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Volume 18 Issue 9

SEPTEMBER 2002 No:221

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## RAILWAY IS REGIONAL CHAMPION Stockport Local is Greater Manchester Pub of the Year

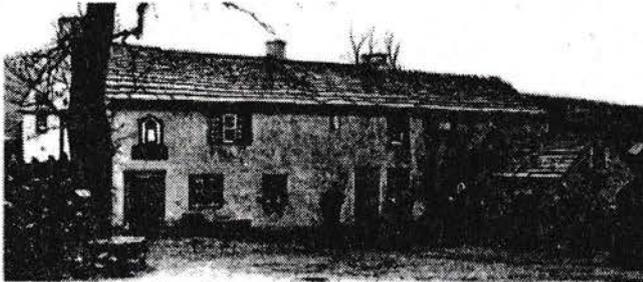
**F**or the seventh consecutive year, the Regional Pub of the Year title for CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, in Greater Manchester has gone to a pub in the Opening Times area. The Railway on Avenue Street, Portwood, scooped the top award, crowning a year of achievement for the pub.



### QUIET WOMAN MAKES A NOISE

#### High Peak Pub Picks Up Regional Award

It's been a double victory for pubs in the Opening Times area this year. Not only has the Railway Portwood picked up the Greater Manchester regional award, but the High Peak Pub of the Year, the Quiet Woman at Earl Sterndale has become the CAMRA East Midlands champion.



Located in the depths of deepest Derbyshire, The Quiet Woman Inn has stood in the village of Earl Sterndale since 1675.

It is a two room pub with low ceilings and original oak beams with plenty of atmosphere and a homely cottage feel. The Quiet Woman is very much a community local where everyone really does know each other. The pub also sells eggs, postcards of the pub as well as books by local poet Tom Wise. On a Sunday there is live traditional folk music played by local musicians which only adds to the country atmosphere.

Landlord Ken Mellor has been at the helm of this former Marstons freehouse for 12 years which he runs with his wife. There are five handpumps with a variety of beers on offer. Marstons Bitter and Pedigree are the mainstays along with Mansfield Cask Dark Mild. Recent guests have included Timothy Taylor's Landlord as well as beers from Brains, Slaters and Wytchwood. Ken is an expert at looking after his beer and on the occasions High Peak Branch has visited the pub the beer has always been on top form.

The Quiet Woman and the Railway now go on to the 'Super Regional' rounds of judging where, by chance, they are in the same group along with pubs in the West Midlands and North Wales. First however, is the little matter of the presentation of the Regional award and this is on Saturday 7 September. High Peak branch will be running a minibus and for details and to reserve your seat please contact Frank Wood on 01457 865426.

The pub can also be reached using public transport by getting a train from Manchester Piccadilly to Buxton and then getting the bus (442-Ashbourne) to Earl Sterndale (journey takes 12 minutes).

It's a case of lightning striking twice for the Railway, as the pub also picked up the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year award earlier in the year. This was a springboard for the pub's entry into the Regional competition time and its double victory is a tribute to the hard work and commitment of licensee Alex Lord.

Back in 1996, the Railway was re-opened by the Porter Brewing Co as their third tied house. Under the stewardship of Paul and Bev Stanyer, the Railway became an instant success and something of a flagship for the Porters brewery. At around the same time Alex Lord started working for the company as a barman, and then also as an odd-job man.

Paul and Bev left the Railway after notching up two Pub of the Month awards there, and subsequent events have been well documented in these pages. Suffice it to say that the pub appeared to enter a period of decline culminating in a sudden management change in September 2000. This resulted in Alex taking charge and facing the task of restoring the Railway's fortunes.

Luckily, in Alex Lord the Railway has found itself in the hands of one of the most hard-working and committed licensees you are likely to encounter. And the hard work has paid off with the Railway now restored to its place as one of the top cask beer pubs in Stockport. The full range of Porter's hand-pulled beers, including the house beer, Railway Sleeper, traditional cider and foreign beers are all back to the top quality demanded by the pub's customers. A comprehensive menu of home-made food has also been restored.

A new innovation, introduced by Alex, is a wide range of Belgian and German bottled beers. The range, which would look well at home in Manchester's *Northern Quarter*, has really taken off with the pub's customers. The latest development is an ever-changing, independently sourced guest beer on at weekends.

On hearing of the award Alex told Opening Times "Everyone is very, very happy and all of the customers are over the moon. This really is excellent news."

The presentation will be on Saturday 5 October from about 8.00pm onwards. The Railway isn't the biggest pub and it's likely to be a very busy night, so get there early. The pub is an easy walk from the centre of Stockport, and a variety of buses including services 325 and 330 will drop you almost at the door.

#### IN SEPTEMBER'S OPENING TIMES

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## MORE CHOICE BETTER BEER



**2002 International Brewing Awards**  
Gold Medals for Navy and Wobbly Bob

## IN THE EDITORS' VIEW..

The launch of a new premium cask beer by Coors Brewers is welcome news indeed. Especially as it is to be supported by a substantial advertising campaign. Now, Coors are now soft hearted sentimentalists and they clearly see a market for this new beer, despite the much touted decline in cask ale sales. It is therefore interesting to reflect on the words of Scott Wilson, the Worthington brand director. They are worth quoting in full:

"Accounting for one in four pints of ale, and with share increasing between 2001 and 2002, there is growing evidence that cask ale is re-emerging."

Pardon me? Did he say 'share increasing'? OK, it may be only a straw in the wind but there's certainly something going on out there. For some time now, reports of cask ale's continuing decline have sat uncomfortably with reports from breweries large and small that their cask ale volumes are at worst static and usually increasing, sometimes quite substantially. The breweries reporting these results have, however, been the regional, family and micro-brewers who between them only account for something like 15% of the beer market and their increases have been overshadowed by the continuing decline in cask ale volumes by the giant national brewers. If however, the likes of Coors are detecting volume increases then it is likely that the next national production figures could well indicate that cask ale is back on the increase.

And what will to doom and gloom merchants have to write about then?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hearty congratulations to two of our local Pubs if the Year making it through as their respective regional champions. Both are excellent pubs and it is unfortunate that they face each other in the next round of the national Pub of the Year competition. The judges are certainly going to have their work cut out. This is also further proof, as if it were needed, that the Opening Times area has arguably the highest concentration of good pubs anywhere in the country.

*John Clarke*

Once again, CAMRA's national pub prices showed that we in the North west are lucky enough to enjoy the nation's lowest beer prices. My fellow editor lamented last month that his appeal to letter writers about the price issue got a zero response, perhaps this is why. One letter this month takes the Beer Monster to task for complaining about prices at the Great British Beer Festival. Well they were not extortionate by London prices, and in light of the Sunday papers heralding the arrival of a £10 loaf of bread in the capital (I kid you not) they were probably a bargain.

*P.B. Hutchings*

## OPENING TIMES ISSUE 221

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 CD-R, or via e-mail to [johnclarke@stocam.u-net.com](mailto: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 19!**

# PUB OF THE MONTH SEPTEMBER 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 CAMRA Pub of the Month award for September 2002 will be the Queens Arms on Stockport Road (A560) in Cheadle.

The ill health of the previous licensee had resulted in the pub becoming run down and neglected, but this all changed with the arrival of Tony Dunn, his wife Helen, and their team of enthusiastic bar staff and helpers. Prior to running the Queens, Tony and Helen had run the Unity in Stockport, the Travellers Call on Hyde Road in Gorton, and the Nags Head, also on Hyde Road. Tony and Helen decided to grasp the gauntlet of running the Queens in November last year and set about to improve the pub in every respect.

One of the first things to change was the ambience of the pub in that customers were made to feel welcome. The beer order was resized to suit the initial low turnover of the pub and the erratic opening hours were standardised so that everyone knew when the pub would be open, which is now all permitted opening hours. With few creature comforts, central heating was installed as a priority, before an extensive internal redecoration was undertaken.

The results of these changes have created a busy friendly pub serving excellent quality Robinson's Hatters Mild and Best Bitter. But the improvements are not just limited to those already mentioned. In addition the Queens has now introduced lunchtime meals with daily specials, served seven days a week. On Sundays you can also enjoy the Queens traditional Sunday lunch (children's portions are also available). If you are working nearby, the Queens even offers free food, late afternoon on a Friday, to allow you to wind down after that particularly heavy week. The famous rear garden with its play equipment is also still in use making the pub extremely popular with families in good weather and during holiday periods.

Since the pubs change of management last November barrillage has more than trebled. With the order for Old Tom already conditioning in the pub cellar and scheduled for sale in the winter months, this increase in turnover looks set to continue. From a pub that struggled to tick over, the Queens is now one of the busiest, friendliest, community pubs in the area, which also sells top quality Robinson's cask conditioned beers. Can you afford to miss the Pub of the Month celebrations at the Queens Arms in Cheadle? I suspect not!

Why not join us to celebrate this richly deserved award on Thursday 26th September 2002? Expect a busy night! SB.

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

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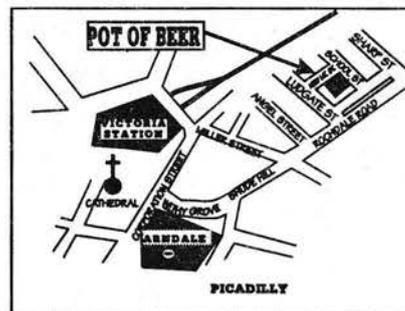
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# STAGGER

with Mark McConachie

## Gorton

I knew something special was in the air tonight as I decked off the 203 bus from Stockport outside of the Travellers Call in Gorton, for this was the famous Hyde Road crawl. Or was it, perhaps, that my mind had been clouded by some romantic vision...

Anyway, upon entering the Travellers Call one finds a smallish L-shaped space with the bar fronting the road and a room occupying the rear. These were once two separate rooms that have now been combined in a way that is not displeasing to the eye. The front Vault has carpeted walls but, sensibly, none upon the floor; apart from the carpet, the walls are covered with framed monochrome images of every pub that ever existed (or that were photographed, at least) on Hyde Road. The landlady has sourced these from the vast electronic image archive based at Manchester Central Library - it makes for a good display and provides a ready source of inquisitive banter. The Travellers being a Hydes' house, it sells their bitter and that beer alone; of the four people starting the Stagger here, we all rated it identically as being above average.

Our next call was at Robinson's **Coach & Horses** on the corner of Belle Vue Street - we had checked the **Imperial** and **Nags Head** but found both to be selling keg beers only. It is great to see the Coach open and trading again after it had a fallow period of several months being closed and awaiting new tenants. I do not think it will ever have the same character as when Beryl and her family ran the place for well over a decade, but things move on. Thus you find a simply decorated two-roomer where a lovely, tiled bar counter greets the thirsty with handpulls for Robbies Hatters and Best. Both beers were sampled and found to be very good with the mild just shading it over the Best. The Public Bar has darts, TV and

bunting to keep one amused, and whilst the side Lounge was fairly spartan, it did have what appeared to be a disco in the making as we bade our farewells.

A five minute walk to our rendezvous took us past the long-closed **Cheshire Hunt** (now a shop of some kind), the greenery of Gorton Park, a budget hotel that occupies the site of the **Lakes Hotel** near the old bowling alley, and the extant, but long-closed **Midland** by Belle Vue BR station. Cross the railway bridge and over Kwik Save's car park gets you to Garratt Way and to the **Pineapple**. This is a modern house giving the impression of being large and airy, no doubt due in part to the use of Scandinavian-style open roof space and boarded ceiling. It has two large and comfortable drinking areas and, to my mind, a fairly heavy emphasis on football - well every time I go in, there always appears to be a game in progress on a large-screen television. Like the Travellers, this too is a Hydes' house and one too that merely sells bitter (it has sold mild in the past but now sales no longer warrant it, a sensible decision to maintain quality, one must agree). Our party had swollen to ten in number by now and with that came a discord about the merits of the beer with scores ranging from average to good.

Next up was the **Suburban**, a JW Lees house a short walk up Garratt Way. An older building this, that has been extended to give it a modern appeal; the most famous thing about the 'Sub' is that it is home to the Gorton Morris Men - a band of merry gents who maintain that most English of traditions, Morris Dancing. These days the 'Sub' is a most unremarkable affair that boasts two rooms serving Lees GB mild and bitter. The former beer was not at all on good form but was changed for bitter without fuss by the kindly landlord who told us that mild sales were low; the bitter was another story - just how Lees bitter should be, the assembled company thought it to be absolutely splendid and scored it accordingly. From one splendid pint to another, this time at the **Plough** back on Hyde Road. Robinson's Hatters and Best were served in exceptionally good form to a still appreciative crowd - the mild was deemed wonderful (probably some of the best in Gtr. Manchester, anyway), whilst the best bitter was only slightly less drooled over. The Plough is a listed property that was to have made way for a widened Hyde Road some years ago had it not been for the campaigning efforts of CAMRA and other interested bodies. This three room house plus beer garden is now getting the attention it deserves through the tenant couple who both care about the building, the beer and the folk who sup it there - surely a recipe for success and a future nominee for a Pub of the Month award one thinks? Do take a visit to the Plough to see the marvellous tiling in the corridors, the quality bar counter and the fine matchboard seating in the vault.

Two pubs awaited us in the back streets on Gorton Cross Lane. The first, the **Cotton Tree** was an all keg affair so we crossed the road to the double-fronted, Boddingtons signed **Royal Oak**. The place was bustling, boisterous, jovial and almost raucous; apparently the landlord is the son of TV actor Bill Tarmey. That aside, John Smiths Cask was the sole cask ale on offer which we sampled outside in the cool evening air - this did nothing to enhance it and it was all rather disappointing really. More wandering through back streets and some wooded paths that I didn't know about brought us the **Vale Cottage** - this lies only a cockstride from Hyde Road (just beyond the **Lord Nelson** which was keg by the way). The Vale Cottage still has that air of the 'pub in the country' with its rustic, cottagey feel, low beams and chintz. It is not the Cottage of old, however, so if you remember a good selection of ales including Landlord then think on, as the sole beer now is John Smiths Cask (it gets everywhere, this stuff). This example was far better than the Oak's it must be said, but it would not vie for the beer of the night.

Our final port of call was Holt's **Waggon & Horses** back on Hyde Road. I say final because some of our party returned to the Plough for last orders such was their enthusiasm for the beer and pub. For

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many of us this was our first opportunity to try Holts Baton bitter (or Silver as it was dubbed) as this beer was considerably more difficult to encounter than the Baton Gold. I must say it was alright and scored quite highly, but for me it was no match for the original - Joey's bitter, still a classic beer by anyone's reckoning. Holt mild and bitter were also on sale and they too scored well; indeed, they are the standard offerings here. The Waggon is in the mock-Tudor, roadhouse style; it is large and comfortable and always seems well used, tonight was no exception to that. A final pint here provided one with a most fitting end to a good evening's entertainment, I look forward to the next Gorton stagger. As I had begun the evening on a 203, thus I ended it so on my return to Stockport.

## SILVER JUBILEE FOR TRAFFORD & HULME

*Details of the Branch Festivities - All Welcome!*

**T**he Trafford & Hulme Branch of CAMRA was established in October 1977, when the Queen was only 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 festivities 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 actual date of the branch's foundation was the third Thursday of October, 1977. Thanks to the generosity of Tony Philips at Hydes, we will mark the third Thursday of October 2002 with a visit to the biggest brewery in the branch area - Hydes' Anvil Brewery in Hulme. The brewery can only accommodate 25 of us so priority must go to CAMRA members living in the Trafford & Hulme branch area. That's roughly the area bounded by the Irwell, Blackfriars, Market Street, Mosley Street and Oxford Street in Manchester city centre, plus Hulme (west of Princess Road) and of course the Borough of Trafford. There's a small charge of £2 a head in aid of branch funds. Please contact Neil Worthington on 0161 749 4882 if you want to come along. You'll have to make your own way there but the brewery is well served by several bus routes.

The Branch has been rather quiet in recent times, despite being one of the Campaign's largest branches with some 300 members. 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:

- ★ **Monday 9th September** - social with East Cheshire branch at the Greyhound, Ashley (8 p.m.)
- ★ **Wednesday 25th September** - pub crawl with North Manchester branch, starting at the Malt Shovels, Altrincham (7.30 p.m.)
- ★ **Thursday 3rd October** - branch meeting and Jubilee Party at the Old Market Tavern, Altrincham (8 p.m.)
- ★ **Saturday 5th October** - joint social with Stockport & South Manchester Branch at the Railway, Stockport for Regional Pub of the Year presentation.
- ★ **Thursday 17th October** - visit to Hydes' Brewery, Hulme (7 p.m.)

### CONTRIBUTORS TO OPENING TIMES 221:

John Clarke, Paul Hutchings, Peter Butler, Peter Edwardson, Phil Levison, John Taylor, Tom Lord, Frank Wood, Neil Worthington, Stuart Ballantyne, Mark McConachie, Dave Platt, Dave Hallows, Anthony Firmin, Stewart Revell, Trevor Gammage



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## CHAMPION BEER OF BRITAIN

### Scottish Beer Wins Top Title For First Time

Deuchars IPA brewed by Caledonian of Edinburgh was judged to be the best beer in Britain by a panel of brewers, beer writers and journalists at last month's Great British Beer Festival. This is the first time that a Scottish beer has ever won the title of Champion Beer of Britain.

The beer is described in the 2002 edition of the Good Beer Guide as, 'An extremely tasty and refreshing amber-coloured session beer. Hops and fruit are very evident and are balanced by malt throughout. The lingering aftertaste is delightfully bitter and hoppy.'

The Edinburgh brewed beer was chosen as the overall winner from over fifty finalists in eight categories.

Roger Protz, one of the finalist judges and Editor of the Good Beer Guide said 'I think that the victory for Caledonian is well overdue. Deuchars IPA is a fabulous beer. A brilliant blend of malt and hop character and above all a drink with enormous drinkability. A great victory for Scotland!' David Brown, Caledonian's Director of Marketing said 'We are absolutely thrilled to have won this award, particularly as we are the first Scottish brewery to do so. Deuchars has been a great success in Scotland for many years and appreciate the support that CAMRA has given us.' The Silver award went to East Street Cream from RCH (Somerset). Bronze went to Moondance from Triple FFF (Hampshire). The full list of winners is:

### Champion Beers of Britain 2002

Supreme Champion: Deuchars IPA - Caledonian (Edinburgh)  
Silver: East Street Cream - RCH (Somerset)  
Bronze: Moondance - Triple fff (Hampshire)

### Milds

Gold: Pressed Rat & Warthog - Triple fff (Hampshire)  
Silver: Man In The Boat - Boat (West Yorks)  
Bronze: Black Cat - Moorhouses (Lancashire)

### Bitters

Gold: Deuchars IPA - Caledonian (Edinburgh)  
Silver: Viking - Rudgate (York)  
Joint Bronze: Hewish IPA - RCH (Somerset), JHB - Oakham (Peterborough)

### Best Bitters

Gold: Moondance - Triple fff (Hampshire)  
Silver: Brewers Gold - Crouch Vale (Essex)  
Joint Bronze: Red Macgregor - Orkney (Orkney), London Pride - Fuller's (London)

### Strong Bitters

Gold: East Street Cream - RCH (Somerset)  
Silver: ESB - Fuller's (London)  
Bronze: Hop Garden Gold - Hogs Back (Surrey)

### Speciality Beers

Gold: White Dwarf - Oakham (Peterborough)  
Silver: Schiehallion - Harviestoun (Clackmannanshire)  
Bronze: Umbel Magna - Nethergate (Suffolk)

### Guardian/CAMRA Bottle-Conditioned Beers

Gold: 1845 - Fuller's (London)  
Silver: Live Organic - Brakspear (Oxfordshire)  
Bronze: Summer Lightning - Hop Back (Wiltshire)



JOIN CAMRA (PAGE 19) & DRINK REAL ALE

Dave and Sue Welcome You To

## THE QUEENS ARMS

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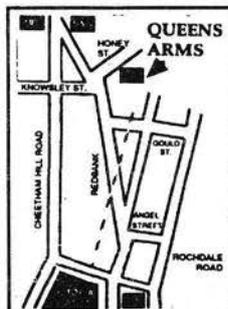
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Old Stockport Bitter, Best Bitter,  
Hatters Mild, Dark Mild, Frederics,  
Old Tom and Hartleys XB and

Cumbria Way

plus....

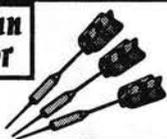
**SNOWDON ALE**



A WARM WELCOME IN A TRADITIONAL PUB

# Stockie on The Oche

By John Taylor



The two 'heavyweights' of local darts (without taking the phrase literally) are Tony O'Shea and Darryl Fitton. Both these players are naturally gifted in their chosen sport and with the right kind of backing would have made the top grade of international darts years ago.

That didn't happen, but in the last couple of year, especially with Tony, things have started moving in the right direction. It cannot be easy travelling all over Europe every other weekend, attempting to pick up ranking points, especially when you have to give up your annual leave from work to achieve it. But that is what Tony has done, and having reached two Embassy World finals, he has just qualified for this year's as well. A couple of weeks ago he came to within an inch of winning his first European title, when he lost in the final of the Belgian Open to Ted Hankey.

Darryl, on the other hand, has seen what is possible and this year has travelled to all points of the compass, along with Tony, to fulfil his dream of being a top-notch dartsman, not just at local level but on the international scene too. At present, and with just two competitions left, Darryl is just one point away from qualifying for the best darts tournament in the world. On their day both these players are capable of being World Champion. We have seen it in the past - both Deller and Walton came from obscurity to win the world crown. On the back of his recent success, Tony is now a regular in the England team. Let's hope Darryl can follow in his footsteps. It would be great to see two Stockport-based players on the most famous oche in the world.

★ ★ ★ ★

More recently, the above two, along with other local players such as John Hollins, Paul Yates, Andy Wright, Mick Haynes and Brian Derbyshire, have taken the Cheshire Super League team from Stockport into the national team finals. This was achieved, firstly by being the best team in the Cheshire Northern Section and then beating the winners of the county's southern division. They then moved on to the area finals where they beat Staffordshire 7-2 in the quarter finals, thrashed Clywd 8-1 in the semis, and demolished Merseyside 7-2 in the final. What made the final more emphatic was that the Merseyside team had beaten the national champions for the last four years, Rochdale, in the semi-finals. So, it's on to the national finals at the Lakeside to be held early this month. The home base for this team is the Ash Hotel in Heaton Norris and their next home fixtures are scheduled for Sunday 6 October (against Crewe) and 1 December (against Stoke). So if you like watching top class darts get yourself down there. You could be watching the national team champions and, who knows, a possible future world champion.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Unusually, I have been contacted with results of another local league, but too late to make it into this issue - full details will be revealed next month - but this month I will concentrate on the Stockport Licensed Houses Leagues. The top teams in the Super League, Reddish WMC, Union Inn and Royal Mortar, are all still unbeaten, but that is about to change because they are all due to play each other over the next couple of weeks. If the points system in this division was a point a game and two for the match, then the Mortar would be a country mile in front, but as they know having the best team on paper does not always guarantee success, as they found to their cost last season. I doubt if they will take things for granted this year. In the Premier Division, the Gateway from Kingsway presently lead the charge for promotion, followed by Brinnington side, Salisbury Club, the Old King from Portwood and

## OPENING TIMES SPECIFICATIONS

Column Widths, single 84mm, double 172mm. image height 26cm. 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.

Offerton's Golden Hind. The top of the tabled are shown below:

### Super League

Team	Pld	Won	Pts	Crib
Royal Mortar	7	7	14	14
RWMC	7	7	14	8
Union Inn	7	7	14	5
Bobby Peel	7	6	12	12
Magnet	7	5	10	13
Copperfields B7	5	5	10	12
North Reddish	7	4	8	11
Copperfields A7	2	4	4	12
Printers Arms	7	2	4	9
Club Leisure	7	2	4	9

### Premier Division

Team	Pld	Won	Pts	Crib
Gateway	5	5	10	10
Salisbury	6	4	8	10
Old King	6	4	8	8
Golden Hind	6	4	8	6
Grey Horse	6	3	6	12
Florist	6	3	6	10
Fiddlers Green	5	3	6	7
George & Dragn	6	3	6	7
Romiley Lib	5	2	4	7
Sidings	6	2	4	10

Well, it's that time again. See you soon, John Taylor

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ASK IF IT'S CASK**



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No Admission after 10.45pm)

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Roast Muffins

Live Entertainment:

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Sundays 3 - 6pm



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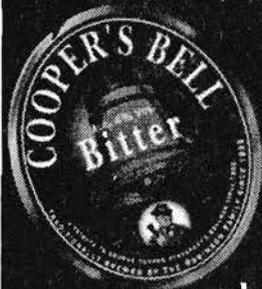


7

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



# Robinson's COMPETITION



This fully bitter autumn ale is the seasonal beer for September and October. Its malty character is complemented by a pleasant hop aroma derived from the addition of choicest hops late in the brewing process.

There's the chance to sample a new beer in this month's competition by winning a tray of Northern Glory. This 4.4% ABV ale has been brewed for the American market and will be on sale in the UK next year. It's also congratulations to Ian Cameron of Warrington who won a tray of Best Bitter in the July competition.

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

1. What was the occupation of Stockport resident George Cooper circa 1865?
2. To what ABV is Cooper's Bell brewed?

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**

## HALE NINKASI!

New 'Goddess of Beer' unveiled to attract women to British beer

**CAMRA**, the Campaign for Real Ale, has launched a daring and powerful new campaign to encourage women to try real cask ale, Britain's traditional pub drink.

The campaign is in response to research into the nation's beer drinking habits released by CAMRA which highlights how brewers have failed to attract women to beer. It features a modern version of 'Ninkasi', the 4000-year-old Sumerian Goddess of Beer, and creates a powerful icon for real British beer.

The research reveals that:

Over one fifth (22%) of women don't drink real cask ale because it isn't promoted to them

- ✪ 17% of women think it is 'old fashioned'
- ✪ 29% don't try it because their friends don't drink it
- ✪ 17% think it will make them fat!
- ✪ Only 23% of women have tried real ale in a pub
- ✪ 19% of women would try real cask ale if it were served in more stylish and fashionable glasses

The CAMRA campaign was a key feature at last month's Great British Beer Festival and included a huge (the biggest ever!) sixty foot banner and life-size cut outs of the Goddess of Beer as well as a 'live' appearance by Ninkasi. This is supported by posters, beer mats and leaflets in thousands of pubs across the country.

Mike Benner, Head of Campaigns and Communications said, "We think real British beer is something to be proud of and it should be marketed to women as well as men. Our research shows that many women don't try it because it isn't promoted to them. Almost all of the advertising we see on our TV screens for beer is too laddish, too lager-based and a real turn-off for women. Ninkasi, the new Goddess of British beer is here to change all that and sets a new precedent for marketing a great product."

"Our survey also shows that many women think real cask ale will make them fat. This is a common myth and the truth is that beer contains no fat at all. We hope Ninkasi will help change their minds!" Goddess Ninkasi is said to have created her recipe for beer some 4,000 years ago and was worshipped by both men and women at a time when women brewed the beer and ran the taverns. Ninkasi's dream lives on today and the new Ninkasi is urging drinkers to 'get real and discover the cool natural taste of real cask ale.'

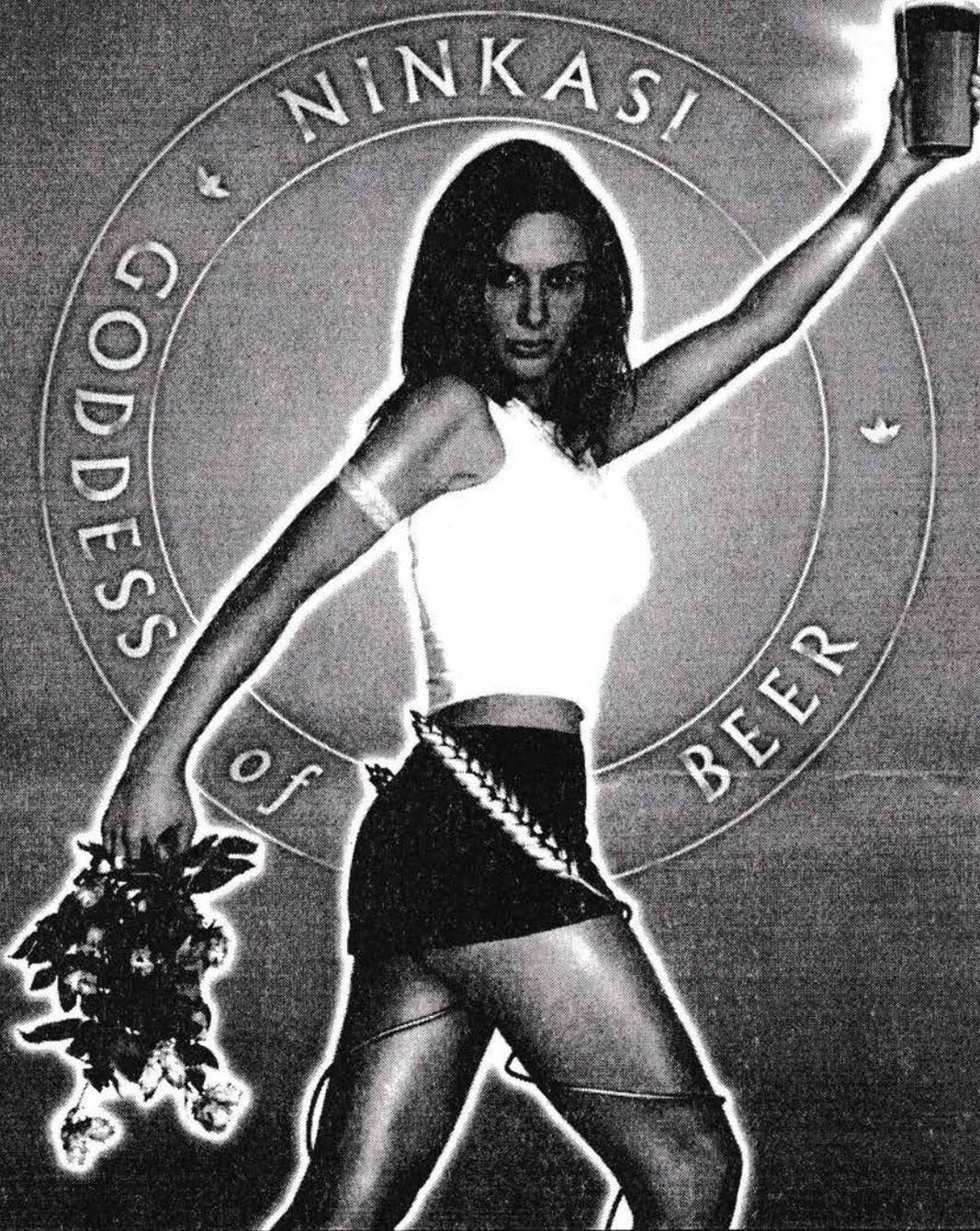
CAMRA claims that beer advertising is too macho and needs to become more female-friendly through promoting the taste, diversity and enjoying beer with food as an alternative to wine. CAMRA is calling on restaurants to offer a more interesting range of British beers which have been matched to dishes on their menus.

Mike Benner said, "The huge range of different varieties of real cask ale make it every bit as enjoyable and sophisticated as wine and these aspects need to be promoted to attract women and beat the decline in the UK beer market. If you look at both Germany and Belgium, far more women choose beer than here in the UK."

'Hale NINKASI' builds on CAMRA's '100% NATURale' campaign which was launched in 2001 to an explosion of media interest. CAMRA's research shows an increase in the number of people, particularly men, who have tried real cask ale in a pub since last year. In February 2001, 58% of men and 21% of women had tried real cask ale, but by June 2002 this had increased to 71% of men and 23% of women. The campaign, which featured male and female models on a bed of malted barley, targeted the key 25-35 year old market.

Mike Benner added, "Last year's campaign helped us shake off real ale's flat cap image and proved very popular, particularly with younger men. With Ninkasi we are turning our attention to women and creating a new, powerful icon for female as well as male beer drinkers. We now need to see real ale brewers following our lead with innovative and exciting marketing campaigns to put British beer back at the top of the shopping list for the increasing numbers of female pub-goers." CAMRA's research also showed that nearly a fifth of women would be more likely to drink real cask ale if it was served in more stylish and fashionable glasses. 31% of adults also thought women who drank from pint glasses were 'unfeminine', 18% thought it 'undignified' and only 7% found it stylish and attractive.

Mike Benner said, "British beer is quite rightly associated with the good old pint pot which is popular with many female beer drinkers, but brewers need to present beer in a more original and modern way if they are going to build a following with women generally as well as men. Real ale needs to be associated a little less with Inspector Morse and a little more with a modern icon like Ninkasi!"



# Hale NINKASI

The Goddess of Beer says "Get Real. Discover the cool, natural taste of real cask ale. I discovered it 4000 years ago and look at me now."

CHECK US OUT AT [www.halecask.com](http://www.halecask.com)

SOME THINGS NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale





### National News

Coors Brewers (the brewer formerly known as Bass) is to introduce a new premium bitter to replace the gap in its portfolio left by Draught Bass, a brand retained by Interbrew when it sold the former Bass Brewers to the American concern.



The new brew is to be named Worthington's 1744 is named after the date William Worthington started brewing at Burton-on-Trent and is to be supported by a substantial advertising programme. The announcement was accompanied by some interesting comments by Scott Wilson, Worthington's brand director. He commented thus "Accounting for one in four pints of ale, and with share increasing between 2001 and 2002, there is growing evidence that cask ale is re-emerging." There has already been some pre-launch tasting of the beer but no news yet of when it is to hit the nation's bars.

### Family Brewers

This month sees the launch of the next seasonal beers from our local family brewers. Robinson's, are back (for the third time) with Cooper's Bell, a 4% bitter described as "a fully bitter autumn ale with a distinctive malty character complemented by a pleasing hop aroma derived by the addition of choicest hops late in the brewing process".



Lees, meanwhile are bringing out a brand new beer, Ruddy Glow a 4.5% "rich ruby ale" which is "brewed with a high percentage of crystal malt to give a sweet ale with a hint of liquorice. A well balanced ale flavoured with Target hops for bitterness and Styrian Goldings hops for aroma".



The new beer from Hydes' is also a 4.5% brew. This is Autumn Goldings, the latest in this year's craft ale programme based on the theme of "Pick of the Hops" and will be hopped with...Goldings.

Finally, Holt's latest seasonal beer, Thunderholt (around 5%) is expected to be on sale at the launch of Real Beer Week on 30 September (see below). The brewery is also considering producing a new bottled beer to complement "1849".



### Holt Mild Gains

Last month Dave Hallows reported on the availability of handpumped real mild in a number of Holt's pubs. Readers may recall that he went out to test Holt's brewery policy whereby all pubs selling the 'smooth' mild should also offer the handpumped version, too. The results weren't good but Dave's been back and things are looking up. The Grove, Clayton; Orion, Withington; and Duke of York, Cheetham Hill, all now have handpumped mild on tap - and all in good form, too. Thumbs down, though, to the Halfway House, Droydsden; Kingsway, Levenshulme, and Claremont, Moss Side, who still only have 'smooth' available.

### Real Beer Week

The Independent Family Brewers of Britain (IFBB) is holding a Real Beer Week in September/October, aimed at introducing more drinkers to the delights of real ale. Formed in 1993, the IFBB is made up of the 33 remaining family-owned and run UK brewers and pub retailers. They account for just 5% of the UK's beer production but brew half of all the UK's real beer. The IFBB's activities include lobbying government on pertinent issues and raising awareness of and for real beer.

Real Beer Week will run from 30 September to 6 October, and follows the success of Cask Ale Week last years. The IFBB promotions will include 'Try Before You Buy' in their pubs and competitions to win brewery tours or beer for a year.

In Manchester, the week will be launched in the Ape & Apple (John Dalton Street, City Centre) by Holts, Lees, Robinson's, Hydes' and, making their first appearance, Thwaites.

### Micro Magic

*There's only been time for a quick run round some of the local micros this month - apologies to those who have missed out.*

**Beartown** - there are really exciting things happening here. Due to a refinancing, the brewery now aims to buy three new tied houses in this year, 2003 and 2004. Three have already been snapped up. One is in St Helens but the other two are closer to home. In Collyhurst, the Junction was expected to reopen as a Beartown tied house in the first week of this month, while in Fallowfield, the conversion of the former Bamboo Café and neighbouring phone shop on Wilmslow Road will hopefully be complete by mid-November. Look for a full report on this in OT in due course. On the beer front, another name to be found on the bar soon is Bearley Literate. This beer will be a 4.5% golden ale which will be dry hopped. The beer is being launched in conjunction with the poetry society. Another fruit beer is also in the pipeline, following the success of Strawberry. It will either be a peach of strawberry beer - testing was still ongoing as OT went to press with, we hear, Angella at Stockport's Navigation acting as informal taster!



**Khean** - Congleton's other brewery is also going strong. Trade continues to build with the beers proving particularly popular at the Queens in Congleton (it's right next to the station) and the Swan in Kettlethulme. A lower gravity beer has also been introduced. All Rounder is a 3.9% session bitter, the same colour as Premium but more bitter and dry.



**Pictish** - this month's seasonal is a welcome return for Staddle Stone, a 4.5% premium tawny coloured ale with a ruby red hue. "A robust hop aroma precedes a full bodied malty taste with caramel notes and a dry bitter finish" says the description. OT certainly recalls that it's a very moreish beer.



**Bank Top** - the brewery move is now complete and brewing was due to start at the new premises as we went to press. A new beer to mark the successful move will be launched at the Howcroft Beer Festival (9-13 October and highly recommended). This will be "Game, Set &



THE MANCHESTER BREWERY

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Frederic Robinson Ltd,  
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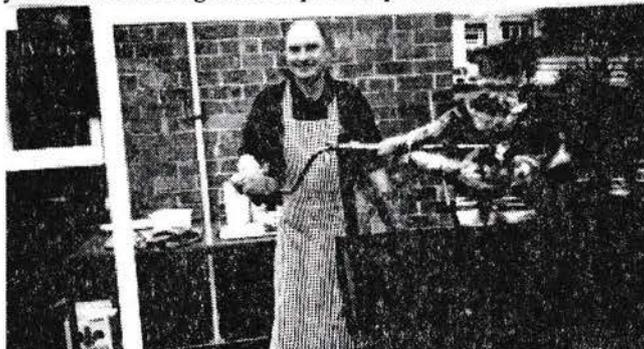
## RECORDS AT WRENBURY

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

Did you miss out on your 2002 Festival  
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Items must be picked up at 66 Downham Rd,  
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Glasses are £2 each (pint or half pint).

T-shirts £4.50 (NB - large blue, front logo only)

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by an excellent wine selection

**TRADITIONAL SUNDAY LUNCH £4.75**



**Bar open all day Sunday  
Sunday lunch 12 till 4.30pm**

**Full Menu, Specials and Traditional  
Roasts in our conservatory Restaurant**



Stockport CAMRA Pub of the Month Oct 2000  
**MANCHESTER ROAD, HEATON CHAPEL  
STOCKPORT, TEL 0161 431 9301**



Recommended in CAMRA's New Pub Food Guide



11



## The Waters Green Tavern



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and many more....

Your Hosts Brian and Tracey

Bar Meals Served Mon to Sat Lunch  
*This is not a free house*



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



Lunchtime Bar Snacks  
12-2.30 Mon-Sat  
Peter and Gail  
welcome you  
Tel: 01625 828078

12



SEPTEMBER 27-28 (FRI-SAT)

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CIVIC HALL, NANTWICH

(5mins from rail station, right next to bus station)

Opening hours:

Fri 7-11 (£3), Sat 1-5 (£2), 7-11 (£3).

ENTRY INCLUDES FREE GLASS

(and free half-pint for CAMRA members)

## 30+ BEERS & CIDERS

from breweries within a 30-mile  
radius of Nantwich  
along with local food

Part of the Nantwich Food Festival in  
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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.

Steve, Johanne, Molly & sometimes Jess welcome you to

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**CAMRA CALLING!** Here are the monthly branch event diaries, starting with Stockport and South Manchester, followed by High Peak and Macclesfield

**Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries**

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

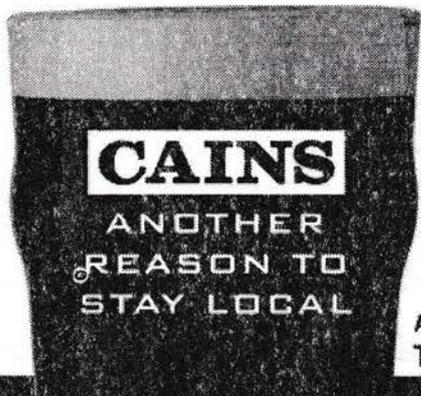


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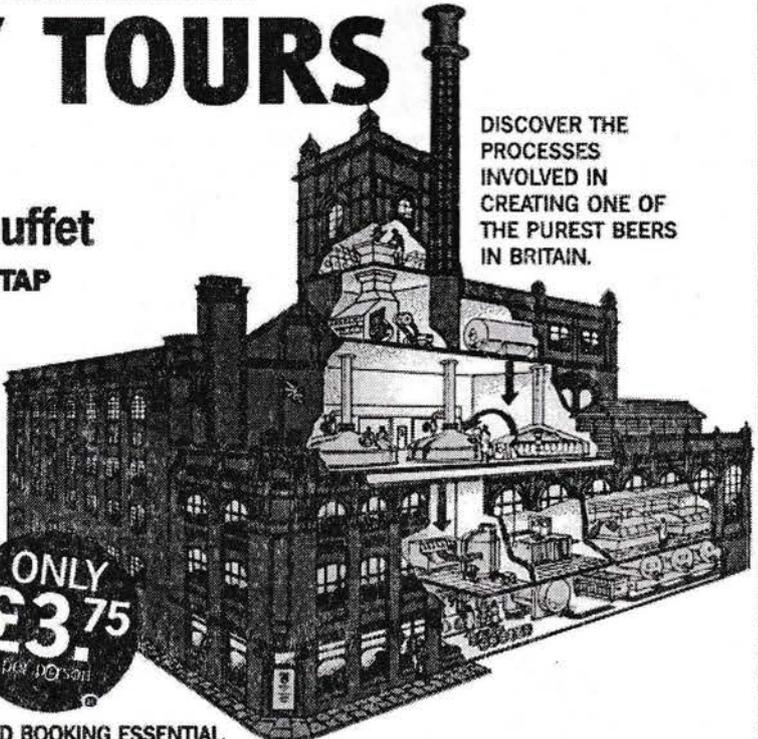
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# 5 Years Ago

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)



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REAL ALES AND  
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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.

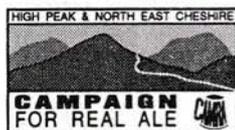
The much improved and refurbished Griffin in Broadbottom, became the Harewood Arms at the end of April and what a great refurbishment it is. Worthy of an article in its own right in next month's issue, the beer range is Boddingtons, Taylor's Landlord plus a guest beer (Adnam's Regatta on my visit on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

16





## 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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Seasonal Guest Beers  
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# O P E N I N G T I M E S

## 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 dumping 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!  
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ASK IF IT'S CASK**



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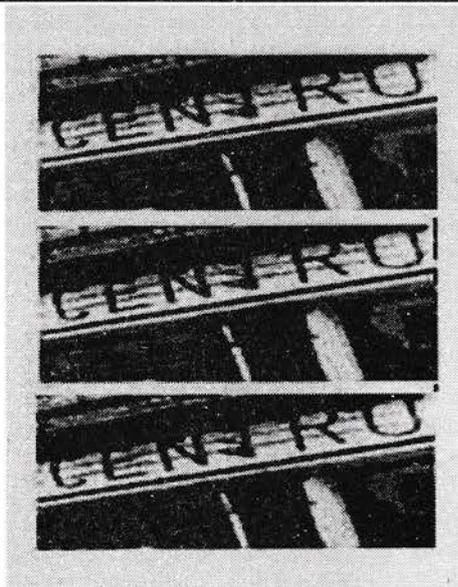
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