



OPENING TIMES



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NAVIGATION IS REGIONAL PUB OF THE YEAR



FASHION BAR FAD FINISHED

Britain is growing out of its theme bar phase - literally, according to market researchers. For the ageing population is being cited as a major factor in the decline of the country's high street circuit bars. According to latest figures from market research company Mintel, at least 100 town-centre theme bars have been converted back into mainstream pubs in the last 12 months, with older and wiser drinkers starting to favour traditional pubs instead.

Mintel leisure analyst Pat Ashton said: "The big boom in theme bars is over. They have lost their novelty value."

Sales in theme bars fell from £382 million in 2001 to £350 million in 2002, says Mintel, which forecasts another 150 closures or reconversions by 2007. Although it predicts some will survive, it believes they will occupy a niche of no more than one per cent of the £24.3 billion pub market. Mintel's research also charts the decline of the so-called Irish bar; it has found 35 O'Neills, 23 Scruffy Murphys and 12 Finnegan's Wakes that have been turned back into straightforward pubs. These figures bear out an earlier report from rival market researcher AC Nielsen, which says that by 2011 63.5 per cent of the population will be aged over 30. The growth area is now fifty-somethings who feel "disenfranchised" by young people's venues, it says. Nielsen says beer sales through managed houses fell by 16 per cent last year, while sales through tenancies and leased houses rose by 7 per cent. Even discounting the conversion of many smaller managed houses to leasehold, managed pubs showed a 1.5 per cent decline in beer sales, while tenancies showed a 1.5 per cent increase. These figures mirror the cooling of the high street and the greater resilience of community pubs as the economy moves down a gear," said Nielsen's Graham Page. "Tenancies are less prone to the fashion-conscious young in towns and cities, where many managed houses are located.

The downturn has hit many smaller high street operators hard, with Old Monk, Brannigans and Porter Black among the casualties and SFI in deep financial trouble. "Few of these operators can provide adequate financial returns by City standards, and with the high street and economy cooling, it's these 'me-too' bars that are losing their appeal," said Mr Page.

Following in the footsteps of many illustrious predecessors, another pub in the Opening Times area has become CAMRA's Greater Manchester Pub of the Year. This year's winner is the Navigation, Lancashire Hill, Stockport. The story of the Navigation will be well-known to many Opening Times readers. This long-time keg only ex-Wilsons pub was acquired by Congleton's Beartown Brewery in December 2001 and almost overnight transformed itself into one of the foremost cask ale outlets in the town. This transformation would be impressive in itself, but it is in the range of beers on offer that the pub really scores. In less than a week, the standard keg range (including beers, lagers and stouts) and the usual boring bottles were all ditched. In came six cask ales from Beartown Brewery. Bearskinful and Kodiak Gold are permanent bitter and the superb stout, Polar Eclipse, is the third permanent beer. The rest of the Beartown range rotates among the other handpumps - and such is the demand that a seventh pump had to be installed. Prices are keen too, with the beer either £1.50 or £1.60 a pint depending on strength. The only other draught beers are imported German lagers, two draught Belgian beers - the superb Liefmans Frambozen and De Koninck which are supplemented by a bottled range of Belgian and German beers. Real cider has also been successfully introduced - between three and five are always available, and many cider aficionados now consider the Navigation to be the top cider pub in the north of England.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the right people behind the bar and in Angella Lindsay, Beartown have been very lucky indeed. Angella has run the pub with impressive efficiency - firmly dealing with any troublesome customers but offering a warm welcome to the many new faces the pub has seen. Mention also needs to be made of daughter Chantal who is a regular face behind the bar, and whose efficiency and charm have won over many of the regulars old and new.

Angella and the Navigation were the winners of the local CAMRA Pub of the Year award earlier this year and this second success firmly cements the pub's position as one of the stars of the local real ale scene. Needless to say, Angella and Chantal were over the moon when told of their latest win **QUOTE**.

The Navigation's two predecessors, the Nursery and the Railway, went on to reach the finals in the national Pub of the Year contest, with the Nursery clinching the top prize for 2001 and the Railway making runner-up in 2002. These are hard acts to follow but let's hope the Navy can make it three in a row. This latest award will be presented on the evening of Saturday 2 August from 8.00pm. It's bound to be a busy night so get there early. *The Navigation is well served by public transport. In particular bus 203 will drop you very close.*

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2002
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 Gold Medal

IN THE EDITORS' VIEW..

Congratulations to the Navigation on becoming CAMRA's Greater Manchester Pub of the Year. This is a superbly well-deserved award and rightly recognises the efforts that have gone on in transforming this pub from keg beer hell to cask ale heaven. It also gives the lie to all those who say there is no demand for cask ale in pubs – it would have been very easy to write off the Navigation which would undoubtedly have had a very uncertain future if Beartown hadn't come on the scene.

The secret of the pub's success isn't rocket science either. A keen and dedicated licensee who won't stand any nonsense from potential troublemakers, a good range of cask beers and full active support from Beartown Brewery itself. In short, guts, commitment and hard work. All too often I suspect, it is these three ingredients that are missing rather than a demand for real ale.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This month we highlight the launch of the latest version of CAMRA's National Inventory. As readers will see, this area is well endowed with heritage pubs, both on the Inventory and a good few 'near misses' as well – the Blossoms in Stockport and the Mawson in Chorlton-on-Medlock both come to mind. Indeed there seems to have been a general and welcome increase in awareness of our pub heritage in recent years. That's not to say there is room for complacency. Pubs are still under threat – Cityman's report of what sounds like an ill-advised opening out of the Station in Didsbury is a case in point. The pub's unique selling point was its multi-roomed, intimate interior – once gone, these can rarely be put back (unless you're Sam Smths, of course).

John Clarke

It is with a certain wry amusement that I notice the prediction of the end of the theme pub (report page 1). With pub companies desperate to somehow 'recycle' venues to keep them fashionable its beginning to resemble clubland (and a 'fashionable' club now has a half-life of only three months, I'm told). Maybe someone might hit on the idea of turning them into proper pubs again. On a sadder note, I see Wetherspoons are pulling out of Longsight. The Edwin Chadwick was a brave venture, but apparently there are some places even JD can't go.

Paul Hutchings

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OPENING TIMES is published by Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA - The Campaign for Real Ale. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the campaign either locally or nationally. Editors: John Clarke, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport SK3 9HD. ☎ (0161) 477 1973; Paul Hutchings, 8 The Green, Heaton Norris, Stockport Cheshire, SK4 2NP. ☎ & Fax (0161) 432 8384. News, articles and letters welcome. All editorial items may be submitted in most popular WP formats or preferably ASCII on IBM-PC format 3.5" disks (which will eventually be returned) or CD-R, or via e-mail to johnclarke@stocam.u-net.com Adverts or photos should be "hard copy" or in CorelDraw 3,5 or 7 (*.cdr) format or TIFF or EPS files (submit printed proofs for checking and ensure that any "include all fonts" options are on). All editorial items © CAMRA: may be reproduced if source acknowledged. All Advertising images are copyright the respective design sources (Largely CPPR, but all other copyrights and trademarks acknowledged).

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Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for July is the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport. It is perhaps no coincidence that the Crown graces the front cover of *Viaducts & Vaults 3*, the latest CAMRA guide to Stockport's pubs. Its striking location, almost underneath the town's famous landmark railway viaduct, coupled with the pub's deep commitment to quality cask beers, neatly sums up the two themes of the book.

Put simply, the Crown is one of Stockport's foremost cask ale houses with 10 handpumped beers usually available, and accompanied by a cask cider to boot. The house policy is to always have a guest mild available, and more often than not there will be a stout or porter, too. Add in handpumps reserved for guest beers from Whim, Pictish, Phoenix and Bank Top breweries and it is easy to see why the pub has become something of a mecca for many local beer drinkers. Quality goes hand in hand with quantity as well – this is a pub that will never knowingly serve a bad beer.

There's more to the pub than beer, though. The impressive façade leads to a multi-roomed interior retaining many original Victorian features and much of the layout, too. There are front and rear snugs (the latter non-smoking), bar, lounge and pool room. All this is topped off with a large outdoor area which is variously used as a beer garden, music venue and barbecue area – sometimes all at once! Music also plays a large part in the pub's activities with live events several nights a week featuring rock, folk, acoustic and more.

Responsible for this happy state of affairs are Graham and Jeanette Mascord whose dedication to quality runs through every aspect of the Crown's operation and which has gone a long way to make the pub the huge success it is today. This, their second Pub of the Month award at the Crown, will be presented on the evening of Thursday, 24 July. Come along for a great night out. JC.

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

THE ARBITER

Those Difficult Questions of Pub & Drinking Etiquette Answered by Manchester's Leading Beer Fashionista

Will be replacing the BeerMonster™ in August while he is in retreat

CONTRIBUTORS TO OPENING TIMES 231:
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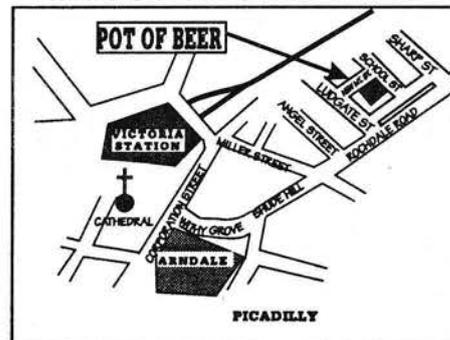
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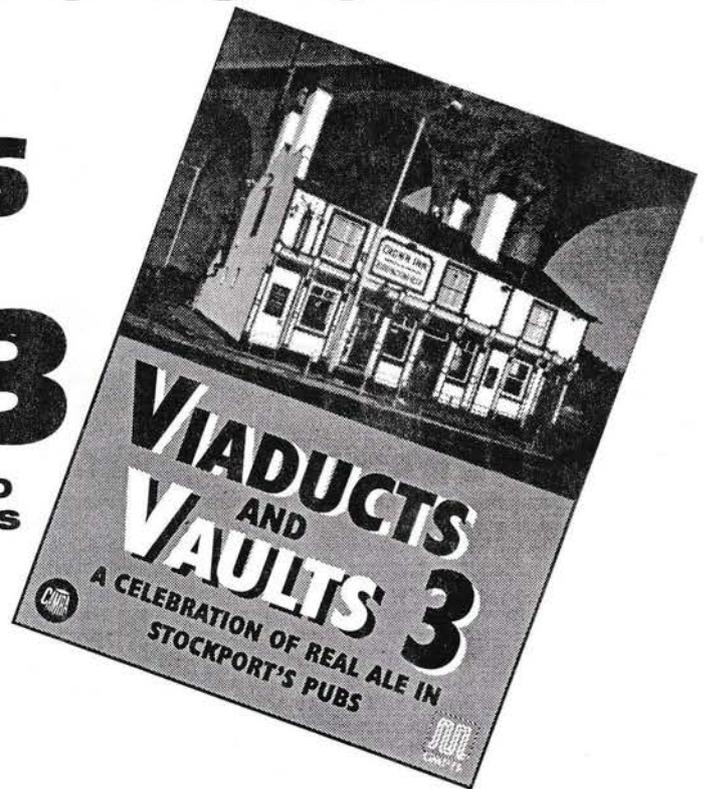
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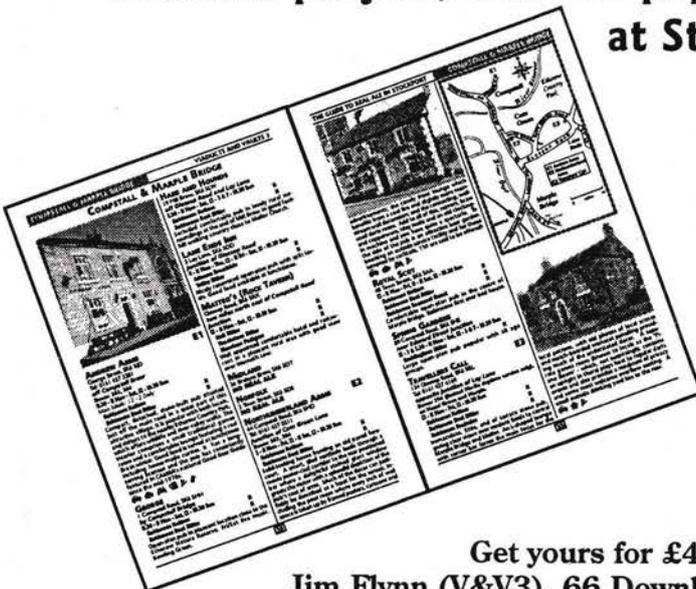
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The Davenport Arms, Woodford.

As Stockport is mainly an urban area with few real country pubs it's a pleasant surprise that among the handful is one of the very best.

Better known to many as the "Thief's Neck", the Davenport Arms externally has the aspect of an old-fashioned Cheshire farmhouse, built of mellow red brick and surrounded by rambling outbuildings. Impressive floral displays in the summer add to the bucolic feel.



Inside, the pub has kept its small cosy rooms – on the left is a plain but welcoming tap room while on the right is a comfortable snug where children are welcome at lunchtimes (there's a special children's menu at £2.85). This is now also a no-smoking room, which has proved a very popular feature. To the rear of the pub is a combined large/bar area where drinkers tend to cluster thickly around the counter, although the efficient service means that this is rarely a problem. The atmosphere is firmly traditional with no piped music, apart from perhaps the radio being played at low volume at quiet times, no pool table, and three blazing real fires in winter (inevitably accompanied by a glass or two of Old Tom).

The Davenport Arms was acquired by Robinson's in the 1920s and since then the licence has been held by four successive generations of the Hallworth family, a record of continuity which is unique in the Stockport area. Not surprisingly, good, mostly home-made food is served at lunchtimes, with traditional staples complemented by some more adventurous dishes. So it was when myself and the Busman called in mid-June.

There's a set menu accompanied by one or two blackboard specials – today these were quiche and a beef & mushroom pie, both of which were tempting. The main menu runs the usual gamut of pub food from starters (soup £2.20; pate £2.30, prawn cocktail £3.75), snacks (sandwiches, toasted or otherwise) and a range of main meals. I was tempted by the home-made Steak & Kidney, but this had sadly run out, alongside the other choices including salads, home-made pies (cheese & onion, steak, chicken & mushroom, pork), pate & toast, rump steak, dim sum with home-made sweet & sour dip or a mixed grill, this at £5.95. All come with a choice of potatoes, vegetables or salad.

The Busman beat me to the beef & mushroom pie so, after much agonising, I went for the mixed grill. Both proved to be excellent choices. The pie was in fact a large bowl of filling with a puff-pastry top rather than a traditional plate pie but was none the worse for that, with plenty of filling in tasty gravy. Lots of chips and veg made for a filling plateful, which was pronounced tasty and satisfying. Just what a pub meal should be, in fact.

The mixed grill was a snip at £5.95. There was so much on the plate that the chips had to come in a separate dish. All the usual components were there including some particularly fine black pudding, two good quality sausages, mushrooms, chop etc, etc. It was a struggle to finish, so much so that both of us had to pass on the puds, all at £2.25. All very highly recommended.

The pub has been in the Good Beer Guide for 16 years on the trot so this fine food can be washed down with Robinson's ales at their finest. On the day we both went for Hatters, perhaps the perfect lunchtime pint, and here served in the peak of condition. JC The Davenport Arms is at 550 Chester Road, Woodford, close by the bus terminus (service 157 from Manchester, Cheadle, Cheadle Hulme and Bramhall). Phone 0161 439 2435. Food is served 12-2 Sunday-Friday and 12-7 on Saturdays.

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STAGGER

with Peter Edwardson

Reddish and Heaton Chapel

Our April stagger on the Thursday before Good Friday took us to the Reddish and Heaton Chapel area. In recent years, Reddish has seen a sharp decline in the availability of real ale, with five of the nine pubs no longer stocking the proper stuff. The result of this is that instead of starting at the north end of the district at the Bull's Head, this crawl now kicked off more than half a mile further south at the Fir Tree on the junction of Gorton Road and Longford Road West. This is a large, free-standing 1950s pub where the interior has been largely gutted to become a "Mr Q's" pool lounge, although there is also a small vault. It was fairly busy when we called, not surprisingly with a mainly young clientele. The only real ale was Tetley Bitter, which was felt to be in fairly poor condition.

A long walk down Gorton Road and past the keg-only Houldsworth Arms in the centre of Reddish brought us to the Thatched Tavern, tucked away off the main roads on Stanhope Street. This is a traditional street-corner local, with a lounge, vault and a small snug at the apex of the two streets. As it is the only cask mild in Reddish we all went for the Tetley Mild, which was pretty good. Tetley Bitter and Boddingtons Bitter (very popular in this establishment) were also available, although from the lounge side the only handpump visible was for the latter.

We then changed direction and headed west to the Grey Horse on Broadstone Road. This is a large redbrick pub with the year 1909 in the stone detailing over the door. Formerly a Boddingtons house, it is now owned by Enterprise Inns. We headed for the spacious but quiet lounge, where memories of the 1980s were brought back by the strains of Laura Branigan singing "Self Control". Whatever happened to Laura Branigan, I wonder. Equipment was being set up for live entertainment later in the evening. The only real ale available was Boddingtons Bitter, which was OK.

We doubled back a short distance to our half-way meeting place, the Union, also on Broadstone Road. This is a smaller pub than the Grey Horse which was modernised by Robinson's a few years back in their then typical bland house style, but which seems to have mellowed in the intervening period. It retains a number of distinct areas and was noticeably busier than the previous pub. Again just the one real ale - Robinson's Best Bitter, which was comfortably above average.

A long walk then followed down Broadstone Road to our next pub, the George & Dragon on the corner of Manchester Road in Heaton Chapel. This is a very large pub with one of the most impressive exteriors in Stockport. Now owned by Scottish & Newcastle, it has been extensively altered to give what is basically a single room interior, but with distinctly different characters at the lounge and vault ends, and a few raised seating areas to give a little more privacy. It was by far the busiest pub of the night so far, and clearly popular with customers of all ages. Alongside the standard Boddingtons Bitter was a guest beer - Charles Wells Bombardier, which we all tried and found to be in pretty good nick.



Another longish walk down Manchester Road brought us to the Hind's Head. While this has the appearance of a half-timbered Cheshire farmhouse it is actually a relatively new pub built on the site of the former Poco a Poco nightclub. Inside it goes for a more up-market atmosphere than the other Heaton Chapel pubs with a spacious lounge and a separate dining area serving some well-regarded food. It was packed inside, but on a mild night we were able to find a seat in the outside drinking area. This pub had the widest selection of real ales encountered so far, including Taylor's Landlord, Morland Old Speckled Hen and John Smith's Cask. Most of us went for the guest beer, Caledonian Deuchars IPA, which was very good indeed, while one person chose the Marston's Pedigree which was of similar standard. The only criticism of the beer was that it was perhaps a little too cold.

Just over the railway bridge is the Ash Hotel, another monumental red-brick building. After becoming very run-down in recent years, this pub has recently been given a thorough refurbishment, making it much smarter than before but to my mind having a rather awkward layout. The lounge features a mock fireplace in a fake wall that finishes a couple of feet below the ceiling. There was a lively atmosphere here, too, with a disco in progress. Boddingtons Bitter is the standard beer, and seems very popular with the locals, but there is usually a guest too, tonight Ryburn Best Bitter, which we all chose. Opinions were divided on this, but this was probably down to the intrinsic unusual character of the beer rather than cellarman'ship.

Passing the keg-only Three Crowns we came to the final stop of the evening, the Navigation at the top of Lancashire Hill. Much has been written about this multi-award winning pub, so suffice to say that the beer and the welcome were both of the expected very high standard. We tried three of the Beartown beers - the Ambeardextrous and Kodiak Gold were both good, and the Black Bear was excellent and comfortably qualified as the best beer of the night. So we ended a very interesting evening's drinking on a high note.

As ever, these are only the impressions of a particular group of people on one specific night. Why not try the pubs for yourself and see what you think?



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OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From A Regular, Hazel Grove (name & address supplied) I am writing to tell you about Steve and Judy Knowles, the new tenants of the Royal Oak, Commercial Road, Hazel Grove. Since they moved in last December from the Grove Inn, they have cleaned the place up and what a transformation. They have painted and decorated, put in new lighting in the lounge, new curtains and photos and 19th Century transport and buildings, I could go on and on.

I am not a Robbies drinkers, only top shelf because of my health - just two brandies. Just thought you would like to know about the pub.

(Thanks for the update - apologies to the pub for not giving this a mention earlier - Ed(1))

From: David Fraser, Warrington:

I have read with interest Curmudgeon's article about smoking-v-non-smoking in the June issue of Opening Times and would like to add my comments.

I seriously believe that when the Irish Republic adopts a national no-smoking policy in all bars and restaurants, there will be a serious downturn in business - in the short term. After a short period of readjustment, there will be grudging acceptance, followed by horror when the Irish walk into a bar or restaurant outside the republic where smoking is still allowed - just as happened in California and will doubtless happen in New York.

Not all non-smokers are "fastidiously" concerned about health - I am a case in point and enjoy my pints with the best, but I can assure you that I don't care tuppence for what others want to do to their bodies. Nonetheless, as an asthmatic I don't see why I should have to suffer because of it - and believe me I do! There is another school of thought in that not all non-smokers like the fact that second-hand smoke leaves everyone's clothes smelling of stale tobacco.

I agree that it is sheer fantasy to believe that there are vast numbers of non-smokers who would otherwise go to the pub. What is omitted is that there is a vast number of non-smokers who consciously walk past pubs where there is no area designated for non-smokers, and because they can't find a decent pub with real ale that is within walking distance, they go home instead. I have seen and been a party to that myself. I am not at all in favour of banning smoking completely in bars that rely almost entirely on wet trade, but where food is served and is the main source of income, I really do feel that a smoking ban is appropriate.

On a point of location, can anyone explain why it's always necessary to pass through the smoking area to reach non-smoking? And why is the smoking area always between the non-smoking and the bar? Surely it would be possible to make the non-smoking area accessible without passing smokers, and as almost all pubs have a "no smoking at the bar" policy, why not have the no-smoking area between the bar and the smokers? Or is that just a tad too radical?

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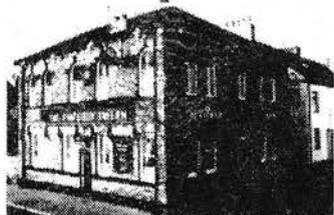
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& DARK MILD IN CASK**



National Notes



Coors Brewers has introduced the first of a series of new seasonal ales. This is St Modwen, a 4.2% bitter produced at the Museum Brewing Company, based at the Coors' Museum (previously known at the Bass Museum) in Burton, and now renamed the White Shield Brewery. Head brewer Steve Wellington describes the beer as "a thirst quenching blend of wheat and White Shield's traditional pale ale malts, balanced by the fresh, zesty punch of Centennial and Cascade hops". It sounds rather good, and will be available from 14 July for six weeks to 'trial accounts', which probably means it will take some seeking out. Coors have confirmed that other new beers are promised and these will also go out under the White Shield Brewery label. St Modwen, by the way, is a seventh century nun who is credited with unearthing Burton's special brewing water.

This month should also see a new beer from Wolves & Dudley (WDB). This is Marston's Old Empire India Pale Ale brewed to the high gravity of traditional pale ales, in this case 5.7% ABV. The term IPA has indeed been much abused in recent years. As WDB's Alistair Derby says "Today, IPA is descriptive of standard ale whereas traditionally they were always high strength, high quality and never three per cent glugging ales". This new beer is much hoppier and true to type, with ingredients selected to help achieve a degree of authenticity. The beer has already been out in bottle but from the middle of this month should be on bars as a cask ale.

Family Brewers

Look out for new beers from all our family brewers this month as the next batch of seasonal ales come on stream.

Robinson's have produced Northern Glory, which appeared last year as Stadium Bitter. Already selling well in the USA as a bottled beer, this is a refreshing beer with good hop character underpinning a slightly malty body. Lees meanwhile, are bringing back the ever-popular Scorchers,

a 4.2% light, golden beer with a superb hop finish. It's a perfect beer for summer and remains one of their best seasonal ales.



HYDES Hydes have one, or possibly two, beers out this month. The first is the latest in their 'Fine Beers in the Making' range of craft ales and is Rack 'n' Ruin, a 4.1% beer described as "created with only the freshest homemade finings this tawny tone beer has been crafted with three hop varieties resulting in a crisp, refreshing ale for summer." Look for it in many Hydes' pubs. The other beer is something of an enigma at the moment. In early June there was a report in the trade press that Hydes were brewing their 4.7% bottled 'Manchester's Finest' as a cask ale for the first time and would be released on draught "as the ...seasonal ale for June and November". We were still awaiting for confirmation of this as we went to press - anyone out there seen it?

Holt's still have Edwards out and this seasonal ale brewed with a touch of honey continues to get good reviews. The next seasonal still hasn't got a name, but it is believed that the name will be chosen to highlight the association Holts have with the Radium Institute, Christie's Hospital and the Patterson Institute at Withington.

Micro Magic

Here's our latest round-up of the happenings at some of our local micros. As ever, apologies to those we didn't manage to contact. If you are a local micro news is always welcome - e-mail to johnclarke@stocam.u-net.com.



Bazens' - the next seasonal beer in the astrological theme is 'Scuttler', representing Cancer the crab. This is a very pale 4% brew brewed using a single varietal hop, this time Cascade. The end of the month will see the Leo beer - details and name not yet decided as we went to press. Cliff Bier, the joint brew with Facers' sold very well, so this 5.2% cask lager will be brewed again and released to the trade in mid-August. Bazens' will in fact be celebrating its first anniversary on August 15.

Boggart Hole Clough - recent beers have included Silver (4.5%) and Boggart Ale (4.8%) along with the mighty Rocket Fuel, aptly named at 14%, yes that's fourteen per cent! The aim was to sell this mainly as a bottled beer although



GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL

Held at London Olympia every year, the Great British Beer Festival is Britain's biggest beer festival and has much to offer you. Why not catch up with friends or unwind after work with a good quality pint? There is also live entertainment and music, traditional pub games and a fine selection of food including many pub favourites. Drop in and enjoy all the fun at the Great British Beer Festival from 5th-9th August.

The festival brings together the widest beer range from around the country with a handpicked selection of over 700 real ales, ciders and perries. Our enthusiastic bar staff are also happy to advise you on the wide-ranging international choice of beers and real lagers including beer from Germany, Belgium, Italy, USA, Russia and the Czech Republic.

Cider drinkers will find a wide choice of real ciders on offer at the Real Cider and Perry Bar and there is also a large range of bottled real ales for you to enjoy at the Bottled Beer Bar. There are dozens of different bars at the festival and you will find many of your favourites as well as some of the newest beers available. What's more, to truly appreciate the tastes on offer, you could attend one of our tutored beer tastings hosted by our international team of beer experts.

CAMRA welcomes families to the festival and provides a Family Room with entertainers and games which is open until 9pm every night. Children must be supervised by a family member at all times. You can also bring along your work colleagues as we provide corporate hospitality, please visit the festival website, www.gbbf.org for further details or telephone CAMRA on 01727 867201.

2002 saw a record 44,000 visitors from around the country through the door over five days. Between them they downed 200,000 pints as well as bottled beers, cider, perry, and a selection from our international beer bar. Visitors enjoy the unique festival atmosphere and nearly 90% of visitors rated the festival as excellent or good.

The Great British Beer Festival is open every day from Tuesday 5th August to Saturday 9th August and full details of opening times, prices and live music can be found at www.gbbf.org or on our Information Line 0900 525 2525 (calls to this number cost 60p per minute). Tickets can be booked online or by telephoning 01727 867201; discounts are available for CAMRA members. Remember to leave your car at home as London Olympia is easily reached by public transport.

Thrills & spills
At the
Great British Beer Festival



London Olympia
5th-9th August 2003
www.gbbf.org



demand for draught was such that very little ended up in bottle. This month sees the appearance of the rather more manageable Sunset, a 3.7% pale, fruity, easy-drinking beer.

Facer's - there have been one or two new beers recently. Crabtree 1639 (4.3%) is named after a local astronomer and the year in which he recorded the transit of Venus across the sun. The new seasonal is JAS, a 3.9% pale and hoppy beer. The name is an acronym for July-August-September, the months when it will be available.

Greenfield - continues to do well with sales double the planned target. Two recent beers have been Delph Donkey, a 4.1% light gold beer with citrus overtones, and Brassed Off, a 4.4% brew. Two new beers will be produced for the Saddleworth Rushcart celebrations, one will be about 4.5% but other than details have not yet been finalised.



Khean - Congelton's 'other' brewer is still going strong. Village Green is selling well and a recent new beer has been Fine Leg, a 4.2% traditional bitter, not as pale as some of the other Khean beers. This beer is also being supplied to next month's Great British Beer Festival **Mayflower** - this Standish, Wigan, based micro has lost its premises. Brewing has temporarily ceased and the plant is in storage pending relocation.

Phoenix - work continues on the brewery which has had little major repair work since the old Phoenix Brewery was taken over in 1937. This work is going to put the brewery temporarily off-line so stocks of all the regular beers are being built up to maintain supplied during this brief interruption. Next month sees the opening of the restored East Lancs Heywood station, just across the road from the brewery, which gives rise to all sorts of interesting possibilities for beers and rail associated events. OT intends to run a major feature on Phoenix when the work is complete.



Pictish - this month's new beer is Siren, a welcome return of this 4.1% clear wheat beer. This naturally spicy beer is subtly augmented with coriander seeds and orange peel to give a refreshingly different flavour - and of course the trademark Pictish hoppy finish. Also out now is the award-winning Summer Solstice, a 4.7% crisp refreshing blonde ale that won Beer of the Festival at Stockport two years ago.

Porter - Rossendale's Porter Brewing recently celebrated its 1000th brew. Two special beers were produced to mark this event. Brew 999 was FFD, a 4.4% version of the popular Floral Dance. This was a superb beer - let's hope Dave Porter make's it a reasonable regular part of his portfolio. Brew 1000 had to be special, and it was. A 6.5% version of the already powerful Sunshine, really made its mark with the strong alcohol balanced by a complex hoppiness. Wonderful stuff.



Ramsbottom - Old Ground Mild (3.8%) was voted beer of the festival at The Three Moles beer festival in W.Suffolk in the weekend of the 21 June. This micro is producing some seriously good beer - Opening Times hopes to visit in time for next month's issue. It's run by Paul Robinson and his wife who were previously managers at the Hare & Hounds, Otterspool, where they reintroduced cask ale in the form of Bank Top and Coach House beers.

If any micro-brewers without a logo in this article (or their friends) have logos or pumpclips stored in electronic form (tif, jpeg etc) please e-mail to beermonstertm@lineone.net. If hard copy is available send to Ed(1) at the address on page 2. Thanks.

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BEER NEEDS TO SHOUT LOUDER

Call for Higher Profile for Brewing

Shepherd Neame boss Jonathan Neame has gone on the offensive in a drive to win more recognition for beer.

Mr Neame, who is managing director of the Kent family brewer, says British brewers produce some of the best beer in the world, and the industry should be publicly celebrating the fact.

He told 450 members of the Brewing, Food & Beverage Suppliers Association annual lunch that during the 1990s the industry had focussed on pubs and retailing. Food, wine, staff training and investment in the physical surroundings had been top priority.

"But where was beer on the agenda?" he said. "It was too often taken for granted, too often passed over."

"For the voice of beer to be heard properly, it may to shout louder than it has in the past."

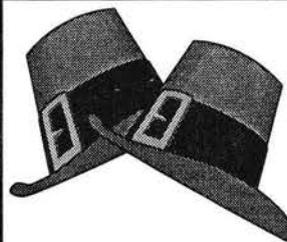
Mr Neame said there were many hurdles to cross in revitalising the beer market, one of which was its negative image. "The beer belly, football hooliganism, high street violence - we are trying to sell a lifestyle, and who wants their lifestyle to be characterised in that way?" he said.

He added that the industry's efforts to win greater appreciation for the nation's brewing heritage should not be confined to cask beer alone. "We must overcome the presumption that cask beer is inviolate and unchangeable," he said. "I adore cask beer, and enjoy it every day. But let us celebrate the diversity of all beer styles - keg, smooth, lager - and ensure that the new generation of drinkers choose malt-based drinks over grape-based."

Mr Neame returned to his theme at the reopening of Shepherd Neame's latest addition to its London tied estate, the Duke of York in the Borough formerly the Goose & Firkin.

"To many pubs have become little more than wine bars or restaurants," he said. "Britain has one of the world's great beer traditions, and it's about time brewers and retailers put beer back at the very centre of everything they do and encouraged drinkers to increase their knowledge and enjoyment of different types of beer."

"The Belgians do it - so should we."



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CAMRA Trafford & Hulme Inaugural Pub of the Season Award

Orange Tree Bears Fruit

The Trafford & Hulme branch of CAMRA has introduced a Pub of the Season award, for the first time in many years. A recent branch meeting decided that the most worthy recipient of the inaugural award, for Summer 2003, will be the Orange Tree in Altrincham.

The award is in recognition of the exemplary efforts made by licensees Andy and Sue to promote cask ale, most notably in staging their first ever Beer Festival last March. Beer festivals are not unknown in pubs and some, like the Crescent in Salford, make a habit of running them several times a year. But they are risky in financial terms, they make extra demands on staff, and they take a lot of the licensee's time to plan and organise. In fact, it's so much easier for pubs to keep doing the same old thing that we felt we couldn't let the achievement go unrecognised.

Andy and Sue have been at the Orange Tree now for nearly three years. Cask ale isn't something new there, but it is something they've been promoting and beer sales are up as a result. This is despite the handicap of a tiny cellar - the pub you see now is several eighteenth century buildings that have been joined up and adapted over many years. Not to mention the alleged presence of two ghosts, one in the cellar and one upstairs - they're described in a newspaper article displayed by the bar.

Also on display is the Wilsons Brewery Shrine. This is a glazed alcove near the main entrance featuring handpumps, bar towels, beer mats, ash trays and all kinds of memorabilia with the famous chequerboard logo of this late lamented Manchester brewery. The pub now belongs to the Unique Pub Company (part of Scottish & Newcastle) but is leased to a much smaller operator, Back Tracks UK, who also have the Bowling Green in Stockport. Beer supply is tied to S&N but there is a very wide ranging beer list to choose from. Drawn up in partnership with SIBA (the Society of Independent Brewers), the "Quarterly Ales Selector" offers three dozen beers each quarter. The current one covers most of Britain with the likes of Hexhamshire Devil's Elbow and Kelham Island Pale Rider. The Orange Tree usually has three cask ales, Tetley Bitter as the "house" beer and two guests (Charles Wells Bombardier is a particular favourite of the regulars).

It's not an especially quiet pub but it certainly doesn't go in for loud booming music. The cheerful atmosphere and the uncommon smoke-free back room make it an attractive meeting place for all sorts of people. And it's also the home of the "Ticker Club" - not collectors of novelty beers, as you might suppose, but a bunch of people raising funds for heart transplant patients. Food is served at lunchtimes (12 till 3 on weekdays, 12 till 5 on Sundays).

Our inaugural Pub of the Season award will be presented during the evening of Wednesday 30th July. We will be assembling at the Orange Tree from about 8 o'clock onwards - do join us if you can!

Oh yes - and there's going to be another Beer Festival very soon. Andy and Sue hope to make it a regular event.

MICRO U-26

On a sunny Saturday, over a dozen of CAMRA U-26 members and guests from Wigan, Bury, Hyde, Stockport, Salford and Manchester gathered for the Microbrewery Tap Minibus Crawl. Dave Hallows was with them...

First call was the Lord Raglan in Nangreaves, the home of Leyden beers. Along with Light Brigade, Nanny Flyer, Forever Bury and Crowning Glory, there was Picador. This drank like a stout - dark and only 3.6%. Bar food was ordered: Cumberland sausage or steak and onions on a barm, prawn sandwiches, chillies, etc, all served with chips and side salad. Big portions for £4.45 to just over a fiver. We sat outside at the back in order to contemplate the view over to Pendle. Terry Leyden gave us a whistle-stop tour of the two small rooms which make up the tiny brewhouse at the back of the pub. It had to be a quick visit as we were behind time and the pub was busy! I was trip organiser, so there was no way we weren't going to the Griffin Inn, the home of Porter's Brewery in Haslingden. This is my favourite brewery and it was no surprise to me that I had to wrench everyone out of the pub. After all, this is the home of beers such as Sunshine, Rossendale Ale and Porter's Porter, to name but a few. Dave Porter's creations never taste finer than in the Griffin (*I like the Railway - Ed(1)*).

Time was pressing and we had to get to the Cask & Feather in the centre of Rochdale and the home of the McGuinness Brewery. Between us we tried all of the card - Feather Plucker Mild, Best Bitter, Junction Bitter and Tommy Todd's Porter.



A happy group of young imbibers

Some of the party would clearly have been happy to stay at the McGuinness Brewery tap, but we had to set off for Uppermill and the Church Inn, home of the Saddleworth Brewery. Inside and out, the pub was very busy, with others taking advantage of the fine weather like us.

As we placed our orders, the bar ran out of the special St Georges Bitter (4.4%) and the Saddleworth Bitter! The staff said it would

take half an hour to put some more on and they were up to their eyeballs with customers. Most of us had the Bert Corner Bitter (4%), which was excellent - straw coloured and with a surprisingly smoky taste. Each handpump is now bar coded and each member of the bar staff has a bar coding gun to mark up orders. The supermarket comes to the pub, so to speak. Will Wetherspoons catch on? The outside seating area at the back is a meadow, with a fine collection of wildfowl and peacocks in the adjoining enclosure. Again we had to tear ourselves away to get to the last pub - the Marble Arch. Between us we sampled all the Marble Brewery beers. N4 was amusing, Lagonda was luscious, Ginger was bitingly dry, Cloudy Marble was again not cloudy and, once more, the Manchester Bitter was magnificent.

There are CAMRA Under 26 events throughout the year - especially in term-time.



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Themes and Brands

So the gurus and propeller-heads of market research organisation Mintel have spent their millions and told us what we could see with our own eyes, the days of the themed or 'branded' pub are numbered. No less than one hundred of the Scruffy-Oz-Springbok-O'Neills emporia have either shut their doors for good, or changed back into traditional pubs (the much lamented King and Keys on London's Fleet Street - it had been a Scruffys - being but one example).

"More women are going to bars, and there is a new trend towards minimalism or post modern eclecticism, neither of which fits well with theming!" says Mintel's senior liesure analyst Pat Ashton. That and the fact that the last mini-baby-boomers are growing older and have outgrown the novelty. Yes the population is ageing, and we wrinklies are not really welcome in the themed pubs. Wetherspoon saw this early, and whilst the majority of their establishments are anodyne boxes, they are full of crinklies in the day time, and yooof at night. They've all got money to spend. Getting too 'niche' can be self defeating, as the high turnover of trendy or pink bars tends to illustrate.

De-Branding

So a big welcome back to Bar Fringe on Swan Street, newly liberated from the Marble Empire, and restored to its full idiosyncratic independence with Charlie running the place under the largely benign eye of owner John Henley. The Fringe was never fully integrated into the Marble Group, and it always seemed an awkward fit. The group however retains the Knott Bar, which is definitely much improved since it became part of Marble, the Marble Arch itself (with the brewery and James Campbell's excellent beers) and the Bar and Marble Beerhouse in Chorlton. All well worth visiting if you're unfamiliar with any of them. John says the split was as amicable as can be expected (!) and wishes Vance, their staff and pubs every success. I suspect we may see a few changes in the Fringe in the next six months, but neither Charlie nor Martina's (nor the Jukebox's) volume will probably be amongst them. And a good thing too.

Absent Friends

Well, me, actually. I'm taking a break in August, though I might contribute a book review, but I should be back in September or October, with another pub of the season award. While I'm away investigating the carbohydrate content of foreign beers, my friend



the Arbiter will make his long heralded return answering important questions of pub etiquette. Before I go, Ed (1) has prevailed upon me to include this photo of some very fat person

presenting the BeerMonster™ Summer Award to Len at the Boundary last month during the Beer Festival. (Len's the fairly slim one on the right). Very good it was too (the Festival!).

Hals und bienbruck!

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IN BAR FRINGE"**

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BRITAIN'S TRUE HERITAGE PUBS FEATURE IN NEW 'NATIONAL INVENTORY'

Consumers call for more recognition and protection for pubs with outstanding historical interiors

Of over 60,000 pubs in the UK, a mere 250 have interiors of outstanding heritage interest. The huge majority of pubs have undergone drastic alterations in recent years and less than 4% have retained features of historic significance.

The 'National Inventory' (of outstanding historic pub interiors) was released this month by CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. It features 205 pubs with exceptional historic interiors and a further 43 pubs with particular internal features of national historic importance.

Dave Gamston, Chairman of CAMRA's Pub Heritage Group and Editor of the National Inventory said, "CAMRA fully appreciates that pubs have to survive in the real world of commercial pressures, adapting their business to modern needs, but all too often these pressures have led to 'change for change's sake', with wide-scale loss of historic internal features. Less than 1/2% of the national pub stock remains unspoilt enough to be worthy of CAMRA's National Inventory, and holding on to these treasures is now a major conservation challenge. The National Inventory is about raising awareness of the problem with politicians, local authorities, pub companies and fellow consumers. It's also about celebrating the best of the pub heritage we have left".

The third edition of the National Inventory has been painstakingly compiled by CAMRA's Pub Heritage Group. It includes pubs from across the UK including Northern Ireland. Pubs are selected purely for their internal physical fabric and things such as beer quality or 'atmosphere' are not considered.

<Local Authority Action Needed

A large number of National Inventory pubs are in statutorily 'listed' buildings - most of them at Grade II, which means their safeguarding is essentially entrusted to local planning authorities. In the past, local planning authorities have not always exercised their control powers with the same force to the insides as to the outsides of listed pub buildings, and this has contributed to the loss of many valuable pub interiors.

Not all historic pubs qualify for statutory listing, but they could benefit from inclusion in 'local lists' of the kind some local authorities already operate. CAMRA is calling for all local authorities to establish such lists, which can play a major part in influencing local planning policies and raising awareness about locally-important historic buildings, including pubs. CAMRA believes that, at the

present time, only about a third of local authorities choose to maintain such lists.

Dr. Geoff Brandwood, CAMRA and English Heritage Pubs Caseworker said, "Many pubs have interiors which are simple and unsophisticated and do not qualify for statutory listing, yet they are still of value to the people who use them and help to define the sense of local community. The local list initiative holds promise as a vehicle for protecting valuable local pubs and their historic interiors so that future generations can enjoy them".

Government Review

This review is widely expected to place greater emphasis on character assessment of localities, understanding what makes them special and the value local people attach to them, and through this process achieve greater engagement with local communities and their heritage.

Dr. Brandwood said, "Pubs need to be a central part of this process and CAMRA's National Inventory can be an important reference for planners and decision-makers in understanding which are the key historic pub buildings in a given locality".

A recent report from English Heritage has highlighted a shortage of resources within local planning authorities for dealing with the historic environment.

The report shows that 15% of authorities have no Conservation Officer posts at all and three-quarters of conservation areas have no adopted character assessments. The report also found the influence of Conservation Officers within planning departments to be generally low.

Referring to the Government's policy document of December 2001 ('The Historic Environment: A Force for our Future') Dave Gamston said, "The Government is placing great importance upon conservation issues and character assessments in local planning. Yet there seems to be no plan at all to provide the necessary resources for planning authorities to action what is preached. Things clearly need to change if building conservation at the local level is to stand a chance of being successful".

NATIONAL INVENTORY PUBS IN THE OPENING TIMES AREA

Altrincham: Railway, Broadheath - small Victorian working-man's pub with original rooms and bar lobby

Bollington: Holly Bush, Palmerston Street - largely intact, small 1930s pub with impressive panelling and bar fittings.

Gawsworth: Harrington Arms, Church Lane - unspoilt rural public house part of a working farm.

Gorton: Plough, Hyde Road - unaltered plan and impressive fittings from 1893 remodelling

Heaton Norris: Nursery, Green Lane - superbly intact multi-room pub from 1939

Macclesfield: Castle, Churchwallgate - small C19 town pub with four varied rooms and fine, decoared ceiling in lounge.

Manchester City Centre: Briton's Protection, Great Bridgewater Street - Good c1930 interior, tiling and leaded glass of note.

Manchester City Centre: Circus Tavern, Portland Street - tiny and narrow with partitioned interior. A classic.

Manchester City Centre: Hare & Hounds, Shudehill - intact 1930s interior with most fittings intact. Tiled throughout.

Manchester City Centre: Marble Arch, Rochdale Road (Appendix entry) - superb tiled interior with frieze and mosaic floor.

Manchester City Centre: Mr Thomas's, Cross Street - beautifully preserved design scheme of 1901; extensive tiling.

Manchester City Centre: Peveril of the Peak, Great Bridgewater Street - preserved rich tilework, panelling and bar-screens from remodelling c1900.

Stalybridge: Grosvenor, Grosvenor Street - intact 1930s remodelling

Stalybridge: Station Buffet (Appendix entry) - original surviving buffet bar (one of only three nationally)

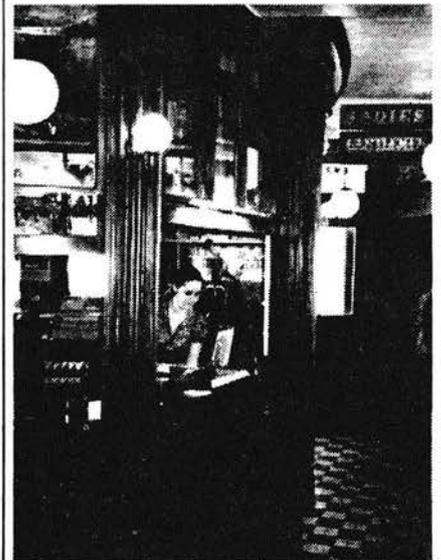
Stockport: Alexandra, Northgate Road - intact from 1911 with fine tiling and decorative glass.

Stockport: Arden Arms, Millgate - possibly one of the earliest surviving Victorian interiors with snug accessed through bar.

Stockport: Bishop Blaize, Lower Hillgate - remodelled c1930 and largely unchanged.

Stockport: Queens Head, Little Underbank - early 19th century character, fittings and layout preserved in 1980s remodelling.

Stockport: Swan With Two Necks, Princes Street - beautifully preserved c1930 interior with intact layout and fittings.



Interior of the Arden Arms, Stockport



JULY FEATURED PUB

The Globe, Glossop

This month's featured pub is the Globe on High Street West, Glossop, the most important real ale outlet that has opened in the town since the Gloveworks, some four years ago. Bought by Diana Virgo and Ron Brookes in April 2002, it was formerly selling keg beer only but most importantly, was the home to a local music club, the Lift Global Music Club with which Diana and Ron were involved. They had spent many happy evenings upstairs in the concert room being involved in the world wide music for which the 'Lift' Club has been well known for locally. When it was put on the market, it seemed the obvious solution to buy it, rather than look elsewhere for their concert venues.

Many music fans in the area are likening it to the Witchwood in Ashton, with its varied and plentiful live music but those who know it a little more, would argue that it is more select and upmarket, catering for a more sophisticated music lover. A typical week at the Globe then, starts on Monday with an increasingly busy folk/jam session that goes as wide as Old English, Acoustic, Irish, ballads, foot tapping and French Medieval as well as jolly folk music with musicians playing instruments such as the Mandolin, fiddle, bodhran, penny whistle, bouzouki, hurdy gurdy as well as varying guitars.

Since Diana & Ron have very much a 'hands on' approach at the pub (they are always around either on the bar, in the kitchen, cellar, socialising or organising something), Tuesday is their day off and the pub remains shut (but they do all the 1001 other jobs that running a busy pub entails).

Wednesday evening has evolved from a local jazz pianist in the bar but as the weeks go on, various others turn up, saxophone player, percussion players etc. and it is ever building.

On Thursday, Robin Sunflower hosts Quack Night, a jam night of tunes and improvisations ranging from Duke Ellington and Bob Marley to Lennon & McCartney. Weekly guests can include the Woodbank Street Band, Victor Brox, Sons of Arqa and others and all are welcome to join in. Friday sees varying DJ's (at an ambient volume) playing varied music from around the globe, and from varying eras, 60's, etc, whilst upstairs there is a band playing, could be an indie band, rhythm & blues, rock & roll, in fact absolutely anything. Saturday is a gig organised by the Lift Club normally each fortnight, with a gig alternate weeks similar to Fridays.

July is a most important month however, The weekend of 11th-13th, it is the Lift Annual Festival of music, this years bookings so far are Urban Poison on the Friday, Nick Harper and Darren Poyser on Saturday and there are gigs all day and night on the Sunday, with Funky Do Das, Moqsha, Finka & Unknown. After all this about the music, what about the beer you may be asking?

The pub began with two handpumps but has gradually increased to seven as trade has increased. Beers from J W Lees, Abbeydale, Kelham Island and more recently Ossett are regulars but all the range of beers these breweries produce are tried in their turn, even a mild is often an option, with Fat Cat Mild from Kelham Island making fairly regular recent appearances. There is also a very good selection of bottled beers that seem popular with the locals. For those going upstairs to watch a band, two handpumps are in use at weekends.

I must not leave out the restaurant. Paula Holland, the chef runs the food side of things, everything being organic, reflecting again the Global theme, with food - all vegetarian and vegan - from all over the world. The menu is highly thought of locally, even the chips start off as whole potatoes being peeled (no oven chips allowed in the building!). Food can be served in the separate restaurant or in the bar and is available 7-9pm Monday, and Wednesday-Friday, and 1-9pm Saturday and Sunday. A three course meal is extremely good value and could include samosas & salad, home made soup or Hummus & pitta to start, a main vegetarian course including a selection of salads, hot vegetables and potato dish and a variety of sweets such as fruit crumble or lemon cheesecake. The restaurant is child friendly too and non-smoking.

Outside at the rear, is a riverside beer garden/courtyard in the shadow of the local mills and chimneys. Spacious and enclosed, you would never think there was a main road out at the front. Inside, the pub has a lounge and a tap room, with a snug tucked in the middle - or you can stay around the bar area like I do!! Buses stop a few yards away from the Globe and it is a ten-minute walk from Glossop railway station. Alternatively, check out the web sites. www.globemusic.org or www.liftglobal.com. FW.

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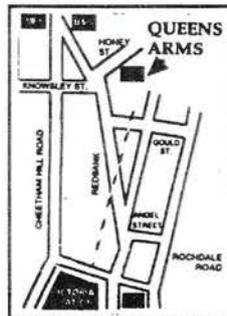
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LOCAL CAMRA PUB of the Month APRIL 2002

Fine Cask Ales including
Boddingtons and Ever Changing
Guest Beers

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

JULY 2003

Thursday 10th - Branch Meeting: Armoury, Shaw Heath, Stockport. **NB - brief meeting will be followed by Summer Quiz - lots of great prizes.**

Monday 14th - Social: Ye Olde Vic, Chatham St, Edgeley. Starts 8.00pm. (By coincidence, this is also the Branch Chairman's Birthday...)

Friday 18th - Clayton and Higher Openshaw Stagger: 7.30pm Grove, Ashton New Road, Clayton; 8.45 Legh Arms, Ashton Old Road. Openshaw

Thursday 24th - Pub of the Month presentation: to the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport. From 8.00pm

Saturday 2 August - Regional Pub of the Year Presentation to the Navigation, Lancashire Hill, Stockport. From 8.00pm

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

Monday 7th - Committee Meeting: Lane Ends, Glossop Road, Marple Bridge. Starts 8.30pm

Monday 14th - Branch Meeting: White Hart, Mottram. Starts 8.30pm.



JULY 2003

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:

Saturday 26th - Sunday 27th - Beer Festival at Dog Inn, Peover. Details from George Symes 01565 653096

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

Thursday 10th - Wythenshawe social and survey - meet at The Jolly Butcher 7.30pm

Thursday 24th - Social meeting in Chorlton at Lloyds. From 7.30pm

Wednesday 30th - Pub of the Season presentation at The Orange Tree, Altrincham. From 8.00pm

Thursday 14th August - Branch Meeting: Old Market Tavern, Altrincham. Starts 8.00pm

Great British Beer Festival

The Great British Beer Festival is open every day from Tuesday 5th August to Saturday 9th August and full details of opening times, prices and live music can be found at www.gbbf.org or on our Information Line 0900 525 2525 (calls to this number cost 60p per minute). Tickets can be booked online or by telephoning 01727 867201; discounts are available for CAMRA members.

To Do Address Notepad Anniversary CAMRA 93 Planner

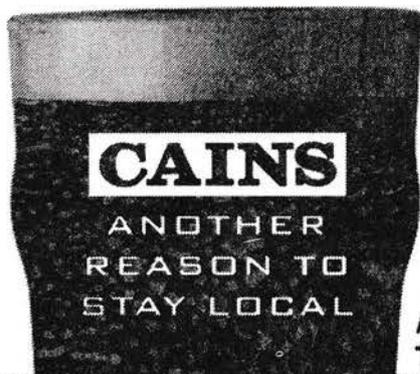
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CAINS

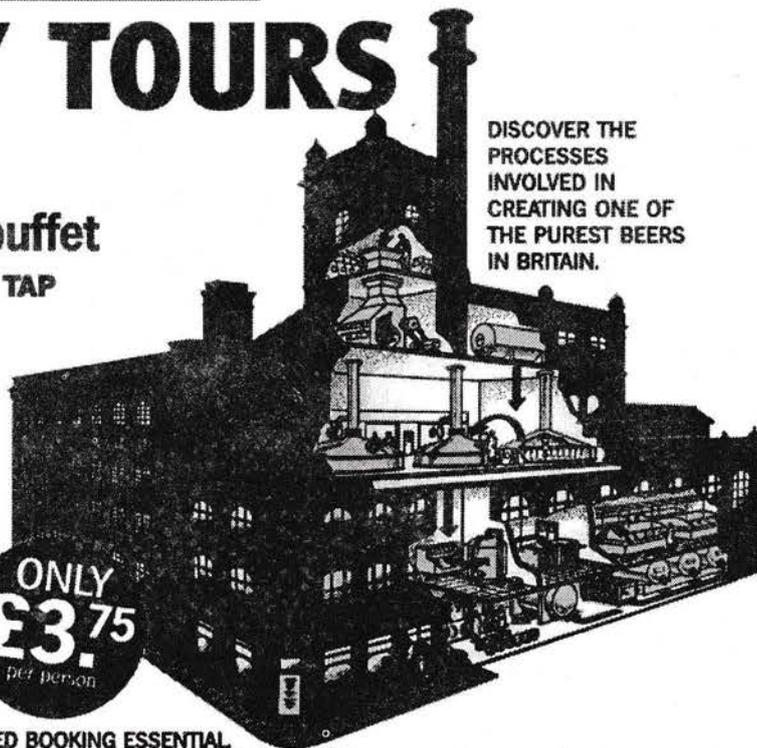
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5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

JULY '98

A A well known advertising slogan at this time was "Great Stuff the Bass", but Opening Times had produced a different front page version - "Stuff The Great Bass". Although described as the second largest brewer in the country, Bass had been through a programme of brewery closures, and now seemed bent on killing demand for at least one of their remaining cask ales by reducing it to a shadow of its former self.

The strength of Stones Biter had come down from 3.9% ABV to 3.8%, the Sheffield brewery was due to close and trial brews were under way in Burton to develop a 3.7% 'match' of the Sheffield beer. Now in 2003, it is perhaps comforting to know that Stones is still around - it's £1.50 a pint in the Unicorn on Church Street, Manchester, together with Tetley, Boddingtons and Draught Bass. The pub itself seems to have changed little over the years and is the headquarters of the Honourable Order of Bass Drinkers.

1998 was the year that CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival came of age - 21 years old, the biggest beer festival in the UK, and with a larger variety of beers on sale than the famous Munich Beer Festival. Another statistic - 1,000 volunteers from all over the country serving a quarter of a million pints. The Festival started off in Alexandra Palace in North London, where it stayed for a few years until the place burnt down in 1980. Then it was two years in Leeds' Queens Hall (a former tram shed), then one year in Bingley Hall, Birmingham (which burnt down in 1984), three years in Brighton, back to Leeds, and a fill-in year in Brighton, followed by the 1991 festival held at the Docklands Arena. 1992 was the first year at Olympia, where it has remained ever since. At the early Festivals it was possible to feature every real ale brewery - about 90 in 1977. But by 1998 this number had increased to over 400, including the growing number of pub breweries.

The Station at Cheadle was one of Banks's early pub conversions from the time when they first became active in the North West. However, it was some time previously that Opening Times learnt that Banks's were unhappy with the image and performance that had been presented, and they has given the pub a major facelift, and refocused it away from the youth market. The designer bottled beers had largely been with drawn, the loud juke box had been replaced by much quieter canned music, and the electrically dispensed keg and cask beers had been replaced by handpumped cask ales. It had become much more of a restaurant/dining pub, with its own chef, and also a 'non-advertising' policy. The Cheshire Lines had not been signed as a Banks's pub, and there was no promotional material on beer mats, bar towels, ashtrays or posters.



What's a Binge Anyway?

There's been a lot of discussion recently about the problem of binge drinking, particularly by young people at weekends. According to research by the Institute of Psychiatry quoted in the newspapers, binge drinking can affect people's mental well-being. Dr David Ball surveyed 20,000 people about their drinking habits. He found that binge drinkers were more likely to suffer from anxiety and neuroticism than those who drink more steadily.

But it's illuminating to see how Dr Ball defines "binge drinking". Apparently, a binge consists of six or more units of alcohol on one occasion for a woman and eight for a man. That's four pints of ordinary bitter, or three pints of a premium beer. Under this definition, half the customers of your local will qualify, and it certainly bears little relation to the typical level of consumption you see on the High Street on Friday night. Indeed you have to wonder how they can find reporters who have led such a sheltered life that they can write such stuff down while keeping a straight face.

Of course there are a minority of people who do seriously over-indulge and may be causing themselves long-term health problems. But the issue cannot be effectively dealt with unless it is defined honestly. Statements such as those made by Dr Ball merely give the impression that many strategies that supposedly target "problem drinking" are in reality aimed just as much at stigmatising and restricting the moderate, responsible drinker.

Old Friends

You often find with an old friend that you get used to their appearance and don't really notice the passage of the years, and much the same can be true of pubs. This occurred to me the other week when I was sitting in a pub that has for long been a favourite of local drinkers and won a Pub of the Month award not too long ago. Yet, seen in the cold light of day, when the flaws were not covered by darkness and artificial light, it was looking distinctly frayed at the ages. Not dirty, not lacking in elbow-grease from the licensee, but clearly in need of a lick of paint and the attentions of the repair man.

If you're a regular, you might not notice until the place was literally falling apart, but if you were to take someone there to show them a fine example of a traditional pub, they could all too easily turn their nose up and dismiss it as simply grotty. Genteel decay isn't too fashionable nowadays and does real pubs no favours. There's a world of difference between fixtures and fittings simply being old - which is often a good thing - and being shabby. Unfortunately there's one particular local independent brewery I can think of who brew some fine beer but all too often seem to skimp on the repair and maintenance budget.

Curmudgeon Online: www.curmudgeon.co.uk



JOIN CAMRA (PAGE 19) & DRINK REAL ALE

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On a partial tour of Guide Lane, from Guide Bridge to Denton on June 8th, the Boundary had four beers from Scattor Rock all in fine form, unusual for a pub such as the Boundary to have as many beers from the same brewery available on the bar at one go.

From here, I skipped a few before looking in at the Sun Inn which disappointingly has no cask beer. However across the road, in the Pack Horse, as ever, the Robinson's Best Bitter and Hatters were fine. Moving on it was disappointing that the Sam Smiths was now keg in the Stamford Arms. Approaching Denton, the Silver Springs had Holts Bitter on handpump and a Worthington cask clip turned the other way round. On enquiry, the barmaid said that the Holts really outsold the Worthington so much that they have discontinued it. Sounds like the locals have good taste (my opinion).

On to the Red Lion at Crown Point. No problem here with the Hydes beers but as I walked along Hyde Road in Denton, it was again a disappointment that the Broom House, a rare Jennings pub in the High Peak Branch area, only had Jennings Smoothflow (or Creamflow) Bitter. The lady behind the bar who I presumed to be the licensee was however very friendly when I said I was after cask ale. She said it was very nice and that it was popular and that they were getting other smooth beers on soon such as Cumberland Smooth. I declined politely and walked on to the Coach & Horses which served a nice Marstons Bitter as the only cask beer. A few minutes wasted after this. At the nearby Angel, it was all smoothflow, same at the Cottage and again across the road at Broomstairs. So when I got to the Lowes Arms, a pint of LAB Aromatic Amber and a half of Broomstairs Bitter were much appreciated on a hot day.

Carrying on into Hyde, I walked past the shut White Gates, a Sam Smiths house (Sunday afternoon 2pm?), Hyde Social and Snooker Club (keg/smooth) and the currently shut Cheshire Ring, metal shutters hiding anything that the forthcoming Beartown pub may be promising. Through the bus station, passing the Bike and Hounds, I saw that there was now no real ale available but that it advertised that on Thursday nights there was a topless "ever changing" guest barmaid (really, no kidding!). There could be a long debate at this point at the attractions of this compared to an "ever changing" Guest Beer. Perhaps there would be a time and a place for either but my preference would be both (just having a break to think back to our trip to Prague two years ago where the Branch seemed to find a certain bar extremely popular just for this reason). Perhaps I had better shut up. On to the Sportsman then, for a pint of Hartington Bitter and a quiet reflection before my train. At the Queens in Old Glossop, Smiles Guest beers and Ringwood Forrester, have been on the bar recently alongside the usual selection.

The Masons Arms in Hadfield no longer has any Cask Ale. Many miles away in Kettleshulme, on June 7th, the day of our Branch Charity Walk (36 people turning up on the day for a potentially successful Charity fund raiser), the Bulls Head had Boddingtons Bitter, Wadworth 6X and a guest beer from Weetwood whilst down the road at the Swan, the list of three included Kheanes Village Green which was so good on a hot Summers day, after walking over the tops from Buxton, that no-one tried any of the alternatives, or if they did, they didn't remember what they were!

LAB beers have been seen in other outlets recently. In mid June, a rarity, both LAB Broomstairs Bitter and Shaws Bitter, our two Branch breweries, were seen next to each other in the Gloveworks in Glossop. Both these breweries' beers have been on in the Kinder Lodge in Hayfield during June.

A quick peek into the Pack Horse at Mottram, reopened last month after a good 18 months closure, saw cask ale has been re-introduced in the form of Boddingtons bitter and Draught bass.

Out of the Branch area now, but high above the Pennine Moore on a circular walk from Marston in mid June, I looked forward to a quick look in the remote Buckstones Inn only to find that it was shut and had been so for more than a year. I had to walk a further

three miles back to the Tunnel End Inn at Marston for a pint of their current guest beer Eastwood & Sanders Beyond the Pale, also seen last month in the Star in Glossop on two separate occasions.

Saddleworth Notes

On 14th June, it was the day of the Saddleworth Beer Walk where 1500 walkers in fancy dress (I will not disclose what I went as!), walked a 10 mile circuit around the Saddleworth villages. I made a few notes on my way round, though just out of our Branch area.

The first pub, the Wellington in Greenfield only had Cask Boddingtons Bitter. At the King William IV, Tetleys Dark Mild, Greenfield Brewery's Brassed Off, York Full Bloom, Batemans XXXB, Tetley Bitter and Black Sheep Bitter were the decent selection here. The landlord showed me his recently opened cellar bar round the back, where he said he sold 3 firkins of beers from Greenfield Brewery including Brassed Off and Delph Donkey the night before, in 2½ hours when the Brass Band Contest was on in the area.

At the Navigation, Dobcross, Black Sheep Bitter, Green King IPA, Tetleys Bitter and Greenfield Brassed Off were on the bar. Then on to the Swan at Dobcross (Top House), where the bar was once laden with at least five Phoenix beers. Since last year however, Jennings have bought the pub and whilst the number of handpumps remains the same (7), they were all beers from the Cockermouth Brewery, a total of 6 differing ones, Bitter being on two pumps.

In Delph, the Old Bell had one cask beer, Taylors Landlord, expensive at £1.20 per half (and they were charging 20p for a plastic glass on the day). At the Bulls Head on the main street, it was Black Sheep Bitter and Taylor Landlord and at the Swan, a Lees house, Lees Best Bitter and GB Mild were available, both reported to be fine.

Down in Diggle at the Hanging Gate the John Smiths bitter and Theakstons Bitter were the handpulled bitters whilst Lees was available but not on cask. Finally, though I am told that Uppermill Tory Club has a great pint of Taylors Bitter, very consistent, we finished at the Church, up the hill, for what were good quality beers from the Saddleworth Brewery. I tried the Hopsmacker and the St Georges Ale, both excellent, before a slight incline up to the Cross Keys, a Lees house, which always has Moonraker on draught, but not for me on the day. The pub always has a good selection from that Brewery but we opted for a half, then went back to the Church Inn to round off the evening with another Hopsmacker.

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0161 427 7099 (h) email: jenni.lord@tiscali.co.uk
Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch Contact is George Symes 0161
288 6778(w); 01565 653096(h) email: editor@outinncheshire.co.uk



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Good Beer Guide listed.

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Seasonal Guest Beers
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Award Winning Food.



Robinson's Chef of the Year 1999/2000
- second place and highly commended.

British Meat Steak Pie of the Year 2001 - second place.

British Meat Steak Pie of the Year 2002 - runner up.

MANCHESTER MATTERS by Cityman

News reaches me that Fallowfield should be getting a Lloyd's No. 1, that's the type of JD Wetherspoon (JDW) outlet which allows music. It is to be sited opposite J Sainsbury on Wilmslow Road at the bottom of what is now Mayfair Court; so it will be over the new footpath which used to be the Fairfield loop railway line. Expected opening date is late October / November.

More JDW news. This time from Longsight, where the Sir Edwin Chadwick has been sold to Laurel PubCo (the folk who run Hogs Heads). Their intention is to run it in the same format for three months or so then gradually adapt it to their way of thinking, whatever that may be. For the first month beer and food will come from Wetherspoons, apparently – and the good news is that most of the staff and management are staying in place.

In the city now. I said I would check out the closure of Rothwells on Spring Gardens last month, well I did, and it is closed; a good month or so by the look of it. For sale as a retail development, no less. Better news across town though, as Holt's Crown & Anchor (C&A) re-opened its doors after a thorough revamp on Thursday June 26th. The C&A has most definitely moved upmarket in very much the same way that the Railway, West Didsbury, Pepper Alley, Bolton and Wyldes in Bury portray themselves. This is probably the best I have seen the C&A in the last 15 years! No structural alterations have taken place, so the rooms at differing heights still prevail. If one works one's way up from the Deansgate end of Cateaton Street to Exchange Square then you first encounter the plush, bare-boarded vault (or 'lower deck' as it used to be known to regulars). Reupholstered, new chairs and tables, and bar improvements; you can even dine in this room now. Up the steps, the lounge has become somewhat of a dining area with lounge chairs and some tables dividing this from the rightmost upper area which is now wholly non-smoking. This latter replacing the former alcove no smoking area which is now set out with leather sofas and such.

TVs are a big feature but are set into the walls so as not to be too obtrusive (there's even one set amidships a chimney breast). They show music videos all the time. Food is now playing a large part in the offering of the pub with the standard Holt menu very much akin to the likes of a JDW menu but without the burgers; prices are from £1.99 to £7.95 (most main meals are just over a fiver). Specials are also offered too, along with Sunday lunch at £5.50, two courses for £7.45. Food hours are 12 – 5 Mo-Fr and 12-7 Sa-Su. Three Holt beers are offered mild (£1.38), bitter (£1.45) and Edwards – the prices are dearer than regular Holts outlets you will have noticed. Outside seating is also available on Cateaton Street; you may well be asked if you are drinking outside? If you are, then be aware that they will serve your pint in one of those awful plastic pots – beware! This is the first time I have noticed the use of a new Joseph Holt logo – the JH escutcheon now surmounts a board that proclaims 'Joseph Holt of MANCHESTER'. Look out for it.



Out In The Suburbs

More Holts was to pass my lips the following day, this time at the Silver Birch, Poundswick Lane, Wythenshawe. This ex S&N pub came in to Holts ownership a few months ago and it seems to be going very well with a lot of people in on a very wet afternoon. Mild and bitter are on handpull in this tastefully redecorated sixties house. On entering you are greeted by a large L-shaped bar that serves the right and front lounges. To the left is a separate, large vault room. Again, clean and tidily decorated. I think this goes to show that where good cask beer is sold in good condition in a clean environment it will sell, and sell well. The Silver Birch can be found just behind Wythenshawe Civic Centre, a short walk from the bus station (buses 11 from Stockport and 105 from Manchester will drop you nigh-on by the door). On my way home I noticed that the Talisman (Burtonwood) on Oatlands Road had re-opened its doors, but I had not the time to investigate whether it was selling cask or not.

Back in Fallowfield, I dropped in to Bruins, the Beartown outlet on the corner of Mauldeth and Wilmslow Roads. Mark and Dani have now taken on the pub as tenants and so have more freedom on the foreign beer front. There are some guest cask ales on at the moment as well. This is due to Beartown Brewery moving premises and thus running down stocks of some beers and so alongside the Beartown range, Bruins was selling Nethergate Painted Lady and Umbel Magna when I called. Due to the absence of the students, trade is quiet at the moment so happy hour (all beers £1.20 early evening) may be introduced during the summer months. There's still live music, though. There's an open mic session every second Tuesday, blues on Sundays and acoustic sessions on Thursdays. The aim is to offer something different from the house DJs featuring in most of the local bars.

Down the road in Didsbury, the Station reopened on 26 June following a refurbishment in which the front bar and middle lounge have been knocked together into one room. T-bar keg fonts now dominate the bar with a large pulldown satellite TV screen dominating the single room drinking area. In my view the unique character of this previously charming little pub has now been destroyed. Those that prefer not to be compelled to watch TV whilst enjoying a pint will be disappointed as the TVs are prominent and seemingly always on in all three former rooms. I have picked up the impression that there is some disquiet in the village by this unfortunate renovation as plenty of the pubs former regulars have been conspicuous by their absence on my recent visits.

And it gets worse – across the road the Hogshead has had all its cask beers removed. At least the Nelson is still flying the flag. Lees Bitter has sadly been axed though, and replaced by Tetley Bitter on a one-month trial. Licensee Andy Black is keen on his beer though and has asked if Opening Times has any suggestions as to what other beers he can put on. Contact either OT at the usual address or call in the pub and have a word with Andy (and support his cask ale efforts by having a pint or two while you're there).



COPY DATE FOR AUGUST ISSUE IS JULY 26



- Scuttler 4.0% (June/July)
- Cliff Bier 5.2% (Lager)
- Bullocks 4.3%
- Pacific Bitter 3.8%
- Flatbac 4.2%
- Best Bitter/Flying Zebra 4.5%
- Black Pig Mild 3.6%

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or email enquiries@bazensbrewery.co.uk



The main story this month is the departure of Paul Stanyer from the Swan With Two Necks (Princes Street, Stockport). Paul has been planning to leave for some time and handed his notice in to the brewery early this year. Paul's last night was Saturday 21 June, which he marked by falling off a penny-farthing bicycle and breaking his arm! But that's another story - what readers will want to know is who has taken over this high-profile town centre pub.

We welcome Jim and Jean Shaw who took over at the pub on Monday 23 June. This is the first pub for Jim, a former BT engineer, and ex-social worker wife Jean. Jean does have trade experience, though, and has worked at the pub in the past.

They had talked about entering the licensed trade for years then they opportunity following Jim's early retirement and Jean deciding on a career change. Jean had always wanted to run the Swan so when the chance arose they immediately went for it. Jim and Jean are keen to emphasize that the style of the pub will remain unchanged as a traditional local. The layout, relaxed style and beer range will remain as now, although if trade permits the already wide range of Robinson's beers will expand. It's certainly good to know that the town will be keeping a rare outlet for Frederics.

The pub is being tidied up and new carpets are already being fitted. The corridor has had a new laminated old-style wooden floor installed, which certainly adds to the traditional feel (the original parquet floor was beyond restoration, unfortunately). The seats in the middle room are to be reupholstered to eliminate that 'sinking feeling' that occurred from time to time.

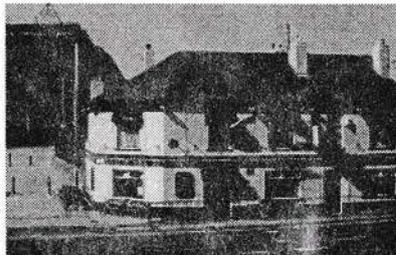
What there will be is more of an emphasis on food with a more extensive menu served from 11am to 7 or 8pm. Opening hours may change a little, too, as Jim and Jean get to grips with the pub's pattern of trade - Sunday opening until about 4.00pm is one thing they may be trying out. All in all, it looks as though this superb pubs remains in safe hands - drop in and pay a visit if you've not been before, it really is a gem.

A quick look at Robinson's web site (www.frederic-robinson.com) as we went to press showed some other local pubs up for tenancy as at 29 May. These include the Andrew Arms, Compstall; Bird in Hand and Cock, Hazel Grove; Cobdens, Stockport; Emigration, Offerton; Royal Mortar, Hillgate; Royal Scot, Marple Bridge and the Ring O'Bells, Marple.



rarities from new breweries set up by Dave Porter. Alex has also rearranged the dispense system to ensure the beer is cellar cool at all times.

The Woolpack, Brinksway, continues to do a nice line in guest beers. These come from either established family brewers right down to rare beers from unusual micros. Three guest beers are now sold and quality is always tip-top.



There's news from Ye Olde Vic, too. The pub now opens at 3.30 on Friday afternoons and has added a fifth handump to the bar. This is reserved for the new house beer, the excellent Moorhouses Premier Bitter from Burnley.

VIADUCTS AND VAULTS 3

A Celebration of Real Ale in Stockport's Pubs
IS OUT NOW! SEE PAGE 4 FOR DETAILS

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- Under 26 Joint...£12
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Name(s) of account holder(s)	Originator's reference
Account Number	9 2 6 1 2 9
Reference number	Branch Sort Code
Signed	Date



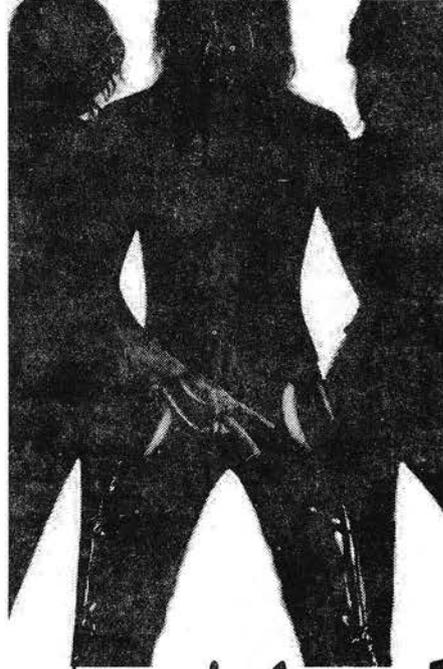
The Railway, Portwood has now extended its beer range to cover 11 handpumps. This enable licensee Alex Lord to feature not only the full Porters range but also up to three guest beers at weekends. These come from mainly established micros plus

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(Hey -We may have a boss more like Bozley but we thought we'd get this one in before you Charlie!!XX)



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CAMPAIGN FOR WIG ALE