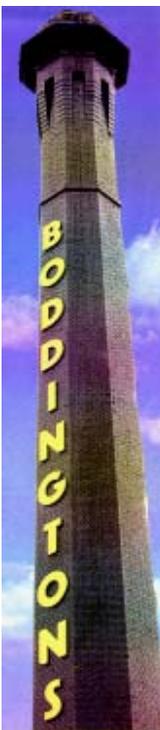




The FREE CAMRA Regional Magazine covering Central, East & South Manchester; Stockport; Tameside; Trafford; N.E. Cheshire & Macclesfield



A CALL TO ARMS! FORCES MASS TO PREVENT BODDIES AXE



A BROAD FRONT of workers, consumers, politicians and media stars has been formed to resist the threat from North American carpetbaggers to one of the city's most cherished institutions.

The Transport & General Workers Union, the City Council and TV star Bruce Jones – Coronation Street's Les Battersby – last month held a joint press conference to set out the city's disgust at InBev's plan to close Boddingtons Brewery next February.

The press conference was also the launch pad for a series of initiatives aimed at forcing InBev to honour the promises made two years ago to keep Boddingtons open and put some meaningful effort behind the brand.

The City Council has already stated its intention to resist any attempt to redevelop the Strangeways site. And CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner launched a dossier exposing the trail of destruction Interbrew has left in its wake in the last 25 years – and the likelihood of even worse to come at the hands of the new InBev regime. InBev has dropped the old Interbrew "World's local brewer" slogan from its web site and now touts itself as "a true global brewer... ranked no. 1 or no 2 in



over 20 key beer markets around the world."

And Mr Benner warned that the new management, headed by American CEO John Brock, was intent on closing more breweries to add to the current casualty-list of Boddingtons, Bass Northern Ireland in Belfast, and the Labatts brewery in British Columbia.

"Since Interbrew and AmBev of Brazil merged earlier this year everything has changed, and it's the workers and consumers who are suffering," said Mr Benner. "What's scandalous is that all the promises made four years ago when Interbrew took over Bass and Whitbread and again two years ago when Boddingtons was last under threat have been quite unashamedly abandoned. "Under the old regime there was talk of making Draught Bass a cask ale champion and investing heavily in Boddingtons as a cask brand. All the personnel who made those promises have gone, and none of their promises have been kept.

"Instead of being respectful of local markets, the company has been swamped by US corporate greed. We have been invaded by neo-conservative carpetbaggers." And he said the fight to head off the threat to Boddingtons was there to be won. "Two years ago we won by mobilising a wide spectrum of local forces, and we can do it again," he said. "We have to confront InBev with the simple fact that the Boddingtons brand and Strangeways brewery are profitable. By shifting the brand away from Strangeways, InBev will simply destroy it. Any savings made in the short term will quickly disappear as the brand withers away.

"A clever CEO would recognise the point where the drive to maximise profits alienates the consumer so much that the strategy is doomed." You have a part to play, too! Sign the on-line petition – go to <http://boddingtons.camraactionnetwork.org.uk>. Look out also for the 'Save The Cream' T-shirts produced to support the campaign.

CITY LIFE AWARD FOR THE CRESCENT

CONGRATULATIONS to Idy & Sal (pictured) at the Crescent, Salford who have won this year's City Life Pub of the Year Award. The criteria for consideration are that the pub must have been run by the same manager/landlord/landlady for at least 12 months at the time of the Gala Dinner when the award is presented, and the key areas are ambience/welcome, drinks selection, food, historic building, entertainment. Well done indeed.



NWAF NEEDS YOU!

CAMRA's National Winter Ales Festival returns to Manchester from January 26 - 29 2005 and the Festival needs you! Greater Manchester CAMRA members are needed to volunteer their services to help out - even if only for a few hours, and a staffing form is included on page 9. The rest of our readers are needed to come and drink the beer! Full reports in Dec and Jan OTs.



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Salford's Rose 4.8% (October/November)
 Wild Boar 6% (Strong Mild Ale) Blue Bullet 4.5%
 FlatbaC 4.2% (Beer of the Festival, Stockport, 2003
 & BIA Bronze Medal Winner 2004) eXSB 5.5%
 Black Pig Mild 3.6% (Bronze Award for Mild,
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PUB OF THE MONTH NOVEMBER

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
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2004



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for November is the Kingsway in Levenshulme.

Julie and Barney Donaghy have been licensees at the Kingsway for over two years having come to the pub after a spending over three years at the Claremont in Moss Side. For those of you that do not already know, the Kingsway in Levenshulme is a Joseph Holt's house and is indeed the second Holt's pub in Levenshulme to win the prestigious Pub of the Month award in 2004. The other being The Sidings back in April. Thus dispelling the myth about the absence of good real ale in 'Levy'.

This (to the best of my knowledge) is the first time this pub has received this award and dare I say, it is long over-due. The pub offers something for just about everyone. There's the vault with darts and pool table and large screen for all your sporting events. The Kingsway has Pool, Darts and Darts & Crib teams and hosts major darts and pool competitions. For those of you wishing to watch your sport in a little more peace and quiet there's the nearby snug. However if you wish to get away from the TV altogether and have peace and quiet or a bite to eat, there's a large dining area which also provides space for those who wish to have a quiet drink and chat with friends and family. In addition there is an upstairs function room capable of seating 200 as well as providing a meeting area which is already being utilised for CAMRA meetings.

This is very much a pub for everyone and you can often see three or four generations of families enjoying everything the Kingsway has to offer. Recent events have included a charity raffle which raised over £1100 for Francis House.

I, by my own admission, have not been Holt's beer's biggest fan since I have been in Manchester. However, the Kingsway has gone a long way to win me over. On every occasion I have been in the pub the bitter and the mild have always been in excellent shape. In fact I have been told that Barney will only drink Holt's Mild. So you mild (and bitter) fans out there should be taking note and making your way to the Kingsway on Thursday 25th November when this well deserved award will be presented. **GW.**

The Kingsway is, as you might guess, very close to Kingsway and is served by a number of bus services including the 50. It is also a short walk from the A6 and Levenshulme Station.

**PLEASE NOTE - COPY DATE FOR
DECEMBER ISSUE OF OT - NOV 26**



Facer's Brewery

Look out for the November special in the
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 Crabtree (4.3%),
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IN THE EDITORS' VIEW..

The fight to keep Boddington's Strangeways Brewery continues but so far InBev remain outwardly unmoved by the storm of protest. Having said that, there do seem to be some signs that the company's international management are seeking to distance themselves from this damaging move.

When a party of CAMRA and union activists lobbied InBev in its Belgian heartland, the response was basically 'nothing to do with us, guv'. The message was that this was purely a decision by the UK management, which, when you think about it, is pretty amazing.

Are InBev saying they have no global strategy when it comes to perceived excess capacity? Or are they starting to at least prepare the ground should a potentially embarrassing retreat be needed?

★ ★ ★ ★

The more InBev's plans for Boddington's are digested, the more it becomes clear that they see no future at all in Boddington's Cask. For sure, transferring production to Hydes' is being dressed up as a continuing commitment to the brand in its Manchester heartland but what it really means is that finite limits are being set to the availability of the beer. Hydes' will have to invest heavily to take on the current cask volumes but what if, despite Inbev's indifference, there was a leap in demand for cask Boddies? How would that demand be met? It would soon run up against the buffers of Hydes' capacity.

But say cask Boddies is allowed to wither and die? Where would that leave Hydes'? Let's hope that cask Boddies doesn't prove to be a poisoned chalice for one of our best local brewers.

John Clarke

FRANK BARLOW

We were very saddened to learn of the death of local branch member Frank Barlow, who sadly passed away on 25 October.

While Frank didn't attend many branch events, he was an enthusiastic helper at Stockport Beer Festival where he was well-liked by both customers and staff. He came to the Festival late in life and only really started working at it in his mid-seventies. He last worked at the Festival this year, aged 82. He will be much missed as next year's event. Our sympathies go to his family and friends.

OPENING TIMES ISSUE 247

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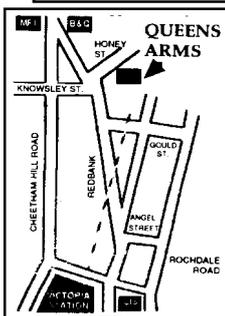
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3

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FOR
REAL ALE



BACK TO ITS BEST

YORKSHIRE family brewer Theakston's has celebrated the first anniversary of its new found independence by re-launching its nationally distributed Best Bitter. The beer was downgraded to



3.6 per cent ABV – with no reduction in its wholesale price – by the brewery's then owner Scottish & Newcastle five years ago. Now it's back to its original strength of 3.8 per cent, and brewery boss Simon Theakston says that since the trade price wasn't cut when the alcohol content was, it won't be increased now. The restoration of Best to its former strength is part of a wider package which includes new pump clips and livery for all the Theakston brands.

COORS QUIT REAL ALE



Coors is set to follow InBev and cease real ale production when its contract to brew Draught Bass runs out in February. InBev is moving Bass to Marston's – although it won't be brewed on the Burton Union sets. The American-owned Coors, whose big UK brands are Carling and Grolsch, says the loss of the 130,000-barrel Bass contract will make real ale brewing at Burton-on-Trent unviable. Draught Bass has been declining at 17 per cent a year but still accounts for round 70 per cent of Coors's real ale production. Smaller brands like the M&B range are already contract brewed by regionals, leaving only 40,000 barrels a year of cask Worthington and its 1744 variant being at Burton.

FAMILY FAVOURITES

As usual there is news from our local family brewers.

Robinson's – the winter season sees the annual return of Robin Bitter (4.5% ABV), which has proved one of the most popular of the Robbies seasonal beers. The official description is "a unique cask ale brewed specially for the long, dark months of the festive season. This rich, dark, full-bodied bitter has a distinctive roasted malt character, comple-

mented by a vague hint of liquorice culminating in a deeply satisfying finish." Old Tom is of course also back again.



JW Lees – the new winter seasonal ale is the 4.7% ABV Crackerjack. The brewery tell us that this is "a special seasonal ale to finish the year off with a bang and put you in good spirits for Christmas. Brewed with a combination of malts to produce a nutty flavour and some Bramling Cross hops for fruitiness and just a hint of blackcurrant". Look out for this in the City Centre's Rain Bar and the ever-reliable Lloyds Hotel in Chorlton.

Hydes – the November/December seasonal from Hydes' is usually a particularly good beer and this year's promises to be no different. Look out for the 5% ABV Seventh Heaven described as a "deliciously fruity flavoured winter ale crafted from rich roasted malts blended with a hint of seasonal spice". Many local Hydes' pubs should have this one.



Holts – the annual price increase took place on Tuesday 12 October, when the beer went up by 5p a pint. Many regular Holt's drinkers are already moaning about this, and some of the die-hard types are still regretting the time when the price of a pint of Holt's went through the £1 barrier, many



years ago. The latest seasonal beer, Nuts & Holts, has appeared in a few outlets. Initial reports say that the beer is on the sweet side and the same price as normal bitter.

MICRO MAGIC

More news from the local micro brewers. Apologies to those we weren't able to contact this time.

Phoenix – out now are Flash Flood (4.1% ABV) and Snowbound (4.3%). Look out in the coming weeks for Christmas Kiss (4.5%) and the superb Humbug (7%). Humbug has in fact already been brewed and is maturing at the brewery prior to its early December release. Of the recent IPA range, West Coast IPA (4.6%) has proved so popular that it is to be rebrewed.



Pictish – the November special is Z-Rod (4.8%) described as a "strong, pale, golden coloured ale with full malt flavours and a well-balanced hoppy finish" and in December look out for Winter Solstice (4.7%) a "refreshing pale, amber coloured ale. Subtle chocolate malt flavours are balanced by a delicate bitterness and floral hop aroma". The potent Rudolph's Rocket Fuel (7.3%) will also be back for the festive season. Brewer Richard Sutton also tells us that another batch of Blue Moon (6%) is also in the pipeline. Last month saw the annual



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Navy
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2002
Wobbly Bob
Gold



2004
Wobbly Bob
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appearance of the excellent Samhain Stout (5%) and also a brand new beer – Whiteout. This was a 6% ABV pale, hoppy wheat beer. This was well received and may well reappear in the future. Pictish is also producing a range of merchandise. T-shirts and pin badges are already available and in the pipeline are polo shirts and baseball caps. Check the brewery website (www.pictish-brewing.co.uk) for details.

Millstone – the 5% ABV True Grit is still in the pipeline, for the simple reason that the brewery has been too busy to fit it in! Autumn Leaves proved very popular and is being rebrewed. The next big thing for Millstone is their own bottling line. There was a trial at Leek Brewery and the bottles sold like hotcakes so bottling is now to be carried out on site at Mossley. The first three beers to be bottled will be Millstone Edge, Garinstorm and Autumn Leaves. All will be bottle conditioned and available from, amongst other outlets, Mossley Wholefoods on Arundel Street in Mossley.

Three Rivers – the Balinese chocolate stout is out now and will be appearing in the Crown, Heaton Lane. There will also be a one-off Three Threads Porter (5.5%) out in mid-November. Three Rivers have also produced a (possibly) one-off cask lager for the Sweet Green Tavern in Bolton. This 4.2% brew uses Saaz and Heersbrucker hops and a bottom-fermenting lager yeast brought over from Germany. The brewery is also offering the trade a 'buy three get one free' offer for Christmas while the public can purchase minipins and polypins for the festive season. Contact the brewery on 0161 477 3333.

Marble – the new Marble Bitter is now out and superb. This has replaced both Cloudy Marble and N/4 and comes in at a sessionable 3.9% ABV. There is a very complex hop blend used, including one of the first UK uses of the citrusy organic Cascade variety. The result is a pale copper coloured beer with an initial sweetness quickly giving way to a complex fruity bitterness and a lingering dry finish wanting you to have another one. Unsurprisingly it has gone very well so far.

Greenfield – out now is Firecracker a 4% ABV dark ale. In early December look out for Rudolph's Tipple a 5% strong, dark winter beer and Ice Breaker a 4.2% golden bitter with a hoppy aftertaste. For the New Year will be Celebration, a 4% light golden brew. Greenfield are also celebrating being 'Brewery of the Month' at the Three Pigeons, a well-known Halifax free house. The full

Greenfield range will feature over the month – anyone thinking of popping over will find the pub by turning left down the main road outside the station with the pub about 200 metres down on the left-hand side.

Bazens' – Wild Boar, the strong (6%) mild came out last month and is going well. Apart from that the brewery is so busy, there has been no time to produce any new beers. Brewer Richard Bazens has, however, joined a new band - this is the Black Mountain Bootleggers who play hillbilly-style tunes and can be found performing at the Crescent in Salford on the first Thursday of each month.

Facer's – has a new beer out for November and the first week of December; Anthem commemorates the 1st World War poets, the name being taken from Wilfred Owen's famous 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' (What passing-bells for those who die as cattle? - Only the monstrous anger of the guns.). The beer is 3.9% ABV, with a touch of crystal malt to add a golden glow to the pale colour and heavily late-hopped with Styrian Golding hops.

Other news; October was the best month for sales of Facer's beers in its 20 month history, with sales averaging nearly six barrels per week. The summer recipes for Landslide and Crabtree have proved so popular that Dave has decided to make the 'summer recipes' permanent.

Ramsbottom – Paul Robinson has been racking his brains to see where the mistaken reports of the brewery's imminent demise came from. Luckily the reports are very mistaken and Paul continues to produce a varied range of quality beers. He's sold out of Squiwells, so new for November is Peel Porter (4.2%) and his 50th brew which will be simply called L (4.4%). On top of that there's Summerseat (4%) which we've not mentioned before. Old Ground Mild is, as ever, doing the rounds as is Tower Bitter. Later in the month he may well be brewing Rammyversary 'seeing as it's that time of year'.

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BELGIAN BASH At The LLOYDS

THE EVENING of Friday, October 8th saw an unusual event take place at the Lloyds Hotel in Chorlton. This was a tasting of Belgian beers married with Belgian food organised and hosted by the team from the Belgian Belly beer shop and deli. The event was one of many to celebrate the breadth and range of drinks and foods available in Chorlton as part of the Manchester Food & Drink Festival.

Around thirty people were present at this sell-out presentation held in the very grand surroundings of the pub's Boardroom. All guests were greeted with a glass of the superb Mort Subite Oude Gueuze served, stylishly, in a champagne flute. As was to be the case with the four beers that were to follow, Belgian Belly owner Jason Barker, talked us through the style and manufacture of the beer, telling us why he thought this was a beer worthy of "show-casing" and what tastes we should be aware of. As a brewery, Mort Subite has been guilty of late of dumbing down their beers, especially their Lambics; this is not the case with this newly released Oude Gueuze however. All lovers of this unusual beer style will appreciate this example.

Next up was Duchesse de Burgogne, a dark, slightly sour beer. The first of the food accompaniments came with this one - fluted tomato halves topped with shrimps in a seafoody sauce - delicious. The third beer was an example of a lighter style - Ename Blond. This was paired with a Witloof (chicory) salad with walnuts and cheese with green beans and red onion in a light oil dressing.

Fourth out was Moinette Brune, a fine example of the Belgian style of brown beer. The food that went with this was a robust mixed meat, pate and Orval cheese platter (for those not caring for meat, non-meat alternatives were provided) paired with plenty of bread. Our final beer was the warming Gouden Carolus (a brown ale) that went well with the dessert course of ice cream with chocolate sauce and a wafer.

The food and beers seemed to be well appreciated as was Jason's relaxed but informed talk through a small sample of what can be had from Belgium. All of the beers can be purchased from the Belly and I would like to thank Jason and his well-drilled serving team - sisters Sandra and Susan, and nephew Matt. A splendid evening, and at £10 a head, superb value!

I, for one, look forward to future such events.

MM



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This month I've not been out and about as much as I would have liked. Still, there are still one or two items of news.

Perhaps the shock news last month was Alex Lord's departure from the **Railway**, Portwood. Alex always intended to move on at some stage and when a chance came up to train as a commercial pilot, it was an opportunity he could not miss.

Alex's final night saw the pub bursting at the seams with regulars wishing him the best, and at the end of the evening Dave Porter said a few words of thanks which were greeted by loud applause and cheers. I'd like to add my own thanks – during his stay at the pub, Alex really put the place on the map adding weekly guest beers to the Porter range and bringing in a huge range of foreign bottled beers. He was probably the most visibly hard-working licensee I have met – his frantic activity behind the bar often left me exhausted just watching him, and of course in need of a further restorative pint!

REAL ALE GAIN

It's always good when a pub or bar returns to the real ale fold, particularly so when it's somewhere as characterful as the **Three Shires Wine Bar** on Great Underbank. After a closure, the Three Shires was bought 12 months ago by ex-IT consultant Sarah Kennedy, who felt she needed a major career change. Almost straight away she was faced with demands for the introduction of real ale but there have always been problems with adequate cellar facilities. However manager Simon Parry (formerly of **Cobdens** and a cask beer fan) seems to have added a further impetus and where there's a will there's a way. Thus, cask beer was introduced in mid-October in the form of Taylor's Landlord. To say the move has been a success is something of an understatement, with 5-6 nine-gallon casks being sold in the first 12 days. The guest beers will change and forthcoming treats include Wells' Bombardier, Greene King Abbot, Exmoor Gold, Fuller's London Pride, and Black Sheep. As this is a genuine free house there is no restriction on the source of the beers so things could get very interesting here. One to watch, I think – and to eat in, by the way, as the menu looks very appetising and is well spoken of.

NEW FACES

After carefully weighing up the options, Sheila Barlow from Shaw Heath decided she was ready for a new challenge, and has now swapped her role as a housewife to become licensee of the **Armoury**, her local Robinson's pub.



Sheila with Oliver Robinson

"The customers make the Armoury what it is. The atmosphere is cosy and welcoming and they have so many stories to tell – it's a pleasure to be here, it really is," says Sheila. She went on to describe the pub as offering everything that would be expected of a traditional local, where customers still play their favourite pub games in a convivial atmosphere. "They play all the old games, from crib and dominoes to darts and cards while enjoying their pint. They really appreciate the fact that the real ale is still brewed in Stockport, so it's important to me that I keep the beer in perfect condition," she explained.

There are also plans to sell food in the form of snacks to go with the excellent Robbies beers. Unicorn and Hatters are the staple fare, although the pub has traditionally had a cask of Old Tom on the vault counter in the winter months.

MORE NEW FACES!

Chris Warriner returned to Compstall after seven years in Aberdeen as an engineer to join forces with his daughter, Joanne Scarlett, as joint licensees of the **George**. The Robinson's pub, which has always been a favourite of theirs, seemed like the ideal challenge for the father-daughter, team.

"I used to come here with Joanne when she was a child and enjoyed her time in the play area, so there are quite a lot of memories here which makes it even more important that we do a good job with this business," explained Chris.



While Chris is new to the licensed trade, Joanne has many years' valuable experience, and together, they are working hard to give the George their own personal touch to ensure its reputation stays on track. The sizeable pub with its bowling green, play area and restaurant has always been popular with the locals and passing trade alike and has a wide appeal. "We already have live music on Friday nights, which is popular with all ages, and we plan to introduce a quiz night to further involve our customers," says Chris. "We are also planning to revamp the small bar downstairs so that we can host private functions and by next summer we plan to upgrade the children's play area outside."

BITS AND BOBS

I called into the **Kings Head** on Tiviot Dale and it seems the guest beers are selling well. It's always something interesting and well kept. I've always thought the Kings to be a bit of an underrated pub and it really does deserve support. I will certainly be popping in more often.

Of course, just across the road is the **Tiviot**, perhaps the epitome of the traditional town local. Galvanised by last month's **Pub Grub** I called at lunchtime and enjoyed the thriving atmosphere in the vault. Robbies Hatters and Unicorn were both on top form and Old Tom will of course soon be with us again.

Two local pubs are currently closed. Well, one is definitely shut. This is the **Royal Mortar** on Higher Hillgate, which is not only shut but also up for sale by Robinson's. It's due to be auctioned off this month with a guide price of £150,000 to £200,000. Probably shut is the **Dog & Partridge**, Heaton Mersey where there have been no signs of life downstairs on two recent occasions when I have been past.

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STAGGER

with Pete Farrand

HAZEL GROVE SOUTH

WITH THE NIGHTS starting to draw in, although warm for the time of year, our team of beer 'connoisseurs' for the night headed to the *Rising Sun*, a former coaching inn located on the fork in the road between Buxton Road (A6) and Macclesfield Road near the terminus of the 192 bus. The attractive exterior of the pub is sadly not matched by the interior which has been changed many times; it is now basically one room, though broken up somewhat by partitions and pillars. The commitment of the current landlord has improved what in the past was a very ordinary pub.

On the beer front, this pub provides the largest choice of cask conditioned ales in Hazel Grove (four). Most of our party went for either Adnams Bitter or Theakstons Grousebeater, both on good form with the latter one judged to have a distinctive taste. The Beecham's Crystal Wheat Beer was thought to be in good condition, but had a sickly taste (caused by a problem with the brewing process?). No one felt inclined to try the John Smiths Cask, possibly because they knew the beer range in the next pub! It is worth noting that the *Rising Sun* is open till midnight on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, but you have to be in by 10:30pm.

Heading in the Stockport direction our next stop was the *Bulls Head* on the corner of Torkington Road and the A6. This large, one roomed, former Wilson's House was already busy with the usual clientele of 20-somethings. We decided to take advantage of the large outdoor seating area, filled with 'picnic' style tables, to catch the last rays of sun and enjoy the sole offering of cask ale i.e. John Smiths Cask Bitter, which was on average form. One of our party received the 'smooth' version, which confusingly seems always to be sold alongside the Cask version, but this was changed on request.

Not surprisingly after a few minutes sat outside, it started raining, so we drank up rapidly and headed for the next pub passing two café bars, *The Lounge* and *Browns*, which offer no cask conditioned beer, though the bottled beer range may merit further investigation.

The rain had stopped by the time we reached the next pub, the *White Hart* located on the A6 opposite Chester Road. The beer choice was (and will be for the remaining pubs) Robinson's Unicorn Bitter and Hatters Mild, served here from free flow electric pumps into lined glasses, the quality of which was average. The pub interior is open plan and looks to be in sore need of a refurbishment. One of our party investigated the *Horse & Jockey* further down the road but the hand-pull on the bar now seems to be an ornament, and it is some years since this pub last saw cask conditioned ale, which is a shame as a recent redecoration has vastly improved its interior.

Across the A6 northwards to the next pub which was the *Grapes*, a charming pub, accessed through a small porch which leads to a traditional vault and a lounge formed from three rooms, where we headed for the area where there was a trophy cabinet, together with photos of local football and cricket teams. The above average hand-pulled Robinson's beers were enjoyed by all and we noted that the half pint glasses were lined. The shortest walk of the evening brought us to the *Three Tunnes* next door! Another Robinson's house. The decor was rather minimalist throughout, the five interconnecting rooms seem to merge into one if you are stood at the bar. The most obvious points of interest were the stained glass upper window sections and the small cast iron cooking range in the rear room. The beer was again above average with the mild being particularly appreciated by those who tried it. Now an unusual feature in public houses, the Gents lavatory is located outside.

Further north still, across the A6 we came to the *Bird in Hand*. Those of us who could stand the Karaoke in the other large room, found the beer to be good. This pub sometimes offers a third Robinson's beer, but sadly it was not available on the night. The small area in front of the bar where we sat was decorated with local pictures and brass ornaments.

Back across the A6 again to the Commercial Road junction we arrived at the *Cock*. In the largest of the pub's three rooms, at the back, there was a disco and very few customers. The small 'Commercial' room at the front next to the bar was full, but in semi-darkness for some unknown reason. We settled in the overly bright pool and darts room to enjoy average to good Robinson's Unicorn and Hatters. The music didn't make us want to linger very long and those of us who had not set off home early were soon on our way to the last pub of the evening.

The *Royal Oak* is about a quarter of a mile down Commercial Road on the right. An imposing pub from the outside, inside the pub has an air of faded glory. There are three rooms, a pool room to the rear, a large public bar and a non-smoking lounge. This was the only pub of the evening to offer a non-smoking room; a feature that I expect will be increasingly demanded. We settled in the public bar near the impressive wooden oak staircase that may once have led to further public rooms upstairs. There are remains of original features such as the 1930s interior door signage which sadly have been removed. Worthy of note, although not visible when we visited the pub, is an attractive outdoor drinking area behind the pool room which leads unexpectedly to a crown green bowling green. Most of us that lasted this long drank the Hatters which was in above average condition.

This brought us to the end of an enjoyable evening where most of the beer was of good to excellent quality. It is a shame that in the Robinson's pubs we did not see any seasonal beer or their premium bitter Double Hop. One might have expected that with so many Robinson's pubs in Hazel Grove, an extra choice of cask conditioned beer would give a pub a competitive advantage over its neighbours. There are a further three pubs on the south side of Hazel Grove that we did not have time to visit on the night; *The Fiveways* which serves a cask conditioned guest beer is about half a mile south of the *Rising Sun* on the Macclesfield road; the *Robin Hood* (Robinson's again!) which is a mile beyond the *Rising Sun* in the Buxton direction and lastly a Robinson's pub that does have an additional choice of beer (Hartleys XB when I checked), the *Three Bears* on Jacksons Lane.

Hazel Grove can be reached in the evening by buses 192, 191 (Middlewood/Poynton-Stockport) & 199 (Buxton-Stockport).



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Barton Arms, 2 Stableford, Worsley
Bishop Blaze, 708 Chester Road, Stretford
Boathouse, Ferry Road, Irlam
Bollin Fee, 6 Swan Street, Wilmslow
Bulls Head, 155-157 Broken Cross, Macclesfield
Bulls Head Hotel, 28 Buxton Road, High Lane
Calverts Court, St. Petersburg, Stockport
Church House Inn, Church Street, Bollington
Coach and Four, 69-71 Alderley Road, Wilmslow
Cotton Bale, 21 Market Street, Hyde
Cross Keys, Adwood Road, Cheadle Hulme
Crown, 81 High Street, Cheadle
Dog & Partridge, 665-7 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury
Duke of York, Stockport Road, Romiley
Eccles Cross, 13 Regent Road, Eccles
Farmers Arms, 209 Stockport Road, Stockport
Farmers Arms, Manchester Road, Swinton
Fletcher Moss, 1 Williams Street, Didsbury
Football, 35 Swinton Hall Road, Swinton
Four Heaton, 63 Didsbury Road, Heaton Norris
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Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury
Gothic Bar, 61 Church Road, Gatley
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Great Central, Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield
Hanging Gate, Higher Sutton, Macclesfield
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High Grove, Silverdale Road, Gatley
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Jar Bar, SilkHouse, 4 Park Green, Macclesfield
John Gilbert, Worsley Brow, Worsley
Kings Hall, 13 Station Road, Cheadle Hulme
King's Ransom, Britannia Road, Sale
Lloyds No 1, The Printworks, Manchester
Loves Arms, 301 Hyde Road, Denton
Moon Under Water, Deansgate, Manchester
Oddfellows Arms, 73 Moor End Road, Stockport
Old Plough Hotel, 56 Green Lane, Sale
Old Wellington, 4 Cathedral Gates, Manchester
Osborne House, 32 Victory Street, Rusholme
Paramount, 33 Oxford Street, Manchester
Poachers Inn, 95 Ingersley Road, Bollington
Porters Ale House, Prince Roe Street, Macclesfield
Q Bar, 3-5 Market Street, Stalybridge
Rising Sun, 22 Queen Street, Manchester
Ryecroft, Turves Road, Cheadle Hulme
Sam's Chop House, Black Pool Fold, Manchester
Sedge Lynn, 21a Manchester Road, Chorlton
Society Rooms, Macclesfield Park La, Macclesfield
Society Rooms, Grosvenor Street, Stalybridge
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Star Inn, 13 High Street, Cheadle
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Victoria Hotel, 438 Wilmslow Road, Withington
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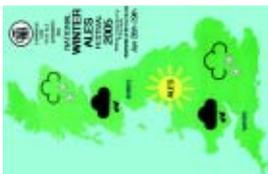
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NWAF NEEDS YOU!

The forthcoming National Winter Ales Festival (Manchester, open 26 - 29 January) needs staff! CAMRA members who would like to help, please fill in a staffing form (see below) and return it to the staffing officer as soon as possible. Other staffing forms should be available at most Greater Manchester Branch events. Please note you **MUST** be a paid-up CAMRA member to volunteer - a membership form (and special offer) can be found on page 16 - just in case!



National Winter Ales Festival Manchester 2005

New Century Halls 26 - 29 January 2005
PLEASE USE ONE FORM PER PERSON

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Address _____
Post Code _____ e-mail: _____
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CAMRA Branch (if Known) _____

Please tick the sessions you are able and willing to work, (Medical Conditions: Please advise us of anything relevant separately in strictest confidence). Please contact the staffing officer directly or on site for further details (such as leaving times for transport). Please note - accommodation cannot be guaranteed, is limited to slightly subsidised B&B and is prioritised for workers from outside Greater Manchester.

	Sat 22	Sun 23	Mon 24	Tue 25	Wed 26	Thu 27	Fri 28	Sat 29	Sun 30	Mon 31
08:00										
11:00										
14:00										
17:00										
20:00										
23:30										
Accommodation requested										

Notes: Shaded areas indicate open sessions.
For set up & take down sessions, please wear strong boots.

Have You Worked at a CAMRA Beer Festival Before?

Please List any special skills you could offer to the Festival, or preferred area of working (continue on reverse as necessary) _____

Do you have current first aid qualifications? or Food Hygiene Certificate
(if yes give details on reverse)

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

Send your completed form to:

Staffing: Brian Taylor, NWAF Staffing, 1 Gloucester Drive, Sale, Cheshire, M33 5DH.

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THE JOHN MILLINGTON, CHEADLE HULME

AFTER A RECORD SPEND by Hydes', the John Millington in Cheadle Hume is repaying the investment in spades, with record takings, miles above target.

That's not surprising when you consider how well the money has been spent on this incredibly stylish and confident conversion-extension of the Grade II listed Millington Hall. It's hugely popular and the local nimbys who predicted that this development would turn Station Road into a 'strip' something akin to an inner circle of hell must be feeling very foolish indeed. Well, if they've any shame they will.

Thus far so good. The beer's been on top form, too as you would expect from a brewery flagship run by a keen beer enthusiast. A major part of the operation is food-based and here reports had been mixed - some people raved about the place, others were less impressed. Time to find out, so four of us descended on the pub one Wednesday in October.

The pub as already busy at 7.15pm but we had no trouble either getting drinks or a table in the restaurant area at the back of the pub. A word about the beer first - four are available, Hydes' Mild, Bitter, Jekylls Gold and the seasonal, Over the Moon. We worked our way through the whole range during the meal and all four were on top form.

There's a printed menu and also a range of blackboard specials, and we decided to pick and mix between the two. Service was prompt and attentive (thanks to Charlotte, our waitress for the night), so orders for starters and mains were quickly taken.

Soup of the Day (£3.25) was tomatoey, generously portioned and appreciatively received. Black Pudding & Tomato Stack (£3.95) was a pile of black pudding rounds interspersed with sliced tomato and surrounded with a creamy peppercorn sauce. This was a dish that worked well, although the tomatoes struggled to make their presence felt and did little but add some textural interest. Perhaps that's why they were there. The Thai Spiced Fishcakes (£4.85) were pronounced tasty and meaty, and were demolished in short order. The Yorkshire Blue Mushrooms (£4.75) - button mushrooms in creamy stilton sauce served in a large, crispy Yorkshire pudding - was a generously proportioned, 'very cheesy' dish, again very much enjoyed.

So far, so good. The main courses were equally good. Pork Medallions (£7.65) came with black pudding and peppercorn sauce and a selection of vegetables including ratatouille, all working very well together. My Bangers & Mash (£6.95) comprised three large and meaty pork and red Leicester sausages atop a pile of creamy mash. Generously garnished with a huge pile of crispy onion rings in a sort of tempura batter and surrounded by a very tasty gravy, this was comfort food at its best.

A Prawn & Chorizo stir-fry (price not noted, unforgivably) attracted only minor quibbles - a touch more sauce (the dish came with a huge heap of noodles) and bigger pieces of chorizo would have improved what was an essentially very good combination. Finally a seared swordfish steak at £8.25 brought rave reviews with a moist, succulent and 'really well cooked' and generously proportioned piece of fish forming the centrepiece of what was described as a top class dish.

Unlike some other food reviews, this column always has room for pudding so the menu was summoned back and in we dived. Oh bliss. Lemon & Lime Bavaois came on a crispy base and with a helping of clotted cream. My Belgian Waffle with honeycomb ice cream and maple syrup was deliciously indulgent while the Eton Mess - a fabulous combination of raspberries, cream, meringue and Greek yoghurt - served in a Jekyll's Gold goblet, was a real start turn.

The verdict? Top class food to match the other quality aspects of the operation here. With excellent food operations at Robinson's Church and Holt's Cheadle Hulme, the local residents are truly spoilt for a combination of both good beer and good food served in top-class pubs. JC.

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NOVEMBER FEATURED PUB

THE PACK HORSE, MELLOR ROAD, NEW MILLS
REGULAR READERS will be aware of this pub, featured quite recently in *Pub Grub*. Those with longer memories will recall when the Tetley's beers were served by gravity from a back store room-cum-cellar, writes Rod Oliver. Eight or so years ago, after 15 years as Tetley licensees, the present owners John and Beryl Crossland, along with their son Mark, bought the Pack Horse off Tetleys (their bitter is still available at the pub) and set off on their journey to build an expanding business.

This is an old coaching inn and the building dates from the late seventeenth century. The Crossland have added five bedrooms in the stables but the real work is now under way. Another six rooms are under construction and there will be accommodation for twenty-two people – en suite and at a very affordable price. These extensive alterations will also include a new cellar to replace the one which itself replaced the one on the ground floor, plus a new dining room.

Aside from the menu which we covered on our recent article, our main interest is in the beer of course. This pub has a really enterprising choice. There are three guests on offer, which the family choose, and you can be reasonably certain of finding something novel and unusual and, more importantly, good. They usually buy from an agency but will tap any source to ensure an exciting beer menu.

The pub itself hides away on a tricky bend on the top road between Marple and New Mills. From Marple Bridge you go up through Mellor and over the crest of the hill. There is a bus from Marple twice a century so if you're on public transport take the train to New Mills Central or the 358 bus from Stockport and prepare for a bracing climb. It will be worth it, I promise you. At present, pre-alteration, you enter an L-shaped room with comfortable furnishings, antlers on the wall, and a black stove which is very comforting in the winter. The sentimental amongst you shouldn't miss the picture "Fireside Joys". Make the effort to get there – it's open all day at weekend – you won't find any better.



CHICKEN IN PERRY

It is a long time since I have used cider or perry, so try this one. The recipe serves four.

INGREDIENTS

1 3lb roasting chicken
3 tablespoons olive oil
4-5 cloves garlic, crushed
1 pint dry or medium perry
1 teaspoon rosemary
1 teaspoon sage
4 fl oz red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons plain flour
salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

Divide the chicken into eight pieces. Heat a large saucepan with olive oil and add the garlic and herbs. Stir for about a minute, then add the chicken pieces, salt and pepper and cook until golden.

Transfer to a flameproof casserole or oven dish. Cover with perry and add the vinegar. Cook in a medium oven (200-220°, gas mark 6) for 45 minutes.

Remove the chicken from the casserole. Take a little of the liquid to one side and in a separate container blend with the flour to form a smooth paste. Stir this paste into the remaining liquid and simmer for 5 minutes.

Pass the liquid through a sieve. Return it to the dish and add the chicken. Warm through for five minutes and serve with roast potatoes and green beans.

Obviously cider or perry would be a good accompaniment, but a decent gueuze, or even a wheat beer (Tesco's French wheat beer is fabulous), would go equally well.

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CAMRA CALLING!

Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries

Here are the monthly branch event diaries, starting with Stockport and South Manchester, followed by High Peak, Macclesfield and Trafford & Hulme

Diary

November 2004

Thursday 11th - Branch Meeting: Blossoms, Buxton Road, Heaviley. Starts 8.00pm.

Friday 19th - Edgeley Stagger: meet Olde Woolpack, Brinksway 7.30; Alexandra, Northgate Road 8.30.

Saturday 20th - Informal Social at Bury Beer Festival - from 12 noon

Thursday 25th - Pub of the Month Presentation to the Kingsway, Levenshulme. From 8.00pm.

Saturday 4th December - Day in Chorlton. Meet between 12noon and 1pm in The Bar, Wilbraham Road (opp. Safeway)

Thursday 9th - Branch Meeting and Christmas Quiz: Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris. Starts 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 15th - Branch Meeting: Kinder Lodge, New Mills Rd, Hayfield. Starts 8.30pm.

Monday 6th December - Committee Meeting: Royal Oak, Buxton Rd, High Lane. Starts 8.30pm.

Saturday 11th - Xmas Social, Cheshire Ring, Manchester Road, Hyde

Monday 13th - Branch Meeting: Friendship, Arundel St, Glossop. Starts 8.30pm.

Regional CAMRA under 30 social group: Hydres Brewery Visit with FREE Beers. Thurs 18 Nov. Booking is essential. Phone Dave on 07931750108.

November 2004

Apart from Macclesfield & Bollington, the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch covers a wide area from Wilmslow to Knutsford and down to Congleton.

Saturday 13th - Regional Pub of the Year Award and brewery tour: Beartown Tap, Willow St, Congleton. From 3.00pm.

Monday 15th - Autumn Pub of the Season Award: Robin Hood, Rainow, Sandwiches and pub games! From 8.00pm.

Monday 22nd - Social: Castle, Castle Inn Rd, Congleton. From 8.00pm

Monday 6th December - Campaigning Meeting: Poachers, Ingersely Rd, Bollington. Starts 8.00pm

The Trafford & Hulme Branch covers the Borough of Trafford, Manchester west of the M56/Princess Parkway and a large part of the City Centre.

Thursday 18th - Broadheath Social. 8.00pm Railway then Packet House

Sunday 28th - Curry night at Essence, Broadheath (booking essential through Joan Taylor, 0161 962 2396)

Thursday 9th - Branch Meeting: W heatsheaf, Church St, Altrincham. Starts 8.00pm

Thursday 16th - Hydres Xmas social, booking essential through Neil Worthington.

Regional CAMRA under 30 social group: Fri 3 Dec from 8pm. Social in the Rain Bar, Great Bridgewater St, Manchester City Centre. Meet by CAMRA sign. davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk

To Do

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12



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BLOWING HOT AND COLD

IN THE PAST I've complained about pubs being heated to tropical levels in winter. However, very often they seem to err in the other direction and show excessive optimism about the British climate, flinging their doors open at the first sight of sunshine. I've seen this on bright spring days where it really wasn't at all warm out of the sun, and on autumn evenings where Indian summer weather earlier in the day is rapidly being replaced by a frosty chill. Staff working behind the bar don't seem to realise that a wide open door is likely to leave customers shivering in a freezing draught. Keeping the elements out is the most sensible and economical way of ensuring a comfortable temperature in your pub.

Another rather Quixotic attempt to defy the elements is the growing popularity of "patio burners". The idea is to make it possible to use outside drinking areas at times when it wouldn't normally be warm enough. However, they don't really have the effect of producing constant, all-round warmth. It's more like sitting next to a bonfire, where you're toasted on one side and freezing on the other. Also, as they're basically trying to heat the entire outdoors, they're extremely wasteful of energy. At a time when gas and electricity prices are shooting up and we are all being urged to conserve power, surely it would make sense for pubs to follow a more sustainable policy. We should simply accept as a fact of life that the British climate is such that there are only a few tens of days each year when it's comfortable to sit outside until the late evening.

MINIMISING DISORDER

The nationwide epidemic of so-called binge drinking has led a growing number of local authorities to look into imposing minimum pricing schemes on pubs and bars. Typically they are looking at requiring all pints and bottles to be priced at no less than £1.25 or £1.50 - in Aberdeen they've even gone as high as £1.75. They are skating on thin legal ice, though, as dictating prices could be seen as an anti-competitive practice and a restraint of trade.

It is certainly true that some forms of promotions, in particular those offering all you can drink for a tenner, are blatantly irresponsible. It's also questionable whether offers of "buy two large glasses and get the full bottle of wine" can be seen as encouraging a moderate approach to drinking. However, around here, many Holts and Sam Smiths pubs sell beer for well below £1.50 a pint, and could easily fall foul of a minimum pricing regime. Yet these pubs are often the ones that are least likely to witness late-night disorder. It isn't pricing as such that is the problem, but the general attitude to drinking encouraged by modern stand-up bars. By all means restrict promotions that give people an incentive to drink more than they otherwise would, but the only restraint on pricing should be that if you want to sell something cheaply you have to do it all the time.

At the same time, when drinkers are often getting tanked up on cheap take-home booze before heading out to the pub, the supermarkets should not be allowed to escape scot-free. Of course you can store take-home drinks and don't have to consume them all at once, but is "12 cans for the price of 8" at the checkout really all that different from "3 bottles for the price of 2" at the bar?

Curmudgeon Online: www.pubcurmudgeon.org.uk

5 Years Ago
by Phil Levison **OCTOBER '99**

The main front page story dealt with the Regional Pub of the Year title for CAMRA, Greater Manchester - for the fourth successive year the title had gone to a pub in the Opening Times area. This was the Sportsman in Hyde, which had won the prestigious award for the second year running. So was there some secret formula for winning an award like this, because three years previously the pub was a failed, shabby Whitbread house with a low level of trade. It had now been completely refurbished, and turnover had increased almost seven-fold. In many ways the Sportsman summed everything CAMRA stands for - a gimmick-free, thriving community pub, serving a range of independently brewed ales in tip-top condition, with full measures guaranteed every time.

★★★★★

Last month's *Five Years Ago* reported on the rationalisation of the beers available to the former Marston's tied estate - the in-house guest beers had been reduced from 30 to just 12. Bateman's Dark Mild had been delisted along with the draught version of Owd Roger. Now it had been announced that the mainstream Marston's Bitter was also destined for oblivion, even though Wolverhampton & Dudley chairman David Thompson had promised that if there was a demand for the beer it would continue.

A spot survey carried out by *Opening Times* in South Manchester revealed that the axeing of the beer had been greeted with dismay, and sales in the Wilmslow Road corridor were probably in the region of 40-50 barrels a week. There were comments like "Manchester people like Marston's not Banks's" - so it seemed that Mr Thompson had ignored customer demand by axeing Marston's Bitter.

★★★★★

New faces were reported at Ye Old Vic in Edgeley. Ex-policeman Steve Brannan and partner Johanne Quinn had taken over as tenants of the previously managed pub, which remained in private ownership. The permanent range of beers was Theakston's Bitter, Courage Directors and Wells' Bombardier, usually supplemented by a guest beer, but Steve had been experimenting with different beers to find out which went well.

★★★★★

Hydes' had finally launched their long-awaited premium bitter, and early signs were that they were on to a winner with Jekyll's Gold, a 4.3% ABV golden beer. It already had listings with wholesalers and other brewers (including John Smiths) which would put it into pubs throughout much of the country. The creation of this new brand, adding to Hydes' all-year beers and their seasonal range, was intended to give the Manchester brewer an ale which could be a strong competitor in a market dominated by Pedigree and Landlord.

Hydes' had also unveiled a new corporate image, covering everything from pubs down to bar towels and ashtrays. There was a new livery, and new-look pumpclips - the 'Anvil' tag had been dropped, and whilst the new beers were plain 'Hydes', a small representation of an anvil was to remain in the corporate imagery.



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Robert Brown and Christine Massey liked their local, the Rock Tavern, New Mills, so much that they took on the tenancy! Now the couple are fully trained licensees and are working together as a team to make the most of their favourite pub.

Both Robert and Christine are still involved in other careers, as post master in Wilmslow and a hairdresser respectively, so they have their hands full with every hour of the day accounted for. "But we're thoroughly enjoying the challenge," Christine said. "It might be hectic sorting out stock and making sure everything is just so for our customers, but it's worth it, and the reason why this new venture works for us is because we perform well as a team, which makes it all the more enjoyable." In addition, the couple are able to put their customer service skills, perfected by their daytime jobs, into practice behind the bar. "It's a different kind of interaction from working behind the counter at the post office," explained Robert, "but it's still working to ensure customers are happy, both with the atmosphere and the beer we serve, so it's a very rewarding career." Robert and Christine are also aware that the Rock Tavern still has plenty of potential to be developed. "We're just opposite Torrs Riverside Park, so there is a great opportunity to start serving meals for the many hikers who come to visit. That's what we like about this pub, there's always the chance to build business because of the good mix of local and passing trade. The other benefit is that we get to spend more time in the company of friends," concluded Robert.

★ ★ ★ ★

Local man Martin Wharam decided to take on the role of licensee of the Board Inn, Whaley Bridge, in order to take control of his own destiny. So far, his time at the Robinson's pub has been hectic while he has been busily making changes to make sure the Board realises its full potential. "I've already set up darts and dominoes teams and would be interested to hear from anyone who needs a base for their club or society. In my opinion that's what pubs are for, serving their customers and keeping the community spirit alive," Martin said. He also added that he wanted to create a warm and friendly atmosphere for everyone to enjoy and relax in.

His wife, Olwen, still works full time at present, but also helps behind the bar when she can, to give Martin her support. The couple plan to make the pub a real draw, and have already started to open at the earlier time of 12.00 noon each day. "I'm really looking forward to building up the trade and getting to know our customers better, and I'm sure we can really make a go of it. At some point, we would like to start serving food, but for the immediate future we will concentrate on putting our own personal stamp on the business," says Martin. As a resident of Whaley Bridge, Martin will no doubt be recognised by many of his customers, both old and new, and he is sure to be offering them all a very warm welcome.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

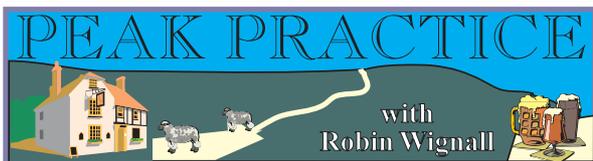
Horse riding enthusiasts, Susan Kellett and Alan Jones have taken over as joint licensees of the Wagon, in Mottram. The pub and restaurant has been a strong favourite of the couple for many years, so when they heard that the tenancy was to become available, they took up the perfect opportunity to start their own business together. The bold move will enable the couple to spend more time together and share their ambition of building the business, which for Susan is a first time in the licensed trade, and for Alan is a new direction, having left his established career in engineering to take on the pub. The Wagon, with its large adjacent pasture, is the ideal venue for the couple who share a passion for horse riding. "In the long term we would like to be able to offer riding holidays, but for now we are concentrating on building the pub and restaurant trade," enthused Susan.

"Alan has been a customer here for many years, but this is the first time we've worked on the other side of the bar, and we have had a lot to learn," says Susan. "The most important thing from day one was to create the right impression and to be sure that the beer is served in tip top condition. The change in licensees has already generated a lot of interest in the community and it's always nice to welcome new customers. I am sure that the pub's strong appeal is the fact that we serve cask conditioned beer, and conversation is not interrupted by the distractions of a juke box, so our guests can enjoy their pint in peace," she explained.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

It's a while since Holt's bought a pub. However, their latest purchase is the Queens on Clarendon Place in Hyde. The pub is currently closed for refurbishment but should reopen selling the full Holt's range. A welcome addition to the town's drinking scene.





RECENT FIGURES show that 20 pubs a month are closing nationally. Inevitably the Peak District has suffered over the years with closures for various reasons.

Andrew McCloy in his Peak District Pub Guide has an article on lost locals. Some of these were part of the general pub stock reduction brought about by population changes. Some pubs were closed in Longendale and the Derwent Valley at the time of the reservoir building, being either flooded, or closed because water authorities considered the pubs and public water supplies were not compatible. The George & Dragon near Crowden in Longendale was one of the latest 'water' closures, surviving until 1961. I have a postcard photo of the George & Dragon, probably from around 1950.

In more recent years the George in New Mills was closed by 1992, as I took a photo of the pub, boarded up, in May of that year. The Squirrel in Newtown has closed and is now a private house, and a brief CAMRA favourite, the Squirrels in Chinley, is also lost.

On the Cat & Fiddle road, the Setter Dog closed its doors relatively recently, as did the Rose & Crown at Tunstead Milton. This latter looks to have residential use. The New Inn at Horwich End, Whaley Bridge, formerly the Jolly Roger, a one-time Tetley Walker house, is now part of the Nimbus Antiques complex, an expanding antiques business.

It is not all doom and gloom. Earlier in the year the Jodrell Arms in Whaley Bridge re-opened after several months of closure, though successive landlords during this year perhaps suggest some continuing uncertainty.

At the end of September, the Shady Oak at Fernilee re-opened after over a year's closure. This former Boddington's house, now badged as a free house, has had new windows, refurbished toilets, some tasteful extension and a good clean-up. Flowers IPA and Shady Oak (a 4.2% Coach House brew) are on handpump at £1.90, and both were on form during a recent brief visit. A third handpump sells a changing range of beers that has included Marston's Pedigree, Webster's Yorkshire Bitter and Theakston's Bitter. Food was important on a busy Saturday evening. More on the Shady Oak in the near future.

Sadly, just as I was putting the finishing touches to this column, came the news that the Swan at Kettlethulme is to close. This is a great loss to the drinking scene. The Swan is a rural gem in a genuinely old building. More importantly, it served a good choice of beer in very good condition. This Good Beer Guide listed pub will be missed by locals and visitors alike. The message is obvious. All our locals need using, especially rural and village pubs. If you are out in the Peak District, pop in a pub. As the old adage has it, use it or lose it.

On a completely different note, though still encouraging use of rural pubs, comes news of a special brew from Storm Brewery in Macclesfield. At the behest of Tony Bianchi, of Arighi Bianchi, Hugh Thompson at storm has produced a special anniversary brew, AB150 (4.2 per cent ABV). This celebrates 150 years of trading by Macclesfield's designer furnishing business, housed in the famous glass and iron listed building just a stone's throw from Storm near the town centre. The first batch of AB150 flew into the free trade, and flew out, in the Peak District and nearby parts of Staffordshire and Cheshire. Further brews of this smooth, clean bitter with a lingering finish, were on the cards, so it might still be available in the likes of the Cheshire Cheese at Hope, the Church at Chelmsorton, the Ship at Wincle, and in Bollington at the Poachers and the Meridian. These of course are just a few of the village and rural pubs worth trying in and around the Peak District.

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LIVING IN THE PAST?

Still visiting pubs that local CAMRA members have decided not to include this year? One third of the pubs in the 2004 edition haven't made it for 2005. So avoid disappointment and get your copy of the 2005 Good Beer Guide now.

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Plus Top Writers...

One's Beautiful, Two's A Crowd – Jeff Evans on the modern brewing industry, divided between regionals and micros wedded to cask beer and the nationals that have sidelined real ale.

Keep it in the Family – Barrie Pepper celebrates the return of Theakston's to family ownership and looks at the remarkable Yorkshire market town that is also home to Black Sheep Brewery – run by a member of the Theakston family.

Waiter – the Beer List! – Celebrated American brewer Garrett Oliver, author of the Brewmaster's Table, matches some of the world's classic beers with traditional food.

Public Bars – Roger Protz on pubs that have been saved for their communities, run as co-ops or community locals, plus Roger's Good Beer Guide Awards for Brewing Excellence and Innovation.

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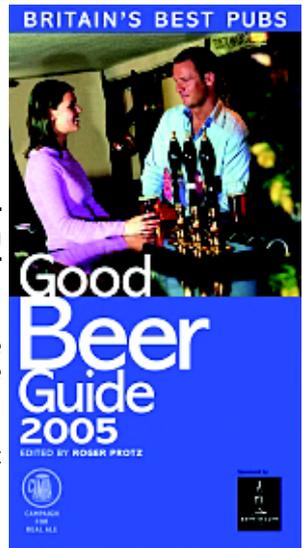
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FESTIVAL PRESENTATIONS



Just to prove we don't spend ALL our time in pubs.. presentations are also made in Breweries - (above) John Clarke giving Robinsons head brewer Chris Hellin his Bronze award from the 2004 Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition (Old Tom) on September 30 and (right) Charlotte Bulmer presenting the Stockport 2004 Cider of the Festival award to Ralph Owen (top) and the Perry award to Kevin Minchew (right) on the recent Stockport branch cider trip.



DAY OUT IN MACCLESFIELD

QUITE A LARGE group of us arrived in Macclesfield for an afternoon in some of the pubs. As we walked through Waters Green the fair was in full swing.

Anybody who looks at old photographs of Waters Green will see the 108 steps, next to these is our first port of call, the **Nags Head**. This is a Robinson's pub, refurbished not so long ago it is quite impressive inside, with quite a few separate areas away from the bar. It also houses a snooker table. There's a good range of Robbies ales, including the seasonal, and these were all on good form, the pub also has quite an impressive food menu. Next leaving here, passing the **Bull & Gate**, which is still boarded up we went to the **Waters Green Tavern**, as a long standing Good Beer Guide entry this pub did not disappoint. It is well known for stocking more unusual beers, many from north of the border. They had a good range today, Greene King IPA, Phoenix White Tornado, Storm Windgather, Green Oak Lager & Lime (this one is by Oakham), Atlas Latitude and also Kelham Island Easy Rider. Quite a selection, most of which was tried and found to be in good nick. We were also very impressed with the reasonably priced food, which is served at lunch times, and none of us were disappointed with our choices.

Next climbing the hill we came to the **Castle**. This is a very old pub, which is on the CAMRA National Inventory of historic pub interiors. Deceptively small from the outside, it is quite large once you enter, with separate rooms off the bar. You feel as though you are going back in time as this pub has changed little in many years. On the beer front the sole offering was some well-kept Theakstons Bitter.

Our next pub also a Good Beer Guide entry, the **Prince of Wales** on Roe Street. This is an ex-Greenalls house, now badged as a 'Porters Ale House'. It looks very inviting from the outside with a mosaic in the doorway as you enter. Inside it was quite busy and sometimes it is difficult to get a seat on busy days. The beers on offer were Deuchars IPA, Bass, Belhaven Sandy Hunters Traditional Ale, Lees Bitter, Batemans XXXB and all were all excellent. They also serve a variety of seafood. This pub also has its own website, with a webcam that updates every 30 seconds. A visit to the gents revealed a fish tank, very unusual.

Leaving here we descended the hill to Park Green, to the next pub on our list, the **Society Rooms**, this is a Wetherspoons house not that long ago converted from the old college. Inside a fairly good job has taken place in the usual Wetherspoons fashion. The beers on offer were Courage Directors, Marston's Pedigree and Abbot Ale. These were all OK.

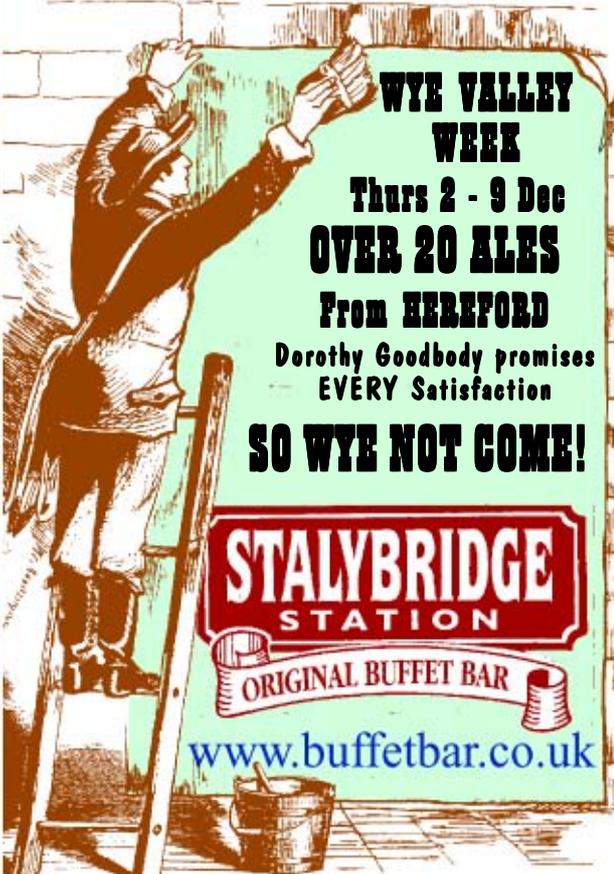
Next a small group of us branched off, and went to a little pub hidden away on Chapel Street. This is the **Lord Byron** a Robbies pub. Entering we were met by old photos of Macc which adorned the walls. A good range of beers was stocked and these were all on good form this pub is quite a hidden little gem.

Meanwhile some of our group had gone to the **Railway View** and we decided to join them. This pub is on Byrons Lane just on the outskirts of town. Inside the pub is all sorts of railway insignia; the pub was fairly busy and among the beers on offer were Timothy Taylors Landlord and Typhoon by the local Storm Brewery which were both rated good. The pub also has a food menu for lunchtime visitors

Leaving here we headed back towards town to the **Sun** on Mill Lane. This pub has a traditional interior, with dark wood furniture, and ornate mirrors in the lounge. Quite a good range of beers were on offer these being, Marston's Pedigree, Breakspear Bitter and Three Shires XXX, all in fairly good nick.

Our final destination was quite a little walk to the other side of town. This pub is the **Ship Inn**, a free house on Beech Lane. This is a typical local pub, and we were met by friendly atmosphere once inside. As you enter you are met by a well stocked bar facing you, and an interior on a nautical theme, with ships and other items around the pub. Two blazing fires burned away in the open grates. A selection of beers was on offer including Storm Ale Force, Moorhouses Pendle Witches Brew and Worthingtons Bitter, all on good form. Everybody agreed this pub was well worth the visit. All in all a good selection of pubs were tried and enjoyed by us all.

GM.



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MANCHESTER MATTERS *by Cityman*

I've managed to get back into my stride this month with quite a bit to report.

We'll kick off with the second stage of my idle around some of the City Centre pubs I've not had chance to visit for some time, starting with **Mulligans** on Southgate, just off Deansgate. This used to be the Waggon & Horses but for many years has been one of the city's better Irish theme bars. The good news is that real ale is also sold – when I last popped in it was Jennings Cumberland Ale but this time there was the equally welcome sight of Taylor's Landlord on handpump.

The **Rising Sun** on Queen Street, just off Lincoln Square, is one of the city pubs with an entrance at each end, the other being on Lloyd Street. Last time I paid a call it was pretty poor, but that was a couple of years ago and since then it's hugely improved. The pub is clean, bright and smart, with good beer to match – it has Cask Marque accreditation. There were three cask beers available – Black Sheep Bitter and Wells' Bombardier, which I guess are the core range, along with a guest, Riddleys Witchfinder Porter. All in good nick, too. There was a sign advertising the fact that the pub is now open on Sundays between 12 noon and 10.30pm.

If you leave by the back (Lloyd Street) entrance, you will see opposite the rear entrance of the **Nag's Head**, which has its main entrance on Jackson's Row. Done out more in the 'Queen Victoria's railway carriage' style of traditional, this is still a comfortable and pleasant place to have a drink. Boddington's Cask and Theakston's Bitter are on handpump. Nearby on Lloyd Street, there is work underway on the former premises of the **Old Monk**. Intriguingly, a Church Inn/Saddleworth Brewery van was parked outside. One to watch perhaps?

At the top of Lloyd Street on the corner of Albert Square, the **Square Albert** is now closed. I know that because there's a sign up saying just that. Not far away there is the **Sir Ralph Abercromby** on Bootle Street. A long time favourite this, with Wadworth 6X, Boddington's Cask, Castle Eden Ale (a rare find these days) and Greene King Abbot all on handpump. A pleasant and comfortable watering hole.

PLUSES AND MINUSES

A couple of months ago, I reported that there were plans to turn the long-closed **Bay Horse** on Thomas Street (just off High Street) back into a pub. Well, it's now open and I have to say it's a huge missed opportunity. Yes, it's pleasant and comfortable, although the concrete floor has deservedly attracted some criticism. My main gripe though, is the absence of any cask ale or, indeed, much of note in bottle. Most of the better independently run bars opened in recent years manage one or the other (Kro, Bar Centro, Cord, Temple, Fab Cafe etc). Even near competitor **Bluu** sells the real thing. Let's hope things improve but at the moment it's one to miss, I'm sorry to say. Talking of independently run bars, another one doing the decent thing on the beer front is **Font** on New Wakefield Street off Oxford Road, behind the station. It's been open for about a year, I believe



and is a stylish, split level bar with serving counters on the upper and lower levels. There are handpumps on both bars and, while these were out of action when I called, I was told by the barman that the cask beer range normally comprises Black Sheep Bitter and a guest beer. The bottled range includes Chimay (all three varieties), Duvel, Delerium Tremens, Budvar, Krombacher and Erdinger. One to keep an eye on, I think.



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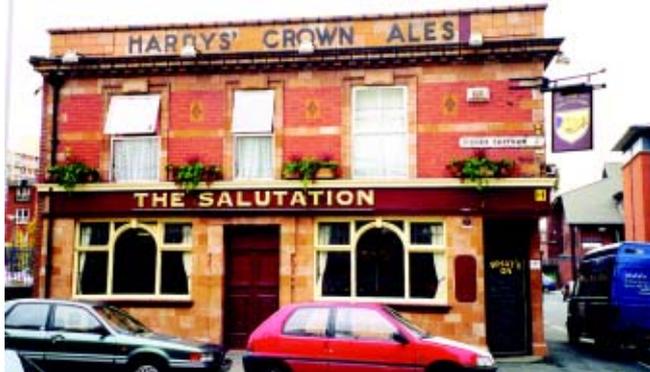
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NEW FACES

I called in at Font on my way to another hugely improved pub. This is the **Salutation** on Higher Chatham Street. This has been a long-time favourite of mine, although in recent years it had fallen on hard times with shabby décor and no real ale. Luckily it was saved in the nick of time by Tim Ellis and Eric Barker. I reported some time ago that the pub was in new hands and it has now benefited from a wholesale refurbishment, both inside and out, reopening at the end



of September after a one-month closure. It's a huge improvement with the whole pub being upgraded in a traditional but unfussy style. Outside the tilework has been cleaned up and even the old Hardy's Crown Ales sign has been uncovered and restored. I believe there has been some comment elsewhere about the loss of the etched windows although Tim and Eric explain that this was done so that potential customers would be able to see that the pub was now a very different animal to that before. I can go with that. The refurbishment accidentally resulted in the number of handpumps being reduced by one. The previous range was Black Sheep Bitter, Flowers IPA, Marston's Pedigree, Tetley Dark Mild and an occasional guest. When I called there were just Black Sheep and Flowers on, although this will increase. Quality was good. Once the gas supply has been upgraded there will also be traditional pub food available during the day, and a selection of curries in the evenings. Well worth a visit.

DOWN IN FALLOWFIELD

Beartown Brewery have finally got themselves a new tenant for **Bruins** in Fallowfield (corner Wilmslow Road/Moseley Road). This is Edd Whaite who took over on 18 October, having previously worked at the Cheshire Ring in Hyde.

Edd has taken the place by a much-needed scruff of the neck. The first change is the opening hours which are now fixed at 12-11 Monday to Saturday and 12-10.30 on Sundays – the pub had previously been plagued by irregular opening. He also realises that Bruins has to strike a balance between appealing to the student trade and also getting the locals in, given that the students are away for 20 weeks of the year. So, there's a pool table and a DJ on Fridays and Saturdays, although the volume is kept down. Similarly while there is sport on the big screen, the commentary is generally turned off. On the second and last Sundays of the month there is live folk/acoustic music. A kitchen is to be built to enable food to be served. The pub has been redecorated and the aim is to have local art students exhibit their works on the walls.

On the beer front, seven Beartown Beers are sold along with a guest ale. Budvar will soon be available on draught, too. All in all, I was impressed by this. Edd knows what he wants to do with this pub and strikes me as the man to pull it off. I will certainly be back.

Just down the road, Hydes' have refurbished the **Friendship**. The pub has had a huge amount of money spent on it and, as we have come to expect from Hydes', it's a very impressive job. The front entrance has been moved, the entire pub looks to have been refitted and there is a large but almost seamless extension at the back. The décor, fixtures and fittings are traditional without being over-fussy, again in the usual Hydes' style. A blackboard menu advertises food from 12-5.

On the beer front there are Hydes' Light, Bitter, Jekyll's Gold, the current seasonal and, to my pleasant surprise, a changing guest beer, all on handpump. On my visit the guest was a tasty pint of Roosters Special. The Friendship has always struck a good balance between locals and students and looks set fair to carry on doing the same thing in fine style.

DOWN DIDSBURY WAY

Greene King appear to be in no rush to re-introduce cask conditioned ale into the **Olde Cock** in Didsbury. When I called in on 21 October delivery of the beers was still awaited but was anticipated later in the same week. The beers expected to go on sale will include Greene King IPA and Abbot Ale.

Advertisements have appeared in the trade press for the lease on the **Station**. As some readers may know, *Opening Times* was thrown out of the pub when we pointed out that, in our honest opinion, the incumbents had made a bit of a pig's ear by (amongst other things) opening the pub up (although the beer quality has always been good on my subsequent incognito visits). All I will say is that despite its Didsbury location (for which read – license to print a reasonable amount of money) they do seem to be having some problems in shifting this – the latest issue of *The Publican* has the lease reduced to £135,000. Any takers?

I hear that the **Parrswood**, a John Barras pub, is up for sale. Can this be true? It's a big and, in my experience, a popular pub. If it is for sale would it make a good Holt's pub I wonder? Or JW Lees even...

Finally, Andy Black at the **Nelson** has asked me to point out that he has not changed the range of beers that he sells because he has had problems with Holt's bitter. He says that Holt's have been very good to him over the years and I am of course happy to put the record straight on this point. On a recent visit the Nelson was selling Tetley Bitter and Worthington Bitter.

LOCAL CAMRA AWARDS



An apparently illegal(!) branch chairman - and Ed(1) - John Clarke presents Simon Prime of the New Victoria, Longsight with a deserved September Pub of the Month award

Left: Alan Hazelhurst and his wife Jenny, who run the Horse and Farrier, Gatley and who have been in the trade for 25 years with their October Pub of the Month Award, presented on October 28.



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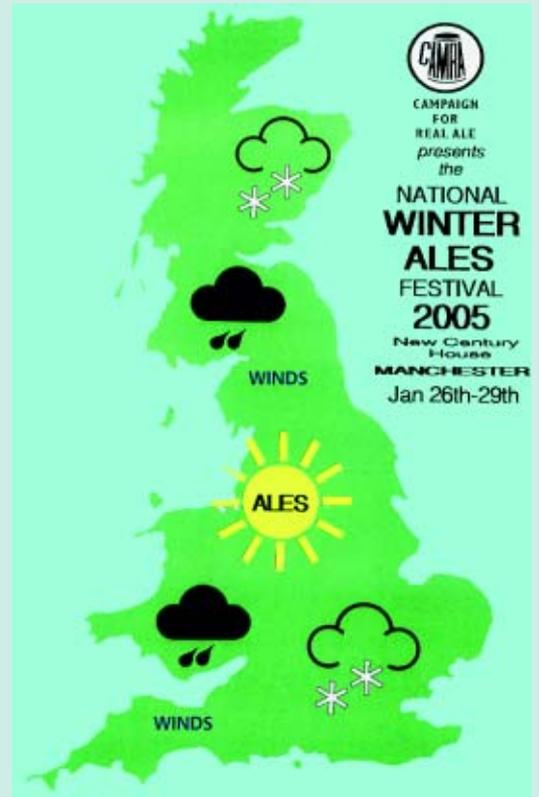
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