

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

## HERE WE ARE AGAIN!

### MORE MISLEADING CASK ALE SIGNS

**D**ESPITE ADVERSE PUBLICITY in the past, we are surprised to see that some pubs still persist in advertising cask ale on their outside signing yet still sell only keg beers. Two more offenders have recently come to light.

The pubs are both in what is the (almost) real ale desert of Longsight and both are on the main A6. The pubs in question are the Gold Cup and the Bay Horse. Both are owned by pub companies, who presumably have responsibility for exterior signing, so the licensees aren't responsible for these misleading signs (although they could of course put matters right by selling cask beer).

One of the two, the Gold Cup, has a 'for sale' sign on it so presumably the owners have lost interest in it. The Bay Horse, on the other hand, had been refurbished and, more recently, re-signed. We are told that cask ale may have made a brief reappearance shortly after this but the pub has reverted to its long-term keg-only status. The Gold Cup has also sold real ale in the past and once again it seems that the external signing hasn't caught up with what's sold inside.

We hope that both of these pubs will put things right - we would be delighted to report a real ale gain in either case. Failing that, we hope that these signs will either be removed, or at least taped over, in the near future.



## PANIC IN THE STREETS

### CONFUSION GROWS OVER NEW LICENSING LAW IMPLEMENTATION

As L-Day (August 6 - deadline for applications to renew licenses under the new Licensing Act) approached, both National Newspapers and the Licensed trade press carried dire warnings that large numbers of premises had still to apply. The predictable last minute flood of applications certainly happened with some local Councils (now the licensing authorities) staying open especially late on the Saturday to take completed forms. Information is patchy, but in some areas as many as 25% of applications haven't come in, mostly from clubs, restaurants and off-licenses. In some areas 5 - 10% of pubs failed to make it. These establishments can still apply - but they will be treated as NEW applications and there is no presumption that licenses will be granted, so when the Act is due to come into force in November, a number of people will find themselves embarrassed (or prosecuted) in the run-up to Christmas. OR WILL THEY?

A strange alliance of Judges, Press, Celebrities (who are worried about their inner-city property prices) and opposition MP's, not to mention members of the Upper House are uniting in last-minute opposition to try to stop or delay the act coming into force. Binge-drinking and violence seven days a week. Upsurge in wife-beating! Lunacy! (The words of an eminent circuit judge). Well, frankly, baloney. Most premises have requested modest extensions of an hour or so (which they may or may not actually use), and one or two hours at weekends. Binge drinking will remain largely a weekend problem (it requires disposable income, which means a job, which means weekends only, and very few people - even amongst those for whom its a habit - can afford to do it more than once or twice a week). Most of the premises (usually vertical-drinking-emporia) causing the problems already have extensions anyway. If the act fails to come in, all that will have happened is that small pubs have been forced to pay out an average of £2,000 for a load of needless paperwork. Its no wonder Britain is seeing one proper pub close every working day. PBH(Ed(2))



**7,000 CIRCULATED THIS MONTH**

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Pacific Bitter 3.8% Blue Bullet 4.5% Flatbac 4.2%  
 (Beer of the Festival, Stockport, 2003  
 & BIA Bronze Medal Winner 2004) eXSB 5.5%  
 (Beer of the Festival, Great Harwood, 2005)  
 Black Pig Mild 3.6% (Bronze Award for Mild,  
 Champion Beer of Britain, 2003)  
 Zebra Best Bitter 4.3%

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# PUB OF THE MONTH SEPTEMBER

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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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	

2005



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for September is the Thatched House on Churchgate.

Over the years the pub has had numerous owners, mainly Wilson's and the ill-fated Vaux Breweries, and various incarnations but in recent years has settled down in its role as Stockport's premier rock pub. Not perhaps the clichéd 'CAMRA pub' to the casual observer but not only does the pub excel on the music front it has in recent times become increasingly impressive with its range of beer and cider.

The pub has always been a cask ale outlet but it was the arrival of licensee Lisa Crouch and her partner Alex Hammond in April 2004 that really signalled a major improvement.

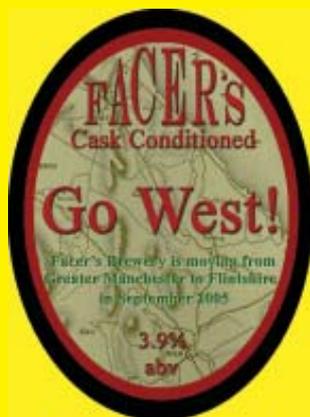
Since then there have been steady additions to the beer range, particularly since the installation of a new bar area earlier this year. This has seen an enhanced range of bottled beers (some bottle conditioned but all interesting - a recent very popular addition has been the bottled range from Scotland's Heather Ales including the likes of Grozet (gooseberry wheat beer), Kelpie (a strong dark ale with seaweed) and Fraoch, made with heather) introduced along with an increased cask ale range. The regular beers are Boddingtons Bitter and Black Sheep Bitter and these are accompanied by an ever-changing range of guest beers sourced from the surprisingly extensive Punch Taverns list. Not only that but Lisa is a cider and perry fan and so alongside regular Weston's Old Rosie, you will often find guest ciders and perries (sometimes one of each) supplied by John Reek's Merrylegs Cider, a name well-known to cider fans.

It would be easy to concentrate on the music side of things here and just offer a couple of bog standard national beers, cask or otherwise. To offer such a wide range of interesting drinks as well as maintaining a vibrant music policy shows real commitment (as well as being hard work!). The Pub of the Month award is in recognition of the effort and commitment by Lisa and Alex at the Thatched House, and will be presented on Tuesday 20 September from 8.00pm. JC

Pub of the Month certificates are framed for us by Picture This who offer the most competitively priced bespoke picture framing service in Greater Manchester. They specialise in framed breweriana and also offer a 10% discount for CAMRA members. Phone 0161 477 0009



## Facer's Going West...



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coming move to  
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# Go West!

And The Regulars.....

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Northern County (3.8%) - Pale Session Ale

Crabtree (4.3%) - Mid Range abv

DHB (Dave's Hoppy Beer) 4.3%

- Dry-Hopped Mid Range Beer

Landslide 1927 (4.9%) - Premium Strength

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## IN THE EDITORS' VIEW..

History certainly seems to be repeating itself. This month our *Five Years Ago* column reports on a campaign against pubs advertising cask beer but only selling keg. Five years later and we return to the subject.

In both of the cases we highlight this month, I suspect that it is case of oversight rather than a deliberate attempt to deceive but even so these need putting right. Given that the Longsight area is something of a beer desert the ideal solution would be for both pubs to reinstate cask beer. It can certainly be sold in the area as its continuing success in the New Victoria demonstrates - so come on, give it a go.

*John Clarke*

## OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From Robin Boardman, via e-mail:

On 8th July, Stockport County Supporters' Trust took control of Stockport County FC meaning that the Club is now run by the community, for the community. This is a fantastic achievement which means that County should never again be used as the play-thing of a wealthy individual. The take-over is the culmination of weeks of sterling effort by a dedicated group of individuals but it could not have been achieved, nor can it be maintained, without the support of the people and businesses of Stockport and South Manchester.

One of the main tasks the Trust has set itself is to raise a significant amount of money to provide a 'rainy day fund' for the Club to ensure that County will be able to continue operating in the event of temporary loss of revenue, for example, a series of postponements due to bad weather. In order to secure this funding (circa £325,000), the Trust have launched a Bond Scheme whereby supporters and anyone else who has the interests of local football at heart can invest in the Club. By joining the SCST or buying a Bond, you can share ownership of County and be Stockport's answer to Roman Abramovich or Malcolm Glazer!

In order to promote the Bond Scheme, the Supporters Trust has launched a massive campaign which centres around the distribution of 100,000 beer mats and huge quantities of leaflets. We are aiming to enlist the help of every pub in Stockport to publicise our efforts and, so far, the response has been fantastic. From Gatley to Mellor and Reddish to Woodford we have received a warm welcome. From my own experience and from talking to fellow Trust members, the reaction has ranged from polite to enthusiastic and to date we have not been turned away from a single establishment! On behalf of the Trust, I would therefore like to thank the publicans of Stockport for your invaluable help. I hope we are able to repay your kindness by providing success on the pitch and filling your bars with celebrating Stockport County supporters!

For further information on the Stockport County Supporters' Trust, visit our website @ [www.stockportcountytrust.com](http://www.stockportcountytrust.com) If you have not received beer mats / leaflets and would like some, email : [info@stockportcountytrust.com](mailto:info@stockportcountytrust.com)

**(Of course Edgeley Park is also the home of Stockport Beer & Cider Festival - I hope many of our customers will support this scheme - Ed(1))**

From: Tony & Anne Biggs, via e-mail:

I have just read your July/August edition of Opening Times, and I am very impressed with the standard.

We have Pub in St. Helens ([www.suttonoak.co.uk](http://www.suttonoak.co.uk)) we are a Mersey Camra Pub of the Year 2003 and have recently been awarded a Merseyside Camra Best Outlying Pub award for 2004/5. We have a Cask Marque award and an entry in the Good Beer Guide.

Our regular beers are Copper Dragon Scott's 1816 and Golden Pippin. We have several guest beers on (currently George Wright's Cheeky Pheasant). We have Budweiser Budvar, Budvar Dark and Erdinger weissbier all on draught, and Erdinger Pikantus, Dunkel and Alkoholfrie plus others in bottles. We have a minimum two traditional draught ciders/scrumpy on draught. So we think we cater for all tastes and do our best to keep up with customer requests.

In August we will be holding our second Beer Festival (this follows a very successful festival last year and a successful Christmas Beer Festival and Cider Festival over Easter). We will be offering at least 30 beers from local micro and small breweries including our friends at Millstone, McGuinness, etc. The event starts on Saturday 27th August and concludes on Sunday 4th September (a full 9 days of Festival drinking). We are very handy to St Helens Junction Station which has regular direct trains to Manchester, Stalybridge, Huddersfield etc. Should any of your readers like to join us they will be made more than welcome - there is a discount for Camra members of course.

## FROM THE MARBLE VAULTS

BY STEVE SMITH

*Hello and welcome to what I hope will be a regular feature from me, the CAMRA Liaison Officer for the Marble Arch Inn and Brewery at 73 Rochdale Road, Manchester. Regular readers may need no introduction but for the less initiated here is a potted history...*

**The present building is constructed of polished red granite, which gives it the 'marble' exterior look, and an ornate brick upper storey with a gargoyle sitting at one end. It was built in 1888 on the site of a former pub on the old St George's Highway, and designed by architects Darbyshire & Smith. It included a simple cellar, used for storing casks of porter and which extended beyond the confined of the pub building.**



In former times it was known as the Wellington, being a McKenna's Brewery house,

the Walker & Homfrays and passing into the hands of Wilsons in 1949. During the 1950s a tasteless refurbishment took place and through to the late 1970s a crude plastic sign hung over the door proclaiming that it was "Andy's Bar". It remained much this way until it became a free house in 1984. This was when it was bought by John Worthington, a then local CAMRA member with a commitment to real ale. It was restored to its former glories with the uncovering of a decorative frieze advertising ale, porter, gin, whiskies and all manner of drinks, along with a jack-arched ceiling, beset with brown and green glazed brick and tiling.

New owners came along in 1988 and the pub held a beer festival which featured "100 Beers for 100 Years" with 25 different brews each week over a one month period. The following year a "Mild Weekend" was held in May, then in October followed a repeat of the previous year, this time with 101 beers. The year closed with another major refurbishment, the bar being moved to its now familiar location. A wonderful (but reproduction) "McKenna's Harpurhey Brewery" mirror now hangs above the fireplace. A new back room was created and became a lounge area with its own side entrance. Things stabilised until 1997 when further alterations created the space for the installation of a brewing plant by the famous Brendan Dobbin, and thus the Marble Arch became a brew pub. Mark Dade, now of Boggart Hole Clough Brewery fame became the brewer. In October 2000 the brewing operation became totally organic and shortly thereafter Mark Dade left to set up on his own and was replaced by new brewer James Campbell who, ably assisted by Phil Little, remains there to this day.

At one time the Marble Brewery had several tied houses including the Marble Arch itself, along with Bar Fringe and Knott Bar in the City centre, plus the Marble Beer House and the Bar in Chorlton. Now though, only the Marble Arch and Marble Beer House are directly owned although Marble Beers have a permanent presence on the bar at Knott Bar and The Bar.

The range has expanded, too, and during late 2004 the brewery underwent a major overhaul, and at the same time a new kitchen was created out of part of the back room, thereby enabling the pub to introduce a major food operation. There was a major relaunch in December 2004 and the range of beers continues to expand with a number of one-offs and seasonal special. Port Stout and Summer Marble have already been seen and a new late summer quencher is also in the pipeline. The brewery is also starting to spread its wings in the free trade and so even more people will be able to enjoy the delights of Ginger Marble, Manchester Bitter, Lagonda IPA, Chocolate Heavy, Marble Bitter, and many more.

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**Quite a few bits and pieces for you this month....**

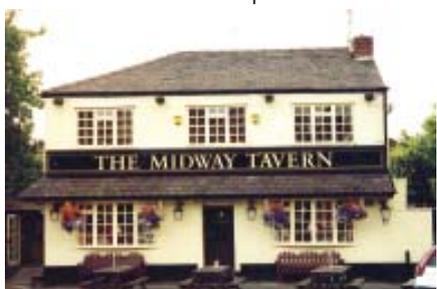
In the town centre, I see that the former **Abbey Bar** on St Petersgate has now reincarnated itself as **SK1** – the ‘SK’ presumably refers to the post code but it may as well stand for ‘still keg’ because that’s what it is. I’ve said it before – I really do think this place is missing a trick with its rather dull beer offering.

Nearby the **Stockport Arms** was in the throes of a major refurbishment as this was written, with a reopening scheduled for 26 August. To date this has been a reliable cask outlet and I hope that remains the case after reopening. The nearby **Egerton Arms** has Tetley Bitter and Boddington’s Bitter on handpump. Not too far away, there also seems to be some activity at the former **Bridge Street Wine Bar**, although whether or not it will reopen as a pub I hesitate to guess.

★★★★★

On my back from Hyde recently, I stopped off to have a look at the remaining pubs of Portwood. Of course there have been some prominent losses here in recent years with both the **Brinnington Inn** and the **Coach & Horses** demolished, and the **Stanley Arms** turned into a shop. Intriguingly, the latter is currently ‘to let’ – if the owners would consider selling, I guess it wouldn’t take much effort to turn it back into a pub... The other Portwood loss is something of an enigma. The **Rifle Volunteer** remains in situ complete with sign but hasn’t traded for years. There seems to be somebody living there and it may now be functioning as a private house, although I am unaware of any application for change of use. Having said that though, I suspect that the nearby pubs have taken most if not all of the available trade in the area.

The **Park** was crowded at ‘early doors’ on Friday evening and has Holt’s Bitter and Boddington’s Bitter on handpump. Further up Newbridge Lane, the **Midway** has established itself as something of a dining/function venue. I was very impressed with the clean modern décor – this is a pub which has had a lot of money spent



on it, and it’s money well spent, too. On handpump is Boddington’s Bitter (which, I have to say, was no more than OK when I called) and a real rarity these days – Websters Green Label. I didn’t even know they still made that!

The **Old King** is all keg but the star of the area must be the nearby **Railway** – the jewel in the Porter Brewing Co crown with its large range of real ales, real cider and foreign beers both in bottle and on draught. I am sure I don’t have to wax any more lyrical about this place – just get there soon if you haven’t already been. Of course this pub is also threatened with demolition in the next couple of years and I hope a replacement will be sought. Now, what was that about the **Stanley Arms**?

★★★★★

North Reddish, I am sorry to say, has taken the crown (if that’s the right word) as the town’s number one beer desert. The **Fir Tree** has now lost its real ale, meaning that not one single pub in North Reddish now sells cask beer. Apart from the **FirTree** the list of shame includes the **Bulls Head**, **Reddish Vale** and **Railway**. Given

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that both the **Houldsworth** and the **Carousel** in South Reddish, and the **Pomona** and **Friendship** in Gorton are also keg, it means there is no cask beer to be had on the entire stretch of road between the excellent **Navigation** (Beartown) at the top of Lancashire Hill and the **Waggon & Horses** (Holt’s) on Hyde Road. What a pitiful state of affairs! At least this dismal stretch is topped and tailed by two good pubs.

It’s not all doom and gloom in Reddish, though. The **Thatched Tavern** on Stanhope Street is a welcome oasis within sight of the main road with Tetley Mild and Bitter along with Boddington’s Cask. On Broadstone Road the **Union** (Robinson’s) is another cask ale outlet and I hear good news about the nearby **Grey Horse** where the likes of Theakson’s Old Peculier, Courage Directors and Everard’s beers have been seen recently. The new keen licensee would like to expand the range if there is the demand. I hope to get up there myself before penning next month’s column.

★★★★★

The authentic taste of the Mediterranean has come to High Lane with the arrival of twenty three year-old Natalie Gomez and her father Salvador who have taken over as of the **Red Lion**. Having brought with them a genuine Spanish chef, and head waiter, the pair have established a high class restaurant called ‘Raphael’s’ where their High Lane customers can experience continental service and the true taste of Mediterranean cuisine.

“Our speciality is fresh fish and seafood, which is something that we do very well, and is appreciated by diners who are looking for a special meal as an alternative to ordinary pub and restaurant food,” explained Natalie. “My father is originally from Lalineia in Spain and most of his family are in the restaurant business,” says Natalie, who has also gained her own invaluable experience from working in a number of bars and restaurants.

“We have a lot of other good ideas and look forward to putting them into practice to complement what we have already started, and we are now making plans for theme nights such as tapas and cocktails.”

“This is the first time that we have worked together as a team with me looking after the restaurant and my father overseeing the general management. In addition my mother Sheila is providing administrative support and my brother Jason helps out behind the bar when he’s not away at university,” she told me..

★★★★★

Well known on the Hillgate pub scene, Linda Kennerley has kept up a family tradition by following her father in to the licensed trade, for Linda has taken over as licensee of the **Waterloo**, on Waterloo Road, Stockport.

“I was born and brought up in Reddish and for the past 15 years I’ve built up a career working in the Robinson’s pubs around the Hillgate area,” Linda explained. “Until now it has always been for other people, but now that my family have grown up I’ve decided to take on a tenancy of my own.” Linda has stayed with Robinson’s, and now ensconced at the Waterloo she is already seeing customer numbers grow as she makes progressive changes to the way she runs the pub. Darts, pool and quiz nights are among the line-up of activities that bring all sections of community together for friendly competitions on most nights of the week.

“I thoroughly enjoy being in this business, as did my father when he worked for Robinson’s as a drayman, delivering beer to pubs, for 20 years. As part of his job Dad also got to drive the Thorneycroft, a 1927 delivery wagon similar to that used by Robinson’s at the turn of the century, and it still makes regular appearances at local events and carnivals,” she told me.

And finally...the **Hesketh**, Chedale Hulme, pub was closed for refurbishment as this was written and due to reopen ‘late August’ as a ‘Contemporary Traditional Pub, Whatever that is! Judging from the positions they are recruiting for, the pub will have an emphasis on food. More next time. On the other hand, currently closed and with no sign of reopening at all is **Dillon’s Whistling Jig** on Wellington Road North. The pub was very firmly boarded up in mid-August.

**OPENING TIMES SPECIFICATIONS**

Advert Column Widths, single 84mm, double 172mm. Image height 26cm. NB Advertisers who supply camera ready artwork designed for another publication that cannot be resized to our standard sizes will be charged the equivalent column/centimetre rate plus a surcharge of at least 30%. Adverts that require unusually large amounts of design work will have the extra work carried out by a studio at full commercial rate.





I never got around to writing my review of the foreign beers that featured at the 2005 National Winter Ales Festival (NWAFF) in New Century Hall, Manchester - 2006 Dates are January 18 - 21 - so I was pleased to see many of them make their appearance at the last Great British Beer Festival to be held at London's Olympia in early August. Last I hear you say? Yes indeed because next year's GBBF moves to the larger Earls Court exhibition hall down the road.

So how was this last Olympia? Busy, with a record 47,000+ customers through the doors. Hot (at times) though CAMRA's beer cooling system copes remarkably well. In fact Olympia hosted two beer festivals (three if you count the Foreign Beer Empire as semi-detached). The main one, for the customers and the smaller 180+ kil festival - for the staff.

This latter is crammed and I mean this literally, into two cold stores with crawl spaces above the tubs for tapping and venting. It's a minor miracle that anyone who ventures inside is ever seen again. I know, reader for I have been there...

After four and a bit days of that it was a relief to get behind Bieres Sans Frontiers - the foreign beer bar.

Venturing out into the main areas, what can one say? Lots of beer, some superb, some merely good, and some less so. The Cain's real lager certainly made an impression. Some loved it, some I have to say did not. Having previously sampled it in a Cains pub I must say it seemed a bit different. I hope to feature it (cooled) on the 'Beer Near & Far' bar at NWAFF alongside some of the German stuff to see how it compares then. Of the other 'brewery' bars I sampled most at the Fullers stand where the ESB was of high quality, but their local pub, Latymers (with an excellent Thai restaurant at the back) provided ESB of even higher quality.

The Supreme Champion (Crouch Vale Brewers Gold) sold very well and was in excellent form. I do feel though that there might be a 'southern/eastern' taste bias starting to creep in. I suppose it is easier to recruit judges from the area, and people have an unconscious bias towards what they are used to. Hop dominance is not a characteristic to be found much below the Severn/Wash line (or indeed in Scotland).

Food stalls were fewer in number, expensive (as you would expect) but generally of a very high standard, which was gratifying. Certainly most of the customers seemed to be enjoying themselves - with a record number joining CAMRA at the festival, which must prove something. Best real ale I tasted was probably Porter's Sunshine (no surprise) on the staff bar. All in all a grand farewell to a much loved (and loathed!) venue. I even joined Team Tango (the insanity also known as the Stewards) on the Friday to have the full 'Olympia Experience'. Very sobering it was too!

#### BEER MONSTER'S FOREIGN BEER OF THE MONTH.

*Paffgen Kolsch (Köln), sampled at BSF Olympia*  
One of the hardest to get Kolsch. Hopefully you will get a chance to sample it at NWAFF in January - it's already on order. Very dry and light with a pleasant flowery aroma. Ultra-pale, fruity and malty body and dry finish that, as is true of all this style, finishes abruptly leaving a desire for more.

#### JOINT CASK ALES OF THE MONTH

*Marble Brewery GSB (3.8%) / Howard Town Bleaklow (3.8%)*  
Golden Ales are here to stay, and not as faux understrength 'I' PAs but as a style like the Crouch Vale Brewers Gold, in their own right. The former is a fully organic pale beer from the experienced hands of James Campbell. Light floral hopped nose, with apple fruit mixing with dry slightly bitter taste. Short dry finish, bittering until the abrupt end characteristic of organic hops. Slightly reminiscent of the Kolsch above. The Howard town beer is a stonker for such a new brewery, bone dry nose and body, bittering finish. Interesting malt flavours percolate through the hops. Would give Brewers Gold a run for its money!

### OPENING TIMES ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING RATES FROM JANUARY 2004: 1/8 page (60mm x 85mm): £30 (£60 colour); 1/4 page (120mm x 85mm): £55 (£90 colour); 1/2 page (horiz: 174mm x 120mm; vert: 250mm x 85mm): £90 (£150 colour); Full page (175mm x 240mm) £150 (£250 colour). Surcharges may apply for back page. Generous discounts available on adverts of 1/4 page or above for runs of insertions. Advert design origination usually free of charge unless large costs involved. Ring 0161 477 1973 for details. Artwork should be submitted as hard copy (positive bromide) or PC COMPATIBLE (NOT MAC) \*.jpg, \*.eps, or \*.tiff AND you MUST include hard copy back-up). For colour adverts please ring for details first.

## ZESTQUEST IS BEST FEST IN WEST (NO JEST)

Neil Worthington reports....

Well, it was quite definitely the best beer festival in the west of Manchester anyway. The ZestQuest BeerFest, Chorlton's first ever Beer and Music Festival, took place in early July, in the grounds and indeed the nave of St Clement's Church, on Edge Lane. It was the first time in many years that the Trafford & Hulme branch of CAMRA had helped to organise a beer festival and we were very pleased to be associated with this successful fund raising event for the church.



I was personally pleased to note that I had lost three pounds in weight by the end of the festival, something I ascribe only partly to the physical effort involved. As any bar staff will tell you, there's not much chance to sit down when you're working behind a bar, and indeed very little chance to get anything to eat. But what usually happens at a festival is that you stoke up on a big fried breakfast and then graze on pies and chips and other stodge for the rest of the day. Chorlton of course is different, and we had such delicacies as fish in banana leaves, Thai vegetable curry and halloumi kebabs to keep us going - very much healthier all round. So what about the beer? It wasn't a sell-out, but then there was a lot of beer. And I always think a successful festival is one that covers its costs, makes a few bob for the promoters and still has a wide range of different beers to try, even when you're calling Last Orders for the last time on Saturday night. We started with some 25 different beers, with 18 gallons or more of nearly all of them, and we ended with a dozen or so still available. The first to run out, by the way, was Facer's Crabtree, quickly followed by the same brewer's Landslide and then Phoenix Wobbly Bob.

Keeping the beer cool was definitely a challenge in the summer heat but we were helped by thick insulation in the roof of the main hall. In the main, we resorted to the usual trick of damp tea towels to cover the casks and relied on evaporation to draw off surplus heat, but we also tried a new trick - "blister packs" of water, frozen to ice, as used to pack frozen fish and meat. These can be draped over the top of the cask and they don't slip off when the ice melts.

Our thanks go to Dominic Driscoll, licensee of Font Bar on Manchester's New Wakefield Street, for taking on the job of cellarman and ensuring that all the ale was fit to drink; and to no fewer than 21 different CAMRA members from five different branches for helping to staff the event. There were a lot of church members there too, but I think it's fair to say that they are more used to running garden fetes and jumble sales than beer festivals - especially one with over 800 visitors - and CAMRA's help was much appreciated.

And finally: our apologies to the draymen. It's normally good practice at festivals to empty out any remaining beer, either into pop bottles for later consumption or else down the drain to feed the sewer monsters. It makes the casks considerably lighter and easier to handle, an important consideration when you don't have gravity to help you get them back on the dray. But on this occasion we just weren't able to empty them. The only drains that were within rolling distance turned out to be blocked and quickly swamped with beer. Rather than leave pools of stagnant beer in the churchyard, which would have become most malodorous very rapidly, we decided to bung the casks up and leave them to be emptied back at the breweries. Sorry lads - hope you didn't put your backs out!





## INBEV SHUN CASK?

Are Interbrew UK, now renamed InBev, about to finally abandon all involvement with cask beer? The signs aren't good.



Most of the other global giants who dominate the British brewing industry have made clear they have little or no interest in cask beer, leaving the market to the regional, family and micro brewers, many of whom are reporting growing sales against the background of a declining beer market. InBev have clung to the fig leaves of Boddington's Bitter and Draught Bass, although cask Boddies has been contracted out to Hydes' and Bass is now brewed by



**InBev** Marston's. While the beers are brewed by others, responsibility for sales and marketing, and hence the long-term health of these beers, still rests with InBev. They have recently announced further support for both beers, although there has been precious little sign of this locally, but possibly unguarded comments by a company spokesman shows their 'commitment' in a different light. An article in *The Guardian's* G2 supplement on 10 August looked at the cask ale market. InBev's British PR manager, Rob Bruce, is reported as saying that the company has no plans to break into the real ale market. "We leave that to the smaller brewers and microbreweries" he is quoted as saying. Which begs the question, whither (or should that be wither?) Bass and Cask Boddies? If these beers and now to be abandoned to their fate, this will be bad news for those who make them, particularly Hydes who have invested huge amounts to take on the Boddies contract.

### FAMILY FAVOURITES

More new seasonals from the family brewers this month.

**Hydes'** – the latest craft ale from one of the more go-



ahead local brewers is Inspiration (4.5% ABV). This is described as a "mellow full-flavoured autumnal ale created from Maris Otter and crystal and Cara malts complemented by carefully selected English hops". Certainly one to look out for in the local Hydes' pubs.

**Holt's** – not much news here. Many Holt's pubs have been selling off their stock of bottled Humdinger (3.5% ABV) at £1 a bottle – hopefully the new, higher strength (4.1% ABV) version will be its replacement.



**JW Lees** – the seasonal for September/October is the old favourite Brooklyn Best (5% ABV). When it first appeared this was an intensely hoppy ale brewed by 'guest brewer' Garrett Oliver from New York's Brooklyn Brewery. In the intervening years, the beer has become rather more Lees than Brooklyn in its hopping but still remains a hugely enjoyable beer. Look out for it in pubs



such as the Lloyds (Chorlton), rain Bar (City Centre) and Urmston (Urmston).

**Robinson's** – the original plan was to one again run Kick Off from last year. However, despite being an enjoyable beer it didn't go too well in the free trade. Thus it has been replaced by Lighthouse (4% ABV), "an outstanding golden



Autumn Ale specially brewed for fullness and flavour, with an interesting blend of toasted biscuit and mellow citrus flavours, perfectly balanced by a subtle hop

aroma." Of course this month will also see the first brew of Old Tom for its prolonged autumn, winter and spring season. Enjoy!

**Cains** – Cain's are celebrating the success of their cask lager at this year's Great British Beer Festival. Whilst it didn't win any awards it was apparently a huge hit with many customers. Cains Lager stands apart from other British 'lagers' thanks to the combination of the ingredients and the skill of the brewing team. It's made with what is widely considered the finest malted barley in the world - Maris Otter from Norfolk. It's then stored or 'lagered' for a full 3 months to give it a smooth and fuller flavour. Look out for it in local Cain's house, the Gothic in Gatley.



**Coming Next Month: Early look at Three Rivers new Brewing Premises and Plant.**



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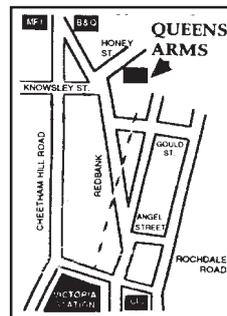
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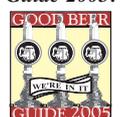
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**Micro Magic**

As ever our local micro brewers have a plethora of beery delights available. Once again apologies to those we couldn't contact this month.

**Phoenix** - not too many new beers at the moment. The excellent White Tornado (4.2%ABV) is still available and at the end of September look for Struggling Monkey (4.7% ABV).

**Bank Top** - still going strong at Bolton and continuing with the 'Knights of the Round Table' range of guest beers. The latest of these will be Sir Gareth a 4.2% ABV bitter beer.

**Millstone** - up at Mossley, Millstone is 'ticking over nicely' and is installing a new fermenter which will increase capacity by 50 per cent. No new beers are planned for the time being but the good news is that the excellent True Grit (5% ABV) has now become a permanent addition to the portfolio.

**Bazens'** - the popular Lion Brew (4.1% ABV) is making an appearance this month, mainly to satisfy a large order from the West Midlands but we should expect to see some locally, too. On the awards front, Richard & Jude Bazen are off to Brontë country - the Waggon & Horses at Oxenhope was voted best mild pub on the Keighley & Craven CAMRA Mild Trail and the mild sold was Bazens' Black Pig.

**Greenfield** - the popular Longwood Thump (4.5% ABV) will be out at the beginning of this month, brewed to mark the local Saddleworth Rushcart event. The end of this month will see Black Five, a 4% ABV dark, black beer a sort of cross between a strong mild and a stout but without the heavy body that can be associated with the style.

**Facer's** - Go West continues as the special. By the time this edition of OT is out Dave Facer will have brewed a strictly one-off beer using Styrian Goldings as both bittering and aroma hops, it is being brewed for Faram's Hop Merchants as his contribution to the single variety hop beer tasting session at their forthcoming "brewer's hop walk", which is always a good trade day out, he tells us. It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it. The other 13 or so casks will be available at the usual outlets.

The new brewery plans are ever evolving. Dave has found a suitable industrial unit in Flint a couple of miles from the new house and hopes to have the lease within a month or so, in which case he'll be able to move his half of the SBS in late September/early October. This will give him a good stop-gap to evaluate the market conditions and decide on the new build, for which design work continues - a turf roof is the latest mad-cap idea!

The last Facer's beer brewed at the SBS is likely to be Beerjolais Nouveau 2005, assuming the Salford hop crop gets a move on from its current lacklustre appearance (Dave's not too worried, it didn't look too good this time last year, but by the middle/end of September the crop was fine).

**Three Rivers** - 'D Day', the move to the new premises, was scheduled for the weekend of 13/14 August. The move will triple capacity at Stockport's booming micro, and to complement the extra capacity Three Rivers have also purchased an additional 600 9-gallon casks. As Head Brewer Mike Hitchen told us, "you've got to go for it, haven't you?". On the beer front, two new beers have been specially commissioned for local Wetherspoon's outlets. The Bishop Blaize at Old Trafford will be getting Busby's Pride a 4.1% ABV reddis-coloured (what else?) ale brewed with Challenger hops. As a staunch City fan, Mike found this a particularly challenging commission! The other new beer is Eccles Cross Ale, brewed for the Eccles Cross pub in... Eccles. This is a 'meaty stout' at 5.6% ABV. Also out is Straw Boater, a 3.7% beer brewed with Cascade hops and also using some Scottish honey in the brew. As part of the move, Three Rivers have kept a small 3-barrel fermenter which will be used for limited edition special. This may include a range of 'unhopped ales'; the first of which may be Samuel Pepys Ale brewed with rowanberries.

**Howard Town** - the area's latest micro seems to be going great guns. The first brew was a slightly unplanned Howard Town Bitter (4.7% ABV), a crisp amber beer that sold out comfortable. The follow-up Wren's Nest (4.2% ABV) also sold out and beer number three, Bleaklow (3.8% ABV) was about to be put into barrels in the first week of August. One-third of this brew had already been sold, too. A special may be produced for the Glossop Jazz Festival in mid-September. While many local freehouses are trying the beers, they also seem to be going well on their home patch, with reliable Glossop real ale outlets such as the Globe, Old Gloveworks, Star and Beehive taking the beers.

**Marble** - the Summer Marble 2005 (4.5% ABV) was a great hit but has now finished. The follow up, which should be out now, is GSB. This is designed to be a late summer quenching beer, very pale and hoppy rather than bitter. Quaffability has been the intention and this should be easily realised with a tempting hop combination of Cascade, Goldings and Pacific Gem in the boil and dry hopping with Fuggles and Goldings.

**Owl** - Oldham's Owl Brewery is still expanding and now has 18 regular accounts (apart from the Hope Inn where the brewery is based) and has so far produced 15 different beers. Recent additions to the range have been Owl Pale Ale (4.6% ABV) and Amber Light Mild (3.3% ABV). The brewery will be celebrating its first birthday on 20 August and to make this will be brewing, almost inevitably, Hoppy Birthday (5% ABV).

**Shaws** - Dukinfield-based Shaws continue to do well. Deliveries to their Devon outlet continue to go well with Best Bitter proving very popular. The other regular beer, Golden Globe also goes well. A recent new beer is Lazy Daze (4% ABV) a pale and hoppy bitter and in the pipeline for late August was Woody's Pale (4.5% ABV), a beer made using a recipe from High Peak branch stalwart and OT contributor Frank Wood.

**Pictish** - the ever-popular Honey Ale (4.3% ABV) will have been and gone by the time you read this but look out for another batch of Mistral (5.2% ABV) another pale hoppy wonder in the Pictish style. The special for September is Staddle Stone (4.5% ABV), an amber ale but still with the trademark Pictish hoppiness.



**GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL 2005**

A full review of this year's Great British Beer Festival, held in August at Olympia, is provided by *The BeerMonster™* on page 7. The highlight, or one of them, of the event, is the annual Champion Beer of Britain competition, arguably one of the most sought after awards in the British brewing industry. Sadly this year there were thin pickings, not only for the North West but the entire north of England. Hopefully they may do better in January's Champion Winter Beer of Britain Awards.



The category winners were:

**MILD**

- Gold - Grainstore Rutland Panther
- Silver - Brains Dark
- Bronze - Elgood's Black Dog

**BITTER**

- Gold - Woodforde's Wherry
- Silver - Holden's Black Country Bitter
- Bronze - joint RCH PG Steam and Belvoir Star

**BEST BITTER**

- Gold - Harveys Sussex Bitter
- Silver - Mighty Oak Burntwood Bitter
- Bronze - joint Taylor's Landlord and Olde Swan Entire

**STRONG BITTER**

- Gold - Hanby Nutcracker
- Silver - Bullmastiff Son of a Bitch
- Bronze - Fuller's ESB

**GOLDEN ALES**

- Gold - Crouch Vale Brewers Gold
- Silver - Jarrow Rivet Catcher
- Bronze - Oakham JHB

**SPECIALITY BEER**

- Gold - Cairngorm Tradewinds
- Silver - Young's Waggledance
- Bronze - joint Daleside Morocco/Ridley's Rumpus

**BOTTLE CONDITIONED BEER**

- Gold - Durham Evensong
- Silver - Young's Special London Ale
- Bronze - Titanic Stout

Apart from the bottled beers, all of the category winners went on to the overall Champion Beer of Britain contest. The winner here were:

- Champion Beer of Britain: Crouch Vale Brewers Gold**
- Runner-up: Grainstore Rutland Panther
- Third place: Woodforde's Wherry.



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# THE STATION HOTEL

WARRINGTON STREET, ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE.

**T**he Station is a beautiful old Victorian pub in the heart of Ashton's Old Town quarter. With original fireplaces, ceiling roses, brass bar fittings and period sash windows, it is a rare example of a genuinely original English pub that has managed to survive without its character being ripped out in the seventies and eighties.

The little snug is a beautiful room that has been closed to the public for several years, and is being brought back to its former glory, a big conservatory with leather chesterfields gives the perfect place to relax with a paper and coffee or glass of cask beer, the big beer garden is enclosed by trees for privacy and the fruit trees are starting to fruit again.

The pub has had close links with The Witchwood historically, sharing promotions and events with John and Syl years ago, and in more recent years with Dave. When Dave decided to call it a day in the pub game, Pauline and the team at the Witchwood couldn't miss the opportunity to make The Station a sister pub and Dave played a major role in helping us make this happen, keen to see his unique old pub go to people who would have time and resources to care for it and keep its character.

With all new beer lines installed, and a careful refurbishment to let the original period features and railway memorabilia shine through the Station fully reopened in late July as the Witchwood's little sister. Music will be a part of the pub's character, with local musicians already arranging acoustic free and easy sessions on Tuesdays from last month and a weekly quiz proving a huge hit on its launch night last month. Apart from that the music is low level background music for those who want a relaxing drink.

Andy Monahan and Rob Del Giudice are the two Witchwood team members who have moved into The Station as the full time managers, and both are passionate about real ales. The permanent regulars are Holt's Bitter and John Smith's Cask (with the

Holt's being the biggest seller), Marston's Pedigree is on a month's trial and may well join them as a permanent part of the range, and in addition up to six guest beers will be available. Look out for a Victorian Beer Festival over the weekend on 17 September.

When OT called Pauline Town was very enthusiastic about the prospects for the pub. Many regulars are back along with plenty of new faces, too. The kitchen reopened on 8 August and while initially offering just club sandwiches, this will be expanding to include all freshly prepared traditional northern food

All in all the Station looks set for a bright future - oh, and CAMRA members get 10% off cask ales with their membership card on Sundays.



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# STAGGER

with Stuart Ballantyne

## WEST DIDSBURY & WITHINGTON

Our Stagger begins at the **Woodstock** on Barlow Moor road in West Didsbury, a large Ember Inns pub (part of the Mitchells & Butlers pub group) and formally owned by the British Council. The building is more of an Edwardian house set in its own grounds of mature trees and gardens than it is of a typical pub. The multi room layout is plushy decorated and progress between the separate rooms has been made easier by knocking through archways in the walls between the rooms. The Woodstock also serves food up until 8pm daily. During student term time the pub features guest beers but today the choice was Caledonian Deuchars IPA, Charles Wells Bombardier and Boddingtons Bitter. Nobody tried the Boddies but the Bombardier was thought to be average whilst the IPA received a disappointing poor rating. A further disappointment about this pub is that the management has a policy of not turning around the pump clips of beers that go off. I know this because I overheard a conversation between a member of the staff and a frustrated customer, who had ordered a beer only to discover that, contrary to the point of sale material, that the beer was not actually on sale because they didn't have any. We sat outside in the large beer garden whilst dark clouds, suggesting an imminent heavy downpour, gathered overhead.

Just across the road is the **Barleycorn**. Mass produced keg beer only. We moved on.

Walking up Palatine road brought us to the junction of Lapwing Lane and the **Four in Hand**. This former old peoples' home was converted into a large split-level dining pub in the 80s. Complete with large flat screen TVs, piped music and no smoking areas but apparently devoid of any quiet areas. Am I unique in choosing to visit a pub to get away from the noise, TV and general pandemonium at home? Sometimes it seems so as the number of pubs that just offer a quiet social drink seem to be forever on the decline. Opinions on the quality of the sole beer on sale, Banks's Bitter, were mixed ranging from just above average to poor.

Next on to the **Railway**, originally a keg John Smiths pub that fell into disrepair and was closed, subsequently being bought by Joseph Holts and tastefully extended into the adjoining building. Now a small multi compartmentalized pub, busy, friendly and very hot on our visit. At the front of the pub is a large shop style window where you can sit and watch the hectic life of busy west Didsbury pass you by. This pub featured no music and it is long and narrow with a wooden and tiled floor. Holts guest beer, Lightening Holt, whilst being promoted via a badged hand pump appeared to be off as was the Mild leaving us with the choice of

Bitter or nothing. Fortunately this proved to be a good choice, receiving an above average rating by our party.

Just opposite the Railway is the **Metropolitan**. Formally the Midland (a Whitbread pub) this is now a large busy pub extending into a high roofed former billiard room, which serves as the candle lit restaurant and continues into the old stables which now house the kitchen and toilets. The pub is pleasantly decorated with numerous different drinking areas, the walls are adorned with old photographs and advertising posters. A concession to progress means that no smoking is allowed in the main bar (from the end of March this year). On our visit at around 9:00pm the pub was extremely busy, mainly with students and young people. The Metropolitan is definitely the pub in West Didsbury to be seen at and the prices reflect the pub's status in the area as all cask beers, irrespective of strength, were sold at a whopping £2-70 a pint. I hope that my bank manager is not reading this. The beers on sale today were Timothy Taylors Landlord, Caledonian Deuchars IPA and Draught Bass. Nobody tried the IPA but both the Bass and the Landlord were thought to be above average.

Continuing up Burton road towards Withington brought us to the **Old House at Home**. This is a low ceilinged pub built at right angles to Burton Road. Over the years it has been extensively modernised and is now open plan with an added extension to the side that serves as the dining area. Internally the pub appears to be quite dark due to its low ceilings and small leaded glass windows; I imagine that years ago it was quite a characterful multi roomed little pub at the centre of the community. Today it appears to be clean and well run albeit with an uninspiring choice of cask beers. On sale on our visit were Greene King IPA and Abbot Ale, neither beers I have to say, are to my own particular taste. Despite my own reservations our group scored the beers well with the IPA being considered above average and the Abbot Ale just falling short of good.

Back onto Burton Road and just a little further up the road brought us to the **Orion**. This is a lively pub with a jukebox that seemed to be rather on the loud side and a barmaid that seemed to be over-stretched when our party arrived. Fortunately the licensee was available to lend a hand. The beer quality in this pub is usually excellent as we found with the bitter, which received a good rating. However we found the mild to be poor but not undrinkable. As we left the pub we were just in time to see the licensee putting on a new barrel of mild. Clearly we were unlucky on our visit to receive the last few pints out of the barrel (and on one of the hottest days of the year). Do not overlook this pub, I certainly intend to revisit it again soon if only to try the mild again.

Walking around the corner onto Wilmslow Road brought us to the rather sad **Withington Ale House**. Is this the most inappropriately named pub in Withington? The days when the pub sold cask conditioned ale are long gone and it is now a rather thread bare, well-worn students pub. With no cask beer to detain us we continued on to the next pub. This is the **Albert**, again with no real ale so we moved on to the Victoria.

The **Victoria** is a large open plan pub with three distinct drinking areas, one area being a pool / TV room. This Hydes pub has been completely turned around by the current licensee who has weeded out the more challenging clientele, restored the beer quality and returned the pub to one of the best community pubs in the village. A full range of Hydes' cask beers is usually on sale here, as and when they are available. Today we had the choice of Hydes Mild, Bitter, or Jekyll's Gold; the current seasonal craft ale was conditioning in the cellar but not yet ready to be put on. Both the Bitter and Jekyll's Gold were tried and both received a comfortably better than good rating providing the best scores of the evening and more than justifying the pubs inclusion in the current edition of the Good Beer Guide.

Backtracking slightly, past the **Turnpike** (Sam Smith's keg for donkeys years) brought us to the **Red Lion**. The Red Lion must be one of the oldest pubs in the area dating back well over 200 years. This is immediately obvious as on entry you can't help but notice its small rectangular windows and low ceiling; if you are much over six-foot tall you will struggle to stand upright at the front of the building. Over the years the pub has been extended several times, the major extension has been to the rear of the pub, which took place in the eighties. This saw the edition of a large rear lounge, followed by, a few years later, a conservatory, biting a sizeable chunk out of the immaculate bowling green (which is still used). The Red Lion is one of Wolverhampton & Dudley's busiest pubs. Still primarily a Marston's house it sells Marstons Bitter, Pedigree, Banks's Bitter and the W & D guest beer, when available. This proved to be a great end to the evening. Marston's Bitter was considered above average whilst the Pedigree was judged good. Nobody tried the Banks's. So ended another successful stagger. There were certainly many interesting pubs selling beers at widely different prices in very different environments. The views expressed are entirely those of the author and do not necessarily coincide with the views of CAMRA. Why not try the pubs yourself and see how much you agree or disagree with the authors views?



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THE BULLS HEAD, OLD GLOSSOP

THE BULLS HEAD is a handsome building, situated in the historic Old Glossop area of this attractive Derbyshire town. Its imposing appearance is probably down to the fact that the building functioned as the town hall many years ago, although it has been a pub since at least some time in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

One of the many old photographs inside shows the pub long ago, when it was owned by the now-defunct Openshaw Brewery Co. This concern vanished from the brewing map in 1957 on its takeover by Sheffield-based Hope & Anchor Breweries. A series of takeovers led to it being a Bass house and in 1992 the Bulls Head was one of a clutch of former Bass pubs purchased by Robinson's, in whose ownership it remains today.

To the right the pub has extended into an ancient cottage, which now functions as a pool room. There's a central bar (with excellent Hatters, Old Stockport and Unicorn on tap) and a comfortable lounge. However it is the set of rooms to the left that concern this article, as it is here that you will find the pub's in-house Indian restaurant and takeaway. Yes, indeed. Nowadays there are one or two pubs scattered around with similar facilities but the Bulls Head was, to my knowledge at least, the very first. This part of the pub's operation is run by a genuine Indian restaurateur from Rusholme along with his kitchen staff. There are three rooms for dining with two, I think, being no-smoking, with tables laid out for dining and some striking artworks by a local artist on the walls. There is an extensive menu featuring many Indian restaurant regulars along with a few more unusual dishes, and this is supplemented by a short list of specials chalked up on a blackboard. The form seems to be that if no-one is around after you have perused the menu, then a knock on the kitchen door will bring forth the waiter (who in fact is the man who runs the show) to take your orders.

The chicken & ginger balti from the specials board was tempting but the New Chairman and I stuck to the printed menu. Aloo Tikki (£1.30) and Chicken Tikka Pakora (£3.40) for starters; Lamb Achariya (£6.20) and Lamb Pathiya (£6) for mains, accompanied by two rooti apiece (at 90p each).

First up were the mandatory poppudoms along with five large dishes of top quality relishes (nice thick mango chutney – always a good sign in my book) and a dish of salad. Good to see, too, that the relishes etc were left on the table for the duration of the meal – I always feel a bit cheated when these are whisked away after the starters.

The starters were excellent – the soft filling of the Aloo Tikki having a good spicy kick and the batter on the pakoras light and well cooked (albeit an alarming bright red). As an extra treat we also sampled some spicy fish tikka where moist fish was complemented by sensible spicing rather than being overwhelmed.

We'd gone for the mains on the basis that they were something new for both of us. The achariya is prepared with garlic, ginger, aniseed, mustard seed, dried mango and dill seeds. I had followed the waiter/manager's recommendation to have the spicy version and was mightily impressed. The unusual and (again) sensible spicing enhanced the tender lamb chunks admirably. The pathiya was almost equally well-received. This dish is prepared with dried lentils, dried mangoes and is described as sweet and spicy mixed with delicate herbs and while the New Chairman had no difficulty in clearing his plate, he did wish he'd ordered a hotter (spicier) version. Personally, I thought it was fine but then it wouldn't do for us to all like the same things now, would it?

After this we were stuffed and so couldn't manage a pud (ice cream and, even better, kulfi, are available at £2 and £2.50 respectively). Our meals were washed down with a couple of pints of top notch Hatters although a jug of lassi (sweet or salty) can be had for £3.30.

I'd heard a lot about this restaurant at the Bulls Head – it's been there for a good few years now and with food of this quality and value you can see how it has lasted the course. I'll certainly be back and if you've not been before it's well worth making the journey. The restaurant opens at 5.30pm so the best bet is a train from Piccadilly (the Hadfield service) which will get you there is half an hour or so. From the station it's a 10-15 minute walk. JC.

The Bulls Head is at 102 Church Street, Old Glossop. Phone on 01457 853291.

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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

September 2005

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>** - Informal afternoon gathering at Third Glossop Beer Festival, Glossop Labour Club, 11-13 Chapel Street. 1.00pm onwards - details from Dave Sharpe on 483 3708.

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>** - Branch Meeting: Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. Start 8.00pm. **Guest Speaker Oliver Robinson**

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup>** - Stockport Town centre/Hillgate North Stagger: meet 7.30pm Nelson, Wellington Road South (corner Greek St); 8.30 Unity, Wellington Rd South (corner Wellington St)

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>** - Trip to present Beer of the Festival Award to Abbeydale Brewery, Sheffield. Details and book with John Clarke 0161 477 1973.

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup>** - Pub of the month presentation to **Thatched House, Churchgate, Stockport. From 8.00pm. NB change of day.**

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup>** - 20<sup>th</sup> Stockport & Cider Festival - first organising meeting: Armoury, Greek Street, Shaw Heath. Start 8.15pm.

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup>** - Social at Thatched House, Churchgate, Stockport. From 8.30pm.

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October** - Opening Times Abroad - visits Glossop including visit to Howard Town Brewery. Meet Star (next to station) 11.30-12 noon. Details from John Clarke on 0161 477 1973.

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

**Friday-Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup>** - 3rd Glossop Victorian Weekend Beer Festival at Glossop Labour Club, Chapel Street, around 30 beers from micro breweries with specials and ciders. Fri / Sat noon to

September 2005

11.00pm & Sun noon to 5.00pm. Admission free.

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup>** - Committee: Hare and Hounds, Otterspool, Chadkirk, Marple. Starts 8.30pm

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup>** - Branch Meeting: Cheshire Ring, Manchester Rd, Hyde. Starts 8.30pm.

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October** - Committee Meeting: HofBrau Beer Tent, Stuttgart Beer Festival. Starts 1.00pm

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup>** - Branch Meeting: Globe Inn, Glossop. Starts 8.30pm.

*Apart from Macclesfield & Bollington, the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch covers a wide area from Wilmslow to Knutsford and down to Congleton. They have notified us of the following events:*

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup>** - Campaigning Meeting: Rifleman's Arms, Moor Ln, Wilmslow. Starts 8.00pm

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>** - Curry Night: joint social with North Cheshire CAMRA, Penny Black, Northwich.

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup>** - Autumn Pub of the Season Presentation: Crown, Crown Ln, Swan Green, Lower Peover. From 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. They have advised us of the following events:*

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>** - Branch Meeting: Orange Tree, Old Market Place, Altrincham. Starts 8.00pm

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>** - Urmston Social: meet 8.00pm Urmston, moving on later to the Lord Nelson.

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October** - Branch Meeting: Old Market tavern, old Market Place, Altrincham. Starts 8.00pm.

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# 5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

JULY/AUGUST '00

The main front page headline was "Full Pints On the Way?" and it seemed that moves to ensure pub customers got a full pint of beer were set to go ahead. Following a meeting with Consumer Affairs Minister Kim Howells, CAMRA had been asked to provide evidence of short measure, not just for real ale but also for fizzy nitro-kegs and stout. The pub industry's guidelines referred to a pint being 95 per cent liquid, but pub managers were often under pressure to obtain 76 pints from 72-pint firkins. Whilst there did seem to be encouraging signs in CAMRA's campaign for the full pint, it should be realised that this was five years ago. Now, in September 2005, CAMRA members have asked their MPs to sign a new all-party Early Day Motion opposing a 95 per cent pint, and calling for legislation to put an end to short measures

★☆☆★★

It was interesting to read that Worthington White Shield had been saved (again). Originally known as India Pale Ale, the legendary bottle-conditioned beer was to be brewed and bottled by the Museum Brewing Company at the Bass Museum, Burton-on-Trent. The move followed a two-year exile when King & Barnes brewed and bottled White Shield under license in Sussex. Museum Head Brewer Steve Wellington remembered brewing White Shield in the early Sixties at the Old Brewery on Burton High Street, and he was delighted to have the opportunity of brewing it again. As a fitting postscript to its days at King & Barnes, Worthington White Shield became Champion Bottle Conditioned beer in the Guardian-sponsored competition at the 2000 Great British Beer Festival.

★★☆☆★

"Named & Shamed" highlighted pubs with misleading signs, particularly those that advertised real ale outside, when none was available within. Of the six pubs criticised, two had taken down the offending signs, and one had been repainted and the misleading words removed. The other three remained as before, but none of the licensees involved had responsibility for outside signing (but they could of course have put things right by selling cask beer). The final responsibility lay with the owners of the buildings, and it was hoped that the publicity would lead to the signs disappearing. Just to make sure, letters had been sent to the appropriate Trading Standards departments.

★★☆☆★

Finally, the bi-monthly seasonal beer programmes of the Manchester family brewers all seemed to run in tandem, and there were new beers from Hydes', JW Lees and Robinson's. The latter had only just started brewing seasonals, and their offering was to be Coopers Bell. The only local family brewer not to produce a seasonal range was Joseph Holt, who preferred to concentrate solely on their standard Mild and Bitter. But Holts had entered into a supply agreement with the Head of Steam chain of railway station bars, which would see Holts appearing in Liverpool, Scarborough, Newcastle, Huddersfield and London - this was the first time that Holts had travelled so far afield. Now, in September 2005, the London Head of Steam, at Euston, has been sold to Fullers so Macunians will have to await arrival back in the North before being able to sample "Manchester's finest".



## NOT IN MY BACK YARD

I've recently been looking at a number of pubs' applications for extended hours under the new licensing regime that begins in November. In general, what they're asking for is very modest - typically an extra hour at night, a couple of hours on Fridays and Saturdays, and some relaxation of drinking-up time. Very few licensees are being greedy, and any fears of "24-hour drinking" seem wildly misplaced.

Yet this is still too much for some, and it was disappointing to see that, following objections from local residents, Stockport Council had refused two well-known pubs in the borough any extension whatsoever, not even an extra hour at weekends. While there had been problems with the behaviour of a few drinkers, these are mainstream pubs, serving real ale, with a wide range of customers, and it seems harsh to deny them any chance to improve matters. That extra hour may seem trivial, but in reality it is likely to have a major impact on the viability of a pub. Half of all pub takings are on Friday and Saturday nights, and if people are planning a night out, it is very likely that a lot of them will avoid the pubs where they are going to be kicked out shortly after 11 o'clock. If pubs within a short distance of each other are granted substantially different hours, council officials will be effectively deciding the success or failure of individual establishments. Obviously we will need to see how things work out in practice, but there is a serious risk that, for many pubs and their customers, the new licensing laws will bring no benefit, just a huge increase in cost and bureaucracy.

Unfortunately, in many areas there is a vocal minority of curmudgeons who don't want to see local pubs extending their hours by even a tiny amount, and at heart would probably be happy to see them closed altogether. It would be a great pity if in the long term their influence were to lead to the eclipse of neighbourhood pubs and the further encouragement of town-centre drinking ghettos. However, it also gives pub operators a clear message that, if they do want to extend their hours, it is important to get their local communities on side.

## THE OPEN DOOR LOTTERY

Even if pubs are granted extended hours, they may not necessarily use them all, and it could become more and more difficult to find out exactly when they are open, something that was noticeable after all-day opening was introduced in the 1980s. This doesn't matter if you are a local, but if you are travelling some distance to an unfamiliar pub it can be a major disappointment to find it closed. There were complaints from people doing the recent Mild Challenge that many of the pubs on the list were closed when they turned up. The extra hours at night may lead to putting back early evening opening, or dropping lunchtimes altogether.

It may also be a lottery whether you are actually able to get in pubs after 11pm, even if they are still serving. Surely it will make sense for all pubs to display clearly outside the hours when they actually guarantee to be open, and to let customers in, even if at times they do stay open for longer. But all too few do that now, so don't hold your breath.

Curmudgeon Online: [www.pubcurmudgeon.org.uk](http://www.pubcurmudgeon.org.uk)



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Patience has finally paid off for local man Martin Jackson who has had to bide his time before circumstances were right for him to achieve his longstanding ambition, for he has now taken over as licensee of The Pineapple at New Mills.

"I had been a truck driver for the best part of 20 years, but for a long time I had wanted to settle down close to home in Bollington and run a pub of my own. So rather than just dreaming about it, I booked myself onto a training course at Robinson's Unicorn Brewery and soon after made the career move from trucker to licensee. It's the perfect outcome for me," says Martin.

It was a case of right time and right location for the enthusiastic new tenant who spotted his niche at The Pineapple the first time he saw it. "It's a great pub providing a valuable service to the community, and that's the way I want to keep it," he says. "The training course has given me the ideal launch into the licensed trade and having done some bar work in the past I'm confident that I have a lot to offer at The Pineapple."



Martin is also quick to add that the move away from trucking has made a big change to his lifestyle and provided the opportunity to sleep in his own bed each night.

"Although I enjoyed driving around the country, there was a lot of time spent away from home and many nights spent sleeping in the cab. I am already convinced that my career change has been a good move and that taking on The Pineapple is the best thing I've done for years," says Martin, who now looks forward to putting all his training into practice and getting to know his customers.

Nine years after taking up residence in Disley, chartered accountant Rod Hitchcox is now ensconced at the Dandy Cock, having taken over as licensee of the Robinson's house. "It's certainly a big change from my previous career, but having been made redundant three times, I wanted control over my destiny, and running the Dandy Cock is certainly providing that satisfaction," he explained. Originally from Blackpool and having last worked behind



a bar in his early twenties, Rod's career took him first to Kent and then north to Cheadle Hulme, which was when he took up residence in Disley.

Rod now regards the area as home, so wasted no time in putting his name forward as the next licensee of the Dandy

Cock which was one of his favourite haunts, when he learned that the tenancy was to become available.

"At the time I was actually the regular Sunday night quiz master, so I already knew the pub reasonably well. Nonetheless, I am new to the licensed trade and there has been a steep learning curve, but with the training I received from Robinson's, and the support of my wife Jeannette, I am thoroughly enjoying it," he said.

However, Rod has already found time to introduce a new lunch time menu at the Market Street venue and has a hectic schedule of karaoke and live entertainment planned throughout the week, and looks forward to keeping his customers entertained.

*Pictured Top: Martin Jackson (right) completes a five day licensee training course, approved by the British Institute of Innkeeping Awarding Body held at Robinson's Unicorn Brewery in Stockport, where director William Robinson presented him with a certificate to mark his achievement. Below: Rod Hitchcox (right) presented with his training certificate by Robinson's director Paul Robinson.*



## THE SPORTSMAN

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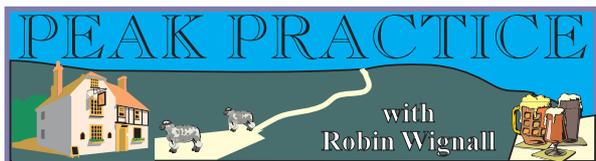
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Recently I tried to catch up with some pubs which I rarely visit in Whaley Bridge. The **White Hart** next to the road bridge over the River Goyt had two real ales, Tetley Bitter and a guest beer, Greene King Abbot. In recent months guest beers have been available and have included beers from Adnams and Chas Wells' Bombardier. Two former Boddington's houses presented a contrast, early doors on a Friday teatime. I was a lone customer in the **White Horse** at Horwich End lights. Hydes' Boddington's Bitter was enjoyable enough. The pump clip was turned round on the non-available GK Abbot. By contrast the **Navigation** near the canal basin in Whaley Bridge was noticeably busy at this time, though Chas. Wells' Bombardier was the only real ale. The White Horse has a fine Pubmaster lantern over the door, but is now presumably Punch-owned, as is the Navigation, I understand. The **Jodrell Arms** gains an entry in Nikolaus Pevsner's 'The Buildings of England - Derbyshire' (1993 reprint, revised by Elizabeth Williamson, publisher Penguin). The architectural expert and critic noted a "heavy Tuscan arch and minimum Elizabethan gables" dating from a c.1850 extension of the c.1800 building. One can only wonder what beer was sold in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. When I visited architectural merit exceeded real ale merit as the clip was turned round on the only real ale which seems to be currently available, Marston's Pedigree. Robinson's **Railway** in the village centre has recently changed hands. Old Stockport Bitter has been replaced by Hatters Mild, though this was unavailable when I called. No problems with a pint of Unicorn Best Bitter however. Another Robinson's house worth a visit is the **Board** at Horwich End. The Board made its debut in the Mild Challenge earlier this year, and both Hatters and Unicorn are worth trying.

UPDATES

Updates from a couple of pubs which take *OT* include a new seasonal beer from Jennings at the **Shady Oak** in Fernilee. Fish King is a 4.3 per cent pale bitter, named after the ospreys nesting at Bassenthwaite Lake, not too far from the brewery. As an aside some readers may know why Bassenthwaite Lake is the Lake District's only lake! The **Navigation** at Buxworth continues to source interesting guest beers. A recent visit found Porkers Pride (3.8%) and Dreckly (4.3%) from the Ring O'Bells Brewery in Cornwall. The first of these was badged as a house beer, Navigation Ale. Waiting in the cellar were beers from the Thornbridge Brewery at Ashford in the Water, a recently established Derbyshire brewery. Blackthorn is promised as a 4.4 per cent hoppy brew, whilst Jaipur is an authentic 5.9 per cent India pale ale. **Stop Press.** A 'To let' sign has appeared at the Navigation in Whaley Bridge, and this may not be the only one as a round of upward only rent reviews has resulted in a number of disgruntled licensees in the Punch estate. The House of Commons Trade & Industry Committee report on Pub Companies in December 2004, of course whitewashed the big pubcos, in their dealings with licensees. Pubcos also seem to have scant regard for pub customers. Some MPs need to get out into the country to see what is really happening in their constituencies. As I noted a month or two ago, being a licensee or one of the big pubcos really is a tenuous existence.

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PUB NEWS

I called in the Brewers Arms delivering *Opening Times*, (writes Glen Mason) and found that there has been quite a bit of work on the pub. The outside has been painted, the interior has been decorated as well, new windows have been fitted, and the pub looks very smart. Landlord Graham tells me his real ale is really going well with people who normally drink keg finding that the real thing is far better. He also tells me new hand pumps have been fitted and that he now only uses oversize glasses for the real ale - great news for people wanting a full pint. I think we can expect this pub can only get better and better as time goes on.

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**300 BEER TO TRY BEFORE YOU DIE** BY ROGER PROTZ  
CAMRA BOOKS, 304 PAGES, £12.99

Released for the Great British Beer Festival held last month at Olympia, this well presented and attractively produced book features tasting notes on some of the world's great brews. It also features one or two not so great brews as well. More on this later. Protz of course is a well-known and highly respected figure on the British beer scene and this book is presented as a distillation of "decades of beer knowledge into an entertaining and indispensable guide to the ales that no beer lover should miss". It certainly covers all bases - the introduction includes a detailed description of how beer is made and what goes into it and, importantly for this book, how to taste beer, too. Most of the rest of the book is split into 29 beer categories starting with India Pale Ales, running from the mainstream (Brown & Mild Ales) and the exotic (Lambic & Gueuze) and finishing with Smoked Beer. At the end there is a glossary and two indexes by both beer name and style, including tick boxes for you to mark off the beers as you work your way through them.

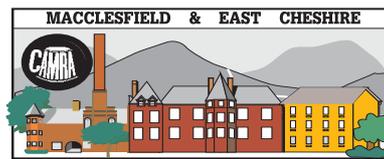
Each chosen beer is described in detail, some getting just a half page, many a full page and illustration. In many cases there is also a history of each particular beer and often the brewery behind it, along with Protz's tasting notes. There is also space for the reader to enter his or her own tasting notes, with reference to appearance, aroma, taste and overall score.

So far, so good. Where people will have different ideas, is of course in the 300 beers chosen. Protz doesn't claim that they are the 300 best beers in the world, or even that they are his 300 personal favourites, although you could be forgiven for putting either interpretation on the list. They are perhaps most accurately described as 300 decent to very good to world classic beers that the average reader with more than an average interest in beer is likely to stand a reasonable chance of encountering. Although that wouldn't make for a very snappy title.

Even so there are a few odd choices. Banks's Original anyone? And does this still account for 60 per cent of the brewery's production? The Belgian inclusions, while sound on lambics and trappists, are a little awry elsewhere and one or two entries seem to be based on folk memory rather than present day reality. It's a long time since Holt's Bitter could be described as a beer that "puckers the tongue and leaves a furrow down the back of the throat", for example.

But it's easy to quibble. This is, I think, a book aimed at people with a developing interest in the world of beer rather than died in the wool old soaks like your reviewer. And by featuring beers that people stand a reasonable chance of trying it makes (without spelling out) the eminently sensible point that good beer is there for the taking and does not occupy some obscure niche. Both the keen enthusiast and the relative novice will find much to enjoy in this book. While perhaps not an essential purchase it will nevertheless be a welcome addition to anyone's bookshelf.

Most good bookshops will sell this. You can also get it from CAMRA direct of 01727 867201 or online at [www.camra.org.uk/books](http://www.camra.org.uk/books). CAMRA members get two quid off as well. JC.



# PUB OF THE SEASON

**THE MACCLESFIELD & EAST CHESHIRE CAMRA Pub of the Season for Autumn 2005 is the Crown, Crown Lane, Lower Peover.**

The Crown is a homely 17<sup>th</sup> Century inn which is still part of a working farm and has been run by licensee Andrew West for the past six years (mum Anne is the lessee). The pleasant looking exterior has a cobbled frontage, flower tubs, window boxes and hanging baskets. Inside there is a friendly, almost family atmosphere with a welcome extended to locals and visitors alike.

A well-executed refurbishment four years ago retained the original layout of three very homely rooms centred round the bar. The room you enter from the porch has a wonderful timeless feel with scrubbed wooden tables, benching and a regularly used dartboard. The central room houses copper-topped tables and a cosy snug. Low ceilings, beams and exposed stonework abound. The smart front room is used mainly by diners enjoying the home-cooked meals where local beef is on the menu.

Darts and dominoes are played, Thursday night is quiz night and there is an annual gooseberry competition on the last Sunday in July!

The beer range includes Old Speckled Hen, Taylor's Landlord, Tetley Mild and Bitter (always good to see cask mild on sale), Flowers IPA, Deuchars IPA and a guest beer, often from one of Cheshire's independent breweries (Storm Brewery's Bosley Cloud when OT called). The quality of the beers has gained the Crown a regular entry in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide.

Not surprisingly Andrew is very pleased with his award, "chuffed to bits" as he put it. This well deserved award will be presented from 8.00pm on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September.



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# MANCHESTER MATTERS *by Cityman*

Not much for you this month as I've not been out and about as much as I planned...

## EAST MANCHESTER NEWS

However, on a recent trawl round my local haunts in East Manchester the following has come to light. Screwy Hughies at Ashton Old Road/Ogden Lane has now reopened as the Tower, and is operating an over thirties policy with keg only as well. Given that the over-thirties are one of the prime markets for cask beer this seems something of a contradiction in terms. Let's see how long they last!

The Strawberry Duck on Crabtree Lane, Clayton, is closed for business. Rumour has it that it closed after a "bit of bother" which, unfortunately, I've been unable to verify.



Mucho news from our Pub of the Year, the Legh Arms on Ashton Old Road. This was owned by Avebury Taverns, who practised an enlightened guest beer policy but they have now been bought out by Punch Taverns, who have a less impressive track record on the beer front. This means that

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Local CAMRA Pub of the Month, Feb 2004

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Partner Title / Surname (If applicable)	
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Forename(s)	D.O.B
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Reference number	<input type="text"/>
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Signed	Date
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Dave and Tracy are in limbo, but hopefully the new owners won't try and fix something that isn't broke. On a lighter note Dave has recently had some brilliant brews alongside his Moorhouses stalwarts of Black Cat and Blue, namely Wychwood Hobgoblin and Deuchars IPA. Also on the good side the Legh now has a ladies darts team playing on the Manchester log end board.

And in another rare bit of good news from East Manchester, I am told that the long-closed **Coach & Horses** on the corner of Hyde Road and Belle Vue Street is about to re-open! Sold off by Robinson's as a no-hoper (and they have to be real no-hopers for Robbies to get rid), I knew it had been refurbished and offered for lease in the trade press. Someone has now bravely taken it on - if it's open in time I'll try and get in for next month's column.

HEADING SOUTH

Another item, this time from the **Farmers Arms** in Northenden where, to my shame, I've not been able to get in and spend time with the new licensee who unfortunately was robbed not long after moving into the pub (at knife point, whilst cashing up).

Elsewhere, the **Parrswood** in Didsbury has taken out cask Boddington's amid reports of quality problems with the beer. Another loss for cask Boddies is **Mother Macs** (a welcoming and cheap pub at the back of the Gardens Hotel in Piccadilly Gardens) which has switched its one real ale from Boddies to Tetley's 'because no-one wanted to drink the new stuff'. It grieves me to say it, but the Tetley's is far superior to the Boddies at least in this pub.

Finally this month, I see that the **Portland Arms** on Portland Street has closed due to the proposed redevelopment of the Portland Hotel and the Piccadilly Plaza complex. Whilst a keg outlet in recent years, this pub was, surprisingly, a cask ale outlet for much of its existence.

LOCAL CAMRA AWARD



Pauline O'Sullivan (and family) of the Pack Horse, Stockport Market Place with their July Pub of the Month award.

MILD CHALLENGE TRIP



Stockport 2005 Mild Challenge winners raise their glasses on their Hydes Brewery visit, with Challenge co-ordinator and Stockport & South Manchester Branch Chairman Mark McConachie pictured at extreme right. Thanks to Hydes and especially Beverly Roe for hosting an excellent and successful visit.



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Navy

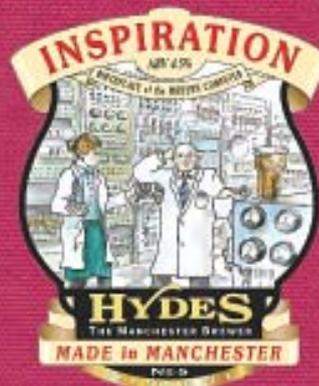


2002  
Wobbly Bob



2004  
Wobbly Bob

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