

OPENING TIMES. NOVEMBER 1984.

NUMBER SIX

SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA'S PUB NEWSHEET.

ISSUED FREE.

MORNING STORY.

The first we heard in Manchester was that Sam Smith's had dropped the strength of their Old Brewery Bitter by 2c. But had this only just happened?

Apparently the Trade paper, the Morning Advertiser, had printed the contents of a circular sent to Sams licensees stating:

"The competitive wholesale price charged has been possible owing to an increase in efficiency and productivity in our brewing operations, and not from any drop in gravity. Old Brewery Bitter at 1038 is still stronger than bitters produced by many of our competitors....."

It also stated that the OG had not altered since 1979, when it was lowered from 1040 to 1038.9. But in 1979 the Good Beer Guide was quoting a strength of 1040.9 and this figure remained unaltered until it came down to 1038.9 in the current guide.

So who was pulling whose leg in those intervening years? It certainly seems that the 1038 beer has been masquerading as something much stronger - no wonder Sams prices have always seemed competitive, and no wonder they refused the Morning Advertiser's invitation to comment on the discrepancy.

Phil Levison.

PUB OF THE MONTH.

The South Manchester and Trafford and Hulme Branches of CAMRA Pub of the Month for November is Ye Olde Vic on King Street, West, Edgeley, Stockport.

This small but popular pub has only been open in its present guise for about a year. Formerly called the Victoria Vaults (a Wilson's House) it is now a Free House selling a wide variety of fine beers mainly from Breweries outside the region. Tetley's Mild & Bitter, Everards Tiger, Marstons Pedigree and Wilsons Bitter are all kept in fine form and are now well established

The event will take place on Thursday, November 29th., but be warned, get there early as the pub is not very large.

Paul Braidley.

"Opening Times" is written and published by CAMRA South Manchester. Send us your news, views and comments about the pubs and the beer to:

S.H.Higgins,
48, Moorcroft Drive, Burnage, Manchester M19 1WE.

SUNRISE IN BURNAGE.

The latest addition to choice of Beers in Burnage can be welcomed on Tuesday, October 30th., when Sam Smiths' open their newest pub.

Formerly the Milton Lodge, Burnage Lane (near Lane End Road) reopens its doors as The Sun in September (an odd name!)

The welcome sight that greets visitors are pairs of hand-pumps - Old Brewery Bitter and Tadcaster Bitter.

Where's the Mild?

GOODBYE MR. CHIPS.

Hot candidate for dearest pint and shortest measure must be Mr. Chips, Mersey Square, where Wilsons Bitter is 70p for about $\frac{3}{4}$ pint.

A request for the pot to be filled was met with an icy glare, two tugs on the pump and the pot replaced with such finery that the extra ale was slopped over the bar.

Ron Sproson.

NELSONS ALE HOUSE

WELLINGTON ROAD - STOCKPORT

HANDPUMPED WILSONS

MILD & BITTER

IT'S THE HOME OF

HOME MADE FOOD!!

We apologise to our customers for any inconvenience during refurbishment.

A R O U N D I N T H E T O W N .This month: The Hyde Road Crawl.

Curiously, the Hyse Road Pub Crawl started out at the massive Wilsons pub, The Waggon & Horses, Stockport Road/ Plymouth Grove. A fortunate idea since Mild scored 3.7 (scores are from 0, undrinkable to 4, excellent) the best score of the evening. The rather cold Bitter scored 2.4. No price list evident but at 63p the mild was also the most expensive of the evening, the bitter was 64p.

Down Kirmanshulme Lane we eagerly headed for the Longsight Inn and the Banks beer. Unfortunately the mild, at 57p, was very cold and tasteless & scored only 1.1. The bitter at 60p was slightly better and managed 2.

We wandered around Belle Vue Speedway Stadium and into the Rock Inn on Hyde Road. A recently renovated Tetleys Pub the beer was good with mild at 62p scoring 3.5 and the bitter, 64p, 3.1.

Down Hyde Road towards Manchester we called in at the basic Boddingtons Pub the Nags Head. No mild available but the Bitter tasted pretty good & scored 2.9 - almost worth the 62p price tag!

The Travellers Rest was next on the list a recently painted Hydes House; but the beers were disappointing. The mild at 56 scored 1.8 and the bitter, 62p, managed 2.4.

Another Boddingtons pub, the Unicorn Hotel, also sold only Bitter. It was 2p cheaper than the Nags but scored only 2.4. However it is obviously a popular local, so much so that we had to stand outside to drink!

A swift stop at the Horseshoe Inn found Robinsons Bitter (63p) in slightly above average form with a score of 2.5. Unfortunately the mild was so bad as to prove undrinkable and scored 0.

The City Gates is a large open-plan Chesters pub done out in Man. City colours. No real mild available but the handpumped bitter was better than expected and scored 2.3, costing 63p.

As the evening was coming to an end we headed down Devonshire Street North into the Greenalls' pub, the Kings Head. Again no real mild was available but the bitter at 66p (the most expensive of the evening) managed the best bitter score with 3.3.

To finish the evening, we hurried down Ashton Old Road to the excellent Holts Pub - the Seven Stars. The mild at 55p was cheapest of the evening but only scored 1.8. The Bitter at 56p, was also the cheapest, it also tasted pretty good and scored 2.9.

A summary of the evening reveals that the Bitters scored between 2 & 3.3, a fairly consistent set of marks. Whilst Real Mild was sold in only 6 out of the 10 pubs visited the scores varied between 0 and 3.7. Enough said!!

Malcolm Swallow.

Q U E S T I O N -----

Records have been with us for a long time - not the round black ones, but the Guinness type, longest, shortest, oldest, tallest etc. The Book of Records in its Public House section deals with size, manes, height, even numbers of visits. But apart from these superlatives we have all seen the other sort - The Last Pub in England, which of course becomes the First on the return journey from foreign parts.

There is one pub, though, where the Landlord has decided that he too has a claim to fame, and a new sign above the door say 'Welcome to the most Northerly pub in Wales'. So where is it? There are no prizes for the correct solution, in fact you can find the answer on another page, together with a bit more information about the pub.

A G O R Y S T O R Y .

The Waldorf (handpumped Chesters Bitter) has been closed for some time now, but there are plans to re-develop the site (near the old Blood Bank on Gore Street) It should be interesting to see Whitbreads '85 style.

Sykes Wine
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STOCKPORTS' WINE BAR WITH REAL ALE

DRAUGHT BASS - HIGSONS BITTER -

HIGSONS MILD
AT THE

GEORGE

MORE HOSTS.

The Salisbury (nr. Oxford Road Station) closed in the middle of October, "For Renovation" it said on the door. This is a Host treatment, expected to take about seven weeks, but we understand that neither the beers nor the name will change, it will be one of their Taverns.

The Thompson Arms (next to Chorlton St., Bus Station?) are in the middle of their alterations, although the pub is still open. A night club, bistro and restaurant will appear in due course.

Nelsons Ale House, Wellington Road, opposite Stockport Town Hall is being re-named simply The Nelson after the Host treatment. Work starts on November 1st., but after pressure (!) from licensee Paul Sixsmith traditional features will be retained, such as darts, cards and the pool table. Plus, of course the excellent home made food & handpumped Wilsons Mild and Bitter. The place should be ready before Christmas and Paul hopes to keep open throughout and is quite prepared to serve ale from the cask in the Gents if necessary (he says ladies will be welcome!!!)

OLD HOUSE AT HOME

It was originally reported by John Turrell in the South Manchester Reporter that the Old House at Home, Burton Rd., Withington (handpumped Chesters Bitter) was to close on October 20th., for 5 weeks - there were to be improvements in the food arrangements, and some structural alterations as the building was in danger of collapse!

A quick pint of the 22nd., October confirmed that the pub had'nt closed. Whitbread had changed their plans somewhat, closure has been deferred until 25th., November and it would be for 3 weeks only. There is to be no change in the beer, but someone suggested the price might go up - 65p a pint at present.

CAMRA NEWS - CAMRA NEWS - CAMRA NEWS

Tuesday 6th., November - Open Committee Meeting at the Gateway, East Didsbury.

Thursday, November 8th., - Branch Meeting at the New Inn, Wellington Road South, Stockport (next to the Town Hall) Possible Speaker from Wilsons Brewery.

Manchester Beer Festival ---- 22nd., 23rd., 24th., November - Barnes Wallace Building, UMIST.

CASTLEWOOD

(HOLE IN WALL)

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ALL CHANGE AT THE STATION.

Bob and Tish Smithson of the Station, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, a 1985 Good Beer Guide Pub, will be retiring next summer after 26 years in the pub, during which they have not only attracted many customers but made many friends. There is hope that not much else will change, however, as the Smithsons' daughter and son-in-law, who already work in the pub, have applied for the tenancy. I am sure local CAMRA members will wish them success in their application. One cause for concern though, word has come from Marstons about 'modernising' the pub. Perhaps we should make them aware that local people like the Station as it is - big is not always beautiful and there are more than enough large, trendy modern pubs in Didsbury. The Station provides choice - lets keep it that way.

Alan Seal.

OPENING TIMES recently requested candidates for the cheapest and dearest real ale in the South Manchester CAMRA area. I reckon I have stumbled on both in a single week.

As our contemporary 'Sot's Ruin' reported last month, the Vineyard Bar of the Grand Hotel, Aytoun Street, is selling Boddingtons Bitter at 80p a pint. I make this a tie with the price of Bass at the George & Stockport. What Periwinkles' mouthpiece did'nt tell you, though, is that the Vineyard has a Happy Hour (and a half) 5-30 - 7-00 Mondays to Fridays when Boddingtons or Wilsons Bitter (also keg & spirits, if anyone cares) will set you back a mere 50p. I think that's going to be hard to beat.

Rhys Jones.

ROUND BRITAIN DRINKER - and the Ales
of the Dales

Well, we had a trip to Keighley they asked me to write about. Only trouble is, the beer in Keighley's so good you forget where you've been!

Here goes - Manchester to Leeds by rail change trains and on to Keighley (OK so far), We then spent a vast amount of time looking for Timothy Taylors' Brewery, which at length proved to be up a narrow cobbled track with no sign. We did'nt get a visit (maybe next time), but at least we've seen the outside. By this time the pubs were open.

First stop was the Vine, finished externally in Taylors favourite, but unlovely pebbledash. The Beer, however was excellent, electric pumps dispensing Taylors Golden Best & Best Bitter - or as the locals more simply call them, Mild and Bitter. More Taylors seemed a good idea, so we march on to the Friendly which offers the same range of beers. Sadly, though this offered the only duff Taylors of the day - the bitter though perfectly drinkable, just did'nt taste like Taylors. The Mild was OK though.

Now it's bus time and the 701 to Laycock, followed by a steep walk down to the secluded hamlet of Goose Eye, which boasts its own Brewery, in a converted mill. Being lunchtime the Brewery Bar is shut, so we invade the Turkey Inn and sample several excellent pints of Bitter, Special and a new 1050 Gravity brew called Pommies Revenge that's intended to take the ---- out of Australian lager - it certainly makes the climb back to the bus terminus a whole lot easier!!

Back in Keighley we joined the 1555 departure on the steam railway to Oxenhope. And guess what - the buffet car was serving Taylors Golden Best! A nice drop too even if they did run out before journeys end. Still it did whet our appetites for the chicken barbecue joint back in town and by the time we'd finished there, well the pubs were open. First stop in the evening session was the Volunteer near the bus station, with the first handpumped Taylors of the day, and also the first appearance of Taylors famous premium Bitter, Landlord, which was in excellent form, as were the bitter and mild. We left for the Fountain, which turned out to be not yet open, so we had to kill time in a Tetley Pub called the Devonshire a bad move since although both Bitter and Falstaff light mild were available on handpump neither of them were much of an advertisement for the Brewery. Still the Fountain did open eventually (could it have been around 7 ish??) - again Taylors, again excellent.

After that things get a bit hazy. I recall the Boltmakers, good Taylors, a small and very busy pub, a variety of hair and dress styles amongst the customers and we finished up at the Eastwood Tavern near the Station, another excellent Taylors house, from which, I understand, we staggered onto the train for home.

Now the good news - you can drink Taylors ales in the centre of Manchester!

Landlord is on sale at the Coach and Horses, London Road (opposite Piccadilly Station), the Marble Arch, Rochdale Road and the Crown and Anchor in Hilton Street (this last also sells Golden Best and Ram Tam)

Many would reckon that of these three the latest outlet, the Marble Arch, is also the best. But why not try them all and then make up your own mind?

Rhys Jones.

BOAIRS HEAD

MARKE PLACE, STOCKPORT.

SAMUEL SMITHS OLD BREWERY
BITTER

PUB FOOD DAILY.

LIVE

JAZZ &

ROCK &

ROLL

THE LIONS' TALE.

Once upon a time there were three lions in Withington, one white, one red and one golden. But this is no fairy story, in fact it started off as a horror story as far as CAMRA members were concerned because the lions are three pubs that sold no Real Ale, although the story does have a happy ending.

There was the White Lion at the top of Burton Rd. (Wilsons), the Red Lion (Marstons) just down Wilmslow Road and the Golden Lion (Tetleys) a bit further on past the Christie Hospital.

The White Lion was the first to undergo a complete transformation (if this really was Casablanca where was Humphrey Bogart?) Anyway, Wilsons cask bitter appeared in the very much altered ground floor of the pub which was renamed the Pavillion, but the White Lion Bar downstairs was not revamped, some body somewhere obviously realised that the locals might not take kindly to the restyled Pavvy Lion as it is now generally known.

The Golden Lion was the next to receive the treatment - it closed for alterations, and then re-opened just before last Christmas as the Manor House, complete with library, Gazebo and Grecian pillars. Many locals thought that the Golden Lion had never been a very succesful pub but all that has changed - could it be the excellent hand-pumped Tetelys Mild and Bitter and the Ind Coope Burton Ale that packs them in?

Finally the Red Lion - a sight for sore eyes for Camra enthusiasts - a handpump with a Pedigree pump clip, with Mercian Mild and Burton Bitter to be similarly converted from the old metered dispense.

ROBINSONS BITTER

Local Camra members have been heard to bemoan, with much justification, the dearth of outlets for Robinsons Ordinary Bitter. While there seems little chance of altering Brewery policy towards this drink people would do well to get themselves along to Cheadle - where not one, but two Robinsons tied houses serve the rare brew on handpump. The Queens Arms is situated just by the junction of Stockport Road and Councilor Lane. The hand-pump has been at the pub for 19 years and has always remained loyal to 'ordinary', The Red Lion just down the road, is a more recent convert, having changed from Best at the start of the year when prices went up. The landlord reports that locals have taken very well to the change. Both pubs are small comfortable locals with a variety of rooms in which to drink so why not go along and try them. If you're the pub crawling type Cheadle has seven other Real Ale pubs within walking distance (2 Robinsons, 2 Hydes, 2 Boddingtons and 1 Wilsons.

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A N S W E R -----

It's the Stag, Cemaes Bay, Anglesey. It had a brief moment of glory in the '75 GBG with handpumped Burtonwood and it featured in What's Brewing when it went wet after being closed on Sundays for 101 years. It now serves a consistent pint of bitter, the mild having gone keg due to slow turnover. Its a friendly little pub, you are always sure of a warm welcome from licensee Tom Hughes, and its always been a pub of character - there are old photographs of the village as it was, and of local ship wrecks, but maintaing a modern interest with colour photos of lifeboats and helicopters. The '75 decription of unspoilt is, alas, to change. The Brewery plans to demolish walls, move the bar, and make other improvements which are destroying the character of so many of our tradtional pubs.

The views expressed in 'Opening Times' are not necessarily those of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.

NEW GREATER MANCHESTER GOOD BEER GUIDE!

At last a new 'topers' vademecum' of the best Real Ale Pubs in the County is to be produced to replace the aging, and virtually useless, existing Guide.

Although by no means comprehensive, the new Guide will contain some 600 outlets, including 113 in Stockport and South Manchester. With an intended cover price of £1.50 this will be a handy, pocket-sized edition of 80-100 pages, incorporating photographs of the more attractive pubs, an informative brewery section and up to 15 symbols denoting such attributes as accomodation, public bar, meals, pub games, nearness to public transport and perhaps most importantly - proximity to a curry-house!!

Another improvement will be the inclusion of much better maps than previously, with an outline county map, larger scale borough maps and detailed street plans of the town centres.

No stickers will be available for pubs as these are prohibitively expensive. However publicity posters will be available instead. Campaigning editorial on such issues as the decline in mild sales at the expense of pseudo British lagers, flexible licensing and pub preservation will be interspersed throughout the Guide. Advertising will be accepted but only from Breweries and non-political organisations. No individual pubs will be allowed to advertise to dispel any suggestion of favouritism or endorsement.

It is hoped that the initial 2000 copies will be available by the National CAMRA AGM in Southport in spring '85. Demand is expected to be heavy, so don't miss out on your copy. Watch out for the distinctive front cover featuring a hand-pump on top of the County Library!

Good toping,
Jock Stroller.

HOSTS JOKES!!

Some of you will have received the Pennine Joke (whoops - Hosts) publication which is full of adverts. On page 23 there is a voucher enabling you to get a pint of Wilsons Bitter free. The bad news is that in a promotion costing £2 million they have found no room to mention that Wilsons brew a very fine mild. It can be no surprise to see it slowly disappearing from Manchester pubs when rather than promote mild they are still offering free bottles of wine to go with sit down meals.

You can also see the way the marketing experts (?) think on page 14. My idea of a good pub (and I'M sure I am not in a minority) is one that serves a good pint of traditional beer and where I can relax and meet friends old and new. If there is room there should be a dart board and possibly a pool table and a crib board should be available. These requirements have been split by marketing 'expert' to produce three kinds of pub - the Real Ale House, the Local and the Sporting Life, though how they intend to prevent people meeting and talking in a Real Ale House is beyond me. Perhaps they will play loud disco music to stifle conversation or perhaps if you open your mouth to say other than 3 pints of bitter and 2 pints of mild please - you will be asked to go.

Finally there are 2 offers which require forms and they are back to back so it is impossible to use both - the pint of bitter and the holiday in the Canaries. I'm going to use the pint of bitter since there is no Real Ale in the Canaries!!

Contributors: P. Levison, R. Jones, A. Seal, H. Higgins, P. Thompson, R. Sproson, J. Stroller, M. Swallow, P. Braidley.

THE NEW INN BEAT THE BREATHALISER

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