

H I G H F L Y E R !

Yorkshire may have what is claimed to be the only train that serves beer from hand-pumps, but what about handpumped beer from a Boeing? If all goes well, Manchester toppers will soon be able to try a pint of probably Boddies or Thwaites whilst actually aboard a Boeing 707, but they won't be up in the clouds, they'll be on Ashton New Road.

This sounds an unlikely place to find an aeroplane, and it could cause a few motorists to sign the pledge, as they suddenly come across it, complete with wind-sock, runway, control tower, and fire engine, and all next to the Why Not? Pub.

The scheme is the brainchild of the owner of the pub, Bill Webster, who besides looking after the pub runs a travel agency called Why Not? Travel, and he also has flats and apartments for sale or to let in foreign parts. He has always dreamed of being an airline pilot, but as this is not to be, he has decided the next best thing is to buy his own aeroplane, even if it never takes to the air.

There has been a lot of publicity about this venture, and it was recently well covered by press and Radio (even German Radio!), but for some odd reason the Boozer's Chronicle has never reported it - perhaps they thought no one would believe it.

But apart from the aeroplane that is still to come the pub is well worth a visit because of its unusual style. It's a bit like stepping back in time, with old style furniture, posters and advertisements, and the music is certainly from another era. Beers at present are Boddingtons and Thwaite's Bitter, and Chester's Mild, but this may be replaced by Thwaite's Mild (all on handpumps.)

Phil Levison.

'Opening Times':

- is written & published by CAMRA South Manchester, send us your news, views and comments about the pubs and the beer to 'Opening Times',
S.H.Higgins,
48, Moorcroft Drive,
Burnage,
Manchester M19 1WH.

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

S T A T I O N A R Y

In November we reported fears that Marstons intended to 'modernise' the Station, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury.

However, we can now breathe a sigh of relief for Mr. J. Lunn, Local Director of Marstons, writes to assure us:

"Thank you for your letter regarding the Station Hotel, we certainly have no plans for altering this pub..."

Paul Thompson.

H O S T S A N D G U E S T S .

Certain Pennine Hosts pubs (Wilson's managed houses) are now sporting price lists that promise Marstons Pedigree. Sources within Hosts confirm that Marstons is to be on sale in some of their pubs, anybody seen it? Please tell Opening Times, or CAMRA at any meeting.

P O S H B O D D I E S

Boddingtons Black Lion on Hillgate looks set to follow in the footsteps of the Buck & Dog and become a Steak Bar (or glorified chippie as it was described to me). The conversion is due in the next few months, but Boddies Bitter should be staying. Any chance Mild?

John Clarke.

For details of advertising in 'Opening Times' please contact Ron Sproson on 432 0059.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

CASTLEWOOD

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PUB FOOD MONDAY TO SATURDAY & BANK HOLS.

11-30 - 2-00

Function room available

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Meetings, Parties etc.

HEARD AT THE BAR

So far 'Opening Times' has published several of these items, and two were actually overheard at the same bar, not in South Manchesters Branch Area, but not far away - any guesses?

Now follows a personal exchange, this time at the Welsh Guardsman at Carmarthen (originally Buckleys flagship pub):

CAMRA Member (fed up with bar people not knowing the meaning of 'cask-conditioned'):- "Have you any hand-pumped beer?"

Answer: "No, sir, but we have cask-conditioned beer served through electric pumps."

And another Welsh one, this time at the Black Boy in Caernarfon - the same CAMRA Member, having accepted that people do know what cask conditioned means:

Question: (Having looked at the confusing array of dispensers) Can you tell me what is cask conditioned?"

Answer: "Yes, sir, cask conditioned means beer that completes its fermentation in the pub cellar."

The hand-pumped Bass was in the other bar!

Finally at the Bowling Green on Charles Street, Stockport, during the Hillgate Pub Crawl after several Camra Members expressed regret (!) that the beer was now keg: Regular customer at the Bar: "You'll have to go a long way to find traditional beer in Stockport."

CAMRA NEWS

Next Branch Meeting: Thursday, January 10th., 8 p.m. at the Castlewood, Bridge Street, Brow, Stockport - visitors welcome.

NO TO HOSTS.

Manchester Council have put the block on plans by Pennine Hosts to convert an unused room at the Pavilion (formerly the White Lion) in Withington into a shop - it would have sold food, drink and household goods (what next: a ¼ of tea and a pint?) They also planned a video hite section! The Historic Buildings Panel said the plan would cause irreparable damage to the building, which is in a conservation area and the Planning Committee have rejected the application.

Changes in the 'Grove'

The Three Tunnes, one of the most popular pubs in Hazel Grove is to undergo major alterations this year (about March) The toilets are going to replace the current Vault; the two rooms on the left will be knocked through and the bar will go into the back room! This pub has probably more character than any other in the 'Grove'; how much of this remains after Robinsons have got their hands on it it remains to be seen, so does whether the handpumps will remain.

The re-opened Bulls Head in Hazel Grove has now been visited and first impressions are of a vast improvement.

Previously a gloomy one-roomed pub, it has been considerably brightened up with several distinct drinking area, the accent being on natural materials with much wood and brick in evidence. Even the car park looks better! The mild is still keg but the bitter was on fine form when sampled, but at 70p is at the top end of Wilsons price range, worth a visit though.

Contributors to this edition: John Clarke, Humphrey Higgins, Rhys Jones, Phil Levison.

BOARS HEAD

MARKET PLACE, STOCKPORT

SAMUEL SMITHS OLD BREWERY

BITTER

PUB FOOD DAILY

LIVE

JAZZ &

ROCK &

ROLL

AROUND IN THE TOWN:- The Annual
Hillgate Crawl.

The Annual Christmas Crawl of Hillgate, Stockport, is a long established feature of the CAMRA Calendar, and for the first time it has been recorded in print! Be warned though that due to the increasing drunkenness of both the writer & the party the scores in the later stages are not as accurate as they should be.....

On the principle that it's easier to roll down that stagger up we kick off at the very top, on the A6 at the ex-celled Blossoms Hotel, this long established Good Beer Guide Pub can usually be relied on for a decent pint of Robbies and this was no exception, mild getting 2.6, bitter almost 3, (scores being 0 (undrinkable) to 4 (excellent)).

Across the road to the newly painted Wheatsheaf where Wilsons mild ($2\frac{1}{2}$) was even better than the bitter (2). Next Robinsons Royal Mortar, a friendly lively pub with mild at 2.6 & bitter, 2.4 were both appreciated. Over the road and into Robinsons rather grotty Flying Dutchman (named after a race-horse by the way, not the ship). It was rumoured that this pub was to be demolished and to be honest unless Robinsons are prepared to spend a lot of money here there doesn't seem to be much alternative. The mild, however, managed a respectable $2\frac{1}{2}$, the bitter, which at first was stuck in the pump, managed only $1\frac{1}{2}$. This was probably due to a pump malfunction as a later sampling produced a 3.

A word of warning now - the Bowling Green has usually been on the itinerary but it is now all keg.

COMING SOON.....AN EVEN WIDER RANGE OF

FARE AT

THE NELSON TAVERN

THE HOME OF HOME MADE FOOD

MEALS SERVED LUNCHTIME & EVENINGS
(MON-THU) TILL 9-15.

HANDPUMPED WILSONS MILD AND BITTER.

Robinsons Star & Garter now and again the trend of better mild than bitter was continued with 2.75 & 2.6. Onto the Rams Head and Wilsons mild managed an average 2 but the bitter was by general consensus disgusting although to be fair it got one score of 3 & another of $2\frac{1}{2}$. The night wore on and so did we into Wilsons Crown with mild at 2.6 & bitter 2.5. Over the road into the Golden Lion, serving Burtonwood beers, a rare brew for the area. Again mild was better than the bitter with 2.7 against 2.4.

Mild drinkers had so far had a better night of it but this was soon evened out by those who ventured into Whitbread's Chesters awful Big Lamp. Three Os & 0.1 say it all. The bitter wasn't bad (ie it was about as good a pint as you will get anywhere & got a respectable 2.25. Boddies next in the Black Lion, no mild here. The bitter scored 2.2, less than the Chesters but again as good as you are likely to get. A sad comment on a once great beer.

A detour now to the Waterloo and the best mild score so far 3.1. The bitter averaged a respectable 2.6. Up on to Hillgate and into the Red Bull, probably one of the more characterful Hillgate pubs with equally characterful beer, the scores matching the Waterloo at 3.1 & 2.6. On the home straight and Tetleys in the Gladstone (the Sun & Castle is keg). The mild scored well 2.9, (good to see it back) but the bitter was a bit of a disappointment at only 2.2.

Robbies to finish with. First the Spread Eagle with, to be honest, not the beer you'd expect from the Brewery tap, the mild managing only 1.8 and the bitter 2. But to be honest by that time no-one could taste much anyway - definitely worth a visit when sober. One further point - surely if Robinsons had real faith in their rare but excellent ordinary bitter they'd make sure it was sold in the brewery tap which is supposed to be a showpiece for the brewery and its beers.

Speaking of showpieces our final stop was the excellent Royal Oak on High St. the mild - $3\frac{1}{2}$ (probably the best of the night, and bitter 2.9...I seem to remember drinking some Old Tom as well.....

John Clarke.

ROUND BRITAIN DRINKER.

This is a pub crawl with a difference, leaving Palatine Rd. by car and heading Anglesey - and with no drinking & driving it's 125 miles before you get a pint!! The first pub on the road is the Galcot Arms before Holywell (Keg Ansell's), a bit further on the new & very posh Stamford Gate Hotel (Traditional Wilsons) Next is Greenalls Deeside T avern (from the Welsh side the sign says Tafarn..what's the Welsh for Deeside?) Then about a mile to the Rock at Rock a very pleasant Burtonwood pub with handpumped mild & bitter. Greenalls Singing Kettle & Borders Travellers Inn are next & down into Rhualt is the Smithy Arms, keg Bass until recently, but sold to Burtonwood who provide handpumped bitter, but keg mild. Next, the White House, which has changed its signs a few times, its Border at the moment (but not for long presumably). & because of dual-carriageways and by-passes (the latest extension takes you past Colwyn Bay) the next proper pub is Ansell's Bride in Conway, or Y Bont depending which sign you look at, then the Erskine Arms, with the best selection yet, Tetley Mild & Bitter & Ind Coope Burton, all on handpump. Through the first tunnel & past the Little Chef to Penmaenmawr, a small but well pubbed village. The Mountain View has Ind Coope Bitter & Ansell's Mild, the Brom Eryri Marstons Mild, Bitter & Pedigree, and before you reach the Alexandra (Bass) there's a recent addition, Red Gables (was there a murder there?) with Wilsons Mild and Bitter. Next comes Llanfairfechan with the re-named Village INN (Ansell's) & the Castle (Greenalls), which had the dubious distinction of being the last wet pub on the route, until the last referendum changed all that (another dual sign - on the Old dry side it say Y Castell) A mile further on is the Aber Falls Hotel, much altered and now a free House selling mostly Martstons - there was a promise at one time of Greene King Abbot & it's not known whether this ever appeared.

Now once again due to a new by-pass & dual carriageways, there are no pubs for a few miles, Bangor is no longer a bottle-neck & you cross the new road bridge built over the old Britannia Railway Bridge over the Menai Straits, to the first pub in Anglesey, Robinsons Four Crosses.

Heading North up the A5025 it's Real Ale all the way - The Panton Arms -

Burtonwood, the Bull, Greenalls, at Pentraeth, then through Benllech - the Nautilus (Tetley), Breeze Hill (Robinsons), Gwrafaon (LEES), Benllech Hotel (Youngers). A sudden drop down a steep hill past the Pilot Boat (Robinsons) - the bar is actually made from part of a boat, then there's a very new Greenalls Free House Y Bedol (The Horseshoe), and it's into Amlych with its Kings Head (Burtonwood) Mariner (Ansell's) Queens (Tetley) and Dinorben Arms - the latter originally sold the local Gwynedd Ales and several McEwans in season, but this has now been reduced to just one beer, McEwans 70/-.

The journey continues through Bull Bay with its spectacular sea views (including the Isle of Man on a clear day), the Trecastell Hotel (Robinsons) & the Bull Bay Hotel (Lees). Finally into Cemaes Bay, past the Castellor and the Harbour Hotel (Both keg) and into the Stag (Burtonwood) for a well earned pint of Bitter. (The Vigour next door has cask Bass, but there's CO2 on it!

Phil Levison.

FALCON QUEST.

Banks's is much in the news and we reported at Christmas that the ex-Wilsons, Falcon, had re-opened surprising even Wilsons BLO. But how could he know when Wilsons didn't know either? Apparently Wilsons Order Dept. rand Dave Teasdale the Manager, reminding him he had't ordered any beer - they were horrified when he said he was getting supplies 'elsewhere'! When it finally sank in that they had sold the pub to Banks's Wilsons said they wanted their £12.50 back for the holiday extensions they had already applied for!

Sykes Wine
Local Beer

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HIGSONS MILD

AT THE

GEORGE