



Opening Times

No. 24

STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRAS PUB NEWSHEET

APRIL 1986

FREE

A SLOPPY BUSINESS!

When one considers the many hours of Radio and Television pushed out into the airwaves every week, items concerning booze and related subjects are fairly few and far between. So when Radio Times announced (for BBC 2's "Food & Drink" programme "Beer what are the hidden extras in a pint of bitter that could affect your health?" - there was at least one CAMRA member ready with the video recorder!

It was all about germs, and what really happened to the contents of drip trays. 40 out of 70 former publicans confirmed the long suspected practice of putting the slops back into customers glasses. Worse even - one talked about collecting left-overs from glasses after closing time, and demonstrated gaining access to a keg and pouring in a bucketful of these left-overs.

An Environmental Health Officer was suitably horrified - this is an offence under Food Hygiene Regulations, carrying a fine of up to £2,000. The Brewers' Society says it is undesirable and illegal. The BBC presenter suggested oversize glasses to reduce spillage, and metered pumps, but "CAMRA are against metered pumps as they think it destroys their folksy image" (?)

So what can we the drinking public do? Personally, I like a clean glass every time, but in the Manchester area at least, this is not a very widespread practice, and in any case, if the slops go in, nothing is achieved. It isn't always possible to see exactly what is going on behind the bar, but at a very well known and busy pub in Didsbury village, drip trays are openly emptied into stainless steel buckets during a busy session - are they really going to be tipped away?

Phil Levison.

WEBSTERS TO LAUNCH NEW BREW

Websters' have announced that they are to present what they believe to be 'the finest quality pint of cask conditioned premium bitter available today... a beer brewed for quality rather than quantity consumption'. Is this to be the the sequel to the much vaunted but never born Wilsons Gold Medal? Watch this space - Websters have invited 'a chosen few' to attend a presentation & tasting this month and we shall report our opinions.

Humphrey Higgins.

PUB OF THE MONTH

Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month for April is the Crown, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury.

The Crown has gone from strength to strength since it re-opened some twelve months ago following extensive refurbishment. The pub was extended into the old jewellers shop and tastefully redecorated throughout.

Greenall Whitley Mild, Bitter and Original are sold, in excellent condition, and complemented at lunch time by a selection of good food at reasonable prices.

The licensees, Christine & Andrew McKay, must be congratulated for creating a genuine community pub, as opposed to yet another Didsbury trendy house.

Try to come along on the presentation evening, Thursday, April 24th., as celebrations - and a damn good night are guaranteed!

Stuart Ballantyne.

Castlewood

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STAGGER

THE CHEADLE CRAWL.

A chilly late February evening saw a group of CAMRA stalwarts gather at the White Hart, a Boddingtons pub at the Gatley end of Cheadle village at the start of the monthly crawl through the delights of one of the Branch's best known areas. The White Hart is a popular pub, although the clientele at 7pm are markedly different to those who frequent the pub later in the evening. The beer, both Mild & Bitter was of fairly indifferent quality.

Next stop was the first of 2 Hydes pubs, the Crown, a garish modern pub with wallpaper which wouldn't have looked out of place in a Turkish brothel. It only has one room, and as a result is rather lacking in character. However there was a blissful lack of either background or foreground music. The Mild was well thought of whilst the bitter was average.

By way of contrast, we moved onto the Vine, a Pennine Hosts pub, which, unusually, is an example of thoughtful pub renovation. The major criticism revolved round the potted plastic plants. The pub had a price list, but since this was positioned beyond the end of the bar, out of sight to all but those sitting near it, its use was minimal. Only Wilsons Bitter was available, which was of average quality.

Hydes' other Cheadle pub, the Star, a former Good Beer Guide listed pub, came next. Both the mild & the Bitter were however short of Good Beer Guide quality. This somewhat characterless pub seems a typical 1960s renovation with polystyrene tiles on the ceiling and flower power wallpaper. This is a shame since the pub has an interesting exterior.

Next, the Railway, another Boddingtons pub, which despite being filled with the smart young Cheadle set, was very pleasant. It is something of a 'theme' pub, and does not have conventional 'Ladies' & 'Gents', instead being afflicted with a 'Powder Room' & 'Porters Room'. The Bitter was disappointingly poor, although the mild was fairly well thought of.

The rest of the crawl comprises of a series of Robinsons pubs, commencing with the Royal Oak. The pub seems to have become very popular, and deservedly so. Despite this, the Vault was virtually unoccupied, and seemed extremely neglected by the landlord, which is a bit of a shame. Both the Best Bitter & Best Mild were liked by the majority of those drinking them.

We then moved on to the Red Lion, a rare

Old Ship Inn, Styal.

IN THE HEART OF THE NATIONAL TRUST PARK

HANDPUMPED MARSTONS PEDIGREE -

WILSONS MILD & BITTER -

WEBSTERS YORKSHIRE BITTER -

THE HOME OF HOME MADE FOOD

outlet for the excellent Ordinary Bitter. Both this & the Best Mild were of a high quality in this lively locals pub. This was followed by a similarly excellent pub, the Queens, another outlet for Ordinary Bitter. The pub was again fairly crowded, and again deservedly so, being a typical example of the Greater Manchester multi-roomed local. Old Tom was also available from the barrel, and was of the same high standard as the Bitter & Best Mild.

The crawl was rounded off by a visit to the excellent and extremely popular Good Beer Guide listed Printers Arms. It was apparent from the quality of the beer why this pub is in the Guide, and the pub itself is similarly difficult to fault. The pub is also frequented by several founder members of Camra in South Manchester.

Thus drew to a close another crawl which comes highly recommended for both beer quality and variety of pubs.

(The comments made in the above are not intended to be a statement on the quality of the pubs or the beer on all occasions, but are of our opinion of both on the night of the crawl.)

Andy Cooper.

RICHARD AND SUSAN GENDERS -

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A HAVEN IN THE SHOPPING PRECINCT!



This month we visit one of the new pubs in the Branch Area - the Sun in September, Burnage Lane. Formerly the Milton Lodge Motel, the pub opened in October 1984 having been excellently converted by Sam Smiths into a welcoming pub. The unusual name is meant to reflect the twilight of the British Raj in India & this colonial theme is reflected inside. However, unlike the tacky non-sense perpetrated by Pennine Hosts on the Far Pavilions, this has been done with taste and restraint, the layout is basically a small, traditional vault & a large lounge although the different levels & alcoves give a multi-roomed feel. Two cask beers are available (Old Brewery Bitter & Tadcaster Bitter) and both are invariably well kept, so much so that the pub is to be included in the National Good Beer Guide for 1987.

So, what about the food? The menu is very wide ranging with at least 20 items (I didn't count!) going from the more traditional pub food such as chili, lasagne, steak & kidney pie (£1.70), steak

& kidney pudding (£1.95) to more up-market items like trout or salmon (£2.75). Also available are jacket spuds at 55p or £1 with fillings.

Passing over the starter (soup at 80p) I chose the chicken curry at £1.95. This came on a long oval plate and was very well presented. There were good pieces of chicken and although not a hot curry it was pleasantly spicy & fruity. This time I wasn't dining alone and my two companions chose the Beef Stroganoff (£2.75) and the sirloin steak (£3.50). The stroganoff consisted of strips of beef in a thick creamy sauce & came in its own bowl and accompanied by boiled rice. What there was was very good but the size of the portion wasn't judged value for money. The sirloin steak got full marks - a good sized steak and very tender. Accompaniments were chips, onion rings, mushrooms, peas & salad. Good value for money. Unusually there were no sweets on the menu which is perhaps an omission that should be rectified.

To conclude, the Sun in September is definitely worth making a detour for - you won't be disappointed.

John Clarke.

OVER THE TOP ?

Pennine Hosts have a number of different styles for their refurbishments and some are more like pubs than others. Sadly, their 'Open House' conversions tend to sweep away practically everything you might expect to find in a traditional pub. Even the outside signs are replaced by illuminated glass tubing on a silver background. Once inside, you may well wonder what happened to the separate vault, the games, the real fire, and that other, almost indefinable ingredient, atmosphere. Cask conditioned ale is often the only survivor from the original pub - you might even be lucky enough to find a slightly increased range available.

2 more have joined the area's look-alikes - The Moor Top, Heaton Moor, has become Tops & the Jolly Sailor, Bramhall Lane is.... still the Jolly Sailor. Tops has Wilsons Bitter at 74p & although Websters was expected it never appeared. The Jolly Sailor has Wilsons & Websters Bitters at 76 & 78p, all handpumped. Both have the Open House ingredients - light paintwork & upholstery, brass, chromium, mirrors, flashing lights, greenery & raised seating areas. It's almost getting back to the days of the 'Red Revolution' when the Watney houses were instantly recognisable country-wide.

MANCHESTER ARMS.

WELLINGTON ROAD SOUTH, STOCKPORT.

ROBINSONS BEST ALES!

PUB FOOD & SNACKS MON - SAT.

TURNERS PLANS CONFIRMED

Readers will recall that we have been concerned with the proposals Sam Smiths have for changing Turners Vaults, Underbank, Stockport.

Luckily things now look promising with no 'fundamental changes' planned to the existing vault. The beer servery is to be renewed but all existing fittings will be retained where possible. There will also be a general re-decoration & additional toilet facilities, with all work planned to be completed by late summer. Sams also hope to apply to have the opening hours brought into line with other pubs in the area.

Good news on the ale front as well, they say it would appear that they will be able to introduce cask beer although this depends on 'various factors which are yet to be resolved'. More news when available.

TUNNES OF CHANGES

We got our wrists slapped last year for reporting that Robinsons had plans for the Three Tunnes, Hazel Grove when none in fact had been drawn up. Robinsons have, however, confirmed that plans have now been prepared for carrying out alterations, and these have already received approval from the licensing justices and also planning permission. This is a larger alteration as apparently part of the building is in a poor condition and the Brewery are taking the opportunity of generally trying to clean up the rear of the pub. Alterations will also include a new toilet block, a downstairs kitchen and 'a certain amount of re-adjustment to the layout downstairs'. If & when we discover what the re-adjustment involves we'll let you know.

ROMPER UP-DATE

Further to our reports on the Romper, Ringway, the City Council tell us that Boddies have not in fact appealed against the rejection by the planning committee of their proposals for the pub. Should an appeal be lodged we shall be advised and we shall keep readers advised of future developments.

John Clarke.

Rotation

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Opening Times

GRANTED !

Whilst the licensing Justices rejected the applications for an extension to permitted opening hours in the Trafford, Salford & Eccles districts the green light was given to Manchester pubs to open until 11 pm throughout the week (excluding Sundays.) The extra half hour was granted after a powerful submission at the hearing last month by Mike Grierson for the Licensed Victuallers Association, who was ably supported by Rhys Jones on behalf of CAMRA.

The argument against the change, put by the Licensed House Managers Association, was not helped when one of their witnesses, who was under the impression that he had to open during all permitted hours, was advised by Mr. Grierson that this was not so - he was only permitted to open during them - then promptly shot himself in the foot by advising the court that he did'nt open until 7pm!

All in all a very satisfying morning which was nicely rounded off with celebration pints (Brains, Fullers & Wem) at the Marble Arch!

Humphrey Higgins.

HEARD AFTER THE BRANCH VISIT TO DUBLIN:

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HYDE ROAD AXE LATEST

Following last Months' shock news of the Council's widening scheme for Hyde Road, we have now seen the plans and can give the latest news. All the pubs we listed as 'definitely affected' WILL go under the scheme; of the 'others at risk', 5 will be unaffected - Bulls Head, Wellington, City Gates, Junction, Lord Nelson - the others WILL go. A further threat is posed by the Intermediate Relief Road, planned to intersect Hyde Road near the Travellers Call. This scheme, together with associated junction 'improvements' will mean the demolition of the Star, Pottery Lane, Grey Mare Ashton Old Road, Travellers Call, Ashton Old Road, Duke of Edinburgh, Mill St., & Alexandra, Mill St. The Council has acquired various vacant plots of land in the area but no pubs - indeed no functioning buildings of any sort - have so far been acquired.

The news is a disturbing extension of the original threat. While some comfort can be taken from the 'reprieve' for 5 pubs (shame only 2 sell cask beer), this is more than outweighed by the appalling threat to the Beswick/Bradford area, where the 5 threatened include 2 of such excellence that they have just been included in next years' Good Beer Guide.

We are urgently contacting the Breweries & the proprietors of the free houses concerned to find out their attitude & meanwhile don't forget that the Council want YOUR views - contact Mr. Alan Hubbard in Manchester Town Hall, Tel: 234 4530.

Rhys P. Jones.

NEW LOCAL BEER GUIDE

We have just produced a new Guide to Real Ale in Central & South Manchester. It's a list of all the pubs in the City & the Southern suburbs together with the beers they sell. At 10p it's available in a selection of the pubs or from: Jim Flynn, 13, Styal Ave., Reddish, Stockport. If ordered by post please include an s.a.e.

Numbered update will appear in 'O.T.' & information for these should be sent to:
Rhys P. Jones, 2, Ellen Wilkinson Crescent,
Manchester 12.

UPDATE NO. 1: Additions: City: Sam's Chop House, Back Pol Fold: Webster B, Manns B (H) (restricted opening hours)
Rusholme: Shewood Inn, Claremont Rd: Chesters B (H)
Deletions: City: Bridge, Pin Mill Brow: Closed.
Changes: Ardick: King's Head ADD Greenalls M (H)
Clayton: Strawberry Duck DELETE Holts M.

DARK SECRETS REVEALED

Readers of 'Opening Times' will be familiar with Robinsons Best Mild & Best Bitter. Some of you may even be familiar with the difficult to find Ordinary Bitter, but it's a fair bet that few readers will have sampled the extremely rare dark mild. This is simply the Best Mild with added caramel but the effect is to create a distinctively different beer. It is produced for nine outlets only and Robbies won't put it in any more pubs but even so full marks to them for catering for local tastes in this way. None of the outlets are particularly local but we thought readers might be interested to know where they are should they want to search out this beer.

The outlets are:

The New Inn, Market Place, Buxton.
The Old Pack Horse, Chapel-en-le-Frith.
The Square & Compass, Darley Dale, Matlock.
The Red Lion, Lower Withington, Macclesfield.
The Red Cow, Beam Street, Nantwich.
The Rifleman, The Barony, Nantwich.
Griffin Hotel, Llanbedr-dyffryn, Clwyd, Ruthin.
The Wine Vaults, Ruthin.
Sandringham Hotel, West Parade, Rhyl.

ADVERTISING IN "OPENING TIMES" IS CHEAP AND REACHES THOUSANDS OF PUB USERS EVERY MONTH.

FOR DETAILS OF RATES PLEASE CONTACT THE EDITOR, ADDRESS ON THE BACK PAGE.

I remember you.



TAKE-AWAY ALE !

Many readers will know of South Manchester's best off licence, Legendary Lancashire Heroes, Burton Rd., Withington. Part of a chain based in Greater Manchester, Heroes specialises in selling a wide range of draught traditional beers in any quantity from a pint to 18 gallon casks.

A good range is always available with Theakstons Old Peculier, Taylors Landlord, Moorhouse Pendle Witch & Sam Smiths & Winkles Bitter being regulars. Heroes Best Bitter, a house brew from Winkles of Buxton is sold; & on a recent visit, Titanic Premium Bitter from Stoke & Dilfords Bitter from Liverpool were also available, introducing rare small breweries beers to the areas' drinkers. For all afficiandos, it is a pleasure to see 2 traditional ciders -Thatchers' Scrumpy & Medium Sweet.

All in all, an excellent establishment, and well worth seeking out for the enthusiast wanting variety & quality in their beer choice, at very reasonable prices.

In the other part of the Branch area Richard Genders, who owns the Bottle Stop on Acre Lane, Bramhall, is known thereabouts as a beer enthusiast. With his wife Susan he has built up a thriving business with a good turnover of exotic bottled beers, real ales & continental lagers. This success has been built on keeping excellent beers of relatively high gravity. Richard believes that high gravity beers are better suited to the carry-out trade. On a recent visit only Ruddles County, the 'house beer' at 85p a pint & Theakstons XB at 80p were on, along with Dortmund Union Special from Germany (under pressure) because they were winding down somewhat for their holidays. Normally there are three real ales on chosen from an extensive list (see the advertisement). The Ruddles County was on excellent form & I can understand why their sales have risen since Tetleys pulled it out from the Shady Oak. The Genders hope soon to have Ruddles new 'Rutland Bitter' & already have bottled Mexican beers for drinking while watching the World Cup Finals!

Although not the cheapest of establishments the beer is kept excellently & The Bottle Stop is a welcome oasis in a beer desert, the nearest pub being half a mile away.

Andy Cooper & Jim Flynn.

REBUFF FOR FREE HOUSE PLAN

The proposals of former licensee of the Shady Oak, Barry Sullivan, to build a Free House on the site of the 7 Acres Garden Centre, Cheadle Hulme, have come to grief.

When he came to make application for outline planning permission local residents took great umbrage at the idea of having a pub on their doorsteps and objected en masse. As a result he had little choice but to withdraw the application on the day of the hearing.

OPENING TIMES is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester branch of CAMRA. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Campaign. Send your news to: S.H. Higgins, 48 Moorcroft Drive, Burnage M19 1WH

Contributors: Andy Cooper, John Clarke, Rhys Jones, Humphrey Higgins, Stuart Ballantyne, Jim Flynn, Phil Levison.

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BRANCH DIARY...

APRIL

7th: Social: Victoria, Withington.
10th: AGM: Gateway, E. Didsbury.
11th: City Centre Crawl: 7pm Lass O'Gowrie; 9pm City Arms, Kennedy St.
14th: Social: Adswood Hotel, Adswood
21st: Social: Unicorn, Belle Vue.
24th: Pub of the Month: Crown, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury.
28th: Social: Printers, Cheadle.
Contacts: Business John Clarke: 832 2468 (ext 385) day: 477 1973 (h)
Socials and Trips: Andy Cooper: 0625 872641 (day)

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