



Opening Times

No. 25 STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRAS PUB NEWSHEET MAY 1986 FREE

LANDLORD TO GO AS ROBINSONS 'DO' THE UNION

The news that the long awaited work on the refurbishment, or better still restructuring, of the Union, Broadstone Road, Reddish, has started also brought with it the news that its first victim is, surprisingly, not the character of the pub, but its popular and longstanding Landlord, Fred Thurgoland and his wife.

Fred has been asked, as the Tenant, to pay £12,000 for the dubious privilege of having his pub 'Robinsonised' and, unfortunately, he is unable to pay this amount, so he has got to go!

As far as the plans for the pub go the much needed toilet block is now being constructed in the derelict terraced house next door to the pub and the next stage will be to move the bar back to where the living quarters are presently, creating the now standard open plan one status pub.

Within a few months of all this work being completed it will be time for the final change to be made and Fred will leave the Union. It is not known yet whether another tenant will be found with a spare £12,000 plus, or if a Manager will be employed at the pub.

How sad it is that Robinsons have to sacrifice a seemingly successful landlord like Fred, who has consistently served good beer to his customers (the pub has been in CAMRA's National Good Beer Guide for a number of years) on the altar of their modernisation programme.

Does a similar fate await other landlords whose pubs are to be given the 'treatment'?

Jim Flynn.

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

PUB OF THE MONTH

Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA have selected the New Inn, Wellington Road South (next to the Town Hall) to receive the Pub of the Month Award for May.

The pub has been under the Tenancy of Gordon McTear for the past three years and the continued excellence of both the Wilsons Mild & Bitter on handpumps has secured the pub a deserved entry into the 1986 and 1987 Good Beer Guides.

Often crowded, and always popular, there's a changing clientelle in the New Inn that belies its former reputation!!

A worthy winner of the award, and the presentation evening on Thursday, May 22nd., promises to be a first class do! Come along, and be early!

Humphrey Higgins.

IN YOUR BUMPER EIGHT PAGE 'O.T.' THIS MONTH:

- Page 2: Reddish refurbishments.
- Page 4: The ABC Stagger
- Page 5: Branch Diary.
- Page 6: Pub Grub.
- Page 7: A new choice for drinkers.
- Page 8: Pub News.

PLUS facts & features for all Beer Buffs!!

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REDDISH ROUND-UP

The Fir Tree on Gorton Road, North Reddish, was recently refurbished by Tetleys. As is to be expected the pub is now open plan with one Central Bar and glass conservatory at the rear.

Despite the, now standard, mellow colours, mirrors on the pillars and the raised fake 'library' area, the effect is an improvement on the previous drabness. The really good news however is the reintroduction of Real Ale with handpumped Tetleys Bitter and Mild. Wake up Bass!! - why be the odd ones out, how about putting real ale in your North Reddish pubs, the Reddish Vale and the Bulls Head?

Just over the border into Gorton the Pomona on Reddish Lane has been shut by Wilsons and the windows boarded up presumably for interior renovation work. It is difficult to imagine how the grotty interior can be anything but improved, although having seen some of the efforts of the Pennine Hosts arm of Grand Metropolitan perhaps I'm wrong! Let's hope that they will replace the keg beer with Real Ale here - and that this will put even more pressure (?) on Bass to change to the path of righteousness at the Bulls Head a few hundred yards away.

Jim Flynn.

QUESTION TIME

What was the proper name of the 'Slutch Pit' in Longsight, and whose beers did it sell? Branch Chairman offers a couple of pints of Real Ale in the winners' favourite local to the first correct entry received by the Editor. If two correct entries in the same post TIE-BREAKER: how's the site presently used? Committee members of CAMRA Branche in Greater Manchester are not eligible to enter.

FARMER HOSTS

Converted by Hosts a few months back but not so far reported in 'Opening Times' is Farmers, previously the Farmers Arms in Cheadle Heath. A recipient of the Pub of the Month award about three years ago Farmers has been given the standard 'Open House' theme treatment, with lots of plastic plants & pastel colours. Indeed it's all very comfortable and easy on the eye but all this combined with getting rid of the interior walls have meant that it just doesn't seem like a pub any more. Its customers can probably be guessed by the advert for the 'perfect poser' contest that was displayed on my visit.

Also worth mentioning is the wierd menu, only the Host Group could come up with something that calls hot-pot 'Lanky from Preston' and why they call chicken curry 'Indiana Jones' is anybody's guess!!

Three handpumped beers are available: Websters' Yorkshire Bitter, Wilsons Mild and Bitter. This last was distinctly average when sampled.

John Clarke.

Egerton Arms

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WEDNESDAY- FOLK NIGHT- FREE

FRIDAY- LIVE GROUPS

SUNDAY- LIVE ENTERTAINMENT- FREE

477 8008

NORTHENDEN NEWS

The Church in Northenden village was closed recently after a large scale fight in the pub - which is somewhat surprising when you consider that on some evenings there have been as many bouncers as customers.

The tenancy of this Tetley house is rumoured to have been sold to two Merseyside brothers and it is thought that the pub will not re-open until they take over.

Meanwhile round the corner on Ford Lane the Tatton has been refurbished and the name changed by Chef & Brewer to the Tatton Arms Tavern. There has been no major structural changes but the wooden panelling, drape curtains and pleasant wallpaper are an improvement. The pub now boasts a half-size snooker table and it is obviously the 'in' place to be for the young drinkers in Northenden and unfortunately the prices have been set accordingly.

The Real Ales available are Wilsons Bitter, Websters Yorkshire Bitter and the new Websters Choice. We tasted the latter at 88p a pint and found it to be decently kept.

GASSY ALE AT INFLATED PRICES

How sad to see that the owners of the new G-Mex Exhibition Centre in Manchester couldn't find it in themselves to put a Real Ale from one of our seven Greater Manchester Brewers (or from one of the many other excellent breweries in the North-West) in their bars. Instead they have installed keg Stones from Yorkshire and Bass Light. So much for promoting the better aspects of the Region!! Mind you at £1.00 a pint perhaps few locals are going to buy the stuff anyway!

Even more disturbing is the news that some of the local pubs have hoisted their prices to celebrate the opening of the Centre.

Is this what is meant by Enterprise North-West?

SMILE PLEASE!

Is it true that Greenall Whitley are to donate a small percentage of their profits on Local Bitter to the famine relief fund and calling the exercise 'Bland Aid'?

(culled from Notts & District Drinker)

ADVERTISE IN 'OPENING TIMES' : Rates are cheap and the paper reaches thousands of pub goers every month: Contact the Editor for details - address on the back page.

REAL ALE IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH MANCHESTER:

Update No. 2.

Additions: City Centre: Mr. Chesters' Celebrated Pie & Ale House, Cateaton Street: Chesters M, B; Marstons PED; Thwaites B; Bulmers Cider (H).

Chorlton-on-Medlock: Grafton Arms, Grafton Street: Holts M, B (H).

Deletions: Ardwick: Cleveland (Closed)

Changes: City Centre: Branagans Bar: Delete beers shown, add Wilsons B; Websters B, GL. (H)

Britons Protection: Add Jennings B (H)

City Arms: Add Jennings B (H)

Gullivers: Add Moonraker (E)

Peveril of the Peak: Add Websters B (H)

Salisbury: Add Bulmers Cider (H)

Chorlton-on-Medlock: Bowling Green: Add Greenalls Mild (H)

Didsbury: Old Grey Horse: Add Websters B (H)

Copies of the Guide 'Real Ale in Central & South Manchester', which lists all the pubs in the City & Southern suburbs, is available in a selection of the pubs at 10p, or from Jim Flynn, 13, Styal Ave., Reddish, Stockport. If ordered by post please include an s.a.e.

WELSH NOTE

The Glyn-y-Weddw at Llanbedrog on the Lleyn Peninsula has been a Bass pub for a long time. Although Draught Bass was available during the busy summer months this disappeared during the winter.

What people may not have realised is that Bass have been running the place on a 21 year lease from Robinson's - this lease expired in early April. So what can we expect?

Bass would dearly like to keep it going, but Robbies want it back!!

Phil Levison.

Castlewood

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ROBINSONS BEST ALES!

PUB FOOD & SNACKS MON - SAT.

STAGGER

THE ABC CRAWL - ARDWICK, BRUNSWICK AND
CHORLTON-ON-MEDLOCK.

Our Crawl this Month deviates from the usual pattern whereby we follow main roads or explore a particular district - instead we take a cross-section through three neighbouring districts just off the City Centre.

As usual, the comments on the pubs and the beer relate simply to what we found on the night and are not to be taken as definitive.

We started at the Seven Stars, Ashton Old Road, a typical large Holts pub selling Mild & Bitter on handpumps with a real coal fire in the lounge. Mild (63p) was very good, the Bitter was not quite so highly thought of (65p) but still well above average. Next came the Old House at Home, a few doors on the Manchester side of the Seven Stars, a Wilsons House with both Newton Heath Beers (64p/67p) and also Websters Bitter (69p). We noted an interesting collection of coins above the bar, plus a draught peanut dispenser. There was also an interesting selection of questions on the Trivia Quiz Machine!! Nobody tried Websters Bitter, but Wilsons Bitter was good, and mild clearly above average.

Next call was the King's Head on Chancellor Lane, a Greenalls pub with Bitter (69p) and recently reintroduced cask mild (67p). Unfortunately the mild was not on when we called, but the Bitter - even in the Landlords absence on holiday - weighed in well above average.

A short stroll across the road now, to Chesters Steam Engine, with handpumped Mild (not on tonight though) and bitter (70p) in what was universally agreed to be the least welcoming pub atmosphere of the night. The bitter was only average as well, but it should be recorded that the toilets were officially opened by Johnny Briggs, and there's a plaque to prove it - I'm assured that this will mean something to some of our readers! Avoiding Temperance Street, we next found the Union, Higher Ardwick, a street-corner Wilsons pub. This came across as an excellent busy and friendly local. Particularly praiseworthy were the real flowers - a rarity nowadays. Sadly, though, both mild (68p) & bitter (70p) were rated below average; both beers were handpumped.

Round the corner now to the Church on Ardwick Green. This is a Pennine Hosts pub, and most of us reckoned it to be amongst their most successful renovations, light years ahead of Mickey Mouse affairs like 'Sports' or 'Conways'. The handpumped beers are Wilsons bitter, (74p), mild (72p) and Websters bitter (76p); best liked was the Wilsons bitter which was very good, while the other two were well above average, the Websters outscoring the mild by the narrowest of margins. Particular praise is due to the entertainment, which came in the shape of an old fashioned live pub pianist. Passing the boarded up Cleveland we reached Boddingtons' Plymouth Grove, on the road of that name. The former Ardwick Town Hall, with its imposing clock tower, this place looks tremendous from the outside - once you enter the only interest is in deciding which of the graffiti ridden entrance to the bar or the utter blandness of the lounge is the greater disappointment. Mild (64p) and Bitter (66p) are on electric pump. Both were comfortably above average.

Across waste ground now to Banks's Falcon, an estate pub built by Wilsons in the '70s

Old Ship Inn, Styal.

IN THE HEART OF THE NATIONAL TRUST PARK.

HANDPUMPED MARSTONS PEDIGREE -

WILSONS MILD & BITTER -

WEBSTERS YORKSHIRE BITTER -

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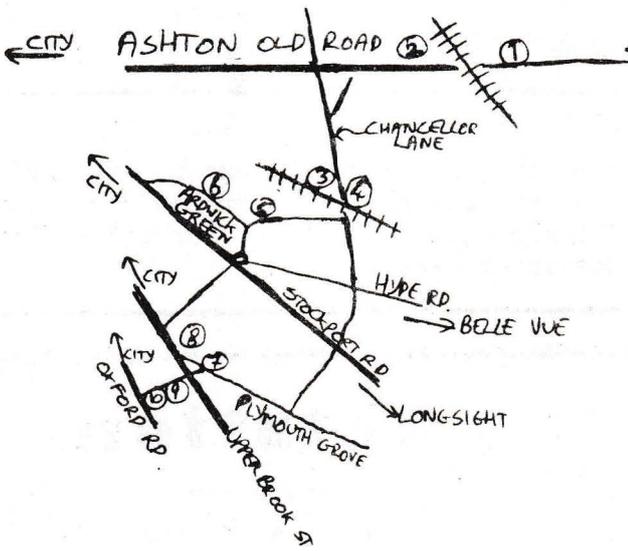
and sold to Banks's last year. On electric pumps it sells mild (64p), Black Country Bitter (66p), and Bitter (69p) - the mild and bitter were both very good (the mild marginally preferred), and even Black Country Bitter, a slow seller in most Banks's pubs, was above average. As we entered the second pub pianist of the night was belting out 'The Wild Rover'!

Close by on Grafton Street stands the Bowling Green, a Greenalls pub where electric-pumped bitter (70p) and handpumped Original (72p) have recently been joined by handpumped mild (68p) - mind you, that probably wasn't the reason the pub was standing room only, more relevant this close to the University's the fact that this was the last night of term! Mild was above average, bitter was good, Original was very good. From here we were left with the shortest of staggers down the street to the second night of trading at Holts' rebuilt Grafton Arms (and yes, some of us had been there on opening night as well). We used the lounge, which was generally agreed to be good by new pub standards, though a dissenting minority (myself included) found the excellent vault more congenial. For just 59p in the lounge (a penny less in the vault), the handpumped mild romped home as the best beer of the night, while the bitter (62p/61p) was only marginally less well thought of - an impressive debut.

So ended another excellent night, which while starting and finishing on Manchester's finest brew had included plenty of quality and variety in between.

Rhys Jones.

MAP



- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1) Seven Stars | 6) Church |
| 2) Old House at Home | 7) Plymouth Grove |
| 3) King's Head | 8) Falcon |
| 4) Steam Engine | 9) Bowling Green |
| 5) Union | 10) Grafton Arms |

BRANCH DIARY...

MAY.

- Tuesday, 6th.: 8 p.m. Committee Meeting, Plough, Hyde Road.
- Thursday, 8th.: 8 p.m. Branch Meeting, Castlewood, Stockport.
- Monday, 12th.: Social, Crown, Hillgate, Stockport.
- Wednesday 14th. Trip to Shipstones Brewery, Nottingham.
- Monday 19th., Social, Waggon & Horses, Longsight (Also Editors' **th Birthday Party - bring the Phylasan for a free pint!)
- Thursday 22nd., PUB OF THE MONTH AWARD: The New Inn, next to the Town Hall, Stockport.
- Friday 30th.: Openshaw area Stagger: 7 p.m. Duke of Edinburgh, Mill Street; 8-30 Foresters, Ashton Old Road (NB 8-30 venue provisional - phone contact.)

JUNE.

- Monday 2nd., : 8-30 p.m. Social, Grapes, Hazel Grove.
- Tuesday 3rd., : Committee Meeting: Swan with Two Necks, Princes Street, Stockport.

Contacts: Business: Andy Cooper 0635 872641
 (day) Socials: John Clarke 477 1973 (H)
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Back to Stockport this Month and the Egerton Arms, St. Petersgate.

Having suffered a period of closure the Egerton has been brought alive by licensee John Newport with a combination of tasteful and much needed refurbishment and a lively programme of music and meetings. Particularly welcome was the uncovering of the fine tilework on the exterior of the ground floor.

Previously at the well-known Wellington Inn, Central Manchester, John is an experienced licensee and this shows in the quality of both the four beers on sale (Wilson's mild and Bitter, Websters Green Label and the newly introduced Websters Choice) and the range and excellence of the food.

For starters there is home made soup, which for once seems to be the real thing, rich and filling, which comes with granary bread at 55p. The selection of main courses is varied and interesting and all are excellently presented. On the day of my visit the lengthy menu included, amongst others, Rich Beef Potrot, £1.10; Chicken & Veg. pie, £1.75; Bourquette Provencale, £1.55; and Chicken Malaysian Curry at £1.50. Roast Chicken, Fried Scampi and Chilli were also available.

Those the curry which was superb - good pieces of chicken, nice and spicy but not too hot, which is as a Malaysian Curry should be, two of my companions chose the chicken and vegetable pie, which came with veg. and either chips or jacket potatoes. Again excellently presented - good pieces of chicken, generous portions. One of the tasters thought that

there was possibly too much pastry but then again there was a lot of everything.

The rest of my party plumped for what is probably the centrepiece of the Egerton's food - the Hot Roast Pork or Beef Sandwiches, carved off the joint while you wait. These are 95p or £1.05 with a portion of salad. The amount of meat in these sandwiches has to be seen to be believed and the general verdict 'delicious' (so much so in fact that one of the party pigged himself on two!!)

At this stage it's also worth mentioning two other aspects which recommend the Egerton. Firstly, there is a special kiddies menu with things such as burgers at 65p or 'Beans, Banger & Burger' at 95p. Not very often seen in a pub. Also unusual is the juice extractor which means you can have really fresh orange or grapefruit juice.

And now, unfortunately, the let-down. There is only one dessert on sale and I decided to round off my meal with this. At 65p a portion, Black Forest Gateaux is very reasonably priced but the quality just didn't match up to what had gone before, it seemed to have come from the freezer and can best be described as tired and uninspiring. Perfectly acceptable in pubs which aren't aiming so high, but out of place here.

Nonwithstanding this, the Egerton Arms is highly recommended for a visit and get there early as queues can build up when it's really busy!

John Clarke.

HEARD ON THE AUTOROUTE.....

Beer writer, Michael Jackson, explaining the limitations of his French vocabulary: "If you can't put it in your mouth, I'm not interested!"

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BRIDGEWATER RE-BORN

Good news for Stockport drinkers came last Month with the welcome re-opening of the Bridgewater Arms on Chestergate.

Having been closed for the past few months the pub, which won the Pub of the Month Award in December last, is now under the personal management of its owner, John Nagel.

A new range of beers too, with Tetelys Mild and Bitter and Jennings Bitter being available all on handpump, and very nice too!

TIN TIME

CAMRA'S newspaper "What's Brewing" recently referred to Felinfoel producing the first tinned ale in 1935. A commemorative can of Double Dragon produced late last year to celebrate this event names Felinfoel and Metal Box as pioneers of canned beer in Great Britain - it also gives a staggering statistic - "around 1900 million cans of beer are sold in Great Britain every year."

No doubt avid collectors have some of the original containers - obviously they were nothing like our present day aluminium cans with ring-pulls. Somebody said they were 'stubby, with a crown cork'? Did we have those back in 1935? But what about the story that back in the '30s some of these tins were supplied to Cunard, who were so pleased that they asked the Brewery to expand their plant to cope with a prospective huge order. Apparently Felinfoel said, in effect, "You run your ships, and we'll run our Brewery."

Phil Levison.

CAMRA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Are you a real ale drinker? Do you feel strongly about your local being turned into a disco fun pub? Does the current spate of brewery takeovers worry you? Then why not join CAMRA and help with the struggle against the profit makers.

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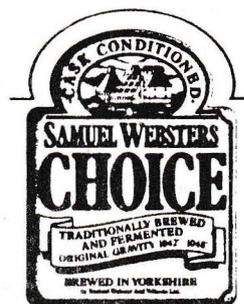
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A HAVEN IN THE SHOPPING PRECINCT!



WEBSTERS of Halifax, the Yorkshire arm of the Grand Met. empire, launched their new strong Premium Bitter, Websters Choice, last month. The new beer is traditionally brewed and fermented cask conditioned beer with an original gravity of 1045, which makes it one of the strongest bitters available.

We sampled the new beer at a presentation held at the Brewery and found it to be a flavoursome and full bodied pint.

It is to be test marketed in some 50 selected outlets and Websters Marketing Director stressed that it is to be a beer for 'Quality rather than Quantity' consumption. To emphasise this point it is only being made available in 11 gallon casks.

Refreshingly for a launch of a new beer the Brewery are actively promoting the product, with prominent point of sale advertising in the form of drip mats, stickers etc., and each pub selected to sell Choice have an individual plaque proclaiming the fact, together with another outlining the brewing process.

A full list of outlets selling Choice is still to be made available, and there is to be press advertisements later in the year, however in our area it is on sale at the Salisbury in Manchester, the Tatton in Northenden and the Egerton Arms, Petersgate, Stockport, where it was on fine form on both occasions that I have sampled it.

Prices tend to vary, 88p at the Tatton, 83p in the Egerton - and this may seem to be expensive - but it is a premium beer and deserves to Succeed.

Humphrey Higgins.

PUB NEWS

BANKS'S: More news concerning the two pubs that the Wolverhampton based Banks's are currently building in the Stockport & South Manchester area: the conversion of the old Cheadle Station is due to open in July and will be called "Buffers End" while the one on Burnage Lane is scheduled to open in August and will be called The Milestone. Both will serve Banks's & Hansons traditional beers.

.....

It seems that the alterations expected for some time at the Waggon & Horses (Holt's), Hyde Road, may actually take place some time later this year; they are likely to substantially increase the drinking area in the pub while preserving the two-bar layout. More news when, and if, it happens.

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MOVES: We bade farewell at the end of March to Barry Atkinson of the Longsight, Belle Vue who has now moved down to Banks's homeland to take over the Bulls Head at White Heath, Halesowen.

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Stockports' only Transatlantic licensee, Ron Davies of the Bulls Head, Market Place, is to retire from the trade, probably in June. We wish Ron & Jean all the best.

.....

Late February saw the second change of licensee in four months at the Rock (Tetleys), Hyde Road. Tommy Cleere has arrived at this attractive little pub & whilst it is Tommy's first pub he has experience in the trade in the shape of a club in Hyde. We hope that his arrival will bring a period of stability to the pub - it is open regularly and it's a grand little boozier.

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Hydes Brewery have applied for planning permission to carry out alterations to the Cross Keys in Adswold Road, Adswold. It is to be hoped that nothing drastic is done to spoil this pleasant pub.

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Rumours abound that plans were afoot for alterations at the Blossoms, Buxton Road, Heaviley, Stockport. This can be discounted as Robinsons have told us that "no plans are in existence for any alterations at this house."

.....

Jennings Bitter is now available at Tetleys Plough in Heaton Moor.

.....

Recently we reported the fleeting appearance of cask Greenalls mild at the Kings Head, Ardwick. This beer is now permanently available following a big increase in sales compared to the keg mild formerly sold. Said Landlord Jim Hewston, himself a mild drinker, "it went so well I felt I had to keep it on."

.....

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THE NEW INN: CAMRA PUB OF THE MONTH MAY 1986!!

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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