

Opening Times



STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

JUNE '87 No. 38

ELECTION SPECIAL!



MICHAEL HOWARD, Minister for Corporate & Consumer Affairs in the outgoing Government, was questioned with regards to takeovers in Brewing with the current Monopolies Investigation proceeding. **We suggested that takeovers restrict**

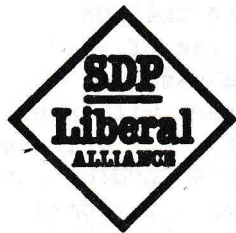
consumer choice, increased prices & led to loss of jobs. The Minister didn't think there was a case for specific legislation for Brewing. "There is the possibility of change, but I can't prejudge the report. I am keenly interested in the result of the enquiry but you cannot legislate for one industry alone." **With the sale of Courage to Elders did he think there should**



Labour

ROBIN COOK, Labour spokesman on Industry & the City, said that Labour's emphasis will be on mak-

ing vast combines more accountable to consumers and employees. Beefing up the consumer protection powers is the order of the day. "The major thrust of our policies on mergers/takeovers will be to shift the onus of proof, to oblige those proposing a merger to prove it is in the public interest rather than leaving it to the authorities to prove the opposite, we would require statutory notification of a merger. Our policies should have a significant effect on dampening the current spate of takeovers." He



IAN WRIGGLESWORTH, Alliance spokesman on Trade & Industry, said there would be sweeping changes in laws affecting takeovers & mergers if the Alliance came to power. The policy is to increase competition with US style powers to tackle large trusts & comb-

ines. "We would expect our machinery to increase competition in Brewing, we would abolish the Monopolies Commission & strengthen the powers of the Director of Fair Trading with powers to make judgements on economic grounds on mergers & takeovers. **Was he concerned about such firms as Elders of Australia buying Courage?** He said

CAMRA ASKS: WHERE DO THE PARTIES STAND ON THE DRINKERS BIGGEST THREAT: BREWERY TAKEOVERS AND MERGERS?

be legislation to stop overseas firms buying British firms? "Many British firms buy firms abroad, we live in an international economy - we can't draw up the shutters, we profit from abroad & the Government is keen to encourage investment. **Is it desirable that major combines control 80% of beer production & supply?** "If competition doesn't work because of a Monopoly we have a system to deal with that. But competition is the consumers best friend - most mergers work efficiently." **In some areas 1 or 2 firms own such a large proportion of outlets that there is no choice.** "in such areas the Inquiry will have a look, if people aren't getting choice they will say so, we are keen to ensure proper competition."

did not accept that brewing should be given special status to protect it against takeovers nor did he favour a ban on takeovers by overseas firms. "I would not discriminate against a foreign takeover because it was foreign." **What about the monopoly of supply in brewing?** "The key to the marketing of beer lay with the tied house system, whilst we have no proposals for the tie if there was ever an offence against fair trading it is the tied house system. We must give tied houses the right to supply a diverse range of beers for the customers." Labour would not scrap the current investigation of the tie - "We would let that run and look at it with renewed interest. At this stage I wouldn't rule out anything."

he was deeply disappointed by the Courage takeover. "I hope that the kind of machinery we would set up would stop that kind of takeover happening. I wouldn't want to stop foreign firms coming to this country any more than I would want to stop British firms going overseas, the Alliance believes in free trade, but it must be fair trade." **How about the rumours that Anheuser-Busch of the US were keen to buy Watneys?** Mr. Wigglesworth laughed - "The less said about Watneys the better but - and I must be careful - the American appreciation of beer is very low and the prospect of a multinational like that coming in and carving a slice of our market would be very undesirable."

Interviews by Roger Protz.
Edited by HUMphrey Higgins.



By John Clarke.

Out along Ashton New Road to Clayton this month and the Strawberry Duck on Crabtree Lane. Formerly the Crabtree, a run-down Wilsons house which even had a period of complete closure, the Strawberry Duck opened about two years ago and is now a thriving free house selling handpumped Wilsons Bitter, Websters Green Label & Holts Bitter.

Very much a locals pub, the lunchtime trade is mainly drawn from surrounding offices and factories. The food is keenly priced & no-nonsense - on my visit there was a choice of two main meals, meat & potato pie or beef curry with rice.

The meat & potato pie was obviously home made & was served from what looked like a crockpot with a crust on top. Several of the customers were obviously enjoying this and it did look a very appetising plateful. I chose the curry however and wasn't disappointed. Not particularly hot it was nice and spicy with good sized

Thank goodness, it's back.

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pieces of meat - not the reconstituted stuff you sometimes get. Despite being a generous plateful, I soon polished it off and got to wondering how such good food could be so reasonably priced - the curry was only £1.20 and the pie similarly priced.

If you don't want a hot meal, a variety of rolls are available, all freshly prepared as you wait. I didn't catch the price as there's no list or menu but I'd be surprised if they're much above 50p each.

So not a pub with a huge menu and very much off the beaten track but nonetheless one serving keenly priced food. It must be popular as they've applied for planning permission for a kitchen extension to the lounge. Look out for it if you're ever out that way.

BY GEORGE!

The re-furbished George, Mersey Square, Stockport, re-opened at the end of April. Re-signed as a Boddingtons House the pub has been transformed with much use of wood and though open-plan there are distinct raised seating areas and a library with real books! Under the managership of Larry & Irene Duggan excellent Higsons Bitter & Boddingtons Bitter are available on handpump - it comes as no surprise that Larry has spent 20 years in the trade, latterly at the Dealers, a Higsons pub in Garston - the Higsons is the best I've sample in the George for many a long day! Higsons Mild is promised and there is also the possibility of Oldham beers. First class food is available at lunchtimes and there is evening food from 6-8 pm.

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CAMRA CALLING!

Quite a full programme of events this month as we approach summer.

On Monday 8th., we have one of our regular socials, this time at the Britannia on Rowsley Street, Beswick, one of our few Leas pubs. As usual with these socials we start between 8-30 - 9-00 pm. The Branch Meeting on the 11th., at the Victoria Inn, Burnage, has added interest as we are having two speakers from Boddingtons along - it promises to be interesting.

Next, on Saturday 13th., the first of our Summer 'Opening Times' Awaydays - this one to Chester. We aim to catch the 10 am train from Oxford Road.

Monday the 15th., sees a social at the George & Dragon, Heaton Chapel and later in the week on Friday the 19th., our monthly crawl, a bit different this time, by minibus round Bramhall, Woodford and Cheadle Hulme.

Next Monday Social is on the 22nd. at the Railway, Manshaw Road, Openshaw, an excellent Holts pub now under new management. Pub of the Month is on the 25th., at the Crown, Hillgate.

Monday, 29th., sees a social with a diff-

erence - the Midsummer Pub Hunt - a Treasure Hunt round pubs solving clues on the way. Teams of two at 50p a head with prizes for the first and last! A good night is promised.

Into July now and on Saturday 4th., we have another Awayday this time to Morecambe taking advantage of the new direct train service from Stockport (departs 9-14 am).

Finally, on Monday 6th., we have our social, Offerton this time and the Gardeners Arms. If you want any more information, please 'phone me, John Clarke, on 477 1973 at night or 831 7222 ext. 307 during the day.

REAL ALE IN CENTRAL & SOUTH MANCHESTER - UPDATE.

A very welcome new outlet for real ale in the City Centre is Mr. Thomas's Chop House on Cross Street, now serving Thwaites Best Mild and Bitter on Hand-pump. Elsewhere in the centre the Coach & Horses is using one of its pumps to give Mitchells ESB a try - early sales have been encouraging, not surprising as the beer has been in very good condition and at 86p fairly priced for a beer of this strength.

Finally, the Old Garratt has replaced Higsons Mild with handpumped Boddingtons Mild.

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STAGGER

The Goyt Valley Ramble - By Peter Edwardson.

For this months' pub-crawl we chose a leisurely ramble along the banks of the Goyt, on a beautiful, clear Spring evening. The Portwood district of Stockport may lack something in scenic beauty compared with the delights of Fernilee & Errwood higher up the river, but it certainly makes up for it in the quality and variety of real ales and pubs. As always, the opinions expressed are purely those of individual CAMRA members on one particular night.

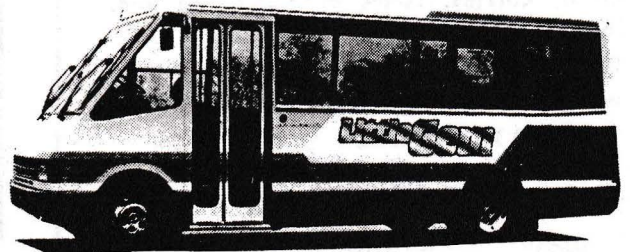
We started at the Arden Arms, an immaculately kept, classic pub tucked away behind ASDA. We sat in the unique snug that can only be reached by walking through the bar, savouring the handpulled Robinsons Best Mild & Best Bitter, which were both in very good condition. We could happily have stayed there all night, but in the interest of research we had to tear ourselves away and proceed to the Stanley Arms. This is a plain Wilsons pub where the mild was of average quality and the bitter a little better. Interestingly the pub has been re-signed in the new Wilsons colours, suggesting a question-mark over its future.

Further along Newbridge Lane is the Midway, a comfortable one-bar free house serving Tetley mild & Bitter, Boddingtons, Thwaites & Burtonwood Bitters & Marstons Pedigree - probably the best choice of beers in Stockport and all at very reasonable prices. We sampled the Thwaites & Boddingtons (both good), while I at least gave the Burtonwood full marks.

Next to two Wilsons pubs almost opposite

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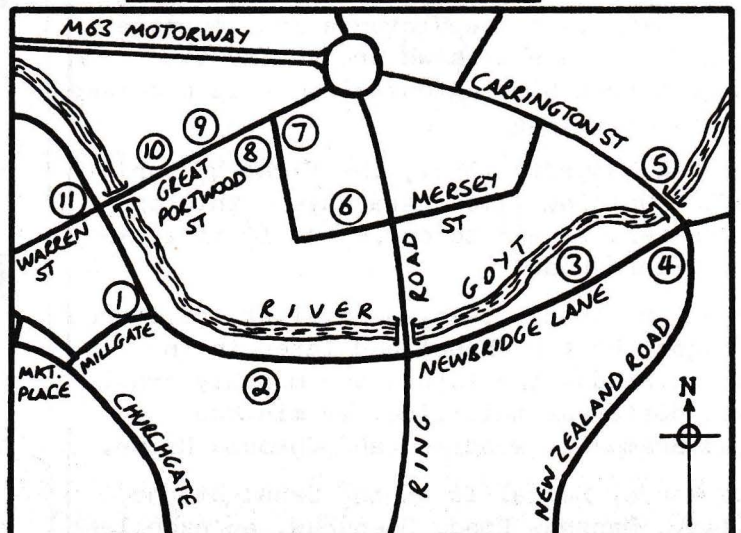


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A gem of an idea from **GM**

each other on the junction of Newbridge Lane and Carrington Street. The Park, recently modernised and busy, offered Wilsons Mild and Bitter, both above average, and Websters Bitter, which found no takers despite being pushed by the bar staff when just bitter was requested. What does this say about the future of Wilsons? Unusually we

THE PORTWOOD CRAWL



KEY: 1 - ARDEN ARMS; 2 - STANLEY ARMS; 3 - MIDWAY; 4 - PARK; 5 - RIFLE VOLUNTEER; 6 - COACH & HORSES; 7 - BRINNINGTON INN; 8 - OLD KING; 9 - RAILWAY; 10 - QUEENS; 11 - KINGS ARMS

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- MARTIN & SANDY



were too early for the happy hour, which lasts from 8-30 to 10pm. The Rifle Volunteer was quieter, and a rather nondescript pub, but the Wilsons Mild was good and the Bitter above average, as was the Websters which we did try here.

We now turned back towards the centre of Stockport and diverted off Carrington Street to Boddingtons' Coach & Horses on Mersey Street. This bustling two-roomer was previously hidden away in the back streets but is now clearly visible from the new Ring Road. The electrically pumped mild and bitter were both in good condition.

Back to Great Portwood Street and an area where the pubs cluster thickly together - a distinct advantage later on in the crawl. First was Robinsons Brinnington Inn, a comfortable 1950s style pub which seemed to appeal mainly to older drinkers. The Best Mild was considered good and the Best Bitter a little above average, both beers again on electric pumps. Almost next door is the Old King, the only real Bass outlet in central Stockport, which brought a change in atmosphere with a young and lively clientele. Three beers are available on handpump, Special Bitter and Stones Bitter, both of which were marked average to good, and Bass light, which was thought good by the one person who tried it.

Across the street to Wilsons' Railway, again lively and busy, with an open-plan interior. The handpumped mild was above average, the bitter not quite up to this standard. Then the Queens, not a pub for those of delicate aesthetic sensibilities, being packed

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SUNDAYS - Return of the

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WEDNESDAYS

- John Brett &
Norman Beaker



with bric-a-brac of various descriptions, including a full-size dummy behind the bar pulling at a set of handpumps. The handpumps are dummies too, as the Robinsons Best Mild and Best Bitter are on electrics, unusually dispensing into brim measure glasses, resulting in a very small head. The mild was quite acceptable, but the bitter was generally considered poor, and was certainly the worst beer of the night.

Onto the last lap, and Boddingtons' Kings Arms, where bitter on a keg-type free flow electric pump was the only real ale available. It was in good condition, but the pub itself was a dull and characterless place noticeably less busy than any of the previous five. It's on a prime site opposite the new Sainsbury's and Asda stores and surely would benefit from a modest refurbishment to improve its appeal.

Finally, we returned to the Arden Arms for last orders. The mild was still very good, but the bitter - it must be said - was slightly cloudy, although still perfectly acceptable. The pub was very crowded, and the pub cat obviously thought that the safest way to cross the room was across peoples shoulders rather than at floor level. So ended an evening which - although a few critical comments were made - the average standard of pubs and cellarmanship was much higher than on many of these crawls, and poor beer was noticeable by its rarity.

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January							February						
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PUB OF THE MONTH

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October

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November

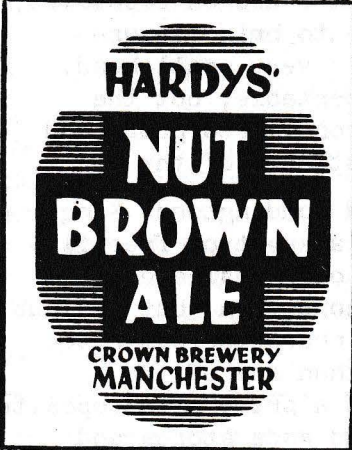
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December

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BRAINLESS BASS LOSE HOPE

You have to hand it to Bass - they really have a genius for getting things wrong. They have recently spent what must be a considerable sum of money refurbishing the HOPE on Wellington Road North, Heaton Norris, revealing a striking, attractive blue-gold mosaic 'Hardy's Crown Ales' frieze around the roof line, resulting in a very attractive looking pub. On an historical note Hardy's Brewery was on Renshaw St., in Hulme, taken over jointly by Ind Coope & the Cornbrook Brewery in 1962. Cornbrook at that time were owned by Northern Breweries who, through a series of mergers became the Bass we know and love today! Hardy's Brewery was demolished in 1965 - amongst their beers was the unusually named Happy Man Bitter, so called after a pre-war race horse owned by one of the Hardy family.



After the money spent on the Hope you might have thought they could have put some real ale on at the same time - but NO!

Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month Award for June goes to the CROWN, Hillgate. Known locally as the 'Corner Cupboard' the Crown epitomises all that the Campaign asks for - a fine, unchanged, traditional local - no frills, no juke-box, no one-armed bandits, just excellent handpulled Wilsons Mild & Bitter, the cheapest in Stockport, in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

The Crown is a two-roofter, a 'vault' with a telly, and a snug/lounge where conversations can be held without the need to shout and strain the ears!

The pub is under the able tenancy of Brian & Margaret Cumston though still in the name of Brians' Mother - the family have tenanted the pub for over 80 years and Brian was born there!

Come along on the 25th., June - you won't be disappointed!!

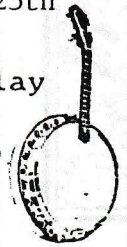
GO FOR GROVE?

As we go to press, Wilsons Grove, Ashton Old Road, Openshaw, is closed for a fortnight for re-furbishment and is due to open on May 20th. A little tasteful attention would not come amiss at this latterly rather dowdy pub - let's hope Wilsons do a good job. Also of interest will be the beer range on re-opening - it would be nice to see traditional Mild make a come back.

THE GLADSTONE

Lower Hillgate, Stockport, 061, 4808359, a fine unspoilt pub now under NEW MANAGEMENT - PAT & PAULINE O'SULLIVAN
Handpumped TETLEY ALES, mild and bitter, HOME COOKED FOOD AT LUNCHTIME
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ASK THE FAMILY!

By Jim Flynn.

Looking for a decent pint when you take the family out for the afternoon? Well, here are just a few ideas all within approximately half-an-hour drive.

The Castlefield Urban Heritage Park is the Country's first & can be found just off Deansgate on Liverpool Road (5 minutes from Deansgate Railway Station.) It comprises of 4 main elements: the Museum of Science & Industry on the site of the Worlds oldest railway station with the UKs largest collection of working exhibits; the Air & Space Museum, the Roman Fort which shows Manchesters earliest remains & finally the Park's Transport legacy in the form of canals, railways & river navigation systems. It's a fascinating place & it's all free. In the middle of the complex is the White Lion which serves a surprisingly pleasant pint of Chesters Bitter & Mild & lunchtime meals and snacks during the week. Although there's no childrens room (though they seem to be relatively lax) you can sit outside with your food & drink and imagine yourself back 2000 years as you look across the Roman Fort.


If you fancy industrial history in a more rural setting then try the Styal Country Park & Quarry Bank Mill. Here the thundering looms & intricate spinning help bring back to life the best preserved Georgian cotton mill in the country along with its cottages all set in unspoilt countryside. The huge water wheel is now working and the place is well worth finding, well signposted from the A34. Previously I would have recommended the Ship Inn, round the corner from the Park, however on my last visit the Wilsons was off leaving only the ubiquitous Websters Bitter & Choice

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along with a lengthy array of lager pumps. I would therefore recommend a call at the Tatton Arms ½ a mile back towards Manchester at Moss Nook where you will see no lager boxes or indeed any kind of keg only electric pumps for the excellent Robinsons Mild & Best Bitter. Lunchtime meals are available (except Bank Holidays) and can be eaten in the pub itself or in the beer garden where you can watch the planes land at the nearby airport.

History of a more gentle kind can be found at Dunham Massey Hall off the A56 3 miles SW of Altrincham. The 18th., century house has a fine collection of furniture and silver & portraits as well as extensive grounds with nature trails. Nearby is the Rope & Anchor selling Boddingtons Mild & Bitter. Your lunch again can be had either in the pub or the beer garden.

For a change from the past why not visit the nature reserve at Etherow Country Park, Compstall. Before taking the trail to see wildfowl & huge fresh water fish call of at the Andrew Arms, a cosy Robinsons pub on George St. There is a dining room & the pub is relatively tolerant (within the law!) with children in the pub.

If you like your countryside more dramatic then take a trip to the higher reaches of the Goyt to the Fernilee reservoir. There are a number of pubs to choose from on your way - the Highwayman near Rainow is a 400 year old pub with Thwaites Bitter & very reasonably priced lunches. It's easily found on the A5002 north of Rainow & you can take the scenic route from Stockport by turning right at Disley station. Turn left after the pub & the road takes you through stunning moorlands to the reservoirs. You have a choice of numerous rambles including a hike over Shining Tor to the Cat & Fiddle pub for another pint of Robinsons.



HYDES have applied for permission to make alterations to the entrances at the appropriately named ANVIL, Wythenshawe.

WENE BARS continue to proliferate - someone has applied for permission to convert 6, Lapwing Lane, West Didsbury into one of the same.

BODDINGTONS have announced a £9 million plan to refurbish many of their houses. Perhaps they'll get round to the CROWN, Heaton Lane, where Jim & Alice Knight have been waiting to have the place re-wired almost since they moved in 2 years ago.

HOLTS have now started work at their new pub on Broom Lane, Levenshulme and over in Stockport. ROBINSONS have begun on the replacement for the Grapes at the end of Waterloo Road which got the chop due to a road scheme.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN on Hillgate was boarded up as we went to press. We understand that Robinsons intend to move the pub back about two feet, which could presumably involve virtual demolition. Rumours about the pub have circulated for years and it's fair to say that

The Nursery Inn

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- * Good Home Cooked Food Served Daily
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almost anything would be an improvement.

MARSTONS have announced that they will probably be phasing out their Mercian Mild in favour of Burton brewed Border Mild as they consider this to be a superior brew & it must be admitted that there's something in this. No sign of it yet in any of the South Manchester outlets but, as usual, we will keep you posted.

J.R.'s (ex Rams Head, Hillgate) opened just before we went to press. We are looking for a sartorially elegant member to investigate as the Editor was advised that he was improperly dressed to be allowed admission.

Mindless violence has claimed another victim. A gang of youth went on the rampage last month in Stockport & wrecked the UPS & DOWNS, Wellington St. The incident resulted in the doorman losing the sight of one eye and the pub is now boarded up with a question mark over its future.

BASS are to do something with the fire damaged CLARENCE on Wilmslow Road, Rusholme. The plans involve a partial removal of the 2nd., floor & small extensions to the ground floor. There would also be a complete re-vamp of the internal layout with a lounge occupying what were the two rooms at the front with a new vault plus pool and darts areas to the rear on the left. Perhaps they will also see their way to installing cask beer in view of their new found 'commitment' to the stuff.

The Castlewood


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Opposite TSB, Bridge St., Stockport


Children Welcome 11-3 & 5.30-7pm

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SAMUEL WEBSTER



WILSONS

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