

Opening Times



STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

AUGUST 1987

No.40

LAGER - THE TRUTH!

AT LAST - THE FACTS ABOUT BRITISH "CONTINENTAL" LAGERS - By Humphrey Higgins.

FACT 1 - QUALITY

Few British Brewed Lagers conform to European practices, despite their European names. They are of lower gravity than their equivalents & whilst European lagers are often not pasteurised or filtered and are dispensed from the cask under the pressure generated by their natural conditioning British lagers are normally filtered, pasteurised, re-carbonated and dispensed under CO2 pressure from kegs via flash coolers. Because it is served at low temperatures, lager needs to be of a higher gravity and body to have any flavour; weak British lagers tend to be low in gravity, body and flavour.

Lager is the German verb to store. Storing, or lagering, lager beer improves the product greatly. Continental lager is often stored for 2-3 months but most UK lagers are lucky to be lagered for any more than 2-3 weeks. Indeed very few British brewers even admit how long they give their beer to store and every effort goes into artificially speeding up the process. UK brewers get lager out quickly to recoup their beer duty. Alone amongst the EEC Countries the British tax-man gets in quick, levying duty before the product is racked. Germany, Holland, Spain, Luxembourg & Portugal operate a 'factory gate' system - duty is paid when the product leaves the brewery. Belgium, Italy & Ireland allow 80-90 days delay in payment.

FACT 2 - PRICE

It is here where the difference between the Big Seven brewers and the Independents shows again. The vast amount of money pumped into advertising lager results in a higher price. In 1987 some £8 Million will be spent plugging Fosters, £5M on Budweiser, £8M on Skol & £2M on Holsten. Last year the Big 7 spent a staggering £54 millions advertising lager! Let's make comparisons with the Independents lager which isn't advertised. Take Robinsons' Einhorn (Gravity 1035), average price 82p - Watneys Carlsberg (1030) avge. 92p. Holts Regal (1039) avge. 78p - Watneys Fosters (1035) avge. 92p. Hydes Amboss (1036) avge. 84p - Whitbread Heineken (1033) avge. 90p. The list is endless the length & breadth of the UK and the answer is always the same - **Big 7 = weaker product & higher price!**

FACT 3 - LAGER v BEER

In 1960 Lager took 1% of total beer sales - now it stands at 43%. The growth of lager has been achieved by the skilful manipulation of the drinking public. Beer has become associated with the words old, fat, traditional, boring. Lager is put as being a link with young, slim, new and exciting. These are the images the ad-men perpetuate but what's wrong with a product that's made with wholesome traditional ingredients, served without pressure, that's varied, refreshing and healthy? Why shouldn't beer be given a fresh image? Banks's proudly boast of their beers as being 'Unspoilt by Progress' - and quite right too. The chillingly serious prospect is that if the Big 7 have their way we'll all be drinking lager in 20 years and there'll be no real ale left. Young drinkers start on, and tend to stick with, lager and as the ads don't really work for individual brands the big boys put more & more brands into their pubs and beer is elbowed out. Regional brewers & their ales are disappearing because of takeovers and those that are left can't afford the huge advertising spends to compete with lager, and because the big boys need more pubs to push their products the result is more takeovers. And, as the Big 7 grow, the foreigners move in (such as Elders) & what's to stop them moving in and buying up what's left? Already rumour abounds that Anheuser Busch of the USA are after Grand Met. But there is hope - the British rebel at having things stuffed down their throats and fashions and cults wane - and CAMRA are here to stay with the simple message - **British lager is an expensive, poor imitation of its European counterpart, it's unnatural, bland and the product of the accountant and ad-man. Could you tell the difference between Fosters and Castlemaine?**



By John Clarke.

Two pubs feature this month. Firstly the Gransmoor Ashton Old Road, Openshaw. A pub with an interesting history, this, originally belonging to the old Stopfords Brewery of West Gorton, mentioned a couple of months back on the Hyde Road Stagger. Passing to Wilsons via Walker & Homfrays, the former flogged it off to Banks's a couple of years back. Even Banks's have had two attempts to get it right, the first refurbishment including a sort of fun bar one of which's features being a toilet seat nailed to the wall. Fortunately sense has prevailed and the Gransmoor is now a fine traditional pub.

Food is advertised 6 days a week but Saturday can be discounted, consisting of little more than butties and rolls. The other five days offer a pleasant, good value if unexceptional menu in pleasantly low-key surroundings. Lunchtime trade is building up but on my visit there were only about a dozen in the pub of which about half were eating. There is a comfortable raised area for eating near the food counter and the menu (not chalked up on my visit) consists of such items

as plaice and chips, scampi & chips, Jumbo sausage & chips. All come served with a salad garnish and a decent portion of good chips. I chose scampi at £1.95, good value indeed. Definitely one to chance if you are in Openshaw at lunchtime, but be warned, on my visit the service was as relaxed as the atmosphere although I gather there had been one or two problems that day.

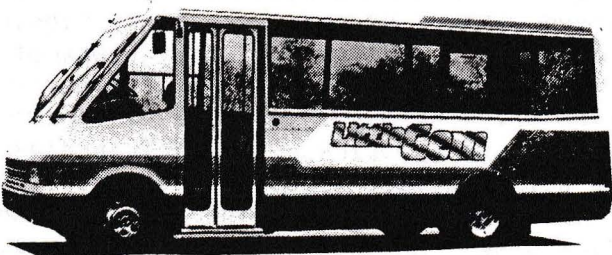
I was initially drawn to the Gransmoor by rumours of bought in Indian food which didn't, unfortunately, materialise, but whilst on the subject of Indian food, mention should be made of the continuing excellence of the Marble Arch, Rochdale Road, in this respect. Friday lunchtimes now offer a choice of up to three - Chicken Masala, Special Kebabs and pork & cauliflower vindaloo on my visit. Ingredients are top quality and you can expect to pay about £2.00 a time. A word of warning - queues often develop, there's usually a rush to the food bar when John Worthington appears with his bowl of steaming rice. If you've not tried it yet, you don't know what you're missing.

MIDWAY LATEST

Following the purchase of the Midway, New-bridge Lane, Stockport, by Courage new hosts are John & Stephen Palmer. With a keen interest in traditional beer they are anxious to improve on the solitary real ale currently available - handpumped John Smiths Bitter. So far they have requested Courage Directors' Bitter or a guest beer without success.

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sat. evenings *

SUNDAYS - Return of the

BOOGIE CLUB

WEDNESDAYS

- John Brett &
Norman Beaker





CAMRA CALLING!

Another mixed programme this month - the Branch meeting on the 13th., will be at the Castlewood - the promised Tetley Walker speaker being postponed until November when 'exiting news' is promised.

On Saturday 15th. we are hoping to have a minibus cum cycle trip to the Manifold Valley, leaving Stockport at about 10 am we drive down to Waterhouses near Ashbourne, hire bikes and cycle down the old railway track to the Railway at the other end. After lunch we cycle back and in the evening tour one or two of the more notable pubs in the area.

Monday 17th., sees a social at the Horse & Farrier in Gatley and on Friday 21st we have our monthly crawl - this time Heaton Norris kicking off at the Bridge Inn, Georges Road at 7 pm and stopping at the Silver Jubilee, Belmont Way at 8-30.

A social at the Rising Sun, Hazel Grove, follows on Monday 24th., and on Thursday 27th. it's Pub of the Month at the Manchester Arms, Stockport when a lively night is promised!

Saturday 29th., sees the last 'Opening Times Awayday for 1987, this time to Keighley for the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway. We'll be catching the 9.27 train from Manchester Victoria. On Monday 31st., there's a social at the Welcome, Rusholme and this is followed on Saturday 5th. by a night out in Buxton, leaving Stockport on the 6.29 train.

All Monday Socials start at 8-30 but people often don't arrive until about 9pm. If you want any more information please 'phone me, John Clarke, on 831 7222 ext 307 (day) or 477 1973 (night).

SPECIAL OFFER SPECIAL OFFER SPECIAL OFFER.

For this month only there's a special CAMRA membership offer. If you join CAMRA at any of our Meetings or Socials (see above) we will give you a 1987 Good Beer Guide (price £4.95) absolutely FREE!! Protect your pint and enjoy yourself at the same time - join CAMRA now!!!

CROWNED!

Ralph and Jean Heatley have been at the Crown, Cheadle, for a full year now, and they are certainly appreciated by the pubs' regulars, who sprang a surprise party on them on July 2nd. A poem thanking Ralph & Jean was recited, a champagne toast was drank, fruit cake handed round and a good time was had by all.

Ralph and Jean have put in some hard work over the year, brightening the atmosphere in the Crown considerably. The old nickname 'Chapel of Rest' no longer applies!!

ANGEL DELIGHT

Full marks to licensee Edward Stafford of the Angel, Wellington Street, Gorton, for a tasteful redecoration of the pubs' lounge. Being a realistic licensee rather than a brewery-retained "design consultant", Eddy has spent money wisely but well, and the refurbished seating, lighter colours and appropriate bric-a-brac (like a display case of barrel bushes) have brought about a subtle but marked improvement in the atmosphere of this pleasant pub.

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STAGGER

BRAMHALL BY BUS - A GEM OF A TOUR. By Andy Cooper.

A late June evening saw a group of some 20 CAMRA stalwarts gather at the Pineapple on Heaton Lane, Stockport at the start of what proved to be an enjoyable jaunt around the southern end of Stockport in a Little Gem minibus.

Our first stop was the SHADY OAK on Radford Drive on the New House Farm Estate, Bramhall. Built in 1985 in the heart of this Wimpey estate it is extremely difficult to find, but persistence is eventually rewarded. The pub is now owned by Tetley & is an excellent example of modern pub design. Tetleys have been attempting to sell a range of beer, although the Mild has now gone keg, and the Thwaites Bitter was not available. However Tetley Bitter, Jennings Bitter, Ind Coope Burton Ale & Marstons Pedigree were all on & in at least reasonable condition.

Our next stop was another well hidden modern estate pub, the BROMALE on West Park Drive, selling Bass products, but unfortunately lacking the class or charm of the Shady Oak. Predictably the pub has only one room - the trend of modern pub design, and to most of our group, the Stones Bitter and Foby light verged on the forgettable. The locals did however seem impressed with the arrival of our Little Gem on their estate.

Next we travelled to the LADYBROOK, a Boddingtons outlet on Fir Road. This is a large, multi-roomed pub with excellent Oak panelled walls. Ex-patriate Brummies, like the writer, would feel at home in this one. It was also good to see 2 full size snooker tables - fast becoming a rarity, and an

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easily visible price list - equally rare. The Bitter was generally preferred to the Mild.

After this came another Boddies pub, the recently tastefully refurbished VICTORIA on Ack Lane East. Echoes of the Raj were evoked by the swirling fans and the tree in the lounge. The writer found the whole effect slightly overpowering, but given the nature of the building, any renovation was an improvement. The beer was generally felt to be a little better than in the Ladybrook.

We then travelled to the highlight of the evening, the excellent DAVENPORT ARMS, Woodford, known locally as the 'Thief's Neck'. As usual both Robinsons beers in this fine multi-roomed pub were of a high standard, and seemed to be well appreciated by the XR3i set who inhabit the pub. Located opposite Woodford aerodrome, & a must for fans of flying memorabilia.

It was then back to the SMITHY on Grove Lane, a typical Pennine Hosts pub. It's difficult to say anything more positive than that the pub was clean and comfortable, selling average Wilsons Bitter in average surroundings. We were told that Websters Choice was not available on a Friday night because 'it's a strong beer'.

Next came the CHURCH INN, on the corner of Church Road and Ravenoak Road, Cheadle Hulme; a fine Robbies pub, which was deservedly popular. Service was excellent, particularly considering the number of people in the pub, and both the Best Mild and Best Bitter were of a high quality. The pub has been modernised within the



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HANDS OFF!

That is the clear message to Robinsons Brewery following a survey of the general public at the recent Stockport Beer Festival. Of the people who stated that they visited a Robinsons pub (s) regularly, a massive 80% said that they would like the pub left as it is. A further 15.7 % would like the pub to be redecorated sensitively to retain its traditional character. Significantly, only a paltry 4.3% of people wanted their local to be re-structured in the current Robisons fashion. This means that an overwhelming majority of almost 96% of people surveyed are not in favour of what Robinsons are doing to their pubs.

The survey covered men and women of all ages from 18 to over 65. Over half (56.5%) considered themselves to be regular Robinsons drinkers, but the majority (75.9%) of these said that this was because they liked the beer. The vast majority (90.5%) of all people surveyed expressed a preference for traditional pubs (i.e. many rooms, public bar, traditional fittings, pub games etc.) and even less (a miserable 0.6%) liked 'theme' pubs (i.e. 'sports', disco, etc.)

So the message to Robinsons could not be more obvious. The people who drink Robinsons beer regularly in Robinsons pubs would like them to scrap their present policy of bland, featureless, identikit renovations and stop destroying the character of their traditional pubs.

How much longer can Robinsons continue to disregard the opinions of the vast majority of their faithful customers?

Alastair L.Walker (a regular Robinsons drinker).

CROWN GETS THE TREATMENT!

Extensive alterations have now started at the Crown, Heaton Mersey. This traditional, small, 2 roomed Robinsons House is being extended into the adjoining buildings both on Didsbury Road & down Parrs Mount Mews. Two extra rooms will be created, with a bar in one & new toilets are to be built. The catering facilities are to be expanded & the electric fires are to be replaced by more welcoming real coal fires. In all work should take about six months & should be complete for Christmas.

last ten years, but it has retained a traditional pub atmosphere.

Finally, we went to drink the best beer of the night, at the JUNCTION, the Holts pub in Cheadle Hulme. The pub is at last beginning to improve to match the beer, but provided you concentrate on the product, you won't be disappointed.

So ended a tour round some of Stockport's interesting further flung pubs, which despite requiring transport from many areas to visit, are well worth the effort. Our special thanks also must go to the driver of the Little Gem for providing such a good service. Hiring a bus from this source is highly recommended.

As ever, comments on the pubs and the beers simply reflect the opinions of those who undertook the crawl.

The Award for August goes to The **Manchester Arms**, Wellington Road, Stockport.

The M.A., as it is better known, is a traditional Robinsons' pub serving excellent Best Mild, Best Bitter & Old Tom on hand-pumps.

Deservedly popular with Postmen, Bikers and the Drinker in the Street, the M.A. is under the energetic direction of Martin & Sandy Gibbs - full, lively with arguably (and I'm not going to argue!) the best Juke-Box in Town the Presentation Evening, on Thursday, August 27th., promises to be full of surprises in the usual 'no-holds-barred' tradition of the pub.

January							February						
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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March							April						
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30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30			
May							June						
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30	31				

PUB OF THE MONTH

Be there!!!

CRESCENT TURNS THE CORNER

We recently reported the imminent re-opening of Whitbread's 'Old Brewery' pub on Bell Crescent, Beswick. When the pub opened in June there was a surprise in store! The name has changed to the **Crescent** and what a good job Whitbread have made of it. The Vault, equipped with every modern comfort, retains, much cleaned up - the wooden ceiling and there are separate, well-segregated areas for pool & darts (both Manchester & Standard Boards), together with baize-topped card tables. Once the pub games season starts the Crescent aims to have strong teams challenging in darts (both boards), dominoes & pool.

There's also a very comfortable lounge which offers live entertainment on Friday & Saturday nights, A simple, but reasonable priced, range of food which is available Mondays-Fridays and praise is also due for the thoughtful provision of a toilet for the disabled.

And now the really important news - the beer. It's the complete range from Whitbread's Cook Street, Salford Brewery - Chesters Mild and Bitter and Trophy - all on handpump. And if we tell you that it's run by Fred and Ann Fox, formerly of the Duke of Edinburgh on nearby Mill Street, you'll agree that a good night out can be guaranteed.

Find it soon - Ashburys Station is nearby, as are the bus stops on the 218-221 services.

POET'S CORNER

The Cautionary Tale of Eric Spiggot Who drank lager and exploded.

Eric Spiggot, while a lad,
Would go out drinking with his dad
Who, caring for his only child,
Brought him up to drink draught mild.
But at the age of seventeen
Young Eric hit the disco scene
And met new friends who made him think
That lager was the thing to drink.
He tried it once, he tried it twice,
Ignored his father's stern advice.
He shrugged it off, and, with a laugh,
Drank lager at a pound a half.
His white-haired mother begged in vain,
"Don't throw your money down the drain,
Oh give it up, it turns you blind."
But he did nothing of the kind.
One night he took the fatal step
Of drinking with the Fosters rep.
All through the night and day they drank
And pints of lager Eric sank
Until, too late, he cried "Alas!
Oh woe is me, I'm full of gas!"
Indeed, his words were all too true;
Ten pounds per squ'inch of CO²
Inflated him four times his size
So listen as the poor lad cries
"Oh look my friends, behold my fate!
Give lager up, it's not too late.
Don't let me die to no avail,
Pledge yourselves to drink real ale".
And then poor Eric staggered home
And blew up in a cloud of foam.
So learn a lesson from this song
Drink lager and you won't last long.

PETE ORTON revised by Graham Hards
From *Thames Valley Drinker*

GREENALLS CHOP

Just as we were going to press Big 7 brewer Greenall Whitley announced the closure of one of the Groups Breweries and the redundancy of more than 100 staff.

The unlucky Brewery is at Wem in Shropshire which will close next year with the loss of 39 jobs and two cask beers - the Pale is to be axed and the mild replaced by Davenports Mild. Davenports, at Birmingham are to take over the production of the remaining Wem Beers - Bitter & Special but even they haven't escaped the chop with the closure of their bottling and canning line and the loss of 64 jobs.

The packaging is to be transferred to Greenalls Cambrian Drinks plant at Bolton (formerly the brewery of Magee Marshall, an earlier Greenalls casualty).

Once again proof is given to the fact that takeover means closure means loss of jobs and loss of choice for you - the consumer.

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FUNCTION

We've got the
ROOM



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SAMUEL WEBSTER



WILSONS

on our visit.

Further north along the sea front is the YORKSHIRE BREWER, a Sam Smiths house serving their Old Brewery Bitter on handpumps. The interior of the pub is quite pleasant but it could do badly with a re-decoration. It is, however, a good place to eat, the menu offering honest good value, if a little uninspiring food. Items such as Corned Beef Hash (£1.00), Steak & Kidney or Mince & Onion Pie (£1.60) & Ploughmans Lunch (£1.30) were all tried and pronounced perfectly acceptable.

Further north & turning right into Queen St. will bring you to the BRADFORD ARMS, owned by Lancasters' only surviving brewer, Mitchells. The only cask beer is Bitter served via electric pumps and to be honest wasn't on top form. The pub was crowded, noisy and smoky - full of holidaymakers having a good time in fact. It does offer food (there was a menu outside) but we saw no sign of it. Accommodation is also available.

For those wanting to escape the bustle of Morecambe, the surrounding countryside does boast two classic country pubs where food and drink can be consumed in more relaxed surroundings. Buses to Overton leave the bus station at about 10 minutes past each hour & once you have reached the village (about 25 mins), walk up the main street and you will come to the SHIP INN, otherwise known as Ma McLuskeys after the ever present licensee. Now a Thwaites house, but formerly belonging to Lancaster brewers Yates & Jackson, the Ship is a classic. From the spacious vault with its tiled tables, the crowded corridor area near the bar with dogs spread out on the carpet to the wonderful little snug with a settee down one wall, grandfather clock and amazing Victorian displays of birds eggs, this is everything a pub should be. Food consists of excellent value sandwiches

HOLIDAY ALE

MORECAMBE

By John Clarke.

For the second of the 1987 Holiday Ale series we go to a resort which has probably been the butt of more jokes than any other - Morecambe.

Morecambe is now easily accesible by virtue of adirect daily rail service from Stockport. There are two trains daily, one about midday & the other, which we caught, at 9-14 am, this also calls at Victoria at 9-40 for those who choose to travel from Manchester, with arrival at Morecambe at 11-15.

Often overshadowed by its not too distant rival, Blackpool, Morecambe still manages to preserve a traditional resort atmosphere, less brash and commercial than Blackpool. Unfortunately this can give the appearance of decay - the pier was boarded up on our visit for example. Having said that there is still much to do and see and of course it offers plenty of choice in places to eat and drink.

Immediately opposite the station is the art-deco grandeur of the MIDLAND HOTEL, built before the war by the Midland Railway Company. Although a residential hotel, it does offer a congenial, not to say genteel public lounge where you can take in the atmosphere of days gone by - and don't miss the amazing staircase as you enter, it could have come straight out of an Astaire/Rogers musical. 2 cask beers are available, John Smiths bitter and Moorhouses Premier Bitter. The latter at 83p a pint was most acceptable if a bit yeasty

THE MANCHESTER ARMS

STOCKPORT
Tel 061 480 2852



CLASSIC JUKE BOX
*
BIKERS WELCOME
*
ROBINSONS FINEST ALES
*
MARTIN & SANDY

at 32p (Beef, Turkey, Cheese or Salmon) and the beer is superb; the Ship has been in every Good Beer Guide produced.

If you can tear yourself away and if it's a fine day, a 2 mile walk will take you to the GOLDEN BALL at Snatchems, a Mitchells house selling the full range of mild, bitter & ESB. The Golden Ball is a tiny, homely local with cosy low beamed rooms. There is a parlour with oak benches set into the walls & a low doorway leads into a snug with a serving hatch. Again food is simple consisting of sandwiches & snacks and there is a beer garden for fine days. From Snatchems you can head straight for Lancaster but be warned - the road is completely covered at high tide!!

From Overton it is easier to return to Morecambe & perhaps sample the pleasure beach, now decked out in a Wild West theme. Rides are paid for with 40p tickets bought from the numerous booths. The Mousetrap & the Big Dipper are pretty good but the Haunted Silver Mine & Noahs Ark cannot really be recommended. The Big Wheel, where the riders sit in cages which can be spun round is also worth a try - the OT Editor went on twice! Attached to the Fun Fair is the Wild West Saloon apparently selling Boddingtons Bitter - we went there for early doors (5-45pm) and the place appeared to be just closing, an incredible state of affairs for a sea front location in a holiday town.

Trains run to Lancaster regularly, the journey taking about 10 minutes. A University town with a particularly good shopping centre, Lancaster itself is worth a day out. On a hill above the town you will see something resembling a miniature version of Sacre Coeur Cathedral in Paris. This is, in fact, the restored Ashton memorial, erected by a linoleum magnate of all people.

There are many pubs in Lancaster and we chose three - first the THREE MARINERS (formerly the Carpenters Arms) serving Mitchells Mild, Bitter & ESB. The building looks old and the pub certainly has an old world atmosphere so it is a surprise to learn that it only opened in 1961. There are benches to sit outside and it's definitely worth a visit.

On Moor Lane, next to Dukes Playhouse, is the GOLDEN LION, a Theakstons house selling Best Bitter, XB & Matthew Brown Mild, all on handpump. A feature of the pub is the variety of pub games on offer - skittles, table football etc. - and a no-smoking area which was an unusual but welcome sight.

Close to the Golden Lion are Mitchells Brewery offices and our final stop was their original brewery at the rear - the NEW INN was Mitchells first pub & again sells their full range on handpump. The pub is pleasantly furnished with wooden settles and pews and a large fireplace, although the loud juke box was a little distracting. Another unusual feature is the stained glass featuring among other things pint pots.

The last train back from Lancaster is at 9-27 pm which gets into Victoria at 1045 (no direct return to Stockport at night), which is just nicely timed for last trains and buses back to the suburbs.

Thank goodness, it's back.

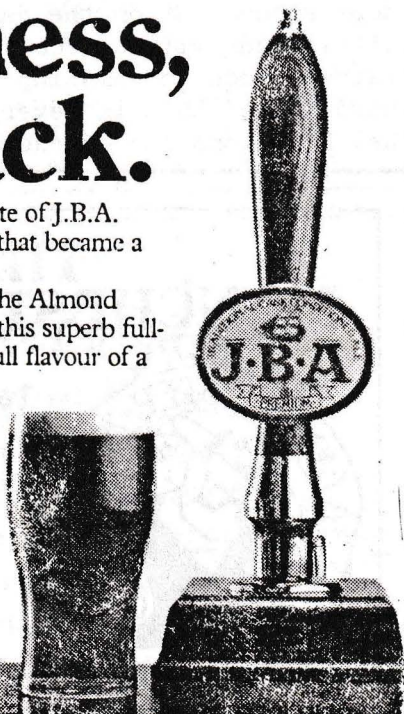
Now you can try a taste of J.B.A. Premium bitter - the beer that became a legend in its own time.

Originally brewed at the Almond family brewery in Wigan, this superb full-bodied beer captures the full flavour of a bygone era.

J.B.A. Premium bitter is now being brewed again in the time-honoured tradition, allowing you to enjoy a

J.B.A. taste of the past again.

Welcome home.




Brewed by Burtonwood Brewery

WIN A GALLON OF REAL ALE!!

Yes, that's the prize in our easy to enter Lager Competition this Month. Listed below are the names of 10 of the Big Seven Brewers British Lager Brands. All we want to know is who brews them and where. Entries should be sent in a sealed envelope to 'Opening Times' Lager Competition, 48, Moorcroft Drive, Manchester M19 1JH to arrive no later than August 22nd. Entries will be opened at the Camra Social at the Rising Sun, Hazel Grove on 24th., August and the holder of the first all correct entry opened will win 8 pints of Real Ale in the pub where he/she gets 'Opening Times'. Answers will be published next Month.

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Lowenbrau. | 7) Carlsberg. |
| 2) Tennents Extra. | 8) Fosters (2 towns) |
| 3) Grunhalle. | 9) Holsten. |
| 4) Hofmeister (2 towns) | 10) Stela Artois (2 towns) |
| 5) Harp (2 towns) | |
| 6) Castlemaine (3 towns) | |

Licensees, their staff & members of Camra are ineligible for entry.



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FOOD
DAILY

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* **SAM SMITHS REAL ALES** *

SLOP IT!

Word reaches us that a busy pub in our area has recently had an inspection by the local Authority & been warned against the unsavoury practice of pouring the contents of drip-trays back into the cask after sessions. Apparently this has been going on for some time in full view of the customers although, it must be stressed, without the blessing of the Brewery. The recipient of the warm, stale and possibly infected beer was, of course, the mild barrel. Small wonder if this practice is more prevalent than so many mild drinkers complain of unreliable quality.

Many readers will have heard of cleverly designed pumps & systems which re-circulate spillage directly into the next pint. This is perhaps a lesser evil as the beer has less time to become warm or contaminated, although there have been successful prosecutions recently in Rochdale involving one such system. You may well have your own opinions on such technology; in practice you are unlikely to notice it in use behind the bar. What you are likely to see, if you are in the right place at the right time, are buckets of warm spillage being carried past the nearest sink to its implied destination of your pint of mild tomorrow! CAMRA feels that although prosecutions are not common, such practices are illegal, unpleasant and potentially harmful. They do no good at all to the cause of Traditional Draught Beer & are yet another insult to the much abused consumer. If you see, or hear of such practices, and are sure of your facts, notify CAMRA and you are also within your rights to make a personal complaint to the Environmental Health Officer.

Stand up for a pure pint!!

BOWLED OVER

A warm welcome to Alan Phillips, new licensee of the Bowling Green, Grafton Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock. Alan comes to us from the Cloggers in Failsworth via a 2 year stint in Holywell; his latest move being prompted by the low barrellage in his previous pub.

He's well pleased with the turnover in the BOWling Green however despite the absence of the students although it seems that they account for most of the Original sales which is moving only slowly at the moment causing Alan some quality problems. It may, in fact, take a summer break and return, along with the students.

Some alterations are planned to reduce the space behind the bar and enlarge the vault considerable and the lounge slightly. Planning permission permitting a picture window will be installed in the long wall on the right of the lounge and a thorough re-decoration is also in the pipeline. All in all it sounds promising and we wish Alan well.

MORE OR LESS BODDIES

On a recent visit the Old Garratt in Manchester had run out of both Oldham & Higsons Bitter, demand remaining high despite the University holidays - yet Boddies maintain that such is customers loyalty to their own beers the others just won't sell in their pubs! Mention should also be made of the Gardeners Arms, Offerton, which now offers cask Oldham Mild & Bitter alongside similar Boddies beers. All 4 were in fine form on a recent visit. Interestingly the OB is electrically pumped from mountings which in the past have been an indication of keg.

With the advent of Higsons Mild as a regular feature at the George, Mersey Square, all six beers from the Boddingtons Group are now available in Stockport.

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The **Whitworth**, Moss Lane East, is being enlarged with the lounge being extended. One result will be the provision of a mild pump in the lounge. Also **Border mild** is a promised future attraction.

More **Real Ale** in Clubs - the **Stockport Cricket Club** sells **Matthew Brown Mild & Bitter** & **Theakstons Best Bitter**, St. **Peters Chaplaincy**, Oxford Rd. (which we gather is run by **Jesuit Priests**) has **Robinsons Best Bitter** & **Cheadle Labour Club** sells **Boddingtons Bitter**.

Thompsons Arms, outside **Chorlton Street Coach station** is now the **Village**. Only real ale is handpumped **Wilsons B.**

Websters Choice is now on sale at the **Castlewood**, **Stockport** on handpump. The

Websters Green Label is now chilled & filtered.

Whitbread's Bulls Head, on **Hyde Road** has been boarded up for ages but plans are afoot for extensive alterations. These involve conversion to a one roomed pub with a large bar on the right and a stage at the back. The exterior is also to be substantially refurbished. Let's hope some of the cash goes on installing handpumps as it was keg only previously.

The **Travelers Call**, **Ashton Old Road**, has dropped **Pedigree** in favour of **Marstons Border Bitter**. It sells at 72p - 2p cheaper than the **Boddies** or the **Tetleys**. The pub also opens at 11 am on Sundays for **Travellers Brunch** - a breakfast fry-up with tomatoes and beans, toast and marmalade - all for only **£1.95** (special menu at 75p for children.)

Bass's Birch Arms, **Pottery Lane**, **Gorton**, has been refurbished in a plush style - carpeted throughout - which nevertheless respects the former multi-room layout. True to form **Bass** have missed the opportunity to install traditional beer. They've also messed the juke-box about - formerly carrying a good & popular range of Irish favourites this has been homogenised to the usual mid-Atlantic/Top 40 fare.

The **Crown & Anchor**, **Port Street**, **Manchester** appears to be surviving the regretted departure of **Dave & Joanne Glass** and is still serving well-kept **Taylor's Beers** alongside the **Chesters**. Get in there and help swell the demand for **Taylor's fine beers**.

The sad decline of the **Waggon & Horses**, **Stockport Rd. Longsight**, continues. On a recent visit only overpriced, indifferent **Wilsons Bitter** was available in traditional form. Not long ago this pub was in the **Good Beer Guide**, now its owners **Hosts** seem content to let it rot. Could this be because they'd like to re-open it as a 'theme' pub once it's terminally run-down?

HEARD AT THE BAR:

In a **Marstons House**:-

"Have you got any **Pedigree**?"

"No, only **Marstons**."

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OPENING TIMES

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