

# Opening Times



STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA OCTOBER 1987 No. 42

## WHAT'S IN YOUR PINT?

By Humphrey Higgins

Last year CAMRA incurred the wrath of several breweries for having the temerity to question the ingredients that made up their beers. All sorts of additives and adjuncts - flaked maize, invert sugar, head retention & clarifying agents and such oddities as wheatflour, rice and potato flour are known to be used by some brewers. Whilst it is a legal requirement to state what goes into all items of food there is no such legislation when it comes to the brewing industry. CAMRA feels it is only right that you should know what makes up your pint and our sister paper in North Manchester, "What's Doing", wrote to every brewery whose beer is available in the County requesting any information as to what additives, if any, they used in their brews. The replies make interesting reading!

**Robinsons** assure us that "no unmalted barley, head retention or clarifying agents, other than finings, are used. A small proportion of flaked maize is used and since the cask conditioned beer is primed we do use sugar for this. It is a blend of various types (invert, cane etc.)" Their Lake District subsidiary, **Hartleys**, however, are not as forthcoming "...we have to inform you that the information is of a confidential nature and cannot reply in detail." **Bass P.R. Manager** is equally economical "...for commercial reasons we do not disclose the recipes of any of our beers." Over the Pennines **Humphrey Smith** of **Sam Smiths** states categorically that "...Old Brewery Bitter is all sold in wooden casks, is brewed only with the best pale malt; whole hops of the traditional English varieties, Fuggles & Goldings; yeast; water. It is then primed with cane sugar." Their neighbours **John Smiths**, a Courage Company, advise us via the Public Relations & Special Events Manager (!) "Your Camra colleagues who have visited our brewery would recoil in horror at the very suggestion of unnatural additives...John Smiths Bitter is the genuine article brewed here in Tadcaster where quality and consistency are of paramount concern" **J.W. Lees** are happy to advise us that "other than malted barley no other cereals are used but we do take advantage of brewing sugars. As regard to additives we are happy to confirm that with the exception of liquor treatment and finings no additives such as you mentioned are used." Over in **Greenall Whitley** land they "...use traditional raw materials in brewing for all our beers and few adjuncts or additives are included in our recipes. With regard to traditional beers English Malt, hops, water and yeast are the main ingredients, no invert sugar or head retention agents are used. A small proportion of wheatflour is added to the grist and the only clarifying agents are finings." Back in Manchester the Head Brewer at **Boddingtons** writes "...we are committed to the use of wholesome ingredients which we consider to have certain advantages over our competitors, consequently we do not wish to disclose the formulation of our brew. All the materials used in the production of our beers are on the approved list for food ingredients. WE do not use head retention agents, preservatives such as sulphur dioxide and we do not adjust the colour of our Bitter Beer by the addition of caramel. **Chesters** "...whilst welcoming your interest in Chesters Brewery, it is not our policy to divulge the ingredients we use. I can assure you that we purchase ingredients of the highest standard & these are subjected to the most stringent quality checks..." **Timothy Taylors** don't mince words "...Timothy Taylor have been brewing traditional beers since 1858. Looking back at the records the same materials are used as they were then; only malt, sugar, & yeast - no additives. My opinion about breweries that use additives such as unmalted barley, maize, enzymes, put profits before quality and have got to filter the beers to get them bright." The last brewery to reply, **Hydes**, were more than open! "...we have for many years pursued a policy of producing beer from the basic materials of water, yeast, hops and malt. We believe we are the only Company within the region producing beer from a 100% British malt grist." They then go on to list the precise amount of additives they use in the order & proportion they add them. The list is available from the Editor!

### The Nursery Inn

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- \* We now cater for families in our upstairs Dining Room which is also available for functions. \* Mon-Fri.
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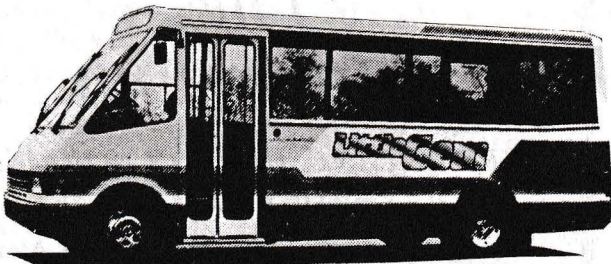
This month a change of gourmet and a change of direction too - we are at the BARLEYCORN on Barlow Moor Road, Didsbury, a pub that has been recently renovated in a modern, but sympathetic, style. On the day I visited the Tetley Bitter was unavailable but it was more than compensated for by the Jennings Bitter at 85p a pint. Seasoned pub gourmets will recognise the style of serverly, hot plates displaying a variety of pies, veg and a salad table.

I decided upon the lasagne with roast potatoes, carrots and peas, it was surprisingly good, the lasagne melting in the mouth but retaining a slight degree of firmness as all good pasta should. My companion, ever concious of her waist-line, went for a mixed salad, which she described as excellent, there were at least fifteen different ingredients to try with either quiche or a selection of cold meats.

Before I began my sweet I tried the Burton Ale (93p), it was magnificent, full of flavour and superbly kept. The Strawberry cake for me was a little too sweet and sticky but my friend thought it was just right - you'll have to choose for

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yourself.

Prices for the main meals begin at £1.95p and include Steak & Kidney pie, Cheese & Onion pie, Chilli and Lamb Chops. Sweets were from 85p and included Carrot cake and good ol Apple Pie. It might not be as mum used to make but lunch at the Barleycorn won't leave you out of pocket or disappointed. Happy Eating!

## PIER TWO?

Following hot on the heels of Pier One in Withington, FRITZBY'S has opened on Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, opposite Owens Park (well placed for the student trade). Like Pier One it sells hand pulled Castle Eden & Chesters Bitter.

Fritzby's claims to be a cafe-bar (whatever that may be) but there was no sign of any food on sale when I visited, albeit on Sunday evening shortly after it had been open.

The main drawback is that the entrance seems nowhere near wide enough - well built persons might find it a squeeze to get in & one person could easily prevent anyone entering or leaving.

The Castle Eden at 89p a pint was very enjoyable and I recommend you to give it a try. A welcome addition to the licensed establishments in Fallowfield - perhaps other wine bars ought to take the hint and install real ale.

HEARD AT THE BAR: Elderly customer to Stockport licensee: "Do you sell Yorkshire Bitter?"

A: "No"

"Well he does in Mr. Chips (Far Pavillions) & I told him - I wouldn't give that to Italian Prisoners of War."





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**CAMRA  
CALLING!**

October sees a full programme of events kicking off on 5th. with a social at the Plough, Shaw Heath, Stockport followed on Thursday 8th. with the Branch Meeting at the Pomona, Reddish Lane, Gorton - speaker will be Bruce Cunningham, owner of Palatine Inns who run the pub. On Sunday 11th. something a bit different - lunch at the Manor House, Withington from noon onwards. Monday 12th. is CAMRA's Regional Quiz Night details from the contact. Friday 16th. is our annual coach trip to the Stoke Beer Festival leaving the Mauldeth, Kingsway at 5-30, Pineapple, Heaton Lane 5-45 & Bulls Head, Hazel Grove 6pm. Cost is £3, members, £5 non-members which includes admission, programme & souvenir glass. On 19th. there's a social at the Red Lion, Withington & on Thursday 22nd., it's Pub of the Month at the Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris.

On Friday 23rd. we have an afternoon visit to Buckleys Cooperage, Dukinfield. If you want to know how barrels are made here's your chance. Phone for details. The social on Monday 26th. is at the Greyhound, Bowden St. Edgeley & on the 28th. we are launching the 1988 Good Beer Guide in Stockport at the Boars Head, Market Place from 6pm. Finally on Friday 30th., it's the Hazel Grove Stagger - 7pm in the Crown, Buxton Road, 8-30 in the Woodman. More details of any of the above events please phone John Clarke on 831 7222 ext. 307 during the day or 477 1973 at night.

PREPARATIONS ARE NOW IN HAND FOR THE SECOND STOCKPORT BEER FESTIVAL (APRIL 7th - 9th. AT STOCKPORT COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY) & WE ARE LOOKING FOR AN ARTISTIC READ-TO DESIGN A FESTIVAL LOGO! THERE'S FREE ADMISSION TO THE FESTIVAL FOR THE WINNING SUBMISSION - SEND YOUR ENTRY TO THE ADDRESS ON THE BACK PAGE.

REAL ALE IN CENTRAL & SOUTH MANCHESTER.

The local Branch of CAMRA have just published the latest edition of this invaluable guide to EVERY pub in the City Centre & southern suburbs that sell real ale. We welcome any news of any changes in the list which should be sent to 'Opening Times' editorial address. Copies can be had at 15p (+ sae) from Jim Flynn, 66, Downham Rd. Heaton Chapel. Whilst the guide was, as far as we know, up to date in mid-August, there are a couple of changes already - The Midland, West Didsbury is selling Castle Eden Ale & on Wilmslow Rd. Fallowfield, Fritzby's sells Castle Eden & Chesters Bitter, all handpumped.

**IT'S THE COMPUTER!**

A breakdown in Tetley Walkers multi-million pound computer caused chaos at the end of August. Many pubs found themselves without deliveries or offered only keg beers. Kay Ord at the Olde Vic, Edgeley, refused to have keg beer in the pub and sent the dray packing, while at the Gladstone, Hillgate, unsuspecting customers found themselves being served with keg bitter from the keg mild pump! We understand that things are now back to normal & you should be guaranteed your usual pint once more.

**NOW WE ARE ONE!!**

Chesters' experiment with a 'non-alcoholic youth public house', the **Pop Inn**, Ashton Old Road, celebrated its first birthday in August. Events included a special evening for the local senior citizens. It seems to be accepted as a place where tomorrow's drinkers get a foot in the door of pub life.

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**HAPPY HOUR 5.30 - 7.00 MON - FRI**

# STAGGER

LEVENSHULME & LONGSIGHT - By Malcolm Swallow.

Our latest crawl centred on the neighbouring districts of Levenshulme & Longsight which has many, scattered, real ale pubs.

We met in the **Waggon & Horses** on Stockport Road. This is a large Pennine Hosts' pub that has seen better days - a vast fortune will be needed to restore it to its former glory. The Wilsons Bitter was rated poor and the mild was keg. A new bar billiards table was noticed as the only point in its favour, as against the general decay both inside and out.

Across Plymouth Grove into the box-like **Ducie Arms** next where the Chesters Bitter was considered fractionally better than the previous Wilsons, but comments like tasteless and watery were noted. No real mild is served here either.

Retracing our steps past the Waggon & Horses, we strolled into the **Bay Horse**. It was surprisingly full for the early evening and we were entertained by the performing drunks. The Boddingtons Bitter was considered reasonably good whilst the mild was average. Continuing down Stockport Road we wandered into the **Crown**. This is a Chef & Brewer Tavern theme pub, and appears to be a reasonable alteration with the rooms opened out. The Wilsons Bitter was above average, but again no real mild was available. Websters beers were on, though, but not tried.

A detour down East Road and Pink Bank Lane brought us to the down-market **Garratt**. The pub windows commemorate the Bayer-Garratt Engineering Works that made railway engines for everywhere in the world it appears. We went into the vault so as to avoid the dubious delights of the talent night in the lounge. The Holts Bitter was very average whilst the mild fared less well.

Returning to Stockport Road via Crowcroft Park the fairground was in full swing so a temporary halt was called so that several members of the party could enjoy a ride on the waltzers and consume candy floss and toffee dummies!

WE went past the 'Sons of Hell' bikers and the bouncers on the door into the aircraft hangar of a pub, the **Midway**. Another Chef & Brewer type pub with a band performing Abba & Foreigner songs well in evidence. The Wilsons bitter was thought to be reasonably good. WE trooped across the road into the **Farmers ARMs** next. This is a nice, clean & plush pub, with a barman of the old school. Disappointingly the Chesters bitter was only average and no real mild was available.

Next came a detour down Chapel Street into the backstreet local the **Horseshoe**. This is another nice and comfortable pub, and was very full. No doubt the crowds were enjoying the band blasting out the Country and Western & Irish folk tunes. The Wilsons bitter was above average.

The **Union Inn** on Stockport Road was the next port of call. This is a traditional pub with tiled walls and room to sit down - just as well really, as we were advised to clear the bar area to avoid the fight that was about to start! The Boddingtons bitter was good - the best beer of the night but again no mild. Onwards to the **Sports Open House** (formerly the Packhorse). For this type of pub it's well done, but the bright colours, neon lights, giant poolballs and pictures of sports cars are not to everyones taste. The Wilsons bitter was average but the Websters Yorkshire Bitter was very poor.

Finally the last pub came in sight - the **Levenshulme**. Decisions as to lounge or vault are academic as both doors lead into the same big room. Evidence of its former multi-roomed past are just visible through the smoke! The Wilsons bitter was above average.

As ever the opinions and comments on both the pubs and the beer simply reflect the opinions of those who undertook the crawl on the particular night.

## The Midway Hotel



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### BANKS'S SELL PUB

We learn that Banks's have sold the **Gransmoor**, Ashton Old Road, Openshaw, to a Blackpool-based partnership - date of transfer of ownership is Monday, October 5th.

Under Banks's, as under Wilsons' before them, the pub has struggled to find an identity (struggled at time, indeed, to find the trade to keep it viable). The new owners' plans are not yet known, but it's thought that the pub will remain tied to Banks's beers, and local speculation suggests the introduction of B & B facilities plus a stage for artistes to perform. Innovation is certainly needed if the Gransmoor is to stand out from the pack of good pubs in the area; however the current decorative scheme is the best the pub's looked for many a long year, and we hope the new regime will build on this rather than simply instal an instant gimmick.

### TEA-UP!

At a recent meeting with **CAMRA**, Tetley-Walker have indicated that they are proposing a more enlightened approach to cask beer.

A substantial number of outlets are to be converted to traditional beer over the coming six months both in their tied estate and in their free trade outlets.

Hopefully this will lead to an improvement in the drinkers lot in some of South Manchester's beer deserts - like Levenshulme, Longsight and Wythenshawe.

Tetleys have also indicated that they are looking towards purchasing a number of pubs in areas in which they are poorly represented. This could also mean an improvement for drinker in our area. It just goes to show - some Big 7 brewers do try harder!

### DIRTY TRICKS DEPARTMENT - REVISITED.

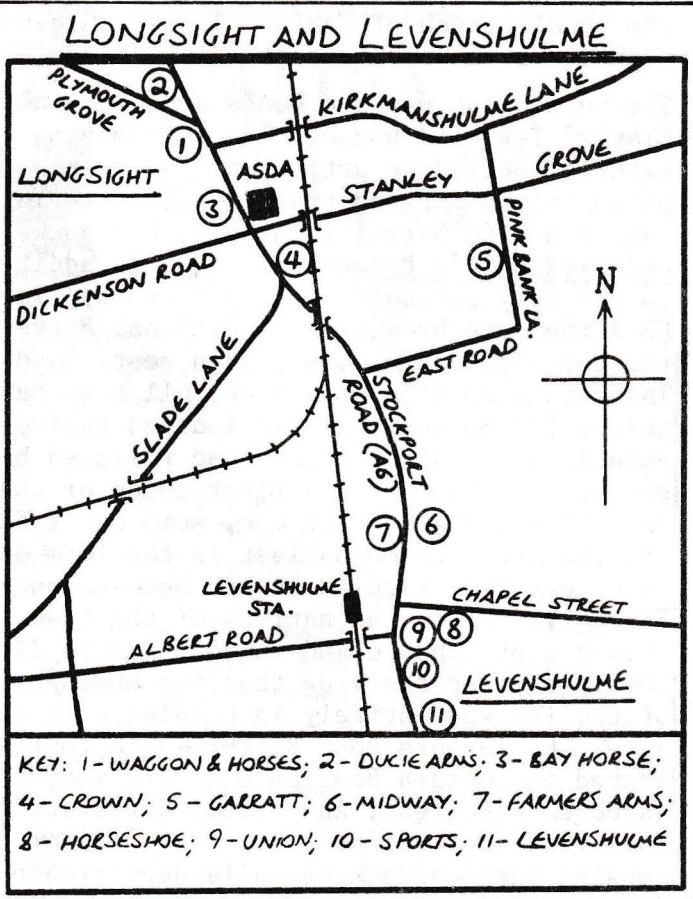
It has come to our notice that the bastions of traditional beer - **Boddingtons** - are apparently promoting in the free trade a handpump that can be used to dispense either traditional or gassy beers.

Previously a handpump selling products from the Boddingtons Group was always a sure sign of traditional beer. Sadly this is not now necessarily true.

### Take care in Boddies free trade outlets!!

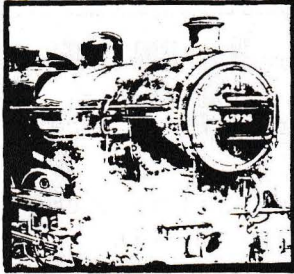
### HEARD AT THE DARTS MATCH:

"I wouldn't say it's a long match, but Keith's gone grey."



### NEW WHEELS AT THE OAK.

After more than 20 years, Jim & Dorothy Carruthers left the **Royal Oak**, Cheadle in August. We wish them well. New licensees are **Phil & Maureen Ferris**, and the Oak is their first pub. They are not inexperienced though, Maureen having worked as a barmaid for many years and the couple acting as relief at the Railway, Hale upon occasion. The pub, which serves Robinsons Best Bitter & Best Mild, was shut for 3 days while an army redecorated & refurbished the place: it is now light, smart & comfortable, with bench seating in the lounge and smoke room, though not the vault. They hope to open up the other room out of the lounge before Christmas. Altogether a very successful redecoration, which has improved the pb.



# HOLIDAY ALE

Keighley  
& Worth Valley Railway

STEAM BEER - By Time Lord.

August Bank Holiday weekend is always a good excuse to get away, not that we needed an excuse; with good beer, good fish'n'chips and steam trains, Keighley is just waiting to be visited. The morning began well; BR were digging up the rails outside Victoria so we had to take a special shuttle service to Stalybridge to meet our diverted train. Much to our glee, the modified timings meant that our Social Secretary missed the departure and was obliged to catch up with us in Keighley. I understand that a bacon butty provided him with consolation.

Our first port of call on arrival was the **Bolt-makers Arms**, a pleasant enough pub with hand drawn Taylors Best Bitter, Golden Best and Landlord. In view of the extensive programme before us, most sampled the Golden Best Mild and were gratified by the fruits of our decision. Our party had swelled to its maximum size of eleven - a fair turnout for a trip abroad! It was also here that your scribe

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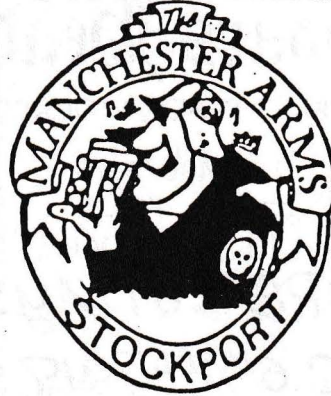
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BIKERS WELCOME  
\*  
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ALES  
\*  
MARTIN & SANDY

made the acquaintance of **Alesman**, not a comic strip hero, but the quarterly magazine of the local Branch of CAMRA - I was impressed by both its style and content.

The second pub was the **Boons Arms**, one of Clarks' few tied houses. The unpromising exterior belied an artificial but nonetheless pleasantly contrived 'traditional' interior, complete with barrel furniture, hop pockets and Swedish (!) brewery mirrors. In addition to the very pleasant light and fruity Clarks HB & the same brewery's Traditional Bitter, the bar boasted Taylors Golden Best, Landlord, Theakstons XB & Scrumpy Jack, all from hand-pumps. It was here that we learned that our voracious Social Secretary had followed his second breakfast by his first lunch of the day. Taking this as our cue, some of us decided to stock up on ballast in the form of excellent fish & chips before seeking out the **Friendly**. One of the natives of the town proved approachable and in addition to directions proffered the view that the atmosphere of the inn was entirely in keeping with its name. The Taylors Best Bitter which complemented the Golden Best on electric pumps was adjudged excellent. An unusual attribute of this venue was the collection of more or less amusing cartoons on the walls depicting pub names.

Adjourning down the road to the **Red Pig**, we were next able to enjoy Best Bitter and Wild Boar Bitter from this Trough Brewery tied house. Here the walls are festooned, perhaps predictably, with an extensive range of pig-oriented adverts & posters. Some of these were vastly amusing - if a little rude!

A vigorous discussion ensued as to the relative merits of different orders of business, and was resolved by our boarding the bus to Laycock. This is only a few minutes ride away and is the location of the splendid Turkey Inn, a source of excellent Goose Eye Bitter &

the powerful Pommies Revenge. Unfortunately there were no other examples of the range available - I understand that the latest addition to the portfolio is White RoSE Bitter; credit for this news goes to Alesman. The sun shone beatifically on our gathering, although our pleasure was marred to some extent by the attentions of the virulent local insect population. Similarly annoying and only marginally more intelligent was the behaviour of another patron of the beer garden. He was apparently intent on character forming by forcing his terrified & tear-shedding offspring to climb a high stone wall. Although we considered whether his own character could be improved by a few well-aimed blows, we elected to save our energy for the ascent of the near perpendicular lane back to our bus stop.

I can scarcely conceive of a more idyllic way to spend an afternoon; imagine if you will, a time-machine. For only £2.20 a steam-enshrouded fantasy engine will dredge from your memory things you didn't remember forgetting. Nostalgic maroon coaches glide from a 1950s British Railways platform to a timeless soundtrack. The smells hold the key to remembering; a steam engine redolent of the past hauls you back to those days of childhood, to the holiday trips to the seaside and the scarce contained excitement of a long, adventurous journey. The sun shone as it always did in those endless summers and the scenery was as beautiful as almost anything rural England can produce. Suddenly it got better! The train boasts a bar equipped with handpumps dispensing Clarks Traditional Bitter the epitome of civilisation.

The **Keighley & Worth Valley Railway** is heartily recommended to anyone over 30, for the memories, and to anyone under 30 to see what they missed. The terminus at Oxenhope has a railway museum, entry free to railway passengers & there are any number of attractions accessible from the six stations on the line.

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Returning to our own decade, we encountered one of the problems with time; the pubs were shut. More fish & chips helped, and then sighting a herd of Morris Dancers in the distance proved an infallible guide, the **Royal** being open conveniently early. This is an outlet for Taylors Golden Best, Best Bitter and Landlord, and has a useful beer garden and a pool table. On this latter, the Brand hustlers took on and defeated all comers. While this epic series of confrontations was in train, the party fragmented and no intelligence has reached me of the **Albert**. I assume it sells traditional beer and therefore recommend it to you all! The final halt in Keighley for your scribe was the **Black Horse**, distinguished by an unusual central circular bar. Handpumped Tetley Bitter was bought & enjoyed here and although the pub provides music and games, it had the atmosphere of an early evening rendezvous rather than a place to stay all session.

Our return train journey entailed an enforced wait in Leeds. Resourceful as ever, our rapidly dwindling party took refuge in the **Scarborough**, opposite the station, and found the Tetley Bitter to be most pleasant although the mild was less well received. Our routeing via Stalybridge then proved to be serendipitous\*, as we were able to make an easy connection for Stockport in time for last orders at the **Olde Vic**, rounding off a well-organised and memorable trip.

\* characterised by serendipity - a fortunate discovery made other than by design!!

### HEARD AT THE BAR:

In Keighley - spoken with a rich Yorkshire accent:

1st. Lady: "I'm onto Mondays' money."  
2nd. Lady: "It's all right for thee - I'm onto Fridays'!"



**Holts** have at last started work on the alterations at the **Waggon & Horses**, Hyde Rd. They've promised the job will be finished by Christmas (they said that about the First World War!) WE look forward to seeing this good pub unencumbered by the infamous dangling wires.

Still with **Holts** money is being spent at the **Railway**, Manshaw Rd Openshaw. The car park has been tarmaced & subject to approval it is the intention to extend the lounge into the unused room behind which should make a good pub even better.

**Ruddles** continues to make new appearances - latest outlets for County are the **Bulls Head**, Hazel Grove & the **Strawberry Gardens**, Offerton.

Several tit bits from Bradford - the **Park**, Mill St. has been revamped and gone 'real' with Chesters Bitter on Handpump and at the **Alexandra**, St. the range is now down to only Tetley Bitter & mild. The **Why Not**, Ashton New Road though has added Banks's Bitter & Youngers Scotch to the Tetley Mild & Bitter & has dropped Boddingtons.

It's the **Crown**, Northenden, not the Church, that has dropped Boddies mild in favour of Oldham. The bad news is that it is chilled & filtered - a sad loss.

**Holts** again and the welcome news that the much needed alterations at the **Junction**, Cheadle Hulme are due to begin in the New Year.

In Reddish the **Grey Horse** have plans to have a landscaped beer garden.



Hydes **Travellers Call**, Hyde Road, is currently padlocked and boarded up and it is with great sadness that we must report that this is following the death of licensee Carmel Murphy. This was a lovely little pub where Carmel, the longest serving licensee in the area by a long way, presided over an atmosphere that was always friendly and welcoming, never more so than when the Irish musicians gathered in the back room. CAMRA extends deepest sympathy to family and friends.

A recent letter from Manchester City Council suggests that the Hyde Road dual-carriage-way scheme, which entails the demolition of several pubs, is set to start in early 1989 although previous 'target dates' have come and gone for the past 20 years.

On Hyde Road the **Cheshire Hunt** has changed from being a 'free-house' selling Sam Smiths to being a 'free-house' selling John Smiths. Whilst we deplore the application of the term 'free House' to a pub selling only one breweries products hand-pumped John Smiths Bitter is a welcome addition to choice in the area and has been on good form so far.

Contributors to this edition: Charlotte Bulmer, John Clarke, Andy Cooper, Humphrey Higgins, Rhys Jones, Jim Flynn, Malcolm Swallow, George Symes, Paul Thompson & a guest Gourmet! Full details of postal sales and advertising rates can be obtained from: 45, Bulkely Street, Stockport, SK 3 9HD.

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 - John Brett &  
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