

## CHOICE CHOPPED! AND WILSONS TO GO IN 2 YEARS?

Websters Choice, the popular strong bitter, only introduced a couple of years ago is to be axed, we can reveal and all the signs are that Wilsons Bitter will go the same way in the next 2 years.

Camra has long said that brewery takeovers and mergers mean 2 things - closures and less choice for the drinker as favourite beers are phased out. The merger of Wilsons and Websters has already brought about the closure of the Newton Heath brewery amid fears for the continued survival of Wilsons beers - the takeover of famous Real Ale brewer Ruddles by Grand Met (the combine that owns Wilsons etc) only increased the danger, and now the axe is about to fall.

First, Choice: we have it on good authority that Wilsons and Websters managers (the Pennine Host pubs) were told, off the record, in a secret July briefing in Macclesfield, that Websters Choice would be withdrawn and replaced by Ruddles County. Although County can be an excellent beer, it is also 5° stronger and some 10 pence dearer than Choice.

The threat to Wilsons is longer term, but already the signs are there:

Bar staff in at least one managed house selling standard bitters from Wilsons, Websters and Ruddles have been told to offer customers ordering 'bitter' a choice of only Ruddles or Websters

At least one tenant, currently selling Wilsons and Websters bitters has been told that if he wants Ruddles Bitter, it's the Wilsons that will have to go.

Sales reps making clear Wilsons will go in two years.

Little or no advertising spend on Wilsons, all on Ruddles and Websters. An old method of creating 'no demand' before axeing a beer.

It won't be the first time this has happened - only earlier this year 2 local London beers - Coombes Bitter and Trumans Bitter - got the chop in favour of Ruddles. Are Wilsons pubs to become like those of Phoenix in the South-East, Manns in the Midlands and Norwich in East Anglia - without a beer to call their own, awash in a sea of Ruddles and Websters?

Local drinkers can meet the threat by demanding their local beers. Choice NOT County, Wilsons NOT Ruddles. The Choice is yours - but perhaps not for much longer.

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IN THIS MONTH'S OPENING TIMES.....

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Next Month: 1989 Good Beer Guide, a special feature plus the first of a monthly look at the new hours and how they affect your local

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Brewers  
of  
Traditional  
Cask  
Beers

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Always in  
good taste



By Alexander Panesh

Residents of Stockport will remember the Midway with affection, it was one of the first truly free free-houses in the area selling not only the likes of Thwaites but also the much-lamented JB Bitter from Pollards Brewery in Reddish, a fore-runner in the new brewery revolution, being covered elsewhere in OT by Phil Levison.

These days, the Midway is a John Smiths tied house selling handpumped bitter at 82p a pint, the range of beers may have gone, but the quality lives on.

The Midway has long had a tradition of offering good food, one that is still carried on by licensees Ian and Gwen Parrott. Pub food is available Monday to Saturday 12 - 2pm and 6-9pm in the evenings. There are usually two specials which complement the set menu which also features a selection of sandwiches and snacks.

I decided to try the Chicken, Ham and Mushroom Casserole with chips (real not frozen) and peas at £2.00. Service was efficient and friendly and the casserole itself was well balanced and piping hot and came in a generous portion. I followed this with gateau which at 90p was of acceptable size and quality.

The quality and value of the food here is evidently widely known as the pub was doing a brisk trade with customers who were obviously prepared to travel - the car park was full.

To summarise, the Midway offers good value food which is well prepared and generously portioned and a visit is well recommended.



## STATION ON LINE

Alterations to the Station in Didsbury are now complete. Initial worries that the Station would be spoilt by any alterations have proved to be unfounded as a smarter and roomier version of the pub is now evident without its unique character having been compromised.

The old bar has been replaced by an attractive new all wooden one with new handpumps. The doorway between the front and back rooms has been moved across to the opposite wall and a third room has been created behind these two rooms to be used for pub games and watching sport on TV.

The pub has been redecorated throughout, with a new floor and seating. Rescued from a house to be demolished are some fine historical railway pictures, which complement the decorations. A small kitchen off the games room is now being used to provide lunchtime snacks.

Renovations to the Station have been sensitively carried out, and serve to illustrate to other local breweries just how painless renovations can be if sufficient care is taken.

The range of beers is unchanged, with Marstons Burton Bitter, Pedigree and Mild all available.

## PARRSWOOD REVAMP

We are told that alterations will begin at the Parrswood, Didsbury (Boddingtons) in early September with the aim to have them completed by Christmas.

The vault is to be retained and enlarged and the food facilities are to be enhanced but not up to 'Henry's Table' standard.

Handpumps are to be installed and the Boddingtons beers are to be joined by some or all from the Oldham and Higsons ranges (the two bitters we imagine).

Sounds promising - more news when we have it.



The Midway Hotel



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## TREVOR THOMAS

It is with great sadness that we record the death, at the tragically early age of 43, of Trevor Thomas, licensee of the Britannia, Rowsley St., Beswick.

Landed with a back street pub many would have deemed hopeless, Trevor created a vibrant local where the quality of the welcome - and the beer - caused a faithful crowd to renounce the pleasures of other pubs for the warmth of the "Brit".

Trevor was particularly proud of his Pub of the Month award, given in April 1988 for excellence of beer and pub; his ambition was a place in next years Good Beer Guide. As we extend our sincerest condolences to Linda and the lads, may we hope that the brewery will allow Trevor's ambition to be realised after his time.

## BEER ON TAP

We reported some time ago that Graham Rawlinson, owner of Brown's No 1 Wine Bar/Free House in Heywood was hoping to reopen the Railway on Pottery Lane, Gorton as a free house around April. Planning problems caused some delays but he now tells us that the pub, renamed the Brewery Tap, after the old Openshaw Brewery which was nearby, will be opening on September 15th with a range of 8 beers including a selection from Thwaites, Taylors, Scottish & Newcastle plus a minimum of three guests. A range of continental beers will also be sold. A further report next month.

## NEW GREENKEEPERS

Welcome to Charlie and Shelagh O'Rourke, new licensees of the Bowling Green, Grafton St, Chorlton-on-Medlock. An ex-regular of the pub, it was always Charlie's dream to run the place and now it's come true.

Greenalls Original and Mild have been reinstated and join the Bitter on handpump. Specialities of the house will be home-made food (with the emphasis on home-made) and live Irish Music at weekends - he's already booked popular Irish band Innisfree for Bank Holiday Sunday plus 25th Sept., 9th Oct and every Sunday from 13th November to the end of the year including Xmas night. Charlie also intends to take full advantage of the new permitted hours. We wish him and Shelagh the best of luck.



### SEPTEMBER

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## PUB OF The MONTH

For September's Pub of the Month, we have chosen yet another Holt's house (third in a row!), the Waggon & Horses on Hyde Road, Gorton. Some readers may remember this as the pub that was always about to be done up; if that's your image of the place, you should know that the refurbishment has been completed all this year and what we now have is a totally refitted pub with the highest modern standards of comfort but not lacking anything in traditional pub atmosphere. A central bar serves distinct vault and lounge areas, which are complemented by a separate area for darts and pool plus an alcoved "overflow" room off the lounge.

As the pub's fame has spread, so naturally has its custom returned - the quality of the beer and the welcome is ensured by the skills of popular licensees Nick and Pat Knight. We'll be presenting Nick and Pat with the Pub of the Month award on Thursday, 22nd September - come early for a great night out with some of the best (and cheapest) beer in Manchester.

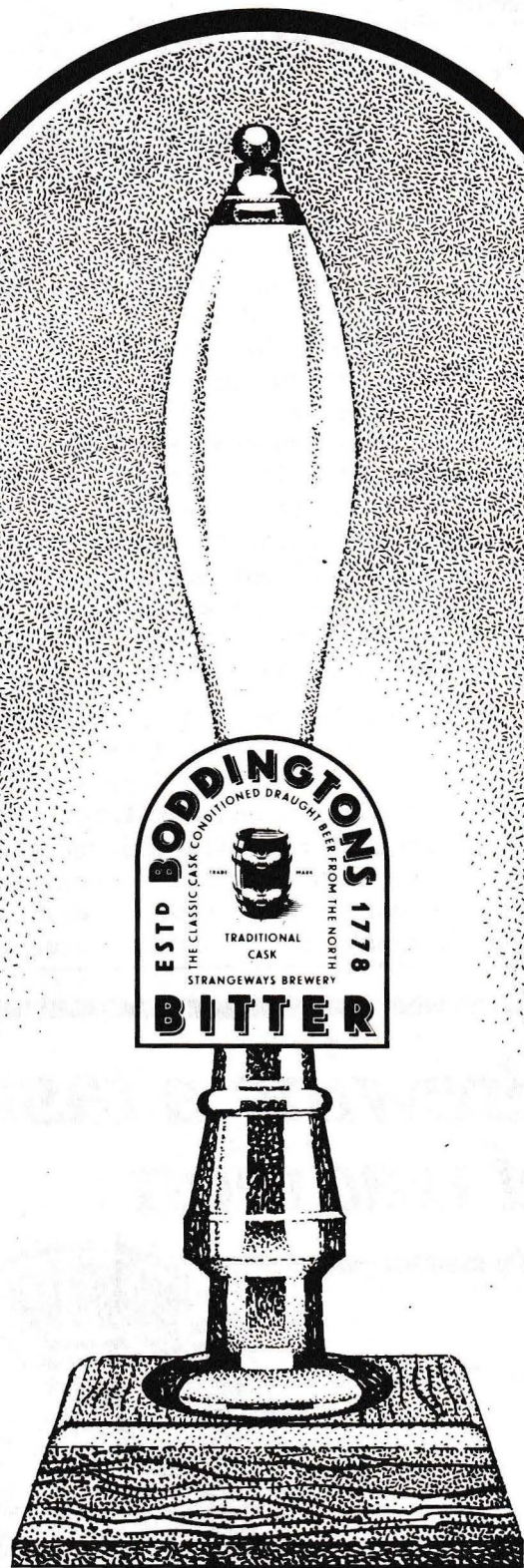
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**BITTER**

## MORE BREWERIES PLEASE!

CAMRA's Independent's Day celebrations struck a chord with Geoff Corfield, who offers his own view of the brewing industry.

'Let's keep our 56 independent brewers free and safe from takeovers and closures'... Yes, let's use their pubs and drink their beers (if we like what they offer, and let's buy their shares. But that's it. The idea that any normal industry can or should be protected to be 'free and safe from takeovers' is just a fantasy. I don't want just 56 independent breweries in Britain, I want more and I doubt all of the current 56 want to be particularly 'free and safe from takeovers'. Others didn't - Ruddles, Wem, Oldham, Higsons didn't. The list goes on and on, always has done and always will. And so it should.

You see these 56 independent brewing companies are just that: independent. Independent to make their own decisions about their future. There's nothing sacred about being a brewing company, they exist in the same commercial world like anybody else. They have their own individual way of going about it, and I say all the best to them. They can stand on their own two feet. Many of the 56 are free and safe now to make their own decisions and be as safe from takeover as they want to be. Others are living on borrowed time.

Some of the 56 are owned privately and are as free and safe now as they want to be. Here in Stockport we have one surviving brewery where years ago there were dozens. Robinsons survives in its 150th year as a private company. It got where it is today by the takeover and closure of other private companies, most of whom willingly sold out. They didn't want to be free and safe.

However, if there is something in the brewing industry which we must fight to make free and safe, it is to keep the 56 free from interference and safe to control their own destinies, and for that we must fight to make the brewing industry free and safe for the entry of competition. I don't want 56 breweries, I want as many as I can get. For every Ruddles or Oldham that goes, I want a Ringwood or Old Mill to enter.

That is the future of the independent breweries in Britain. It's not some stuffy old club of 56 members and falling, but a healthy industry where new companies are always coming in to replace those that leave. Don't worry about the 56, they can look after themselves. Worry about how to make it free and safe for others to join them.

(Geoff Corfield has acted as a consultant to several of the small new-wave breweries.)



## SUFFOLK SUBURBAN

At Lees' Suburban in Gorton we welcome new licensees Ron and Val Fitch, who have made the long journey north from a Norwich Brewery pub (ie part of Grand Metropolitan, just like Wilsons), the Golden Boar in Freckenham, Suffolk. Despite Ron's attractive Suffolk accent, they're not really strangers, as Val hails from the North-West and they also have a daughter living in Manchester. Ron tells us that a big factor in the move was to get away from Grand Met's bureaucracy to the more flexible attitudes of a family firm.

We wish Ron and Val well in a pub which, while languishing in the closing months of the previous licensees incumbency, can boast numerous attractions - not least the support of Gorton Morris Dancers whose September Rushcart celebrations, traditionally centred on this pub, will receive the usual welcome.

## HANSONS RE-LAUNCH

Regular readers will recall that in July we wrote to Banks's for a list of Hanson's Black Country Bitter outlets. We have in fact been overtaken by events as the beer has now been re-launched as 'Hansons' which makes it sound like some yuppie Pennine Host pub rather than a beer. The beer is of course the same and we can't help but wonder if this is a last-gasp effort to promote a product that, locally at any rate, has struggled to gain widespread popularity alongside its well-regarded Banks's Mild and Bitter stablemates.

Those outlets currently selling the beer in cask form are as follows:

Tollgate, Seymour Grove, Old Trafford  
Falcon, Kincardine Road, Chorlton-on-Medlock  
Milestone, Burnage Lane, Burnage  
Station, Manchester Road, Cheadle

There's also 15p a pint off until 11th of this month.

## DECLYNE & FAIL

Though it's just outside our circulation area, it's sad to note that Clyne's Wine Bar on Cavendish Street in Hulme switched to keg beer this summer - the ostensible reason was erratic sales of the cask beer.

Not remotely resembling a wine bar in the modern sense, this Wilsons house retained a certain amount of its original character and was known for hosting frequent Irish music sessions which itself gives a clue to the demise of cask ale here: more Guinness must be drunk than all the other beers put together. Real music and processed beer don't mix though - is it too much to hope that the keg-only policy can be reversed?

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Bar Snacks



## VINTAGE PUBS

Have you bought your copy of 'Vintage Pubs and Real Ale in the Manchester Area' yet?

If not then seize your opportunity now, the book is selling well and would certainly make an excellent Christmas stocking filler or birthday present. The guide is certainly the best ever published about the pub in this area and contains detailed descriptions which bring to life the unique atmosphere of 150 classic pubs throughout Greater Manchester from Woodford to Wigan.

Described by Camra's national newspaper as "a pleaser to look at" the book is a snip at £2.50 and is available post free from Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport SK4 5EG. Please allow 14 days for delivery.

# STAGGER

This month's crawl started at Holts' well refurbished Waggon & Horses on Hyde Road. A week before we'd voted the Waggon in as September's Pub of the Month, so we arrived with high expectations; we weren't disappointed with both beers rated very good, the bitter being marginally preferred to the mild.

Across the road lies Wilsons' (Pennine Hosts) Lord Nelson. This is a modernised one-room pub, though some small attempt has been made to provide separate drinking areas. Wilsons and Websters bitters were side by side on handpump. The pumps were unmarked, and beer mats throughout the pub advertised Websters - is this a ploy to wean customers who just ask for 'bitter' on to the less characterful brew? We refused to be manipulated and ordered Wilsons, which turned out to be of slightly above-average quality and came in some cases with a generous head. The plastic beams and intrusive canned music did not impress. To sum up, the place doesn't really feel like a local but may make an acceptable call on the way home from work.

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From the Lord Nelson a footpath takes you to the Vale Cottage (if you have a driver, approach via Kirk St.). A delightful, country-style pub this, with leaded lights and seats in the garden. It had gained Ruddles County since our last visit, and this was the better of the two cask beers on offer, being rated well above average, while Wilsons bitter only rated an average score. It's almost a shame to have to criticise such an attractive and well run pub, but it is marred by the continued appearance on (unmarked) handpump of Wilsons keg Special Mild - I accept that this distinctly sweet mild is the regulars' preference, but it really should be made clear that the beer is keg. Also some of us thought £1.08 was a bit steep for County, though I suspect there may be only coppers in it nowadays.

On now to Cross Lane and Boddingtons' Royal Oak. Like many Boddingtons pubs in East Manchester, this is a bitter only house and the beer was rated slightly above average. The pub has a central bar serving two distinct sides, a plain vault and a comfortable 'smoke room' which will appeal to lovers of dralon and fake beams.

Across the road now to Wilsons Cotton Tree, and what a transformation! Formerly a pleasant enough but plain and quiet pub, tonight it was buzzing with life. No cask mild any more, sadly, but good Ruddles County and above-average Wilsons Bitter - even the normally super-bland Websters bitter was rated slightly above average by those who volunteered to drink it!

One of the longer walks now, to the Prince of Wales on Abbey Hey Lane, a Chesters pub refurbished some time ago. Despite an unpromising exterior, the pub inside, while lacking individuality, is roomy and pleasant enough. The sole cask beer is Chesters bitter and despite one dissenting voice who pronounced it good, this was generally rated as below average.

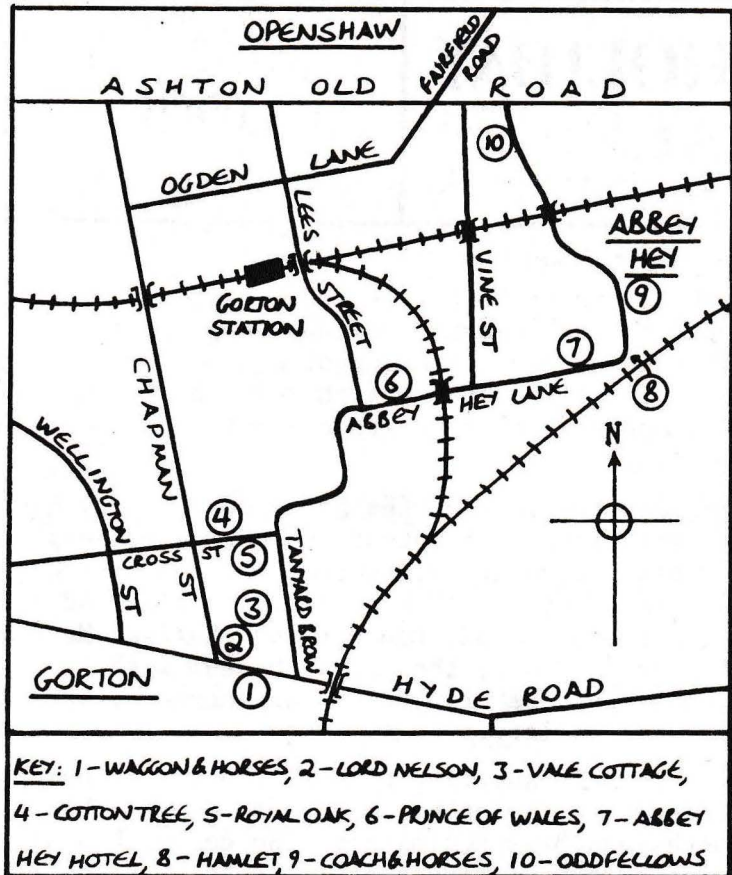
Just along the road is the Abbey Hey Hotel, a Bass pub which to our delight had converted to real ale since our last visit. This is to the credit of licensees Ann and Peter Beswick, who after much persuasion of the brewery are now selling Stones Bitter and Toby Light on handpump. Toby Light was judged slightly below average (essentially a judgement on the beer itself, rather than its state here), but the Stones was above average. The pub itself is a big old place, retaining many attractive features.

Much the same can be said of Wilsons Hamlet nearby. It was good to see this large pub, pleasantly refurbished, still selling Wilsons mild and bitter and giving no house room to the over-priced and under-flavoured Websters. Mild drinkers did best here; their beer was thought to be well above average quality, but sadly the bitter struggled to make an average rating.

Our next call, the Hare & Hounds on Abbey Hey Lane, had been keenly awaited owing to its high reputation as an old-fashioned local of great character. We certainly weren't disappointed in the pub, which was deservedly one of the busiest all evening. The beer though (handpumped Boddies bitter) wasn't quite its usual excellent standard here, seeming curiously lifeless; I hope and believe this was a temporary aberration.

And so to our last call, Boddingtons Oddfellows Arms, just off Ashton Old Road. Though not as unspoilt as the Hare & Hounds, the Oddfellows shares the same vibrant atmosphere, thanks to its division into distinct areas. The bitter was well above average, but opinions differed on the mild.

Altogether, then, a crawl of Gorton can be highly recommended, and you don't need to follow our route slavishly - particularly at the start and end of this Stagger, there are several other worthwhile pubs within striking distance. And of course, this Stagger is purely a description of how we found things when we were there - so get round the pubs and decide for yourself. - Rhys Jones



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# HOLIDAY ALE

## York

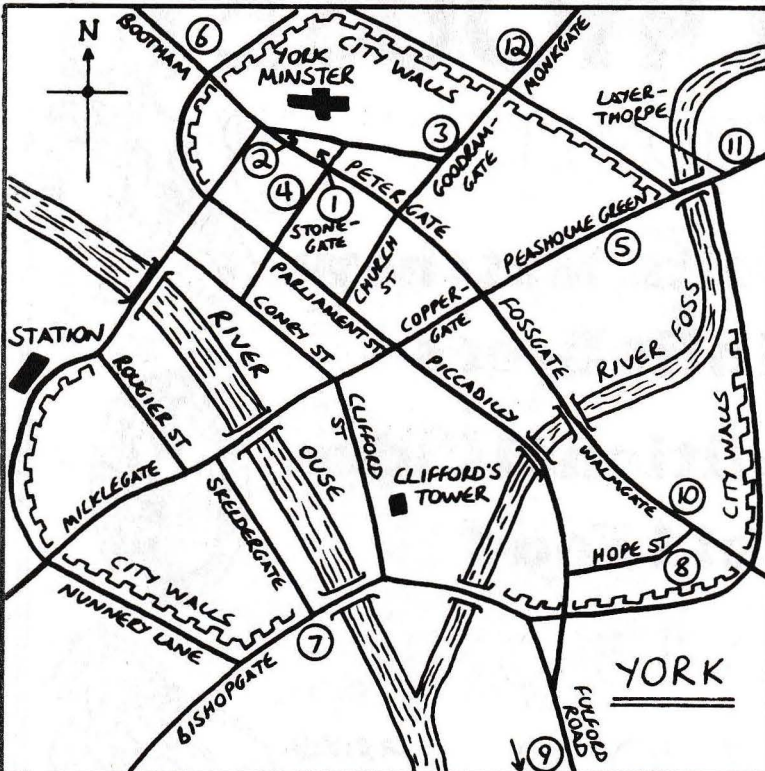
By Peter Edwardson

York is one of Britain's great historic cities, occupied from Roman times to the present. Although on the itinerary of many foreign tourists, it's a place with more than enough life and character of its own not to be overwhelmed.

York Minster lies at the heart of the city and is surrounded by a network of narrow medieval streets including the famous Shambles. You can walk round over half the original walls and other attractions include the National Railway Museum, Clifford's Tower, the Castle Museum with its reconstructions of 19th century streets, and the City Art Gallery.

York is well supplied with real ale from numerous breweries with Tetley, Camerons, Sam & John Smiths and Bass dominating. The center has a large number of fine historic pubs, many of which retain a great deal of character despite being tourist honeypots at certain times of the day.

In the shadow of the Minster is Sam Smiths' York Arms on High Petergate, with a fine multi-roomed interior and Old Brewery Bitter. Nearby is the Hole in the Wall, another historic building, but opened out inside, a Mansfield house with hand-



KEY: 1-YORK ARMS, 2-HOLE IN THE WALL, 3- GOLDEN SLIPPER,  
4-OLD STARRE, 5- BLACK SWAN, 6- BOOTHAM TAVERN, 7- SWAN,  
8- BROWN COW, 9- WELLINGTON, 10- SPREAD EAGLE,  
11- JOHN BULL, 12- TAP & SPILE

pumped Riding Bitter and Old Baily - but avoid the keg mild on handpump. John Smiths Bitter and Courage Directors can be sampled in the Golden Slipper on Goodramgate which has been sensitively renovated to produce a very congenial pub. Other pubs worth a visit in the central area include Cameron's Old Starre in a courtyard off Stonegate, and the Black Swan on Peasholme Green, a Bass pub which claims to be York's oldest.

Outside the city walls good Tetley Bitter is available at the Bootham Tavern on Bootham, and at the Swan on Bishopgate, a well kept street corner pub with a traditional layout. Timothy Taylors one tied house in the city is the Brown Cow, a pleasant two-roomer serving Best Bitter and Landlord, tucked away on Hope St, just off Walmgate. Further south from here is an absolute gem - the Wellington on Alma Terrace off Fulford Rd, a small three-roomed pub in the middle of a terrace, with quarry tiles in the vault, serving excellent Sam Smiths OBB.

York also has a growing number of free houses, the oldest established of which is the Spread Eagle on Walmgate, a lively pub with a bustling front bar and two small back rooms. Beers on our visit included Old Mill Bitter and Draught Bass. The food is also worth a mention here, not least the 'Cat with 9 Lives' - a whole french loaf, filled with hot beef, covered in gravy and surrounded by chips. Serves 4, a snip at £5.00.

The John Bull on Layerthorpe is a two roomed pub where the atmosphere is best described as pleasantly scruffy. Beers included Belhaven 80/ and Gatzweiler Alt a German beer rarely seen on draught in the UK and cheap at £1.22 a pint.

Close by on Monkgate, Camerons have turned the old Black Horse into the latest of their Tap & Spile free houses. It's a highclass conversion with a superb wood floor, serving a range of 6 'outside' beers plus Camerons own Srongarm and Old Ebor Special, a house beer for the chain. This is a welcome venture from one of the large independent brewers and deserves great success.

York has many other pubs worth a visit - a full list can be found in CAMRA's excellent guide to "North Yorkshire Ale". Parking is difficult in York but there is a frequent train service from Victoria with a connection from Stockport at Stalybridge.

HEARD AT THE BAR HEARD AT THE BAR HEARD AT THE Well, on the CAMRA stall at the Castlefield Carnival, to be precise.....

Camra member to customer: "Do you drink Real Ale sir?"

Customer: "No, I live in Warrington"





# LETTERS...

From Kay Ord, Licensee of Ye Olde Vic, Edgeley

In reply to Peter Edwardson's letter:

Ye Olde Vic is a free house and like CAMRA supports the independent brewers by purchasing guest beers from them and supports the customer by providing the freedom of choice to sample these. In doing so, unfortunately this means no discounts or subsidies which the bigger breweries offer as the independents are not usually in a position to offer these.

Most beers come from different parts of the country and are therefore purchased through beer agencies. The price structure is set by the agencies who dictate the price (+ VAT) and then present their lists to myself. Much of my time and effort (plus the expense of telephone calls) is spent on searching for the right supplier with the most realistic prices available. It does not always follow that the most expensive beer will be the strongest, it is based on where the beer comes from and the agency's price. Batemans XXXB came from Wainfleet, Skegness and a mark up price of £1.09 was charged for the quality of the beer, which was available nowhere else in the Stockport area. May I mention that Ruddles County first appeared over 12 months ago as a guest beer when Ruddles was still an independent brewer and not now as taken over by Grand Met and therefore easily available in most Wilsons houses.

Marstons Pedigree and Taylors Landlord, now firm favourites, still up to date found nowhere else in Stockport are priced at 98p and £1.04 a pint (Landlord was in fact 98p until recently). Taylors Landlord, in keeping with my own fair pricing policy has to date been subsidised by myself when the actual mark-up price is £1.07.

CAMRA campaigns for a fair deal for customers and freedom of choice, I myself am a life member. If you choose to visit Ye Olde Vic, you will find it is a pub totally committed to the cause and takes its beer very seriously. You will not be promised a cheap pint of beer but you will certainly be offered a good quality beer at a realistic price level.

## STOP PRESS - NEW BEER!

As we went to press we learned of a new beer to be launched by Greenalls in October.

To be called Thomas Whitley Premium Bitter, the beer could well be a rival or replacement for the well regarded Original Bitter which it has to be said is too rarely seen (the Bowling Green, Chorlton-on-Medlock and the Crown Didsbury are the only pubs to sell it in the Stockport & South Manchester area).

The beer will only go into selected pubs but we have no further information at present. As usual, more news when we have it.

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## ALL SMILES AT VIC

The Victoria on Burnage Lane has recently been refurbished by owners Boddingtons. At one stage we understood that it was to become a 'Henry's Table' eaterie, but instead has simply been given a much needed redecoration and uplift. There is more of an accent on food though, with an attractive menu available. Also worth a mention is the sign showing Queen Victoria with an insane grin, most odd.

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**THE NEW  
BREWERIES  
by PHIL LEVISON**

This month, Phil Levison continues his look at 1979 when the new brewery revolution started to take off in a big way.

It was back to the South again for the next two breweries: Martlet at Eastbourne and Cotleigh in Devon. Martlet started brewing Brighton Bitter (og 1040) in Eastbourne, for the free trade in Sussex and London; Desmond Turner and Lynden Hughes were in charge.

Cotleigh was originally set up at Washfield, near Tiverton in Devon, and Tawny Bitter was soon going into local pubs, and those in the neighbouring counties of Somerset and Cornwall. Such was its success that premises became outgrown, and a move was made to a much larger old brewery premises at Wiveliscombe, near Taunton.

1979 was proving to be a remarkable year, not only because of the number of new breweries that were appearing, but because this was the year that Southwark saw the opening of David Bruce's Goose & Firkin - the first of a whole series of unusually named establishments. Because it was on Borough Road, the first brew was called Bruce's Borough Bitter, and this was to be followed by Dogbolter (og 1060) and Earthstopper (og 1075). All powerful stuff, and this was on a Brewpubs plant using malt extract.

David Bruce was ex-Theakston and Courage, Simon Hosking was a borough treasurer with Southwark Council, and Simon's Tower Bridge Brewery was another completely different venture. It was set up in an old rope warehouse, behind Courage's Horsleydown Brewery at the end of Tower Bridge;



CAMRA Investments bought the lease and sub-let it to Simon, who had first thought of his own brewery when he saw the John Thompson Inn in Derbyshire - 'if he can do it, so can I' - the brew was Simon's Tower Bridge Bitter (og 1042).

Ernie 'Scottie' Scott, ex-paratrooper and former chairman of Winchester CAMRA, brewed Old Chidham Bitter (og 1042) at his pub, the Old House at Home, at Chidham, West Sussex. Containing no sugar or additives, it was selling at 49p a pint first only at the pub and then in several other local outlets. Gerry Tompkin, ex-helicopter pilot, bought the Mandeville Arms at Hardington near Yeovil, then started to brew his own Hardington Best Bitter (og 1040), a malt extract brew, which was again only available at the pub initially, but was then supplied to other outlets.

After these four 'Southern' breweries, we travel to Northern England, where we find Appleby and Moorhouse in the North-west and Derwent in the North-East. Appleby New Brewery was set up in a small brewery in Appleby Cumbria by experienced commercial brewer Bill Bell. Although the og 1038 beer was named Topcross, after the market cross on the hill in Appleby, the locals dubbed it Billy Bell's Bangalore Bitter - he was once a brewmaster in India. His partner, Donovan Greenaway was the landlord of the King's Head in Appleby, where the beer was first sold, but difficulty was experienced in finding other outlets.



Moorhouses of Burnley were long established producers of hop bitters, but then they decided to install the necessary plant to produce proper beer - Premium Bitter (og 1036). At first sold locally, it soon established a reputation in the free trade, and appeared country-wide. The beer is still available and regularly on sale at Stalybridge Station Buffet.

Next month Phil looks at the end of 1979 and 1980

**APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP**

I/We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale Limited, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

NAME(S) ..... DATE .....

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I/We enclose remittance for individual/joint membership for one year: **U.K.** £9   
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I/We would like to receive further information about CAMRA

*Please send your remittance (payable to CAMRA Limited) with this application form  
T. Clarke, Flat 2, 2 Errwood Rd., Levenshulme, Manchester M19 2PA*



# CAMRA CALLING!

Another mixed bag this month starting on 8th our branch meeting at the Victoria, Wilmslow Rd, Withington (upstairs room), starting at 8.00pm. This is followed on Monday 4th with social at The Grey Mare on the corner of Grey Mare Lane and Ashton Old Road, Openshaw. A recent convert to real ale this. This week ends on Saturday 17th with the last Opening Times Awayday of 1988 to London catching the 9.00am from Piccadilly (9.08 from Stockport). Phone me for details of coach fares)

Monday 19th sees a social at the Cock in Hazel Grove, starting at 9.00pm (as do all socials). The Thursday of this week (22nd) is Pub of the Month, with the award going to the Waggon and Horses, Hyde Rd, Gorton. Unusually Stagger falls in the sameweek and is on Friday 23rd, covering the Fallowfield area kicking off at 7.00pm at the Fallowfield, Wilbraham Road and meeting at 8.30 at the Derby, Exbury St.

There's a social on Monday 26th at Ye Olde Woolpack (formerly the Hague) on Brinksway, Stockport and on Thursday 29th we will be doing something to mark Robinsosns 150th anniversary (phone for details)

The weekend 30th Sepember-2nd October sees us visiting Lincolnshire and Batemans Brewery and on Monday 4th October we have a social at the Friendship, Wilmslow Rd, Fallowfield. Students are especially welcome to this one.

If you want more info about any of the above, phone me, Angela Walker, on 0663 43769, evenings only.



# MANCHESTER MATTERS

It's good to see the Old White Bear on Swan St in the city centre open again, even under its new silly name "Polars". With layout unchanged, but jazzily furnished with a glacier-mint carpet and an electrical discharge sphere on the bar, the place now sells Tetley mild and bitter, Jennings Bitter and Ind Coope Burton Ale, all on handpump. On my first visit, the customers didn't quite match the yuppie image which seems to be intended - there was more effing and blinding than you'd hear in many a Moss Side tap-room - but as long as they sup enough cask beer to keep it indecent nick, who's bothered? Polars is open all day Monday to Friday but just 11-3 and 7-11 on Saturdays.

Our other gain this month is fully covered in this issue's Stagger; here I merely urge you to try Gorton's Abbey Hey Hotel for real beers from Bass. Other Gorton changes are also detailed in Stagger including those at the Vale Cottage, Lord Nelson and Cotton Tree. In Bradford, the Little Bradford has dropped Tetley Mild and Jennings Bitter but added hand-pumped Boddies Bitter, while in the city centre Bensons has replaced Marstons Pedigree with Handpumped Whitbread Trophy.

We also understand that Draught Bass is still sold at the Burton Arms, Swan St but is not always available. On the other side of the coin, Stones Bitter here is sometimes sold in keg rather than real form and on these occasions is dispensed through a Tennents Lager mounting temporarily shielded by a Stones bar towel! Finally, we can report that the Crown on Deansgate has dropped Websters Bitter due to lack of demand - the first of many?

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# PUB NEWS



As predicted a couple of months ago, we are happy to say that cask Tetley Bitter has joined the Jennings at The Sun & Castle on Hillgate Stockport and is selling well.

\*\*\*\*\*  
We are told that the Junction, Cheadle Hulme will close for renovations from October until about Easter next year.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The increasing decay of the Waggon & Horses, Longsight, has been a cause for some concern. Owners Pennine Hosts now tell us that the pub will be transferred back to the Wilsons/Websters tenanted estate this month as the pub is 'no longer commercially viable to Pennine'. We hear that the

pub could come under the new Grand Met leasing scheme if they can find someone daft enough to take the place on.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Another real ale gain for Stockport could be in the pipeline - Greenalls tell us that when alterations are complete at the Gamebird, Bird Hall Lane, Stockport will have cask beer installed.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Whilst on the subject of Greenalls, we are told that the Crown, Didsbury, is to install a new cask beer, Shipstones or Wem must be possibilities we think.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The Royal Oak, Castle St., Edgeley now sells Ruddles County on handpump. The pub also does a nice line in food at lunchtimes and early evenings.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The Railway, Didsbury Road, Heaton Mersey sells Websters Bitter and Choice alongside the Wilsons Bitter. The Choice was OK when sampled recently, the Websters though, was even more tasteless than usual.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The Hinds Head, Heaton Chapel, which only opened last November, is to have a kitchen extension. The pub food must be taking off in a big way.

\*\*\*\*\*

A change of beers may be on the cards at the Woolpack, Brinksway, Stockport. Landlord Bob Dickenson tells us that Websters Yorkshire Bitter could be replaced with Vaux Bitter - a new beer for the area if it comes about.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Burton Ale and Jennings Bitter have now been withdrawn from the Shady Oak, Radford Drive, Bramhall, leaving the range as Tetley Bitter, Thwaites Bitter and Marstons Pedigree. The pub has never reached the levels of popularity it enjoyed as a free house - perhaps the new permanent manager who takes over this month will revitalise the place. A guest beer policy might be worth considering we think.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Simon Finch, owner of the enterprising Beer House on Rochdale Rd, Manchester is spreading his wings and opening his second pub - the Auld Lang Syne on Manchester rd, Werneth in fact opened on 26th August and became the only free house in central Oldham. The pub is owned by Oldham council and will ultimately be demolished for a road scheme but is guaranteed 12 months of trading. The pub will feature a Beerhouse-style range of beers and food. Simon tells us he would also like a pub in Stockport, we will of course be first with the news if he gets one.

\*\*\*\*\*  
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*Richard and Sue Genders*

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