

Opening Times



STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

NO. 60 April 1989

ALL CHANGE! Drinkers Cheer In MMC Report

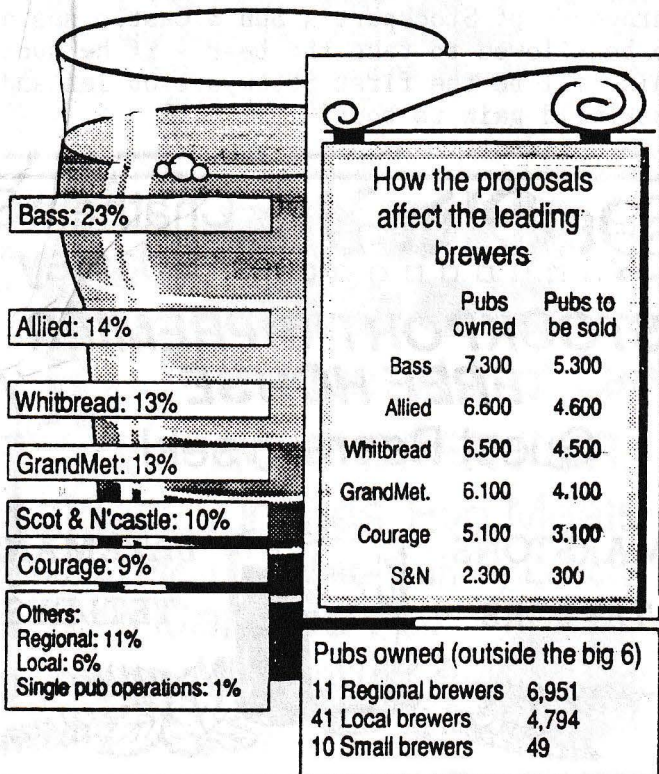
THE Monopolies Commission probe into the UK brewing industry published its findings just before Opening Times went to press. If its recommendations are implemented in full, as seems possible then the British brewing industry is in for its biggest shake up since the merger mania of the 1960's.

Among the recommendations are:

- Brewers should be only allowed to control or own a maximum of 2000 pubs. Companies with more than this should sell the excess in 3 years
- Covenants between brewers and retailers which tie products to outlets should be outlawed.
- Tenants should be allowed to sell a minimum of 1 guest beer outside the tie.
- The loan-tie, by which the big brewers are able to tie up much of the free trade by offering low-interest loans to publicans in exchange for a product tie, should be abolished.
- A sliding scale of duty should be introduced to help small brewers.

These are all issues on which CAMRA has been

Beer, the big brewers' market shares



campaigning for many years and on first sight the proposals represent a major victory for consumers. A degree of caution is called for however; indeed, the free for all, with as many as 22000 pubs coming on the market, envisaged by some commentators (see our chart below) is looking less likely. It is now widely thought that if the crunch does come, some of the nationals, notably Grand Met (Websters/Wilsons etc) and Allied (Tetley) will chose to keep their pubs and dispose of the breweries they control. This could result in the unwelcome presence of overseas firms who would probably have even less regard for our brewing traditions than the current Big 6.

The smaller regional and local brewers are generally pleased with the report however, not only do they emerge unscathed but they have been given an unprecedented opportunity to expand - some pubs will doubtless come on the market from the nationals and of course the guest beer scheme can only help local firms.

Combined with the end of the loan-tie, the guest beer proposal should also encourage the micro-brewery sector, it is lack of access to the free trade that has led to almost half the 140 or so breweries set up over the last 15 years going out of business.

Properly implemented, these proposals will mean better pubs and better beer. We'll drink to that.

Richard and Sue Genders

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BY ALEX PANESH

THE ROEBUCK, MOBBERLEY

The Beer Festival is over; if you were able to try the food, then you'll have found it pleasant and well prepared, and preparation is the keyword at the Roebuck, which lies in the pleasant Cheshire village of Mobberley, a village that boasts seven pubs and no less than 13 real ales.

The Roebuck has a large, spacious bar, recently renovated. The doors are also very wide and we were told by the staff that disabled people often use the pub.

The menu was very comprehensive with starters ranging from 90p to £2.50, plenty of home-made dishes featuring. The main courses started at £3.00 for Lasagne or Fisherman's Pie. However, I plumped for the Homemade Steak & Kidney Pie with baked potato and vegetables of the day at £3.50, while my friend had a Vegetarian Lasagne at £3.00.

The Steak & Kidney Pie had a melt-in-the-mouth puff pastry top and was absolutely packed with filling, it was very tasty and a good size. The Lasagne was also very generous in size, full of taste and freshly made.

The sweet trolley had such delights as Hot Chocolate Fudge Cake, Apple Pie and Banana Pancakes, all at £1.30. They looked, smelt, and the ones we tasted, were, delicious.

The food is also available in the evening but it is advisable to book in advance. The Roebuck is on Town Lane, opposite the Bulls Head. Telephone Mobberley 2757.

HOLTS OFF THE RAILS

AT the Railway on Manshaw Road, Fairfield, the lounge extension has now been completed, and has added considerably to the attractions of the pub. However, we understand that Holts have rejected as too expensive their original intention of reinstating the famous old lamp over the door.

While Holts reluctance to spend money is frequently commendable, especially compared to those breweries whose design departments have more money than sense, in this case it amounts to mere penny-pinching. The Railway without the lamp just isn't the same pub, so let's see it back in its rightful place!

BASS BOTCH

THE Bulls Head in North Reddish is being refurbished with a prospective reopening of early April. Unfortunately, Bass have shot themselves in the foot by not taking the opportunity to put in cask conditioned beer. Why Bass think they know better than Wilsons and Tetleys who have both introduced real ale in their pubs in the area over recent years is anybody's guess.

Meanwhile, over in Didsbury, the revamped Fobs to be renamed Times Square, was due to reopen on 7th April, although as we went to press it looked unlikely that this date would be met. Bass have said they intend to put real ale in when it does reopen, it remains to be seen whether they keep their word on this, past experience makes it doubtful.

IN THE DARK

IT'S rumoured that Tetley Dark Mild, which we recently reported on test market, is doing well enough to be retained as a permanent beer. David Farnworth of Stockport's Sun & Castle has asked to be allowed to take the beer - if he succeeds this will be the first Stockport outlet and a cask mild gain to boot!



The Red Lion WITHINGTON

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Pedigree and Bitter

Owd Rodger on draught
Burton Best Bitter

De Olde Vic Chatham St. Edgeley

STOCKPORT'S PREMIER
FREE HOUSE

Guest Beers Weekly

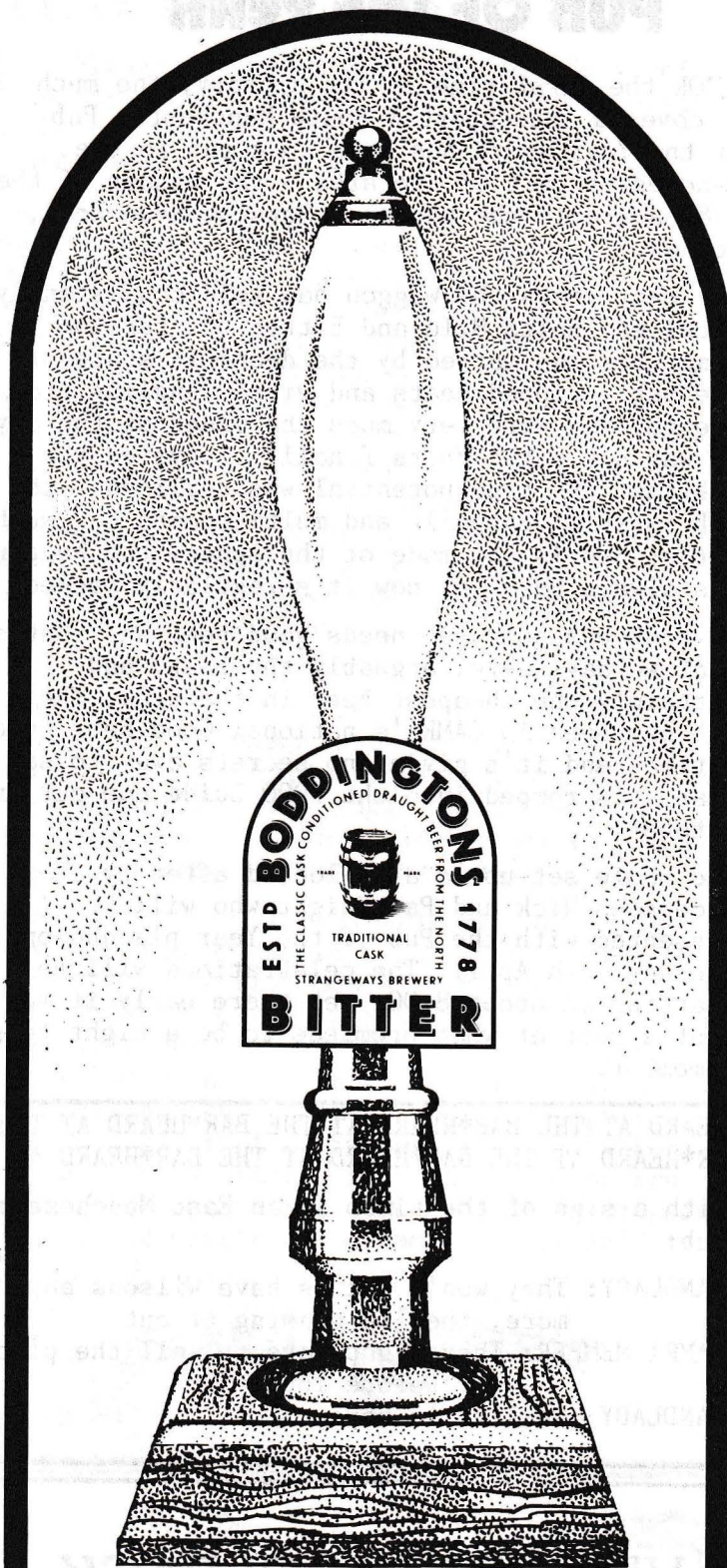
MARSTONS

TAYLORS

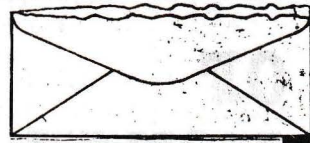
BATEMANS

TETLEYS





THE CLASSIC
CASK
CONDITIONED
BITTER



LETTERS

FROM: Barney Cotgreave -

Re. issue no.57, Jan 1989.

I refer to 'The Stagger' in the above issue of your interesting publication and note that your team of 'Tasters' had visited 6 pubs before you paid your return visit to the Lord Nelson, and it appears to me that your background knowledge was somewhat clouded when writing your report.

For instance, it is not a managed house. Peter the landlord has been the tenant for approximately 15 years. Everyone does not drink Wilsons bitter - many drink the well kept Websters - there are also two lagers, draught Guinness, cider and a variety of bottled beers all kept nice and cool. It is a warm friendly house whose patrons range from 18 years to 80 plus. The bar staff are very pleasant and the music is not over-loud. It is also a very popular house with excellent food at lunchtime. The patrons don't worry about the absence of pumpclips, it's the beer that counts and as you rightly say, the Wilsons was above average.

For information, I have drunk in all the houses mentioned and more in the past 45 years, and on my visits to the Lord Nelson I have always found it above average and a place where you can take the family for a nice evening and where bad language is not tolerated. So may I suggest that instead of moaning about pump clips, that you get all your facts right and write about the good things you see on your boozy 'Staggers'. Perhaps less pubs, less beer and you would be able to remember the next morning.

(Editor's note: it should be remembered that the Stagger articles are not meant to be a once and for all judgement on the pubs visited but are simply the views of those present on the night. It is only fair to point out that those writing up each article generally restrict themselves to no more than a half pint in each pub and take notes as they go along rather than attempt to remember the pubs the following morning.)



BEER BOOKSHELF

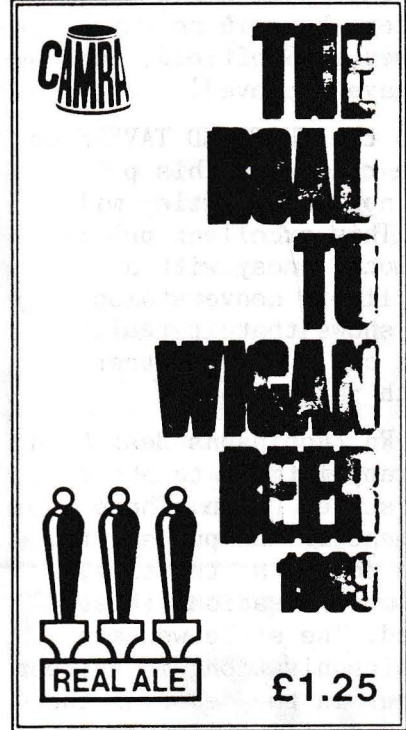
FOLLOWING last month's review of the latest guide to Bolton, this has now been followed up by a local beer guide to the pubs of Wigan and area, Although similar in format to the Bolton guide, the content is quite different. The good campaigning items which the Bolton guide featured are not so apparent which is unusual given the fact that real ale is almost as thin on the ground in Wigan as it is in Bolton. In addition, the Wigan area has suffered many major pub losses in

recent years and while these are given a mention, there must surely have been scope for some good hard hitting content here.

The pub descriptions are also somewhat briefer than the Bolton guide, and whilst adequate do not give the feel of the pubs as much as could have been done.

Another area where the guide falls down to some extent is the maps - whilst these are certainly clearer and better positioned than in the Bolton guide there are just not enough of them with the result that a stranger to the area could well struggle to find their way around.

This review may sound negative and perhaps it is a little unfair on a guide



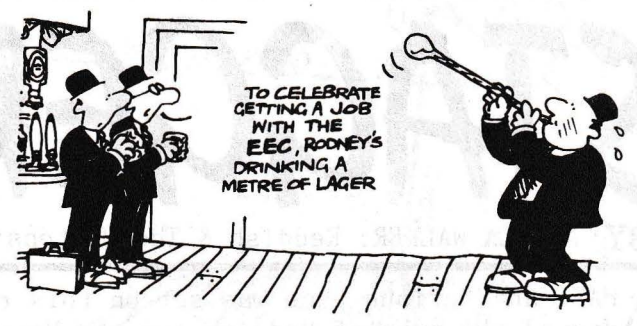
which is certainly no worse than many others on the market and at only £1.25 is good value for what it is.

NEW BREW

THE new premium bitter from Greenalls, as exclusively reported in Opening Times, was due to be officially launched on March 29th, just after this issue of Ot went to press, by that well known pub-goer and beer drinker the Duchess of York, no less (she also happens to be an old family friend of the Greenalls it seems).

While we hope to have a more detailed report in the next issue, we can tell you that the beer will only be available in 9 gallon containers, which should hopefully mean that it will be in reasonable condition even in those pubs with slowish sales.

Greenalls describe the beer, named Thomas Greenall's Original, as a 'full-bodied, darker bitter beer with a very hoppy character'. we will of course let you have a more unbiased opinion!



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STAGGER

BY: ANGELA WALKER: Reddish & The Heaton's

A FAST and furious pace was set on this rally around the pubs of Reddish and the Heaton's.

Our first stop was at Chesters' RAILWAY on Gorton Road. This large, rambling pub had typical early 1980's Whitbread decor (plastic plants growing out of concrete?) and we were told that it is due for refurbishment shortly. The pub obviously tries to cater for many tastes as there were not only two large pool rooms but also a separate children's room, complete with comics. Beers sold were Chesters' Bitter, which was below average and also good condition mild (which had to be asked for as there was no pump-clip advertising it).

Moving down to the FIR TREE (Tetley Mild and Bitter, Ind Coope Burton Ale), we found a comfortable seat on sofas surrounded by a library, standard lamps, reproduction works of art and genteel decor. Although some of us liked this, others felt uncomfortable, saying it was more like a stately home than a pub. What we did agree

on was the quality of the beer - both mild and bitter were good. The Burton Ale was not on at the time as it is only a slow seller and landlord John Sullivan is trying to get it supplied in small 9-gallon containers, rather than the 18's currently in use.

Next came the FOLDSWORTH HOTEL, a pleasant pub selling Chesters' Mild and Bitter, and which looked to have been recently decorated. It was interesting to note that one of the side rooms had no juke-box speakers and so was music free, a feature it would be nice to see in more pubs. Although the bitter was no more than average, the mild was very good. Indeed it's worth noting that Chesters' beers have in no way suffered from being brewed in Sheffield, in fact the mild seems to have improved!

Around the corner now to the THATCHED TAVERN on Stanhope St. Until quite recently, this pub sold only keg beers but now sells Tetley mild and bitter on handpump. This excellent pub is a classic multi-roomed local, cosy with a friendly atmosphere and lively conversation. A photograph in the vault shows that it really was a thatched tavern at one time. The beer matched the pub with both rating good.

The UNION on Broadstone Rd (Robinsons Best Mild & Best Bitter) was a disappointment to those who remembered the 'old style' Union. Those opposed to the refurbishment of the pub several years ago criticised the design at the time, and now looking at the 'modernisation' those criticisms were justified. The style we have come to refer to as 'Robinsonisation' is evident there is no real character in the decor of the pub any more, indeed it fits in well with the identikit design of many Robinsons houses. The beers matched the decor, neither being thought better than average.

The GREY HORSE next door (Boddingtons Mild & Bitter) has a very imposing exterior dating from 1909. Although at one time it was multi-roomed the pub has been opened out into one huge lounge with a bar in the corner. There is also a large vault at the back. The overall impression was very easy on the eye. The bitter was judged to be good but the mild was no better than average, the bar staff were quite happy to change it for us but explained that the pub in fact sold very little mild.

Further down was the GEORGE & DRAGON, another Boddies pub with mild and bitter on handpump. This is a large, rambling and obviously very popular pub. It did seem rather dark and gloomy inside but whether this was due to dark decor or bad lighting, we couldn't tell. No doubts about the beer though with both mild and bitter rating from above average to good.

We had visited several old pubs with modern interiors over the evening but the next pub was quite the reverse. The HINDS HEAD on Manchester

ESTD  1867
BURTONWOOD
BREWERY



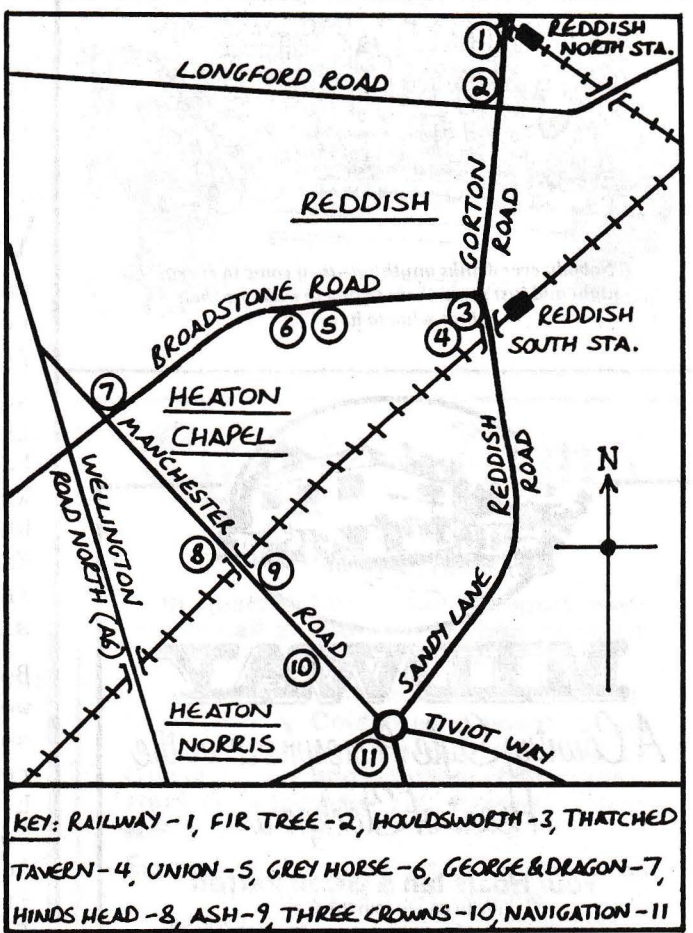
**A FAMILY TRADITION
 OF FINE BREWING**

Road is a new pub built by Whitbread and only opened about 18 months ago. The pseudo-Victorian decor is quite effective with dried flowers, old prints, wooden beams and fireplaces. There is also a restaurant area at one end of the pub. As well as Chesters' mild an bitter, Castle Eden Ale is also available which we all chose and found it was in good condition.

Crossing the railway bridge we came to the ASH, a large Wilsons pub which is impressive outside, but inside has been altered over the years and gave a general impression of red plush seating and dim red lights - the best feature, an unusual hexagonal handpump stand, was unfortunately removed a couple of years ago. The Wilsons bitter was considered above average while opinions were divided on the mild. Nobody tried the Websters bitter.

The THREE CROWNS (Boddingtons mild and bitter) could be described as a 'bland 1960s' pub with a large noisy disco lounge (on Fridays anyway) and a more basic vault. Very much a locals pub with a down to earth atmosphere. Both mild and bitter were above average though.

We finished the night at the NAVIGATION. This pub has been virtually rebuilt but the interior still has a good traditional feel. Again there were no takers for the Websters bitter but the Wilsons mild and bitter were both judged above average. As usual the views in the article are simply



what we found on the night and are not intended to be a once and for all judgement.

THE BEERHOUSE

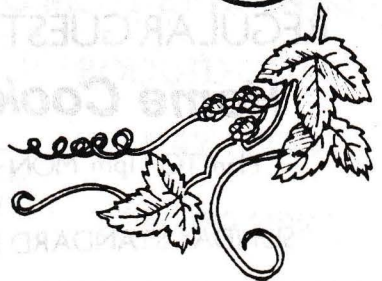
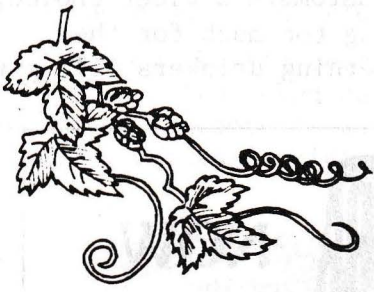
ANGEL ST., off ROCHDALE RD., M/CR

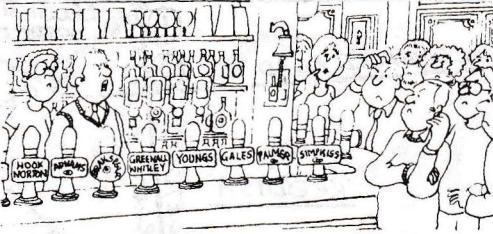
**Theakstons, Holts, Matthew
Brown & Linfit Beers**

**Thatchers Traditional Cider
Hot and Cold Food**

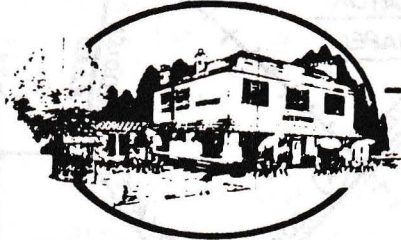
MON.-SAT. 11.30 - 11.

SUN. 12.-3., 7.-10.30





"Nobody ever drinks anything—they come in every night and just stand there trying to make up their minds what to have!"



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SUNDAY STANDARD HOURS

PREMIUM BEER PREMIUM PRICES

WHITBREADS have been mentioned in these pages before as one of the worst culprits among the major brewers when it comes to charging over the top prices, remember the storm over the pricing policy at the Hinds Head when it first opened?

Now, yet another example of blatant overpricing by this company has come to our attention. Two premium beers are currently being introduced into local Whitbread pubs: One is Castle Eden Ale, brewed by Whitbread themselves at Hartlepool, the other being Marstons Pedigree, the Burton-on-Trent based independent, in which Whitbread nevertheless has a sizeable stake.

Both beers have a similar gravity, Castle Eden weighing in at OG 1040°, Pedigree 1043°. Castle Eden sells for 92 - 99p a pint, not cheap but not unreasonable for a beer of this strength from a major brewer. The Pedigree however is anything from £1.02 to £1.04, and as this is a beer which is available locally in the free trade and Marstons tied houses, it's easy to make a few comparisons. Just look at the following examples:

PUB	OWNER	PEDIGREE PER PINT
Marble Arch, M/cr	Freehouse	95p
Station, Didsbury	Marstons	96p
Royal Oak, Didsbury	Marstons	98p
Woolpack, Stockport	Freehouse	99p
Olde Vic, Stockport	Freehouse	100p
Crown & Anchor, Manchester	Whitbread	102p
Red Lion, Gatley	Whitbread	107p
Heald Green Hotel	Whitbread	116p

After allowing for wastage, this represents a mark up of from 44% to 52% in Marston's and freehouses, and 55% to 74% in Whitbread pubs. These figures are based on the wholesale price from a local firm supplying the free trade. As Marstons and Whitbread obtain their supplies direct from the brewery, the mark up for their pubs will be even greater than estimated.

Whilst it is always good to see a big brewer making an attempt to offer their customers a wider choice, Whitbread are simply charging too much for the privilege and we trust discerning drinkers will give this rip-off a wide berth.

JOIN  NOW

OPEN ALL HOURS

AS a service to our readers we are listing the opening hours of all the Stockport and South Manchester pubs which currently feature in the national Good Beer Guide. Please note though that all of the hours may change, particularly with the approach of the summer months. First, South Manchester:

- ARDWICK: Seven Stars: 12-3.30; 5.30-11 Mon-Sat. 12-3; 7-10.30 Sun.
- BRADFORD: Duke of Edinburgh: 12-3; 7-11 Mon-Sat. 12-3; 7-10.30 Sun.
- BURNAGE: Sun in September; 11.30-3; 5.30-11 Mon-Thu. 11.30-4; 5.30-11 Fri. 11.3-4; 7-11 Sat. 12-3; 7-10.30 Sun.
- DIDSBURY: Crown: 11-11 Mon-Sat; 12-3; 7-10.30 Sun. Station: 11-11 Mon-Sat; 12-3; 7-10.30 Sun
- FAIRFIELD: Railway: 11.30-11 Mon-Sat. 12-3; 7-10.30 Sun.
- GORTON: Hare & Hounds: 11-11 Mon-Fri; 12-11 Sat. 12-3; 7-10.30 Sun. Waggon & Horses: 11-11 Mon-Sat. 12-3; 7-10.30 Sun.
- MOSS NOOK: Tatton Arms: 11.30-3; 5-11 Mon-Fri. 11.30-3; 5.30-11 Sat. 12-3; 7-10.30 Sun.
- RINGWAY: Romper: 11-11 Mon-Fri. 11.30-3; 5.30-11 Sat. 12-3; 7-10.30 Sun.

Next month we hope to feature the current hours of the current Stockport Good Beer Guide entries.



CAMRA SHOP

IF YOU didn't manage to get to the Stockport Beer Festival, here is your chance to purchase a guide for your holiday or a book to read on the beach:

- 1989 Good Beer Guide.....£5.95
 - Good Cider Guide.....£4.95
 - Cheshire Beer Guide.....£2.25
 - Cumbria Beer Guide.....£1.75
 - Vintage Pubs & Real Ale in Manchester...£2.50
 - New Beer Guide (a guide to new breweries) £3.95
 - Pubs for Families.....£4.95
 - Beer, Bed & Breakfast.....£5.95
 - Great British Beer Book.....£5.95
 - Dictionary of Beer.....£2.95
 - "Two Beers, My Friend Will Pay"(humour).£2.95
 - Stockport Comprehensive Guide.....10p (+SAE Central & South Manchester Comprehensive Guide.....10p (+SAE
- Send a cheque payable to 'CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester' to the Treasurer, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport.

FROM SKYE TO STAR

OPENING TIMES would like to welcome new licensees Christine and John McIntosh to the Star on Hyde Road, Ardwick. Originally from the Isle of Skye, although more recently from Edinburgh, this is their first pub and we wish them well.

They say that the pub will be redecorated shortly (the new seats have already been ordered) and soon after they hope to introduce food.

The only real ale currently available is Banks' Bitter, although if mild sale spick up, it too will be converted to cask.

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. I am/ We are over 18 years of age [AGE.....] *

NAME(S) DATE

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

SIGNATURE TELEPHONE NUMBER(S)

I/We enclose remittance for individual/joint membership for one year: **U.K. £9** **Overseas £12**

I/We would like to receive further information about CAMRA

* Knowledge of the average age of our members would be helpful. The information need only be given if you wish ALL MEMBERS MUST BE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE.

Please send your remittance (payable to CAMRA Limited) with this application form to:

T.CLARKE, FLAT 2, 2 ERRWOOD ROAD, LEVENSHULME, MANCHESTER M19 2PA

NEW PLOUGH

THE Plough in Heaton Moor reopened just before Easter after a major refurbishment completed in the remarkably quick time of 6 weeks. Peter Edwardson has been to give it the once over...

"The bar has been moved and the area of the pub doubled by extending it into a passageway at the side and a former stable yard at the rear. It's a one bar pub (as it was before) but there are three distinct drinking areas around the bar plus a large new lounge at the back. There's plenty of comfortable seating and none of the dreaded raised seating areas. Tetleys usually set a high standard in renovations and the Plough is no exception, with the decor in a tasteful Victorian style making good use of wood panelling, although some (not me) may find it a little dark. Particularly impressive and authentic is the new window at the front which duplicates the leaded stained glass of its neighbours.

Tetley Bitter (90) and Jennings Bitter (91) are available on handpump as before and have been joined by the powerful and distinctive Ind Coope Burton Ale (107). This range should certainly put more pressure on the trade of Greenall's keg-only Elizabethan across the road.

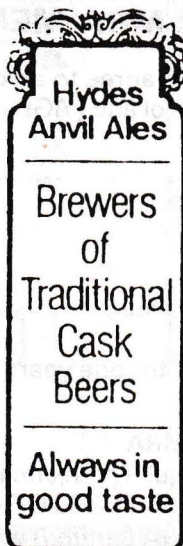
Hot and cold food is available lunchtimes and early evenings - however I found the selection ordinary and the main meals rather pricey at £2.95. It's also less than ideal to have the toilet entrance between the main food counter and the salad bar! Talking of toilets, it's disappointing how so often the pub designers spoil the effect of an impressive mock-Victorian interior with a cramped and functional modern Gents. Why not make the effect complete by going for polished marble and ornamental tiling?"



The Nursery Inn

GREEN LANE, HEATON NORRIS
STOCKPORT

- Traditionally Brewed Hyde's Anvil Ales
- Good Home Cooked Food Served Daily
- We now cater Mon-Fri for families in our upstairs Dining Room which is also available for functions.
- Bowling Parties Catered for - Details on request.



DONE TO A TURN

ON March 16th Sam Smiths formally opened the refurbished Queens Head (Turners Vaults) on Stockport's Underbank, although trading recommenced a week prior to that date. Local CAMRA Press Officer Paul Braidley was invited along and here gives us his impressions of the 'new' pub...

"Estimated to take 5 months, the work on the Queens Head ended up taking 14 as Sam Smiths and their architects found the old pub literally falling down around their ears. Indeed, as previously reported in OT, the work eventually involved the complete demolition of the rear of the pub and the gutting of the main building.

It is perhaps the extent of the work involved which makes the restoration of this fine old pub all the more remarkable, at a casual glance the main change, apart from one or two minor and sensible modifications, appears to be simply a coat of paint. In fact there has been much more done than this - the central part of the old corridor has been brought into the vault as a drinking area, the bar has been shortened at both ends to make room for seating in the window and to provide better access to the rest of the pub. The glazed roof of the lounge and 'horse box' snug, previously felted over has been restored along with the unique spirit taps now taking pride of place on the new, solid mahogany bar. The back lounge is perhaps better than it has ever been and is now a superb example of restrained Victoriana.

The famous 'Compacto', the smallest gents in the country, has been retained, although there are now more modern toilet facilities upstairs.

Two cask beers are on sale, Old Brewery Bitter at 88p and the more powerful Museum Ale although initial sales of this have been slow.

Licensee is June McCabe, whose first pub this is, we wish her well"

Alan and June Preston
invite you to

The Hinds Head opening times

Mon.- Sat.(inc.) 11.30am - 11pm
Sunday 12 noon - 3pm; 7pm - 10.30pm

TRADITIONAL HANDPULLED BEERS

QUALITY LUNCHES AND EVENING
MEALS SERVED SEVEN
DAYS A WEEK



The Hinds Head
Manchester Road
Heaton Chapel
061-431 9301



CAMRA CALLING!

ONCE again we have a varied selection of events this month, starting on 10th with a social at the Duke of Edinburgh, Mill St., Bradford. As with all Monday Socials, this starts at 9.00pm. Later in the week on Thursday, 13th, we have the Branch AGM - will all local CAMRA members please attend this important meeting. If you want to vote, you will of course need your membership card. Venue, Blossoms, Stockport 8pm.

Monday 17th sees a social at the Railway, Pottery Lane, Gorton - just opposite Ashburys station. Please come and support this new freehouse. The very next night, Tuesday 18th, is one of our main events of the year when we present our Pub of the Year award to the Waggon & Horses on Hyde Road, Gorton. This should be a night to remember.

A hectic week is rounded off on 21st with a Stagger, this month round Cheadle. We start at 7.00pm at the White Hart, High St., and will be in the Star at 8.30.

There is a social at Yates Wine Lodge (!) in Stockport Market Place on Monday 24th and on Thursday 27th we present our Pub of the Month award to the Albert, Wilmslow Rd, Withington - another interesting night in prospect there.

On Saturday 29th there is a day trip to Burton-on-Trent which will include visits to the Heritage Brewery and Museum plus the Burton Bridge Brewery.

Last but not least this time, there is a social on 1st May at the Crown, Boat Lane, Northenden. If you want any more information about any of the above events then please 'phone me, Angela Walker on 0663 43769, evenings only.



MANCHESTER MATTERS

FAR and away last month's best news for Manchester drinkers was the re-opening of the Railway on Pottery lane, Gorton, opposite Ashburys station. The official opening was on Easter Saturday, although trading commenced a month or so before then. Capably run by Bob and Madeleine Gregory, the pub is open all permitted hours. It's a one room pub, but with the pool and darts area skilfully sectioned off so as not to interfere with the drinking, and is simply but pleasantly decorated featuring some interesting railway photographs - contrary to initial plans the pub is to retain its original name. Now for the beers - they are Matthew Brown Mild, Theakstons Best Bitter, Thwaites Best Mild and Bitter, and Youngers Scotch Bitter & IPA, all on handpumps: there are also guest beers, usually one at a time but with two - Everards Tiger and Marstons Pedigree - when they opened. Guests planned for the first few weeks included Taylors Landlord, Boddingtons and Batemans Victory Ale.

The pub is only 4 minutes from the city centre, thanks to Ashburys Station in addition Ashton Old Road and the 53 'inner circle' route are also handy.

Elsewhere in the City Centre, "top" Yates on Great Ancoats St has lost its Holts and is now all keg, but Holts have bought (from Whitbread) the Crown & Cushion, whose handpumps should soon be dispensing their excellent mild and bitter. The City, Oldham st., now has handpumped Trophy, not Chesters Bitter.

In Ardwick, the Park Inn, though retaining a handpump, does not sell real ale and seemingly has no intention of so doing. Better Whitbread news though, at the Crescent in Beswick, which has added Handpumped Marstons Pedigree to its full range of Whitbread's Sheffield beers. There's also change at two Wilsons pubs in Openshaw - the Lord Raglan has gained handpumped mild, while at the Grove the three cask beers are now on handpump rather than electric.

In Burnage, the Mauldeth has gained, if that's the word, handpumped Websters Bitter, which has also joined the range at the Nelson in Didsbury, along with Ruddles Bitter on handpump. The Nelson though, has dropped Wilsons Bitter with the alarming consequence that there is now no cask Wilsons beer in Didsbury - further proof if any were needed of the destructive effect of brewery takeovers.



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As reported elsewhere, Marstons Pedigree has now appeared alongside the handpumped Trophy and Chesters Bitter at the newly refurbished Red Lion in Gatley. We are told that it is selling well in comparison to the Whitbread beers.

Work has now started on the Junction in Cheadle Hulme and is expected to take six months to complete. When it reopens it will feature an 80-seater restaurant. Advertisements have already appeared in the trade press for a management couple to run the new venture.

We are pleased to report that, contrary to a previous report in OT, cask Wilsons Mild has not been withdrawn from the Pomona in Gorton and is still available on handpump.

The Midway on Newbridge Lane in Stockport launched its own Social

Club on April 1st. The aim is not only to raise funds for social activities, but also for charity. Yearly membership costs £5 for couples, £3 for single people and £2 for OAPs.

Ruddles County is now on sale at the Tatton Arms in Northenden while the Smithy in Cheadle Hulme is now selling Ruddles Bitter alongside the Websters Bitter and Choice.

Alterations are planned at two South Manchester pubs: the Manor House in Withington is to have a conservatory built on while in Didsbury the Crown is to have a single storey extension to incorporate a new lounge.

It's nice to see a pub actually doing something to positively promote Wilsons beers rather than the ever-present (and ever-bland) Websters. The Blue Bell on Shaw Heath, Stockport is charging only 65p a pint for Wilsons beers on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Well worth supporting.

News reaches us that Boddingtons have moved into Mr Thomas's Chop House in the City Centre. This Good Beer Guide listed luncheon bar until recently sold real ale from Thwaites, Marstons and Whitbread's Sheffield and Cheltenham breweries. To see it reduced to just handpumped Boddingtons and "Oldham" Bitter, along with keg Higsons Mild is very sad.

Manchester lost one of its few lager-free pubs recently when Robinsons' Tatton Arms at Moss Nook acquired keg pumps for Guinness, lager and Wheelwright low alcohol beer. Mind you, the traditional Best Mild and Best Bitter are

still as good as ever, so unless you're driving and don't like soft drinks, there's no real reason to use the new pumps.

At Wilsons' Vulcan in Gorton, we welcome, rather belatedly, new licensees Tony and Christine who took over just before Christmas.

We seem to have given the impression to some of the regulars that both the mild and bitter in the Stockport Arms Stockport are keg beers. This is not of course the case, the bitter is cask, although served through a fake handpump.

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