

STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA

OPENING TIMES

CAMRA
FREE

No 75

JULY 1990

INDEPENDENT'S DAY

BACK Britain's Independent Brewers!, that is the message from CAMRA as it celebrates Britain's very own "Independent's Day" in July.

Most of Britain's beer is sold by the big brewers, created by decades of takeovers and mergers. They have expended by taking over their rivals and tying up pubs with tempting deals - not by being cheaper, better or innovative. The Independent brewers may only sell a fifth of our beer, but it is a fifth that matters more than most of the rest. That's why CAMRA is saying - Support Your Independent Breweries!

What do the Independent Breweries offer the customer?

● **GOOD VALUE** - it is competition with the independent breweries which keeps prices in all pubs down. It is not by chance that this area, with many independents, has some of the keenest prices in the country. Have you noticed how the price of a pint of Boddies has gone up since Whitbread moved in?

● **GOOD QUALITY** - it is independent breweries who take real pride in a local product, with local character. Usually "local beers" brewed by the national brewers come from many miles away (like 'Chesters' from Sheffield and 'Wilsons' from Halifax). The national breweries brew average beer that offends few people and excites fewer.

● **REAL VARIETY** - Independent brewers provide the choice of brands that make drinking so interesting. They are keeping different styles of beer alive, such as mild, which the nationals show little interest in promoting. And they innovate, reviving old beer styles and trying new brews (like stouts and porters which were so popular at Stockport Beer Festival). If the Independents go, we'll be left with half a dozen brewers with a scattering of mediocre brands.

CAMRA believes the future of good beer depends on the independents, if nothing else to keep the giants on their toes. But good Independent breweries, with well-loved products, are taken over and closed every year because of the mad economics of the industry.

We seek to promote good beer and good pubs, and that means providing the good breweries too. Join the battle for our Independents. You can help by joining the campaign, hundreds are doing so each month. Look out for the 'Independents' beer mats with the special membership offer - a year's membership for £7 instead of the usual £10. If you picked up this Opening Times in an Independent's pub, they should have some.



THANK YOU

A BIG 'Thank You' to everyone who came to Stockport Beer Festival last month and made the event such a success.

Again attendance far exceeded our expectations - we thought there would be 2500 of you, it turned out to about 3300. Luckily careful beer management by the bar managers meant we had enough beer to last until 10 o'clock on Saturday, although we did run out of programmes - we hope this didn't cause too many problems. Once again there was a great deal of interest in our traditional cider and perry - look out for next month's Opening Times' "Cider Special".

Thanks also to the committee at the Masonic Hall - we know some of the members had doubts about the festival and it's a tribute to you, our customers that it was such a happy, trouble-free event.

You were also a generous lot - the people from Christie Hospital were delighted to raise £432, much more than they expected.

All being well we'll be back next year - see you then!

**Bob, Caz and Betty
Welcome You To**


**The Plough
Shaw Heath**

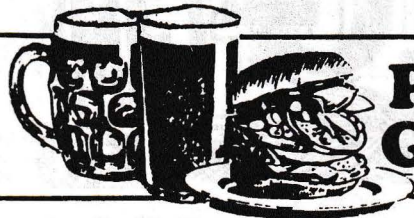
— Fine Ales —

Good Home-Cooked

— Meals —

*** BY GRAHAM THE CHEF ***

 **480 3833**



PUB GRUB

BY IAN SAUNDERS

AFTER a long absence from Opening Times, Pub Grub returns this month with a visit to Didsbury and Ye Olde Cock on Wilmslow Road.

This pub was refurbished a few years ago in the up-market style common to other Whitbread pubs in the area - subdued lighting and the 'library effect' with plenty of books on shelves. It is open all day and in the evenings is usually quite full, designed as it is to attract the younger clientele. Unusually for the area, lunchtime food is provided 7 days a week.

The menu consists of sandwiches at £1.10, salads for £2.30 and hot food ranging from Jumbo Sausage at £1.80 up to Roast Beef or Lamb at £3.10. I went for the Roast Beef which was served with carrots, peas, cabbage, gravy and a choice of roast potatoes or chips. This was very good and there was certainly a generous helping of beef. The high turnover of chips meant that some portions (including mine) were slightly underdone. One of my friends tried the chicken curry which with half rice/half chips and veg turned out to be very good value. The third member of the party had a tuna fish salad with a barm cake and again this seemed reasonable value for the amount served up. For those still hungry, sweets such as Black Forest Gateau were available for around the £1 mark.

These days the Olde Cock features a wide range of real ales from under the Whitbread umbrella in the form of Chesters Bitter, Boddingtons Bitter, Bentleys Yorkshire Bitter, Marstons Pedigree and the occasional Whitbread 'guest' ale. To sum up, standard, well presented pub grub in reasonable surroundings and prices that compare favourably with other pubs in the area.

The Robin Hood

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WEST COAST NEWS

THE West Coast Brewery of Chorlton-on-Medlock could be destined for national fame, as its Sierra Nevada Pale Ale is one of the finalists in CAMRA's "Champion Beer of Britain" contest.

Entered in the "New Breweries" class on the strength of write-in votes from CAMRA members nationwide, Brendan Dobbin's much-loved "Sierra" enters the lists with such colorfully named brews as Orkney Skullsplitter and Hop Back Summer Lightning. The class winner will go on to fight out the supreme championship with the winners of the 5 other categories in the contest. The other Greater Manchester beers in contention are Holts Bitter (in the 'standard bitter' class) and Robinsons Old Tom ('strong ale'), while other contenders of local interest include Banks's Mild and Thwaites Best Mild in the mild class, Marstons Pedigree and Taylors Landlord ('best bitter'), and Moorhouses Pendle Witches Brew ('special bitter'). Judging takes place on the afternoon of Tuesday 7th August, as part of the opening ceremony of CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival in Brighton.

Opening Times readers visiting the Wigan Pier tourist complex will also now be able to sample West Coast beers in the Orwell pub that forms part of the site. The canalside pub, situated in a converted warehouse, will be taking Dobbin's Best Bitter regularly, accompanied by an alternation of Sierra Nevada Pale Ale and Extra Special Bitter.

PUB GRUB PLUS

Landlord John Newport at Stockport's Egerton Arms, has added a further choice to his range of Hot Roast Sandwiches. The latest addition is Turkey, and very nice it is too, and good value at £1.09. John also tells us that fears of Mad Cow disease do not appear to have affected sales of the Roast Beef Butties, which are still selling well!

West Coast Brewing Company Ltd.

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JULY

| | | | | | |
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| 1 | 8 | 15 | 22 | 29 | ... |
| 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 | 30 | ... |
| 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 | 31 | ... |
| 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 | ... | ... |
| 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 | ... | ... |
| 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 | ... | ... |
| 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 | ... | ... |

PUB OF THE MONTH

JULY'S "Pub of the Month" goes to the **Britannia**, Rowsley Street, Beswick. Now, you don't need too good a memory to recall the last time the "Brit" won this coveted award, under previous licensee Linda Thomas. It was April 1988 - so why have we come back so soon? Well, the pub's just the same hearty local it was before, with a good line in banter and leg-pulling both sides of the bar (on hearing of the award, landlord Lance Turner said "Be sure to mention Len the barman - mind you I might have sacked him by then"). And the beer's still just as good.

The new factor that really stands out, though, is that on moving in last November, Lance and Bev decided to go for all-day opening - noon till eleven each day - in a pub that previously hadn't opened till seven in the evening. Though doubted by many, their enterprise has brought a significant increase in trade, and it's good to see such success attend a reform for which CAMRA campaigned for years.

Just off Ashton New Road, the Britannia is a Lees pub with Mild and Bitter on handpumps. Delightfully old-fashioned in style, it consists of a small L-shaped vault and a larger but still cosy lounge. Often busy, both rooms will no doubt be particularly so on the presentation evening, Thursday July 26th, when all Opening Times readers will be made very welcome.

To get there, catch any Ashton New Road bus (216, 231, 236, 237) from Piccadilly Bus Station, and alight as soon as you see Wall-work's Volvo showroom. The Mosley pub (keg Whitbread) marks the corner of Rowsley Street.

ROADS TO RUIN

MANY good pubs have been lost to road schemes over the last few years - Manchester Inner Relief Route; Regent Road, Salford; M66 extension; various schemes in Wigan and Bolton; not to mention the pubs along Hyde Road which have been under threat for the last decade. There are 11 different highway authorities in Greater Manchester, all of them, at this moment, with schemes on the drawing board and for all we know with routes passing through some great pubs. In addition, during the next two years, the Department of Transport is preparing a scheme for a new motorway connecting the M62 at Eccles with the M6 at Knutsford and an eight mile dual carriageway linking Ringway with the A6 at Hazel Grove (Tatton Arms, Moss Nook look out)

If any pubs are in the way of these road schemes being designed at the moment, their closure and demolition is not inevitable and you do not have to be "against progress" to campaign or their retention. Providing the public (that is us) are prepared to make a move to protect pubs then the engineers and planners are often ready to respond with alternative schemes. After all, many of them enjoy the pubs as much as we do but as professionals they have to put forward the most efficient and cost effective scheme for consideration, regardless of what buildings happen to be in the way.

The Department of Transport Schemes will not be available for public consultation until 1991 but other local schemes are coming up all the time. To find out about them it is best to regularly check the public notices in your local paper. Also make sure your local Civic Society/amenity group is kept in the picture. If we can take on Metrolink and the Passenger Transport authority and save the Castle & Falcon and Coach & Horses, we can save other pubs too.

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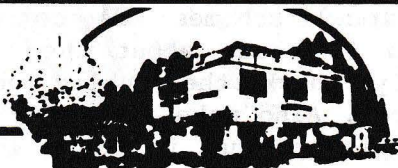
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BEER BOOKSHELF

AT THE recent Stockport Beer Festival, the biggest selling book by quite a margin was **Derbyshire Ale**, the CAMRA guide to Derbyshire. As you flick through, it is easy to see why as it is packed with information about the area itself, as well as its pubs and their beer.

The pub descriptions are very comprehensive, many with a wealth of historic data on the pubs and their surroundings. In addition, each of the towns and villages is given a write-up which I found made me want to go back to places I'd already visited and find places I hadn't. But there's the rub - search as long as you want and you will not find a county map in the entire book. A strange omission this, the first edition of the guide had a very useful map, surely it could have been reproduced this time round.

However, this is really the only criticism of **Derbyshire Ale**. With articles on Derbyshire's brewing past plus traditions like Wells Dressing and Shrovetide Football, there is something for everyone. I particularly liked the list of personalities, both past and present, connected with Derbyshire and its pubs. Certainly, at £2.95 this guide is worth buying just for the read, even if you never intend straying across the border to visit the pubs. After you've read **Derbyshire Ale**, however, I suspect you will be tempted to make the journey (road atlas at the ready!).

PERHAPS someone can tell why, when CAMRA produces a guide, it can take them two attempts to get it right. **The Best Pubs for Families** is certainly a case in point. The first edition, produced a couple of years ago, was a substantial affair but the second, which has just been published, is a vast improvement even down to the paper and printing.

The number of entries has gone up to 450 with an even spread across the country. Whatever your families needs, you will find a pub in this guide: pubs with adventure playgrounds, pubs with special childrens meals, pubs with purpose built children's rooms, but most of all, pubs with a decent pint of beer. As usual with the recent guides from Alma Books (CAMRA's publishing arm) the descriptions of the pubs are very comprehensive, with full details, not only of the pubs and their facilities, but also of the local attractions for families.

The Best Pubs for Families can certainly be recommended as value for money, at £4.95 from all good bookshops you can't really go wrong.

JOIN  NOW

HOLTS WRECK PUB OF THE MONTH

THE Pub of the Month for July was originally chosen as the Railway, on Manshaw Road in Openshaw. Unfortunately, the brewers, Holts, have an appalling sense of timing, and the licensees were told to leave by 25th June, to make way for a manager. The award would have been a richly deserved pat on the back for Eric and Sylvia, who have improved the pub immeasurably in their 3½ years, increasing the barrelage tenfold and bringing the regulars back in. It remains to be seen whether the manager will be able to show the commitment and care for the pub, the beer and the locals that have been lost by Holt's policy.

We wish the Sandifords well in their new pub and by the time you read this, we expect to have presented them with a CAMRA mirror as a mark of our appreciation.

The new manager is thought to be the former custodian of the Winston, on Churchill Way, Salford. He arrives with our best wishes; let's hope he can rise to the challenge, as he has a hard act to follow.

And Pub of the Month? Luckily, there was a worthy winner waiting in the wings - as you will see from page 3, the award has gone to the excellent Britannia in Beswick.

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| Friday 10th | 5.30 - 11.00 |
| Saturday 11th | 11.00 - 11.00 |

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THE sad tale of the takeover and closure of Liverpool's last remaining brewery, Higsons, has been well documented in these pages. It is therefore welcome news that brewing is to recommence on the site.

The brewery has been bought by a new independent company, GB (Breweries) Ltd. Little is known about the company, although there has been speculation that a Hull-based businessman is behind the venture. The brewery will initially concentrate on the supermarket 'own label' business but the hope is to eventually produce beers for the guest beer market.

The Merseyside area is also losing another brewery, but this time in happier circumstances. The small independent Oak Brewery of Ellesmere Port is moving to the old Phoenix Brewery at Heywood. The move has been prompted by an urgent need to expand production, such is the demand for its beers.

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- 'phone Derek "The Doc" Hayward-Shott or Andrew "Yogi" Baron at PWD to ARRANGE YOUR ESTIMATE AND VOUCHER.

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STAGGER

BY: ROBIN WIGNALL

A Friday in May found a group of us gathered early in the **Golden Hind** at Lisburne Lane/Marple Road corner. This Grand Metropolitan house was previously Drakes, and before that the Golden Hind! The latest refurbishment leaves an open plan lounge with more space now that vast numbers of potted palms have been removed. There is also a vault with darts and pool - good to see the vault retained in the refurbishment. Wilsons Bitter rated average and better, though £1 a pint was a little expensive, even allowing for transport from Halifax. We thought that the Ruddles Best Bitter was better than average and none of us sampled either the Websters National Bitter or Choice. Future visitors should beware the wobbly table-tops in the lounge.

The **Strawberry Gardens** on Offerton Lane retains many qualities of a classic pub. Traditional small rooms at the front of the pub are rich with wood and ornate ceilings, enhanced by local photographs. The rear of the pub has

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been opened out, and leads into a beer garden. The drinker of several pints can be assured that there really is a pink elephant in the beer garden. Wilsons Mild (98p) was well above average, as was the Ruddles Best Bitter. Again Websters Bitter went untried.

A walk to the **Fingerpost** brought us to a large Robinsons house. The former owners, Bell & Co were taken over by Robinsons in 1949 and their Hempshaw Brook Brewery closed. What's new in brewing? The Fingerpost is a local social centre for Offerton. It is home to Offerton Cricket Club and is adorned with photographs of local events and personalities. A fine multi-roomed pub, it has a vault with darts and pool and a pleasant snug at the rear. Although the music was rather obtrusive this did not spoil our enjoyment of the realistically priced Best Mild (89p) and Best Bitter (93p). There is also a handpump for Old Tom, although this was not available on our visit.

Round the corner in Hempshaw Lane is another Grand Met pub, the **White House**. This gives the impression of being two pubs. A large, open-plan lounge had noisy music and left some of our group unimpressed. Much more welcoming was the pleasant vault. This also seems to serve as a social centre and is home for a local soccer team. Darts and Crib are also important, as indicated by numerous trophies. The beer though, Wilsons Mild and Bitter, was thought no more than average.

On to the Boddington PubCo's **Gardeners Arms** where we found a busy local and a welcoming, cheerful landlady. The open-plan lounge has three obvious areas, and a large vault has pool and darts. Boddingtons Bitter is served on electric pumps, and there is a handpump in the vault. A welcome surprise was to find cask conditioned Oldham Brewery Mild and OB Bitter, also on electric pump. The Boddingtons Bitter was certainly above average, the Oldham Bitter better still and the OB Mild very good indeed - the best mild we had tried so far. It is a pity that much of the Oldham Mild in the area is keg, the Gardeners Arms shows that the real thing can be kept well and will sell.

Along Hall Street, the **Emigration** was only the second Robinsons house of the evening. It sports a fine pictorial sign - does anyone know if the Emigration and its sign have a historical significance (letters to address on back page - ed.). The interior has been opened out in typical Robinsons fashion. The pub was very busy by the time we arrived and was another obvious social centre. Robinsons Best Mild and Best Bitter were served by electric pumps, whilst Old Tom was available on handpump. Opinions varied about the Best Mild, although some thought it good, and the Best Bitter was well above average. The Old Tom was also good.

Our last call of the night was almost across the road to Greenalls' **Victoria**. This was formerly a Wilsons house, as shown by the engraved stone outside the pub. It changed hands in a pub swap in the 1970's. There is a large vault with dartboard. The lounge has been opened out from a former multi-room format but is a good refurbishment. The landlord recently joined CAMRA, and certainly backs this with both a good selection and good quality beer. The Davenport's Bitter was unfortunately unavailable, however the Greenalls Mild and Bitter were both good and the Thomas Greenalls Original better still, coming in as the best beer of the night. All in all an ideal point to finish the Stagger.

It was good to find that most of the Offerton pubs were true locals, thriving on local trade and serving as centres for the local community. As ever, the article simply reflects what we found on the night and is not meant to be a definitive judgement on either the pubs or the beers. Give them a try and form your own opinion - there is certainly some decent beer in pubs worth visiting.

OFFERTON

CHURCHGATE WAY
WATERLOO ROAD
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NEW ZEALAND AVENUE
HALL STREET
TURNBROFT LANE
HEMPSHAW
BANKS LANE
DIALSTONE LANE
NANGREAVE ROAD
HILLCREST ROAD
MARPLE ROAD
LISBOURNE LANE

KEY: 1 - GOLDEN HIND, 2 - STRAWBERRY GARDENS, 3 - FINGERPOST, 4 - WHITE HOUSE, 5 - GARDENERS ARMS, 6 - EMIGRATION, 7 - VICTORIA

CAMRA SHOP

WERE you unfortunate enough to miss the Beer Festival? Well, here is your chance as an Opening Times reader to obtain to obtain the books and products that were on sale there, many at a specially discounted price (items marked *). All prices include p&p.

| | |
|--|--------|
| 1990 Good Beer Guide | £6.95 |
| 1990 Good Cider Guide | £5.95 |
| 1990 Best Pubs for Families | £4.95 |
| Good Pub Food Guide | £4.95* |
| Best Pubs in London | £4.95 |
| Best Pubs in Lakeland | £3.95 |
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| Best Pubs in North Wales | £4.95 |
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| Best Pubs in Devon & Cornwall | £4.95 |
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| Cooking with Beer | £2.95* |
| Dictionary of Beer | £2.95 |
| Ale of 2 Cities (Manchester & Salford) | £2.95 |
| 1990 Derbyshire Guide | £2.95 |
| 1990 Merseyside Guide | £1.75 |
| CAMRA Mirror | £16.00 |
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TWO NAVVIES WALK

BY MARTIN SELLERS

THE 'Two Navvies Walk' is a joint promotion by the licensees of the Navigation at Whaley Bridge and the not too far distant pub of the same name at Buxworth. A combination of good beer, good food and a night out in the country is always a tempting prospect so a fine June evening saw a large party on the 5.17pm train to Buxton, anticipating an interesting night out.

On arrival at Whaley Bridge turn left out of the station yard and the Navigation is about 50 yards on the right, set back from the main road on Johnson Street. When we arrived it was shut, despite the publicity leaflet saying it opened all day on Saturday (we later learned that this was the result of a disturbance in the pub a couple of weeks previously). To our surprise all the other pubs in the town centre were also closed - surprising, to say the least, in a town with more than its share of tourists and visitors. We therefore set off to Buxworth unrefreshed. Readers intending to try this walk might therefore be better off catching a later train (say the 6.17 from Stockport).

The walk itself is along the Peak Forest Canal towpath and takes a leisurely 20 minutes. The start is at the Whaley Basin, almost next door to the Navigation. It's then a simple matter of following the towpath although make sure you follow the right-hand fork when the canal splits (the Bugsworth Arm) or you'll end up in Marple! The construction of the Whaley Bridge By-pass has enormously improved the environment locally - the first part of the walk used to run parallel with the busy A6, the diversion of the traffic, however, gives the whole walk an air of almost timeless calm.

The Bugsworth Basin is a fascinating piece

of industrial history and is currently being restored by the Inland Waterways Protection Society to as near as possible its appearance on closure in the 1920's. The Navigation is at the end of the complex and is a stone-built, traditional pub with a separate vault and restaurant. The raised section of the pub, nearest the road, was until recent years a shop, and this has been skilfully incorporated into the main building - the stone-flagged floors in this part of the pub are particularly attractive

The two cask beers available are Wilsons Bitter and Websters Bitter. Both were well kept, particularly the Wilsons. Space for a guest beer, here, surely? The landlord of the Navigation is Eddie Cleworth who made us very welcome and kept us guessing as to the purpose of an antique piece of brassware (it's £1 to charity if you can't guess - only one person ever has!).

The Navigation also does a good line in food which you can eat either at your table or in the restaurant. This is all home-made, comes in generous portions and is sensibly priced. The Steak pie (£3) and the Gammon (£4) are especially recommended.

On the way back, just as you get to the turning, look out for the Dog & Partridge in Bridgemont. Despite its Wilsons signing, this appears to be a Control Securities pub, and sells both Tetley Bitter and Burton Ale. The latter at 94p a pint was excellent value.

Back at Whaley Bridge, the Navigation had opened its doors: it is a smallish one-room Boddington PubCo house which on our visit was dominated by a TV and the World Cup. Some of our party stayed inside to watch whilst others sought refuge in the outdoor drinking area at the back of the pub. As in all the pubs visited, the beer here was pretty good.

Two other pubs we called at are certainly worth a visit: Marstons Shepherds Arms (up the main street then take the left-hand fork), a Good Beer Guide regular; and the Jodrell Arms, next to the station. A Wilsons house with Taylors Landlord as a guest beer - on our trip the beer of the night.

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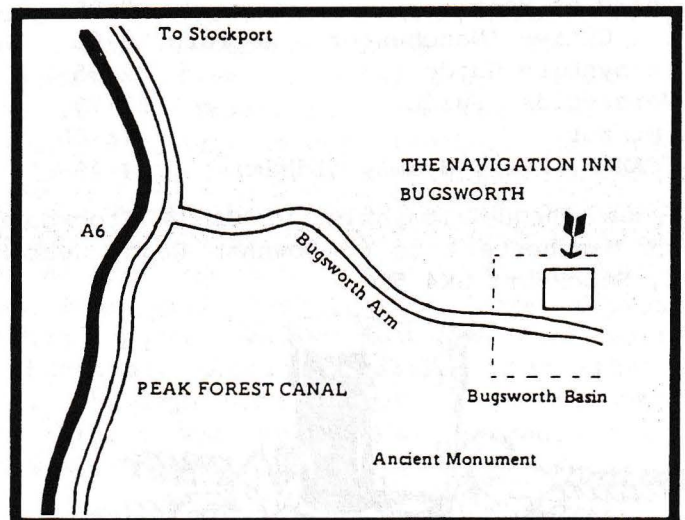
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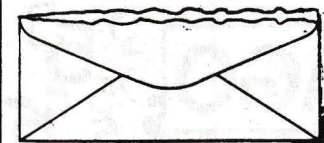
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LETTERS

From: George Symes:

Why is it that Holts, brewers of some of the best beer in the area, are so callous and insensitive when it comes to dealing with people? I write as someone who has been drinking in the Railway, Manshaw Road in Openshaw, on and off for 18 years. Time was when the pub was disgusting, with sticky carpets, poor beer and a very rough reputation. In recent years, Eric and Sylvia Sandiford have improved the pub enormously. It has lost none of its old character, but is now a clean and decent boozier, catering admirably for the local residents. Eric and Sylvia have invested a lot of time and care in improving the atmosphere in the pub, and evidently this is to the liking of the regulars, as the turnover has increased from one barrel a week to ten. They even sell up to two barrels of mild a week.

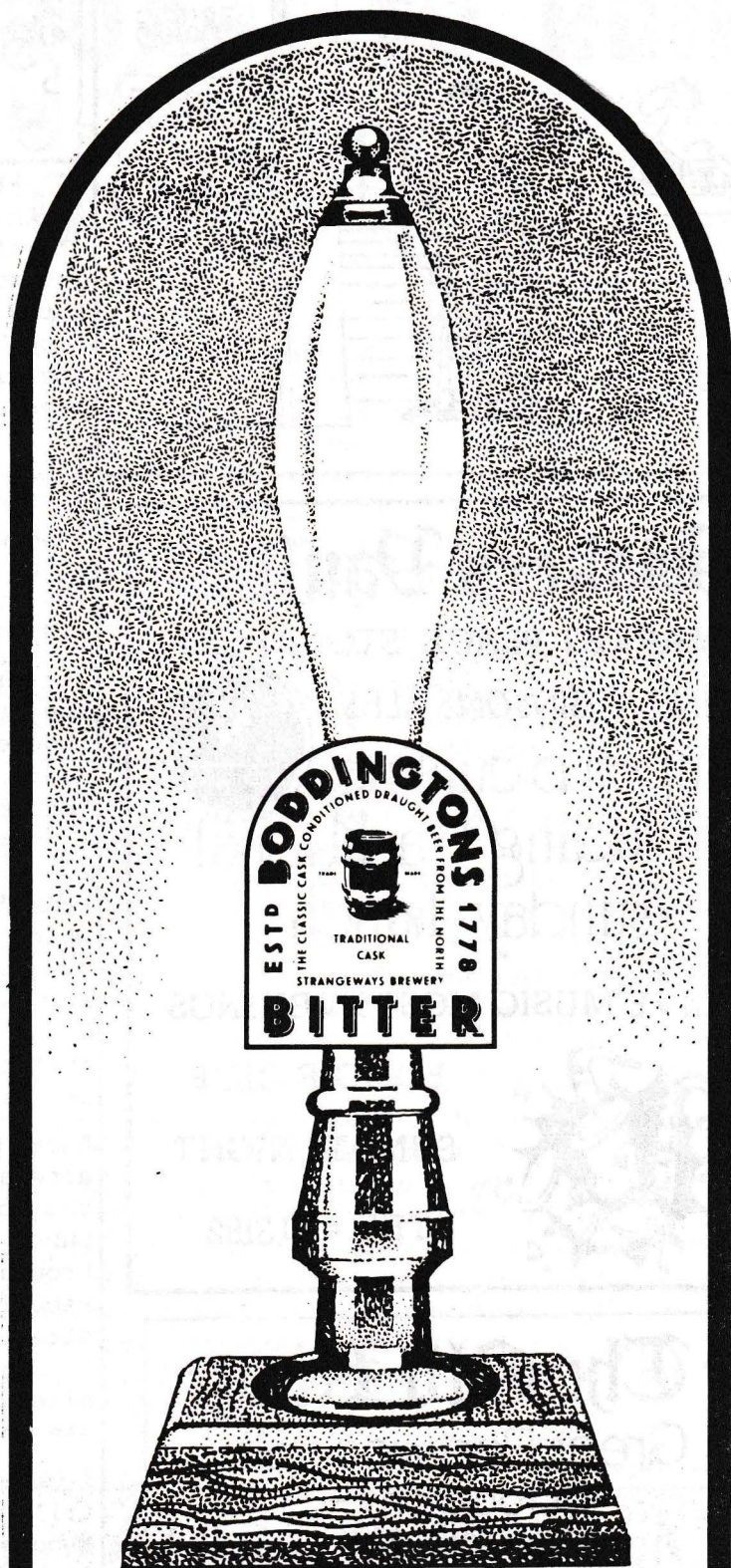
Now Holts have decided they want a bigger slice of the cake, so the licensees have been given notice and a manager is to be installed. It isn't his fault, and I wish him well, but surely Holts are treating loyal and keen licensees in an appallingly shabby way? The term shabby comes to mind also when we see photographs of the degrading living conditions the Sandifords have had to endure, with leaking roof, collapsing ceilings and even an entire window falling in!

Hot on the heels of the news that Holts are to ruin, for no sensible reason, the splendid interior of the Seven Stars, this news makes me think that there is a lot more to being a good brewer than brewing good beer. Few pub managers have the commitment to a pub and its regulars to produce an excellent pub. Eric and Sylvia had that commitment; now it will be lost, to Openshaw and to Holts.

CHARITY CORNER

If you want to help raise money for a worthy cause - Stepping Hill Hospital Intensive Care Unit - and have fun at the same time then you will be interested in a Fun Drive/Treasure Hunt on Sunday 22nd July.

The start is at the George & Dragon, London Road, Hazel Grove at 11am and Sunday Lunch can be had at the halfway stage, the Navigation at Buxworth (although you should phone to pre-book this on 0663 732072). The entry fee is £5 per car or £3 for motorcycles. For tickets phone Ken on 456 6963.



THE CLASSIC
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MANCHESTER MATTERS

BY RHYS JONES

A SURPRISE Manchester gain for the new guest beer law was the installation of handpumped Holts Bitter in the **Lord Lyon**, Claremont Road, Rusholme. A long standing keg Bass pub, whose then licensee expressed no interest at all in real ale when it was supposedly on offer from Bass a couple of years back, the Lord Lyon would have been nobody's guess for an early 'guest real ale' convert; it's therefore particularly encouraging that in its first few weeks the beer is reported to be selling well and in good condition.

Another real ale gain this month presents a marked contrast. **Courtney & Co** of North Parade (off Deansgate in the cafe bar belt behind Kendals) is owned by Yates's Wine Lodges, and is not unlike some of their more upmarket conversions; for this writer's taste, it achieves style without brashness. There's live entertainment, sometimes from Ged Hope and his Dixie Boys (as heard at Stockport Beer Festival). The beer is Ruddles Bitter and Tetley Bitter on handpumps.

A couple of blocks away, the Waggon & Horses has re-emerged as **Mulligans** - an Irish theme pub, surprisingly well done (it might help to know what FIR and MNA mean before visiting!). The sole real ale is handpumped Ruddles Bitter. To wrap up the upmarket City Centre bars, the **Gemstone** has dropped cask Stones Bitter in favour of handpumped Draught Bass, while **Ed's Cafe Bar** has handpumped Courage Directors (in very good form on a recent visit) in place of the Camerons and Everards beers.

Three more Whitbread pubs are now selling handpumped Boddingtons Bitter - they are the **Park**,

in the angle of Forge Lane and Mill Street in Bradford (a real ale gain, though it did flirt VERY briefly with real Chesters a few years ago), the **Albion** in Openshaw, and the **Waldorf** in the City Centre. However the **Victoria** in West Gorton has gone the other way - the licensee's unflattering and pungently expressed opinion of present day Boddingtons has led to its removal, though a change of licensee may see the decision reversed.

Finally, the **Vale Cottage** in Gorton has gained, if that's the word, handpumped Websters Bitter. The 'handpumped' mild in this pub remains keg. We also reported the other month that the **Peveril of the Peak** in the City Centre was also selling keg mild through a handpump - what we assumed to be a reliable source has turned out not to be and we are happy to confirm that the Pev's mild remains the real thing.

CAMRA CALLING!

Our two extra events this month are both on Sundays. On the 8th we are having a day out on the Settle & Carlisle Railway. The train leaves Stockport at 9.29 and Piccadilly at 9.38. We will be having lunch in Appleby and returning via Preston and Lancaster (those intending to go should therefore buy a Carlisle Saver and not a special DalesRail ticket).

The other Sunday is 29th where we will be having a lunchtime drink in the Kings Arms, Helmshore Walk at noon and the Grafton, Grafton St at 200pm before going to Rusholme for a curry.

This month's branch meeting is on 12th at the Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris from 8.00pm. The Stagger covers Hazel Grove and Great Moor, starting at the Grove, Hazel Grove at 7.00pm or you can join at the Crown, London Road at 8.30. That is on Friday 20th.

Lastly on 3rd August there will be a minibus to East Manchester. For details of this and our Monday Socials, phone Ian on 445 5979.

The Nursery Inn

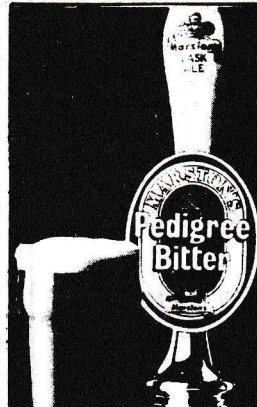
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PUB NEWS



Keith Marshall of Whitbread's **Victoria**, West Gorton, has moved the short distance to take over the same brewery's **Steelworks Tavern** on Gorton Lane. At the Vic, Keith has kept a decent pint in a well-run pub; the Steelworks is a good traditional local so we look forward to similar results there. Keith, who has a low opinion of present-day Boddingtons Bitter, tells us that the Steelworks will continue to be a Boddies-free zone.

Belated greeting to Patrick and Margaret Byrne on taking over the **Bowling Green**, Grafton St, Chorlton-on-Medlock who have moved there from the **Mad Hatter**

as **'Cheekies'**. Drag acts will apparently feature in the entertainment...

Further to last month's report of the much-regretted departure of Ron and Val Fitch from the **Suburban** in Gorton, we are pleased to report that the pub's future does look relatively stable; Ron's associate, Nelson, will be staying in command until the tenancy is finally allocated, and despite the circumstances leading to Ron and Val's departure, the pub remains, at all but the most exceptional times, a good hearty and companionable local.

Congratulations to Andy and Debbie and customers of the **Claremont Hotel** in Moss Side who, at a charity night on 9th June, raised £400 for Craig Delaney, a sufferer from Cerebral Palsy. This, along with £833 raised from a previous event, will, they hope, enable Craig to attend a special school in Somerset. Donations are still being accepted - phone Andy on 226 9823.

A pub which seems to have taken on a new lease of life since the arrival of a new licensee is **Tom Thumb's** on King Street West, Stockport. The lively landlord was featured in the local press after spending a day on the pub roof in a bath of custard to raise money for ITV's Telethon. On the beer front, we are pleased to report that this long-standing keg pub has at last introduced real ale in the shape of John Smiths Bitter.

Contributors to this edition: John Clarke, Rhys Jones, Peter Soane, George Symes, Peter Barnes, Ian Saunders, Paul Braidley, Jim Flynn, Robin Wignall, Peter Edwardson, Martin Sellers, Phil Levison, John Hutchinson.

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in Longsight.

One or two pubs were on the market as we went to press: in Stockport, the **Pack Horse** on Hillgate was going for £168,000 whereas in inner-city Manchester you could pick up the **Steam Engine** in Ardwick for £75,000 or the **King William IV** in Chorlton-on-Medlock for about £120,000. The two Manchester disposals are former Whitbread houses, it will be interesting to see if they thrive in the free trade as several other Big 6 'discards' have done.

We hear that the **Railway** on Great Portwood St, Stockport, is to be revamped and re-emerge

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