



April 1976

# Opening Times

Dirt  
**5P**  
Cheap

Second Edition

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## Branch to run Beer Tent

The South Manchester branch of CAMRA have been asked to run the beer tent at this years Glossop Carnival. The Carnival, which will run for two days, 26th & 27th June is expected to be attended by 6000 people. Hordes of people will be required for dispensing beer, washing glasses, cleaning up and of course drinking. Anyone wishing to help in any way should contact Jack Hopwood 494 9047. No plans have been made yet regarding the range of beers to be sold.

## Chairman's Report

1975 has been a very successful year for CAMRA. We have seen a leap forward in membership, a noticeable increase in the amount of influence wielded by CAMRA and the establishing of CAMRA (Real Ale Investments) as a viable and successful organisation.

South Manchester branch has had an equally active 12 months. Branch meetings have been held every month and continue to be well attended although numbers have decreased slightly. Speakers from a number of breweries have attended, including Tetleys and Bass North West, and have all been well recieved although with disagreement on some points. I am always concerned as to whether Branch Meetings are maintaining interest and would welcome suggestions for future meetings (no four letter words please).

In an attempt to cover the large geographical area of our branch a number of informal meetings have been held in different parts of the branch area to enable members who cannot attend the monthly meetings to meet the Committee and hear reports of CAMRA activity. During the year three new branches have been formed. High Peak, Macclesfield and Warrington, all taking some of South Manchester's area and this

has reduced us to a more manageable size. I would like to wish all three branches well for the future and assure them of help and assistance whenever this may be required.

On the campaigning side we have seen the re-introduction of cask Sam Smiths to this side of the Pennines at the Maltshovels in Altrincham after much persuasion over a long period of time and it is hoped to see more Sam Smiths houses converting to cask conditioned beer. The branch has maintained it's good relations with the local breweries and I am sure that we have had some influence on their policies. The Committee was represented at a joint meeting with other branches with the management of Bass North West and this is a contact which it is hoped will yield some fruitful results. The year did see a completely new beer emerging in the form of Pollards of Stockport and the Whitegates Inn was one of the first outlets.

A full social programme has been run during the year ably organised by our Social Secretary and there is little need to repeat details of the events (most participants probably do not remember anyway) except to say that all have been successful and thoroughly enjoyed by those taking part.

My thanks are due to all members of the Committee who have put in so much work over the year, to Ralph and Jean at the Gateway for their hospitality and to all members of the branch who have contributed time and effort to the cause.

I would like to wind up with a look forward to the next year. The Greater Manchester Good Beer Guide is due to be published in the near future and this promises to be an excellent publication which will be an essential requirement for all discerning beer drinkers. (Special mention must be made of Trevor Hatchett, editor of the guide, who has done such a tremendous amount of work over the last few months). A new Committee will be elected at the Annual General Meeting and their first task will be to plan for the year ahead and one of the items which will figure prominently will be the feasibility of holding a branch Beer Exhibition.

I must, however, sound a word of warning to CAMRA members. With the success that the organisation has

achieved over the last two years it is very easy to become complacent and it is very important that this is not allowed to happen. CAMRA is now so well known that it has become a part of the English Language and herein lies the danger in that CAMRA instead of being an organisation to battle against the establishment could itself become a part of the establishment. Some spectacular successes have been recorded over the last twelve months, especially in the South, and while this is very satisfying it should not blind members to the fact that while certain breweries are on one hand now supporting real ale they are often on the other hand still ripping out handpumps and converting to tanks and pressurised beer.

I sometimes feel that the display of support for CAMRA shown by some breweries is to a certain extent a public relations exercise designed to fool real ale drinkers into a false sense of security. The big six breweries of course are not the only culprits as far as taking out handpumps and converting to tank beer is concerned and there is a need for constant vigilance on the part of CAMRA members to combat this insidious campaign to deprive the public of their right to choose to drink real ale, served how they want it to be served and in the surroundings in which they want to drink.

Even in South Manchester, where there is a far greater variety of real ale and number of places in which to consume it, we are certainly better off than most of the country but, as I said previously, there can be no room for complacency and I look forward to an active, campaigning twelve months from South Manchester Branch.

## Scotch Missed

Traditional draught beer has this month made a return to a Scottish & Newcastle tied house in Manchester. The Bolton Arms at the junction of New Bridge Street and Cheetham Hill Road is now selling McEwans Scotch Bitter through handpumps (which have not been used for some years) for 22p a pint. The mild is at the moment still pressurised.

# Features

## SPOM!

Can the formation of S.P.O.M. be averted? I hope so. Over the past couple of years several members of the South Manchester branch, including Richard Greenhalgh, Peter Simmons and myself, have referred (not completely in jest) to the need for a separate organisation looking after the interests of mild-hence S.P.O.M., the Society for the Protection of Mild.

CAMRA's successes over the last two years have, broadly speaking, all been in the highest gravity range, certainly as far as new introductions are concerned, and in one sense brewers, mainly the big 6, have played a 3 card trick on us by merely replacing expensive keg with high gravity beers as their premium drinks. On the other hand perhaps they genuinely mistook CAMRA's demands as being for strength of beer. Whatever their motives the fact remains that mild, which had in any case been declining in popularity over the years, had hardly benefitted from CAMRA's intervention until recently. Why until recently? The signs are that mild could

now undergo a revival for a number of reasons.

However, first the background. Nearly 90 breweries still brew a mild (and less than 20 do not) which is encouraging since mild probably accounts for less than 15% of current beer production. A lot of them sell very little and it also varies greatly in availability from one area to another. Recently I did a report for CAMRA's Campaigning Committee examining the whole question of mild's availability, and since the report also forms the basis of a Whats Brewing article it is not worth examining the national outlook in greater depth in this article. Suffice to say, there is more mild left in the Manchester area than anywhere; Robinsons Best Mild is still their biggest seller, and Hydes' two milds together outsell the bitter by 50%, Holts and Oldhams Breweries, neither easy to get clear figures from, reckon to sell about as much of each. While Boddingtons and Lees both sell a lot more bitter. The Mancunian generally has a good chance of a decent pint of mild throughout the North West and North Wales, and, further afield in places like Nottingham, a good mild town, and the West Midlands. Deserts are towns such as Sheffield and areas like Avon and the West Country. So why could there be a revival?

Firstly for base motives, the price. Anyone used to paying less than 20p a pint for Boddies being asked for 30p plus in a 'bandwagon' London freehouse knows all about value for money nowadays. Some trading down is often noticed temporarily after Budgets, but such are rising prices and inflation nowadays that there could be a longer term, prolonged switch.

Secondly there could be a national swing of the pendulum back to what Neil Kellett calls "good slutching ale" when all the lemming-like rushing around after Henderson's L.J. at 1057 is over.

Thirdly (and heaven forbid, really, but they're all welcome) it could become trendy to seek obscure milds within the 'CAMRA bore' fringe. All in all, these and other factors could reawaken interest amongst those who never think to try the mild. That's all S.P.O.M. asks anyway - just try it, while it's there before the brewers decide to phase it out through lack of demand before you drift on to the bitter when your tastebuds become jaded later in the evening (and doesn't that happen to all of us). Apart from that, what can you do? Always ask for it.

Dave Hall

## New Bass

BASS INTRODUCE NEW CASK BEER IN MANCHESTER

The past 12 months have seen the introduction of three new draught beers in Manchester, Pollards John Barleycorn bitter, J.W. Lees Moonraker Strong Ale and Hydes draught Strong Ale. Now Bass North West have introduced a new brew as a test market exercise in the Greater Manchester Area.

The new brew known as S.B. is brewed at the former Hammonds Brewery in Tadcaster, which already brews one bitter and two milds for distribution in cask form in the Manchester Area. All processed Bass North West beers come from the massive new plant at Runcorn.

Mr Alex Omand, Public Relations Manager for Bass North West Ltd., said in a letter to the branch:-

"I must make it clear that this is a very small test market, and it is too early to say yet whether the new cask beer will be retained in the outlets mentioned or not. Anyway, no doubt,

if your branches try the beer it will have a much better chance."

The new beer priced at 19 or 20p a pint is now being sold through electric pumps in the following outlets:-

Iron Duke, Hulme Walk, Hulme, Mcr.  
Corporation Arms, 236, Stockport Rd,  
Guide Bridge, Nr. A-U-L.  
Regent Hotel, Market Place, Oldham.  
Wakes Hotel, Lancaster Rd, Hindley,  
Nr. Wigan.  
Derker Hotel, Vulcan St. Oldham.  
Lord Howard, The Strand, Kirkholt,  
Rochdale.  
Royal Oak, 536, Bolton Rd.,  
Pendlebury, Lancs.  
The Mayfield, Albert Royds St.,  
Rochdale.  
Commercial Hotel, Butler Green,  
Hollinwood, Chadderton.  
Church Hotel, 525, Stockport Rd,  
Longsight, Mcr.  
Navigation Hotel, Manchester Rd.,  
Broadheath, Altrincham.

N.B. Bass are to become the first brewers around Manchester selling both real and processed beer to declare on the pump whether the beer is cask or keg.

## The Column that Jack built: The Burton Brewers

Burton around 1880 was the hub of the brewing world but until the start of the 1800's the ale produced was little known anywhere else. This was due to the means of inland transit which was very costly. There was not much available other than the horse and cart.

It was not until the passing of the Trent Navigation Act of 1698 that the trade began to assume any importance. The Great Canal constructor Brindley with his network of canals and inland navigation put the town on the map followed by the Midland Railway which finally did the trick.

In 1804 there were 7 breweries and according to the census of 1821, there were 867 men and 61 boys working in them.

## THE COLUMN THAT JACK BUILT

In about 1880 there were 27 breweries the names of which were as follows:-

Allsopp & Sons, Bass & Co, Burdley & Co, BODDINGTON & Co!, Bowler Bros, Burton Brewery Co, Charrington & Co, Cooper & Co, Dawson & Co, Eadie, Jas. Evershed, S. Green & Clarkson, Hill & Son, Ind Coope & Co, Mann, Crossman & Paulin, Marston & Sons, Nunneby, Joseph & Co, Porter & Son, ROBINSON & Co! Salt & Co, Sykes & Co, Thompson & Son, Truman, Hanbury Buxton & Co Walker & Son, Walker, Peter (Executors of ) Worthington & Co.

According to the 'Lancet' of around 1888, the secret of the great success of the Burton Brewers was due to the 'peculiar' quality of the water. Indeed, it is because of this attribute that the ales brewed here NEVER required finings to be added and were fit for use almost as soon as they were brewed! (Present day Keg and Bright Beer producers please note date - 1888!). The wells from which this 'peculiar' water was obtained was confined to certain areas of the town sometimes separated by only a few feet from each other. More than one brewery attempted in Burton had to be closed due to its being situated in the wrong place.

TO BE CONTINUED! Next month, some notes on the Burton Brewers themselves.

Jack Hopwood.

## Newton Heath Olympics

It is believed that Wilsons are willing to re-introduce traditional draught beer into any of their houses that are prepared to serve it - so ask for it! Wilsons already sell real ale in more than half their tied houses.

And so to the Olympic. We hear that Wilsons new higher gravity bitter (at the moment only available in bright form) is to be introduced in cask form later this year.

## Mersey Drinker

Copies of the Merseyside branch of CAMRA's monthly newsletter, "Mersey Drinker", are to be made available for sale in the Manchester area. This excellent paper will be on sale at South Manchester branch meetings.

## Dear Shirr r.. Letters

### BREWERS CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMERS

Recently Boddingtons Breweries Ltd. inaugurated a judicious new sales policy designed, no doubt, to improve customer relations. It stopped selling barrels of beer direct to the public. "If you want to buy a barrel you will have to order through a Boddingtons landlord". I was brusquely informed by a voice on the phone when I enquired whether I might purchase 9 gallons of bitter. (Even CAMRA membership cut no ice.)

The high esteem in which Boddingtons have always held the occasional customer is of course widely known. The thoughtful indifference with which the office staff invariably treated you when you called to collect a barrel, brave attempts they made to omit giving you tap and stillage and the assistance proffered by brewery loaders as they stood and watched you struggle with a barrel to your car, were just a few examples of a standard of customer concern for which Boddingtons prided themselves.

So, where can you buy a barrel direct if you haven't a tame landlord willing to put himself out by ordering a barrel on your behalf and charging a hefty commission? Not from Wilsons I'm afraid they operate the same system as dear old Boddies. And you can only buy Hyde's direct if you happen to know a brewery worker. Holts and Lees too, make no direct sales to the public.

Of the local brewers then it only remains to consider Robinsons. They alone have no qualms about allowing the public to purchase barrels. There are though some organisational quirks in their retail system. If you wish to buy more than 9 gallons you have to do business with the order department in the brewery. If you wish to buy 9 gallons or less then you must deal with the off-licence attached to the brewery. The main brewery will not sell you Old Tom, but the off-licence will happily dispenise the stuff. Yet these are minor inconveniences, which must be cheerfully born.

However, there are more serious deficiencies in their system of which the prospective buyer might be advised to beware e.g. 2 barrels of Old Tom were ordered in good time. The order was accepted. On my arrival to collect the beer it transpired that there was no Old Tom for the public to purchase, as it was Christmas, even if it was ordered. I remonstrated but was told that it was my hard luck. Pubs had taken all the available stock. No effort

was made by the brewery to let it be known that the order could not be fulfilled. The brewery were totally unapologetic about the situation and seemed to regard my attitude as one of unjustified pique.

Subsequent conversations confirmed my experience tallied with that of others. In other words customer convenience, as at Boddingtons, was bloodily sacrificed on the altar of Brewery expediency.

J.A.White (Didsbury)

I should be pleased to hear any comments on the above plus any successful/unsuccessful attempts to buy beer direct from the local breweries — Editor

## Boddies Up

Boddingtons, the Strangeways based brewers who brew nothing but traditional draught beer, last year increased their sales by 38.6% to £10.6 million.

## Future Branch Events

Thursday April 15th, Annual General Meeting, 8pm Gateway Hotel, Parris Wood.

Saturday May 15th (Provisional) Coach trip to Ripon for Theakstons etc and an evening in Keighley for Timothy Taylors. Depart Mersey Square 0900. Return 1130.

Friday/Saturday 28/29 May. 24 hours getting legless in the Isle of Man. Cost? That's up to you!

Saturday June 19th (Provisional) Coach trip to Keswick for Jennings for a dinnertime session. Spending the evening drinking Hartleys in Ambleside. Depart Mersey Square 0900. Return 1130.

## What a load of Pollards

Pollards John Barleycorn Bitter is now available in 2 new outlets as follows:- (unfortunately clubs.) Bredbury Workingmans Club and Botanical Society, Higher Bents Lane, Bredbury Cale Green and Heavily Conservative Club, Dundonald Street, Heavily, Stockport.

# Back Page

## Ads

**TENT WANTED** Frame tent, igloo or large ridge to sleep three or four, also equipment, cooker, sleeping bags etc. Must be cheap. Telephone Patti 236 5794 9-5.30.

**SECOND HAND TYPEWRITER** Wtd. in good condition for around £10. Contact Graham Lister 225 8916.

**CLASSIFIED AD RATES:-** 1p per word per issue or 2p per word per issue to non CAMRA members. Display Ad rate available on request.

## GRAFFITI RULES O.K.

Snow White thought 7UP was a fizzy drink until she discovered Smirnoff.

## STRIP

Anybody with a burning desire to create a strip cartoon? Either complete finished artwork or words for discussion to John Campbell, 164, Palatine Road, West Didsbury, M20. Area: 55 x 189 mm (DxW).

## Tetley Bitterpersons?

The Manchester Evening News of 7/4/76 informs us that CAMRA membership includes about 4000 women 'signed up for the keg war'

## STOP PRESS

Our Hyde correspondent tells us that Hartleys Bitter is being taken out of the Whitegates to be replaced by Hartleys Best Bitter.

## Real Sams

Samuel Smiths, the Tadcaster based brewers who recently re-introduced cask conditioned beer to the North West, have announced plans to close their distribution depot at Rochdale (the former Rochdale & Manor Brewery). It is assumed that deliveries to the North West will now be made direct from the brewery at Tadcaster. As beer will no longer be transported to, or stored at Rochdale, (Sam Smiths main objection to delivering cask beer to the North West) it may now be possible that more Sam Smiths houses may be converted to real beer.

## Odes to Ale

Now Theakstons of Masham in Yorks, Have joined with the Arabs in talks, On producing a beer, With a Muslim all-clear, If it sells will they take over Vaux?

## 6 Months issues for £1

O.T. ON SUBSCRIPTION.

The Opening Times is hoping to become a monthly paper offering the opportunity for beer conscious consumers to express their views on anything to do with the local brewery scene. Due to the success of the first issue it has been decided to make the Opening Times available on a subscription basis. The cost is £1 for 6 months issues or 50p for 3 months, postage included. If you wish to order your Opening Times or have anything to contribute to next months issue please contact the Editor at the address given on the front of this issue. Articles for the May issue should arrive no later than Saturday May 1st.

## The Windmill

The Windmill, Whiteley Green (GBG) between Poynton and Macclesfield now has Robinsons Bitter, Marstons Pedigree both on handpumps & Robinsons Old Tom from cask + all beers mentioned in GBG.

## Heavy Breathers

Dave Hall is now on the phone Macc 610367.

## Coming Soon

Dear Beer.....customs and extort. Why your beer costs so much.

WILSONISATION. Where, when and why.



When the Times burps  
the world listens