



July 1976

Opening Times

Dirt
5P
Cheap

Fifth Edition

Editor: Anna Greenhalgh 9 Brogden Grove Sale. Tel: 973 6193

Regional Row (2)

The front page piece in last month's Opening Times on the row over regional boundaries elicited the following response from Mike Hardman, Whats Brewing Editor:

Dear Mrs Greenhalgh,

Thank you for sending a copy of Opening Times with the article criticising the decision to extend the northern region.

It is not our policy to publish news of internal wrangles such as this in What's Brewing and I would suggest that your protest is made through the proper channels - namely the Chairman of CAMRA.

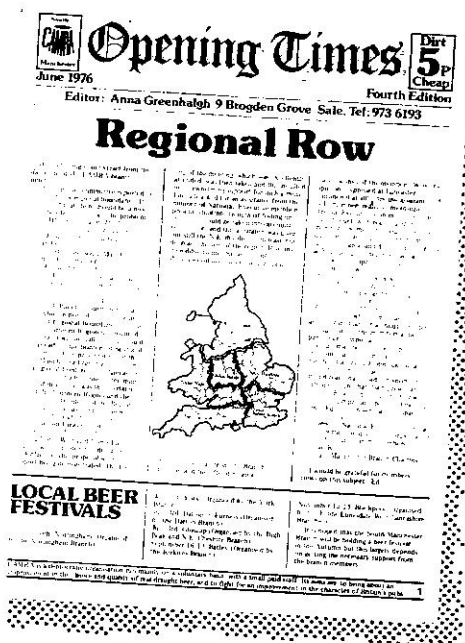
Yours sincerely,

M Hardman.

So now you know. Fortunately we also had a response through the aforementioned 'proper channels' from Chris Bruton, the Chairman of CAMRA:

"Thank you for your letter and the enclosed copy of Opening Times. I was not personally present at Lancaster but I had heard from Chris Holmes of the strong feeling expressed.

I must point out that all regions would like to be smaller and in more direct contact with the Executive, but the logical extension of this argument would be an Executive of 140 with one person from each branch. I am sure you will agree that the result would be chaos. In terms of branch numbers, the Northern Region is about average but the area is clearly immense. As to action: the Branches Committee were asked by the last Executive meeting to reassess Regional Boundaries (incidentally this was before I received your letter) and they have suggested that some readjustment is desirable. Indeed I have written to Dave Hall - the Executive member resident in the region - asking him to become the L.O. Dave was, I believe, chairman of South Manchester for some time and if you and the branch can persuade him to do the job, I am confident that that would be in the best interests of the Campaign and all its



Last month's front page.

members. Please help in this way if you are able.

I hope that I will be able to come to the north west later in the year and I am very much looking forward to an AGM in Blackpool.

Please be assured that, after resolving the chaos at St. Albans, I regard Branch involvement in the running of the Campaign as my most important duty. This matter is certainly not buried. Whether or not Michael Hardman writes an article or prints a letter is an editorial decision with which I do not interfere. However, in principle, I believe such internal problems are best dealt with directly and responsibly, rather than by a series of vitriolic letters in the Campaign newspaper.

Cheers,
Chris Bruton

BRANCH NEWS

Next Meeting August 12th, venue uncertain, see What's Brewing or contact Graham Lister on 225 8916.

August 14th - Day trip to Lancaster and Morecambe. Contact Graham Lister for further details on 225 8916.

New Hand on the Pumps

The Castle & Falcon (Burtonwoods) on Bradshaw Street, near Victoria Station has a new landlord, still selling Burtonwood's Dark Mild and Bitter, still on handpumps.

LOCAL BEER FESTIVALS

September 16-19 Batley (Organised by the Kirklees Branch)

November 12-13 Blackpool (Organised by the Fylde/Lunesdale/West Lancashire Branches)

It is hoped that the South Manchester Branch will be holding a beer festival in the Autumn but this largely depends on getting the necessary support from the branch members.

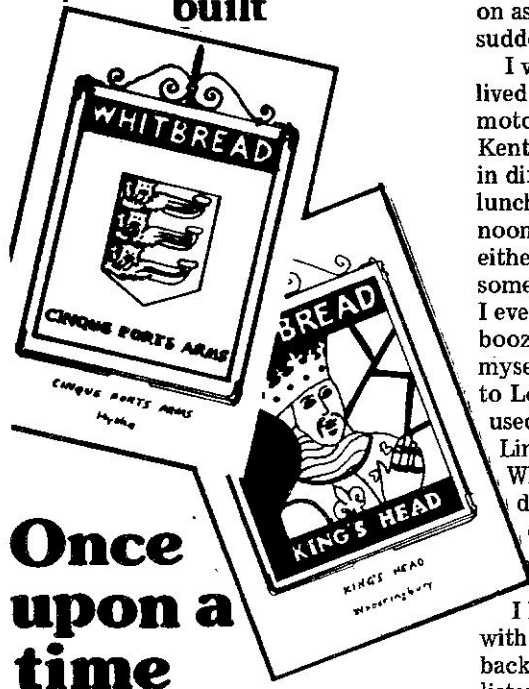
COLLECTORS ITEMS

Back issues of the 1974 Good Beer Guide available at the cover price of 50p from R W Greenhalgh, 9 Brogden Grove, Sale, Cheshire, M33 1UF

Hurry Hurry while stocks last!

Features

The Column that Jack built



Once upon a time

Around 1953, in the county of Kent, there were strange 'goings on' in the Kentish pubs - vast influxes of strangers appeared from nowhere at every opening session and locals, some of whom had never been known to leave their own places at the bar of their local, were actually seen in different pubs!

What was the reason for this state of affairs which could be described as a scene out of T.V.'s 'Avengers'? The answer, believe it or not, was WHITBREAD! Now most of you will only ever have heard the worst about that name, but once upon a time they were a 'goody goody' Brewer and their beers before the days of Tankard & Trophy were well worth going to Kent for.

What they devised in the early 50's which caused all the aforementioned movement of imbibers, was a most fascinating collection of Inn sign cards. These cards, a little larger than a cigarette card, were in series of 50's and there were four series altogether. Each card had an Inn sign printed in beautiful colour on the front and the history of the pub and sign on the reverse.

The cards were only obtainable from the pub it depicted and you had to buy a drink in that pub before the landlord

would give you a card - hence the great movement of drinkers. The hobby caught on as if pubs in the Norfolk beer desert suddenly started selling Boddies etc.

I was caught up in the hobby as I lived in NW London then and had a motor bike on which I travelled into Kent at the weekends, and after sessions in different pubs collecting Inn signs at lunchtimes, the latter part of the afternoons would be spent sleeping it off either behind hedges or in the pictures somewhere, depending on the weather. I even had a friend from Blackpool (a booze-up man of 2 Preston Guilds like myself) who used to come on holidays to London but on these occasions we used to go out into Kent on the Green Line Bus for our Inn sign collecting. What super days out those were too, drinking in those lovely pubs, some of which were surrounded by Hop fields and Oast houses. Although the flavour of the beers escapes me, all

I know is they suited most agreeably with the surroundings. Nights were spent back in London visiting various Jazz Clubs listening to Humphrey Lyttleton, Mick Mulligan's Magnolia Jazz Band etc, and drinking vast quantities of Youngers No. 3 in 'The Blue Posts' in Newman Street.

However, to get back to the Inn signs, of which regrettably I only have 11 left. The most interesting one is the sign of 'Castleton's Oak' at Biddenden, this sign is in remembrance of an Ebenezer Castleton, a local carpenter, who learned that the local great oak had been des-



troyed on his 70th birthday and was said to have acclaimed it a warning. At once he set to work on a coffin for himself, and arranged to always have it handy. It is pleasant to record of this early exponent of 'Be prepared' that nearly another 30 years elapsed before it was needed. The picture on the front of the card shows an old man sat on a coffin and the pub is well worth a visit if you are near Biddenden. A suitable quote is written on the back of the card:- "Judge not the play, before the play is done".

Jack Hopwood.

Brewery News

The Robinson family first entered the licensed trade on 29th September 1838 when William Robinson purchased the Unicorn Inn on Lower Hillgate, Stockport, from one Samuel Hole. From this Inn William Robinson carried on a retail business only but it is from this Inn that the Brewery's present day trademark is taken. In the early 1860's William's younger son Frederic succeeded him and commenced brewing, firstly just for himself, but shortly afterwards he entered the wholesale trade. May 1876 saw the purchase of the first licensed house, the Railway Hotel at Marple Bridge. This pub, which is still a Robinsons house, is now named the Royal Scot and was recently the scene of a centenary celebration. In 1878 the eldest son of Fredric, William, entered the business at the ripe old age of 14. In the early 1880's Fredric retired from the retail trade - at the time of his death in 1890 he owned 12 licensed house. The running of the business was passed to Fredric's widow Emma and his son William who became responsible for management.

In 1908 the bottling department was opened. By 1919 William's son Fredric Edgar (now Sir John) and Cecil had all joined the business and in 1920 the Company was formed with William as chairman.

1926 saw the takeover of Schofields Portland Brewery in Ashton under Lyne. Schofields had 42 houses almost all of which were in the Ashton under Lyne area. The same year saw the entry of the Company into the Wine and Spirit trade.

In 1929 Kays Atlas Brewery was taken over. Kays was in the Ardwick area and the Company had a large proportion of their trade in off-licenses. Most of the tied pubs and off-licenses were in the Manchester area. A fine example of a Kays house is the Foresters Arms on Ashton Old Road in Openshaw. The name board of the pub still bears the legend "Atlas Ales". Unfortunately the interior of this pub was gutted by fire last week and it is not known whether it will be reopened. The pub is by the way in the

Good Beer Guide.

In 1949 a controlling interest in Bell & Co Limited of Stockport was aquired. Bells pubs were supplied from the Hempshaw Lane Brewery in Stockport which after the takeover was used as the bottling plant for Robinsons. The majority of Bell & Co's houses were in Stockport although they did stretch as far as Nantwich. There are still pubs bearing the name of Bell & Co but unfortunately these signs seem to be being covered up.

The trading area of Robinsons has over the years been gradually increased and today Robinson's beers can be drunk in 317 houses as far away as Anglesey, Merioneth, Garstang (near Preston), Congleton, and throughout the Southern Peak District. District.

To keep up with an expanding market the Company recently opened a new bottling store on Lingard Lane at Bredbury to replace the old store at Bells Brewery.

It is interesting to note that all five directors of the firm are members of the Robinsons family.

THE BEERS

Best Bitter	1041
Bitter	1034.9
Best Mild	1030
Mild	1030
Old Tom	1079

The brewery produces two guides for the dedicated Robbies drinker, one is a leaflet 'Dine at the sign of the Unicorn' the other is a booklet entitled 'Sight-seeing with the Unicorn.'

WARRINGTON COLUMN

Its rare that a branch has any lack of support for a brewery visit but last month was an exception. The brewery in question was Hook Norton near Banbury in Oxfordshire, a round trip of 250 miles. However, the dedicated few could not turn down such a trip, so six of us got up unusually early on Saturday, to arrive at the brewery for 10.45 am.

Hook Norton must be one of if not the remotest brewery in Britain. Although a high building, it was invisible from the road. Once found, the brewery is an impressive sight. The original brewery dates back to 1849 and is still in use but modifications were made and the new part built in 1900.

The brewery machinery is still driven by a massive steam-engine, with an eight foot flywheel, through a series of shafts, belts, pulleys and cogs. Built in 1900 it also pumps water up from underground wells. This water or 'liquor' is so pure that it is used untreated.

The excellent beers are sold in 34 tied houses and also in 15 free houses. The beer is personally recommended to anyone visiting the area, if they are successful in finding one of the also remote houses. However, the locals are very helpful with directions as we all can testify.

Parties are welcome to visit the brewery by appointment. A small museum has

been set up in one room with some of their old books, advertisements, CAMRA local beer guides and of course a bar complete with handpumps.

Hopefully this brewery will continue to be as successful as it deserves to be.

BEYOND THE FRINGE

Nantwich! Where's that?

Deep in the heart of Greenall Whitley land of course. And to prove it, within the Warrington and North Cheshire branch area, the Wilderspool Brewery supplies 47 public houses in the town and its surrounding villages. And what of the intruders in the land of smiles? Foreign outposts number : Tetley 4, Burtonwood 3, Robinsons 1.

A monopoly of this magnitude does not provide the best breeding ground for 'drink to the death' CAMRA members, especially amid the confusion of Big Brother's claim to supply more beer from the wood than any other brewer in the world, whilst being haunted by a waning reputation for dubious beer which at one time rivalled Wigan's Pier in notoriety.

However, these setbacks seem to have strengthened the resolve of members like Mike Jones of Hartford to put plenty of useful work in for the branch. He and Roy Walker form the nucleus of a keen group in the Nantwich district. There are too many members whose talents are untapped as yet, probably because of their relative isolation from branch meetings.

Exactly the same situation applies in Knutsford (Macclesfield & East Cheshire) so spread the news of the following informal meetings to your acquaintances who live and drink in these areas:

Tuesday 24th August:
Holly Bush, Little Leigh.
A49, Nr. Weaverham.

OTHER FUTURE EVENTS

Bowls match with South Lincs.
Holts Arms (Burtonwood),
Foot 'th Causeway, Billinge.
(Coach from Warrington approx 80p at 12.30pm., return approx 7.30pm)
Get practicing)

Gordon Smith

WHITE GATES INN



The White Gates Inn opened in 1854 when Charles Hincliffe brewed his own beer in the back yard.

In 1872 there were 11 spittoons in the Vault, and the pub sold canary seed to the miners on their way to the pit up the road.

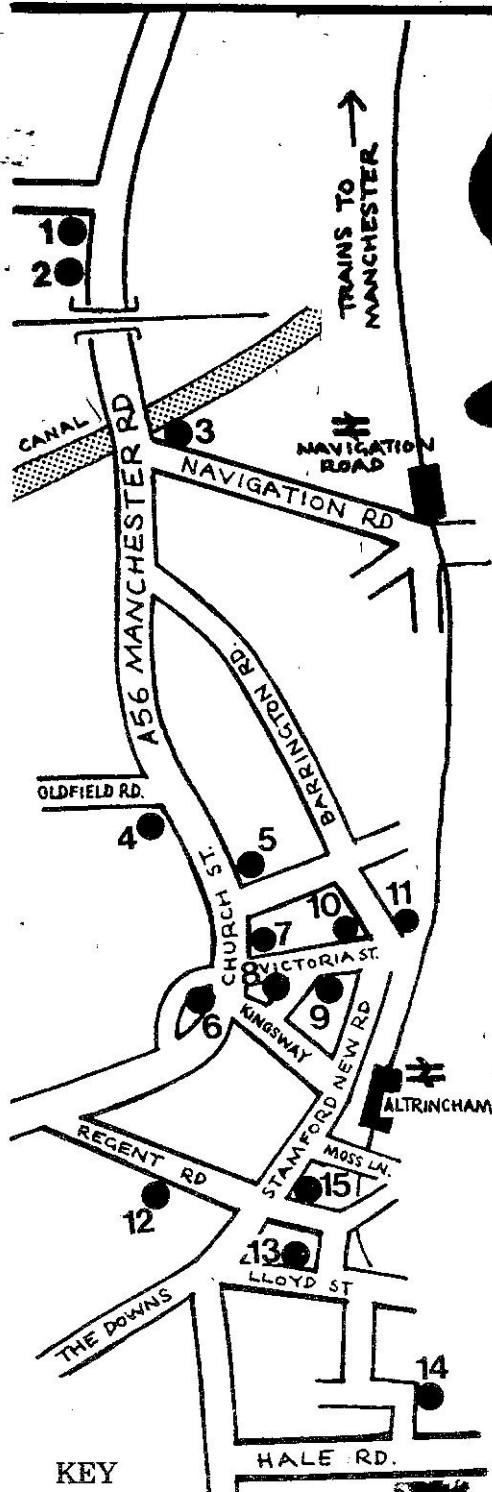
The White Gates Inn was run by five generations of the Oldham family until 1975.

Today the pub is owned and run by CAMRA. It has been renovated and

extended. It is a maze of little rooms and alleyways. It sells bitter from Boddingtons, Hartleys, and Pollards, best mild from Thwaites, and good food at working people's prices.

The White Gates Inn
Manchester Road Hyde

STAGG



KEY

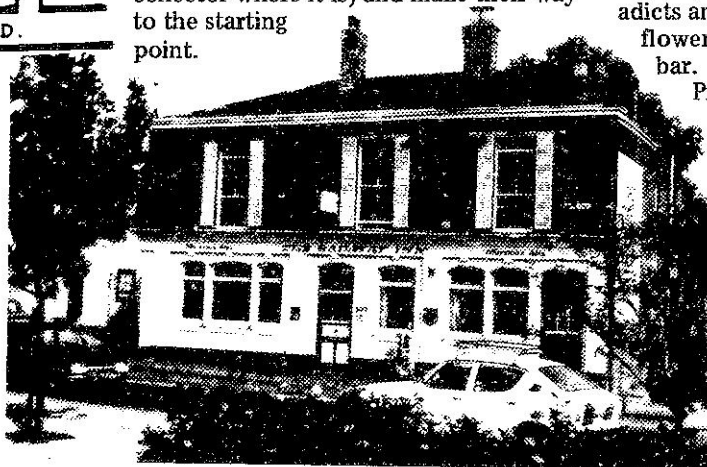
- 1) Cheshire Cheese Boddingtons (E)
- 2) Railway Boddingtons (H)
- 3) Old Packet Wilsons (H)
- 4) Wheatsheaf Wilsons (H)
- 5) Cresta Court Hotel Guinness XXX (bottles)
- 6) Orange Tree Wilsons (H)
- 7) Roebuck Wilsons (E)
- 8) Victoria Bass Charrington (E)

- 9) Malt Shovels Samuel Smiths (H)
- 10) Railway Marstons (E)
- 11) Barrington Wilsons (H&E)
- 12) Grapes Boddingtons (H)
- 13) Park Greenall Whitley (E)
- 14) Tatton Arms Boddingtons (H)
- 15) Faulkners Arms Wilsons (H)

Broadheath and Altrincham Town Centre.

15 pubs, 14 brews from 6 different breweries, plus Guinness XXX Stout.

The full crawl is designed for complete lunatics who like an early start and don't mind spending the following day in a coma. More sane drinkers can still enjoy the full range of brews available by starting at No. 5. The route is designed principally for public transport users and begins with the Cheshire Cheese (1) - Boddington's ordinary Mild and Bitter (E) on the 263 bus route from Manchester. Watch out for the black and white frontage and leap out immediately. Train users should disembark at Navigation Rd. Station (less than 5 mins. walk from the Gardeners Arms, Boddingtons, if you want an excellent extra - just ask the ticket collector where it is) and make their way to the starting point.



Leaving the loud juke box of the Cheshire Cheese, pass the 'Chippy' and on the same side of the road, not more than a cockstride away, the terraced housed just before the railway bridge is in fact No.2. The Railway, Boddingtons ordinary Mild and Bitter (H). This pub changed to a tenancy this year and is a wonderful basic house with no spirits licence (or Tankard, or draught lager!). Not to be missed unless you're fussy about carpets and comfy chairs and silly things like that.

From here pass under the Railway Bridge, cross the road, over the canal (see if you can detect the famous Broadheath pong) and immediately on your left is No.3. The 'Old Packet,' Wilsons Mild and Bitter (H). This is the home of the local sea angling club and was once a staging post for packet boats on the canal. Although modernised in the Watney image complete with pool table, it possesses a fine panelled bar and the real oak beams are still there under the plastic covering!

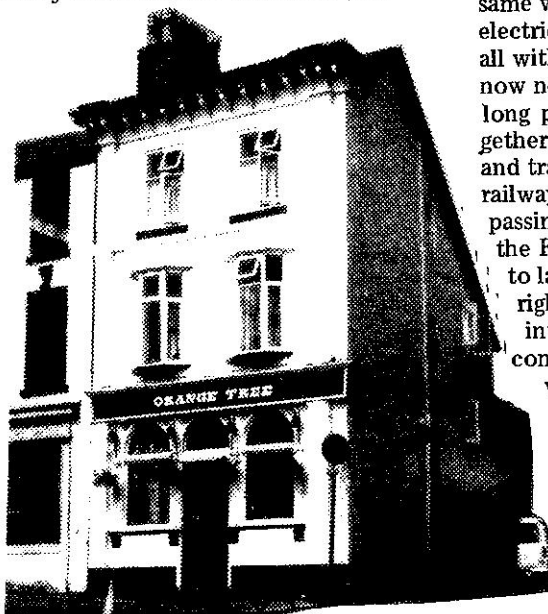
Continue along the main road past the Navigation (this was No.4 but Charringtons SB was discontinued despite good sales in this particular pub), and in front of you where the road bends you will see a large black and white building - No.4. The Wheatsheaf. Wilsons Mild and Bitter (H). This also has a pool table for addicts and is a comfortable pub with real flowers adding a pleasant touch to the bar.

Proceed further along the main road, cross the dual carriageway to the modern brick building of the large and busy Cresta Court Hotel, No.5. Enter the thematic splendour (!!) of the Forge Bar (not to be missed by those who actually like 'comfy chairs, carpets and brass do-dahs) and there purchase a bottle of Guinness XXX stout, expensive at over 30p a bottle but powerful stuff and, I would imagine, ideal for a cold

ER

winters day.

A little further along the road and on the other side, where it bends sharply right and hidden by the Unicorn (ugh) is the Orange Tree (6), Wilsons Mild and Bitter (H) (NGBG) with its hanging baskets outside. Avoid falling down in here as there isn't much room. Leaning against the front door and looking diagonally left across the main road you



should be able to focus on the sign of the Old Roebuck, No.7, Wilsons - Mild and Bitter (E) on Victoria Street, a comfortable old pub with four rooms. Cross over the road and stumble forwards towards a blurred triangle with a toby jug grinning at you. This is the Victoria Tavern (8) the only real Charringtons in the area with Brew Ten and Dark Mild (E). Avoid the pressurised Light. The Victoria also has a pool table, noisy juke box and lots of young regulars that the Editor used to teach.

Opposite the Victoria is the Malt Shovels, No.9. Samuel Smiths Old Brewery Bitter and 4X Mild (H) - a success story for the South Manchester branch since it reverted to real ale earlier this year. The landlord was delighted when his handpumps were installed and keeps

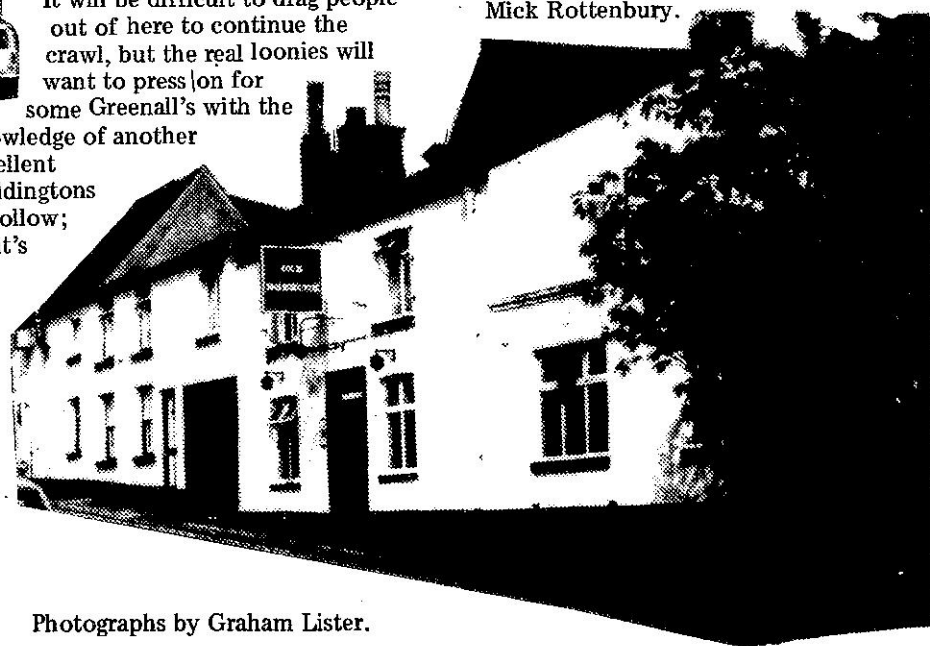
a thriving pub with a folk night on Wednesdays, modern jazz on Thursdays and Trad jazz Sunday lunchtimes. For an exiled Liver pudlian he is doing much to promote local pride in Altrincham with plans for a festival next year - anyone with a lorry for a CAMRA float?

Cross the road again (one way of running down numbers) and into the Railway No.10. Marstons Mild, Burton Bitter and Pedigree (E), the only Marstons in the town centre and another very friendly pub. Turning left outside the front door, cross a road and head for the Barrington (11), Wilsons Mild and Bitter (H and E). A triangular shaped pub, admire the windows if you can still focus.

The landlord (a tenant) renovated his handpumps this year, but the beer is the same whether through the push button electric or the handpumps. After six pubs all within sight of each other, you will now need a map reader as leader and a long piece of string to keep the rest together. Turn left outside the Barrington and travel sort of south alongside the railway line (Stamford New Road) passing the new bus/rail interchange and the Faulkners is on the left (I leave this to last since its near the station). Turn right immediately after the Faulkners into Regent Road where you will come into contact with the black and white front of the Grapes, No.12. Boddingtons ordinary Mild and Bitter (H) (NGBG) a justifiably popular town centre pub.

It will be difficult to drag people out of here to continue the crawl, but the real loonies will want to press on for some Greenall's with the

knowledge of another excellent Boddingtons to follow; so it's



Photographs by Graham Lister.



out of the Grapes, sprint back to the road junction, and turn right into Lloyd Street, past the public conveniences and the Park Hotel (13), Greenalls Bitter and Dark Mild (E) should appear on the left, a large suburban where there always seems to be plenty of room. After admiring the beauty of the mock oak juke, it's safari time in search of No.14, the Tatton Arms, Boddingtons Best Mild and Bitter (H). Sway gently outside the front door of the Park and aim diagonally left through the bus stop, alongside the carpark towards the Bakers Arms (ugh) at which point turn left into Pownell Road where the Tatton should be exerting a magnetic pull in front of you, next to the old folks club. Our architectural expert tells us it is an inter war years pub because it has metal windows. Now we come to the difficult part - find your way back to No.15, the Faulkners Arms, Wilsons Mild and Bitter (H) (NGBG) a comfortable and friendly pub within grovelling distance of the bus/rail interchange

Mick Rottenbury.

The latest issue of Whats Doing tells us that the Salford 100 Club is now down to the Salford 90. The last three crawls revealed three pubs that were on bright beer and two had been demolished.

Medium - large sized portrait of Queen Victoria.
Laurie Renton, Malt Shovels,
Altrincham.

Watch out for Manchester Free Press, ('the news you're not supposed to know') a paper of great foresight which has been running a Beer Page for about three years (it also gives space to local CAMRA branch details). *It's on the newstands now!*

“We must clearly redeploy our advertising activities to vitiate our counterproductive rationalisation program.”

Whitbread Bighead Trophy Bitter.
Brewed to understand the local tongue

As you may have noticed, Opening Times offers an advertising service; at present we have a circulation of approximately 250 but we hope this is going to rise dramatically. The paper is read by both CAMRA members and members of the general public but on all occasions by people interested in beer. It is therefore in your interest to advertise in the Opening Times. The current rates are as follows: £5.00 for a full page advert, £3.00 a half page and £1.75 a quarter page. You may submit your own artwork or artwork can be made up for you on request. For further details please phone or write to the Editor.

1	A	L	C	O	H	O	L								
				H		A						4	H	O	P
5	H		A			6	V	A	T			A			
7	I	N	N			E						8	R	U	B
	C			10	T	A	N	K	A	R	D			R	
	C				L							12	U		A
	U			13	F	E	R	M	E	N	T	15	T		N
16	P	E	R						M			17	O	L	D
			E			18	T	I	P			T			Y
19	T	E	E						T			A			
						20	L	O	Y	A	L	T	Y		

Printed by Progress Printers, Hathersage Road, Manchester.