



August 1976

Opening Times

Dirt
5P
Cheap

Sixth Edition

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IMPORTANT Whitbread Date Note

At the September branch meeting to be held on Thursday 9th at 8.15 at the Gateway, Parris Wood, Didsbury, there will be a speaker from Whitbread. Obviously we need a good turnout for this meeting, so make the effort to be there.

Customs and Extort

In his 1975 Budget Mr Healey increased the duty on beer by 50%. In 1976 he pushed it up a further 16% so that our pint of mild now pays 5½p duty, a strong bitter 7½p and a pint of barley wine or strong ale around 14p.

The Beer Duty, like the duty on U.K. produced spirits and wine, is controlled by H.M. Customs & Excise, and the Excise officer is a very familiar figure at a brewery.

The level of duty fixed in the 1976 Budget as £15.84 per barrel (36 gallons) at 1030 specific gravity and an additional £0.528 per barrel per degree above 1030. Thus the Excise officer must be able to measure (a) the quantity of beer brewed and (b) its specific gravity before fermentation begins (called the Original Gravity or O.G.) Quantity is determined by measuring the fermenting vessels accurately (to the nearest tenth of an inch or two millimetres) and then drawing up tables to show how many gallons are in the vessels at any level of dip (the distance between the surface of the liquid and the rim of the vessel measured by a 'dipstick'). To check the gravity, an instrument called a saccharometer is placed into a sample of the unfermented

beer (known as 'worts') and the gravity read off on the graduated stem.

Since most breweries produce a number of different beers at varying gravities, to work out the total duty payable each month the Excise officer makes his calculations in 'standard gallons' at a standard gravity of 1055. His final calculation is to the nearest 1/55th of a gallon (and even that means a duty of 1p nowadays).

As a considerable amount of beer is lost in a brewery between brewing and final delivery to the customer (eg sediment left behind in the fermenting vessels when the beer is drawn off, losses during bottling and when putting into barrels) it would be unfair to charge the brewer with duty on every drop brewed, so 6% is deducted from the total gallonage before duty is charged.

In the same way, duty can be refunded on 'spoilt' beer returned to the brewer by his customers, provided that the brewery destroys it by pouring down the common sewer.

General control is exercised by requiring the brewer to give notice in an officially provided book of his intention to brew and of the quantities of malt sugar etc. that he proposes to use. Sugar is used in the brewing of the beer and also to make solutions of 'priming sugar' which is added in small quantities to the finished beer when it is being put into barrels prior to delivery from the brewery. As this priming sugar becomes part of the beer we drink, produces alcohol by the action of the yeast still present (thus giving a 'head' and a sparkle when the beer is drawn off at the pub) and gives 'body' to the beer, it is charged with duty in the same way; the vessels in which it is dissolved are measured just like the beer vessels, and the sugar solution is dipped and its gravity measured. This is usually about 1150, which pays 27p duty per pint. With this amount of duty involved, a brewer might be tempted to dissolve some priming sugar without letting the Excise officer know, for whereas the brewing of beer is a lengthy 12 hour process, sugar can be dissolved very quickly. So the storage and use of sugar in a brewery is very strictly controlled and the brewer must account for every pound of sugar that he receives.

In the days of the small, independent brewery defrauding the Excise was not uncommon. As the small breweries were taken over by the big combines, cases of fraud became very few and far between.

Now that small breweries producing real ale are springing up again, no doubt the Excise men will have to be extra vigilant, especially at today's rates of duty. To form a picture of an Excise officer dreaded by the brewer would be a mistake however; almost always he is welcomed as a friend, and many Excise officers who over the years have become experts in the brewing arts have taken jobs with breweries when their turn came to retire.

Regional Row(3)?

Having received a communication from our Regional Organiser, Barrie Pepper on the above, I am able to furnish you with the following information. The N.E. in theory accepted the split but had a problem in finding someone to take over the North Western branch area. Dave Hall being our local N.E. member was the obvious choice but unfortunately he has just resigned. So under Barrie's guidance Dave Easton, (our Manchester Area Organiser) was suggested for the job and quoting from Barrie's letter, "He agreed but wished the job to be Assistant Regional Organiser working under me but with special responsibility for all branches West of the Pennines. The appointment was confirmed by the N.E. last Saturday."

This appointment left the job of Manchester Area Organiser free which has been filled by R.W. Greenhalgh, the former South Manchester Treasurer.

I am pleased to inform the branch of these developments and feel that we should have no fears about the fact that our Regional Organiser does have our interests at heart, and isn't it about time WE did something to make his job easier. After all, to quote once again from his letter, "It is a two-way business."

CAMRA is a democratic organisation run mainly on a voluntary basis, with a small paid staff. Its aims are to bring about an improvement in the choice and quality of real draught beer, and to fight for an improvement in the character of Britain's pubs. 1

Features

The Column that Jack built

Real Ale in S.W. Wales

In early June my wife and I went on a fortnight's holiday to S.W. Wales. The main object — to do as much walking as possible on the Pembrokeshire Coast Path.

For the uninitiated this comprises of 160 miles of some of the most beautiful and breathtaking coastal scenery to be found anywhere. It stretches from Cardigan in the North to Amroth (near Tenby) in the South. It is much like the Cornish coastline but we like it better as the area is not too commercialised and not as crowded as Cornwall and besides it is only 180 miles or so from Stockport (The best bit is between Fishguard and St. David's.) If you like fairly easy walking and observing plenty of wild-life (Binoculars are a must) then this is an ideal place to go, but if you tend to think more of beer on holiday then DON'T go UNLESS you want to keep up your keen interest in the ideals of CAMRA.

FIZZ SLUTCH

For the past five years we have visited the area only to return absolutely full of gratitude that we live in an area where we are spoilt for choice as regards our beer. Any CAMRA members who have become apathetic lately, (and there are plenty) should go on holiday to an area where FIZZ SLUTCH dominates. We are sure that on their return their minds, too, would be cleansed and interest in the cause would be intensified.

Most of the pubs are Free Houses mainly stocking Bass subsidiary beers, Tartan, McEwans, Tankard and all the other dreaded names. Welsh Brewers (part of Bass Charrington) own most of the pubs that are tied. There are a scattering of Buckleys and Felinfoel pubs,

the latter's beer being most excellent straight from the cask — we found one super pub that hasn't been touched for a 100 years or so, it even had flitches of bacon hanging from hooks in the ceiling (these weren't 100 years old of course!).

As to the Worthington Best Bitter in the pubs where it was supposed to be real ale I cannot say I rave over it. To me it seems like keg beer without the fizz, having the nondescript taste of a completely dead beer. Two years ago it seemed far better and when I asked the Proprietress of the 'Fishguard Arms' about it, she agreed that the Brewery had done something to it, as they could now serve it 3 or 4 hours after delivery, whereas before it took 2 or 3 DAYS due to it still working in the cask after delivery. Now the distributors (Welsh Brewers) will only deliver 18 gallon casks instead of 9 gallon to anyone who wants Worthington B.B. Around the Fishguard area there are very few pubs that want to be bothered with real ale and this discourages Buckley's or Felinfoel to deliver, as apparently it wouldn't be economical to do so.

Because of this lack of interest in real ale I think that the Brewers are trying to phase out this Worthington Best Bitter in the area. Why? Read on.

In the pubs that sell this beer, they are mainly small and in the case of the 'Fishguard Arms' it is run by a marvellous elderly lady called Mrs Gibbons or 'Ma' as everyone locally call her. Now, Mrs. Gibbons has to have help to stillage an 18 gallon cask whereas the 9 gallon one wasn't too bad to handle. She also said that she never had any trouble with air taint with a 9 gallon cask but was concerned about the 18 gallon cask in periods of slack trade. When she complained to the Brewery about this they fell over backwards in the rush to tell her that they would provide her with pressure taps etc., or why not serve keg beer? Anyway she told the brewery to get lost and as long as she had the pub a keg barrel would never cross the threshold. Anyone going to this area should rush immediately to the 'Fishguard Arms' and sample the originality of this superb little pub. It's like going back in time 100 years. The conversation in there is excellent and strangers are made very

welcome — but beware, once you are in you don't want to come out — that's why not much walking was done!

RECOMMENDED

Other recommended pubs in the area:

The Cardiff Arms, Cilgerran, Nr. Cardigan-Felinfoel (G)

The Masons Arms, " " "

The Duffryn Arms, Gwaun Valley, Fishguard, - Worthington BB (G)

The Tufton Arms, Tufton, on B4329 (6 miles from Haverford west)

Worthington BB (G)

The Ship Inn, Lower Fishguard, Worthington BB (H)

Jack Hopwood

WOULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN A GOOD IDEA IF.... DEPT!

Wouldn't it have been a good idea if Watney's had introduced their new brew draught Olympic this week to coincide with that other boring subject the start of the Olympic Games. You would have thought that a genius in their marketing department could have made something of it only if it were "Olympic for the Olympics" — (wonder if they'd give me a job).

Home Brew

It has been suggested that we hold a home brewing exhibition, possibly at the October meeting, for South Manchester members who partake of this hobby. Entries would be restricted to South Manchester members and should be accompanied by a brief description of ingredients used. Entries to be sampled and judged by an expert.

If you do brew your own beer and are interested in entering such a competition let us know so that we can get organised.

Advertising

It may have escaped your notice, but I doubt it, that the last two month's meetings have not been advertised in 'Whats Brewing' and lately only Graham Lister's phone number (which is no good as he doesn't live there anymore) has appeared. Who is responsible and don't you think that the committee should do something about it or at least comment on it. They do have the means (ie the Opening Times) to make their views known.

1977 Beer Guide

Perhaps you would be interested to know that in the 1977 GBG (already in the process of being compiled) South Manchester have not had their quota of pubs increased. Therefore in order to put any new pubs in we'll have to throw something out. There are pubs which merit entry in the guide eg the Malt Shovels, Altrincham - now selling cask Sam Smiths (one of only three in Lancashire) which wasn't in last years GBG because it 'changed back' too late for submission but what do you throw out of the GBG?

It begs the question that if we can't alter the pubs why bother spending money producing a new guide the same as the old one? Very few people are going to buy a reprint.

WARRINGTON COLUMN

Gordon Smith

Firstly, in the column last month, for Nantwich read NORTHWICH.

On every brewery visit I learn something new. The branch's visit to Burtonwood Brewery Co. Ltd., was no exception. We were shown a machine which automatically extracts a quantity of beer from a freshly filled cask and replaces it with finings. Although this involves a certain amount of double-handling of the barrels, it must eliminate the inaccuracies of earlier methods. Previously at Greenall Whitley (Warrington) I noted that the scale of the dispatch department there, warranted the addition of the finings to the beer before its arrival at the cask.

Another point raised during our tour of Burtonwood Brewery was their use of Lucilite. This is the trade-name of a product made by the Warrington firm of Crosfields. It puts the crystal into Burtonwood's Crystal Keg.

Lucilite, or its other name Chill-Garde, is sold all over the world. It stabilises the beer by removing certain proteins which would otherwise cause a haze when the beer is chilled, whilst leaving behind those ingredients which provide the head and flavour. It can be filtered out, which for example, provides a double benefit for German lager brewers. It drastically cuts the traditional six months storage time for settlement and allows them to comply with the law which requires that

all additives used in food processing must be removed before the products are sold. Therefore enzymes which break down protein but remain in the beer are banned. However, they are used in Britain by the brewers who utilise large proportions of malt substitutes such as maize syrups, wheat flour and raw barley. I expect they are watching with interest the proposed changes in the law of the United States which may force brewers to list all ingredients on the bottle label. An unfavourable public reaction to the use of enzymes is anticipated, and hence, sales of Lucilite for beer clarification are expected to rise in the U.S.A.

The moral of this story is "Don't drink with your eyes." I look forward to the day when the market research men instruct Crosfields to start breeding Sturgeon fish in the Mersey.

Deserving a mention is a recent event at the Railway, Heatley the only Boddington pub in our area. Because of lack of sales the landlord has removed the pump which dispensed a famous keg beer made by Whitbread.

When I called at the Cresta Court Hotel, Altrincham for some bottles of Triple Stout Guinness I was told that sales had fallen since they stopped giving free samples. It is hardly surprising as they were completely hidden behind other bottles on the shelf.

Greenall Whitley confirmed that the tenancy of the Forest View, Delamere is soon to change.

No plans as yet have been finalised concerning the future of this hard to find rural gem. So there is still time for it to be knocked into a Michael Green style Easy Bird Disco Tavern. Northwich members are requested to keep the committee informed of any rumours in the air because, as the G.W. employee so rightly pointed out, one of them sometime would be the right one.

Meetings

Tuesday 17th August - Branch meeting
Manx Arms, Warrington

Tuesday 24th August Informal meeting
8.15 pm, Holly Bush, Little Leigh, A49.

Wednesday 1st September. All day trip
including Marstons Brewery.

Tuesday 14th September. Branch meeting
Hop Pole, Horsemarket Street, Warrington.

WHITE GATES INN



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

In 1872 there were 11 spittons 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.

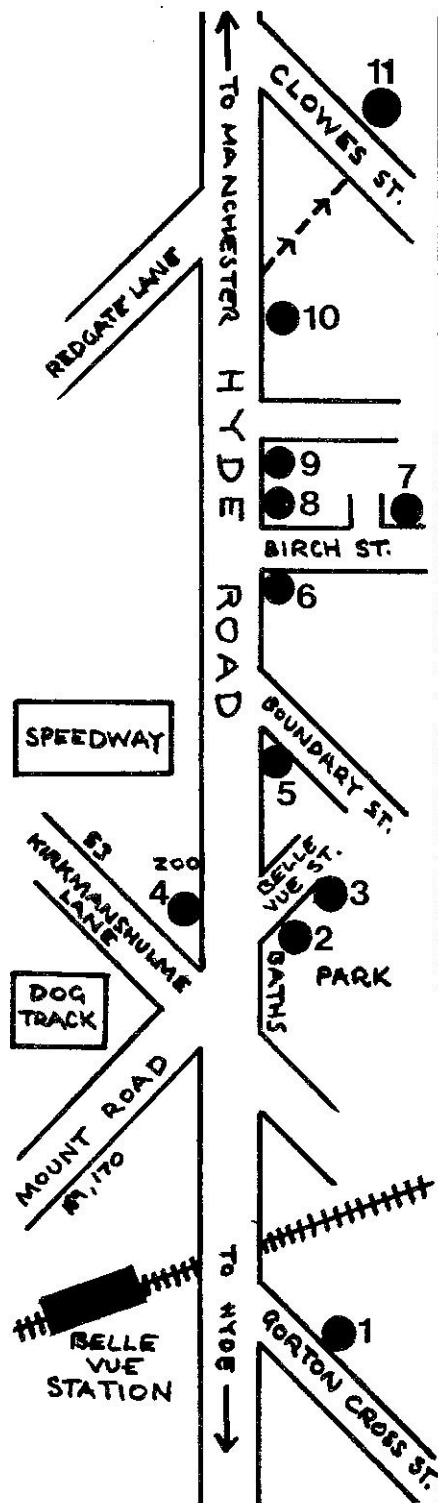
Today the pub is owned and run by CAMRA. It has been renovated and

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

BELLE VUE CRAWL

STAG



Last month's crawl was described as one for moonies who like an early start and don't mind spending the next day in a coma. This month's could well fall into the same category. Virtually every Manchester based brewer is represented and a total of 12 different beers from 6 different brewers can be sampled in the 12 pubs along the route. The missing Manchester brews are Pollards and Holts. Holts can be sampled (just to complete the set) by fanatics in two outlets within a very short bus ride of the main crawl. The Waggon and Horses is on Hyde Road itself about a mile further up towards Denton and the Garratt is on Pink Bank Lane near Central High Schools for Boys in Longsight.

How to get There

- 1) By bus. Frequent and numerous buses run from Piccadilly eg: 201, 202, 204, 205, 210, 211, 125, 234. The 53 passes through Belle Vue on its way from Los Angeles to Marrakesh and is useful for anyone travelling from Whalley Range, Chorlton, Moss Side, Rusholme and Longsight. Crawlers living in the Withington, Didsbury, Burnage and Levenshulme areas just have to hop on a 169 or 170 and they will be whisked straight there.
- 2) By Train. Fairly frequent service from Piccadilly, Reddish and Bredbury.
- 3) By car. Don't bother, this one's a real licence loser.
- 4) By bike. You've got to be joking.



Starting from the traffic lights at Belle Vue walk up Hyde Road for 50 yards or so until you reach Gorton Cross Street on your left. A short walk down here is pub number 1. The 'Suburban Inn'. A John Willie Lees house that seems to be a long way from home. Bitter (24p) and Mild (22p) are electrically dispensed. One of the two rooms is frequented by pool freaks and the other is all tinsel and Costabraviana.

Retracing your steps onto Hyde Road walk past a Corporation grass patch, past the baths, police station and Gorton Park until you reach pub number 2.

The 'Cheshire Hunt' which as the fine chequerboard windows will tell you is a Wilsons pub. The Bitter (25p) and Mild (23p) are electrically dispensed. The pub is somewhat lacking in character but for a small fee you can listen to Nat King Cole on the juke box.

Just around the corner from here is the third pub on the crawl the 'Coach and Horses.' The Robinsons Bitter (26p) and Mild (24p) are not pulled from the fine array of handpumps but from push button metres under the bar. The two keyboards are arranged so that some ambidexterous pianist can play both at once.

Opposite, on the other side of the

GER

BOOZING ROUND THE ZOO

2L with DD drink BB

Dragging yourself away from the 'Nags' turn immediately right into Birch Street where across the road from the old Corona Cinema lies the 'Imperial' (Number 7), a small tiled Wilsons pub serving Bitter (24p) and Mild (22p) from handpumps. The pub which is in the National Good Beer Guide has two rooms, Vault and Lounge and Nat King Cole turns up on the juke box again. For the statisticians this is the third pint of Wilsons on the crawl, and the best, but don't linger here its Hydes next. Turning twice right brings you onto Hyde Road again and fifty yards towards Manchester is the 'Traveller's Call' (Number 8).

Newts

This is the only Hydes pub on the crawl and is the only Hydes pub I know that serves the beer in Schooners (the drinking man's glass). The Bitter (24p) and Mild (22p) are electrically pumped. Buy your pint, sit down in the Smoke Room and consider the logic of what you're doing. You've just bought your ninth pint, your speech is beginning to slur, your stomach is getting full and you're starting to get evil thoughts about the girl on the calendar on the wall. Should you carry on? **OF COURSE!** Stand up straight, empty your glass and leave the pub, proceed 50 yards up Hyde Road and walk determinedly into:

The 'Unicorn' (Number 9). If you had problems tearing yourself away from the beer in the 'Nags Head' you'll never want to leave here. The handpumped Boddingtons Bitter (21½p) and Mild (19½p) are enough to make you resolve not to carry on with the crawl, and by the time the atmosphere of this pub has hit you you'll be wondering why you ever drank anything or anywhere else. This kind of pub is one of a dying breed, thanks to demolition and the Brewers.

Most people doing this crawl (if they get this far) will not see any reason at all why they should leave here just to do two more pubs and it seems the sensible

thing to do to spend the remaining part of the licensed hours finishing the job off before crossing the road to the chippy and then trying to find your way home. Definately a pub for the dedicated drinker, the dedicated pub crawler however, will leave the 'Unicorn' and walk fifty yards further up Hyde Road to the 'Horseshoe' (Number 10) serving Robinsons Best Bitter (25p) and Best Mild by Handpump. The pub is undeniably basic and the few crawlers who left the 'Unicorn' will be wishing they hadn't. The pub has no special qualities but it has the one advantage that it breaks the journey between here and the next pub which is the 'Dolphin' (Number 11).

Swirling Pits

This pub is reached by 'walking' (and I use the term loosely, funny how the pavement won't keep still isn't it?) up Hyde Road (does this road never end) past Slack & Coxes until a Corporation grass patch is reached, cross this diagonally and the pub should be right in front of you (if its not, you've got problems.)

The beer is handpumped Marstons Bitter (24p) and Mild and is kept in excellent condition but remember, this is your twelfth pint and will probably taste very much the same as the eleventh.



Words by Graham Cundall and Graham Lister. Photographs by Graham Lister.



Hyde Road in the building that was once known as Caesar's Palace is a newcomer on the real ale bandwagon. Known as 'Jennisons Ale House' (number 4). The decor is expensive looking and gives the place the appearance of an Edwardian Gentlemen's Club. You can almost expect to see Lawrence of Arabia walk through the French Windows. The beers served through smart looking porcelain hand-pumps are Tetleys Mild and Bitter (25 & 26p) and Wilsons Mild and Bitter (24 & 25p).

Fifty yards or so further along Hyde Road on the opposite side, on the corner of Boundary Street stands the 'Rock', (Number 5) a cosy popular Tetleys pub with hand pulled Bitter (25p) and Mild (23p).

Another short walk up Hyde Road brings you to a pub from which you will travel no further if you appreciate the finer pints of Boddingtons: the 'Nags Head' (Number 6) is a pub where CAMRA means photographs and a Boddingtons Tee shirt means you are a Brewery Rep. The pub has not been altered for years, apart from the intrusion of television into the Vault. The beer is superb. The Bitter (22p) and Mild (20p) are both hand pumped and one pint will definately lead to another.

WILLIAM HICCUP COLUMN

Middle Leg

I don't know how many of our branch members are Lancashire Cricket supporters but on my last few trips to Old Trafford, it has occurred to me what a stranglehold Carlsberg seem to have on 'beer'/lager sales in the popular side of the ground. Mind you I believe the members in the Pavillion can drink fizzy Wilsons which, although I realise some of the more puritanical members amongst you will not agree, is slightly better than having nothing but canned ¾pints of Carlsberg Lager at 35p per can (that's nearly 48p a pint, a bit pricey even in these days of inflation) or a ½ pint can of Carlsberg Special Brew - I didn't dare to buy any dreading to think what it would cost.

Since Manchester is famed for its choice of beers, how is it that a southern chemical factory (the old Phipps' Brewery in Northampton) has been allowed to get this monopoly and does anybody really care?

The queues at the Third Test Match were massive in length at times for this 'wonderful' drink. Now I know that once in the ground you have to buy what there is but at 48p a pint there are a lot of very rich cricket lovers. (Perhaps the rhythm section on the popular side were going through cans so quickly, they had to keep buying more - not so much for the drink - but so as to keep the beat going) Or perhaps most Lancashire cricket supporters do not have a very discerning taste. On reflection, this could well be the case!

As Old Trafford is easily within our branch boundary isn't there anyone prepared to make enquiries and see if something cannot be done, if only to give assistance to one poor guy I saw staggering around with three full Bodkans - he was probably staggering around afterwards when he had drunk them. He obviously was aware of the ride that people were being taken for, both in price and quality

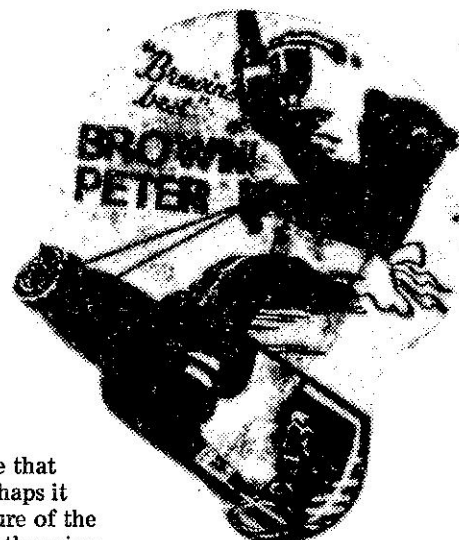
Perhaps it is too much to hope that real ale could be introduced, perhaps it is even impractical given the nature of the turnover but one of CAMRA's other aims is freedom of choice at reasonable prices. This clearly does not occur at present. Other cricket grounds I have visited have proper bars serving albeit top pressure beer but at least people do have a choice between mild and bitter, lager, keg and bottled beers at prices which aren't a ripoff

Oh, by the way, towards the end of the day I found a stall selling Watneys Pale Ale at 35p per ¾ pint can. Some choice! The only crumb of comfort I can suggest for people going to a match is to get your own beer from Pollards shop and take it with you to Old Trafford. This way you can drink a decent pint at a decent price.

Free Youngs!

It was nice to see it reported in the nationals the other week that over 800 shareholders turned up for the Annual General Meeting of Youngs Brewery. I'm not sure how many attended because each shareholder could drink as much of Youngs excellent beers as he wanted free in addition to the bottle of whiskey given away but it is good to see people being really interested in their investments and not just being bothered with the dividend they would receive. I can't imagine Whitbread shareholders turning up to their AGM in order to drink free Tankard or for that matter Allied Breweries shareholders turning up for their free K9P occasionally known as DD.

Can't our branch buy some shares in Youngs so that I can go to next years meeting?



Beer Guide...When?

Is anybody else wondering what is happening, or perhaps not happening, to the local Manchester Beer Guide.

We were originally told, if my memory serves me right, that publication would be last February, and here we are now in July without any sign that it is going to make its appearance soon.

Since the research was done for it in some cases nearly 12 months ago, it is in danger of being seriously out of date before it is even printed - as no doubt North Manchester will testify to since their Salford 100 is already down to 90.

So come on Trevor, we all realise that you have put in an immense amount of work on this project and that the final product will no doubt be superb, but don't you think that it is time to put people in the picture and let them know when they can expect to see the guide published or what work you have left on it to do.

Beer Festival... at last!

Congratulations to the committee on finally setting a date and venue for the Beer Festival, lets hope that this does not fall through, like last year's grandiose scheme to use City Hall. It was never satisfactorily explained why this never got off the ground so lets not have a repeat performance this time.

Good Old George Higsellent

I know the George, the Higsons pub in Mersey Square tends to get mentioned a lot by the branch because it is the only Higsons pub for miles, but I make no apologies for giving it another push. The draught Bass I have drunk in there on the last couple of times I have been in has been superb. I suppose I should drink more of the mild and bitter but it is difficult switching when the Bass is so good. It also seems to me that the pub's trade is on the increase. When I first went in several years ago it seemed such a shame that more people did not frequent the pub but nowadays it seems to be much more popular.



Photograph by Graham Lister.

The George has some most unusual interior decorations as well as having a highly individual lay-out. It will be a pity if, as has been rumoured, Higsons sell the pub when the present landlord leaves, because it is so far out of their normal trading area. The Talbot (Rochdale) was the only other Higsons pub in Greater Manchester but that was closed several months ago. So, apart from the 'Fool's Nook' near Macclesfield, the George is the only Higsons house near us without having to drive to Liverpool and needs to be encouraged.

by **BROWN PETER**

All Our Yesterdays

David K Hall

Last week I resigned from the National Executive of CAMRA, and although there is no particular 'story' behind it, and it doesn't even rate as a ripple in CAMRA's history, perhaps it is a good moment to summerise local and national events of the last couple of years as I have seen them (particularly as the editor is screaming for copy and I have nothing else to write about). People who've only just appeared on the scene may be interested, anyway.

Summer 73

In the Printers Arms one day I produce a cutting from a Sunday paper bemoaning the decreasing number of local brews and giving a Salford address of some organisation, called CAMRA. I say it must be a good outfit if it's based in Salford. Neil Kellett says we'll wait to see what YOU get for YOUR 50p.

October 73

Neil, Alan and myself, our loyalties split, call in at Stone for a lunchtime drink as the clans gather for the Joules closure protest march. We are en route to watch Manchester City at Wolverhampton, and we call in at Stone on the way back. Marchers very tired and emotional. We tell Graham Lees we are surprised there is no Manchester branch. 'Start one' he says.

December 73

Test support meeting in the Printers with Laurie Hughes from Chester branch.

January 74

Inaugural meeting of South Manchester branch. 70 people in Printer's back garden on a very cold night. 2 barrels of bitter drunk.

February and March 74

Two meetings in Royal Oak, Alderley Edge. Boddies Mild 11½p a pint, Bitter 13p. AGM at York - branch well represented. We run Manchester Ales stall.

April 74

Move to present 'home' at Gateway.

Summer/Autumn 74

Several successful branch trips notably to Stamford for last of Melbourns, Lancaster and Morecambe, and Barnsley for the protest march. Several interesting branch speakers, including directors from Hydes', Boddingtons', Robinsons and Holt's.

Winter 74/75

CAMRA Investments formed, buys White Gates Inn, Hyde, following South

Manchester branch survey of area. Branch Treasurer Neil Kellett becomes director, as well as CAMRA's financial adviser.

February 75 (I think)

I join NE and find they meet in very cold upstairs room of London Charrington pub with snacks across the door and very poor ale. Scene reminiscent of Wartime Resistance.

March 75

AGM at Nottingham. Another very good branch attendance.

April 75

Branch AGM and committee changes. Alan Kellett becomes chairman.

Summer/Autumn 75

Branch ticks over, initiates Greater Manchester beer guide under editor Trevor Hatchett. Branches formed around our borders: High Peak and North East Cheshire, Warrington and North Cheshire, Macclesfield and East Cheshire. Attendances accordingly level off.

Winter 75/76

CAMRA National Executive splits into Committees in major restructuring. I find myself on Campaigning Committee, in theory the committee closest to the grass roots. Initiate a mild survey involving questionnaire to every brewer (see Opening Times No.3, 'SPOM').

March 76

AGM at Brighton. Zany mini-bus full straggles down, half of them bound for Wembly.

April 76

Branch AGM - few changes. Opening Times launched and immediately wins plaudits for design, layout, readability and content.

Summer 76 & future

More good trips - IOM./Samaritans and Keswick. I miss both.

So what of the future? I have resigned from the NE as the time required suddenly took on a different perspective when I started working for myself. At a national level I hope CAMRA continues to grow into a strong and respected voice in the industry, and doesn't disappear under a welter of bureaucracy. I hope PR battles aren't gained in the South East at the expense of the provinces. I hope the dormant voice of the North West is heard when we get our own Regional Organiser (see Alan Kellett's article in last month's issue). Lastly I hope to continue to take part in local CAMRA activities as a keen and thirsty member.

Back Page

PUBLICity

Readers in the Sale area might be interested to know of the existence of a small club boasting three traditional beers: Youngers Scotch Bitter on handpump and Hydes Bitter and ordinary Mild served by electric meter. The Club, Sale Wardens Association, stands on Wardle Road (not far from Sale Station) and opens at 8pm each evening and 12-2 Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes. Besides drinking, you can enjoy a game of snooker, darts, dominoes or cards in a friendly atmosphere. Mick Rottenbury will be pleased to sign in any visitor - just give him a ring and drag him out for a pint (Tel: 969 7013)

Odes to Ale Competition

Yet more entries for the Whitbread competition (is there no end to this amazing poetic talent?)

There was a young bighead called Whitbread
Who says that his pint is a quart
He's stopping soon cos it is said
There's hardly a pint ever bought.
(Eh?)

There was a young bighead called Whitbread
Who brewed a new Keg Chemical drink
Now like the Dodo Gauntlet is dead
Next time he brews will he think?

Freep

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!

NE Resignation

As you may know Dave Hall our 'local' N.E. member has decided to resign due to pressure from work. I think we should all thank Dave for the time he has served on the N.E. and for always keeping us in touch with all N.E. decisions. I am sure that you would all wish to join me in these sentiments and wish him every success in his new business venture.

Moonlight

Graham Lister, our young, handsome, curly-haired Social Secretary has moved, and is alas no longer on the phone. To disturb his new-found peace, carrier pigeons etc. should be directed to:-

Flat 6,
40 Osborne Road,
Levenshulme,
Manchester 19.

Please

Please do not ring 225 8916 anymore.

BRANCH NEWS

Thursday September 9th -
Branch meeting, Gateway, E. Didsbury.
Speaker from Whitbread.

Saturday August 14th -
Day trip to Lancaster and Morecambe.

Friday September 10th -
joint trip to Isle of Man with Liverpool branch.

Friday September 17th -
Altrincham pub crawl.

Further details from 973 6193.

South Manchester Beer Festival

It appears as if the South Manchester Beer Festival is going to materialise. The proposed festival is likely to be staged at the Poynton Social Centre on Saturday October 30th and Sunday 31st. It is hoped to have 3 sessions (2 on Saturday and 1 on Sunday). The price and range of beers has not yet been decided but it is certain that an army of volunteers will be necessary if the festival is to succeed (or even get started). Volunteers are not only required for the Saturday and Sunday but also for the Friday and Monday to help set up/clear up the exhibition. As well as the beer it is hoped that some of the rooms will be used for traditional pub games and folk singing.

Further details will be available in next month's Opening Times and at the September branch meeting in the Gateway, Parris Wood.

Ads

WANTED

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

STOP PRESS Gasp! Shock! Horror? NEWS!...

Hartleys Best Bitter is to be discontinued at the White Gates Inn, Hyde. It will be replaced by Theakstons Bitter and Old Peculiar. The sale of Hartleys was made difficult by both high delivery costs and the shortage of the amount of cellar space needed to keep a large delivery.

CAMRA does not regret the experiment if it has done anything to encourage people previously unfamiliar with this excellent beer to go out of their way to sample it when passing through Hartleys country.