

OPENING TIMES.

No. 16. STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA'S PUB NEWSHEET. AUGUST 1985. FREE.

THE SINKING OF SIMPKISS!

The latest bout of Brewery takeovers continued in July when Greenall Whitley took over the small West Midlands Brewery of J.P. Simpkins and promptly closed it down (last day of operations being July 12th.)

The 16 pubs will now be supplied by Greenalls subsidiary, Shrewsbury & Wem, which at least produces a range of 4 cask beers, some of which go into all of their houses. (Unlike the policy of our friends in Warrington who have now started selling keg beer from fake handpumps - the Elizabethan on Heaton Moor Road being a local offender)

Simpkins's own distinctive and truly local beers are now a thing of the past along with 20 jobs as all the Brewery staff have been thrown out of work, including head brewer John Simmonds who has now had 2 breweries close under him in as many years. It seems that to some all that Greenall Whitley land means is the Dole Queue, remember that next time you're in one of their pubs.

The latest news is that the former brewery is to be demolished to extend the car park of the former Brewery tap.

John Clarke.

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MORE WEBSTERS: The Mauldeth, Kingsway, Burnage, is now selling Websters Bitter on handpump alongside handpumped Wilsons Bitter.

PUB OF THE MONTH.

Stockport & South Manchester CAMRAS' Pub of the Month for August has been awarded to the Castlewood, Bridge Street Brow, Market, Stockport.

Tenanted by Don & Ailine Cleary for the past two years, the Castlewood serves an excellent pint of handpumped Wilsons Mild & Bitter and the pub has plenty of character & atmosphere, being on two levels an one of Stockports' steepest streets!

Recently tastefully redecorated and refurbished, the pub offers a good range of excellent food six days a week in the 'upstairs' room which is also available for functions.

With a wide range of activities from quizzes to cavers and the 18+ the Castlewood is a worthy winner.

Presentation night is on Thursday, August 22nd.

BRIIDGE - WATER.

CHESTERGATE, STOCKPORT -

FREEHOUSE: WILSONS BITTER
HOLTS MILD & BITTER
WEBSTERS GREEN
LABEL

all on handpump

LIVE MUSIC WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY.

HOT & COLD MEALS EVERY DAY

UP TO CLOSING TIME!

WILSONS & WEBSTERS D O W N

TO 63p A PINT!!!

ROUND BRITAIN DRINKER.The Scottish Highlands.

Unfortunately, the majestic and magnificent scenic splendour of the Scottish Highlands is almost without exception infested with some of the most insipid, uninspiring, boring BR Buffet-type licensed premises in the known universe! However, cask-conditioned beer is gradually becoming more widely available, albeit incredibly slowly outside of Glasgow & Edinburgh.

Nonetheless, anyone who intends to spend a holiday in the Highland Region in the next few months might benefit from the following list of real ale outlets which were visited this summer.

ONICH (Near Fort William - visited 23/6/85)

Craig Dhu Hotel (Main Rd. A82) - large plush hotel with small cocktail bar. Expensive. McEwans 80/- (H) 90p - very warm but good flavour.

Alice Ale (H) 90p - On trial basis. Not available on the night of my visit.

Onich Hotel (Main Rd. A82) Smart tourist Hotel. Excellent views of Loch Linnhe from rear lounge and/or Beer Garden. Arrols 70/- (H) 80p - bit warm, bit flat, bit bland!

Burton Ale (H) 90p - bit warm, bit flat, reasonable flavour.

FORT WILLIAM (2/7/85)

Nevis Bank Hotel (Belford Road)

Huge modern hotel at north end of town with cask beer in bar and lounge.

McEwans 80/- (H) 80p - very good

Youngers No. 3 (H) 80p - reasonable.

Ben Nevis Hotel (High Street)

Lively bar on main shopping Street.

Beware of "£1 notes" partly concealed under bar towels.

Youngers No. 3 (H) 77p - good.

DINGWALL (24/6/85)

National Hotel (Viking Lounge)

Modern lounge bar in large hotel at end of main street.

Youngers No. 3 (H) 85p - slightly cold, but good condition and flavour.

THURSO (26/6/85)

Central Hotel (Traill Street)

Modern Hotel lounge.

Youngers No. 3 (H) 85p - cold and gassy.

Possible top/blanket pressure.

Station Bar (Princes Street)

Superb, traditional, unspoilt gem with much wood panelling and original Bass, Youngers, Campbells & Aitchison mirrors

Used to bottle 'draught' No. 3 underneath the pub until 1958. A must!!
McEwans 80/- (A) 83p - good.

Youngers No. 3 (A) - 83p - excellent.

Marine Bar (Old Town harbour area)

Closed at the time of my visit but outside windows with stickers claiming cask conditioned McEwans 80/- & Youngers No. 3.

ISLE OF SKYE - Portree (1/7/85)

Caledonian Hotel (Wentworth Street)

Upstairs, young peoples bar with prominent juke box.

Herriots 80/- (H) 80p - warm but reasonable.

INVERGARRY (2/7/85)

Inn on the Garry - Main Road A87.

Attractive sandstone exterior with disappointing bistro bar at side.

Arrols 70/- (?) - not available.

Burton Ale (H) - 93p warm but reasonable flavour.

It should be fairly obvious to most people intending to visit these pubs that they should line their pockets with a considerable wad of notes before embarking on this 1,600 mile pub crawl!

Those wishing further information on additional real ale outlets north of the border should consult "Real Ale in Scotland", published by the Scottish Branches of CAMRA.

Jock Stroller

(Still at liberty somewhere in Derbyshire!)

PS: Almost every pub we ventured into had a clearly marked visible price list.

Heard at the Bar: In the Elizabethan, Greenalls, handpumped Keg: Q: "Is this Real Ale?"

A: "Well, it's not Real, Real Ale.

SYKES WINE

HEATON LANE,
STOCKPORT,
off Mersey Square.

BAR

Tel: 480 5996.

STOCKPORTS' WINE BAR WITH REAL ALE.....

DRAUGHT BASS, HIGSONS BITTER

& HIGSONS MILD

AT THE

GEORGE

NEWS FROM HAZEL GROVE

The Rising Sun, a Pennine Host pub, has recently undergone internal alterations which, believe it or not, actually improves the appearance of the pub. A small dining room has been extended further into the pub by utilising a corridor which was previously unused.

One can only hope that Pennine don't decide to convert it into one of their theme pubs in a couple of years time!

The bad news, though, is that the mild is now keg.

The Horse and Hockey, Wilsons, now also sells keg mild.

The alterations to the Bird in Hand, Robinsons, have eventually been completed and although the outcome is the usual bland, boring identikit pub, it must be looked upon as a vast improvement.

The Fallowfield, Fallowfield (surprise, surprise) now sells Wilsons Handpumped mild alongside the bitter.

The Ducie Arms on Plymouth Grove, Longsight, will hopefully be selling cask Chesters Bitter on handpump by the time we go to print.

Kipling on the A6

The Bar of the refurbished Rudyard Hotel on the main drag through Heaton Chapel now sells Handpumped Stones Bitter (78p & the only real Stones in our area) and Bass (82p). The typical Big Six upmarket interior does its best to live up to the exterior colonnades - not most peoples' idea of a down-to-earth local, but a welcome new real ale outlet nevertheless.

SHIP INN

STYAL,
CHESHIRE

DRINK IN STYLE.....

PAUL & SHERALYN WELCOME YOU TO

THE NEW HOME OF HOME MADE FOOD!!!

HANDPUMPED WILSONS MILD AND BITTER

HANDPUMPED MARSTONS PEDIGREE

& BURTON BITTER

FAREWELL MARIE.

Marie O'Leary of the Seven Stars, Holts, on Ashton Old Road, retired in mid-July. The tenancy has been advertised but in the meantime a relief manager is in charge.

Marie and family will be much missed in the district - it was their hard work and dedication that improved a formerly run-down pub to a standard that brought a richly deserved Pub of the Month Award in February '85 and selection for the next edition of CAMRA's National Good Beer Guide.

We understand Marie will be returning to her 'home territory' of Heaton Mersey so, while hoping to bump into her over a pint at the Griffin, CAMRA extends sincere good wishes for a happy and well-earned retirement.

ON THE RIGHT LINES?

A reliable source tells us that the Railway, Pottery Lane, opposite Ashburys Station, should soon be selling Boddingtons Bitter. Probably not by the time you read this, since some cellar work needs to be done, but it'll be good to see real ale return to this former Bass (and earlier Openshaw Brewery) tied house which sold cask Bass beers until 1980 or so.

VIVE LA LONGSIGHT!

You just can't keep the Longsight out of the news! Latest wheeze, in mid-July, was a French Fortnight (to celebrate Bastille Day?), which saw the barmaids resplendent in red berets and a menu boasting such delights as 'Cotelettes de Porc Poivrade a la Creme'. Perhaps more to the point, the beer maintained its usual good form for the festivities.

TERMINATED SHORT

Pennine Hosts Railway, Didsbury Road, Heaton Mersey, appears to have lost the handpumped Websters Bitter it re-opened with, leaving handpumped Wilsons Bitter at 70p as the only real ale.

THE PLOUGH - AN APOLOGY.

In our last issue we reported that the Plough, Shaw Heath (Wilsons) was to re-open after alterations with keg only beers.

We are advised by the licensee that this is not the case and that after cellar improvements Cask Wilsons Beers will be available. Full report next month - and our apologies for this error.

AROUND IN THE TOWN - Longsight and Levenshulme.

What follows is not intended to be a statement of the quality of the pubs or beer on all occasions, but is our opinion of both on the night of the crawl.

This was definitely a crawl which degenerated throughout its duration. A fine early start was made at 6pm at the Longsight. Much has already been said of this place, its only fault seems to be the fact that it's new! At 6-30 the early starters joined the crawl proper at the Wagon & Horses. The beer was a good average in this large Hosts pub. It would seem to be ripe for 'treatment'. The managers from the Midway have recently moved here and their pile of Pennies certificate is on the wall, so don't worry you're not in the wrong pub! A quick check in the Ducie established that Chesters Bitter was to be on by Wednesday or Thursday, 5th./6th. July. Then on to the Day Horse, a modern Boddies pub. The beer was good, the pub uninspiring.

The Crown came next, yet another Host house this time blessed with a "Take 2" illuminated sign above the bar which was totally out of keeping with the pub. The beer was good, but nothing to write home about. The Garrett was eagerly looked forward to by all present, its most notable feature being the price of the Drabs (Holts' for the uninitiated!) The beer was O.K., in fact one of our number waxed lyrical on its excellence, I suppose no one's perfect! We met with an uninteresting sight here, a white 'cow' that has to be seen to be believed. Those laziest amongst us cadged a lift to the next stop, the Polygon, a bitter only Boddies pub. A quiet, comfortable pub with reasonable beer.

The return to Wilsons Land was begun by the Horseshoe, where the beer was quite reasonable, but far too cold. Jim dropped his beer and had the cheek to blame a slippery glass! Finally the crawl returned to Stockport Road and the home run! First on the straight was the Levenshulme, a run of the mill bitter only pub, managed by the ubiquitous Host group. Next came another Host house, the Pack Horse, again Bitter only where the only interesting feature was the glasses. A great pity the bitter was'n't as interesting as the glasses!

Only three to go from here, the first being the Union, a Boddies house where

the bitter achieved a spread of opinion ranging from excellent to little better than undrinkable. The prevailing opinion seemed to lean to the former. Our penultimate port of call was the Farmers Arms where handpumped Chesters (I think) was available. Doubt was expressed over the quality of the beer, and Rhys left most of his pint undrunk! The ultimate destination was ultimate in more ways than one! The Midway is a recent 'conversion' by Hosts. The Beer was extremely poor, there were unwashed glasses everywhere, and the pub was packed to the door. Perhaps the place is best summed up by a little scenario observed by us:

Bouncer/Doorman: "Hope to see you again"
Departing Girl: "I doubt it"

This crawl could have been far more compact had more pubs in the area sold real ale; and as an area it is ripe for CAMRA to return to grass roots and start campaigning. Much of the beer was little better than mediocre, much of it was too cold, and one pub served grossly short measure.

I only hope that our Branch name change doesn't lead to South Manchester being ignored as the poor relation.

Carole Brooks.

Marston's Burton Bitter has been withdrawn from the Shady Oak, Bramhall. The seven remaining beers are selling well and invariably in good form.

The Jolly Sailor in Davenport, now sells Websters Bitter alongside the Wilsons.

THE
NELSON.

WELLINGTON ROAD SOUTH,
STOCKPORT.

HANDPUMPED WILSONS MILD & BITTER

WIDE RANGE OF LUNCHTIME FOOD

MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS.

PUB GRUB.

This Month features a pub in a more out of the way area - the Travellers Call on Ashton Old Road. Previously run-down and even closed for a time, this has now been converted into a comfortable, thriving free house serving Boddies & Thwaites beers on excellent form (the Thwaites Bitter was particularly good on my visit). This is a heavily pubbed area so it was quite a gamble to take on the pub but it certainly seems to have paid off with a good trade at lunchtimes and at night (quite an achievement these days).

Also unusual, and again enterprising, is that food is available early evening from 5.30 - 9pm as well as lunchtimes.

The menu consists of a wide variety of set dishes ranging from sandwiches to dishes like Cumberland sausages & Pork chop or Gammon & Pineapple at about £2.20 each. In addition each day sees about 4 specials, one usually being home made soup (eg potato & leek), and the others more substantial including, on my visit, meat & potato pie, steak & onions in beer, and tandoori chicken, all accompanied by chips, vegetables (not canned) and salads as appropriate. The main specials were £1.75 each & I chose the steak & onions in beer which turned out to be excellent. The steak was surprisingly tender & the sauce, although thin, was really tasty. The chips looked home made & the vegetables (peas & carrots) were the best I've had in a pub for a long time (they actually tasted of something!) Portions are generous but if you are a real pig there's gâteau & cheesecake to finish off with.

Definitely worth a visit. If you are in Manchester and want somewhere a bit

BOARS

HEAD

MARKET PLACE,
STOCKPORT.

SAMUEL SMITHS OLD BREWERY BITTER.

PUB FOOD DAILY - LIVE JAZZ AND
ROCK 'N ROLL.

different for lunch Buses 118, 119, 120 & 121 from Piccadilly will drop you off near the pub (it's just before Grey Mare Lane) Try it and see.

Footnote: For all 'OT' readers travelling to the West Midlands a good place to eat is the Brewery Inn at Oldbury (Brewery tap of Holt, Plant & Deakin, an Allied Brewery Company). They produce mammoth double decker butties for an incredible 65p!

BRIDGE THAT GAP!

Stockports latest Frehouse, the Bridge-water on Chester gate, has replaced Wilsons Mild with Websters Green Label. It was on excellent form when sampled - with the added attraction of being available at a cut down price of 63p from Monday, 5th., August.

Seen in the Toilet! - In the Public bar Gents of the Mitre, Greenwich: "Hand Washing facilities are available in the saloon bar toilet." ♀ We know Londoners are supposed to be class-conscious, but this is ridiculous!!

BURTONWOOD KEG KAPERS

A recent 'What's Doing' mentioned that the handpumps at Wigans' Royal Oak were not dispensing cask conditioned ale.

Another sneaky trick from Burtonwood has now come to light, in the Black Lion at Llanfaethlen, Anglesey (a GBG Pub). The pump clips on both Mild & Bitter pumps say 'cask-conditioned', but the mild is not. (The price list gives a clur, they're both 70p). The mild is surprisingly palatable (probably because the CO2 pressure is kept very low) but apart from being completely misleading for unsuspecting drinkers, it is a blatant breach of Trade Descriptions. This was politely pointed out to the Licensee - sticky tape over 'Cask Conditioned' was suggested as a temporary measure, but so far no action has been taken.

The Waldorf in Manchester Centre is at present undergoing extensive alterations which have involved the demolition of the entire front of the pub. Having failed to find a purchaser, Whitbreads have decided that drastic action is necessary to make the pub pay although it remains to be seen whether this includes keeping any of the previous character & traditional beer. Watch this space for a further report after re-opening.

ALL CHANGE IN REDDISH.

The Houldsworth, Whitbreads pub in Reddish is closed for refurbishment only a couple of years since the last one. It's remarkable how quickly dimmed lights, plastic grapes & the landlords 'taste' in art become passé. Builders say they are moving the bar to the middle of the pub and making it open plan. Apparently it is based on a similar design as one on the Wirrall. Lets hope the handpumped Chesters Bitter & Mild survive the changes.

Plans have been submitted to renovate the Union, Broadstone Road, as predicted earlier in 'O.P.' The toilets, at present in a terrible state, are being moved next door (now occupied by a derelict cottage) & the bar is being moved to where the downstairs living quarters are. Whilst something needs to be done why can't Robinsons avoid creating yet another semi-open plan pub. Mind you the current opinion in the pub is that they will believe that the Brewery will spend money when they see it.

Congratulations are due to Boddington for the paint-job on the exterior of the Crown on Heaton Lane, Stockport. Gone is the boring brown & yellow standard Boddies decor, to be replaced by a colour scheme that really brings the character of the pub alive with the fine details picked out in green, purple & gold. Inside a complete redecoration seems to have worked wonders with custom now picking up again after slumping disastrously over the past year.

A cat's eye view: "I'm going to get a brother, any ideas for suitable names?

- Theakston Cat.

PS: Can I preserve dairies?

CASTLEWOOD

(HOLE IN WALL)

BRIDGE STREET BROW, MARKET,
STOCKPORT.

TEL: 430 5529

WILSON'S REAL ALE - HANDPUMPED,

PUB FOOD MONDAY TO SATURDAY AND
BANK HOLS

11-30 - 2-00

Function Room available.

MANCHESTER ARMS

WELLINGTON ROAD
SOUTH,
STOCKPORT.

1984 CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR!!!!

FINE ROBINSONS ALES.

BOOGIE CLUB EVERY SUNDAY

AT 8 p.m.

MAKE STOCKPORT BOOGIE!!!!

PICK OF THE PUBS???

If you venture into any of the local John Smiths pubs you may be tempted to pick up a copy of a glossy booklet called 'Pick of the Pubs'. Judging from the few local entries this should be the most inaccurate and badly researched pub guides ever. For example the Tom Thumbs (or Tom Thumb as this laugh a minute book puts it) on King Street West, Stockport is 'close to Lyme Park' Well, what's 5 miles or so between friends? and anyway while you're looking for Lyme Park in the centre of Stockport you might wander out to 'Romily' & the Duke of York which, you'll be surprised to find sells the excellent handpumped bitter of which there's no mention in the 'guide'.

This is not the only John Smiths guide to run into inaccuracy problems - the East Midlands edition had to be reprinted following complaints from licensees and customers alike although like this one it presumably announces 'every effort has been made by John Smiths to ensure accuracy in this publication.'

Oh, by the way, although it does seem to be given away free it has a cover price of 50p - if anyone asks you to pay that remember - you have been warned!!

Belated compliments are due to Robinsons for the external renovations at the Unity on Wellington Road South, Stockport.

The removal of the shabby blue paint has revealed all of the original features which are now illuminated at night.

It makes you wonder what other gems are buried under years old layers of paint.