

OPENING TIMES.

No. 18 STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA'S PUB NEWSHEET OCTOBER 1985 FREE.

PUB PRICE LISTS - CAMRA SURVEY

SHOWS 1/3rd OF PUBS IGNORE THE LAW.

As mentioned some months ago, members of the local CAMRA Branch have made a survey over the 'summer' of pubs in the area just to see how many keep to the Law and show a price list. The law states that a list must be clearly visible and we were surprised to find that despite this clear ruling almost one in three of the pubs surveyed had either no price list or one that was so obscure as to be useless. So what?, you may say, I know how much drinks cost in my local, who cares about anywhere else? Well, to be honest, we think you should. Why? Well, the history of the brewing industry over the last 20 years is one of continuing disregard of what the pub-goer wants both in terms of the beer they prefer and the type of pubs they want to drink it in. The late '60s & early '70s saw attempts to swamp the country with generally inferior keg beers and it was only the activities of CAMRA which at first halted and then reversed this trend. Although keg beers are now widely discredited the pub-goer today faces pressure from exciting publicity campaigns to drink less than exciting and overpriced lagers and many pubs are being tastefully converted into bizarre themes (I knew we'd get round to the Far Pavilions again) or bland open plan lounges (hello Robinsons). Our criticisms of these are often met with "Camra doesn't know what it's talking about etc." and it's true - pubs and beer are a matter of taste - so, this time, we decided to see how the brewing industry measured up to a question of fact, how they respect your legal rights. In respect of price lists they failed miserably. Here are the results in full:

BREWERY.	TOTAL SURVEYED	WITH LIST	WITHOUT LIST
TETLEY	6	4 (66.6%)	2 (33.3%)
WHITBREAD/CHESTERS	9	7 (77.7%)	2 (22.3%)
WILSONS/HOSTS	25	18 (72%)	7 (28%)
ROBINSONS	17	10 (58.8%)	7 (41.2%)
BODDINGTONS	13	10 (76.9%)	3 (23.1%)
HYDES	9	7 (77.7%)	2 (22.3%)
GREENALLS	8	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)
OTHERS	18	11 (61.1%)	7 (38.9%)
TOTALS	105	72 (68.5%)	33 (31.5%)

Continued overleaf.

PUB OF THE

MONTH.

Pub of the Month for October is the Junction Hotel, Cheadle Hulme (by Cheadle Hulme Station) and the presentation will be on Thursday, October 24th. John Holt has been the Landlord for 16 years and over that time has amassed a large number of regulars. The pub always seems busy whether it be at lunchtime when local working folk take advantage of the meals, or early evening when the commuters stop on their way home, or later when people gather for darts & pool or to socialise. The imminent completion of the back-room refurbishment, including an open fire, will see live music & entertainment is promised for the night of the presentation. Other points of note are the prices (Holts Mild 60p, Bitter 62p) which compare very favourably with other local pubs and the paintings created by a local leisure-time artist which are displayed in the lounge.

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!!

PRICE SURVEY RESULTS - continued.

As can be seen, Hydes and Whitbread came out best, but even here almost 25% of the pubs visited did not comply with the law. The worst performers were Robinsons, with over 4 out of 10 pubs with no price list.

Of course these results may not represent the whole tied estate of the brewer concerned, but we took random samples and think they are probably a fair guideline. 'Others' cover various breweries where the sample was too small to reflect reliably on their pubs and here there were wild fluctuations from 100% with price lists to 100% without.

We showed the results to the GMC Consumer Services Department, whose Director expressed his concern at the 'apparent high number of premises where the price legislation appeared to be ignored'. He has agreed to write to all breweries concerned reminding them of the law, although lack of resources means that the really effective way of maintaining the law, by inspection visits, is not possible at the moment. For our part we will be making a similar survey next year and it'll be interesting to see if there's any improvement. If you have any thoughts on the subject please write to 'Opening Times', all letters will be published.

Finally, thanks to all those members who did the groundwork for the survey, in particular Stuart Ballantyne, Jim Flynn, Malcolm Swallow and Paul Thompson.

John
Clarke.

BACK ON THE RAILS.

Banks's have bought the former Cheadle Railway Station (about $\frac{1}{2}$ way between the Gateway & Boddies Railway). Since it closed a few years ago it's had various industrial uses, and then, early in 1984, David Pollard applied for a licence - he was obviously planning to start brewing again. But nothing happened, and there have been no further developments until now, and provided all goes well, we should be looking for a Rail Ale Gain!

Letely, though, Banks's have been less than 100% dedicated to Real Ale - they are clinging to the gassy variety in three of their acquisitions on the Wirrall. To be fair though all their Greater Manchester ventures have the very welcome Cask Mild & Bitter (even if it's served through electric boxes!)

REAL TARTAN TERRORISTS????

Despite official denials, rumours still circulate that Scottish & Newcastle's Moss Side Brewery will be producing cask conditioned beer within the next 12 months (it cropped up again while on the Branch Stall at the Castlefield Warrival). A year ago this would have been welcome news but it's a different matter now - real ale from Moss Side would cast major doubts on the future of most, if not all, of the breweries operated by Matthew Brown should the S&N takeover bid be successful.

FAILSWORTH FAILS?

It seems that Manchester's only new Brewery, Failsworth, is in some trouble. A creditors meeting has been called and the outlook must surely be bleak. This is a great shame, especially as the Brewery seemed to be facing a settled future with the increasing success of the tied house, the New Wellington in Hyde. Two real ales will also disappear, Failsworth Bitter and the excellent Strong. Reasons for the failure of the Company will no doubt become clear but a lack of suitable free trade outlets in the County must have played a part.

WHY NOT?

Latest reports indicate that the proprietor of this unusual and engaging East Manchester Free House will now be staying put, though there may be some discreet internal alterations. The plan to park an aeroplane next to the pub appears to have been shelved.

CLOSURE.

The Midland, the big keg Bass pub on Hyde Road at Belle Vue, is closed "until further notice". We await more details.

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

ROUND BRITAIN DRINKER - An Eisteddfod Diary.Part Two.

Tuesday. No lunchtime beer - too much going on at the Eisteddfod - but evening sees me exploring Beeside again, starting in Flint at the Three Pigeons, Coleshill Street, one of the pubs Banks's acquired in the Cheshire Inns deal and now selling electric-pumped mild and bitter. This turns out to be the only pub in town that opens before 6-30 and is packed - I find myself wondering not for the first time, why we in CAMRA bother pushing for more liberal hours when so many licensees don't use the hours they've got! Eventually the George & Dragon on Church St. decides to open. This is a Burtonwood pub with free flow electric pumps marked simply Best Bitter & Mild - no indication of whether or not it's cask beer. What I actually receive 'Best Bitter' is a pint of pure nostalgia. After all, most keg beers these days have the gas turned down fairly low and sometimes you even get a hint of what the beer would taste like if it wasn't being served by aerosol from a dustbin. This stuff, though, is pure Red Revolution - enough gas to float and airship, deep-freeze temperature and a 'head' like an ice cream soda. I drink what I can of this parody of a beer & retire to the Cross Foxes, Church St., a Greenalls pub which (pleasant surprise) has all three Warrington beers on handpump and on good form. This is the first Greenalls Original Bitter I've seen in North Wales. On now to Holywell, where just by the bus stop is the excellent Volunteer, a decent Burtonwood pub where the 2 handpumped beers can be enjoyed in a variety of small low-ceilinged rooms, fortunately the town doesn't attract enough tourists to have tempted Burtonwood to prettify the place. The Volunteer was in the Good Beer Guide for many years but has been dropped from the current edition, in which Holywell is represented by the Cross Foxes (Ind Coope) & the Old Boars Head (Wilsons). I know neither pub but am determined to visit them because if they're better than the Volunteer they must be pretty special. As I enter the Cross Foxes the pub is deserted, the landlady watching television, the handpumps destitute of clips. I ask for Real Ale and she says there is none - no hint of surprise or apology, no suggestion that this might be thought to be an unusual state of affairs in a Good Beer Guide Pub. The Boars Head is a bit better, at least it's got beer average Wilsons Mild & Bitter (72p) in nondescript surroundings. If either of these two makes it to the '86 Guide I shall not be pleased. After more Wilsons at the Beaufort Arms, a would be trendy bar where television is the main focus of attention, I walk down the Greenfield Valley (interesting Industrial Archaeology here, if you're

in the area outside opening hours) for good handpumped Greenalls Mild & Bitter in the Packet House at Greenfield, an attractive between the wars pub, before finishing off in Mostyn at the 17th., century Lletty (formerly The Honest Man), where both Burtonwood beers are on handpump & are excellent.

Wednesday.

Lunchtime in the Cathedral City of St. Asaph. Once again pubs seem to have trouble opening on time. The New Inn, lower Denbigh Rd., Lees mild & Bitter is reasonably punctual & a good pint. After passable Brew X1 at the Bryn Dinas opposite the Cathedral (M&B Mild also available) I drop in to the Red Lion on Gemig St., a lovely old coaching Inn that's escaped intrusive modernisation - it's a Tetley pub that as well as Bitter & Burton Ale is selling Banks's Bitter. Banks's seem to be guesting in a few North Wales Allied pubs these days I first noted the phenomenon at the Crown in Caernarfon in 1984. Banks's is good but at 75p it ought to be. The food's expensive too - £2.20 for a bowl of Chilli little more than half the size of the ones served up at the Marble Arch for £1.25 in town. Now it's Marstons again at the Bull, which has Burton Bitter and Pedigree on handpump, mild on electric and an amazing collection of bric-a-brac in the lounge - the Good Beer Guide calls it 'unique' which is pushing it a bit (think of the Canny Mans in Edinburgh, not to mention the Yew Tree at Cauldon) but it certainly gives the pub that extra something. After pausing for more Burton Bitter (mild also available) at the Swan, I finish the session at the Talardy by the expressway flyover. This is a Pennine Hosts pub, and anything they do to it - Sports and Far Pavillions not excluded - will be an improvement on the present decor! A pleasant enough building externally, some years ago it was done out inside in the most ham-fisted mock-Tudor you have ever seen - a particularly gruesome touch is garishly coloured plastic simulating stained glass windows. Continued on Page 6.

DRINK IN STYLE.....

SHIP INN

STYAL, CHESHIRE.

PAUL & SHERALYN WELCOME YOU TO THE

HOME OF HOME MADE FOOD!!!

HANDPUMPED WILSONS MILD & BITTER

MARSTONS PEDIGREE &

WEBSTERS YORKSHIRE BITTER.

P U B G R U B.

This month Pub Grub has been to one of the newest pubs in our area; Banks's The Longsight in Belle Vue. Opened earlier this year the Longsight replaced the old pub of the same name which formed part of the now demolished main entrance to Belle Vue. From outside it looks like many other modern purpose built pubs but inside it is clear that a lot of money and thought has gone into the place, much use being made of natural wood, etched & stained glass. Apart from the large lounge & vault there's also a family room, which seems to be the trend these days. The quality of the beer is also high, which is more than can be said of the old Longsight with both Mild (66p) & Bitter (71p) selling well (in Banks's Wolverhampton homeland, mild sales are something like 75% of the total, believe it or not.)

I visited the Longsight on a Monday lunchtime & business was very slack, indeed it's hard to imagine where the lunchtime trade is likely to come from but this has'nt stopped quite a varied menu being available. On my visit there was a choice of steak & kidney pie, lasagne or chicken a la ting (all at £1.80) or a cold table consisting of pork pie, cheese etc., from 60p. I picked the chicken which came in a savoury white sauce with mushrooms & peppers. Accompanied by generous portions of boiled potatoes, peas & carrots. I found it almost too much to finish and had to pass up the chance to sample the cherry pie & cream (60p) All well cooked and presented (although in a tray, the cherry pie reminded me of school dinners a bit!), the food at the Longsight is certainly worth a try and deserves support.

Finally, in last month's article I described the Three Tunnes curry as 'not too hot'. For those who insist on misunderstanding this, I was, of course, referring to the heat of the curry and not its quality. (OK Andy?)!

John Clarke.

STEAK-EATERS NEWS.

The Didsbury, the Berni Inn near the Cock that's been selling handpumped Wilsons Bitter of late is currently closed for alterations. Berni recently merged with fellow Grand Metropolitan Hotels subsidiary the Host Group - so anything could happen!!

DUKE OF EDINBURGH LATEST.

The Duke of Edinburgh (Tetleys), Mill Street, Clayton, receives its new Landlord on October 4th. Fred Fox, who will run the pub together with a business partner, comes to the Duke from the Prince of Wales (Whitbread Chesters) Abbey Hey, Gorton. Some months ago this magazine had some fairly uncomplimentary things to say about the Prince of Wales beer following a CAMRA pub crawl round Abbey Hey; however we believe that was the sort of 'one-off' bad night that can affect any real ale pub (it makes what cask beer interesting they say) and we expect Fred to follow in Pete Traynors footsteps by providing top-class cask beer in this excellent, but under-frequented Tetley Pub.

Speaking of Pete, he and Margaret are now firmly established at the Bull's Head in Mobberley, a splendid village pub in a part of Cheshire that's blessedly free of the labradors-and-green-wellies brigade. Tetley Mild & Bitter, as good as you'd expect from the Duke, are 69 & 73p respectively (well this is Cheshire) and for the future there's a chance of Burton Ale as well. One big bonus of the pub is a well-used bowling green - so bring your woods! The Bull's Head is situated just off the B5085 Knutsford-Alderley Edge Road, O.S. ref 790796.

ON THE MOVE.

Very best wishes to the future to Ian & Dot Brookes of the Manchester Arms, Wellington Road, Stockport, (Pub of the Year 1984, 1986 GBG) who are moving shortly to the lush pastures of Stockport Market Place, to take over the tenancy of the Bakers Vaults. Ian assures us that he intends to open the pub rather more often than seems to be the case at the moment!

BOARS

HEAD

MARKET PLACE,
STOCKPORT.

SAMUEL SMITHS OLD BREWERY BITTER

PUB FOOD DAILY - LIVE JAZZ AND

ROCK 'N ROLL.

AROUND IN THE TOWN: Boozers Bliss -
The Hyde Road Crawl.

(This is not a statement on the quality of the pubs or beer on all occasions, but our opinion on the night of the crawl.)

7pm, 30th., August saw a hardcore of 3 hardy souls gather in the Rock, Hyde Rd. (Tetleys), opposite Belle Vue at the start of what was to be an excellent Crawl. The Rock is a pleasant, small tiled pub, quiet at the time of our visit, but it gets busy later on. We were all favourably impressed with the Tetely Bitter.

We moved on to the Coach & Horses, Robinsons, where our party was augmented by one. The pub has an excellent small vault, and a lounge containing an organ complete with organist. An impressive array of handpumps showed all the Robinsons Beers & their original gravities although sadly the good Best Bitter & average mild were sold through electrics.

A further member joined at Hydes' modern Pineapple. The pub had a pleasant exterior, and forgettable interior, and was fairly quiet until the jukebox started. However, opinions on the Bitter ranged from good to excellent & the Mild was considered fairly good. We then ambled on to the Suburban (Lees), a modern estate pub with a lively vault and quiet lounge, the latter having photos of old Gorton on the walls. Whilst the Bitter was good, unfortunately the same could not be said of the mild. The numbers on the crawl were expanded again when we reached the Plough, a classic, large multi-roomed Robinsons pub with ornate tiling. The pub is excellently unspoilt, but for how much longer? The Best Bitter was very pleasant, but the one person who tried the mild regretted it, and was unable to finish the drink!

We then proceeded up to the Angel, a very pleasant Greenalls pub, this time with a busy lounge & quiet vault. From the trophies on the walls, it is obviously a keen darts players pub. The urinals contained anti-splash panels - rare these days! All present thought the mild good, although opinions on the Bitter tanged from excellent to OK.

We then moved on to the Cotton Tree (Wilsons), a friendly pub with a smartish lounge and basic vault, containing a Manchester dartboard. The mild was good and the bitter not bad! Next came the Royal Oak, a pleasant Boddingtons pub knocked through to make one room and containing false wooden beams. Whilst the mild is keg, the bitter was of a fairly high standard.

Then came the rural pub of the evening, the excellent Vale Cottage (Wilsons), hidden well off the beaten track at the bottom of Kirk Street. The pub is small & cosy and full of bric-a-brac, and is like a country pub that has been transported into Manchester. The beer matched the decor, with the Mild verging on the excellent and the Bitter not far behind.

After this came the comparative disappointment of the recently renovated and fairly quiet Lord Nelson (Wilsons). This once again sold excellent mild, but only poor to average bitter.

We then went up the hill to the Friendship (Marstons), a multi-roomed, wood panelled inter-war pub, again of a high quality. The Bitter was good & the mild not far behind.

Finally we retraced our steps to the Waggon & Horses (Holts). This is a typical, cavernous Holts pub, with the original decor, resembling a 1950s station waiting room. Not only was the beer extremely cheap (Bitter 60p) but the Mild was superb and the Bitter very good.

Thus finished a crawl round one of the best drinking areas in South Manchester, in terms of variety, quality and pubs. All who went on the crawl would heartily recommend it for an evening out.

Andy Cooper.

NEW BREW?

We have a report of a proposal to establish a new small brewery either in or to service the South Manchester area. Hopefully more news of this should be available next month. Such a venture would be warmly welcomed - Free Houses take note!!

CASTLEWOOD

(HOLE IN WALL)

BRIDGE STREET BROW, MARKET, STOCKPORT.

TEL: 180 5529

WILSONS REAL ALE - WEBSTERS GREEN LABEL

HANDPUMPED.

PUB FOOD MONDAY TO SATURDAY & BANK HOLS.

11-30 - 2-00

Function

Room

Available.

GOODBYE TO HARTLEYS.

It's only about a year since Hartleys Bitter first appeared alongside the Robinsons Mild & Bitter in the Cheadle Hulme Conservative Club - and this was the first Hartleys in the South Manchester (as it was) Branch area.

This is a private membership Club, and sales, of course, are limited to members and their guests - a further restriction is that the Club is only open evenings and week ends. Anyway the Hartleys never really took off - as sales declined, it was 'not on', but now the dispenser has disappeared, and it's back to the Robinsons.

1986 GOOD BEER GUIDE

'OPENING TIMES IS OFFERING ITS READERS THE CHANCE TO BE THE FIRST TO OBTAIN THE NEW 1986 GOOD BEER GUIDE.

THE GUIDE LISTS OVER 5000 OF THE BEST PUBS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, ALONG WITH ALL THE REAL ALES IN THE COUNTRY.

NO BEER DRINKER SHOULD BE WITHOUT ONE!!

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Allow 21 days for delivery. P & P is Free.

MANCHESTER WELLINGTON ROAD SOUTH, STOCKPORT.

ARMS

1984 CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR!!

FINE ROBINSONS ALES.

BOOGIE CLUB EVERY SUNDAY,

AT 8 p.m.

MAKE
STOCKPORT
BOOGIE!!!!!!!

ROUND BRITAIN DRINKER: cont. from page 3.

However the Wilsons' Bitter (74p) is very acceptable, served both by handpumps and by free-flow electrics - the first Original Bitter counter mounting I've seen for this means of dispense - and the lunchtime session had put me in just the right frame of mind to appreciate the afternoon performance of the leading Welsh Folk Group, Ar Log.

Early evening I try the nearby village of Dyserth, but unfortunately only one of the four pubs is open by the time I have to return to the Eisteddfod. However the handpump Burtonwood Mild & Bitter in the Cross Keys are excellent, the view over the Vale of Clywd superb, and the Landlords' even put the Morning Advertiser out for his customers to read, so I learn of Boddingtons' buying up pubs in Blackpool! - Rhys P. Jones.

Concluded next month.

CLASSIFIED AD.

PUB PIANIST WANTED FOR CHESHIRE PUB.
'PHONE MOBBERLEY 3134.

OPENING SOON.

Much activity, both inside and out, at the Egerton Arms, St. Petersgate heralds the fact that the pub will shortly be opening its doors again after a lengthy closure. Planning problems have delayed the original opening date, which should have been last March.

OPENING TIMES is written and published by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd. Copy may be freely used in other publications, but due acknowledgement should be given. The views expressed in Opening Times are not necessarily those of the Campaign.

News, views, letters and articles for inclusion are always welcome. Send your contributions to the Editor, S.H. Higgins, 48, Moorcroft Drive, Burnage, Manchester M19 1WH.

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As reported last month from the December edition Opening Times will appear in new format and with over double the present circulation. In order to meet the printers deadline for this first 'new' O.T. copy date for both November and December Editions is Wednesday, October 30th.

Advertising in the new Opening Times is cheap and reaches over a thousand pub goers - contact the Editor for details.