

Opening Times



No. 30 STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA OCTOBER 1986

ANOTHER MILESTONE

By Phil Levison.

Banks's is a brewery that has only recently started appearing on the Branch pub lists, but in less than two years three brand new pubs have been added - the Longsight, the Station at Cheadle and the Milestone on Burnage Lane; and these are in addition to three refurbishments of ex Wilsons pubs - the Falcon, Gorton Arms and Gransmoor.

It started in December '83, when the Longsight at the back of the Belle Vue site first started selling the Wolverhampton brewery's products, including cask-conditioned Mild, Bitter & P.B. (a lighter gravity bitter, since discontinued). This was to be the toe-hold for Banks's incursion into the area, with a completely new Longsight planned on a nearby site. Although the pub was due to open by Christmas '84, building problems made this unattainable - so, early in December, almost literally overnight, Wilson's Falcon, behind the Plymouth Grove Hotel, suddenly blossomed forth in Banks's livery - it was such a rapid change that some of the locals didn't know about it, and Wilsons Order Department only found out when beer deliveries suddenly ceased.

Two more refurbishments of ex Wilsons pubs followed - the Gorton Arms near Belle Vue opened its doors on March 1st., 1985, and the Gransmoor on Ashton Old Road followed three weeks later. The poor old 'New' Longsight was still having problems and it was April 3rd. before it finally opened. It had been worth waiting for though, with a tastefully furnished lounge, a roomy vault and something new for the area, a specially designed family room. These pubs are in our Branch area but nearby we had the Mitchell Arms, Ashton New Road, which opened on December 18th 1984 & the Osborne, Rochdale Road (29th., March '85).

Next, work started on the old Cheadle Railway Station, and after being extensively re-built and enlarged it opened in June this year as the Station at Cheadle. This has proved to be an extremely popular pub & plans are afoot to extend the car park. It's a one-bar pub with a good selection of lunch-time food and the inevitable railway memorabilia.

The Milestone on Burnage Lane was the last of the three new pubs to open on August 19th. on the site of an old petrol station. Once again the style of pub-fitting is very recognisable, with expensive looking woodwork and brass rails, coloured glass and tiles, there is a separate vault - even if it is an unusual place to find a central island fitment covered with artificial greenery.

Whilst we have concentrated on the locality Banks's have also been busy elsewhere - the Albert at Whitefield is having a refit, and the Sparking Clog at Radcliffe is brand new and both are due to open later this year.

Continued on page 3

RICHARD AND SUSAN GENDERS -

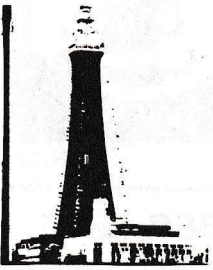
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HOLIDAY ALE

4. BLACKPOOL

By Peter Edwardson.

"There's a famous seaside place called Blackpool, that's noted for fresh air and fun...."

So begins the famous monologue 'Albert & the Lion', which the Editor insisted on reciting to our reconnaissance Party once a few drops of ale had loosened his tongue! Indeed 'Fresh Air & Fun' is still what Blackpool is all about - all the famous attractions are going strong, the Tower, the Pleasure Beach, the Golden Mile, the Illuminations, and of course the unique trams - and the modern entertainments seem to get ever more lavish and sophisticated.

On the ale front you may be forgiven for thinking that Blackpool is full of vulgar tourist clip-joints selling keg beer at inflated prices, and true there are places like that, especially on the Promenade, but there are also some good real ale pubs, if you know where to look.

The best area is around North Station, and there's three worth a visit immediately opposite. The Kings Arms (1) is a fairly plain two-bar Higsons house with Mild and Bitter and Boddingtons Bitter which replaced Draught Bass after the takeover. Almost next door is the Wheatsheaf (2), formerly a Matthew Brown pub now converted to Theakstons. It has a comfortable, recently modernised one-bar interior and has Theakstons Best Bitter, XB & Old Peculier, plus Matthew Brown Lion Mild. Again almost next door is the Ramsden Arms (3) a 1930s mock Tudor pub which takes its name from the former owners Ramsdens of Halifax. It is now a Tetley house with Mild and Bitter, Jennings' Bitter & Ind Coope Burton Ale. There's a large plush lounge and a fine wood panelled vault complete with half-size snooker table and pool. A wide range of food is available, the steak & kidney pie, mash & peas at £1.20 being especially good value.

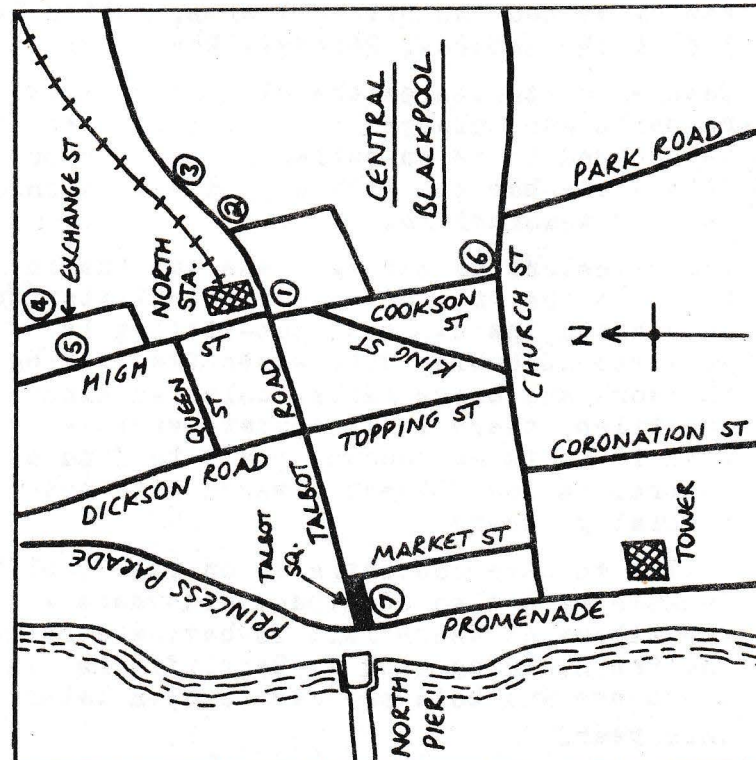
North of the station on Exchange Street

Thwaites Mild & Bitter can be found at the Empress (4), an impressive back-street pub with fine decorative stonework. Inside it is basic and cavernous, and seems little changed since the '50s. Nearby, Matthew Brown Lion Mild and Bitter & Theakstons Old Peculier can be enjoyed in rather more cosy surroundings at the Mount Pleasant (5) on High Street.

To the south of the station, the Grosvenor (6) on Cookson Street serves Bass Special Bitter & Draught Bass, the latter being very good value at 76p a pint. This is an imposing red-brick building where two pubs have been converted into one and has a basic vault and a large, plush, rambling lounge. Fairly close by on Topping Street, the Criterion has been a recent sad loss to real ale. A Tetley house once described as 'town centre pub with character' it has been drastically modernised and decked out in appalling blue & mauve paint, and offers 'stimulating music and an unrivalled range of lagers' - but no decent beer!

Away from the station, the availability of real ale is more patchy. You even need to be careful in Thwaites pubs, which elsewhere virtually guarantee the real stuff. Most bars on the prom only offer keg, but two are worth a mention. The Breezes Bar in the Clifton Hotel (7) on

MAP.



HOLIDAY ALE - Continued.

Talbot Square offers Draught Bass, Youngers Scotch Bitter & McEwans 80/-, plus a Trivia machine which we found quite lucrative. Further South, on Central Promenade, is Uncle Peter Websters, a trendy young people's bar named after the famous showman. It serves three real ales - Tetley Mild & Bitter and Jennings' Bitter - which were all in good condition and seemed to be enjoyed by a good proportion of the clientele.

A little off the Promenade near the South Pier is the Dog & Partridge, a Boddingtons house on the junction of Lytham Road & Waterloo Road - a fairly tasteful modern pub with mild & bitter plus Higsons Bitter.

Finally two pubs further out from the town centre are worth a mention. The Bispham Hotel at Bispham, a two mile tramride north, offers Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter and is a large comfortable one-room lounge. To the South of the town, and well off the sea front, is the Saddle, on Whitegate Drive, Marton. Bass 4X Mild, Special Bitter & Draught Bass are available and the pub is described in the Good Beer Guide as 'old inn of character with interesting collection of old pictures and photos.'

To sum up, there's a good choice of real ale in Blackpool, and some characterful pubs to drink it in. In a word of warning, though, a lot of pubs near the Promenade have bouncers on the door and one, Matthew Browns Old Bridge, refused us admission on the grounds that it was 'couples only'. When you visit the 'lights' take this edition of 'O.T.' with you and you should'nt have any problem finding a decent pint!

ANOTHER MILESTONE - cont. from page one.

Looking ahead there's another new pub being built at the Manchester end of Seymour Grove and further afield Banks's bought the Cheshire Inns group, and several other pubs have been added to bring the total to 17 in the Chester area, and Hoole Hall just outside Chester is to become a Hotel & Conference centre.

A tribute to the high standard of the pubs - two have been entered for CAMRA Pub Preservation Group awards - and the beer is high quality too, and cheap. Top of the range prices in this area are now 70p & 74p for mild & bitter.

Black Country Bitter from Hansons has joined Banks's Mild & Bitter in most of the pubs & is usually priced midway between the two. One point to watch though - the bar corks for Banks's give a clear indication of the type of beer - in our pubs it's 'cask conditioned' - but the Hansons fittings give no such assurance.

So Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries are new to the area with good beer in pleasant surroundings - so why not give it a try?

DOG GONE!

Despite several stays of execution, Boddingtons Buck & Dog, in Stockport, finally closed its doors on August 9th. Doubtless Boddies will be taking out some of the interior fittings - the Landlord was apparently offered £500 for some of the stained glass window fittings in the vault - and we will then have the dubious privilege of watching another famous Stockport pub go under the hammer in the name of progress.

Meanwhile Boddingtons have alterations in line for two more Stockport pubs - The Victoria, Ack Lane, Bramhall, is to have a conservatory extension while the Kings Arms, Portwood is to get a new lounge extension at the back and have the games room extended into the existing kitchen and toilet.

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STAGGER

THE ABBEY HEY CRAWL - by Angela Walker.

An early evening gathering at the Waggon & Horses, Hyde Road, marked the start of the '86 Abbey Hey Crawl. Holts mild & Bitter were both in good form and given the thumbs up by all present. Much needed signs of renovation were apparent in this large, tatty pub. There is also to be an extension to be built at the back and we look forward to the end result. Strolling across the road we found the Vale Cottage nestling down a side street (Kirk St). This is a very pleasant 'country cottage' style pub, seemingly far away from the bustle of a busy road which is actually only a few yards away. The Wilsons Bitter sampled was good, but the mild provoked an interesting debate. It was served from an unmarked handpump & was a sweet, cloying dark brew, not popular with those who tried it. Foul play was suspected! This was fortunate in retaining our credibility, for when enquiring at the bar we found it was none other than the brewery conditioned keg Special Mild, served through a handpump - very naughty! The staff assured us that it was selling better than the cask mild. Another short jaunt round the corner & we arrived at the Cotton Tree on Cross Lane where the mild was judged below average & the bitter slightly above - the pub has an interesting collection of brass & copper kettles. Next stop was the Royal Oak across the road. The Boddingtons Bitter was adjudged to be quite good but the pub did not leave much of an impression as it has been refurbished in a rather second division trendy style.

A brave campaigning spirit led some of the party to the Garibaldi (Constable St.) The halves of bitter sampled confirmed that it's still keg Tetleys. Onward to greener pastures...The Prince of Wales, Abbey Hey Lane, recently very tastefully refurbished. Here opinions varied on the beer - some thought the Chesters Bitter good, others not so

impressed. Rumours of real mild drove us into the Abbey Hey on Abbey Hey Lane, a Bass house selling the usual range of keg beers. No real mild & no printable comments were made on the beer sampled!

Pints of Wils ons mild & bitter were welcomed at the Hamlet across the road, with shouts of 'that'll do' & distinct nods of approval, both being on very good form. The only interesting feature of this pub is the ornate vine strewn portico over one of the outside windows.

MANCHESTER ARMS

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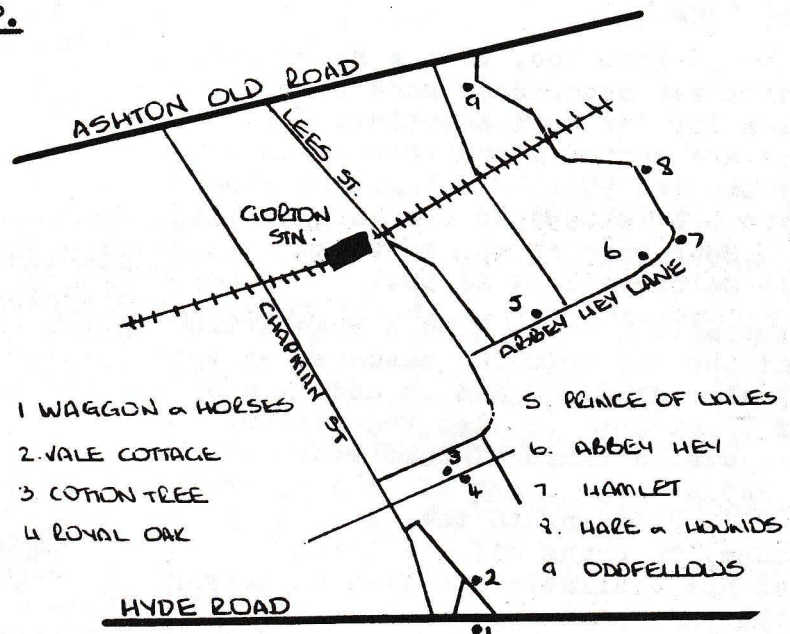
TEL:4805529

STAGGER - Cont.

The Hare and Hounds, further up Abbey Hey Lane, was the highlight of the evening. A veritable gem to coin a phrase. This lively multi-roomed local has a traditional layout & a cosy atmosphere. The Boddingtons Bitter was judged by all to be in excellent condition. A congenial atmosphere and a good pint of ale does wonders for the spirit; pity so many of the larger Breweries do not realise what marketable qualities these are.

Finally on to another Boddingtons hostelry, the Oddfellows. An extremely popular pub, although it must be said that once we fought our way to the bar through the crowds, we were served promptly by attentive bar staff. This pub is quite unusual in its modernisations by having an island bar...more places to prop the elbow! Both mild and Bitter were in good condition affording a pleasant end to an interesting evening.

MAP.



REAL ALE IN CENTRAL & SOUTH MANCHESTER - UPDATE no. 7.

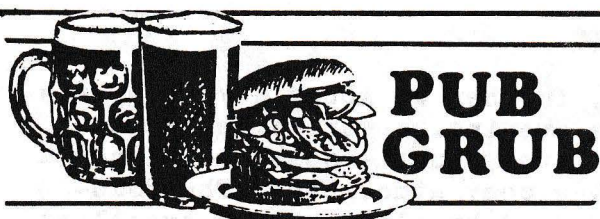
Two real ale gains this month-Banks's Milestone on Burnage Lane is now open selling Mild, Bitter & Hansons Black Country Bitter on electric pump and by contrast, those who enjoy being ripped off should head for Boddingtons reopened Royal Central (formerly Cox's Bar) on Museum St., City Centre, where handpumped Bitter is a thumping 86p a pint & is the only real ale, despite assurances by the brewery regarding their commitment to the beers of their Higsons & Oldham subsidiaries. Two pubs closed, for the immediate future though one hopes not for ever, are the Railway in Beswick & the Church Inn in Northenden.

The Waggon & Horses in the City Centre now sells Websters Choice, while the Travellers Call in Beswick has dropped Thwaites Bitter; on the mild front Tetley at the Manor House is now keg, but the Angel in Gorton has regained Greenalls Mild on handpump. Finally a recent check revealed that a gremlin had transposed the addresses of two Northenden pubs; the Crown is on Ford Lane while the Tatton is on Boat Im.

Escape to a better bitter

Burtonwood brew a better bitter





By John Clarke.

Manchester this month and the Manor House in Withington. It is primarily a young persons pub at night & comes complete with cocktail bar and neon. At lunchtime it attracts a wider clientele and, being less crowded, gives the visitor a chance to see the good job Tetley Walker made on the alterations with much use of natural brick & even a stone flagged floor around the front of the bar. Three cask beers are available, Tetley & Jennings Bitter & Ind Coope Burton ale - all on handpump and usually on fine form.

The food is good too, with a reasonably extensive set menu. Home made soup is 55p plus 15p for roll & butter. Main courses are varied & run from Steak & Kidney pie (£1.99), 'Old English' steak & potato pie (£1.99) to Lasagne, Chilli, Sweet & Sour Pork chops, moussaka or Steak & Onions all at £2.50.

Interestingly there's also a vegetarian dish of the day (stuffed pancakes on my visit) also at £2.50 and in addition 6 out of 7 quiches are also vegetarian. There's also a range of cold meats at £2.50 and a large range of salads, 'at least 20' according to the menu, to go with them. To round off Ice Cream Sundaes are available & coffee is served from the bar.

On my visit I chose the steak & kidney pie which turned out to be excellent - a light crisp pastry topping covered large chunks of steak & kidney. This came with a selection of vegetables & several roast potatoes; all excellently cooked. The other dishes looked equally good & the salads and cold table most tempting. The Manor House is certainly one to try & it boasts lunchtime food available 364 days a year - so if you can't make it during the week pop along Saturday or Sunday.

One final point - I can't write about the Manor House without mentioning their excellent football team who last month took on, and beat, a Spanish First Division side - Well done lads!

BRANCH DIARY...

OCTOBER.

- Thu. 9: 8pm Branch Meeting: Gateway, Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury.
 Mon. 13: Social: Grove, Clayton (Holts)
 Fri. 17: Trip to Stoke Beerex: Tel contact for Transport details.
 Mon. 20: Day trip to Theakstons, Masham. Tel. for details.
 Fri. 24: Minibus Stagger of Bramhall, Woodford & Cheadle Hulme.
 Mon. 27: Social: Whitworth, Rusholme (Marstons)
 Fri. 31: Pub of the Month: CHURCH, Ardwick Green.

NOVEMBER.

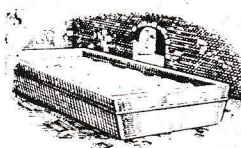
- Mon. 3: Social: Olde Vic, Chatham Street, Stockport.

All Monday Socials commence at 8-30pm.

Contacts: Business: Andy Cooper 0625 872641
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'OPENING TIMES': An apology.

We apologise for late distribution of this months Edition which has been caused by technical problems (Eds. Typewriter bust!)



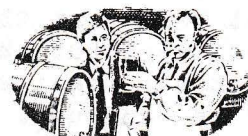
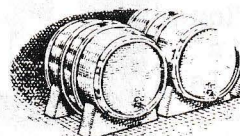
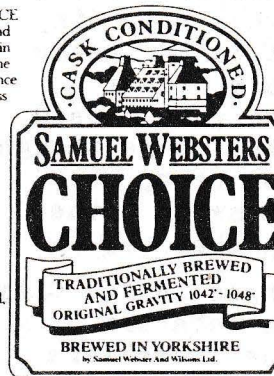
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Available only as a Cask Conditioned, handpulled, traditional ale, Samuel Websters CHOICE is considerably stronger with a higher gravity than normal bitters, which is why it costs a little more.



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As you would expect from a brewery with traditions and experience spanning a century and a half, our attention to detail doesn't stop there. Samuel Websters CHOICE is available only in selected and approved outlets, whose high standards of Innkeeping match our own.



MAKE IT YOURS

PUB OF THE MONTH

The Pub of the Month award for October goes to Gwyn & Margaret Davies of the Church Inn, Ardwick Green. The Church was considerably modernised & extended some while ago; it has always been a pub of character and the renovation was skillfully carried out to enhance the appeal of this popular rendez-vous.

Gwyn & Margaret became incumbents in December '85 and have worked hard, supported by enthusiastic staff, to develop this attractive pub. Previous to this their faces had become familiar at several of the area's Pennine Host pubs, notably the Nelson in Stockport.

Of special mention at the Church is the house charity - Guide Dogs for the Blind. Last year £1200 was raised & this summer events have included a Gala Day & a sponsored walk on the Pennine Way.

There's always a good pint of Wilsons Mild & Bitter, while those who prefer a less individualistic brew Websters Bitter is also available and Gwyn is taking the opportunity of the presentation night to introduce Websters Choice as a fourth traditional beer.

The presentation will take place on Friday 31st., October when an excellent night can be enjoyed & all are welcome. NB: You may have seen October 30th. mentioned in other CAMRA publications, however the date has been postponed one day as a result of clashing commitments in the pub.

CROWNED

Rumours that Alan Johnson & his wife are leaving the Crown, Northenden, are incorrect. They would like it known they are very happy at the pub and intend to stay for some considerable time.

Old Ship Inn, Styal.

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PENNINE PLAYTIME

Pennine Hosts latest wheeze is to instal play equipment in the shape of something called a Herbi Tree in the rear garden at the Jolly Sailor in Davenport. When the Jolly Sailor reopened after 'the treatment' it was apparently meant to be a 'style bar' with a 'high-tech image' - we didn't realise it was stylish hi-tech under 5s they were after.



Hanson's Black Country Bitter is a 1035° - 1036° lighter bitter offering the full flavour, clarity and clinging head of a distinctly Banks's beer. The revival of the ancient brewing skill of 'late copper-hopping' has created a Bitter of superb, individual character.

Available at the following Banks's & Hanson's pubs:

The Falcon, Chorlton-on-Medlock	The Longsight, Belle Vue
The Gorton Arms, West Gorton	Osborne House, Collyhurst
The Gransmoor, Openshaw	Mitchell Arms, Beswick
The Station at Cheadle, Cheadle	The Milestone, Burnage



PUB NEWS!

Following August's 'Stagger' of Holts pubs, which was compiled some months ago, we are asked to point out that the prices are now 61p & 63p throughout the pub, a rate and creditable price decrease for lounge drinkers. The beer's still just as good and the discreet extension works are progressing well at the Seven Stars, Ashton Old Rd.

Alterations at the Castlewood, Bridge Street Brow, Stockport, should be complete by the time you read this - the bar having returned to the rear of the pub, the ceiling lowered amongst the general improvements - a full report next month.

The new licensee at the Longsight comes from Banks's only pub in Nottingham - the Navigation. Peter Radford has also kept the Grandstand next to Derby County Cricket Ground.

Tetley's excellent little Rock Inn, Hyde Road, West Gorton, received a new licensee last month as Tommy Cleare took over the Old White Bear on Swan Street, City Centre, near Smithfield Market the Bear seems shamefully under visited by CAMRA enthusiasts, but should be worth a visit now Tommy's there. Meanwhile at the Rock the Irish connection will be maintained by new landlord Jimmy Donohue, whose first pub this is.

The Swan (Wilsons) on Shaw Heath, Stockport has now reopened and is a real ale gain with both Wilsons and Websters Bitter now available on handpump to replace the former keg. The Licensee is Tom Jones - who will be remembered from his days at the Warren Bulkeley. A full report next month.

Robinsons Church, Moseley St., Edgeley, is to have alterations & extensions. The layout will be more or less unchanged but there will be a new private entrance & the covered way leading to the toilets will be turned into a lobby. There will doubtless be the usual internal redecoration, which in the case of the Church is badly needed.

The Union, Ardwick (Wilsons) is to have minor alterations involving a new single storey toilet block and four parking places.

Marstons are planning extensive alterations to the Red Lion in Withington. Basically it's going to be a 'knock through' job with the current numerous smaller rooms at the front becoming in effect one larger one. Let's hope that as much of the pubs character as possible remains.

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Contributors: Jim Flynn, John Clarke, Humphrey Higgins, Peter Edwardson, Rhys Jones, Phil Levison.

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