

Opening Times

FREE



STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA SEPTEMBER 1987 No. 41

NEW BREWS SQUEEZED OUT

By
Humphrey
Higgins.

Since 1974 over 200 new small breweries have been started around the country - but over 60 have folded and many that remain struggle to stay in business.

CAMRA supports these 'micro breweries' because they enlarge choice, produce good beers at cheap prices (though this is not always passed on to the customer), they provide a boost to competition and they produce distinct local beers - the opposite of some of the bland big 7 national brands.

So why have so many folded? The answer lies within the licensing and 'tied house' system which has resulted in 46% of the pubs being in the hands of the Big 7 Breweries - and of the remainder the bulk are in the hands of the established independents, so the new boys have little chance to become established, let alone grow. But it's not just the tied system that's at fault - the so-called 'free house' is, in many instances, far from free - some houses are tied for many years by a big brewer in return for loans - in 1985 for instance Bass had £135.4 Millions tied up in free trade loans. The Brewers Society would have us believe that Free Houses are growing but they fail to recognise how many are in fact tied. The real size of the 'free trade' is shrinking fast. In Stockport & South Manchester, since the recent demise of the Midway, we now have only 5 Free Houses, and some of these are tied to some extent.

The Government, too, handicaps the small brewer by red tape. New Brewers in the U.K. pay a lot more beer duty than new entrants on the continent where a 'sliding scale' system exists in regard to the levying of beer duty. In Denmark, for instance, there is a 25% reduction on the first 2000 hectolitres produced by any brewer in any one year.

In CAMRA's submission to the Monopolies Commission investigation into the Brewing Industry we recommend that no brewer be allowed to own more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the pubs in any one licensing district and that each tenant and manager be given the right to stock one extra bulk beer of his choice in addition to his breweries products. This would result in more pubs being sold and thus encourage free houses and giving a chance for the small brewers to sell beer in Big 7 pubs.

With loans we recommend that ties be related to no more than 50% of the total bulk beers sold for a period of up to 5 years. Further any house with any tie should be forbidden to describe themselves as a free house. In regard to beer duty we propose that duty be suspended for the first 500 barrels of production, that we adopt a sliding scale of duty based on actual production & that we introduce a 'factory gate' system - levying duty when the beer leaves the brewery and not before.

Measures such as these offer hope for the entrepreneur, gives the consumer more choice and makes for wider competition - not bad aims for this Government! Over to you, Mrs. Thatcher!

THE CON CONTINUES!!

Not content with misleading the customer by serving keg beers through handpumps Greenall Witley are pulling the same trick with cider. The Bowling Green, Grafton Street, sells all 3 Warrington beers on genuine handpumps so when Scrumpy Jack, from Greenalls Symonds subsidiary that's available both in cask & keg form appeared on handpump you might think it was the genuine article. Not a bit of it - if asked, the licensee cheerfully admits that the 'handpump' dispenses pressurised cider.



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A HAVEN IN THE SHOPPING PRECINCT!





By John Clarke.

Following on from the Gransmoor last month, this time Pub Grub goes to another Banks's pub - the **Station at Cheadle**.

Opened about 12 months ago, the pub is unusual in that it represents a conversion of the old Cheadle station, closed by BR in 1967 - in view of its inconvenient location from Cheadle centre it's amazing that it stayed open so long. Despite its relative isolation the Station is an extremely popular pub both at lunchtimes and evenings - indeed in the evenings it can become too busy for comfort. Lunchtimes are quieter - it gives you the chance also to have a look round the pub and appreciate what a good job Banks's made of it - with their usual trademarks of much natural brick & wood plus etched and stained glass. The old platform has been turned into a conservatory, sitting in which can be disconcerting at times as the railway is still used by limestone trains which noisily trundle past from time to time.

The pub is one of Banks's more up-market pubs (designated gold star in their terminology, I believe) and the menu is correspondingly impressive. Served from an attractive food bar, with a table

of salads ready (one of the help-yourself type arrangements), there are a variety of hot and cold dishes - on my visit these ranged from Ocean Pie, County Lamb & veg casserole, Roast Beef, Steak & Mushroom Pie or Gammon, all at £2.65p, or cottage Pie at £2.40. All come with a choice of 2 veg, chips or roast potatoes. I chose the Ocean Pie - good pieces of fish and prawns in a savoury sauce, topped with potatoes, and my companion went for the Lamb casserole - tasty with plenty of meat. Both were difficult to fault and the other main dishes looked equally good.

The salads are £2.50 for pate, smoked ham or mackerel, Roast Chicken, Turkey or Quiche - once you've been served with the main ingredient it's help yourself to the vast selection of salads on display. I would say value for money varies here, the quiche looked to be in generous portions but the pate certainly wasn't.

A variety of sweets are available at 80p, I chose Lemon Meringue Pie & my friend picked a Strawberry Cream Horn - extra portions of whipped cream were also available at no extra cost but despite this, and the quality of both items, I thought they were a little over-priced.

For those not wishing to sample the excellent Banks's Mild and Bitter, coffee is available at 35p.

Any complaints? Well at busy times it would probably be better if more than just one person was behind the counter - service did tend to be slow and a small queue formed, if the pub had been busier this could have caused problems. To be charitable I will also assume that the lack of assistance didn't amuse the girl doing the serving, for whilst efficient, it certainly wasn't service with a smile!

Don't let that put you off though - the Station provides excellent food in comfortable surroundings and is well worth a visit.

REDDISH RIP-OFF.

Proof, if proof was needed, of the Big 7 Brewers profiteering can be found in the depths of Reddish. At Whitbreads Houldsworth Arms a pint of mediocre Chester Mild can be had for 80p. The charitable would justify the price by saying that it was required to pay for the numerous refurbishments the pub has been afflicted with. The cynical would suggest that the price was needed to boost profits adversely affected by the poor reputation of their beers.

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CAMRA CALLING!

Another mixed bag this month - Saturday 5th., sees us on a Buxton night out catching the 6-29 train from Stockport. This is followed by a social at the Crescent (formerly the Old Brewery) in Beswick - re-opened under keen hands & currently selling the full range of Chesters Beers - mild, bitter & trophy. Later in that week on 10th. we have our Branch Meeting, this month at the Blossoms, Wellington Road South, Stockport. A guest speaker from Stockport Trading Standards Dept. is promised so it should be an interesting meeting.

The following weekend is busy with our Branch stall at the Castlefield Carnival on the 12th & 13th and later on the Sunday night it's farewell to Jim & Alice Knight, licensees of the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport. On Monday 14th. there's a social at Pier 1, Copson Street, Withington (Castle Eden Ale on sale) & on Friday 18th. our monthly Stagger, this time in the Didsbury area, kicking off at the Parrswood Hotel, Parrswood Rd. at 7 pm & meeting at the Crown, Wilmslow Road at 8-30.

Monday 21st. sees a social at the Sherwood, Claremont Road, Rusholme, where the Landlord has challenged us to inspect his cellars & this is followed on 24th. by Pub of the Month at the Olde Vic, Chatham St., Edgeley. Monday 28th., has a social at the Travellers Call, Ashton Old Road, Beswick. On Friday, October 2nd., we're hoping to visit Buckleys Cooperage in Dukinfield, details haven't been finalised at the time of writing so phone for details.

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Finally on Monday 5th., October it's a social at the Plough, Shaw Heath, Stockport.

If you want more info. please phone me, John Clarke on 831 7222 (ext 307) in the day or 477 1973 at night.

PS: COMING SOON!! Friday 16th., October - coach to Stoke Beer Festival. Depart Mauldeth, Kingsway 5-30; Pineapple, Heaton Lane 5-45 & Bulls Head, Hazel Grove 6-00. Cost £3 for CAMRA members, £5 for non-members (but this includes admission, programme and souvenir glass, — money on the glass may be refunded on leaving). Book now to avoid disappointment!

ARMS FOR THE MAN!

Greenall Whitley certainly seem to be getting it right in the pub refurbishment stakes these days - hot on the heels of the Railway, Wellington Road comes the STOCKPORT ARMS, St. Petersgate. The former awkward layout has been changed to form an island bar with two lounge areas and a separate vault. Decor is comfortable and much in the style of the Railway - another improvement is the removal of the strange converted barrel type seating which managed to be both uncomfortable and difficult to move. Good news on the beer front too - new handpumps adorn the bar dispensing bitter (on fine form when tasted recently) and mild which represents a gain, the mild previously being keg.

HEARD AT THE GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL:

Mother with three small children in tow, leaving the family room:

Smallest child: "Mummy, where's Daddy?"

Mother: "He's upstairs, getting drunk, dear."

January							February						
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month for September is Ye Olde Vic, Chatham Street, Edgeley.

Formerly a Wilsons house, the Vic reopened as a Free House about 4 years ago and after a period of decline was taken over by Kay Ord just over 12 months ago who promptly set about restoring the pubs fortunes by means of a complete redecoration and latterly the introduction of an increasingly enterprising range of

guest beers to complement the regular Tetley Mild and Bitter. She has been justly rewarded by a continuing increase in trade (although lunchtimes can still be quiet) and a growing reputation for the quality of the beer.

The Vic is the only Free House in the Branch area to offer guest beers and the famed Timothy Taylors. Landlord, plus one or two others, will be available on the presentation night, September 24th., when friends old and new are warmly invited.

THE LAGER COMPETITION - THE ANSWERS!!

10 'Great British Lagers' - who brews them and where?

- 1) Lowenbrau - Allied - Brewed in WREXHAM.
- 2) Castlemaine - Allied - ROMFORD, WREXHAM & ALLOA.
- 3) Tennants Extra - Bass - Burton.
- 4) Hofmeister - Courage - READING & TADCASTER,
- 5) Grunhalla - Greenall Whitley - WARRINGTON.
- 6) Harp - S & N - EDINBURGH & MANCHESTER.
- 7) Carlsberg - Watney - NORTHAMPTON.
- 8) Fosters - Watney - HALIFAX & MORTLAKE.
- 9) Holsten - Watney - MORTLAKE.
- 10) Stella Artois - Whitbread - SAMLESBURY & MAGOR.

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CHURCH TIMES

Robinsons have come in for a lot of stick from CAMRA for their pub revamps so it's nice to report on one refurbishment that has improved the pub beyond all recognition.

The CHURCH, Edgeley, has recently been completed and marks a transformation from what was, to be honest, a pretty characterless dump into a pleasant, comfortable pub that's well worth a visit. A multi-room effect has been created with distinctly separate vault, pool, lounge and bar areas and it's particularly nice to see the old fireplace in the lounge replaced with an impressive Victorian cast-iron and tile affair with an open grate, hopefully waiting for an open fire in the winter.

The new bar is adorned with the usual plastic boxes dispensing Best Mild and Best Bitter and a solitary handpump doubtless waiting for Old Tom when the season arrives.

Although virtually anything would have been an improvement, on balance Robinsons deserve a pat on the back for this one - let's hope they keep it up.

HEARD AT THE BAR:

- 1) In a Derbyshire Freehouse: "Stella's really pleasant...it is to lager what Old Peculier is to bitter"
- 2) In Stockport: A round being ordered: "What you having?" "Oh, As I'm driving, I'll stick to lager."
- 3) A customer recalling the Holts' of 20 years ago: "Sure, you had to be thirsty to Drink it."

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J.B.A. Premium bitter is now being brewed again in the time-honoured tradition, allowing you to enjoy a taste of the past again.



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CASE OF THE HIDDEN PUMPS

It always pays to keep a sharp eye out when you go to the pub, and never more so than nowadays - particularly it seems if you use pubs managed or supplied by the Watneys/Wilsons/Websters empire of Grand Metropolitan. Most of their pubs still sell Wilsons Beers, now brewed at Halifax since the closure of Wilsons Newton Heath Brewery but still with the distinctive Wilsons taste (and far superior to the dreadful Websters Bitter) - but it can be a job to find them. At Branagans in the Royal Exchange complex, for example, a free house to which Grand Metropolitan supply the pumps selling McEwans and Websters face you on entry, but the Wilsons is stuck right at the end of the bar. Across the Irwell, the Crown on Blackfriars Street again has its Websters facing you; the pub also sells Wilsons facing a brick wall! On Ardwick Green, the Church sells a creditable four real ales - but walk in the door and you'll see only three of them, Wilsons Mild is away to the right towards the food counter!

The advice we gave when they closed Newton Heath Brrewery down is still valid - ASK FOR WILSONS!!

END OF THE HANGOVER?

Do you suffer from hangovers?

Do you wake up after a session feeling nearly dead?

Well, Dr. Wayne Jones, an expert in alcbhöl research at the National Laboratory of Forensic Chemistry in Linköping, Sweden, has found a substance called '4-methyl pyrazole' which which clears hangovers in no time at all.

Alcbholic drinks contain methanol, the main constiuent of methylated spirit, and the body breaks this down into toxic metabolites. It is these toxic metabolites which cause hangovers, and the 4-methyl pyrazole prevents these forming.

The research is not yet complete but if tests are successful and the drug is introduced, it could mean the end of te hangover!

What more can we say other than 'I'll drink to that!!!'

Due to pressure of space this months' 'STAGGER', covering Levenshulme and Longsight, has had to be held over. It will appear in next months edition as will the name of the lucky winner, if there is one!, of our Lager Competition held last month.



CARNIVAL TIME

Once again CAMRA will have a stall at the Castlefield Carnival, which is to be held on Saturday and Sunday September 12th., and 13th.

As you can see from the leaflet which accompanies the copy of 'Opening Times' there's plenty to see and do (you could go on both days and still not see everything!) All the usual attractions of the Heritage Park are there to be explored plus street entertainers, guided tours, steam rides and street stalls.

Why not come down with the family, have a pint or two at the White Lion (Chesters) on the site and visit our stall. Find out what we are all about, meet the people who write 'Opening Times' and buy some CAMRA books and products! WE would love to see you and hear your pub news and your opinions as a consumer. You can even take up our offer of a **FREE** 1987 Good Beer Guide (£4.95p in the shops) if you join the Campaign at the Carnival!

See you there!!

RAISE YOUR GLASSES

Although it's outside O.T.'s normal circulation area, we're happy to welcome Dave & Jo Glass, formerly of the Crown & Anchor in Central Manchester, to their new pub, the **Queens Arms**, on Honey Street, Cheetham. The Queens is now selling all three Theakstons Beers (Best Bitter, XB and Old Peculier) together with Matthew Brown Mild; there's also lunchtime and early evening food which can, if you wish, be taken into the beer garden, with its panoramic views of Boddingtons' and Chesters' Breweries (not to mention Red Bank Carriage Sidings and Collyhurst nick!) Opening Times are 11-30 to 3 and 5-30 (Saturday 7) to 11, with the standard Sunday hours.

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SUNDAYS — Return of the

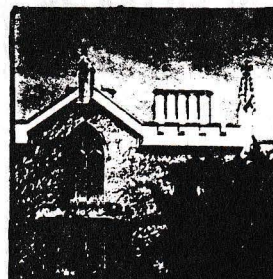
BOOGIE CLUB



WEDNESDAYS

— John Brett &

Norman Beaker



HOLIDAY ALE

Oxford

By Martin Wystryk.

Oxford holds many delights for the discerning scholar — far more than listed here! For the 'Freshers' then, I have devised three courses to help you graduate! Unfortunately no grant is available to compensate the high prices!

For the first course start at the Bus Station off George Street & first stop is the GRAPES (Morrells) opposite the Apollo theatre — avoid the pre & post performance rushes. This is a Victorian, mahogany panelled narrow pub serving handpulled Bitter & Varsity plus excellent food. Once an Egon Ronay Pub of the Year, now a Buccaneer Inn.

Behind the Grapes on St. Michaels St. is the St. MICHAELS TAVERN (Wadworth) — a popular restaurant, pizza cellar & bar. 6X on gravity is only available in the cellar bar. Now cross over Cornmarket to Market St. for the ROEBUCK (Courage) with real ale only in the downstairs bar — Best Bitter & Directors on handpumps. Look out for the unusual placque which marks the parish boundary between St. Martin All Saints & St. Michael. Turn now onto Turl St. for the MITRE (Turl Bar — Ushers & Wethered). Full of

history - some parts date back to the 13th., Century. The Monks Retreat, a cellar bar with mediaeval vaulting is only open in the evenings, the main 17th. Century building is a Berni Inn. Previous patrons include Peel, Gladstone, Churchill & Elizabeth Taylor. Now head up to Broad St. to the WHITE HORSE (Halls & Ind Coope), opposite the Sheldonian Theatre & the Clarendon Building. A delightful, small 16th., Century pub - beware of 'Slopers Dip'! Out onto Broad St. turn left to the KINGS ARMS (Free). First granted its Royal Charter by James I in 1604 it has a variety of bars, rooms character - and characters. There's a capacity for 11 real ales and the range always varies.

Now cross over Holywell St. & turn down the first alley on the right for the TURF TAVERN (Free). This is the jewel in the crown - a famous 13th., Century Tavern & former malthouse with beer gardens and patio, open fires & 2 low beamed bars. Once again several real ales are always available & Hot Punch is served in Winter and accomodation is available.

We now move on to the second course - starting at the begining of High St. CHECQUERS (Halls & Ind Coope) is a well-restored 15th., Century Inn in a courtyard. The unspoilt front Monks Bar has original panelling, fireplace, historic Parliament Clock & a collection of stone jars and bottles, as well as a fresco reputedly from an old Priory - the story goes that the Friars were banished from the City when they became too familiar with the local nuns! Back onto High St. turn right then right down Alfred St. to the BEAR INN (Halls, Ind Coope & Coates Old Cider). A small, old, historic & very popular with a famous collection of over 6,000 ties - each one autographed by its donor - if you are

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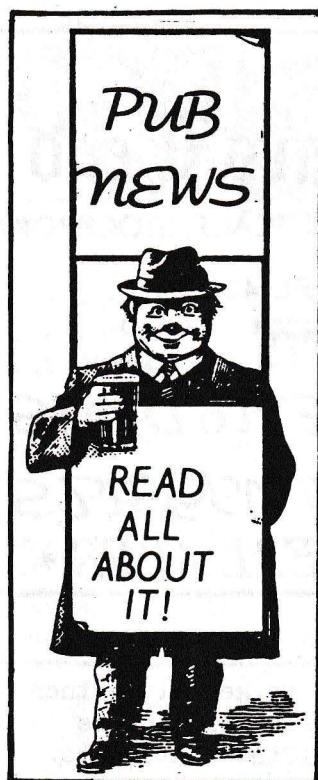


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wearing an unusual tie & want to keep it - then pocket it! Turn right to St. Aldates & cross over to the OLD TOM (Morrells), a 17th. century town pub formerly ahive of small rooms but knocked into two in 1968. A GBG entry with Bitter, 200 ale & Varsity. Almost next door is the BULLDOG (Courage) a former coaching inn with a friendly front bar & a rear lounge. Real ale is in the front bar only. The pub is named after the University's bowler hatted police which once had responsibility for student discipline - especially late drinkers & the University Bulldog is depicted on one side of the pub sign. Up to the crossroad & left nito Queen St, keep going until you reach the WESTGATE (Morrells). Large & modern this is a regular GBG entry with the Breweries full range on sale. Outside the Westgate head down Castle St. to the DUKE OF YORK (Morrell) left in isolation by re-development. Now right up Oxpen Rd. until you reach the little ALBION (nore Morrells) a lively 2 bar local. Finally turn anti-clockwise down St. Thomas St. to the MARLBOROUGH ARMS (Morrell) a friendly town pub - beware of irregular opening hours.

Now our last course moves westward to the station starting at the QUEENS ARMS (Morrell) on Park End St. An early Victorian 3 roomed pub with occasional sing-a-longs. Turn left at the lights & down Mill St. to the KITE (Morrells) & then back to Botley Rd. to the WATERMANS ARMS (Morrells & Realcider). Retrace your steps for a change of brew (Courage) at the HOLLYBUSH. Wander a little further up to the OSNEY ARMS (Halls) and lastly return to the station for the OLD GATEHOUSE (Halls & Ind Coope) This is a warm and friendly pub with excellent food and accomodation - there's also a very keen crossword fraternity!





The **Parrswood** (Boddingtons) on Parrswood Road, East Didsbury, is to be re-furbished at the end of the year and hopefully will re-emerge with Oldham and/or Higgs' beers.

The **Pomona** on Reddish Road Gorton has now added Ruddles County to its range to complement the Wilsons Bitter & Mild and the Websters Bitter.

In Northenden the Boddingtons mild has been replaced by O.B. Mild at the **Church**.

Back in Reddish a children's room has been added to the **Railway**,

Correction Corner: New tenants at the **Midway**, New Bridge Lane, Stockport are Terry & Pat Maxwell - not as stated last month (sorry!) And the good news is that they have succeeded in persuading new owners Courage to install an extra cask beer in the shape of Courage Directors - this should be available soon.

Whitbreads previously keg-only **George & Dragon**, London Road, Hazel Grove, has finally introduced cask beer in the unlikely form of Thwaites bitter on handpumps which seem rather lonely amongst the keg dispensers for the Chesters.

In the **Bakers Vaults**, Market Place, Stockport, the acquisition of a music licence has enabled Ian Brookes to re-introduce the Mega-Band on Sunday nights - go along and watch Stockports only trumpet playing licensee!

Returning to Reddish yet again the only cask beer now available at the **Carousel** is Wilsons Bitter.

Over in Wythenshawe **Royals**, Royalthorn Road, now has only one real ale - but this is the best Websters Choice.

Not quite pub news, but for beers festival fans the Third Lowton Beer Festival (near Leigh) is

going ahead at Lowton Civic Hall on Thursday, Friday & Saturday, September 3rd. - to 5th. Hours are 6-11 Thursday, 11-3-30 & 6-11 Friday and 11-3-30 & 6-11-30 on Saturday. There's entertainment on Friday & Saturday evenings, food, wine, cider, perry and over 25 Real Ales. Should be a good Lancashire thrash!

Contributors to this Edition: Stuart Ballantyne, Stan Chlebicki, John Clarke, Humphrey Higgins, Jim Flynn, Rhys Jones. For details of Postal Sales and advertising rates please write to: 45, Bulkely Street, Stockport SK3 9HD.

FOOTNOTE: Robin Quinn's DragonCider Company optimistically produced a real Somerset Cider called 'Thatcher's Ruin'. Alas, the Company failed. The winding-up meeting was held in Cardiff - on June 11th.!

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