

Opening Times



STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

No. 50. JUNE 1988

CHANGE AT LAST!

At long, long last Britain's outdated drinking laws are to be reformed. The final hurdles were cleared last month when MPs approved the hour long extension to Sunday lunchtime hours by a majority of 93. The House of Lords then gave approval to a minor technical amendment and the Bill is now on its way to the Palace for the Queen's signature, to become law. This won't mean that pubs will be opening longer straight away, though: the act then has to be distributed to the police and magistrates who will have to familiarise themselves with the new law.

It is possible that we won't be benefitting from the changes until August although the Home Secretary has promised to cut through as much red tape as possible so a late June/early July introduction is possible.

The changes will mean:

- Sunday lunchtime drinking to 3.00pm
- Weekday opening from 11am to 11pm
- Drinking up time increased to 20 minutes
- Stricter controls on drink sales in supermarkets.
- Clubs will lose out on Sundays, still being restricted to 5½ hours opening. This has been criticised as unfair by many MPs, including Stockport's Tony Favell

CAMRA believes that the changes are a step in the right direction but don't go far enough. Many inner city or suburban pubs will benefit little by being able to stay open, for example, all Tuesday afternoon. Keep the 12 hour limit but let each pub open according to its own circumstances and trade.

The major omission of course is that pubs will still not be obliged to display their opening hours outside. With the greater flexibility now on offer this must surely be put right if chaos is to be avoided.

CAMRA's Regional Director, Andy Cooper summed up: "We've been campaigning for reform for a long time so it's good to see light at the end of the tunnel. Let's hope though that the more unscrupulous brewers don't use this as an excuse to hoist prices"

This of course is a major concern and CAMRA will be monitoring prices even more closely over the next 12 months.

(on the subject of prices, watch for the results of CAMRA's national prices survey - coming soon)

**PLEASE PASS OPENING TIMES
TO A FRIEND OR RETURN IT TO
THE HOLDER.**

THIS MONTH IN OPENING TIMES.....

Page 2: Pub Grub, Falsale
Page 3: Boddies AGM, Market Place
Page 5: Beer Books
Page 6: Stagger - Gatley & Northenden
Page 8: Pub of the Month, Letters
Page 9: CAMRA Calling
Page 10: The New Breweries, Part 4
Page 11: Manchester Matters
Page 12: Pub News



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A HAVEN IN THE SHOPPING PRECINCT!



PUB GRUB

By Alexander Panesh

In the recent history of new Stockport pubs, the Hinds Head has come in for praise and controversy. The controversy centered around the exceptionally high prices charged by the first tenants - prices whilst still on the high side are at least now in the Wilmslow rather than the London bracket. Where the pub does succeed however is as a pub, the passing traveller could never imagine that this pub has been open for less than 6 months, only the absence of mature gardens gives a clue to its paradigmatic style (what? - ed.)

The interior has been carefully thought out, although the absence of a public bar is to be regretted. The eating area is light and airy with a 'cane and wicker' feel. Disabled people can be accommodated with ease, a good feature in a new public house.

The menu was very comprehensive, being divided into a lunchtime 'snack' group, the main menu and specials. I chose the Chili-con-carne and my companion had the vegetarian dish (this also changes regularly).

The chili was very well presented, with a fresh parsley garnish. It was very tasty and the portion quite generous. The vegetarian dish was a cashew nut and mixed vegetable 'casserole' in a creamy white sauce and with a side salad. It too, was very tasty and had been freshly prepared. A portion of onion rings (40p) completed the meal.

At £5.65 for 2 this was a good value meal with a high level of service. Well worth a visit.



FALSE ALE

CAMRA's national campaign against the practice of brewers large and small, of serving keg beers through fake handpumps continues as this shameful deception becomes more widespread.

Locally there is mixed progress:

WILSONS: Keg Special Mild is still being sold by this method in several outlets, including the Vale Cottage in Gorton.

BODDINGTONS: Increasing in the free trade. Minor differences in the pump clip wording do little to dispel confusion. In a different category is the Railway in Cheadle which, while displaying a handpump proclaiming Boddies Mild actually only serves keg Oldham Mild from a less prominent dispenser. We have reported this to the trading standards dept.

WHITBREAD: Low alcohol White Label is to be launched on draught, and although it will be a keg beer it has been reported that "Whitbread hopes licensees will sell it on hand-pump alongside traditional beers"

GREENALLS: Say the practice will be stopped and want names of offending pubs. We have reported the likes of the Gamebird and the Elisabethan to the brewery.

NATIONALLY: There could be some action. The national trading standards co-ordinating body has issued new guidelines to local officers and is taking the matter up with the Brewers Society, the National Union of Licensed Victuallers (the landlords union) etc.

Lets hope that this brings results, until it does we will continue to highlight offenders.

NOW WE ARE 100

Last month we reported how Boddington's results had disappointed the city whiz kids. We followed this up by sending Rhys Jones to their AGM....

"Boddington's Annual General Meeting, held in early May was their 100th as a public company - but there was no congratulatory telegram; nor was it that much of a party. The well-attended event, held in the Alexandra suite of the Midland Hotel, was festooned with display boards and mock-up handpumps (whose clips proclaimed Boddingtons only - no Oldham or Higsons here). In an opening speech which pointed the way to more diversification, chairman Ewart Boddington made a brief reference to the trauma of the last 12 months by saying 'over-capacity and old ways of working cannot be retained', though under questioning he was forced to admit that the introduction of contracted-out systems had meant a 'certain hiccup' - a description which many customers and licensees will see as a laughable understatement. We were also told that the £3 million plus proceeds of the sale of their Yorkshire pubs, first reported in May's Opening Times, would go to the creation of more Henry's Table pub-restaurants and Village Leisure Hotels.

The company's concerns, Mr Boddington assured us, were three fold: customers, employees and shareholders. We know that increasingly customers find it difficult to give Boddingtons more than two cheers; the recent redundancies and industrial action speak for their employees degree of satisfaction; so what of the shareholders?

Enter a company known as Roger Cunliffe Investments, whose shareholding has been built up in recent months but whose representative at the meeting, Mr Morris, had been a shareholder in his own right for some years. He spoke scathingly of the company's long-term profit performance pointing out that the share price was now lower than 5 years ago. Seeing the takeover of Higsons and Oldham as a 'bad mistake', he considered Boddies should instead have expanded piecemeal following the motorways (a lesson from Banks's) and poured scorn on the new ventures into Village Leisure Hotels and Henry's Tables - 'or as I call them, Hubert Reid's Fables' (Hubert Reid is Boddingtons Managing Director). To judge from the applause in the hall, his remarks struck a chord with many of the shareholders present - and Ewart Boddington's anodyne reply, which ignored the points made to concentrate on the last 6 months figures, can have given scant reassurance. I fancy we have not heard the last of Roger Cunliffe Investments.

Perhaps, though, the most enduring impression of the meeting is of the fare dispensed to those attending. Kaltenberg lager and Boddingtons bitter were available - both keg - while the hotel staff served trays of snacks which while tasty enough were ultimately insubstantial -

MARKET PLACE

Once again we are offering our readers the chance to buy a range of CAMRA products and guides, essential for summer holidays. Just send a cheque payable to 'CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester Branch' along with your order to the Treasurer, 66 Downham Rd., Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG. Please allow 14 days for delivery:

1988 Good Beer Guide	£5.95
1986 Good Beer Guide	£1.00
Dictionary of Beer	£2.95
Pocket Beer Book	£4.95
Great British Beer Book	£4.95
Good Cider Guide	£4.95
Two Beers, My Friend Will Pay	£2.95
Pubs for Families	£4.95
Cheshire Beer Guide	£2.25
Classic Country Pubs	£10.95
Beer, Bed & Breakfast	£5.95
Real Ale in Stockport (with April 1988 update)	10p
CAMRA Tea Towel	£1.50
CAMRA Bar Towel	£1.25
CAMRA Sweat Shirt	£8.50
CAMRA Coffee Mug	£1.50

TITANIC SINKS

It gives us no pleasure at all to report that the Titanic Brewery of Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent has run into financial difficulties and was in the hands of a Receiver as we went to press.

Unlike many small operations, Titanic was more a victim of success than failure with production doubling last year. This led to financial over-commitment and a huge overdraft, which could not be refinanced when the bank called it in.

Fortunately, the brewery is to be sold as a going concern and is still in operation, supplying the one tied house, the Travellers Rest, Burslem. Four possible buyers have come forward and owner John Pazio is hoping to stay at the helm when things are sorted out.

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Beers

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good taste

NEW THATCH

Don and Aline Cleary, formerly of the Castlewood Stockport are now settled in at the Thatched Tavern, Churchgate. The pub has been redecorated and is now a much brighter place than before.

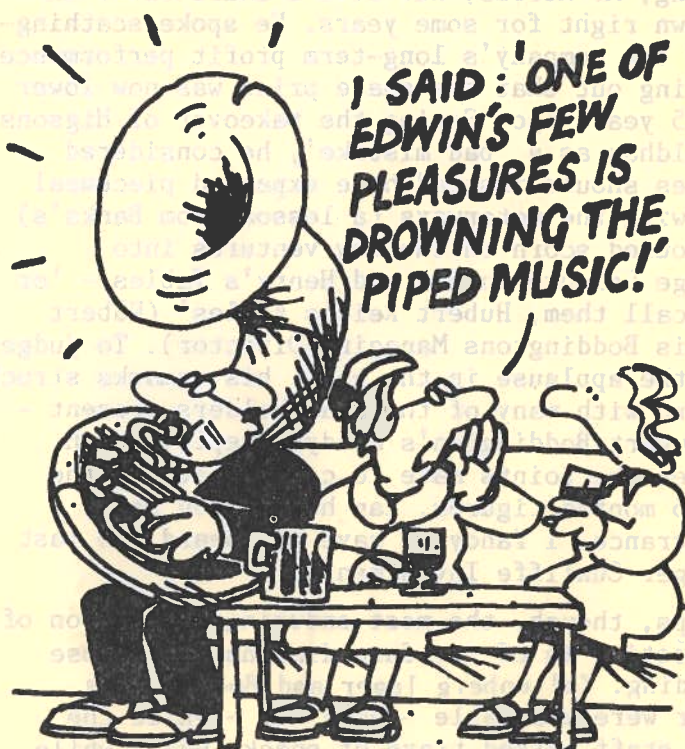
The beer has been brightened up as well: Don lost no time in installing handpumps and the current range is Wilsons Mild & Bitter, Websters Bitter & Green Label plus the powerful Ruddles County (which apparently laid the local pool team low when it was first introduced!). All beers have been on fine form when sampled recently.

WHY NOT OPEN?

The Why Not on Ashton New Road closed in late April; we understand that the lessees ran into financial problems, and the pub will therefore revert to being directly managed by the owner. It's been a good and enterprising freehouse over the past year or two, so we look forward to seeing it open and thriving again in the near future.

WE'RE NUMBER 1

A British beer gained three world records last month: the strongest, most alcoholic...and most expensive! The record-breaking brew is called Domesday Ale and comes from the Steam Brewery, Redruth, Cornwall. The original gravity is an incredible 1043° (Old Tom is a mere 1079) and 15.86% alcohol by volume. 39 bottles were auctioned off in London and bottle number one fetched £1000, the equivalent of more than £2,200 a pint!



BEER BOOKS BEER BOOKS BEER BOOKS BEER BOOKS

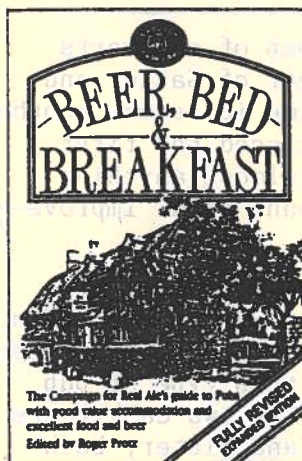
CAMRA has recently published two guides; Beer, Bed and Breakfast is an upgraded edition while Pubs for Families is a completely new guide.

The difference in the maturity of the two certainly shows. Beer Bed and Breakfast (1988) is a great improvement on the previous edition and the writers have obviously listened to the comments sent in by readers. The first edition was a little embarrassing for both the low quality of the paper used and the low number of entries. Both of these criticisms have been met with better quality paper and an increase in entries along with a better geographical spread of these. The guide is particularly useful for families going on holiday who want value for money accommodation with a decent drink for the parents before retiring to bed.

Criticism has to be made however of the lack of entries in the major urban areas which would prevent the book being of great use to the businessman/woman (eg Tyne & Wear has no entries at all).

Pubs for Families however has not had the benefit of readers suggestions and criticisms. On the plus side, the editorial content is very worthy with details of the legal position of children

in pubs, advice for parents about taking children out to pubs and an article by food writer and radio presenter Derek Cooper on pub meals for children. The detail relating to the pubs themselves is also good with all the information that parents could want.



The problem is that there aren't enough entries, for example, in Greater Manchester there are just four and in the whole of Merseyside only two. As a result the book looks more than a little spartan. Much of the criticism for this must be levelled at CAMRA members who failed to send in more entries and to the editors for not pushing for more. I suspect that like Beer,

Bed and Breakfast, the second edition will significantly improve on these points. Overall though, a useful reference book for parents, particularly if on holiday in a strange part of the country. Both books can be obtained from CAMRA locally, see 'Market Place' for details.

Two Bevvies of Beauty

BODDINGTONS AND HIGSONS
TOGETHER.

A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES,
NOT TO MENTION DRY THROATS.

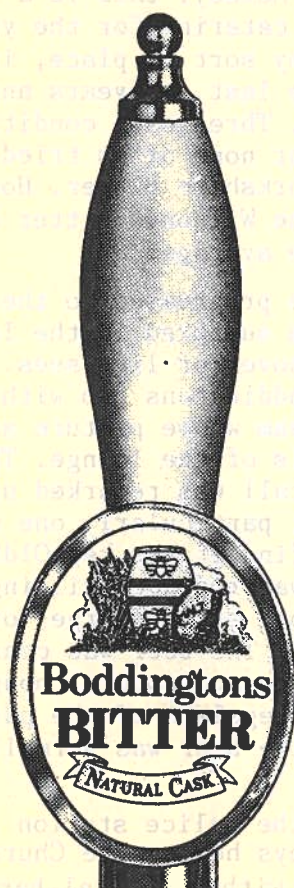
TRULY TWO BEVVIES OF
BEAUTY, YOU COULD SAY!

As Real Ale Lovers, you need no introduction to the deliciously nutty tang of Boddies bitter.

Now, however, you can also try the superb individual flavour of Higsons at many Boddies' pubs in the Stockport area. This noble brew from down the M62 has been winning friends among real ale drinkers for many years - 200 to be exact!

Like Boddies, Higsons is brewed in the traditional way, using only the finest malt and hops. So whether you stick to the local favourite or sample the strength of the guest from 'out west', you're still in for a treat.

Try a bevvy of beauty today. Or better still, try both.



STAGGER

GATLEY AND NORTHENDEN: By Jim Flynn

On a warm April evening a group of stalwarts set out on a two legged stagger of Gatley and Northenden. For the second time in recent months we found that Whitbread had closed the first pub for renovation. Mind you almost anything done to the Red Lion would count as an improvement.

So, the first stop proper was the Prince of Wales, a cosy Hydes pub next door to the church. This pleasant, multi-roomed pub has an excellent atmosphere and unusually for this type of pub has a public cum games room. The two cask beers on sale were the (dark) Mild and Bitter, both were considered good by the entire party.

Newly opened behind the Prince of Wales is a WINE BAR, 'Harveys', definitely one to miss with keg Tetleys on the bar and bouncers on the door. Surely, only those terminally influenced by lager advertising would choose to go there when

there are two such excellent Hydes pubs nearby.

Two hundred yards down the road in the centre of Gatley is the other Hydes pub, the Horse & Farrier and what a loveley pub it is too. It is a large, multi-roomed pub with wonderful wood panelling and a country atmosphere which belies its now urban setting. Hydes are one of the few breweries to brew two milds and the Horse & Farrier has the Best Mild (or Light as it is now known) as well as the Bitter. The Light proved to be one of the best beers of the night, rating between good and excellent with the Bitter fareing just worse.

Red Lion



Prince of Wales

For the second leg of the trip we caught the 371 and walked down into Northenden where the Jolly Carter on Royle Green Rd was our destination. A mid-sixties rebuild, the Carter is an open plan, two roomed Boddingtons house. Its one really good feature is that it sells the only cask conditioned mild in Northenden. Both the Mild and Bitter rated between average and good.

On down the road past the Spread Eagle with its keg Greenalls, the only pub in Northenden without cask conditioned beer (trust Greenalls to be the odd one out, let's hope that they see sense and install cask beer before too long) Passing the Crown we walked down Boat Lane to the Tatton Arms Tavern, a Chef & Brewer house overlooking the River Mersey. this is a large open plan pub largely catering for the young. Although this is not my sort of place, it has been improved over the last few years and is not unpleasant at all. Three cask conditioned beers are available but none of us tried the ubiquitous Websters Yorkshire Bitter. However in general we found the Wilsonos Bitter and Websters choice above average.

Retracing our steps we progressed to the Crown on Ford Lane which has suffered in the last few years from a high turnover of licensees. It is a small but popular Boddingtons pub with a very successful football team whose picture and posters adorn the walls of the lounge. The friendliness of the stall was remarked upon by a number of the group, particularly one who ordered mild only to find it was keg Oldham; at his request his pint was replaced willingly by a pint of bitter without extra charge: other landlords please note. The beer was considered to vary between average and good although those of the group who were regulars of the pub felt that the standard of the beer was normally higher.

On the other side of the police station is a large, open-plan Tetleys house, the Church. The pub is fitted out with a central bar surrounded by the standard Tetleys package

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and lacks any spark of originality at all. The range of cask conditioned beers has been reduced since it reopened after renovation and now only handpumped Tetley Bitter remains. This was thought to be between average and good.

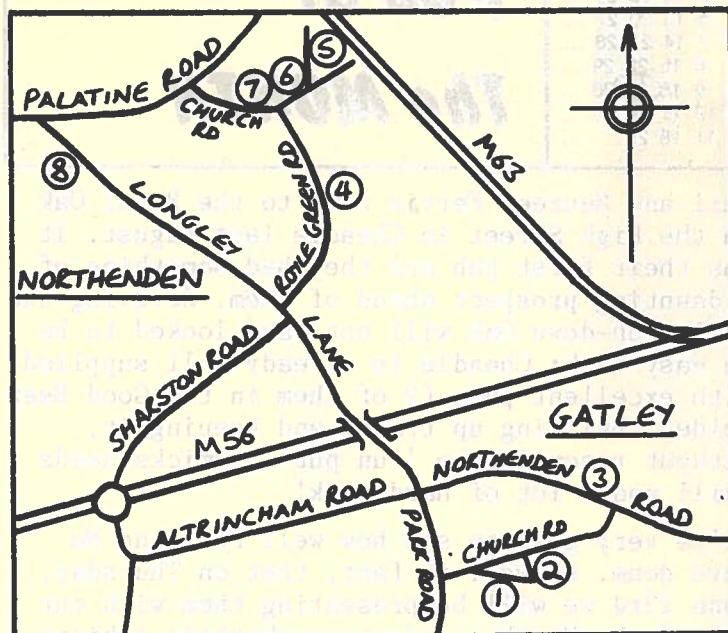
Finally on to the Farmers Arms on Longley Lane which is a small cosy Greenalls pub. In contrast to the Crown concern was expressed at the service as it was felt that locals were continually given preference at the bar. The one cask conditioned beer available was Local Bitter which was considered generally good by the group.

Overall this is an excellent crawl with not a bad pint to be had and with a variety of different beers en route, the only flaw being the lack of real mild in Northenden.

As ever, the opinions expressed simply reflect how we found things on the night - try the pubs for yourself and make up your own mind,

QUIZ NIGHT KINGS

Congratulations are due to the quiz team from the Comfortable Gill, Stockport for winning their first round on Granada TV's 'Quiz Night'. They go on to meet a team from Blackpool in the second round and we wish them the best of luck. (Quiz Night is on Granada at about midnight if you want to watch)



KEY: 1 - RED LION, 2 - PRINCE OF WALES, 3 - HORSE & FARRIER, 4 - JOEY CARTER, 5 - TATTON ARMS, 6 - CROWN, 7 - CHURCH, 8 - FARMERS ARMS

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 . 7 14 21 28 ...
 1 8 15 22 29 ...
 2 9 16 23 30 ...
 3 10 17 24 ...
 4 11 18 25 ...

PUB OF The MONTH

Phil and Maureen Ferris came to the Royal Oak on the High Street in Cheadle last August. It was their first pub and they had something of a daunting prospect ahead of them. Reviving the sadly run-down Oak will not have looked to be an easy task: Cheadle is already well supplied with excellent pubs (2 of them in the Good Beer Guide). Building up trade, and keeping it, without resorting to 'fun pub' gimmicks needs skill and a lot of hard work!

We're very glad to see how well Phil and Mo have done. so well in fact, that on Thursday, June 23rd we will be presenting them with our Pub of the Month award, to mark their achievement.

The Royal Oak is a traditional Robinsons house, having three rooms (lounge, darts and pool) as well as the main bar area. It's particularly pleasing to see the previously neglected vault brought back to life.

Best Mild and Best Bitter are on handpump and you can be sure of a warm welcome there any evening, but especially on June 23rd - please join us then!

ANGEL CHANGES

At the Angel in Gorton we welcome new licensee Billy Craven, the former guv'nor Eddie Stafford having moved to the Ship at Irlam. According to North Manchester CAMRA's latest published list, the Ship does not currently serve real ale, so let's hope that Eddie's enthusiasm for proper beer will mean a real ale gain for Irlam. Meanwhile the Angel is little changed apart from a fancy new till incorpoarating a VDU, The mild and bitter remain in good nick.

LETTERS...

From C.R.P.Jones:

While I agree that, within their brief, Boddingtons architects and designers have made a reasonably successful job of the Crown on Heaton Lane, I must take issue with the description of the pub ("Crown Crowned", OT May '88) as previously having a "run down feel". Along with the reference to "the small cramped hatch" - actually two separate serving hatches, one to the corridor, one to the back room - these are the sort of weasel words which one expects breweries to use in justification of "improvements"; it's sad to see them uncritically parroted in a CAMRA publication. And note, please, that the rooms have not "simply" had their doorways widened; the doors have been removed so that the former separate rooms now function simply as "separate drinking areas" - whether you regard this as "bringing them into the mainstream of the pub", or destroying individuality and making privacy impossible, is, I suppose, a matter of taste. However it's CAMRA's policy, reaffirmed at the recent national AGM, to support the retention of a separate vault, and I feel your report did not give sufficient weight to this consideration.

It's not part of my purpose to attack the Crown. It's still a good pub; formerly it was an excellent one.

(editors note: the report on the Crown was intended to be simply factual, it just proves that you can't please all of the people all of the time. What do you think of the new look Crown?)

NEW JEWEL IN CROWN?

Speaking of the Crown, Heaton Lane, we reported last month on the introduction of Higsons Bitter which is now selling well. Consideration is now being given to installing another Boddington Group beer - Oldham Mild, no less. We'll let you know if it appears.

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

I/We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale Limited, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

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Please send your remittance (payable to CAMRA Limited) with this application form to:

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CAMRA CALLING!

Flaming June starts with a social on 6th in the Thatched Tavern, Reddish meeting at 8.30 to 9.00pm. This is followed on Thursday 9th with the branch meeting at the Longsight, Kirkmanshulme Lane, Belle Vue (Family Room). Business starts about 8.00pm

As summer fever hits the branch we begin our hols and gather our buckets and spades (or perhaps not!) for the first 1988 Opening Times Awayday to Southport on Saturday 11th. We will be catching the 10.30 train from Manchester Victoria, arriving Southport at 11.46 when we will start sampling the delights of the local alehouses. Once the pubs have closed and we have attempted to find the sea our travels will continue to Liverpool for an evening jaunt. For those wanting to spend the evening in Liverpool without sand between their toes, we will be meeting at the Vine, Lime St., at 7.30 (catch the 18.09 from Stockport or 18.20 from Piccadilly).

On Monday 13th we have a two-way social in Levenshulme meeting at 8.30 at Dicey Rileys on Stockport Rd then on to the Sidings, Broom Lane at approx 9.45. The Offerton Stagger on Friday 17th starts at 7.00pm in Drakes, Marple Rd with a second meeting place at the White House, Hemphaw Lane at 8.30.

On Monday 20th Midsummer Madness continues with the annual PUB HUNT which involve scouring the pubs of Stockport to solve devious clues. An exclusive prize awaits the winner! We kick off at the Thatched House, Churchgate at 7.00pm for 7.30 when the clues will be handed out and the trail blazers let loose.

Thursday 23rd sees our Pub of the Month presentation at the Royal Oak, Stockport Rd., Cheadle, an excellent Robinsons house, recently refurbished.

A hectic month closes with a social at the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport, starting about 9.00pm. An event not to be missed however will be a day out in Bollington and Macclesfield on Saturday, 2nd July. Phone for more details; although we will be walking back to Macclesfield along the canal banks, weather permitting.

If you want more information about any of our social activities please phone me, Angela Walker on 0663 43769, evenings only.

STOP PRESS*STOP PRESS*STOP PRESS*STOP PRESS*STOP PRESS

On 28th June we will be visiting Mitchells Brewery in Lancaster. Departing Stockport at 6.00pm, the cost will be £4.50 per head.

HOLTS MOVES

We are sorry to report the impending departure of Barry & Sue Manning from the Grafton, Chorlton-on-Medlock. They take over the Melville in Stretford in late July/early August. The Melville is to be refurbished and Sue told us that they hope to make more use of the function room and introduce pub food. Their replacements will be Bruce & Diane from the Junction, Cheadle Hulme who we wish well. The Junction, by the way, is not to be knocked down (despite misleading reports elsewhere - more next time)

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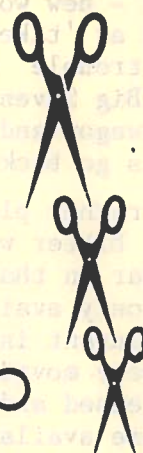
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THE NEW BREWERIES by PHIL LEVISON

Number 3 in this series took us up to 1976, by which time the small brewers totalled 14, but it had taken three years to double the 1973 figure of 7. A further 7 were to be added during 1977 and although progress in the next few years was steady, it was not spectacular until 1981 weighed in with 41 newcomers, almost as many as in the previous five years. By this time, the 'new boys' were approaching the magic figure of 100, but 1981 also produced some straws in the wind - new words appeared in this new industry, such as 'take-over', 'changing hands', 'in trouble' and onomously members of the Big Seven decided to jump on the bandwagon and 'go small'. But first, let's go back to 1977.

The rather pleasantly named Smiles Best Bitter was the first new beer to appear in that year, but initially it was only available at John Payne's restaurant in Bristol. But when the brewery moved to a new site, capacity increased and the beer started to become available in other outlets in the area.

A bit further afield at Blackawton, Totnes, Devon, Nigel Fitzhugh started to brew a malt extract Bitter (og1040) which he supplied to a number of outlets in South Devon, but he soon changed his production method to 'full mash'.

Back up-country to Lancashire now, where Richard Vernon started brewing at his own pub, the Ribblesdale Arms at Gisburn. The beer was named Malkin (og1038) after the witches meeting place at Pendle, and the plane was from Brewpubs (as installed at the Fighting Cocks and New Fermor

Arms). This type of malt extract plant which was said to work like a coffee percolator, was later to appear in David Bruce's Goose & Firkin pub in London.

Both Smiles and Blackawton were 'firsts' for their respective counties, as was the next to appear, the John Thompson Inn at Ingleby, Derbyshire. There was also another first here - it is the only pub to be named after its owner. He was helped in setting up the brewery by Colin Lloyd, former Bass test brewer, and one of the first beers to be produced was Lloyds Country Bitter (og1045).

Penrhos Court at Kington, Herefordshire was the next brewery to appear - Richard Boston, Martin Griffiths and Terry Jones (of Monty Python fame) were all involved, and one of the first beers was named Jones First Brew (og 1050). The plant itself was designed by Peter Austin, who also helped launch the brewery, and he was to figure prominently in what had come to be called the new brewery revolution. He had retired from his post as Head Brewer at Hull Brewery, but soon found himself designing plant and acting as consultant in setting up new small breweries.

Godsons was a new London brewery set up by Patrick Fitzpatrick in a converted sweet factory - one of its beers was Godsons Black Horse (og1048) sometimes more affectionately known as GBH. Most of Godsons production

was for the London free trade. Later it became involved in mergers and takeovers with other new brewers.

Finally, when Westcrown was established in Newark by former pub owners Alan and Norman Rutherford, brewing Regal Bitter (og1037.5), the number of new ventures had reached 21, thus proving that the new breweries had really come of age.

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MANCHESTER MATTERS

By Rhys Jones

Two real ale gains to be reported this month, though neither can be regarded as a traditional pub. In the City Centre, Daniel's "cafe bar" on Chapel Walks has Thwaites Bitter on handpump - however the beer which is available in the downstairs bar only, costs £1 a pint and was of indifferent quality on my visit. Out in Gorton, the Pig & Ball Bearing "fun pub" on Hyde Road is reportedly selling Boddingtons Bitter on electric pump, using the same pseudo-continental fonts that formerly sold keg.

The month's two real ale losses are both in the centre - Yates's Merchants now sells no traditional beer, while the Old White Bear appears to be closed. Staying in the centre, there have been a few changes in the free or semi-free trade. The White House has added Taylor's Land-lord on handpump, Mr Thomas's Chop House has lost Thwaites Best Mild but gained handpumped Marstons Pedigree and Whitbread Trophy, while Branagans has revamped its range since last reported on and now has the following on hand-pump: McEwans 80/-; Theakstons Best Bitter and Old Peculier; Websters Bitter and Choice and Wilsons Bitter. Mixed fortunes for Ruddles in the Pennine Hosts estate: County has come out of the Salisbury, but Ruddles Bitter, along with Websters Bitter has joined the handpumped range at the Brunswick.

Banks's beers make an unusual appearance on handpump in their two most recent East Manchester acquisitions - mild and bitter at Openshaw's Royal Oak, just bitter at Ardwick's Star, where the mild continues to be keg as it was under Wilsons (following Banks's usual and

admirable practice, the counter mounting for the mild clearly states 'brewery conditioned'). Not far away, the Travellers Call in Beswick now has Jennings Bitter on handpump alongside Tetleys; and finally, at the Mawson in Chorlton-on-Medlock, tetley Mild is now on handpump, not electric (though a pumpclip was still awaited as this was written!).

PS: last month's issue of 'Whats Doing', North Manchester CAMRA's sheet, included the advice "try the Star on Pottery Lane". Well, you can try it if you like - but you won't find any real ale there!

NEW HANDS AT HINDS

We extend a belated welcome to Alan Preston, new licensee of the Hind's Head, Heaton Chapel. Alan and his wife are not exactly strangers to the trade and moved into the pub in February, on the departure of the previous, temporary tenants. The most noticeable change is the reduction in prices which are now between 3 and 5p cheaper than when the pub opened in November, and that's after the budget too.

As reported elsewhere, the pub also does a nice line in food, which is also available in the evenings.

Alan tells us that his ambition was to run a free house, perhaps in time Whitbread could be persuaded to relax the tie along the lines of Manchester's Crown & Anchor. Current beers are Chesters Mild & Bitter plus Castle Eden Ale - we've had good reports about them all.

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PUB NEWS



The Derby, Fallowfield is to have major alterations which, we are given to understand will result in a one room pub. Cask beer will remain however.

Perhaps Pennine Hosts are going to listen (see last months OT), a traditional type pub sign has been seen on the Jolly Sailor, Bramhall Lane, Stockport. Inside however, it currently remains a plastic palace.

Changes of licensee to report at both the Shady Oak, Bramhall (Tetley and the Grey Horse, Reddish (Boddies Temporary managers were in both as we went to press.

The Railway, North Reddish (Whitbread) is to have a major refurbishment. This is long overdue as the previous 'instant Victorian' revamp was becoming decidedly worn.

We are told that Castle Eden Ale may have gone from Fritzby's, the wine bar on Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, leaving Chesters as the only cask beer available. Confirmation please.

The long-closed Dolphin on Hyde Rd/Clowes St, West Gorton was surrounded by scaffolding as we went to press and we hear that it will be re-opening as a pub. A brave venture indeed if true, lets hope for some decent cask beer as many of the neighbouring pubs are fizz only.

Time was in fact when this former Marstons house was in the national Good Beer Guide.

We reported last month that Greenalls were planning 'minor' alterations to the Pack Horse on Ashton Old Rd, Openshaw. Glimpses of work in progress however, suggest something more major and it may emerge as a one-room pub. More news when we have it.

Speaking of renovations, Robinsons are now well on with work on the Woodman, Hazel Grove where it is intended to knock through into the cottage next door. New etched windows have been installed and the new drinking room in the extension, if that is what it is to be, seems to have its own door. A sensitive refurbishment at last from Robbies? We'll keep you posted.

By the time you read this, the former Hague should have been re-signed as the Olde Woolpack. This Brinksway, Stockport freehouse has also changed its range with Thwaites bitter replacing the Tetleys. This will be the

only regular Thwaites outlet in the Stockport area and is well worth a visit. Live music has also been introduced as a regular feature on Thursday nights.

The former Bradford Labour Club on Grey Mare Lane is now a pub known as "Richmonds Free House" - it is, however effectively tied to Australian-owned John Smiths, whose keg and lager range is the only 'beer' on sale.

Taylors Landlord is now permanently on sale at Ye Olde Vic, Stockport. Since its introduction sales have increased from one 18 gallon barrel a week to 5.

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