

A MESSY BUSINESS

BY JOHN CLARKE

A DEVICE is being marketed to local licensees, which, while promoted to assist the return of 'safe' waste beer to your pint, could be wide open to abuse by unscrupulous landlords

The system is intended to help the return of 'first pump drawings' (the clean beer drawn off when a barrel is tapped or a pump first brought into use) and filtered barrel ends to your pint by putting this waste beer into a storage container from which it is slowly fed into the beer being drawn off from a fresh cask.

CAMRA has long opposed the return of any beer to the cask and whilst first drawings are doubtless clean and safe, the return of filtered barrel ends is much more dubious. Anyone who has had a pint from the end of a barrel will know that the beer can have a sour or harsh 'metallic' taste, even when clear. If this is fed back into fresh beer it will certainly do nothing for the overall quality of your pint.

Certainly one local brewer makes clear in its cellar instructions that 'no attempt should be made to remove or filter the sediment remaining at the

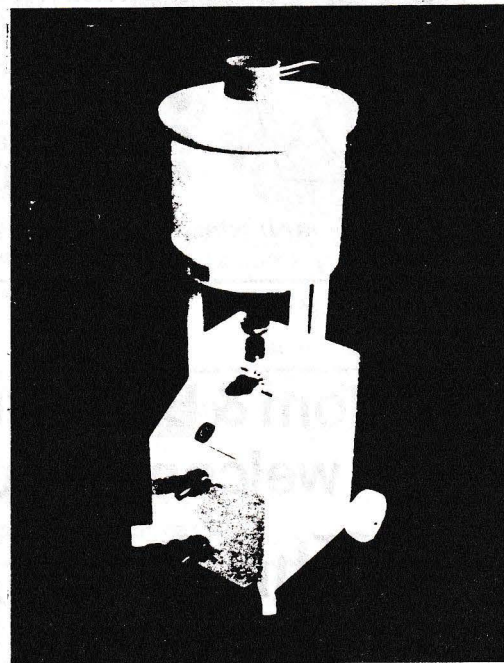
bottom of the cask' and also makes the point that, with wooden casks, that sediment helps to prevent them drying out.

It is, of course, a short step from returning 'safe' beer to the more dangerous practice of returning all manner of slops and this is a point that Opening Times put to Peter Dubell of Heaton Moor-based Cellar Hygiene Products who market the 'Cellar-Hy Beer Conserver Unit'.

He agreed with us that the Unit could be abused but took the view that if someone wanted to return slops they would be doing it anyway, with or without his machine.

He did not accept that the Unit would encourage licensees to return dubious beer, although the publicity material does emphasise the speed and ease with which waste beer can be returned. He went on to defend its use: "as long as a landlord continues to return beer, I think this is the most hygienic way of doing that"

Although Mr Dubell went on to agree with CAMRA that no tainted, off-tasting or otherwise doubtful beer should ever be returned to a cask, serious doubts must remain as to the desirability of this machine from the drinkers point of view. While most licensees care



THE CELLAR-HY BEER CONSERVER

deeply about their beer, there remains a minority who care more about their profit figures than customer satisfaction, and for those this device will be a godsend.

CAMRA remains unconvinced about the merits of this machine and we are seeking the views, not only of local brewers on its use in their pubs, but also the Environmental Health Department's and we will report what they have to say in future issues.

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5	12	19	26	...
6	13	20	27	...
7	14	21	28	...
1	8	15	22	29
2	9	16	23	30

PUB OF THE MONTH

WHAT IS "Pub of the Month"? It is your local CAMRA branch's way of highlighting the efforts and achievements of particular licensees (and their staff); a public expression of appreciation for good beer, served in a good atmosphere. Why do we give the award? CAMRA often criticises - but we do like to give credit where it's due! It may remind you, the pub-goer, of a local you've not visited for some time; or draw your attention to a pub that you're not aware of. And what sort of pub gets the award? Sometimes we may spotlight a 'rising star', where new management have dramatically improved a previously run-down pub; but also, we try and reward the consistent quality-givers, who might otherwise be neglected in favour of the latest 'in-place' to go.

One pub that falls into this second category is our Pub of the Month for June: the **Printers Arms**, on Stockport Road on the edge of Cheadle. It's a Robinsons house, serving Best Mild and Best Bitter (over 10p cheaper than the new Red Lion down the road!). It is small, and old-fashioned (for these days), being a family-run pub with three separate rooms; it can get very busy, but has been for many years a friendly, comfortable local, with just as warm a welcome from landlady Phyllis Turner for the passing stranger as for the regular - good beer too!

The presentation evening is Thursday, June 28th, and it will be a smashing night out, so please join us! How to get there? The Printer's is easy to get to, being on the A560 near Roscoe's roundabout, which is the main bus route from Stockport to Altrincham (371, S10 etc); and under 5 minutes walk from the centre of Cheadle, where the Manchester buses stop (45, 129 etc).

INDEPENDENTS' DAY

JOIN CAMRA in celebrating Britain's independent breweries! July is CAMRA'S Independent's Month when we celebrate the producers of over 450 real ales the length and breadth of the country. Greater Manchester has traditionally been the home of a clutch of the best independents and to mark the fact we will be staging a special event at the Ashton Canal Festival which takes place at the Portland

Basin, Ashton, from 5th - 7th July.

There will be a specially decorated canal boat and plenty of promotional material - look out for the special beer mats offering discount on CAMRA membership.

In addition there will be a beer tent featuring most of our local breweries' beers.



ON THE GUEST LIST

THE partial relaxation of the tie which came into force on May 1st whereby tenants of the five national breweries can stock a cask beer of their choice, has so far been slow to have any effect on the local pub scene with only a handful of licensees taking advantage of their new-found freedom.

Full marks must go to Gordon Bardsley, of the **Park Hotel**, Newbridge Lane, Stockport who was first off the mark with the installation of Holts Bitter as his 'house guest beer'. The Holts went on sale at mid-day on May 1st and now accounts for about 50% of bitter sales - which is hardly surprising considering that its only competitor in this Grand Met pub is the ever present Websters Yorkshire 'Bitter' which sells at 90p a pint compared to 82p for the Holts.

Gordon tells us that he came under some pressure from Websters who made the usual threatening noises about him selling 'foreign' beer through 'their' handpumps. Gordon simply pointed out that they did not in fact own the pumps, he did, and that was that! There was also some dismay that he was selling the Holts for so much less than the Websters - presumably the concept of value for money is not one that has greatly troubled the Halifax marketing men in the past.

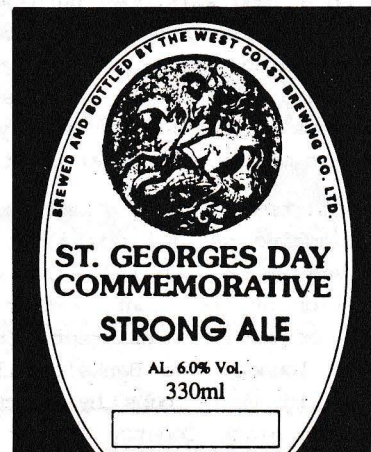
One note of caution about the Park, though. Visitors will also notice a handpump dispensing Wilsons Special Mild. This is in fact a keg beer. Readers will know that CAMRA is very much against the practice of selling keg through handpumps, and whilst Gordon has explained to us why he is doing this, it is still something that we cannot condone. This apart, we still hope that many OT readers will get down to the Park and sample the excellent Holts.

Other local pubs with guest beers are few - the **Old King**, Portwood is selling a well-kept pint of Tetley Bitter whilst in Manchester, the **Cotton Tree** in Gorton and the **Grove** in Openshaw (both Grand Met pubs) are taking Boddingtons Bitter. Both of these pubs are in direct competition with Boddington pubs so the choice, if uninspired, is at least understandable. On the brewery front, Tetleys are now offering their tenants guests from Jennings, Hydes, Robinsons, Hartleys, Mitchells and Burtonwood, although take up has been very slow so far. More news as we get it.

ST GEORGE'S ALE

THE latest product to emerge from Brendan Dobbin's West Coast Brewery at Chorlton-on-Medlock is a bottle conditioned beer produced the other month to celebrate St George's Day.

Called appropriately 'St Georges Day Commemorative Strong Ale', the beer is a 6% alcohol strong pale ale produced by blending three of the standard West Coast beers - North County Bitter, North County ESB and Sierra Nevada Pale Ale. Individually numbered bottles, with labels signed by brewer Brendan Dobbin are still on sale at The Beer House on Rochdale Road, Manchester. Unsigned and un-numbered bottles have been available at the West Coast pub, the Kings Arms, Helmshore Walk, Chorlton-on-Medlock.



The beer is of course sedimented and purchasers intending to drink the beer rather than keep it should pour it with care.

MARIE CELESTE?

WE KNEW Control Securities were bad but....on a recent visit to the recently reopened Metropole in Beswick, not only were there no customers, there didn't seem to be any bar staff either, even after calling out several times.

Resisting the temptation to strip the bottle shelves, our correspondent stumbled out (there weren't many lights on either). This sort of nonsense is a bit late for April Fool, so does anyone out there know what Control Securities are playing at?

PS - as far as could be told in the semi-darkness, all the beer at the Metropole appeared to be keg (that'll get 'em flocking in - ed.)

The Nursery Inn

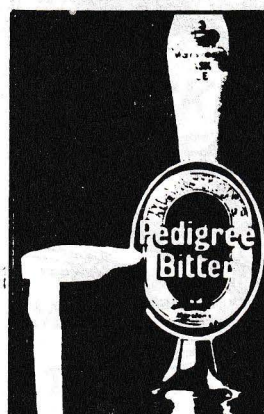
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STAGGER

BY: PETER EDWARDSON

ON A pleasant Spring evening, our April Stagger took us on a long walk down Burnage Lane through Burnage itself to Heaton Mersey. Eight different breweries are represented in the nine pubs - although now Boddingtons is brewed by Whitbread this is no longer strictly true. As always, the opinions expressed are purely those of individual CAMRA members on one particular night.

We started at the **Milestone**, a modern Banks's pub of distinctive design, now about four years old. It is good to see a new pub with the vault placed in a prominent position at the front, rather than tucked away around the side or even non-existent. There is also a large split-level lounge. The Banks's Mild and Bitter, dispensed as usual in their pubs by electric pumps, were both good; Hansons Black Country Bitter is also available in cask form, which is rare in Manchester.

Moving off down Burnage Lane we came to the **Victoria**, a big inter-wars Boddingtons pub, where a sign of the times was a large outside banner proclaiming that Castlemaine XXXX was now on sale. Spurning those dubious delights, we stuck to the handpumped Boddingtons beers, the Bitter

being good, the Mild slightly less so, but still above average. The pub itself, with vault, lounge and small snug off, was nicely redecorated about two years ago, and noticeably busy even at this early stage in the evening.

Passing Greenalls' keg-only **Farmers Arms** brought us to Whitbread's **Green End** at Green End roundabout, another big inter-wars pub, this time in a Brewers' Tudor style. When we last did this Stagger over three years ago the pub was done out in chrome and mirrors, and sold only keg beer, but since then it has been tastefully refurbished, with much use of wood and stained glass, and real ale has also been installed, making a big improvement all round. In the past Marstons Pedigree, Castle Eden Ale and various Whitbread guest beers have been sold, but the range tonight was Chesters Bitter, which nobody tried, Boddingtons Bitter, now appearing in more and more Whitbread pubs, which was about average, and Chesters Mild, which was good, a number of us remarking on a distinctively roasty, Guinness-like flavour.

Another much improved pub was Hydes' **Albion**, which last time we had found shabby and unwelcoming. The pub has an impressive exterior, and inside it has now received a thorough refurbishment, making it much more appealing than before. The Bitter we found above average and the Light Mild good, both beers being dispensed by electric pumps.

In contrast to the last two, the **Sun in September** is a pub that needs little improvement, having kept up a very high standard since it was converted from a private hotel about five years ago. It's hard to spot from the road, being hidden by trees, but once found it's an attractive and unusual building with a pleasant interior consisting of a comfortable, rambling lounge and small vault. It was the first pub that was busy enough to make it difficult to get a seat. Only one real ale is on sale, Sam Smith's Old Brewery Bitter on handpump, which was in good condition.

A ten-minute hike down the south end of Burnage Lane took us across the Stockport boundary to the **Mersey Vale** on Didsbury Road. Formerly the Dog & Partridge, it has been extensively renovated, resulting in a large open-plan one bar pub with acres of carpet and something of a lack of comfortable seating, where to my mind it is difficult to feel at ease. The handpumped Boddingtons Bitter was thought above average; another handpump had a Mild pumpclip, but only the keg version of the beer was on sale - a misleading and reprehensible display which CAMRA has reported to Stockport Trading Standards.

Next we headed up Didsbury Road to the **Railway**, a Grand Met pub apparently in need of an exterior repaint, although inside is one of their more interesting Chef & Brewer interiors, with a long bar down one side, a number of irregular spaces opening off opposite, and a woody feel to the decoration. The clientele was noticeably younger than in the other Heaton Mersey pubs. All of us tried the Websters Choice, which was generally felt to be rather tired and past its best; the pub also sells Websters Yorkshire Bitter, which not surprisingly found no takers, and Ruddles County which was off.

Opposite and a little further up is the **Crown**, an attractive cream-washed building set back a little from the road. Formerly a very small pub inside, it has been extended and a second bar opened up in one of Robinsons' more tasteful renovations. Despite the extension, the Crown is so popular that we ended up drinking our beer outside. The electrically

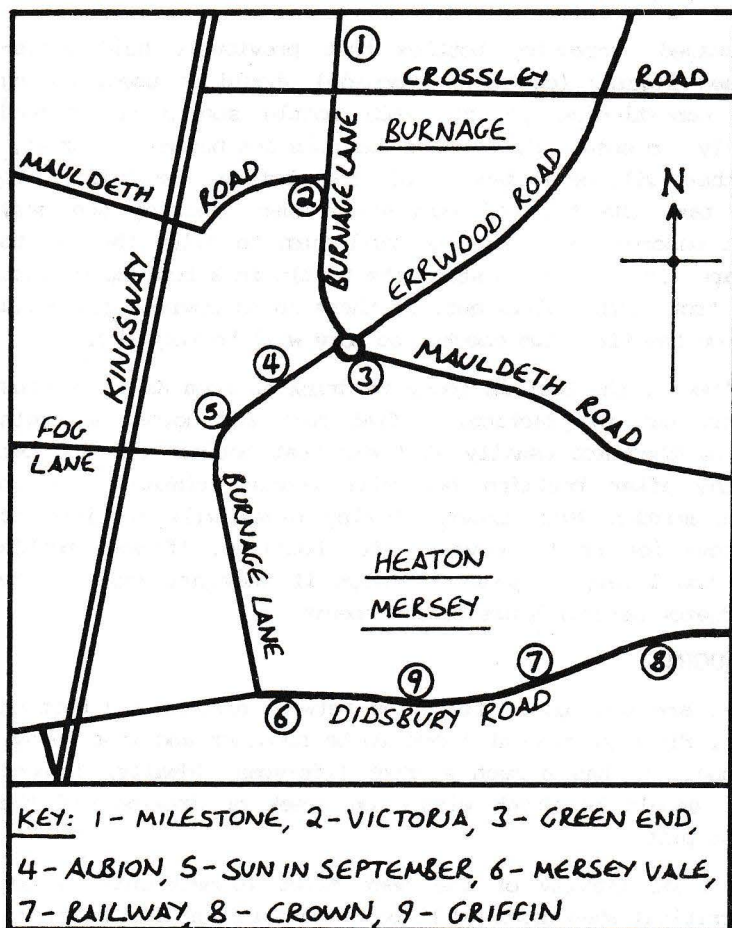


**A FAMILY TRADITION
OF FINE BREWING**

pumped Best Mild and Best Bitter were both in good condition the Mild being the better of the two and by a slim margin the best beer of the night.

Finally we doubled back down Didsbury Road to the **Griffin**, a classic multi-roomed pub centred on a superb wood and etched glass bar, a place that hasn't been altered or messed around in any way and is all the better for that. The one slight quibble was that some of us felt the vaguely Laura Ashley style wallpaper was not quite the thing for a Holts house. The Griffin was also very crowded, though there was a little more breathing space than in the Crown, and the handpumped Holts Mild and Bitter were both thought good, and were certainly the cheapest pints of the night. However, unfortunately, for some reason going back into the mists of time, the licensee of the Griffin is not on speaking terms with CAMRA. I can say without reservation that the feeling is not mutual - we consider the Griffin to be one of the finest traditional pubs in Greater Manchester, serving some of the best beer, and it's a great pity that the licensee does not feel able to join together with CAMRA to promote its virtues.

All in all a fitting end to a crawl where there were plenty of signs of improvement and little to seriously complain about.



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HOME BREW

BY Alastair Walker

This Month: Conditioning and Storage

In most cases, fermentation is complete when the original gravity has dropped by approximately 75% and can be further confirmed by the absence of bubbles rising in the beer (NB do not attempt to bottle your beer if bubbles are still rising). If possible, try to get your finished beer down to less than SG 1010 before running it off for further conditioning. In many cases the final SG will 'stick' at a level well above 1010, particularly if you have brewed a very strong beer. In this case it will be caused by the alcohol level becoming too toxic for the yeast to tolerate and is perfectly normal. If 'sticking' occurs in normal strength beers (eg less than SG1045) and fermentation cannot be restarted by (a) additional rousing, (b) addition of small amounts of sugar and yeast nutrient, or (c) an additional pitching of fresh yeast, then great care must be taken to make sure that the beer is not over-primed during the conditioning stage.

When fermentation is definitely complete, it is very important not to leave the beer lying around for too long before it is run off for further conditioning, since the beer is very vulnerable to airborne infection at this stage.

The two main methods of storing beer for conditioning prior

to consumption are in bottles or draught bulk containers. I usually combine the two by racking off eg two gallons into bottles and three gallons into a small pressure vessel, from a typical 5 gallon brew. If you are going to put your beer on draught, it is essential to choose a container size that leaves as little air space above the beer as possible after the initial transfer (no more than 2-3 inches). It is important to keep the beer in a warm (15-20°C) place for about one week after priming, to allow for the secondary fermentation that will put 'life' into the beer. This should be followed by another 2-3 weeks in a cool place (eg cellar, garage) to let the beer 'drop bright' before drinking.

BOTTLES

Ideally, the gravity of the beer should have dropped below OG 1010 before it is bottled. This does not always happen in practice, although it is still possible to bottle the beer if certain precautions are taken. For an OG of 1011-15, use half the normal priming rate, for OG 1016-20 use no priming sugar at all and above 1020 do not attempt to bottle the beer but transfer it to a draught container.

Priming should be done with white sugar only as this is more readily fermented and will produce more life in the beer. The normal priming rate is around $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon per pint.

Undamaged, screw-top bottles that previously held pressurised liquids (eg beer, lemonade) should be used. During the conditioning period, each bottle should be checked weekly to ensure that excess gas does not become too great, or there will be a danger of the bottles exploding. Do not take the top off completely when checking the gas, just unscrew for a half or full turn to allow the gas to escape. It is best to stand the bottle in a bowl to collect any froth that spills out. If there is no obvious gas build up on the first two checks, no more will be required.

In theory, the beer is ready to drink as soon as it becomes clear, but in practice, I find that for normal strength beers, they are usually at their best between one and two months after bottling but will remain drinkable for up to 6 months. High gravity barley wines will continue to improve for up to a year after bottling. If your bottles are too lively to pour, it helps if they are kept in the fridge for several hours before opening.

DRAUGHT

There are two main differences between draught and bottled beer. Firstly, draught tends to be smoother and less gassy, secondly it has a much shorter life-span. Ideally, draught beer should be drunk within one week of drawing off the first pint.

The final gravity of the beer after fermentation is not as critical when destined to be draught rather than bottled. If a strong pressure barrel (easily obtained from most home brew suppliers) is used, this will comfortably withstand any pressures resulting from secondary fermentation. If a cap fitted with a threaded pressure valve is also used, this will automatically regulate the internal gas pressure.

After primary fermentation, the beer can be run directly from the fermentation vessel into the pressure barrel. The correct amount of fining is $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 oz of sugar per gallon of beer. If it is expected that consumption of the beer will take longer than one week after the first pint is drawn off

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it is essential to exclude all air from the pressure vessel. The reasons for this are that the air itself can chemically oxidise the beer, producing unpleasant off-flavours, and it also contains micro-organisms that will turn the beer sour after a few days. Usually, the first 4-8 pints can be drawn off without any trouble, since the pressure inside the barrel which has built up naturally from the secondary fermentation will force the beer out through the tap. However, eventually this pressure will be spread through such a large volume that it falls below atmospheric pressure and a vacuum develops. At this point you have to decide whether to open the cap and let the air in the vessel or resort to the dreaded CO₂ cylinder!

I hope that this series of articles has been helpful to all prospective home brewers who want to brew beer properly, instead of just opening tins of malt extract. If anyone has any queries on home brewing, I would be glad to attempt to answer them via the pages of Opening Times. Cheers!

(Send any queries to Alastair, c/o Opening Times, address on back page - ed.)

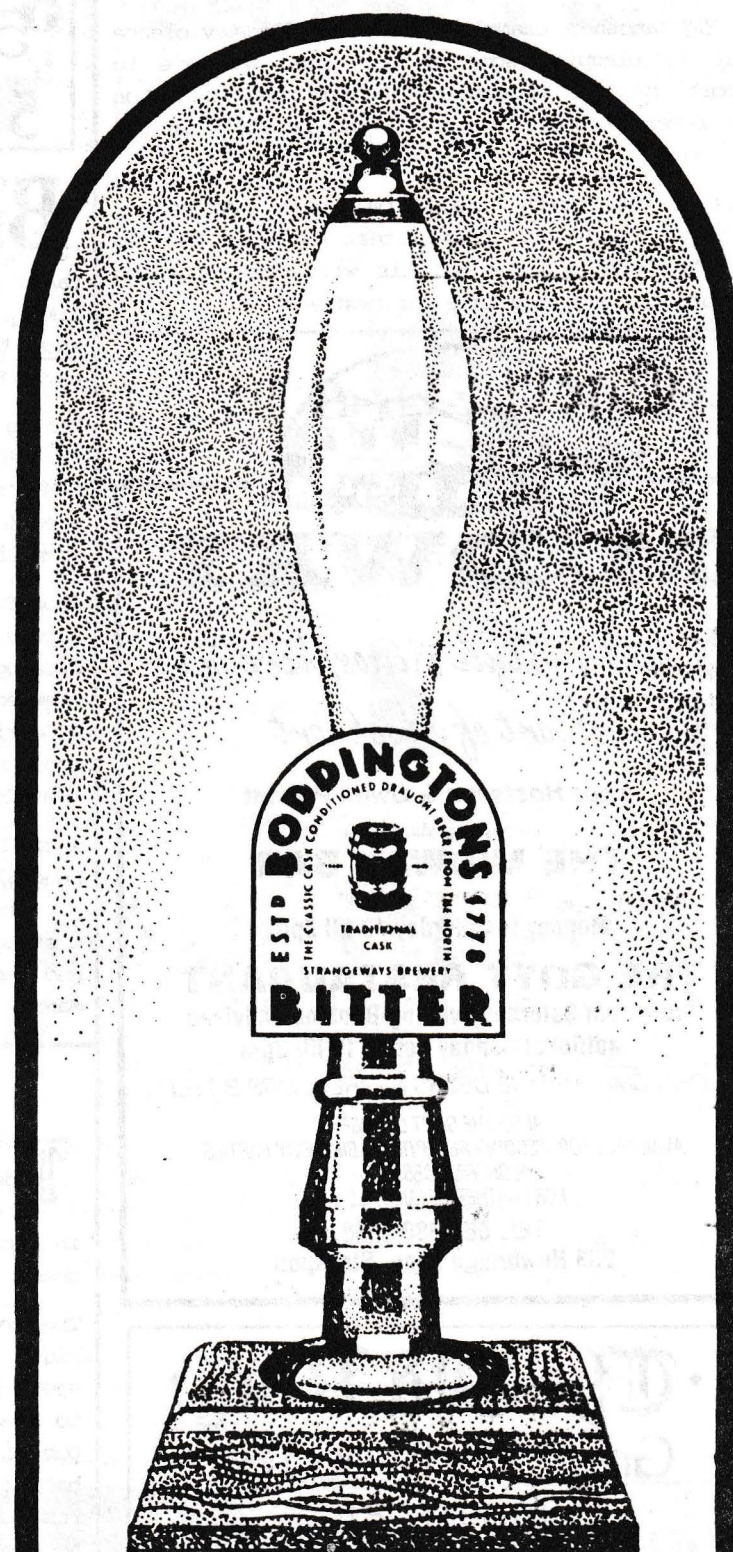
RED LION REVISITED

THE story of the fight put up by the locals to prevent the Red Lion in Cheadle being turned into something more akin to a licensed restaurant has been well documented in these pages. The pub was one that increasingly rare commodity, a genuine community pub which in many ways served just as much as a social centre as it did a pub. Certainly, it badly needed a lick of paint but when Robinsons decided to lease it to Playmaster Leisure it was obvious that they were going to do a lot more than just redecorate - a look at the other Playmaster pubs made that clear.

Well, the 'new' Red Lion is now open and many of the former locals worst fears have come to pass. So different is the new-look pub however that comparisons with what was there before are very difficult and if you view the new pub in its own right, then it has several plus points. There are facilities for the disabled, it still has a multi-room feel and the decor is very plush with much emphasis on wood panelling and stained glass (although perhaps it is a bit too 'Laura Ashley', and there is certainly a degree of overkill with the pictures and plates on the walls). Indeed, it is a far superior job than, with the odd exception, Robinsons seem capable of doing at the moment. Food is available at lunchtimes and evenings (5-8.30) with main courses priced at £4-5.

And now the downside - do we really need uniformed bar staff? Or wine lists on the tables? The presence of bouncers (sorry, 'door supervisors') to keep out 'undesirables' (presumably including the former regulars) who dare to turn up in jeans after 8.30 on a Friday or Saturday is little more than an insult. Injury is added to insult by the prices - £1 for Robinsons Best Bitter and 95p for mild are up to 10% higher than neighbouring pubs.

Indeed, perhaps the best thing that can be said about the Red Lion is that it provided a boost to the real pubs nearby as the former locals vote with their feet and take their custom elsewhere leaving the Red Lion to the out-of-town yuppies for whom it was evidently designed.



THE CLASSIC
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BITTER

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Steve & Dorothy

YEARS AGO

BODDY SNATCHERS" was the headline on the front page of Opening Times for June 1985 - this time it was Boddingtons doing the "snatching" of Higson's Brewery. As Boddingtons had already taken over Oldham Brewery, there was speculation whether they were likely to keep all three breweries open. Now, five years on, we know they didn't, but perhaps it happened in a rather unexpected way - Boddingtons sold their breweries and brand names to Whitbread.

Rising prices always seem to be a subject for complaint, but back in 1985, a rather surprising fact was reported, using figures from CAMRA's local branch records. The average price of a pint in the area had risen by only 4p in 12 months. Just in 1990 and we already seem to have had several price increases of that magnitude.

Egon Ronay talks about it, so do a lot of other guides, and there's hardly a newspaper that doesn't have a column about it, and now Opening Times had joined them. The subject is food, and it was covered in the new Pub Grub feature. First visit was to the Lass O'Gowrie, one of Manchester's few home-brew pubs - home-cooked food, too, and no chips, with main dishes well under £2 (yet another reminder of how prices have moved ever upward since then).

A small item on the back page referred to a coming Extraordinary General Meeting at the Gateway, East Didsbury, to consider a change of name. The Gateway was a regular venue for Committee and Branch meetings - nowadays, much more variety in meeting places is apparent; and the name? - it of course became (and still is) Stockport & South Manchester Branch.

SUN GOES DOWN

THE new look Sun & Castle on Stockport's Hillgate opened its doors just after the last issue went to press - readers will have read of our concern that this classic 1930's pub was in danger of being spoilt and sadly this has turned out to be the case.

The best thing that can be said is that they've carried out the right job in the wrong pub. Clearly quite a lot of money has been spent but has it been to good effect? The aim seems to have been to create a Victorian feel to the pub, but in a classic inter-wars pub this is just plain stupid. Admittedly the Victorian-style bar back (it's dated 1897 but it could be a fake) looks good but the rest of the pub has little to commend it. All of the leaded glass has been taken out (even from the windows, for Heaven's sake) and in what is perhaps the worst single act of vandalism, the fine leaded glass and light oak partition which created an entrance corridor has been ripped out, to be replaced at first by a tacky (and rickety) brass railing and, after about two weeks that was replaced by a flimsy and cheap-looking wooden partition. There are pointless raised drinking areas at the back of the pub and to cap it all the pale oak panelling has all been stained mahogany - some of the panelling looks new, and cheap. There are many pubs where this type of job would be a general improvement but at the Sun & Castle which had many fine features which could have been kept and enhanced, it does all seem a monumental waste of money.

Beers available are Tetley Bitter and, making a first appearance locally, Tetley Dark Mild. Both have been in good form when sampled and there seem plenty of spare handpumps to accomodate further beers, but after what's been done to the pub, does it matter?



MANCHESTER MATTERS

NO SOONER had the ink dried on last month's edition than the **Horseshoe** in West Gorton, described there as derelict, was demolished. All the more credit to the nearby **Unicorn** for holding out as long as it can - sadly, though, work on the relief road has already reached Hyde Road.

Clayton records two real ale gains this month, with handpumped Chesters Mild and Whitbread Trophy at the **Sir Humphrey Chetham**, on Ashton New Road (which has flirted with real Chesters Bitter in the past), while the **Clayton Arms** on North Road has finally made the long-awaited conversion to handpumped Tetley Bitter.

Five more Whitbread pubs are now taking handpumped Boddingtons Bitter - they are the **Crescent** in Beswick (replacing Trophy), the **Derby** in Clayton (replacing Chesters Bitter), the **Old Cock** in Didsbury (also taking Whitbread "guest beers"), the **Prince of Wales** in Gorton, and the **Blackstock** in Victoria Park (replacing Chesters Mild). Wilsons pubs are getting in on the act too, with handpumped Boddies at the **Cotton Tree** in Gorton (replacing Ruddles Bitter) and the **Grove** in Openshaw. Next door to the Grove the merry-go-round continues, with Boddington Pub Company's **Crown** adding handpumped Tetley Bitter, which also appears now to be the only real ale at Control Securities' **Railway** on Chapman Street, Gorton (though Burton Ale's been tried).

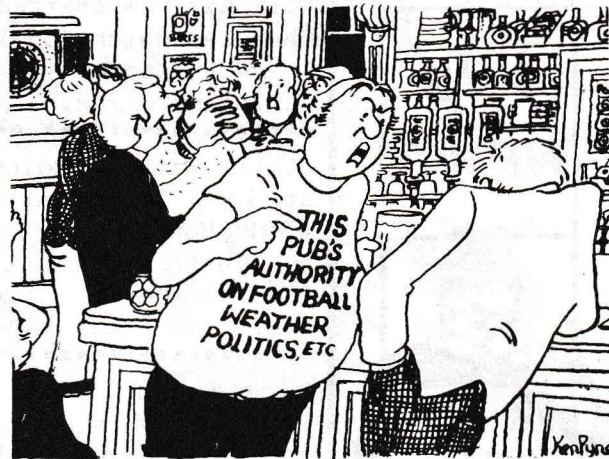
Why, though, do these accelerating beer deals, whether initiated by breweries, pub chains, or individual tenants, so seldom involve beers of real character? One such, albeit too often absurdly oversold by being dubbed Britain's strongest beer, is Theakston's Old Peculier, which has now joined the permanent range on handpump at the **Railway**, Ashburys. Also worthy of note is the addition of handpumped Ind Coope Burton Ale at the **Hare & Hounds** in the City centre.

CAMRA CALLING

OUR special event this month is on Saturday 16th when we will be doing the 'Two Navvies Walk' from the Navigation in Whaley Bridge to the Navigation at Buxworth and back. The train leaves Piccadilly at 17.06 and Stockport at 17.17 and we will be meeting for a quick drink in the Navigation at Whaley Bridge before setting off to Buxworth where we will be spending about an hour and having a meal. If you want to order food in advance, contact Ian on 445 5979.

We also have our usual Monday Socials which will be at the Whitworth, Moss Lane East, Rusholme on 11th; the Peveril of the Peak, Great Bridgewater St., Manchester on 18th; a two-way event in Great Moor on 25th - Dog & Partridge 9.00pm, Travellers Call 10.00pm; and on 2nd July at the Jolly Angler, Ducie St, Manchester. All socials start at 9.00pm.

The Branch Meeting will be on Thursday 14th at the Midway, Newbridge Lane, Stockport (John Smiths Bitter, Magnet and Courage Directors), and starts at 8.00pm. Last but not least there is the monthly Stagger which this month takes us to Didsbury on 22nd, starting at the Parris Wood, Parriswood Road, at 7.00 and meeting at the Crown at 8.30 (the Royal Oak if the Crown is still closed).



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"WHATS ON IN OUR CONCERT ROOM"

1st Wed. of the month: Disco

Friday & Saturday: Live Bands

Sunday: Happy Hour 8-10.00 pm & Members Draw
Parties catered for - function room available

HAPPY HOUR 5.00 - 7.00 MON-FRI

Open 11 - 11 Monday to Saturday, Food 10 - 7.30

PUB NEWS



Work has now started at the **Railway**, Cheadle, which Boddingtons are to convert into one of their 'Henry's Table' eateries.

Still with Boddingtons, work has at long last started on the **Parrswood Hotel**. The job is expected to last up to eight weeks with the pub being closed for the final two.

Not too far away, **Greenalls' Crown** in Didsbury is also currently closed for major refurbishment work which should see the pub extended and generally spruced up.

The **Bromale** in Bramhall no longer sells cask Toby Light, the solitary real ale remaining being **Stones Bitter**.

Still in Bramhall, **Higsons Bitter** has vanished from the **Ladybrook**

on Fir Road, leaving Boddingtons Mild and Bitter as the cask beers on sale.

The **Smithy** on Grove Lane, Cheadle Hulme has added **Ruddles Bitter** to its range which now comprises **Ruddles**, **Websters Bitter** and **Choice** plus **Wilsons Bitter**. The **Smithy** is, incidentally, now selling the **Choice** on a Friday night - on a previous visit a couple of years ago, this beer was not sold on Fridays as it was 'too strong'!

What was once **Beacons** on Didsbury Road, Heaton Mersey, has reopened within the last month. It is notable in two respects: firstly, by appearing to have no name (although a tiny notice at the door indicates that it might be called 'Steaks'), and secondly by being the first pub in the area to sell draught **Newquay Steam Bitter**, which the 1990 Good Beer Guide raves about as 'frankly under average'.

The **Britannia** on Rowsley St, Beswick, will host a major charity event on Sunday, June 17th. This well-known and excellent **Lees** pub has applied for a licence extension to give all-day drinking this day. Even on the off-chance this isn't granted, the fundraising events will still proceed. These include:

DARTS MARATHON - 10am-10pm, an attempt on the world record
POOL MARATHON - playing all comers for 12 hours
LONG DISTANCE RUN - 10 regulars are running from Blackpool to Manchester
OTHER FUN EVENTS - from Yards of Ale to Speed Cream Cracker Eating
*FOR CHILDREN - fancy dress contest and 'kids' castle'.

All the proceeds will go to **Leacroft Special School** in **Miles Platting**. Do get down to the **Brit** for what promises to be a great day out.

We hear that a cafe bar selling cask **Boddingtons Bitter** is to open in **Stockport's Craft Village**. **Handpumped Boddingtons** has also been spotted in the unlikely surroundings of **Bramhall Moat House**.

Theakstons XB and **Old Peculier** have replaced the **Best Bitter** at the **Stanley Arms**, **Newbridge Lane**, **Stockport**. The pub is now a permanent outlet for **Dobbins North County ESB**, brewed at the **West Coast Brewery** in **Chorlton-on-Medlock**.

Contributors to this edition: **Jim Flynn**, **Rhys Jones**, **Peter Edwardson**, **Ian Saunders**, **John Clarke**, **John Tune**, **Charlotte Bulmer**, **Alastair Walker**, **Martin Sellers**

Copy date for the next issue is **Friday 22nd June** with publication on **Tuesday 3rd July**.

Details of advertising rates and postal subscriptions are available from the address below.

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Opening Times is published by **Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA** — the Campaign For Real Ale. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the campaign either locally or nationally. Editor: **John Clarke**, 45 **Bulkeley St**, **Edgeley**, **Stockport SK3 9WD**. Tel: 477 1973 (home), 831 7222 ext. 3411 (work). News, articles and letters welcome. All items © CAMRA:: may be reproduced if source acknowledged.