

OPENING TIMES. CHRISTMAS 1984.

NO. 8.

SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA'S PUB NEWSHEET.

FREE.

TAKING THE PITH!

By the time this Edition hits the streets Pennine Hosts will have re-opened the clutch of pubs they have been re-furbishing in Stockport.

First off the ground was the former 'Mr. Chips' in Mersey Square, now renamed the Far Pavilions! I quote from the advertsing blurb: "...the most exiting development to date...to offer customers all the spice of old India in the days of the Raj....Pennine Hosts 'ethnic colonial' concept (their words - not mine!!) forms the basis of the decor. The centrepiece is an eight foot pith helmet over the bar, made of timber & canvas. At one end of the pub a tent-like pavilion has been installed to give an authentic period feel. Jungle noises combine with a constantly shifting pattern of lights to sweep customers into another world. (It swept me outside!) The brewery has set up a mock gentlemans club complete with cane furniture and marble-effect table tops."

Need one say anything else after that? Well, just one point - it says there is a 'large range of traditional beers' - all that is available is Wilsons Bitter - at 70p a pint!

Further up the A6, opposite the Town Hall, Nelsons Ale House, now the Nelson Tavern has re-opened. The alterations have been fairly tasteful and full marks to the licensee for insisting on keeping cask mild, Hosts wanted keg! Let's hope all drinkers repay this act of faith by making sure sales warrant it. The full range of home-made food is also being retained and there is no price increase (once again at the landlords insistence).

Hosts have had plannig probelms with regard to a neon sign for the Windsor Castle. This is to be a sports pub (God help us) & renamed 'Windsor Sports. It will feature snooker tables and 2 TVs so that racing can be followed. It remains to be seen what call there will be in Edgeley for this especially if prices are hoisted as is usual when Hosts open this kind of pub.

Last but not least is the Bulls Head in Hazel Grove. Any alteration (well, almost any) will be an improvement here, the previous interior being particularly characterless. A full report on this in the next Edition.

John Clarke/
Hamphrey Higgins.

BANKS'S PROGRESS FURTHER.

Buying pubs can be a slow business, and building new ones inevitably takes time. It was just about a year ago when the Longsight near Belle Vue started selling Bans's and we all looked forward to the new Longsight being built nearby - projected opening Christmas '84 (due to 'hiccups' it's now likely to be Jan/Feb '85.

Then there was the Brook House Hotel and the petrol station on Burnage Lane, both apparently still in the pipeline (sorry!) Opening Times reported early in December that Banks's had bought some of Wilsons' pubs, and with lightning re-furbishment we now have the New Mitchell's Arms due to open on 18th., December. But, surprise, surprise, after an incredibly short changeover period, the Falcon in Dryden St., (behind Boddies Plymouth Grove Hotel) opened for business at 5-30pm on 4th., Dec.

Apparently Banks's fitters had installed their equipment whilst Wilsons were busy removing theirs, and now the bar sports Banks's usual plastic boxes which dispense traditional Mild & Bitter at 60p & 63p respectively.

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The views expressed in Opening Times are not necessarily those of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA!!!!!!

DALLAS & MARION AT

Sykes Wine bar

HEATON LANE, STOCKPORT, off
MERSEY SQUARE,

WISH ALL THEIR CUSTOMERS A HAPPY
CHRISTMAS AND A GOOD 1985.

THE **GEORGE**

BANKS'S PROGRESS FURTHER.

cont from p.1

The Falcon suddenly appearing in Banks's livery seemed to take everyone by surprise (even some of the local residents) and certainly Wilsons B.L.O. had no idea that a Banks's/ex-Wilsons pub was opening on December 4th.

So perhaps we'd better keep a closer watch on Banks's other acquisitions - work has already started on the Gorton Brook, and Feb. '85 is forecast for completion. The Gransmoor and the Osborne House are both 'quiet' with no signs of activity.

Phil Levison.

PUB OF THE YEAR.

The last pub of the Month award is on December 20th., and the stage is set for the selection of the 1984 Pub of The Year. This should be done at the January Branch Meeting (be there!!) with the Winner and information about the presentation night appearing in the February 'Opening Times'. Watch this space!

GONE!!

The much criticised Red Lion in Hazel Grove has reportedly been sold. Who to we don't know yet but they've got their work cut out if they want to turn it back into a pub!

HEARD AT THE BAR (2)

Large Irish customer to small gent. in a hat in a crowded Tetley Pub in Leeds:

"Take your hat off in a House of the Lord!!"

GREENALLS' GAIN.

The Pack Horse, Ashton Old Road, Openshaw (Manchester side of the Halfway House) has recently reverted to hand-pumps for Greenalls Bitter (64p), though the mild remains fizz. It's a fairly ordinary two-roomed pub; good to see though, that the vault retains a Manchester dartboard alongside the standard version.

BERNIS' IN

Handpumps serving Wilsons Bitter have appeared in the Bamford Arms, the Berni Inn in Great Moor, Stockport. The quality of the beer has not yet been sampled however.

DOWN AND UPS.

Work appears to have ground to a halt at the former Ups & Downs in Mersey Square. The outside has been much improved but inside nothing appears to have been done.

From the Gutter.

So keen is a certain individual on blowing his own trumpet that it is rumoured that 'Sot's Ruin' (the 15p wrapper that comes with 'Opening Times') will be changing its title to The Periwinkle Bugle. The press barons of North Manchester have not however been able to confirm or deny this undoubtedly scurilous report.

DISAPPEARING TRICK.

In August we mentioned Whitbreads Beech Tree in Outwood Rd., Heald Green, with its nicely polished, but disused hand-pump. The pub is now refurbished but the bad news is that the pump has gone & there is no cask ale, just the usual range of kegs and 'foreign' lagers. I suppose you can't win 'em all.

PAUL AND SHERALYN

THE NELSON TAVERN

WELLINGTON ROAD SOUTH, STOCKPORT

WISH YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING CUSTOMERS

OLD AND NEW.

COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

FROM YOUR LOCAL

JACK & BERYL AT THE

AIRDEN

AIRMS

MILLGATE, STOCKPORT (NEXT TO ASDA)

wish you compliments of the season!!

FESTIVE GREETINGS FROM ANDY
& CHRISTINE

THE

CROWN

WILMSLOW ROAD,

DIDSBURY.

JOHN AND JOSIE AT THE

KINGS HEAD

ARDWICK

WISH CUSTOMERS OLD AND NEW A MERRY
CHRISTMAS AND

A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM BRAU' & YVONNE

LITTLE JACK

HORNER

WELLINGTON ST., STOCKPORT

DON AND ALINE WISH ALL THEIR
CUSTOMERS A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

CASTLEWOOD

(HOLE IN WALL)

BRIDGE STREET BROWLS MARKET, STOCKPORT.

BILL & KATH WELCOME YOU TO THE

SPIREAD

EAGLE

LOWER HILLGATE, STOCKPORT,
AND WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

STAR

&

GARTER.

HIGHER HILLGATE, STOCKPORT.

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

AND A HAPPY
NEW YEAR

FROM ALAN,
KATH &
THE STAFF.

BARBARA AND FAMILY AT THE

BLOSSOMS

BUXTON ROAD, STOCKPORT,

WISH YOU ALL THE BEST AT CHRISTMAS.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS FROM RON & JEAN

BULLS HEAD

HOTEL

MARKET PLACE,
STOCKPORT

BOARS HEAD

MARKET PLACE, STOCKPORT.

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR
CUSTOMERS.

AROUND IN THE TOWN.

- The Gorton Gamble & The Abbey Hey Hobble.

The Waggon & Horses, Hyde Road, Gorton, was the first shelter from a wet & windy November evening. A cheering 52p mild & 55p bitter (HOLTS) welcomed us to the hostelry (1p cheaper in the vault!) where 7 eager campaigners gave very sober scores of $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ for both beers. With an excellent brew in our veins we ventured a parting of the ways. Some visited the Lord Nelson, Hyde Rd., a Wilsons Pub (Mild 63, Bitter 65) where Bitter only was sampled and gave a disappointing score of 1. More fortunate members managed to seek out the Vale Cottage Inn, Kirk St., behind the Lord Nelson. Wilsons mild (64) & Bitter (66) were sampled in a cosy, welcoming 'country pub' atmosphere with a beer rating of Bitter 3 & mild $3\frac{1}{2}$.

Next stop the Royal Oak, Cross Lane, W. Gorton, Boddingtons Bitter at 62p (beware Oldham Keg Mild!) scored a miserable 0.7 in noisy, smoky, crowded, 'modernised' surroundings. Across the road in the calmer Cotton Tree, Wilsons Mild (61) & Bitter (63) was served, and received, with scores of mild 3 & bitter $2\frac{3}{4}$. The impressive collection of pottery, copper, and brass kettles was admired by all.

As we stumbled upon the Prince of Wales, Abbey Hey Lane, we felt a right bunch of Charlies to pay 8 x 64p for a tableful of unconsummable Chesters bitter - a few dozen mouthfuls of the stuff revealed scores of between 0 & $\frac{1}{4}$. Dahing down the road we decided (as nothing could be worse) to pop into the Abbey Hey, same lane, a Bass house. Representatives were appointed to sample the Stones/Toby Light to check the 'keg factor' whilst others stood by agog. Yes, still keg, no scores, no comment.

Moving swiftly across to the Hamlet, Falmer Street, the pub on the sharp bend, we sampled Wilsons Mild (60) & Bitter (63). This is a recently modernised local where the beer was judged to be mild $2\frac{1}{2}$ & Bitter $2\frac{3}{4}$. As we descended into the depths of Abbey Hey in an attempt to find a better pint of Boddingtons than the last, we found the delightful Hare & Hounds, Abbey Hey Lane, which sold Boddingtons Bitter only through a lovely array of old red handpumps. This virtually unspoilt local had three rooms and

an open corridor where the beer was served in a very convivial atmosphere. Original materials such as wood, tiles, and etched glass (gasp!) still exist here. Oh, by the way, the beer was also consumed and scored 2-3.

Anyway, almost the end of the evening now and onto the Oddfellows, Abbey Hey Lane, again Boddingtons Bitter and Mild. The latter had very variable scores of between 1 & $2\frac{1}{2}$, upon which the elected could not agree. The bitter however was easier and was given an almost unanimous and very definite $1\frac{1}{2}$ - a disappointing end to a very interesting and variable adventure.

Scores for Ale: 1) Poor
2) Average
3) Good
4) Excellent

Angela Walker.

KEG KAPERS.

The Waldorf in Cooper Street (off Princess St., in the City Centre) changed its name to Oscars a number of years ago, when there was a George Best involvement.

The Wilsons was thought to be Real at one time, but the present small electric dispensers look distinctly un-cask like. The food is very good though, much used by parties of Office workers cheques are payable to SASKEG LTD - are they trying to tell us something?

Phil Levison.

Opening Times would like to take this opportunity of thanking all our Advertisers, new and old, whose support for this venture have ensured its success - very best wishes for a prosperous 1985 - and to our readers, please give them your support - they're all good pubs!!
For details of advertising please contact Ron Sproson on 432 0059.

OLIVE, DON & THE STAFF AT THE

WHEATSHEAF

HIGHER HILLGATE, STOCKPORT

WISH ALL THEIR CUSTOMERS A

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A

HAPPY NEW YEAR.

ALL THAT GLISTERS.

It needed an AGM motion before Allied Breweries ill-fated Gold Cross Lager was pronounced 'not real'. Whitbreads new 'hand-drawn' lager is not going to need the same treatment - it has already been officially described as not cask conditioned, in fact it is filtered and carbonated in the Cook Street Brewery in Salford, but it is served by hand-pump.

It's on sale in 18 outlets in the Greater Manchester area and 4 of these are South Manchester branch pubs: The Green End Hotel, Mauldeth Road, Burnage; The Sherwood, Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield; Ye Olde Cock, Wilmslow Rd., Disdsbury & The Red Lion, Church Road Gatley.

It was only possible to sample it in 2 of these pubs (81p a pint 3p more than Heineken) but it tasted completely different, one was flat, the other very prickly'. At one of the other pubs, water came out of the pump on the first visit (good clean lines?) but next day the lager was 'not available - sorry'. Finally a barmaid said she would'nt serve it, it was so awful, but she drew a small sample which was very frothy, a bad colour and with a diabolical taste.

Bar staff generally were critical of it - difficult to serve, nobody drinking it, too expensive - one thought it would be withdrawn before this appeared in print. Although the lager has no name (the pump clip just says 'hand-drawn lager' it was going to be called Gold Label, but second thoughts were that this might damage the image of Gold Label Barley Wine - how right they were.

Phil Levison.

OPENING DEFERRED - 1

It was in February of this year when we were all agog at David Pollards new venture - the old Cheadle Railway Station that was going to be a new home-brew house.

But now, 10 months later, there has been absolutely no visible progress - windows are still boarded over, and weeds have grown round the old Waiting Room door.

OPENING DEFERRED - 2.

October 'Opening Times' reported the new pub on the New House Farm Estate in Bramhall - opening was thought to be possibly at Christmas, but work is taking longer than planned and it will now be early 1985.

Progress will be watched with interest, as there is every indication that this is going to be a real, non-plastic pub. Everything is real - bricks, timbers (some are wierd shapes & very old), stone flags, fires; - correction there was some polystyrene ceiling lining in the cellar for insulation purposes.

A HOME OF THEIR OWN.

Congratulations to Braulio and Yvonne Sebastian of the Little Jack Horner on Wellington Street, Stockport, who took over the tenancy of this Wilsons house on the 3rd., December after being managers for the past two years.

They offer Wilsons Bitter on Handpump in a warm and cosy atmosphere with an excellent range of food at lunch-times.

Spelling lesson

Banks's insist it's Banks's not Bank's as appeared last month.

Was it that bearded gentleman who lost the S?

CAMRA NEWS.

Tuesday, January 8th., Open Committee Meeting at the Gateway.

Thursday, January 10th., Branch Meeting at the Castlewood, Bridge Street Brow, Stockport. Both commence at 8pm.

GATEWAY

WILMSLOW ROAD, EAST DIDSBURY.

HYDES BITTER & MILD.

GOOD BEER GUIDE LISTED.

HOSTS RALPH & JEAN PROVIDE A WIDE

RANGE OF HOME-COOKED FOOD.

PARTIES CATERED FOR.

TEL: 445 2750.

ROUND BRITAIN DRINKER -
Eight get wet in Bradford.

It was hardly raining when we left Stockport. It wasn't too bad even in Bradford - in fact it was only when our transport irrevocably departed, not to return until late at night, that our intrepid organiser discovered he'd left his umbrella on the bus, an oversight that was to prove the day's one major didaster.

Our objective was the CAMRA exhibition on the Glory of the Traditional British Pub, on at Cartwright Hall, Bradfords Municipapal Art Gallery, every day except Monday till January 13th. We'd also planned to visit Trough, Bradford onlt independant brewery, but they were all going out to get drunk together so they sent us some free beer tokens instead. This meant we had to start the lunchtime session in one of their 5 tied houses. We chose the Whatmough Arms on Lumb Lane and enjoyed both the Trough Beers (Bitter and Wild Boar) in fine form plus good and cheap pie and peas.

We'd decided to end the lunchtime at the Oakleigh, a long-established freehouse near the exhibition. Only a quarter hous walk, we said - then we realised that when the Asians came to Bradford, they not only brought the curry, they brought the monsoon too. After a drenching mile, the Oakleigh faced us with a choise of Bass, Old Mill, Theakstons and Taylors. These were vigourously attacked and met with general, though not unqualified, approval. Then it was off through the puddles to the exhibition.

This was nearly a handkerchiefs out job for some - seeing reminders of all the once proud brews you never had a chance to try can have that effect on people. There's plenty of good stuff on display (including a photo of our very own Griffin, Heaton Mersey) and the show is certainly worth seeing, though personally I felt it wasn't angry enough - where was the condemnation of the big brewers (and some smaller ones) for destroying the character and tradition up and down the country?

After another severe soaking we revived flagging spirits with a splendid, and splendidly chep meal at the Sheesh Mahal, one of Bradfords famous down to earth curry houses (no cutlery, just dig in with your chapatti)

SWAN with 2 NECKS.

PRINCES STREET, STOCKPORT.

BEST WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS AND
 THE NEW YEAR
 FROM IRENE.

Then it was time to meet the Bradford Branch in the Shoulder of Mutton (Bhuna or Vindaloo?), a city-centre Sam Smiths pub selling Old Brewery Bitter & Tadcaster First stop on the ensing crawl was the Wheatsheaf, where Vaux Samson & Darleys Bitter, nice pint too, were enjoyed. Then, still rained on, to the Peel, a Websters house amongst dark satanic mills offering light and bitter, juke boxed Cream & Hendrix & table football. The next stop brought gasps of recognition - a Whitbread House of Horrors! It's actually quite a restrained version compared to say, the Nip & Tiddle, & I must report that the Durham Ale was most impressive. The place is called Frshers and, yes, its near the University. Are'nt the Whitbread executives original? After that, a real find - the Fighting Cock, possibly the ultimate beer-exhibition free house, which on top of a regular range as long as your arm has had over 100 guest beers in its first year, including Hilden Ale from Northern Ireland.

We could only scratch the surface of the range and after threatening to return at regular intervals until a similar establishment opens in Manchester (Which the proprietors are keen to do), staggere round to have a quick one in the Gladstone, a largely unspoilt Bass pub. Then we inspected the Bradfordian, another exhibition pub with almost as many beers as the Fighting Cock, plus a loud rock group, before a leisurely last drink of Websters at the Lancaster across the road. It was almost certainly still raining but by now we werewet inside as well!

Rhys P. Jones.

PS: Our invite to Trough still stands - watch Opening Times for details. No doubt the visit will provide enough beer & curry to keep the Manningham monsoon at bay - even for those of us who leave our umbrellas behind!

Contributors: John Clarke, Humphrey Higgins, Rhys Jones, Ron Sproson, Phil Levison, Angela Walker.