

Goodbye Websters?

PLENTY has already been written in Opening Times about the current turmoil and upheaval currently facing the brewing industry in general and the national brewers in particular as they come to grips with the changes brought about by the Monopolies Commission report on their activities.

One of the biggest changes so far has been the deal whereby Grand Metropolitan (Websters and Wilsons locally) swapped its breweries for the pubs run by Fosters (John Smiths/Courage). This has left the new Fosters Brewing group with around 20% of the UK brewing capacity and, arguably, too many breweries and beer brands. Shortly after the swap Fosters announced that they were to conduct a three-month 'fundamental review' of their newly enlarged operations which could well result in the rationalisation (ie axeing) of production facilities and beer brands. That review will now be reaching its conclusion and it's looking as though a prime candidate for the chop could well be the Halifax brewery and its "flagship" product (if that's the right word in the circumstances), Websters Yorkshire Bitter. Websters is in direct competition with John Smiths at Tadcaster and a few recent events may provide clues as to the future of these two breweries:

- John Smiths have embarked on a £7 million advertising campaign
- Magnet, the rival to Websters Choice, is now being massively promoted in certain parts of the country.

- John Smiths have dropped the title 'Yorkshire Bitter' from the brand name for their bitter in the South.
- Production of Budweiser lager has been moved from Halifax to Mortlake in London.
- Websters Brewery is now working well below capacity.

Fosters are currently remaining tight-lipped. Indeed, commercial director Guy Hutchinson has gone so far as to maintain that recent initiatives have helped position Websters and John Smiths quite differently in the market, and so implying a continued future for both brands. Despite this however, the sheer economic nonsense of having two Yorkshire breweries, one of which is well below capacity, producing similar products for the same market must weigh heavily against the survival of brewing at Halifax. If Websters does survive it is likely to be as a keg and canned product for the club and take-home trade only, we think.

So, where does this leave Wilsons. Whatever your views on its quality since the closure of the Newton Heath brewery, the brand is one that is produced essentially for the North West and provides a link with our brewing past. In particular, there is still a demand for Wilsons Mild, despite Grand Met's best efforts to kill it off, and John Smiths do not currently brew a cask mild. Wilsons from Tadcaster perhaps? Or a new cask mild from John Smiths? Watch this space.

The Nursery Inn

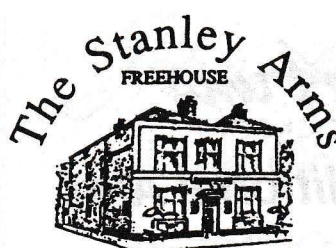
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Hartleys Axed

TWO local firms hit the headlines last month as the shakeout in the brewing industry gathers pace.

The Boddington Group narrowly failed in their attempt to take over west country brewery Devenish. Despite the failure of the bid, Boddington's action did bring forward the long-expected announcement by Devenish that they were to cease brewing by August with the consequent closure of their Redruth brewery unless a buyer could be found. Luckily, there do appear to be some interested parties although what sort of market there will be for the beers remains to be seen as Devenish have sold their existing brands to, and signed a seven-year supply deal with....Whitbread. Meanwhile, the failure of the bid is also thought to leave Boddingtons open to a takeover with favourite predators tipped as being Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries who already have a few pubs locally under the Banks's banner.

The other shock came from Robinsons who announced that their Hartleys subsidiary would cease brewing later this year. Details are still sketchy but at present the intention seems to be to brew the existing Hartleys range at Stockport and use the Ulverston site as a depot and admin. 'centre. Dennis Robinson stated that the company had had to face harsh economic facts but how much money the move will save remains to be seen. 10 staff at Hartleys will lose their jobs but set against this is the cost of trucking the beer up to Ulverston and the drop in trade which several firms have experienced on closing a brewery and attempting to brew the beers elsewhere. It is also a moot point whether the full range of Hartleys beers will survive - of the four only the premium XB seems to have any long-term future. CAMRA is currently trying to set up a meeting with Robinsons to find out more about this - more news when we have it.

JULY

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| 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 | 30 |
| 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 | 31 |
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| 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 | |

PUB OF THE MONTH

PUB of the Month for July 1991 is the **Armoury**, Shaw Heath, Stockport.

The Armoury is one of many Stockport pubs formerly owned by Bell & Co of Hempshaw Lane whose ownership is here still evident from the interior glasswork. The pub is staunchly traditional in both its atmosphere and layout with a bright and comfortable lounge on the right as you enter and on the left a series of inter-connecting rooms with a busy vault, quieter lobby-cum-hall and a back room where darts is very much in evidence.

Whilst the pub can get very busy at night, the efficient service ensures that you don't have to wait long for your pint of well-kept Robinsons Best Mild or Best Bitter, or even Old Tom from the cask that is stillaged on the bar counter in the vault.

All this is overseen by Garry Cathcart and his sister Jayne who took over the running of the pub last September from their parents who themselves had been there 17 years. In this days of upheaval in the trade family continuity like this is good to see and seems appropriate to such a traditional local like the Armoury.

As we went to press work was underway to remove the 1920's tiling from the exterior of the pub and also to instal new windows. All this should be finished by the presentation night on Thursday, 25th July when an excellent night is promised.



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Thank You

A BIG thank-you to everyone who came to Stockport Beer Festival and made it the best and most successful yet. There must be few events where over 3000 people can drink over 12500 pints without any sign of trouble. That is a credit to you, our customers, so give yourselves a pat on the back.

You were a generous lot as well - the Festival Charity raised almost £500. The Rainbow Trust is indeed a worthy cause and in this copy of Opening Times you will find a leaflet explaining what they do and also giving you the chance to make a further donation. Please do try and give something to this worthy cause, after all £1 is less than the price of a pint these days.

Kings Curry

WEST Coast Brewery's tied house, the Kings Arms in Chorlton-on-Medlock last month pioneered a tasty partnership - with an Indian restaurant. Following the withdrawal of the local church group from catering at the Kings, licensee Simon Finch asked himself "why should I go to Oldham Street for my dinner when I can bring my dinner here?" And so, catering at the Kings Arms is now in the hands of the Cuckoo Chef, Oldham Street's renowned Indian restaurant that supplies varied and excellent Asian cuisine at prices even lower than Rusholme's finest. Food is expected to be available both lunchtimes and in the evening - for further details contact the Kings Arms.

The Kings Arms is also now selling Yellow Mountain Chinese-style lager in both draught and bottled form, while the famous Yakima Grande Pale Ale is now on sale as far away as the Bermuda Triangle - a Good Beer Guide-listed pub in Poole, Dorset. The Kings Arms, meanwhile is taking regular guest beers, one of the first being Shefford Old Dark.

Independents

JULY is the month when CAMRA celebrates Britain's Independent Breweries, the local firms who keep Britain's real ale traditions alive and well.

It's the Independents who offer value for money and quality ales of distinction, brewed to suit local tastes unlike many of the mass-market lowest common denominator beers produced by some of the nationals. In Greater Manchester we are lucky to have a thriving independent sector with old established firms like Robinsons, Holts, Hydes and Lees and smaller newcomers such as West Coast and Oak. So, this month if they're not your regular tipple already, try an independent's beer - you'll enjoy the taste and like the price.

Also, look out for the special CAMRA beer mats like the one shown below. Post it off to CAMRA and you can join the Campaign at the special discount rate of £8.



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Hydes 50-Up

Those of our readers who have sent off for the list of Hydes pubs we have available (SAE to address on the back page) will want to know about the latest addition to the estate - the Cock Robin on Main Avenue, Sale, formerly a keg-only John Smiths house which, oddly, had been leased by Mansfield Brewery.

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Book Review

BY JIM
FLYNN.

RECENTLY Sigma Leisure, a publishing firm based in Wilmslow, have started to produce a series of Real Ale rambling books, the first of which is "Pub Walks in Cheshire" which retails at £5.95.

The book details 30 circular walks each of which starts and finishes at a pub. The county is divided into six sections, each introduced by a description of the area, its main attractions and long-distance walks. As a book of short-distance walks it is excellent with detailed descriptions of each walk, including mileage, maps and their degree of difficulty.

The main introduction is by Joe Lawless of Cheshire CAMRA but it is with the pubs that the book tends to disappoint. Whilst the pub descriptions are very comprehensive for some reason this does not extend to details of the real ales sold and in the case of a number of the free houses, this omission does mean that you will have no idea of the beer you might be starting or finishing your walk with. This, and the excessive reliance by the author on either Greenalls or national breweries pubs does undermine somewhat the sub-title "Real Ale Rambles". Nevertheless this is a very worthwhile book and with some refinement, future books in the series could really live up to the potential of the concept.

In similar vein, the AA have published "Short Walks to Country Pubs" (£4.99). This is a surprisingly good book with a hundred scenic walks covering most of the country's rural areas. In contrast to the Sigma publication, the walks have the real ale pub half-way round which, as a somewhat lethargic walker myself, seems much more civilised. The food, beers and ciders (including the keg) are detailed and it is pleasing to note that many freehouses and independent breweries' pubs are featured. It is unfortunate that unlike 'Cheshire Walks', the AA's book lack maps but, considering the price it is a good value addition to any active beer drinker's library.

Both books can be obtained from local bookshops and "Short Walks to Country Pubs" is also available at AA shops.

Viaducts & Vaults

"...a marvellous guide to Stockport's famed asset and well worth £2.95"

And what was it the Stockport Express Advertiser was raving about in its review? Yes, you guessed - it's "Viaducts & Vaults", the very first guide to Stockport's pubs produced by CAMRA. This really is an indispensable book for anyone who cares about the towns pubs and the beer they sell and if you've not bought yours yet, you'd better hurry as over half the print run sold out within two weeks of the book being launched at the end of May. It's available from all good bookshops and many local pubs. If you really want to be sure of getting a copy though, just send a cheque for £3.25 payable to "CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester" to 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG.



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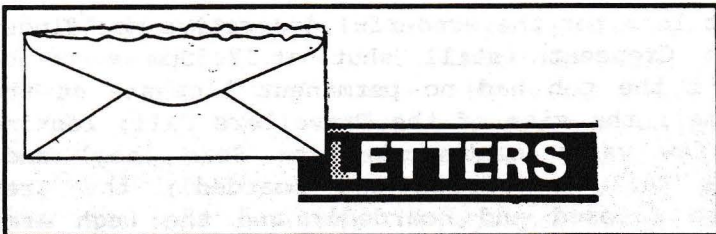
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From Peter Soane:

I was interested to read Peter Edwardson's comments about Reddish pubs in June's "Opening Times".

I think that the main reason why the pubs and beer in Reddish leave something to be desired is the predominance of Working Mens Clubs. Most of the drinkers I know in Reddish use these clubs, and no wonder. Their beer is at least 20p a pint cheaper and they offer excellent facilities - full size snooker tables, live entertainment, special events. These clubs are the heart of the social scene in Reddish and I think that until the large price differential is removed, they will continue to be.

From Rhys Jones:

After last month's mention for the new licensees at the Sun in September, Burnage, it seems only fair to point out that former licensees Les and Ann are comfortably installed at the Vine at Dunham Woodhouses, between Altrincham and Lymm, where they have introduced handpumped Old Brewery Bitter to this previously keg pub.

Handy for Dunham Hall and deer park, the pub is set in an attractive village location and boasts a pleasant garden and tempting menu (though I have yet to eat there). In short, an ideal venue for the summer months.

From Mike Goode:

Re: Peveril of the Peak

Once again Rhys has gone into print with totally wrong information on the Pev - this time it nearly resulted in the pub being taken out of the Good Beer Guide.

The FACTS are that Scrumpy Jack which has been on for months, was on handpump for approx. 2 days - it has been on electric freeflow ever since; so much for Rhys' recent info! Clearly, drinking cider has affected his brain, I suggest he reverts to real ale - perhaps even the real mild in the Pev. Perhaps in future, he will check his facts before writing more cr*p.

(Editor's note: I think that the offending 'handpump' was in use for a little longer than the two days suggested by Mr Goode. However, be it two days or two weeks, the fact does remain that at the time the May issue of Opening Times went to press, the Pev. was selling keg cider through a fake handpump. Happily, that is no longer the case, as Rhys Jones reports this month in 'Manchester Matters'.)

THE CLASSIC
CASK
CONDITIONED
BITTER

STAGGER

BY: RHYS JONES

A DULL evening saw our staggerers convene at the **Seven Stars** on Ashton Old Road for a walk up to Openshaw.

Plenty has been written in these pages about the refurbishment of the Seven Stars - suffice to say that our party, arriving in ones and twos over a period of perhaps half an hour, made as one for the vault. And here we found a friendly welcome both sides of the bar, with several people's beer being topped up even though this had neither been requested nor was the original measure appreciably short. The beer being Holts, it's not surprising that it was very good. Indeed, the mild and bitter here eventually emerged as the two best beers of the night, with only one serious challenger (of which more later). A good start.


And we needed it, for there followed one of the most dismal experiences of many a long stagger, as our weary footsteps passed - the **Metropole** (keg); the **Openshaw Inn** (now offices

but look for the wonderful decorative mouldings) the **Crescent** (still shut at 7.30pm - to be fair the pub had no permanent licensee at the time); the site of the **Travellers Call**; looking a few yards southwards, the **Star** (keg) and the **Railway** (closed and boarded); the **Grey Mare** (closed and boarded); and the **Legh Arms** (keg). By the time we reached the **Lord Wolseley** we needed a drink. It's a two-bar pub, quiet in the early evening, with some good Chesters etched glass. The beers were Chesters Mild (on an unmarked handpump) and Boddingtons Bitter. Only one of us tried the Boddingtons, and rated it good; the mild was not so well thought of but still above average. Some of us had a good session on the table football.

Another dead zone now, as we pass the **Drovers Return** (still closed at 8 - believed to be keg anyway), the **Staff of Life** (keg), the **Malcolm** (now a private house), and the **George** (keg). This has the result that we reach the **Smithfield**, our second appointed meeting place, half an hour early, and while some pile straight in, the rest of us decide to get a few more pubs done. Just across **Cornwall Street** is the unexpected sight of the "**Gorton Loco Freehouse**". This turns out to be the old **Gorton Loco Club**, now operating as a pub and with Boddingtons and Lees Bitter on handpump. However Lees is off and Boddingtons substandard (it was to prove the worst beer of the night). The place still has the look of a club - a cavernous room with serried ranks of tables - and despite it advertising "the cheapest (sic) beer in town", our halves cost 50p!

Just along **Cornwall Street** is the **Napoleon**, an ostensible freehouse where we are met on the door by a lady who informs us that, since a group will be playing later, it'll cost us 50p to get in, however long or short our stay. On learning that the only real ale is **Websters Bitter**, we decline her kind offer, and make for the **High Bank** on **Ogden Lane**, a plain but perfectly pleasant modern two-roomed Boddingtons pub. This is the first remotely busy pub we've seen, featuring a strong vault trade - note the well-filled trophy cabinet. The only real ale is Boddingtons Bitter, on handpump. Sadly, this is little better than the beer at the **Gorton Loco**.

Now back to the **Smithfield**, or the **Locomotive** as I still think of it, where our colleagues are onto their second pint. When refurbished some while ago, this place came in for a good deal of criticism, but on this visit a number of us wondered what all the fuss had been about. It's still multi-roomed; it's got some wonderful tiling; and the splendid narrow vault retains its original wood panelling and atmosphere. Again, the only real ale is Boddingtons Bitter, on which opinions varied - most found it at least above average though.



ESTD 1867

**BURTONWOOD
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Out now to Greenall's **Pack Horse** on the corner of Louisa Street. Here a disco dominated the lounge, and a pool table the vault, making the pub less than congenial - matters weren't helped by the lipstick-smearing glass which one of us received, or the presence of keg cider on fake handpump. Handpumped beers are Greenalls Bitter and Original - bitter was marginally above average (though some thought it too "green" or immature), Original was off as the pump was broken.

Things improved considerably across the road at the **Wrexham**, a fine example of a Boddingtons pub that's not been mucked about with. This down-to-earth multi-roomed boozier really is the face of old-style Openshaw drinking, but popular with all age groups (though on this visit the clientele was heavily male-dominated). There's plenty of good tiling, including a tiled floor in the back room. Beer once again is Boddingtons Bitter only, and comfortably above average on this occasion.

At this stage we'd intended to enjoy some Banks's in the **Royal Oak** on Ogden Lane, but the pub turns out to be now all keg (Banks's Mild and Hanson's Bitter). The licensee did assure us that real ale would be on sale following alterations to the bar, but since the pub sold real ale for decades until quite recently, one wonders what to make of this. It certainly needs sorting out - a Banks's pub with no real ale is, thankfully, a rarity.

Instead, then, it was on to the **Lord Raglan** at the crossroads. The corner door, still in use, leads to a great vault which is still very much the heart of this old-style pub. It's a Websters-free zone, with both Wilsons beers on handpump; both were above average tonight, the mild being the better of the two. What a shame the place throws it all away by selling keg cider on a fake handpump!

Just across stands the **Halfway House**. As we entered, the pub was in disco mode and we feared the worst. However, the vault was opened up and turned out to be a grand room with a log-end dartboard and a well-filled notice-board. And the beer was excellent: handpumped Chesters Mild came within an ace of being the best beer of the night, and Chesters Bitter wasn't far behind. Whether or not it's your style of pub, the cellarwork at the Halfway is hard to fault.

Next we stepped back towards town to take in Robinsons' **Forresters Arms**. Formerly a run-down two-room pub, this was altered a few years ago to the brewery's familiar one-room format. Personally, I find it more than a little uninspiring, but some of our party disagreed, seeing it as a decent straightforward local. Unusually for a Robinsons pub, no cask mild is on sale. Best Bitter, though, was above average without being exceptional.

Back to the crossroads and a left turn on Fairfield Road brings you to the **Concert**. Once a by-word for squalor, this pub has without doubt been revived by the Boddington PubCo's recent refurbishment. Sensibly, Boddingtons have only altered those things that needed altering. The vault, which we used, is just as it always was, only clean; the whole pub was clearly thriving; and Kinks and Rolling Stones on the jukebox didn't detract from the enjoyment of those of us of a certain age. The beer (once again, Boddingtons Bitter only) was well above average. By this time last buses and trains were calling us, so the Stagger came to an official end (although one or two of us did make it to the Oddfellows on Abbey Hey Lane for last orders...).

As ever, this isn't supposed to be the last word on Openshaw's pubs - visit them yourself, and feel free to disagree with us. One thing, though, seems clear - Lower Openshaw is very poorly served in sheer number of pubs, to say nothing of their quality, and things can only get worse when the new ring road goes through. What the area really needs is a beer festival - see you at Openshaw College in October!

The Robin Hood

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PUB IN THE PEAK

A Summer Series

— This Month —

THE SQUIRRELS, Chinley

THE A6 Whaley Bridge by-pass has made Chinley even more off the beaten track than ever but this is real Derbyshire in all senses.

In the 1991 Good Beer Guide for the first time as the Squirrels, the pub had made an appearance many years ago in its previous incarnation as Princes. This pub had developed a fearsome reputation as a brawling discotheque until it was taken over 2½ years ago by Drew and Alison Marsh who set about returning it to civilisation.

Large and imposing with a double gabled stone facade, the building is obviously a hotel and upstairs there are both rooms to let and a function room which will take 60. Until last December, when the lounge and restaurant opened, there had been only one badly refurbished bar. Both bars are now well-used and the false ceiling in the bar area of the new lounge produces a small bar atmosphere in a large room.

Although there are four steps to the front door, there is a wheelchair entrance from the small rear car park and a wheelchair lift up to the first floor. The downstairs bar, restaurant and very upmarket toilets are all on the same level. Outside in the garden, children can be kept occupied on the climbing frame and slide.

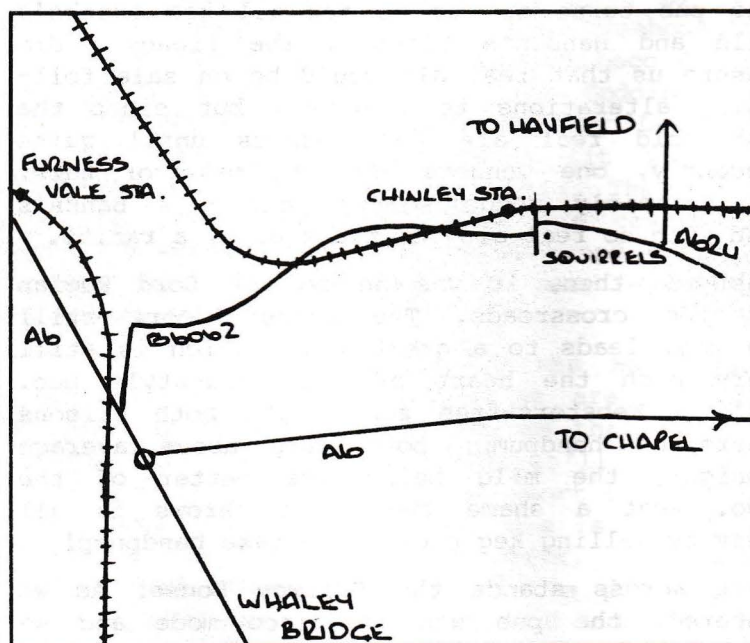
The beer range is something different however. The Nationals are represented by Tetley Mild and Bitter from Leeds and Ind Coope Burton Ale, but behind the bar an already impressive display of pumpclips tells the real story

of the Independent Breweries. Lloyds Derbyshire Bitter is a house regular in its most westerly outlet, and there are two rotating guest beers with a current standard price of £1.20. One blemish in this department is the keg cider on fake handpump. Luckily, this state of affairs is expected to change shortly.

Food is available at almost all times of the all day opening with a quite varied menu, which includes the specialities of the house - a lavish all-day breakfast and a 'pick and mix' grill with 21 items believed to be beyond the appetite of one person.

The service is friendly and good which, together with competitive pricing makes the Squirrels worth a visit for either a drink or a meal. It is certainly not one of those places where your custom is taken for granted.

Situated only 100 yards from Chinley Station it is easily accessible from either Manchester or Stockport. The last trains back are not too early but if you do happen to miss the last one, there's always bed and breakfast.



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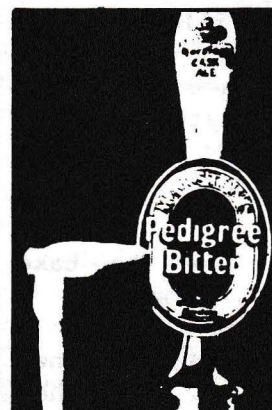
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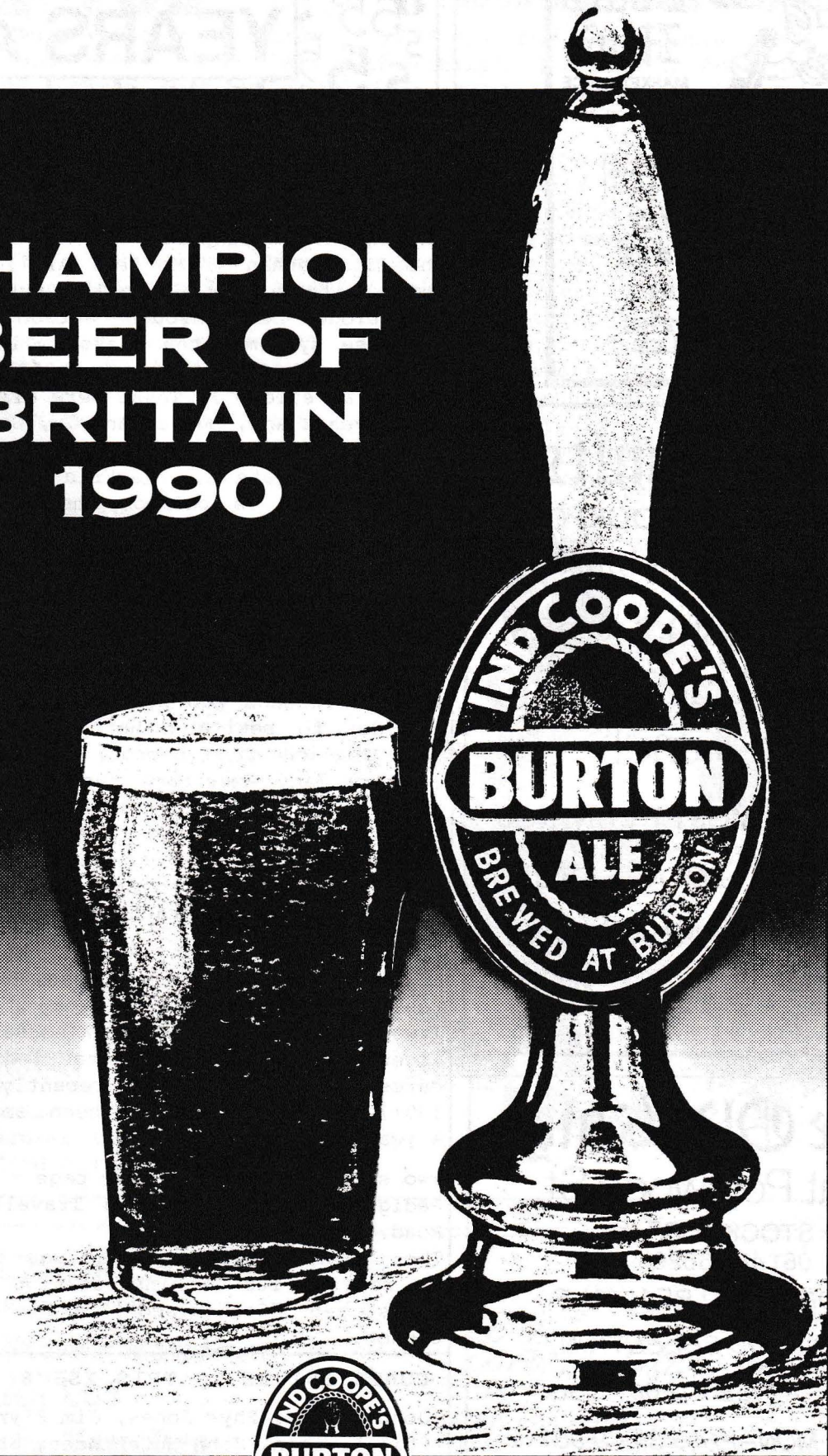
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55 YEARS AGO

THE front page of Opening Times in July 1986 was all about Greenalls and their use of handpumps to serve keg beer. The Elizabethan, Heaton Moor was mentioned as one of the offenders (interesting that in the new Stockport Pub Guide, three words describe the Elizabethan - 'No Real Ale'). Readers may remember that quite a few Greenalls pubs used to serve cask conditioned beer through "Metrons" - this was a metered dispense system with a glass cylinder on the bar, containing a plunger that moved from side to side (often called a "slider"). These were all replaced by handpumps a few years ago, but strangely, Greenalls still couldn't bring themselves to put in "proper" handpumps - many of them operate an electric pump in the cellar. Once the handpump is pulled, the beer flows continuously, and as the pump-clip says Cask Conditioned, there is no real problem. Today, if you fancy a pint of "real" cider, be careful to avoid Scrumpy Jack in Grand Metropolitan pubs - there's a handpump on the bar, but it serves straight from the keg.

It was reported that Ron Davies of the Bull's Head (the Robinson's pub near the Market Hall in Stockport) was due to retire - nothing unusual in that, except that Ron was from Boston, Massachusetts - there can't be very many Americans running our pubs. From memory, there used to be a Stars and Stripes on display and (I think) a bull's head. All this has gone now - the bar has been reduced in size and moved into a corner, and the rest of the room looks more like a cafe, instead of the extremely characterful pub it used to be.

The Imperial, Birch Street, West Gorton was almost ready to open as a free house, and this was after what was described as two years of virtual dereliction. It was originally a Wilsons house that closed when the licensee retired, and it has led something of a varied career. In fact it has recently been reported (April 1991) that it has just been sold (again) after over a year on the market.

Two snippets from the back page -

Pedigree on sale at the Travellers Call, Ashton Old Road, at 78p a pint.

The Crown on Didsbury Road was the next on the agenda to receive its "Robinsonisation". (Devenish pubs nowadays get "Cannonised", after brewery boss Michael Cannon.

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CAMRA - THE PUBGOERS' CHAMPION



JOIN NOW!

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



MANCHESTER MATTERS

BY RHYS JONES

FIRST of all, it's splendid to be able to record that the **Peveril of the Peak** in the City Centre has removed the fake "hand-pump" selling keg Scrumpy Jack cider. This malpractice was always an aberration in this otherwise fine pub, and it's good to see it so promptly got rid of. On a sadder note, the **Unicorn** in West Gorton closed its doors on Thursday, 13th June, and by the time you read this it will be substantially, if not totally, demolished.

There are two real ale gains this month, both Whitbread pubs. In the **Orion** on Burton Road in Withington, handpumps deliver Chesters Bitter and Bentleys Yorkshire Bitter, while in the **Gold Cup** on Stockport Road in Longsight the handpumped beer is Boddingtons Bitter. The **Angel** in Gorton now has Stones Bitter on handpump, while two Boddington PubCo houses - the **Old Garratt** in the City Centre and the **Parrswood** in East Didsbury - have added hand-pumped Robert Cain's Bitter from the former Higsons Brewery in Liverpool.

Finally, a word on the **Swinging Sporran**, or rather its licensees' former pub, the much-lamented **Railway** at Ashburys. When "OT" commented that "the story will never be known" on the Railway's closure, this was not intended to imply that we had been in any way misled; quite simply, when a CPO strikes, licensees may have limited time to make important financial decisions, and all we wanted to convey was that we weren't privy to the detailed transactions involved. Meanwhile back at the Sporran, while real draught cider is still awaited, glass jars of Weston's Special Vintage and Vintage Dry are available.



CAMRA CALLING!

WE have a wide variety of events this month. On Monday 8th there is a social at the White Swan, Green Street, Fallowfield. As usual with Monday Socials, this starts at 9.00pm. The branch meeting is on Thursday 11th and this will be at the Kings Arms, Helmsshore Walk, Chorlton-on-Medlock.

On Saturday 13th we are having a day out on the East Lancs Steam Railway which runs from Bury to Rawtenstall. Phone Tracey for details. On the following Monday (15th) the social is at the Stanley Arms, Newbridge Lane, Stockport. We are back to Fallowfield on Friday 19th for our monthly Stagger. We meet in the White Swan, Green Street, Ladybarn at 7.00pm or you can join us at the Derby at 8.30.

Monday 22nd sees a social at the Concert Inn, Openshaw. A minibus will be run for this, departing from the Crown, Heaton Lane at 8.15pm. Pub of the Month is on Thursday 25th and will be at the Armoury, Shaw Heath, Stockport.

There's a Tiviot Dale social on Monday 29th - 9.00pm in the Kings Head and 10.00pm across the road in the Tiviot. On Friday, August 2nd we are running a minibus around some of the country pubs in the northern part of Stockport, again phone Tracey for details. Lastly on Monday 5th August, the social is at the Church Inn, Ravenoak Road, Cheadle Hulme.

If you want more details about any of the above or our activities in general, please phone Tracey Clarke on 061 456 6354 (evenings only).



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PUB NEWS



Yates Wine Lodge on Stockport Market Place re-opened last month after a refurbishment. Apart from the new curtains, it's difficult to see what's been done. There has been a change in the beer range, though, with Tetley Bitter replacing the Stones.

The **Steam Engine** in Ardwick didn't last long as a cafe after ceasing to trade as a pub - it's now closed and boarded following a serious fire. Desperate though the pub was in its last days, this is a sad and undeserved end.

The **Ashlea** in Cheadle has discontinued Marstons Pedigree due to poor sales. Boddingtons Bitter remains on sale.

The **Crown** in Longsight is now open again, but no longer sells real ale. The handpumps remain on the bar but are unused.

In Rusholme, the **Rampant Lion** for long a Tetley tied 'freehouse' has started on the guest beer path with the introduction of Greenalls Original (now brewed by Tetleys, of course).

The **Sherwood** on Claremont Road, Rusholme is no more following two serious fires in the bar area. Memorable for serving one of the worst pints of Chesters Bitter that Opening Times has tried (and that's going some), we suspect that few will mourn its passing.

The **Romper** at Ringway has introduced a guest beer in the form of Draught Bass retailing at £1.25 a pint. Licensee Harry Curran has bought the handpump himself and has so far not relented to Boddington PubCo pressure to sell one of their own guest beers. The beer is 'on trial' for a month after which Harry will keep it, change it, or discontinue with guest beers accordingly.

Keg cider is on handpump at the **Derby Arms** in Fallowfield.

Two cask mild losses to report are the **Church** in Hulme (Lees) and the **Waterloo** in Withington (Wilsons).

Two pubs just outside Opening Times' circulation area have introduced enterprising guest beers. In Chorlton, the **Beech** on Beech Road is now selling Taylors Landlord while in Salford, the **Salford Arms** on Chapel Street has replaced Boddingtons Bitter with Holts (at only 88p a pint, to boot).

The latest addition to the Stockport drinking scene is **Winters** on Underbank. The 'brasserie and bistro' has been converted out of the old Winters Jewellers shop and very impressive it is, too. The drinking area is on the ground floor and has been quite elegant-fitted out in the neo-Victorian look which is so popular at the moment. At the front is the bar area with a stripped wood floor which leads back to a variety of tiled or carpeted alcoves and rooms - particularly attractive is the small room directly behind the bar. Somewhat incongruous however are the three wall-mounted televisions and when Opening Times visited the ever-so-tasteful taped music was just a bit too loud. Handpumps dispense Tetley Bitter and Burton Ale. However drinkers should note that keg Tetleys is also sold and a request for 'bitter' on our visit was met by a lunge for the keg tap. The cask bitter was perfectly acceptable, the only thing that left a nasty taste in the mouth was the price - £1.24 a pint!

The next issue will be published on Tuesday 6th August and the copy date is Friday 26th July. Details of advertising rates are available from the address below

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