

# OPENING TIMES.

No. 17 STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA'S PUB NEWSHEET SEPTEMBER 1985 FREE.

## "OPENING TIMES" & "WHAT'S DOING"

Since the launch of this newsheet almost eighteen months ago the bulk of the copies have been distributed with "What's Doing", the Manchester Beers Drinkers Magazine.

However the North Manchester Branch, whose members include the Editor and printer, have decided that from next month "What's Doing" shall revert to being a North Manchester only publication.

For some time this Branch, and the other Branches in Greater Manchester, have sought to have more Regional control over the content & policy of the regional magazine, indeed the main reason we established 'Opening Times' was because all too often items of concern to our area were omitted, and many readers complained of the lack of information about what was happening in the Stockport & South Manchester area.

At a meeting of all the Manchester Branches to discuss the future of "What's Doing" North Manchester let it be known that they were not prepared to accept 'outside' interference and that the magazine would henceforth be for North Manchester only.

Therefore from October 'Opening Times' will be the only Beer drinkers paper in our area and to cater for the growing need for such a publication from December we shall be vastly expanding our print run and going over to a new format and print. The paper will become more widely available and with the support of readers and advertisers will continue to expand. 'Opening Times' will continue to be FREE, and so we do need as much advertising as we can to cover our costs, please contact the Editor for details.

We hope that you will find the new 'O.T.' interesting and informative - please keep us informed of your news, views and comments.

Humphrey Higgins, Editor, Opening Times.

OPENING TIMES is written & published by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Campaign.

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## PUB OF THE MONTH.

The Pub of the Month award for September from the Stockport & South Manchester Branch has been won by the Victoria, Wilmslow Road, Withington.

The Victoria is a recently refurbished Hydes pub. It has been extended into the off-licence next door; the extension has resulted in a friendly pub with no juke box (!!) but with a distinct musical 'presence'.

Bob and Doreen have been at the pub for a long time; they retire in the New Year; and the award is a well deserved accolade.

To find out more, come and join us on the presentation night on Thursday, September 25th.

Carole Brookes.

With the temporary closure of the Trade Union Club the competition is on to find the Stockport club with the worst beer!!

## BRIDGE - WATER.

CHESTERGATE, STOCKPORT.

FREEHOUSE: WILSONS BITTER,  
HOLTS MILD & BITTER  
WEBSTERS GREEN  
LABEL  
all on handpump.

LIVE MUSIC WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY.

HOT & COLD MEALS EVERY DAY

UP TO CLOSING TIME!

WILSONS & WEBSTERS D O W N

TO 63p A PINT!!

ROUND BRITAIN DRINKER - An Eisteddfod Diary.

Some readers will be aware that in the first week in August each year, yours truly disappears to the National Eisteddfod of Wales. The Eisteddfod is many things to many people - a cultural jamboree, a markets place, a political arena, a rock festival; it's also an excellent opportunity to explore the pubs of whichever part of Wales it happens to be held in. This year it took place at the historic village of Rhuddlan, just inland from Rhyl, and I present below some notes on the weeks drinking.

Saturday.

The journey out involves a detour via Acrefair, near Ruabon, to rendezvous with friends. The Eagles Inn, on the main village crossroads used to sell hand-pumped Border, and still has a handpump with an 'Exhibition' clip, this is now presumably brewery-conditioned, but we don't get the chance to try it as it's not on anyway. So its up the road to the local Good Beer Guide entry, the Hampden Arms on the A539; where the Banks Mild is not as good as I can get any day at the Longsight and is 4p more expensive. Round the corner on Chapel St., the Oddfellows Arms provides much better & cheaper Banks's in a vastly more characterful pub - low ceiling, plenty of nooks & crannies.

Most of the Rhyl pubs are not worth a second glance, but we do establish that the Mermaid, Bodfor St., usually sells Burton Ale but not at present, that the Windsor, Windsor St., (Bss) no longer sells Real Ale; that the George Hotel, Queen St., usually sells real M & B Mild but not at present because Bass is recovering from a spot of industrial relations trouble; and that the Draught Bass & M&B Mild at the Liverpool Arms, Wellington Rd., are really rather good. Final call is the Pointy Hotel, Hilton Drive, a holidaymakers pub which from the outside looks like an appalling trippers paradise but inside is quite comfortable; bound as I am by the terms of a Pledge of Abstinence from Scottish & Newcastle products until they withdraw their bid for Matthew Brown, I resort to bottled guinness (bottled not by S&N but by Keegans of Holyhead! I'm told the Youngers Scotch Bitter is quite good.

Sunday.

Along the Dee estuary for lunch, alighting from the expensive green Crosville bus at Bagillt almost outside the Kings Arms

a Marstons pub dispensing Burton Bitter from an antique free-flow electric pump. I change a five and get four pound notes! The Bagillt Arms, further along the main street, is a Bass 'freehouse' with no real ale today because of the dispute, while the news at the White Horse is worse still - this former Marstons real ale house has been transferred by Marstons into their Border tied estate & sells fizzy, Burton brewed Border beers plus John Marston, the keg version of Pedigree. Shocked I venture to the bus stop to await transport which arrives, 10 minutes late - and sweeps past without stopping! Never mind, Flint's only 2 miles, I ought to be able to walk it in time for last orders. In the event walking and faster drinking allow me 3 pints of Greenalls by 2-15 or so - mild in the Ship & Anchor, bitter in the Ship & the Royal Oak. 3 good pubs - the Royal Oak is the most characterful but the Ship & Anchor has the bonus of a bagatelle table, popular in Chester but here at about the limit of its range. Back in Rhyl, a decent Rogan Josh is consumed in the one Indian Restaurant but licensing hourse plus evening concert mean no evening beer. (The Eisteddfod is strictly dry - except underfoot!)

Monday.

Lunch at the Ty Fry, Bodelwyddan; the handpumped Marstons Burton is excellent, but at 72p in the public bar I suspect prices may have been 'adjusted' for Eisteddfod week. This regrettable practice has gained ground in recent years, so it's a pleasant surprise to find the pubs in Rhuddlan itself charging normal price. Marstons Kings Head, a breeze-blown two-roomer is festooned with notices in Welsh proclaiming the fact; it also sells good Burton Bitter & Mild. - Rhys Jones.

Continued next month.

# SYKES WINE BAR

HEATON LANE,  
STOCKPORT,  
off Mersey Square.

Tel: 480 5996.

STOCKPORTS' WINE BAR WITH REAL ALE....

DRAUGHT BASS, HIGSONS BITTER

& HIGSONS MILD

AT THE

# GEORGE

WHITBREAD NEWS.

The Houldsworth, Reddish, re-opened in August as the Houldsworth Arms still selling Chesters Bitter & Mild on hand-pump. The pub now sports a snooker table as well as pool and darts. Part of the open planned interior is now a 'quiet' area whilst another is the Public Bar area (you can tell the difference because the latter has no carpet).

The previous style of fittings in the Houldsworth had a life of 3 years whilst the new style deemed as the Community Pub will be disposed of in 5 years. The new theme is designed to attract the family man and woman back into the pub and dissuade the younger drinker (ie the underaged drinker). There were a considerable number of Whitbread pubs given a '3 years' style which are now due to be refurbished. These include the Railway, North Reddish & the Chapel House Heaton Chapel.

The Fox Tavern in Openshaw is another establishment apparently being renovated. Whether it, too, will be a new 'Community pub' has to be seen.

GETTING THERE.

As promised last month Boddingtons Bitter is now on sale at the Railway, Pottery Lane, opposite Ashburys Station. It's handpumped & costs 65p. The pub has been opened out into one room though the former vault and lounge are still clearly distinguishable - and the 'vault' boasts a well-used Manchester Dartboard.

Correction - Contrary to last month's report, Websters Bitter was not installed in the Railway, Heaton Mersey, when it was refurbished; so it's not been withdrawn!! Sorry!

DRINK IN STYLE.....

SHIP INN

STYAL, CHESHIRE.

PAUL & SHERALYN YOU TO THE NEW

HOME OF HOME MADE FOOD!!!

HANDPUMPED WILSONS MILD & BITTER

HANDPUMPED MARSTONS PEDIGREE

& BURTON BITTER.

FLOUGH INN.

Further to previous reports, the Plough on Shaw Heath now has had the alterations finished & congratulations must be due to Wilsons for the fine job. Previously grotty & run down, the Plough is now bright and comfortable, although mainly open plan, separate areas have been created by the use of glass and wooden partitions, each of which has its own atmosphere. Cellar improvements have also enable cask beer to be reinstated & Wilsons Mild & Bitter are available on handpump. Both beers have been on fine form so far - worth a visit.

CRABTREE BEARS FRUIT.

As predicted the Crabtree on Crabtree Lane, Clayton, has followed former ex Wilsons pub the Bridgewater in Stockport into a new existence as a free house selling Holts & Wilsons Beers. Handpumped Mild & Bitter from both are on sale; the pub has been well modernised into a one-room interior, though retaining separate drinking areas. Set amidst Lowryesque surroundings of decaying industry beside the Manchester & Ashton Canal, it's not in fact an out of the way as you might think - Crabtree Lane is a turning off Ashton New Road not far on the Manchester side of Holts' Halfway House, while it can be approached from Ashton Old Road via Louisa Street (Turn at Greenalls Pack Horse.)

HYDE ROAD HAPPENINGS.

The Victoria, the Chesters pub on Hyde Road between the Roack (Tetleys) & the Coach & Horses (Robinsons) is now selling handpumped mild & Bitter at 67 & 70 respectively. Take care when ordering mild as keg is also available. Slightly further out of town the long closed Cheshire Hunt appears to be getting some work done with a view to re-opening.

FREE THE BANKS'S SIX!!

To publicise their six Manchester Pubs, Banks's of Wolverhampton are not content with having a GMT bus painted in advertising livery, have inaugurated a small 'passport' scheme. Get your 'On the House' card stamped in all 6 and you can claim a free pint of mild or bitter in any. The scheme closes on 30th., November and you can go round as often as you like. The pubs are: Falcon, Chorlton-on-Medlock; Gorton Arms, West Gorton; Gransmoor, Openshaw; Longsight, Belle Vue; Mitchell Arms, Ancoats; Osborne House, Collyhurst.

AROUND IN THE TOWN: Survey of the Heaton's (or drinking with the Socially Upwardly Mobile.)

(What follows is not intended to be a statement on the quality of the pubs or beer on all occasions, but is our opinion of both on the night of the crawl.)

We started in Heaton Chapel, at the Chapel House, a brick built Whitbread House. The bland exterior is contrasted by the potted plants, chrome & mirrors of the renovated interior which gave me the feeling of drinking in a bathroom. Typically for Whitbread when I asked for bitter the barman went straight for Trophy instead of handpumped Chesters. We have been told in the past by Whitbread that the future of Cook St. Brewery depends on the success of their real ales - so why don't they educate their labdlords to sell it? On tasting the Bitter we collectively agreed that it was at best mediocre. There was one other handpump on the bar that of brewery conditioned Gold Label Lager - another sharp practice by a major brewer!

Next stop was down the road at Boddingtons George & Dragon. The pub had been revamped inside, again with mirrors & potted plants, but this time more tastefully. The beer too was an improvement, the bitter being voted just above average and the mild good.

We moved on to the Rudyard Hotel on the A6 which has recently been reopened after refurbishment. The Hotel Bar is now very plush in a pseudo colonial style including a mural of the Indian jungle tiger. The uniformed staff seemed to be more at home serving cocktails than Handpumped Stones Bitter & Bass. We tried the Stones and found it to be in good form. Two words of warning, the prices are a bit steep (Stones 78p, Bass 82p) & the bouncers come on at 8pm - so beware scruffy readers!!

We progressed to Heaton Moor where we called at the Elizabethan. Here we found a further example of a brewer trying to hoodwink the consumer. This time it's Greenalls selling their Keg bitter through handpump. If they are so ashamed of their keg beers why don't they go the whole hog and try selling cask conditioned beers in pubs like the Elizabethan?

Across the road to the Ploght, a cosy Tetley house where we tried both the Bitter & Mild, both on Handpump. A

plaque inside proclaims the licensees to be the 1984 Tetleys licensees of the year, but the beer could only be described as average.

Leaving behind the bric-abrac of the Plogh we went almost next door to the much plainer Crown. This used to be an old stomping ground of mine, with excellent beers and a vibrant local atmosphere. Oh dear! The Crown has gone right down the nick. It was half empty, the atmosphere had gone and both the mild and the bitter could only be described as ordinary. It appears that Oldham Mild had been on sale but the pump was filled with water.

Down the Road to the Moor Top, a modernised open plan pub opposite the cinema. Sitting amongst the artificial wooden beams we sample Wilsons Bitter (Mild is keg) & scored it above average.

The longest trek now to the Crown, Heaton Mersey, subtly modernised and a well preserved Robinsons House. I was pleased to note that there were far less trendies than on my last visit. We all kept to the Bitter which was voted the best beer so far and suitably refreshed we progressed to the Railway which has been taken by Pennine Hosts and renovated. This is a definite improvement on its previous state but it has now become wall to wall with poseurs. We sat out in the 'beer Garden' & sampled Wilsons Bitter (again keg mild) which was a similar standard to that of the Moor Top.

Finally we reached our goal - the Griffin the finest pub of the crawl. Packed solid around the ornate Victorian Bar & the Holts Mild & Bitter were best of the night. We all described them as between good & excellent. A great place to end any pub crawl.

Jim Flynn.

# BOARS

# HEAD

MARKET PLACE,  
STOCKPORT.

SAMUEL SMITHS OLD BREWERY BITTER.

PUB FOOD DAILY

LIVE JAZZ AND  
ROCK 'N ROLL.

PUB GRUB.

This Month Pub Grub has been to one of the more outlying areas of the Branch, the Three Tunnes in Hazel Grove. Arguably one of the most popular pubs in the Grove this former Bells House (nice old poster in one of the rooms) has been ably run for several years by Tom & Betty Burke and at weekends it's pretty packed. At lunchtimes it is quieter which is odd as the wide range of good cheap food available is a definite attraction. Nothing elaborate but just good pub food - toasties at 60p-75p; various filled jacket potatoes & burgers from 60p-95p & various meals from home made cottage pie (surely a baragin at 90p) to chilli, curry, mixed grill all at £1.50. Scampi and chips is top of the range at £1.80.

I chose curry & chips at £1.50 which was excellent value. The curry was 'nt too hot but nicely spiced all the same. The chips I suspect were frozen but looked home made being of decent size and generous in quantity.

Definitely worth a visit - bus 192 will drop you close by.

John Clarke.

WELCOME ABOARD.

Pennine Hosts, the Northern Branch of Grand Metropolitan Hotels Host Group, that run the managed house (Wilsons in this area) have just unveiled their latest refurbishment - the Boardroom Tavern on Portland Street in Manchester City Centre. It's in standard 'Tavern' style, just like the Brunswick on Londo Road round the corner - plenty of wood and brick, floral print seat covers, lighting globes.. It's a real ale gain with Wilsons Bitter on handpumps at a steep 78p - no marks for value Host Group, when you consider that nearby Timothy Taylors Landlord is a mere 72p at the Crown & Anchor (whose beer at present seems to be back on its best form).

CONGRATULATIONS

CAMRA extends good wishes and congratulations to Anne & Tony Healey of the Travellers Call, Ashton Old Road, who completed their first year in the pub at the end of August. Enough has been written on the high standard of beer, food & hospitality not to be repeated; one point of note is that unlike most pubs in the area they open a 5-30pm! Here's to many more successful years!

LLYTHR O FON (Letter from Anglesey - per Rhys)

Going back about 5 years, CAMRA listed 50 real ale outlests on Anglesey. At that time there were such notes as:

- 1) Reported real ale but not yet surveyed  
Bull Bay Hotel - Lees.  
Dinorben, Amlwch - Gwynedd Ales.
- 2) Landlords interested in Real Ale:  
Valley Hotel.  
Adelphi, Amlwch Port.

The Lees is the only one of these that arrived and survived - Bitter is still available at the Bull Bay. The Gwynedd arrived, but sadly, lack of 'free houses' able to take it caused it to go out of production. The Valeey never happened - it just had an expensive refit, with no sign of the real stuff. The Adelphi had handpumped Ind Coope Bitter for a while, but there was 'no demand for it' and now only the handpump remains.

So what of the present? Whilst it is stressed that the list is by no means yet definitive, the situation is not too bad. Some mild has been lost, but outlests have increased to 58, with 2/3rds being accounted for by Angleseys 'Big Four' Breweries viz Burtonwood 12, Robinsons 11, Greenalls 10, Lees 6. The rest are a mixed bag of Allied, S&N, Bass and, surprisingly, Banks's, divided between tied houses and so called free houses, where one Breweries products predominate. The Banks's (handpulled!) appears in three pubs selling mainly Allied products.

Prices? The range 68/75p a pint covers mild and bitter with the inevitable exceptions - Lees Bitter 63 at the Anglesey Arms, Menai Bridge; Bass 84 at the Min-y-Don, Red Wharf Bay, & Youngers No. 3 85p at the Parciau Arms, Marianglas.

Phil Levison.

CASTLEWOOD

(HOLE IN WALL)

BRIDGE STREET BROW, MARKET,  
STOCKPORT.

TEL: 480 5529

WILSONS REAL ALE - HANDPUMPED.

PUB FOOD MONDAY TO SATURDAY AND  
BANK HOLS.

11-30 - 2-00

Function room available.

DENNIS LEAVES THE CROWN.

Dennis Flaherty has left the Crown in Northenden (1984 & 86 Good Beer Guide) It is understood that he is presently ensconced in Altrincham but is hoping to complete the purchase of a Free House 'down South' (by the way Dennis, if you read this you owe for July Whats Doings'.

New tenants are Alan & Barbara Johnson who are experienced in the trade but for whom this is their first tenancy. Alan & Barbara promise to continue to serve good ale and say they have no intention of substantially altering the nature of the pub. Good luck to them both.

Claytons' loss, Mobberleys' Gain.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Mill Street, Clayton, will shortly have a new Landlord as Pete & Margaret Traynor are moving to the Bulls Head at Mobberley, another Tetley pub and already a real ale outlet. This is a richly deserved reward for the hard work they've put in at the Duke, and while they're looking forward to the challenge of a fresh and more up-market pub, they're sorry to be leaving the pleasant pub atmosphere they've done so much to create. We wish them well and suggest that if your travels take you in that direction, the Bulls Head should be well worth calling at for an excellent pint of Tetely.

A cats' eye view.....

I've got a baby brother. He's called 'Robinson Morgan Murk' & he wants a Robinsons ashtray to eat out of. He's stuck with McEwans at the moment!

Theakston Cat.

**MANCHESTER  
ARMS**

WELLINGTON ROAD  
SOUTH,  
STOCKPORT.

1984 CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR !!!!

FINE ROBINSONS ALES.

BOOGIE CLUB EVERY SUNDAY,

AT 8 pm.

MAKE STOCKPORT BOOGIE!!!!!!

ESCAPE TO BURTONWOOD.

This is the name of the first Burtonwood promotion for a number of years, but the way the Brewery are going just now, with their trick handpumps, and use (or misuse) of the word 'traditional', we may feel that an escape 'from' Burtonwood would be more appropriate.

It's a passport type of scheme, with prizes according to the number of pubs visited - 10 for a T shirt, 25 for a sweatshirt, 35 for a sportsbag and 50 for a wristwatch. There is also a second chance of winning with a 'scratch-off' card - various prizes range in value from a free pint to a week end in North Wales. So if you travel around the Burtonwood trading area, it could prove quite profitable, particularly as there are no purchases necessary (this, of course, is to comply with the law). It must be very difficult to forecast the likely success of such promotions, and probably a lot of drinkers will see it as a challenge. Oddly the John Willie Lees scheme a few years ago produced surprisingly few dedicated boozers who completed the course, and there was a full year allowed for the 125 pubs.

Burtonwood have 278 pubs, much more scattered, with a mere 18 weeks for completion, and some pubs have shortened this by delaying display of the 'Escapes' The promotion finishes on 30th., September so you've even less time if you want to have a go.

Phil Levison.

ASHTON OLD ROAD REVISIT.

Ashort visit was paid to the Prince of Wales, a modern Bass pub, which had only Stones Bitter on handpump, quality was good, it should be noted that the Rudyard is not the only outlet for real Stones. A visit to the Seven Stars - a friendly welcome from the regulars & the beer was strangely smooth and malty, yet another variation of Holts' myriad Beers.

Peter & Carole.

Further to our report that the Red Lion, Hazel Grove, had been bought by Greenalls. They have spent some money on attempting to improve the appearance of this previously gruesome pub and to be fair they seem to have done the best they can with a pub this size. Gone is the dustgather-ing bric-abrac and the pub now operates on 3 levels instead of 4! The beer remains keg & was almost empty, this was doubtless due to the fact that the previous customers are discouraged by the 'no bikers' notice.