

BEER LINES



10p

GREATER MANCHESTER

OCTOBER, 1986

GENIUS ISSUE

NUMBER 9

FESTIVALS, FESTIVALS AND YET MORE FESTIVALS

BURY BEER FESTIVAL GETS ASBESTOSIS!

BURY Beer Festival was postponed until February last month. During a check at the Derby Hall Council officials discovered asbestos in the roof. Now the hall will be closed for a period in November while the asbestos is removed and replaced with safer material.

The new dates for the North West's most popular Beer Festival are Friday 13th and Saturday 14th February 1987. More details later.

YORKSHIRE BEER FESTIVALS OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

OVER the Pennines the Beer Festival season is in full swing. If you haven't been paying attention, you've probably missed Sheffield, Keighley and Holmfirth (all the same weekend at the end of September). However, gird your loins and other drinking muscles for two further Yorkshire real ale extravaganzas!

Thursday 16th (evening only), Friday 17th and Saturday 18th October.

Calderdale Beer Festival at the Drill Hall Halifax. I'm sorry but that's all the information I have but I'm sure that it will be enjoyable, as well as giving you the chance to visit TFC's Woodcock on Gibbet Street.

Friday 28th and Saturday 29th November.

Bradford Beer Festival at the Queens Hall, Bradford (just up the road from the Alhambra). Without doubt the best of the Yorkshire Festivals, with a promised 90 real ales on offer this year. If you would like to visit there is the traditional R.O.B. trip that you could sign up for. Rochdale, Oldham and Bury branch will be visiting Bradford on Saturday 29th November for CAMRA's version of the Krypton Factor Assault Course: lunchtime at the Beer Festival; a curry; evening pub crawl around the City Centre; another curry and then home! Think you can stand the pace? Anyone who is interested should contact me at the usual BEER LINES address or contact a CAMRA member. Full details next month. Cost is expected to be £5-£6 per person for coach fare and entry to the Beer Festival.

BRIGHTON BONANZA

STILL on the subject of Beer Festivals, the GBBF at Brighton this year was a huge success, with 30,000 people supping an estimated 90,000 pints. Apparently this GBBF was so successful that the beer ran out on the Saturday night! It looks like Brighton will be hosting next year's Festival after this year's excellent performance.

FINCH FLIES BACK

THE hottest news in Greater Manchester at the moment concerns the Gamecock, TFC's ale house in Ashton-under-Lyne. Due to a slump in trade and beer quality since Simon Finch was moved to the Fighting Cock (Bradford, W.Yorks.) in May, but now changes are afoot. It is understood that a change of landlord is imminent, with young Finch returning to train and introduce the new man to Greater Manchester beer keeping and drinkers. Simon is expected to return for a period of two to four weeks starting early October.

The Managing Director of TFC, Mr. Jim Wright, has appealed to Greater Manchester beer drinkers to renew their support for his extremely enterprising free house. Developments are awaited with great interest. Welcome back Simon! More news next month.

ROB CARDER

Manchester Beer Festival Cancelled

IT WAS announced at the last regional meeting of CAMRA that there will now be no Manchester Beer Festival this year. This is because regional organiser Ken Birch failed to come to an agreement with the students union at UMIST over dates.

It is still hoped to run a festival in the near future, but a new, more dependable venue will be needed. Anyone any ideas?

ROB CARDER

FALCON UPDATE

NO definite further developments on the fate of the Falcon on Kay Street Bolton, (see BEER LINES July/August) although rumour has it that the nearby Peel on Higher Bridge Street, closed down and put up for sale by Greenall Whitley over a year ago, has been bought by Bolton council who intend to knock it down as part of the Topp Way scheme.

DES NOGALSKI

BOLTON NEWS

THWAITES have spent a considerable sum refurbishing the Toll Bar on Chorley New Road, Horwich, and very nice it is too. The bar has been moved slightly and has been decorated with handles to pull the more enthusiastic imbibers off the floor. These apparently came from a demolished church in Worsley. Perhaps Thwaites could do some equally tasteful jobs on some of their other pubs in Bolton. Meanwhile their only remaining keg pub in Bolton, the Starkie Arms, Tonge Moor Road, is rumoured to be a future conversion to real ale.

The Sunnyside on Adelaide Street reopened at the end of August. Boddington's Bitter is the only cask beer on offer.

Burtonwood's premium bitter JBA is now on sale at the Swan Hotel's Buttery Bar on Bradshawgate, and also at the Alexandra on the Bolton/Wigan border at Hindley Green. Unfortunately, though, low sales have forced it out of the Alma on Bradshawgate.

Jennings' bitter has gone from the Clifton Arms, Newport Street and The Quill and Pen, Great Moor Street. At the Quill and Pen Jennings has been replaced by Walker's Best Bitter while the Clifton is still working on a replacement. One addition is the Beehive, Chorley New Road, Horwich, which also sells cask Tetley Mild and Bitter for the first time in years.

Rumours have it that Bolton could be having its first beer festival in over three years next spring if all goes well.

DES NOGALSKI

A Real Alternative for Woodley

THE White Hart, Stockport Road, Woodley, formerly an all keg Bass establishment has recently been re-vamped and now serves Bass Light and Stones Bitter through handpumps. The refurbishment is in true "Sir Terence Conran" style with a Pergola entrance.

TIM JONES

Failsworth Fiasco

WHILST pondering over the inexactitudes of Sam Smiths publicity policy, my chauffeuse and I decided to "research" all the pubs on the main road back to central Failsworth. On the face of it not a bad proposition, as all pubs reputedly sell traditional beers. Here is a summary of our Saturday evening's finding —

CLOGGERS — Greenalls bitter on electric pumps. Depressing two room characterless layout. Surely things can only get better.

WEAVERS — Wilsons mild and bitter on electric pumps — I think. Couldn't see the bar for dense smoke. Suspected an electrical fire in the keg lager chiller. Landlady criticizes CAMRA for not including her pubs in the GoodsBeer Guide and says that she never sees any CAMRA members. I'm not surprised with all that smoke!

HALFWAY HOUSE — Another Greenalls pub, but both mild and bitter on handpumps. The past presence of tom cats was very much in evidence. Joined here by two friends who couldn't believe that we were doing this voluntarily.

GUIDO — A recent convert to real ale. John Smiths bland bitter on handpump. Beer not as bad as expected, pub small but attractively furnished. Had a few here.

BLACK HORSE — Unique "Rothwells Ales" exterior tile-work leads to a cosy interior. Marstons mild and bitter on handpumps. Moved no further!

HIGH SPEED GAS

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HIGSONS

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BEER FESTIVAL REPORT

1. Why does CAMRA organise beer festivals?
2. What attracts the average member of the drinking public to attend beer festivals?

My examination this month will answer question number 1 above. By the time I have finished, you will note that CAMRA needs answers to question 2. As CAMRA members are not 'average members of the drinking public' they cannot themselves answer the question. Please, therefore, write in to Beer Lines and tell us what you like, dislike, or would like to change/add to your local beer festivals.

CAMRA organises beer festivals for two major reasons. Firstly, festivals are an important feature of campaigning to promote the public awareness of CAMRA and its aims. Secondly, festivals serve to raise much-needed funds which may be utilised to finance further campaigning activities.

CAMRA's basic aim is to ensure that the traditional beer drinker is able to continue to have easy access to a range of real ales, brewed and dispensed in a variety of different styles, served at their best in convivial surroundings. In order to pursue this aim it is necessary to fight to ensure that choice is not diminished by the continued growth of the national combines, which take over small local breweries, and frequently either (1) close them down altogether (e.g. the recent loss of Simpkins when taken over by Greenall Whitley); (2) change the recipe of the brew (e.g. the production of Shipstones Local Bitter by — guess who — Greenall Whitley, after takeover; and the change of taste of Border Beers with the closure of the Wrexham plant and the move to brewing the beer at Marston's in Burton-on-Trent) and (3) lead to a loss of one or more of a brewery's products (e.g. the recent loss of Theakston Milds now that Matthew Brown have been allowed to consolidate and get their act together!). At Saddleworth Beer Festival in May of this year R/O/B chose, therefore, to promote beers from many small and home-brew companies — Thurlstone, Linfit and Old Mill to name but a few. Additionally, brews 'at risk' were promoted — Oldham Mild and Bitter were on sale at 50p and 54p per pint respectively, and a petition was completed to show Boddingtons that the Oldham drinker wishes to retain his local brewery; plus "in the balance" Bateman's were represented — mild and XXXB.

Saddleworth Beer Festival also provided beers of many different styles: several 'ordinary' and 'premium' bitters; dark mild (Oldham & Bateman) together with light mild (Taylor's Golden Best); strong ales — both light (Enoch's Hammer from the Sair Inn Brewery) and dark (Old Genie from Big Lamp) and even draught stout!

In order to provide the consumer with a choice of ales which are not readily available in the area, we obtained beers from London (Fuller's London Pride); South Wales (Felinfoel Double Dragon); East Anglia (Greene King Abbott); the Midlands (Titanic Premier from the potteries); the far north (Big Lamp) to name but a few.

R/O/B always endeavour to try to ensure that the local connoisseurs of their beer festivals also are able to enjoy at least one 'exclusive' and, of course, always try to obtain some beers which have never featured at the festival before. This year we welcomed Thurlstone's Bell (premium bitter) to its first (?) ever beer festival. We also welcomed beers from Oakhill, Jennings Marathon, Titanic Premier, HOB ales and Linfit stout to their first R/O/B festival.

The local drinker is very familiar with handpulled and electrically-metered methods of dispense. Only rarely is gravity-dispensed beer to be found in the area (any advance on the Ram's Head in Denshaw?) and we concentrated as usual solely upon this typical beer-festival approach.

Saddleworth Beer Festival is only a small event. The hall, obviously, has its limitations, as does the locality. After several earlier festival sell-outs, when Sunday lunchtime was hardly viable, with so little beer left, we have now sadly turned around and face each year the prospect that this event is declining in popularity. This year we ordered far less beer than we have in the past — and were left with more than ever before to sell into the Free Trade. We are often told that Beer Festivals are losing their appeal. If so, why is Bury always a sell-out? We can only come to the conclusion that it is the location of the festival as every other aspect of the event is similar to Bury where we only wish we could find more stillage space! If you used to attend regularly, and don't anymore, let us know why!

Saddleworth Beer Festival is not a fund raiser for CAMRA, even when profits peak, as this festival is organised on behalf of the local museum in Uppermill. It would be nice to feel that we are contributing well to this charity as well as promoting the cause.

As our branch was held responsible for the scale of the losses at Brighton last year (as we had pressed for non-exorbitant prices at the 1985 AGM) I can foresee John Cryne & Co. being wryly amused at our own lack of outright success. I can sympathise with the GBBF organisers — any event which relies upon providing the public with a perishable commodity on demand throughout can stand or fall for many reasons beyond the control of the organisers. But if you can help us to see where we may generally improve our festivals please do let us know!

SUE CUNNINGHAM

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Takeovers and Appointments

WELL, you must have heard by now, Elders the Australian 'lager' group is **not** now going to buy Allied-Lyons, even though the Monopolies Commission ruled that the bid would not be against the public interest. Instead John Elliott, chairman and chief executive of Elders IXL has done a deal with the Hanson Trust and bought the Imperial Group's Courage and John Smith Breweries. These operate between them three breweries and have 3,671 tenanted pubs, with another 1,334 managed pubs. Mr. Elliott has said that he does not plan to close any of the breweries, and that he will allow the tenants of pubs to have joint ownership with his company in order to increase profits. The newspapers reacted to this Aussie takeover with numerous cartoons referring to Australian evenings in pubs and bar snacks including various parts of kangaroos and wombats!

Those people who have access to the brewing trade papers will be very familiar with the flamboyant self publicist Raymond Miquel, the ex Bells chairman. Well he's back, this time as chairman and chief executive of Belhaven Brewery. His first decision in that post was to return Belhaven's H.Q. back to Scotland. Let's hope he doesn't sell this company to Guinness like he did the last one.

PAULA CARDER

SPOTLIGHT ON THE SAIR INN

SMALL breweries definitely seem a thing of the eighties, there must be over 50 dotted around the country, which are an absolute joy to find. We are lucky here in Manchester, for lurking just over the border, in relatively easy reaching distance is probably one of the finest examples, namely The Sair Inn at Linthwaite.

This delightful pub once found, is a favourite of many real ale lovers everywhere, the attraction? Well, the choice and quality of beers on sale speak for themselves. Hidden behind the trappings of a normal pub, is a micro-brewery producing macro-style products, no less than seven real ales! This surely outclasses some of the larger breweries who can only manage two or three, even the most famous home-brew pub of them all, The Blue Anchor at Helston only produces five, and even then not all at once.

For those who are unfamiliar with the range at The Sair, let's start with the mild, a dark traditional Yorkshire brew which is best served in the traditional Yorkshire manner, with a creamy foaming head, this at an O.G. of 1032 is fairly harmless compared with what is to follow. The Bitter, known as Linfit, after the local pronunciation in Linthwaite, is light and flavour-some with an O.G. of 1035. The Special (or Shpecial, as Ron calls it) is a mere 1042 and is Rob's favourite beer, as I'm sure many of you will know! On to the stronger stuff, the Old Eli is a strong bitter at O.G. 1050, beware of this, just ask to see Eli and see what it did to him! On now to the real tasty ales, just the thing for cold winter nights, or lazy Sunday afternoons. First Leadboiler at a mere 1063, this really is delicious and quite pale for so strong an ale and finally the master brew in this class, Enoch's Hammer, an unbelievable 1080, it's very pale and not at all sweet and cloying like some strong ales. All six of these ales are brewed to just two recipes, but mashed and fermented differently to produce the different types. The seventh and most recent addition to this fine string of ales is English Guineas, a very dry stout with a gravity of O.F. 1040 (ish). About eight months ago, when we were involved with a small charity beer festival at the Gamecock in Ashton-under-Lyne, we asked Ron if he'd ever thought of brewing a stout, he had and did, it has proved so successful that he can barely keep up with orders for it and his other beers, in the free-trade.

The genius behind this pub is Ron Crabtree, one of the co-founders of the original West Riding Brewery. After some disagreements with his fellow brewers he made the split and started afresh with the Sair. An article written about West Riding shortly after opening says of Ron, a former craft teacher (there is a lot of us about!), that he has made an art form of transforming sow's ears into silk purses. The emblem of The Sair Inn is indeed a sow and Ron has not only transformed the ears into silk purses, but the whole concern into a jewel. The man can turn his hand to making anything or finding ways round any problems. He even has flashes of inspiration in his sleep, he dreamed of stillages which as the barrels emptied, lifted by springs, so tilting the casks, an idea I'm sure if he thought about, he could actually put into practice.

If by now you are keen to visit Uncle Ron at The Sair Inn, I'll put you out of your misery and tell you how to get there. Take the Oldham to Huddersfield road (A62), through Marsden and Slaithwaite to Linthwaite. You have to watch carefully as there isn't a lot to Linthwaite, you take a right turn, up Hoyle Ings, which is an extremely steep hill. The turning takes you under a sort of bridge which connects two mills, and past the Working Mens Club. Near the top of this hill is The Sair Inn. The pub itself is unspoilt with several rooms and real fires in winter. There are many interesting items on the wall which will explain who Enoch was and what he did with his hammer! And there's Old Eli, but you really must go there yourself, it is well worth it, it's a real treasure.

PAULA CARDER

P.S. The Spinners Tavern, Lees Road, Oldham is understood to be shortly taking Linfit Leadboiler for a trial period.



WHEN IN ROCHDALE

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The Brewing Industry in Manchester

UP to the end of the 17th century, Manchester had been little more than an industrialised village. Wool, linen and silks had been woven in the area since medieval times. In the mid 1700's the population was under 20,000.

The event which sparked off the growth of Manchester came in 1761, with the completion of the Bridgewater Canal. When the canal was extended to Runcorn it provided cheaper communication with Liverpool. It encouraged the construction of other canals and Manchester soon became the centre of a network of canals linking it with every important part of the country.

During this time cotton production steadily replaced all other textiles in the area. The moist atmosphere, and cheap power provided by water mills led to building of factories on stream courses. Hence the name 'mills'. With the advent of the spinning mule the industry was revolutionised and all the local labour was used up. Labour had to be recruited from London and other towns. In 1778 the population was under 22,000 and by 1788 it had nearly doubled, with workers cramming into towns, with terrible working conditions, with the noise, heat, throat parching dust, the availability of a good quality beer at a price they could afford was a godsend.

A brewery which is still brewing today is Boddingtons. They were founded by two partners in 1778. These brewers had gained a reputation for the consistent quality of their beer. The brewery sales were approximately at £18,000 a year, considering that beer was 4d. for a quart or 1p per pint, it would indicate a lot of beer was drunk in Manchester. All the malt and hops were brought from the south via the canals. With improved production techniques including temperature control (to get the maximum extract from the malt) steam power and belt driven machinery led to a marked increase in production.

GRAHAM MASON

All change at the Station

ON a recent visit to the Station (Free House) in Ashton-under-Lyne, it was noted that Higsons Mild is now on sale, replacing the Chesters Mild, as a resident beer. Unfortunately, it is on a handpump at the bottom end of the bar where it is not easily noticeable, and its presence is not advertised by point of sale material other than its pump clip. Let us hope this is soon rectified, as Higsons Mild is a newcomer to this area and we wouldn't want it to disappear through going un-noticed. Boddingtons Bitter and Marstons Pedigree are the other resident beers at the Station, which regularly serves a guest beer.

GEOFF LEES

BITS AND BOBS

THOSE people who frequent The Marble Arch, on Rochdale Road, Manchester can not have failed to notice the tea urn, masquerading as a lager dispenser on the bar top, I've been told that it is best not to mention it though, as a donation to Sooty is required as forfeit. Whilst on the subject of lager, have you noticed the advertising blurb on the neck of Barbican bottles? It maintains that the brew(?) now has more lager taste! Several of my acquaintances claim that lager has no taste! So what's in the Barbican bottles? Perrier Water?

While visiting the Sair Inn recently Ron Crabtree brewer extraordinaire claimed that since he started to brew and drink his stout, English Guineas, his piles have completely cleared up! Perhaps he should sell it in small bottles as 'Uncle Ron's Patent Haemorrhoid Cure'. Speaking of Ron, reminds me of a chat with Ken, the brewer of West Riding. They are awaiting planning permission to build a brewery and family room in the cellar and out-buildings at the Barge and Barrel Pub, Elland, meanwhile they have made a deal with Oak Brewery of Ellesmere Port, they made one test brew of 'Tyke', which went slightly wrong, so they sold it as Wirral bitter, a second brew has been tried, and subject to it being more Tykeish, will be on sale at their pub and possibly soon at the Cemetery Hotel, Rochdale.

Last month saw the third birthday of TFC (The Fighting Cock) group of pubs, free food and Bathams bitter at 6p per pint was available at the Bradford pub. Speaking of TFC, the Gamecock in Ashton-under-Lyne is the place for mild lovers, there are now two available, Oldham and Matthew Brown. On the subject of Matthew Brown, they now no longer produce Theakston Mild, yet casks keep turning up with Theakston's stickers on them. Do you know your milds? If so why not try some Matthew Brown's at the Gamecock and then some Theakston's at the Horse and Jockey near Delph and see if you can tell the difference!

PAULA CARDER



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Our selection of handpumped beers is

Boddington's Bitter - Ruddles County
Theakstons Old Peculier - Taylors Landlord
Best Bitter and Porter - Thwaites Mild and Bitter
Oak Old Oak - Shipstones Bitter - Old Mill Bitter
West Riding Tyke

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Regulars will know the answer.

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Sunday: 12.00 p.m. — 2.00 p.m., 7.00 p.m. — 10.30 p.m.

BEER AWARDS

WHILST on the subject of beer festivals, I must congratulate Thwaites of Blackburn for winning the mild category of "The Beer of the Year" competition at the Brighton GBBF. Now this will come as no surprise to anyone who has visited a Thwaites outlet recently, due to the vast range of posters and other paraphernalia advertising the fact. What may come as a surprise after seeing the shelf-wobblers! and pump appendages is that only one of Thwaites beers actually won a prize, that being the Best Mild!

Just to put the record straight, here is a full list of the prize winners.

Mild Category

1. Thwaites Best Mild
2. Bass Highgate Mild
3. Hook Norton Mild

Standard Bitters

1. Brakspear P.A.
2. Young Bitter
3. Gales BBB

Premium Bitters

1. Bateman XXXB
2. Fullers London Pride
3. Timothy Taylors Landlord

Strong Bitter

1. Theakston Old Peculier
2. Ringwood Old Thumper
3. Marston Owd Rodger

New Brewery

1. Pitfield Dark Star
2. Banks and Taylor Shefford Bitter
3. Old Mill Bullion

The overall beer of the year was actually Batemans XXXB, which, I gather, was a popular decision as the future of the brewery is under a cloud following a split in the family. Overall second was Pitfield Dark Star, from a tiny brewery in North London, and third prize went to Theakstons Old Peculier.

So congratulations must go to Thwaites for their splendid Best Mild, please don't go totally O.T.T.

ROB CARDER

GO TO CHURCH

THE Church Inn on Cambridge Street in Hulme (round the back of the polytechnic) is a small Lees pub selling both mild and bitter on handpump.

In fact The Church was in the GBG for a number of years, until unfortunately the beer and bodies in the pub declined.

The good news is that the Church is on the up again. Pamela Kaigg, whose first pub it is, took over last December and trade has increased rapidly. The pub now has active football, darts, cribbage and pool teams; the latter despite the fact the pub does not have a pool table!

The even better news is that the pub is to have a small extension so that the pool team can have a table of their own and to increase the size of living accommodation upstairs. Builders willing, this will be complete by Christmas.

MIKE GOODE

MIDDLETON NEWS

TENDERS are being invited from a shortlist of four applicants who want to take over Ye Olde Boar's Head, one of Middleton's oldest buildings. A special meeting of Rochdale Council's Land Committee, to which Middleton councillors were invited, decided on the shortlist recently. It consists of Middleton Junction brewers J.W. Lees — who are currently looking after the pub on a temporary basis; Yates Wine Lodge; Boddingtons Brewery and private developer Mr. A. Howarth, who has already converted a former bank into the Smithfields pub on Shudehill, Manchester.

The Hare and Hounds, Oldham Road, Middleton is closed and empty, and the landlord gone. The land around the pub has been flattened possibly for a car park and extension, when it reopens as a restaurant.

KEITH PARTINGTON

LETTERS

Dear Beer Lines,

As I begin this letter I feel because of its length and also because it knocks that 'cherished' institution of CAMRA that it runs the risk of not being published. However . . .

Over the past couple of months I have built up a few grievances against CAMRA and its policies, to which I will enter one by one.

To start with I am quite perturbed over the event known as the 'Beer Festival'. Now apparently this is an event where the most blandest ales are gathered together from the four corners of the British Isles in order to be sampled by a gullible public. But from a recent CAMRA article one is 'supposed to dislike' regional tasting ales, so the fact that we do dislike most of them seems to be O.K., even if comments such as 'crap' and 'if this is real ale, give me fizzy Bass every time' are heard from people next to me.

CAMRA are usually bemoaning the 'sad decline of mild ale', then why is it that their beer festivals only have a nominal one mild? And that that is usually always O.B? This is hardly going to reverse the declining trend is it?

Apparently the recent campaign locally is to 'Ask for Wilsons' in your pub to show your dislike at the latest takeover and subsequent closure of yet another brewery. So why didn't the recent Ashton beer tent lot help this campaign by having a barrel of Wilsons?

There does seem to be a slight hypocrisy rampant within CAMRA. For one thing they claim to be against big brewers who are 'ruining the consumer's choice', then why have beer festivals often featured brews from Courage and recently Wem, a subsidiary of Greenall Whitley?

I notice that Ashton's 'Gamecock' gets a lot of publicity from within BEER LINES (is there any connection here, I wonder, as both seemed to begin at the same time?). Anyway I'm leading up to CAMRA's support of Free Houses. This is great, but how about an active campaign for 'quiet and free from little kids from Free Houses' policy? I say this because we have stopped visiting two of Ashton's Free Houses, namely the Gamecock, because loud and awful taped music that wouldn't have been out of place in a Co-op made every mouthful of Landlord painful and unenjoyable. The other being the Station, where uncontrolled little brats are allowed to disturb your quiet drink and conversation as much as they please as long as their parents buy them a glass of orange to drink.

Whatever happened to 'CAMRA Investments'? CAMRA campaigns for choice, yet they had to sell their own Free Houses because apparently they couldn't compete. If CAMRA couldn't, there doesn't seem to be much hope for anybody else, does there?

CAMRA is supposed to be anti-lager then wouldn't it be better to stop supporting pubs that sell the stuff? The Marble Arch, Manchester's 'Premier Free House' for instance sells **two** lagers, but there again John Worthington is a CAMRA member isn't he? So I suppose a blind eye could be turned here, couldn't it?

And finally . . . do we have to have turgid reports of "going to a lot of pubs in one night and meanwhile some members are sick or feel ill" as appear in BEER LINES, it makes one believe that CAMRA is really only a club for moronic pub crawlers.

Yours sincerely
Roy Cottam, Blackley

The Ed replies . . . Well I'm sure a lot of people out there may feel they have a case for libel, if you do, send your letters via me and I'll pass them on to Mr. Cottam. Seriously though, just to answer some of the points, if Mr. Cottam cares to read Sue Cunningham's article on beer festivals a lot of his points may be covered, as regards the Canals Festival, the Wem was very popular, as mentioned in last month's BEER LINES. By the time the festival was organised, Wilsons beers were already coming from Halifax, and as they had no Websters on sale, asking for Wilson's rather than Webster's would have been a little pointless. Big breweries? No one is too big to be taken over, Courage now belong to the Aussies. I'm not sure which article tried to make people dislike regional beers, it's not the regional beers we are complaining about, it's the breweries who tamper with their beers to make them a blander brew that we object to.

On to free houses, **no**, BEER LINES and The Gamecock are not connected, they opened in July 1985, we started in December 1985, apart from the fact that they advertise with us and that they are a free house which we are keen on, no connection.

Instead of campaigning for kid free pubs we should be campaigning for pubs with children's rooms, but with the present trend for open-plan pubs this will be a problem. If you find something in a pub you don't like, don't just sit and suffer in silence and never go back, complain, be it too loud music or children. Do yourself and the pub a favour, it's there to please the public, if it doesn't know what the public wants it doesn't stand a chance.

Now to lager, CAMRA believes in freedom of choice, if the public wants to drink lager, then let it, what we need to do, is to make sure the unsuspecting public are not ripped off, by large brewers who try to foist inferior continental style beers, at extortionate prices onto them.

The topic of CAMRA investments and what happened to them will no doubt be answered by people more knowledgeable than myself, but to pub crawls, a lot of people seem to enjoy reading about our little jaunts around pubs. No one is forced to drink any more than they want to, the pub crawl provides a means of visiting areas not often frequented by CAMRA people, so useful survey work is carried out, besides, if a beer makes someone feel ill, it may well make you feel ill too, so to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Anyone else want to reply? If so send your letters to the usual BEER LINES address.

CIDER APPEAL

WE have had a letter from John Wantling, who along with his friend, Brian Pickavance, has just published a booklet regarding ciders, this booklet has been very successful and had sold out, the two friends are keen to produce an updated booklet and appeal for any information directly to them via John Wantling, 175 Dunkirk Rise, College Bank, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL12 6UJ.

PAULA CARDER

LEGENDARY CIDERS

THE real ale off licence chain, Lendgarry Lancashire Heroes, now also stock ciders, both in draught, ranging from Thatchers, Langdons Farmers Tipple, Broadoak medium and dry and in bottle including Broadoak (reputed to be 8.2% alcohol), Dixies Cripple Cock and Kingston Black Vintage, said to be the only vintage cider produce from a single apple variety and produced only in "even" years.

KEITH EGERTON

BRANCH DIARY

STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER

OCTOBER

Monday 6th: 8.30 p.m. Social, George, Mersey Square, Stockport (note change of venue)
 Thursday 9th: 8.00 p.m. Branch Meeting, Gateway, Kingsway, E. Didsbury.
 Monday 13th: 8.30 p.m. Social, Grove, Ashton New Road, Openshaw.
 Friday 17th: Coach Trip to Stoke Beer Festival, pick up 5.50pm. Pineapple, 6.10 p.m. Bulls Head, details from Branch contact.
 Monday 20th: Coach Trip to Theakston's Brewery. Pick up 12 noon, Pineapple, details from branch contact.
 Friday 24th: Social, 8.30 p.m. Whitworth Hotel, Moss Lane, Rusholme.
 Friday 31st: 8.30 p.m. Pub of the Month, Church, Ardwick Green, Ardwick. (note change of date).
 Contact: John Clarke 061-477 1973 (H)

TRAFFORD & HULME

OCTOBER

Thursday 2nd: Committee/Social 8.0 p.m. Stretford Cricket Club, Leslie Road, off Urmston Lane, Stretford.
 Thursday 9th: Chorlton Survey, meet 8.15 p.m. 5.0 p.m. at the Southern, Mauldeth Road West.
 Saturday 11th: York trip by rail. Details from branch contact.
 Thursday 16th: A.G.M. 8.00 p.m. at the Melville, Barton Road.
 Thursday 23rd: Old Trafford Survey, meet 8.00 p.m. at the Dog and Partridge, Chester Road.
 Thursday 30th: Pub of the Month, 8.00 p.m. Axe and Cleaver, Dunham.
 Contact: David Shelton 061-224 7341 X54 (W)
 061-795 2113 (H)

ROCHDALE, OLDHAM AND BURY

OCTOBER

Tuesday 7th: Branch meeting, 8.00 p.m. Queens Werneth.
 Tuesday 21st: Committee meeting, 8.00 p.m. Rams Head, Denshaw.

NOVEMBER

Tuesday 4th: Branch Meeting, 8.00 p.m., Blue Bell, Sunnybank.
 Tuesday 18th: Committee Meeting, 8.00 p.m. Masons Arms, Nangreaves.
 Contact: Steve Lawton 061-620 9239 (H)
 061-928 6311 X7111 (W)

NORTH MANCHESTER

OCTOBER

Wednesday 1st: Farewell to Spread Eagle, Regent Street, 7.00pm then crawl to Ordsall, Prince of Wales, Oldfield Road, 8.00 p.m.
 Wednesday 8th: Irwell Castle, L. Broughton Road, 8.00 p.m.
 Contact: Roger Hall 061-740 7937 (H) 061-736 3065 (W)

CAMRA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Are you a real ale drinker? Do you feel strongly about your local being turned into a disco fun pub? Does the current spate of brewery takeovers worry you? Then why not join CAMRA and help with the struggle against the profit makers.

Name(s)

Address

.....

.....

Postcode

I/We enclose my/our remittance for Full/Husband & Wife membership for one year £7.00

Signature(s)

Date

Please send this form with your remittance (payable to CAMRA Ltd.) to:

Sally Bennell, CAMRA Ltd., 34 Alma Road, St. Albans, Herts. AL1 3BW.

BOLTON

OCTOBER

Wednesday 1st: 8.30 p.m. Branch Meeting, The Crofter's, St. Georges Road.
 Sunday 12th: 12 noon, Social, Church, George Street, New Bury, Farnworth.
 Wednesday 15th: 8.00 p.m. Social, Stag's Head, St. Helens Road.
 Contact: Dave Flemming 0204 389918 (H)
 0204 75111 X207 (W)

HIGH PEAK AND NORTH EAST CHESHIRE

OCTOBER

Tuesday 7th: 9.00 p.m. Committee meeting, Northumberland Arms, Compstall (Robinsons).
 Tuesday 14th: 8.30 p.m. Branch meeting, Crescent, Disley (Robinsons).
 Tuesday 28th: Evening Coach trip to Matthew Brown Lion Brewery, Blackburn, to arrive for 7.30 p.m. Further details of pick-up times and places from Tom Lord.

NOVEMBER

Tuesday 4th: Day Trip by coach to Marstons Brewery, details from Tom Lord.
 Thursday 6th: 9.00 p.m. Committee meeting Crown and Cushion Newton, Hyde (Wilson's).
 Tuesday 11th: 8.30 p.m. Branch meeting Dog and Partridge, Denton (Robinsons — a rare opportunity to sample ordinary bitter).
 Saturday 22nd: Proposed rail trip to London for a pub crawl. Full details from the "talking timetable" (Tom Lord)
 Contact: Tom Lord 061-427 7099 and
 Geoff Williamson 06632 5634

SOUTH EAST LANCASHIRE

OCTOBER

Saturday 11th: 12.00 noon, Marches Meeting, Olde Custom House, Ghester.
 Sunday 12th: 1.00 p.m. First meeting for the Third Lowton Beerex, Railway Hotel, Leigh.
 Sunday 26th: 1.00 p.m. Branch Meeting, Railway Hotel, Leigh.
 Tuesday 28th: Hydes Brewery trip, 6.30 p.m. from Railway Hotel, Leigh.
 Contact: S.B. Prescott 0925 835481 (W) 0942 719037 (H)

Real Ale in Central and South Manchester - Update 7

TWO real ale gains this month. Starting with the better one, Banks's Milestone on Burnage Lane, Burnage is now open selling Mild, Bitter and Black Country Bitter on electric pump. By contrast, those who enjoy being ripped off should head for Boddington's re-opened Royal Central (formerly Cox's Bar) on Museum Street in the City Centre, where handpulled Boddington's bitter is a thumping 86p a pint — and is the only real ale, despite assurances reportedly vouchsafed by the brewery regarding their commitment to beers of their Oldham and Higsons subsidiaries.

Two pubs closed, for the immediate future though not one hopes for ever, are the Railway in Beswick and the Church Inn in Northenden.

The Waggon and Horses in the City Centre now sells Websters Choice, while the Travellers Call in Beswick has dropped Thwaites Bitter; on the mild front, Tetley Mild at the Manor House in Withington is now keg, but the Angel in Gorton has regained Greenall's Mild on hand-pump. Finally, a recent check revealed that a gremlin had transposed the addresses of two Northenden pubs; in reality, the Crown Inn is on FORD Lane while the Tatton Arms Tavern is on BOAT Lane.

RHYS P. JONES

Why not advertise in BEER LINES? The rates are reasonable and there is a discount for a block booking of six months. Half page ads are £50, Quarter page £30, Eighth page £15 and Sixteenth page £10. Contact The Editor, 35 Hayfield Close, Pennine Meadows, Moorside, Oldham OL4 2LX.