

JUNE 2006



# Opening Times

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

NUMBER 262

COVERING CENTRAL, EAST & SOUTH MANCHESTER, STOCKPORT, TAMESIDE, TRAFFORD N.E., CHESHIRE & MACCLESFIELD

## Festival Fever

Build up to the main event now well ahead

20<sup>th</sup> Beer Festival promises to be biggest and best so far



**W**e are now well and truly in the run-up to this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, once again kindly sponsored by the Stockport Express. The entertainment is booked, the glasses and T-shirts ordered and, most importantly, the beer and cider order has been worked out.

As usual *Opening Times* is taking this opportunity to bring you just a small taster of the many beers on offer. There really will be something for every taste, whether you like mild, bitter, stout or strong ales.

There will be up to **13** milds available including, Ruby Mild from Durham and the excellent Rutland Panther from Grainstore.

Lovers of bitter will be well catered for with no less than **73** standard and premium bitters available during the course of the Festival. The Festival special beer will be from Pictish and with five casks ordered this year it should be available at every session.

**12** stouts and porters will include the superb Maguires Plain from Dublin and Molly's Chocolate Stout from Belfast's College Green Brewery. In fact six Irish beers will feature this year. Also noteworthy is the wonderful St Petersburg Imperial Stout from Thornbridge.

There will also be **11** special beers including Thornbridge Bohemia cask lager, Grand Union Centenary Honey and a new Ginger Wheat beer from Phoenix. Look out too for the unusual Cinnamon & Apple beer from St Peters Bringing up the rear we also have **11** strong ales and this year there are some real treats here. Robinson's Old Tom is a firm favourite of course but others to try include rare cask outings for the normally bottle-only 1845 and Golden Pride (a pale 8.5% barley wine) from Fullers. Look out, too for Jaipur IPA from Thornbridge – a dangerously drinkable beer.

So, something for everyone. Do remember, though, that not all beers will be on at the same time and one or two may not even arrive (although we usually have an acceptable alternative if that happens). You can also visit the Festival Website at: [www.stockportfestival.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.stockportfestival.fsnet.co.uk)

### Festival Charity – Independent Options

The Festival Committee asked for nominations for a local charity providing a service in the Stockport and South Manchester area and chose Independent Options (Stockport) which operates from The Pines on Chester Road, Hazel Grove and provides support to people with learning and physical disabilities and mental health needs.

Independent Options was established through the Mayor of Stockport's appeal in 1976 to provide locally based respite care at

The Pines Holiday House in Hazel Grove, for children and adults with a mental handicap, as it was described then. The range of services have grown and developed since then and are aimed at helping people of all ages to access leisure, support to run own home, having a short break from family, holidays abroad and in the UK.

#### IN JUNE'S OPENING TIMES

Pub of the Month	3
Book Review	4
Festival Music	5
Curmudgeon	5
Cheshire Inns	6
5 Years Ago	7
High Peak Pub News	8
Peak Practice	9
T & H Pub of the Season	10
T & H Pub News	10
Brewery News	11
Manchester Matters	13
Stockport Supping	14
Recent Awards	15
Ken's Kitchen	16
Stagger	16
CAMRA Calling	18

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\* All sizes subject to availability



**Pub  
OF THE  
Month  
AWARD**



**The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for June is the Railway, Avenue Street, Portwood – the local flagship for the Porter Brewing Company of Rossendale.**

Much has been written in these pages about this multi-award winning pub. In the past it has achieved awards as Pub of the Month, Pub of the Year, both local and regional, and also made the finals of the national Pub of the Year competition.

All those awards however, were gained during the tenure of previous licensees. The current incumbent, Martin Wood, has continued, and arguably surpassed, the high standards set by his predecessors. Perhaps less extrovert than those who have gone before him, Martin nevertheless has maintained the Railway as one of the highlights of the Stockport pub scene.

The pub's wide ranging appeal is well-known. Whatever your tipples there will be something for you. The beer lover is truly spoiled for choice. The full range of the Porter Brewing Company beers is the obvious highlight, running from the malty and satisfying Cribden Dark Mild, the stunningly bitter house beer, Railway Sleeper, the two Porter signature beers Sunshine and Pitch Porter and various specials. At weekends these are complemented by three guest beers from micro-brewers far and wide.

The cask range is supported by a large range of foreign bottled beers, principally from Belgium and Germany but with highlights from other countries too. There is also a changing guest cask cider and, again, a number of quality bottled ciders. Foreign beers are on draught and for those with a taste for something stronger, small but perfectly formed ranges of Scottish single malts and Irish whiskeys are available, too.

On a more sombre note, the long planned redevelopment of the area may now be rather more imminent than has been the case and the Railway might now have only 12 months or so left. This might therefore be the last chance we have to celebrate this excellent pub and its hardworking licensee. So join us when we present this very well-deserved award on Thursday 29 June. **JC**

*The Railway is about a 10 minute walk from Stockport Town Centre. Buses 330 and 325 will drop you almost outside.*



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## OT – COMMENT...

Well, we're back after an unexpected three-month break.

What went wrong? After 261 unbroken issues the wheels fell off the wagon at just the wrong time. We missed publicising the Mild Challenge, Stockport Beer & Cider Festival and two major in-house beer festivals at Poynton Royal British Legion and the Cheshire Ring. Talk about bad timing.

As you will see, we have taken this opportunity to redesign *Opening Times* and we hope you like what you see. Let us know if you don't! We will doubtless continue to tweak the appearance over the next couple of months. Many thanks to Mike Greensmith at The Artworks (0161 480 7538) for his help with the redesign.

We have a new team in place, too. I'm still here as Ed (this time one, and only) and I've been joined on the production team by John Tune, Pete Farrand, Dave Hanson and Peter Butler – my thanks to them all for their hard work on this issue. Paul Hutchings, former Ed(2) and production man has left the team and he goes with all our heartfelt thanks for his hard work over the past years.

Coming up, of course, is Stockport Beer & Cider Festival – I hope all our readers will try and come along and support the premiere event on the Stockport drinking scene. See you there! **JC**

## OT – INFORMATION

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**Trading Standards** – problems in pubs should normally be resolved by a quiet word with the licensee. However sometimes it may be necessary to take it further. These are the local contacts:

**Stockport:** 0845 644 4301  
**Manchester:** 0161 234 1555  
**Tameside:** 0161 342 8355  
**Trafford:** 0161 912 2274  
**Derbyshire:** 08456 058 058  
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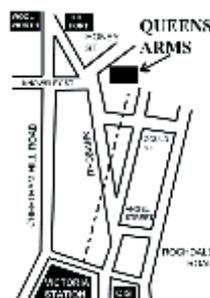
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New Opening Hours

New Food Menu



New Fish



Watch this space

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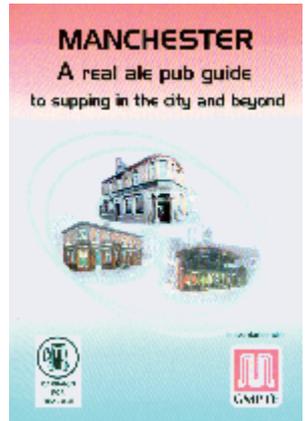
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# Book Review

While *Opening Times* was taking a short break, three pub guides came out that will be of interest to readers. Let's start close to home with

**Manchester – a real ale pub guide to supping in the city and beyond, CAMRA, 72pp, £4.95.**

Well, it's not the world's snappiest title, is it? And it graces a cover whose design, whilst good in conception, would have had greater impact had the pub photographs been reproduced at a larger size. (For an object lesson in making an impact, look no further than J W Lees's robustly politically incorrect ad on the back cover.) Turn the page, however, and it rapidly becomes clear that we are in safe hands, as the crisply written introductory articles lead us straight into the main



listings. The principle of the guide, as with previous guides to central Manchester, is to list all pubs and bars in the city centre, giving no more than name and address for the key-only outlets while providing description and listing of facilities for those that serve real ale. However the look of this guide is markedly different from its predecessors, and the larger format really gives the entries room to breathe, while good use has been made of photographs (of varying standard, but sharply reproduced in the main) and some attractive line drawings. Descriptions are on the terse side by the standards of some recent guides, averaging perhaps 50 words apiece, but do a good job of summarising the character of each pub, though the occasional less than fluent sentence would have benefited from editorial intervention. Particular praise is due for the decision to quote opening hours using the 24-hour clock – this should surely become standard practice for CAMRA publications now that flexible licensing means a simple "12 – 2" is ambiguous. New for this edition is selective coverage of outlying areas of Manchester and Salford, with entries in the same format as the main city centre entries. Feature articles interspersed amongst the entries cover mild, cider, continental beer, curry cafes, and Manchester's pub heritage. Perhaps a purist might frown at some of the ciders and continental beers alluded to, but the articles read well, broaden the appeal of the book, and are clearly written by people with real enthusiasm and knowledge (though curiously, not all are attributed to a named author). There's also the usual plug for CAMRA membership, and comprehensive coverage of all Greater Manchester's real ale breweries.

With little or no waffle or padding, this guide packs a tremendous amount of information into a small compass. Some may question the paucity of maps (there is only one orientation map of the city centre, with no pubs marked), but CAMRA specialises in beer, not cartography, and maps of Manchester are widely available. Even if you think you know Manchester's pubs well, this book will undoubtedly lead to you to many discoveries or re-evaluations, while for the newcomer to the city it is quite simply essential. **RPJ**  
**More guide reviews next month.**

## Festival Entertainment

As ever live entertainment plays a major part of this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Here Entertainment Manager Stuart Ballantyne brings you a brief lowdown of what's on....

Thursday night kicks off the fun with the **Lowry Brass Quintet**. Formed at the Royal Northern College of Music in 1999 the quintet has performed at many functions and major venues such as the Bridgewater Hall, the RNCM and St. Martin-in-the-fields.

The Lowry Brass Quintet perform an exciting and highly successful blend of jazz and popular light classical music featuring many famously loved songs together with some of their own written material. Typical songs from the quintet's repertoire include Berlin's Putting on the Ritz, Mozart's Hallelujah Exultate Jubilate, Frank Sinatra's New York New York, Lutoslawski's Mini Overture, Rossini's William Tell Overture and the trad jazz classic Just a Closer Walk.

On Friday night the **Gascat** band take to the stage. Formed around three years ago the band has built up a good following as a result of regular gigs in and around the Stockport area. All the band members have lots of experience and have been friends for years.

Gascat are a fun band that enjoy playing and encourage interaction with the audience. The band's repertoire includes a wide mix of covers and originals played with Gascat's unique interpretation from a range of styles. About one third of their set will feature songs written by the band, these songs are some of the material of which the band are particularly proud.



The Saturday lunchtime crowd will be entertained by the **Curragh Sons**.

With a pedigree of over twenty years in a variety of different line-ups the Curragh Sons must be one of the most established folk performers in the business. Over this time the band has toured extensively both in this country and in Ireland building up a huge fan base. All of the band members have extensive experience in the business

from touring to recording and supporting other famous artists such as the Pogues. The backbone of the band is Sean the 'arch dabbler' Wood. Sean's great vocals and bodhran playing drive the band from great classics such as Whiskey in the jar, Dirty Old Town, and the Irish Rover to their own original penned songs.

We always close with a bang and this year is no different. Our Saturday evening band is the **Roach Twins Band**, originators of the Irwell Delta sound, and one of the most original bands around playing in the blues idiom, with a fast growing national and international reputation.

Driven by the twin guitar sound of enigmatic identical twins, Chris and Tony Roach, the band sport passionate vocals and the thought provoking lyrics of Uncle Dinners, powerful harmonica from the Junk House Dog with multi instrumentalist Professor Mayhem controlling the wild wind. This formidable frontline is held down tight by Andy Sykes' rock solid bass line and the crisp drumming of Rick 'lockdown' Lacey. The band's live set contains a strong theatrical element and generous chunks of humour as well as first class musicianship. There should be no doubt in your mind. A live show by the sensational Roach Twins Band will not disappoint and will be even harder to forget.



### Up in smoke

Well, intolerance has prevailed, and we are now going to get a total ban on smoking in pubs and clubs in England. There is little point in those who run pubs crying over spilt milk, and they will need to think carefully about how they are going to adapt to the change. But many may well reach the conclusion there is little point in continuing at all.

You are likely to hear apologists for a total ban claim that the experience of other countries is that it has not led to any decline in trade, and may even have brought about an increase. However, they are quoting figures that cover the whole bar and restaurant sector, even going so far as places like McDonalds, and to use them to predict the impact on pubs and bars is a highly misleading use of statistics that is only too typical of the dishonest tactics they have employed. There is a general trend in society towards people eating out more, and this has the effect of masking the impact on the drinks trade in bars. In every country that has banned smoking, there has been a marked decline in business for wet-led bars.

In Ireland, there was an overall drop of more than 10%, and for many smaller bars in rural towns and villages the figure was over 25%. The Irish Licensed Victuallers estimate that the smoking ban led directly to the closure of over 400 pubs, or one for every 10,000 of the population, over and above any loss of pubs due to the general year-on-year trend. Although you may sometimes hear people who have been on holiday to Ireland say they haven't noticed much difference, visiting tourist areas is not going to be representative of the country as a whole. You wouldn't base a survey of the English pub trade solely on the West End of London and Stratford-on-Avon, and if they went to the back streets of Limerick, or little market towns off the beaten track, they would find a very different story.

An equivalent loss of pubs would be 30 in Stockport, 40 in Manchester. And the closures would not be spread evenly across the board, as dining outlets and vertical drinking circuit bars would be little affected, while small community locals would be hit very hard. These are exactly the kind of traditional pubs that CAMRA champions and which form the backbone of the real ale market. Clearly it wouldn't be the case that all these pubs closed simultaneously overnight, and some could even shut up shop before the ban came in. Anyone would certainly think long and hard before taking on the tenancy of a small wet-led local with the ban looming over them. There are many factors affecting trade, and if a pub is already struggling a bit, as so many are, then a drop in business of 10 or 20% might well lead them to give up the ghost, leading to a steady trickle of closures over a number of years. The smoking ban will serve to intensify the trends that are already in operation in the licensed trade.

It's sometimes claimed that a smoking ban will bring in a lot of new customers who currently avoid pubs because they are too smoky, but this really doesn't stand up at all. While people may grumble about smoky atmospheres, the number who feel so strongly that they actively avoid going to pubs must be minimal. *Continued on page 10...*

### Hand & Trumpet, Wrinehill

The thought of a “country dining pub” will make many old-school drinkers splutter into their beer, but at a time of rapid change in the licensed trade, the better run examples of this type of outlet often give some of the strongest support to local micro-breweries and also producers of quality fresh food. A small independent pub chain that has gained quite a reputation in this field is Cheshire-based Brunning & Price, who have steadily expanded and now have about fourteen pubs in South Cheshire, Shropshire and North Wales. Their website can be found at <http://www.brunningandprice.co.uk>.

Their latest acquisition is the Hand & Trumpet at Wrinehill near Nantwich, which feels much like South Cheshire but in fact is just over the Staffordshire border. The village is on the A531 between Nantwich and Newcastle-under-Lyme, and is best reached by taking the M6 to Junction 16, then the A500 towards Nantwich and turning off to the left down the A531. The pub had been closed for some time when Brunning & Price took it over in 2005 and apparently was in quite a run-down state, which makes the renovation they have done all the more impressive. It opened for business in February this year and we called in about a month later.

It's a large, four-square, white-painted pub standing by the roadside, with a fair-sized pond at the rear which should be an extremely attractive spot in the summer. There's plenty of outside seating, including a sun terrace on the roof of an extension at the back of the pub. Inside, the impression is of a very light and airy interior, with a mixture of antique furniture and a wealth of pictures on the walls. We spotted one showing the pub as a small cottage alehouse in 1880. It is a very spacious pub indeed, with the public areas going a long way back at the rear. There was a polite notice saying that, while children were welcome during the day if dining, it was mainly intended as a pub for adults, and they shouldn't stay beyond the early evening. There's a welcome absence of piped music in the pub. While obviously it majors on food it certainly isn't the kind of place where drinkers would be made to feel uncomfortable.

The bar counter faces you as you go in through the door, and the bank of six handpumps are given pride of place. The beers available on our visit were Titanic Mild, Thwaites Bitter, Caledonian Deuchars IPA, Taylors Landlord, Archers Billy No Mates and Woodlands Old Willow, both the Titanic and the Woodland coming from local micros. The prices were not cheap (around £2.40 a pint) but in line with what you would expect from this type of pub. We tried the Titanic and the Thwaites, which were both on very good form. As you would expect, food is important in a pub like this and there's an extensive and interesting menu that includes a good selection of snacks as well as full meals. While I would not say that nothing whatsoever came from the freezer, the menus are changed regularly and include many fresh local ingredients. Main courses are typically around the £8-£9 mark, but both the quality and the quantity make it worth paying for. We tried the traditional staple of Ham, Egg and Chips (£8.45) and the rather more exotic Butterbean Cassoulet (£8.50), together with a Ploughman's (£8.50) featuring Brie, Cheshire Blue, Organic Staffordshire and a slice of pork pie. Everything was very good indeed and one of the party was heard to say that he would have struggled to fit in a pudding. *Continued on page 17*



# 5 YEARS AGO

"Festival Frenzy" was the front page headline – Stockport's 15<sup>th</sup> Beer & Cider Festival had broken all records, so 'record breaking' was the only way to describe the massive success of the Festival, run by CAMRA, and sponsored by the Stockport Express. Attendance had risen 10 per cent to over 4,300, with over 1,000 visitors on the Friday night alone. Demand was such that the beer ran out earlier than expected on the Saturday night with the last drop squeezed from the barrels at 9.35pm. Luckily, the band played on and the cider bar stayed open for another half-hour before the supplies ran out there, too. Cider sales had been phenomenal, almost 50 per cent up on the previous year.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Editorial had been written as the General Election was in the offing, and it looked as if Labour were likely to be returned for a second term of office. If this turned out to be the case, then there were two items of unfinished business which needed to be addressed. It was just 12 months previously that *Opening Times* has been hailing proposals for a sensible reform of the antiquated licensing laws, but despite much consultation and publication of proposals, nothing had been done. The other item still waiting concrete action was the proposal to guarantee drinkers a full pint – the consultation on this had been endless.

\* \* \* \* \*

Following a record breaking Stockport Festival, it was perhaps to be expected that the Mild Challenge would also come up with a string of broken records, summed up as "the most successful ever, with all records broken". It also underlined the fact that despite claims of its demise, mild ale still had a dedicated following. Perhaps there was a lesson here for our local brewers when they considered their promotions and marketing policies.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was an item headed 'Unspoilt by Progress', which was of course the motto of Wolverhampton & Dudley (Banks's), the brewer that was facing a hostile takeover bid. The saga had been going on for over 18 months, a ridiculously long time for the company's employees to have a potential axe hanging over their jobs.

\* \* \* \* \*

In Didsbury, Ye Olde Cock had undergone quite an extensive (and expensive) refurbishment, which had given the pub a more contemporary look. The area around the bar appeared to have been designed to cater for the large amount of vertical drinking that went on over the weekend,



The Stockport pub scene was stunned by the sudden death in April of Bob Dickinson, popular and hard working licensee of **Ye Olde Woolpack, Brinkway.**

It was almost 18 years to the day that Bob had taken over the Woolpack, saving the pub from closure and dereliction, and making it one of the unsung gems of the towns real

ale circuit.

The slightly out-of-the-way location meant that the pub didn't perhaps have the higher profile of some of Stockport's other real ale flagships, but there is no doubt that Bob's commitment, hard-work and unfailing geniality made the Woolpack a treat to visit and his beers a joy to drink.

The quality of the pub spoke for itself but was recognised by a semi-permanent entry in CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide along with a multitude of awards – four times Pub of the Month plus Pub of the Year and Greater Manchester Pub of the Year.

The Woolpack is still trading under the care of Bob's partner Anita and still offer a range of changing guest beers. Please continue to support it. Our sympathies go to Anita and Bob's many friends and relatives. He will be sorely missed. **JC.**

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At the **Bike and Hounds** in Hyde, near the bus station, a new manager has been installed during April. If the name Stephanie Oliver rings a bell, you are right, dad is Geoff, long time owner of the Sportsman up the road, a long-standing Good Beer Guide entry. Geoff has assisted in fitting two handpumps due to requests from the clientele and Millstone beers were the first on, in what is planned to be an ever changing guest beer policy.

The **George** in Hayfield reopened recently, after a couple of months shut. Handpulled beers are on the bar, more news when we know more.

At the **Huntsman** at Thurlston, on the way to the M1 at Barnsley, (I know, -its out of the *Opening Times* area but you may be on your way to somewhere else), a Good Beer Guide 2006 pub, is selling Acorn and Bradfield beers predominantly. The **Dog & Partridge** (just as you drop down into Yorkshire as you go over the Woodhead pass) has the same two breweries' beers on the bar.

Again out of the area, but in the Hope Valley, between Hope and Bamford, the **Travellers Rest** also has beers from the same breweries. Not sure how significant this is, but we will ask next time in the area.

In Glossop, not news of a pub, but of an off licence. The **Booze Box**, on High Street East, on the way to Old Glossop, is selling an increasing amount of varying bottled beers and some continental bottles too. On my visit in mid April, there were also bottled beers from Leatherbriches and Thornbridge Hall breweries prominent. The assistant told me that the owner goes to pick them up himself, such is the popularity of the beers. The reputation of the outlet is growing - many people from out in Yorkshire and Derbyshire are calling whilst passing on the way over the Snake pass, to stock up with bottles.

In the same year that Keith and Cecilia Hickson will be celebrating their silver wedding anniversary, and at a time when most people would think about winding down, the couple from New Mills have moved up a gear and taken over as tenants of the **Rock Tavern** in their hometown.

The couples are not strangers to the pub trade, and some residents of New Mills will remember that they last kept a pub in the town 23-years ago.

**Curmudgeon**, continued from page 5

The experience of pubs that have in the past gone totally non-smoking does not suggest they are flooded with new customers - indeed some experienced such a fall-off in trade that they had to reintroduce a smoking area. And if you're that fussy about health matters it's unlikely that you're going to want to spend long hours drinking in pubs anyway. Even if you sympathise with the argument behind it, don't fool yourself that the pub trade will sail largely unscathed through a smoking ban. It won't.

*Curmudgeon Online: [www.curmudgeon.org.uk](http://www.curmudgeon.org.uk) (note new improved URL)*



# PEAK Practice

Robin Wignall 's monthly round-up of doings in the Peak District....

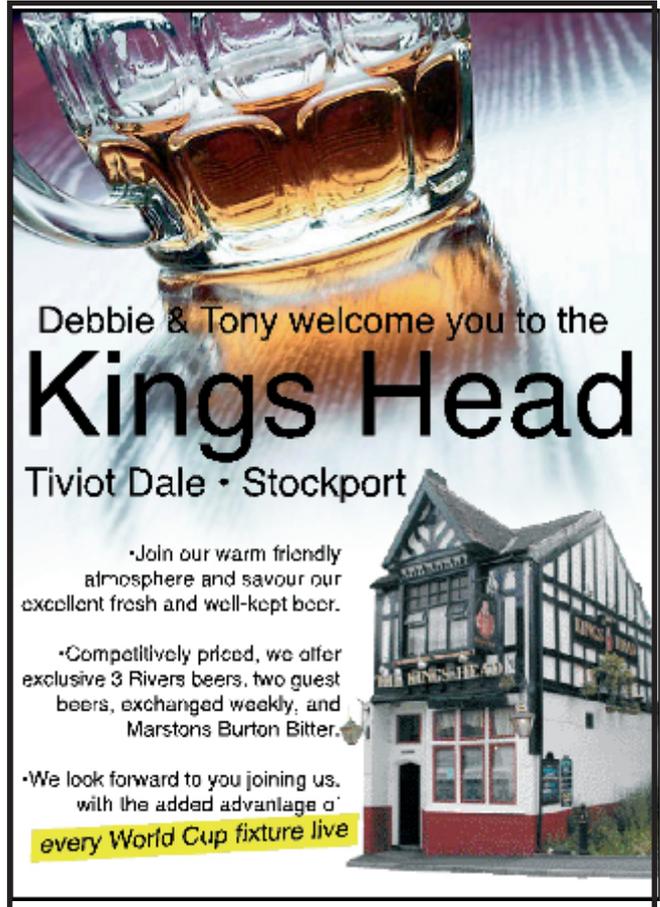
**C**alls at the **Shady Oak**, Fernilee, in the last few weeks found the Jennings seasonal beer Golden Host (4.3%) available. The pump-clip explained all with daffodils and William Wordsworth illustrated. This is a malt brew rather than a hoppy brew, and not as pale as the name might suggest, but still worth drinking. Also available was the Marston's seasonal, Double Drop (5%). Some hops for taste here! Double Drop is presumably available in the W&D estate. Regular beers at the Shady Oak are Jennings Mild, Bitter and Cumberland. The pub's debut on the Mild Challenge will hopefully have introduced the Dark Mild, rare in this area, to some new drinkers.

**T**he **Board** at Horwich End (Robinson's Hatters and Unicorn) has also been on the Mild Challenge. Recent developments here include food on Saturday and Sunday lunchtime. There is also a fortnightly quiz and a fortnightly meat draw. I haven't come across a meat draw since holidaying in Cornwall nearly 20 years ago, and returning home one year with three substantial pieces of local produce. Martin Wharram is certainly being innovative in attracting custom.

**A**lso new to the Mild Challenge this year has been the **Shoulder of Mutton** at Chapel-en-le-Friith. This is a recent mild gain as Hatters had not been served on visits some months ago. Also on the bar was Ward's Bitter, which was selling well, competing with the Unicorn for turnover. Brewery News in February's OT mentioned that Robinson's were brewing Ward's Bitter. A brewery source confirmed that Ward's would be going out into some of Robinson's estate in Derbyshire where the Ward's name will have fond memories for many drinkers. Phil Faulkner and Marjorie Cromwell took over the Shoulder of Mutton in February this year. Phil is pleased with the sales of the well-kept cask ale and is looking forward to increasing the range of beers available. Certainly, both Hatters and Ward's were on good form on a visit for a Mild Challenge stamp.

**G**uest beers continue to thrive at the **Navigation** in Buxworth. Recent guests have included Sozzled Swine, a strength-tasting 5.5% brew from Ring 'o Bells, Cornwall, whilst from Thornbridge Hall have come Riverside Romance (4.6%) and Fool's Gold (4%). The former was a lager-pale brew for St Valentine's Day, described as a "golden fruity ale". With a distinctive but moreish taste it was another quality beer from Thornbridge, as was the pale, hoppy Fool's Gold.

**B**ack in March the Good Beer Guide listed **George** in Buxton held a weekend beer festival. As well as the usual good range of beers on handpump, including three from Millstone, a rack of 12 firkins was stillaged against the wall next to the bar. Beers included four from Storm; Leatherbritches, of which both Belter and Dovedale were sampled; Crouch Vale Snow Drop and Northumberland Winter Gold. All the beers were in good nick and made a pleasant afternoon's drinking. There was also good quality, sensibly priced food to be had. This event is certainly to be recommended and I hope that wider advance notice might be available next time.



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- Competitively priced, we offer exclusive 3 Rivers beers, two guest beers, exchanged weekly, and Marstons Burton Bitter.
- We look forward to you joining us, with the added advantage of every World Cup fixture live

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STOCKPORT & SOUTH  
MANCHESTER PUB OF THE  
MONTH MARCH 2005



**T**he Trafford & Hulme CAMRA Pub of the Season Award for Spring 2006 is the Stamford Arms, in Bowdon, a pub making great strides in promoting its cask beers.

The Stamford Arms stands on the high ground of Bowdon, across from St. Mary's church. A building has existed on the site since 1720. The original property, more than likely a farmhouse, changed to a public house probably when Bowdon became gentrified in the Victorian times with the coming of the railway. It takes its name from the Stamford family of Dunham Hall.

Until some thirty years ago the pub had a separate vault, snug and gentlemen's room (which was entered by invitation only). In today's more egalitarian times the rooms have been opened out to create spacious drinking areas, accompanied by all day food if you wish. The traditional atmosphere, enhanced by the low ceilings and original windows, has been retained. Outside the Stamford presents itself as an attractive, well-grounded building. It has a claim to fame with its twelve unusual brick chimneys, known locally as the twelve apostles.

John, the head barman, has worked at the Stamford for thirty three years and says since the pub, originally a Boddingtons house, took on its range of five regular, plus guest, hand pulled cask ales his job has become more interesting. He took me down to the brick lined chamber cellars and showed me the stillages and pipes, all in immaculate condition. Certainly the pint of Wychwood Dirty Tackle, guest of the moment, was on top form and slipped down a treat.

The Stamford has made great efforts to promote its cask ales and they are finding increasing favour amongst the regulars and visitors, young and old. A chalk board outside lists the beers of the day with their strengths, a lure to enter in. **Mike Kerr**

**THATCHED TAVERN**

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*A Warm Welcome  
to All our customers*

**BODDINGTONS BITTER**

*A Real Traditional Pub  
for Real Ale Drinkers -  
come and try the cask version*

**plus TETLEY BITTER  
& DARK MILD IN CASK**

**Old Market Tavern** - At the end of March, the Old Market Tavern in Altrincham closed somewhat abruptly. Anne-Marie Hilbourne, the licensee, was last reported to be in Prague. However, the pub re-opened under new management on Monday (24<sup>th</sup> April). It is reported to be doing "business as usual", i.e. a variety of cask ales plus live bands at weekends.



# Brewery NEWS...

## Howard Town - Still in business.

**P**erhaps the most dramatic item of *Brewery News* while *Opening Times* was away was the destruction by fire of Glossop's Howard Town Brewery. Luckily Howard Town is still in business.

It was exactly one year from the installation of the brewery on 1 April 2005 when a fire in a neighbouring unit spread to destroy the Howard Town premises. However interim arrangements have ensured the continued availability of the brewery's increasingly well-regarded beers.

Howard Town's Les Dove told *Opening Times* that beer was being brewed for them at the Hebridean Brewery in Scotland and, closer to home, the Derventio Brewery in Derby. The aim of these beers will be to keep the Howard Town name on local bars and, if they are not suitable matches with existing Howard own beers, will be given fire related names. Contact Howard Town on 01457 869800. The good news is that new premises have been found in Glossop and as this was written, a lease was to be signed and plans were in hand to recommence brewing. Obviously there will be a delay before 'proper' Howard Town beers are back on stream – look for updates in future issues of *OT*.

### Family Favourites

Our local family brewers continue to produce interesting beers on a regular basis.

**Robinson's** – the seasonal for May/June is England's Champion (3.9%), nicely timed to coincide with the World Cup. Meticulously brewed using only the finest Lincolnshire malted barley, Worcestershire hops and Cheshire water from Robinson's own deep bore well beneath the brewery, this is a full-bodied and golden coloured ale with a smooth, refreshing, sweet malt palate, perfectly balanced by a full, crisp hop bitterness.

**Hydes'** – the latest in the Hydes Classics range of craft ales is Dr's Orders (4.4%), celebrating the James Bond film Dr No. This is a light coloured beer characterised by Styrian Golding and English Fuggle hops and is described as an easy drinking balanced ale.

**JW Lees** – the seasonal for April-June is the ever-popular Scorcher (4.2%), a pale, quenching beers with a good hoppy note to it.

**Cains** – have announced to become an American-style craft brewer, the "Samuel Adams of Britain". While their range of cask ales is already well-regarded (and can be sampled in the OT area at Gothic in Gatley) but now intends to turn its attention to a whole range of special beers. Cains Lager has already made its mark and the company now plan to launch a stout and for next year the brewery is planning a bock beer at 8 per cent ABV.

### Micro Magic

This month we have only had time (and space!) for a quick canter round the local micros. As ever apologies to those we have missed out (more than usual this time).

**Three Rivers** – lots going on here, not least the establishment of a members club at the brewery, along the lines of a similar venture run by York Brewery. It will certainly transform the Reddish drinking scene and there should be a full report next month. Beers are also being exported to the USA (and this should see the import of American beers back to the UK) – as part of these arrangements a 5% ABV GMT Extra has been produced. This pale hoppy beer is a superb addition to the Three Rivers range and is well worth seeking out.

**Phoenix** – June will see the appearance of old favourites Tennis Elbow, Sticky Wicket and White Tornado. Also out are a 7.3% version of the popular West Coast IPA (normally 4.5%) and a ginger wheat beer based on White Tornado. These last two will be available at Stockport Beer Festival.

**Bazens'** - April/May saw the first of a series of 12 monthly specials ("one-hop wonders"!). Again this is a single varietal hop series each linked by reference to a classic film. The first is called "On Goldings Pond" featuring the stalwart English Golding variety. All 12 of the beers have the same 4.0% Maris Otter malt, so the difference between hop varieties can be more finely judged.

**Millstone** – a new beer at 4.2% came out this month. Stone Circle is very pale and hoppy in the Millstone style, and uses American Cascade hops. Later this year Millstone will be producing a stout or porter – their first dark beer!

**Marble** – the strong mild Uncut Amber (4.7%) has had an increased hop rate this year which makes for a very quenching drink which still retains those essential mild characteristics. Summer Marble will be out soon – this, too, may have a changed/increased hop grist.

**Shaws** – new out in May were Beltane (4.5%), the popular Mayday beer now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year. Crusader (4.7%) is light, hoppy and citrusy. This year will see the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shaws first foundation and a celebratory beer is planned. *OT* would like to see the return of the famous 'Gradely Ale' first introduced in 1933. What about it lads?

Sue & Graham welcome you to

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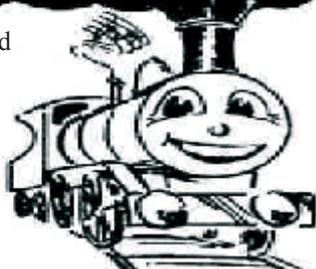
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I enclose my Cheque/P.O. for £ ..... payable to 3 Rivers Brewery Ltd.





# Manchester MATTERS

I've been out and about quite a lot this month, so lots of news for you. You lucky people. But first it's rumour denial time. A couple of months ago we reported that the future of the **Ducie Arms** on Devas Street was threatened by planned expansion of the university. A similar rumour reached my ears this month. The landlady of the Ducie got in touch after the last report to firmly deny that there was no threat to the pub's future and that it most certainly won't be closing. So now you know.

## New Faces

Mild Challenge time means a trawl round pubs I didn't visit as often as I should, a point proved straight away when I pitched up at the **Kingsway**, Levenshulme, to find new licensees Michelle Adshead and Ed Savill have been in charge since October last year. Michelle has been in the pub trade for some time joining Holts four years ago, Ed having had a spell as a relief manager for S&N had a go at teacher training then joined Holts in March last year.

New licensees, too, at the **Tatton Arms** at Moss Nook. Ann and Alec Barnett are no strangers to the Tatton as Alec has been the chef there for the past three years taking over the licence last October. He told me that the pub is getting a mini refurb with the seating being recovered and two hand pulls being installed.

## Bits & Pieces

The former **Piccadilly Tavern** has now reopened as just **Piccadilly** and I had a very brief look in. This is the pub that used to be called Goose on Piccadilly amongst other names. There were three cask ales on, Boddingtons, Caledonian Deuchars IPA and Everards Tiger. A member of staff told me that Boddies sells at £1.69 a pint and that the other two are guest beers which will change regularly. Possibly one to watch.

Sean Piatt at the **City Arms** tells me that with the takeover of Spirit by Punch, the pub will become a tenancy. Thus, he shall be moving on elsewhere, sadly.

The **Bank** on Moseley Street has had a makeover and now looks much better than it has done for year, with an altogether more upmarket feel. There's a good range of cask beers as well – Boddies and Landlord are the regulars along with three changing guests. Well worth a visit.

In East Manchester, the **Crown** in Openshaw is now closed and I am told that it is scheduled to become offices for a major redevelopment scheme. I've also had reports that this scheme could also threaten nearby pubs – let's hope that proves not to be the case.

Just down Ashton Old Road, the former **Pack Horse** has been converted to residential use. A similar fate awaits the **Rising Sun** in Burnage which has closed for a residential redevelopment.

The **Belgian Belly** on Wilbraham Road, Chorlton, now has an on licence as well as an off-licence. This is strictly for drinks served with food, which is just as well, as there are only three tables in the shop. Food is served between 11 and 5, Monday to Saturday, and 12 to 4 on Sundays. The shop itself is open for slightly longer for customers requiring carry-outs. The food is as authentically Belgian as the beer, and features some very filling snacks like stoo vlees (beef stewed in beer) in large rolls.

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**International Brewing Awards**



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Wobbly Bob



2002

Navy



2002

Wobbly Bob



2004

Wobbly Bob

## Cask Marque Award

**Wetherspoons, 47 Piccadilly, Manchester**  
**The Paramount, 33 Oxford Street, Manchester**  
**Beehive, Claremont Road, Moss Side**  
**Osborne House, 32 Victory Street, Rusholme**  
**Great Central, Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield**  
**Friendship Inn, Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield**  
**The Hillary Step, 199 U. Chorlton Rd, Whalley Rge**  
**Ineapple, Garrett Way, Gorton**  
**Albion, Burnage Lane, Burnage**  
**Sam's Chop House, Black Pool Fold, Manchester**  
**City Arms, 48 Kennedy Street, Manchester**  
**The Waterhouse, 67 Princess Street, Manchester**  
**Mill Bar One, 73 King Street, Manchester**  
**Rising Sun, 22 Queen Street, Manchester**  
**Fetcher Moss, 1 Williams Street, Didsbury**  
**Victoria Hotel, 438 Wilmslow Road, Withington**  
**Dog & Partridge, 665-7 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury**  
**Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury**  
**Sedge Lynn, 21a Manchester Road, Chorlton**  
**Old Wellington, 4 Cathedral Gates, Manchester**  
**Woolen Under Water, 68 Deansgate, Manchester**  
**The Bishop Blaize, 708 Chester Road, Stretford**  
**King's Ransom, Britannia Road, Sale**  
**P Joule, Northenden Road, Sale**  
**Old Plough Hotel, 56 Green Lane, Sale**  
**Bank at Sale, 70 School Road, Sale**  
**Loves Arms, 301 Hyde Road, Denton**  
**Red Lion, Crown Point, Denton**  
**English Lounge, 64-66 High Street, Manchester**  
**Joy's No 4, The Printworks, Manchester**  
**Tim Bobbin, 41 Flixton Road, Urmston**  
**Ash Tree, 9 Wellington Road, Ashton U Lyne**  
**Salverts Court, St. Petersgate, Stockport**  
**Coachers Inn, 95 Ingersley Road, Bollington**  
**Hanging Gate, Higher Sutton, Macclesfield**

**Porters Ale House, Roe Street, Macclesfield**  
**Jar Bar, SilkHouse, Macclesfield**  
**Society Rooms, Park Lane, Macclesfield**  
**Cotton Bale, 21 Market Street, Hyde**  
**Society Rooms, Grosvenor Street, Stalybridge**  
**Stalybridge Buffet Bar, Stalybridge**  
**White House, 1 Water Lane, Stalybridge**  
**Q Bar, 3-5 Market Street, Stalybridge**  
**Angel Inn, 197 King Street, Dukinfield**  
**Wye Bridge Inn, Fairfield Road, Buxton**  
**Bamford Arms, Buxton Road, Stockport**  
**Pack Horse, 3-5 Market Street, Hayfield**  
**Farmers Arms, 209 Stockport Road, Stockport**  
**Four Heaton's, 63 Didsbury Road, Heaton Norris**  
**Nursery Inn, Green Lane, Heaton Norris**  
**Duke of York, Stockport Road, Romiley**  
**Hare & Hounds, Dooley Lane, Marple**  
**Bulls Head Hotel, 28 Buxton Road, High Lane**  
**Crown, 81 High Street, Cheadle**  
**Old Star Inn, 13 High Street, Cheadle**  
**Prince of Wales, Gatley Green, Gatley**  
**High Grove, Silverdale Road, Gatley**  
**Kings Hall, 13 Station Road, Cheadle Hulme**  
**Cross Keys, Adswold Road, Cheadle Hulme**  
**Rycroft, Turves Road, Cheadle Hulme**  
**John Millington, 67 Station Road, Cheadle Hulme**  
**Horse & Farrier, Gatley Road, Gatley**  
**Governor's House, 43 Ravensok Rd, Cheadle H'tm**  
**Bollin Fee, 6 Swan Street, Wilmslow**  
**Coach and Four, 69-71 Alderley Road, Wilmslow**  
**Quarry Bank, Bloomsbury Lane, Timperley**  
**King George, Moss Lane, Hale**  
**Corbens, Hale Road, Hale Barns**  
**Bear's Paw, Warrington Road, Knutsford**  
**Cross Keys Hotel, 52 King Street, Knutsford**



To find outlets in your area with the Cask Marque Award visit our website on [www.cask-marque.co.uk](http://www.cask-marque.co.uk) Or ring us on 01206 752212 and we will send you a Regional guide.

The Cask Marque plaque is awarded to a licensee who has passed two unannounced visits by our assessor who checks all cask ales on sale.

The Cask Marque Trust, Seedbed Centre, Severalls Business Park, Colchester, CO4 9HT  
Telephone 01206 752212

## Sue and Keith welcome you to THE BREWERS ARMS

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Deuchars IPA 3.8% (Permanent Guest Ale)  
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*A real community local,  
guaranteeing  
a friendly welcome.*



Not quite as much news this time, but still some interesting snippets for you. I plan to be out and about a bit more for the next issue.

### Cheadle Moves

Some of you might remember the never-ending saga of the **Queens Arms** in Cheadle. Robinson's brewery has been intending to do the pub up for ages and work has at long last started. However licensee Tony Donn has decided that he was fed up of waiting and he has taken on the **Royal Oak** on Stockport Road in Cheadle (also Robbies). Debbie and Pete Doran had done a fine job in their 10 months at the Royal Oak, taking on a pub that had pretty-well hit the depths, making a real improvement in atmosphere and beer quality. They are taking over the **Horseshoe** at Willaston (east of Nantwich on the A500).

With Tony & Helen's track record, I'm sure they'll make a success of the Oak.

### Angela Follows In Her Father's Footsteps

Hard work and determination are proving to be the making of Angela Williamson from Brinnington as she sets out on a new career path. The fresh start for Angela comes as she takes over as tenant of Robinson's **Church Inn** at Edgeley.

"Having grown up in The Palatine at Hadfield, where my father was tenant, the licensed trade and Robinson's have always been a part of life. Since then I have worked in a number of public houses but this is the first time that I have had my name over the door as licensee," explained Angela.

### Other News

There's yet another planning application in for the **Railway**, Portwood. The plans this time are just a variation of an existing planning permission and in the highly unlikely event that they came to fruition would see the pub demolished to be replaced by...yes, you guessed – a pub! Consensus seems to be that this is a bit of kite flying by the potential developers and there is no immediate threat to the pub's future.

Congratulations to Sue McIntyre at the **Bishop Blaize**, Hiilgate, who is a regional finalist in the Cask Force competition, for the quality of her cask beers. Sue has been in charge for the past six months and aims to be there for the long haul and restore the pub's fortunes. She will be helped in this by the £4,000 prize which is to be used to improve the pub – the vault is to be redecorated to make it a little brighter, without compromising its traditional feel, and there will also be some work to bring the kitchen up to scratch. Once this is complete a limited menu of proper freshly prepared food will be available. On the beer front Marston's Burton Bitter is the regular and on my visit this was accompanied by Old Empire. Sue likes to have a contrast between the two beers available and eventually aims to increase the number sold. Well worth a visit. Nearby, the **King's Head** on Tiviot Dale has had a fourth handpump installed and this will exclusively feature Three Rivers beer. This pub really has taken the bull by the horns on the cask beer front and is always worth a visit to see what's on new – apart from the Three Rivers beer there is Marston's Burton Bitter and another two changing guests. Top notch quality, too.

## RECENT CAMRA AWARDS

Local CAMRA business has continued in *Openings Times'* absence and here we present a review of awards made while we were gone.



The Pub of the Month for **February** was presented to the Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris, on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>. This was yet another award to add to the collection at this multi-award winner and former national Pub of the Year. Our photograph shows Branch Chairman Mark McConachie (left) with George & Sue Lindsay and son Simon.



The **March** Pub of the Month was won by another Hydes' house, the Four Heatons, Didsbury Road, Heaton Norris. Chris & Zena Marlborough, seen here with their award, have transformed the pub's fortunes since taking over last year, and it is now a welcoming and comfortable local.



Our Pub of the Year award was presented to the Vale Cottage in Gorton on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February, during national Pubs Week. February's *Opening Times* explained how John and Maureen Smith had hugely improved what was already a good pub and they are pictured here receiving their award from Mark McConachie (left).



Lastly there was our Pub of the Month Award for **April**, which went to the Cheshire Line, Manchester Road, Cheadle.

Its licensee Joanne Mills, who took over the reins in mid 2005, has with the help of her dedicated cellarman Dudley, an enthusiastic team of bar staff, and an innovative chef who has the ability to tailor the catering for all types of occasions, really turned what was a somewhat lame establishment around.

The regular Banks's Bitter and Marston's Old Empire are always joined by two guest beers, and all are invariably on top form. Our photo shows cellarman Dudley (left) and licensee Joanne Mills (right) receiving their award from Branch Chairman Mark McConachie.

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**THE CHESHIRE RING**  
 Manchester Road, Hyde



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 Handpumped cider or perry*  
 Beartown Beers and Ever-Changing Guest Beers  
 Draught European lagers including Budvar Dark  
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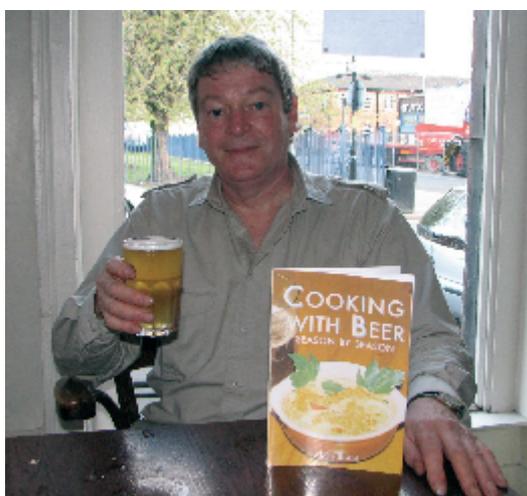


# Ken's Kitchen

Ken Birch, the *Opening Times* cook, has now published a collection of his recipes.

Formally launched at Manchester's Sand Bar on April 25<sup>th</sup>, "Cooking with Beer, Season by Season" features a collection of Ken's recipes, some of which have appeared in *Opening Times*, but many are brand new.

The launch (Ken is pictured below with his book) featured a selection of tasty recipes taken from the book – Cheesy Rodenbach Dip made for a very tasty starter and was followed by Somerset Sausages (top class sausages, apples and cider being the main ingredients) and the excellent Ram Tam Yam Yam – a spicy vegetable stew boosted by the addition of Taylor's Ram Tam.



The book itself features a hugely tempting collection of recipes, arranged on a season by season basis and all featuring beer or cider in the ingredients. All also include serving suggestions and suggested beer accompaniments. There's a Foreword by writer and broadcaster C P Lee together with a somewhat whimsical introduction by Ken himself – indeed it is Ken's touches of humour that make this book so enjoyable to both read and, more importantly to use.

An essential addition to any beer loving cook's bookshelf, *Cooking with Beer* is available from Ken Birch at 31 Rock Bank, The Cliff, Salford, M7 2EX (call 0161 705 0836) at £4.95 or £3.95 for CAMRA members. Please add 50p for postage. Here's a taster recipe:

## Kriek Ice Cream

*This recipe serves two. You will need*

- 1 330cl bottle Lindemans Kriek (or any other not too sweet kriek – that's Belgian cherry beer)
- ½ pint double cream
- 2-3 teaspoons icing sugar
- 10-12 cherries

Pour the cream into a mixing bowl and whip, (does this term give rise to the phrase 'lashings of cream'?), until semi-stiff (no tittering boys). Gently fold in the icing sugar, then fold into it about 2-4 tablespoons of Kriek; taste as you add it to get the right amount of cherry flavour. Stone and halve the cherries and fold into the mixture. Freeze until set, churning the ice cream every half hour or so.

Use the remaining beer to accompany.



# Stagger

This Stagger took us to some of the leafier parts of Stockport in Heaton Moor and the western part of Heaton Norris. We began at the **Elizabethan** on Heaton Moor Road. This is a large pub converted some years ago from a private house, with a modernised, open-plan interior. It was very busy and obviously attracting a smartish clientele, with a number of bottles of wine visible on tables. No less than six real ales were available – Youngers Monk, which was the pick of the bunch, Marstons Resolution, also quite good, Holts Bitter, which was OK (although selling for an eye-watering £2.19 a pint), Greene King IPA, which was pretty poor, and Wells Bombardier and Boddingtons Bitter, which were not tried. The pub deserves credit for making an effort on the real ale front, but to be honest isn't somewhere I feel at home.

Next door, some of the party had to swallow their political principles when we paid a visit to **Heaton Moor Conservative Club**, which isn't normally open to the general public, but had invited us to call as a regular "Opening Times" outlet. Inside, it's a fairly typical working men's club, with a lounge area at the front, a large main bar featuring sport on satellite TV, and several full-size snooker tables. Three real ales are normally available – Beartown Kodiak Gold, (not on on this particular occasion) Marstons Pedigree, which was not tried, and a varying beer from the local Three Rivers brewery. Tonight this was Pilgrim's Progress, which was generally thought to be on pretty good form.



Crossing the road, we came to the **Plough**, with its impressive sandstone frontage. It has a rambling interior going a long way back and featuring a number of cosy nooks and crannies. Only one real ale was available, Tetley Bitter, which was in quite reasonable nick. This is one of the relatively few big brewery beers that good cellarmanship can still coax some character out of.

A few doors down is the **Crown**, a former Boddingtons tied house that still offers Boddies' Bitter, which was judged quite good, alongside Marstons Pedigree and Old Mill Bitter, both of which were a little better still. It has the only vault still remaining on the Moor, together with a choice of other rooms including a cosy snug at the left on the front. The pub was very busy and had the best atmosphere of all the ones encountered thus far. This excellent multi-roomed pub is maybe a little under-appreciated and is well worth a repeat visit.

At this point, we had originally been intending to make a beeline for the Nursery, but a couple of members of the party told us they had spotted handpumps in the **Moor Top**, so we detoured further along Heaton Moor Road to

investigate. We were not disappointed, as we found Boddingtons Bitter on sale, which was pretty good, together with Marstons Pedigree (yet again) which was OK, but not as good.

The licensee told us she had recently succeeded in getting real ale reinstated after three years of trying to persuade the pub company that it would sell. It had been in since just after Christmas and so far was proving very successful. A long trek along Green Lane brought us to the **Nursery**, tucked away down a narrow cobbled street in a conservation area. This classic unspoilt multi-roomed 1930s pub, a former winner of CAMRA's National Pub of the Year, and long-standing Good Beer Guide entry, needs no introduction, and did not disappoint tonight. Although fairly busy it's a spacious pub and we were able to find a seat in the rear lounge. Nobody tried the Hydes Bitter, but the Mild, Jekyll's Gold and Free Spirit (the latest seasonal beer) were all on good form, with the Mild the pick of the bunch.

We then cut through the industrial estate and headed back up Didsbury Road to the **Four Heatons**, a modern pub set back from the main road. This was given an excellent refurbishment by Hydes a couple of years ago. The interior consists of a vault at the rear and a long lounge running along the side of the pub. In contrast to the Nursery, this pub sells Hydes Light alongside the Bitter, both beers being in good nick tonight.

For our final port of call we crossed the M60 and the Mersey to leave the Heatons behind and enter what is properly Edgeley to visit the **Olde Woolpack** in the shadow of Stockport's famous blue pyramid.. Some years ago this pub was rescued from what seemed like terminal decline and is now a thriving free house. Beers on sale were Theakstons Bitter, which was about average, Facers SSG, which was pretty good, Archers Old Frosty (not tried), and Phoenix Snowbound, which sold out shortly after we crossed the threshold and was replaced by Storm Twister, which was excellent and just pipped the Mild at the Nursery as the beer of the evening. It was also good to be able to get a final half just before half past eleven and be allowed to finish it at a leisurely pace before heading home.

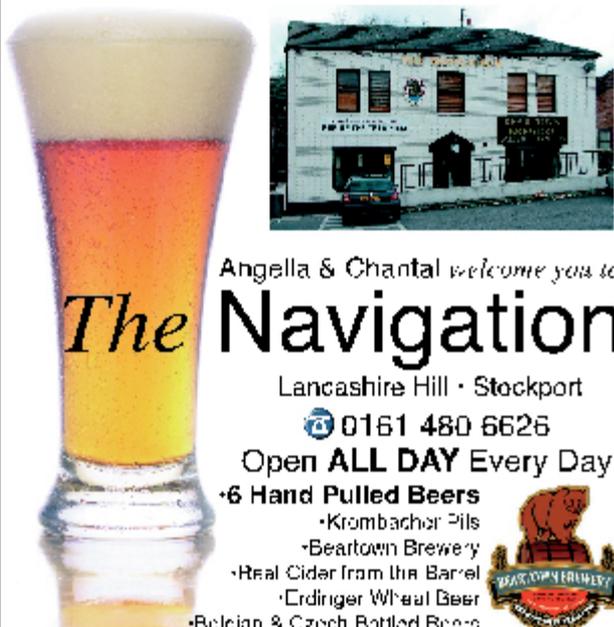
So concluded a very enjoyable and – with at least two miles' walking between the pubs – fairly energetic evening. Although the atmosphere of the pubs varied greatly, there wasn't one where we didn't find at least one beer you could happily drink all night, and indeed only one brew tasted could be considered poor. As ever, these are only the impressions of a particular group of people on one specific night. Why not try the pubs for yourself and see what you think?

**Cheshire Inns, continued from page 6**

The Hand & Trumpet, like all Brunning & Price pubs, is somewhere with a clear sense of its own identity and its target market, and is unlikely to appeal to lovers of raucous, basic boozers. However, the old-fashioned country alehouse is now an endangered species and in the future it will increasingly be places like this that carry the banner for real ale and real food.

It isn't the only pub in Wrinehill, as just around the corner on Den Lane, although with a sign on the main road, is the Crown, which is listed in the 2006 Good Beer Guide. This is a smaller, cottage-style pub that has more of the atmosphere of a village local, with a rambling lounge area wrapping itself around the central bar. The beers on offer were Marstons Bitter and Pedigree, Taylors Landlord, Adnams Bitter and Townhouse Flowerdew, brewed just down the road in Audley. The latter, a distinctively hoppy, bitter brew, was the only one sampled, and proved to be in good condition. It's also well worth a visit if you are in the area.

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**H**ere is our monthly round up of what's happening in the local CAMRA branches. Members of all branches are welcome to attend each others' events.

The **Stockport & South Manchester** branch covers Stockport Borough apart from Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley and Marple, plus that part of Manchester from the River Medlock in the north to the M56/Princess Parkway in the south. *Branch Contact – Pete Farrand 07786 283990*

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May** – Pub of the Month presentation to the Three Shires, Great Underbank, Stockport. From 8pm.

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June** – Setting up, running and taking down Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. All members please try and help with this.

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup>** – Branch meeting: Three Rivers Brewery Club, Delta Works, Greg St, Reddish. Starts 8pm.

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Didsbury Stagger: meet 7.30pm Gateway, East Didsbury; 8.30 Didsbury, Wilmslow Rd.

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup>** – Pub of the Month presentation to the Railway, Avenue St, Portwood.

The **High Peak & North East Cheshire** Branch covers Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley, Marple and all points north. *Branch Contact – Tom Lord 0161 427 7099*

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>** - Branch Meeting and AGM: Cheshire Ring, Manchester Rd, Hyde. Starts 2.pm

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July** – Branch meeting: Poynton British Legion Club, St George's Road, Poynton. Starts 8.30pm.

The **Trafford & Hulme** Branch covers the Borough of Trafford, Manchester west of the M56/Princess Parkway and a large part of the City Centre. *Branch Contact – John Ison 0161 962 7976*

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May** – meeting with Paul Jeffries of Hydes Brewery, Woodheys Club, Washway Rd, Sale. Your chance to listen and put questions to the Production Director! Starts 8pm

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June** – Branch meeting; Lloyds Hotel, Wilbraham Rd, Chorlton. Starts 8pm.

Apart from Macclesfield & Bollington, the **Macclesfield & East Cheshire** Branch covers a wide area from Wilmslow to Knutsford and down to Congleton. *Branch Contact – Trevor Gammage 07802 645898*

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June** – Campaigning meeting: Angel, Knutsford. Starts 8pm.

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>** – Summer Solstice walk (3pm) followed by Pub of the Year Presentation (5pm): Ship, Wincle.

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>** – Liverpool pub crawl: meet 11am Piccadilly Station or 12 noon Liverpool Lime Street.

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July** – Chair & Treasurer's birthday BBQ: the Poachers, Bollington. Phone for details.

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