

AUGUST 2008

O
CAMRA
CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE
TIMES

Opening

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

COVERING THE CITIES OF MANCHESTER & SALFORD, STOCKPORT, TAMESIDE, TRAFFORD, N.E. CHESHIRE & MACCLESFIELD

SORT THESE OUT!



Once again we are highlighting the blight that closed and derelict pubs are inflicting on local communities across the Greater Manchester area.

Those featured above are currently blighting the Stockport district of Edgeley but this is a story repeated across the region. The main photo shows the Blue Bell on King Street West, at the top of the station approach. What a terrible impression of the town this is for visitors. Just behind the Blue Bell is the Church (pictured, bottom right) a pub that Robinsons have now given up trying to let and recently failed to sell when it failed to reach its reserve price at auction. Also pictured is the former Windsor Castle on Castle Street, the district's main shopping area. Planning permission was granted for its demolition and replacement with a mixed residential and commercial development. Now, though, it is up for sale and a major eyesore.

The owners of these pubs surely have a responsibility to clean up their acts. Stockport Council has previously compulsorily purchased other eyesore buildings. If their current owners continue to shirk their responsibilities to the local community the time must come for similar action here.



**MANCHESTER
FOOD & DRINK
FESTIVAL 2008**

Following the huge success of the cask beer bar in the "Summer in the Park" event last month, the Manchester Food & Drink Festival has announced a major cask ale event to be held on 10 and 11 October. Read more about the Greater Manchester Beer Festival on page 13.



Seventy five years after Heaver Brothers sold out to Ind Coope & Alsopp, brewing has returned to the Cheshire village of Bollington.

Lee Wainwright, owner of the Vale Inn has set up the Bollington Brewing Co., situated just 50 yards from his highly successful Vale Inn free house.

The first beer went on sale, and sold out, on Thursday 24 July. More on page 16.

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Pub OF THE Month AWARD



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for August 2008 is the Kings Hall situated at 11-13 Station Road Cheadle Hulme.

Originally built in 1937 as a dance hall, the Kings Hall served latterly as a restaurant before being acquired by JD Wetherspoon and converted to a pub opening in September 1998.

Following its opening the pub soon achieved a Pub of the Month award and Good Beer Guide listing, however, the pub then entered something of a downward spiral often only offering the Wetherspoon house beers with interesting guest beers being something of a rarity and beer quality was somewhat indifferent. The pub was not helped when it was severely damaged by a fire several years ago and which required extensive rebuilding.

This downward spiral was reversed in 2005 when Kelly Beardmore took over management of the pub. Kelly introduced improvements to the range, quality and availability of real ale and not coincidentally service standards also improved.

When Kelly went on maternity leave in February 2008 management of the pub passed to Jo Fish who was already a duty manager at the pub. Jo has continued and enhanced the improvements introduced by Kelly.

On the real ale front both Kelly and Jo have benefited from the enthusiasm of young team leader Rick Parris who manages the cellar. On his own admission Rick had not tried real ale up until a year ago but has now developed something of a passion for the stuff, organising a recent CAMRA "Meet the Brewer" night with the George Wright brewery and a recent mini beer festival. Rick deserves much credit for the excellent quality of the ales achieved over the last year or so.

As well as supporting Wetherspoons national twice yearly beer festivals the Kings Hall also supported the CAMRA mild month in May with three milds being available.

Recent guest beers have come from the likes of Butcombe, Exmoor, Hook Norton, Holdens, Oakham, Saltaire & Wentworth as well as the more local Beartown, George Wright and Three Rivers. It is now normal that around 3 guest beers will be available in addition to the regular Wetherspoon house beers. As always the full range of Wetherspoons good value food is available until late in the evening.

All in all it is fair to say that the hard work of Kelly, Jo, Rick and all the staff has transformed the Kings Hall into a very good Wetherspoon pub. This will be recognised by the presentation of the Pub of the Month award on the evening of Thursday 28th of August. A great evening is promised. **PW**

The Kings Hall is well served by public transport. Buses 157 & 313 stop almost outside, the 369 stop & Cheadle Hulme rail station are a short walk away.

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COMMENT, NOTES & CONTENTS

Opening Times – Comment

LAST month I was intending to carry out a survey of local pubs to see how they had been affected by the smoking ban. Whilst I have no doubt that some pubs are indeed suffering badly, my personal experiences have told a rather different story. Most, no all, of the licensees that I have spoken to tell me that the ban has had little or no effect on their trade. Perhaps I'm going to the "wrong" pubs. Or perhaps it is the pubs that I generally don't go to – the more basic lager and keg-only pubs – that are suffering disproportionately. Should we welcome their passing? Well no – all pubs have the potential to be good pubs when they are well run by the right people. However many licensees will need to raise their game massively if they are to survive. Those who can't or won't will go under.

Welcome back to the George, Mersey Square, Stockport, at last returned to the real ale fold. This is a very welcome move and yet another indicator that a quality cask ale offering is an essential ingredient to running a successful pub.

Opening Times - Information

Opening Times is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Additional material is supplied by the High Peak & NE Cheshire, Trafford & Hulme, North Manchester and Macclesfield & E Cheshire Branches. The views expressed are not necessarily those of CAMRA either locally or nationally. 7,000 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth. All articles copyright CAMRA unless otherwise stated.

News, articles and letters are welcome to the editorial address – 45, Bulkeley St, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9HD. E-mail – stocam@btinternet.com. Phone 0161 477 1973. Advertising rates on request.

Postal subscriptions are available at £6 for 12 issues (make cheques payable to *Opening Times*). Apply to John Tune, 4 Sandown Rd, Cheadle Heath, Stockport, SK3 0JF.

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	Trafford	0161 9122274
Manchester	0161 234 1555	Derbyshire	08456 058058
Salford	0161 925 1346	Cheshire	0845 1132500
Tameside	0161 342 8355		

Copy Date for the September issue is Saturday 9th August.

Contributors to this issue: John Clarke, John Tune, Pete Farrand, Dave Hanson, Peter Butler, Frank Wood, Robin Wignall, Peter Edwardson, Mark McConachie, Heather Airlie, Andy Jenkinson, Jim Flynn, Paul Watson, Geoff Williamson, Dan Williams, David Scott, Beverley Gobbett and Neil Worthington

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 Flash Flood, Black Bee, White Tornado,
 Last Leaf, Massacre, Porter, Snowbound,
 Wobbly Bob, White Hurricane, Uncle Fester,
 Christmas Kiss, Humbug, Tyke, Thirsty Moon

**MORE CHOICE
 BETTER BEER**

International Brewing Awards



1998

Wobbly Bob



2002

Navy



2002

Wobbly Bob



2004

Wobbly Bob

Swan Sold – No Need to Panic

The sale of the Swan Inn at Kettlethulme is due to be completed this month, reports Geoff Williamson. This may not be unusual news in the licensing trade these days, but in this case it is significant as the Swan was saved from conversion into a dwelling over four years ago when it was bought by a group of locals.



This consortium has continued to run the pub in a manner that has retained beer quality and choice while ensuring it remained a firm entry in the Good Beer Guide. The sale of the pub by the consortium should therefore be a major cause for concern.

However the consortium has completed its job in exemplary fashion by ensuring the pub is sold into 'safe hands'. The new owner is Rob Cloughley who took over the running of the food side of the business over two years ago, which has made such a difference at the Swan.

Rob is also known for the reputation he built up over many years during the period he owned the Oddfellows in Mellor, which was and still is a regular Good Beer Guide entry. Although Rob's main enthusiasm is for food he has for many years also demonstrated a skill for the quality of his beer and will no doubt continue to run the Swan in the same way that has resulted in its deserved success in recent years.

The final legacy to the local drinkers at the Swan by the consortium was their inclusion of a covenant as part of the sale guaranteeing a minimum of 15 years continuance as a pub. Our thanks go to the members of the consortium for their intervention preventing the loss of this gem and for the quality of the beer during their ownership. We also wish Rob good luck for the future as he plans to take the Swan forward as a top quality pub for both beer and food. The pub's annual beer festival is currently planned for the weekend of 15th August.

Charity Corner



Congratulations to local man Robert Clapham who recently completed a charity bike ride from London to Paris. He did the ride in aid of Crisis (the charity for the homeless) and raised about £1250. About £400 was donated by the owner and regulars of Ye Olde Vic, Edgeley and a further £150 from regulars of the Tuesday night quiz at the Arden Arms on Millgate in Stockport.

Robert contacted us as he wanted to publicly say thank you to the fabulous generosity of the staff, management and customers of both these great pubs in our area. We were happy to oblige – well done all concerned. Here's a photo of Robert at the Eiffel Tower with bike aloft and the Olde Vic logo emblazoned on his back.

Castle Closes

IN a shock move, the famous Castle on Oldham Street in Manchester City Centre closed suddenly on 25 July. The pub has been famous for selling the entire Robinson's cask range and for many years was run by the indomitable Kath Smethurst.

Kath sadly died two years ago and the tenancy was taken on by her son Damien. He hit the news by commissioning a mosaic memorial to his late mother which included her ashes in the cement.



The demise of this pub has been put down to the smoking ban. Damien posted a message on the Manchester Confidential website explaining that his first year running the pub was fine but with the smoking ban he lost 60% of his trade. He was unable to provide for smokers as there is no outside area at either the front or back. Damien has now left the area and in his message said he would probably not visit Manchester again.

To be sure the smoking ban might not have helped a pub like this but there were other problems too. It wasn't the cleanest pub (and the toilets were a disgrace). Sadly when *Opening Times* called the beer quality wasn't always up to scratch either.

The closure has caused much chatter on the *Manchester Confidential* website but we guess that the pub isn't lost. Robinson's won't want to surrender their only City Centre pub and hopefully will now carry out a much needed refurbishment. We will keep you posted.

CITY FESTIVALS

Beer Festival Fever seems to be gripping the City at the moment. Elsewhere we report on the Greater Manchester Beer Festival, to be held as part of the Manchester Food & Drink Festival, and of course there is the huge Belgian splurge at the New Oxford in September.

Two other events worth putting in your diary are in September and November.

First up on Friday 29 and Saturday 30 September is a festival in the main bar and café area at the Royal Northern College of Music. Tickets will be £3 each and will include a glass and programme. Unsurprisingly, given the venue, there will be music. The Friday entertainment is to be confirmed. There will be a busy concert on the Saturday night, **Stephen Bishop** will be playing and this concert will be relayed into the beer festival area. At 10 pm, Indie band, **The Satellite Towns** will be playing. More next time.



On Friday 21 and Saturday 22 November is the Didsbury Beer Festival to be held at St Catherine's Club on School Lane. This will feature local and Lakeland beers along with real

cider and perry. The festival is supported by the local Civic Society and will be supporting Francis House and the Friends of Ghyll Head charities. Again more in future issues but also check out the website at www.didsburybeerfestival.org.uk.



Diluting the Brand

IN the past, breweries would often be taken over for their tied estates, and the acquiring company, despite making assurances to the contrary, wouldn't be too bothered about the beer brands. When did you last have a pint of Matthew Brown? However we have recently seen two substantial breweries being taken over that do not have tied pubs, so the only attraction is the brands themselves. Scottish & Newcastle bought Caledonian, while Marston's acquired Refresh who produce Wychwood and Brakspear's beers.

There is no inherent reason why a large company cannot be a worthy steward of a beer brand - after all, many of Scotland's most famous malt whisky distilleries have been owned by multinationals for decades. But the past track record of large brewers does not inspire confidence. How long will it be before cost-saving pressures lead to the closure of the original breweries and the transfer of production to the parent plant, with the inevitable erosion of distinctive character? Just look at the fate of Ruddles, once one of the most respected beer brands in the country, but now existing only in a sad half-life being brewed by Greene King at Bury St Edmunds after having passed through the hands of Grand Metropolitan, Grolsch and Morland.

If the long-term aim is to dilute the heritage they have acquired, which will inevitably cause sales to dwindle away, you have to wonder what is the point of the exercise in the first place, except as a short-term smash and grab raid with the aim of gaining quick profits.

Raising the Bar

THE government's decision to raise the level of alcohol duty well above the rate of inflation has been widely criticised as potentially making alcohol problems in society worse, by widening the differential between the on and off trade and encouraging drinking at home rather than in the relatively controlled environment of pubs and clubs. One way of getting round this would be to impose a minimum price per unit of alcohol that would apply to all outlets, something that is now seriously being considered in Scotland. This would prevent below cost selling and the aggressive discounting of low-end brands while leaving pubs largely unscathed, and on the face of it could help to redress the balance.

If it was set at a level of say 30 or 35p per unit, it would only affect cheap brands and deep discounting, and wouldn't have any impact on mainstream off-trade products. However, the Scots are talking of setting it at up to 50p per unit, which would make a standard bottle of whisky £14 and a bottle of 12% ABV wine £4.50. That would leave a large hole in many household budgets and would be politically extremely unpopular. If a similar policy did not apply in England it would also give rise to a large amount of cross-border shopping, with discount booze warehouses springing up at Berwick and Carlisle. This would distort the market and could even make matters worse by encouraging bulk buying and large-scale smuggling for resale.

If the proceeds of the higher prices in Scotland went entirely into the pockets of drinks producers, it would ironically give the drinks industry a large financial injection. The competition authorities work strenuously to expose price-fixing cartels, yet in this case price-fixing at the expense of the consumer would be legitimised.

On the face of it, minimum pricing might seem an appealing option for the on-trade, but in reality it would be likely to lead to all kinds of unforeseen and undesirable consequences and would be another example of the neo-prohibitionists seeking to undermine the drinks trade by a "divide and rule" approach.

Curmudgeon Online: www.curmudgeon.org.uk



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Foreign NEWS...

Belgian Beer Festival

THE big news this month is the forthcoming Greater Manchester Beer Festival to be held at the **New Oxford** pub from 26 to 28 September.

This promises to be the biggest Belgian beer festival ever held in the UK and will in fact rival some of the biggest beer festivals held in Belgium.

Planning is now under way for an event that will see 50 draught and up to 200 unusual bottled Belgian beers on sale at the Bexley Square, Salford, pub. In what is an ambitious event 30 draught beers (including some lambics) are expected to be on sale at any one time and the bottled range is being chosen for its quality and rarity value.

The festival, a joint promotion by the New Oxford and Belgian beer importer and bar operator Dranke Centrale, should be one of the year's beery highlights. We will have more details next month but this must be an essential diary date for beer lovers across the region.

Lambic Latest

MENTIONED briefly in *Opening Times*, the new guezee and kriek from the revitalised Oud Beersel lambic makers is now available from the **Belgian Belly** in Chorlton, **Mort Subite** in Altrincham and other selected outlets across the region.

While restoration of the old Vandervelden lambic brewery in Beersel (to the south of Brussels) continues, the actual lambics are made at the Frank Boon lambic brewery and then transferred to Beersel for the all important maturation and blending.

Both guezee and kriek are potential classics. The dry and sherberty guezee has a refreshing acidity that is characteristic of the style but avoids the extreme mouth puckering dryness of some examples of the genre. It will clearly keep and mature well for many years.

The kriek, with a huge 400 grammes of fruit to each litre of lambic is again dry and refreshing but this is accompanied by sumptuous fruitiness. Again a beer that will mature well but like the guezee drinks very well now.

More at Mort Subite

THE beer range at **Mort Subite**, the foreign beer bar on Greenwood Street in Altrincham continues to expand. In the pipeline as this issue of *Opening Times* went to press was a range of beer from Dutch breweries including two of our favourites, De Schans and Mommeriete. This may well be the first time that these beers have been widely available in the UK and they are well worth trying.

Opening Times is a great fan of Dutch beer. There are an increasing number of micros in the Netherlands, producing a huge range of well-made beers (OK, there are a number of duffers, too, but that is the nature of the beast). Once we have details of what is being imported, OT will try and highlight the essential purchases.




Trafford & Hulme PUB NEWS



The **Swan with Two Nicks** at Little Bollington was the Trafford & Hulme CAMRA Pub of the Season for Summer.

Sixteen members of the T&H branch attended the event, and Branch Chair Beverley Gobbett is pictured above making the award to manager Ann Amphlett and Danny, the Head Chef. Bev particularly thanked Ann for supporting the new Dunham Massey Brewery, three of whose beers were available at the event (Big Tree, Stamford and the recent Little Bollington).

On the subject of awards, Trafford & Hulme branch would like to apologise to the manageress of the **Old Market Tavern**, Altrincham. As reported in last month's issue by error, her name is not Janet Glover but Janet Cassidy. We are sorry if this caused any undue embarrassment.

Chorlton Beer Festival Success

WE had a record crowd in this year, *reports Beverley Gobbett*.. The beer order was fifty per cent higher this year but it still sold out at 9.15pm on Saturday evening. Mostly this was due to the numbers in on Friday evening. In 2007 we saw 570 people through the door, this year we had 1050. No wonder we were busy. We then had another 800 on the Saturday!

The first beer to go was Thornbridge Jaipur IPA, in fact Friday evening saw off all three of the Thornbridge beers but the beer which went the quickest was actually Pictish Summer Solstice. To cap it all, 30 new CAMRA members were signed up.

Urmston Real Ale Gain

THE former booking office at Urmston railway station, on the Liverpool platform, has been closed and quietly rotting away for the past 15 years or so. But on Monday 30 June it took on a new lease of life as the **Steamhouse**, a pub-cafe-bar-type-thingy, offering a couple of cask beers from Hyde's - Original (i.e. bitter) and Eager Beaver (the current seasonal ale). The owner, Rob Foster, is keen to stock other ales too and he's not tied to Hyde's, so expect a few interesting guest beers once the place is fully operational. Opening hours are 12-11, Monday to Sunday.





High Peak

PUB NEWS

WITH FRANK WOOD



ON the A6 corridor into Derbyshire, the **Soldier Dick** at Furness Vale re-opened early in July after several months of closure. No reports yet on the beer but I believe it is now controlled by Punch Taverns and will be serving guest beers from their list. A welcome return. The **White Lion**

at Disley is only a few stops down the road on the 199 bus that runs from Stockport up to Buxton and beyond and they sell quite a selection of beers from various breweries. In the other direction at Bridgemont, the **Dog & Partridge**, just off the A6 on a side road to the right is also worth a trip. They have Coach House Gunpowder Mild on permanently, along with three regular beers including Greene King Abbot and Tetley Bitter, with often a guest too.

The proprietor here, Kate Hornbuckle tells me that the annual beer festival held on the car park, will be over the Bank Holiday weekend in August (22nd-25th). Worth a trip up the A6 that weekend to try out what is a nice little pub crawl by bus.

At **Roaches Lock** in Mossley, real ale has not re-appeared on the bar. The **Stamford Arms** on Huddersfield Road, Heyheads (Good Beer Guide 2008 listed under Stalybridge) has had a change of licensee. The **Market Tavern** at Glossop, the Cains pub that opened only in December last year, has changed to its third licensee in seven months.

The **Peels Arms** in Padfield continue to sell Theakston's Bitter, Marston's Pedigree, a varying guest beer, with an additional guest at the weekends. Guest beers are priced at £2.55 pint in this popular village pub, noted for its food. I dined there on a Friday evening in late June and the place was packed, the food above average.

SHAWS Brewery, Howard Town Brewery and Pennine Brewery have promised specials so far for the Glossop Beer festival on 5th-7th September. The Shaws beer is confirmed as being called "Glossop's Sixth"



(hard to say after a few beers eh?) because it's the 6th event that has been held and Shaws have done a new beer to coincide with the festival on every occasion. The beer from Pennine will be the first that is not made to Dave Porter's tried and trusted recipes since Geoff Oliver took over the reins, thus it will be in demand. Several beers are being sourced from the Midlands and from South Derbyshire breweries, hopefully with some beers from Black Hole and Tower at Burton.

LANDLORD John Lucas is leaving the Good Beer Guide listed **Oddfellows Arms** in Ashton after his family have run the pub for a total of 94 years. John was born in the pub and has lived there all his life, taking it on in 1984 from his father Thomas, who had taken it over from his own father Albert. It is said to be the place where the National Union of Mineworkers started. John has reached 60 and has decided to call time - and there is no-one else in the family that wants to take it on. Interestingly, after the **Quiet Woman** at Earl Sterndale, it is the pub in the High Peak & North East Cheshire Branch area that has appeared in the Good Beer Guide the most number of years since the Guide first appeared in the seventies.

Colin and Vicky Welcome You To

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Open Friday/Saturday Noon – 11pm
Sunday Noon – 5pm



Robin Wignall's monthly round-up of Peak District News

THE **White Lion** in Disley continues to serve a range of interesting beers from the Enterprise Inns SIBA list. A visit in early June found Thornbridge Hall Ashford, a 4.2% 'new world brown'- delicious, and Station House 1st Lite, a 3.8% pale hoppy brew from this Ellesmere Port microbrewery. Also recently available and well worth trying have been Bradfield Farmer's Bitter, Howard Town Bleaklow and two from York Brewery. As well as good beer, the White Lion does a good line in food, all of which goes to make this pub one to visit.

Another June visit found the **Swan** at Kettlethulme keeping up the good work, with Copper Dragon Challenger IPA and Pictish Alchemist available. Visits in the interest of science and research are certainly not a hardship with quality beers as these are available. The Swan usually has two or three guest beers available alongside Marston's Bitter, and they are all well kept as befits a Good Beer Guide regular entry. Kettlethulme can be reached by a walk through the lanes from Whaley Bridge, ideal on the fine, long evenings of summer. During the day, up to teatime, the 60/64 bus connects Kettlethulme with Macclesfield and Whaley Bridge on a roughly hourly basis, Monday – Saturday.

The **Royal Oak** in Glossop is the last pub on the Snake Pass road out of Glossop. This made an interesting visit as a venue for a local fell race. In its current format the pub has a partly opened out, possibly 1930s interior, with wooden panelling, a tiled and wood surround fireplace, and a tiled entrance hall. It is certainly an architecturally interesting pub. Thwaites Original, bitter, was the sole real ale, and this in good form. Pricing was odd at £2.40 for a pint but an unreasonable £1.30 for a half. The pub is worth a visit for its beer and interior, but don't drink halves.

The **Goyt** in Whaley Bridge reopened in June in time for consecutive weekends of events in the village including Water Week End, Rose Queen and Carnival, Well Dressing, Art Exhibition and Folk Train. Tony Gunner has taken over the reins at the Goyt, and until recently ran the Good Beer Guide listed Queen's Head in Congleton. Young's Special was in good form, whilst Greene King Abbot and Black Sheep Bitter were available, with Charles Wells Bombardier to follow. Good luck to Tony in his new venture. The Goyt is potentially a smashing little pub, and deserves some continuity.

Just round the corner the **White Hart** in Whaley Bridge also has Young's Special and Bombardier, but less frequently found these days, Tetley Bitter and good it was. Tetley Bitter is a good case of 'not the beer it used to be,' but decent pints can still be found, as the White Hart demonstrates.

The **Beehive** in New Mills had Storm Ale Force, this I think a regular, and Silk of Amnesia. It is good to see Macclesfield's microbrewery supported. By contrast the **Navigation** at Buxworth has had beer from a more distant microbrewery, Cornish Buccaneer from the Wooden Hand Brewery at Truro.

Try to get to the good little beer festival at the **Dog and Partridge**, Bridgemont, over the August Bank Holiday weekend. This runs from Friday teatime until beer runs out on Bank Holiday Monday. The 199 bus from Stockport drops you nearly at the door, as does the 61 from Glossop, Hayfield, New Mills and Buxton. Trains from Manchester, Stockport and stations on the Buxton line call at Furness Vale and Whaley Bridge, each of which gives a ten minute walk to the Dog and Partridge.

Finally look out for the beers from Howard Town Brewery in bottles. Bottle conditioned beers are available from specialist off licences such as **Goyt Wines** in Whaley Bridge. So far available are Wren's Nest, Dragon's Nest and Mill Town and they are well worth trying.

FESTIVAL PHOTO GALLERY

More pictures from this year's record breaking Stockport Beer Festival



Here is another selection of pictures from this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. The record-breaking event attracted many brewers and publicans among the crowds of enthusiastic drinkers.

Top Row (left-right): Robinson's Head Brewer Chris Hellin, Shaws Head Brewer Neil Hay, Abercolwyn CAMRA Branch who had an enjoyable day out.

Second Row (left-right): part of the record breaking cider range, staff member Lisa Fletcher on Rocky Horror Night, taking a break at the Railway Portwood are Outstanding Brewery's Dave Porter (left) and Pennine Ale's Geoff Oliver.

Third Row (left-right): main cider supplier John Reek of Merrylegs, Colin, Rob and Warren from the Marble Brewery and Marble Arch pub, Rick Yates – one of the stewarding team.

Bottom Row (left-right) CAMRA Shop manager Margaret O'Brien on Rocky Horror Night, the cider bar in action, staff member Lynn on Rocky Horror Night.

Preliminary negotiations will soon be under way to book Edgeley Park for next year's festival. If all goes well the dates for your diary will be Thursday – Saturday 28-30 June 2009.



The first weekend in July saw the surprise re-opening of an old friend under a new guise. The former **Beer House** is now the **Angel**.

This comes about through a collaborative venture between highly regarded chef, Robert Owen-Brown (last seen at the **Bridge**), and front-of-house man, Mark Mottram. Mark has an interesting history as his background was in sales, he also has a music degree from Chetham's School of Music.



It is intended that the upstairs area will become the 30+ cover restaurant, whilst downstairs Mark has re-decorated to create "a traditional English pub that serves great food". The ethos continues to the banning of TV, fruit machines and the

jukebox. So, whilst old hands will readily recognise the layout of the old Beer House, it is not intended to be run along those lines, more on the lines of a gastro-pub. When I called, the restaurant kitchen had yet to be fitted, but I was given a look at the proposed menu. It looked very good indeed with nothing too elaborate - five Starters; five Mains; yes, and five Desserts. All, with quality ingredients throughout. Doubtless the "Pub Grub" guys will be calling in to do a review?

Beer-wise, the operation has seen great assistance through Ben Robinson of Marstons. They have been responsible for a thorough cellar and dispense makeover; there is no tie to Marstons however. On the bar were Marston's bitter and Pedigree, together with a guest ale - Dunham Massey Little Bollington (3.7%). A return visit saw two Dunham Massey beers alongside Phoenix West Coast IPA. I am told that turnover is already such that a fourth hand pump may be installed. A short list of interesting Belgian bottles is supplied by Dranke Centrale of Altrincham.

As I believe the Beer House was closed for more than two years, it will interesting to see how this daring new venture fares in this part of town. We'll keep you up-to-date on events. The pub can be contacted on 0161 8334786 (and via the web on Facebook, the Angel Manchester).

Ged MacIntyre left as manager of the **Crescent** at the end of July with plans to spend at least two years travelling abroad. His replacement is Stephen Cliff, known to one and all as Cliffy, and his partner Will.

Cliffy previously worked at the Crescent for two and half years and has spent the last seven months working at the Marble Arch. He tells me that no changes are planned on the beer front and the pub's next beer festival is planned for the first weekend in October.



Above – Will and Cliffy

There will be a regular programme of events. The Monday night quiz and the Wednesday night curries continue and in addition there will be an open mic night every other Sunday and from September the last Saturday of the month will see a music / performance night. Check out the pub's new website at www.thecrescentonline.co.uk. I hope everyone gives Cliffy support in running this iconic real ale pub.

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RECENT CAMRA AWARDS

We've been a bit tardy in reporting on recent awards. Here are some of those we missed. More next time.

The Pub of the Month Award for March went to the New Victoria in Longsight, a rare cask ale outlet for the area. Stockport & South Manchester Branch Chairman John Clarke, *right*, is seen here presenting the award to manager Andy Eykyn.



The April Pub of the Month Award went to the Didsbury. Managers Paul and Paula Johnson are seen here with you know who presenting their certificate.



Below are Kevin and Christine Cummins of the Boars Head, Stockport, with their Pub of the Month Award for May.



Dan Williams checks out an old favourite...



WHAT could be better than a walk on the Marple section of the Cheshire Ring canal line, on a balmy June day, conversing with good people you had not seen in years? Well, perhaps finding a denizen of a narrow boat who could accurately explain why one side of a lock has a single gate, whereas the other side has a double gate? Or indeed the answer to which blue-plumed bird with a yellow breast has a flying style reminiscent of an athlete approaching the triple jump? (Answers on a postcard invited)

Thankfully, the first question is easier to answer - to rest your legs and puzzled brain cells at the Ring O' Bells (130 Church Lane, Marple).

To (badly) paraphrase Oscar Wilde: to have one good pub lunch may be regarded as a fortune - to have two on consecutive Sundays in the same venue seems like a sign of comestible consistency.

My first visit had impressed me mightily with the intriguingly named "Ron's Chicken Fillets Crepe Marango" (£9.50). Whoever Ron is, I hope he keeps his Mango, Mustard and Demi-Crème Sauce to his chest - it could make him a fortune. One companion said she was not hungry, but then somehow managed to leave no gannet's pickings left from her roast beef dinner (£6.95). "Hungry Desperate Dan's Deep Dish Meat Pie" (£7.95) was less well received, but I was too happily stuffed to offer a second opinion.

The Nursery Inn

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- CAMRA Regional Pub of the Year 2001
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Brewers of
Traditional
Cask
Beers

Always in
good taste

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2008 We're in it!

FAST FORWARD ONE WEEK: "Hmm, there's a walk down the other side of the canal which will lead us back to the same pub" (obviously, vis a vis canals, this is unsurprising)

This time I tried All Saints Belfry Pie, a lovely blend of mince, tomatoes, cheese sauce and freshly cooked cabbage (£7.50) Others of our party chose lighter meals. The jacket potato (£4.50) came with mountains of prawns in a tasty dressing. The ham salad sandwich on brown (£4.25) came with especially fresh salad. The experienced Home Economics teacher in our party said she had rarely come across such well-cooked veg and chips in a pub environment, and greatly enjoyed the lasagne (£5.50). Lest it seem this is a simple panegyric, or I be suspected as a corporate shill for Robinsons, the chilli jacket potato was considered bland, requiring (apparently) more onion and garlic. The garlic bread, however, received universal acclaim.

One thing I would single out is quality of service. The waiting time was made clear and we were regularly checked to see if this was still OK. And, as "any fule kno", waiting for food is often a good sign.

Oh yes, the beer. The Robinsons Hatters and Top Tiddle were both perfectly drinkable, and the Guinness fan among us said it was particularly smooth (it may be counter-intuitive to keg-haters, but the quality of Guinness can in fact vary).

This pub is clean, full of fascinating memorabilia and has a lovely terrace for sunny days. The piped music is discreet, even when playing a James Bond theme tune compilation. Their quiz raises much money for charity, and the hosts Peter & Sue Clarke plainly know what they are doing, in their time since 2006. The food times are somewhat complicated, so why not check out their excellent comprehensive website (www.ring-obbels.com). Highly recommended.



**MANCHESTER
FOOD & DRINK
FESTIVAL 2008**

Following the huge success of the cask beer bar in the "Summer in the Park" event last month, the Manchester Food & Drink Festival has announced a major cask ale event to be held on 10 and 11 October.

Last year's Festival saw a new and welcome spotlight on the vibrant brewing scene in Greater Manchester, culminating in the "Best Beer Brewed in Manchester" competition, won by Marble Brewery's J P Best.

The competition is to be repeated this year as part of a Greater Manchester Beer Festival to be held in the new Spinningfields District. However apart from the competition beers the plan this year is to order additional beers from all of the cask ale brewers in Greater Manchester and these, too, will be available as part of the larger beer festival.

Judging of the champion beer will be undertaken by expert panels and announced on Friday 10 October. In addition the public will vote for their favourite beer and the winner of the "People's Pint" will be announced on Saturday evening. More next time.

The Royal Oak

High Street, Stockport

Robinson's Hatters & Unicorn on handpump

Robinson's Seasonal Beers also available

Pool Wednesday and Thursday Nights

Darts Knock-Out Sunday afternoon

END OF AN ERA



World War One broke out, King George V reigned over the British Empire and Herbert Asquith was Prime Minister. In Ashton-under-Lyne near Manchester, though, 1914 was also the year that saw Albert Lucas become tenant of the Oddfellows Arms and start a family tradition that has lasted almost a century.

The pub later passed to Albert's son, Thomas, before current licensee John Lucas took over from his father in 1984 built on its reputation as a much-loved friendly local. Now, though, having turned 60, John has decided to retire and the end of a 94-year era is looming at the "Oddies".

"It was a very difficult decision and one tinged with great sadness," said John. "Robinson's have been great to work with - I get on famously with everyone at the Brewery."

While John ruefully admits that some of his earliest memories of the pub - such as cleaning the grate and lighting the coal fire for pocket money - are not too happy, the licensed trade certainly won him over in the years that have followed.

"If you are prepared to take the highs with the lows then running a pub can provide more than a living - it's a way of life," he said. "Of course the structure in which you operate makes a difference and with Robinson's there is the mutual trust and loyalty that has given me the freedom to do things my way."

Following his long and happy association with the brewer it is no surprise that John says he will be happy to carry out relief work in the future - including at the Oddfellows Arms.

In the meantime, he is hoping that his eventual successor at the pub will leave in place many of the Lucas family photos that adorn the walls and help create such a friendly atmosphere.

"It's very important to me that the right kind of person takes over," he said. "I feel it's my duty to my staff and customers - and I also want to enjoy coming in here for a drink myself!"

Plain Sailing at Three Tunnes



Regulars at the Three Tunnes, Hazel Grove can be sure that their favourite pub is in safe hands with new licensee Donna Quinn-Williams at the helm. Donna, 43, and husband Andy, 45, have come to the Robinson's house having spent nine years running a sailing club in Germany.

Having decided to return to their home area the couple were delighted when the chance to take over at the Three Tunnes arose. "It was just the sort of place we wanted," said Donna. "The original building dates back to 1762 and the whole pub has a friendly, old world atmosphere".

Their catering experience has also been put to good use with the introduction of a lunchtime menu featuring traditional favourites such as homemade soup, steak and ale pie and sausages and mash all using local produce where possible.

The couple will be continuing to support the Three Tunnes' popular football and lacrosse teams as well as hosting darts, poker and quiz nights.



From Stockport Beer Festival Organiser Jim Flynn:

I would like to thank everybody who worked to make the 2008 Stockport Beer and Cider Festival such a triumph. Special praise is due to all my friends and colleagues on the organising committee who worked so hard in the 8 months leading up to the Festival and the 130 members of CAMRA who toiled so diligently at the festival itself. Without these unpaid volunteers there would be no festival!

The stunning success of this year's festival is also due to the support from our sponsors whose commitment needs to be applauded. I would like to record my thanks to all the following who deserve your appreciation because without them the festival might not be viable.

Stockport Express; 3 Rivers Brewing Co; Abbeydale Brewery, Armoury and Florist pubs, Shaw Heath; Bazens' Brewery; Cask Marque; Crown Brewery, Sheffield; Crown, Heaton Lane; Duke of York, Romiley; Fuller, Smith & Turner; Howard Town Brewery; Marble Brewery; Olde Vic pub, Edgeley; Pennine Ale; Pure Radio; Robinson's Brewery; Thatched House, Churchgate; J D Wetherspoon and Ye Olde Woolpack, Brinksway.

Finally I would like to thank everybody who came along and who made the festival such a pleasure.

From Brian Begg-Roberston (via e-mail):

Curmudgeon would do well to accept defeat with grace in the matter of the smoking ban as it is becoming tiresome in the extreme seeing the nicotine addicted minority continue in their hopeless campaign to force their habit, and the potentially fatal consequences thereof, onto others. (*Opening Times*, July 2008)

It has always been my understanding that the pub industry was given the chance to clean its own act up and failed to do so. Your right to light up seems, in my opinion, to pale into insignificance against the right of bar staff and non-smoking customers not to share the stink, the dirt and the lung cancer that goes hand in hand with the habit. Legislation was both inevitable and long overdue.

I would have more sympathy with smokers if they didn't seem to think that their habit somehow elevates them against all the norms of behaviour that most of us accept naturally. I think I can assume that most OT readers who smoke would refrain from dropping crisp packets and beer bottles on the pavement, yet as a general rule they will drop their discarded cancer sticks in the street, flick their ash anywhere and allow trails of carcinogenic fumes to drift across children and adults alike. More power to the councils who are handing out heavy on the spot fines to such people

It is an absolute delight for both my wife and I to return from a night drinking and to not stink of stale smoke anymore
Sorry, Curmudgeon, but you lost. Live with it.

From Rt Rev PHW Love, Sandy Bay Church of the Virgin, Tasmania (allegedly):

Via the World Wide Web we saw a copy of your magazine (*Opening Times*, July). While we are aware of the film Rocky Horror Picture Show in Tasmania (which is still banned from terrestrial TV here) we thought the picture of the slightly pregnant red-headed woman is truly outrageous and would never have been allowed in a Tasmanian periodical. Indeed this woman's posing and pouting, like "Posh Spice" is something like one sees on a porn site!

Both Editor and Photographer should be roundly chastised. You Poms like spanking, don't you? So, spank the culprits at your next annual meeting.

(The Rev has clearly got me bang to rights here. I have been a very naughty boy and deserve a damn good thrashing – Ed)



THERE'S a new face at the **Navigation**, Lancashire Hill, Stockport. This well known Beartown Brewery pub changed management in late July and is now being run by David Wright, previous manager Angella Lindsey having left the trade altogether.

David, who hails from the Black Country, is a beer man through and through having grown up in the trade, and actually worked in it for over 20 years. Locally, he made something of an impression at the Malt N' Hops in Chorley, another Beartown house, where he was getting through some 100 beers a month before his departure from there.



Describing himself as a "real ale evangelist" David aims to restore the pub's position as one of the town's premier real ale venues, first to stabilise both the quality and range of beers and then increase the choice available.

He had certainly made an impressive start in the few short days before *Opening Times* went to press. The current range comprises three Beartown beers, Bearskinful, Kodiak Gold and Bruin's Ruin plus three guests. As trade improves again David aims to increase the number of guest ales to five, and also reintroduce real cider. The quality when I called was excellent and I am very optimistic that the Navigation is now back on track after, frankly, a couple of dodgy years on the beer quality front. I shall certainly be calling in regularly and I hope that plenty of other *Opening Times* readers do the same.

Round and About

ELSEWHERE it's been a frustrating month. The **Red Bull** on Hillgate looks as though it is about to reopen (and peering through the windows Robinson's look to have done a cracking job) but the doors remained firmly shut until my copy date.

Just down the hill, the **Bishop Blaize** has reopened but sells no cask beer now. Given this I wasn't surprised to find myself the only customer. The pub remains up for sale and can be yours for £195,000. Up at the very top end of Hillgate, the **Wheatsheaf** has now taken out its cask beer and, I understand it won't be back. A baffling decision here considering that cask ale is now just about the only growth area in the beer market. I hope they now get rid of the sign outside that advertises cask ale within.

Equally frustrating are as yet rumours of a cask ale gain at the **George**, Mersey Square. Yes, really. I noticed on 16 July that there was a blackboard inside which said "Try our new Cask Ales". Peering through the window I spotted another board which listed Bombardier, Greene King IPA and Old Speckled Hen, giving prices. I didn't go in at the time. Two days later I called in and discovered that the cask beers weren't on - but I was told "there's a delivery tomorrow". Subsequent visits have revealed the handpumps still out of use. I really do hope that this wasn't a false dawn as the George is a prominent pub and I would be delighted to see it back on cask.

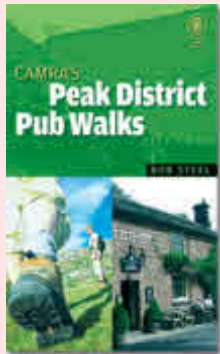
Further up Wellington Road North I found the **Midland** (a cask ale pub) nicely busy for a mid-week night while the keg-only **Magnet** and **Railway** (recently re-opened) were virtually deserted. Further on the keg-for-years **Hope** appears to be shut. The equally keg-for-years **White Lion** on Underbank has also closed down. Notice a pattern here?



Book Review

**Peak District Pub Walks by Bob Steel.
CAMRA Books. 160 pages. £9.99.**

This is a book with a lot to recommend for both walker and real ale drinker alike, though of course this is neither a comprehensive real ale guide nor a comprehensive walking guide. Bob Steel's choices are of necessity, subjective, but walks are chosen for their interest, scenery and to give a wide view of the Peak District. Pubs are chosen for various laudable qualities, the chief criterion being the availability of good real ale.



The book is a handy size, slightly smaller than an Ordnance Survey Explorer Map, and will fit into a map pocket. The introductory pages include the author's reasons for choosing pubs and walks. There are items on the pub and local brewery scene and on historic pub interiors. There is a good section on the Country Code, hill safety, including 'a map and compass are invaluable - provided you know how to use them,' and road safety.

Walks are grouped around some of the larger centres, to help visitors from further afield. Each walk is accompanied by the appropriate OS map extract, and contains ample generally good quality colour photographs. Steel's walk directions are easy to follow, but also have a good balance about pubs, other buildings and the landscape in general. I like the author's description of Youlgrave as being 'a village worth a closer look - it still has 'real' shops, three pubs and a youth hostel and other signs of the vibrancy that has disappeared from many villages.' There are some good information boxes on local features such as 'The caves and caverns of the Castleton area.' There are many enticing pub descriptions, but perhaps none more so than that of the Shepherd's Arms in Whaley Bridge, but perhaps I am biased. Each walk has separate information boxes about pub opening times, food etc., and for public transport.

Most of the walks are circular, but a few are end-to-end. This is where public transport information is particularly useful. Walks range from short half day 4 milers to longer 9-10 mile outings. Whilst walks avoid the high moors of Kinder Scout and Bleaklow, many walks climb to over 1000 feet above sea level, and many have some steep gradients. Information on this is contained in each chapter, but also emphasises the value of the hill safety section in the introduction.

At the back of the book are 3 cycling routes, with format similar to the main section. There is a further section on public transport, good to see this emphasised, a section on beer styles and a comprehensive index.

Whilst I am reasonably familiar with walks in the Peak District, this book will take me into unfamiliar areas, so I look forward to some exploration. I would not quibble with Bob Steel's choice of pubs, when looking at those with which I am familiar, or at those whose good reputation goes before them. So there will be more exploration of some of the several other gems.

There are one or two typos, and a repeat of a half page photo of Consall Station in the Churnet Valley two pages after the first, but these are minor quibbles.

This may not be a book for gentle strollers or for mountain tigers. It is however an excellent little book for those who wish to take the moderate exercise of a good walk, and wish to accompany it with good beer in good pubs. Highly recommended. *Robin Wignall.*

**Stockport & South Manchester
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MUSIC AT THE CROWN

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	16	Razors	
	17	Where's Charlie	
	22	Domonic and Neil	
	23	Captive Moon	
	29	Bourbon St. Preachers	
	30	Rockyoke	
	Sep	5	D'Mangos
		6	Hare Of The Dog
7		James Adolpho	
10		Jazzworks	
12		Chaos Theory	
13		DC/79	
14		Geoff Higginbottom	
19	2 Hats		
20	Conspiracy Of Equals		
21	Where's Charlie		
26	The Truth		
27	The Zans		

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2008 We're in it!



New Brewery for Bollington

The village of Bollington, just a few miles this side of Macclesfield, is well known for its large number of pubs. Until 75 years ago it also had a brewing industry. This was snuffed out when Heaver Brothers sold out to Ind Coope. Now it's back.



One of the aforementioned pubs is the **Vale Inn** on Adlington Road. Since reopening three years ago the pub has gone from strength to strength, first winning the Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA Pub of the Summer 2006 and then Pub of the Year 2007. It is currently being judged for the Regional Pub of the Year 2008. From the beginning real ale quickly became the focus, with beers coming from numerous local micro breweries. This soon expanded with six hand pumps

being installed on the bar to keep up with demand. It then seemed a natural step to set up a brewery to complement the pub.

Lee told us that despite having no brewing background he had always wanted to brew. This ambition began to take firmer shape a year ago after a chance meeting with a former brewery owner at the Stowmarket beer festival. The plant was from the former Bury Street Brewery, which ceased to brew in 2003. It was then transported, installed in its new home about 50 yards from the pub and brewing began.

The "First Brew" went on sale at the Vale on Thursday 24th July at 5.30pm and the first cask sold out that night. The beer is a 4.2% ABV medium gold bitter with a good, but not extreme, hoppiness coming from the use of Aurora and Sovereign hop varieties, and a firm body stemming from classic Maris Otter pale ale malt. Dangerously moreish is the *Opening Times* verdict.

A darker 4.4% beer, inspired by the old Youngers No.3, was in the fermenter as this was typed and will have been on sale by the time you read this. The third beer in the core range is planned to be a mid-brown session beer at 3.8%. Seasonal beers will also appear.

The 4 barrel plant can produce 16 nine-gallon casks and the plan is to sell most of these through the pub although some will go out into the wider free trade.

The Vale itself is an excellent pub with not only a good range of cask beers on sale but also first class food to accompany them. Further information can be found at www.valeinn.co.uk



Micro Magic

Here is our monthly round up from the local micro brewers. As usual our apologies to those we have not managed to contact this month.

Bank Top – the current hop situation has caused the brewery to review the range with one or two beers being temporarily dropped. Two new beers are out, though. Ian's Choice (4.4% ABV) is a pale and hoppy beer brewed in the memory of local CAMRA member Ian Pendlebury who sadly died recently. The other is the brewery's first ever cask lager.

Brewed to a strength of 4.4%, Boltonbrau is brewed with lager malt and also traditional lager hop varieties, Saaz and Hersbrucker.

Cellar Rat Brewing – the 8.4% IPA, Rat A**ed has been on sale at the Crown, Heaton Lane and is a very accomplished interpretation of the style and not surprisingly has proved very popular. Also out has been Dead Rat (5%) a vanilla mild brewed with some smoked malt in the mash. Again a well-made and popular beer. This is going to be the last Cellar Rat beer for some time although there is a chance that a winter ale will appear.

Dunham Massey – the excellent Chocolate Cherry Mild (3.9%) seems to be catching the public imagination. After winning bronze at Stockport it has now gone two better, picking up gold at the recent Chelmsford & Mid Essex CAMRA beer festival.

Greenfield – so busy selling the core range of five beers that few new brews have been made, although a 3.8% ABV pale and hoppy beer may appear at the end of this month. Direct sales to the public have really taken off and now account for a large part of the brewery's production. Look out also for Dobcross Bitter and Delph Donkey in bottle.

Hornbeam – the excellent Lemon Blossom (3.7%) has now been added to the core range. Three new beers are out this month. Champagne Ale (4%) is brewed with Nelson Sauvin hops from New Zealand, this is an excellent variety that imparts floral and grapefruit flavours to the beer. Also out will be Horns and Halos, a 4% ruby ale plus a third special to mark the Olympics.



Howard Town – the special for autumn will be Snake Ale (4%) which will be making its 2008 debut at Glossop Beer Festival. Look out, too, for Longendale Ale (3.9%), a pale and "interestingly refreshing" ale. So far this has proved very popular and may be added to the standard range. Pubs in the Oldham area will be selling "Latics Glory", which is a rebranded Wrens Nest with 10p from each pint going to the Oldham Athletic Youth Community Fund.

Marble – Festival (4.4%) will be back this month. Also out will be three one-off beers, each named after the brew number. The strength will vary between 3.8 to 4.5% and will feature three hops new to Marble Brewery – Mount Hood, Brewers Gold and Santian Ace. Summer Marble 2008 is still available as well. This year's brew is 4.7% ABV and is brewed using New Zealand hops. A one-off nine gallon cask of Chilli Chocolate was also produced at the end of July. This was for a beer festival in Huddersfield.

Millstone – another brewery running to stand still, so not many new beers. The next beer in the "Pub Series" will be out, though. This is "Crown & Anchor" and will be a 4.3% ABV beer brewed using First Gold hops.

Phoenix – nothing brand new this month. Hopsack (3.8%) is still being very well received. Summer specials include Midsummer Madness and also White Tornado, a 4.7% clear wheat beer (and an *Opening Times* favourite).

Pictish – the August special is Corn Dolly (5%), a strong pale ale with a crisp hoppy finish. At the end of July another in the single hop range was in the fermenter – this is Antanum, a US variety, and the beer will be 4.1% ABV.

Shaws – a beer to mark the 200th brew, Double Century IPA (4.8%) has been out and about. This 4.8%, very hoppy beer was a very tasty beer. Shaws are another brewery about to produce a lager style beer. Their, as yet unnamed, version will be a 4% beer made with traditional lager hops.



Shedded – the tiniest of the local brewers has produced a 3.9% mild. 4 Coffee Mild (think about it) was a refreshing dark beer with a slight coffee taste. More Shedded beers are expected in the near future.



LAST month we reported on the winning beers from Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, This month we turn our attention to the cider and perry and also take a look at the national scene.

In common with much else at this year's beer festival, cider sales hit a record with 352 gallons sold and the cider and perry bar entirely sold out by 10.20pm on the Saturday night.

There were 32 traditional ciders and 18 perries on sale and as usual we asked our customers to vote for their favourites.



The winning cider was from Perrys Ciders in deepest Somerset with their Vintage Cider. Based in very picturesque surroundings at Dowlish Wake, the Perry family have been making their cider for four generations, picking up a fistful of awards on the way. For example in 2003 and again in 2005 they won the prestigious Worshipful Company of Fruiterers

Supreme Champion Cider award at the Royal Bath & West show beating some 200 other entrants from across the UK and Europe. They have now topped that off with Cider of the Festival at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival!

It was a close run thing though, and honourable mentions should go to Oliver's, Minchews (for their Dabinett) and also Welsh champion cider makers Gwynt y Ddraig.

The winning perry came from a newish maker, Harechurch Hill of Gloucestershire. Steve Burson at Harechurch is a third generation cider maker, although he is the first to sell his products commercially. He is a previous winner having picked up Cider of the Festival in 2006 (our picture shows him receiving that ward from Festival Cider Manager Charlotte Bulmer) and now he's done the double with his perry, Swallowfield Red Longden.



Again we need to make a couple of honourable mentions this time to Hartlands and also to previous winners Gregg's Pit for their Thorn perry.

National News

Green Valley Farmhouse Vintage Cyder, produced in Exeter by Green Valley Cyder, and Gregg's Pit Perry, produced by Gregg's Pit Cider and Perry in Herefordshire, won the Gold Awards at CAMRA's National Cider and Perry Championships held at the Reading Beer and Cider Festival over the May Bank Holiday weekend.

The best ciders and perries in Britain were sampled over two days by judges at the festival. The judging panel described the winning Green Valley Farmhouse Vintage Cyder as having "a lovely 'proper cider' aroma, like an Autumn morning. It was easy drinking with a pleasant lingering aftertaste." Runner-up was Westcroft Janef's Jungle Juice and third place was taken by Welsh cider makers Blaengawney Cider

Gregg's Pit Perry, produced by Herefordshire based Gregg's Pit Cider and Perry, won the national Gold Award for best perry. The judges described the winning perry as "A balance of citrus aroma with a winy aftertaste. Fabulous." Runner-up here was Ross-on-Wye while third place spot was bagged by Hartlands of Gloucestershire.

The Railway



Avenue Street, Portwood, Stockport

Second Annual Cider & Perry Festival 22 to 25 August 2008

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MONTH MARCH 2005

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2008 We're in it!



Here is our monthly round-up of what's happening in the local CAMRA branches. Members of all branches are of course very 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-west. *Branch Contact – Pete Farrand 07786 283990*

Thursday 14th – Branch Meeting: Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris. Will include Summer Quiz. Starts 8.00pm

Friday 22nd – Stagger: Didsbury East – start 7.30pm, Gateway, Wilmslow Road; 8.30pm Didsbury, Wilmslow Road.

Thursday 28th – Pub of the Month presentation to the Kings Hall, Station Road, Cheadle Hulme. From 8.00pm

Saturday 30th – Beer of the Festival Bronze Award presentation to Dunham Massey Brewery. Meet at Stockport Station for 11.34 train to Altrincham. Book with John Clarke on 0161 477 1973

Thursday 11th September – Branch Meeting: Blossoms, Buxton Rd, Heaviley. Starts 8.00pm. **NB – selection for new Stockport Pub Guide to be made at this meeting**

The **High Peak & North East Cheshire** Branch covers Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley, Marple, Tameside and Derbyshire from Glossop to Buxton. *Branch Contact – Tom Lord 0161 427 7099*

Monday 11th – Branch Meeting: Market Tavern (formerly Trap Inn), Glossop. . 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. Branch website: www.thcamra.org.uk*

Thursday 14th – Branch Meeting: Lloyds, Wilbraham Rd, Chorlton. Starts 8.00pm

Thursday 21st – Social at the Greyhound in Ashley (WA15 0QR). Trains depart 7.49 Navigation Road, 7.52 Altrincham. Return on 9.48 or 11.44 train. NB Ashley is a request stop,

Saturday 30th – Social trip to Sheffield and Kelham Island Brewery. Details from Branch Contact or Chairperson.

Thursday 4th September- Branch Meeting: Orange Tree, Old Market Place, Altrincham. Starts 8.00pm

Apart from Macclesfield & Bollington, the **Macclesfield & East Cheshire** Branch covers a wide area from Knutsford to Congleton. *Branch Contact – Tony Icke 01625861833*

Sunday 10th – Branch Walk: from Robin Hood, Rainow, 2.00pm. Park in the lane.

Thursday 21st – Summer Pub of the Season Award: Queens Head, Congleton. Starts 8.00pm

Monday 1st September – Campaigning Meeting: Rifleman's, Wilmslow. Starts 8.00pm


The **North Manchester** Branch covers The Northern Quarter and North East Manchester plus the City of Salford. *Branch Contact – Dave Hallows 07983 944992. davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk*

Wednesday 13th – Social: Smithfield Hotel, Swan St, Manchester. From 8pm.


Wednesday 20th - Branch Meeting: New Oxford, Bexley Sq, Salford. Starts 8pm.

Wednesday 27th – Stockport Crawl: Railway, Portwood 7.30pm. Finishes at Olde Vic, Chatham St, 10.00pm

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale



Just fill in the form below and send, with a cheque (payable to CAMRA Ltd) or for Three Months free membership (for those renewing or joining by Direct Debit) complete the Direct Debit Form. All forms should be addressed to: Mark McConachie, CAMRA Membership, 39 Fox Street, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9EL. Tel 0161 429 9356. Alternatively you can join online at www.camra.org.uk.



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Haslingden
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The Sportsman
Hyde
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Contact Geoff Oliver
01706 21 40 21



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