

DECEMBER 2008

  
TIMES

# Opening

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

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

## Bah Humbug!

### Festive Cheer in Short Supply in Chancellor's Fiscal Fudge

Pub-goers and publicans look to be amongst the losers in the Chancellor's multi-billion pound fiscal stimulus, announced just as this issue of *Opening Times* was being put together.

While aiming to boost consumer spending with a VAT reduction from 17.5% to 15%, Alastair Darling made sure that the price of your pint won't benefit from this by accompanying the VAT reduction with a huge 8% increase on alcohol duty. The declared aim is to keep the tax take from beer (wines and spirits, too) broadly the same.

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale was quick to condemn the move. CAMRA Chief Executive, Mike Benner, said: "The Chancellor's refusal to allow beer drinkers to benefit from a VAT reduction means that 7,500 pubs could close by the end of 2012. The Government's failure to support pubs will undermine community life, ruin livelihoods and deprive people of an affordable night out at a local pub."

There is also a potential sting in the tail. While the VAT reduction has been described as a temporary measure, there has been silence about the compensating duty increase. Will this too be scrapped when VAT goes back up to 17.5%? Don't hold your breath.

### Winter Ales Festival Back in Town

Tired of the winter gloom? Has the fiscal stimulus left you distinctly unstimulated? Or are you just credit crunched out? Well here's something to look forward to as the National Winter Ales Festival roles back into town.

Held at the New Century Hall, Manchester from 21st-24th January, the Festival promises to showcase some winter-warming recommendations for the season, combined with a formidable array of over 200 cask ales, bottled ales, ciders and perries. Festival organiser Graham Donning is promising more beer than ever in recognition of the growing interest in cask beer.

One of the highlights of the Festival will be the announcement of the Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain on the afternoon of Thursday 22 January. We will have much more next time but until then you can keep up to date on the official Festival website at [www.alefestival.org.uk](http://www.alefestival.org.uk).



**Atherton & Tyldesley Round Table**  
 in association with CAMRA presents the 20th annual

**BENT & BONGS BEER BASH**



**29th, 30th & 31st of January 2009**  
**FORMBY HALL, ATHERTON**

All Proceeds to Local Charities.

Thursday 29th January	6:00 pm - 11:00pm	£4.00
Friday 30th January	5:00pm - 11:00pm	£6.00
Saturday 31st January	12:00 noon - 4:00pm	£4.00
Saturday 31st January	7:00pm - 11:00pm	£4.00

CAMRA members (proof required) £1.00 reduction on admission fee  
 Entertainment & Food available at all sessions

**Main Sponsors**




**The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for December 2008 has been won by Ye Olde Woolpack on Brinksway, Stockport.**

It is not so long ago that Ye Olde Woolpack at the bottom of Brinksway in Stockport was a pub in decline, the licensee Bob Dickinson, the man who had rescued the place from obscurity, had sadly died and the future of the place was decidedly uncertain. Eventually however in stepped Andy Sinclair, Bob's nephew, firstly on an interim basis and earlier this year he finally bought the pub. Andy's stewardship has seen this traditional, multi-roomed free house making massive strides so much so that the pub is now back in the Good Beer Guide.

Andy has just finished refurbishing the pub including the outside decor. Inside although opened out a few years ago the pub has retained a traditional feel with a vault to the left when you enter and two lounges to the right, one with a TV for the sport. The central bar has a lobby area adjourning it and the whole pub now has a very comfortable feel to it.

Behind the pub separating it from Stockport's most modern landmark, the Co-op Bank's massive blue pyramid, is the River Mersey. Unfortunately the only way of viewing the river from inside the pub is through the window of the gents (I can't speak for the ladies). However on a balmy summer's evening there is nothing better than sitting at the tables perched at the end of the now defunct Brinksway bridge and looking towards the river rolling by (not something recommended at a December Pub of the Month).

Being a freehouse the Ye Olde Woolpack usually has four different and interesting beers on handpump, often from small local independent breweries and these are always kept in good condition. Testimony to Andy's interest in beers is the fact that the Woolpack sponsored the Festival Ale at the 2008 Stockport Beer and Cider Festival. The pub has an excellent lunchtime trade and food is served daily until 4pm.

So why not join the local CAMRA branch to celebrate the award which will be presented to Andy, Sarah and staff on

Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> December when, I am sure, a great night will be enjoyed by all. Take this opportunity to enjoy the warmth of pub and the excellence of the beers while toasting Andy's success. **JF**

*The pub is only 5 minutes from the back of the bus station and 10 minutes down the hill from the Edgeley side of the railway station.*



**Crown Kettle**  
*Real Ale Heaven*

Following extensive restoration works, the Northern Quarter's most famous old watering hole has re-opened after being closed for almost 26 years!

**TRADITIONAL 3-Room Pub**  
 FINE SELECTION OF HAND-BOTTLED ALES  
 (LOCAL & IMPORTED)

HOME-COOKED FOOD SERVED DAILY  
 WEEKEND BOASTS  
 LIVE SPORT

OPEN TIL 2AM  
 IRISH SAT

ALSO AVAILABLE FOR PARTIES AND PRIVATE HIRE

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009 We're in it!**



## COMMENT, NOTES & CONTENTS

### Opening Times – Comment

These are undoubtedly difficult times. These words were written just as the Chancellor was about to announce his fiscal stimulus and regardless of whether or not this has the desired effect it is clear that 2009 will be a difficult one for the pub trade. I remain convinced that the good, well-run pubs, are best placed to weather the storm. Those that fail to raise their game may be in trouble. We could be in for a bumpy ride.

Next year *Opening Times* is 25 years old. To mark this event we are commissioning 12 commemorative beers, one a month, each from a different local micro. Hornbeam Brewery kick off the programme with a fruit wheat beer. More next time.

Finally, it is of course the festive season so I would just like to take this opportunity of wishing all of our advertisers, distributors and readers a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

### 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:

<b>Stockport</b>	0845 644 4301	<b>Trafford</b>	0161 9122274
<b>Manchester</b>	0161 234 1555	<b>Derbyshire</b>	08456 058058
<b>Salford</b>	0161 925 1346	<b>Cheshire</b>	0845 1132500
<b>Tameside</b>	0161 342 8355		

**Copy Date for the January issue is Saturday 13th December**

**Contributors to this issue:** John Clarke, John Tune, Dave Hanson, Peter Butler, Robin Wignall, Peter Edwardson, Mark McConachie, Andy Jenkinson, George Symes, Chris & Karen Wainwright, David Hasler, Frank Wood, Charlotte Bulmer

### Opening Times 292 - Contents

Pub of the Month	2	Pub Grub	10
Stagger	4	Winter Warmer Wobble	11
T&H Pub of the Season	6	Curmudgeon	13
Cider & Perry	7	Macclesfield POS	13
Stockport Supping	7	Brewery News	15
High Peak Pub News	8	Manchester Matters	17
Peak Practice	9	CAMRA Calling	18

## Greater Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year 2008



### The Crown Inn, Heaton Lane

*16 Handpumps  
Real Cider Guest Lagers Foreign Beers  
Lunches Served*

*12 - 3pm Monday - Friday  
Special Occasions Catered For*

*Live Music Outside - Fri & Sat  
Live Music Sunday*

**ALL EVENTS ARE FREE ADMISSION**

**Open every day from Noon**

<http://thecrowninn.uk.com/>

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009 We're in it!**



*Happy Christmas and a prosperous new year to all.*

Superb selection of core beers and regularly changing monthly and seasonal beers including;



Hoppypresents 4.3%



Christmas Champagne Ale 4.0%

Recently launched "Party Home Bar" delivered in either firkin (9 gallon) or pin (4.5 gallon) with a genuine beer engine

### Brewing Awards



Dark Domination 6%ABV  
**Champion Beer of Leeds 2008**  
Available Sept till Dec



Malt Mountain Mild 3.6% ABV  
**Champion Beer of Rugby 2008**  
Available April till June



Hornbeam Brewery, Unit 1-1C Grey Street, Denton M34 3RU Tel 0161 320 5627 e-mail Kevin@hornbeambrewery.com



## PHOENIX BREWERY

GREEN LANE, HEYWOOD, OL10 2EP TEL. 01706 627009

Best Bitter, Old Oak, Navvy, Double Dagger, Monkeytown Mild, Arizona, White Monk, Pale Moonlight, Midsummer Madness, Bantam, White Monk, Black Shadow, March Hare, May Fly, Sticky Wicket, Double Gold, 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  
Navvy



2002  
Wobbly Bob



2004  
Wobbly Bob

## The Deansgate



321 Deansgate, Manchester

**4 cask beers including guest ales**

Home cooked food every day 12 noon - 8pm

**Roof Bar  
and Terrace**

**Function Room  
for Hire**

**Open 12 - 11 Sunday to Thursday**

**12 - 2am Friday & Saturday**

**Telephone 0161 839 5215**



# Stagger

**Heaton Norris East with Mark McConachie & Dave Hanson**

**F**OR our stagger this month we assembled in the **Pineapple**, a very traditional Robinson's house just yards from the A6 down Heaton Lane.

Because of the lure of other nearby establishments the Pineapple tends to be overlooked, but it is a shame to miss this welcoming hostelry. As you enter, the area to the left feels like somebody's front room, while the bar is to the rear right and the second room around a dividing wall further to the right. There



were a welcome gaggle of regulars around the bar when we entered and much banter and repartee about ale drinking was undertaken. Speaking of which, the four ales normally available are: Unicorn, Hatters, Cumbria Way and Robinsons seasonal. As the demand for the seasonal had outstripped supply,

tonight the fourth handpump dispensed Dizzy Blonde. Inviting and comfortable thought the surroundings were we (reluctantly) dragged ourselves away.

There could hardly be a bigger contrast with the Pineapple when you walk into the **George** on the corner of Heaton Lane and Wellington Road North. Having recently been fully refurbished, the interior tastefully reflects modern ideas of pub decor. There is plenty of light wooden panelling and flooring in evidence, but it is anything but a stark open plan barn. Basically L-shaped in plan, the floor area is broken up into many seating areas by waist high wooden screening. The refurbishment also saw the welcome re-introduction of cask ale into what was once the only Higsons outlet in Stockport (now that's showing my age!). A discussion with the licensee confirmed that she is determined (despite some obstacles by the owning company) to continue with cask ale as it attracts a varied cross section of people into the pub. Tonight's offering was Wells Bombardier, and a good pint it was at that.

Leaving the George, we wandered up Wellington Road North to the **Midland**.



This is an old railway pub set in a Victorian style. It still retains many of those elements such as some good tiling in the corridor, the door frames, cornices and friezes.

Essentially three rooms following alterations done some years ago to open out the interior. Although it spent some time as "Dillon's Whistling Jig", that period did no lasting damage to the pub. The bar is to the left whilst opposite that is a longish room where the majority of customers seemed to be settled. A band (I think of the country music variety) was setting up in the corner. It was only unfortunate we couldn't stay to hear them play. Beer-wise, the Midland sells Greene King IPA which we found in good form. The licensee informed us he'd like to sell more than one cask beer, but that sales do not warrant it at the moment.

At least the Midland is selling cask, as the next three pubs - **Magnet**, **Railway**, and the newly re-opened and decorated **Hope** did not. So it was on to Belmont Way and Robinson's estate house, the **Silver Jubilee**. Built in 1977, it commemorates

Queen Elizabeth's twenty-five year reign at that time (note the wall plaque set in the entrance lobby that echoes that event). The building is almost a part of next-door Belmont Shopping Centre, which too has seen much change in that time. The outside boasts a good-size, enclosed drinking area too. Comprising of two rooms, we settled ourselves in the lounge; this is decorated as if for a permanent series of entertainments - country-music videos were playing to a backdrop of a mirror-ball, a festoon of blue twinkly lights and photos of singers from a past era. Unusual, but all terribly good fun, the mainly middle-aged customers seemed to be enjoying it all too. The separate Vault has a pool table and an area for darts. The beer offering was Robbies Hatters and Unicorn. The Hatters had the edge over the bitter, but both were in good nick. What really stood out were the friendly, welcoming, and knowledgeable staff.



Also on Belmont Way is the **New Roundhouse**. It did not sell cask beer but it was very clean and well-lit inside. Two other pubs on Old Road that did not sell cask were the **Grey Horse** and **Grapes**. All three of these have been interesting venues for cask drinking on past Staggers. It is a pity that the demand is not there within these establishments. There was so little demand for beer of any kind in the **Nicholson's** (just off Lancashire Hill), that it was closed some time ago. It remains closed.

This crawl had been re-jigged as we had extra time on our hands. As we were due to finish at the Navigation, we headed for the **Carousel** on Reddish Road which was about ten minutes' walk away having just missed a bus. This is a pub that was overlooked from other past Staggers due to its inconvenient location and its persistence in selling only smooth or keg beers. Well, not now. A refurbishment about a year ago has changed the entire mood and customer-base of the place. Decor is now of the modern style with autumnal hues, comfortable booth and other seating styles are spread over two distinct



areas. Food served during daytime is now quite a major selling point. The whole place seems suited to an easier-going set who enjoy an untroubled atmosphere. Meanwhile on the beer-front, cask ale has returned with a degree of some success. On our visit Black Sheep Bitter and Clark's Westgate fought for our attention. Good to report that they both rated very highly with us. I was amused to see an arcade-style crane-grab prize machine installed in the pub. Here though, instead of plastic toys and teddy-bears as the prize, you could win a mobile phone!

We saved our legs for the return journey by getting the bus this time.

Our last pub was Beartown's **Navigation** at the top of Lancashire Hill. Licensee of a few months, Dave told us that cask ales sales were on the up in the former 2003 winner of Stockport Pub of the Year. This is a tidily kept two-room house with a central bar and a quite large outside area. The pub had been in the Good Beer Guide for number of years until recently, so it is pleasing to report that the "Navy" is back as a true gem in what can only be described as a sea of keg beer and closed pubs. The pub has been overlooked for too long I think. Quality of beer was some of the best we encountered with the Beartown Bearskinful taking top honours. Other Beartown beers were Kodiak Gold, Black Bear, and Bruins Ruin. These were joined by Black Country Fireside and a cask cider.

A good end to an interesting crawl. Give it a go yourself.

*Steve, Johanne & Molly*  
welcome you to

# Ye Olde Vic

1 Chatham Street, Edgeley, Stockport  
(0161) 480 2410



## Opening Hours:

Mon – Fri: 5pm – 11pm;  
Sat: 7pm – 11pm;  
Sun: 7pm -10.30pm

## 5 Alternating Cask Beers

*Westons Traditional Cider chilled,*

Selection from 12 single malts in  
35ml measures

## Solid Fuel Open Fire

*An Establishment for the Discerning Drinker!!*

**We still maintain our no  
swearing and good  
behaviour policy.**

STOCKPORT & SOUTH  
MANCHESTER PUB OF THE  
MONTH MARCH 2005

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009 We're in it!**

[www.thelass.co.uk](http://www.thelass.co.uk)



**LASS O'  
GOWRIE**

*Outstanding*

Probably the best pies in Manchester  
Homemade food served every day  
Up to 9 cask ales at any one time  
Free Comedy on first Saturday of month  
Computer Club last Tuesday of the Month  
Open Mic every Monday

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009 We're in it!**

# NEW OXFORD

*A warm welcome awaits you at the 2008  
CAMRA Pub of the Year*

Bazens' Flatbac 4.2%  
plus 10 Guest Ales  
7 Belgian & 4 German beers on  
draught at all times

*New food menu available  
Mon - Sat 12 - 8pm  
Sunday lunch and light bites  
12 - 6.30pm  
Thurs night - curry night*



New world bottled beer menu

Tues night - quiz night

GBG 2009

[www.thenewoxford.co.uk](http://www.thenewoxford.co.uk)

**11 Bexley Square, Salford (just off Chapel St),  
Salford**

**Tel 0161 832 7082**

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009 We're in it!**



**O**n Thursday 16th October the Trafford & Hulme Branch presented their Autumn Pub of the Season Award to the City Arms on Kennedy Street in Manchester writes Beverley Gobbett.

This is a great little city centre 'Proper Boozer' which is always packed to the doors and the presentation night was no exception. The Landlord, Eddie Thurston, together with his team which comprises of his wife Sophie, cellarman Steve Crook and the bar staff have done a fine job in keeping the City Arms as a great cask ale outlet with eight hand pumps offering a constant change in choice of real ale.



Eddie has been in the trade for eight years but has only looked after cask ale in the eight months that he has been at the City Arms, ably assisted by Steve Crook who has been a fixture in the City for a number of years now. When Eddie took over management of the pub he

decided that there was no point in trying to change it as it already seemed to have a good philosophy that was working. A surprise for Eddie and the team was made when the branch also presented an Award for 13 consecutive years in the Good Beer Guide.

The owners of the pub had also turned out to support Eddie and his team. After the presentation we all enjoyed some hospitality produced by Sophie.

So thanks from the branch to Eddie and his team for a great night. Please go in and see for yourselves this great little pub with no gimmicks, loud music, quiz nights or big screen, just a great choice of beers.

**T**hursday 22nd October saw Trafford & Hulme Branch presenting the Marble Beer House, Chorlton, with an award for ten continuous years in the Good Beer Guide.

This pub only opened 11 years ago and so, right from the very first time that this pub became eligible to be considered for Good Beer Guide entry, it made it in and has been there ever since.

It has seen quite a few managers over the years but has always been able to maintain its high standards of beer quality and good customer relations. The pub is currently managed by sisters, Helen and Vicky Creer. They have worked at the pub for six and five years respectively but they took over as joint managers two years ago.



Both Helen and Vicky wished to thank their team working alongside them in the pub, the lads at the Marble Brewery for all of their support and the owner Jan Rodgers. This is quite a small public house, being a conversion from an Off Licence so you are able to talk to your fellow drinkers and get drawn in to the general atmosphere of friendly banter and laughter.

The Marble Beer House has predominantly Marble Brewery beers but they also always have a draught cider and two hand pumps for local other micro brewery beers.

Please feel free to go in and congratulate them yourself and enjoy a pint and some friendly banter.



October is cider-making time and, as usual, proved an ideal time of year to travel to the West Country to present the Cider and Perry of the Festival Awards from this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival.

## Perry's Cider

Based at Dowlish Wake in deepest Somerset the Perry family have been producing award winning ciders for over four generations at their family farm. George Perry showed us round the very impressive operation, which combines tradition with a keen commercial approach (the new bottling line is very state of the art). Our picture below shows George being presented with the Cider of the Festival award by Cider Bar Manager, Charlotte Bulmer.



## Swallowfields

By contrast Mat Town's Swallowfields operation, in the depths of Herefordshire near Ross-on-Wye, is a much more recent creation.

Mat has had an interest in cider and perry for many years and about five years ago he joined forces with Steve Burson of Harechurch Hill Cider but last year pressed fruit in his own right – and immediately picked up our Perry of the Festival Award for his Red Longdon. We were royally treated by Steve and his Russian wife Venera, who are seen below receiving their award from Charlotte.

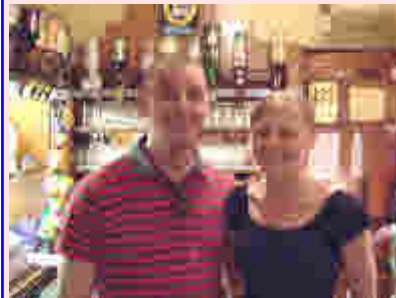


I admit to being shocked by the closure of the **Three Shires** on Underbank. The pub remains shut as these words were written and, as far as I know, it is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. I'm not sure what went wrong here, although the smoking ban and the "credit crunch" have almost inevitably been cited as significant factors. It is true that when I called in of an evening there were often few customers, and beer quality was starting to suffer – with perhaps one too many on sale. Having said that I know that owner Simon Parry is a keen beer man so I do hope we see him back on the local pub scene again in the near future.

## New Faces

However while it's goodbye to Simon and the Three Shires, it's a big hello to some new faces.

The **Swan With Two Necks** on Princes Street has been taken over by Tremayne "Trigger" and Pamela Dean who arrive from City Centre Mulligans. Trigger and Pam have considerable experience in the licensed trade and have sold a lot of cask in the past. Since taking over last month they have certainly made an impact on the pub which, to me at least, seems a much more



pleasant place to drink.

Trigger is busy removing formica from some of the original oak bar fittings and there are plans to restore the original 1920's clock on the bar back. A new menu is being introduced courtesy of a chef

recruited from City Centre Piccolino's and during the run up to winter there will also be a stall outside selling mulled wine, cider punch and mince pies.

The beer's been on cracking form, too, with sales well up. Hatters and Unicorn have been joined by the seasonal and the plan is to have a pin of Old Tom on the bar for the winter months. Trigger is also hoping to get permission to sell the rare Dark Hatters.

The pub is now open all day every day, as well – worth a visit, or two.

In Cheadle it's welcome back to Tony and Mary Nastari who took over as tenants of Hydes' **Star** on 1 September. They are veterans of the local pub scene and are pretty much a



guarantee of a well run pub. They have reintroduced live music and also food (Thursday nights are curry nights with a curry, nan and a pint for a fiver). Darts teams play on Mondays and Tuesdays and when I called I there was certainly a welcome bustle about the place.

The cask range is currently Hydes Original and Light plus a seasonal or craft ale – the exceptional, and powerful, XXXX was on handpump in mid-November.

Beartown Brewery's **Navigation** on Lancashire Hill also has new tenants in the form of Barry Harvey and Debbie Smith who took over at the beginning of November. I hope to call in and have a word in time for next month's column.

*Continued on page 17*



# High Peak PUB NEWS

WITH FRANK WOOD

## Hyde News

**G**OOD news in Hyde where the **Sportsman** on Mottram Road now has a full range of Pennine (formerly Porters) beers on sale as owner Geoff Oliver took back control at his large imposing former Regional Pub of the Year from the outgoing tenants.



Three guest beers are also available with Pictish Brewers Gold likely to be a popular choice that is kept on the bar on a regular basis. Real cider is also available.

The pub has had a much needed clean-up and redecoration, a real positive change in bar personnel and is returning to its former glories as a top class community pub. Geoff deserves much support for all of this and I hope that all of my readers will call in.

And of course the 201 bus provides a handy shuttle between this and the **Cheshire Ring** on Manchester Road, the town's other top ranking cask ale pub.

## Other News

**W**E hear that the **Beltane Bar** on Hall Bank in Buxton (the steep road leading down from the Town Hall towards the Opera House) is up for sale. Obviously we are keeping tabs on this as it is a Good Beer Guide entry for the 2009 guide. More news as we get it.

After around six years of smooth flow, the **New Bridge** on Micklehurst Road at Mossley is selling cask beer. Also in Mossley, the **Roaches Lock** was still shut in late November. Nearby, the **Woodend Tavern** on Manchester Road, has a new licensee in Sandra Scott. Evidently cask beer from local breweries will be retained and the pub will stay open later in the evenings.

Late news maybe, but the Marple Food & Drink Festival in mid September was a successful event, and culminated in a Beer Festival at the **Lane Ends** at Lane Ends (the top of the hill on the way to Charlesworth). Buses ferried punters around the area's pubs, a novel way to attract locals to move around and participate in the event.

In Glossop, the **Market Tavern** has now returned to a "Last Orders" house after the well documented Cains situation. They are on their 4th licensee of 2008, quite an achievement eh? Good news is that cask ale has been retained, the beers available currently being Theakstons Bitter and Old Speckled Hen.

The **North Western** near to New Mills Newtown railway station (Robinsons) failed to meet the reserve price the first time at auction.

The **George** in Compstall (Robinsons) is now selling Robinsons Dark Mild, a beer that is not available in many outlets, maybe just in pubs where the demand is predicted by the brewery. It is one of only a handful of outlets for this rare beer. Just up the road, the **Spring Gardens** has been selling Taylor's Landlord and Wychwood Hobgoblin recently as they try and move back into cask ale sales.

In Ashton the **Heroes Of Waterloo** was closed in mid October but no more information is known.

## The Nursery Inn

GREEN LANE,  
HEATON NORRIS,  
STOCKPORT

☎ 432 2044

- Good Home Cooked Food Served Daily
- Lunches every day including Sundays for families in our Dining Room
- Beer Garden with Eating Area
- Bowling Parties & Function Room
- Egon Ronay Guide,
- AA Best of British Guide
- CAMRA Good Pub Food Guide
- CAMRA Regional Pub of the Year 2001
- CAMRA NATIONAL Pub of the Year



**HYDES**  
THE ASSOCIATION OF  
BREWERS OF  
TRADITIONAL  
CASK  
BEERS  
  
Always in  
good taste

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009 We're in it!**

## The Legion Club

Greater Manchester CAMRA Club of the Year  
**The Home of Live Music and Live Sport**

**All Prem Plus** matches

As well as all other Sky Sports Channels

**Porkies Folk Club**

First Friday of Month

**Ultimate Quiz**

Last Saturday of Month

**Live Jazz**

With Mart Roger Manchester Jazz  
Third Thursday of Month

Magnificent choice of Cask Beer  
served in a convivial atmosphere

**Poynton Legion**

**George's Road West  
Poynton**

For more information

contact Nick Williams  
on 01625 873120

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009 We're in it!**

## GEORGE AND DRAGON

Manchester Road, Heaton Chapel, 0161-431-7629

Steve, Jeanette and Staff

Would like to wish all our customers old and new

**A merry Xmas and Happy New Year**

Cask ales on handpump - Wells Bombardier

Theakstons Best Bitter and Guest Ales

**Great meal offers including 2 for £8**

12.00 to 8pm (7pm Sat/Sun)



## The Waters Green Tavern

Local  
CAMRA  
Pub of the  
Season  
Spring '03



96 Waters Green,  
Macclesfield,  
Cheshire SK11 6LH  
Tel 01625 422653

Ever Changing Guest Beers including:  
Oakham, Pictish, Phoenix, Abbeydale, Acorn,  
Roosters and many more

*Merry Christmas from Your Hosts,  
Brian and Tracey*

**Bar Meals Served Mon to Sat Lunch**  
*This is not a free house*

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009 We're in it!**

## The Cheshire Ring

Manchester Road, Hyde



**Beartown Beers and Changing  
Guest Ales on handpump**

**Thursday is Curry Day from 2pm**  
a pint and home-made curry for just £5

**Live Music**

first Thursday of the Month

**Sons of the Desert, Tent 262**

last Thursday of the month

**Coming soon - the Cheesy Ring Club!**

Open Monday - Friday 1pm - late

Saturday - Sunday 12pm - late

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009 We're in it!**

Colin and Vicky Welcome You To

## The Greyhound Hotel

Lower Bents Lane, Bredbury, SK3 2NL - Tel: 0161 355 0715

**Traditional hand pulled Robinson's fine ales**

Rotating guest ales every weekend plus tea and coffee available

Live entertainment - Every Saturday Lucky Key Draw

Every Sunday Pot Luck Quiz and "Pray" Your Cards Right

• **LARGE BEER GARDEN TO THE REAR** •

~ Nice Warm Friendly Atmosphere ~



*Robin Wignall's Monthly Round-up of Peak Pubs*

Beginning this month with the doom and gloom in the hope that we can finish on a brighter note.

The **Woodroffe Arms** in the centre of Hope, near Castleton is closed. There have been apparently a number of changes of licensee in the last couple of years. Hope is one of the area's tourist villages, and despite competition from other good pubs there was a certain expectation that it could be a going concern. This pub was one of Andrew McCloy's selections in his 'Peak District Pub Guide' (2002, reprinted 2003 and can still be found in bookshops and tourist outlets.)

Still in the Hope Valley, a large part of the long closed **Marquis of Granby** has been demolished. This was an imposing hotel with numerous extensions, standing at the lights where the road to Bamford meets the main Hope Valley road. However a gutted stone block of a building remains. Was this the original core of the building? Around this shell extensive groundwork excavation is taking place. (end of October). It is however difficult to imagine a pub in any future developments on this site, but then strange things happen.

Also closed and boarded is the **Bakers'** in Buxton. This pub is still badged as a Burtonwood house, and therefore currently owned by Marston's. It has been a Good Beer Guide pub and always seemed to be a smashing little local. It was always on my calling list when doing a round of Buxton's pubs.

The bad news continues as the **Black Grouse** at Longnor, south of Buxton may also be closed by now.

And now for the brighter notes. When I made an October call at the **Navigation** in Buxworth a visiting licensee strongly recommended the guest beer, York Yorkshire Terrier. This was indeed in very good form and well worth the walk round from Whaley Bridge. The Navigation has a changing guest beer to complement its regular beers which include Marston's Bitter, Theakston's Bitter and Taylor's Landlord, and is invariably worth a visit.

The **Crossings** at Furness Vale has been selling Hartley's XB, Robinson's brew for its south Lakes houses, but of course available to interested licensees in the rest of the estate. The pint I had at the Crossings was certainly in good form. The last call of Dizzy Blonde was still available, soon to be replaced by Spellbound. The other beer to grace the recently fitted new bar top, courtesy of Robinson's, was Unicorn.

When I call at the **Navigation** in Whaley Bridge I usually try the consistently good pint of Black Sheep bitter. Recently I was persuaded into trying the Wells' Bombardier, and the recommendation was well worth following, for another good drink was enjoyed.

For some months building work has been going on at a site by the roundabout near Chapel en le Frith, on the Whaley Bridge and Chapel by pass. The building is now well advanced and boards have appeared advertising Christmas meals and booking therefore. Adverts have appeared to attract staff. This will be a Marston's house, the **Fallow Deer**. Food is obviously going to feature, and size and location suggest that there might be accommodation. Hopefully Marston's will install handpumps for real ale. However this doesn't look like being a locals' local and the pub goer can only tremble in advance at the prices that might be charged at the bar. To be fair to Marston's it is good to see that in the present economic climate they are prepared to invest in a new build public house. I hope to be able to update this story next time

# The Crescent

12 Real Ales  
1 Hand Pulled Cider  
Wide Range of  
European Bottles

*Monday*  
*Free Chip Birms (1700-1800)*

*Wednesday*  
*Our Famous Curry Night*  
*5-8pm*

*Food Served Daily*  
*Monday 1200-1600*  
*Tuesday 1200-1930*  
*Wednesday 1200-1600*  
*Thursday 1200-1930*  
*Friday 1200-1930*  
*Saturday 1200-1800*  
*Sunday 1200-1700*

*Live Music every*  
*first Saturday of the*  
*Month !!!!!*  
*Function Room*  
*Available for Hire*

*18-21 The Crescent*  
*Salford, M54PF*  
*Tel: 0161 736 5600*

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009 We're in it!**



Karen & Chris Wainwright visit

## **The Oddfellows Arms, Mellor**

73, Moor End Rd, SK6 5PT

Long noted for its fine beers and dining, this country pub, built of local stone and amid a terrace of cottages, has changed little over the years. The welcome from Richard Kitchingman could not have been warmer. He has been in charge here since September and has put a lot of thought into the presentation of both pub and restaurant and appears to err on the side of quality rather than quantity. The menu is no huge tome to ponder over, but a selection of no more than seven starters and ten main dishes.

We decided to order starters from the main menu, not that there was anything wrong with the specials board. It was just that the selection on the main menu is very adventurous and all under £5.25. I was enticed by the patriotic sounding English Onion Soup (£3.50). Arriving with crusty bread sprinkled with chopped herbs and a knob of butter, the soup is a clear compote made with Stamford Press Cider. Suspended in it is lots of Lincolnshire onion sliced and sautéed. Floating on top, like an island, is a large crouton with toasted cheese. A delightful combination. Karen ordered the Baked Eggs (£3.95). At least three whole eggs covered in a creamy sauce topped with cheese and baked to a golden finish. This was also accompanied by the same crusty bread and herbs. To help it all go down we started on some Adnams bitter.



For mains Karen chose from the specials, Rump Steak with Garlic Mash and Seasonal Vegetables (£11.95) was ordered. This is a new dish having its first (and very successful) night. Medallions of prime beef on top of a bed of delicately garlic flavoured mashed potato and an accompaniment of diced roasted winter roots. My impression was there wasn't enough garlic but Karen disagreed. A glass of Rioja Navajas Tinto was selected for this but I had an excellent Fullers London Pride to go with my choice, one of the more expensive items from the menu, Venison with Buttery Champ and Game Sauce (£15.95). More medallions, this time of the most succulent venison I have ever had. This was on top of a layer of champ (mashed potato with finely chopped spring onion in it - Irish in origin) and topped with a crest of shredded and fried spring onion. Surrounding it was a moat of very rich gravy. Not every thing on the menu is quite so bold though. There are the more popular dishes starting from £8.95 including Steak and Guinness Pie and Fish and Chips.

Now for the desserts. The sweetness of Raspberry Tartlet and Iced Cream went well with the fragranced flavours of the Copper Dragon Golden Pippin beer. The Chocolate Pot was also had, a coffee cup filled with dark chocolate mousse, as to be expected not too sweet.

The chef is 21 year old Adam Stanyer. Trained at the Grosvenor Hotel in Chester and recently worked at the Joshua Bradley (Hydes) pub in Gee Cross. If there is just one observation to be made of the menu it is that there is only one item on both starters and mains suitable for vegetarians restricting their choice slightly.

Unfortunately The Oddies is only served by the 375 bus until mid afternoon Mon-Sat, so driving is almost unavoidable. Food is served 12-3pm & 6-9pm Tue-Sat and 12-6pm Sun. Since the quality of the beers is second to none please have a nominated non-drinking driver when you visit.



# The Winter Warmer Wobble.....

**T**his month we are once again running the Winter Warmer Wobble, our annual celebration of festive beers to bring you a little winter cheer across the Christmas and New Year season, and on into the cold nights of January.

Like the well-established Mild Challenge and the increasingly popular Cider Circuit, this is the chance for you to visit some new pubs and try some new beers.

Winter is the time for stronger and darker beers and that is what we are focussing on this time. So, a bit about these seasonal beer styles, and what you can expect to encounter...

**Porter** was a London style that turned the brewing industry upside down early in the 18th century. Restrictions on making roasted malts in Britain during World War One led to the demise of Porter and Stout but in recent years, smaller craft brewers in Britain have rekindled an interest in the style. Look for profound dark and roasted malt character with espresso or cappuccino coffee, liquorice and molasses, all underscored by hefty hop bitterness. Porters are complex in flavour, range from 4% to 6.5% and are typically black or dark brown; the darkness comes from the use of dark malts unlike stouts which use roasted malted barley. **Stouts** can be dry or sweet and range from 4% to 8% ABV.

**Old Ale** is a style which has re-emerged in recent years, due primarily to the fame of Theakston's Old Peculier, Gale's Prize Old Ale and Thomas Hardy's Ale. Old Ales, contrary to expectation, do not have to be especially strong: they can be no more than 4% alcohol, though the Gale's and O'Hanlon's versions are considerably stronger. Neither do they have to be dark: Old Ale can be pale and burst with lush sappy malt,

tart fruit and spicy hop notes. Darker versions will have a more profound malt character with powerful hints of roasted grain. The hallmark of the style remains a lengthy period of maturation, often in bottle rather than bulk vessels. Old Ales typically range from 4% to 6.5%.

**Barley Wine** has to be strong. The biggest-selling Barley Wine for years was Whitbread's 10.9% Gold Label. Bass's No 1 Barley Wine (10.5%) is occasionally brewed in Burton-on-Trent. Fuller's Vintage Ale (8.5%) is a bottle-conditioned version of its Golden Pride. The local classic, though, is Robinson's Old Tom (8.5%).

## Rules

You need to have a least a 1/2 pint of one of cask stout, porter or old ale (4.5% ABV or greater) to have a sticker placed on this page.

Visit 15 different pubs to win a bottle of stout, porter or old ale. Do all 30 pubs to be entered in the big draw for a special hamper of stouts, porters and old ales.

The "Wobble" runs from Saturday 13 December 2008 to Saturday 31 January 2009 so you have plenty of time.

We will only accept signatures if the pub runs out of stickers. The completed form has to be sent to David Platt before Sunday 8 February. The address is 38 Lincoln Avenue, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 3LB

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Crown Wilmslow Road DIDSBURY M20 2DR <b>Guest</b>	Dog & Partridge Wilmslow Road DIDSBURY M20 6RA <b>Guest</b>	Didsbury Wilmslow Road DIDSBURY M20 2SE <b>Guest</b>	Marble Arch Rochdale Road MANCHESTER M4 4HY <b>Guest</b>	Bar Fringe Swan St MANCHESTER M4 5JN <b>Guest</b>
Rain Bar Great Bridgewater St MANCHESTER M1 5JG <b>Moonraker</b>	Crown Heaton Lane STOCKPORT SK4 1AR <b>Guest</b>	Ye Olde Vic Chatham St STOCKPORT SK3 9ED <b>Guest</b>	Ye Olde Woolpack Brinksway STOCKPORT SK3 0BY <b>Guest</b>	Railway Avenue Street STOCKPORT, SK1 2BZ <b>Guest / Pennine</b>
Armoury Shaw Heath STOCKPORT SK3 8BD <b>Old Tom</b>	Arden Arms Millgate STOCKPORT SK1 2LX <b>Old Tom</b>	Crown Buxton Road GREAT MOOR SK2 7BY <b>Old Tom</b>	Blossoms Buxton Road HEAVILEY SK2 6NU <b>Old Tom</b>	3 Rivers Club Greg Street REDDISH SK5 7BR <b>Guest</b>
Friendship Wilmslow Road FALLOWFIELD M14 6XS <b>Seasonal</b>	New Oxford Bexley Square SALFORD M3 6DB <b>Guest</b>	Crescent The Crescent SALFORD M5 4PF <b>Guest</b>	Legh Arms Ashton Old Road OPENSHAW M11 2HD <b>Guest</b>	Cheshire Ring Manchester Road HYDE SK14 2BJ <b>Guest</b>
Sportsman Strines Road STRINES SK6 3AE <b>Guest</b>	Royal Oak Strines Road STRINES SK6 7GE <b>Old Tom</b>	Nursery Green Lane HEATON NORRIS SK4 2NA <b>Seasonal</b>	Navigation Manchester Road HEATON NORRIS SK4 1TY <b>Guest</b>	Duke of York Stockport Road ROMILEY SK6 3AN <b>Guest</b>
Hatters Arms Church Lane MARPLE SK6 7AW <b>Old Tom</b>	Red Lion Stockport Road CHEADLE SK8 2AJ <b>Old Tom</b>	Ashlea Manchester Road CHEADLE SK8 2NP <b>Guest</b>	Cock Hotel Buxton Road WHALEY BRIDGE SK23 7JE <b>Old Tom</b>	Shepherds Arms Old Road WHALEY BRIDGE SK23 7HR <b>Guest</b>

George & Elaine  
at  
**The Grapes**

196  
London  
Road



On 192  
Bus Route &  
Near Train  
Station

**Hazel Grove**

*Would like to wish all our  
friends and customers  
a very Merry Christmas  
and a Prosperous New Year*

**Finest hand pulled Robinsons Beers**  
New Year's Eve Party, Fancy Dress Welcome

**THE PACK HORSE**

**Frank, Debbie and Colin**

**Would like to welcome you all**

**Now serving Copper Dragon,  
Deuchars IPA & Tetley's  
Cask Marque**



**Food Served on Market Days**  
**Sky TV now available**  
**Free pool every Tuesday**  
**Warm atmosphere - friendly people**  
**Market Place, Stockport**

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009 We're in it!**

**THE RED LION**

183 Stockport Road, Cheadle 0161 428 5507

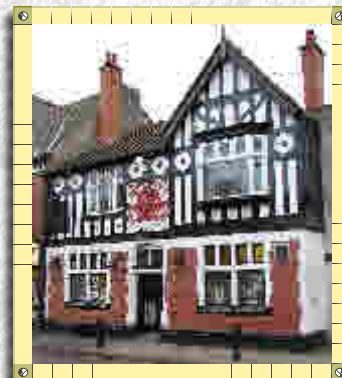


**Sunday Carvery**  
**Robinson's Real Ales**  
**Heated Covered Patio**  
**Xmas Menu**  
**Xmas Day Bookings**  
**Car Park**  
**Extensive Food Menu 12 - 8:30pm**

**Tony and Mary welcome back  
customers old and new to**

**The Star**

**High Street, Cheadle**



**Craft Ales**  
**Home-made food**  
**Live Entertainment and Sports**  
**Curry Night Thursdays**



### Facing the Axe

**B**ACK in the distant past, beers were simply called "Mild", "Bitter", "Best Bitter" and the like. However, as interest in beer grew and guest beers and multi-beer pubs spread, brewers increasingly gave their beers distinctive names to attract customers' attention. It is very common for these names to combine historical associations with a tongue-in-cheek element.

Unfortunately one of these beers, Orkney Brewery's 8.5% ABV Skull Splitter strong ale, a former CAMRA Champion Winter Beer of Britain, which takes its name from a 10th century Viking Earl of Orkney, has fallen foul of the self-appointed drinks watchdog the Portman Group. These po-faced individuals have decided there is an unacceptable link between the name and the beer's strength, and are demanding that it be withdrawn from sale. Now obviously you're not going to call a light bitter Skullsplitter, but in this case they really seem to have spectacularly missed the point.

Skull Splitter is not some super strength lager or white cider designed as a rapid route to oblivion, it is a carefully crafted premium strong ale that is not sold through supermarkets and will be found only in specialist free houses and off-licences. In practice it appeals to discerning drinkers and is not in any sense a cause of problem drinking. Along similar lines, locally, during the winter months, a number of Robinson's pubs offer draught Old Tom, at 8.5% ABV one of the strongest draught beers in the country, yet you never see troublemakers swilling it down before going out to cause mayhem.

You can't apply a one size fits all policy to drinks publicity, and have to recognise who particular drinks are aimed at, and how they are going to consume them. The adult customers of strong ales such as Skull Splitter should be credited with both a sense of responsibility and a sense of humour.

### Think about your Drink

**O**F course this raises a wider issue. There is currently a lot of concern about the abuse of alcohol in Britain, which to my mind all too easily degenerates into hysteria, but is not without substance. But very little of the blame can be placed at the door of ale. Have the young people brawling and puking in city-centre streets on Saturday night, or the under-18s swigging booze on park benches, been drinking ale? In almost all cases the answer is no, not even John Smith's Smooth.

If you go in pubs that place an emphasis on ale, whether traditional locals or multi-beer freehouses, you will scarcely ever see any significant trouble, even if very strong beers are available. The difference, of course, is that ale drinkers think about what they are drinking and do not judge it purely by its alcoholic content.

It is perhaps asking a bit much to want to see deliberate discrimination in favour of ale through taxation or licensing policy, and such measures would have the potential to backfire. But there can be no doubt that the ale sector, both in pubs and the off-trade, offers a model of responsible and discerning alcohol consumption that sets a salutary example to the rest of the licensed trade. Ale should not be tarred with the same brush as shooters, blue WKDs and British-brewed fake premium lagers.

Curmudgeon Online: [www.pubcurmudgeon.org.uk](http://www.pubcurmudgeon.org.uk)

Curmudgeon Blog: [pubcurmudgeon.blogspot.com](http://pubcurmudgeon.blogspot.com)



**C**LOSE to the railway station, just down the road from the bus station and opposite a car park, standing on its own between the access to a garage and a street corner, is one of the most popular and most visited pubs in our region. Known to most, if not all, beer drinkers in the area, the **Waters Green Tavern** is a regular stop off for commuters on their way home, for groups meeting before an evening out, for football fans on their way to a match and for most local CAMRA members on their way to or from anywhere!

Those who may not have visited, possibly been put off by the unprepossessing exterior (don't mention the half timbered first storey!) may wonder at the attraction. Put simply good beer on up to eight handpumps, served in a well run pub with a convivial atmosphere. It is no secret that Brian prefers the lighter golden beers but what a selection of these he offers! It would take the rest of the



page to list just those which make frequent appearances, but these include breweries such as Abbeydale, Roosters, Pictish, Thornbridge, Oakham and Phoenix. The pumpclips seen behind the bar, clipped to the shelf, give a flavour of what is coming next, and it is not unusual to see punters who were about to leave, waiting as Brian pulls through a new barrel, just in case they miss a particular favourite. In the winter months, one of the pumps at the weekends is a dark beer: Bazen's Black Pig, Farmer's Stout, Phoenix' Monkey Town Mild for starters.

Food is only served at lunchtime and is good, hearty, traditional food cooked by Brian himself. The pub in the evening, therefore, is not taken up with tables set for food just beer (with crisps or nuts if you're desperate). There is a pool table and darts board and the pub has teams playing in various local leagues. A group of regulars arrange walks. The Morris Men appear occasionally, once dancing *inside* the pub when the weather was bad. Macclesfield Beer Festival tickets are sold here and Brian has supported the festival since its early days. There is even a 'Friends of the Waters' page on Facebook.

Winner of awards over the years, including one from the supporters of Darlington Football Club, the Waters has for several years been the venue for Macclesfield CAMRA's 'Post Christmas Wind Down Social' and this time we will be honouring the pub again with a Pub of the Season award, to reflect its consistent services to Real Ale in Macclesfield.

Why not join us on Monday 29th December (from 8pm), if you've never dropped in you're missing a gem.

**Join CAMRA Now!**  
**See page 18**



# Pennine Ale Ltd

## THE ROSSENDALE BREWERY

All of our beers are now available to the Free Trade.Landlords please try them at one of our pubs below: -

The Railway  
Stockport  
0161 429 6062

The Griffin Inn  
(Site of our Rosendale Brewery)  
Haslingden  
01706 21 40 21

The Sportsman  
Hyde  
061 368 5000

Contact Geoff Oliver  
01706 21 40 21



# Ye Olde Woolpack

Brinksway, Stockport, SK3 0BY

**OPEN**  
**MON-SAT**  
**12-11**

**SUNDAY**  
**12-10.30**

**FOOD**  
**AVAILABLE**  
**12-4**  
**EVERY DAY**



**CASK**  
**MARQUE**  
**ACCREDITED**

**GOOD BEER**  
**GUIDE 2009**

**XMAS**  
**MENU**  
**AVAILABLE**

**PUB OF THE MONTH**  
**DECEMBER 2008**

**THWAITES WAINWRIGHT AND CHANGING GUEST BEERS**



# Brewery NEWS...

**T**he big news this month on the national scene is the planned closure of the Tetley brewery in Leeds in 2011. Tetley's is of course an iconic brand and has a fierce local following in West Yorkshire, and especially in Leeds. The announcement was accompanied by the usual assurances that Tetley's will continue to be brewed, possibly in the North and "certainly in the UK". So that's alright then. In truth this will almost certainly kill the brand which has made much of its Yorkshire connections. We shall see.

## Micro Magic

As usual the local micro brewers have lots of tasty treats for you. As ever our apologies to those we were unable to contact this time.

**Cellar Rat** – Sarah Bergin's Cellar Rat beers (which she makes at 3 Rivers Brewery but using her own ingredients and recipes) are likely to be back this month – and on a more regular footing than before.

This month should see some test brews of Best Bitters appearing on the bar of the Crown, Heaton Lane. The plan is to identify the best sellers which will go on to form the core of a permanent Cellar Rat range.

In the New Year the core range will be developed further with more test brews, along with up to two monthly specials. There could be as many as four Cellar Rat beers each month. Good news indeed as the Cellar Rat beers have so far been marked by their very high quality.

**Bazens'** – the December entrant in the Salford Brewers series is "lechyd Da", a 4.3% alcohol pale and hoppy beer brewed to mark Dave Facer who shared the Bazens' premises before moving to Flint. The 2009 series will be Manchester breweries. Look out, too. For a new Christmas beer, this will be darker than the regular Santa's Reinbeer and will be "quite warming".

**Bank Top** – Santa's Claws (5%) is back for the festive season. Bank Top's Dave Sweeney also tells us that the brewery has come to an arrangement with the Wilton Arms, a Mitchell's house near Bolton, to promote Bank Top beers in the pub. New beers are also promised for January.

**Boggart Hole Clough** – always something new here. Recent beers are Dark Rum Porter (3.9%) – and yes, it does have rum in it, plus a powerful 6% alcohol Ginger Beer. Brewer Mark Dade tells us that quite a lot of this will be sold in swing-top 75cl bottles. Coming soon to a farmers market near you.

**Greenfield** – a recent beer was Gardener's Hop (4.2%) a very light, straw-coloured bitter made with "Saddleworth hops" grown by a local CAMRA member. This sold out in record time. It is being followed by Winter Hop (4.2%) another very pale beer with a slight hoppy aftertaste. The strong winter beer Rudolph's Tipple (5%) is also out this month. A dark beer brewed with honey and mixed spice proved very popular last year so this time around there will be two brews made instead of the usual one.

**Hornbeam** – two welcome returns from last year, but both with some changes. Christmas Champagne Ale (4%) is back but with more Nelson Sauvignon hops than last time. Mmm. Also back is Hoppy Presents (4.3%) which again will be more hoppy than last year with an entirely new hop grist including Atlas as the late hop.



**Millstone** – another brewery revamping its Christmas beer. Reindeer (4.2%) will be back this month with a new recipe including Challenger and Centennial hops.

**Phoenix** – as usual quite a few festive specials from Tony Allen's ever-reliable Phoenix Brewery. Look out for Snowbound (4.3%), Christmas Kiss (4.5%) and the powerful Humbug (7%). Also out is one of OT's favourite Phoenix beers – the "rich traditional Porter" at 5%.

Phoenix has also recently entertained the Bishop of Manchester, the Rt Rev Nigel McCulloch, who went on something of a whirlwind tour of Heywood. The bishop apparently took a keen interest in the brewing process and he was presented with a special pump clip for "Crook & Mitre Ale" made specially by Tony to mark the visit.

**Marble** – Two dark beers for you this month. The excellent McKenna's Reprised Porter (4.5%) continues to be available throughout December and on Christmas Eve comes the by now traditional launch of the latest vintage of Port Stout, always a festive treat to look forward to.

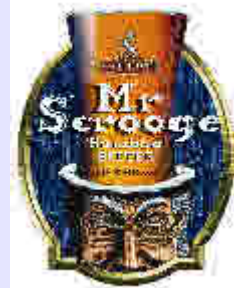
**Pictish Brewery** – expect a few new beers from Pictish. Hopefully the excellent Rudolph's Rocket Fuel (7.3%) will be back this month. The monthly special is Winter Solstice (4.7%), a pale amber beer with a floral hoppiness.

**Dunham Massey** – Chocolate Cherry Mild is becoming a serial award winner. Last month it picked up Beer of the Festival at Bury. They have now won nine awards in the first year – a remarkable achievement. More on this next time.



## Family Favourites

As usual our local family brewers also have some festive treats in store for us.



**Robinson's** – of course the multi award-winning Old Tom (8.5%) is available all winter but really seems to come into its own over the Christmas period. While some pubs have it on hand pump, many will have a small cask on the bar – always a welcome sight on a frosty day. Joining Old Tom is Mr Scrooge "Humbug" Bitter making a welcome return from last year. This mahogany brown beer has a tempting malty aroma and rich, biscuity taste.

And of course it comes with perhaps one of the most appealing pump clips around.

**Hydes** – another local brewery with two festive beers. The November / December craft ale is Mumbo Jumbo, a rich, dark stouty beer at 4.9%. Tried recently in Stockport's Olde Vic, it proved a moreish pint. In addition Hydes have once again produced the powerful (6.8%) XXXX strong ale. This is dark brown, rich and warming – and very drinkable for its strength.

**JW Lees** – the potent Moonraker (7.5%) is brewed all year round but again this is a beer that is really made for the winter months. In addition Lees have two seasonal beers out this month. One is now a familiar face at this time of year – Plum Pudding (4.8%). "Specially made with Christmas in mind" says the brewery. It really is very good. Alongside Plum Pudding the brewery also have the more prosaically named Winter Warmer (4.5%) out this month and through to February. This is described as a "full flavoured dark beer with a hint of chocolate on the palate".

**Joseph Holt** – this month's seasonal is Maple Moon (4.8%). This has been around before and is brewed using a "teasing glimmer of maple syrup". It is a sweet but refreshing beer with a good malty body.



# COUTURE

@ The Manchester Museum

250 Oxford Road

Tel: 0161 275 3220

[www.couturemanchester.com](http://www.couturemanchester.com)

## Real Ale Wednesdays

We are launching a new real ale tasting session every Wednesday night from 7pm onwards at our café bar on Oxford Road.

To begin with we will be championing ales brewed by Dunham Massey Brewing Co, such as their Chocolate Cherry Mild, Little Bollington Bitter, Milk Stout, Deer Beer and Winter Warmer.

We will be selling the 500ml bottles at a promotional price of £2.50 each or £4.00 for two. Our homecooked, warming 'one bowl' meals will also be available at £4.95.

Courtesy café & bar at The Manchester Museum serves a fantastic menu of classic British dishes, made using high quality, locally sourced ingredients. We are open daily on breakfast & lunch. We also run a Quiz Night on Thursday evenings from 8.30pm onwards.



**Real Fires    Real People**  
**Real Beer    Real Food**



## THE ARDEN ARMS

23 Millgate, Stockport, SK1 2LX

### Robinson's

UNICORN, HATTERS,  
DOUBLE HOP, SEASONAL ALE

and for the Festive Season

OLD TOM

A Merry Xmas to all our customers from Steve, Joe and staff

### Christmas Menu

served 3rd to 24th December  
at the following times:

12 to 6.00pm Wednesday to Friday

12 to 4.00pm Saturday & Sunday

12 to 6.00pm Christmas Eve

**Three courses £25.95**

**Book on 0161 480 2185**

Details available on our website at  
[www.arden-arms.co.uk/index.htm](http://www.arden-arms.co.uk/index.htm)



Manchester Food & Drink Festival  
Pub of the Year 2008-09



## Stockport Supping continued...



The **Bulls Head** in the Market Place reopened on 29 October. The owner is Elaine Williams and the licensee Simon Hornby. Cask beer is back on sale – the pub was keg only for about six months prior to Elaine and Simon's arrival. Old Stockport was on handpump in late October

but I understand that this will be changed to Unicorn.

The pub has had a tasteful refurbishment with a nice feature being the black and white tiling round the bar. The upstairs meeting / function room is also being renovated. In keeping with the pub's traditions there will also be regular live bands plus DJs.

### Closed, Boarded and Knocked Down

Here at *Opening Times* we have been no slouches in highlighting the various closed and boarded up pubs that are scarring the local urban landscape.

I'm please to say that two of these time expired pubs have now bitten the dust with the long overdue demolition of the **Windsor Castle** on Castle Street in Edgeley and the **Railway** in North Reddish. I can't say I'm sorry to see either of them go – and in fact can't recall of ever having half-decent pint in them.

In Edgeley that still leaves the "gruesome twosome" of the **Blue Bell** and the **Church** still mouldering away, although there are signs of some activity at the Blue Bell with a series of skips being filled with rubbish and other material from the pub.

One pub that is **not** apparently closed, however, is the **Pineapple** on Castle Street in Edgeley. Despite appearing shut when I penned last month's column, I have since seen it open. No real ale of course.

### Bits & Pieces

The **Shady Oak**, Redford Drive, Bramhall was undergoing an extensive refurbishment as this was written and the work should be completed this month. The licensees are Linda & Robert Barton who have been in the Punch Taverns pub since April. When I called in the cask range comprised Taylor's Landlord, Thwaites Bitter and Greene King Abbott – quality was excellent.

The **Bottle Stop**, Bramhall/Cheadle Hulme is now a cask real ale outlet as well as a "real ale in a bottle" outlet again with Jennings Snecklifter on handpump.

Boddingtons Cask Bitter is no longer on sale at either the **Thatched Tavern** (Reddish) – despite the handpump - or the **George and Dragon** (Heaton Chapel), due to lack of sales/quality. The former still has Bombardier and Tetley Dark and I was told that Tetley Bitter was also



normally available. The 'new' licensees since July at the George and Dragon are Jeanette and Steve Foy, ex Hydes. Current beers are Theakstons Best Bitter, Bombardier and Greene King IPA with the licensees intending to replace the latter with guest beers (Jeanette has been talking of getting in the Hydes seasonal).

The **Woolpack** on Brinksway now has Cask Marque accreditation, another testament to the high beer quality here. I popped in to have a chat with owner Andy Sinclair and was very impressed by the beers on offer - currently regular Thwaites Wainwright (a very good seller Andy tells me) and three changing guests.

Finally – a new piece of equipment can be seen outside Ye **Olde Vic** in Edgeley. Steve Brannan tells me that a renovation and repaint of the pub may be in prospect. We shall see.

## Manchester Matters

I managed to call into the **Didsbury Beer Festival** on the Saturday afternoon and was very impressed by the whole set-up, especially as this was their first event. By all accounts the busy crowd on the Saturday was nothing compared to the Friday night throng when the place was jam packed. I particularly enjoyed the Lakeland beers and this theme was imaginatively run throughout the rest of the festival. The cider and perry range, courtesy of the ever reliable John Reek of Merrylegs was also a cut above the average for a festival of this size (where it can too often be an afterthought).

It was on course to be a huge success so congratulations to all involved. They are already looking towards next year's event and I for one will be making an entry in my shiny new diary when the dates are announced.

While in Didsbury I managed to call into a couple of the village pubs. The **Fletcher Moss** is always a cracking pub to visit with a good range of Hydes beers, including the excellent Owd Oak dark mild, the current craft ale and now a guest beer from Allgates Brewery in Wigan. The Allgates "Some Like It Hopped" went down a treat – mind you all the beers were on top form, as usual.

I also popped into the **Nelson** which was its usual lively self, with a good crowd enjoying the football on TV. It was good to be able to chat with licensees Julie and Pete Sweeney who told me that smoking ban and credit crunch notwithstanding, they are still doing a good trade. They certainly have a loyal following and it's a pub I always enjoy visiting. There were two cask beers on – excellent Jennings Cumberland and good Draught Bass (now there's a beer you don't see very often nowadays).

Across the road from the Nelson the former **Clocktower**, latterly Fugu I think, seems to be in a state of flux. The Japanese restaurant idea seems to have been ditched some time ago and the pub is now under temporary management.

Further up towards the City Centre I hear the **Osborne House** in Rusholme is closed. "Are you sure?" I asked my source. "Well, it's boarded up" came the reply. Hydes have previously expressed doubts about the long term future of "wet led" back street pubs so I hope this isn't the thin end of the wedge – bearing in mind that among their estate they have such back street, wet-led classics like the **Jolly Angler**, Great Ducie Street, and the **Dutton**, Park Street (hidden behind the site of Boddingtons Brewery).

Finally this month – news of another unlikely but very welcome real ale outlet. By this we mean real ale in a bottle and the outlet is the **Couture** café bar at **Manchester Museum**. I spoke to manager Nick Gornall who told me that the Couture organisation have been running the bar since mid-January. They have a keen interest in locally sourced products and beer was a natural extension of this interest – particularly as this area is so well served by craft ale brewers. Each Wednesday from 7pm a different brewer will feature – with Dunham Massey at the debut event on 26 November. Worth a visit – more next time. In the meantime look for the ad in this issue of OT.

### DAVENPORT ARMS (THIEF'S NECK) Woodford



GOOD BEER GUIDE 1988 – 2009  
22nd GLORIOUS YEAR  
IN THE SAME FAMILY FOR 76 YEARS  
Season's Greetings to Customers Old & New  
From Yvonne & Staff  
Robinson's Traditional Draught Beers



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 01625 425734*

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>** – Winter Warmer Wobble launches with mini-Stagger: 5.30pm Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris; 7.30pm Railway, Avenue Street.

**Friday 19<sup>th</sup>** – Annual Hillgate Stagger: 7.30pm Queen's Head (Turners Vaults), Little Underbank; 8.30pm Red Bull, Middle Hillgate.

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup>** – Pub of the Month presentation to Olde Woolpack, Brinksway. From 8pm.

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January** – Branch Meeting: Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. Starts 8pm. **NB – Pub of the Year 2009 will be chosen at this meeting**

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](http://www.thcamra.org.uk)*

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup>** – Social: Railway Inn, Manchester Road, Broadheath. From 8pm

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup>** – Post-Xmas Social: Old Market Tavern, Altrincham. Starts 8pm

The **High Peak & North East Cheshire** Branch covers Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley, Marple, Tameside and Derbyshire from Glossop to Buxton. *Branch Contact – Mike Rose 07986 458517. [mikewrose@btinternet.com](mailto:mikewrose@btinternet.com)*

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>** – Branch Xmas Party: White Lion, Disley. Starts 7.30pm.

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January** – Branch Meeting: Sportsman, Hyde. Starts 8.30pm

Apart from Macclesfield & Bollington, the **Macclesfield & East Cheshire** Branch covers a wide area from Knutsford to Congleton. *Branch Contact – Tony Icke 01625 861833*

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup>** – Christmas Social: St Dunstan's Inn, Langley.

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup>** – Post-Christmas Social and Winter Pub of the Season Award: Waters Green Tavern, Macclesfield. From 8pm

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January**: Good Beer Guide selection meeting: Beartown Tap, Congleton. Starts 8pm.

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](mailto:davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk)*

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup>** – Branch Meeting: New Oxford, Bexley Square, Salford. Starts 8pm

**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January** – Presentation of the Neil Richardson Trophy to the Star, Back Hope Street, Salford. From 8pm.

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>** – Good Beer Guide 2010 shortlisting meeting: Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford. Starts 8pm.

**Merry Christmas**

# It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

**Join CAMRA Today..**

Telephone

E-mail

**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](http://www.camra.org.uk).**

**Title Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth**

--	--	--	--

**Partner Title Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth**

--	--	--	--

**Address**

**Postcode**

--	--

Please tick membership category:

	Cheque	Direct Debit
Single	£22 <input type="checkbox"/>	£20 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint	£27 <input type="checkbox"/>	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>
Under 26	£13 <input type="checkbox"/>	£11 <input type="checkbox"/>
Under 26 Joint	£16 <input type="checkbox"/>	£14 <input type="checkbox"/>
Retired	£13 <input type="checkbox"/>	£11 <input type="checkbox"/>
Retired Joint	£16 <input type="checkbox"/>	£14 <input type="checkbox"/>

**Signed** .....

**Date** .....

**Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit**

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the Manager	Bank or Building Society	9 2 6 1 2 9
Address <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>		
Postcode <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>		
Name(s) of Account Holder (s) <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>		
Bank or Building Society Account Number <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>		
Branch Sort Code <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>		
Reference Number <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>		

**FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Membership Number

Name

Postcode

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society  
Please pay CAMRA Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with CAMRA and, if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

**The Direct Debit Guarantee**

- This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.
- If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change CAMRA will notify you 7 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
- If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

# Discover the best beers south of the North Pole

## 2009 NATIONAL Winter ALES FESTIVAL

21st-24th JANUARY  
NEW CENTURY HALL  
MANCHESTER



CAMRA  
CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE



Organised by



CAMRA  
CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

In Association with

**CityLife**  
co.uk

Wednesday 21st January 16.00 - 22.30

Thursday 22nd January 16.00 - 22.30

Friday 23rd January 12.00 - 22.30

Saturday 24th January 12.00 - 22.30

- ❄ £3 entry for all sessions except £2 for Wednesday, £5 Friday night (from 17.00) ❄ Discounts for CAMRA members
- ❄ £1 discount for Concessions (NUS & OAP's) on Wednesday & Thursday ❄ Tickets available on the door
- ❄ Entertainment on Wednesday evening - **The Frank White Band** and Saturday evening - **Doctor Busker**
- ❄ Saturday - Pirate Fancy Dress Day (optional) - Great Prizes!
- ❄ Over 200 beers including foreign beers plus cider and perry
- ❄ 5 minutes from Victoria Station, by CIS Tower

For further information:

[www.alefestival.org.uk](http://www.alefestival.org.uk)

☎ 01727 867201

CO-SPONSORED BY

Manchester  
Evening News

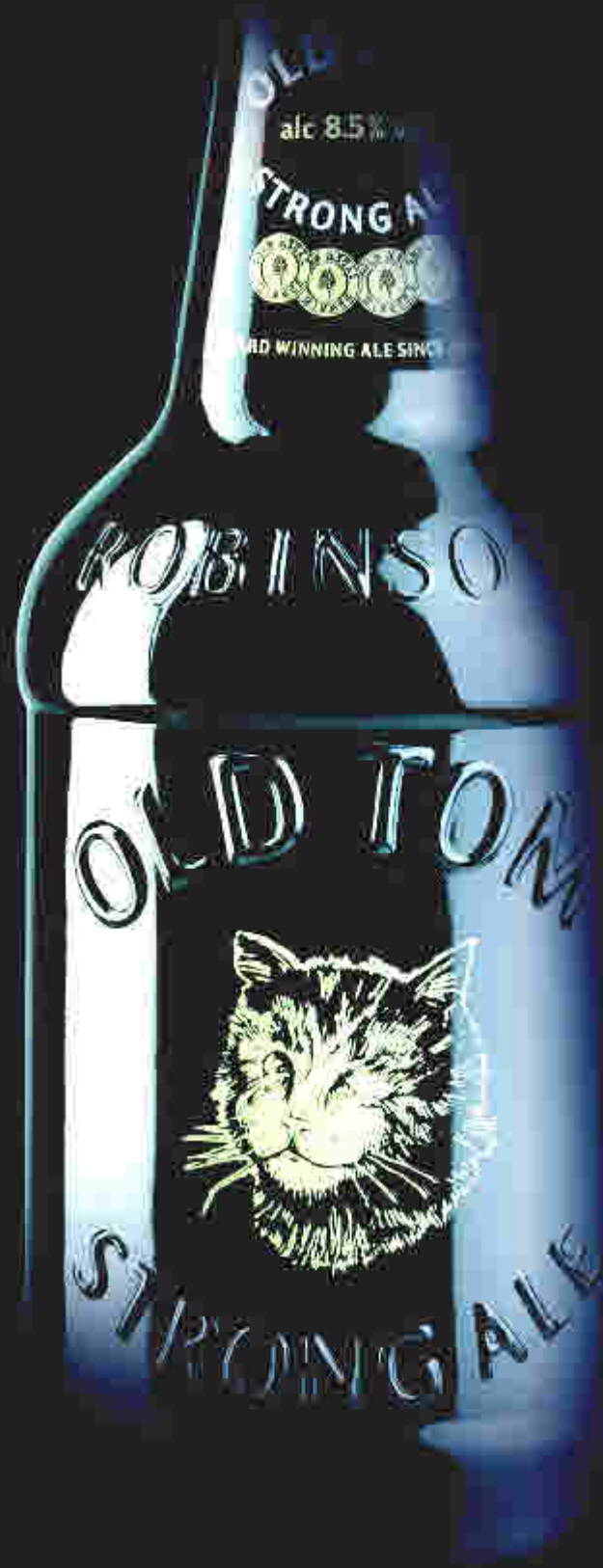


**21st-24th January  
New Century Hall  
Corporation St.  
Manchester  
M60 4ES**



**Come in from the cold and grab some winter warming**

# Don't be a mouse



Robinson's Old Tom is almost as old as the brewery itself. It is a dark and warming superior strong ale, with aromas of dark fruit and a palate booming with ripe malt and hops followed by a deep port wine finish. Over the years it has won some of the industry's most prestigious brewing awards and is now recognised as one of the most famous strong ales brewed in England.

Available from selected stores

**ASDA** **BOOTH'S** **Sainsbury's**