

MARCH 2009



Opening

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

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



Record Sell Out at National Winter Ales Festival

THE National Winter Ales Festival run by CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, broke all records. Held at Manchester's New Century Hall in January, the credit crunch defying turnout soared from 7,750 in 2008 to an incredible 8,800 this year with queues stretching round the block at almost every session.

Despite ordering 3,500 extra pints of beer, supplies still ran out at around 9.30 on the Saturday night. Record sales of traditional cider (75 gallons) and a huge array of foreign beers completed the picture. There was a huge boost to CAMRA membership, too with 130 new members signed up. CAMRA's National Executive has confirmed that the event will be back in Manchester for at least the next two years – next year's festival will run from 20-23 January. Get those diaries noted!

One of the highlights of the Festival is the announcement of CAMRA's Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain. Sadly this year there were thin pickings for the North West but nevertheless the top three were all superb beers. In bronze position was Sarah Hughe's Dark Ruby Mild from the Black Country while silver was won by Elland Brewery's 1872 Porter, just across the Pennines. Supreme Champion was the acclaimed Oakham Ales Attila. This 7.5% ABV barley wine is described by the brewer as having 'fruity notes and an elderflower aroma, with the taste of ripe red berries and citrus fruit and a long bitter fruity finish.' Congratulations to all concerned



So as one festival comes to a close, arrangements are made for the next – the 23rd Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. The entertainment has been booked and the first meeting has been held to plan the beer order. Indeed one beer has already been ordered as we have a cask of Acorn Brewery Gorlovka Stout maturing at the brewery! We also hope to have three Opening Times Birthday Beers available, including something rather special from Cellar Rat!

With more beer and cider on order than ever before this really will be an event not to be missed. Those important dates – 28 - 30 May. Venue – Edgeley Park.



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Pub OF THE Month AWARD



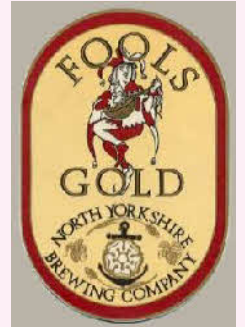
The Stockport & South CAMRA Pub of the Month for March is the Ashlea, Manchester Road, Cheadle.

The pub dates back to 1939 and was originally called the Railway being situated as it is next to the Stockport-Chester rail line and opposite the site of the long closed Cheadle station.

Originally a Boddington's house, a complicated series of ownership changes now sees the Ashlea part of the Chef & Brewer division of the Spirit Group. Consequently it is a food-driven operation – as it has been for many years in point of fact. Even in its Boddingtons days it was part of the Henry's Table chain of dining pubs.

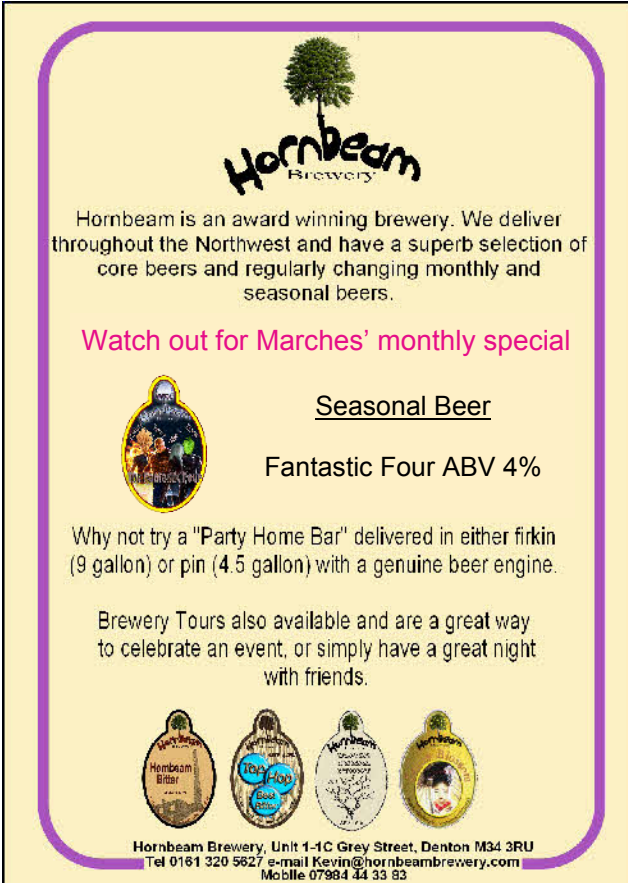
However there is still room for beer – like its fellow Chef & Brewer pub, The Didsbury, a good range of cask ales co-exists happily with an extensive menu.

The beer is invariably well kept, thanks to the efforts of master cellarman Dudley, who used to look after the beer at the nearby Cheshire Lines. The four small streams flowing through the pub's cellar also help maintain a constant year-round temperature. There are often interesting guest ales, too, with organic beers from the North Yorkshire Brewery currently finding favour.



The pub is currently run by David and his team who work hard to maintain high standards and offer everyone a warm welcome. To this end there are weekly events including an acoustic night every Wednesday and on Tuesdays a pub quiz run by Dudley, taking time off from his cellar duties. There are also themed food and drink evenings every month.

This well deserved award will be presented on Thursday, 26 March. To get there either catch the 130 or X57 buses from Manchester; from Stockport the 309, 310, 312 and 371 will drop you nearby.



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See Page 18



COMMENT, NOTES & CONTENTS

Opening Times – Comment

So it wasn't to be the Crown after all. Just before this issue of Opening Times was put together, the winner of CAMRA's national Pub of the Year was announced as Sheffield's Kelham Island Tavern. Having said that, finishing as one of the top four pubs in the country is no bad thing. The Crown will be getting a "Finalist" certificate and there will be a presentation night for this in due course.

This month we also report on the incredible success of this year's National Winter Ales Festival. Congratulations to all involved and particularly Festival Organiser Graham Donning who really took the festival by the scruff of the neck this time round. We can confirm that the event will be returning to Manchester for both 2010 and 2011. Good news indeed.

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.

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

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

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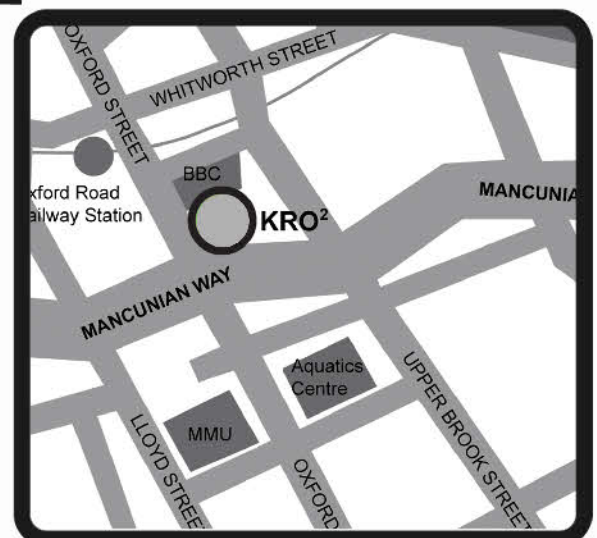
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Hazel Grove South – with John Clarke

The local Stagers of Hazel Grove have always been something of a mixed bag and to be honest too many of the pubs and the beers they have sold have been less than inspiring. Would this one, on Friday 16 January, be any different?

The first pub was the well known **Rising Sun**. This was in fact the last but one night of Dave Prunty's tenure as licensee. The following day he closed the pub in almost a blaze of publicity. Your author subsequently gave numerous media interviews about the reasons for closure and the state of the pub industry in general.

For me, the trouble with the Rising Sun was that it never seemed sure what it wanted to be. Open plan and sprawling, it perhaps spread its net too widely in terms of just who it wanted to attract. Tonight there were two cask beers – the ever-dull John Smith's Bitter and the ever-excellent Marble Manchester Bitter. We all went for this and it was very good indeed. There was a large and lively crowd in the pub, who seemed to have come along to say goodbye to Dave.

Dave Prunty seems to have blamed all and sundry for his demise (even CAMRA for not going there and drinking enough beer – oh, come on now!) but what really seems to have done for the Rising Sun was the successful and enthusiastic conversion to cask of our next pub, the **Bull's Head**.

The Bull's Head is a former Orchid Pub Company house and was one of those that reverted to Spirit Group ownership and closed for a few weeks.



Having just reopened the pub was very busy and also very loud - the music system seemed to be playing two songs at the same time.

The team is the same as before with manager Scott Pringle and his deputy, cask ale fan Nicola Park. I briefly spoke to Nicola who told me that she wanted to expand the cask ale range to once again include more local beers. Tonight though, three national brands were on the hand pumps – Greene King IPA, Black Sheep Best Bitter and Courage Best. The temperature and condition of all three were fine but none really delivered on the taste front, more to do with the beers themselves rather than any criticism of the cellar skills of the management team. One to keep an eye on, I think.

With one exception it was now Robinson's all the way. First up was the **White Hart** with Hatters and Unicorn on electric pumps. The pub has been knocked about a bit over the years but was bright and clean with a decent crowd in. The Hatters was dull but the Unicorn was much better.

Next comes the **Grapes**. This is one of the stand out pubs in the Grove and, on tonight's findings, by far the best of the Robbies houses. Elaine and George Wood



have been there for 15 years now and their experience shines through. There's a vault, lounge, lobby and another room off and the whole pub is warm and cosy. There was a good local crowd in tonight enjoying the hand pumped Hatters and Unicorn. Both were good, the Unicorn especially so.

Next door is the **Three Tunnes**. For many years this was the pub in Hazel Grove and has remained unchanged over many years. There's a multi-roomed interior with several lounge rooms and a traditional vault. The outside toilets add to the unchanging feel of the pub. Again it was the usual Hatters / Unicorn combo, this time on hand pump. Both were no more than OK with the Hatters just shading it.



Across the road is the **Horse & Jockey**. This ex-Wilsons, ex-Vaux house has recently rejoined the cask ale fold with Black Sheep Bitter and Wells' Bombardier on handpump.

It's basically all open plan with a pool table in the back vault area. Nevertheless it was clean and comfortable and obviously well run.

Having said that it was a shame that the beer slightly let down what is a much improved pub. There was nothing particularly wrong with either beer but they just seemed a bit well, ordinary.

Onwards now to the **Bird In Hand** and back to Robinsons. There was a scrum at the door of this quite badly laid out but very busy pub. A lively crowd was enjoying a karaoke and DJ and all in all this struck me as a really good boozier. The beer was, inevitably, Hatters and Unicorn, this time on electric pump. I spotted a hand pump for the seasonal beer but the clip was turned round. So, Hatters and Unicorn it was. The latter was very enjoyable but the Hatters didn't quite come up to scratch for those who tried it.

Across the road again now to the penultimate pub, the **Cock**, notable for a "to let" sign outside. There was a crowded corridor with a pool vault and a large rear room. After being served (Hatters and Unicorn, again, on hand pump) we made



our way to the "secret snug" at the left front of the pub. This is by far the best room in the place with a cosy feel and a nice old fireplace. We sat here to enjoy the room and also to try and escape the exceptionally loud karaoke DJ in the back room. Fat chance, so loud was the noise that the whole pub seemed to vibrate.

The beer wasn't up to much either. The Hatters was warm and dull while the Unicorn was totally nondescript. Together they were comfortably the worst beers of the night.

I bailed out here and my colleague *John Sutcliffe* takes up the story for the last pub.

We made a short detour from the A6 along Commercial Road to the large 1930's **Royal Oak**. Entering at the front there is a lounge area, almost the full width of the building, with a red padded bar facing the entrance situated in the right hand corner, and at the opposite end of the room, a splendid light oak staircase. The staircase was probably an original feature but the rest of the building appeared to have been refurbished around eight or nine years ago. There is another room to the rear with two pool tables. At the back there is a bowling green and an outside seating area. The Old Tom and Chocolate Tom were finished so most had the Hatters Mild that was quite good. The Unicorn Bitter was not as good. There were quite a few customers but perhaps because it is so large, it did not seem very full for a Friday night.

And that was that. Of course this is just a snapshot of what we found on one particular Friday night. The pubs and their beers might be very different at other times – why not visit a few to see what you think?

B&J MCKENNA



Soup

Mushy Peas and Crispy Salsot
£3.95

Charolais Beef and Red wine
Stew with Mash £8.95

Ham Hock Terrine with Piccalilli

Aubergine Stuffed with Goat Cheese
and Barley £7.50

Monkfish Fillet with Haricot Beans
Linguini Vegetable £9.50



Trafford & Hulme CAMRA have named the Knott Bar on Deansgate, Manchester as their Spring Pub of the Season, writes Beverley Gobbett.

Situated across the road from Deansgate Station the Knott is, as you will see from our photograph, built into a railway arch – and as a result the enjoyment of the excellent food and drink is from time to time interrupted by the rumble of trains passing overhead.

For the past five years now the pub has been run by Scott Davies. In that time he and his team have maintained a continuously high standard in both the cask ales and good food on offer, all to be enjoyed in an atmosphere that changes as the day progresses. If you want a quiet afternoon drink then this is the place for you. In the evenings, particularly at the weekends, there is a louder, vibrant and younger feel to the place.

However whatever time of day you visit you will always get a good pint of cask beer. Marble Manchester Bitter and Ginger are permanent features and the remaining three hand pumps dispense an ever changing range of guest beers, often from local micros (Phoenix and Pictish seem to be favourites).

Scott also supports CAMRA in many ways. Trafford & Hulme CAMRA use the Knott as a meeting place and also a drop off point for information around the region. The bar is also currently supporting our Locale campaign.

We have come to expect that the Knott Bar will always be a brilliant pub and so not to be complacent, we are awarding Scott and his team the Pub of the Season award on the evening of Tuesday 7 April from around 8pm. This is to mark their continued work for the Campaign and the public at large. The able team in the kitchen will also be serving us all some delights after the presentation.

Please show Scott and his team your appreciation for all of their hard work and join us in celebrating their achievement



Trafford & Hulme CAMRA's Winter Pub of the Season award was presented to the Railway, Broadheath.

The excellent heritage pub remains under threat and this award was made to highlight the fact. Pictured here is pub landlady Pam Turton (left) receiving the award from Trafford & Hulme Chair Beverley Gobbett.

Shady Oak Reopens

BRAMHALL'S Shady Oak has been thoroughly refurbished, and it re-opened its doors in mid-February. It now sells three beers - Thwaites Original; Taylor Landlord; Greene King Abbot, with guest beers to come from the Punch list in the future. Licensees Linda and Robert have been in place for about a year; they were former customers.

Built in the 1970s alongside the New House Farm estate which it so ably serves, the pub is hidden away - look for the "recycling point" sign. This is a large house set on two levels. Upon entering, there is a "chill-out" area furnished with relaxing sofas for coffee and such on the left, then comes the main bar and stand-up drinking area. This is flanked by a small lounge popular with older folk, and to the rear the dining area. Meanwhile on the right, at a higher level is the large high-ceilinged vault with TV, pool, and its own bar counter. Beyond that a former conservatory has been innovatively converted to smoking use.

A real community facility this, it plays host to occasional DJs, singers, and karaoke. It supports Childline with charity events such as beer and meat raffles. A ladies, and mixed darts team play here too. Meals are served 5 to 9 on Thursdays and Fridays plus 12-8 at weekends. Bus 374 (not Sundays) will get you there.

Meanwhile on Edgeley, longtime landlord Noel at the Royal Oak retired to Spain in early February. His assistant there, Chris Valentine has taken the reins, so there should be little perceptible change.



The popular lunches (including the fabulous "Edgeley Mess", eat your hearts out Etonians!) all continue alongside a great pint of Holts bitter

Staying in Edgeley, development seems to be underway at the three eyesore pubs we highlighted last year. The Windsor Castle has of course been demolished while I understand that building work at the Blue Bell will see the building converted into flats. The real surprise is the Church – it looks as though someone has actually bought the place and is working on site. I don't know what's happening but I can't see it reopening as a pub.

The Houldsworth in Reddish is another pub I have been surprised to see reopen. No real ale yet but the manager tells me that she is interested in putting some on, pubco policy permitting. On Portwood, though, the Old King, which has been keg for years, is now empty and to let (sporting one of the biggest "to let" sign I have seen – someone must be desperate). Also to let (yours for £49,950) is the Jolly Sailor, Davenport. This pub still trades, though and while I haven't been there for ages, last time I was in it had Theakstons and Boddingtons on hand pump.

In Hazel Grove the Rising Sun has reopened. I have had mixed reports since but when I called there was no cask beer but I am told it will be reintroduced according to demand. Moving down the A6 towards Stockport, the Crown, Great Moor has been repainted and re-signed by Robinsons. Inside, Robbies seasonal beers have made a welcome return with Trouble & Strife on hand pump when I called. Meanwhile in Offerton the White House is being rebuilt – which suggests it must have been in a poor state. There is no indication of what the building will be used for when the work is done.



High Peak

PUB NEWS

WITH FRANK WOOD

The **Soldier Dick** in Furness Vale continues to be very up and down. We hear it is currently open again as I write this (mid-February) but the choice was down to one beer, the other handpumps currently not in use. The beer on sale was Black Sheep Bitter. If planning to visit the area, never fear if it is shut, as the **Crossings**, just across the road, is getting good reports for its Robinsons Unicorn, Hatters and seasonal beer.

We hear that the **Mynt Bar** on Old Street, Ashton is taking Hopstar beers, from Darwen. At £1.20 a pint, the beers are sure to be popular.

In SK 12, Poynton, the **Bulls Head**, a former Boddingtons pub on London Road North, is going from strength to strength, with five beers on cask, the regular one being Wells & Youngs Bombardier. The **Farmers Arms** has Robinsons Unicorn, Hatters and the seasonal beer but the **Kingfisher** has no real ale. **Poynton Working Mens Club** sells cask ale, with Sam Smiths OBB and Hydes Dark seen recently. The **Boars Head**, up near the canal, takes Black Sheep Bitter and Boddingtons Bitter and **Poynton British Legion Club**, an ambassador of ale in the area, continues to sell several guest beers. I got no report from the **Vernon Arms**, which is very much a gastro type pub.

In Glossop, the **Corner Cupboard**, for many years a smooth only pub, recently began taking real ale, with a Wentworth beer reported to be on sale as we went to press. I will report more on this next time after checking it out, as I will on two other Glossop pubs that are currently shut, the **Nags Head** on Charlestown Road and the **Beehive** on Hague Street. Another pub currently shut is the **Rock Tavern**, formerly Matteo's on the road from Marple to Charlesworth.

First place in Robinson's annual Best Kept Bar and Cellar Competition has been awarded to the **Broadoak**, Ashton. The annual competition held by the brewer is now in its eleventh year and involves a comprehensive, top-to-bottom, inspection of around 360 public houses throughout the North West and North Wales.



Robert and Teresa Frost, secured a near perfect score of 297.5 points out of a possible 300. They dropped just two and a half point for their otherwise immaculate presentation, but picked up full points for their perfect bar area.

Robert has been a tenant at the Robinson's pub for 29 years, and although the Broadoak has regularly scored highly in the annual competition, this is the first time that the top spot has been secured. Continued hard work and attention to detail finally paid dividends this year in a close fought competition in which the top three contenders were separated by just one and a half points.

Robert said "I could not have achieved this alone so I particularly want to thank my manager Neil Hudson and every one of our staff for all of their hard work. I would also like to thank the many customers and friends who came along and offered their support on the awards night."

As a reward for Robert and Teresa's efforts they hosted a high profile celebration evening at the Broadoak and were presented with The Unicorn Shield which has been inscribed with their names, and will take pride of place in the pub for the coming year. The prize from Robinson's also included a valuable barrel of Unicorn Bitter.

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Robin Wignall's monthly Peak District Round-up

The Navigation in Buxworth has seen some uncertainty during last year, because of changes of managers and therefore was missing some continuity. Steve Howard and Gemma Esders have recently taken over the rôle, arriving with wide experience in pubs with various breweries and pubcos on the other side of the Pennines.

They are keen to build up the reputation of the Navigation once again. Food is still a feature and diners revisiting, this area of the business is on a sound footing. Steve is committed to real ale. He has kept the five hand pumps with Pedigree, Landlord, Marston's Bitter, Theakston's Bitter and a guest beer, yet another very good pint of York Yorkshire Terrier on my last visit. Steve is keen to access beers from local microbreweries, and is aiming to provide a second guest beer. He has also signed up the Navigation for the Mild Challenge in April/May, a good reason to get out to Buxworth and call in. The Navigation is open from late morning till late every day.

At the **Shady Oak** at Fernilee, Craig and Sue have taken on the tenancy of this Marston's, still badged Jennings, pub. They are rebuilding trade for both beer and food, and the three letting rooms are to be re-opened. They have a good background in pub food which they are keen to develop. The Credit Crunch Lunch in January had 1/2/3 courses for £5.50/£6.50/£7.50. Beers available were Jennings Cumberland and Snecklifter and Marston's Bitter. The Shady Oak is also open every day from late morning till late. New tel. No. 01663 733658. The 61 bus, Glossop- Hayfield- New Mills- Whaley Bridge - Buxton stops at the door. This runs hourly during the day until teatime every day including Sunday.

The **Old Hall** at Whitehough near Chinley continues as a dining success with booking essential for Sunday lunch, but is also well worth a call for good beer. A January visit found Marston's Bitter and Wychwood January Sale, but the highlight was Storm Beaufort's Ale from Macclesfield, a very good sharp, hoppy bitter brew.

Across at Chapel en le Frith the **Jolly Crofter** is a bit isolated at the Town End end of Chapel but is worth a visit. These days open all day, the Jolly Crofter has food available to be washed down with Robinson's Unicorn and a seasonal beer.

I understand that the **Roebuck** on the Market Place in Chapel, changed hands last year. It is good to see that it remains a rare outlet for Tetley Mild, or was it Dark Mild?, but good anyway. Tetley Bitter and Black Sheep Bitter were also available.

Across the main road in Chapel the **Royal Oak**, Marston's ex. Burtonwood, is also reported to have changed hands, but continues to be a good source of well kept Marston's Bitter. Pedigree and Wychwood January Sale were also available.

The closed Memorial in Chapel looks set to re-open as the Club House, café bar and restaurant. Recent trips to Chapel show that it is not yet trading but changes seem to be being made in preparation for opening for business.

The **White Lion** in Disley continues to provide interesting beers in good condition. On a January visit, beers from Cottage, Bowland and Salopian, amongst others, caught my eye and palate, all in good form. The White Lion also had a very good value Sunday Roast at £3.99, which may still be available.

In all the current doom and gloom, especially in the pub trade, it is good to find so much positive news. Let us hope the good signs continue as the year passes, however one item of not so good news is that in early February the White Hart in Whaley Bridge was still closed from just before Christmas. Even here there are rumours of a re-opening. Watch this space.

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CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009 We're in it!



Forced to Lie

The government are planning to make it mandatory to show official guidelines on so-called safe drinking levels on all drinks packaging, and also to display them prominently in pubs. But the problem is that these guidelines – 2 to 3 “units” a day for women and 3 to 4 for men – were, as I pointed out last year, effectively plucked out of the air and have no scientific basis. In fact a study found that the healthiest group of men were those drinking slightly more than the “safe” level, and men had to routinely drink more than 63 units a week, or well over twice the guideline, before they exceeded the health risk for someone who drank nothing.

People's body size and metabolism varies so much that it is impossible to define a one-size-fits-all level of “safe” drinking. These guidelines are effectively a kind of lowest common denominator below which alcohol consumption is highly unlikely to have any adverse health effects for anyone. But this does not mean that the opposite is true, that exceeding them is inevitably going to damage your health. If everybody religiously stuck to these limits, most of the brewing industry and pub trade would be put out of business, so brewers and licensees must feel very unhappy about being forced to display messages that they believe to be at best highly questionable, and which are potentially very damaging to their business.

We are now increasingly seeing these guidelines used to stigmatise people who by any reasonable standards would be regarded as very moderate drinkers. Recently we had Liberal Democrat MP Norman Lamb getting all worked up about a survey that showed 37% of adults had exceeded the guideline amounts in a particular week, in other words had consumed the equivalent of two pints of Robinson's Unicorn in a day. Even more shockingly, 20% of adults had consumed double the guidelines on at least one day, which they could easily do by having three pints of a premium beer such as Abbot Ale.

There is no doubt that heavy consumption of alcohol over a period of time is likely to damage your health, but the idea that people who occasionally drink three pints in a day are storing up problems for the future seems completely detached from reality. Obviously in practice these guidelines will be widely ignored, but it would be very complacent to take the view that this means they are nothing to worry about. In the longer term, if they become generally accepted in society, they could seriously undermine the brewing industry and pub trade as we know them.

Restraint of Trade

With large numbers of pubs now being disposed of by the major operators, there is a growing problem of the sellers seeking to place restrictive covenants on them to prevent future use as a pub. Of course, if a pub owner has a pub they no longer think is viable, they are fully entitled to sell it off. If nobody else thinks it is viable either, then it will be sold “for alternative use”. But if you can't make a go of it yourself, and then try to stop anyone else trying to either, it is taking a distinctly dog-in-the-manger attitude. It is also simplistic to believe that the customers of one pub will automatically go to another one nearby if the first one is closed. There are plenty of thriving pubs up and down the country that had been cast off by major pub owners as “unviable”. Customers should be entitled to decide which pubs have a future rather than being dictated to by pub companies.

Curmudgeon Online: www.pubcurmudgeon.org.uk
Curmudgeon Blog: pubcurmudgeon.blogspot.com



A6 - One Year On

Twelve months ago we launched our A6 Campaign, highlighting the appalling lack of cask ale in the pubs on the A6 between Manchester and Stockport. "The Road to No Beer" we called it and urged licensees to rise to the challenge of selling cask beer, particularly important as cask is one of the few areas showing growth in the pub trade during these difficult times.

So, one year down the line how are our target pubs faring? Well, it's something of a mixed bag. First the good news.

Welcome Gains

The Stockport stretch of the road is something of a good news story. There have been no less than three cask ale gains and there could well have been a fourth by the time you read this.



At the **Railway**, Wellington Road North, Pam and Ray arrived in November from pubs in the heart of Cheshire, the Wirral, and North Yorks. They have been in the trade since 1992 and recently did a stint at the Bells of Peover. Ray's plan is to concentrate on building the trade with the

aid of two cask beers. Beers sold so far include Jennings Cumberland (Ray's favourite), and Brakspear Bitter.



A new broom swept into the **Magnet** on Wellington Rd North in early December. Now run by a pair of experienced hands in the form of Paul (ex Bishop Blaize) and Derek. They run three other pubs in the region - Three Crowns, and Dog & Duck, both Oldham centre; and the Pineapple

in Ashton (West End). All incidentally sell cask ale, with the latter for example doing Greene King IPA and Pedigree or Old Speckled Hen when it hadn't sold the real stuff in years. Naturally then, cask is on offer at the Magnet initially being Greene King IPA and a guest.



The latest gain is the **Hope** on Wellington Road North. This long standing, and seemingly impervious keg-only outlet now stocks cask Bass. The man who brought about the change is local Edgeley lad, Matt Willoughby. He's been at the Hope since July where many changes have taken

place, especially to brighten up the decor and make the place more appealing. Bass was introduced in late January as Matt wanted to see how it sold. He chose Bass as it is not a beer you see you much of in the town.

This appealing building still displays its Hardy's mosaic, inside it has two compact rooms, vault to left, lounge with raised-seating area to right. Throughout is done in a modern decor with lovely polished wood floors. Matt being a Hatters season-ticket holder for 15 years, it comes as no surprise to see the spacious vault has been made a shrine to Stockport County with football shirts festooned from the ceiling, and insignia adorning walls. Karaoke feature on Sundays, whilst live acts appear from time to time. Meal times are 12-2.30 Monday to Friday and 12-4 Sunday. "Credit lunches" (geddit?) are available all day for a modest £2.25.

Still to come is the **Toby Carvery**. Heaton Chapel where new beer lines were due to be installed on 3 March with cask ale to follow shortly afterwards, we are told.

And Now The Bad News...

The whole point of our campaign is that today pubs need to use every weapon in their armoury to survive. Sadly this diagnosis has proved only too accurate where the pubs along the Manchester stretch of the road are concerned.

Our three cask ale champions, the **Bulls Head**, opposite Piccadilly Station, the **New Victoria** in Longsight, and the **Horseshoe** in Levenshulme soldier on. Indeed the quality of the beer in the first two could well see them appear in the next Good Beer Guide. However no less than three of the keg-only pubs have bitten the dust.



The **Levenshulme**, in its day a regular Good Beer Guide entry itself, has been closed and boarded for months with forlorn signs almost begging prospective licensees to take it on.

Further on, the **Midway**, at one time one of the grandest pubs along the entire road, has been converted to other use and its days as a public house are over. The same can be said for the **Springbank Tavern** which is not only closed but has now been demolished.



The One That Got Away...

The Spirit Group division of Punch Taverns has shown itself to be pretty enlightened when it comes to cask beer – witness the cask ale success of pubs like the **Ladybrook** in Bramhall and the **Bulls Head** in Hazel Grove. However when it comes to the **George** in Mersey Square, bone headed stupidity seems to rule the roost.

It took manager Laura Robinsons a long time to get cask ale installed and then it seemed to be on the most grudging basis. There was little or no point of sale material supplied and the price the pub was expected to charge was ridiculous. It seems someone wanted this to fail – and it has. The pub is now keg only again.

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**FIRST CLASS**

**From Frank Wood, Glossop:**

In these testing times for the pub trade, Ron Brookes, the Landlord of the Globe in Glossop told me recently that he only charged 40p per pint for Lime & Soda as drivers should not be penalised with high prices for non-alcoholic beverages when they are often transporting passengers who are out drinking for the evening.

I agree, as I am often driven around by my partner so that I can enjoy a few pints in pubs that I would normally struggle to get out to with any ease.

A quick survey one weekend found that Punch Taverns pub the Star in Glossop charge 80p pint, the Railway in Greenfield £1.25, the Crown in Glossop 60p, Glossop Conservative Club 75p, the Wetherspoons chain 75p, the Pennine Pub chain (Sportsman, Railway & Griffin) 70p... all reasonable I think.

However, when I queried the landlady at the Peels Arms in Padfield, where I quite often get driven out to on a Sunday afternoon, charging £2.60 pint recently she refused to answer my question and seemed embarrassed and offended that I had even challenged her about it.

Would you not have thought that a village pub such as this, where the car park is normally full of cars on a weekend, would treat the trade generated by cars more considerably? I would be interested to hear of any other pubs that can beat this overpricing.

**From Roy Bennett, Romiley:**

Having won the main prize in the Mild Challenge last year which involved being a Brewer for the day at the Marble Brewery I wanted to put in writing my thanks to everyone for putting up with me and for their hospitality.

For one reason and another this was not organised until early December and the thing that impressed me most was the passion and the commitment of the Brewers namely James, Dominic and Colin and just seeing how the whole operation worked behind the scenes.

Over the last 20 years I have been a frequent visitor to the Marble Arch and will continue to be and if you have not been before then you are missing out on what makes a cracking English Pub as in good beer and food, plus a great atmosphere.

Thanks to everyone once again.

**From Rhys Jones, Aberystwyth:**

I see (Pub Grub, OT February) that the Lasagne served at the Swan with Two Necks is "a world away from ... traditional staples" such as, er, lasagne. Must be that capital L that makes the difference

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Opening Times Chef Ken Birch with two new recipes for you

**Caribbean Combo Soup**

This filling starter may seem eccentrically eclectic in its combining of spicy Latin American ingredients with winy Flanders style top fermented beer, but I think it works – even as a chilled soup. If the liquid is reduced then it can be used as a sauce for chicken or goat. As it is it will suit vegetarians.

**Ingredients**

- 1½ tablespoons olive oil
- 1 packet creamed coconut, chopped into thumb-size pieces
- Half a large onion, chopped and diced
- 2 beef tomatoes, chopped (core & seeds removed)
- 3 tablespoons mild paprika
- 5 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 medium sweet potatoes
- 2 teaspoons tomato puree
- 1 tablespoon dried methi
- 2 whole green chillies, chopped
- 1/3 pint Duchess de Bourgogne or other Flemish red ale

**Mis-en-Place**

Heat the oil in a saucepan and sweat the onions. Then add the tomatoes, crushed garlic and chillies. Stir and add the paprika. When combined remove from the heat.  
 Peel the sweet potatoes and cut into oxo sized cubes. Bring ¾ pint water to the boil.  
 Add the sweet potatoes to the onion mixture and stir for one minute over a high heat. Slowly add the water and boil fiercely until the sweet potatoes are tender, adding more water if necessary.  
 Stir in the remaining ingredients, except the beer. Then stir in the beer. Ready!

**Double Fruit Beer Trifle**

Two fruits and two fruit beers is not a mere trifle. It elevates this ever popular sweet to a position close to ambrosia. A perfect end to a beery meal, especially if it follows a spicy dish such as the previous one.

**Ingredients**

- 6 plain fairy cakes or sponge cake / sponge fingers
- 2 medium bananas
- 1 lb cherries (stoned) or medium tin cherries
- 1 cherry or strawberry jelly
- 1 pint custard (made however you prefer – packet is fine)
- 1 tub whipping cream, duly whipped
- 1 bottle Jacobins kriel or other sweet cherry beer
- 1 bottle Mongozo or Chapeau banana beer

**Method**

Crumble the cakes/ sponge into a glass serving bowl and soak with ½ cup kriel. Make up the jelly as per instructions, but use only about 7/8 of the recommended liquid.  
 Slice the bananas (about the size of £1 coin), then layer on top of the sponge. When jelly has cooled and thickened add 1 tablespoon kriel. Leave until nearly set and add all but 20 of the stoned cherries. Pour the jelly over the bananas and leave to set.  
 Make up the custard substituting part of the liquid with a half cup of banana beer and, when the jelly has set, pour gently on top. Refrigerate and then decorate with cherries and whipped cream. There should be enough beer left to enjoy a slurp or two or use a fruit beer of your choice (try Sam Smiths cherry beer)



**The Old Wellington Inn.** 4 Cathedral Gates, Manchester, M13 1SW.



On previous trips out for OT, we have tended to review country pubs. So it seemed perfectly reasonable to us after a shopping trip to Manchester, to opt for a historic City Centre retreat.

Tucked away at the bottom of Cannon Street and in the shadow of the Cathedral, it is the perfect choice to relax, drink and dine. The Old Wellington Inn dates from the 1530s and moved to its present position after the terrorist bombing of 1996. Along with Sinclair's Oyster Bar next door the whole building was dismantled, relocated and rebuilt.

The Wellington has three floors. The ground floor is the preserve of drinkers. In contrast the 1st and 2nd are laid out for diners. Fabulous old wooden beams and low ceilings are in abundance everywhere. There always seems to be an excellent range of beers available including the two regulars, Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Jennings Cumberland Ale. We started with a guest ale, Sharps Dooms Bar 4% ABV, on tip-top form. Forthcoming beers listed at the time of our visit included beers from Skinners, Holdens, and Adnams. The beer and cellar manager for the last 18 months is Pete Allen, formerly from the Piccadilly Tavern, is very committed to the real ale cause. A couple of plus notes that caught our eye: - The crest on the guest beers' pump clips display tasting notes for those not familiar with the beer. You can also order a nip (1/3 of a pint) for £1 and you can order specially created sampling trays of up to 6 nips. Two excellent innovations!



We quickly selected two starters. Chris had Sole Goujons with tartar sauce and lemon. Although very nice, they were a little lost on the large dinner plate they were served on. Karen chose Baked Baby Camembert with toasted Ciabatta and real ale chutney. This was very imaginatively presented, arriving in its box with the paper wrapping still intact if a little charred at the edges for effect. Very tasty indeed!

Turning our attention to main courses, the Wellington specialises in a large selection of pies from Dunkerleys of Northamptonshire. Chris picked one that grabbed his fancy, the Turkey, Stilton and Port pie. Absolutely delicious, packed with turkey and very strong Stilton cheese and just balanced with the delicate flavour of Port. It came with mashed potato and carrot and vegetables. Karen had a sirloin steak matured for 28 days. Very tender and full of flavour. Served with chips, button mushrooms and a tomato. Don't ignore the wine list, we can definitely recommend it.

The Wellington is a Mitchell and Butler managed house and managed extremely well by Gareth Williams. We found the service excellent and the staff very knowledgeable of both the food and the beer. Meals are served every day until 10pm. A Sunday roast is available and breakfast is served daily. The Old Wellington Inn is an excellent alternative to the plethora of chain cafes and pubs the city seems to be crammed with. You can enjoy a good pint with a good meal - try it for yourself and see.

**Chris & Karen Wainwright**



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## Stalybridge Buffet Bar

THE final stage in the long running saga that has been the restoration of Stalybridge Station Original Buffet Bar was reached last month with the unveiling of the fully rebuilt and restored conservatory. Using as much of the old materials as possible, notably the stained glass, the conservatory is now back to its former glory.



The new conservatory was formally opened by Lord Tom Pendry, the former MP for Stalybridge, who played a major role in the campaign to save the Buffet Bar from closure. Our photograph

shows Lord Pendry (second right) between Sylvia Wood and John Hesketh who have run the Buffet Bar so successfully in recent years

### A Brief History

Stalybridge Station's Original Buffet Bar is located on Platform 1 of Stalybridge Railway Station, writes *Ralph Warrington*. It was Christmas 1845 when the Sheffield, Ashton and Manchester Railway opened a branch line from Guide Bridge to Stalybridge. This was the first railway to come to the area. The line was extended to Huddersfield via the Standedge Tunnel and a further two railway companies shared the station in Stalybridge.

Complaints of poor facilities and overcrowding led to a large new station operated by the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway and the London North Western Railway opening on 2nd May 1885. The Buffet Bar, with its original conservatory dates from this time.

The Buffet Bar is a remarkable survivor of a time when most stations of any size had such a facility. At their nadir in the 1980's, there were just two original refreshment rooms operating, Stalybridge and one at Manningtree in Essex.

The Buffet Bar developed a reputation as a champion of traditional values, traditional music and traditional beer under the stewardship of the fondly remembered Dorothy Redfern, landlady from 1968 to 1987, during which time it came to be known as 'Dot's Diner'. After her death, her son Ken took over and fought hard against the machinations of British Rail/Railtrack, who had various schemes in mind from a barebones, de-manned station to a redeveloped 'wine bar and restaurant', and most other options between the two at some time or another.

To fend off these manoeuvres, 'The Friends of Stalybridge Station' a coalition of interested groups and individuals was formed, raising the profile of The Buffet Bar, and garnering massive publicity so that BR backtracked and offered a revamped Buffet Bar. With this secured, Ken, with a little reluctance, but no small satisfaction, moved to pastures new and The Buffet Bar closed for refurbishment, including the provision of its own toilets, much to the relief of the gentlemen patrons who previously had to endure the 'long march' to the gents at the opposite end of a platform renowned for its biting wind in winter.

The reopening of The Buffet Bar in 1996 followed a few weeks of building and electrical work, which in turn followed weeks of nail biting waiting to find out who British Rail, or rather Railtrack, were going to select as the lucky applicants. Originally The Buffet Bar only consisted of Conservatory, Bar and Kitchen. The part the previous tenant, (Ken Redfern and before that his parents), used as living accommodation were the Station Staff Room and General Waiting Room, while the current large room was the Ladies Waiting Room, 1st Class.

The cost of the 1885 station, tracks and all ancillary work was £23,156!



To mark the 25th Birthday Year of Opening Times we are commissioning a series of commemorative beers from local breweries, one per month (although one or two "extras" are also likely). Each month we will be featuring the brewery producing the beer and also tell you a bit about the beer itself. The third in the series comes from Heywood's Phoenix Brewery.

### About the Brewery

**T**ony Allen's Phoenix Brewery in Heywood is one of the survivors from the original micro brewery boom of the early 1980s.

Brewery founder Tony Allen started his career with a rather larger concern, namely Bass where he spent 13 years working first at Sheffield and then, from 1973, at Runcorn. The huge keg plant at Runcorn has long since closed down but the Phoenix brewery lives on.

It was in fact founded in 1982 as the Oak Brewery and at that time was based in Ellesmere Port. Nine years later Tony upped sticks and moved to the premises of the old Phoenix Brewery in Heywood, a location more central to his growing free trade.



Few micros have premises as impressive as Phoenix, occupying as it does part of the premises of the old Phoenix Brewery, a company whose third bankruptcy in 1939 proved to be final. Its legacy, though, is an impressive building retaining many of its original features which are slowly being restored.

Today's Phoenix Brewery occupies the old maltings and itself has been the subject of considerable investment in recent years with a new malt store, fermenting vessels and conditioning tanks. Around 100 barrels a week are produced, supplying 400-plus outlets. There is a core range plus many monthly specials and some occasional one-offs. Highlights include:

**Hopsack (3.8%)** – a pale very hoppy beer with a lingering bitter finish.

**Arizona (4.1%)** – a refreshing yellow beer with citrus, hops and good bitterness.

**White Monk (4.5%)** – aromatically hoppy with a fruity taste and a hoppy, bitter finish.

**Wobbly Bob (6%)** – a cult beer with a malty, fruity flavour with bitterness and sweetness throughout. Dangerously drinkable.

### About the Beer

**W**HILE Phoenix Brewery makes some superb darker beers – check out the legendary Wobbly Bob as well as Monkeytown Mild, Black Bee and the iconic Phoenix Porter, it is best known for paler and hoppier brews. Our Birthday Beer will be no exception.

Inspired by the lower gravity Hopsack, this 5% pale beer is brewed using Mount Hood and Brewers Gold hops. These will produce a sweet floral nose leading to a moderately bitter beer with a light finish. It sounds dangerously drinkable. Enjoy!



# The Crescent

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### Bowling Green and Ducie Arms

Now here are two pubs on the up and up. The **Bowling Green** is on Grafton Street while the **Ducie Arms** on Devas Street, both in Chorlton-on-Medlock. Both are run by Kev Bayles who is putting them both on the map both on the beer front and also with some interesting food options.

The Bowling Green is a Punch Taverns pub, and Kev is making full use of their Finest Cask list of guest beers. The permanent beers are St Austell Tribute and Brains Reverend James and alongside these are two changing guest beers – those planned for March include Exmoor Hound Dog, Vaux Double Maxim and Evan Evans Warrior, an enterprising and imaginative range.

Meanwhile the Ducie is an ex-Burtonwood house and so now gets its beer from the Marston's group of breweries, long with one or two others. Six hand pumps are in use featuring regular beers such as Ringwood Bitter, Marston's Bitter and Jennings Cumberland Ale. Ringwood Old Thumper has recently been added to the permanent range. Planned guests for March include Ringwood Bold Forrester and Wychwood Paddy's Trout amongst others.



While the two pubs have differing beer ranges, they share similar menus. These include pub staples such as ham, egg and chips, steak & kidney pudding and chilli, supplemented by some specials, for example butternut squash curry.

However what really catches the eye speciality sausage and burger selections. The range is wide and unusual, including such variants as kudu, impala, kangaroo, bison and ostrich. There is also venison, apple and cranberry; springbok, rosemary and red wine plus three wild boar variants.

I chose the wild boar, spring onion and stilton which comes with either two eggs and (proper home made) chips or mash and onion gravy. I went for the egg and chip option which proved to be a snip at £5.95.

Food is available from 12-2 and 5-8 Monday to Friday. Both pubs are highly recommended for both food and beer.

### Lass O'Gowrie

There's always something happening here. And it's always good news.

The pub is currently working with Dave Porter's Outstanding Brewery for a low gravity (3.6% – 3.7%) house beer. It's going to be called Betty's Bitter and should be on sale this month, if all goes according to plan.

In addition the Lass has tied up a deal with north Wales' Conwy Brewery which should see their excellent beers being regularly stocked at the pub. This will make the Lass the only regular outlet for these beers in Greater Manchester we think. Finally, the pub has now negotiated freedom from tie on bottles and the first results from this should see a range of German beers available in the pub.

### Castle and Other Pubs

The good news to come out last month was that of the planned reopening of the **Castle** on Oldham Street. The Grade II listed pub is scheduled to reopen this month (perhaps an optimistic forecast we think) and will be undergoing extensive restoration. The front bar and snug are to be the first to open but it seems that the back room may take up to a year to restore.

The famously foetid toilets will also be replaced with customers using a portacabin toilet for the time being (itself a huge improvement on the standard of the facilities!).

The people behind this scheme are Rupert Hills (who played Jamie Baldwin in Corrie) along with his business partners Jonny Booth (ex-manager of the Temple of Convenience off Oxford Street) and Miz de Shannon from Cup Café on Thomas Street.

The plan is to keep the Castle as the traditional boozier it has always been. This is good news for both Robsinons who own the pub and the City Centre pub scene.

Elsewhere it's a mixed bag. Passing the **Barleycorn**, Barlow Moor Road, all the windows were papered over and there was a sign on the door stating "The Barleycorn has now closed". Looked like it was a very recent occurrence as there were people inside and the TVs were still on. On return later, the pub had been boarded up so it is definitely a long term, if not permanent closure.

I finally got round to checking **The Art Of Tea**, Barlow Moor Road which began its evening openings a couple of weeks ago. Sadly, no real ale. In fact nothing on draught at all. They do have a selection of St Peter's Ales in bottles alongside decent selection of foreign stuff. But wait for this - the St Peter's are a whopping £3.60 a bottle! And yes, they are the same bottles you can get in Majestic for £15 a dozen.

Next some rare good news from Levenshulme where there is a cask ale gain to report. Yes, really. At long last Sam Smith's **Bluebell** on Barlow Road has at installed Old Brewery Bitter on handpump. This is a long established keg outlet so its return to cask is very welcome. The other long term keg Sam Smiths pub is the **Turnpike** in Withington – I will have to get down there to see if that has also seen the light. It would be a remarkable turn of events if it has.

Finally I am told that the **Farmers Arms** in Burnage has been sold by Hydes. The purchaser is apparently Laurence Hennigan of Levenshulme fame. I have no news of what his plans for the pub might be.

**Excellent Selections of Cask Ales in Chorlton-on-Medlock**

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# Brewery NEWS

Stockport's family brewer, Robinson's have been in the news lately for a variety of reasons – all of them positive. The real good news, for Robinson's tenants and customers alike is that there are to be no beer price increases, apart from duty, for the rest of this year.

"Ordinarily this time of year we would carry out a price review.

This year we won't be carrying one out," said William Robinson.

"Looking at the industry and the economic climate we felt that, from the licensees' point of view, it was not the right time to be suffering price increases."

He said trading across the estate was roughly in line with the industry and tenants had been asking for rent

concessions, although "not a huge number". "In its own way, [the price freeze] is as valuable and in some ways more valuable than rent concessions," he added.

Robinsons have also announced a six figure investment to re-equip the Unicorn Brewery with a new brewing plant to give the company much more flexibility. This is welcome news and a sign of the company's continued commitment to its future independence.



## Other Family Brewer News

Robinson's are carrying on with Trouble & Strife as their seasonal beer this month. The other local family brewers have some new beers out, though.

**Hydes** – the craft ale for March and April is Spin Doctor (4.2%). This is a tawny beer with a bitter sweet flavour balance, made using Challenger, Fuggles and Target hops. This had an early outing in late February for the Fletcher Moss Pub of the Month night and was very well received by those present.

**JW Lees** – out for the three months March to May is Hopping Mad (3.5%). This is a hoppy beer made with crystal malt and Styrian hops – it is dark brown in colour with a liquorice smell, a full bodied taste and a roasted finish.



## Micro Brewery News

As usual there is a wealth of new beers from our local micro brewers. Again apologies to those we were unable to make contact with this month. But first news of a brand new brewery in the pipeline.

We have already reported on the planned brewery at the **Old Hall** near Chinley. Now it seems that another Peak District brewery will be opening later in the year. This is the **Buxton Brewery** which, if all goes according to plan, will be opening in an old farm building behind Staveley Lane Industrial Park in either June or July. Progress has been painfully slow to date as premises were sought and planning permission obtained. There is still some way to go but we hope to keep our readers up to date with progress.

The people behind the brewery are Geoff Quinn and Richard Garnett, cask ale enthusiasts both, who have dabbled in home brewing previously. Their beers will in fact be out and about before the brewery is ready as they will be brewing them on the Leek Brewery plant – look out for them in the next six weeks or so. Planned at this stage are a pale ale, ruby ale, a stout and a porter.

**Bank Top** – we are pleased to report that the Opening Times birthday beer, featured last month, sold very well. Coming this

month is Leprechaun, a 6% ABV dry stout made for St Patrick's Day.

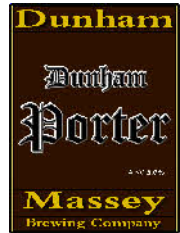
The brewery is also experimenting with a new 3.6% beer to replace Bikes & Trikes. This has to be replaced as the Pride of Ringwood hops used in the recipe are currently unavailable.

**Greenfield** – another brewery doing well with sales currently beating last year's figures. This month look out for Friezland Ale (4.2%), described as a rich ruby red bitter with a slight liquorice taste.

**Millstone Brewery** – up at Mossley Jon and Nick continue to brew flat out. The latest in the "pub series" is Ye Olde Vic, named after one of Stockport's top pubs, of course. Next month sees another one in the series with The Wellington, a 4% pale and hoppy beer brewed using Nelson Sauvin hops. Millstone have also been picking up awards in the SIBA competitions. True Grit won gold in the 5% class, and bronze overall in the 5% class while 3 Shires picked up silver in its class.

Both beers have now gone forward to the national SIBA competition and the results are eagerly awaited.

**Dunham Massey** – always something happening here and a new brew has been produced for 2009. This is Dunham Porter, to give a total portfolio of 13 real ales. The newcomer is a classic old-style English porter, ABV 5.2%, dark, creamy, full-bodied and packed with flavour. As with all the other beers, this one is available at the brewery shop in bottle-conditioned form.



Also, the brewery has been given yet another award to add to John Costello's impressive list. The Chocolate Cherry Mild won Beer of the Festival at the Woking CAMRA event. This brought the tally for 2008 to **10 Awards**, including five for Beer of the Festival. This must surely be a record for a new Brewery!

**Hornbeam** – Kevin Rothwell still has some blackcurrant concentrate left from producing the first Opening Times birthday beer. So last month he produced Blackcurrant Stout (4.7%), an excellent fruity beer. Also creeping out unannounced was February Gold (3.6), a superb quencher made with Serachi, Nelson Sauvin and Mount Hood hops. This month will see Fantastic Four (4%) a pale bitter made using Admiral, Target, Cascade and Mount Hood hops at various stages of the brewing process. No doubt a couple of others will also appear.

**Marble** – after the fantastic success of 1425 (did anyone not like it?), last month saw 1425v2 (5.9%) This was an astonishing (and excellent) marriage of Chinook and Nelson Sauvin hops, a real clash of the titans of the hop world.

Definitely one for the hopheads. They're not done yet. This month will see 1425v3 and more are planned.

There is also a third Marble outlet in the pipeline. Marble Beers are looking to take over the former Love Saves The Day premises on Thomas Street in the Northern Quarter. However everything is still at a preliminary stage with little matters of planning consent and licensing to sort out. Great news if it all comes off, though, and OT will keep you up to date with developments.

**Bollington Brewery** – Lee Wainwright continues to make some classy beers and two recent additions to the range have been seriously impressive. Oat Mill Stout (5%) is an oatmeal stout with a twist. "A hoppy bitter taste keeps the sweetness in check and allows for a great dark beer" says the brewery website, and it is right, too. Excellent stuff. At the other end of the spectrum, Wheat Nancy (4.3%) is a golden crisp bitter brewed with wheat malt giving body and flavour. Lee has also agreed to make the Opening Times birthday beer for April so we think we are in for a treat.

**Phoenix** – OTT (5%) is the Opening Times birthday beer for March (see page 15). In addition Tony Allen has produced Chain of Office (3.8%) for the Lady Mayor of Accrington. This mid-golden, rounded session beer is selling very well. Two regulars coming back this month are March Hare (4.4%) and Shamrock (4.3%) – these should be widely available in the local free trade.





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*

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup>** – Fallowfield / Ladybarn Stagger. Start 7.30pm White Swan, Green St; 8.30pm Friendship, Wilmslow road.

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>** – Trip to Empire Brewery & Huddersfield free houses. Depart Crown, Heaton Lane 11am; return by 9pm. Book with Margaret O'Brien on 0798 1756720 (eves only).

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>** – Pub of the Month presentation to the Ashlea, Cheadle. From 8pm.

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April** – **Branch Meeting & AGM, Blossoms, Buxton Rd, Heaviley. All members please try and attend this important meeting.**

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

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup>** – Campaigning meeting: Society Rooms (Wetherspoons), Macclesfield. Starts 8pm

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April** - Improved Newcomer Award, Old Kings Head, Byrons La, Gurnett.

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)*

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup>** – Manchester City Centre Survey: meet City Arms 5.30pm; Ape & Apple 7pm; Athenaeum 8pm; Corbieres 8.45pm' Moon Under The Water 9.30.

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>** – Urmston Survey: meet Tim Bobbin 8pm; Chadwicks 8.45; Steamhouse 9pm

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April** – Branch Meeting: Waterhouse, Princess St, Manchester. Starts 8pm

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April** – Spring Pub of the Season presentation to the Knott, Deansgate. 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)*

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April** – Branch Meeting: Lantern Pike, Little Hayfield. Starts 8.30pm

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 18<sup>th</sup>** – **Branch Meeting & AGM, Unicorn, Church St, Manchester. Starts 8pm. All members please try and attend this important meeting**

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>** – City Crawl: Bank, Moseley St, 8pm; Seven Oaks, Nicholas St, 9pm; Fab café, Portland St 10pm.

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April** – City Fools Crawl: Font Bar, New Wakefield St 7.30pm; Old Nags Head, Jacksons Row 8.15pm; Ox, Liverpool Rd, 9pm; Lass O'Gowrie, Charles St, 10pm

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup>** – Blackley Cask Ale Week Crawl: Millstone, New Blackley Rd 8pm; Fox Inn 9pm; Golden Lion, Old Market St 10pm.

# It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

**Join CAMRA Today..**

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 Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 3LW. Alternately you can join online at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk).

**CAMRA newsletter Opening Times**

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|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--|
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| Partner              | Title                | Surname              | Forename(s)          | Date of Birth                                       |  |
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| Joint          | £27 <input type="checkbox"/> | £25 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Under 26       | £16 <input type="checkbox"/> | £14 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Under 26 Joint | £19 <input type="checkbox"/> | £17 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Retired        | £16 <input type="checkbox"/> | £14 <input type="checkbox"/> |
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Signed .....

Date .....

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- 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.

## Recent CAMRA Awards



The November Pub of the Month Award went to the Railway, Portwood. Sue and Vince Hitchen are pictured above with their certificate. The January winner was the Ladybrook in Bramhall. Seen below are Manager Sarah Ridgway and cellarman James Darcey receiving their award from Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Chairman John Clarke (left).



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# 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: -

|                                                           |                                                                                                      |                                                        |                                                |
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| <p><b>The Railway</b><br/>Stockport<br/>0161 429 6062</p> | <p><b>The Griffin Inn</b><br/>(Site of our Rossendale Brewery)<br/>Haslingden<br/>01706 21 40 21</p> | <p><b>The Sportsman</b><br/>Hyde<br/>0161 368 5000</p> | <p>Contact Geoff Oliver<br/>01706 21 40 21</p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|

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**Floral Dance**  
Pennine Ale Ltd

**Railway Sleeper**  
Pennine Ale Ltd

**Hameldon Bitter**  
Pennine Ale Ltd

**Pitch Porter**  
Pennine Ale Ltd

**Sunshine**  
Pennine Ale Ltd

**Rossendale Ale**  
Pennine Ale Ltd

## February & March

**TROUBLE & STRIFE** ABV 4.1%

Premium copper red ale with distinctive deep, fruity, wild American hop aroma. This rich, full bodied, bitter beer has a hop dominated palate but also exhibits an interesting balance of biscuit and burnt toffee flavours.



# Trouble & Strife



alc 4.1% vol

