



JUNE 2009

Opening

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

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

D-Day for Pubcos

MPs last month delivered a scathing verdict on the business model of the major pub companies. The report by the House of Commons Business & Enterprise Committee found "alarming evidence" that there may be major problems caused by the dominance of the large pub companies.

From the consumer's point of view there are two major recommendations. First and foremost is the question of the beer tie. This has become a major bone of contention with pubco tenants and lessees; the Committee recommends that they should all be given the option of negotiating free of tie deals. The Committee goes on to say "we believe that the supply ties operated by pubcos may well be anti-competitive and may well have a detrimental effect on the public house market". They recommend that supply ties in the pub industry are referred to the Competition Commission. The MPs do however recognise the importance of local brewers with tied estates and make clear that they have no wish to damage regional brewers.

Another recommendation concerns the practice of pubcos selling pubs with restrictive covenants preventing their future use as public houses – Enterprise Inns has been notably guilty of this practice. The Committee makes the obvious point that "it is for the market to decide whether a pub is unviable and not for a pubco to restrict a building's use".

The report could not have come at a worse time for the major pub companies. Their business models have never been tested in the face of a fierce recession and they are visibly creaking at the seams. Both Punch Taverns and Enterprise Inns are struggling with huge debt mountains and have resorted to selling off the family silver to stay afloat. Punch in particular is selling pubs wholesale, with local brewers snapping up some prime sites.



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CAMRA Welcomes PubCo Report

CAMRA has welcomed the following recommendations from the Business and Enterprise Select Committee:

"that the Government addresses the inequalities of bargaining power between pub companies and lessees" and

"that the Government ban companies selling pubs with restrictive covenants preventing them being used as pubs in the future".

CAMRA has further suggested that there should be an independent economic study into the operation of the beer tie by the Office of Fair Trading before the Government decides to refer the issue to the Competition Commission for a lengthy investigation. Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, said:

"While the issue of the 'beer tie' needs to be assessed to ensure fairness to all parties we are not yet convinced of the need for a lengthy Competition Commission Investigation. A two to three year investigation would create huge disruption and uncertainty for the UK's pub owners, licensees and consumers. A lengthy investigation may also serve to delay urgent action to deliver fairness to struggling pub licensees and their customers."

"CAMRA supports the principle of the "beer tie" provided that the higher prices licensees are required to pay for their beer supplies are balanced by a lower rent, credible business support and the option of stocking a guest beer."

"We are delighted that the committee has backed CAMRA's campaign to end the immoral practice of selling pubs with restrictive covenants that prevent them being used as pubs in the future. This deplorable practice deprives communities of valued pubs, reduces consumer choice and may ultimately lead to higher pub prices in a particular area due to a lack of competition."

"CAMRA has long been concerned about the unbalanced relationship between pub companies and lessees and hopes that the Government will look at this issue with great urgency. A mandatory code of conduct providing a set of legally enforceable rights for lessees, particularly relating to rent calculations, would be of huge benefit and should not be delayed until after a lengthy investigation."

1984 – 2009: Opening Times is 25 years old this month – see feature on page 11.

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COMMENT, NOTES & CONTENTS

Opening Times – Comment

As damning reports go, the House of Commons Business & Economics Committee is particularly severe, and extremely bad news for the giant pub companies. Greg Mulholland MP, writing in *The Publican* summed it up perfectly “So, now it is official: the way that big pub companies are operating ‘the tie’ is bad for tenants, bad for pub customers and a threat to the future of the British pub”. What happens next remains to be seen but the consensus is that the Government cannot ignore these findings.

It is ironic that one of the report’s recommendations is that pubs should not be sold with restrictive covenants preventing their re-use as pubs. In point of fact this practice was illegal under the much derided Beer Orders. Unfortunately in a classic case of throwing out the baby with the bathwater they were abolished in their entirety by the present government...

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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Postal subscriptions are available at £7 for 12 issues (make cheques payable to *Opening Times*). Apply to John Tune, 4 Sandown Rd, Cheadle Heath, Stockport, SK3 0JF.

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

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Stockport | 08454 040506 | Trafford | 0161 9122274 |
| Manchester | 0161 234 1555 | Derbyshire | 08456 058058 |
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| Tameside | 0161 342 8355 | | |

Copy Date for the July issue is Friday 12 June

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The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for June 2009 has been won by the Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris.

As you walk in the door of the Nursery the door mat proudly proclaims that this was CAMRA's National Pub of the Year in 2001. However things have moved on in the pub since then with the longstanding licensee at that time retiring and his step son, Simon Wetton taking over. Be assured however the quality of both the beer and the pub remains undiminished. Tucked away at the end of a cobbled street the Nursery remains at the heart of the community, attracting a great mix of people to live music, quizzes and the local groups meeting in the function room upstairs. It also serves excellent food including a highly regarded Sunday lunch. To say the place is popular would be an understatement and for many very good reasons!

This 1930s Hyde's pub is an absolute classic. With its magnificent wood panelled interior the pub it's easy to see why the Nursery is in CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. Through a separate entrance to the side is the traditional vault and to the rear is a lovingly tendered bowling green. There is nothing better than sitting with your pint at one of the tables around the green especially if there's a game on.

The beer range is exceptional for a tied house with two milds, Hydies Mild and Owd Oak together with the Original Bitter, Jekyll's Gold, the seasonal beer (which should be Sacre Bleu) and a guest beer. All these beers are of the highest quality, so much so the pub is our longest standing Good Beer Guide entry.

So why not join the local CAMRA branch to celebrate the award which will be presented to Simon and his staff on Thursday, 25 June when, I am sure, a great night will be enjoyed by all. Take this opportunity to find out why the Nursery is still truly one of Stockport's must visit pubs. It will be a rare double celebration not only to loudly applaud the Pub of the Month award but also the presentation of a very rare award recognising the pub's 25 years in the Good Beer Guide.

The pub is only five minutes walk from the A6 down Heaton Road or Bowerfold Lane or 10 minutes from Heaton Moor down Green Lane itself. Don't miss it! **JF.**



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Night Half-Life

A RECENT Friday night pub crawl around central Stockport found a couple of perfectly decent pubs very quiet, and the Underbanks eerily deserted at around 10 pm. Some pubs such as the Crown, Railway and Arden Arms do well, but overall Stockport very much lacks the vibrant "night-time economy" of many of the other major towns in Greater Manchester. There's also a marked dearth of restaurants in the town centre over and above the usual fast food outlets. It seems as though, if people want a good night out, they head off to Manchester rather than remaining in the town.

So what could be done to make the town centre a bit more lively and welcoming in the evenings? One major factor must be the effective banning of traffic in the town centre streets. Pedestrianised streets may work during normal shopping hours, but in the evening they turn an area into a dead zone. If the dreaded rising bollards on Underbank were permanently retracted after 4 pm, and traffic was allowed along Princes Street after 6 pm, it could well make a big difference. However, you have to be careful what you wish for, as it is highly likely that a revitalisation of night-time Stockport would mostly just lead to the spread of chain bars and takeaways.

As an alternative, maybe what Stockport needs to do is to promote its unparalleled collection of high-quality traditional pubs rather than just trying to ape every other town centre in the region. "Stockport - the civilised night out" might not be too bad a slogan.

Punch Drunk

FOR a number of years, I've held the view that the giant pub companies were ultimately unsustainable. The key reason for this was that they had no unique selling proposition. It's quite clear what differentiates a Robinson's pub, or a Wetherspoon's pub, from the competition, but what does a Punch pub have that an Enterprise Inns one doesn't? They were far more driven by financial engineering than pub retailing.

Now, with the recession, the chickens are really coming home to roost, with Enterprise and especially Punch Taverns in an increasingly precarious financial position. Apparently Punch's debts now exceed the total value of their property portfolio. In these circumstances, it's not surprising that they're engaged in a fire sale of their crown jewels to various family brewers. In the South-East, Fullers, Charles Wells and Adnams have benefited from this, and now in the North-West first Lees and now Robinson's have bought tranches of pubs from Punch.

In the longer term, this is likely to lead to a major shift in the balance of power in the pub trade away from the pub companies as heirs of the former Big Six national brewers towards the family brewers, who were once derided as an anachronism. You have to wonder whether the heirs of defunct companies such as Home and Vaux might feel a twinge of regret about selling out. And how long can we expect the giant pub companies to survive in anything like their current form?

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



Stockport South with Pete Farrand

There was a certain air of anticlimax as we set out on the first Friday after the Easter weekend.

Our first port of call for the evening was the decidedly empty **Nelson** on Wellington Road South opposite the Town Hall. The lack of students from the college next door may account for the fact that they had only one cask beer on, Fullers London Pride, which was very poor. They were quite happy to change the beer, the only problem was that there was no other cask beer to change it to.



Swiftly passing the keg-only **Town Hall Tavern** it was on to our second stop of the evening, the **Unity**, further down Wellington Road opposite Stockport station approach. Under the previous management this pub seemed to be a continuous Karaoke. It was refreshing to actually be able to see the pub and the admirable collection of Stockport photographs on the walls. The choice of beers was Robinsons Unicorn and also Hartleys XB, brewed by Robinsons but somewhat hard to find in Stockport. We all drank the XB which was in good condition.



Only a few paces away was our next pub of the evening, the split level **Little Jack Horner's** on Wellington Street,



where the only cask beer was Black Sheep Bitter, which was in good condition and enjoyed by all. Here they usually also sell Deuchars IPA, Marstons Pedigree and Charles Wells Bombardier. I was

told that thirsty drinkers over Easter had almost drunk the place dry. There is an interesting collection of just about every spooft pub notice you could imagine, behind the bar.

We then took a short walk leading through the front door of the **Peter's Square Tavern** and straight out of the back door as there was no cask on sale.

So swiftly on to our next calling point, the **Royal Oak** on High Street, the closest Robinsons pub to the brewery

now that the Spread Eagle has closed. The beer was excellent, particularly the Hatters Mild. This one room pub was rebuilt a number of years ago in the no frills style common to many Robinson's pubs built at the time. It is notable how large the Gents is for the size of pub. The evening's Karaoke was just starting so we made our way down Hillgate to Joseph Holt's **Winters**.



Those with a long memory will remember that Winters was a Jewellers and Holt's did an impressive conversion retaining the original frontage which includes a magnificent clock, the mechanism of which can be seen in the upstairs lounge. The ground floor has the feel of a Vault with bare tiled & wood floors. The only cask beer available was a reasonable pint of Holt's bitter.



Our next pub, the **Queens Head** on Little Underbank, is also a conversion, this time by Samuel Smiths, from the tasting room of a wine & spirit merchants, Turners Vaults. On entry you are greeted with an array of (redundant) spirit taps, which were originally fed by gravity from casks stored on the first floor.



There are three small drinking areas starting with bench seating around the bar leading on to a small room with bench seating with newspaper racks above, and then onto a small lounge where we settled to enjoy our drinks. Old Brewery Bitter may be Sam Smith's only cask beer but it is consistently amongst the cheapest available in Stockport, and

good with it. One feature not on display is 'The Compacto' behind the first door off the corridor, this is reported to be the world's smallest Gents, but is no longer in active service.

Our last call of the evening was supposed to be the **White Lion** on the corner where Little & Great Underbanks meet. This has recently returned to serving cask ale, but we were not prepared to fork out £5 to see 'The Band', so the stagger came to an abrupt unplanned end. As we moved on to a well known multi-ale free house for last orders we passed the, previously Good Beer Guide listed but now closed **Three Shires**, which served as a sad reminder of the severe pressures that the licensed trade now faces.

If you wish to try any of these pubs yourself, all pubs mentioned are within easy walking distance from Stockport train and bus stations.



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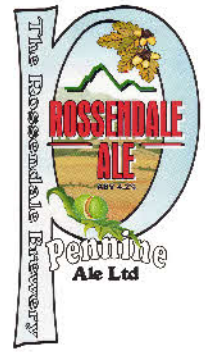
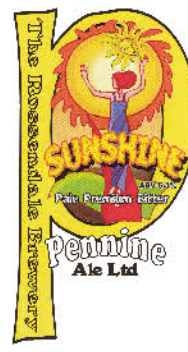
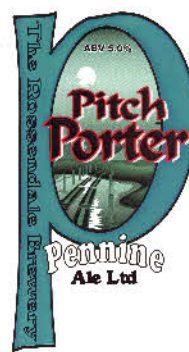
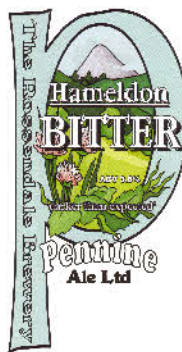
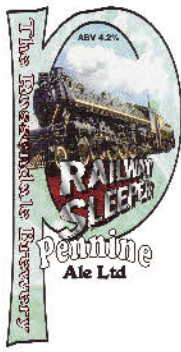
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Italian Cauliflower Cheese Soup

Ingredients

- 1 medium cauliflower
- 1 250g tub of ricotta cheese
- Half pint tomato passata (or tomato concasse)
- Quarter pint milk
- 3 finely chopped shallots
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 5-6 large cloves of garlic
- 2 teaspoons tomato puree
- 2-3 teaspoon hot paprika (available in Polish shops)
- 2-3 pints water
- 1 bottle Peroni Gran Reserve
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 1-2 teaspoons grated parmesan (optional)

Method

Cut the cauliflower into small florets. The easiest way to do this is to take out the hard white core and cut the florets at the stem.

Bring two-three pints of salted water to the boil and drop in the florets; boil for 15-20 minutes.

When the cauliflower is tender liquidise it, or mash with a potato masher. Stir in the ricotta and then add and stir in the passata.

Heat the olive oil in a fresh pan and sweat off the shallots. Remove from the heat and add the paprika, garlic and tomato puree.

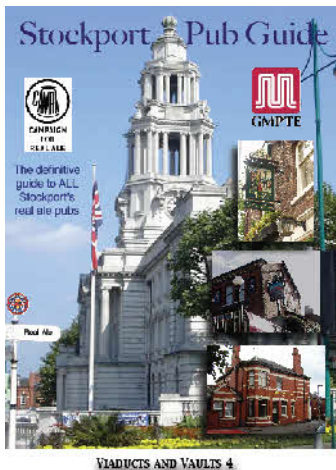
Stir in the cauliflower / ricotta mixture and then add the milk. Return the pan to the heat and stir constantly until *just* bubbling.

Remove the pan from the heat and add the Peroni thus: quarter pint then taste; quarter pint then taste and so on until it is beery enough for your particular (or peculiar) taste. Adjust the seasoning and, if necessary, liquidity with a little water.

Get an extra bottle of Gran Reserva to accompany (you can get this from the larger Tescos).

STOCKPORT PUB GUIDE

The Stockport Beer and Cider Festival saw the launch of the new 2009 Stockport Pub Guide, Viaducts and Vaults 4. Although in the same tradition of previous editions, this one is better in several respects. It is remarkably good value, as the price has been kept the same as V&V3, published in 2003 but this one is in full colour and has an extra 16 pages, packed with useful information, articles and rail trail guides. It lists all the pubs in the Stockport Metropolitan Borough with a description of all those selling real cask conditioned beer with maps and transport details, a key to features and facilities, food provision and many illustrated with photographs.



Many readers, realising the tremendous value, have already purchased a copy from the Festival, but for those who have not, or who would like additional copies for friends and relatives, may be as birthday or Christmas presents, the guide is available from book shops, some public houses, branch meetings (with CAMRA members discount) or by post by sending a cheque for £4.95 made payable to **CAMRA Stockport Pub Guide**, to Mr. D Sharpe, 1 Chiltern Drive, Woodsmoor, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 7BE.

**JOIN CAMRA TODAY
 SEE MEMBERSHIP
 FORM ON PAGE 18**



High Peak PUB NEWS

WITH FRANK WOOD

The Swan, Kettleshulme

Many people will be aware of the story surrounding the achievement of a group of locals who rescued the Swan from conversion to a dwelling in 2004 by buying the pub prior to reopening it in March 2005 and running it successfully for several years. The pub was sold by the group in October 2008 to continue as a pub and restaurant under private ownership. The Swan was a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide during the period of group ownership and it continues to be so. Even in this day of unprecedented pub closures the loss of such a gem would have been unforgivable and local drinkers are truly grateful to the consortium and to the present owner Rob Cloughley for their part in ensuring this wonderful little Inn continues to provide high quality real ale and excellent food for us all to enjoy – long may it continue.

During early May the High Peak & NE Cheshire branch of CAMRA presented the pub with a certificate commemorating its rescue by the locals.

Below: Branch Chairman Geoff Williamson (right) presents the certificate to Rob Cloughley the present owner of the Swan.



Other News

In early May, the **Wheatshaf** in Old Glossop re-opened after four years as a restaurant, becoming the Greek Taverna. It has re-joined the **Bulls Head** and the **Queens**, as Old Glossop's trio of pubs fly again. The licensee is Bob Skupham, who has run a successful jewellers business in the town for many years and among his beers, he will have a permanent hand pump with a beer from the nearby Howard Town Brewery.

Thwaites Nutty Black is popular at the **Church Inn** on Stockport Road, Mossley. The **Woodend Tavern** on Manchester Road in Mossley now has live music on the first Saturday of every month.

The **Crossings** at Furness Vale is a rare regular outlet for Dark Hatters, also having Hartleys XB on a recent visit, as well as the standard Unicorn and Hatters. While this Robinsons house is very popular, it seems that the **Crown** on Market Street over in Hyde has shut its doors for good, as it has been shut and boarded up some time now. Also in the same state, the **Gardeners** and the **Globe** on Lumb Lane in Hyde are also boarded up, those two for many months now.

Congratulations to Vic Chappell over at another Robinsons pub, the **Masons**, on High Street New Mills. Vic has been at the little back street pub for 14 years on 14th April just gone. It is one of the pubs in the Mild Trail that I always ensure I get out to and as usual the Unicorn & the Dizzy Blonde were in good condition when I called in at the end of April.

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Robin Wignall's monthly Peak pub scene round-up

FIRST of all an apology for a mistake in April's column, where I reported a visit to the Jolly Crofter in Chapel en le Frith. Even I know that it is the **Jolly Carter**, recently spruced up, open all day and advertising the availability of food and of course Robinson's beers.

The city columns in the daily papers have been reporting on the state of finances at Punch, everybody's least favourite pub company. Raised rents and price increases for beer sold to tenants, mean of course that these costs have to be passed on to customers, and so fewer drinkers are inclined to visit Punch pubs to pay already inflated prices. Eventually tenants move on and pubs may be closed for a duration, or permanently. The local community loses out. But of course the pubcos don't seem to care about communities, nor for that matter do they seem to care about pubs and beer, other than as a source of cash to satisfy the company's debt mountain. Readers will also be aware that Enterprise Inns have a similar focus.

The **Goyt** in Whaley Bridge is always worth a visit. Black Sheep Bitter is the staple beer, but Abbot Ale is usually available. Other recent ales at the bar have included Adnam's Broadside, Brain's Reverend James and Copper Dragon 1816. Tony Gunner has Cask Marque accreditation and in this case it does mean that you will usually find the beer in good condition.

Real ale is thriving at the **Old Hall** in Whitehough near Chinley. Three ever changing guest beers are turning over quickly and so are invariably in good form. April beers included Hornbeam Eggstra Hop, a 4.5% Easter brew, and from Thornbridge, Martius, a dry hopped 5.2% premium beer, and Lord Marples.

The **Navigation**, Buxworth, has had Thatcher's Scrumpy Cider on hand pump recently. Let us hope that this is sufficiently successful to become a permanent feature. Recent guest beers have included best Bitter and Black Gold from Copper Dragon, and Cottage Broad Gauge Bitter. For my Mild Magic sticker, Theakston's Mild was available, whilst other choices included Copper Dragon IPA and O'Hanlon's Yellow Hammer.

The April/May edition of Wetherspoon News had an article on the **Society Rooms**, the company's Macclesfield outlet. The pub held a beer festival which featured beers from the Hawkshead Brewery at Staveley near Kendal in South Lakeland. Having just returned from two short breaks in the Lake District I can vouch for the quality of Hawkshead Bitter and Lakeland Gold. The former is especially refreshing after a day on the hills. Of the increasing number of Cumbrian microbreweries, also worth looking out for is Keswick Brewery. Thirst Pitch and Thirst Blossom are well worth trying. Products from both these breweries are recommendable if you see them at beer festivals or in the free trade in the OT circulation area.

Lakeland beers are regularly available in the Peak District in the wider Marston's estate. Beers from their brewery Jennings of Cockermouth can often be found. At the **Shady Oak** at Fernilee, Lakeland Stunner has accompanied Snecklifter. The Credit Crunch Lunch has been revamped at The Shady Oak. At the **Shepherds Arms** in Whaley Bridge Jennings' Dark Mild and Snecklifter are permanent beers, whilst Sue Greenwood often accesses the Jennings' seasonal beers from the Marston's list.

The **Crossings** at Furness Vale changed hands at the end of April. More on this next time.

Despite lots of good news uncertainty remains out there. One or two 'For Sale' and 'To Let' notices have appeared recently,

Regional Pub of the Year

Judging is about to start to decide the winner of the CAMRA Greater Manchester Regional Pub of Year title. Last year's winner, the Crown on Heaton Lane, Stockport, went on to reach the final four in the national competition. Which pub will be county's torch bearer this year? There are seven contenders:



The entry from Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA is the **Arden Arms**, Millgate, Stockport. This Robinson's house is well known for great beer, fine food and an unspoilt traditional interior. A previous national finalist.



Rochdale, Oldham & Bury Branch have chosen the **Baum**, Toad Lane, Rochdale. This split-level free house has been successfully converted from a former shop and sells three ever changing guest beers as well as excellent pub food.

Wigan CAMRA have chosen the **Crown**, Platt Lane, Worthington as their Pub of the Year. This country inn offers seven cask beers, mainly from micro-breweries, and also hosts two annual beer festivals. Again high quality home-made food is a feature here.



The Trafford & Hulme Branch entry is the **Knott**, Deansgate, Manchester. This modern conversion of a railway arch is now a well-established pub with a great mix of both customers and guest beers. Food is available every day until 8pm.



North Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year is the well-known **New Oxford**, Bexley Square, Salford. A huge range of changing guest beers, often from obscure micros, is accompanied by a large and growing range of Belgian beers.

The South East Lancs Branch is represented by the **Pendle Witch**, Warburton Place, Atherton. This is one of a small chain of pubs owned by Moorhouses Brewery of Burnley and features their beers plus changing guest ales. The pub also stages occasional beer festivals.



The final entrant is from High Peak & North East Cheshire Branch. They have chosen the **Sportsman**, Mottram Road, Hyde. Owned by Geoff Oliver's Pennine Ales, the pub sells the full range of that brewery's products along side guest beers and traditional cider.

HIGH PEAK PUB OF THE YEAR



THE SPORTSMAN, MOTTRAM RD, HYDE

The Sportsman is a long term entry in the Good Beer Guide and is a former pub of the region; winning this award on two consecutive years. It has now won the High Peak Branch Pub of the Year title for their Greater Manchester pubs (the Derbyshire winner is the Globe in Glossop).

The landlord is Geoff Oliver, who was previously landlord here. Returning after nine years he is the man who originally bought the pub from Whitbread, creating a free house of it.

Geoff's first act on recommencing his tenure was to completely redecorate the interior of the pub and restore it to its former glory. Geoff is also the brewer of The Rossendale Brewery (formerly Porters); he owns the Griffin Inn in Haslingden and the Railway in Portwood, Stockport. You will find the full range of the seven Rossendale brews here, together with three guests which are Plassey Bitter and Moorhouses Black Cat; the third is a regularly changing beer.



The Sportsman has darts, pool and snooker; it has a regular clientele of all age groups. There are two 'quiet' rooms with real fires; these are themed with old local breweries (mainly now all gone) and a vault/games room with a jukebox restricted to the one room. Upstairs is a snooker room with a full sized table; a recent innovation is the inclusion of El Cuba Libre. This is a Cuban themed tapas restaurant, together with more conventional foods. What more can you say? Tapas and real ale in the same place! The restaurant is open Wednesdays to Sundays (advance bookings recommended) and the Sportsman offers bar snacks downstairs on the same days.

In addition to the real ales, there is one draught cider or perry, plus a range of bottled ciders.

The pub is situated on the corner of the exit from Morrisons super store car park and provides a relaxation after doing the weekly shop. There is a pub car park, which is behind the Sportsman and is accessed from Bowker Street, the road between Morrisons car park entrance and The Sportsman.

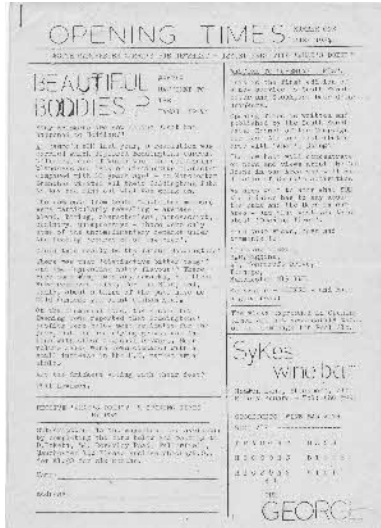
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From Geoff Williamson:

As Chairman of the High Peak & NE Cheshire branch of CAMRA I am writing in reply to the letter from Paul Hurditch, the Licensee of the Star Inn, Glossop, published in May's issue of Opening Times. In response I merely wish to confirm that the selection of the High Peak & NE Cheshire branch nominations for 'Pub of the Year' and 'Cider Pub of the Year' were made following a democratic vote of branch members attending the March branch meeting. I trust this clarifies the matter.

1984 – 2009 25 YEARS OF OPENING TIMES

THIS month we reach a milestone with the 25th Anniversary of Opening Times. June 1984 saw the launch of OT as a duplicated insert in *What's Doing*, the then regional CAMRA magazine for Greater Manchester. It was born out of



discontent, and has continued to have its stropy moments to this day. The initial cause for concern was that *What's Doing* was not giving Stockport a fair crack of the whip and *Opening Times* was launched to redress the perceived imbalance.

The founding editor was long time CAMRA activist Humphrey Higgins, who really was the father of OT, and drove it forward in those early days. Issue 1 led with a feature bemoaning the fate of Boddingtons Bitter,

variously described as bland, boring and nondescript. Whether much has changed there in the intervening 25 years is a matter of opinion. There was a advert from the George in Mersey Square, at the time selling Draught Bass alongside Higsons Mild and Bitter. A news item reported the recent closure of the Grove, on Norbury Street – the building is still there and in use as offices.

Issue 2 carried the banner headline "Robbies Rape!" berating our local family brewer for a series of insensitive pub refurbishments. This heralded a series of rows about this with

Robbies over the year. Luckily those days are long gone and the brewery now has a reassuringly sure touch when renovating their pubs.

There was also a stagger around Clayton which gives a snapshot of a long vanished pub scene – of the nine pubs featured only four remain today. This was echoed in issue 3 where one man's visit to 30 pubs on and around Ashton Old Road included 22 pubs that have since closed and/or been demolished. Pub

John Clarke took over as Editor with effect from the May 1987 issue and had something of a baptism of fire, having to apologise for that year's infamous beer festival which had to close early due to having the wrong license.

Issue 61 in May 1989 brought news of a new micro brewery for the area – Brendan Dobbin's now legendary West Coast Brewery, based at the Kings Arms in Chorlton on Medlock. Mild (og 1035), Best Bitter (og 1038), Extra Special Bitter (og 1060) and Guiltless Stout (og 1039) were the first cask beers. Later that year a redesign, with a new masthead, saw issue 67 leading with the news that Boddington's had sold out to Whitbread. The editorial speculated just how long the new Boddington Pub Co would remain independent. Not long, is the answer.

The next major development came with issue 89 in September 1991. Paul Hutchings joined as production editor (later becoming

joint editor). This led to a huge improvement in layout and design and more professional printing. The headline, "The Price is Wrong" bemoaned the effect that high beer prices were having an adverse effect on consumption. Not much change there then!

This improvement in production standards, and the wide range of contributors that has always been one of OT's great strengths, led to the magazine winning the first ever CAMRA Newsletter of the Year Award for 1994.

That was in fact the first of three CAMRA awards won by *Opening Times*. In 2002 it picked up a special "Highly Commended" award to mark continuing high standards over a long period of time.

In October 2003 came a move to colour production with issue 234. The lead story this time was the reopening of the Cheshire Ring in Hyde as a Beartown Brewery tied house. The second front page item featured CAMRA's Cider & Perry Month and the inaugural Cider Circuit. This reflected the very strong cider campaigning that has also featured in *Opening Times* over the years. This was followed up by another CAMRA Newsletter of the Year Award for 2003, awarded at the 2004 AGM.

Issue 261, in February 2008, featured the Vale Cottage, Gorton, as the local Pub of the Year for 2006. Unfortunately this issue marked the end of an unbroken history of regular publication. A variety of internal problems caused the wheel to fall off the wagon and unfortunately saw the departure of Paul Hutchings from *Opening Times*. However a new production team comprising John Clarke, John Tune, Peter Farrand, David Hanson, Peter Butler, and distribution supremo Jan Flynn, took over the reins and relaunched a redesigned *Opening Times* in June 2006. There were one or two initial hiccups but OT is once again firmly established on the local pub scene, covering not only Stockport but Manchester, Salford, Trafford, Tameside, Macclesfield and parts of the High Peak. Here's to the next 25 years!

STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA
OPENING TIMES
 SEPTEMBER 1991
The Price is Wrong

Licensee has managed to keep up what has been obvious to continue for a long time now...
 Licencee has managed to keep up what has been obvious to continue for a long time now...
 Licencee has managed to keep up what has been obvious to continue for a long time now...

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|---------------|---|------|------|----|
| Cheshire Ring | 2 | 5000 | 1000 | 10 |
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| Cheshire Ring | 2 | 5000 | 1000 | 10 |

Station - Update
 The Station...
 The Station...
 The Station...

The Old Vic
 Edgely
 STOCKPORT'S PREMIER
 FREEHOUSE
 Grand Beer Weekly
 MILDERS & SUBS
 MILDERS & SUBS
 MILDERS & SUBS

Opening Times
 WELCOME!
PHE MONTH
THE GEORGE
 Draught Bass
 Higsons Mild
 & Bitter
SYNES
 WINE BAR

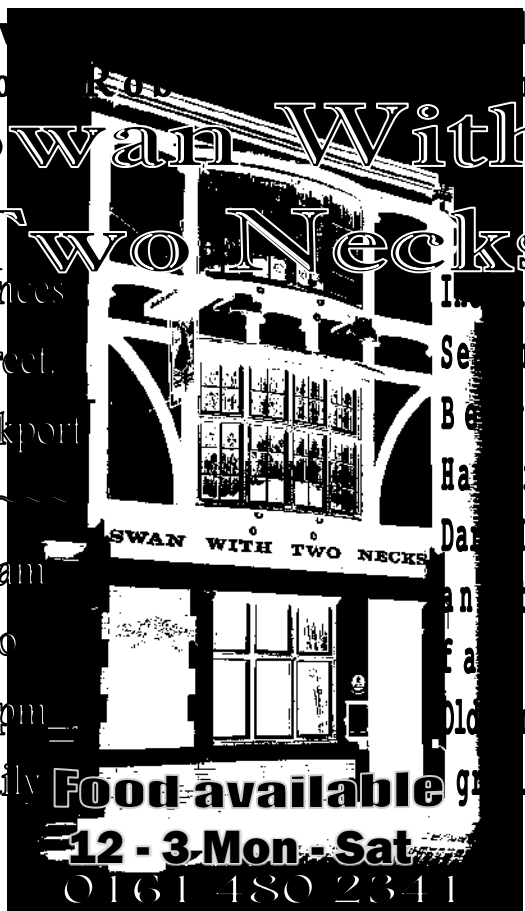
news in that issue included an item recording the first sale of guest beers by Ye Olde Vic in Edgely. Marston's Pedigree was the first guest, followed by Stones Bitter.

It wasn't long before *Opening Times* broke free from *What's Doing* and became a free standing publication in its own right. Issue 20 in December 1985 welcomed new readers as a move to proper printing was accompanied by a doubling in circulation.

The Pub of the Month for December was now long-closed Bridgewater on Chestergate. This former Wilsons pub was now a free house selling Holts Mild and Bitter, Wilsons Bitter and Websters Green Label, the latter two selling for "a knockdown price of 63p a pint".



Serve... es
 From... ry
Swan With
Two Necks
 Princess... ing
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 Stockport... Be... s,
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 11am... Da...ild  
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Quite a few bits and pieces for you this month. Firstly news of another Stockport Town Centre Robinson's pubs that looks to be on the up.

**Bulls Head**

I HAVE already reported how the **Swan With Two Necks** has been revitalised by a successful combination of great beer and good food. That recipe for success now looks to be repeated at the **Bulls Head** in the Market Place.

This has been taken over by Lawrence Cody, who is the licensee, along with his business partners Karen and Steve Martin, and the pub reopened on Thursday 7 May.



Little has been done to the appearance of the pub as it had already been refurbished and redecorated to a high standard, with bold colours and designs giving quite an intimate feel to what could be a cavernous space. However, while

the appearance may have changed little, the feel of the pub is very different.

For a start, cask beer takes pride of place with two banks of hand pumps on the bar, dispensing four beers from the Robinsons range. On opening night these comprised Hatters, Old Stockport, Unicorn and the seasonal, Nosey Parker. Later in May this latter had been replaced by Cumbria Way. As trade improves, the number of cask ales will increase to seven.

An extensive menu of lunchtime and evening food has been introduced and this is available from 12-2.30 and 5.30-9.30 Monday to Friday and 12-9.30 Saturday. On Sundays there is a carvery from 12-9. Look for a review soon.

Future plans include a quiz night, a folk night and live jazz. Well worth a visit or two.

**In the Sticks**

I AM expecting major changes at the **Romiley Arms** in Romiley, where I am told that Greene King plan to refocus the pub and introduce cask ale to boot. However when I called in late May the pub remained firmly keg only. I have heard good things about the new people down the road at the **Friendship**, but have not yet had time to call. Sounds worth visiting, though.

I dropped off at Bredbury on the way back, and this proved something of a mixed bag. The bad news is that the **Sportsman** appears to have breathed its last, well at least as a Robinsons pub. Not only is it closed and boarded, but it has had all signage removed. Nearby the **Queens** sports a shiny sign advertising cask beers but nevertheless remains keg only. Let's hope the pub either installs cask beer or removes this misleading signage.

However at the **Greyhound** on Lower Bents Lane there is better news. This has been a good pub for a long time now and I was dismayed to see the tenancy "to let" on the Robinson's website. However it has been taken over by John 'Capper' Parkin and his partner Donna.



John is of course a well known face on the Stockport pub scene and is a cask ale enthusiast as well. As trade picks up he plans to feature the whole Robinson's range on a rotational basis. Some changes are planned to the pub, including a food operation and development of the beer garden. When I called Hatters and Unicorn were on hand pump – I only had time for a pint of Hatters but it was on top form.

The **Wrights Arms** on Offerton Green makes a welcome return to real ale. Patrick "Paddy" Rooney took over the pub in January 2009. There are currently two hand pumps selling cask ale which are Golden Sheep from the Black Sheep Brewery and Charles Wells Bombardier. The pub is now a free house and Paddy has plans for up to five real ales. Paddy has previously worked in the pub trade in north Manchester but this is his first time running a pub.

There is a friendly atmosphere and Paddy wants a community local with family values and a safe environment in which to enjoy the excellent beers. There are bar snacks available through out the week and also Sunday lunches. The real fire in the rear lounge has been lit again too

**Charity Success and Exploding Pubs**

CONGRATULATIONS to everyone at **Ye Olde Vic**, Chatham Street, Edgeley. This well-known free house has for some months had a very large charity bottle attached to the bar. It had to fill up eventually and when it did, the jar was found to weigh over nine and a half stones, and contain in excess of £850. Well done to all concerned.

The new manager Dave, is now in the **Cheadle Hulme**. He has considerable experience in the licensed trade and in the past has been licensee of the Ladybrook. His parents were in the licensed trade for 40 years and his grandparents before that. He arrives from Macclesfield Rugby Club



where he introduced Holt's beers and drinks mild himself. Holt's poached him to manage the Cheadle Hulme. In the past he has had Cask Marque accreditation. He looks after the beer himself. I had the mild and bitter and both were top notch.

The **Comfortable Gill** on King Street West now has Copper Dragon beers on a rotating basis and the licensee told me that this is now the only Copper Dragon outlet in town bar the Crown.

Two pubs that are apparently losing their licensees are the **Pack Horse** in the Market Place and the **Crown Great Moor**. I am told that both were due to leave at the end of last month. In Reddish, the **Reddish Vale** has been demolished after the vacant pub was torched. It only sold cask beer briefly many years ago when it had a failed attempt to sell Draught Bass.

I am very late in telling you this but on 27 January the **Carousel** in Reddish, opened its doors again after over five weeks closure. The ownership has been transferred to the Spirit Group but Jo Worthington has remained as the manager. She is now on maternity leave, leaving Christian, her partner, at the helm. He is a committed real ale fan too, so the beers are in good hands, so I will look forward to continuing good ales being served. There is also a new and varied menu available, as yet not tried, but it looks good.

JW Lees have bought 10 pubs from Punch and two are in Stockport. These are the **Elizabethan** in Heaton Moor and the **Orange Tree** in Bramhall. It's early days yet but I will be calling in both when the dust has settled.

Finally that exploding pub. This is or perhaps that should be was, the **Cross Keys** in Adswold. I've no idea what's gone on here but the place is closed indefinitely.



## National Cider & Perry Champions Announced

**G**watkin's Yarlington Mill cider of Abbey Dore, Herefordshire, and Broadoak Perry of Clutton, Somerset, won Gold medals at CAMRA's National Cider and Perry Championships 2009, held at the Reading Beer and Cider Festival over the May bank holiday weekend.

The 2009 Championships featured 24 ciders and 20 perries, selected from different regions throughout the country, and assessed on aroma, flavour, finish and personal enjoyment by a judging panel including award-winning producers and publicans.

In the national cider category, Gwatkin of Herefordshire won the Gold for Yarlington Mill, which judges described as a 'smooth and rich cider with a spirit aroma and taste that resonates with the taste buds to surprise and delight.' Gwatkin are a family firm, which have been producing cider and perry for generations but began selling commercially in 1991. The fruit used in their winning products is produced locally, with their apples coming from a neighbouring farm.

The Championships proved a doubly special occasion for Gwatkin cider, after also picking up the Bronze medal in the perry category for their Blakeney Red perry. On hearing the news of this success, Denis Gwatkin cider, said:

*'I am over the moon to hear that both my cider and perry have won CAMRA awards. The fact that I planted the trees and have seen them come to fruition makes it even more special. Thanks to everyone for their support.'*

In the national perry category, Broadoak Perry of Somerset won Gold for what the judges described as a 'lovely, drinkable perry with a true pear aroma that starts with a medium sweet taste and is followed by a dry finish.'

Brian Brunt, Broadoak's producer, started making cider and perry as a hobby 30 years ago. Mr Brunt moved to his present location in Clutton Farm, in Clutton, Somerset, after popular interest in his products helped turn the Original Cider Company business into one of the country's biggest independent producers. A delighted Mr Brunt, receiving the good news whilst on holiday, said:

*'I'm simply over the moon as this is an award I simply was not expecting to win. I've been perfecting this perry for the last 30 years and I'd like to dedicate this award to the late Geoff Williams, formerly of the Long Ashton Research Institute, for teaching me the methods I have since used to produce cider and perry. He was a great friend, and one of the greatest figures in the world of cider-making.'*

The full results of the CAMRA National Cider and Perry Championships are:

### CIDER

**GOLD** - Gwatkin, Yarlington Mill, Abbey Dore, Herefordshire  
**SILVER (Joint)** - Orchards, Wye Cider, Gloucester shire  
**SILVER (Joint)** - Rosie's, Triple D Cider, Denbighshire

### PERRY

**GOLD** - Broadoak, Perry, Clutton, Somerset  
**SILVER** - Seidr Dai, Painted Lady Perry, Cardiff  
**BRONZE** - Gwatkin, Blakeney Red, Abbey Dore, Herefordshire

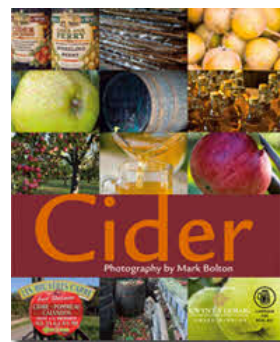
## Cider Book Reviews

Rhys Jones reviews two new books on cider...

**Cider**, by Ted Bruning et al, CAMRA Books, 192 pages, £14.99  
**Ciderland**, by James Crowden, Birlinn, 256 pages, £20.

Serious books about cider, though less rare than they once were, still don't turn up every week, so it is a pleasure to welcome two handsome large-format paperbacks within the space of some six months – *Ciderland* came out last autumn, while *Cider* was launched at CAMRA's annual conference in mid-April. Both books make a feature of attractive photography – indeed CAMRA's multi-authored tome credits only photographer Mark Bolton on the cover – but both are much more than mere coffee-table books.

After an introduction by Adrian Tierney-Jones to set the historical scene, CAMRA's book gets into its stride with substantial sections by Ted Bruning covering how cider and perry are made and reviewing Britain's cider regions. While these do contain the odd questionable assertion, they give a good overview of the subject. The following section introduces a personal touch by featuring ten double-page pen-pictures of cidemakers ranging from such well-known figures as Roger Wilkins of Somerset to more recent arrivals such as Steve Hughes of Llandegla in north Wales.



Following some brief sections on cider with food, cider recipes, and a (highly selective) guide to where to buy good cider comes the book's real innovation: a 30-page guide to the cider regions of Europe – from Austria to Brittany, Asturias to Frankfurt. Contributed by Dave Matthews and Alan Golding of the Welsh Perry and Cider Society, this is evocatively written, clearly the fruit of recent experience, and a joy to read. With further features on conservation (largely contributed by noted cider campaigner Gillian Williams), museum orchards, and even mistletoe, the book's great strength is its breadth of coverage. However more coverage could usefully have been given to the regional cidemakers' associations, and also to the specialist real cider wholesalers – both groups get a passing mention, but their importance to the revival of interest in high-quality cider and perry deserves more.

With higher pagination and a larger format, James Crowden's book is an altogether weightier affair. It is also more single-minded; devoted entirely to the "western" cider tradition by contrast to the ciders of eastern England where culinary and dessert fruit is often used, the bulk of it consists of extended accounts of 22 producers spread from Cornwall to Herefordshire. The author's cidemaking experience gives him an obvious rapport with the producers, be they newcomers to the craft or cider-making families established for centuries, and the particular local factors of soil, climate, and fruit variety that distinguish one from another are expertly brought out. Some quite superb photography, mainly credited to Claire Davies, makes the book a pleasure to the eye as well as the mind. And while the book does not set out to be a directory of cidemakers, its closing gazetteer section gives useful details for a respectably large selection (for this purpose the geographical scope is extended to include Wales and the island of Jersey).

Those wishing to have a broad survey of the cider scene from the point of view of the discerning customer will be best served (despite the odd factual slip) by CAMRA's book. However, for anybody who wants to understand the culture of traditional cider-making from an insider's perspective, *Ciderland* will be an indispensable delight. The well-stocked cider bookshelf should contain both.





## OT Birthday Beer June

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 sixth in the series comes from Pictish Brewery. Check out the brewery website at [www.pictish-brewing.co.uk](http://www.pictish-brewing.co.uk).

### About the Brewery

**P**ictish Brewery, despite the Hibernian name, is in fact based in Rochdale, where it was founded by brewer Richard 'Sooty' Sutton in April 2000.

Like many top ranking micro brewers, Richard essentially cut his brewing teeth at the old Firkin chain, notably at Manchester's Flea & Firkin on Oxford Road, where he started making a name for himself with distinctive and well-crafted beers. After the Firkin chain closed down its brewing operations Richard spent six months at Tony Allen's Phoenix Brewery in Heywood while he laid the foundations to set up on his own.

As well as supplying the country with some cracking brewers, the Firkin chain also supplied many of them with their kit as the old in-house breweries were sold off. So it was with Pictish (and here's a Scottish connection) as Richard snapped up the plant from the Firkin pub in Dundee (for a song, he told us at the time).

The plant is still in use today and Pictish Brewery remains very much a "one man band", although Sooty's dad sometimes helps out. Such is the reputation of the beers that everything the brewery produces is more or less sold before it is brewed.

The beers have won a sack full of awards, as a visit to the brewery website shows. While some of the dark beers are deserved award winners, notably Pictish Porter and Black Shiver, it is with golden, hoppy ales that Pictish has really made its name.

Apart from the regular beers, there is a constant stream of "single hop" brews enabling the true character of each hop to come to the fore. Also noteworthy is the exceptional Blue Moon (6%) one of the first UK beers to be brewed in the "export IPA" style, where premium strength is matched with a full malt body and a long, deep hoppy bitterness.

### About the Beer

**T**his month's *Opening Times* beer is a pale and hoppy brew in what has become the Pictish tradition.

At 4.2%, Old Timer is brewed using equal amounts of pale malt and lager malt along with a hefty dose of wheat malt (which accounts for about 20% of the grist). Pacific Gem hops have been used for bitterness, with Pacific Gem and Millennium hops for aroma. The hoppy aroma is reflected in the taste. Enjoy!



## THE CRESCENT Good Beer Guide 2009 13 Real Ales 1 Real Cider

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Curry Night  
1700-2000  
3 curries for £4.50*

**FOOD SERVED  
MON/WED 1200-1430  
TUE/THURS 1200-1700  
FRIDAY 1200-1900  
SUNDAY 1230-1630**

**Regular Beers from  
Pictish brewery  
Bazens brewery  
Phoenix brewery**

Contact  
will or cliffy on  
0161 7365600  
[crescentpub@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:crescentpub@hotmail.co.uk)  
18-21 the crescent  
salford, Lancs, m5 4pf





## BREWERY & OTHER NEWS

The financial woes of Punch Taverns continues to benefit the family brewers who are now picking up tranches of pubs from the stricken pubco.

JW Lees have bought ten pubs and in the *Opening Times* area these include the Elizabethan, Heaton Moor; the Orange Tree, Bramhall; Bridge Inn, Dane Road, Sale; Farmers Arms, Wilmslow; and the Moss Trooper in Timperley.

Robinson's have bought a further eight pubs but details of these had not been released as we went to press. With luck we will have details next time.

### Dunham Civic Visit

Every year the current mayor or mayoress of Trafford invites all the other mayors of Greater Manchester to the Annual Trafford Civic Tour. This year, John Costello had the honour of being invited by the Mayoress of Trafford, Councillor Judith Lloyd, to host the group at the Dunham Massey Brewery. The brewery was the final stop on the Tour which also included the Imperial War Museum and South Trafford College.

John gave them a brewery tour and explained his passion for using traditional recipes to produce high quality North Western ales. He was also able to tell them of his success in winning a dozen beer festival awards since the brewery opened at the end of 2007, the certificates of which are now on display in the brewery shop. The group then enjoyed sampling Dunham Dark Mild and Stamford Bitter.

*Photo: Some of the Mayors and Mayoresses of Greater Manchester in the brewery shop.*



**Le Trappiste** one of the two Belgian bars on Greenwood Street, Altrincham, has started to sell beers from outside Belgium, and cask ales at that. It is now selling a range of beers from the Dunham Massey Brewery. Seven bottled beer are being sold, including Cheshire IPA, Porter and Milk Stout, alongside one Dunham beer on hand pump.

Le Trappiste's Martin Matthews tells us he will continue to sell the seven in bottles, with the other five beers from the brewery on a rotation basis on cask. He also intends to source beers from other local micros, and is especially keen to bring in beers that do not regularly appear in the Altrincham area.

### 3 Rivers Brewing Competition

Calling all home brewers! 3 Rivers Brewery is to host a competition for local home brewers. The idea is simplicity itself - home brewers produce a beer and the 3 Rivers team will judge it at the brewery on the first Saturday in July. The top beer will then be produced commercially and the winning brewer will get a firkin and be able to name the beer and design the pumpclip. Sounds fun - interested home brewers should contact the brewery on 0161 477 3333.

### Poynton News

The Poynton Wine Bar on Park Lane has become the rather more appealing **Cask Tavern**. Rob Oldham is the man in charge and there are no less than four cask beers on the bar. These have included Ruddles County, Wells Bombardier and, from 3 Rivers, Hilary Gold and GMT. More on this and the rest of the Poynton beer scene next month.

www.thelass.co.uk

**IASS 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!**

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

#### THE DUCIE ARMS DEVAS STREET

- Marstons Beers and Guests
- June guest beers include: Brakspear Hooray Henley, Jennings Honey Bole and Wychwood Wizard's Staff

Ideally located for Academy, University, Science Park and Curry Mile

Try Our Special Sausage & Burger menus  
12 - 2 and 5 - 8 Monday - Friday

*Speciality beers from  
Belgium, Germany & USA*

Visit our sister pub  
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Both Pubs Available For Hire  
Phone Yvonne or Kev on 0161 273 1057



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*

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>** – Branch Meeting: New Victoria, Stockport Rd, Longsight. Starts 8pm.

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>** – National Pub of the Year Runner-up presentation to Crown, Heaton Lane. From 8pm.

**Friday 19<sup>th</sup>** – Cheadle East Stagger: 7.30 Ashlea, Manchester Rd; 8.30 Red Lion, Stockport Rd

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>** – Trip to Acorn Brewery, Barnsley. Depart Crown, Heaton lane 9.30am. Book with Dave Platt on 0161 256 1166

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>** – Pub of the Month and 25 Years In Good Beer Guide presentation to Nursery, Green Ln, Heaton Norris. From 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 AGM: Ramsey's Bar, Buckingham Hotel, Buxton. Starts 1.30pm. Will be followed by Buxton pub crawl.

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July** – Presentation of Pub of the Year (Derbyshire) Award to the Globe, Glossop. From 8.30pm.

The **Trafford & Hulme** Branch covers the Borough of Trafford, Manchester West of the M56/Princess Parkway and a large part of the City Centre. *Branch Contact – John Ison 0161 962 7976. Branch website: [www.thcamra.org.uk](http://www.thcamra.org.uk)*

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>** – Flixton Survey: meet 8pm, Church, Church Rd, M41.

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup>** – 7.30pm Jacksons Boat, Rifle Rd, Sale Waterpark; 9.15pm Horse & Jockey, Chorlton Green, M21

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>** – Social day out by train. Start 10.27 Piccadilly Station visiting various buffet bars and pubs. See website for more details.

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup>** – Cheshire Day Out: along canal towpaths. 12.30pm Barn Owl, Agden Wharf; 2.15pm Ye Old No. 3; 3pm Home; 3.45 Swan with 2 Nicks; 5pm Dunham Massey Brewery for BBQ.

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

**Monday 1<sup>st</sup>** – Pub of the Year presentation to the Harrington Arms, Gawsorth + Campaigning meeting, from 8.00pm.

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup>** Walk, Dolphin, Windmill St. Macc to Railway View via Sutton, Start 7.00pm.

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

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>** – Eccles Social: Eccles Cross 8pm; Lamb Hotel 9pm

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

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>** – Greenfield trip: 18.27 Train from Victoria. Meet Railway, (opp.Station) Greenfield at 7pm. Also visiting King William. Finish at Railway at 9pm for 21.51 return train

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July** – Pub of the Year presentation to the New Oxford. From 8pm.

# 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).



Title Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth

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Partner Title Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth

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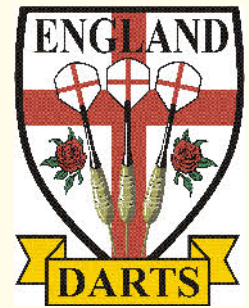
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## England Masters Darts Festival Weekend



will take place in Stockport at

# EDGELEY PARK

17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> July 2009

England Masters Men's & Ladies Singles  
England Masters Youth Event  
England National Singles Event  
Poker Dart Event  
England Winmau World Masters Regional Play offs

There will also be Money-in, Money-out events  
which will ensure a weekend of Darts, Darts, Darts!

For further information or to register online visit:

**[www.Englanddarts.co.uk](http://www.Englanddarts.co.uk)**

Registration for the England National Singles must be through an England County Members Secretary and is open to all members.

The England Masters Singles & Youth are BDO Grand Prix Events and are open to all players who are eligible to play in the Winmau World Masters and the Lakeside World Professional Championships. The England Masters Singles is a pre-registration event and entries will close on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

Details can also be found on:

[www.salesharks.com](http://www.salesharks.com) or [www.cheshireconferencecentre.co.uk](http://www.cheshireconferencecentre.co.uk)

Email: [info@cheshireconferencecentre.co.uk](mailto:info@cheshireconferencecentre.co.uk) or Telephone: 0161 286 8891

Edgeley Park, Hardcastle Road, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9DD



Edgeley Park is home to Cheshire Conference Centre, Sale Sharks Rugby Club and Stockport County Football Club

**May and June**

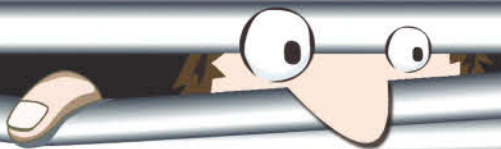
**NOSEY PARKER** ABV 3.8%

Traditional Harvest gold bitter with aromas of spicy hop and honey.

An interesting and complex beer with a malt and honey sweet palate matched by fruity overtones and complemented by a dry roasted or nutty finish.



**Nosey Parker**



alc 3.8 % vol

