

March 2010



Opening

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

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

Off The Rails!

City Centre Gateway is Cask Ale Desert
Full Report on page 15....



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The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for March is the Vale Cottage on Kirk Street in Gorton. Dave Hanson has been to visit this classic "country pub in the heart of the city".



WHY are we presenting the Vale Cottage with this award? The answers are too numerous to do justice here; but here goes:

Where else can you find a 'country pub' in Gorton? The pub has been extended through a collection of 19th century cottages which is why it has numerous rooms on different levels and varying roof heights. Couple this to a delightful garden and a wooded front aspect with the Gore Brook babbling past the front door and you could be out in the wilds.

When you enter there will be a friendly greeting from John Smith, Alison and their staff. If quiet conversation is your desire, there is no intrusive television or juke box blaring away to distract you. If you desire feeding, Alison puts on a range of good, home cooked dishes. If however, you merely dropped in for a pint, you won't be glowered at for taking up valuable dining tables – this is not a diner's only pub.

Just like a country pub, the Vale Cottage is at the heart of the community. There are two popular quiz nights. Other groups also drop in, ranging from the local bell ringers to impromptu folk music sessions. As part of the Gorton 100 celebration John arranged a week long beer festival which raised such interest that he now keeps one hand pump as a constantly rotating guest. Two other hand pumps dispense Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Sharp's Doom Bar. Though a previous winner of this award, John has raised the reputation of his real ales to such an extent that we have bestowed the accolade on him yet again.

How do I find this hidden gem? The Vale Cottage stands beside the Gore Brook just as it runs under Hyde Road, but thick vegetation hides it from all but the keen eyed. Buses 7, 201, 203 and 204 will drop you on Hyde Road, from where you approach either along Fox Fold to the right of the Lord Nelson or Kirk Street, the footpath behind the Gorton Butterfly Garden.

Why not join us at 8pm on 25th March for a memorable evening?



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Opening Times - Comment

Piccadilly Station – the gateway to Manchester and arguably the gateway to Greater Manchester, one of the major centres of independent brewing in the UK. Arguably perhaps the major centre of independent brewing in the UK. As we report this month – you would scarcely know it from this dismal selection of beers on offer in the station's bars. The situation is just as bad at Victoria, too.

Whoever runs these stations is doing our city and our region a great injustice by this short-sighted policy. Manchester is a city of great character. The city and its region produces beer of great character. What a shame then that visitors travelling by rail are offered nothing but bland corporate pap. Shame on those responsible.

Opening Times - Information

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Copy Date for the April issue is Saturday 13 March

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Opening Times 307 - Contents

| | | | |
|------------------------|----|------------------------|----|
| Pub of the Month | 3 | Manchester Matters | 14 |
| Pub Grub | 6 | Off The Rails | 15 |
| Stagger | 7 | Staveley Beer Festival | 15 |
| Curmudgeon | 8 | Stockport Supping | 17 |
| T&H Pub of the Season | 9 | Brewery News | 19 |
| Beer Festival Sponsors | 9 | Awaqrds Gallery | 20 |
| High Peak Pub News | 10 | Macclesfield PoS | 21 |
| Peak Practice | 11 | Phyllda Bradshaw | 21 |
| Gallery | 12 | Brian Taylor | 21 |
| Winter Warmer Wander | 13 | CAMRA Calling | 22 |

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 in the UK (Guardian/Observer 2009)






PUB Grub



This month we kick off a new series of Pub Grub with a visit to the Black Lion in Salford. While the new free house has already established its reputation among cask ale fans, it is also getting a name for the food on offer.

THE Black Lion on the corner of Blackfriars Street and Chapel Street had languished unloved for years. Despite being just a five minute walk from St Annes Square and New Cathedral Street, it had singularly failed to realise its potential. Keg-only for years and neglected by its owning pub company, Enterprise Inns, the inevitable happened and it joined the ranks of the many closed and boarded pubs that litter Salford.

Luckily for the Black Lion it was within walking distance of the New Oxford. Having rescued the Oxford, Tim Flynn and Paulette Scanlon had the Black Lion in their sights for some time until they finally took the plunge last year. It reopened last November after months of frantic activity which saw the pub transformed. Lemon yellow walls combine with the newly polished bar and other traditional fittings to make the pub an easy combination of old and new. A range of handpumps now dispense a variety of cask ales and the bottled beer range is huge with about 110 Belgian beers on offer.



It's been a huge hit and the beer operation has been matched by the food which is available both lunchtimes and evenings. A small set menu is accompanied by daily specials and runs the gamut from "Burgers & Butties" to "Hearty Warmers", all very reasonably priced.

Crab cakes with sweet chilli dipping sauce and dressed salad (£3.25) made for a light and tasty starter. While across the table my famously hard to impress dining companion enjoyed a thick and piping hot carrot and ginger soup (£2.95).

For mains I chose from the specials board with home made steak and ale pie (£7.95) while offal loving hard to impress chose pan fried lambs liver and bacon, with mash and onion gravy (£6.25).



The pie comprised an incredibly thick and rich portion of tender steak topped a good crust of properly cooked pastry. Accompanied by excellent chips and a variety of vegetables, the only jarring factor was the dark grey plate on which it was all served. For some reason this reduced the appeal of the whole ensemble – a shame as the food was fine.

No problems across the table where the liver and bacon attracted rave reviews. "A perfect example of how to cook this" gushed my normally hard to impress companion, impressed for once, adding that the thinly sliced liver avoided "the dry graininess that so often mars this dish".

The puddings are on the specials board and my attention was drawn to the cappuccino crème brulee (£3.25). Let's just say this was fantastic – rich, unctuous and everything this should be. *The Black Lion is at 65 Chapel Street St, Salford. Lunch is 12-3 Monday-Friday, 12-5 Saturday. Dinner is 5-8 Monday-Thursday and 5-9 Friday and Saturday. Sunday roasts are served from 1-6pm.*




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Stagger



A journey from Hazel Grove, through Great Moor and into Heaviley reveals the excellent quality of Robinson's ales from our local Regional brewer writes Alex Keenleyside.

JANUARY'S stagger began at the **Grove**, Hazel Grove and for about five minutes I pondered whether the poor weather, preparations for the National Winter Ales Festival and the following evening's branch meal would have me taking this route alone. I was quickly joined in this well worn local and discovered turning up early doors means you get to write it up.



Lesson learned to be tardier in future.

My pint of Unicorn was a drinkable example of the brew, my drinking partners discovered the mild required changing but the beer was replaced without fuss. The pub consists of a large room decorated with pictures

of the Hazel Grove of yesteryear and a friendly collection of locals at the bar. Table football, pool and a large television though not turned on. With a few pubs to get through it was sup up and off.

Next up were the **Anchor**, and a new bar in the area, the **3 Lions** sports bar. Both were Keg and sparsely populated, so we popped into the **Woodman** to find an altogether busier and vibrant pub. The cask beer on offer was Robinsons Unicorn served a little cold but a cold pint can warm up, whereas a warm pint cannot cool down, and decidedly moreish. The exotic wallpaper suited the wood carvings decorating the seating area, and we liked the Lowry prints on the wall. One area has pool and a dart board but when we visited the busiest part was the seating area with a youngish crowd enjoying the ambience.

We popped into the **Phoenix** to confirm the inexpensive dining pub is still keg (but now sells cask – see *Stockport Supping – Ed*) before visiting the **Crown** in Great Moor. Recently under new management, the landlord is making the place his own with a smart traditional multi room pub with Unicorn, Hatters and Double Hop on cask. All were considered on good form. We got a seat in the front room and noted the pub sports sketches of Stockport landmarks on the walls and all were in agreement that this was the best of the pubs so far. The pub sits slightly back from the main road, finished in a mock Tudor black and white fascia, and worth a visit.



Next on the route was the **Travellers Call**. A small street corner pub that has the distinction of being the first pub I ever drank in. I was pleased to find it was still the welcoming traditional pub I remembered. Unicorn and Hatters on cask, both scored well. No

one had a slippery nipple from the cocktail menu, no doubt due to its lack of cask conditioning. I was pleased to see the distinctive nautical memorabilia has been retained by the current landlord. The bells, diver's helmets and even a fish tank feature to give this pub a distinctive feel and welcoming atmosphere. Despite being a cold evening I had to look in the beer garden to see whether the traffic lights and red phone box were still there and thrilled to note they were. Noting the clocking in machine on my return I have to comment times have changed slightly. Customers tempted to ring a bell are tolerated far more than they were in my misspent youth.

Onwards to the **Dog and Partridge** to find the busiest pub of the evening, three deep at the bar. One of our number discovered the reason being that a wake was in progress. The bar staff were undoubtedly busy but remained efficient and helpful offering top ups before being asked. The pub has recently been refurbished giving the pub a lighter airier atmosphere that suits the seating area. The Unicorn, Double Hop and Hatters were all considered good.



A bit of a walk to the next pub on the A6, and I'm sure a couple in the crowd got on the 192. How else does someone trailing behind get to the bar before you? The **Duke of York** has recently undergone major work to the building, alongside the bar and public areas. The work appears to be paying dividends as the pub was well populated. The cask beer on sale being Robinsons Unicorn and scoring well. A feature pointed out by the lively and friendly locals is the buffalo trophy that sits proudly on the mantelpiece, a victory for the Sunday league football team who were as proud of their trophy as the fact that they were asked to leave the league for reasons undisclosed the following season. Nice work fellas.

Next stop the **Bamford Arms**. The pub/restaurant has a Travelodge to the rear, a restaurant upstairs and a bar area on the ground floor. The modern furnished bar had two cask ales on, Jennings Cumberland ale and Marston's Pedigree. Making a change from the Robinsons ales that had been enjoyed all evening, all barring one opted for the Jennings which scored well. The Pedigree was returned but considered good on being pulled through and was replaced without fuss.

The stagger finished at the ever popular **Blossoms** at the top of Hillgate. What is to be said about this CAMRA favourite that hasn't been said before? We were lucky to find a seat in the rear sitting area and many mentioned it was the best beer of the evening, but many a fine beer had been drunk along this route. The Unicorn, Hatter's and Old Tom had the best scores of the evening with the Old Tom especially welcome as a stronger beer to finish on and brace you for the journey home.



An enjoyable convivial stagger that had some very good examples from our regional brewery and welcoming local pubs to drink in. All pubs featured here are on the A6 and accessible via the 192 bus route.

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Majority, What Majority?

IT'S often claimed by supporters of the smoking ban in pubs that it is supported by a majority of the population. Sometimes the likes of fake charity Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) go so far as to say that it enjoys "overwhelming" support.

However, this quite simply isn't true. The latest edition of the annual British Social Attitudes survey says: "In Britain as a whole, the majority support a smoking ban, with just seven per cent saying that smoking should be freely allowed. However, the level of restriction, whether a complete ban or simply restricted to certain areas, divides the public. While just under half (46 per cent) support a ban on smoking in pubs and bars altogether, a similar proportion (41 per cent) prefer limiting smoking to certain areas of pubs and bars."

So, nearly three years after the ban took effect, less than half of those surveyed support it. In fact, this survey – which is carried out by a government agency and thus can't be accused of having an anti-ban axe to grind – has NEVER shown a majority of people to be in favour of a blanket smoking ban in pubs and bars. This suggests that they do not regard them as genuinely public areas in the way that, say, station concourses are, but rather see them as part of the licensee's space where customers are allowed in as guests.

Mandatory Madness

THE government have announced the introduction of a new mandatory code of practice for pubs and bars. All you can drink promotions and speed drinking competitions will be banned from April, and pubs required to provide free tap water, while from October smaller measures of beer, wine and spirits must be offered and any customers appearing to be under 18 must be asked for identification.

Now, I'm not going to rush to the barricades to defend all you can drink promotions, but it is naïve to think that well-run pubs have nothing to fear from this. Taken as a whole, these measures represent an unprecedented degree of interference in the way licensed premises are run, which will impose new burdens on responsible and irresponsible licensees alike.

While in reality I can't see it happening very often, requiring pubs and bars to offer free tap water opens up the opportunity for bloody-minded people to occupy space and use glassware while contributing nothing to the overheads of the establishment. If you were running a pub in the Lake District and a party of eight thirsty hikers came in and demanded eight pints of tap water with ice you might not be too impressed.

I've no problem with requiring pubs and bars to offer 125ml glasses of wine, which after all are roughly equivalent to a half of 5% beer or a 35ml measure of spirits. But I'm puzzled as to what they mean by requiring them to serve smaller measures of beers and spirits. Do any pubs actually only serve beer in pints? Or do they mean they're going to make pubs offer nips, which will involve a costly investment in glassware and possibly dispense equipment to meet a negligible demand? And, likewise, does it just mean pubs will have to offer single measures of spirits, or that a single must be defined as 25ml rather than 35ml, which will require all those pubs that have gone over to 35ml to replace all their optics?

Curmudgeon Online:

www.curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com



The Trafford & Hulme Pub Of The Season for Spring 2010 is Pi on Manchester Road, Chorlton. John O'Donnell tells you why it has won



NESTLED away at the north end of Chorlton opposite the famous Unicorn grocery store, Pi is one of the small independent gems that make the Chorlton area so vibrant.

One of the smallest pubs to receive the accolade with seating for just over 30 people, Pi doesn't have pretensions of being a nightclub or a restaurant or anything else – as the sign outside says – Pi is a bar. It has two specialities and it does them both excellently – the first is beer and the second is pies (if you hadn't guessed).

On the beer side, currently the four handpumps dispense house beer Bank Top Flat Cap plus two guest ales and a guest real cider. A Good Beer Guide Entry in its first year of eligibility says all that is needed about the quality. In 2009, Pi took part in both CAMRA's Mild Challenge and the Winter Warmer Wander promotion and is already signed up for Mild Magic 2010. Local micro breweries such as Hornbeam, Bazens', Phoenix and Acorn dominate the guest ales and Phoenix even have a dedicated font for their range of lager & fruit beers.



Supplementing the real ale and cider is a massive selection of foreign beers with seven fonts supplying draught from Belgium, Germany, Holland & the USA while each table has a copy of the Pi "Beer Bible & Beverage Compendium" with

tasting notes for the 60 odd bottled beers available from 20 countries as far afield as Australia, Canada, Kenya and even Mongolia.

Food wise it's straightforward enough – there are nuts and there are pies! However, it's not your average meat & potato here – the Pi pie is a gourmet experience available 11am (12 on weekends) to 11pm every day.. A choice of four from the Pi-Minister range is available at any one time (usually two meat & two vegetarian), each pie being hand made using only the finest free range and organic ingredients. Although each is filling enough to be a meal on its own, sides of gravy, mash and minty peas are available.

Excellent beer, simple hearty food and friendly atmosphere make Pi a worthy winner of this award. The award presentation will be made on Thursday 22nd April from 8pm – please come along.

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CAMRA Pub of the Month November 2009



High Peak

PUB NEWS

WITH FRANK WOOD

THE Indian franchise that previously ran successfully for many years at the **Bulls Head** in Old Glossop came to an end a few months ago. Mamood and his team however, have now re-located to Hadfield, just a two minute walk from the train station, on Railway Street. They opened up in mid January, sharing with a Chinese restaurant the premises of the Video Vault function site, also known as Kingsmoor Leisure. However, from what I hear, there is no real ale available, although the **Palatine**, a well noted Robinsons pub just a stones throw away, sells good quality beers normally including the seasonal offering. The restaurant is named Aman and their phone number for bookings is 01457 862777.

Stop Press: shortly before we went to press, the Bulls Head announced in the local Glossop paper that they would be imminently replacing the departing Indian franchise with a new one, due to open in late February (by the time this edition of OT comes out)

In Guide Bridge, both the former Good Beer Guide listed Boundary and also the **Junction** are closed and have 'pub business to let' signs up.

Drastic news from a regular Good Beer Guide entry in Glossop, the **Crown** on Victoria Street. The Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter has gone up 3p, to a grand £1.38 a pint. However, all is not gloomy as the pub has now officially made Part 1 of the CAMRA National Inventory of heritage pubs. Still well worth a walk up the hill from the town centre for, don't you think?

Whilst in the **Sportsman** in Hyde a few times in January (Pennine Brewery), I have been trying out a few different combinations of beers. The Pennine Pitch Porter and Moorhouses Black Cat when combined, make an excellent drink for instance (Pitch Black or Pitch Cat?) as do a combination of Pennine Sunshine and Floral Dance (Sundance?). Staying in Hyde, the **Cheshire Cheese**, once a highly rated Boddingtons pub on Market Street, has been sold and will re-open as an alternative business

Cask Marque awards this time to the **Roe Cross** at Mottram and the **Wrens Nest** in Glossop (carvery here at £3.50 in the week, dearer at weekends). Meanwhile, at the wonderful **Godley Hall** at Godley (find it if you can), the licensees have just purchased the pub from their former bosses, Punch Taverns. Old Speckled Hen & Sharps Doom Bar were the beers available on a recent visit.

In Lower Mossley, the **Woodend Tavern** on Manchester Road (next to the canal) was shut in early February but due to open as a coffee shop and bistro by Giorgio's, who are re-locating from their premises at Higher Mossley. They cite more room to operate their business. However, bottled beers are said to be available once open, as previously. Ben Plunkett from the Cotton Bale in Hyde has been promoted within the Wetherspoons business, to take on the **Bishop Blaize** at Stretford. This took effect from early February. However, continuation is the aim here, with his assistant and cellarman Darren Foskett taking over the Hyde pub.

The **Chieftain**, on Green Lane in Hadfield, continues to sell Hydes Original and Owd Oak Mild. In addition they sell the Hydes seasonal ale and a guest beer. On my visit on 14th February, the guest beer was Ridleys Old Bob (5.1%) and so good, I stayed for a while.

In Tintwistle, the **Bulls Head** on Old Road has fairly regular music on a Saturday evening and on 13 February, the Victor Brox Band pulled in a large crowd, not surprisingly as he has been something of a legend round the Glossop area for a good number of years. The beer was not bad either, I tried the Wrens Nest and Love Nest (both from the local Howard Town brewery) and moved on to the staple Taylors Landlord later, all three being very acceptable.

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MORE CHOICE
BETTER BEER

International Brewing Awards



1998

Wobbly Bob



2002

Navy



2002

Wobbly Bob



2004

Wobbly Bob



WHAT have a major department store, a national toy shop and a national fitness club chain got in common? The answer is the M & B pub company. New chairman and some directors include the above in their portfolio of recent business experience. There is no mention in reports of boardroom battles at M & B of pubs and beer and communities. These people are but players in the big business game of Pub Monopoly. It would be laughable were it not likely to affect some of our pubs and the beers that we drink.

Reading the small print on a menu in Crown Carvery pubs, I think that these are part of the M & B estate. Scattered across certainly northern England they do a good deal in budget priced food and usually have one or two real ales available. Whilst the choice is not out of the ordinary you do get a reasonable pint of a national brand with your meal.

Robinson's new seasonal beer, Dragon's Fire has been available at both the **Crossings**, Furness Vale and at the **Navigation**, Buxworth.. This latter is a free house currently featuring Robinson's beers, but some unusual beers continue to be provided. A recent surprise was St. Austell Proper Job, a 4.5% brew described as 'powerfully hopped.' No problems with this description of a very enjoyable pint. A media entertainment centre has been installed at the Navigation and will be used for karaoke, race nights and other potential crowd pullers.

Back at the **Crossings**, a recent visit found the unusual Old Stockport Bitter and Hartley's XB in good form, alongside Unicorn and Dragon's Fire.

At the **Cock** in Whaley Bridge, Double Hop sells well with a regular clientele, and until a fourth hand pump is installed the seasonal beer is not always accessed.

Still in the Robinson's estate, the **Railway** in Whaley Bridge is worth a call for its one real ale. Unicorn sells well enough to be in consistently good form. One decent beer really is better than a line of hand pumps serving indifferent products.

The **White Hart** in Whaley Bridge usually has Tetley Bitter, Young's Special, and Theakston Old Peculier. Old Peculier is very popular, as it has been at the Navigation in Buxworth.

Young's Special also sells well at the **Dog & Partridge** at Bridgemont, where of course Coach House Gunpowder Mild makes a worthwhile call for mild drinkers. Recent guest beers have included Coach House Innkeepers and Cottage Full Steam Ahead..

Both the **Shady Oak** at Fernilee and the **Shepherds'** in Whaley Bridge continue to source beers from the wider Marston's brewing empire. The Shady has had Marston Ugly Sisters and Wychwood Hobgoblin available. A recent visit to the Shepherds' found Jennings Cocker Hoop and Cross Buttock, a Cumbrian wrestling expression, and Ringwood Porter. The Jennings Brewery should be back in production by now after the flood damage, but this seems not to have been confirmed.

By the time you read this the Winter Festival at the **Old Hall** at Whitehough, Chinley, will have come and gone. A normal visit to the Old Hall will find at least one Thornbridge beer as a permanent feature. Wild Swan was very good recently, with Jaipur and Lord Marples also available. Also look out for beers from Kelham Island, Marble and Phoenix.

A sad item of news is the closure and boarding up of the **Highwayman** at Rainow. This Thwaites' house lies out of Rainow on the east side. Unconfirmed reports are that lack of customers during the worst of the winter weather, the Macclesfield to Whaley Bridge road was closed on occasions, tipped the business over the edge. Let us hope that Thwaites are soon able to find a new tenant.

I am also uncertain about the **Soldier Dick** in Furness Vale, with reports of the doors being closed when the pub could be expected to be open.

More on both of these as information becomes available.

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GALLERY

WINTER WARMER WANDER SPECIAL

This year's Winter Warmer Wander was a huge success with no fewer than 88 people taking part and winning prizes. A presentation afternoon was held at the Magnet, Stockport in early February when some 65 people turned up to collect their prizes. Special congratulations to the major prize winners – Chris Walkden and David Allen who won the two hampers of winter ales, and Sam Rurey who won the £25 food and drink voucher kindly sponsored by the Ashlea in Cheadle. Our photo below shows some of the crowd who came along on the day.



Thanks in particular to Wander organisers Margaret O'Brien and Dave Platt. They are pictured below while on the Wander themselves.



Pictured left is Winter Warmer fan Carol Sheldon, co-author of the write up on the facing pages. Carol is seen armed with both a copy of the *Opening Times* Winter Warmer Wander special and the Stockport Pub Guide – essential tools for a successful day out on the Wander.

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Winter Warmer Wandering

Dave and Carol Sheldon hit the trail

Dave and Carol Sheldon completed the entire Winter Warmer Wander – here are some of their highlights from the 30 pubs visited along the way. A fuller version of this article can be found at: <http://www.ssmcamra.org.uk/page50.html>

Friday 11th December: was probably not the best evening to start the Winter Warmer Wander as Manchester was heaving with early Christmas revellers. It was cold and misty but we soon warmed up as we entered a packed **Marble Arch**. There were at least six beers that would qualify as winter warmers. Two of these were from the Headless brewery in Derby and Carol went straight for their Zymosis at 7.5%ABV, I took things easier with Marble Chocolate at 5.5%. Both beers were very good.

Saturday 12th December: We caught a no.X57 bus out to **Didsbury** and started the day in the pub of the same name. It was very busy with diners. Two beers qualified for the WWW, Speckled Hen and Abbot Ale and the helpful lad behind the bar said that he had some North Yorkshire Flying Herbert in the cellar if we would like some. We took him up on the offer and it was very nice.

We returned to bus travel for the journey to Chorlton. A walk along Beech Road brought us to the **Trevor Arms**. Busy and very much a locals pub there were just two beers on offer, Speckled Hen and Brains Party Popper. The Party Popper, which probably qualified as a mild, was the poorest beer that we had had to date. Midway through our beers the landlord came over with two fresh glasses of Downton Winter Solstice and swept away our Party Poppers with his apologies for it being served. Apparently the Party Popper had just gone off and the the Winter Solstice had just come on. As we had not made any comment about the Brains beer this was customer service at its very best. The Winter Solstice was very good.

Sunday 13th December: joined the hordes of Christmas shoppers on the train but none of them alighted along with us at Heaton Chapel. A ten minute or so walk brought us to the **Nursery** which was doing very good business. Two beers qualified for the WWW and so we had them both. The Hydes seasonal, High and Dry, was decent enough but we both thought that the Allgates Winter Meltdown was very good.

A walk of a similar length found us in the **Railway** on Wellington Road North. From their five hand pumps two beers met the WWW criteria. Unfortunately Lytham Baileys Blinder was possibly just starting to turn. Bradfield Farmers Belgium Blue however was far better.

Over the road it wasn't surprising to find half a dozen beers of 4.5%ABV or above from the 14 or so hand pumps in the **Magnet**. Our choices turned out to be two of the best beers on the wander so far. O'Hanlons Port Stout was not lacking in port making this a fine winter warmer. Even tastier was Ramsbury Rum Truffle which had a lovely earthiness to it.

Thursday 24th December: early finish on Christmas Eve led to a drinking session in Manchester and Stockport with friends. We started in the **Micro Bar** where Boggarts Rum Porter wasn't lacking in the rum content. After a visit to the reopened and improved Angel we made the promised return to the **Smithfield** where there were plenty of qualifiers for the WWW. I opted for Greenmill Santa's Grog whilst Carol chose one of her favourites, Phoenix Wobbly Bob.

At the **Crown** in Stockport there was no pulling of the punches with Dark Star Critical Mass at 7.8%. This was yet another pub which had run out of stickers. With over three weeks to go it

appeared that the WWW was going to be a big success. Good thing it is not a sticker per beer consumed because we finished the evening with Acorn 7th Noel at 5.4%.

Sunday 27th December: We started in the **Railway** on Avenue Street with some Cotleigh Red Nose Reinbeer, which neither of us was too keen on, and Pennine Pitch Porter. At 4.5% and 5.0% respectively these wouldn't normally be my first beers of the day but this is the WWW and a much stronger beer was to follow.

We don't get into the **Swan with Two Necks** too often and we had forgotten what a nice pub it is. We relaxed with some Robinsons Old Tom whilst listening to music from the late 50s and early 60s.

At our next pub, the **Arden Arms**, the music was more modern - early to mid 60s! Again Robinsons Old Tom was the qualifying ale but I cheated just a little by having Robbies Mr.Scrooge at 4.4%. The Old Tom here was from a barrel on the bar. The **Bulls Head** is another Robinsons pub which meant more Old Tom.

Monday 26th December: Although not far from our home in Cheadle Hulme we don't very often visit Cheadle and Gatley, the WWW gave us a reason to take to the bus and visit some more pubs that we hadn't visited for quite a while, years in some cases.

At the **Prince of Wales** the qualifying beer was Hydes Three Sheiks to the Wind, a pleasant starter to the afternoon. Almost next door the **Gothic** is rather careworn. The Cains F.A. was perfectly acceptable.

Tuesday 27th December: The **New Oxford** Salford had several beers over the qualifying 4.5%. Our choices were Potbelly Captain Pigwash and Allgates Winter Meltdown. Both beers were OK but didn't really provide that winter warmer feel. On to the **Crescent**. This was more like it, a nice warm pub with a lively atmosphere on a cold day. We chose two Phoenix beers and they were absolute crackers. The 7.5% Black As Your Hat was an imperial stout which looked and tasted the part, even better was the 7% Humbug which had a spicy, warming taste. Two beers worthy of the occasion.

Thursday 31st December: hadn't set out to visit all 30 pubs but here we were on the last day of the year with just two to go. Although the nearest of the 30 pubs to home it is years since we last visited the **Ladybrook Hotel** Bramhall. We were greeted by 14 hand pumps offering five different beers and we chose the two which were over 5%ABV in strength, Titanic Capt. Smith and Cropton Dangleberry, the latter being particularly good.

A New Years Eve visit to Stockport started with a visit to the **Olde Vic** for our final WWW sticker. Steve and Jo were preparing for their New Year's Eve celebrations but they let us in early when we explained that we had come for our final beer of the WWW. Our final beer was one suitable of the occasion, Facers 7th Heaven, a 7% beer that was smooth, full of flavour and belied its strength. So that's it, the ending was fitting for the occasion, although they were busy Jo and Steve had let us in to complete the Winter Warmer Wander and showed the spirit of the season.

We have had many enjoyable winter warmers and visited pubs which we wouldn't have gone into otherwise, not because there is anything wrong with them but because they were a bit away from the areas where we usually go to.

Thanks go to Margaret O'Brien and Dave Platt for organising the event.

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**Lots of bits and pieces this month with changes, losses and gains around the city.**

First an update on one of the news items last month. Sad to say, Jimmy Bibby has now left the **Queens Arms** on Honey Street, Cheetham, having only been there for about a month. This is a shame as he has had great plans for the pub. The good news is that cask ale remains on sale.

## Chorlton Chatter

**T**HE **Horse and Jockey** currently has real cider served from the cask. **Pi** has also confirmed that they will be retaining hand pulled cider.

The **Beech** reopened just before Xmas under new management and after a bit of a brush up. Since the New Year they have managed to keep two house beers, Timothy Taylors Landlord and Best and one guest beer. In the future they are looking to expand their guest beer range and there are lots of improvements planned for the premises depending upon response.



New management in the **Lloyds** is committed to improving and expanding the selection of real ale. It hosted the February meeting of Trafford & Hulme CAMRA and promises to have at least three ales on, plus some bottles of the limited edition Harvest Ale.

The **Famous Trevor Arms** has a new and improved beer list to reflect the continuing good real ale sales, which has been demonstrated in interesting recent offerings. Finally the **Nook** now has a dedicated handpump for Dunham Massey beers – the downside is that they have achieved this by taking off the traditional cider.

## Bits & Pieces

At long last Wetherspoons have gained an outlet in Didsbury. They have tried before but failed in the face of local opposition but seemingly have encountered no such problems this time. The new outlet will occupy the former Pitcher & Piano premises on School Lane, and work is proceeding apace. The new outlet will be called the **Milson Rhodes** and is scheduled to open on 19 March.

While the pub scene in South Manchester may be thriving, some of the other suburbs are faring less well. The **Church Inn** in Levenshulme has been demolished while the **Bay Horse** in Longsight remains closed and boarded.

In Wythenshawe the **Talisman** (Oatlands Road/Portway) in Woodhouse Park, which had been closed for some months, is now also demolished.

In Salford (just!) the builders are in at the long-closed **Crown** on Blackfriars Street. Now, there have been numerous false starts here before so I will be interested to see what emerges.

Finally, I have been very impressed by the new bottled beer range at the **Bowling Green** on Grafton Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock. Small but perfectly formed sums it up. The beers featured include among others, the Belgian Rodenbach Grand Cru, Rochefort 10, Orval and Kwak, while the USA is represented by Brooklyn Black Chocolate Stout and Pumpkin Ale, Anchor Porter and Flying Dog Doggie Style IPA. I usually have a glass of the regular St Austell Tribute (or the guest) when I call but now I'm really spoilt for choice!



**M**ANCHESTER'S mainline railway stations are the gateway to not only the City of Manchester but arguably to the entire Greater Manchester region. You might therefore expect they would act as a showcase for the best of what the county has to offer, in terms of both its culture and its industry.

You might expect that but you would be wrong. Instead they present a bland corporate face to our visitors and nowhere is this more apparent than in the various bars, at both Piccadilly and Victoria stations.

Greater Manchester is arguably a national centre of independent brewing. We can boast four long established independent family brewers in the shape of Robinsons, Holts, Hydes and JW Lees – a higher number than any other county in the country. Not only that but they are accompanied by no fewer than 19 micro brewers, with another two likely to come on line this year.

It would not be unreasonable to expect then, that the various bars and buffets at the main rail stations might reflect at least part of this heritage – a couple of hand pumps in each outlet perhaps, offering a choice of the region's exceptional cask beers. Or perhaps if there is no scope for cask, then say a selection of bottled beers – all of the family brewers and many of the micros bottle their products. But no.

### Imagination

The lack of imagination is breathtaking – which is rather more than can be said for the beers on offer. Victoria has the most characterful bar and buffet, still redolent of its 19th Century glories. However despite a recent makeover it is a dreary drinking experience.

At least you can admire the architecture, which is more than can be said for Piccadilly. The station's makeover has rightly attracted plaudits and it is now a modern, light and airy gateway to the city. The spirits however sink when you cross the threshold of the two bars on its upper level. Not only are their designs an almost classic example of corporate blandness but their beer offerings are soulless. National brands abound and offer nothing at all to anyone with even the remotest interest in beer.

By ignoring the wealth of good beer available almost on their doorsteps, these outlets let down themselves, let down their customers and let down the great brewing tradition that continues to thrive in Manchester and its region.

Manchester and its people rightly have a reputation for sparky individuality. What a shame then that the operators of the bars at our great stations prefer to take refuge in bland corporate anonymity.

## Staveley Beer Festival

Alan Gent has a grand day out...

**O**NE of the good things about the current cask ale revolution is the plethora of beer festivals available. Check the CAMRA national newspaper What's Brewing and there can be anything up to half a dozen in any one month.

One of my favourites is the Staveley, held in the Beer Hall at Hawkshead Brewery, not least because it also involves a very pleasant train journey.

Although there is a direct train at 9:46, Dave Jenkinson and I board the 10:16 at Piccadilly, because we have to change at Oxenholme. There is a one hour wait, here, which would be very dull, but for the fact that it gives us ample time to walk up to the Station Inn, one of Cumbria's Good Beer Guide listed pubs, to sample their wares. We treat ourselves to a pint and a half before descending the hill for the short train ride to Staveley. Alighting on the platform we bump into Ian Ritchie who hooks up with us and we spend a very pleasant afternoon sampling ale and sorting out the world.

The beer hall is above the brewery but with a large picture window into the brewery itself allowing ample reflection on the brewer's art whilst sampling the result of his efforts. The hall itself is no more than half the size of Calvert's Court in Stockport, so it's a very intimate affair. On the same floor is a cafe, with waitress service bringing you ample plates of fresh home cooked food if required. Our mind though was on other things....

As we approached the bar, the bar man immediately gave us a sheet of paper on which was the beer list. A bit like offering a condemned man a choice of rope....

Although over 30 beers were listed, there are only 23 hand pumps available (on a very small bar!) and a large board above the bar indicates what is on. Sheets are quickly updated and we settle down. All the beers on offer are SIBA National Champions.

The beers are laid out by category topped off by Saltaire's Cascade Pale, the overall northern champion ale. There is a



good mix of pale ales, bitters, old ales and some very special specialties! Sadly none of the extras listed (incl. Jaipur) were available on Friday lunchtime. However we spent a very happy four hours culminating in a reprise for two ales. My first one was a second glass of Vale's VPA, largely to cleanse the palate for the final and top brew of the day, Saltaire Triple Chocoholic - absolutely brimming with flavours of Cadbury's mixed with Baileys! Drinking halves we didn't go above £5 a round for three drinks, which makes it seem very reasonable.

And so to the fish and chips. The chip shop in Staveley has to be one of the best in the country. He still uses dripping to cook his fish and chips in and standing in the cold biting into crisp batter and just as crisp chips, finished off the day in the best way possible. We walked back to the station (for a direct train to Manchester) our breath clouding in the air and a thin patina of chip fat coating our lips against the frost. It was, in every respect, a grand day out!

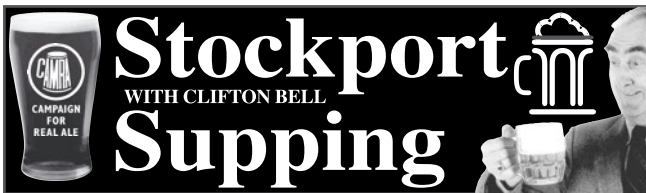


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**Navigation**

THE first thing I need to do this month is put right a bit of an injustice. The **Navigation** at the top of Lancashire Hill is Beartown Brewery's only pub in Stockport and in the past has been a serial CAMRA award winner. However it's dropped off my radar in recent times, for no good reason I have to admit.



Since November 2008 the pub has been run by Barry and Debbie Harvey who have the pub on a lease until 2011.

There has been a general spruce up at the pub and Barry tells me that trade has increased over the 18 months he and Debbie have been there.

The beer was certainly on form when I called, probably due to the fact that Barry has reduced the number of beers sold to match the trade. The range therefore comprises two Beartown beers, Bearskinful and the more powerful Bruins Ruin, alongside a changing guest beer. Tittertons excellent pies are sold should you be feeling peckish and live sport is screened should you fancy some armchair exercise. Great bar staff, too. Well worth a call – I shall certainly be dropping in again.

**Real Ale Gains**



No less than two cask ale gains to report this month. The first is a long standing keg outlet – the **Phoenix** in Hazel Grove. Many years ago when the pub was run by Whitbread (remember them?) it was something of a cask ale theme pub. Latterly it became one of the first “no smoking” pubs, before this became compulsory, although cask ale departed with the ciggies.

However it's now owned by Greene King and at long last they have put cask ale back – hand pumps now sell IPA, Abbott and Old Speckled Hen.

The other gain is the **Fir Tree** in Reddish which has now put cask ale back again. As before the hand pumps are confined to the vault and dispense Greene King IPA and John Smith's Cask. Popping over from North Reddish to the Denton/Haughton Green border, the new licensees at the **Masons Arms** are mother and daughter, Ann Bristow and Michelle Bradbury ex of the Junction in Glossop which is being sold off by Enterprise.

Nearby, the **Windmill** in Dane Bank has been selling cask for a few months now with Thwaites Bomber at £1.89 a pint, Greene King IPA at £1.69 a pint and a guest beer. They have also obtained Cask Marque accreditation.

Back to Stockport now and the new owner of the **Stockport Arms** on St Petersgate is a local builder who also has the Red Lion in Denton, the White House in Stalybridge, the Grove in Clayton and the Four Heaton's in Heaton Norris (I presume he leases all these latter pubs). He briefly told me that he will operate the Stockport Arms free of tie and he intends to put cask beer on. This is a very welcome development – more news when I get it.

**More Stockport Supping on page 20...**

# The Railway

Good Beer and Good Cheer

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Monday</b><br/>Stockport Darts and Crib League<br/>(Mixed)</p> <p><b>Tuesday</b><br/>Stockport Darts and Crib League</p> <p><b>Wednesday</b><br/>Tango Poker League</p> <p><b>Friday</b><br/>Open Mic Nite</p> | <p><b>Cask Ales</b><br/><b>J. Holt</b><br/><b>plus 3</b><br/><b>changing</b><br/><b>guest ales</b></p> <p><b>Sunday</b><br/>Jazz Nite</p> |
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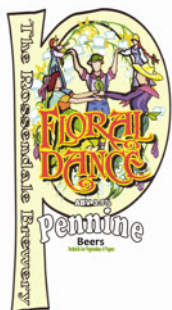
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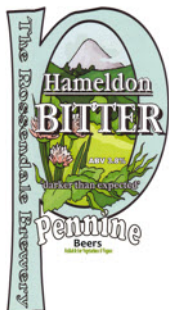


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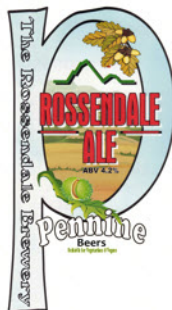
**Floral Dance**  
3.6%

A pale and fruity session beer, with body that is more than a match for many stronger beers!



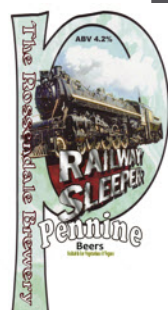
**Hameldon Bitter**  
3.8%

An unusually dark traditional bitter, with a dry and assertive character that develops in the finish.



**Rossendale Ale**  
4.2%

A malty aroma leads to a complex, malt dominated flavour, supported by a dry, increasingly bitter finish.



**Railway Sleeper**  
4.2%

An amber, uniquely intense bitter and hoppy beer, still brewed with our Stockport drinkers in mind.



**Pitch Porter**  
5%

A full bodied, rich beer with a slightly sweet, malty start, counter-balanced with sharp bitterness and an obvious roast barley dominance.



**Sunshine**  
5.3%

A hoppy and bitter golden beer with a citrus character. The lingering finish is dry and spicy.

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# Brewery NEWS

## Family Favourites

**T**HE current seasonal from **Robinson's**, Dragon's Fire, is getting rave reviews. This dark yet hoppy 3.9% ABV beer really is worth seeking out if you've not yet tried it.

While Old Tom is a serial award winner for the brewery, some of the variants are starting to pick up awards. One feature of the National Winter Ales Festival was the voting for the "People's Pint" sponsored by JD Wetherspoon. So, while the judges were sipping and slurping their way to deciding the Champion Winter Beer of Britain, the punters were picking their favourite pint – and this turned out to be Robinsons Ginger Tom.

A party of festival staff duly visited Robinsons on 17 February where Wetherspoons Phil Buckley presented Head Brewer Chris Hellin with a certificate to mark the award (pictured, right). A cask of Ginger Tom was on the bar for the party to enjoy and we understand that it will be released to the trade in the autumn as an extra seasonal beer.



The other Old Tom variant, Chocolate Tom, is planned to be made available on cask as an extra seasonal for the Easter period.

**Hydes** have a new craft ale out for March and April. This is Over a Barrel at 4.1%. It is described as an "amber Spring beer, with a thumping great hoppy flavour, heavy on the hops". It is made with pale ale and crystal malt, and hopped with Fuggles and Challenger hops, with additional dry hopping using more Fuggles.

**JW Lees** have a new seasonal ale out for March to May. Brassed Off is 3.7% ABV brewed using crystal malt and Styrian Goldings hops.

## Micro Brewery News

Lots of news this month from our local micro brewers. Firstly news from a couple of Derbyshire breweries, one in the *Opening Times* area, the other a local favourite.

**Buxton Brewery** is now up and running at its new home. We had hoped to get up to Buxton and see them in time for this issue but time pressures prevented this. Hopefully next time.

A range of beers is being produced including Buxton Blonde (4.6%); Buxton SPA (4.1%) – a light and refreshing ale late hopped with Cascade; and Kinder Sunset (5%) a ruby red bitter. Seasonals have included Buxton Blizzard (3.6%), a light winter ale, and on the way are Quinn's Rustic Irish Stout, for St Patrick's Day, and Buxton Spring, a dark mild out for CAMRA's May Mild Month.

**Thornbridge Brewery** are now starting weekly deliveries to the Stockport and Manchester area. Always willing to experiment their new beer is Exposed, 4% easy drinking stout brewed with strawberries and pink peppercorns. This is what the brewery says about the beer: "The recipe has a base of a stout, creamy with just a hint of classic Irish dryness. A good portion of roasted barley provides a hint of astringency to emulate that found in balsamic vinegar and to accentuate the fruit character. A small amount of the oil packed Tellicherry black pepper was added to provide a hint of aniseed fragrance. The beer was lightly hopped with Bramling Cross and Amarillo



with a final addition of a large amount of cracked pink peppercorns full of fragrances of parma violet, juniper berries and plump, green sultanas. The beer has been aged on strawberry pulp to provide the faintest hint of strawberry to blend in with the fragrant pepper and lovely, slightly dry chocolaty character of the stout." Wow.

**Phoenix Brewery** produced a corker of a beer in January. This was Black As Your Hat, a 7.5% strong porter. It turns out this was the result of a mistake at the brewery – luckily brewer Tony Allen has saved the recipe so hopefully we can look forward to its return next winter. This month look out for March Hare (4.4%) and Shamrock (4.3%).

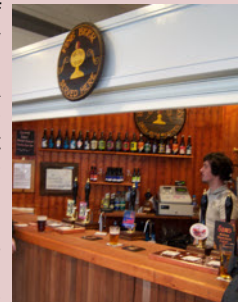
**Hornbeam Brewery** are very busy at the moment with both their core range and also monthly specials. The special for February was the 4% Denton's Glory, a dark golden ale well hopped using Amarillo and Celia hops. It's very good indeed. Try it if you come across any left. For March the beer hadn't been named as we went to press but it was to be about 3.5%, and pale, light ale.



**Millstone Brewery** is continuing to reprise some of their older beer. Thus next month will see the return of Millstone Edge (4.4%) last brewed three years ago. This will be hopped with Fuggles and Goldings varieties.

**Shaws Brewery** Dukinfield is still going strong. The big seller is still the excellent Golden Globe, but a series of seasonal beers are still produced. Cascade (4.5%), brewed using Cascade hops (as you might expect) has been flying out of the brewery.

**Boggart Hole Clough** is now settled in new premises and continues to produce a wide range of beers. Out in February was Liberty Pale Ale (4.3%) a refreshing and citrusy beer made with Liberty hops. A recent single hop beer was Cascade (4%) and this has been so popular that it is being brought back. As ever there will doubtless be other beers emerging from the brewery as the month progresses. Boggart beers are always available at the brewery's one "tied house" – the Micro bar in the Arndale Market (pictured).



**Greenfield Brewery** held an open day for their 500th brew and to mark the occasion also produced a 5% version of their very first beer, Bill O'Jacks.

A particularly interesting beer coming out this month is Boon Army Ale (4.6%). This very light and pale beer, made with Chinook and WGV hops, has been brewed in conjunction with former Inspirial Carpets member Clint Boon and the Wetherspoons Up Steps pub in Oldham where the beer will be launched on 18 March.

**Bollington Brewery** has a new beer coming out at the beginning of March for British Pie Week. It's called 'Brewers Breakfast' because when they started brewing the brewers always had pies! There will also be a special pie week menu at the Vale pub.



Demand for Bollington beer is such that they have just bought a fourth fermenter to try and keep up with this. For the future on 8 May the pub is having its annual Fell Race which is sponsored by the Vale but this year will start and finish at the brewery. It's the Three Peaks of Bollington and is an official fell race so people should be coming from all over the country. On the same day there will be a family picnic on the recreation ground across the road and there will be a mini beer festival and music on in the evening.

**As ever apologies to those breweries we couldn't contact this time – more next month.**

## AWARDS GALLERY

The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month Award in November was presented to the Lord Nelson in Gorton, a hugely improved pub. Pictured below, branch chairman John Clarke (left) presents the certificate to Lynne and Les.



The Pub of the Month in December was the Railway on Wellington Road North, Stockport. The pub went on to win the overall branch Pub of the Year award, too. Ray and Pam Ford are shown here with their Pub of the Month certificate.



Coming up to date, the award for January was won by the Cheshire Line in Cheadle. Malcolm and Nina were away so the excellent bar team accepted the award on their behalf.



## Stockport Supping

Continued from page 17

I HAVE finally caught up with the new licensee at the **Rising Sun** Hazel Grove. He is Bill Moon and is new to the trade. Internally the pub has been redecorated throughout (much needed) and the pool table removed. Food is now available seven days a week from 11am 'til 8pm. The food operation is run by Bill's son Peter.

On the cask beer front the choice is from Deuchars IPA, Wells Bombardier and Theakstons XB but Bill tells me that he will soon be adding a fourth handpull which will feature a rotating guest from the S&N list. There will be a new function room upstairs and when the weather improves the outside of the pub will be redecorated. I'm sure we all wish Bill well and it is great to see cask ale return to this landmark pub.

### Competition Win for Royal Scot

THE **Royal Scot** at Marple Bridge has secured the top spot in a comprehensive search of the north west and north Wales for the Robinson's pub with the Best Kept Bar and Cellar. Licensees Helen and Karl Guare were elated when their pub was singled out in the strongly contested annual competition, which is now in its twelfth year. The significant achievement by Helen and Karl was honoured in an award ceremony at the pub. Customers packed the premises to see the couple acknowledged for earning an almost perfect score of 295 points out of a potential 300.

In an acceptance speech Karl acknowledged the contribution and hard work put in throughout the year by all of his staff and thanked his customers for their support. He went on to say: "Running a pub is more than a job it is a lifestyle for our family. We enjoy what we do and take a great deal of pride in the Royal Scot and the role it plays in the community. So it is particularly rewarding to be recognised as having achieved the very highest standards."



To win the coveted top spot in the competition that takes in over 300 of Robinson's pubs throughout the north west and north Wales, every aspect of the bar, cellar and beer quality at the Marple Bridge pub was put under close scrutiny. In the final round of the contest there were just two points separating the top three pubs, but with the Royal Scot putting in a near perfect performance for the presentation of its bar, the pub's close knit and dedicated team pipped the opposition to the post.

In recognition of the significant achievement director Oliver Robinson of Frederic Robinson Limited presented Helen and Karl with the Unicorn Shield which has been specially inscribed to mark the occasion.

### Cheadle Hulme Notes

I popped along to the **Governors House** in January as I'd been tipped off about an Osset guest beer in this GK pub. My spy was right - Osset Red (4.0%) was on as well as the GK stuff (including Morlands). What a fantastic beer the Osset was with a fine balance of malt and hops. Two pints were consumed before we were kicked out at closing time! There was an intention to hold a beer festival here, possible late February or early March. I'd heard nothing more as this was typed but this is clearly a pub to watch.

My spy who tipped me off about the Ossett also told me the nearby **John Millington** has some interesting bottled beers such as Chimay Red, Duvel and Erdinger. I've not yet had the chance to check this out.



Macclesfield and East Cheshire branch chose the Old Ship Inn, Beech Lane, Macclesfield as their Pub of the Season, for Winter 2009/10 and presented the award on Monday 18th January at a well attended social event, writes David Hasler.

THE Old Ship is in every way a traditional style local pub. There are no televisions and only a large jukebox for background noise, but more usually the only noise is the hum of conversation from the many locals and regulars. There is a darts board in a separate area and a pool table in a back room and, as you would expect, there are pub teams for both of these. Apparently, the Gents toilets are also worth a visit, though I have to pass on that! Also worth noticing is the pub sign, make sure you look at both sides!



A prime requirement for a pub to receive a Winter Pub award is the presence of a real fire. Here there are two, blazing away and, until this was pointed out, it was not obvious that there is no other heating in the bar, so cosy is the feel.

The Old Ship could almost be counted as the tap for the local Storm Brewery, as it is one of the few places where there is always a choice of Storm beers, on a recent visit the choice was from Ale Force, Bosley Cloud and Silk of Amnesia, as well as Worthington. There is also a wide range of wines sold by the bottle.

The landlord here for many years has been Jed Morton, and there is an eye catching large portrait of him by the fireplace. He has been through a very tough time recently, but the pub has continued to thrive and serve the local area, which is a tribute to both Jed and the loyal team with him. It seemed appropriate to recognise the consistent quality of this popular local pub and to wish Jed and his team the very best for the future.

Our picture shows CAMRA's Dave Hasler, right, presenting the award to the team at the Old Ship.

### Phyllda Bradshaw

The funeral of Phyllda Bradshaw was held at Macclesfield Crematorium on Friday 29 January. Until fairly recently, Phyllda and her husband Robert owned Sutton Hall, and before that the Hanging Gate at Sutton.



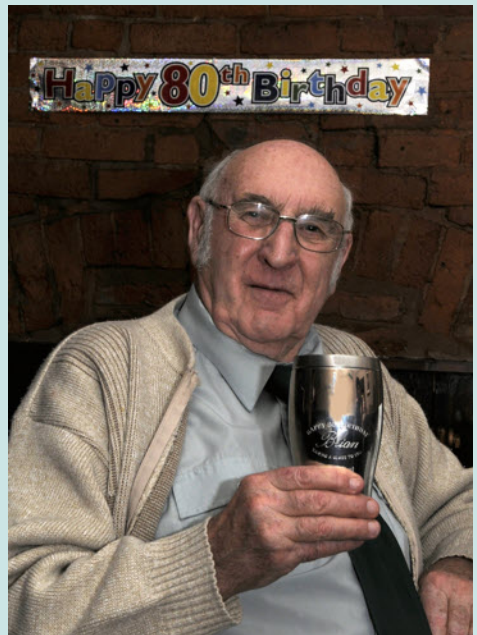
Both establishments were strong supporters of traditional English beers. She was a brave and lovely lady who will be much missed by her family and friends. Dave Ball, Really Nice Beer Co.

## 80 Years Young

TRAFFORD and Hulme Branch had good reason to celebrate recently, writes Andy Jenkinson

A large group of local members met at the Old Market Tavern in Altrincham to celebrate the 80th birthday of Brian Taylor.

He is probably our oldest branch member and he is definitely our oldest member who is still volunteering, and enjoying a pint of his favourite tipple, Timothy Taylors Landlord (no relation). Brian, and his wife Joan are well known to a lot of CAMRA members because of their involvement with beer festivals far and wide.



Brian originally joined the fledgling campaign in 1974 (his membership number is only 3 digits) as a Trafford member. In 1986, Brian and Joan moved away and became members of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre branch where they volunteered to work at Fleetwood Beer Festival and they have been back to volunteer at every one since.

They eventually moved back to Manchester and were instrumental in reviving the Trafford Branch in 2002, Brian being Secretary and Joan the Treasurer. When asked how many beer festivals had he worked at Brian replied, "so far I have volunteered for 17 Great British Beer Festivals in London, 22 Fleetwood festivals, all the Manchester Winter Ales Festivals numerous Stockport, Oldham and Bury festivals and there the ones I can remember". But Brian has no plans to retire just yet.

Happy Birthday Brian, 80 years young.

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## CAMRA Calling - What's On In The Local CAMRA

### Stockport & South Manchester

Branch Contact: *Pete Farrand 01625 425734*  
[pete.farrand@googlemail.com](mailto:pete.farrand@googlemail.com)  
 Branch website: [www.ssmcamra.org.uk](http://www.ssmcamra.org.uk)

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup>** - Mild Stagger: Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris 7.30pm; Magnet, Wellington Road North, 8.30pm

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>** - Branch Meeting: Lass O'Gowrie, Charles St, Manchester. Starts 8pm.

**Friday 19<sup>th</sup>** - Reddish & Heaton Chapel Stagger: Fir Tree, Gorton Rd, 7.30pm; Union, Broadstone Rd 8.30pm

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>** - Pub of the Month presentation to Vale Cottage, Gorton.

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> April** - Branch AGM: Railway, Wellington Road Nth, Heaton Norris. Starts 8pm. All members please try and attend this important meeting.

### Macclesfield & East Cheshire

Branch Contact: *Tony Icke 01625 861833*  
[contact@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk](mailto:contact@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk)  
 Branch website: [www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk/](http://www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk/)

**March 5<sup>th</sup>**; Congleton Beer Festival CAMRA social, Leisure Centre

**March 17<sup>th</sup>**; Bollington pub crawl, starting Poachers 7.30 start

### North Manchester

Branch Contact: *Dave Hallows 07983 944992*  
[davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk)

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>** - Social: Golden Lion, Manchester Rd, Clifton. Starts 8pm.

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup>** - Annual & Branch Meeting: Unicorn, Church St, M'cr City Centre. Starts 8pm. All members please try and attend this important meeting.

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>** - Social: Stanley Arms, Liverpool Rd, Patricroft, Eccles. From 8pm.

**Mar 29<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> April. Cask Ale Week-** Mar 31: Lloyds No. 1, Dantzig St, M'cr City Centre, 7.30pm; Crown & Anchor, Cateaton St, 8pm; Old Wellington Inn, Old Shambles, 8.40pm; Mitre, Cathedral Gates 9.30pm.

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April** - Central Salford Complete Crawl: Black Lion, Chapel St, 1pm; Rovers Return, Chapel St, 1.40pm -then, Marc Addy, Egerton, Eagle Inn, Kings Arms, New Oxford, Crescent at 6.30pm.

**March 27<sup>th</sup>**; Wilmslow pub crawl, starting King's Arms Sat lunchtime

**April 7<sup>th</sup>**; Spring Pub of the Season, Church House, Sutton

### Trafford & Hulme

Branch Contact: *John Ison 0161 962 7976*  
 Branch website: [www.thcamra.org.uk](http://www.thcamra.org.uk)

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>** - Ashton-on-Mersey survey. 8pm Old Plough, 9.30pm The Buck.

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup>** - Manchester survey: 8pm Wetherspoons Moon Under the Water, 8.45pm Corbiers, 9.30pm Sawyers Arms, 10pm Mr Thomas's Chop House, Finish City Arms.

**Thurs 1<sup>st</sup> April** - Branch meeting: Wetherspoons Waterhouse, Princess St, Manchester City Centre. Starts 8pm

### High Peak & NE Cheshire

Branch Contact: *Mike Rose 07986 458517*  
[mikewrose@gmail.com](mailto:mikewrose@gmail.com)  
 Branch website: [www.hpneccamra.org.uk/](http://www.hpneccamra.org.uk/)

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup>** - Branch Meeting: Cotton Bale, Hyde. Starts 8.30pm

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>** - Buxton Social: Ramsays Bar, Buckingham Hotel. From 8.30.

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April** - Branch Meeting and Spring Pub of the Season presentation: White Lion, Disley. Starts 8.30pm.

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# Dragon's Fire

February and March 2010

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