

April 2010



Opening

TIMES

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

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

In association with



All Change

Major Investment at Family Brewer – page 25



Mild Magic 2010 – Lots of Great Prizes to be won – see page 15



Countdown starts to Stockport Beer Festival: Full Details - page 11
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The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for April is to be given to the Cheadle Hulme, on Station Road. John Sutcliffe tells our readers why it was chosen



Located as it is next to the station, where the Macclesfield and Wilmslow railway lines meet, this was at one time called the Junction. It was an establishment of character but with a reputation for being a little on the rough side. It was altered and renamed the Cheadle Hulme; good but rather bland. Gradually it was improved and eventually entered the CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

In April 2009, the present landlord, Dave Woods, with his wife Rebecca and their young son Max, took over its management. Dave has a superb track record in the licensing trade and his considerable experience soon showed. He looks after the cask beers himself: Holts Bitter, Mild and monthly changing seasonal. This shows in the consistently fine quality.

Dave took the brave decision to encourage Joseph Holt's management to spend a considerable sum, tastefully refurbishing and refurnishing the premises. A new Carvery and Hob has been added and my family and I can vouch for the excellent quality, including the vegetarian dishes. It's good value too, with a special lunchtime offer. The dining is kept to the rear, quite separate from the sociable drinking areas at the side and front, including the comfortable vault. When writing the description for the Stockport Pub Guide, *Viaducts and Vaults 4*, my one criticism was the intrusion of large television screens in every drinking room, but now alleviated by having the middle Lounge free of TV.

Dave is a very 'hands on' manager, nearly always present, often behind the bar and always with a friendly word for the customers. He is ably helped by capable bar staff, some of whom have served for several years, and of course the chefs. Of course this can not work without the many regular customers of all ages in this magnificent community hostelry.

This well deserved award will be presented on 22nd April, starting at 8.00 p.m. There will be a quiz from 9.30 p.m.

The pub is served by railway to Cheadle Hulme station and the buses 313 and X57 stop immediately outside with 368 & 369 within 5 minutes walk.



The Pub of the Month award is sponsored by Stephenson's, a local family firm that has been supplying the local pub and catering trade for over 140 years. Check out their advert on this page.

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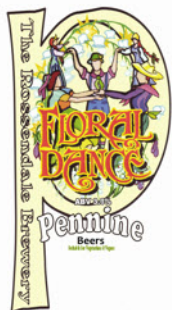
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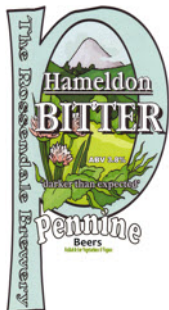
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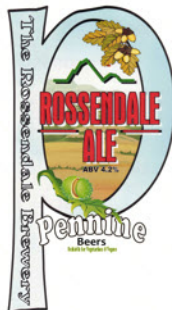
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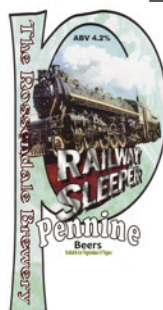
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Rossendale Ale
4.2%
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Railway Sleeper
4.2%
An amber, uniquely intense bitter and hoppy beer, still brewed with our Stockport drinkers in mind.

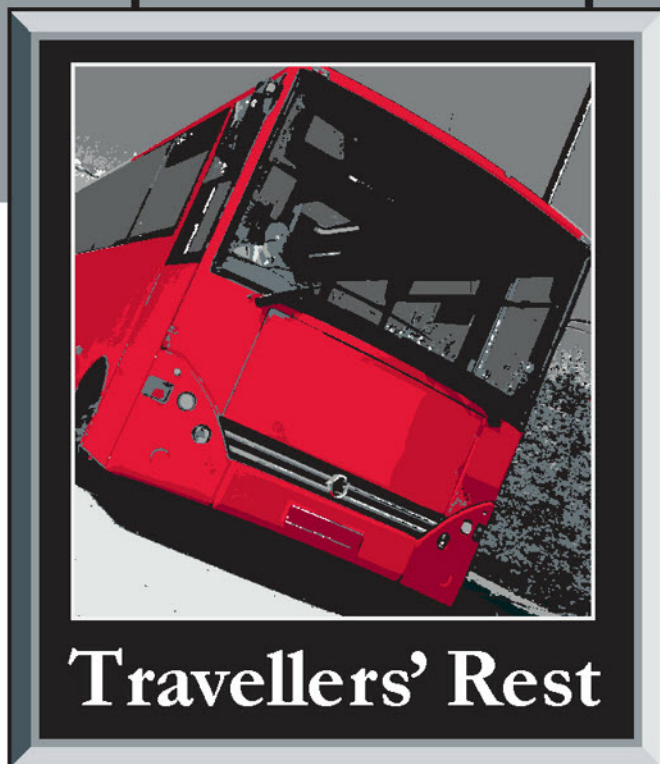


Pitch Porter
5%
A full bodied, rich beer with a slightly sweet, malty start, counter-balanced with sharp bitterness and an obvious roast barley dominance.



Sunshine
5.3%
A hoppy and bitter golden beer with a citrus character. The lingering finish is dry and spicy.

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COMMENT, NOTES & CONTENTS

Opening Times - Comment

We are now gearing up for one of the year's beeriest (and cideriest!) events. Yes, the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival will soon be upon us. Planning is already well advanced and in this issue we highlight the entertainment that will be on offer. Don't forget those important dates 3, 4 and 5 June at Edgeley Park, Stockport.

In this issue we are again launching our annual mild promotion, Mild Magic. The fact that we have been able to sign up 94 pubs this year illustrates just how well this endangered beer style survives in reasonable rude health in our part of the country. Thanks to all of the participating pubs – and now it's over to you, our readers, to support them in this initiative. I hope you will all take part.

Finally, a big welcome to GMPTe, who will be our sponsors for the next 12 months. Look out for public transport related articles in the coming months.

Opening Times - Information

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

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Trading Standards – for complaints about short measure pints etc contact Consumer Direct (North West). Consumer Direct works with all the Trading Standards services in the North West and is supported by the Office of Fair Trading. You can email Consumer Direct using a secure email system on their website (www.consumerdirect.gov.uk) which also provides advice, fact sheets and model letters on a range of consumer rights. Their telephone no. is 0845 404 05 06.

Copy Date for the April issue is Saturday 10 April

Contributors to this issue: John Clarke, John Tune, Dave Hanson, Peter Butler, Robin Wignall, Peter Edwardson, Frank Wood, Andy Jenkinson, Dave Hallows, Alex Keenleyside, Jim Flynn, John O'Donnell, Mike Rose, Heather Airlie, John Sutcliffe, Neil Worthington, Stuart Ballantyne.

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PUB Grub



The Red Lion

112 Buxton Road, High Lane

High Lane is something of a no-man's land of suburbia, rather anonymously strung out along the A6 to the south of Stockport. Amongst its pubs is the Red Lion, one of several Robinson's pubs in the village. It's had several incarnations over the years, most of which have involved major food operations. Some have garnered quite a reputation for themselves. It's current guise promises to be the best of the lot.

Late last year Robinson's went into partnership with Steve Pilling who has run the famous Mr Thomas's and Sam's Chop Houses in central Manchester. The Red Lion has had about a million quid thrown at it and it has to be said this is money well spent. The interior rambles pleasantly through a variety of levels and areas, some where you can just have a drink, perhaps with a snack from the bar menu, and some set out for more formal dining. The decor is "modern traditional" with lots of wood everywhere, and very easy on the eye.

The excuse for this visit was a birthday celebration so five of us fetched up there one Tuesday in March. Beers duly ordered (more about them later) we were shown to our table - it should be said that service throughout was friendly and efficient - just what it should be in fact.

The excellence of the first courses set the scene for what followed. Highlights included balsamic glazed chicken livers with roasted onion puree and a truffle oil dressing (£6.45), superbly light codling and smoked salmon fishcakes which came with a poached egg and a lemon and herb butter sauce (£5.95) and my pressed ham hock with parsley, capers and gherkin with a pease pudding - an excellent meaty terrine at £4.95



Mains also hit the spot. Slow roast crispy belly pork with sage and onion mash, buttered cabbage and pan juices (£12.95) brought rave reviews particularly the mash ("should I ask them for the recipe?") and the "exactly right" cabbage. Pan fried calves liver with smoked bacon and creamy devilled sauce (£15.95) was fantastic. The liver was wonderfully tender and well offset with the slightly spiky sauce. Green beans and mash completed a filling plateful. Who could resist pudding? All priced at £4.95, Bakewell tart with raspberry ripple ice cream was an excellent combination, while lemon crème brûlée did everything you would expect of it. Chocolate feuillantine was an indulgent highlight, being rich and unctuous atop a crispy wafer base.

While beer accompanied all of this, mention should be made of the rather good Italian Muscat that two of us had with our puddings. Speaking of the beer. Three were on handpump. Unicorn was on top form while Hatters was more than acceptable. Dizzy Blonde was seriously below par though, being dull and flabby. Given the high standards set, and achieved, with the rest of the offering, I think the Red Lion needs to pay just a little more attention to the beers to make sure they are all of the highest quality. With that minor caveat, the Red Lion is very highly recommended. They have a website at www.redlionhighlane.co.uk. Telephone 01663 765227.

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Labelling Away Diversity

THERE have been numerous calls recently to bring in compulsory "health" labelling on alcoholic drinks packages. Fair enough, you may think, it's not banning anything, it's simply providing drinkers with information, but in practice such a scheme could lead to a significant reduction in the variety of drinks available in the UK. One major importer has already stopped bringing in a particular beer brand because they didn't think it was practical to include the necessary labelling elements on the bottles. If you look at a selection of bottles and cans, you will see that the mass-market ones already have the health warnings, the more interesting and unusual ones by and large don't.

Mandatory labelling will impose an extra burden on small producers entering the market, and it is likely to deter people from importing low-volume specialist drinks, whether beers, wines or spirits, as they will have to either spend money redesigning the labels or put unsightly extra stickers on bottles or cans. And does it really matter in terms of the overall message that a handful of small-selling products don't have the labels when the vast majority, including all the big brands, do?

It doesn't help that the contents of the labels are highly questionable anyway – the official unit guidelines, as this column has pointed out before, were plucked out of thin air without any scientific justification, and neither is there any evidence that drinking small quantities of alcohol will harm unborn babies. The recommendation that expectant mothers should abstain from alcohol entirely was adopted because it was clear and simple, not because it was true.

And, of course, as we have seen with tobacco, mandatory labels will inevitably be the start of a slippery slope. They will get bigger, they will have to appear on the front of bottles, they will have to appear on wine lists and menus, they will have to appear on adverts, they will have to be prominently displayed on all bars, they will have to include pictures of diseased livers and car crashes. The anti-drink lobby will never say enough is enough.

All that Glisters

I RECENTLY went into a well-regarded multi-beer pub and was struck by the fact that over half the beers on offer had something along the lines of "Pale", "Gold" or "Light" in their title. It was a cold winter's night and, to be honest, I was looking for something a bit more robust and warming.

The past few years have seen a very definite trend towards golden ales, and up to a point they have been a refreshing antidote to predictable "brown beers", but you can have too much of a good thing, and sometimes it seems impossible to get away from them. It would be good to see a few more milds, stouts and old ales on sale, and even some of the old-fashioned English bitters with generous helpings of both malt and hops and a rich copper hue.

Last year on holiday in East Sussex I enjoyed a number of pints of Harvey's Sussex Best, a true classic beer with a highly distinctive flavour that certainly meets the above description. A few more beers like that on the bars of free houses would make a welcome change from a long list of identikit golden ales.

Curmudgeon Online: www.curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

From Chris Walkden, Chealde Hulme:

I read your article "Off the Rails" in the last OT with interest.

Manchester's gateway rail termini have no real ale now, but it was not always thus. Long time CAMRA member Dave Sheldon reminded me that both Piccadilly and Victoria used to have real ale outlets. We think the Piccadilly bar was called Bonapartes and had three or four handpumps and I think Bass was a regular. We can't remember the name of the bar under the dome at Victoria (well a lot of beer has passed down the throat since then!) but it used to have two handpumps.

Piccadilly is managed by Network Rail, who also operate other big stations including Leeds, London Liverpool St and London Victoria that all have Wetherspoon outlets, Paddington has a Fullers pub and St Pancras has the Betjamen Arms free house, all serving the real stuff.

Manchester Victoria is managed by Northern Rail. They have a station with a real ale pub on it at Sowerby Bridge and there may be others on their large network. Meanwhile Transpennine manage stations at Stalybridge, Huddersfield and Dewsbury all of which have real ale pubs - in the case of Huddersfield, two!

So it is not impossible that our two big stations could have a real ale outlet. No doubt the current pubs are all run as concessions, so when they come up for renewal, how about putting real ales in the specification? As we all know, provision of real ale will increase footfall and turnover, to everybody's benefit.

In the meanwhile, missing a train at Piccadilly means a short walk to the Bulls Head; at Victoria maybe a visit to the Micro Bar or the Black Lion if you have time. So come on Network Rail and Northern Rail, here's an opportunity to give more variety of choice to your customers and hopefully make a couple of bob as well!


From PB, Hazel Grove (via email):

In March's Opening Times, Stagger article a mistake was made. The Anchor Pub (A6, near the Woodman and the Grove pubs), was lumped in with a keg bar. Implying the Anchor did not serve cask ale.


I am a regular of this excellent and friendly pub, and the Robinsons beer (and mild) is the real McCoy. I must also stress that the beer is perfectly kept. I know of no other pub where the Robinsons is better, and few equal its reliable tasty quality.

Sorry for the mistake which we are pleased to correct - Ed

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Music and a Beer "FA Cup" are in the news this month, along with the usual closures and reopenings.



THE Cheshire Ring in Hyde is getting well known on the live music circuit as well as for its quality beers. Landlord Wayne has recently teamed up with Graham Buckley from the Biggles Wartime Band (he's the giant with the tin hat!) and over the last months, there has been a regular weekend of class acts brought to the Ring, utilising the upstairs function room. The project is called "The Verge" and you can see the latest band line ups on their web site www.theverge.co.uk One I have picked up on is the Wild Willy Barrett band on 20th May which features Jolly Jock from Biggles as support which will no doubt be another hilarious solo set in his unique style.

Also, in Hyde town centre, the **Unity** was selling Robinsons Unicorn only on handpump on a recent call, though it was in good form.

In the **Cotton Bale** on Market Street, Hyde, the unique "FA Cup of beers" is progressing well. Thought up by outgoing manager Ben Plunkett, it has been taken over by the new manager. Two beers from two different breweries that have been drawn together from the 16 starters compete each weekend. The first three sold out get a point each, thus the scores are always 2-1 to the brewery that has sold their two firkins the first. The winners go into the next round. To compete, just try the four beers with the FA Cup medals on the top of the pump clips.

ELSEWHERE, Nagging Doubt, the seasonal offering from Thwaites (a Lancashire Stout) was well received in the **Church Inn** at Mossley.

In Gamesley, the **Melandra** on Melandra Castle Road has closed its doors and it is not known at the moment if Enterprise will be giving it a makeover or re-opening it. However, the landlord Chris Bethel has taken on the nearby **Old Tup** on Glossop Road, Gamesley, which has been closed for around three years. There was no sign of real ale when I looked through the window on its opening week in mid March, though John Smiths cask was sold at the Melandra.

Both the **George & Dragon** and **Grey Mare** at Charlesworth have lease signs up at the moment, the Mare being currently shut. On Mottram Road at Hattersley, the **New Inn** is closed and metal shutters are fitted on all the windows and doors. The New Inn was previously run for several years by Ray Hatton and his wife (boxer Ricky Hatton's parents) and its claim to fame was that it is a stones throw away from where Ian Brady & Myra Hindley lived on Sundial Close in the sixties before their convictions.

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Closed pubs feature in Robin Wignall's round-up of the Peak pub scene this month.

By early March the **Board Inn** at Whaley Bridge had been closed for a few weeks after the departure of the previous tenant. I understand that a new tenant is lined up in the near future. As I have previously noted the Board has the potential to be a smashing pub. After recent lack of managerial continuity a new tenant will need patience and commitment, and the pub could be pulled round. More news on this as it becomes available.

The **Jolly Carter** in Chapel en le Frith carries a 'Business Opportunity' board which of course tells the tale of further tenancy change.

I am also uncertain about the status of the **Robin Hood**, Hazel Grove, nearly into High Lane. This was closed recently on a couple of occasions when the doors could have been expected to be open.

Confirming last month's note, the **Soldier Dick** in Furness Vale is closed and the For Sale board remains in place.

The Rugby Union Six Nations Championship has spawned a range of seasonal beers. From Marston's breweries come Wychwood Dirty Tackle and Marston's Sweet Chariot. Brains of Cardiff have produced a Welsh rugby anthem brew, Bread of Heaven, seen in the **Boar's Head** at Higher Poynton and the **Navigation** at Buxworth.

Also at the Boar's Head when I called was a good pint of Thwaites Original Bitter, and Black Sheep Bitter was on the bar. The Boar's Head is a former Boddington's house, overlooking the Middlewood Way and near to the west side of Lyme Park. It is popular with visitors and locals alike. A range of reasonably priced food is available lunchtime and evening.

Returning to the Navigation, I understand that a new chef is in the post, a new menu is being introduced and breakfasts will be available. On the beer front I have had good reports about the Taylor's Landlord, whilst Robinson's Old Stockport made a welcome change on a recent visit.

I went recently to a meeting at the **King's Arms** in Chapel en le Frith. This pub is a former coaching inn. In the last few years there has been only a brief dalliance with real ale and now even the redundant hand pumps have been removed. Unfortunately a big sign outside the pub proclaims a selection of real ales. This obviously needs to be changed. A curio to be found in the upstairs function room is a bit of brewing history, though not the most auspicious, in the form of a low table advertising Grünhalle Lager. Those were the days.

A former brewery name reappeared in the **Shepherd's** in Whaley Bridge recently when Usher's Founders Ale was available. The former Usher's Wiltshire Brewery is no more but reading between the lines and pages of the 2010 Good Beer Guide, this beer is probably brewed at Marston's Wychwood brewery. Also available at the Shepherd's has been Riding Bitter, though without mention of the former Mansfield Brewery on the pump clip. This beer is thought to be a product of the Banks's Brewery, another arm of Marston's.

Jennings Dark Mild is set to return to the Bar in the Shepherd's, after fear of its demise in the Cumbrian floods. There will also be a mini beer festival at the Shepherd's in early April with a selection of beers from all the Marston's empire, as well as guest beers from elsewhere.

The **Old Hall** Winter Festival at Whitehough, Chinley, was again a success with most beers selling out. Festival beers were stillaged in the historic room with the minstrel gallery, a fine setting for the occasion. There were of course other beers on the main bar, and a good choice of cider and perry. Since then the provision of a range of well kept beers continues as normal. A recent visit found Stout Stout and Dobber from Marble, and a superb pale hoppy brew, Fossil Fuel from the Isle of Purbeck Brewery in Dorset.

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The Railway

Good Beer and Good Cheer

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Stockport Supping
WITH CLIFTON BELL

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Now that the Houldsworth has cask beer, Reddish is now totally cask for the first time in over a decade although it has taken the demolition of two pubs (Railway and Reddish Vale) and the closure of another (the Bulls Head) as well as pubs converting to cask beer (most recently the Houldsworth and the Fir Tree) to achieve it. Perhaps a warning to all licensees - convert or be damned!



Nearby, the Grey Horse on Old Road Lancashire Hill has shut, after having sold no real ale for some time. Is there anybody out there, I wonder, brave or daft enough to take over this dismal pub (which to be fair has been a good boozier in its time).

Wellington Road North and South

Moving over to Wellington Road North now, the Railway has now introduced traditional cider on handpump and so far this seems to be selling well. Hecks was on draught at the recent Pub of the Year presentation and this seemed to be particularly well received.

Just across the road, the Magnet continues to expand its beer offer and has recently been adding some interesting foreign bottled beer to the range. Flying Dog Raging Bitch and Anchor Porter, both from the USA, have been particularly enjoyable.

I also popped into the Midland, had a chat with the landlady. She tells me that since she put on the Copper Dragon Best Bitter in place of the Greene King IPA her cask sales have risen massively. Quality pays!

Staying with the A6, the currently closed Town Hall Tavern looked a sorry sight when this was written in mid-March. However there is a potential good news story here. I am told the lease for the pub has been secured by Steve Rodriguez (of the Harvester, Offerton) and his business partner and cellarman Adrian Cunningham. It was due to re-open on 20 March after Enterprise Inns had completed a much needed refurbishment. Steve will be putting on cask beer in the form of Wells' Bombardier and Young's Bitter. He hopes to have room for a mild too but will wait to see how trade picks up. Hopefully he can make a success of the THT like he has at the Harvester where he has had to pick the business up off the floor. In just 10 months there he has had a 400% growth in his cask ale sales. More next month.



Across the road the Nelson is currently being managed by Mark Bond on behalf of a management company. He has put cask beer back on - a lonely handpump dispenses some rather good Beartown beer. Worth supporting with a visit, I think.

Given that the Unity is a traditional Robbies house with Unicorn, and sometimes the seasonal, on handpump, these developments mean there are just two pubs on the A6 letting down the town centre real ale scene - the George and Cobdens.

More Stockport Supping on page 19...



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LAST WEEK IN APRIL?



beer and food/food and beer

Public Transport

BUSES, trains and trams are a great way to get around if planning a trip to a pub. Greater Manchester has an excellent public transport service, so there's always a handy way to take you to the pub of your choice.

Most public transport runs until around 11pm Mondays to Saturdays, although times of last services vary. On Sundays and public holidays services run less frequently and last services may run a little earlier. There's a great range of tickets including good value returns and day tickets to save you money.

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☞ Visit a **GMPTE Travelshop** at bus stations in Greater Manchester. They have timetables and travel maps to take away and can help you plan your journey.

☞ Phone **Traveline 0871 200 22 33** (calls cost 10p a minute from landlines, mobile and landline networks may charge an additional tariff). Lines are open 7am to 8pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm Saturday, Sunday and public holidays.

☞ Visit **www.gmpte.com** for full information about local bus, train and tram travel, including a journey planner, maps and timetables.

☞ For local train information visit **www.northernrail.org** or phone **National Rail Enquires 08457 48 49 50**.

News Extra

OFTEN overlooked in these pages is the village of Gatley. A recent foray found that the keg-only **Red Lion** was firmly closed and boarded. Nearby Hydes' pub, the **Prince of Wales** was selling their Mild alongside Original and the Hydes seasonal ale. Next door Cain's **Gothic** has reduced its range to just Bitter and FA as that is what is really selling. Trade appears to be down, but you never can tell with this lively boozier. The busiest pub in the village remains the **Horse & Farrier** situated at the clock / war memorial junction. Full Hydes beer range and their seasonal beers, together with a guest beer. Always worth a look.

A recent visit to the always reliable **Oddfellows** in Ashton revealed some impressive redecoration had taken place – it seems that landlady Louise Heal is not only a dab hand in the kitchen (the pub's food is highly recommended) but can also turn her hand to interior design. She told OT that some further work should be taking place on the bar area this year courtesy of Robinson's.


OT is planning a visit to the revamped People's History Museum in Manchester. Not only is this one of Manchester's underrated attractions, the new **Left Bank Café Bar** promises "guest cask ales" on its menu. We hear though that you will look in vain for hand pumps as there aren't any. Hmm. Reviews of the place in the press have suggested bottled beers from Marble and Dunham Massey. We shall see. More next time.

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Stagger



A trip around a selection of the pubs featuring on the upcoming Mild Magic showcases a range of delightful pubs and superb quality mild ale available in Stockport. Alex Keenleyside went along.

The mild stagger was organised as a special event to promote and kick off the upcoming Mild Magic Event, organised by CAMRA to promote mild beer, once the most popular beer style in the country and now sadly absent from a great many pubs. The Mild Magic starts on the 17th April and is well worth a go.



We started off in the **Nursery**, Green Lane. Hidden down a small cobbled street this former winner of CAMRA's national pub of the year had two cask milds on. Hydes' Mild & Owd Oak. This 1930s multi room pub has won many CAMRA awards over the years and from our experience this

evening deserves every one of them. Decorated with wood panelling and wall plates the pub offers a wide selection of Hydes beers alongside a choice of seasonal and guests. Both milds were considered in good form with no consensus regarding a favourite. I recommend trying both, you won't be disappointed.

Next up a visit to the **Silver Jubilee**, built in the year of the Queen's silver jubilee, 1977. This welcoming community local served up a fresh example of Robinson's Hatters. Decorated with photos of celebrities and vinyl records, the low lighting and disco lights created a relaxing bohemian ambience. The landlord was kind enough to show us his pride and joy, an animated robotic stag's head on the wall that moved in time with the music, a feature that greatly amused all present, and possibly could result in one member of the stagger googling how to buy such a gem.



We moved on to the recently re opened multi beer ale house on the A6, the **Magnet**. Offering up 16 cask ales this pub has quickly become a venue bar on the real ale scene. Unfortunately a communication breakdown resulted in no cask mild being available on the evening we visited, but we were assured cask mild would be available for the duration of the Mild Magic event. I look forward to returning and enjoying what appears a welcoming and friendly establishment.



Onwards to the **Pineapple**, and I was reminded by one of the group not to repeat the error of our local pub guide and erroneously mention the words "coaching house". Ah well, too late now. This multi-room pub offers the homely feel of a great local in the heart of the town

centre. Decorated with plates brought back from around the world by its customers, and notable for its wood beamed ceiling

and fresh cut flowers on the bar. All agreed the Robinsons Hatter's was one of the best beers of the evening in a pub it was all too tempting to linger longer in. Unfortunately not possible, with the stagger to get through, so with mild regret we continued.

However onwards we marched to the **Crown** for a superb example of Moorhouses Black Cat mild. The rich mouthfeel of this beer was for me an eye opener in terms of how complex and flavoursome a mild beer can be, and certainly drank beyond its strength. This perennially popular multi beer house was as busy as you'd expect on a Friday night, offering a magnificent range of beers in a vibrant and lively atmosphere.

A short walk to the **Swan With Two Necks**, an altogether quieter pub in the evenings, suffering due to its location for the evening trade as much as it enjoys its location in the heart of the town centre during the lunch hour trade. All agreed the quality of the Robinsons Hatters on offer made this pub worth going slightly out of your way for and comes recommended.



Up onto the market to try the often difficult to find Robinsons Dark Hatters in the **Bulls Head**. A version of Robinsons Mild originally brewed for the Welsh market but a welcome find in England. A bright airy pub, recently refurbished with subtle background music that doesn't distract from conversation. The pub offers one of the widest ranges of Robinson's beers you can find, with an events menu on each table offering information on upcoming entertainments.



We finished the evening in the **Railway**, Portwood. Another pub notable for its extensive national and international beer choice and range of Rennie Ales. Sitting at the back of the busy pub, the railway theme was continued with pictures of steam trains on the wall. The Moorhouse Black Cat Mild was considered on excellent form and the evening concluded on a high.



The evening is probably best described as an enjoyable journey through a small selection of the fine mild beers available on the upcoming Mild Magic event. For me personally I'd describe the evening as a real eye opener as I cannot confess to being a regular drinker of mild beer. Like many drinkers I have tended to favour stronger beers. However this evening I drank some of the nicest and full flavoured beers that arguably deserve more of my attention.

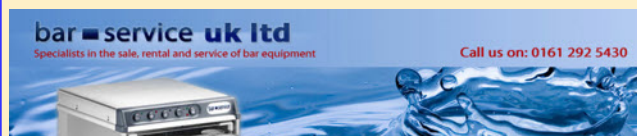
Of further note and whilst appreciating that CAMRA promotes responsible drinking it is possible to wake up the morning after a stagger slightly the worse for wear. The lower strength of mild is undoubtedly the reason why the morning after this stagger I arose bright as a button. This year's Mild Magic has found its first convert and I look forward to taking part when it begins on 17 April.

A fascinating stagger that had some excellent examples of the mild beer available in Stockport. Most of the pubs featured here are on or slightly off the A6 and accessible via the 192 bus route.



Following the tremendous success of last year's 'Mild Magic' (and of course this year's 'Winter Warmer Wander') we are once again running this our ever popular cask mild passport scheme. This time such has been the response from the pub trade that the scheme boasts a record 94 pubs promoting cask mild covering Manchester, Salford, Tameside, High Peak and Trafford – and they say it's a declining beer style!

We have a brand new sponsor, too. Many thanks to Bar-Service UK of Droylsden, who specialise in the sale, rental and service of bar equipment covering all surrounding areas including: Lancashire, Cheshire, Merseyside, & Yorkshire. Find out more about them at www.bar-service.co.uk



Our previous mild promotions have been a great success and if you haven't taken part before, you must try and have a go this time. It's fun and it's so easy, especially as we have reduced the minimum number of pubs you need to visit down to 12 and given you an extra week to complete the challenge. It's also a marvellous chance to visit some new pubs, try new beers and, of course, to win some great rewards and prizes.

The challenge runs from Saturday 17 April to Sunday 23 May inclusive and offers everyone taking part the chance to win something. All completed entries will receive either a free entry ticket for the 2010 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival or, if you're a CAMRA member, vouchers for two free half pints of mild at the Festival.

We are also again featuring the **Mild Magic Extra** – this year it's even easier just visit 12 different pubs in 12 different areas, using the headings shown on the card, and you will win a stunning 'Mild Magic' T-shirt.

Mild Magic Super is also far easier - just get stickers from 24 different pubs in 24 different areas and you will receive an eye-catching 'Mild Magic' polo shirt plus this year for the first time you will also get an extra Festival entry ticket/ pint of mild and be entered into a prize draw to be "Brewer for the Day" at Denton's Hornbeam Brewery.

To complete the new enhanced **Mild Magic Ultra**, send in cards containing a sticker from every participating pub, you will receive a free, special-edition, embroidered Polo shirt, a free Mild Magic T-shirt, six free Festival entry tickets/pints of mild and again go into the 'Brewer for the Day' draw. Otherwise, only one entry per person please.

This year we are also especially grateful to Hydes for enabling us to offer an extra-special prize: every completed entry will go

into a draw and the first 10 pulled out will win a **visit to their brewery** on 5 July to see how their milds and other beers are brewed.

This year we are asking all participants to vote for their favourite pints of mild and the pub in which they were served in the Stockport MBC area and outside Stockport – the winning two pubs will be presented with a 'Mild Champion' award in recognition of their efforts (all participants who provide an email address will be sent invitations to these award evenings).

Too good to miss out on? Definitely! So, what do you have to do? It's easy...

First, get a card. All participating pubs have a stock or you can get one from the Mild Magic address: 1 Chiltern Drive, Woodsmoor, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 7BE

When you buy a pint or a half of cask mild in one of the pubs taking part, ask the bar staff to put a sticker on your card. Remember, though, you can only get one sticker from each pub. Don't forget to check the times of pub opening hours, especially if you are making a special journey during the day.

When you've filled the card (you'll need 12 different stickers from 12 different pubs) send it to the Mild Challenge address on the card and, after our closing date, we will send you your Stockport Beer and Cider Festival Tickets and a personal invite to our special prize and rewards evening.

The Mild Magic Pubs

ADSWOOD Cross Keys, **ALTRINCHAM**, Old Market Tavern, Unicorn, **BRAMHALL**, Ladybrook, **BREDBURY**, Greyhound, **BRIDGEMONT**, Dog & Partridge, **BUXWORTH**, Navigation, **CHEADLE***, Cheshire Line, Crown, Star, Queens Arms, Red Lion, **CHEADLE HULME***, Cheadle Hulme, Kings Hall, Church Inn, **CALE GREEN**, Adswood Hotel, **CHORLTON***, Elektrik, Pl, Sedge Lynn, Famous Trevor Arms, Horse and Jockey, **CLAYTON**, Grove Inn, **COMPSTALL**, Andrew Arms, Northumberland Arms, **DENTON**, Chapel House, Masons Arms, **DISLEY**, White Lion, **DROYLSDEN**, Halfway House **EDGELEY**, Grapes **FALLOWFIELD**, Friendship, Great Central **FURNACE VALE**, Crossings, **GATLEY**, Horse & Farrier, **GORTON**, Waggon & Horses, **GREAT MOOR**, Crown, Travellers Call, **HAZEL GROVE**, Grapes, Three Tunnes, **HEALD GREEN**, Griffin, **HEATON MERSEY**, Crown, Griffin, **HEATON NORRIS***, Magnet, Nursery, **HEAVILEY**, Blossoms, **HYDE***, Queens, Cotton Bale, Cheshire Ring, Sportsman, **LANCASHIRE HILL**, Silver Jubilee, **MANCHESTER CITY CENTRE***, Castle, Marble Arch, Micro Bar, Bulls Head, Old Monkey, Sandbar, Ape & Apple, Paramount, Waterhouse, **MARPLE**, Hatters, Ring O Bells, **MARPLE BRIDGE**, Royal Scot, **MARPLE LANE ENDS**, Travellers Call, **MARPLE ROSE HILL**, Railway, **MELLOR**, Royal Oak, **NEW MILLS**, Masons Arms, **PORTWOOD**, Railway, **ROMILEY**, Friendship, **RUSHOLME**, Ford Madox Brown, **SALE**, Volunteer, JP Joule, **SALFORD***, Black Lion, New Oxford, Crescent, **SHAW HEATH**, Armoury, Florist, **STALYBRIDGE***, Society Rooms, Buffet Bar, **STOCKPORT***, Crown, Pineapple, Arden Arms, Tiviot, Bakers Vaults, Bulls Head, Swan with two Necks, Red Bull, Calvert's Court, **STRINES**, Royal Oak, **TIMPERLEY**, Taverners Club, **WEST DIDSBURY**, Railway, **WHALEY BRIDGE**, Shepherds Arms, Cock Inn, **WHITEHOUGH**, Old Hall, **WITHINGTON**, Victoria, **WOODFORD**, Davenport Arms.

*These areas are subdivided on the card to make it easier for you in undertaking Mild Magic 'Extra' and 'Super'.

More Mild Magic features on page 17...

FAIRFIELD GOLF CLUB



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Fairfield Golf Club, Booth Road, Audenshaw, M34 5QA is pleased to hold its annual beer festival over the May bank holiday weekend.

Opening hours:-

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Mild Magic in Whaley Bridge

SIX pubs in the Whaley Bridge area have registered for Mild Magic, the Mild Challenge, in 2010. They will provide participants with a good trip out. These southernmost pubs on the Challenge are well worth a visit in their own right, with a range of good beers and welcoming hospitality. To avoid wasted journeys some information about opening / closing hours may be helpful.

Dog & Partridge, Bridgemont. Opens at 11.00 but has a 15.00 –17.00 close Mon-Thurs. though this can be flexible in favour of being open. Open all day Fri. Sat. Sun.

Shepherds, Whaley Bridge. 15.00 till late Mon-Fri. 12.00 Sat. and 14.00 Sun. till late.

Cock Inn, Whaley Bridge. open all day from about 11.00 till late.
Crossings, Furness Vale. 15.00 till late Mon.-Thurs. Fri., Sat. and Sun. 12.00 till late.

Navigation Buxworth. Open from late morning till late, daily.

Old Hall, Whitehough, Chinley, 12.00 till late daily.

These times could of course vary.

The **Old Hall** is new to Mild Magic. The others have become regulars. Some of the pubs will be new pubs for some people. All the pubs will look forward to seeing new faces, and returning ones.

Getting there

Bus 199 from Stockport stops at Furness Vale, Bridgemont, Whaley Bridge Station then outside the Cock. Half hourly service during the day, hourly in the evening and on Sunday. Trans Peak stops at Furness Vale, every 2 hours until soon after tea. The 61 links Whaley Bridge with Glossop, Hayfield, New Mills and Buxton, hourly during the daytime, every day. The 189/190 links Whaley with Buxworth and Chinley, hourly until teatime, Mon.-Sat.. Buxworth is a 15-20 minute walk from Whaley Bridge along the canal towpath or over Bings Road/Silk Hill.

Trains. Manchester- Buxton service: Northern Table 20. Hourly through the day all week, to Furness Vale and Whaley Bridge, half hourly in the evening rush hour.

Trains to Chinley: Northern Table 23. Hourly on Sat. Less frequent in the week and Sun., but more trains in the rush hour. The Old Hall is a 15-20 minute walk along the Peak Forest Tramway to the Navigation at Buxworth.

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Mild – Who Brews What

WHILE the National Brewers seem to have virtually turned their backs on cask mild, our local companies still produce the real thing. Robinson's in fact still produce two milds and Hydes three! Here we give a run-down on some of the milds you can expect to find on this year's Challenge. In addition many of the pubs will be offering a variety of guest milds during the Challenge.



Expect to find both milds from Robinsons. There was a time when almost every Robbies pub sold mild but these days fewer pubs take it, although it happily remains widely available. The regular mild is **Hatters** (3.3%), a light mild with a gently hoppy



and fruity aroma, and a delicate taste. One or two pubs (notably the Bulls Head and Swan With Two Necks in Stockport) sell the rarer **Dark Hatters** (3.3%), which has a slightly richer taste.

Hydes produce no fewer than three traditional cask milds. The one you will encounter most frequently is the straightforward **Hydes Mild** (3.5%), a classic mid-brown mild with a good malt taste and a delicate bitterness. The darker version is **Owd Oak** (3.5%), a dark and rich beer with a satisfying flavour. The third member of the line up started life as Best Mild. The first name change saw it become Hydes Light and today it is **1863** (3.5%), a light amber ale with good maltiness in the mouth and a soft bitter aftertaste.



The other family brewer's mild is Joseph Holt. There has been some concern that Holt's are phasing out their cask mild in favour of the keg beer, Holt's Black. However there remain a good number of their pubs selling the traditional **Holts Mild** (3.2%), a very dark red-brown beer

with quite a pronounced bitterness for a mild, and a malty dry finish.

The Marston's group produces two milds. The dark and enjoyable **Jennings Mild** (3.1%), now back in production following the reopening of the Cocker mouth brewery, is dark and rich. **Banks's Original** (3.5%) brewed in Wolverhampton, was once one of the biggest selling milds in the country in the days when it went by the name of Banks's Mild. We hear that this refreshing mid-brown beer may in fact be reverting to its old name.

Many of our local micro breweries produce mild beer, usually during May, designated as Mild Month by CAMRA. One or two beers are available all year round, though. One of the very best is **Black Cat** (3.4%) from Moorhouses Brewery in Burnley. Moorhouses has been around since 1865 but only started producing cask beer in 1978. Since then it has been hugely successful and now supplies an extensive free trade apart from its own estate of six tied houses. Black Cat is full of chocolate and coffee roast flavours which combine with a bitter finish. It has won many awards and was CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain in 2000.



Strong or weak, dark or light, mild ales are one of the unsung stars of the UK brewing scene. Mild is indeed Magic. Enjoy.

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CAMRA Pub of the Month November 2009



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The Church Inn, Flixton



Neil Worthington drops by....

THERE have been a few changes at the Church Inn in Flixton, a long standing *Good Beer Guide* entry. A new licensee, a new cellarman and, horror of horrors, a visit from the pub company's refurbishment squad made me wonder what we might be facing.

So I was pleasantly surprised when, after the pub had closed for a week, I couldn't immediately see what had changed. The barmaid kindly spelled it out for me: new carpets, new curtains, new tables, chairs, wallpaper, lights, pictures... But the layout is exactly the same as it was before, the pub is still a series of individual drinking areas around a central bar, and even the Greenall Whitley mirrors are still in place behind the bar. It's still a proper community pub, with no loud music or much noise at all, despite the arrival of a couple of plasma TV screens.

Back in October Joanne and Lance Amison moved in, having previously worked in the licensed trade in Blackpool. In January cellarman Danny moved to a pub closer to home (the White Swan in Withington). Lance then took direct responsibility for the beers. One result



is that the pub refurbishment squad spent as much time in the cellar as in the public rooms. The cellar rooms have been cleaned, repainted and fitted with new coolers. They extend under the whole of the original pub (it's grown a bit over the years) and include separate areas for cask and keg beers, cooled to different temperatures.

The cask ale line-up remains strong. There are usually five ales on offer, typically including Everard's Tiger, Taylor's Landlord and something from Titanic. Lance is also planning to get a house bitter from Lytham Brewery.

But perhaps the best news is that the Church Inn's "mystery object", the so-called Shell, has survived. This is a strange and antique piece of ironmongery, attached to the corner formed by the pub wall and the wall of the churchyard next door (see picture). It stands a



couple of feet off the ground and you might think that it hides a tap or a drain, but no. It's been there for donkey's years (since 1907 at least, the locals reckon) and no-one's entirely certain what it's for. The most plausible explanation is that it's to stop people from using that semi-sacred corner as a *pissoir*, as the French so delicately term it. Not that the Church's patrons would ever be so rude.

For Your Convenience?

Heather Airlie goes behind closed doors

WHAT is it about modern day pubs? They decorate the front of house, maybe upholster, new artwork, funky flooring....but what about the facilities?

It seems that budgets just don't extend as far as the smallest, and at times, the most important room in the building. I have visited a number of establishments recently that have gone through a make-over since the smoking ban - quite right too - but failed when it comes to the loos. Some have holes in the door, some have no locks, some doors don't actually shut. Worse are those that have a loose or missing seat. As for paper, well, it's a bonus isn't it?

There are paint jobs that stop short, tiles that fall off and never get replaced, carpet that just shouldn't be there. Everyone has come across the hand dryer that doesn't work, the towel dispenser that is always empty and the overflowing bin.

Now I know that after a busy Saturday night it can be difficult to keep up with supplies, but surely it is simple procedure to make sure that all is in place before the start of the rush?

After all, what does this lack of attention to detail tell you about the pub? Primarily that they don't care. They don't care about your welfare sufficiently to provide you with a clean, well stocked washroom. My biggest concern is - if the public washroom is badly maintained, what does that say about the areas that you can't see - like the kitchen or cellar? If the staff is using those same facilities, how are they able to achieve a good level of personal hygiene?

There are far too many examples of offenders of poor loos to mention them all, I could start with bars in Chorlton and work my way through to City Centre pubs, but it would take too long.

Why can't more take notice of the many much maligned Wetherspoons, which have made a great effort to enhance the facilities in each establishment (example pictured right)? The good news is that some pubs have started to make amends; The Famous Trevor Arms is due



to close for a couple of weeks so that the loos can be refurbished and the nearby Beech also has plans for improvements. Let's hope this is the start of a trend.

Stockport Supping

Continued from page 10

BRINNINGTON has been blighted by the recent closure of two of its three pubs. Apparently, just into January the **Farmers Arms** on Brinnington Road, a large estate house that in its day boasted a bowling green and hosted music closed. Alongside that bombshell, Robinson's **Cheshire Cat** which is nigh-on hard-by Brinnington Rail Station also shut its doors around that time. Presumably the latter will soon find another tenant as Robinson's will be keen to have the place up and trading again. For Brinnington, this is disastrous as it leaves only Robbies' **Jack & Jill** manning the pub fort, so to speak. More news when we have it.

Sad news reached us too from Stockport centre, where Alex, aka Banjo, is to leave the popular **Thatched House** on Churchgate. What will now happen? What will become of the Rock and Punk music, as the pub did style itself as the town's premier venue for these music types? This is a sad event, especially as Alex has always been a keen supporter of both cask beer and real ciders. We await with interest.

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Manchester MATTERS



Real Ale gains in the City Centre are in the news this month

IT is by now common knowledge that cask beer is about the only area of growth in the pub trade at the moment. There certainly seems to be a buzz about and I think this is neatly summed up by some new cask ale outlets in the City Centre – venues of a type that just a couple of years ago would scarcely have given it a second thought.

On King Street **All Bar One** has installed two shiny steel handpumps and when I called these were dispensing Thwaites Bitter and Deuchars IPA. There's also an A board outside promoting cask, too. On the downside I have heard that cask has not always been available when people have called. Let's hope that was just a hiccup as All Bar One is a very pleasant place to drink, and also has a few decent German beers on tap, too.



Another gain is **Yates's** on Portland Street. There are three handpumps on the bar (and in all honesty I think they have probably been in situ for some time) and when I called two were in operation dispensing Wells Bombardier and Yates's Best Bitter house beer. Sales seem to be good as the Yates's chain has reported significant increases in cask ale volumes over the past year.



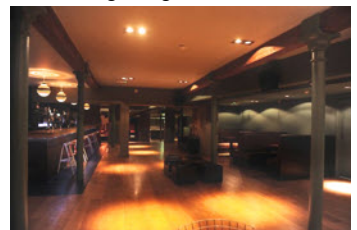
Northern Quarter Gains

HOWEVER it's the Northern Quarter that's making waves. I've already reported on Phil Entwistle's long term mission to turn the **City** into a cask ale venue. Two other bars have also entered the fray.

Common on Edge Street now has two handpumps. One is apparently always Flowers Original, one of those peripatetic beers now brewed I believe by Badger in Dorset. The other serves a changing guest, which when I last called was Thornbridge Lord Marples (in excellent condition) at £3 a pint. There is also Anchor Steam Beer on keg, and a range of interesting range of bottled beer, including the likes of Sierra Nevada Pale Ale and Porter and a couple from Coopers of Adelaide. This is well worth a visit to support them.



Cask ale is also on tap at the **Black Dog Ballroom**, Underneath Afflecks palace. Apparently modelled on a New York speakeasy, this new bar has one changing guest cask beer on handpump. Taylor's Landlord has featured but this will have been replaced by a new beer by the time you read this. Another venture well worth supporting.



Let's also not forget the eagerly awaited Marble venture at **57 Thomas Street**. This is now projected to open at the end of this month and promise to be a major beery gain for the area, with both Marble beers on cask and an interesting range of foreign bottled beers.

More City News

ELSEWHERE in the City Centre, the **Town Hall Tavern** and the **Crown** closed quite suddenly. However the Town Hall Tavern quickly reopened after some building work upstairs. The main drinking area remains unchanged. The new team also have an interest in the **Waldorf**, I am told. The cask offering comprises Taylor's Landlord and Deuchars IPA on handpump. The Crown was still closed when this was typed but may well be open again by the time you read this.



Across town just into Salford, the builders are still also hard at work in the **Crown** on Blackfriars Street. Whether this emerges as a pub I don't know as it's been closed for years now. Word on the streets is that it *will* be a pub so it's clearly one to watch.

Moving to Castlefield, the **Commercial** at the lower end of Liverpool Road is doing Holts Bitter in lively surroundings. The nearby **Castlefield Hotel** bar was selling Theakstons XB, Caledonian 80/- and Deuchars, plus a guest ale from Wychwood, Dirty Tackle when I called. Somewhat bland surroundings, but clean and friendly service with a £2.30 happy-hour from six till nine.

Meanwhile at **Cask**, former Marble Arch manager, Warren McCoubrey is now helping out for a few months. He may well be making a return to the area following a successful stint in Preston. The beers on at Cask on my visit were two from Acorn - Barnsley Gold, and Motueka IPA. Good to see Warren back.

Chorlton Update

AFTER a rush job to re-open the **Beech** before Christmas, the feedback is generally positive. The new landlord is keen on his real ales and has managed to get back in the ever popular Beech favourite, Timmy Taylor's Best Bitter. There is also one guest pump too, serving Black Sheep on my last visit, to join the regular Landlord and Golden Pippin. Dave tells me he hopes to introduce more local ales if he is able.

Ripping up the carpet, a lick of paint and some swift upholstery work helped to give the place a lift in the short term. There are plans afoot to continue with the re-decoration, including re-vamping the toilet facilities, which have been sorely neglected over many years.

Ever busy, the **Nook** has swapped its cider hand pump for another real ale pump dedicated to Dunham Massey beers, a real achievement. Don't worry, though, cider will still be available. Meanwhile **Escape** doesn't seem to be doing ale any more. It certainly hasn't had any my last few visits. On the plus side at **Oddest** I am very pleased to report that they are concentrating on bringing in unusual ales, particularly those that are not available anywhere else locally.



The former **Uluru** bar on Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton has the builders in. A new sign is up already, apparently to be "**Duffy's Bar**". And on the sign is the JW Lees logo! No sign of pumps just yet, but I'll keep an eye. If it does turn out to be cask then that will make 20 real ale pubs in Chorlton & Chorlton Green, 23 if you add Upper Chorlton Road & the Christie Fields.

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STOCKPORT BEER AND CIDER FESTIVAL
3rd to 5th June 2010

Music @ the Festival

Thursday Night - The Jalapenos

THE festival kicks off with a high energy great fun band of crazy rockers called **The Jalapenos**. **Charlie**, **The Doc** and **The Diamond** are the three members of the band.

The Jalapenos have blazed a trail of rock'n'roll mayhem throughout the UK for the last ten years and show no signs of stopping. Renowned for their astonishingly energetic and visual live shows, **Charlie Davidson** (guitar and vocals), **Doctor Martyn** (bass and vocals) and **Diamond Dave** (drums and vocals) have a formula which is unique amongst contemporary equals bands: **talent plus humour plus excitement equals fun!**



The Jalapenos have released four studio albums and one compilation on the independent label 3D Discs. For the last two albums, all songs have been written and produced exclusively by the band. For more information check out the Jalapenos web site.

From pubs and clubs to enormous festivals and motorcycle events, there is scarcely a stage that **The Jalapenos** have not rocked in their inimitable style. Their current repertoire encompasses in excess of 150 songs ranging from rock to roll, with nods to the blues, to punk, and other music styles.

Friday Lunch - The Prospectors

THE Prospectors are the Stockport beer festival charity band for 2010 and will perform on Friday lunchtime.

The Prospectors are a local band who play classic pop, rock and dance covers as well as their own songs. The band has been created by members of the Stockport Cerebral Palsy Society, and they are supported through the Drake Music project. The band meet at Prospect House in Heaton Moor (hence their name) on Fridays to practice prior to performing concerts at different venues throughout the year. The band has performed at the Royal Exchange Theatre, The Lowry, Urbis and at more local venues such as The Moor Top pub in Heaton Moor.

The Band success has resulted in them producing an EP named 'Silver & Gold'

Friday Night - Kinda Kinks & The Rave-ons

RELIVE the sights and sounds of the sixties with the beer festival's premier tribute band to the chart topping sixties band, **The Kinks**. **Kinda Kinks** are an authentic four piece group that use original instruments and amplifiers. Dressed in hunting jackets, frilly shirts and Cuban heels, they deliver all of **The Kinks** classic hits including *You Really Got Me*, *Tired of Waiting for You*, *All Day And All Of The Night*, *Waterloo Sunset*, *Days*, *Sunny Afternoon*, *Lola* and many more. These guys are not only the



spitting image of the 1960's original **Kinks** but they also dress the part and look the part.

The **Rave-ons** are an authentic 60s four-piece group based in East Lancashire. With original instruments and amplifiers, this fab quartet, dress in neat "beat" clothing, and deliver classic hits from bands including **The Rolling Stones**, **The Beatles**, **The Monkees**, **The Hollies**, **The Who**, **The Small Faces**, **Dave Clarke Five**, and many more!

Despite a tragic fire last year that destroyed their PA and all their classic 60's drums and guitars the **Rave-Ons** are now back in business and ready to rave on again.

But are you also up to the challenge? I hope so because I think that you are never too old to rave!



Saturday Lunch - Quare Crack

QUARE Crack are an fabulous Irish folk band, featuring the critically renowned **Dezi Donnelly**, ably backed up by no less than **Kieran Cunningham** and **Andy Jones**, all musicians performing at the top of their game.



It is a well known cliché, to describe a fiddle player as "a devil fiddler" but in **Dezi Donnelly's** case this is more of an understatement! The sibling of a Manchester fiddler dynasty is both **All Britain** and **All Ireland Champion**, a title truly deserved for his brilliant jigs and reels.

The band isn't all about **Dezi** though, and **Kieran** and **Andy** contribute massively to a sound which is hugely entertaining and acclaimed amongst Irish folk protagnoaists all over Europe. So at the festival you can expect some brilliant Irish musicianship combined with great traditional vocals delivered with passion and fun. A great band that should not be missed!

Saturday Night - Spidermonkeys

Headlining the beer festival on Saturday night we have **Spidermonkeys** an indie/rock covers band that plays clubs, pubs and events right across the North West.

It's the band's aim to produce a great show with the tempo building throughout the set. Past beer festival appearances have proven that **Spidermonkeys'** repertoire is an excellent accompaniment to a few pints of cider, perry or ale! The band has previously played at **Atherton**, **Bent and Bongs** and **Wigan** beer festivals to great acclaim.

The band has a philosophy that every audience will enjoy their performance which will guarantee that the band also enjoys themselves. Having said that, the band is serious about their music and they will always deliver a quality performance with a terrific sound and great stage presence. If you like the sort of music that the band plays and you like it played brilliantly, with lots of energy and loudly then you are going to enjoy this band on Saturday night.

What a great way to close the 2010 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival!



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On display will be 40 real ales from the North West
Be a part of our 1st Sale festival

Friday 1700 - 2300 Saturday 1200 - 2300

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Brewery NEWS

Robbies Redevelopment

MAJOR investment by Stockport's family brewer demonstrates the company's commitment to cask ale and also to its independence for future generations.

The multi-million pound investment will see the brewery transformed with a brand new brewing plant and malt handling facilities installed. This will increase efficiency, allow a huge estimated 70% energy saving and also give the company more flexibility with its brewing operations.

The new German brewing plant will be able to brew round the clock if need be and will reduce the minimum brew size from 120 barrels to a more manageable 60 barrels.

Interestingly, much of the old copper equipment will also be kept in the brewery, sitting alongside its 21st Century replacements. This will add interest to the brewery tours and of course in an emergency it could be brought back into use.

Robinson's are also planning a major redevelopment of the Unicorn Room – the venue for many brewery tours and presentations. This is now closed (or will be very soon) and when it reopens will be larger and hopefully also incorporate a shop for the public's use.

On the beer front, the two Old Tom variants, Chocolate Tom and Ginger Tom are becoming hugely popular and as we went to press hopes were high that a cask version of Chocolate Tom would be available for Easter (with Ginger out on cask in the autumn). New beers may also be in the pipeline – certainly this year's seasonal beers have got off to a flying start with the excellent Dragon's Fire, which has garnered many positive reviews.

All in all, this is positive news from what is now one of the UK's leading family brewers.



Tetley Troubles

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, has expressed its discontent at the move by Carlsberg UK to ship its iconic Tetley's cask brand from its Yorkshire



heartland to Marston's of Wolverhampton. Since the announcement to shut the historic Hunslet site in Leeds was made in November 2008, CAMRA has attacked Carlsberg UK, owner of the Tetley's Leeds site, for failing to promote Tetley's beers at a time of increasing consumer interest for real ale.

As part of a national campaign, CAMRA has previously written to Carlsberg UK, offering ways to keep Tetley's cask brands brewed in the city of Leeds, and has seen mass support for its 'Save Tetley's' campaign, launched at the Great British Beer Festival in August 2009.

Bob Stukins, CAMRA Vice-Chairman, and Yorkshire resident, said: "It's unbelievable to think that a long-standing global brewer would make this move at a time when the real ale industry is enjoying year on year growth, and CAMRA's annual research is showing a steep increase in the number of consumers trying real ale for the first time."

Lees Latest

Manchester brewers J W Lees have once again launched their Passport Trail for 2010. The scheme runs until 28th February 2011 and covers parts of Manchester, Salford and Trafford, Oldham and Rochdale, a few pubs in the Stockport, Cheshire and Merseyside areas. There is also a considerable collection of pubs in their Welsh estate focusing around North Wales.

After a considerable absence there have been some changes. To begin with the booklet is a little smaller - this is probably due to the fact that the Lees estate has increased to 162 public houses on the trail, from a total of 132 the last time round. In some areas there are pubs clustered together, making it possible to visit several in one go and within walking distance of each other. Many are also on public transport routes.

There is now an easier level of prizes to attain too; for 25 pubs you can claim a t-shirt, 50 pubs and it's a polo shirt, and 125 pubs will get you a half-zip fleece and an engraved grip glass in a gift box. On completion of all 162 pubs you can take an after hours VIP trip to the Greengate Brewery. You may send in the passport on completion of each stage to claim these prizes and more information can be found at www.jwlees.co.uk/passport



St George's Day Ale from Hydes

HYDES Brewery is to re brew its special St George's Day ale following its resounding year on year success.

Getting behind growing enthusiasm for the national saint's day Hydes produced this special bitter for the first time five years ago. With an ABV of 4.3% it's a traditional bitter brewed using English pale Ale Malt and Fuggle hops, and is "guaranteed to quench the thirst of even the most famous dragon slayer", says Hydes.

Amber brown in colour, the beer will be available in all Hydes' managed, tenanted and free trade houses from the middle of April giving customers plenty of opportunity to sample the ale before St George's Day on 23rd April.



Marble @ De Molen

DE MOLEN? A cult micro based under a windmill at Bodegraven in the Netherlands (pictured). It has built an enviable reputation amongst European beer lovers and last year hosted a beer festival. This featured some of the very best Micros from around Europe and has already become the stuff of legend.

However the UK was notable by its absence. Not this year. Marble Brewery has been asked to exhibit its beers and has naturally jumped at the chance. The beers there will be a mixture of bottle and cask, including the new Special barley wine, making a very rare appearance on draught. There may also be a brand new beer made with yeast supplied by De Molen. The festival will run on 24 and 25 September – OT will of course be there.

Other Marble news includes plans of a new bottled beer in the style of a Belgian dubbel (expect 7.5% or so) based on Chocolate Marble. That's going to be worth the wait. One that won't involve a wait is Brew 43, a hoppy little number brewed using Citra, Amarillo and Willamette hops. This should be out by the time you read this – an early tasting points to a beer with luscious tropical fruit aromas and a long bitter finish.



Join the Campaign for Real Ale



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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
Branch website: www.ssmcamra.org.uk

Thursday 8th – Branch Meeting and AGM: Railway, Wellington Road North, Stockport. Starts 8pm. **Will all members please attend this important meeting**

Friday 16th – Ardwick & City Stagger: Church Inn, Ardwick Green 7.30pm; Waldorf, Gore St 8.30pm.

Thursday 22nd – Pub of the Month presentation to the Cheadle Hulme, Station Road, Cheadle Hulme. From 8pm.

Saturday 24th – Trip to Bollington Brewery. Book with Margaret O'Brien (07981 756720 – eves. only)

Macclesfield & East Cheshire

Branch Contact: *Tony Icke 01625 861833*
contact@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk
Branch website: www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk/

Wednesday 7th - Spring Pub of the Season Presentation to the Church House, Sutton. 8pm

Tuesday 20th – Social: Dolphin, Macclesfield. Starts 8pm

North Manchester

Branch Contact: *Dave Hallows 07983 944992*
davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk

Wednesday 7th - 2-Pub Social. Queens Arms, Honey St, Cheetham, 8pm; Marble Arch, Rochdale Rd, Collyhurst, 9.30pm.

Thursday 15th - Eccles Crawl: Lamb Hotel, Regent St, 7.30pm; Eccles Cross, 8.15pm; Royal Oak, 9.30pm.

Wednesday 21st - Branch Meeting: Black Lion, Chapel St, Salford. Starts 8pm.

Wednesday 28th - Bury visit: Rose & Crown, Old Manchester Rd, 8pm; Trackside, Bolton St Station, 9pm.

Saturday 1st May - National Mild Day Crawl. Starts at Marble Arch, 1pm. Finish – Crescent, Salford. 6.30pm.

Wednesday 5th - Social: Crescent, Salford, 8pm

Trafford & Hulme

Branch Contact: *John Ison 0161 962 7976*
Branch website: www.thcamra.org.uk

Thursday 15th - Urmston survey: 8pm, Tim Bobbin; 8.45pm Chadwicks; 9.15pm Steamhouse; finish Lord Nelson.

Thursday 22nd - Spring Pub of the Season presentation: Pi, Manchester Road, Chorlton. From 8pm

Thursday 29th - Timperley survey: 8pm Stonemasons; 8.45pm Quarry Bank; 9.45pm Moss Trooper; finish at Timperley Taverners Social Club.

High Peak & NE Cheshire

Branch Contact: *Mike Rose 07986 458517*
mikewrose@gmail.com
Branch website: www.hpneccamra.org.uk/

Monday 12th - Branch Meeting and Spring Pub of the Season presentation: White Lion, Disley. Starts 8pm.

Thursday 29th – Buxton Social: Ramsays Bar, Buckingham Hotel. Starts 8.30pm

Monday 10th May – Branch Meeting: Crown, Glossop. Starts 8.30pm.

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12-3 and 5-8
Saturday 12-9*

Sunday lunches coming soon

*Function Room
Available for hire*

Dizzy Blonde

ABV 3.8%

*Straw coloured Summer Ale
with distinctive herbal or
perfume like hop aroma.*

*This light refreshing beer has
a clean zesty hop dominated
palate complemented by a
crisp dry finish.*

