

June 2010

  
**TIMES**

# Opening

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

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

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## Real Ale in the Rainy City City Centre Stagger – page 9



**57 Thomas Street –  
Marble Brewery's  
New Bar in N/4. Page 7**

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# Pub OF THE Month AWARD

The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for June is the well known Royal Oak in Didsbury. Stuart Ballantyne is a long time fan of the pub and explains why it has won.



**T**HIS month the prestigious pub of the month award goes to one of my long standing favourite pubs in Didsbury. The Royal Oak on Wilmslow road is a famous Marston's house; famous for its cheese and pate lunches, famous for its great beer and famous for its eventful history (anyone remember the arson attack)?

Now managed by the most capable team of Jim Garrow and Karen Fletcher plus some notable staff (some of whom have worked in the pub for many a year) the pub seems to be going from strength to strength. Jim has spent the last 30 years in the trade as a licensee working in Bass, Tetley and Marston's pubs, latterly working in Macclesfield at Marston's Millstone pub before taking over at the Royal Oak. Jim is one of the good guys, he has worked for Marston's for the last 16 years and he is a big fan of cask beers – in fact he drinks the cask beers in the pub himself and so he always knows that they are in tip top condition and he is always on hand to resolve any problems should they occur. In just eleven months the pub has seen a significant increase in barrelage, particularly with the guest beers that the pub now sells.

Marston's Bitter is still the pub's best selling beer and on a recent visit this was accompanied by Pedigree, Merrie Monk and Burtonwood Top Hat.

The friendly and relaxed demeanour of Jim, Karen and their staff belies the hard work that clearly goes into running the pub. The Royal Oak still features its famous cheese and pate lunches that are as popular as ever.


With Jim an experienced, customer focussed licensee, the pub's renaissance should come as no surprise as it exudes quality in every aspect of the operation – good beer, good food and good staff. So, why not join us on Thursday 24 June for the presentation of this well deserved award when a great night is in prospect.

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## COMMENT, NOTES & CONTENTS

### Opening Times – Comment

By the time you read this Stockport Beer Festival will have been and gone. This edition of *Opening Times* was put together as preparations for the festival were in their final stages – look out for a full report next time.

Our Stagger covers pubs and bars on the south side of the City Centre, and we feature the new Marble Brewery outlet in the Northern Quarter. Pub Grub takes us to the Andrew Arms in Compstall. If you've not visited the City Centre for a while, why not take a trip this month and take in the burgeoning cask ale scene there?

### 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. 7,200 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth. All articles copyright CAMRA unless otherwise stated.

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Copy Date for the July issue is Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June

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## CHAMPION BEER OF CHESHIRE 2009

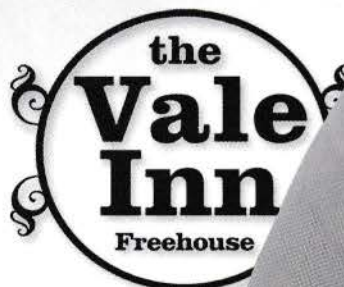
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# PUB Grub

## The Andrew Arms, Compstall

**T**HIS month's Pub Grub is the Andrew Arms set in the picturesque settlement of Compstall (in the valley between Romiley and Marple Bridge), writes *Mark McConachie*. This is very handily located by Etherow Country Park, where wildfowl of all types and over 200 plant species can be viewed during the year. Our visit was on a glorious Spring day when the former mill reservoir looked absolutely splendid.

The Andrew Arms is a stone-built house set somewhat high upon a back street location. In months with fine weather people wishing to dine or drink outside are catered for with a fine sun-drenched spot at the front.



Meanwhile inside are two neat, unfussy rooms with something of a country air to them. Beyond these is a 20-cover dining room that may also be used for functions. The small bar dispenses fine examples of Robinson's Hatters and Unicorn.

Food-wise, the Snack Menu has such staples as Soup for £2.95; Sandwiches from £2.95; Jacket potatoes and Omelettes from £3.95 and £4.95 respectively. The star of this enterprise must surely be the Specials however (these change daily). A price-busting £5.95 gets you either Scampi; Steak & Kidney Pudding; Roast Beef Dinner; Plaice; Meat & Potato Pie; Gammon & Pineapple; or Beef Madras.

Well, Jean and I opted for the Steak & Kidney Pudding, Jean going for chips with hers, whilst I had new potatoes (mashed potato is also available) and vegetables. The vegetables were not skimped on either, you get five different ones - cauliflower, carrots, leeks, cabbage, and broccoli! Your recommended "Five-a-day" in one meal. Brilliant!



As for the Steak & Kidney puddings, these were a four-inch diameter pudding offering a superb blend of tasty kidney and succulent steak in a very light suet bound with a rich gravy. Jean loved hers, as did I and I thought it one of the best puddings I've had in a long time.



Across the table, David was none too hungry so opted for a ham sandwich. Not just any ham though, he liked the thick-cut ham that they were filled with, so obviously due care is taken in everything that hosts Lee & Mike Mawby prepare here. Jean and I had no room for a dessert (sorry to our Editor), but yet again they sold at another truly price-busting £1.95! I'm sure they would be great tasting too. Perhaps we ought to send our Editor down to find out? A terrific place with great food and very friendly service.

*Food service hours are 12 - 2.30 and 5.30 - 9 Tue-Sat. The Andrew Arms, George St, Compstall SK6 5JD. Tel. 0161 484 5392.*



**M**ARBLE Brewery's much awaited outlet at **57 Thomas Street** in Manchester's Northern Quarter finally opened its doors last month and has already proved to be a huge success.

It occupied the premises that were formerly the home of Love Saves the Day and as such can perhaps best be described as "small but perfectly formed".

Notable features include the 15 foot long table dominating the public space, made for socialising and communal eating and drinking, although there is some comfortable seating at the front. Also of note is the drinks range. "Food and beer" is the theme and that is what you will get – thus there are no wines, spirits, or other mixed drinks and alcopops. Note, too, the replication of the Decadence bottle label design on the wall – this has been painted on at an angle to replicate the famous sloping floor at the Marble Arch.



The bar is dominated by four casks stillaged on the counter, with the beer temperature maintained by in-cask coolers. Alongside the draught beers there is the full Marble bottled range plus a wide range of Belgian and German bottled beers (and three ciders from award winning producer Dennis Gwatkin).



On the food front, this is prepared up at the Marble Arch by pub chef Ken Calder and brought down to Thomas Street – thus the quality for which the Marble Arch has become known is replicated here.

The whole shebang is overseen by manager Warren McCoubrey, who, as we reported the other month, is now back on his home territory following a sojourn up in Preston. Warren knows what makes a good pub and also knows his beer so is a reassuring sight at the helm here. A major addition to the city's pub and bar scene.

Cask ale is really taking off in the city's Northern Quarter in existing pubs, too, as long-time keg stand-out, the **Wheatsheaf** Oak Street (a former Burtonwood house with a renowned tiled interior) is now stocking three beers from the Marstons stable - Pedigree, Hobgoblin, and Mansfield Dark Mild. If you're unsure where Oak Street is, just turn off Oldham Street, down the side of **Gullivers** (Lees), and it's straight on.

City favourite, the **Circus** on Portland Street, is set to become all the more wonderful if landlord Greek George gets his way with Punch Taverns. He is set to double (yes, double!) the cask range by the addition of a guest beer in the form of the hoppy northern brew, Moorhouses Pride of Pendle. For cask fans, this is great news as the beer would take over the bar space previously occupied by the ersatz Aussie brew, Fosters. We await developments.



In Fallowfield, I noticed that the ever-busy **Friendship** (Hydes) has added a cask, handpulled Westons cider to the bar. There certainly seems to be a rise in the number of pubs now stocking cask cider.

PRESENTS

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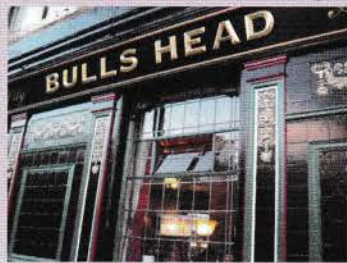


# Stagger



The "Ardwick & City Centre" Stagger had to miss out on the Ardwick part as the last cask ale outlet there had dropped the real thing. Thus the tour started at the Bulls Head on London Road. Dave Burston went along...

The Bulls Head consists of one large well-decorated high-ceilinged room, split up with a pillar in the middle and different types of seating around the sides, including a separate raised area in one corner. This pub has been thriving since the redevelopment of Piccadilly Station a few years ago put it directly opposite the new station entrance, and no doubt the five well-kept ales from the Marston's stable help to make it popular too. On the night, these were Marston's Pedigree and Dragon's Tale, Jennings Cumberland and Stickle Pike, and Banks's Original. Our party only tried the Dragon's Tale and Stickle Pike and both were good.



On then to our next port of call, but first a quick look in Monroe's to check it was still keg (it was). We also looked in the very plush bars of the City Inn and Malmaison hotels as we passed them, just in case, but found no sign of handpumps, although there were some pictured on an A-board outside the Malmaison advertising a brewery dinner event the following week. On enquiry, we discovered that they would be having one cask ale on handpump for this event only, so it seems a shame that they can't do this more of the time.

The Waldorf on Gore Street just off Piccadilly was our next cask ale pub. This pub also consists of one large room, but there the similarity with the Bulls Head ends. The lower ceiling, separate screened-off seating areas (some with sofas) and dark wood panelling all contribute to a cosy feel, which hasn't changed much in years. The three cask ales were Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Deuchars IPA and Marble's Manchester Bitter, all in reasonably good nick, though there was a little disagreement between those present about how good.



Our next two stops were definitely bars rather than pubs. Kro Piccadilly is the most prestigious of the Kro chain of pubs and bars and occupies part of the ground floor of One Piccadilly Gardens. Inside, the predominance of concrete and glass make for a noisy environment, and sure enough, tonight it was very noisy with both music and conversation, making the latter very difficult. Although it was busy we did manage to find some seats while we sampled the three cask ales available: Deuchars IPA, Wells Bombardier and Bank Top Dark Mild. There were also two pump clips turned round. The mild was rated highly, the Deuchars less so, and the one person who tried the Bombardier didn't like it much.

And so, onwards down Portland Street. Having passed more keg bars (including Edwards, Blue Parrot and Bar Wave), we strolled past the bouncers into Yates's, part of the Yates's chain, and a recent convert to cask ale. In my younger days, these used to be called Yates's Wine Lodges and had a dubious reputation and were best avoided. This one is a more modern version - one dark high-ceilinged room illuminated mainly by

screens showing Sky Sports. The music here, being played by a DJ, was louder than in Kro Bar, but the place wasn't particularly busy for the time of night considering the type of bar it is trying to be. There were two cask ales on: Wells Bombardier (again) and a house beer called Yates's Best Bitter, brewed by Wells and Young's. Most people tried the Yates's which was reasonably good; the Bombardier was just OK. We were a bit put out to find that the glasses were plastic, but were told that this is at the insistence of the Police.

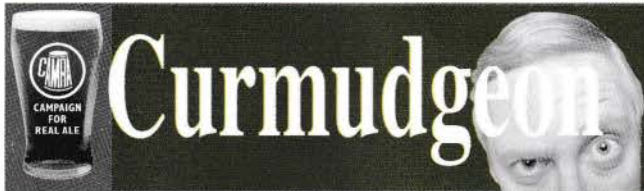
Now we were back to pubs, rather than bars. Five more awaited us, so there was no time to lose. Next up was Paddy's Goose on Bloom Street, behind the Chorlton Street bus station and on the edge of the Gay Village. This had Robinson's Unicorn bitter and the ubiquitous Bombardier, which understandably no one tried this time. There was a bit of disagreement about the Robinson's, with some people rating it good and others only OK. The pub was very busy, so we made our excuses and left. A bit of a walk back across Portland Street and through Chinatown took us to the Seven Oaks on Nicholas Street. This is a small friendly pub with dark wood on the ceiling and around the bar of the single room downstairs; it also has an upstairs room which is only open sometimes. Four cask ales were available: Jennings Cumberland, which no one tried, Sharp's Doom Bar, which was rated OK to good (disagreement again!), Coach House Blueberry, a very sweet beer which was in good condition if not to everybody's taste, and finally Black Sheep Best Bitter, which was dispensed from a strange-shaped font that was nevertheless labelled as cask, and was just OK.



Now back to Portland Street for the final three pubs of the night, all in the same block. If you know Manchester pubs at all well, you will know of the legendary Circus, the smallest pub in the city, which used to have Tetley's Bitter as its only draught beer, i.e. no keg or lager. Nowadays there is a lager font, but the Tetley's is still cask and was in reasonable condition. Photos cover all the walls, and the whole pub, which consists of two small rooms and a corridor, was very busy as it usually is, especially on a Friday night. Nearby is the Grey Horse, which is only slightly larger but is all one room. This was fairly busy but we did manage to find some seats. This is a Hydes house, with three cask offerings: Original Bitter, Mild and the seasonal Over a Barrel. The mild and seasonal were reasonably good; only one person tried the bitter and rated it OK.

The final pub of the evening was the Old Monkey. This is the antithesis of Kro! It's Holts' largest pub in the city centre and occupies three floors, all with a slightly different character, but we stayed on the ground floor, where the beers were Holts Bitter and the seasonal Fifth Sense. Neither was rated very highly by most of the group, in spite of the sign outside proclaiming "Award winning cask ales". However, it was probably the cheapest beer of the night.

And so we all drifted off to catch buses and trains as another stagger ended. This one had an interesting variety of pubs and bars, and a greater range of beers than in many other parts of the branch area. The best beer of the night, by a narrow margin, was adjudged to be the Bank Top Dark Mild in Kro Piccadilly. Overall the best beer was had in the Bulls Head at the start of the stagger. But, as always, these are only the impressions and opinions of a small group of people on one night of the year, so it's up to you to try these pubs and see what you think.



### Cheaper than Water

**T**HE anti-drink lobby and the likes of the "Daily Mail" have often been heard to claim that supermarkets are irresponsibly "selling beer cheaper than water". But, when you look into this, it is highly misleading, because they are not remotely comparing like with like.

In Tesco, you can buy four cans of "value lager" for 92p, or 52p per litre. But this only has a strength of 2% ABV, which would have made it legal under US Prohibition. Given the sheer amount of liquid you would need to consume, it would be well-nigh physically impossible to get in any sense drunk on the stuff. Indeed, it baffles me why anyone would want to buy it. They are then comparing this with the price of premium branded bottled waters – the most expensive multipack I found was Highland Spring at 76p a litre. Again I can't understand why anyone would spend so much on water, but if people do that's their choice.

A far more honest comparison would be with the supermarkets' "value" bottled water. When I recently checked on Tesco's shelves, their still water was 13p for a two-litre bottle, and the fizzy water a mere 10p, or only a tenth of the price per litre of the lager. Even the more reasonably priced branded waters are far cheaper than the lager, and Tesco's standard own-brand lager would be considerably dearer than any water. Yes, it may be true that the very cheapest and weakest lager is a bit cheaper than an expensive designer water, but as a general statement the claim that beer is being sold cheaper than water just does not stand up. You can no doubt buy an expensive racing bike for more than the cost of an old banger, but that does not mean in any meaningful sense that cars are

cheaper than bicycles.

This claim is not far short of an outright lie, and is typical of the dishonest tactics used by the anti-drink lobby. It is on a par with their constant references to "24-hour drinking" when in fact the number of pubs open for the serving of alcohol 24 hours a day can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Given this, it is regrettable that it has been taken up by some people seeking to champion pubs, who really should know better.

### Because Nanny Says So

**A** WHILE back I highlighted how the official guidelines on safe drinking levels had been plucked out of thin air with no scientific basis. Now it seems as though the message of eating "five-a-day" portions of fruit and vegetables falls into the same category. A massive study covering over 500,000 people has shown that the reduction in cancer risk is a mere 2.5%, which falls well short of being significant. And apparently the figure was dreamed up in California in 1988 for no better reason than it was double the average consumption of fruit and vegetables.

Now, obviously in a broad sense eating fruit and vegetables is going to do you good, so it's easy to say that even an unscientific target can't do any harm. However, if taken too seriously, it can lead to the inappropriate targeting of resources on people who are only falling a bit short of the target, and can be harmful if applied strictly to children who need plenty of protein and calcium to help them grow. Also, it is likely to undermine the credibility of all health messages, however sound the scientific backing. When you were a small child, if you were told not to do something, but given no better reason than "because mummy says so", you would never have found it very convincing.

If we are to be given official health advice, it must be based on good scientific evidence and treat us as responsible adults, not naughty children.

Curmudgeon Online:

[www.curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com](http://www.curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com)



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## Trafford & Hulme @ Pi

**T**HE Trafford & Hulme Spring Pub Of The Season award was presented to Chorlton's Pi bar on Thursday 22nd April. Although Pi is one of the smallest bars to receive this award, around 30 local CAMRA members squeezed in alongside the regulars – thankfully the gods smiled on us and provided fine weather so we could overspill onto the patio outside.

On the real ale front, Bank Top Flat Cap was joined by Hornbeam Prog Rock with Mild Magic coming in the form of Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby. As you would expect for a Good Beer Guide listed pub all were in top form with the 6% Sarah Hughes being dangerously good. Broadoak Perry completed the line up on the hand pumps.

With the mammoth gourmet pies from the Pi menu being a little impractical for a buffet, Pi had persuaded maker Pie Minister to provide miniature versions of their Moo, Chicken of Aragon & Heidi pies. The magically refilling plates of these went down very well.

Presenting the award to Manager Ben Roberts, branch Chair Bev Gobbett commended Pi for furthering all of CAMRA's aims – serving good quality real ale and real cider & perry; supporting local micro breweries; promoting high quality independent foreign beers; supporting rare styles such as mild. Ben thanked CAMRA and his excellent staff & loyal customers for their support.



## Shining Through

**T**RAFFORD & Hulme CAMRA's Caroline O'Donnell, Julia Brown and Heather Airlie successfully completed the Shine night marathon in eight hours, raising over £900 between them for Cancer Research.

Starting from Gmex at 22-15, they walked through the drunks in town before going through sheesh-scented Rusholme to Christies, down the dull, straight Kingsway to Whitworth Park to let the part timers finish. The marathoners then set off for Old Trafford, Trafford Centre and Salford Quays before returning to GMex.



It was a case of mind over matter, as tedium set in after the first couple of hours and the reality of walking 26.2 miles through the night set in. It was not fun but an ordeal to be endured. Your support with the money raised for such a good cause was the only reason to do it.

They would like to thank everyone who contributed and supported them in this event. They were particularly touched by the men in Kellogg's who were waving and cheering them on when they were at their lowest ebb at 3 or 4 in the morning.

A great deal of support was also forthcoming from their local pubs, especially the staff and customers of the Trevor Arms, Elektrik, Oddest and Pi in Chorlton – our photo shows Heather and Caroline celebrating later with a welcome drink at Pi.



**T**HE chosen pub for Macclesfield & East Cheshire's Spring Pub of the Season award was the Church House at Sutton. The Church House is currently in the care of Kathryn & Rick Hogg (pictured with their award), who manage to combine the running of a successful pub with bringing up a family on the premises.

The pub was chosen because of its long tradition of serving good and varied beers, a tradition started well before Kathryn & Rick's arrival in 2004 and which has gone from strength to strength, with excellent quality beers in recent years.

There is an all day food service, which at no time dominates the pub, and a strong community local atmosphere, exemplified by the weekly gathering on practice night of bell ringers from the nearby church. In addition the pub is well equipped for a "Spring" venue with outdoor seating and play areas, and an attractive floral display round the building.



The presentation on 7th April coincided with an important Champions League match for which the hosts had thoughtfully provided a large screen television, on a decidedly chilly evening, outside the pub! Whether the result justified the endurance of the spectators is doubtful!

Inside the hosts demonstrated their pleasure at being nominated for the award by obtaining a nine gallon cask of Taylor Landlord which was sold at a very cheap price from eight o'clock onwards. A subsidiary charity competition involved the guests in guessing at what time this beer would run out – correct answer being after only 65 minutes!

Both Kathryn and Rick had invited parents to be present at the presentation, after which sandwiches were provided for all in the pub, a much appreciated gesture which rounded off an enjoyable evening. We congratulate them both, and their staff, on a well-deserved award.

## Altrincham Bottle & Cask Festival

**F**OLLOWING on from the success of last year, Le Trappiste Belgian Cafe Bar Altrincham, is hosting the second Altrincham Bottle and Cask Beer Festival over the August bank holiday weekend. The Festival will run on Saturday 28th 7.00pm - 11.00pm, Sunday 29th 12.00pm - 10.00pm and Monday 30th 12.00pm - 4.00pm.

The bigger and better Festival will once again be held at Altrincham's historic Market. This year the entire market will be used to provide space for more quality beers and an increased indoor seating area, add to that an extra day of Festival fun and it promises to be a great weekend.

Once again the festival is enlisting the expertise of the Trafford & Hulme branch of CAMRA to give their advice and serve the beers. They will be featuring cask beers from some of the best small micro/craft breweries along with a selection of superb Belgian Beers and wines. They are also especially keen to feature cask beers and breweries that have either never appeared at a festival before, or are new to the Altrincham area, alongside award winning ciders and perrys.

More details in future issues of *Opening Times*.

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**Stockport**  
WITH CLIFTON BELL

**Supping**



News has been a bit thin on the ground this month so I only have one or two snippets for you, including news of yet another free house for the town.

**T**HE big news is that Sue Hitchen at the **Railway** on Portwood has acquired the pub from Geoff Oliver's Rossendale Brewery, thus making it a fully fledged free house. Sue has now signed a three year lease with the developers who own the site which means that any immediate threat to the pub's future has now receded.



Obviously some work needs to be done at the pub and Sue's immediate priority is to have it painted as the outside has become a little careworn over the years.

Inside the immediate result has been a change in the pub's beer stocking policy. The Rossendale range has been cut back to four beers (including Sunshine and Porter, I am pleased to see), and with the price reduced by 10p a pint! The other permanent beers are Pictish Brewers Gold alongside Outstanding Red and Blond. The mild remains as a changing guest and there are also three to four other guest beers, extended from weekends only to throughout the week.

Add in a changing guest cider or perry and a great range of foreign bottled beers and the Railway has something for every taste. Do pay it a visit if you've not been able to call yet.

**ANOTHER** pub I did manage to drop into was the **Tiviot** on Tiviot Dale, a pub I always enjoy but do not visit as often as I ought. Dave has been there for 44 years now, having been brought up there and he and wife Jill said they were now happy with the way the pub was doing – although the effects of the smoking ban are still being felt.



There was of course a threat to the pub's future from the now abandoned Bridgefield Development but now this has been lifted they are looking to the future with much more confidence. The excellent and value for money food is still being served (Tuesday and Saturday only) while Hatters and Unicorn are the cask ales, still served by electric pump. The Hatters on my visit was excellent, I have to say.

We have another real ale gain – the **Frog & Railway** in Heaton Mersey is advertising that it has cask ales on offer in the form of Greene King IPA, Abbot Ale and Old Speckled Hen.

Finally, the **Star** in Cheadle swiftly closed and reopened to allow a refurbishment to take place. The significant change is that the vault is no longer a separate room. The wall (on the right as you enter the pub) has been removed, the vault-facing opening at the side of the existing bar widened, and an additional bar counter fitted. The effect is a much lighter, roomier space as you go in - and, strangely, makes the rest of the pub look bigger too. It's sad to lose a vault, but the room has been barely used in recent years (10 or 15 years ago it was thriving).



# Brewery NEWS



## Robinsons Unicorn Room

**W**E would like to put the record straight with regards to the reported closure of the Unicorn Room facility within Robinson's brewery (Opening Times, April 2010)

While the brewhouse refurbishment has begun, the Unicorn Room is at the moment most definitely open for business for the near future. Work is not due to begin in the area for several months and when it does the aim is to continue providing hospitality for visitors though it may entail some modifications such as using a different entrance etc. At some time in the future the Unicorn Room will close temporarily, but even then they hope to be able to continue the popular tours of the brewery and are making plans which will allow them to do so.

So don't be disappointed, Lea and Angela are still happy to welcome you and ply you with beer and more importantly, this is your last chance to see the lovely old brewhouse in its traditional form. So book a tour with them now (parties of 15 - 10 people) and for further information ring 0161 612 4087 or e mail [tours@frederic-robinson.co.uk](mailto:tours@frederic-robinson.co.uk)

## New Appointment at Robbies

**D**AVID Bremner is to join Robinson's as Director of Marketing. "I'm delighted to be getting back into the brewing industry with a company that has great plans for its pubs and brands over the next few years" he says.

"Having spent the past two years at MDA it gave me a great opportunity to work with many cask beer, spirit and lager brands as well as bringing Cask Ale Week to the on-trade alongside Cask Marque to develop the sector. I leave there hopefully better off for my time with them."

Oliver Robinson, who made the appointment was equally delighted. David will be responsible for all aspects of pub, brand and company marketing and will put together the relevant team to do this. His appointment is a key step in our plans to stand out as the leading brewer and pub operator in the North West.

David has previously worked at Punch and Everards where he is remembered for having developed the Cyclops tasting scheme, adopted by over 1000 beers in 210 breweries. He is expected to be in place by the middle of the summer.



## Robbies Results

**R**obinsons has announced a 52 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £3.2m in the year to December 31, 2009 on the back of higher sales in what it described as "very difficult" trading conditions. Sales increased by £2.23m to £55.8m during the year, due largely to higher beer sales. It said that although it achieved a "modest" £200,000 increase in rents to tenants of £6.7m, this was more than offset by a £600,000 drop in income from its temporary managed houses to £2.3m.

During the year, the company spent £10.5m acquiring ten "excellent" new pubs – all of which are in the North West and six of which are in Cheshire. These included the Bells of Peover pub in Lower Peover and the Red Lion at Pickmere, near Knutsford. It said that it had continued to offload some of its smaller, poorly-performing pubs, through which it raised £1.4m. As a result, the overall number of pubs in its estate dropped by three. Cost-cutting measures introduced also meant employee numbers dropped from 436 to 397.

## Micro Brewery News

As ever, apologies to those breweries we have not been able to feature this month.

**Phoenix Brewery** been very busy in the last few months, running out of casks twice and this is with a stock of 4,500!. Approaches from potential new customers have been coming thick and fast. One new beer has been Authentic Gold (4%) which was designed for Curry Week and was well received in 62 north western Wetherspoons pubs. This month look out for the return of such favourites as White Tornado, Tennis Elbow and Midsummer Madness.

**Pictish Brewery** in Rochdale is another very busy concern. Out this month are Ginger Ale and Summer Solstice along with a new beer in the single hop series – this one uses Sonnet hops, a new US variety, at 4.4% ABV.

**Marble Brewery** always seems to have something going on. The popular Dobber has been discontinued until the new season's New Zealand hops become available while Pint is currently being brewed using Amarillo hops in place of the NZ varieties. This gives the beer a notably different, but equally enjoyable, flavour profile. Look out for this year's Summer Marble 2010 (4.5%). Summer Marble is brewed to a different recipe each year and the 2010 version uses a combination of Citra, Amarillo, Simcoe and US Cascade hops. It's "big and hoppy" according to head brewer James Campbell.

**Hornbeam Brewery** – again, a busy brewery with plenty of new beers. This month look out for Clueless (4.2%), a pale and very hoppy beer using Apollo and Boadicea hops. The June special (unnamed as we went to press) will be a 4% ABV hoppy light beer made using Green Bullet and Bramling Cross hops. Hornbeam has also produces a special beer for Liverpool's Ship & Mitre pub. This is a 3.6% ABV beer made using just one hop variety, Boadicea.

**Greenfield Brewery**, like many others, will be producing a beer to mark the World Cup. This is Fabio's Gold (4.4%) which is a single hop beer using the Green Bullet variety and will have a dry, bitter finish. Like many other local micros, Greenfield is extremely busy meeting demand.

**Buxton Brewery** has produced a new summer session beer. Moor Top (3.6%) is dry hopped in the conditioning tank with armfuls of American Chinook hops. "This beer oozes citrus flavour and aroma. It has a lovely sweetness balanced with a lingering bitter finish backed up with a late grapefruit hit", says the brewery.

Buxton Brewery also brews beers under the **Wild Walker** and seems to be using this as a launch pad for some very interesting beers. First off the blocks is Remergence a 7% "New Age Double IPA". It was due to premiere at Stockport Beer Festival and sounds very interesting – this is what the website says about it: "Strong and well flavoured with malty richness giving way to a blast of fresh hop. There is a huge amount of hops in this beer. Cascade, Chinook, Goldings and Hallertau make up the bill. Dry hopped for extra aroma and flavour. This one will blow you away. Recommended for serious hop-heads". Also coming out under the Wild Walker label are El Capitan (4.8%) a "California Common Beer", fermented with a specially imported Californian lager yeast and using Northern Brewer and Cascade hops; and also Hohenlage Bier Hefeweizen (5%), a "High Altitude Wheat Beer" a German-style wheat beer.



## Trafford & Hulme Club of the Year - Timperley Taverners Club

**T**RAFFORD & Hulme have yet another first in naming the Timperley Taverners Club on Park Road, Timperley as their Club of the Year 2010. The Club will now go forward in to the Regional competition which will be announced later on this year.

Originally a tennis club in the 1960's the current building on the site was built in 1981 to replace the wooden hut, by the Liberal Democrats as their headquarters for the area. In 1985 a further extension was added to give a large function room. The club has always been a private member's club and is now managed by Jayne and Ron. They have all of the usual club things going on, pool, darts, fishing club, quiz and live artists at the weekend. They even have a belly dancing club!

The club is decked out in a canal and railway theme seen as how it is only yards from both of them just by the Timperley Metrolink station. In the winter I personally find the log burning stove a delight.

All CAMRA members are always welcome, just remember to carry your membership card and that the club is only open in the evenings. The presentation takes place from 8pm on Thursday 24th June so please come along and celebrate with Jayne and Ron and the branch and encourage them to do well in the Regional competition.



**T**RAFFORD and Hulme Branch have voted Wetherspoon's J.P Joule in Sale as their Pub of the Season for summer 2010. Named after James Prescott Joule, the English physicist, who resided in Sale, we are very pleased to see Barry Back and his team successfully win this accolade.

When told of the award it was obvious that he was immensely pleased. He and the team work very hard to welcome and look after all their customers providing a comfortable ambience, good food and especially well presented ales. In the four years that Barry has been manager at the J.P Joule he has been keen to improve the quality of the cask ales and a 46% increase in like for like sales over the last two years is testament to that endeavour.



Barry recently invited Trafford & Hulme Branch to "cut the ribbon" on a new bank of handpumps which takes the number to nine on the ground floor with four more upstairs. He has two

permanent beers, which are Ruddles and Abbot Ale, with seven changing guest ales of which several qualify for the CAMRA LocAle scheme and a permanent real cider.

During Wetherspoon's Real Ale Festivals (which occur three times a year) the number of beers can increase to as many as 14 with the Belgian and foreign beers proving to be very popular.

Barry is keen to give the pub more of a community feel and to this end he has organised "meet the brewer" evenings as well as occasional "themed nights", the latest being an Indian night with curry tasting and henna tattooing. Barry is also proud that the pub raised £980 as part of a company initiative in supporting a group of Wetherspoon London marathon runners who raised £426,000 for CLIK, the Cancer Charity.

Barry would like to thank his staff for their hard work and to the customers for supporting real ale. The presentation of the award will take place on Wednesday 14 July at 8pm. J.P Joule is situated on Northenden Road, very near to Sale Metrolink station. Please come along to celebrate with us. It promises to be a great evening.



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**Barry Pryme looks back to less liberal times**

**T**HE shake-up in licensing laws led me, as a more mature CAMRA member, to cast my mind back to the days when pubs actually had to close in the afternoon, and Sunday hours were limited to 12-2 and 7-10.30.

The search for extra drinking time was endless, and whereas we all knew about an 'early doors' or 'late tap', a great deal of pleasure, and sometimes confusion, could be obtained by seeking legitimate extended drinking.

The favourite was always Market Day in towns that had a weekly agricultural market. Pubs were allowed to open all day to cater for the thirst of local farmers, and avid CAMRA folk. Most Market Days were held during the week, which necessitated a day off work to join in, but Beverley on North Humberside had the common sense to hold theirs on Saturday, thus enjoying a large influx of CAMRA coach parties in the afternoon following a lunch session at York or Selby (home of the Brahm's & List brewery in the 1970s).

Also popular was the Worth Valley railway in Yorkshire. The restored steam trains ran from Haworth to Keighley and the Buffet Car was allowed to serve traditional Theakston Old Peculiar from a hand-pump whilst the train was in motion – but not whilst stood at a station! I think this later changed to McEwans 80/-, but still a pleasant diversion between Timmy Taylors in Keighley at lunch and Timmy Taylors in Hebden Bridge in the evening.



With a bit more planning, it was possible to catch the 7.00am ferry from the end of Llandudno pier for the 3-hour crossing to the Isle of Man and enjoy an all-day session of Okells and Castletown beers, before desperately trying to remember how to find the ferry for the evening return.

The Queen's Silver Jubilee celebration in 1977 provided a one-off all-day license for pubs, and a day off work for us lucky customers. I can't remember any undue chaos or anarchy breaking out, but then again I can't remember much about the day at all. Cheers, Ma'am.

Different, and sometimes adjacent, Local Authorities had varying closing times at weekend which led to a farcical situation whereby a pub at one end of the street closed at 10.30 and a pub on the next corner, in a different authority, closed at 11.00. If nothing else, this taught you how to run on a belly full of beer! I'm sure other OT readers will have their own reminiscences – do I feel a mini-series coming on?

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when trade supports it.



# High Peak

## PUB NEWS

WITH FRANK WOOD

### Pubs from Mottram to Hadfield

A small bunch of Branch members took a bus to the **Roe Cross** Mottram in late April to start off a Saturday evening and walk to Hadfield. The Roe Cross has sold real ales now for around a year and there are usually at least two on the bar. On this occasion, Pennine Rossendale Ale and Floral Dance were the guest beers on offer, both in excellent condition, and topped up without a request. The other beer on offer was Black Sheep Bitter which was tried too and was fine.

All downhill to the **Gun Inn** in Hollingworth, where in recent years, there has been a decent selection with six hand pumps on. Well, the hand pumps are still there, but the disappointment was that only one cask beer was available, and on a Saturday night at 9.10pm, we were the only customers to drink the John Smiths cask. The bar staff did not give the impression of being interested in their work nor greet their customers.

Hoping for better things, we passed on to the **Spring Tavern**, which usually has one or sometimes two real ales on offer. At 9.45pm, it was shut, so we walked on the old railway track a little, at the rear of the pub, before turning off for the **Chieftain**.

The Chieftain is a reasonably well run Hydes estate pub, the beer as ever was very good and the staff polite. There was live entertainment and a lot of people in, enjoying themselves. The beers were: Hydes Owd Oak (Mild), Greene King Old Speckled Hen and Hydes Original. All were fine.

On next to the **Spinners** on Hadfield Road. Approaching, there was loud music, flashing lights, and not seeing any hand pumps nor any chance of conversation, we quickly moved on to the **Anchor**, further up Hadfield Road. Again there was entertainment on, Tetley's Bitter, the sole beer on hand pumps, was in good condition, as it usually is here.

Final pub of the night was the **Palatine**, a short walk away at the top of Station Road, near to the railway station. Here, Unicorn, was on two hand pumps with the seasonal beer from Robinsons on the third. This is the normal in here and very good it was too.

### Round and About

FURTHER afield, the **Friendship** in Glossop, normally only selling Hatters and Unicorn, has had Old Stockport on regularly in mid April and into mid May. Not sure if this will be regular but it was nice to have a choice. The beers as ever in the Friendship are in fine condition.

The **Globe** in Glossop has a new beer in Maypole (4.5%). Brewer Ron describes it as "big sister to Comet", with more hops and more malt but a similar recipe. Personally, I think it's extremely nice and have been drinking it as first choice whilst it has been on.

Haughton Green village (with the exception of the little **Chapel House** which serves an excellent pint of Robinsons) has been devoid of real ale for some time. However there is a new landlord, Malcolm Lake, at the **Jolly Hatters** pub on Haughton Green Road, Haughton Green which for the past few weeks has had two cask ales on offer: Bombardier and Spitfire, although by now the Spitfire may now have been replaced by Wychwood Hobgoblin. This is an area which until recently only served keg beers so this initiative is well worth supporting.

In the Guide Bridge area, the **Sun Inn** on Guide Lane is now a Last Orders and reports are that it has been extremely busy and they are planning to show all World Cup football. The **Junction**, opposite Guide Bridge station appears to be open again, though the nearby **Boundary**, a recent Good Beer Guide entry and holder of a very successful beer festival over the years, is starting to look derelict and may I say doomed! Finally, in Mossley, good reports about the beers in the **Britannia**, opposite the station. The **Caledonian Mayhem** at 3.5% particularly getting good reports.

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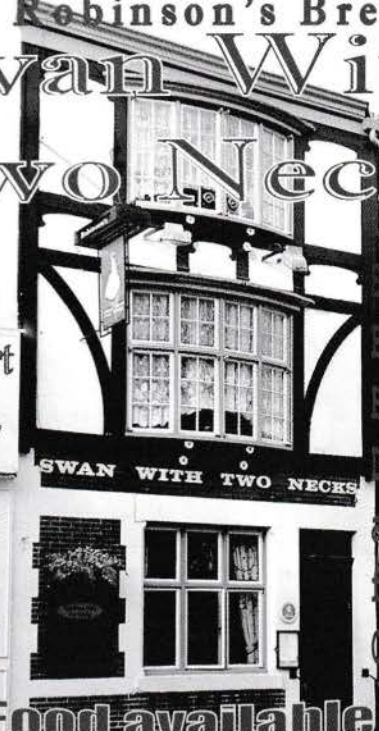
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Father's Day etc - Special Menus Coming up



# PEAK Practice



**Mild Magic, new faces, beer festivals and bottled beer all feature in this month's Peak pub scene round-up by Robin Wignall**

*Mild Magic* brought a range of milds to the area. The **Crossings** at Furness Vale had both Hatters and Dark Hatters usually available. Another pub with two milds was the **Navigation** at Buxworth. Dark Hatters was on when I called, but much more interesting was a good pint of Holden's Black Country Mild. The Navigation may well be unique as the only pub of the ninety odd selling this. Here at the Navigation Roger Cockerell has gone to the trouble and expense of having a Navigation / Mild Magic banner produced and an advert in the *Buxton Advertiser* features Mild Magic. Now there's commitment to the cause!

At the **Old Hall** at Whitehough, Chinley, a good pint of Phoenix Monkeytown Mild was on offer when I called. Others in the range of changing milds have included beer from Marble and Buxton. Old Bristolian cider was also on hand pump. Still with the Old Hall dates for the diary are 17, 18, 19 September when the autumn beer festival is scheduled.

The **Robin Hood** at the top end of Hazel Grove, nearly into High Lane, is due to have opened as a Thai restaurant in early May. Obviously there are questions here about whether the premises remain within the Robinson's estate, and about the status of real ale.

As expected the **Board** at the Horwich End end of Whaley Bridge reopened at the end of April. Locals Kev and Lin have taken on this potentially good little pub. The May Day Bank Holiday weekend gave them a good start with steady footfall. They will be opening earlier in the afternoon than had been recent practice. Therefore decent Hatters and Unicorn can be had from 2pm. till late Monday to Wednesday and noon till late Thursday to Sunday. Kev is interested in trying some of the other Robinson's beers and the forthcoming World Cup offering might make a good starter.

The **White Horse**, also at Horwich End, is a former Boddington's house. Phil Cox does a good job with two beers from the Punch list. A good pint of Greene King IPA was to be had when I called. Phil is successfully going down the Cask Marque road. At least Punch can get some things right, encouraging their licensees to be involved in this national beer and cellar quality scheme.

This leads on to the **Goyt** in Whaley Bridge where Tony Gunner continues to serve real ale in good form as befits a licensee with Cask Marque accreditation. Brains Rev. James, Black Sheep Bitter and Young's Special are regular, the first being a good seller. These are from the Punch standard list. Tony also accesses beers from the more unusual list, though a good pint of Black Sheep was my choice when I last called.

Windle Undertaker from the Windle Brewery near Rushton Spencer, badged as a dark bitter, was an unusual beer to find at the **Dog & Partridge** at Bridgemont. This of course comes via the Enterprise Inns SIBA list. Kate regularly buys from this list to add further interest to the range of up to six beers on the bar. I am assuming that another diary date to note will be the Dog and Partridge beer festival over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

The Good Bottled Beer Guide listed **Goyt Wines** in Whaley Bridge continues to do a good job selling real ale in a bottle. One of my favourites is Wentworth WPA. More recently Terry has been stocking beers from the Bollington Brewery now that their excellent ales are being bottled. Bollington Best is a best seller, no surprise there, whilst I have bottles of Happy Valley and White Nancy in store for the right sampling moment.

Hopefully Mild Magic will have tempted many readers out into the Peak District to try some of its pubs and to drink some interesting beer in good condition. If you missed out on MM the long days of summer tempt you out for some good drinking. Public transport works quite well.

One for the road (or rail)

Public transport information on 0871 200 22 33 or [www.gmpte.com](http://www.gmpte.com)

# Join the Campaign for Real Ale



**CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE**

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
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Your membership will make a difference. For just £20 a year you can help our work to promote real ale, protect consumer rights and support pubs. Benefits include a monthly newspaper, quarterly magazine, free entrance to beer festivals and discounts on books and the Good Beer Guide. Just fill in the form below and send, with a cheque (payable to CAMRA Ltd) or for Three Months free membership (for those renewing or joining by Direct Debit) complete the Direct Debit Form. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 3LW. Alternately you can join online at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk).

## CAMRA newsletter Opening Times

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

**Stockport & South Manchester**  
Branch Contact: Mark McConachie 0161 429 9356 [mark.mcconachie@o2.co.uk](mailto:mark.mcconachie@o2.co.uk)  
Branch website: [www.ssmcamra.org.uk](http://www.ssmcamra.org.uk)

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>** - Branch Meeting: Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. Starts 8pm

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup>** - Burnage & Heaton Mersey Stagger: Victoria, Burnage Lane 7.30pm; Sun in September 8.30pm.

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>** - Pub of the Month presentation to the Royal Oak, Wilmslow Rd, Didsbury. From 8pm.

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July** - "New Faces" Branch Meeting at the Magnet, Wellington Road North, Stockport. Meet from 8pm, meeting starts 8.30pm

**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/)

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> June** - Branch AGM: Royal Hotel, Hayfield. Starts 1pm. Will be followed by a branch social around Hayfield and Little Hayfield

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>** - Buxton Social: Ramsays Bar, Buckingham Hotel. Starts 8.30pm.

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> July** - Branch Meeting and Pub of the Season Presentation: Dog & Pheasant (Top Dog), Ashton. Start 8.30pm.

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

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>** - Social: Park Inn, Worsley Rd, Swinton From 8pm.

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup>** - Branch Meeting: Black Lion, Chapel St, Salford. Starts 7.30pm.

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup>** - Social: Racecourse Hotel, Littleton Rd, Lower Kersal, Salford. From 8pm.

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup>** - Good Beer Guide Selection Workshop, Black Lion, Chapel St, Salford. Starts 7.30pm.

### Regional Event

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2010: Annual Independents' Day Treasure Hunt**  
Start from the **Black Lion**, Chapel St, Salford, between 12.00 and 13.00 (pub open from 1130 for today only). Return to the Black Lion (upstairs) by 19.00 for prizes and food. Entry fee: £2.00 per team member (including food after the event.) If you've done this before, you know what to expect. If not - the annual Independents' Day Treasure Hunt is basically a pub crawl combined with a quiz where the answers are in the pubs. It offers the chance to tour interesting pubs around central Manchester that you may or may not have visited before.  
Your team will start by answering a short quiz/puzzle which will reveal the names of the pubs to be visited during the day. You then tour these pubs, enjoying beers from independent breweries and answering questions in each pub. The winners receive the **ceremonial shield**, and hopefully will take on the challenge of setting the 2011 Treasure Hunt. For further details contact Mark on 0161 789 5016

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

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>** - Sale / Chorlton Green Survey: 7.30pm Jacksons Boat, Rifle Rd, Sale; 9.00 Bowling Green; 9.45 Horse & Jockey; 10.15 Famous Trevor Arms

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>** - Day Trip to Huddersfield: meet 11am Piccadilly Station for 11.12 departure.

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>** - Social in Moberley and Ashley: 7pm, Railway in Moberley; 9pm Greyhound in Ashley

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>** - Club of the Year presentation to Timperley Tavemers Social Club, Park Road, Timperley from 8pm.

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> - Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> July** - Friday 2nd July 5- 10.30pm. Sat 3rd 2pm - 10.30pm. Sat 3rd Cider/Perry Tasting hour 1-2pm, Booking required. See [www.chorltonbeerfestival.org.uk](http://www.chorltonbeerfestival.org.uk) for more details.

**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/)

**Monday 21<sup>st</sup>** - Pub of the Year and 10 Years in Good Beer Guide Presentation at the Poachers in Bollington. Starts 8pm.

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>** - Summer Pub of the Season award to Crag Inn, Wildboarclough. Starts 6:00pm.

*The Award Winning*  
**NEW OXFORD**

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

*Phoenix Oxford Pale - 3.8%  
Plus up to 16 Guest Ales*

*7 Belgian & 4 German beers  
on draught at all times*

*Two Guest Ciders*

*120 Belgian Bottled Beers*

*Traditional Pub Grub  
Tuesday - Saturday 12 - 4pm*

*Regular Weekend Beer Festivals  
(on the last full weekend of each month)*

*Tuesday Night - Quiz Night*



*We are in the Good Beer Guide  
2010*

*www.thenewoxford.co.uk  
11 Bexley Square, Salford*

**The Black Lion**

*65 Chapel St, Salford  
(corner Blackfriars St)  
0161 834 4620*



*A warm welcome awaits you*

**8 Guest Ales**

*120 Belgian and German  
Bottled Beers*

*Original and High Quality  
Food prepared in our kitchen*

*Available  
Monday - Friday  
12-3 and 5-8  
Saturday 12-9*

*Sunday lunches coming soon*

*Function Room  
Available for hire*

# 4.4.2

May and June 2010

**ABV 3.7%**

*This refreshing golden bitter has a sweet malt and delicate noble hop aroma normally associated with fine lagers. Brewed traditionally from a recipe incorporating an interesting blend of pale and lightly roasted malts, this beer exhibits a rich array of sweet, malt and hoppy flavours complemented by a crisp dry finish.*

