

June 2011

  
CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE  
TIMES

# Opening

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

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The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for June is the Bulls Head on London Road, Manchester. Here John Clarke sings its praises.



THE Bulls Head has seen many owners and changes of layout over the years. I first knew it as a fairly dreary Wilsons pub. Burtonwood Brewery then came and went with little discernable change. However the pub is now owned by Marston's and several years ago it underwent a dramatic transformation.

The pub was knocked through and this is one of the rare examples where removing the internal walls has worked to a pub's benefit. It's a stylish yet traditional place the whole dominated by the bar counter facing the main entrance on London Road. And on the bar is a cluster of handpumps dispensing beers from the large portfolio of beers produced by Marston's and its various subsidiaries. Quality is consistently high – as you would expect in a pub that now seems to be a fixture in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide.

There is also a popular food offer here with both a regular menu and daily specials available at lunchtimes and early evening. Add in a legendary quiz night on Tuesdays and you have the makings of a great pub.

Of course what makes any good pub is the people. Those who use it and those who run it. While the Bulls Head attracts its fair share of passing trade (being opposite Piccadilly Station it could scarcely do otherwise) it also has a loyal band of regulars who ensure it has that "local" feel that belies its city centre location. The bar staff are welcoming, knowledgeable and efficient. And of course all this is made possible by the hard work and commitment of business partners Mui-Heng and Keith William who have been running the Bulls Head for about five and half years now. It is their attention to detail and commitment to quality that has made the Bulls Head the undoubted success it is today. This well deserved award will be presented on Thursday 30 June from about 8pm.



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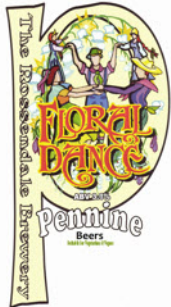
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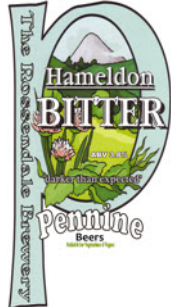
# THE ROSSENDALE BREWERY



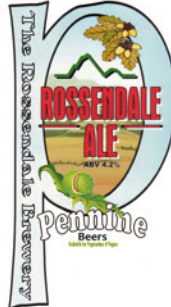
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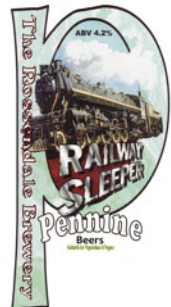
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# Comment, Notes & Contents

# What's On

## Opening Times – Comment

This was written before Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. I hope you all had a thoroughly good time. We will have a review next month. However as one festival finishes, more come over the horizon.

First up is the inaugural **Greater Manchester Cider & Perry Festival**. This is a brand new venture and there is more information on pages 10 and 11. We think this might currently be the only CAMRA festival solely dedicated to cider and perry so we are keen for it to succeed. It's in a central City Centre venue so please do try and call in.

Early next month (Friday 8 and Saturday 9) is the **Chorlton Beer Festival** held, as usual, at St Clements Church on Edge Lane. This is always a very enjoyable event with a great range of beer and cider. Again, well worth making the journey.

Finally – you will see on page six the list of contenders for this year's Greater Manchester Pub of the Year. I think it's fair to say that this time round there is one of the strongest fields we have had for some years so competition will be particularly fierce. We will bring you news of the winner later in the year.

## 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. 7200 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth. All articles copyright CAMRA unless otherwise stated.

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Postal subscriptions are available at £9.00 for 12 issues (make cheques payable to *Opening Times*). Apply to John Tune, 4 Sandown Road, Cheadle Heath, Stockport, SK3 0JF.

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## Copy Date for the July issue is Wednesday 15 June

**Contributors to this issue:** John Clarke, John Tune, Dave Hanson, Peter Butler, Robin Wignall, Peter Edwardson, Frank Wood, Phil Booton, Jim Flynn, Mike Rose, Mark McConachie, Caroline O'Donnell, John O'Donnell, Beverley Gobbett, Andy Jenkinson, John Sutcliffe, Jon Gobbett, Steven Swain, Rob Lea, Jim Flynn, Dave Burston, Adrian Palmer

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Local CAMRA branches organise regular events in pubs across the region – members of other branches & general public are welcome to attend except some Branch business meetings (contact branch contact if in doubt). Organising branch in brackets.

### June

**Saturday 11th** – Hulme Social: 1pm Salutation, Higher Chatham St; 2pm Junction, Rolls Crescent. Finish Britons Protection (TRH)

**Saturday 11th** – Saturday Dawdle: Marble Arch 2pm; Angel 3.15pm; Ducie Bridge 4.15pm (NM)

**Tuesday 14th** – Meet the Brewer: Oddest, Chorlton – meet the people behind Bollington Brewery. From 7.30pm (TRH)

**Thursday 16th** – Carrington/Flixton Social: 8pm Windmill, Carrington; 9pm Church, Flixton. (TRH)

**Saturday 18th** – Trip to Leeds – provisional – contact branch for details (TRH)

**Sunday 19th** – Mild Magic Awards Evening; Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport. From 7pm (SSM)

**Wednesday 22nd** – Gardens Crawl 1: Marble Arch 7.30pm; Bar Fringe 8.30pm; Port Street Beer House 9pm (NM)

**Friday 24th** – Gorton Stagger: 7.30pm Pineapple, Garratt Way; 8.30 Plough, Hyde Road (SSM)

**Sunday 26th** – Chorlton Bring & Share BBQ: St Clements Church, Edge Lane, Chorlton. Starts 1pm (TRH)

**Wednesday 29th** – Gardens Crawl 2: Ape & Apple 7.30pm; Cask 8.30pm; Rain Bar 9pm (NM)

**Thursday 30th** – Pub of the Month presentation to the Bulls Head, Manchester (SSM)

**Thursday 30th** – Stretford Social: 8pm Melville, Barton Rd; 9.15 Metro Club, Moss Rd; finish Trafford Social Club, Moss Rd. (TRH)

### July

**Saturday 2nd – Independents' Day Treasure Hunt** – Starts Crown & Kettle, Oldham St, 12 noon. (All)

**Saturday 2nd** - boat trip from Bollington (4pm) to Marple with food at pub afterwards. Beer will be for sale on the boat. Contact 07986 458517 to book (HPNC)

**Monday 4th** – Pub of the Season presentation: Egerton Arms, Chelford. From 8pm (MEC)

**Wednesday 6th** – Social at Trackside, Bolton. From 8pm (NM)

**Friday 8th–Saturday 9th – Chorlton Beer Festival, St Clements Church, Edge Lane.** (All)

### Your Local CAMRA Branches:

**SSM: Stockport & South Manchester** [www.ssmcamra.org.uk](http://www.ssmcamra.org.uk)

Contact: Mark McConachie 0161 429 9356, [mark.mcconachie@o2.co.uk](mailto:mark.mcconachie@o2.co.uk)

**NM – North Manchester** [www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk](http://www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk)

Contact: Phil Booton 0161 957 7148, [phbooton@hotmail.com](mailto:phbooton@hotmail.com)

**HPNC – High Peak & North Cheshire** [www.hpneccamra.org.uk](http://www.hpneccamra.org.uk)

Contact: Mike Rose 07986 458517, [mikewrose@gmail.com](mailto:mikewrose@gmail.com)

**MEC – Macclesfield & East Cheshire** [www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk](http://www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk)

Contact Tony Icke 01625 861833, [contact@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk](mailto:contact@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk)

**TRH – Trafford & Hulme** [www.thcamra.org.uk](http://www.thcamra.org.uk)

Branch Contact: John Ison 0161 962 7976, [enquiries@thcamra.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@thcamra.org.uk)

### CAMRA Branch Business Meetings

**Wednesday 15th** – Unicorn, Church St, Manchester. Starts 7.30pm (NM)

**Thursday 16th** – **Shortened Branch Meeting and New Faces Event. Meeting ends at 9.30 followed by social and buffet. Free pint for new faces. Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. Starts 8.30pm.** (SSM)

**Saturday 18th** - AGM & Social: Ramsays Bar, Buckingham Hotel, Buxton. Starts 1.30pm (HPNC)

**Thursday 7th July** – New Lloyds, Wilbraham Rd, Chorlton (upstairs room). Start 8pm (TRH)



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## Regional Pub of the Year

Judging will soon be underway to decide the winner of the CAMRA Greater Manchester Regional Pub of the Year title. Our regional pubs of the year have a very good track record in the national Pub of the Year competition with many finalists and one overall winner in previous years. Which pub will carry the county flag this year? There are eight contenders.



The entry from Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA is the **Magnet**, Wellington Road North, Stockport. The pub has been transformed from a dull, pub company outlet with no cask beer into a thriving multi-beer freehouse. There are up to 24 beers on handpump, traditional cider and a growing range of foreign bottled beers. Shortly to be the home of Cellar Rat Brewery.

The Trafford & Hulme Branch entry is the **Marble Beer House** on Manchester Road in Chorlton. One of three Marble Brewery "tied houses" this bar is a popular local with a distinct pub atmosphere selling a wide range of Marble Brewery beers alongside guest beers and traditional cider



The South East Lancs Branch entry is the **Boars Head**, Market Place in Leigh. Opposite the parish church, this imposing red brick building is a true free house selling two Moorhouse's beers and two ever-changing guests.

The Rochdale Oldham & Bury Branch entrant is the ever popular **Hare & Hounds** at Holcombe Brook, north of Bury. This is a large, rural community pub with a bright and friendly atmosphere. There are ten cask ales on handpump and these include guest beers from across the UK. Two beer festivals are held each year (March and September) and these feature a huge range of beers.



The North Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year is another Marble Brewery outlet – the famous **Marble Arch** on Rochdale Road in Manchester. Known also for its tiled interior and excellent food, the wide range of Marble beers (on both handpump and in bottle) is accompanied by guest beers and traditional cider.

The High Peak & North East Cheshire Branch has chosen the **White Lion** in Disley. The pub has been transformed over the past four years. Eight handpumps now dispense ever changing guest beers, many sourced from micro brewers. In addition a popular beer festival takes place every August. There is also excellent pub food



Bolton CAMRA has chosen the **Bank Top Brewery Tap**. This is a very new pub in its present guise. As the name implies this is the first tied house run by the local Bank Top Brewery which has taken over and transformed a previously run down pub. It now features the full range of Bank Top beers plus guests from around the UK.

The final entry, from Wigan Branch, is the **Masons Arms** on Carr Mill Road in Billinge. This pub has been run by the same family for many years now and this welcome continuity has gone to make a cosy, welcoming pub. The beer range changes all the time with guest beers from local breweries and those further afield.



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# Stagger.....

## The Delights of Didsbury With John Sutcliffe

Our March stagger started at the **Gateway** at Parrs Wood at 7.30 p.m. on Friday 18. This was a large multi-roomed building with a central dark wood bar serving on one side into a large function room with raised stage area, where a band was tuning up for a performance later. This went on for some time and was a bit loud, especially when the drummer nearly gave a member of our party a heart attack with a sudden outburst. There was a small function room upstairs. A rather more Spartan vault, with dart board and large television was at the rear and on the opposite side of the bar to the main function room was a rather luxurious pool room with bookshelves and a real fireplace. There was another small room at the front.



At the time the Gateway was owned by Hydes Brewery but it has now been sold to Wetherspoons. The beers were Hydes, Manchester's Finest, a good pint and O'Finnegans Irish style stout, brewed by Hydes, that was even better.

Avoiding the keg only Bell House on Parrs Wood Lane we made our way into Didsbury village. The Fat Loaf, that used to be the Steak & Kebab House sometimes has real ale but not on this occasion so we took our custom to the **Didsbury**, a Chef & Brewer House and a past Pub of the Month winner.

It was busy, with a largely youngish clientele, if you discount the eight or so CAMRA members on the stagger, for whom the first blush of youth has passed. There were a few people waiting for a table as the food area was full. This is probably in the upper range of chain dining but is quite drinker friendly for a food orientated establishment. There is a room upstairs but this was closed for a wedding the next day. Opposite the bar are tables set aside for drinkers and there was an adequate choice. Three people had the Youngs bitter which was good at £2.68 a pint but the Adnams

Broadside although £3.10 was scored higher by the other five. There was also Courage Directors bitter.



A seasonal beer festival ran from 15 February until 29 March with five changing cask beers on each week. A leaflet listing the beers was available and also gave tasting notes and a guide to matching beer styles to food types.

We bypassed the Olde Cock, Loch Fyne that had no real ale and continued into the centre of Didsbury village, to the **Crown**, a traditional pub with low ceiling.



Emphasis here is on providing excellent quality, cask conditioned real ale. Five of us tried the Wee Shimmy brewed by Sadler's, at Lye, Stourbridge while the rest favoured Boondoggle. Both scored well. Wells Bombardier was also available but no one tried this. An informative leaflet quoted the Cyclops scheme tasting notes and a map on the back showed the location of the breweries.

Our next venue, although not strictly on this stagger was the **Nelson**, perhaps a more working class pub, with a lively atmosphere as it was karaoke night. Beers were Jennings Cumberland and Copper Dragon best bitter. We missed out the Dog and Partridge which is also on another stagger.

The **Fletcher Moss**, formerly the Albert was sampled next. There are small rooms and alcoves at the front but the main room

extends on either side of a central bar and there is a seating area in a large conservatory at the rear. As it is a very busy and popular Hydes establishment, we found room to sit outside in the covered, heated area, suitable for smokers. On Mondays, a quiz night alternates with live



acoustic music, mostly folk. One person tried the O'Finnegans Irish style stout, good but perhaps not quite as good as in the Gateway. The York bitter had just gone off and no one tried the Hydes Original bitter or the 1863, the alternative to the caramel rich dark mild. Hydes have now discontinued their standard mild. So the Manchester's Finest and the Allgates, Super Alpha were the beers of choice. Both were very good; well over Good Beer Guide standard. The Fletcher Moss does not do food but hot pies and bar snacks are available.



And so to end the stagger we finished the evening at the **Royal Oak**. Famous for its generous lunch time ploughmans and variety of cheeses, it was just as busy and lively on Friday night. Four had the Paddy's Tout that scored highly, as did the Marston's Pedigree, while the Jennings Golden Host tried by three people, scored slightly lower but was still good.

Altogether this was a great convivial evening with a very high standard and good variety of beers. This is not surprising as there were at least four places that have been Pub of the Month in the last few years.



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# High Peak Pub Scene

Frank Wood with Pubs News from High Peak & North East Cheshire CAMRA plus Robin Wignall's monthly round-up of the Peak District Pub scene

## Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

The May edition of *Cheshire Life*, that glossy magazine with adverts for very expensive houses and articles about society weddings and hunt balls, had a supplement, the *Cheshire Life Pub Guide Summer 2011*. The Guide is a brief and select collection of a score of pubs. The only Peak District pub with an entry is the **Ryles Arms** at Sutton, Macclesfield. This little A6 size guide is good on food and facilities. All the pubs chosen serve real ale, but there are no details of beers available. Pubs with 'excellent ales and tasty food' have been chosen. These seem to be the criteria for selection for this little guide. No chance of selection being subject to the vagaries of branch democracy which so enhance the Good Beer Guide. Neither is there a great need to rush out to buy May's Cheshire Life.

Sutton has featured in recent editions of *Opening Times* and *Out Inn Cheshire* as the home of Red Willow Brewery. Good to see another new brewery on the fringe of the Peak District. Red Willow beers have been at the **Old Hall**, Whitehough, where Feckless and Wreckless were available, and at New Mills Beer Festival. They are very recommendable.

The spring edition of *Potters Bar* reports on the short move being made by the Winkle Brewery in the south west of the Peak District. These are also beers worth seeking out.

The latest information from Birch Vale is that the **Grouse** may have re-opened, contrary to expectations. This is a bit of good news. Work is continuing towards the re-opening of the **Soldier Dick** in Furness Vale. On the down side comes the confirmation that the long closed Navigation in Whaley Bridge now has planning permission for conversion to four flats.

Special event and seasonal beers have been widely available. The various breweries in the Marston's empire are usually well represented at the **Shepherds Arms** in Whaley Bridge. Marston's Perfect Union was a royal wedding brew. Wychwood have produced a spring brew, Elderwych. Ringwood Lovey Warne is a tribute to the Australian cricketer Shane Warne. This was a good pale, hoppy beer. Jennings Golden Host, their William Wordsworth tribute beer, and Wychwood Paddy's Tout were available in March and April. It was also the time of year for Marston's Double Drop, also available at the **Shady Oak**, Fernilee. This is hoppier than Marston's Bitter.

The **White Hart**, in Whaley Bridge, in common with other Punch pubs, has been able to access Wadworth St. George and Brains Bread of Heaven. Brains have also produced a Dylan Thomas tribute beer, Mikwood, a 4.2% nut brown ale, a good brew of its style

but would it have been the poet's favourite tipple? The **White Horse** in Whaley often has two guest beers. A recent good brew was Wold Top Voluptuous Vicki, pale and hoppy.

The **Navigation** at Buxworth continues to source unusual beers. In April beers from Flipside Brewery, Nottingham and from Clark's at Wakefield were available.

At the **Cock** in Whaley Bridge up to five Robinson's beers are available, including the seasonal. The once unusual Old Stockport has been selling well. The promotion of food continues to be successful and has been extended into a Breakfast Club at 11.00 on Saturday and Sunday. Seems to be a good chance to feed up for a good day in Peak District pubs

## High Peak Pub News

With Frank Wood

The latest new brew at the **Globe** brew pub in Glossop is Toby Porter 4.3%, named by landlord Ron after his grandson, who is also the regular weekend food waiter at the pub. A recent line up of beers brewed on the premises and on sale at the bar in mid May was: Globe Wheat Beer 3.9%, Comet 4.3%, Blondie 3.9%, Vulcan 4.5% and Amber 3.9% along with the porter. All beers range from £1.80 to £2.00 pint; excellent value. Rosie the chef has added further choice to the menu lately, now including a home made ice cream selection and also prepares her own samosas and spicy veg rolls.

This month sees the **Hare & Hounds** at Simmondley hold its annual beer festival on 24th - 26th June. Buses stop on the way into Glossop at the former Junction pub, by the two mini roundabouts and from there, it's a 15 minute walk all uphill to the top of Simmondley. On a recent visit, the regular Tetleys Bitter was joined by Robinsons Unicorn, Draught Bass and Brains Bread of Heaven.

The **Grouse** at Birch Vale reopened early in May after a period of uncertainty. It now has a Chinese food franchise operating and a work colleague of mine stated it was excellent and his family would definitely be going back regularly.

The **Lowes Arms** at Denton was the starting point for a recent Branch pub crawl. As is normal, a Hornbeam beer was on offer, the pub being the nearest regular outlet of the brewery, Voyager was 3.9% and was joined by Brakspears Bitter, Ringwood Bitter and Phoenix White Tornado. No comments were made that any of them were not in fine form.

In Furness Vale, the **Soldier Dick** on Buxton Road, has had lots of activity recently, as it was being prepared to re-open and it did so in early May, bought outright as a free house with cask ale. More news on this next month.

The **Queens Arms** at Old Glossop has again changed hands with Tetleys Bitter, Robinsons Unicorn and guest beers available. Of late, the **Wheatsheaf** and **Bulls Head**, both only 100 yards away, have been excellent and continue to be so, with all three pubs also serving food. Old Glossop is certainly a great place to drink real ale at the moment.

In New Mills, the **Royal Oak**, a Robinsons pub on the main street, had Unicorn, Hatters and the seasonal beer on sale when I dropped in recently. The **Torrs** across the road had Theakston's Black Bull but at the **Pride of the Peaks**, opposite the bus terminus, no real ale is served. In Poynton, the **Kings** on London Road South has Black Sheep Bitter only, but plans to extend the range soon.

Over to Buxton, good reports continue to come in about the **Wye Bridge House** (Wetherspoons) but the **Mood Bar** has shut and the **Robin Hood** on London Road is closed, pending a new tenant. In Newton, I popped into the **Railway** recently, once a well regarded Boddingtons pub near to Newton station. Disappointingly there were two handpumps on the bar with pumpclips on, but on asking for a pint, I was told that this was only to advertise the beers and they were actually a keg version of the beer. I declined this misleading advertisement and left.

## Pub of the Season

At a presentation on the evening of Monday 9th May, the **Royal Hotel** in Hayfield was awarded the Pub of the Season for Summer 2011.



The Ash family have been running the pub for several years and are very enterprising and passionate in their choice of beers, using local breweries wherever they can, as well as the staple Hydes Bitter. On the Monday, beers were available from Winkle Brewery, Ossett, RedWillow and Happy Valley when we arrived and by the end of the night three of them had been changed. Geoff Williamson (*above right*) presented the framed award that was pre-arranged after the Branch meeting. The Royal also hold a very successful annual beer festival each October and offer occasional entertainment evenings from the concert room at the rear.

# Cider & Perry News

## National Cider & Perry Champions

CAMRA's National Cider & Perry Championship was held at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival for the first few years of its life. However it has now found a permanent home at Reading Beer Festival, held over the last weekend in April. Here are the results from this year's contest.



**Cider** – winner was a relative newcomer “Hard Core” from Virtual Orchard Cider of Wolverton, Bucks. Silver went to Gwynt y Ddraig Black Dragon while Bronze went to Hartland's Sweet Cider.



**Perry** – winner was former Stockport winner Rathays for Painted Lady. Gwynt y Ddraig got another silver for Two Trees and joint Bronze winners were Olivers Medium and Ralph's Old Badland.

## Greater Manchester Cider & Perry

WITH the success of cider bars at CAMRA cider representatives have Manchester CAMRA Cider & Perry of June between the hours of 12.00 – 22.30.

It will be held at Copper Face Jacks in the entrance is on the corner of Oxford Street and Road train station (and is pictured below). Tickets are £1.00 for CAMRA members.



We are looking for volunteers from within Greater Manchester for the festival both when open to the public and during the week for a variety of roles including staffing the CAMRA membership stall.

work is manual labour putting up publicity - and take down, if you wear it. Gloves and



Don't think you have There will be information volunteers who know of course the jobs available filled for the festival to be a

Set-up starts on Thursday 23rd June. The festival is open to the public between noon and 10:30pm on Saturday 25th June 2011 (Staff required 12:00-10:30pm) and will take place on Sunday 26th June. If you would like to be a staff volunteer please contact phil55494@gmail.com

There will be 60 tubs of cider and perry with something for everybody. The list of products will be together as we went to press but expect to see products from such as ciders from Virtual Orchard, Gwynt y Ddraig, Hartlands, Pickled Pig and Rosie's. On the day we expect to see products from the likes of Olivers, Ralph's, Hecks and Cromwell. There will be something for everyone. Some of the cider and perry or if you are drinking it will be available.

This event is a first for the Greater Manchester area. It will be the only dedicated CAMRA run cider and perry event a success so if you are at all interested in, try a few glasses and chat about all things



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# Cider & Perry News

## Manchester Perry Festival

beer festivals within the region, some of your  
e got together to bring you the First Greater  
Festival. The festival will be held on 24 & 25

the Palace Hotel, Manchester M60 7HA. The  
d Whitworth Street, which is opposite Oxford  
the admission prices are on the door at £2.00.



Greater Manchester CAMRA to work at the  
ring set-up and take-down. Staff are required  
bar, running the glasses stand, staffing the  
For set-up and take down the majority of the  
but there are also lighter duty roles such as  
all help appreciated. If volunteering for set-up  
you have your own safety footwear, please  
d high-visibility vests will be provided.

ve to be a cider or perry expert to help out!  
mal training about cider and perry for the  
a little but are enthusiastic to learn more and  
y from serving on the bar which need to be  
success.

estival will be open to  
on Friday 24th and  
(11am - 11pm), Take-  
If you would like to  
t Phil Moss on

so lots of choice,  
was still being put  
see award winners  
y Ddraig, Broadoak,  
perry front you can  
f Rathays, Olivers,  
be food to soak up  
iving soft drinks are

er Branches of CAMRA and indeed this may  
and perry festival. We are keen to make the  
d in cider and perry please take time to drop  
s apples and pears.



## The Moss Cider Project



This is an interesting and exciting project which had its public launch at the Port Street Beer House on 24 May. It is, in short, a Manchester based community cider maker which at the same time aims to see as many local people a possible planting apple trees and harvesting apples. The man behind it is Dan Hasler a native of Cirencester (in the heart of traditional cider country) and now an adopted Mancunian. Boundlessly enthusiastic he has now been rewarded by the sight of the project's cider – fruity, spritzy with a champagne-like echo – launched to public acclaim. Only limited quantities have been produced so far but this sounds like it will grow and grow. Check out the website at [www.themoss cider project.org](http://www.themoss cider project.org)

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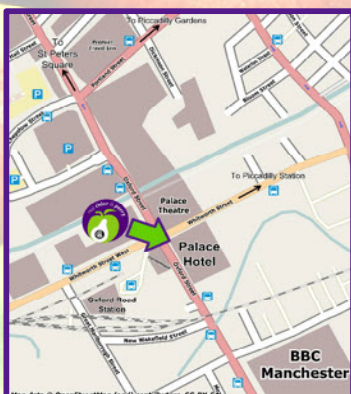
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# Join CAMRA

See page 18

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### Driving Customers Away

**L**AST year yet another official report was produced, this time by Sir Peter North, proposing the reduction of the UK drink-driving limit from 80mg to 50mg. This offered no new evidence, and earlier this year it was rejected by Transport Secretary Philip Hammond, arguing that the vast majority of drink-related road deaths involve drivers well over the current limit, and cutting the limit by itself would do nothing to change their behaviour. For the first time, an official response on the issue actually acknowledged the potential effect on the hospitality trade. Licensees and customers of rural, suburban and small town pubs will no doubt have felt considerably relieved by this decision.

However, it could be argued that many of the supposed benefits of a lower limit have already been achieved, with a change in public attitudes over the past twenty or so years leading to a growing reluctance to drive after drinking even within the legal limit. In the early years of the breathalyser law, this was widely regarded as normal and responsible behaviour, and many pubs prospered on this "car trade". Indeed, the ultimate high water mark of beer sales in British pubs was not reached until twelve years later in 1979. However, from the mid-80s onwards, there was a distinct shift towards the view that drivers shouldn't touch so much as a half of lager, which has become commonplace amongst new entrants to the driving population.

There are still plenty of people from their mid-forties upwards who continue to do what they have always done, although their ranks are steadily being thinned by advancing years. But, amongst their younger counterparts, the kinds of people who in the 1970s would have routinely gone to the pub in the car and drink a couple of legal pints haven't, by and large, found an alternative means to get there, they have simply stopped going in that kind of regular, moderate way, although they may still have a weekend blow-out. Now it could be said that this is beneficial to road safety, although whether much additional risk is caused by someone driving after a couple of pints of ordinary bitter is questionable. But, over the past two decades, this change in attitudes has undoubtedly been a prime cause of the long-term decline of the pub trade outside of major urban centres.

### I Don't Like the Taste

**F**ROM time to time you hear people who don't drink claim that they simply don't like the taste of alcohol. If people choose not to drink because they are concerned about the potential effects, then fair enough, although they are missing out on one of the great pleasures of life. They are entitled to their view and I would not criticise them for it, although I would expect the same tolerance to be extended to those who do drink provided they don't make fools of themselves.

But "I don't like the taste" always strikes me as being a particularly feeble rationalisation. Alcoholic drinks cover a huge spectrum of different tastes, and many don't really taste "of alcohol" at all. For example, I recently tried some alcoholic root beer which was impossible to distinguish from the soft drink version. Have they really tried everything from Liebfraumilch to cask-strength Laphroaig and decided that nothing appeals? People may be vegetarian on principle, but you never hear them claiming that they don't like the taste of meat, especially when it spans such a wide range of flavours from venison to oysters. Non-drinkers would be respected more if they were honest about their motivations.

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

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## Clubbing Together

In the first of a new feature, Opening Times takes a look at the often forgotten alternative to the pubs and bars – the private social club. While to many private member clubs may conjure up one of two images – a group of workers in work wear supping pints of bitter at the end of a hard days toil or that of suited toffs sitting round a roaring fire with glasses of brandy. However, in reality most clubs aren't as polarised.

We start the series with a club that may be familiar to South Manchester drinkers - St Catherine's Social Club on School Lane in Didsbury, the home of Didsbury Beer Festival since 2009. Open every evening from 7.30pm (and 12-5 on Sunday afternoons), the club is situated a short walk from Didsbury Village about halfway between Wilmslow Road and Kingsway. St Catherine's was established 36 years ago by the parish priest of the Catholic church next door but was and still is a non-denominational club open to all regardless of faith.



Guests are welcome into the club at any time – in fact it is club policy to give potential members a chance to try the club before joining. All they ask is that by your third visit you join the club – at the princely sum of £3 a year (£2 for OAPs).

Like many clubs, offers a range of drinks at keen prices. The house ale is Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter at just £1.88 a pint – an absolute bargain for Didsbury. As well as Sam Smiths, there is always at least one guest ale on, usually selected from either Bollington or Dunham Massey breweries and sold at £2.32 a pint. On busy weekends there is often a second guest.

Live sports are shown on the two big screens in the lounge bar – although the club is often at its busiest during big matches, it is still possible to get a seat when the other local pubs are packed. The club hosts a quiz night on Wednesdays with cash and drinks prizes and on Thursdays there is bingo from 9pm with prizes including a £50 "snowball".

St Catherine's is a friendly welcoming club. With good quality cask ale at keen prices and plenty of seating, it is a real alternative to the hustle and bustle of Didsbury village.

**St Catherine's Social Club, School Lane, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 6HS (0161) 445 0577 <http://saintcatherines.org.uk/>**

If you would like your club to feature here – please feel free to submit an article to the editor – contact details on page 3.

## Horse & Jockey



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## Farewell to Studio 7



When the BBC Philharmonic left Studio 7 at Oxford Road, where it has rehearsed and recorded for 30 years, for pastures new at Media City, they threw a party to mark the occasion.

Percussionist, and CAMRA member Rob Lea, pictured left above, purchased a couple of casks of Bank Top Brewery's Flat Cap which drew praise from everyone, including Chief Conductor Gianandrea Noseda. He found that although, as an Italian, he normally drinks wine, he thought this beer to be very good indeed. Our photo shows orchestra members enjoying their beer while the Maestro pulls a pint with a suitably dramatic expression.

## Pubs, Supermarkets, Offices, Hotels

**W**HO cares? We do. In CAMRA all members are encouraged to assist their Communities to keep Our Pubs as Community Pubs and a service to all.

Just in the last few months Trafford & Hulme CAMRA have heard about the **Huntsman** in Sale becoming a Londis. The **Bridge** in Altrincham being under compulsory purchase to make way for a new development to include a hotel, shops, ice rink and flats. **Corbans** in Hale is to become a locksmiths, office and apartments. The **Hope** in Hulme (pictured right) has featured in the newspapers on numerous occasions recently as it is has been lived in by squatters, all the interior has been ripped out and it is earmarked to become a Chinese Takeaway. The **Commercial** down Liverpool road in the City Centre is purported to become a larger hotel than it is currently with a soulless bar not selling cask beers. Hopefully, we can believe the rumour that the Landlord has a seven year lease and intends to go nowhere. Also the **Salutation** in the City Centre is purported to have been bought by MMU and may become a car park.



Over the last few years this branch has seen the **Railway** in Altrincham demolished and replaced by offices. The **Cheshire Cheese** in Broadheath has become a heating engineers and the **Old Cock** in Stretford has become a builders merchants.

If you know of any pubs near you that are under threat and need any assistance with a campaign to Save the Pub or need assistance to offer advice on how the locals can purchase their own pub and turn it into a co-operative, then contact your local CAMRA branch and give them all of the details. All contact details can be found on our HQ website at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) and follow the link to CAMRA near you. Alternatively, see the diary at the beginning of Opening Times and go along to one of our branch meetings or socials and speak to someone about your concerns.

Don't just sit around and hope that the developers out there may change their minds. Lets work together to keep our Local and maintain the community service that they all provide for us.

## Timperley Taverners Presentation

**O**N Thursday 19 May, Timperley Taverners Club (Park Rd, Timperley) was presented with Trafford & Hulme Branch's Club of the Year award for the second year in a row. Pictured in the club's newly renovated garden are (L-R) Trafford & Hulme branch Chair Beverley Gobbet, club member Veronica Hough and joint managers Ron Smith and Jayne Blackshaw



## Trafford & Hulme Cider Pub of the Year

Trafford & Hulme Branch have awarded their Cider Pub Of The Year to Oddest on Wilbraham Road in Chorlton, this follows on from their recent Pub Of The Season award. The bar asked the Branch how to go about selling Cider in June last year and started selling cider the next month with Black Dragon and Broadoak Perry. Nicola the bar General Manager is delighted with the award and is trying to get the other bars in the "chain" Odd & Odder to stock real cider and perry as well. The award will be presented on Sunday 12 June with the festivities starting at 2pm



**T**RAFFORD & Hulme Branch have voted **Costello's Bar**, Goose Green, Altrincham as their Pub Of The Season for Summer 2011. The presentation will be made on the evening of Thursday 21 July 2011 from 8pm.

This is a great accolade for a pub that has only been open since early December but even in that short time it has become firmly established on the Altrincham real ale circuit and already embraces the local community with cycling clubs and vintage motor cyclists meeting there. Recently they have had the local Bollin Morris dancers and visiting Rostherne Morris doing a wonderful display in Goose Green inviting all onlookers to join in. Watch out for them dropping in again in November.



Costello's Bar is the brewery tap for the Dunham Massey Brewing Company and takes it's name from the family name of the head brewer, John, and his two sons, Anthony & Jason, who own and run both the brewery and the pub. Costello's Bar is a LocAle haven having six handpulls on the bar with Big Tree Bitter being a constant feature and a mild, either Dunham Dark or Dunham Light, always being available. On the subject of mild, Costello's have taken part in Mild Magic with an extra hand pump dispensing the infamous Chocolate Cherry Mild. There is even talk of this perhaps becoming a permanent feature in the cellar so if you want to keep it there, go in and tell the person behind the bar.

The remaining handpulls dispense an ever changing selection from the extensive brewery portfolio. A real lager is also available, Altrincham Pilsner served using cask breather, which is also brewed at the brewery and is neither filtered or pasteurised and is very tasty. So please come along on July 21st and help us celebrate this award.

## CAMRA helps landlord to serve his customers

**V**ISITORS looking to partake in CAMRA's Mild Magic trail in April found themselves disappointed when visiting the **Famous Trevor Arms** on Beech Road in Chorlton. Despite having successfully participated in Mild Magic in previous years due to the popularity of mild with his customers, owners Punch Taverns had told manager Kevin Moores that cask mild was not available to him.



When local CAMRA members got wind of this, they quickly took up the matter and used CAMRA's considerable influence to get Punch to see the error of their ways. Punch are Britain's biggest pub company, with over 6,000 pubs, but after local activists and CAMRA HQ contacted Punch management at a local and national level, they hurriedly backed down. The Trevor received a delivery of Bank's Mild within the week.

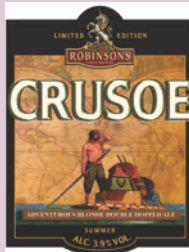
Kevin told Opening Times that it was proving very popular with his customers - marking a small but significant success for CAMRA in standing up for pub customers rights to be served what they would like to drink, not what somebody in an office many miles away decides they should drink.

# Brewery News

## New from Robinsons

This month Robinsons launch the latest in this year's seasonal beer range, and it promises to be a cracker we think.

Robinsons Crusoe (yes, we know) is a 3.9% session strength beer and is described as a "refreshing pale amber lager style ale with aromas of sweet malt and fine hop. Brewed traditionally using a blend of pale barley and wheat malts this crisp, clean tasting beer has a fully bitter and citrus palate with a lingering green hop finish". Sounds good – and ideal for summer. Worth seeking out



## Marble Collaboration

One feature of today's vibrant micro brewing scene is collaboration brews whereby brewers from two (or more) breweries get together a devise a beer between them. Thornbridge and Dark Star have been notable exponents of this.

However something of a lead is being taken by Marble Brewery which has several of these in the pipeline. A collaboration with Whim resulted in a superb IPA and now they have landed a real big fish. Last month Fuller's head brewer John Keeling (a local lad as he hails from Droylsden) travelled up from London to create a beer with Marble's James Campbell.



John (pictured above left) told us that he met James at the 2010 National Winter Ales Festival trade session and this sowed the seeds of the brewing get together. He had to get the permission of the Fuller's board and they were happy for him to get involved – so a brand new beer is born.

It is a hoppy "ESB-style" beer based on Marble's bottled Tawny 5 but with an entirely different hop regime (geeks will want to know that this involves bittering with Goldings, Mitueka and Galena, with Amarillo, Simcoe and a touch of Motueka used for aroma). The final ABV should be about 7% and with 60 bitterness units it should be quite a beer. It will be released in about three months - mainly in bottle but some in cask.

In another move it's the end of an era as brewing is to cease at the Marble Arch pub. All production is to be concentrated at the new brewery "down the hill" on Williamson St.

While no firm decision has been taken about what will occupy the space currently used by the brewery, we do know what will happen to

the equipment. It's been bought by Rob Hamilton (a familiar face behind the bar at the Marble Arch) who will be installing this at his new brewery to be situated between Stockport and Levenshulme. He's currently seeking premises and we will let you now more about this project in due course.

## All Change

A new era is dawning at Robinsons as head brewer Chris Hellin hands over the mantle after 24-years. Martyn Weeks who joined the company as quality assurance manager back in January 2010 is to be appointed as his successor, and will officially take on the position on 8 July when Chris retires.

Having been in the brewing industry throughout his thirty three year career Martyn Weeks is looking forward to helping Robinson's in the development of their new multi-million pound brewhouse facility.



Martyn told us: "This is an exciting time to take up the position. There are going to be some great opportunities here for innovation and product development, both for our own brands and as a contract brewer."

The move follows Chis Hellin's distinguished 42-year career in the industry. He joined Robinson's in 1987 where he became head brewer in 1994. During his time with the company he has played a leading role in brand development and a number of quality initiatives. Most recently Chris has also been instrumental in the planning and design of the new brewhouse which will re-position the company for the future.

Chris said: "The brewing industry is constantly evolving to meet changing demands. It has been a real pleasure to play my part within Robinson's where an increasingly experimental and adventurous approach to brand development looks set to continue.

"The greatest pleasure though has been the friendships that have grown and the shared passion for the brewing and pub trade. I wish them all the very best for the future as they meet the exciting opportunities ahead."

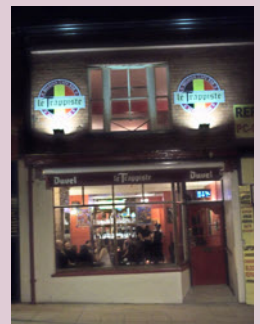
## Le Trappiste Triple

Le Trappiste, Altrincham's specialist Belgian Beer Café on Shaws Road, has announced that they are now brewing their own house beer. 'Le Trappiste Triple' is a Belgian inspired golden ale brewed especially for Le Trappiste at the Bollington Brewery. Le Trappiste owner Martin Matthews, who is brewing the beer himself, explained the reasons behind the new beer. "Since opening in 2003 Le Trappiste has

been proud to offer the largest range of specialist Belgian beers anywhere in the UK, at present that total number is approaching 1,000. I wanted the 1,000th beer to be something really special, something that embodies Le Trappiste. Therefore I decided to mark the occasion by creating our own house beer. It was only natural that we should turn to Belgium for inspiration. Le Trappiste Triple is a Belgian style beer which is a slightly bitter and hoppy cask ale, it has a good body, golden in colour with a strength of 7.5% ABV. It will be available at Le Trappiste from the 27 of July on draught and in bottles."

The beer will also be available at the Altrincham Bottle & Cask Beer Festival, held by Le Trappiste in Altrincham Market, over the August bank holiday weekend.

Martin went on to add, 'I would like to thank Lee and Kim Wainwright at the Bollington Brewing Company for their expertise, assistance and use of their brewery, for without their help we wouldn't have been able to create this beer. There are several more Le Trappiste beers in the pipeline; we hope to brew more in the coming months. The beers will all have a Belgian influence and they will be available in cask and in bottles.



## Outstanding News

The Outstanding Brewing Company has seen a massive increase in demand for its beers over the last 12 months and as a result it is now investing to expand the brewery and increase brewing capacity. A new cold storage facility has been commissioned and additional fermenting vessels have been ordered to enable the brewery to keep up with demand. On the cask ale front, a new yet to be named 3.9% session beer is currently under development and will be available to the free trade soon. Look out for Outstanding Mild at 3.3%, a classic refreshing session ale.

## More Brews News

Poynton's **Worth Brewing Company** didn't make its expected debut at Stockport Beer Festival due to some problems with the first brew. We are expecting the formal launch shortly – look for a full report in the near future.

There were however no problems with Jay Krause's new **Shaws**. The first of the new Shaws beers is EPA, a brand new English Pale Ale recipe using only pale malt along with English First Gold and Northdown hops. Jay's first Quantum beer is out, too. AAA (American Amber Ale) is brewed using pale, crystal and amber malts along with Bravo and Summit hops.



# Pub News



## Chorlton Update

Down Wilbraham Road into Chorlton, **The Bar** finally has ended a 10 month search for a permanent manager with the appointment of Tim Jackson, formerly a supervisor at sister pub **The Knott**. The interim period that saw management from the Knott helping out their sister has ultimately led to a decision by owner Vance de Bechevel to strengthen the bond between the two pubs should see a new common identity and a number of cross promotional offers. The Bar have also just launched a new summer menu including a small tapas selection for the first time. On the other side of the Chorlton crossroads, My Place has a new name – "Mint Bar & Grill".



## City Update

Unfortunately the plague of pub closures has hit South Manchester hard over recent weeks. First the **Bowling Green** in the shadow of the Manchester Royal Infirmary on Grafton Street was closed and boarded in late April. It has been followed by the former Good Beer Guide listed **Southern Hotel** on Mauldeth Road in Chorlton (OT believes this followed a successful application by the police to revoke their licence). Northern Moor now has only one pub left after the boards went up at the **Yew Tree**. A sign offering the site as a "development opportunity" would suggest the loss may be permanent, leaving **The Gardeners Arms** as the area's only pub.



The **Mauldeth** in Burnage has reopened after a refurbishment but at the moment there is no cask beer. The deputy manager (who used to work at the Nags Head in the city centre) told OT that cask beer will be put on in the next few weeks when one of the lager taps is removed. We await developments

In the City Centre, the **Waterhouse's** Kevin Muldoon has been moved to the **Seven Stars**, the Lloyds No.1 bar at The Printworks as part of his Wetherspoons career development. During four years at the Waterhouse, Kevin has been instrumental in building the pub's reputation for varied and excellent quality real ales. OT wishes him all the best in his new challenge

Robinson's have recently completed a major refurbishment of the **Tatton Arms** at Moss Nook near Manchester Airport. In past years a "Good Beer Guide" regular, this was a classic, largely unspoilt pub that more recently seemed to have rather lost its way. The core of the pub around the bar is little changed, but it has been extended at both ends to add a spacious dining area finished by a huge picture window, and a striking timber-framed smoking shelter. The extensive wood panelling has mostly been retained, and although there is a stronger emphasis on food the pub still has a traditional feel with a variety of interesting and characterful drinking spaces. The outdoor drinking area at the back of the pub facing the airport has also been extended and smartened up. On our visit the beer range was Unicorn, Hatters and Cumbria Way, the Unicorn at £2.55 a pint being quite reasonably priced by today's standards



The **Gateway** in East Didsbury has now closed and is being converted to a Wetherpoons, following its disposal by Hydes. In late May the plans for the new pub were on display in the Milson Rhodes in Didsbury.

In Withington, **Solomon Grundy** seems to have hummed and hawed with cask beer but recently both Black Sheep Biter and Holts Bitter have been seen on sale so hopefully things have settled down now. There is still no obvious sign of cask beer at **Bar 461**, although the sign outside includes "Well loved cask ales" in a list of the bar's attractions.

## Stockport Supping

The **Thatched Tavern** in Reddish has a new licensee Wendy Hunt. This is her first pub and she has immediately put cask beer back on the bar with Wells Bombardier and promises more beers to be added (including potentially a mild which would mean that mild will be available once again in Reddish). She has also stopped the ridiculous 'members only rule' so it is once again a true 'public house'. Sanity is restored at this classic street corner local! Opening Times will be again be available at the pub.



There are some welcome real ale gains to report in Stockport. In Edgeley the **Prince Albert** on Castle Street has had a very impressive makeover and now looks better than it has done for a long time. The good news is that handpumps have been installed and the pub now sells cask Black Sheep Bitter and Marston's Pedigree. Meanwhile on St Petersgate the **Egerton Arms** has also put cask beer back on sale – reports are Tetley Bitter and Marston's Pedigree are the beers on offer.



Two pubs currently for sale are the **Town Hall Tavern** on Wellington Road North (which was also closed at the time of writing) and the **Midland** on Wellington Road South. The latter had also been closed but reopened at the end of May. A visit shortly afterwards revealed plastic bags covering most of the pumps and no real ale at all being sold.

Elsewhere on the closed pubs front, we hear that **Sam's Bar** on Stockport Market Place is to be converted into flats. Meanwhile on Lancashire Hill the long closed **Nicholsons Arms** is being converted into an Indian Restaurant. Incidentally the Nicholsons had one claim to fame as the sole Stockport entry in the 1974 Good Beer Guide. No, we don't know why either.

## Trafford Latest

Christine & James Hartley, the husband & wife team behind the rejuvenation of **Sale's Bulls Head** have sadly left the pub. After two years during which they transformed this previously run down pub, introducing quality food and gaining a Good Beer Guide entry, they have decided that they have done all they could with the pub. They haven't gone far though – their new venture is the Spanish restaurant next door! Owners Enterprise Inns have installed new management who told OT that there were no major changes planned – by the time you read this the pub should be re-opened after a short cellar refurbishment and OT was assured that real ale would remain.



There is also new management at the **Steamhouse** in Sale. OT previously reported that manager Paul Scrimshaw had left the pub suddenly in early February. He has now been replaced by the former manager of Urmston's Green Room, which shares ownership with the Steamhouse. There remain four real ales on the bar (when OT called these were two from Hydes and two from Dunham Massey Brewery) along with an impressive and regularly changing range of bottled beers from around the world.

On Saturday 26 June, the **Timperley Taverners** club on Park Road in Timperley are holding an open day. The twice Trafford & Hulme Club of The Year will be open all day to non-members and members alike, with a range of entertainment laid on.

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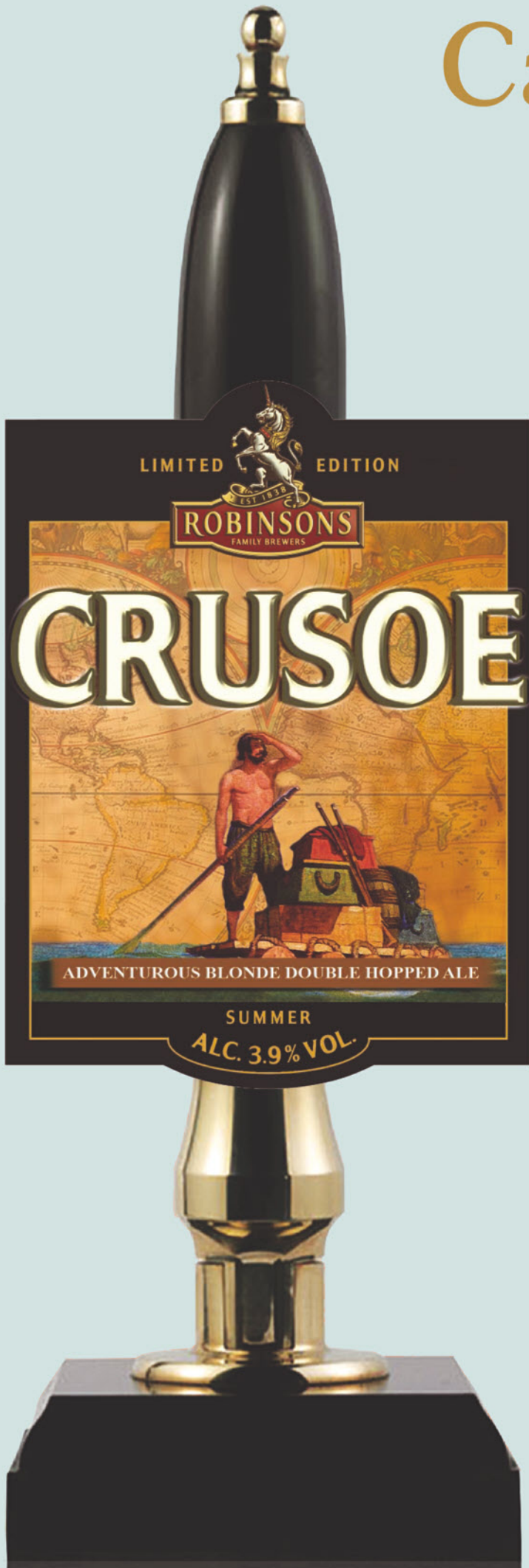
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