

July 2011



**TIMES**

# Opening

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

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



PLACE  
À LA BIÈRE

**Happy Valley Strikes Gold  
Stockport Beer & Cider Festival  
Round-up – see pages 12 & 13**

# THE MAGNET

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CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for July is the Milson Rhodes on School Lane in Didsbury. Didsbury pub fan Stuart Ballantyne went to visit this relative newcomer to the village's pub scene.



THE Milson Rhodes is Wetherspoon's first venture into Didsbury and it has introduced some much needed competition into the village. The pub is named after Dr. John Milson Rhodes (1847-1909) who has been described as 'a friend to humanity'. Dr. Rhodes lived in Didsbury treating patients with learning difficulties and epilepsy. He was so highly regarded that on his death Didsbury's four square clock tower on Wilmslow road was built to commemorate his life.

The manager of the Milson Rhodes is Kirstin Downham, formerly the duty manager at the Ford Madox Brown in Rusholme. She told Opening Times that she drinks cask beers herself and uses her own experience and beer preferences to choose which beers to sell. She always tries to mix well known beers with those of her own choice and from smaller breweries up and down the country. "I am always willing to try new beers" she says.

At the Milson Rhodes attention to detail is important. Kirstin has trained her own management team to ensure that quality is always high. She always supports local charities and regularly raises money for the nearby Christie hospital.

Kirstin's plans for the near future include running a mini Manchester beer festival featuring micro breweries across Greater Manchester and participating in the Wetherspoons cider festival. As if this were not enough, she is also in negotiations with a North West brewery to brew a beer to her own recipe.

For the new kid on the block, the Milson Rhodes has covered the ground fast. We will present Kirstin and her team with the Pub of the Month award for July on Thursday 28 July. To add to the celebrations on the same night from 7pm there will also be a "Meet the Brewer" event with representatives from Milestone Brewery.



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

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# Comment, Notes & Contents

# What's On

## Opening Times – Comment

Last month we looked forward to Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. We hoped for a success and once again all records were broken. There's a full report on the centre pages but here can I just record my personal thanks to everyone who helped make the Festival such a success.

Organising something like this and I know all of the hard work that goes on in the run-up to the Festival – so thanks to all the organisers (you know who you are), all of our incredibly hard working staff (ditto) and you, our customers without whom it really could not succeed.

Our first ever trade session was also a success with many brewers and publicans present. We shall certainly be repeating that, I think. Congratulations too, to those brewers who won Gold, Silver and Bronze in our Beer of the Festival awards. Over the coming months we will be presenting award to Happy Valley, Outstanding and Offbeat breweries so look for details in coming issues.

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

**Copy Date for the August issue is Friday 15 July**

**Front cover – Happy Valley Brewery's Dave Hughes in celebratory mood**

**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, John O'Donnell, Caroline O'Donnell, Viv Thorpe, Stuart Ballantyne, George Elmslie, Adam Bruderer, Chris Walkden, Patrick Sudlow, Charlotte Bulmer.

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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.

### July

**Wednesday 13th** – CAMRA Discount Oxford Road Crawl: Kro2 7.30pm; Font, New Wakefield St 8.30pm; Alibi, Oxford St 9.30pm. (NM)

**Thursday 14th** – Altrincham Social: Bridge 8pm; Bricklayers Arms 8.45pm; Conservative Working Men's Club 9.30pm; Orange Tree 10pm. Finish Old Market Tavern. (TRH)

**Saturday 16th** – Grand Cheshire Day Out: 12.30pm Swan With Two Nicks, Little Bollington; then Vine, Rope & Anchor, Axe & Cleaver (all Dunham Massey). Finish with BBQ at Dunham Massey Brewery. (TRH)

**Thursday 21st** – Pub of the Season & Mild Magic Mild Champion Awards to Costello's Bar, Goose Green, Altrincham. 8pm for 8.30 (TRH & SSM)

**Friday 22nd** – Hazel Grove South Stagger: 7.30pm Rising Sun, Buxton Rd; 8.30pm Wilfred Wood, London Rd. (SSM)

**Wednesday 27th** – Wetherspoons Crawl: Paramount, Oxford St 7.30pm; Waterhouse, Princess St 8.30pm; Seven Stars (Lloyds), Printworks 10pm. (NM)

**Thursday 28th** – Pub of the Month presentation to the Milson Rhodes, School Lane, Didsbury and Meet the Brewer night with Milestone Brewery. From 7pm (SSM)

**Saturday 30th** – Day out in Liverpool. Book with and details from Margaret O'Brien (0161 256 1166, [margaretg84@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:margaretg84@yahoo.co.uk)) (SSM)

### August

**Wednesday 3rd** – Social: Star, Back Hope St, Salford. From 7.30pm. (NM)

**Friday 5th** – Trip to new Shaws/Quantum Brewery. Numbers limited – book with Margaret O'Brien as above (SSM)

**Saturday 6th** – The Holts Eight: Peel Green to Eccles. Starts Grapes 1pm. (NM)

**Monday 8th** – Pub of the Season presentation to Bulls Head Old Glossop – from 8.30pm (HPNC)

### 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: Dave Hallows 07983 944992, [davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk)

**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

**Thursday 14th** – Magnet, Wellington Rd North Stockport. Short Meeting followed by Mild Champion presentation social. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

**Wednesday 20th** – Kings Arms, Bloom St, Salford. Starts 7.30pm (NM)

**Monday 8th August** - Bull's Head, Old Glossop. Starts 8.30pm (HPNC)

**Thursday 11th August** – Railway, Manchester Rd, Broadheath. Starts 8pm. (TRH)

**Thursday 11th August** – Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport (includes Summer Quiz). Starts 8pm. (SSM)



## Joining Forces

**E**ARLIER this year, ASH Scotland and Alcohol Focus Scotland held a joint conference in Glasgow "to consider the progress of alcohol and tobacco control and explore what each sector might learn from the other." This underlines the point that I have made in the past that the tactics used in the campaign against tobacco are increasingly being brought into play in the campaign against alcohol. You may argue that the two are very different issues, but if the neo-Prohibitionists regard them as two sides of the same coin there is nothing you can do about it.

It is also instructive that, as has been the practice of the tobacco control lobby for many years, no industry representatives were allowed to attend or have a voice. Not just the likes of Diageo and Heineken, nobody. Even if you run the most low-carbon, organic, Fairtrade, recycling-friendly micro brewery in the world, as far as the anti-drink lobby are concerned you're still engaged in a "toxic trade" and they're not interested in any kind of dialogue or accommodation with you.

## Soaking it Up

**I** WAS surprised and disappointed recently to walk into one of my favourite local pubs – which in many respects is very traditional – and find they had decided to dispense with beer mats. It's not going to make me take my custom elsewhere, but it's another niggly little reason to feel the pubgoing experience is less than ideal.

It has baffled me for years why a growing number of pubs refuse to provide mats. Especially with the now-universal adoption of brim measure glasses, they perform a useful role in soaking up spilt and overflowing beer, stopping it staining tables and running off the edge to spoil your clothes. I'm convinced it comes from the same misguided school of "trying not to look like an old-fashioned boozier" that has led to the widespread ripping out of bench seating.

Given that so many commercial organisations and campaigns produce promotional mats, the argument doesn't wash that pubs find them difficult to get hold of. Indeed, if they thought they were worth having it wouldn't be a huge expense to obtain their own. No pub would refuse to provide table napkins on cost-saving grounds, so why should mats be any different?

## Pale and Uninterested

**O**LDER readers will remember how, in the 1980s, Samuel Smiths introduced a beer called Tadcaster Bitter which was paler, hoppier and a little less strong than their standard Old Brewery Bitter. When well kept, it could be very good, but unfortunately it wasn't well promoted and Sams' conservative customers tended to stick with OBB. So Tadcaster Bitter began to suffer from a vicious circle of slow turnover leading to poor quality which further deterred people from drinking it, and after a year or so it was withdrawn.

I do worry that the same fate is likely to overtake the recently-introduced Holts IPA, which occupies a similar position in relation to Holts Bitter. This too is a good beer, with a pronounced hoppiness that to many brings back memories of the Holts Bitter of old. It has appeared in a number of Holts' high-profile pubs, but unfortunately in my experience it seems to suffer in the same way from slow turnover, and I have had a few lacklustre pints in pubs where the Bitter is reliably good. If you think it will be a lottery whether you get a pint that has been festering in the lines for hours, you may well decide it's best to avoid ordering that beer in the first place.

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

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email: [kevin@hornbeambrewery.com](mailto:kevin@hornbeambrewery.com)

# Stagger.....

## Offerton With Viv Thorpe

It was a glorious sunny evening when a small but select crew assembled one by one in the **Gardeners Arms**, Offerton, in the south-east area of Stockport. A smart frontage presents, cream painted stucco, offset by black-painted shuttered sash windows. Added to that, in keeping with the name, there were several very colourful hanging baskets spaced along the wall.



Inside, two main rooms, lounge to the right, with carpeted flooring, and vault to the left, with a tiled floor and a pool table in its rear. One interesting discovery was that one of the windows had an old Boddingtons Bee barrel design etched into it. As we were in the early part of the evening, we were the biggest group in there. Tetleys and Boddingtons ordinary bitters (Cask Marque) were on offer, and samples of both were tried, but both were only of average standard, a sad comment on these once great beers.



Moving up the road, we came to the **Strawberry Gardens**, a smart road-side pub, again with nicely painted walls and windows. Inside, though, was a different matter - lots of varnished wood panels and a mixture of styles; a couple of nice, yet somehow out of place, antique fireplaces, one fore, the other aft. There was a well constructed L-shaped wooden decked smoking area, part open, and part-covered section with bench seating! Once more, not many patrons, though in possible anticipation of more, the Karaoke man was just setting up as we sat down, with his sound checks making conversation difficult at times. Only one operative handpump, dispensing Deuchars IPA. This was a nice

surprise, and went down quite well with the group, who notched up their appreciation by half a point. If anything at all had to be said, the beer was slightly chilled, but on a personal note, to me at least, this is not a problem. Looking out back, a scene of former glories was noted - what presumably had been the bowling green was now bedecked with flower pots & picnic tables (*Editor's note - availability of cask ale in the Strawberry Gardens seems to be variable. In mid-June it was reported that none was available*).



Next stop was the **Fingerpost**, a large red-bricked pub, overlooking the busy road junction on Hempshaw Lane in this residential area of Offerton. Inside, large, multi-roomed set up spread around the bar area, with connecting corridors all over the place linking them together. Here, we were treated to the booming bass sounds of 'The Truth', a psychedelic disco set-up in the Edgeley Park room, (once, apparently, a well frequented Stockport County sports venue which used to even have coaches turning up with fans). A Robinsons pub, with Unicorn and Hatters on tap, the Hatters just having the edge on the Unicorn, but both acceptable.



Onward, we next encountered the **Emigration**, on the main drag back down towards Stockport. A unique pub in that it is the *only one* with this name, apparently. There is a small front room, nicely decorated, and a large side/rear room with bench seating plus tables and chairs. An unusual feature, towards the back, was a short, narrow staircase with *banisters*, leading towards the exit for the smoking area and car park. The low-ceilinged

painted roof tiles served to bounce back the sound from the jukebox, playing, I am reliably informed, some offering from "The Clash". Unicorn bitter only, and rather underwhelming at that. It was rather busy however.



Carrying on down the main road, on the other side, we found the **Victoria**. Either side of a central bar were two large rooms which turned to meet each other as a corridor round the back of the bar, allowing access via steps down to and through a passage to an outdoor tables/smoking area/car park. Two different handpumped offerings on tap here, Old Speckled Hen and Hobgoblin, a dark malty bitter. OSH was average, but the Hobgoblin was well on form, and went down very well.

Technically, this was the end of the 'booked' stagger, as *The Thatched House*, which was to be our last one was closed and boarded up. As a result, we wandered down into Stockport to a most unusual and interesting venue. **The Old Rectory** dates from 1720 when it was the rectory to St Mary's Parish Church. Boddingtons bought it in 1991, and converted it to a pub, since when it has had several owners, finishing to date with Punch Taverns, as a Premier Inn. There is a big central bar surrounded by large open areas. On entry there are large corridors, left to the toilets and (eventually) dining, and right leading to the Premier Lodge. Beer was two creditable offerings, Marston's EPA and Black Sheep, both enjoyed by the group.

Lastly, to bring us closer to transport links home, we ended up in the **Pack Horse**, in Stockport Marketplace. Not too inspiring, as they were in the throes of redecoration - outside covered in scaffolding, and inside an overpowering smell of paint. However, these things have to be done. The bar sported one operative handpump, issuing Copper Dragon's Golden Pippin, a light, citrusy ale. Didn't gain much admiration from the group however, being only average by vote.

Thus ended our 'Offerton' Stagger, with the overall "Beer of the Evening" accolade going to the Hobgoblin from the Victoria. That's what we think - over to you!



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# Pub News



## Hulme & Chorlton

A surprise addition to Hulme's limited real ale scene has come from the former **Czech Bar** on the corner of Booth Street West and Higher Cambridge Street, just a short walk from Oxford Road. The bar has new ownership, new management and a new name "**Frankie's**". New manager Katie has gone for a bit of a career change having spent the previous 27 years as a pharmacist before deciding. She told OT that her first priority is to change the pub's character from a specialist bar focussing on the weekend market to one with a more traditional community pub feel. This is going to be a work in progress over the next few months but one of the first changes has been to strip out many of the fonts for mass produced Czech beers and install real ale.



When Opening Times called only the one handpump had been put in serving Robinson's Unicorn (a surprisingly rare beer in and around the city centre) that was in very good condition. However, they were just waiting for the cellar services team to come back and install a second pump so by the time you read this a guest ale from the Robinson's portfolio should be available (initially expected to be Dizzy Blonde)

Just along the road from Frankie's the future of one of the areas more longstanding pubs, Higher Chatham Street's **Salutation**, remains the subject of speculation. Following previous speculation that Manchester Metropolitan University were to buy it to build a car park, posters then appeared in the nearby Royal Northern College of Music announcing that the Sally had been taken over by Trof group, owners of bars in Fallowfield and the Northern Quarter, and Grosvenor Street's Deaf institute. However no sooner had they appeared than they were taken down - OT understands that while negotiations are ongoing, the pub is currently still owned by Punch Taverns and its range of three cask ales and regular live music programme will continue for now.

The new ownership at Chorlton's **Dulcimer** bar is making a couple of innovative changes to the drinks on offer. Already underway is the first in a series of guest brewery showcases. Rather than the usual rotating range of guest ales from different breweries, Dulcimer's two

guest pumps will focus on beers from one particular brewery for one or two months at a time. For June and July the featured brewery is Williams Bros of Alloa, Central Scotland with no less than 13 ales from their range being rotated with highlights including Fraoch Heather Ale and Ceilidh cask lager.

The upstairs bottle bar at Dulcimer is in the process of fitting out into a full bar in its own right specialising in German beers. Due to be launched on the weekend of 13/14 July, there will be three draught German beers and a range of around 10 bottled beers imported from Germany.

## City News

It has been all too common in recent years to see traditional pubs converted into restaurants but for once we can report a reversal of such a move. Didsbury Green's **Ye Olde Cock** has been converted from a fish restaurant back to its original use as a pub. It's all under the same ownership, the ever-growing Greene King group, but at least as a pub, cask ale has returned to the bar. When Opening Times called there were no less than six cask ales displayed, all from the Greene King brewery in Bury St Edmunds (despite the various defunct brewery names appearing on the pump clips).

Meanwhile, there have been changes next door at the **Didsbury** with managers Paul and Paula moving on during May. The couple have been running the pub restaurant for seven years during which time they improved its cask ale offering to such a degree they earned a Good Beer Guide listing. Thankfully they are not totally lost to the area as their new appointment is another Chef & Brewer outlet, the **Axe & Cleaver** in Dunham Massey near Altrincham.

George Archondogeorge, also known as Greek George has come out of retirement (formerly of the famous Circus Tavern) to re-open the **Sir Ralph Abercromby** on Bootle Street, next door to the city's main police station. Planned to open in the first week in July, it will retain three cask beers in the form of Copper Dragon Best, Black Sheep Bitter, and Taylor Landlord. Extra beers are planned, but for now depend on trade. Food will be a feature with an ambitious plan to serve from early doors till 10pm daily. The open kitchen will serve up a buffet menu plus Greek cuisine, so creating an offering not seen in any other city pub.

George has taken on the pub from Enterprise for a three month trial. Opening times will be 11 to midnight, with a 2am closing Friday and Saturday; Sunday hours will be 12-11 although those may change. The whole interior has been re-decorated in a pleasant light and welcoming style; there will be TV but no Sky. The pool table has been jettisoned to enable that room to be used for functions and private occasions. Outside, the yard has been cleaned up to make a really good drinking

environment. George has made a promise that in the first four weeks of opening, ALL drinks will be £3 apiece. George and partners are sure to make a good go of this and it is hoped that this will provide increased variety in that part of the city. In a show of friendly rivalry, Barry at the Circus has now 'barred' George. We'll see...



Alan Southgate who latterly worked with George at the Circus passed away on June 2nd. Alan ran many pubs over the years including the Moulders, Imperial, and the Crown. He was a gentleman and always one for having a good chinwag.

In the City Centre the **Deansgate** on Deansgate (it's in the shadow of the Hilton Hotel) has added real cider to the range. Westons Scrumpy was on handpump in late June and manager Jon Anderson tells us that he is keen to ring the changes and to try perry. He planned to make contact with the Natural Cider Company (having seen their advert in OT) so expect good things to come. It's worth mentioning that the beer in the Deansgate is always top notch with up to four changing guests. Rather fine Copper Dragon Golden Pippin and Thwaites Bitter were among those on sale when we called.

## Stockport News

In early August, the **Star** in Cheadle bids farewell to tenants Tony and Mary Hughes. They came first to the Star as managers, in 2001-4, winning Pub of the Month in October 2003. Tony's background is engineering, but he took to the pub trade, to the extent that he was a Hydes trainer in beer and cellar management for a number of years. They made a welcome return to the Star in 2008, this time as tenants, and won another Pub of the Month in Feb 2010. Unfortunately, the Star has struggled in the current downturn (as have many small wet-led pubs), and they have decided to look for new opportunities. Their last day is the 7th August, and we wish them well

And finally – apologies to both the **Midland** on Wellington Road North, Stockport, and the **Town Hall Tavern** on Wellington Road South. Last month we reported that the Midland had re-opened but was not selling cask ale. Wrong - we are pleased to report that the pub is both open and still selling excellent Copper Dragon beers on cask. We also said the Town Hall Tavern was closed – wrong again it's still open but not selling cask beer.

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# Hulme Revisted



## Hulme Sweet Hulme

*Trafford & Hulme CAMRA visit Hulme – George Elmslie was there. This is what they found.*

*Photos all courtesy of Adam Bruderer*

WHILE has passed since the last survey by the Trafford & Hulme branch of the eponymous inner city district. Development of this area from its 1980s nadir to today's low rise spread has meant the end of many pubs and bars. Historians would no doubt tell of the many watering holes that peppered the back-to-back terraces and factories when the population was some 80,000, it is now estimated to be a tenth of that, indeed there are some excellent books on this subject, one in particular is by Bob Potts and is well worth a read.

My own memories go back to the mid to late seventies when I lived in Poynton Close which is no more than a strip of tarmac among the overgrown weeds facing a row of smart modern terrace houses. Back then the many places I recall would be thriving indeed you would have to get in early to grab a table. The old **Hulme Labour Club** had two main function rooms which would have turns on of a weekend and would be full. This of course was when many families lived in the area

As the eighties progressed the housing policy was to move them out and the drinking establishments changed character and lost a lot of business; hence the closure of many of them. It has to be said that there was not a lot of real ale available then despite the proximity of the Hydes brewery so there was much trepidation as to what would be available now. Fortunately one of our active members lives locally and has kept us up to date with gains and losses in this field. The most recent and notable loss was the **Hope** at the far western end of the district on the A56, as traditional a street corner house as you could get. This would have been a busy old night out at one time; close by is the **Pomona Palace** and at one time the **Manchester Regiment** also a little further into the estate the **Grey Parrot**.



Our survey concentrated on the opposite end of the area closer to the university and Oxford road. The **Salutation**, long a favourite of students and locals alike is still going strong; three hand pumps, one with a palatable Black

Sheep Bitter met universal approval, the Bombardier was tired and frankly undrinkable. There is a large development going on just outside on Chatham Street and we all hope this poses no threat to the old 'Sally'.

A less traditional real ale outlet is the **Royal Northern College of Music** but in recent years successful beer festivals have been held here and the legacy lives on. Three hand pumps on this particular Saturday one of which was a Kirkby Lonsdale brew which was very well received.



A real gain was found nearby, stumbled upon in the week previously by a passing branch member. The former **Czech Bar** (pictured above) on the corner of Cambridge Street and Booth Street West is now called **Frankies**, and had Robinsons Unicorn on hand pump. It is surprisingly spacious and light inside with tables for dining and sofas for a more relaxing time. We spoke for some time with the co-owner who seemed very optimistic about the prospects of another beer going on. Time will tell but it strikes us that much free publicity is on hand for new licensees if they got in touch with their local CAMRA branch rather than wait for our surveys to happen along.



A short walk away from Oxford Road takes us past the near derelict **Gamecock**, another blast from the past. The first pint I had in Hulme/Manchester was in here; once again there would be entertainment here, the predecessor to karaoke I suppose, then known as a sing song, an open 'mic' night, impersonators and discos.

Across the footbridge now on the other side of the A5103 Princess Parkway takes us to the historic **Junction Hotel** (pictured above)

Many old and new photos exist of this 'flat iron' building and the obvious difference from the outside is there are now two storeys instead of the original three. Development has yet to take place around the present site so the building stands in pleasant isolation. Inside there is less clutter than I remember and a decent Hydes Light (1863) was on offer alongside the Hydes Original.

We now swung back to the northern edge of Hulme to investigate the **Courtyard**, very much in the student area but on this Saturday afternoon with a fair mix of punters. Outside is one of if not the biggest outdoor drinking areas in town, half covered with a PVC roof and the biggest patio umbrella I have ever seen, unfurled it must span 50-plus feet. Thankfully on this blustery day it was firmly secured or it may have taken off. Beers on offer here were a quite unremarkable Hydes Manchester's Finest and Black Sheep Bitter out of one of those shiny new hand pumps, which do not look traditional at all, and I wonder if they don't put discerning drinkers off.

Proceeding on to Oxford Road now and **Odder**, one of a small chain in Manchester. They have been serving the real stuff in here since they opened. No exception today with three beers on offer, though a tad cold for my liking.

Turning left out of Odder take the next left past the Revolution (not a chance) down alongside the railway arches to the **Font**, a multi level, noise as well as levels, bar which always has a good array of real ale on offer with the added bonus of a 10% discount for CAMRA card carrying members.



So a couple of bright spots for Hulme but gone is the **Arch** (above) which was on the site of the **Red Admiral** (Robinsons); the **Cavendish** is reported to be erratic on the real ale front; the **Church** no longer sells real ale (it did on our last survey in 2003), and the **Grants** is no longer licensed premises. Also gone is the **Sir Henry Royce**, demolished and now flats (and once briefly the site of the original Rolls-Royce manufacturing workshop before it moved to Derby)

*Editor's note – just across the road from the Junction is the site of Swales Brewery, the last brewery to operate in Hulme. It was bought and closed by Boddingtons in 1971. The beer was famously awful.*



# Beer Festival R

## Records All Broken Once Again

IT IS almost a tradition now that the issue of Opening Times that is produced after the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival reports on yet another record event. Once again it is good to be able to do just that.

All records were well and truly shattered this time around with larger crowds and more beer and cider sold than ever before. Where to start? The crowd was hugely up on 2010 – over 6,800 people came through the doors, an increase of 600 over 2010 (and that was itself a record). In fact attendance at the festival has increased by over 2,000 in the last five years.

Beer and cider sales also went through the roof. 19,000 pints of beer were sold and for the first time in many years we had to re-order some beer to make sure we had stocks left to the end of Saturday night. Many thanks to Shaws and Dunham Massey breweries for coming to the rescue.

As usual there was considerable interest in the Festival Award, voted on by our customers choosing three excellent but very different beers.

The winner as Beer of the Festival was the one from Bollington's Happy Valley Brewery. This was heavily hopped with German varieties, giving it a freshness and a long bitter finish to the beer. Dave Hughes was over the moon when told he was gobsmacked to win Gold Best Beer of the Festival. The quality of the competition. We've only been told so as you can imagine we are very pleased with the Times.

Runner-up was serial award winner Outstanding Delight. This was an 8% imperial stout devised after our visit to the brewery last year to produce it. It has become something of a quiet classic for us, well be brewed again for the winter months.

Third place went to another very new beer from the coriander and orange peel infused golden wheat. A very good yet distinctive beer and the votes in trying something new.

## Cider Sales Rocket

Sales of Cider and Perry were equally impressive from 510 gallons the previous year. The beer pictured left is the Charity Stand where Stockport has a three year tenure as Festival Charity in grand.

We asked Festival Cider Manager Charlotte

To all our customers: it was a lovely three days, hope you enjoyed it as much as we on the day we did! It certainly seems so – you got through nearly 600 gallons of cider and perry – which is once again more than we've ever sold. We started with over 60 different ciders and perries, and were down to about a dozen by the end. Last year, it was clear that the queue was long, so this time we had more staff, more space and more ciders and perries. I hope that helped you have more pleasure spending some time with you, finding something that you would enjoy.

Highlights for me included our local cider-maker's very tasty ciders; the two Painted Lady perry producer new to the Stockport Festival, Spring and Summer cider and perry for Cider and Perry of the Festival (they in the Autumn, at cider-making time, to be in the report in Opening Times). So now, I stand at [cider@stockportfestival.co.uk](mailto:cider@stockportfestival.co.uk) of any ciders and perries.

## New Members Recruited

Just two years ago Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA marked the recruitment of its 900th member. Given that Stockport & South Manchester is geographically one of the smallest branches of CAMRA we thought that was quite some achievement. At last year's event we signed up the 1,000th branch member and this time we went a stage further with our 1,100th membership. The new recruits are fittingly two Under-26 year-olds, Robert and Lucy Wallis of Edgeley. The lucky couple who took away a box of Young's beers to mark the occasion of this milestone in the branch's and the festival's history. They are pictured here and branch member Dave Sharpe (right)



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# Review

the contest for the much sought after Beer of the Year. They are clearly a discerning bunch, and the winners for the top three.

Excellent Sworn Secret beer is a 3.8% golden beer with a grassy lager-like character. Brewery owner John Houghton said of his win, "I was very surprised to win the Beer of the Year award at the festival, given the fact that it had been leading seven months of the year," he told *Opening*.



Outstanding Brewery from Bury with Matron's award by festival staffing officer Margaret Corlett. They present them with the beer of the festival award. Outstanding and we understand that it may

from a new brewery. Way Out Wheat, a 4.5% wheat beer from Crewe's Offbeat Brewery. A beer that gained show our customers aren't afraid of

Massive with 545 gallons sold – an increase in a busy cider bar is pictured above left. Also Stockport Cerebral Palsy Society ended their day in style.

Bulmer for her thoughts on the festival.:

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ker Mad Hatter – you drank 45 gallons of his beer from Rathay's and Swallowfield; and a longhorne. And you chose some really lovely beer festival (Gregg's Pit and Ralph): we'll be visiting to present them with their awards (look out for the next year: let me know at the end perries you'd like to try at Stockport 2012

d



here with Festival Organiser Jim Flynn (left)

## ELR Rail Ale Trail



THE East Lancashire Railway (ELR) Rail Ale Trail was launched on Friday 10th June at the Trackside pub at the ELR station in Bury. The Trail involves a number of pubs – and in Rawtenstall, Britain's only remaining temperance bar – which are located close to stations on the East Lancs Railway.

As with any such event there were some speeches! Pete Waterman, pop guru and railway enthusiast said a few words about the importance of beer and its connections with railways, whilst Paul Simpson, Chief Executive of Manchester stressed how vital tourism was to the region.

The Chairman of the ELR had an interesting view; he told us that events 40 years ago had led to the development of today's Rail Ale Trail! The first event was the formation of the East Lancs Railway Preservation Society in 1970; the second was the birth of CAMRA a year later. Without these two elements there probably would be no railway, little if any real ale and certainly no Rail Ale Trail. How very true!

There are now a large number of breweries in the area and two are close to the line, so beers can be delivered by rail. A goods train dropped off beers from Irwell Works Brewery in Ramsbottom and then went off to Heywood to pick up some casks from Phoenix. Beers from both breweries are often found at the Trackside Pub which is a fine place to eat and drink whilst you watch the trains go by.

The Rail Ale Trail can be done individually in your own time, (sadly there are no prizes!) but every couple of weeks there will be professionally guided tours of part of the trail. These will involve visiting a location on the line, learning about its history, hearing a few good stories – oh and supping too of course! Be assured that Suzanne and Mark have been doing in-depth research on the locations, especially the pubs!

In Ramsbottom, you will learn about the development of the spinning, weaving and printing industry in the 19th Century as well as the Temperance movement in the area. But don't worry, a visit to the First Chop pub on Bolton Street should see four Local Ales available. And by the time you read this, the bar at the Irwell Works Brewery should be open in their building, built in 1888 as the Irwell Steam Tin, Copper & Iron Works. The brewery only started up at the end of 2010 and their beers, which are mostly named after the metal products originally produced at the works, have already won several awards at CAMRA festivals. Later this year, the Phoenix Brewery, brewers of fine beers including Wobbly Bob, should also be participating in the guided tours

Rail Ale Trail brochures are available locally, or you can get more information at

<http://www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk/things-to-see-do/rail-ale-trail/>

It's an easy ride from Manchester on the Metrolink; there's even a tram (number 1007) called East Lancashire Railway which co-incidentally whisked me from the City Centre to Bury in about 30 minutes. Should you need an excuse to go to Bury this could be it!

**See Page 22  
To Join  
CAMRA**



Pete Waterman celebrates the arrival of the Irwell Works beers at the Trackside in Bury with the owners and brewer.



Phoenix Brewery's Tony Allen loads his casks at Heywood station.



Above - Local ales at Ramsbottom's First Chop pub.

Below – a band greets the arrival of the Phoenix beers at Bury Bolton Street.





# 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

## High Peak Pub News With Frank Wood

LISTENING in to a Sunday afternoon programme on Tameside Radio that reminisces about past Tameside news, I was interested to hear that it was 20 years this month (it was June when I wrote these notes) since **Stalybridge Buffet Bar** was saved. British Rail wanted to close it and regulars fought to save it, enlisting the help of the local MP at the time, Tom Pendry.



The bar has gone from strength to strength since then, and is one of the most well known remaining buffet bars in the whole country, attracting customers on the famous railway pub crawl up the line into Yorkshire and beyond. In Spring 2011, High Peak Branch awarded it their Pub of the Season award.

I popped into the **Bike & Hound** in Hyde the other Sunday as I heard it was selling real ale again. Indeed it was, on this occasion it was a Hornbeam beer and was in good enough condition for me to feel I had to try a second half. One week on and I looked in again, this time it was a Robinsons seasonal ale. Of course, there are many who would prefer to call in on a Thursday evening, for the pub still has a topless barmaid on the bar from 9pm. Enjoy.

The **Cheshire Ring**, also in Hyde continues to sell excellent beers both from Beartown and the changing guest beers. Bearskinful has been on excellent form in the last three visits I made during June. The music also continues to be popular at weekend in the upstairs concert room. I watched John Otway & Wild Willy Barrett recently and two hand pulled beers are still dispensed there, so there is no need to go down into the main pub for refills.

The **Globe** in Glossop is similar, with two handpumps upstairs selling Globe beers. An excellent band on in early June were Ska Wars, back by popular request and were as good as ever.

Talking of bands, the **Moon and Sixpence** on Bernard Street in Glossop (just behind the main street) continue to have live music on Friday and Saturdays. It's worth catching The Curragh Sons or Atlanta Roots in particular. Courage Best Bitter and Deuchars IPA are the

usual beers on sale, a little dearer than you would expect, at £2.90 but note that there is no charge for entrance so it is good value as pubs with rooms upstairs normally have at least a £5 charge on the door and the music is usually of a good quality.

We hear that the **Lamb** at Gee Cross has reopened recently after looking for several months like it may have served its last pint. I am told (unconfirmed) that there is no real ale on sale, but I would suggest a visit to check this out.

Celebrations this month for Terry the landlord at the **Fox** in Brookbottom (it's a hard to find hamlet high above New Mills). He has been at the Robinsons pub for 30 years, a great feat and very unusual in these days of large turnover of staff. We congratulate him on this, and suggest that any walkers in the Marple and New Mills area drop in to toast him.

The **Swan** on Stamford Street, Ashton (near to Ashton College), is up for auction by Pugh and Co. The **Turnpike** on Lees Road, Ashton, the **Top House** at Haughton Green, the **Wellington** on Oldham Road, Ashton, the **Angel** on King Street, Dukinfield, the **Junction** on Whitehead Street, Audenshaw and the **Globe** on Globe Square Dukinfield are all under the hammer in June by the same auction house. All being sold with vacant possession.

More bad news from Romiley. The **Duke of York** was repossessed on Monday 6th June. The company are now going to refurbish the pub and it will we believe re-open with new tenants once this is completed.

Finally, congratulations to High Peak Branch secretary Mike Rose who got married to his partner Mary on 11th June. Whilst attending the ceremony, I picked up on the **Leewood Hotel** now advertising that they sell cask ale in the form of Bakewell Best Bitter at £2.00 a pint, quite a snip eh?

## Peak Practice With Robin Wignall

THE publication of this issue of *Opening Times* will probably almost coincide with the closure of the Tetley Brewery in Leeds. Tetley Bitter has for many years been advertised and sold nationally and lost some of its character for being a national 'bland', sorry brand. Brewing of Tetley Bitter is expected to go to Banks's at Wolverhampton, part of the Marston group, whilst Tetley Mild and Dark Mild are already brewed at Marston's. The **White Hart** in Whaley Bridge still sells a well kept pint of Tetley Bitter. Connoisseurs will doubtless detect a difference between Leeds water and

Wolverhampton water. All three Tetley cask ales can be found in the Peak District.

Timothy Taylor Dark Mild was one of the milds available for Mild Magic at the **Navigation**, Buxworth. The Late Spring Bank Holiday week end saw a much wider range of beers available as Roger and Janet embarked on their first beer festival. There was a score of beers from local-ish breweries in Derbyshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire. The beers that I tried were all in good form, helped by a cooling system from Leatherbritches Brewery, which also provided the stillaging. Prices were a sensible £2.50 across the board. Roger and Janet are keen to repeat the venture, so look out for the Navigation beer festival at the end of May next year.

Merlin's Spellbound, brewed at Arclid in Cheshire, was a recent guest beer at the **Dog & Partridge** at Bridgemont. Here the Enterprise SIBA list provides an ever changing range of beers which can sell out quickly during a busy week end. This range will be enhanced during the August Bank Holiday weekend which sees the annual Dog & Partridge Beer Festival. It is also worth giving advance notice of the festival at the **White Lion** at Disley the same week end. Between them these two events should ensure good use of the 199 bus service along the A6.

Right at the end of May the **Board Inn** at the Horwich End end of Whaley Bridge changed hands. Welcome to Anthony and Kirstie who have taken over the pub and are keen to welcome customers old and new. Cask ale is a feature, Hatters and Unicorn to start with and with Dizzy Blonde and Robinson's seasonal beer, currently Crusoe waiting to be added to the available beers. There is a new access to a pleasant garden area. Following re-decoration there will have been, by the time you read this, a formal launch on 2 July and food should come on stream with Sunday roasts on 3 July. Opening hours are 12 till late. Some of the pubs in Whaley Bridge don't open until into the afternoon so the Board has a chance to tap into the early doors market, and to build on a successful first few weeks trading.

The **Soldier Dick** at Furness Vale could be ready to re-open at the end of July, with ongoing internal work continuing. It certainly looks better for a coat of paint outside.

News about the **Jodrell** in Whaley Bridge also seems to be much more positive. The owner took an advert in the Whaley Water Weekend programme which suggested progress towards reopening. There have certainly been recent signs of work going on.

High summer is a busy time in the Peak District with carnivals, well dressings and other entertainments. It is well worth visiting the area to support and to enjoy the events and to support the Peak District pub scene.



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## Pub of the Year Awards

The past few months have seen various Pub of the Year presentations. OT was there to capture the events.



The Stockport & South Manchester Award was presented to the **Magnet**, Wellington Road North, Stockport, Here Branch Chairman John Clarke is shown presenting the award to landlady Leslie Watts and the team.



The Trafford & Hulme CAMRA winner was the **Marble Beer House**, Manchester Road, Chorlton. Branch Chair Beverley Gobbett (*right*) is shown presenting the award to pub manager Caroline Jones and Marble Head Brewer (and pub regular) James Campbell.

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The North Manchester winner was the **Marble Arch** on Rochdale Road in Manchester.

Pictured is pub manager Vicky Creer (*right*) with the award.

All three pubs are now being judged in the Greater Manchester CAMRA Regional competition.



## Clubbing Together

**T**HIS month Clubbing Together travels to Altrincham to take a look at **Altrincham Conservative Club**. The club is housed in an imposing yet understated building on Market Street facing Altrincham's historic market hall (not to be confused with Altrincham Conservative Working Mens Club which is on the opposite side of the market).

Inside you will find a large open plan room with the bar in the far left corner. Depending on what events are being held, the room can be partitioned to give separate areas for members and party guests. The whole room or just part of it can be hired for all kinds of occasions, with on site catering available.

To behind one side of the bar is an alcove that can also be partitioned off either for meetings or occasionally to provide a members area when the club's main room is hired out. Behind the bar is the games room with three full size snooker tables and darts boards. Like many clubs there are a number of active sports sections including a golf society and a members indoor bowling league.

Unusually for a private members club, the club is open from noon daily serving lunch, teas and coffee (alongside the full bar offering), offering a social meeting point to members who have been out shopping in the town centre or just looking to meet up with friends. A range of good value home cooked food is served Tuesday to Saturday from 12 til 2pm. The club remains open until midnight every day except Sunday (when it closes at 5pm).

The club is not tied to any brewery. The single handpump turns over an ever changing range of guest beers, usually around five a week. Regular featured breweries include Robinsons, Dunham Massey, Tatton and the various breweries in the Marstons group.

On the first Thursday of the month there is a folk club open to the public. Most months this features local folk singers and musicians alongside poets and other performers, although occasionally there are performances from more established artists on the national folk scene. Entrance is usually just £1 (free to members) and £3 for a special event.

The club also hosts Weight Watchers sessions three times a week, Mondays from 7pm & Wednesdays at 10am & 5pm.

General membership of the club is available for £38 a year. CAMRA members are welcome, although a £1 guest membership is charged to comply with licensing restrictions. The club has also agreed to extend this to anybody who shows a copy of this article – or of course to check out the club just go along on folk night.

Clubbing Together is about promoting what great local clubs we have in our area. Contributions are invited from other sports & social clubs serving cask ales - if you would like your sports or social club to feature here, feel free to write a piece yourself & submit to the editor or just let us know where you recommend and who to contact to arrange a visit.

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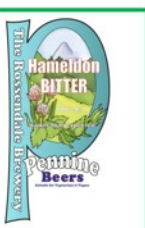
Contact Robin: 07709 874 783; [robin@rossendalebrewery.co.uk](mailto:robin@rossendalebrewery.co.uk)  
Or Geoff: 07816 912 794; [geoff@rossendalebrewery.co.uk](mailto:geoff@rossendalebrewery.co.uk)

### Meet our beers - Beer Tasting Notes



**Floral Dance**  
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**Hameldon Bitter**  
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An unusually dark traditional bitter, with a dry and assertive character that develops in the finish.



**Glen Top Bitter**  
4.0%

A citrusy, full bodied, pale beer. Intentionally not over hopped with quite a dry after taste.



**Rossendale Ale**  
4.2%

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



**Halo Pale**  
4.5%

A citrusy, pale ale brewed with Cascade aroma hops, finishing with a slightly bitter aftertaste.



**Pitch Porter**  
5%

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



**Sunshine**  
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# CAMRA Awards Gallery

We start here a long overdue catch up with some now not-so-recent awards.



The Pub of the Month Award for August 2010 was presented to the **Crown** Cheadle, an excellent Hydes house with a great community focus. Pictured above are Karen and Alan with their award.



It was back to Stockport for the November award which went to the **Hind's Head** on Manchester Road, Heaton Chapel. The pub has improved hugely since Stuart Krkham took over in 2007. He and two members of his team are pictured above with their award.



September's award went to another Hydes' house, the **Horse & Farrier** in Gatley, know also for its in-house beer festivals. Pictured above are manager Allan Marple (left) and assistant manager –cellar man Fran Dunne with their award.



The December award went to the **Plough** in Heaton Moor. This excellent community local is thriving under licensee Ian Wardle who is seen above with his certificate.



In October the Pub of the Month moved to South Manchester and the famous **Red Lion** in Withington. This famous Marston's house dated back to the 1670s. CAMRA's Mark McConachie (left) presents the award to long serving licensee Kevin Connor and assistant manager Carl Ross



We ventured to the City Centre for the January presentation to the **Seven Oaks** on Nicholas Street. A real community pub in the heart of Manchester it is run by Patrick Smith (above left) who is seen receiving his award from CAMRA's John Sutcliffe.



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## Pub News Extra – Village Ale

A RECENT survey of Manchester's gay village found that the old trends of only selling keg beers and spirits, may well be giving way to a change in policy and in tastes. Below is a summary of each outlet.

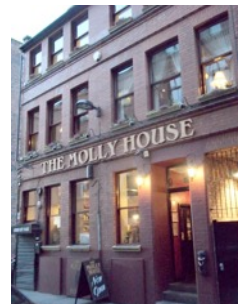
**Outpost** - *Shaws Golden Globe; Fullers London Pride.* Comfortable, smallish sub-basement bar. This also acts as a feeder or an annex to Legends club which is next door. The front room has a long bar with mirrored-ceiling work. At the rear is large room used for dancing and entertainment; it also houses a stage. A popular happy-hour operates till 7pm. It attracts a mixed crowd. Gets busy at weekends. A very handy stop-off if you have a lengthy wait for a train at Piccadilly.

**Paddy's Goose** - *Robinson's Unicorn; Wells Bombardier.* A pub of the more traditional sort where wood and paint, rather than glass and chrome reign supreme and seats are there for the taking. The decor appears to almost be a throwback to the old Magic Pub Company days. It is the sort of pub where you might say all human life is here. The interesting decor includes mirrors, pictures and general stuff including a whisky box collection. Handy for the Central Coach Station. Food service is noon till 6.30pm.



**Crunch** - *Black Sheep Best Bitter.* Modern bar with large open spaces, set on two levels (upstairs is the Upper Crunch). Side booths provide privacy and comfort, yet in general this is a stand-up drinks bar with plenty of dance space. Great to see a bar such as this trying cask ale.

**Rembrandt / Rem Bar** - *JW Lees Coronation St Ale.* Two bars in one building. The lower Rem Bar has recently been refurbished to a high standard - all black and silver décor with tasteful use of a military-boot motif in the logo and in artefacts in and around the bar. There isn't much furniture, so the emphasis is on vertical drinking. This bar is men-only by the way. The upstairs bar, Belinda Scandals / Rembrandt, is accessed from the Sackville St entrance and accepts both sexes, however this is open evenings only. This is a pusher affair but the down-side is that there is no cask ale in this bar! Shame.



**Eden** - *Black Sheep Best Bitter; guest beer.* A striking bar-restaurant that exists in two parts, two mediums even. The first part you encounter is the water-borne former barge and terrace that operates as an alfresco drinking and dining location on the Rochdale Canal. Then you enter the building itself to a smart interior where food has a focus. Relaxing sofas lead onto a lower bar area with more formal tables set out. Meals served 12-10.

**Molly House** - *Deuchars IPA; Beartown Black Bear, Ginger Bear, Kodiak Gold, Peach Melbear.* Brand new bar and cafe opened in December 2010. A former worsted tailors shop that may well be starting a new movement in the village. Not just a bar, it does 20 different teas, specialist coffees, and high-end spirits. The name derives from the London molly houses of the Victorian period. Set on two levels, its decor is described as post-Victorian decadent shabby chic. The ground floor, "The Tea Room" has the cask ale bar together with food servery. Intended as a stand-up drinking space, furnishings here are spartan, meanwhile upstairs in the "The Bordello", the decor and lighting is more intimate. This floor has a bar too with sofas and a fireplace adding warmth. An outside smoking and drinking verandah finishes the impressive package. Food service is noon till 8 and of the lite-bite variety. Cider is Westons.

All of the bars listed are on Canal Street with the exception of Outpost, which is on Whitworth Street near to London Road, and Molly House which is on Richmond Street, off Sackville Street. Many thanks to Liz at Eden, and Simon at the Molly for their help and hospitality.

# Brewery News

## Family Brewers Latest

As usual the local family brewers have a number of new or recent beers out this month.

**Robinsons** are still running with Crusoe (3.9%) which was promised to be hoppy and refreshing and certainly delivers. An excellent beer for the summer months.

**Hydes** meanwhile continue to produce a whole range of new beers. This month sees the launch of the new bi-monthly craft ale, Swift Delivery (4%). This is described as a "light, refreshing, golden summer beer". It is brewed using Styrian Goldings hops for lots of citrus and floral flavours. In addition Hydes have also reintroduced Plum Treat (4%) which "offers a distinct fruit flavour of plums with a delicate aroma of English choicest Fuggle hops. The rich scents and flavours complement each other perfectly and balanced with Crystal and Tipple Pale Ale malt, produce a quirky, yet supremely drinkable fruity ale". It is indeed a very tasty beer and well worth seeking out.



## Micro Brewery News

The **Outstanding Brewing Co** said that they were over the moon that their imperial Russian stout "Matron's Delight", which had been matured in the cask for seven months, gained the Silver Award at the 25th Stockport Beer Festival. The brewery thanked Margaret Corlett, the festival staffing officer for assisting in designing and brewing the beer and said that due to its very positive reception, the beer, which had been planned as a one off brew, may make a return in the future. The brewery was also very pleased to hear that their 4% Festival Special Beer "Silver Magnet" (sponsored by The Magnet on Wellington Road) sold very well throughout the festival and happy to see that the hard working festival volunteers modelled to perfection the t-shirts sponsored by the brewery.

The brewery has seen a massive increase in demand for their beers over the last 12 months and as a result they are now investing to expand the brewery and increase brewing capacity. A new cold storage facility which sees a trebling in capacity 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.

There are always interesting developments at **Marble Brewery**. To commemorate brew number 1888 (a significant number as that is when the Marble Arch was built) a Ginger

Stout at a powerful 6.7% ABV was produced. This was very well received and is to be re-brewed and sold in 50cl bottles. A brown ale at 5.1% has been produced and Tawny No. 5 is also selling well and will be brewed again, too. Also out in 50cl bottles soon will be a new Wheat Beer (5.5%) – this will be a traditional German-style wheat beer using weiss beer yeast and some spicing in the brew. Finally – the long-awaited Triple (9%) has been bottled into 75cl bottles and will be out soon. It's a modern take on a triple brewed with traditional Belgian yeast (Westmalle) and blend of traditional (Goldings) and modern (Motueka and Nelson Sauvin) hops.

Stockport's new micro, **Shaws**, continues to do well. The first two beers, Shaws EPA and Quantum AAA (American Amber Ale) appeared at Stockport Beer Festival and both sold out (and were re-ordered). Both beers are to be re-brewed to meet continuing demand. More beers are to be brewed under the Quantum label – look out for a new IPA at around 7% ABV (and brewed using New Zealand Motueka hops) plus a range of beers using various flowers as a added ingredient. The first of these, Fleur No.1, is a 3% summer ale brewed using elderflowers.



Bollington's **Happy Valley Brewery** has increased its range to six cask ales. Launched at the Macclesfield Beer Festival, the first one up was Bollywood IPA (5%) which has a deep, almost rich bitterness and full body. This has now been joined by another IPA – Tie The Knot is 5% and is a paler, straw coloured beer with a dangerous drinkability. Third up is Little Rascal at a more sessionable 3.9%. This is a modern, pale beer brewed using Tomahawk, Columbus and Chinook hops from the USA, and with a lingering, citrus aftertaste.



The **Bootleg Brewery**, based at the Horse & Jockey on Chorlton Green is doing well, with two new brews on the way. After the success of the winter mild, Black Market, a 4.5% stout will be the first to show followed by a lighter nettle beer. The stout was expected to be ready for the seventh Chorlton beer festival held at St Clements Church. The regular beers, Contraband and Lawless will be accessible more consistently, with further special ales planned for the summer. Contraband was recently awarded silver for beer of the festival at Bury and both proved popular at the recent Stockport festival

The **Millstone Brewery** is very busy and they don't often have time for new beers. However there's a new one out now. This is Millstone Light (3.7%) and as its name suggests is a pale "easy going session beer" brewed with First Gold and Bobek hops.

**Pictish Brewery** always has something new out alongside regular monthly specials. For July the special is Siren, a 4.1% clear wheat beer drawing on both English and continental heritage. This naturally spicy beer is subtly augmented with coriander seeds and orange peel to give a refreshingly different flavour.



Equally busy is **Phoenix Brewery** up in Heywood. Indeed they are "busier than ever" according to owner Tony Allen with June being the record month for sales in the brewery's history. Not much new from Phoenix for the next couple of months but the always excellent White Tornado (4.3%) and Midsummer Madness (4.5%) will be available and are both "selling like hotcakes".

Denton's **Hornbeam Brewery** continues to do well with both cask and bottled beers. The Summer IPA (4.6%) is now out in bottle and on the cask front look out for X-Ray Ale (4%). This is brewed using Green Bullet and Delta hops and is rather more bitter than many Hornbeam beers (60 bitterness units – which is quite a lot).

Another brewery with a constant range of new beers is **Boggart Brewery**. Out now will be Blue Moon Rising (5%). This is an IPA brewed with Galena, Perle and Cascade hops. It will also be available in bottle. The whole range of Boggart bottled beers is available from the Micro Bar in the Arndale Centre Market.

Back in the 16th and 17th centuries travellers took their lives in their own hands travelling in the Derbyshire Peak District as highwaymen ruled the pathways - the most famous of all robbers being Black Harry. The area that Black Harry operated in sits close to **Thornbridge Hall** and today the area has become a place of recreation for walkers, horse riders and mountain biking. The Black Harry Trails project has just been completed to upgrade and improve these routes for users and in doing so increase recreation opportunities for the less able, elderly and those with young families. To commemorate this work being completed Thornbridge have brewed Black Harry a 3.9% dark, fruity ale. It uses Pale Ale, Crystal, Black and Oat Malt. The Hop is Hallertau Northern Brewer.



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