

August 2011



Opening

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

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

Beer Festival Frenzy



Chorlton Review page 9
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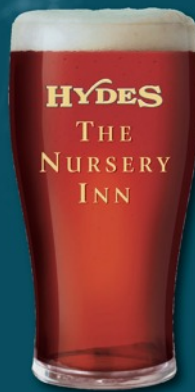
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CAMPAIGN
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The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for August is the Friendship on Wilmslow Road in Fallowfield. Margaret O'Brien explains why it won.



THIS will be the third Pub of the Month award that Chris and Tricia Batty have won during their stewardship of the Friendship, a welcoming Hydes pub in central Fallowfield. They must be doing something right – so what makes the Friendship such a great pub?

It is of course in the heart of the university and student area of South Manchester and is surrounded by halls of residence. But despite that location the Friendship lives up to its name by being perhaps the last true local on the long stretch of road between the City Centre and Withington.

Refurbished this year to give the pub a fresh and modern look, the large horseshoe bar serves a variety of areas and can now accommodate 12 cask ales - offering the Hydes range, as well as varying guest beers. This is ideal for the many festivals the pub hosts (the next one is coming up between Friday 30th September and Sunday 2nd October).

The rear extension completed a few years ago has created the space for provision of interesting and popular Oriental food, including takeaways. Well positioned TV screens provide for sports fans, but to get away from the bustle and hubbub, there is the "Hyde Out" back bar for a peaceful drink and a chat. Come the good weather, a variety of outdoor drinking spots are available for people-watching or bus spotting even! Quizzes are held weekly - music on Sunday; general knowledge on Tuesday.

Beer quality is excellent and the Friendship is often to be found gracing the pages of CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide. There will certainly be good beer to be had on the night of our presentation – Thursday August 25th.

The pub is very well served by public transport – the many buses that go up and down Wilmslow Road will drop you outside. From Stockport the 42 will do the same.



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Comment, Notes & Contents

What's On

Opening Times – Comment

It's certainly beer festival season at the moment. Hard on the heels of Stockport Beer & Cider Festival's success came another record breaker at Chorlton. There is a report elsewhere in this issue. Now it's the turn of various pub and bar based festivals to take centre stage locally. Bank holiday weekend is when it all happens with festivals in Stockport, Disley, Whaley Bridge, Salford and Altrincham notified to Opening Times by the time this was written. Needless to say, we will be trying to get round them all and will bring you a report in a future issue. Yes we know, it's a dirty job but someone has to do it.

Of course when this issue of OT hits the streets the "big one", namely the Great British Beer Festival will have been and gone. The highlight is the announcement of the winners in CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain contest. Will any gongs be heading for the North West? Find out next time.

Finally – let us draw your attention to this month's Curmudgeon column. The argument about so-called "craft keg" has been raging in certain parts of the on-line community. Curmudgeon sums it up perfectly and his approach is one that we at OT will be following.

Opening Times - Information

Opening Times is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Additional material is supplied by the High Peak & NE Cheshire, Trafford & Hulme, North Manchester and Macclesfield & E Cheshire Branches. The views expressed are not necessarily those of CAMRA either locally or nationally. 7,200 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth. All articles copyright CAMRA unless otherwise stated.

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Copy Date for the September issue is Wednesday 10 August

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, Andy Sullivan, Dave Burston, Chris Walkden, Steven Swain, Margaret O'Brien.

Opening Times 324 - Contents

Pub of the Month	3	Book Review	13
Stagger	7	Letters	13
Chorlton Beer Festival	9	Pub News	15
SIBA Beer Festival	9	Pub News Extra	16
Curmudgeon	9	Denton Review	19
High Peak Pub Scene	11	Foreign Beer News	19
Cider	12	Brewery News	21

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.

August

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

Monday 8th Social @ Porters (Prince Of Wales), Roe St, Macclesfield. from 8pm

Wednesday 10th – Social: Railway, Greenfield. From 8pm. (NM).

Thursday 18th – New Faces Social: Beech, Beech Rd, Chorlton. A social for new and existing members who have never attended a branch event before to meet active members. Small buffet provided. From 8pm. (TRH).

Friday 19th – Shaw Heath & King Street West Stagger: 7.30pm Florist, Shaw Heath; 8.30 Armoury (SSM).

Tuesday 23rd Congleton Crawl, Lord Mountbatten, Mill St. from 8pm

Wednesday 24th – Ginnels & Alleys Crawl: starts Town Hall Tavern, Tib Lane 7.30pm (NM).

Thursday 25th – Pub of the Month presentation to the Friendship, Wilmslow Rd, Fallowfield. From 8pm. (SSM).

Saturday 27th – Inter-branch social when Burton Branch visit Stockport. From 12 noon – details to be advised. (SSM).

Saturday 27th to Monday 29th – Le Trappiste ABC Beer Festival, Altrincham Market Hall. Volunteers needed. (TRH).

Wednesday 31st – Social: Morning Star, Wardley. From 8pm (NM).

September

Saturday 3rd – Under-30s Social: Magnet, Wellington Road North, Stockport. Details TBA. (SSM).

Thursday 8th – Whalley Range Social: 8pm Hillary Step; 9pm Nip & Tiddle; 9.30 Jam Street Café. (TRH).

Your Local CAMRA Branches:

SSM: Stockport & South Manchester www.ssmcamra.org.uk

Contact: Mark McConachie 0161 429 9356, mark.mcconachie@o2.co.uk

NM – North Manchester www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk

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

HPNC – High Peak & North Cheshire www.hpneccamra.org.uk

Contact: Mike Rose 07986 458517, mikewrose@gmail.com

MEC – Macclesfield & East Cheshire www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

Contact Tony Icke 01625 861833, contact@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

TRH – Trafford & Hulme www.thcamra.org.uk

Branch Contact: John Ison 0161 962 7976, enquiries@thcamra.org.uk

CAMRA Branch Business Meetings

Monday 8th – Bulls Head, Old Glossop. Starts 8.30pm (HPNC).

Thursday 11th – Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. Starts 8.15pm. **NB**
– short meeting followed by Summer Quiz.

Thursday 11th – Railway, Manchester Road, Broadheath. Starts 8pm (TRH).

Wednesday 17th – Angel, Angel St (off Rochdale Road). Starts 7.30pm (NM).



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Stagger



Heaton Norris With Mark McConachie

THIS month's Stagger start-point was the **Carousel** in Reddish. Reddish, on a Heaton Norris crawl? Well yes, as the position of the Carousel lends itself better to this crawl rather than the Reddish one. This is a largish family-dining house in an under-pubbed part of Reddish. Until a tasteful refurbishment a number of years ago, this was a pub that was largely avoided by people. That refurb also saw the re-introduction of cask beer after some considerable absence.

On a warm spring evening the place was busy with folk enjoying the sunshine, and dining inside on the value



"Two for £10" meals. The family-friendly décor is soft, easy on the eye, and welcoming - a mix of sofas and dining furniture set off by mushroom and terracotta wall colourings. Various furnishing and design elements break up the space neatly so that it does not seem as large as it truly is. We wondered how the India-inspired Elvis-tribute act "Patelvis" would both sound, and indeed look? Anyway, he wasn't there that night, but the week after. Three cask beers were on offer - Tetley Bitter, which was on good form; the Black Sheep bitter fared better still; whilst the final beer, Adnams Broadside was not sampled.

As it is a fifteen minute walk to the next pub, a group of us took advantage of the good-frequency 203 bus to drop us off at the top of Lancashire Hill. At the roundabout there, and in the shadow of Nelstrop's flour mill, is the **Navigation**.



The Navy has been a recent branch Pub of the Month award-winner, so it is good to report how well it seems to be doing. Owned by the aforementioned Nelstrop's, yet operated by Congleton's Beartown Brewery. This is a two-room house that comprises a vault with pool table to the right, and a large lounge to the left featuring two large bay horseshoe seating areas to the front, whilst the rear offers sofas for those wanting more relaxation. A friendly welcome greeted us, but on this occasion only the left side of the pub had drinkers in. Nonetheless, the beers we sampled were all on very good form - the guest of Vale Brewery, St Georges scoring lowest, whilst the

Congleton beers shone brightly, all garnering goods marks. They were: Beartown Kodiak; Black Bear; Bearskinful; Bear Ass; and Bruins Ruin.

Next on the trail was Robinson's **Silver Jubilee**, this is just off Belmont Way, next door to Netto. On the way we passed the cleared site of the Roundhouse, whilst the two pubs on Old Rd (Grey Horse and Grapes) were both closed, their respective futures remaining unclear. Bypassing the main entrance, we entered through the garden and via the patio doors. We couldn't help notice how busy it was, especially in the garden; it seems a celebratory function was in progress, so every one was at their ease. The interior has recently been redecorated in a lighter style than that previously, so gone are the Country & Western references, the heavy drapes, and the highly amusing "singing moose head".



Another friendly and cheery welcome from the staff providing us with good quality examples of Robinson's Hatters and Unicorn beers. The pub dates from 1977 and is another two-roomer (large vault with pool table, and smaller lounge this time round), you can see a commemorative plaque bearing the Queen's coat of arms in the entrance lobby; a tribute to Queen Elizabeth's 25 years on the throne. I wonder if new-build pubs that open in 2012 will similarly commemorate that occasion by being named Golden Jubilee?

Weaving our way through the terraced streets to Wellington Road North brought us to the **Hope**. Again this was busy and lively. More celebrations we suspect. The first few of our party to enter reported seeing no cask ale, so we assumed (wrongly as it turns out) that there was indeed no cask ale. The pub **does** sell cask we are keen to report, it was just an oversight that they didn't have the correct pumpclip for the beer. We compounded that by making a speedy assumption. Oh well, onward...



The remaining three pubs are just a tad further south on Wellington Road North, the first one was the **Railway** (a former branch Pub of the Year). This was selling Bridestones Penn Gold, Butcombe Gold, Phoenix Arizona, and Holt Bitter. All scored very highly, with the Holts taking first place in the rankings. After all of the celebrations going on in the preceding houses, this was strangely quiet tonight.

Comprising of three rooms all set out in comfortable style - vault with stage to right; lounge to left; whilst the rear is host to a pool table and a "slouch" relaxation area. Live music often plays a large part in the proceedings at the Railway, so it is one to remember if you enjoy that. Hosts, Ray and Pam provided a friendly goodbye as we set off to the **Midland**.



On arriving we learnt that the landlady Janet and pub dog, Max were to leave the pub for good in a week's time. The message on the sign on the outside of the pub declares 'A Warm and Friendly Welcome' and the Midland certainly lives up to its promise. This comfortable pub has the distinction of being the first to reintroduce



real ale into this part of the A6 corridor when this part of Heaton Norris was a desert for cask ale. The pub was fittingly restored to its previous homely glory. The most distinctive feature of this multi-roomed house is the lovely green art nouveau style tiling, but also of note is the glassware behind the bar, and the plates and brasses on the walls. Only Copper Dragon Bitter is sold and that was deemed to be a good pint. So it was a fitting send-off for our departing licensee.

Finally we ended the crawl at the **Magnet**. A failing keg pub that was rescued then renovated to become



Stockport Branch Pub of the Year 2011. It now boasts 14 handpumps for beer and a draught cider. A large foreign bottled range completes the now rosy picture. It has a bustling vault to the left, leading to a lower pool room, and a series of rooms separated by arched doorways on the right. The pub is also home to the Cellar Rat brewery which is in the final stages of completion in the cellars. Busy and bustling as always it must have proven all too much for me, as I failed to note down any beer scores. Amongst the many well-kept beers on were Hornbeam Malt Mountain Mild, and Brewdog Punk IPA. So, all ended well on a most enjoyable ramble. Give them a go yourself to see what you think.

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Chorlton Beer & Cider Festival

Another sell-out success for 2011

THE 7th Chorlton Beer & Cider Festival once again saw drinkers descend on St Clements Church in their thousands, drinking the festival dry 45 minutes before planned closing on Saturday night.

Organisers ordered 20% more beer, cider and perry than in 2010 but even torrential rain on opening night, Friday 8 July, could not drive the Chorlton community away. Over 3,000 pints of ale and 800 of traditional cider and perry were sold on Friday alone, at a rate of almost 15 pints a minute. Visitors had the choice of 40 locally brewed beers from the CAMRA LocAle bar plus a further 22 sourced from outside of the local area on the second bar opposite. The LocAle selection included festival specials "Clement Summer" from Macclesfield's Bollington Brewery and "STout CLEMENT", brewed by the Bootleg Brewing Company just 200m down St Clements Road at the Horse & Jockey pub.

A new bar layout, including a bank of nine handpumps for the first time at Chorlton Festival gave more space in the beer hall for thirsty drinkers to choose their beers. Once again the Youth Centre hosted the real cider and perry bar along with the foreign beer bar while the live music was performed al fresco in the grounds.

The opening of Chorlton's Metrolink line just one day before the festival helped bring many visitors from further to the festival on Saturday, with people travelling from as far away as York and Wolverhampton, as well as all over Greater Manchester, to attend. After the terrible weather on opening night, the Saturday was a complete contrast with visitors basking in the summer sun with live jazz accompaniment.

By the end of the festival 6500 pints of ale plus 1800 of cider and perry had been drunk along with hundreds of bottles of specialist continental beers. By the time the beer ran out at 9.47 on Saturday evening, thousands of pounds had been raised to support St Clement's Community Rooms campaign. Phase 1 of this campaign will see new disabled toilets, refurbishment of existing facilities and rewiring to the church buildings that are used by many local community groups from 9am to 9pm most days. By Sunday morning, Rector Ken Flood was able to confirm that thanks to the success of the festival he would be able to sign the orders for the first bank of work to commence immediately.

Drinkers voted Rum Porter from Newton Heath's Boggart Brewery as Beer of The Festival. This classic porter with a smooth roast finish & just a hint of dark rum triumphed in what turned out to be a very close vote. Ironically, the silver medal position went to Dunham Massey's 7.2% "Gold". Gwatkins Stoke Red was named Cider of the Festival with the Perry title going to Moore's Perry.

SIBA Great Northern Beer Festival

SIBA, CAMRA Manchester and the Manchester Ramada Jarvis Hotel have agreed that the SIBA Great Northern Beer Festival will be held at the Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Piccadilly Gardens on 27th - 29th October. The change of venue is due to the fact that the Palace Hotel has another event booked for the chosen dates so a hasty search found the RJ as suitable. There will be a maximum of 250 cask beers with 64 available at any one time via hand pull. The fresh glass policy remains and a more sensible entry charge of £3 (£2 for CAMRA members) including a refundable deposit on the souvenir glass) ensures a busy couple of days. The event opens to the public on the Thursday evening following the SIBA North judging panels. More next month.



A Crafty Pint

BACK in the early 70s, things were very straightforward. Real ale, the traditional beer of Britain, with all its rich palette of flavours and characters, was under attack from cold, bland, fizzy, standardised keg beer. This was always a touch simplistic, especially when people tried to apply it to beers from other countries that had no tradition of "real ale". However, in terms of what was actually happening in this country at the time, it was a reasonable enough approximation to the truth, and it allowed CAMRA to mount a campaign that led to it being described as "the most successful consumer movement in Europe".

For a long time much the same remained true. Keg beers were bland, mass-market brews produced by the big brewers, and in the 1990s they gained another dimension of unpleasantness with the soapy foam of nitro "smooth". But recently things have changed as we have begun to see well-regarded new generation breweries producing keg beers. Some, such as Lovibonds and Meantime, produce nothing but; the publicity-seeking controversialists of BrewDog produce some real ale, but much more keg, while others such as Thornbridge major on real ale but also produce keg versions of flagship beers like Jaipur IPA. BrewDog have even started to roll out a chain of specialist beer bars that serve no real ale, only keg.

Surely, it is argued, these new "craft keg" beers are entirely different from the old industrial keg and are worthy of recognition. Of course, there's a lot of truth in that. It can't be seriously argued that keg Jaipur is no better than Red Barrel, and to believe that there is a Manichean division between good "real ale" and bad "chemical fizz" has always been elevating a definition into an article of faith. It has never been the case that all real ale is good; equally, it has never been the case that all keg beer is inherently bad, although in the 1970s most of it was.

However, the problem with embracing "craft beer", whether real or non-real, is that you then have to make subjective judgments as to what qualifies. If Timothy Taylors, a respected, long-established small family brewer, started making a non-nitro keg version of Landlord, would that be craft? Or Black Sheep, a very successful new brewery, albeit one whose cask beers are sometimes thought a little dull? And, if not, why not? How are those beers different in kind from keg Jaipur IPA? And, if keg Landlord, why not keg 6X, or keg Pedigree?

This is not to say that people shouldn't drink and enjoy these new-wave keg beers, or that the editor of "Opening Times" shouldn't say that they are available alongside real ales and might be worth trying, but to argue that CAMRA should metamorphose into a "campaign for craft beer" is a misguided and dangerous idea. It plays into the hands of those who advocate a much more narrow, élitist and frankly snobbish approach to beer, and dismiss out of hand anything that has achieved mainstream success amongst non-enthusiasts. They sneer at the "boring brown beers" from brewers such as Shepherd Neame, Wadworth's and Robinson's who in the early days of CAMRA were at the heart of what the campaign was all about.

"Real ale" is something that has a clear and objective definition, whereas "craft beer" is whatever people choose to call it, and can all too easily just become "beer from breweries that we approve of". Real ale is a distinctive British tradition that is worthy of celebrating and preserving, although it is ignorant and narrow-minded to assert that it encompasses all that is good in the world of beer. To champion real ale shouldn't mean you oppose everything that doesn't qualify. As Michael Hardman, one of the four original founders of CAMRA, said in a recent newspaper interview: "I must point out that we're not fighting against anything, we're fighting for something."

Curmudgeon Online: www.curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com



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

THE **Gun Inn** at Hollingworth continues to gain in popularity after holding a successful beer festival in May. I dropped in on the last Thursday in June when the folk session was in full flow, and was surprised how popular it was. The beers on sale that night were Theakstons Bitter, Theakstons Lightfoot (4.1%) - a new beer on me and very pleasant too, and Deuchars IPA. However, I had just missed out on Happy Valley beers that have been popular at the pub of late. The session is held every two weeks, and the opposite week there is live music.

In Audenshaw, good reports come in of the **Pack Horse** from two branch members, for the quality of its Robinsons Unicorn and Hatters.

On a recent walk from Whaley Bridge back to Glossop in a party of others, we decided to call in at the **Royal Oak** on Longhurst Lane, Mellor. Another Robinsons pub, its selection here was the same, with their Dizzy Blonde as the other beer on sale. The beer garden here is particularly worth trying out on a hot day and the group of us did not want to move on.

Heading up to Millbrook, a small hamlet tucked away between Lane Ends and Mellor, is the **Hare & Hounds** another Robinsons pub I have not been in for a while. Most of the party walked on but I spent a pleasant time trying out the Crusoe, which accompanied the regular Unicorn and Hatters. This pub is another unsung pub that is well worthy of visiting - it is neat and tidy and the food highly regarded locally I believe.

My last pub after walking over Cown Edge via Robin Hood's picking rods, was the **Hare & Hounds** at Simmondley. The new licensees Dave and Tracy, had only been in for two days, after their move from the Corner Cupboard in Glossop town centre and Tetleys Bitter was the only beer on offer. However, they plan to have all the handpumps in operation by the time this is read, Dave being passionate about real ale. The last time I called in, the outgoing staff were telling me about their beer festival, which actually never happened as they left fairly quickly due to illness. However, Dave assures me he will be trying a small version of the previously successful annual event, probably over the August Bank Holiday.

In Poynton, on London Road South, the **Kingfisher** is closed and looking unlike being re-opened. The rumour is of a demolition of the site.

The **British Protection** in Stalybridge, a friendly little Marstons pub, has Banks's Bitter as the regular beer, with Jennings Bitter or another beer from the Marstons range on sale.

Usually worth seeking out but a little off the beaten track, it is located in a side street just off Acres Lane, opposite the primary school.

The nearby **Stop and Rest** (known to locals over the years as the Stop and Fight, due to its illustrious custom at times) has been shut and boarded for some time. However, in Hyde, next to the Wetherspoons **Cotton Bale**, the **Albion** sells Marstons Pedigree as its only hand pulled beer but it appeared to be selling well and was in good condition when I called recently.

Buxton Round-up

OVER to Buxton now, on the day of the High Peak AGM at **Ramseys Bar**, beers from the Buxton Brewery and Thornbridge were very prominent, the quality being very good too. At the **Wye Bridge House** (Wetherspoons), two Buxton brewery beers were on sale on the day, again good. At the **Swan** just beyond the market place, Sharps Doom Bar was joined by Tetleys Bitter, Morland Speckled Hen and Storm Brewery Hurricane Hubert. Note that Storm is normally represented here on one handpump. In **Nats Kitchen**, there were no less than four Thornbridge beers on sale, the other handpump selling Ringwood Old Thumper - what a great choice. The **Queens** on the market place had no real ale so we moved on, the **Miltons Head** on Spring Gardens had re-introduced real ale of late. That day it was Greene King IPA.

Reports that the **Sycamore** at Birch Vale is re-opening have not yet been confirmed. The **Cottage** on Hyde Road, Denton was up for auction with Pugh & Co in mid-July.

Finally, in answer to a query recently, the **Butchers Arms** at Reapsmoor (outside of the branch area, high above Buxton and Longnor) and the Mermaid, just off the Buxton to Leek road, have both indeed closed, I can confirm, after passing them recently. The Mermaid is now a bunkhouse for walkers whilst the Butchers Arms appears to be now a residential house.

Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

AS MENTIONED in last month's article this is the time of year for village carnivals, Rose queen processions, fell races and other related celebrations.

Among the categories to be judged on carnival day there is often one for the best dressed or best decorated pub. This is often an opportunity for licensees and regulars to pool their creative talents to support the community event. At New Mills the **Pride of the Peaks** was the best dressed pub, whilst at Chapel en le Frith the **Roebuck** and the **New Inn** shared the victory. The **Shepherds Arms** won the category in Whaley Bridge. Carnival day in

Whaley Bridge includes the Rose Queen procession, a fair, an Art Exhibition and a fell race. These attractions bring in visitors and residents alike, and help to give the pubs a busy afternoon, even if the weather is damp with not too many dry spells.

These days the **Miners Arms at Adlington**, adjacent to the Macclesfield Canal and the Middlewood Way, is very much a food orientated pub. Back in the 1970s I recall playing darts against the local team there. The dartboard was set up in what was reported to be the mortuary for corpses from the local coal mines. Redesign and refurbishment have changed that. With a group of walkers, we enjoyed the lunchtime fare, and perhaps more importantly the beer we tried was fine. Between us we sampled Theakston's Bitter, Wells Bombardier and Deuchars I.P.A. Whilst these are not the most imaginative of choices these days, each was judged to be a decent pint.

Reading brewing history it is clear that before the widespread use of hops, herbs, spices and other flavours were used to enhance the taste of beer. There is something of a return to added flavours but not always to the benefit of the brew, more of a marketing ploy. Recently Robinson's Ginger Tom was a widely available and successful seasonal beer. Marston's have followed with Wychwood Ginger Beard. Honey is used in some brews. Brakspear Buzz is the Marston contribution to this variant, with a portion of sales going to the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. Buzz has been available at the **Old Hall** at Whitehough and Ginger Beard at the **Shepherds**. Chocolate would not have been added in late mediaeval beers, but Marble Chocolate is a reasonable brew. Elderflower probably was and has recently been available in Wychwood Elderwych. These and other flavourings may add a bit of interest to beer drinking and some are worth trying. In general terms I prefer to stick to malt and hops and water. Lots of interesting variety available there.

Cumbria Way has been added to beer available at the **Railway** in Whaley Bridge, whilst up at the **Board Inn** Dizzy Blonde and Crusoe were about to join the list.

August Bank Holiday weekend sees the well established Beer Festival at the **Dog & Partridge** at Bridgemont. Expect up to a score of beers with the usual bar and the festival bar outside in the marquee. The festival starts on Friday teatime and runs through until the beer runs out on the Bank Holiday Monday. The 199 Stockport-Buxton Bus provides a regular service. Trains on the Buxton line stop at Furness Vale and Whaley Bridge, both about a 10 minute walk away. There is an hourly service all weekend. The same weekend sees the **White Lion** festival in Disley. The 199 Bus or the train to Disley can be used to link both events.

Cider & Perry News and Updates...

Question - What do you call a Beer Festival with no beer?

Answer - A damn good time.

Which is what everyone had at the recent Greater Manchester Regional Cider & Perry Festival at the Palace Hotel. The Festival was held on 24 & 25 June and was open from Noon to 10.30pm both days, *writes Steven Swain.*

Over the course of the Festival there was a choice of 40 different ciders and 15 perries; so good was the range that no one went away unhappy with their choice. In fact so many people enjoyed themselves, the staff were

continually asked when is the next festival or if we were doing it again next year.

So in answer to the questions we have been given permission by the APPLE committee, which is the cider side of CAMRA, to go ahead with another festival, so watch this space.

The BBC Radio Manchester programme Manhunt, broadcast part of their show live from the Festival.

In fact so successful was the Festival other regions in CAMRA are looking at doing their own Cider & Perry Festival, so if you attended the Festival, thanks to you proving that it would work,

we have made a major step forward in the promotion of Real Cider & Perry.

As well as thanking everyone who attended, I'd like to thank all the staff who worked so hard and to the staff of the Palace Hotel. Of course we also asked our customers to vote for their favourite cider and perry. The winners were:

Cider of the Festival - Madhatters Nine Holes

Perry of the Festival - Double Vision Impaired Vision

Cider Pub of the Year



In recent weeks judging has been underway in the Greater Manchester heat of the National Cider Pub of the Year competition.

After the judging of seven pubs within the Greater Manchester region, the winner was **Ye Olde Woolpack** on Brinksway Stockport. The presentation was held on Sunday 10 July. Mike Quinn owner of the pub was delighted with the news as it is his first ever award for the pub. The Woolpack serves ten real ciders and two real perries; and real ale drinkers are not forgotten as he serves seven ever changing cask ales as well.

Mike also runs The Natural Cider Company from the pub which sells cider to other pubs and the general public.

Pictured below - Mike (right) receives his certificate from CAMRA's regional Cider Co-ordinator Steven Swain while Stockport & South Manchester Cider rep Mike Gilroy looks on



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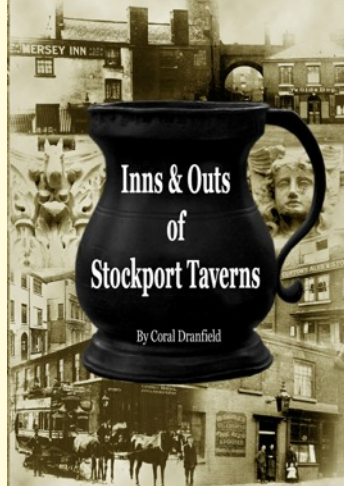
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Inns & Outs of Stockport Taverns by Coral Dranfield. 52pp £6.

HERE at OT we are always telling people what a great pub scene there is in Stockport. Its combination of free houses, community locals, family brewers' tied houses and heritage pubs takes some beating. This excellent new book by Coral Dranfield puts much of this in a historic context with a look at over 150 of the town's pubs.



This is not however some dusty historical tome or index of pubs. As the author says in her introduction this would be "too long and too dull". Instead she has selected those that she considers to have the best histories or stories connected with them.

Some of the pubs featured no longer exist, and many of the others have radically changed over the years. However all have a story to tell. Thus we learn how the long closed Adam & Eve in Adswood was the forerunner of the famous Belle Vue zoo and entertainment complex and how the old Britannia on Churchgate, demolished in the 1960s, has a (albeit tenuous) connection with John Lennon and the Beatles' Sergeant Pepper album.

Murders, riots and tales of privation abound. The old Hen & Chickens off Hillgate started life as a boarding house where the town's poorest inhabitants could sleep leaning over a rope for a modest sum. At the other end of the spectrum is the tale of the giant meat pie presented to his customers by the licensee of the Rock House on Great Egerton Street. This monster was four feet long, nine feet wide and weighed 200 pounds (that's over 90kg). It was too heavy to get to the pub's upstairs banqueting room so had to be consumed in the street.

This is just the briefest selection of this excellent "cut and come again" book. Extensively illustrated it deserves a place on the bookshelf of anyone with an interest in Stockport's pubs.

If you pick this copy of *Opening Times* up on time, you might want to drop into the launch at the Arden Arms on Millgate. This is between 3pm and 6pm on Saturday 13 August when it will be available at a launch price of £5. Otherwise you will be able to pick it up at the Stockport Heritage Trust Centre in St Mary's Church and hopefully the Tourist Information Centre as well as Waterstones in the Merseyway Precinct. **JC**

More Pub Festival News

Bank Holiday weekend really is Pub Beer Festival Weekend locally (although the Railway on Portwood, Stockport, is doing things slightly differently and hosting a cider and perry festival).

One unexpected festival (but welcome all the same) takes place at the **Mark Addy** (just) in Salford. This is their first event and runs from 27 to 29 August, featuring 40 guest ales billed as the "Best of the North West". New and exclusive beers are promised along with a brewing demonstration and a ballot for the new house ale. The Mark Addy has already made a name for itself on the food front but, as we have reported previously, this is another sign of a growing and enthusiastic beer interest too.



From: Adrian Rigby-Bates, Fundraiser for Stockport Cerebral Palsy Society

On behalf of everybody at Stockport Cerebral Palsy Society, I would like to thank you so much for adopting us for the third and final year as the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival Charity. We were absolutely delighted to be a part of this successful event once again this year.

The Festival was a resounding success for our charity in helping raise invaluable funds that will go towards equipment and activities for our service users and also helping to raise awareness to the general public of the Society's work.

We are delighted to inform you that the Society made approximately £8,000 profit from this year's festival which included the festival's generous donation of £800 that you kindly donated to us at the Festival review meeting on 11 July.

Also a big thank you to Steven Fisher at Bookers Cash & Carry in Stockport for donating the crisps, drinks and snacks for us to sell at the festival and to Cask Marque for their £50 donation to the Charity.

All of our staff and volunteers did a really fantastic job at this year's festival through their efforts selling a variety of locally donated beers, festival programmes, charity raffle tickets and soft drinks, crisps and snacks. We would also like to extend our thanks to Brenda Marsh for her donation to the Society from her Jewellery sales at the festival and to the ten volunteers from Nat West Bank in Heaton Moor who came along to help raise funds.

I would like to thank Jim Flynn and all the festival staff for making this such a fantastic fundraising event for our Charity and a special thanks to Charlotte Bulmer, your Charity Liaison Officer, for all her commitment and fabulous liaison with the Society in helping making it such a successful event.

In addition, Stockport Cerebral Palsy Society is very grateful to five local brewers who showed their generous support in donating the cask beers for the Charity to sell at this year's festival: JW Lees of Middleton, Hornbeam Brewery of Denton, Hydes of Manchester, Robinsons of Stockport and Storm Brewing Company of Macclesfield.

For the first time ever the charity enjoyed its own festival sponsor and they would like to take this opportunity to thank Sue and Vince at the Railway Pub in Portwood, Stockport for their very kind support.

The Charity was also successful in attracting individual sponsors for each of the individual casks of beer that were donated and they would like to give their thanks to the following supporters: Clarke Nicklin Chartered Accountants at Cheadle Royal, Malcolm Bird at The Cheshire Line Tavern in Cheadle, Simon Wetton at The Nursery Inn in Heaton Norris, Ray and Pam Ford at The Railway in Heaton Norris, Stuart Kirkham at The Hinds Head in Heaton Chapel and John Harrison at Stephenson & Threader Insurances in Droylsden.

We are also very grateful to Jim Flynn, the festival organiser who appeared on our behalf to judge the festival's Pirates fancy dress competition and drew the charity raffle.

Finally, thanks to the Society's band "Prospectors" who performed at the Friday lunchtime session at the festival supported by the Drake Music project. The band members are all service users and they really did enjoy playing to an enthusiastic audience.

Heartfelt thanks to all the staff and volunteers for their help at the festival and everyone who attended the festival and sampled the beers and for all their kind support which is very much appreciated.

(Very many thanks, Adrian. The search is now on for a new festival charity for the next three years. See the advertisement on page 17)

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Pub News



Northenden Notes

A recent foray into Northenden found a few cheering changes had taken place. First though, all of the bars - Bibo, Mono, Palatine, and Escape remain firmly keg only. Round the Church Road area, the Crown and Spread Eagle remain resolute to the keg with seemingly no hope of a return of Boddies nor Greenalls beers. The Church Inn (ex Tetley) remains shored-up with scaffolding and in a ruinous condition.

Now to the pubs doing real ale. The **Farmers** is now down to just Black Sheep Best Bitter alone, prior to this it had a couple of Marstons beers. Set opposite a prominent junction, it is traditional at the front and opens out more to the rear where the pub meets the former bowling green. Low-ceilinged and cosily set out in the front three rooms, the large room beyond that is mainly for dining. Very popular with families.

Meanwhile at the southern end of Palatine Road lies the star of the village, **Lounge About**. This is a bar of two halves, well two shops really. The left half is a drinking area with tables set out for drinking or dining, whilst through the wall on the right is the lounge with low leather sofas and coffee tables for a more relaxed ethic. Decor is very much cafe-like with lots of mono photos and some individual paintings. Sports, particularly football, are shown on three big screens. At the back is a beautiful little, secluded beer garden; whoever tends this does so with great care, it's a real picture. A nice place to get away from the bustle of Palatine Road. It stocks two ever-changing cask ales, today they were Organic Love Muscle, alongside Hooray Henley. Cask cider is provided in the form of Westons Scrumpy too. It also does lunches every day.

West Didsbury

Moving on to West Didsbury, the former **Silver Apples** on Burton Rd has now changed hands to be re-named as **Mary & Archie**



(these are the names of the owner's parents). The interior is now blue and gold with little in the way of adornments apart from some flower prints and a variety of lampshades. An array of furniture styles provides for comfort in the narrow space. Much of the old ways remain with the cupcakes being available during the day, but now there is a full menu from noon till 9 daily. The owners told me that cask was definitely selling, so the range will be a Marble beer plus a guest. Marble Ginger plus Hornbeam Mary Rose were on when OT called. No cask cider, but good bottled variants compliment a range of British and foreign bottled beers.

A call into the **Metropolitan** was also deemed necessary. It was busy, especially outside. The beer range is Caledonian Deuchars IPA, Wells Bombardier, and Taylor Landlord, with the latter being £3.40; steep even for this area. Down the very northern end of Burton Road, the former White Lion (ex Withington Ale House) has emerged as a Sainsbury's Local store; the upstairs rooms are being advertised to let as accommodation.

City News

Last month we featured cask ale in Manchester's Gay Village. Because of a mix-up, we did not report on the **Eagle** on Bloom Street. This is a downstairs bar behind which is the Black Eagle club / dance area.



Quite a small L-shaped space with a bright bar, and a cosy black-furnished lounge room behind that. The main room lighting is dim, yet colour comes from the red furnishings matched with tables fashioned from travel chests. This will soon operate as a male members-only bar (to enquire about membership, please email info@eaglemanchester.com). Two beers are usually available - Wells Eagle IPA, and a guest beer. Meanwhile a new venture, the Richmond Tea House is planned to open in August 2011 in the space above the Eagle. This will be open to all, with planned opening hours of 11-11 daily.

Out of the Village and down towards the River Medlock, the **Joshua Brooks** has also seen some



changes take place. Three extra handpulls have now been installed to serve Wells Bombardier, Greene King IPA, and guest beers. This is a sister pub to the Deansgate and Thirsty Scholar, it is a smart, modern yet traditional bar that is both relaxing and busy. Waltzer-style booth seating sits down one side, with dining furniture and Chesterfield sofas in front of the bar. Plenty of doors on the opposite side of the room give you access to a balcony that lets you see the seldom-seen river below.

After months of speculation, it was confirmed in early July that Hulme's **Salutation** was to close for redecoration on 15 July and by the time you are reading this will have re-opened under the management of Trof group who already own the nearby Deaf Institute. Neither this, the two Trof bars in Fallowfield nor Trof Northern Quarter sell cask ale - it remains to

be seen if the Salutation will be their first venture into this growing market.

Beech Road Beer

July's Beech Road festival saw local pubs have a bumper weekend as hot summer weather brought up to 10,000 visitors to the Chorlton street. Relative newcomer **Parlour** teamed up with Macclesfield's Red Willow Brewery to install a temporary outside bar serving two of the brewery's cask ales, although with the unprecedented numbers of visitors, they didn't last long.

The **Beech** also had a temporary outside bar, although without real ale. However, inside they expanded their range to six cask



ales with the addition of Jennings Cumberland and Hopback Summer Lightning. So popular did they prove over the weekend that after a hasty restock, they now form part of a permanent range of six ales in the rejuvenated pub. Real cider has also been added to the range, served from boxes on the bar. Landlord Chris Clisst has also signed up with owners Enterprise Inns in a deal that will see the pub redecorated inside and out.

Trafford Update

Urmston is home to the area's newest brewery, with the **Steamhouse** installing a "nanobrewery" (smaller than a microbrewery) in the pub's cellar. The tiny plant is currently being used to trial recipes that when perfected will initially only be available at The Steamhouse, Urmston and possibly at sister the Steamhouse in Sale. When the beers are established on the bar and the operation is running smoothly, management told OT that they will look at replacing the nano kit with something capable of supplying beers to the wider market. In a related move, the pub is making a batch of its own cider, apparently something owner Rob has long fancied having a go at.



In Sale, the Marston's Pub Co has given a much needed refit to the **Bank At Sale** on the pedestrianised section of School Road. The pub was closed for five weeks and while looking no different outside, it is a lot brighter and more welcoming within. There are three handpumps - when OT called these featured Banks's Bitter, Marston's Pedigree with a seasonal from the Marston's group was just being changed.

More Pub News on next page...

Pub News Extra...

Continued from page 15....

One stop down the Metrolink line, the **Brook** at Brooklands station has also re-



opened after a major refurbishment that sees a new bar area and new seating areas. The outdoor patio area has been expanded with the addition of a canopy, new lighting and heating.

In June's pub news, we reported the demise of Northern Moor's **Yew Tree**. The piece mistakenly stated that the **Gardeners Arms** remained the area's last pub. Apologies are due to the **Park**, the traditional JW Lees estate pub nestled away to the south of the area on Moorcroft Road which continues to serve the local community well.

Meanwhile in Timperley, the resurgent interest in cask ale at the **Stonemasons Arms** reported in May's Opening Times has proved short lived. The additional handpumps installed earlier this year have now been removed, leaving the pub once again selling just Tetley's Cask.

Gateway Wetherspoons



July 12 saw the re-opening of the former Hydes pub, the Gateway as a Wetherspoon outlet. Sited at the junction of Kingsway and Manchester Road, this is a large roadhouse that dates from between the wars. Externally, and for that matter internally, the structure is little changed.

Inside the large island bar serves a large lounge with raised seating area (this used to act as a stage area in Hydes' time), this is flanked by a comfy lounge on the Manchester Road side, and a more open lounge, that used to be the vault on the Kingsway side. Behind the bar is a more secluded drinking and dining area. All is carpeted now, with half-height panelling on most of the walls. The interesting photos of the interior of yesteryear have gone to be replaced by pictures and text relating to Daniel Adamson and the Ship Canal Co.

So what about the beer? There are eight handpumps, dispensing the usual two Wetherspoons' regulars (Ruddles Best and Abbot Ale) and six guests, four of which were on while OT was there: Exmoor Gold (4.5%), Northern Summer Breeze (4.1%), Caledonian

Deuchars IPA and Adnams Broadside, with Moorhouses Pendle Witches and Northern Stateside slated as 'coming soon'. The prices are higher than usual for Wetherspoons, at £2.45 to £2.60 for the guest beers, even higher than at the nearest other branch, the Milson Rhodes up the road in Didsbury, so this is not just the Didsbury factor operating, but maybe it reflects the lack of direct competition in the immediate locality.

However, in spite of that Hydes ultimately didn't manage to make a go of this pub but on the current evidence Wetherspoons are giving it their very best shot

Soup Kitchen Latest



Here at OT we are big fans of the **Soup Kitchen** (Spear Street, off Stevenson Square) and now there has been a major expansion into the huge cellar area, along with changes to the opening hours and beer range.

They will be opening on Friday from 5pm to 3am, every Friday and Saturday through to late August when they expect to extend the opening days from Wednesday to Sunday. It's free entry on Fridays all night and ticketed events from 9pm on Saturdays. On the beer front they have two rotational cask ales downstairs extending the range to four in total, this will be alongside Phoenix Lager, Vedett Blonde and Vedett White. The bottle selection is a work in progress and they will either be extending the bottled conditioned beers upstairs or move most of them downstairs....in general though the whole offering will be extended and if someone wants a drink that is in the basement when it's not open, one of the staff will happily get it for them. Well worth a visit.

Cheadle Hulme News

The former Smithy on Grove Lane in Cheadle Hulme reopened last month as the **Pointing Dog** but this is essentially a brand new building which is largely unrecognisable from its previous incarnation. This follows a £1.5 million investment by the Sheffield-based Felicini group (which runs Italian restaurants of that name in Didsbury and the City Centre, along with Grinch café bar). Inside it is light and airy with plenty of different areas for seating and outside is an enormous garden, again with plenty of seating available.

While there is a selection of cask beers available, the emphasis does seem to be on eating with an impressive (if rather pricey) menu available. The beers on opening night



comprised a mixture of the familiar (Theakston's Bitter and Deuchars IPA) and more imaginative offerings – Dunham Massey Big Tree Bitter and Castle Rock Harvest Pale. We understand that a Dunham Massey beer will always be available, which is a laudable move. Among the keg offerings is Moravka a remarkably authentic Czech-style lager from Taddington Brewery near Buxton (and arguably one of the best beers of its kind made in the UK). Beer prices match the food – the Dunham Massey was £1.80 a half, with the Castle Rock coming in at £1.85. So not cheap but still a significant improvement on the Smithy.

It Takes a Lot of Bottle

In these recession hit times, it takes a lot of bottle to set up a business but Corin Bland, owner of the High Peak Beer Company, has done exactly that. In fact, he has over 100 different bottles of beer and cider at his new stall in **Stockport's Victorian Market Hall**.

'Supporting CAMRA's LocAle principle, we aim to focus on beers which have been produced by micro breweries within a 25 mile radius of Stockport, which make up over 70% of our range. There will also be beers from the remainder of the British Isles, along with the occasional German, Belgian and American craft beers. However wherever possible, we will try and provide a local beer to match people's tastes. For example, we are pleased to be stocking Thornbridge's new Versa Weiss bier, which has been created to match the banana, bubblegum and cinnamon notes of its German counterparts but brewed in Bakewell not Bavaria!'

Corin, a relatively recent convert to real ale, following a trip to the 2006 Stockport Beer Festival, describes himself as an enthusiast about real ale as opposed to an expert but is keen to convert others to the cause through his new venture. The festival proved to be my 'road to Damascus' moment, I was amazed at the sheer variety of beer on offer and the range of different tastes compared to the fizzy lager I was used to drinking. I hope I can replicate that choice through the range of beers I have on offer.'

The stall which was due to open on Tuesday, 2nd August is in the middle aisle of Stockport indoor market and will be open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 9.00am -4.30pm. To be kept up to date with new beers and events please e-mail info@highpeakbeer.co.uk

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The Hat Goes Forth

Andy Sullivan on Denton and Audenshaw

IT HAS to be said that Denton and Audenshaw do not immediately spring to mind when it comes to thinking about a destination for a beer or two. But I live here and have done for long enough to remember the Thursday, Friday and Saturday night wanders. Each of these evenings saw groups and couples of all ages starting in one pub, let's say the **Cottage** on Hyde Road, and by one route or another ending it in the **Red Lion** at Crown Point perhaps. There were the "all nighters" and the "last hour" people and their routines were pretty much a fixture.

Sadly those days are gone and I find the streets deserted of those mostly easy going folk, who often knew each other, passing the time of the night so to speak and the easy unthreatening atmosphere. Yes of course there were young men who got into fights, indeed sought them out, but it never seemed to spill over much and it was always fists and often handbags anyway. So it has to be said most of my supping goes on at tea time, which has kind of evolved over time and has a lot more to do with personal circumstances than the shift away from the pub culture of old.

This story is in common with many a town and familiar I guess to a lot of people so I won't belabour it too much, but it does go some way to emphasise the decline of the local pub trade, which appears to have reached catastrophic conditions and in particular recently here in Denton and Audenshaw. If one, as I do, quite reasonably at tea time, alighted the train at Guide Bridge and looked to the right, the closed **Boundary** is right in front of you. This used to be a destination pub for many an ale fan, lost its way and has come to this sorry pass. Across from and to the left of the station is the **Junction**, also closed. Turning left towards Denton a little way down on the right is the **Queens Arms**, for some time a carvery or Indian restaurant now more a pub and a decent number of customers, but no cask ale. Further down on the left this time is the **Hooley Hill** late the Mechanics, closed again.

A thirsty wannabe drinker might be thinking at this stage about turning round and making a bee line for another destination, but wait does sanctuary beckon? Perhaps, at the crossroads of Guide Lane and Shepley Road there are two pubs, the **Sun** and the **Old Pack Horse**, both open and the **Sun** seems to be doing something right at least often appearing busy when I pass it on the 347 bus from Ashton or walking. Not tonight it doesn't. To be fair anyway it doesn't appeal to me, but let's take a look inside. Oh dear, dreary tonight and anyway no real ale!

On the other side of the crossroads the **Pack Horse** is a Robinson's pub and, when I last visited some time ago had the one beer on hand pull, the often derided Unicorn, it was fine and the pub was nicely turned out. Now I do like this beer, but it does disappoint on occasion, but today the beer is again fine and the pub a welcome respite. As a local community pub it has a lovely feel, a nice mixed tea time clientele and a little buzz about the place. Clean and well presented, if a little old fashioned in appearance, this pub deserves support.

Leaving the Pack Horse and walking towards Denton after half a mile or so there is, on the left the **Richmond** and whilst open it is dark and in my mind unwelcoming and has no real ale. The **White House** a little further on the same side is a Sam Smith's place. I always thought this a decent pub, but never any real ale. You really would have thought that now, given the value for money Sam's gives per pint, they might have had a go with it here as a cask offering, but no, still keg.

Oh well, walking a little further, but not much, again on the left is the **Dog and Partridge**, a Robinson's pub I used to go in every Saturday for a while. The pub hadn't been opened up, much, then and the old landlord used to have a couple of Old English sheepdogs to clear out the pub at closing time, or Hoover up crisps whichever came sooner.

Leaving the Dog and continuing towards Crown Point, on the left just beyond Crown Point North is the **Silver Springs**, a former decent ale house and just had a facelift at least outside. Forget it no real ale and almost no custom. Ok we're at Crown Point now let's try the **Red Lion** a terracotta pub on the corner and a Hydes outlet. Well there's a

handpull proclaiming "Original", but on asking the only one available was smooth! This place has a TV blaring and virtually no custom is dark and, to me, not very welcoming. A hasty retreat then and a turn to the left along Stockport Road, to the **Gardener's Arms** almost next door. At last a decent pint and a bit of life too, in fact it's an excellent pint of Unicorn, the bar counter is really impressive here; it's just likely to be standing when the rest of the pub has collapsed. This really is a refuge, I refuse point blank to enter the **Last Orders** opposite the Red Lion so to have this place available is very welcome, but boy could it do with some investment!

As I walk home reflecting that perhaps I might have chosen a better route, I can't actually think of one, depressed I trundle past the closed **Broomhouse**, the ale free **Coach and Horses**, the **Angel** and the **Cottage** (up for sale) all on Hyde Road and walk into the amazingly busy **Lowes Arms**. It's now half past seven a quiz is about to start and this place is clearly thriving. I have a pint of 4.1 X-Ray from Hornbeam and Ahhhh. For some reason the Lowes doesn't seem to get the credit it deserves. Pete Wood and his team have created an excellent business and a place that people want to go to. OK, it majors on food, but the beer, at least on this visit, is in fine form and surely we should celebrate this success as much for our local brewer Hornbeam as the pub.

So a somewhat depressing state of affairs is seen on this, my first take on Denton and Audenshaw, but three pubs deserve our support if you are in this neck of the woods. I will take another route through Denton for next time and I hope it will be more uplifting, but I wouldn't necessarily bank on it! That said don't forget there are always exceptions to the rule. The Lowes, Gardeners and The Old Pack Horse prove the point, support them.

Foreign Beer News

As we have reported before Altrincham has three Belgian beer bars in close proximity. Martin Matthews who owns **Le Trappiste** on Shaws Road has now gone one step further and helped brew two Belgian-style beers at Bollington Brewery.

Le Trappiste Classic is a dark abbey-style dubbel at 7.4%. It's dark, slightly spicy and aromatic and has a real Belgian air to it, despite not using Belgian yeast for the brew. Only 14 nine-gallon casks have been made – ten of these will be sold on draught while the remaining four will be bottled. The companion beer, also at 7.4%, is a golden brew and more of a tripel in style. Both beers will be sold at Le Trappiste as well as the Vale in Bollington and the Park Tavern in Macclesfield.

The Le Trappiste Classic was in fact the 1,000th different beer sold at the bar. But there are other goodies, too. When OT called we tried Des Monts Cats (7.6%) a beer from a putative trappist brewery in France (but which for the time being is having it's beer made at Chimay), along with some beers from cult Belgian brewers Struise – Elliott Brew is a collaboration with (equally cult) Danish brewer Mikkeller and is a big booming IPA at 8%, while Svea IPA is a more restrained beer at 7%. Martin is also stocking Struise Aardmonnik. Beer geeks rave about this – it's a sweet-sour beer matured for 18 months in oak casks – and is also totally flat.

Apart from the Altrincham bars, the best range of Belgian beer locally is to be found at the **New Oxford** on Bexley Square in Salford. Tim Flynn is currently revamping and adding to his selection, too. When OT called he was in the process of ordering draught Monk Stout from Brasserie Dupont. This is relatively new beer from this highly respected Belgian brewer and is rarely seen on draught anywhere.

New bottles are in the pipeline, too. The new St Feuillien Grand Cru will be available in 33cl bottles – probably by the time you read this. Tim is also planning to get bottles from iconic Dutch micro De Molen – in this he might be in something of a race with the **Port Street Beer House** who are starting to branch out more into European beers and who already have their eyes on these beers.



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Brewery NEWS

New From Robbies

The latest seasonal from Robbinsons is an addition to their "Old Tom" series. Young Tom comes in at 4.2% ABV and it is a reformulated version of a similarly named beer that was a seasonal several years ago. This version is described as a "full flavoured mahogany coloured dark ale with aromas of nutty malt and fruit esters. This complex and deeply satisfying beer has a sweet toffee and roasted malt palate complemented by a creamy richness normally associated with strong ale". Well worth seeking out in your local Robbies house.



Changes at Marble

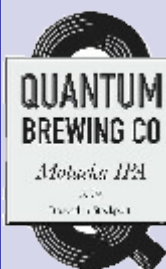
Brewer Colin Stronge (pictured far right with Head Brewer James Campbell and Marble owner Jan Rogers) is leaving Marble Brewery for pastures new. And pastures pretty remote, too. He's off to take up the newly created post of Head Brewer and Production Manager at the Black Isle Brewery just north of Inverness. He's certainly looking forward to the challenge and the huge change of lifestyle this will bring with it. Black Isle is a fully organic operation set on a farm with a well established beer range (you might pick some up at Unicorn Wholefood in Chorlton) and Colin is looking forward to introducing some monthly specials.



Meanwhile back at the ranch, so to speak, look out for two new bottled beers from Marble. The long awaited Belgian-style triple (made with Belgian yeast but with extra hops – as you might expect from Marble) comes in at 9% ABV and is available in 75cl bottles. Staying with the international theme there is also a German-style wheat beer out shortly. This 5% brew will be available in 50cl bottles. Check them out.

Latest Locals

Pictured is Poynton Royal British Legion Steward Nic pulling a pint of the first **Worth Brewery** brew to go on sale at the club. As previously reported in *Opening Times* the brew is called "Bout Time" and it is a 4.1% traditional English Bitter. The pumpclip shows St. George's Church in the centre of Poynton village, and opposite the road on which the Legion may be found. Brewer Paul Hession was hoping to have up to five different beers available by the end of July with the first up being "Incline" a 3.6% bitter. Hopefully a full report next month.



Meanwhile Stockport's **Shaws Brewery** is going from strength to strength, building an increasingly impressive reputation. Jay Krause has now launched a series of single hop IPAs under his Quantum Brewing label with the first one using New Zealand Motueka hops. Motueka IPA at 5.5% should still be available when you read this.

Outstanding Brewery recently set up a Facebook page and Opening Times readers are welcome to join. As well as engaging with customers and friends, and keeping them updated on the latest brewery news, it is hoped that users of the page will treat it as a forum to discuss beer, ask questions, make suggestions and provide feedback. Outstanding Amber Bock will be making a long awaited return after a long absence as new batches of the 6% beer are being brewed.

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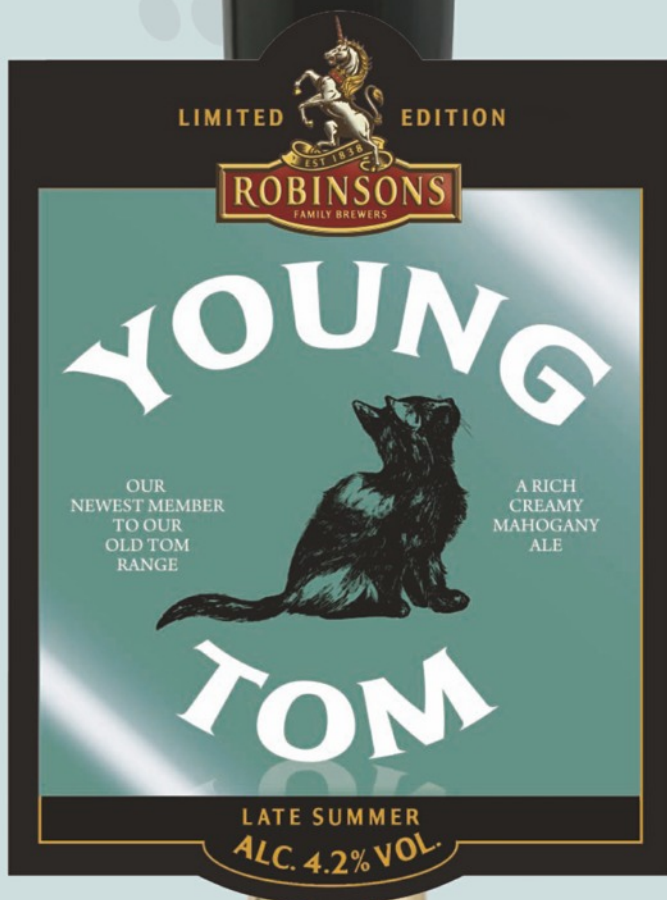
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