

September 2011

Opening

TIMES

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

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



Good Guys Come Second – top award for Marble at Great British Beer Festival – see page 14
Bollington Brewery also win out – see page 14
Stockport's Magnet is Regional Pub of the Year – Full details on page 19

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**CAMPAIGN
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The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for September is the Fingerpost on Hemphaw Lane in Offerton. Chris Wainwright explains why it won.

There is this month a new-comer to this column, being a first time winner of our prestigious award. The Fingerpost was built in the Victorian era, and dominates a cross-roads in Offerton. Like many things Victorian, it is a solid red brick built affair with a bold white painted porch and large sash windows. A multi-roomed former hotel that has been a proud part of the Robinsons estate since their takeover of the old Bell's Brewery over 60 years ago.



It is comprised of a large curved bar in the vault harking back to the days when most of the trade was provided by the working classes, and a smaller bar serving the lounge area. The vault is still suitably appointed so as to provide comfort for those not wanting too many modern trappings, without being too bare. The lounge side has all the comforts of a modern pub with three distinct drinking rooms in a semi open plan layout, with two meeting rooms at the end of the passageway.

Until recently it had been under the care of no less than three generations of one family. About eighteen months ago and just after Robinsons had spent a large amount of cash on structural repairs, Robert Lester arrived to take over the helm, ably assisted by family members Barbara and Meg. No strangers to either the pub trade or Robinsons Brewery having run pubs in Whaley Bridge, Kirkham, Nantwich and Shrewsbury, they set about to restore the business to its former glory. They introduced homemade meals, reopened the upstairs function room and engaged live bands to complement the already established darts, cribbage and football teams.



Past visitors may remember the Robinsons Best Bitter and Mild being served through electric pumps, these were replaced with handpumps a few years ago when the beers were renamed Unicorn and Hatters. Credit for the sparkling quality of the beer is down to Robert's faultless cellarmanship. The Lesters have continued the Fingerpost's habit of supporting charities by holding family fun-days in the huge open space to the rear of the pub. There is still a very strong Stockport County FC following here too, with a band of regulars who insist on calling in for breakfast to start their journey to away matches, a tradition that Robert is happy to continue.

So please come and give your support to The Fingerpost (434 Hemphaw Lane, Offerton SK1 4QA) from 8pm, September 22nd. It is served by the 383/384 and 358 buses.



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Comment, Notes & Contents

What's On

Opening Times – Comment

CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival was held in London last month. The highlight of the event is the announcement of the winners in the Champion Beer of Britain contest. "Will any gongs be heading for the North West?" we pondered last time. Well, they certainly did.

Congratulations are due to two local brewers. Marble Brewery almost pulled off the big one but had to settle for second place overall in the national rankings for their superb Chocolate Marble. This is a huge achievement and a credit to everyone at Marble. The beer itself is a rich stout classic and is available both on draught and in bottle.

However the awards don't stop there. In recent years Opening Times has charted how Bollington and Macclesfield has become something of a centre of micro-brewing with no less than four breweries operating there now. This has now achieved a degree of recognition with Bollington Brewery's Bollington Best gaining a bronze in the 'Best Bitter' category. This former Champion Beer of Cheshire is superbly quaffable and refreshing. Congratulations to Lee and Kim Wainwright for a job well done!

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) 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 October issue is Saturday 10 September

Our front cover shows Marble Head Brewer James Campbell photographed by John Macklin

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, Lawrence Bamber, Paul France, Dick Puddlecote, Richard Chanin, Adam Bruderer, John Macklin.

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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.

September

Wednesday 7th – Eccles Social: Wangies, Liverpool Rd 8pm; Eccles Cross 9.15pm (NM)

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

Saturday 10th – 11am train from Manchester Piccadilly for Liverpool crawl. (MEC)

Saturday 10th – Visit Offbeat Brewery to present bronze award in Beer of Festival contest. Catch Crewe train: Piccadilly 11.04, Stockport 11.16, Ch Hulme 11.24, arr 12.01 or Piccadilly 11.30, Stockport 11.38, arr 12.05. Meet on station concourse at Crewe (SSM). Contact John Clarke – 0161 477 1973 or stocam@btinternet.com.

Tuesday 13th – Macclesfield Crawl. Starts Plough at 8pm. (MEC)

Wednesday 14th – Thomas St Crawl: TV21 7.30; Bluu 8.00; Bay Horse 9.00; 57 Thomas St 9.30; Millstone 10pm. (NM)

Thursday 15th – Timperley Social: 8pm Stonemason's; 8.45 Quarrybank; 9.30 Moss Trooper; 10.15 Gardeners Arms; finish Timperley Taverners. (TRH)

Friday 16th – Ladybarn, Fallowfield & Rusholme Stagger: 7.30pm White Swan, Green St; 8.30pm Friendship, Wilmslow Rd. (SSM)

Monday 19th – Local ales award presentation to Bulls Head, Mobberley. 8pm. (MEC)

Wednesday 22nd – Pub of the Month Award to Fingerpost, Offerton. From 8pm (SSM)

Friday 23rd – Sunday 25th – South West Manchester Cricket Club Beer Festival (TRH)

Saturday 24th – Social at Old Hall Beer Festival, Chinley. From 12 noon. (MEC)

Wednesday 28th – 25 Years in Good Beer Guide presentation to the Crescent, Salford. From 8pm. (NM)

Thursday 29th – City Centre Social: 8pm Sam's Chop House; 8.45 Thomas's Chop House; 9.30 Vine; finish City Arms/ Waterhouse. (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: Phil Booton 0161 957 7148, phbooton@hotmail.com

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

Thursday 8th – Milson Rhodes, School Ln, Didsbury. May include Thornbridge Meet the Brewer. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 21st – Unicorn, Church St, City Centre. Starts 7.30pm (NM)

Thursday 6th October – Branch AGM – Timperley Taverners, Park Lane, Timperley. Start 8pm (TRH)



This month we have a special guest column from Top 50 political blogger "Dick Puddlecoate", whose blog can be found at: <http://dickpuddlecote.blogspot.com>

Caught in the Crosshair

THERE is a curious – and ill-judged – tendency amongst many beer lovers to consider their chosen vice as somehow resistant to the attentions of the health lobby as opposed to tobacco. Even CAMRA have fallen for it. In 2004, they weakly attempted to defend pubs from the harmful effects of the smoking ban by playing right into tobacco control hands and suggesting that a diversity of outlets offering choice for all would "split the pub trade". In the end, they got their wish as *all* pubs were given *no* choice. Now, you can argue, if you like, that this has had no damaging effect on the hospitality trade (I'd heartily disagree) but it has certainly contributed to a big problem for pubs, and beer lovers, which is only now beginning to come home to roost.

In a rousing 1919 speech following the ratification of Prohibition in the US, "anti-saloon" campaigner Billy Sunday declared "Prohibition is won, now for tobacco!" Because all the while campaigners for the prohibition of alcohol were tied up with that issue, their assault on smoking was left on the back burner. Once the war against alcohol was completed, resources were freed up to attack tobacco, employing the same personnel and moral pleading which was so successful against booze.

Nothing has changed from those days. Just as righteous crusaders tackled both substances around a century ago, so do their modern day equivalents act the same now. ASH have taken to coaching anti-alcohol campaigners on how to achieve the same demonisation of alcohol as has happened with tobacco, and the methodology is lifted from the successful anti-smoking playbook. Professor David Nutt was the first to suggest that "there is no such thing as a safe level of alcohol consumption", a position which is increasingly becoming the default one. The Cancer Council of Australia certainly thinks that way, a couple of months ago advocating that total abstinence should be the *only* public health policy. In a chilling reminder of post-prohibition triumphalism in the US, the Australian press reported the campaign as "Cigs war won: now cancer campaigners set their sights on beer".

CAMRA keeps ploughing this furrow, as in August last year where they tried to claim some form of high ground by declaring that "beer can supplement a healthy lifestyle if consumed in a responsible manner", but this approach is doomed if they think that playing in public health's self-constructed playground is going to do anything but invite ridicule. 'No safe level' leaves no wriggle room whatsoever, and the protestation that beer is somehow not *that* bad will be thrown back at them by the health lobby as an admission of guilt. Which it is.

No. The best form of defence, as always, is attack. And instead of back-sliding when the smoking in pubs debate was taking place, CAMRA would have been better served standing firm and resisting all legislation on tobacco. While that buffer was still in place, CAMRA were insulated against the worst excesses of an insatiable health lobby. Without it, resources are being withdrawn from tobacco in favour of new targets, and those who enjoy a pint or two are now squarely in the crosshair.

(References for this article can be seen in the online version)

Curmudgeon Online:
www.curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com



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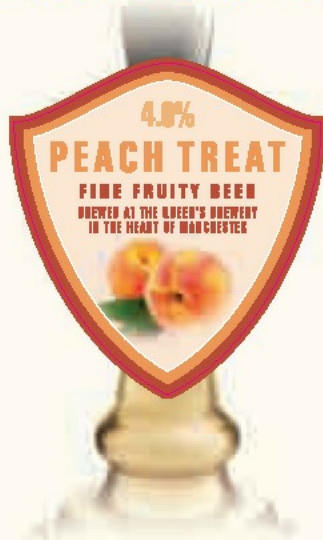
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Stagger.....

Hyde Road

With Jim Flynn

PERHAPS it was the very poor wet weather or Andy Murray playing a match at Wimbledon (highly unlikely I agree) or that some feel that this stagger is a shadow of its former glory but only a small band of us met up in the **Pineapple** on Garratt Way in Gorton.

This stagger used to start in the **Travellers Call** but this Hydes pub went some while ago and is now up for sale. We almost didn't go to the Pineapple as this too lost its cask beer however after experimenting unsuccessfully with the Hydes seasonal the new licensees decided to persevere by introducing Hydes Original. We were the first to drink the beer as it had only been just put on that evening and found it in more than reasonable nick. We were greeted by the landlady who we congratulated for her commitment and we were very pleased to hear how the pub was proving a success since it returned directly under Hydes control (it was previously one of the Keary Bars). The pub itself is a 1960/70s building with two seating areas around the bar in a sort of a staggered L shape. The two noticeable features from where we sat were the wooden (pine?) Swiss type high ceiling and the modern art paintings of a young lady in various states of undress but strangely with no facial features. It is to be hoped that Hydes now invest in a refurbishment so that the pub can improve further under these enthusiastic licensees.



We moved on down Garratt Way in the drizzle to the **Suburban** hidden from view behind the giant Tesco which surrounds two



sides of the building including the original front of the pub. In the lounge (the vault seems permanently closed these days) there were two handpumps displaying Lees Bitter and Mild pump clips (despite the fact that Lees Mild hasn't been available now for some time). On asking for the Bitter we were told that the cask had only been delivered that day and wasn't ready for sale.

Leaving the pub to its single customer it was on through the Tesco's car park to Robinsons' **Plough** on Hyde Road itself. I was told on a

previous stagger by the then licensee that much of this large, impressive looking building dates from the 18th century, with parts originally built in 1702. We sat in the unpretentious vault with its traditional wooden high bench seating and parquet flooring. There are three other rooms; a lounge, a games room and a back room used for meetings but sadly there were no customers in any of these other rooms. One of the most noticeable features however is the striking green tiling in the hall that links these rooms and the bar. A beer garden lies to the rear but given the weather were weren't tempted. There is only one cask beer available these days, Unicorn and we found it to be of a similar standard to the beer in the Pineapple.



Our next stop was again off Hyde Road on Cross Street. Ignoring the keg only **Angel** and the cask free disco hell that was the **Cotton Tree** we went straight to the **Royal Oak**. In my opinion this is one of the unsung pubs in the area which should get more attention and praise. This very homely pub has two rooms, a vault and a lounge, each with its own door on to the road because this was originally two separate buildings in a terrace. The place was buzzing as we sat in the lounge amongst the bric-a-brac on the beams and the wood panelling. Although the music was little loud for our tastes conversation was certainly still possible while we enjoyed the Dark Side of the Toad a dark bitter from the Toad brewery in Doncaster (normally the pub serves Everards Tiger). This beer is an acquired taste but nevertheless it went down well.

It was back down Tan Yard Brow and across Hyde Road to the **Waggon and Horses**, Holt's very large, extremely



busy and lively pub. From the evidence of this visit this is clearly a place on the up after previously seeming to suffer a decline. Although there was a karaoke in full swing such is the size of this multi roomed road house type pub it was easy to get away from the music (a loose description with some of the singers) to sample not only the Holts Bitter but also their Mild, the only mild available on the night. Both were found to be on good form.

Ignoring the keg only **Friendship** further up Hyde Road we turned back towards Manchester and walked to the **Lord Nelson**.

This is another pub which briefly lost its real ale but now serves cask beers again. The pub is much older than it looks (over 300 years old I'm reliably told) with the original front door being on Fox Fold to the rear as this was the old droving road through Gorton. Inside appears far more modern and is festooned with sporting memorabilia from both Manchester teams



(although surprisingly given this is East Manchester, United predominate) and from local hero Ricky Hatton, including signed boxing gloves. One of the features of this very busy pub is the prompt and very customer friendly service. The music was again loud but although more difficult to avoid our conversation was not completely stifled while we supped our Theakstons Best Bitter, the only cask beer available that night.

Onward then to my personal favourite of the night, the **Vale Cottage**.



If you haven't been to this top pub then you are really missing something, it's a gem! This is another pub situated on the old droving road which is why it is now completely hidden from the busy Hyde Road behind the Lord Nelson in the trees of the Gore Brook conservation area. As a consequence standing outside the pub you feel that you are entering a country pub and on going inside you certainly aren't disappointed. There are two main areas of the pub connected by a 'corridor' along the bar and with the low beamed ceiling it's easy to accept that parts of the pub date from the 17th Century. In contrast with the last few pubs the noise around the place was mainly the buzz of conversation. We were welcomed by the landlord and landlady almost as lost friends and given a run down of the trials of the pub trade. Make no bones about it however these people know how to run a proper pub. The beer was superb with both the Taylor's Landlord and Moorhouses' Pride of Pendle on excellent form (none of us tried the Theakston's Best Bitter). Altogether a great end to the night I thought as I reluctantly left for my bus home.

Those who stayed in and watched Andy Murray because they thought this stagger was a poor imitation of its former self were mistaken because they missed a good night out with a vary of pubs, different beers in every pub visited and some good quality beer to boot.

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Pub News



Chorlton & Trafford News

Chorlton's **Marble Beer House** has undergone a change of management with Caroline Jones leaving in late July. She has been replaced by Warren McCoubrey who has had a long association with Marble Beers, having formerly been assistant brewer and most recently establishing 57 Thomas Street before moving to The Continental in Preston. OT welcomes Warren back while wishing Caroline best wishes in her next venture.



Not even Chorlton can claim to have every single pub and bar in the area serving real ale, but Urmston can now stake that claim following the installation of two handpumps at **Mambo's** on Flixton Road. Wychwood Hobgoblin and Greene King IPA are on sale in this "night club" that actually opens weekday afternoons only except for Friday and Saturday evenings when it comes to life until the early hours.

By the time you read this, the historic **Sale Hotel** on Marsland Road, Sale should have re-opened under Greene King's Hungry Horse brand. Built in 1878 as part of a nineteenth-century botanical garden complex, the pub had fallen on hard times and closed in 2009. However a massive campaign by local residents succeeded in having the building listed. Greene King bought it for just under £1m in 2010 and have spent the past year restoring and refurbishing it.

Altrincham's **Bridge Inn** has had a temporary reprieve. Although the pub had announced a closing date of 10th August, the council's plans to compulsorily purchase it to make way for a new development hit a snag when it was found not to have followed correct procedure. As OT went to press, the pub was still open so the fight for The Bridge goes on, at least until the next hearing scheduled for September.

City Centre News

In the city centre, the **Salutation** hidden away on Higher Chatham Street behind the Manchester Metropolitan University reopened on 18th July under management of Trof group. Two cask ales remain, Wells & Youngs Bombardier and Greene King IPA, although management are believed to be non-committal on whether cask has a long-term future at the pub. There is a reasonable range of bottled beers including



some American craft ales. (Picture by Adam Bruderer)

The former Hogshead on Deansgate is now known as the **Lost Dene**. Although it was closed for a number of weeks for refurbishment, the internal layout is not significantly different. Owned, as before, by Stonegate Pubs Company who also own the Yates, Slug & Lettuce & Scream brands, there are four cask ales from national names, including their own Lost Dene Best Bitter (understood to be a rebadged Courage Directors). They have a loyalty scheme - buy seven pints and get an eighth free and offer a 20% discount for CAMRA members, should you be inclined. The pub is open until Midnight on Thursdays, 1am on Fridays and 2am on Saturdays.

Visitors to the Spinningfields district may have noticed an interesting shaped building being constructed in Crown Square. This development from the owners of nearby Alchemist is to become the **Oast House**, modelled on traditional buildings of that name that were used in Kent to dry hops so they could flavour beer. Real ales are promised alongside continental ales with food to be in the form of cheese & pate platters.

Finally, **Odd Bar** on Thomas Street has now opened an upstairs bar with three handpumps in addition to the one on the main bar downstairs.



Stockport Supping

The **Puss in Boots** deserved a review after having been refurbished in plush style and run on behalf of Robinsons by the Almond Pub Co (they also run two other Robinsons pubs - the **Three Bears**, and **Fletchers Arms**, plus the **Hesketh**). Prior to this impressive refit, the Puss was seemingly doing little trade and had equal level of appeal. Now the former 60s estate pub on Nangreave Road in Offerton offers you an extensive outside seating and drinking area together with a very fancy covered smoking veranda. Internally, good use of furnishings and wall coverings, together with excellent lighting gives the place instant class. Food is available throughout the day and throughout the pub, added to which is a separate dining room to the rear right. Trade was brisk and people seem very keen on the new look.



The ground floor cellar has now become a feature in itself by the installation of glazing in front of it (pictured here). The cask beers are now Hatters, Old Stockport, Unicorn and seasonal ale; prior to this it only sold Unicorn.

A wander into neighbouring Heaviley found the **Bamford** selling pretty mediocre Pedigree and Jennings Cumberland. The place was busy however. The nearby **Duke of York** (Robinsons) should be unveiling its new interior soon after a makeover. At the **Blossoms**, landlord Eric Mills informed us he may be stocking more cask beers than the current Dark Hatters, Dizzy Blonde, Unicorn and seasonal line-up currently on the bar. Bag-in-box Westons cider is also available on the bar counter. By the way, the pinball machine has now gone.

Meanwhile the **Florist** on Shaw Heath has new licensees. John and Deborah Munro took over this large Robinsons



house along with their son Mark in late July. Run very much as a "family firm" this is John's first pub (he is an engineer by profession) although son Mark has had plenty of experience of the pub trade. The beer range has been extended with Dizzy Blonde and Dark Hatters now on sale alongside the staples of Unicorn and Hatters. John told us that while business was initially slow it is now picking up nicely with old faces returning to the pub. Well worth a visit.

Nearby the **Grapes** at the top of Castle Street (up for let according to Robinsons website at 19 August) has lost its traditional cider. However as one door closes another opens and the excellent **Alexandra** on Northgate Road now has two ciders on handpump - Westons Bounds Brand and Old Rosie. Both are selling well.

Congratulations to the **Railway** on Wellington Road North which has won Pure Radio's Stockport Perfect Pub Award for 2011. This is the latest in a series of awards won by Ray and Pam Ford who have really turned the pub around



since buying it from Punch Taverns back in 2009. Needless to say they are delighted with their award - Ray told us that he would like to thank all of the customers who voted for them. A celebration night was held at the pub and Ray is pictured here with the trophy.

Northern comfort.



Autumn food and award-winning beer.

High Peak Pub Scene

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

Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

Just off the Leek road, A53, not far south of Buxton stands the village of Flash, with its pub the **New Inn**. The New Inn claims to be the highest *village* pub in England. Flash is in the northern extremity of Staffordshire and is within the Peak District National Park. Remoteness doesn't preclude recognition, for the Potteries Branch of CAMRA voted the New Inn Pub of the Month for July 2011. Flagged floors remain a feature in this pub in farming and walking country, whilst Storm Bosley Cloud is a regular beer. It is good to see a rural gem of a pub in the Peak District succeeding in its CAMRA branch. Information from *Potters Bar*, Summer, 2011, the Potteries Branch of CAMRA newsletter.

Now and again the big national brewers try some interesting ideas in their efforts to boost sales. Recent efforts have seen special editions of Greene King Abbot and Marston's Pedigree. Marston's Father Time was a 5% version of Pedigree, available briefly because of rapid sales, in the **Shepherds** in Whaley Bridge. Abbot Reserve, somewhat stronger, and even more so in bottles from the supermarket, was available at Wetherspoon's **Crown** in Matlock. At a time when ABVs are being eroded, especially by the big brewers, it is good to see some consideration being given to stronger products. A recent visit to the aforementioned Crown in Matlock found the usual Wetherspoon's suspects on the bar, but also interesting brews such as Thornbridge Seaforth, Naylor's Drayman's Delight and Bath Rare Hare. At risk of contradicting myself none of these beers is a lower gravity session beer. The only session beer available was Ruddle's Best, hardly the most inspiring product of the Greene King stable.

The name of the Thornbridge Brewery spreads nationwide. Bottles have been available in Waitrose in Lincoln, reported a recent *Lincoln Imp*, the Lincoln CAMRA newsletter. *Today's Railways U.K.*, a national publication from Sheffield reported that bottled ales supplied by the **Sheffield Tap** were available at a gala weekend on the Mid Norfolk Railway. Of course the Sheffield Tap is that splendid Thornbridge outlet at Sheffield Station.

The ever changing beer list at the Shepherd's in Whaley Bridge has seen beers from all the Marston's breweries. Ringwood Filly Drift was a good balance of malt and hops, whilst Wychwood Cherry Picker drew mixed responses from drinkers, though each cask did sell out.

Our local Punch pubs access beers from microbreweries via the Punch Finest Cask list. Recent offerings have included Salopian Hop Twister, **White Hart**, Shugborough my Lady's Fancy, **White Horse**, and Coors' Sharp's

Doom Bar, **Goyt Inn**. This last sold out very quickly and is due for a quick return. A recent visit to the Goyt found all five hand pumps in use.

Another now up to five hand pumps is the **Board Inn**, with all the beers selling well enough to maintain quality, including well kept Robinson's Hatters. Food came on stream in July and steady progress is being made.

The weekend of 23-25 September sees the Beer Festival at the **Old Hall** at Whitehough, Chinley. This will be the usual mix of beers from local micros and products from around the country. Pale hoppy brews may predominate but look out for a variety of shades and flavours. Not to be missed.

Pub of the Season

The High Peak CAMRA Pub of the Season for Autumn 2011 is the **Bull's Head** in Old Glossop. Pictured below are (left to right) High Peak CAMRA Chairman Geoff Williamson, Paul Taylor (who has run the pub with wife Barbara for the past eight and a half years), CAMRA's Lisa Fletcher, who made the presentation, and landlady Barbara Taylor.



Around the High Peak

With Richard Chanin

The end of July saw me out in Glossop with the High Peak & North East Cheshire Branch of CAMRA. We began our tour at the **Globe**, a Victorian gas light and mirrors establishment and long standing brewpub, popular in folk music circles. The pub features a vegan kitchen but not all the beers are so do ask. The full range of beers was sampled (Sirius, Comet, Amber, Eclipse) and found to be very good, with the Comet excellent.

Moving up the street we came to the **Star Inn**, adjacent to the railway station. Run by long time CAMRA members, the Star has had an enduring commitment to real ale for many



years. This night we found Woodfordes Wherry and St Austell Tribute on handpump along with regular beer Greene King Old Speckled Hen, all of which were in good order and enjoyed by all.

A short trip up the hill brought our group to Old Glossop at the foot of Doctor's Gate, a major access point for the Pennine Way. Here we discovered two hidden gems: the **Bull's Head** and the **Wheatsheaf**, recently reopened as a pub after being a Greek tapas bar for many years.



The **Bull's Head** (pictured above) is a Robinson's house dating back to the 16th or 17th Century, with its mullioned windows, flagged floors and wood panelling it must be to many the quintessential image of the country pub. Available were Crusoe, Hatters and Unicorn. We all opted for the seasonal Crusoe, which we found to be on very good form and enjoyed enormously.



The last visit of the evening was the **Wheatsheaf**, a genuine free house owned by a local businessman. This early Victorian pub was opened up and modernised before it became a tapas bar and now has a contemporary feel. Settling in amid the comfortably busy Saturday evening crowd, we chose our final sampling of the evening: Shepherd Neame Spitfire and Howard Town Wren's Nest. The Spitfire Premium Ale was originally brewed as a commemorative beer for the RAF's benevolent fund, but has now become Shepherd Neame's flagship brand, and unsurprisingly so, as we found it most enjoyable. So too was our last beer of the evening, Wren's Nest which comes from the nearby Howard Town Brewery. Regular visits to the brewery at Hawkshead Mill are organised at the Wheatsheaf, with lunch included. So after a very pleasant evening out in Glossop we wended our ways home.

The Hat Goes Forth

More on Audenshaw & Denton with Andy Sullivan

It has to be said that for this, my second exploration of the real ale opportunities of Denton and Audenshaw, that I might have picked a better time than 5 o'clock on the evening of the Community Shield football match between City and United. However, to be honest I really didn't give it that much thought and being of the Red persuasion I was a happy man in search of a wet (old southern expression for drink). I was also very happy with the apparently general good nature of the atmosphere around. I may be tempting providence, but perhaps we have all grown up a bit and some of the worst aspects of the tribalism have abated somewhat. Anyway I live in hope and this is not, absolutely not, about the football.

In picking this route I have been vindicated in a previous assertion that I could not think of a better one than my journey from Guide

Bridge back to the Lowes Arms. I am about to prove the point. This is an odd one, I walked it over around two hours, but all the pubs can be reached by bus. I've mentioned the 201 and 347 before, but here the 327/324 also fit and there are others. However, you might want to think very carefully before embarking on this one and if I appear in moan mode I make no apology.

I start at almost Crown Point and visit the recently reopened **Jolly Hatters** on Stockport Road, a former Bass house and surprisingly smaller inside than it looks from outside, although the obvious "refurbishment" has changed this feel somewhat. On entering tonight the music is very loud, there are zero customers and apparently zero bar staff. Unsurprisingly I don't linger and there is no real ale, despite the Hydes name!

On leaving the Jolly a little further towards Crown Point on the right is the **Toll Point**, outside of which are some people who have clearly been enjoying the afternoon's entertainment. I go in, there's no ale and this

place does food! Well that's only my opinion, obviously it does something right because it is very, and has clearly been, very busy so perhaps it's unfair for me to judge on tonight's visit.

As I've already detailed the Gardner's Arms on my first report I cross what is a very good redevelopment of Denton Market place and enter the equally revitalised Victoria Park, which looks really lovely now after some years of relative neglect, well done the council! I am heading towards **Hughes's Bar** on Manchester Road without, it has to be said, much eager anticipation and my fears are well founded, but again it is happily busy and seems to do what its customers want. I leave and retrace my steps back to Acres Street and what I expect to be a pint at the **Acres Inn**. I have been told that there is ale on here, but as it turns out this is a ticket only day so I can't find out for myself. However, the usual suspects are heavily advertised outside, I don't hold out much hope. I will go back and let you know another time.

I am learning rapidly that to do this job I either need to plan it better or make sure I'm not thirsty. It is obvious that I still have one or two lessons to learn! Carrying on down Acres Street towards Town Lane and to another **Jolly Hatters**. This was a Chesters place at one time and I confess never to having liked it much and today, again purely my opinion, it is truly dreadful, but as it is totally packed inside and out am I in a minority? No proper beer and, call me sensitive, I really don't like being accosted by people asking whether I have, to put it delicately, much of a pouch and suggesting that I really don't belong! Mind you on the last count clearly they have a point and I move on, eventually.

I trudge through the Yew Tree estate, considering my next move. Do I venture just marginally into Stockport? Absolutely I do and head straight for the **Arden Arms** on Stockport Road. Sanity at last. The footie's been on here too, but this is a proper pub, friendly and the kind I recognise with a decent range of clientele. Whilst I still have southern vowels and an occasional difficulty with being understood, as here, I successfully procure a pint of Unicorn and am treated to this beer in its finest possible condition, truly making everything so far worthwhile (ish). Now I know this pub should be out of bounds on a tour of Denton, but I don't think it gets too many mentions so what the heck. Well done too to the licensee, I apologise for not recording your name, for the note right on the door as you enter inviting customer suggestions for entertaining activities which would benefit both the pub and charity. Why on earth did I leave?

But I did. Back up Stockport Road towards Denton and up the hill is the **Fletcher's Arms**. A big old roadhouse type pub and another Robinson's outlet. Now to be fair the carvery looked fantastic and pretty good value, but my poor pint of Unicorn was not up to the Arden's quality and though it was not complainable I leave it and also don't sample either the Hatters or Crusoe. Now I am reliably told that this is an unusual state of affairs, so perhaps on another day things may be better and also, being absolutely fair, I'd just been treated to the perfect pint so following that would have been difficult, nigh on impossible. **Continued on page 17...**

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Not for girls?

Peter Edwardson wonders whether brewers are missing a trick by ignoring half of their potential market

BREWERY Molson Coors have just launched a new beer called "Animée" which is specifically targeted at female drinkers. This follows on from a similar product from Carlsberg called "Eve" introduced last year. These "beers for women" have been widely criticised as patronising and sexist, and unlikely to succeed, and those critics are probably right.

But it's not good enough just to respond complacently by saying "if you can actually get women to try Old Volestrangler they really like it," which in its way is just as patronising. Women who do drink beer often do it for precisely the reasons that deter others – because it comes across as a touch rebellious and not in the least "girly," and so their motivations may not be the best guide to expanding the overall female beer market.

It has to be accepted that beer as a category has a serious image problem amongst women in this country. Only 17% of beer drunk in Britain is consumed by women, compared with 25% in the USA. In the great beer-drinking countries of Europe such as Belgium, Germany and the Czech Republic, it's far more common than here just to see women enjoying a beer in a bar as a normal, everyday activity.

Beer is seen as gassy and bloating, and also as something that will make you fat. Neither of these objections are really valid – the first one is easily answered by choosing cask ale, and the second isn't really true at all. Strength for strength, beer has no more calories than other forms of alcoholic drinks. But they are still widely believed, and more needs to be done to counter those myths.

Much mass-market beer still has a laddish, pint-swilling, footy-chanting image which continues to be reflected in marketing campaigns, such as the current Foster's "Good Call" ads. Many cask beers, in contrast, adopt a kind of rustic, bare-boards, back-to-nature imagery which may appeal to fans of *The Good Life*, but doesn't exactly come across as, well, very sophisticated. And too many small real ale brewers choose to use crude lavatorial or blatantly sexist humour in their beer names and pumpclip designs which is likely to be highly off-putting to women (and any men with taste) and frankly debases the whole category.

What is needed, surely, is not dedicated "beers for women", but a marketing strategy which avoids any hints of "machoness" but instead portrays beer as a modern, authentic, high-quality product that can be enjoyed by both sexes in a social context. You may not think much of the beer, but the recent Kronenbourg "slow the pace" campaign was a good start.

And the presentation of beer needs to be looked at too. If it is to appear smart and contemporary, utility Noniks need to be ditched in favour of stylish branded glassware, and those glasses should ideally be oversize so you don't run the risk of spilling beer all over your clothes. In this context the widely-discussed two thirds of a pint measure could have a particular appeal to women.

Perhaps even the much-loved handpump, powerful symbol of cask beer though it is, needs to be called into question. After all, you wouldn't do your washing with a mangle or specify a car with running boards, so why in the 21st century should you be dispensing beer using a manually-operated device invented in the Regency period? To many – and not exclusively women – it's likely to come over simply as clunky and old-fashioned, and the product it dispenses may be dismissed in the same way.



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Brewery News

Great British Beer Festival

"Will any gongs be heading for the North West?" we asked last month. We were talking about the Champion Beer of Britain competition staged last month at CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival. Well they did.

Just missing out on the top award was **Marble Brewery**, coming second overall with the excellent Chocolate Marble – a journey started by winning their class at the National Winter Ales Festival held here in Manchester last January.



The 5.5% ABV beer is a dark, rich brew which does not in fact include any chocolate in the recipe – the colour and flavour coming primarily from the use of dark and chocolate malts. The richness combines with a lingering dry finish to make for a hugely quaffable beer. It's available all year round, both in draught and in bottle from all Marble outlets.

Needless to say the Marble team (pictured right) are over the moon. Head Brewer James Campbell told *Opening Times* "We're really pleased. It's good to get the recognition, particularly as it's our longest standing brew. It's also good to see dark beers back in favour. We have certainly had more orders for Chocolate, including one from the prestigious Borefts Bier Festival held at de Molen Brewery in the Netherlands later this month".



Marble owner Jan Rogers was equally pleased telling OT "I couldn't be prouder of the team if I tried. They work and party so hard. They love a good beer and it shows. Quality over quantity every time".

Marble have recently launched two new bottled beers, too. Weizen comes in 50cl bottles and is a German-style wheat beer – although the typical spiciness is slightly subdued and complemented by some clever hopping. Also out is the powerful Manchester Triple, a 9% Belgian-style beer made with Westmalle yeast to give that typical spiciness that characterises many Belgian beers but again complemented by good hop character.

However Marble weren't the only local brewery in the awards. **Bollington Brewery** won a

bronze in the Best Bitter category for their excellent Bollington Best.

"It's a great day for the region's beers, we proud to be in such good company" said Lee Wainwright who runs the brewery with his wife Kirsten and his brother, Head Brewer, Kym. "It's great that in our industry there are opportunities where your hard work and dedication is recognised." (Pictured above – Kym and Lee at Bollington Brewery)



"It's the third year on the run this beer has caught the attention of a judging panel and the competition just keeps coming from further afield. 'Bollington Best' won Champion Beer of Cheshire in September 2009 and Silver in the 'Best Bitter' category at the SIBA North West region in 2010 but this time it was a group of expert beer judges, brewers, broadcasters and writers who picked the beer out from its national competitors".

What does this award winning beer taste like? 'Bollington Best' is described as a clean crisp and hoppy bitter with a light golden colour and has an ABV of 4.2%.

It's an exciting time for the brewery who only brewed their first pint in 2008 and the team are understandably proud of what they've achieved in such a short period of time. The future is looking bright. The couple recently opened a second pub, Macclesfield's Park Tavern, which joins The Vale in Bollington in serving the Brewery's own beers, like 'Park Life', 'Oat Mill Stout' and 'Long Hop' to name a few.



More Micro News

Last month we reported on the launch of the new **Worth Brewery** based at Poynton Royal British Legion. The first beer was the appropriately named "Bout Time" a "traditional English bitter" at 4.1% ABV. Since the first brew Head Brewer Paul Hession has been busy adding to the beer range which is now as follows: Anson (3.6%), a light session bitter; Blithe Spirit (3.8%), a light, fairly hoppy bitter; Wainwright's End (3.9%), a well-hopped, dry bitter; Seam Cutter (4.2%), a rich, black beer. All beers are named after local Poynton connections, and are made using locally sourced ingredients; each pump clip has been designed by a local artist to showcase the selected beer name

There's plenty going on at Stockport's new **Shaws / Quantum Brewery**. Bottling is to start soon so the beers will be out in off licences, bottle shops and bars by autumn hopefully. Before Marble brewer Colin Stronge headed off to Scotland's Black Isle Brewery he dropped down to Shaws to make collaboration beer with Shaws' Jay Krause. It's a 7.4% ABV barley wine-style beer using all New Zealand hops. A cask will be held back for Stockport Beer Festival (next year!), Port Street Beer House is taking two kegs and the rest will be bottled, so the jury will be out on the best method of dispense!



The team from London's Brodies Brewery are coming up to Shaws to do a brew this month, a New Zealand hopped session beer which will be on sale both in Brodies pubs and in Manchester. Single Hop IPAs to be brewed from late August to mid September are Super Alpha, Nelson Sauvín and East Kent Goldings; a Pumpkin beer will be brewed for October, and a strong spiced porter will be done in time for Christmas. Phew!

At Macclesfield's **RedWillow Brewery** as Autumn looms the beers will start shifting seasonally so there will be more dark beers coming through. First up will be Oyster Stout with real oysters. Some 270 oysters were shucked and added to the brew of this 5.2% beer. The initial run is just 16 firkins (the short run has been done to see how the beer goes). If it's a success there will be a second brew, some of which will go into bottles. On the pale side, look out for the Faithless range of beers. These are single hop brews, using whatever hops brewer Toby McKenzie feels like using on the day. Faithless III was out in the free trade as OT went to press.



In September **Outstanding Brewery** will be welcoming a new face, Kieran Smith. Kieran is a Brewing and Distilling graduate from the renowned Heriot-Watt University of Edinburgh and he will be undertaking some research and brewing as well as carrying out brewery installation work with PBC Brewery Installations. The brewery has released a new session ale in collaboration with The Ramsbottom Festival. The succinctly named Ramsbottom Festival Ale is a refreshing and pale 3.9% session beer made with the citrusy New Zealand hop, Motueka. It will be available at the festival and in the free trade for a limited period prior to the festival.





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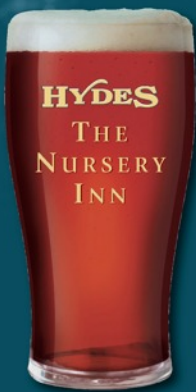


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Mild Magic Awards

As part of the annual Mild Magic promotion, those taking part are asked to vote for their favourite mild pubs. Two "Mild Champion" awards

are presented – one to a pub in Stockport Borough and one outside.

This year's Stockport winner in a very close public vote was the **Magnet** on Wellington Road North. Pictured are Lorraine and Lesley Watts with their award.



The vote for the non-Stockport pub was anything but close. The winner by a degree was **Costello's Bar** on Goose Green in Altrincham. By happy co-incidence Costello's was also the Trafford & Hulme CAMRA Summer Pub of the Season so a joint presentation was made. The Costello's team are seen below with their certificates.



The Hat Goes Forth

Continued from page 12

Further on up the hill is the **Masons**, another Robinson's place, but I pass this as I want to include it on my final survey of Denton, Audenshaw and Haughton Green. So on towards Crown Point and I reach the **Carter's Arms**, used to be a Greenall's pub, never liked it and today there aren't many customers, there's no beer either and so on towards what I think is my final stop and an oasis in this rapidly encroaching real ale desert at the **Chapel House** (Big Chap) opposite the magnificent St Lawrence's church. Shut! There are customers, but for presumably football related reasons no entry. Now I know there is usually a pretty good pint in this popular Holts outlet so I can report on previous experience. Enter here and you get what Holts does, good beer, good price, no frills.

So what to make of this walk? Not a lot, there are a number of pubs apparently doing good trade off the football, good luck to them, but I do wonder how they might do on a wet Tuesday night in February. None, except the Arden or Big Chap appeal to me, not just because of the lack of ale. The Fletchers is fine if you want a meal out and on another night my beer experience should be better, but the others (note this excludes the Acres due to lack of entry), even if they did real ale would be unlikely to attract my custom. Again though that is an opinion clearly not shared by a large number of people and who I am to deny that a range of pubs is desirable, if not essential. I dare say where I like to go would be anathema to many I saw enjoying the busy pubs I visited this Sunday evening.

What did I do after the disappointment of finding the Big Chap shut? Repaired to my local in Hyde for a well earned wet, perhaps I should have gone back to the Arden!



From **R B Williams, Manchester:**

Your July issue on "High Peak Pub Scene" shows on the previous page shows the Marble crew and a vintage (veteran?) open sports car. What is it? For once, I'm puzzled.

This is a vintage Lagonda – Ed

From **Peter Edwardson, Heaton Norris:**

Sadly, Mark McConachie falls short of his usual punctilious standard in his Stagger write-up in August's "Opening Times". He writes "I wonder if new-build pubs that open in 2012 will similarly commemorate that occasion by being named Golden Jubilee". However, of course, the Queen ascended to the throne in 1952, and thus celebrated her Golden Jubilee in 2002. 2012 will see her Diamond Jubilee.

The Great British Home Brew Challenge

CRAFT brewing has had a resurgence across the world during the past few years and is having a fantastic influence on the brewing industry in the UK. With over 750 breweries now operating, the range of beers styles available has never been greater. Many of the beers brewed in today's new wave of breweries are brewed by professionally qualified brewers, others brewed by those that have developed skills through brewing at home. This reflects the tradition of brewing beer in the UK which until the advent of commercial breweries was in the main done at home and often by the woman of the house.

Recognising this great tradition of home brewing Thornbridge brewery and Nicholson's pubs have announced the launch on the 1st September of The Great British Home Brew Challenge 2011 aimed at identifying the best home brewed beer.

Simon Webster from Thornbridge explains "A considerable number of home brewers develop great quality beers that can never be appreciated by a larger drinking public. The Home Brew Challenge 2011 will provide home brewers with an opportunity to match their beers against those of other enthusiasts, and have them tasted by a panel of expert beer judges".

The winner will see their brew recipe transformed into a production brew by Thornbridge Brewery and made available through Nicholson's 100 pubs across the UK.

Ben Lockwood of Nicholson's says "the UK has a great tradition of home brewing. In many countries home brewers work closely with fulltime brewers and new approaches and recipes for beers are often discovered. With this Challenge we can offer the home brewer a chance to have their beer professionally produced and then served in over 80 traditional British pubs. This should be a very interesting competition and whilst serious hopefully great fun for all involved".

Thornbridge's Simon Webster says "the Challenge will be a celebration of the British tradition of brewing with the aim of creating a great new beer and for people to try and embrace many of the new flavours in beers from across the world. As we do in our brewers at Thornbridge we will look for Passion, Innovation and Knowledge as key factors in the judging".

See www.gbhomebrew.co.uk for entry details.





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THE ROSSENDALE BREWERY

Contact Robin: 07709 874 783; robin@rossendalebrewery.co.uk
Or Geoff: 07816 912 794; geoff@rossendalebrewery.co.uk

Meet our beers - Beer Tasting Notes

 <p>Floral Dance 3.8%</p> <p>A pale and fruity session beer, with body that is more than a match for many stronger beers!</p>	 <p>Hameldon Bitter 3.8%</p> <p>An unusually dark traditional bitter, with a dry and assertive character that develops in the finish.</p>	 <p>Glen Top Bitter 4.0%</p> <p>A citrusy, full bodied, pale beer. Intentionally not over hopped with quite a dry after taste.</p>	 <p>Rossendale Ale 4.2%</p> <p>A malty aroma leads to a complex, malt dominated flavour, supported by a dry, increasingly bitter finish.</p>	 <p>Halo Pale 4.5%</p> <p>A citrusy, pale ale brewed with Cascade aroma hops, finishing with a slightly bitter aftertaste.</p>	 <p>Pitch Porter 5%</p> <p>A full bodied, rich beer with a slightly sweet, malty start, counter-balanced with sharp bitterness and obvious roast barley dominance.</p>	 <p>Sunshine 5.3%</p> <p>A hoppy and bitter golden beer with a citrus character. The lingering finish is dry and spicy.</p>
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All of our beers can be sampled at: -
The Griffin, 84-86, Hud Rake, Haslingden Lancashire (Brewery Tap) - 01706 21 40 21
The Sportsman, 57, Mottram Road, Hyde Cheshire - 0161 368 5000
www.rossendalebrewery.co.uk

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further info!

All of our beers are suitable for Vegetarians & Vegans.

Regional Pub of the Year Magnet Triumphs in Regional Contest

THE Magnet, Wellington Road North, Stockport, has crowned a year of CAMRA awards by winning the CAMRA Greater Manchester Pub of the Year award. Having clinched the local Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Year award earlier in the year, it went head to head with the entries from the other seven CAMRA branches in the region.



The win is all the more impressive when you consider the competition – this year the contest included such big hitters as the Marble Arch in Manchester, the Marble Beer House in Chorlton, the Bank Top Brewery Tap in Bolton and the White Lion in Disley – all strong contenders for the top slot.

The history of the Magnet has been well rehearsed in these pages. A former Wilosn's house that had drifted into pub company ownership over the years and lost its way in the process. Real ale, if it was sold at all, was often of poor quality and it came as little surprise that it was sold off into the free trade. Luckily it was bought by Ian Watts who already had one pub rescue under his belt when he bought the Crown, Heaton Lane with business partner Steve Alexander (under whom the Crown still flourishes).

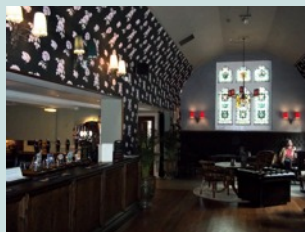
The revamped Magnet reopened on Friday 13th 2009, and while that may be unlucky for some, the Magnet has never looked back. Run by Lesley and Lee Watts along with Sarah Bergin, the pub is almost a shrine to good beer. There are 13 cask beers on handpump with a changing guest cider on the 14th pump. In the cabinets behind the bar is a growing and well considered range of bottled beers from both the UK (particularly Brew Dog) and overseas – the Stone Brewery beers from the USA have been notably popular.

The Magnet is still a work in progress. Last year saw the opening of a very well appointed function room upstairs along with outside decked areas at both first floor and ground floor levels. More recently there has been a great deal of work carried out in the cellar to accommodate the kit for the planned on-site brewery.

Landlady Lesley Watts was almost overwhelmed when she got news of the win and was at pains to thank everyone for their continuing support for the pub. As we went to press the presentation date had not yet been announced. The Magnet will now go head to head with three other regional winners in the National Pub of the Year "super regional" round. Fingers crossed.

Sir Joseph Whitworth

FOLLOWING the acquisition of the Cheshire Cat and the Queen of Hearts earlier in the year, Hydes have reopened the Cheshire Cat as the Sir Joseph Whitworth Pub on Wilmslow Road in Fallowfield. Named after the city's well-known philanthropist the pub reopened on 13 August after a general refurbishment.



While the layout remains unchanged the focus of the pub has certainly changed. The first thing that hits the eye when you enter is some rather startling wallpaper but this does in fact complement the "mix and match" furniture and adds to the traditional feel of the pub. Cask ales are now very much to the fore with Hydes beers complemented by guest beers (which included Ginger Marble when OT called) and although none was in evidence when we called real cider is also promised on handpump. There is also an extensive menu with all manner of food available ranging from snacks to more substantial meals. Well worth a visit.

Clubbing Together

South West Manchester Cricket Club, Ellesmere Road, Chorlton, M21 0SG

With the majority of outlets on Chorlton's renowned real ale scene have sprung up in the last 15 years or less, the South West Manchester Cricket Club (SWMCC) has been part of Chorlton's community since 1882. Despite this, most visitors to Wilbraham Road's bars won't even know it is there, but if you take a left turn out of the tram station and pass Oddest, just a few yards further on is Ellesmere Road, nestled at the end of which is SWMCC.



The club has three senior cricket teams competing in the Manchester & District Cricket Association and also runs junior sides for ages 10 to 19. As well as cricket there is an active bowls section playing every evening during the week and Monday and Wednesday afternoons. The club also holds indoor bowling competitions during winter months. Completing the sports line up are snooker (two full size tables are available) and darts teams also playing in local leagues.

The current club house was built in 1976 and has a large comfortable bar serving the club's active group of social members. In recent years, real ale has become an increasingly important feature of the bar, with Cask Marque accreditation achieved in 2010. The regular house beer is Hydes Original, joined by at least one permanent guest ale – when there are major events on bringing in more custom there are two. The club has joined Trafford & Hulme CAMRA's LocAle scheme and is keen on supporting local microbreweries – Hornbeam, Boggart, Dunham Massey, Allgates and Beartown have all featured recently.



Visitors are welcome to come in and visit the bar to see if they like it – if you do and want to come back, social membership is just £15 a year.

From 23 to 25 September, the club will be hosting its first ever beer festival with around 30 ales available. Organised in association with Kro, the club is aiming for a fun filled weekend with live music, barbeque food and a bouncy castle. Details at www.swmcc.org.uk.

The upstairs are conditioned function room with its own bar and dance floor was extensively refurbished in 2010 and is available for parties, anniversaries, christenings and meetings for clubs and groups. Chorlton Folk Club meets in the function room every Thursday night. The club has an ethos that encourages anyone brave enough to get up on stage and perform, whether traditional folk or acoustic blues and rock. Tuesday is the turn of the Glee Club – an adult group for over-21s who secretly want to sing like nobody's listening!

Clubbing Together is about promoting what great local clubs we have in the Opening Times area. Contributions are invited from other sports and social clubs serving cask ales. If you would like your sports or social club to feature here, feel free to write a piece yourself and submit it to the editor (address on page 4), or just let us know where you recommend and who to contact to arrange a visit.

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