

April 2012



TIMES

Opening

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Community Pubs Month
- see page 19



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STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA
PUB OF THE MONTH - APRIL 2012

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Pub OF THE Month AWARD



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for April is the John Millington, Cheadle Hulme. Opening Times Editor John Clarke went along.



THE JOHN MILLINGTON is one of the newest pubs in Cheadle Hulme, and one of the newer pubs in the Hydes estate having been converted into a pub just a few years ago. It occupies the listed premises of the former Millington Hall and at the time the pub conversion attracted no little opposition from locals who were concerned about yet another licensed premises in the village.

Since then the John Millington has settled in to become a fixture of Cheadle Hulme village life. Far from the rowdy den of iniquity predicted by the local nimbys the pub became known for a solid food offering and a reasonable range of Hydes ale. A food destination but not really a beer destination.

However that started to change in late 2010 when Matthew Abbot arrived as manager. Matthew is a cask ale fan and set about making the pub's beer offer as impressive as its other attractions. And so, as the beer trade has increased so has the number of cask ales on offer. Up to nine cask ales are on sale at weekends and apart from the regular Hydes beers (usually Original, Manchester's Finest and the current craft ale) guests come from a variety of brewers with the likes of Allgates, Marble and Hornbeam being amongst the favourites.

Apart from the beer side, the pub is thriving with events and promotions most nights – notably Mondays where there is 50p off cask ales all day. There are pub quizzes, live bands and even brewery visits. In short what could easily have been something of an anonymous suburban food destination is also making its mark as a proper community local. This is all down to the hard work of Matthew and his management team, including Louise Anderson and Paul Murren

It is appropriate then that this award is being presented during Community Pubs Month on Thursday 26th April from 8pm. To celebrate the award the John Millington is running a month long beer festival so we should be in for a beery treat on the presentation night.


This is quite an easy pub to get to. It's just a short walk from Cheadle Hulme station and buses 313 and 157 will take you there and back.

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Comment, Notes & Contents

What's On

Opening Times – Comment

April is CAMRA's designated Community Pubs Month. This has been launched to champion local pubs which are at the heart of countless communities across Britain. There is more about it on page 19 where we also document the contrasting fortunes of two excellent pubs. If you are a licensee reading this there is still time to sign up and take part – I hope all our readers will also make a special effort to go out to their local perhaps a couple of times more than usual this month. Community pubs are precious but they do need your support.

One way you can visit some excellent community locals and also win some great prizes is to take part in this year's Mild Magic promotion. With 100 pubs taking part this is the biggest and best Mild Magic ever. This is an excellent way to support local pubs and local beers. You know it makes sense.

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 May issue is Friday 6th April

Front cover – Mild Magic – our smart new poster designed by Laura Stockton

Contributors to this issue: John Clarke, John Tune, Dave Hanson, Peter Butler, Robin Wignall, Peter Edwardson, Frank Wood, Phil Booton, Mike Rose, Caroline O'Donnell, John O'Donnell, Charlotte Bulmer, Adrian Palmer, Barry Pryme and Dave Hannan.

Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

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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.

Wednesday 4th – Pub of the Year presentation to the Egerton Arms, Chelford. 8pm (MEC)

Saturday 7th – Altrincham Amble: A day touring all the town's real ale pubs. (TRH)

Tuesday 10th – Cider Pub of the Year presentation to Font, New Wakefield St, off Oxford Rd. From 7.30pm. (TRH)

Tuesday 10th – Bollington Crawl. Start Poachers 7.30pm. (MEC)

Wednesday 11th – Irlams o'th' Height Crawl: Waggon & Horse 7.30pm; Wellington 8.15pm; Red Lion 9pm (all on Bolton Rd). (NM)

Thursday 12th – Ashton-on-Mersey Social: Plough 8pm; Buck 9.30pm. (TRH)

Friday 13th – Mild Magic "Sticker Stagger": 7.30pm Calverts Court, St Petersburg, Stockport; 8.30pm Tiviot, Tiviot Dale. (SSM)

Saturday 14th – Social at High Peak Beer Festival, Chalkers Snooker Club, New Mills (next to Newtown Station). From 12 noon. (SSM & MEC)

Tuesday 17th – Cider Pub of the Year presentation to Ye Olde Woolpack, Brinksway, Stockport. From 8pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 18th – Pub of the Season presentation to Cask Bar, Liverpool Rd, Castlefield. From 8pm. (TRH)

Friday 20th – Edgeley Stagger: 7.30pm Olde Woolpack, Brinksway; 8.30 Alexandra, Northgate Road. (SSM)

Saturday 21st – Branch Trip to Preston. Train trip to visit some of the city's finest pubs. Details on branch website. (TRH)

Wednesday 25th – Oldham Street Social: Castle 8pm; City Pub 9.30pm (NM)

Wednesday 25th – Urmston Social: Urmston Hotel 8pm; Lord Nelson 8.50; the Piano Bar. Finish Steamhouse. (TRH)

Thursday 26th – Pub of the Month presentation to John Millington, Cheadle Hulme, From 8pm. (SSM)

Friday 27th – Macclesfield Community Pubs Crawl: start Chester Road Tavern 7.30pm. (MEC)

Saturday 28th – Pub of the Year presentation to the Bulls Head, London Rd, Manchester. From 8pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 2nd May – Pub of Year presentation (venue TBC). From 8pm. (NM)

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

Wednesday 4th – Branch Pub of the Year selection: Millstone, Thomas St, City Centre. Starts 8pm (NM)

Thursday 5th – Railway, Ashley Rd, Hale. Starts 8pm. (TRH)

Thursday 12th – Blossoms, Buxton Rd, Heaviley. **Includes Branch AGM.** Sandwiches will be provided. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 18th – New Oxford, Bexley Square, Salford. Starts 7.30pm (NM)

Thursday 3rd May – Moorfield Hotel, Marsland Rd, Sale. Starts 8pm (TRH)



Prohibition by Price

THE idea of setting a minimum price per unit of alcohol has been widely touted as a means of reducing the level of alcohol-related problems in society, and at the same giving a boost to the pub trade. It has been adopted as the official policy of the devolved Scottish Government, and has been talked of sympathetically by David Cameron. But would it really deliver the benefits that are claimed for it?

While it is often portrayed as only affecting drinkers of cheap cider and bulk-buy supermarket lager, in reality the effect would spread far wider. An investigation by the Institute for Fiscal Studies showed that 71% of all alcohol units bought in the off-trade were under 45p per unit, and that setting a minimum price at this level would affect 91% of all households buying off-trade drinks. It could easily make a couple £300 a year worse off without even approaching the official "recommended" drinking levels, something not to be sneezed at when many people are already struggling to make ends meet. Heavy drinkers, and especially those clinically dependent on alcohol, could end up sacrificing other items of household expenditure to keep up their intake. It has been said that one of the main results of hiking drink prices is simply poorer alcoholics.

It is also a fundamentally patronising and élitist idea, implying that it is fine for the well-heeled to continue swigging single malts, claret and craft ales, but that the irresponsible proles are not to be trusted with an abundance of Carling, Glen's Vodka and Lambrini. As the famous Victorian liberal philosopher John Stuart Mill said, "Every increase of cost is a prohibition to those whose means do not come up to the augmented price."

The major brewers have been oddly quiet on the subject, with some, such as Mike Lees of Tennent Caledonian, even expressing qualified support. No real surprise there, as, given that the overall demand for alcohol is not highly price-elastic, it would in effect be legitimising a price-fixing ring by alcohol producers, something normally prohibited by competition law.

It would inevitably lead to an upsurge in alcohol smuggling and illegal brewing and distilling. The authorities have signally failed to make any inroads into tobacco smuggling resulting from ever-increasing duty rates, and it is unlikely they would do any better with alcohol. Unlike legitimate retailers, smugglers are hardly going to exercise much discretion about selling to underage customers. Recently, a Sheffield student had her eyesight permanently damaged by drinking counterfeit vodka, and last year five Lithuanian men were killed in Boston, Lincolnshire, by an explosion at an illegal vodka distillery. Minimum pricing would lead to many more such tragedies.

While it might somewhat reduce the price differential between the on- and off-trades, there is no guarantee that minimum pricing would actually do anything to tempt more people into pubs. Under any credible scenario, off-trade alcohol would still be substantially cheaper, and it wouldn't give people a single extra penny to spend in pubs. Indeed, by squeezing household budgets, it could end up reducing their discretionary spending. What is more, the study by the University of Sheffield that is used to underpin the argument for minimum pricing actually concludes that the most "beneficial" results would come from setting differential minimum prices for on- and off-trades, with that for pubs and bars more than twice as high. Once introduced, what guarantee would there be that, if it was felt not to be "working", the minimum price would not be ratcheted up year-on-year by considerably more than the rate of inflation? It would be letting a Trojan Horse of government pricing control into the entire drinks trade.

And, if you still think minimum pricing might have something to be said for it, just pinch yourself and look at who you are lining up with – all the miserable, Puritanical, pub-hating killjoys of the anti-drink lobby like Don Shenker, Anne Milton and Sir Ian Gilmore. If you care at all about pubs and the brewing industry, is that really the side of the debate you want to be on?

Curmudgeon Online: curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

(comments on these articles can be left on the website)



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Music @ The Beer Festival

A Preview of the Festival Entertainment

Thursday Night – The Uplifters

The festival opens with Manchester's premier SKA band, The Uplifters who have provided their unique SKA and Reggae sound since 2005. The bands influence include Prince Buster, The Skatalites, The Specials, Bad Manners, Madness and the Selecter. Are you old enough to remember hits like Guns of Navarone by the Skatalites, or Monkey Man by Toots and The Maytals? What about A Message To You Rudy by the Specials or One Step Beyond by Madness? All great fun songs delivered along with original material by a polished 7 piece SKA band complete with skanking keyboard, boss horns, and a sweet rhythm section.

The band mixes Jamaican music from the early 1960s with Two-Tone rhythms from the late 70's to create a unique sound. The band has supported the likes of Bad Manners, The Beat, and Neville Staples in recent times. Over the last two years, the Uplifters have been busy writing and recording songs for a new debut album, due out later this year.



Friday Lunch – Walthew House Steel Band

On Friday lunchtime the beer festival features the Walthew House Steel Band as this year's beer festival charity. The majority of the band is actually visually impaired and so it must be very difficult for the musicians to

perform to a discerning audience. The band formed in 2009, as a result of the support of the North West Steel Band Association who generously donated the instruments. Since this time the group have gone on from strength to strength. Group leader Janice Turley told the beer festival 'the musicality of even the simplest pieces delights us and as the complexity of our repertoire grows we have started to include pieces from our favourite musicians. Arranging has become fun yet challenging'. Popular songs included in the band's repertoire include Coconut Woman, Diana, Island in the Sun and Red Red Wine. With a strong ethos of 'fun' and a 'real quality sound' the Walthew House Steel Band is something unique, and by supporting one of Stockport's oldest charities you will be enabling the band's passion for music to continue.



Friday Night – The Jalapenos

On Friday night, back again, literally by popular demand, are the sensational Jalapenos. The band are renowned for their astonishingly energetic and visual live shows. Anyone that has an ounce of rock 'n' roll in their soul will love the Jalapenos. The band delivers songs such as "Milk and Alcohol", "Jailhouse Rock", "Hippy Hippy Shake" and "Riot in Cell Block No 9" with such enthusiasm and humour that you can't help but smile and tap your feet. The band are such good musicians that they deliver these songs effortlessly with fun and charisma. With a repertoire of over 150 songs ranging from rock to roll, with nods to



the blues, punk, and other music styles the band blends classic 50's and 60's rock'n'roll with other carefully selected material. The Jalapenos deliver all of this with lots of mad, wild, jumping around, showmanship and humour. Once you have seen a Jalapenos gig, never forgotten. If you have never seen the Jalapenos play before then it's time that you put that right. Come to the beer festival on Friday night and be prepared to be astounded.

Saturday Lunch – Merry Hell

On Saturday lunchtime the festival welcomes Merry Hell, a Wigan based 8-piece folk/rock band that combines male and female vocals with mandolin, electric guitars, bass, drums and

keyboards to create music with passion and energy that is also great fun. The band have evolved from the 90's cult rabble-rousers The Tansads, who developed a dedicated fan base over their five album, regularly touring, career. Merry Hell include brothers John on Guitar, Bob on Mandolin and Harmonica, and Andrew on vocals. They are joined by John's wife, Virginia on vocals and acoustic guitar, Lee on keyboards, Andy (Jones) on drums, Tim on Guitar and Andrew (Dawson) on bass. Merry Hell's infectious live performances and their original emotionally charged stirring songs will uplift and inspire festival visitors. Great musicianship together with the contrasting beautiful vocals of Virginia and the gravel voice of Andrew make a Merry Hell performance, unmissable. Merry Hell will play your favourite songs that you haven't yet heard. A great up and coming band, remember that you saw them first at Stockport Beer Festival.



Saturday Night – Connie Lush & Blues Shouter

Saturday evening sees the return of one of the greatest artists that Stockport Beer Festival has ever featured. Eight years ago Connie Lush and Blues

Shouter played the festival to critical acclaim and festival visitors have been requesting Connie and the band's return ever since. Voted the Best UK Female Vocalist by the readers of Blues in Britain magazine over five different years, and in France she won the European Singer of the Year. Connie has one of the most incredible blues voices you will ever hear. Her powerful vocals are the UK's answer to a combination of Etta James and Tina Turner. Like Etta, Connie can growl, shout and moan the blues or tug the heart-strings with smouldering soulful ballads. Renowned for her blistering live performances she has even raised the roof at B. B. King's world famous Beale Street Club in Memphis. B B King is quoted as saying of Connie "that woman makes my heart sing". What may be less well known is that Connie's musical talents go beyond singing. She is a highly accomplished songwriter, confirmed by many excellent self-penned songs that form the content of her live & recorded repertoire. She also has a stage presence, and genuine warmth, that builds a bond between her and her audience. Over twenty years Connie has produced six albums, so spectacular are her live shows that three of these albums are live albums. Don't miss her, if you do you will surely live to regret it.



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Amble Around Altrincham

LOCAL CAMRA members are preparing themselves for a day long trail round the real ale pubs of Altrincham on Saturday 7 April. Inspired by Trafford & Hulme branch's annual Chorlton Challenge circuit of Chorlton's 20-plus pubs, the Altrincham trip will be a slightly more leisurely day's entertainment taking in a mere 12 public houses. The event was planned before the recent closure of two pubs in the town - the Bricklayers Arms and the Orange Tree - but thankfully despite this setback the town still retains a broad range of pubs of varying styles.

The day will begin at 1pm at the **George and Dragon** pub-restaurant on the corner of Church Road & Sandiway Road to the north of the town centre. After gathering over a pint there, the party will take a short stroll towards the town centre where the second stop will be to sample the 11 ales on offer at the **Old Market Tavern** (pictured right). A short stroll down and then back up Victoria Road and Stamford Street will take in four diverse pubs, from Sam Smith's **Malt Shovels**, to the public bar at the **Barrington Hotel**. The Amble will then head to Altrincham's Historic Market area to visit craft beer bar **The Brewhouse**.



Recent branch socials including the first of three pubs on Stamford New Road, the **Slug & Lettuce** have found it to have no real ale more often than not, but ever optimistic, it's been included on the itinerary although we won't be stopping if offered John Smith's Smooth. Travelling via the recently re-opened **Faulkners Arms**, the crawl will arrive at Wetherspoon's improving **Unicorn** before heading round the back of Sainsbury's to reach JW Lees' **Tatton Arms**, tucked away on Tipping Street and then on to last call of the day, Dunham Massey brewery's **Costello's Bar**.

Non-members and guests from other branches are welcome to join for the whole day or just a pint or two. A full itinerary and map are available on Trafford & Hulme Branch's website;

- see <http://tinyurl.com/altamble2012>

A Few Pints Around Oxford Road Station

ADRY and mild Thursday evening saw a small but dedicated group from Trafford & Hulme branch take a short stroll around the pubs in the vicinity of Oxford Road station.

The night started a short walk from the station at **Odder** bar, opposite the now vacated former BBC studios. Middle sibling of Northern Quarter's Odd and Chorlton's Oddest, Odder is also the largest of the group, being split over two floors. Although there were a few people in at the early hour, the bar was quiet enough that we found a table in the smaller ground floor bar so ventured no further on this occasion. Three cask ales were on offer, Titanic's Steerage being flanked by two from Skipton's Copper Dragon brewery, Golden Pippin and Black Gold. The Titanic was deemed of an average standard, but the Copper Dragon's were not so highly rated. The Golden Pippin was found to be thin, lacking in condition and generally insipid, unusual for this normally tasty beer. The Black Gold was also flat and lacking in any significant flavour.

Heading north back up Oxford Road, on reaching the railway viaduct a quick left turn at Revolution "vodka bar" takes you down New Wakefield Street, passing Sound Control nightclub to **Font Bar**, the newly crowned Trafford & Hulme Cider Pub Of The Year. Despite the average age of our group being in the mid 40s, we were easily the oldest people in the bar whose core clientele is definitely students. Three ciders were



available from boxes stacked behind the bar, however tonight we had no lovers of the fruit in tow. Thankfully Font rarely disappoints on the cask ale offering either. Tonight its three handpumps offered Magic Rock's Curious, Marble Chocolate and Orkney Brewery's 6% Orkney Blast. In keeping with other bars in the area, Font is not a cheap place to drink with the Curious being on sale at £3.30 with the Marble at £3.60. However, a very generous 25% discount on cask ale & cider is offered to CAMRA members bringing the price of the purchased pints down to a bargain £2.47 and £2.70 respectively. Both beers were considered far too cold but generally in good condition. A couple of them went down well enough that two brave travellers added a swift half of the Orkney Blast which was also good.

Set into the railway viaduct itself is the **Thirsty Scholar** and its associated club, **The Attic**. Here a live music night entitled The Shooting Gallery was in action with a young singer songwriter called Matthew Tate on stage as we entered.



On the bar Boggart Rum Porter had just run out but that still left three beers to sample along side a handpump dispensing Weston's Old Rosie cider. Most went for Prospect's Pioneer with one selecting Conwy Brewery's St David's Ale. The Conwy was deemed acceptable without being great, but unfortunately opinions on the Pioneer were split. One drinker found it good, while most considered it unbalanced, the suspicion being that it was on sale too early. However one drinker found it so unpalatable, it was returned and swapped for the remaining beer on offer, Boggart's I Am Beer. Matthew Tate gave way to a duo named the King Hill Anti Cult featuring an acoustic guitarist singer alongside a heavily distorted electric guitar accompaniment - a little too loud and brash for our taste so we drank up and left. While not to our taste - it was good to see a pub giving new artists a forum to learn their art.

Live music was also on at **Grand Central** on Oxford Road immediately north of the viaduct. While King Hill Anti Cult were deemed a little loud, thrash metal band Boss Keloid were too much for our oldest member who chose to head home. The band, the middle of three on the bill this evening, was obviously not short of fans - the pub was very busy with rock fans of all ages - the first pub of the night where we couldn't get a table. Grand Central is a recent addition to the cask ale fold with only one ale on offer, Wychwood's Hobgoblin at £2.80 a pint. A sweet malty ale, it is a beer which often divides opinion but while not to everyone's taste, everyone agreed it was in good condition and just as the brewer intended.

Last stop of the evening was the **Salisbury**, located behind Grand Central, the only business on Wakefield Street which leads to the staircase up to Oxford Road Station. The Salisbury was also busy so we ended up leaning on a shelf near the pub's interesting Jack Daniels branded black covered pool table. The pub retains its long established popularity with rock music fans although these days it does attract a more general clientele than when it was the regular pre-club stop for visitors to now defunct Jilly's Rock Club. Six cask ales were on offer, the ever present Old Peculier being joined by Theakston stablemate Flying



Scotsman, two from the Marston's stable - Pedigree and Jennings Cumberland Ale, Caledonian 80/- and Bath brewery's Gem. With so many ales on offer, it was disappointing to see so many similar beers - nothing here for fans of the hop. Still, most opted for the Bath Gem which was not exciting but generally well received. The Old Peculier was considered good - our resident dark ale fan declaring it beer of the evening.

With the time past 11pm, we could have opted to stay in the Salisbury until its 2am closing or returned to any of the evening's other pubs, all of which have regular late licences. However we instead took the sensible option to head on our way home, leaving behind us an evening where we had the odd good beer, the odd bad beer but largely OK beer. With a number of the group reporting that they'd enjoyed the beer a lot more on previous visits to these pubs, the predominant feeling was that we'd caught most on an off night.

Stagger.....

A Walk on the Mild Side with Dave Hanson

MAKING my way towards the first port of call for this stagger I wondered just how much mild would be available in advance of the Mild Magic event. We were to find out.

Our journey started in the **Rain Bar** on Great Bridgewater Street, one of only a few J. W. Lees houses in central Manchester. You



enter this stone fronted former Victorian umbrella factory and are immediately presented with a choice, turn to the left to secure a comfy seat or to the right and the bar. No contest. The main bar area is basically appointed, with wooden floors, but plenty of vanity screens breaking the otherwise large area up into small nooks and crannies.

Turning back to the bar we observed that Lees Brewers Dark, John Willies and Bitter were accompanied by Fiddlers Elbow. As this was a mild stagger we all ordered the former and, though very dark in colour, we found it pleasant but a little thin. Anticipating tonight to be a little sparse on mild outlets, some of us settled down for a leisurely pint. However, one of our number must have had the recent Team GB cycling successes on their mind, because they set off like the pace setter at breakneck drinking speed. Gulping down our beers we almost sprinted out of the front door.

Making our way back towards Piccadilly Gardens we confirmed that there was no mild available at the Paramount although this will not be the case during Mild Magic. Passing along Portland Street we came upon the **Old Monkey** on the corner of Princess Street.

Doors on both streets deposit you in the downstairs bar, which has the feel of a tap room, with mainly vertical drinking. Being a Holts house both Mild and Bitter were available, along with Thwaites Bitter as a



guest. Again this is a dark mild, but a pleasant drop with much more body this time. We decided to move upstairs to find some seats. As another companion was meeting us here we had to tarry a little even though our pace setter was eager to set off again.

Out onto Portland Street and a few doors along we entered the **Grey Horse**. Of a comparable

size to the notoriously small Circus next door, but as there are no internal walls it feels bigger.

As we visited during the Irish Festival, there were a profusion of green, white and gold flags in evidence in one of Manchester's "proper" Irish pubs. Confusion reigned when we observed the beers on offer, one was obviously Hydes bitter, but what about the other? Though bearing a red badge claiming it was Mild, this beer has not been brewed for around a year, so what was it? We speculate that it was Hydes 1863 and unfortunately I have tasted better versions.

Though busy, the sociable locals bugged up on the bench seating so as to offer us somewhere to sit. Looking around at the decor, I noticed a football cap from the 1968 United v Benfica European Cup Final. To keep harmony there was also a similar vintage picture of City's toilet roll king Francis Lee. Our pace setter was getting impatient as we had been sat comfortable for at least five minute, so it was up and off.

Doubling back onto Princess Street we travelled towards Manchester Town Hall, Both the Waterhouse and City Arms were visited to confirm that, unlike during Mild Magic, they had no mild on tonight. In passing we spied a real ale bar in the Irish Festival enclosure in Albert Square so we called in. There were four real ales available, all from Irish breweries, three of which were stouts! This is the point at which our pace setter veered off towards home, leaving the rest of us to set our own pace. Phew!

Threading our way through a building along the former route of Brazenose Street to Lincoln Square where we espied the **Rising Sun**. We entered the front door, which is on Queens Street, but there is also an entrance on Lloyd Street giving the bar a very long and narrow aspect. The Rising Sun has a changing mild, and tonight an excellent pint of Moorhouse's Black Cat was on offer. Having obtained our drinks we found comfy seats near the front door, where we discovered some of our brethren from North Manchester CAMRA. Comments were made about the extensive

woodwork in evidence and how well it was looking. On cue the landlord appeared and informed us "Yes it should look good, we had a complete refurbish two weeks back, in fact the electrician still has to finish the lighting!" As we were bereft of our pace-setter we tarried and



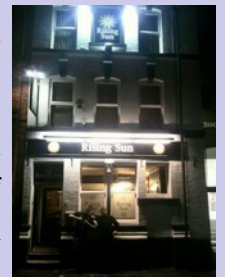
had a few words with the landlord before setting off once again.

Across Lincoln Square and around the corner into John Dalton Street and we entered the **Ape and Apple**. I was informed that the premises were formerly a bank, and there remain enough grandiose embellishments to support this, from the mosaic flooring through the numerous etched glass partitions to the wood panelled walls. Being a Holts house their Mild was available, as was bitter and one of their seasonal/occasional beers. Being faced with a long hike to our next pub we did not linger and were soon on our way across town to Oldham Street.

The **Castle** is Robinsons first (of several they promise) venture into a multi-ale house, and what a change from when I first entered these doors many years ago. The layout of the rooms has not been changed, except for a new suite of toilets, but everywhere has been spruced up, or so we think because the lighting was dimmed and atmospheric. The biggest change/shock was seeing a multitude of handpumps all across the bar front and a good way down the side as well. A full report of the beers on sale was impossible, because there was not enough room to swing the proverbial cat. We managed to sandwich ourselves onto a table by the door and passed comment on the fact that nearly everyone appeared to be under 30 and most were drinking real ale. Two milds were available, Robinson's own Hatters and 3 Bs Stokers Slack, which we all tried and found to be very good. Time and the last train was pressing for all except for yours truly, so we left the Castle and headed back towards Piccadilly station.

As the night was still young (well it was only 10:30) I decided to call in my local and round off an enjoyable evening. The **New Victoria** on Stockport Road in Longsight will never win architectural awards, but its workmanlike exterior hides a warm and friendly interior. Being owned by Oakwell Brewery of Barnsley, a pint of their Dark Mild was ordered. The beer pours almost like Guinness, very dark and you have to await the head separating out before downing an excellently balanced mild – a classic. Then again maybe I am biased as the landlord did treat me to a second glass!

An interesting stagger, where, much as we anticipated, apart from the Rising Sun, mild was only available from the brewery owned outlets. By not drinking Hatters in the Castle we also missed out on a full house of milds from our local family brewers.





Mild Magic 2012

MILD MAGIC SCORES A CENTURY

Last year our popular cask mild pub passport scheme, 'Mild Magic' earned a marvellous response from local drinkers and then also went on to win CAMRA's national 'Beer Styles Promotion Award'. So it's no surprise that flushed with this success we are running Mild Magic 2012.

The support from pubs has been incredible with for the first time ever an amazing 100 pubs from across Stockport, Manchester, Salford, Tameside, High Peak and Trafford joining this cask mild promotion. Cask mild might be a under threat but clearly with this level of support the game is certainly not lost. This is one of the most important campaigns CAMRA organises locally so please now give it your support.

So, what do you have to do? It's extremely easy...**First, get a card. All participating pubs have a stock or you can get one by sending an SAE to Mild Magic, 26 Parkin St, Longsight, Manchester M12 5RL.** Then buy a pint or a half of cask mild in one of the pubs taking part and ask the bar staff to put a sticker on your card. Remember, though, you can only get one sticker from each pub. NB Check the times of pub opening hours, especially if you are making a special journey.

When you've filled the card(s) send it/them to the Mild Magic address above to receive your Festival Tickets and a personal invite to our special rewards evening.

The scheme runs from Friday 13 April to Sunday 20 May and everyone participating will win something (only one entry per person). All completed entries (you need at least 12 stickers from 12 different pubs) will receive a **free entry ticket for the 2012 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival (or a pint of mild for CAMRA members)**. It's really easy so there is no excuse for not taking part.

We are again featuring **Mild Magic Extra** – visit 12 different pubs in 12 different areas, as identified on the card, and you will win a stunning **'Mild Magic' T-shirt** as well as the ticket/pint of mild.

Mild Magic Super is a little more challenging - get stickers from 24 pubs, each in a different area and you will receive an eye-catching **'Mild Magic' polo shirt** plus an extra Festival entry ticket/ pint.

If you want a bit more of a challenge but can't get to every pub we have **Mild Magic Ultra** – get stickers from just under half the pubs (48) in a minimum of 36 different areas and you will receive a special-edition **Mild Magician sweatshirt**, four Festival entry tickets/pints and entry into a draw to be **"Brewer for the Day"** at Stockport's Quantum Brewing Co.

However why not really weave some magic and become a **Mild Master Magician** by sending in cards containing a sticker from the **Magic One Hundred**? You will receive the enhanced **Mild Master Package** of a special-edition, **Mild Master Magician Fleece**, six Festival entry tickets/pints and go into the **'Brewer for the Day'** draw. **Go on join the 100 Club!**

Each garment will be embroidered with the fabulous new logo designed by Laura Stockton, a design student from Stockport College who won a competition jointly organised by CAMRA and the College. Thanks to all the students who submitted designs and congratulations to Laura; we are sure that you will enjoy your prize of a VIP package for two for the Festival.

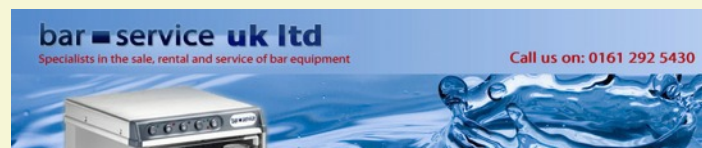
Our **presentation rewards evening** will be held at the **Crown, Heaton Lane** to which all participants will receive an invite to what is always a great event with an opportunity to drink a variety of milds.

We are also especially grateful to **Robinsons** for enabling us to offer an extra-special prize: every completed entry will go into a draw and the first 10 pulled out will win a **visit to their innovative brewery visitor centre** in the late summer or early autumn to see how their

delays in finishing the multi-million pound redevelopment have prevented them from savouring their prize until now.

To add even more interest all participants are invited to vote for the pubs in which they were served the best mild both in the Stockport MBC area and outside Stockport – the winning two pubs will be presented with a 'Mild Champion' award (participants will be sent invitations to these award evenings).

Such is the success of Mild Magic that we again have Bar-Service UK of Droylsden as our sponsors. Our grateful thanks to them! They specialise in the sale, rental and service of bar equipment covering all surrounding areas including: Lancashire, Cheshire, Merseyside, & Yorkshire. Find out more about them at www.bar-service.co.uk.



If you haven't taken part before, you must have a go this time; it's great fun and it's so easy - you only need to visit 12 pubs over a five week period. What an excellent chance to visit some new pubs, try new beers and win some great rewards while voting with your feet in favour of Britain's proud brewing heritage. Please give our campaign to preserve cask conditioned Mild in this area your support!

The Mild Magic Pubs

ALL SAINTS Sand Bar; **ALTRINCHAM** Costello's Bar; **BREDBURY** Greyhound; **BRIDGEMONT** Dog & Partridge; **BROADHEATH** Old Packet House; **BUXWORTH** Navigation; **CALE GREEN** Adswold Hotel; **CHEADLE** Crown, Cheshire Line, Red Lion; **CHEADLE HULME** Church Inn, Cheadle Hulme, Kings Hall; **CHORLTON** Oddest, Sedge Lynn, Beech, Horse & Jockey; **COMPSTALL** Andrew Arms, Northumberland Arms; **DIDSBURY** Fletcher Moss, Milson Rhodes, Railway; **DISLEY** White Lion; **EDGELEY** Ye Olde Woolpack; **FALLOWFIELD** Friendship; **FURNESS VALE** Crossings; **GATLEY** Horse & Farrier; **GORTON** Waggon & Horses; **GREAT MOOR** Crown, Travellers Call; **HAUGHTON GREEN** Chapel House; **HAZEL GROVE** Grapes, Three Tunnes, Wilfred Wood; **HEALD GREEN** Griffin; **HEATON CHAPEL** Hinds Head; **HEATON MERSEY** Crown, Griffin; **HEATON MOOR** Crown; **HEATON NORRIS** Magnet, Nursery, Navigation, Railway; **HEAVILEY** Blossoms; **HYDE** Queens, Sportsman, Cheshire Ring, Cotton Bale; **LEVENSHULME** Sidings; **LONGSIGHT** New Victoria; **MANCHESTER CITY CENTRE** City Arms, Crown & Anchor, Micro Bar, Waterhouse, Bulls Head, Grey Horse, Old Monkey, Castle Hotel, Marble Arch, Molly House, Knott Bar, Paramount, Rain Bar, Ape & Apple, Moon Under Water, Rising Sun; **MARPLE (ROSE HILL)** Railway; **MARPLE BRIDGE** Royal Scot, Windsor Castle; **MARPLE** Navigation, Ring O'Bells; **MELLOR** Royal Oak; **NEW MILLS** Masons Arms; **OFFERTON** Fingerpost; **OLD TRAFFORD** Bishop Blaize; **PARRS WOOD** Gateway; **PORTWOOD** Railway; **RUSHOLME** Ford Madox Brown; **SALE** JP Joule, Plough Hotel, Volunteer; **SALFORD** New Oxford; **SHAW HEATH** Armoury, Florist; **STALYBRIDGE** Station Buffet Bar; **STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE** Bakers Vaults, Calverts Court, Tiviot, Arden Arms, Red Bull, Waterloo, Crown, Pineapple, Swan With Two Necks; **STRINES** Royal Oak; **TIMPERLEY** Quarry Bank; **WHALEY BRIDGE** Shepherds Arms; **WHITEHOUGH** Old Hall; **WITHINGTON** Victoria; **WOODFORD** Davenport Arms

Note – Many of these areas will be subdivided on the card to make it easier for you to complete Mild Magic Extra, Super and Ultra.

Cider Pubs of the Year

THE STOCKPORT & South Manchester CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year is **Ye Olde Woolpack** on Brinksway in Stockport.



Much has been written in these pages about the resurgence of the Woolpack under the guidance of Mike Quinn and his family. Although the five changing guest beers are of note in themselves it is on the cider front that the pub has made its name. There are in fact no less than 15 handpumps on the bar and ten of these are given

over to cider and perry – although the pub sells up to 16 draught ciders and perries in total.

Mike also runs the Natural Cider Company which supplies many other outlets and also runs cider bars at various festivals around the country. So his efforts have not only led to the restoration of the Woolpack as one of Stockport's destination pubs, not only for real ales and a great atmosphere but also one of the widest selection of ciders and perries in the county.

The presentation will be made to the Woolpack on Thursday 17th April during Community Pubs Month.

Trafford & Hulme branch's Cider Pub of The Year is **Font** bar on New Wakefield Street, in the shadow of Oxford Road Station.

Although they do a roaring trade in selling cocktails to students, they also slightly more quietly stock an excellent range of world beers and cask ales for the more discerning drinker. Last year they introduced trade from the back bar and have done an excellent job of introducing many of their young customers to the real taste of cider and perry containing nothing but apples & pears.



So successful have they been that sales have rocketed to the point that just as their award was announced they advised that they are to expand their range to four ciders and perries. They are also planning their first cider festival for May - see next month's OT for details. Despite their largely academic client base, all are welcome, with CAMRA members entitled to a 25% discount on their cask ales, ciders and perries on presentation of a valid membership card.

Font will be presented with their award on Tuesday 10th April - everybody welcome to come down and enjoy a pint or two of cider and perry from 7.30, with the presentation to be made around 8.30pm.



The High Peak & NE Cheshire CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year is the excellent **Rising Sun** in Mossley.

This pub has gone from strength to strength in recent years and not only offers a range of changing guest beers but also a range of ciders and perries. Full details of these and more can be found on the pub's excellent website which is www.risingsunmossley.co.uk.

At the time of writing the ciders were from south Wales producer Gwynt y Ddraig and also, closer to home, Pure North from Holmfirth.

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Ted Jones

The last great domestic cider maker

CIDER-MAKER Ted Jones died in February; he was 74. Fans of the Cider Bar at the Stockport Beer and Cider Festival will recognise his name, and remember his high-quality (though sometimes challenging) cider and perry, which he supplied to us for many years, winning Cider of the Festival on one occasion.



Each May, I would make a trip to Worcestershire, and sit with Ted in his cider-shed for an hour or so, tasting that year's cider and perry, choosing which to bring back for the Stockport Cider Bar. Later in the year, as part of the trip to present Cider and Perry of the Festival awards, a group of us would arrive at Ted and Janet's on a Sunday morning in October, and participate in the cider-making itself: Ted and his regular helpers scratting and pressing the apples, and transferring the juice to oak barrels; the Stockport visitors trying not to get in the way, while asking questions about cider, and sampling some of the last year's pressing (and Janet's amazing apple wine).

Ted made cider for pleasure, not for profit, and in the old-fashioned way. No hydraulic presses, stainless steel vats or chemicals: he took pride in using traditional methods and materials, and was the last



cider-maker we know of who used horse-hair cloths (to contain the apple pulp for pressing). His cider-shed was an impressive sight: two rows of immaculate barrels for the cider and perry; the large screw-press; the circular stone mill-trough (though he used a scratting to make the pulp); and lots of old pub signs, horn mugs, agricultural implements, all hanging on the walls and from the ceiling.

Not every cider-maker enjoys explaining their craft to others: Ted was an enthusiastic communicator, interested and knowledgeable in the history of cider. He did demonstrations at local events, and was happy to welcome his friends from Stockport to "help" with his own pressing. He was generous with his time, and his cider: every pint of "Ted Jones" that we have drunk at Stockport was given by him, free of charge (the Festival donated a suitable sum each year to St Michael's Hospice in Hereford).

Ted will be very much missed; our condolences to his family. **CB**

Mild Magic In Whaley Bridge

FIVE PUBS in the Whaley Bridge area have registered for Mild Magic, the Mild Challenge, in 2012. They will provide participants with a good trip out. These southernmost pubs on the Challenge are well worth a visit in their own right, with a range of good beers and welcoming hospitality.

To avoid wasted journeys some information about opening / closing hours may be helpful.

Dog & Partridge, Bridgemont. Opens at 11.00 but has a 15.00 –17.00 close Monday to Thursday though this can be flexible in favour of being open. Open all day Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Shepherds, Whaley Br. 15.00 till late Monday to Friday. 12.00 Saturday and 14.00 Sunday till late.

Crossings, Furness Vale. 16.00 till late Monday to Thursday; Friday, Saturday and Sunday 12.00 till late.

Navigation Buxworth. Open from late morning till late, daily.



Old Hall, Whitehough, Chinley (pictured above), 12.00 till late daily.

These times could of course vary.

All the pubs took part in last year's Mild Magic and have become regulars. Some of the pubs will be new pubs for some people. All the pubs will look forward to seeing new faces, and returning ones.

Getting there. Bus 199 from Stockport stops at Furness Vale, Bridgemont, and Whaley Bridge Station. Half hourly service during the day, hourly in the evening and on Sunday. Trans Peak stops at Furness Vale, every two hours until soon after tea. The 61 links Whaley Bridge with Glossop, Hayfield, New Mills and Buxton, hourly during the daytime, every day. The 189/190 links Whaley with Buxworth and Chinley, hourly until teatime, Monday to Saturday. Buxworth is a 15-20 minute walk from Whaley Bridge along the canal towpath or over Bings Road/Silk Hill.

Trains. Manchester- Buxton service, Northern Table 20. Hourly through the day all week, to Furness Vale and Whaley Bridge, half hourly in the evening rush hour.

Trains to Chinley, Northern Table 23. Hourly on Saturday. Less frequent in the week and Sunday, but more trains in the rush hour. The Old Hall is a 15-20 minute walk along the Peak Forest Tramway to the Navigation at Buxworth.

News Extra

THE TEAM behind the Castle on Oldham Street in Manchester City Centre have struck a deal with another of our local family brewers to take over a second pub. This time the deal is with Joseph Holt and the pub in question is the iconic **Eagle** on Collier Street in Salford.

The new team were due to take over early this month following a "bit of a spruce up", with a view to re-launching for the Easter weekend.



Initially the range will be expanded to include Old Rosie cider Courage, Directors, Abbey Ale, Shepherd Neame Bishops Finger and Spitfire, Wells Bombardier and Greene King's Old Speckled Hen alongside the Holts range, dispensed from six handpulls. While this is kind of the usual suspects list the new owners felt it's a strong improvement – and that would be difficult to argue with, we think.

Whilst delivering O Manchester F we had an int with Mike duty manage now outsells the la thinks can be put down to the recent introduction of the craft "single hop" ales brewed by Marstons, these beers are on a regular monthly rotation with February's, which was just coming to an end, being Galaxy a single hop brew that had citrus notes with just a hint of passion fruit.

The March offering which had just come on was another single hop, East Kent Golding, this was a very tasty brew with caramel, spice and honey flavours. These craft ales have really complemented the pub's regular offerings of Courage Directors and Black Sheep although they had just had to have Greene King's Old Speckled Hen on instead after the dry delivering had an accident.

Mike did suggest that there may be a possibility of a mini beer festival later this year when all of the pub's six hand pulls will be put to use.

Readers may have noticed a slight dearth of brewery news in recent issues. Space has dictated against us. A full round up from our local micros will appear next time but we do have news of one new brewery that may be up and running by then. Rob Hamilton is a familiar face at the Marble Arch. He has purchased the small brewing plant that was formerly in the pub and is setting up his own **Blackjack Brewery** which will in fact be a close neighbour of Marble Brewery on Wood Street. More news of this exciting project as we get it.

Red Rose

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For more details: Email - ian.w.ritchie@02.co.uk Tel: 07746 766251

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 highly regarded **Bulls Head** in Old Glossop, run for over seven years by Paul and Barbara Taylor, and a High Peak Pub of the Season in 2011, was recently reported to be changing hands. However, though Paul will be taking a back seat and following another line of work, Barbara is now confirmed as taking over the pub, with the usual help from family and bar staff. It's good news for both locals and those who enjoy a visit to sample the excellent franchised curries. I visited on 4th March, the first time since the rarely seen Dark Hatters has been added as a regular, and it was in great condition, creamy and well presented. It replaces Hatters. The other beers were Unicorn and the seasonal beer that was also fine. As normal on a Sunday afternoon, the place was busy with football on TV in the tap room and was lively and friendly. For those of you who like a quieter time, most Thursdays are normally jazz evenings and various local artists do their turn round the room.

Talking of music, the **Moon & Sixpence** in Glossop town centre continues to present live music starting normally at 9.30pm on Fridays and Saturdays, with some great talent which can include classic local bands such as Atlanta Roots and the Tony Auton Band. Beers include Shepherd Neame Spitfire and Deuchars IPA. Often the local Howard Town Wrens Nest is also available.

Down at the **Globe**, a loyalty card has been recently introduced. Buy 10 pints of Globe beers and you get one free. Landlord Ron Brookes says it's to try and encourage the lager drinkers to exercise their taste buds. He reports it is working, as some customers have started to change over.

At the **Hare & Hounds** in Simmondley, Dave and Tracey have been there some nine months now after moving up from the Corner Cupboard down in the town centre (Glossop). Tetley Bitter has always been the most popular real ale in the pub but Thwaites Wainwrights is a close second, with Black Sheep also often on sale. Recently, they have been taking Greenfield beers, a rarity in Glossopdale and report that they are selling well so may appear fairly regularly. The pub had a refurbishment last year and it is much more

light and airy. Plans are in hand to raise up the beer garden so it gives extensive views for drinkers, over the Glossopdale valley. Also a Summer beer festival will shortly be announced. Down at **Glossop Labour Club**, the last few monthly Folk Trains have seen Buxton SPA on sale alongside the Moorhouses Premium and very popular it has been too. Recent bands on the Folk Train have included Geoff Higginbottom and Dr Butlers Medicine Hatstand Band. The Folk Train takes the 6.48pm train from Piccadilly to Glossop on the 4th Thursday in the month, plays in the club and then returns to Manchester on the 9.37pm train and it's well worth a try.

Nearby, the **Oakwood** on High Street West also has live music at weekends, and three Robinsons beers on offer. Just up the road on Arundel Street the Friendship now has Robinsons Dizzy Blonde on sale regularly, to complement the Unicorn & Hatters.

Glossop North End FC is holding a beer festival on the weekend of May 25th and 26th, opening at 6pm on the Friday evening. There will be 20-plus beers on sale and several ciders. It follows requests from fans for such an event to be held and hopefully will raise money to help keep the club's income afloat during the close season.

Some of the beers will be on sale on the existing clubhouse bar and the others in a tent outside. There is also live music planned in the evenings. Of course, visitors to festival will have the opportunity of visiting some of the town's fine pubs of which several are within a few minutes walk away. The football ground is located on Surrey Street, a few minutes walk away from the railway station (you can see the ground shortly before pulling into the station on your right) and buses too are only minutes away. Paul Eccles, the organiser appears to have covered all avenues and the event sounds like it will be a "good do"!! ... see you there.

Peak Practice With Robin Wignall



More than 60 beers were available at the **Old Hall**, Whitehough, Winter Beer Festival at the end of February. The beers were available at three bars, the main bar and festival bar in the Old Hall, and across the road in the **Paper Mill**, formerly the Oddfellows. There was a fine range of and selection of beers from across the country, with an emphasis on a number of Derbyshire breweries, such as Ashover, Brampton, Brunswick, Derventio and of course Thornbridge. Although there were easy drinking milds and bitters, there was, as befits a Winter

Festival, a good range of 5% plus beers, both pale and dark, including some very good stouts and porters.

The Festival Beer List was this time helpfully in alphabetical order by brewery, and tasting notes gave a good clue of what to expect. There were lots of mentions of the use of hops for taste, with this ingredient being sourced from around the brewing world. Allgates Brewery had followed Marston's good example and brewed a single hop beer with Wai-iti hops from New Zealand. Bank Top Barley to Beer is brewed with eastern European hops and Abbeydale Deception, a very popular and quick to sell out brew, used Nelson Sauvin hops.

At the easier end of the range Moorhouses Black Witch and Ashover Light Rale were perhaps my selections. At the stronger end of the spectrum Marble Lagonda, a classic IPA, and Titanic Iron Curtain were my choices. It has to be emphasised that all the beers that I tried were in good form and could be easily recommended.

As noted above the Paper Mill, across the road from the Old Hall was in use for this beer festival and provided a welcome break for some, from the busy atmosphere of the main building, at least in the afternoon sessions. The Paper Mill normally opens at weekends and most evenings at the moment, though work continues with the remodelling during the day. There has been some reshaping of the interior, to give a multi-room feel to the pub. The new bar is now in place and operational and space has been found for a pool table. The fully finished job will be well worth visiting. Sometime in April might see a formal re-opening, but as with all building projects, one can never be quite sure. However the Paper Mill is already taking its place in the community and when work is completed this rôle will be enhanced.

The long standing tenant left the **Royal Oak** in High Lane in January. This is a former Burtonwood pub which has been something of a Good Beer Guide regular over the years, including 2012. However the pub is in safe hands at the moment as Marston's were quick to install a relief manager. Mark Parsons took over the Royal Oak in January. Mark and Linda are familiar faces in the area and have in recent years managed the Shady Oak, the aforementioned Oddfellows and other local pubs. Six beers are available with Marston's Bitter, Pedigree and Wychwood Hobgoblin as regulars. The other three come from the list of beers from the Marston's brewing empire. When I called these were from Ringwood and Marston's single hop Galaxy.

Good pub food is available at the Royal Oak and Sunday lunchtime is busy with diners. The 199 Stockport-Buxton bus, stops at the door. The pub has an afternoon close Monday-Thursday, but is otherwise open from noon until late.

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Pub News

Duffy's Bar on Barlow Moor Road in Chorlton has expanded its range of cask ales with the addition of Lancaster Red. The 4.9% ruby red beer joins Hydes Original and Black Sheep Bitter on the pumps. The small friendly bar just down from Chorlton's "four banks" crossroads offers a break from some of the area's trendier youth orientated bars. It specialises in TV sport from GAA to PGA, Racing and the odd football match. There's disco and karaoke on Fridays and a variety of live bands on Saturday nights.



Chorlton's **Electrik** bar has launched its very own cask ale. The Electrik Ale Experiment is a collaboration between Electrik's own staff and Bollington's Happy Valley Brewery. Manager Matt and popular barman Cristoph joined Happy Valley owner and head brewer Dave Hughes to brew their first beer which has been named "Bright Spark". Brewed using Maris Otter malts and Hersbrucker and Bravo hops the beer is a 3.7% bright session pale ale, strong in flavour, yet dry and hoppy. Over the next 12 months the team plan to extend their range to include a porter and a classic IPA. The new beer went on sale on 8 March to mark the end of refurbishment work at the Wilbraham Road bar. The gents toilets have been relocated to the rear of the bar, making room for an extended bar with more fonts and fridge space and a new seating area.

Chorlton's **Oddest Bar** will host the next of their series of Meet The Brewer events when the award winning Titanic Brewery from Stoke visit on Tuesday 24 April. Famed for their nautically themed beers such as Iceberg, Steerage and Lifeboat, the brewers will be on hand to talk about the brewing process, the history of the brewery and to answer your questions. A full range of their beers will be available on the night.

The **Rising Sun** which spans Queen Street and Lloyd Street just off Deansgate in the city centre has re-opened after a major refurbishment. Almost every aspect of the pub has undergone change from the replacement of the old red and gold signage with classy new black and white to a well overdue replacement and retiling of the toilets. A new bar now boasts seven handpumps, six for cask ale and one for real cider while new flooring, wall coverings and



furniture give the pub a brighter but traditional feel. The pub has also extended its opening hours and food service times.

Nestled behind Wetherspoons' Waterhouse in the city centre are three real community pubs making it well worth the short detour down the backstreets from Princess Street or Mosley Street. The **City Arms** is a well established cask ale house that has recently been able to bring local brews to their range thanks to SIBA's Direct Delivery Scheme. (To celebrate they have organised a Meet The Brewer event with Denton brewer Hornbeam). The event is on Wednesday 18th April from 7.30pm. Just across the road from City Arms on Fountain Street is the **Crown** where new licensees Paul and Marie are making strides in improving the real ale offering. The couple who also run the Village in Trafford Park, have installed two Timothy Taylor's beers - Landlord and light mild Golden Best with plenty of promotion to encourage their customers to try the ales. They are keen to expand the range as soon as demand allows. Completing the back street triumvirate is the **Vine Inn** where landlady Rachele and her team offer a friendly welcome to regulars and visitors alike to their "country pub in the city".

The **Tollgate**, the Marston's pub opposite Trafford Bar tram station has re-introduced cask ale after many years selling only keg products. Two handpumps have been installed with the first beers on sale being Brakspears Bitter and Jennings Bitter, both from the Marston's stable. After many years with Wetherspoons' **Bishop Blaize** being the only real ale in Stretford, the area is slowly undergoing a revival with the Tollgate joining the **Great Stone Hotel** which began stocking cask ale late last year.



Lovers of the push bike are being invited to a "bike music festival for all the family" on Saturday 12th May in the grounds of **Jackson's Boat** pub on the banks of the Mersey between Sale Moor and Chorlton Green. Organised by The Bike Barn, the bike hire and repair shop based at the pub, the event is to raise money for charities The Children's Adventure Farm Trust and Simply Cycling. As well as various bike related activities, there will be live music, rowing on the Mersey and various other fun family activities. The pub will be providing a variety of ales, one of which will be the charity ale for which part of the cost of each pint will go to the charities. For details see www.bicyclevillage.the-bike-barn.co.uk

Students and visitors to concerts at **Manchester Students Union** can now enjoy cask ale with two handpumps installed in the main student union bar. When OT called, Robinsons Build A Rocket and seasonal Long Kiss Goodnight were available, both in decent condition.

Major brewer Greene King have submitted a planning application to demolish Fallowfield's **Orange Grove** pub and build six "retail units" and a two storey restaurant unit almost double the size of the pub on its site. In an amazing statement for one of the country's major brewers and pub operators, their letter of application actually proposes the demolition of the pub to be good for the area by "reducing the proportion of public house/take-away units". They also propose that crowding seven glass and metal boxes where there is currently an attractive multi-level pub with extensive decked and lawned surrounds will "enhance the attractiveness and physical appearance" of the area.



In Stockport town centre, as one door closes another one reopens. Robinsons' cull of their perceived no-hoper pubs continues with the **Unity** on Wellington Road South being the latest to close its doors.

However further down the road in Mersey Square the **George** reopened its doors on March 17. Not only that but the cask ale has made a welcome reappearance in the form of Taylors Landlord and Golden Best light mild on handpump. This is a very welcome development not only as the pub is a cask ale gain but the closed and shuttered building was something of an eyesore. The George has dabbled with real ale in the past, not always successfully, so let's hope it's a success this time round. Drop in and give it some support.

Pub shorts: the **Salutation**, Higher Chatham Street has replaced Deuchars IPA with Rossendale Floral Dance as their permanent beer. The **Whitworth** at the top end of Rusholme has closed and is reportedly being converted to a cafe. The **Town Hall Tavern** on Tib Lane (city centre) is under new management. The **Lost Dene** (formerly The Hogs Head), Deansgate is selling real cider on handpump. The **Waterhouse**, Princess Street is holding a Meet The Brewer event on 18th April to launch their participation in Mild Magic. The team from Holmfirth's Summer Wine Brewery will be on hand with a full range of their beers on the bar, including Resistance Dark Mild which will be the Waterhouse's featured mild for the promotion.

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Pub News Extra

THIS MONTH CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale is launching a new national pubs campaign, Community Pubs Month, to champion local pubs which are at the heart of countless communities across Britain.

The aims of Community Pubs Month are to increase footfall in pubs, to encourage more publicans to promote new or existing events to attract further trade, and to spread awareness of community pubs throughout the media.

The dedicated website for the Month – www.communitypubsmonth.org.uk – is geared up to give pubs free publicity through listing any events licensees have planned throughout the month of April. Pubs signing up to the Month will be given free promotional material to help promote their events, whether it be the regular weekly pub quiz or a big one-off charity bash to get the community together.

Kicking off proceedings on Monday April 2nd with Community Pubs Day – the day after CAMRA’s Members’ Weekend & AGM in Torquay – CAMRA branches across Britain will be organising a wide range of events to promote their local pubs during the Month, and will be working in the lead-up to April to ensure this first year for the campaign is a big success.

Tony Jerome, CAMRA Head of Marketing, said:

‘The real aim of this Month is to give a window of opportunity for hard working publicans to promote any events they have planned in April, and for us at CAMRA to give them all the help and support in terms of publicity and increased trade.’

‘We realise it’s a tough time out there for pubs at the moment – as CAMRA’s new pub closure figures highlighted last week – and this is why CAMRA has put a large amount of campaigning funds into this initiative to help pubs market themselves during April.’

As well as CAMRA branches ordering promotional material to maximise the exposure for this new campaign in pubs across Britain, pub licensees can also order packs direct from CAMRA. Community Pubs Month packs will include campaigning posters, beer mats, leaflets and pump clip crownners.

CAMRA has been campaigning for over 40 years to support pubs in the wake of rising costs, underinvestment, threat of demolition, property developers and more, and with 16 pubs closing on a weekly basis, the future of the great British pub is at stake.

Pictured above (top to bottom) - three of Stockport’s community locals: The Arden Arms, Millgate; Swan with two Necks, Princes Street; Red Bull, Hillgate



WHILE ROBINSONS are closing down some of their “no hoppers” at the same time welcome investment is being made in other parts of the company’s estate. One pub to benefit from a recent makeover is the **Blossoms** on Buxton Road in Heaviley.

Rather than spend a huge six figure sum on refurbishing other Robinsons pubs to receive a lower cost makeover which involves a general re-decoration of the interior furnishings. It’s quite a different approach. The right hand front wall has been turned into a shrine to Old Tom complete with a mural (pictured aside) which you will either love or hate.



There is a wealth of old brewery memorabilia on the walls, recalling some of the brewers Robinsons have taken over – notably Bell & Co, from whom some very evocative adverts can be seen. The back “smoke room” has been restored to its Victorian splendour (although painting the oak fire surround grey is a notable faux pas we think). All in all an excellent job, though and we look forward to more of the same in other Robinsons pubs.



Staying with the Blossoms the pub has also received the awarded Cask Marque accreditation, which recognises quality of presentation and service for traditional, hand-pulled and cask conditioned beer.

Annabel Smith, National Account Manager for Cask Marque, said: “Robinsons should feel proud of this excellent achievement, which not only recognises the effort put into serving great beer but also acts as an independent guarantee of quality for their customers.

Pictured above – Oliver Robinson, Annabel Smith (Cask Marque), Blossoms’ manager Eric Mills and Robinson’s Head Brewer Martin Weeks.

The Blossoms is a community pub receiving welcome investment. On the other side of the coin there are concerns about the future of another local. This is the **Mawson** on Kincardine Road in Chorlton-on-Medlock which has recently closed.

This Grade II listed building is on CAMRA’s National Inventory of heritage pubs due to its unspoilt interior and is in CAMRA and thrive as a pub. As things stand the whole area is to be redeveloped and another story has it that the building has been sold to the Taipei Chinese cash and carry nearby.



Urgent enquires are being made to establish just who owns the building and to find out what is planned. We think this is an important pub that should not be lost.

The **Bulls Head** in Hazel Grove re-opened on March 2, re-branded as a John Barras house, with handpumps re-introduced offering Black Sheep and Bombardier at a respectable £2.45 a pint. Just up the road, Bill Moon has now left the **Rising Sun** (we kid you not) and new licensee Pete has kept the four handpumps dispensing Theakstons, Deuchars and Bombardier. Meanwhile the ever excellent **Grapes** (a Good Beer Guide regular) is now selling the Robinsons seasonals alongside Hatters and Unicorn.

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The Beer Shop is now fully open until 22:00 every night for on and off sales. Check the website for future events following the successful "Meet the Brewer" with Toby Mackenzie of RedWillow. Tutored tastings and more Meet the Brewer events are planned for the new year. Visit www.ukbeershop.com or call 0161 947 9338 for updated information.

**OPENING HOURS: 4 -10PM TUESDAY TO THURSDAY; 2-10PM FRIDAY;
12-10PM SATURDAY**

Brewery News



All Change at Robinsons

WITH over 150 years in the business between them, Chairman Peter Robinson and his brothers Dennis and David have announced they will be reducing their involvement with the business, allowing for some changes to the Board.

Peter Robinson stated that from 1st March, Oliver and William Robinson (pictured, left) will become joint managing directors. He went on to say “that this year, with the completion of a number of our investments in the brew house, new training and visitors facilities and a new depot in Cumbria, we feel it is the right time for the transition of the day to day management of the business from one generation to the next.”

Oliver will head up the Beer Division whilst William takes responsibility for the Pub Division. Commenting on their new appointment, William and Oliver said:- “We would like on behalf of all our generation to thank our fathers and uncle for their on-going commitment to the Company and the hard work they have put into making it the robust business it is today. It is the clear principles and values they have instilled in all of us that we will use to develop the Company.”

Robinsons’ investments this year include a new brew house featuring the biggest Hopnik in the world. “As I’m sure people have noticed, from the new website and initiatives such as the beer with the band elbow, we are evolving. The next noticeable sign of change will be the complete re-branding of

More Robbies News

OLD TOM now has its very own website. The website, oldtombeer.co.uk, includes an online shop, an extensive history of Robinsons’ brewery, a special CATNAV system for locating Old Tom stockists and public houses, plus latest news from the Old Tom brand. The website will also host a virtual tour of the Robinsons’ brewery.



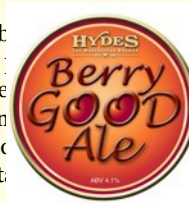
Robinsons’ Director of Marketing, David Bremner said: “After 112 years of winning awards with one of the best beers on the planet we thought we’d start to make a bit of a fuss. This beer isn’t for everyone; it’s strong, indulgent and rich. It’s not like anything most people have had before. But once you have tried it you’ll never look back. The debate at the brewery is which of its siblings is the best. Oliver Robinson swears by the Chocolate Tom whilst every female I have met loves the Ginger. That includes people who tell us they don’t like beer. This is where the fun begins. Sign up to the newsletter or follow us on Facebook or Twitter for the ride of your nine lives!”

Hydes Move Latest

HYDES have released more details about their proposed brewery move. The new premises will be at Kansas Avenue in Salford, near the Media City site, and will occupy the former premises of an old Greenalls distribution depot. The £2 million spend on the new premises will not just cover the cost of the brewing plant but also the company’s numerous head office functions.

Some eyebrows were raised when it was heard that the new brewery might initially produce just 5,000 barrels a year. However it appears that this may simply be the amount of Hydes cask ale currently being supplied to their estate, and will be supplemented by additional beers bought in from third parties – this latter will include both keg beer and guest cask ales. Indeed all non-cask beer production was due to cease at Hydes at the end of last month.

The new brewery will be able to brew 40 barrels at a time and is planned to be up and running by the end of September or early October. When it is the plan is to range of one-off and bespoke to the standard core range an ale programme. The reduced enable Hydes to take advantage beer duty regime for smaller producers, which will result in a significant tax saving for them.



On the beer front, the latest craft ale is Berry Good Ale (4.1%) described as a “delightful, well balanced copper toned ale, craft brewed using only the finest Goldings and Fuggle hops”. You may also have caught a one-off for St Patrick’s Day - O’Finnegan’s Irish-style dry stout (4.1%).



THE FIRST pint from the first cask of Solstice Golden Ale ever brewed, was drawn on the eve of the summer solstice in June 2011 and marked the birth of Brightside Brewing Company. In terms of marketing this sounds like a brilliantly conceived idea; shame it was just an incredible coincidence!

The inspiration to establish the brewery followed the purchase of some particularly undrinkable beer in January 2009, but it took many months of planning, building and testing equipment, and finally brewing and discarding brew after brew before they were happy with the beer. Brightside was however, rewarded for its efforts with the first CAMRA award, *Best in Festival* from the Tamworth beer festival, being presented for Maverick IPA after just two and a half months of trading.



The company is entirely family run; father and son Neil and Lance Friedrich look after brewing, daughter Carley takes care of sales, and mum Maxine has a hand in most areas of the business. They all have a food and or drink background, with Neil now having butcher, baker and brewer listed on his CV, Maxine and Lance are bakers born and bred and Carley with a background in the wine trade.

In terms of the hardware, it is a 2.5 barrel plant, producing roughly 10 firkins per brew. Brewing takes place once or twice a week depending on time available as the family also runs a bakery, which in the short term also doubles as the home for the brewery. The equipment, which has had to fit into a particularly tight space at the bakery, was designed by Neil who has an interest in all things technical. The core range consists of Brightside Best Bitter 4.3% ABV; Solstice Golden Ale 4.5% ABV; Darkside Stout 4.6% ABV and Maverick I.P.A. 4.8% ABV. Odin Wheat Beer (3.8%) was a special released in early February. Check out the brewery website at www.brightsidebrewing.co.uk or look them up on Facebook and Twitter @BrightsideBrew.

Next month- a full round up of local micro

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A great selection of over 30 cask ales and ciders, rotating throughout the week, including Hydes St. George's Bitter



FRIDAY 20th	MONDAY 23rd	THURSDAY 26th	FRIDAY 27th
STEVE'S KARAOKE	ST. GEORGE'S DAY	SUPER QUIZ NIGHT WITH 'OPEN THE BOX'	BILLY AND MANDY LIVE

Ye Olde Woolpack

70 Brinksway, Stockport, SK3 0BY 0161 474 1212



ASK FOR A FREE TASTE OF OUR CIDERS

**16
TRADITIONAL
CIDERS
2 PERRIES
7 EVER
CHANGING
CASK ALES**

**LUNCH 12 TILL 4
WEEKDAYS & SUNDAY
£4.95**

**FRESH IN EVERY
FRIDAY FROM THE FARM
IN SCOTLAND**

**FRIDAY NIGHT
KARAOKE
LIVE BAND
SATURDAY**

**VENISON BURGERS & PIES
STEAK BURGERS & PIES
CHICKEN, PORK
COME ALONG & TRY THEM**

Pennine

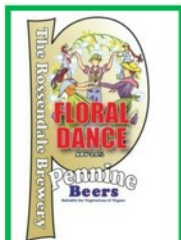
Pennine Ale (Rossendale) Ltd., 84-86, Hud Rake, Haslingden, Lanc's BB4 5AF

THE ROSSENDALE BREWERY

www.rossendalebrewery.co.uk

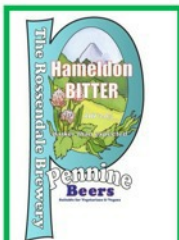
Contacts - Office: 0333 210 4021; Geoff: 07816 912 794; Robin: 07709 874 783

Meet our beers - Beer Tasting Notes



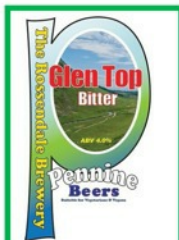
**Floral Dance
3.8%**

A pale and fruity session beer, with body that is more than a match for many stronger beers!



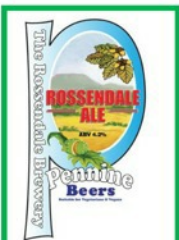
**Hameldon
Bitter 3.8%**

An unusually dark traditional bitter, with a dry and assertive character that develops in the finish.



**Glen Top Bitter
4.0%**

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



**Rossendale Ale
4.2%**

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



**Halo Pale
4.5%**

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



Pitch Porter 5%

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



Sunshine 5.3%

A hoppy and bitter golden beer with a citrus character. The lingering finish is dry and spicy.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further info!

All of our beers can be sampled at -
The Griffin, 84-86, Hud Rake, Haslingden, Lancashire BB4 5AF (Brewery Tap) - 01706 21 40 21
The Sportsman, 57, Mottram Road, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 2NN - 0161 368 5000

www.rossendalebrewery.co.uk

All of our beers are suitable for Vegetarians & Vegans.

ENIGMA

After 5 years Enigma makes a welcome return to our limited edition range, with a fresh look and taste. Taking its name from the famous code breaking machine that encrypted and decrypted secret messages, Enigma is a golden ale with a sweet malt and fruity hop character. Brewed with Goldings and Challenger hops, a blend of barley and wheat malts, Enigma exhibits a rich array of sweet, malt and hoppy flavours with a crisp dry finish.



— SEASONAL

— ALES 2012 —



ENIGMA

A Quaffable Amber Beer,
with a Rich Finish

— SPRING —

Hop Variety:
Goldings and
Challenger
Alc. 4.3% Vol.

1.2
UK
Units
Per 3.5 Pint

STYLE		AMBER BEER	ABV 4.3%
SEE		 GOLDEN	
SMELL		 SWEET MALT, FRUITY HOP	
TASTE		 SWEET MALT AND FRUITY FLAVOUR	
BITTER		    	
SWEET		    	

Available March/April 2012

