

February 2013

Opening

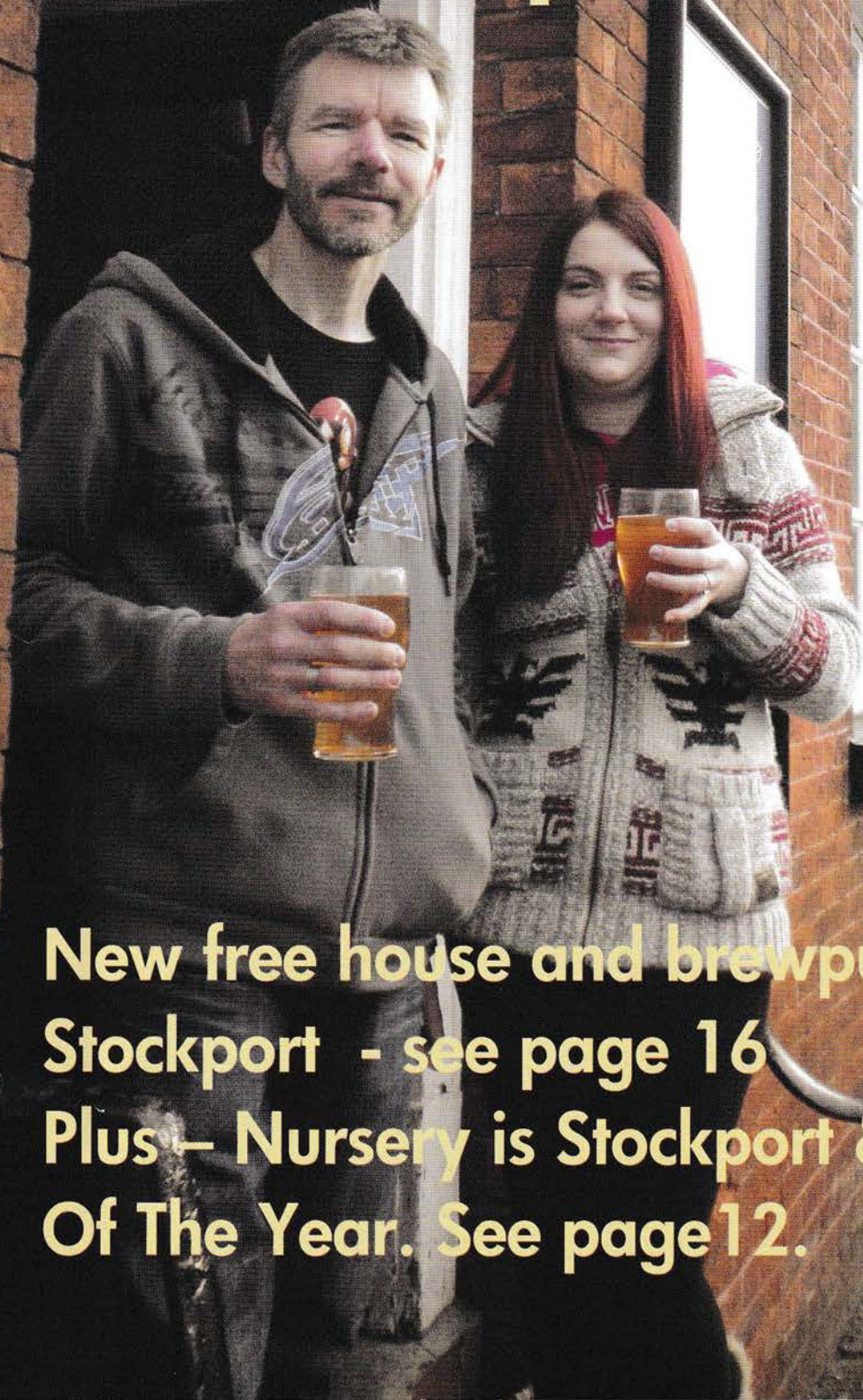
Times

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New Hope



New free house and brewpub for Stockport - see page 16

Plus – Nursery is Stockport & Sth Mcr Pub Of The Year. See page 12.

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Pub of the Month

The Railway, Heaton Norris



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for February 2013 is the Railway, Wellington Road North, Heaton Norris. *John Clarke* went along...

When Ray and Pam Ford took over the Railway, just a short walk uphill from Stockport Town Centre (there is a bus stop close by for the less agile) it was a pretty ordinary Punch Taverns leased pub selling a pretty ordinary selection of cask beers.

While the pub remained tied to Punch there was not a lot they could do about that. However Punch's financial difficulties resulted in a fire sale of their pub stock and three and a half years ago the couple were able to buy the pub free of tie. It's fair to say that since then it's not looked back.

The Railway has comfortably settled into the local pub scene, quietly making a name for itself with the quality of the live entertainment it offers. No tuneless karaoke here – instead there is top rated live jazz every weekend and this has now been supplemented with a rock'n'roll night on Mondays.

The beer range has now settled too. Holts Bitter is always on sale – always good to have a familiar name on the bar – and this is supplemented by four ever changing guest beers, often from local micros (Ray has been a great supporter of the new Ringway and Privateer breweries) and some from further afield. Quality is spot on with the pub appearing in the 2013 Good Beer Guide.

Ray and Pam have already been rewarded for their efforts with a previous Pub of the Month and Pub of the Year award. However their continuing hard work taking the pub forward makes them worthy winners a second time around.

This very well deserved award will be presented on Thursday 28 February when an excellent night out is in prospect. The pub is easy to get to being on the 192 bus route. From the south Manchester area bus number 22 will also drop you off nearby.

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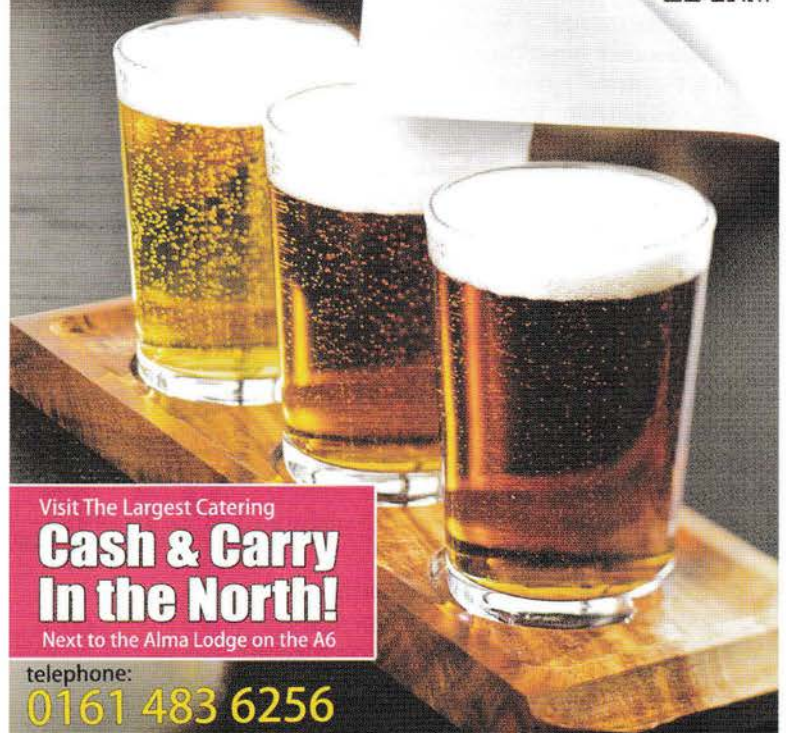
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Comment & What's On

Index, Notes and Local CAMRA Branch Events

Caught on the hop

"When the brewery at the Hope Inn opens in a few months' time Stockport will have four operating breweries again – the last time we were in that position was 1959" That's what we said last month. Seems like that has come around quicker than we thought as the new Foolhardy Ales brewery was scheduled to open on 7 February (so by the time most readers see this it will be up and running).

If there is space in OT we plan a review of the three newcomers, Quantum, Ringway and Foolhardy, alongside a look back at the vanished three. Robinsons have been the constant of course but back in the day there was brewing at Clarkes in Reddish, the old Bell's Brewery on Hempshaw Lane (then owned by Robbies) and the Royal Oak Brewery on Hillgate (recently turned into flats). Any readers who have memories of these are very welcome to get in touch.

We usually run a review of the National Winter Ales Festival in this issue but this year our production schedule means that there will be a report next time. What we can say is that as this was typed it is shaping up to be a cracker and will be leaving Manchester on a high note. Our colleagues in Derby have a hard act to follow but we are confident they will rise to the occasion.

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. 7,350 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth. All articles copyright CAMRA unless otherwise stated.

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Subscriptions – available at £11.00 for 12 issues (make cheques payable to Opening Times). Apply to David Sharpe, 1 Chiltern Drive, Woodsmoor, Stockport, SK2 7BE. Tel 0161 483 3708

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Contributors to this issue: John Clarke, Alan Gent, Dave Hanson, Peter Butler, Pete Farrand, Robin Wignall, Peter Edwardson, Frank Wood, Phil Booton, Caroline O'Donnell, John O'Donnell, Tony Icke, Geoff Williamson, Mark McConachie, Jim Flynn.

Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Front Cover – Martin Wood and Samantha Halfyard toast the reopening of the Hope.

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Your Local CAMRA Branches

Stockport & South Manchester (SSM) www.ssmcamra.org.uk
Contact: Mark McConachie 0161 429 9356; mark.mcconachie@o2.co.uk

North Manchester (NM) www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk
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High Peak & NE Cheshire (HPNC) www.hpneccamra.org.uk
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Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)
www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk
Contact: Tony Icke 01625861833; bicke@madasafish.com

Trafford & Hulme (T&H) www.thcamra.org.uk
Contact: enquiries@thcamra.org.uk

Your Local CAMRA Events

Friday 7th – Branch Meeting and Good Beer Guide selection: Volunteer Hotel, Cross St, Sale. Starts 8pm. (T&H)

Sunday 10th – Cider Crawl in Chorlton: Contact branch for details (T&H)

Monday 11th – Branch Meeting: Cheshire Ring, Manchester Road, Hyde. Final Good Beer Guide selections will be made. Starts 8.30pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 13th – Good Beer Guide Surveying Crawl: Peel Green/Patricroft – Grapes 7.30pm; Bird in Hand 8.15; Queen's Arms 9.00. (NM)

Thursday 14th – Branch Meeting & Good Beer Guide selection: Magnet, Wellington Rd North, Stockport. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

Thursday 14th – Quiz Night in Bowden: Griffin 8pm; Stamford Arms 9pm for quiz. (T&H)

Saturday 16th – Flixton/Urmston Social: Railway, Flixton 12pm; Fox & Hounds 1.15; Bent Brook 2.30; Nag's Head 4.00; Castle in the Air 5.15; finish at Swinging Bridge or Mardi Gras. (T&H)

Wednesday 20th – Branch Meeting: King's Arms, Bloom St, Salford. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 21st – City Centre Cross Street Social: All Bar One 8pm; Browns 9pm; Sam's Chop House 9.30; Corbieres 10pm; finish Mr Thomas's Chop House. (T&H)

Friday 22nd – Gatley & Cheadle Stagger: Prince of Wales, Gatley Green 7.30pm; Horse & Farrier 8.30. (SSM)

Monday 25th – Quiz Night in Timperley: Quarry Bank – from 8pm. (T&H)

Wednesday 27th – Good Beer Guide 2014 Final Selection Meeting: Salford Arms. Bloom St, Salford. Starts 7.00pm. (NM)

Thursday 28th – Pub of the Month presentation to the Railway, Wellington Rd Nth, Stockport. From 8pm. (SSM)

Thursday 7th March – Branch Meeting: Flixton Ex-Servicemens Club. Starts 8pm. Transport back to Stretford for all members after meeting. (T&H)

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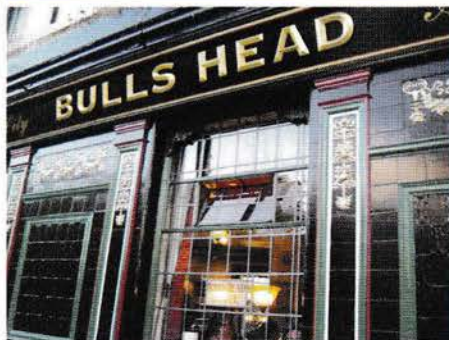
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Stagger

City Centre East with Mark McConachie



We began our City East crawl at the **Bulls Head** on London Road, across from the rear entrance to Piccadilly Station. It displays an ornately painted Victorian exterior that attracts both rail users and a faithful band of regulars. While the interior is basically open-plan it nevertheless manages to generate the atmosphere of cosy intimacy that you might expect to find in a more suburban location. With the recent retirement of long-time licensees Keith and Mui, I thought there may have been a change in the way things are managed. However I needn't have worried, as new licensee Paula continues the same professionalism and quality. Tonight we had Banks's Original; Jennings Cumberland Ale; Marstons Pedigree; Ringwood Boondoggle; Banks's Howling Wolf and Marston's Single Hop Citra. Only the latter two were sampled and both were very good.

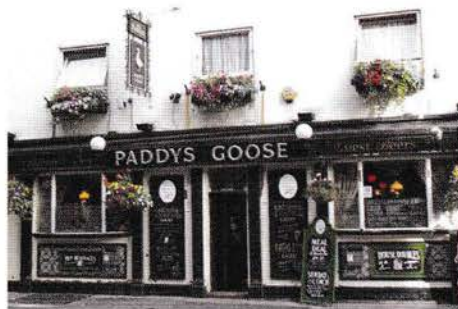
Passing by the keg-only Monroe's, one of our party enquired about cask ale availability in the Doubletree by Hilton hotel. Seemingly they sell cask Caledonian Deuchars IPA at a whopping £4 for a schooner (that's a two-thirds pint glass to you and me), which makes it possibly the most expensive pint in the world! Okay, perhaps not the world, but Manchester for sure.

He declined the offer and joined us in the **Waldorf** on Gore Street. This is an old but attractive building that stands quietly tucked away. The interior though is of more modern times, yet it gives a feel of provenance with wainscoted walls and a match-boarded ceiling. Mainly open plan (which seems to amplify the piped music), screened-off seating areas (some with sofas) afford some privacy to those wishing it. When televised football is shown, it can be busy, although tonight it was a loud with karaoke. Beers tried were Caledonian Deuchars IPA, Taylor Landlord, and from Bury, Irwell Works 1888. All scored well.

On next to Piccadilly Gardens and **Kro Piccadilly**. The most prestigious of the Danish Kro chain of pubs and bars, it occupies part of the ground floor of One Piccadilly Gardens. Inside, the predominance of concrete and glass can make for a noisy environment, what with both music and

conversation, making the latter very difficult. This is a stylish setup though that caters equally well for those dining as it does for those just here for a drink. The food is available all day whilst the beer selection tends to vary from time to time, with some interesting foreign bottles rounding it all off. Although busy at the bar, service was fast and efficient. A couple of beers were found to be on the warm side, but these were replaced when we informed the staff (the cellar beer-line-cooling equipment was working sporadically it seems). Thanks to manager Alistair Birdsell for the explanation. Beers were Robinson's Build a Rocket Boys (not tried), and Dizzy Blonde, Brakspear Bitter, Wychwood Hobgoblin, Jennings Cumberland (not tried). The Dizzy Blonde triumphed here over the others.

Passing the keg bars on Portland Street - Missoula, Blue Parrot, and Wave/Rogue, we entered **Yates** in front of the coach station. It is a large open space with raised alcove area to right leading to outside seating and smoking patio. A long curved bar sits along the back wall. It's similar in many ways to a Wetherspoon but not so cluttered with menus, so giving equal balance between wet trade and food. Unfortunately the usual Yates' House Best Bitter was not on tonight, so we passed on disappointed. Meanwhile behind the



forementioned coach station is **Paddy's Goose**, a pub of the more traditional sort where wood and paint, rather than glass and chrome, reign supreme and seats are there for the taking. The decor appears to almost be a throwback to the old Magic Pub Company days. Being on the fringe of the Gay Village, it attracts a fairly mixed crowd, with tonight having a friendly and convivial atmosphere as old Motown hits played in the background. The beers were Robinson's Unicorn and Wells Bombardier with both being in above-average condition.

Into the Village itself now, to the **Molly House** on Richmond Street. This new bar and cafe opened in December 2010 in a former worsted tailors shop. Not just a bar though, it does 20 different teas, specialist coffees, and high-end spirits. Set on two levels, its decor is

described as post-Victorian decadent shabby chic. The ground floor "The Tea Room" has the cask ale bar together with food servery. Upstairs in "The Bordello", the decor and lighting is more intimate. This floor has a bar too with sofas and a fireplace adding warmth. An outside smoking and drinking verandah finishes the impressive package. It invariably appears busy here, yet we managed to get seats to enjoy our Lancaster Amber, RedWillow Heartless, Abbeydale Fargate, Hornbeam Stretch Bitter, and Hornbeam Francesca (untried). People really took to the RedWillow beer whilst the others scored well too. They also do a real cider, which was Lancaster Farmhouse.

Back onto Portland Street next to finish the evening. First call was the **Old Monkey**, this was Holt's first ever new-build house in the city. Set on two floors with the downstairs being the main engine of trade, a mostly standing drinking area. Meanwhile upstairs has its own bar, and serves the



food in a comfortable and intimate environment. The upstairs windows provide you with great views of the bustle of the Princess Street junction. With a good-natured crowd in this evening, we enjoyed above-average Holt Mild, Bitter, and Wadworth 6X.

Two doors down is the **Circus**, a tiny, two-room house that echoes times past in its layout. A small bar manages to serve two cask beers, whilst friendly waiting staff guide you to a seat (space is at such a premium, that the waitress service here really is a godsend) in either room. Both rooms are plastered with hundreds of photos of footballers, boxers, comics and celebrities who have frequented the pub over the years. The back room's particular focus is on football material. Always popular with tourists, the Circus is a magnet for visitors to the town. We too were greeted well as we supped the very reasonable Tetley Bitter, it being the only beer on this evening.

Final stop was a further three doors down: Hydes' **Grey Horse**. This is a friendly single-roomed old pub. It has a light, clean interior with red upholstered bench seating and stools, and dark laminate floor. Photos of bygone Manchester adorn the walls along with a feature "Duffys" mirror. A tiny, heated outdoor yard at the rear can seat two people. We were easily accommodated although it was busy; the beers were Hydes 1863, Original Bitter, and seasonal beer Jekyll's Gold. All were well appreciated.



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Pub of the Season

The Trafford & Hulme Pub of The Season for Winter 2012-2013 is The Parlour on Beech Road, Chorlton. The award was presented on Thursday 10th January when local members joined a packed pub of regulars to celebrate with owners Jamie and Goshka Langrish and their team.

They were also joined by local MP John Leech who travelled back early from London specially for the presentation, spending two hours chatting to locals about subjects as diverse as the beer tax escalator, changes to the justice laws and the merits of various diets! As ever there were five cask ales plus a real cider and a real perry on offer while for the occasion the pub's chef had rustled up some hors d'oeuvres of roast beef in Yorkshire pudding with horseradish, mushroom & spinach vol-au-vents followed up by fish and chip cones.



Pictured below, pub cellarman Ben Brown receives the award from CAMRA's Heather Airlie and Trafford & Hulme Branch Chair Beverley Gobbett (right)



Neil Richardson Award



North Manchester CAMRA's prestigious Neil Richardson Award is presented each year to a local pub embodying the best of traditional pub values. It is presented in memory of the late Neil Richardson, long time CAMRA stalwart and editor of the now defunct North Manchester magazine *What's Doing*.



This year the award was presented to the **Union Tavern** on Liverpool Street in Salford, a traditional Holt's house. The award was presented by Neil's widow Sue who is pictured here presenting the award to landlord Danny Grayson.

The Railway Inn

A Journey Into History

The house at 91 Wellington Road South, Stockport, has seen a lot of changes. A glance at the neat frontage of Turner's art and craft shop won't give you many clues about its strange history. It won't tell you, for example, that sixty years ago, it was a popular pub. It won't tell you, either, that a gifted artist once lived there who decorated the walls with colourful murals.



The pub was the **Railway Inn** and in the 1950s this was a Wilson's house, although originally it was not owned by the Newton Heath brewers but by Daniel Clifton who brewed at the Royal Oak Brewery in Hillgate (and which has recently been converted into flats). The Railway was taken over in 1954 by John and Olive Nicholson, whose children John and Janet have been researching the history of the pub and its customers.

Their fascinating website (www.journeyintohistory.co.uk) provides a snapshot into a vanished world with atmospheric photographs of the pub and its customers from almost 60 years ago. It also provides a striking contrast with the building as it is today. After a couple of years the family moved to another vanished pub, the Church Inn on Love Lane in Heaton Norris, where the copious intake of regular "Sticky" Edwards is recalled by John Nicholson.



Pictured above – Olive Nicholson behind the bar (top), John, Olive and customers (above right), John Nicholson and clientele (above left). Many thanks to Janet and John Nicholson (who retain copyright of the pictures and site content) for permission to use this material.

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High Peak Pub Scene

Frank Wood & Robin Wignall with News and Views

High Peak Pub News With Frank Wood

The **Prince of Wales** in the Milltown area of Glossop changed hands in the Autumn and seems to have stabilised after several years of uncertainty and various changes in personnel. The Marston's pub had the standard Marston's Bitter and Pedigree on sale on my visit in early January, with the stronger Marstons Empire and a beer from Wychwood on the guest pump. I stuck with the Marston's Bitter and it was in good form. Heading down into central Glossop the **Howard Arms**, near top the town's main traffic lights, sells no real ale and hasn't done for many a year.



At the **Globe** brew pub at the bottom end of High Street West, the new beer on sale from the New Year was Malt Star, a light coloured beer at 4.3% which was proving popular on my visit and unfortunately replaced the batch of Ginger Ale that was consumed over the Christmas period in double quick time (more Ginger Ale please!). The **Moon & Sixpence** now sells Taylor's Landlord alongside its other beers and across the road, a new basement bar has opened called **Hurricanes**. One handpump is fitted, but so far is not in use.

In Droylsden, the **Beehive** has been selling real ale for some months and recent beers on sale have been from Ringway Brewery and Wilson Potter at Middleton. They also sell food – a rarity among pubs in the area. Also in the town, the **Cotton Tree** had its licence withdrawn by the Council in the Autumn after pressure from Councillors and residents following concerns after a shooting at the pub last May. It is now up for sale. The **Gardeners Arms** on Edge Lane is also in the news following an armed raid just prior to Christmas.

The **Society Rooms** in Stalybridge has improved no end in the past months. Ben Royle is the real ale 'specialist' and he is doing all he can to promote it via events such as 'meet the brewer' nights.

Carrbrook Institute Club on Buckton Vale Road has been selling Greenfield beers recently, a real ale gain here and further on up towards Mossley, the **Stamford Arms** at Heyhead, a Thwaites pub, sells Lancaster Bomber, Wainwrights and the seasonal beer and has had good reviews.

Back in Stalybridge, the **Old Fleece** has been selling real ale but following various changes in temporary licensees, it had none on in late January. The nearby **Q** has re-opened, with Tom Hathaway from the White House looking after both pubs. Tom is unsure at present if it will be a permanent position, but it makes sense for it to be open as they are very close together and both fall under Hydes ownership. He will be working on expanding the beer range.

Peak Practice With Robin Wignall

The festive season brought some opportunities to visit some establishments not on the normal circuit, even though many of them do serve decent real ale.

The **Old Hall**, Buxton received its annual visit before Christmas. This is a historic pub, the present building dating from 1670, and in Victorian times was described as a 'comfortable and fashionable hostelry.' A decent lunch was taken by a small group of us, and at sensible prices taking into account the town centre location of the Old Hall in this tourist hub. Beer choice was Buxton Moor Top, as good as ever, Thornbridge Kipling, and Sharp's Doom Bar. The Old Hall is also well worth a call.

The **Beehive** at Combs is still one of the best places for handling large parties. Food service is slick and quality is maintained even when there is a score or more of diners. The beer is well kept. These days the three beers are from the Marston's breweries. Beehive Bitter is Brakspear Bitter, a worthwhile 3.4% brew.

The **Poachers** at Bollington makes another good lunchtime call, with an inexpensive meal deal during the week. As can be expected in a Good Beer Guide listed pub, well kept beer also features. Storm Desert Storm and Weetwood Black Dog are usually available. York Jester and the local Happy Valley Christmas Cracker were on in December, the latter making enjoyable lunchtime drinking.

Another Good Beer Guide listed pub always worth visiting is the **White Lion** in Disley. Sensibly priced food can be washed down by a selection of well kept real ales from the

Enterprise Inns SIBA list.

Every so often both the **Soldier Dick** at Furness Vale and the **Navigation**, Buxworth serve the odd cask of mild as a guest beer. In this way customer interest is raised and the beer sells well and quickly enough to remain in good form. Thwaites Nutty Black has featured at the Soldier Dick whilst Phoenix Monkeytown Mild and Bank Top Dark Mild sold well at the Navigation.

The Marston's monthly Single Hop offerings during 2012 reached the year end with Kohatu New Zealand hops and Saaz Czech hops. Each of the single Hop beers has been distinctive, and certainly has greater hop flavour than say Marston's Bitter. Hopefully Marston's found this to be a successful experiment worthy of being continued. The **Shepherds** in Whaley Bridge (pictured below) has had each of these monthly beers on the bar as they have become available.



The Festive season produced a range of seasonal beers. Some were rich and dark, others pale, whilst some were herbed and spiced, sometimes a bit too much. However it is good to see brewers producing beers with a seasonal interest. It is even more pleasing to record some of the many pubs where some of these beers have been available. If it is commercially viable, it is good to see licensees providing a wider range of beer choice when they can.

The **Navigation** at Buxworth has sold Abbeydale Frostbite. A December visit to the **Drum & Monkey** at Horwich End found Christmas beers from Storm and Happy Valley in the cellar. Phoenix Christmas Kiss sold well at the **Old Hall**, Whitehough. Coach House Christmas Pudding and Moorhouse's Lap Prancer was available at the Soldier Dick. The Shepherds sold Wychwood Bah Humbug and Marston's Ugly Sisters with others from the Marston's breweries. Tom & Berry featured in the Robinson's estate, notably at the **Cock** in Whaley Bridge and the **Crossings** in Furness Vale.

Of course the next opportunity to experience a really big choice of real ale in the High Peak comes with the Winter Beer Festival at the **Old Hall**, Whitehough, during the last week end in February. As ever, this is one not to miss.



High Peak & NE Ches.
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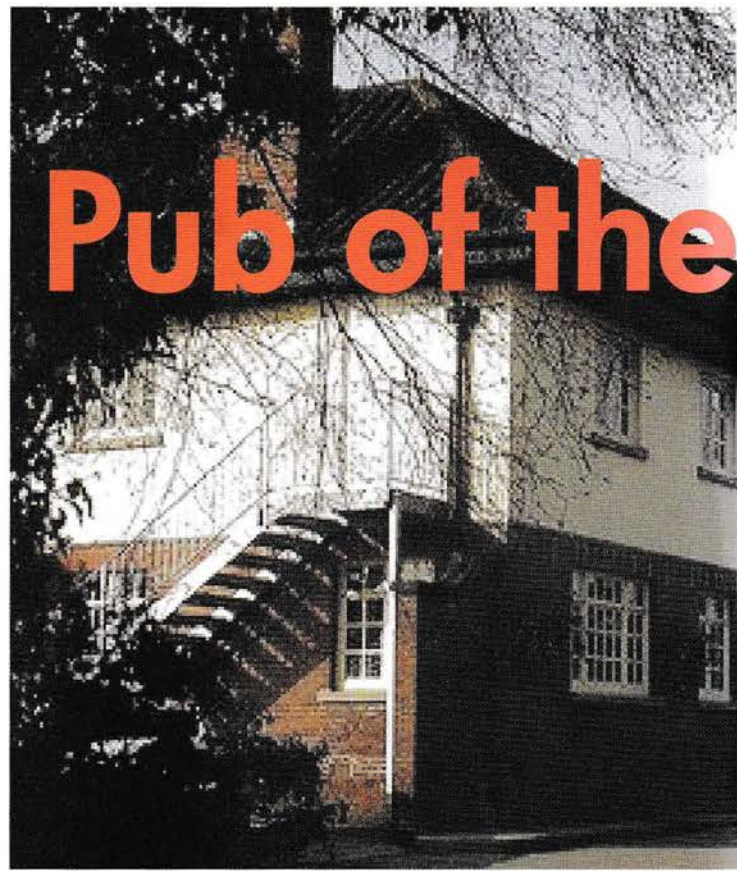


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Pub of the

The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year vote is often strongly contested and this year two classic Stockport pubs were in the running. With the Nursery in Heaton Norris and the Arden Arms in the town centre both in contention it was always going to be a close run thing. Both were previous winners but only one could emerge triumphant and this time honours went to the Nursery, with the Arden Arms a well - deserved runner-up.

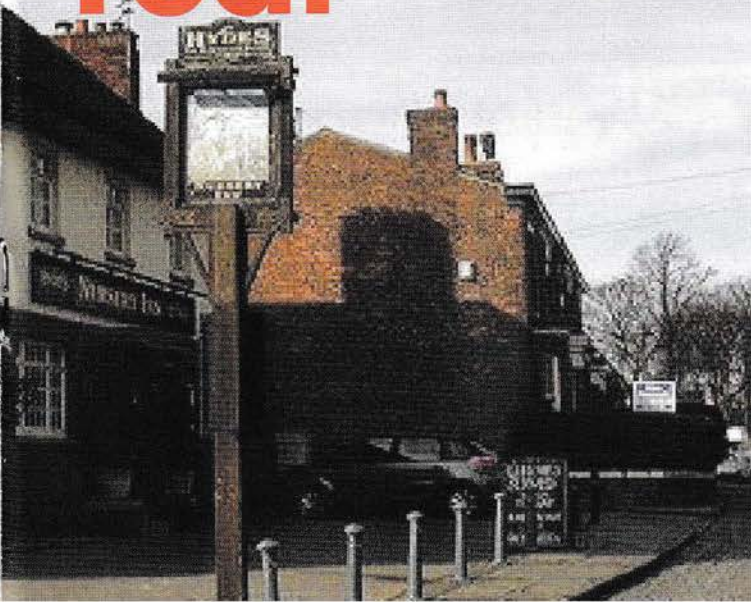
Of course honours have gone to the Nursery in the past. Indeed it was CAMRA's national Pub of the Year under long serving licensee George Lindsay back in 2002. George's stepson Simon Wetton (pictured right) is now at the helm and if anything the pub has improved in the time.

Of course it is still an unspoiled multi-roomed gem, nowadays benefiting from a Grade II listing, and remains on CAMRA's National Inventory of Heritage Pubs. There is still superb food, now under the supervision of Simon's sister Louise. There is though if anything an even more impressive community focus with an increased amount of charity work and a broader spectrum of entertainment bringing in crowds of all ages. There is a good traditional vault crowd too, who enjoy the televised sport - the Nursery is one of the few local pubs with a separate vault with its own entrance which cannot be accessed from the rest of the pub.

On the beer front there have been major changes. Back in 2002 just the Hydes range featured (the Nursery is a Hydes tied house) but now this has been expanded to include a range of changing guest beers. This is supplemented by occasional beer festivals. Quality continues to be high and indeed the pub recently received an award to mark 30 continuous entries in CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide.



Year



Simon was over the moon when he learned of the pub's triumph in the voting. "That's fantastic news", he told us. "I never thought we would win this year. It is really is a great start for the New Year for me, Louise and the rest of the staff." The presentation is due to take place on Saturday March 9th when the customary good night will be enjoyed by everyone there.

Arden Arms is Runner-Up

This year's runner-up is also a serial award winner with both Pub of the Month and Pub of the Year awards under its belt. Again like the Nursery it's a multi-roomed Grade II listed gem on CAMRA's National Inventory, although the Arden Arms dates from the early 19th Century, rather than the middle of the 20th. It is in fact one of the oldest surviving pubs in town, with the current 1815 building replacing an older structure dating back to 1650.

However while the Arden Arms is a historic pub, it's no ossified museum piece. It's a vibrant community local ably run since 1999 by Steve King and Joe Quinn. There's a darts team, a quiz team and live jazz. Numerous



groups and societies meet there, ranging from Stockport Heritage, Stockport PLUS to Robinsons Fishing Club and even a knitting group.

The quality of the food at the Arden Arms is the stuff of legend with restaurant quality food served in a comfortable pub environment, made particularly welcoming in the winter months by two real fires blazing in the Millgate Room. A recent development has seen the introduction of evening meals between 5.30 and 8.0pm from Wednesday to Sunday.

The Arden is a Robinson's house and makes the full use of the Robinsons range serving 1892, Dizzy Blonde, Unicorn, Double Hop and the current seasonal. A small cask of Old Tom on the bar in the winter months adds to the traditional feel. In many towns a pub like the Arden Arms would be permanently top of the heap. It is a testimony to the strength of the Stockport pub scene that it is one amongst several superbly run traditional pubs. We hope to present a runner-up award at a date to be arranged.

Introducing...

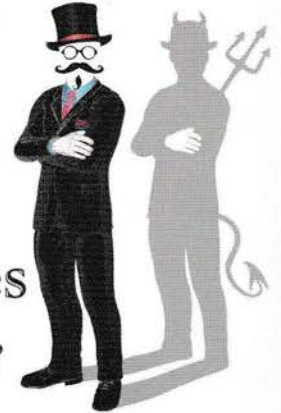
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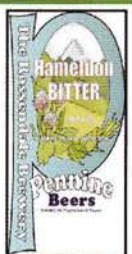
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Pub News

Covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Suburbs & City News

The **Sir Ralph Abercromby** on Bootle Street in the city centre is having a spruce up. When OT called in for a pint, we found owners George and Michael browsing through carpet swatches, picking the new floor coverings for the pub. A



redecorating is also in the pipeline. With the Peterloo area of the city undergoing something of a revival and the abandoned bars on Peter Street itself all finding new owners, the Ralph is joining in with the revival. They have also joined the modern age and launched both a Facebook page and a Twitter feed (@SirRalphAbercro).

Only last month, we reported that Withington's **Verso** bar had changed into The Terrace. No sooner had our previous issue been published than the bar closed just after Christmas. A sign in the window says it is closed for refurbishment and will re-open as "Elvis' Kitchen". It is not clear if this will be related to the existing Elvis' Kitchen in Hazel Grove.

Staying in Withington, the new licensees at the **Victoria** are Alyson Spibey and Paul Mitchell, who previously ran pubs for Sam Smiths in Chester and Edinburgh. They are cask beer enthusiasts and intend to introduce more guest cask beers once the logistical



problems of fitting more in the cellar have been resolved. **The Font** in Fallowfield now has both cask beer (Dizzy Blonde on OT's visit) and Westons cider both on handpumps.

Elsewhere in south Manchester both the **Mauldeth** on Kingsway and the **Green End** at, err, Green End have reverted to keg-only status after brief flirtations with cask beer. The landlady at the Mauldeth told OT that this was due to slow cask sales but they were thinking of having external promotions (banners and such like) and then re-launching it. The **Victoria** in Burnage, although sporting Boddingtons and Robinsons pumpclips on a variety of handpumps (and the old Boddies 'Traditional Cask' signs outside) has no cask beer either.

After a successful premiere in 2012, **Flixton Conservative Club** on Chassen Road, Flixton, is planning its second beer festival over the Easter weekend (29th March - 1st April). In something of a coup, they have arranged for the cooper from Theakston's Brewery, the last working cooper in the UK, to come along to the festival and demonstrate the skill of making wooden casks. We hope to be able to bring you more details in the next issue.

Sale is losing yet another pub to the growth of the supermarkets. After the Huntsman became a Londis and the Lively Lobster was surreptitiously converted to a NiSA under the locals' noses, the latest casualty is the former **Piper** on Norris Road, Sale Moor, which has been closed since 1997. Plans have been approved to convert it into a Tesco Express.

More on Chorlton



Drinkers visiting Chorlton's **Beech Inn** over recent weeks have found themselves in the midst of a major decorating project. Wallpaper has been stripped and walls replastered around the pub which is still managing to open for its many regulars every day. It's meant slow progress but publican Chris Clish assures us it will be worth it in the end. As a result of the decorating, the pub's folk and singing nights have been suspended until the completion of the work, although other events continue, including a new record fair to be held at the pub on the last Sunday of every month. In the meantime the pub continues to serve up to eight cask ales, with the latest addition being a handpump for Westons Old Rosie cider. When OT called, the Beartown Black Bear and Copper Dragon Golden Pippin were in particularly good form. The pub is also planning a beer festival in a marquee in the beer garden to coincide with the Six Nations Rugby. More details in the next issue.

A short walk down Beech Road, current Trafford & Hulme Pub Of The Season **The Parlour** has renovated its back bar to make more space. The main beneficiaries of this are cider and perry drinkers as it means that the pub has now added a box on the back bar to the existing handpulled cider.

The aim will be to serve one cider and one perry. The Parlour has also welcomed Chris Byrne as manager with former manager Ian having moved on to master the art of brewing under the tutelage of Toby McKenzie and the RedWillow team. Chris was previously manager of Pi (Chorlton).

While it's good news for cider drinkers at The Parlour, it's not so good for them up at **Elektrik** on Wilbraham Road. There the success of their own Elektrik Ale Experiment brand ales, brewed by Happy Valley Brewery, looks like seeing the fifth



handpump converted to cask ale. The Elektrik Ale Experiment Bright Spark and Black Out ales are about to be joined by a new red ale so the bar is going to have a single dedicated pump rotating their own beers while returning to three guest ales as they were before the launch of Bright Spark.

We reported last month about the introduction of cask ale to the **Spoon Inn** on Barlow Moor Road. The pub reports that sales are going well. They want to concentrate on quality over quantity so at most times are only offering one ale at a time but as sales pick up both handpumps will be put into use simultaneously, initially at weekends. The pub has launched a range of events to entertain its customers including a quiz night on Mondays, music nights alternate Thursdays and a comedy night on the third Wednesday of the month - all events are free.

Joseph Holt's **Spread Eagle Hotel** on Wilbraham Road, Chorlton, has replaced Holt's Mild with Holt's IPA. As part of a promotion across the whole Holt's estate, there is 20p a pint off the IPA and the Mild until the end of March.

There have also been beer changes at **The Bar** and **The Knott** (city centre) where the previously ever-present Marble Ginger has been replaced by Hard Knott Cool Fusion, another ginger infused beer, slightly more subtle and paler than the Marble beer.

The Odd bars group have launched their new house beer. Oddingtons is a 4% bitter which has been brewed for the group by Blackjack Brewery under the direction of Oddest manager and group ale guru Nicola Clark. It isn't a permanent beer but will appear occasionally in all three Odd bars.



A Good Knight Was Had By All!

Following on from the success of Stocktoberfest, High Peak Beer Promotions' second event, its Winter Wassale on Saturday 15th December proved to be a great night. With a distinctly medieval theme to celebrate the historic roots of Stockport Market in whose hall the event was held, revellers were encouraged to wear fancy dress and as the picture shows, the good people of Stockport duly obliged!

With over 550 people in attendance the medieval merriment soon commenced. A combination of winter ales, ciders, mead, hearty hog roasts and perfect pies from the Lord of the Pies on Petersgate in Stockport (you must try their Stockport pie by the way!) soon had a smile on everyone's faces. The drink and victuals were accompanied by entertainment from the Brandywine band who had the fair knights and maidens of Stockport dancing in the aisles!

Laura Shiers, co-organiser of the event stated 'it's great to see people here of all ages and to hear the market hall ringing with laughter especially at this festive time of year – the fact that we're also helping to raise money for Jump Space, a charity providing rebound therapy for children makes it all the better!'

High Peak Beer Promotions' next event in the market hall is the Stockport Sausage Festival on Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th May which will see sausages from a 30 mile radius of Stockport, washed down with beer and cider from the same locale. The theme for this event will be a Victorian one with Dandys and Dames to delight the eye! For more information or to reserve your ticket e-mail tickets@stockportsausagefest.co.uk

Local MP works in pub

Last month Cheadle MP Mark Hunter put in a shift behind the bar at the Victorian in Bramhall village. The Victorian is owned by Manchester Brewery J.W. Lees and William Lees-Jones, Managing Director, came to meet Mark on the day. Also joining Mark behind the bar was General Manager, Alan Warnock, (see right). Mark (pulling a pint) is part of the All Party Parliamentary Beer Group 'Work in a Pub' project which is encouraging its members to take part in to learn first-hand about the industry.



Local residents and members of CAMRA were encouraged to stop by to have a pint, or simply a quick chat while the MP learned more about the pub trade and tried his hand at working behind the bar. Mark said "I was delighted to take part in such a fun and informative project to help support local business and highlight some of the issues facing local pubs. It was also a pleasure to see a number of local residents in Bramhall and also a number of members of CAMRA."

"As a CAMRA member myself, I know just how vital a role pubs play in our communities and I am keen to learn more about what happens on the other side of the bar."

Hope Re-opens

As foretold in our December issue, the Hope on Wellington Road North in Stockport is set to reopen as the town's latest multi-beer free house. In fact by the time you read this it should be up and running as the scheduled opening date is 7 February.

The Hope is something of a landmark pub; a handsome red brick building with a classic "Hardy's Crown Ales" mosaic frieze along the top. It's difficult to miss as you journey down the A6 from Manchester into Stockport.

However for the cask ale drinker it's been eminently missable. Apart from a short flirtation with Draught Bass the Hope has been a real ale free zone for years. Luckily it was also owned by Punch Taverns who, as is well known, are selling off pubs left, right and centre. Enter Martin Wood and Samantha Halfyard who completed their purchase of the pub in December last year. They promptly closed it down and started a complete overhaul.

It promises to be an important addition to the local pub scene. The new look is firmly traditional. On the left will be a 'Vault Room' with leather fixed seating and a bare board floor (pictured right). To the right will be a comfortably appointed lounge.



The focus will be firmly on beer. There will be 10 handpumps dispensing beers from both the on-site Foolhardy Ales Brewery and changing guest beers from around the UK. In addition expect traditional cider and also four draught foreign beers (including Anchor Steam from the USA and Maredsous Blonde from Belgium). There will be a wide range of bottled beers from Europe and the USA, too.

Of course it is the brewery that has aroused most interest. OT thought that this would come on stream a couple of months down the line but it will be launched with the pub. Martin used to run the Railway on Portwood when it was owned by Dave Porter so it is unsurprising that the kit has been supplied by Porter Brewery Installations (the source of many of the UK's new micros). When OT called one beer, a 3.8% session bitter, was already in the fermenter and a 4.4% blond beer was due to go in the next few days – Martin is pictured right in the cellar brewery.



There will be three core beers (pictured below). Rash Dash (3.8%) is the session beer brewed using Cascade, New Zealand Pacific Gem and Slovenian Savinjski hops. Risky Blond will also be brewed using New World hops as will Reckless Danger (5%) which is planned to be a fruity premium ale. Once the core range has settled down expect to see one-off and special beers produced. Martin is a self-confessed mild fan so it would be good to see one of those produced for CAMRA's Mild Month in May. Exciting times.





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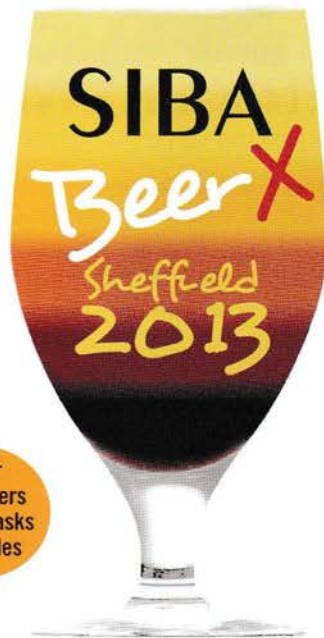
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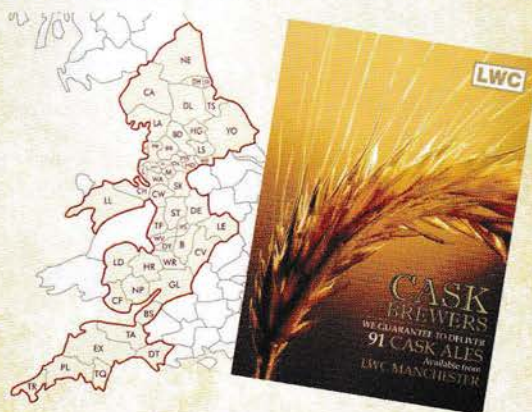
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High Peak Pub of the Season

The Shepherds Arms, Whaley Bridge

The High Peak branch of CAMRA gathered in the Shepherds Arms in Whaley Bridge in the cold of the middle of January to celebrate the pub and the consistent efforts of its licensee, Sue Greenwood.



The Shepherds is a traditional multi-roomed pub with bare timber tables and a stone floor in the vault, whilst the best room is more obviously comfortable. As befits the season there were warm fires in both rooms for the presentation.

About 10 years ago the Shepherds was a regular Good Beer Guide entry, but during a period of changing licensees this accolade was lost. However in November 2007 Sue Greenwood arrived from the Tatton Arms, a Robinson's house near the Airport. She set about restoring the pub to its former status and the Shepherds bounced back into the Guide.

Hand pumps were added and the lines sorted so as to allow up to 10 beers to be served in a busy weekend. Customer choice is enabled by a wide range of beers from the Marston's brewing empire. Of course these beers need looking after and Sue's cellar management skills ensure that consistently good pints of real ale are always available. A rapid turnover of beer consumed by grateful, thirsty customers ensures that beers rarely hang around in this super locals' local.

The gathering congratulated Sue on her achievement and took great pleasure in presenting the High Peak Branch Pub of the Season award to Sue Greenwood and the Shepherds Arms, Whaley Bridge. Pictured right - Sue receives her award from CAMRA's Robin Wignall.



Brewery Shorts

Only room for a brief update from some of our local micros this month, starting with the **Privateer Brewery** in Ardwick. Matt Jervis tells us they are now brewing twice a week and all three beers have been well received. The brewery has bought "enough hops to last till the rapture", including some new varieties for the seasonal brews they are planning. Website is nearly up and running - we'll let you know when it is.

Stockport's **Quantum Brewery** has acquired two more fermenting vessels so its output is now potentially doubled. On the beer front Quantum is rapidly approaching Gyle 100 which will be an imperial stout. Owner Jay Krause is also researching local brewing records and will hopefully be able to resurrect an historic Stockport recipe in the very near future. Also look out for a single hop pale ale with Dr Rudi (formerly Super Alpha), which will be around 3.9%; also something Belgian is in the works brewed using La Chouffe yeast. This will be malty and hoppy with the Belgian yeast characteristics coming through. Finally **Ringway Brewery** in North Reddish has just produced its third beer - an IPA at 5% brewed solely with English hops. Ringway beers are famously quaffable so this should be a real treat.



Curmudgeon

Dull or Shiny Spoons?

Over the past twenty years, the rise of Wetherspoon's from very small beginnings has been one of the most obvious changes in the British pub scene. They now have over 850 branches, and one or more of their pubs can be found in pretty much every substantial town in the country. Their large average size means that they command a much higher market share than that figure might suggest, and it is reckoned they now account for one in ten of all pints of real ale sold. Like many new developments, they have strongly divided opinion and sparked some passionate debates over whether, on balance, they have been a good or bad thing.

In their favour, they have enjoyed conspicuous success during a period when large swathes of the pub trade have been struggling. Most of their pubs have been brand-new openings rather than having been bought from other pub operators. All of their pubs sell a range of real ales, and they are strong supporters of small independent breweries. In many of the places they operate they have by far the best choice of beer in town. No fewer than 256 of their pubs now feature in CAMRA's "Good Beer Guide". They have introduced customer-focused measures such as all-day opening and all-day food which, even after the 1980s liberalisation of licensing hours, were still rare. They offer conspicuously good value across the whole range of food and drink, and their pubs are bright and welcoming and attract a wide range of customers from all age groups. Their Chairman, Tim Martin, has been an articulate and outspoken defender of pubs and drinkers in opposition to the government and the anti-drink lobby.

On the other hand, their detractors argue that their establishments are soulless, open-plan drinking barns singularly devoid of traditional pub atmosphere. One way they achieve low prices is economising on staff numbers, resulting in endless waits at the bar and tables groaning with uncollected glasses. Their food is specified down to a price, rigorously portion-controlled and warmed up in a microwave. Their wide range of customers often seems to be dominated by elderly drunks and single mothers with offspring in tow. Perhaps most telling of all, many paint them as the Tesco of the pub world, using their financial muscle to drive down prices from suppliers and ruthlessly undercut the local competition. They end up replacing characterful, independent pubs with standardised corporate drinking outlets with the same range of food and drink and general ambiance from Penzance to Wick. You know what you're getting with a Wetherspoon's, but that's because, like McDonalds or Starbucks, they're basically all the same.

I have to say that, all things considered, I tend to incline more to the first view than the second. You can't knock their success, and, at a time when closed and boarded pubs are a common sight, they are opening dozens of new ones every year in a variety of locations. They have hit upon a formula that obviously works and pulls the customers in. They started from a single pub thirty years ago, and the same business opportunities have been open to everyone, but nobody else has taken them to anything like the same extent.

Pubs, just like any other business sector, benefit from healthy competition, and, when Wetherspoon's were starting up, much of the pub trade was very complacent. However, their formula is basically to do a wide range of things reasonably well, and if you choose to specialise you can still make a decent living. Wherever there's a Wetherspoon's, not too far away there will be pubs with one or more of better food, better beer, a more traditional and intimate atmosphere, better pub games and better live music. Yes, the kind of bog-standard pub that tries to be all things to all men may struggle, but perhaps that's no bad thing.

My biggest criticism is that, with few exceptions, they're very "unpubby" in feel, with open-plan layouts avoiding internal divisions and traditional pub-style fixed bench seating. Whatever else it may be, a Wetherspoon's pub is scarcely ever cosy. However, I've reached the conclusion that's a deliberate policy to appeal to customers for whom old-fashioned pubs came across as a touch intimidating.

Bar Fringe

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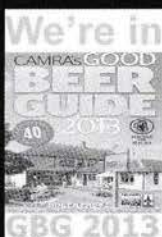


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Bar Meals Served Mon to Sat Lunch

This **is** a free house

The Cheadle Hulme

47 Station Road, Cheadle Hulme, SK8 7AA
Tel: 0161 485 4706

We have four Joseph Holt's Beers and three changing Guest Ales

Carvery and Full Menu

Monday to Saturday

Carvery 12:00-20:00 Full Menu 12:00-20:45
2 main courses for only £10.50

Sunday

Carvery & Full Menu 12:00 - 20:00
2 main courses for only £12.50

Quiz every Thursday night

Live Entertainment - last Saturday of month



CAMRA Awards Gallery



The rarely presented Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Cask Champion Award was presented this year in memory of the late John Tune. Not only did John work tirelessly for CAMRA but he was also known for enjoying the occasional pint! The award was presented to John's brother Malcolm, by Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Chairman John Clarke. The certificate is displayed in the Railway, Portwood, one of John's favourite pubs.

The first of the 2012 Mild Magic Champion Mild Pub awards was



presented to the Swan With Two Necks in Stockport. Participants in Mild Magic voted for their favourite mild pubs and the Swan was voted top Stockport outlet. Licensees Pam and Trigger are seen receiving their award from John Clarke.

The final award from the 2012 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival went



to Peerless Brewery who won Silver in the Beer of the Festival competition for Jinja Ninja. Festival Organiser Jim Flynn (left) shown presenting the award to Peerless Brewery's Steve Briscoe.

The Crown Inn

98 Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor

Tel: 0161 432 5548

Over 5 cask ales from SIBA range

Selection of lagers

Quiz every Thursday 9 pm

Entertainment last Saturday every month

Roast spuds 6 pm every Sunday

Great Atmosphere

Great People - Great Beer

All under one roof

The Deansgate



321 Deansgate, Manchester

4 cask beers including guest ales

Home cooked food every day 12 noon - 8pm

Roof Bar
and Terrace

Function Room
for Hire

Open 12 - 11 Sunday to Thursday

12 - 2am Friday & Saturday

Telephone 0161 839 5215

Attention all Publicans

Want to Boost Mild Sales? Then take part in

Mild Magic 2013

Running mid April to end May

What is in it for you?

Increased footfall, inclusion in Opening Times articles, press coverage and publicity. All for £10

Interested in taking part?

Contact David Hanson on 07891949354

MildMagicChallenge@gmail.com

A Campaign

of Two Halves

Fair deal on beer tax now!

Save Britain's Pubs!



Join CAMRA Today

Complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive 15 months membership for the price of 12 and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription.

Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

Your Details

Title _____ Surname _____
 Forename(s) _____
 Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____
 Address _____

 _____ Postcode _____
 Email address _____
 Tel No(s) _____

	Direct Debit	Non DD
Single Membership (UK & EU)	£23 <input type="checkbox"/>	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Membership (Partner at the same address)	£28 <input type="checkbox"/>	£30 <input type="checkbox"/>

For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association

I enclose a cheque for _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Applications will be processed within 21 days

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title _____ Surname _____
 Forename(s) _____
 Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

01/06

Campaigning for Pub Goers & Beer Drinkers

Enjoying Real Ale & Pubs

Join CAMRA today – www.camra.org.uk/joinus



Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to: Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW



This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
 - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society Service User Number

To the Manager _____ Bank or Building Society
 Address _____

 _____ Postcode _____

9 2 6 1 2 9

FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY

This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Membership Number _____
 Name _____
 Postcode _____

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Campaign For Real Ale Limited Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Campaign For Real Ale Limited and, if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s) _____
 Date _____

Name(s) of Account Holder

Branch Sort Code

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Reference

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

A bounty of beautiful
BANGERS & BEER

A celebration of hand held
HAPPINESS



STOCKPORT

SAUSAGE FEST

2013

**SATURDAY
4TH MAY**

**SUNDAY
5TH MAY**

Stockport Victorian Market Hall

SESSION 1

Saturday 4th May 7.00pm til 12.00am (midnight)

DANDYS AND DAMES FANCY DRESS (optional)

SESSION 2

Sunday 5th May 11.00am til 4.00pm

**THE SAUSAGE FESTIVAL MAIN EVENT
VOTE FOR THE SAUSAGE OF THE FESTIVAL**

Family day with children's entertainers
(children free of charge with paying adult)

SESSION 3

Sunday 5th May 6.00pm til 11.00pm

TOFFS AND TOTTY FANCY DRESS (optional)



Beer



Bangers



Bands

**ADVANCE TICKETS ONLY £10 PER SESSION EXCHANGED FOR A
FESTIVAL GLASS, BANGER AND £3 BEER OR CIDER ON ARRIVAL**



Available from High Peak Beer Co. Unit 25, Middle Aisle, Stockport
Victorian Market Hall. (Card payment facilities now available)
& Stockport Tourist Information Centre, Staircase House, 30 Market Place.

e-mail: tickets@stockportsausagefest.co.uk Tel: 07730 034326



@sksausagefest

Stockport Sausage Festival

STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

High Peak Beer
Promotions Event



ROBINSONS BREWERY

VISITORS CENTRE



Welcome to Robinsons Brewery. Join us as we celebrate our 175th anniversary with the launch of our new Visitors Centre and discover the history and heritage of this proudly independent family brewer.

What a great excuse to combine a brewery tour with award-winning cask ales!

OPENING MARCH 2013



ONE HUNDRED
ONE FAMILY
AND SEVENTY
ONE PLACE
FIVE YEARS



FOR CONFERENCE & TRAINING ENQUIRIES
PLEASE CONTACT

events@frederic-robinson.co.uk

or call us on 0161 612 4100

www.robinsonsbrewery.com

BREWERY TOURS

TRAINING

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