

March 2013

# Opening

Times The FREE local CAMRA magazine

Covering the cities of Manchester & Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, N.E. Cheshire & Macclesfield

## National Champs

Rochdale's Baum is  
National Pub of the  
Year - see page 21



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# Pub of the Month

## The Wilfred Wood, Hazel Grove



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for March is the Wilfred Wood on London Road in Hazel Grove, writes Alex Keenleyside.

Opening towards the end of 2010 this recent pub conversion in a disused office block has quickly become a firm favourite with the people of Hazel Grove and established itself as one of the most popular pubs of the area. It is not difficult to understand why as the pub does all the simple things well. Good beer, friendly service & reasonable prices in a smart modern environment.

As a Wetherspoons pub it offers Ruddles Bitter & GK Abbot Ale as its permanent cask offerings as well as an ever-changing choice of 3 guest ales from microbreweries, regionals & nationals. The Wetherspoons chain founded in 1979 began supporting cask ale when it was unfashionable to do so, and the business is now the largest single supporter of microbreweries in the UK, making it a welcome addition to the area and expanding choice for customers. The pubs hold regular Meet the Brewer events which offer an interesting insight into brewing whilst sampling a range of beers from a local micro. Details of these can be found at the left hand side of the bar area.

The pub is open from 6am for breakfast with the regular food menu starting at midday. The usual Wetherspoons menu and steak, curry & Sunday clubs are on offer and served with a smile to a fine standard.

The pub is named after a past resident of the area, Wilfred Wood, a recipient of the Victoria Cross for action on the Italian front against the Austro-Hungarian forces in the First World War. In the battle of Vittorio Veneto whilst serving in the 10th Battalion of The Northumberland Fusiliers a young 21 year old Wilfred displayed conspicuous valour, initiative and gallantry in the face of intense rifle and machine-gun fire.

A pub that ticks all the boxes: good cask beer kept well, tasty food, all at reasonable prices in a convivial, smart and friendly atmosphere. It is certainly worth coming along to celebrate the pub's achievement as we present the award on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March.

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# Comment & What's On

## Index, Notes and Local CAMRA Branch Events

### Well Done The Baum

Regular readers may wonder why our front cover feature is a pub in Rochdale – not somewhere normally within the Opening Times circulation area. Well no apologies for that as the town is now host to the brand new CAMRA National Pub of the Year. And that's got to be worth celebrating, both in its own right and also as a great testimony to the Greater Manchester pub scene.

It's on Toad Lane in a conservation area which includes the Pioneers Museum and is well worth a visit. When the trams (finally) get to Rochdale it will be a short walk from the town centre terminus which will make it very easy to get to.

Of course it's not the first time that the award has headed to the region as The Nursery, Heaton Norris, won the award back in 2002. Since then the Nursery has continued to be a serial award winner and is the current Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year. As such it is about to embark on another journey that could conceivably see it getting the national top slot again.

### 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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**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, John Sutcliffe, Alex Keenleyside, George Elmslie, Phil Rowbotham, Beverley Gobbett, Dave Atkins, David Gittins, Mark McConachie, Dave Burston.

**Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn**

**Front Cover – The Baum. Inset Simon and Heidi with their award.**

### Opening Times 342 - Contents

Pub of the Month	3	High Peak Pub Scene	11
Comment / What's On	4	NWAF	13
Curmudgeon	5	Pub News	15
Stagger	7	Brewery News	19
Trafford & Hulme	9	Membership	22

### Your Local CAMRA Branches

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

**North Manchester (NM)** [www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk](http://www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk)  
Contact: Phil Booton 0161 957 7148 (*daytimes*); [phbooton@hotmail.com](mailto:phbooton@hotmail.com)

**High Peak & NE Cheshire (HPNC)** [www.hpneccamra.org.uk](http://www.hpneccamra.org.uk)  
Contact: Geoff Williamson 01663 765634; [disleygeoff@gmail.com](mailto:disleygeoff@gmail.com)

**Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)**  
[www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk](http://www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk)  
Contact: Tony Icke 01625861833; [bicke@madasafish.com](mailto:bicke@madasafish.com)

**Trafford & Hulme (T&H)** [www.thcamra.org.uk](http://www.thcamra.org.uk)  
Contact: John Ison 0161 962 7976 [enquiries@thcamra.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@thcamra.org.uk)

### Your Local CAMRA Events

**Wednesday 6th** – Black Jack Brewery Visit. Contact Phil Booton for details and to book. (NM)

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

**Saturday 9th** – Pub of the Year Award: Nursery, Green Ln, Heaton Norris. From 8pm. (SSM)

**Wednesday 13th** – Branch Pub of the Year selection meeting: Eagle, Collier St, Salford. Starts 7.30pm (NM)

**Thursday 14th** - Quiz Night: Volunteer Hotel, Sale. From 8pm. (T&H)

**Thursday 14th** – Branch Meeting with guest speaker from Cask for Community. Nursery, Green Ln, Heaton Norris. Starts 8.15pm (SSM)

**Wednesday 20th** – Branch Meeting and AGM: Derby Brewery Arms (upstairs room), Cheetham Hill Rd. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

**Thursday 21st** – Deansgate Social: Oast House 8pm; Gas Lamp 8.45; Bridge 9.30; Sawyers 10.00; Lost Dene 10.30. (T&H)

**Friday 22nd** – Heaton's Stagger: George & Dragon, Manchester Rd 7.30pm; Plough, Heaton Moor Rd 8.30. (SSM)

**Wednesday 27th** – Campaigning Crawl in Ordsall: Welcome, Robert Hall St 7.30; Broadway 8.15; Lime, Salford Quays 9pm. (NM)

**Thursday 28th** – Pub of the Month presentation: Wilfred Wood, London Rd, Hazel Grove, From 8pm. (SSM)

**Saturday 30th** – Deansgate/Liverpool Rd Social: Deansgate 12pm; Cask 1pm; White Lion 2pm; Ox 2.45; Dukes 92 3.30; Eight Bar 4.30; Wharf 5.15. Finish at the Knott. (T&H)

**Sunday 31st** – Club of the Year presentation to Flixton Con Club. From 2.30pm. (T&H)

**Wednesday 3rd April** – Swan Street Swagger: Smithfield 7.30pm; Burton Arms 8.15; Picture House 8.45; Bar Fringe 9.15; Crown & Kettle 10pm. (NM)

**Thursday 4th** – Branch Meeting: Orange Tree, Altrincham. Starts 8pm. (T&H)

**Monday 8th** – Branch Meeting: Wharf Tavern, Caroline St, Stalybridge. Starts 8.30pm. (HPNC)



# Curmudgeon

## Not What it Used to Be

It's not uncommon to hear people complaining that many well-known cask beers have become blander over the years and have lost much of the character they once had. It's tempting to dismiss this as simply looking back on the past through rose-tinted spectacles, and it is certainly true that as you get older your tastebuds become less sensitive. It may also be the case that the introduction of some very strongly-flavoured brews in recent years has made some of the established ones pale in comparison.

However, a couple of months ago, Peter Alexander wrote about how some of the major brewers have admitted making lager brands less bitter in a bid to gain wider acceptability, and it is hard to believe that the same never happens with real ales. It is certainly my subjective impression that many beers that have been around since the 1970s are not as distinctive as they once were. One where it's hard to argue this hasn't happened is Holt's Bitter, which is still an excellent beer when well kept, but over the years has become noticeably rounder and mellower in flavour, and darker in colour, compared with the pale, "shockingly bitter" brew described in early editions of the "Good Beer Guide".

There may be other factors at work, though. One is that beers once confined to brewers' tied estates, where they had some control over how they were kept, have now become widely available in the free trade and pub company outlets where standards of cellaranship are not as consistent and therefore the average quality encountered is not as good. This undoubtedly was the case when many previously keg-only Whitbread pubs began stocking Marston's Pedigree in the 1980s, and seems to apply today to, for example, Taylor's Landlord.

I also suspect that financial pressures to turn stock over as quickly as possible lead many pubs to put beers on as soon as they have dropped bright in the cellar and not give them sufficient conditioning time to develop their full flavour. It has often been remarked how some pubs manage to coax depths of flavour out of beers widely dismissed as a bit dull, and maybe serving beer before it has had time to mature properly in the cellar is one of the main reasons why beers don't seem as distinctive as they once were.

## Sharing the Pain

One of the major trends in the beer market in recent years has been the steady move from pub to at-home drinking. According to statistics produced by the British Beer and Pub Association, in 1997, the on-trade accounted for 71% of total beer consumption, a figure that had fallen to 52% by 2012. This is often simplistically blamed on supermarket discounting, although in reality the reasons behind the shift are much more varied and complex.

However, the latest figures tell a different story and suggest that this trend has come to a grinding halt. In the twelve months to December 2012, the total UK beer market declined by 4.7% compared with the previous year, with the falls in the on- and off-trades being pretty much the same. The malign effects of the beer duty escalator must bear a large share of the blame for this but, even if it once contained an element of truth, it is wide of the mark to suggest that cheap beer in Tesco is currently killing pubs.

**Curmudgeon Online:** [curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com](http://curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com)  
(comments on these articles can be left on the website)



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### Monday

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### Tuesday

Bluegrass Folk Music -9pm

### Wednesday

Alternate weeks Jam Night and  
Wine Down Wednesday Club 9pm

### Thursday

Classic Vinyl Dj Night 9pm  
Northern Soul, Motown, Indie

### Friday

Beer and Spirit Promotions

### Saturdays

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etc

### Sunday

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# Stagger

## Cheadle Hulme with John Sutcliffe



We met at the **Hesketh** above at the corner of Hulme Hall Road and Swann Lane. Built in 1864 and modified in 1895 with a side extension added in November 2009. It is managed by James, one of the Almond family who also have the Three Bears, Puss in Boots and Fletchers Arms. Beers were Caledonian Autumn Red, Theakston Lightfoot, both of which scored well and a rather average Adnams Southwold bitter. It was busy, but mainly with customers eating from the carvery, so not much room for drinkers to sit. There is an attractive garden area at the rear with a large car park that replaced the bowling green in the 1970's so more drinking space in summer.



It is owned by Greene King Brewery but in addition to their beers had Wolf Poppy Ale that scored reasonably well and is normally only found as a bottled beer, Oakley Manor of Good Beer Guide standard and Thwaites Wainwright that also scored well. Greene King IPA, Abbot and Old Speckled Hen were available but not tried. The central bar serves a number of well decorated semi-enclosed spaces, the rear given over to food. It is still residential with eight en suite bedrooms, so breakfast is available to the public from 9.00 a.m. There is an extensive menu of bar type meals. There is a Sunday morning farmer's market held once a month in the car park.



Moving to the Robinsons **Church Inn** (interior pictured above) at the junction where Ravenoak Road, Church Road and Ack Lane meet we sampled 1892 mild, Unicorn bitter, which both scored average to good and Dizzy Blond, and Tom & Berry, which scored well. A small, hedged and well tended garden with some outside seating leads to the comfortable, oak panelled Lounge Bar with a real fire in a carved stone fireplace. A real fire warms the back Lounge in winter where food is served until around 9 p.m. There is a small vault extension on the other side of the bar that now has a TV. The overall character has been maintained and still has much of the charm that it had when 18<sup>th</sup> century cottages were combined to form the pub. Now there were about ten of us as we crossed the road to the Governor's House.

The **Governor's House** was built as Oakley Manor and was originally called the Ravenoak (1882) and was a hotel but was rebuilt as a public house in 1998.



A ten minute walk brought us to the **John Millington** (pictured above). Once again this results from an extensive rebuilding and modernisation of what was previously Millington Hall restaurant. There is a similar format of a central bar serving a number of rooms. While it was awarded Pub of the Month recently, the beers were on this occasion disappointing. The Marston Armistice and the Sharp's Doom Bar were average to poor. Hancock HB (brewed by Brains for Marston Coors) scored below average. There were other Hyde's beers and a real cider, not tried. Food is served both inside and in an attractive outside area.



The Cheadle Hulme

A short downhill walk led to the **Cheadle Hulme** also given Pub of the Month recently for its consistently high beer quality and excellent community spirit. Holt's support Christie's Hospital and this year Help for Heroes. It was formerly the Junction, a much more sensible name as this is where the Crewe and Stoke lines meet, this Holt's establishment next to the railway station has an extensive bar serving comfortably furnished areas separated by half glazed screens, including a vault with darts board. In addition to Good Beer Guide standard Holts bitter, IPA was also on offer and the excellent mild, which achieved the highest score of the evening. Ossett Big Red and Wadworth 6X also scored almost as well. There is a quiz night on Thursdays, and once a month, live entertainment on Saturday night to support the charity. There is a choice of carvery or more extensive menu in the ample area discreetly placed at the rear. You would not think that this is a managed house because Dave Wood and his friendly staff they know most of their customers, many of whom are regulars.



Bypassing the now closed Penny Black, latterly the Sizzled Sausage, our last call of the night was at the **Kings Hall**. (Above) Built in 1937, this was formerly a village hall with a dance hall upstairs. It became a Chinese restaurant and was converted by J.D. Wetherspoons into a café bar style public house. Around 2000 it was restored after a serious fire. Entering from Station Road, there is a full height, wood panelled space with a curved staircase leading to a small mezzanine area that also gives access to the toilets. The 'L' shaped bar serves two permanent cask beers and usually three or four guest beers. Steps lead down to the rear area with tables given over more to food. There is a mixed clientele of all ages and it can be quite crowded at weekends. A small outdoor area on either side of the central entrance is very popular on warm sunny days bringing an almost continental café feel to the frontage. Although not quite the traditional public house, Wetherspoons do much to promote a choice of good, well kept cask conditioned ales. Lees Moonraker scored highest followed by Goff's White Knight and then Titanic Iceberg. All were above average. A good night overall.

Photos of the Hesketh and the Governor's House courtesy of Phil Rowbotham. You can get to these pubs by train from the Manchester line through Stockport or from Macclesfield/Stoke or Crewe/Wilmslow. Main buses 313, 157, 5X57, or 368, 369 or 130.

# THE BEEER SHOP

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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](http://www.ukbeershop.com) or call 0161 947 9338 for updated information.

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# Flixton & Urmston

George Elmslie reports on the local pub scene

On a relatively mild Saturday in January, the Trafford and Hulme branch had a long overdue trip to the far reaches of Flixton and back to Urmston, including a chance to visit some new clubs (to some) now sending out the real ale message. A Saturday afternoon social does not suit all but it was hoped a more relaxed timescale offers a better appreciation of the rarely visited stretches of the branch, and we were not disappointed with what we



found.

The **Church** on the Flixton Road is the last pub before you head out to Carrington. Once a regular in the Good Beer Guide there have been changes of management in the recent past and some modernisation to the bar area. The standard however was good with three beers on hand pump. This particular day we found Everards Tiger, Charles Wells Bombardier and a very reasonably priced seasonal guest Marston's EPA on fine form. Food is an important part of the Church's business, served most days with well over half the area of the bar dedicated but not exclusive



to diners.

Onward now to the first of our club visits. Only a ten minute walk from the Church back towards Urmston standing alone in its own spacious grounds is the **Flixton Ex-Servicemen's Club** (interior pictured above), a large social club of the old school with a good sized concert room downstairs and the bar and games rooms upstairs. This has the main bar where we found the real ale and our welcoming hosts, Harry and Pauline and some members of the committee. Up now to the first floor, you then come upon a good sized lounge with snooker tables to the right

offer today were Tetley Bitter and Dark Mild, the regular Robinson's Unicorn and a seasonal Tunnel Vision from the Box Steam Brewery, which quickly ran out and was immediately replaced by Hook Norton's Old Hooky. What with the low annual subs fee, the massive beer garden and the floodlit bowling green, all in all this is a great club to belong to.

The majority of our hostelries today were on the route of the 255 bus and two of us timed our exit to perfection and caught the next one to the **Flixton Conservative Club** (interior pictured below) but in truth it was only another ten minute walk. This club responded to our mail-out with a welcoming invite to sample their wares, not many of us had been here before with one notable exception - one of our number actually lived here when his dad was the steward!



We were greeted with a very cosy club, small intimate spaces and an ideal one for possible future meetings. The beer range consisted of four hand pumped ales, two from Theakstons (Lightfoot and Best) and two guests, Lancaster Red and Caledonian 80 Shilling. There is a large function room on the first floor and four full size snooker tables to the rear of the ground floor behind the bar.



Another short walk or hop on the bus took us to the outskirts of Urmston town centre and the local Wetherspoons, the **Tim Bobbin** named after a poet born locally whose real name was John Collier. This is an impressive example of the chain with plenty of well kept ales from all over the country, the speciality of the brand. It consists of a large open space and overhead the ventilation system is exposed

which gives it a somewhat futuristic utilitarian look; before the smoking ban it would have come into its own. I personally had the Thwaites Nutty Black and Blakemere Two Tone Special. A theme there.

Next a slight deviation from the publicised route - across the road and only a few yards on is **Chadwicks** which has a deceptively narrow front but carries on some distance inside. The bar on the right is about twenty yards long so on a busy night would have plenty of room for serving what would no doubt be a lively crowd; importantly for us it had a couple of real ales I had the Westgate (aka Greene King) Fireside. Not too exciting but flying the flag none the less.



Our final halt was the **Steamhouse**, set in an old railway property on the still operating Manchester to Liverpool railway line. Definitely flying the real ale flag and how, with plenty of hand pumps in this long narrow building divided into multiple rooms. One of the keg cider taps has an unusual feature to me anyway; with the flick of a switch the said liquid can be dispensed with or without ice.

Flixton and Urmston cover a large area and this social was only able to cover a fraction of the pubs. By the time you read this, the branch will have completed another trip to the northern part of the area.

For information on other Trafford & Hulme branch socials see [www.thcamra.org.uk/diary](http://www.thcamra.org.uk/diary)

## Pub of the Season

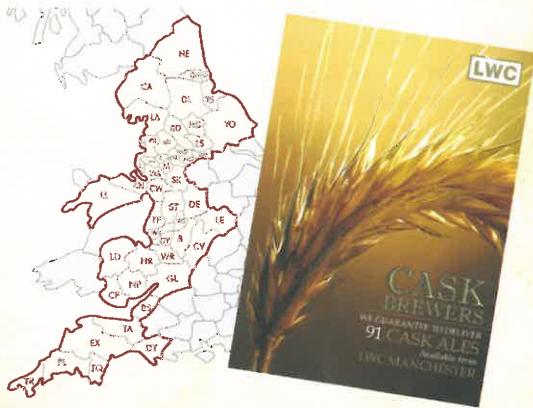
The Trafford & Hulme CAMRA Pub of the Season will be the Old Packet House at Broadheath. The presentation is likely to be made on Tuesday 16 April. More next month. Photo below by Adam Bruderer.



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CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

**High Peak & NE Ches. CAMRA Branch announces its**

**Hills & Mills Beer Festival**

**Chalkers Snooker Club  
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# High Peak Pub Scene

Frank Wood & Robin Wignall with News and Views

## High Peak Pub News

With Frank Wood

Starting in Old Glossop, where all three pubs appear to be doing well at present, all selling quality beer and all offering food. The **Bulls Head** on Church Street needs no introduction to folk in the Glossop area as it is well known for its quality Robinsons beers and authentic Indian cuisine. On a Sunday in early February, trade was brisk, with Unicorn, 1892 and the seasonal offering, Frederics 175, which is proving popular in their estate. A few doors away on Wellgate, the **Wheatsheaf** had Brakspears Bitter, Brains SA and the regular beer which is Howard Town Wrens Nest. Again there were several parties eating the home cooked traditional English fare that has built up a good reputation since the pub re-opened some three years ago under the current landlord Bob Scupham. Down the road, the **Queens Arms** had a change of ownership last year. Local customers from the Bulls Head bought the pub and it now boasts six handpumps. In the last few visits that OT has made, the choice has been: Holts Bitter, Thwaites Wainwright, Sharp's Doom Bar, Robinsons Unicorn, Greene King Old Speckled Hen....and Thornbridge Jaipur, a rare regular beer for the area. Again the Queens has started doing Indian food and from reports I have had, it too is worth a try.

In Glossop town centre, the two pubs near the station also appear to be doing well. The Hurditches at the **Star Inn** at Howard Street have recently signed up to



a new long term lease with Punch Taverns, and have negotiated three hand pumps free of tie from the pub company. As a result, it has been chosen as the High Peak Branch Pub of the Season for Spring 2013, the date of the presentation currently to be arranged. Across the road, the **George** only has one beer on sale, Greene King Old Speckled Hen, but the pump is always in brisk action and the beer in decent condition. For anyone visiting the town, those five pubs are enough for one day, with a selection of 18 beers on sale to go at. I will cover another section of the town in this column next month.

For anyone calling into Hadfield, the **Palatine** near the station currently has Unicorn, Frederics and Dizzy Blonde on sale, whilst the Spinners nearby, which re-opened in Autumn 2012 after a couple of years shut, has Tetley Bitter and Black Sheep. The **Red Lamp** on Bankbottom has closed its doors, some believe for the last time, though I suspect not.

The **Anchor** sells Tetley Bitter only. The **Peels Arms** in Padfield is worth a walk however, with Theakstons Bitter joined by two changing guest beers. Finally in Hadfield, the **Chieftain** has Hydes Bitter, Dark, Jekyll's Gold and a guest beer. Reports have come in that the **Red Lion** at Crown Point, Denton, has started taking Hornbeam beers alongside their Hydes beers. This seems to be a growing thing in Hydes pubs, to offer one or more guest beers and a very positive move I think. Hornbeam beers are also very much in prominence at the re-opened **Boundary** across from Guide Bridge train station. I wonder if the well patronised beer festival that used to be held each June will be held this year?



Another pub that has re-opened successfully is the **Norfolk Arms** (above) in Marple Bridge. On a recent visit in January, Black Sheep bitter was joined by Marble Stout and Kelham Island Bitter, quite a change in an area dominated by Robinsons pubs.

## Peak Practice With Robin Wignall

At the back end of last year a new publication appeared in tourist offices in the High Peak area. A 'Buxton Real Ale Trail' includes pubs selling real ale, though not all of them, and there is a special mention of food in most entries, which means that a number of café bars/ restaurants are included, even if their real ale is only bottle conditioned beer. Three shops are included where bottled real ale is a speciality. There has apparently been little CAMRA input into this Trail Guide, which perhaps accounts for the odd slip. There is a reference to the Titanic Brewery as being in Macclesfield. I am sure that Storm and RedWillow breweries will be pleased that the competition is not so close. Quibbles apart, this is a handy free publication if used as a guide and not as a bible. I picked my copy up in the Information centre in Buxton Pavilion Gardens.

Look out for the new BBC Television series in the coming months. This is set in the Peak District, especially in the Chapel en le Frith and Hayfield areas. On the pub scene see the Kings Arms in Chapel and the Royal in Hayfield as you have never seen them before, transformed into the 'Lamb' of the TV story line.

The third pump at the **Drum and Monkey** in Whaley Bridge is certainly earning its keep. A recent visit to the pub found Storm Windgather 4.5% in superb form. An earlier offering was Wincle Winter Warmer, one of those herbed and spiced brews made for a winter's day. The guest beers from local microbreweries certainly sell well and are a useful boost to this relatively new venture as a free house. Food is now being promoted at the Drum & Monkey with early evening service from 5.00pm till 8.00pm on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Food is available all day from opening until the early evening on Saturday and Sunday. Sunday roast is popular, and there is a range of homemade and locally sourced food.

The **Soldier Dick** in Furness Vale usually has beers from Thwaites, Moorhouses and Coach House. Thwaites Nutty Black now has a pump clip attachment announcing it to be the 'Best Dark Mild in the World', following recent World Beer Awards. It is a good beer and should give Mild Magic visitors something to look forward to. Also from Thwaites, Big Ben is a dark 4.5% brew. Moorhouses Witchfinder General and Running Wild were both well worth trying. Still in Furness Vale, a recent visit to the **Crossings** found on form Dizzy Blonde and Unicorn whilst a pin of Old Tom has been stillaged behind the bar during January.



Our local Punch Taverns in Whaley Bridge, **White Horse**, **White Hart** and **Goyt** continue to offer customers a choice of decent beers, with ales from the Finest Cask list and from an extended ordinary beer list. Amongst beers recently available have been Shepherd Neame Late Red, Jennings Cumberland, Sharps Doom Bar and Tribute from St Austell and Caledonian Deuchar's IPA.

The **Shady Oak** at Fernilee, former Boddington's house, former Clarke's of Reddish house, is still badged as a Jennings pub. Sometimes Jennings beers are on sale, of course alongside beers from elsewhere in the Marston's brewing empire. Jennings Cumberland and Cocklewarmer recently flew the flag for the Cockerthorpe brewery. Incidentally the bit of brewing history above can be seen in the place mats you are given when dining at the Shady Oak. The food is good as well!

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# National Winter Ales 2013 and Beyond

*The 2013 National Winter Ales Festival, the last to be held in Manchester, took place at the Sheridan Suite in late January and was another huge success.*

On learning of the award, Ian Bearpark, Production Director of the brewery announced on Twitter that he was "stunned and delighted" and thanked all of those customers who voted for the beer.

Over 8,300 people braved the appalling weather conditions to make it to NWAFF in Manchester where the National Champion Winter Beer of Britain was announced as 1872 Porter from Elland Brewery in West Yorkshire.

The customer's choice for cider, was an old favourite, Weston's Old Rosie. Old Rosie is the flagship traditional unfiltered cloudy cider from the Herefordshire company who have been making cider since 1880. The Perry of the Festival was the 7.1% Troggi Perry from the Monmouthshire based Troggi Seidr. Troggi is a small cider maker founded in 1984 using initially the milling and pressing equipment based at Usk College with their permanent cider house opening in 1995.



We know that several hundred members of the public could not get to the event, mainly from across the hills in Yorkshire, as we received several enquiries from people after the event who wanted their souvenir glasses! Some of our locals in Oldham and Rochdale also struggled with the roads and transport systems.

## Manchester Beer & Cider Festival 2014

Radio 4 did make it and broadcast on 'You and Yours' but seemed to confuse everybody by suggesting that all golden ales are keg beers and cask beers are all in wooden casks! This was despite the poor brewer from Ilkley trying to put the interviewer correct on several issues including the fact that Ilkley brew more than keg beers! (You really would expect better from Radio 4 - Ed)

The Sheridan Suite has provided a great home to the National Winter Ales Festival for the past three years but from next year you can look forward to a new festival to be held in the stunning setting of one of Manchester's most iconic venues on the Manchester Sportcity campus. The Manchester Beer & Cider Festival 2014 will take centre stage in the Velodrome of the National Cycling Centre, home to Team GB's fantastically successful Olympic cyclists.

## Results in Full

The main bars will be on the Velodrome floor surrounded by the famous banked track which will remain in use during the festival. As you enjoy your pint, there is every chance that medal winning cyclists will be whizzing round you as they train for the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

As reported above, the overall Champion Winter Beer of Britain is the excellent 1872 Porter from Elland Brewery. This 6% dark rich beer has won the accolade before and is one of those beers that seems to be a serial award winner (and every one fully deserved it has to be said). Runner-up was the wonderfully named Comrade Bill Bartram's EAISS (Egalitarian Anti-Imperialist Soviet Stout) from Bartram's Brewery in Suffolk. Bronze went to Dark Moor from Kelburn Brewing in East Renfrewshire. Local awards were thin on the ground in the national competition although Marble gained a runner-up spot in the Stout category with Stouter Stout.

The festival will be brought to you by the team behind the National Winter Ales Festival's eight successful years in Manchester so you can expect a similar great range of the very best cask ales. The cider and perry bar will be larger than ever before and we will again have a great range of foreign beers both on draught and in bottles.

The event also hosted the North West Regional Finals to determine some of the finalists in the next Champion Winter Beer contest (which will be held in February 2014 at the Festival's new home in Derby). Greater Manchester brewers (or those very close by) did rather well, winning gold in all four categories.

The Velodrome is climate controlled so no worries about being too hot or too cold and with 3500 seats overlooking the track, there will be seating for all. The centre has great transport links with its own Metrolink station and plentiful buses running down Ashton New Road. The dates for your diary are Thursday 23 to Saturday 25 January 2014.

Bollington Winter Reserve claimed gold in the Old Ales & Strong Milds class (with Chocolate Marble in third place). Stouts was won by Marble Stouter Stout (with Hornbeam Black Coral Mild claiming the bronze): the Porter class was a Greater Manchester clean sweep - winner was Dunham Massey Porter, silver was Pictish Porter and bronze was shared by Bank Top Port O'Call and Boggart Rum Porter. The final class is Barley Wine & Strong Old Ale won by JW Lees Moonraker with Outstanding Pushing Out in second place.

## And a Big Thank You

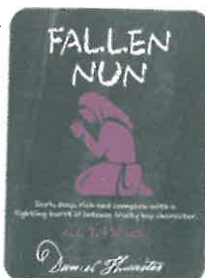
**From: Sophie Bell, Senior Fundraiser, After Adoption**

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone involved in helping After Adoption raise a fantastic £5,350 at the CAMRA National Winter Ales Festival 2013 as the Festival Charity.

We would like to thank everyone who works to organise and support the Festival, not only for this year but selecting us in the first place three years ago, and supporting us in making it such a success for our charity - in particular Graham Donning, and Jim Flynn for their support and advice.

We are grateful to our 2013 sponsors - Castle Malting S. A. / Malterie du Château S. A. and LWC Drinks - for supporting our activity at the Festival, and to all the breweries who generously donated some great prizes to our to our lucky straw game - thank you. A big thank you to all our volunteers who gave up their time, and put in a huge amount of hard work and enthusiasm.

After Adoption finds adoptive families for children and supports young adopted people and adopted adults, adoptive families, and birth relatives of those adopted. Over the three years we have been the Festival charity we have raised over £14,000 which will make a real difference to the lives of the people and families we help. I'm pleased to say our participation in the Festival has also directly resulted in a family coming forward to provide a home for a child through adoption, and us being able to provide support to a number of people who were searching for information.



## The People's Choice

There was also a Beer Of The Festival contest voted for by customers, who were invited to name their favourite beer out of over 260 available. The customers selected the 7.4% Black IPA from Blackburn based Thwaites, a new beer which was launched at the Festival. Described as "dark, deep, rich and complex with a fighting burst of intense fruity hop character" the beer features Citra, Amarillo, Motueka and Apollo dry hops and is the latest product of the recently installed 'craft' microbrewery at the 200 year old Blackburn site.

Despite its relatively high strength, the beer certainly proved popular with beer fans at the festival, becoming one of the first beers to sell out.



# Pennine



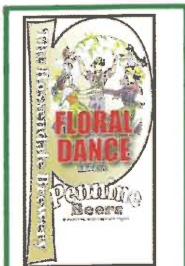
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Meet our beers - Beer Tasting Notes



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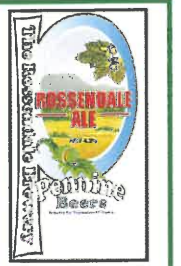
### Hameldon Bitter 3.8%

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



### Glen Top Bitter 4.0%

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### Rossendale Ale 4.2%

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### Halo Pale 4.5%

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### Pitch Porter 5%

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# Pub News

Covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

## West Didsbury

Only a couple of months back, we commented on the surprising lack of cask ale in the café-bars of West Didsbury, so it is pleasing to report that **Folk** bar on Burton Road has installed two hand pumps. When Opening Times called we sampled the Brightside Winter Solstice which was in excellent condition. The second handpump was out of use, but had been serving Hedgehopper from Mobberley Fine Ales. It is encouraging that not only have they chosen to offer their customers cask ale, they are also supporting local breweries. This also applies across the road in **Mary & Archie's**, a visit there saw OT finish off their cask of Marble Hoppy New Beer before sampling a Tod's Blonde from Little Valley Brewery.



The more traditional pubs in the area continue to do a roaring trade in cask ale. Calling in at the **Railway** on Lapwing Lane (pictured above), we found a bar packed with handpumps. In addition to the full Holts Range, there were no less than three guest ales available - Bombardier and Directors from Wells & Youngs and Old Speckled Hen from Greene King.

## Chorlton

The **Jackalope** is a new bar on Barlow Moor Road in Chorlton, opposite Chorlton Bus Station, which looks like it could become a major asset to the area's beer scene. Rob Loader, former owner of Silver Apples in West Didsbury has teamed up with Lee Gorton, formerly of Manchester indie band Alfie, to transform what was Escape bar. Although retaining a similar layout, the venue has been extensively refurbished with new furniture making the whole place seem more roomy. There are two handpumps on the bar and a good selection of bottled beers from around the world. Lee is the ale fan in the team, determined that the bar will stock the very best local breweries. The plan went slightly wrong on opening night when they underestimated demand with two casks from Black Edge of Horwich and Huddersfield's Magic Rock that had been expected to last through the opening weekend both selling out on Friday night.



It is testament to their commitment to selling cask ale that when Opening Times popped in two days later they had drafted in an emergency cask of Marston's EPA (using the "Fast Cask" system that doesn't need settling time) to keep the ale flowing. The day after their Facebook page (facebook.com/Thejackalopebar) reported that they'd taken delivery of beers from RedWillow and were selling off the Marstons cheap to make space for it. Opening Times called back the following weekend where Lee told us that they had again sold out of ale on Friday night but this time were prepared with fresh casks ready to go - we sampled RedWillow's Shameless and an extremely good pint of Doc from First Chop Brewing Arm of Bury - a new brewery rapidly gaining an excellent reputation for quality tasty ales.

The bar offers gourmet pies from Stockport's Lord of the Pies company with cakes, cream teas and other delicacies from the Silver Apples Catering Co. They are also planning a range of cheese and beer tasting events in conjunction with local deli Higson & Blacks. There will be regular live music with gigs from a number of notable acts on the local indie scene booked in already.



Elsewhere in Chorlton, the **Beech Inn** has had to postpone its planned beer festival as the ongoing refurbishment work continues to disrupt the pub. The regular monthly comedy night at the pub goes from strength to strength. Opening Times tried to attend the January night, but made the mistake of arriving a little late and couldn't get in the back room - we settled for selecting a couple of ales from the eight handpumps. The comedy night is the second Tuesday of every month so get on down early on March 12th & April 9th. While the Beech is a great community pub, the lack of a kitchen means that the one thing it can't offer its many regulars is hot food. Landlord Chris Clish has come up with a novel solution to this problem and has arranged for mobile kitchen The Hungry Gecko to visit the pub every weekend. Customers will now be able to buy gourmet Asian street food to go with their pint. The kitchen will be open from 4pm on Fridays and 12pm Saturday and Sunday.

Another pub extending its food offering is **Elektrik** which has begun offering breakfast from 10am every Saturday with a choice of full English, Brooklyn (American) or Scandinavian and even traditional breakfast offerings like kippers and porridge.



The **Horse and Jockey** (above) is hosting a Gourmet Food and Beer Event from 21st - 23rd of March. Tickets will be £20 a head which will include a meal and a paddle of ales plus a talk on beers and brewing from a number of guest speakers. The first speakers to be confirmed are Dave Hughes from Happy Valley Brewery and Bev Gobbett from CAMRA who will speak on Friday 22nd. The next Horse and Jockey Farmers Market and Craft Fair will be held on Saturday 30th March.

Other news from around the area include that the **Nook** is offering all ales and ciders at £2.90 a pint from Monday to Saturday until 8pm. **Oddest** bar is in the early stages of planning a mini beer festival in the summer. The **Bar** has welcomed back former deputy manager Alex Swift who has transferred from The Knott. The **Hillary Step** is planning a cheese and beer pairing event for March with six cheeses and six Belgian beers and a guest from Duvel Moortgat brewery. Unfortunately when OT went to press, the date had yet to be set.

## Stretford

There is bad news for ale drinkers and pub goers in Stretford. Firstly the **Robin Hood** has decided to stop offering cask ale. Unfortunately demand for their offering has just not picked up enough and with too much going to waste, the decision is a business one. The second blow to local drinkers was the sudden closure of the **Drum** on Stretford Road. The distinctive round pub has been a landmark to passing traffic for many years, but in early February those passing noted that it had been boarded up, with a for sale sign put on it shortly afterwards.

More Pub and Brewery News on page 19

# Trafford & Hulme Club of the Year: Flixton Conservative Club

*Flixton Conservative Club has sold Real Ale for quite a number of years, however over the last couple of years the club has reached new heights as far as the choice and the quality of the beer on offer are concerned, writes Beverley Gobbett.*



*Pictured above – Club Steward Nigel Porter (left) with Treasurer Frank McDonnell and Chairman George McNally*

Nigel and Sharon Porter took over the stewardship of Flixton Conservative Club in February 2011. In those two years, the cask ales have increased both in number and, more importantly, quality. The number of cask beers regularly available has now doubled from two to four, these normally being Theakston Best Bitter, Theakston Lightfoot and two ever changing guest beers (often from local breweries such as Dunham Massey, Prospect and Bank Top).

Nigel and Sharon's genuine enthusiasm for cask ale ensures that the quality of the beer is always first class and it was instrumental in the club being awarded the Cask Marque Accreditation in early 2012 and again in 2013 (which they passed with flying colours).

Their enthusiasm seems to have also rubbed off on to a very large section of the membership who have become increasingly willing not only to try beers from a variety of breweries but, even more encouragingly, to try different types of beer (as Nigel's favourite tippie tends to be the darker beers they often have dark milds, stouts and porters on offer).

In order to promote cask ales further, the Club, led by Nigel (with the help of a couple of equally enthusiastic cask drinking members) held its first Beer Festival during the Easter weekend of 2012. By making all four pumps available for guest beers, members and their guests got to enjoy over 20 different beers from 12 different breweries over the four day period. The event is being held again this Easter when they will be showcasing beers from breweries in the North West. Their aim is to have two further hand pumps fitted in time for the festival.

The branch felt that this would be an ideal time to make the presentation and encourage their members to continue to support Nigel and Sharon but also to showcase the Club to the local community attending the festival. The festival runs from Friday 29th March to Monday 1st April. We will be making the presentation on Sunday 31st March at 2.30pm. This will then be followed by a demonstration of barrel making by Jonathan Manby, the Cooper from Theakstons brewery.

The event is Free to attend so please come along and support Nigel and Sharon and your local Club and enjoy the demonstration.

# Macclesfield CAMRA Winter Pub of the Season

*On an appropriately cold and snowy evening in January, The Macc, Macclesfield, celebrated being named as Best Winter Pub in Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch area, writes Dave Atkins.*

It is situated on the edge of the town centre at Mill Green, corner of Mill Lane and Cross Street, and ideally placed for those heading from Macclesfield station to the Moss Rose football ground.

The Macc opened as a new free house in October 2011 and has gone from strength to strength, becoming one of the best local pubs in a town with a competitive market. Formerly the Three Crowns, this large Victorian pub just outside the town centre was formerly a Joseph Holts pub of varying fortune. It is now owned by the De Becheval group, which owns and operates the excellent Knott in Manchester and The Bar in Chorlton.



Over the last year The Macc has been extensively renovated in a slightly more modern style but still maintains the basic layout of two large rooms with the lounge bar split into smaller areas with two real fires which were welcomingly blazing away on the snowy night of the presentation. The pub was very busy and had its usual very convivial and friendly locals as well as visitors for the presentation. The picture above shows Dave Atkins from the local CAMRA branch presenting the award to licensee Hannah Cook and Michael, the cellar manager; Vance De Becheval of the De Becheval Group is on the left.

The Macc always has an interesting range of beers over its six real ale pumps and tonight was no exception. As well as the house beer from the local RedWillow Brewery, Thornbridge Kipling, Privateer Dark Revenge and a further two real ales from the UK's more innovative breweries were also available. There is also an extensive range of bottled beers from around the world and foreign and UK craft keg beers. The staff are passionate and knowledgeable about cask beer.

Food is farmhouse cheeses, soup, curry, chilli con carne, meat platters and pizza, available all day. Opening times are from 4pm during the week and from noon to midnight Friday to Sunday. The pub is situated a short 10 minute walk from either the bus or train station. For those travelling by car there is ample on-street parking down the side on Mill Green.

## Congleton Beer Festival

Congleton Leisure Centre will be holding its 11th Annual March Beer Mini-Festival between Wed 6th and Sat 9th March. Once again there will be 20 varied real ales on offer throughout the 4 days - whilst stocks last - and there will also be 3 real ciders available. As usual, the vast majority (if not all) of the ales on offer will be new to the Leisure Centre, including beers from local Cheshire brewers and at least one from just over the border in Staffordshire. A good mixture of different beer styles is promised. Opening hours will be 1900 - 2300 (Wed - Fri) and 1700 - 2300 (Sat). The Leisure Centre is around a 5 minute walk from the Bus Station.



## Coming Next Month Mild Magic 2012

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bumper April issue  
Of Opening Times

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2013

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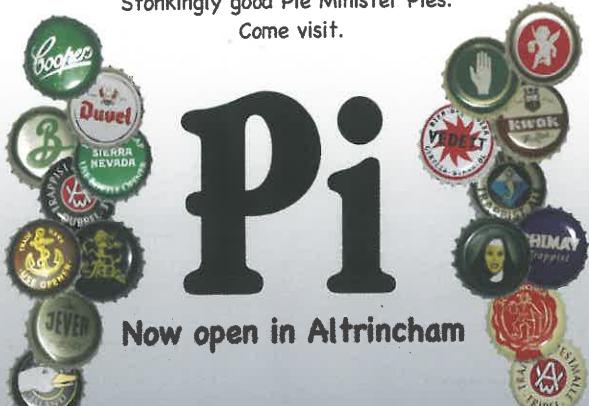
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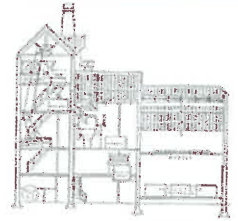
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Proper beers. Proper pies. Proper People.



# Pub & Brewery News

Covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond



## City Centre

Although we wouldn't normally report on a pub's success in selling keg beers, some congratulations are due to the **City Arms** on Kennedy Street in the city centre with the Irish Post newspaper announcing that they serve the second best pint of Guinness in the country after a "secret shopper" competition judged the pub's pint of the ailing brand on the taste, appearance, pour and ambience of the pub. Of course, at Opening Times we know that there are a lot better things to drink at the City Arms, with eight cask ales on offer, including many LocAle offerings. Having been a regular in the Good Beer Guide for over 10 years, quality is always top notch.

Across town, the **Wharf** in Castlefield is tempting ale drinkers in by offering 50p off a pint of cask ale from 5pm to 7pm Monday to Friday. With its 12 hand pumps, it is able to offer a good selection of ales and the staff are all trained in what beers they have on and are even able to recommend ales to go with your choice of food from their extensive menu.

The Northern Quarter has now gained its very own specialist beer shop. **Beermoth** opened on Friday 1 February and has already made an impression with its wide and growing range of UK beers and foreign imports.



There is also an on-licence and this will be used for a variety of events including tutored tastings. Beermoth is on Tib Street between Matt & Phreds and the Tib Street Tavern. It is open every day between 12 and 9pm. Well worth dropping by.

## Pub Shorts

Out in East Manchester the excellent **Oddfellows** on Abbey Hey Lane still serves no real ale but a recent visit revealed that traditional cider was now on sale with Thatchers Cider on handpump.

The **Hollywood** on Bloom Street in Edgeley, Stockport, has been closed for some considerable time and now appears doomed. It has been sold and we understand it may reopen as a children's nursery. At least the impressive building will remain. The loss of the impressive structure of the former **Grove** in Hazel Grove probably won't as an application has been lodged to demolish this former Robinsons house.



In Cheadle the **White Hart** (above) offers a 10 per cent discount to card carrying CAMRA members (for both a pint and a half). The pub is part of the Original Pub Company Group and as such seems to have a large list of guest beers at its disposal. When OT called in mid-January beer available included Pale Gold and Treacle Stout from Ossett Brewery and Beartown Kodiak Gold. Worth a visit we think. Meanwhile we have a pub loss to report in Cheadle Hulme. The largely unlamented **Sozzled Sausage** (previously the Penny Black) is being converted into an Indian restaurant.

Also closed is the **Rampant Lion** in Rusholme. A notice on the pub stated that owners Enterprise Inns had taken possession of the premises and we learn that the freehold is now up for sale. Yours for £600,000.

Manchester Airport is to get a new real ale outlet in Terminal 1. Opening in March or April it is to be called the **Grain Loft** and will feature local micro brewery real ales from the likes of RedWillow and Dunham Massey.

A recent 'Stagger' in the Burnage area revealed that the **Green End** had lost its cask beer. We now learn that the pub is up for sale at £400,000 freehold described as "potential alternative use subject to planning permission".

## Fallowfield

According to a local residents' newsletter the owners of the **Orange Grove** have been granted planning permission to demolish this and replace it with retail units. However, the planning application was still marked 'Pending Decision' on the council's website, even though the decision date was supposed to be last September, so we're not sure what's going on. The pub was still open and trading last time OT passed by.

**Twisted** (formerly Robinskis) closed last September when its licence was revoked. However, there is now decorating activity going on inside to convert it into the Nayaab Restaurant & Coffee Lounge. The former **Bar XS** (the old station building), which is supposed to be becoming a 'Loungers', now has scaffolding all over it. This is the first sign of activity here in many months.

There's better news at the **Great Central** where Danny Bowler, who used to be at the Gateway, has taken over with a remit to increase ale sales and quality. Since the pub changed management 18 months ago there has been something of a sea-change in its clientele with a greater emphasis on ale drinkers - now sells 900-1,000 pints a week, up from 200-300. The beer range is sourced using many micro breweries, some tried and tested, some experimental, on a weekly basis such as RedWillow, Millstone, Phoenix, Thornbridge, Moorhouses, Lancaster, Ikley, Lytham and others.

## Windle Brewery

The Windle Beer Company of Cheshire has been selected to supply a special guest beer to the giant Wetherspoon's pub chain. The distinctive 4.0%ABV beer is now the permanent guest ale in the Kingfisher in Poynton, Cheshire. The beer is aptly named Pickford's Premium and takes its inspiration from the area's connections to the local Pickford family who founded the international removal business.

Head Brewer and owner of the Windle Beer Company Giles Meadows said: "We were delighted to be approached by Wetherspoon's and asked if we could supply a guest beer to celebrate the town's rich history. "It was a great challenge and after trawling through the archives we came up with a pump clip which features an original Pickford's horse drawn removal wagon." *Continued on page 20...*



Tripel Hop, De La Senne, Odells, Bruery, Flying Dog give a brief flavour of what to expect). Jeremy is from Kansas and also spent a few years in Utrecht so we have high hopes of beers from Kansas City's excellent Boulevard Brewing along with some of the cutting edge stuff coming out of the Netherlands.

The Award Winning  
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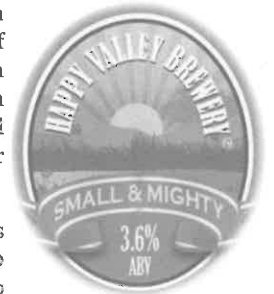
## Pub & Brewery News

Continued from page 19

"The beer is brewed with plenty of crystal malt and Bramling Cross hops which make this fruity beer a really good move. Added to that it is great to see that a national chain like Wetherspoon's is doing business on a local scale with craft brewers like us." This latest success for Wincle adds to a growing number of listings for their beers as the company expands from its brewhouse nestled on the edge of the Peak District National Park.

### Happy Valley Brewery

Dave Atkins reports: The latest offering from the excellent Happy Valley brewery of Bollington is Small & Mighty. Small as in alcohol content at only 3.6% and Mighty as in taste; this is a beer that lives up to its name and is well worth seeking out. Just don't ask the bar staff for a taste of S&M!



The beer had its launch at Bollington's Poachers Inn on the 12th February and over 30 people turned up to taste the beer and listen to Happy Valley brewer Dave Hughes give an informative and amusing talk about the beer and his style of brewing; he was also looking for feedback on his beers. It was good to see a decent turnout from the Macclesfield and Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA branches on a cold and windy night.

Small and Mighty is a modern style golden ale loaded with Citra hops with Hersbrucker added for balance. The result is a wonderfully refreshing, incredibly drinkable session beer with a huge amount of taste for its gravity. Although an undoubtedly hoppy beer the hops are well balanced with the malts. This beer was well received and well drunk on the night with much praise.



## PHOENIX BREWERY

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Best Bitter, Old Oak, Navy, Double Dagger,  
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May Fly, Sticky Wicket, Double Gold,  
Flash Flood, Black Bee, White Tornado,  
Last Leaf, Massacre, Porter, Snowbound,  
Wobbly Bob, White Hurricane, Uncle Fester,  
Christmas Kiss, Humbug, Tyke, Thirsty Moon

MORE CHOICE  
BETTER BEER

International Brewing Awards



1998

Wobbly Bob



2002

Navy



2002

Wobbly Bob



2004

Wobbly Bob



Dave also had two experimental beers he is working on: a 4.4% rum porter using Extra Old 25 year Oak Aged Mount Gay Rum from Barbados. This beer proved to be incredibly popular with those present. It starts with a lovely chocolatey taste that slowly and smoothly slides through to a long chocolatey rummy finish. This is not an aggressively rummy porter like some and is far more refined. The addition of

North American high alpha aroma hops has produced a ridiculously drinkable smooth dark beer. The other was a 5% ABV dry hopped IPA using the fantastic but difficult to source Nelson Sauvin hop from New Zealand. This beer was also popular and Dave hopes to add it to his range after further tweaking the recipe.

All in all this was a great night and much thanks to staff at the Poachers and to Dave for the talk, the beer and for generously donating £87.50 from the sale of the small casks of the experimental beers to the Bollington Beer Festival to be held in July.

### Robinsons

"The story of Robinsons Brewery is very special and one that we are very proud to be a part of!" William Robinson, Managing Director (Pub Division), Robinsons Brewery.

That quote is taken from the Robinsons Brewery website (as is much of what follows) and hails the reopening and relaunch and reopening of the Brewery Visitor Centre this month. It promises to be a major attraction for the town.

Continues on next page...

# Robinsons

Continued from page 20



The Robinsons family have been brewing beer at the Unicorn brewery in Stockport since 1838, and in the last 12 months they have rebuilt their Victorian brew house, installed the world's largest Hopnik (a giant tea strainer which extracts many of the great flavours from 'leaf' hops which conventionally get boiled away rather than finishing up in the beer), rebranded their beers with a fresh new look (and feel), and launched an individual website for each pub. This year also marks the 175th anniversary of the brewery and it is therefore fitting that this year sees the launch of a new Visitors and Training Centre at the brewery (pictured above).

The website ([www.robinsonsbrewery.com](http://www.robinsonsbrewery.com)) explains: "Come March 2013, you can marvel at the magic of the brewing process, admire new and original brewing equipment as you tour around the brew house, play with interactive screens, create your own perfect pub guide, find your ideal pub to run, visit the Shire horses, buy beer related gifts and also explore some real vintage gems showcasing just how things have changed since 1838. You can even round off your visit with a delicious homemade lunch or afternoon tea – freshly prepared, using local ingredients".

Those who have had a preview say that it does indeed live up to the hype and is an impressive initiative on the part of Robinsons. OT hopes to pay an early visit – look out for our report in a later issue.

## Bollington Brewery

A new 12 barrel brewhouse is now fully operational and it is performing well ("We're very happy with it" says Bollington's Lee Wainwright). There's a new website, too, which they are quite excited about and the on-line shop was due to be operational at the beginning of March. The website is now in keeping with the new brewery branding and all the beers are shown with tasting notes. More will happen as it develops over the next few months. Needless to say, Bollington was very happy to get a Gold in Strong Milds and Old Ales in the Regional CAMRA Winter Beer Competition - especially since it was with Winter Reserve brewed on the new kit.



## In Brief

As previewed last month, the **Hope** on Wellington Road North opened in early February and shows great promise. The beers from the in-house Pool Hardy Ales brewery have sold very well, notably the hop accented Risky Blonde (which had to be re-brewed at short notice to keep up with demand). The three house ales are complemented by two from Outstanding Brewery, five changing guest beers and a changing guest cider.

And finally – a cask ale gain in Bramhall. When OT was passing the **Bubble Room** we spotted a handpump for Marston's EPA. Not cheap at £1.85 a half but at least they are having a go.

# National Pub of the Year

## The Baum, Toad Lane, Rochdale

*The Baum, Rochdale, Lancashire has been crowned the best pub in Britain by CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.*

CAMRA's National Pub of the Year competition recognises all the criteria that make a great pub, including atmosphere, decor, welcome, service, value for money, customer mix, but most importantly, the quality of the beer.



The Baum, which sits next door to the Pioneers Museum, which is the original Co-op store, has only been a pub for around 30 years and was converted from Morris's Hardware Store in the 1980's.

Simon Crompton, one of the owners, started work in The Baum in 1993 and became manager in 1994. In 2005, Simon and his wife Heidi, who co-owns the business, bought the pub just two days after having their first child. On hearing the news, Heidi Crompton said, "We were ecstatic to hear that we had been voted CAMRA's National Pub of the Year. We are very proud of the team that have played an important role in The Baum's success and it is a testament to their hard work that the consumers have recognised our pub with this prestigious award."



Heidi continued, "We are a family run pub with our values influencing every aspect of the business in relationships with our staff and suppliers. We are dedicated to the 'buy local, shop local' initiative, always willing to support independent businesses. The support from the regular customers and local CAMRA members is valued and we would like to thank everyone for their continued support."

CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2013 describes the pub as "A split-level hostelry with old world charm next door to the world's first co-operative store. The Baum has eight handpumps, one dedicated to cider, and a large variety of continental bottled beers. Excellent food includes vegetarian dishes, with a tapas menu available at weekends. There is an upstairs dining / function room. The large rear garden, overlooked by a conservatory, contains two full-size pétanque pistes."

CAMRA's Pubs Director, Julian Hough, was delighted with this year's winner and said, "I would like to congratulate Simon, Heidi and all of the staff at The Baum on winning CAMRA's national award. It is great to see a pub that offers consumers a fantastic range of quality drinks and also supports local businesses crowned National Pub of the Year. I would urge all pub lovers to visit The Baum and experience what a brilliant pub it is."

Peter Alexander, Chairman of Rochdale, Oldham and Bury CAMRA said, "Clearly we are absolutely thrilled that the Baum has been chosen as CAMRA's National Pub Of The Year. While we locally know how good a pub the Baum is, it is fantastic to have this confirmed by senior judges who have never visited it before. Given that the Baum was up against some tremendously fierce competition, Simon and Heidi have done a tremendous job. There is no higher accolade in pub awards and we in the local CAMRA branch are very proud to have Britain's best pub in our area."

# A Campaign

# of Two Halves

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**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

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VOTE FOR THE SAUSAGE OF THE FESTIVAL**

*Family day with children's entertainers*  
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Sunday 5th May 6.00pm til 11.00pm

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# ROBINSONS BREWERY VISITORS CENTRE



Welcome to Robinsons Brewery, Cheshire. 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.

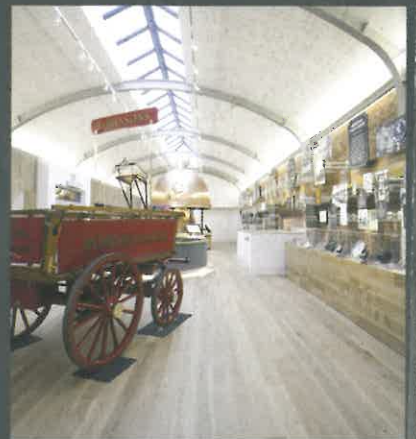
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