

October 2013



Opening

TIMES

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Pub of the Month

The Hope Inn, Heaton Norris, Stockport



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for September is the Hope on Wellington Road North, writes Margaret O'Brien.

Occupying a prominent site on the A6 just north of Stockport town centre, the Hope Inn for many years offered little of interest to local beer drinkers. The Hardy's Crown Ales boldly advertised along the top of the pub have long since ceased to be brewed.

However since February this year, the pub has been re-born as the town's latest free house and Hardy's beers are also back in a way. This transformation is down to Martin Wood and Samantha Halfyard who bought the pub last December. They promptly closed it down and started a complete overhaul.

The pub is now a comfortably appointed two-roomer with a "vault room" to the left, with leather fixed seating and a bare board floor, and to the right a lounge with stylish modern décor. The emphasis is on good beer with 10 handpumps on the bar dispensing a range of cask ales and a traditional cider. These are complemented by draught foreign beers and a range of bottled beers from Europe and the USA. The bottled beer list has recently been overhauled and expanded to 75 beers.

Of particular interest though is the in-house brewery producing the pub's own range of Fool Hardy Ales (Martin couldn't find out who owned the rights to the Hardy's Crown name). The brewery produces three regular beers and a range of seasonal and one-off specials which are already making an impact at both the pub and on their occasional forays into the free trade.

So, the Hope is not only a revitalised pub but has also given birth to Stockport's fourth brewery. In recognition of this superb transformation join us when we present this well deserved award on Thursday 24th from about 8.00pm.



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What's On

Information, Notes and Local CAMRA Branch Events

Opening Times - Information

Opening Times is published 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.

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- * Transport for Greater Manchester: www.tfgm.com
- * East Cheshire: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel.aspx
- * Derbyshire: <http://www.derbyshirebus.info/>

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We aim to ensure that the information in *Opening Times* is correct at the time of going to press. If we get something wrong then please get in touch (editorial contact details above) and we'll print a correction. Please also note the opinions expressed in *Opening Times* are not necessarily those of CAMRA either locally or nationally.

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Front cover – Cider apples and casks at Perry's Cider

Your Local CAMRA Branches

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www.ssmcamra.co.uk

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North Manchester (NM)

www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk

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Trafford & Hulme (T&H)

www.thcamra.org.uk

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

Local CAMRA Events

Events open to all

Wednesday 9th October – Blackley Social: Fox, Old Market Street 7.30pm; Golden Lion 8.15; Grove 9.15 (NM)

Thursday 10th – Branch Meeting: Olde Woolpack, Brinksway, Stockport. Starts 8.15pm. Will also include tutored cider tasting (SSM)

Thursday 10th – Branch AGM: Flixton Conservative Club, Urmston. Starts 8.00pm (T&H)

Monday 14th – Branch Meeting: Commercial, Manchester Road, Mossley. Starts 8.30pm (HPNC)

Wednesday 16th – Branch Meeting: Lower Turk's Head, Shudehill. Starts 7.30pm (NM)

Thursday 17th – Pub of the Season presentation: Salisbury, Wakefield Street, Manchester. From 7.30pm (T&H)

Friday 18th - Heaton Norris East Stagger: Carousel, Reddish Road 7.30pm; Navigation 8.30pm (SSM)

Saturday 19th – Day out in Liverpool. More details from Margaret O'Brien (SSM)

Saturday 19th – Knutsford Pub Crawl: Cross Keys 12 noon; Angel 1.00pm (MEC)

Saturday 19th – Joint social with North Cheshire CAMRA in Lymm. Details from contact (T&H)

Wednesday 23rd – Ginnels & Alleyways Crawl: Mr Thomas's Chophouse 7.30pm; Ape & Apple 8.00pm plus 3-4 others (NM/T&H)

Thursday 24th – Pub of the Month Award: Hope, Wellington Road North, Stockport. From 8.00pm (SSM)

Saturday 26th – Trip to Black Edge Brewery. See Trafford & Hulme's website for more details (T&H)

Tuesday 29th – Autumn Pub of the Season presentation: Park Tavern, Macclesfield. 8.00pm (MEC)

Wednesday 30th – Salford Cider Crawl: Eagle Inn, Collier Street 7.30pm; Kings Arms 8.00pm; Salford Arms 8.30pm; New Oxford 9.15pm; Crescent 10.00pm (NM)

Friday 1st November – Evening Social at Didsbury Beer Festival, St Catherine's Social Club, School Lane 8.00pm onwards (SSM)

Saturday 2nd – Trip to Wilson Potter Brewery to present Beer of the Festival from Chorlton. Meet at the brewery at 1.00pm (T&H)

Wednesday 6th – Anniversary Social: Burton Arms, Swan Street, Northern Quarter, Manchester. Starts 8.00pm (NM)



Curmudgeon

Open and Shut Case

It's now twenty-five years since 1988 when the licensing laws were liberalised and all-day pub opening permitted once again. However, over time, in many cases the effect seems to have been pubs opening for shorter hours, not longer.

Before 1988, most pubs would adhere fairly closely to the standard permitted hours for their area, although opening a bit later at lunchtimes and Saturday evenings was fairly common. If a pub was normally closed even for one session it was something worthy of note.

In the early years of the new licensing regime, most pubs seemed to stick to their previous pattern of opening, and indeed a couple of years afterwards it was still hard to find anywhere open after 3 pm in the centres of Stockport and Manchester. However, the growth of Wetherspoons and other chain pubs, which didn't close in the afternoon, made them start to reconsider that approach, and nowadays you'll find that most pubs in town and city centres do open all day.

On the other hand, many pubs with a more local appeal started to take the view that there wasn't much point in opening at lunchtimes at all, especially during the week, and switched to an evenings-only model, possibly including Friday, Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes, although some don't even bother with that. This has even happened to some pubs that once did a healthy lunchtime trade with customers from local workplaces.

I'd certainly not want to argue that pubs should be expected to open at times when they can't trade profitably, and curbing your hours can make it possible for a couple to run a pub with little or no additional staff. However, if they're doing this, it's surely vital to display the opening hours outside so people know when they're going to be able to get in. Even if you're not going to the pub on that occasion, you can still make a mental note of the hours for a later visit. And, if you turn up and find a pub shut, if you know it will open in half an hour you may stick around and wait; if there's no indication at all you're more likely just to go elsewhere.

If you are in a location where there is potential passing and casual trade, limiting your hours can also indicate a smallness of ambition and reluctance to cultivate a wider appeal. The amount of trade on offer at lunchtimes is often underestimated – for example, many retired people much prefer going to the pub at lunchtime rather than in the evening, and I've come across some pubs that are like a pensioners' social centre in the afternoon. Plus people nowadays are less likely to work regular, 9-5 hours, so more working people will be around in the daytime. Open a Wetherspoon's pretty much anywhere and there will be people in for a drink from mid-morning onwards, and throughout the afternoon, even when nearby pubs are firmly shut.

Another point is that lengthy and predictable opening hours are in themselves a selling point even to potential customers who aren't really going to take advantage of them. You know Wetherspoons are open all day, and so you can plan a visit with confidence without having to check what the actual hours are. And one word-of-mouth report that someone visited a pub at a time when they might reasonably have expected it to be open, and found the door firmly shut, could do a lot of damage. If a pub gets a reputation for scarcely ever being open it will make it much less appealing to casual customers.

At the end of the day, pubs are there to provide a service to their customers, and if they can't be bothered opening when people want to visit, it will result in a black mark for that particular establishment and potentially also the entire sector.

Curmudgeon Online: curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

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Stagger

The Openshaw Beer Hunt with Dave Hanson

On a pleasant evening in May we started our survey of this eastern segment of Manchester in the **Railway** on what used to be Station Road, Higher Openshaw. These days there would be little reason to name this sturdy Holt's pub the Railway, but until around 1890 a station, Fairfield for Droylsden, stood at the bottom of the street so the name was apt. When the station was rebuilt 300 yards to the East, the thoroughfare was renamed Manshaw Road, the name it still carries.



The Railway is a grand old Victorian building entered by a couple of steps. On the left a room whose glass door screen bears the inscription "Officers Mess" from the time in WW1 when there was a temporary army camp across the road. This room is now the games room, where on match nights you will find lively inter-pub competitions taking place, including Manchester log end darts. On the right as you enter is the front lounge, while continuing forward brings you to the bar on your left and a further lounge, with occasional large screen TV, to the rear left. Outside seating is available both to the front on picnic table style seating and in the rear beer garden. Beers on offer were Holt's standard Bitter along with their IPA. We all tried the former and found it to be an acceptable pint.

Dragging ourselves away, we crossed Ashton Old Road and headed 400 yards back towards Manchester to check out the **Grove**. It was shut and there were not one but two For Sale signs outside! "Another one bites the dust", we thought, but while passing through the area more recently I observed it to be open and trading, so it lives to fight another day.

Travelling back towards Manchester we passed the former CK's/Hickey, which is not trading as a pub but is being used as business premises by two companies. Continuing towards Manchester the green (more brown) field site which was formerly occupied by the Albion was passed. Development hereabouts appears to have ground to a halt after the wholesale demolition of a couple of years back.

We popped into the **Oddfellows Arms** a few yards down Abbey Hey Lane as we had heard a rumour that draft cider was being served. When we entered the handpump was present

but draft cider had not been sold for a while, nor was there any real ale.

Passing the former Half Way House/Screwie Hughie's we entered the **Lord Raglan**. Real ale, in the form of Holts Bitter, was previously available here, but not currently. Never mind, it was next door but two to the **Forrester's Arms**, our 8:30pm meeting place. Imagine the shock and consternation when we discovered this Robinson's house no longer served any real ale. What should we do now, as the timetable called for a 20 minute sojourn here before catching a bus to our next port of call? We could investigate whether any Real Ale In a Bottle was available in the Morrison's opposite – dismissed. Waiting for the rumoured new build pub on the corner of Fairfield Road would stretch our patience a little.



Re-arranging the order of the stagger we decided to head all the way over to the **Strawberry Duck** on Crabtree Lane (behind the former Maynes garage for those familiar with the area). After our lengthy trek through the back streets of Openshaw we finally reached what felt like a real ale oasis in this part of town. The place was alive with music, due no doubt to the fact it was Chris's birthday, or so a banner informed us. Internally walls have been removed to create a single drinking area. The area to the right still retains its dartboard, while straight ahead is the bar and to the rear is where the entertainment was set up. A very acceptable pint of Holts was proffered with a friendly smile. We chose to drink inside, rather than outside overlooking the canal, where boats can be observed passing through the adjacent lock. Had we been there a few days later entertainment would have been provided by a bargee who got this manoeuvre wrong and sank his boat!

Moving on a quarter mile towards Manchester we approached another impressive Victorian Holt's house, the **Grove**. Entering the front door you have a choice of right for the lounge or left for the vault, we chose the latter. On this Friday evening the place was quiet, but being close to the Etihad Stadium, it can be standing room only on match days. As it's a Holt's house we hoped a seasonal beer would have been available, but the Bitter on offer was acceptable. The Grove is a fine example of a "proper" local, by which I mean friendly clientele, pleasant surrounds and no overpowering muzak or large

screen entertainment. After chatting with some of the locals it was time to drag ourselves away.



Leaving the Grove we passed the conveniently adjacent Clayton Hall Metrolink stop on the Droylsden line. While travelling back towards Ashton Old Road we encountered the site of several closed and/or demolished pubs. We felt obliged to call in the Bridge located, not surprisingly, by a bridge over the canal. No real ale was available.



Finally we reached our ultimate destination, the **Legh Arms**, opposite Manchester College. The Legh Arms was our Pub of the Year in 2005, and real ale still holds on here, but Dave the landlord finds that when the City fans abandon the area in summer, keeping one real ale on all the time can be difficult. Dave sources his beer from diverse breweries and this evening we were greeted by an offering from Blue Monkey. Inside there are a number of drinking areas from the alcoves to the left as you enter the front door through to the large games area at the rear. This is another place where the Manchester log end board can be sighted, and the pub's darts teams acquitted themselves well in the local league.

How can this stagger be summed up? We covered a lot of ground, and saw many closed and demolished pubs and a few still trading, but real ale was as rare as rocking horse effluent. The area was dominated by Holts, and we could have added a couple more had we strayed a few yards over the border into Tameside. How does this bode for the rumoured new build Harvester style pub, which is planned for Openshaw, and to be located opposite the Lord Raglan next to Morrisons?



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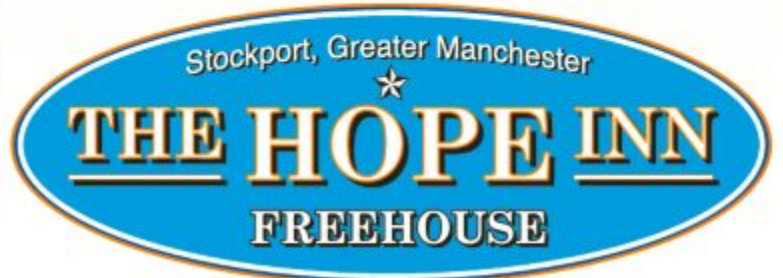
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The Sale Stroll

George Elmslie goes walkabout

The annual wander around the streets (and pubs) of Sale led by members of the Trafford & Hulme branch took place on the last day of August. The aim was to establish the availability and quality of real ale in and around the centre of the town.

First stop near the Dane Road tram stop was the **Bridge**, a large canal-side JW Lees house with an open U shaped room inside – at the back overlooking the canal the emphasis is on dining and at the front is a small games area. Standard offerings from the Middleton Junction brewer here with Bitter, Governor and the seasonal Manchester Pale Ale on handpump.



A ten minute walk now on to the main road and the historic **Volunteer Hotel**, a redbrick Victorian pile with a car park at the rear - many shops have closed along this road possibly due to the lack of parking so this is a great advantage for the pub. Joseph Holts supplies the house beer, Bitter, Mild and an occasional seasonal offering are all usually on fine form (the pub is a long time Good Beer Guide entrant).

Moving on closer to the town centre to the **Railway** just behind the Sale Waterside complex. On offer were Robinsons Unicorn and Hartleys XB (the latter also brewed at Robinsons - Hartleys brewery being long gone). On being introduced we had to check we weren't being wound up - the new management couple are a Mr Robinson and a Mrs Hartley! This bar has a small snug to the left and a larger space divided in two on the right.

Across the road to the **Waterside** a spacious modern bar catering for diners and drinkers. The patio area is at the front of the building facing the theatre on one side of a piazza type space and the canal on the other. On the bar were two ales, Greene King's Morland Original and Charles Wells' Bombardier. Quality was not great but encouraging enough to see two handpumps in what would not be considered by some a natural real ale outlet.

A pleasant surprise next at the **Slug'n'Lettuce**, a chain not known for its devotion to cask ales. When they do sell cask it's normally national brands dominating. However today they were selling Saltaire Blonde, a welcome change from

the big brewer's beers. The manager explained she is required to have a Greene King beer on permanently, normally Old Speckled Hen, but she always tries to have a more local and tastier beer alongside.

Down the School Road precinct now and off to the right tucked away down a side road is **Ryans Bar**, a lively haven in the midst of the shopping area. As long as I have been going in here there has always been a welcome surprise on the bar and on this occasion, the two handpumps were serving beers from Morecambe's Cross Bay Brewery - Halo and Nightfall.

A short few steps now to the **Bank**, a Marston's pub converted from a former Barclays Bank and keeping up the link by serving.... yes, Banks's Bitter. There is a superb interior here, not as busy as its smaller and more basic neighbour but serving a decent pint none the less.



The next stop on our tour was the **Bulls Head** at the junction of School Road and Washway Road, a fine old building adorning many an old photo of the town. More spacious than Ryans or the Bank, it was not crowded but nonetheless was fairly busy on a Saturday afternoon but only offering Marston's Pedigree for us real ale seeking tourists to savour.

A short walk south along the A56 took us to the **Vine**, a pub which has had a variable commitment to real ale in the past. However, today it surprised us with a beer rarely seen in these parts - SA Gold from Cardiff's Brains Brewery. This really found the spot with your author - a gem of the beer served just right. While my fellow strollers didn't all find it as quite as to their taste as I did, most agreed it was very nice indeed and certainly the best beer of the day so far.

Round the corner now and up to the Brooklands tram stop to the **Brook**. This Lees pub is situated in the old station buildings - handy for weary commuters. By this point we were running behind schedule and hungry bellies were calling for a meal stop so it was only a swift half here.

Moving on now to the **Little B** so named due to its location near a now demolished hotel called the Big B. Earlier in the year the pub was taken over by Thwaites who closed it for a month long refurbishment. A smartly furnished patio area

at the front makes an impressive statement, but inside the refurbishment seemed somewhat 'identikit', lacking much in the way of character. After such an expensive refurbishment, we had expected a showcase for some of the excellent new beers being produced by Thwaites, but only Lancaster Bomber and Wainwright were available - the latter having insufficient in the cask to serve our party and was not changed in the hour we were there.



After eating at The Little B, we skipped the **Moorfield**, venue for a recent branch meeting, and headed back to the town centre and on to the **Kings Ransom** a multi-roomed and multi-level canal side pub with a patio on the canal itself. Surprisingly for this Greene King pub, as we visited there was just the one GK beer available - Old Speckled Hen compared to three "guests" - Thwaites Wainwright, Mauldons Silver Bullet and Growler (nee Nethergate) Umbel Magna, the latter a sort of chilli & coriander flavoured stout which certainly divided opinion amongst those that tried it.

Nearly at the end of our stroll, a short hop across the road took us to Wetherspoon's **J.P. Joule**, named after the famous physicist who is buried nearby. Our party ignored the bank of "house beer" pumps at one end of the bar and selected from the five guest pumps. I tried the Acorn Madness, a good strong ale from the Barnsley brewer.

Last but not least, we finally made it to the **Steamhouse**. This corner pub has a small split level room at ground level but downstairs opens up to a large space which hosts live bands every weekend. There were three ales available but notes are lacking - most opted for Cross Bay Halo, making a second appearance of the day.

All in all Sale has a healthy, if unspectacular, real ale scene with only two outlets in the area not stocking cask beers. While the area might not be bursting with cutting edge micro-brewery beers, there was barely a bad beer all day. The best of the day for me was the Brains SA Gold at the Vine and the power of the real ale movement means that very different venues such as Ryans Bar and the Slug'n'Lettuce both have something for the discerning drinker.

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High Peak Pub Scene

Tom Lord & Robin Wignall with News and Views

High Peak Pub News

With Tom Lord

In New Mills the **Pride of the Peaks** on Market Street now serves a cask ale on handpump. Recently these have been Hobgoblin, Pedigree and Directors Bitter. The former Robinson's pub the **White Hart** is now closed with pub signs removed. The Robinson's **Hare and Hounds** on the Hayfield road out of New Mills is now serving Dizzy's Dark Side, the current seasonal beer.

Over in Ashton Robinson's **Junction Inn** on the road out to Mossley now has a new tenant. **Stalybridge Labour Club** has recently been selling beers from Stalybridge's own brewery, TicketyBrew, in draught form. One of our remotest pubs the **Wanted Inn** at Sparrowpit is also closed with the pub signs taken down. This is the pub with the well-known photograph of itself in winter showing it snowed in up to the first floor windows!

Glossop Labour Club is hosting its own Oktoberfest from 18th to 20th October. This is the second of what should become a regular event. The focus is on German beers along with real ale and cider. Food will be available, there will be live music on Saturday and a folk train from Manchester Piccadilly on Saturday afternoon.

Buxton News

The Buxton pub scene continues to improve. Robin Wignall reports on the transformation of the **New Inn** but there are other developments, too.

The **Cheshire Cheese** on High Street was undergoing a major refurbishment in September. We understand it has been bought by Leicester-based Everards who in turn are leasing it to Burslem's Titanic Brewery. The pub is due to open this month as a Titanic tied house – more on this in the November or December issue.

Meanwhile Thornbridge Brewery has taken over the running of the **Old Court House** on George Street (directly behind The Crescent) with all the draught beers on keykeg dispense. More interestingly are the developments at the other end of the row. It is here that Buxton Brewery has opened its **Buxton Tap House**.

It is very bright and new so will obviously mellow with time. Nevertheless it is comfortable enough and offers a pretty spectacular range of beers. What seems to be the entire Buxton range is available on either handpump, keykeg or in bottle. In addition there is traditional cider and a wide range of guest bottles – although for some reason there



are no prices on the bottled beer list which is chalked up on a wall mounted blackboard.

There's good food too, with very much on-trend pulled pork, sliders and ribs available alongside more regular fayre, and traditional Sunday roasts (which look very tempting).

It is almost as if a small part of Chorlton or the Northern Quarter has been uprooted and transplanted to the Peak District. If it was in Chorlton or N/4 the Tap House would be permanently rammed. Will it work in Buxton though? Hopefully yes because this is an impressive showcase for an impressive brewery.

Other regular outlets in town for Buxton beers include the **Queens** on High Street and the **Theatre Bar** of the Old Hall Hotel.

Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

The weather on Friday and Saturday of the August Bank Holiday weekend tried to spoil the local beer festivals, but sun on Sunday and Monday saved the weekend.

At the **White Lion** in Disley there were 10 beers and five ciders in the marquee with an ever-changing selection on the main bar, up to 80 beers in all. It is difficult to do justice to a long list in an afternoon. In the marquee beers from Off Beat (Crewe), Kirkby Lonsdale, and New Plassey (Wrexham) caught the taste buds. From the main bar Phoenix Arizona and Rooster's Yankee were as good as ever. My pick of pale beers was Jarrow JB whilst Kirkby Lonsdale Stout was a good dark brew. Of course all the beers were in good form. Weston's supplied the cider, from Rosie's Pig to Old Rosie.

The **Navigation** at Buxworth successfully took a bank holiday slot for its Navi Hopstock Festival. 15 beers were racked for gravity dispense in the festival room. An efficient cooling system worked well. A choice of beers from not too far away included offerings from Dancing Duck (Derby), Allgates (Wigan), Geeves (Barnsley), Merlin (Congleton),

Chantry (Rotherham) and Bradfield (Sheffield). On the main bar a changing beer range was available. A choice of palate pleasers included Geeves Smokey Joe and Chantry Diamond Black Stout, with Allgates California and Abbeydale Thinking Fountain making enjoyable pale drinking. Ciders were from Farmer Jim, Somerset, the medium being a good drink.

The White Lion has for a few years been a part of the August bank holiday drinking scene, and on this year's experience the Navigation also deserves to be part of the future scene. Look out for both of these festivals next August.

Ahead of its end of September beer festival, the **Drum & Monkey** in Whaley Bridge has Whaley Bridge Wyoming, using US hops, and an outstanding beer from Marble. La Petite Toulousaine is brewed in collaboration with a French brewer. This beer really reaches the parts other beers don't.

Our Punch pubs continue to access beers from smaller breweries, via the Finest Cask list, Black Hole Cosmic at the **White Horse**, Scottish Borders Foxy Blonde at the **White Hart** and Highland Brewery IPA at the **Goyt** being examples. Weetwood Cheshire Cat is currently a favourite at the Goyt.

The promised call at the **New Inn** in Buxton found Trooper, Unicorn and Dizzy Blonde available. Titanic White Star was soon to come on. This last is part of a trial package which Robinson's have put together allowing a few licensees ordering

four Robinson's beers to have a guest from Titanic and one from elsewhere via Titanic, an interesting change in policy which will be worth following. The refurbishment of the New Inn looks good. There is a big open room around a central column of earlier wall corners. Tables are located around the walls with comfortable seating which is at the same time robust. This is a job well done.

In recent years Marston's have allowed their licensees two festivals a year when a list of about a dozen non-Marston beers are available. At the **Shepherds** in Whaley Bridge full advantage is taken of these opportunities. The range varies from nationals and regionals to much smaller breweries. A new venture to be applauded seems to be a monthly changing list. One for August/September is to be followed by another for September/October. More on this development as it unfolds.





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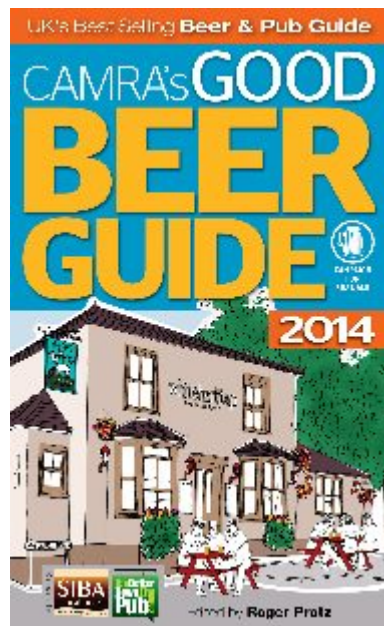
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Good Beer Guide 2014



"The definitive rundown of the best places in the UK to get a pint of real ale, from cosy country inns to upmarket style bars." - Time Out Magazine

The **2014 Good Beer Guide** was published on 12 September. This, the 41st edition of the country's best beer and pub guide, features over 4,500 of the best pubs in the UK, chosen by CAMRA members from across the country.

The Guide has heralded a 'golden era' for British brewing after recent research has found that 187 new breweries have opened across the nation over the past 12

months. Such radical growth in the sector now takes the total number of breweries to 1,147 across Britain!

Such new growth is demonstrated by counties such as Greater Manchester, which in the space of just 12 months has seen 9 new breweries crop up in the area taking the total to 37 – a 50% increase on the 2013 Guide. Meanwhile, further expansion in real ale hotspot Yorkshire means there are now a staggering 131 breweries in the region.

All these real ale breweries are comprehensively listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2014. As CAMRA's flagship title, the Guide features over 4,500 urban and rural pubs, giving details of the real ales, food, opening hours, beer gardens, accommodation, transport links, disabled access and family facilities.

The Guide is completely independent, and there is no charge for entry. The Guide is compiled by CAMRA's 150,000 members, who exhaustively update and revise the Guide each year, thereby guaranteeing the reader with the most up to date publication to Britain's best real ale pubs.



Roger Protz, CAMRA Good Beer Guide editor (pictured left), said:

There has been a boom in the growth of breweries over the last 12 months, resulting in a total of 1,147 breweries now producing beer in the UK – and with more breweries comes greater choice for the drinker and more opportunities to buy locally produced brews."

Pubs are surveyed by local CAMRA members and scored on a variety of aspects that make a great pub. These include customer service, the clientele mix (i.e. the pub appeals to 18 and 80 year olds), value for money, décor and of course the quality of the real ale. CAMRA members therefore endeavour to supply the reader with the most comprehensive publication to help locate the best pint of real ale.

You can keep your copy of the Good Beer Guide up to date by visiting the CAMRA website (www.camra.org.uk). Click on About then "Good Beer Guide" then "Updates to the GBG 2014".

Copies of the Good Beer Guide can be obtained from Jim Flynn at a price of £15.99 (includes p&p). Please send a cheque payable to "CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester" to 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG.

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Cider Matters

25 Years of Cider Campaigning by CAMRA



How It All Began

In 1988, the world of real cider was completely different to the situation we have today, writes Mick Lewis. Usually found in the West Country, it was mainly looked on as an obscure drink that the majority of the pub going public never saw.



If you didn't know which pubs sold it, you had to go direct to a cider maker to buy it. The same applied to other cider making areas as well, for example Kent. It was, of course, found at most CAMRA festivals, but often in very small quantities. In fact, real cider was in a similar position to that of real ale when CAMRA was formed in 1971. There was clearly a market for it, but finding it could be a real problem.



CAMRA had, by this time, published its first Good Cider Guide, but there was no official group within CAMRA to collate all of the knowledge that was floating about amongst its members, and certainly nobody to actually promote it. So I

decided to do something about it, and in 1988, at CAMRA's AGM, I proposed a motion to get a national cider committee formed so that cider had a real voice within CAMRA. And 25 years later APPLE, as the committee is known, is still going strong. One of the first things that we did was to formulate a definition of what real cider is, compared to the fizzy concoctions still found in most pubs. We have modified this definition over the years, but we still have one and it can be found on CAMRA's website.

We started CAMRA's annual cider trip each October, where members visit two or three producers and see how it is made. These have become so successful that they are often sold out within weeks. We also held four national cider festivals in London, all of which generated a lot of publicity as they were real novelties at the time, which is where we started the Cider and Perry of the Year awards, voted for by the staff and the customers. These competitions continue to this day at regional events with judging panels, culminating in the Finals which were initially held at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival and are now held at Reading Beer & Cider Festival in May each year.

Over the years, we have supported and advised producers, compiled a database of all known producers, published several cider guides, introduced a window sticker scheme for pubs who sell real cider, run cider training courses for members, liaised with both cider associations and Members of Parliament, appointed regional cider co-ordinators for the whole of the UK, advised and helped CAMRA festivals and run cider bars at outside events. We have a National Cider Pub of the Year competition, and use October as the month for promoting real cider and perry. And a whole lot more that I can't think of at the moment. Oh, and drunk quite a lot of it as well!

So when you see or hear CAMRA banging on about real cider and perry, don't think that we've taken the organisation away from real ale because we haven't. CAMRA will always be about beer, but it's about cider and perry as well. There may not be many of us on APPLE, but we make a bloody loud noise!

Pictured above – the well patronised cider and perry bar at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival

Greater Manchester Cider & Perry Festival 2013

This was our third and most successful festival so far. We had more people through the door and they drank a lot more.



The "Cider of the Festival" was from a brand new producer based in Bolton called Red Bank Cider run by Lee Thorne with his cider named "Proper Cider". This is their first award and it's nice that it came from a regional festival; you might remember Stockport's Madhatters Cider won their first award at this festival a couple of years ago. So

is good to see local producers doing so well. The "Perry of the Festival" was won by a Welsh producer Blaengewney based in Caerphilly for their "Blakeney Red Perry".

We had a few firsts at the festival this year. Number one was "festival glasses" that everybody seemed to like and quite a lot were taken home, and hopefully got there in one piece! Number two was the charity, Walthew House, who also were at the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. They did better than they expected to, so well done to Kathryn and her team at Walthew House. Number three was the sponsors, so a big thank you goes to The Font and The Real Cider Company.

Another innovation was the "Celtic & North England Cider & Perry Competition". This is where the cider and perry from Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Merseyside, Cheshire, West Pennines, the North East, Yorkshire and Greater Manchester are judged. Everyone who judged, not just the experts but the members of the public, had a great time taking part and learning more about cider and perry. We hope to have the competition next year so why not turn up at the festival and be a judge for a day?

The winners are as follows; Cider: 1. Dove Syke "Ribble Valley Gold". 2. Seidr O Sir "Betws Medium Cider". 3. Raglan Cider Mill "Boris Brainbender". Perry; 1. Blaengawney "Blakeney Red Perry". 2. Nooks Yard "Cheshire Perry". 3. Raglan Cider Mill "Snowy Owl".

Regional Cider Pub of the Year



It's the Trackside, Bury! Well done to all involved. It now goes forward to the national final. Photo taken from East Lancs Railway website – check it out at www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk.

The Cider Circuit

Win great prizes on our annual cider trail



This month we are offering you the chance to win a 36 pint “box” of cider as we re-run our Cider Circuit. Not only that but it is once again very easy indeed to win a prize. All you have to do is visit our participating pubs and buy a pint or a half of traditional cider or perry, and then get the bar staff to put a sticker on the pub’s entry on the form below. Get 15 stickers and you will win a bottle of traditional cider or perry. Get 25 stickers and you will win instead two bottles of cider or perry. Get a sticker from all pubs and as well as winning two bottles of cider or perry you will also be entered in the draw for the 36 pint box. If the pub has run out of (or mislaid) the sticker then get a signature and date instead.

The Cider Circuit runs from Saturday 5 October to Sunday 17 November. Completed forms should be sent to: Cider Circuit, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 9HD to arrive no later than Saturday 23 November. If you are entering the grand draw, make sure you specify whether you would prefer dry, medium or sweet cider. **Please make sure you include your name, address, telephone no. and email address so we can contact you.** All the prizes will be presented at a special cider afternoon to be held at the Cheshire Ring, Manchester Road, Hyde on Sunday 1 December from 2.00pm onwards (prizes awarded about 4.00pm).

Magnet 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ	Crown 154 Heaton Lane, Stockport, SK4 1AR	Hope 118 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 2LL	Railway 1 Avenue Street, Portwood, Stockport, SK1 2BZ	Ye Olde Woolpack 70 Brinksway, Stockport, SK3 0BY
Waters Green Tavern Waters Green, Macclesfield, SK11 6UB	The Macc 1 Mill Green, Macclesfield, SK11 7PE	Wharf 107 Brook Street, Macclesfield, SK11 7AW	Park Tavern 158 Park Lane, Macclesfield, SK11 6UB	Cheshire Ring 72 Manchester Rd, Hyde, SK14 2BJ
Angel 6 Angel Street, Manchester, M4 4BQ	Marble Arch 73 Rochdale Road, Manchester, M4 4HY	Castle Hotel 66 Oldham Street, Manchester, M4 1LE	Bar Fringe 8 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JN	Piccadilly Tavern 71-75 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 2BS
Micro Bar Arndale Market, High Street, Manchester	Knott Bar 374 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 4LY	The Wharf 6 Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4ST	Font 7-9 Wakefield St, Manchester, M1 5NP	New Oxford Bexley Square, Salford, M3 6DB
The Crescent Crescent, Salford, M5 4PF	Kings Arms 11 Bloom Street, Salford, M3 6AN	Eagle 18 Collier Street, Salford, M3 7DW	Friendship 353 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, M14 6XS	Victoria 438 Wilmslow Road, Withington, M20 3BW
Font 115-117 Manchester Road, Chorlton, M21 9PG	Sedge Lynn 21a Manchester Rd, Chorlton, M21 9PN	Dulcimer 567 Wilbraham Rd, Chorlton, M21 0SD	Oddest 414-416 Wilbraham Road, Chorlton, M21 0SD	Costello's Bar 18 Goose Green, Altrincham, WA14 1DW
Old Market Tavern Old Market Place, Altrincham, WA14 4DN	Star Inn 2 Howard Street, Glossop, SK13 7DD	Globe 144 High St West, Glossop, SK13 8HJ	White House Water Street, Stalybridge, SK15 2AG	Station Buffet Bar Rassbottom Street, Stalybridge, SK15 1RF

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Spoons Listing for SIBA Champ



One North West brewer could get the listing of a lifetime after pub chain JD Wetherspoon threw its support behind the SIBA North West Region Beer Competition and Festival. For the first time ever, the Overall Champion beer from a SIBA regional contest will be invited to supply JD Wetherspoon.

The competition, being staged by the Society of Independent Brewers North West Region in October, opened for entries on August 1. All 80 North West breweries which are members of SIBA, are invited to enter their beers which will be judged by a panel of experts including SIBA members, CAMRA experts and national food and drink journalists. More than 200 beers are expected to be entered.

Gary Holmes from JD Wetherspoon said: "Our pubs are recognised for serving beers of the highest quality and we are always keen to discover new products for customers to enjoy. As the brewers' society, SIBA competitions are a showcase for excellence and we are delighted to give them our support and we are looking forward to tasting the winning beer from the North West competition in October."

Fifteen categories are up for awards, including those for cask as well as bottles, from which the overall winner will be selected. The beer which is crowned 'Overall Champion of the Competition' will be offered a listing with JD Wetherspoon and also on the Punch Pub Co Finest Cask rotation. It will also feature on the SIBA bar at the Great British Beer Festival 2014 and be entered into the SIBA BeerX National Beer Competition 2014, which takes place in Sheffield in March and pits all eight SIBA regional winners against each other.

Greg Bolton, chairman of SIBA North West, said the opportunity to secure a national presence could be a valuable opportunity for the brewery: "The title doesn't just come with bragging rights, there is a genuine commercial opportunity for the winning brewery with two of the country's biggest chains offering the chance for brewers to gain exposure to a national market, and who knows where that might lead. Even if a brewery is too small to take on a national listing, there will still be opportunities for them on a more local scale within their region or local area."

"We're delighted with the encouragement we've received from the industry for the SIBA North West competition, there is a real desire for quality beer from consumers and these two companies have responded to that with their support. Helping and promoting independent brewers is SIBA's main aim and the competition is a great opportunity for our members, and of course for customers to come along and try their choice of the 200 beers that will be on offer as part of the festival."

David Aucutt from East West Ales, which will provide the JD Wetherspoon listing, added: "The SIBA North West event will be a showcase of the best the region has to offer and I'm confident that the Overall Champion ale will be an absolute cracker. Pub companies are always on the look out for new products to meet the ever more sophisticated tastes of their consumers and the winner of such a prestigious event will make for a fantastic addition to any bar."

The SIBA North West Region Beer Competition and Festival is being held Thursday, October 24 to Saturday, October 26 at The Beer Hall in Staveley, Cumbria, allowing the expected 3,000 visitors to soak up the atmosphere of an authentic working brewery. Free to enter, it will be the county's biggest ever beer festival with all 200 beers available at the same time (while stocks last) and up to 100 on handpull at one time.

The SIBA North West Region has partnered with local charity the Cumbria Community Foundation which will be fundraising during the event and hoping to raise in excess of £3,000 through sales of the event brochure. Go Lakes and Cumbria Tourism are also supporting the event, helping visitors to find transport and accommodation.

High Peak CAMRA Awards

High Peak & North East Cheshire CAMRA have been out and about presenting some significant awards.

The Autumn Pub of the Season Award was presented to the **Hare & Hounds** in Marple.

Pictured right, High Peak Chairman Phil Moss (left) presents the award to pub managers Carl Anderson and Katie Meggison.



The Branch Pub of the Year Award for the Greater Manchester area was won by **Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar**.

This classic and unspoiled bar needs no introduction and here Phil is seen presenting the award to delighted manager Sam Smith and her team.



It was a double night of celebrations for Stalybridge as the town is also home to the High Peak CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year and the award was presented on the same night as the Buffet Bar



award. The winner is the Hydes-owned **White House**, just down the road from the station. Here Phil is shown presenting licensee Tom Hathaway with his award.

Letter to the Editor

From Rhys Jones, Llanilar, Aberystwyth:

In reply to your question (Withington Stagger, OT September) the Albert in Withington was indeed a Wilson's pub. Reference to my increasingly tattered copy of CAMRA's *Ale of Two Cities* guide reveals that in 1989 it was selling handpumped Wilson's bitter but also, misleadingly, Wilson's keg mild on handpump.

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Didsbury Beer Festival

Final preparations are underway for the 6th Didsbury Beer Festival which has become a 'definite must go' for keen festival goers and locals alike.

With over 4,000 visitors over the open sessions last year the festival has a reputation for a great night out with bands and food available at all sessions not to mention the great range of beers, ciders and perries on offer. Whilst not a CAMRA event the festival team is headed up by several Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA members and there will be a CAMRA membership stall at the event.

The Festival runs from 31st October to 2nd November, will begin with a Halloween theme this year, and visitors to the opening night are invited to come in fancy

dress. There will be over 100 beers as well as a range of ciders and perries, plus a variety of live music each night including Didsbury big band 'Swingin' Affair. It will be at the same venue St Catherine's Club, School Lane, Didsbury, now only five minutes walk from the Metrolink.



The Didsbury Beer Festival aims to develop community and fellowship while promoting a range of real ales, with many from local breweries, whilst also supporting good causes. Over the past five years, these have included St Ann's Hospice, Francis House, Cornerstone, Wood Street Mission and The Christie Hospital Charity, totalling over £60,000. This year's beneficiaries will be The Seashell Trust in Stockport and St Catherine's Community Centre.

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IMBC

The burgeoning craft beer scene has given rise to a growing number of bars and pubs that specialise in a whole range of beer with the emphasis equally on cask conditioned beer, "craft keg" beer from UK brewers and exotic foreign imports.



Manchester's Port Street Beer House is one of the country's leading examples of this (as is the Font on Chorlton). A natural extension of this phenomenon is beer festivals which offer a range of both cask and "craft keg" beers from both the UK and overseas.

The first really was last year's Independent Manchester Beer Convention (or IndyManBeerCon to its friends), staged at the Victoria Baths in Longsight. There have been similar successful events in Liverpool, Birmingham and Leeds. London has yet to successfully pull one off. The "IndyMan" was the brainchild of the team behind Port Street Beer House and Common, both in Manchester's Northern Quarter, and this year they are back bigger and better. No fewer than 37 brewers and two cider makers had been announced as we went to press. Not only will some of the UK's most progressive brewers be present but a significant number of European brewers will be along too – five Italian brewers will be there along with To Øl and Mikkeller from Denmark and top Dutch brewer Emelisse.

There will be food and music, too. Check out the website at www.indymanbeercon.co.uk. Tickets are available online but many sessions had sold out as OT went to press.

THE BEER SHOP

13 KINGSLEIGH ROAD, HEATON MOOR



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. Visit www.ukbeershop.com or call 0161 947 9338 for updated information.

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SUNDAY 6TH OCTOBER

New York New York

Guest Chef: Lee Coombes Marble chef: Rob Kerry
(Former Chef de Partie of Tom's Chop house)

10am-2pm
2pm-8pm

Manhattan style
breakfast & evening
menu with cocktails
to go alongside

SUNDAY 13TH OCTOBER

.....A SENSE OF.....

AUTUMN

SERVING UP FOOD & MULLED DRINKS

..... 12PM - 8PM



Guest Chef: Adam Leavy Marble chef: James Purcell
(Former Chef of Room & presently @Abode Mcr)

SUNDAY 20TH OCTOBER

'PICKERS' ENGLISH SMALL PLATES

Guest Chef: David Carr Marble chef: Dawid Wiczorek
(Present Sous Chef at Lunya Liverpool)

12PM - 8PM

SUNDAY 27TH OCTOBER

FLIGHTS OF BEER and Oktoberfest

Guest Chef: David Bright Marble chef: Justin Berry
(Former Executive Chef at Toms/Sams Chop House)

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Pub News

Covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

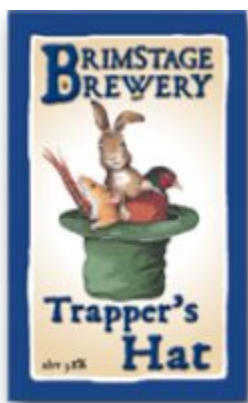
Pack Horse, Stockport



The **Pack Horse** on Stockport's Market Place is the latest local pub to escape pub company clutches and emerge as the town's newest free house.

It has been acquired by the Chester-based A2b Pub Company, an ambitious company aiming to have a portfolio of 50 pubs by 2015, and after a speedy makeover reopened on Thursday 20 September. The landlord is Richard Mav (known to everyone as Dixon) who comes with 22 years' experience in the licensed trade. He's previously run Manchester's Frog & Bucket and spent some years running the Moorside Farm in Swinton.

When OT called the pub was still being finished (with about 50 pictures still to be hung on the walls) but on the beer front everything was firing on all cylinders. Cask ale is now a major feature with a bank of six handpumps taking pride of place on the bar. The two



regular beers will be Thwaites Wainwright and Trapper's Hat, from the Wirral-based Brimstage Brewery. Alongside these will be four ever-changing guest beers from micro-brewers within a 30-mile radius of the company's Chester base. When we called these were Brimstage Sandpiper, Wincle Sir Philip, and both Feckless and Peerless from RedWillow. Richard told us a further 17 beers (including five more from RedWillow) were waiting their turn in the cellar. Pricing is keen with all cask beers at £2.10 a pint until 6.30pm every day, increasing to £2.50 thereafter. A further handpump may be installed for traditional cider.

What's to come? Live music will feature on Friday and Saturday and Thursday will be quiz night. Food will appear – Richard has plans to major on pies and sausages – and for next

summer work will be completed on the beer garden to the rear.

This is a very welcome addition to the local scene and deserves success. For that to happen the Pack Horse will need bums on seats so let's hope OT readers drop in and try it out.

Poynton Update

The main event this month will be the opening of the **Cask Tavern** (pictured below in its former guise) on Park Lane as Bollington Brewery's third tied house. This will be a real shot in the arm for Poynton's improving beer scene – hopefully a full report next time.



Elsewhere the **Bull's Head** has opened a beer garden, complete with pets for the kids. The pub also makes a point of selling "LocAles" from local breweries. Meanwhile the Vernon has added Wells' Bombardier on handpump alongside Greene King IPA. The **Boars Head** now has three cask ales on tap (complete with scarecrows to welcome drinkers!). In a welcome move the Farmers has converted an upstairs room into a dining area with meals available from 12 noon until 8.00pm.

Gorton

The **Royal Oak**, Cross Lane in Gorton reopened in June 2013 (following a period of open-and-close ping-pong). The pub is now free of tie from former owners, Punch. Owned by Andy and Vanessa Williams who run the Strawberry Duck in nearby Clayton, the Oak is run by experienced couple Les Park and Lynn Crossthwaite who previously ran the Lord Nelson, Gorton for nine years. It is selling two cask beers once again, Everards Tiger and a guest ale. Guests have included Tetley Dark Mild, ales from Lancaster Brewery and others. Future plans may see a third handpump added if cask sales warrant it.

The pub is a two-room former Boddington's house, each room having its own entrance and character. The left side is the lounge, comfortably decorated with images of old Manchester. The right-hand side is the vault

with plenty of photos celebrating the successes of both the city's football teams; equally comfortable with much bric-a-brac on the beams and wood panelling. This room was once part of the adjacent cottage which was bought by Boddington's in the late 70s to enlarge and enhance the premises. Outside is a beer yard, which may be enlarged in the future. Meanwhile the interior is scheduled for a minor refurbishment too.



Televised sports are a big draw for the pub, and during the week most days have some form of entertainment laid on: Monday - ladies darts; Tuesday/Thursday - men's darts; Wednesday - open-mic night (very popular); Friday - an artist; Saturday - karaoke; Sunday - singalong with club singers. The pub operates an over-21 policy, which suits the regulars just fine.

We are told that the Admiral Taverns-owned **Friendship** in Gorton may now be selling cask ale in the form of Sharp's Doombar. If correct, this will be the first cask ale sold in this former Marston's house for the best part of ten years.

Pub Shorts

In Cheadle Hulme, the **Hesketh** has gained an additional handpump. It's owned by Scottish & Newcastle (we think) so you'll not see any micro brewery beers. However good beers from reliable brewers such as Brains, Adnams and Theakstons are to be had and beer quality is usually good. Elsewhere in Cheadle Hulme, the **John Millington** often has an interesting range of guest beers and is usually worth dropping in.

In Edgeley the **Royal Oak** on Castle Street has had a makeover inside and out and is now looking very smart. There are usually two or three changing guest beers sold here now. Elsewhere the conversion of the former **Hollywood** on Bloom Street into a nursery continues. The outside of the building has been cleaned up and looks smarter than it has done for years. On Castle Street the former **Grapes** (ex-Robinsons) has now reopened as the Barbican Coffee House. Finally, the **Greyhound** on Bowden Street remains closed (and looking increasingly forlorn) but is for sale by auction.

It Makes You Think

Stewart Taylor on a new initiative

News reaches us via the National Press that the brewing giant SABMiller is introducing something which they are describing as “fresh lager”. Such terminology is music to the ears of those with an interest in the English language as this is an increasingly rare example of an *oxymoron*. An oxymoron (derived from Greek via Latin) is simply a contradiction in terms and there are many fine examples in English Literature which need not detain us here.



If we look at this specific case we can say that whilst CAMRA members may not be “expert” in lager we at least understand the word. *Lager* (from German) is a term indicating storage and goes back many centuries.

The term *Fresh* can have a number of meanings but the one which springs immediately to mind is *New* (recently made). And therein lies the basis of the oxymoron in that how can something which is stored be considered to be new?

We could debate the semantics for a long time and come up with all sorts of alternative definitions and understandings but it is perhaps better to consider what *Fresh Lager* actually is – according to SABMiller.

It is reported that the USP for this version of the legendary Pilsner Urquell is that it is unpasteurised and unfiltered. Seemingly, it needs to be transferred from the brewery to point of sale in less than 24 hours in order to retain the “freshness” and this is achieved by tanker and then storage in the pub in copper tanks. The first UK outlet in the White Horse on Parsons Green, which became well known to both beer drinkers and gastronomes under the guidance of Mark Dorber.


To real ale drinkers this description begins to ring some bells – some alarm bells and some of a more comfortable nature. First, the negatives. Some of us can remember travelling the highways and byways of the sceptered isle in the 1970s and making frequent sightings of a Whitbread Tanker carrying Trophy or whatever under pressure for off-loading into pub cellar tanks. The product would then re-appear sometime later in a glass full of gas and at a temperature which would make even an Australian beer drinker wince. I leave it to others to consider the merits or otherwise of storing this “new” product in copper tanks but the only reasonable way of getting such a stored product from tank to glass would be under top pressure and, of course, we could expect the temperature of serving to be rather lower than the Cask Marque range.

On the other hand, SABMiller are maybe beginning to recognise that an unfiltered, unpasteurised product could have some merit in terms of flavour. They are quoted as saying that this *fresh beer* does not have to go through the same pasteurisation process as bottled and barrelled beer which can alter the flavour. Not true of course in that there is no compulsion to pasteurise beer but we have to recognise marketing speak when we hear it. This really is an example of re-inventing the wheel as all CAMRA members, and many others who know their real ale, are well aware. Nevertheless, recognition from a world scale producer of processed beers that flavour is important could be considered to be a step in the right direction.

What we could do, of course, is to point out to SABMiller that all of the “novelty” in their new product has been around for a very long time and guide them in the direction of one of the many established real ale brewers in this country to show them how it’s done. But that would be churlish wouldn’t it? And where are the headlines in the national press if they take that approach?

Image: SABMiller / Jason Alden / OneRedEye


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

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Floral Dance
3.8%

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



Hameldon Bitter
3.8%

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



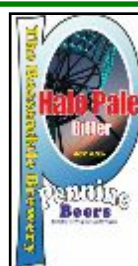
Glen Top Bitter
4.0%

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



Rossendale Ale
4.2%

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



Halo Pale
4.5%

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



Pitch Porter 5%

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



Sunshine
5.3%

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

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What's Brewing

Brewery News around the area

Robinsons

This month marks 175 years since Robinsons bought their very first pub on Lower Hillgate, Stockport, back in 1838. Now they are on course to deliver a planned spend of £3.5m on pub refurbishments in 2013, and have already committed to the same for 2014.

"These are really exciting times at the brewery" commented Operations Director David Harrison. "We currently have four new Business Development Managers (and are recruiting a fifth) who, between them and our in-house design team, have developed 35 pubs this year with significant investment schemes. Ever more rewarding is that we are seeing volume growth to encourage a similar investment next year."

Robinsons see this as part of a long-term plan to keep pubs sustainable in all segments of their estate. "Some of our pubs in the Lake District, North Wales and Cheshire are amongst the best pubs you will ever see," explains David, "but we have dozens of great community-focused pubs which need an equal amount of love. So alongside significant investment into pub repairs we need to continue to support our pubs at all levels in order to make the most of our diverse pub estate in the North West."



"Robinsons has always worked on the basis of the long term rather than the short term. Over the years we have demonstrated that we mean business with our brewery, beers and training centre, now we need to show that we mean business in our 300+ pub estate too."

Pictured above – the new look New Inn at Buxton

Fool Hardy Ales

Stockport's Hope Inn is of course a brewery as well as a pub and their Fool Hardy Ales are always worth seeking out (they are usually confined to the pub but are seen in the free trade and at festivals from time to time). In fact you may see them out and about a bit more often as the beers are also now bottled.



Since opening and brewing the core range, Rash, Risky and Reckless, Fool Hardy has brewed five guests. These have include an excellent mild (Dark Raven), a ginger beer (Renowned Ginger), and Rain Dance, the brewery's first single hop ale at 4.5% brewed with Chinook. Next up is a hoppy 4.8% ale called Rabble Rouser. The popular Rou Shou (4.1%) has been re-brewed due to great demand (and the odd death threat says brewer Martin Wood).

Lymm Brewery

Lymm Brewery beers are now appearing in the free trade and also at the Lymm Brewery Tap pub in Lymm. There has in fact been no Lymm Brewery so far but all the beers have been made at the parent Dunham Massey Brewery. However brewing at Lymm may well have started by the time you read this. They are tasty beers too and those produced so far are Lymm Bitter (3.8%), Slitten Brook Stout (4%), Bridgewater Blonde (4%) and Heritage Trail Ale (4.5%). Worth seeking out.



sandbar

Marble Brewery

The big news from Marble Brewery is the departure of Head Brewer James Campbell after almost 13 years in post. James (pictured here with Marble owner Jan Rogers) tells us he has no immediate plans although he is looking to undertake some consultancy work – so if any brewers out there need some advice then get in touch.



In the meantime Kevin Mutch is working with the Marble brewing team to ensure continuity of production while a new head brewer is sought. James's swansong is likely to be the collaboration brew made with some of the team behind this month's IndyManBeerCon.

Green Mill Brewery

This Rochdale-based brewery is on the move. It has relocated to the Harewood Arms in Broadbottom which will be run as a Green Mill pub with an on-site brewery. The Green Mill team exchanged contracts with Enterprise Inns in early September and were due to take over the pub on Tuesday 24th. Eight handpumps will be in use for six cask beers and two real ciders. There will also be bottled Belgian beers and craft ales. More in due course.

Happy Valley Brewery

Happy Valley's Dave Hughes is celebrating another success for the brewery. His Black Out Rum Porter (4.4%) has won through to the semi-final of the Champion Beer of Cheshire competition. The finals will be held in Chester on 25th of this month. The beer is permanently available at Elektrik Bar in Chorlton.

Hornbeam Brewery

Hornbeam's popular Lemon Blossom relies on a supply of Sorachi Ace hops for its flavour profile. Unfortunately these seem to be in short supply at the moment so Kevin Rothwell has come up with a replacement – Orange Blossom (3.8%) made with Sterling, Admiral and Summit hops. Also look out for Dark IPA (4.2%) which should pack quite a hoppy punch from the use of Apollo, Pacific Gem and Summit hops. The brewery's stronger IPA, Licence to Spill, is also out again although this time at the slightly lower strength of 6.7%.



Quantum Brewery

Lots going on here. As ever brewer Jay Krause has been collaborating with all sorts of people. There has been a joint brew with the BrewDog Manchester crowd which is a raspberry stout at 5.7%. This has had 10kg of raspberries added to the conditioning tank and it will be on sale in all BrewDog bars this month. OT thinks that stouts usually perform better on cask but BrewDog have some weird ideological thing against cask so they will only sell it on keg. Luckily there will be one cask available at the IMBC (see page 18) so some drinkers will be able to taste it at its best.

There has also been a collaboration with the IMBC team who visited the brewery in July to make an 8.6% Smoked Imperial Treacle Stout, using German beech smoked malt and 6kg of treacle. The beer will be available at the festival and there will also be a cask at the Magnet sometime afterwards, and it will be also be available in bottle.

There are more collaborations in the pipeline when Dutch brewers Rooie Dop and Oersoep visit Manchester this month (they will also be brewing at Buxton Brewery). In December Elixir Brewing from Edinburgh will be down to make a joint brew, too.

Finally – the next Quantum house beer for the Waterhouse in Manchester will be out soon. It is a 5.7% dark and hoppy number using plenty of US and New Zealand hops.

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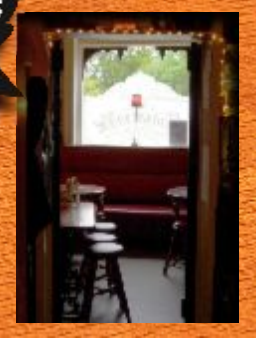
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Pub News

Covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Trafford News



The **Volunteer Hotel** on Cross Street (A56) in Sale has re-opened its kitchen under the stewardship of landlord Jim, a fully trained chef before taking on the Good Beer Guide listed pub. The pub is now offering a range of great value lunchtime meals to local workers and regulars with the menu available between 12 noon and 4.00pm Tuesday to Friday.

Opening Times was disappointed to hear that Altrincham's **Wheatsheaf** has closed its doors and is up for lease from owners Trust Inns. It is only a few months since the new team of Joe Walsh and Laura Wilson took over the pub, introducing live music, a quiz night and regular barbeques throughout the summer months. Sadly it was a short lived revival, and we understands the pub closed in mid August.



The former **Faulkners Arms** on Stamford New Road in Altrincham has a new look, a new name and a new focus. Having briefly passed through the management of the team behind the Bulls Head in Sale, it is now in the hands of Richard Greenwood who has transformed it into "**Malt & Apples**", specialising in ciders and malt whiskies. In what seems to Opening Times as missing a trick, when we called none of the ciders on offer were of the traditional type made from just apples, instead three handpumps served syrup infused "fruit ciders". After initially opening with no cask ale, the bar has installed a fourth pump to sell cask ales with Thwaites Wainwright on offer. The tired interior of the Faulkners has been replaced by a brighter, more modern look with lots of light-coloured

wood. The outdoor drinking area which opens onto Goose Green to the rear of the pub has been given a "garden" makeover with the addition of artificial grass.



There is a new management team at the **Tollgate** in Old Trafford (pictured above, courtesy Adam Bruderer). The pub which stands opposite Trafford Bar Metrolink station is a Marston's house which introduced a single cask ale early in 2012. Theresa and Kenny Johnston took over the pub on August 12th. The team were previously at the Hatter in Warrington where in two and half years they turned round the previously failing pub including successfully introducing cask ale. Prior to that they ran their own pub in Benidorm where they even had bottled ales on the Costa Blanca. They have already increased the range at the Tollgate to two ales - currently Marston's Pedigree and Burton Bitter and are aiming to significantly increase the pub's local trade rather than relying on the fortnightly influx of Manchester United fans. Darts, pool and football teams are already established or being set up and there is a new weekly quiz night. Other plans include running car boot sales, farmer's markets and rock nights. The pub's large car park means they have a good business lunch trade, but the pub is encouraging more evening diners with a range of meal deals running - including a free drink with every burger on Wednesdays, grill night on Thursdays & curry nights on Friday - curry and a drink just £5.25.

Hulme Update

There is good news for locals in Hulme with the news that the long redundant handpumps at the **Church Inn** on Cambridge Street are back in action thanks to new management at this long neglected JW Lees pub. When Opening Times called Manchester Pale Ale and seasonal ale Cora were on the pumps. The pub has been refurbished and now boasts free wifi as well as a range of home cooked food, including sharing platters aimed at the after work crowd. They have also launched a website www.innchurch.com

Just round the corner, the Manchester Metropolitan University run **Salutation** has retained the Salutation Ale from Rossendale

Brewery that was introduced by the previous management. The rest of the pub's range which used to feature the likes of Blackjack, RedWillow and Buxton has been replaced with that available through the University's deal with a national lager brewer. When Opening Times called, Marston's Pedigree was on the bar alongside Bank Top Flat Cap, the pub appearing reasonably busy with staff from the University having after work drinks.

The Beech is Back



Two years ago I was delighted to reveal the difference in the Beech, Chorlton Green, in the first year of new management, *writes Heather Airlie*. "From moribund to thriving community pub is no easy task, but manager Chris Clish has pulled it off." Part two is its welcome return to the Good Beer Guide for the first time since 2007. That year, it had just been given an award for ten consecutive years in The Guide. Sadly that was the last time it was eligible, until now.

The changes are obvious; it has been redecorated and re-vamped, even down to the furniture. Still in development, the woodwork has been stripped and cleaned up, fresh wall coverings, new curtains, and the latest improvement is a working fireplace. Even the exterior has been going through changes, with new furniture and lighting. So, what about the beer? Well with eight hand pumps to choose from, plus a cider, the choice matches the quality. Regulars are Copper Dragon, Timothy Taylor, with guest breweries such as Beartown, Offbeat and Salamander proving popular. Dark beers are usually available with the Beech being an enthusiastic supporter of the Mild Challenge and Winter Warmer Wander.

There is a lot of entertainment available too. Tuesday night is the big one: comedy nights are every second Tuesday of the month, with a quiz every first and third. Most week nights there is live music on of some sort, usually an informal gathering of musicians. The food side has improved also with street food prepared in the beer garden by The Hungry Gecko on weekends and Tuesdays. Quality pies from Accrington are served behind the bar for the less adventurous.



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