

● May 2014



Opening

TIMES

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Pub of the Month

The John Millington, Cheadle Hulme



This month Stuart Ballantyne tells you about the John Millington in Cheadle Hulme, which receives May's Pub of the Month award from the Stockport & South Manchester branch of CAMRA.

In 2004 Hydes Brewery opened their fourth Heritage Inn in Cheadle Hulme: a £1m restoration of the 1683 Grade II listed Millington Hall. Built originally as the home of Alderman John Millington, the conversion was done sympathetically, retaining the old Cheshire brickwork and many period features such as the large original fireplace and surviving arched windows and doorways. The John Millington has a multi-room layout, and despite its antiquity the conversion managed to introduce a lightness and airiness into the pub that its former resident would not recognize.

Since last year it has been run by CAMRA members Matt and Amy Comerford, who arrived with an impressive track record with Hydes, most recently at the Hare & Hounds in Marple. They are keen beer people and while there is an impressive food operation at the John Millington the pub also deserves recognition for the great range of cask beers sold there.

Up to 10 cask beers are sold and the pub also holds regular in-house beer festivals. Since Matt and Amy took over cask sales have increased by 50% which is testimony to their cellar skills. Matt tells me the beers all receive at least seven days conditioning before going on sale – and if you drop in on Mondays you'll also get 50p off a pint of cask beer. Traditional cider is also sold on handpump.

All in all the John Millington is a great community pub popular with all ages. There is an excellent range of well-kept cask beers and prices are keen for the area. What's not to like? Join us for the presentation on the evening of 22 May when a great night is in prospect.

The pub is easily accessible by public transport, too. It's within walking distance of Cheadle Hulme station and buses 157, 313 and X57 will drop you close by.



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What's On

Information, Notes and Local CAMRA Branch Events

Opening Times - Information

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Front Cover – Stockport Beer & Cider Festival – not to be missed

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Local CAMRA Events

All welcome at these events

Wednesday 7th – Mild Crawl in Patricroft and Eccles: Bird in Hand, Liverpool Road 7.30pm; Stanley Arms 8.15pm. (NM)

Thursday 8th – Branch Meeting (with guest speaker): Robinson's Brewery Visitor Centre, Apsley Street, Stockport. Starts 8.00pm. (SSM)

Monday 12th – Branch Meeting: Cheshire Cheese, Buxton. Starts 8.30pm. (HPNC)

Thursday 8th – Liverpool Road Social: Cask 7.30pm; White Lion 8.15; Oxnohle 8.45pm; Commercial 9.30pm; Castlefield Hotel 10.00pm. (T&H)

Saturday 10th – Bus to the Pub. First bus leaves Eccles at 11.15am. More details on page 12 or www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk (NM)

Tuesday 13th – Meeting to discuss branch boundaries present and future: Waterhouse, Princess Street, Manchester. Starts 8.15pm. (T&H)

Wednesday 14th – Cider Pub of the Year presentation: New Oxford, Bexley Square, Salford. From 7.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 15th – Timperley Social: Stonemasons 8.00pm; Quarry Bank 9.00pm; Moss Trooper 10.00pm. (T&H)

Friday 16th – Stockport South & Hillgate North Stagger: 7.30pm Imperial, St Petersgate; 8.30pm Little Jack Horners, Lord St. (SSM)

Saturday 17th – Trip to Mouselow Farm Brewery. Names to Contact. (HPNC)

Tuesday 20th – Campaigning Meeting: Cross Keys, Knutsford. Starts 8.00pm. (MEC)

Tuesday 20th – Cider Pub of the Year presentation: Font, Manchester Road, Chorlton. From 8.30pm. (T&H)

Wednesday 21st – Branch Meeting: Salford Arms, Bloom Street, Salford. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 22nd – Pub of the Month presentation to the John Millington, Cheadle Hulme. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Thursday 22nd – Pub of the Year presentation: City Arms, Kennedy Street, Manchester City Centre. From 8.30pm. (T&H)

Saturday 24th – Cider Pub of the Year presentation: Railway, Portwood, Stockport. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Saturday 24th – Trip to National Pub of the Year, Swan With Two Necks, Pendleton. 11.00am train from Victoria to Clitheroe. Taxis or walk to pub. (T&H)

Saturday 24th – Social at Glossop North End Beer Festival, Surrey Street, Glossop. From 2.00pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 28th – East Lancs Road Crawl: Moorside, Moorside Road 7.30pm; Albert's 8.30pm plus two others. (NM)

Thursday 29th – City Centre Social: Nags Head 7.30pm; Sir Ralph Abercromby 8.15pm; Old Grapes 9.00pm; Rising Sun 10.00pm. (T&H)

Saturday 31st – Social at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, Edgeley Park. From 12 noon. (MEC)



Curmudgeon

Another Country

It's often said that London is becoming increasingly detached in economic and social terms from the rest of the UK. Its economy seems to be more a part of an international world of finance than the realities of workaday provincial life, and it experiences a house price boom while the rest of the country is stagnant. Unlike pretty much any other major city, apart perhaps from Edinburgh, it has a large population of prosperous middle-class people living in inner-urban areas, which gives them a distinctly different feel. With so many politicians and journalists being based in London, it is all too easy for them to form the opinion that the capital is typical of the rest of the country when in reality it isn't.

London is also home to the social phenomenon of the "hipster" which only appears to have spread outwards in a rather half-hearted fashion. This seems to be bound up with the direction that the London beer scene has taken. I get the impression that craft keg ales and lagers have become much more widely available there than anywhere else. The craft beer bar, or the minimalist makeover of an old pub, has become an essential centrepiece for the up-and-coming trendy neighbourhood.

Many of the London microbreweries seem to be intent on developing a cutting-edge image rather than brewing a range of conventional, accessible beers. This has given rise to the phenomenon of deliberately cloudy "London murky", which really is very specific to the capital. And the sky-high property prices make it attractive to convert even thriving pubs for residential use, which is something you don't see around here, where pubs that have been converted into something else have in general either been obviously struggling or already closed.

It's sometimes said that, where London leads, the rest of the country eventually follows, but, in wider terms spreading well beyond the world of beer, I get the feeling that the two are increasingly heading in different directions.

Blowing Hot and Cold

The British weather is notoriously fickle, and Spring often brings a dramatic alternation between different conditions, with some days seeing bright, warm sunshine while others are cold, wet and blustery, often with little advance warning. It seems to be a characteristic of pubs nowadays to over-react to changes in the weather, flinging all the doors open at the first sign of sunshine, yet turning the heating on as soon as we get a dull day.

I've been in pubs where all the doors have been wedged open because the sun was shining, but it actually wasn't all that warm, and on the side of the pub away from the sun there was a chilly draught. I'm sure pubs never used to do that thirty years ago, or at least not until the sun was actually cracking the flags. On the other hand, on days which are overcast in comparison to the previous one, but still quite close and muggy, some pubs decide to turn their heating on, making the atmosphere pretty stifling.

In one branch of Wetherspoon's, again on an overcast but warm and muggy day, the under-seat heating was on full blast in one corner. I went to the bar to complain and was told the system was controlled by Head Office and there was nothing the bar staff could do about it. It turned out that other areas of the pub were unaffected and I was able to move to somewhere more comfortable, but even so the entire situation seemed bonkers.

Surely it would result in a more equable climate inside, and save money on energy bills at the same time, if pubs were less eager both to open all the doors, and to turn up the thermostat.

Curmudgeon Online: curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

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Stagger

Viv Thorpe in Hazel Grove



A few minutes before 7.30, five members of Stockport & South Manchestrerr CAMRA had gathered in the **Rising Sun**, a large open-plan pub nestled neatly within the divergence of the A6 to the left and the A523 to the right. It is a pleasant, socially active pub, with quiz nights, live music sessions, and a scattering of flat screen TVs, of various sizes, dotted about to the point that just about wherever you are sat you are in the firing line of at least one! Four handpumps were active, and beers from three of them were tried – Courage Bitter, Theakstons Black Bull and Nottingham Brewery Navigation Gold were all perfectly acceptable. Overall, a pleasant experience with reasonable beer.



By the time we came to leave, our numbers had increased to eight. Next up was a short stroll Manchester-wards on the A6 to the **Bulls Head**. We weren't sure if it would be open, and if it was, would it be serving cask beer? However, on entry into another open-plan pub it seemed we were among the last punters in its present guise, as this was the last night before a refurbishment, rebranding and renaming exercise the following week (the pub has now re-opened as the **Bullock Smithy**). Of the two handpumps only one was in use and this was dispensing decent Moorhouse's Pride of Pendle.

Onward then to our next venue, the **White Hart** - a small pub with the bar on the right, and a large extended room to the left. This is one of several Robinsons houses along the A6, so the beers on offer were Unicorn and 1892,

both of which were in good condition.

Upon leaving here, we crossed the road to reach what may well have been the 'hit' of the night, Wetherspoon's **Wilfred Wood**. This is a lovely large open plan (again) pub with a long bar on the right, with tables and armchairs in the front half, an L-shaped staircase with lovely twisted dark wood bannisters (up to the loos), beyond which were traditional tables and chairs, presumably for dining. Going up the stairs, if you look across to the opposite wall, there is a superb giant mural that tells the story of how Hazel Grove came to be. The building the pub occupies was built on the site of a Primitive Methodist Chapel (built in 1897, and demolished in the 1960s).



The building was refurbished and opened in 2010 by Wetherspoons, who named it after Private Wilfred Wood VC, who was famed for conspicuous gallantry in WW1. Among the many beers on offer were Pile Driver (a collaboration between the rock group Status Quo and Wychwood), Hawkshead Cumbrian Five-Hop, Phoenix Spotland Gold and a fabulous 'wildcard' - The Bruery Oatmeal Stout (made with chocolate malt). This beer is brewed by a member of the American Craft Brewer Showcase, in this case Tyler King. It was possibly the favourite brew of all night (it certainly was for this contributor).



Leaving here, we went up to the **Grapes**. This was to be a sort of bitter-sweet night, as the friendly licensees, George and Elaine, retire in May 2014. The pub is a multi-room building, which has a loyal clientele, and is considered to

be a classic example of a Robinsons pub. Both the Unicorn and 1892 were on top form as usual. So, with a final farewell to Elaine and George, we headed on to our next port of call.



This was the **Three Tunnes** next door. This is another multi-room pub which has had a major investment from Robinsons in recent years. Currently the pub's tenancy is "to let" and the beers certainly weren't as good as those in either the White Hart or the Grapes with both Trooper and 1892 little better than average.

Following on, we next visited the **Bird in Hand**. Unfortunately it was karaoke night and the music was banging, along with frenetic flashing lights. More Robinsons, of course, with the rather good Trooper outscoring the only average Cumbria Way. 1892 and Unicorn went untried.



Soon enough, we headed towards our final hostelry of the night, the **Anchor**. This is another open-plan pub with the bar in front of you on entry and with a number of distinct areas. It seemed somehow appropriate that we should finish in a Robinsons house with the standard offer of Unicorn and 1892. The former was rather good while the latter rather average.

With this offering our stagger ended with, I think, a pleasant night being experienced by all participants.

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Trafford & Hulme Pub of the Year

City Arms takes the top spot

The Trafford & Hulme CAMRA Pub of the Year 2014 is the City Arms on Kennedy Street in Manchester City Centre, writes John O'Donnell.

While hype rages about the "Craft Beer Revolution" and the press raves about specialist beer bars, the City Arms is testament to the enduring popularity of a well run traditional pub. The pub is nestled away on Kennedy Street, a quiet narrow back street which runs parallel to Princess Street, one of Manchester's busiest streets. Despite being so close to Albert Square and the heart of the city, once inside you could forget you are in the city and imagine yourself in a lively suburban local, the kind of which there are sadly fewer and fewer of these days.

Once a Tetley Heritage Ale House, real ales have long been at the heart of the City Arms, and 16 years and counting of Good Beer Guide entries demonstrate that they know what they are doing with those ales. Eight handpumps adorn the bar in two banks of four and variety is assured. There are blackboards for you to see what's on, but the range always includes a dark beer, a stout or a porter most commonly, and there is always a mild available. The pub embraces CAMRA's LocAle scheme, usually aiming to have at least two beers from local breweries on the bar, often sourced through the SIBA Direct Delivery Scheme. Real cider is also available at all times, from a "bag in box" on the bar.

Like most truly great pubs, what really makes it is the staff. It makes you feel at home in a pub when the bar staff greet you warmly when you step through the door and bid you a fond farewell when you leave. If you are up for a bit of banter at the bar, they will oblige, but if you want to get your pint and slope off to a quiet corner, then that's fine. Licensee and manager Steve Crook took on the pub four years ago after four more as head cellarman under the previous management. Steve continues to do much of the cellar work today as well as the day to day running of the pub, but as reported in Opening Times previously, it is testament to his team that when Steve was recently laid low by injury, the staff stepped up so that the customer experience hasn't changed.

Despite the pub's central location, most of the rest of the givens of a great pub are also present - a hearty good value menu is served at lunchtimes (with a pie warmer on the bar for snacking at other times), there's a yard at the rear and space in front of the pub for smokers and there's no music to interrupt the conversation. Coupled with great beer and a warm welcome, there is not much more you could ask for and that's why it's Trafford & Hulme Pub of the Year for 2014. The presentation will be made on Thursday 22nd May. Come along from 8pm to help the pub celebrate. A light supper will be provided.



Trafford & Hulme Awards



Trafford & Hulme Branch presented their Spring Pub of the Season Award just before Easter. The winner was the **Vine** on Kennedy Street, Manchester (it's the next door neighbour of the City Arms in fact). Pictured above left) are landlady Rachele Stringer, her business partner Mike Nicholas and Trafford & Hulme Branch Chair Paul King (right).

On 27 March Trafford & Hulme's Beverley Gobbett presented the **Briton's Protection** and the **Peveril of the Peak** (both on Great Bridgewater Street in Manchester City Centre) with certificates to mark their inclusion on CAMRA's National Inventory of Heritage Pubs. They were also each presented with a copy of the National Inventory book. Above centre Beverley is shown presenting the certificate to Gwen, the manager of the Briton's Protection and top right presents the certificate to a member of the bar staff at the Peveril of the Peak as long serving landlady Nancy Swannick was too unwell to attend herself. The Peveril was also presented with a copy of an original award from July 1981 - a Pub of the Month Award jointly presented by Trafford & Hulme and South Manchester branches. The designer of the award, North Manchester CAMRA's Peter Cash, was also present on the evening.



Local Pubs of the Year

Branch winners from around the regions

Judging is now under way to find CAMRA's 16 regional Pubs of the Year from which the next national Pub of the Year will be chosen. Here we have a look at all of the local contenders.

The Stockport & South Manchester entry is the **Hope Inn**, Wellington Road North, Stockport. The pub was acquired by Martin Wood and Samantha Halfyard in late 2012 and opened its doors to the public under its new guise in February 2013. It offers eleven cask ales, five of which are brewed in-house at the Hope's very own micro-brewery, 'Fool Hardy Ales' (www.foolhardyales.co.uk). That name is a nod to the past history of the Hope, which started life as a Hardy's Crown Ales brewery house; Hardy's was then acquired by Bass. Also on the bar are two beers from Bury's Outstanding Brewery as Martin has worked in the past with Outstanding's Dave Porter, and indeed Dave installed the micro-brewery here. Other changing ales from breweries across the country will be available, alongside foreign draught and bottled beers. There's a real cider too.



Trafford & Hulme Branch has chosen a City Centre pub, the perhaps appropriately named **City Arms** on Kennedy Street, just off Albert Square. It's a traditional, compact two room pub with two permanent cask ales plus six guest beers, including locally brewed offerings sourced from SIBA's direct delivery scheme. A real cider is available from a box on the bar and at least seven malt whiskies are always available. It has been a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide for many years.



The High Peak & NE Cheshire CAMRA entrant is the **Harewood Arms** at Broadbottom. This former Enterprise Inns pub was taken over by Green Mill Brewery in October 2013. The brewery itself has relocated from Rochdale and is now established in the pub cellar and so the Harewood Arms is essentially the brewery tap. As well as the Green Mill range of cask beers there is a range of continental bottled beers available, along with a handpump dedicated to real cider. The interior has a traditional rustic appearance and the pub has a great community feel.



North Manchester Branch has also chosen a City Centre pub as its local Pub of the Year. This is the well known **Port Street Beer House** on Port Street (where else?) in the Northern Quarter. Opened in 2011 in former shop premises Port Street Beer House has gained a national reputation as being in the vanguard of modern craft beer. There are seven handpumps providing an always interesting range of beers plus other draught and bottled craft beers from both the UK and overseas.



Elsewhere in the region, the Bolton Branch has chosen the **Bank Top Brewery Tap** on Belmont Road. Although just a two room street corner local, this is an extremely popular pub which has deservedly won various local CAMRA awards. It is immaculately kept with superb service and eight rotating Bank Top beers. The brewery's owner and staff are regulars and with a good social mix everyone feels at home. There is a guest beer, real cider and a good selection of bottled Belgian beers.

Wigan Branch has chosen the **Crooke Hall Inn** on Crooke Road at Standish Lower Ground. This multi-roomed pub is owned by AllGates brewery featuring both AllGates ales and guest beers. There is a beer garden and children's play area overlooking the Leeds-Liverpool canal at the rear. There are men's and ladies' darts teams based here. A Ukulele Club and a Folk night are held every Wednesday and Thursday respectively.



An AllGates Brewery pub has also been chosen by the South East Lancs Branch. This is the **White Lion** on Leigh Road in Leigh. Fully refurbished and reopened in 2011, the White Lion is situated opposite Leigh's historic parish church just a few minutes' walk from the town centre. A friendly pub, you can choose whether to enjoy the comfort of the main bar, bar games in the vault, or the quiet of the snug. Six handpumps dispense a selection of AllGates' real ales plus guests, and draught Gwynt Y Ddraig Cider.



Finally in Greater Manchester, the Rochdale, Oldham & Bury Branch has chosen the **Carrion Crow** on Huddersfield Road in Oldham. Dating from 1796 the Crow is a vibrant community pub on the A62. The licensee is a real ale aficionado serving an extensive selection of beers from the Marston's range on six handpumps.

Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA's Pub of the Year will go forward to the Merseyside and Cheshire Pub of the Year contest and for this they have chosen the **Young Pretender** on Lawton Street in Congleton. The Young Pretender opened over Easter 2012 after a frantic few months of renovation of what was a large toy shop on the main shopping street through Congleton. It comes with a good pedigree as it's run by the same team behind the Treacle Tap in Macclesfield. Six cask ales from mainly local breweries are complemented by other beers from around the world. The bar is modern in style consisting of one large room split into smaller areas with murals by local artists adorning the walls.



High Peak CAMRA also covers part of Cheshire and they have put forward Bollington Brewery's **Cask Tavern** in Poynton for that regional award. They also cover a large chunk of Derbyshire so have a third bite of the cherry. For the East Midlands award they have entered the consistently excellent **Old Hall Inn** at Whitehough near Chinley.

The pictures of the Crooke Hall Inn and the White Lion are courtesy of the excellent Beer Manchester blog. Check it out at: <http://beersmanchester.wordpress.com/>

Beer Festival Beers



A preview of some of the beers we plan to have

The heart of any beer festival is of course the beers on sale. This year we are planning a bigger and better range than ever before.

Bar Nouveau

One new innovation is “Bar Nouveau” which will be located downstairs in the music room. We will have 11 or 12 brand new beers which will all be making their public debut at the festival. The plan is to have them all on sale from Thursday night, all will be on handpump and the casks stored in a temperature controlled cellar located behind the bar.

The participating breweries for Bar Nouveau include Blackjack, Deeply Vale, Shindigger, Greenmill, Mouselow Farm, Fool Hardy Ales, Wilson Potter, Nook, Ringway, Quantum, TicketyBrew and Squawk.



Not all of the beers have been finalised yet but we are hoping for a new IPA from Blackjack, a blond beer from Wilson Potter, a black IPA from TicketyBrew and a wheat beer from Ringway. The Nook beer will be 5.2% Liquorice Stout with star anise and vanilla in the brew while Shindigger will be launching a 4.5% Rye Pale Ale. The Fool Hardy beer will be Radical Brew #1. Specially designed for Bar Nouveau, this will be a complex combination of three malts, five hops, root ginger, dried elderflower and leaf tea. Quantum’s beer will be a new Aussie Light at 3.6% and choc-a-bloc with New World hops.



There will be three nine-gallon casks of each beer and when they are gone, they are gone!

Even More Beers

As we went to press the beer order was still being put together but confirmed breweries include local favourites such as Marble (including Pint, Sprint, Dobber and Earl Grey IPA) and Buxton (including Moor Top, Rye and the formidable Axe Edge). Making their festival debut will be breweries such as Salford’s First Chop and Huddersfield’s Hand Drawn Monkey. Six O’Clock beers will be back as will RedWillow whose beers will include Faithless XXXII and, if all goes to plan, a cask version of the Tilting Ale they make for Virgin Trains. We will also be having beers from the brand new Stockport Brewing Co. – this concern is so new that at the time of going to press they hadn’t even brewed a commercially available beer.



Other breweries so far confirmed include Bollington, Bootleg, Copper Dragon, Robinsons, Fullers, Happy Valley, Hornbeam, Moorhouses, Okells, Tatton, Thwaites, Outstanding and Rossendale. The Scottish list was still being put together but beers from Alechemy and Fyne Ales will certainly be present.



All in all there should be more beers than we have had before as the layout this year enables us to have more beers in nine-gallon casks.

Bottled Beers Too

The finishing touches were being put to the bottled beer list in late April but the plan is to have a greater number of British breweries represented this year. Bottled beers from Marble, Hornbeam and Fullers will be back but in addition we aim to have beers from Kernel, Bad Seed and Burning Sky. Local nano-brewery Five-Oh will also be represented and a case of a collaboration Farmhouse IPA made by Huddersfield’s Magic Rock and Norwegian micro Lervig has been ordered to add to the fun.



Of course there will be a good range of international beers, too. Beers from Belgium’s De La Senne will be there (look out for the superb Jambe de Bois Triple and hoppy Brussels Calling) and the exceptional Duvel Triple Hop 2014 will be available. St Feuillien Triple and Saison will be there and lambic lovers will find beers from Oud Beersel, Drie Fonteinen and Lindemans. The Netherlands will be represented by Emelisse from whom we will have three beers including their version of Earl Grey IPA – so it will be possible to try the Emelisse and Marble versions side by side. From the USA there should be beers from Sierra Nevada, Odells, North Coast and Founders. Last but not least the superb IPA and Imperial Stout from Norway’s Nøgne Ø will be back again.



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Smithfield to Re-open

Opening Times was pleased to hear that closure of the **Smithfield Hotel** on Swan Street is to be short lived and it should re-open towards the end of May. The new team behind the Smithfield consists of Paul Downes, former landlord at the Crown (now the Beef & Pudding), and Wayne Nuttall who also has the Waldorf near Piccadilly.



The pair have agreed a 25 year free of tie lease and are currently going through the building room by room, cleaning, renovating and skipping anything considered rubbish. Paul told Opening Times "plans are to offer a traditional cask pub environment together with craft and world beers and a simple bar snack menu. There will be no fanfare or fanciful pretensions, it has been a local pub for nearly 200 years, hopefully we will bring it into the 21st century whilst at the same time continue in the traditional alehouse sense".

The pair have strong feelings on the traditional pub, Paul saying "a real down to earth pub in all it's honesty is a place to chill, socialise, escape, just have a couple of halves or a full blown session, free of corporate constraints, a place to enjoy beer and company, a chance to relax and unwind, exactly as pubs used to be." He added that "the pub has and always will be the meeting place regardless of the explosion of soulless coffee shops on every street corner."

When the Smithfield re-opens, there will be nine handpumps on the bar which will offer lots of opportunity to interact with local microbrewers. The Smithfield has rather been left behind by under investment in recent years, so *Opening Times* wishes the new tenants well and looks forward to seeing it reopen when we hope it will be an asset to the area which already has some top cask beer outlets.

Stockport Beer Festival Charity Walthew House, Shaw Heath

It's our third and final year as the charity for Stockport Beer and Cider Festival's and it's been an amazing few years for us, raising £5,000 in the first and almost £7,000 in second! We're looking forward to making this our biggest and best year before we hand the baton over to another deserving charity.

Walthew House is a small independent charity for people in Stockport with sight or hearing loss. Around 250 people access one or more of our volunteer led services. Walthew House also hosts a monthly drop in hearing aid clinic provided by Stepping Hill Hospital, provides a permanent home to Stockport Talking Newspaper Association, which has its recording studio at Walthew House and supports local organisations working with people with a sight or hearing loss by providing not-for-profit room hire for groups including the local branch of the Macular Disease Society and the local education service, which runs sign language classes for families who have a deaf child.

We are a very small staff team and are fortunate enough to have the backing of around 100 volunteers to deliver our services and who were also (unsurprisingly) very happy to volunteer to lend a hand at the beer festival!

We receive no government funding so rely on the support of local people and organisations to support our work – the funds we raise at the festival really are a huge help to us. We are hoping to raise enough in our final year to keep us going for a while so please come and buy a pint at our stall or have a go on our raffle!

This year we're delighted to receive the support of Sainsbury's, Cheadle as our festival sponsor and as always, would like to thank Jim and everyone on the festival committee who've done so much for us.

All of us at Walthew House hope to see you there.

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The Cider Press



Pubs of the Year and other news

Pubs of the Year

Eagle eyed readers will have noticed a number of presentations being made this month as local branches of CAMRA celebrate their local Cider Pubs of the Year. Here's a rundown of those in the *Opening Times* area. All of these will now go forward to the competition to see which will be crowned as Greater Manchester Cider Pub of the Year.

Once again Stockport & South Manchester Branch has the **Railway** on Avenue Street in Portwood, just off the town centre. A perennial winner of the branch's cider award the Railway was something of a pioneer for traditional cider and perry. It still sells and ever changing guest cider or perry and also hosts an annual cider and perry festival. The branch Cider Pub of the Year Award will be presented to the Railway on Saturday 24th May.



The Trafford & Hulme Branch Cider Pub of The Year 2014 is **The Font** in Chorlton. When the pub opened was a choice of eight draught ciders, and although they were not all "real" by CAMRA standards, the choice was well thought out. There is also an amazing choice of bottled cider. The Font also offers a massive 25% off real cider (and real ale) to CAMRA members on production of a valid membership card. The presentation will be on Tuesday 20th May from 8pm. Come along - even if you don't like the choice of 10 ciders, there will be eight ales as well!



High Peak & NE Cheshire Branch have chosen the **Cheshire Ring** on Manchester Road in Hyde. This Beartown Brewery pub has been run for years now by the ever amiable Wayne Taylor who is something of a cider fan. A changing guest cider (often from smaller producers) is usually available on handpump with often one or two more available from the cellar. The pub is also home to the annual prize giving afternoon for the *Opening Times* Cider Circuit - an event that has evolved into a superb celebration of cider and perry.



Finally, the North Manchester CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year is the **New Oxford** on Bexley Square in Salford. Although the New Oxford is best known as a multi-beer free house there is always something for the cider drinker, too. There are always two, and often three, ciders and perries available on handpump. The range always changes and often features ciders from smaller suppliers.



CAMRA Approves Cider Freeze

CAMRA has welcomed the Government's decision in the Budget to freeze cider duty.

Making the announcement, the Chancellor highlighted that some cider producers in the West Country had been hit hard by recent weather conditions so needed additional support. This duty freeze will apply to cider with a juice content of 35% or higher, and will not apply to sparkling cider between 5.5% and 8.5% ABV.

This is a welcome move which will support Britain's real cider and perry producers - a vital traditional British industry. Andrea Briers, Chair of CAMRA's Apple Committee commented:

"Cider is a traditional British product and I welcome the Chancellor's decision to freeze cider duty to help those who keep this tradition alive. I would encourage you to help real cider or perry makers thrive by visiting a pub and trying some."

CAMRA has cautioned that small cider producers (making below 70 hectolitres each year) already pay no duty, so the benefit of this duty freeze will primarily be felt by slightly larger producers. CAMRA is continuing to campaign for a new cider duty system to support real cider with a considerably higher juice content.

For more information on real cider and perry, visit www.camra.org.uk/cider



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The Font Walthew House





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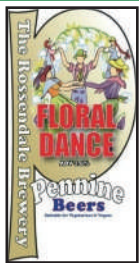
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Contacts - Office: 0333 210 4021; Geoff: 07816 912 794; Robin: 07709 874 783

Meet our beers - Beer Tasting Notes



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Hameldon Bitter
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Glen Top Bitter
4.0%

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Rossendale Ale
4.2%

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



Halo Pale
4.5%

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



Pitch Porter 5%

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



Sunshine
5.3%

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

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further info!

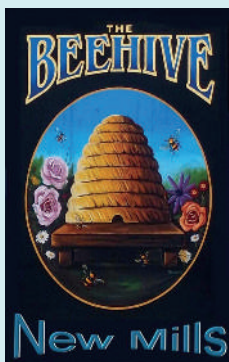
All of our beers can be sampled at: -
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High Peak Pub Scene

Tom Lord & Robin Wignall with News and Views

Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

Ward Lock guides have been around for a long time and I recently had the chance to browse the volume *Buxton & The Peak*, which dates from the late 1890s. In a section headed Boarding houses and private hotels, there can be found some good pub history, which becomes even more important with the galloping pace of pub closure.



In Chapel en le Frith, the **King's Arms** is currently closed and for sale, though look out for it in its other guise as the Lamb in BBC TV's *The Village*, the next series of which is currently being filmed. The Bull's Head in Chapel has long been residential, though this lost local is easily spotted. The **Royal Oak** (pictured above) remains and is open. A recent report I received talked of good beer to be had. However this Marston's (formerly Burtonwood) house, is for sale. It is a while since I called here so perhaps there it is time to call before it is too late.

High Peak Pub News

With Tom Lord

Starting with some good news the **Wanted Inn** at Sparrowpit out in the Peak has reopened as a free house with a changing range of guest beers. Expect more on this in a future edition. Readers may remember that this is the pub which had well known photographs of a Peak District Winter with snow up to its first floor windows.

On the bleaker side it is reported that the **Cheshire Cheese** in Broadbottom is now closed and boarded up, which now leaves Broadbottom village with just one pub, the excellent **Harewood Arms**. Also on the 'closing' theme the **George** by the river bridge in Compstall has now had its signage removed. No news about the future of the bowling green behind the pub.

Over in Glossop the **Whitfield Working Mens Club** on Kershaw Street has closed and



The list in Ward Lock includes the Ordnance Arms at Hathersage. Is there any trace of this remaining and what was its origin? The Royal Oak at Taxal became more famously known as the Chimes, but even that has been long closed and is also in residential use. In Whaley Bridge the Jodrell remains closed though there is some prospect of an eventual reopening. The **Railway** and the **White Hart** are still going strong.

Finally, from the end of the 19th century, Buxton has its own pages in the guide which include the Midland Hotel, owned by the Midland Railway. This of course is still open and thriving as Wetherspoon's **Wye Bridge House**.

Some updates are now available on some of our local pubs. After a very brief closure the **White Horse** in Whaley Bridge reopened with a new tenant, towards the end of March. No changes are planned on the beer front. Greene King IPA continues as the main session beer, with Well's Bombardier along side. A third pump is set aside for more interesting beers. Cheap and cheerful food is available from 3.00pm. opening in the week, 12.00 at week end, until

it is not known if there are any plans to reopen. The **Royal Oak** also in Glossop which is currently closed has been reported to have been sold, but no further news at present.

In Ashton the **Witchwood** is reported to be up for sale, and over in Poynton the **Farmers Arms** on Park Road is closed for a few weeks for refurbishment.

Mark Lawson adds – the **New Mills Beer Festival** last month was another successful event. The National Student Caving Society which found the festival on the Saturday provided new CAMRA members and a healthy interest in trying new beers, and a promise to be back next year. It was particularly good this year to welcome beers from Whaley Bridge Brewery, the most local brewery to the festival site, and both sold out before the Saturday evening session as did a number of other beers including Cluckstar and Hair of the Horse from another local brewery, Mouselow Farm. Look out for next year's event – dates to be confirmed.

into the evening. Chilli, hot pot or similar are staple fare. Good luck to the new team.



After seemingly months of uncertainty the **Cock** in Whaley Bridge now has a new tenant. There was a formal re-launch in early April and the new tenant is keen to rebuild the beer side of trade as well as food, once a decent sprucing up has taken place. When I called Unicorn, Trooper, Dizzy Blond and Hoptimum Prime were available. No problems with the quality of the last on this visit.



Along the road at the **Railway** there is certainty in the uncertainty. This Robinson's house is being managed by Mitchells of Lancaster, former brewer and now pub company. The current manager is the former tenant of the now closed White Hart at New Mills. He remains until a new tenant is found, but there has been no drop in standards here as this is a manager keen to maintain the quality of his real ale. Two real ales are normally available, with a third at weekend. Unicorn and Hoptimum Prime were on when I called, the latter being well worth trying. Trooper was the next up on the bar.

The bank holiday weekend at the end of May promises to be busy with beer festivals. The Northern Rail leaflet on folk trains and guided walks notes that there is a festival at the **Beehive** at New Mills, just down the road from Newtown Station. There is a Folk Train from Buxton on the Sunday afternoon.

The **Drum & Monkey** at the Horwich End end of Whaley Bridge will be holding its second festival following the success of last autumn's initial festival. There will be lots of good beers to look forward to here, both from local brewers and from further afield.

Finally looking slightly further ahead the Buxworth Olympics will be held on 12 July at Buxworth Club! More next time.

Heard at the Bar

Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Stretford Sip Club

Drinkers in Stretford have not had the greatest of choice in recent years with the Old Cock, the Green Windmill and the Drum all having been lost. However, the tide may be turning for ale fans in the area with the redevelopment and rejuvenation of the Melville now having been followed by the opening of a brand new bar - the interestingly named Stretford Sip Club.



Close to Stretford Mall and the landmark Robin Hood pub, the Sip Club is hidden away on the first floor of 164 Barton Road above Trading Places estate agents. A small sign on the otherwise anonymous door announces the

presence of the Sip Club and its opening times. A short staircase takes you to a large open plan room which has a homely feel that makes you feel instantly at home. You wouldn't know you were in a pub, particularly as there is no bar in the room - that is hidden away behind a partition wall.

The bar itself is a marvel of reclamation being constructed entirely of reclaimed wood from various sources and represents much of the ethos behind the new venture. Getting the Sip Club off the ground has been a labour of love for local lass Heather Garlick who just last November decided that after a background in the service side of hospitality, what she really wanted to do was open a modern bar in her home town. Since then she has been on a steep learning curve - it is very much all her own work, albeit supported and assisted by mum Bernice.

Opening Times called on their first Friday of operation just before Easter, which was also the first day that real ale was available. Two casks sat atop the bar, with space for a third to be settling below, with the two handpumps alongside. The Sip Club is very much about local produce and that was no different with the ale with the Best Bitter from Stockport's

Ringway Brewery being on one pump, while the second featured Affinity from Derby's Shiny Brewing. Both were on great form.

Depending on how demand goes, cask may only be available at weekends initially but even if it is, ale drinkers can sample from the fridge which is stocked with a range of bottled beers from Bury's Brightside Brewery including their award winning Amarillo and Darkside Stout. Cider from the Moss Cider project will be along just as soon as it is ready.

By the time you read this, the bar will be serving food in the form of a range of cold platters and is also backing a local community project which will see newly set up independent bakers supplying the bar with cakes and savouries. They are currently fitting out a function space which will host special events such as supper clubs and other special events. The bar is currently open 5pm - 11pm Tuesday to Sunday with an extra hour until midnight on Friday & Saturday although once settled in the aim is to open longer offering coffee and meals.

Epicurean, West Didsbury



If the increasing availability of an ever greater variety of real ales in pubs and bars across the area isn't testament enough to the popularity of beer at the current time, then the fact that this popularity is also breeding a growing number of specialist beer off licences shows that beer is very much in vogue at the moment - of course *Opening Times* and CAMRA are pleased to have been so far ahead of the fashion!

The latest beer emporium to open is The Epicurean on Burton Road in West Didsbury. It has been created by Rob Loader who used to own Silver Apples (now Mary



& Archies) just a few doors down Burton Road and who also owns Chorlton's Jackalope bar. Apart from a small selection of traditional ciders (no Koppberg in sight) which occupy one window sill, the shop is dedicated to beer - and it's quite a selection with over 250 different types to choose from. A sign inside tells us the ethos - "A place devoted to sensual enjoyment, especially that derived from fine ales".

Shelving down one wall offers a wide selection of Belgian, German and other world beers - including a good choice from the USA. Venture to the back however and you will find "The Best Of British" - a wall of beers that puts the offerings in Tesco and Sainsbury's to shame. There is the inevitable Brew Dog but alongside these are local favourites such as Marble and RedWillow plus relatively new local breweries such as Stockport's Quantum and Salford's First Chop are also on the shelves. Most of the hot names on the craft beer circuit are here - Arbor, Weird Beard, Summer Wine, Siren, Moor... but there is also space for upcoming names such as Celt and Manchester's own Shindigger.

Rob told *Opening Times* that he had been overwhelmed by the response he's had from locals since opening the shop in late March, with over 1000 customers visiting in the opening weekend causing him to have to pull in some favours to restock. He's also been warmly welcomed by local traders. The shop is open from 11am to 9pm daily (12 - 7pm on Sundays). Follow them on twitter at @EpicureanThe for news of new stock and special events.

Horse & Jockey, Chorlton



The much promoted refurbishment of Chorlton's Horse & Jockey was completed in late March. Owners Joseph Holt had promised a £750,000 investment which had locals wondering quite what was planned for a pub which many thought was lacking more in quality of service than décor. The basic layout of the pub has not changed much, with the bar in the same central location but has now been painted a pastel blue. There is new furniture throughout, new flooring and new lighting. The low beams inside the main bar area have been plastered and painted to give a lighter feel. It is fair to say that the new decor has met with mixed reaction from locals with there being more negative comments than positive ones on local message boards.

Opening Times called a week after the reopening and while it wasn't quite as bad as expected, we have to agree that the refurbishment has taken quite a lot of character out of the pub. Thankfully, the Bootleg Brewery is still upstairs and the beers are still on the bar.

More pub news on page 23

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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What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region

New Faces at Marble Brewery

After an interregnum of several months there is now a new brewing team in place at Manchester's Marble Brewery. It's headed up by new Head Brewer Matthew Howgate and *Opening Times* dropped by to say hello.

Yorkshire man Matthew certainly has brewing in his blood – he hails from the famous brewing town of Tadcaster and his parents both worked at the Bass brewery there. His father was a drayman and his mum worked in the offices. After gaining a degree in engineering at Liverpool University his first real brewing job was at Leeds Brewery where he moved up through the ranks during a four year stay. After that it was off to AB InBev at Samlesbury to expand his horizons (because whatever you say about companies like this they are the masters of technically precise brewing). Then the Marble job came up and applying for that was something of a no-brainer really.

Since his arrival at the end of February, Matthew has worked on the beers and the brewery. Consistency and quality are his watchwords. He's fully aware that there was a view that the Marble crown was slipping and he is determined to put a halt to that. Fermentation temperatures have been adjusted, yeast counts checked and a daily tasting and testing regime initiated.

Apart from Matthew the new team comprises familiar face Slavek Mincikowski, Johnny Read (in charge of packaging) and part timer Stewart Ball (who also has a masters degree in brewing so is bound to want to get his hands dirty pretty soon). And the beers? Well recent tastings of Dobber, for example, have shown them clearly regaining their former glory and Mattew's first brew, Spring, was a seriously good drop of beer. It's a pale 4.6% brew made using Maris Otter malt with a percentage of oats for a rounded mouthfeel. Columbus hops were used for bittering with Columbus, again, Citra and Centennial for aroma. Look out soon for the new recipe Summer, too.

Marble Brewery has a formidable reputation, both locally and nationally. It looks to be in safe hands.

Pictured above the new team – left to right Slavek, Stewart, Mathew and Johnny.



Craftsman Brewery

The latest brewery to open in the *Opening Times* area is also one of the smallest. Craftsman Brewery is located in the cellar of The Old Abbey Inn on Manchester Science Park and at the time of writing was brewing on a 100 litre plant - a little over half a barrel or 175 pints. The first test brew was completed in mid March with the first beer - an English Bitter in the Taylors Landlord style - going on sale at the pub on 4th April - and selling out in one night. *Opening Times* tagged along a week after the launch when local branch Trafford & Hulme was invited to the pub to sample the beers.



Head Brewer is Paul Scrimshaw (pictured right) who has a long history in the licensed trade ranging from wine trader to landlord - but this is his first foray into actually making the drinks. Since the kit arrived, Paul has been on a self taught crash course in brewing four times a week. Although most of the brews so far have been based around staples of Maris Otter malt and Fuggles and Target hops, the brewery currently has a total of 12 different hop varieties in stock.

On the bar when OT visited were Bruntwood Bitter, a 4.2% pale ale modelled on the much missed original Boddingtons' recipe, and MSP

London Porter, a 5.6% sweet rich dark brown beer. Both beers were clear and bright, with good condition - the Porter being particularly lively - and both were very well received by the small band of CAMRA members present that night. Other styles lined up in the pub cellar include a Scottish style Mild (MSP Mild), a strong golden ale (MSP IPA) and a classic best bitter. With confidence that the first beers were up to scratch, a larger 300 litre plant has been ordered which should be in place by you read this. The smaller plant will be retained for test brews.



The two beers on offer when we called both give a nod to The Old Abbey's location on the Bruntwood-owned Manchester Science Park which sits between the main Manchester University campus and Heineken's Royal Brewery. With limited residential property in the area, the pub generally only opens weekday lunchtimes 11.30 to 2.30 and by advance

notice. The beers will also be regularly on the bar at The Old Abbey's sister pub, The Steamhouse in Sale.

Dunham Massey Award



Dunham Porter, a traditional dark beer brewed by Dunham Massey Brewery, has taken the top gong in CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain awards. It's the second time that a porter has taken the top spot. Speaking at the ceremony, following a presentation at the brewery's bar in Stockton Heath, Head Brewer and owner of Dunham Massey Brewery John Costello had this to say: "To win this award is fantastic and we're just glad that everybody else likes this beer too, as we really are very proud of it."

Pictured above – John Costello (left) receiving the award from CAMRA National Chairman Colin Valentine.



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A Brief History of Electricity

Peter Edwardson looks back

It's often surprising how things that you take for granted as part of the pub scene can rapidly pass into history. A good example of this was serving real ale through electric pumps of various designs. If we go back to the late 1970s, at that time probably at least 40% of all real ale in the UK was dispensed by electric pump, and much more across large swathes of the Midlands and North.

Electric pumps were divided into two main types - the free-flow, which was visually indistinguishable from a keg dispenser, and the metered, which was either of the sliding cylinder "diaphragm" type or had a push-button to dispense a half-pint from a separate nozzle. I am told that some Stones' and Ward's pubs in the Sheffield area had diaphragm pumps dispensing a pint at a time, but I never actually saw these. There were one or two other types occasionally seen, such as one with what looked like a revolving vane in a glass sphere which cropped up in some Wilson's pubs.

In my experience, the free-flow pumps were only widely used for real ale in pubs owned by the Bass group, although I have seen them in a few Lees, Holt's and Robinsons' pubs. The obvious drawback was that they were outwardly indistinguishable from keg dispensers, which once CAMRA made a major point of promoting real ale could all too easily deter prospective drinkers. A few said "cask conditioned" on the mounting, but this wasn't usual.

Metered dispense was more common, and in particular was widely used by Banks's, Greenall's, Boddington's, Robinsons, Hyde's, Home and Shipstone's, although I have seen it in many other brewers' pubs, even including Gale's down in Hampshire. At first the diaphragm-type pumps were much more numerous, but from maybe about the late 80s onwards

it came to be increasingly replaced by illuminated bar mountings which were harder to distinguish from keg taps.

I have always associated metered dispense with real ale, but it was also widely used for bright and keg beers, and also for lager and Guinness. In the 1980s I recall my local Hyde's pub having Harp Lager, Strongbow and even Guinness on meters alongside Mild and Bitter. Metered dispense for non-real beers was very common in clubs. I remember being taken aback once to be served obviously fizzy draught bitter from diaphragm pumps in a Border pub south of Oswestry, so that must have been a rarity.

Two big advantages of metered dispense were that it ensured a full pint, and that it greatly reduced the ability of bar staff to ruin decent beer by an incompetent pulling technique.

From the late 80s onwards it began to slowly disappear - breweries seeing the advantage of at the same time pushing a more obvious image of "real ale" and also being able to use brim-measure glasses and serve less beer per pint. In my view CAMRA mistakenly encouraged this process by presenting handpumped beer as superior and apparently putting image before full measure.

By 2000, metered dispense had become pretty rare and as far as I know has pretty much entirely disappeared now. My most recent local sightings were in Robinsons' Queens Arms on Portwood and Anchor in Hazel Grove, but both of those have now been converted to handpumps. The Anchor used free-flow taps which in a sense were the worst of both worlds because you didn't even get an oversize glass. The Flying Dutchman on Hillgate retained metered dispense for a long time, but that went when it was sold off to become the Fairway free house. I am also told that one or two of the more traditional former Banks's houses still serve their Mild using electric meters, although I haven't seen this myself in recent years.

While it's something that has now been pretty much consigned to history, I have to say that personally I miss it as something that added variety and distinctiveness to the pub scene.



Third Bollington Beer Festival in July

The Third Bollington Beer Festival will take place in the Bollington Arts Centre on Friday 25th and Saturday 26th July. There will be around 40 casks of beer from some of our more innovative brewers around the country as well as old favourites. There will also be around 15 ciders and perries available. The festival's main sponsor is Bollington Brewing Company. There will be three sessions, 6pm to 11pm on Friday 25th plus from noon to 5pm and 6pm to 11pm on Saturday 26th July.

The Arts Centre is located adjacent to the viaduct in the centre of Bollington on the main road. The aim of the festival is to raise money for local charity and community support groups. Entertainment will be provided by local musicians at all sessions. Hot and cold food will be available during both days sourced from local caterers. The aim is to provide something for everyone. Entrance ticket prices have been held at £6 for each of the three sessions and will include a souvenir glass to take away. All beers and ciders will be on sale at £3 a pint.

Local brewers Bollington Brewing, Happy Valley and RedWillow are all kindly sponsoring two firkins apiece of their beers. Other breweries likely to feature include Buxton, Marble, Magic Rock and Thornbridge and others from further afield (more next month).

Tickets will be available from late May in the following pubs in Bollington: the Cock & Pheasant, Poachers and Vale. In Macclesfield tickets will be on sale in the Park Tavern, Treacle Tap and the Wharf. In Poynton go to the Cask. Tickets have sold out well in advance for all sessions at the previous festivals so it is a good idea to purchase them early.

We are again looking for sponsors willing to sponsor a firkin for £100 or share sponsorship on a firkin at £50. Sponsors get their names on the cask plus four free tickets for a session of their choice, those sponsoring half a firkin will get two free tickets. Sponsorship is also available for cider. If you are interested please phone Roland Edwards on 01625 574 466.



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Old Dancer, Wilmslow

Opening on 28 March, the Old Dancer is the third bar of its type opened in as many years by husband and wife team Tim Sedgwick and Bronwyn Riley. Bronwyn first opened the **Treacle Tap** in Macclesfield in December 2010 and with its emphasis on both cask ales and other draught and bottled beers (from both the UK and abroad) it quickly became a hit with local drinkers.

Buoyed by this initial success, and with Tim joining Bronwyn after giving up his day job, a former toy shop in Congleton was taken over and the **Young Pretender** was born in April 2012. Following the same style as the Treacle Tap, it has been an even greater success and is currently the Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA Pub of the Year.

Now two years on the dynamic duo have repeated the formula on Wilmslow's main shopping street. They have leased what was a lap dancing club on Grove Street and in recognition of the former use they have named this latest venture the **Old Dancer** (although contrary to rumour, no poles from the previous business have remained after the refurbishment!).

The same successful formula has been followed and there are two large rooms with a bar in each. The walls of both are decorated with stunning hand-painted murals on a dance theme by Norwegian artist Hilde Kjepso, who produced paintings for the other bars.

There are six handpumps downstairs and three upstairs with an interesting range of beers being sold. One of the pumps is reserved for cider. There is also a wide range of wines, foreign beers, tease, coffees and soft drinks. The food choice includes a range of snacks and sandwiches, award-winning pies, charcuterie and cheeses. All in all a very welcome to the Wilmslow bar scene.



Indy Man Back Again

The Independent Manchester Beer Convention (Indy Man Beer Con/IMBC) is a world class showcase for the best breweries from the UK and beyond. It is returning to the stunning surrounds of the Grade II listed architectural gem, the Victoria Baths, for its third year. Running from Thursday 9th October to Sunday 12th October, IMBC brings together the most progressive, forward thinking breweries from across the UK, Europe and USA for a multi-sensory, headlong, hop-forward beer extravaganza.



Spread across 5 rooms over 4 days with more than 80 taps serving up the finest beers on both cask and keg (from a swimming pool no less), each day will offer a new experience, with an array of local, national and international brewers mingling and pouring their own beer, secret tastings, pop-up beer talks plus one-off beers made especially for the Convention. There will be beer-matched meals from Masterchef finalist Jackie Kearney aka The Hungry Gecko, specially curated live music and a plethora of the best street food traders.

Festival organiser Jonny Heyes explains "The beer world is a dynamic industry, more women and young people are drinking beer and it's losing its stuffy, old man image, yet something was lacking in Britain's beer festivals so we thought we'd change that."

Last year's event sold out months in advance, welcoming over 3000 attendees who mingled with 47 brewers, there serving beers and answering questions. Tickets went on sale on 1 April – hurry while stocks last. Book via the website indymanbeercon.co.uk.

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22 OPENING TIMES May 2014

Heard More at the Bar

Pub News extra covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

City News



The major new opening in Manchester City Centre last month was **Beef & Pudding** on the corner of Booth Street and Fountain Street in the city's business sector. The former Crown Inn has been totally refurbished by the New Moon Pub Company which has four "gastro" pubs in Cheshire and has now brought its concept to central Manchester. While predominately a restaurant, the good news for drinkers is that a substantial area at the front of the building has been set aside for drinkers and there are three real ales on the bar.

The house beer is currently Tatton Ale, although *Opening Times* understands that the company is in discussions with Tatton brewery about brewing a brand new exclusive beer for the group. When *OT* called, the other two beers on the bar were Sir Galahad from Merlin Brewery and Frodsham Brewery's Iron Man. The interior is what is deemed "industrial" which translates as lots of stripped back brickwork and simple furnishings - not a style that is to everyone's taste but is not offensive.

When Manchester Metropolitan University took over the **Salutation** in 2011, many feared for the future of the pub. Doubts were also raised when the University ended a management contract with the Trof group and handed control of the pub to the MMU Students Union in 2013. While it's true that the beer range has become less adventurous the pub has otherwise continued to be a well run pub successfully serving students, university staff and the local community.

Now its future seems assured with the announcement that the University is to invest £235,000 with the pub closing on 18th April and due to reopen in July. The university has assured locals that the character of the ground floor, which dates back to the 1840s, will be preserved. Original features such as light fittings and ceiling mouldings will be restored along with improvements to the building's aging electrics and plumbing but no major changes to the layout are planned. Of course when the pub re-opens in July *Opening Times* will be there to report back in the August issue.

Meanwhile, the nearby **Church Inn** continues to thrive with growing custom from university

staff and students. Real ale sales have increased and now support two beers at all times - when *Opening Times* called the permanent JW Lees MPA was joined by current seasonal The Hoptimist. The pub is now serving meals until 9pm daily with a full menu of home cooked options lining up alongside daily specials. The pub is also serving Sunday lunch from 12 - 4 every week.

As we briefly mentioned last month, the famous **Mark Addy** (Stanley Street, Salford) re-opened just as we went to press. It closed suddenly after Christmas but has now been rescued by former general manager Keran Douglas-Clark and his business partner Allen Caldwell. They have also taken on beer enthusiast (and former Mark Addy bar-cellarman) Pete Kilip as manager



Keran told *OT* that he'd always liked the Mark Addy and really fell in love with the place while realising it needed some TLC lavishing on it. It's had a thorough going over with work done on both the fabric of the building (new doors were being fitted when we dropped in) and also the fixtures and fittings.

Five changing cask beers are currently sold and this will increase to six as trade improves. Food will be available when work has been completed on the kitchen and will be restricted to the cheese and pate that made the pub famous, although various pop up food operations may appear outside in the summer months. There are DJs planned for Friday and

Saturday nights, too. The Mark Addy opens at 11.30 each day (12 noon Sundays) - well worth dropping by.

Pub Shorts

Further to our CAMRA discount list, the **Lloyds** in Chorlton has been in touch to say they offer a 10% discount of food and drink. Well worth dropping in for.

The **George** in Mersey Square, Stockport, has dropped the number of cask beers to two to maintain quality. However the cask beer has also been joined by Gwynt-y-Ddraig Black Dragon cider in handpump.

In Bollington, the **Royal Oak** on Princess Street has finally closed its doors and is now boarded. Further into the village Robinsons **Holly Bush** is also closed but we understand the brewery plans to invest in and reopen the pub in due course.

The new management at the **Nook & Cranny** on Wilbraham Road, Chorlton has wasted no time in making changes - not least in the name which has been changed to **Mono**. When *Opening Times* called just a week after Guy Hodgkiss took over, the bar's booth seating had been ripped out and replaced by free standing tables and chairs. The walls had also been stripped and were in the process of having new wiring installed. We understand that three handpumps are also now in place. A full review next month.

West Didsbury's **Volta** has extended its opening hours and is now open from midday everyday (11am on Saturdays). During daytimes they will be serving deli style sandwiches, cakes and pastries, coffee and teas alongside their usual selection of three cask ales and craft beers.

Trafford News



Real Ale sales are also increasing at the **Garricks Head** on the Urmston border which has installed a third handpump. The Moorside Road pub, close to Trafford General Hospital, has added Thwaites Wainwright to their range alongside Sharp's Doom Bar and a guest ale. The pub serves a wide ranging menu of good

value meals with their range of 13 burgers coming highly recommended.

Landlady Angie Friday is to leave the the **Manor House** in Sale West after 14 years at the helm. Reports are that owners Hydes brewery are to convert the Manor Avenue pub to a managed house and invest in a much needed refurbishment inside and out.

The **Gardeners Arms** in Timerperly has reopened after a £130,000 refurbishment by owners Star Pubs. The pub has spent the last two years under a succession of temporary managers but now has new management in the form of locals Alan and Fran Bates who took over in April. Alan and Fran have lived in the area for over 30 years and used to frequent the pub as customers. Their son David has also joined the team and is in charge of the bar. The pub has been redecorated inside and out with new toilets and baby changing facilities. A kitchen has been installed allowing the pub to serve food for the first time.



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