

July 2014

Opening

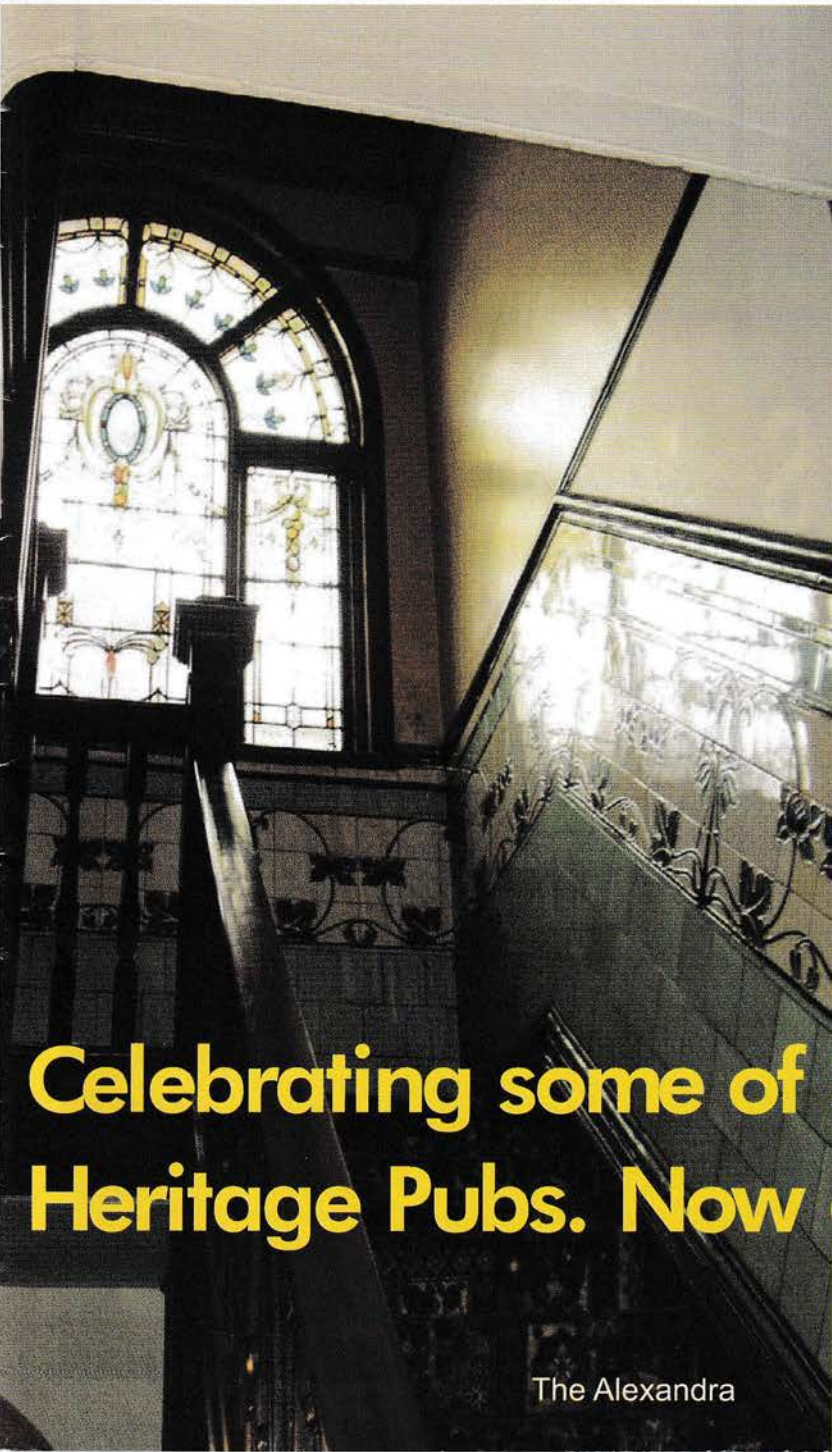


Times

The free local CAMRA magazine

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

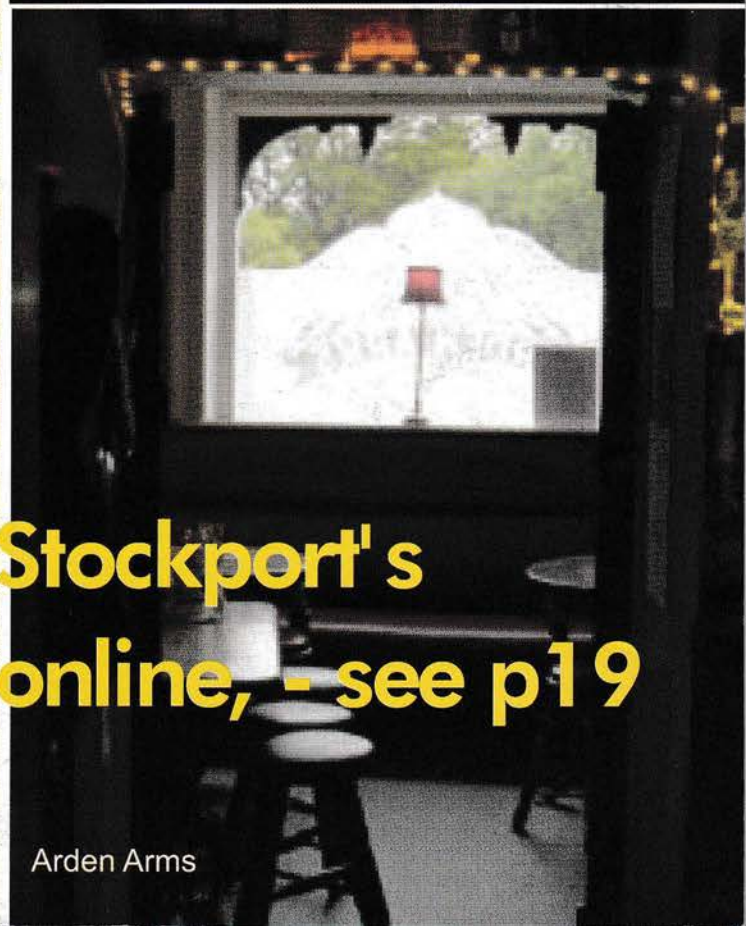
Sun and Castle



The Alexandra



Crown, Heaton Lane



Arden Arms

Celebrating some of Stockport's Heritage Pubs. Now online, - see p19

Tracy Mullen, loved and greatly missed.
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The Crown Inn, Heaton Lane

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Pub of the Month

The Crown, Heaton Lane



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for July 2014 has been awarded to the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport. Dave Platt reports.

When the Crown receives its Pub of the Month Award on Thursday 24th July it will be a bitter sweet occasion. While CAMRA will rightly be celebrating the pub's continuing success, one significant person will be missing. Tracy Mullen, the pub's landlady and partner of licensee Steve Alexander, who sadly passed away last month. Tracy was proud to run the pub and she will be sadly missed by everyone. We will be raising a glass to her memory on the night.

The Crown, meanwhile, carries on as a thriving and bustling cask ale flagship. It is already a multiple award winner having one local and regional Pub of the Year titles. It was also a National Pub of the Year runner-up – no mean feat.

It would be easy to rest on your laurels with a track record like that. The Crown however goes from strength to strength. There are now up to 16 ever changing cask beers (with always a stout/porter and a mild available) alongside up to three real ciders. The pub is also a regular outlet for beers from the new Stockport Brewing Co, based just across the road. Quality is top notch and the pub is a Good Beer Guide regular.

The pub itself, while having undergone some alterations over the years, still retains much of its Victorian layout and fittings with four rooms radiating off a central drinking lobby. There's a Thursday quiz, live entertainment (local bands are showcased on Saturday nights), an excellent beer garden, folk nights on Tuesday and Sunday – and on Saturday afternoons a ukulele band performs. At lunchtimes pub grub is available and at other times rather fine pork pies and sausage rolls can be had.

In short the Crown ticks almost every box you can think of. It's one of the cask ale flagships that have put Stockport on the national beer enthusiasts' map. Join us as we mark this success on 24th June- the pub is easy to reach being just a few minutes' walk from Stockport rail and bus stations.

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The Pub of the Month award is sponsored by Stephenson's, a local family firm that has been supplying the local pub and catering trade for over 140 years. Check out their advert on this page

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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. 7,350 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth.

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Trading Standards

For complaints about short measure pints etc contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service. This works with all the Trading Standards services in the North West and is supported by the Office of Fair Trading. You can email the Consumer Service at the following address:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice/consumer_service.htm

Their telephone no. is 0845 404 05 06. To report a matter to Trading Standards go to:

www.adviceguide.org.uk/consumer_e/reporting_a_problem_to_trading_standards

Subscriptions

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

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* Transport for Greater Manchester: www.tfgm.com. 0161 228 7811

* East Cheshire: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel.aspx. 0845 140 2666

* Derbyshire: <http://www.derbyshirebus.info/>

Disclaimer

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.

Copy Date for the August issue is Friday 11 July

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Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Front Cover – A selection of some of Stockport's Heritage Pubs. (Photos by Alan Gent and John Clarke)

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www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

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Trafford & Hulme (T&H) www.thcamra.org.uk

Contact: John O'Donnell 07879 880972 or enquiries@thcamra.org.uk

Local CAMRA Events

Wednesday 9th – Irlams o'th Height Survey: Henry Boddington, Bolton Road 7.30pm, then Waggon & Horses 8.15; Wellington and Red Lion. (NM)

Thursday 10th – Branch Meeting & Presentation Night: "New Faces" event plus Mild Magic and Beer of the Festival Silver Award to the pub and brewery. Hope Inn, Wellington Road, North, Stockport. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

Thursday 10th – Branch Meeting: Ape & Apple, John Dalton St, Manchester. Starts 8.15pm. (T&H)

Saturday 12th – Trip to Merlin Brewery & Sandbach. Contact John Barber, jfbarber@aol.com, for details. (MEC)

Monday 14th – Branch Meeting: Duke of York, Romiley. Starts 8.30pm (HPNC)

Wednesday 16th – Branch Meeting: Kings Arms, Bloom St, Salford. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 17th – Pub of the Season Award to Old Market Tavern, Altrincham. From 8.30pm. (T&H)

Friday 18th – Didsbury Stagger: 7.30pm Station; 8.30 Dog & Partridge, both on Wilmslow Road. (SSM)

Friday 19th – Regional bus trip to Hawkshead Brewery Beer Festival. Coach departs Chorlton St 9.00am. Cost £12 (£5 deposit required). Details from Andrew Rodbourne – yogibarney@hotmail.com.

Tuesday 22nd – Campaigning Meeting: Old Red Lion, Holmes Chapel. Starts 8.00pm. (MEC)

Wednesday 23rd – Worsley Social: Cock, Worsley Road 7.30pm; Ellesmere Sports Club and then Worsley Old Hall. (NM)

Thursday 24th – Pub of the Month Award to the Crown, Heaton Lane. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Thursday 24th – Sale Moor Social: 7.30 Jackson's Boat; 8.30 Carters Arms; 9.15 Leigh Arms; 10.00 Temple. (T&H)

Saturday 26th – Regional Cricket Match & Fun Day at Broughton Cricket Club. Beers & BBQ. All welcome – bring the family. Playing not compulsory. From 1.00pm

Wednesday 30th – Presentation to Keith Sheard (Holt's retiring head brewer): Derby Brewery Arms, Cheetham Hill Rd. From 7.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 31st – Possible Brewery Trip. See website for details. (SSM)

Friday 1st August – Tutored Bottled Beer Tasting: Booth's Supermarket, Salford Quays. Starts 7.30pm. Full details on branch website. (NM)

Saturday 2nd – Grand Cheshire Day Out – Cheshire Pub Tour plus drinks & BBQ at Dunham Massy Brewery. Full details on branch website. (T&H)



Curmudgeon

Joule in the Crown

I'm sometimes accused of purveying a relentless diet of doom and gloom – which was in a sense the point of this column in the first place. However, one positive development of the past few years has been the growth of Joule's brewery and its associated pub estate. The name is from a well-known brewery in Stone, Staffordshire, which was taken over by Bass and closed in the early 1970s. Their original premises were in Stone, but they have now developed a purpose-built brewery just across the Shropshire border in Market Drayton.

Rather than going down the route of developing nationwide distribution, they have followed the more old-fashioned course of building up a tied estate within about thirty miles of the brewery, and only selling to the free trade within that area. They have concentrated on producing a standard range of high-quality, but fairly mainstream and accessible beers, and have eschewed ever-changing weird and wonderful specials. Their flagship beer, Joule's Pale Ale, is a classic balanced Burton-style brew in the mould of the original Draught Bass and Pedigree, which to my palate is one of the best everyday beers produced by new breweries in recent years.

None of their pubs are closer than about thirty miles from me, so I can't say I'm a regular visitor, but whenever I've come across them I've been impressed. While most of them offer food, they very much remain proper pubs rather than identikit family dining outlets, and the ones I have visited have been carefully and expensively restored and have interiors of considerable character. They're not cheap in Sam Smith's or Wetherspoon's terms, so aren't targeted at the down market value drinker. Possibly the one people from the Manchester area are most likely to have encountered is the Cross Keys in Chester close to the Old Dee Bridge.

However, it's difficult to avoid the impression that the development of the Joule's tied estate is to some extent a labour of love depending on some deep pockets. If it was an obvious commercial winner, then others would be doing the same, but in general they don't appear to be. Having said that, if someone's doing something right we might as well both celebrate it and enjoy it.

A Fit of the Vapers

On a recent visit to my local, I was confronted by an officious notice stating that the use of electronic cigarettes was not allowed anywhere inside the pub. The reason usually given for this policy is that it may be difficult for bar staff to distinguish between electronic and "real" cigarette use and thus lead to customers flouting the smoking ban. However, the smell of tobacco tends to be a dead giveaway, and surely it is something that pubs can manage rather than taking the easy way out of a blanket ban. The fact that something looks vaguely like something else is not a good reason for prohibiting it and, if some customers find the sight of e-cig vapour unnerving, then pubs always have the option to restrict them to a designated area.

At a time when so many pubs are struggling, it can't make sense to turn away customers wanting to pursue an entirely legal activity. Also, given that e-cigs have been widely adopted as a way of helping people to quit tobacco, pubs could be accused of standing in the way of efforts to reduce the prevalence of smoking in society. If you force users outside with the smokers they might reach the conclusion that they might as well go back to tobacco. And if pubs that have banned e-cigs close due to lack of trade they're likely to be seen as having helped bring it on themselves.

Curmudgeon Online: curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

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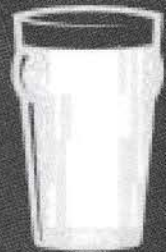
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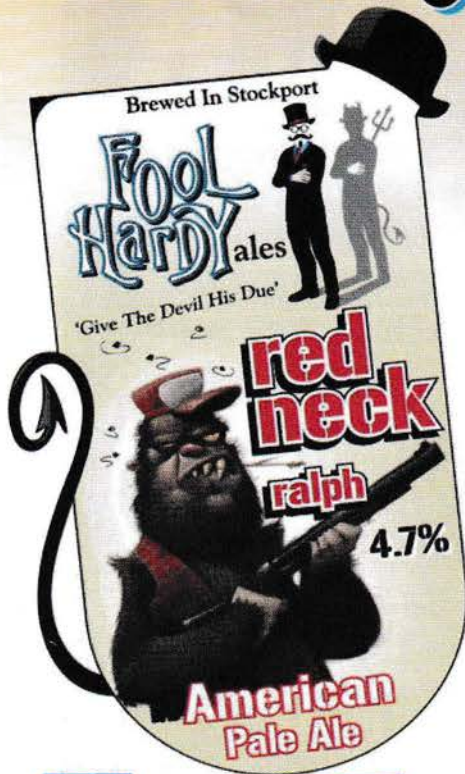


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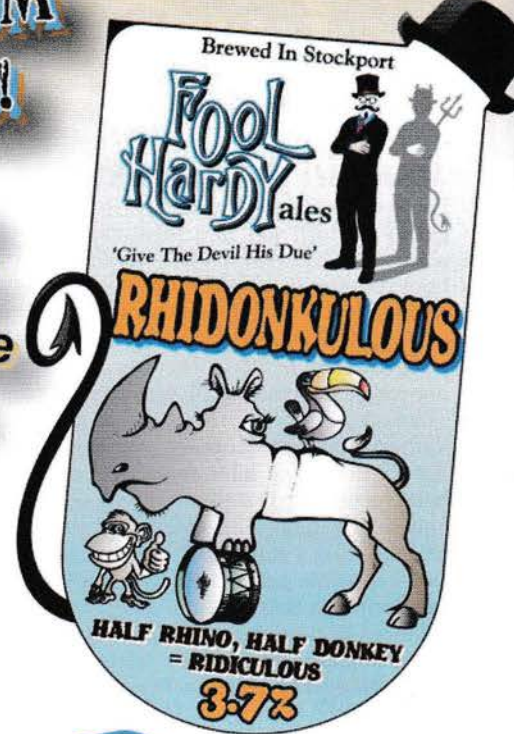
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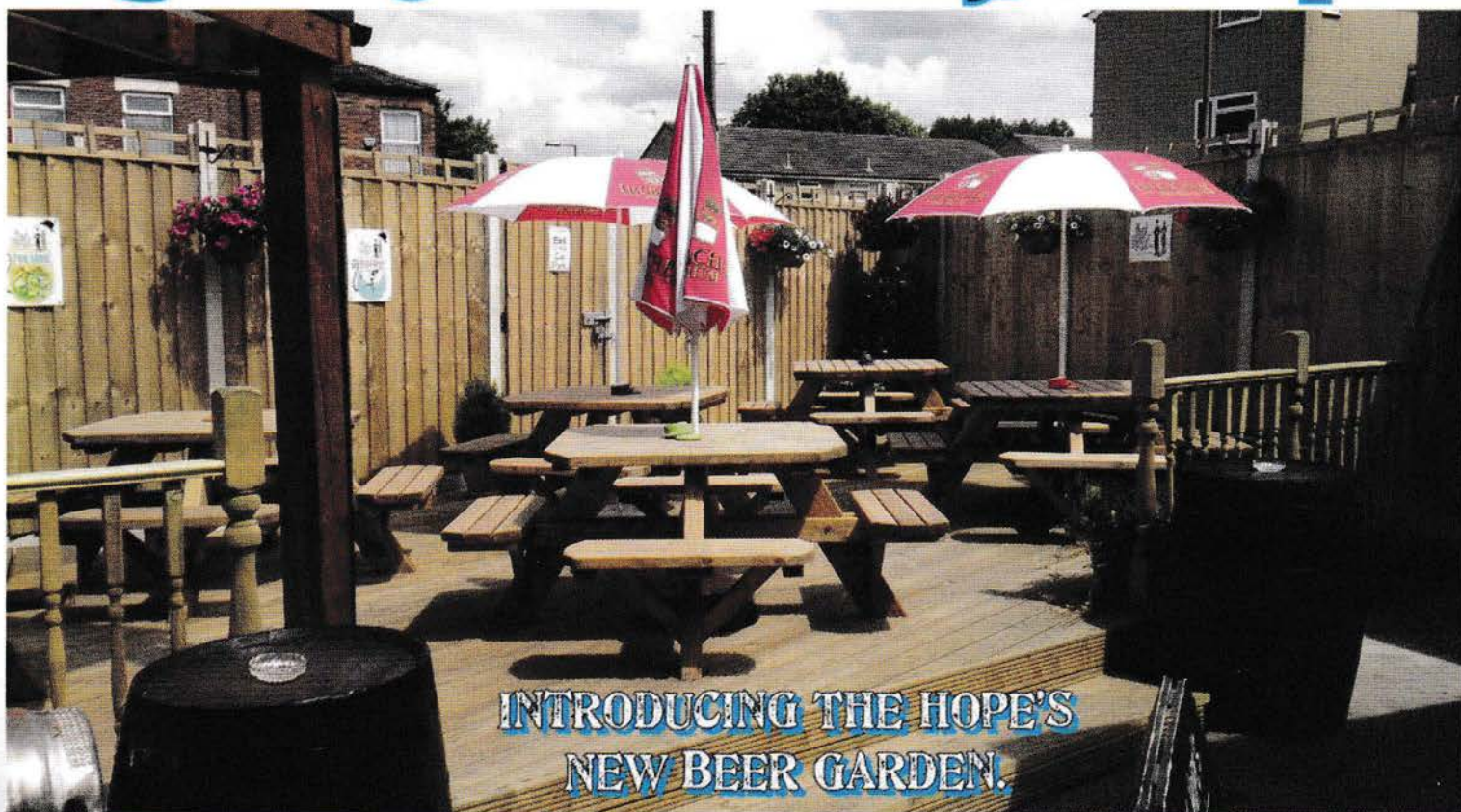
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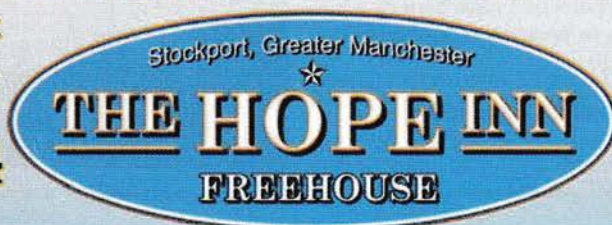


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Stagger

Mark McConachie on Shaw Heath & King Street West



We began our March Stagger at the imposing, three-storey early-Victorian structure that is Robinsons **Florist**.



Despite changes over the years, we had a choice of five distinct drinking areas around the bar itself. Under temporary management by a team from the Blossoms, it has recently been decorated in a modern, restrained style. Images of the town Stockport County memorabilia decorate the walls. All this has given the place definite character and appeal. Pubs however are more than bricks and mortar, they are really made by the customers, and at the Florist the people on both sides of the bar are some of the friendliest you could meet. It was a little quiet when we arrived, although that said, it was early on. The two beers on were Robinsons 1892, and Unicorn; we were told normally that Dizzy Blonde, and Trooper would be on too, but not tonight. The Unicorn scored marginally better than the 1892.



Next on the list was Robinsons **Armoury**, just a short walk along the road. This Victorian pub was refitted in the 1920s and has remained largely intact since then, with a host of original fittings and evidence of ownership by the old Bell's Brewery still evident in the interior glasswork. There really is a room for everyone in this pub - there is a bright, brassy lounge, drinking lobby, complete with its own bar counter, a darts room (the Hatters Room) at the back and an excellent traditional vault, arguably one of the best in town. The lounge walls feature memorabilia of the Cheshire Regiment. Outside at the back is a good, secluded beer garden, which can be quite a suntrap in the summer months. The Armoury has a more

mature clientele, with a strong community involvement, and friendly and knowledgeable staff. It was very busy tonight with what appeared to be a regimental celebration, but speedy service was not hindered by this. We found seats in the Hatters Room; the scatter cushions here are a neat and most welcome touch. Beers tonight were: Robinsons 1892, Dizzy Blonde, Unicorn, Trooper, and seasonal beer, Hoptimum (which turned out to have sold out). All beers scored comfortably good marks.



Walk to the very top of King Street West, and on your left is the **Olde Vic**. Now, to the casual observer this may appear to be a shut pub (although it is now being repainted - Ed), but do try the front door. This was the first Stockport pub to offer a changing range of guest beers and still flying the flag (or two in the Vic's case) for choice and quality. We were welcomed by larger than life licensee Steve Brannan who likes to run a tight-ship here.; no-swearing rules are strictly enforced. A blazing real fire provides a welcome focus in winter months and on this squally, wet night was most welcome. A secluded and well covered drinking area at the back is well used in the summer. Six handpumps dispense an ever-changing range of guest beers, mostly focusing upon local micro-breweries. The interior of the pub is full of character and stuffed with idiosyncratic artefacts. If you haven't been, then pay a visit if only for the excellent choice and quality of the beer. All together this is a fine must-visit pub! Beers tonight were Dark Star Partridge Bitter; Hop Studio XP; Burton Bridge GD; Blue Monkey BG Sips; plus a beer from Ardwick micro, Privateer. All beers scored comfortably good marks.

Down King St West and opposite the town's bus garage is the **Comfortable Gill**. A tidy pub with an olde-worlde look to it as the decor is rustic in the two front rooms, and a further Games room lies beyond. The bar confronts you upon pushing your way through the saloon doors. It once sold Copper Dragon beers, however it has sadly been no real ale for some years, and a mere three customers were in when we called...

Keep heading north, cross the River Mersey and bear right under the famous railway viaduct to find Robinson's **Pineapple**. This



is a pub that feels like it should really be on a homely street well away from the hustle and bustle of life rather than only yards from the A6 in the centre of Stockport. Inside this friendly and cosy pub the two rooms to the front have been opened out somewhat but are still clearly separate and on the walls are numerous plates many of which the customers have brought back from their foreign travels for the very longstanding licensee. To the rear is a more basic games room resplendent with an array of trophies, from which leads the entrance to the smoking area. A warm, friendly welcome was accompanied by good beers in the form of Robinson's 1892, Unicorn, and Hartley's Cumbria Way.

Retracing our steps back under the viaduct we came to our endpoint, the **Crown Inn**. A runner-up nationally in CAMRA's Pub of the Year for 2009 and still doing a wealth of different beers, so no wonder the Crown is a busy pub, especially in the evenings. A choice of around 16 ever-changing beers is usually to be had, making it probably the town's foremost cask ale outlet; beers from Pictish and Copper Dragon are normally available. Four rooms radiate from the busy bar: two compact snugs, a large lounge with feature overmantle, and lastly a plushly decorated room. The atmosphere is one of friendly professionalism aided by knowledgeable staff. Real cider is often sourced by Merrylegs. I found there were just too many beers to note down all of the names of them, yet all that were sampled were to score a good mark once again.

All in all, a cracking stagger which included no fewer than FOUR Good Beer Guide 2014 pubs (I will let you fathom out which they are).



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Trafford & Hulme Pub of the Season

The Old Market Tavern, Altrincham

Trafford & Hulme CAMRA's Pub of the season for summer 2014 is The Old Market Tavern in Altrincham - better known as 'OMT' to most people, writes John Ison.

John Glover with his wife Linda and family 'took over the reins' in March 2005 and quickly set about making the pub what we see today. However when they first entered the building it was in a mess. It had been closed for a period of time and certain 'undesirables' had broken in - the pub had been vandalised and many items had 'gone missing'. Over the intervening years the OMT has been transformed into a thoroughly enjoyable place to drink some fantastic beers. 2008 was the year that saw the OMT re-enter CAMRA's Good Beer Guide and has been in every edition since. The same year saw it voted as Trafford & Hulme's CAMRA's Pub of the Year.

Although the OMT is owned by Punch Taverns, John has an excellent agreement with them which allows him to choose which beers he wants. Six beers are permanent - Caledonian Deuchars IPA, George Wright's Drunken Duck & Northern Lights, Taylor's Landlord, Phoenix Arizona and Facers DHB, with a futher five handpumps reserved for guest beers from far and wide. Due to John's previous employment in the brewing industry in Warrington, he is meticulous with his beers and will not hesitate in refusing to accept beers which he feels are not up to standard - no matter what the brewery is! The OMT is open from 12 noon until late every day and if you visit on a Monday to Friday lunchtime you will find an excellently priced menu serving home-cooked food prepared by Linda.



Whether you want 'a quiet pint' or a few beers with friends you will be made to feel most welcome. However on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings the OMT comes alive with the sound of 'live' Heavy Rock music which is renowned for miles around. Quiz nights are held on Wednesday evenings with acoustic sessions on Thursdays (this will take place after the presentation). A function room is available which is where Trafford & Hulme regularly hold their CAMRA branch meetings. All this in a safe environment made possible by John, Linda and family, friends and staff. The OMT is only five minutes walk from Altrincham Interchange where Metrolink trams (services from Manchester & Bury), buses (from all local areas including Lymm and Warrington) and trains (hourly services from Stockport, Knutsford, Northwich and Chester) are all available. The presentation will take place on Thursday 17th July, 2014 at 8:30 pm (fifteen minutes before the acoustic session starts), so come along for a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

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When taking your photo and choosing your location be creative, be adventurous, be humorous - but most importantly, be the Beer Master!

To enter the competition

Download, print off, and cut out a Beer Master flyer by visiting: gbbf.org.uk/competitions (or pick one up from selected UK pubs) Take a photo of you holding the moustache flyer to your face Email your photo to beermaster@gbbf.org.uk

That's it!

All entries will be displayed at gbbf.org.uk/competitions

Deadline for entries is Saturday 16th August 2014

A Tour of Dukinfield

Andy Sullivan continues his trip round Tameside



Dukinfield is a Tameside town which has a rather indistinct character. I mean no disrespect, but it has always seemed to me to not really have a clearly defined identity or position. Nor does it appear that there is, on the face of it, any reason to go there and this goes for the real ale fan too. However I think it my duty to put the record straight if I can. There are a number of real ale outlets in the area and whilst there may not be that much choice in any one pub, the quality isn't too bad for a place that has not one single entry in the Good Beer Guide or indeed a hostelry with Cask Marque accreditation.



Dukinfield, like so many places, has had its share of pub casualties. It is now a largely residential area with some small, medium and consequently very important local businesses. The days of masses of workers at mills and pits, all living locally and needing refreshment, are long gone. The result is that the pubs are either isolated a little or come in groups. It is this that has given me such a problem in researching the place.

Now then there are nine, yes that may surprise you, nine real ale pubs in Dukinfield that I know of. I'd be delighted if anyone can tell me about a local that I have missed mentioning here. These are, in no particular order, the **Chapel House** on Astley Street (pictured above), the **Angel Inn** on King St, the **Victoria** on Victoria Road, the **Old General** on Crescent Road, the "Top" **Astley Arms** on Chapel Hill, the **Tame Valley** on Park Road, and the **Wheatsheaf**, **Albion** and **New Inn** all on or accessible from Birch Lane.



With the notable exceptions of the **Wheatsheaf** and the **Angel**, all are normally single ale houses and none the worse for that. The **Old General** was very nearly missed off as it hasn't had cask on for some time, but just recently started with **Hobgoblin**. This is a start in this popular and rather spacious street corner pub with a central bar. I think the licensees need congratulations and

support for the initiative. Service was good but could have been a bit more helpful. People here, as everywhere, choose what they know and sometimes need help in exploring something different. Otherwise what a smashing family local this is, providing a clear alternative to the "Top" **Astley Arms** a little distance away. Both are on the 346 bus route.



The **Astley Arms** is a Robinson's house in a brilliant and commanding location opposite one of my favourite war memorials. A rather more sophisticated establishment than the **General**, it's a large pub with a corner bar and a drinking area with tables and comfy settees. A pool table is tucked away in the back. The blue plaque at the front commemorates Andrew Moynihan's VC earned during the Crimean War at Sebastopol. Unicorn, the usual Robinson's offering in single beer pubs, is generally very good indeed.



At the other end of Chapel Street, the **Angel Inn** on King Street has been serving four ales at sensible prices for some time. With two rooms, both clean and bright, this pub was closed for some time and has had a serious refurbishment. I found it a bit sterile in atmosphere compared to the **General** and the **Astley**, but variety is the spice of life and it is clearly popular, very well run and admittedly the times I have chosen to go in may not have been properly representative. One real positive is the quality of the staff here; really sharp. This is a good match for the **General** and the **Astley** as they cover similar customer bases whilst remaining very different. All three also have a food offering.

A pie offering can be found at the **Chapel House** on Astley Street heading towards

Audenshaw. I have a real soft spot for this little pub. Set back a bit from the road it really looks the part and sells a stonkingly good pint of **Holt's Bitter**. A small vault is on the right and somehow accommodates a pool table, (and presumably players). A larger lounge is on the left; with the many plates, brasses and mirrors it seems cluttered by today's standards. Predominantly red and with a tiny bar area so crammed it must difficult to manage on busy days, I would imagine



While I have never yet heard of a "Chippy Night", this was scheduled to take place on the 9th May at the **Tame Valley** on Park Road. I have left this pub until last in this piece because what a gem it is. Isolated now among crumbling mills, some of which are being demolished, and slightly disturbingly, at the bottom of the hill where **Dukinfield Crematorium** stands! With a central bar and opened out interior it is welcoming and talkative. **Thwaites Original** is on the bar with a landlord seemingly determined to make this beer more special than it usually is! You really have to want to come here as there is no bus service to the outside world, and is quite a step away from anywhere else, but trust me you are in for a treat if you do. It is also the only pub left in the area where once there were several others. There's not much in the way of residential property either, so it will have to work hard to keep going. Lovely beer garden too.

So there's a little taster of Dukinfield. Real ale fans can sometimes be a bit sniffy when there is just one beer on offer and that is from a regional or one of the "usual suspects", but without pubs there wouldn't be any real ale at all, so use your local and give the regionals a break, they are not always deserving of our scorn.

Before signing off I note the **Hare and Hounds**, **Werneth Low** is indeed dog friendly and seems there is a much greater emphasis on real ale than previously. I am pleased to put the record straight on this. Also the **Broomhouse Inn** in **Denton** is now an American styled grill. Depressing though this is, it seems popular and it is far better as this than a conversion to flats. In time it could be a pub again.

Beer Festival Round-up



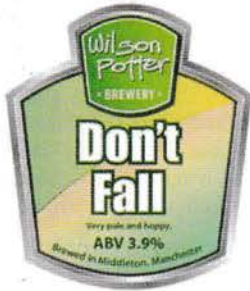
Despite a small drop in attendance, this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival was a big hit with local drinkers; about 4,500 of them passing through the doors over the three day event. *writes Jim Flynn.* Between them they drank in the region of 15,500 pints of beer and 3,800 pints of cider and perry. The bottled beer stock almost sold out, too. So all in all we are pretty happy with how it went.

One of the big hits was Bar Nouveau featuring 12 brand new beers. After some technical hiccups on Thursday night demand for these beers was high and this bar sold out on the Saturday night. Bar Nouveau will be back next year with another dozen debut beers. Other highlights included beers from the new Stockport Brewing Co. and the return of a legend – Dobbin's Yakima Grande Pale Ale - brewed at Conwy Brewery.

This year we signed up 67 new members of CAMRA. Included in that number was the 1,400th member of Stockport & South Manchester Branch, Siobhan Gibbons from Heaton Mersey (pictured right). Sean was presented with a small hamper of beer to mark the occasion. Welcome to CAMRA!



One of the highlights of the Festival was the voting for the beer, cider and perry of the festival. Voting for Beer of the Festival marked a break from the past – all this year's winners were blond beers while in the past dark beers have often featured strongly. All the winners were local, too.



The winning Beer of the Festival was Don't Fall from the Wilson Potter Brewery in Middleton. This is a superb pale and (very) hoppy session beer at 3.9%. The runner-up was very close to home – Risky Blond from Stockport's Fool Hardy Ales based at the Hope Inn on Wellington Road North. This is the first award for brewer Martin Wood and he is suitably pleased. Bronze went to Ticketybrew of Stalybridge for their Blonde. This is a blond beer with a twist as it is brewed using Belgian yeast

giving a distinctive and delicious taste.

The cider and perry voting was the usual tight race with many excellent ciders and perries to choose from. This year the Cider Bar was also one of the first to use a new system to cool the cider down to cellar temperature which seems to have been a success. Perry of the Festival went to one of the UK's best perry makers, Tom Oliver. Why he's not won here before we don't know but at last justice has been done.

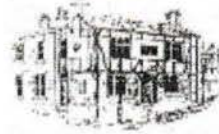
While Tom Oliver is based in Herefordshire, the winning cider maker comes from near Wrexham – not part of the world usually associated with cider making. Rosie's Cider is made by Steve and Nicola Hughes who win with their Black Bart Cider. Lastly an award was made to the "Best Newcomer" and here the winner was SiDa's Maxonian Mist from the new Macclesfield based makers.



Congratulations to all our very worthy winners! Presentations will be made to all three in due course with Fool Hardy due to get their award on 10th July. Look for news of the other awards in **Opening Times** or the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA website.

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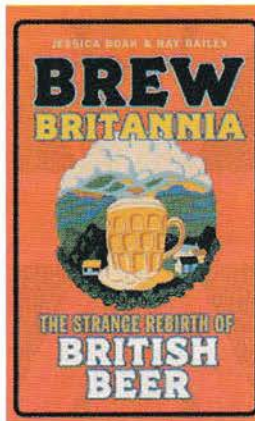
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Book Review

"Brew Britannia" by Jessica Boak & Ray Bailey

In the early 1970s, the British beer market was increasingly becoming dominated by a number of bland, dumbed-down beers mass-produced by a handful of giant corporations. Fast forward to the present day, and we have an unprecedented level of interest in and enthusiasm for beer, more breweries and beers than at any time since before the First World War, and more variety of beer styles than there has probably ever been. In their new book *Brew Britannia: The Strange Rebirth of British Beer* (Aurum Press, £12.99) Jessica Boak and Ray Bailey tell the story of exactly how this transformation came about.



They have been writing their blog since 2007. Some of their best pieces have been examinations of various historical trends in the beer world and that approach adapts very well to the longer book format. The end result is a very lucid and readable volume that treats the subject with due seriousness but never allows itself to get bogged down in turgid detail.

Starting with the amateurish efforts of the Society for the Preservation of Beer from the Wood in the 1960s, it looks at the foundation and dramatic expansion of CAMRA, the setting-up of the first microbreweries and the pioneering work of Michael Jackson. The story then runs through the politics behind the Beer Orders, which revolutionised the British beer and pub industry, the introduction of "golden ales", the widespread adoption of American hops and beer styles, the contemporary "craft beer" movement and the growth of trendy beer-focused bars. It concludes by asking whether the tide of constant innovation has currently reached a high-point.

The authors are members of CAMRA, and generally sympathetic towards it, but they don't flinch from recording events such as the conflict over the creation of CAMRA's own ill-fated pub chain in the late 1970s. They also give due prominence to stories such as the creation of the Firkin brewpub chain, with which CAMRA had a love-hate relationship, and the deliberately CAMRA-baiting rise of BrewDog in recent years. However, they rightly point out that, while much contemporary beer innovation has broken loose from the moorings of CAMRA, without the organisation's ground-breaking campaigning, a lot of it might never have been possible.

One of the great strengths of the book is the way that, rather than just relying on secondary sources, the authors have carried out interviews with many of the individuals involved in the story. These include CAMRA founder Michael Hardman, its early chairman Christopher Hutt, David Bruce of Firkin fame and the mercurial Brendan Dobbin. This underlines the point that the beer revolution has very much been driven by a number of maverick personalities ploughing their own furrow rather than being an inevitable historical trend.

The aim of the book is to provide a history of the growth of beer enthusiasm and alternative beer in Britain, and so it would be unfair to criticise it for not being something it never sets out to be in the first place. However, the last few chapters do come across as a slightly breathless and narrowly-focused run through a variety of current trends and innovations. Taking a step back, there is a glaring paradox that, while we are more interested in beer than ever before, and producing a greater variety, we are in fact overall drinking less of it than at any time in that forty-year period. It's entirely possible, of course, that one is the mirror-image of the other, that beer becomes more appreciated the less it is part of everyday life.

Despite this slight caveat it is an excellent and enjoyable book which really is essential reading for anyone wanting to understand the development of the specialist beer market in Britain over the past forty years.

Peter Edwardson

Horse & Jockey

the inn on the green

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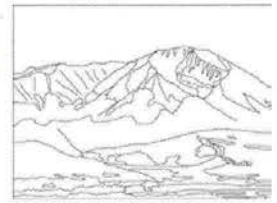
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High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views



Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

Summer in the Peak District brings carnivals, rose queens, well dressings and other such events. Village competitions involve the local community and encourage visitors to come and see. Best Decorated Public House is usually a category in these summer competitions. Hayfield is one of the early starters with a May Queen and other attractions. Here the sometime Good Beer Guide-listed **Royal** (below) which is also host to the Hayfield Beer Festival in October, was adjudged to be the best decorated pub. The **Kinder Lodge**, which is also worth a call, was runner-up. These summer events make a trip out into the Peak District well worthwhile.



Hopefully you may read this in time to get along to the Buxworth Olympics on 12 July. Sports and games for children take place on the village playing field and the event HQ is in **Buxworth War Memorial Club**. Here there will be live music from the Storm Band and three cask ales to create adult interest. Wincle Sir Phillip was recently available at the club and real ales are mainly sourced from local microbreweries. An enjoyable afternoon should be had by all.

Of course, whilst in Buxworth a call in the **Navigation** will find five or six beers, often from across the Pennines or from further south in Derbyshire. With local beers as well, a visit will be rewarded.

Late Spring Bank Holiday saw a number of pub beer festivals in the Peak District. I managed to call in at a couple of events, the **Drum & Monkey** in Whaley Bridge and the **Beehive** in New Mills. At the Drum & Monkey four hand pumps were increased to six and other beers were served on gravity: they were stillaged in the cellar, which naturally has a good temperature for real ale. Local breweries represented included Whaley Bridge Brewery, (two beers which quickly sold out); Happy Valley, including 8.9% Big Smiler, and Storm. There were transpennine offerings from Abbeydale and Bradfield alongside Marble and Moorhouses beers. 4Ts, (Runcorn), and Front Row, (Congleton), were new breweries to me. All the beers tried were in good form. Look out for the next Drum &

Monkey festival, though of course the pub is worth a visit at any time.

The **Beehive** is just down the hill from Newtown Station. The newish licensee is keen to promote real ale, hence the inaugural beer festival. About 30 beers were available, with most of them stillaged in the back room and served on gravity. There was a long list of beers from Red Squirrel in Hertfordshire. Established concerns such as Ossett and Oakham were represented, and there were beers from distant breweries such as Mighty Oak, Essex and Padstow Brewery in Cornwall. Again all the beers tried were in good form, though I highlighted Padstow Pale Ale and Red Squirrel Jack Black, Black IPA. By Sunday afternoon the festival was thought to be a success, with a second festival anticipated.

Many of our local pubs do source beers from local breweries. In early June Wincle beers were to be found in the Drum & Monkey, the **White Horse** at Horwich End, Whaley Bridge and Buxworth Club. The Wincle beers are their own recommendation.



At the **Goyt** (Whaley Bridge) Weetwood Cheshire Cat regularly makes for good drinking alongside other beers from these days more interesting Punch list. The **Soldier Dick** in Furness Vale uses local breweries like Whaley Bridge directly, whilst interesting beers arrive on the HB Clark dray.

In the last few weeks Marston's have held their limited beer festival, allowing licensees a more interesting list of beers to sell. Choices included beers from Upham, Purity, Springhead and Titanic as well as York, Thwaites and Fullers. Local pubs using this extended list include the **Royal Oak** at High Lane and the **Shepherds** in Whaley Bridge.

Finally an impending change at the **Shady Oak** at Fernilee, as Sue and Craig are moving on after over five years in this Marston's pub. In that time they have built up a good reputation for quality food at sensible prices. Neither has beer been neglected as there are usually three well-kept beers available from breweries in the Marston's empire. In early June New World Pale was on very good form. The departure in mid-July obviously leaves concerns about the future of the Shady Oak, but hopefully Marston's will act to ensure continuity for this good pub on the Long Hill road from Whaley Bridge to Buxton. To Craig and Sue, thanks for a job well done and best wishes for the future. Perhaps it might be possible to write about them again in the

future, elsewhere in the Peak District pub scene.

High Peak Pub News

With Tom Lord

The keg beer only pub the **Roaring Winds** on Beacon Road, Bredbury Green has been demolished to make way for affordable housing.



There's better news in Romiley where the **Stock Dove** (pictured above) has been taken into the charge of the licensees of the nearby Platform One by Romiley station, who in fact ran the pub until a couple of years ago.

The plan is to restore the Stock Dove's reputation as this does seem to have become a little tarnished in recent years. After a short period of closure, during which the pub had a deep clean and a redecoration, it reopened for business on Wednesday 18 June. While Platform 1 features beers from local craft breweries, those at the Stock Dove will be a little more mainstream with Taylor's Landlord and Well's Bombardier available on opening night.

Sadly it now looks as if another local pub bowling green is going to rack and ruin. That behind the now closed **George** in Compstall is rapidly returning to the wild. A sad loss as I have played on the green and drunk in the pub many times.

Over in Ashton the **March Hare**, adjacent to Curzon Ashton football club, has now closed, but on a good note the **Feathers** in Ashton has reopened, but it is unsure yet whether it will sell real ale.

In Droylsden the **Royal Oak** on Manchester Road is up for let and the **Beehive** now features Boggart beers as part of its range.

In Hyde the **Shepherds Call**, a long standing survivor of the once many pubs on Market Street, now has Moorhouses Bitter. The **Town House** on Mottram Road (formerly the Moulders Arms and more recently Flanagan's) returned to the real ale fold with Tetley's bitter.

News from Glossop is that another pub now has real ale on offer. The **Last Orders** on Victoria Street now has Thwaites beers.

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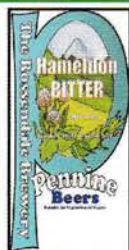
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Meet our beers - Beer Tasting Notes



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Hameldon Bitter
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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%

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Heard at the Bar

Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond



Stockport News



As this issue of Opening Times went to press work was well progressing at the **Bakers Vaults** in Stockport Market Place. The planned reopening date is 11 July and we understand that it has been taken on by the team behind the **Castle** on Oldham Street in Manchester City Centre.

The interior has certainly had a major makeover and will look substantially different when the doors finally open. Word is that live music will feature which should help to bring more trade to the area. More next time.

Hopefully this will see that start of an increase in the fortunes of the Market Place area. Work is also underway at the former Yates's which is to be turned into a sports bar and of course the revitalised **Cocked Hat** goes from strength to strength. The "Happy Hour" here now runs from 11.00am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday when all cask beers are £2.30 a pint, increasing to £2.60 thereafter.

Another pub which just goes from strength to



strength is the **Fairway** on Hillgate. The number of handpumps has been increased to 10 with one reserved for mild or stout, two for cider and perry and the remaining seven dispensing a changing range of guest beers. At the same time opening hours have increased with the pub now open from 1.00pm on Saturday. Food hours have been extended as well and you can now get fed every lunchtime (bar Mondays when the pub is closed) from 12 noon until 2.0pm (7.00pm Saturdays, 6.00pm Sundays) and between 5.00pm and 8.00pm on Thursday and Friday.

One of the few pubs in central Stockport to offer no cask beer has been the **Chestergate Tavern** in Mersey Square. An unusual state of affairs given the pub's prominent position

but possibly explained by the fact that it has been "to let" with a "planned refurbishment" for what seems like forever. However the current management couple is the very experienced Bob and Evelyn Perkins who have finally persuaded Star Inns & Bars (the pub's owners) to install a handpump and supply cask beer. When Opening Times called Caledonian XPA was on sale and Bob told us it was selling well. The perhaps unusual choice of beer is explained by the fact that Star Pubs & Bars is the pub owning arm of Heineken UK which also owns Edinburgh's Caledonian Brewery. This is a welcome change for the better and deserves support. Hopefully this will signal an upturn in the fortunes of the Chestergate which seems almost to define unrealised potential.



Landlord Mark Munro's work to restore the historic **Alexandra** in Edgeley continues. The latest project has been to restore the tiled floor in the lobby and corridor which has involved a great deal of elbow work to remove a large amount of black glue! The work is now complete and once a couple of cracks have been sorted out the floor will be revealed in its full glory.

Trafford Update

The **Stretford Sip Club** hidden away above Trading Places on Barton Road in Stretford is going from strength to strength as locals slowly discover this new gem in their midst. The bar now has its own events room which it launched with a sold out whiskey tasting evening. More tasting evenings are planned for the future. By the time you read this, the bar will be opening on lunchtimes (11 - 3pm) serving coffee and cakes alongside its full range of beers and wines. Initially lunchtime opening may be variable - call ahead if planning a visit. The bar is open 5pm - 11pm Tuesday to Sunday. Two cask ales are now regularly available at all times with the emphasis very much on local breweries - when Opening Times called in mid June Ringway Brewery's Reddish Ruby was on the bar alongside Wilson Potter's Bon Don Doon. They also have bottles of cider from Manchester's very own Moss Cider Project.

Unfortunately, the **Church Inn** on Higher Cambridge Street in Hulme had a kitchen fire in early June. Luckily the pub was open at the

time so the fire was put out before anyone was in danger. Damage is mostly limited to the kitchen which has been closed and is expected to reopen in mid to late July (subject to JW Lees sorting it out). Since they can't serve food they're not opening Sundays at the moment.

Yet More Chorlton Moves

There was surprise news in Chorlton at the end of May when Barlow Moor Road's **The Jackalope** suddenly announced that it would be closing its doors at the start of June. The bar had become a firm favourite on the Chorlton beer scene with an ever changing range of well kept beers.



However, all was not lost when it became apparent that the reason for the sudden closure is that the bar had been sold and less than a week after the closure, **Strange Brew** was launched in the same space.

At the helm of Strange Brew is David Williams, a beer fan with experience at various notable Manchester bars. Dave spent three years at Good Beer Guide listed Sandbar before moving over the road to Zecol's The Deaf Institute where he revitalised the beer range including introducing cask ale. He moved on from Deaf Institute to Chorlton where he spent a brief period at Dulcimer (itself establishing quite a reputation for craft beers) while looking for his own bar.

Strange Brew has maintained much the same layout as The Jackalope although Opening Times was also pleased to see the Gents given a much needed makeover - they were not one of Jackalope's best points!

Dave has promised to maintain Jackalope's reputation both for its beers and as a music venue with a number of gigs already booked in. When Opening Times called on a Monday evening, an Open Mic night was in full swing with an enthusiastic crowd both listening and participating in this regular event. There were four cask ales on the bar including Doc from First Chop Brewing Arm, Shindigger's new Black IPA, Under Current from Siren brewery and an excellent pale ale from Wale's Hopcraft Brewery called Santa Muerte. This range sets the scene for what to expect from the bar in future.

More Pub News on page 16



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Pub News Extra

The Brook, Brooklands

At this year's J W Lees annual dinner, Dave Barlow was delighted when his pub was crowned the J W Lees Cask Ale Pub of the Year 2014.



The JW Lees estate comprises of 115 tenanted pubs together with 35 managed houses so there was quite some competition to beat. The Brook is the old waiting rooms on the Altrincham-bound platform of the station. It must be one of the smallest of Lees' pubs and yet it boasts that it sells more cask MPA than any other pub in the estate. Dave keeps his cask ales in the tiny cellar under the bar and the rest of his cellar is under a store room on the other side of the path to the platform entrance. Next time you walk through the pathway take a look at the new channel of tarmac where the pythons have been laid into the footpath. I have had the pleasure of a tour of these cellars as Dave is quite rightly proud of how he keeps his beer especially under the cramped conditions he has to work in.

Dave has worked at The Brook for 12 years and has been the Manager for 8. He and his team are worthy winners of this gong so please, next time you intend to just walk down that little pathway to or from the Metrolink, pop your head in the door and congratulate them.

Legh Arms, Sale Moor

Last month we had a few, but slightly harsh, words about the absence of mild at Holt's Legh Arms in Sale Moor. This prompted a call from Paul Naylor who has been running the pub for 21 years. He explained that the Legh Arms hasn't been



a regular seller of mild for five years. He did try and sell it again for six weeks on a guest beer basis but only sold eight pints in that period. We can only agree there's little point in flogging a dead horse. On the plus side the Legh Arms is now selling guest beers alongside the regular Holt's range – when Paul called he had Castle Rock Harvest Pale, Everard's Tiger and Bootleg Brewery Urban Fox on the bar. (Photograph courtesy Adam Bruderer)

Pub Shorts

Those venturing airside at Manchester Airport may do well to seek out the **Grainloft** in the heart of Terminal 1. It has the best beer offer in the airport with regular beers Dunham Massey Big Tree Bitter and Thornbridge Jaipur joined by up to four guests – as recently reported were beers from Thornbridge, Marble and Weetwood. The prices however are what you might expect from this type of location - £4.20 to £4.90 a pint. Ouch!

The **Packet House** in Altrincham has been managed by the father and daughter team of Terry and Claire Hardman for the past 10 years. However Terry decided to retire and at the end of June passed the reins solely over to Claire. This is already a thriving and vibrant local pub so Claire does not intend to make too many changes. She has however introduced evening meals on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday following many requests from her regulars. Cask beers are Dunham Massey Little Bollington and Taylor's Golden Best.

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01/06

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Tracy Mullen

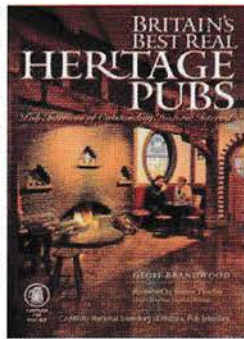
There was great dismay last month when Tracy Mullen, the much admired landlady of the Crown, Heaton Lane, died suddenly. While Tracy had been bravely fighting cancer for several years the news of her untimely death still came as a great shock to all those who knew her – and she was very well known. The long term partner, and more recently fiancé, of the Crown's licensee Steve Alexander, Tracy's smiling face and warm welcome had been a feature of the Crown for as long as anyone cared to remember. For many of the pub's regulars it will be some time before her absence truly sinks in.

The enormous turnout at her funeral, held in the Old Chapel in Manchester's Southern Cemetery – Tracy was a Manchester lass to her roots – was testimony to the enormous regard in which she was held. So large was the crowd that dozens were left standing outside the Chapel. While this was clearly an emotional time for Steve, who acted as one of the pall bearers, he would have taken some comfort from the enormous outburst of sympathy and goodwill that was forthcoming from all of those present. The eulogy told the story of a life well lived by someone who was clearly very well loved – by the pub's staff, its customers and above all by Steve himself. He has the deepest sympathy from all of us here at Opening Times and in the local branches of CAMRA.



Heritage Pubs Online

CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors has been mentioned in these pages before. The main entries, those pubs with almost entirely intact interiors, have been documented in a best selling book, Britain's Best Real Heritage Pubs, but this only documents the tip of the iceberg. There is also an online resource (www.heritagepubs.org.uk/home) which documents not only more detail on the main listings but increasingly includes those with regional or local importance.



billiard room (minus billiard table!). Or you might want to check out the Railway Tavern in Flixton with a largely intact 1950s interior or perhaps the Hare & Hounds in Gorton with much of the original Victorian layout and fixtures. If you are interested in pub this really is an essential resource.

The full list for the North West has recently been uploaded and is now available to read online. This includes lesser-known pubs with important heritage features such as the Crown in Heaton Moor, which retains many fixture and fittings from a 1930s rebuild, and the 19th century Sportsman in Hyde with its intact upstairs

Keeping in Touch

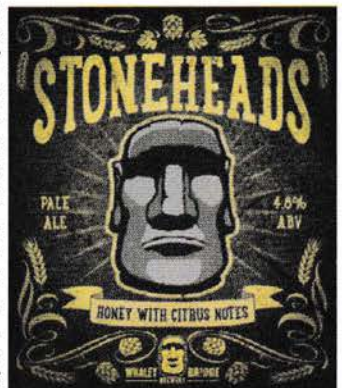
Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA have relaunched their social-media accounts to keep in touch with members. The group has a Twitter account @ssmcamra and a Facebook group at [facebook.com/pages/Stockport-and-South-Manchester-Camra](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Stockport-and-South-Manchester-Camra). Please follow our Twitter and like the facebook page for regular updates on all the latest branch information, staggers, brewery trips, social events and lots more!

Brewery Bits

Toby McKenzie of RedWillow Brewery is used to winning awards but even he must have been surprised by the collection he won in the various competitions hosted by this year's Manchester Beer & Cider Festival. There was a RedWillow "tap takeover" at the Rising Sun in Manchester City Centre and the occasion was taken to present Toby with the various wards – he's pictured here with the awards for Heartless (gold in the stouts), Smokeless (gold in porters), Directionless (silver in best bitters) and Headless (bronze in bitters).



Whaley Bridge Brewery also has a new look with owner Mike Wilde using the hamlet of Stoneheads as inspiration for the brewery. He engaged a professional branding and graphic design company to take his ideas and come up with a concept he can use across the range. Wyoming (the name) has been dropped and now known as Stoneheads. There will be no change to the strength or recipe. Rapa Nui (4.9%) a "pale amber ale with subtle spice and a hint of orange" is now on line as a regular beer. The other brews will be kept the same with more coming online soon such as Anakena (4.2%) a "pale and tropical" summer ale. A website will follow at the following address: www.whaleybridgebrewery.co.uk.



Readers will have seen last month's advert from Marble Brewery. This previewed the new labels which will be actually printed onto the Marble bottles. This will enable Marble to streamline its bottling operation and ensure the bottle-conditioned beers are consistently available.



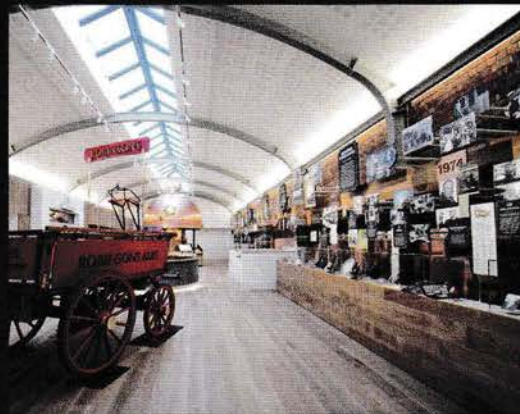
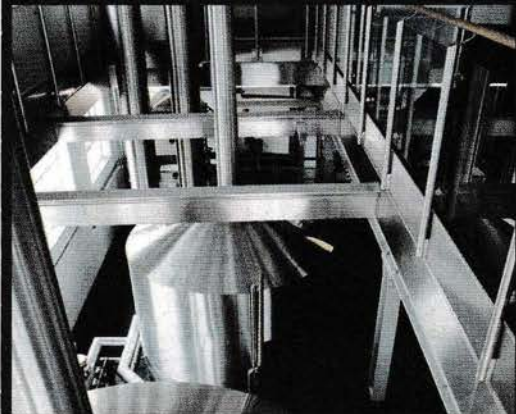
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