

November 2014

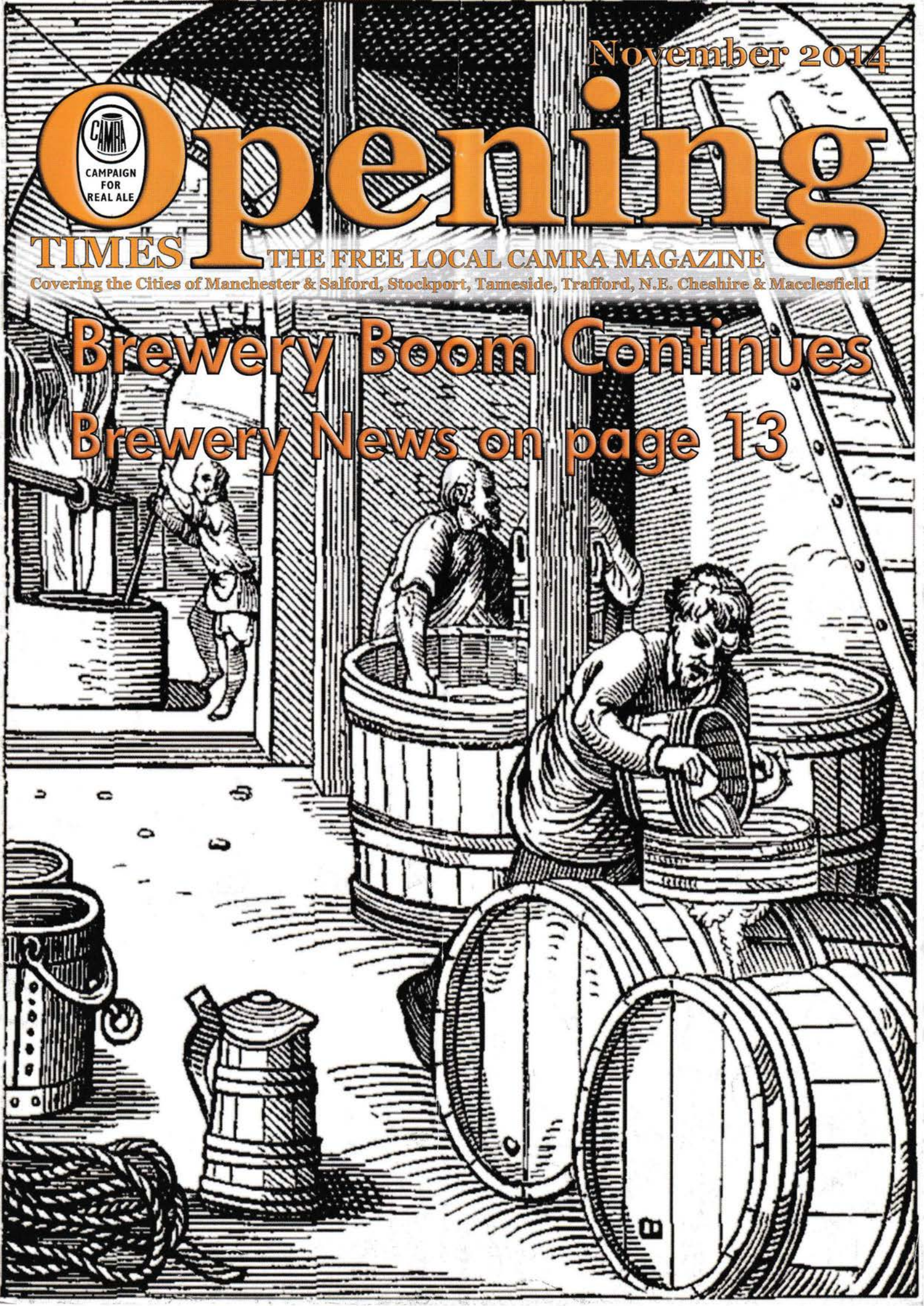
Opening



TIMES THE FREE LOCAL CAMRA MAGAZINE
Covering the Cities of Manchester & Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, N.E. Cheshire & Macclesfield

Brewery Boom Continues

Brewery News on page 13



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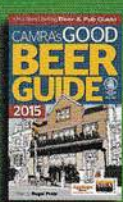
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What's On

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:

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

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

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Public Transport

Opening Times does not recommend you drink and drive. Local public transport information can be obtained online as follows:

- * 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.derbybus.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 December issue is Friday 7 November

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Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Front Cover – Brewery woodcut, things have moved on slightly these days.

Your Local CAMRA Contacts & Websites

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North Manchester (NM) www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk
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High Peak & NE Cheshire (HPNE) www.hpneccamra.org.uk
Contact: Stewart Taylor 07907 714826; taylorshouse@supanet.com

Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)
www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk
Contact: Tony Icke 01625 861833; bicke@madasafish.com

Trafford & Hulme (T&H) www.thcamra.org.uk
Contact: John O'Donnell 07879 880972 or
enquiries@thcamra.org.uk

Local CAMRA Events - Open events in blue

Wednesday 5th – Social to Regional Pub of the Year – Harewood Arms, Broadbottom. Train from Piccadilly at 18.46. (NM)

Thursday 6th – Branch Meeting: Orange Tree, Altrincham. Starts 8.00pm (T&H)

Saturday 8th – “A bit of a do” at the Spinners Arms, Hadfield, featuring Mouselow Farm beers and some music. From 8.00pm, (HPNC)

Monday 10th – Branch Meeting: White Lion, Disley. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

Tuesday 11th – Campaigning Meeting: Coach & Four, Wilmslow. Starts 8.00pm (MEC)

Wednesday 12th – Newton Heath survey – start at Railway 7.30pm. (NM)

Wednesday 12th - The Big Parlour Pig Out – one pig, several different ciders, call 01618814871, for details and to book. (T&H)

Thursday 13th – Branch Meeting including “Meet the Brewers” – a chance to meet some of the area's newest brewers. New faces very welcome. Stockport Brewing Co Tap, Arch 14, off Heaton Lane, Stockport. Starts 8.00pm, (SSM)

Friday 14th & Saturday 15th – Chorlton Challenge: a visit of all the cask ale outlets in Chorlton. Contact for details. (T&H)

Wednesday 19th – Branch Meeting: Hare & Hounds, Shudehill. Starts 7.30pm, (NM)

Friday 21st – Chorlton-on-Medlock & University Stagger: 7.30pm Ford Madox Brown, Wilmslow Road; 8.30pm Grafton Arms, Grafton Street. (SSM)

Saturday 22nd – Gtr Manchester Pub of the Year and Pub of the Season presentations to the Harewood Arms, Broadbottom. From 8.00pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 26th – Ginnels & Back Doors themed survey in Manchester City Centre: starts Town Hall Tavern, Tib Lane 7.30pm (NM)

Thursday 27th – Pub of the Month presentation to the Fletcher Moss, Didsbury. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Friday 28th – Congleton Fun Crawl. Starts Leisure Centre at 7.30pm. (MEC)

Saturday 29th – Winter Warmer Launch Stagger in central Stockport: Coked Hat, Market Place 7.30pm; Arden Arms Millgate 8.30pm (SSM)

Wednesday 2nd December – “Most Improved Pub” presentation to Worsley Old Hall followed by early Christmas buffet (price tba). From 7.30pm. (NM)

Pub of the Month

The Fletcher Moss, Didsbury



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for November 2014 goes to the Fletcher Moss on William Street in Didsbury. Stuart Ballantyne tells you why.

The Fletcher Moss is now run by Jane and Martin Devlin, who are no strangers to Didsbury - a few years ago they ran the Royal Oak before moving to the Four in Hand in West Didsbury. But it was the draw of running a traditional locals' pub that drove Jane and Martin to apply for the vacancy at the Fletcher Moss.

Prior to the recent opening of the Metrolink tram the pub could easily be missed by visitors to Didsbury as it is tucked away on a side street off the busy Wilmslow Road. It was the arrival of the adjacent tram stop that prompted Hydes Brewery, together with Jane and Martin, to make changes to the pub. Out went the tiny car park and in came a beautiful garden and outdoor drinking area. Internally the pub was remodelled to create distinct, cosy, separate drinking areas. An over 25's policy was introduced. Then Martin got to work in the cellar and on the beer. He is fastidious about his beer, frequently getting up as early as 6am to ensure that the beer that he sells is always of the highest quality.

All these efforts have worked wonders. Hydes cannot believe how well the beers are selling in the Fletcher Moss. So well in fact that, by the time that you read this, two more hand pumps will have been installed. It had been expected that the cost of the refurbishment would take five years to cover itself but only taken ten months such has been the increase in trade. No wonder Hyde's recently presented Jane and Martin with their "Managers of the Year" award.

The Fletcher Moss is not a food-led pub. It's a locals-led pub that by listening to its regulars and offering great beer in a clean and friendly environment has reaped dividends. And if all that is not enough you could always visit the Fletcher Moss to admire Jane's collection of over 100 porcelain tea pots which are displayed around the pub

So why not join us for the Pub of the Month presentation to Jane and Martin on Thursday 27th November when the pub is likely to be very busy.

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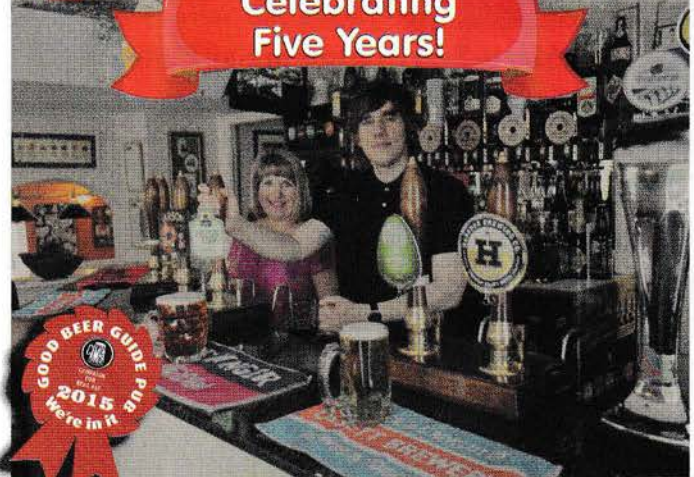
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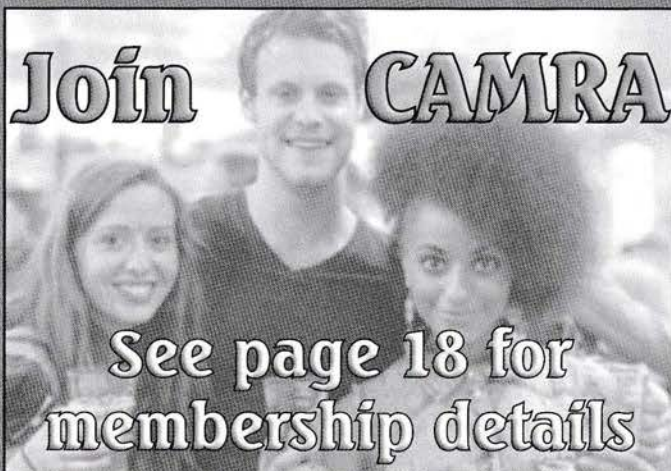
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Stagger

Dave Burston in and around Stockport Market

September's Stagger covered the pubs in and around Stockport's historic Market Place, an area that is on the up after a period in the doldrums - More of that later.



We started on St. Petersgate, at the **Calverts Court**, Stockport's Wetherspoons. The only modern building on the stagger, it's a bit like Dr Who's Tardis, in that it is much larger inside than it looks from the outside: long and narrow, with the bar down much of the right-hand side and various kinds of seating on the left. Ten handpumps were serving seven different beers on this occasion, with strengths ranging from 3.6% to 5.5%. All were rated above average to good, with Mobberley's Legacy and Winkle's Sir Philip being particularly appreciated. Most beers were £2.20 a pint, surprisingly this was not to be the cheapest beer of the night.

The next pub on our route was the **Egerton Arms** but as the two handpumps on the bar were not in use we moved on.

While passing the Grade II listed building that was once a bank and is now **Live Stockport**, we peered through the windows and could see scaffolding inside, confirming that renovations were in progress. The name of its previous incarnation, Bamboozza, was still visible on the outside. Looking forward to trying the real ales promised in this venue, we had to content ourselves with the here and now. (*Live Stockport is now open - see Pub News - Ed*).



So we went on into the Market Place proper, and to another recently renovated and re-opened pub, also Grade II listed, the **Bakers Vaults**. This Robinson's house and former live music venue closed suddenly last Christmas, but after considerable investment and some internal alterations it is good to see that it's a thriving pub once again. The juke box was a little on the loud side and the pub was very busy,

even at 8.30 on a Friday, so after getting served by the very efficient bar-staff, we gathered outside, where there are a few tables overlooking the square. No fewer than eight beers were on offer: five from the Robinsons stable including Hartley's Cumbria Way, and three guests. All the beers were rated above average to good, and the 6% Ashover Milk Stout was even better. Interestingly, our halves were served in half-pint dimple mugs, the first time I've seen one of these for ages, though handled mugs in general seem to be making a comeback in pubs. All beers were around the £3 mark apart from the stout which was understandably dearer.



After the modernity of the first two pub interiors, the next one was a real contrast. The **Boars Head** is a little-changed Sam Smith's house, with several different rooms leading off a central passage where the bar is. Although the pub is on a sloping site, it is all on a level inside once you have got past the two steps to get in. There is even an outdoor decking area on the same level, raised considerably above Vernon Street at the lower end of the site. Sam Smith's Old Brewery Bitter, at a very cheap £1.80 a pint, was the only real ale available, and received mixed reviews from the 14 of us, varying from below average to good.



The longest walk of the night took us next to the **Old Rectory** on Churchgate, a large rambling pub-cum-restaurant with a country-house feel. The large conservatory room was busy with diners, but there are other areas more suited to drinkers and a fairly large beer garden at the front. We sat outside as it still was quite a mild night, consuming our half-pints of Wells Bombardier and Greene King IPA. Both were around average or just above.



Retracing our steps, we returned to the edge of the Market Place for the **Cocked Hat**, another recently renovated pub, re-opened about a year ago. Formerly the Pack Horse, of dubious reputation, the change of name reflected a break from the past and a change to a multi-ale house selling six real ales, which on this occasion were from Beartown, Coach House, Conwy, Brimstage and RedWillow. All were rated good, with the two Beartown beers scoring best. The downside this evening was the loud music being played by a DJ in the main lounge, which seemed to have driven most of the customers into the bar area. There were also three TV screens (two in the lounge and one in the bar) showing a foreign football match no one was watching.

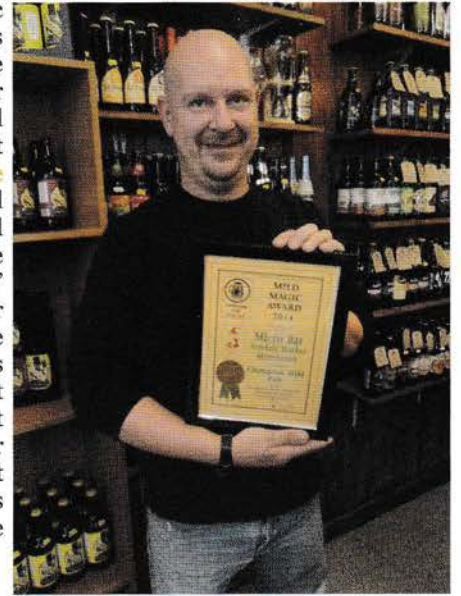


On, then, down the hill to the final pub of the night, the **Arden Arms**. This unspoilt gem has been branch Pub of the Year twice in recent years, and has something for everyone. Food had been served earlier in the evening, but by now all the rooms were full of drinkers partaking of the six Robinson's beers, which were all rated above average to good or, in the case of the Dizzy Blonde, very good, and this was voted the best beer of the night. In the large covered courtyard at the back (almost as big as the rest of the pub) a fairly recent innovation is hosting live bands on Saturday nights, and this area was quite full too.

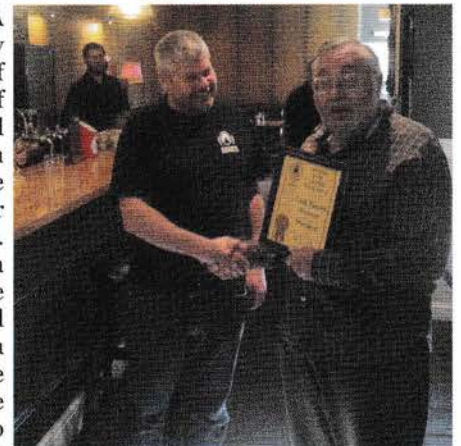
So, with an average of five beers per pub and 26 different beers overall, this was a stagger for the discerning drinker, with the added interest of the heritage of the area. Four of the pubs on this stagger are in listed buildings, and this will have increased to five (with the addition of Live Stockport) by the time you read this. The beer quality overall was pretty good too. But don't just take my word for it - try them yourself!

Recent CAMRA Awards

This year's Mild Magic was a notable success and as usual those taking part voted for their favourite mild pubs. The Stockport winner was the **Hope** on Wellington Road North which received its award in April. The "outside Stockport" winner was the popular **Micro Bar** in the Arndale Market. This is owned by Boggart Brewery and last month Boggart's owner Mark Dave finally got his gong. He is pictured here with the certificate.



High Peak CAMRA have been busy presenting more of their Pub and Club of the Year awards and this time it was the turn of those winners in the Cheshire part of their extensive branch area. Both winners were in Poynton and the awards were presented during the course of a social day out in the village. The Pub of the Year award went to Bollington Brewery's **Cask Tavern** on Park Lane. Our picture shows local High Peak member Lawrence Bamber (above right) presenting the winning certificate to Bollington Brewery's Lee Wainwright. The Club of the Year Award went to the nearby **Legion Club**, also home to Worth Brewery. Lawrence is seen here presenting the award to Club Steward Nick Williams.



The summer beer festival at the National Cycling Centre was a notable success this year. As is usual with beer festivals there was a vote for Beer of the Festival which was won by **Brightside Brewery**. A CAMRA group visited the brewery in late September to present the award. Pictured here CAMRA's Graham Donning (centre) is shown presenting the award to three generations of the Friedrich family (grandfather Neil, father Lance and son Hayden).



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The Unstoppable Rise of the Home Brewer

Mark Reeves on getting started

In recent years interest in home brewing has seen a great resurgence - ingredients are easier to get hold of than ever before and, like with food, people are more and more interested in what goes into what they're drinking. It's a hobby that can become an obsession and a career (many home brewers have gone on to set up their own breweries - RedWillow, Black Edge and Weird Beard to name just a few) and you can start out with just a plastic bucket, a few bottles and a kettle. Home brewing has advanced from 'Boots' kits to full-on nanobreweries with a range of ingredients and equipment previously only easily accessible to professional brewers.

Equipment and Ingredients

As previously mentioned you don't need much equipment to brew, a kit can be made up and fermented in a food-safe bucket (ideally with a lid and airlock). You'll need to clean and sanitise your equipment well (brewing can seem to be more about cleaning than anything else!). You can buy empty bottles, or ask a local, friendly, bar (ideally bottles from bottle-conditioned beer) or you can buy beer in bottles and empty them in the usual fashion.

Much of the resurgence of home brewing can be attributed to the relative ease of obtaining ingredients such as grains, hops and yeasts. Traditional homebrew shops inevitably tend to stock fairly basic core ranges that they know will have a high turnover (though they may be able to order in specific items and many now have an online presence too), but on the internet there are shops with vast ranges of ingredients along with chemicals for water treatment and cleaning, and equipment from plastic buckets to fully automated breweries. Many branches of Wilkinsons stock a basic but useful range (mostly kits and equipment) as do some supermarkets.

Learning How to Brew

Home brewing can be enjoyed at many levels, using simple techniques and kits, or using malt extract, hops and speciality grains or right up to all-grain brewing (mashing the malted grains to extract the sugars) and even this can be done relatively cheaply (after the initial outlay on equipment the raw materials are very cheap and beer can be produced for practically pennies).

The Internet is a great source for information on brewing - John Palmer's 'How to brew' website is a complete reference on brewing with details of both novice and advanced techniques. Sites such as 'Jim's Beer kit' and 'Home Brew Talk' host very active communities giving advice to all comers of any level of experience. Others such as BIABrewer.info give advice on specific brewing techniques, Brew In A Bag (BIAB) in this case. Brewers can also seek advice from the online stores, the BrewUK forum being particularly good in this author's opinion.



For those who prefer the printed word, CAMRA has recently published an updated version of Brew Your Own British Real Ale by Graham Wheeler, a recognised home brewing expert. This has details on brewing techniques and includes over 100 recipes to recreate commercial ales including Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild.

Meeting Other Brewers

The rise in numbers homebrewing has also seen a rise in homebrewing clubs, Manchester having at last count two - Manchester Homebrew and, a very recent addition, Chorlton Homebrew Association. The former meets at Beermoth every 3rd Sunday of the month, the latter bimonthly on the 2nd Tuesday in Font Chorlton. The clubs are an opportunity to try each other's beers (and get constructive feedback), discuss home brewing and maybe meet professional brewers (and sometimes 'borrow' their breweries to make beer!)

Resources

Homebrew shops

The Brew Shop, 48 Buxton Road, Heaviley, Stockport, www.thebrewshop.com
Trafford Homebrew Ltd, 14 Eastway, Sale, www.traffordhomebrew.co.uk
Salford Homebrew Ltd, 96 Fitzwarren Street, Salford, www.salfordhomebrew.co.uk

Online

Brewuk, brewuk.co.uk
The Malt Miller, www.themaltmiller.co.uk
The Home Brew Shop, www.the-home-brew-shop.co.uk

Books

Brew Your Own British Real Ale, Graham Wheeler, CAMRA

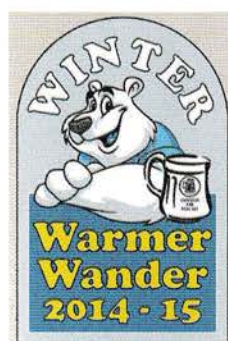
Useful websites

Howtobrew, www.howtobrew.com/intro.html

Clubs

Manchester homebrew, @manchhomebrew, www.manchesterhomebrew.co.uk
Chorlton Homebrew Association, @chorltonbrewers, homebrew@fontbar.com

Jim's beer kit, www.jimsbeerkit.co.uk
Homebrewtalk, www.homebrewtalk.com/
BIABrewer.info, www.biabrewer.info



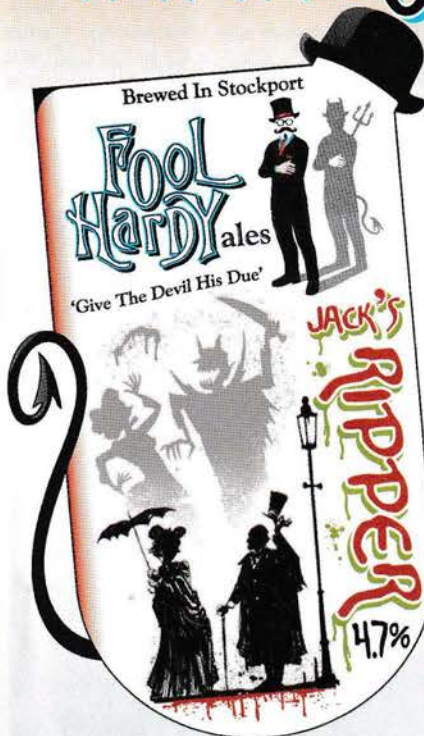
Follow the Bear – Winter Warmer Wander 2014-15

December is not only time for Christmas and the start of winter. It's also time for the Winter Warmer Wander. This year's event runs from Saturday 29th November to Sunday 11th January. There are lots of prizes to be won including t-shirts, bottled beers, pub meals and bottled beer hampers. There are some new pubs taking part this year and once again the event is being sponsored by Stockport family brewer Robinsons and in particular their famous Old Tom. For more information see the December issue of Opening Times.



To launch the Winter Warmer Wander there will be a Stagger around central Stockport on Saturday 29th November. The start will be at the Cocked Hat in the Market Place at 7.30pm with an 8.30 meeting point at the Arden Arms on Millgate.

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High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views

Peak Practice With Robin Wignall



Peak District events and attractions continued into autumn with the Buxworth Steam Festival at the beginning of October. Both the **Navigation** in Buxworth and **Buxworth War Memorial Club** welcomed additional customers during this busy weekend. At the Club three handpumps were in use throughout the event, both with local beers (Storm and Winkle) and other brews supplied by H.B.Clark, including Navigation Pale from Nottingham and beers from Green Mill. The Navigation regularly serves six beers from handpump, both with local brews and beers from across the Pennines or from elsewhere in the east Midlands. The first weekend in October is one to look out for next year, both for the steam event and for some interesting well kept beer.

A fairly recent edition of the *Buxton Advertiser* noted that a government small business grant had been awarded to the Intrepid Brewery, based in Brough in the Hope Valley. Hopefully beers from there will reach our locality fairly soon and can become available in those pubs able to operate as free houses.



One change to report in the Punch estate in Whaley Bridge is that the **White Horse** at Horwich End traffic lights has changed hands. No big changes are anticipated and there will normally be 2 or 3 real ales available. More on this next time.

Elsewhere in Punch pubs darker beers have been on sale at the **Goyt** in Whaley Bridge, including Old Sodbury Mild from Cotswold

Spring and Smokestack Lightnin' from Dorking. The Goyt also does a good line in pale ales, with Castle Rock Harvest Pale and Moorhouses Blond Witch being recent examples. Along the road at the **White Hart** (pictured below) Moorhouse's beers are often ordered from the Punch list and make for good drinking.



Problems still remain with the big pubcos as a recent press item illustrates. The **Pattenmakers Arms** in Duffield, south Derbyshire, featured in the Daily Telegraph's Pint to Pint article. The licensee has built up a good trade for both her beer and good food but was faced with a 42% rent increase for her troubles. After considerable outside pressure Enterprise Inns, the offending pubco, backed down. Hopefully common sense will prevail in the long term. Enterprise Inns have an unfortunate record of forcing the closure of good pubs through short-term commercial greed. Organic growth in trade in a good pub will provide an income for the company in the future. An empty pub returns nothing. But as I have noted in the past some of the bean counters at pubcos and big brewers know little about beer or pubs or communities.

Your correspondent spent a few days in the Lake District not far from England's highest peaks. Keswick is well off for pubs and you can't really do the lot. Favourites include the **Dog & Gun**, a good source of beers from the Keswick Brewery and from other Cumbrian microbreweries. The **Royal Oak**, formerly the Keswick Lodge, has a good range of Thwaites beers, including Nutty Black and seasonal brews. The **Bank** is a Jennings house but sells beers from the other Marstons breweries, including New World. Whilst over in Keswick a new Wetherspoon's opened, with mayor and consort and the town crier present. The **Justice of the Common Pleas**, as ever a well researched choice of name by the company, is housed in the old police station, where there was also a court. A small drinking area is provided in a former cell. Service was good in the busy first couple of days, with the bar well staffed. Beers included Yates Golden Bitter from West Cumbria, Rooster's Yankee and Young Henry, an Australian beer brewed for

Wetherspoon's at Banks's. Prices were of course very attractive and only time will see if there is an impact on some of the more expensive pubs in this tourist town.

Finally, nearer home, Jennings beers can often be found in Marston's houses in the area, including the **Shady Oak** at Fernilee, the **Shepherds** in Whaley Bridge, the **Royal Oak** in High Lane and the **George** at Hayfield. Jennings Cumberland is on the current Punch list and has been tried in the White Horse in Whaley Bridge and is doubtless available elsewhere in the Punch estate.

High Peak Pub News With Tom Lord

Stalybridge Labour Club has now added two more handpumps to the bar which extends the range to five real ales.

The **Hatters Arms** in Marple, currently up for let as a Robinsons business opportunity, is currently undergoing a refurbishment.



Over in Romiley the **Stock Dove** (pictured above) now has two real ales, currently Reverend James' and Waggle Dance. Down in Bredbury on Bents Lane the good news is that the **Queens**, which was a keg-only pub for many a long year, now has two real ales, Timothy Taylor's Golden Best and Boltmaker, both on handpumps. This adds considerably to the range of beers in the area.

Regrettably up in Mottram the **Wagon and Horses** on the Broadbottom road is closed and boarded up with the signage removed. In Poynton on Park Lane a new bar has opened up called the **Acoustic Lounge**. There is no brewery tie and two guest real ales feature. It is open in the evenings with music on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

Finally it is rumoured that in Dove Holes the **Wheatshaf**, which has been closed recently, will be spruced up and reopened as the Quarryman, with the emphasis on real ales and food.



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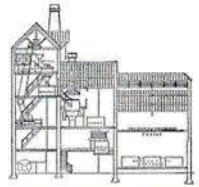
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What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region



The brewery boom shows no sign of abating with new ventures around the *Opening Times* area. It's difficult to keep up but we are doing our best...

Cryptic Ales

With its 10-barrel capacity brewhouse Cryptic will be Stockport's second biggest brewer (Robinsons occupy the number one slot of course) so it's a start-up that's aiming high.



The brewery is based in a unit on Carrington Field Street at the very end of Higher Hillgate and came about from a conversation at a beer festival. The team is Brian Smith, Jon Dean, Andy Screen, David Boulton and Anne Boulton. They've all known each other for ages and have been taking part in the Thursday quiz at the Crown on Heaton Lane for about 10 years (hence the origin of "Cryptic"). "We could set up a brewery" went the conversation; "let's do a budget". Things sort of snowballed from there, as they are wont to do.



Pictured above – Jon Dean and Brian Smith

Brian has a background in financial services so arranged for some professional costings and worked out a budget for the project. Wind forward 12 months or so and a 10 barrel brewery is delivered and installed by Porter Brewery Installations.

The brewing will be in the hands of keen home-brewer Jon and beer enthusiast Andy, neither of whom will be giving up their day jobs as train driver and actuarial assistant respectively.

The core range will comprise four standard beers - an IPA at about 5%, a bitter, a blond/golden ale and a stout/porter - which will be supplemented by seasonal beers. In addition there is a one barrel experimental plant which will be used for making less mainstream beers such as a double IPA, imperial Stout, saisons and sour beers.



Above – view of the brewery

Brewing was expected to be underway by late October so expect to see the first Cryptic beer (an IPA) in local pubs and bars this month.

More Stockport Brewers

Meanwhile it's all go at Stockport's other new brewers. **Stockport Brewing Co** now has HMRC approval and brewing is underway at Heaton Lane. The beers continue to impress and the new Stockporter (4.8%) is memorably good. So good, in fact, that it now has a permanent slot on the bar of the Crown across the road where one or two other Stockport Brewing beers will usually be found.

Thirst Class Ales is also up and running. Brewer Richard Conway told us that he expected to be brewing by the end of October so this month should see the launch of his first four beers. These are planned to be an American IPA, an Oatmeal Stout, a Pale Ale and a California Common Beer. Again, look out for them in local pubs and bars.



Brewing has also at long last started at the Magnet where **Watts Brewing** (kit pictured above) fired up its copper on 20th October. The first beer was an experimental pale ale at 4% and was brewed to test out the one barrel kit. Brewer Sarah Bergin told us that she then expected to brew three more beers in the following days. The beers will only be on sale at the Magnet and will be formally launched to mark the pub's fifth birthday as a free house in mid-November.

As we said last month, this brings Stockport's brewery total to eight which is the highest number since 1899. We aren't aware of any more in the pipeline. Yet.

Tweed Brewing Co

Hyde is about to get its first brewery for 84 years with the launch of Tweed Brewing this month.

Based on Newton Business Park, Tweed Brewing is the project of father and son team Dave and Sam Ward (pictured below). And like Cryptic Ales this is a brewery that began life with a conversation over a few beers. Dave is an ex-fireman while son Sam already runs the Tuck Shop in Denton and wanted to branch out in another direction; they are both cask ale fans and so Tweed Brewing Co was born.



The six barrel brewery was acquired from Pureweld in Mirfield and was delivered and installed last month. While Sam and Dave will have some involvement in the brewing operations a full-time brewer will be employed (and whose name was being kept under wraps for the time being).

The theme is "a new take on an old tradition" and the plan is to brew beers with a wide appeal. Tweed is also working with Manchester University where 60 students will be taking part in market research for them. The first beers should be a session bitter at 3.8% (which will be part of the core range) and seasonal Winter Tweed (4.2%), which will be a dark beer in the altbier style. The aim is to have these beers out by the middle of this month. You can contact Tweed on 0161 368 8608 or email at info@tweedbrewing.com. They are also on Facebook (www.facebook.com/TweedBrewing?fref=ts) and Twitter (@TweedBrewCo!).

Coming Soon

Next month we hope to bring news about two or three new breweries in Manchester - in Ardwick there is **Alphabet Brew Co** and **Chorlton Brewing Co**, and the **Cloudwater Brewery** is based in the Piccadilly Trading Estate. All three should be up and running (or very close) by the end of this month.

Heard at the Bar

Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Another Chorlton Outlet

Chorlton-cum-Hardy now has an incredible 25 pubs and bars serving real ale. The latest addition to the area is the **Shak** which opened in October on the same part of the Wilbraham Road strip as Mono and The Bar. The Shak is a first venture into the pub world for manager and co-owner Francesca Duffy who has opened Shak with two sleeping partners.



The bar has been fitted out in a modern style with the walls a mixture of neutral grey-green and stripped wood cladding and panels. A giant print of a forest scene adorns the wall to the right of the entrance. The bar is to the rear of the raised area which forms the left hand side of the room. There are three handpumps on the bar. The house beer is Thwaites Wainwright, initially joined by two beers from Green Mill Brewery - their single hop special Stellar and Smokey Joe Porter. Local to Francesca's home and one of her favourite breweries, Green Mill are likely to feature regularly on the guest roster. The back bar features six modern keg taps which were featuring beers from Thwaites' Crafty Dan range.

When Opening Times visited the kitchen was due to be open the following week Francesca said it would be a varied menu featuring a couple of Caribbean-themed dishes alongside modern favourites like pulled pork burgers. There will also be a range of hot and cold snacks for those who just fancy a nibble with their beer.

Altrincham Update



Altrincham's Orange Tree has re-opened. As we reported previously, the pub has been taken over by Chris Clish who has overseen the revival of Chorlton's Beech Inn. Chris has gone into partnership with Gabrielle Burns-Smith, formerly his manager at the Beech, and her partner James Dainty to take the lease of the

Enterprise Inns pub. The Orange Tree has undergone an extensive refurbishment lasting two months and is now a much smarter affair than it was previously.

Externally the rather garish orange colour scheme has been replaced with a much more subdued green, while internally there is a mix of stripped brick walls and plain grey plaster. On entering the pub, seven handpumps flank the corner of the bar in front of you. Five dispense real ale with two given over to cider. Three regular ales are Taylor's Landlord, Copper Dragon Golden Pippin and Thwaites Wainwright, while when Opening Times called the two guests were Otter Amber and Rudgate Ruby Mild. Gabby told Opening Times they will be aiming to have at least one local brew available - beers from Mobberley Fine Ales have been going well and they also had some Beartown in the cellar.

Opening times are currently 4pm - 11pm Monday to Thursday and 12 - 12 on Friday and Saturday although weekday opening will be extended when works are completed (and the coffee machine arrives). Opening Times congratulates Gabby, Chris and James on the transformation and looks forward to seeing the Orange Tree become a thriving community hub just as the Beech has become.

City Latest



One of the most interesting city centre drinking places to open in recent months comes courtesy of beer shop **Beermoth** on Tib Street in the Northern Quarter. The downstairs room now has a full on-licence and is open on Saturdays (until 7.00pm) for on-site consumption of beers from the shop's extensive range. There is a fridge downstairs (although you can select from the beers upstairs as well) and often a box of lambic on the bar to boot. One of the best drinking spaces in the Northern Quarter we think.

Elsewhere in the City Centre the **Sawyers Arms** on Deansgate was undergoing a major refurbishment as we went to press. OT understands that it is to be converted into a Nicholson's outlet by new owners M&B. This should be good news on the beer from we think.

In Fallowfield, the Wahl Bar has now become **Koh Tao** and no longer sells cask beer.

Nearby the **Orange Grove** remains closed and boarded with precious little sign of the proposed redevelopment of the site which is in fact now advertised as up for sale. Meanwhile in Ladybarn the site of the former **Talbot** is being redeveloped as flats. On a brighter note though the **Red Lion** in Withington now sells nine different cask ales, all from the Marston's stable. Quality has so far been very good according to our local man on the ground.



Nearer the City Centre, the **Footage** (pictured above) at All Saints has had something of a makeover. The interior is much smarter and it's good to see the balcony now in use. All sorts of food is available and so is cask beer, for the first time in years. When OT called Robinsons Trooper, Thwaites Handsome Devil were available with a Greene King beer having just gone off. Round the corner on Grosvenor Street **Sand Bar** has also had a bit of a revamp since OT last called - we particularly like the display cases full of old and varied artefacts. There are now eight handpumps on the bar, seven for beer and one for a changing guest cider.



In Levenshulme we await the opening of **Fred's Ale House** which will occupy the former bookmakers next to the Union pub. It's part of Lawrence Hennigan's chain of pubs and bars and he tells us that this should be quite an interesting operation. It will operate over three floors and include facilities to show films from local film makers, an artwork display area and an area in the basement for acoustic acts. Alongside coffees and hot drinks, and a small food offering, there will be a selection of cask beers. In fact Mr Hennigan tells us that he is hoping to develop a range of cask beers in a small micro brewery to supply his chain of bars. Watch this space.

More Pub News on Page 19

Letters to the Editor

Exciting Future

From: John O'Donnell, Beer Orderer, Manchester Beer & Cider Festival:

I read with interest the two letters promoting the joys of "craft keg" - with some slight amusement that both were from a company which happened to be doing a promotion on the stuff during that month.

What really caught my eye was the praise for IndyManBeerCon and the seeming denigration of CAMRA festivals in comparison.

Now IMBC has proven itself a welcome addition to the local festival scene which is undeniably very popular with both brewers and a segment of the public. I went myself this year and drank some great beers but one thing that struck me was how many of the customers and volunteers I recognised from other festivals. To suggest that IndyMan has a demographic of its own is simply not true - I did the statistical analysis of the 2013 National Winter Ales Festival attendance and can tell Mr Bechevel that the attendance was 30 - 40% women and that the largest age group was the 30 - 45 bracket - the "30 somethings" that he thinks are unheard of at a CAMRA festival.

There is indeed a massive expansion in the number of breweries pushing the boundaries and experimenting with new flavours and the vast majority of them are making cask beer alongside their keg and key keg beers. Mr Mullen named RedWillow, Alechemy and Tiny Rebel - all of which were featured at the Manchester Beer & Cider Festival in 2014 alongside Siren, Arbor, Anarchy, Quantum.... all names which also graced the IndyMan beer lists. The beer list for MBCF 2015 is only just starting to come together, but it already features many exciting new breweries - Blackjack, Seven Brothers, Cloudwater, First Chop to name just a few. I can assure you that by January it will offer something for everybody - from traditional session beers to the biggest hoppiest beers around.

The fact that the Manchester Beer & Cider Festival attracts over 10,000 beer lovers - many times the attendance of IndyMan - would suggest that there are plenty of people who find a choice of 400 cask conditioned beers more than adequate. The future does look exciting for the beer drinker - and there will be plenty of cask and keg for lovers of either form.

But what is beer?

From Roger Bullock, Cheadle:

For many years CAMRA has concentrated on method of dispense and lack of filtering and pasteurisation, which is laudable, however I see little mentioned about the actual ingredients of beer. I see vague references to "traditional ingredients", however I believe we require a UK equivalent of the German *Reinheitsgebot* which only permits the use of water, barley and hops. I don't think I am alone in concluding that certain real ales give me a bad head after only one pint, whereas others have no serious side effects. I have travelled to Germany many times and have never experienced this problem there. I can only conclude that my intolerance to certain brewers products is down to additives of which we are not aware.

Editorial comment - although almost every German brewery sticks to the *Reinheitsgebot* (the famous purity law) it is not compulsory. While it guarantees what goes into your beer it does not guarantee that your beer will be particularly good. It has also been argued that it can be something of a restraint on innovation - indeed respected beer historian Ron Pattinson can give you 11 reasons why, in his words, the *Reinheitsgebot* is a "load of old bollocks". Read them here: <http://www.europeanbeerguide.net/reinheit.htm> JC



It's Kicking off Again

Once the football season starts in the middle of August, anyone just looking for a quiet pint needs to check the fixtures before venturing out to the pub at weekend lunchtimes or midweek evenings. Clearly, for some pubs, televised football brings in a lot of extra custom, but the problem is that it is so often allowed to dominate to the exclusion of all else. Given the eye-watering cost, you can perhaps understand pubs wanting to put screens everywhere, but that suggests that those who aren't interested in football aren't really welcome. It might be a good idea to offer a reduced subscription to pubs who were only going to show it in part of their licensed area, but that would be very hard to enforce.

There are growing signs, though, that pubs are realising that every customer they attract with football puts another off, and it doesn't convey the image that many pubs want to put across. Much of this is to do with attracting dining trade, but there are straws in the wind that the micropub movement is encouraging a return to the old-fashioned drink and chat pub. Marston's boss Ralph Findlay says that sport is becoming less important to his pubs, while a survey by the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers reported that the proportion of pubs with a sports subscription had declined from 51% in 2003 to 37% today.

Apart from matches featuring City and United, I see little sign around here that it actually draws in additional custom. Many pubs have it simply because they fear that, if they didn't, all their customers would decamp elsewhere. But, in a sense, it's a case of waiting for the other man to blink first. The total cost of Sky Sports to pubs probably greatly exceeds the additional revenue it generates for the trade as a whole. And the point is often made that many of the customers who flock in to watch the two big local clubs are never seen in the pub at other times, and may not put that much money across the bar even when they're there.

The Unquiet Pint

For as long as I can remember, piped music in pubs has been a perennial source of complaint. Even if you happen to like it, the odds are that other people won't, and what is music to one person's ears will be an unholy racket to someone else. While it is claimed to create instant "atmosphere", almost invariably it detracts from a pub.

In the 1990s, a guide to pubs without piped music was produced entitled "The Quiet Pint". To be honest, it featured a rather random selection of pubs and the overall coverage was too sparse to make it of much practical use, although it might have led you to the occasional gem that you weren't aware of. The book seems to have died the death around 2005, but if anything the problem seems to be spreading.

I can think of at least three pubs on my regular rounds which have a generally traditional character, but within the past few years have introduced piped music where there was none before. Indeed, sometimes they have been playing what sounded like Radio 1, which was totally inappropriate for a clientele whose average age was well above fifty. Very often nowadays it's only Sam Smith's and Wetherspoon's pubs that are free of it, and you can't really call your average Spoons "quiet". It helps to understand piped music in pubs if you appreciate that most of the time it is played for the benefit of the bar staff, not the customers. But more pubs should realise that getting rid of it could well add to their appeal.

Curmudgeon Online: curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

(comments on these articles can be left on the website)



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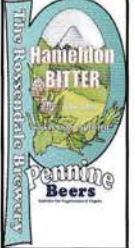
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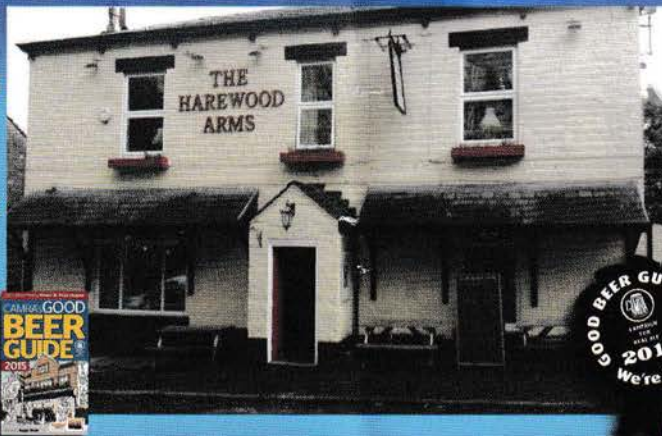
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More on Dukinfield

Andy Sullivan concludes his tour of the local pubs



One of the curiosities of Dukinfield is that it plays host to Stalybridge (St Paul's) Cricket Club, for which a remarkably small amount of historical information appears on the internet, like why and since when it sits on its site on Gorse Hall Road.

Just around the corner on Fir Road is a two-sided car park with a series of shops and takeaways on one side and the **Forrester** public house on the other. The Forrester was a surprise to me mid-way through a Friday evening. It is not what I would have reckoned to have been a real ale house and indeed has not been until recently. Now there are two real ales regularly on offer and they do change. I was advised that if one makes a request they will do their best to accommodate it too. On my visit there was a Wadworths seasonal and a rather fine example of Black Bull from Theakston's. The pub is large, open plan with some distinct areas, darts, pool etc and looks every bit the 1970's estate pub with the accompanying busy vibe. The 389 bus could not be more convenient without taking you through the door!

At the other end of Dukinfield, and right where Dukinfield bumps into Hyde on Victoria Street, is the **Victoria**, a single beer Robinson's house, which has had a decent enough reputation in recent years. Despite the "Available To Let" sign I found it clean and well presented. The interior is unremarkable really, but there is a keenness on the all-important real ale front. The likely new licensee was happy to fit the sparkler, pull the Unicorn through properly and produce a stonkingly good example of the species! I wish him every success and will pop in again afore long. Good rail and bus connections make the Victoria a very good place to start an exploration of Hyde or Dukinfield.



We'll now go up to the top of Dewsnap Lane via a very handy footbridge over the railway, and behind the marvellous war memorial next to the Victoria, cutting a huge chunk off the walk round by the white bridge; a Dukinfield landmark.

At the corner of the aforementioned lane and Birch Lane is the **New Inn**, another Robinson's establishment and another with just the Unicorn, although I have been here when the Elbow beer was on as well. I like it here, too. The main lounge area is split into two smaller ones along the multi-room plan that must have existed at one time. However, the vault is an unspoiled gem of a place stuck in a time warp. Fantastic, as once again is the Unicorn. Spotlessly clean as always, but I am minded to wonder where the glass swiping habit started! This is where the bar staff serve your pint after they have wiped the outside down with their hand. I have seen a lot of this lately and it does seem to have begun all of a sudden. I am undecided as to my view of this practise.



We are now on the 343 bus route, but other bus routes, notably the 389, are not far away. Turn left out of the New Inn and a short walk away is the **Wheatsheaf**, set back a little from the main carriageway. Here there is a welcome change from the diet of Unicorn, good though it usually is. Marston's Bitter and Banks's Original are on the bar, at extremely good prices. The pub has a large lounge laid out with standard bench seating and tables with stools and there are bands at weekends. A large music playing TV sits on the wall opposite

the bar. The smaller vault is a traditional affair; the ale is good to very good.

Turning left out of the Wheatsheaf and only a dozen or so yards away is the **Albion**, a noisy, boisterous place when I called on a Sunday afternoon. In the main lounge bar there was a karaoke or open mic thing going on my latest visit, which I didn't hang around for, and this bar was unbelievably more noisy than the pretty basic vault. This no male-dominated place today and a good age range is apparent and is certainly vibrant. Unicorn is the cask offering and yet again it is really good.

Also in Dukinfield and on towards Stalybridge on Oxford Road is the **Masons**. Now this gets a mention here because there has been a good effort in recent years to make something of this once rather dismal pub. The outside is a little more welcoming than previously and the interior, whilst needing work, is much brighter and cleaner than before. The thing the Masons gets right is community and this can be a busy pub especially at the weekends. The thing it gets wrong in my opinion is not selling real ale consistently. It has been on sale here before and I am advised that it has sold quickly so there does appear to be a market here, if only a little effort was made.



During my wanderings around Dukinfield I have been reminded, as I have been in many other places, that the pub is alive and if not that well, does survive and thrive where care and attention to detail are allied to hard work. Real ale can help that and if only one pub can be made to work then so be it.

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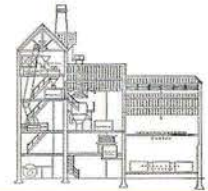
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Pub & Brewery News

Covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond



Continued from page 14

Levenshulme seems to be on the up in terms of beer. Apart from the imminent arrival of Fred's Ale House, there is good beer to be had at Levenshulme Market, which is held every Saturday at the moment. Look out for Darren and Natasha's **Those Four Mobile Bar** which always has one local cask beer on sale, alongside some key-keg offerings. Our picture below gives some idea of what you may find.



Stockport Openings

The town's pub scene goes from strength to strength at the moment (with one cloud on the horizon).



On Wellington Road South, sharing the same building as the Garrick Theatre is the **Spinning Top**, occupying the premises of a former Indian restaurant. It's a project by Mike Swann (pictured below) and Duncan Lanser, and OT dropped in to have a chat with Mike about the new bar.



It's comfortably laid out with a mixture of seating from regular tables and chairs to comfortable sofas to lounge on. The well appointed bar is down one side. Mike describes it as a "metro bar" which aims to appeal to everyone. So alongside coffee and cakes, and a selection of meals, there is a wide range of drinks available. There are three hand pumps for cask beers – and Mike says these will be mainly local brews –

including one dispensing a "house beer" by Tatton Brewery (it's Tatton Blonde rebadged). Displaying his West Country origins, Mike is also keen on traditional cider and perry which are also sold. These are sourced from Merrylegs (which also supplies Stockport Beer & Cider Festival) and as trade grows Mike would like to develop this side of the business. There is also an interesting range of bottled beers to boot.

There's live music most Thursdays and artworks from local artists are on the walls. Comedy nights are planned. This is a welcome addition to the local scene and deserved support – well worth a visit we think.

Also open by the time you read this will be **Live Stockport** in the Market Place. There will be a full review next time but we understand that on opening there will be cask ales from Outstanding, Moorhouses and Phoenix breweries.

There are one or two proposed openings in Heaton Moor. One outlet on Shaw Road will be courtesy of Corin Bland of the **High Peak Beer Co.** We understand this will be a combination of beer shop and bar – and the range available will certainly be worth making a detour for. Down at the other end of Heaton Moor Road we believe that a similar operation is planned by Damien O'Shea who runs beer stalls as "The Beer Man" at various local markets.



The cloud on the horizon is the continuing threat to the **Midland** on Wellington Road North. As we have previously mentioned this is threatened by current plans to put a cycle lane through the front of the pub. The consultation period ended on 17 October and CAMRA has formally objected – and also submitted alternative plans which would modify the scheme and save the pub. We await developments.

Finally - it looks like **Ye Olde Woolpack** on Brinksway is to reopen. Again, OT calculates that this will be the fifth time the pub has reopened after a period of closure. We understand the pub has been bought by experienced local licensee Dennis Davies who has a very good track record in running pubs. More news when the pub reopens.

Scots Award

Slightly out of Stockport, CAMRA's Pub of the Year for Scotland is the **Steampacket Inn**, The Quayside, Isle of Whithorn, Dumfries & Galloway. An excellent pub is a slightly out of the way spot.



Why are we telling you this? Well the pub is a free house and regular beers on the pumps come from Stockport's Fool Hardy Ales. They are taken their by Hope Inn regular Ray Cronie. He is pictured here (second left) complete with Fool Hardy pump clip watching the award being presented to licensee Alastair Scoular.

Happy Valley News

Dave Hughes from **Happy Valley**

Brewery has been in touch to tell us that in view of the resurgence in English hop quality he is to produce a small range of ales brewed using just English hops. The first of these is **Mill Town** (3.6%) which is a classic "Olde English Mild" made using lots of roasted malts. It also includes hops grown in Bollington – the first time this has happened in over 100 years according to Dave.



Marble News

Matt Howgate called from **Marble Brewery** to tell us about two new lager style beers he has made. **Bohemian Pilsner** (4.2%) made with Pilsner malt and noble hop varieties from Germany and the Czech Republic; Matt thinks this will be an easy-to-drink beer. Marble have also sourced Pilsner yeast from the Czech Republic. CAMRA traditionalists should look away now as this beer will be available as keg only. Available in both cask and keg will be the new "**Imperial Rogenschwarz**" at 7%. This very well hopped beer will be a cross between a black IPA and a dark lager with the addition of rye for dry spiciness.



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