

OPENING TIMES

MARCH 2015 / FREE

**INSIDE: TRAFFORD & HULME AWARDS /
CIDER NEWS / PUB AND BREWERY NEWS /
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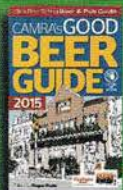
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OPENING TIMES

Opening Times is published by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, with assistance from the Trafford & Hulme and High Peak & North East Cheshire Branches. Additional material is supplied by the North Manchester and Macclesfield & E Cheshire Branches. 7,350 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth and distributed throughout Stockport, Trafford, Manchester and Tameside. There are also many outlets in Macclesfield & East Cheshire, High Peak and Glossop.

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Their telephone no. is 03454 04 05 06. To report a matter to Trading Standards go to:

www.adviceguide.org.uk/consumer_e/reporting_a_problem_to_trading_standards

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- ❖ Transport for Greater Manchester: www.tfgm.com 0161 228 7811
- ❖ East Cheshire: 0300 123 5500 www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport.aspx
- ❖ Derbyshire: www.derbybus.info

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Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Front cover – This stunning view of Dukes 92 and the Beetham Tower is courtesy of Wesley Harding. Visit his website at <http://www.whhardingphotography.co.uk/> to view and purchase this and other images.

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What's On

Local CAMRA Branch Events, Information and News



Your Local CAMRA Contacts & Websites

Stockport & South Manchester (SSM)

www.ssmcamra.co.uk
Contact: Mark McConachie 0161 429 9356;
Secretary@ssmcamra.org.uk

North Manchester (NM)

www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk
Contact: Phil Booton, phbooton@hotmail.com

High Peak & NE Cheshire (HPNC)

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;
enquiries@thcamra.org.uk

Local CAMRA Events

Regional Event: Saturday 28th March – Regional Meeting and AGM: Gateway, Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury. Starts 1.00pm.

Saturday 7th – Visit to Howard Town Brewery, Glossop. Catch train from Piccadilly at 11.46 and then walk up to brewery. Book with John Clarke – 0161 477 1973 or stocam@btinternet.com. (SSM)

Monday 9th – Branch Meeting: Fleece, Stamford Street, Mossley. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 11th – Social: Grocer's (new micropub), Liverpool Road, Cadishead. From 8.00pm. (NM)

Thursday 12th – Branch Meeting and 'New Faces' Social (including 'Meet the Brewer'): Railway, Wellington Road North, Stockport. Starts 8.00pm. (SSM)

Thursday 12th – Timperley Social: 7.45 Stonemasons (curry night until 8.00pm); 8.45 Quarry Bank; 9.45 Moss Trooper. (T&H)

Monday 16th – EGM and Campaigning Meeting: Young Pretender, Lawton Street, Congleton. Starts 8.00pm. (MEC)

Wednesday 18th – Branch AGM: Derby Brewery Arms, Cheetham Hill Road. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 19th – Hale Social: 8.00pm Moose, Ashley Road, 9.00 Cheshire Midland; 9.45 Railway; 10.30 Tatton. (T&H)

Friday 20th – West Didsbury Stagger: 7.30pm Woodstock, Barlow Moor Road; 8.30 Greenfinch, Palatine Road. (SSM)

Wednesday 25th – Salford Quays Survey: 7.30pm Dockyard, Media City; 8.30 Craftbrew, Lowry Plaza. (NM)

Thursday 26th – Pub of the Month presentation to the Boars Head, Stockport Market Place. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Saturday 28th – Flixton Social: 1.00pm Church Inn; 2.00 John Aker (Ex-Servicemen's Club); 3.00 Bird in't Hand; 3.45 Flixton Con Club; 5.00 Tim Bobbin; 5.45 Chadwick. (T&H)

Wednesday 1st April – New(ish) outlets survey: 7.30pm Abel Heywood, Turner St; 8.00 Allotment, Dale Street, plus others. (NM)

Thursday 2nd April – Branch Meeting: Flixton Conservative Club, M31 5Df. Starts 8.00pm. (T&H)

Social Media

Many of the local CAMRA branches have Facebook and Twitter accounts which you can follow:



Stockport & South Manchester:
www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA

Trafford & Hulme:
www.facebook.com/thcamra

Macclesfield & East Cheshire:
www.facebook.com/pages/Macclesfield-East-Cheshire-CAMRA/106975496056067



Stockport & South Manchester: @SSMCAMRA

Trafford & Hulme: @THCAMRA

North Manchester: @NorthMancsCAMRA

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Pub of the Month

The Boars Head, Stockport



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for January is the Boars Head on Stockport's Market Place. Dave Sharpe reports.

There is very little argument when I say the Boars Head in the Market Place is Stockport's busiest lunchtime boozier – given there is no food available.

This Sam Smith's house was first mentioned in the town's history in 1824. It was rebuilt in 1880 and back in 1921 it was a Bass house. It came into the ownership of Tadcaster's Samuel Smith's in the late 1960s when they acquired a small local pub chain. For the last six years it has been in the capable hands of Sue and Terry Wild, supported by, Sue tells me, the best staff you could wish for. Prior to taking on the Boars Head Sue and Terry ran the now-closed Greyhound in Edgeley for five years.

It has had several refurbishments, the last in 2013, which have seen the restoration of something approaching the original multi-room layout. On entering, the bar faces you, with a lobby running down to the left. A small open area to the right leads to the corner room and there are two small rooms facing the bar. Carry on past the bar and round the corner you enter a large "function room" with its own bar.

Sam Smith's was established in Tadcaster and it is Yorkshire's oldest brewery. They still brew in traditional "Yorkshire squares" and deliver their draught beer in wooden barrels – they still employ their own cooper. Old Brewery Bitter is the only cask ale at this Good Beer Guide listed pub and they get through three 36-gallon barrels of it each week so, as you can imagine, it's always in good condition. Don't take my word for it – come and join us for an enjoyable social evening on Thursday 26th March.

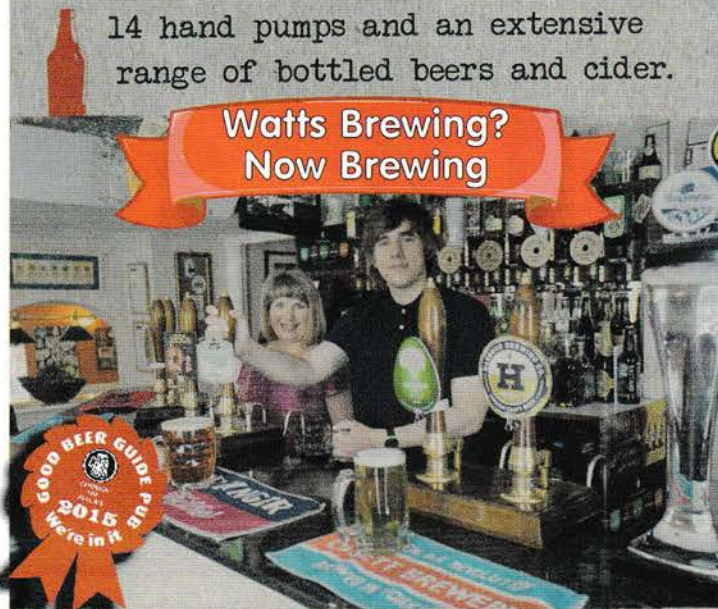
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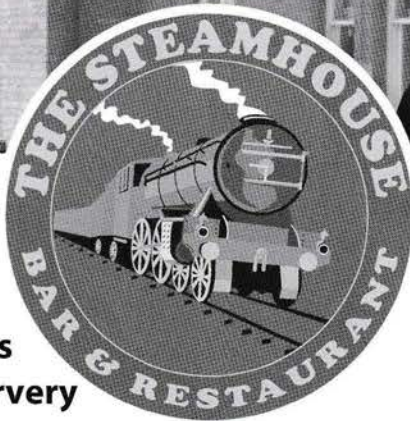
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Food is served:

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- TRAFFORD PUB OF THE YEAR 2010 BY CITY LIFE

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HOP HOUSE

Urmston Independents Review -

The Hop House is a new bar at 10 Higher Road, Urmston, which offers continental beers, wine, champagne, artisan foods, tea and coffee to Urmston's thirsty carousers.

In spite of its name, and the prevalence of beers on the menu, the place has the feel of an old-fashioned gin parlour, with an eclectically designed interior (leopard-print walls, mismatching chairs – the kind of thing we've been missing in Urmston for far too long ...) and a cordial atmosphere of gregarious cheer. It's the kind of bar where you could easily strike up a conversation with the people on the next table.

If you're a beer enthusiast, there's plenty to choose from at the Hop House.

The Hop House hasn't been open long, but when I called in the other night it was very busy, though not in a terrible, help-me-I-can't-move kind of way. It's just a stone's throw from Urmston train station and the main bus stops so it's easy to get to.

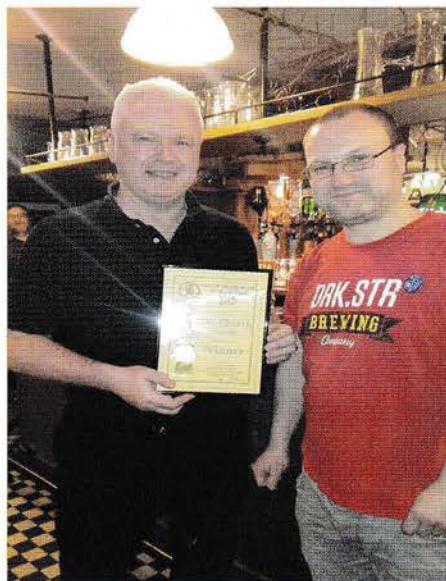


Trafford & Hulme Awards



Winners from around the branch area

Most Improved Pub 2014



Congratulations to Carl and Steve (pictured left, with Trafford & Hulme branch's Mark Reeves) and the rest of the team at the **Church Inn**, Hulme, on winning the 2014 Trafford & Hulme Most Improved Pub of the Year award.

A JW Lees pub, it was refurbished in 2013 with a new kitchen and outdoor drinking area and a warm welcome is always guaranteed. Having successfully run a bar in Macclesfield for 14 years, they were set a new challenge by the Church, which had

been off of the real ale map for years and was generally a bit run down and ignored. It now serves two Lees' ales and has a real community feel with a clientele consisting mostly of locals, students and university staff.

A kitchen fire in 2014 was a small setback but they have shrugged that off and continue to serve excellent home cooked food (the steak and ale pie is a winner, according to regulars). In an area where traditional pubs can be counted on a few fingers we wish them a long and prosperous future.

Sip Club Triple Award



Most pubs would be happy to receive one award in a year, but Stretford's **Sip Club** isn't your ordinary bar and it seems many in the region are noticing this with the Barton Road bar having picked up three awards already this year. First up was Trafford & Hulme CAMRA's Best Newcomer Award for 2014 which was presented to owner Heather Garlick by Branch Chair Paul King in January.

This award was quickly eclipsed when the Sip Club was named Best Bar in the City Life Awards, seeing off competition from West Didsbury's Volta and the Northern Quarter's Bluu to

take 50% of the public vote. "I'm totally overwhelmed by people's reactions," Heather told the Manchester Evening News, continuing, "We certainly haven't won this award for our snappy interiors or our wide range of imported beers! We owe it to our amazing regulars and supporters who have not only voted for us but made the bar a fun and welcoming place to be."

The trio of gongs was completed by an off-field offering from the Federation of Small Businesses in recognition of their efforts to

promote and engage with other Stretford businesses. Local MP Kate Green nominated the bar for the Business Buddy Award after noting their efforts to use local suppliers wherever possible (including almost exclusively offering beers & ciders from local brewers and producers) and to promote other Stretford businesses via events such as the bimonthly "Made In M32" craft fairs.

Community Pub of the Year



Congratulations to Pete, Wendy and the rest of the team at the **Railway** in Broadheath on winning the 2014 Trafford and Hulme Community Pub of the Year award. This is a well deserved award for a pub that has successfully served the locals of Broadheath since it was saved from

demolition in the mid 1990's by a joint campaign organised by CAMRA and its locals.

Pete and his partner Wendy have carried on the tradition of keeping the Railway a locals' local since taking over the lease. Some pubs have a smart kitchen and are able to serve meals, the Railway doesn't, some pubs have the space to allow live music and comedy acts, the Railway doesn't. It relies entirely on its community spirit, and great ale, to attract and keep its customers. So let's wish Pete & Wendy a long and successful future. (Pictured above, Trafford & Hulme CAMRA's Beverley Gobbett presents Pete with his award.)

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Stagger

Heald Green & Cheadle Hulme with Jim Flynn



It was a cold, damp evening in January just after the end of the Manchester Beer and Cider Festival, the pavements were treacherous with snow from the previous day and more bad weather was promised. It was no surprise that the number of hardy souls on the stagger was small.



Our starting point was the **Griffin** in Heald Green. Holts spent a lot of money turning this from what was admittedly a down-at-heel local into a quasi-dining pub back in 2006 or 2007, and no doubt recently spent almost as much again upgrading it still further. This latest refurbishment did away with the vault, although there is still an area of the pub that might be described as such, and fashioned a dining area to the rear. What they have created is a clean, airy, well-lit and obviously highly popular pub which, although food-orientated, nevertheless caters well for the drinker. In fact we sat in the dining area to have our beer. The choice was the Bitter, IPA and Two Hoots along with a beer from Bootleg (Holt's micro), Metro Pirate. We tried all but the IPA and found them to be in good form.



in one of the raised areas finding the Hydes 1863 and the Original in good order - in contrast to the weather, which was deteriorating.



As the snow fell we trekked to the **Kenilworth** on Cheadle Road (note to self - make sure this is a summer stagger next time!). This is a large, obviously thriving pub which in recent years has seen an increasing emphasis on interesting cask beers. The back of the pub was packed with customers for the pub quiz but at the front there were still a few free seats. The televisions were showing Championship football but this was certainly not intrusive. The pumpclips on the three handpumps in front of us were showing Taylor's Landlord, Moberley Hedgehopper and Wells' Bombardier were available but as we approached the former went off. When I expressed my disappointment the landlady told me that Thwaites' marvellous 13 Guns was also on offer from another handpump (I never saw where from) which I jumped at and my colleagues plumped for the Hedgehopper; both beers were on really top form. As we sat with our beers the landlord approached us with the offer of Moberley Roadrunner which was about to be put on. Altogether a very welcoming and friendly pub indeed.

Our next stop was the **March Hare** on Mill Lane just off Ladybridge Road. There is a cut through but given the atrocious weather (the snow had now turned to sleet) and our lack of local knowledge we decided that the longer main road route was safer. When it was built in the 1980s, from reclaimed brick to resemble an old corn mill, it was called the Old Mill. Since then along with the name change a false ceiling has been added (and also separate seating areas) presumably to give a more intimate feeling to the place. Now owned by Vintage Inns, which we were told is part of Mitchells and Butler, the pub is like many around here. The focus is on food but we were not made to feel uncomfortable in just drinking (the nearby Hesketh should note!). Thwaites Wainwright, Hook Norton Lion and Brakspear Bitter were the beers on offer but the latter was found to be at the end of its life and was replaced. Therefore the only beer tried was the Lion which we found was in reasonable nick. As we left the Brakspear pumpclip had not been

turned around due to 'company policy' - a little disappointing especially for a Cask Marque accredited pub.



It was now raining as we wound our way passed the pile of bricks that used to be the **Greyhound** down to the **Micker Brook**, on Councillor Lane, another Mitchells & Butler house. Perhaps because this is a carvery which mainly attracts families with young children the pub was almost empty by this point in the evening; in fact they appeared to be considering locking up as we entered. There is not much to say about the pub which is an identikit place of its type with no real individual features and I'm afraid the same might be said of the Thwaites Wainwright, the sole cask beer. All very standard fare but at least in contrast to the similar Cheadle Royal cask beer was on offer.



Our final stop was the **Cross Keys** on Adswold Road, a Hydes community pub with a lounge to the front and a vault at the rear. The lounge was heaving with people listening to what was a rather good karaoke (it's not often I have used those words together in a Stagger article). However, locals very kindly made room for us and we found ourselves chatting to them whilst we enjoyed our Original and 1863, which were very well worth drinking. At the rear of the pub is a play area but the fine bowling green of old is regrettably long gone. This is a place definitely on the up.

Overall this is a stagger which can be commended for the general variety and quality of beer available (with perhaps one exception) but do pick a nice sunny evening when you attempt it!

We skated across the car park (why no grit Holts?) and very gingerly made out way to the **Ryecroft** on Turves Road, having first ascertained by phone that the Cheadle Royal was still keg. Like the Griffin this pub has been refurbished in recent years but in contrast this is still very much an estate pub frequented by locals. Given the bad weather the door to the lounge was closed and we entered through the deserted vault. At this point I could see why rumours of the pub closing last year had been so prevalent but on entering the lounge the picture changed as it was quite busy with a number of families with lively children out enjoying themselves. We sat

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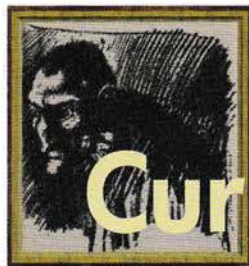
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Branch and Regional
Cider Pub of the Year 2014



Curmudgeon

Goodbye to the 19th Hole

In December last year, the Scottish government cut the drink-driving limit in Scotland from 80mg to 50mg, which means that an average man can legally have no more than one pint of ordinary-strength beer. This seemed to be nodded through by all political parties with little opposition, but the effects have not been exactly surprising.

Paul Waterson, chief executive of the Scottish Licensed Trade Association, said the law change would lead to a "complete change to drinking habits" and would be "bigger than the smoking ban". "Rural pubs especially are at risk because people travel to them," he said. "This definitely will be a difficult situation for many. It's having a marked effect. It stops people having a glass of wine with a meal or a pint with a meal. People are not taking the chance. It's a game-changer. This is a very strict ban by anyone's standards. We have lost three pubs a week since the smoking ban and this, for many, is worse." It's reported that many pubgoers, faced with being limited to just a single drink, have decided not to bother at all.

Greene King, who have a substantial pub estate in Scotland, recorded a noticeable drop in sales over the Christmas and New Year period compared with the previous year. Bars in golf clubs, which have a much wider social base in Scotland than south of the border, are especially feeling the pinch. This is a good example of where the primary purpose of people's car journeys is something else, but they take the opportunity to combine it with a drink in the bar. Realistically, golfers aren't going to take their set of clubs on the bus.

Fortunately, the UK government has said that it has no plans to follow suit in England. But no-one should delude themselves that it wouldn't have a severe effect on the licensed trade, and it is hard to escape the conclusion that it is much more an anti-drink and specifically anti-pub measure than a road safety one.

Variety Isn't Everything

The latest version of Pete Brown's Cask Report was published last autumn, and again it recorded a story of success in a declining market, with cask beer continuing to gain absolute volume, not just market share, and having reversed the proportion of the ale market it enjoys vis-à-vis keg since 2006. It's the drinkers of traditional keg ales, not cask, who are literally a dying breed.

However, it has some interesting things to say about drinkers' expectations of how rapidly beers are changed and rotated on the bar and how, maybe surprisingly, drinkers tend to be less adventurous in their tastes than publicans think they are. Drinkers were happiest with an average of 4.9 beers over a four-week period, versus an average of seven amongst publicans. Drinkers also wanted to see guest beers available for more than a week, whereas publicans wanted to change them over more often. Many said that if they enjoyed a beer they would appreciate the opportunity to try it more than once, which is why many pub-owning breweries tend to produce seasonal beers for a period of two or three months.

I'm all in favour of trying new and unfamiliar beers, but often it's good to see an old favourite on the bar, particularly if you just want a dependable pint to wash down your lunch. And, from the breweries' point of view, surely it will help their long-term prospects if they can build up a reputation for specific beers and get repeat business rather than an endless series of one-off specials. Thornbridge Jaipur is a good example of a beer that many people will immediately order if they see it. It would seem from the Cask Report that Britain's drinkers agree.

Curmudgeon Online:
curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

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Cider Awards

Celebrations at the Cheshire Ring

The Cheshire Ring on Manchester Road in Hyde always offers a warm welcome with great "craic" to be had around the bar. Part of this is down to the loyal and lively regulars. Most however is down to landlord Wayne Taylor, who has firmly stamped his personality on this excellent local.

It's a Beartown Brewery pub so the Congleton brewer's beers have pride of place on the bar. These are supplemented by guest beers and, significantly, a guest cider or two. Unsurprisingly then, the Cheshire Ring has for some years now been the venue for the annual Opening Times Cider Circuit prize-giving afternoon. It's a convivial afternoon in this most convivial of pubs. Much cider and perry is drunk, in what has really become an annual informal celebration of these most traditional of drinks.

This year saw a good turnout of prize winners and other cider fans, who were also treated to Wayne's now famous pork and cider stew — enlivened just before serving by the addition of mustard and half a bottle of Calvados. Wayne is pictured here at the front of the merry crowd of prize winners and friends.



Given the Cheshire Ring's long standing commitment to traditional cider and perry, the High Peak & NE Cheshire Branch of CAMRA made the Cheshire Ring its 2014 Cider Pub of the Year from Greater Manchester. Wayne is used to winning CAMRA awards by now and he is pictured here with his certificate, with various other awards on the wall behind.



Best Newcomer

A belated award was made late last month — that for the "Best Newcomer" to the cider bar at last year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. The winner was Macclesfield's SiDa for their excellent Maxonian Mist. The presentation was made at the Waters Green Tavern in Macclesfield which both drew SiDa to the festival's attention and sponsored the cider to boot. Pictured above are Waters Green landlord Brian McFadden (left) and SiDa's David Lamb and Simon Ashmore. Simon and David made much more cider last autumn so they will be back at Stockport this year.



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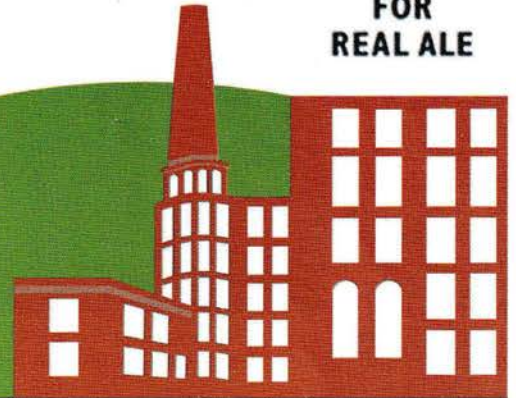
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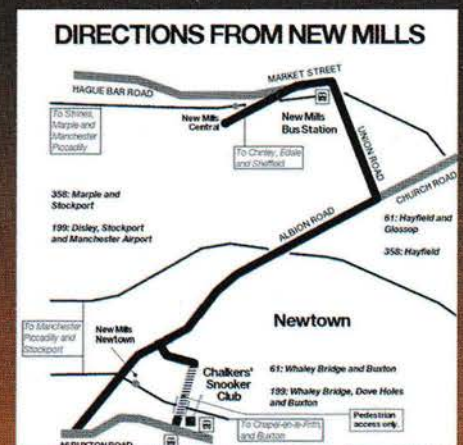


How to find Chalkers' Snooker Club:

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High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views



Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

This may be the time of year for CAMRA branches to be choosing their branch Pub of the Year, but late January saw the **19th Hole** on Buxton's Fairfield Common voted the winner of the Buxton Advertiser Best Bar Award. The successful management have been in place since 2011 and this award obviously reflects local satisfaction with how the 19th Hole has developed in that time. Congratulations to all concerned. Well done to the Buxton Advertiser for promoting local pubs.



January's *Derbyshire Life* also carries some good pub news. This relates to the community pub in Bamford in the Hope Valley, the **Anglers Rest**. Threatened with sale to a developer the pub was listed as an Asset of Community Value, and the Bamford Community Society worked successfully to keep their local. As well as being a pub, the Angler's Rest also serves as the village Post Office. Part of the pub has been set aside as the Rest Café and there is a monthly farmers' market in the car park. I have heard good reports about the food available. Again, well done to all concerned for saving a pub in these times of continuing uncertainty.

A few of us visited another revived pub recently, the **Rose & Crown** at Allgreave on the A54 between Buxton and Congleton. High on the hills this is a relatively isolated pub which has only recently reopened, with new owners, after a period of closure. I first called here in the early sixties when beer was supplied by Smith's of Macclesfield, a local brewery bought out by Marston's. The 1981 CAMRA book, *Real Ale in Cheshire* from 1981 shows the pub as selling Robinsons beers, as do more recent Cheshire guides. These days the Rose & Crown is a free house selling beer from local breweries. Food is also sourced locally, so that I was able to enjoy Wincle Heritage beer along with a trout from the Wincle trout farm, both but a couple of miles away. Other local beers available were Storm Pale Gale Ale and Merlin Blizzard. This was a worthwhile visit and the Rose & Crown is to be recommended.

Just to show that lost locals are not just a recent phenomenon, about a mile east of Allgreave, along a minor road, stands the former **Eagle & Child**, overlooking Gradbach. The building seems to be just a house, but may well have been a farm house - many country pubs were. It was lost as a pub many years ago, but gets a mention in Andrew McCloy's *Peakland Pubs - a Pint-sized History*, published in 2005.

Nearer home the **Crossings** at Furness Vale has launched the sale of food. Katie's Kitchen is open on Friday teatime and early evening for, amongst other offerings, a fish and chip special. Meals and snacks are available through the day on Saturday. Sunday starts with breakfast available from 10.00 until after 12.00, and through lunchtime and into the afternoon. Traditional Sunday lunch is available. Unicorn is always on sale, and well kept too, whilst a second beer can be on the bar. Double Hop and Voodoo Dawn have been recent popular selections. At the Crossings they are hoping for visitors to call in, as well as attracting locals.



Also in Furness Vale, the **Soldier Dick** makes a good call for food. A group of us booked for lunch after a couple of hours on the hills and were well served with good meals. Four hand pumps dispense a range of beers from around the country as well as from local breweries. Well recommended.

Some bad news came to light recently when the **George & Dragon**, at Higher Hurdsfield on the Whaley Bridge road out of Macclesfield, was closed following a fire in mid January. Damage to the roof can be seen from the road, and the building has been secured with fencing. This was a Greenall's house back in the mists of time, and over a decade ago was a Good Beer Guide pub.

Badged as White Label IPA, a curio from Robinsons has appeared in the Cock in Whaley Bridge, and doubtless elsewhere in the Robinsons estate. This is a fine pale and hoppy 5.5% brew. The beer mat describes it as a bespoke craft beer created by the blokes who serve it.

Finally, look out for a heritage event in Buxworth during the Easter Weekend. The canal basin will be the focus of the weekend but there will be a beer event at the **Navigation** and an enhanced range of beer at Buxworth W.M.Club. The 190 bus

links Whaley Bridge and Chinley via Buxworth on the Saturday only. Buxworth is about a 15 minute walk along the canal from the 199 bus stop in Bridgemont, and a good 20 minute walk from Chinley railway station. The effort will be well worth while.

High Peak Pub News

With Tom Lord

News has come in of two pub auctions. Firstly the **Oddfellows Arms** on Kings Road, Hurst, in Ashton under Lyne was one of the lots at an auction at Manchester City Football Ground on 26th February. Rather sad this, as this Robinsons pub was in former times a regular in the Good Beer Guide for several years. The second is reported in the local press as being the White Hart in Mottram. The suggestion is that if the pub is sold it will be converted into housing. The sad fact is that this is the last pub actually in Mottram!

We follow this with some rather better news about several pub refurbishments. The **Friendship** in Glossop is being refurbished and should have reopened by now. The **Royal Oak** on Market Street in New Mills is also being refurbished with reopening due in late February. The refurbishment at the **Swan** in Kettlethulme is now completed. There is now a larger eating area but the bar and remainder of the pub are as before.



The following beer news has been reported. The **Wren's Nest** in Glossop now has Greene King IPA, and the **Peaks** in New Mills has a rotating real ale from one of Jennings Cumberland, Wychwood Hobgoblin and Black Sheep. The **Station** (pictured above) on Warrington Street in Ashton has several changing real ales and the nearby **Forester's Call** had Holt's Bitter on a recent visit.

The **Rock Tavern** on Wirksmoor Road in New Mills has recently welcomed a new landlord. Robinsons Unicorn and Dizzy Blonde are the real ales on offer. It is reported that the **Moon and Sixpence** in Glossop is up for sale. The **Halcyon** Restaurant on Station Road, Hadfield is now stocking bottled real ales from Howard Town Brewery in Glossop.

CAMRA Discounts

There are several pubs in the Opening Times area that offer a discount to card-carrying CAMRA members. This is a very welcome promotion and we are very grateful to those pubs that have taken up this initiative. Opening Times publishes an up-to-date list of these pubs every three months. To date we have been given details of the following pubs which offer a discount. If any pub out there has been missed off the list (or the information below is incorrect) then please email Opening Times Editor John Clarke with details. The email address is: stocam@btinternet.com.

Here are the pubs we currently have full details of:

- ❖ **Albert Square Chop House, Manchester:** 20% off cask ales.
- ❖ **Bar Fringe, Swan Street, Manchester:** 10p off a half and 20p off a pint of cask ale.
- ❖ **Beehive, Market Place, Droylsden:** 10p off a pint on Mondays.
- ❖ **Bier Cell, Greenwood Street, Altrincham:** 10% discount on bottled beers.
- ❖ **Font, New Wakefield Street, Manchester:** 25% off cask ales.
- ❖ **Font, Manchester Road, Chorlton:** 25% off cask ales.
- ❖ **Font, Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield:** 25% off cask ales and ciders.
- ❖ **Harewood Arms, 2 Market Street, Broadbottom:** 20p off a pint of cask ales Sunday to Thursday.
- ❖ **Lass O'Gowrie, Charles Street, Manchester:** 50p off a pint and 20p off a half of cask ale.
- ❖ **Lloyds, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton:** 10% off food and drink.
- ❖ **Mary & Archie, Burton Road, West Didsbury:** 10p off a pint of cask ale.
- ❖ **Mono, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton:** 10% off cask ale.
- ❖ **Salisbury, New Wakefield Street, Manchester:** 50p off a pint and 20p off a half of cask ale.
- ❖ **Spinning Top, Wellington Road South, Stockport:** 30p off a pint and 12p off a half.
- ❖ **Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar:** 10% off cask ales (does not apply Friday and Saturday).
- ❖ **Stalybridge Labour Club, Acres Lane, Stalybridge:** 14% off cask ales.
- ❖ **Trevor, Beech Road, Chorlton:** 10% off cask ale.
- ❖ **White Hart, High Street, Cheadle:** 10% off cask ale.
- ❖ **White House, Water Street, Stalybridge:** 10% off cask ales.
- ❖ **Victorian, Ack Lane East, Bramhall:** 10% off a pint of cask ale.

Yet more good reasons to join CAMRA! See membership form on page 18 or join online at: <http://www.camra.org.uk/>

Mild Magic Coming Next Month



Next month we launch our annual Mild Magic promotion: your chance to visit new pubs, try new beers and win prizes too. Full details next time.

Many thanks to Hydes Brewery for sponsoring this year's event.

Unicorn, Dean Row

Under threat as a "proper pub"



By the time you read this, its future as a pub could be in doubt, writes John Clegg. A planning application has been submitted to transform it into an American-style diner.

The Unicorn is a pub which has been transformed in recent months, often selling up to five ales on handpump, winning a near perfect Cask Marque score back in May 2014 (and again last month) and selling comparatively more cask ale than the other pubs in a recent Spirit Group beer festival. All signs of a pub on the up.

The planning application is to build onto the existing pub and convert it into a Hickory's Smokehouse, an American-style eatery - just what Dean Row has been crying out for, of course. What makes a good pub doesn't make a good US-style "restaurant". Pubs are regularly used; a smoke-house-style diner will be a destination where people will visit less regularly.

A recent planning meeting showed that there is local support to keep the Unicorn as a pub, but locals objecting aren't enough to stop someone inflicting their unwanted vision of a food outlet on the local area. The date for objections and comments passed on 9th February, and so the next key date is 4th March when it is going before committee for further scrutiny. There's a chance that this date may be missed due to the planning officer's workload.

While currently a Spirit Group pub, the Unicorn exercises its right to buy local beers via the SIBA Direct Delivery Scheme and so supports local small breweries and jobs and the wider local economy. The proposal has shown up a wider problem in how people view pubs. The Unicorn has only risen again since last November; before that it was run by apparently uninterested - or differently-interested - tenants, and people have recalled that the place had become a bit shabbier, a bit unloved, and was only a shadow of its past glories in the '90s and early 2000s. This demonstrates that once pub-goers get an idea about a pub, it is difficult to change that perception. The Unicorn has changed.

So if it's successful as a Smokehouse, then we've lost a decent pub. If it's unsuccessful, then it'll most likely go downhill. It could then become a McDonalds. Or one of those ever-changing Indian-style restaurants. Or even a mini-supermarket. Or it could stagger on until the boards go up on the windows and the place falls into ruin and then gets sold off for development.

A Facebook campaign to keep the pub as a pub has been set up and is currently compiling signatures on an application to have the pub listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). This can be viewed at www.facebook.com/Savetheunicorn.

The planning application can be seen online at: planning.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ApplicationSearch.aspx - Cheshire East's planning ref. no. is 14/5873M.

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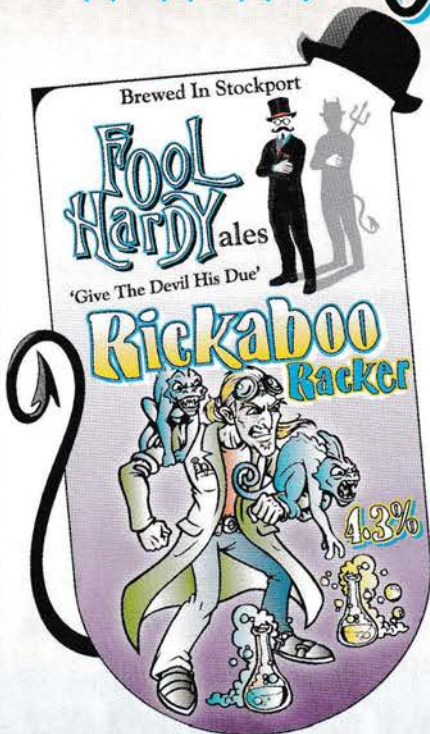
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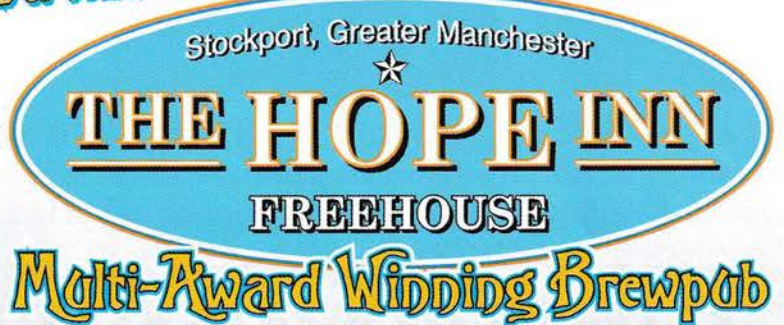


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All of our beers can be sampled at: -

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Heard at the Bar

Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond



Club News

Flixton Conservative Club (pictured below) has launched a monthly series of "Brewery Awareness Evenings" which sees one brewery being showcased across the five handpumps which have been installed in the club's Abbotsfield Suite. Bolton's Bank Top, Accrington's Big Clock and Bury's Brightside Brewery have already featured at the club, which is on Chassen Road between Urmston and Flixton centres.



Held on the last Friday of every month, the evenings are to encourage non-members to come along and try the beers, and see what the club has to offer. Entrance is £2 including a pie and peas supper. Pints are priced at £2.50. Details of the 27th March event were not available when *OT* went to press but can be found by visiting flixtonconservativeclub.co.uk. The club is also putting together details of their third Beer & Cider Festival which will again be held over the Easter weekend.

In other club news, the **Woodheys Social Club** on Washway Road, Sale has become a regular real ale outlet, alternating between two Thwaites beers - Wainwright and Bomber (both now brewed at Banks's in Wolverhampton). New members are welcome and the club has launched a new website to keep up to date with events - woodheysclub.co.uk.

Wetherspoons News

Stretford's **Bishop Blaize** has launched a series of mini beer festivals dubbed "2015 Weekends of Ale". From Thursday to Sunday each weekend they will hand over half their handpumps to showcase one brewery. February saw Acorn, Robinsons, Moorhouses and Greenfield feature, but details for March were not available when *Opening Times* went to press.

JD Wetherspoon pubs across the region will be holding their spring real ale festival from 13th to 29th March. The theme for the spring event is that all the featured beers have been brewed using British hops. As they have been doing for a few years, Wetherspoons have again commissioned several beers to be brewed by overseas brewers including Dungarvan Brewery of Waterford in the Republic of Ireland, Mountain Goat Brewery of Richmond, Australia and Cervceria Fort Brewery from Barcelona, Spain.



Opening Times still doesn't understand how they get away with branding these events as "The World's Biggest Real Ale Festival" but it is always good to see some of our local breweries being given the opportunity to get beers into Wetherspoon pubs countrywide. This time round, Manchester will be represented by Phoenix, Robinsons and Hydes. To launch the festival, Chorlton's **Sedge Lynn** will be welcoming Cumbria's Hawkshead Brewery to a Meet the Brewer event on Thursday 12th March. Hawkshead has brewed Jester, a 3.7% pale bitter loaded with Bramling Cross hops for the event and this will be on the bar a day before the it starts along with a selection of the other festival beers. Brewery staff will be at the Manchester Road pub from 6.30 - 8pm.

More on Chorlton



Also in Chorlton, **the Bar** has expanded its range of traditional cider and perry to offer a choice of three - usually one perry and two ciders. One is on handpump at the end of the bar while the other two are kept in the fridge - just ask for what is available. They continue to offer seven cask ales, including one regular dark ale.

On Barlow Moor Road, the **Spoon Inn** has launched a new evening menu to complement their regular daytime menu of sandwiches, salads and snacks. The new menu includes Sausage Mondays when you can get a gourmet hot dog (or vegetarian option) and a pint of ale for £6.50. The café bar has also become a drop-off point for Barakah Food Aid, the food bank project set up by local business people Manzoor and Aiysha Ali to help those in need of food in the Whalley Range and Chorlton area. Members of the public can drop non-perishable food items at the bar and the

staff will arrange for them to be collected and distributed to those in need.

City News

One of the newest additions to Manchester's Northern Quarter pub scene comes courtesy of Hydes. The **Abel Heywood** on Turner Street is named after a radical Liberal politician who was twice returned as Lord Mayor of Manchester, and who was born locally in Prestwich. The bell inside the Town Hall clock tower is named 'Great Abel' after him.

Styling itself as a "boutique hotel". It has a restaurant on the first floor (accessible by stairs and lift). There's a public house type bar on the ground floor, neatly kitted out with wooden furnishings, large arched windows and the like, all deliberately modelled in a 'nicotine' brown retro style. There are high and low tables and seating, with some banquettes and adorning the walls are pictures of old and new Manchester scenes.

On entering, an L-shaped room has a curved bar with six handpumps. These dispense Hydes Original, together with their seasonal beers and Beer Studio creations. Lunchtime and evening meals are served from their 'Brunch' and 'Food' menus with a full restaurant service upstairs. There is reasonably priced accommodation and all in all it's a warm, friendly and comfortable place to be in. The pub opening hours are from 11am-12 midnight, extended to 1am on Fridays and Saturdays.



Opening Times recently called in to **The Knott** on Deansgate to find it in the middle of alterations to the bar area. The bar which was curved at one end has been extended and is now longer and straight. The handpumps previously ran round the curve making them hard to see, but are now in a straight line. In addition, the blackboards listing what is available are now behind the bar, meaning staff will be able to update them even when the pub is busy.

A recent opening in the Northern Quarter is **Affleck & Brown** on the corner of Thomas Street and Tib Street. When *OT* looked in Thwaites Wainwright and Deuchars IPA were on handpump.

More on page 19

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Heard More at the Bar

Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Midland Reprieve



We have previously highlighted the threat to the **Midland** on Wellington Road North. In short, a planned road scheme could involve the demolition of the pub. Needless to say neither CAMRA nor the pub's owner Mark Hayter is happy at the prospect and we have been gearing up for a fight. However it now looks like the pub has had a temporary reprieve as we have now received the following message from Stockport Council:

"The link road from the A6 to Travis Brow which involves demolishing the Midland Pub remains part of the Town Centre Access Package scheme. It is, however, part of Phase 2 and we will be developing the scheme further and re-consulting over it later in 2015 or early in 2016 with a view to submitting a final business case for it later in 2016. In the interim we have been concentrating on the Phase 1 schemes which we expect to have on site this summer."

Let us hope that this breathing space gives the planners pause for thought and, more to the point, allows them to come up with revised proposals that avoids this pointless demolition.

Pub Shorts

There's a real ale gain in Marple Bridge. **South 7** on Town Street has installed a handpump and is selling beers from Hydes new Tweed Brewing.

In Burnage the **Mauldeth** on Kingsway appears to be closed. When OT passed by in early February the pub was firmly shut and has a To Let sign outside.



Across town in Gorton, the **Vale Cottage** was taken over by Mark Gladney, just in time for the New Year's Eve celebrations. For the time being it's steady as you go although the menu is

being re-appraised. Mark is also looking at all day opening, but from when and on which days has yet to be decided. Nearby the regulars of the **Plough** should be sampling a house beer, Gorton Guzzler (4.2%).

In Offerton things are looking up at the **Harvester** on Turnstone Road. Last August the pub gained a new licensee in Craig and at the end of January he bought the pub outright. It is therefore Stockport's latest free house. A second handpump has been installed and this will feature a regularly changing guest beer alongside regular Wells Bombardier. There are plans to install a third handpump shortly.

Britannia, Urmston



Urmston's **Britannia** has gone through several incarnations in recent years, mainly operating as a late-night venue under names such as Juicy, TFI Mambos and most recently the Ivory. New tenant Matt Price has reinstated the pub's old name and set about returning it to the traditional pub model, with the immediate introduction of real ale. The Britannia is serving freshly made, locally-sourced food with a main gourmet burger menu and a separate lunchtime menu served from 12-4 Monday to Friday. The permanent cask ale is Sharp's Doom Bar with a second guest ale on rotation. All sports are shown live in HD across five TVs and a large screen. There is live entertainment every Saturday night and DJ/karaoke on a Sunday night.

Prince of Orange, Ashton

Following a six-week closure and a major refurbishment, the **Prince of Orange** on Warrington Street, Ashton reopened on Thursday 11th of December. Long time Roger Hantulik (pictured top right) remains at the helm, writes Peter O'Brien.

The pub is a world away from what it was prior to the refurbishment. There is now a warm and inviting atmosphere about the place. The old pool table has been replaced by a snug, while the large main bar area is now more open plan thanks to the addition of a new carvery and dining area. There is a small stage area for the live entertainment which will be on every weekend from about 9pm.

Roger now has three handpumps on the bar selling a rotating range from the Robinsons card, and he also has his own specially badged Prince of Orange Ale. When I spoke to Roger about the new look he was understandably proud of it and now has ambitions to transform the Prince back into one of Ashton's most go-to venues. He also has ambitions to get the Prince in the Good Beer Guide, and has been talking to Robinsons about trialling a CAMRA discount scheme.



The carvery will be open every day – Monday to Thursday until 5pm, Friday and Saturday until 8pm, and 6pm on Sundays. The food is both excellent quality and value for money. Children are allowed in until end of food service after which the pub then goes back to an over-25s only establishment.

Friendship, Glossop

The **Friendship** on Arundel Street in Glossop has reopened following a complete transformation courtesy of Robinsons and tenant Sarah Ozdemir.



The refurbishment has taken the once-dark pub and illuminated it with new industrial style mood lighting and a carefully chosen colour palette to complement the pub's original oak panelling. The bar area now feels much larger thanks to a new furniture layout including high tables, comfy seating and bentwood stools. Pictures showing local history adorn the walls along with vintage letters and other carefully selected bric-a-brac items including old glass bottles, ceramic jars and books.

The focal point of the pub is undoubtedly its unique circular bar, which has been re-finished incorporating a new bar top with studded steel wrap detail. A tiled beer board identifies the various beer colours and the bar now boasts five hand pulls, serving a rotating range of Robinsons' beers.



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