

OPENING TIMES

JULY 2015 / FREE

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STOCKPORT BEER WEEK / CAMRA LOOKS
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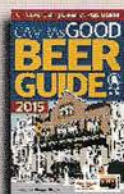
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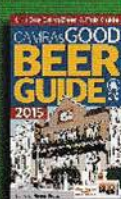
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OPENING TIMES

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. 7,500 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 - The new look bar at the Palatine, Hadfield.
Photo courtesy of Robinsons.

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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: Paul Felton; Secretary@ssmcamra.co.uk

North Manchester (NM)

www.northmanchester.camra.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 or enquiries@thcamra.org.uk

Local CAMRA Events open to all, in blue

Wednesday 8th – Wardley/Walkden Survey: Morning Star, Manchester Road 7.30pm; Bull's Head, High Street 9.00pm (NM)

Thursday 9th – Branch Meeting & New Faces Social: Hope, Wellington Road Nth, Heaton Norris. New faces especially welcome. Guest speaker from local brewery. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

Friday 10th – Chorlton Social: Royal Oak, 7.30pm; Beagle 8.00pm; Sedge Lynn 8.45; Marble Beer House 9.30; Pi 10.30 (T&H)

Saturday 11th – First Peak District bus trip. Details from branch contact. (HPNC)

Monday 13th – Branch Meeting: Boundary, Audenshaw Road, Guide Bridge. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 15th – Branch Meeting: Royal Oak, Barton Lane, Eccles. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Wednesday 15th – Open Committee Meeting: Stretford Sip Club. Starts 8.00pm. Branch members welcome. Note no July branch meeting. (T&H)

Friday 17th – Gatley & Cheadle Stagger: Prince of Wales, Gatley Green 7.30pm; Horse & Farrier, Gatley Rd. 8.30pm. (SSM)

Saturday 18th – Cheadle Hulme Pub Crawl: starts Platform 5 1.30pm. (MEC)

Wednesday 22nd – Newton Heath Survey: Church, Gaskell St 7.30pm; New Crown 8.30pm; Railway, Dean Lane 9.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 23rd – Pub of the Month presentation: Old Monkey, Portland Street, Manchester City Centre. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Thursday 23rd – Pub of the Season presentation: Pi, Shaw's Road, Altrincham. From 8.00pm. (T&H)

Saturday 25th – Railway Crawl to Romiley, Marple etc: catch 11.49am train from Piccadilly. More details on website. (NM)

Saturday 25th – Sale Stroll: 12.00pm Bridge; 1.00 Volunteer; 1.45 Railway; 2.30 Waterside; 3.00 Kings Ransom; 3.30 Slug & Lettuce; 4.00 Ryan's; 4.30 Bulls Head; 5.30 Vine; 6.15 The Brook; 7.00 Brooklands Tap; 7.30 Little B; 8.30 JP Joule; 9.15 Steamhouse. (T&H)

Saturday 25th – Social at Bollington Beer Festival, Bollington Arts Centre. From 12 noon. Ticket only - price £6. (MEC)

Wednesday 29th – University Area Crawl: Joshua Brooks, Princess St 7.30pm; Lass O'Gowrie, Charles St 8.15pm. (NM)

Friday 31st – Beer of the Festival presentation to Stockport Brewing Co. Meet 7.30pm Crown, Heaton Lane or 8.00pm at brewery. (SSM) - Booking essential.

Friday 31st – Albert Square Social for Jazz Festival: 8.00pm Velvet Lounge; 8.45 Albert's Chop House; 9.30 Slug & Lettuce; 10.15 Duttons. (T&H)

Wednesday 5th August – Salford Stroll: Eagle, Collier St 6.00pm; Rover's Return, Chapel St 7.45pm, plus others. (NM)

Thursday 6th August – Branch Meeting: Navigation Hotel, Altrincham (upstairs function room). Starts 8.00pm. (T&H)

Friday 7th August – Mild Magic presentation: Spinning Top, Wellington Road South, Stockport. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

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

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Pub of the Month

The Old Monkey, Manchester



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for July is the Old Monkey on Portland Street in Manchester city centre. Mark McConachie paid a visit.

The Old Monkey was brewer Joseph Holt's first ever new-build house in the city. Built on the site of the Queens Arms beer house, it opened in 1993 to great acclaim. The current success of the pub is down to licensee, Stacy

Saunders, who arrived in early 2014 after a stint at the Ape & Apple. She is a woman with great ideas that have been brought to fruition in the pub; her friendliness, bubbly personality and charm really come through.

Set on two floors where the downstairs is seldom anything less than abuzz with custom (and is definitely the main engine of trade), it is popular with tourists who venture here from their nearby hotels. There is fixed seating round the edges of the room, but this is mostly a standing drinking area. Meanwhile upstairs has its own bar, and serves food and drink in a more relaxed, comfortable and intimate environment. On the first Wednesday of the month, the upstairs room hosts comedians sourced by the Trapdoor Comedy Club; these events cost £3 advance or £5 on the door per ticket. On the first Monday of each month it also hosts "Mope music evening", this is described as three hours of musical misery!

Food is served every day, when a menu of home-made dishes is the staple fare. Being a Holt's house, it serves their Bitter, IPA, Two Hoots and Mild, alongside a guest beer (these change once a week). Add to this, seasonal beers from Bootleg Brewing Co (brewed at the Holt's-owned Horse & Jockey, Chorlton-cum-Hardy), which change with availability. The Monkey operates a loyalty card scheme (buy eight pints, get the ninth one free) in conjunction with the other two Holt's houses in the city - Ape & Apple and Crown & Anchor - plus the Railway, Lapwing Lane, West Didsbury.

You are welcome to attend the presentation night, on Thursday 23rd July (from 8pm), and see Stacy and staff receive this much-deserved award.

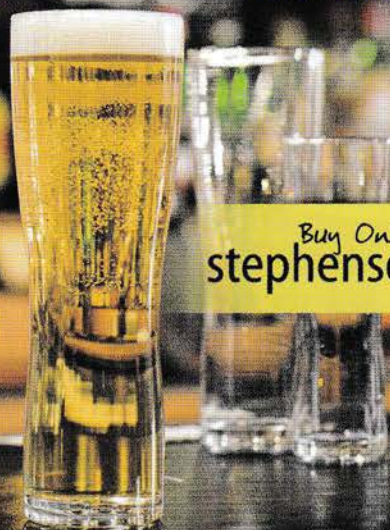
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MORE CHOICE BETTER BEER

International Brewing Awards



1998

Wobbly Bob



2002

Navvy



2002

Wobbly Bob



2004

Wobbly Bob



Curmudgeon

The Best-Laid Plans

Imagine you live in a suburb of a major town, and have a local pub, a big free-standing building dating from the Thirties or Fifties, on a spacious site with a large car park. Over the years, it's gone through various brands and formats, none of which really seem to have been successful. To be honest, you rarely go in it, as the beer's not much good and it only seems to be busy when the football's on, but you still think of it as a key feature in the local community.

One day, you see work starting on it and think that maybe at last they'll be giving it a thorough makeover and allowing it to realise its potential. But when the fencing comes down you are shocked to see a gleaming new Tesco Express inhabiting the old pub building. "How on earth did that happen?" you wonder. "We weren't consulted – nobody told us a thing." It's entirely lawful and above board, though, and something that has happened in hundreds of places over the past ten or fifteen years.

It is a feature – many would say a loophole – of the planning system that this can be done without needing planning permission. Pubs fall into Use Class A4 "Drinking establishments" and can be turned into A3 "Restaurants", A2 "Financial and professional services" and A1 "Shops". The thinking behind this is that permission shouldn't be needed to convert premises to uses that are likely to have less adverse impact on the neighbourhood.

However, many pubs are seen as valuable community hubs, and people are understandably concerned if they are lost without any consultation or prior warning. Even if in the end the building turned out to have no future as a pub, if planning permission was needed, then at least there would have been the opportunity for other pub operators and community groups to step in.

It has to be recognised, though, that planning can only stop things happening – it cannot keep businesses in operation that nobody considers commercially viable. And the best way for a community to have a say in the future of its local pub is to actually use it in the first place. All too often, the first to complain are those who haven't crossed the threshold for years.

Let A Thousand Flowers Bloom

There's another reason why strict planning controls might not be a good idea for pubs. The 2003 Licensing Act made it easier to open new licensed premises by removing the requirement to demonstrate "need". This has led to a remarkable growth in small new bars, many of which, as we have seen in Chorlton and increasingly in West Didsbury and the Heaton, make a real effort on the beer front.

They may not be traditional pubs, but they show that the opportunities are there for new entrants to come in and meet a demand that the old pubs, which were often just too big and in the wrong place, didn't satisfy. Their small size means that overheads are modest, and the planning system makes it easy to turn them back into shops if the venture fails to take off. If even the smallest bar had planning protection from day one, then we would have a lot fewer small bars.

There's a strong case for extending planning protection to well-established, popular pubs to ensure they aren't arbitrarily converted to shops without consultation. But, unless it is limited according to one or more of length of time in operation, size, and whether purpose-built rather than a conversion, the effect will be to deter people from opening new pubs and bars without necessarily doing much to keep the existing ones in business.

Curmudgeon Online: curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

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Stagger

Around Portland Street with John Sutcliffe



In a way, this was the wrong day because, being Friday 22nd May, we had been setting up the Stockport Beer and Cider Festival all day, followed by something to eat at Calvert's Court in Stockport. However two of us made it to the **Molly House** on Richmond Street in time for the 7.30 start, where we were joined by a member from Rochdale, Oldham & Bury Branch for the first half of the stagger.

The ground floor was full so we found a seat upstairs, but only just, as this was also crowded. For anyone who has not been here, the floor area is not large but is spread over two floors with the unisex toilets on a third. The décor is generally understated with natural timber-boarded floor, but with a deep red-walled staircase leading to the first floor where there is a balcony garden area. A fast running stag has pierced the wall and looks down on the customers with stately disdain. The beers that we had were York Brewery First Light and Brightside Manchester Skyline. Untried were: Seven Brothers Stout, Off the Wall Rhubarb Pale, Stod Fold Molly's Gold and Beartown Blueberry.

Since we now had only one pub on the first part of the stagger, we fitted in a visit to the **Goose**, formerly Paddy's Goose, a pleasant pub, comfortably full with a mixed clientele. It has two handpumps, but the Bombardier was not on so we had an acceptable Robinsons Unicorn.

The 8.30 meeting point was the **Old Monkey** on Portland Street where we sampled Camerons Gold, excellent Holt's Mild, and a good Bootleg Chorlton Pale Ale. There was also Holt's Bitter and IPA. This is a pub that has been much improved in recent years, well-managed with knowledgeable and friendly staff. I was particularly impressed with the care and help given to a disabled elderly customer who only wanted a half pint, but was unfamiliar with the beers. There is comedy upstairs on Sundays.

At this stage we became two again and moved to the well-known **Circus Tavern**. This remarkable survivor is easily the smallest pub in the City Centre, yet remarkably retains a largely unspoiled multi-roomed interior. Not for nothing is it on CAMRA's National Inventory of Heritage Pubs. Not quite so heritage was the overpowering, soundless, enormous TV screen, which no one was watching and which dominated the front room. The bar counter is tiny and only has room for one person serving the two cask beers, Tetley Bitter and Robinsons Dizzy Blonde. Both were good.

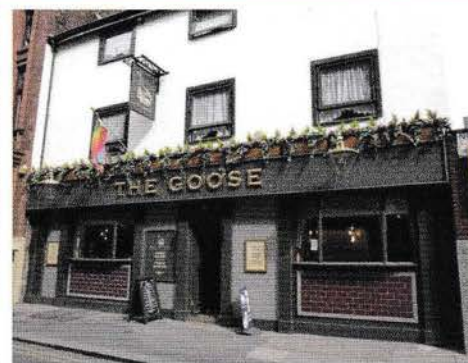
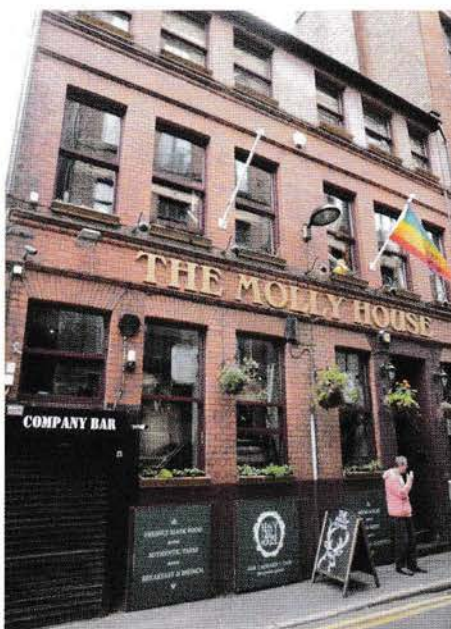
Then it was on to the **Grey Horse**, a Hydes

pub just two doors down. While not much bigger than the Circus it is more open and has two modest TVs. It was impressively refurbished by Hydes a couple of years ago with much use of natural wood fittings which help create a warm and welcoming appearance. We tried the Hydes Owd Oak and their Beer Studio Citra Chinook, both of which were very enjoyable. Other beers not tried were George Gale Redwood, 1853 Mild, and Hydes Original Bitter.

A slightly longer walk, round the corner into Nicholas Street, past the Chinatown Arch, led to the **Seven Oaks**. Here we had good Otter Bitter (an unusual find) and acceptable Timothy Taylor Landlord. There was also Sharp's Doom Bar but we didn't try this. Opening at 12 noon each day it offers pies and mash, if food is required. It then closes at 11.30pm and re-opens as a club one hour later and runs through until 8.00am to serve the many late-night and shift workers in the area.

Finally we went round the corner onto Mosley Street to the **Bank**, a Nicholson's pub. This was once the fashionable, residential part of Manchester, with the street named after the Mosley family who were lords of the manor. The Bank is an impressive, classical revival building with twin stone columns inside. We enjoyed Conwy Beachcomber Blond, which scored well and Orkney Dark Island that was even better.

So, an interesting night with a variety of pubs and an interesting selection of generally well-kept and enjoyable beer. Pictured below - the Molly House. Right - the Goose, Grey Horse and Seven Oaks.



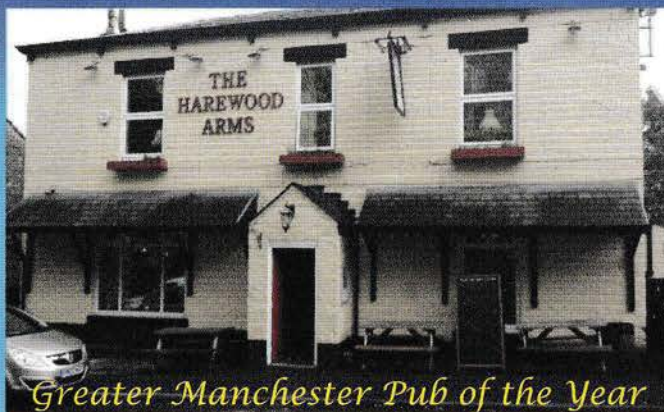
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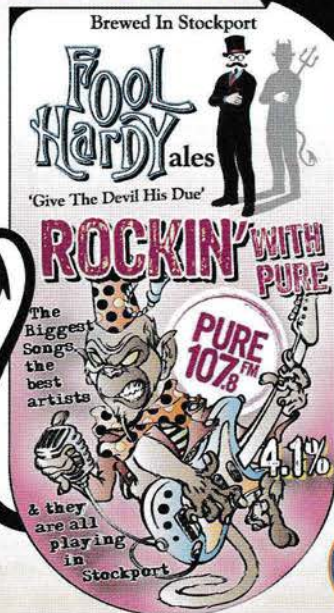
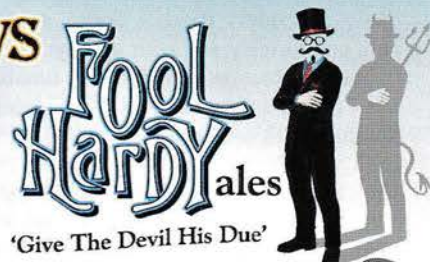
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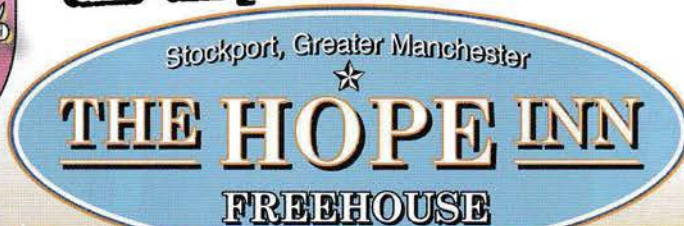
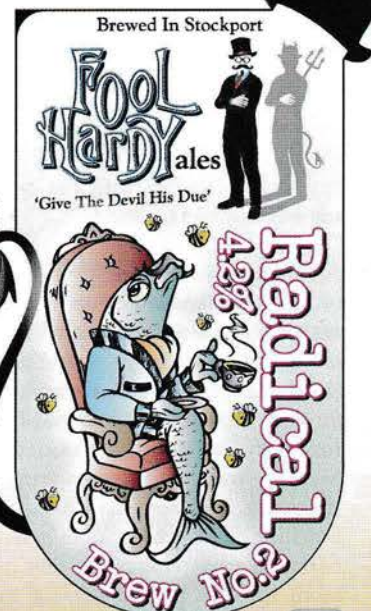
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Trafford & Hulme

Summer Pub of the Season



The Trafford & Hulme Pub of the Season for Summer 2015 is Pi, on Shaw's Road, Altrincham writes John O'Donnell.

Pi opened in October 2012 as the third outlet for Chorlton based Pivo Inns. The original Pi on Manchester Road in Chorlton was Pub of The Season for Spring 2010. Pi (Rose Lane) in the Liverpool suburb of Mosley Hill joined the family in 2011.

The Altrincham bar follows the same basic formula as its siblings - specialising in beer along with a basic but hugely successful food menu based

around the products of Bristol's Pieminister. The concept of Pi was born out of owner Andy Ingham's desire for a local bar that he would want to drink in and as nobody else was opening the kind of place he liked, he did it himself.

There are two handpumps on the bar, one for the permanent beer, Tatton Blonde. The guest pump serves an ever changing range of guests with regularly featured breweries including RedWillow, Saltaire and Brightside. The cask ales are complemented by a wide range of distinctive draught beers - there are no national brands here - and a massive range of bottles from the "beer bible". Essentially it's a beer heaven.



Although relatively small, the pub has plentiful seating - even when the downstairs level bar is full, seats can normally be found on the first floor. In summer months you can enjoy the beer garden to the rear or take a seat looking down Greenwood Street in front of the pub. The daily range of four Pieminister gourmet pies changes regularly to cover different combinations of flavours. Two are usually vegetarian. The accompanying options of creamy mash, minty peas and onion gravy all make great accompaniments, individually or combined.

The pub is managed by Ben Reynolds who doubles as Operations Manager for the Pivo Group, overseeing all three bars. Having previously taken the Chorlton and Rose Lane branches into the Good Beer Guide, Ben made it a hat-trick when Altrincham was selected for inclusion in the 2015 Guide - one of only three Altrincham pubs to be so recognised. Over three years, Pi (Altrincham) has established a reputation for well-kept cask and good customer service, drawing people to the area even before the redevelopment of the adjacent Market Hall. It is this consistency which has seen the pub awarded Pub of the Season for Summer 2015.

The presentation will be held on Thursday 23rd July from 8pm. All are welcome to join the celebrations.

High Peak

Spring Pub of the Season

High Peak CAMRA's Derbyshire Pub of the Season for Spring 2015 is the Soldier Dick in Furness Vale, between New Mills and Whaley Bridge, writes Tom Lord.

This excellent, comfortable and welcoming pub, with a friendly atmosphere has gone from strength to strength under the guidance of licensees Mike and Lynn Nelson.

It is open-plan in layout with real fires and traditional games and there is a large car park at the rear. Previously, the Soldier Dick only sold keg ales from the Bass stable but now there are four changing guest beers on hand pump. There is also a good value and varied menu of main meals and snacks available from 12 noon to 9.00pm each day.

Bed and breakfast accommodation is also available and walkers, cyclists and children are welcome. The Soldier Dick is ideally situated on the A6 in the centre of Furness Vale close to the bus stops, the railway station and the Peak Forest Canal - so you can arrive on foot, or by road, rail or canal boat!

All in all the Soldier Dick is a fine pub providing a pleasant experience for all tastes and well worth a visit. Trains from Manchester to Buxton stop at the nearby Furness Vale Station. The 199 and TP buses from Stockport to Buxton will drop you almost outside, as will the 61 Glossop to Buxton service.

Pictured below - High Peak CAMRA's Tom Lord (left) presents the award to Mike Nelson.



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Pie & Ale

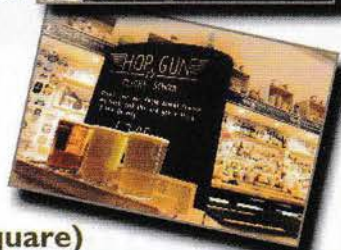
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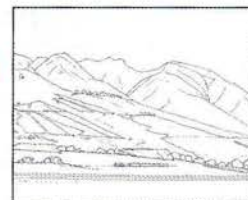
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High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views



Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

The Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May was busy with beer festivals in the Peak District. At the **Drum & Monkey** in Whaley Bridge cellar capacity allows for about a score of beers over the few days. Beers were mainly from local breweries, Wincle, Storm, Whaley Bridge, Happy Valley, Marble and Boggart Hole Clough, with Abbeydale and Bradfield from across the Pennines. With a couple of visits I picked out Bradfield Farmers Decade and Marble Pint as really good pale brews, whilst Boggart Mud Brawler and Wincle Old Hag were notable dark beers. And then there was always the 8.6% Big Smiler from Happy Valley! As ever this was a good little festival with live music at some sessions. We can hopefully look forward to another bash in the early autumn around the time of the Drum & Monkey celebrating its anniversary in its current guise.



Beers at the **Beehive** festival in New Mills came from a much wider geographical area and included brews from Orkney, Cairngorm, Clearwater (Devon), Moor (Bristol) and Purple Moose (Porthmadog) as well as beers from much nearer home. Some beers were in the cellar but there was a good stillage system in one of the rooms for a good part of the 40 or so beers eventually available. The Beehive Festival by Howard Town sold out on the Friday session. Beers that appealed to my palate included Glaslyn Ale from Purple Moose, plus an old favourite, Orkney Dark Island and Cairngorm Trade Winds. Everything tried was on good form as well. This is another festival which deserves to succeed and hopefully we can look forward to the next one in May 2016.

Beer festivals coming up in the next month or so include those organised by Kazantevents. The Romiley Summer Beer Festival is on 17-19 July in the beer tent at the **Wharf** on Green Lane in Romiley. **Glossop Labour Club** hosts the Glossop Beer Festival from 14-16 August. Both the Marple Oktoberfest and Romiley Oktoberfest follow traditional Bavarian fashion, the first being 11-13 September at **Marple Conservative Club**,

whilst the second is 25-27 September at the Wharf in Romiley. The Glossop Oktoberfest, again at the Labour Club, is however an October event, 16-18 October. All these festivals will have interesting beers and ciders, and the Oktoberfest will also feature German beers, mainly bottled. These are events worth getting to if you can and attendance will be well worth the effort.

The summer season of processions and village celebrations, often with well dressings, Rose Queens, carnivals and fell races, has started in the Peak District. Events start early at Hayfield with the May Queen and associated attractions. The **Royal** was the winner of the Best Decorated Public House competition. These events highlight our local pubs as centres of the community, but they also welcome visitors, so if you are able, come and join some of the summer celebrations out in the High Peak.

It will be interesting to see if the sale of beer brands by Thwaites to Marston's will have an effect in our local pubs. Thwaites Wainwright and Lancaster Bomber have been brewed at Marston's for some time, presumably as a solution to capacity problems. Concern remains about the production of those beers still brewed at Blackburn: Nutty Black, the flavoursome Dark Mild, and Original, the ordinary bitter and still a good brew. Some seasonal specials remain at Blackburn. Customer choice could be threatened.



The **Shepherds Arms** in Whaley Bridge continues to ring the changes of the beers available from the Marston's breweries. Some of the pale hoppy ones such as Banks's Sunbeam and Ringwood Boondoggle always go down well. A recent beer with a difference was Juniper Pale Ale, brewed under the Marston's Revisionist label. This is a pale, refreshing brew with a hint of juniper and rosemary. I am not normally a fan of added flavouring in good ale but this seems to work well.

Juniper has also been on sale at the **Shady Oak** in Fernilee, where it was alongside Ringwood Best Bitter. This is not the most obvious Ringwood beer to see on the Marston's dray in this area, but it is good to see the less usual. A development of the menu at the Shady Oak sees a 'Two main courses for

£12' offer on many items from Monday to Thursday. Well worth a visit.

The **Navigation** at Buxworth has had beers from Elland Brewery available on a couple of recent visits. I enjoyed Blonde and Beyond the Pale. Next to come to enrich the choice of beers available are four or five beers from Merlin at Arclid. With the onset of summer, (just about) it is good to see Weston's Rosie's Pig available as a hand pumped draught cider at the **White Hart** in Whaley Bridge. Finally, some good pub news is that the closed-for-some-time **Wheatsheaf** at Dove Holes should have re-opened as the Quarryman by the time you read this. More on this pub in Pub News. P16.

High Peak Pub News

With Tom Lord



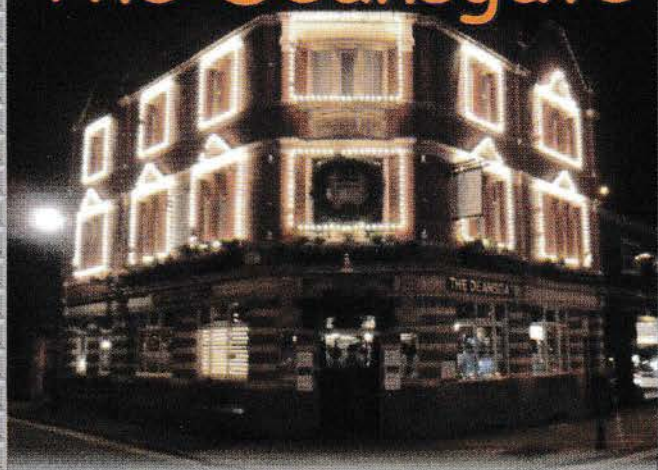
A recent visit to the **Spread Eagle** at Hatherlow, Romiley, saw four real ales on offer, all on handpump. They were Moorhouses Pride of Pendle, Black Sheep Bitter, Fullers London Pride and Mobberley Concept Red. This is an excellent pub with good value food and a changing range of beers.

On a recent Branch afternoon visit to Droydsden three pubs were visited. The excellent **Lazy Toad**, on Ashton Hill Road close to the town centre, had three real ales available. These were Copper Dragon Golden Pippin and two from Wharfedale Brewery -Tether Blonde and Ro Sham Bo. All were at the great price of £2.00 a pint.

Nearby the **Beehive** on Market Street was serving Tatton Brewery Ale. Also available here were two ciders from Bolton's Red Bank Cider. Next door at the **Kings Arms** were Holt's Bitter, IPA and Humdinger. Unfortunately time prevented us visiting any further pubs. However a return trip is to be planned catch up with the other pubs in this rapidly improving area for real ale.

The High Peak CAMRA Spring Pub of the Season is the **Soldier Dick** in Furness Vale—see full article on page 9.

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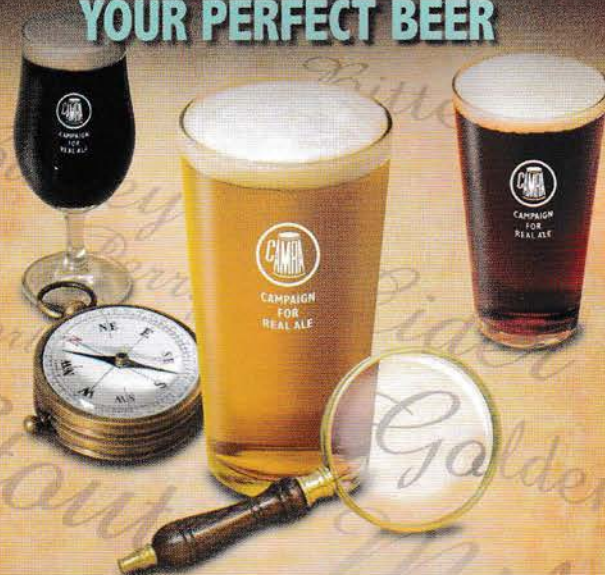
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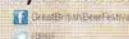
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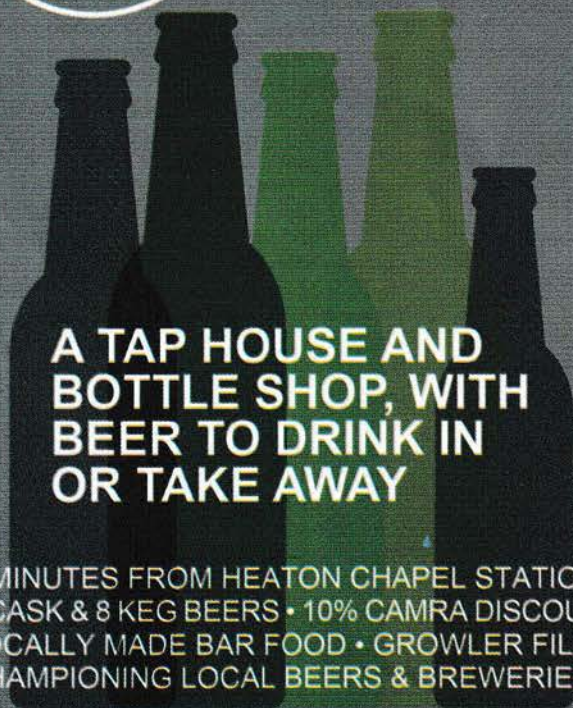
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Heard at the Bar

Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond



Trafford Pub Shorts



By the time you read this, the **Quarry bank** in Timperley will have re-opened after a major refurbishment. The pub closed at the start of June with its Bloomsbury Lane location turned into a building site for three weeks. We've no idea what owners Hydes are doing to the pub, but of course when it re-opens, *Opening Times* will be heading along to find out.

Meanwhile, there have also been changes at Sale's **Moorside**. Most striking are the changes to the outside area, where the formerly open-plan patio adjacent to the car park has been remodelled with individual tables separated from each other by partitions to create what are almost alcoves in an outside area. The partitioning has also been carried on inside.

Travellers on Church Road in Sale will have noticed that the long closed and decaying **Wagon & Horses** was finally demolished in early June. Elsewhere, the **Greyhound** in Ashley has re-opened after an extended period of closure.



Sad news in Altrincham where it has been announced that the team of Chris Clish and Gabby Burns-Smith are to return the **Orange Tree** to owners Enterprise Inns. While the pub has been busier than it has been for many years, the duo have reluctantly concluded that there simply isn't enough trade to keep the pub. With their track record of success at the Beech Inn, the fear has to be that if this team can't make the pub pay, where will Enterprise find a team that can? Hopefully they will put it on the market at a fair price and give somebody the chance to run it as a free house.

The Flying Coach

After a prolonged closure, Robinsons have now executed a long-planned refurbishment at the **Cock** in Hazel Grove and, just in time for the late May Bank Holiday, it was reborn as the **Flying Coach**.

Outside and in, the new-look pub displays many of the current Robinsons design features, all, (well mostly all) to good effect. Outside, the new Robbies livery, with grey-brown paintwork and copper highlights, is effective and classy.



Inside there has been a little opening out but the three-room layout with the bar to the front essentially remains unchanged. The colour scheme is based on shades of grey and the flooring is bare wood or tile. This could be cold and clinical but here it has been skilfully executed so the pub is both light and airy but also warm and welcoming. There are some clever design features although there has perhaps been an over-generous hand with the bric-a-brac which could be rather high maintenance in a busy pub environment. And the current design concept of ripping the spines off books is an idea whose day should never have come and will, with luck, soon be gone – the end result looks like a pile of old tat.

On the beer front, Unicorn, Wizard, Dizzy Blonde, Double Hop and Cumbria Way are on handpump. A further handpump is for Old Rosie cider. Bottled beers from Camden in London plus Brooklyn and Kona in the USA add to the appeal.

Part of the offer here is an absence of live music, karaoke and games. Another part is the short but appealing menu. Based on traditional pub fare such as sandwiches (including fish finger!), ploughman's, cheese on toast, chips, pickled eggs and soup, it's all done extremely well with an emphasis on both quality and presentation. Food is

available from noon until mid-evening every day (with a break between 3 and 5.30 Monday to Friday).

The manager is Diane Radbron, an experienced hand with 42 years in the trade. She tells us that the new-look pub has been enthusiastically received. We're not surprised as it's a huge improvement and a great addition to the Hazel Grove pub scene.

Travellers Call

Hot on the heels of the Flying Coach, the **Travellers Call** in Great Moor, Stockport, has also unveiled a new look courtesy of Robinsons.



The layout remains unchanged but everything has been upgraded. There's a new colour scheme of blues and greys which is matched by the upholstery and seating. The flooring has also been renewed and there are feature cast iron fireplaces and pendant lighting. Cask beers on sale include Wizard and Unicorn on handpump.

It certainly looks very smart and Robinsons are to be congratulated on a job well done here.

Wythenshawe News

Wythenshawe doesn't feature very often in these pages but we have good news and bad. First the good news – the **Cornishman** on Cornishway has returned to the cask ale fold. This large multi-roomed Marston's house reintroduced cask beer last year at the request of loyal regulars whose preferred tittle is Wychwood Hobgoblin which is what you will find on handpump.

The pub itself is a standard two-roomer with lounge and vault separated by a central bar. The vault has two pool tables and the pub also has a resident football team. Sounds like it's doing well, which is good news.

On the debit side the **Portway Hotel** on Ruddpark Road has removed the Holt's cask beers because of poor sales and now offers no cask beer. While this is a shame it would be pointless for the pub to try and sell cask if no-one wanted to drink it.

More pub and brewery news on page 16

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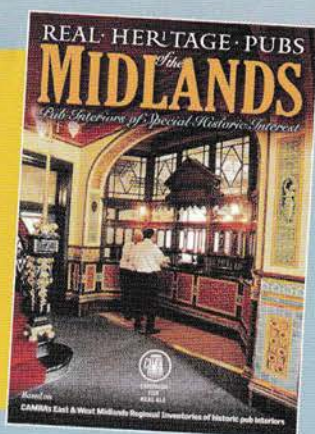
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Bipolar Beer

CAMRA looks forward and not back explains Peter Edwardson



Last April's CAMRA AGM passed a motion instructing branches to desist from "anti campaigns" denigrating other drinks. Many would take the view this was long overdue, and indeed founder member Michael Hardman famously said "I must point out that we're not fighting against anything, we're fighting for something." Over the years this has included both a blanket dismissal of whole categories of beer as worthless rubbish, and casting doubt on the intelligence of those who chose to drink them. This kind of attitude may come across as narrow-minded and dogmatic today, but it's interesting to consider how it arose in the first place.

When CAMRA was formed in the early 1970s, the British beer and pub landscape was very different from today. Approximately 90% of beer was sold in pubs and clubs, and 90% of that was ale – either bitter or mild in various forms. People weren't "keg drinkers" or "real ale drinkers", they were bitter or mild drinkers, and what CAMRA was trying to do was to raise awareness of whether that beer was real or pressurised in some way. But, at this time, it was correct to say that cask beer, when well kept, was almost universally better than any form of pressurised beer, so the simple dichotomy of "real ale good, keg beer bad" wasn't that wide of the mark.

Of course there was at that time one clearly-defined group of "keg drinkers" – those who went for the big brewers' premium keg beers such as Watney's Red, Double Diamond and Worthington E, but even there they identified with the brand rather than the category. These were among CAMRA's first targets and within a period of about five years they had reduced them from being seen as an aspirational product to something irredeemably naff. "Keg drinkers" as such didn't re-emerge until the early 90s and the rise of "smooth" as a distinct category. At first, with products like Caffrey's, the brewers hoped to reconnect ale with a younger market, but it has been increasingly characterised as the choice of older, working-class male drinkers. People do specifically ask for "smooth", though, whereas nobody really used to ask for keg.

In the long run, cask has won the battle against keg, which now accounts for a smaller proportion of the ale market than at any time during CAMRA's existence. But ale has decisively lost the wider battle against lager, which has come to represent 70% of on-trade beer sales. The spectacular rise of lager is often thought to have really taken off in the hot summer of 1976. This was harder to oppose than keg ale, because it wasn't possible to point to a direct "real" alternative, and so inevitably lager drinkers themselves began to be stereotyped. Initially they were seen as effete "shandy drinkers", but as lager gained popularity amongst a new generation of drinkers, they metamorphosed into the laddish followers of George the Bear, and in a sense lager became the drink of the Loadsamoney generation. Obviously this was easy for the beer buffs to look down their noses at, but as they started to realise that in Germany and the Czech Republic you could actually find many excellent lagers, it became more difficult to dismiss the whole category. You won't win any

converts by asking "What's the matter, Lagerboy? Afraid you might taste something?"

Forty years on, the beer scene is far more diverse than it was in the early days. Lager has come to dominate the market – much dull or indifferent, some truly excellent. We have imports from all over the world, the craft beer movement has brought a bewildering array of styles and flavours, and we have high-quality beers from small new breweries appearing in keg form, some of which even technically qualify as real ale. The old certainties have gone, and it no longer makes any sense to dismiss entire categories of beer out of hand or suggest that the people who drink them are ill-informed. Most of us, including most CAMRA members, are to some extent "repertoire drinkers" now, and don't religiously stick to the same product on grounds of principle. I rarely drink anything but cask in pubs, as I make a point of choosing pubs that serve decent cask, but I'm certainly not the kind of person who sits at a wedding drinking bitter lemon with a face like a wet weekend because the only beer available is Foster's.

If you want to encourage people to try something new, denigrating their current choice is not a good way to go about it. It is good news that CAMRA has at last officially recognised that championing Britain's unique contribution to the beer world and a key part of our national heritage requires a positive, outward-looking approach rather than refighting the doctrinaire battles of forty years ago.


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See page 18 for membership details

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Pub News Extra

News from around the region



Ladybrook reopens



The **Ladybrook** on Fir Road in Bramhall has just reopened following a refurbishment by the Spirit Group so *Opening Times* went along to have a look.

The manager is Joe Goncalves but we spoke to his enthusiastic deputy Mike McManus, who has been at the pub for about

nine months. He's a keen beer fan who has been in the trade for 11 years. "I've always liked beers and looking after them" says Mike and naturally he has responsibility for the beer side of operations.

The new look pub has a greater emphasis on beer than before with no fewer than 11 handpumps in use at busy times of the week. The regular cask ales are faithful old troopers Thwaites Wainwright, Wells Bombardier and Tetley Bitter alongside a new house beer The Brook which is brewed for the pub by RedWillow Brewery. Alongside these is a changing range of guest beers, with three new beers appearing each week, along with a traditional cider from Westons.

The pub itself looks very smart with a rambling multi-room layout (although the days of the full size snooker table are long gone). At the rear is the "Cask and Tap House" which combines the former vault (dartboard and pool table are still in place) with a beer themed room – all very nicely done. At the front the old car park is now a suntrap of a drinking terrace which was being very well used on a sunny June evening.

At the end of July a beer festival will see a total of 20 beers and three ciders available, either on the handpump or direct from the cask. There's also a 10% discount for CAMRA members so well worth a visit.

Farewell 1892

Robinsons 1892 has now finally bitten the dust and you won't find it anywhere. It took a little while to die however and probably the last ever outlet for the famous mild was the **Church Inn**, Cheadle Hulme, which kept on serving it until 4th June. The Church's manager Ed Bromley saw the beer off in style and he is pictured here (second right) with a group of the pub's regulars enjoying the final pints.



The Quarry Man

In a much-welcomed reversal of the trend, the former Robinsons Wheatsheaf in Dove Holes re-opened in early June as the completely re-vamped **Quarry Man**, a freehouse under the guidance of local people Kevin and Clare Bloor. Although this is their first venture into pub ownership, they have secured advice from family members in the trade around the Buxton area.

The initial beer offering was in the safe hands of Taylors Landlord and Greene King's Old Speckled Hen, but discussions are already underway with local brewers to fill up the bank of four hand-pulls. Opening hours are 11.00am to 11.00pm every day, and the full food

menu will be served 12 noon to 9.00pm by the time you read this. There will be monthly live music – details available on the pub's website and usual social media.

Smithfield Reborn

The Smithfield on Swan Street in Manchester's Northern Quarter has had something of a chequered history in recent years. A relaunch a couple of years ago didn't really work and the pub struggled to regain its reputation as one of the city's "must visit" pubs. Hopefully this is now set to change.



The ground floor and the cellar space of what is now the **Smithfield Market Tavern** have been taken over by a joint operation involving Blackjack Brewery and Glassworks Beer Distribution. The team behind the operation is James Darcey (known to just about everyone as plain Darcey – pictured above, outside the pub), Rob Hamilton, Joe Bird and Jonathan Hartley – all familiar names to many on the local beer scene.

Opening Times was there on launch night, Thursday 18th June, and managed to catch up with Darcey during a brief lull in the proceedings. He told us that the pub was to effectively be a tap house for both sides of the business, operating as a showcase for Blackjack beers as well as the craft beers (both cask and keg) that Glassworks source from around the UK. They are keen to feature local beers as well as cask ales from smaller brewers that Glassworks visit while delivering and collecting beers.

On opening night there were six cask beers on handpump and 10 keg and key-keg beers on tap, as well as a separate font for Blackjack's Lager. There is room for more handpumps as trade expands. The pub certainly looks a lot better, with the previous pink and purple colour scheme replaced with neutral shades of grey, cream and green for a more modern look. While it was still something of a work in progress on opening night (pictures on the walls and some additional furniture were obvious requirements) the pub is clearly settling in well.

Darcey tells us that the aim was to create "somewhere where we'd want to come and have a drink". It looks like plenty of others have the same idea. The Smithfield is closed on Mondays and opens from 4.30pm Tuesday to Friday and from midday on Saturday and Sunday.

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Pub Shorts

It looks as if Stockport could be in line for another brewery, which will take the town's total back up to eight. Plans have been submitted to convert units 10 and 11 Market Place (next to Robinsons mothballed Bulls Head) into a café bar with micro-brewery. The plans have been submitted by SMS Ltd, and one of the people behind that is none other than Mike Hitchen of 3 Rivers Brewery fame. More news on this one as we get it.

In Manchester there is a new cask ale outlet at **Home**, the new arts centre off Whitworth Street. Meanwhile down in Chorlton-on-Medlock, Holt's looks to have done something with the **Grafton** on Grafton Street. More on these two next time.

Finally, the **Park** on Newbridge Lane in Stockport was advertised as for sale as we went to press. Yours for £175,000.

Beer Festival Review

Crowds turn out for 2015 event



This year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival was the most successful for several years. Significant changes to the organisation – improved beer cooling, no rationing and all-day opening on Saturday – came together to produce a remarkable 16% increase in attendance across the three-day event.

Over 5,500 people saw off most of the beer, cider and perry. There were just 350 pints of cask beer left when we closed (down from 15,500 on opening night) while the bottled beer bar had just 10 bottles remaining when the shutters came down for the last time.

Feedback, both directly and on social media, has been hugely positive with compliments about both the quality and the range of the beer, cider and perry.

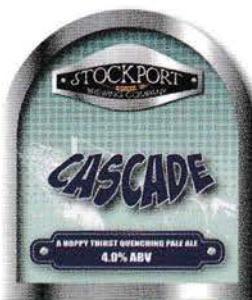
Over 65 new members of CAMRA were signed up and among these were Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA's 1,500th members, Jonathan and Gemma Murphy from Davenport. They are pictured here receiving a



Good Beer Guide and case of beer from CAMRA's Brendon Hall (left).

As usual one of the highlights was the much-awaited result of the beer, cider and perry of the festival votes. For the first time ever, all of the winning beers came from breweries within the Stockport & South Manchester branch area.

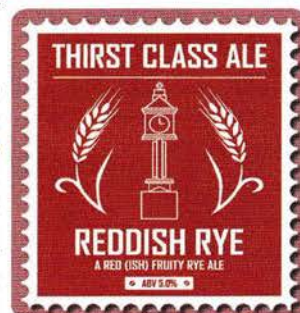
The overall Beer of the Festival was **Cascade** from **Stockport Brewing**. This 4%, hoppy and quenching beer is made using UK Cascade hops which have a more restrained citrus character than their US equivalents. The beer also has the characteristic clean and fresh edge that marks out the Stockport beers. Stockport Brewing owners Steve Alexander and Andy Pass were cock-a-hoop at the news with brewer Andy telling *Opening Times* "We are just overwhelmed to have this success against so many fantastic beers and brewers. It's just fantastic and unbelievable news".



Runner-up was the excellent **Squawk & Bean Brothers Espresso Stout**. This dark and smooth 6.5% brew was the result of a collaboration between Ardwick's Squawk Brewing and Huddersfield roasters Bean Brothers who use their Derek coffee blend with the stout base. It's just everything you might want in a coffee stout as it avoids the acrid bitterness that some of these beers display. Oliver

Turton at Squawk declared himself "well chuffed" with the award.

Third place went to a brand new beer from one of Stockport's newest brewers. Richard Conway's **Thirst Class Ales** has only been in production since last year and apart from two of his more regular beers, Richard also sent a beer for Bar Nouveau, the bar established last year, showcasing new beers. This was **Reddish Rye** – a 5% fruity red ale with a dry finish from the addition of rye to the grist. On hearing of his award, Richard told us "It was great to get a podium place in the festival competition and I was well chuffed when I heard. The festival was great fun both days I was there - well done to the team for organising it".



The cider and perry awards went to two newcomers – fighting off stiff competition from stalwarts such as Oliver's, Minchew's and Gregg's Pitt. Cider of the Festival was won by **Stockmoor Cider's Dabinett**, a single varietal cider made with the juice of the Dabinett apple. While Stockmoor is based at Pembridge, in north west Herefordshire, the perry winner, however is much further south. Perry of the Festival was **Nempnett Piglet's Perry** from the amusingly named hamlet of Nempnett Thurbwell to the south of Bristol.

Congratulations to all of the winners. Visits are being arranged to present the various awards so look for reports in future editions of OT.

Recent CAMRA Award

The High Peak CAMRA branch covers a wide area, so much so that it extends into three of CAMRA's administrative regions. This means they are in the lucky position of being able to have three Pubs of the Year. The first one to be presented was to their Greater Manchester winner, the **Harewood Arms** in Broadbottom, also the home of the Green Mill Brewery. Last year the Harewood Arms reached the final four in the national Pub of the Year competition so hopes will be running high again.

The other High Peak Pubs of the Year are serial award winners. For Derbyshire the award goes to the **Old Hall Inn** at Whitehough near Chinley while the Cheshire winner is the **White Lion** in Disley.





Join CAMRA Today

Complete the Direct Debit form and you will receive 15 months membership for the price of 12 and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription. Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to the: Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

Your Details

Title _____ Surname _____ Direct Debit Non DD
Forename(s) _____ Single Membership £24 ☐ £26 ☐
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____ (UK & EU)
Address _____ Joint Membership £29.50 ☐ £31.50 ☐
Postcode _____ (Partner at the same address)
Email address _____ For Young Member and other concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201.

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title _____ Surname _____ I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association
Forename(s) _____ I enclose a cheque for _____
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____ Signed _____ Date _____
Email address (if different from main member) _____ Applications will be processed within 21 days

01/15

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- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debit.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
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- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

New Mills AFC Real Ale Festival

**Open from
Midday
each day**



**FREE
Admission**

Friday 7th August to Sunday 9th August

Over 30 local ales from Manchester and the High Peak including New Mills' very first microbrewery

These include offerings from JW Lees, Buxton Brewery, Whaley Bridge Brewery, Howard Town Brewery and many more...

Food and entertainment available including live music (Friday and Sat evening), football match (3pm Sat) and family activities for the kids on Saturday (bouncy castle, candy floss, stalls etc)

10 minutes from both New Mills
Central and New Mills Newtown train
stations and local buses 61, 62 and 358



Free pick up from New Mills
Newtown train station on Friday &
Saturday afternoon

Please check website for more beers and travel details nearer the time

www.pitchero.com/clubs/newmillsafc

**New Mills AFC, Church Lane, New Mills, SK22 4NP
(opposite St George's Church)**

Meet the Brewer Stockport Beer Week

Matt Howgate of Marble Brewery

Celebrate Stockport's Pubs & Breweries



Brendon Hall interviews another local brewer and this month meets Marble Brewery's Matt Howgate (pictured above, second right, with the rest of the Marble brewing team).

1) Hi Matt, how did you start your journey into professional brewing?

I grew up in a small town called Tadcaster which has a rich heritage in brewing. Most of my family had worked in the brewing industry in some capacity, so it felt like a natural progression to get into brewing. During my study breaks I had been working at Coors brewery helping out in the lab and on the kegging line, and once my studies were completed I applied to join Leeds Brewery as a full-time brewer.

2) How do you go about choosing the ingredients for the beers you brew?

We choose Maris Otter, a premium malt, for our beer and we support a small company in doing so. Marble have used Warminster Maltings for a long time and we have a great relationship with them. Our hops come from all over the world so we have to rely on an excellent hop merchant. It is our job as brewers to ensure that our processes are as efficient as possible to let these ingredients shine through.

3) What one piece of advice would you give to anyone thinking of getting into brewing?

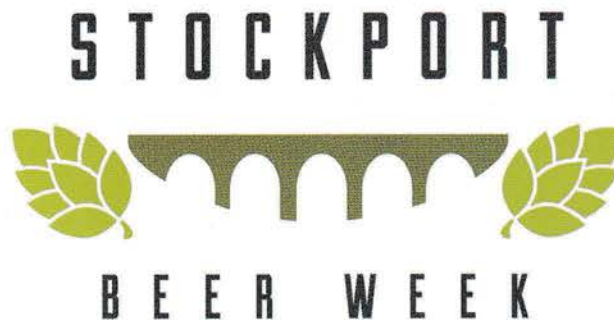
More and more people are looking at getting into brewing; we currently get a few CVs a week from people looking to volunteer in the brewery. Look at doing brewing qualifications - we support all our staff by putting them through the Institute of Brewing & Distilling general certificate. This is a great base for knowledge and is well respected within the industry.

4) Any chance of a sneak-peek at what to expect from Marble in the next few months?

We are launching our Pilsner beer 'Boheme' this month. The aim is to have this as a regular draught product in our three pubs. We will also be bringing back one of our special beers from 2013 in keg and bottle for a limited run - La Petite Toulousaine. We have big plans for Xmas which include a few old beers coming back in bottle. But you'll just have to wait for these.

5) Finally, when you aren't drinking your own product - please can you tell us one of your favourite local, national and international beers?

Locally I enjoy Blackjack beers, as well as Runaway's Marzen Lager: this is beautiful and I tend to opt for this if I see it on the bar. However, I usually tend to settle for a pint of Lagonda in the Marble Arch.



Stockport now has no fewer than seven breweries and a thriving pub scene. Not only is there an increasing number of free houses with guest beers, Stockport also has some excellent family-brewer owned community locals and an impressive range of historic and heritage pubs. It's all becoming something of a tourist attraction in fact.

Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA thinks all this is worth celebrating and will be launching Stockport Beer Week in the autumn. This will take place at the same time as national Cask Ale Week and will run from 24th September to 4th October. It is intended to be a celebration of Stockport pubs and breweries, and those people we have spoken to so far have been very enthusiastic. While we are still in the early planning stage we are looking to see in-pub beer festivals featuring local beers, brewery visits, brewery tap days, meet the brewer events, historic pub tours and all manner of celebrations. Pubs might want to create special menus or feature local bands for example.

Local accountants Crowe Clark Whitehill have kindly provided some sponsorship and thanks also to Ric Gamble (at ricgamble.com) for the excellent logo.

The main focus is expected to be Wellington Road corridor from Heaton Norris to Heaviley and taking in the entire town centre, although events at pubs outside this area will be welcomed and encouraged. We won't be expecting pubs to do something for the whole of the ten days but during this period we'd hope that many local pubs will run one or two events to mark the occasion.

We plan to publish a full programme of events, so if you run a local pub and would like to take part please contact our co-ordinator Brendon Hall at bren.hall@gmail.com or contact *Opening Times* - details on page 3.

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