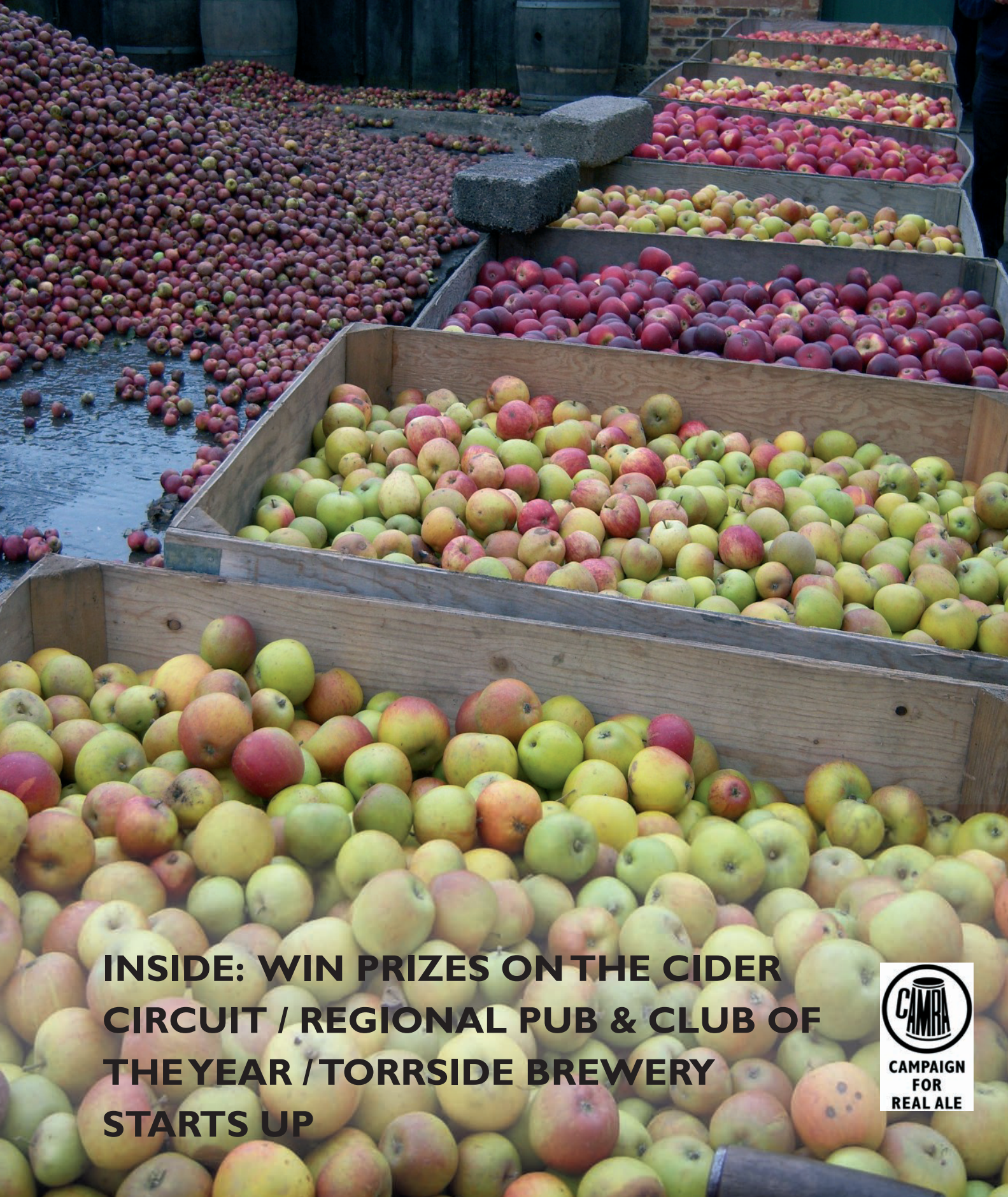


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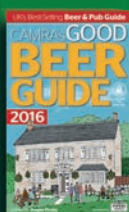
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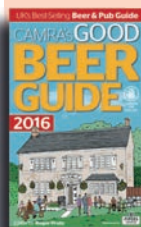
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OPENING TIMES

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 Oxuniprint Ltd, a division of Oxford University Press, 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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- * 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

Disclaimer

We aim to ensure that the information in Opening Times is correct at the time of going to press. If we get something wrong then please get in touch (editorial contact details above) and we'll print a correction. Please also note the opinions expressed in Opening Times are not necessarily those of CAMRA either locally or nationally.

Copy Date for the November issue is Friday 9th October

Contributors to this issue: John Clarke, Alan Gent, Dave Hanson, Peter Butler, Pete Farrand, Neil Worthington, Paul Felton, Dave Burston, Robin Wignall, Peter Edwardson, Tom Lord, Caroline O'Donnell, John O'Donnell, Stewart Taylor, Phil Booton, Geoff Williamson, Mike Gilroy, Paul King, Beverley Gobbett, Brendon Hall

Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Front cover - Cider apples at Burrow Hill Cider, Somerset.



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

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

Local CAMRA Events Open events in blue

Wednesday 7th – Piccadilly Pot-pourri: Allotment, Dale Street, M1 1FY 7.00pm; Tariff & Dale, Dale Street, M1 2FF 7.45pm; Port Street Beer House 8.30pm, plus two others. (NM)

Thursday 8th – Branch Meeting: Railway, Wellington Road North, Heaton Norris. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

Thursday 8th – Branch AGM: Timperley Taverners, WA14 5AD. Review of accounts and election of new committee. Supper and entertainment. Starts 8.00pm. (T&H)

Monday 12th – Branch Meeting: Half Way House, Manchester Road, Droylsden, M43 6JE. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 14th – Irlam/Cadishead Social: Irlam Station Café 7.30pm; Irlam Steel Club, Liverpool Road, M44 6AP 8.15pm; Grocer's, Liverpool Road, M44 5DD 9.00pm. (NM)

Thursday 15th – Ashton-on-Mersey Social: Mersey Farm, Carrington Lane M33 5BL, 8.00pm; Plough, Green Lane, M33 5PG, 9.00pm; Buck Inn 10.00pm. (T&H)

Friday 16th – Stockport North & Portwood Stagger: Midway, Newbridge Lane, SK1 2NX, 7.30pm; Railway, 1 Avenue Street, SK2 2BX, 8.30pm. (SSM)

Friday 16th – Regional Club of the Year presentation: Flixton Conservative Club, M41 5DF. From 8.00pm. (T&H)

Wednesday 21st – Branch Meeting: Swinton Conservative Club, The Parade, Swinton. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Wednesday 21st – Pub of the Season presentation: Jack-in-the-Box, Altrincham Market Hall, WA14 1SA. From 8.00pm. (T&H)

Thursday 22nd – Pub of the Month presentation to the Railway, Avenue Street, Portwood. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Saturday 24th – Pub of the Season presentation: Platform 1, Stockport Road, Romiley, SK6 4BN. From 3.00pm. (HPNC)

Saturday 24th – Regional Pub of the Year presentation to the Crown & Kettle, Oldham Road, Manchester, M4 5FE. Presentation at 8.00pm. All welcome.

Wednesday 28th – Cider Month Crawl: Pie & Ale, The Hive, Lever Street, M1 1FN 7.30pm; Castle, Oldham Street, M4 1LE, 8.15pm; Bar Fringe, Swan Street, M4 5JN, 9.00pm; finish Crown & Kettle. (NM)

Saturday 31st – Trip to Salford Beer Festival. Afternoon visit – 10 tickets available. Contact social@thcamra.org.uk. (T&H)

Wednesday 4th November – Branch meeting: Prairie Schooner, Urmston, M41 5BQ. Starts 8.00pm. (T&H, please note change of day)

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: <http://fbl.me/meccamra>



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Stagger

Heaton Moor & Heaton Norris with Dave Burston



On a pleasant August evening, a handful of us met up at the Elizabethan on Heaton Moor Road, to survey the pubs in this leafy part of Stockport. The **Elizabethan** is a large Victorian building on the corner of Broomfield Road, with a sizeable beer garden at the front, where we sat. It was quite busy at 7.30 on a Friday, both inside and out, but the bar service was quick as there seemed to be loads of bar staff. Inside is one large room split into several areas, with a central bar and modern décor. It's a J.W. Lees pub with an emphasis on food but with plenty of people just drinking. We tried the Lees MPA, which was good, and the seasonal (Tackler's Gold) which was OK.



Just as we were about to leave, we were joined by a few late-comers, one of whom informed us that he'd had a phone call from the **Moor Club**, a private members' club next door, inviting us to go and sample their beers. We couldn't turn down an offer like that, and sure enough, as we gathered outside the club, another large imposing building, we were all shown in through the front door into a largish square room with a bar in one corner (pictured above). We were nearly the only people there, but some of us were allowed a peek into the busier and much bigger back room with several snooker tables and a large screen showing TV football. The beers were Copper Dragon West Coast Pale which was good, Thwaites Wainwright which was average, and Holt's Bitter which none of us tried.

Just across the road, **Thom's Wine Bar** was found to have one cask beer on, Marston's "Pedigree New World Pale Ale", so we all piled in. It has a long narrow bar area which widens out into two rooms at the rear, one of which gives access to a small but pleasant outside yard with tables and

hanging baskets, which was where we gathered after buying our beers, which were OK.

The nearby **Town Café Bar** does not sell real ale, so our longest walk of the night so far (about 100 yards!) took us to the Plough. As it happened, this was the very night the **Plough** was re-opening after a refurbishment, so some of us were keen to see what had changed. It was very busy, understandably, and our ears were assailed by loud music which made conversation difficult. The pub is long and narrow, with bare boards, but it would be fair to say that most of the mixed clientele didn't seem overly bothered by the music. Four cask ales were available: Purity Pure Ubu and Thwaites Wainwright, which were good, Hop Back Summer Lightning which was average, and Sharp's Doom Bar, which no one tried.



Escaping rapidly from the music, we quickly moved on to the nearby **Crown**, the first traditional pub of the night. This historic pub retains its original multi-room layout, with two large rooms on the left containing the bar, which runs alongside both of them, and a small snug on the right where we gathered after buying our beers. These were Ossett Rai, Copper Dragon Golden Pippin and Timothy Taylor's Landlord, which were all pretty good, while no one tried the Pedigree or Bombardier.

On the corner of nearby Shaw Road is **Kro**, but unlike its sister establishment on Oxford Road, it does not sell cask ale, though it has at times in the past. There are several other bars on this road too, but Bottle, although (as its name suggests) selling lots of interesting bottled beers and a few 'craft' keg beers, has no cask ale, and neither does Cassidys, while the former Blue Cat had closed down, so there was nothing to detain us here (**Blue Cat has since reopened – see pub news. Ed.**)

The village of Heaton Moor has two main centres on Heaton Moor Road, and we now had a bit of a walk to get to the **Moor Top** end, named after the only pub there (or maybe the pub was named after the area). The Moor Top doesn't seem to have changed

at all since I first went in it in the 90s; it's basically one large L-shaped room with the bar running round the inside of the L. One small area is slightly raised up a few steps, and this is where we sat to drink our beers, which were Thwaites Lancaster Bomber and Wainwright, and Black Sheep Bitter. All were rated average to good.



As we had already found, pubs are not the only places you can drink good beer, and we now moved on to the second club of the night, the **Heaton Moor Sports Club**, signposted down a short side-turning off Green Lane. This hosts local rugby, cricket, lacrosse and tennis clubs in one large club house with a bar on the first floor, accessed by stairs or lift. As well as a sizeable indoor seating area, the bar (pictured above), which is open to non-members, has a large balcony overlooking the tennis courts and sports fields. The beers available were Holt's Bitter, which was fine, and Thwaites Wainwright, which was OK.



Now that we were on Green Lane, the obvious finishing point was at the cobbled end of that road in the neighbouring district of Heaton Norris, at the **Nursery**, a 1930s pub which is on CAMRA's national inventory of historic pub interiors. This Hydes pub has recently been refurbished, retaining its distinctive layout which includes a large lobby area, two rooms front and rear, and a vault with a separate entrance; the central bar serves all four areas. As well as all the Hydes beers, it serves a number of guest ales, which tonight included two from Castle Rock, Harvest Pale and Red Riding Hood, and Samuel Adams Blonde Ambition, all of which were good. But the beer of the night was in fact the only Hydes beer we tried, the dark mild Owd Oak, which was excellent. All in all, an interesting stagger.

Pub of the Month

The Railway, Portwood



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for October is the Railway on Avenue Street, Portwood. Mike Gilroy goes there a lot.

Since 2008 Sue and Vince Mathers have been working hard to keep the Railway on the map. Between them and their team of knowledgeable bar staff they have done a great job.

The Railway is situated opposite The Peel Centre on Portwood and looks like an average street corner pub (and as our picture shows there is currently no name outside). However, upon entering it is apparent this is not the case.

On the bar there are ten hand pulled ales permanently available from breweries such as Outstanding, Moorhouse's, Rossendale and Thornbridge to name but a few. In addition there's a rotating guest mild and an additional beer is available at the weekend. With an array of German, Belgian and other world beers available by the bottle and on draught there is something for everyone. A real cider and perry can always be found (via Merrylegs), along with a great choice of bottled cider. Indeed, the Railway is Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA branch's Cider Pub of the Year (and not for the first time).

The pub has a warm and friendly atmosphere and can get very busy at times – it has the feel of, and indeed is, a proper community local. The bar billiards table is well used and is great fun. There is a model railway that runs above the bar, if you ask Sue or Vince nicely enough they may start it up for you to see. On every other Sunday there's a pub quiz and there are regular music nights and acoustic jam sessions. Notices around the pub say who is playing and when.

In the past Sue and Vince have held several successful beer festivals and cider festivals, while tutored cider tastings are starting to become a feature on the pub's calendar.

So why not come and join Sue, Vince and the staff on Thursday 22nd October when we present this latest addition to the Railway's award collection.



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

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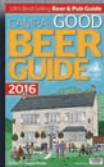


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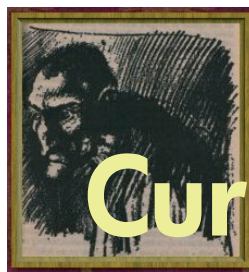


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Curmudgeon

Magical or Mundane?

Earlier this year, Robinsons discontinued their once best-selling 1892 Mild, in the face of steadily falling sales. While they could perhaps have made more effort to continue to make cask mild in some form available to their pubs, very few of them were selling enough to make it viable, so the decision, while sad, was entirely understandable.

At the same time, they launched a new 3.7% amber bitter called Wizard, not as a direct replacement for 1892, but to plug a gap at the bottom end of their range. Not surprisingly, this was not greeted with much enthusiasm by those who look down on any beer that isn't hoppy enough to take the skin off the roof of your mouth. However, it's intended to be a classic session bitter, not an in-your-face beer, and it fills that role very well.

It's a fairly dry beer, mid-amber in colour (a little darker than Unicorn), with a touch of the distinctive Robinsons house character and a good balance of malt and hops. Robinsons say that they "have combined five English hops, pale, wheat & crystal malts", and there's certainly considerable depth and complexity in there.

Historically, Robinsons have been in the unusual position of selling a "best bitter" as their everyday quaffing bitter. Some breweries in other parts of the country also did this, but it was pretty much unique in the North-West. Many people, unaware of the relative strength, used to complain that a night on Robinsons Best Bitter gave them a "bad head", when in fact it was markedly stronger than most of its competitors. In recent years they have introduced the 3.8% golden ale Dizzy Blonde, but it has never claimed to be an ordinary bitter and indeed often sells at a premium to the stronger Unicorn.

It seems a sensible move to bring out a lower-strength ordinary bitter that will also allow Robinsons to be more price-competitive in many of their urban pubs. And initial reports are that it has been selling very well.

Scotched

Scottish drinkers will have raised a glass last month at the news that the SNP government's plan to introduce minimum alcohol pricing has been dealt a major blow by the European Court of Justice. In a preliminary ruling, the Advocate General stated that the proposals were clearly in violation of EU rules on competition and free trade. While there may be a public health justification for it, the same objectives could be achieved by other measures that were less discriminatory. It's very rare for the main court to overrule such decisions and, while the idea isn't completely dead, it has certainly been kicked into the long grass, as many commentators had predicted.

Some people have argued that minimum pricing might help pubs by reducing the price differential against the off-trade, but it wouldn't give anyone a single extra penny to spend in pubs and off-trade drinks would still be much cheaper. CAMRA sensibly abandoned this policy a couple of years ago following a conference motion by two prominent Greater Manchester members arguing that it was basically putting the organisation on the wrong side of the debate.

Even if it did give pubs a slight boost, which is very doubtful anyway, it would be extremely short-sighted for one section of the drinks trade to seek a temporary advantage from what is essentially an anti-drink measure. In the words of Winston Churchill, "an appeaser is one who feeds the crocodile hoping it will eat him last."

Curmudgeon Online:
curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

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Trafford & Hulme Pub of the Season

Autumn Award goes to Jack in the Box, Altrincham

Some folks are not sure whether this outlet falls in to the description of a pub but I definitely am, writes *Beverley Gobbett*. It's set in a diverse and historical old market hall where you share tables with other visitors and everyone can choose what they wish to eat and drink from the various vendors.

Jack in the Box opened in September 2014 having been invited to join the other independent traders within the superbly refurbished Market House in Altrincham. With the bar being a collaboration between Blackjack Brewery and Glassworks it was always the aim to showcase the beers of Blackjack, and other UK micro breweries represented by Glassworks, as well as the many breweries of the North West. As such their beers are ever changing, as usually only one cask of each beer is purchased, although popular beers do return from time to time. One of the cask beers is a house pale which is permanently available, as is Blackjack lager. There is a discount available to CAMRA members on the house pale.



The bar was initially set up with four cask beers, eight keg lines, a still cider and a range of bottled beers, to both drink in and take away. With a very limited space and having to fit in the working cellar they originally came up with a few Heath Robinson contraptions to cool the casks; a Ford Mondeo radiator comes to mind! There's recently been a rethink on the set up of the bar though with better use of the space making the bar more workable. As a result, they've now got an extra cask line, the cider is now on draught and there's an extra fridge for a more extensive, and ever changing range of bottled beers.

Many of the staff have beery backgrounds, from Blackjack, Marble and Runaway breweries, and as such try to be as knowledgeable as they can about the products they serve, and of course are always happy to offer tasters to help customers make their own minds up before ordering a pint. The bar really hit the ground running both attracting regulars just popping in for a pint or two to those who come to dine and drink for the evening with all the amazing food on offer from the various stalls in the Market House. This well deserved award will be presented on Wednesday, 21st October from 8.00pm. All are welcome.

Rising Sun: Good Beer Guide?



Well, yes, the Rising Sun in Manchester City Centre is a 2016 Good Beer Guide pub. It's just not in the printed guide.

Gaining a place in the Good Beer Guide is no mean feat, with a multitude of CAMRA members effectively mystery shopping

pubs over many months and scoring the quality of the beer on the WhatPub beer scoring system. To get to the voting stages a pub must score consistently above average across the year, which is no easy task when working with a live product. It takes great skill in the cellar and from the bar staff and management to ensure standards do not drop and you can be guaranteed a good pint.

Even when a pub has consistently been good across the year, a place in the Good Beer Guide is not guaranteed. With a limited number of places available the rigorous testing is only stage one. Eligible pubs are also surveyed to ensure they meet all the other requirements to be listed in the guide before a Branch vote is taken. Trafford & Hulme Branch always has far more pubs eligible for Good Beer Guide places than are available and so the voting night is a hotly fought contest over which pubs finally make the grade.

As a Branch we were delighted to announce to the pub and our members that the Rising Sun was one of our Good Beer Guide entries for 2016. A much deserved place for a pub that has won many awards over the years under the watchful eye of Barrie Sneyd. Despite being owned by a pubco, Barrie has worked hard to bring a good range of beers to this City Centre pub, including supporting local breweries. His support to local breweries has even led to brewery takeover nights and other events to promote local beers and real ales. In addition to the great range of beers a real cider is always on tap.

Our delight was slightly short lived however, when it was

discovered that due to what we believe is called a 'cock up' at CAMRA HQ the Rising Sun was omitted from the printed guide, and so the Rising Sun is listed as a Good Beer Guide pub on the WhatPub online listing, but missing from the printed Guide. So, raise a glass to the Rising Sun and congratulate it on its place in the Good Beer Guide 2016, just don't try to find it in the printed guide.

Pictured left - Paul King, Trafford and Hulme Branch Chairman congratulates Barrie and his team, Ian Varley, Barman and Conor Sherlock, Barman and Cellar Team member

Altrincham update

Opening Times recently reported on the sad loss of John Glover, landlord of the **Old Market Tavern** in Altrincham. Since then the future of the pub has been uncertain. While it has been reported that the pub will be under new management in the near future, it is believed that John's daughter Amy will continue behind the bar and no immediate changes are planned. As any change of management is always going to raise concerns about the future, especially for a much loved community pub such as the OMT, a group of concerned locals including local CAMRA members going under the name "Friends of the Old Market Tavern" have submitted an application to Trafford Council to have the pub listed as an Asset of Community Value.



Across Altrincham's Old Market place, Enterprise Inns have installed new management at the **Orange Tree** which is open again following the departure of the team behind Chorlton's Beech Inn. *Opening Times* hasn't had a chance to call in yet, but local reports said beers on the bar were Thwaites Lancaster Bomber and Taylor's Landlord and that Sky Sports is back.





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High Peak Pub Scene



Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views

Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

Unfortunately not all the news can be good. A recent Buxton Advertiser carried the news that the **Royal Forresters** in Fairfield, Buxton, is to be demolished for housing. The pub had been closed for two or three years and its demise was probably inevitable. Also in Buxton the Advertiser carries reports and complaints that Robinsons seem to be doing nothing about the presently closed **Grove Hotel** in the heart of the town centre. It is reported that the brewery seems unwilling to carry out improvements, or to put the premises up for sale. On my only visit to the Grove a while back, Unicorn was in decent form. Doubtless this story will have further developments.

This situation in Buxton contrasts with the news that Wetherspoon's are to convert the first floor of the **Wye Bridge House** into hotel accommodation, which will bring the building round full circle as it started life back in the 19th century as a hotel built by the Midland Railway. The Wye Bridge House will of course continue to be a good venue for decent beer and 'you know what you're going to get' food.

Robinsons are spending money on pub refurbishments in the Peak District, as the in-house magazine The Unicorn reports in its summer issue. A good article shows the work that has been carried out to upgrade the **Royal Oak** at New Mills. This pub always was worth a visit and even more so now.

I managed a quick preview visit to the beer festival at **Glossop Labour Club**. Almost a score of beers were available and those tried were in good form. All the beers were from local-ish breweries and there was a good range of European bottled beers. Cascade from Stockport Brewing was as good as expected, whilst beers from Track and from Tweed were well worth trying. Look out for the Oktoberbierfest at the Labour Club, 16-18 October.

I missed the inaugural beer festival at **New Mills Football Club** but an interesting beer list suggests that this is one to try if it is repeated. A dozen or so beers were available, with notably the launch of beers from Torrside Brewing in New Mills. My information notes that both No Frills and New World were good, with the latter having a powerful flavour. Anakena and Stoneheads were available from Whaley Bridge Brewery, whilst beers from J.W. Lees, Howard Town, Weetwood and Seven Bro7hers completed the list. Hopefully all these went down well with visitors.

As ever, the **Navigation** at Buxworth offers

a range of beers from interesting breweries. Beers from Huddersfield's Empire brewery were recently available. Golden Warrior is blonde, pale and hoppy, and there were more to follow. Abbeydale beers are often available with Masquerade, a pale and hoppy beer, well worth trying.



New management at the **White Horse** in Whaley Bridge has continued to serve Wells Bombardier as a currently lone cask ale, but a single beer selling well enough is an aid to quality. Finally, the **Plough Boy** in Disley is for sale, which might set alarm bells sounding. However I understand that it may be in safe hands if a planned purchase goes through. More as this story unfolds.

High Peak Pub News

With Tom Lord

A recent Branch social in Stalybridge including two not frequently visited real ale pubs revealed some interesting beers. Starting with the **Stalybridge Labour Club**, where two beers from the Seven Bro7hers Brewery, Pale Ale and a very good Wheat Beer, were available. Alongside these were Oakham JHB and a beer from the local TicketyBrew Brewery. It was quite hard to leave really.

Moving on to the nearby **Britons Protection**, Marstons EPA was in good nick. This is an excellent local pub still doing the job that it was designed to do, one of the dwindling band of unsung heroes so frequently overlooked.

Down the road is the **Wharf Tavern** on Caroline Street backing on to the Huddersfield Canal. Pint in hand I stood for a while at a rear window watching several fishermen on the towpath having a good time pulling in roach. This is also a good local, particularly so because it still has many of the original architectural features, such as tiles, woodwork and separate smoke room plus leaded windows with the original lettering. One bears the legendary information 'Gartsides Golden Ales'. The last pint I had from Bents Gartsides Brewery was in the **Norfolk Arms** in Marple Bridge many, many years ago. If I remember correctly it was Staffordshire IPA.

It is reported that the currently closed **Jolly**

Hatters (Full Shilling) in Denton near Crown Point is to be converted into a Little Learners Nursery. Meanwhile up in Mottram, the **White Hart**, which was sold at auction in February, now appears to be closed. This will leave the village of Mottram without a pub. Over in Glossop the closed **Moon and Sixpence** on Bernard Street looks set to become a restaurant.

Now for some good news from Ashton under Lyne. This is the **Ash Tree Farm**, which opened in the spring. Owned by Greene King and part of the Farmhouse Inns brand, this is a large modern establishment in the area previously known as Ashton Moss. It's essentially a family dining establishment with traditional pub grub alongside a carvery, but the real ale drinker is not forgotten with three hand pumps on the bar. Ash Tree Ale is brewed for the pub by Moorhouses and Greene King IPA and Old Speckled Hen are also on offer.



A quick trip to Dukinfield and Ashton revealed some interesting beers. At the **Angel** on King Street, Dukinfield, Wadworth Dirty Rucker, Sharp's Rising Tide, Sunny Republic Brewery Hop Day and Taylor's Golden Best were available. At the **Forresters Call** was Lees' Drayman's Reward and at the nearby **Witchwood** were Moorhouse's Bohemia and Blond Witch, Sadlers Yellow Mellow, Wells Bombardier and Wychwood Hobgoblin plus Impeared Vision Perry from Double Vision Cider in Kent. The **Station** on Warrington Street produced Brains Reverend James and Sharp's Atlantic together with Lilley's Merry Monkey Cider.

It is reported that the closed **Horsfield Arms** in Bredbury has now been demolished. In Hyde the extension of the **Ash Tree** is now underway following the demolition of the neighbouring former snooker hall. Up in Hollingworth the **Gun Inn** has recently reopened after an extensive refurbishment and there will be more on this next month.

Meet the Brewer

Zeitgeist Brew Co

This month Brendan Hall interviews the team behind Zeitgeist Brew Co, new “cuckoo” brewers who to date have made their beer at Runaway Brewery.

1. Hello Zeitgeist Brew Co. Please introduce yourselves!

Hello! We're Jason, Paul and Sean. A pub landlord, an architectural assistant and an aerospace engineering undergraduate looking to create something special in and on behalf of, Manchester.

2. Manchester is having a real beer renaissance at the moment. How do you plan to make your beers stand out from the crowd?

We aim to create a strong, recognisable brand synonymous with quality craft ale. We intend to do this by not compromising on quality and ensuring we brew accessible, refreshing, high quality, hop-driven craft beer. Between us, due to our varied skill set and base of experience we are confident we can evolve with the ever changing trends of Manchester to always provide an exciting and captivating variety of products.

3. Zeitgeist beers are currently available on tap in the Crown & Kettle in Manchester. How soon can we expect you to roll out to other pubs and bars?

Recently we've been busy meeting various pubs and bars regarding supplying both bottle and keg as well as setting up relationships with several craft bottle shops throughout the North-west region. Currently you can find us at Kosmonaut NQ, Piccadilly Tap and we will also be resident at Dough, Apotheca and the Crown and Kettle very soon.

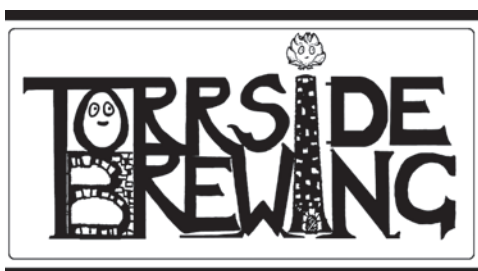
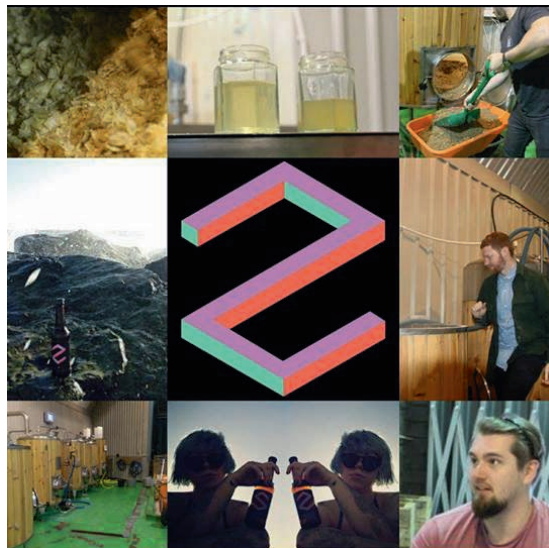
Basically, expect to see us all over the city centre in the next month or so! Also, follow our latest developments on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. @zeitgeistbrewco

4. Your Twitter feed shows your beers available in key-keg. Do you have any plans to move into the cask market?

Cask is something that we definitely want to deliver going forward as we're excited to see how our beer can be showcased on this platform. Exploring how body, aroma and especially taste can be developed is something we can't wait to get started on.

5. Finally, when you aren't drinking your own beer – please choose a favourite local, national and international beer that are currently blowing your socks off.

Our favourite local beer has to be Runaway. Every brew is different, tasty and driven by quality, something we have modelled in our own ale. Nationally, it has to be Siren. These guys really bring a fresh, modern stance and variety to the beer market. Internationally, we love Mikkeller. He really is a truly innovative and cutting edge brewer. All three brewing styles are something that we have worked hard to encompass in our own brewing - making it personal to our own tastes, and as a diverse threesome we know it will be a hit with the Manchester beer lovers.



Brewing, a project of three keen home-brewers, Peter Sidwell, Chris Clough and Nick Rothko-Wright (pictured left to right).

All three were members of the Manchester Home Brewers Group and harboured plans for a step up to more commercial operation. They got together last year to pursue a joint project and, as is usually the case with new brewers, it was almost a year before they found suitable premises. They found a former warehouse at the restored New Mills Marina and moved in during February after which came a pause while planning permission was granted.

It's a huge building with lots of room for expansion and the substantial 10 barrel kit (supplied by Oban Ales) looks quite lonely at the moment. It's already been joined by a large pile of casks and kegs, and a bottling kit will soon follow as the plan is to make Torrside beers available in all three formats.

When *Opening Times* called in mid-September the first brews were already underway and should be out and about very soon. The initial beers will be a session bitter at 4%, brewed with European and New Zealand hops and a smoked porter at 5%, with 62% of the malt grist being smoked malt (so this will be very smoky) and hopped with

New Mills seems Challenger. Both will have poised to become an unlikely centre of brewing. If all goes to plan in the next few months there could be no fewer than three breweries operating in the town. First off the blocks is Torrside

in the 5% region. OT sampled some of the bottled test brews and was very impressed – an IPA was crisply hoppy, the red ale had the malts and hops in superb balance while the stout (both standard and imperial versions) was knock-out. All very promising we think.

The brewery is in an excellent location overlooking the marina and with views out to Kinder Scout and there are plans to make use of this in the warmer months, with outside seating, barbeques and the like. There's already a bar at the brewery and occasional open days are planned when you'll be able to drop by and have a few beers – it's just a short walk from New Mills Newtown station and the 158 bus terminus.

You can contact Torrside via their website at www.torrside.co.uk.

And those other breweries? We understand that Rock Mill Brewery in the town centre will be up and running by the end of the year. There are also rumours of a brewpub opening in the town, too. Oh, and down the road at Chapel-en-le-Frith we welcome Ben Millner's High Peak Brew Co. More on that one next time.



The Cider Circuit

Win great prizes on our annual cider trail



This month we are offering you the chance to win a 36 pint “box” of cider as we re-run our Cider Circuit. Not only that but it is once again very easy indeed to win a prize. All you have to do is visit our participating pubs and buy a pint or a half of traditional cider or perry, and then get the bar staff to put a sticker on the pub’s entry on the form below. Get 10 stickers and you will win a bottle of traditional cider or perry. Get 20 stickers and you will win instead two bottles of cider or perry. Get a sticker from all pubs and as well as winning two bottles of cider or perry you will also be entered in the draw for the 36 pint box. If the pub has run out of (or mislaid) the stickers then get a signature and date instead.

The Cider Circuit runs from Monday 5th October to Sunday 15th November. Completed forms should be sent to: Cider Circuit, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 9HD to arrive no later than Saturday 21st November. If you are entering the grand draw, make sure you specify whether you would prefer dry, medium or sweet cider. **Please make sure you include your name, address, telephone number and email address so we can contact you.** All the prizes will be presented at a special cider afternoon to be held at the Cheshire Ring, Manchester Road, Hyde on Sunday 13th December from 2.00pm onwards.

<p>Crescent 18-21 The Crescent, Salford, M5 4PF</p>	<p>New Oxford 11 Bexley Square, Salford, M3 6DB</p>	<p>Eagle Inn 18 Collier Street, Salford, M3 7DW</p>	<p>Bar Fringe 8 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JN</p>	<p>Castle Hotel 66 Oldham Street, Manchester, M4 1LE</p>	<p>City Arms 48 Kennedy Street, Manchester, M2 4BQ</p>
<p>Crown and Kettle 2 Oldham Road, Manchester, M4 5FE</p>	<p>Font 7-9 New Wakefield Street, Manchester, M1 5NP</p>	<p>Marble Arch 73 Rochdale Road, Manchester, M4 4HY</p>	<p>Micro Bar Unit FC16, Arndale Market, Manchester, M4 3AH</p>	<p>Paramount 33-35 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 4BH</p>	<p>Pie & Ale The Hive, 47 Lever Street, Manchester, M1 1FN</p>
<p>Rising Sun 22 Queen Street, Manchester, M2 5HX</p>	<p>Smithfield 37 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JZ</p>	<p>Vine 46 Kennedy Street, Manchester, M2 4BQ</p>	<p>Star Inn 2 Howard Street, Glossop, SK13 7DD</p>	<p>Station Buffet Bar Rassbottom Street, Stalybridge, SK15 1RF</p>	<p>White House 1 Water Street, Stalybridge, SK15 2AG</p>
<p>Harewood Arms 2 Market St, Broadbottom, SK14 6AX</p>	<p>Cheshire Ring 72 Manchester Road, Hyde, SK14 2BJ</p>	<p>Calverts Court 13 St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB</p>	<p>Crown 154 Heaton Lane, Stockport, SK4 1AR</p>	<p>Fairway 137 Higher Hillgate, Stockport, SK1 3HR</p>	<p>Heaton Hops 7 School Lane, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5DE</p>
<p>Hope 118 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 2LL</p>	<p>Magnet 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ</p>	<p>Railway 1 Avenue Street, Portwood, Stockport, SK1 2BZ</p>	<p>Spinning Top 20 Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK4 1AA</p>	<p>Gateway 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury, M20 5PG</p>	<p>Victoria 438 Wilmslow Road, Withington, M20 3BW</p>
<p>Friendship 353 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, M14 6XS</p>	<p>Font 236 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, M14 6LE</p>	<p>Ford Madox Brown Wilmslow Park, Oxford Road, Rusholme, M13 9NG</p>	<p>De Nada 127 Manchester Road, Chorlton, M21 9PG</p>	<p>Dulcimer 567 Wilbraham Road, Chorlton, M21 0AE</p>	<p>Font 115-117 Manchester Road, Chorlton, M21 9PG</p>

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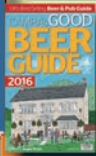
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Heard at the Bar

Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond



West Didsbury

For many years local press have compared what they dubbed “trendy Burton Road” with Chorlton’s “Fashionable Beech Road” and there has been much in the comparison. However, the West Didsbury street lagged behind in what it offered beer fans. In recent years **Mary & Archies**, **Folk** and more recently **Volta** have levelled the drinking field. Now thanks to two openings in one September week, Burton Road may just be able to claim the edge for the drinker.



The first new opening was the **George Charles** situated on the corner of Burton Road and Nell Lane in what was formerly Wellington Stores corner shop. The name refers to the person who owned the shop back in the late 1800s – there is a photograph of him in the basement of the new venue. Opening on the first weekend in September just in time for the local “WestFest” community street fair, the bar has been an incredible 10 months in the making. It’s very nicely fitted out and there have been major works to convert it from a shop, including digging out the cellar to give an extra two feet of headroom.



With large windows on all sides, the bar has a very spacious and open feel, although the ground floor only has seating for around 40 people – fixed bench down one side, drinking shelf and stools down the other with a spattering of two and four person tables in between. Downstairs is a second room with seating for around 30 more and a second small bar.

In the main room, the bar is at the rear and boasts four handpumps. When Opening Times called an hour into opening night (we suffer for our journalism you know) the

cask ales were Brightside Odin, Brightside Indian Summer, RedWillow Wreckless and TickyBrew Munchner. We tried all except the TickyBrew and all were good.

There are no fonts on the bar itself, instead the bar has the now familiar “font wall” on the back bar with 10 lines, one of which has a cider from Westons. The line-up isn’t as heavily “craft” as some places but the only real mass market product is Guinness. Lagers are Flensburg, Brooklyn and Mahou plus “Revisionist” lager which looks like it’s “craft” in the mould of Meantime but is actually a Marston’s brand. There is also Shipyard American Pale Ale – another Marston’s product. The only real UK “craft keg” beers were Anarchy Quiet Riot and Blackjack Small Saison.

Cask is priced at £3.50 with the Revisionist Lager at £3.90 and the Blackjack at £4.50. The manager is Ben Brown who was formerly manager of the **Parlour**, Chorlton, so beer should be in safe hands although the bar does have the limitation of a small cellar so if demand is high (and the first 10 days trading has shown it may well be), he may not be able to keep all four pumps going simultaneously.



Just as the George Charles was preparing to open, news broke that the team behind Chorlton’s highly successful Dulcimer bar had taken over the **Violet Hour**, just a few doors down from the George Charles. In the two years since the current owners took control, Dulcimer has been slowly building itself a reputation as a leading light of Chorlton’s beer scene (including an overdue return to the Good Beer Guide this year) with the cellar in the hands of Dave “Badger” Bell. Now Dave, along with co-owners Will Pitcher and Jonty Wood have transformed cocktail specialist Violet Hour into **Saison** (pictured above) – a bar with a very different focus (although they are still serving cocktails).

While George Charles was 10 months in the making, the Saison team set themselves a rather more ambitious target of 11 days between Violet Hour closing after the bank holiday weekend and Saison throwing open the doors on 11th September. The main change was the one that Opening Times was most interested in – the bar now features

four shiny handpumps in the centre while the back bar features a font wall with no less than 16 lines. Behind the scenes, accommodating such a massive expansion of the beer range has seen the bar’s cellar doubled in size with the office making way for casks of beer.



Opening Times again did its duty and popped along on opening night to check it out. Will Pitcher told us that it had been touch and go whether they would be ready in time with the cellar fit-out team only finishing the job 30 minutes before opening but they made it with a full range available. The four cask beers on opening night were Blackjack Belgian Honey Porter, Fyne Ales Great Pacific Hop Patch, Left Handed Giant Red 5 and Siren Soundwave. All were found to be in excellent form. The font wall featured a range of local, national and international beers ranging from Blackjack’s Black Maria through Celt, Hammerton and Wild Beer to Danish gypsy brewer Mikkeller and New Zealand’s well respected Yeastie Boys. There is also an impressive range of bottled beers, all advertised in a glossy “Beer Book” complete with brewery info, tasting notes and even space to record your score for the beer.

The bar is a little smaller than its new neighbour, although the centrally located bar masks the depth of the premises which has additional tables at the rear. The stairwell opposite the bar has one flight running down to the toilets while a second flight takes you to the first floor where there is additional seating and a second bar which is a pint sized copy of the main bar – two more handpumps and a seven font wall.

Burton Road is certainly a cask and craft destination these days. The two new additions join Folk, Volta, Mary & Archies and the long standing **Railway** and **Metropolitan** offering a choice of over 25 cask beers between them. With easy access by tram to Burton Road station and regular bus services from Manchester, Stockport and Levenshulme either passing down Burton Road or stopping at the junction with Barlow Moor Road, it’s well worth a trip from out of area to sample some great beers in a varied selection of bars.

More news on page 17

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Pub News Extra

Covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Church Inn, Flixton

The Church Inn at Flixton has reopened after some refurbishment during September. It has been redecorated inside and out, with a heavy emphasis on hard surfaces for floors and walls - tiles, blinds and wooden boards



have displaced carpets and curtains. Greene King now own Spirit Pubs so their IPA, Old Speckled Hen and Abbott Ale are likely to be permanent beers. Jennings' Cumberland Ale and Sharp's Doom Bar were also on offer when *Opening Times* called in.

Bright white tiling dominates the back of the bar (the old etched mirror advertising Greenall Whitley went some time ago, but was rescued by a previous landlord for domestic use). There is a nod to "craft beers", which here are bottles of Brooklyn Lager and sundry BrewDog products. And there are lots of shiny keg fonts dispensing nothing of especial interest to readers of this magazine.

There has been some re-ordering of the patio area outside the entrance from the car park, featuring some smart new tables and chairs. Unaccountably, this re-ordering hasn't extended to any form of ramped access for folk using wheelchairs: they still face two or three steps, whether they approach from the front or from the car park. The irony is that inside all the public areas are on the same level, even the side bits that used to have raised seating.



But otherwise not much has changed. Mine hosts are still Joanne and Lance Amison. The pub still offers food all day, though without the previously popular discounts on two meals ordered together. The menu now includes the vegetarian version of fish and chips, with battered halloumi cheese. Sporting events are still celebrated, with additional flat screen TVs on the walls. And yes, the ancient and mysterious "Shell" is still in place (pictured above), protecting the corner where the wall of the pub meets the wall of the churchyard. You'll have to see it to work out just what form of protection the Shell gives...

Name Changers

The two bars in the Moose group - **Moose of Hale** and the recently opened **Moose of Chorlton** have changed their name to "**The Elk**". In announcing the change, the bars tweeted #TakenDownByTheBiggerMoose later revealing that the name change was due to complaint by Moose Coffee who have two shops in Liverpool and one in central Manchester. Not wanting to get into extended dispute, the bar version decided to be proactive and change their name. All other aspects of the two bars remain unchanged.

Another name change in Chorlton has seen the **Shak** becoming the **Jam Inn**. The Wilbraham Road bar is now 100% owned by Paul Duffy who previously had a third share in former owners Shak Enterprises and brings the bar into the same ownership as Whalley Range's **Jam Street Café** - hence the name change. When *Opening Times* called, three cask beers were on the bar. The Fell Tinderbox IPA was good while the First Chop AVA was OK if a little tired. The Marston's/Thwaites Wainwright was not tried.

Arden Arms Anniversary



Publicans Steve King and Joe Quinn of the award-winning Arden Arms pub on Millgate, Stockport, celebrated its 200th birthday on Sunday 30th August.

"We fell in love with the Arden Arms the first time we saw it" Steve told *Opening Times*. "It was the perfect location for us after running another business together for 15 years... we haven't left since!" Joe said: "It's hard to believe we've been at the Arden Arms for almost 16 years; we feel almost part of the furniture! It's incredible to look back at the history of the pub and the celebration is to pay homage to a Stockport institution."

The first landlord of the Arden Arms, George Raffald Junior, was the nephew of a remarkable woman named Elizabeth Raffald. Elizabeth was born in 1733 and became a housekeeper at Arley Hall in Cheshire. After marrying the head gardener John Raffald, in 1763, the duo set up business at the Bulls Head in Manchester. Elizabeth was renowned for her cold collations, elegant French cuisine and eye-catching confectionery.

Her recipes were so successful that in 1769 she published 800 of them in her best-selling cookbook 'The Experienced English Housekeeper'. Elizabeth is credited as being amongst the first recorded sources in the English language to use 'barbecue' as a cookery term in her eighteenth century recipe book; nearly a century before Mrs Beeton published her world-famous 'Book of Household Management'. She is also responsible for the modern Eccles Cake which she innovated using flaky pastry instead of a yeast based mix.

Steve said: "They don't make them like that anymore! She was an inspiring woman, especially at a time where the world was very male dominated. She left her mark not just on Manchester and Stockport but on the entire world." After her death in 1781, her nephew George built the Arden Arms directly opposite St Mary's Parish Churchyard where his aunt was buried. The pub is now the only original building left standing on its side of Millgate.

Joe said: "We're proud of our heritage. Without our history and the long line of innkeepers before us, the Arden Arms wouldn't have made it to 200 years. We hope we can do them proud!"

Loungers

The national Loungers Group have opened two new bars in the *Opening Times* area, supplementing their existing **Expo Lounge** in Didsbury. First to open was the slightly strangely named "**Cosy Club**" in the revamped Corn Exchange in Manchester City Centre. Two handpumps are at the end of the bar which both featured beers from Brightside when OT called in. We tried the Our Town at £3.60 a pint which was in good condition. We were told that all cask beers would come from local breweries with Tickybrew to follow after the Brightside. The second new bar from the group is "**Bevano Lounge**" in Urmston's Eden Square development. Bizarrely, here there is no cask ale and according to the management, no plans to introduce it. With this report, *Opening Times* skipped our planned visit in favour of bars in the area that are selling lots of cask ale - visiting Wetherspoon's **Tim Bobbin**, micro pub the **Prairie Schooner Tap House** and brew pub the **Steamhouse**.

Hazel Grove

Some you win and some you lose. Robinsons have looked at their Hazel Grove estate and have called time on the **White Hart** which has now closed down and had the signs removed. However on the upside the forthcoming **Grove Alehouse** micro pub continues to make progress. As we went to press the licensing application had been successful and planning permission granted.

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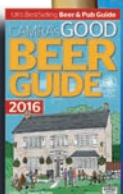
Greater Manchester Pub of the Year

**CAMRA
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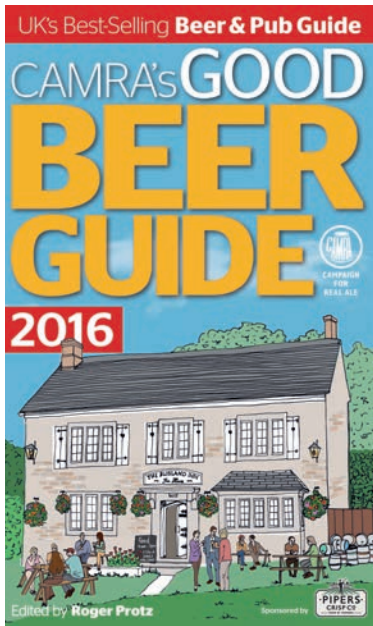
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Good Beer Guide 2016



"The definitive rundown of the best places in the UK to get a pint of real ale, from cosy country inns to upmarket style bars" - Time Out Magazine

The **2016 Good Beer Guide** was published on 10th September. This, the 42nd edition of the country's best beer and pub guide, features over 4,500 of the best pubs in the UK, chosen by CAMRA members from across the country.

The Guide shows that the UK now has more breweries per head than anywhere else in the world and records 204 new start-ups over the previous 12 months. The UK total is now 1,424 (and as we show in this issue more are in the pipeline).

Britain's 1,424 breweries are all comprehensively listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2016. As CAMRA's flagship title, the Guide features over 4,500 urban and rural pubs, giving details of the real ales, food, opening hours, beer gardens, accommodation, transport links, disabled access and family facilities.

The Guide is completely independent and there is no charge for entry. The data is compiled by CAMRA's 170,000-plus members, who exhaustively update and revise the Guide entries each year, thereby guaranteeing the reader the most up to date publication to Britain's best real ale pubs.

Roger Protz, CAMRA Good Beer Guide editor (pictured), said:



"Real ale is the only success story in a declining beer market. New breweries, making handcrafted beers, continue to come on stream while many long-standing regional and family breweries are expanding with new equipment and new brands. Real ale has almost doubled its market share over the past decade."

The continued growth across the whole of the UK has been driven by small, independent breweries which have been starting up all over the country, many of whom are experimenting with the new beers they brew, leading to even greater choice for drinkers.




"With every region in the country seeing an increase in breweries it means even more choice for real ale drinkers, particularly as breweries are becoming more adventurous in the beers they brew, adding herbs, spices, fruit and chocolate to beer - while a growing number are ageing beer in oak casks bought from whisky, wine and rum producers to give new depths of flavour to their products."

The pubs are surveyed by local CAMRA members and scored on a variety of aspects that make a great pub. These include customer service, the clientele mix (i.e. the pub appeals to 18 and 80 year olds), value for money, décor and of course the quality of the real ale. CAMRA members therefore guarantee to supply the reader with the most up to date publication to help locate the best pint of real ale.

Copies of the Good Beer Guide can be obtained from Jim Flynn at a price of £15.99 (includes p&p). Please send a cheque payable to "CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester" to 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG.

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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.
- ☺ **Ashlea, Manchester Road, Cheadle:** 10% discount off cask ale.
- ☺ **Bar Fringe, Swan Street, Manchester:** 10p off a half and 20p off a pint of cask ale.
- ☺ **Beehive, Market Street, Droylsden:** 10% off a pint of cask ale and cider.
- ☺ **Bier Cell, Greenwood Street, Altrincham:** 10% discount on bottled beers.
- ☺ **Fir Tree, Gorton Road, Reddish:** 20% off a pint of cask ale.
- ☺ **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.
- ☺ **Garibaldi, Lees St, Abbey Hey:** 10% off cask ale.

- ☺ **Harewood Arms, 2 Market Street, Broadbottom:** 20p off a pint of cask ales Sunday to Thursday.
- ☺ **Heaton Hops, School Lane, Heaton Chapel:** 10% off all draught beers.
- ☺ **Lass O'Gowrie, Charles Street, Manchester:** 50p off a pint and 20p off a half of cask ales.
- ☺ **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.
- ☺ **Pie & Ale, The Hive, Lever Street, Manchester:** 10% off cask ale.
- ☺ **Salisbury, New Wakefield Street, Manchester:** 50p off a pint and 20p off a half of cask ales.
- ☺ **Spinning Top, Wellington Road South, Stockport:** 30p off a pint and 12 p 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.
- ☺ **Famous Trevor Arms, 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.
- ☺ **Wine & Wallop, Lapwing Lane, West Didsbury:** 40p off a pint of cask ale.

The Pubs of Disley

Geoff Williamson takes a tour



When travelling east from northern Cheshire to the Peak District or towards Sheffield, Chesterfield or Matlock you may have used the A6 and passed through the small village of Disley.

Nestling into the edge of the Pennine hills Disley is the most easterly part of Cheshire on this route before passing into Derbyshire and is well worth a visit, particularly as a base for walking or cycling in the wonderful surrounding countryside or while visiting the National Trust's Lyme Park with its superb hall and its deer park. Once you have built up a thirst there is nothing better than relaxing in one or more of Disley's seven pubs with a pint or two of real ale. I recently spent a pleasant summer's evening strolling around the village calling in the pubs on the way, starting at the easterly end and working my way along the A6 (Buxton Road) towards the centre.



The first port of call was the [White Lion](#) a must for all real ale lovers as its nine handpumps (pictured above) dispense an ever-changing range of guest beers. Beers are sourced from both regional and micro-breweries and on my visit the beers on offer included Slater's Rye IPA, Tatton Lazy Haze, Stockport Stock Porter, Saltaire Blonde, Sharp's Doom Bar, Otter Bitter, Hobgoblin Gold, Skinner's Lushingtons and Lees Bitter. The White Lion was selected by the local CAMRA branch as its nomination for Cheshire Pub of the Year 2015 and has a large open-plan interior; worth noting is the curious pub sign, which is a zebra rather than the lion you might expect. The pub welcomes all, including dogs, and even provides a dog room.

Heading west a few hundred yards brings you to the [Albert](#), again this pub has an open-plan interior where once were separate rooms. The Albert is used by many locals keen on football and there are several TV screens showing live games. The single handpump offers Thwaites Wainwright.

Further along the A6 I passed the building that had previously been the [Crescent](#), a Robinsons house, which was sold last year and is awaiting redevelopment and a change of use – alas another well-loved local closed. On reaching the centre of the village I visited the [Dandy Cock](#) a

Robinsons pub, which on my visit was serving Unicorn, Double Hop and Dizzy's Twisted Sister. The comfortable interior underwent a full refurbishment a couple of years ago which has given it a more contemporary feel while retaining its original character. The pub was one of the first houses acquired by Robinsons and in its time has seen many changes in this part of the village. Its name is reputed to originate from the days when it hosted cock fighting.



In the centre of the village and only a short walk from the Dandy Cock stands the [Ram's Head](#). Adjacent to the village green (and the closest pub to the railway station) this former coaching inn is an impressive building dating from around 1840. The style of the building both outside and in is impressive and takes you back to a bygone age, although numerous interior refurbishments over the years have much changed the building's character leaving it now a mixture of old features mixed with some modern decor. At the time of my visit, Thwaites Wainwright, Black Sheep Best Bitter and Hopback Summer Lightning were on offer.

The last three pubs on my stroll around Disley are all located along Buxton Old Road, and as the road name implies this is part of the old coaching route and some of the oldest parts of the village are to be found along this road. Buxton Old Road starts from traffic signals adjacent to the Ram's Head and runs in a southerly direction over the hills towards Whaley Bridge in Derbyshire.



[Frankies Wine Bar](#) is only a hundred yards from the Ram's Head; it was previously called the Mousetrap and was renamed only a few years ago following a substantial refurbishment. It is now arguably the most chic pub in the village

and with its contemporary style it is difficult to appreciate that this is in fact the oldest pub in Disley. Alongside the chrome fonts on the bar sit three handpumps with Thwaites Wainwright and Lancaster Bomber being regulars in addition to Timothy Taylor's Landlord (or sometimes Boltmaker). On the occasion of my visit, however, the Thwaites beers were not available and instead Marston's New World was on sale.

A few yards away on the opposite side of the road stands the [White Horse](#), another Robinsons house. Originally this pub had numerous rooms but the brewery refurbished it in the early eighties and it is now open plan. Many of the pubs in the village offer good food, as does the White Horse, but what makes the food here unusual is that the menu includes Spanish Tapas. A good selection of Robinsons beers was on offer during my visit and included Unicorn, Wizard and Dizzy's Twisted Sister in addition to Hartleys Cumbria Way.



On leaving the White Horse and heading up the hill on the last leg of my tour I was prepared for the slightly more strenuous walk as the gradient quickly increased. After five minutes of uphill walking I was grateful to reach the [Ploughboy](#) and put my feet up. Walking through the small outdoor covered drinking area and into the pub I was enveloped by the cosy low-ceilinged interior of this small pub frequented by locals who do not want to endure the walk down into the centre of the village, and more particularly the walk back. TV screens are present again in this pub for sports fans, but the pub still retains a restfulness at times when there are no major sporting events showing. Usually on offer are Doom Bar and Atlantic from Sharp's in addition to Marston's Pedigree. Update – the pub has now gone up for sale at an asking price of £180,000.

Disley also has a number of good restaurants as an alternative to the food offered in several of the pubs. Should you wish to find more information on the pubs featured within this article then visit the CAMRA 'WhatPub' website at whatpub.com/ where you will find up to date information on opening times, food availability etc.

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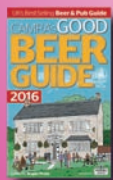
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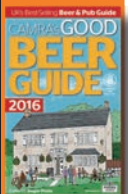
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We're in the Good Beer Guide 2016

Regional Awards

Pub and Club of the Year winners

The launch of the 2016 Good Beer Guide in October saw the now traditional announcement of CAMRA's Regional Pubs of the Year. In Greater Manchester the regional Club of the Year results were revealed at the same time.

CAMRA's Greater Manchester Pub of the Year is the Crown & Kettle, a striking building on the corner of Great Ancoats Street and Oldham Road. This Grade II listed free house reopened in 2005 after 16 years of closure. While the internal layout is much changed (and now has more public rooms than was the case before the pub closed - there is a large drinking area in front of the bar along with a small vault and a snug at the rear) the striking ceiling is the main feature and has been partly restored.

A change of management a couple of years ago saw a revitalised beer range. Nine handpumps dispense an ever-changing range of guest beers, with an emphasis on local brews – more so as manager Jason Stephenson is one of the partners in the new Zeitgeist Brewing. In addition there is a range of bottled and keg, craft beers plus traditional cider and perry. Commenting on the award Andrew Rodbourne, CAMRA's Greater Manchester Regional Director, said, *"This year has seen a variety in the styles of pubs being judged from the rural community pubs to a city centre community pub. The calibre of entries is extremely high and the end result very close. The Crown & Kettle is one of the standout establishments in the city centre and it deserves this prestigious award. Congratulations Jason and the team"*. The award is due to be presented at 7.00pm on Saturday 24th October.



The runner-up was last year's winner, the Harewood Arms in Broadbottom. This former Enterprise Inns pub was taken over in October 2013 by Green Mill Brewery which moved there from its previous location in Rochdale. The brewery is now established in the cellar of the pub which functions as the brewery tap. There is a range of continental bottled beers available along with a handpull dedicated to real cider. There a large open plan areas either side of the entrance and which feature wooden beams and panels. Open fires help to create a warm and comfortable atmosphere. There's a notable community feel to this pub in a quiet village on the edge of the Peak District.

The Greater Manchester CAMRA Club of the Year for 2015 is Flixton Conservative Club. The Club now has six hand pumps in permanent use on the downstairs bar, five of them dispensing ever changing guest ales with the remaining pump normally used for the regular Theakston's Best Bitter. The guest ales are acquired from various breweries and regular support is given to many local producers (Dunham Massey, Brightside, Prospect, Bank Top, Coach House and Allgates to name just a few). Complementing the extensive range of cask ales are a number of excellent bottles from near and far with beers from local brewery TicketyBrew joining an impressive selection from America and Belgium (including some Trappist beers). Not content with downstairs, the recent addition of a further five hand pumps on the bar in the upstairs function room has enabled the club to organise a number of special events with their monthly "Brewery Nights" proving to be particularly popular. The friendly and knowledgeable team at Flixton Conservative Club, under the expert stewardship of Nigel and Sharon Porter, is proud of the quality of its cask ales and of its Cask Marque rating. They are also very appreciative of the recognition and support they continue to receive from CAMRA.



Andrew Rodbourne commented *"This year has seen the most entries ever submitted for the Club of the Year. With a wide variety of different clubs including for the first time an entry from Stockport and South Manchester branch in Ladybarn Social Club which is runner up in this competition. Congratulations to the winner Flixton Conservative Club a truly outstanding club and an asset to the community of Flixton."* The presentation will be made at 8.00pm on Friday 16th October.

Ladybarn Social Club now occupies the premises of a former Robinsons pub, the White Swan, which for many years, played a central role in the activities of the old South Manchester CAMRA branch and, indeed, seems to have functioned as an unofficial branch HQ at times. Sadly the pub fell on hard times and was an early victim of Robinsons closure programme. Luckily that was not the end of the story and the building was acquired by the local Ladybarn Social Club who at the time occupied premises next door. The old pub has

been refurbished and again plays a central role in the life of the local community. Indeed the community spirit is palpable and really gives the whole enterprise a lift. The presence of two well-kept changing cask beers on the bar is the icing on the cake.

The photograph of the Crown & Kettle is courtesy of Wesley Harding. Prints are available at w.whhardingphotography.co.uk/



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*'Drink of this & take thy fill
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