

OPENING TIMES

NOVEMBER 2015 / FREE



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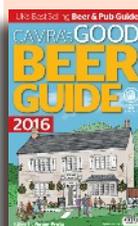
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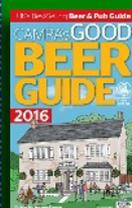
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OPENING TIMES

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
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- * Derbyshire: www.derbybus.info

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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
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High Peak & NE Cheshire (HPNC)
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Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)
www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk
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Trafford & Hulme (T&H)
www.thcamra.org.uk
Contact: John O'Donnell 07879 880972 or enquiries@thcamra.org.uk

Local CAMRA Events Open events in blue

Monday 9th – Branch Meeting: Chalkers Snooker Club, Redmoor Mil/Buxton Road, New Mills, SK22 3JT. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 11th – Higher Broughton Social: 7.30pm Duke of York, Marborough Road, M7 4SP; 8.45pm Star, Back Hope Street, M7 2FR (NM).

Wednesday 11th – Campaigning Meeting: Ox-fford, Oxford Road, Macclesfield, SK1 8JG. Starts 8.00pm. (MEC)

Thursday 12th – Branch Meeting: Stockport Brewing, Arch 14, Heaton Lane, Stockport, SK4 1AG. New faces especially welcome and "Meet the Brewer" with Torrside Brewing and Stockport Brewing Co. Starts at 8.15pm. (SSM)

Friday 13th – Urmston Social: 8.00pm Hophouse, Higher Road, M41 9BQ; 8.45 Steamhouse, Station Approach, M41 9SB; 9.30 Britannia, Flixton Road, M41 5AW; 10.00 Prairie Schooner Taphouse, Flixton Road, M41 5BQ. (T&H)

Saturday 14th – Winter Pub of the Season presentation: Lantern Pike, Glossop Road, Little Hayfield, SK22 2HG. Award at 2.00pm then stroll around Hayfield pubs. (HPNC)

Wednesday 18th – Branch Meeting: Hare & Hounds, Shudehill, Manchester, M4 4AA. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Friday 20th – Withington Stagger: 7.30pm, Old House at Home, Burton Road, M20 1HB; 8.30 Victoria, Wilmslow Road, M20 9Bw. (SSM)

Friday 20th – Chorlton Challenge Part 1: 7.00pm Bowling Green, Brookburn Road, M21 9ES; 9.00 Parlour, Beech Road, M21 9EG; 10.15 Spoon Inn, Barlow Moor Road, M21 8AZ. (T&H)

Saturday 21st – Chorlton Challenge Part 2: 12.00pm Lloyds, Wilbraham Road, M21 9AN; 1.45 Beagle, Barlow Moor Road, M21 0BQ; 5.15 Mono, Wilbraham Road, M21 0UE; 8.00 Marble Beer House, Manchester Road, M21 9PW. Full itinerary on website. (T&H)

Wednesday 25th – Most Improved Pub Award: Blackjack Beerhouse at the Smithfield, Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JZ. From 7.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 26th – Pub of the Month presentation: Queens, High Street, Cheadle, SK8 1AA. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Thursday 26th – Deansgate Locks Social: 8.00pm Britons Protection, Great Bridgewater Street, M1 5LE; 8.45 City Road Inn, Albion Street, M1 5NZ; 9.30 Lock 91, Century Street, M3 4QL; 10.15 Knott Barr, Deansgate, M3 4LY. (T&H)

Saturday 28th – Branch Cheshire Club of the Year presentation: Poynton Legion Club, George's Road West, Poynton, SK12 1JY. Award at 2.00pm followed by tour of local pubs. (HPNC)

Thursday 3rd December – Branch Meeting: Melville, Melville Road, Stretford, M32 9RE. Starts 8.00pm. (T&H)

Social Media

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



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

Trafford & Hulme:
www.facebook.com/thcamra

Macclesfield & East Cheshire: <http://fbl.me/meccamra>



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form in this issue.



Pub of the Month

The Crown, Cheadle



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for November is the Crown, High Street, Cheadle. Stuart Ballntyne reports.

This month the Pub of the Month award goes to one of the best local pub in the area, the Crown Inn on Cheadle High Street. The Crown sells up to seven hand pulled beers, these include beers from Hydes' Beer Studio and two guests which have recently included beers from Batemans, Jennings, Adnams and Wychwood. The beers sold are always in excellent condition which is down to both attention to detail in the cellar and a regular turnover. Good value lunches are also served every day apart from Mondays.

The Crown has the outside appearance of a small shop, however inside the pub opens out at the back into a larger 'L shaped' lounge with a pleasant smoking area outside. The pub is spotlessly clean and is decorated with subdued Victorian style lighting and plenty of mahogany period furnishings. Around the walls are some fascinating photographs of Victorian Cheadle and the surrounding area.

The person behind the success of the Crown is Karen Williams who has now been the licensee there for ten years; eight as a tenant and two as a manager. So successful has her tenure become that turnover has steadily increased with some customers travelling some distance to be regulars (one man who travels all the way from Denton to frequent the Crown).

The Crown Inn is a warm and welcoming pub that sells a range of good local and national beers in a clean, friendly and safe environment. What better excuse do you need to join Karen and the local CAMRA group to celebrate with us the presentation of the Pub of the Month award to Karen and her staff? The presentation will take place on Thursday 26th November from about 8:00pm.



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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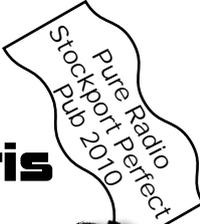
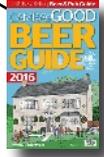
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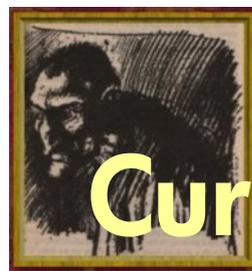
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Curmudgeon

Craft Wars

In the mid-1970s, there were only 44 brewing companies left in the whole of the USA, and the beer market was dominated by bland, light lagers. So the conditions were ripe for the development of an "alternative beer" movement, initially referred to as microbreweries, but more recently morphing into "craft". They were able to draw on a wide range of brewing traditions from all around the world, including a substantial influence from British real ale, to produce a huge variety of interesting, characterful beers.

Not surprisingly, beer enthusiasts looked at this and thought there was a golden opportunity to extend that buzz over to this side of the pond. However, there was a little problem. Britain already had a thriving craft beer scene, comprising both the established independent breweries that CAMRA had originally been created to champion, and hundreds of micro breweries that had sprung up since then in a similar way to the US.

Some of it could be conservative and stick-in-the-mud, but there was a huge amount of innovation and variety in beer styles. Yet it was this "real ale scene" that the new evangelists of craft chose to tilt against. Britain was surely ready for mega-strong beers, teeny measures, craft keg and cans, weird flavours, eye watering prices, and check shirts and fancy beards.

A key tipping point was when BrewDog, the leading lights of the craft beer movement, stopped producing cask beer entirely and deliberately portrayed themselves as standing up against everything CAMRA represented, something that came across as a crass publicity stunt. There seems to be a continuing brush war between craft beer hipsters and real ale traditionalists, but surely everyone interested in good beer shares a huge amount of common ground. And it's clear that most of the antagonism comes from one particular side.

Walk Before You Run

One thing that the craft beer movement has brought is a marked increase in innovation in brewing. We have seen numerous variations on existing categories, mashups of multiple beer styles, and even entirely new types being dreamed up. However, innovation can be a double-edged sword, and brings with it potential pitfalls.

For one, you can never be quite sure if an experimental beer is off, or just something that isn't to your taste. If you see a new beer in an established style such as Stout or IPA, you'll have a reasonable idea whether or not it's in good condition. But for something entirely new, how are you expected to know? And, for beers aping Belgian and German "sour" styles, there can be a fine line between challengingly astringent and downright vinegary.

Experienced brewers are well-placed to know whether something unusual makes sense or not – locally, Cloudwater are a good example of this. However, some newcomers to the industry have a tendency to chuck whatever comes to hand into the mash tun and take pot luck as to what comes out. Unless it's utterly vile, they can generally put a positive spin on the result. Apparently one new brewery produced a batch that was heavily affected by diacetyl, a common brewing fault that, while not unpleasant as such, gives beer a pronounced caramel character. But, rather than pouring it down the drain, they marketed it as "Butterscotch IPA".

Innovation, within reason, is a good thing, but it does help to have a sound background in conventional brewing before striking out on a more adventurous path. Picasso is famed for his distorted, abstract paintings, but in his early years he had a thorough grounding in the principles of draughtsmanship. Perhaps experimental brewers should first demonstrate a track record in producing sound beers in established styles.



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MORE CHOICE BETTER BEER

International Brewing Awards

			
1998	2002	2002	2004
Wobbly Bob	Navy	Wobbly Bob	Wobbly Bob

Stagger

Stockport Beer Week with Peter Edwardson



To celebrate Stockport Beer Week, we slotted an extra Stagger into the calendar to visit a mixture of some of the best-known pubs on the eastern side of the town centre, and one or two with a lower profile. On a dry, mild September evening it was very well-attended, with a number of new faces who had heard about it at other events in the promotion.



We started at **Little Jack Horner's** on Wellington Street, an outwardly small street-corner pub which is surprisingly spacious inside, with three distinct areas on varying levels and plenty of comfortable seating. There was a "For Sale" sign outside and the pub did give the impression of being a little tired. Two cask beers were available – Wychwood Hobgoblin, which was OK, and Wells Bombardier, which came out cloudy. Mine was changed without demur, but the two people who struggled through it weren't too impressed.



We then headed across to Hillgate and to the **Red Bull**, an old pub which was sympathetically extended and modernised by Robinsons a few years ago. It has a spacious interior with a variety of areas around the central bar. Amongst the customers, we spotted an Elvis impersonator. Although it's roomy, access to the bar was partly blocked by a group of people sitting on barstools in a circle, something I have noticed here before. Four Robinsons beers were on sale – Wizard, Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde and Trooper, all of which were in pretty good condition.



Just around the corner on Waterloo Road is another Robinsons pub, the **Waterloo**, which is a two-roomer with more of a local feel. It was pretty busy, with a birthday party filling the lounge. Wizard was thought to be good, with Unicorn and the rugby-themed seasonal beer Hop'n'Under shading more towards average.



We then headed back towards the Market Place, where the Foodie Friday event had just officially finished, but there were still plenty of people circulating, many of whom were looking to adjourn to the pub. The **Cocked Hat** was very crowded around the bar, but we succeeded in finding some seats in one of the side rooms. There was a disco on playing '80s music, but it was just about possible to hold a conversation.

Formerly the **Pack Horse**, this pub was taken over by new owners a couple of years ago and has been transformed into a thriving venue with an ever-changing selection of cask ales. There were six beers on, all at a bargain price of £2 a pint to celebrate Stockport Beer Week. Brightside Amarillo and RedWillow Feckless were both judged pretty good, with RedWillow Directionless being a little better still. Also on the bar, but not tried, were George Wright Pipedream and Joseph Williamson and William Roscoe from Liverpool Organic Brewery.

We had hoped to visit the **Bakers Vaults** next, but a large throng of drinkers outside and a packed mass of bodies inside the door suggested that it would be a struggle to get served, so we ducked in to the **Boar's Head** right opposite (pictured above right). This large, multi-roomed Sam Smith's pub had

been running very successful guided cellar tours as part of the Beer Week. It was also extremely busy and, despite having something of a reputation of appealing to the more mature drinker, there was a wide range of age groups. The only cask beer available was Old Brewery Bitter, at Sam's usual bargain price of £1.80 a pint, which was above average to good, although it must be said that it is a distinctive, malty brew that palates seared by mega-hoppy beers may struggle to appreciate.



For our final port of call we diverted a short way from the Market Place to the **Arden Arms** on Millgate. This is a marvellous, unspoilt pub dating back to the early part of the 19th century, which features on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. While many of us have long been familiar with it, surprisingly some of the new faces had never been in before. Its most distinctive feature is a small snug that can only be reached by walking through the serving area, but it also has a variety of other characterful rooms arranged around the glass-fronted bar, plus a spacious outside drinking area.



It was a little less busy than the Market Place pubs, so we were able to find seats. As usual, there was a comprehensive range of Robinsons beers available, including Wizard, Unicorn, Trooper, Dizzy Blonde and Double Hop, all of which were found to be in good condition. So this was a convivial ending to an interesting evening which showcased a cross-section of Stockport's town-centre pubs. Even if you find it a bit of a squeeze, it's good to see pubs so busy. Why not try them yourself – maybe on a quieter night – and see what you think?

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Salisbury Ale House

Now Asset of Community Value



Over the past decade communities have been losing local amenities and buildings of great importance to them – the village, housing estate shop, pub, community centre or village hall. On average nearly 300 pubs and 400 village shops have closed each year, writes Heather Airlie.

Over the same period community asset ownership has been growing, delivering real benefits for many communities. Over two hundred communities have bought their village shop, and a growing number are

looking to take over their pub to prevent it closing. All too often community organisations find themselves without the time to prepare a bid before an asset is sold. CAMRA has long been campaigning to support local pubs for communities and this legislation provides an ideal opportunity.

A building or land in your council's area can be listed as an asset of community value if its current primary use furthers the social well-being or social interests (cultural, recreational, or sporting interests) of the local community.

CAMRA regards the power to list pubs as Assets of Community Value as a powerful new weapon in the battle to protect valued pubs. Listing adds a vital extra layer of protection, and will mean the pub can't be sold on without the community being told. Listing a pub proves how valuable it is to the local community and councils can take this into account when considering planning applications against the pub. Property developers looking for a hassle-free purchase are also less likely to show interest if a pub is listed.

The Salisbury sits at the bottom of a steep cobbled street beside the railway viaduct that runs into Oxford Road Station at the corner of Wakefield Street and James Leigh Street. As the plaque on the outside wall says, the 19th century pub once sat within one of the poorest areas of Manchester known as Little Ireland because of the nationality of the majority of its residents.

It is one of the few remaining rock music pubs in the city, which has lost so many others in the vicinity. The pub itself is warm, cosy and is a comfortable place to sit and have a drink with friends. The drinks on offer are reasonably priced, and the pub has a good range of local ales and other interesting beers. The Salisbury attracts a massive variety of people of all ages and professions who are united by their love of rock music. This doesn't mean to say you have to be heavily tattooed and pierced to fit in; this place is very welcoming to all. There is a beer garden and pool table; an unusual feature for the city centre.

When rumours of a plan to redevelop the area surfaced, a petition to Manchester Council to "Save the Salisbury Rock Pub" attracted over 1,800 signatures in three months. This included those from as far away as Finland, Sweden and Germany, as well as all over the Greater Manchester area.

The good news is that ACV listing also means that planning permission is required for demolition or any change of use. It looks as if the Salisbury Ale House is one venue that will not become a well-known supermarket any time soon.

Macclesfield CAMRA

Cider Pub of the Year



The Waters Green Tavern has long been known for its good selection of real ales, writes Dave Hasler, but many people may not have registered that the end hand pump (tucked in the corner by the door) is always for a real cider- and sometimes even two! Ciders on offer often come from Gwynt y Ddraig as well as the more common Westons and others. Most notably, the Waters Green Tavern was the venue for the launch of Macclesfield's own cider - SiDa (named from the makers Simon and David).

It seemed fitting, therefore, that the pub was recognised for its real cider offerings (as it has frequently been for its real ale) and was named Macclesfield and East Cheshire CAMRA's 'Cider Pub of the Year'. What is more, this meant the pub went forward to the next, regional, level of competition. This included pubs from North Wales, Cheshire, Liverpool and the Wirral, where the Waters Green Tavern reached second place, losing the top spot by just one point!

The region's cider coordinator, Linda Harris, made the journey from Liverpool to join the local CAMRA members and the SiDa makers, and to present Steve McDermott, joint licensee with his father Brian, with the certificate. Two ciders were enjoyed that night, Abrahall's Thundering Molly and the very more-ish Burnt Worm from SiDa.

High Peak Awards Cider & Club Awards in Stalybridge

High Peak CAMRA had a day out in Stalybridge on 22 August – the aim being to present two more awards from what has been something of a marathon series of presentations this year.



The Cider Pub of the Year was won by the ever-excellent [Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar](#). Here we see High Peak Chairman Phil Moss (left) presenting the award to Caroline and her team.

The branch's Club of the Year Award for Greater Manchester is [Stalybridge Labour Club](#). There's a strong commitment to real ale here and in fact the club was due to hold a beer festival over the last weekend in October. Pictured here is local CAMRA member Richard Chanin (right) presenting the award to Simon, the club steward.





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Heard at the Bar



Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Altrincham



There's a new team at Altrincham's **Old Market Tavern** following the passing of long-time landlord John Glover. The new landlord is local businessman Stephen Dale and day-to-day manager Phil Platt, who has also taken over booking the bands.

They have told us "90% of the old staff remain, caring for valued customers and it is the intention to refurbish the property and continue with the practice of selling real ales as well as promoting the OMT as a music venue for all genres of music. The plan is to feature "recovery Mondays" with no activities, Tuesday open mic night, Wednesday quiz night, Thursday jamming night with all musicians welcome, Friday "popular music" bands, Saturday the established Rock night and finally, chill Sundays where good soul, blues and easy vocals are promoted".

No sooner had the new management took over at the OMT when we were contacted with news of increased competition in the Altrincham real ale market. Nick Scott and his stepfather Colin are opening a new "craft beer and fine wine" outlet at 41 Stamford New Road between the station and Goose Green. They tell us they plan to feature a great selection of cask and keg beers in a venue which is aimed at those who appreciate good beer in good company and in relaxed, comfortable, safe and welcoming surroundings. **Opening Times** will of course call in when they open.

Chorlton Change

October saw the end of an era at Chorlton's **The Bar** when manager Chris Henry departed after many years there and at its sister bar the **Knott**. Chris was such a tireless worker that he would often be seen behind the bar seven days a week, often from early opening to closing time. Chris has a great passion for beer and whenever **Opening Times** called at The Bar, he'd often be immediately there with a tasting glass of the latest special beer he was proud to have on sale. While he has left one Manchester beer institution behind, as **Opening Times** went to press it was confirmed that he has taken over as manager at another – none less than the **Marble Arch**.

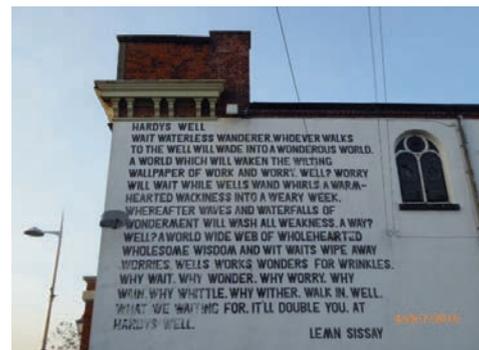
Hardy's Well

In September Rusholme and Fallowfield Civic Society was successful in its nomination of **Hardy's Well** as an 'Asset of Community Value' on behalf of local residents and businesses.



The pub's unique location on the corner of Dickenson Road and Wilmslow Road and opposite Platt Fields Park proudly stands between Rusholme and the famous 'curry mile' and Fallowfield student halls of residence. It serves a hugely diverse community of entire generations from a wide variety of cultural and economic backgrounds.

Hardy's Well, formerly **Birch Villa Hotel**, has been in sole use as a public house since 1837 and, as such, has had a social significance and has been at the centre of Rusholme life for nearly 180 years. The pub was once a Hardys' Crown Brewery house, a Hulme-based brewery long since demolished, hence the name Hardys' that appears in mosaic around the top of the building's walls.



Now, local volunteers are supporting the pub in many ways to help turn it into a community focused space for everyone in the area to make their own. Even local businesses such as Brent Sunshine barbecue and various businesses along the 'curry mile' have lent their support.

There's a landmark poem spanning the whole of the pub wall in the beer garden, written by Lemn Sissay (who earlier this year was appointed Chancellor of the University of Manchester). Lemn is backing the bid to save Hardy's Well as a community resource and to save his poem from being destroyed should the

pub be sold to a private investor who may then wish to remove it. He says;

'Poetry is central to what we do and should be seen in the street in the same way as sculpture is. I wrote the poem for the pub years ago and it has become a visual landmark on one of the busiest roads in the country and is dearly loved by local residents who wish to save it'.

The pub has two pool tables, a large outside space with tables to seat up to 100 people and two resident goldfish! The small team currently running the bar and operating the pub since September 2015 are all local volunteers and include Jess Mullins (volunteer, events, marketing and PR), Matt Wozencroft (volunteer ,bar), Rob Lambert (volunteer, bar), Adrian Cokik (volunteer, bar), Nigel McAdam (volunteer, business development and bar) and Lesa Dryburgh (volunteer, communications). Everyone has got involved out of sheer passion to save their local pub and to encourage as many supporters and volunteers to become involved and help.

Here at **Opening Times** we are delighted by the team's achievement so far and wish them every success.

Pub Shorts



We bid a very fond farewell to Shirley Revelle, the long-serving barmaid at the **Nursery** on Green Lane in Heaton Norris. Shirley retired on October 16th with a party at the Nursery where she had worked for 25 years. Before that she worked at the **Moor Top** in Heaton Moor for 23 years (which would be about the time the pub opened). Shirley was very much a barmaid of the old school who always had a cheery word for everyone. We wish her well for a long and happy retirement.

In Didsbury, the **Carrington's** off license has now closed and all the business had been transferred to the Chorlton outlet which remains open for business.

Some minor refurbishment work is ongoing at the **Midland**, Wellington Road North, Stockport. A previously blocked window has been opened up making the bar area much brighter.

More Pub News on Page 15

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High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views



Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

A recent walk around New Mills as part of New Mills Festival, was a dry walk on a wet morning, as, in indifferent weather, a dozen or so people interested in local history gathered for a tour round the lost locals of New Mills. The **Squirrels** at Newtown has been closed many years, whilst nearby the **Swan** remains closed with no obvious sign of action by Robinsons to either sell or to restore. Just along the A6 towards Disley was the **Grove**, which stood at what is now the entrance to a fairly recently-built small housing complex. The **North Western** below Newtown Station has been converted to other use. We passed the site of the original **Beehive**, on the other side of the road near to the heavy goods entrance for Swizzles' Sweet works.

Further into town closures include the **Rock**, not the Robinsons house which still survives, and the **George**. The **Torrs** has a long history and I wrote about this some time ago. Present use means that the building is at least available to the community. On Dye House Lane the **Pineapple** is a fairly recent loss, whilst just along the lane was the **Grapes** and at the top of the lane the now-closed **White Hart**. This is now up for sale though I understand that there is a covenant preventing it re-opening as a pub. There are others in a town with an interesting pub history. The trouble is how many other pubs will become part of history if the trend of pub closures continues?



The day the Tour of Britain cycle race passed through Whaley Bridge brought some rare opportunities for late morning and lunchtime drinking in some of the pubs which normally don't open until well into the afternoon during the week. The **Goyt**, **Shepherds Arms** and **Railway** took the opportunity to attract customers from a very busy crowd of spectators in town centre. Whilst a mid-afternoon break might have followed, licensees thought it well worthwhile opening up as a steady stream of customers took advantage of pubs with open doors.

The annual September Beer Festival at the **Old Hall** and **Paper Mill** at Whitehough was, as ever, an event not to be missed. More beers than you could sample in several visits and all the ones I tried were in good form. There were lots of beers from new breweries as well as brews from local and not too far away favourites. Amongst the beers which impressed me were RCH Double Header from Somerset, Tweed New World Pale, Liverpool Craft Brew Co. and Oakham American Sunset. These were all pale hoppy brews. Many of the dark brews claimed to have added flavours from coffee or chocolate or dark fruits though some brewers just get on with brewing a good dark porter or stout. Geeves Smokey Joe Stout impressed, as did Thornbridge Ashford, and High Peak Porter. There was an extensive cider bar which seemed to be steadily busy during my visits with a range of strengths, tastes and flavours. The Old Hall festival continues to be one of the best pub beer festivals in the country so do look out for future events.



Early October saw the latest beer festival at the **Drum & Monkey** (pictured above) at the Horwich End side of Whaley Bridge. There were usually up to 10 beers available at a time out of a total choice of over a score of brews. Local beers came from Whaley Bridge Brewery, Storm at Macclesfield, Ashover Brewery and Happy Valley at Bollington. From further afield, Oakham Inferno and Track Sonoma made very good impressions, as did Fyne Hurricane Jack and Byatt's Big Cat, from Coventry. This is another festival worth visiting, though on a much smaller scale than some. Live music was a feature at some sessions, though a good choice of good beer was a highlight throughout the week end.

The next Marston's Britain's Brewing guest brewery festival is due in mid November and the beer list contains some interest ales. The Shepherds Arms in Whaley Bridge will be making a mini festival out the beers available. Some of the beers are from national and regional brewers who are providing seasonal brews, whilst there are interesting beers from much smaller concerns. Look out for Castle Rock Red Riding Hood, Bootleg Urban Fox, Ossett Treacle Stout, Sadler's Peaky Blinder

and York Dr. Rudi, the latter using NZ hops. Plenty there to suit most palates.

Other Marston's houses where you can expect to find these beers include the **Royal Oak** in High Lane, the **George** in Hayfield and the **Shady Oak** up at Fernilee, on the Long Hill road to Buxton.

High Peak Pub News With Tom Lord

First, some news from Tameside. **Browntons**, the real ale shop in Ashton-under Lyne, is putting on a real ale handpump hopefully in time for the Ashton Christmas market.

Over in Droylsden it is rumoured that **Wetherspoons** has put in a bid for Droylsden library premises after the library moves in to the new pension building. Hopefully more on this later.

Two bits of less good news from Hyde, firstly the **Duke of Sussex** at the top of Clarendon Road is now boarded up and the **Apethorne** on Knott Lane in Gee Cross is also boarded up.

A Saturday afternoon visit to Buxton starting in the Titanic pub, the **Cheshire Cheese** in the Market Place, found RCH East Street Bitter and Brewster Hop Doodle Do as well as the excellent range of Titanic Beers. A good start. The often unjustly overlooked **Queens Head** also in the Market Place had Greene King's Old Speckled Hen, Sharps's Doombar, Thornbridge Jaipur and Titanic Iceberg. Whim Hartington IPA often features here as well.

The **Buxton Brewery Tap** near the Opera House was the next stop and had three beers on handpump - Moor Top, Rednik Stout, and Mannen Bitter. We have since learned that the number of handpumps here has been reduced to two and that the Tap is now the only place where cask conditioned Buxton beers are available as the Brewery wishes to concentrate more on other types of beer. Up the hill next, to **53 Degrees North** where we found Jaipur, Winkle Cosmic Flyer, Marston's Burton Bitter and Jennings Summit Else.

Finally a visit to the excellent little **Ale Stop** in the Market Place for three interesting beers - Hopcraft Slave to the Wage, Pilot Unfined and Steel City Brewery End of the World. Some stalwarts then caught the last number 58 bus over the Cat and Fiddle Road to Macclesfield for a few beers in the **Treacle Tap** and **Waters Green** before heading back.

Over the last year or so Buxton's range of pubs and cask conditioned ales have improved considerably and it now ranks as an excellent day out supported by good public transport links.

**MARK DADE
JAMES CAMPBELL
MATT HOWGATE**

?



JANUARY 2016

Pub News Extra

Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Withington and around

Firstly, there's a real ale gain (or re-gain) in the village. What used to be **Solomon Grundy** (which gave up real ale during a refurb in 2012), has now re-opened as Solomon's, after being closed for quite some time. There are two handpumps on the bar, serving Thwaites Wainwright and Lees MPA. These are going to be regular beers, apparently.



Elsewhere, in Ladybarn, the **Brewers Arms** has had a handpump installed on the bar for some time, but there is never anything on it when OT looks in – we'll continue to monitor this.

The **Mauldeth** nearby on Kingsway (technically in Burnage we think) is closed and nothing seems to be happening to it. All the temporary signs (advertising live music etc.) have come down now, as has the 'To Let' sign, but the pub signage is all still in place so that may be a hopeful sign.

East Manchester



The **Waggon & Horses** on Hyde Road in Gorton was taken over in late August by Katrina Jackson, the former licensee of the Golden Lion in Blackley. Currently it is steady as she goes with no changes to the darts teams etc nor to the music nights on Saturdays. Katrina has however increased the range of real ales to include Holt's Hat Trick which seems to have been very well received.

Nearby the **Vale Cottage** on Croft Bank is now definitely a free house, its official change in status taking place in mid-September. The beer is being supplied via Coors but Taylor's and Moorhouses beers are still very much in evidence. Again it's very much business as

usual with the Tuesday night general knowledge quiz continuing and the Thursday music quiz is being re-introduced. The kitchen was temporarily closed for a full refit when we went to press but will be open for Christmas.

Meanwhile former Vale Cottage licensee Marc Gladney has taken over the reopened **Levenshulme** on Stockport Road in Levenshulme. No cask beer is currently available but as we know Marc to be a cask fan hopefully that may change.

Albert's Schloss

A new German-style beer hall opened its doors to the public in Manchester in mid-October, after a couple of press and invitation-only nights the previous week OT popped along to take a look.

Albert's Schloss, named after Queen Victoria's German consort Prince Albert, is on Peter Street and is fitted out with a Bavarian pine interior which is pleasant enough, but the main attraction is the beer, in particular Pilsner Urquell, the world's first golden lager brewed since 1842 in the Bohemian town of Pilsen, or Plzen as it's known in the Czech Republic.



Albert's Schloss is one of the few places in Britain that serves unpasteurised Pilsner Urquell *tankovna*, dispensed by air pressure from large tanks above the bar. It's not cheap (£4.80 a pint, or £3.20 for two-thirds) but it's great stuff: fresh, soft-bodied, cool rather than cold, with low carbonation and a delicate balance between the sweetness of the malt and the bitterness of the Saaz hops. There's also a range of draught and bottled German and Belgian wheat beers and lagers at similar prices and a single hand-pump for cask ale which was from Magic Rock when we called.

We didn't get chance to look at the food menu but guess it's the usual German combinations of pig, potatoes and pretzels.

Moor Top

The **Moor Top** in Heaton Moor has always seemed a little out of place as it's essentially a late 1960s estate pub rather incongruously dropped into a leafy Victorian suburb. It seems to have struggled to find a role for a long time but it now looks as though it will have the

necessary direction and focus. The lease has been taken on by Steve Pilling, owner of the acclaimed Damson restaurant across the road.



It's being managed by Conal Taylor who is enthusiastic about his role and the future of the pub. There does appear to have been an immediate improvement across the board and notably on the beer front. By the time you read this there should be five handpumps – one dispensing Greene King beer (the pub is owned by the Spirit Group, a Greene King subsidiary) while the other four will feature changing guest beers sourced from Stockport and Manchester micro-brewers.

The kitchen is run by Dave Smith, who is also the Damson chef, and he sources the same ingredients for both operations so as you may imagine quality here is high (although the prices are very reasonable).

The pub, now dubbed "Moortop Pub and Kitchen", will close for a major refurbishment, inside and out, in January. OT will be back once the work is finished.

Wheatsheaf



The **Wheatsheaf** at the top end of Hillgate looks like it could finally be on the up. After a couple of periods of closure it's been taken on by business partners Greg Harrison and Will Halliday who aim to turn it round.

The pub is now open every day from 10.00am (11 on Sunday) and serves breakfasts until 3. It's been generally cleaned up and there are two cask beers on the bar – Marston's Pedigree and Moorhouses Blond Witch when we called. There will be live entertainment and cask fan Greg hopes to have Meet the Brewer nights. He's also signed up to the Punch "Finest Cask" list so some interesting guest beers could feature in coming months. Well worth a visit we think.

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Meet the Brewer

Torrside Brewing



*This month
Brendon Hall
interviews Peter
Sidwell, Chris
Clough and Nick
Rothko-Wright
who are the
team behind the
new Torrside
Brewing in New
Mills and the
town's first
brewery.*

1) Hello Torrside! Please introduce yourself to the readers. We're a brand new brewery in New Mills, at the northern tip of Derbyshire. We've only got four brews under our belts on the full-sized kit so far, but we've had a very positive response locally, so keep an eye out for our bitter "Futureproof" and smoked stout "Fire Damage".

2) What got you into commercial brewing? The three of us are friends who have been homebrewing for years and simply love brewing! Spurred on by positive feedback from all quarters, including the homebrew clubs in Manchester and Macclesfield (as well as the odd award along the way), we decided to pool our resources and scale up. We get to work for ourselves, it's fun, and it's creative!

3) How do you go about choosing the styles of beer you brew and the flavours you use? We're keen to brew lots of different styles. The best thing about brewing at home is that you've got the freedom to produce any beer you want to drink, with any flavour profile, so we're hoping to continue along those lines commercially - within reason! The brewery is 10 barrel capacity, but we're planning to use that flexibly to brew batches of varying size and strength.

4) You're New Mills's first ever brewery, how soon can we expect New Mills's first ever brewery tap? Having spent much of this year waiting for planning permission, we might leave it a while before applying for permission for a brewery tap! We've applied for an off-license however, so that we can sell bottles direct from the brewery, and will be doing regular open days for people to come and sample our beers. We've pencilled in our first open day for 7th November.

5) Finally, when you aren't drinking your own beer - please tell us one local, national and international beer that you're really excited about at the moment.

Chris: I'm a huge fan of smoked beers, so I'm looking forward to trying Thirst Class's smoked mild at Salford Beer Festival. Further afield, Five Points have recently done a great smoked porter called London Smoke. Internationally, it's the time of year for Schlenkerla Urbock, possibly my favourite beer in the world!

Nick: Locally, Buxton Wyoming Sheep Ranch (although everything from Buxton is excellent!) Nationally, Cannonball from Magic Rock (in all its forms). Can't wait for it to be more readily available when they start canning. Internationally, Founders Centennial IPA. An excellent beer, especially when you still get fresh flavours despite coming all the way from America.

Peter: Chris got to the smoked stuff first so I'll try to think of others... At the moment, I really want a bottle or two of Quantum's Stock Ale, a full-on aged British beer. Nationally, I'd point anyone at Fullers Past Masters line, the Imperial Stout was great. Internationally there's a lot of interesting stuff, but now it's getting colder I'm eyeing up St Bernardus Abt 12 again...

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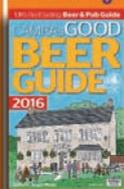
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When is Keg Not a Keg?

Real Ale from Key-Kegs – John O'Donnell explains

Back in April, when delegates at CAMRA's Members Weekend in Nottingham passed a motion about the labelling of "real ale in a key-keg", many commentators saw it as a major step in CAMRA modernising and recognising what is popularly known as "craft keg".

In fact, while the motion was the first to be passed by CAMRA's highest body to positively recognise the sector, it actually came four years after CAMRA's Technical Advisory Group first recognised that key-kegs can contain "CAMRA approved" real ale, a decision which followed trials held at The Great British Beer Festival. Even in a hall full of CAMRA activists in Nottingham, it was clear that many were unaware of CAMRA's position nor what key-kegs are all about.

When CAMRA was established in 1971 it fought against a sweeping trend for what came to be known as "real-ale" being replaced by bland "keg" beers. Forty-four years later the word keg still has massive negative connotations for many CAMRA members with any beers associated with the "k" word being dismissed as "fizz". However, what those pioneering members were really fighting against wasn't the physical containers the beer was served from, it was the product in them which was made with low quality ingredients and universally filtered and pasteurised, killing so much of the flavour in the process.

Renaissance

The renaissance of British brewing over the last ten years or so has seen a massive resurgence in "keg" beers but the vast majority of these beers have very little, if anything, in common with the keg beers of the 1970s and 80s. Unlike their predecessors, the modern wave of brewers understands that flavours will be killed by filtering and particularly by pasteurising their beers so they don't do it. In many cases, the beers which these brewers put in their kegs is the exact same beer they put in their casks – complete with live yeast which will undergo secondary fermentation in the keg. The only thing which stops these beers being real ale is that traditional kegs require the application of compressed gas to propel the beer to the bar.

This is where Key-Kegs come in. Invented in 2006 by a Dutch company as a one-way container (i.e. filled once, used, then disposed of), the key to the system is the "bag in ball" principle with the beer sealed in a flexible synthetic bag held inside a gas tight rigid plastic outer – originally a ball but these days more commonly a tall cylinder. To serve the beer, the space between the bag and the outer ball is filled with pressurised gas, forcing the bag to collapse and pushing the beer out to the

bar. Effectively, the Key-Keg is a cask which shrinks as the beer flows.



The gas never comes into contact with the beer so any gas can be used – while many pub cellars use the CO2 which is on hand anyway, compressed air works just as well. Because the gas never touches the beer, it doesn't make the beer "gassy" the way beer from traditional kegs can be. Importantly for CAMRA, it means that if what went into the bag was real ale – unpasteurised, unfiltered beer containing live yeast - what comes out will still be real ale – beer which has "matured by secondary fermentation in the container from which it is dispensed, and served without the use of extraneous carbon dioxide."



Key-kegs can't replace traditional casks, but they have advantages for breweries in certain circumstances. As they are disposable, real ales can be delivered to irregular or far afield venues without the worry of retrieving expensive casks. Secondly, not only does CO2 never come in contact with the beer, neither does oxygen – the enemy which causes real ale to go off if not sold in a few days. In a traditional cask, as the cask empties the space is filled with air which oxidises the beer. In a key-keg, the bag collapses with the beer (as pictured above), keeping oxygen out and

meaning beer in key-keg can last longer than traditional cask, allowing real ales to be served in places such as sports and social clubs which wouldn't normally have the throughput to sell traditional casks in three or four days. They also allow pubs to increase their range by stocking slower selling stronger and speciality styles in key-keg year round alongside their regular cask offerings.

Hard-Line

For those that follow debates on Facebook and other online discussion forums, there are many hard-line CAMRA activists who can't get beyond the word "keg" in the name "Key-Keg", associating the word with the "dead" beers of the past. The Key-Keg companies market their product to cask ale brewers as Key-Cask but the only difference is the printing on the outside wrapper – the container holding the beer is the same.

While real ale can be served from key-kegs, not all key-kegs contain real ale as the format can be used to serve filtered and/or force carbonated beers. However, brewers such as Mark Welsby of Manchester's Runaway Brewery believe passionately in natural conditioning. Mark packages all his draught beers exclusively in Key-Kegs, holding them in the brewery for several weeks to allow them to mature and generate natural CO2 in the container. Mark prefers key-keg over traditional cask because it means his beers retain the carbonation he generates in the brewery – they don't go flat if not looked after properly in the pub. Although he doesn't own any casks, all Mark's draft beers are real ale to CAMRA's definition.

Which takes us full circle back to Motion 13 at the last CAMRA's Members Weekend. Those that were there will remember the passionate speech by brewer Phil Saltonstall, another brewer who ensures all his key-kegs contain naturally conditioned real ale. While Phil's Brass Castle Brewery (Malton, North Yorkshire) also produce award winning traditional cask beers, he argued successfully that CAMRA needs to support brewers such as himself and Mark Welsby by allowing them to differentiate their real ale in a key keg with CAMRA approved labelling.

While the labelling scheme is yet to be launched, progressive CAMRA festivals are moving ahead and beginning to feature key-kegged real ale alongside traditional cask. London's Pigs Ear and York Beer Festival were among the pioneers in this field and from 2016 they will be joined by Manchester Beer & Cider Festival which will feature a dedicated "Real Ale From Key-Keg" bar.

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If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.

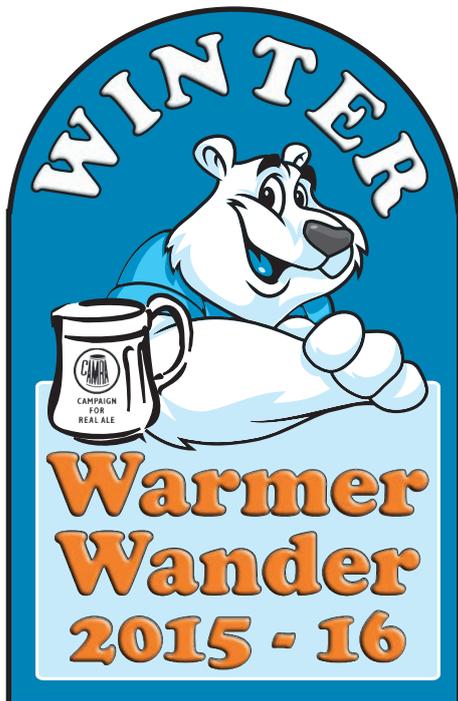
If you receive a refund you are not entitled to you must pay it back when The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd asks you to.

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.

Follow the Bear

Winter Warmer Wander 2015-16

December is not only time for Christmas and the start of winter. It's also time for the **Winter Warmer Wander**. This year's event runs from Friday 27th November to Sunday 10th January. There are lots of prizes



to be won including t-shirts, bottled beers, pub meals and bottled beer hampers. There are some new pubs taking part this year and once again the event is being sponsored by Stockport family brewer Robinsons and in particular their famous Old Tom. For more information see the December issue of Opening Times.



Stockport Beer Week

Success for first event



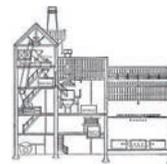
Now the dust has settled it's time to take stock of the first ever Stockport Beer Week – and the general consensus is that it was an overall success.

The organisers are keen to thank everyone who supported the event. Not only the participating pubs and breweries, but also **Clarke Nicklin Financial Planning** and **Stockport MBC** for their financial support and **Virgin Trains** who gave us permission to publicise it at the station. Thanks also to **Robinsons** for hosting the press launch where we were privileged to have both the Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor Andrew Verdeille and Mrs Cleo Cundall, in attendance but also the Council Chief Executive Eamonn Boylan. They were all very encouraging of this initiative to support local pubs and breweries and this was much appreciated. And of course thanks to everyone who turned out at any of the the various events.

As was to be expected some events were more successful than others and as a result of this we'll be looking to refine the programme next year and hopefully involve more pubs too.

What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region



As we briefly reported last month, there's now a new brewery in Chapel-en-le-Frith which brings brewing back to the "Capital of the Peak District" after a 105 year absence. This is Ben Millner's [High Peak Brew Co](#) whose beers first went on sale at the beginning of September.

Ben's background is in hospitality and catering and his interest in beer was sparked by the local beer scene in Castleton from where he hails. He worked at the Castleton YHA which just happens to have an on-site micro-brewery for use in GCSE further science courses and it was here he got hooked "seeing the processes involved, the variety of ingredients, the possible outcomes from experimenting and so on"

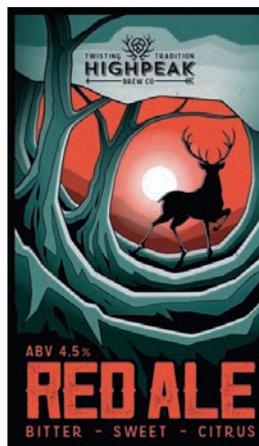


Real life (including getting married and having two children!) intervened but by the end of February this year Ben was good to go with his project. The kit comes from Mark Smith based in Kettering and is a 3.5 barrel capacity brewery (that's about 1,000 pints per brew) which Ben describes as "good and very efficient, but basic"

So far he has produced three core styles which are both unfiltered and unfiltered, making them suitable for vegetarians and vegans. The first is a pale ale at 3.7% where the hops change but the flavour profile is always on the citrus floral side. So far Ben has used Columbus, Motueka and Bramling Cross hops and he's looking at making the next batch with Ahtanum. The next beer is a red ale at 4.5%, which is a cross between an English best bitter and an American pale ale. This includes plenty of crystal and roasted malts for a strong backbone to carry the hops and is around the 50-60 IBU (bitterness units) mark depending on the batch. Here the hops used so far have been Columbus, Chinook and Bravos. The last of the three is a porter at 4.8%, with a recipe based on the London porters of old but using the more modern British hops, First Gold and Bramling Cross and a blend of English and

American yeasts for a dryer finish.

There are quite a few plans under way. First is to get a premises license and start an on-line shop and Ben also wants to open up for off-trade sales on Fridays and Saturdays. Once sales are a bit more established he'll start adding to the styles of beers as he's keen to start making some wheat beers and stouts but "if the ingredients are there I'll make what takes my fancy".



So far the beers have been sold in cask and bottle (the bottles are bottle conditioned) and he will also be selling beers in key-keg in the future and these will be conditioned in the keg, mainly to get the beer to a wider market but also because Ben thinks it works better than cask for certain styles of beer.

The one regular outlet so far is the Yorkshire Bridge Inn at Bamford in the Hope Valley. A lot of the first stock has gone to beer festivals around the area and a couple of bars in Sheffield. However Ben also wants to start supplying bars and pubs in the High Peak and Stockport area as it's where he lives and is based. So if any pubs or bars out there fancy selling High Peak Brew Co beer please give Ben a call on 07936 174364.

SIBA Wins

SIBA is a national trade association for small brewers and hosts a series of regional beer competitions. The North West event was held last month in Bolton and resulted in no fewer than six gold medals for Greater Manchester brewers.

[Brewsmith](#) picked up gold for their Bitter (and a bronze for their IPA), [Blackjack](#) for New Deck, [Green Mill](#) for both On the Tiles and Shortand Stout, [Wilson Potter](#) for bottled Don't Fall and [Blackedge](#) for bottled IPA. Quite a haul, especially when you add in placings for [Prospect](#) (Nutty Slack), [Seven Bro7hers](#) (Session), [Blackedge](#) (IPA – draught), [Brewsmith](#) (IPA), [Irwell Works](#) (Marshmallow Unicorn and Tin Plate), [Tweed](#) (Orange County IPA), [Bank Top](#) (Dark Mild and Pavilion Pale Ale – bottled), [Bollington](#) (Endurance – bottled), [Brightside](#) (Classic Pilsner – bottled) and [First Chop](#) (SYL – bottled).

The icing on the cake came when the overall champions were revealed with Gold going to [Blackjack New Deck](#) and Silver to [Brewsmith Bitter](#).

Opening Times had a quick catch up with the two champs. [Blackjack's](#) Rob Hamilton was self-effacing as ever and told us that he'd actually forgotten about the competition and was in the middle of a double brew day when he found out! Nonetheless he declared himself to be "chuffed and happy" at what was a completely unexpected award. Those who drink [Blackjack](#) regularly will know they are on something of a roll at the moment with some superb beers being produced so this win is wholly deserved in OT's opinion.



The team at Ramsbottom-based [Brewsmith](#) are equally pleased with the wins. Jennifer Smith told Opening Times "We are really pleased to pick up three SIBA awards this year, and that our [Brewsmith Bitter](#) will once again enter the national finals next March. We are committed to keeping our consistency and quality at the high standards we set ourselves from the outset; and the awards are a great boost for the brewery". [Brewsmith](#) have certainly made a mark in their short history – they only started last year - and this is another highly deserved win.

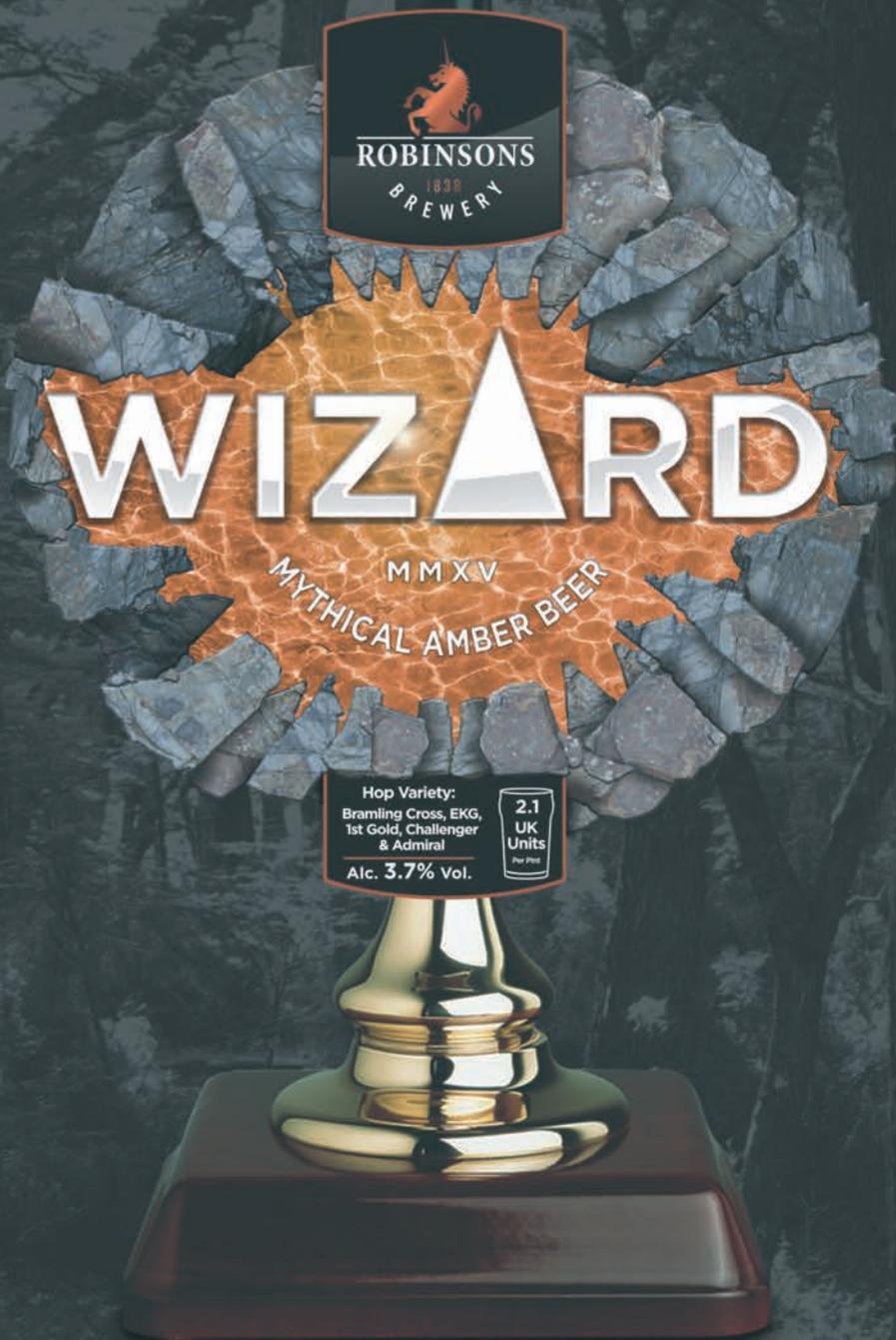


Brewery Shorts

Matt Howgate will have left [Marble Brewery](#) by the time you read this. He's heading back to Yorkshire and a new start-up in Leeds we understand. [Marble's](#) Jan Rogers tell us that a replacement has been found and will be taking up duties at the end of January. More on this in future issues.

Steve Dunkley's [Beer Nouveau](#) has now settled in its new premises on Temperance Street in Ardwick. Capacity has expanded 22 times with the move and already some new beers have been produced including the cheekily named and malt-accented Temperance Ale and the spiky and spicy Nelson Sauvign Lit Wit. There's a bar at the brewery and Steve will be hosting occasional open days for people to drop by and have a drink. The first was during the [IndyManBeerCon](#) last month and proved very successful.

INTRODUCING...



Serving
SORCERY

Inspired by a local Cheshire legend 'The Wizard of Alderley Edge', we have combined 5 English hops, pale, wheat & crystal malts to produce Wizard, a moreish, sessionable 3.7% ABV mythical amber ale. Packed full of flavour, Wizard has a spell-bounding berry fruit & zesty hop palate complemented by a magical full malt character.

*Drink of this & take thy fill
for the water falls by the Wizard's will'*