

# OPENING TIMES

JANUARY 2015 / FREE

INSIDE: MANCHESTER BEER & CIDER  
FESTIVAL AT MANCHESTER CENTRAL /  
MEET THE BREWER WITH CARBON  
SMITH / PUB & BREWERY NEWS





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## THE J. P. JOULE

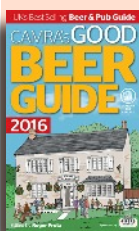
2a Northenden Road  
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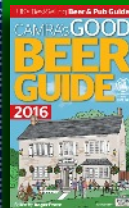
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 [ManchesterBeerFestival](https://www.facebook.com/ManchesterBeerFestival)  [@MancBeerFest](https://twitter.com/MancBeerFest)



Manchester  
Evening News





# What's On

## Local CAMRA Branch Events, Information and News

### Your Local CAMRA Contacts & Websites

#### Stockport & South Manchester (SSM)

[www.ssmcamra.co.uk](http://www.ssmcamra.co.uk)

Contact: Paul Felton; [Secretary@ssmcamra.co.uk](mailto:Secretary@ssmcamra.co.uk)

#### North Manchester (NM)

[www.northmanchester.camra.org.uk](http://www.northmanchester.camra.org.uk)

Contact: Phil Booton; [phbooton@hotmail.com](mailto:phbooton@hotmail.com)

#### High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire (HPNC)

[www.hpneccamra.org.uk](http://www.hpneccamra.org.uk)

Contact: Stewart Taylor 07907 714826; [taylorshouse@supanet.com](mailto:taylorshouse@supanet.com)

#### Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)

[www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk](http://www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk)

Contact: Rob Nicholson 07983 524102;  
[social@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk](mailto:social@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk)

#### Trafford & Hulme (T&H)

[www.thcamra.org.uk](http://www.thcamra.org.uk)

Contact: John O'Donnell 07879 880972; [enquiries@thcamra.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@thcamra.org.uk)

### Local CAMRA Events

Public welcome at these events

**Monday 11th** — Branch Meeting: Stalybridge Labour Club, Acres Lane, Stalybridge, SK15 2JR. Good Beer Guide selection for Cheshire and Greater Manchester parts of branch area. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

**Tuesday 12th** — Introductory and planning meeting for new City Centre Branch: Beer Nouveau, 75 Temperance Street, Manchester, M12 6HU. Assemble from 6.00 for 6.30pm start. Contact Graham Donning at [g\\_donning@yahoo.com](mailto:g_donning@yahoo.com). All interested CAMRA members welcome.

**Wednesday 13th** — Good Beer Guide Shortlisting: Derby Brewery Arms, Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, M8 8PY. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

**Thursday 14th** — Branch Meeting: Blossoms, 2 Buxton Road, Heaviley, SK2 6NU. Will include votes for branch Pub, Cider Pub and Club of the Year. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

**Thursday 14th** — Most Improved Pub presentation: Navigation, Manchester Road, Broadheath, W14 4PY. From 8.00pm (presentation 8.30pm). (T&H)

**Monday 18th** — Campaigning Meeting: Old Kings Head, Byrons Lane, Gurnett, Macclesfield, SK11 0HD. Starts 8.00pm. (MEC)

**Friday 22nd** — Informal social at Manchester Beer & Cider Festival: meet in reception area between 7.30pm and 8.00pm. (SSM)

**Wednesday 27th** — Branch Meeting: Eccles Rugby Football Club, Gorton Street, Patricroft, M30 7LZ. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

**Thursday 28th** — Pub of the Month presentation: Grove, 625 Ashton New Road, Clayton, Manchester, M11 4AT. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

**Wednesday 3rd February** — Salford Quays Survey: Craftbrew, 1 Lowry Plaza, M50, 3WB 7.00pm; Lime, Lowry Outlet Mall, M50, 3AG 8.00pm; Dockyard, Dock House, M50 2EQ 9.15pm. (NM)

**Thursday 4th February** — Branch Meeting & EGM: Beech, Beech Road, Chorlton, M21 9EG. Election to fill vacant committee posts followed by usual business. Starts 8.00pm. (T&H)

**Monday 8th February** — Branch Meeting: Glossop Labour Club, 15 Chapel Street, Glossop, SK13 8AT. Good Beer Guide selection for Derbyshire part of branch area. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

**Tuesday 9th February** — Good Beer Guide Selection Meeting: Volunteer, Cross Street, Sale, M33 7HJ. Starts 8.00pm. Venue to be confirmed. (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](http://www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA)

**Trafford & Hulme:** [www.facebook.com/thcamra](http://www.facebook.com/thcamra)

**Macclesfield & East Cheshire:**  
[www.facebook.com/groups/897449270304045/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/897449270304045/)

**Stockport & South Manchester:** @SSMCAMRA

**Trafford & Hulme:** @THCAMRA

**North Manchester:** @NorthMancsCAMRA

**Macclesfield & East Cheshire:** @MECCAMRA

**Manchester City Centre:** @ManchesterCamra



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**CAMRA**  
needs  
**YOU**

See page 19  
for details



# Manchester Beer & Cider Festival

## John O'Donnell with more news of this month's event

While January will bring the usual charities trying to promote "DryJanuary", in Manchester January brings our largest celebration of beer – the Manchester Beer & Cider Festival. This year, the festival moves to the heart of the city and the grand surroundings of Manchester Central – better known to a certain generation as G-Mex (although the generation before them will remember it as Manchester Central Railway Station). Opening Times has been looking at what the festival has in store for us this year.

### Brewing up a storm



The festival team has been out in the brew houses of the region working on some brand new collaboration beers that will debut at the festival. As Opening Times went to press the first of these brews had been completed at Temperance Street's Beer Nouveau – a 5.5% IPA with hints of honey and whiskey. Planned MBCF Collaborations include a special Porter being brewed with Ramsbottom's Brewsmith and a

New Zealand Pale Ale at Blackedge brewery in Horwich.

The festival will be brewing up a Hopfenweisse – a German style wheat beer packed with New Zealand hops with Bury's Outstanding Brewery. The recipe for the final MBCF brew at Stockport's Cryptic Ales was still under wraps at time of writing.

We will also be teaming up with the organisers of the forthcoming Manchester Beer Week to produce their very own beer to promote this June's celebration of beer in Greater Manchester. Wigan's Allgates Brewery will be the host. To find out what the beer is, you'll have to visit Bar 1 at the festival!

### Brewery Bars



Complementing the 300+ beers on our three main bars, MBCF also welcomes twelve of the North's most innovative and exciting brewers bringing their own bars to the festival. As well as a great range of beers, the brewery bars will give you the opportunity to meet some of the brewery staff, talk to the brewers about their beers and taste some of the ingredients which go into the beers. The brewery bars will be grouped in four locations, two

on the central island and two as part of our 60 metre mega-bar.

The line-up comprises the following breweries: Blackjack Beers, Bollington Brewing Co., Brightside Brewery, Cloudwater Brew Co., Hawkshead Brewery, Marble Beers, RedWillow Brewery, Runaway Brewery, Bragdy Conwy, Outstanding Beers, Pictish Brewing Co., and Wilson Potter Brewery.

### Not so Home Brewers



The increased numbers of commercial breweries around the region has been matched by a growth in the popularity of home brewing. The city has two successful home brew groups in Manchester and Chorlton where amateur brewers regularly

meet up to swap tips and recipes and try the beers of their contemporaries. Although brewing kits still adorn the shelves of supermarkets, many of these home brewers are brewing "full mash" beers from raw ingredients and many of the resulting beers easily stand up against commercial beers. Now MBCF has arranged for the groups to try their recipes on full scale brew-kits to produce two beers for the festival. Manchester Homebrew Club (@MancsHomebrew) will travel to New Mill's Torrside Brewery while Chorlton Home Brewers (@ChorltonBrewers) will travel to Beer Nouveau in Manchester.

Overseeing both brews will be the current National Homebrew Champion Matt Dutton who won the Best of Show award in the 2015 UK National Homebrew Competition with his Coup D'Etat Brett beer. You'll be able to judge Matt's talents for yourselves as he'll be brewing up one of his own recipes for the festival with Sam Dyson at the Track Brewing Company.

### Meet the Big Wigs

On Wednesday 20th, CAMRA Members will have the opportunity to put their questions to CAMRA's Chief Executive Tim Page and the National Chairman Colin Valentine when they visit the festival to host a special Question Time session. Tim and Colin will be facing questions in the foyer of Manchester Central from 5.30pm on Wednesday 20th January. The session will be restricted to current CAMRA members, but unlike the BBC programme, this Question Time will welcome those with pints in hand.

### Festive Friends



In what may be a first, Manchester Beer Festival has twinned with Barcelona Beer Festival (BBF) in a unique tie-up. The festivals have much in common – both cities are leading the way for great beer in their respective countries; as Manchester enters its third year, 2016 will see just the fourth BBF and both have iconic venues – while MBCF moves to Manchester Central, BBF 2016 will be held at the city's historic Martime Museum from 4th – 6th March.

For MBCF 2016, Barcelona Beer Festival organisers are curating a selection of the very finest beers from their most highly rated local breweries including Dougall's brewery and family outfit Querr. Representatives from the breweries will be travelling to Manchester for the festival and will take part in collaboration brews while they are here. In return, MBCF will put together a range of 24 beers (12 cask and 12 keg) from six carefully chosen local brewers which will be shipped out to Barcelona to feature on a Manchester bar at BBF.

The Spanish and Catalan beers will feature on the returning "Rest of the World" bar which will also see another first with the first appearance of Chinese craft beer from Panda Brewery in Beijing being imported specially for the festival. There will also be an extensive range of draught beers from New Zealand and representatives from the USA, Scandinavia and more. Once again the Bière Sans Frontières bar will host all six Munich Oktoberfest beers and the usual great selection of German, Belgian and Czech beers.

### Tutored Tastings



Another innovation this year is a series of tutored tasting and talks (with beers to try along the way). Good Beer Guide editor Roger Protz (pictured) will be hosting "Mild, Porter and Stout" at 5.00pm on Thursday 21st and again at 3.00pm on Friday 22nd. Also on the Friday will be "Beer and Chocolate" hosted by CAMRA's Christine Cryne at 7.00pm. Opening Times editor John Clarke will be hosting "The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of IPA" at 1.00pm on Thursday and 12.30pm on Friday. On Saturday at 1.00pm John will be hosting "An Introduction to Belgian Beer". Details of tickets for these events will be on the festival website.

### All the details

All the details are available at [www.mancheerfest.uk](http://www.mancheerfest.uk). For updates before and during the festival follow the festival on twitter at @MancBeerFest or on Facebook at ManchesterBeerFestival.



Spring Gardens, 89 Compstall Road,  
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Heaton Norris, Stockport, SK4 2LL.  
www.thehopestockport.co.uk

@foolhardyales



# OPENING TIMES

Opening Times is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester, the Trafford & Hulme and the High Peak, Tameside & North East Cheshire branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Additional material is supplied by the North Manchester and the Macclesfield & East 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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## Trading Standards

For complaints about short measure pints etc contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service. This works with all the Trading Standards services in the North West and is supported by the Office of Fair Trading. You can email the Consumer Service at the following address:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice/consumer\\_service.htm](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice/consumer_service.htm)  
Their telephone no. is 03454 04 05 06.

To report a matter to Trading Standards go to:  
[www.adviceguide.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards)

To find a local office: [www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office](http://www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office)

## Subscriptions

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## Public Transport

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

- \* Transport for Greater Manchester: [www.tfgm.com](http://www.tfgm.com) 0161 228 7811
- \* East Cheshire: 0300 123 5500  
[www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public\\_transport.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport.aspx)
- \* Derbyshire: [www.derbybus.info](http://www.derbybus.info)

## Disclaimer

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

**Copy Date for the February issue is Saturday 9th January.**

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**Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn**

**Front cover - Manchester Central (location of Manchester Beer and Cider Festival) by Wesley Harding. Visit his website at [www.whardingphotography.co.uk/](http://www.whardingphotography.co.uk/) to view and purchase his excellent photographs.**

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# Curmudgeon

## A Pub is for Life, Not Just for Christmas

The public health lobby seems to be falling over itself to launch as many schemes as possible to encourage people to give up alcohol for a month. No sooner has Stay Sober for October come to an end than we are bombarded with another round of publicity for Dry January. What will they come up with next? Miserable March? Arid April?

It's up to each individual to make decisions about their own lives, and many will understandably want to cut down in January after having eaten and spent too much over the Festive season. Nobody should kid themselves that their local pub will stand and fall on their custom alone.

However, January has always been a slack time for pubs, and if you value them surely they deserve your support. Dry January comes across as an organised campaign to, in effect, encourage as many people as possible to boycott pubs at the time when they are most vulnerable. It is going beyond personal choice to become political. And it's no good saying that people can still go to the pub and spend as much on soft drinks, because we know that in practice few will.

To counter this, sections of the brewing and pub trades have set up a couple of campaigns called "Tryanuary" and "Try January". Someone should bang their heads together to make them combine their efforts, but the general message is clear – don't overdo it in January, but take the opportunity to spread your wings a bit and try some different beers, drinks, dishes and pubs and bars. And the Manchester Beer and Cider Festival, which falls right in the middle of January, offers a golden opportunity to do just that. Hands up if you've ever been to a beer festival held in GMEX! It would be a shame to miss it by sticking rigidly to a principle.

## Selling off the Silver?

Over the years, people have viewed the rise of some businesses as unstoppable, only to find them later falling flat on their face. A good example is Tesco, which not so long ago was seen as a juggernaut remorselessly tearing up Britain's High Streets, only to run into a perfect storm of declining profits, accounting fraud, sacking the boss, closing existing stores and putting expansion plans on hold.

For long, Wetherspoons were seen in the same way, inexorably growing towards a target of a thousand pubs and represented in every substantial town. Earlier this year, they reported record sales and profits. However, there have been signs that all is not well. They have always disposed of the occasional pub, but in July they announced the sale of a job lot of twenty. Most of these either had another branch close by, or were in locations where there maybe wasn't enough footfall, so it seemed as though it could be just a sensible bit of rationalisation.

Then, four months later, the news came out that they wanted to sell a further tranche of thirty-four, this time including what appeared to be some very successful pubs on good sites. Locally, the list featured the Milson Rhodes in Didsbury and the Bollin Fee in Wilmslow, both current Good Beer Guide entries and not close to another branch. There have been suggestions that Wetherspoons are cashing in on high-value freeholds, but their precise reasoning is very hard to pin down. But that thousand-pub target suddenly looks a lot further away.

Curmudgeon Online: [curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com](http://curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com)  
(comments on these articles can be left on the website)



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Wobbly Bob, White Hurricane, Uncle Fester,  
Bantam, Christmas Kiss, Humbug, Tyke

## MORE CHOICE BETTER BEER

### International Brewing Awards



1998

Wobbly Bob



2002

Navvy



2002

Wobbly Bob



2004

Wobbly Bob

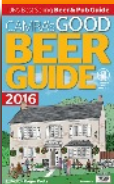
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11am till 11pm Monday to Thursday

11am till Midnight Friday and Saturday

12noon till 11pm on a Sunday





# Pub of the Month

## The Grove Inn, Clayton



*The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for January 2016 has been won by the Grove, Ashton New Road in Clayton. Jim Flynn reports.*

If, in these days of micro pubs and multi-beer ale shrines, you are not sure what a genuine street corner community local looks like, and why such pubs are so important to the fabric of many communities, you need look no further than the Grove in Clayton. This classic multi-roomed Holts pub, oozing with history (note the war memorial on the wall) is an oasis in a pub and cask beer desert; it's nearly two miles from the city centre and this is the first pub you will come across! The licensee, Sandra Billings has worked diligently to enhance the community spirit in the pub and her efforts are clearly paying off as it is very much at the heart of social life for many in Clayton. Sandra has been behind the bar in pubs from Sheffield to Middleton and her experience certainly shines through.

Towering over Clayton is Manchester City's Etihad Stadium complex and while the Grove is a great watering hole for cask beer loving fans on match days Sandra is very keen to ensure that both fans of all teams plus none supporters of football are welcome. On one of the walls of the vault is a football montage with badges from numerous teams from across the country (disappointingly nothing from Port Vale...) and in the newly renovated outside drinking area there are City and United walls.

The all-important beers are Holts Bitter and the seasonal and Sandra ensures these are on good form. So why not join the local CAMRA branch to celebrate the award which will be presented to Sandra and her staff on Thursday, 28th January when I'm sure we will all be given a real East Manchester welcome by these very friendly people.

The pub is on the 216, 217, 231 bus routes (the 53 also stops nearby) but your best mode of transport may well be by tram as the pub is very conveniently next door to Clayton Hall tram stop on Ashton Metrolink line from Piccadilly.



*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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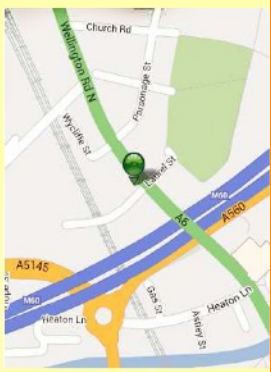
## The MIDLAND

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# Stagger

## A Friday Night Around Portwood with Jerry Wicken



Our evening started at the **Midway Tavern** on Newbridge Lane. Midway from or to where we know not. What we do know is that when a pub is described as food orientated a collective shudder passes through the bodies of CAMRA members as the implication is that the beer offering may be neglected. But hurrah! Food may be the driving force here but the three real ales sampled were all on good form and the Stockport Brewing Co. Stock Porter was rated one of the two best beers of the night. Moorhouse's Ruby Witch and Everard's Tiger were the other two tried and the fourth offering, Thwaites Wainwright, remained in the barrel. The pub interior is modern and stylish without looking like an art installation. Food here has a good reputation and it was quite busy with diners when we visited but there were free tables for drinking and a beer garden is available in warmer weather. There are also many events and clubs catered for including a Monday folk evening and the monthly home of Stockport Metal Detecting Club.



The **Park Inn** being keg only we strolled down to the **Queens**, a Robinsons house on Great Portwood Street. I'm not sure whether the pub merits an apostrophe as newish looking stained glass in the lounge all pictured queens, albeit the same one! All the ales sampled, Unicorn, Wizard and Dizzy Blonde, were good or better but the pub was quiet which seemed to be a recurring theme. Having said that, there is Superleague darts played here during the week so perhaps Fridays are not representative. Sad to say, though, all the tied houses or single beer pubs were very quiet despite the quality of the beer. Whilst we cannot pass judgement on the basis of one Friday night, it seemed that unless there was an added selling point, loads of different beers, dining etc., many pubs were struggling.



Luckily our spirits rose when a short walk down the road found us in the **Railway**. This was the then-current October Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month and needs no introduction to most local drinkers. There are 10 regular ales from a number of breweries including Moorhouse's, Allgates, Outstanding, Thornbridge, Rossendale and Pictish along with two guests which on this occasion were Holden's Golden from the Black Country and Three Kings Dark Side of the Toon from Tyne and Wear. The pub was quite busy but not as rammed as some Friday nights. All the ales were in decent form including the guests, probably the best of the bunch being Allgates Tag, a dark mild. There is always a lot going on at the Railway, so pay it a visit and enjoy the range of real ales, continental bottled beers, a couple of ciders (Gasping Goose and Aspalls on this occasion) or perries, as befits the current local Cider Pub of the Year, and perhaps a game of bar billiards.

Next up was the **Swan With Two Necks**

which we were pleased to find open near to 9pm. Their website provides opening times but it is as well to remember that other than Friday and Saturday when it closes at 11pm, the pub shuts at 7pm (6pm on Sundays). The pub caters largely for shoppers or local workers, lunches being very popular, and by the time we arrived there were but two drinkers. Still we received a warm welcome into a pub with a stunning wood panelled interior through three bars with a connecting corridor. Not for nothing is it on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. The customers who stayed away missed some consistently good Robinsons Unicorn and Wizard as well as a near perfect Old Tom enjoyed by one of our more intrepid drinkers.



The cavernous **Chestergate Tavern** had two turned pump clips so real ale there is, at best, sporadic. The number of door staff just about

equalled the number of customers. Opposite is the equally barn-like **George**, in a previous life a Higson's house. Whether the presence of door staff or an historic poor reputation kept people away, I don't know, but it was all but empty. Nonetheless, the Timothy Taylor's Landlord was pretty good, the Jennings Cumberland less so. It also offered real cider in the form of Gwynt Y Ddraig Black Dragon so perhaps their efforts deserve to be better rewarded.

The empty pub syndrome continued through our penultimate stop, the **Pineapple**, another Robinsons house little changed over the decades and selling just Unicorn bitter which again scored well. (An unturned pump clip promised a choice of Wizard but this was sadly unavailable.)



So to our final hostelry, the ever popular **Crown** on Heaton Lane. It was by some distance the busiest pub of the night, but we still found seating for all who wanted it. Just outdoing the Railway, the Crown had 12 ales on offer including Three Tuns 3X from Bishop's Castle which was one of the two best beers of the evening. A couple of ales weren't quite up to scratch and were changed on request, but overall the standard was very high. The breweries represented on this evening were Stockport Brewing Co, Stamps, Three Tuns, Bad Co, Cryptic, Pictish, Hornbeam, Copper Dragon, Derventio and Big Shed. Also a real cider from Merrylegs.

Whilst I may have painted a rather dystopian vision of empty pubs and tumbleweed blowing along Chestergate, the happy truth is that the seven real ale pubs we visited provided us with ale from 22 individual breweries and a mammoth choice of 32 different beers. Considering there was no J.D. Wetherspoon in sight this is a pretty big achievement and one to be applauded. But more than that it is one to be supported so we don't lose the choice which makes our local area so great.





# OUR BEST KEMPED SECRET IS OUT

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# Trafford & Hulme Pub of the Season

*The Trafford & Hulme Branch Pub of the Season for Winter 2015-16 is the Sir Ralph Abercromby in Manchester City Centre.*

The Sir Ralph is a Manchester institution having stood on Bootle Street since the early 19th century. Current landlord Mike Christodoulou arrived at the pub in 2011 when he and the legendary “Greek George” of Circus Tavern fame revitalised it after a period of closure. George moved on after a couple of years but Mike has continued to build the pub into one with a vibrant community who head to it for good value food, regular entertainment and of course good beer – there are usually five real ales on the bar.

Despite its long history, the future of the pub is seriously under threat from Manchester City Council’s plans to redevelop the whole area. Although the proposals which were recently the subject of public consultation are deliberately vague, all the indications are that the developers see the pub as “in the way”. CAMRA will be doing what it can to ensure that development does not wipe out such an important part of our pub scene.

The Pub of the Season award will be presented on Friday 29th January from 8pm. It’s hoped to get the press to cover the event in the light of the threat to the pub, so it would be good if CAMRA members from across the region could make it down to show the level of support for our historic pubs.



## New CAMRA Branch



Following a lengthy consultation process, CAMRA’s National Executive has given its approval to forming a new branch to cover the Campaign’s administration within Manchester City Centre, writes *Graham Donning*. Up until now the city centre had been looked after by three different branches each covering one area of it: North Manchester, Trafford & Hulme and Stockport & South Manchester. Few people, especially publicans, could understand why this was so and it always led to some confusion. So

much so that last year two of the branches each nominated a pubs in the city centre as their “Pub of the Year” - Knott Bar and the Crown & Kettle.

With the move to form a new branch for the City Centre (which basically covers the area within the inner ring road and bordering with Salford), it is believed that it will be better for both campaigning and administrative reasons and also assist with a recruitment drive within the city. It is felt that the new branch will be able to target social activities, recruitment and campaigning within the city by concentrating on specific City Centre issues. Events such as meetings and socials can be held at times when city centre workers will be able to attend them on their way home from work rather than travelling home then having to come back into town for them.

There will obviously be a transition period while the new branch is set up and as part of this an introductory and planning meeting will be held on Tuesday 12th January. This will be held at Beer Nouveau, 75 Temperance Street, Ardwick and will start at 6.30pm. Meanwhile if you need to contact CAMRA locally about the new branch then Graham Donning (new Branch Chair elect) at [g\\_donning@yahoo.com](mailto:g_donning@yahoo.com) and Phil Booton (new Branch Secretary elect) at [phbooton@hotmail.com](mailto:phbooton@hotmail.com) will be the initial points of contact.

## High Peak Awards

The High Peak, Tameside & North East Cheshire Branch recently awarded its Winter Pub of the Season Award to the **Lantern Pike** in Little Hayfield. This excellent pub,



dating back to 1792, always has at least two cask ales on sale. Pictured above High Peak CAMRA’s Geoff Williamson presents the award to landlady Stella Cunliffe.

Catching up a bit, the High Peak Summer Pub of the Season Award went to the **Queens Arms** in Old Glossop. Purchased by a small group of local individuals some three years ago, the Queens, first listed in the 2015 edition of the Good Beer Guide, has become something of a “destination venue”. For the real ale drinker the pub is a delight with five regular hand-pulled ales complemented by three changing guests. All are always in excellent condition, a testimony to the work of a truly dedicated cellarman. The food side is also strong with a full menu in the pub and a dedicated Indian Restaurant upstairs. Pictured above Branch Chair Phil Moss (left) is seen presenting the award to co-owner Ian (centre) and cellarman Blaise (right).





# THE BEER SHOP

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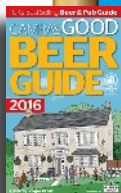
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# High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views

## Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

Early December saw the arrival of seasonal brews in our local pubs. Robinsons Frosty Frolics has appeared in the **Cock** in Whaley Bridge and at the **Crossings** in Furness Vale. Up at the **Shady Oak**, on the Long Hill road from Whaley Bridge to Buxton, Wychwood Snow Belle has been available. Wychwood special brews are sometimes more interesting than those from the parent company, Marston's. Seasonal drinks are of course not confined to beer as Henry Weston's Mulled Cider has been available in tubs behind the bar in both the **Railway** in Whaley Bridge and at the **Navigation** round at Buxworth. In both cases the cider can be served at room temperature or warmed to suit the palate.



Slater's Smoked Porter was on at the **Goyt** in Whaley Bridge. This was made with 'beechwood smoked malt' according to the pump clip. I enjoyed it, but it might not be everybody's cup of tea, or glass of beer. Ossett Treacle Stout, a good, rich winter brew, has been available at the

**Shepherds** in Whaley Bridge and elsewhere in the Marston's estate, one of the beers from the last Marston's festival. It was also time for Marston's Old Empire IPA to make its annual appearance in the estate. Brewed at 5.7%, this is almost an authentic IPA!



Many pubs of course carry on doing what works for them. At the **White Horse** at the Horwich End traffic lights in Whaley Bridge, Wells Bombardier is the regular beer kept on the bar by the now not so new latest management. At least having just one beer gives a reasonable guarantee of a decent pint and is a realistic policy.

Along the road at the **White Hart**, one of the pumps changes every so often, so that favourite beers get a good run but variety is maintained by rotating what is available. Greene King London Glory was a recent beer to try.

Dining out in the Peak District gives a chance to visit some of the pubs less frequented by your correspondent. A call at the **Royal** in Hayfield provided a good lunchtime meal at sensible prices. Beers available were Happy Valley Kinder Falldown (a house beer) Thwaites Original (good to see that this is still being brewed, presumably at Blackburn) Thornbridge Jaipur, Howard Town Monk's Gold and

Wainwright from Marston's. The Royal is worth a visit, especially if you have spent some time walking the hills around Hayfield.

A group of us dined at the **Castle** in Castleton recently. Castleton is of course in the heart of the Peak District tourist area. Again good sensibly priced food was served at lunchtime. There was an interesting beer list which included some more obvious nationally available beers, Brains Rev. James, Greene King Morland Old Speckled Hen, Marston's Pedigree and Doom Bar from the Molson Coors Sharp's Brewery in Cornwall. Leeds Pale seems to be a very welcome permanent beer, whilst Exmoor Silver Stallion joined the line as guest beer.



The **Drum & Monkey**, on the Chapel-en-le-Frith road out of Whaley Bridge, is of course good at accessing beers from a variety of breweries, Abbeydale and Bradfield are amongst the fairly regular brews. The Whaley Bridge Brewery often has a beer available, now from its new brewery in Furness Vale. Stoneheads was on last time I called. The pub is now also the sponsor of the kit for the Whaley Walking Football Group (pictured above). The group meets weekly on the all weather pitch at the town football ground in its smart new kit, and is part of a rapidly growing pastime.

A recent call at **Buxworth Working Mens Club** found High Peak Red Ale from Chapel-en-le-Frith and as a contrast, Summerleaze from Bude, Cornwall. Down the hill at the **Navigation** Elland beers are fairly regular, whilst a recent novelty was a delivery from the Big Shed Brewery near Shrewsbury. Finally, a curio from Marston's brewery in their Revisionist series of beers. The latest offering is Sardinian Bock. Bock beer is a name normally given to a fairly strong German beer, often produced as a winter brew, perhaps produced to coincide with the season of the Zodiac sign Capricorn, the goat. Michael Jackson asserted in his *Beer Companion* that 'Not all strong lagers are bocks, and the designation should be reserved for all malt beers with a respectable lagering time'. This beer won't have been lagered but at 5.5% is fairly strong and is an all malt beer to taste. But where does the Sardinian come from? It is an interesting brew and well worth trying if you come across it in the Marston's estate or the free trade.

## High Peak Pub News

With Tom Lord

In Stalybridge the **Hunters Tavern** on Acres Lane has reopened after refurbishment and in Ashton it is reported that the **Witchwood** is to apply for Cask Marque accreditation.



In Glossop the former **Moon and Sixpence** on Bernard Street has reopened as the **Victoria Lounge**. The following real ales featured a few days ago: Ringwood Old Thumper, Howard Town Wrens Nest, Jennings Cumberland Ale and Marston's Pedigree New World.

Up in Chapel-en-le-Frith the **Kings Arms** in the centre of the town was due to reopen on December 15th after a long period of refurbishment. One house beer and two guest beers will feature on handpump.

Finally – in November we mentioned the closed **Swan** at New Mills and commented that there was no obvious sign of Robinsons either selling or restoring the pub. This prompted Robinsons to get in touch to tell us that they did in fact sell the pub in March 2011 and they are as baffled as us as to why the purchaser has apparently done nothing with it since.



# Heard at the Bar

## Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

### Café Beermoth

One of the more eagerly awaited City Centre openings finally came to pass, at very short notice, on Friday 11th December. Indeed *Opening Times* was off to the Blackjack and Runaway breweries' tap night when a tweet popped up announcing the opening of **Café Beermoth**. Plans were immediately changed.

Run by the team behind the Beermoth shop on Tib Street, Café Beermoth has been in development for some months now. It was worth the wait as the conversion of a large box-like unit on the ground floor of an office block into what will surely be one of the city's premier beer destinations is classy and spectacular.



Good use has been made of the very large space with a row of booths facing the long and uncluttered bar counter - the seven handpumps and 10 keg fonts are on the back wall. There are some table and chairs to one side and upstairs there's another smaller and more intimate area (which to be honest at the moment feels like a bit of an afterthought and may need a little more work).



The overall impression though is one of space – it's tall and airy and there's plenty of room to move around. It also manages to cleverly

combine modernity and tradition – note the hop bines across the bar for example.

In common with the best new bars, cask doesn't take a back seat here and the beers have been cleverly chosen from some of the best, and most reliable, modern brewers with the likes of Mallinsons, Magic Rock, Thornbridge, Buxton, Roosters and Quantum all represented.

The keg beers are a mixture of UK classics (Runaway and Kernel) alongside imports like De Dolle Brouwers Export Stout, Oud Beersel Oude Lambic and De La Senne Taras Boulba (which will be a permanent beer). A draught lambic beer will also be a regular feature. And of course there is also an extensive list of bottled beers, as you might expect given range available at the Beermoth shop.

Beer is served from 12 noon but the café opens at 8.00am for coffee and pastries. Apart from that food will be restricted to plates of meat and cheese – classic accompaniments to good beer.

Interestingly Café Beermoth is not in the Northern Quarter. You'll find it just off Market Street on the corner past the Post Office. The official address is 40A Spring Gardens but it's essentially on the corner of Brown Street. Go and enjoy.

### Piccadilly Tap

Since it opened last year the **Piccadilly Tap** (on the station approach) seems to have struggled to find a place in the hearts of local beer fans. It's not clear why that should be but we think that will be about to change following the appointment of Jeff Bell as temporary manager late last year.



Although he hails from the North East, Jeff (pictured above) has run two very successful pubs in London and has now been taken on by the owner of the Tap as a consultant-cum-manager to make it the pub it should always have been.

The beer offer has been rebalanced with more local beers in the cask range (and the prices have dropped too). In a change from what was perhaps a rather too random selection before, many of the beers now come from tried and trusted brewers. Not only that but more than one cask is purchased of each one so that the beers can have the cellar management they

need, and returning customers can try a favourite for a second time. Jeff makes the point that most of the initial custom is passing trade so every pint needs to be good as the Tap might only has the one chance to get it right.

The keg range is likely to feature more classic imported beers from the likes of Germany and the Czech Republic – the aim is to complement the cask offering rather than compete with or undermine it.

There's food too. Pork pies from Beehive Foods on Deansgate are available, and there's a veggie option as well. They've been a huge success with 100 selling in the first three days they were available.

When *Opening Times* has called there does seem to have been a palpable change for the better in the general vibe here which is good news as the Piccadilly Tap should be a serious player on the local beer scene and finally it looks like it may well just become one.

### Grove Alehouse



The **Grove Alehouse**, which opened on 5th December, is the project of Kevin and Tina Clarke. They know Hazel Grove and ran the nearby Bird in Hand for a couple of years, leaving there about 18 months ago. They then wondered what to do and in April they chatted to their nephew who had opened a micro-pub in Wellingborough which had been an instant success. The Grove Alehouse (which occupies the old Tittertons butchers premises at 145 London Road) is the result.

Work started on 22nd September with all the conversion work carried out by Kevin and Tina's son Darren who made much use of reclaimed materials – all to very good effect it must be said. The bar occupies one corner and the simple furnishings comprise one long bench seat, a handful of tables and chairs and some stools at the bar. And that's it – the essence of a micro-pub and none the worse for it.

*Continues on page 18*



# Meet the Brewer

## Carbon Smith Brewing



*This month Brendon Hall interviews Ollie Smith who is in the process of relocating his brewery from Edinburgh to a railway arch in Ardwick, part of Manchester that is rapidly becoming brewery central.*

**Hi Ollie, welcome to Manchester! 'Carbon Smith Brewing' – how did the name come about?**

The name is a bit complicated to

explain, I'll try my best! When you brew, you turn starch into sugars, then sugars into alcohol + CO<sub>2</sub>, then you add hops, all are carbon based chains which you cut in places and add bits onto. So just like how a goldsmith deals with gold, we do to carbon. Smith also happens to be my surname.

**Your brewery will soon be part of the burgeoning 'Piccadilly Beer Mile', what is Carbon Smith Brewing bringing to the table? Do you have any plans for a brewtap?**

We have lots of plans! Firstly is indeed a brewery tap, we're thinking six to eight keg lines and *maybe* one cask line – definitely opening on Saturday, maybe other days of the week. We'd love to host events and tap takeovers from friends at other breweries. Secondly, I am keeping the tiny kit we started on and building a few duplicates of it. This is so the public can come and brew small amounts (~50L) with professional level kit and with professional help – we're talking fully stainless steel conical fermenters and pressurised conditioners all with temperature control. There'll be monthly subscriptions for the home brew fanatics as well as options for one-off brews for beginners or stag parties etc. We started at the 50L level and are passionate about teaching others about good beer, can't think of a better way of doing it!

**How do you go about choosing your beer styles, types of beer, flavours and ingredients?**

I can get inspiration for a beer from anywhere. We don't shy away from experimenting. We've done a mustard seed, cress, kelp and green tea saison which was inspired from a blogger's hypothetical example of an over the top craft-beer, so naturally we had to brew it. Other sources of inspiration have included a rose petal pale ale (inspired by my fiancée's name); a rosemary and lime IPA (from a cocktail at a bar I used to work in); a cardamom and chocolate stout (after experiencing a Swedish cardamom hot chocolate), and a jaggery infused Berliner weisse (an idea proposed to us by a chef at an Indian restaurant). Usually though ideas are dreamt up over a couple of pints down the pub.

**Manchester is having a real 'golden age' of brewing at the moment, what can we expect from CS over the coming year?**

A lot of experimenting, not just with flavour but viscosity, texture and different gases (CO<sub>2</sub>, Nitrogen and maybe a few others, we're tempted to do a helium beer) to name but a few etc. We will of course have a core range of more usual beers too.

**Finally, when you aren't drinking your own beer - please let us know one local, one national and one international beer or brewery that is exciting you right now?**

Locally Edinburgh or Manchester? In Edinburgh I highly rate Fallen Brewery (pronounced Fall as in Pal), particularly his Platform C IPA. In Manchester the best I have had is Chorlton's Amarillo Sour, one of the best sour beers I've ever had actually. Nationally I love the work of The Kernel. Evin is a hop wizard, his single hop IPAs showcase hops better than any other brewery in my humblest of humble opinions. Internationally I can't get enough of Drake's Brewing, well when I can find it. Particularly the Hopocalypse IPA and Drakonic Stout.

# Poynton

## Award & Brewery News



The High Peak, Tameside and North East Cheshire Branch of CAMRA covers a wide area, as its name suggests, and as such is able to make a number of Pub and Club of the Year awards. The small area of Cheshire within the boundaries includes Disley, Poynton, Pott Shrigley and Kettleshulme. However within that small area is a number of remarkably good pubs and one club that is a real star turn. This is the **Poynton Legion Club** on George's Road West and unsurprisingly it was voted the Branch's "Cheshire Club of the Year". Pictured above is local Poynton CAMRA member and activist Lawrence Bamber (right) presenting the award to the club manager Nick Williams. If you look closely you can see a number of previous awards displayed at the far right.



After the presentation the assembled CAMRA party was given a tour of the on-site **Poynton Brewery** by owners Andy King and Colin Bavins (shown left serving their beers). Readers may recall that Poynton

residents Colin and Andy purchased the former Worth Brewery from Paul Hession who sadly had to give up brewing due to ill health.

It's taken them longer than expected to re-start brewing (not least due to a 15 week wait to get formal permission from HM Revenue & Customs) but they put the waiting time to good use. While the brewery looks superficially unchanged there has been a lot of improvement work behind the scenes, not least the installation of some proper temperature controls and some new conditioning tanks.

It was worth the effort if the first two beers are anything to go by. The pale and hoppy Aurora was crisp and refreshing but most of us were blown away by the darker Fireside. It's billed as a mild and is a very modest 3.1% but is astonishingly tasty and full-bodied with a great mouthfeel. It's really more of a firm dry brown ale (and may be rebadged as such) and in OT's opinion could well be a classic in the making. Two more beers are in the pipeline too – look out for Hoppy Days (which is sort of self explanatory) and also a classic Porter – just right for the winter months.



# Pub & Brewery News Extra

## The latest openings around and about

### Grove Alehouse contd.

There are five changing cask beers and these will always include a couple of pale and hoppy brews and, for the colder months, a stout. In addition there is a small (but growing) range of bottled beers, a selection of wines and spirits and two “bag in box” traditional ciders served from the fridge. Prices are keen and CAMRA members get a 10% discount Monday to Thursday.

There won't be much food but what will be available are Tittertons pork pies (and chutney) – a nice nod to the building's history. This is a very welcome addition to the Hazel Grove pub scene and we wish it well.

### Beer Traders

And another new micro-pub – the first of two openings in Marple. This one is in the village centre at 113 Stockport Road and is a project by Matt Fairhurst. Matt wasn't around when *Opening Times* called but we were able to chat



to his brother-in-law John Marley who had done much of the fitting out (the finishing touches were still ongoing in fact).

It's been 10 years since Matt and John were sitting in their local in Denton and bemoaning the beer on offer there and in other neighbouring pubs. It all took off about a year ago however when a Christmas present of books about beer and breweries encouraged Matt to finally move ahead. There followed a period of market research to see what similar places were doing right (and wrong) and by the middle of last year he decided to finally take the plunge and look for the right premises. A former shop in Marple was available and Beer Traders opened for business in early December.

It has quite a modern feel and look, and this is also reflected in the beer offer which is more towards the craft end of the spectrum. Three cask beers are accompanied by five on keg

(including local beers from RedWillow, Alphabet and Shindigger) and a “bag in box” cider. The cask is £3.40 to £4 while the keg is £4.20 to £4.50 a pint. In addition to the draught offerings there is also a range of (mainly local) bottled beers and also canned beers from London's Beavertown Brewery. A welcome increase in local choice for Marple which we are sure will do well.

### Ninety-Ninety Brew Co

Another newcomer. The man behind this one is Ian Sanderson (pictured below with an award for a RedWillow beer) and OT caught up with him last month. He explained: “During my time as manager of the Parlour in Chorlton I got really into all-grain home-brewing leading to me doing a couple of volunteer brew days at RedWillow. When they expanded from a six to a 12 barrel kit I pestered Toby and Caroline for a job. They let me wash casks on a part time basis which slowly led to me doing the odd bit of brewing which then became my full time job. I always had the aim of one day setting up on my own and now the opportunity has arisen”.



Ian has a six-barrel fermenter which is currently at RedWillow where he still works three days a week. At the moment he cuckoo brews there at the weekend as this doesn't affect RedWillow production and allows him to be in to do the brewery checks. Ian tells us that Toby and Caroline McKenzie, RedWillow's owners, been amazingly supportive while he starts up and he cannot thank them both enough.

The first brew was a 3.9% English Pale Ale hopped with Target and Admiral. This was brewed for FC United of Manchester, where Ian is a season ticket holder and co-owner, but was also available to the free trade in cask format. Next up was a 4.6% Session IPA hopped with Admiral, Columbus and Chinook and available only in cask. The third cask beer will be a stout at around 5%.

Ian tells us that while he is a big fan of contemporary beer styles “and the wild and wonderful concoctions that are around right now” his aim is to concentrate on consistent sessionable cask ales, to begin with interspersed with some one off brews which will be available in whichever packaging format he feels is best suited to that beer style i.e. key-keg for big IPAs, imperial stouts, saisons, lagers etc, cask for sub-6% ales.

Eventually some brews will be available in bottle. For now the brewery is a one man

operation although Ian's friend and avid home-brewer Adrian Ison has helped him on brew days.

### Hexagon Brew Co



Two bottled beers from this new Mellor-Marple start-up appeared in the local free trade in mid-December. We swiftly arranged a chat with Andrew, the man behind Hexagon.

He's been a keen home-brewer for eight years now and for the past 12 months has been planning to make the leap into commercial brewing. He brews on a small (100 litre) kit and, having finally obtained his brewing license at the beginning of November, the first beers were good to go just over a month later.

Two bottle-conditioned beers have been produced so far. Session Ale is a very drinkable 5% and is hopped with Fuggles, Target and Styrian Goldings. The stronger Winter at 6% is another pale ale hopped with Citra, Willamette and Styrian Goldings. We don't think there are too many outlets yet but just before Christmas the bottles were available in the new Beer Traders in Marple.

### Two New Ones

Just as we went to press two new brewing operations came to our attention. **Burton Road Brewing Co** appears to be based in West Didsbury and looks to have launched a bottled Burton Road Pale Ale which may have been cuckoo brewed at Alphabet Brewery. The other is Levenshulme-based **Byrne the Cake Brewing** about whom we know even less apart from that two beers, a Black IPA (6.3%) and an Xmas Ale (4.7%) have been sold at Levenshulme Market (according to their Twitter feed). Hopefully more next time.

### Remedy Bar & Brewhouse



The revival of Stockport's Market Place continues with **Remedy Bar & Brewhouse** at numbers 10 and 11 (next to the mothballed Bull's Head) which opened for business on 5th December and which, we think, should be a major success.

*Continues on next page*



# A Campaign of Two Halves

Fair deal on beer tax  
Save Britain's Pubs!



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I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association

I enclose a cheque for \_\_\_\_\_

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Applications will be processed within 21 days

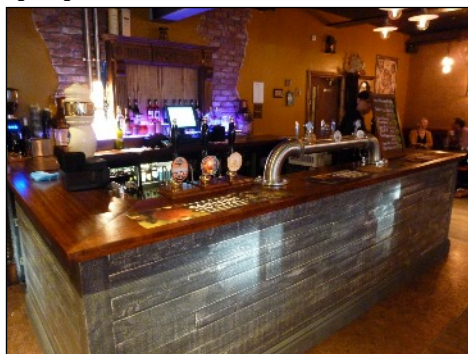
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**Campaigning for Pub Goers & Beer Drinkers**

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It's a project by Simon Wells and Sam McDonald whose conversion of two former shop units has been skilfully carried out. The bar is at the rear but interestingly part of the former dividing wall between the units remains in situ to break up the quite large interior and so prevent everything being that bit too open-plan.



The decor is loosely steampunk inspired with exposed pipes and ducts, mix-and-match furniture, and bare light bulbs. The floor around the bar is an eye-catching mosaic made of one penny coins.

There are six cask beers available and once the on-site brewery comes on stream this month (it will be Stockport's ninth!) two will be supplied from there with the remaining four being changing guest beers. It is likely that many of these will come from breweries set up by Simon and his other business partner Mike Hitchen (who some readers may remember from his

days at Stockport's Three Rivers Brewery). There are a couple of keg beers – Hofbrauhaus Helles from Munich and Founders All Day IPA from the USA. There is also a small selection of bottled beers (which we suspect will develop as time goes on).



Coffee is also available and this month will see the introduction of food in the form of British, German and American inspired tapas-style dishes. Remedy is closed on Mondays but open every other day from 12 noon until 11.30pm.

## Spring Gardens

As we reported last month, Martin and Sam Wood from the **Hope** in Stockport have acquired the **Spring Gardens** on Compstall Road in Marple Bridge. This will operate as a second Fool Hardy house although all brewing will remain at the Hope. We've now had a chance to chat to Martin about his plans and he tells us that the operation will be broadly similar to that at the Hope albeit with a much more

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significant food operation. The plan is to offer “decent pub grub at a sensible price”.

On the beer front there will be one or two Fool Hardy beers released exclusively at the Spring Gardens, the first two being Rude Vagabond and Rendezvous No.5. There will also be a more extensive craft keg offering than is seen at the Hope. If all goes to plan the Spring Gardens will reopen late next month although it was apparently left in a bad state and some of the work amounts to “almost a rebuild” in places.

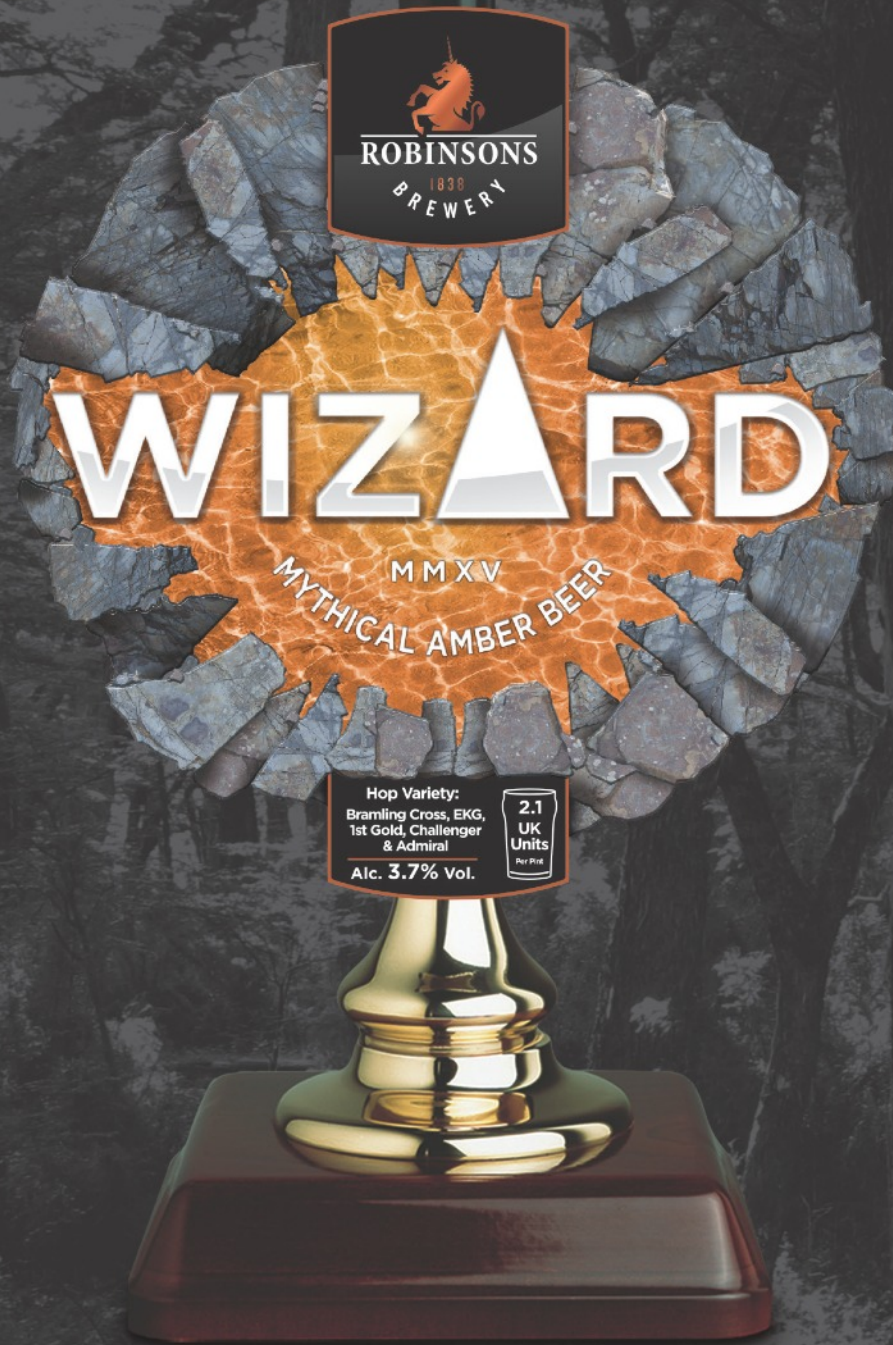
## Browton's, Ashton



Having run a beer shop for about 12 months, Simon Browton has now got himself an on-licence so you can have a drink inside the shop on Fletcher Street. The beer is bottles from selected micros along with some choice international selections. Cider is also available. Displaying an eye for a bargain, the varied glassware has been bought from local charity shops. It is open Tuesday to Saturday along with some Sundays, opening when the monthly farmers' market is held on the other side of the market hall to the shop.



# INTRODUCING...



Serving  
SORCERY

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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.

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