

# OPENING TIMES

MARCH 2016 / FREE



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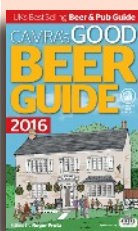
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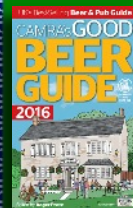
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# OPENING TIMES

*Opening Times* is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch, the Trafford & Hulme Branch and the High Peak, Tameside & North East Cheshire Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Additional material is supplied by the North Manchester, Central 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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- \* East Cheshire: 0300 123 5500  
[www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public\\_transport.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport.aspx)
- \* Derbyshire: [www.derbysbus.info](http://www.derbysbus.info)

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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 April issue is Friday 11th March.**

**Contributors to this issue:** John Clarke, Alan Gent, Dave Hanson, Peter Butler, Pete Farrand, Neil Worthington, Paul Felton, Dave Burston, Robin Wignall, Peter Edwardson, Tom Lord, Caroline O'Donnell, John O'Donnell, Stewart Taylor, Phil Booton, Brendon Hall, Graham Donning, Nick Earle, Beverley Gobbett, Mark Dredge, Rob Nicholson.

**Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn**

**Front cover – Stop press - Marble Brewery win Champion Winter Beer of Britain award with Chocolate Marble. Pictured is the brewery team with their certificates. More next month.**

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

Contact: Paul Felton; Secretary@ssmcamra.co.uk

#### North Manchester (NM)

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

Contact: Phil Booton; 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

#### Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)

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

Contact: Rob Nicholson 07983 524102;  
social@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

#### Trafford & Hulme (T&H) [www.thcamra.org.uk](http://www.thcamra.org.uk)

Contact: John O'Donnell 07879 880972 or  
enquiries@thcamra.org.uk

#### Central Manchester (CMCR)

Contact: Graham Donning 07961 886696; g\_donning@yahoo.com

### Local CAMRA Events (Open events in blue)

**Saturday 5th** – Visit to Torrside and Rock Mill breweries, New Mills (provisional date, to be confirmed – more details from contact). (HPNC)

**Saturday 5th** – Trip to Wigan Beer Festival and Wigan CAMRA Pub of the Year, Wigan Central. More details from contact. (T&H)

**Tuesday 8th** - Branch Meeting: Piccadilly Tap (1st floor), Station Approach, M1 2GH. Assemble from 5.30pm for 6.00pm start. (CMCR)

**Wednesday 9th** – Cider Pub of the Year presentation: Crown & Kettle, 2 Oldham Road, M4 5FE. From 7.00pm. (NM)

**Thursday 10th** – Branch Meeting: Railway, Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HF. Includes "Meet the Brewer" with Ray Barton of Rock Mill Brewery. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

**Friday 11th** – Club of the Year presentation: Moor Club, 35 Heaton Moor Road, Stockport, SK4 4PB. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

**Friday 11th** – Trip to Oldham Beer Festival, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Oldham, OL1 1NL. More details from contact. (T&H)

**Monday 14th** – Branch Meeting: Navigation, Stockport Road, Marple, SK6 6BD. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

**Wednesday 16th** – Branch AGM: Old Pint Pot, 2 Adelphi Street, Salford, M3 6EN. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

**Thursday 17th** – Whalley Range Social: 8.00pm Nip and Tiddle, 197 Upper Chorlton Road, M16 0BH; 9.00pm Jam Street Café, 209 Upper Chorlton Road, M16 0BH; 10.00pm Hillary Step, 199 Upper Chorlton Road. (T&H)

**Friday 18th** – Didsbury East Stagger: 7.30pm Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, M20 5PG; 8.30pm Old Cock, 848 Wilmslow Road, M20 2RN. (SSM)

**Wednesday 23rd** – Winton Survey: 7.30pm Ellesmere, 26 King William Street, M30 8HZ; 8.45pm Jolly Carter, 118 Worsley Road, M30 8LS. (NM)

**Saturday 26th** – Altrincham Amble: annual day long trip round all the pubs and bars in Altrincham - itinerary to follow or check website. (T&H)

**Wednesday 30th** – Irlam o'th'Heights Survey: 7.30pm Red Lion, 279 Bolton Road, M6 7GU; 8.15pm Waggon & Horses, 367 Bolton Road, M6 7NJ; 9.00pm Wellington, 345 Bolton Road, M6 7GU. (NM)

**Thursday 31st** – Pub of the Month presentation: Sun & Castle. Middle Hillgate, Stockport, SK1 3EH. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

**Wednesday 6th April** – Branch Meeting: Hare & Hounds, 46 Shudehill, M4 4AA. Assemble 5.30pm for 6.00pm start. Venue TBC. (CMCR)

**Thursday 7th April** – Branch Meeting: Lord Nelson, Stretford Road, Urmston, M41 9LG. 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](http://www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA)

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

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



**Stockport & South Manchester:** @SSMCAMRA

**Trafford & Hulme:** @THCAMRA

**North Manchester:** @NorthMancsCAMRA

**Macclesfield & East Cheshire:** @MECCAMRA

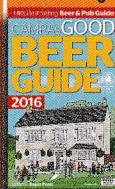
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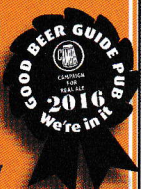
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# Pub of the Month

## The Sun & Castle, Hillgate, Stockport

*The Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for March 2016 is the Sun & Castle, on Middle Hillgate, Stockport. Opening Times Editor John Clarke dropped in...*



Landlady Veronica Bell (known to everyone as Ronnie) says that her pub is something of a contrast between inside and out. She's right. From the outside it can look a little forbidding – not helped by the very shabby sign which owners Joseph Holt really ought to do something about – but walk through the doors and you're in a warm and friendly local.

Holts haven't always owned the Sun & Castle, for many years it was a Tetley pub, and for a lot of those sold no cask beer. Holts were responsible for replacing most of the original inter-war fittings with a mock Victorian interior and for once this really seems to fit the bill with pride of place going to a spectacular 1890s bar back.

So what you have now is a warm interior with lots of dark wood plus red, brown and cream fixtures and fittings adding up to a classic "traditional pub" feel. To the right is a cosy lounge and behind that a bigger rambling room complete with a small stage. To the left is a spacious and well used vault.

Ronnie and her husband Harry have been there on and off for most of the last 16 years. Four years ago she retired and was tempted back for six weeks – and is still there! She has been in the trade for over 30 years and seems to have spent most of those on Hillgate as before coming to the Sun & Castle she had lengthy spells at the now closed Golden Lion and Pack Horse. Harry looks after the cellar – the cask beers are Holts Bitter and the current seasonal – to such good effect that he's entered in this year's Best Kept Cellar competition being run by Holts.

So come and join us on the evening of Thursday 31st when we present Ronnie, Harry – and their hardworking staff – with this very well deserved award.

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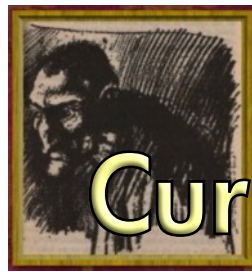
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# Curmudgeon

## Someone's Gonna Have to Pay

From the beginning of April, the government will be introducing a "National Living Wage" of £7.20 per hour, which will progressively rise to £9 by 2020. This has been widely welcomed as a way of reducing in-work poverty, and some have claimed that it doesn't go far enough. However, several pub operators, most notably Wetherspoon's, have warned that it is likely to affect their profits. This might be viewed as a demonstration of corporate greed, but isn't it preferable that they accept a reduction in profits rather than seeking to recoup the loss through cutting staff or increasing prices?

Raising the level of the minimum wage doesn't conjure money out of nowhere – it has to be paid for through one or more of:

- Customers, through higher prices
- Employees, through reduced hours, job losses and restriction of fringe benefits
- Business owners, through reduction of profits and dividends

Big companies such as Wetherspoon's may be able to take it in their stride with little impact on their business. But it must be remembered that most pub businesses are not run by managers, but by individual tenants, lessees and freeholders. They will have much less scope to adjust to paying higher wages, and may well see their own income suffer. And most licensees are not exactly making a fortune in the first place.

It is sometimes argued that the increased costs of a National Living Wage will be redistributed through the economy, and thus stimulate demand. However, the costs will be mostly borne by labour-intensive businesses such as pubs, whereas the benefits will be spread across the board. It's also not widely appreciated that many minimum wage recipients are second earners in a household, or people such as the partially retired who already have another source of income. Economists estimate that well over half the benefits of an increased minimum wage will accrue to households in the top half of income distribution.

Across the economy as a whole, this may well be a beneficial policy. But it can't be denied that it will have a damaging impact on many pub businesses that are already struggling.

## Cutting the Strings

In the past, I have pointed out that many so-called charities are in reality "sock-puppets", which take government funds and then use them to lobby the government to take further action on their chosen cause. Alcohol Concern and similar anti-drink groups are prime examples of this. It's very noticeable how all of them demand further control and restriction, rather than any kind of liberalisation.

The government have now at last addressed this issue, with Cabinet Office minister Matthew Hancock announcing that charities will no longer be able to spend any funds received from the public purse on lobbying activities. Predictably, some have complained that this represents a restriction on freedom of speech, but charities are still free to espouse whatever cause they want so long as they use money received from voluntary donations. This is a major step forward for transparency and a level playing field in public debate, and I'd say one of the best measures taken by the current government.

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[curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com](http://curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com)

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# Stagger

## Abbey Hey revisited by John Clarke



Back in the early 1980s I was the Social Secretary of what was then called the South Manchester Branch of CAMRA. Then, as now, the name belied the area actually covered including as it does, large parts of East Manchester: Gorton, Abbey Hey, Openshaw, Clayton all fall under the remit of what is now Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA.

One of my jobs back then was to launch the programme of monthly Staggers which continues to this day. Among the first I planned out was a Stagger of Abbey Hey. This is one of our "lost" Staggers – those made unviable due to the loss of cask ale outlets by either conversion to mainstream keg beers ("craft keg" has yet to make an appearance in this part of Manchester) or closure.

However lacking a Stagger for this issue I thought I'd revisit part of the old Abbey Hey Stagger to see how the pubs were faring. It was a mixed bag. The earliest write up I have found for an Abbey Hey Stagger is in issue eight of *Opening Times* (Christmas 1984). So let's compare and contrast.



That Stagger started at the **Wagon & Horses** on Hyde Road (Holts Mild and Bitter at 53p and 55p a pint) and moved on to the **Lord Nelson** (Wilson's Mild and Bitter, the latter 65p a pint and quite poor). My re-run started at 1984's pub number three – the **Vale Cottage** on Kirk Street (more or less behind the Lord Nelson and pictured above). Back then it was another Wilson's pub with good mild and bitter. Today it's a free house (having escaped the embrace of Enterprise Inns) and when I called had three cask beers – Taylor's Landlord, Castle Rock Harvest Pale and Greene King's Rocking Rudolph. The beer's still good and I certainly enjoyed the Harvest Pale. Still a damn fine pub, too, with a warm and welcoming feel and very well kept.

The two pubs on Cross Lane came next. Back then the **Royal Oak** had horrible Boddington's Bitter while the **Cotton Tree** had quite decent Wilson's Mild and Bitter (61p

and 63p respectively) and was a comparative oasis of calm. Roll forward and their roles appear to have reversed. There's no cask in the Cotton Tree any more but the Royal Oak had some decent Sharp's Doom Bar. With a well-used vault and lounge plus big screen football, this felt like a proper local.



Launching into Abbey Hey proper, the first pub back then, the **Garibaldi** on Lees Street, was a Tetley house with no cask beer. More recently it has been an unexpected conversion to cask with beers from Morecambe's Cross Bay Brewery apparently going down very well with the regulars. However when I called on a late Saturday afternoon it was closed and I've heard other reports about people finding it shut, too. If anyone has information let us know please.

The first pub on Abbey Hey Lane was, and still is, the **Prince of Wales**. Back in 1984 it was selling undrinkable cask Chesters Bitter. Today there's no real ale at all. Next up was the **Abbey Hey Hotel** with keg Stones Bitter and Bass Toby Light in 1984. I recall that cask beer was later introduced here and the quality was high. All rather academic though as the pub is now a patch of waste ground.

The **Hamlet** on Falmer Street was next in 1984. Wilson's Mild and Bitter were OK back then, and the pub subsequently came into the ownership of Vaux Breweries of Sunderland. Vaux has vanished into history as has the Hamlet which today has been converted to non-pub use.

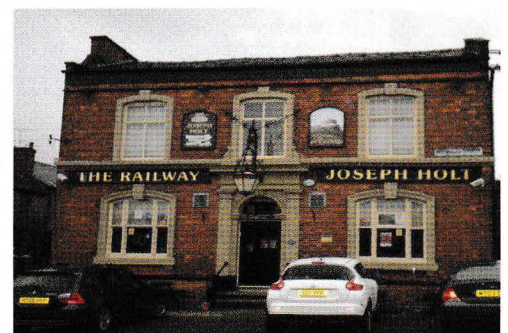


Next came a gem. The **Hare & Hounds** on Abbey Hey Lane was a very unspoiled Boddingtons pub with three rooms and drinking corridor, tile work, etched glass and good Boddingtons

Bitter served from vintage ceramic handpumps. It's still open and despite some opening up retains much of the old layout. Sadly the tiling has been painted over and most of the old etched glass has gone, as have those handpumps. And the cask beer. I drank a half of keg Boddingtons and mulled over times past.



The last Abbey Hey pub is also still with us. This is the **Oddfellows Arms** and here the old layout is more or less intact. Even the corner door is still in use and there's some decent etched glass. In 1984 Boddingtons Mild and Bitter were on handpump (but neither were much cop it seems) while today there's no cask beer at all. I've always had a soft spot for the Oddies and I think it's a great shame it doesn't sell a cask beer. It's owned by the Dorbieri Pub Group who have been putting cask into a lot of their pubs so how about it folks?



After that it was on to Ashton Old Road and the cask-less wastes of Openshaw. Luckily help was at hand. A short bus ride out of Town and I was at the **Railway** on Manshaw Road. This is an excellent old Holt's pub with a real pub atmosphere, multi-roomed layout and, more to the point good Holt's Bitter and Two Hoots. After a largely disappointing trek it was like finding a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.

Looking back, although the availability of real ale has certainly taken a hit, it is perhaps surprising that so many of the pubs have survived the 30-odd years since this Stagger was first undertaken and that is something to celebrate I think.

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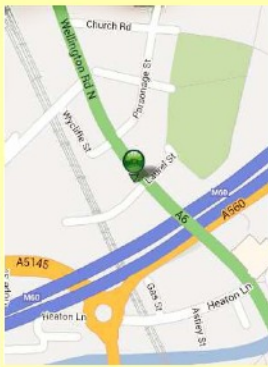
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# Night out in Altrincham

## Nick Earle and friends out and about

The Champion Winter Beer of 2014 was on the handpumps at our first stop of this social: Dunham Massey Porter. We were at **Costello's** in Goose Green, Altrincham (interior, pictured right). A familiar bar – chosen as the start because the other bars we were planning to visit are not so well known. Other ales on the handpumps were Dunham Dark (a dark mild at only £2.20 a pint), Big Tree Bitter, Little Bollington, Cheshire IPA, Stamford Bitter and Dunham Gold. As usual all the ales were on excellent form.



Our plan was to cross the newly repaved Goose Green and go to the **Tavern on the Green**. Unfortunately, since the social had been planned a couple of weeks previously, this pub had shut down again and had a board outside from Enterprise Inns advertising the lease. When I called in during December it had new tenants. It also had fairly new handpumps with Theakston's Best Bitter on one.

This traditional pub, which used to be called the Faulkner's Arms, has had a multitude of names and tenants in the last few years but none have survived very long. It is a similar story with a string of tenants at the **Orange Tree** - which is also owned by Enterprise. I suspect Enterprise would blame the tenant, or the building. I think Enterprise has a lot to answer for.



So we moved on to the **Craftsman** on Stamford New Road (next door but three to the **Slug and Lettuce**).

This opened in December and is run by the former owners of Blakemere Brewery. There is low wooden booth seating near the front, opposite the bar, and chairs and tables further back. Another room upstairs can be used for meetings or events (the next Trafford & Hulme CAMRA Branch Meeting was due to be held there on 3rd March). There are lots of those designer squirrel cage filament bulbs, giving the bar a warm feel. The six hand pumps have pump clips showing numbers and you need to look up the number on the board behind the bar where there is also a short description of the style. There were small sample jars at each hand pump so that you could see the colour of the beer. The ales were Dark Star Brewing Co Festival and Antares, Great Heck Chopper, Battlefield Brewery 1403, Merlin Micro Brewery The Wizard and Cross Bay Brewery Dusk. The range changes all the time. The Festival ale was a bit past its best, but was happily changed by the bar man and the pump clip was turned round. All the others were in good form. Oh and we nearly forgot there is a 25p pint discount for CAMRA members. If you don't want ale then the bar also specialises in gin. There are Soul/Motown or 60's music DJs most Friday and Saturday evenings and also on Sunday afternoons.

Walking past the front of the closed Tavern on the Green we moved to **Embrace**. This is a bar that has also had many incarnations over recent years, but has survived longer than most and this is probably helped by its recognition that it helps to serve decent ale. The single pump always has a Brightside Brewery beer on it - Polaris this evening. The bar is open from 10am and has a new menu - specialising in bagels and a small selection of hot meals. A staircase dominates the downstairs, but this at least makes it clear that there is more seating upstairs including a small outdoor terrace at the rear.

Our final stop was a bar that also opened in December as the **Cheshire Tap**. Formerly it was called Classroom and did not have real ale. Robinsons Brewery helped to install the four handpumps and so they plan to always serve Dizzy Blonde. The other three pumps had two beers from Poynton Brewery and one from Mobberley.

Quality was good. The bar is long and the subdued lighting and window seats make it intimate and cosy. (More of those squirrel cage lamps again.) They specialise in cocktails too.

It was a good evening visiting modern Altrincham bars. We will be doing it all again plus others on Saturday 26th March during the Altrincham Amble - you are welcome to join us. Check [thecamra.org.uk](http://thecamra.org.uk) nearer the time for more information.

## Macclesfield Pub of the Season

An intrepid group of walkers braved the wind, rain and mud to walk from the Cat & Fiddle to the **Rose & Crown** in Allgreave for the presentation for Winter Pub of the Season as part of a longer walk back over Shutlingsloe – the so-called Cheshire Matterhorn. The Rose & Crown is a lovely cosy pub nestled against the hillside deep in the beautiful Peak District. We were warmly welcomed by our hosts Ian and Luda Rottenbury who took over the pub as a free house in 2014. The cask ale is kept in excellent condition and sourced from local breweries and beyond. They have been renovating the pub with the walker friendly main bar area being the initial focus with sturdy wooden tables and log burner. Next on the renovation list are the restaurant and beer garden. Ian and Luda are not new to the area having run the **Legh Arms** in Prestbury and **Hanging Gate** in Sutton for many years.



The pub can't easily be reached by public transport but has its own accommodation and is a great base to explore the surrounding countryside with walks to suit a variety of abilities. Their website lists several walks and the pub's on the Langley 11 walk every May which takes in 11 pubs over 15 miles. Not for the faint hearted! The Rottenburys are justifiably proud of their food which will be expanded from the bar menu to a full restaurant menu during 2016. Ian bakes his own bread which everyone agreed was excellent when used in the unexpected plates of sandwiches. A grand day out and highly recommended as a destination pub. In East Cheshire we have a lot of stunning rural pubs that deserve our support and are well worth the effort of visiting, rather than the usual town centre suspects. *Picture – CAMRA's Rob Nicholson (left) presents the award to Ian and Luda.*

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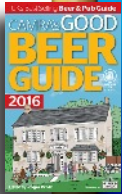
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# Unsessionable IPA?



## Mark Dredge on a new trend imported from the USA

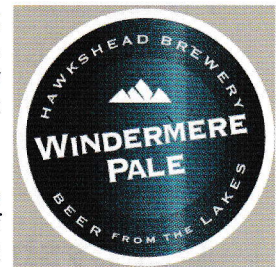
In 2013, sales of Session IPA grew 450% in the US, helping it jump from non-existent to a core range beer within two years. And because the US is where many brewers look for the latest beer trends, we're seeing Session IPA brewed all around the world. But there are a few things about this hot-right-now IPA iteration that don't work for me.

In today's Americanised beer parlance 'Session' means something relatively low in alcohol content (4%-5% ABV) and it's a basic simplification based on the British idea of a session ale – but this American context is not the same as the British context.

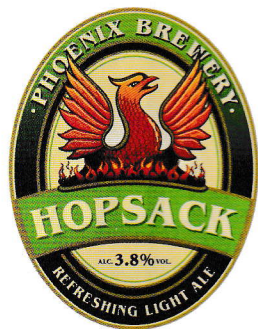
British 'session ales' are a broad group of beers (pales, milds, bitters) that you drink a few of and still happily want more, where they're best enjoyed in the pub with friends. There's a simplicity to these beers that belies their depth and balance and makes their drinkability somehow increase as you go from pint to pint during your drinking session – and that's where the name comes from: it's from the extended session of sipping pints. Many Czech and German beers have a similar quality where they manage to get their quenching malt-hop-alcohol balance just right to make you want more and more. From these drinking and pub nations we'd expect such beers that we can gulp in great volume. American session beer is different.



I've never tasted a Session IPA that's sessionable in the British sense and they are almost ironically unsessionable; too dry, too bitter, too intense in aroma and flavour – they are unbalanced towards the IPA instead of the Session. And sure, the alcohol content is often (but not always) low enough that we could drink four or five or six, but they are so powerful in flavour that we soon want to move onto something else: they are session-strength but not sessionable.



And this is where I get stuck. IPA owes its popularity to the fact that it's a beer with an impact that's so different to what most people think of as 'beer': that huge aroma, that gripping bitterness which makes you want another taste of the sweeter, bulking malts, that heightened buzz of alcohol. There's something incredibly impressive about IPAs and they have a flavour profile that so many drinkers have come to love. But that alcohol content is anti-socially high – a few pints of 7% IPAs leaves us drunk and done. Beer is a social drink and the 'session' is the ultimate setting for that.



Yet I do love Session IPAs. I love the flavour and aroma of hops and I want to drink them. There are also some great British Session IPAs and I do see their place between the other hop-forward styles (more aromatic and bitter than pale ale, gentler than IPA). I also like that we can get all the aroma and flavour of an IPA with less of the alcohol, which suggests a shift towards a maturing of the collective beer palate, one which is slowly looping around from the hollering extremities of brewing towards beers of greater drinkability and balance (even if they still come with a distinct US accent).

In a way this is already happening. Or at least the session trend is evolving with the generically-named 'Session Ale'. It's a broad category but indicative of how 'Session' has thrust itself into beer's vocabulary as the latest cool word, where it really just means low-ish in alcohol. However, to the wider world, it's Session IPAs that are taking hold and not the blanket term of 'Session Ale'.

If you want hops and sessionability then we don't look to the US and instead we look to British brewing and the pale and hoppy session beers which are at the tasty intersection between calm British sessionability and excitable American impact. We've had beer like this for years now, inspired by the qualities of an American IPA but brewed with the British drinking temperament in mind. Many of these are really great beers, beers we can drink buckets of, nailing that malt and hop balance plus the delicious addition of beautifully fragrant hops, which is all enhanced by the subtle elegances of being pulled from the cask. I would argue that these are becoming the flagship British craft beer style today, indicative of where past and present meet in our pint glasses.



Session ale is small beer making big gains in the American craft beer market and it's having an impact around the world, primarily with Session IPAs, which have become the latest style which many brewers are attempting. That full-on flavour of hops with the modest alcohol content is a great addition to the bar, just don't expect to have an actual session on session ales before needing to change to something else.

Mark Dredge is a blogger ([www.pencilandspoon.co](http://www.pencilandspoon.co)) and the author of *The Best Beer in the World*, *Craft Beer World* and *Beer and Food*. His latest book, *Cooking with Beer*, is out in April and available now to order on Amazon. Top image from Chicago Tribune who ranked 22 Session IPAs with Stone's Go To IPA as number one.

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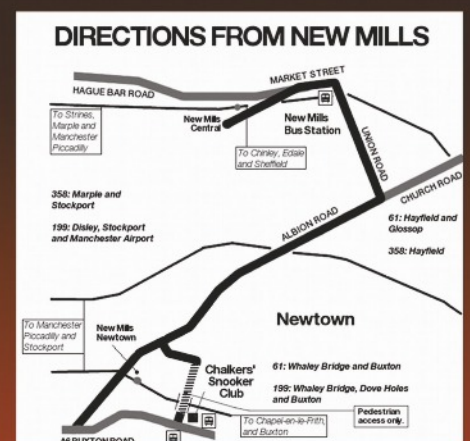
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# High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views

## Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

Sometimes going along to one of our local Local History Societies, provides the odd gem of information about our pub stock, or in this case of a lost local.

The former Devonshire Arms in Ashwood Dale, on the A6, just south of Buxton, not far beyond Morrisons, dates from about 1825. It started life as a corn mill, and was at one time both a public house and a corn mill. The 1861 census shows the occupant to have been both a miller and an innkeeper. The historical information is drawn from Alan Roberts' *Watermills on the Derbyshire Wye*, published in 2010. The Devonshire Arms does have an entry in the 2000 edition of the handy pocket guide, *Robinsons Inns and Hotels*, so its demise was into the 21st century. The pocket guide refers to the pub as having been a saw mill. There certainly was a saw mill along that stretch of the Wye, but Roberts suggest that this was a different building. Whatever, the site of the Devonshire Arms is no longer a pub and it is consigned to the ever growing list of lost locals.



Another bit of history with a much happier ending was to be found in the *Daily Telegraph's* Pint to Pint Article recently which featured the **Queen's Arms** in Old Glossop. Arthur Taylor

briefly traces its history from opening in 1825, becoming the Queen's Arms in Queen Victoria's accession year, 1837, then through the brewing history of Gartside's brewery, then from 1939, Bents & Gartside's, followed by Bass, a pubco, near dereliction and finally resurrection following a local buy out. Mr Taylor is keen to praise both the food and the real ale, and you can try for yourself, as the Queen's Arms is only a few minutes' walk from the transport hub in the centre of Glossop.

A recent call at the **Soldier Dick** in Furness Vale found a couple of interesting beers. Dark Star Hophead was well worth trying and also of note was Torrside Brewing Fire Damage from New Mills, though I left this untried as at 5% it is perhaps not an early afternoon drink. It was good to see one of our local breweries being supported by the local free trade. Whaley Bridge Brewery is of course just down the road from the Soldier Dick.

Last month I mentioned the Whaley Bridge Porter. I tried a bottle of this 4% brew and was really impressed. Dark and full of flavours, no wonder a pin of it flew out of the **Drum & Monkey**. Another Whaley Bridge brew recently available at the Drum & Monkey was Rapanui, whilst other recent guests include beers from Phoenix, Titanic, Bradfield and Storm. Look out for the next Drum & Monkey Beer Festival expected in April.

The latest White Label brew from Robinsons is a 5% porter. It is paler than I anticipated, though nonetheless worth trying when I sampled it in the **Cock** in Whaley Bridge. There is incidentally a new menu in the Cock and a group of us enjoyed a good lunch and beer here after a couple of hours out on the hills. Still with Robinsons, I see from my notes that Unicorn at the **Crossings** at Furness Vale is as good a pint of Unicorn as you are likely to find. It really is well kept, and invariably on very good form.

## High Peak Pub News

With Tom Lord

It is reported from Glossop that the **Surrey Arms** on Victoria Street now has a beer from Bradfield Brewery as a regular alongside its other beers. Also in Glossop the **George Hotel** opposite the Railway station is currently closed.

In the centre of Hyde the **Jolly Carter** now has Courage Best Bitter on a handpump. An unusual brew for the area. This pub has been a non-real ale pub for many years so this is a welcome addition to cask ale pubs in the area. Just down the road in the Market Place the **White Lion** is up for lease.

Also in Tameside on the Audenshaw/ Droylsden border the **Fairfield Arms** has been taken over by Ember Inns and is selling eight real ales

with 20p off a pint for CAMRA members and also a Monday Club selling real ale at £2.49 a pint. In Droylsden itself the **Haddon Hall** has also joined the cask ale fold and was recently selling Greene King IPA and Moorhouse's Pendle Witch. Also on handpump was Old Rosie Cider.



After a brief mention of the **White Horse** in Whaley Bridge last month, I can now report a change of licensee, with opening hours becoming 4.00 till late Monday to Friday, and 12.00 till late at the weekend. Terry has taken over as licensee. A few years ago he ran the Board Inn, long before that Whaley Bridge pub's revival as the Drum & Monkey. Real ale at the White Horse remains as Wells Bombardier. Welcome Terry and good luck.

Other snippets collected recently include Pennine Brewery (from near Masham) Winter Warmer at the **Goyt** in Whaley Bridge. Tony likes to have a dark beer on sometimes as an alternative to a good range of well kept pale ales. Beers from the Empire Brewery at Slaithwaite have been at the **Navigation** at Buxworth, where there is a succession of interesting and changing guest beers. Worth a call.

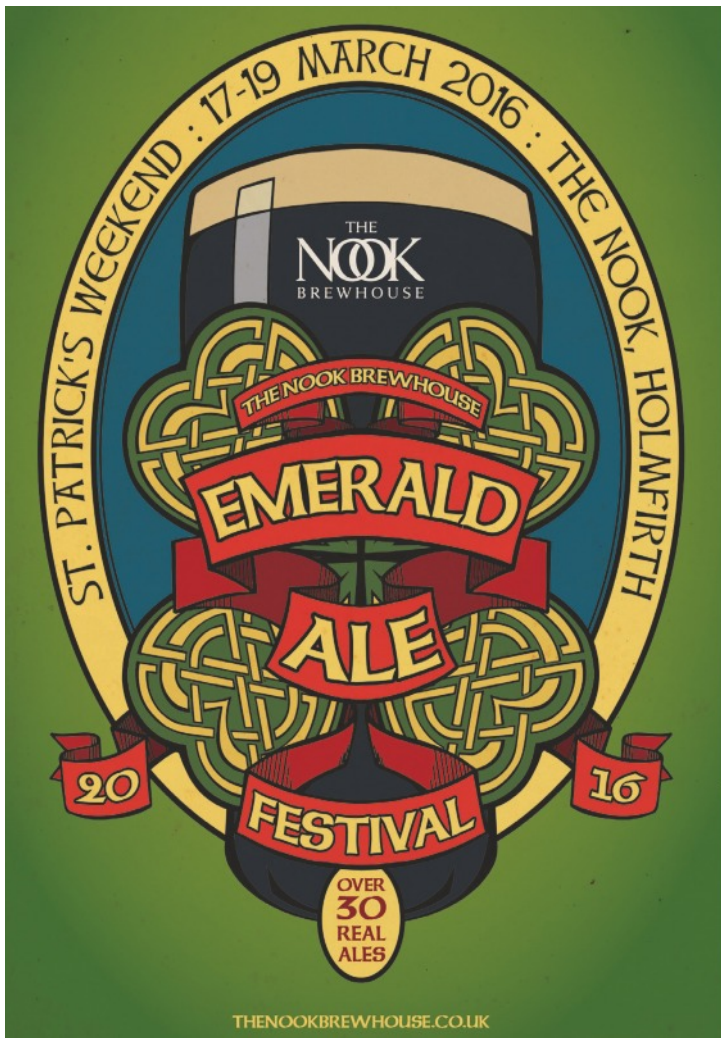
Lees MPA has gone down well at the **White Hart** in Whaley Bridge, alongside favourites like Moorhouse's Blond Witch. MPA is less of a challenge to the taste buds than Lees Bitter, but is still a good brew. The Marston's Revisionist series is up to a Red Ale, and this was a recent guest at the **Shady Oak** up at Fernilee on the Long Hill road to Buxton. Finally it appears that signage has been removed from the Royal Oak at Strines. This will be a sad loss of a good local if this is confirmed (*which it is, I'm afraid - Ed*).

On a recent visit to the recently reopened **Hunters Tavern** in Chisworth (pictured below left) the beers were Marston's EPA and Howard Town Wren's Nest. This small end of terrace pub on the Marple to Glossop road is well worthy of support and the 394 bus stops outside. It opens at 4.00pm on weekdays and at 12.00 noon on Saturdays and Sundays.

Finally, it looks like Tameside is due to get two micropubs. **Bridge Beers** on Melbourne Street in Stalybridge was due to open on Friday 26th February so more on this one next time. The other is in Denton where the **Crown Point Tavern** should be opening on Market Street. This has been a long-term project which seems to have had difficulty in securing the right premises but we understand that obstacle has now been cleared.



**Horse & Jockey**  
the inn on the green  
9 The Green, Chorlton



# Meet the Brewer

## Six O'Clock Beer Co.



*This month Brendon Hall interviews Ian Johnson of Manchester's Six O'Clock Beer Co.*

*Ian of Six O'Clock Beer Co, hello! Condensing something you love into*

*a few sentences is always hard, but how would you sum up Six O'Clock Brewing Co in a few lines for our readers?*

Hello! The company was founded by two friends, and we agreed that Six O'Clock Beer Company should be a fun place to work and develop. We chose the Six O'Clock name to reflect our dissatisfaction with the 9-5 working life and to evoke the feeling of sitting down with a tasty, refreshing pint after a hard day's work. Six O'Clock beer should be easy to drink and demand another, so making balanced beers is very important: even if they are on the strong side from time to time. We are quite "sciencey" and having designed our computer control kit we built it from scratch. So the whole company has a lot of us in it, and brewing beers "correctly" is important. Over the last year we have been using more complex brewing techniques to produce beer styles other than ales.

*Manchester is having a real brewing golden age at the moment, what do you hope to bring to the mix?*

We do the expected pale ales, *Overtime* and *Annuet Coeptis*, but we also make beers that others don't tend to brew in Manchester. *Union* is our UK hopped IPA. *Union* has been with us from the very start. It was one of the reasons I wanted to start Six O'Clock: to use our UK hops! I really like our domestic hops and they can be just as good as the American, Australian and NZ "go to" hops that breweries tend to use.

We make lagers. Up to now two types have been made and we *will* do more. These beers are made using authentic techniques, which is a bit of a curse on our kit! However, when you taste them it's well worth the effort.

We're the only brewery that I know of to use the name of an HMRC tax form in their beer names: *P45*! These are specials, usually one-offs, and are made every now and again.

*What beer styles do you have in development and where can the readers get their hands on the finished article?*

We made a *Zoigl* for the Manchester Beer and Cider Festival 2016. Plus, there'll be a Dortmund lager being made hopefully in January, and it should be ready for the middle of March. *P45: Zoigl* and *P45: Dortmund* will be available, most likely, at Blackjack's Smithfield Market Tavern. Readers should follow us on Twitter at @sixoclockbeer for any news of where you can get hold of our beer.

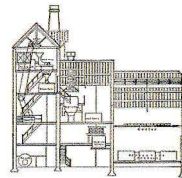
*P45: Czech Mate*, our Czech pilsner, will be made again with our great Czech brewing technology expert Petra. There's no firm date for this but it'll probably appear early summer. We secretly have an urge to make another rare and European style of beer, but we're keeping this close to our chest for the moment. If we make this beer we'll definitely let you know.

*And finally, when you aren't drinking your own brew - please tell us one local, one national and one international beer and/or brewer that are really brewing your socks off at the moment!*

Local: *Runaway American Brown*: malt and big US hops. Lovely. National: *Salopian Oracle*. I am never disappointed with *Salopian* and *Oracle* is a prime example of their brewing prowess: consistently brilliant. I never knowingly turn down an opportunity to drink a *Salopian* beer. International: *Gaffel*. I love *Kölsch*. And *Gaffel* is the finest example. Fresh, crisp and refreshing.

# What's Brewing

## Brewery News from around the region



It appears there's something about a railway arch that is irresistible if you want to set up a brewery. Of the many new breweries to set up in and around central Manchester no fewer than nine are in various railway arches – and they have just been joined by two more (and, rumour has it, yet more are in the pipeline).

The two newcomers have set up shop beneath the railway lines running from Piccadilly out to Ardwick – part of the city that is becoming something of a brewery hub, home as it now is to seven railway arch breweries plus Cloudwater Brewery nearby in a large industrial unit. In a way all this activity is in the right place as Ardwick was the historic home to Manchester's famous Chesters Brewery (a name older readers will recall)

### Manchester Brewing Co.



The two are near neighbours on North Western Street and first up was Paul Mellor (pictured below in his soon to be filled railway arch premises) at Manchester Brewing

Co. When OT called we met in an empty unit with the location of the shortly to be delivered brewery neatly marked out on the floor. The kit, from Dave Porter's PBC Brewery Installations of Bury, was being installed as this was written and the beers should be out this month.

Paul's background is in the hospitality industry and the wine and spirit trade, but more recently he worked in sales for Burslem's Titanic Brewery. It was there he got the taste for home-brewing – with encouragement and assistance from Titanic's then head brewer Dave Rawsthorne.



Paul had kept in touch with Dave Lawton, a former work colleague and now business partner, and it was 18 months ago they decided to finally commit to a career making beer rather than just selling it. When it's in place the brewery will be able to produce eight barrels at a time (that's about 2,300 pints) and a core range of four beers is

planned – Factory Pale Ale (4%), Cut Like a Buffalo American Pale Ale (4.5%), Mad Carew IPA (5.9%) and Dark Eyed Sailor (4.5%), a coconut and raspberry porter. These will be supplemented by specials and one-offs as the opportunity arises. These beers will be available in cask, keg and can.

### Carbon Smith Brewing



#### CARBON SMITH

Just down the road, Ollie Shorley-Smith (pictured below) has relocated his Carbon Smith Brewing from Edinburgh, no less. He first started commercial brewing in a first floor flat up there but soon relocated to an industrial unit. The move south was down to family reasons and until his 10 barrel plant arrives in the next three months or so he is brewing small batch beers on a 60 litre kit. "Have fun and keep it interesting" is Ollie's motto and he won't be having much in the way of a core range (and over the past two years he reckons to have brewed something like 40 beers).



Carbon Smith was due to launch early this month with five beers. Carbon 12 will be a potent IPA at 7% and brewed using Citra hops; A.Rose Pale Ale (3.5%) will be a golden ale flavoured with rose petals; Carbon Copy (3.8%) is a pale ale using lots of hops to give tropical fruit notes; Duchess Grey IPA (6.5%) is made with Duchess Grey Tea (like Earl Grey but with extra bergamot) and the line up will be completed by either an imperial stout (Carbon Footprint) or an imperial porter (Graphene Porter) both of which will be in the 8-9% region. The aim is to split production 20% keg and 80% bottled with the occasional cask offering.

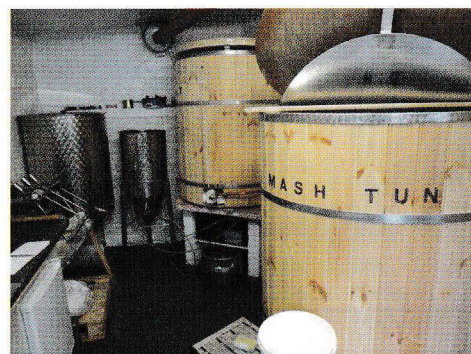
### Rock Mill Brewery

Ray Barton's Rock Mill Brewery is a long way from the Ardwick railway arches – although there's a tenuous railway connection as his small but perfectly formed brewery is situated a stone's throw from New Mills Central station.

Like many other new starters Ray has a long home-brewing background graduating from country wines to commercial kits and then full-on all-grain brewing although he didn't anticipate making the leap to a commercial operation.



However the growth in the local beer and brewery scene prompted a re-think and he decided to take the plunge just over a year ago. There was a derelict garage near his joinery workshop (that's the day job) and so, with help from various friends, he began a lengthy restoration process.



The kit has a three barrel capacity but he doesn't have enough space for that at the moment so production is limited to three nine-gallon casks at a time (although there is room for expansion next door as and when the need arises).

A range of cask beers has been produced to date. This includes Mermaid's Pool (3.5%), a light golden ale hopped with Fuggles, Goldings and Challenger; Back to the Future (4%), a ruby-red "old traditional beer", a dry Rye Stout (4.5%) and a Ginger Stout (4.5%). When OT called there was an American-style pale ale (4%) in the fermenter. So far production has been largely cask-only but Ray also plans to bottle his beer too.



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# Heard at the Bar

## Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

### Sip Club

Stretford's **Sip Club** continues to come up with innovative ways to support its local community. The latest is to become a hub for The Food Assembly – a network which connects local people to buy fresh food directly from local farmers and foodmakers. Orders are placed and paid for online at [thefoodassembly.com](http://thefoodassembly.com) and then the Sip Club welcomes the producers to their "hive" every Thursday evening for people to collect their orders. It's a farm shop. In a pub. Brilliant! The Food Assembly joins the Kids Clothes Swap, Creatives meet up, watercolour painting club, kids' drama workshops, Sip One Purl One knitting club and many more regular activities - it's like a community centre. Owner Heather Garlick has even found time to expand her beer range with the addition of new bottles from First Chop Brewing Arm, Beer Nouveau, Blackjack Beers and cans from Chorlton Brewing alongside two cask beers.

### Membership Scheme



Three pubs under the same ownership have introduced a new membership scheme for 2016. By joining up, regulars at Manchester's **Port Street Beer House** and **Common** plus Chorlton's **Beagle** can now show their membership card to get 10% off all beers and ciders as well as a range of offers on food. You can sign up in the pubs or join online.

### Old Market Tavern ACV



Altrincham's **Old Market Tavern** has become the latest pub in the area to be registered as an Asset Of Community Value - the first to be recognised by Trafford Council. The Old Market Tavern is known as a local hub for live music with local bands playing every Thursday, Friday and Saturday plus the weekly folk club.

### Harewood Arms

The **Harewood Arms** in Broadbottom was the runner-up in the Greater Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year competition. It's now been presented with a certificate marking the fact and pictured below Harewood Arms owner Phil Wild (right) is seen receiving the award from Phil Moss, chairman of High Peak, Tameside and NE Cheshire CAMRA.



### Horse & Farrier

The **Horse & Farrier** in Gatley has just had a much needed refurbishment ("it was held together with gaffer tape and blu-tac" as manager Dave Woods put it) during a 10 day closure from mid-January. Not a huge amount has changed; there has been a little opening out here and there and some of the fixed seating has been replaced by free-standing tables and chairs. The décor and furnishings have been refreshed, but are still in a traditional style, and the pub now boasts no fewer than three real fires – these were very welcome on a cold, wet February day when OT called. Outside there's a new beer garden and smoking shelter.



The food offer has been extended and you'll now get fed every day from noon until 7.00pm. The food, which concentrates on traditional pub

staples and daily specials, is all home-made and includes pies and one-pot meals.

Dave is a beer man through and through and makes good use of Hydes' quite liberal stocking policy. So there are nine cask beers to choose from – the Hydes core range of Original, 1863, Old Indie and Manchester's Finest, and five guest beers (some from Hydes sub-brands but most not).

### Peveril of the Peak

On Sunday 24th January, family, friends and loyal customers of the **Peveril of the Peak** all came together to celebrate with Nancy Swanick. Nancy and her son, Maurice, have made this popular National Inventory pub their home now for 45 years.

The Trafford & Hulme branch of CAMRA made a huge fuss of Nancy five years ago when she hit the landmark of 40 years at the helm. The wonderfully engraved mirror which the branch commissioned to commemorate this hangs in pride of place over the fireplace in the lounge.

In the last couple of years, Nancy has not had the best of health and so is not seen 'downstairs' too often nowadays but everyone who visits and knows her asks after her constantly and sends up their best wishes. On this day, she sat surrounded by people who love and respect her. There were speeches and tears from young and old, all gathered to show Nancy how highly she is thought of. Our icon of Manchester in her iconic pub.

### Pub Shorts

Work is now underway at the Chiverton Tap spin-off in Bramhall. The **Craftsman's Tap** will be at 8 Woodford Road and we are anticipating an opening in the Spring.

Local sensitivities were upset when the refurbishment of the **Plough** in Heaton Moor saw the removal of the stained glass windows from this locally listed pub. Despite the installation of what looked like bespoke new windows the pub's management assured the council's Conservation Officer that the old ones had just been removed for repair and restoration. The latest message is that the old windows are to be returned on 22nd February. More next time.

In Cheadle the **Queens Arms** has taken out its cask ale. Sales had fallen so low that even nine-gallon casks were going off. This will make it one of just a handful of Robinsons pubs offering no cask beer. Another Robinsons loss is in Brinnington where the **Jack & Jill** has been closed down and put up for sale. Robinsons say they will support anyone wishing to reopen it as a pub but we are unsure how many takers there will be.



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# Manchester Beer & Cider Festival – how it went

*Pretty damn well seems to be the overall verdict. Almost 14,900 people trooped through the doors of Manchester Central and more or less drank the festival dry.*

Not only the cask ales, ciders and perries were appreciated by our many visitors. The Biere Sans Frontieres bar, with its wide array of foreign offerings was hugely popular as was the experimental UK keg conditioned bar (key keg) - although one CAMRA die-hard spent a fair amount of time at the bar expressing *very* firm views on the subject.



The tutored tastings were a hit (including those delivered by your editor) and the debate about Beer in Manchester was also well attended. We recruited over 300 new members to CAMRA and the management at the venue was very complimentary about the way the festival was run.

And what didn't go so well? Most of the feedback has been very positive (and the huge amount of seating was certainly appreciated) but the most persistent rumblings have been about the food available, that it was expensive and that vegetarians were poorly catered for. This was out of CAMRA's hands, unfortunately, but hopefully that will form part of the negotiations about a future event there.

Prior to the Trade Session on the Wednesday there was judging for a variety of competitions. Space

precludes a run-down of them in detail, but a brief mention needs to be made of them.

First was the judging for **Champion Beer of the North West** and here breweries from Greater Manchester swept the board. The bronze award went to **Black Edge Brewery** of Horwich for their Dark Rum Porter (4.6%). Silver went to **Robinsons** for their superlative Old Tom (8.5%) while the gold award, the Champion Beer of the North West, is Nutty Slack (3.9%), a superb dark mild from the **Prospect Brewery** of Standish and already a well-deserved multiple award winner.

However you might argue that the most important votes are those cast by the members of the public for their beer, cider and perry of the festival. Once again **Robinsons** Old Tom was there but had to settle for a bronze this time. Runner-up in the public vote for Beer of the Festival was Bury's **Outstanding Brewery** with their lovely Chocolate Liqueur Stout (4.9%). The winning beer was the excellent Talisman IPA (4.2%) from Rochdale's **Pictish Brewery**. Well done all.

It doesn't end there though. There was voting for cider and perry of the festival. The winning cider was Jenny Lay Back from the **Manx Cider Company** on the Isle of Man. The winning perry will be familiar to visitors to Stockport Beer & Cider Festival – Thorn Perry from master perry maker **Kevin Minchew**.



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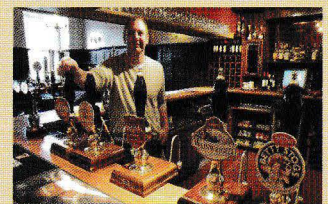
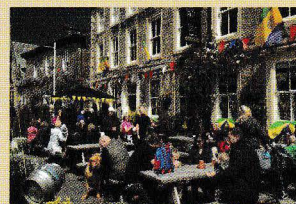
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