

MAY 2007



# Opening Times

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

NUMBER 273

COVERING THE CITIES OF MANCHESTER & SALFORD, STOCKPORT, TAMESIDE, TRAFFORD, N.E. CHESHIRE & MACCLESFIELD

## End Of An Era?



The Crescent in Salford has for long been one of the region's leading free houses with an ever-changing range of guest beers and holding regular beer festivals. The quality and attention to detail are such that it has been a permanent fixture in CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide. All that may be about to change. Hopefully, it will not.

Long-standing tenants Idy and Sal are due to leave at the beginning of July, and there may be other management changes at the same time. The pub itself has been put up for sale by owner Andy Davies. The asking price is £690,000 and the pub is being marketed as a possible "development opportunity" attracting considerable interest in the local media. Idy and Sal's final beer festival was due to take place just as this issue of *Opening Times* comes out, although we feel they will leave with a bang rather than a whimper.



Everything is now in place for Stockport's 21st Beer & Cider Festival, organised by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA, and once again sponsored by the Stockport Express.

A mouth-watering array of beers, ciders and perries is being ordered – on page seven we give you a preview of some of the beers we hope to be selling. Make sure you get down to this must visit event from 31 May to 2 June.

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\* All beers subject to availability



**The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for May 2007 is the Friendship, Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield.**

In the student heartland and surrounded by halls of residence, the Friendship is arguably the last true local on Wilmslow Road between the City Centre and Withington village. A role it maintains due to its ownership by Hydes Brewery who have resisted the temptation to turn it into another 'Young Persons Venue'. That's not to say it doesn't attract any of the local student population – one of the pub's strengths is its appeal to the whole local community, young and old alike.

The traditional values have been enhanced despite numerous refurbishments and extensions, the last in 2004. Creditably, a largely separate vault area has been retained at the rear of the pub too. Extensive outdoor drinking areas are very popular and well used in fine weather.

The traditional qualities of the pub are underpinned by the range of cask ales available. Hydes Bitter, 1863 and Jekyll's Gold are the regulars and these are accompanied not only by

the latest craft ale from the brewery but also up to two guest beers, currently from the Allgates Brewery of Wigan. It hardly needs saying that quality is tip-top and the pub features regularly in the national Good Beer Guide. The efficient and knowledgeable bar staff ensure good service even when the pub is very busy, as is often the case.

Of course none of this would count for much if the right people weren't running the pub. Luckily in Chris and Tricia Batty, the Friendship has been in very safe hands for the past 8 years. In fact they gained a Pub of the Month Award in August 2000 and their continued commitment to quality across the board has gained them this second, well-deserved award. The presentation will be made on the evening of Thursday 24 May from 8.00pm onwards. **DP/MO'B**

*The Friendship is well served by public transport, with a multitude of busses serving Wilmslow Road and stopping close by. From Stockport, the 42 will drop you almost outside.*

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# OT – COMMENT...

No apologies for featuring the Crescent on this month's front cover. It may not be a pub that is familiar with every reader of *Opening Times*, but for those of us who have an interest in the huge range of cask beers available today, it has been something of a landmark establishment for many years now.

This is down to the work and efforts of long-standing licensees Sal and Idy, who previously put Manchester's Beer House on the map before working their magic on the Crescent.

The Beer House now presents a sad sight – closed, boarded and awaiting its fate. Its place in the Northern Quarter has largely been taken by the Marble Arch, a pub that goes from strength to strength across the board.

Idy and Sal's departure from the Crescent, and the potential sale of the pub itself, may mean the eclipse of what has been a Salford institution. With luck that won't happen, however, just as the Marble Arch has replaced the Beer House on the cask ale map, there is a pub quietly waiting in the wings to assume the Crescent's mantle should the need arise. Step forward the New Oxford – the enthusiasm, commitment, and even the handpumps are already in use. This pub is already gaining a reputation for quality across the board. Both the Crescent and the New Oxford are running beer festivals on the first weekend in May, around *Opening Times* publication date. For Idy and Sal this may be something of a swansong. For Tim and Paulette at the New Oxford, this is surely a taste of greater things to come.

Of course, the main event on most local beer lovers' horizon is this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. I do hope that many of our readers will support this major event and make it yet another success. See you all there.

# OT – INFORMATION

*Opening Times* is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Additional material is supplied by the High Peak & NE Cheshire, Trafford & Hulme, North Manchester and Macclesfield & E Cheshire Branches. The views expressed are not necessarily those of CAMRA either locally or nationally. 7,000 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth.

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**Trading Standards** – problems in pubs should normally be resolved by a quiet word with the licensee. However sometimes it may be necessary to take it further. These are the local contacts:

- Stockport:** 0845 644 4301
- Manchester:** 0161 234 1555
- Salford:** 0161 925 1346
- Tameside:** 0161 342 8355
- Trafford:** 0161 912 2274
- Derbyshire:** 08456 058 058
- Cheshire:** 0845 11 32 500

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2002  
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Wilmslow Road in Didsbury with Graham Atkinson

**A**s a result of the Winter Ales Festival, this month's stagger took us round a rare midweek taster in the Wilmslow Road corridor of pubs, in Didsbury.

The **Station** was the first port of call, with both the Marston's Bitter and Pedigree being sampled, the bitter being on good form in this pleasant street corner local.

With the troops mustered, we set off across Wilmslow Road, bypassing the **Hog's Head**, **O'Neills** and the **Clock Tower** to arrive at the **Dog and Partridge**, now part of the Punch Tavern chain. The pub was pleasantly full, as opposed to the usual Friday night scrum. The range and variety of the guest beers was not as great as usually available at weekends, but the Taylor's Landlord, Bass, Wells Bombardier, and Theakston's were all in good condition.

From the side door of the D&P, we took a short detour down School Lane and round the corner on to William Street venturing into the **Fletcher Moss** to sample the Hydes Original Bitter, Jumping Jack and Owd Oak (the re-named Dark Mild). The general consensus was that the beers were of good quality, with one dissenting voice rating the Jumping Jack only average.



On leaving the Fletcher Moss, we ventured across Wilmslow Road to the **Nelson**. Very much a locals' pub, and arguably the only working man's pub left in the village, the Nelson consistently delivers on the beer front. The pub still has John Smiths livery but don't let this put you off. Jennings Cumberland Ale and Moorhouses Black Cat are in fact the regular beers on offer. The Black Cat was in good condition and sells well in this friendly pub.

Moving on down Wilmslow Road we reached the "famous" **Crown**. The Wells Bombardier and Banks's Fine Fettle were average but the two souls tasting the Taylor's Landlord found it in good condition.

Finally, it was across the road to the (genuinely famous) **Royal Oak**. The popular beers were Old Empire and Jennings Dark Mild, both on form, with the Marston's Bitter and Pedigree less well regarded.

This was a pleasant evening's drinking, in a somewhat quieter Didsbury than the usual Friday Night Stagger.

Best Beer of the night? A difficult decision but the Marston's Bitter in the Station, the Owd Oak in the Fletcher Moss, the Black Cat in the Nelson, and the Jennings Dark in the Royal Oak were all popular and in good condition. My personal favourite was the Black Cat in the Nelson.

## Sponsors Join Festival's 21st Birthday Bash

Stockport Beer and Cider Festival has come of age this year and firms both nationally and locally have agreed to become sponsors to help celebrate the auspicious occasion.

As the Festival Organiser, Jim Flynn explained this was to the advantage of the thousands of beer drinkers the festival attracted "To have reached the ripe old age of 21 is a real achievement and we could not have achieved this level of success without the support of both local people and our sponsors.

"Over the years we have gained an enviable reputation for having a great atmosphere, good quality beer and cider and a very competitive pricing policy. Without the valued assistance of our sponsors we could not have achieved this as we would have had to charge up to an additional pound on the entrance for all customers, including members, or an extra 30p a pint.

"The commitment of these companies just shows how much the Festival has engaged the imagination of people in the area and across the brewing industry. I would like to record my thanks to each of them."

The following sponsors are very generously supporting the Festival this year:-

**Stockport Express** – Sponsor of the Festival itself and the Festival dining suite

**Armoury and Florist pubs** – Sponsor of the Festival Session on Friday lunchtime

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### Mixed bag in the City Centre

From one upmarket city centre hostelry in the Northern Quarter (**Odd Bar**) to one on Piccadilly (**The Brunswick**) proved a hit and miss affair recently.

The **Odd Bar** on Thomas Street has had a few good reports. Indeed it won the accolade of 'Bar of the Year' at the last Food & Drink Festival and is popular in the ever-trendy Thomas St. area. Nearby there's is a new bar **Trof** (no real ale but a good selection of foreign beers both on draught -most notable is German Jever and in bottle.) Alas, the last two visits to Odd provided no real ale, despite the good reports and the bar being busy. It was mid-week evening, but on a third visit I found Marble Lagonda IPA on handpump.

Around the corner on High Street is the ex-Hogshead **English Lounge**. Again up-market with Marston's Pedigree, Taylor's Landlord, Wychwood Hobgoblin, and Black Sheep Best Bitter, which was in good nick.

Further up Thomas Street is the **Millstone** a JW Lees house for some years. Sadly, no GB Mild on here, but the Bitter was found in fine form. Next up was the **Unicorn** on Church Street. This Edwardian pub with fine oak panelling throughout has Boddies, Caledonian Deuchars IPA and Draught Bass on handpull.

On Back Piccadilly there's the tucked-away **Mother Macs**. Sadly, on my visit the one real ale was not on, but it's Tetley Bitter when it is. The **Crown & Anchor** in its past was getting a good reputation for real ales, but then it hit the doldrums. Now, though there's good quality Shepherd Neame Spitfire, Deuchars IPA and Taylor's Landlord to be had.

On Piccadilly there are two busy emporiums; the **Piccadilly** and the **Brunswick**. The former is like a large 'Spoon', and, despite various people scoffing 'It'll never last', since a refurbishment and introduction of real ale some time ago, the proper stuff is still on! Boddies and Taylor's Landlord was joined by a mild, no less, with Moorhouses Black Cat. One always hates to finish on a downer, but there's no other way of looking at it. The **Brunswick**, upmarket to cater for the city gent served me a terrible pint. Three of the Theakston's range are available with Mild, Best Bitter and Old Peculier on handpump. The latter was stale and murky and priced at £2.90 a pint. An astonishing price for tired, on-the-turn beer. The other beers were £2.65.

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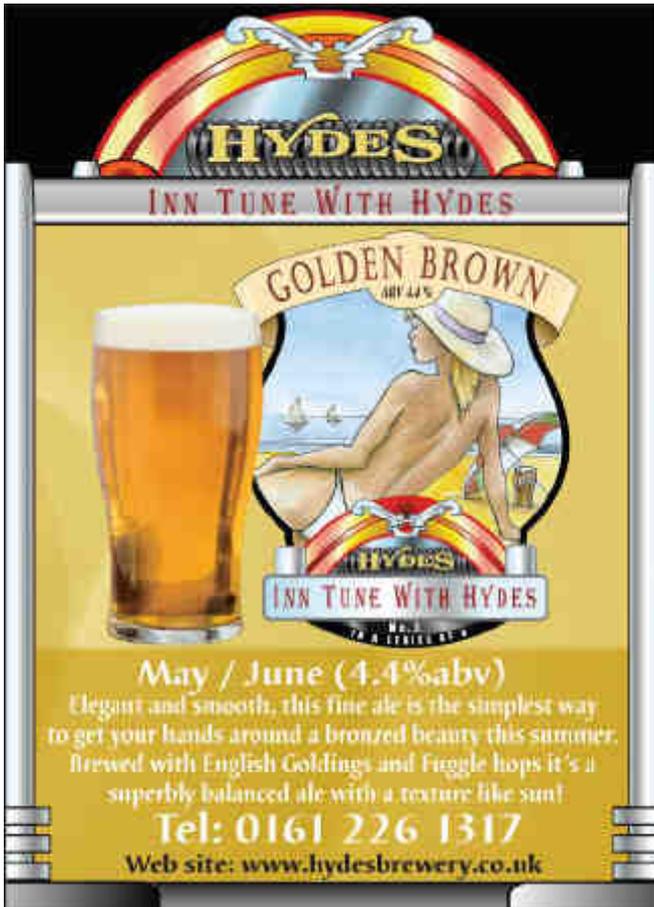


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## Recent CAMRA Awards



Outgoing Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Chairman Mark McConachie (left) presents the March Pub of the Month award to Bev and John Bonyng at the Griffin, Heaton Mersey. Below – not a CAMRA award but a charity presentation at the Cheshire Ring, Hyde, in late February.



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## The Beers – a taster

A summary of some of the brews on offer...

Once again the Festival beer managers are working hard to bring you an exciting range of beers. There will be some old favourites alongside beers new to the Festival, and some brand new, full stop.



The Festival special beer is being produced by the highly regarded Pictish Brewery at Rochdale. Expect something pale and very hoppy – we are ordering enough to make sure that this beer will be available at every session.

There will be up to 12 **Milds** available including, hopefully, new beers from both Marble Brewery and Howard Town Brewery alongside popular beers from last year such as Grainstore Rutland Panther and Arundel Sussex Mild.

**Bitter** lovers will be well served with up to 43 standard bitters (up to 4.2% ABV) and 35 premium brews. Old favourites such as Abbeydale, Durham and Newby Wyke will be back alongside a host of beers new to the Festival.

Among those to look out for are the award winning beers from the Otley Brewery of Pontypridd. We aim to have O1 (4%), CO2 (4.2%), OG (5.4%) and the powerful O8 (8%) – the current Champion Beer of Wales. If it's available,



we also aim to have the very rare Carters Best Bitter from the White Hart Inn at Machen, Caerphilly. This beer divides opinion due to its extreme bitterness – *if we get it, see what you think.*



If all goes according to plan there will also be beers from Stockport's new Hornbeam Brewery, hopefully Hop Hornbeam (3.8%) and the more powerful Golden Wraith Pale Ale (5%). If a third Hornbeam beer becomes available (possibly a mild or a stout) it will be found on the charity stall.

The charity stall will also feature one of the rarest beers in the UK. Marble Brewery has produced a 6% version of its Ginger Marble. All of this beer has been bottled with the exception of just one nine-gallon cask. This will be exclusive to the Festival charity.

Among the other **Special Beers** will be a fruit stout, honey beers, wheat beers and ginger beers. The popular Phoenix Ginger Wheat will be making a return visit along with a Lemon & Ginger beer from Suffolk's St Peters Brewery.

There will be up to 10 **Stouts & Porters** and these will feature popular beers like Thornbridge St Petersburg Imperial Stout, Titanic Stout, Woodlands Midnight Stout and, new for this year, the Scottish Prestonpans Gothenburg Porter.

Fans of the more powerful beers will also be catered for. Old Tom will be back, as usual, along with Fuller's Golden Pride (8.5%), Phoenix Earthquake (7.7%) and the very strong Abbeydale Last Rites at a massive 11%. You have been warned.



### Degrees of Danger

**M**ILLIONS of moderate, responsible drinkers will have been dumbfounded by a recent report by the Academy of Medical Sciences claiming that alcohol was more dangerous than Class A drugs such as cocaine and LSD.

Now it cannot be denied that excessive drinking does cause long-term health problems for many people, and is often a factor in domestic and town-centre violence. But there are two crucial points that this report ignores.

The first is that alcohol is far more widely used in society than any illegal drug, and so it is hardly surprising that the scale of problems is more even if proportionately they are far lower. If the majority of adults were regularly using LSD, there would be hundreds of thousands of frazzled "acid casualties" and a vastly higher incidence of mental illness.

The second point is that the vast majority of people manage to cope with alcohol without it leading to drunken violence or cirrhosis of the liver, and this is the crucial reason why it is legal when many other drugs aren't. It is absurd to suggest that it would be possible for most people to control their intake of heroin or crack cocaine while still maintaining a normal healthy life. Alcohol is also, unlike the vast majority of illegal drugs, actively beneficial to health at modest consumption levels.

This is yet another example of the growing tide of alarmism about the dangers of alcohol which is supporting a quasi-Prohibitionist agenda. Over the coming years it is highly likely that such misleading scare stories will be used to justify ever tighter curbs on the moderate drinkers who cause no problem either to themselves or to others.

### A Vicious Circle

In the early days of the real ale campaign, it was a badge of honour for independent breweries to be able to say they sold real ale in all their tied houses. This was certainly the case for Holts and Hydes, and for a number of years Robinsons had the distinction of having just a solitary keg-only pub. However, in the past few years a growing handful of their pubs have been losing their real ale.

One can maybe understand it in the case of a disco pub or Irish pub where the customers prefer other products, but the argument that some pubs simply lack the turnover doesn't stand up. You only need to sell two nine-gallon casks a week to be able to keep one real ale in good condition, a mere twenty pints a day. If a pub can't achieve that it calls into question whether it is viable at all. And the quality argument isn't that convincing either – if most licensees can manage to look after their beer, the small minority who can't should either be educated or removed.

Surely a major factor is that cask and keg beers are now regarded as completely separate products rather than superior and inferior versions of the same thing. In how many of these pubs was smooth beer put on alongside cask, and the cask ended up in a vicious circle of variable quality pushing some drinkers towards smooth, thus reducing the cask turnover and making the quality even more unreliable?

Curmudgeon Online: [www.curmudgeon.org.uk](http://www.curmudgeon.org.uk)

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**T**he **Dog & Partridge** on High Lane (near Disley) has been renamed the **Lyme Arms** and become a "Vintage Inns" pub, part of InnBev. It is we believe, very food orientated.

The **Astley Arms** (Bottom Astley) has been closed and boarded up for some time now. Former visitors to the Tameside Canal Festival, when the beer tent was run by High Peak Branch, will remember it as the pub just over the canal from the site.

The **Globe** brew pub in Glossop often has up to five Globe beers on the bar, often one-off new brews, alongside the two guest beers. Great news this month upstairs in the concert room is that John Otway and Wild Willy Barrett are playing a rare gig there together on Saturday 26th May. I believe the tickets are already going down very quickly so act quickly if you want to go!

On June 8th to 11th, the **George** in Buxton, a regular Good Beer Guide pub these days, is holding another of its popular beer festivals. High Peak Branch holds its AGM on June 9th at the **Lantern Pike** commencing at 1.00pm. All members are asked to attend this meeting, in which there will be some issues requiring a vote. This is followed by a pub crawl/social around Hayfield village starting at around 3.30pm and continuing into the evening.

Gary Hesketh of the **Old General** in Dukinfield tells me that his brother Wayne is licensee at the **Pride of the Peaks** in New Mills and his sister Tracey, licensee at the **Pineapple**, also in New Mills. Quite a feat for three in a family all having a pub in the same CAMRA Branch area. Is this a record we ask? Interestingly, their father Len "Liquid Len" Hesketh, once ran both the Pineapple and the Masons nearby.

## Station Success

Ashton's **Station Hotel** has been recognised as the best pub in Britain for customer service at this year's Publican Awards – the hospitality industry's equivalent of the Oscars. Pauline Town and her team travelled to London for the black tie award ceremony at the Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane. The pub was also a finalist for the Promotional Pub of the Year award and team member Lisa Shaw was named as one of the top six in the Bar Person of the Year category.

The host for the evening was Dame Edna Everage and when the Station was announced as the winner Pauline and



the team were over the moon at taking the award back to Ashton. The judges said of the Station "This pub has defied expectations for a community pub in a down to earth area, its approach to customer service involves a warm relationship between staff, customers and the community. Concentrating on live music and premium drinks has dispelled troublemakers and created a unique offering. This has created a genuinely warm and welcoming community boozier".

They could also have added the range of cask beers that regularly features here and the Station is Ashton's premier cask ale outlet – as regular readers of *Opening Times* will know. Hearty congratulations.



A snippet in the papers in late March was headed 'Punch calls time on 1,000 pubs.' There was no great detail in the article but a simple explanation that Punch was considering putting 1,000 of its least profitable pubs on the market ahead of the smoking ban. If this happens it could just be a blessing in disguise for some pubs, which with sensitive ownership and good management could become thriving locals. Or is this just a pipe (non-smoking of course) dream. Whatever, another tranche of pubs looks like reaching the Pubs Monopoly Board.

There is a problem with drinking in pubs owned by pub companies. Pub customers are paying for two lots of administration and two lots of company profits. The breweries have their own workforces, administrations and shareholders. They sell their beers to the pub companies who then have an add-on to licensees to pay for their own workforces, administrations and shareholders. Lastly of course the licensee has to make a living. The trouble with the big pub companies is that they seem to be top heavy with accountants, those good at bean counting, but with no great knowledge about or interest in beer or in pubs as part of a community.

Generally the family brewers and vertically integrated companies (brewers still owning pub estates) have lower costs than above. And drinking in their pubs should be cheaper. 'What about Marston's/W & D?' the drinker might ask. But I don't want to get further into corporate greed this month.

### New Find

It is always good to find a real ale secret. A few weeks ago I dined at the **Chapel Bistro** on the main street in Chapel en le Frith. One actually fears the worst on the beer front, with bistros, wine bars, and similar, so it was a more than welcome surprise to find Cains IPA on hand pump. The Chapel Bistro usually has one real ale available, on a rolling guest beer programme, for diners in the know. The beer was fine and at 2 courses for £10 the food was also worth the visit.

The new management at the **Navigation, Buxworth**, continues to source unusual beers, one of the latest being Cornish Buccaneer from the Wooden Hand Brewery in Truro. This was a good balance of malt and hops and was in good form.

At the **Navigation, Whaley Bridge**, Tom Wood's Shepherd's Delight was the only beer on a recent mid week visit. This was also in good form, a typical Tom Wood's beer with malt bitterness, but with the added bonus of hops for flavour.

The **Soldier Dick** at Furness Vale had unusual guests Exmoor Gold and Goff's Joustier, the former being in particularly good form. I have heard good reports about the food at the Soldier Dick. It is not the cheapest meal around, but quality is assured.

A final guest beer of note was Milestone Rich Ruby on sale at the **Dog and Partridge**, Bridgemont. This good brew could have diverted me from collecting my Mild Challenge sticker for Coach House Gunpowder Mild.

Finally news of a new pub, good news in these days of widespread closure and falling pub stock. The **Memorial** has opened in Chapel en le Frith, in the completely refurbished premises of the former Chapel Memorial Club, which had been closed for some time. No news is available on the beer front other than that traditional hand pulled ales are advertised. Hopefully more next month.



### All Change in Chorlton

*Copland Smith details four new licensees*

At the **Beech** (Taylor's Best Bitter, £2.05), it was the end of an era as Joanne passed on the tenancy to Jimmy Renshaw, who used to run Chorlton's United Services club. February 2007 signalled the end of 16 years in which the Beech has been in the hands of Joanne's family. Before her, Ken, and Joanne's mother, the legendary Edna, kept things under control for years and established a reputation for a well-kept, wide selection of cask ales. Currently, they have Taylor's Best (£2.05), Taylor's Landlord, Marston's Pedigree, Deuchar's IPA, and Copper Dragon.



Over the road at the **Trevor**, the arrival of Kevin Moores has seen the return of many regulars. Its pub sign is still the coat of arms I designed, with a bit of help from DeBrett's, and my poem is painted (badly) over the door, (special prize of one pint to anyone who can name the three poets I'm quoting in it.) And it still has "The Famous Trevor Arms", from the era when Greenalls decided lots of their pubs had suddenly achieved renown. Theakston's Cooper's Butt (£2.17) was in excellent form on my last visit. They also have Boddington's (cask), Marston's Pedigree, John Smith's smooth and a rota of guest beers.

I wanted to include the **Lloyd's** (John Willie Lees £N, where N is a large number) which gained a new tenant a few months ago. When I asked if the boss was about. I got a peremptory "What for?" I explained cheerily that I was writing an article to



let OT readers know about new landlords in Chorlton. She stomped off, returning soon to say, "No, he won't speak to you. There's too much acrimony!" I pointed out that that was all I could now put in the OT, but he still wouldn't appear. Anyone know what he has against OT? I've used his pub for gigs many times, and have had no trouble with anyone there before – the "acrimony" was

not caused by me. Until now. I won't be going there again.

At the **Spread Eagle** (Holts Bitter £1.58), Chris Lister and Lisa McCormack have already made their presence felt. More TVs for match days. And a new touch-screen music system. Unfortunately, the regulars are beginning to work out how to use it. But, for boring crossword-solvers like me, Chris has arranged for a speaker-less area, where we can even have conversations. There are many pubs that would benefit from this approach. There's a sports area, a music/video area and a quieter zone, for conversation. They are both friendly, helpful, interested in the customers views, and a bad batch of bitter was sent straight back to the brewery. Good signs here. He can't help being from Halifax.

Chorlton has lost the Seymour and the Oaks to the developers, but there are still nine traditional pubs (Beech, Bowling Green, Feathers, Horse and Jockey, Lloyd's, Royal Oak, Southern, Spread Eagle and Trevor) and at least three bars with cask ales (the Bar, Abode and the Marble), – well worth a visit.



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### Gatley News

Finding myself in Gatley, I popped into the **Gothic** to sample some Cains beers. As well as the usual Mild, Bitter and FA, landlady Carol told me that their new Creamy Stout had been finding much favour with her customers. Look out for it, as it's on the bar-back. Lunchtime food is going well too, seven days a week, especially the Friday curries. Offers are available in the form of two meals for £6, and Sunday lunch is £5.50 for two courses. The pub is planning a charity event on Saturday, May 26th in aid of Francis House.



News at the **Horse & Farrier** is that licensees Mark and Sharon left the pub on April 27th. They've taken on a foody-pub in Newton Abbot, Devon. The new people worked at former Hydes pub, the **Old Hall**, Altrincham. The pub is likely to go non-smoking prior to the ban, this will follow some re-decoration and thus preserve the freshness of the new look. I don't often get to the **High Grove** (also Hydes) as it is quite a hike from Gatley centre, but my walk was rewarded with a decent pint of Owd Oak. The pub also sells bitter and a genuine seasonal, Allgates' Bottoms Up (a local Wigan micro). Other beers will feature soon. As I was close by, I verified that the **Cheadle Royal** pub still does not sell real ale.

### Changes in Marple and Cheadle

Meanwhile in Marple Bridge, the **Northumberland** is selling OB alongside Hatters and Unicorn, whilst across the road, the **Spring Gardens** is now sub-titled as **Springers**, it's been spruced-up and is doing cask ale in the form of Deuchars IPA and such.



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New tenants are due to take over the **Lane Ends** on Glossop Road sometime in July following a re-furb. Whilst across the way, Dave Dutton of the **Travellers Call** is doing Robbies seasonal ales alongside Hatters and Unicorn in this keen rugby-following pub. For the last two years, Christine, Dave's partner has run the **Friendship** in Romiley (also Robinson's). Hatters and Unicorn are the beers, and good to know that the bowling green at the rear has just been renovated to a high standard after several years of lying fallow.

Fancy a change from Unicorn and Hatters? Try some Wards then, as it is on sale in the **Dog & Partridge** (Robbies) in Great Moor. Don't bother trying to get into **Brannigan's** at Grand Central though, it closed its doors for good at the end of March. It, together with the nightclub and several other properties are all to be re-developed soon.

Over in Cheadle, Karen and Alan Williams of the **Crown** (Hydes) are going to run a ten-beer Beer Festival in the lounge of the pub during May 15 to 17. The beers will be properly set-up on custom stillages with integral cooling. The Festival has no particular theme, but a promotion of



some kind may be offered, so do look out for this. As far as their standard beer range goes, this is Hydes Mild, Bitter and seasonal, augmented by a guest beer - the 4.2% Allgates Bottoms Up when I called. The guest is a recent addition, but has left other beer sales unaffected; overall sales are up in fact. Karen and Alan used to run the **Bromale** in Bramhall, but when the pub company there went bust, they lost their jobs. They have been in situ at the Crown for two years now, overseeing a doubling of sales of bitter, and improvements on sales of the other beers. This polished operation is rounded off with a lunchtime offering of dishes of a traditional nature at very reasonable prices. Well worth a look-see.

### Town Centre News

Moving back to Stockport centre there are one or two changes to report.

The **George** in Mersey Square remains boarded up – this is not however a closure but I am told that the pub is in fact undergoing a major refurbishment. The classic 1930s interior was wrecked years ago (courtesy of the Boddington Pub Company – remember them?) but it would be good to think that whatever emerges will have a more traditional aspect than its predecessor and, more to the point, reinstates some decent cask beer.

On St Petergate, the former Imperial, latterly the Blarney Stone, has re-opened as the **St Peters Tavern**. The pub has undergone a thorough makeover and is now smart and modern while retaining a traditional feel. There's a quite major food operation but live entertainment and karaoke also feature. Real ale is available, although the two handpumps are tucked away at the end of the bar. The beers are Black Sheep Bitter and Greene King Abbot – I tried the Back Sheep and found it perfectly acceptable.

The nearby **Stockport Arms** also has Black Sheep Bitter as its sole cask ale. I have also spotted Adnams on sale in the **Egerton Arms**, a welcome addition to the cask ale range here.

### Changes and Gains

First I'm pleased to say that cask ale is back in the **Kings Head** on Tiviot Dale. When I put my head around the door just Taylor's Landlord was on handpump but I hear that more beers are available at weekends.

It also looks as though the **Three Crowns** in Heaton Chapel is set to reopen as a live music pub called the **Venue**. Hopefully this will see cask ale but I'm not too optimistic (but would gladly be proved wrong).

Big news of course is the change at the **Railway**, Portwood. Martin Wood left on Saturday 17 March, moving to take a pub on the Isle of Man. He goes with my best wishes as he ran the Railway impeccably. I gather Martin left as he wanted some certainty for the future which, given what we know about the pub's likely fate, the Railway was perhaps unable to offer.

Martin's replacement is the very capable Sue Hitchen who has a wealth of experience and notably ran another Porter's pub, the Arthur Inn in Bury. Beer quality has been bang on since the changeover and it now seems that the pub may be with us a little longer than we thought likely –



the deal for ASDA to take the site has now fallen through so once again everything is up in the air.

I also managed to pay my long-planned visit to the **Three Shires** on Great Underbank. Unfortunately licensee Simon Parry wasn't there but the impressive range of cask beers was. There are now four handpumps – one is dedicated to Copper Dragon beers (usually IPA and Black Gold alternate) and the other three feature changing guests. On my visit these included beers from Archers, Facer's and Moorhouses, and the Facer's Sunny Bitter was on top form. Well worth a visit – particularly as the food also comes highly recommended.

Finally, while I have heard reports that Holt's may be having second thoughts about their involvement with the **Grey Horse** in Reddish, I am assured that they remain committed to the project.

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## Out & About with Heather Airlie

ONE of the advantages of living in Manchester is the opportunity for a day out, even in inclement weather. With this in mind I proposed a train trip up to Greenfield.

A twenty minute ride from Victoria gives access to a variety of possibilities. If the weather and fitness allows, one can opt for a rigorous walk in the hills. A less taxing option is to walk along the canal towards Mossley and Stalybridge, with the added incentive of a number of quality drinking establishments on the way. The less active can do the same route by train, but with fewer pubs, also allowing a cop out if the weather turns.

We chose to dive straight into the **Railway Inn** at Greenfield as a taste of things to come. To be honest we could easily have stayed, as we were faced with a choice of Caledonian Deuchars, Millstone True Grit, Taylor's Landlord and Charles Wells' Bombardier. We started with Deuchars, which was on good form, but tore ourselves away with the thought of so much ahead (and just as well).

Before leaving Greenfield we felt we ought to try the **King William IV**, but wished we hadn't. A 5-10 minute walk from the Railway but worlds apart in quality. Although they offered a choice of Deuchars, Eden Vale, Boddies and Highgate Dark Mild I'm afraid they were just not right. Although not quite bad enough to send back the dark mild was such a disappointment, especially as I have served it at beer festivals in the past when it was at its best and know how good it can be.

So we abandoned the King Will and set off down the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, only to be distracted by the

### Tollemache

**Arms** at Roaches Bridge, a Robbie's pub serving a very nice pint of Unicorn. It had a friendly feel about it with the locals circled around the bar but not blocking access. For better



weather there was even a beer garden overlooking the canal.

A short walk away was a new-looking "family-style" pub which, although empty did merit a half before hitting Mossley and the **Britannia**. This is definitely a favourite, as the first pump I saw advertised Jennings's Crag Rat. Even though it had only just come on it was in excellent condition and was admirably complemented by the roast dinner, a bargain at just under a fiver.

With some reluctance we tore ourselves away to continue the walk to Stalybridge and the always popular Buffet Bar.

The walk took us past a newly re-built section of canal near Scout Tunnel. This area is renowned for leakage and major works were needed to stabilise the embankment. The re-build is quite a change from the original but should soon blend in once the reed fringe has re-established itself.

But what about the Buffet Bar, I hear you cry? The selection was as unusual and varied as usual, however we did have reservations about the quality – my pints, Archers Autumn Leaves and Millstone True Grit, were enjoyable, but my companion rather wished he'd stuck at the first pint, as the new barrel was not really ready. Unfortunately the train was delayed so we had a renewed thirst by the time we got back to Manchester, so we visited the City Arms and a fine end to a "grand day out".



## Going Foreign – Real Ale in Singapore

A tour of the Far East gave an opportunity for a couple of CHAPS to make a short stopover in Singapore and sample the delights of one of the city's two brewpubs. Brewerkz ([www.brewerkz.com](http://www.brewerkz.com)) is situated on the Singapore River at Riverside Point off Merchant Road and is a must visit for beer lovers if you are in the city. The CHAPS were joined by CAMRA members from Merseyside, Huntingdon, Twickenham and South East Essex.

Brewerkz was founded in 1997 by an American and a Chilean resident in Singapore who were fed up with the boring "industrial" lagers available at the time. It has now grown into a major city watering hole with the 18 hectolitre brewery turning out around half a million pints a year. But even on this scale, the beer is brewed with skill by Canadian brewer Scott Robinson and their bottle conditioned XIPA won a gold medal in its class at the 2004 Brewers World Cup.



*The Brewerkz brewing kit on display*

The pub has a large and roomy indoor area which seats 240 in air conditioned comfort whilst there are another 160 seats outside by the river if you can stand the heat and humidity. Inside there is a games room for pool and darts - sport seems to play a major part in the life of the pub with teams representing rugby, ice hockey, soccer, cycling, softball, basketball and tennis. If all this sounds too energetic you could always join the pub's frisbee team!

On the afternoon of our visit, only nine of the pub's 12 current brews were available. Like many US micros, sample trays can be bought which gave us the opportunity to try them all, including the excellent cask conditioned "Hopback Ale" (4.5%), served via a handpump. This is dry hopped using Challenger hops and had a creamy floral nose, a well balanced bitter aftertaste and a dry finish. This was part of the "Brew Masters Reserve" series which also featured the only disappointing beer of the day, a cherry brew called "Fruitbrewz" which had little cherry taste and did not stand comparison with other cherry brews of my acquaintance, for example Hanby Cherry Bomb.

Also in this series were an Oatmeal Stout (6.2%), a very silky stout with an intense roasty aftertaste and Xtra IPA (7.2%), which was more malty than the India Pale Ale (6.0%) from the Draft Selection. The latter was marginally the best

beer of the day, with an excellent malt and hop character giving a splendid flavour which lingered for sometime.

The "Draft Selection" also featured Golden Ale (4.5%) with a lovely floral character and very refreshing if you had been out in the heat and good examples of Kolsch and Pilsner (both 5.0%). Hop Harvest Ale (4.8%) is made with freshly picked Goldings and had a good balance of malt and hops. Not available were a dark wheat beer, "Dunkel Ryzen" (5.5%), the Oktoberfest seasonal ("well balanced smooth and malty with a bit of sweetness" - 6.0%) and the Bock Lager weighing in at a hefty 6.8%. 28 different beers have been brewed in the last 6 years so the range is always being refreshed.



*Tasting the beers – CHAPS table is front left*

One very unusual element of the Brewerkz offering is the pricing policy for both beer and food. In off peak periods, both beer and food are heavily discounted and it was fortunate that we arrived there in mid afternoon as we were able to take advantage. Food is discounted by 20% until 4pm and we ordered at 3.55 after a gentle reminder from the staff that prices were about to rise. I wonder how often that would happen in the UK? The food came quickly and was excellent value, Paul having a really good steak whilst I had an excellent bowl of Jumbalaya - not the best for tasting beer later but several gallons of cold water eventually restored the taste buds.

The beer prices rise from S\$4.49/pint (£1.60) in the weekday 12-3pm slot via intermediate periods to S\$12.49/pint (£4.25) between 8pm and closing time. Perhaps someone might like to think about whether this sort of thing has some potential for curbing late night binge drinking in UK towns and cities (although I can't see one bar doing this on its own as people will just vote with their feet and go to the next vertical drinking establishment round the corner).

Using public transport from Stockport, you need to catch the X69 or 369 to the airport and then Singapore Airlines' daily non-stop flight at 10.00. The flight takes around 13 hours but the time flies by with their wonderful interactive entertainment system with around 70 on demand films and the same number of music CDs. In addition they have a wonderful Singapore-brewed stout (ABC Stout) on board with lots of roasty nutty taste despite coming from a can. This is not often on the trolley but the excellent staff will get some from the galley on request. The flight arrives in Singapore at 0600 the next morning so you have time to get to your hotel, have a little snooze and then freshen up before going out to Brewerkz to take advantage of those lowest prices. Enjoy.



# Macclesfield PUB NEWS

For over 100 years the same farming family have been serving hand-pulled beer at the **Harrington Arms**, Gawsworth, and now the 'gem' at the heart of the Cheshire pub scene has passed into the safe hands of a new licensee, Caroline Wightman.

The Robinson's house is probably best known for having been part of a working farm and for its own brand of rustic charm. Reassuringly for customers though, Caroline is enthusiastic about retaining and building on the best aspects of the rural pub, while the previous tenants, the Bailey-Wright family, will continue to run the farm as a separate enterprise. The move to take on the Harrington Arms was not entered into lightly as Caroline and her husband Andy conducted an in-depth feasibility study to assess the pub's true potential before making their move. "We didn't just want to take on any pub, we wanted somewhere special, but we needed to know that it was a viable business before we took on the tenancy," she said.



This is Caroline's first move into the licensed trade, but Andy has a background in marketing for the drinks industry, and used his skills to conduct a questionnaire and identify exactly what his potential customers were looking for in a traditional country pub.

"The overriding outcome was that while customers looked for open fires, friendly service, good food and good beer, they also wanted quality. The Harrington Arms already met many of the criteria so we are now building on its best aspects and adding to its appeal," he explained.

Not wanting to lose the charm the historic pub the couple are now sympathetically moving to meet their customers' high expectations by decorating with 'heritage' colours and

they are also opening a designated no smoking room ahead of the national ban to be introduced this summer. Further ahead, the couple will also introduce a food service based around home-cooked dishes from local produce.

"We have tried out some of our culinary ideas by serving Victorian dishes like 'pulled rabbit' to the folk club that meets here each Friday night and the food has been very well received. Our plan will be to build on this style of cookery with casseroles and soups and serve them in a comfortable and inviting environment," added Caroline.

## Woodman, Hurdsfield Road

Robert Locket has sparked off a new career in Macclesfield having taken over as licensee of The Woodman on Hurdsfield Road.

For Robert, from Warwick Walk, the change from working as a self employed electrician to entering the licensed trade for the first time has been a big step. But, having completed an intensive five day licensee training course he is confident that he is equal to the challenge.

"The course, at Robinson's Unicorn Brewery in Stockport, was the ideal introduction to the trade before I came into The Woodman, said Robert. Of course I have run my own business before but this is a completely different industry in which there is a lot to learn in order to run a successful operation.



As part of his strategy to provide a welcoming pub for the community, Robert is also keen to build on the sporting success that has seen The Woodman hold the top position in the Macclesfield 501 Darts League for the past four seasons. As a regular player himself he is now looking for players for a ladies team as well as members to represent the pub in pool and dominoes leagues.

## Beer Masters 2007

CAMRA Greater Manchester Region sponsored a barrel of beer (Marble Best) at CAMRA Oldham Beer Festival as part of Beer Masters - a real ale tasting contest. Entrants had to match their beer tasting skills to a expert panel of Paul Jefferies from Hydes, Richard Bazens from Bazens' in Salford with CAMRA Chair, Matthew Parr, Beer Orderer at the festival. The eventual winner was Alison Whitaker from Bolton branch, who carried off the CAMRA plaque, beer prizes, plus a free brewery tour of Hydes for up to 20 people, as well as the title of 1st. Beer Master 2007.



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## Robbies Bar & Cellar Awards

The **Coach & Horses** at Timbersbrook, near Congleton, has secured the top spot in a comprehensive search of the north west and north Wales for the Robinson's pub with the Best Kept Bar and Cellar. Licensees David and Lynn Cropper were elated when their pub was singled out in the strongly contested annual competition, which is now in its ninth year.



The significant achievement by the Coach & Horses was honoured in an award ceremony at the pub. Customers packed the premises to see David and Lynn acknowledged for earning an almost perfect score of 298 points out of a potential 300.

"We have been at the pub for just over four years and done well in the competition before, but never quite made it into the final. This year we purposefully aimed to win and are delighted to have come out on top, and we will be aiming to repeat our performance next year," said the couple.

To win the coveted top spot in the competition that takes in over 350 of Robinson's houses throughout the North West and north Wales, every aspect of the bar, cellar and beer quality at the Timbersbrook pub was put under close scrutiny. In the final round of the contest there was just one point separating the top three pubs, but with the Coach & Horses putting in a perfect performance for both its cellar and bar, the pub's close knit and dedicated team pipped the opposition to the post.

"We certainly couldn't have won without the support of all our staff who put in the same level of hard work all year round. Securing the winning position is well deserved recognition of everything that they have achieved," said David.

In recognition of the significant achievement at Timbersbrook, director Oliver Robinson of Frederic Robinson Limited presented David and Lynn with the

Unicorn Shield which has been specially inscribed to mark the occasion. Their prize also included a barrel of Robinson's Unicorn Bitter and there were also presentations from the competition's sponsors Chemisphere and Coors Brewers.



David & Lynn Cropper in the spotless cellar at the Coach & Horses, Timbersbrook.

The two runners-up were also pubs in the *Opening Times* area and have both been in the honours several times in the past.

In second place was Robert Frost at the **Broad oak** in Ashton, a pub that is consistently well-placed in this competition. Third-placed were Peter and Gail Brady at the **Admiral Rodney** in Prestbury – previous overall winners.

The winner of the Most Improved award went to Lorraine Chandler at the **Bulls Head** in Castleton.

This excellent competition has certainly helped improved the overall quality of Robinson's beers across their estate over the past few years. Unsurprisingly then, Robinson's have been able to report that, despite an overall decline in cask national figures, their overall cask ale volume have held up well over the last year.

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## Stockport's Permanent Beer Festival



# Brewery NEWS...

Again we open with news of a local micro brewer picking up a major award, this time the honours go to **Millstone Brewery** at Mossley.

Millstone produces Love Saves the Day Beer (for the Deansgate deli of the same name) which has been voted the Best Alcoholic Beer by the NW Fine Food Awards 2007. To the delight of Nick and Jon (of The Millstone brewery) and Derek (of Love Saves the Day), not only was the vote of the judges unanimous, but at the star studied gala dinner held at The Lowry Hotel on March 22, the beer received the accolade of Best Beverage as well.

The Millstone Brewery fought off tough competition as it went head to head with some of the North West's finest food and drink producers. The categories covered a wide range, including a variety of delicacies from cheeses and chutneys to beer and bangers.

This year saw a record number of entries, with more than 500 submissions, judged by a panel of famous foodie faces including North West top chefs Nigel Howarth and Paul Askew; national & regional food critics; supermarket representatives and regional tourist groups.

*Love Saves the Day Beer* (4.0% ABV) is derived from Tiger Rut, a variant of True Grit, and is brewed using Golden Promise malt and Chinook hops. The result is a refreshing, clean beer with a long, lingering, fruity flavour. Our picture show Derek of Loves Saves The Day (centre) with Jon and Nick from Millstone Brewery.



## Family Favourites

As usual our local family brewers have a range of seasonal beers in the pipeline. Here are some to watch out for:

**Hydes** – the craft ale for May and June is Golden Brown (4.4% ABV), described as “elegant and smooth” it is brewed with English Goldings and Fuggles hops and is a “superbly balanced ale with a texture like sun”.

**Holts** – the seasonal beer for May is Maple Moon (4.8% ABV), a beer brewed using amber malts, Cascade hops and “a teasing glimmer of maple syrup”.

**Robinson's** – there is no seasonal for May but June sees the appearance of Dizzy Blonde, a 3.8% ABV summer ale brewed using Cascade and Amarillo hops, so expect lots of zesty citrus notes.

**Cains** – new for May is Triple Hop (4.5% ABV), an aromatic ale brewed using three hop varieties. Look out for this in Gothic, Gatley, our local Cains tied house.

## Micro Magic

As usual the local micro brewers are coming up trumps with lots of tasty beers. First though, news of a departure from the local scene. We reported some time ago that the **Thomas McGuinness Brewery** in Rochdale was out of action following a fire. Brewing has now ceased permanently and the brewery plant sold on.

**Bazens'** – the May and June beers of the “Salford series” are Winning Post and Salford's Hero respectively. Both brewed at 4.3% ABV, Winning Post marks the first race meeting at the Castle Irwell Racecourse in May 1847 while Salford's Hero celebrates Mark Addy who rescued over 50 people from the River Irwell.

Bazens' have also produced a new stronger mild. Wild Boar (4.1% ABV) is an excellent full-bodied beer with bags of taste. Also in the planning stage is a coffee mild, that promises to be very interesting indeed.



**Marble** – look out for the new Marble Mild, a new strong mild for May. Congratulations are due to Head Brewer James Campbell who married fiancé Shirley Berry on Saturday 7 April. The assembled throng was treated to a cask of GSB and also special bottlings of Stronge Tawny and the new 6% ABV Ginger Marble. There should be a new Brewers Challenge later in the year, beer style to be determined.

**Paradise** – John Wood brews his Paradise Brewery beers at Three Rivers on Mondays. A regular outlet is his bar in the Arndale Centre. A new beer to look out for is 6880 Ale, brewed for the first Llangollen Beer Festival. Available in both cask and bottle, this 4% ABV beer is a brown and highly hopped bitter ale.

Also available at the Arndale Bar is Moelfre Mild (3.6% ABV) from John's new North Wales Brewery using the old Paradise Brewery kit. This however is likely to be the only North Wales brew for a while as John has hit a couple of problems regarding waste disposal and building regulations at the North Wales site in Abergele.

**Three Rivers** – Delta Dark Mild (4.8% ABV) is available during May and is a tasty, full-bodied beer. The brewery are currently experimenting with dry hopping some of the beers, so expect some particularly aromatic brews in the coming weeks.

**Phoenix** – new for May are the pale and hoppy Mayfly (4.4% ABV) and the excellent Dark Shadow mild (4% ABV). Late May could also see an early appearance of the 4.3% White Tornado, a very popular member of the Phoenix range – “jolly refreshing” says Phoenix's Tony Allen.

**Pictish** – in common with several local micros, the special for May is a mild. Black Diamond (3.5% ABV) described as “a full bodied, rich, dark Mild. Roast barley flavours dominate the palate and lead to a subtle well balanced finish”.

**Howard Town** – Glossop's award-winning micro is another brewery with a new mild available. Melandra Mild (ABV not known as we went to press) should be dark and luscious. The last special, Liberator (4.6% ABV) was pale and hoppy brewed using Northdown and Challenger hops. Look out for the smart new Howard Town pump clips

**Shaws** – Dukinfield's local brewery is producing Hersbrucker, a 4.2% ABV light and hoppy beer made using Belgian hops. A recent special was Auld Roger, another light and hoppy beer at 4.3% ABV.

**Boggart Hole Clough** – May will see Dark Mild (4%) and also look out for Light Side, a pale and hoppy beer at 4.1% ABV.





Here is our monthly round-up of what's happening in the local CAMRA branches. Members of all branches are of course very welcome to attend each others' events.

The **Stockport & South Manchester** branch covers Stockport Borough apart from Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley and Marple, plus that part of Manchester from the River Medlock in the north to the M56/Princess Parkway in the south. *Branch Contact – Pete Farrand 07786 283990*

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>** – Branch Meeting: Paramount, Oxford St, Manchester. Starts 8.00pm

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>** – Informal Social at Macc Beer Festival. From noon.

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>** – Stockport Town Centre beer festival poster distribution. Meet Crown, Heaton Lane 7.30pm

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>** – Joint Social with Trafford & Hulme Branch. Meet Trevor Arms, Beech Road, Chorlton 8.00pm

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup>** – Stockport Market Place Stagger: 7.30pm Calverts Court, St Petersgate; 8.30 Bakers Vaults, Market Place.

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Pub of the Month presentation to Friendship, Wilmslow Rd, Fallowfield. From 8.00pm.

The **High Peak & North East Cheshire** branch covers Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley, Marple, Tameside and Derbyshire from Glossop to Buxton. *Branch Contact – Tom Lord 0161 427 7099*

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup>** – Branch Meeting: Sportsman Inn, Strines Rd, Strines. Starts 8.30pm.

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup>** – Buxton Social: meet in George 2.00pm

The **Trafford & Hulme** Branch covers the Borough of Trafford,

Manchester West of the M56/Princess Parkway and a large part of the City Centre. *Branch Contact – John Ison 0161 962 7976*

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May** – Branch Meeting: Lloyds, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton. Starts 8.00pm

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>** – Joint social in Chorlton with Stockport & Sth Manchester: Meet Trevor 8.00pm; Beech 8.30pm, Lloyds 9.15pm

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June** – Branch Meeting: Britons Protection, Gt Bridgewater Street, City Centre. Starts 8.00pm.

Apart from Macclesfield & Bollington, the **Macclesfield & East Cheshire** Branch covers a wide area from Knutsford to Congleton. *Branch Contact – Tony Icke 01625861833*

**Friday 11<sup>th</sup>/Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>** – Macclesfield Beer Festival

**Monday 21<sup>st</sup>** – Campaigning Mtg: Bulls Head, Handforth. 8.00pm

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June** – All Cheshire evening social with tasting and special "Out Inn Cheshire" presentation. Holly Tree Farm, Tabley.

The **North Manchester** Branch covers The Northern Quarter and North East Manchester plus the City of Salford. *Branch Contact – Dave Hallows 07983 944992*

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup>** – Princess St Crawl: Vine 7.30; City Arms 8.00; Old Monkey 9.00, Circus 9.30; Grey Horse 10.00

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>** – National Mild Day Crawl: meet Marble Arch 12 noon.

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup>** – Branch Meeting: New Oxford, Bexley Sq, 8.00pm

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Social: Star, Back Hope St, Salford. 8.00pm

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>** Hope Valley Crawl: Catch 11.37 Piccadilly train to Buxton. Alight at New Mills Newtown. Meet in Beehive

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup>** – 10 Year Good Beer Guide presentation to the Marble Arch. From 8.00pm

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