

● December 2012


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Times

Opening

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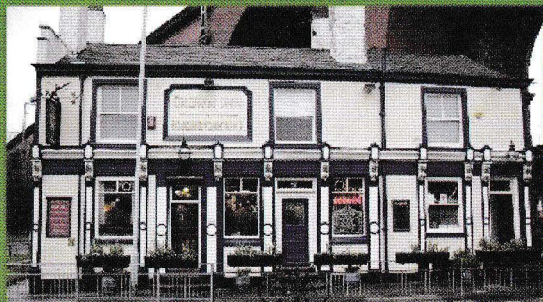
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see pages 25 & 27**

**Win prizes on the Winter Warmer Wander -
see page 15**

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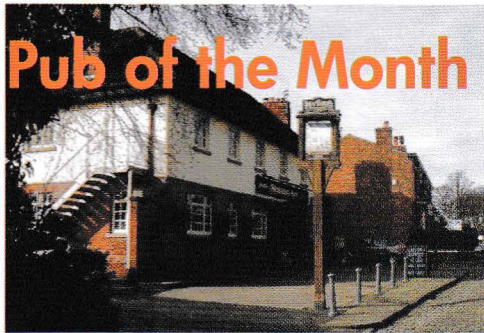
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Pub of the Month

The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for December 2012 has been awarded to the Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris.

What can be said about this 1930s gem of a multi roomed pub that hasn't already been said before in these pages? Much has been written about the classic unspoilt structure and decor of the pub, the superb light oak panelling, the delightful windows decorated with horticultural images and the well manicured bowling green to the rear.

However any pub is more than just its decor and history. Its excellence is measured by the quality of its beer and the warmth of the welcome. On all these points the Nursery has scored extremely highly for many a decade. Despite being tucked away, it draws customers from miles around encouraged by the friendliness of the staff, and the quality of the Hydes beers and the guest ales. This has resulted in the longest record of continuous entries in the Good Beer Guide for the area with the pub achieving a remarkable 30 years in the guide with the publishing of the 2013 edition.

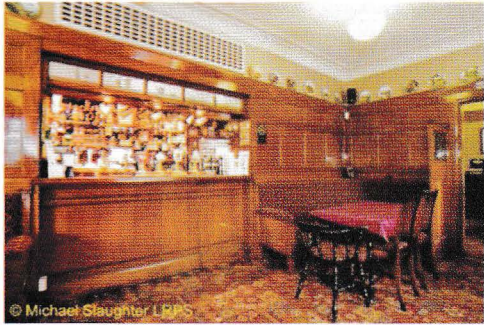
This incredible record is down to one family. Simon Wetton manages the pub and his sister Louise organises the lunchtime food. Simon took over the pub from his step father George whose tenure saw the pub being crowned CAMRA's National Pub of the Year in 2001. However Simon hasn't sat on his laurels and lived on past glories; he has promoted highly successful beer festivals, live music at weekends and regular quizzes while maintaining the excellence of the beer and the food.

The December Pub of the Month is always a lively and popular affair lodged as it is between Christmas and New Year. So why not join the local CAMRA branch to celebrate not only the Pub of the Month Award but also an award to mark their 30 years in the Good Beer Guide? Both will be presented to Simon and his staff on Thursday, 27th December .

The pub is less than 10 minutes from the main 192 bus route (walk down Bowerfold Lane or Heaton Lane), 10 minutes from the 84 and 197 routes in Heaton Moor and the 22 stops within a 5 minutes walk of the door. Don't miss it! **JF**

The Pub of the Month award is sponsored by Stephenson's, a local family firm that has been supplying the local pub and catering trade for over 140 years. Check out their advert on this page. Two bottom photos of this article courtesy Mick Slaughter.

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Comment & What's On

Index, Notes and Local CAMRA Branch Events

Festive Cheer

While Christmas looms large, the Greater Manchester CAMRA branches are all looking ahead to January and one of the main events of the local CAMRA year. The National Winter Ales Festival is back at the Sheridan Suite – look out for details in both this and next month's *Opening Times*. It is the last time the event will be held in Manchester as it's off to Derby in February 2014. The good news is that a replacement festival will be held in Manchester at around the same time as it is now but in a new, and iconic, venue. More on this in later issues.

Readers can get into the festive spirit by entering our Winter Warmer Wander. We have 40 pubs taking part and a great range of prizes so do give it a go.

Finally, can I just send the warmest of seasonal greetings to everyone involved with *Opening Times* – our contributors, distributors, production and distribution team, advertisers and most of all to you, our readers. Have a great Christmas – and we'll see you again in January.

Opening Times - 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. 7,350 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth. All articles copyright CAMRA unless otherwise stated.

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Trading Standards – for complaints about short measure pints etc contact Consumer Direct (North West). Consumer Direct works with all the Trading Standards services in the North West and is supported by the Office of Fair Trading. You can email Consumer Direct using a secure email system on their website (www.consumerdirect.gov.uk) which also provides advice, fact sheets and model letters on a range of consumer rights. Their telephone no. is 0845 404 05 06

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Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

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Your Local CAMRA Branches

Stockport & South Manchester (SSM) www.ssmcamra.org.uk
Contact: Mark McConachie 0161 429 9356; mark.mcconachie@o2.co.uk

North Manchester (NM) www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk
Contact: Phil Booton 0161 957 7148 (daytimes); phbooton@hotmail.com

High Peak & NE Cheshire (HPNC) www.hpneccamra.org.uk
Contact: Geoff Williamson 01663 765634; disleygeoff@gmail.com

Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC) www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk
Contact: Tony Icke 01625861833; bicke@madasafish.com

Trafford & Hulme (T&H) www.thcamra.org.uk
Contact: enquiries@thcamra.org.uk

Your Local CAMRA Events

Friday 7th – Branch trip to Offbeat Brewery: a social at the brewery's open evening Firsty Friday. (T&H)

Saturday 8th – Christmas Social: Magnet, Wellington Rd North, Stockport (upstairs room). From 4pm – buffet at 6pm. (HPNC)

Thursday 13th – Branch meeting and Christmas Quiz: Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

Thursday 13th – Branch Christmas meal at the Sutton Hall. (MEC)

Monday 17th – Macclesfield Crawl: Starts 6.30pm at the Park Tavern. (MEC)

Wednesday 19th – Branch Meeting: Salford Arms, Bloom St/Chapel St, Salford. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Friday 21st – The famous annual Hillgate Stagger: start 7pm Queens Head, Little Underbank; 8.30 Waterloo, Waterloo Rd. Finish at the Blossoms. (SSM)

Thursday 27th – Pub of the Month and 30 years in the Good Beer Guide awards: Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris. From 8pm. (SSM)

Thursday 27th – Post Christmas Social: Waters Green Tavern. From 8pm. (MEC)

Friday 28th – Post Christmas Social: the Knott, Deansgate, Manchester. From 6pm. (T&H)

Friday 28th – Social/crawl in Manchester City Centre. Starts 12 noon at Marble Arch, Rochdale Road. (HPNC)

Wednesday 2nd January - Presentation of Neil Richardson Award to Union Tavern, Liverpool Sreet, Salford. From 8:00pm (NM).

Thursday 3rd January – Branch Meeting: Ape & Apple, John Dalton St, Manchester (upstairs dining room). Starts 8.15pm (T&H)

Sunday 6th – Bring your own ale curry night in Altrincham. Contact social@thcamra.org.uk to register (T&H)

Thursday 10th – Branch Meeting including Pub of the Year vote: Armoury, Shaw Heath, Stockport. Starts 8.15pm (SSM).

Monday 14th – Branch Meeting: Stalybridge Labour Club, Acres Lane. Initial Good Beer Guide selection meeting so a good turn out needed please. Starts 8.30pm. (HPNC).

Where space permits, non members are welcome at most of our social events. Get in touch with the listed contact to see if that's possible.

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Session 2 Sunday 16th December

11.00am to 4.00pm
Family day with children's entertainers
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Session 3 Sunday 16th December

6.00pm to 11.00pm
'Jest for Laughs' Court Jesters
Fancy dress competition - more prizes
to be won!

Winter
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Stagger

West Didsbury with Mark McConachie

We began our West Didsbury Stagger at the **Woodstock Arms** (pictured below) an Ember Inns pub on Barlow Moor Road. Formerly the home of the British Council, it was converted to pub use some years ago and is now a much cherished facility in an area with few pubs. A Victorian house with many original features preserved and well-tended gardens too. The luxuriously panelled upper floor is similar in area to the ground floor and is reached by a traditional hardwood staircase, wide enough to have a table and settee on the half landing. Tonight it was busy with drinkers and those dining too, with plenty of people enjoying the gardens. Service was attentive too, with the beer range being - Black Sheep Bitter; Sharps Doombar; Thwaites Wainwright; Ilkley Mary Jane; and Adnams Explorer. All beers were tried, yet we thought them to be of average quality.

Due to it being very busy with diners and drinkers, we took up a table outside where we ordered the Brightside Best Bitter, and Little Valley Dutch Courage beers from a most pleasant and smartly attired waitress. You'd expect to pay through the nose here, but at £3.20 a pint it is cheaper than others in this locale. The beers were all well received, and comfortably above average in score.



Across the road is **Albert's Restaurant & Bar**. This began life as a Tetley pub, the Barleycorn which re-opened April 2010 as Alberts. About 80 per cent of the space inside is given over to restaurant tables. The other fifth, down the right side, is a bar with some comfy modern seating and some space to stand. There are two beers on, but advertised via a single chrome handpump at the far end of the bar. I am presuming that the beers are served from some hidden dispense as there is nothing really visible. Outside at the front, are two distinct terrace areas: the first (inner) one covered with restaurant tables and with a sign saying diners only (although they let people sit

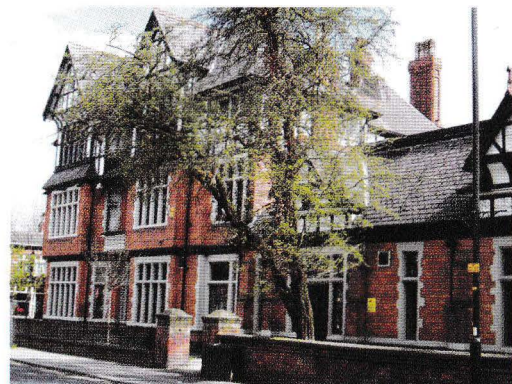


there if the tables are not needed); the other one (nearer the road) is uncovered with standard outdoor tables for drinkers - in fact there's probably more space for drinking outside than there is in.

The next pub was a good walk away on Palatine Road, the **Four in Hand**. Another Victorian mansion conversion that occurred some years ago. Allegedly built as consulting rooms or a small hospital by a doctor, for his two daughters who failed to qualify; it was sold to Wolverhampton brewer Banks's and eventually became a large, multi-roomed public house, now under the Marstons name. It has a warm and comfortable 'L' shaped bar, with a lower level food area at the rear. This grand house is set in extensive grounds and does well from the food. Quite a plush affair with many folk taking advantage of the gardens when the weather is good. Normally does Marstons Burton Bitter, seasonal beers; and guest beers, but tonight there was none to be had as it was closing the day after for a full refurbishment. We await the results with interest.

Next was the middle part of Burton Road, to visit café bar, **Mary & Archie**. Opened in 2008 as the Silver Apples, then changed name in June 2011 to Mary & Archie (these are the names of the owner's parents). The interior is now blue and gold with little in the way of adornments apart from some flower prints and a variety of lampshades. An array of furniture styles provides for comfort in the narrow space. Much of the old ways remain with the cupcakes being available during the day, but now there is a full menu from noon till 9 daily. The cask is definitely selling, two beers are normally on, usually a beer from Dark Star, and a Marble or Hornbeam beer. No cask cider, but good bottled variants compliment a range of British and foreign bottled beers. Quirky, and a fun place to drink and socialise. Very busy inside and out, so we had to stand at the bar. Tonight there was only Hornbeam Citrus Temptation as the Dark Star had yet to settle, the quality was very good.

Missing out all of the other keg café bars on Burton Road (Velvet Hour, Folk, M Twenty, Drawing Room, One Lounge Bar, and Verso), got us to the **Railway** on Lapwing Lane. At one point this was a tiny, narrow John Smiths house that had become somewhat run-down. Taken over by Manchester brewer, Joseph Holt in the late 1990s, it was extended and transformed into a pleasant drinking house. Once again we found the atmosphere to be busy in here. Given the confines of the space, the layout has traditional elements with a modern, clean mushroom decor. The narrow entrance is flanked by two panelled rooms, a high-stool snug to the left for those wanting an intimate space, and a more open but screened lounge to the right. The bar is next, opposite that is another multi-panelled screened area with fireplace. Beyond all that is a more open lounge area where a TV can be viewed. Photos of old Didsbury provide added interest. The beers were Holt Mild, Bitter, IPA, and seasonal beer, Humdinger. All beers, bar the IPA were tried, all scored above average.



Right across the road was our final stop, the **Metropolitan**. Until being bought by the next door 'Nosebar' around 2000, this was the troubled Midland Hotel, a vast Grand Metropolitan house with a history of trouble, drugs and criminality. Converted at some expense to the Metropolitan pub and restaurant, it is West Didsbury's busiest pub by far. It was sold around mid-2008. To say that this is impressive would be a gross understatement. Progressing through the usually very crowded bar, there is a lofty restaurant with hammer beam roof trusses. Large outdoor drinking area, where it has also been extended into the former stables with an outside bar (with cask Landlord on offer too) for better weather. Food forms a large part of the offering here, and you can dine almost anywhere in the place. Although very busy, the service was its usual good efficiency. What we did notice though was with so many people in, it does become very loud. And that's only through people talking, not music or such. Three beers were Caledonian Deuchars IPA; Taylor Landlord; and Bass. All scored in the average to good range.

So only five pubs, quite a compact crawl. Good to see that all of the pubs were very busy on what was a warm evening.

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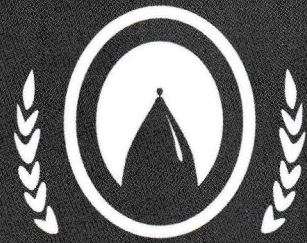
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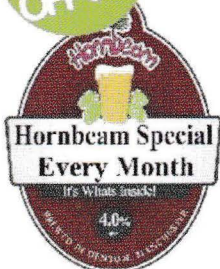
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Save Your Pint

Mass Lobby of Parliament on Wednesday 12 December.

Have you had a moan or two of late as to how the price of beer has increased over the last few years? Well speak to a CAMRA member and they will tell you that a major reason is a not so little thing called the beer duty escalator. Introduced under the last government this vicious little tax means that each year beer duty goes up by inflation plus 2%. This means that now a pint costing, say £3, almost £1 is VAT and excise duty.



CAMRA has been working hard with many parts of the beer industry and we have now exceeded 100,000 signatures on an e-petition calling on Government to remove the escalator - and the numbers continue to grow. This is only the 12th petition to reach this magic number, which led to a debate in Parliament, and we were delighted, when recently, a motion for the Government to conduct a thorough review of the economic and social impact of the escalator was passed.

But CAMRA believes this on its own may not be enough. The lobbying of individual MPs to get them on board will be key to achieving a turn around. To this end, a Day of Lobbying is being organised on 12th December to lobby as many MPs as possible. It is in all beer drinkers' interests to make as much noise as possible about this unfair tax, a tax that is contributing to over 12 pubs closing every week as people increasingly have to reduce the number of times they visit a pub due to financial pressures. **And it is not just real ale that is impacted - it is all beer: real beer, keg beer and lager.**

CAMRA is inviting everyone, whether you are a member or not, to join us on this very important day. You may be busy but this campaign is worth one day of your time to change the future. This is a also rare opportunity to see inside the Palace of Westminster and to see how it works. It really is impressive!

So what can you do? Register with CAMRA at www.saveyourpintlobby.co.uk or phone 01727 337 851 and arrange a meeting with your MP on 12th December. We have arranged an initial meeting at the Emmanuel Centre in Westminster, before taking the short walk to Parliament. CAMRA is coordinating attendance as there are restrictions on the number of people who can be in Parliament's lobby area at any one time.

For our area, the timings are: Arrive at Emmanuel Centre - 11am to 12 noon; Meet with MP - 12.30pm to 1.30pm

Afterwards, we will have a debrief, some free time to visit some pubs and then a rally at 4pm accompanied by some beer thanks to the support of Fuller's, Shepherd Neame and Wychwood.

This is a major opportunity to change beer tax so if you don't do anything else in the next six months, this should be it. Any queries, Emily Ryans, Campaigns Manager, will be available to help: emily.ryans@camra.org.uk; 01727 337 851.



Cider Awards

Winners from this year's Beer & Cider Festival

In the past couple of months members of Stockport & South Manchester Branch have been busy touring the country to present the cider and perry awards from this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival.

In October there was a trip to the West Country to visit the winners of the Cider and Perry of the Festival awards. First it was down to Street, near Glastonbury, and Hecks, winners of Cider of the Festival for their excellent Port Wine of Glastonbury. Festival cider manager Charlotte Bulmer is seen here presenting the award to Andrew and Chris Hecks.



Perry of the Festival was won by Kevin Minchew, one of the country's top perry makers and a renowned expert on cider and perry fruit. Sadly none of his winning perry, the single varietal Stinking Bishop, was available but some rather fine, five year old, whisky cask matured Moorcroft perry was. This has also been ordered for next year's festival! Charlotte is seen here presenting Kevin with his certificate.



The final award, for Best Local Cider, was presented closer to home - at the Railway, Portwood to be exact! Winners were Heaton Norris based Mad Hatters with their excellent Ding Dong. Here branch chairman John Clarke is shown presenting the award to Marysia Bossowski and Gordon Battersby (second right), along with branch cider representatives Mike Gilroy (centre) and Dave Preston (right).

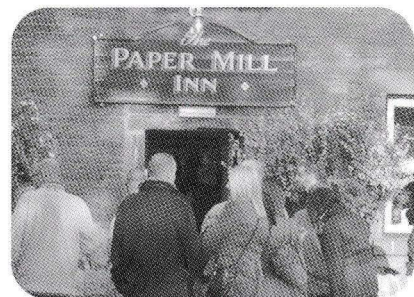
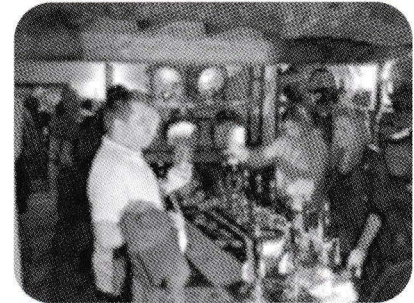
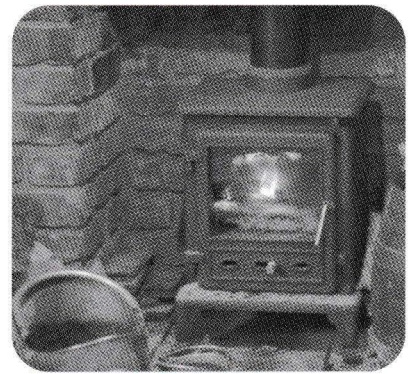


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High Peak Pub Scene

Frank Wood & Robin Wignall with News and Views

High Peak Pub News

With Frank Wood

I called in the **Sportsman**, Kinder Road, Hayfield, recently and this hidden away Thwaites house had Thwaites Original and Wainwrights on sale as the staple beers alongside the seasonal Crafty Devil. Although a Friday evening, filming was taking place down in the village for a forthcoming drama and we had to battle our way past horses, soldiers and wartime cars on the way back to the village, where the Royal Beer Festival was our destination for the evening. As ever, there was a good choice of beers though the function room was being used as a dressing room for the cast, so was out of bounds. It's goodbye to landlord Dave Ash and his family, as the pub will have changed hands by the time this OT appears although Dave is staying on a while to train up the incoming people.

Stalybridge Circuit

Into Stalybridge now and the **Wharf Tavern** now has three real ales on offer. On my visit, Thwaites Lancaster Bomber, Sharps Doom Bar and Marstons EPA were the beers though I believe that a Moorhouse's beer is regularly to be seen. On a bus trip to the Bridge on 3rd November, we started at the **Old Hunters Tavern (Robinson's)** on Acres Lane, as the **Organ** just a few yards away, sells no real ale. Unicorn, 1892 and Double Hop were on that evening at this 2013 Good Beer Guide pub, while further down the road, the **Stalybridge Labour Club** had Phoenix Flash Flood, Thwaites Guided Star and Everards Tiger.

At the **Society Rooms**, a much improved Wetherspoons these days, the beer festival was on and I tried the Cambridge Brewing Co. Heather Ale that night, and it was very tasty indeed, though my favourite beer of the current festival is without doubt, the Brouwerij't IJ Ijbok, at 6.0% and dangerously drinkable.

On to the **Old Fleece** which has of late sold Millstone beers. Alas that night, there was no real ale on, so off to the **White House**, a recent worthy High Peak Branch Pub of the Season. That night, Allgates Citra and Jennings Cumberland were the guests, with three Hydes beers also on sale. At **Q**, only Hydes bitter was on that night which is unusual for here. Final pub of the night then - the **Millpond** has reopened recently and is selling real ale too. A band was playing in the corner and there was a pleasant atmosphere in the room. On a previous visit, I drank beers from the Middleton brewery (Wilson Potter)

but tonight there were Millstone beers of Kirkstall. The Pale Ale from the latter was Mossley on. Only a choice of two cask beers but that's quite enough when a pub is building back up after a fair period of closure. No time then to visit the **Number 7**, the former Conservative club on the corner of Acres Lane and Mottram Road, but I will be back there for next month.

More News & Snippets

Over in Dukinfield, the **Angel** on King Street has started selling real ale along with good basic food. A rare appearance for Mitchell & Butlers Mild in our area, with Robinsons Dizzy Blonde and up to two other guests were available when OT called recently. I believe they have a connection with and the same loyalty card as the nearby **Astley Arms**. On Ashton Moss, the **Sheldon Arms'** joint managers Carolyn and Dave have won the "Manager of the Quarter" award from JW Lees.

In Hyde, the **Old Town House** on Mottram Road is gaining trade and I hear the Sunday lunches are extremely popular. At present, the Trust Inns pub has Theakstons Black Bull and Ringwood 49 as its cask beers and on the last Sunday in October they were both on good form.

In Buxton, the **Duke of York** at Burbage crossroads is to have a refurbishment by owners Punch Taverns after being closed since March. However, they are asking for people to "draw on local history and local references of Buxton" for inspiration to pick a new name. The person who wins will officially open the pub and win a meal for four. The closing date will have gone by the time this OT comes out.

Final snippets then, and in Droylsden the **Bush** has three Thwaites beers on, the **Buxton** on Manchester Road has Holts and Black Sheep (with Bombardier in bottles), the **Fitzroy Social Club** has two real ales (a Thwaites beer plus a Skinners on our branch member's visit). **Old Aldwynians Rugby Club** has three cask beers from Thwaites and the **Snipe** has Robinsons Unicorn. Add to that the **Kings Head** on Market Street (Holts and in the 2013 Good Beer Guide) the town is looking worthy of a visit. The **Queens** in Old Glossop usually has Holts Bitter, Robinsons Unicorn, Jennings Cumberland and Thwaites Wainwright as its four beers.

Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

A recent visit to the **Sheffield Tap** on Sheffield Station was as ever, a pleasure. Four beers from Thornbridge were accompanied by a range of guest beers including ales from Ilkley and

visiting on its own or as part of a day in Sheffield when it makes a good start and/or finish to the day.

Robinson's Green Bullet was popular as a seasonal brew in both the **Crossings** at Furness Vale and the **Cock** in Whaley Bridge, and was certainly well worth trying. However those with long memories would have found it a rather different beer to the stunning Green Bullet from Brendan Dobbin's brewery in the early 1990's.

A quick call at the **Royal Oak** on Market Street. New Mills, found a good pint of 1892 alongside Unicorn and Green Bullet, see above. The Royal Oak is well worth a visit. Still with Robinson's, Hartley's XB has made a welcome return to the Crossings. This is probably my favourite regularly available beer. The **Railway** in Whaley Bridge is usually good for a decent pint of Unicorn and is often accompanied by Double Hop. The Railway is also making a name for itself with live music.

Beer festivals continued to feature into October. The Good Beer Guide listed **Royal** in Hayfield held its 20th annual festival, with beer from each of the ceremonial counties in England. There were also supplies of cider and perry. Beers enjoyed included McMullen AK, Six Bells Castle Bravo, and Truefit Erimus Pale. Gwynt y Ddraig Scrumpy was a decent taster.

The Oktoberfest at **Glossop Labour Club** was organised by Kazant Events. There was an emphasis on seasonal special bottled beers from Germany, but also a decent range of real ale, cider and perry. Beers from Buxton, Outstanding, Red Willow and Blue Bee made for some quality drinking. Look out for more Kazant Events events.

The **Drum & Monkey**, at the Horwich End end of Whaley Bridge, is putting its third hand pump to good use. Buxton Moor Top was a recent attraction, with Buxton Spa next up. Beers from Wincle are likely to follow. The Drum and Monkey serves food from Wednesday to Sunday, with Sunday roast and specials particularly popular.

There is also interesting beer choice at the **White Horse** at Horwich End traffic lights. The Punch Finest Cask list seems to have more originality about it these days, so unusual beers can be anticipated here. Pennine Brewery at Batley brew a Real Blonde, and this was on good form when tried recently.



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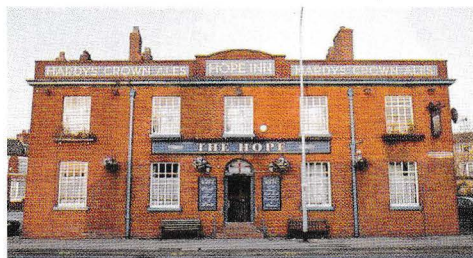
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Pub News

Covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond



Hope Springs Eternal

The Hope on Wellington Road North has never been a pub to offer much for the cask beer drinker. Apart from a brief flirtation with Draught Bass, it's been a real ale free zone for years. Pretty Hope-less you might say.

All that is about to change. The pub has been acquired by Martin Wood and Samantha Halfyard and will open its doors to the public under its new guise, after a refurbishment, in late January. Both Martin and Sam have been long time fans of the Hope's iconic looks, with its 'Hardys' Crown Ales' lettering and brewing history, that when they were back north-ward bound in April 2012 and realised the pub was up for sale, they knew exactly what they wanted to do.

Both Martin and Sam have worked within the pub trade for several years and achieved a fair bit along the way. Martin has 25 years under his belt winning CAMRA Pub of The Year three times at two different venues, and CAMRA Cider Pub of The Year once, amongst various other awards. Sam has seven years in the trade, working closely alongside Martin, but in parts doing relief work in her own right, as the pair would quite often manage more than one pub at a time.

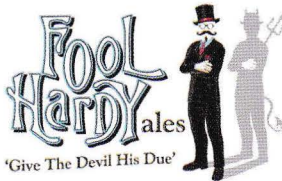
Back in 2004 to 2007 Martin was running Porter's Railway in Portwood, Stockport where he gained an excellent reputation in the local area. It is also where Martin and Sam met and the chance to come back to work and live in the Stockport area was grasped with both hands, as the couple who have worked all over the UK have always had fond memories of working in Stockport.

The general plan for the Hope is not to rewrite history, or reinvent the wheel, just to run a great pub, with a great atmosphere and great beer. And there will be plenty of beer with 10 handpumped cask beers, plus foreign imports on draft alongside a large selection of bottled beers from around the world. Real cider will also be on handpump. The icing on the cake will be the in-house micro brewery.

The couple are under no illusions that it will be anything other than hard work and somewhat of a roller coaster ride at times, but they are more than up for the challenge and invite everyone to join them on their journey.

Fool Hardy Ales

Keeping the Hardys' Crown Ales lettering in mind from around the top of the Hope, Martin and Sam spent a long time considering names for their own Microbrewery being installed in the basement of the Hope. They toyed with the idea of simply calling it 'Hardys' Crown Ales', but felt they wanted something they could put their own stamp on.

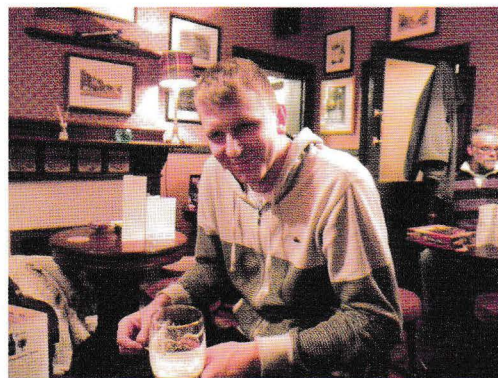


They even thought about basing the name around the word 'Hope', but after a lot of deliberation, and many names later, the pair settled on 'Fool Hardy Ales'.

All the design work for the new brewery has been created by Martin himself, as with his previous design background, he knew exactly how he wanted to market 'Fool Hardy Ales'. Martin has also designed pump clips, brewery leaflets, bar runners, glassware and so on for many other breweries including Porter Brewing Co, Staffordshire Brewery, Naylor's Brewery and Craddock's Brewery but to name a few.

Blossoms Blooms

After what seemed an eternity, Robinsons have finally got themselves a tenant for the Blossoms on Buxton Road, Heaviley. It seems to have been worth the wait as John Goodhew, who took over on 26 September with his business partner Lee Holt, has plans to really put the pub back on the



local map. Big strides have already been made in that direction.

John (pictured above), who hails from Hertfordshire, has around eight years experience in the licensed trade around the country (he also has an interest in Bar 461 in Withington) but this is his first really traditional pub. It is however a move he has wanted to make; "I was really lucky to get this and love the pub" he told us.

The Blossoms was of course substantially, and very successfully, refurbished by Robinsons so John and Lee have not had to make any structural or decorative changes. What they have brought though is an enterprising ethos and a huge level of commitment.

Thus the upstairs room is now used for live music, traditional board games are available and the third Tuesday of the month sees a popular knitting club gather. Traditional pub food is sold from Tuesday to Sunday between 12 and 7.30pm. On December 14 a "Christmas Spectacular" is planned where a £5 ticket will get you mulled wines, food and music.

And let's not forget the beer. The Blossoms currently offers seven cask ales – six on handpump and a small pin of Old Tom on the bar. John tells us the beer has been selling very well – indeed demand for the new seasonal Tom & Berry has been so high that he is one of the few pubs taking this beer in 18-gallon containers.

It all looks good. If you've not been to the Blossoms for a while, take a trip down there, you won't be disappointed.



Stalybridge – All Change!

There are changes in the air at Stalybridge where two of the town's famous pubs have changed hands.

Following the sad death of owner John Hesketh the Buffet Bar has a new owner. It's in very safe hands though, as it has been purchased by Mike Field who also owns the West Riding Licensed Refreshment Rooms at Dewsbury Station and the Sportsman pub and micro-brewery in Huddersfield.

It's been all go since he took over. The main bar has been decorated, the bar top resurfaced and 10 new handpumps have been installed. The heating in the bar (and the lounge) has been increased and some new shelves put up. While the kitchen has been refitted there are no plans to alter the menu so lovers of the famous black peas can relax. The toilets have also been

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