

O
Times



December 2013

Opening

The free local CAMRA magazine

Covering the cities of Manchester & Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, N.E. Cheshire & Macclesfield

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Inside – win prizes on our Winter
Warmer Wander – see page 13

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Pub of the Month

The Red Bull, Hillgate, Stockport



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for December 2013 has been won by the Red Bull on Hillgate, Stockport, writes Dave Platt.

Long a local favourite, the Red Bull received a new lease of life in 2008 when it was given a massive investment by Robinsons, whose brewery is just down the road and who regard this as something of a flagship.

It took a while before suitable licensees were found but it's now in the hands of Karen and Aimie who have really put it on the map. The investment saw the pub extended into a neighbouring building and the cramped internal layout revised. It is to Robinsons' credit that despite these major changes the pub's character was maintained, and arguably enhanced.

There is an extensive menu now and this includes everything from a light lunch or a bowl of chips through to a full three course meal. The Sunday carvery is also very well regarded. The pub also offers accommodation with four individually designed rooms which have garnered rave reviews online.

There are quiz nights and live entertainment features regularly.

But what about the beer? As you may imagine, there a full range of Robinsons beers available and quality is top notch (the pub is sufficiently busy to maintain turnover). Plenty will be enjoyed on the presentation night – Friday 27 December. The pub is easy to get to, being just a short walk from the A6 (via Hillgate or Edward St.) which is well served by buses.



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What's On

Information, Notes and Local CAMRA Branch Events

Opening Times - Information

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- * Transport for Greater Manchester: www.tfgm.com
- * East Cheshire: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel.aspx
- * Derbyshire: <http://www.derbyshirebus.info/>

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Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn.

Front Cover – the Boars Head at Higher Poynton in winter. Photo by Neil Worthington

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Local CAMRA Events Open events in blue

Wednesday 4th – Worsley Social: Barton Arms 8.00pm; Bridgewater Hotel 9.00pm. (NM)

Thursday 5th – Branch Meeting: Old Market Tavern, Altrincham. Starts 8.00pm. (T&H)

Friday 6th – Beer of the Festival Best Newcomer presentation to Elixir Brewing: Magnet, Wellington Rd North, Stockport. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Saturday 7th – Champion Beer of Cheshire Awards presentation to Happy Valley Brewery, Bollington. (MEC)

Wednesday 11th – Christmas Meal at Windmill, Whitley Green. Starts 7.30pm. Book with Rob Nicholson. (MEC)

Wednesday 11th – Swinton Crawl: White Swan, Worsley Rd 7.30pm; Park Inn 8.15pm plus 2/3 others. (NM)

Thursday 12th – Branch Meeting and Christmas Quiz: Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

Saturday 14th – Christmas Social: Cheshire Ring, Hyde. (HPNC)

Wednesday 18th – Branch Meeting: Salford Arms, Bloom St, Salford. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 19th – Community Pub of the Year 2013 Presentation & Quiz Night: Volunteer Hotel, Sale. From 8.00pm. (T&H)

Friday 20th – Annual Hillgate Stagger: Queens Head, Little Underbank 7.30pm; Waterloo, Waterloo Rd 8.30pm. (SSM)

Friday 27th – Pub of the Month presentation to the Red Bull, Hillgate. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Friday 27th – Social: Waters Green Tavern, Macclesfield. Starts 8.00pm. (MEC)

Saturday 28th – Post Xmas Meal: contact Phil Booton or see website (NM)

Monday 30th – Post-Christmas Social: celebrate at The Bar, Chorlton. From 7pm. (T&H)

Wednesday 1st January – Welcome 2014 Social: contact Phil Booton or see website. (NM)

Monday 6th – Good Beer Guide shortlist meeting: Alderley Edge Social Club. Starts 8.00pm. (MEC)

Thursday 9th – Branch Meeting: Railway, Chapel Rd, Sale. Starts 8pm. (T&H)



Curmudgeon

Reducing Strength, Reducing Choice

In an attempt to curb the problem of street drinking, a number of local authorities have recently implemented an initiative called "Reducing the Strength", whereby off-licences are invited to enter into agreements not to sell beers and ciders above a certain strength. Ipswich and Hastings have set the bar at 6.5% ABV, but Newcastle have lowered it to a mere 5%. While these agreements are supposedly voluntary, there is undoubtedly a significant amount of arm-twisting involved.

You may think that this is only aimed at tramps and has nothing to do with you, but many highly-respected beers such as Old Tom and Duvel come in at over this figure, and some of the new-wave craft brewers have made a speciality of distinctive, higher-strength beers. The same is even more true of traditional ciders. Many of the products favoured by street drinkers were originally entirely respectable and were only later adopted by them as their tippable of choice – Carlsberg Special was first brewed to mark the visit of Sir Winston Churchill to Copenhagen. And it would be impossible to come up with a watertight legal definition that put Old Tom in one camp and super lagers in the other.

The risk is that responsible drinkers of high-quality strong beers and ciders will find them more and more difficult to get hold of, and that their consumption in general will increasingly be denormalised. This will lead to the disappearance of many excellent, distinctive products and an unwelcome reduction of choice and diversity in the overall market. And it always seems to be beer and cider that are singled out when most wines and all spirits come in at a higher strength and cannot claim to be innocent of involvement in problem drinking.

Building a Customer Base

An argument I've often seen advanced, especially in relation to Stockport, is that new residential developments in close proximity to town centres are a way of revitalising their pub trade. On the face of it, this sounds plausible, but in fact it's another example of the "captive market" fallacy. Being the nearest pub to a large number of homes is no guarantee of success, and indeed one of the most typical patterns of pub closure is of stand-alone pubs in the midst of residential areas, or next to local shopping parades, which will often be the only pub within convenient walking distance for a large number of people. Going directly to the pub from home in the evenings is a far less typical pattern of pubgoing than is often imagined.

While there may be ten thousand people living in Manchester City Centre now, when thirty years ago there were only a few hundred, that is still only the population that would support the handful of pubs in a typical small market town, and in terms of the centre's overall pub trade is a drop in the ocean. Pubs thrive in the centre of Manchester, and other large cities, because they function as retail, employment, business, cultural and entertainment hubs for a wide surrounding area and thus attract large numbers of people for a wide variety of reasons.

If new flats are built on land on the edge of a town centre that was formerly derelict, or industrial premises, it might give a slight boost to pubs in the vicinity, although probably scarcely so much as you would notice. But if former shops and offices are turned over to housing, it will in fact be bad news for local pubs, as it will signal a retrenchment of the town's hub function and mean fewer potential pubgoers visiting it from outside.

Curmudgeon Online: curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

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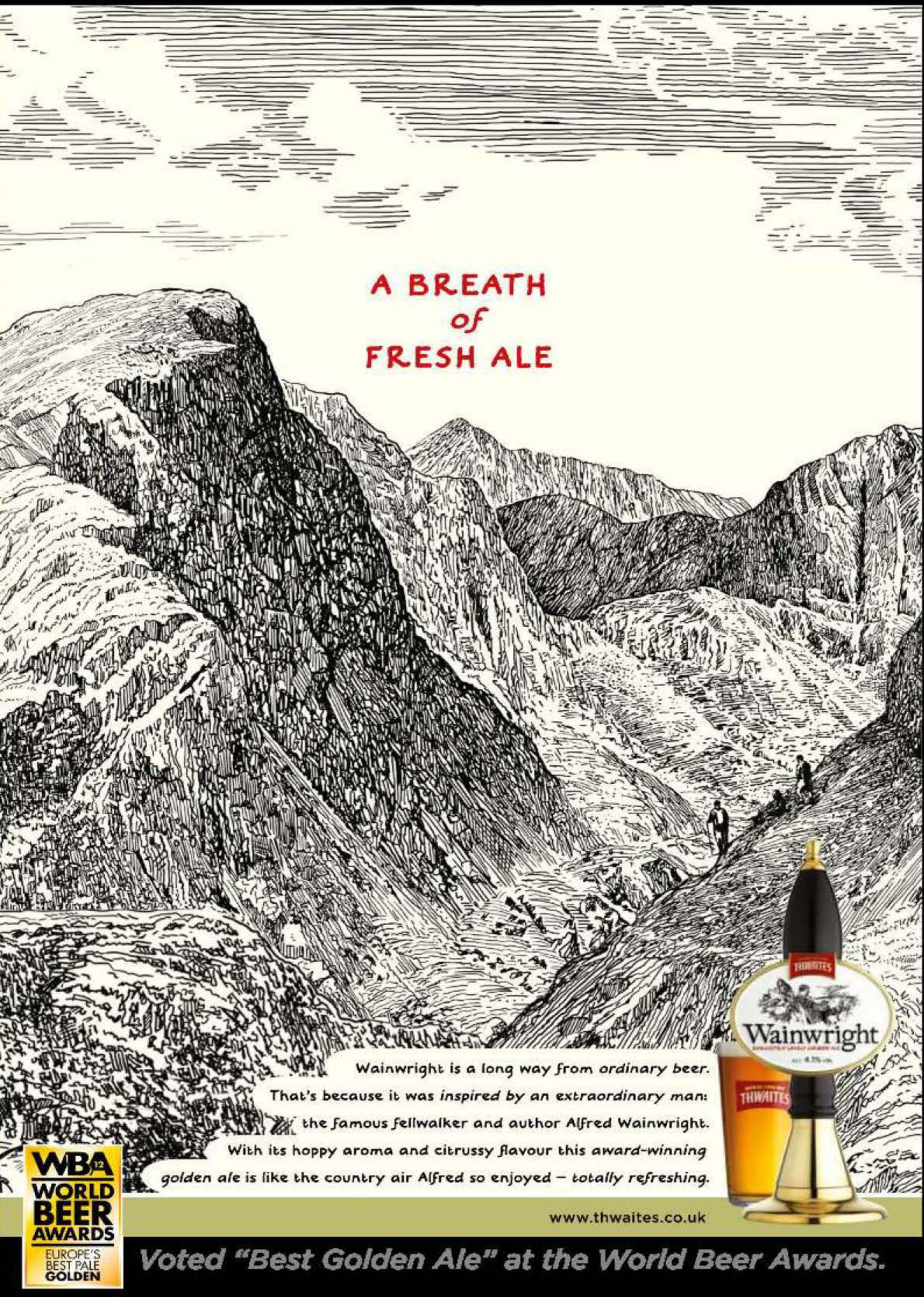
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Stagger

An Evening in the City with Jerry Wicken



Just the three of us met up in **Joshua Brooks** on a hot Friday evening wondering when our numbers might swell. There are worse places to wait. JB is on the up – light and airy, an outside drinking area, comfy seats and friendly staff – and, of course, a decent selection of ales mainly from North West micro-breweries. It is just as well we had a pint as even Vladimir and Estragon would have moved on by the time a fourth staggerer appeared.



We chose to drink the Ringway Session at 3.8% which was a very reasonable £2.60 a pint. The beer got good marks all round. Note though, a half of the same costs £1.75, not a policy of which I'm in favour. Other ales on offer included MIA, SIP, Generous George from Kirkstall Brewery and Black Jack's Mosaic. Food is available and later the pub turns more into a club with music, DJ etc. I must admit this is just the kind of establishment I wish had been around for me 40 odd years ago – good real ale, music, cocktails and plenty of bottled beer choice. Personally, I think this is the way forward if CAMRA is to attract the younger drinker.

Having waited for others to join us we realised that we had three pubs to review in 15 minutes before our 8:30 meeting place. So, a flying visit to the **Lass O'Gowrie** followed. It was pretty quiet for a Friday night but three beers were still available, Lass's own Betty's Best, Coach House Coachman's Best Bitter and Howard Town Longdendale Light. They were all tested and marked identically as a little above average. Not long ago there were at least twice as many ales to choose from so perhaps the Lass is suffering from the loss of BBC personnel. I hope it doesn't disappear altogether.

There is no real ale available in **Projekt 42** on the same street or in the **Old Garrett** on Princess Street so the next stop was the **Retro Bar** which is somewhere else trying to attract a younger clientele. It is a rather soulless place in my opinion and beer-wise offers Wychwood Hobgoblin which was just about average and Deuchars IPA which was distinctly below par. It seems to me that some bars these days are selling real ale without really caring about it.

CAMRA promotes and encourages real ale but we really need to campaign for **great** real ale and be wary of what seems like tokenism. If a cask ale novice visits the Retro Bar, at least on the night we visited, and tries one of the real ales he or she is unlikely to be encouraged to sample another elsewhere. No bar or pub is compelled to sell real ale and perhaps it is sometimes better if they don't.

Jumping quickly from my soapbox, we headed for our next meeting point, the **Fab Café**. En route, I acknowledged the doorman and briefly entered **O'Sheas** which occasionally serves real ale. There were two staff, no customers and a Black Sheep pump, clip reversed, so I left. (I should add that around midnight from the top of the bus I noted the place was busy so it is obviously a later evening venue.)

The sci-fi themed Fab Café was popular mid-evening and we even picked up one more staggerer who had been awaiting our arrival. Time was not now an issue so we relaxed with Black Sheep Bitter (average) and Hornbeam Black Coral Stout, a rather unusual selection for mid-summer but rated slightly higher than the Sheep. This bar is ever popular and later in the evening it can get extremely busy.



Next up was the **Paramount**, a popular city centre Wetherspoon outlet. There were still tables to sit at and enjoy a few of the huge range of real ales available. We did not try Robinson's Elbow – Build a Rocket Boys or Trooper, nor Greene King Abbot, Pendle Witches Brew, Titanic White Star or George Wright Galaxy IPA. We did manage Thwaites' Little Bewty which was good and Wainwright which was above average; Moorhouse's Pendle Witch scored similarly and Dunscair Bridge Wicketkeeper which one in our group thought excellent.

Next door on Oxford Street is **Alibi**, a modern design sports bar offering on this evening Sharp's Doom Bar and Timothy Taylor Landlord both of which scored well. Moorhouse's Blond Witch appeared to be on tap but had in fact run out. When we suggested the pump clip be turned round the bar staff told us that this was

not the policy of the management. This seems a little odd as drinkers want to know what is available not what was available.

The **Seven Oaks** is a traditional city centre pub next to the Art Gallery and on the fringes of Chinatown. It was very quiet on our visit and had four hand pumps, three clips turned round. This left Black Sheep Best Bitter which was poor and left unfinished by most of our group. Let's hope this was a blip as we've enjoyed good beer here over the years.

We needed a bit of a lift and the last two pubs of the night provided this. First up was the **Bank** an impressive building inside and out built in a neo-classical style in the first decade of the 19th century. The Portico Library still survives upstairs. The pub is now owned by the pub chain Nicholson's and was having a summer beer festival during our visit. Thwaites' Wainwright, Nicholson's 'own' IPA and Moorhouse's Pendle Witch Brew were not sampled and this left us with the unusual and very well received Lemongrass from Lancaster Brewery, the equally well received Cornish Coaster from Sharp's and the similarly splendid Gladness from the Growler Brewery in Essex (formerly Nethergate Brewery).



We had one more pub to fit in to this rather lengthy stagger and that was the **Grey Horse**, a Hydes stalwart that had fairly recently undergone a refurbishment. Apart from decoration the main difference is a reshaped bar giving the impression of greater space around it. This is a very friendly pub, staff and customers alike, and the beer we tried was again in top notch condition and marked good to very good in all cases. Again the Wainwright was untried but the 1863, Hydes Bitter and the Beer Studio's Venetian Red were all enjoyed as the final drinks of the evening.



To conclude, I would like to give big thumbs up to all bar staff who were friendly and efficient on what was a very hot evening in July. We had some good beer from some unusual sources in some good pubs and bars as well as the odd disappointment. Try them yourselves and I'm sure you won't be disappointed.

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Tameside Travels

Andy Sullivan gets out and about

There I was sitting in the marvellous **Little Chapel House**, Haughton Green, enjoying a lovely pint of Unicorn listening to the cricket (well I was listening to the cricket, the Unicorn was otherwise engaged) when a thought struck me. Why is it this small, front-roomy pub doesn't seem to be on too many people's visiting lists? Admittedly, there isn't anything else to go to Haughton Green for, but the 347/322/324 buses stop almost outside on Two Trees Road and the 204 stops outside what was the Top House. Anyone venturing out to Denton (really!) or Hyde (more probable), could do worse than starting here, although I would not recommend large groups, this is me and a friend territory, you wouldn't want to upset the equilibrium.

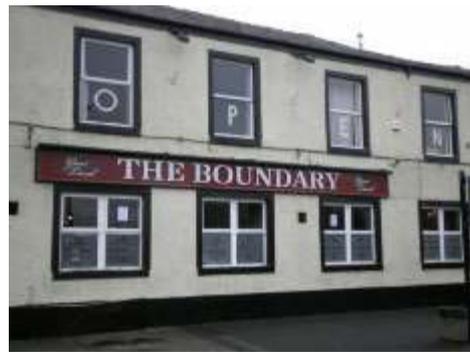


Spotlessly clean always, the pub has a best room to the right on entering and a traditional vault the other side. With the French doors in the middle of the best room closed, the bar area really is little bigger than a typical terrace's front parlour. A bar and back that seems to date from the 1950's is tucked into a corner. I will let the design educated tell me the period, but it is a fine thing, again in keeping with the domestic room feel.

This pub reminds of pubs past: yes it could seem a little cliquey, a lot of pubs do at first; but it is homely and does become very busy with the regulars from not very far and wide, at weekends especially. Oh, and the Unicorn and 1892 are always good to excellent.

Over the summer I have had the privilege of visiting North Norfolk and returning to Sussex for a few days. Both visits were much needed breaks for me and provided some real highlights. Such highlights of course are of little interest to someone wanting a pub in Tameside, however what occurs to me is that certain themes recur. First take the Fox in Felpham in West Sussex. The Fox is the sort of place you only really appreciate as you get a little older. It has changed over 35 years, but essentially serves the same customer group and is somewhere where you take your mum on a Sunday. This also very much applies to the **Lowes Arms** on Hyde Road, Denton. Now I bet loads of people have passed it driving or on

the 201 bus so the thing is you have to want to go there, many do, just like the Fox and is rarely less than busy at the predictable times. The Fox is very large, well run, always well presented, arguably food led, with good bar staff and you know who they are; so is the Lowes and don't forget the beer quality either. I am delighted to note that the Lowes has made a return to the Good Beer Guide for 2014. The Fox and the Lowes; it had been far too long since I'd been to either.



The **Boundary** is back at Guide Bridge, just down from the railway station and on several bus routes including 347 and 219, selling a range of Hornbeam beers on my last visit. I do hope they make a go out of this former destination ale house and since it is was a good few weeks since I visited, I popped in when alighting a train a stop or two earlier than usual. It has an odd interior, but there was a really healthy clientèle quite early on this particular Friday. The food on the menu, while not closely examined, couldn't be missed as the portions looked huge! Something that increasingly forces me to order from the starters.

At some point I expect the **Broom House** to reopen. There has been work going on here for yonks and it looks like it will be quite smart and modern. I do hope it is a better standard than generally down at Crown Point, Gardener's Arms excepted, and it has been truly awful in years past. A handsome building, the pub is actually quite small, but has been extended to the rear. Set in an island of its own at the corner of Morrison's car park on Hyde Road, there is no sign yet when it will open and now the blinds are up I cannot spot if there will be a hand-pump. **The Gardener's Arms** is well worth a visit, always selling a good Unicorn and sometimes Dizzy Blonde. I like the Robinsons makeover, it had to be better than fake beams and artex and it is the best of the bunch of Crown Point pubs by a mile: comfortable if a bit rough and ready mind. On my last visit I sampled the excellent new beer from the brewery, Dark Side and chatted briefly to the landlord, also a convert to this lovely dark thirst quencher. Numerous buses pass by.



The **Cheshire Ring** in Hyde, is my local. Last Thursday a bunch of us was discussing what it is that keeps us going there instead of choosing elsewhere more often. This obviously meant talking about the welcome, the ambience, the other locals and comparing it with other pubs.

I cannot think of any place anywhere (do we all say this about our local I wonder and what do others think when they come to ours?) where there is such a varied mix of conversation with the quite frankly surreal goings on that just happen out of nowhere, particularly when the pub conversation, as all do from time to time, drifts to the banal end of the spectrum. Good Beer Guide again! Well done Wayne. There's always of choice based around Kodiak and Bearskinful from Beartown, but with a huge changeover from everywhere, often showcasing a range of ales from a single brewery, nice bottle range as well plus real cider.

On the 201, 204 bus routes and Hyde Central station across the way, but beware crossing the road and pay attention!

Finally, I want to make mention of the new Good Beer Guide entry for the **Godley Hall Inn**, a warm, friendly little "country" local tucked away off the Mottram Road, Hyde close to 201, 202 bus routes and Godley Station. Well done to Allan and Sue. At this point I should also say that owing to a newish personal awareness of the issue I shall try to find out about dog friendly pubs. The Godley is, as is the Ring, and the Little Chap is in the vault. I would expect the Gardener's to be, but I am not sure about this. The Boundary appears unlikely to admit canines.

The competition for Good Beer Guide entry in Hyde is especially strong and must have been the subject of heated discussion as the 'Spoons lost out this time. The Cheshire Ring, Queens and Sportsman, all dog friendly, deservedly retain their entries. Love it or hate it, the beer quality at the **Cotton Bale**, not dog friendly, remains terrific and the Robinson's in the timeless **White Lion**, fine with dogs in the vault, unerringly wonderful.



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High Peak Pub Scene

Tom Lord & Robin Wignall with News and Views

Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

A recent visit to the **Shady Oak** at Fernilee found Brakspear Pride of the River, and very enjoyable it was. It is a 4% presumably seasonal brew, which is reminiscent of Oxford Gold. The former Brakspear brewery in Henley-on-Thames is now long gone, and in its present form shares premises with another Marston's owned brewery, Wychwood, at Wilton, Oxfordshire.



The cycle of Marston's single hop beers continued into the autumn, with Endeavour, English hops, Waikata, New Zealand and Eldorado, US. The latter could be available by the time you read this. Waikata went down very well at the **Shepherds** in Whaley Bridge (pictured above). I also found it very refreshing drinking after a day on the hills during a visit to the area of England's highest peaks, where Waikata was available at the **Bank Tavern** in Keswick.

The end of September saw a very successful beer festival at the **Drum & Monkey**, in Whaley Bridge. This was a first anniversary event to celebrate the re-opening of the pub in its present form. Beers from Whaley Bridge Brewery sold out quickly as did some of the popular Moorhouse's beers. There were also beers from Storm, Happy Valley, Abbeydale and Woodforde's. All the beers I tried were in good form. After this first festival success repeats are promised. Keep an eye on publicity.

In early October the Buxworth Steam Party provided a busy weekend for locals and visitors alike, the latter arriving by road and canal. Vintage steam traction provided visual and olfactory enjoyment. There was the usual good range of beers at the **Navigation**, busy during the weekend, whilst up at the **War Memorial Club** Thwaites Original and Storm Silk of Amnesia were well worth sampling. With these

you could wash down locally prepared hog roast. This is a good weekend which is worth a diary note for next year.



This was followed by the beer festival at the **Royal** in Hayfield. This is a popular annual event, which with better weather might have been even more successful. Up to 40 beers were available during the weekend. There was a succession of beers on the main bar, with other beers stillaged for gravity dispense. Beers were available from round the country; from Great Orme, Llandudno to Ole Slewfoot, Norfolk and from Piddle, Dorchester to Scarborough Brewery. I was also pleased to find beers from a fairly recent (2010) Derbyshire brewery, Mr. Grundys of Derby. Obviously not all the beers were available all the time. The beers that I tried were in good form and as ever preferences are down to personal taste. For me old favourites reigned; Happy Valley Dangerously Dark and Salopian Oracle. And not to be missed in the Royal, an advert for 'Wilson's Mild, drawn from the cask.' Those were the days.



Further changes are afoot locally in the Robinsons estate. Lou and Steve are reported to have departed the **Cock** in Whaley Bridge. Lou was the longest standing of the current batch of licensees in Whaley Bridge, and in recent years built the pub's reputation around good food, as well as well-kept beer. More news another time.

The **Wanted Inn** at Sparrowpit was reportedly auctioned in early October Whither the future for this pub which historically got its name because nobody wanted it at a previous sale a long, long time ago. More to follow.

High Peak Pub News

With Tom Lord

It was reported in the last issue that the **White Hart** at the top of Dyehouse Lane in New Mills had closed and this has now been sadly followed by the **Pineapple** at the bottom of Dyehouse Lane.

Stalybridge Labour Club is now offering a sampling selection based on thirds of a pint.

In Glossop **Harvey Leonards Wine and Ale Tasters** off licence is now open at 136 High Street West where tasters can be sampled on the premises. Will we see this idea repeated elsewhere? Still in Glossop, it is reported that the **Royal Oak** no longer sells cask ale.



The **Dandy Cock** in the centre of the village has been closed recently but is now reported to be awaiting a major refurbishment and re-opening in due course. The Robinsons website (from where we obtained the picture above) reveals that the tenancy is currently "to let".

The **Spinners Arms** in Hadfield is now offering beers from the nearby Mouselow Farm brewery.

Some news from Droylsden. The **Fairfield Arms** on Manchester Road is now offering beers from Hornbeam on hand pump. Over at the **Strawberry Gardens** on Moorside Street, Taylor's Landlord, Sharp's Doom bar and a weekly changing guest beer are available. At the **Railway** on Lumb Lane, Littlemoss a regularly changing beer on handpump is on offer, which was Spitfire at the time of our correspondent's visit.

Over in Mossley the new **Fleece Inn** at 53 Stamford Street opened its doors two weeks ago and is currently selling Irwell Works Bitter and Stout at a terrific £2.00 a pint.

Finally congratulations to Millstone Brewery in Mossley on reaching their 10th anniversary. A celebratory bash was held in the Rising Sun, Mossley with all the Millstone beers on offer including the house beer brewed by Millstone for the pub.



Winter Warmer Wander 2013-14

Runs from Saturday 30th November 2013 until Sunday 12th January 2014

Sponsored by Robinsons Old Tom



57 Thomas Street Thomas Street Manchester M4 1NA	Arden Arms 23 Millgate Stockport SK1 2LX	Blossoms 2 Buxton Road Stockport SK2 6NU	Bulls Head 84 London Road Manchester M1 2PN
Calvert's Court 13 St Petersgate Stockport SK1 1EB	Castle Hotel 66 Oldham Street Manchester M4 1LE	Cheshire Ring 72 Manchester Road Hyde SK14 2BJ	Crown 154 Heaton Lane Stockport SK4 1AR
Deansgate Tavern 321 Deansgate Manchester M3 4LQ	Elektrik 359 Wilbraham Road Chorlton M21 0AE	Fletcher Moss 1 William Street Didsbury M20 6RQ	Font 115 Manchester Road Chorlton M21 9PG
Ford Madox Brown Oxford Road Rusholme M13 9DP	Friendship 351 Wilmslow Road Fallowfield M14 6XS	Gateway 882 Wilmslow Road East Didsbury M20 5PG	Great Central 306 Wilmslow Road Fallowfield M14 6AH
Hope 118 Wellington Road North Stockport SK4 2LL	Lower Turks Head 36 Shudehill Manchester M4 1EZ	Magnet 51 Wellington Road North Stockport SK4 1HJ	Marble Arch Rochdale Road Manchester M43 4HJ
Marble Beer House 57 Manchester Road Chorlton M21 0PW	Mark Addy 73 Stanley Street Salford M3 5EL	Milson Rhodes School Lane Didsbury M4 5JN	Navigation 1 Manchester Road Stockport SK4 1TY
New Oxford Bexley Square Salford M3 6DB	Nursery 258 Green Lane Stockport SK4 2NA	Oddest 414 Wilbraham Road Chorlton M21 0SD	Paramount 33-35 Oxford Road Manchester M4 5JZ
Parlour 66 Beech Road Chorlton M21 9EG	Railway 1 Avenue Street Stockport SK1 2BZ	Red Bull 14 Middle Hillgate Stockport SK1 3AY	Robinsons Visitor Centre Apsley Street Stockport SK1 1JJ
Sedge Lynn 21a Manchester Road Chorlton M21 9PN	Swan With 2 Necks 36 Prince's Street Stockport SK1 1RY	The Cocked Hat 2 Market Place Stockport SK1 1EW	The Wharf 6 Slate Wharf Manchester M15 4ST
The Wilfred Wood 204 London Road Hazel Grove SK7 4DF	Victoria 438 Wilmslow Road Withington M20 3BW	Waterhouse 67-71 Princess Street Manchester M2 4EG	Ye Olde Woolpack 70 Brinksway Stockport SK3 0BY

This month we are once again running the Winter Warmer Wander, our annual celebration of festive beers to bring you a little winter cheer across the Christmas and New Year season, and on into the cold nights of January. Like the Mild Challenge and the Cider Circuit, this is the chance for you to visit some new pubs and try some new beers. This year we have lots of great prizes and lots of ways to win them. What you need to do...

Buy at least half a pint of cask conditioned stout, porter, old ale, barley wine (or if none are available any other premium beer at 4.5% ABV or greater).

Get the pub to put a sticker on its entry below (if they can't find a sticker, just get a signature).

Get 15 stickers and you will win two bottles of beer plus a ticket for Manchester Beer & Cider Festival.

25 stickers will get you two tickets for Manchester Beer & Cider Festival and a special WWW t-shirt

Visit all 40 pubs and you will win 2 bottles of beer, two tickets for Manchester Beer & Cider Festival, a special WWW t-shirt and entry into a draw for prizes including hampers of assorted beers.

The Winter Warmer Wander runs from Saturday 30 November to Sunday 12 January and winners will be invited to a special prize-giving social.

Completed forms need to be with Dave Platt, 138 Broom Lane, Levenshulme, M19 3LJ by 16 January (so we can post tickets in time)

Horse & Jockey

the inn on the green



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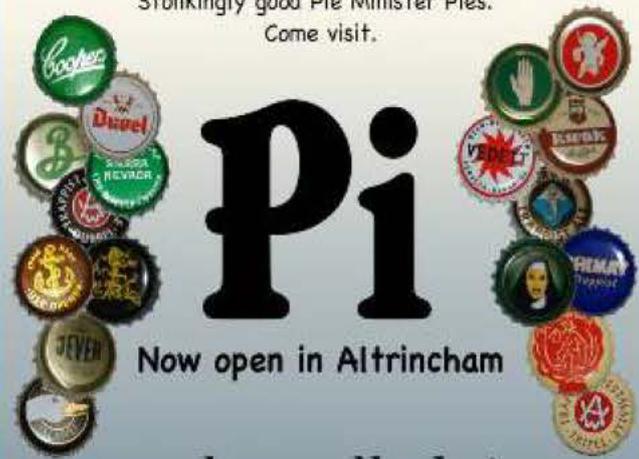


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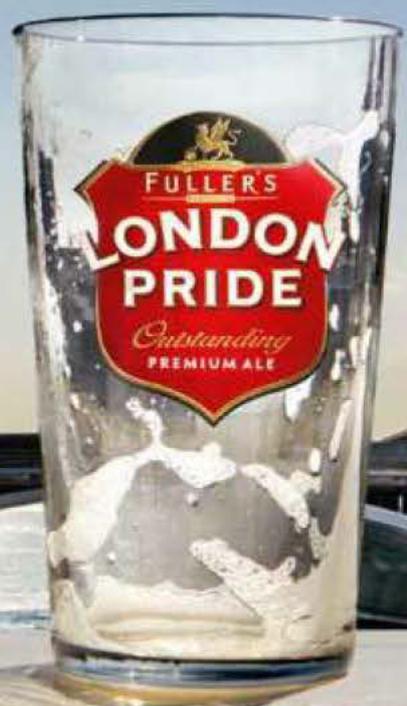
Pi (Chorlton) 99 Manchester Rd Chorlton Manchester M21 9GA 0161 882 0000 @PiChorlton	Pi (Rose Lane) 106 Rose Lane Massley Hill Liverpool L18 8AG 0151 222 0443 @PiRoseLane	Pi (Altrincham) 18 Shaws Road Altrincham Cheshire WA14 1QU 0161 929 9098 @PiAltrincham
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Proper beers. Proper pies. Proper People.



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Pub News

Covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Trafford News

Sale has a new cask ale outlet in the form of the **Brooklands Tap** on Hope Road, just round the corner from Brooklands Metrolink stop and a short walk from Sale centre. It has been taken on by Joe Delaney who hails from the Republic of Ireland where he has had pubs before, but this is his first on the mainland. He has had three handpumps installed and is trialling cask ale with three beers from the Greene King portfolio - IPA, Abbot Ale and Old Speckled Hen.

The pub will be opening long hours as Joe intends to open for breakfast at 8am (including offering takeaway options at breakfast and lunch). The main opening hours will be 11am - 11.30pm with an extra hour on Friday and Saturday evenings. Food will all be home cooked and sourced from local suppliers. Evening meals will be served until 9pm with snacks and the bar menu available until close. We wish Joe and his new team every success.

There is also a new team at the **Timperley Taverners** club. Although only in temporary charge, Ray and Joe have already increased the footfall into the club and are receiving great feedback both from the committee and the clientele so they hope that they will be asked to remain on a permanent basis. They now stock all Thwaites beers, Original and Nutty Black plus the seasonal which was "TBC" (Thwaites Best Cask) when Opening Times called. Both Ray and Joe are booked to do the Cellarmanship course at Thwaites brewery and are very enthusiastic about supporting CAMRA.

Chorlton Update



In Chorlton, there is new management at the **New Lloyds Hotel** on Wilbraham Road. Chris Woodall, previously a manager at JW Lees' Greyhound in Ashley, Cheshire, took over in mid-October and has big plans for the Lloyds. The pub is expected to be closed for a few weeks

at the end of January for a major refurbishment. Once this is complete, there will be two banks of five handpumps, alongside major improvements to the upstairs function room and to the toilets.



Staff and customers at **Duffy's Bar** on Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton can be very proud of themselves having raised an impressive £3083.10 for the Ailsa Malcolm-Hutton fund - the terminally ill young mum who has set up a "bucket list" of things to do with her six year old daughter before motor neurone disease robs her of ability to be a mum. The money was raised through a variety of events including a sky dive, a race night and a ladies night which raised over £1000 alone. The contribution was topped off with £500 for two donated football shirts bought by landlord Peter Heffernan at a fundraising ball.

DeNada on Manchester Road, Chorlton has taken the decision to concentrate on quality over choice, reducing their range down to two handpumps which will ensure turnover to maintain the excellent quality which this small bar restaurant on the very northern extreme of Chorlton has become renowned for. When Opening Times called, they were serving Solstice from Bury's Brightside brewery alongside XT8 (Dark Roast) from Buckinghamshire's XT brewery.

Brewtique in Macclesfield

Since opening in late September Brewtique, has been impressing customers with its well chosen selection of bottled beers from around the world. The owner is Chris Stairmand, the landlord of the Wharf in Macclesfield, which was recently named Cheshire Pub of the Year 2014. You will not find supermarket beers here: what you will find are beers previously unavailable in Macclesfield, from some of the more cutting edge breweries in the world that have become fashionably-named "craft". Chris has chosen to avoid this overused term and

instead named his new venture an Artisan Bottle Beer Shop. Beers of all styles from the traditional to the adventurous are represented, from breweries both local to UK wide as well as those from North America, Scandinavia, Germany and Belgium. A good selection of lambic beers was noticeable.

On a recent visit bottled beers from Buxton, Thornbridge, Marble, The Kernel, Partizan, Fyne Ales, Weird Beard and Beavertown from the UK were spotted, and from further afield Evil Twin, Mikeller, De Molen, Cantillon and Nøgne O to name just a few.



So if you find yourself in the area or are a local who has not yet visited, go along and see for yourself what a great job Chris has done. Prices are very reasonable and you can find a great Christmas gifts for beer-loving friends and family. Brewtique is located at 17 Church Street, Macclesfield, near both bus and train stations. Opening hours are from Wednesday to Saturday 11am to 7pm.

CAMRA Discounts

We reported last month that **Albert's Chop House** on Albert Square was offering a 10% discount on cask ale to CAMRA members. Well no sooner had we gone to print than the pub revised this to an impressive 20% a pint. The pub's regular prices are far from cheap but CAMRA members can now enjoy a pint including regular offerings from Chorlton's Bootleg brewery for less than £3, which is good for that area of town.

Vale Inn, Bollington

The Bollington Brewing Company has announced a new team of fully trained bar and kitchen staff at their award-winning pub, the **Vale Inn**, on Adlington Road in Bollington.

New manager, John Gartland, heads the team and has been working with pub owners, Lee and Kirsty Wainwright, to make sure everything is running smoothly in the build up to Christmas. "Here at the Bollington Brewing Company, we never like to stand still for long," says owner Lee Wainwright.

Continued on page 21

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Christmas Markets

When you read this the Manchester Christmas markets will be in full swing. This year we are told they are bigger and better than ever. There's certainly plenty to eat and drink on offer – but amid the ocean of Germans beers and mulled wine, is there anything for the cask beer drinker?

Happily, yes there is. In the main market in Albert Square Dave Nuttall is back with the cask bar that has been a feature of this event over the past couple of years. The emphasis is on Lees' beers with one or two "guests" – Dunham Massey Winter Warmer was on one of the handpumps when OT dropped by. There are also a few bottled beers, notable Lees famous Vintage Harvest Ale. Vintages from 2008 and 2011 were available when we called and the 2013 brew should have joined them by now.

However walk across to Exchange Square and you'll come across a new two storey structure. The ground floor includes a hog roast and dimly lit bar (no cask there) but go upstairs to the "Vintage Lounge" and things are rather different. There a counter for tea and coffee and another for wine (mulled and otherwise), mulled cider and bubbly. The third bar boasts a row of half a dozen handpumps dispensing a range of cask beers. When OT called these came from Lancaster, Boggart and Outstanding breweries. Deliveries had been made by Marble and Brightside, with others to follow. The beer is £4 a pint (and £2.50 a half) but show your CAMRA card (assuming you have one) and you'll get 50p off a pint. There's no discount of halves. It's a very attractive place to have a beer and a very welcome addition to the Christmas Market drinks offer.

Heritage Awards

Local CAMRA branches have been presenting some of their local heritage pubs with certificates to mark their status as pubs with interiors of national historic interest. Among others, Stockport & South Manchester Branch have awarded certificates to the Turnpike in Withington, the Circus Tavern in Manchester City Centre and the Plough in Gorton. Pictured here are the licensees of the Circus (with CAMRA's Mark McConachie, right) and the Plough with their certificates.



The Circus on Portland Street is arguably the smallest pub in Manchester, with a wonderfully preserved 19th century interior comprising a small, one-person bar counter, drinking corridor and two rooms. It has recently been carefully refurbished. The Plough is a very old building, parts of which have functioned as a pub for about 200 years. It was fitted and extended in the latter part of the 19th Century and retains its layout and fittings largely intact. Owners Robinsons carried out a very sympathetic refurbishment-cum-restoration last year and the Plough now looks better than it has done for many years. Both the Circus and the Plough are listed Grade II.



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2002

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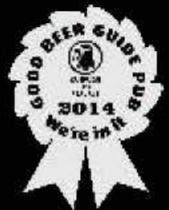


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sample
and enjoy

What a Year It's Been for Brightside Brewery

Carley Friedrich looks back

When I cast my mind back, this time last year we were frantically brewing three days a week and running our bakery at the same time. Our working days frequently ran from 4am-6pm, often seven days a week, and then continued in front of the computer screen when we finally arrived home. So many things have changed since then (not the long days though, just yet!)



As I write, we currently run a 2.5 barrel plant, however it was always the plan to scale up very quickly after settling into the unit in order to make enough beer to make the business viable. So, for a good two to three months Lance and dad worked very closely with our equipment manufacturer to plan and design every single aspect of the new 15 barrel plant which should have been delivered by time OT goes to print. As with our first set of equipment, we have worked hard to ensure this plant is designed to our requirements, and many aspects have been improved upon given the knowledge gained since the first attempt three years ago!



The other major development in our business is that we are finally selling our beer in bottles. The process was arduous to say the least; getting labels printed was a drama in itself, but now that the kit has arrived, fitted and synchronised everything is much more straightforward. We decided to bottle on site so that we could keep an eye on the quality of the beer, keep continuity of stock and have a faster turnaround from brewing to sale. It's also in line with our efforts to minimise our effect on the environment where possible, which is also why we are delivering our beer in bespoke wooden crates: we want to avoid creating cardboard and plastic waste as far as possible. Our challenge in the short term is to get the cask/ bottle ratio right as this is difficult with such small vessels, but once we're making 60 casks per brew this will no longer be an issue. The bottles are available for sale in various shops including Carrington's Chorlton in the Opening Times area. All are CAMRA RAIB (Real Ale in a Bottle) accredited, and are vegan and vegetarian as we don't use finings in our bottled products.



The final big news is that earlier in November, we won the SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers) North West Overall Champion (cask) Beer of the Festival with our Amarillo US style single hopped IPA. Due to the amount of work that we've had to get through since moving into the brewery, we didn't feel that we could afford the time to travel to Hawkshead – we certainly couldn't stop brewing, so we were unable to join in the festivities at the awards ceremony. We found out that we had won the award through texts and phone calls from fellow local brewers (Irwell and First Chop, who were also award winners) but I can assure you we had our own celebrations here in Bury! It was so unexpected as this was the first time we had entered the competition, but was hugely appreciated and we now eagerly await the national competition in Sheffield early next year.



BRIGHTSIDE BREWING COMPANY



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Brewery News

Micro, Regional and Family Brewers



Rtwo Dtoo Brewery

After a slow start during the summer the new brewery at Urmston's Steamhouse pub is now brewing twice a week. The RtwoDtoo is named after the triumvirate who run it: Rob Foster, who also owns the pub, Ron Parker and Danny Brownbill. That's two people whose names begin with R and one whose name begins with D, so it's a couple of Rs and a D as well. R Two. D Too. RtwoDtoo. Geddit?

All three of them were involved in setting up the half-barrel plant and developing the early test brews. Most of the hard graft now is being done by Ron, who's more or less full time in the brewery, while Rob and Danny are more likely to be seen in the pub, dispensing the finished product.



There are usually two brews a week, each producing two firkins. The most successful of the trial brews have been tweaked as the new house beers: Steamhopper IPA (4.9%), described by Danny as "generously hopped in keeping with the style, using a mix of Goldings and Target hops"; and Best Red (4.2%), which mutated from an early attempt at a best bitter. The Red uses lots of crystal malt and a single hop - Goldings - producing a darker bitter with "hints of hazelnut".

Still fermenting when OT called round, the next new brew was a German-style beer made with Pilsner malt and darker Munich malt. It's top fermented of course but still quite pale and generously hopped with Hallertau and Nelson Sauvin, intended to give a fruity aroma. It was expected to weigh in at 5.4%. Other experiments over the next few weeks will be a Christmas beer, probably involving some caramel malt and aiming at a "Christmas cake taste", and a Winter Warmer.

The brewers want their beers to be "as traditional as possible", with whole hops, no chemicals and nothing artificial, and all the work done by hand. The plan is to upgrade the brewing plant so that it can supply enough beer to keep two handpumps busy at the Steamhouse all through the week. The other six pumps will

continue to dispense a range of beers and brewing styles from independent breweries across the North West. The capacity of the brewing plant will be constrained by the limited site available, which is at the side of the Steamhouse, alongside the Liverpool platform at Urmston railway station. It is unlikely that the beers will ever be made available to other pubs or beer festivals, such is the demand for them locally.

Bootleg Brewery

Bootleg beers, brewed at the Horse & Jockey in Chorlton, continue to grow in popularity; they are available in over 30 pubs now. The latest special was brewed for Bonfire Night and proved so popular, being the first to sell out, that it may well become a regular. A gloriously rich stout at 4.6%, it deserves a regular spot in any real ale establishment. Beautifully balanced, it has enough caramel and malt to give it depth but without any cloying mouth feel. Very more-ish!

The beer for November is Gangster's Moll, a pale, easy drinking session ale, at 3.8%. It will be followed by the Christmas beer, intended to be based on Mistletoe with a twist. The kitchen will be introducing food matching. Holts have been very supportive of their new acquisition, including a new design for the pump clips. This will have a black background and white lettering with the Bootleg logo as standard but a varying picture for the various beers.

Happy Valley Brewery

Happy Valley Brewery, in Bollington, is a happy place these days, and owner Dave Hughes is a happy man. Why is this? Because his Black Out Rum Porter (4.4%) has been voted the Champion Beer of Cheshire for 2013. This is no mean achievement when you consider there are now 34 breweries in the county.

When OT contacted Dave he told us that everyone at the brewery was really pleased with this result. Black Out is a malty beer made with Maris Otter, chocolate malt and roast barley. It then has 25-year-old oak-aged Mount Gay rum added before a three month maturation period. It is one of three beers exclusively brewed for the Elektrik Bar in Chorlton but the good news is that to celebrate the win it is being made available to other outlets for a limited period – contact the brewery for details.

Lymm Brewery

Lymm Brewing Company has started brewing in Lymm; their first brew was done there at the beginning of October. Also the Costello family has applied for and got permission to open a new bar in Stockton Heath. This will be similar to Costello's Bar (Dunham Massey Brewery Tap)

and will be tied to both Dunham and Lymm breweries, though it may have a guest beer.

Robinsons

Lots of news from Robinsons where Trooper continues its march to world domination. Whether it's a casualty of Trooper's success, we don't know but time has been called on the brewery's other musical tie-in. The collaboration with Elbow, "Build a Rocket Boys" has now been discontinued.

Coming back though is the popular seasonal Tom & Berry which has been brewed for a second year. The brewery tasting notes say "Tom & Berry is a premium bitter brewed using Goldings hops and is paw-sitively the perfect companion for the cold winter weather. It has a rich and complex palate of roasted malt and biscuit, complemented by seasonal fruit and citrus notes"



Elsewhere awards seem to be flooding in. The bottled Ginger Tom has been voted the "World's Best Herb & Spice Beer" in the 2013 "World Beer Awards" while the company itself was voted Beer Champion at the British Beer & Pub Association awards and also Family Business of the Year at the EN Business Awards. Congratulations across the board, we think.

Correction Corner

We dropped a couple of clangers in the last issue. First we reported that **Privateer Brewery** had moved to Salford. Not so. It's just moved down the road to another, bigger, unit. More significantly wrong was our report about the **Magnet**. Contrary to what we reported it is probable that the brewery will be coming on line in the New Year rather than before Christmas. We also said that Sarah Bergin would be taking something of a backseat with the brewing. Not so at all. When the brewery opens Sarah will be very much hands on as brewer. Apologies all round.

ShinDigger

This is a new name on the Manchester beer scene. It's the project of two former Manchester Uni students, Paul Delamere and Paul Grant, who currently have their beer contract brewed at Outstanding Brewery in Bury. Just one beer had appeared to date – South Pacific Pale (4.5%) hopped with Motueka, Nelson Sauvin, Chinook and Cascade. A lager and Imperial IPA may be up next. Sadly it's all keg so far but cask hasn't been ruled out. Look out for them.

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Pub News

Covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Vale Inn continued



"We wanted to make sure customers continue to get the best possible service, so we've trained up new staff and introduced table service. At the same time, our new chefs have created a fabulous new menu in time for Christmas."

Customers can look forward to a festive meal that includes parsnip & sherry soup, roasted crown of Heathcoate's finest turkey with all the trimmings, and lemon posset with mulled berry compote and homemade shortbread for dessert. Meals can be enjoyed with the usual wide selection of locally and own-brewed beers, wines and ciders - this year the pub was awarded North West Regional CAMRA 'Cider Pub of the Year' and celebrated with a Cider Festival in August.

As well as making certain changes at the pub, Lee Wainwright is quick to point out that many of the things that make the pub special will be staying just as they are: "It's always been important for us that the Vale Inn is at the heart of the community here in Bollington, and customers have been fantastically supportive. Popular events like the brewery tour, the regular Monday quiz and the Bollington SciBar socials, will of course continue and we hope to build on their success in the future."

Pictured above: the new team at the Vale – Holly Arnold, John Gartland, Mark Ellis, Kirsten Wainwright and Lee Wainwright.

Flying Horse

The **Flying Horse** is a Greene King pub on Longstone Road in Woodhouse Park, on the edge of a new housing estate and business park. It's behind Heald Green railway station and in sight of the end of the runway at Manchester Airport.

It's pretty much what you get from this kind of chain pub: open plan and food offers advertised prominently. Having said that it is quite a bit more "pubby" than you might expect with a fair

amount of bench seating and extensive use of dark wood. On the right-hand side there is a "public bar" area with pool table and large-screen TV, and a sign saying "Over 18s only". The left-hand side with the conservatory is more restaurant-like. There's also a children's play area and outdoor seating (which will undoubtedly be popular with plane spotters in the summer months).



There are three cask beers – Greene King IPA, Old Speckled Hen, Abbot Ale. IPA is £2.95 a pint, the others £3.05. There are two sets of handpumps, but they're on each end of the long bar and aren't immediately obvious when you walk in. Although there are two other food-led pubs fairly close by – the Heald Green and the Tatton Arms – if the opening dinner time is anything to go by, there's more than enough passing as well as local trade for Greene King to make a go of it.

Levenshulme News

The previously-promised extra hand pumps have now been installed at the **Klondyke Club** in Levenshulme (it's on Burnage Range not far from the station) and three beers are currently being served. All are from the First Chop Brewing Arm and change regularly. The current offerings are Hop, a pale hop ale at 4.1%; Doc, an ultra pale using New Zealand hops also at 4.1%; and Syl at 6.2%, a porter recently awarded a bronze at this year's regional beer competition. The Klondyke is well worth a visit particularly on Sundays with the newly-introduced Sunday Lunches which are chef-prepared and reasonably priced. Bar snacks are also available Thursday to Sunday evenings.

Tiviot Shuts

The **Tiviot** on Tiviot Dale in Stockport has been a local favourite for many a year. Although quieter in the evenings it always had a lively and loyal lunchtime and afternoon following. Unfortunately it's in quite a poor structural

state, particularly the roof. Regular readers may recall that a couple of years ago Robinsons had to carry out some emergency repairs. Since then the brewery has been sending round structural engineers on a regular basis but the deterioration has continued apace. Long-serving licensee Dave Walker decided to retire last month (he had been at the pub for well over 30 years in total) Robinsons decided to call it a day. The pub closed on Saturday 16 November and on both that night and the previous Friday many locals dropped in to say farewell. Certainly when OT called on Friday night the pub was very busy with live music in the back room. We understand that the pub may now be demolished.



Pub Shorts

In Stockport the revitalised Pack Horse on the Market Place seems to go from strength to strength. The refurbishment is now complete with the walls now covered in pictures and prints. The cask ale offering remains impressive and the beers seem to be turning over well. To mark its break with the past the pub is now changing its name to the **Cocked Hat**.

Following the financial difficulties of its parent company, **Sanctuary** in Didsbury has closed. Compared to previous incarnations on this site, it was quite pleasant as Sanctuary, and the real ale usually well served albeit with a choice of only one or two and fairly

priced at around £3. There has been quite a lot of turnover this year in Didsbury, with new licensees at the **Royal Oak**, (Famous) **Crown** and the **Station** (pictured above) in the last few months, the **Didsbury Lounge** and **Expo** opening and **Cibo** and **Nido** reopening previous premises on a similar cafe / bistro bar model resulting in a rather crowded market.





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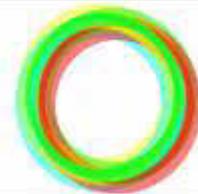
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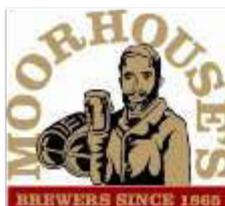
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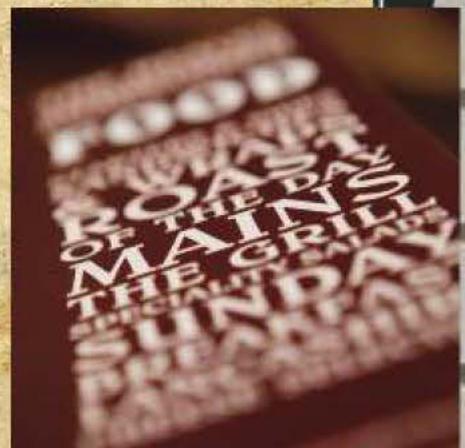
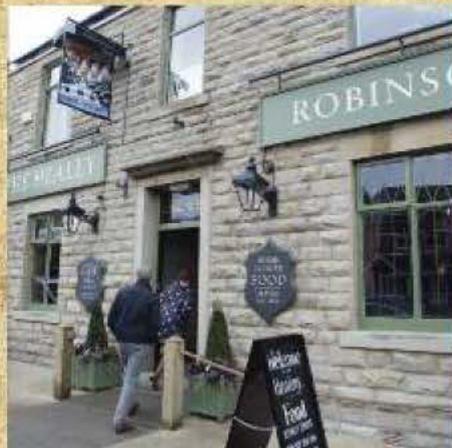
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