



June 2014

Opening

Times

The free local CAMRA magazine

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

Brewery Bonanza continues



Stockport Brewing Co and
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- See page 10

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Pub of the Month

The Nursery, Heaton Norris



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for June 2014 has been awarded to the Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris. Jim Flynn reports.

Over the years there have been accolades galore for the Nursery. Its classic unspoilt interior and well manicured bowling green to the rear are well known. However in 2013 the pub fell on relatively hard times with the very sudden and unexpected departure of the long standing licensee whose family had overseen the pub for decades and taken it to the pinnacle with 30 years in the Good Beer Guide and the award of CAMRA's National Pub of the Year in 2001. Sadly following this upheaval customers drifted away as rumours abounded.

The Nursery however is not a pub to be kept down and November brought in a new but highly experienced licensee, Brendan Adderley, who had previously done sterling work at the High Grove for 13 years. Brendan has laboured tirelessly to return the pub to its glory days. Once again the Nursery is attracting customers from miles around encouraged by the friendliness of the staff, the excellence of the food and the quality of the Hydes beers and guest ales.

If anything the beer range has improved with Hydes Original, Manchester Finest, 1863 and Owd Oak (yes that's two milds!) together with beers from their Beer Studio and new Lowry ranges. In addition there are always between two and four guest beers available. The lunches are also to be recommended, available six days a week, Tuesday to Sunday.

June could not be a better month for a Pub of the Month at the Nursery as with good weather you will be able to sit outside and maybe even watch a bowls match being fought out on the luscious green in front of you while sampling the excellent fare on offer. So why not join the local CAMRA branch to celebrate the return to form of an old favourite and make the award to Brendan and his staff on Thursday, 26th June when, I am sure, a great night will be enjoyed by all.

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 ¼ mile of the door. Don't miss it!

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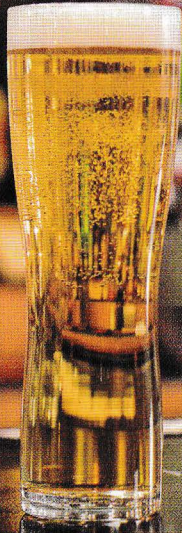
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What's On

Information, Notes and Local CAMRA Branch Events



Opening Times - Information

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* Transport for Greater Manchester: www.tfgm.com. 0161 228 7811

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* Derbyshire: <http://www.derbybus.info/>

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

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Local CAMRA Events

Wednesday 11th – Salford Crawl: Mark Addy 7.30pm; Egerton Arms 8.15pm plus two others. (NM)

Thursday 12th – Branch Meeting (including Meet the Brewer with Ticketybrew): Magnet, Wellington Road North, Stockport, Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 11th – Hale Social: Moose, Ashley Road 8.00pm; Cheshire Midland 9.00pm; Railway 9.30pm; Tatton 10.30pm. (T&H)

Saturday 14th – AGM and Branch Meeting (followed by Hyde stroll): Sportsman, Mottram Road, Hyde. Starts 1.00pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 18th – Branch Meeting: Crown & Anchor, Cateaton St, Manchester. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Friday 20th – Cheadle East Stagger: Cheshire Line, Manchester Road 7.30pm; Royal Oak, Stockport Road 8.30pm. (SSM)

Saturday 21st – Rail Crawl: Burscough Bridge to Wigan. Check website for details. (NM)

Saturday 21st – Flixton/Urmston Social: Church Inn 12pm; Flixton Ex-Serviceman's Club 1.30pm; Flixton Con Club 3.0pm; Tim Bobbin 4.30pm; Steamhouse 5.30pm; Nelson 6.30pm. (T&H)

Wednesday 25th – Midsummer's Day Gardens Crawl: Marble Arch 7.30pm; Angel 8.15pm; Bar Fringe 9.30pm. (NM)

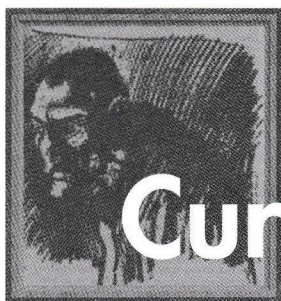
Thursday 26th – Pub of the Month presentation to the Nursery, Green lane, Heaton Norris. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Saturday 28th – Social trip to Brampton and Chesterfield. Details and names at next meeting. (HPNC)

Saturday 28th – Leek Pub Crawl. Bus departs Macclesfield 12.30pm or meet at Den Engel, Leek, at 1.15pm. (MEC)

Sunday 29th – Chorlton Festival set-up. St Clements Church, Edge Lane. From 12.30pm. Volunteers needed. (T&H)

Wednesday 2nd July – Higher Blackley Crawl: Three Arrows, Middleton Rd 7.30pm; Duke of Wellington, 9.00pm. (NM)



Curmudgeon

Chicken and Egg Situation

What's the purpose of CAMRA? "To campaign for real ale", of course. However, something that isn't appreciated as widely as it should be is that CAMRA actually invented "real ale" as a concept – it didn't spring into life to defend something that was widely understood but felt to be under threat. When the four founder members had their famous discussion in that pub in the west of Ireland, they had a general sense that something was going wrong with British beer, but they didn't know exactly what. At first, the organisation was called the Campaign for the Revitalisation of Ale. It was only later, once they had looked into the subject more thoroughly, that the current definition of "real ale" was arrived at.

In the context of the British draught beer market at the time, it was actually a pretty good way of sorting out the sheep from the goats. But, even then, the wiser heads knew very well it wasn't a universal yardstick for good beer. There was effectively no real ale anywhere in the world outside Great Britain, but that didn't mean there was no good beer. For a period of thirty years, the concept of real ale went largely unchallenged, and even in 2000 there was little "good beer" available on draught in the UK that didn't qualify. The introduction of nitrokeg "smooth" beers in the 1990s gave a new impetus to the real vs keg battle.

However, in the 21st century, beer has suddenly become fashionable again, and there has been a huge upsurge of interest in new and different styles and flavours, especially amongst younger drinkers. But a growing proportion of this new beer falls outside the definition of real ale, and thus presents CAMRA with a dilemma. Many of these young beer enthusiasts are happily mixing cask and keg in places like the Port Street Beer House or the RedWillow bar in Macclesfield, or even sticking entirely to keg in the BrewDog bar in Manchester. If you want to get them involved in CAMRA, telling them that all keg beer is chemical fizz isn't going to get you very far, and saying "that's nothing to do with us, we campaign for real ale" isn't much better. And to argue that keg Thornbridge Jaipur is no better than Watneys Red Barrel, or that Moravka lager is on a par with Fosters, is turning what was once a useful yardstick into blinkered dogma.

It is possible to overstate the scale of the issue – after all, many pubgoers will never encounter a "craft keg" tap from one month to the next, while you'll struggle to find even a half-decent pub without real ale. But it isn't going to go away, and is likely to grow in importance with the passage of time. In the long term, there is a risk that it will lead to a loss of credibility and marginalisation.

In reality, CAMRA has always campaigned on subjects well beyond real ale, such as opening hours, beer duty and licensing reform, and has also brought cider under its wing even though it has less to do with beer than whisky does. It presents itself as a champion of all beer drinkers and pubgoers, not just real ale drinkers. So, looking forward, surely it should adopt a more open-minded attitude to non-real beers while still retaining its core objective of protecting and promoting British cask beer. It simply needs to accept that CAMRA publications and spokespeople are allowed to discuss, review and praise non-real products rather than just pretending they don't exist. As private individuals, many of its leading lights do just that, but officially it remains beyond the pale.

In the long term, though, this is probably going to happen through a slow but steady grass-roots revolt rather than by official changes in policy. It could be compared with the way a majority of Catholics have come to embrace contraception despite the official hierarchy of the church remaining dead set against it.

Curmudgeon Online: curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

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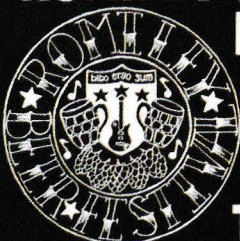
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Stagger

Jim Flynn visits Ladybarn, Fallowfield and Rusholme



We started our Stagger on Ladybarn Lane - familiar territory for me as I lived here when I first moved to Manchester almost 40 years ago.



First up was the **Brewers Arms**. This has changed hands since our visit (under new management from 23 May) but when we called there was only one cask beer, Jennings Cumberland Ale, but this is a massive improvement on the past as for many years it was a keg only pub. The beer was in reasonable condition.

These days the Brewers is the only pub in Ladybarn, as round the corner the Talbot has been knocked down, the Derby is now residential accommodation and Robinsons sold off the White Swan to a property developer a year or so ago. However all is not lost as the White Swan, known by many as the 'Mucky Duck', has been saved. The **Ladybarn Club** which resided in the old British Legion around the back swapped premises with the property developer and has now moved into the pub.



We had an invite from one of their members, an Opening Times reader, but I must admit on walking towards the club we almost turned away thinking it was shut. We saw a light and decided to press the bell. On being warmly invited in I was struck how the place had been opened out with the bar being moved to the back of the pub. The old vault has however been kept as a cosy snug. The place has been cleaned and brightened up and we were told that upstairs there was a room housing two large snooker tables. There were two cask beers, Robinson's Unicorn and a guest beer, Shepherd Neame's Dragon Fire which was in very good form. The place is run by an enthusiastic band of volunteers and I think

they should stop hiding their light under a bushel by proclaiming they are open for business (***They tell us that they now do this - ed***).

So on we walked to Fallowfield and the **Friendship** (pictured below) where Hydes have shown the value of investing in a pub. The Friendship is large and very well furnished with wood panelling and sofas as well as standard pub seating with distinct drinking areas around a horse shoe bar. Despite the fact that it was out of the university term time it was busy with a good mix of customers. The beer range was excellent with 1863, Original, Manchester's Finest, Lowry Dispute, Beer Studio Copper Cascade and Dark Odyssey from Hydes plus Copper Dragon Silver Myst, McMullen's Fool Hardy, Jennings Lakeland Stunner and Farmhouse Scrumpy from Gwynt y Ddraig. We found all the beers we tried to be on good form.

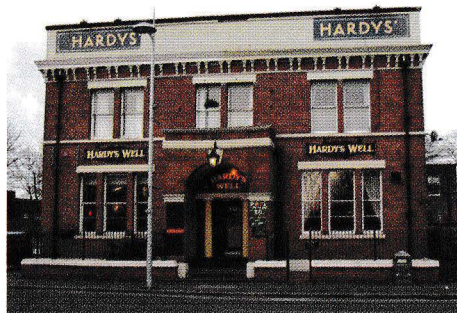


Across the road is the **Great Central**, a large Wetherspoons pub under a new block of student flats. The large rectangular, rather uninspiring, building has been broken up with columns and artefacts creating a surprisingly intimate feel to the place. It's clearly thriving doing what Wetherspoons do best; providing an excellent value night out. The beer range has noticeably improved over recent years and the quality was also found to be more than up to scratch. Just as we arrived the delightful Carley Friedrich from Brightside Brewing Company was finishing a Meet the Brewer session and there were three of her beers on the bar - Our Town, Amarillo and Manchester Skyline - along with Lancaster's Raspberry Rose, Hilden Nut Brown and RCH Chocolate Porter.

Across the road running alongside the Great Central is **Wählbar** which opened almost two years ago. The bar obviously suffers out of term time as it was very quiet on our visit. It's simply furnished and decorated, and I found it a little soulless, though others in our party disagreed. The XT Pale Ale having just gone off there was only one beer available, Brightside's Our Town which was a little cloudy. Opinion was divided as to whether this adversely affected the taste.

Across Wilbraham Road is the Hydes

complex of **256** and the **Sir Joseph Whitworth**. 256 is a large former church hall opposite the Owens Park student residences. On entering into the almost deserted premises I noticed opposite the rather forsaken bar there was a mezzanine drinking space whilst at the back there was a pool room and outside an extensive drinking area. I assume the lack of customers was due to the absence of the students. There were two beers available - Hydes Dark Odyssey and Manchester's Finest but on ordering it was clear that the bar staff went next door to the Sir Joseph Whitworth. The beer was in reasonable form but we collectively decided that it was not worth going next door for exactly the same beers. Normally the beer range is wider than at the 256 but not tonight so on we went to the Font only find the pumpclip turned around and no real ale (although Westons Old Rosie was available).



So our next stop was in Rusholme at **Hardy's Well** just before the start of the curry mile. Before you enter you notice the huge poem by Lemn Sissay, which dominates the wall facing the beer garden. The rambling interior has a comfortable lived-in feel with an eclectic mix of furniture and an equally cosmopolitan mix of locals and students. It was moderately busy for a Friday night and we found the Taylors Landlord was in better form than their Golden Best (the Wells Bombardier, Sharp's Doom Bar, Robinsons Dizzy Blonde and Weston's Old Rosie were not tried).

From this point on every other pub that was open 10 years ago has been shut (for example the **Welcome**, **Huntsman** and **Osbourne House**) so we dodged the traffic and went on up right into the heart of the Curry Mile to the **Albert** a Hydes pub on Walmer Street, 50 metres or so from the main drag. This two roomed pub has well-used feel to it but is by no means shabby, and every wall in the place shouts of the Emerald Isle. Hydes Original is the only cask beer available and was again not a bad pint, indeed much improved from previous staggers. So ended not a bad stagger at all but one that might be better undertaken when the students are in town.

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ALC. 5.1% VOL.



Chorlton Beer & Cider Festival

John O'Donnell with a preview of this year's event

Next month sees a landmark for the Chorlton Beer & Cider Festival as it celebrates its 10th anniversary from 3rd to 5th July. It was in 2005 when St Clement's Church approached Trafford & Hulme CAMRA to see if they would assist in organising a small festival to raise some funds for much-needed repairs to the church - not quite the crumbling spire, but it was getting there! That first festival featured just over 30 beers and attracted around 500 customers. How times have changed - the 2013 event saw over 90 beers and a little short of 4,000 thirsty drinkers.

To mark the 10th anniversary, the festival is growing again. With no more space on the site to fit in more people, it is expanding the only way it can - by adding an extra day. While there is always a great atmosphere with the church grounds packed with beer and cider lovers on Friday and Saturday, the organisers have decided to try something different with a limited numbers preview evening on Thursday 3rd July. With entrance by advance ticket only, there will be the full choice of cask ales but without the queues at the bars. It is hoped that it will give Chorltonians (and the festival volunteers) an altogether more relaxed introduction to the festival before the regular fun and frolics begin on Friday.

There will be more beer and cider than ever before with over 50 ciders and perries already ordered and the Trafford & Hulme cellar team thinking they've found a way to squeeze in 97 different cask ales and increase the quantity available to see if they can stay open until the end of Saturday for the second year in a row. Two of the rising stars of the brewing world will be coming together to brew this year's Chorlton Festival Ale, which will be a collaboration between Manchester's Blackjack Beers and Crewe's Offbeat brewery. At the time of going to press, brewers Rob Hamilton (Blackjack) and Michelle Kelsall (Offbeat) hadn't decided what they plan to brew, but one thing that is for certain from these two brewers is

that it won't be a dull session bitter.

Bury's Outstanding Brewery is sponsoring the festival and will have a good selection of their beers on the bar including their new Junga single hop IPA and the ever excellent Outstanding Stout. There will be a couple of beers from our newest local brewery - Craftsman - as well as established favourites such as RedWillow, Marble and Beartown. The festival is also pleased to have been able to obtain a cask of the return of Brendan Dobbin's Yakima Grande Hoppy Pale Ale - see page 10 for details.

There will be live music from local Manchester bands in the church grounds on both Friday and Saturday evenings. Fridays headliners are That Manchester Sound, a tribute band who play the best songs from Manchester's rich musical heritage from The Buzzcocks through Oasis to the Courteners. On Saturday, the festival will welcome The Fuss who specialise in all the very popular indie classics including The Stone Roses, Kings of Leon and others from the Brit-pop era.

Tickets for the Thursday Preview Evening will be available from the Beech Inn, Beech Road, Chorlton from Saturday 7th June while stocks last. Entry on Friday and Saturday will be pay on the gate. A new fast track entry is being introduced where £10 will cover your entrance, a souvenir glass, a copy of the festival programme and a £4 beer token so you can head straight to the bars. Opening times are Thursday 6pm - 10pm; Friday 5pm - 10.30pm; Saturday 1pm - 9.30pm. The festival has a brand new website for 2014 with all the details of the event - visit www.chorltonbeerfestival.org.uk. You can also keep up to date with all the latest information via twitter by following @ChorlBeerFest and on facebook.com/ChorltonBeerFestival.

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St Clement's Church, Edge Lane, Chorlton

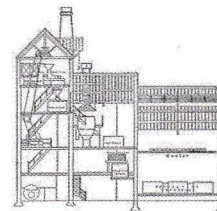
90+ Cask Ales • 50+ Ciders & Perries • Bottled World Beers • Live Music • Food

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ENTRY £10 inc £4 beer tokens, souvenir glass & programme
Preview Thurs 3rd (6-10pm, ticket only - see website)

www.chorltonbeerfestival.org.uk @ChorlBeerFest

What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region



Railway arches seem to be the premises of choice for many of the new breweries opening up around Greater Manchester. Opening Times knows of half a dozen and they have now been joined by two more.

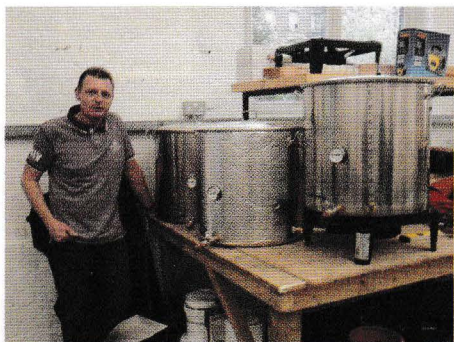
Stockport Brewing Co

By the time you read this a brand new eight barrel brewing kit will have been installed at Arch 14, Heaton Lane. Stockport Brewing Co is a joint venture between Steve Alexander (licensee of the nearby Crown) and Andy Pass. It's an entirely separate business to the Crown although the pub will act as the brewery tap, always featuring at least two of the brewery's beers.



Andy will be the head brewer and in preparation for the role has attended a course at Brewlab in Sunderland. His background in beer is one of an enthusiast who has been interested in the subject for 10 years or more. He's also known Steve for many years and at one stage was Steve's apprentice but they now joke that the boot is on the other foot!

So why the leap into commercial brewing? Beer is a passion for both of them and they each wanted a fresh challenge. With the continued growth of the interest in beer generally this seemed the right time to launch the new venture. The official launch coincided with Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. The beers on sale then were brewed by Andy elsewhere but at all times the emphasis has been and will be on quality.



The aim is to have a core range of three or four beers and the pair will be seeking customer feedback from regulars at the Crown across the road. There is also a small experimental kit (pictured above) to try out new recipes.

The launch beers were: Ginger Tinge (4.2%) - fresh and crispy hopped bitter with a ginger

bite, Crown Best Bitter (4.2%) - golden premium bitter double hopped with a dry finish, Easy Blonde (3.8%) - quenching session ale with top notes of grapefruit, and Citra (3.8%) - smooth hopped blonde beer with subtle tropical fruits and a lime burst finish.

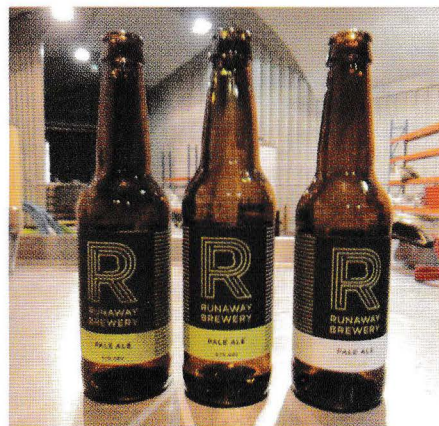
There should be a tap bar open at the brewery from Thursday to Saturday between 4.00 and 10.00pm. Even more interesting though are the plans for a second regular outlet which will take the point of a "micro pub" elsewhere in Stockport. Exciting times indeed.

Runaway Brewery

The railway arches down the road from the Marble Arch are starting to become crowded with breweries. Marble and Black Jack breweries are famously near neighbours and now they have been joined by Runaway Brewery just down the way on Dantzig Street.



This is the project of Mark Welsby (pictured above) and Darren Clayson, both of whom hail from Northampton. In fact Darren, who will be dealing with all of the admin work is still based there, but Mark has been in the North West (based in Old Trafford) for some years now.



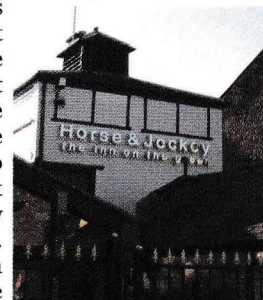
Mark's a former landscape architect with a background in engineering. So why the career change? Mark and Darren had both been involved in the "social side" of the beer scene for some years and had been talking

about brewing for some time. Witnessing the brewery boom in the United States prompted them to take the plunge and so Runaway Brewery was born.

The kit should produce five and a half barrels at a time and came from Bespoke Ales when that brewery upgraded. Test brewing was underway as we went to press with the intention that the beers would be launched by the end of June. Expect to see the following: Pale Ale (4.7%), IPA (5.5%), American Brown Ale (5.9%) and Smoked Porter (6.3%). Initially the beers will be available either bottled conditioned or keykeg. We think that cask will also not be too long in coming.

Bootleg Brewery

Brewing is progressing well at Bootleg. Such is the success that it seems to have inspired Holts, the parent company, to use its small plant to produce a new range of beers. They may be a different range than those produced at Chorlton, but carry the Bootleg brand and will be sold in the Horse & Jockey. Those sold locally will be the local brew, while the Holts plant will produce the same recipes on a larger scale for a wider market. A new beer for the summer season will be a summer ale made with nettles and Citra hops. Already in progress is a range of Pale Ales with fruits; cherry has been out, blueberry will follow.



Brewery Shorts

The opening of Stockport Brewing Co will bring the total of the town's breweries up to five - but it's not stopping there. Hot on the heels of Stockport Brewing will be the new in-house brewery at the **Magnet**. The equipment had arrived as we went to press - so hopefully a fuller report next time. Rumours also circulate about at least another couple of Stockport breweries - more news if and when we get it.

Finally - the return of a legend. Older readers may recall the West Coast beers produced by Brendan Dobbin at the Kings Arms in Chorlton-on Medlock. His flagship beer was **Yakima Grande Pale Ale** - one of the first really hop forward beers in the UK. Well, Brendan has teamed up with Conwy Brewery to recreate this renowned beer. It will use the same yeast strain, hops and malt as the original. It was due to make its debut at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival with a reprise at Chorlton in early July.