

OPENING TIMES

MAY 2015 / FREE



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OPENING TIMES

Opening Times is published by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, with assistance from the Trafford & Hulme and High Peak & North East Cheshire Branches. Additional material is supplied by the North Manchester and Macclesfield & E Cheshire Branches. 7,400 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth and distributed throughout Stockport, Trafford, Manchester and Tameside. There are also many outlets in Macclesfield & East Cheshire, High Peak and Glossop.

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

* East Cheshire: 0300 123 5500
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport.aspx

* Derbyshire: www.derbysbus.info

Disclaimer

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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Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Front cover - Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Don't miss it!

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What's On

Local CAMRA Branch Events, Information and News

Your Local CAMRA Contacts & Websites

Stockport & South Manchester (SSM)

www.ssmcamra.co.uk

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

North Manchester (NM)

www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk

Contact: Phil Booton; phbooton@hotmail.com

High Peak & NE Cheshire (HPNC)

www.hpneccamra.org.uk

Contact: Stewart Taylor 07907 714826; taylorshouse@supanet.com

Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)

www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

Contact: Tony Icke 01625 861833; bicke@madasafish.com

Trafford & Hulme (T&H)

www.thcamra.org.uk

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

Local CAMRA Events

All welcome at these events

Sunday 3rd – Tutored Cider Tasting and Cider Pub of the Year Presentation: Railway, Avenue Street, Portwood, Stockport. Starts 2.00pm. (SSM)

Tuesday 5th – Cider Pub of the Year presentation: Font, Manchester Road, Chorlton. From 8.00pm. (T&H)

Wednesday 6th – Pub of the Year Presentation: Crown & Kettle, Oldham Road, Manchester. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 7th – Branch Meeting: Old Market Tavern, Altrincham. Starts 8.00pm. (T&H)

Saturday 9th – Pub of the Year presentation to the Magnet, Wellington Road North, Stockport. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Monday 11th – Branch Meeting: Navigation, Stockport Road, Marple. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 13th – Mild Month Crawl: Marble Arch, Rochdale Road 7.30pm; Smithfield, Swan Street 8.30pm; finish in Crown & Kettle. (NM)

Thursday 14th – Branch Meeting: Crown, Buxton Road, Great Moor. Guest speaker from Robinsons. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

Thursday 14th – Pub of the Year presentation to the Knott, Deansgate, Manchester. From 8.00pm. (T&H)

Friday 15th – Chorlton and Whalley Range social: Nip & Tipple 8.00pm; Hillary Step 8.45pm; Jam Street Café 9.30pm; De Nada 10.15pm; Font 11.00pm. (T&H)

Saturday 16th – Social at Glossop North End Beer Festival, Surrey Street, Glossop. From 2.00pm. (HPNC)

Monday 18th – Stockport Beer Festival (2014) Bronze Award presentation to Tickety Brew. Details to be arranged – contact John Clarke (0775 383 6898 or stocam@btinternet.com). (SSM)

Monday 18th – Campaigning Meeting: Church Inn, Church Lane, Mobberley. Starts 8.00pm. (MEC)

Wednesday 20th – **Branch EGM**: Hare & Hounds, Shudehill, Manchester. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Friday 22nd – City Centre Village and Chinatown Stagger: Molly House, Richmond Street 7.30pm; Old Monkey, Portland Street 8.30pm. (SSM)

Saturday 23rd – York Day Out: Visiting the beautiful city of York and some excellent pubs! 9.52am train from Victoria, return 6.41pm to Oxford Road. Check for advance tickets. (T&H)

Saturday 23rd – Social at the Beehive Beer Festival, Albion Road, New Mills. From 2.00pm. (HPNC)

Tuesday 26th – Pub of the Month presentation to the Kenilworth, Cheadle Road, Cheadle Hulme. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 27th – **Special Meeting to discuss City Centre Branch proposals**: Pie & Ale, The Hive, Lever Street, Manchester. Starts 7.00pm. More details from Branch Contact. (NM)

Wednesday 3rd June – Social: Grocer's micropub, Liverpool Road, Cadishead. From 7.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 4th June – Branch Meeting: Timperley Taverners Club, Timperley, WA14 5AD. Starts 8.00pm. (T&H)

Social Media

Many of the local CAMRA branches have Facebook and Twitter accounts which you can follow:



Stockport & South Manchester:
www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA

Trafford & Hulme: www.facebook.com/thcamra

Macclesfield & East Cheshire:
www.facebook.com/pages/Macclesfield-East-Cheshire-CAMRA/106975496056067

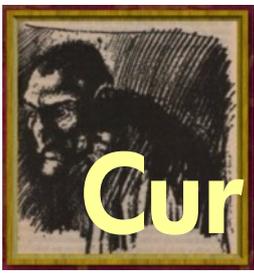
Stockport & South Manchester: @SSMCAMRA

Trafford & Hulme: @THCAMRA

North Manchester: @NorthMancsCAMRA

Macclesfield & East Cheshire: @MECCAMRA





Curmudgeon

Lilacs out of the Dead Land

By the time you read this, there's a distinct chance George Osborne will no longer be Chancellor of the Exchequer. But, in his budget in March, he cut beer duty for the third time in a row, something unparalleled in history. Some have pooh-poohed this, saying that a penny a pint duty cut is neither here nor there, and most pub operators haven't applied it anyway. But in reality the comparison is not with a duty freeze, but with the continued application of the beer duty escalator, which would have resulted in a pint in the pub being 30 or 40p dearer by now.

There can be little doubt that three years of small beer duty cuts, combined with the economic recovery, have delivered a much-needed shot in the arm to the pub trade. In 2014, beer sales in pubs fell by just 0.8%, the lowest figure in fifteen years. Yes, it's still a small decline, but it's one that many other businesses such as print newspapers would die for. A report by the Centre for Economic and Business Research has claimed that the beer duty reductions have already saved over 1,000 pubs from closure.

A couple of years ago, all was doom and gloom, with pubs closing left, right and centre, and Robinsons' pub cull shutting many much-loved but no longer viable locals. But the tide seems to have turned. Entirely new bars have sprung up such as the Spinning Top and Heaton Hops, the long-closed Bambooza on Stockport Market Place has returned to life as Live!, and our local family brewers have been spending large sums on revamping pubs such as the Baker's Vaults, Platform 5 and the Griffin in Heald Green. There's certainly a new sense of confidence in the air.

However, we shouldn't forget that this upsurge is largely confined to town and city centres and prosperous suburbs. The wider social trends that have contributed to the decline have not gone away, and it's still reckoned that, across the country, thirty pubs are closing every week.

Bring Back Plates!

Go in any pub or restaurant nowadays that has the slightest aspiration to be fashionable, and the odds are that you will have your meal served, not on a plate, but on a roofing slate, a chopping board, a baking tray or even just a plank of wood. Your chips may be stacked on their end in a mug, salad under an upturned wine glass and vegetables in a flowerpot. Some of the worst examples highlighted on the Twitter account @WeWantPlates include bread in slippers, chips in a miniature shopping trolley, steak on a meat cleaver and mushy peas in a latté glass.

Not too long ago, people were complaining about square plates replacing round ones, but this is taking things to a whole new level. There are obvious practical objections, in that an entirely flat surface does nothing to stop food sliding or dripping off the edge, and you have to wonder how thoroughly chunks of wood are washed, especially those with cracks in them. Some types of containers may make it physically difficult to actually eat the food from them.

But ultimately this is just a rather pathetic attempt to come across as funky, artisanal and cutting-edge. Anything, no matter how absurd, is better than a boring old round plate. We all know that very often the food's just popped out of a microwave and they're not actually slaughtering pigs round the back. However, Wetherspoons are bucking the trend – not so long ago they replaced plain square plates with very retro-looking round ones with blue and white patterns. It might be a good idea for more pubs to follow suit and stop opening themselves up to ridicule.

Curmudgeon Online:
curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

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Saturday May 23rd

23MAY2015

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and from Jolly Angler 1229
then approximately hourly till late
this year also picking up in Stevenson Square
full details see northmanchester.camra.org.uk

You've heard about the **Star**, Salford's first co-operatively-owned pub, but never got round to going? What about Holt's **Duke of York** or **Union Tavern**, or the **Royal Oak** in Gorton, all well off the beaten track? Then there's Urmston's **Prairie Schooner**, Stretford's **Sip Club** and in Levenshulme, **Fred's Ale House** amongst the newbies. How about getting to them all, and in just one day?

Ambitious, certainly, but possible on Saturday May 23rd, when CAMRA's Bus to the Pub again runs its hourly service, linking these and many others. For only £5 (£4.50 for members) your ticket allows you to travel all day, getting on and off where you choose on our 30 mile route. Buy in advance from any of the pubs on the route and it's only £4.50 for each passenger.

We offer this bus service to remind everyone who loves pubs and good beer that not everything is concentrated in the city centre. The outer districts are not always well linked with each other, but for this one day you can get from Eccles to Higher Broughton, from Gorton to Urmston or Fallowfield to inner Salford with our Bus to the Pub. And home again, right round the circle. Passengers each receive a free booklet giving full details of each pub, its beers and prices, and where to eat, in the pub itself or somewhere nearby.

You can join us at any of the pub stops shown in the timetable, plus Stevenson Square, outside Rosy Lee Tea Rooms! But you don't need to come into the city centre. Our route crosses all Manchester radial bus, rail and tram routes, so wherever you're travelling from, you will intersect our route. The full details of these interchange points are also on the website (see poster left). Just look out for our red double-deckers.

A two-hour circuit, lots of pubs, but don't even think of trying them all at one go. They're all too good for that, and we want everyone to be left only with memories of a great day out.

Humphrey Higgins

It was with sadness that Opening Times learned of the recent death of founding editor Humphrey Higgins after a long illness.

The launch of Opening Times in June 1984 was Humphrey's idea and it was his drive and determination that saw it through the early days when production was often a financially-threadbare "seat of the pants" affair. At the time it was an insert in *What's Doing*, a magazine produced by the North Manchester Branch. However Humphrey oversaw its relaunch as an independent publication, with a much bigger print run, in December 1985 since when we have not looked back.

Very much a CAMRA stalwart, Humphrey was a permanent fixture on the local branch committee until he left the organisation in 1987. He was also a familiar figure nationally as he worked regularly at many beer festivals up and down the country. Outside CAMRA he was very active in the Labour Party and also worked for many years at the White Swan in Fallowfield, in the early days one of the hubs of what was then South Manchester CAMRA. Our photograph shows him behind the bar there.

His contribution to CAMRA, and particularly to Opening Times, was huge. Indeed without Humphrey we probably wouldn't be here today. Our sympathies go to his family and friends. **JC**



Pub of the Month

The Kenilworth, Cheadle Hulme



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for May is the Kenilworth on Cheadle Road in Cheadle Hulme. Jim Flynn reports.

This large, open plan 1930s pub is often overlooked, being away from the main drag on the way out of Cheadle Hulme towards Cheadle. It has an emphasis on pub games, quizzes, occasional karaoke, football on TV and good value food. So the fact that the Kenilworth also serves quality cask beers, often from local micros, can go unnoticed by some perhaps less perceptive CAMRA members. This would be a mistake because landlord John Powell knows how to run a good pub and there are usually three well-kept cask ales from which to choose. As a result this ultra-friendly hostelry is absolutely thriving!

John and Annette have been at the pub for 14 years. Originally John was the manager but latterly he has leased the pub from Spirit who themselves have a long term lease from a property company (the machinations of big business!!). Having reintroduced real ale into the pub he is passionate about his cask beers and often has beers from Mobberley Ales (one of the brewers lives nearby and is a pub regular). This year John jumped at the chance to join Mild Magic such is his enthusiasm.

So why not join the local CAMRA branch to celebrate the award which will be presented to John, Annette and their staff on Tuesday, 26th May (NB note the change from the normal date due to the Stockport Beer and Cider Festival) when I am sure we will all be made royally welcome by these very friendly people. Come along for a great night as we congratulate them on an outstanding job well done!

X57/157 buses from Manchester to Woodford, which go through Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle and East Didsbury go past the door and the 369 from Stockport stops just a couple of minutes away at the junction of Cheadle Road and Turves Road. Cheadle Hulme station is less than 10 minutes walk away.



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.

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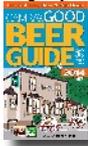
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Chorlton Beer Festival 2015

While the focus this month might be on the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, following on not far behind, the 11th Chorlton Beer & Cider Festival will return to the church and grounds of St Clement's on Edge Lane from Thursday 2nd to Saturday 4th July. As ever, the festival is organised by St Clement's in association with Trafford & Hulme CAMRA, with the assistance of the amazing folks at Outstanding Beers.



Once again there will be over 90 real ales on offer split across two bars. One bar will celebrate the unprecedented growth in local breweries over the last 12 months by exclusively featuring beers from Greater Manchester breweries. Of course great beer doesn't just come from this fair city so the second bar will feature the best from Cheshire, Cumbria, Merseyside and beyond.

The festival will be hosting the Golden Ales round of CAMRA's Champion Beer Of Britain competition for the North West region - a perfect fit for summer. Equally summery will be the range of over 50 ciders and perries on the outdoor cider bar. The new World Beers bar will feature bottled beers from the four corners of the world from Europe to the Americas and beyond.

There will be a range of street food on offer in the grounds and live music on Friday and Saturday evening. The Thursday evening will again be a quieter preview evening with limited entry - tickets will be on sale from the festival website. Look out for the full preview in the next edition of *Opening Times* for details on the food, music and beers on offer. Times, ticket details and all the latest news can also be found at www.chorltonbeerfestival.org.uk or on twitter at @ChorlBeerFest.

Trafford & Hulme Club of the Year

Trafford & Hulme Branch is fortunate in having a number of clubs in its area doing an excellent job in selling and promoting quality cask ale. However, it is **Flixton Conservative Club** which continues to set the benchmark and for that reason it has been selected as the Trafford & Hulme Branch Club of the Year 2015. This completes their hat-trick of titles, having gained the same accolade in both 2013 and 2014. This is a reflection on how hard the Club works to ensure that it not only maintains its already high standards but continues to develop and push even higher.

The Club now has six handpumps in permanent use on the downstairs bar, five of them dispensing ever-changing guest ales with the remaining pump normally used for the regular Theakston's Best Bitter. The guest ales are acquired from various breweries and regular support is given to many of our local producers (Dunham Massey, Brightside, Prospect, Bank Top, Coach House and Allgates to name just a few). Complementing the extensive range of cask ales are a number of excellent bottles from near and far with beers from local brewery Ticketybrew joining an impressive selection from America and Belgium (including some Trappist beers). Not content with downstairs, the recent addition of a further five hand pumps on the bar in the upstairs function room has enabled the Club to organise a number of special events, with their monthly "Brewery Nights" proving to be particularly popular.



The Easter Weekend also saw the Club hold its 4th Annual Beer Festival with brews from Lancashire and Yorkshire helping to give this year's event a "War of the Roses" theme. Good timing led to the Branch holding its April Meeting at the Club just as the Beer Festival had begun. As well as being able to try a number of fantastic beers we were also provided with a very much appreciated buffet (*thank you Sharon!*). The opportunity was also taken on the night to present the award and to pass on well-deserved congratulations to everyone at Flixton Conservative Club on their fantastic achievement.

The friendly and knowledgeable team at Flixton Conservative Club, under the expert stewardship of Nigel and Sharon Porter, is proud of the quality of its cask ales and of its Cask Marque rating. They are also very appreciative of the recognition and support they continue to receive from CAMRA. This is a club well worth making the effort to visit, perhaps on one of their Brewery Nights or maybe include it as part of your "Mild Magic" trail. The Club are participating in Mild Magic for the first time and Nigel has lined up some multi-award-winning beers for the event.

The Club, located on the corner of Flixton Road and Chassen Road can be easily reached using public transport with regular trains stopping at Urmston (some at Chassen Road) and a number of bus routes also serving the area (the 255 actually passes the door).

Blossoms, Heaviley and Crown, Great Moor

Last month's Stagger included a couple of errors about two of the pubs featured. We reported that the Blossoms had installed a pool table in one of the front rooms. Not so – landlord Jerry Evans has been in touch to tell us that in fact it's a bar billiards table he's put in. It's good to see yet another outlet for this excellent pub game (the Railway, Portwood is another local pub with bar billiards).

We also dropped a slight clanger about the Crown in Great Moor. We said there were four handpumps in use. Licensee Mark Taylor tells us that in fact he normally has six Robinsons cask beers on sale at any time. There are no fewer than seven handpumps lined up on the bar (Mark got Robinsons to relocate the pumps so they could all be in a row) and while all seven have yet to see use there are rarely fewer than five cask beers available and on the Stagger night Mark made a point of having six available. Apologies – and we can of course thoroughly recommend a visit to this rather fine pub.



Macclesfield Beer Festival 2015



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FOR
REAL ALE

This year's Macclesfield Beer Festival will take place at Macclesfield Rugby Club from 7pm on Friday 8th and all day on Saturday 9th May. The organisers are urging guests to book their tickets to avoid disappointment, or attend the Saturday lunchtime session with free admission.

Proceeds from this year's Festival will be donated to East Cheshire Hospice - the first charity to benefit from its sponsorship when it began 21 years ago. East Cheshire Hospice will use the proceeds to develop its bereavement centre for children, providing a bespoke facility for young people who have lost a parent or loved one to cancer.

Tickets, which cost £10 for each evening, and include a 21st anniversary glass, are available from the Macclesfield Beer Festival website www.macclesfieldbeerfestival.org. The festival is also free to attend on Saturday from 12noon - 3.30pm where there will be family entertainment, a tombola, a raffle and pub games for all to enjoy.

The bar, run by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), has over 200 real ales, real ciders and perries from across the UK. Visitors can also enjoy live music from local bands including Monkey Harris and The Big Jam in the evening, with more relaxing music for the Saturday lunchtime session.

A variety of freshly prepared food will also be available, including a hog roast, stone baked pizzas from Wood, Fire, Smoke and a range of pies and sandwiches.

Ben Whiteley, from Macclesfield Round Table, said: "The Macclesfield Beer Festival is an annual event that so many local residents look forward to each year. This is now the event's 21st year and many people don't realise that it's actually a charity event and has raised a staggering £200,000 for local charities during this time. This year we're planning to make the event even more memorable and hope to raise enough money to help East Cheshire Hospice develop an incredibly special facility to support young people in the local community deal with the grief of losing a loved one to cancer."

Mild Magic 2015



If you've not joined in there is still time to take part in Mild Magic 2015. The trail was launched at the Nursery in Heaton Norris and our photo shows (left to right) local CAMRA members John Clarke, John Sutcliffe and Jim Flynn enjoying pints of Hydes Owd Oak Mild. Hydes are the generous sponsors of this year's Mild Magic.

Mild Magic runs until 17th May so there is plenty of time to pick up a card from a participating pub (or download a copy here: www.ssmcamra.co.uk/MildCard.pdf). The minimum entry level is just 12 stickers from 12 different pubs which will win you free entry to (or for CAMRA members, a free pint of mild) at this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Here are the participating pubs:

ALL SAINTS Sand Bar; **ALTRINCHAM** Costello's Bar, Jack in the Box, Orange Tree, Unicorn; **ASHTON-U-LYNE** Ash Tree; **BRAMHALL** Ladybrook; **BROADBOTTOM** Harewood Arms; **BROADHEATH** Old Packet House; **CHEADLE** Crown, White Hart; **CHEADLE HULME** Kenilworth, Kings Hall; **CHORLTON** Beech, Parlour, Sedge Lynn;

CLAYTON Strawberry Duck; **DENTON** Lowes Arms; **DIDSBURY** Dog & Partridge, Gateway, Milson Rhodes, Parrswood, Ye Olde Cock; **DIDSBURY (WEST)** Railway, Wine & Wallop; **DUKINFIELD** Angel Ale House; **FALLOWFIELD** Friendship, Great Central; **FLIXTON** Flixton Conservative Club; **FURNESS VALE** Soldier Dick; **HAZEL GROVE** Fiveways, George & Dragon, Wilfred Wood; **HEATON MOOR** Crown; **HIGH LANE** Royal Oak; **HYDE** Cheshire Ring, Cotton Bale, Queens, Sportsman; **LEVENSHULME** Fred's Ale House; **MANCHESTER CITY CENTRE** Bulls Head, Grey Horse, Molly House, Old Monkey, Paramount, Castle Hotel, Crown & Anchor (Cateaton Street), Crown & Kettle, Marble Arch, Micro Bar, Smithfield, Ape & Apple, City Arms, Knott Bar, Moon Under Water, Rising Sun, Waterhouse; **NEW MILLS NEWTOWN** Chalkers Snooker Club; **OLD TRAFFORD** Bishop Blaize; **POYNTON** Cask Tavern, Kingfisher; **RUSHOLME** Ford Madox Brown; **SALE** JP Joule, Volunteer; **SALE WEST** Plough; **SALFORD** New Oxford; **STALYBRIDGE** Society Rooms, Stalybridge Labour Club, Station Buffet Bar, White House; **STOCKPORT (CENTRAL)** Bakers Vaults, Calverts Court, Live Stockport; **STOCKPORT (EAST)** Midway, Railway (Portwood); **STOCKPORT (NORTH)** Hope, Magnet, Midland, Nursery; **STOCKPORT (SOUTH)** Fairway, Spinning Top; **STOCKPORT (WEST)** Crown (Heaton Lane), George; **TIMPERLEY** Timperley Taverners Club; **WHALEY BRIDGE** Drum & Monkey, Goyt Inn, Shepherds Arms; **WHITEHOUGH (CHINLEY)** Old Hall; **WILMSLOW** Bollin Fee, Coach & Four; **WITHINGTON** Red Lion, Victoria.

Stockport Beer & Cider Festival

Beer Preview and Ticket Arrangements

The heart of any beer festival is of course the beers on sale. This year we are planning to combine the return of old favourites with some very new and cutting edge beers. We are also making one significant change. In previous years the availability of beer has been rationed across the various sessions. However **this year there will be no beer rationing**. All the beers will go on sale as soon as they are ready to sell. Most of the beer is delivered on the Tuesday with some arriving on Wednesday so we aim to have about 80% good to go on Thursday night with the rest on sale Friday lunchtime.

Bar Nouveau

Following its success last year, "Bar Nouveau" will be returning for 2015, again located downstairs in the music room. We aim to have 12 brand new beers which will all be making their public debut at the festival. As last year, the plan is to have all the beers on sale from Thursday night. They will all be on handpump and stored in a temperature-controlled cellar behind the bar.

The full line-up of participating breweries has not yet been finalised but those confirmed so far are Quantum, Thirst Class, Cryptic, Fool Hardy, Stockport Brewing, Offbeat, Track, Deeply Vale, Green Mill and Runaway/IndyMan Brewhouse.

Among the beers that we know about so far include a Sorachi Ace Stout from Quantum, a Pineapple Saison from Offbeat, a Rye Pale Ale from Thirst Class and a Banana Split Stout from Deeply Vale. The Runaway/IndyMan Brewhouse collaboration will be a Hopfen Weiss, a hoppy German-style wheat beer. We are likely to have the only casks of this, so that's a real exclusive. Fool Hardy will be producing Radical Brew #2, specially designed for Bar Nouveau. Last year's beer included root ginger, dried elderflower and leaf tea, so expect something equally exotic for this year.

There will be three nine-gallon casks of each beer which we hope will be enough to last throughout most of the festival – but when they're gone, they're gone!

Even More Beers

As we went to press the beer order was still being put together but confirmed breweries include local favourites such as Marble (including Pint, Spring, Dobber and Earl Grey IPA) and Buxton, from whom we are hoping to have one or two cask exclusives. Making a welcome return this year will be Holmfirth's Summer Wine, again with one or two cask exclusives – confirmed so far is Queensbury Rules Pale Ale using the new Jester hop. We will have one of just six casks.

New faces include Leeds-based Northern Monk who will be sending us five beers including a cask of the limited release Eternal Session IPA. Manchester's new Cloudwater Brewery will be along too, with five cask beers. Two of these will be normally keg-only beers that have been put in

cask especially for us, including a Bière de Garde made in collaboration with Mark Tranter of Burning Sky Brewery. Other new faces include Brewsmith, an award-winning new brewery from Ramsbottom, which will also have five beers at the festival, and the very new Bolton-based Drink Up Brewing who will be debuting with two versions of a 5% amber/red ale, one of which will be extra dry-hopped. Also offering two brand new beers will be Stockport's Watts Brewing?, based at the Magnet.

This is just the tip of the iceberg really – check out the festival website nearer the time for a full list.

Bottled Beers Too

The finishing touches were being put to the bottled beer list in late April but already some treats have been lined up. Bottled beers from Marble and Fullers will be back and we plan to have a range from Squawk, too. We have two excellent beers from Blackjack, a Triple IPA aged in a Rioja cask and a Porter aged in a whisky cask, along with beers from Five-Oh, Beer Nouveau, Cloudwater (try the Bergamot Hopfen Weisse) and an imperial stout from Six O'Clock.

As usual there will be a good range of international beers, too. Lambics from Oud Beersel will be joined by those from Boon (Mariage Parfait Oude Gueuze) and Timmermans (Oude Gueuze). The new Duvel Tripel Hop will be there alongside favourites such as St Feuillien Triple and De La Senne Taras Boulba. Also from Belgium we hope to have Belle Fleur, an excellent IPA from De Dochter van de Korenaar. Interesting beers from the USA will include Boulevard's Tank 7 and Single-Wide IPA, Rogue Shakespeare Stout and Crooked Stave Nightmare on Brett. All being well there will be a couple of beers from Italy making their festival debut, too. We've not overlooked the Netherlands, so expect to see beers from respected Dutch craft brewers Emelisse, Rooie Dop and De Molen.



Advance Ticketing

Want to beat the cash queues? Well the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival has the answer with the opportunity to buy your fast-track tickets in advance on-line at www.stockportfestival.org.uk.

It's quite simple, you just go to the home page of the web site, click on the session you want (28th to 30th May), fill in the payment details and print off your unique ticket. On arrival at the festival at the relevant session you will be shown up the fast-track lane to have your ticket scanned. All advance ticket holders are guaranteed entry.

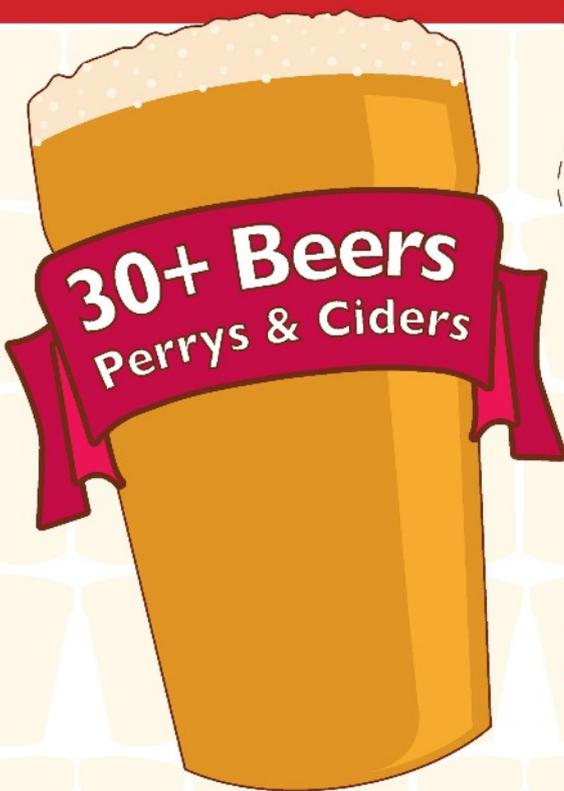
If you are a regular at the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival you will know that we like to freshen things up each time and this year advance ticketing is only one of a number of improvements we have made. We are planning to utilise a new beer-cooling system which has enabled us to change our beer rationing policy. To reiterate - this year every available beer will be obtainable from the start of the first public session (usually around 10 to 15% of beers are not ready to go on sale from the start – this is cask beer remember!).

This year we are opening all day Saturday, so for the princely sum of £2 you can come along, drink some very fine beer and cider and watch three sets of superb bands throughout the day and the evening. What incredible value is that? So buy your advance ticket for the Saturday now but be advised that it is cash only after 5pm on that day.

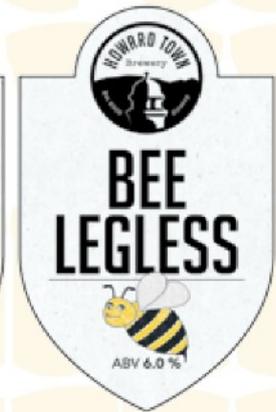
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High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views

Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall



I wrote last month about the steps licensees can take to increase the sales of drinks in their pubs. Sometimes live music can be a draw especially if the licensee is really enthusiastic. At the **Railway** in Whaley Bridge live music features at weekends and really attracts customers. I was also recently in conversation with one of the musicians who declared his enjoyment at playing in the Railway, because there is a great atmosphere. The Saturday night of W3 (June 12 to 14), Whaley Water Weekend, a gala weekend in Whaley Bridge, sees novel entertainment from the Tabby Catz, a five-piece swing band. There is also good Robinsons beer to be had at the Railway, where Trooper outsells Unicorn, with both in consistently good form.



The Easter weekend saw a Community Gala at Buxworth, with events at the Canal Basin and elsewhere in the village. A changing range of beer was available at **Buxworth War Memorial Club**, whilst at the **Navigation** (pictured above) there was a good beer festival over the weekend. As well as the five or six beers normally available in the bar, a stillage had been set up in a back room for about 20 festival beers, with a very effective cooling system. Brewers represented included Thwaites, Elland, Geeves, Green Mill, Merlin and Towcester. A couple of pale beers of note were Towcester Mill Race and Geeves Clear Cut, whilst the two strong, dark brews from Elland, 1872 Porter and Defiance Stout, were well worth a try. All the beers that I tried were in good form. Hopefully this beer festival will have been successful so as to become an annual

feature and to be one to look forward to next year.

Robinsons White Label Brews, which aims to produce 'a series of bespoke craft beers, created by the blokes who serve it', have produced another 5% brew to follow the successful IPA. This time there is a 5% stout, perhaps a bit heavy with cocoa in the flavour for my palate, but a brew worth trying. This was available at the **Crossings** in Furness Vale, and doubtless elsewhere in the Robinsons estate.

Still with Robinsons, the **Cock** in Whaley bridge is good for dining. The active group of us who spend the morning being busy on the hills were well rewarded by a good choice of lunchtime meals at the Cock, washed down by Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde and Trooper. Well worth a visit. The **Goyt** in Whaley Bridge is always good for a good choice of well kept beers. Weetwood Cheshire Cat is often my preference, but York Centurion's Ghost was a recent fine dark brew.



The latest Taste Great Britain Festival by Marston's gave its licensees a chance to set up their own Easter beer festival. At the **Shepherds Arms** in Whaley Bridge the range of a dozen beers was well received. Beers of note included Leeds Pale, St. Austell Cornish Best, Adnams Mosaic and Harviestoun Bitter & Twisted. It is good to see that customers can be offered a big range of choice in a tied estate.

The bank holiday weekend at the end of May sees the next beer festival at the **Drum & Monkey** at the Horwich End end of Whaley Bridge. A special one-off from Wincle Brewery is expected. A recent call in found Storm Downpour, Happy Valley Black Magic and Phoenix Monkeytown Mild available. The last of these was of course there ahead of its availability in Mild Magic. The 199 Stockport - Buxton bus stops at the door, whilst a 10 minute walk from Whaley Bridge Station, Northern Rail table 20, will get you there, and back.

Finally the national press has picked up on the **Old Hall** at Whitehough, near Chinley, well known for its beer festivals. The *Financial Times* colour section had a recent article featuring Pubs With Walks. Lots of deserved praise for beer and food were contained in the

High Peak Pub News

With Tom Lord

Good news from Birch Vale is that the **Sycamore**, which had been closed for some time, has now been reopened. More news on this in the next edition. Less happy news is that the **Travellers Call** at Lane Ends on the Glossop road out of Marple Bridge is now closed and is up for auction. Another local pub which is now also up for auction is the **Moan and Sixpence** in Glossop.



The **Beehive** in New Mills is holding a beer festival over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend (May 22nd to 25th). Around 30 beers will be on offer plus cider and perry, some sourced locally and others nationally.

The **Angel Inn** on King Street in Dukinfield is providing a good variety of cask ale for the area with beers from the Empire Brewery, which included a dark mild, and also Half Moon Brewery. In Droylsden it is reported that the **Beehive** now has Red Bank cider on offer. Also in Droylsden, on Ashton Hill Lane, the **Lazy Toad** now has an expanded range of real ales, making a positive contribution to beer variety in the area.

It now looks likely that the only regular outlet in New Mills for cask conditioned mild is **Chalkers Snooker Club** in Newtown. This is a changing mild normally from local micros, and well worth support.

brief article, though it is a fair trek from Teggs Nose to Whitehough to sample these delights. Perhaps a local stroll from Whaley Bridge, say, will provide enough exercise.

There are new faces at the **Shady Oak** in Fernilee where Danny Curley and his partner Danni have taken the helm. Over the past two years they have worked for Almond Family Pubs (the Three Bears in Hazel Grove and the Spread Eagle at Hatherlow) so have plenty of experience in the trade. The Shady Oak is now open for food and drink seven days a week, with proper homemade food ("we don't do fast food, we do quality food as fast as we can") and a changing selection of beers from the Marston's range.

THE BEER SHOP

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Stagger

West Didsbury with Jim Flynn



It was a cold early spring evening when we met at the **Woodstock** on Barlow Moor Road but outside people were sitting in the spacious garden taking advantage of the large patio heaters. It was extremely busy and so we went upstairs to find a seat. This was the first time I'd ventured up to the first floor and was impressed with the wooden panelling and the pop art paintings on the walls. The beers available were Hop Stuff Pale Ale, Thwaites Wainwright, Sharp's Doom Bar and Wadworth's Chilli and Chocolate but we kept to Andwell's 5 Little Fishes which was in reasonable nick.



Across the road is **Albert's Bar and Restaurant**. If you knew it when it was the Barleycorn you will be pleasantly surprised as it has been transformed from a somewhat down-at-heel pub into a plush restaurant and bar. We fought our way to one end of the bar where a lone handpump had been spotted only to be told to go to the other end. Another unmarked handpump lurked here (presumably pumpclips don't fit in with the design aesthetic but their absence can't do much for cask sales). Brightside Underworld Porter was the beer and we drank this outside under some of the most powerful heaters ever encountered and found it to be very agreeable.

We left to trek around the corner to the **Greenfinch** on Palatine Road opposite the West Didsbury tram stop. This is another grand Victorian house set in extensive grounds. Previously the Four in Hand, it was refurbished by Marstons three years ago when a conservatory was added and like many in the area it is a dining pub. Probably the quietest

pub of the night, we easily found seats facing the bar and sampled passable Banks's Bitter, and Marston's Help for Heroes, Pedigree and Hobgoblin which were better.



On the other side of road on Lapwing Lane is the **Wine and Wallop**, recently converted from a video shop, having previously been a Liptons. The bar is not very large but does have a balcony area upstairs and a small amount of seating outside. Features include bare boards on the floor, large mirrors on the walls and chandeliers hanging from the ceiling (it was too busy to spot much else). This stagger is certainly not for the financially challenged and here we hit the £4 per pint mark for Taylor's Boltmaker; worse still it was my round! (I guess you overlooked the 40p CAMRA discount available here - Ed) Other beers available were Youngs Bitter, Brightside Oden, Little Valley Cragg Vale, Track Toba and XT XPA which were well received.



We walked down Lapwing Lane (you can hop on the Metro for one stop) to the **Metropolitan**, another extensive Victorian building which has been transformed into a dining pub. To say this place was busy would be an understatement and given the prices of the beer it must be an absolute goldmine. The restaurant area was full and many people were sitting outside in the large garden which has its own bar. At the bar inside the beer hit £4.20 a pint for Tickety Brew Jasmine Green Tea (hoorah it wasn't my round!) which most didn't find to their taste but the Taylor's Landlord, Deuchars IPA and Hawkshead Red were met with more positive responses.

Down Burton Road are two neighbouring bars, **Volta** and **Folk Café Bar**. Volta recently

opened in the old Rhubarb restaurant premises and is owned by the same people as Electrik in nearby Chorlton. It was jammed and on the walls were awards from City Life so it has obviously been well received. The three cask beers available were Wainwright, Electrik Ale Experiment Livewire (from Happy Valley) and RedWillow Feckless all of which were OK.



Next door Folk, a recent convert to real ale, is wider in frontage but doesn't seem that much bigger inside. However it did mean that there was more seating outside. From what I could see through the sea of people the décor is retro 1950/60s with an old radio and other period bric-a-brac featuring on the far wall. The beers available were Brightside Odin and Tatton Red Red Rye which were both on reasonable form.

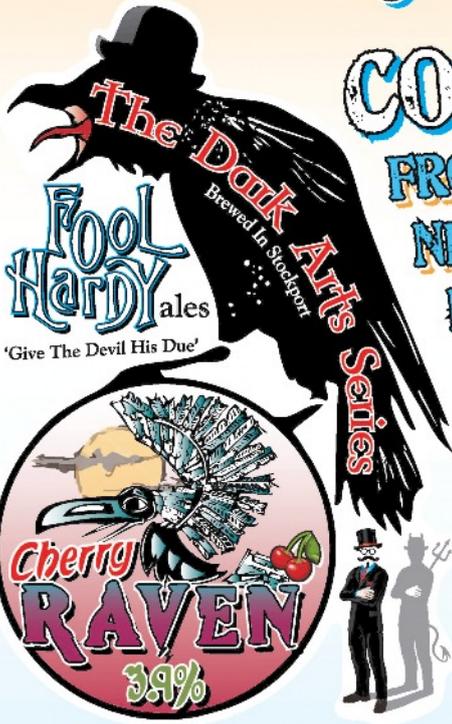
Back down Burton Road we moved to another café bar, **Mary & Archie** (apparently named after the owner's parents). This is the smallest of the three bars and, I think, the more characterful and quirky with a disparate array of furniture crammed into a relatively small space. We found seats and sampled Thornbridge Brother Rabbit, Siren Craft Dinner for Two and Pig and Porter Slow Black Oatmeal Stout all of which were good and the latter the beer of the night.

Our final stop was the **Railway** on Lapwing Lane opposite the Metropolitan. This Holt's house is the one traditional pub on the stagger and the only one selling beer at under £3 a pint (sod's law it wasn't my round!); as a result it attracts a different clientele. Despite its traditional atmosphere the Railway has light modern décor which stops it feeling old fashioned. The pub is in fact two buildings and this I always think gives one the sense that the separate rooms and areas have been thrown together somewhat haphazardly while at the same time providing intimate spaces for those who want them. Beers available were Holt's Bitter, IPA and Two Hoots, Bootleg Back Street Maple Ale, Old Speckled Hen and Beartown Kodiak Gold. All tried were in good form.

Overall this is a stagger which can be commended for the great variety of beer available but it's not one for those who prefer traditional pubs or for anybody with financial concerns!

www.FoolHardyales.co.uk

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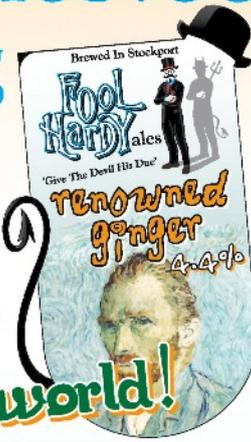


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Heard at the Bar

Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

The Dockyard

Following the success of the Media City outlet, a second **Dockyard** opened in Manchester City Centre just after Easter. Taking over the former Café Rouge unit on Left Bank in Spinningfields the new outlet follows much the same design concept as the original - what might be called industrial chic - but on a more generous budget.



The Dockyard sums itself up as 'a proper pub, serving proper food and proper ale' - the latter being served from eight hand pumps. Four pumps dispense Thwaites Wainwright (now brewed by Marston's) and the house beer Dockyard Ale. A separate bank of four pumps serves the guest ales which when *Opening Times* called were Seven Bro7hers' excellent IPA, Brewsmith Bitter, Tweed Hopster and Brightside Odin. Purely in the interests of journalistic research, we tried all four and can report that quality ranged from very good to excellent.



As well as the two Dockyards, owner Steve Pilling owns the Red Lion in High Lane and two Damson Restaurants in Heaton Moor and Media City. Dockyard manager Joe Foster tells us that Steve has a passion for local produce and this extends to the ales on the bar so those four pumps will always see local micros featured. Joe had no hesitation in signing the pub up to CAMRA's LocAle scheme on the spot.

The food menu is moderate without being minimalist - classic burgers share with a selection of 'butties' ranging from ham and cheese through to a fish and mushy pea butty, complemented with a selection of ribs, wings, salads and a pie of the day. Sunday roasts are also served.

With its beer range, prices a lot lower than some of their Spinningfield neighbours and an extensive outside area on the banks of the Irwell, the Dockyard looks like a welcome

addition to Manchester's pub scene. Find out more at dockyard.pub and on twitter at @DockyardSpin

Altrincham

Since last we visited Altrincham, a couple of new real ale outlets have sprung up in what is an increasingly interesting real ale and pub scene.

Embrace is a new café bar-cum-nightclub on Stamford New Road (formerly the site of Uluru and Cushion). It opened back in November with the tag line "The House of Spirits" and a drinks menu dominated by cocktails and draught beers from London's Meantime Brewery. However, in March, the range expanded to include locally produced beer with the addition of a single handpump on the bar. It's free of tie and initial offerings have been from Bury's Brightside Brewery, including Manchester Skyline and Odin. There is live music every weekend (Friday or Saturday) and a wide range of other events. *Opening Times* salutes bars like Embrace which may not have beer as their focus but still appreciate that a good quality real ale is something that their customers will appreciate and buy when offered.

Meanwhile the **Station Hotel**, an on-off outlet for many years, has returned to the real ale fold. It has recently featured two beers which aren't that common round these parts - Theakston Old Peculiar and XB. Quality has been reported as good. We hope to catch up with the new tenants shortly to hear their plans for this oft-overlooked pub which has an excellent location opposite the recently re-opened Altrincham Interchange.



The revamped Market Hall is firmly back up and running again after the fire earlier this year. The market house bar **Jack In The Box** now has its very own house beer from parent brewery Blackjack Beers. Called simply House Pale, it's a 4% hoppy little number designed as a session beer for those who pack the market dining at the various food outlets.

On the outskirts of Altrincham, the **Navigation** on the junction of Navigation Road and Manchester Road in Broadheath has re-opened after a major refurbishment. No walls have been knocked down or built but it is all new furnishings and freshly painted walls for the Stonegate-owned pub. The new landlady, Julie, with 26 years experience in the

trade, took over the pub last September and has spent the last couple of months trying to obtain the clientele that she wished for. The pub has five handpumps but currently just has three in use until business picks up. It is the intention to have at least one real cider available in the summer.

Chorlton

Hale's Moose bar has expanded its operations with a new bar in Chorlton. Imaginatively called **The Moose, Chorlton**, it opened on Beech Road just in time for Easter and when *Opening Times* called on Good Friday, was already proving popular. With two handpumps on the bar this is yet another addition to Chorlton's incredibly vibrant real ale scene bringing the number of clubs, pubs and bars selling real ale to twenty-six.



At the Chorlton outlet's opening, the cask ales were Brightside Brewery's Amarillo and a second 3.7% beer with a paper pumpclip named "Moose Ale". Although the clip didn't give any clues to the origin of it, the bar's beer menu indicates it as Moose Ale, Blackburn - which would make it from Daniel Thwaites. The menu also listed a third beer from Porthmadog's Purple Moose Brewery - given that there were only two pumps, hopefully this indicates that a third won't be long in coming. Given that the company has its roots in Hale's The Little Deli Company, it is no surprise that food comes in the form of a variety of cold platters, sandwiches and similar charcuterie based fare.

In a coincidental reverse move, Dominic Clancy, owner of Chorlton's Morley Cheeks, has opened a new bar-restaurant in Hale. The **Stockyard** opened on 27th February, replacing the former Amba Bar on Ashley Road. Sadly, unlike its Chorlton sibling there is no cask ale. Given that Morley Cheeks has given prominence to local beers with a house beer from Privateer, and regularly features the likes of Seven Bro7hers and Beartown, it was disappointing to see Stockyard's menu advertising keg Boddingtons as "brewed at the famous Strangeways brewery in Manchester", when in reality that brewery closed 10 years ago and the current product is believed to come out of the AB InBev factory in Samlesbury, Lancashire.

More Pub News on Page 21

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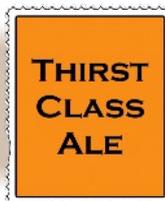
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Meet the Brewer

Richard Conway of Thirst Class Ale



This month Brendon Hall meets one of Stockport's newest brewers: Richard Conway of Thirst Class Ale.

Hello Richard of Thirst Class Ale! What initially got you into brewing your own ales?

My first foray into brewing was back at university when I homebrewed a few beers from cheap homebrew kits. It's the only hobby I've ever had that I've not got bored of, I was getting good results, great feedback and even won medals in a few competitions. It seemed only fair that I should share my passion and the results with the general public so in 2014 Thirst Class Ale was born!

How do you choose which type of beer to brew or which type of ingredients to use?

It's a cliché, but I try to brew beers I really enjoy - luckily I enjoy most styles although I'm unlikely to brew a sour beer any time soon as I've not really got my head around them yet! If I'm brewing a new style I usually try to research as much as possible - and that doesn't mean drinking lots of different beers (although that is important!) but actually reading up on the history of the style, which ingredients are typically used and any special brewing methods required. I also enjoy going off-piste from time to time and am hoping to launch both a Raspberry Witbier and Treacle Imperial Stout later this year.

Stockport's brewing scene seems to be especially lively at the minute and with collaboration brews always popular - would you ever consider brewing with another Stockport brewer?

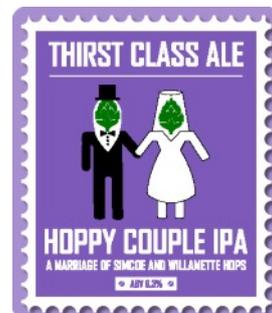
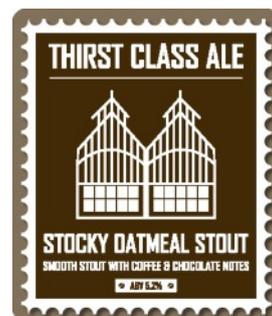
I have had the honour of brewing with the renowned Jay Krause of Quantum Brewing Co. fame when we brewed my Elephant Hawk IPA recipe a couple of years ago - it was my prize for winning a homebrew competition hosted by Beermoth in Manchester. It is great to see such a superb calibre of brewers operating in Stockport at present and I wouldn't rule out brewing with any of them - if any of you fancy it give me a shout!

We note Stocky Oatmeal Stout was very popular at Manchester Beer Festival, where can we buy your beers locally?

We haven't really settled down to a core range as yet - although when we do Stocky Oatmeal Stout will definitely be part of it as the feedback we've received has been phenomenal. Local outlets that have stocked our beers so far include the Magnet, the Font in Chorlton, Port Street Beer House, High Peak Beer, Beermoth and Heaton Hops to name a few. We're only brewing part time at present so if you see some be sure to take advantage!

Finally, when you aren't drinking your own beers - can you name one of your favourite beers the readers need to try: one local, one national and one international.

I'd say look no further than Buxton Brewery's Axe Edge - or if you can get it the Sorachi Ace version, Ace Edge. Nationally I've been enjoying Beavertown quite a lot recently - in particular Gamma Ray and 8 Ball Rye IPA. Internationally it's just way too hard to single one out, but I recently visited the Brooklyn Brewery in New York and had some cracking beers, their Sorachi Ace Saison is an old favourite and worth a try.



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A Farewell to Best Mild

Neil Kellett on the end of Robinsons 1892



When I ascertained that Robinson's were going to discontinue brewing Best Mild after having drunk copious quantities for over 57 years I was, quite naturally, rather disappointed.

I contacted the brewery and received the usual "small demand, can't handle small brew lengths" excuse but I also received a list of pubs that had been supplied with Best Mild in the previous few months. So, armed with this list and with seven like-minded Best Mild imbibers, on Easter Saturday, 4 April 2015 I set forth on the trail for Best Mild in the Stockport town centre.

Included in the seven was Dave Heatley, son of the late Ralph Heatley, the landlord of the Gateway, East Didsbury, where early branch meetings were held, and Graham Lister, who was in charge of beer orders at the very early branch beer festivals held at the Wythenshawe Forum.

First stop was the **Armoury** in Edgeley – what a great pub this is – open on Saturdays from 11:00am until 1:00 am! Then quite a stroll to the **Waterloo**, Waterloo Road; another good local.



It was with trepidation that we approached the **Red Bull** on Hillgate, as on a recce of the tour the beer I tasted was rather old. However, no worries – a new cask had been tapped and it was well up to standard. Disappointment followed – no Best Mild in the **Brewery Visitor Centre** so we made a rapid exit. A runner was sent ahead to the **Bakers Vaults** but there was a "no" to Best Mild here, as also in the **Swan with Two Necks** on Princes Street.

The next call was the **Arden Arms** where the first question was – are you eating? With the answer being no we were banished to the marquee outside in the back in case we Best Mild drinkers used up valuable eating space. Our last port of call was the **Queens**, Portwood, to my shame my first ever visit to this pub. What a delight! Lots of locals, a game of cards going on and the cheapest beer on the tour at £2.60 a pint.

It was agreed that the beer was excellent in all pubs but there were two equal winners by a short head – the Waterloo and the Queens. Please taste this fine beer before it finally disappears after the end of April 2015 – there may still be a drop left here and there by the time you read this.

I am pleased to report that the pub where our branch was formed, the **Printers Arms** in Cheadle, still served an excellent pint of Best Mild – at £2.60 to the last pint.

Neil Kellett was the founder treasurer of Stockport & South Manchester Branch in January 1974. Pictured above are Graham Lister (top left) Neil Kellett (second left) and Ralph Heatley (top right).

Beacon Counselling

Stockport Beer Festival Charity 2015

Beacon Counselling is delighted to have been chosen as the festival partner of Stockport Beer and Cider Festival for the next three years.

At Beacon Counselling we improve the lives of people experiencing mental and emotional distress. This means people who are dealing with depression, bereavement, anxiety, stress and relationship difficulties, to name just a few challenges.

We provide counselling services for adults from eight venues in Stockport and two in Wythenshawe, services to young people from 11 secondary schools across Stockport and Macclesfield, and services for disadvantaged young people outside of the school system.

Beacon has grown in recent years to respond to the increasing need to provide support, and during 2014 Beacon helped 1,000 adults and 500 young people and children. As a small local charity, the festival is a fantastic opportunity for us to extend our reach and help even more local people who struggle with mental health problems on a daily basis.

Beacon Counselling has won several national awards including the Winifred Tumim Award for charity governance, the Queens Award for Contribution to Voluntary Services and the prestigious GlaxoSmithKline IMPACT Award for delivering high quality, targeted and innovative services that make a difference to those who need it most.

The foundation of Beacon's service is its large team of qualified and skilled volunteers. There are 90 volunteers within Beacon, including over 60 professionally certified counsellors who are extremely dedicated to the cause. Many of our volunteers are kindly rolling up their sleeves to help out at the festival, but we can always use a few more pairs of hands! So if you fancy helping by pulling a few pints then please get in touch on volunteers@beacon-counselling.org.uk.

Beacon Counselling is fortunate to be supported at the festival by the following sponsors to whom we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude: our T-Shirt sponsor, TREE Accountancy, based in Manchester; our refreshment sponsor, Parfett's Cash & Carry, Stockport; and the following cask sponsors: the Cocked Hat (A2B public houses) in the Market Place, Delta Comtech IT services based in Macclesfield, the Hinds Head in Heaton Chapel, the Midway Tavern in Stockport, Snapes Estate Agents in Bramhall and Woodbank Office Support, Stockport.

The following breweries have very kindly donated their delicious ales to us to sell at our stall: Coach House Brewing Company, First Chop Brewing Arm, Hornbeam Brewery, JW Lees, Tatton Brewery and Weetwood Ales. Please do come and try them! Thank-you also to Lynx Taxis for sponsoring two squares on our game-card. If you'd like to advertise your business, we're still selling beer-mat sized adverts on our giant game-card which circulates the entire festival as customers play it. The cost is just £50 and in addition to a highly visible presence throughout the festival, you receive a thank you in the festival programme and the August edition of *Opening Times*.

As well as selling beer and refreshments, we'll also have Brenda Marsh selling her jewellery and we will have other merchandise for sale, along with festival programmes and daily raffles. Finally, we would like to thank the festival committee for giving us this wonderful opportunity and for all their help and support.

We can't wait to see you at the festival, and look forward to saying hello!



Pub News Extra

Three in the Heatons and other notes

As the saying goes, you wait ages for a bus to come along and then two turn up at the same time. Similarly two long trailed shops-cum-bars in the Heatons finally opened within a day of each other.



First up was **Heaton Hops** (7 School Lane, Heaton Chapel) which opened to the public on Thursday 2nd April. The people behind this are Damian O'Shea and his partner Charlotte Winstone (pictured above). Damian is better known as "The Ale Man" whose public face to date has been a series of beer-dedicated market stalls which have gained a substantial following among local beer fans. Damian told OT that it was popular demand that led him to open Heaton Hops.

While there are shelves dedicated to local (and not so local) craft beers, it's the draught offering that takes centre-stage with two cask beers, eight keg beers and two traditional ciders making up the range. The aim is to promote local beers as far as possible although not to the exclusion of high quality products from around the UK. Wine and locally roasted coffee (from Heard & Graft) is available, too, and if you want to take draught beer away flagons are available for this purpose.



With two small rooms (the second is downstairs) Heaton Hops is a cosy and convivial place to have a drink. It's closed on Mondays and opens from 1.30pm the rest of the week, closing at 9.30pm Tuesday and Wednesday, 11.00pm Thursday to Saturday and 10.30pm on Sundays. It's been an instant hit with a full house every night since opening night.



The next to open, on Friday 3rd April, was **Bottle** (9a Shaw Road, Heaton Moor). This is the latest outlet for Corin Bland, best known for running the High Peak Beer Co stall in Stockport Market, and being one of the driving forces behind the well-established Foodie Friday events.

Like Heaton Hops this is another former shop and comprises a small front room backing onto the bar, which features seven keg taps, and a very extensive bottled beer and cider range (pictured below). The bottles are to take away or drink on the premises (with a 50p premium). A small suntrap beer garden is planned for the back. The draught stocking policy is to feature two local, two national and two international beers alongside one draught lager. Wine is there too, alongside artisanal gins from local maker Zymurgorium.



Corin's tag line is "you'll find great things in a bottle" and these sentiments appear to be shared by the locals who have packed the place out since it opened.

Bottle is closed on Monday and Tuesday, opening at 11.00am the rest of the week. Closing is at 10.00pm Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday, and 11.00pm Friday and Saturday.

Also enjoying success, with a 30% year on year increase in trade, is the one that got there first. This of course is Dean Hilton's **Beer Shop** on Kingsleigh Road, Heaton Mersey which has been doing the business since November 2011. It's not as central as the other two but buses 22 and 197 will drop you very close by.

Again it's a one room affair, with a bar at the back, shelves of bottles to the left and fridges to

the right. The red walls add a warm touch and there's plenty of seating (plus a big screen TV for big sporting events). Cask beer is a major feature with between four and six available (and the useful website at www.ukbeershop.com will keep you up to date with what is on tap). These can either be drunk on site or taken away in three, five, ten and twenty litre bag-in-box containers.

While the cask beers are mainly local-ish, the bottled range features not only local offerings but also those from further afield in the UK as well as choice offerings from overseas.

There is a notably good range from Belgium and Germany (including lambics from the former and smoked ales from the latter). The emphasis is on quality across the board.

You can get fed here too. There are snacks and nuts available at all times but on Thursday, Friday and Saturday (between 5.00pm and 9.00pm) fresh handmade pizzas are available to either eat in or take away. These are made by Dean's partner Threna Allum who is a trained cook, and feature proper tomato sauce and fresh shredded basil. Well worth the bus ride.



Pub Shorts

Hopefully opening this month is **George Charles** at 244 Burton Road, West Didsbury. The manager is Ben Brown who comes here from Chorlton's Parlour. Local cask ales, international craft beers and traditional cider should all feature. More next time.

Not so far away, **Wine and Wallop** on Lapwing Lane now has its own beer. Test Pressing 001 has been brewed by cellar manager Guy Potter at Brightside Brewery (which launched the beer as part of a tap takeover as OT went to press). Interestingly, the Wine and Wallop team are looking to buy their own brew kit from Brightside, and are looking for a venue they can use as both a brewery and an events space.

Stockport's **Spinning Top** on Wellington Road South is showing an increasing interest in traditional cider with no fewer than four on sale. Two are on handpump and two on gravity dispense. The entertainment here is also gaining quite a following with the monthly comedy nights proving particularly popular.

There is also a well-established comedy night at the **Griffin** in Heaton Mersey running on the first Saturday of each month.

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Manchester Brewery Expo 2015

Pioneering collaboration for Manchester brewers



The last week in May promises to be a real treat for local beer fans. There is Stockport Beer & Cider Festival running from 28th to 30th and on Saturday 23rd there's the North Manchester CAMRA "Bus to the Pub". And then there is the Manchester Brewery Expo on Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th. This is potentially one of the most exciting developments on the local beer scene for a long time. Paul Jones of Cloudwater Brewery and Mark Welsby of Runaway Brewery explain what it's all about.

Today's beer scene can be divided and subdivided many different ways – traditionalists versus modernists, macro versus micro, brands versus breweries, cask versus keg, and so on, but for the majority of us just putting down new roots in our city, and some of those longer established, our focus is on our common ground and shared vision. In our own ways, we're all working towards the same goal – making fantastic beer for the good people of Manchester (and beyond) to enjoy, and charging ourselves with the responsibility for the changes we want to see. We couldn't help wonder what would happen if we all got together, and celebrated where we are now, and the bright futures we're working towards.

The inaugural day of Manchester Brewery Expo will feature Piccadilly area breweries (Track, Alphabet, Cloudwater, Privateer, and Squawk) as they come together and open their doors (many for the first time) on Saturday May 23rd, and offer tours and tastings, classes and presentations, and more. Saturday will end with a Manchester tap takeover at First Chop.

The following day, Sunday 24th, will feature Manchester's Green Quarter breweries (Marble, Blackjack and Runaway) and special events will include curated beer tastings, brewery tours, street food and beer



pairing, and live music. There will of course be plenty of beer to try, including a number of specials brewed specifically for the event, including a collaboration between Marble, Blackjack, Runaway and Joseph Holt. Bars at Blackjack brew tap and the Marble Arch will showcase the broad range and wide variety of beers brewed in our fine city; celebrating both Manchester's brewing heritage and the current crop of modern breweries helping make Manchester a modern beer destination. Sunday will end with another Manchester tap takeover at Blackjack's May Bank Holiday knees up.

Across both days there'll be the best of local street food and music, and many of our brewery staff will be around to share with you all the process and passion, craft and commitment that lie behind our beers. Manchester Brewery Expo is cementing a new era of co-operation and collaboration across our city. We're joining forces to open up for a weekend like no other. Come and see the places and meet the people behind some of the best beer ever brewed in this city. Tickets, schedules, maps, and more information are coming very soon. Please keep up to date via [@MCRBrewExpo](#) or [facebook.com/MCRBrewExpo](#).

In preparation for the Expo, many of Manchester's new brewers came together at Cloudwater Brewery on Saturday 18th May to brew a collaboration beer (an American Pale Ale) which all of them will sell. Our photograph shows (top row) Rosie Setterfield-Price (Blackjack Beers), Tom Evans (Alphabet Brewing), Oliver Turton (Squawk Brewery) and Mark Welsby (Runaway Brewery); (middle row) Emma Cole (Cloudwater Brewery); (front row) Will France (Cloudwater), Sam Dyson (Track Brewing), Rich Andrew (Blackjack), James Campbell, Paul Jones and Al Wall (Cloudwater), Matt Howgate and Stewart Ball (Marble Brewery). Also taking part in the Manchester Brewers' Expo are Privateer Brewery, Seven Bro7hers Brewery and the First Chop Brewing Arm. *Photograph by Giles Smith*

Pub Shorts

The **Nag's Head** in Davyhulme is a real ale gain. It's been offering cask ale since last Christmas but we'd not noticed. Black Sheep Golden Sheep and Robinsons Dizzy Blonde were recent offerings, the former being in much better form than the latter. The pub is an interesting building. It still has a proper vault at the back, though dominated by a pool table, and what you might call a snug at the front. And the beer garden/yard in front of the pub is still cobbled and apparently undisturbed since the pub was built. Prices were £2.20 and £2.50 a pint but both were on some sort of promotion: the normal price is £2.80.

The **Ladybrook** in Bramhall is due to close for a few days around 20th May for renovation and redecoration. When it re-opens there will be more guest ales with the number of handpumps increased to 10. Michael, the manager who has been there for three months, is keen on real ale. Readers should also note that CAMRA members receive 10% off on production of their membership card.

In Bredbury the **Rising Sun** has reopened. The five handpumps are still in place but until trade builds only two will be in use. When OT called these dispensed Robinsons Trooper (which will feature permanently) and Dizzy Blonde (making a guest appearance). There's also 50p off a pint for card-carrying CAMRA members.



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