

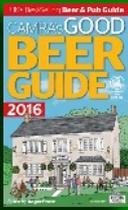
OPENING TIMES

FEBRUARY 2016 / FREE

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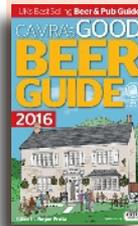
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OPENING TIMES

Opening Times is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch, the Trafford & Hulme Branch and the High Peak, Tameside & North East Cheshire Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Additional material is supplied by the North Manchester and Macclesfield & E Cheshire Branches. 7,500 copies a month are printed by Oxuniprint Ltd, a division of Oxford University Press 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 244 1000
- * East Cheshire: 0300 123 5500
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport.aspx
- * Derbyshire: www.derbybus.info

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Copy Date for the January issue is Monday 8th February.

Contributors to this issue: John Clarke, Alan Gent, Dave Hanson, Peter Butler, Pete Farrand, Neil Worthington, Paul Felton, Dave Burston, Robin Wignall, Peter Edwardson, Tom Lord, Caroline O'Donnell, John O'Donnell, Stewart Taylor, Phil Booton, Sue Lightfoot, John Sutcliffe, Brendon Hall.

Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Front cover - The interior of Café Beermoth on Brown Street in Manchester City Centre.

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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.northmanchester.camra.org.uk

Contact: Phil Booton; phbooton@hotmail.com

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www.hpneccamra.org.uk

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

Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)

www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

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Trafford & Hulme (T&H) www.thcamra.org.uk

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

Central Manchester (CMCR)

Contact: Graham Donning 07961 886696; g_donning@yahoo.com

Local CAMRA Events (Open events in blue)

Monday 8th February – Branch Meeting: Glossop Labour Club, 15 Chapel Street, Glossop, SK13 8AT. Good Beer Guide selection for Derbyshire part of branch area. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

Tuesday 9th February – Good Beer Guide Selection Meeting: Volunteer, Cross Street, Sale, M33 7HJ. Starts 8.00pm. (T&H)

Tuesday 9th – Branch Meeting. Cafe Beermoth starts 5:30pm for 6:00pm (CMCR)

Wednesday 10th – Monton & Eccles Survey: Park Hotel, 142 Monton Road, M30 9QD, 7.30pm; Malt Dog, 169 Monton Road, M30 9GS, 8.00pm; Eccles Cross, 13 Regent Street, M30 0BP 9.00pm; Lamb, 33 Regent Street, M30 0BP 9.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 11th – Branch Meeting and 2017 Good Beer Guide selection: Hope, 118 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 2LL. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

Thursday 11th – Altrincham Social: Costello's Bar, 18 Goose Green, WA14 2DW, 8.00pm; Tavern on the Green, 57 Stamford New Road, WA14 1DS, 8.45pm; Craftsman, 41 Stamford New Road, WA14 1EB, 9.30pm; Embrace, 59 Stamford New Road, WA14 1DS, 10.00pm; Cheshire Tap, 39 Railway Street, WA14 2RD to finish. (T&H)

Wednesday 17th – Branch Meeting: Kings Arms, 11 Bloom Street, Salford, M3 6An. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Wednesday 17th – Locale Pub of 2015 presentation to the Wharf, 6 Slate Wharf, Castlefield, M15 4ST. 8.00pm onwards. (T&H)

Friday 19th – Levenshulme Stagger: Kingsway, Moseley Road, M19 2LG, 7.30pm; POD, 30 Albert Road, M19 2FP, 8.30pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 24th – Good Beer Guide 2017 Final Selection: Old Pint 2 Adelphi Street, Salford, M3 6EN. Starts 7.00pm. (NM)

Thursday 25th – Pub of the Month Presentation to the Chiverton Tap, 8 Mellor Road, Cheadle Hulme, SK8 5AU, From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 2nd March – Walkden Survey: Details to be advised – see branch website. (NM)

Friday 4th March – Visit to Thirst Class Ales to present award from 2015 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Catch 203 from Stockport Bus

Station at 7.25pm. Numbers limited – book with chairman@ssmcamra.co.uk.

Tuesday 8th March - Branch Meeting. Starts 6.00pm. Venue to be confirmed – details from contact (CMCR)

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: <http://fbl.me/meccamra>

Stockport & South Manchester: @SSMCAMRA

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DIRECTIONS FROM NEW MILLS

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Pub of the Month

The Chiverton Tap, Cheadle Hulme



The Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for February 2016 is The Chiverton Tap. John Sutcliffe, who has lived for over 70 years in Cheadle Hulme, describes this interesting new development in the village, on Mellor Road.

The Chiverton Tap was opened in May 2015 by like minded local residents who are passionate about their real cask beer, draught cider, perry and good bottled beers and wines. The three partners Bob Ellis, Mary Ellis and Andrew O'Shea, aimed to offer warm hospitality coupled with high quality drinks and simple bar snacks in convivial surroundings. Undoubtedly they have been enormously successful in achieving their stated aim of welcoming customers, inviting them to share some good times and create fond memories.

The original proprietor of the building was Arthur Chiverton whose name is in the mosaic step at the central doorway into the pub. The premises have been many things down the years but was originally a drapers and milliners, and this theme has been carried through the interior décor. As you sit and relax you constantly notice some new, slightly quirky feature. There is a large, vertical yellow tape measure near the shop window. This motif is continued in the shelf edges behind the bar that are edged with standard size, white dressmaker's tapes. Note also the light fittings over the bar and elsewhere in the room, formed from bottles with the bases removed. The front of bar has recessed displays of old cotton reels and items associated with the drapery trade.

Furniture is an eclectic mix of dissimilar chairs and tables from all periods from the 1930s through to the 1980s. There is a booth enclosing an area, while other parts of the room have a variety of groupings so that there is the traditional feature of intimate and semi-private spaces but overlapping in a friendly way that allows for easy intermingling if desired. A blackboard gives information about the beers on offer, usually six on handpumps. A notice at the end of the bar offers Titterton's pies with mustard or chutney.

So why not squeeze in on Thursday, 28th of February, when the presentation will be made. We normally gather from around 8:00pm in the evening, with the presentation about 9:00pm. Mellor Road is opposite the front of the railway station. The 313 and X57 buses stop on Station Road or the train takes five minutes from Stockport.



The Pub of the Month award is sponsored by Stephensons, 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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Stagger

Withington with Sue Lightfoot



Having forgotten for a moment that the **Old House at Home** on Burton Road is now a typical Greene King outlet with a food emphasis after an extensive refurbishment ages ago – who remembers Chesters' Mild and the Manchester dart board? – the first staggerer tried to get in through a now non-existent door but eventually found the way to the bar, drawn by the pump clip of a favourite beer, Everards Tiger. Much looked-forward to, sadly, this didn't live up to expectation. It was only just about drinkable and the next three staggerers who turned up tasted it and thought the same. Avoiding the staples Old Speckled Hen and the Greene King IPA, the Brains SA, 4.2%, was tried and declared average or above.

It was soon on to the next port of call, however, and, stopping briefly by the site of the **Waterloo Inn** to read the plaque dedicated to the dog 'Brigadier', who won the Waterloo Cup in 1866, and after whom Brigadier Close was named, we arrived at the Orion, a basic street-corner Holt's house, with a traditional vault. It was pleasing to note the mix of people in here and the fact that there are darts, occasionally a quiz and an artist or karaoke for those who want to join in. Here, Holt's Bitter was on offer. All decided this was above average to good – mostly

Balderdash, a dark ale with a malty, porter-style taste and the Alsace, a light ale from the Hydes Provenance range brewed with hops from Alsace.



With its friendly, knowledgeable staff, offers of tasting, beer promotions, music, TV, activities and a cosy corner for those who just want to sup, the Victoria is the sort of place to settle in to but a move had to be made and it was on over the road to **Solomon's** (pictured above) where Lees' MPA and Thwaites Wainwright (now brewed at Marston's of course) were available. These were pronounced very good or above. A busy venue with music in the basement, which we were informed about at the bar and invited to sample, Solomon's 'brings a slice of the Northern Quarter' to this area and serves cocktails and sweet and savoury snacks as well as wines and beer. We amused ourselves for a while trying to work out who's who on the montage of Manchester faces.



away. This Grade II listed building is the oldest pub in Withington and the last 'Lion' remaining. From the outside, it looks like a country pub but inside there are contrasting areas – a 'vault'-type space, a larger bar area, a conservatory and outside, a bowling green. There are several TV screens and quiz, music and poker nights. It was very busy, this being a Friday night, and the clientele was very varied.



Popping into the **Albert** just to have a look at this pub set in a time-warped with its Formica tables, we found no real ale still – but we did ask and were obligingly told that it was available in the **Victoria**, which happened to be our next destination and so we moved on.

This Hydes pub increasingly sells guest beers and traditional ciders and no-one was disappointed. All the beers tried were regarded as very good to excellent. A real stand-out for those who tested it was Hydes Beer Studio's Ruby Amarillo, a deep red ale, and a deceptive 4.9%, made with American Amarillo hops. The other beers were of super quality too – the ones sampled were Butcombe Crimson King, a red beer using rye malt, Woodward and Falconer's



Our next stop couldn't have been more different. The **Turnpike** (pictured above and top right) on Wilmslow Road doesn't seem to have changed at all for over forty years – as indeed it shouldn't as it is in CAMRA's National Inventory of historic pub interiors. Extended and remodelled in the early 60s, the Turnpike now has real ale back on and one of our number was looking forward to a good pint of the beer available – Sam Smith's Old Brewery Bitter – but unfortunately it wasn't on top form, being voted only average to below. This would appear to be a blip as the beer here is usually very good.

The last call was the **Red Lion**, a stone's throw



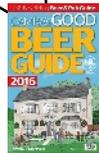
The beers routinely available are Jennings Cumberland Ale, three Marston's beers, and (Marston's) Wychwood Hobgoblin but those sampled this evening were Jennings Pigs Might Fly, a coppery-coloured ale, slightly spicy, the richly-coloured Black Sheep Special, with a crisp, dry bitter-sweet taste, recently rebranded, Banks's (Marston's) Czechmate, which combines lager malt and Czech hops and Oakham Inferno, with its dry, fruity and slightly bitter finish. All were very good to excellent. We struck up a conversation with our near neighbours, and spread the word by giving them some copies of *Opening Times* which were on hand.

Then it was over the road to catch a bus home from the stop conveniently situated just opposite. From blasts from the past to the more contemporary, this Stagger offered a variety of experiences – and beers. The route is easily walkable and quite compact and there are several buses which cover its start and end. Tram stop Burton Road is useful for the first two pubs and the 42, 142, 169 and 84 are some of the many buses which run along it.

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Stockport & South Manchester Awards

As usual the voting to choose the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA **Pub of the Year** was nail bitingly close. The annual winner is chosen from the Pubs of the Months in the previous year and the 2015 crop was a particularly diverse range so debate was intense.

However there can only be one winner and by a whisker the top honours went to the **Boars Head** on Stockport Market Place. In an age of multi-beer freehouses and guest beers commonplace in many pubs, the Boars Head sells just the one cask beer – Sam Smith's Old Brewery Bitter. So what makes this a Pub of the Year?



In essence it's a classic example of its type: a straightforward, down-to-earth boozier - the type of pub that used to be found on almost every street corner and which is now a vanishing species. They weren't all good pubs of course, and neither are all those that remain, but get a good one, and the Boars Head is certainly a good one, and they embody everything that historically made the reputation of the UK pub across the globe.

For the last six years the Boars has been in the capable hands of Sue and Terry Wild, supported by, Sue tells us, the best staff you could wish for. It has had several refurbishments, the last in 2013, which have seen the restoration of something approaching the original multi-room layout which is another nod to tradition, as is the absence of food. What the pub does have though is a superb atmosphere generated by its large, diverse and loyal crowd of regulars. Between them they get through three 36-gallon casks of Old Brewery Bitter every week so quality is invariably high.

Commenting on the vote, CAMRA's Jim Flynn told *Opening Times* "Apart from celebrating what is obviously a very good pub, I think this vote sends out the important message that CAMRA is about supporting pubs of all types and even those with a modest beer offering can be award winners if they are run as well as the Boars Head."

Olde Vic is Runner-up



Running the Boars Head a close second was the **Olde Vic** on Chatham Street in Edgely. Historically the Vic's claim to fame is that it was the first Stockport pub to sell changing guest beers and that tradition carries

on today with a range of up to six changing beers (often from new local brewers and always on top form) supplemented by a traditional cider.

For many years now Steve Brannan and Jo Quinn have been at the helm and over that time the Vic has become known for its quirky décor – think licensed Old Curiosity Shop and you'll get the picture – and the dry

humour of its licensee. It's been in the Good Beer Guide for years which tells you all you need to know about the beer quality.

Last year the Vic was subject to a buy-out when the owner of the building decided to sell up. A group of regulars got together and bought the pub to keep it in operation (*Disclaimer – that includes me. Ed.*) since when fund-raising has continued to fund some much needed building repairs.

Other winners

Two other annual awards have also been decided and we will be reporting on these at greater length in future issues. However congratulations are due to the **Railway**, Portwood, for again winning the **Cider Pub of the Year** title. The long-term commitment to real cider and perry at the Railway really marks the pub out – not only are there changing guest ciders and perries (two or three usually available) but in addition the pub hosts cider tasting and stages an annual cider and perry festival.



The **Club of the Year** is something that Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA is new to. The 2015 winner, the Ladybarn Social Club, was the first such award made by the branch, and it went on to be Regional Runner-up! They are hoping that a similar level of success may await this year's winner, the **Moor Club** in Heaton Moor which features three cask beers on a regular basis.

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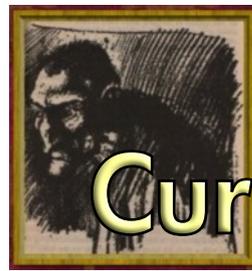
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Curmudgeon

Open All Hours?

In November last year, we saw the tenth anniversary of the implementation of the 2003 Licensing Act, which allowed pubs and bars to open whenever they wanted, subject to local authority approval. At the time, there were widespread scare stories about the likely effects of “24-hour drinking”. The Daily Mail predicted that it would unleash “unbridled hedonism... with all the ghastly consequences that will follow,” while the Sun told its readers to prepare for the “inevitable swarm of drunken youngsters”. The Association of Chief Police Officers warned that “people are going to drink more because of the longer hours and there will be lots more crime and disorder”. And the Royal College of Physicians said that “24 hour pub opening will lead to more excess and binge drinking, especially among young people.”

But, in practice, none of this happened, although some ill-informed politicians still go on about “rolling back the 24-hour drinking culture”. Today, we are drinking a fifth less than we did back then, with consumption in licensed premises having fallen by more than a quarter. Frequent drinking amongst young adults has fallen by more than two thirds. Rates of binge drinking have fallen amongst every age group, most sharply amongst 16 to 24 year olds.

Far from there being “lots more crime and disorder”, there is in fact much less. Criminal damage is down by 48 per cent, domestic violence by 28 per cent and violence in general by 40 per cent. Instances of drink driving not only fell after the Act came into effect, but fell more sharply in England and Wales, where the new law was applied, than in Scotland where it wasn't. As for alcohol-related deaths, they were rising before the Licensing Act was introduced, but flattened out in 2005 and have not risen since.

We still do see some alcohol-related disorder in city centres on weekend nights, but it is a lot less than it used to be. Taking away the traditional flashpoint of moving from pub to club has helped, and from pubs' point of view it is much better that people stay there longer and may not feel the need to move on at all. The average pub has extended its closing time by a massive 29 minutes, and in fact it's impossible to find any example of pubs and bars where you really can drink round the clock, or anything like it.

In my experience, the trade still noticeably thins out around 11 pm, as people need to get last buses or trains, or remember they have to go to work the next morning. A few stay for another drink or two, but the evening winds down in a civilised way, and there's no trouble or obvious drunkenness. It's also much easier to get a cab home if everyone doesn't call for one at the same time. The Act has not been without its problems, but overall it has improved the experience of pubgoers and contributed to less dangerous late-night streets.

Planning not Parsimony

Back in August last year, I criticised some recently-opened micropubs for only providing a single unisex WC for their customers, which could easily become overwhelmed at busy times. However, a correspondent reports that the key reason for this is not the owners being skinflints, but planning rules. It is OK to have a single WC, but if you want to add another, it has to be one accessible to the disabled. If you only have room for two standard-sized WCs, hard luck, it's either an accessible one or nothing. Existing pubs can avoid this requirement through “grandfather rights”, but new ones can't. This is a classic case of well-meaning legislation ending up having unintended adverse consequences.

Curmudgeon Online: curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

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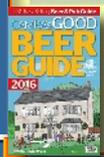
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Stockport & South Manchester Pubs of the Month



The June Pub of the Month was **Ye Olde Vic** in Edgeley. This free house has recently been the subject of a community buyout and features up to six changing cask beers and a traditional cider. Landlord Steve Brannan is pictured here (centre) with the team.



The July Pub of the Month was the **Old Monkey** on Portland Street in Manchester City Centre. This Holt's pub has been revitalised since manager Stacy Saunders (above) took over and her keen cellar team ensure that the Holt's ales are always in top condition.



The December winner was the **Governors House** in Cheadle Hulme. Liam and Michaela Ward are shown above with their award.



The Pub of the Month for October was the **Railway** on Avenue Street, Portwood. Apart from a wide range of cask beers, which always includes a mild, the Railway also focuses on traditional cider and foreign beers. Vince and Sue Hitchen are seen above with their certificate.



August's Pub of the Month was the **Beer Shop** on Kingsleigh Road in Heaton Mersey. Although this year has seen the opening of more beer shops - cums - bars, Dean Hilton's Beer Shop was the trail blazer, opening in 2011. Four cask beers feature

alongside an extensive bottled range at keen prices.



the award to landlady Karen Williams.

The winning pub for November was the **Crown** on High Street in Cheadle. This popular Hydes house is a true community local. Stockport & South Manchester Branch Chairman John Clarke is seen here presenting



GRUB'S UP

**MARBLE
BEERS^{LTD}**

High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views

Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall



Dining out during the festive season as ever took your writer to less visited pubs, at least from a personal point of view. The **Beehive** at Combs, a mile off the Whaley Bridge to Chapel-en-le-Frith road is always good for a good quality, sensibly priced meal. This year-round recommendation also applies at Christmas time. Christmas seasonal prices are better than many places, whilst food quality and service are very good. A group of runners and walkers dined well into December, and there was another good sized group in simultaneously. We were all well pleased with our visit. Three real ales are always available. Beehive Bitter is apparently Brakspear Bitter from the

Wychwood/ Brakspear plant at Wilton, Oxfordshire and is of course part of the Marston's brewing empire. Marston's Pedigree is often available and on our visit the third beer was from the Thornbridge Brewery.



Just before the New Year, one of the groups I walk with had a soup and sandwich lunch at the **Horse and Jockey** in Tideswell. The first feature of note, before you go in, is the lantern over the front door. The front face tells us that we are entering a free house. One side panel advertises Stones Best Bitter, whilst the other supports Tetley Ales. In its own way this is a fine piece of brewing history. The Stones name is consigned to the annals of history. The William Stones Cannon Brewery in Sheffield was taken over by Bass Charrington in 1968. Brewing continued in Sheffield until 1998, and you could

still get a decent pint of Stones Bitter brewed in Sheffield whilst much of the country was awash with the bland keg version brewed at Tadcaster. In time the Cannon brewery was closed. More recently Bass was taken over by Molson Coors. Perhaps by now even the keg version has gone. The Tetley name lives on after the closure of the brewery in Leeds in 2011. Now, Tetley Mild, Bitter and a fashionable Gold are brewed at Banks's.

A good choice of real ale was also available. Sharp's Doom Bar and Tetley Bitter were national brews. More locally Peak Ales Chatsworth Gold, brewed on the Chatsworth Estate, and Abbeydale Absolution from not too far away Sheffield, were available and a welcome addition to the range in a village where obviously locals are important to trade, but where visitors are also encouraged.

The January edition of *Derbyshire Life* announced the winners of the Derbyshire Life Food and Drink Awards for 2015. It is good to report local success in the Dining Pub Category in these awards. The **Old Hall Inn** at Whitehough, Chinley was declared the winner. It was described as 'A fantastic pub with a family friendly atmosphere, comfortable surroundings, a great range of beers and a reliably good standard of food.' What can be added? The runner-up in this category was another Peak District pub, the **Barrel Inn** at Bretton, laying claim to be the highest pub in Derbyshire and looking down to Eyam from its hill top position. Well done to both pubs.

High Peak Pub News

With Tom Lord

Another one bites the dust I'm afraid. This time it's the **Organ** in Hollingworth (Robinsons) which was closed sometime in November and has disappeared from the brewery website. This pub was under threat of closure and demolition a little while ago as there was a planning application to build houses on the football field behind the pub and create a new access onto the A628. This planning application was withdrawn following an objection by the Highways Agency. Not surprisingly, local rumour is that the planning application has been re-submitted but there is no evidence for that in the planning applications on the Tameside MBC website.

The **Kings Arms Hotel** on the Market Place in Chapel-en-le-Frith opened on Friday 18th December following a long period of refurbishment. *Opening Times* was on hand to see the results of the work on this rather imposing



building which was originally a stopping off point on the Manchester to Buxton turnpike.

The entrance area looks to be little changed with dark wood panelling. To the right is the bar area which is open plan and decorated in a smart, minimalist style. Ceramic floor tiles around the bar area with the remainder of the floor area in wood adds to the impression. On the left is an elegantly furnished restaurant, the exposed stonework of which exudes a calm ambience.

The pub is free of tie. On the real ale front there are three handpulls. One of these will be dedicated to Titanic Steerage with the other two intended for the products of local micros. At the time of the visit the Titanic Steerage was complemented by JHB from Oakham and Parish from Woods. Not exactly local but it is early days. Focus may well be on session beers but the policy is not yet fully developed.

All in all, a welcome addition to the real ale on offer in this pretty Peak District town which should provide an additional potential outlet for the growing number of micros in the fairly immediate vicinity.

The **Woodley Arms** on Stockport Road in Woodley no longer has real ale, but there is some talk of a possible reintroduction later in the year so maybe better news at a later date.



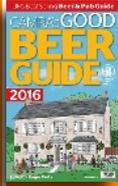
More local snippets include the **Drum & Monkey** at Whaley Bridge selling the latest beer from Whaley Bridge Brewery, a Porter. There will be more on this when I have managed a tasting. Many pubs find it more economical to delay opening in the week, Monday – Thursday, until well into the afternoon. It is good to report that the **White Horse** at Horwich End lights in Whaley Bridge is now opening around noon. This gives the pub a chance to catch any passing trade during the day, as well as being available to locals who might be able to take advantage of the facility. Also in Whaley Bridge the **Cock** is open from noon and the **White Hart** from 1.00pm. There is no need to go thirsty.

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Meet the Brewer

Byrne the Cake Brewing



**BYRNE
THE
CAKE**
BREWING

*This month Brendon Hall
interviews David Foulger of
the Levenshulme-based
Byrne the Cake Brewing
which has so far produced
bottled beers only.*

David of Byrne the Cake Brewery, hello! That's quite a unique brewery name - how did it come about?

Hello. Byrne the Cake was a nickname of my late grandfather who introduced me to the art of home brewing at a young age. There was always something bottled up in his garage or fermenting away in his airing cupboard which was what first piqued my interest and so I felt the name was a fitting tribute.

Condensing a passion into a few sentences is always difficult, but if you could sum up Byrne the Cake in a few lines for our readers.

Byrne the Cake Brewing is a small artisanal setup. One guy steeping, mashing, boiling, hopping, bottling and selling. Starting its way from the very bottom with a view of building a business up whilst learning along the way.

Manchester is having a real brewing golden-age at the moment, what do you hope to bring to the mix?

Manchester, the northwest and the UK even. It's great to see and I most certainly want to be a part of that. I hope to add a collection of tasty brews to the list of Manchester's many and to continually evolve, adding different styles as my techniques progress.

What beer styles do you have in development and where can the readers get their hands on the finished article?

I currently have three beers that I am developing. I have a Black IPA/Cascadian Dark which was the first all grain recipe that I brewed and it's the one that I'm most happy with and one that I've brewed the most. As well as this I'm working on a Session Pale and a West Coast-style IPA which are coming along nicely. At the moment I am just selling beer via market stalls in and around Manchester and I'm hoping to announce some more stall dates in the near future. There are already plans afoot for the next stage of development which will be a more permanent brewing space with the idea of having a few taps on site.

And finally, when you aren't drinking your own brew - please tell us one local, one national and one international beer and/or brewer that are really blowing your socks off at the moment?

I think locally Track Brewery are really on the top of their game at the moment. It seems that every beer I try of theirs is always bang on the money and I particularly enjoyed the Zoji (Black IPA) recently. I'm guessing they are pretty national now but Magic Rock continually challenge themselves with their output. Not only are their beers so well balanced and interesting they are continually evolving with the styles they are putting out. I was really blown away by Rhubarbarella, which was a Rhubarb Braggot they did as a collaboration with Against the Grain. Internationally it would be hard not to mention Mikkeller as I feel they really push the boundaries of what's possible when brewing beer. I've been fortunate enough to visit Copenhagen a couple of times and their bars are always my first port of call. I'm particularly fond of their Citra double and the Spontandoubleblueberry which was a favourite at IMBC last year.

Whittling it down to three breweries wasn't easy though so I don't think I can finish this section without also mentioning Buxton, Wild Beer, Lervig, Beavertown, Vocation, Edge, 10 Barrel, To ol, Kernel, Thornbridge, Elysian, Ninkasi, Tocalmatto. All very inspiring.

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Heard at the Bar



Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Crown, Hawk Green

The **Crown** pub in Hawk Green has reopened following a joint investment from Robinsons Brewery and licensee Simon Hood. Robinsons' design team worked around the clock for nine weeks to reinvigorate the Crown with a new direction that puts quality food and cask beer at the heart of the pub.



Internally, the designers removed obstructing pillars in the trading area to create continuity between the drinking and dining areas and the new low level snug area has become a perfect place to unwind. The new bar area, which displays a new collection of handpicked wines and spirits along with four copper hand pulls, instantly grabs your attention and has been designed to complement the rustic feel of the décor.

Externally, the pub has been transformed thanks to a brand new planting scheme, seating areas and Robinsons trademark copper signage. The Crown now stands proudly and draws you in from the road ensuring that the pub will be enjoyed not just by Hawk Green locals but by passers-by as well.

Crown, Great Moor



On making a customary "early doors" visit to the **Crown**, Great Moor, on New Year's Day, *Opening Times* was impressed to learn that landlord Mark Taylor has managed to get Robinsons to let him have a "personalised" barrel in extra-quick time following the sad death of a local Great Moor "character" named Joe Starr.

Joe was a renowned karaoke performer, although unfortunately we never heard him in action. His vocal abilities are reflected in the

name chosen for the special beer - "Joe's My Way" - although we're not sure if Joe ever sounded much like Frank Sinatra. Be that as it may, the beer was launched in the pub on New Year's Eve, two days before the funeral, and we gather that considerable quantities were immediately consumed. A fine gesture on the part of both the pub and Robinsons.

Victoria Lounge, Glossop

Of recent times the Moon and Sixpence in the centre of Glossop has been something of a disappointment. Under the ownership of Enterprise Inns this pub had been, seemingly randomly, opened, closed, re-opened etc. often featuring real ale of less than consistent quality. All has now changed as the building has been extensively refurbished and opened on December 5th as the **Victoria Lounge**.



Designed to focus on a high quality food offer, the pub is now operating over two floors. Downstairs is a large space featuring a large bar with a number of what may be called "small room" areas. Decorated tastefully in shades of grey these are relaxing areas set up for bar food from a very good and varied menu. Wooden flooring throughout adds to the modern feel. Upstairs is a more formal dining space.

On the real ale front, the pub is free of tie. On the day *Opening Times* visited the ales on offer were Jennings Cumberland, Ringwood Old Thumper, Marston's New World Pale Ale and Longendale Lights from the local Howard Town Brewery. The intention is to keep two of the handpulls on Marston's beers, one on a Howard Town beer with the other used to promote local breweries.

This is a high quality refurbishment and will be a positive addition to the social scene in Glossop.

Dane Bank

Robinsons' **Dane Bank** in Denton has had a major refurbishment and we must say it is a huge improvement. The Windmill Lane pub, which was closed for five weeks, has been transformed by a scheme that looked to re-establish the Dane Bank and emphasise its traditional fixtures and fittings.

Tony Massey, Business Development Manager for Robinsons said: "The Dane Bank has always been a great pub and an asset to the community. The pub was starting to look tired so it was time to shake things up and give the Dane Bank a new lease of life."

The new bar, which has become an instant focal point, has been redesigned with a brand new walnut bar top and striking feature columns at the front.

At the back is an impressively large lawned pub garden with a mini kids' playground, a mini football pitch and numerous wooden benches and table combinations and at the front is a newly laid out car park. The only part of the pub left untouched is the vault which was left open during the refurbishment.

The pub will continue to serve a rotating range of Robinsons ales through four new hand pulls along with a new menu comprised of hearty pub food including beer battered fish and chips, freshly made hot sandwiches and a delicious homemade pie of the week.

Ashlea



Opening Times' Alan Gent called in at the **Ashlea**, Cheadle, after its refurbishment last year and the impression was very favourable with a much fresher look. On the beer front, there were six hand pumps in use, which is a big departure for this pub. Alan spoke to the landlord, who wants to make this a regular occurrence and to help it along he has persuaded the likes of Moberley and Howard Town to supply him with pins (four-and-a-half gallon casks). This obviously helps both customer choice and throughput.

Pub Shorts

Marple's second micro pub, the **Samuel Oldknow**, is now all systems go as owners Anthony Meynell and Billy Booth finally completed the paperwork in mid-January. Work can now start.

We are pleased to hear that Wetherspoons will no longer be selling the **Milson Rhodes** in Didsbury.

CAMRA Discounts

There are several pubs in the *Opening Times* area that offer a discount to card-carrying CAMRA members. This is a very welcome promotion and we are very grateful to those pubs that have taken up this initiative. *Opening Times* publishes an up to date list of these pubs every three months. To date we have been given details of the following pubs which offer a discount. If any pub out there has been missed off the list (or the information below is incorrect) then please email *Opening Times* Editor John Clarke with details. The email address is: stocam@btinternet.com.

Here are the pubs we currently have full details of:

- ☺ **Albert Square Chop House, Manchester:** 20% off cask ales.
- ☺ **Ashlea, Manchester Road, Cheadle:** 10% discount off cask ale.
- ☺ **Bar Fringe, Swan Street, Manchester:** 10p off a half and 20p off a pint of cask ale.
- ☺ **Beehive, Market Street, Droylsden:** 10% off a pint of cask ale and cider.
- ☺ **Beer Traders, Stockport Road, Marple:** 10% off cask ale (Monday – Thursday).
- ☺ **Bier Cell, Greenwood Street, Altrincham:** 10% discount on bottled beers.
- ☺ **Church Inn, Church Road, Flixton:** 10% off cask ale.
- ☺ **Didsbury, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury:** 10% off cask ale.
- ☺ **Fir Tree, Gorton Road, Reddish:** 20% off a pint of cask ale.
- ☺ **Font, New Wakefield Street, Manchester:** 25% off cask ales.
- ☺ **Font, Manchester Road, Chorlton:** 25% off cask ales.
- ☺ **Font, Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield:** 25% off cask ales and ciders.
- ☺ **Garibaldi, Lees Street, Abbey Hey:** 10% off cask ale.
- ☺ **George & Dragon, Manchester Road, Heaton Chapel:** 10% off cask ale.
- ☺ **Grey Horse, Portland Street, Manchester:** 10% off cask ale.
- ☺ **Grove Ale House, London Road, Hazel Grove:** 10% off cask ale (Monday – Thursday).
- ☺ **Harewood Arms, 2 Market Street, Broadbottom:** 20p off a pint of cask ale Sunday to Thursday.
- ☺ **Heaton Hops, School Lane, Heaton Chapel:** 10% off all draught beers.
- ☺ **Ladybrook, Fir Road, Bramhall:** 10% off cask ale.
- ☺ **Lass O'Gowrie, Charles Street, Manchester:** 50p off a pint and 20p off a half of cask ales.
- ☺ **Lloyds, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton:** 10% off food and drink.
- ☺ **Mary & Archie, Burton Road, West Didsbury:** 10p off a pint of cask ale.
- ☺ **Mono, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton:** 10% off cask ale.
- ☺ **Pie & Ale, The Hive, Lever St, Manchester:** 10% off cask ale.
- ☺ **Prairie Schooner Tap House, Flixton Road, Urmston:** 20p off a pint of cask ale.
- ☺ **Saison, Burton Road, West Didsbury:** 10% off cask ale.
- ☺ **Salisbury, New Wakefield Street, Manchester:** 50p off a pint and 20p off a half of cask ales.
- ☺ **Spinning Top, Wellington Road South, Stockport:** 30p off a pint and 12p off a half.
- ☺ **Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar:** 10% off cask ales (does not apply Friday and Saturday).
- ☺ **Stalybridge Labour Club, Acres Lane, Stalybridge:** 14% off cask ales.
- ☺ **Trevor, Beech Road, Chorlton:** 10% off cask ale.
- ☺ **White Hart, High Street, Cheadle:** 10% off cask ale.
- ☺ **White House, Water Street, Stalybridge:** 10% off cask ales.
- ☺ **Victorian, Ack Lane East, Bramhall:** 10% off a pint of cask ale.
- ☺ **Wine & Wallop, Lapwing Lane, West Didsbury:** 40p off a pint of cask ale.
- ☺ **Ye Olde Cock, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury:** 25p off a pint of cask ale.

Even more reasons to join CAMRA! And many thanks to all of the above pubs for their generous offers.

Moorhouse's Seasonals 2016



Moorhouse's has unveiled a raft of adventurous seasonal brews for roll out throughout 2016. The Pendle Witches brewer's innovative team have explored a range of malt and hop varieties to create the new guest range. It includes golden brews to toast the Queen's 90th birthday and the summer's Euro soccer tournament.

The list launches with the premium **Dark Bohemia** (4.8%) to meet February; a brew with four malts, including Bohemian pilsner, for 'depth and toasted complexity', together with Fusion and Styrian Cardinal Hops to deliver 'gooseberry and spice on the nose'.

March welcomes **Eldorado** (4.4%) taking its name from the US hop for rich full flavoured golden ale. In April golden wheat beer **White Mist** (4.2%) sweeps in while for May the always popular fruity **Pure Witch** (4%) appears. June sees a double roll out of celebration ales: **Ninety** (3.9%) toasting the Queen's 90th birthday and **Pitch Craft** (4%) to mark the UEFA Euro Tournament. Both are golden ales brewed with the Australian Summer and New Zealand Nelson Sauvin hops for 'delicious gooseberry and grapefruit notes'.

July hails **Rye** (4.1%) – 'hoppy pale ale with rye malt for a creamy mouth-feel' - and August **Rio** (3.9%), a golden ale brewed with Styrian Goldings and US Mount Hood hops. For September **East Lancs Steam** (5%) rolls in based on the Californian steam beer style and showcases the Northern Brewer hop for 'spicy herb aroma'. Autumn brings the rich, dark **Black Panther** (4.8%) as the Halloween treat while **Black Moss Oyster Stout** (4.9%) tackles the November chill. **Ice Witch** (4.3%) – a light, golden ale showcasing Citra hops – closes the year to deliver premium easy drinking festive ale.

Brewery & Pub News Extra

Covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Marble update

There have been a few changes at Marble recently, not least a complete revamp of **57 Thomas Street** in the Northern Quarter and the appointment of a new head brewer, James Kemp (known to everyone as JK). *Opening Times* caught up with him at the new-look Thomas Street bar.



JK (pictured above) comes to Marble with plenty of experience. With a strong home-brewing background he's worked at Fullers, Thornbridge and Buxton breweries previously. Impressive names to have on your CV we think. Latterly he spent two years on the Wirral working for a manufacturer of home-brew kits while getting some additional brewing qualifications at the same time, with the aim of returning to brewing. He's known Jan Rogers, Marble's owner, for a long time and when Matt Howgate left she asked JK to be his replacement. He jumped at the chance.

He's had a good look at the Marble range and there have been a few changes. The core range will now comprise four beers – Pint, Manchester Bitter, Lagonda and Boheme (the kegged Bohemian lager). There have already been tweaks to the recipes (Pint, for example, has a substantially increased hop rate and a changed hop recipe). Other Marble regulars like Ginger, Dobber and Chocolate will now be more seasonal in their availability as will the likes of Howgate & Kemp, Antipodean and Early Grey IPA.

JK is also keen to introduce more beers that reflect what's happening in the wider UK beer scene so expect IPAs, American pale ales, Brown ales and imperial stouts (plenty of the latter he says). In addition he plans a "cellar" range of barrel aged beers. The barrel ageing programme is a long-term project with the first beers emerging in about a year's time. However once they are launched the aim is to have a regular series of these with an "indefinite supply" of

them. Also planned are experiments with brettanomyces yeast and other (benign) bacteria. This all comes together with the first beer (of quite a few we think) brewed to mark Marble's 20th anniversary in 2017. This is a strong old ale with Brett and aged in Burgundy casks. That alone will be worth the wait.

The aim of all of this is to get Marble fully back into the national brewing limelight – it promises to be an exciting ride we think.

And what about the revamped Thomas Street outlet? Only the ground floor bar is open at the moment but this quite an improvement on the previous set-up in that the large table, a nice touch which ultimately took up too much room, has gone and better use is made of the space in general. There's lots of modern natural wood and we particularly liked the way the bar counter extends into a drinking area. At the moment there's no cask beer and this has caused some raised eyebrows.



Happily cask beer will return when the first floor bar opens (and it may well be open by the time you read this) as there the Marble core range (alongside seasonals and specials) will be available on gravity served from pins (small four-and-a-half gallon casks) stored in a temperature controlled cellar. The smaller cask size will aid quality and Marble has bought a stock for this purpose. A new kitchen will also be upstairs and this will enable Thomas Street to offer a broader menu. Well worth a visit.

Star Community Brewery

The **Star Inn** on Back Hope Street in Higher Broughton doesn't feature in these pages very often – probably because it's quite a way off our patch. This ex-Robinsons pub is noteworthy for a couple of reasons though. Firstly it was the first urban pub to be the subject of a community buy-out. Secondly it became the home of Bazens' Brewery which downsized from an industrial estate across the road to a small outbuilding in the pub garden.

Richard Bazen gave up brewing last summer but that wasn't the end of the brewery which now effectively operates as the test kit for the Brinkburn Street Brewery of Byker, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. How did this odd

arrangement come about? It's a slightly convoluted tale.

Brinkburn Street is owned by Lee Renforth, who, despite coming from the North East, lives in Salford where he has other business interests. Lee plays football with another Lee, Lee Simpson, who also happens to be chair of the committee that runs the pub and who was keen to see brewing continue. So, Lee (Renforth) acquired the brewing kit from Richard Bazen (the premises are owned by the Star), took on a trainee brewer, Ryan Hargreaves (pictured left below with Lee), and away they went.



Two beers have been produced to date, albeit in various versions. Pursuit of Hoppiness (5%) is currently on version six and is generously hopped with Citra and Amarillo while Fools Gold (5.2%) is also well hopped, this time with Chinook and Cascade. There are plans to brew session-strength versions of each at 4% and 3.9% respectively. Malt and hops are all sourced from the parent plant in Newcastle. The beers are available at the Star (where you may also catch a Brinkburn Street beer on the bar, too) and other local outlets.

Heaton Hops



Congratulations to Damian O'Shea and Charlotte Winstone (pictured above) for winning the City Life Pub of the Year Award. The two changing cask beers are always on top form and this is supplemented by real cider, craft kegs and a great bottle selection – all served in a cosy and welcoming bar. Considering **Heaton Hops** only opened on 2nd April last year this award is quite an achievement. Congratulations to both Damian and Charlotte. Well done, too, to the two runners-up – the **Smithfield** and the **Abel Heywood**, both in Manchester's Northern Quarter.

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Manchester Beer Week

City-wide celebration planned for June



Manchester's first ever city-wide beer festival will be launched next summer, transforming the city into a ten-day celebration of the nation's favourite drink.

Manchester Beer Week will run from June 10 to June 19 but, unlike most beer festivals, it will not be tied to a single venue. Instead, it will feature a series of events at pubs, bars, breweries, restaurants and street locations across the city, all designed to celebrate Manchester as one of the UK's best destinations for good beer.

Already, more than 40 venues and almost 30 breweries have signed up for the festival, pledging to host a variety of different events across Greater Manchester. "The early support has been overwhelming and we're already developing big plans for a number of unique events that will appeal to a wide spectrum of people, not just beer enthusiasts," said festival organiser Connor Murphy. "As a proud Mancunian, I am keen to showcase everything our city has to offer – from its rich brewing heritage and varied pub scene to the host of new breweries that have emerged in the past five years. I really do believe Manchester is the best city in the UK for beer."

One of the main initiatives being planned for the festival will see modern breweries revive beers from Manchester's past, digging through the record books to find forgotten recipes that can be recreated. But a wide range of further events are being planned, including a brewers' street market, a week-long pub quiz, pub treasure hunts, brewery tours, history walks and a host of special tasting events. Meanwhile, it is hoped fundraising initiatives will raise money for good causes in the Manchester area.

Manchester Beer Week will also focus on beer's relationship with food, collaborating with restaurants and food traders on initiatives such as brewery supper clubs, beer-matched meals and pub snacks created especially for the festival. "When talking about the right drink to accompany good food, too often the focus is drawn towards wine and there are too few restaurants that promote good beer," added Murphy. "In fact, beer is the perfect partner for food as it is so incredibly versatile, offering an even greater range of styles and flavours than wine. Manchester Beer Week will attempt to highlight the possibilities for beer to be enjoyed in a wide range of situations."

Manchester Beer Week is seeking sponsors to help fund a number of its larger initiatives and is calling on interested parties to contact manchesterbeerweek@gmail.com. More information on the festival can be found at www.mcrbeerweek.co.uk or by following @mcrbeerweek on Twitter.



Robinsons unveil seasonal range

Robinsons have unveiled their 2016 line-up following the success of the 2015 seasonals. Across the 300-strong pub estate and nationally through listings across the country, over 728,000 pints of Robinsons seasonal beers were quaffed throughout last year; the equivalent of a pint drunk every minute.

Gill Yates, Brands Manager for Robinsons Brewery, said "2015 has been brilliant for Robinsons. We've launched several high profile beers including Wizard and TROOPER 666 and we've had one of our most successful years for seasonals with our spring seasonal, MOJO, and our summer beer, Dizzy's Twisted Sister, becoming our fourth and fifth best-selling seasonals of the past five years. If this year is anything to go by, our customers are in for an exciting 2016. Over 100,000 more seasonal pints were sold in 2015 which shows that our limited edition range is a hit with our customers. Next year, we've got a brilliant seasonal line-up along with a couple of very big surprises that we know our customers will love."

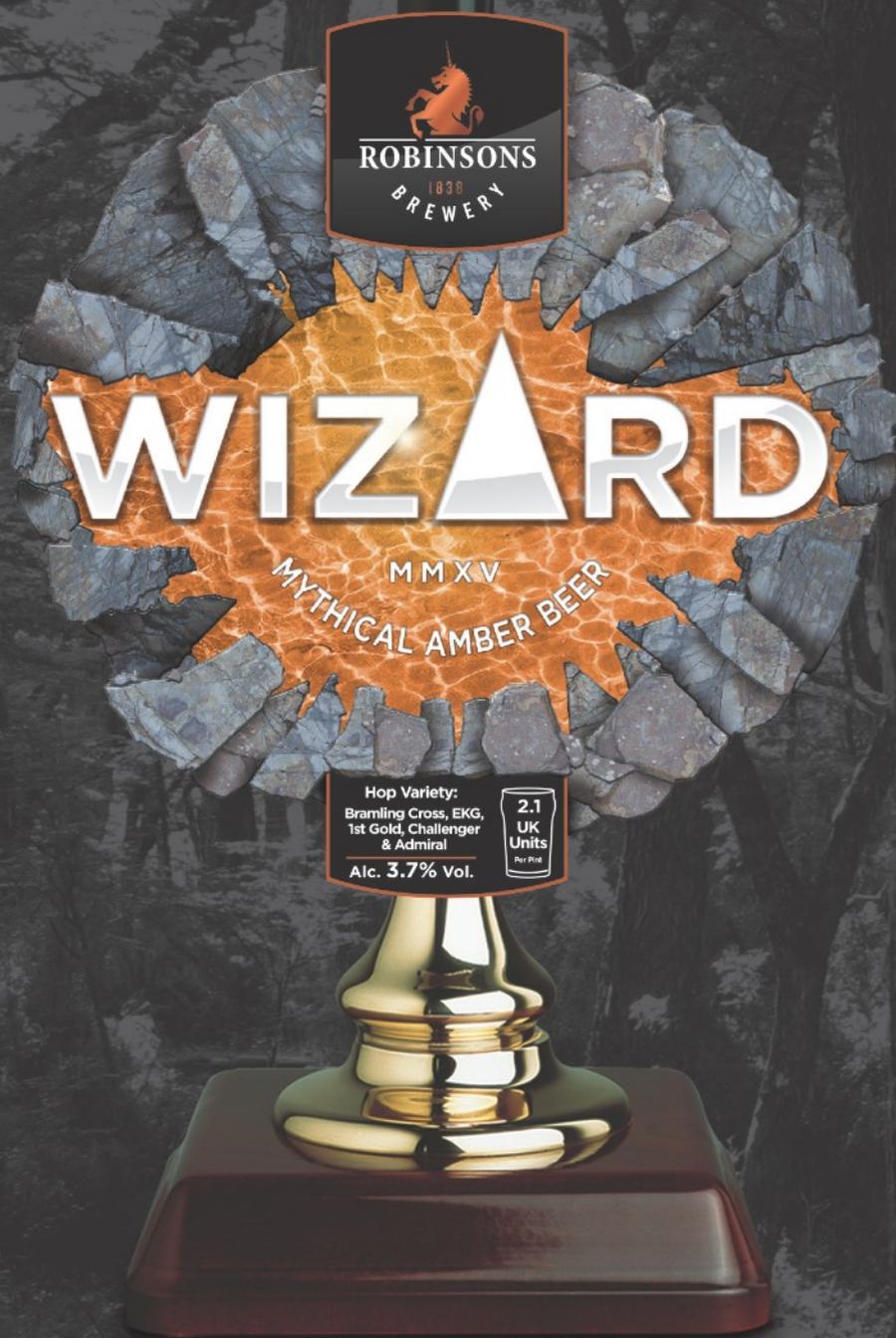


Robinsons' 2016 seasonal range kicks off with Red Jester, a 3.9% red ale with a distinctive blackcurrant hop flavour. This beer "has a great balance of biscuit malt and caramelised toffee flavours making it the ideal companion throughout February and March", says the press release. April and May will welcome Beerdo, a 4.0% golden beer with an intense flavour thanks to the use of Chinook, Bramling Cross and Goldings hops. The beer promises a "citrus aroma and a rich malt character".

Hoping to bring England success in the Euros next year, Robinsons will present Bonjeuros, a light refreshing blonde beer brewed using Cascade, Ella and Goldings hops. This 4.2% beer is planned to have a clean citrus and zesty hop palate and will be available throughout June and July. Hop Gun, a 4.0% light amber ale will 'take your breath away' this summer and will be available during August and September. This beer, created using the Australian hop Galaxy should deliver a distinctive mix of passion fruit, peaches and orange citrus flavours with a hint of sweet caramel.

As autumn fades into winter, Robinsons introduce a new addition to the Dizzy Blonde family: Dizzy's Christmas Kiss. This 4.4% ale will be available throughout December and is a deep mahogany beer packed full of roasted malt aromas and warming winter flavours; the perfect way to finish off the year.

INTRODUCING...



Serving
SORCERY

Inspired by a local Cheshire legend 'The Wizard of Alderley Edge', we have combined 5 English hops, pale, wheat & crystal malts to produce Wizard, a moreish, sessionable 3.7% ABV mythical amber ale. Packed full of flavour, Wizard has a spell-bounding berry fruit & zesty hop palate complemented by a magical full malt character.

*Drink of this & take thy fill
for the water falls by the Wizard's will'*