

JULY 2006



# Opening

TIMES

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

NUMBER 263

COVERING CENTRAL, EAST & SOUTH MANCHESTER, STOCKPORT, TAMESIDE, TRAFFORD N.E. CHESHIRE & MACCLESFIELD

## Records Broken!

### CAMRA celebrates another successful Beer Festival at Edgeley Park



**F**ine weather brought out a record crowd for this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, with about 4,800 attending over the three-day event. Many people took advantage of the good weather to sit out on the stand to enjoy the selection of 115 cask beers and 60 ciders and perris on offer – and luckily stocks were such that there was plenty of choice left right up until closing time on Saturday night.

Many visitors commented on the high quality of the beers on offer, testimony to the skills of our beer managers (and the insulating quality of the stand, which helped us to maintain the beer at cellar temperature). About 20 per cent of the beer order was made up of dark beers (stouts, porters and mild ales) and it was pleasing to see how well these sold.

Cider sales were buoyant, too, with some 300 gallons sold this year, almost a record for the festival. Extra supplies of the popular sweet and medium styles had to be drafted in to keep up with demand. All in all about 17,000 pints of beer, cider and perry were sold this year

The souvenir glasses sold out as did the festival t-shirts and some 87 new members were recruited to CAMRA – one of the highest figures for some years.

A gleeful Festival Organiser, Jim Flynn, told *Opening Times* "This was our third year at Edgeley Park and while we had to rearrange the bar layout again this year, I think this was in many ways our best festival ever. My thanks to all our generous sponsors and the many CAMRA members who gave up their free time to help staff the event".

Our photo shows the Robinson's dray arriving at Edgeley Park after travelling through the town centre with Festival publicity.

#### Another Festival Coming Up

For those suffering withdrawal symptoms there will be a beer festival at Stockport's Calverts Court on St Petersgate for one week from 10 July. Run in conjunction with 3 Rivers Brewery there will be some 40 beer available (10 at any one time) at a maximum price of £1.49 a pint. The beers, all sourced by 3 Rivers, will include favourites such as Whim and Durham plus a selection of Irish cask ales as well as one or two surprises. Special t-shirts will also be available to buy. This is a interesting initiative between 3 Rivers and Wetherspoons and certainly deserves support. OT will certainly be there.

#### Beers of the Festival

One of the highlights of the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival is the voting for Beer of the Festival. This year we changed the arrangements and used a combination of public voting and a beer managers' tasting panel. This produced the top two or three beers in each category, which were:

**Mild** – Arundel Sussux, Bazens' Black Pig, Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby.

**Bitter** – Castle Rock Harvest Pale, Pictish Festival Special, Abbeydale Brimstone.

**Premium Bitter** – Durham Prior's Gold, Marble Summer Marble.

**Special Beers** – Marble Ginger Marble, Phoenix Ginger Wheat.

**Stout/Porter** – Maguires Plain Porter, Woodlands Midnight stout, Thornbridge St Petersburg

**Old/Strong Ales** – Abbeydale Decadence, Thornbridge Jaipur IPA.

The beers of the festival were chosen from this very strong field. In third place was Abbeydale Decadence and runner-up was Thornbridge St Petersburg. The winner though, was a beer close to home – Marble Ginger Marble. "I'm over the moon" said brewer James Campbell when told of the beer's success and plans are in hand to make a formal presentation in the next couple of months.

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*Traditional Beers for Modern Tastes*

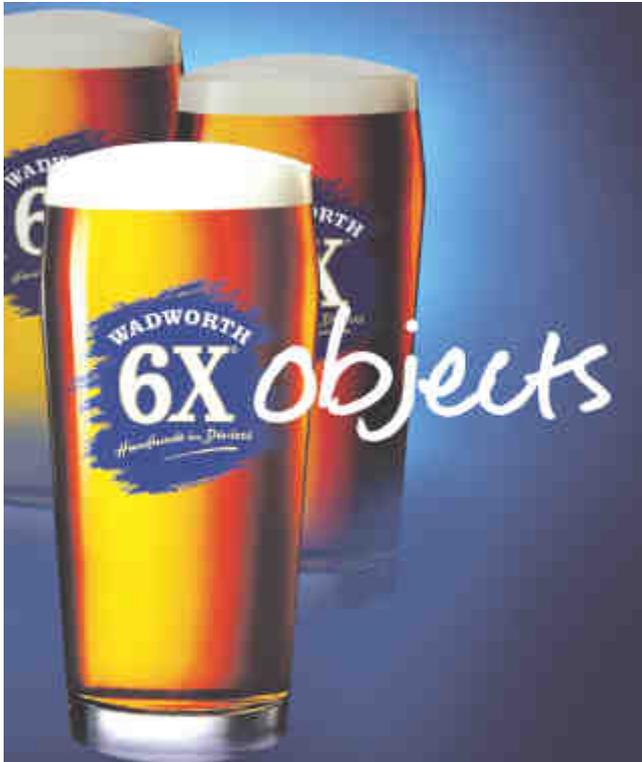


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# Pub OF THE Month AWARD



**The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for July is the Gothic Bar & Grill, Church Road, Gatley – the only tied house for Cain’s brewery outside Merseyside.**

The Gothic Bar and Grill really is one of Stockport's most unusual pubs, not only for the Cains connection but also by being housed in an old converted Methodist chapel dating back to 1841.

The premises still retains an ecclesiastical appearance with high arched windows, lots of dark wood panelling and the use of old pews that complement the refectory style tables in the main body of the establishment.

Above the front entrance is a high balcony reminiscent of the building's past but where the more secular pool table and dart board are now sited.

The bar area down at the side of the main drinking area has a respectable number of hand pumps to complement the keg fonts.

The pub has had its fair share of ups and downs in recent years but since August 2005 when Carol Jones took over as licensee the Gothic has gained a reputation for serving well kept ale, including nearly all of Cains cask beers notably the stupendous dark mild, alongside good, reasonably priced food.

The quality of the beer is uniformly high, but perhaps the star of the show is the excellent mild – so popular is this brew that it was voted one of the top milds on the recent Mild Challenge – this award will be presented at the same time as that for Pub of the Month.

In such a relatively short time Carol and the hard working team she has put together have truly put the Gothic back on the local beer drinking map. Join us as we celebrate their success on the presentation night, Thursday 27 July. **AP**

*The Gothic is close to Gatley station. Buses 371 from Stockport (plus service 11 until about 7pm) and 44 from Manchester and Cheadle will get you there.*

## OT – COMMENT...

Many thanks to everyone who has said how glad they were to see *Opening Times* back after its unplanned break. As I would have expected many of you have commented on the various glitches that marred the last issue, mainly the random forays into large type and the default of many of the sub-heads into the wrong size and type of font. We don't even talk about page 17 from the last issue!

The good news is that we know what caused all of this and, offering a hostage to fortune, you should find that this issue is largely free of such errors.

Thanks also to everyone who made this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival such a success. Attendance hit another record high and while beer sales inexplicably dipped slightly (despite excellent quality and temperature), cider sales continues to boom – we think we probably now sell more gallons of cider to gallons of beer than any other festival in the country. It's a big welcome to the 87 new members who joined CAMRA during the festival – we hope to see some of you joining in other branch activities over the coming year, if you can.

And a big congratulations to Marble Brewery for their Beer of the Festival win – this award has gone to breweries all over the country so it's good to award one on our doorstep.

## OT – INFORMATION

*Opening Times* is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Additional material is supplied by the High Peak & NE Cheshire, Trafford & Hulme and Macclesfield & E Cheshire Branches. The views expressed are not necessarily those of CAMRA either locally or nationally. 7,000 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth.

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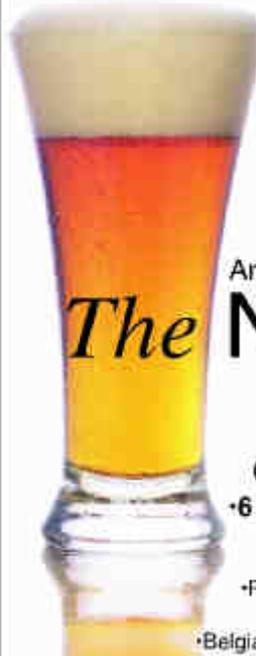
**Trading Standards** – problems in pubs should normally be resolved by a quiet word with the licensee. However sometimes it may be necessary to take it further. These are the local contacts:

- **Stockport:** 0845 644 4301
- **Manchester:** 0161 234 1555
- **Tameside:** 0161 342 8355
- **Trafford:** 0161 912 2274
- **Derbyshire:** 08456 058 058
- **Cheshire:** 0845 11 32 500

**Copy Date for the August issue is Friday 7 July**

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**High Peak**  
**PUB NEWS**  
WITH FRANK WOOD

At the High Peak AGM at the **Cheshire Ring** on 17th June, the pub was pretty full for a Saturday afternoon, with not only our meeting but the Great British Beer Festival having their briefing meeting in preparation for Earls Court 2006. The beers on offer were a range of Beartown beers plus several guests. I picked out Rebellion Wheat Beer as the best on offer. Thanks to Wayne for the buffet which was totally unexpected and a nice gesture.

In Tintwistle, the **Old Oak** is still shut, its days looking eyebrow raising now, as it has been shut since around February. This leaves the **Bulls Head** as the only pub in the village. However, Tintwistle Conservative Club and the Liberal Club are both busy, both selling real ale of a good quality and price, so all is not bad.

The **Victoria** in Dukinfield, on Birch Lane, near Hyde North Station, a Robinson's pub, is shut and now the signage has been taken down, which seems like the end of the line (sorry for the very weak joke!).

**Sullivans Tavern** on Albemarle Street in Ashton has several real ales now on the bar, all in reasonable condition when our member visited recently. However, it's not for the faint hearted, with male drag acts on the agenda on a regular basis. Talking of which, the **Bike and Hounds** in Hyde is quite the opposite sex, being reported to be still having topless barmaids at certain times in the week. Handily placed for the bus station too boys!!

The **Sheldon Arms**, the new Lees pub on Lord Sheldon Way in Ashton has now opened. Named after the former long serving MP for Ashton, it is a welcome gain.

The **Swan** at Kettleshulme is hoping to run a beer festival later in the year, in early September, speaking of which, the Glossop Victorian Weekend festival that High Peak run is on 1st - 3rd September.

Two pubs for sale in Disley by Punch taverns are the **Albert Hotel** and the **Ploughboy**.

I hear that **Stock's Café & Bistro**, Market Place, Chapel-en-le-Frith is doing interesting things on the beer front. They focus on local products so the excellent Thornbridge Hall beers are among the house products.

The aim is to stock as many bottle conditioned beers as they can, and focus on the stronger ales. As well as the Thornbridge beers of St Petersburg, Brock, Blackthorn, Lord Marples and Jaipur, they also stock about 6-10 others depending on what they can find. Coniston Bluebird is a favourite, as are Owd Roger, Old Bob and Old Tom.

Beer is also used in recipes on the menu and they are through to the regional final of the English Beef and Lamb Executive 2006 Steak pie of the Year with a Steak and Stout Pie, the magical ingredient being the St Petersburg Stout.

Finally, the **Rock Tavern** on the road between Charlesworth and Marple Bridge, is reopening (if it has not already by the time this edition comes out). According to a local press release, the beers on offer will be Taylors Landlord, Black Sheep and Theakstons Bitter. The licensees Julie and Stephen formerly had the **Church House Inn** in Bollington where they got into the Egon Ronay guide and they are planning an excellent eating experience at the Rock.

Carole Booth and Dave Armstrong have begun a new venture as tenants of the **Swan** at Newtown, New Mills. their overriding ambition is for The Swan to be at the hub of its community

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## New Breweries Come On Stream

And still they come. Since the last issue of *Opening Times* we have been told of two brand new breweries locally, one of which is in our circulation area, the other a little further afield.

### Rosebridge in Wigan

Philip Little, underbrewer at Marble Brewery in Manchester is set to leave to set-up his own micro in Ince, Wigan. Named Rosebridge Brewery, the new micro was planned to be operational in June. First brews planned will be a 3.8% golden summer beer and a 4% session beer. Seasonals are also in the pipeline. Ales are available direct from the brewery or via Boggart in Manchester.

Some of the equipment has come from the former brewhouse in Lass O'Gowrie in Manchester City Centre. Phil has agreed to supply the Lass with beers brewed to the original LOG recipes from the 1980's. The Lass will also hold a launch party in the middle of June.

### Globe in Glossop

Some new breweries are trailed well in advance and some seem to pop up almost overnight – and so it was with the brewery installed at the Globe in Glossop.

The High Street pub, run for the past four years by Ron Brookes and Diana Virgo, has already made a name for its excellent range of guest beers (brews from Abbeydale, Shaws and Howard Town appear regularly), its enterprising music policy and the excellent vegetarian (vegan in fact) food. The addition of an in-house brewery seemed a natural progression and “completion” of the operation there, as Diana put it.

Ron had been a keen home-brewer in the past and had always had a long-term plan to brew commercially although these had been lying dormant while the rest of the pub's operation was brought up to speed. His interest was rekindled by an advert in the CAMRA newspaper *What's Brewing* for the sale of a brewery. This turned out to be the defunct Merlin Brewery of Leigh which Ron bought lock, stock and barrel (200 of 'em in fact, most of which have been sold on).



Our photograph shows Ron & Diana outside the brewhouse

While Ron didn't go on any formal brewing course, he had a mentor in the shape of Paul Ward, a former brewer at Sheffield's award-winning Kelham Island Brewery who effectively taught Ron how to brew on a commercial scale.

The first brews from the 2 ½ barrel plant came on stream in the first week of May and such has been the beer's popularity, Ron was on brew number five when OT called at

the pub in early June. The first brew was the 4 per cent ABV Sunrise and this will be a regular along with the latest beer, Albion (4.5 per cent). The first two beers were pale and hoppy although it is Ron's intention to brew beers covering a whole range of styles and strengths. He is also experimenting with hop varieties – Albion for example used Challenger, Brewers Gold and East Kent Golding varieties. The malt is the classic Maris Otter variety and no additives at all are used.

While a couple of specials may be brewed for this year's Glossop Beer Festival, sales are to be mainly confined to the pub. Those planning a visit should note the opening hours: closed Tuesday; 5pm-midnight Monday, Wednesday, Thursday; 5pm-12.30am; 1pm-11.30pm Sundays. Well worth the trip.

## 3 Rivers Club opens in Reddish



Three Rivers' Julie Black serving behind the Club bar

A long anticipated event occurred on 1 June when the opening of the Riverbank Room, the members club at the 3 Rivers Brewery, brought some much needed irrigation to the increasingly arid beer desert that is Reddish (and not a million miles from the other notable watering hole, the Thatched Tavern).

Membership rates vary from £15 for full, £25 for joint down to £8 for students and OAPs and £5 for countrywide members. Take up has been phenomenal (“flying” according to 3 Rivers' Mike Hitchen), with 138 signed up after the first week, and has proved popular with both beer enthusiasts and locals, who appreciate a convenient outlet for quality cask beers. You will find a membership form in this issue of *Opening Times* (page 21).

We asked 3 Rivers' Mike Hitchen why he had decided to open the club. He told us that there was plenty of spare room in the new premises taken over by the brewery last year and the initial plan was to create a reception room for brewery tours. However feedback from the tour groups suggested that a club might be a better bet, particularly as this would be a showcase for the 3 Rivers range and their new beers (plus the many guest beers that they now wholesale).

There are two comfortable rooms, pleasantly furnished – the settees in the smaller snug are particularly inviting – and the walls are decorated with an interesting and increasing collection of breweriana. A poster of cellar management instructions from old Stockport brewer Bell & Co was one item that caught the eye.

The beer range is impressive – three 3 Rivers beers from £1.20 a pint (for GMT) plus a guest sit alongside an interesting range of foreign beers – Budvar, both dark and light versions, and Bitburger. In bottle is a range of Belgian winter ales (including the now very rare Christmas Gueuze from De Troch) plus some British bottle-conditioned beers – Titanic Stout and unusual beers from Comy, Warcop, Penlon and Little Valley. There's no real cider yet but that may come.

Members can sign in three guests and opening hours are 12 noon-11pm Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; 12 noon to midnight Friday and Saturday. The club is closed on Mondays.

# The Marble Arch



## The Beer Festival 1st - 31st Aug 2006

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A Short Night's Journey Into Mild with Dan Williams

It was a wild and snowy night. An intrepid band of CAMRA explorers palmed their loved ones off with the time-worn excuse "I'm going out now, I may be some time" and set off in search of the long-abjured, but now increasingly de rigeur, style of beer known as Mild. Though there are of course examples of milds that are high in alcohol content, it is generally considered a drink after consuming a modicum of which one may still be capable of composing a coherent *Opening Times* article - as to which the reader is humbly enjoined to judge for him or herself.

In OT articles it is of course obligatory to begin with a "first port of call", and ours was The **Navigation** (Belmont Way). This has recently been refurbished in delicate pastel colours with cream part-panelled walls, and also features a delightful red leather sofa that would appeal to romantic couples or simply devotees of David Lynch's movies.

Angella and Chantelle provided their customary effusive welcome. Sadly, the start of our evening coincided with the approach to the bottom of a barrel of Beartown Black Bear, but once it was promptly and enthusiastically replaced, it was generally considered a very decent overture to our odyssey.

From there, we slalomed downhill at Olympic speeds to the **Railway** (Avenue St). The planning notice pinned outside sadly suggests that the end of this mighty establishment may be drawing more nigh - let us hope rumours of another Dave Porter venture in the vicinity will prove true. There was the usual busy eclecticism of customers, and the Cribden Dark was received with general approval, and in one case even more pleasure than that.

We then assayed a sashay to the **Tiviot** (Tiviot Dale). This is a friendly pub in traditional Robinson's style, very popular with daytime shoppers. Evenings tend to be more sedate (not always a bad thing), and the Hatters Mild probably just edged out the competition for beer of the night from a very strong field. One dissolute schismatic opted for the famous Old Tom and pronounced it "nectar".

Next was **Winters** (Lower Hillgate), another traditional pub which tends to be busier in the daytime. We again had bad luck with the bottom of a barrel, but again drinks were replaced with prompt good grace, and the Holts Mild too had consistent approval from the group.

It was a short trip to the **Three Shires** (Underbank), a cosy venue with something of the feel of a jazz cellar and now three handpumps for cask ale, which is good news in a venue with a varied, and often young and nubile, clientele. The Tetley's Dark here was considered tasty, but perhaps served too cold. One member of the group discovered from the welcoming landlady Sarah Kennedy that it no longer wishes to describe itself specifically as a wine bar, but to be more generally appealing. A demonic glint in his eye suggested he might hope to discuss much more, so we hastily pulled him off and reminded him of his gustatory mandate for the night.

The **Crown** (Heaton Lane) is a friendly pub with a vast array of well-kept ales and a particular reputation for music, notably Kieron's Tuesday folk nights and regular visits from the fine trio Zingari Swing. Friday night was typically busy and the Moorhouses' Black Cat was enjoyed by all.

At this point, some declined the uphill skiing race to the resurgent and finely run **Four Heatons**, but some did not, and hopefully their addendum is appended below.

Jim Flynn adds... a depleted band of hardy souls moved on to the final pub on the stagger, the **Four Heatons** (aka the Moss Rose) and perhaps the most controversial 'mild' of the stagger. Controversial because these days Hydes can't make their minds up whether their Light is a bitter mild or a gravity mild bitter. Indeed when they decide it is a bitter they call it 1863 instead of Light. For me it is still a mild and although not as good as when, in my opinion, it was their flagship higher gravity beer, it is still not a bad pint. The newly refurbished Four Heatons is certainly a much improved pub these days, with a good atmosphere and we sat in the lounge area drinking our Light, judging it as being in good nick.

Dan concludes...all in all, this was a reminder of just how lucky we are in Stockport. All the pubs featured are well worth a visit and also give a chance to sample the fine drink of Mild. Why not take the Mild Challenge next year? You know it makes sense.

## Mild Challenge Update

Despite the problems caused by the non-appearance of OT during the whole of the period that the Mild Challenge was running, numbers were only slightly down on the high of the previous year. The Polo shirt as the prize for doing 15 pubs in different areas was more popular than ever this time round. We had a few problems during the Challenge with some pubs having no mild or being closed, but hey, that's the fun of it all.

This year, just five hardy souls managed to get round all 93 pubs in what is the world's largest active mild campaign. This year's Mild Challenge was a significant milestone for Dave Meynell. By doing all 93 pubs on the Challenge (the largest ever pub tally incidentally). This year due to a holiday in France, Dave had to race round all of the pubs in just 12 days! Dave has now done every pub on the last ten Challenges! That's every pub since the first Challenge in 1995 - we believe the only person to have achieved that feat. He's calling it a day now though. We thank Dave for his support, one request though - Keep drinking the mild.

Prize winners for the Robinsons Brewery visit are Helen Wood, Paul Watson, John Tune, John Rawlinson, Nik Parker, Diana Moussa, Malcolm Marshall, Michael Hall, Dave Cookson, and Mike Ball. These people will be informed individually by letter.

Two winners came through to snatch the "Brewer for a Day" at the award-winning Marble Brewery in Manchester - Graham Atkinson of Heaton Norris and Andy Sullivan of Hyde. We'll bring you details of how they fared in future editions of OT.

The vote for Favourite Mild in a Pub on the Challenge brought a wide selection of suggestions from you. It has been decided to give two awards this time - a Stockport award, and an outside-Stockport award. The former goes to Cains Mild in the Gothic bar in Gatley (award to be presented on the night of the Pub of the Month in July); the latter is for Moorhouses Black Cat in the Legh Arms in Openshaw (award date to be decided).

Finally, the winner of the slogan competition for completing "I drink Mild because..." was Paul Watson with the sublime "Dark or Light, the taste will delight". Well done Paul. Thanks to everyone who took part in this year's Challenge, thanks to the Licensees for their time, and thanks to all of the volunteers who assisted with getting pubs recruited and delivering packs. A big Thank You to all of the folk at Stockport Express for their continued support, especially Jim Kershaw and Dave Mellor.

Till next year, Cheers, Mark McConachie.

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Quite a bit of news for you this time although the Ed has told me that space may be limited from now on. So enough of the waffle, let's get down to news...

### In and Around Edgeley

I had an interesting chat with the comparatively new folk at the **Adswood Hotel**, Adswood Lane West, Cale Green. Caela (pronounce Kay-La) and Lee Cox took over this large Robinson's house in October of 2005; they are both local and this often helps instil confidence in the clientele. They tell me that sales of Robbies Hatters and Unicorn are on the up, as too are the sales of meals at the weekend as word gets round as to what a good community pub this is becoming.

Major work has been done to the garden, now a pleasant place to drink once more. The general state of decor has been improved. The electric meter pumps have been replaced by handpumps; they have created a Dining room from the space that was the No Smoking area - food is served Sat 12 - 3 specials, pies etc, and traditional puddings, Sun 12 - 4 full Sunday lunch £6 per person or two for £10. Food is described as being "just like your old mum would have made it...", sounds yummy. One to watch.

A saunter round Edgeley revealed that a new couple have taken on the **Hollywood**, they plan to clean up the place to make it more inviting. The live music will remain, and, who knows given a couple of months, cask ale may reappear. I wish them well.

Down the hill to Brinksway, where the sad news is that Anita Dickinson left the **Woolpack** on June 1st. I understand that Bob left the pub to his daughters and it is now up for sale, offer invited in the region of £400,000. Let's hope that a sympathetic buyer is found. The JW Lees house, the **Gardeners** on Northgate Road is no longer selling cask Lees bitter, the locals were finding it too sweet for their taste - sales of the insipid smooth have tripled. All is not lost however, as the seasonals will feature every month or so - first on is Scorchers, a beer for summer.

At the nearby **Alexandra** (Robinson's) all seems to be going well under the leadership of the relatives of Janet and the late John. Hatters and Unicorn are the staples. News has it that Janet is now doing bar work at the **Arden Arms** on Millgate.

On Edgeley itself, the **Jolly Crofter** appears to have abandoned cask ales now, whilst the forlorn **Windsors** is now fully-armoured with steel shutters covering all windows. Also closed are the **Blue Bell**, which is to be auctioned off, the **Tom Thumbs**, now to let, and further down the hill the **Comfortable Gill** is also closed and to let.

### Comings & Goings

As a result of the arson attack, Mary Nastari and Tony Hughes have left the **Prince of Wales** in Gatley to take over the Hoop and Mallet on Callands Road, Callands in Warrington. Mary had said that following the attack that she did not want to continue as licensee in the pub for fear that a repeat attack was possible.

At a time when close-knit families are said to be in decline, nothing could be further from the truth for one family in Brinnington.

Richard Stone is at the helm, with his wife Carol and daughters Kerry, 20 and Michelle, 25 joining forces to run the **Cheshire Cat** public house which lies at the heart of their home community.

As a family unit John, Kerry, Michelle and Carol are sharing the responsibility for running their favourite pub and dividing the workload and shifts between them. When they took on the Cheshire Cat they also retained the help of Rebecca Longson, also from Brinnington, to help serve their customers.

Many of the locals at the Robinson's house will no doubt recognise Richard, who as well as working as a local builder, has served behind the bar in the past and has also been a loyal customer for 20 years himself.

"Dad had wanted to take on the tenancy for quite a while, but just missed out on the opportunity the last time it was available. But he wasn't disheartened and jumped at the chance again this time round," explained Kerry.



Richard Stone (right) receives his training course certificate from Paul Robinson.

In Heaton Norris, Chris and Zena Marlborough have now left the **Four Heatons** on Didsbury Road. When *Opening Times* called, we were told the pub was currently being run by relief management and that the tenancy was currently to let. The quality of the handpumped Light and Bitter was still on form, though.

I was worried to see the tenancy of the **Blossoms** up for grabs on Robinson's website. As this is one of my favourite pubs I was concerned as to what might happen here. Luckily landlady Margaret Owen put my mind at rest. While she and Neville are giving up the tenancy, it is being taken on by their son Stephen, and Neville will continue to look after the cellar. In short it's no change, which is good news.

#### New Outlets

It's always good to have new cask ale outlets to report and I have three for you.

The Heaton Mersey Cricket, Lacrosse, & Tennis Club and the Heaton Moor Rugby Club have merged to form the **Heatons Sports Club** with a new clubhouse recently opened (access off Green Lane adjacent to the old Rugby clubhouse). The new clubhouse opened in mid-April and features a members lounge/bar and a large function room with separate bar. The bars currently have two hand-pulled cask beers available - these are usually Deuchars IPA and Castle Eden Ale; with facilities for at least one more cask beer if justified by turnover - they also sell Budweiser Budvar in bottles. Initial activity indicates the members bar is doing good trade and the club is hoping to increase this by attracting outside functions.

Not far away, the **Moor Top** in Heaton Moor has returned to the real ale fold, after quite a struggle by the manager to get it reintroduced. When I called Boddington's Bitter and Marston's Pedigree were on handpump, and the latter was a very tasty pint, I must say.

Finally, I visited the **Bromale** in Bramhall recently. There was a conspicuous For Sale sign attached but notwithstanding that, a pretty good drop of Moorhouses Witches Cauldron was had (other handpull had Jennings Cumberland). I was pleasantly surprised after my last visit some years ago on a Bramhall minibus crawl ...

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## Takeover Mayhem Continues

The current spate of takeovers plaguing the family brewers took a step closer last month when regional giant Greene King swallowed Hardys & Hansons, the last remaining major brewer in Nottingham.

The 'Kimberley Ales' brewer has a presence in the *Opening Times* area, with a clutch of pubs in and around Buxton together with the Governor's House in Cheadle Hulme and, if recent reports are reliable, the Old Hall Hotel at Timperley.

The current line is that no decision has been taken on the future of the brewery – for which read 'it will shortly close'. This pessimistic prognosis is reinforced by a message to the stock market when the takeover was announced wherein Green King said they expected to add profit "...in the first year after it closes". Some of the beers will continue to be produced although we guess that one for the chop will be the Mild. This was well received at last month's Stockport Beer Festival – it probably won't be around in 12 months' time.

## Family Favourites

Our local family brewers continue to produce interesting beers on a regular basis:

**Cains** has gone back to the brewery's Irish roots by launching a full-flavoured Creamy Stout to challenge the likes of Guinness and Murphy's. Brewery founder Robert Cain hailed from Cork and, for many years, Cains was famous for its stout.

The 4.1 ABV stout - brewed with the finest dried hops and water pumped from the brewery's own natural source - is being launched exclusively in Cains' own pubs before being offered for wider distribution. It was very well-received at Stockport Beer Festival last month.

Despite launching into a section of the beer market dominated by major brand names, joint managing director Sudarghara Dusanj believes the new stout is filling a taste-niche.

He explained: "We are offering something different, a full flavour brewed by traditional methods. It may look like the other stouts on the market but it is elegant and smooth - a black velvet texture with a beautiful creamy, rich, chocolate taste.

**Hydes** – the new craft ale for July/August is Cutty Shark (4.1% ABV), a golden ale brewed with Challenger hops to "deliver a refreshingly light tasting summer ale with a distinctively fruity aroma".

**JW Lees** – the new seasonal for the summer quarter is Scorcher, a welcome return for this ever-popular summer quencher.

**Holt's** – have also produced a beer for the football season. Golden Boots (4.2%) was available from the week commencing 29 May and was due to go in around 50 managed houses as well as selected free trade outlets.

**Robinson's** – also have new seasonal ale out for July/August. This is Sunny Jim (3.8% ABV), which has proved very successful as a light summer refresher in previous years. We also hear that next year's seasonal range is likely to be markedly different from what we have seen so far, with much more experimentation with different beer styles. More news on this when we get it.

## Micro Magic

Once again we bring you a round up from some of our local micro brewers – as ever apologies to those we couldn't cover this month.

**Marble** – lots going on here. The current special is the golden Summer Marble (4.5%), combining a refreshing quality with full-bodied drinking, this year's version has revised hop profile and is perhaps the best version produced to date.

Throughout August, the Marble Arch on Rochdale Road (home to the brewery) will be hosting a Celtic Beer Festival. This will feature 60 beers from the Celtic world with at least 40 new brews collected from Brittany, Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall and the Isle of Man, together with the traditional Marble range.

Bar manager John Rogers told *Opening Times* "We decided to give something back to our loyal customers and welcome new ones by making August an exciting time to visit the Marble Arch".

The Marble Brewery will also contribute three new tawny "Tasters Choice" beers, crafted by the Marble team, one of which will be picked by customers to become a seasonal addition to the Marble beers range. Brewer James Campbell told us that he saw this as a great opportunity for the new brew team to flex their muscles and show what they could do.

To add to the fun there will be Tuesday tasting with the Marble staff, Celtic music nights, a beer quiz, brewery tours, a curry night and other special events. The Celtic Closing Night on 31 August will see all pints sold at just £1.

**Bazens'** – the new monthly range of film-themed single hop beers continued last month with "The Good, The Bad and The Fuggly", a 4% ABV beer brewed with Fuggles hops. This proved so popular that a second brew had to be produced. This is followed in July with "Styriana" (using Styrian Goldings), again 4% and is based on the George Clooney film 'Syriana'.

**Millstone** – the summer special is Summer Daze (4.1% ABV), brewed with First Gold hops for bittering and Styrian Goldings for aroma. This pale amber beer was very popular when it was introduced last year and it is hoped to repeat the success this time round.

**Phoenix** – the usual summer specials are back this year – look out for both Tennis Elbow and Midsummer Madness. Brewer Tony Allen tells us that this year's brew of Midsummer Madness is particularly fine. The Ginger Wheat beer, very well received at Stockport Beer Festival, is also available all summer, as is the excellent White Tornado.

**Three Rivers** – rapidly evolving into one of the most enterprising of the local micros. Elsewhere in this issue are reports of their new on-site members club and also the beer festival being arranged in conjunction with the Calvert's Court (St Petersgate, Stockport). Now there's news of an export order to the USA. Shelton Brothers of Chicago are to import 3 Rivers' bottled beers, with the first order being some 500(!) cases of Old Disreputable. Back here in the UK, the core range has now been consolidated into GMT, Manchester IPA, Hilary Gold, Crystal Wheat and Old Disreputable. These will be supplemented by monthly specials and occasional one-offs. The June special was Summers Pearl (4%) and for July it's Perry's Racket (4.4%) a 'strawberries & cream' beer. There's also been a one-off for the World cup – Robo-Hop (4.1%), a amber ale brewed with New Zealand Green Bullet hops.

**Bank Top** – has produced two World Cup specials. Life's A Pitch and Should Have Been Sam are both 4%, pale hoppy bitters. The brewery is still working on plans to produce bottled beers.

**Boggart Hole Clough** – look out for Pale a 6% ABV light golden strong ale. The World Cup special is Pickles, a 4.5% bitter beer. There will be specials for July but these were still in the planning stage when we went to press.

*Steve, Johanne & Molly  
welcome you to*

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### **Too Big for its Boots?**

I recently called in at a pub on Sunday lunchtime in the expectation of a quiet pint, and was disappointed to find that the entire interior apart from the restaurant had been given over to showing a large-screen football match on Sky, with the curtains drawn. Needless to say, I took my custom elsewhere. At a time when Premier League attendances are slipping and many are complaining that the game has become predictable and defensive, you have to wonder whether pubs are over-estimating the amount of business that live football brings in.

The World Cup has seen many pubs festooned with football paraphernalia and running promotions to tempt fans in. However, the viewing figures for anything but major finals suggest that a large majority of adults prefer to do something else, and it's likely that many quieter customers will be put off by even a handful of rowdy fans. Football has its place, but when it ends up taking over entire pubs it is getting too big for its boots, and overall is likely to be bad for business. This is another reason, of course, to bring back the traditional multi-roomed pub where a variety of activities can take place at the same time.

### **What a Lot of Bottles**

There's now a bewildering choice of bottled beers available in supermarkets and specialist off-licences, ranging from the sublime to the worthless. And something that has struck me is that there is also a bewildering variety of bottle sizes – in recent months I have seen 250 ml, 275 ml, 300 ml, 330 ml, 375 ml, 450 ml, 500 ml, 550 ml, 568 ml, 600 ml, 660 ml, 750 ml and 1 litre, not to mention the standard cans of 440 ml.

This can make it difficult to get the amount you want – there may be a beer you like, but find a 750 ml bottle is too much to drink all at once, or it may seem ridiculous to have to open two small bottles to get anywhere near a pint. It also makes it harder to compare prices between different beers, and may cause a problem by making it well-nigh impossible to work out exactly how much you've had to drink.

Surely it would make sense to adopt 500 ml bottles as the effective standard, as they already usually are for British bottled ales, with 330 ml being used for strong beers of over 6.5% ABV. If there really is a demand for different sizes, then by all means sell them, but as well as the usual size, not instead. Nobody complains that pubs should have to sell draught beers in standard measures, and it would benefit the consumer if the same applied to bottles.

*Curmudgeon Online: [www.curmudgeon.org.uk](http://www.curmudgeon.org.uk)  
(note new improved URL)*



**From: Peter Cunliffe, Cheadle:**

Welcome back to OT but once again I am disappointed that there was virtually no mention of Gatley, not even since the landlord of the Prince of Wales ("The Mop") was fire bombed out of the pub – surely worth a mention as this sort of despicable act affects all of us in the drinking community, especially when Tony, the now ex-landlord, was producing the best Hydes in the pub for many years.

Gatley is however lucky that Mark in the Horse & Farrier is producing beer that matches and beats any of the Hydes pubs in my view and he and his wife turned the place round, following years of Hydes trying to make the Farrier into a café!

I have been going into the Farrier for 50 years in August this year and I well remember Ted Ladbrook who opened up one lounge as an eating room, probably one of the first pub-grub areas in the Manchester suburbs. In those days neither the brewery nor the landlords forgot that their core trade was beer, now including lager, and in my view nothing changes.

And I for one am grateful that the year-old management team has taken this view on board so successfully.

*(I understand that arrests may have been made in connection with the Prince of Wales fire bombing. As for food in pubs, many pubs these days depend on food to remain viable – the key is to strike the right balance, I think – Ed.)*

**From Dennis Jones, Woodley:**

As usual, Curmudgeon is dead right about the smoking ban, but has anyone paused to consider the wider implications?

It's generally accepted that smokers contribute to the exchequer about four times the amount it costs to treat their smoking related diseases. When the anti-smoking fanatics have their way and the UK bans all smoking, how is the Chancellor going to recoup the lost revenue? Here comes the four-pound pint!

It's good to see *Opening Times* back, at last, although I'm not at all sure about the new format. Still, teething troubles are only to be expected and perhaps you'll find a couple of decent proof readers.

*(We know what caused the glitches with the last issue and hopefully they will have been largely eliminated this time round – Ed)*

**From Richard Hough, Sheffield:**

Welcome back to OT and congratulations on the new look! Once the minor production glitches have been ironed out you will have a newsletter to compete with the best once more.

Careful reading between the lines in June's issue made me smile, and I quote; "A long trek along Green Lane brought us to the Nursery, tucked away down a narrow cobbled street in a conservation area. This classic, unspoilt multi-roomed 1930's pub, a former winner of CAMRA's National pub of the Year, and long-standing Good Beer Guide entry needs no introduction..."

*(Point taken, Richard. Many thanks for your kind comments, which have been echoed by many others, not least CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner and What's Brewing Editor Ted Bruning. Lots of people have just been pleased to see OT back. Hopefully this issue will largely be glitch-free.*

**By Heck, it's won...**

**Z**oider, as everyone knows, comes from Zummerzet – at least, Britain's best does. For the winner of this year's Cider of the Year competition, held at Reading Beer & Cider Festival in May, comes from one of the country's most traditional makers, Heck's of Middle Leigh near Street.

Heck's has been making cider since 1896 and produces around 20 single varieties. This year's winner was pressed from the prince of cider apples, Kingston Black.

Judges in the competition, which had 120 entries, praised the winner's "ripe fruity aroma", adding: "This cider lingers on the tongue and makes it burst into flower."

Andrew Heck said: "It's marvellous – we had no idea we were likely to win. I would like to thank the family and all our customers for their help over the years."

The winning perry, a Hellens Early single varietal, came from a much newer maker – Seidr Dai of Cardiff, which is run by CAMRA's very own by Dave Matthews. Dave edited CAMRA's last Cider Guide but one and has written frequently for the organisation's newspaper, *What's Brewing*.

More importantly for cider lovers, he is on the forefront of the Welsh revival in traditional cider and perry making in his role as secretary of the Welsh Independent Cidermakers' Association. Dave, who started making cider for sale six years ago said: "I thought I would spend the rest of my life chasing this award and I can't believe it has happened."

Winner of the inaugural bottled cider class was another Welshman, Steve Hughes of Llandegla, Wrexham, with Rosie's Triple D.

**Stockport Festival Winners**

Stockport Beer & Cider Festival used to host the national Championships, of course, and the votes for Cider and Perry are still much anticipated.

It's often a close-run thing and this year was no different. Cider of the Festival was won Harechurch Hill Dry, made by a new maker in the Forest of Dean. Perry of the Festival was Gregg's Pit Thorn, another win by this new-wave maker who picked up both awards at last year's festival

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**A**nother issue, another correction. My report last time regarding new licensees at the **Tatton Arms**, Moss Nook, was somewhat wide of the mark. Ann and Alec Barnett are not in fact the licensees of the pub, but are the managers, appointed by long-serving licensee Alex Bell. Alex has been the licensee at the Tatton for an incredible 34 years now – this must surely make him one of the longest serving in the local Robinson's estate. Sorry for any confusion.

### Burnage Wanderings

Everything was ticking over nicely, I was propping up the bar at one of my favourite haunts discussing previous forays and the various pubs that have gone from those areas with a mate when suddenly he dropped a real bombshell.

He'd heard through the grapevine that one of the pubs on Burnage Lane had been sold for a million quid and flats were going to be built on it but he wasn't 100 percent which one it was. It had to be investigated, so one chilly March evening I started at the Didsbury Road end of Burnage Lane, what a start I know it's been some long time since I was down there but wasn't there a naff diner called **Quinceys** there once?

Undeterred I trundled up the lane past where the **Old Bull** used to be hoping the **Sun in September** wasn't the one for the chop. It wasn't so I celebrated with a lovely drop of Sam Smiths bitter and a chat with the barmaid. Now I knew where to go a toddle into all the pubs on the way seemed a good idea!

Next stop the **Albion** where the Hydes light was in excellent form, a slight swerve into and out of the **Green End** confirmed it's still keg so off to the **Farmers** where the Hydes bitter was pretty good. Next came the **Victoria** on the corner of Mauldeth Road unfortunately the Boddies whilst drinkable was not the best I've had.

The last watering hole on Burnage Lane as you will have all guessed by now is the **Rising Sun** that sometime in the near future will be setting. It's sad when any pub whether its cask or keg shuts but I must say in this case I don't particularly think that follows. I remember it being built and thinking at the time it wasn't the best place to put it, being next to a junior school in a reasonably quiet residential area. Perhaps the brewery came to the same conclusion - who knows?

### Out & About in Ladybarn

I hadn't been out to this district of Fallowfield for ages, so I thought I'd get myself up to speed with what's happening on the local pub scene there, As ever it was decidedly a mixed bag....

First stop was the **Mauldeth** on Kingsway. I knew that this large roadhouse had dabbled with real ale a couple of years back but, surprise, it's now back to just the dreary old keg stuff.

Luckily, I knew I wouldn't be let down by my next stop, the **White Swan** on Green Street. This Robinson's pub, still displaying some trace of its old Kays Atlas Ales ownership, has a great old-time feel and boasts many original features. The lino throughout took me back to the 1970s when many pubs were like this. Unicorn was the sole cask ale, and a very decent drop it was, too.

Pressing on to the **Brewers Arms** just around the corner I found the pub thriving and hosting some sort of family fun day. It certainly gave the place a good community feel and it

was busy with a good mixture of young and old. There's just one cask beer, Tetley Bitter but this was joined on handpump by a real cider, Weston's Old Rosie – that was certainly a turn up for the books. With two more pubs to do, I couldn't linger and so pressed on.

I don't know why I rushed because my next destination, the **Derby**, still bearing its signs, was in fact in the throes of being turned into flats! This just left the ex-Talbot, ex-Peninsula, now the **Ladybarn**. This, too, was a surprise, but rather more of a pleasant one than the Derby.

The pub has been refurbished in a modern style with tiled floors, soft furnishings and ambient music. There were also the makings of what looked to be quite an impressive food operation. Two cask beers, too, in the shape of Bass and Wadworth's 6X – I tried the Bass, an old favourite, and found it very enjoyable.

### All Change at the Queens Arms

There has been a change of licensee at the **Queens Arms**, Honey Street, Cheetham.

Long standing licensee Dave Price sold the pub last year to S&D Leisure, a family company run by a regular and his family. The pub remains an independent free-house but Dave has now left the pub, to be replaced by Michelle Nicholson, who had already worked there for four and a half years before she took over the reins.

Michelle, who has plenty of experience of the trade, having previously worked in Holts pubs in Winton and Eccles, told me that the plan is to keep the pub just as it was before, but do it better.

Consequently there has been, in effect, a brand new cellar installed, from the handpumps downwards, and the pub has been thoroughly cleaned and brightened up. The beer range continues as before with ever-changing guests on the handpumps but these are complemented by a new range of foreign bottled beers and better wines, too.

The food offering is also to be enhanced with better veggies and low-fat options and as the pub beds in this will be extended into theme nights, such as curry night and steak night, for example. The famous garden is being landscaped, and there will be live music – there's a stage in the garden, too. Well worth a visit, or two.

### Other News

The **Bank** on Mosley Street in the City Centre has undergone a lavish refurbishment to bring out the best of the imposing building. Originally opened as a Firkin outlet, the pub had fallen on hard times in recent years, appearing scruffy and careworn, with little or no cask beer.

Now, it's all change with a substantial move upmarket. The décor, furnishings and layout at last do justice to the impressive surroundings, and cask ale once again plays centre stage on the long bar. Regulars include Taylor's Landlord and Boddies Bitter and guests spotted so far include Nethergate Suffolk County and Goffs Joust. Highly recommended for a visit.

**Font** on New Wakefield Street suffered from poor availability of real ale in early June. This left a fair few customers leaving disappointed before Jonny, the landlord, had chance to catch up and explain. Basically with the heatwave the cellar cooling system finally packed up, meaning the cellar was at a constant 30 degrees! Whilst the lager was still going through its own coolers sadly the cask ale was not, meaning all the beer was far too warm to serve. The problem has now been resolved and Font will be continuing to serve real ale with their usual, ever changing list of micro breweries.

And finally...I suppose it had to happen eventually but I was saddened to learn that the former Boddingtons Brewery at Strangeways has been sold to developers. Who would ever have guessed that such a fate would befall this Manchester icon?

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Wobbly Bob



2002

Navy



2002

Wobbly Bob



2004

Wobbly Bob



**B**etrayed! was the bold headline, followed by 'Campaign would not give up on licensing reform as Labour broke hours promise'. CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, intended to press the Government to honour its election pledge to reform pub opening hours, after hopes were dashed that it would be introduced early in the life of the new parliament. The omission of a licensing bill from the Queen's Speech had infuriated the sacked Home Office minister Mike O'Brien, who had accused Tony Blair of bad judgement. The Prime Minister had broken a promise that reform of licensing laws would be one of the first acts of a new Labour government.

\*\*\*\*\*

There was another item on the front page, headed Full Pint Fight Goes On. As long ago as March 1997, Labour had promised to put an end to the short pint scandal, and plans had actually been drawn up by the Department of Trade & Industry – but consumers were still waiting for the commitment to be honoured. In the meantime, customers were still being ripped off. A survey carried out in Cardiff had revealed that the average pint in themed pubs was only 94.7% liquid, with one containing only 87%. The findings were consistent with previous surveys by CAMRA branches and trading standards officers.

\*\*\*\*\*

John Willie Lees had been running a Passport Trail, with the goal being a visit to all their 149 pubs in the North West and North Wales, during the previous year. The trail had been completed by 56 "passport holders", and to celebrate this remarkable achievement, a party had been laid on at the Greengate Brewery. Every guest was presented with a commemorative passport, a Lees special edition fleece, and a personalised crystal tankard. They were also taken on a brewery tour, followed by a buffet dinner accompanied by free flowing Lees beer.

\*\*\*\*\*

For some time rumours had been circulating that Wetherspoons were coming to Stockport, in the form of a new build on the (still) vacant site next to the Underbank Hall branch of NatWest. The usual form of license application appeared, but nothing happened, and the notice seemed to have finally blown away. More rumours surrounded a premises on St Petersgate and, sure enough, the Calverts Court (originally Partingtons furniture store) had been scheduled to open in July.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Laurel Pub Company, the new operator of the old Whitbread estate, had announced plans to create more Hogshead ale houses. There had been fears that the chain would be sold off, but instead, Laurel boss Ian Payne said he wanted to increase the number of Hogsheads from 150 to around 200. He also had plans to give the chain a new look, with a wider range of beers and table service. This appeared to be good news if it all came to pass.

\*\*\*\*\*

As a post script, the May 2001 issue of *Opening Times* carried an item headed "60,000 and going strong". CAMRA welcomed its 60,000th member at the City of York Beer Festival. To bring the membership up to date, the front page of *What's Brewing* for April 2006 told how CAMRA's national membership had just passed the 80,000 level.



*There's lots of news this month from pubs to the west of Macclesfield town centre.*

**T**he **Blueberry** was busy with Banks's Bitter on good form. The **Peel Arms** on Peel St. is a thriving back street Thwaites pub that was recently visited by visitors from Peterborough CAMRA who found the Lancaster Bomber very enjoyable. Around the corner on Park Lane the **Ivy House** is popular with the under 26s that CAMRA is keen to recruit and offers Marstons Bitter (Deuchars and Bombardier have also been sighted). Up the road the **Park Tavern** is a deceptively large pub that served a perfect half of Robinson's Unicorn. The cellarman is proud of his work, and on the evidence of this visit, rightly so.

**I**n the back streets, Graham has left the **Brewers Arms** and we're waiting to see how the new licensees Susan Edwards and Keith Brittain settle down. Keith used to manage pubs several years ago and is trying to find his feet in the new world of pubcos and guest beers. The **Prince Albert** on Newton Street is an end-terrace local, near Grannelli's ice cream factory, is now serving two guest beers. On my recent visit Wickwar IKB was very enjoyable and Batemans Spring Goddess was the other choice. There's music on Saturday nights. On Bond Street the **Crown** is a comfortable pub serving its usual well-kept

Bombardier with Tetleys Bitter as an alternative. The **Barnfield** has Robinson's Unicorn Bitter and Hatters Mild.

**T**he **Plough** is a popular and friendly end-terrace pub on the short stretch of Prestbury Rd off Chestergate and decorated with a Titanic ocean liner theme. It is keeping up its good work with regulars Tetley, Boddingtons and, unusually this far north, very good Youngs bitters, together with a couple of guests. Recent guests have included Bombardier, Deuchars IPA and Adnams. There's a new beer range at the **Chester Road Tavern** where the traditional Cains Bitter, John Smiths and Tetley Mild have been joined by Black Sheep Bitter and a guest, Thwaites Good Elf or Jennings Sneek Lifter on my visits. It's a thriving pub with many games teams including bowls in Victoria Park.

**C**hris, the long standing landlord, who served consistently good Burtonwood Bitter at the **Crompton Road Tavern** has retired and the pub is to let. The pub is a traditional local with a lounge that can be booked as a function room. The **Oxford** has two or three bitters with Jennings Cumberland and Wells Bombardier at our visit. The **Flower Pot** on Congleton Road is a large Robinson's road house type pub near Macclesfield College and popular with all ages. The Robinson's Unicorn is always very drinkable. Food is available until around 9 in the evening. There's a separate games room and a large front garden with picnic tables.

**F**urther west the **Bulls Head** at Broken Cross is always busy with Boddingtons and Tetley bitters now joined by three guests. Recent visits have found York CPA, Black Sheep, Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Adnams Broadsword, Thwaites Thoroughbred and Hopback Crop Circle, all on excellent form. Part of the lounge can be partitioned for meetings. It has live music alternate Saturdays. The **Packhorse** sadly has not had real ale for some weeks. In Weston, the **Ivy Leaf** is rumoured to have started selling real ale with Bombardier and Deuchars IPA as guests.



**The Railway View, Macclesfield**



**A**fter the recent beer festival, to highlight the good selection of real ales always available in Macclesfield, Camra presented its latest 'Pub of the Season' award to the Railway View. These awards are to recognise and reward the hard work put in by landlords to keep and serve a variety of beers from the handpump. Previous Macclesfield winners, where customers can taste a number of different real ales, include the Waters Green Tavern, the Prince of Wales on Roe Street, the Plough on Prestbury Road and the Dolphin on Windmill Street. A visit to just three of these close to town centre pubs would give a choice of up to 17 ever-changing beers.

The Railway View in Macclesfield has regained its reputation as a good place to go for an interesting selection of real ales and a welcoming atmosphere. The pub was a regular GBG entry, until the retirement of the long standing landlord, Graham. However, the old/new regime in the shape of Graham's son, Graham, and his partner Sue took over 13 months ago- and the pub is now going from strength to strength.

There are usually up to six ales on at the weekend and Monday's Happy Hour(s) mean these beers are cleared so that there are just two or three sustainable beers in the week. Storm beers appear regularly. The pub now again reflects the care and warmth of the landlords- literally, in the gleaming pipes and pumps. The Railway recently held a small but successful beer festival.

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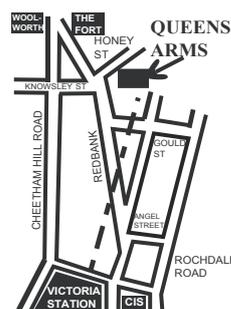
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- |   |   |
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| The Paramount, 33 Oxford Street, Manchester       | Jar Bar, SilkHouse, Macclesfield                |
| Beehive, Claremont Road, Moss Side                | Society Rooms, Park Lane, Macclesfield          |
| Osborne House, 32 Victory Street, Rusholme        | Cotton Bale, 21 Market Street, Hyde             |
| Great Central, Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield         | Society Rooms, Grosvenor Street, Stalybridge    |
| Friendship Inn, Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield        | Stalybridge Buffet Bar, Stalybridge             |
| The Hillary Step, 199 U. Chorlton Rd, Whalley Rge | White House, 1 Water Lane, Stalybridge          |
| Pineapple, Garrett Way, Gorton                    | Q Bar, 3-5 Market Street, Stalybridge           |
| Albion, Burnage Lane, Burnage                     | Angel Inn, 197 King Street, Dukinfield          |
| Sam's Chop House, Black Pool Fold, Manchester     | Wye Bridge Inn, Fairfield Road, Buxton          |
| City Arms, 48 Kennedy Street, Manchester          | Bamford Arms, Buxton Road, Stockport            |
| The Waterhouse, 67 Princess Street, Manchester    | Pack Horse, 3-5 Market Street, Hayfield         |
| All Bar One, 73 King Street, Manchester           | Farmers Arms, 209 Stockport Road, Stockport     |
| Rising Sun, 22 Queen Street, Manchester           | Four Heaton's, 63 Didsbury Road, Heaton Norris  |
| Fletcher Moss, 1 Williams Street, Didsbury        | Nursery Inn, Green Lane, Heaton Norris          |
| Victoria Hotel, 436 Wilmslow Road, Withington     | Duke of York, Stockport Road, Romiley           |
| Dog & Partridge, 665-7 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury    | Hare & Hounds, Dooley Lane, Marple              |
| Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury         | Bulls Head Hotel, 28 Buxton Road, High Lane     |
| Sedge Lynn, 21a Manchester Road, Chorlton         | Crown, 81 High Street, Cheadle                  |
| Old Wellington, 4 Cathedral Gates, Manchester     | Old Star Inn, 13 High Street, Cheadle           |
| Moon Under Water, 68 Deansgate, Manchester        | Prince of Wales, Gatley Green, Gatley           |
| The Bishop Blaze, 708 Chester Road, Stretford     | High Grove, Silverdale Road, Gatley             |
| King's Ransom, Britannia Road, Sale               | Kings Hall, 13 Station Road, Cheadle Hulme      |
| J P Joule, Northenden Road, Sale                  | Cross Keys, Adswold Road, Cheadle Hulme         |
| Old Plough Hotel, 56 Green Lane, Sale             | Ryecroft, Turves Road, Cheadle Hulme            |
| Bank at Sale, 70 School Road, Sale                | John Millington, 67 Station Road, Cheadle Hulme |
| Lowes Arms, 301 Hyde Road, Denton                 | Horse & Farrier, Gatley Road, Gatley            |
| Red Lion, Crown Point, Denton                     | Governor's House, 43 Ravenoak Rd, Cheadle H'Inn |
| English Lounge, 64-66 High Street, Manchester     | Bollin Fee, 6 Swan Street, Wilmslow             |
| Lloyds No 1, The Printworks, Manchester           | Coach and Four, 69-71 Alderley Road, Wilmslow   |
| Tim Bobbin, 41 Flixton Road, Urmston              | Quarry Bank, Bloomsbury Lane, Timperley         |
| Ash Tree, 9 Wellington Road, Ashton U Lyne        | King George, Moss Lane, Hale                    |
| Calvert's Court, St. Petersgate, Stockport        | Corbans, Hale Road, Hale Barns                  |
| Poachers Inn, 95 Ingersley Road, Bollington       | Boar's Paw, Warrington Road, Knutsford          |
| Hanging Gate, Higher Sutton, Macclesfield         | Cross Keys Hotel, 52 King Street, Knutsford     |

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Graeme Donald has been researching the origins of words, phrases and sayings, customs, superstitions, nursery rhymes and popular misconceptions for about 30 years now. He has written 8 books on those subjects, wrote a daily column for Today newspaper for the 10 years it was on the stands, 4 years for The Mirror and 5 years for The Age in Melbourne. He also devised and set the questions for a Radio 2 quiz-game exploring word and phrase origins called Back to Square One which ran to 8 series. He is now also writing for Opening Times, looking at the origin of words and phrases connected with pubs and drinking.

The dangers of over-indulgence are nowhere more apparent than in the origins of *intoxication*, which originally meant to be killed with poisoned arrows! Long before the tribes of the Amazonian Basin began tipping their arrows with curare the Ancient Greeks were distilling poisons from plants for their own arrows and spears. The Greek for a bow was *toxon* so they called the poison *toxikon* and set out to intoxicate the enemy.

When they started to distil more interesting fluids from Mother Nature's Garden, the term shifted in meaning to describe the effects they had on the drinker, but the old link is still clear in archery being more formally know as *toxophily*. Name your poison, indeed!

Greek wives were no more keen than their modern counterparts on the sight of their husbands reeling round making fools of themselves so a standard Greek wedding gift was a cup either crafted fully out of amethyst or encrusted therewith. The belief was that no-one could get drunk when using such a cup, hence the semi-precious stone's name deriving from the Greek a *methusos*, not to be tipsy. Greek husbands, however, enjoyed putting this belief to some pretty rigorous tests!

Moving up to medieval England, men drank out of blackjacks and chucked little arrows around the pubs.

First noted in print in 1591, a blackjack was a leather tankard stiffened on the outside with tar, which must have given the taste buds no end of pleasure. When things turned a tad raucous, these made a pretty good cosh to subdue the unruly, hence the term surviving today to denote such a weapon. As for the modern game of darts, this grew out of mini-archery practice outside on the green.

An empty barrel was placed end-up and chalk-marked into some semblance of an archery butt (another term for a barrel), the drinkers lobbing short quarrels underarm to practice the calculation of trajectory. In time, the barrelhead was brought inside and hung on the wall.

More next month.



Robin Wignall 's monthly round-up of doings in the Peak District....

**A**fter the recent Rainow fell race I called in the **Robin Hood** at Rainow. This is still badged as a Greenall's pub, but that name is of course now part of brewing history. The pub must have had various ties over the years. On the walls I found 2 old photographs. From 1910 there was a view of the pub with a Stancliffe Brothers Brewery dray. This brewery was in Macclesfield and was bought by Lonsdale and Adshead, also of Macclesfield, before succumbing to the expansion of Ind Coope in the 1950's. The second photo is dated from around 1930 showing the Robin Hood as an Allsopp's pub. Allsopp's also merged with Ind Coope, but in 1934, the date quoted by Norman Barber in his *A Century of British Breweries*, for the Brewery History Society in 1994. Beers available on my visit were Black Sheep Bitter, Caledonian Deuchar's IPA, a welcome refreshment after a fell race, and Courage Directors, brewed these days at John Smith's, Tadcaster. Busy on fell race night, the Robin Hood is also popular with locals, but also serves food and has accommodation, so visitors are welcome. Well worth a try.

**S**till on old photographs, on a recent visit to the **Goyt** in Whaley Bridge, very good Tetley Dark Mild followed by Abbot Ale, a fellow customer had a photo of the Jolly Carter Inn at Hague Bar, New Mills. Evidence suggested a date around 1895. This was a Clarke's house. Clarke's of Reddish fell to Boddington's in 1963. The Jolly Carter had become a private dwelling long before that and still stands. It is not listed in Mike Ogden's *Stockport Breweries* of 1987. Lost locals are obviously not just a recent phenomenon.

**A**lso a former Clarke's house is the **Shady Oak** at Fernilee. These days it is part of the Jennings arm of W&D. Jennings Mild made the Shady Oak a strong contender for Favourite Mild of the in the recent Stockport and Manchester Mild Challenge, though sadly recently not available. Jennings Bitter and Cumberland continue on the bar, along with up to three beers either from elsewhere in the W&D. empire or guest beers.

**S**ome of the Lancaster Brewery beers appeared at Stockport Beer Festival, and Lancaster Blonde 4.1% was available at the **Navigation** in Buxworth during mid June, another new brewery for the Navigation's lists.

**A** June visit to the **Swan** at Kettlethulme found the permanent Marston's Bitter alongside Abbeydale Moonshine, popular at Stockport Beer Festival and Mauldon's May Bee 3.9%. I tried the May Bee. I was anticipating honey, but found a pleasant, easy drinking bitter.

**T**he **Jodrell Arms** at Whaley Bridge had been keg only and run by a manager for several months.

However recently a new lease has been taken out, and on the beer front there are some steps in the right direction. Theakston's Bitter is now on. For the recent visit of the Folk Train to Whaley Bridge and for the launch of the Friends of Whaley Bridge Station, as part of the national Community Rail Day, Webster's Green Label was available. This is a rare brew these days, and according to the 2006 Good Beer Guide is contract brewed at Burtonwood.

**N**ot all the news is good however. The **Navigation** in Whaley Bridge (Punch Taverns) remains closed, though there are local rumours of it becoming a restaurant. To Let signs have appeared at the **Railway** (Robinson's) and the **Shepherds** (Marston's W&D) in Whaley Bridge. The **Sportsman** in Hayfield changed hands in the spring, and I must get into the **White Horse** at Horwich End where new management has introduced earlier afternoon opening, and efforts are being made to develop a food operation.

**F**inally advance notice of something to look forward to. The Bank Holiday weekend at the end of August again features the Beer Festival at the **Dog & Partridge** at Bridgemont, between Furness Vale and Whaley Bridge. This is a good little festival and well worth a visit.

---

## SPONSORS AIDED THE FESTIVAL'S SUCCESS

**T**hey say success breeds success and it is so pleasing to find so many companies within the trade wanted to support the Stockport Beer and Cider Festival this year and helped prove such a success.

As the Festival Organiser, Jim Flynn explained this was to the advantage of the thousands of beer drinkers the festival attracted 'To ensure the success of the Festival we increased the beer and cider order this year again but kept our prices as competitive as ever. Without the valued assistance of our sponsors we could not have risked this and the long term viability of the Festival itself without possibly charging up to an additional pound on the entrance charge for all customers, including members. The commitment of these companies just shows how much the Festival has engaged the imagination of people in the area and across the brewing industry. I would like to record my thanks to each of them.'

The following sponsors very generously supported the Festival this year:-

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  - Hydes Brewery - Festival programme
  - 3 Rivers Brewery - Entrance hall and entertainment
  - Lancaster Brewery/MWS - one of the beer bars
  - Fuller, Smith & Turner - one of the beer bars
  - Beartown Brewery/Navigation - Cider & perry bar
  - Bazens' Brewery - Thursday evening session
  - The Co-op - Friday lunchtime session
  - Copper Dragon Brewery - Friday evening session
  - PBC (Brewing Installations) - Saturday lunchtime
-

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### Lancashire Lip Smacker

Picture the edge of Glasson Dock, shipmasts, the Glasgow branch of the Lancaster Canal threading towards Beacon Fell some 10 miles away, and in between the rich pastures around Forton and Garstang. Lush, rich grass, happily munching cows and some of Britain's finest cheese makers; churning, matching and blending creamy, crumbly, tasty, extra tasty, and even *blue* Lancashire.

Now wander to the boat club, past the smokehouse and let the Lune estuary and small settlements across the river lead your eye towards the Lake District mountains, majestically hemming the vast expanse of Morecambe Bay. From these shores and marshy edges comes the deliciously sweet brown shrimp and, linking land and sea, wild samphire.

A glance up the Lune and a brief glimpse of Lancaster itself is possible. Here once was brewed Mitchell's Lancaster Bomber – now of course Thwaites, brewed in Blackburn.

We now have the sources of the main ingredients for Lancashire Lip Smacker, a different kind of starter or a finger buffet snack – and it can be served hot or cold. So, here's how:

#### Ingredients

For 4-6 people (or if CAMRA members, 1-2)

8oz crumbly or tasty Lancashire, grated (only use fresh, not supermarket); 2oz plain flour; 1 pint water; ½ pint milk; ½ pint Lancaster Bomber (degassed – simply pour from glass to glass several times); 2 teaspoons mustard; salt, pepper and a little oil; 100gm packet samphire; 8oz brown shrimps; 2oz Lancashire butter

#### Method

In a medium saucepan heat a little oil and bland in the flour to form a roux. Slowly add the milk to form a thick sauce, then add the mustard and grated cheese, together with a little water. When blended in, remove from the heat and add half of the degassed beer then return to a reduced heat. Add salt and pepper and the *gradually* add the remaining beer – taste the sauce for beeriness before adding *all* the beer. If the sauce is still too thick, then thin down with water. Turn off the heat and leave the pan on the ring.

You now have the sauce, so for the samphire and brown shrimps. I offer one suggestions, but you may well choose alternatives.

**Serving Suggestion** – gently heat some Lancashire butter in a frying pan and add the samphire, which should be stir fried for 2-3 minutes. Next add the shrimps and stir in until warmed through (no more than a minute). Shallots or red onions may be added for additional flavour but don't overdo them.

Samphire can have a fibrous centre, so by running each stem between the prongs of a fork it would make eating easier, but it is an arduous task. Give it to a naughty child, of whatever age, to do.

Spread the sauce onto some thick pre-toasted thick bread lay the samphire around it and place the shrimps on top.

*To wash this down a fine brown ale, stout or porter makes a good contrast, but my personal favourite is rich, fruity JW Lees Moonraker.*

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**H**ere is our monthly round up of what's happening in the local CAMRA branches. Members of all branches are welcome to attend each others' events.

The **Stockport & South Manchester** branch covers Stockport Borough apart from Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley and Marple, plus that part of Manchester from the River Medlock in the north to the M56/Princess Parkway in the south. *Branch Contact – Pete Farrand 07786 283990*

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July** – Branch meeting: Didsbury, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury. Starts 8.pm

**Friday 21<sup>st</sup>** – Offerton Stagger: starts Wrights Arms, Marple Rd, 7.pm; Fingerpost, Hempshaw Lane, 8.30pm.

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup>** – Pub of the Month presentation to the Gothic, Church Road, Gatley. From 8.pm.

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> August** – Branch meeting – venue to be decided.

The **High Peak & North East Cheshire** Branch covers Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley, Marple and all points north. *Branch Contact – Tom Lord 0161 427 7099*

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July** – Branch meeting: Poynton British Legion Club, St George's Road, Poynton. Starts 8.30pm.

The **Trafford & Hulme** Branch covers the Borough of Trafford, Manchester west of the M56/Princess Parkway and a large part of the City Centre. *Branch Contact – John Ison 0161 962 7976*

**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July** – Manchester Social: meet 8pm Font, New Wakefield St; 9.30 Ducie Arms. Lloyd St North.

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> August** – Branch meeting: Wheatsheaf, Altrincham. Starts 8pm.

Apart from Macclesfield & Bollington, the **Macclesfield & East Cheshire** Branch covers a wide area from Wilmslow to Knutsford and down to Congleton. *Branch Contact – Trevor Gammage 07802 645898*

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July** – Chair & Treasurer's birthday BBQ: the Poachers, Bollington. Phone for details.

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>/Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>** – Beer festival at the Dog, Peover Heath.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> August** – Macclesfield Pub Crawl: details to be advised but will include the Sun and Peel Arms

The **North Manchester** Branch covers the City north of the Irwell and Medlock, the Northern Quarter and Salford. *Branch Contact – Roger Hall 0161 740 7937*

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July** – Branch meeting: Hare & Hounds, Shudehill, City Centre. Starts 8pm

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup>** – Social: Woodthorpe (Holt's showpiece), Bury Old Rd, Prestwich (bus 135 or walk from Heaton Park Metrolink station). Starts 8pm.

# It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale



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Just fill in the form below and send, with a cheque (payable to CAMRA Ltd) or for Three Months free membership (for those renewing or joining by Direct Debit) complete the Direct Debit Form. All forms should be addressed to: Karen & Chris Wainright, CAMRA Membership, 173 Shearwater Road, Offerton, Stockport, SK2 5XA. Alternatively you can join online at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk).



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