

JUNE 2007



Opening

TIMES

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

NUMBER 274

COVERING THE CITIES OF MANCHESTER & SALFORD, STOCKPORT, TAMESIDE, TRAFFORD, N.E. CHESHIRE & MACCLESFIELD

Pile it High & Sell it Cheap



The Campaign for Real Ale has accused supermarkets of contributing to the so-called "binge drinking" culture and called on them to stop selling beer at below cost. In a letter submitted to the Competition Commission, Iain Loe of CAMRA said the Campaign is "increasingly concerned about the prevalence of below-cost selling of alcohol by the major supermarket chains".

CAMRA argues that the policy has led to the slow but inexorable decline of beer drinking in pubs as consumers buy cheaper alcohol from the supermarkets. In 1995, 72 per cent of all beer was sold through pubs and clubs, but this had fallen to 59 per cent by 2005.



July 1st sees one of the biggest changes to hit the pub industry for years. Smoking will be banned throughout all pubs and restaurants and we will be looking at the possible consequences of this in the next issue.

The ban is already in force elsewhere in the UK and the jury seems to be out on its long-term affect on the pub trade. In the meantime licensees can check out Stockport Council's list of tips on page 13.

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OT – COMMENT...

The issue of full pints seems oddly divisive in the pub trade. CAMRA firmly believes consumers are being cheated out of £1.3 million every day by the Government's line on the definition of a "full pint" – but many in the trade still believe it is not an issue worth taking a stand on.

Labour promised during the 1997 election that it would guarantee drinkers full pints. Like many other promises this has been broken with the Government now prepared to define a pint as 95 per cent liquid. Apply this definition to any other product and it makes a mockery of the policy – we don't expect to get 95 per cent of a pint of milk or 95 per cent of a litre of petrol.

Luckily very few, if any, of the pubs regularly visited by *Opening Times* rarely sell short measures but nationally it is clearly a problem. But why is there so much hesitation from the pub trade to get behind the campaign? CAMRA believes many licensees are being expected to squeeze up to 185 pints from a barrel containing just 176 – the industry position being if the legal definition of a pint is 95 per cent, that's what they'll serve.

So it comes down to a commercial decision. Those who make money out of pubs can increase profits by getting more out of the barrels – while the consumer gets less. They're unlikely to be fighting for a 100 per cent pint.

We think this is short sighted. The CAMRA Full Pint Campaign is not just about giving customers what they have paid for, it's about building drinkers' trust in the quality and honesty of British pubs. Serving short pints and making a quick buck may appeal, but if pubs get a reputation for ripping off customers it will cost them dearly in the long term.

OT – INFORMATION

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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
Salford:	0161 925 1346
Tameside:	0161 342 8355
Trafford:	0161 912 2274
Derbyshire:	08456 058 058
Cheshire:	0845 11 32 500

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The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for June 2007 is the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport.

The Crown probably needs no introduction to readers of this publication as it has been a highlight on the Stockport pub scene for many years now.

It's had its fair share of ups and downs, though, and the last 12 months have seen both. Former licensees Graham Mascord and Jeanette Walmsley ran into financial problems and left the pub last September. The last months of their tenure had seen the pub become run down and many one-time regulars depart for other watering holes.

Luckily white knights galloped over the horizon in the form of local real ale lovers Steve Alexander and Ian Watts who have overseen the restoration of the pub's fortunes in spectacular style.

While Ian and Steve are essentially sleeping partners in the business, they use the pub regularly, enjoying the fine range of ales on offer. Ian's wife Lesley is the licensee while son Lee helps run the bar with bar and cellar manager Sarah Bergin.

Together they have seen the pub transformed. Most notably the pub has been totally cleaned and partially redecorated, and there are now more regular and extended opening hours, and this in itself had helped draw back many old faces along with plenty of new ones, too. Two real fires have been reinstated and these were a welcome feature in the winter months.

Live music and the weekly quizzes remain a feature along with the weekly folk club. New features include a weekly music quiz and Monday cheese nights. The huge beer garden is being renovated and live music is planned on a new stage out there. Inside the kitchen is being renovated so that home-cooked food can be served.

Of course the heart and soul of the pub is cask beer. There are 14 regularly available along with a real cider. Three of the pumps are reserved for Bank Top, Pictish and Copper Dragon breweries; you will also always find both a mild and a stout or porter on sale. Turnover, and consequently quality, is enormous, so much so that there are plans to install a further two handpumps for weekend use.

This very well-deserved award will be presented on Thursday 28 June when the pub is likely to be even more packed than usual. Get there early if you want a seat. **JC**



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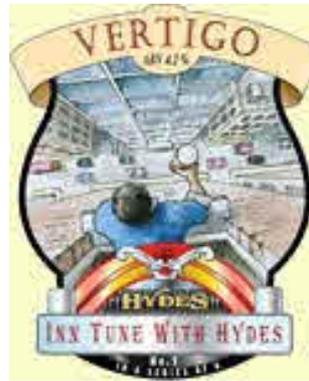
**THE
RAILWAY VIEW Macclesfield**



Chorlton-on-Medlock & University with Mark McConachie

This month's Stagger begins on the fringes of Rusholme's so-called "curry mile", then travels northward to finish at All Saints. The plan was to begin at the newish Varsity on the corner of Hathersage Road, but we found that the handpump for cask Boddies was out of use now, and indeed had been for a good while. So we doubled back to the re-opened **Whitworth** on Moss Lane East to begin our crawl.

Traditionally, this was always the start point, but the place had been closed for a number of weeks, so we had re-jigged things. Anyway, great to see the Whitworth trading again, and doing Hydes cask beers. Set on two levels, high to the front, low to the rear, the interior is somewhat shabby, however I suspect that some re-decoration will occur soon. The atmosphere is relaxed and welcoming. For the warmer seasons, the decked and enclosed drinking area at the rear will prove a very pleasant harbour. Two Hydes beers were on offer - Bitter, and the seasonal ale, Vertigo. The former ran out upon ordering, so we settled for the latter beer. A reddish beer that we thought drank well for a 4.2% brew. By the way, the prices are very keen here, the Vertigo was only £1.40 a pint.



In an area with so little cask ale on offer, the Whitworth is worthy of your support.

Next up was the **Oxford** on Oxford Road. This was built as a Hogshead ale house a few years ago, changed its name, lost real ale, then back came the cask. Thus, we found two beers - Deuchars IPA and Old Speckled Hen. Most of us plumped for the Deuchars, which we found very good, the lone man on the OSH was marginally less impressed. The Oxford is laid out on two floors; all decor is of a pleasing contemporary style. The pub was reasonably busy with people. We positioned ourselves mid-stairs on a small mezzanine, where I took the opportunity to play a pinball game that was new to me "Ripley's Believe It or Not". Interesting all round.

Our mid-point call was on Grafton Street (reached by passing the Emmeline Pankhurst Centre), the **Bowling Green**. This is a former Greenalls pub that has now been neatly fitted out into the two-room space. Decorated in dark colours with some fine wood fittings, it has a very restrained, yet genteel style that I likened to that of a gentlemen's club or private library. For a long time, this did not sell cask ale, so it is great to report the return of the cask - Black Sheep bitter and Spitfire were the offerings. Unfortunately, neither of these beers inspired us, both being somewhat lacklustre. I'm sure this was an aberration, and on future occasions the beers will sing to us with taste and quality.

On the same street is the **Grafton**, a lively, down-to-earth Holts boozier full of down-to-earth people enjoying the evening. Built in the 80's, this is a true two room house, with the bar set between the rooms; the L-shaped lounge was busy, and a female singer was setting up her act. Decor is of the usual style, but here with unusual photos of central

Manchester and its people drawing the eye. Both Mild and Bitter were available, and both were easily above the average mark.

It would be usual to cross Upper Brook Street at this point to do the pubs there, but unfortunately, both the **Tilted Falcon**, and the wonderful **Mawson** are now on keg beer only. Also on keg was the ever promising **Jabez Clegg**, a shame that as it used to trade quite a lot in the real stuff.

So it was straight to the **Kro Bar**, opposite the University Student Union building. Busy, noisy, and full of life. This is a large Victorian villa converted to pub use from its original purpose of the Temperance Society offices. It is a large place, with two floors being used along with an extension at the rear. Add to this a beer garden at the front, and a larger one at the back, so you begin to see the potential of this slick operation. As its owners are Danish ("Kro" translates as pub by the way), the food has a Danish air to it. Nothing Danish about the selection of cask beers though, we had a choice of Taylor Landlord, Tetley Imperial, and Theakston XB, all scored well.

With time to spare, and the knowledge that the **Footage**, **Scu Bar**, and **The Pub** were all keg, I suggested we make a visit to the **Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM)** bar; we found it open, and we were not disappointed.



Busy crowds enjoy cask beers at the RNCM bar.

I believe it only opens when a concert is on, and that beer choice will vary depending on the music type and the hour of the performance. We were treated to a terrific selection of six beers - London Pride; GK Abbot Ale; Copper Dragon 1816; Tetley bitter; Deuchars IPA; and Gales HSB. Between the group, most were sampled and deemed to be good. Sited in a vestibule area, this is a vast, airy space that acts as a waiting area, a bar, and a place where people can get hot drinks and a meal too. Give it a look yourself, as it is worth it alone for the promotion of cask. They are doing things here that are a credit to cask beer, and to the benefit of the concert-going fraternity. The RNCM bar is accessed from Booth Street West.

Our final pub was the **Sand Bar** on Grosvenor Street. A case of old meets new here. Two Victorian properties converted to pub use. One house retains many of the fine original features, whilst the other has been pared-down to a modern taste. Both are linked via a covered former loading bay at the rear; this is also used as a drinking area. The pub is popular with a predominately younger crowd, and a discerning older element. Both houses are used to showcase local artworks on the walls, although on this occasion I don't recall what was on show. Worthy of show however, were the beers from Bazens' - Blue Bullet, Sparked Out, and Salford Star, alongside Shamrock from Phoenix, and Hecks' Farmhouse cider. All the beers were found in fine form. Once again a great way to end a somewhat patchy Stagger.



High and Dry

It was richly ironic that a recent issue of "Opening Times" carried the front-page headline "Use Them or Lose Them!" referring to recent pub closures, while at the same time including a full-page advertisement promoting the forthcoming smoking ban. Presumably next month "Turkey Weekly" will carry an ad advocating an early Christmas. It is highly likely that the prospect of the smoking ban has already led to the closure of several marginal pubs in the area – who would want to take on the lease of an already struggling non-food pub in the knowledge that at least a quarter of its customers were going to disappear come July?

I recently heard a radio interview with the licensee of an estate pub, who said that 80% of her customers were smokers, and all the rest either came in with smokers or socialised with them. This must be typical of thousands of pubs the length and breadth of the country. Following the ban, it is impossible to imagine that those customers, if they continue to come at all, won't call in less often, and won't stay for a shorter time. This has certainly been the case in Scotland, where over half of pubs have reported fewer visits from regulars since the ban. And it is absurd to believe that an establishment like that in a working-class area will suddenly be inundated with a new breed of customers who never came in before, and will happily sip Chardonnay and nibble at ciabattas in a smoke-free atmosphere.

There are quite a few smaller local pubs in the Stockport & South Manchester area that have no outside facilities apart from the street, where no food is served or demanded, where well over half the customers are smokers, and nobody else minds. Following the ban, if people are meeting up in mixed groups of smokers and non-smokers, they will obviously choose pubs that can offer reasonable outside smoking facilities, and those which can't will be left high and dry. It's therefore very likely that a lot more of these small, "landlocked" establishments will be forced to close down over the next two or three years.

Now of course the smoking ban won't mean the overnight death of the English pub, and no doubt the exponents of the ban will in their usual dishonest fashion produce figures showing little or no effect on the total licensed trade, which of course includes restaurants as well as pubs, and food sales as well as drink. But it will change the character of the English pub forever and the traditional drink and chat community pub will be increasingly marginalised. It will also leave an abiding legacy of bitterness amongst disenfranchised pubgoers, non-smokers as well as smokers.

Shell Shocked

Even if you don't smoke, ashtrays are very convenient things in pubs. You can put all your crumpled-up crisp and nut packets in them. Most importantly you can discard all the shells from your pistachio nuts. So what are you supposed to do following the smoking ban? Leave them on the table? Throw them on the floor? And will the sale of pistachios in pubs be forever banned, despite apparently being better for your health than most other nuts? Surely ashtrays should be kept and simply renamed "litter bins". If not, pub tables and floors will be swamped by a wave of detritus.

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“**F**estival Frolics” was the front page headline, and despite competing with the Bank Holiday, World Cup football and the most gloriously sunny weather, the organisers of Stockport’s 16th Beer & Cider Festival were celebrating a comfortably successful event.

Record-breaking Thursday and Friday night sessions made up for the smaller than expected crowd on Friday and Saturday lunchtimes, with the end result that the numbers attending fell just 37 short of the predicted 4,000 crowd. Careful husbandry of the beer and cider stocks meant that even when the Festival shut at 11.00pm Saturday night, there were still more than 20 beers and over a dozen ciders and perries to choose from.

The next Paradise Brewery Beer Festival was to be held in early July, and a range of over 40 beers from micro-brewers had been promised. These had been complemented by an “interesting” range at the Bhurtpore Inn. An added attraction had been laid on the that year – the Wrenbury Scarecrow Trail would be running at the same time as the beer festival, so visitors could wander round the Wrenbury/Aston area, doing a bit of scarecrow spotting. Then the Bhurtpore Inn was holding its own beer festival the following week. The usual passenger train arrangements had been made, viz stopping the Manchester-Cardiff express at Wrenbury.

The Commonwealth Games could be considered a high point in the history of Manchester over the past 100 years, putting the city well and truly in the international spotlight. Many local brewers had been planning beers to mark the games. But these plans had to be scrapped or changed following the intervention of one Peter Tomkies, the “Brand Protection Manager” for Manchester 2002 Ltd, the company charged with delivering the games on budget. The use of any trademark etc, owned by the games could not be used, which meant that Interbrew would be supplying the only commemorative beer, Boddington’s Commonwealth Ale, which would be available in about 200 outlets – hardly the basis for a region-wide celebration of the games. However some local brewers were producing beers that just happened to have vaguely sporting themes, such as Lees Sprinter, Robinson’s Stadium Bitter, and Holt’s Baton Bitter

The Lass O’Gowrie on Charles Street, Manchester City Centre, was due for a refurbishment, and there would be major changes to the downstairs brewery. It had been brewing since 1983, making it one of the longest surviving “new wave” brewpubs. There had been recent problems with a yeast infection, and the brewery had been closed and completely cleaned out. The two house beers, LOG35 and LOG42 were to change. Neither is now produced and the pub’s brewing plant has been removed.

Finally, there was a surprising item in the pub news column. A number of local pubs participated in one of the country’s few karaoke leagues. But did you know that Stockport is actually the birthplace of karaoke? It was the brainchild of Roy Brooke who created “Roy’s Singalong Machine” in a workshop at Goyt Mill, Marple, back in 1975. His invention, allowing singers to read song lyrics while an instrumental version of the track played, had been taken up by a Japanese firm, which renamed it karaoke, or “empty orchestra”. So now you know.

A Stately Ale



Early May saw a party of Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA members venturing into the Derbyshire countryside to visit a brewery with a difference *writes Chris Walkden*. The fact that the journey was by luxury coach (courtesy of Bullocks) set the tone for the rest of the evening as the visit was to the Thornbridge Country House Brewery, located at Thornbridge Hall near Ashford on the Water.

There has been some form of large house at Thornbridge since the 12th Century, but the present hall dates from the 18th Century. The hall was home to several industrialists including George Marples who was a director of the Midland Railway and built a private station on the nearby line, now disused (one of the Thornbridge beers is named after him). After the Second World War, Sheffield City Council used the Hall for a number of activities but it reverted to private use in 1997.

The Harrison family bought the 100 acre site with its parkland and formal gardens in 2002 and set about an extensive work programme which included the restoration of the Carriage House and its derelict underground coal cellar / air raid shelter. This is now a spectacular bar and was our base for the tour. Our hosts for the evening were Alex Buchanan, the brewery's Sales Director and Dave Wickett, who is a leading light in the Thornbridge brewery, along with others in the small team. Dave also founded his own award winning brewery, Kelham Island in Sheffield in 1990 and still runs it today.

We were given a brief history of the house and gardens before going to the bar for a quick pint to whet our whistles before going on to the brewery. Available were Lord Marples, Jaipur IPA and Kipling, but more on those later -



Dave Wicketts of Thornbridge (and Kelham Island)

first a tour of the brewery was required. Dave told us how the idea for the brewery started. Master of the Hall, Jim Harrison, met Dave at Bakewell Show in 2003 and asked him to supply some Kelham Island beers for a party. At that party, the idea of opening up a brewery at the Hall was discussed. Things then moved fairly rapidly; a derelict carpenter's workshop was identified as a suitable location, planning permission was readily obtained and plant obtained from the defunct Malton Brewery. Brewing commenced in October

2004 with the first beers being available to the public in May 2005.

The original 10 barrel brew length was quickly extended to 20. The business plan expected this to increase to 50 in five to six years but this was achieved after only 18 months. How come you may ask? Well, any of you who have already tried a Thornbridge beer will know why. Superbly crafted and bursting with flavour, their beers certainly have the "wow" factor. The brewery tag-line, "Never Ordinary" is most certainly true as they have succeeded in their intention to produce new and exciting beers. The first CAMRA award came after just 4 months and their brews continue to rake them in - 23 in 2006 and 11 in the first 4 months of 2007. And the awards not only come from CAMRA but their brewing peers in the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA).

Well, what about the beers we sampled? Lord Marples at 4% is a classic copper-coloured fruity British Bitter with plenty of malt and a long bitter finish. Next up the strength scale comes Kipling at 5.2% - this uses New Zealand hops and has a passion fruit and kiwi aroma and again a lasting bitter finish. And finally, the multi award winning Jaipur IPA (5.9%) - a superb example of the genre. (The name stems from the place in India where the Harrisons got married.) The beer makes a soft first impression, but this is followed by the Chinook hops coming through in some measure to give a powerful and lasting finish. No wonder the Good Beer Guide describes it as "dangerously drinkable".

The brewery also produces many other beers during the year and some were available again at the recent Stockport Beer Festival including a special version of Jaipur - Jaipur XB (6%). If you want to try them locally, The Crown on Heaton Lane sometimes features Thornbridge beers as do many free houses in the area. Alternatively you could visit the brewery's only pub, the Coach and Horses at Dronfield between Chesterfield and Sheffield, run by New Zealander Kelly Ryan, one of the brewers. He replaced Martin Dickie at the turn of the year who has gone to set up a new brewery at Peterhead in Scotland. Italian Stefano Cossi heads up the brewing team so you can understand why there is an international approach to crafting interesting beer recipes.

The brewery has a one barrel plant with which to experiment with speciality beers which if successful will be given a longer brew run. There are plans to use herbs and spices from the Hall's gardens to produce some beers later this year whilst coming shortly is a New World brown beer featuring European malts and US hops. In addition, there is an interesting project now running involving students at the University of Sheffield to craft and brew their own beer and the results should be available in the Autumn.

Back in the bar after a short tour of the gardens, a buffet was available and the beer flowed. There was lots of good conversation about micro brewers and craft beers and we were delighted to be joined by the lady of the Hall, Emma. One disappointment though - there was no bottled beer to buy despite some of us bringing empty bags and copious amounts of money!! I was looking forward to buying some of their outstanding strong stout - Saint Petersburg (7.7%) - which won the silver overall award at the 2006 Stockport Festival. This full bodied beer has a wonderful balance of chocolate, malt and coffee flavours. Oh well, maybe next time.

Then it was time to go and we bade our farewells to head home. Thanks to Emma, Dave, Alex and the rest of the team who had made our evening very special. If you want to know more about the brewery, visit their web-site at www.thornbridgebrewery.co.uk or you could visit the Hall's Charity Day on Saturday 1st July when the hall, gardens and brewery will be open. One thing's for sure - they DO know how to organise a p*ss up in a brewery !!



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Local News

Tony, the manager at the **Q-Bar** in Stalybridge, a Hydes pub, has also taken on the Tenancy of the nearby **White House**, also Hydes. If you remember, former licensee Dave Conner also had both licences a few years back, when both then free houses were regular Good Beer Guide entries.

The **Dog & Partridge** in Waterloo, Ashton (bottom Dog), normally a keg only pub, is now taking Shaws Golden Globe on a regular basis as its only handpumped ale. Sales of the same beer at the **Old General** in Dukinfield continue to hold well, in what is the only Shaws outlet in town and the nearest to the brewery.

The **Peels Arms** in Padfield continue to have two guest beers on the bar due to demand, with Theakston's Bitter and Marston's Pedigree completing the draught ale list.

In Glossop, it is now five months since Holts bought the **Norfolk Arms**, in the town centre, but still no Holts to be seen, in fact the rumours of a Spring refurbishment seem to be fading fast. Does anyone out there know what is happening? If so, let this column know.

Out in the Sticks

Just out of High Peak area, I recently found myself out in Hartington and whilst waiting for my fellow walkers to turn up, I looked through the window of the **Devonshire Arms** to see Wells Bombardier and Jennings Cumberland Ale on handpump.

However, it was when I crossed the village square to the **Charles Cotton Hotel** that prompted it worth recording for *Opening Times*. The bar boasted six handpumps, on this occasion two being devoted to the local Hartington Ales, two to Thornbridge Hall, and two guest beers, one from Fyne Ales. I was looking very much forward to having an end of walk pint here...but alas the downpour that started part way through the evening, got worse and there was no way we could have gone in what was quite a "posh" hotel bar in the bedraggled and muddy condition we were in.

However, we realised that the **Quiet Woman** at Earl Sterndale was on the route back and it is not quite as upmarket there - no disrespect meant to what is a great pub, a favourite of the Branch and formerly High Peak Branch and the East Midland finalist in the 2002 CAMRA pub of the Year competition - but Ken the landlord would be happy to see us. We were not disappointed with the pint of an Archers beer, that was alongside the Marston's Bitter, Pedigree and Jennings Dark Mild. The pub is one of the Branch's most remote pubs, with just an occasional bus to the village, but they always stock a dark mild and the beers are always in fine condition.

Eric Gatley

High Peak Branch members are mourning the death of Eric Gatley who died in hospital on May 2nd. Eric was an active member in recent years, including being a regular worker at the Glossop Beer festival and distributing *Opening Times* locally. He will be remembered for his company at many of our social events, including the popular annual foreign trips and our winter weekends as well as many Saturday "away days". He first showed his symptoms of illness whilst at Fleetwood Beer Festival in February. He leaves a daughter and two sons. Our thoughts are with them. Eric will be remembered fondly in the Branch in years to come.



SAY YES TO A FULL PINT

PUB customers were robbed of £481 million in 2006. Beer drinkers are being mugged of £1.3m a day! How and why are these crimes against beer drinkers happening? The answer – short measure.

Recent CAMRA surveys of local authorities' trading standards departments have revealed that 26.6% of all pints are served over 5% short. And the worst example found by officers was 13% short.

CAMRA is calling on the Government to stop this legalised robbery. 76% of pub goers want the Government to stick to its promise, made in 1997, to ensure that drinkers get a full pint. Since Labour made that promise beer drinkers have lost an estimated £4.5 billion.

CAMRA's chief executive Mike Benner said "It is a disgrace that up to a quarter of all pints served in the UK are less than 95% liquid when customers are paying for a full pint. The inaction of the Labour government in allowing this unfair practice to continue has cost beer drinkers billions of pounds".

CAMRA is launching a national petition calling on Government to define a pint of beer as a pint of beer and to require licensees to endeavour to serve a full pint every time. Beer drinkers can sign up by

clicking on the web site www.takeittothetop.co.uk. CAMRA has also produced eye catching posters and petition cards that drinkers can sign and return for the PM's attention. Credit card sized short measure cards are available so drinkers can get an immediate check by how much they are being short changed.

It is not just real ale drinkers that get regularly mugged at their local, lager and Guinness drinkers also suffer from short measure. Pub managers are often under pressure from their bosses to squeeze extra pints from their casks and kegs. The training manuals of some pub companies advise licensees to serve 95% pints.

The current code of practice issued by the trade body The British Beer and Pub Association recommends that its members serve a 95% pint to customers but advise that if they ask for a top up it should be given and given with good grace. But when was the last time you shopped for a kilo of potatoes or a dozen eggs and had to ask the shop keeper to give you more because they had originally given you short measure?

So let's end this short measure disgrace. Click on www.takeittothetop.org.uk and sign up to the petition.

"The Government allows drinkers to be cheated out of £1.3m everyday"

Let's do something about it!



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Financial pages during April gave space to the possible take over of Scottish & Newcastle by another one of a number of global brewers. S & N now operates only one cask ale brewery, the John Smith's Brewery in Tadcaster, whence comes the Theakston's Bitter we get in the High Peak. The Theakston family brewery in Masham does not have the capacity to brew Theakstons' Best Bitter for a nationwide market. Tadcaster brewed Theakstons' Bitter is a better brew than when it came from Tyne. Some would say that it could only be better. However this widely available brew could be endangered by the rationalisation which would certainly follow a takeover.

Also worrying is the fact that S & N own the site of the Caledonian Brewing Co. in Edinburgh, and 30% of the company. A take over could affect Deuchars IPA and Caledonian 80/-, both of which appear as guests in this area. To complicate life, Caledonian now own the Harviestoun Brewery at Alva, not too far from Stirling. Bitter & Twisted and Schiehallion are the beers, which tend to appear locally.

S & N have a poor record for brewery closure. This could be compounded by a take over on an international scale. Customer choice will yet again be eroded.

Guest Beers and Best Practice

The Punch pub company often deserves criticism, so it is good to have a chance to write positively. There is currently a programme of licensee training which seems to go beyond that required by the now not so new licensing legislation. After that Cask Marque accreditation becomes available to those licensees reaching the appropriate level of cellarmanship etc. All this should be good for cask beer quality and customers, in the long run.

A variety of guest beers has been available in the Whaley Bridge area during April. Black Sheep Emmerdale, with more hops for flavour than some of the Black Sheep beers, has been on at the **Shepherds'**. The (non bottle conditioned) bottled version is widely available in supermarkets. Bateman's XXXB also made a welcome return.

At the **Navigation** in Buxworth, Milestone Tuck's Tipple was a 4.2% mild to earn my Mild Challenge sticker. Dinting Arches, from the Howard Town Brewery in Glossop, was the guest beer. Good to see local microbreweries being supported when licensees are able to access their beers.

It was also good to see Robinson's OB available in the **Railway** in Whaley Bridge. This was followed by Double Hop. Phil Whittaker is trying with a wider range of Robinson's brews. Of course Ward's Bitter has been a good seller at the **Cock** in Whaley Bridge, for some time now. The Railway is also selling hand pumped Westons Olde Rosie cider.

I understand that Hydes' Boddingtons Bitter and Samuel Smith's Bitter are available on hand pump at **High Lane Conservative Club**, whilst **Furness Vale Social Club** usually has a Hydes Beer, often Jekyll's Gold, on hand pump. Always pleasing to see clubs offering real ale to their members.

Pub closures, headlined by the OT editor in April, and featuring in this column, continue apace. Recent reported closures in the Peak District include the **Plough** at Flagg and the **Olde Bull's Head** at Little Hucklow. The familiar adage, "use them or lose them" seems to gain importance with the passage of each month.



This month I turn part of my column over to Dave Sharpe, who had been up in the hills...

In the Sticks

I was recently, temporarily – for about two hours, seconded to the High Peak Branch to ‘poster’ the pubs in and around the hills of Mellor for Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. What a delight it turned out to be, not having been in that area for many years.

The first call on the never ending climb from Marple Bridge is the Robinson’s house, the **Royal Oak**. The last time I was in there the kitchen was being run by some lads from the “curry mile” in Rusholme. No food on now, I’m told, but looking at starting up again. Next stop was the ever popular **Devonshire Arms**, another Robinson’s house.



The Oddfellows – photo courtesy Marple Pub Guide - <http://www.marple-uk.com/pubguide>

Halfway up the next climb you come to an Enterprise Inns little gem, the **Oddfellows Arms**, taken over two months ago by Andrew and Deborah Moore from Manchester. They are already making an impression locally with the quality beer and food. With five hand pulls and no keg in sight, the range on the day was Adnam’s Bitter, Timothy Taylor’s Landlord, Old Speckled Hen, Black Sheep Bitter and Wells & Youngs Bombardier – complete with an original pump clip. Jennings Cumberland was ready to replace the Bombardier.

Onwards and upwards to the top. Turn left immediately before the road forks and with some spectacular views you come to the **Moorfield**. A good size “eatery” but with a surprise – two handpulls. Pedigree and guest – Abbeydale Absolution. Proving to be very popular I was told, and more Abbeydale on order. B&B is also available.

Along the road for 100 yards (no meters – of any kind – up here) and turn right to Rowarth. Straight on past the next Rowarth sign to the end of the road brings you to the **Little Mill Inn**, with its large working water wheel, large outside drinking area and large children’s play area! For a quieter area – an upstairs dining room. At the bar, four handpulls supplying Banks’s and Marston’s bitters and two guest pumps: Bradfield Brewery Farmer’s Blond (4%) and Coach House Brewery’s St George’s Heritage Ale (4.9% and a definite 10/10 in any score book).

Returning past the Moorfield I dropped down towards New Mills and another little gem – the **Pack Horse**.

Four handpulls were dispensing Tetley Bitter, Phoenix Arizona, Archers Tight Git and Anglo-Dutch Ghost on the Rim.

A very enjoyable run out. The last time I was in those hills was with the cycling club over seven years ago. I was good to make the effort to go back- try it yourself – you won’t be disappointed.

Festival in Cheadle

The recent mid-May beer festival held at the **Crown**, High Street, Cheadle was a great success, say licensees Karen and Alan Williams. Five beers were arranged on a special cooled stillage in the lounge to the side of the bar (see photos). The other beers shared time on the handpumps with regulars, Hydes mild and bitter. The beers that were showcased were York Terrier; FFF Pressed Rat; Everard’s Sunchaser; Moorhouses Blond Witch; Mauldon’s May Bee; Old Speckled Hen; Allgates Reverend Ray, and Napoleon’s Retreat; and lastly, a Hydes special Crowning Glory (5% ABV). They were very pleased with the sales of beer and the interest shown by customers, both old and new.

Remember too, that this beer festival was held mid-week so as not to interrupt their busy weekend trade. Sales were helped by a fair pricing policy, most of the beers were only £1.70 or so. Other similar events may be planned in the future. The guest beers will continue to appear as well, Hydes have made an agreement with Greene King, so expect to see some of their many ales featured soon.



Beers on sale at the Crown Beer Festival

Round and About

I was contacted recently about the **Rock Tavern** on Glossop Road, Marple Bridge. It seems to have had a recent makeover and while obviously heavily food-oriented is quite pleasant inside.

I must also mention the fire at the **Davenport Arms** in Woodford. While this excellent Robinson’s pub continues to trade, licensee Yvonne Hallworth lost most of her personal possessions. She has the good wishes of everyone at *Opening Times*.

In Reddish, Duncan Shenton has left the **Thatched Tavern**. The new licensee has removed all the cask beer and I have heard conflicting reports as to whether it will be back. I hope it’s not gone for good as the cask beer was the one thing that made this pub stand out from the herd in Reddish..

The **Crown**, Heaton Lane is to have two further hand pumps installed for use at weekends only. During the week the pub will have to make do with just the 14!

Finally, **Ye Olde Vic** in Edgeley seems to be becoming a celebrity haunt. TV chef and *bon viveur* Keith Floyd has been spotted in there twice recently.

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Tavern and to Hold

If ever an entrepreneur would one day decide to market Macclesfield's own stick of rock, the name 'The Waters Green Tavern' would run in bold letters through the middle of it, such is its prominence in the town's ale loving society. The Waters Green is situated in... well...Waters Green which is just opposite the Town's train station and lies just next to the romantic setting of the used car garage. But romance is not what we are looking for is it? Oh no, we're only here for the beer.

The exterior of the building takes you back to Tudor England, which is around the same time it came into contact with the bristle of a paintbrush. If you look very carefully on one side of the building you can make out a faded insignia of Tetley's brewery an indication of the pub's history. But exterior décor is not our cup of tea is it? Oh no indeedly we're on the trail for the ale!

Now a little word to the wise, never make a dramatic entrance into the Waters Green, do not under any circumstances fling open the door as you are bound to cause grievous injury to one particular group of locals who insist on standing behind it. They genuinely look at you with a look of surprise on their faces as if the door suddenly appeared out of parallel dimension and deliberately smacked into them, but don't let that put you off, as the locals are a friendly bunch because they are not so far from the bar!

The Waters Green has a no thrills attitude, in fact it should change its name to 'Easy-Pub', if you have not knocked anybody unconscious when you first enter you will find comfortable seating to your right and also to the far left of the pub

But now it is time to revel in the one thing the Waters Green has won more CAMRA awards than you can shake a large stick at because, we are on the brink of drink! If the sun was to go Supernova and darkness filled the land the only light would be emanating from the riot of pale ales that the Waters Green specialises in, although something darker wouldn't go amiss. It appears that the good old folk of Macclesfield know what's good for them and quite rightly visit the pub in their hordes.

And when you do visit the pub you will find a carnival of bar pumps offering such delights as: Monkeytown Mild – Phoenix (3.9%), Deuchars – Caledonian (3.8%), Oakham Ale – Asylum (4.5%), Outlaw – Amarillo (3.9%) and the aptly christened Sporrán Warmer – Blonde Ale (4%). All are mouth wateringly delicious, some flow like honey, some hit the back of your throat like a razor blade such is their sharpness but you will always be left satisfied.

All the beers are lovingly nurtured by the silver haired bar-lord Brian, a man of Scottish descent who has been pulling pints for around 25 years and a special mention must go to his partner the 'Terrific Tracey' a sparky intelligent woman who knows her customers like the back of her eyelids and will always engage you in conversation whatever the subject may be.

The last drop!

News has reached the ear of the Vizier that the one and only Elizabeth Alexandra Grundy will be taking up the reigns of The Prince of Wales (Roe Street, Macclesfield). So please give your full support and keep The Prince on its throne.

Top Tips to Clear the Air

Stockport Council's Paul Kendal with some hints for the forthcoming ban...

With less than a month to go until the smoking ban comes into force, help is on-hand here in Stockport to make sure licensed premises are ready for the new rules.



'Clear the Air' is a joint campaign between the Council and Stockport Primary Care Trust. One of its aims is to provide advice and guidance to local businesses before the smoking ban comes into force on 1 July.

To help pubs and clubs get ready for the law change the Council and its partners have drawn up a handy list of top tips. Advice includes:

Visit the 'Clear the Air' web pages for up-to-date news and information;

Contact the Council's 'Clear the Air' hotline on 0845 6444307 for advice and support on the new rules

If premises are interested in erecting a 'smoking shelter' or guidance on other planning issues contact Planning Development Control on 0161 474 3552/3360/3643/4812;

Think about developing a no-smoking policy in consultation with staff. Visit the Smokefree England website for examples of sample smoking policies;

Take reasonable steps to ensure staff and customers are aware that premises are legally required to be smoke free for 1st July.



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This year's Mild Challenge was another great success, writes outgoing Mild Challenge Coordinator, Mark McConachie.

For those not in the know, this is a 'passport scheme' whereby participating pubs stamp a drinker's mild card when they have a pint or half-pint of mild in that pub. Obtaining fifteen or more different stamps gets that drinker a variety of prizes - free entry to Stockport festival, free pints of mild at this festival, a commemorative polo shirt, a special-edition polo shirt or a combination of prizes.

This year's challenge ran for five weeks from March 31st to May 6th with a mammoth 82 pubs taking part from as far afield as Salford and the city centre in the north, to Glossop in the east and Whaley Bridge in the south. Final results show that just under ninety people returned their cards (many more will have started, but not completed a card for whatever reason). This is a slight rise on last year, with more entrants having visited more pubs and sampled more mild by dint of entering the Mild Challenge Extra - 15 pub visits needed - nearly a third of entrants took this option. Five hardy souls managed to complete the challenge in its entirety by collecting stamps in all 82 pubs.

This is great news for mild sales and great news for the publicans who supported CAMRA in this important campaigning issue. On Mark's travels he encountered many licensees who told him that interest in the challenge and mild were both up, additionally many people had travelled to pubs they had never visited before. Indeed, licensee Tim Flynn of the New Oxford said that the milds he'd put on during the event had sold so well, he now keeps a regular mild on at all times. All round a great effort and a huge success.

The winners of the favourite mild pub of the Challenge (as voted for by the entrants) were, the **Crown, Heaton Lane** (for Stockport), and the **New Oxford, Salford** (for outside Stockport). Dates of the presentations will be announced soon.



Mark would like to pass on his grateful thanks to all of the publicans who took part, all of the people who entered the challenge, and to all those in CAMRA who assisted in distributing / collecting the mild challenge material. Finally, a word of recognition to Graham Platt, who died in January of this year. Graham was a Mild Challenge regular, his humour and good company will be missed.



Brewery NEWS...

Cains Expand



Above, the Dusanj brothers outside Cains Brewery

Merseyside brewers Robert Cain have taken a quantum leap with the “reverse take over” of AIM-listed pub operator Honeycombe Leisure PLC to create a new business with 109 outlets and an annual turnover of £65.5 million.

The new group – formed from Honeycombe and the Cains Brewery owned by the Dusanj brothers - will be renamed Cains Beer Company PLC and will be listed on the AIM market with 57.65 per cent owned by Sudarghara and Ajmail Dusanj, who acquired Cains Brewery in 2002. The company headquarters will be at Cains’ brewery in Stanhope Street, Liverpool.

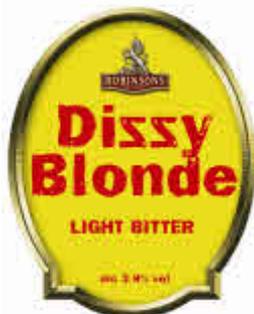
The deal brings together Honeycombe Leisure’s estate of 100 pubs, concentrated mainly in the North West, with the nine already operated by Cains, including the Gothic in Gatley. The Honeycombe estate is something of a mixed bag and Cains admit that it will take years to refurbish them all. Most are free of tie, though, so there are plenty of opportunities for Cains beers to expand their distribution.

Local Honeycombe pubs include the Last Orders in Hyde, Denton and Glossop, ScuBar and Scu2 Bar in Manchester and Suede in Wilmslow.

Family Brewers

This month sees the launch of **Robinson’s** Dizzy Blonde, the latest in the revamped seasonal range. This very pale, 3.8% ABV beer is brewed using American Cascade and Amarillo hops so expect a refreshing beer with plenty of zesty and citrus hop notes.

One of the problems with Robinson’s seasonal beers has been the relative reluctance of many Robinson’s pubs to try them. With a view to increasing the take up, Robbies are running a promotion for all of their tenants – buy six casks and pay for five. Alternatively, pubs can forgo the free cask but get a free hand pump to sell the additional beer. Let’s hope that this provides an impetus for more local Robinson’s houses to get behind what promises to be an excellent summer ale.



Robinson’s are also offering their pubs the chance to sell traditional cider from Westons, who will be supplying all the dispense equipment, too. While this will always be something of a niche product, we hope that there will be a good take-up of what can be a good trade builder.

Hydes meanwhile still have Golden Brown (4.4%) available, an elegant and smooth spring ale.

There are some interesting developments with **Holts**. They are to produce a real ale in a bottle. This will be a 5.2% ABV brew called Pioneer, using hops of that name, and will be available in August. One to look out for. On the seasonal beer front, the special for June is Nuts & Holts (4.1% ABV), a golden amber ale brewed with honey and also Willamette hops.

Micro Magic

As usual the local micro brewers have an interesting range of beers out for you.

Bazens’ – the June special is Salford’s Hero (4.3% ABV) and hopefully many readers will have tried this at Stockport Beer Festival. These monthly single-hop beers from Bazens’ are proving very popular and rightly so.

The brewery has also asked us to clear up some misleading reports that have appeared elsewhere about the Doctor’s Orders special. Apparently, it’s been publicised that they were refused permission to use the name by Christopher Eccleston or someone involved with Doctor Who. This is not the case at all - they were unable to contact the relevant people to get permission for the reference to the programme so out of courtesy to them changed the name just in case there were any objections.



Leyden – the Leyden Brewery, based at the Lord Raglan pub, Nangreaves near Bury, is holding a beer festival from 15 June to 1 July. A special wheat beer (4.5%-ish ABV) brewed using coriander seeds and orange peel will be brewed for the event. Another new beer is Raglan Short Sleeve (3.6% ABV), a copper coloured ale.

Phoenix – a beer for the summer to look out for is White Tornado (4.3% ABV), a clear wheat beer with a good smack of hops. A special treat in store is the return of Pilsner Irwell (4.8% ABV) after a five or six year gap. This superb cask lager is currently undergoing maturation at the brewery and will be available from the end of June.

Bank Top – Bolton’s only brewer gained national exposure last month when Radio 1’s Edith Bowman broadcast her show from the brewery. To mark the event a special beer has been produced. Edith’s Tipple is a 3.9% ABV tan coloured quaffing ale. The brewery has just seen the introduction of a new 10-barrel plant to cope with increasing demand.

Millstone – the Mossley brewery is producing a new series of bi-monthly special beers. The theme is pub names, some of which will feature some of their best customers (so look out for Olde Vic). The first, available for June and July, is The Dragon a 4.2% ABV pale and hoppy beer using the new Brewers Gold Hallertau hops from New Zealand. The pumpclips will be rather different to the usual Millstone style, being designed by art students at Salford University.

3 Rivers – the first anniversary of the 3 Rivers Club fell on the first weekend of this month and numerous celebrations were planned. On the beer front, Summers Pearl (4.4% ABV) returns and the brewery’s bottled beer are now available in local branches of Threshers and Victoria Wine.

Marble – Summer Marble (4.5% ABV), pale and hoppy is back. The bottled beers are selling extremely well – look out for Stronge Tawny and also the 6% Ginger.



Witch Beer? A guide to the best real ale pubs in East Lancashire, CAMRA East Lancashire Branch, 44 pages, £2.

It's over 20 years since there was last a CAMRA guide to the pubs of East Lancashire, so this slim volume is very welcome.

In contrast to previous editions which have attempted a comprehensive listing, the present volume takes a selective approach, claiming to list only "pubs that have an established reputation for quality real ale". However this allows the listing of more than 180 pubs, which must be several times the branch's allocation in CAMRA's national *Good Beer Guide*, so the net has clearly been spread suitably wide, and the exclusion of places serving only tepid Tetley's or worse is probably no bad thing.

There's some brief introductory material, but the pub listings are unashamedly the heart of the book, and are organized by local authority area – perhaps not the easiest format for those of us not sure where Hyndburn starts and Rossendale begins, but locator maps do ease the confusion somewhat. The pub descriptions are terse, rather in the manner of Good Beer Guides of some years ago, but it's good to have precise

opening hours listed for every outlet. A selective listing of real ale clubs and pieces on the area's 8 breweries bring up the rear. In a slim format identical to that of last year's Calderdale guide, the layout and design are admirably crisp and clear, and there's limited but effective use of colour, not least in the attractive cover photograph of Pendle Hill.

As in so many CAMRA guides, the lack of a pub index is regrettable, and you'll need to go armed with a good street map as there are no town maps. But for its bargain price, this is a well-informed and very usable guide to an area with some splendid pubs and beers. Highly recommended – I particularly liked the subtly concealed spoof entry, which I shall leave for readers to discover. *Rhys P Jones.*



Cider & Perry News

Well, news of news really. Next month we will have a review of the ciders and perries sold at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival along with the results of the Cider and Perry of the Festival votes. There will also be news of the winners of the national Cider & Perry of the Year awards.

The Crown

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Two Chop Houses and an Oyster Bar

Three Mancunian institutions- which have been around in some shape or form since the year dot are, in the 21st Century (as far as real ale prices go) poles apart.

Sinclair's Oyster Bar, having been moved twice is now on Cathedral Gates, adjacent to the Old Wellington. Both these touristy hostelries smack of "location, location, location", and both are gold mines, especially so Sinclair's with their very reasonably-priced Samuel Smiths Old Brewery Bitter at under £1.40 a pint and on good song on my last visit.



Thomas's Chop House – Victorian splendour at a price

The other two institutions are **Mr. Thomas's Chop House** on Cross Street and **Sam's Chop House** on Chapel Walks, where the £3 a pint mark for the proper stuff has arrived in both. At Mr. Thomas's the beer range at that price was Boddies, Draught Bass and Black Sheep Best Bitter. On the visit Lees Bitter had just gone. Needless to say the beers were good for the price and just as well. It might be fair to say one was paying for the privilege of drinking in such opulent Victorian splendour and at an upmarket restaurant. Outside on the main street the enterprise is wrapped in scaffolding as renovation is underway. Through the main door the patron is meet by a bar parlour, somewhat modernised, but tastefully so. The restaurant is impressive with its original green

and cream tiling and it's good to see an establishment for the business classes having a number of real ales on, while pushing the usual bottles of wine.

Sam's Chop House had Well's Bombardier, Lees Bitter, Boddies Cask, Flowers IPA and the best buy- Sam's Special Best Bitter at £2.70 a pint. I opted for the 'house' beer brewed by Coach House and found it in good nick. The enterprise is in the basement and is thankfully, not part of the planned re-development of the building above. There is one long room with a semi-circular bar and original stone slabs from the Town Hall. To one side is a quite large, but cosy and swish restaurant

South Manchester News

The **Brewer's Arms** in Ladybarn is now closed and boarded up. It had a 'Pub business to let' sign up for a long time, but this has now come down.

Meanwhile the **'Ladybarn'** does sometimes have cask ale on, contrary to my previous report. The last time I went in (a few weeks ago) it was only Greene King IPA, but the quality was OK.

In Withington village, the **White Lion** is still in the same state as it was in January. I heard a rumour it was being sold to the developer who owns the old Cine City building next door, but this was unconfirmed. Incidentally, the **Golden Lion**, which has been closed and boarded for at least two years (I think), is still in exactly the same state as it was a year ago, i.e. still standing, with fencing all round it and the building next to it, but no sign of demolition starting.

Nothing seems to happen very quickly in Withington!

While in the West Didsbury / Withington area, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the **Four In Hand** has added a guest to its range, making three ales in total. When I called these were Banks's, Pedigree and guest Black Sheep Emmerdale.

The **Old House At Home** also seems to be managing a permanent genuine guest alongside the depressing sight that is Ruddles, Old Speckled Hen and Greene King IPA clips in a row. The guest was Titanic English Glory when I called and I hear that the quality of all the guests recently has been good.

Moving on to Northenden, the **Tatton** is still standing but boarded up, or was recently when I passed. Round the corner the **Crown** has reopened with cask Boddingtons and may also introduce a guest beer. Down the road the **Farmers Arms** has cask ale back on in the form of Bombardier alternating with Pedigree which is good news. On the main drag though the quite sizeable bar, **Kaz Bar** is still keg.

Finally, the **Tatton Arms** (Robbies) at Moss Nook is now selling Oldham Bitter (OB) alongside the standard beers of Hatters and Unicorn.

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Here is our monthly round-up of what's happening in the local CAMRA branches. Members of all branches are of course very 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-west. *Branch Contact – Pete Farrand 07786 283990*

Saturday 9th – Trip to Howard Town Brewery. Contact Dave Platt on 0161 256 1166

Thursday 14th – Branch Meeting: 3 Rivers Members Club, Greg St, Reddish. Starts 8.00pm

Friday 22nd – Heald Green & Cheadle Hulme Stagger: 7.30pm Griffin, Finney Lane; 8.30 Kenilworth, Cheadle Road.

Thursday 28th – Pub of the Month presentation to the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport. From 8.00pm.

Thursday 12th July – Branch Meeting: Grapes, London Rd, Hazel Grove. Starts 8.00pm.

The **High Peak & North East Cheshire** Branch covers Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley, Marple, Tameside and Derbyshire from Glossop to Buxton. *Branch Contact – Tom Lord 0161 427 7099*

Saturday 9th - Branch AGM: Lantern Pike, Little Hayfield. Starts 1.00pm. Followed by Social in Hayfield village. **Will all members please try and attend this important meeting.**

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. Branch website: www.thcamra.org.uk*

Thursday 7th June – Branch Meeting: Britons Protection, Gt Bridgewater St, Manchester. Starts 8.00pm

Wednesday 13th – Joint social in Chorlton with North Manchester: Meet Marble Beer House 7.30pm; The Bar 9.00pm

Saturday 16th – Joint social with South Cheshire branch in Manchester City Centre. Meet 1.00pm Jolly Angler; 2pm Crown & Kettle

Saturday 23rd – Trip to Howard Town Brewery – limited numbers

Thursday 28th – Social in Altrincham/Hale: meet Tatton Arms, Altrincham 8pm, Cheshire Midland, Hale 9pm

Apart from Macclesfield & Bollington, the **Macclesfield & East Cheshire** Branch covers a wide area from Knutsford to Congleton. *Branch Contact – Tony Icke 01625861833*

Monday 25th – Pub of the Year Award and Campaigning Meeting: Porters (Prince of Wales), Macclesfield. From 8pm

Monday 2nd July – Clean Air Social: Queens Arms Congleton followed by Beartown Tap. From 8.00pm

The **North Manchester** Branch covers The Northern Quarter and North East Manchester plus the City of Salford. *Branch Contact – Dave Hallows 07983 944992*

Wednesday 13th – Chorlton Social (see Trafford & Hulme diary)

Wednesday 20th – Branch Meeting: Hare & Hounds, Shudehill. Starts 8.00pm

Wednesday 27th – Social & Presentation: Crescent, Salford. 8pm

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale



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Beers for the Season SUMMER



Hop Back Summer Lightning (5% ABV). One of the original golden summer ales. A good hoppy aroma and flavour with a lingering bitter finish. Dangerously drinkable it belies its strength. Available both on draught and also in bottle



Oakham JHB (3.8% ABV). Jeffrey Hudson Bitter is a golden beer whose aroma is dominated by hops that give characteristic citrus notes. Hops and fruit on the palate are balanced by malt and a bitter base. Moreish and extremely drinkable.



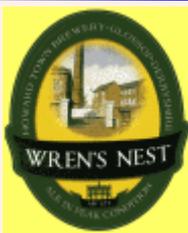
Millstone True Grit (5% ABV). A very pale and hoppy strong ale. Well hopped using only Chinook hop; the mellow bitters make way for a distinctive citrus/grapefruit aroma. Look out for its little brother, Tiger Rut (4%) that is equally refreshing'



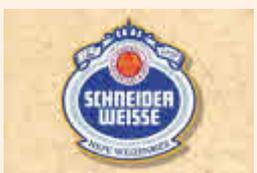
Brouwerij Verhaeghe Vichtenaar (5.2% ABV). One of the best of the Flemish red ales, matured in oak casks for at least 8 months before bottling. Exceptionally refreshing sweet-sour ale from this hugely improved West Flanders brewery.



Brouwerij 3 Fonteinen Oude Geuze (6% ABV). Excellent example of the unique Belgian lambic ales. Distinctive, sharp and dry, the taste for these beers needs to be acquired but is well worth the effort. Other examples are from Boon, Girardin and Oud Beersel.



Howard Town Wren's Nest (4.2% ABV). A light and hoppy beer made using Pioneer and Cascade hops, this beer is the SIBA Supreme Champion for 2007. Aromatic, and fruity with a quenching bitterness.



Schneider Weisse (5.4% ABV). Classic example of a south German wheat beer. The banana and clove aroma leads to a tart and spicy flavour. The quenching finish combines creamy malt, spices and gentle hoppiness.

Seven Beers To Try This Summer

This, the third in our series reviving the tradition of focussing on beers for each season of the year, brings us to Summer.

Summer beers need to be quaffable and refreshing. In the UK, a whole new beer style has developed over the past decade that fits the bill admirably. Golden ales, as they are known, really come into their own during hotter weather. One of the original golden ales, and still one of the best, is Hop Back Summer Lightning. Apart from those listed, look out for other local examples of the style – Hydes Jekyll's Gold, Lees Scorcher, Summer Marble, many beers from Pictish and Phoenix and the yet to be tried Robinson's Dizzy Blonde.

Many European beers are perfect for hot weather. Belgian and Dutch wheat beers in the Hoegaarden style are common but try our alternative suggestions. Sharp and acidic gueuze and krieks (look for 'oude' on the label to avoid the sickly sweet "industrial" products) are wonderful served slightly chilled, while the tart sweet-sour Flemish red ales are perfect summer refreshers. Buy these at the Belgian Belly in Chorlton or bars like Fringe in the Northern Quarter.

Bavarian wheat beers, again served chilled, are excellent long drinks and some pilseners also fit the bill – Jever Pils is the hoppiest beer made in Germany and is a classic of the style.

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