

April 2011



Opening

TIMES

THE FREE CAMRA REGIONAL MAGAZINE

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

Marble Does The Double
Marble Arch and Marble Beer House
Both Scoop Local Pub of the Year
Titles – see pages 9 and 16

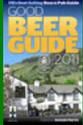


Win Great Prizes on this year's Mild Magic – see page 13



Beer Festival Entertainment Preview – see page 11

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**CAMPAIGN
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The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for April is the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport. Dave Platt is a fan and sings its praises.



THE Crown on Heaton Lane in Stockport is already a serial CAMRA award winner – Pub of the Month, Pub of the Year, Regional Pub of the Year and finalist for National Pub of the Year. Just walk through the door and you will see why.

The pub itself is an old Victorian local and still retains many original features and much of its multi-room layout, which only serves to enhance its appeal. Open fires in the winter months are a very welcome attraction. Outside at the back of the pub is a large outside drinking area and smoking shelter.

However it's what's on the bar that matters and it is here that the Crown scores so well. The bar has been extended in recent years and now features something like 16 handpumps serving a huge range of micro brewed beers both local and not so local. There is always at least one stout or porter on sale (and often more than that) and also a mild. One pump usually features the wares of the excellent Pictish Brewery, Rochdale's finest. There is cider and perry, too.

So popular is the pub that turnover is huge so quality is not an issue. Thus the Crown is a fixture in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide.

The driving force behind all of this is beer fan Steve Alexander, one of the original team who transformed the pub a few short years ago. Aided by his enthusiastic staff, Steve has ensured that the Crown remains one of Stockport's premier cask ale houses.

There is also solid sustenance. Simple but filling lunchtime food is supplemented throughout the day by tempting pork pies served from a chilled cabinet on the bar.

So why Pub of the Month again? Well it's a few years since that clutch of awards came the Crown's way and in the intervening years the pub has not only maintained its high standards but arguably it's got even better. So, join us on Thursday 28 April for the presentation of this well deserved award.



The Pub of the Month award is sponsored by Stephenson's, a local family firm that has been supplying the local pub and catering trade for over 140 years. Check out their advert on this page.

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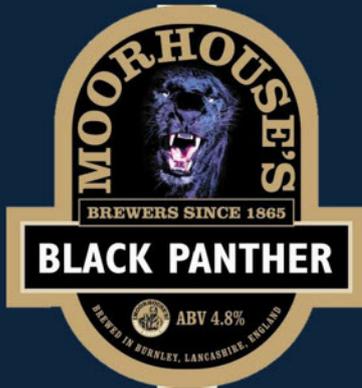
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Perfection in a glass

Comment, Notes & Contents

What's On

Opening Times – Comment

This month we are launching our annual mild promotion, Mild Magic. The fact that we have been able to sign up 94 pubs again this year might lead people to think that in this part of the country at least cask mild ale is in rude health. Compared to much of the UK that is superficially true but the headline numbers do conceal a more worrying picture.

In truth cask mild is hanging on by its fingertips in many pubs. Those brewers who produce it all year round are seeing continuing declines in the volumes sold. Hydes for example are discontinuing their standard mild leaving just Owd Oak as their sole surviving beer badged as a mild (the former Best Mild lives on as 1863, now sold as a light bitter). Whether real cask mild survives as a year round drink, or becomes a seasonal treat for CAMRA's Mild Month of May, is really down to you, the Great British Beer Drinking Public. Even with 120,000 members CAMRA alone cannot ensure the survival of a beer style if no-one else wants to drink it.

One place where you can be ensured a good choice of mild, as well as many other beers, ciders and perries is the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Planning is now well under way and in this issue the entertainment that will be on offer. Don't forget those important dates: 2, 3 and 4 June at Edgeley Park, Stockport

Opening Times - 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, North Manchester and Macclesfield & E Cheshire Branches. The views expressed are not necessarily those of CAMRA either locally or nationally. 7,200 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth. All articles copyright CAMRA unless otherwise stated.

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Trading Standards – for complaints about short measure pints etc contact Consumer Direct (North West). Consumer Direct works with all the Trading Standards services in the North West and is supported by the Office of Fair Trading. You can email Consumer Direct using a secure email system on their website (www.consumerdirect.gov.uk) which also provides advice, fact sheets and model letters on a range of consumer rights. Their telephone no. is 0845 404 05 06.

Copy Date for the April issue is Saturday 9 April

Contributors to this issue: John Clarke, John Tune, Dave Hanson, Peter Butler, Robin Wignall, Peter Edwardson, Frank Wood, Dave Hallows, Jim Flynn, Mike Rose, Mark McConachie, Caroline O'Donnell, John O'Donnell, Dave Platt, Jim Flynn, Beverley Gobbett, Heather Airlie, John Sutcliffe, Pete Farrand, Dave Hasler.

Opening Times 320 - Contents

Pub of the Month	3	Mild Magic	15
Curmudgeon	7	Pub Awards	16
T & H Pub News	9	High Peak Pub Scene	17
Beer Festival Music	11	SIBA Great Northern	18
Mild Stagger	12	Brewery News	19
Mild Magic	13	Pub News	21

Local CAMRA branches organise regular events in pubs across the region – members of other branches & general public are welcome to attend except some Branch business meetings (contact branch contact if in doubt). Organising branch in brackets.

April

Friday 8th – Cider Pub of the Year presentation to the Railway, Avenue Street, Portwood. From 8pm. (SSM)

Friday 8th – Saturday 9th – **New Mills Beer Festival: Chalkers Snooker Club, Redmoor Mill, Buxton Rd, Newton, New Mills. 12 noon to 11pm both days. Admission Free.**

Thursday 14th – Meet The Brewer: Buxton Brewery. The Waterhouse, Princess St, Manchester. 7.30pm (TRH)

Thursday 14th – Social: The Crescent, Crescent, Salford. From 8pm (NM)

Friday 15th – Mild Magic Launch – your chance to get the first stickers on your card! Meet Sand Bar, Grosvenor St, Manchester 7.30pm; Paramount, Oxford St 8.30 (SSM)

Thursday 21st – Heaton Norris East Stagger: Carousel, Reddish Rd 7.30pm; Navigation, Manchester Rd, 8.30pm (SSM)

Thursday 21st – Pub of the Season Award to Oddest Bar, Wilbraham Rd, Chorlton. From 8pm. (TRH)

Tuesday 26th – Pre-Beer Festival Social: Cock & Pheasant, Bollington. From 8pm (MEC)

Wednesday 27th – Irlam Crawl: Railway, Liverpool Rd 7.30pm; Ship 8.15pm, White Horse, Liverpool Rd, 9pm. (NM)

Thursday 28th – Pub of the Month Presentation to the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport. From 8pm. (SSM)

Thursday 28th – Chorlton Social: Elektrik 8pm; Oddest 9pm. (TRH)

May

Wednesday 4th – Swinton Crawl: White Horse, Worsley Rd 7.30pm; White Swan 8.30; Park Inn, Worsley Rd 9pm. (NM)

Saturday 7th – Social at Macclesfield Beer Festival. 12 noon onwards, (SSM)

Your Local CAMRA Branches:

SSM: Stockport & South Manchester www.ssmcamra.org.uk

Contact: Mark McConachie 0161 429 9356, mark.mcconachie@o2.co.uk

NM – North Manchester www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk

Contact: Dave Hallows 07983 944992, davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk

HPNC – High Peak & North Cheshire www.hpneccamra.org.uk

Contact: Mike Rose 07986 458517, mikewrose@gmail.com

MEC – Macclesfield & East Cheshire www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

Contact Tony Icke 01625 861833, contact@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

TRH – Trafford & Hulme www.thcamra.org.uk

Branch Contact: John Ison 0161 962 7976, enquiries@thcamra.org.uk

CAMRA Branch Business Meetings

Saturday 9th – Greater Manchester Branches Regional Meeting: Baum, Toad Lane, Rochdale. Starts 1pm.

Monday 11th – Royal British Legion, Poynton. Starts 8.30pm. (HPNC)

Thursday 14th – Branch Meeting & AGM. **All please attend.** Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 20th – Kings Arms, Bloom St, Salford. Starts 8pm. (NM)

Thursday 5th May – Ape & Apple, John Dalton St, Manchester. Starts 8pm (TRH)

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Doomed ?

IN recent years, the major international brewers seem to have largely withdrawn from the cask ale market in the UK. So it came as something of a surprise to learn that Molson Coors had acquired Sharps, the rapidly growing Cornish micro-brewery best known for Doom Bar Bitter, which, although not maybe the most distinctive of beers, is extremely popular in the South of England.

At a time when mass-market lager is a declining and increasingly commoditised business subject to severe price competition, it makes sense for a major brewer to seek to get into the higher-margin section of the market aimed at the more discerning and generally better off consumer. Very often, it is much easier to do this by acquiring existing businesses operating in that segment rather than building your own brands from scratch. You can see parallels with Cadbury buying Green & Blacks, and Coca-Cola acquiring a stake in Innocent Smoothies. But you have to be careful that you don't kill the golden goose by eroding the qualities that made the brand a success in the first place.

The profile of beer overall would benefit from Molson Coors and the other international brewers becoming strong competitors in the cask and premium bottled markets. Molson Coors have already taken the most positive attitude towards cask beer of all the "Big Four", investing in a dedicated cask brewing plant at Burton-on-Trent, launching Worthington White Shield and the paler, lower-strength Red Shield on cask and announcing a wide range of guest ales.

However, if we look at what happened to Ruddles after being taken over by Grand Metropolitan, to Theakstons after going to Matthew Brown and then Scottish & Newcastle, or to Boddingtons after being swallowed up by Whitbread, the precedent for big brewers buying smaller ones for their brand name is not exactly encouraging. It's not impossible for large corporations to be conscientious stewards of respected "authentic" drinks brands – this has certainly been the case with Scotch malt whisky distilleries – but it never seems to happen with beer. Hopefully this time things will be different.

Not So Beautiful Game

A few weeks ago, the Manchester football derby was held on Saturday lunchtime. All of my local pubs were showing it on satellite TV, which effectively made them no-go areas for anyone who just wanted a quiet pint. Undoubtedly televised football has a strong following and draws many customers in, but on the other hand not everyone is a fan. Licensees seem to take the view that if they don't have it, they will lose trade, but across pubs as a whole many potential customers will be deterred, and of course Sky Sports costs pubs an arm and a leg. It's a case of waiting for the other guy to blink first. As with many other things, surely a diversity in offer is in the interests of the pub trade as a whole, rather than everyone trying to appeal to the same segment of the market.

It's also noticeable that many of the people who come in to watch the football are never seen in the pub at any other time of the week. Pubs might be pleasantly surprised by the amount of business generated if they made a positive virtue of not having Sky rather than simply keeping quiet about it.

Curmudgeon Online: www.curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

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SIBA local beer

Marble Beer House

Trafford & Hulme CAMRA Pub of the Year

TRAFFORD & Hulme branch have voted Chorlton's Marble Beer House as Pub Of The Year for 2011. The Marble Brewery pub has been a favourite pub of drinkers across the area since it opened back in 1998, a trendsetter for the raft of independent pubs and bars that now dominate the character of the area.



Marble Manchester Bitter, Marble Pint and Marble Ginger are always available on hand pump alongside two other beers from the Marble range (always including one of Chocolate, Porter or Stout). Two ever-changing guest ales come from some of the country's other top microbreweries such as Thornbridge, Abbeydale, Dark Star, Pictish, Phoenix and Hawkshead. The full range of Marble Beers is available in bottles. Real cider is also always available alongside a selection of some of the very best bottled continental beers.

The pub attracts a varied clientele across all ages, all of whom are made welcome by the friendly knowledgeable staff. Much of the pub's charm and appeal lies in the simple, unfussy way it goes about its business. The focus is definitely on beer, with no kitchen, DJs or other distractions. Once you have your pint, you can select a book from the extensive and varied library or play a game of draughts, dominoes or connect 4.

Manager Caroline Jones said, "I am absolutely over the moon to receive this award. It is nice to get some recognition for what we do." She paid tribute to the staff that looks after the customers so well – Dave, Pippa, Jack, Sam with relative newcomers Rob and Anna.

Since arriving at the Marble Beer House in September last year, Caroline has quietly been making small improvements to the running of the pub while being careful not to change its fundamental charm. A trial of New York's Brooklyn Lager has been very popular and the pub is now looking to have a rotating guest lager from the new breed of quality craft brewers. Look out for some new additions to the range of bottled beers. A quiz night is under consideration. Décor at the pub has been improved by featuring the work of local artists on a rotating basis.

The award will be presented on Wednesday 8th June. Come along and help Caroline and her team celebrate their award. A warm welcome & the very best beers are guaranteed.

Timperley Taverners

Trafford & Hulme CAMRA Club of the Year

THE Timperley Taverners Club on Park Road, Timperley has retained their title as Club of the Year 2011. The Club will now go forward in to the Regional competition which will be announced later on this year.



Originally a tennis club in the 1960's the current building on the site was built in 1981 to replace the wooden hut, by the Liberal Democrats as their Head Quarters for the area. In 1985 a further extension was added to give a large function room. The Club has always been a

Private member's club and is still managed by Jayne and Ron (pictured above). They have all of the usual club things going on, Pool, Darts, Fishing club, Quiz and Live Artists at the weekend. They even have a Belly Dancing Club!

The Club is decked out in a canal and railway theme as it is only yards from both of them, just by the Timperley Metrolink station. The large wall painting of a steam locomotive was painted by Jayne's brother especially for the club. In the winter the log burning stove is a delight.

All CAMRA members are always welcome, just remember to carry your membership card and that the club is only open in the evenings. Jayne and Ron are delighted with this achievement and so invite everyone to celebrate with them at the presentation which takes place from 8pm on Thursday 19th May so please come along and celebrate with Jayne, Ron, local members and the branch.

Oddest, Chorlton

Trafford & Hulme Spring Pub of the Season

ODDEST is one component of a family of three bars, this being the first outside Manchester city centre. As part of a group of independently-run bars, each with its own identity within an ethos of quality products, good service and recognised drinks, Oddest still stands out.

This is very much a Chorlton pub, with a choice of six hand pulled ales, it also offers a paddle of thirds for those who can't make up their minds. The ales are chosen from breweries not regularly seen elsewhere with an emphasis on LocAle – roughly speaking beers from within spitting distance of the city. The house regular is from Northern Brewery, with a good selection of beers and lagers in bottles for the truly hard to please. There are usually at least two real ciders available, or a cider and a perry, up to four in season.

A bit of a fan club has developed around the "Odd" set, with fans travelling between them doing the "compare and contrast". On the "real" scene, Oddest wins hands down. General Manager, Nicola (pictured right), remarks "it was one of the attractions of working at Oddest in Chorlton – knowing it would have real ale." She has been trying to encourage the other Odd bars to follow her into the real ale emporium by putting together a catalogue of ales for them to choose from. She went on to comment that real cider and perry had proved extremely popular, bringing in a new set of customers. It has proved a real draw on quiz nights.



Members of staff are positively encouraged to try the ales before they go on the bar, and they enjoy their work so much they often recommend breweries themselves, requesting their favourite to be served. With the current six hand pumps to choose from, Nicola has been able to vary not just the breweries, but also the styles of beer she serves. One dark beer is ensured, and with beers being sourced from wherever she fancies, the choice is yours!

The bar has plenty of oddities on show and paintings from local artists on display. These provide a different feeling in the separate areas; a Turkish feel for one corner with some stunning lamp shades, a parachute canopy in the screen room, comfy sofas for cosy groups in another.

Popular with families for food on a weekend, the ingredients are all sourced locally and vegetarians are well catered for. It has a café-style pavement terrace and a large screen as a back drop showing classic films ranging from cartoons to Casablanca – but silent.

So, something for everyone then. We are hoping for a big turnout on the presentation night – Thursday 21 April. Why not come along and see what all the fuss is about.

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Music @ The Beer Festival

A Preview of the Festival Entertainment

Thursday Night – The Jalapenos

THE festival kicks off with a high energy great fun band of crazy rockers called The Jalapenos. Charlie, Doc and Diamond are the three members of the band.

The Jalapenos have blazed a trail of rock'n'roll mayhem throughout the UK for the last ten years and show no signs of stopping. Renowned for their astonishingly energetic and visual live shows, Davidson (guitar and vocals), Martyn (bass and vocals) and Dave (drums and vocals) have a formula which is unique amongst contemporary equal bands: humour excitement fun!

The Jalapenos have released four studio and one compilation albums on the independent label 3D Discs. For the last two albums, all songs have been written and produced exclusively by the band. For more information check out the Jalapenos web site.

From pubs and clubs to enormous festivals and motorcycle events, there is scarcely a stage that The Jalapenos have not rocked in their inimitable style. Their current repertoire encompasses in excess of 150 songs ranging from rock to roll, with nods to the blues, to punk, and other music styles.



Friday Lunch – The Prospectors

THE Prospectors are the Stockport beer festival charity band for 2010 and will perform on Friday lunchtime. The Prospectors are a local band who play classic pop, rock and dance covers as well as their own songs. The band has been created by members of the Stockport Cerebral Palsy Society, and they are supported through the Drake Music project.

The band meet at Prospect House in Heaton Moor (hence their name) on Fridays to practice prior to performing concerts at different venues throughout the year. The band has performed at the Royal Exchange Theatre, The Lowry, Urbis and at more local venues such as The Moor Top pub in Heaton Moor. The Band success has resulted in them producing an EP named 'Silver & Gold'

Friday Night – The Blues Blasters

BACK again, by popular demand, the festival features the sensational Blues Blasters. This Stockport based rockin' blues band is hugely popular and plays some of the tightest driving blues around. The Blues Blasters are a six piece band with singer songwriter and harmonica player Chris Gee on vocals, John Brett on lead guitar, John Dickenson on guitar, Paul Minshull on keyboards and vocals, Andy Schemet on bass guitar and vocals and Henry Quick on drums.



The band's material contains songs from the Fabulous Thunderbirds, Lightning Hopkins, and Chuck Berry to name but a few. Such is the high standard of the band's material that you could be forgiven for thinking that all of the songs played have been written by other famous blues artists, but you would be wrong. In fact a large proportion of the bands material has been written by Chris Gee himself, but as Chuck Berry might say 'You never can tell'.

With over 150 years of combined gigging experience behind them the band are no new kids on the block. And boy does their experience show! It's all high energy stuff played seemingly effortlessly by

accomplished musicians. Add to this one of the tightest rhythm sections you are ever likely to come across and you are on to a winner.

Saturday Lunch – Cracked Flag

ON Saturday lunchtime we welcome Cracked Flag who are always a festival favourite. The band plays a mix of folk music with a touch of country music thrown in for good measure. With top harmonies their songs are catching and you will soon find your feet tapping and a desire to dance. Don't be surprised either if there are a few jokes thrown in for good measure as it has been said that two members of the band were once professional comedians. As a result there is always great banter between the band and the audience at all Cracked Flag concerts.



Cracked Flag are three men on a mission to enjoy themselves! Dave Mather, Pete Robinson and Paul Johnston have all been life long mates! All herald from Salford and they are the only super stars that Opening Times knows that were born and bred in Lower Broughton. Between them they have over 75 years experience of public performance, radio and TV. Salford City Radio (94.4FM) listeners will tune into Dave's Salford Folk radio programme on Thursdays between 6pm and 7pm to listen to his great show.

Opening Times has learned that the band also enjoy a beer or two. That means that they are in the right place, but Stockport Beer and Cider Festival cannot guarantee that we will have Paul's favourite beer on - Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild.

Saturday Night – The Red Stripe Band

THE headline band at this year's festival is the award winning Red Stripe band. Presented with the "Best Band" award at the Marlborough Jazz Festival in 2010 and recently having finished playing a four month residency at



Ronnie Scotts Jazz Club in London, the band provided the title theme to Paul Merton's Channel Five travel documentary as well as providing the endorsement for a multimillion dollar US pizza chain advertisement. Red Stripe have been described by some as where "Jonathan Ross meets Jools Holland on speed" so you can expect some lightning keyboard playing backed by a great rhythm and blues orchestra.

Led by eccentric raconteur and boogie woogie front man Mr Red Stripe on keyboards (or Neil Drinkwater as he is occasionally known), the show is delivered with high energy and is filled with on and off stage antics.

And don't think for one minute that Red Stripe will be rooted to the spot. The band's show is all about participation with the audience. Don't be surprised if Baritone and Tenor Sax players Erica Clarke and Martin Gray leave the stage area and head off into the audience. No doubt they will be closely followed by Mr Red Stripe himself playing his Keytar mobile keyboard and Gemma Nelson looking to dance. Fancy a conga? You might just get it!

So the beer festival closes with an internationally famous boogie woogie jive band that will have you on your feet dancing. Don't miss it!



Stagger.....

A Walk on the Mild Side With Dave Hanson

MILD MAGIC is nearly upon us, so to highlight the range of superb quality mild ale which can be obtained in a small sector of Stockport we took a trip around a selection of the pubs featuring on this year's showcase event.

Mild ale was once the most popular beer style in the country, accounting for the majority of beer sold in the 60s, but is now unfortunately absent from a great many pubs. To remedy this sad state of affairs Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA organises a month long celebration with this stagger as the curtain raiser. Mild Magic proper runs from the 15th April until 22nd May – plenty of time to give it a go.

Our starting point was the **Nursery**, which we entered from the cobbled Green Lane, thus setting the tone for



this unspoilt pub with its 1930s interior. The multi-roomed layout is decorated throughout with oak panelling, and justly deserves its listing in CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. On entering, the door mat reminds you the Nursery is a former winner of CAMRA's National Pub of the Year. How did it achieve this? Not only does it offer a wide selection of Hydes beers alongside a choice of seasonal and guests, but it stocks **two** milds! On offer were both Owd Oak, a dark and delicious mild, plus the soon to be phased out Mild. Simon the landlord had received information saying Mild was no longer available, so imagine his surprise when the dray dropped of four casks. We have it on good authority that Hydes will endeavour to keep the Mild on throughout the Mild Magic event, but then it will be gone — forever? So rush out and drink it while you can.

On leaving the Nursery we spurned the delights of modern technology and dispensed with sat-nav and GPS, trusting to the navigational skills of one of our party who was a local. How wrong we were! After wandering around much of Heaton Norris like David Livingstone stumbling through the jungles of Africa we eventually located our next port of call, the **Navigation**. Located at the top of Lancashire Hill this once canal side pub (yes, the Stockport branch of the Ashton Canal terminated alongside) is overshadowed by Nelstrop's flour mill. A Beartown Brewery pub which is now up and coming, having been awarded February's Pub of the month the previous evening. With the eclectic naming system adopted by Beartown, being faced

with five beers (plus a guest) proved challenging as we endeavoured to locate the mild. Opinions varied which this was, but as there was a great range of dark beers on offer, there was something to please everyone. My personal choice was Polar Eclipse, but Bearskinful and Bruins Ruin were also tried. While relaxing in the hospitable and comfy surroundings our numbers were swelled to an impressive 13 revellers.

On leaving, navigation to our next hostelry proved to be devoid of detours, and we went straight down the hill and called in the **Tiviot** on Tiviot Dale. As you enter take note of the mosaic floor tiles announcing its original name, the Tiviot Hotel.



Another little changed pub, preserving its original multi-roomed interior, with tap room to the left, lounge to the right and dining room to the rear. Recent modernisation has seen 1960s metered electric pumps being replaced by hand pulls which were advertising Unicorn, Hatters, Hannibal's Nectar and Old Tom (plus Old Tom on gravity behind the bar!). We learned that since reducing the food offering and majoring more on cask ales, sales had increased by an impressive 60 per cent.

We left the Tiviot and made a bee-line for our next objective, the **Swan with Two Necks** on Prince's Street. Despite it being observed open earlier in the evening, when we arrived at about 9pm, it was firmly shut and in darkness. This is another pub which suffers from lack of passing trade in the evenings and is wont to close early. Never mind, out came the back-up plan, and off we went to the **Pineapple** on Heaton Lane.

Though not surrounded by any housing and in the heart of the town centre, the Pineapple still attracts a good evening crowd and has the feel of a true local. The eclectic



decorations, consisting of plates brought back from around the world by its customers, are a definite talking point. Along with the Hatters and Unicorn, we were also offered Cumbria Way and Dizzy Blonde. Shamefully some of our party tried the latter as Hatters was not to their liking, never mind, that is the fascination of real ale, one man's mild is another man's poison (to butcher a well-known saying!)

Alas! Time beckoned and we had to wend our way to our penultimate port of call. No navigation problems here, as almost across the road, we entered (just) the ever popular (and crowded) **Crown** further along Heaton Lane just under the viaduct. The Crown keeps a mild on at all times, and today's offering was Holden's Mild a deliciously moreish dark mild, a classic of the West Midlands style. What has not been said about the Crown (not much, but I will attempt more)? Multi-roomed, multi-beered and with something for everyone. Our party diffused to all corners of the pub to absorb the convivial atmosphere, so when we were ready to depart for our ultimate destination the roll call was a little depleted.



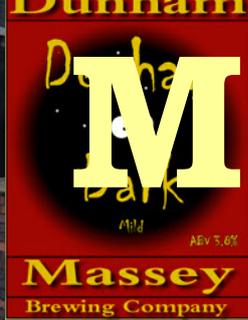
The intrepid few faced the arduous assault on the North face of Wellington Road and made our way up the hill to the **Magnet**.



Re-opened just over a year ago, this pub had previously been keg only for several years, but has risen, phoenix like, to become the latest of Stockport's flagship multi-ale houses. Scrutinising the "What's on" board we discovered that the locally brewed Dunham Massey Chocolate Cherry Mild was on offer. This beer divides drinkers right down the middle; some love it, as attested by all the awards it wins, some run a mile. As this was our terminus, we allowed the dissenters to select an alternative as long as it was dark and not too hoppy.

This perambulation around a selection of pubs selling mild revealed a kaleidoscope of different ales on offer, one of which is in the Red Book and due to become extinct in May. It opened the eyes of some to the range of flavours on offer and balked their assertion that "Mild was weak and tasteless and only drunk by old men". Be warned though that some milds can be, contrary to their name, a ferocious 6%!

Why don't you put this statement to the test and take part in Mild Magic which begins on 15th April with an introductory stagger around some mild pubs of Manchester. All the pubs are signed up to Mild Magic so you can get off to a flying start with the Sand Bar (120 Grosvenor Street, M1 7HL) at 7:30pm our starting point, and the second port of call the Paramount (33 Oxford Street M1 4BH) at 8:30pm.



After last year's amazing response we are once again running our popular cask mild passport scheme, 'Mild Magic'. With the unfortunate announcement of the demise of Hydes Mild just after Mild Magic finishes (they still produce two other milds though) and the continuing decline of mild sales reported by a number of other local brewers this is arguably one of the most important campaigns we have run for some considerable time.

It is good then to report that support from the pub trade has been incredible with 94 pubs promoting cask mild covering Stockport, Manchester, Salford, Tameside, High Peak and Trafford and we have had to decline applications to enter the scheme. Cask mild might be a beer style under threat but it's clear that with your support the fight back can begin.

The scheme runs from Friday 15 April to Sunday 22 May and offers everyone taking part the chance to win something (only one entry per person). All completed entries (you'll need at least 12 stickers from 12 different pubs) will receive either a free entry ticket for the 2011 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival (for CAMRA members, vouchers for a pint of mild). You have more time to complete the challenge this year so there is no excuse for not taking part.

We are again featuring **Mild Magic Extra** – just visit 12 different pubs in 12 different areas, using the headings shown on the card, and you will win a stunning 'Mild Magic' T-shirt as well as the ticket/pint of mild.

Mild Magic Super is a little more challenging - just get stickers from 24 different pubs in 24 different areas and you will receive an eye-catching 'Mild Magic' polo shirt plus an extra Festival entry ticket/pint.

For those who want a bit more of a challenge but can't get to every pub we have introduced a new category **Mild Magic Ultra** – just get stickers from half the pubs (48) in a minimum of 36 different areas and you will receive a special-edition **Mild Magician** embroidered sweatshirt, four free Festival entry tickets/pints and be entered into a prize draw to be "Brewer for the Day" at **Hornbeam Brewery**.

However why not beat the ultimate challenge and become a **Mild Master Magician** by sending in cards containing a sticker from every participating pub- are you up for it? You will receive the enhanced **Mild Master Package** of a free special-edition, embroidered **Mild Master Magician Rugby Shirt**, six free Festival entry tickets/pints and go into the 'Brewer for the Day' draw.

This year we will be having our **presentation rewards evening** at the **Crown** on Heaton Lane and all participants will receive an invite to what promises to be a great event with an opportunity to drink a variety of milds.

This year we are also especially grateful to **Robinsons** for enabling us to offer an extra-special prize: every completed entry will go into a draw and the first 10 pulled out will win a **visit to their innovative new interactive visitor centre at the brewery** in the autumn to see how their beers are brewed (we are likely to be the first visitors following the refurbishment).



Such is the success of Mild Magic that we again have Bar-Service UK of Droylsden as our sponsors. Our grateful thanks to them! They specialise in the sale, rental and service of bar equipment covering all surrounding areas including: Lancashire, Cheshire, Merseyside, & Yorkshire. Find out more about them at www.bar-service.co.uk.

We are asking all participants to vote for the pubs in which they were served the best pints of mild in the Stockport MBC area and outside Stockport – the winning two pubs will be presented with a 'Mild Champion' award in recognition of their efforts (provide an email address and you will be sent invitations to these award evenings).

So, what do you have to do? It's easy...**First, get a card. All participating pubs have a stock or you can get one from the Mild Magic address: 26 Parkin St, Longsight, Manchester M12 5RL.**

Then buy a pint or a half of cask mild in one of the pubs taking part, ask the bar staff to put a sticker on your card. Remember, though, you can only get one sticker from each pub. Don't forget to check the times of pub opening hours, especially if you are making a special journey.

When you've filled the card(s) send it/them to the Mild Magic address above and, we will send you your Stockport Beer and Cider Festival Tickets and a personal invite to our special rewards evening.

Our previous Mild promotions have been a stunning success and if you haven't taken part before, you must have a go this time. It's great fun and it's so easy - you only need to visit 12 pubs and this year you have even more time to complete the trail.

Remember though while it is a marvellous chance to visit some new pubs, try new beers and win some great rewards it is also a real chance to make a statement regarding Britain's brewing heritage. This is your opportunity to join in our campaign to preserve cask conditioned Mild in this area. We need your support!

The Mild Magic Pubs

ADSWOOD Adswood Hotel; **ALL SAINTS** Sandbar; **ALTRINCHAM** Costello's Bar; **BROADHEATH** Old Packet House; **BREDBURY** Greyhound; **BRIDGEMONT** Dog & Partridge; **BURNAGE** Albion; **BUXWORTH** Navigation; **CHEADLE*** Crown, Red Lion, Cheshire Lines; **CHEADLE HULME** Cheadle Hulme, Church Inn; **CHORLTON*** Oddest, The Bar, Famous Trevor Arms, Beech, Pi, Sedge Lynn; **COMPSTALL*** Andrew Arms, Northumberland Arms; **DENTON** Chapel House; **DIDSBURY** Fletcher Moss, Milson Rhodes; **DISLEY** White Lion; **EDGELEY** Old Woolpack; **FALLOWFIELD** Friendship; **FURNESS VALE** Crossings; **GATLEY** Horse & Farrier; **GORTON** Waggon & Horses; **GREAT MOOR** Travellers Call; **HAUGHTON GREEN** Chapel House; **HAZEL GROVE*** Royal Oak, Grapes, Three Tunnes; **HEALD GREEN** Griffin; **HEATON MERSEY** Crown, Griffin; **HEATON MOOR** Moor Top; **HEATON NORRIS*** Magnet, Nursery; **HYDE*** Cotton Bale, Queens, Sportsman, Cheshire Ring; **LANCASHIRE HILL** Navigation; **LANE ENDS** Travellers Call; **LONGSIGHT** New Victoria; **MANCHESTER CITY CENTRE*** Castle, Marble Arch, Smithfield, Crown & Anchor (Cateaton St), Micro Bar, Moon Under Water, Bulls Head, Grey Horse, Old Monkey, Ape & Apple, Paramount, Waterhouse; **MARPLE (ROSE HILL)** Railway; **MARPLE BRIDGE** Royal Scot; **MARPLE*** Hatters Arms, Navigation, Ring O'Bells; **MELLOR** Royal Oak; **NEW MILLS** Masons Arms; **OFFERTON** Fingerpost; **PORTWOOD** Railway; **ROMILEY** Friendship; **RUSHOLME** Ford Madox Brown; **SALE*** JP Joule, Volunteer, Plough Hotel; **SALFORD** New Oxford; **SHAW HEATH** Armoury; **STALYBRIDGE*** Station Buffet Bar, Q; **STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE*** Tiviot, Arden Arms, Bakers Vaults, Calverts Court, Red Bull, Waterloo, Crown (Heaton Lane), Pineapple, Swan With Two Necks; **STRET福德** Bishop Blaize; **STRINES** Royal Oak; **TIMPERLEY** Quarry Bank; **WHALEY BRIDGE** Shepherds Arms; **WHITEHOUGH (CHINLEY)** Old Hall; **WITHINGTON** Victoria; **WOODFORD** Davenport Arms

* These areas are subdivided on the card to make it easier for you to complete the Mild Magic Extra and Super.



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Mild Magic in Whaley Bridge



FIVE pubs in the Whaley Bridge area have registered for Mild Magic, the Mild Challenge, in 2011. They will provide participants with a good trip out. These southernmost pubs on the Challenge are well worth a visit in their own right, with a range of good beers and welcoming hospitality.

To avoid wasted journeys some information about opening / closing hours may be helpful. These times could of course vary.

Dog & Partridge, Bridgemont. Opens at 11.00 but has a 15.00 –17.00 close Mon-Thurs. though this can be flexible in favour of being open. Open all day Fri. Sat. Sun.

Shepherds, Whaley Bridge. 15.00 till late Mon-Fri. 12.00 Sat. and 14.00 Sun. till late.

Crossings, Furness Vale. 15.00 till late Mon.-Thurs. Fri., Sat. and Sun. 12.00 till late.

Navigation Buxworth. Open from late morning till late, daily.

Old Hall, Whitehough, Chinley, 12.00 till late daily. The Old Hall was one of last year's Mild Champion pubs – pictured right is Dan Capper with his award.



All of these pubs have become Mild Magic regulars. Some of the pubs will be new pubs for some people. All the pubs will look forward to seeing new faces, and returning ones.

Getting There

Bus 199 from Stockport stops at Furness Vale, Bridgemont and Whaley Bridge Station. Half hourly service during the day, hourly in the evening and on Sunday. Trans Peak stops at Furness Vale, every two hours until soon after tea. The 61 links Whaley Bridge with Glossop, Hayfield, New Mills and Buxton, hourly during the daytime, every day. The 189/190 links Whaley with Buxworth and Chinley, hourly until teatime, Monday to Saturday. Buxworth is a 15-20 minute walk from Whaley Bridge along the canal towpath or over Bings Road/Silk Hill.

Trains. Manchester - Buxton service, Northern Table 20. Hourly through the day all week, to Furness Vale and Whaley Bridge, half hourly in the evening rush hour.

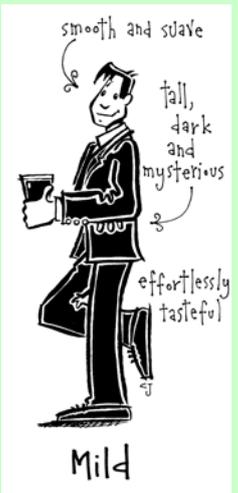


Pictured right – the Crossing in Furness Vale – well placed for the station

Trains to Chinley, Northern Table 23. Hourly on Sat. Less frequent in the week and Sun., but more trains in the rush hour. The Old Hall is a 15-20 minute walk along the Peak Forest Tramway to the Navigation at Buxworth.

Mild – Who Brews What

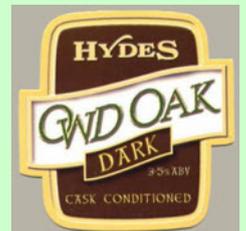
WHILE the National Brewers seem to have virtually turned their backs on cask mild, our local companies still produce the real thing. Robinson's in fact still produce two milds and Hydes three (for the duration of Mild Magic, in any event)! Here we give a run-down on some of the milds you can expect to find on this year's Mild Magic Challenge. In addition many of the pubs will be offering a variety of guest milds during Mild Magic.



Expect to find both milds from Robinsons. There was a time when almost every Robbies pub sold mild but these days fewer pubs take it, although it happily remains widely available. The regular mild

is **Hatters** (3.3%), a light mild with a gently hoppy and fruity aroma, and a delicate taste. One or two pubs (notably the Bulls Head and Swan With Two Necks in Stockport) sell the rarer **Dark Hatters** (3.3%), which has a slightly richer taste.

Hydes produce no fewer than three traditional cask milds. The one you will encounter most frequently is the straightforward **Hydes Mild** (3.5%), a classic mid-brown mild with a good malt taste and a delicate bitterness. The darker version is **Owd Oak** (3.5%), a dark and rich beer with a satisfying flavour. The third member of the line up started life as Best Mild. The first name change saw it become Hydes Light and today it is **1863** (3.5%), a light amber ale with good maltiness in the mouth and a soft bitter aftertaste.



The other family brewer's mild is Joseph Holt. There has been some concern that Holt's are phasing out their cask mild in favour of the keg beer, Holt's Black. However there remain a good number of their pubs selling the traditional **Holt's Mild** (3.2%), a very dark red-brown beer with quite a pronounced bitterness for a mild, and a malty dry finish.

The Marston's group produces two milds. The dark and enjoyable **Jennings Mild** (3.1%), now back in production following the reopening of the Cocker mouth brewery, is dark and rich. **Banks's Original** (3.5%) brewed in Wolverhampton, was once one of the biggest selling milds in the country in the days when it went by the name of Banks's Mild. We hear that this refreshing mid-brown beer may in fact be reverting to its old name.

Many of our local micro breweries produce mild beer, usually during May, designated as Mild Month by CAMRA. One or two beers are available all year round, though. One of the very best is **Black Cat** (3.4%) from Moorhouses Brewery in Burnley. Moorhouses has been around since 1865 but only started producing cask beer in 1978. Since then it has been hugely successful and now supplies an extensive free trade apart from its own estate of six tied houses.



Black Cat is full of chocolate and coffee roast flavours which combine with a bitter finish. It has won many awards and was CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain in 2000.

Strong or weak, dark or light, mild ales are one of the unsung stars of the UK brewing scene. Mild is indeed Magic. Enjoy.



The Marble Arch

North Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year

IN a remarkable double achievement, no sooner had Trafford & Hulme CAMRA voted Chorlton's Marble Beer House as their Pub of the Year, then North Manchester CAMRA do the same with the Marble Arch. Thus two out of the three Marble owned outlets now hold local Pub of the Year titles (and as the third outlet, 57 Thomas Street, is also in the North Manchester branch area this is as good as it can get).



Architecturally the pub's a gem of course with the spectacular tiled interior ranging from the, famously sloping, mosaic floor to the vaulted ceiling. Of particular note is the ceramic frieze around the top of the walls identifying the drinks sold when the pub was built in 1888. Unsurprisingly it features on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors.

The food is famously good ranging from bar snacks to full blown restaurant standard meals. The plates of cheese feature some of the best cheeses available anywhere in Manchester and come highly recommended.

However it's a CAMRA award so we need to talk about beer and naturally this is what makes the Marble Arch really stand out. As you might expect it is a showcase for the products of Marble Brewery with a wide and changing range of Marble beers available on handpump plus many in bottle including special and rare one-offs. There is a small but well chosen range of foreign bottled beers and traditional cider on handpump.

All of this is overseen by manager Vicky Creer with her team. She is delighted with the award as is Marble owner Jan Rogers. "I'm really proud of this – it's a real tribute to the hard work of the teams running both pubs" she told *Opening Times*. Of course Vicky will now be going head to head with Caroline Jones of the Marble Beer House in the Regional Pub of the Year Competition (along with six other local branch winners). "May the best woman win!" declared Jan.

The presentation has been provisionally arranged for Wednesday 25 May at 8pm.

Le Trappiste Royal Ale Fest

LE Trappiste, Belgian Cafe Bar, Altrincham is celebrating the Royal wedding with a 'Royal Ale Festival'. The event will be held over three days, starting at 6.00pm on Thursday 28th; proceedings start at 12.00pm on both Friday 29th and Saturday 30th April. There will be 16 different cask ales on offer as well as cider and perry. The confirmed guest list includes beers from the following breweries; Burton Bridge, Bollington, Idle, Fox, Leadmill, Peakstones Rock, Black Hole, Dancing Duck, Tap House and Bottlebrook.

As you would expect from Le Trappiste there will be some specialist Belgian offerings. Martin Matthews owner of Le Trappiste confirmed that, "we are hoping to offer 20 new Belgian beers never seen before at Le Trappiste, we will have the full range from the Viven Brewery, more from Struise, Troubadour, 3 Fontainen and a brand new stout from Dupont. This will complement our existing menu of 170 quality Belgian Ales".

There will be music provided on Friday and Saturday evenings and entrance is free. Martin is hoping that this spring festival could become a permanent fixture at Le Trappiste. For further details, please call Le Trappiste 0161-941-1981 or see www.letrappiste.com

The Dolphin

Macclesfield CAMRA Pub of the Year

THE Dolphin in Macclesfield is Winner of this year's Macclesfield & East Cheshire branch Pub of the Year award. It could be described as a back street boozier, but that would not do the pub full justice.



No multi-ale free house here, just well kept local beers from Robinsons of Stockport. Unicorn and Dark Hatters are joined by Dizzy Blonde and the current Robinsons seasonal. In winter the range is supplemented by the multi award winning Old Tom.

John and Bev Lythby (*pictured below with their award*) are the long standing tenants who with their hard working staff have kept the pub at the centre of the community and in the Campaign for Real Ale's Good Beer Guide for a number of years. The community spirit of the pub is most apparent in the traditional pub sports teams including darts, dominoes, crib, skittles and there is also a quiz team based here. Home Cooked food is available on Friday & Saturday lunchtimes.



The pub comprises two main rooms; straight in front of you as you enter is the comfortably furnished lounge with an open fire on the left hand wall that is lit when it gets cold. To the right is the public bar with a dart board and a television. There is also a small meeting room.

In Macclesfield, there are many pubs where you can get Robinsons beers, but few have beer as consistently good as this one. The Dolphin is located on Windmill Street, which is the road to the left when you come to the southern end of the Silk Road. It is just outside the town centre and is a ten minute walk from both the Bus and Rail stations.

The Treacle Tap

Macclesfield CAMRA Pub of the Season for Spring

THE Macclesfield & East Cheshire Pub of the Season for Spring is the Treacle Tap on Sunderland St, Macclesfield. OK so it's not a pub in the traditional sense, but this new bar in a former shop had attracted a loyal following in a very short time.



The joint licensees are Bonwyn Ryley with her nephew Jason, who have created a small yet very attractive bar with great interest for the cask ale drinker. There are three cask beers, one from Manchester's Marble brewery and the other two from local Breweries like Beartown, Thornbridge and Redwillow. A bonus point is that there are no silly prices here. Menus on the tables list a selection of wines, foreign beers (mainly Belgian) together with coffees, teas and other soft drinks. Kitchen space is somewhat limited but they do have a selection of 'Pieminister' Pies with optional peas and mash.

Regular features include a book club on Mondays and a Quiz on Sundays, there is also occasional live music. Free Wi-Fi is available, together with newspapers and the walls are adorned with the work of local artists. The Treacle Tap is very close to both Macclesfield Bus and Rail stations.

High Peak Pub Scene

Frank Wood with Pubs News from High Peak & North East Cheshire CAMRA plus Robin Wignall's monthly round-up of the Peak District Pub scene

Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

A February copy of the *Financial Times* had a magazine section article containing an interview with Michael Hardman, Co-founder of CAMRA 40 years ago. In a nutshell he enthused about the wide choice and good quality of real ale available at the moment, especially that from enterprising microbreweries. There is indeed much to celebrate. However he expressed serious concern about the rapid decline in the country's pub stock. Even if the rate of pub closure has eased, the rapid decline in pub numbers will in the end make it difficult to find pubs to enjoy the delights produced by brewers of very good beers.

In the Peak District, the **Rising Sun** at Rainow, formerly Marston's, has closed, apparently for good. The **Bull's Head** at Kettlethulme is closed and has a very uncertain future, though this could be a viable business in the right hands. The **Highwayman** at Rainow (Thwaites) is again closed and boarded. Perhaps it is too far from the heart of the village to attract locals. It also stands at a bad bend on a busy road which could deter passers-by from calling. Two bad winters with road closures have not helped the cause. The **Grouse** at Birch Vale (Robinson's) is closed, permanently I understand, though it would be nice to hear otherwise.



However there is some good news. I understand that the **Soldier Dick** at Furness Vale, closed for seemingly ages, may be set to reopen. There are reports that it has been bought from Punch, free of tie. Water damage during the hard winter has delayed work towards reopening. The Soldier Dick has accommodation, a potential for dining as well as having a potential for selling real ale. More information on this as it unfolds, hopefully.

Hartington Youth Hostel has a bar licence and welcomes the public. This is a real bonus after a good walk. Winkle Wibbly Wallaby 4.3% was available when a group of us made a recent visit. As expected with Winkle beers this was well worth sampling. Whim beers are often available at Hartington Youth Hostel.

I recently attended a meeting at the **Grove** in Buxton. This town centre hotel is primarily

concerned with accommodation and in providing food for shoppers and visitors at lunchtime and teatime. As a result it closes fairly early in the evening. However a decent pint of Robinson's Unicorn is to be had. There's nothing wrong with a pub that can keep well, one real ale, and knows that it can sell it in good condition.

Titanic Lifeboat was one of a dozen or so choices on the Punch Finest Cask list and was therefore available to some of the pubs in the Punch estate. I gather that the list changes every two months. The list often contains beers from the big brewers but there is a regular choice of beers from much smaller brewers. Punch do deserve praise for this ongoing venture, though praise must be tempered by the fact that they charge licensees a premium for beers on the list, and this is inevitably passed on to the customer. In Whaley Bridge the **White Hart**, **White Horse** and **Goyt** all dip into the finest cask list, which gives some interesting drinking when calling in.



Despite the doom and gloom there are still good beers to be found in good pubs. Get out there and try some.

High Peak Pub News

With Frank Wood

A visit to the **Cross Keys** at Chapel Milton in mid March found Black Sheep Bitter the sole real ale, selling at a weighty £3.00 a pint but in excellent form. The pub also sells home cooked food and the Sunday roasts looked good after my hill walk round Lose Hill, but I resisted!

In Chinley, the **Conservative Club** has real ale on regularly, recently either Greene King's Old Speckled Hen or Thwaites Wainwright have been on a fair bit.

In Marple Bridge, the **Norfolk Arms** is closed and an advert displays a 'business opportunity', whilst the pub of the same name in the town centre at Glossop, had Fullers London Pride in good form in mid March, with Holts Two Hoots the seasonal offering, and Holts Bitter and Mild as the normal beers available. In Poynton, the **Kings** on London

Road South is closed and up for sale. In Denton, I recently called in the **Lowes Arms** and confirmed what I had been led to believe for some time - the pub usually has a Hornbeam beer on sale, in this case in early March it was Mary Rose, described as a chestnut red beer. I also tried and preferred the Phoenix Hopsack. Draught Bass was the other beer available that day.

In Hayfield recently, Happy Valley beers from Bollington have been spotted in the **Royal Hotel**, as they have also at the **Old Hall** in Whitehough. I tried the 3.8% Sworn Secret and was very impressed with its full taste.



May 7th sees a joint Saturday afternoon social with High Peak and Trafford & Hulme branches, meeting at the **Lowes Arms** at 2.00pm and moving on into Hyde. It would be nice to see some of our Hyde based members joining us on this.

Pub of the Season



The Pub of the Season Award for Spring 2011 was presented to the Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar. This famous institution seems to have won almost every award going, not only from CAMRA but also for the excellent conservation work that has been carried out there over the years.

The bar features an ever changing range of guest beers and is a regular feature in CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide. Pictured above is High Peak CAMRA's Frank Wood presenting the award to Sylvia Woods who runs the bar with John Hesketh.



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Navy



2002

Wobbly Bob



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Scrumpy cider, Fruli, Lefef, Brugse Zot and Staropramen all now available

SIBA Great Northern 2011

Plus other Festival News

PLANS are in hand for Manchester to host the **2011 SIBA Great Northern Beer Festival** at the Palace Hotel, Manchester in October (27th, 28th & 29th). Greater Manchester Branches of CAMRA will be once again running the bar and providing cellar services.



The intention is that there will be the SIBA judging panels of the various categories (Bitter, Mild, Old ales etc) and once the judging is over the event opens to the public as a beer festival. 56 hand pulls will serve any 56 of the 300 beers at any one time. Once one beer has gone it will be replaced with another - a bit like a very large pub beer festival! A fresh glass will be provided for each fill as all beers will be served in the distinct Northern manner through a sparkler.



For those who drink Cider and Perry don't despair, you will be pleased to know that SIBA have also asked us to run a small cider/perry bar with, hopefully, each of the 12 national finalists from the Reading National Cider tasting event in May.

The entry charge has already been agreed at £3 which includes a £1 refundable deposit on the glass. CAMRA members will get a £1 discount on entry. As well as this the prices per pint/half will be "cheap as chips" and the event has already become known as the "Poshest, yet cheapest, Beer Festival ever!"

As some of you will know the **National Winter Ales Festival** (NWAFF) has been held in Manchester for the past seven years. There was some doubt about where it would be held in 2012 and beyond. After some deliberation the National Executive of CAMRA has decided that it will be held in Manchester in 2012 and 2013. The current plan is that after 2013 it will move to Derby. When the NWAFF moves to Derby we in Manchester are hopeful that we will be able to put on a Manchester event in either January or February 2014 as we feel Manchester deserves at least one other big CAMRA Beer event!

There are also plans in hand for a **Manchester Cider & Perry Festival** to be held in the former Copper Faced Jack's at the Palace Hotel, Manchester on the 24th and 25th June. More on this in future issues.

Pub News - Fallowfield

The **Orange Grove** has four handpumps: Greene King IPA and Old Speckled Hen were on when OT called.

Remedy is closed - for good we believe. A notice in the window still says they have been closed down for 28 days (due to public disorder between midnight and 3am), but we think that was last November and there have been no signs of life since then, so they may have gone out of business. The comedy club that used to meet there has moved to the **Queen of Hearts**.

Robinskis (Scream): Robinskis is the name of the pub; Scream is just the name of the pub owning company or brand. They have two ciders on handpump but no real ale.

Sofa doesn't exist now - the bar at 236-238 Wilmslow Road (on the corner of Furness Road) is now called **The Font** - another branch of the one in town. No real ale, but one cider on handpump (Old Rosie when we went in).

Former Bar One in Withington now re-opened as **Four Six One** bar. Cask ales are advertised outside and on bar blackboards saying "Cask ales £2.35". One ale was available when OT called: Dunham Massey Big Tree Bitter - on gravity!

Brewery News

New From Robinsons

The seasonal from Robinsons for the next two months is a cask version of Ginger Tom. This is a rather different animal from the bottled version of the beer that has occasionally appeared on cask (memorably at last year's Stockport Beer Festival where it was the fastest selling beer). That is quite a dark rich beer at 6% ABV. This version comes in at a more accessible 4.3% and is hugely refreshing and quaffable. It first put in an appearance at last year's Manchester Food & Drink Festival where it sold like hotcakes – look out for it.

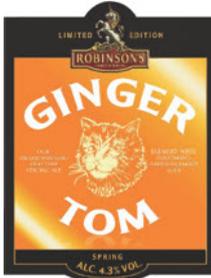


plate glass exterior and engraved glass doors it has been brought in to the modern age with a loving and sympathetic refit by Lee and Kirsten Wainwright from Bollington Brewing.

The new Oak bar has been fitted with eight hand pumps dispensing a selection of Bollington Beers, guest ales and real ciders. A single font will serve locally brewed Moravka lager which has become a big favourite with drinkers at their Brewery Tap in Bollington, the Vale Inn.

The pub layout has been retained with the room to the front left available to be booked for meetings and parties. A catering kitchen has also been added and food will be fresh local produce, including meat from Nigel Wilcox who has the butchers shop next door - you can't get more local than that!



The pub is to be run by experienced publican and real ale enthusiast Clive Nicholson, who has moved from the award winning Charles Cotton hotel in Derbyshire. Over a number of years he took a neglected run down hotel and turned it in to a real ale gem in the Peak District.

One important addition to the pub will be the new beer, Park Life. Developed to a new recipe to give a light golden bitter with a slightly spicy aroma and great hop after taste this promises to be a future award winner or at least popular with locals!!



The decision was very easy to make Macclesfield the location for the growing business, Lee said "The pub has bags of character and is in a great location, only five minutes walk from the Town Centre and the Train Station and in an up and coming area where the community spirit seems to be very strong. We are very fortunate to find a location that ticks all our boxes." The expansion has been in the pipe line for some time but as Lee said "the best laid plans sometimes do take a bit more work".

More Brewery News

There's always something going on at **Marble Brewery**. This year will see a series of IPAs under the Utility IPA banner, and many of these should be collaborations with other brewers of repute.

First up was a collaboration with Joe Allsop from Whim Ales in Hartington. Coming in at 5.7% ABV, Utility IPA (Whim) was generously hopped at all stages of the production process and was hugely drinkable. The next

collaboration is hoped to be with the head brewer of a major local concern. Another collaboration will be with Mark Tranter of the very highly regarded Dark Star Brewer which will result in a "big beer for bottling".

In mid-March there was another brewing of the Decadence imperial stout. This brew is 8.7% and will be released much later in the year (a Christmas treat we expect). A couple of 18-gallon casks will be primed with *brettanomyces* yeast to give the beer a funky kick. Out now or shortly are McKenna's Porter (4.5%) and this will be followed by Summer Marble (4.5%). This beer has a different hop regime each year and is always very drinkable.

Macclesfield's **Redwillow Brewery** is really hitting its stride at the moment with some memorably good beers being produced. The whole range seems to hit the spot but look out for Wreckless (4.8%) a pale ale hopped with Citra and Amarillo, and which is lip-smackingly delicious in our experience.



REDWILLOW

Another star performer is Smokeless (5.7%) a smoked porter described as "velvet smooth with a robust malt backbone". It is, too. Chipotles are added to supplement the subtle smokiness and add a very slight chilli heat. To be honest this is one of the best new dark beers that OT has tried for some time. Seek it out. Look out, too, for Ageless the 7.2% IPA hopped with American Simcoe hops. Dangerously smooth and drinkable.

Bury's **Outstanding Brewery** goes from strength to strength. Their beers increasingly appear in the local free trade and also are a regular feature at the Railway, Avenue Street, Stockport. On the beer front, "Smoked Out" using smoked lager malt is no longer part of the core range due to its niche appeal, but it may make a return on an occasional basis. OSB has had a name change to Red, to bring the naming into line with the (sort of) colour theme of Blond, Ginger and White.

One Outstanding beer that has made waves is Matron's Delight, a 8% imperial stout brewed with input from Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA member Margaret Corlett. Only a limited quantity was made with one 18-gallon cask reserved for Stockport Beer Festival. It also appeared at Manchester's Bar Fringe and our photo shows Margaret launching the beer there.



New Faces

News from the two micros that are about to burst onto the local scene. First off the blocks will be **Worth Brewery** based at Poynton Royal British Legion. As we went to press brewer Paul Hession was just waiting for some casks to arrive before brewing got underway. The brewing kit is in place and ready to go. More next time, hopefully.

With a launch date somewhere around Stockport Beer Festival is Jay Krause's **Quantum Brewing**. The original site for the brewery (off Didsbury Road) proved unsuitable



but they have found somewhere just right a little further up Stockport Town Centre, just near the old Royal Oak Brewery. The plan was to be on-site early this month with brewing by late-April or early May.

The beers planned include a 100% Pale Malt Pale Ale, which will be highly hopped using either a single hop (Simcoe) or a variety of American hops; an amber ale, again highly hopped but much maltier than the pale; and Jay is also planning a rich stout and possibly a light mild. In fact he is brimming with ideas for new beers (of all strengths and styles, including some imperial stouts and big IPAs) so it sounds like we are in for a treat here.

Bollington Expands

With nearly a year in the planning the beer at the Park Tavern in Macclesfield will once again flow in early April. **Bollington Brewing Company** is once again seizing the opportunity to re-open a closed pub with great potential. The ex Robinsons pub on Park Lane has a historic connection with its new owners as it was once owned by previous Bollington brewers Parrott & Horsfield in the late 19th Century. Although the pub today has lost its



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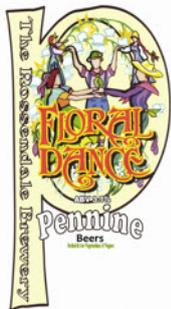
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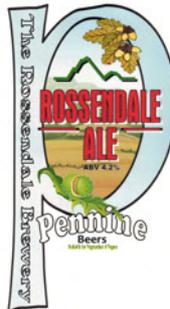
Floral Dance
3.6%

A pale and fruity session beer, with body that is more than a match for many stronger beers!



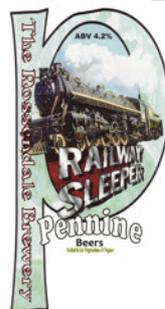
Hameldon Bitter
3.8%

An unusually dark traditional bitter, with a dry and assertive character that develops in the finish.



Rossendale Ale
4.2%

A malty aroma leads to a complex, malt dominated flavour, supported by a dry, increasingly bitter finish.



Railway Sleeper
4.2%

An amber, uniquely intense bitter and hoppy beer, still brewed with our Stockport drinkers in mind.



Pitch Porter
5%

A full bodied, rich beer with a slightly sweet, malty start, counter-balanced with sharp bitterness and an obvious roast barley dominance.



Sunshine
5.3%

A hoppy and bitter golden beer with a citrus character. The lingering finish is dry and spicy.

***Our ales can all be sampled at The Griffin, Haslingden;
The Railway, Portwood Stockport or The Sportsman, Hyde.***



Pub News

While not signed up for Mild Magic (our oversight), the **Lass O'Gowrie** in Manchester will be having a range of mild beers on during the Mild Magic period including Greene King XX Mild which will be stocked throughout the period, with additional milds from Allgates, Bank Top, Coach House and Conwy included **at £2.00 a pint (with the exception of XX Mild) for CAMRA members at all times during the promotion.**



Chorlton & Urmston

It would seem that Chorlton has definitely seen the last of **Argyles** with bailiff's notices posted on the premises in early March. Slightly further down Barlow Moor Road, **Orlando's** bar-restaurant has also closed. Staying in Chorlton, **Dulcimer** re-opened on



24 March. It has been bought from liquidation by Will Pitcher who was formerly the manager of Dulcimer under Lee Janda's ownership. He has sent a message saying "We are looking forward to reacquainting with all you CAMRA faces and I guarantee we'll be showcasing some cracking ales and ciders - both the classics and some new kids on the block!"

The **Chadwick** on Flixton Road in Urmston re-opened in early March after a short closure for refurbishment. As well as new carpets & upholstery, the big addition is four handpumps on the bar. There's even a little chalkboard advising customers to "Ask for Cask". What's on offer is Theakston Best Bitter, Jennings Cumberland Ale, Wells Bombardier and Marston's Pedigree - but prices range from £1.95 to just £2.35.

Wetherspoons Latest

Manchester has a new Wetherspoons pub with the opening of **The Mardi Gras** in place of the former Dexter's bar-restaurant in the

Trafford Centre's Orient zone. Stretford's Wetherspoons's the **Bishop Blaize**, in the shadow of Old Trafford football ground, is making an effort to expand its real ale offering. Manager Ben promoted LocAle in his former pub, the Cotton Bale in Hyde, and told OT he is keen to do the same at Bishop's Blaize. Not content with selling ale to his customers, he's also planning on educating them in its production by organising a trip to Daniel Thwaites' brewery on April 14th - contact the pub for details. If that doesn't appeal then another of our local 'Spoons, the **Waterhouse** is hosting a Meet The Brewer on the same evening. Buxton Brewery will be the visitors and will be bringing two new beers with them.

City News

Barca in Castlefield Basin was closed for refurbishment during March. OT understands that it should have re-opened by the time you are reading this, under the new name of **Bohemia**. Whether it will retain the two handpumps it had previously is unknown. Up on Liverpool Road in Castlefield, **Cask** bar has expanded its range with addition of a third handpump. House beer is the prosaically named "Cask Bitter" from Flintshire's Facer's brewery.

In the Northern Quarter, we hear that there could soon be another bar in the vicinity of the Crown & Anchor and Port Street Beer House. An application has been made for 'R House' which will occupy the ground floor of Hilton House on Hilton Street.

Village news now. Apart from **Eden** on Canal Street, it seems that the only other pub on this stretch to also serve real ale is the **Rembrandt**. This pub has sold Lees beers for a long time and on a recent lunchtime visit a handpump was offering Lees Coronation Street Bitter. Nearby **Paddy's Goose** behind the bus station now only sells Robinsons Unicorn on handpump.

One of the closest bars to Piccadilly Station is the **Piccadilly Lounge** inside the **Mint Hotel**. The beer dispensers, whatever they look like, are hidden out of sight below the bar. To the best of my knowledge the beer is cask, and one member of staff confirmed this, and they have been serving Caledonian beers since this bar first opened. Recent hidden offerings were Caledonian Bitter & Twisted and Caledonian 80/-. If the absence of visible handpumps is not the reason for a lack of reports then perhaps it is the price...B&T £4.15 and 80/- £3.90. Whose round is it?

The Good Beer Guide-listed **Fletcher Moss**, Didsbury, now has up to three guest beers, as well as four regular Hydes beers including their seasonal ale. Jekyll's Gold has been replaced by Manchester's Finest. OT was told they normally have at least two guests on, and they are expecting to have real cider coming on in the next month or two as well.

Stockport Supping

The **Woodman** on London Rd, Hazel Grove has now closed permanently and the Robinsons signage removed, joining the closed **Grove** across the road. This is connected with the developments at the nearby ADSA. Neither pub will be a great loss to the Hazel Grove pub scene.



Since the start of March the **Shady Oak** on Redford Rd, Bramhall has a new licensee in the shape of Chris Able. His parents run the serially Good Beer Guide listed Royal Oak in High Lane where he has previously worked. The current cask beer range is Holts Bitter and two others, Old Speckled Hen and Brains Rev James at the time of visiting. Chris tells us he is intending to vary the beer range and have two more pumps installed for cask beers. This is not the easiest pub to find but the postcode SK7 3PG should get you close and the 374 Stockport-Hazel Grove station bus runs near.

We are told that the **Full Shilling** in Stockport no longer sells cask beer, having started out with three handpumps on the bar.



We are sorry to report that the Landlord of the **Plough** (Shaw Heath, Stockport), Colin Deane died in early March. His funeral was at St George's Church, Heaviley on Monday 14th March with burial in Stockport Cemetery after the service. He and wife Gill took over the pub last year, transforming its fortunes and re-introducing cask ale after an absence of many years. Those who went on the Cale Green & Higher Hillgate Stagger on 16th February will remember how much better and more welcoming the pub was with a cheerful open fire, so it is sad for his family and that we have lost a landlord who was trying to improve premises that had not sold cask for some time.

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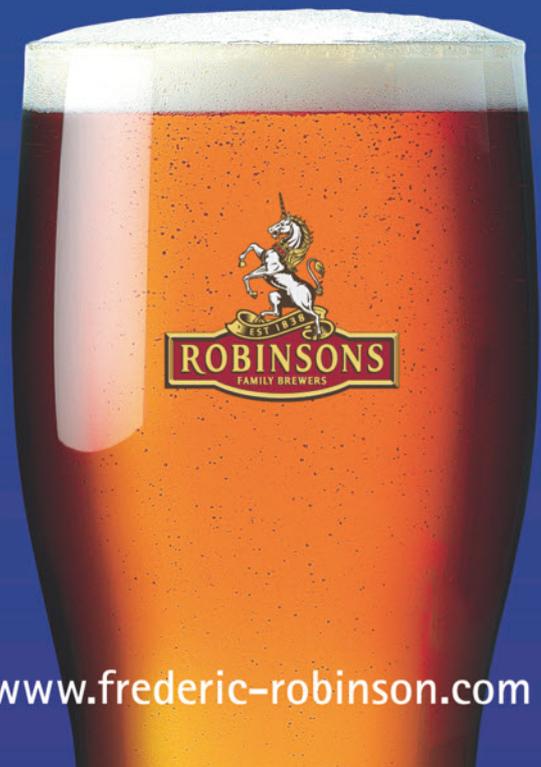
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