

July 2013



Opening

TIMES

THE FREE LOCAL CAMRA MAGAZINE

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



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CAMRA Campaigns – see page 15

Comment & What's On

Index, Notes and Local CAMRA Branch Events

PubCo Reform – An Open and Shut Case?

There seems to be a head of steam building here. The Government is consulting on statutory regulation of the large pub owning companies. These are generally reckoned to be those with 500-plus tenanted or leased houses so our valued family and other independent brewers should be unaffected. Well perhaps not.

While the PubCo dominated British Beer and Pub Association might be expected to oppose change, the organisations representing the family brewers and also the independent sector in general have also expressed grave reservations. The problem seems to be that what is proposed for the big boys could have knock-on effects and impose additional (and substantial) additional costs on the independent sector.

Let's be clear: the appalling treatment of their licensees by some of the large pub companies has brought all of this about and it is perhaps easy to sit back and enjoy watching the chickens come home to roost. We are too far down the path of reform to stick with the status quo but the Government needs to proceed with care and be aware of unintended consequences. The last time there was major outside interference was with the Beer Orders in 1989. Good in principle but badly implemented - and the unintended consequence of those was the rise of the giant pub companies that have caused the current problems. Which is where we come in this time.

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. 7,350 copies a month are printed by Phil Powell Printing of Failsworth. All articles copyright CAMRA unless otherwise stated.

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Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Front Cover – all of the pubs shown here are former pub company outlets that are now either closed or demolished

Your Local CAMRA Branches

Stockport & South Manchester (SSM) www.ssmcamra.co.uk
Contact: Mark McConachie 0161 429 9356; mark.mcconachie@o2.co.uk

North Manchester (NM) www.northmanchestercamra.org.uk
Contact: Phil Booton 0161 957 7148 (*daytimes*); phbooton@hotmail.com

High Peak & NE Cheshire (HPNC) www.hpneccamra.org.uk
Contact: Stewart Taylor 07907 714826; taylorhouse@supanet.com

Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC) www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk
Contact: Tony Icke 01625861833; bicke@madasafish.com

Trafford & Hulme (T&H) www.thcamra.org.uk
Contact: John Ison 0161 962 7976 or enquiries@thcamra.org.uk

Your Local CAMRA Events

Events open to all

Saturday 6th – Pub of the Year runner-up and National Inventory presentation: Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. From 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 6th – Social at Bhurtpore Beer Festival
From 1.30pm. (HPNC)

Saturday 6th – Walk from Kidsgrove to Congleton via canal. Starts Blue Bell 1pm. Catch 12.18pm train ex-Macclesfield. (MEC)

Monday 8th – Branch Meeting: Crown, Glossop. Includes presentation of National Inventory Certificate. Starts 8.30pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 10th – Social: New Oxford, Bexley Square, Salford.
From 8pm. (NM)

Thursday 11th – Branch Meeting and Brewery Tour: Hope Inn, Wellington Road North, Stockport. New faces especially welcome. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

Thursday 11th – Sale Moor Social: 8pm Jacksons Boat; 9.15pm Legh Arms; 10pm Temple; 10.30pm Moorfield Hotel. (T&H)

Tuesday 16th – Macclesfield walk: starts at the Wharf and then Langley and Sutton. Starts 7.30pm. (MEC)

Wednesday 17th Branch Meeting: Queen's Arms, Green Lane, Patricroft. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 18th – Summer Pub of the Season presentation: City Arms, Kennedy St, City Centre. From 8pm. (T&H)

Friday 19th – Manchester City Centre Stagger: start Joshua Brooks Princess St/Charles Street, M1 6NG, 7.30pm; Fab Café, Portland Street, M1 6DN, 8.30pm. (SSM)

Saturday 20th – Social at Alderley Edge Club beer festival.
From 2pm. (MEC)

Wednesday 24th – Snooker Night: Lamb Hotel, Regent Rd, Eccles.
Starts 8pm. (NM)

Thursday 25th – Pub of the Month presentation to Victoria, Wilmslow Rd, Withington, M20 3BW. From 8pm. (SSM)

Thursday 25th – Trip to Lymm Brew Co with North Cheshire CAMRA. See branch website. (T&H)

Wednesday 31st – Gardens Crawl: Marble Arch 7.30pm; Angel 8.30pm; Bar Fringe, 9.30pm. (NM)

Thursday 1st August – Branch Meeting: Old Market Tavern, Altrincham. Starts 8pm. (T&H)

Saturday 3rd August – Visit to Wilson Potter Brewery, Middleton. Book with Margaret O'Brien. (SSM)



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wetherspoon



Pub of the Month

The Victoria, Withington



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for July 2013 has been awarded to the Victoria, Wilmslow Road, Withington, writes Jim Flynn.

This late 19th century pub with its period exterior and etched windows has been a Hydes house for almost 110 years now. Although over the years the pub has been opened, out the most recent tasteful and sensitive refurbishment has produced distinct drinking areas that almost create separate rooms again, giving the place a more intimate feel. At the rear of the pub there is an attractive outdoor beer patio where you can enjoy a cool beer in the sunshine.

However any pub is more than just its structure and decor. Its excellence is measured by the quality of its fare and the warmth of the welcome. On all these points the Victoria scores extremely highly under the guidance of its relatively new licensees, Alyson Spibey and Paul Mitchell who arrived in late 2012. Although they have only been in the trade for three years (previously they worked for Samuel Smiths in Chester and in Edinburgh) they have really demonstrated a passion for real ale and an ability to create a real friendly atmosphere.

Paul and Alyson's labours have ensured that the Victoria is very much a pub at the heart of its community with an eclectic mix of customers including families, pensioners, locals and more mature students. However it is with the beer that the two have really excelled with nine different cask ales at all times from across the Hydes portfolio and three or more guest beers always in excellent form. On a Monday and Thursday all casks beers are just £2.35 a pint all day so all goes well for the presentation night, Thursday 25th July

The pub is on one of the UK's busiest bus routes with amongst others the 41, 42, 43, 142 and 143 from the city centre and 42 from Stockport passing the door and other routes dropping close by including the 84 from Reddish and the Heatons.



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Tuesday

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Wednesday

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Thursday

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Northern Soul, Motown, Indie

Friday

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Saturdays

Big Screen Sky Live Sports and Music events
etc

Sunday

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Stagger

Heaton Chapel & Heaton Moor with Jim Flynn

It was a very cold March night when we met up at the **George and Dragon** in Heaton Chapel. Outside it was trying to snow, England were playing in a televised match and a number of the usual stalwarts were away so I wasn't expecting a large turnout for what is usually a popular stagger.



The pub itself was busy though, with many watching the game (it was 0-0 as we left). Others had obviously come along to check out the new decor as the pub had only just reopened after an extensive refit. We sat in the quieter dining area to consume the Marston's EPA which was decidedly average. However the licensee had previously explained that he also had Bombardier and Everard's Tiger in the cellar but the dray had arrived too late to put them on which probably also explains the EPA.



Back into the cold and down into Heaton Moor proper and the **Elizabethan**, a pub J W Lees acquired a few years ago in a pub company fire sale. A central bar serves a large, open plan lounge and dining area to the rear. We were greeted for the only time that evening by door staff and on entering found the place packed. There were two cask beers, Lees Bitter and Drayman's Promise, the Lees seasonal, both of which were in good nick. As we left England were already one-nil up albeit from an own goal.

We nipped next door to the **Moor Club** who had sent us an invite through one of our number. The club was founded by a 'coalition' (get it?) of the Conservative Club which previously occupied the building and the Reform Club down the road. The Reform Club was sold for redevelopment and the money ploughed into the old Con club building. As I sat in the rather quiet bar I noticed the five full sized snooker tables behind me and the absence of the pictures of Margaret Thatcher

that previously greeted you prior to the merger. The Holts Bitter, Copper Dragon Spring Gold and Allgates Pretoria all went down well as we saw England score the night's second goal.

By the time we had got across the road and into the **Plough** (ignoring the Orangery and Browns, neither of which offer their customers the choice of cask ale) England had scored a third. Inside is a single large lounge area, with tasteful woodwork and stained glass dividers providing for separate alcoves. The pub was heaving and with handpumps distributed around the bar it was difficult to work out the beers available. These comprised two Northern beers, Scarf My Father Wore and The Man from Uruguay both promoting Stockport County. In addition there were two Greene King beers, London Glory and Yardbird, Caledonian Deuchars IPA and a beer and brewery new to us all First Chop Hop. We stood and tried all but the IPA and the London Glory and found all but the 'Scarf...' to be in good form. Just as we were leaving a fifth goal went in.



It was half time in the match as we moved a few doors down to the **Crown**, perhaps the only pub in the area to retain its original multi-room interior and a traditional vault. We went into the main lounge to the left and were greeted by the licensee who as always was enthusiastically welcoming. The pub was busy so we went out of the main door and into the small snug opposite. There were four beers on offer: Crown Bitter, Bombardier, Sharp's Doom Bar and Copper Dragon Golden Pippin. Only the latter two were tried with both being in reasonable nick (the Golden Pippin being the pick of the crop).

It was now 6 – 0 as we travelled the few metres to the sparsely populated **Kro** only to find a handpump but no cask beer (not, I'm afraid, an unusual occurrence here) so we walked a quarter of a mile down to the **Moor Top**. As we sat in the large, comfortable open plan lounge and drank our Marstons EPA and Wychwood Hobgoblin we wondered why, when most of the pubs in the centre of Heaton Moor were so crowded, the Moor Top was relatively quiet especially as it has so little

immediate competition. We came to the conclusion that unless a pub is very special or very isolated people will gravitate to the lively centre of things even if it means travelling further. In coming to this conclusion we hadn't noticed that it was now a 7-0 rout only to hear clapping as Wayne Rooney scored the eighth from a free kick. While the beer wasn't as spectacular it was more than a reasonable pint.



We set off for the longest walk of the stagger down Green Lane towards the Nursery in Heaton Norris. Luckily we had received an invite to pop into the **Heaton Moor Sports Club** (bar pictured above) which broke our journey. It is hidden from view by the houses that were built on the land sold by the club to fund this very plush modern facility. In the comfortable bar we were almost entirely by ourselves as all the practice and training sessions had been cancelled due to the terrible weather. The absent players certainly missed a treat because the Hornbeam Sterling Ale, Pennine Floral Dance and Holts Bitter were all in excellent condition with the Hornbeam probably the beer of the night.



However the **Nursery** called and we were on our way again. Tucked away at the end of a cobbled street the Nursery is one of Stockport's must-visit pubs! With a magnificent wood panelled interior the pub is on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Interiors and is a Grade II listed building. Through a separate entrance to the side is the traditional vault and to the rear is a well-tended bowling green. We enjoyed our Hydes O'Finnigans Stout and Burnt Sienna and Greene King Old Golden Hen (by the time I left nobody had tried the Hydes Original, 1863 and Owd Oak or Titanic Lifeboat). A good end to what is not a bad stagger.



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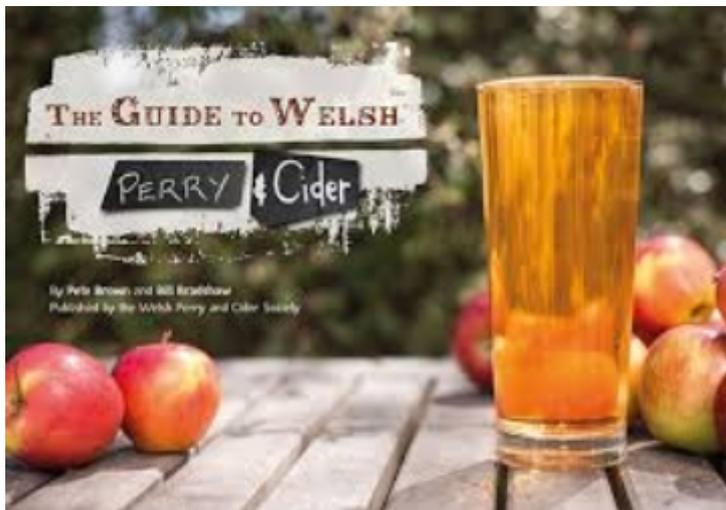
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Book Review

The Guide to Welsh Perry and Cider, by Pete Brown and Bill Bradshaw, Welsh Perry and Cider Society, 108 pages, £10.99



With ciders and perries from Wales winning four of the six medals at CAMRA's recent national cider and perry championships, this book could hardly be better timed. Beer and cider writer Pete Brown and photographer and cider enthusiast Bill Bradshaw have set out to explain and document the tremendous upsurge in quality cider and perry from Wales that we have seen in the 21st century, turning the country, as the authors rightly say, into one of the UK's key cider and perry regions.

Introductory chapters give a brief but well-informed summary of what good cider and perry are and how they are made, followed by a history of Welsh cider-making. Much of this until recent times is a tale of sad decline, with the revival started in 1976 by Ralph Owen (still an active and much-esteemed producer today) proceeding by often slow and uncertain steps until the advent of the Welsh Perry and Cider Society in 2003 with its self-assigned mission to promote Welsh cider and perry and support and assist those who produce it.

This leads naturally to a listing of the producers active today. Not quite all are listed – some considered themselves too small or sporadic to be listed, while one or two still make cider only as an adjunct to their main farming business – but the listings nonetheless run to 27, which is probably rather more than half the total. As tends to happen with cidemakers, some have been more forthcoming than others, but each gets an appreciative pen-picture giving a good insight into the nature of the business – and the product.

As elsewhere in Britain, one of the big problems with real cider is where to buy it. The producer entries give details of farm gate sales where available, and there's also a section detailing pubs and off-licences that sell the good stuff (though I did think some outline of opening hours would have helped here – a number of the pubs don't open weekday daytimes). Supporting features include a very clear and useful section on cider styles and flavours, a listing of festivals where cider and perry can be enjoyed (from outdoor music festivals to the *Mari Lwyd*, Wales's unique form of wassailing involving a horse's skull), and a small selection of recipes that go beyond the obvious.

The book is attractively designed and lavishly illustrated, with a photograph on every page including one or two well-chosen archive images as well as Bill Bradshaw's work. Unashamedly celebratory but based on solid research and packed with useful information, it deserves a place on every cider enthusiast's bookshelf. **RPJ**

Summer Beer Festival

At the National Cycling Centre

This is the first beer festival to be held at this iconic centre of excellence, put together by Steve Tait, the Food & Beverage Manager, along with strong support from CAMRA, who will be running the event. Having put on beer festivals before and having worked in hospitality for over 25 years, and from Berwick to Folkestone, Steve wanted this festival to embrace the beers that have been developed in the regions that his travels have taken to him. So although we have a local presence, we have beers selected from the south coast to Hadrian's Wall!

The emphasis is on light summer ales, to satisfy the thirst from the summer sun, should we get any! There are a few porters and stouts sprinkled within the list, plus a good selection of ciders. There are over 60 beers and ciders to choose from, at this hopefully-annual event. The festival is being held in the Velopark Cafe and is totally free to enter, with additional seating on the patio and 'hub' areas for eating and drinking.

As for eating we are spoilt for choice, with the cafe offering a full range of hot meals, sandwiches, cakes and snacks, and a BBQ outside offering burgers, hotdogs, kebabs and a vegetarian selection.

There is live entertainment on Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon, plus Sunday morning; there is also a cycle jumble sale, which proved extremely popular when run as an event last year.

The transport links are excellent. The new tram route to Droydsden runs from Bury, through Victoria, Piccadilly Gardens and Piccadilly station to Velopark, every 15 minutes, plus a bus service from Piccadilly Gardens at 8 to 10 minute intervals, either the 216 or 231. The bus stop is the next one after ASDA, then over the footbridge to the National Cycling Centre (you follow the same route getting off the tram). It's only a three minute walk whether by tram or bus.

This is a chance to have a dummy run, ready for the Manchester Winter Beer Festival which comes here in January, although in the Velodrome itself, not the cafe. More next month.



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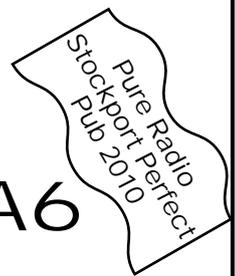
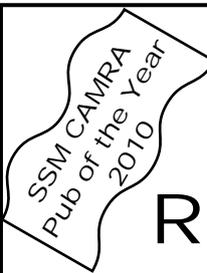
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**OPENING HOURS: TUESDAY TO THURSDAY 4-10PM
FRIDAY 2-10PM SATURDAY 12-10PM SUNDAY 2-10PM
MONDAY CLOSED**



Curmudgeon

A Question of Balance

IF I RAN a pub, I'd make sure that the range of cask beers included sufficient variety that as few customers as possible would be disappointed. If I had four pumps, I'd have a classic ordinary bitter, a golden ale, a stronger premium bitter and a dark beer, either a mild or a porter. As the number of pumps grew, I might add one or two stronger and/or more exotic beers, but I'd still retain roughly the same proportions. And I'd always remember that, although there's much to be said for offering more unusual brews, the majority of customers, even in specialist pubs, will be looking for beers in the gold-amber-copper colour range with a strength roughly between 3.5% and 4.5% ABV.

So it's disappointing when pubs which you think really should know better fail to adhere to the basic principle of offering a balanced beer range. Although by no means the only offenders, Wetherspoon's often seem particularly bad at this. For example, on one occasion, apart from the usual Ruddles and Abbot, there was nothing on the bar below 5%, which isn't ideal if you want to keep a clear head at lunchtime. Another time, all the guests were dark beers of some description with the exception of one cloudy Belgian-style witbier which I imagine many casual punters would have sent straight back. It really isn't good if you're confronted with eight handpumps but can't find anything you want to drink, or if in Spoons you find Ruddles the least worst option.

I also recently called in a well-regarded free house (not in this area) which I've always found to have a particularly congenial atmosphere. It had eight beers on, one of which was a chocolate porter, and the remaining seven all golden ales. Now, I've nothing against golden ales, and many of them are excellent beers, but it would have been nice to see a bit more variety and one or two milds and classic bitters. Wye Valley HPA is a fine brew, but on this occasion their Bitter or Butty Bach might have provided a broader choice.

It's not difficult, licensees – as far as you can, within the number of beers you can turn over, make sure you offer as wide a variety of strengths and styles as practicable, and don't neglect beers of sessionable strength in the amber and copper colour range.

Party Pooper

IT HAS BEEN reported that the Blue Bell pub in York has been excluded from the 2014 *"Good Beer Guide"* by the local branch of CAMRA because at times it supposedly operates a restrictive admissions policy. Now, this is a pub I am very familiar with and would place it in my Top Ten of British pubs. It's a tiny, unspoilt place with front public bar, central servery and rear snug, connected by a corridor along one side. Fifty people would fill it. So it's perhaps understandable that the licensee chooses to put up "Private Party" signs to keep out rowdy stag and hen parties visiting the city on weekend evenings. He says: "We do get nice strangers coming in the pub but on Saturday nights and race days York city centre is a nightmare."

Realistically, apart from a few hours on Friday and Saturday nights, casual visitors are not going to have any problem gaining admission, and even then I would imagine all that it takes is to ask politely. The main impact of excluding the pub from the "Guide" will not be to cost it any trade, but simply to deprive some visitors to the city of the opportunity to experience one of Britain's true classic pubs. Maybe a more diplomatic and tongue-in-cheek approach would have been to follow the example of one Bristol licensee and put up a sign saying "No Idiot Pub Crawls".

Curmudgeon Online: curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com
(comments on these articles can be left on the website)

Poynton Points

Lawrence Bamber checks out the local scene

Our pre-Bank Holiday Stagger started at the **Boar's Head**, Higher Poynton, which is almost at the top end of the new P1 bus route, which now connects Hazel Grove railway station, Poynton station and village with Higher Poynton! The Boar's Head is a Punch Taverns house, which has Thwaites Original as



its House Bitter. Also on tap were Black Sheep Bitter and a guest, Bishop's Farewell from Oakham Ales, a 4.6% premium bitter which won a Gold Award in the 2012 International Beer Challenge; this won our best beer award! All beers here were on good form.

Catching the P1 back into Poynton, our next port of call was Robinson's **Farmer's Arms**. This family friendly pub has two big TV screens, together with landlord Martin's Friday 60s/70s disco! The beers on tap were Unicorn Bitter, 1892, Cumbria Way and the new Trooper. Again all beers were on form with Trooper gaining the accolade for best beer.

About 100 yards down Park Lane towards St. George's Church, we came to the **Red Rock**. This is another Punch Taverns pub, which has recently changes hands, with ex-Bar Manager Melissa Lomax now at the helm. The pub was busy as a live band, The Shaky Dogs, a local Poynton Band with two girl singers, was playing 60s/70s/80s hits. The beers on tap here were Jennings Cumberland Ale, Copper Dragon Golden Pippin, Brains Rev. James and Greene King's Old Speckled Hen. Again all were very enjoyable, with Rev. James being classed as the best.

Walking back down to the crossroads, turning left onto London Road South brings you to the **Kingfisher**, the village's new Wetherspoons pub, which now has a Winkle beer, Pickford's Premium (aka Rambler), as its house bitter. This is an amber ale, named after the Pickfords Removal company, which started in the area. Other beers available were Wetherspoons' standards Ruddles Best and Greene King Abbot plus Morrell's Varsity. One cider on draught was Weston's Wyld. From a Locale point of view, the pub also had Blakemere Gold, Blackmere Hit & Run, Beartown's Peach MelBear (a 4.4% beer flavoured with peaches and elderflowers) and Phoenix Spotland Gold. Definitely not Locale, the last of the beers was Orkney Dark Island. Not all beers were tried from the wide range available, but Blakemere Gold just shaded it from the Orcadian Dark Island for our best beer award.

Walking back to the church (not a pub!), St George's Road West is on your right; half way along is the entrance to CAMRA's Regional Club of the Year for 2005, 2009 and 2012, namely the **Poynton British Legion Club**, which is now home to the Worth Brewery, whose beers strongly feature on tap here. The Worth beers available on the night were the pale and hoppy Anson and Coppice, the tasty dark mild. Guest beer included Arkwrights' Open Ale Hours and Chivalry, a 3.8% pale ale from Medieval Beers of Nottingham. Beer of the Night was awarded to Coppice.

And finally (or almost) to the **Bull's Head** on London Road North (pictured above). This pub is now free of tie, with the Bromley family having bought the pub from Punch. Thwaites Original is now the House Bitter and on the night of our visit other beers on tap were Thwaites Triple C, Cross Bay Nightfall and the Locale Mobberley Whirly Bird, a slightly sweet, amber pale ale at 4.0%. All beers were on good form, with the best beer award going to Cross Bay's Nightfall.

So that's it for the Poynton Stagger, but all was not over as Poynton Sports Club had a Beer Festival on Bank Holiday weekend, namely Sunday 26th and Monday 27th May, to keep us occupied. This was their first venture into beer festivals, so more power to their (and our) elbows!

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Bollington Beer Festival

Dave Atkins looks at what's on offer this year

What, Where and Why

Bollington Beer Festival will again take place in the Bollington Arts Centre on Friday 26th and Saturday 27th July. There will be a bigger selection of beers this year, around 40 casks, double what was available last year. Festival opening hours will be 6pm to 11pm on Friday 21st July and on Saturday 22nd July there will be two sessions from noon to 6pm and then 6pm to 11pm. Entrance will be £6 for each of the three sessions and will include a souvenir glass to take away. Entertainment will be provided by local folk and jazz musicians on Friday evening and Saturday lunchtime and evening. Hot and cold food will be available on both days. As last year the festival is again sponsored by Bollington Brewing Co.

Bollington Beer Festival 2013

Live music, food & beer.

Bollington Arts Centre
Fri 26 July 6pm
Sat 27 July 12 noon

Tickets £6
Available online or in selected outlets

www.bollingtonfestival.org.uk/beer

Main Sponsor: THE BOLLINGTON BREWING CO.

The Arts Centre is located adjacent to the viaduct in the centre of Bollington on the main road. It is a short distance from the No. 10 / 10A bus stop; this bus runs a regular service between Macclesfield and Bollington. The aim of the festival is to raise money for the Bollington Arts Festival in 2014.

Beer and Cider

Firstly we will be supporting our local brewers. Bollington Brewing, Happy Valley and RedWillow are sponsoring the festival and kindly donating two firkins of beer each. Other local brewers are also represented. Buxton Brewery will be sending the extremely refreshing and sessionable Moor Top and SPA beers and as a special for our festival Buxton are doing a cask run of the amazing Axe Edge, a serious IPA of 6.8% ABV usually only available in key keg these days. Marble will be providing the hoppy session beer Pint and Manchester Bitter as well as the amazing Dobber and Chocolate. Thornbridge will be providing the multi award winning Jaipur as well as a cask of Kipling dry hopped with the wonderful Nelson Sauvin.

From further afield expect to see Sussex based Dark Star Hophead and American Pale Ale and from Oakham in Cambridgeshire there should be Inferno as well as the hoppy Citra and more serious Green Devil IPA, a 6.0% ABV hop monster.

At the other end of the country Scotland has seen the same brewery expansion as the rest of the UK and many are brewing cutting edge beers that are sadly rarely available south of the border. To rectify this we have sourced beers from the multi award winning Highland, Fyne and Tryst breweries. Expect to taste some of the best of British brewing from these innovative and progressive breweries.

On the cider and perry bar there should be 15 ciders and perries from around England and Wales including Cornish Orchards Farmhouse Cider, the gold award winning cider at the 2012 CAMRA National Cider and Perry Championships plus the ever popular perries Broadoak Perry, 2009 gold award winner and Gwynt y Ddraig Two Trees, 2011 silver award winner.

This is just a taster of the 40 great beers you can sample at the festival, so do not delay! Buy your tickets from the following pubs, in Bollington, the Cock & Pheasant, Poachers and Vale. In Macclesfield tickets will be on sale in the Park Tavern, Treacle Tap and The Macc. Or buy online at www.bollingtonfestival.org.uk/beer

Stockport Beer & Cider Festival

Review and Results

Well, the 2013 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival has come and gone: Time to pick over the pieces and see how it all went. We had 5,300 people through the doors and between them our visitors drank something like 16,000 pints of beer and 3,800 pints of cider and perry. Most of the increased bottled beer stock sold out, too. So, all in all we're pretty happy with how it went.

This year we also signed up 71 new members of CAMRA which is good, too. Included in that number were the 1,300th (and 1,301st) members of Stockport & South Manchester Branch. The lucky couple are Emily Harris and David Sutcliffe from Heaton Norris who are pictured right. Welcome to CAMRA!



One of the highlights of the Festival is the voting for beer, cider and perry of the festival. Voting for Beer of the Festival was interesting as dark beers almost swept the board. Beer of the Festival winners was Sublime Stout from Fyne Ales. The 6.8% "matured imperial stout" was a clear winner with its rich complexity striking a chord with our very discerning customers.



Silver award went to last year's winning brewery, Blue Bee, of Sheffield. However this year they won with their light summer quaffer Light Blue. At 3.6% and well - but not over-hopped, this is a great beer for the warmer weather.

The other awards went to very new concerns. Firstly, Bronze award was to the new Reedley Hallows Brewery in Burnley for their even newer New Laund Dark, a 4.4% stout that got everyone talking. Reedley Hallows' Peter Gouldsbrough was delighted to hear the news, telling us "Thank you for the great news. Winning anything in this industry is a great achievement as there are so many at it now. Also the fact that we have only been going around 15 months, and that this beer has only been brewed for three months is again a great achievement".



Finally, it was back north of the border and more dark beers for our "Best Newcomer" award. Elixir Brew Co has been brewing for less than a year and shares premises with Edinburgh's Alechemy Brewery. They sent us two beers – Benedictine Groove (5.5% - a scotch ale enriched with Buckfast tonic wine amongst other things) and Coal Porter (5% and pitch black) – which impressed both customers and beer managers alike. Plans are now in hand to visit the winners and present all of these well deserved awards.

The cider and perry voting was a tight race with many excellent ciders and perries to choose from. Perry of the Festival went to master perry maker Kevin Minchew who is a serial award winner at Stockport. This year he triumphed with "Stinking Bishop & Friends", a perry made primarily, but not wholly, from juice of the Stinking Bishop pear which was then matured in a whisky cask. Rich and sumptuous, it was a well deserved winner.

One of the new Welsh makers won Cider of the Festival. In May Springfield Cider of Monmouthshire won CAMRA's national award with their Wobbly Munk Cider and then followed this up with another win at Stockport, this time with Old Barn, a medium-dry cider made from a blend of early season sharp apples and mid-to-late-season Dabinetts.

Great British Beer Festival

This year's Great British Beer Festival will take place between 13th – 17th August at London Olympia. With over 800 real ales, ciders, perries and foreign beers to choose from we are sure there will be plenty of choice to suit everybody's taste buds! It is not all about the beer though. There is also plenty of food, live music and pub games to enjoy.

Tickets can be bought by calling 0844 412 4640 or visiting www.gbbf.org.uk/tickets

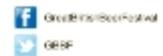
If you are feeling lucky then visit www.gbbf.org.uk/competitions where there are plenty of great prizes to win.



Great British Beer Festival
London Olympia
13-17th August

A fantastic fun packed festival atmosphere with over 800 quality beers & ciders, variety of food, live music, entertainment, games and activities to enjoy.

www.gbbf.org.uk



High Peak Pub of the Season

The High Peak & NE Cheshire CAMRA Spring Pub of the Season Award was won by the **Star Inn** in Glossop. Landlady Vivienne Hurditch is shown here with local CAMRA member Mark Woodacre.



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See page 22 for details
and membership form

Love Your Local

Take Action to Save Your Pub – John O'Donnell Reports

Unfortunately, Opening Times all too regularly has to report on the closure, conversion or demolition of pubs across the area. While some pub closures are inevitable and new pubs and bars do come along, the statistics are stark - across the country, 26 pubs a week are closing their doors - a rise from 18 a week just six months ago - and one thing all these pubs have in common is that they are somebody's 'local'. The threat to the Great British Local has never been greater so CAMRA is joining forces with other pub campaigners to support two campaigns which tackle two of the greatest threats to our pub stock - the practices of the large "pubco" property companies and the predatory actions of developers seeking to rob communities of their local pubs and replace them with corporate supermarkets, offices or private housing.

A Fair Deal For Your Local

The vast majority of Britain's pubs do not belong to your local 'landlord'. In all likelihood, the pub building will be owned either by a brewery or more likely by one of the big property companies known as "pubcos" with the licensee being either a tenant of the pub co or leasing the building from them.

With utilities, staff, business rates and all the other costs to pay out of their takings, many publicans are struggling to make ends meet. New CAMRA research shows that some 57% of pubco licensees earn under £10,000 a year, and 80% earn under £15,000. This is not a fair living wage and more and more pubs are closing because publicans simply can't earn enough to live after paying the pubco's cut.

CAMRA has long campaigned for the Government to intervene and force the pubcos to offer a better deal to their tenants and publicans. After many years and many false dawns the current government has admitted that allowing the pubcos to regulate themselves has failed. A public consultation on a proposed statutory regulation scheme closed on 14th June with CAMRA's submission to this consultation calling for a rebalance to the current unfair relationship between the giant property companies and their licensees.

With the consultation closed, it is now vital that the momentum is kept up to ensure that the government moves from consultation to action. A unique campaign coalition has formed under the banner "A Fair Deal For Your Local", bringing together CAMRA, the Parliamentary Save the Pub Group, publicans' trade union Licensees Unite, micro-brewers and trade organisations such as Fair Pint and Licensees Supporting Licensees. At the time of writing, 123 MPs had signed on to support the campaign directly or signed Early Day Motion 57 but in the face of intensive lobbying by the pubcos to maintain the status quo, it is vital that YOU, the pub goer, keep the pressure on your MP to influence Ministers to act in favour of the publican.

Support Fair Deal For Your Local by:



Signing up as a supporter at www.fairdealforyourlocal.com - scan the QR code to go straight there.

Like the campaign's Facebook page www.facebook.com/fairdealforyourlocal which will be updated with the latest news on the campaign.

Write to your local MP urging them to support the campaign. As we went to press, local MPs who are supporting the campaign are John Leech (Withington), Sir Andrew Stunnel (Hazel Grove), Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish), David Heyes (Ashton-under-Lyne), Kate Green

(Stretford and Urmston), Sir Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton), Paul Goggins (Wythenshawe and Sale East). If your MP isn't one of these then please contact them and ask them to back the campaign - you can e-mail them directly by visiting www.fairdealforyourlocal.com and clicking on "Lobby Your MP" or look up their contact details at <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/>

List Your Local

The local pub is at the heart of many communities, acting as a meeting place where local residents of all ages can mix, a hub for local sports teams and a meeting place for community groups. But for many communities, in recent years simply having a successful well used pub is not always enough to guarantee its survival.

A loophole in planning law has meant that pubs have become prime targets for the big supermarkets who can convert a pub without planning permission meaning the first locals even know about it is when the pub has been sold and the shop fitters are in. The other threat to pubs comes from private developers who seek to convert pubs into residential homes or offices and sell them on for a profit.

Thankfully, thanks to new legislation that came into force earlier this year, there is something communities can do to help protect their local pub from this twin threat. The 2011 Localism Act gives local people the right to ask their local council to list their local pub as an Asset of Community Value (ACV).

Listing stops the sale of pubs behind the back of communities and acts as a marker that the pub is important to the local community. Listing your local means property developers who are keen for a hassle free purchase are less likely to show interest. More importantly, if the owner decides to sell the pub off, the community has to be informed and can trigger a moratorium on the sale for up to six months, giving the community valuable time to get together a suitable bid for the pub.

Your pub may not appear under threat now, but even pubs which are trading well are still vulnerable so if you value your local community pub, you may want to consider applying to your council to list it as an Asset Of Community Value. Even if your pub is recently closed, you can still make an application for pubs which have been closed for up to six months, deterring would-be developers from demolishing it and forcing owners to look again at keeping it as a pub.

To make an application you need the support of 21 local people who are resident in the local council area or an adjacent area. For most community pubs, finding 21 people willing to support it should not be difficult but if finding those last few willing signatories is proving difficult, contact your local CAMRA branch who will have members more than happy to support your campaign.

Councils should already have forms available which you can request and complete but CAMRA's investigations have revealed that neither Manchester nor Trafford councils have such forms available.

Forms for Stockport Council can be downloaded from <http://tinyurl.com/acv-stockport> and for Salford from <http://tinyurl.com/acv-salford>

For other councils, you can use standard forms which have been prepared by CAMRA - you can download these from www.camra.org.uk/listyourlocal

If you have any questions on nominating ACVs please call the Government-funded Locality advice line on 0845 345 4564 or email CAMRA's Campaigns Team on campaigns@camra.org.uk



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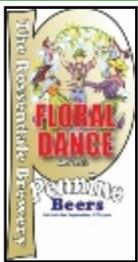
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Hameldon Bitter
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Glen Top Bitter
4.0%

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Rossendale Ale
4.2%

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Halo Pale
4.5%

A citrusy, pale ale brewed with Cascade aroma hops, finishing with a slightly bitter aftertaste.



Pitch Porter 5%

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



Sunshine
5.3%

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Please do not hesitate to contact us for further info!

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High Peak Pub Scene

Frank Wood & Robin Wignall with News and Views

High Peak Pub News

With Frank Wood

News from Droylsden firstly and the **Bush** recently gained Cask Marque status. The **Beehive** has had Black Edge beers on recently and the **Strawberry Gardens** at Moorside had Cornish Coast beers and Taylor's Landlord during May.

Two pubs offering a discount to CAMRA members (10p a pint) are the **Foresters Call** in Ashton, worth calling into for its varying choice of ales, and the **Fairfield Arms** in Audenshaw with 20p a pint off the Fairfield Bitter, brewed by Hornbeam. The **Snipe**, also in Audenshaw is now selling the Robinsons seasonal beer along with the normal Unicorn.

Glossop Wander

As this is my last column in OT, due to other commitments (look out for Mouselow Farm Brewery beers), I will take the opportunity of suggesting a Summer trip up to Glossop by train, to walk around the East part of the town, which has improved greatly over the past few months.



Starting at the railway station, turn left and go up Norfolk Street and into Hall Meadow Road. carry on into Old Glossop and you reach the **Bulls Head**, a Robinsons pub with ales in fine condition and authentic curries available. Virtually next door, the **Wheatsheaf** has three hand pumped beers including one from Howard Town (the brewery is very close). This is an Admiral Taverns pub and the other beers are from their list, which normally offers a reasonable and varying choice.

Pass the old cottages as you go downhill from here and you come to the **Queens**. A true free house, which also sells authentic curries, has a choice of seven hand pulled beers. Regular beers are Holts Bitter, Greene King Old Speckled Hen, Thornbridge Jaipur and Thwaites Wainwright. Last time I called in, Coniston Bluebird was one of the guests and you may find beers from local breweries on sale.

A few minutes walk down Manor Park Road finds you at the **Commercial**, another free house with currently three hand pulled beers. The licensees here have not long been in the pub but they have picked it up significantly and expect that the beer on will offer a wider choice as they gain time in the pub. Food should be

available by the time you read these notes. Turn right here, heading back to Glossop Town centre, and off to your left down Milltown is the **Prince of Wales**. Marston's beers include Pedigree and Best Bitter, and these are joined by beers from other breweries in the Marston's group making up the other three cask ales on offer.

From here, the new Wetherspoons, the **Smithy Fold** has been doing a roaring trade since it opened in early May. Located just off Victoria Street near to the traffic lights, it has the usual Spoons regular beers and several guests, with an outside drinking area overlooking the river.



Finally, the **Star** next to the station is a good place to finish as it is literally across the road. Here you may find beer from Pictish, Ossett, Abbeydale or many other breweries from around the area or further away. You may even decide to stay whilst the next train comes in. However, if going to Manchester, the last one out of Glossop is at 10.39pm (excepting Sundays when it is much earlier).

Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

I am sometimes asked, 'What's happening at the **Jodrell** in Whaley Bridge? And I am unable to give an answer. However, yet again the owner has taken an advertisement in the programme for the Whaley Water Weekend. The text of the advert talks about being 'proud to be involved in the local community' and 'looking forward to opening a completely refurbished pub.' So let's wait and see.

The promised refurbishment of the New Inn in Buxton was underway early in June. The finished job is awaited. Another recent refurbishment has been at the **Bull's Head** in High Lane where, after a few weeks of closure the former Boddington's house re-opened at the end of May. The exterior looks spick and span. More next time.

I noted some bottled beers at **Goyt Wines** in Whaley Bridge last month. The very latest, just published edition of CAMRA's *Good Bottled Beer Guide* again deservedly lists Goyt Wines. The beer range is ambitious and well worth a

visit. Other off licences on the fringe of the Peak District which have made the new Guide include Bottle Stop at Bramhall, Mossley Organic & Fine Foods and the High Peak Beer Co. in the Victorian Market Hall in Stockport.

The **Wheatsheaf** at Dove Holes is reported in the *Buxton Advertiser* as closing as the licensee is moving to the **Waterloo** at Taddington. A new tenant is being sought, says the report, but as yet Robinson's have not found a replacement. The **White Hart** in Whaley Bridge is in the in between stage, with previous tenants having departed, and in early June Punch had put relief management in place. A new tenant is expected soon, so more next time. Other changes in the area include the re-opening of what was the Mousetrap in Disley. After refurbishment this is now a wine bar and place to eat, but real ale is on sale, according to local publicity. Again more on this next time.



The **Goyt Inn** in Whaley Bridge has had an interesting history. Once part of the Wilson's estate, and then Watney's, it was one of several pubs involved in ownership swaps in the 1970's I think. Then it became a Vaux house. When the Sunderland brewer and pub owner showed its commitment to the beer industry by closing its breweries and selling off its pubs, pub company ownership ensued. These days the Goyt is part of the Punch group and Tony Gunner sells a range of well kept, interesting beers from both the main Punch list and the Finest Cask list.

Leaving Chapel en le Frith on the road to Dove Holes and Sparrowpit, a roundabout marks the parting of the ways at the top of Barmoor Clough. On the north side of the junction stood a pub which many years ago would have served thirsty travellers. These days only a footprint can be traced at ground level. The Old Hector later became the Clough, eventually becoming a lost local.

August Bank Holiday Weekend is always good for beer festivals. A festival is expected at the **Navigation** at Buxworth over that weekend. More information next time. I am also assuming that the **White Lion** at Disley will be holding its customary bank holiday weekend beer festival. Another one not to miss.

Go Ape In Stockport



Stockport's Victorian Market Hall will be host to a regular 'Foody Friday' starting on Friday July 19th then regularly on one Friday of every month, with dates to be announced. The event will see the Northern Quarter's Guerrilla Eats team up with High Peak Beer Co to provide a great range of food and drink to consume on the premises. High Peak Beer Co owner Corin Bland stated: 'Guerrilla Eats are a street food

co-operative with an amazing array of food provided by various vendors, from wood fired pizzas to slow cooked BBQ beef brisket to luscious ice creams. When you combine that with over 250 beers we sell at our shop in the market you have the recipe for a great food and drink event!'

The event will start at lunchtime and carry on until 9.00pm. In addition to the food and drink available, stall holders will be open until 7.00pm and DJs and bands will provide musical entertainment across the event.

The event provides a welcome addition to activities being held to invigorate the market in particular and Stockport's night time economy overall so we hope you will give it your support!



The Piccadilly Tavern

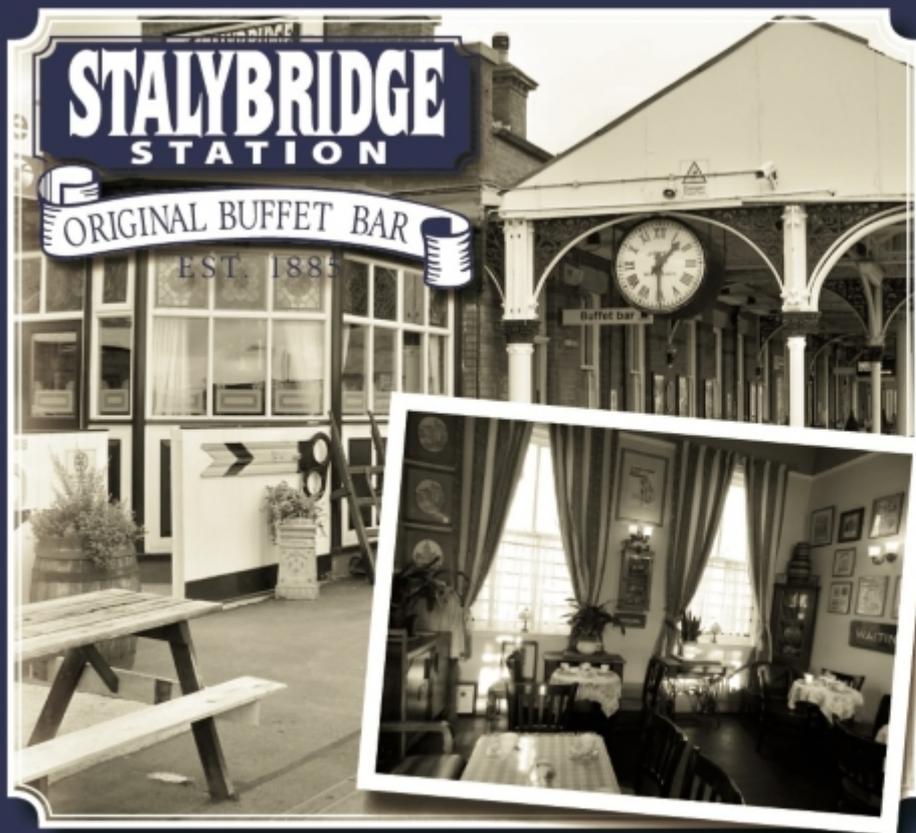
After a quick and thorough refurbishment, the Piccadilly Tavern reopened its doors on the evening of Friday 14th June, writes *Steve Smith*. The exterior, whilst basically remaining the same, has an altered frontage resulting in a more modern styling.



Inside, it has been opened out somewhat with the downstairs lounge area now visible throughout. It is done in a rather plush style, with leather chairs and some low tables. The subterranean toilets still remain, as does the split level rear area, but this is mostly used by the dining fraternity.

The most noticeable feature for the real ale drinker is the bank of 10 handpumps adorning the bar top. These include two for Moorhouse's Pendle Witch and one for John Smiths Cask (the permanent offerings at the moment), up to five guest beers and, unusually, two for Westons real cider, Old Rosie and Traditional Scrumpy. My choice was Oxfordshire Ales brewery's Summer S'up at 4.2% , a tasty drop for this seasonal beer.

All in all this is an excellent makeover, in a prime location on the way to and from Manchester's main line rail terminal at Piccadilly. Even the new pub sign (not shown above) sports a steam engine. The pub is open from 8am till 11pm Mondays to Wednesdays; 8am till 12am on Thursdays; 8am till 1am on Saturdays, and on Sundays from 9am until 11pm, with breakfasts, lunches and dinners available most times.



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Pub News

Covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Altrincham News



Barely a year after re-opening, Altrincham's **Orange Tree** seems to have closed its doors again. Although, as recently reported by Opening Times, the pub was half way through a refurbishment that had seen the front bar and upstairs function rooms given a major facelift, it has not been open since mid-May. The pub is owned by Enterprise Inns, one of the major pub companies which are the target of the Fair Deal For Locals campaign - see page 15 — and it was Enterprise's unrealistic rent demands which led to Paul Cant, the long term tenant of the Orange Tree, walking away from the pub 18 months ago - we can only speculate whether the most recent tenants had similar experience.

Another pub co owned Altrincham pub is also seeking new tenants - the **Station Hotel** which has a prime spot opposite Altrincham Transport Interchange is still trading but up for lease by Star Pubs, the pub division of the multi-national Heineken brewery formerly known as Scottish & Newcastle Pubs. The Station is another pub which has struggled to find a stable clientele base despite a string of tenants trying new ideas including adding a coffee bar onto the side of the pub to serve the passing commuters.

South Manchester

In West Didsbury, cask ales are selling so well at **Mary and Archies** on Burton Road that they have installed a third handpump. The ales are predominantly sourced from local micro-breweries with Little Valley brewery (based at Cragg Vale, near Hebden Bridge) being a favourite alongside First Chop Brewing Arm who late last month moved from "cuckoo" brewing at Outstanding in Bury to their own brewery in Salford. Where there is a guest from further afield, more often than not it is from no less than the multi-award winning Dark Star of Brighton.

Real ales are also going well at near neighbour **Folk** who continue to stock two ales usually from Brightside although also featuring Oxfordshire's XT brewery whose beers are

supplied in the area by Brightside. Despite being a relatively small pub, Holt's **Railway** on Lapwing Lane (pictured below) is regularly serving *seven* cask ales with the regular Holt's range being joined by brews from other regional big boys like Shepherd Neame and Fullers. The pub is also one of those who are taking beers from the Holt's owned Bootleg Brewery, although Opening Times has never been lucky enough to catch one of these on the bar when we have called.

The conversion of the former Verso bar near to the new Burton Road tram stop into "Elvis' Kitchen" must be one of the shortest lived venues around. Barely two months after opening the bar closed and has been transformed into "Terrace Bar and Grill". While there has been extensive work where a central island bar now dominates, sadly despite its increasing popularity in surrounding bars, cask ale has not been included in the new bar set up.

Salutation Latest



Just as last month's Opening Times went to press, news was breaking that the **Salutation** on Higher Chatham Street in Hulme (nestled behind the Royal Northern College of Music) was to close. We are pleased to report that this is not the case. However, what is true is that current tenants the Trof group who have successfully transformed the pub over the last year are not having their lease renewed by owners Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU).

Seeming somewhat taken aback by the reaction to the rapid spreading of the news that Trof's management had been given notice, the University hurriedly issued a statement to say that the pub was not closing with details to follow. A couple of days later they announced that they had "reached an agreement with MMU Students Union to take over the running of the pub". In a statement, the University said: "We would like to thank the current landlord and staff for their hard work in running the pub since it was acquired by MMU in 2011. We would like to reassure patrons of the pub that we remain committed to running and maintaining this landmark public house within our estate."

The move will see several Trof staff made redundant and feeling let down. Manager Gethin Jones told the Manchester Evening News: "Personally I'm gutted because we've worked hard, turned the pub around and are making a profit. We've built up a reputation and put a lot of hours, effort and sweat into this, to make it a great little boozier. It's a shame that hard work is going to be taken away."

Despite the reassurances from MMU, Hulme locals and regulars at the pub are not convinced by the rhetoric with the MMU's takeover having been dubbed "Mmutation" amid concerns that management used to running a student only bar will not be able to translate this to a community pub. With the University building a new student union building next door to the pub, there are fears that once the new building opens with its own bar, a pub next door will be seen as surplus to requirements.

City Centre Update



Joseph Holt's **Old Monkey** on Portland Street, Manchester has a new manager in the form of Emily Fisher, latterly General Manager of the Horse & Jockey, Chorlton, having come into the Holts' group having been the pub's Events Manager under the H&J's former owner Peter Dalton's Hoi Polloi Pub Company. In that role, she was instrumental in embedding the Horse & Jockey into the local community with a range of events include live music nights, arts & craft fairs and regular farmers markets. We wish Emily well in her new role.

Further along the same row, both the **Circus Tavern** and the **Grey Horse** have had makeovers in recent weeks. Less dramatic has been the work at the Circus which has seen the welcome removal of all the photos that seemed to cover every inch of wall space. The wooden partition walls have been stripped back and revarnished while the top of the back room partition wall has also been reglazed. There's also been some replastering and a new panelled ceiling in the corridor. It's all very spick and span. The cask beers remain as Tetley Bitter and Robinsons Dizzy Blonde.

Continues overleaf...

Pub News

Continued from previous page



Two doors down the **Grey Horse** had a more substantial makeover in late May. It's really been given a completely new look with a varnished, boarded floor and a brand new semi-circular bar counter which makes better use of the space in this very small pub. Everything else has been refreshed and generally spruced up. It all works very well and certainly increases the appeal of what was already a good, if perhaps slightly tired looking, city centre local. There are now five cask ales on the bar – when OT called these were all from Hydes (Original, 1863, Jekyll's Gold, Owd Oak and Beer Studio Golden Ochre) but others have spotted non-Hydes guests. Of note is "Cask Ale Monday" with 50p off a pint of real ale all day.



Elsewhere in the City Centre, the new JW Lees **Duttons** on Albert Square (pictured above) was about to open its doors as this was written. A peek through the windows prior to the official opening pointed to a classy looking set-up and a bank of handpumps taking pride of place on the bar. More next month.

At the other end of John Dalton Street **Byron** opened last month. This is an upmarket burger joint so wouldn't normally feature in these pages. However as you munch away you can wash you food down with a beer from the small but rather well put together beer list – notable are a Table Beer from cult London brewers Kernel and the rather excellent Racer 5 IPA from Californian brewers Bear Republic.

Not far way there are still plans to introduce cask ale in **Mulligans** (as reported last month). The current state of play is that things are still progressing but progress has been much slower than anticipated, although this has been due largely to technical problems rather than any lack of enthusiasm on the pub's part. They very much hoped to have this up and running by end of June or early July (Mulligans

is hosting a "Manchester Irish Day") - a family friendly street party - on July 14th featuring live music, local Irish celebs and Irish food and drink. An offer of 40p per pint off real ale will still apply to CAMRA members for 30 days after its introduction.

The city centre has another specialist beer pub with the April opening of **Pie & Ale**, located in The Hive building just off Lever Street in the Northern Quarter. The bar is brought to us by the Bakkerie group who in addition to their own bakery also have a wine shop and tasting room in the Hive building next door to the new bar. Pie & Ale has five handpumps on the bar making it a major new addition to the area's beer scene. Thus far, one pump has offered a near permanent beer from Brightside Brewing company with another hosting Middleton's excellent Wilson Potter brewery - OT is surprised more of the city's bars don't offer their beers. The third offers house beer Yippee Pie Ale which is permanently available for £2 a pint with two guest pumps offering a selection of guests. As the name would suggest, the bar's other speciality is pies made in the group's bakery across the way. A minimum of three are offered daily, one meat, one vegetarian and one "special" - Opening Times called on a Sunday when they had just launched their Sunday Roast Pie - the name says it all.



Chorlton News



When Port Street Beer House operator Common announced it was to transform Chorlton's Scotts Hill into the **Beagle**, "a dining room with beer", many locals questioned whether the formula offering gourmet food at prices which are high for the area (and not that dissimilar to the premises' two previous incarnations) would work. Well it seems like the locals were right as in late May, the Beagle announced it was closing its restaurant operation - in a statement they said "We're having a bit of rethink about what we're doing at The Beagle, after opening with a big emphasis on the restaurant, we've decided we're going to stick to what we're really good at; great beer, great wine, great cocktails and great atmosphere. We want to be a craft beer house with food, not a restaurant with a bar attached."

Instead the venue's kitchens have been turned over to Guerrilla Eats, a collective of street food vendors who will take it in turn to offer a selection of dishes from two or three vendors a day. The bar has also changed its opening hours, the most significant being that it will be closed on Mondays and not open until 4pm on weekdays.

Across the road, the **Sedge Lynn** is to replace house mild "Pot Black" with a new golden beer for summer. Like its predecessor, "Golden Break" will be brewed exclusively for the pub by Radcliffe's Brightside Brewery and is expected to be on the bar by the time you read this having been launched at Chorlton Beer Festival. Continuing up Manchester Road, in a minor change the **Marble Beer House** has extended its opening hours until midnight. Next on this strip is **Pi (Chorlton)** who continue to pull in the customers with their simple but effective formula of an ever changing range (apart from regular Tatton Blonde) of well kept cask beers and traditional cider / perry alongside an impressive bottled range to accompany the award winning Pi Minster pies.

New boys on the block **The Font** (Chorlton) now have their kitchen open with a changing selection ranging from sandwiches to hearty stews offered daily while last but not least **De Nada** continues to offer up to four cask ales most commonly from RedWillow, Green Mill and Brightside breweries and two ciders/perries.



At the other end of Chorlton, the **Spoon Inn** opposite Chorlton Bus Station has opened a new garden terrace to the rear of the pub. Real ale sales are up with the bar now regularly having both handpumps in action even on weekdays. A couple of doors up, the **Jackalope** has expanded its range of ales again, with a fourth handpump added. Tucked away almost out of sight at the left end of the bar, when Opening Times called it was dispensing a very nice pint of Ilkley Black with the other three pumps offering selections from RedWillow and First Chop Brewing Arm. The Jackalope has also invested in their outside area for the summer with the previous loose tables and chairs now replaced by high backed fixed benches on all sides.

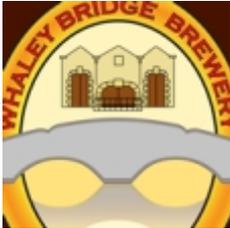
Finally for Chorlton news, the **Beech Inn** has launched a new quiz night. Running alternate Tuesdays, the new event began in early June and will intersperse with the Beech's monthly Tuesday comedy night and wide range of other events including folk nights, Irish music nights, craft fairs and record fairs. The quiz kicks off at 8pm and the next one should be on 16th July.

Pub and Brewery News

Micro, Regional and Family Brewers

Whaley Bridge Brewery

About a year ago Mike Wilde, a former antique restorer, decided that Whaley Bridge needed a brewery and he set about fulfilling this goal. In the past twelve months many tests and trial brews have taken place. Some were successful and inevitably some less so. However his beers are now attaining the consistency needed to be a commercial proposition.



Currently three beers are brewed: Hockerley Old Ale 4.0%, Bugsworth Ale 4.2%, (given the old pre-referendum spelling,) and Goyt Valley Gold 4.4%. A pale, hoppy citrusy brew is in preparation, but no name yet. Whaley Bridge Brewery Beers appear regularly at the Drum & Monkey on Chapel Road in Whaley Bridge, and can sometimes be found at the Old Hall, Whitehough, the Swan, at Kettleshulme, the Poachers at Bollington and in Buxworth Club. At the moment Mike can sell all the beer that he can brew, which is a good sign for the future.

Bootleg Update

Bootleg Brewery (based at the Horse & Jockey in Chorlton) has been hard at work getting beer production up to scratch, producing regular and consistent beers. In this brewster Erin Guy has been supported by new owners, Holt's, and their pub specialist, Lloyd. He has been a sound source of advice and back-up. Having the resources of a large brewery to hand has enabled Bootleg to refine the regular beers while developing new recipes with different hops.

Brewing twice a week to maintain supplies to the Horse and Jockey, beers are also being distributed to three other outlets. The current new beer, Lion's Pride, is a one-off commission to celebrate the rugby, and is made solely with English hops. At 4.2% it is browner than others in the range, bitter at first but with an underlying sweetness to the finish.

A wheat beer is in planning for the summer to follow on from the success of the recent Chorlton Spring. The wheat beer will be launched at Chorlton Beer Festival on 5/6th July.

Gorton & District

A stroll round the less visited pubs of Gorton found the following. The ever so long closed **Pomona** is still standing but very shabby looking. The nearby **Bandstand** was busy with many families enjoying the sunshine. The Two-for-one menu is an obvious attraction, as

is the children's play area and free WiFi. The large structure externally resembles two barns joined together but inside it is plusher than that; a large lounge area fronts the bar, this then leads through to a carvery beyond that. For the youngsters there is a full outdoor play area, whilst the adults can relax at one of many outdoor tables, or use the gazebo. It's been resolutely keg throughout since it opened in the noughties. What a waste.



The **Friendship** across the road continues on with its keg offering. The former **Wilson's Railway** on Chapman Street has been converted from residential use to a travel shop while on Gorton Lane all of the keg trio of **Gardeners**, **Vulcan**, (pictured above) and **Steelworks Tavern** battle on regardless. Not far from the Monastery, a past Pub of the Month recipient (in March 1996), the **Crown**, has succumbed to external forces and is being converted to non-pub use. In West Gorton the **Timers** (originally the Dolphin) has been swept away to allow modern dwellings to take its place. At the back of what was the Fort Ardwick, the long, long closed **Grey Mare** at last has another use, although we are unsure what for, but commercial premises they are now. The former **Star Inn** opposite the bus garage has become some kind of educational establishment too.

The gloom continues in Longsight where the **New Victoria** is now closed and boarded following the demise of Oakwell Brewery and all its works. In addition the **Garratt** on Pink Bank Lane was closed for good at the beginning of May by owners Joseph Holt. It has had all signage removed, and is up for sale. Given the state of trade in the area, the Garratt is unlikely ever to serve beer again we think.

There is some good news in this neck of the woods though. For some time now Levenshulme has been a cask beer desert, watered only by Holt's **Sidings** and **Kingsway** plus Sam Smith's **Blue Bell** on Barlow Road. There are two new outlets to report. The **Klondyke Club** on Burnage Road held a highly successful beer festival in May with over 2,000 attending. More events are planned but in the meantime the club has available a bespoke Klondyke Pale Ale (4.1%) from the First Chop Brewing Arm, using American hops, which has been very well

received. It is expected that more handpumps will be introduced. Not far away the **POD Deli** on Albert Road has also introduced cask. OT plans to drop in here over the next few weeks so more next time.

Urmston Update

The **Garricks Head**, the John Barras branded pub on Moorside Road, Urmston has become the latest to join the cask ale fold. Availability is a little sporadic but that will improve. When Opening Times called Tetley's Bitter (now brewed by Banks's in Wolverhampton) was on the bar, with other beers from the Marston's family also having been available.

Pub Shorts

The **Palatine Bar** in Northenden now has two changing cask beers (and in fact has had since Christmas!). So you can now have a curry in the adjoining Indian restaurant with a pint of cask beer.



The **Royal Oak** in Edgeley (above) has expanded its beer range and apart from the regular Holt's Bitter now has three changing guest beers as well.

In Hazel Grove, Holt's have now obtained planning permission for their major refurbishment of the **Fiveways**. The contract for the work is being tendered and the work is expected to take several weeks to complete.

In Heaton Norris, two pubs will never be pubs again. The **Grey Horse** (formerly Greenalls) has been converted to offices, currently up for sale. Meanwhile the **Cosmopolitan** (formerly Boddington's Three Crowns) has been converted to two large luxury apartments.

In Heaton Moor the **Blue Cat** on Shaw Road now offers two cask beers from the First Chop Brewing Arm (which has just set up its own brewery in north Manchester).

Finally we say goodbye to Matt Abbott who is leaving the **John Millington** in Cheadle Hulme for the Coach & Four in Wilmslow. His replacements are Matt and Amy Comerford who arrive from the Hare & Hounds in Marple and have a solid track record on the beer front. Welcome!

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