

OPENING TIMES

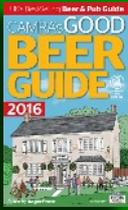
DECEMBER 2015 / FREE

CHRISTMAS CHEER TO
ALL OUR READERS
AND ADVERTISERS

INSIDE: WIN PRIZES ON OUR WINTER
WARMER WANDER / WINTER BEERS
TO TRY / MANCHESTER BEER & CIDER
FESTIVAL PREVIEW



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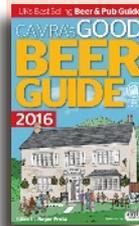
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OPENING TIMES

Opening Times is published by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, with assistance from the Trafford & Hulme and High Peak & North East Cheshire Branches. Additional material is supplied by the North Manchester and Macclesfield & E Cheshire Branches. 7,500 copies a month are printed by Oxuniprint Ltd, a division of Oxford University Press and distributed throughout Stockport, Trafford, Manchester and Tameside. There are also many outlets in Macclesfield & East Cheshire, High Peak and Glossop.

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www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice/consumer_service.htm
Their telephone no. is 03454 04 05 06. To report a matter to Trading Standards go to:

www.adviceguide.org.uk/consumer_e/reporting_a_problem_to_trading_standards

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* Transport for Greater Manchester: www.tfgm.com 0161 228 7811

* East Cheshire: 0300 123 5500
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport.aspx

* Derbyshire: www.derbysbus.info

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We aim to ensure that the information in *Opening Times* is correct at the time of going to press. If we get something wrong then please get in touch (editorial contact details above) and we'll print a correction. Please also note the opinions expressed in *Opening Times* are not necessarily those of CAMRA either locally or nationally.

Copy Date for the January issue is Saturday 5th December .

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

Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Front cover - This old Dutton's advert was taken from a postcard issued by the Brewery History Society some years ago. The card was obtained from the excellent Beer in Print.

Check out their website:

<http://beerinprint.co.uk/index.php>

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What's On

Local CAMRA Branch Events, Information and News

Your Local CAMRA Contacts & Websites

Stockport & South Manchester (SSM)

www.ssmcamra.co.uk

Contact: Paul Felton; Secretary@ssmcamra.co.uk

North Manchester (NM)

www.northmanchester.camra.org.uk

Contact: Phil Booton; phbooton@hotmail.com

High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire (HPNC)

www.hpneccamra.org.uk

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

Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)

www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

Contact: Rob Nicholson 07983 524102;
social@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

Trafford & Hulme (T&H)

www.thcamra.org.uk

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

Local CAMRA Events

All welcome at these events

Saturday 5th – Xmas Party: Royal Hotel, Market Street, Hayfield, SK22 2EP. Starts 6.15pm with buffet at 8.15pm. Cost is £12 per head. **Continued support for this event would be appreciated.** (HPNC)

Wednesday 9th – Branch Xmas Meal: Waterhouse, Princess Street, Manchester, M2 4EG. Starts 7.00pm. (All to be confirmed). (NM)

Thursday 10th – Branch Meeting: will include Christmas Quiz and mince pies. Arden Arms, 23 Millgate, Stockport, SK1 2LX. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

Thursday 10th – Branch Xmas Meal: Christmas Dinner with a twist at Pi (Altrincham), 18 Shaws Road, Altrincham, WA14 1QU. Select from one of Pieminster's annual range of Christmas pies washed down by a pint or two. Starts 8.00pm. Book with social@thcamra.org.uk. (T&H)

Saturday 12th – New Faces Social: Meet 1.00pm in the New Oxford, Bexley Square, Salford, M3 6DB. Then move on to First Chop Brewing Arm, Unit 3, Trinity Row, Trinity Way, Salford M3 5EN at 3.00pm. (NM)

Wednesday 16th – Branch Meeting: Crescent, 20 Salford Crescent, M5 4PF. Starts 7.30pm. (NM)

Friday 18th – Famous Hillgate Stagger: join us on what may be the oldest annual event in any CAMRA calendar! Starts Queens Head (Turner's Vaults), 12 Little Underbank, Stockport, SK1 1JT, 7.00pm; Red Bull, 14 Middle Hillgate, SK1 3AY, 8.00pm. (SSM)

Tuesday 29th – Pub of the Month presentation: Governors House, 43 Ravenoak Road, Cheadle Hulme, SK8 7EQ. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Tuesday 29th – Post Christmas Social: Waters Green Tavern, Waters Green, Macclesfield, SK11 6LH. Starts 8.00pm. (MEC)

Wednesday 30th – Annual Manchester City Centre Trip: meet Piccadilly Tap (M1 2GH) on Piccadilly Station Approach between 12 noon and 1.00pm followed by City Centre crawl. (HPNC)

Wednesday 30th – Branch Christmas day out! West Didsbury/Burton Road. Tram/bus to West Didsbury Station. 2.00pm Wine & Wallop, 2.45pm Green Finch, 3.30pm Railway, 4.00pm Mary & Archie,

4.45pm Saison, 5.30pm George Charles, 6.15pm Folk, 7.15pm Volta, 8.30pm Met. (T&H)

Wednesday 30th – Good Beer Guide 2017 Survey: Egerton Arms, 2 Gore Street, Salford, M3 5FP 7.00pm; Kings Arms, Bloom Street, M3 6AN, 7.45pm; Salford Arms, Bloom Street, M3 6AF, 8.30pm; Finish at New Oxford, M3 6DB. (NM)

Thursday 7th January – Branch Meeting: Lloyds, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton, M21 9AN. Guest speaker to be confirmed. Starts 8.00pm. (T&H)

Social Media

Many of the local CAMRA branches have Facebook and Twitter accounts which you can follow:



Stockport & South Manchester:
www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA

Trafford & Hulme: www.facebook.com/thcamra

Macclesfield & East Cheshire:
<http://fbl.me/meccamra>

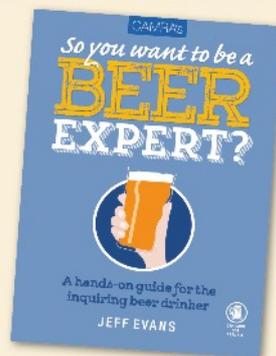
Stockport & South Manchester: @SSMCAMRA

Trafford & Hulme: @THCAMRA

North Manchester: @NorthMancsCAMRA

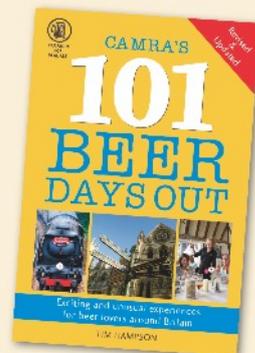


NEW FROM CAMRA BOOKS



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Pub of the Month

The Governors House, Cheadle Hulme



The Stockport and South Manchester Branch of CAMRA has voted the Governors House, Cheadle Hulme as its Pub of the Month for December 2015. Local Cheadle Hulme Ale Person and long-time resident Chris Walkden reports.

The Governors House premises date from 1882; originally called the Ravenoak Hotel, the name was changed to the Oakley Manor in the 1980s. In 1998, Nottingham brewery Hardys & Hansons bought the place, renamed it and converted it to a cosy, multi-room modern pub with cask ale. In 2006, the brewery was taken over by Greene King and it became part of their sprawling estate. For the next eight years, the place trundled along under a number of managers, flirting with guest beers from time to time.

Enter new managers Liam and Michaela Ward in October 2014, fresh from running a wine bar in Knutsford. Liam immediately spotted an opportunity to improve the cask offering to give a wider range of styles and tastes, so three additional handpumps were installed, meaning eight good quality beers are now on offer at busy times. Beers are sourced from the SIBA list and several local breweries' products will be found on the bar; in fact Cryptic have now started to supply their Tip of the Tongue bitter as a regular. Greene King offerings often include their experimental one-off beers.

Liam is grateful for the advice and assistance that has come from other GK pubs such as the Taps in Lytham and the Freshfield in Formby. To promote local breweries, a regular meet the brewer evening has been introduced on the first Wednesday of each month and a beer festival was held during National Cask Ale Week. This pro-cask policy has paid off, bringing in many new faces, and cask sales are up over 50% in the last 12 months. Good value food is served all day and nine en-suite bedrooms are available.

So why not come and join the celebrations with Liam, Michaela, Sam, Jamie and the 15-strong team on Tuesday 29th December from 8pm? What better way to beat those post-Christmas blues - and get your Winter Warmer Wander sticker too! The 313 bus from Stockport and X57 from East Didsbury will drop you outside (but check the Christmas timetable) or it's only a 10 minute walk from Cheadle Hulme railway station. You never know, you might enjoy yourself so much that you stay the night!

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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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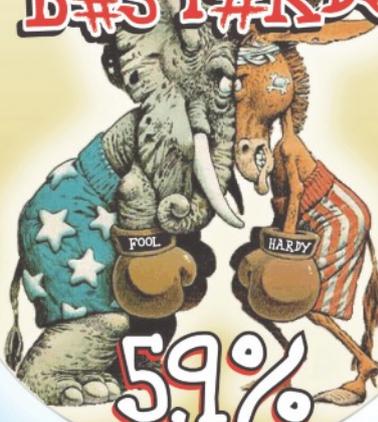
Brewed In Stockport

**Fool
Hardy** ales

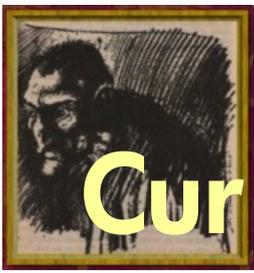
'Give The Devil His Due'



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The Hope Inn, 118 Wellington Road North,
Heaton Norris, Stockport, SK4 2LL.
www.thehopestockport.co.uk



Curmudgeon

Close Your Eyes and Drink Up

One of the founding texts of CAMRA was Christopher Hutt's brilliant polemic, "The Death of the English Pub", first published in 1973. From the perspective of 2015, the English pub back then might have seemed in rude health, but in the preceding decade it had experienced a dramatic upheaval. He describes the tidal wave of brewery takeovers and closures, the loss of distinctive local beers, the spread of pressurised dispense, and the rationalisation policies that deprived many villages of their last pub.

He reserves some of his strongest vitriol for an attack on the brewers' large-scale wrecking of pubs – imposing ludicrous, contrived themes that rapidly dated, knocking lounge and public bars through into one, and removing small rooms and cosy snugs to produce an easily-supervised open-plan interior. In its early years, CAMRA very much took this on board, strongly criticising pub operators for insensitive refurbishments and creating the laudable National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors.

However, as the focus has shifted from tradition to innovation, priorities have changed. The economic recovery has given brewers and pub owners more money to invest, and they have been up to their old tricks again. Sadly, though, much of this has been welcomed, with praise being lavished on "light, airy, open-plan" interiors, modernity in its own right seen as a virtue, and one scheme even applauded for "removing obstructive internal walls". Yes, beforehand, these pubs were often a bit down-at-heel, and the changes have also generally included a wider and more enterprising beer range. And, given that, some have criticised anyone raising objections for being negative and churlish - "Would you prefer it closed, then?"

But a pub isn't just another retail outlet, it's somewhere people actually visit to spend time socialising. It is passed down through the generations, so you will often hear older customers talking of things forty or fifty years ago. Of course pubs cannot set their face entirely against change, but destructive, gimmicky alterations will never stand the test of time. Is it time for CAMRA to return to standing up for pub interiors as well as beer?

Squeaky Bum Time is Back

Older readers will remember that dreadful vinyl upholstery in cars of the 60s and 70s, which didn't breathe at all and stuck to your clothes as soon as the sun came out. During the same period, many pubs installed upholstered "leatherette" fixed seating, often superseding plain wooden benches, which had exactly the same effect when the temperature rose and the place was packed with sweaty bodies. In the 80s, as with the car market, there was a swing against this, with more comfortable and breathable cloth seat coverings often replacing vinyl. At the time, it was seen as providing a more up-market image.

However, more recently, the tide seems to have turned, with many recent refurbishments ditching the velour and moquette in favour of a return to shiny plastic. I suppose there are benefits in that it is more durable and easier to clean, but it seems to be part of the vogue for giving pubs a "harder" appearance that goes against the earlier trend towards being cosy and comfy. Replacing carpets with bare boards is much the same.

And, when the weather gets a bit warm and humid, the effect on human flesh through cloth is exactly the same as it used to be, making the experience of going to the pub a bit tacky and uncomfortable. It's designer vision being put ahead of customer convenience. Nobody's going to walk out of a pub because it has vinyl rather than cloth seating, but, like removing beer mats, it's another of those little niggly annoyances.

Calling Home Brewers New Competition Launched

Stockport & South Manchester Branch is launching a competition among local home brewers to find up to five beers for Bar Nouveau at the 2016 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival.



Bar Nouveau was introduced for the 2014

festival and features brand new beers launched at the festival. It's proved to be a very successful feature and we will be running it again next year (the festival dates are 2nd – 4th June by the way). There will be 10 or 11 beers, all served on a separate bar and stored in a temperature-controlled cellar to ensure optimum condition.

Next year we want to involve local home brewers. There will be five categories and the winner of each will have their beer brewed commercially by a local brewer. The festival will purchase three firkins of each winning beer and the rest will be sold on to the market by the brewers concerned. If you are a home brewer this is a great chance to join in a brew day at a local brewery and also see one of your beers out there on sale to the public.

The brewers who have kindly agreed to host the winners are:

- * Quantum Brewing, Stockport
- * Thirst Class Ale, Stockport
- * Beer Nouveau, Manchester
- * Track Brewing, Manchester
- * Runaway Brewery, Manchester

Many thanks to these brewers for supporting the competition. Now – the beers. The five categories are quite broadly drawn so that people can use their imagination. Here's what we are looking for:

Mild – this can be dark or light, strong or weak. This is a chance to take an old beer style and run with it.

Bitter - session ales, ESBs, pale ales, brown, amber or blonde – the choice is yours.

IPA – while we're not style fanatics you should aim for a minimum ABV of 5%. Apart from that it's up to you – brown, red, black or white IPAs are all welcome.

Stout/Porter – again this is broadly drawn. Your beer can be standard, export or imperial – added flavours and ingredients optional.

Speciality – this is where you can really go to town. Saisons, Bocks, Rauch biers – all are welcome.

A few things to bear in mind. Firstly, although the beers will be judged from bottle they will have to work as cask beers. Also – think about the hops. Some go-to hops (Mosaic, Simcoe, Nelson Sauvin and the like) are getting difficult to obtain. While you might be able to get 150gms for a home brew it may well be a different matter when you come to scale up to a commercial length.



How to enter – just email your name, contact details and which categories you want to enter to: beercomp@ssmcamra.co.uk. **The cut-off date for entries is 31 December.** Judging will be on **Sunday 13th March 2016** at the Hope, Wellington Road North, Stockport, from 1.00pm. If we are swamped with entries then we will extend judging for some categories to the following week (in which case people will have plenty of notice).



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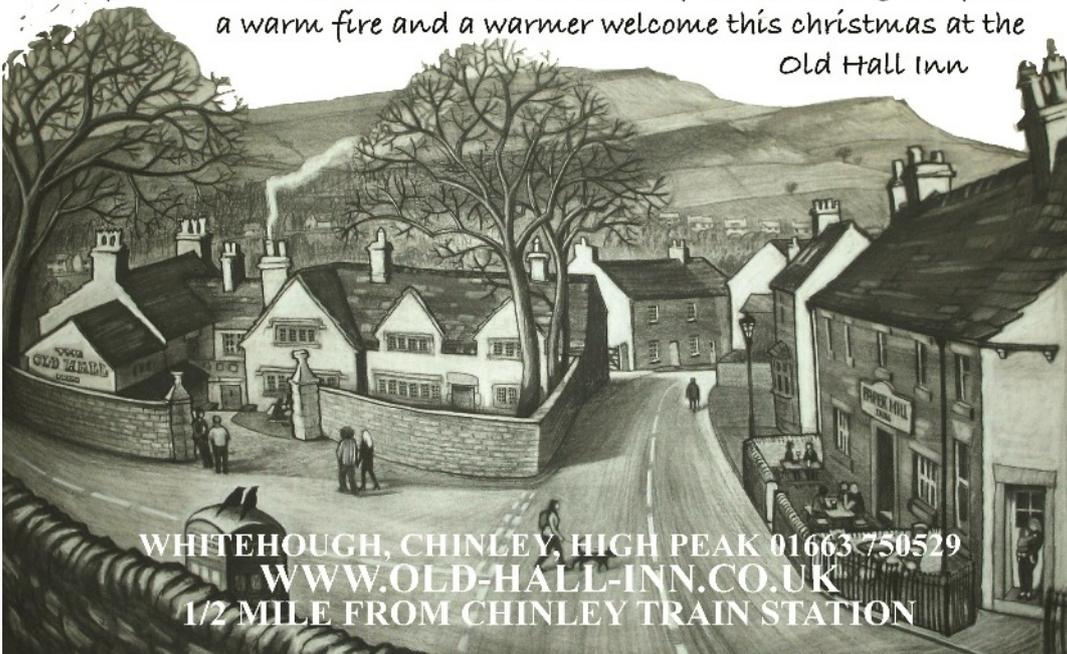
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Letter to the Editor

From Dave Sharpe, Woodsmoor:

Regarding the famous Hillgate Stagger. I have been moved to put pen to paper because it was suggested at a CAMRA branch meeting that we "staggered" elsewhere! This got me thinking about what it had been like long before my days in CAMRA. Let's look at the pub list from years ago.

Turners Vaults – now the Queens Head

The Albion – corner of Little Underbank and Mealhouse Brow – demolished

Spread Eagle – was Robinson's Brewery Tap – now closed

The Gladstone or Bishop Blaize – now offices.

Red Bull

White Bear – corner of Edward Street - demolished

Black Lion – now offices

Sun & Castle

Pack Horse (Big Lamp) – closed

Crown

Golden Lion – now an architects office

Star & Garter

Rams Head – adjacent to the late Royal Oak Brewery – now a restaurant

Shakespeare – facing the above – demolished

The Flying Dutchman – now the Fairway

Royal Mortar – now offices

Wheatsheaf

Well there you have it, 17 pubs to visit in around three and a half hours. Did anyone do the lot? Ten of the seventeen have gone and there is one addition – Winters.

Today's stagger includes the Waterloo and the Blossoms on the A6. Of the ten pubs now nine are serving cask ales. Not bad at all and which makes it an event, the longest running in any CAMRA branch, and well worth keeping going. Come and join us this year on Friday 18th December for a great night out. We start off at 7pm in the Queens Head.

(Dave is right of course – this is always an interesting night out with a great variety of pubs and beers. Ed.)

Cider & Perry Awards

Apart from the much sought after Beer of the Festival awards, Stockport Beer & Cider Festival also makes awards for the champion cider and perry. This usually involves a trip to the West Country and this year was no exception with awards going to makers in Somerset and Herefordshire, neither of whom had won at Stockport before.



receiving his certificate from Cider Bar Manager Charlotte Bulmer.

After that it was a journey up the scenic Wye Valley to Pembridge in north west Herefordshire. This village is home to the well-established Dunkertons Cider (previous festival award winners) but we were on our way to the newer **Stockmoor Farm Cider**. Again based at a working

Perry of the Festival was Piglets Perry made by the **Nempnett Cider Company** based near the Somerset village of Nempnett Thrubwell. Cider making was well underway when we called and owner Keith Balch treated us to some mulled cider while we watched proceedings. He is pictured here



single varietal cider made from the Dabinett apple). Charlotte is pictured here presenting James with his certificate.

farm which also maintains a herd of pedigree Hereford cattle, James Aitchison has been making cider commercially for just a few years and we were pleased to present him with his first ever award. We were also treated to samples of a perry and four ciders (including our festival winner, a

High Peak Pub of the Season



Some four years ago the Railway, in Romiley was an almost forgotten pub within the Robinsons portfolio. It had a very poor reputation, too. They clearly saw no future for it and the pub was offered for sale by auction. Spotting the potential, the

then-closed Railway was acquired by Janice Wright and was brought back to life with a splendid refurbishment that included the provision of a first floor restaurant.

However, it is not simply fine premises that make a good pub. A re-launch in 2012 with a new name, **Platform One**, coupled with fine food and a well stocked bar, which includes six handpumps with an ever changing range of cask ales has seen the pub quickly establish itself within the local community.



The pub has gone from strength to strength and now attracts a wide range of customers. The choice of cask beers has proved very popular and their variety and quality have not gone unnoticed as the pub was selected as the Autumn Pub of the Season by the High Peak, Tameside & North East Cheshire Branch. The certificate marking the award was presented to the pub on Saturday 24th October by local member Alf Clark.



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MORE CHOICE BETTER BEER

International Brewing Awards



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Wobbly Bob



2002

Navvy



2002

Wobbly Bob



2004

Wobbly Bob



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needs

YOU

See page 22
for details



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Branch and Regional
Cider Pub of the Year 2014



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Hazel Moor Sea Anglers Club - 1st Wednesday of Month

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Buses 192 & 22 pass by the door



High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views

Peak Practice With Robin Wignall



The **Goyt** in Whaley Bridge is always good for a well kept pint of beer and has a good range of beers from the Punch lists. A recent visit found Sharp's Atlantic, Fuller's London Pride, Everards Tiger and two from Moorhouse's, Pride of Pendle and interestingly, Black Cat Reserve. This is the 4.6% version of the award-winning dark mild from Burnley. Popular beers are retained for a few weeks though there is also a rolling programme of changing interesting ales. Well worth a visit.



Along the road at the **White Hart** the Punch lists again provide for a range of well kept beer. Moorhouse's Blond Witch seems to be a deserving fixture on the bar, but other beers of note include Wychwood Gold and Sharp's Atlantic. There is also White Hart Bitter, a house beer which I understand is Marston's EPA, brewed, confusingly, at Banks's. Opening at noon each day, the White Hart gives locals and visitors a chance of a fairly early pint to start the day.

A group of us recently spent a few days in Caernarfon, not far from the highest peaks in Wales. The pubs which we found appealing included the twelve-month-old brew pub **Old Market**, which serves up to four of its own beers. You can stand in the main hall of the former market and see the brewing plant. There is a mix of styles of beer and all worth trying on our visit. Good food is also available. **Bar Bach** is quite simply a little bar, a micro bar, with beers from local breweries including Old Market. This provided an interesting call. Wetherspoon's **Tafarn y Porth** of course provided the least expensive beers of the stay.

High Peak Pub News With Tom Lord

In Poynton the **Acoustic Lounge** on Park Lane is now open at lunchtimes and currently has a house beer 'Acoustic Bitter' and a regular beer from the Seven Brothers Brewery.



In Disley the **Ploughboy** is now closed as a pub, and in Hyde the **Duke of Sussex** at the top of Clarendon Road is also closed and boarded up. It is also reported that the **Bay Horse** on Talbot Road, Newton, Hyde, which

Monday evening with 20p off and a further reduction with CAMRA vouchers brought the price of a pint down to £1.35. And good pints they were with beer from Conwy and a fine session beer from the Big Bog Brewery at Waunfawr, a nearby village whose name loosely translates as 'big bog'. Bog Standard Bitter was much better than that and our group made a big hole in the firkin in a couple of days. Our other call was to the **Black Boy**, which has a deservedly good reputation for food whilst also selling a good range of well kept beer, though both come at a price.

Much nearer to home a quick call into the **Stable Bar** at the rear of the Monsal Head Hotel above Monsal Dale, noted a couple of local beers available, Wincle Sir Philip and Thornbridge Kipling. It is good to see this bar which must be very dependent on the tourist trade, supporting the local brewing industry.

I almost hesitate to mention the beer festival which was part of the Great Peak District Food and Drink Fair in Buxton. A big majority of the beers were from the various Marston's breweries, which are hardly Peak District beers. I understand that Marston's had provided bar/cellar services. The only local beers were from Thornbridge along with Howard Town Wren's Nest, and these had mainly sold out by Sunday. There were also a couple of beers from outside the county brewed at the Mobberley brewery. Beer was served in plastic containers, because it was an outdoors event. Pints cost £3.90 and to annoy the 'expensive half pint' campaigners halves cost £2. It is difficult to offer a positive recommendation for a future event.

was closed and boarded some time ago is to become a Co-op Convenience store. The **Fairfield Arms** in Droylsden is currently closed for refurbishment. The **Dog and Partridge** (commonly known as the Bottom Dog) on Oldham Road, Waterloo, Ashton has now reopened, currently with no real ale available.

Opening Times met up with John Kennedy recently. John is well known in Glossop as being the former landlord of the Nags Head (now flats) and the Good Beer Guide-listed **Crown**. John left the Crown a few years ago to take on the **Beehive** in Glossop and then much more recently took over the **New Lamp** in Hadfield – both owned by Punch Taverns. John tells us that he will soon be taking over the **Buxton** on Mottram Old Road in Hyde and the **Poachers Arms** in Hope. Essentially, he intends to work with the same formula as he already has for the Beehive and the New Lamp which is Thai and English food along with three real ales which would generally be two national brands and one other. It looks like we have the emergence of the John Kennedy Pub Company!



In a surprise move in mid-October, the **Soldier Dick** in Furness Vale changed hands as Mike and Lynne Nelson sold the business to Tina Power and Mark Ramsden. They come from a pub background in Leicestershire and south Derbyshire, working especially with Everards. No major changes are planned. In the first day or two of the new ownership beers were Greene King Abbot, Marston's Thwaites Lancaster Bomber and Wainwright and much more interestingly Rapa Nui from the Whaley Bridge Brewery which has now re-located to Furness Vale, within the Whaley Bridge township, just down the road from the Soldier Dick. Less than ten years ago the Soldier Dick was a failing pub under the Punch regime. Mike and Lynne bought the freehold and turned the pub into a successful business, with sensibly-priced, quality food and well kept beer from a range of sources. Mike took advantage of the freedom from tie to access a good range of interesting beer from local micro breweries to regional beers from around the country. The reward for these efforts was a place in the 2015 Good Beer Guide. Thanks to Mike and Lynne for a job well done and good luck to Tina and Mark as they embark on this new venture.

Winter Warmers

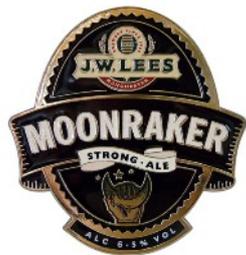
Beers for the Festive Season and beyond

As this was written the prolonged Indian summer we have enjoyed was drawing to a decidedly stormy close. Appropriate then that not only do we launch our Winter Warmer Wander but also turn our thoughts to beers for the festival season and beyond to the winter months ahead.

Christmas calls for celebratory beers, either in big bottles for sharing or smaller measures for sipping at the end of a meal or in front of the television, and preferably a roaring fire as well. More pubs seem to have open fires these days, too, and what can be better than ending a night on a warming barley wine or strong stout?

Family Brewers

All of our family brewers produce strong winter beers. **Holts** have their Sixex (6%) which appears occasionally on draught and is in fact available in bottle all year round. **Hydes** produce XXXX (6.8%), a dark, warming beer that has appeared in both bottle and on draught. It's not always brewed though and currently doesn't appear on the brewery website.



J. W. Lees have their famous Moonraker (6.5%) of course. The brewery's website tells us the name of this beer comes from a story about a group of farm-labourers who thought that the reflection of the moon in a pond was a lovely truckle of Lancashire cheese, and tried to rake it out but ended up falling in! It's a reddish-brown beer with a strong, fruity aroma accompanied by a rich, sweet flavour. First brewed in 1950, it is available in bottle and on draught.

However the granddaddy of them all is **Robinsons Old Tom**. This was first brewed in 1899 and the brewers' recipe book from that time, complete with a sketch of the famous cat's face, is one of the brewery's prized possessions. When first brewed it had an original gravity of 1099, which would make it around 10% alcohol, but it has settled at a more than respectable 8.5% for many years now. Despite being filtered and pasteurised the bottle version is still good to drink but where Old Tom really comes into its own is on draught. An increasing number of Robinsons pubs sell the draught version in winter – either on handpump or from a small cask stillaged on the bar. This is one of the few beers that can be sold at room temperature and still perform well and it is fascinating to try versions at different stages of maturity. One to seek out.



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Belgian Stars

The UK is not the only country with a tradition of strong winter ales. Many European nations with a strong beer culture also produce seasonal specials and among these Belgium is arguably pre-eminent. Most of that country's brewers make a Christmas beer and some of the best are also regularly available in the UK. One of the very best, and one that you will see in most specialist beer shops, is Gouden Carolus Christmas made by **Het Anker** brewery in the historic city of Mechelen. Het Anker makes a range of beers, several under the Gouden Carolus name, and the mighty Christmas version (10.5%) is possibly the star turn.



This is a sweet, dark brew laced with liquorice and spices. If you can restrain yourself it is worth storing bottles for a year in a cool, dark space as this is a beer that matures spectacularly.



Of course Christmas isn't just about strong, dark beers. Not, you may think, it isn't just about beer at all. Fancy a celebratory glass of dry champagne for Christmas Day? Well, as they say, there's a beer for that. The dry and sharp lambics, a Belgian speciality, come in 75cl bottles and are ideal for sharing among friends. These beers are made in a small area

of Belgium and are famously spontaneously fermented by wild yeasts that live in the breweries and their surrounding area. Some are startlingly dry but for a couple of more accessible, but still fully traditional, lambics try those from **Oud Beersel**. Their Oude Geuze (a blend of old and young lambic beers) is citrus-sharp but smooth while the Oude Kriek is a sumptuous and fruity cherry beer which isn't too sweet.

Interestingly there's one other old Belgian Christmas beer you might regularly come across but it's not one we recommend. Back in the 1920s, the old Artois brewery decided to make a special, pale and strong lager for the festive season. Inspired by the Christmas Star they called it Stella....

Local Heroes

Of course many of our local breweries have special beers out at this time of the year. We only have the space to feature a few of them here.



The new **Torrside Brewery** in New Mills seems to have hit the ground running with strong beers. Sold under the "Torrside Monsters" label, three beers will be out and about this month. An English Barley Wine (8.5%) was smooth and dangerously easy drinking when sampled in mid-November while the Imperial Stout (10%) was again a smooth drinking beer full of dark malt character. In the fermenter when we called was an American Barley Wine (10%) which promises to be a deep amber beer with hop character provided by Cascade and Equinox hops.

Stockport's **Quantum Brewery** is re-brewing the superb Cranberry Imperial Stout. Brewed to a minimum 8.5%, this rich, luscious beer is full of dark malts with excellent fruit notes in the finish. This will, hopefully, be available in bottle and also on draught.

Manchester's **Runaway Brewery** has a Gingerbread Stout (6.2%) out on draught, in keg-conditioned form, and you may also be able to find a bottle in local specialist shops. Near neighbours **Marble Beers** have one or two specials out this month including the award-winning Stout Stout (4.7%). This is described as "an extra winter stout with a rich palate, roasted notes, fruity hops and a long, dry, bitter finish". It's only available on cask so you'll have to go down to the pub to try this one. Well worth the journey.

Out in Hyde **Tweed Brewing** have brought out a Porter (4.9%) which is described as "full-bodied and lightly roasty with some sweet treacle notes and a satisfying finish" which sounds just right for this time of year. Also don't overlook the excellent Stock Porter (4.8%) from **Stockport Brewing**; while this is available all year round it really comes into its own in the colder months.



The Winter Warmer Wander



Sponsored by Robinsons Old Tom

This month we are once again running the Winter Warmer Wander, our annual celebration of festive beers to bring you a little winter cheer across the Christmas and New Year season, and on into the cold nights of January. Like the Mild Challenge and the Cider Circuit, this is the chance for you to visit some new pubs and try some new beers. This year we have lots of great prizes and lots of ways to win them...

What you need to do...

- * Buy at least half a pint of cask conditioned stout, porter, old ale, barley wine (or if none available, any other premium beer at 4.5% ABV or greater).
- * Get the pub to put a sticker on its entry below (if they can't find a sticker, just get a signature).
- * Get 12 stickers and you will win a bottle of beer plus a ticket for Manchester Beer & Cider Festival.
- * 24 stickers wins you two tickets for Manchester Beer & Cider Festival, a WWW t-shirt plus entry into a prize draw for a hamper of assorted beers.
- * Visit all 40 pubs to win two bottles of beer, four tickets for Manchester Beer & Cider Festival, a WWW t-shirt plus entry into a prize draw for one of two separate prizes; a hamper (12 bottles) of assorted beers or a meal for two at a local Wetherspoons.

The Winter Warmer Wander runs from Friday 27 November to Sunday 10 January. Completed forms need to be with Dave Platt, 138 Broom Lane, Levenshulme, M19 3LJ by 16 January (so we can post the tickets in time). Include your name, address and a contact number and/or email address.

Name	Address	Contact No./email
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RESTRICTED OPENING: Those with a coloured background do not open at least 12noon to 10:30pm every day of the week. Use WhatPub.com to check.

<u>Costello's Bar</u> 18 Goose Green Altrincham WA14 1DW	<u>Jack In The Box</u> Altrincham Market Hall Market Street Altrincham, WA14 1SA	<u>Sip Club</u> 164A Barton Road Stretford M32 8DP	<u>Parlour</u> 60 Beech Road Chorlton M21 9EG	<u>Dulcimer</u> 567 Wilbraham Road Chorlton M21 0AE
<u>Sedge Lynn</u> 21a Manchester Road Chorlton M21 9PN	<u>Salisbury Ale House</u> 2 Wakefield Street Manchester, M1 5NE	<u>The Knott</u> 374 Deansgate Manchester M3 4LY	<u>New Oxford</u> 11 Bexley Square Salford M3 6DB	<u>Paramount</u> 33-35 Oxford Street Manchester M1 4BH
<u>Waterhouse</u> 67-71 Princess Street Manchester M2 4EG	<u>Micro Bar</u> Arndale Market High Street Manchester, M4 3AH	<u>Marble Arch</u> 73 Rochdale Road Manchester M4 4HY	<u>Crown & Kettle</u> 2 Oldham Road Manchester M4 5FE	<u>Castle Hotel</u> 66 Oldham Street Manchester M4 1LE
<u>Pie and Ale</u> The Hive Lever Street Manchester, M1 1FN	<u>Piccadilly Tap</u> Piccadilly Station Approach Manchester, M1 2GH	<u>Harewood Arms</u> 2 Market Street Broadbottom SK14 6AX	<u>Wilfred Wood</u> 204 London Road Hazel Grove Stockport, SK7 4DF	<u>Blossoms</u> 2 Buxton Road Heavily Stockport, SK2 6NU
<u>Fairway</u> 137 Higher Hillgate Heavily Stockport, SK1 3HR	<u>Cocked Hat</u> 2 Market Place Stockport SK1 1EW	<u>Calverts Court</u> 13 St Petersgate Stockport SK1 1EB	<u>Bakers Vaults</u> Market Place Stockport SK1 1ES	<u>Arden Arms</u> 23 Millgate Stockport SK1 2LX
<u>Railway</u> 1 Avenue Street Portwood Stockport, SK1 2BZ	<u>Heaton Hops</u> 7 School Lane Heaton Chapel Stockport, SK4 5DE	<u>Nursery</u> 258 Green Lane Heaton Norris Stockport, SK4 2NA	<u>Hope Inn</u> 118 Wellington Rd Nth Heaton Norris Stockport, SK4 2LL	<u>Magnet</u> 51 Wellington Rd Nth Heaton Norris Stockport, SK4 1HJ
<u>Crown Inn</u> 154 Heaton Lane Stockport SK4 1AR	<u>Ye Olde Vic</u> 1 Chatham Street Edgeley Stockport, SK3 9ED	<u>Governors House</u> 43 Ravenoak Road Cheadle Hulme Stockport, SK8 7EQ	<u>Gateway</u> 882 Wilmslow Road East Didsbury Manchester, M20 5PG	<u>Ye Olde Cock</u> 848 Wilmslow Road Didsbury Manchester, M20 2RN
<u>Fletcher Moss</u> 1 William Street Didsbury Manchester, M20 6RQ	<u>Milson Rhodes</u> School Lane Didsbury Manchester, M20 6RD	<u>Wine & Wallop</u> 97 Lapwing Lane West Didsbury Manchester, M20 6UR	<u>Friendship</u> 353 Wilmslow Road Fallowfield Manchester, M14 6XS	<u>Ford Madox Brown</u> 1 Wilmslow Road Rusholme, M13 9PD

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Manchester Beer & Cider Festival

John O'Donnell with more news of next month's event

By the time you read this, there will be just six weeks to go until the Third Manchester Beer & Cider Festival arrives at its new home in the heart of the city. The city's largest celebration of beer and cider comes to Manchester Central (still known as G-Mex to many) from Wednesday 20th to Saturday 23rd January.



A move to a new venue is always a challenge for any major event but the festival's organising team has been relishing the opportunities that Manchester Central offers with the entire venue on one level and basically a blank canvas to work with. One wall of the venue will be taken up with what organisers think is the longest bar ever installed in Manchester – over 60 metres from end to end and featuring just short of 200 handpumps and 200 more beers direct from the cask.

This will be complemented by a separate island bar in the centre of the hall featuring dedicated bars from some of the country's top breweries. The festival is pleased to be welcoming back our most popular breweries in Hawkshead and Marble Beers – given how

their beers have flown off the bar in the previous two years, we know you love them. They will be joined on the island by RedWillow, now such an established name on the national craft brewery scene that it's difficult to remember that they are just five years old, and more old favourites Bollington Brewery and Middleton's Wilson Potter.

Another newcomer to the brewery bar line up will be the most talked about new brewery of 2015. Cloudwater Brewery was actually lined up to launch its beers at MBCF 2015 but delays in getting the brewery set up meant they didn't actually brew their first beer until three weeks after the festival. Now we are delighted to welcome them to the festival with their own bar.

Another coup for the festival has been securing a bar from one of the pioneers of the Manchester micro-brewing boom way back in the year 2000. Such was the reputation that Pictish Brewery built for amazing hop-forward beers, they became the holy grail of breweries with a waiting list of pubs wanting to buy from them. After producing their first ever collaboration brew, named Tandem, with the MBCF in 2015 they will be back in 2016 with their very first festival bar.



Sharing the island with the breweries will be the traditional cider and perry bar, which this year will also feature British fruit wines and mead. Backing onto it will be our two Bières Sans Frontières bars – one focusing on the traditional beer countries of Germany, Belgium and the Czech Republic while the other showcases the best from the burgeoning craft beer scene from around the world – including beers from the USA, Spain, New Zealand and many more.

The festival has always striven to be progressive in showcasing both the best of the traditional and the new wave of British beers. In pursuit of this aim, MBCF 2016 will include a new bar serving a rotating selection of key-keg conditioned real ales from UK breweries. This will allow us to expand our beer range to include modern styles of beer which brewers tend not to package in cask either because of high strength or specialist nature – imperial stouts, sour and brettet beers and super strong Triple IPAs.

As well as the impressive central hall space, Manchester Central also brings a number of additional rooms and spaces which will be used to host a full programme of special events – some free to attend and some ticketed. These will range from the ever popular tutored tastings to presentations by brewers and noted beer writers. There will be debates on some of the hot topics concerning the beer world and CAMRA's Chief Executive Tim Page will be holding a special question and answer session for CAMRA members on the Wednesday evening. The full event programme wasn't available as we went to press, but should be on the festival website by the time you read this.

Tickets for the festival are available now from www.mancbeerfest.uk. Although you will be able to pay on the door, the festival is expecting to be busy at all sessions so an advance ticket is your guarantee of entry. Another way of guaranteeing your place is to volunteer to work a shift or two – even if you don't fancy bar work, there are a wealth of other roles available – details available on the website.





Stagger

Cheadle Hulme with John Sutcliffe



On a fine evening we met at the **Hesketh** on the corner of Hulme Hall Road and Swann Lane. It is managed by James, one of the Almond family who also have the Three Bears, Puss in Boots and Fletchers Arms amongst others. The choice of beers has increased and the following were available: Theakston Infallible, Caledonian Dropkick, Adnams Southwold, and Morland Old Golden Hen. All scored well. There is an attractive garden at the rear, next to a large car park which replaced the bowling green in the 1970s. England were playing Fiji in the Rugby Union World Cup and as expected we came across several beers with rugby connotations during the evening.



Moving to Robinsons' **Church Inn** at the junction where Ravenoak Road, Church Road and Ack Lane meet, Unicorn, Dizzy Blond, Wizard, and Hop and Under were on sale. All were good. The covered outdoor area and the small vault extension on the other side of the bar have TV. Quite a few people were watching the game on the large outdoor screen and England were now leading 10 – 3. The overall character of this very traditional public house has been maintained and it still has much of the charm that it had when 18th century cottages were combined to form the pub.

We crossed the road to the **Governors House**. It is owned by Greene King Brewery but in addition to Green King IPA, Abbott Ale, and Old Speckled Hen there was Everards Tiger, and we sampled Cryptic Tip of the Tongue, Kelham Island Pale Rider and Hawkshead Windermere Pale. We didn't try any of the three Greene King beers. The manager, Liam, is keen to keep a good range of cask ales to very high quality and certainly the ones that we enjoyed were well up to Good Beer Guide standard. The central bar serves a number of well-decorated semi-enclosed

spaces, the rear given over to food. It is still residential with eight en-suite bedrooms. There is an extensive menu of bar meals. There is a Sunday morning farmers' market held once a month in the extensive car park. By now the rugby score was 18 – 8.

A ten minute walk brought us to the **John Millington**. Once again this results from an extensive rebuilding and modernisation of what was previously Millington Hall restaurant. There is a similar format of central bar serving a number of rooms. The Hydes beers available were Original, Munchen, Manchester's Finest, What a Drop, and a Hydes Beer Studio beer, Millennium Crystal. We did not try the Hydes Original or Manchester's Finest but the other three were all Good Beer Guide standard.



A short downhill walk led to **Platform Five**. This is a good example of how an expensive refurbishment and re-branding can fail to achieve the desired result. What makes a good pub is a good management team, friendly staff, attention to service and maintaining good beer quality plus the atmosphere built up by customers. Holt's managed to change a successful community pub into something quite different.

The beers were Holt's Bitter, their rather weak IPA, Two Hoots and Bootleg Renegade. Only the bitter managed an average score. With only two bar staff serving on Friday night it is not unusual to wait 10 minutes to be served. The staff are helpful and trying their best but the beer quality is nowhere near what it used to be when the pub was the Cheadle Hulme and had a choice of ten well kept beers at weekends. Bar food is adequate, but expensive for what it is. The vault is so in name only, having lost the dart board. It is difficult to believe that it has been in the Good Beer Guide and sadly has no chance of regaining that status on the present showing. We hope that the new manager will be allowed to make improvements and have control of the choice of menu.

In total contrast, the **Chiverton Tap** on Mellor Road has proved to be a great success. It opened in May, having been converted from a double fronted shop unit. Chiverton was the name of a draper's shop but the premises have had several uses since, the last being a kitchen showroom, but there are subtle hints in the interior décor of its first use as a drapers and

the original name is in mosaic on the entrance step.



Most beers are £3.20 pint with the Elland 1872 porter being £3.60 a pint. Other beers were the excellent Black Jack Play Your Cards Right, Bollington Long Hop, RedWillow Mirthless and Totally Brewed Sorachi Mango IPA. There is also a varying real cider and occasionally perry. Opening hours are from 4:00 pm until 10:30 at the early part of the week, with slightly longer hours at weekends. Food is mainly pies.

The last call of the night was at the **Kings Hall**. Built in 1937, this was formerly a village hall with a dance floor upstairs. It became a Chinese restaurant and was converted by JD Wetherspoon into a café bar style public house. Entering from Station Road, there is a full height, wood panelled space with a curved staircase leading to a small mezzanine area that also gives access to the toilets.



The 'L' shaped bar serves two permanent cask beers and usually three or four guests. There is a mixed clientele of all ages and it can be quite crowded at weekends. Although not quite the traditional public house, Wetherspoons do much to promote a choice of good, well kept cask conditioned ales. Rachael has worked hard to keep the standard high, devoting one week to a CAMRA tap takeover, and there are often 'meet the brewer' events. The standard of beers is usually high but was a little disappointing on this occasion. We tried International Craft Brewer's Showcase Donovan Copper Red Ale, Phoenix Double Gold and Moorhouses Pendle Witch. These were somewhat average. Overall a good stagger, with mostly excellent beer.

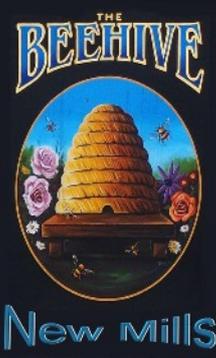
And the Rugby finished England 35, Fiji 11.

*Christmas greetings
to all our customers.
Thanks for your support
during 2015 and best wishes
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Heard at the Bar

Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Discounts



West Didsbury's **Saison** bar has introduced a 10% discount for CAMRA members. The bar on Burton Road, which is run by the same team as Chorlton's Good Beer Guide listed **Dulcimer**, has four handpumps on its downstairs bar (along with 16 keg & key-keg lines). Thwaites Wainwright (owned and brewed by Marston's) is permanent with the other three pumps featuring beers from breweries such as Blackjack, Siren, Hardknott, Fyne and more. Saison and Dulcimer are also the only place where you can buy beers from Oud Craft Brew – the group's own brewery arm run by Dulcimer's Max and Saison's Tom. When *Opening Times* called, their Wandering Eye pale ale was on the bar.



CAMRA members can now also get a discount on cask ales at Urmston's **Prairie Schooner Tap House**. The Flixton Road micro-pub is offering members 20p a pint off their four cask ales. Members can also use their JD Wetherspoon's vouchers in the pub to get the same 50p off that they can get in Wetherspoons own pubs. Having just celebrated its first birthday, the Prairie Schooner has overhauled the bar set up, installing four handpumps (beers were previously served by gravity). A new "cellar" has also been installed behind the bar to replace the previous in-cask cooling system. An ingenious construction of welded steel and plastic, the casks are hoisted onto pull out drawers which then retract into the wall (the new arrangement is pictured above). Magnetic covers form a sealed cooled box to create cellar conditions. The new construction can accommodate eight casks at a time and

means cask beer availability and quality is much improved.

A 10% CAMRA discount is now available at the Church Inn, Flixton, and indeed has been for some time we hear. Further pubs offering a 10% discount to CAMRA members are the **Grey Horse** on Portland Street in the City Centre, the **Didsbury** on Wilmslow Road in Didsbury and the **George & Dragon** on Manchester Road in Heaton Chapel. A further Didsbury pub now offering a CAMRA discount is **Ye Olde Cock** where card-carrying members can get 25p off a pint.

Pub company Stonegate has been playing musical bars with their outlets in Sale. The former **Waterside** has now been rebranded as a **Slug & Lettuce**, while the former Slug & Lettuce is now the **Block & Gasket**. The latter has four handpumps on the bar – an increase of two from its predecessor on the site.

Brew Taps

Blackjack Beers and **Runaway Brewery** are to join forces for a Christmas brew tap event on the weekend of 11th and 12th December at Runaway Brewery on Dantzig Street in the "Green Quarter". As well as Runaway's range of key-keg conditioned beers, Blackjack will also be wheeling their bars over the road to provide a second bar in the yard outside the brewery.



It should be a busy weekend in fact as on Saturday 12th there is another event on the other side of town. Here **Squawk Brewery** and **Track Brewing** are jointly hosting a "Christmas Brew Tap Extravaganza" at Track's

premises on Sheffield Street behind Piccadilly Station.

Marple

The beer scene in Marple and environs has long been dominated by Robinsons. They do have some fine pubs in the area but this does mean that beer choice can be a little limited. However significant changes are in the pipeline for the next couple of months.

Before Christmas, if all goes to plan, Anthony Meynell and Billy Booth will have opened the **Samuel Oldknow** micro-pub and shop on Market Street. Plans at the moment are to feature six cask beers (all local-ish) and six keg lines. The shop will sell local ales alongside "the usual world selection". Opening hours will initially be 12 noon until 11.00pm. *Opening Times* plans to drop along once everything is up and running so look for a fuller report in a later issue.

In fact Marple is to gain a second micro-pub-cum-shop in the form of **Beer Traders** which will be in converted shop premises at 113 Stockport Road and will offer "an ever-changing selection of local and international beers". Again this is planned to be open before Christmas – hopefully more next time.



Another significant development will come in the New Year. Just as this issue was being put together Martin and Sam Wood of the **Hope Inn** and Fool Hardy Ales fame, announced they had bought the freehold of the closed **Spring Gardens** in Marple Bridge (pictured above). Originally a Wilson's pub, the Spring Gardens has had a chequered history in recent years and even spent some time as a Texan steakhouse, Tennessee Jacks before shutting its doors. The plan is to run the Spring Gardens as a "Fool Hardy Tap House" with a food operation as well as, we expect, a beer range not unlike that at the Hope. The plan is to have the pub open in either late January or early February. We certainly wish Martin and Sam the very best for their new venture.

More News on page 21



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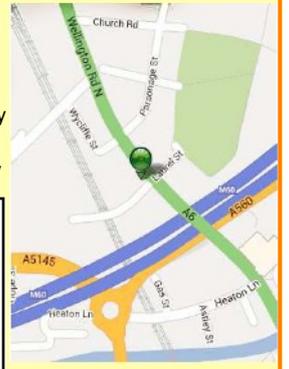
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FRIDAY 2-10PM SATURDAY 12-10PM SUNDAY 2-10PM
MONDAY CLOSED

What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region

Stubborn Mule

Stubborn Mule Brewery is a brand new brewery in Timperley, writes *Jon Gobbett*.

Owner/brewer Ed Bright, a banker with BNY Mellon by day, says that one of the reasons that he got into brewing was watching his granddad make wine at home and being intrigued by the idea of making your own alcohol. Despite this early intrigue Ed didn't actually make his first brew until four years ago which was, as Ed puts it, a "boil in the bag" brew from Boots which was not a success. However it did raise Ed's interest again with the thought that he had to be able to brew something more palatable than that. So, the research started from both books and the internet. This research convinced Ed that all grain brewing was the way to proceed so he set about finding and acquiring suitable kit and his kitchen was turned into a brewery.



Ten all grain brews followed in approximately four months with Ed learning and tuning his brew process on each iteration. At this point the arrival of his first child forced a major re-think of where to brew which fortunately coincided with one of his mates' parents wanting to get rid of their shed. The shed was duly delivered only to spend several weeks just standing in the garden but with the impending onset of winter Ed knew that to continue brewing the shed had to be built. Also at this time he was looking to upgrade his brewing kit and went to Powell Brewing in Holywell, North Wales to purchase a 100 litre kit. With his investment in kit Ed also invested in his own skills taking a micro brewing course with Whim Ales in their Hartington brewery.

Many more practice brews on the new kit followed to hone the efficiency and the recipes which have led to three core beers, Single Hop IPA, Pre Prohibition Cream Ale and W15 Magnum IPA. Ed is now in the process of taking his beers to market and is already supplying seven outlets in the Manchester City Centre and Altrincham areas with two more in the pipeline. There is a fourth brew in the

making - a Dunkelweizen which I must admit I'm very much looking forward to trying.

Free Radical Brew Co

Here's another new name for the local brewing scene – and again it's the increasingly familiar story of keen home brewers getting a commercial licence (and the other necessary permissions) and launching themselves on the local market.



The people behind Free Radical will be familiar to the customers of Bottle on Shaw Road in Heaton Moor as Tom Rayson and Andy Quinn (pictured above) both work behind the bar there. *Opening Times* caught up with them there last month when some test brews were available to try.

A Bergamot Saison (5.6%) had gentle esters on the nose, a spicy taste and a dry, fruity finish helped by the addition of Mosaic hops. The Orange Wheat Ale (5%) combined Chinook and Citra hops with orange peel to create a dry lemony beer while a Raspberry Pale Ale (4%) had the right balance of raspberry fruit and a dry, firm finish. We were impressed.

If all goes to plan the beers should be out and about early in the New Year. The bottled beers will probably be brewed in the small kit used by Andy at the moment while longer runs (including keg-conditioned beers) will hopefully be brewed at a local brewer who has spare capacity.

New from Marble

We report elsewhere on the welcome return of Stouter Stout. There are however two other interesting beers in the pipeline. There are a Double IPA made in collaboration with All In Brewing of Gothenburg in Sweden and an American Porter made with Against the Grain Brewery of Louisville, Kentucky. International or what? We still await news of Matt Howgate's replacement as Head Brewer. In the meantime rumours inevitably continue to swirl.

Macclesfield Brewing Co



And another home brewer takes a leap into commercial brewing. This is Dave Harrison-Ward (pictured below), whose current career is in IT but who has

been keenly home brewing for two years now with the specific aim of learning a new trade.

Over those two years Dave's had some positive and encouraging feedback from well respected home brewers, bloggers and professional brewers, and he's won a couple of awards along the way. He's now decided to take it to the next level and go commercial, gaining his license on 1st November.

Not having the money to go for a full blown set-up Dave has stuck with his initial one hectolitre kit (that's about 175 pints) and tested the water with limited bottle runs of the kind of beers he likes to drink. He tells us the interest from stockists has been fantastic and the first beer is pretty much pre-sold to local bottle shops in Macclesfield, Stockport and Leek.



The brewery is actually in a modest workshop in Dave's backyard, which can only fit two people in at a time so *Opening Times* caught up with him at Torrside Brewery. The first two beers are to be a Lime Pickle IPA (5.9%) made with Centennial hops in the brew and dry hopped with Motueka (at which stage also come the additions of lime, coriander and chilli), and also a Blueberry IPA (5.9%) using the same base beer but with blueberries added post-fermentation.

More News on page 23

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News Extra

Blackjack News



Brewing at Blackjack remains at capacity, with brewing six or seven days a week including a double brew. The brewery is planning to add two more ten-barrel fermenters to supplement the existing single 10-barrel and five 5-barrel ones. This will mean more double brew days but give prospect of the brewers having a day off. Before that, they will also be taking delivery of an 8-barrel mash-tun which will allow full

brews to be produced of some of the stronger beers in the range.

On the beer front, the brewery has been doing lots of new beers using different hops. This is partly just because they like experimenting but also in anticipation of expected shortages of popular US and New Zealand hops in the future as the big brewers use their buying power to buy up stocks.

A strong single hop best bitter using the English Pilgrim hop has proven popular and been brewed a couple of times. Rabbit Hunt, a 4.4% session IPA using US Jarrylo (named after Jarilo, the Slavic god of fertility and springtime) and Azacca (named after the Haitian god of agriculture) hops may become a regular beer too. Most recent new beer is Snip, Snap, Snorum, a 4.6% pale ale using Summer and Vic Secret. Next up will be a first brew with French hops with the single hop ale Triskel.

Pub Shorts

Over in Poynton, there is a real ale gain to report. This is the **Acoustic Lounge** on Park Lane. Our Poynton man on the spot, *Laurence Bamber*, tells us that there are now two handpumps on the bar – one for “Acoustic Bitter” brewed in Blackburn while the other is for a beer from Salford’s Seven Brothers Brewery.

News from Bramhall now where there are changes at the **Shady Oak** on Redford Drive. It’s no longer owned by Punch Taverns but has passed to New River Retail (managed on their behalf by LT Management) and Simon Abell is the manager.

Simon has been in touch to tell us that the conservatory has been converted back from a smoking area into a conservatory and the pub no longer has DJs or karaoke, however it does now have local singers performing regularly, and there’s a pub quiz on a Sunday night from 9pm.

He also tells us that in the last few weeks he has been able to order beer through SIBA, allowing him to have access to a massive range of local and independent breweries. There are five handpumps and two are reserved for the regular cask ales, which are now Sharp’s Doom Bar and Taylor’s Landlord, with three being for changing guest beers. Two of those guests will now be from the SIBA list.



Just before we went to press Stockport’s **Bank Chambers Live!** (pictured left) posted a message on its Facebook page stating that it had now closed for good. It is unfortunate that this quite brave venture has failed. Meanwhile around the corner the **Remedy Bar**

and **Brewhouse**, occupying two shop units next to the mothballed **Bull’s Head**, has been the site of feverish activity – we understand an opening may be imminent.

In Burnage, the long-closed **Green End** looks to have reached the end of the road. A planning application has been submitted to demolish the pub and replace it with housing.

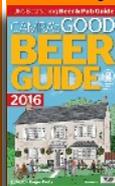
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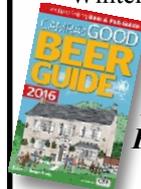
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THURSDAYS
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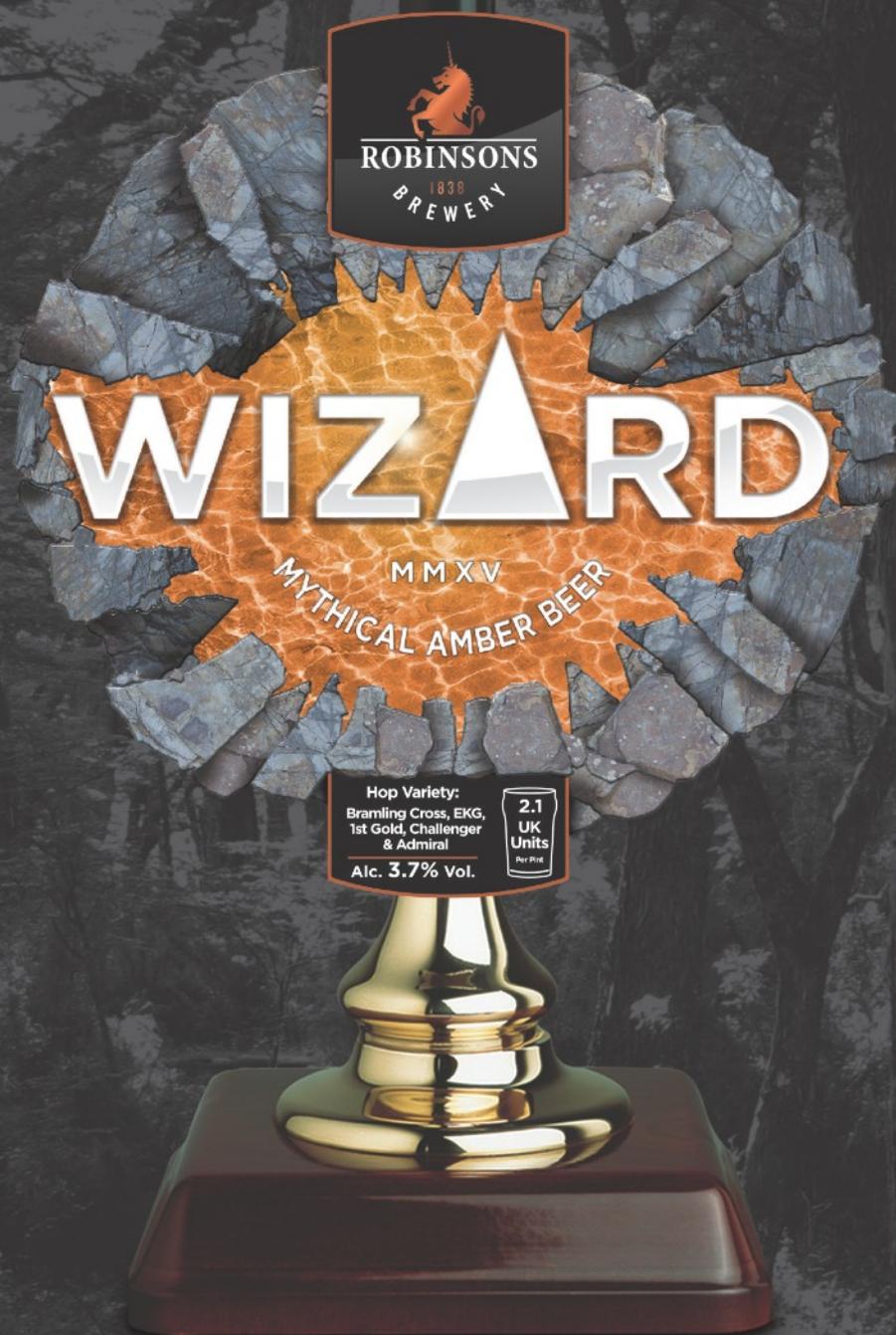
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