

OPENING TIMES

APRIL 2016 / FREE



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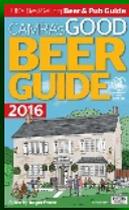
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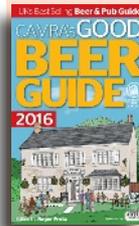
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OPENING TIMES

Opening Times is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch, the Trafford & Hulme Branch and the High Peak, Tameside & North East Cheshire Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Additional material is supplied by the North Manchester, Central 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.

News, articles and letters are welcome to the editorial address – John Clarke, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9HD. E-mail – stocam@btinternet.com. Phone 0161 477 1973. Advertising rates on request or online at: <http://www.ssmcamra.co.uk/magazine.htm>

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For complaints about short measure pints etc contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service. This works with all the Trading Standards services in the North West and is supported by the Office of Fair Trading. You can email the Consumer Service at the following address:

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To report a matter to Trading Standards go to:

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Available at £11.00 for 12 issues (make cheques payable to *Opening Times*). Apply to David Sharpe, 1 Chiltern Drive, Woodsmoor, Stockport, SK2 7BE. Tel 0161 483 3708

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Opening Times does not recommend you drink and drive. Local public transport information can be obtained online as follows:

- * Transport for Greater Manchester: www.tfgm.com 0161 244 1000
- * 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 May issue is Saturday 9th April.

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, Margaret O'Brien, Paul King, Heather Airlie, Graham Donning.

Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Front cover – Coming soon: the Great British Beer Festival.

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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)

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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

Central Manchester (CMCR)

Contact: Graham Donning 07961 886696; g_donning@yahoo.com

Local CAMRA Events

Public welcome at these events

Monday 11th – Branch Meeting: Fairfield Arms, 92 Manchester Road, Audenshaw, M34 5GB. Starts 8:00pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 13th – Worsley Survey: 7:30pm Barton Arms, 2 Stablefold, M28 2ED; 8:30pm Bridgewater Hotel, 23 Barton Road, M28 2PD; 9:30pm John Gilbert, Worsley Brow, M28 2YA. (NM)

Thursday 14th – Branch Meeting and AGM: Magnet (upstairs room), 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. Starts 8:15pm. (SSM)

Thursday 14th – Flixton Social: 8:00pm Railway Tavern, Irlam Road, M41 6NA; 9:00pm John Alker Social Club, Flixton Road, M41 6QY; 10:00pm Church, 34 Church Road, M41 6HS. (T&H)

Saturday 16th – Trip to Bolton Beer Festival: afternoon session at Bolton Beer Festival, Ukrainian Club, 99 Castle Street, BL2 1JP. (T&H)

Monday 18th – Early Doors Club: 6:00pm Paramount, 33 Oxford Street, M1 4BH and finishing Piccadilly Tap. More details from contact. (CMCR)

Wednesday 20th – Branch Meeting: Swinton Catholic Club, 11 Worsley Road, M27 5WN. Starts 7:30pm. (NM)

Thursday 21st – Pub of the Season presentation to The Bar, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton, M21 0UE. 8:00pm for 8:30pm. (T&H)

Friday 22nd – Heaton Norris East Stagger: 7:30pm Carousel, 158 Reddish Road, SK5 7HR; 8:30 Silver Jubilee, 21 Hamilton Square (off Belmont Way), SK4 1JG. (SSM)

Saturday 23rd – Cider Pub of the Year presentation to the Railway, 1 Avenue Street, Portwood, SK1 2BZ. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

Saturday 23rd – Pub of the Year (for Greater Manchester part of branch) presentation to the Cheshire Ring, 72 Manchester Road, Hyde, SK14 2BJ. (Timings from contact) (HPNC)

Saturday 23rd – Trip to Leeds: joint social with North Cheshire Branch to sample the pubs of Leeds. Details from contact. (T&H)

Wednesday 27th – Club of the Year presentation to Eccles RFC, Gorton Street, Patricroft, M30 7LZ. (NM)

Thursday 28th – Pub of the Month presentation to Fred's Ale House, 843 Stockport Road, Levenshulme, M19 3AW. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

Friday 29th – Club of the Year presentation to Flixton Conservative Club, 193 Flixton Road, Urmston, M41 5DF. From 8:00pm. (T&H)

Saturday 30th – Pub of the Year Runner-up presentation to Ye Olde Vic, 1 Chatham Street, Edgeley, SK3 9ED. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 4th May: Pub of the Year presentation to Grocers, 152a Liverpool Road, Cadishead, M44 5DD. From 7:30pm. (NM)

Wednesday 4th May – Branch Meeting: Gas Lamp, 50A Bridge Street, Manchester, M3 3BW. (Venue TBC). 5:30pm for 6:00pm Start. (CMCR)

Thursday 5th May – Branch Meeting: Sip Club, 264A Barton Road, Stretford, M32 8DP. 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

Macclesfield & East Cheshire: @MECCAMRA

Central Manchester: @MCRCentralCamra

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Pub of the Month

Fred's Ale House, Levenshulme



The Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for April 2016 is Fred's Ale House on Stockport Road in Levenshulme. Margaret O'Brien is a fan...

For a long time real ale was thin on the ground in Levenshulme – many pubs closed down and few of those that remained offered anything but keg beers. That was particularly the case with those pubs on the main road that divides this inner city village into two.

Fred's Ale House, which opened at the end of January last year, bucked that dismal trend and from the start offered a choice of cask beers – and traditional cider as well. There are no fewer than six cask beers available with Thwaites Wainwright the regular and five changing guests. There's real commitment to cask here with a special £2 per pint promotion on selected ales from noon until 4.00pm Monday to Wednesday and from noon until close on Thursdays. CAMRA members get a 30p discount, too.



Fred's operates over three floors and hosts numerous events including live music, quiz nights, comedy nights and there's even a board games competition on Sundays. Not only that, but the bar also operates as an art gallery, often displaying the works of local artists. If you want a bite to eat then Fred's offers pies (from Life of Pie), panini, sandwiches, cakes and pastries. Coffee comes from the Ancoats Coffee Company and is first class.

All of this is overseen by manager Mike Nuttall and his staff who work hard to make sure all of their customers, both old and new, get a warm welcome. Join us when we present our award on the evening of Thursday 28th April. The pub is near the junction of Albert Road so it's just a short walk from Levenshulme Station and of course Stockport Road is well served by the 192 bus.



The Pub of the Month award is sponsored by Stephensons, 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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2002

Navyy



2002

Wobbly Bob



2004

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Buses 192 & 22 pass by the door

Save the Sir Ralph Abercromby

Fight to save last link with Peterloo Massacre



It has been known for some time that Gary Neville and former team-mate Ryan Giggs have formed a consortium to build offices, bars, restaurants and a four or five-star hotel, just off Deansgate – a redevelopment said to be worth £140 million.

The site is located within the Peter Street/Deansgate conservation area, and yet the consortium, the Jacksons Row Development Company, has already bought various parts of the parcel of land between Albert Square and Deansgate, including the **Sir Ralph Abercromby**. The plan appears to be to clear the site. The Abercromby is not the only historic building on the development facing an uncertain future. Bootle Street police station, which housed the city centre force from the 1930s until last summer, would also go.

The Abercromby, named after the 18th century Lieutenant General in the British Army, is the only structure remaining from St Peter's Field, where more than a dozen people were killed during the 1819 Peterloo Massacre. One of the weavers cut down by the Militia was taken there and laid on the bar

where he died of his wounds. The massacre made history, sparking changes that we all benefit from today.

In 1819 St Peter's Field was on the edge of Manchester before the Town Hall and Midland Hotel were constructed. It was gradually being built up so there were some houses and gardens as well as open space and uncompleted roadways. The pub still has a large beer garden that forms a suntrap in the summer – a rare amenity for a city centre pub. It also retains a multi-roomed interior which is also rare for a city centre pub. Despite the historic connections and the popularity of the pub Manchester City Council recently turned down an application to have it listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV).

CAMRA representatives met with two of the three local City Centre councillors in mid-March. Councillors Davies and Knowles were both puzzled as to how the Council could reject the ACV applications based on the fact that the Abercromby is "due for demolition and/or sale" neither of which should preclude it from accepting the ACV on the Sir Ralph Abercromby. They will be asking questions but it seems the decision is based on the fact that the Council have expectations that the pub does not feature as part of the proposed development. CAMRA will now be trying to broker a meeting with the developers through the councillors' good offices to see if the development could include the retention of the Abercromby as there seems to be no actual physical reason for its demolition.

What is key is that the public is made aware of the threat to this last remaining physical link with the Peterloo Massacre. After all, there won't be much of a celebration of the 200th Anniversary if the Abercromby is no longer there. If you are concerned then sign the petition to save the pub. Go to change.org and search for "save The Sir Ralph Abercromby".

Central Manchester CAMRA

The recently formed Central Manchester Branch is not letting the grass grow under its feet and has already awarded its first Central Manchester Pub of the Year to the **Smithfield Tavern** (pictured right) and is also currently organising a beer festival in the Engine Room of the People's History Museum, The Left Bank, Spinningfields from July 28th to 30th – opposite the now drowned Mark Addy.

Graham Donning, Branch Chair and Festival Organiser, said "It will be absolutely fantastic to put on a beer festival in this wonderful building and so near to all those offices in Spinningfields. We hope to get plenty of office workers calling in on their way home from work at the end of July, many of whom may never have even tried real ale and ciders from their local breweries!"

Graham, who knows a thing or two about organising beer festivals, is the current organiser of the massively impressive, and very successful, Manchester Beer & Cider Festival (MBCF) recently held in Manchester Central (ex G-Mex) and is bringing all his skills and knowledge to this event. Alongside Graham, Steve Dunkley, owner/brewer at Beer Nouveau and who has many contacts within the brewing industry, especially in Greater Manchester, is very excited about the prospect of ordering the beers and ciders. "What we want", said Steve, "is to showcase as many, if not all, of the breweries from within Greater Manchester and there are currently over 80."

In addition to that, the branch is hoping to get many fine foreign beers from Holland, France, Belgium and Spain – some of which may never have been seen this close to the Irwell before! With food available at all times from the in-house Left Bank cafeteria as well as many fine wines, local brewers' bottled beers, and possibly some foreign bottled beers, it is looking to be a great success. The cafe manager is also hoping to put some live music on so that customers can enjoy fine food, beer and some good live background music.



Central Manchester is also launching a series of walks around Manchester called the Early Doors Club. When completed these will cover a visit to every pub within the area, ensuring consistent exposure to every pub, rather than just the very popular ones, and will provide a good spread of beer scores for future pub awards and Good Beer Guide entries. The first such walk will take place on April 18th starting at the Paramount at 6pm and ending at the Piccadilly Tap. For more details contact Graham Donning at g_donning@yahoo.com.

A Fool Hardy Tap House

the SPRING GARDENS

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2016



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Trafford & Hulme CAMRA Awards

This year's winners in full

Pub of the Year



The Trafford & Hulme branch Pub of the Year for 2016 is **Pi (Altrincham)**.

Situated on Shaw's Road opposite Altrincham Market Hall, it's not a bar which shouts loudly about itself; it has though quietly spent the last three years building a well-earned reputation for serving good beer in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. There are no pretensions about this bar – no DJ nights, no TV sports and no desire to be a gastropub or do “street food”. Quite simply while it may not be a traditional pub, it is very much

a proper pub – all about enjoying beer in good company.

House ale Tatton Blonde is joined by two guest ales most commonly from RedWillow, Saltaire and First Chop while the fonts serve only quality local and imported beers and lagers – there are no mainstream brands. Where bottle menus may be a common sight at craft beer bars these days, the Pi Beer Bible has been a fixture since the first Pi opened in Chorlton back in 2007.

The simple but effective menu offers a choice of four PieMinister pies usually including two vegetarian options, served with your choice of creamy mash, minty peas and gravy. Service is quick and food is served until 11pm daily.

Club of the Year



The Trafford & Hulme Club of the Year for the fourth year in a row is **Flixton Conservative Club**. Having retained its branch title, the Flixton Road club will be hoping to also retain the Greater Manchester Club of the Year title it took last year.

Stewards Nigel and Sharon Porter have continued to improve the choice and quality of real ales on offer at the club. The main club room has six handpumps with permanent Theakston Best Bitter being joined by an ever changing range of guests, mostly from local breweries. In the last year they have installed five further pumps in the upstairs function room to allow them to serve the same great range of beers to the many clubs and groups who use the function room. Turnover of beers is increasing all the time allowing the club to feature even more variety while keeping quality; recently the club was awarded 100 out of 100 in its latest Cask Marque inspection.

The club's monthly “brewery nights” have now been running for 18 months and are eagerly anticipated by the club's members who get to sample five beers from the selected brewery over a pie and pea supper. The most recent night featured Bollington Brewery with Weetwood Ales and Deeply Vale being other recent participants. The presentation of the award will coincide with the next night on 29th April when the featured brewer is due to be no less than the Pictish Brewing Company.

Cider Pub of the Year



Also retaining its title is Chorlton's **Font Bar** which has again won the Trafford & Hulme Cider Pub of the Year award. With a minimum of four ciders and perries available on draught at a time, increasing to as many as eight in summer months, the Manchester Road venue

has the widest range of traditional ciders and perries of any pub in the branch area. If the draught selection isn't wide enough, there is also a fridge full of bottled ciders to choose from.

Most Improved Pub



Broadheath's **Navigation Hotel** was named Trafford & Hulme's most improved pub. New landlady Julie took over the pub in March 2015 and immediately set about transforming it into a venue that welcomes diners and drinkers equally and is suited to both families and mature customers. Although TV sports have been maintained, they no longer dominate the pub with zoning set up to allow some areas to be quiet while sport is shown in others. There is a full menu, regular live music and the bowling green out back is in regular use. Most importantly, the quality and range of beers has improved greatly. Pictured is new branch chair John O'Donnell with Julie.

Best Newcomer & Best Locale



The Best Newcomer award went to Altrincham Market Hall's in-house bar **Jack In The Box**.

The award for best Locale Pub 2015 went to the **Wharf** in Castlefield. The Wharf is part of the Brunning & Price chain and always makes a point of featuring local beers, including a house beer brewed by Heywood's Phoenix Brewery.

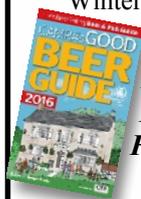
Pictured here is outgoing Trafford & Hulme Chair Paul King presenting the award to the Wharf's Siobhan Youngs.

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Mild Magic in Whaley Bridge

Four pubs in the Whaley Bridge area have registered for Mild Magic, the Mild Challenge, in 2016. They will provide participants with a good trip out. These southernmost pubs on the trail are well worth a visit in their own right, with a range of good beers and welcoming hospitality. To avoid wasted journeys some information about opening / closing hours may be helpful.

☺ **Shepherds, Whaley Bridge:** 3.00pm till late Monday to Friday; 2.00pm till late Saturday and Sunday.

☺ **Goyt Inn, Whaley Bridge:** 4.30pm till late Monday to Friday; 2.00pm till late Saturday and Sunday.

☺ **Drum & Monkey, Horwich End, Whaley Bridge:** 4.00pm till late Monday to Friday; 12.00 noon till late Saturday and Sunday.

☺ **Old Hall, Whitehough, Chinley:** 12.00 noon till late daily.

These times could of course vary.

None of the pubs is new to Mild Magic. Some of the pubs will be new pubs for some people. All the pubs will look forward to seeing new faces, and returning ones.



Getting there

Bus: The **199** from Stockport stops at Furness Vale, Whaley Bridge Station and Horwich End, Whaley Bridge. It's a half hourly service during the day, but hourly in the evening, on Sunday and Holiday Monday.

The **Trans Peak (TP)** stops at Furness Vale, every two or three hours until soon after tea.

The **61** links Whaley Bridge with Glossop, Hayfield, New Mills and Buxton hourly during the daytime, every day.

The **190** links Whaley Bridge with Chinley, roughly every two hours until teatime, Monday to Saturday (not Bank Holiday Monday).

Trains: Manchester - Buxton service, Northern Table 20. Hourly through the day all week, to Furness Vale and Whaley Bridge, half hourly in the evening rush hour. Trains to Chinley, Northern Table 23. Hourly on Saturday, less frequently in the week and on Sundays, but there are more trains in the rush hour. The odd Sheffield express from Manchester and Stockport stops at Chinley during the evening rush hour. The Old Hall is a 30-40 minute walk along the Peak Forest Tramway and Peak Forest Canal from Whaley Bridge or Furness Vale, via Buxworth, and a 10 minute walk from Chinley Station.



The New Oxford

Continental Style Real Ale Bar

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0161 832 7082

Open Daily 12 noon to 12 midnight

Food available 12 noon - 4.00pm
Monday to Friday

Up to 20 cask ales and ciders
Belgian and German draught
and bottled beers

A warm welcome awaits at the
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Branch and Regional
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Food Served 12noon till 7pm All Week

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All Sky and BTsports football shown



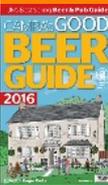
Live Bands Every Saturday Night and
the First Sunday Of The Month with
Pete Maclaine and The Clan

Opening Times

11 am till 11 pm Monday to Thursday

11 am till Midnight Friday and Saturday

12 noon till 11 pm on a Sunday



Mild Magic 2016

Visit Pubs, Drink Beer, Win Prizes

According to the media mild is a dying beer style. The axing of Robinsons 1892 last year might have been seen as another straw in the wind. We beg to differ.

This year we have still signed up 90 pubs to take part. Not only that but this year will see a greater variety of milds than ever before. In fact, to (mis) quote Coleridge, here in the North West it is "Mild, mild everywhere and plenty of it to drink"!



So what are we asking you to do? First enter a participating pub (see below) and pick up a card. Second, buy a cask mild (pint or half) and ask the bar staff to put a sticker on your card. Third, drink the mild and enjoy its taste. Fourth, enter a different participating pub; check below as this may influence your choice of pub. Repeat from step two (no need for a new card) until you have filled the card. NB Check the times of pub opening hours, especially if you are making a special journey (details available at whatpub.com).

How do I win a prize?

Collect stickers from **12 different pubs** and you will receive a free entry ticket to, or a free pint of mild if you are a CAMRA member at, the 2016 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival (2nd – 4th June) at Edgeley Park.

To complete the **Mild Magic Extra**, collect stickers from **12 different pubs** in **12 different areas** and you will receive an entry ticket (one pint of mild for CAMRA members) plus a Mild Magic T-shirt.

Collect stickers from **24 different pubs** in **24 different areas** to enter **Mild Magic Super** and receive a Mild Magic polo shirt plus two entry tickets to the Festival (two free pints of mild for CAMRA members).

Mild Magic Ultra is a little more challenging. Visit as many different pubs as you like but you must (a) cover **30 different areas** and (b) **collect 100 points**. Each pub has an associated 'score' (indicated on card) and you can collect how you like. For example 50 pubs worth two points or maybe 30 worth three points plus 10 worth one point; the options are endless. For this you will receive a Mild Magic sweat shirt and four entry tickets to the Festival (or four free pints of mild for CAMRA Members).

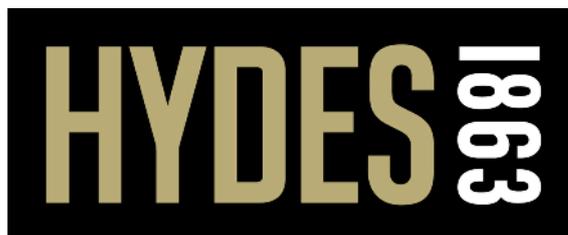
How long do I have to complete all this? Mild Magic runs from Friday 8th April to Sunday 15th May inclusive.

What do I do when I have finished Mild Magic? Simply send your card(s) to the organiser (details on card) no later than 23rd May (only **one entry** per person). All entries will be included in the Grand Draw to be one of the people visiting Stockport Brewing Company. Festival entry tickets are valid any session **except Friday evening**. To receive your entry ticket(s)/mild token(s) please enclose a **large sized, stamped and self-addressed, envelope**.

Garments will be distributed from **6pm onwards** on **Sunday 26th June** at the **Crown Inn**, Heaton Lane, Stockport (or as otherwise agreed). All garments are graced by a stitched version of the Mild Magic insignia.

To add even more interest, everyone participating is invited to vote for two pubs where you most enjoyed the mild – one in Stockport and one outside. The two winning pubs will then be presented with a 'Mild Champion' award and participants are invited to attend these award evenings.

Such is the success of Mild Magic that this year Hydes Brewery has agreed to be our sponsor. Our grateful thanks to them! Hydes produce not one but two milds. Old Indie is a tasty dark beer while 1863 may be marketed as a low gravity bitter these days but it started life as Best Mild. Both are tasty low strength beers that are well worth seeking out.



If you haven't taken part before, you must have a go this time; it's great fun and it's so easy - you only need to visit 12 pubs over a five week period. It's an excellent chance to visit some new pubs, try new beers and win some great rewards while voting with your feet in favour of Britain's proud brewing heritage. Please give our campaign to preserve cask conditioned Mild in this area your support!

The Mild Magic Pubs

ALL SAINTS: Sandbar; **ALTRINCHAM** Costello's Bar, Jack In The Box, Unicorn; **ASHTON UNDER LYNE:** Ash Tree, Dog & Pheasant; **BROADBOTTOM:** Harewood Arms; **BROADHEATH:** Old Packet House; **CHEADLE:** Crown, White Hart; **CHEADLE HULME:** Chiverton Tap, Governor's House, Kenilworth, Kings Hall; **CHORLTON:** Beech Inn, Parlour, Sedge Lynn; **DENTON:** Lowes Arms; **DIDSBURY:** Dog & Partridge, Fletcher Moss, Gateway, Milson Rhodes, Royal Oak; **DIDSBURY WEST:** George Charles, Railway, Wine & Wallop; **FALLOWFIELD:** Beer Studio, Friendship Inn, Great Central; **GATLEY:** Horse & Farrier; **HAZEL GROVE:** Wilfred Wood; **HEATON MOOR:** Moortop; **HIGH LANE:** Royal Oak; **HYDE:** Cheshire Ring, Cotton Bale, Queens, Sportsman; **LEVENSHULME:** Fred's Ale House; **MANCHESTER EAST:** Castle Hotel, Crown & Kettle, Marble Arch, Pie & Ale, Smithfield; **MANCHESTER NORTH:** Ape and Apple, Crown & Anchor, Micro Bar, Moon Under Water; **MANCHESTER SOUTH:** Bulls Head, Grey Horse, Molly House, Old Monkey, Piccadilly Tap; **MANCHESTER WEST:** City Arms, Paramount, Rising Sun, Waterhouse; **MARPLE:** Samuel Oldknow, Spring Gardens; **NEW MILLS NEWTOWN:** Chalkers Snooker Club; **NORTHENDEN:** Lounge About; **OLD TRAFFORD:** Bishop Blaize; **POYNTON:** Cask Tavern, Kingfisher; **RUSHOLME:** Ford Madox Brown; **SALE:** JP Joule, Volunteer; **SALE WEST:** Plough Hotel; **SALFORD:** New Oxford; **STALYBRIDGE:** Society Rooms, Station Buffet Bar, White House; **STOCKPORT EAST:** Calverts Court, Midway, Railway; **STOCKPORT NORTH:** Crown, Hope, Nursery Inn; **STOCKPORT SOUTH:** George, Spinning Top, Ye Olde Vic; **TIMPERLEY:** Quarry Bank; **URMSTON:** Flixton Conservative Club, Prairie Schooner Taphouse; **WHALEY BRIDGE:** Drum & Monkey, Goyt Inn, Shepherds Arms; **WHITEHOUGH:** Old Hall; **Wilmslow:** Coach & Four; **WITHINGTON:** Red Lion, Victoria.

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£2.50
Per Pint

ON SATURDAY

- LIVE RUGBY FROM 3.00 pm

- CLASSIC CAR SHOW FROM 10:30am - 4pm

as presented by TAME VALLEY VINTAGE CLASSIC CAR CLUB

DJ Entertainment

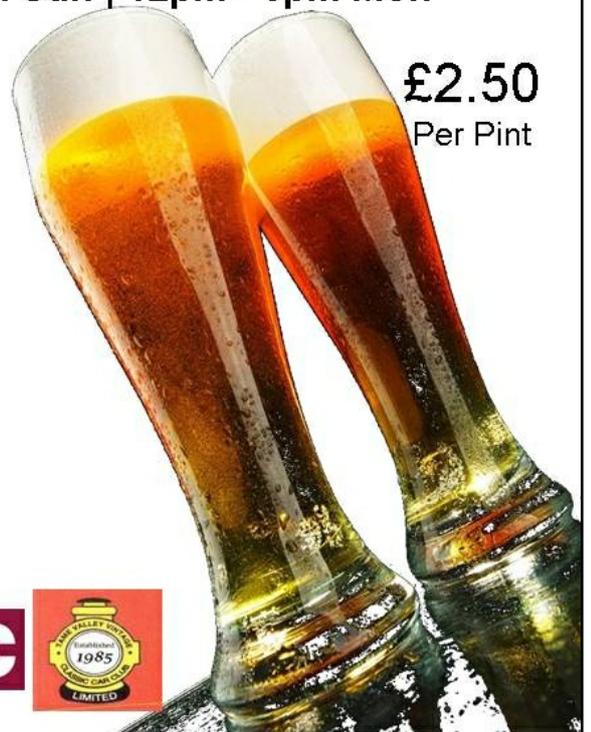
12pm to 12am Saturday and Sunday

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High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views

Peak Practice

With Robin Wignall

It is good to report that *Derbyshire Life* continues to give good coverage of our local pubs. A recent edition featured the village of Buxworth and in amongst bits of history was a fine promotion of the **Navigation**. The Navigation is of course more than just a local as accommodation is available, it has a reputation for food and, as I have often noted, there is an ever changing range of well kept real ales. The Navigation is an attraction to visitors to the area as the pub stands at the end of the Peak Forest Canal beside the Bugsworth Basin. As *Derbyshire Life* notes, it is also popular with locals in the area.

Also mentioned in the article is **Buxworth War Memorial Club**, which is also a social centre for the village and itself a good source of real ales. Generally one is available during the week, two at weekends and three for special events. Beers are usually from microbreweries not too far away, including the recently opened High Peak Brew Co. in Chapel-en-le-Frith.



A group of us dined at the **Royal** in Hayfield recently. We enjoyed a good and sensibly priced meal after a few hours walking in snow above Hayfield. Our food was washed down by beers from Marston's breweries; Banks's Mild, Thwaites Original from Banks's and Ringwood Boondoggle. A local beer available was Kinder Fall Down from Happy Valley in Bollington. By the time you read this, a beer festival will have been held at the Royal, advertised in last month's *OT*, which would have made a worthwhile visit.

As ever the **Old Hall** at Whitehough, near Chinley, is worth a call. Recent visits have found Deception and Jester from Abbeydale, Steerage and Plum Porter from Titanic and Hartington Bitter from Whim Brewery. Thornbridge Black Harry was particularly palatable. Enough there to please most taste buds.

I took the opportunity to follow up Tom Lord's observations on the **Kings Arms** in Chapel-en-le-Frith in February's *OT*. I had stopped calling

in there before its closure so it was a pleasing experience to see what had been done. Importantly the toilets have effectively been rebuilt. Next on the agenda for modernisation is the guest accommodation, important if this town centre hotel in a tourist area is to reclaim its former status. Also as a priority the external appearance will be given a good smartening up. A decent pint of Titanic Steerage was available when I called, alongside Lifeboat from this Burslem brewery. The Kings Arms is worth a visit and callers will be made welcome. This venture is worth supporting.



Hockerley Ale from Whaley Bridge Brewery has been available locally notably at the **Drum & Monkey** in Whaley Bridge and at the **Soldier Dick** in Furness Vale. At the Soldier Dick it was

also good to see handpumped cider available recently. Orchard Pig Hogfather is a 7.4% offering, so not exactly mid afternoon fare, but there will be those who are tempted.

The one handpump at **Furness Vale Club** is currently used for a Winkle beer. In early March Rambler was available, to be followed by Waller. There is a regular change of beers in Furness Club and it is good to see fairly local microbreweries supported.

In early March there was another change of management at the **White Horse** in Whaley Bridge. Keep up with the episodic reports for the next update. Wells Bombardier remains on the bar.

Finally a thought about the resurgence of gin as a popular tippie, or perhaps its popularity never went away. Specialist producers around the country have set up to make a niche for themselves, supplementing the national and supermarket brands with a touch of the special. At the **Goyt** in Whaley Bridge a range of six or seven gins from small producers is available, these of course alongside four or five well kept real ales. Perhaps the most interesting is Forest Gin, locally distilled in Macclesfield. There is much to interest the gin aficionado. Will William Hogarth be turning in his grave?

High Peak Pub News

With Tom Lord

There are one or two changes to report this month including some unwelcome closures.

At the **Wren's Nest** in Glossop, real ale has returned to the Crown Carvery pub after a couple of years' absence. Greene King IPA is now on handpump. In New Mills the **Pride of the Peak** has reopened after a two-week refurbishment. Jennings Cumberland Ale and Taylor's Landlord are reported to be on handpump.



In Birch Vale we have reports that the **Grouse** (pictured above) has been purchased from Robinsons by its licensee and is now operating

as a free house. More information about this in due course. Finally, in Denton the **Windmill** closed and then re-opened as a "Sizzling Pizza and Carvery". We think that cask ale may well be available but at the moment we have no details as to what that might be.

On the closure front, the **Apethorne** in Hyde was closed and shuttered last year and it has now been converted into a children's swimming pool. Staying in Hyde, the **Werneth Hotel**, also closed last year, has now become a private residence. In Buxton the **New Inn** has been reported as closed for most of this year. However Robinsons are making some improvements and advertising for a new tenant. Also closed but advertising for a new licensee is the **George Hotel** in Glossop.

On a more positive note, the **Spring Gardens** in Marple Bridge and **Bridge Beers** in Stalybridge are now open and covered elsewhere in this issue. We also expect the new **Samuel Oldknow** micropub in Marple to be open by the time you read this.

The **Lantern Pike** in Little Hayfield is running a Happy Hour (known locally as an Ecstatic Hour apparently). It runs from Monday to Friday from 5 pm to 7 pm when the beer price is reduced by £1 per pint.

Trafford & Hulme Branch Pub of the Season

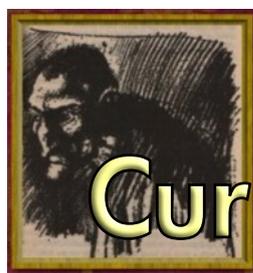
The Trafford & Hulme Branch Pub of the Season for Spring 2016 is The Bar in Chorlton.

The Bar on Wilbraham Road is one of the longest standing café bars in Chorlton and sister pub to the Knott, in the City Centre and the Macc, in Macclesfield. As one of the first of the new breed of “café bars” in the area the Bar was at the forefront of the revolution that now sees almost 30 real ale outlets in a square mile of what was once described as a “beer desert”.

Over the past (almost) 20 years it has gathered a loyal following and now arguably has the most diverse clientele in Chorlton. The three areas of the pub are open plan, yet separate enough to give a sense of intimacy, particularly in the small snug at the back past the bar. The larger area to the left on entry hosts a weekly quiz and music nights and also serves as the main dining area; a full menu is now served.

The long area in front of the bar has a lovely tiled fireplace and there are eight handpumps on the bar, four either side of the large pillar. Beers are mostly regional and is often a LocAle, with offerings from Pictish, Acorn, Marble and Magic Rock frequently on the bar. Real cider is also available with four “bag-in-box” ciders usually found in the fridge. Blackboards behind the bar advertise the offerings including ‘craft’ keg both foreign and domestic. There’s a patio to the front where smoking is allowed and a beer garden to the rear where it isn’t. A few things have changed over the years, but they don’t do cocktails and still don’t sell Stella!

The Pub of the Season award will be presented on Thursday 21st April from 8pm. It’s located opposite the Chorlton Metrolink stop and several bus routes go close by.



Curmudgeon

It’s Real, Jim, But Not As We Know It

A few months ago, you may have been surprised to read an article in *Opening Times* about “Real Ale in a Keg”, which was trialled at the recent Manchester Beer & Cider Festival. Surely, some may think, this is the ultimate betrayal – an organisation originally set up to fight keg ending up embracing it. As George Orwell wrote in *Animal Farm*, “The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.”

Of course, it’s nowhere near as simple as that. In recent years, we have seen the rise of so-called “craft keg” beers. Many of these are essentially conventional kegs, where the beer is filtered, and a cylinder of CO₂ is connected up to the container to propel it to the tap at the bar. However, a growing number use a system called “KeyKeg”, in which the beer is held in an inner bag within the container, in a similar way to bag-in-box wine. The dispense gas exerts pressure on this bag to push the beer to the bar, but doesn’t actually come into contact with it.

Maybe it wasn’t the original intention, but it was soon realised that, if the beer in the keykeg was unfiltered, and therefore retained its natural yeast, it could qualify as “real ale”, as it could undergo a secondary fermentation, and avoided all contact with the CO₂ used to pressurise the outer container. This is perhaps debatable, as the beer contained in the bag does not vent to the atmosphere, and the part of the container outside the bag is pressurised with CO₂ to dispense the beer (although the CO₂ does not actually touch it) but it’s certainly a world away from Red Barrel.

There are two reasons often advanced in favour of craft keg beer. The first is the “East Sheen Tennis Club” argument, that keg beers are ideal for venues that have limited and infrequent turnover. The second is that they allow pubs to stock low-volume, specialist beers for longer. But I suspect that the reason most people go for craft keg is that they prefer its essential characteristics – that it is served cooler, and has more carbonation, than real ale. Bringing it within the fold of real ale is unlikely to make much difference to whether people choose to drink it.

Over the years, CAMRA has succeeded in making handpumps an unmistakable symbol of real ale, so if you go in a pub and see a bank of them, you can be confident about what you’re going to get. But if we get “real” craft keg, are we going to have to have little stickers on the taps saying “CAMRA Says this is Real Ale”? There is also the risk that the boundary with conventional filtered and carbonated keg beers such as Shipyard and East Coast IPA will be blurred.

I’ve often argued that CAMRA can be too dogmatic in making a black-and-white distinction between “good” real ale and “bad” everything else. This is not to say it shouldn’t define real ale clearly and put it at the centre of its campaigning, but it should be more willing to recognise merit in beers that do not qualify. This unfiltered, unpasteurised craft keg is certainly something I’d be happy both to drink and encourage others to. But it is confusing and unhelpful to yoke it in with cask-conditioned real ale, as understood by the general drinking public, as it is obviously a distinctly different product. Rather than arbitrarily extending the definition, wouldn’t it make more sense to accept it as a product category in its own right?

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

Chorlton Beer & Cider Festival

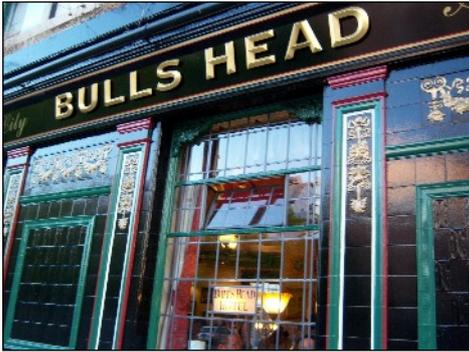
As Spring beckons, the organisation for July’s Chorlton Beer & Cider Festival is well underway. The ever popular festival held in and around St Clement’s Church on Edge Lane will again run for three days from Thursday 7th to Saturday 9th July.

New additions to look forward to this year should include a bar serving a combination of UK key-keg conditioned beers and continental craft ales to accompany the range of around 150 cask ales, ciders and perries. The opening times will be 6pm – 10.30pm on Thursday and Friday, and 1pm – 9.30pm on Saturday. By the time you read this, the festival’s new website should be up and running with advance tickets available for sale at www.chorltonbeerfestival.org.uk and on the Facebook page [facebook.com/ChorltonBeerFestival](https://www.facebook.com/ChorltonBeerFestival).

Stagger

Mild Hunting in the City Centre with Jim Flynn

It was a crisp early spring evening when we set out in central Manchester to track down that rarest of beers, cask mild. We knew that a record eighteen City Centre pubs had joined Mild Magic 2016 but equally we were aware that only a minority regularly sold mild outside the five weeks of the scheme.



Our quest started at the **Bulls Head** across the road from the Fairfield Street entrance to Piccadilly Station. This is a proper, quality pub with an open-plan interior which nevertheless has its nooks and crannies to provide the private spaces so absent in most modern city centre bars. One wall displays the numerous awards the pub has been given including three CAMRA Pub of the Months and one Pub of the Year. The beers are from across Marston's stable of four breweries but we focused on the Banks's Mild which we found to be on good form as usual.



While our first stop was a mild certainty the second was more of a punt. Cutting through Piccadilly Station and down Station Approach we entered the self-proclaimed 'Craft Beer House', the **Piccadilly Tap**. This was previously a shop and the somewhat functional décor seems to be almost circa 1960s despite its very recent transformation. On busy days this is rammed but on this Monday it was quiet and we went straight to the wall where the beer list is chalked up. Amongst the cask beers from Cloudwater, Adnams and Mallinsons was Howard Town Milltown Mild. There are no handpumps but rather cask beer taps lodged amongst those for the keg beers, so the chalk

board is vital reading. The Milltown was on excellent form and for a number of the party the beer of the night.

Heading across the bridge over London Road we went to the **Molly House** on Richmond Street in the Gay Village. Here mild is promised for Mild Magic but at the time of our visit there was none; so on to Portland Street and the **Grey Horse**. I can highly recommend this small single-roomed 19th Century pub with its semi-circular bar and bench seating; especially on



Mondays when there's 50p a pint discount (and a 10% CAMRA discount at all times). Hydes, sponsors of Mild Magic, perhaps almost uniquely still regularly brew a light (1863) and a dark mild. It was the latter, Old Indie (previously Owd Oak), which was available and what a fine pint it was; my beer of the night. While we were supping, the barmaid informed us that she had been headhunted to work in a Barcelona bar; I can't imagine what the attraction was, surely they can't have cask mild!

Two doors down is the **Old Monkey**, a supposed cask mild banker but I was wrong because amongst the half a dozen Holt's and Bootleg beers was no Holt's Mild. We then went, more in hope than expectation, to Wetherspoons **Paramount** on Oxford Street and **Waterhouse** on Princess Street, and to the **City Arms**, the traditional pub on Kennedy Street, which were all fine but had no cask mild. Never mind, a visit to these popular pubs for cask mild will be in order during Mild Magic.



We decided to make our next stop a cask mild certainty before our morale dropped and made

our way to the **Ape and Apple** on John Dalton Street where we were greeted by the sight of a Holt's Mild pumpclip amongst the range of Holt's and Bootleg beers (plus one guest). This normally busy pub was converted from a former bank 20 odd years ago but the wooden panelling, bench seating and old prints give it a much older feel. Being Monday however the place was relatively empty and perhaps because of this the mild was regrettably not up to its usual standard.

Next, to the 17th Century **Rising Sun** on Queen Street to be warmly greeted by the licensee Paul and his dog Harry. This is a smashing pub which frequently sells mild and is on Mild Magic but...on our visit Paul had turned the pub over to a tap takeover by a brewery which didn't brew a mild. Thwarted, we progressed down Deansgate to the final city centre Wetherspoons on Mild Magic, the **Moon Under Water** but with the same result.



Finally then, after wending through the crowds of Adele fans leaving the Manchester Arena, we reached the **Crown and Anchor** on Cateaton Street, off Exchange Square. This upmarket refurbished Holt's house was the most crowded of the night, probably due to the patronage of the Adele devotees. This is another pub with no handpumps but we spotted a small sign proclaiming Holt's Mild amongst the others for Bitter, Two Hoots and IPA. This was subject to mixed reviews but was generally well received.

Regrettably we had no chance to check out the Northern Quarter pubs on Mild Magic 2016: **Micro Bar, Castle, Crown and Kettle, Marble Arch, Pie and Ale** and the **Smithfield** and so home to our beds we went.

Overall on a positive note if the pubs in central Manchester are anything to go by Mild Magic 2016 is going to be a cracker, but on a slightly depressing note cask mild is getting increasingly difficult to find on a regular day to day basis.

GRUB'S UP! COME IN & TRY OUR NEW MENU...

LARGE PLATES & MARBLE CLASSICS

Hot smoked salmon, capers, dill crème fraîche and lemon on toasted sourdough.	£7.00
Cumin and chilli grilled Italian style vegetable platter with pesto, olives and toasted sourdough.	£7.50
Bratwurst with pickles, hot mustard, ketchup and crusty bread.	£7.50
Thomas Street ploughmans with locally made pork pie with Leagram's Cheddar, crusty bread, mustard and pickle.	£8.50
Homity pie with pickled red cabbage, parmentier potatoes, and mushy peas.	£9.50
King prawn and hot smoked salmon platter with sourdough toast, dill crème fraîche and lemon.	£9.50
Classic corn beef hash with red cabbage, carrots and homemade brown sauce.	£10.50
Marble beer braised beef and carrots with parmentier potatoes, mushy peas and crusty bread.	£12.50

BAR BITS, SNACKS & SMALL PLATES

Sweet cucumber pickle chips.	£2.50
House roasted chilli spiced nuts.	£3.50
Garlic and lemon marinated olives.	£3.50
Warm crusty bread, olive oil and balsamic reduction with roasted tomatoes and olives.*	£5.50
Nduja on toasted sourdough with capers.*	£6.00
Brilliat Savarin, confit tomato, rocket and balsamic reduction on toasted sourdough.*	£6.00
Lancashire and Marble beer rarebit with confit tomatoes and red onion jam.*	£6.50
Avocado with chilli, lime and coriander on toasted sourdough.*	£6.50
*Add Woodall's dried ham.	£1.50

CHEESE & MEAT BOARDS

Build your own board for £2.50 per item
All served with crusty bread, crackers, pickles, fig cake and quince jelly.

SOMETHING SWEET

Cake of the day (ask at the bar) and a hot drink.	£4.95
A cantuccini, a florentine and a macaroon with a hot drink.	£4.95



Heard at the Bar

Pub News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Chorlton Update

Chorlton can already claim to be one of the premier destinations in the whole country for the beer lover and it's still getting better.

In February, the former Crema cafe on Manchester Road reopened as **Mary & Archie** – an offshoot of the successful West Didsbury bar. The unusually shaped bar (the cellar access is actually below the bar) has four hand pulls while the back bar has a font wall with nine taps. A packed out opening night saw local brews from First Chop and RedWillow lining up alongside London's Five Points Railway Porter on the pumps, with Blackjack, Cloudwater, Tweed, Siren and Titanic Plum Porter amongst the many top breweries to have featured in the first few weeks.



The bar, which is situated on the corner of Kensington Road between the existing Pi and Font bars, is a family affair with Elli Peake at the helm, her brother Tom looking after the kitchen and mum Bev in the background – the same team who set up the original five years ago. Larger than its Burton Road sibling, there is seating for around 50 inside while outside there is a large wrap-around terrace that looks set to be a premier Chorlton destination in the warmer months.

Breakfast is served daily until 3pm, with a range of mains including daily specials served all day. Those missing their Sunday Roast at Wetherspoons can head to Mary & Archie instead where their Sunday deal offers a roast dinner and a pint of ale for £12. Should you have a sweeter tooth, you can choose from a selection of cakes and brownies from the award winning Silver Apples bakery.

Further down the road, **Morley Cheeks** at the top of Barlow Moor Road has made some changes in the cellar team that have seen expansion and diversification of the cask ale range. An improvement in both quality and choice is on the cards. When *Opening Times* called, Arbor's Triple Hop was on the bar alongside Red Rocker from Cromarty Brewery and the reinstated permanent Wainwright, with a Blackjack beer lined up to replace the Arbor (which we tried and found to be in very

good form). We look forward to seeing what this new dawn brings as while Morley Cheeks has been a great pub in many ways it has not always kept up with Chorlton's above average standards for real ale.

Spring Gardens



The **Spring Gardens** on Compstall Road in Marple Bridge has had a bumpy ride in recent years. Various formats came and went with closure the almost inevitable result. However riding to the rescue came Martin and Samantha Wood, owners of the successful **Hope Inn** on Wellington Road North. They bought the pub from Enterprise Inns with the aim of making it a "Fool Hardy Tap House".

That took rather longer than planned as the pub turned out to be something of a wreck – every time OT spoke to Martin or Sam they'd uncovered another horror. The kitchen floor fell in at one stage. However the new look Spring Gardens finally opened for business on 16th March.



This is a big pub and the rambling interior has been given a very modern and bright makeover, albeit with a traditional touch. For example there's plenty of fixed seating and in the vault area at the back there's open-topped table football. Although the pub is essentially open-plan there are enough discrete areas to break it all up, and to the left is a separate room which looks as though it may function as a dining room for some of the time but is also available for larger parties. Quirky and distinctive artworks plus some bespoke wallpaper add to the overall effect.

It is badged as a "beer emporium and eatery" so there will be quite an emphasis on the food. This will cover the spectrum from more traditional

pub dishes to the likes of risotto or Malaysian Curry. "It's traditional with a twist" Sam told us. The kitchen will be open from 12 noon until 9.00pm Wednesday to Saturday. On Sundays it will be open for traditional Sunday lunches from noon through to 5.00pm.

So, that's the "eatery" side taken care of – what about the "beer emporium"? There's something for everyone really. No fewer than eight cask beers will be available, four from Fool Hardy (including some brewed especially for the pub) and four changing guests. There's a traditional cider, also on handpump, and a wide range of keg beers from both the UK and abroad dispensed from a huge multi-tapped font which dominates the bar and brings a touch of industrial chic. A very welcome addition to the area – the pub is on the 383/384 bus route so it's easily accessible on public transport from Stockport town centre.

Pub Shorts



We hear that one of the next pubs in line for refurbishment by Robinsons is the **Dog and Partridge**, Great Moor. Landlord Andy Green was expecting work on the kitchen to be completed before Easter, and work on the internal and external areas to be completed by mid-April. Exciting plans are in the pipeline for what happens after that. We look forward with great interest to see the results of the refurbishment, watch this space for further details.

The **Orange Tree** in Altrincham re-opened on 26th February. As mentioned in February's *Opening Times* it has had a succession of licensees unable to make a go of it. The new leaseholder, Adam Greaves, explained his secret for success: affordable prices and good beer. All cask beers are priced at £2.80 a pint. The core range for now is Adnams Ghost Ship, Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King IPA and Copper Dragon Golden Pippin. If trade picks up, one or two guest beers will be introduced. They hope eventually to have a real cider or perry. When OT called a real wood fire was roaring. Weekend events include a live singing act on Friday nights, karaoke on Saturday nights and an Open Mike night on Sundays.



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Pub News Extra

News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Old Market Tavern

The **Old Market Tavern** was recently listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). As a result of the protection this affords the pub, owners Punch Taverns have given notification to Trafford Council that they intend to dispose of the pub.



As an Asset of Community Value (ACV), this means that local community groups (not just CAMRA) have a chance to consider buying the building. Any community group interested in purchasing the pub would need to notify Trafford Council of its interest by 12th April in order to trigger a six month moratorium period when the group would need to make arrangements to complete a purchase.

Opening Times understands that Punch's sale does not at this point threaten the future of this great pub as we've been advised that the current tenant is looking to buy the pub from them. Although the lease negotiated with previous tenant, the late John Glover, gave the OMT a level of freedom over its beer purchasing that is almost unprecedented in 'PubCo' agreements, taking the pub completely out of PubCo control should only make the pub's future brighter. CAMRA would welcome the change of ownership and would hope the OMT can continue to be one of Altrincham's most valued purveyors of quality real ale and continue as a great asset to the local community as a venue for live music and other community events.

Gorse Hill

Another pub recently rescued is the **Gorse Hill** on Chester Road, Stretford. As previously reported, owners Greene King shut the pub suddenly in December giving staff only a few days' notice of losing their jobs. The building has been bought by Chorlton-based Ajmal Nasir and two of his friends as AA Trading UK Ltd with plans to convert the upper floors into flats. However, the pub itself re-opened in late February with former landlord Andy Seale back in charge under the new owners.

Despite many years under the ownership of Britain's largest brewer of cask ale, the pub has not been a regular cask ale outlet for many

years. *Opening Times* hopes that freed from the dreaded PubCo tie, the new management will see fit to offer their regulars and the hordes of Manchester United fans that descend on match day a choice of some of the wealth of Manchester-brewed beers that are now available to them.

Crown, Northenden

In recent years the cask ale scene in Northenden has been pretty lacklustre. **Lounge About** has been selling cask for some years now (and offers a CAMRA discount) but apart from that it's been thin pickings. Things are changing though.

First came news that the new licensee of the **Farmer Arms** on Langley Lane has reinstated Black Sheep Best Bitter on handpump and now the **Crown** on Ford Lane is enjoying a new lease of life.



The Crown has been taken over by John and Janice Rogers (pictured above) on an almost free-of-tie lease from Punch Taverns. They are both experienced hands – John has run six pubs since the late 1980s (including a couple of years at the Marble Arch) while Janice was landlady of the Ducie Bridge on Corporation Street in the City Centre for six years.

They are bringing all this to bear on the Crown which has been thoroughly refreshed and redecorated and now looks smarter than it has done for some considerable time. More significantly the keg Boddingtons, which has been a staple here for many years, has been joined by three changing guest cask beers – and there is room for more if they take off. When OT called on launch night last month the guests were Pennine Winter Warmer, Sadlers IPA and Roosters Blind Jack and they seemed to be well received.

Although this has been a wet-led pub for many years John and Janice also plan to introduce a bar snack option and will begin with cheeses, pates, pies and sandwiches. It's a bit of a gamble introducing cask to what has been such a keg-led pub and we wish John and Janice every success.

Bridge Beers

When thinking about a name for a new venture there can be many factors which need to be taken into account. Occasionally, however, a name can almost select itself. Consider for a moment that you are a native of Stalybridge who wants to open a beer related business in the town. Further, your name is David Bridge. It perhaps doesn't take a huge leap of the imagination to arrive at the name of **Bridge Beers** for such an enterprise.



Opening Times was invited along to the pre-launch of this new business, which officially opened on Friday 26th February, and took the opportunity to discuss with CAMRA member David his hopes and ambitions for Bridge Beers.

David sees his place as a combination of a bottle shop and a micropub taking on board the best of both of these worlds. The offer is a family friendly environment with a relaxed café bar atmosphere. The bottle shop part of the business features bottled beers from a number of local breweries and some from further afield.

The micropub side is exactly that and takes its ethos from the inherent simplicity of the micropub movement. The emphasis is on beer and conversation with nothing to distract the discerning drinker except for the occasional rustle of a packet of peanuts, crisps or pork scratchings.

The premises are a converted hairdressers shop on the main pedestrianized shopping street in Stalybridge. The entrance has a small seating area which leads on to the bar and bottle space. Up to eight casks can be stillaged at any one time - all temperature controlled - and the objective is to have four on sale at any one time, all on gravity dispense. All the beers will be from local microbreweries. The bottles are arranged in racks to one side. Upstairs is a comfortable lounge area decorated in a late Victorian style.

Bridge Beers is at 55 Melbourne Street, Stalybridge. It's closed on Monday and Tuesday and opens at 10.00am Wednesday to Saturday and 12 noon on Sundays.

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Brewery & Pub News

News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

Fivecloud Brew Co.

Tom Lewis has been in touch to tell us about his new **Fivecloud Brew Co.** which is a “cuckoo” operation utilising the small one-barrel pilot plant at New Mills’s Torrside Brewery.

Tom is the manager of the Brewtique shop and bar in Macclesfield and is also a founder of both the Macclesfield and Leek homebrew clubs. He has homebrewed seriously for about three years now. Tom has been joined in this new venture by Josh Sharples who also works at Brewtique. Josh used to be a supervisor at the RedWillow tap house in Macclesfield and also interned at Buxton Brewery for a short while.



The name ‘Fivecloud’ comes from a formation of rocks, and the type of sandstone they’re made from, on the Roaches near Leek. The brewery will focus on brewing seasonal beers, rotating the core range (Pale, IPA and Stout) recipes every three months or so. Tom and Josh will also be releasing a number of specials alongside the core range each season.

Fivecloud will launch with two beers, a 4.5% pale and a 6.5% IPA. These will be followed up with its first stout (7%) and the first special, a seasonal saison named “Bière des Roches”, as the name “The Roaches” was derived from the French word for Rocks. The beers will be available in bottle, keg and cask and are expected to be launched from mid to late April.

Westwood Brewery

At least once a year *Opening Times* gets asked “is that brewery in the cellar of the **Lowes Arms** still there?” The reply is usually non-committal. But yes it is – and more to the point it’s back in operation.

Brewing at the Lowes Arms (on Hyde Road in Denton) used to be carried on under “The LAB” banner and fizzled out around seven years ago. Now it’s back as **Westwood Brewery** thanks to the enthusiasm of Canadian Mark West (pictured above right) and the encouragement of Lowes Arms owner Peter Wood (so it’s easy to see where the brewery’s name comes from).

Mark arrived in the UK in 2011 and worked for the Almond family in the Hesketh Arms, Cheadle Hulme and the Three Bears in Hazel Grove as a head chef. However he wanted to work for himself and as a keen homebrewer this seemed an obvious avenue to follow. Talking about this in his local, the White Lion in Disley, he found himself in conversation with a friend

of a friend of Peter Wood. A visit to the Lowes Arms was arranged and it was agreed to re-start the brewery.

As the two-barrel plant hadn’t been used for seven years it took some getting back into action – problems with the cooler dogged the first couple of brews but



Westwood Ales has now launched with “I Am Pilgrim”, a 3.6% session bitter hopped with, well, Pilgrim. It’s an easy-drinking session beer which ends with a moreish and long-lasting bitterness, and has been out and about in the local free trade. Mark’s plans include a dark beer hopped with German varieties and some hoppy pale ales (Oracle from Salopian Brewery is a favourite of his). Westwood Brewery can be contacted via Twitter @Westwoodbrews.

The Brink

After a longer than planned gestation period, the **Brink** (65 Bridge Street) in Manchester City Centre finally opened just before Easter.

It was in October 2014 that Gareth Williams (pictured right) put down the deposit on the disused basement premises that are now the Brink. Problems ensued with dry rot, asbestos, damp, leaks and drainage all combining to put back the opening date.



But it’s now open and promises to be a welcome addition to the City Centre beer scene, complementing the Gaslamp across the road. Gareth is a cask ale fan so a range of handpumps dominates the bar with the keg fonts off to one side. The stocking policy is also worth mentioning – all of the beers (cask and keg) will be sourced from breweries within 25 miles of St Ann’s Square. Food will be available shortly in the form of local pies and the famous “Manchester Egg” (a scotch egg with black pudding).

The Brink is closed on Mondays and opens from 11.00am to midnight on Tuesday and Wednesday, noon to midnight on Thursday;

noon until 1.00am on Friday and Saturday and from noon until 11.00pm on Sundays. These hours may change as trading patterns settle down.

Trooper Red ‘N’ Black

Robinsons have announced the latest edition to the Trooper range. Following on from “regular” Trooper and the stronger Trooper 666 comes Trooper Red ‘N’ Black. This will be a porter at 5.8% (cask) and 6.8% (bottle) and will be launched in September. The beer, designed once again by Iron Maiden’s Bruce Dickinson along with Robinsons’ Head Brewer Martyn Weeks, takes its inspiration from a very early Robinsons recipe which was first brewed in the 1850s.



Pub Shorts



We reported that the **Queens Arms** in Cheadle had stopped selling cask beer. This prompted a call from Dennis Davies, the licensee of this Robinsons house. He tells us that cask beer is back on the bar with Unicorn and Dizzy Blonde on handpump. Dennis tells us that he is working hard to turn round the pub after several years of drift – so drop in and have a pint to support him in his efforts.

The **Egerton Arms** (by Salford Central Station) now has six handpumps (admittedly two serving Holts Bitter) and our man on the spot reports an excellent pint of Moberley Maori, and at a very reasonable £2.80 a pint. Beers from Oakham and Coniston were amongst the other cask offerings. The reason for the uplift is the recent purchase of the Egerton by Phil Entwistle who also owns the **City** on Oldham Street, the **Swan** in Ulverston, the **Top Lock**, Chorley and two others in that area – he also owns a beer agency that supplies most of his pubs.

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