

OPENING TIMES

SEPTEMBER 2016 / FREE

STOCKPORT



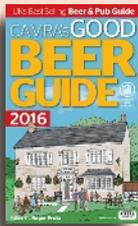
BEER WEEK

**INSIDE: STOCKPORT BEER WEEK – A
CELEBRATION OF STOCKPORT’S PUBS
AND BREWERIES / BEER IN GERMANY /
MARIS OTTER 51 YEARS ON**



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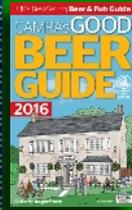
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OPENING TIMES

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

* Derbyshire: www.derbysbus.info

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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, Jon Gobbett, John O'Donnell, Stewart Taylor and Jerry Wicken.

Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Front cover – Stockport beer Week – details on page 9.

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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

Salford (SAL)

www.salford.camra.org.uk

Contact: Dave Hampshire; talldave@gmail.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

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Trafford & Hulme (T&H)

www.thecamra.org.uk

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

Central Manchester (CMCR)

www.centralmanchestercamra.org.uk

Contact: enquiries@centralmanchestercamra.org.uk

Local CAMRA Events

Everyone welcome at these events

Tuesday 6th – Branch Meeting: Castle Hotel, 66 Oldham Street, M4 1LE. Starts 6.00pm. (CMCR)

Wednesday 7th – Clifton and Pendlebury Crawl: 7.30pm Golden Lion, 136 Manchester Road, M27 6PE; 8.30pm Newmarket, 621 Bolton Road, M27 4EJ; 9.15pm Lord Nelson, 653 Bolton Road, M27 4EJ. (SAL)

Thursday 8th – Branch Meeting: Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury, M20 5PG. Includes "Meet the Brewer". Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

Monday 12th – Branch Meeting: Cheshire Ring, 72 Manchester Road, Hyde, SK14 2BJ. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 14th – Worsley Crawl: 7.30pm Cock Hotel, 301 Walkden Road, M28 2RZ; 8.30pm Ellesmere Sports Club, Walkden Road, M28 2RZ; 9.30pm Worsley Old Hall, Worsley Park, M28 2QT. (SAL)

Friday 16th – Ladybarn, Fallowfield & Rusholme Stagger: 7.30pm Ladybarn Social Club, 13 Green Street, Ladybarn, M14 6TL; 8.30pm Friendship, 353 Wilmslow Road, M14 6XS. (SSM)

Saturday 17th – Social in Denton and Hyde: Starts 1.30pm at Crown Point Tavern, 16 Market Street, Denton, M34 2XW. (HPNC)

Wednesday 21st – Branch Meeting: Old Pint Pot, 2 Adelphi Street, Salford, M3 6EN. Starts 7.30pm. (SAL)

Wednesday 21st – Piccadilly Promenade: 6.00pm Bull's Head, 84 London Road, M4 2PN; 6.30pm Piccadilly Tap, Station Approach, M1 2GH; 8.00pm Port Street Beer House, Port Street, M1 2EQ. (CMCR)

Thursday 22nd – Pub of the Month presentation to the Railway, 74 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HF. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

Thursday 22nd to Sunday 2nd October – Stockport Beer Week. See pages 10 and 11 for programme of events. All welcome. (SSM)

Saturday 24th – Trip to Sheffield. Meet at Piccadilly station 11.00am for 11.20am train to Sheffield. (T&H)

Saturday 24th – Autumn Pub of the Season presentation. Details to be confirmed. (HPNC)

Wednesday 28th – Wardley Social: 7.30pm Red Lion, 296 Chorley Road, M27 9RJ; 8.15pm Morning Star, 520 Manchester Road, M27 9QW. (SAL)

Tuesday 4th October – Branch Meeting: venue to be confirmed. Starts 6.00pm. (CMCR)

Wednesday 5th October – Central Manchester Crawl: 7.30pm Britons Protection, 50 Great Bridgewater Street, M1 5LE; 8.30pm Rain Bar, 80 Great Bridgewater Street, M1 5JG; 9.30pm Peveril of the Peak, 127 Great Bridgewater Street, M1 5JQ. (SAL)

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/thecamra

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

Central Manchester:
www.facebook.com/groups/CentralManchesterCamra

High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire:
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Stockport & South Manchester: @SSMCAMRA

Trafford & Hulme: @THCAMRA

Salford: @NorthMancsCAMRA

Macclesfield & East Cheshire: @MECCAMRA

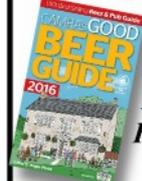
Central Manchester: @MCRCentralCamra

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Pub of the Month

The Railway, Heaton Norris



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for September 2016 is the Railway on Wellington Road North, Heaton Norris. *John Clarke* explains why it won.

The Railway has had various owners over the years. Both Wilsons and Greenall Whitley have vanished into history. Punch Taverns may be still with us but has been beset by well-documented difficulties. One way out of those difficulties was to sell off numerous pubs – and one of those was the Railway which was purchased by Ray and Pam Ford. Since then it's not looked back.

Now a true free house the Railway has Holt's Bitter as its permanent beer and this is accompanied by up to four changing guests. Very often these are new and unusual finds for the area as Ray has developed a talent for sourcing obscure beers from around the country. The pub's place in the national Good Beer Guide testifies to the quality of the beer.

But the Railway has more strings to its bow than just beer (important though that is). There's its enviable reputation for live music for one thing. Live jazz is a speciality but this is supplemented by other live music nights and the rockabilly weekends have seen the pub drunk dry of draught beers and lagers. The bulging trophy shelf also pays tribute to successes of the large number of teams based here. There's a pool team, a quiz team and no fewer than six darts teams (including two in the Super League).

The pub is also undergoing extensive building work, mainly concentrated upstairs where years of neglect under previous owners are being put right. Downstairs there are three well-appointed rooms – at the back is a substantial games room while at the front are two comfortable lounges with that on the right often used for darts and music.

This well deserved award will be presented on Thursday 22nd September and will effectively launch Stockport Beer Week. Come along and join CAMRA members for what will be a great night out.



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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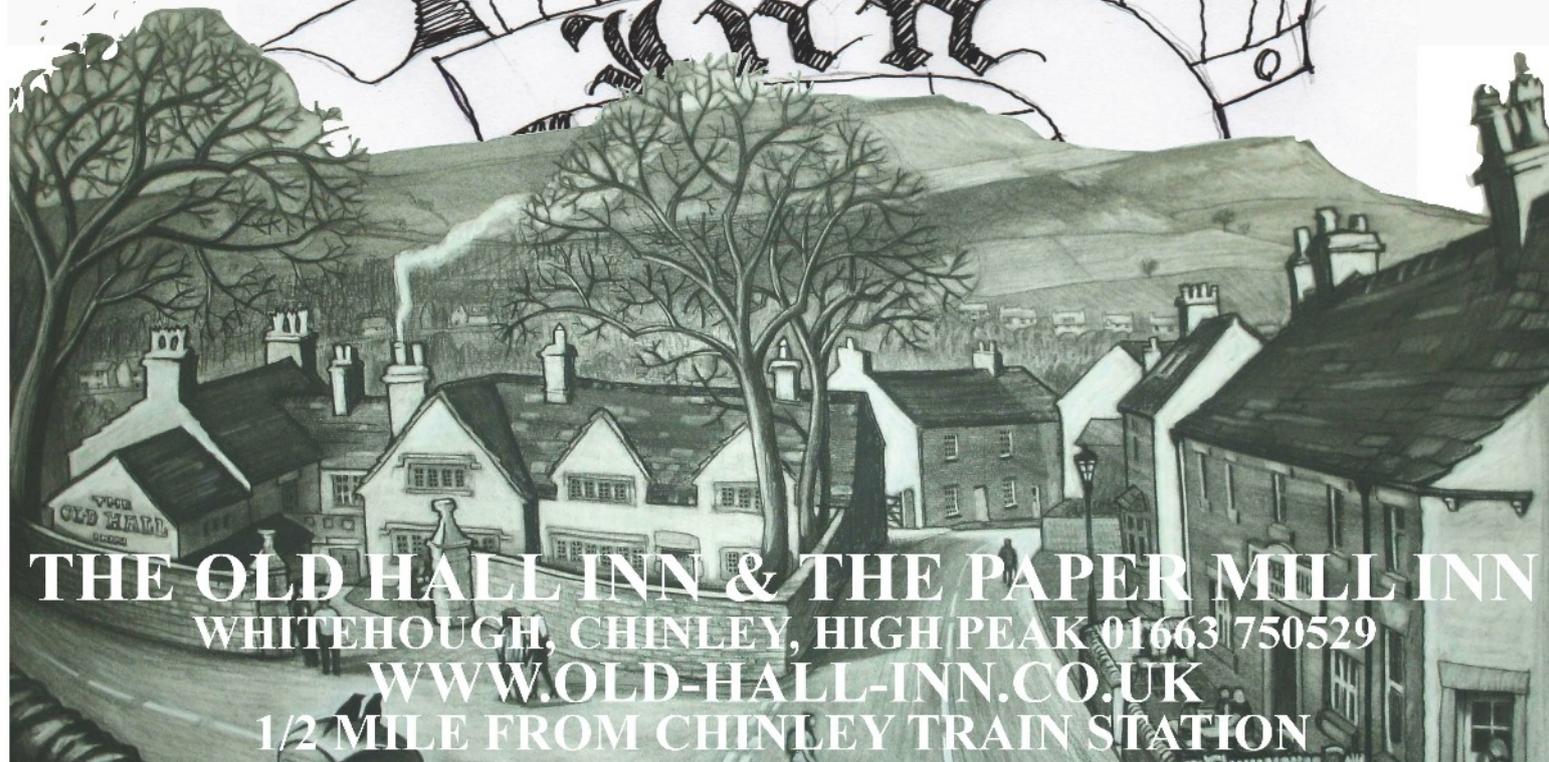
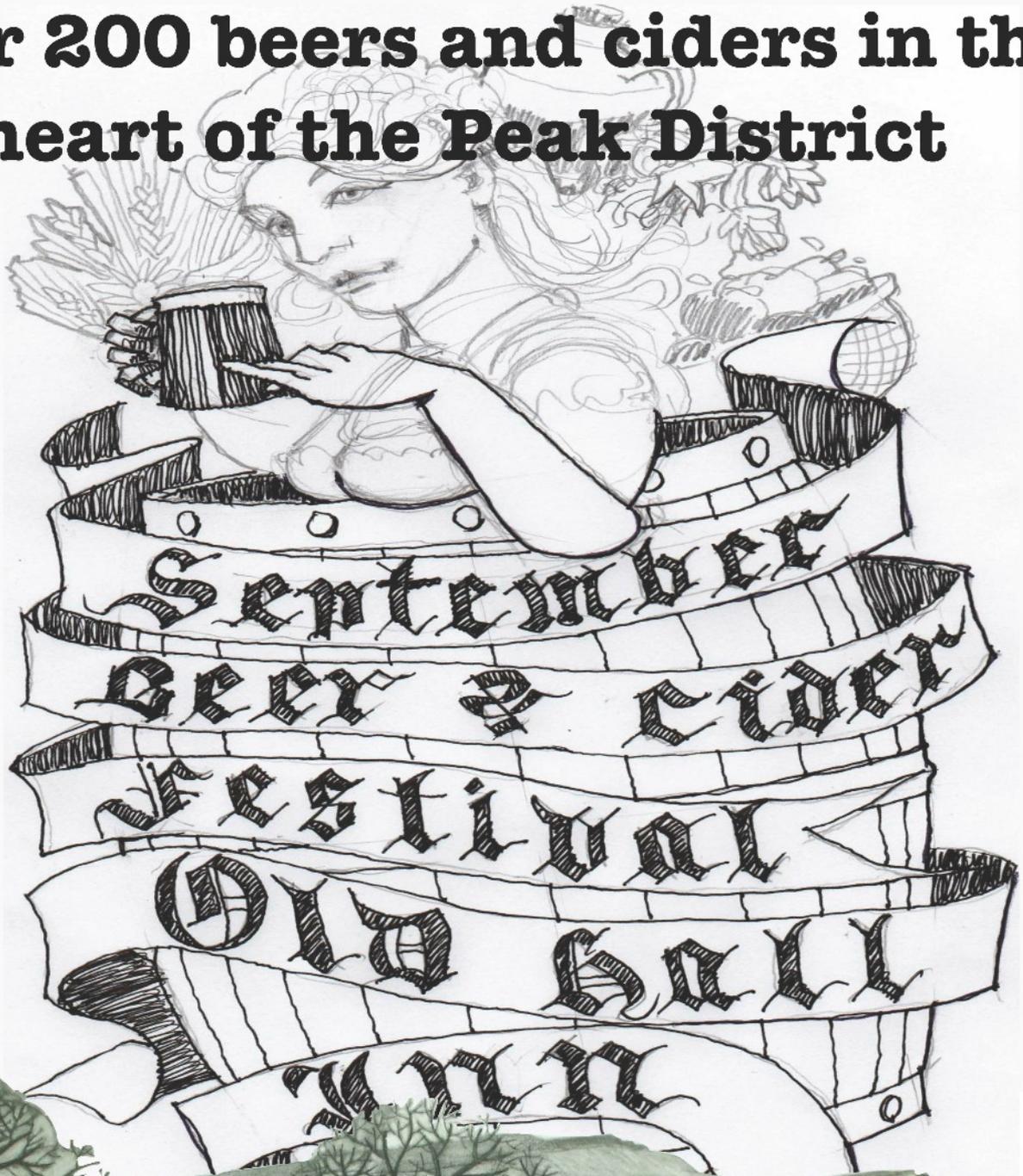
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Stagger

Gorton with Paul Felton

Our tour of Gorton took place on a warmish and mercifully dry night in June (yes, dry, really!), and our starting point was the **Plough**, a Robinsons pub on Hyde Road which has remained pretty much unchanged since a remodelling in 1893.



In around 1994 it was threatened with demolition due to a scheme to widen Hyde Road, but the council was stopped in its tracks by the pub being Grade II listed. It's a fine place. The lobby has a black and white tiled floor and green wall tiling. Off that are four rooms. Front right is the superb bar, with parquet flooring and fixed seating all around the walls. Back right is the games room with pool and darts. On the left are two separate lounges. (Later in the evening, one of our number mentioned that it has a rather pleasant beer garden as well.) Three Robinsons beers were available: Unicorn, Cumbria Way and Trooper. On this evening, the beers weren't quite as good as the pub itself, which is a must-visit if you're in the area.



A quick check at the Angel on Wellington Street and the Cotton Tree on Cross Lane didn't show any sign of cask beer, so it was on to the **Royal Oak**, also on Cross Lane. It's a smallish former Boddingtons house: the left hand side of the pub is the more comfortably-appointed lounge, while the right is the vault, with lots of football and boxing memorabilia. One of our number commented to landlady Lynn about the attractive floral displays outside the front door, which led to us being taken outside (so to speak) so that a very proud Lynn could show off the small but excellent beer garden at the rear of the pub: lots of tables with umbrellas, pots and hanging baskets filled with flowers,

and a barbecue, a really good effort in a rather confined area. Back inside, only one beer was available (there was a second handpump, but its clip was turned round): the ubiquitous Sharp's Doom Bar – and it was pretty good, certainly given the lacklustre examples of the beer that can often be found.



Back onto Hyde Road, we popped into the Lord Nelson to see if it had any cask beer available – it didn't, nor did it have many customers. So it was over the road to Holt's **Waggon & Horses**. As with the Royal Oak, while there aren't really any separate rooms, it's a pub that's definitely divided into vault and lounge: the left hand side is the vault (which was quite busy) and the right hand side is the extended lounge (very quiet in terms of customers, possibly because of the not-very-quiet in terms of volume karaoke). We went outside to get away from the noise, sitting on the decking on the right hand side of the pub – not as nice an outdoor drinking area as the Royal Oak, partly because it's open to Hyde Road and thus rather noisy, but nonetheless a decent effort has been made, with several planters full of flowers hung on the railings. While there was a handpump with a mild clip, only Holt bitter was available; it really wasn't very good.



The youngest member of the party was then despatched to determine whether the Friendship, a little further along Hyde Road, sold cask beer. When he reported that it didn't, we headed through the Gore Brook conservation area and its butterfly garden (yes, really) to the excellent **Vale Cottage** on Kirk

Street. It's often fairly accurately described as being "a country pub in the city" – certainly a friend from Chorlton who I took to the place many years ago was (slightly snobbishly) surprised that such a pub could exist in Gorton! It's an interesting, comfortable place with low, beamed ceilings and several seating areas. After fears of closure, it was bought from Enterprise Inns by a local group, who've given it the stability that it needed. They've begun improvements to the pub: the garden is as good as the Royal Oak, albeit with a lot more ground space to play with – there's raised seating, trees and plants in the beds and attractive hanging baskets, and there are plans for a children's play area at the top of the garden. The interior does need a little care and attention, but this has started as well – for those who know the pub, the small vault area was curtained off for redecoration. Two beers were available (there are sometimes three): the regular Taylor's Landlord, which was good, and the increasingly-regular Harvest Pale from the excellent Castle Rock brewery in Nottingham, which was very good indeed and comfortably the best beer of the night. A great little place, more than worth taking the trouble to find.



So, not many pubs selling real ale – I think that four is the least that I've ever visited on a Stagger – but given the closures that other parts of inner Manchester have seen in recent years, there are perhaps a surprising number of places still open: as well as those mentioned above, there's the Suburban, Gardeners Arms, Vulcan (pictured above), Steelworks and Prince of Wales, albeit none of them serving cask beer at the time of writing. But you have to wonder how much trade any of these places is actually doing – certainly none of the four keg pubs we dropped into on the evening had many customers. Perhaps this is an area where pubs fill up quite late in the evening – while the Vale Cottage was doing okay when we arrived at around 9:30, it was considerably busier by closing time – but you have to fear that a domino effect might take hold and several of them might fold in quick succession, leaving nothing much left. Hopefully not.

The New Oxford

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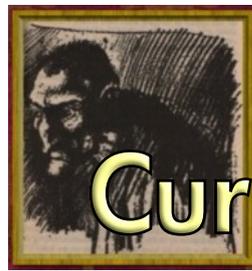
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Curmudgeon

Doing What it Says on the Tin

CAMRA is currently in the midst of a Revitalisation Project, which aims to take a root-and-branch look at the organisation's objectives and priorities. One frequent complaint is that it is too dogmatic in refusing to embrace high-quality beers that do not qualify as "real". However, that is missing the point of what it's all about.

When CAMRA was formed, its core purpose was to promote and champion the independent breweries and their distinctive beers that had survived the takeover frenzy of the 1960s. That decade saw probably the most dramatic transformation in business structures, popular culture and the physical appearance of this country of any in the past hundred years. Modernity, progress and renewal were the watchwords, and anyone who sought to stand in the way was condemned as negative and fuddy-duddy. This, after all, was the era of the New Britain that was to be forged in the white heat of the scientific revolution, and was keenly embraced by both of the major political parties.

However, as the Sixties turned into the Seventies, the downsides in terms of the destruction of the traditional and familiar became increasingly apparent, and there was a backlash in popular sentiment. E. F. Schumacher's bestselling book "Small is Beautiful" is often seen as epitomising this trend, and it gained wide public recognition in the TV sitcom "The Good Life". CAMRA obviously was a major part of this, and there is a strong parallel with steam railway preservation, which shared many of the same motivations and personnel. It was as much about a sense of cultural loss as about a specific technical definition of beer. This was well summed up in a recent Internet comment from one Ian H who said:

"CAMRA is a people-powered cultural heritage organisation in all but name. Traditional drinking culture is what links real ale, real cider/perry, historic pub interiors and community pubs. Embrace it! By all means show craft more respect (the same respect shown to Belgian beers and quality German and Czech lagers, for instance), but don't water down the central purpose of CAMRA".

Arguably CAMRA went too far down the road of trying to tie down a precise definition of "real ale", ending up excluding products and dispense methods that fitted the broader concept perfectly well. The outright refusal to countenance cask breathers is a prime example. The long-defunct Hull Brewery used to store lightly-filtered, unpasteurised beer in large ceramic cellar jars in its pubs. Now how quirky and traditional was that, but it was judged not to be "real". Sadly, this gave rise to a widespread view that real ale was inherently superior to all other forms of beer, which was never really a defensible position and ended up causing a great deal of resentment.

But the problem with any formal embrace of "non-real" beers is that, once you abandon an objective standard, even if an imperfect one, then what are you left with apart from "beers I happen to like"? The famous 20th century writer and commentator G. K. Chesterton once said "When a man stops believing in God, he doesn't then believe in nothing, he believes anything." It just opens the door for subjective favouritism and outright beer snobbery.

CAMRA is not, and never has been, a generalised campaign for All Good Beer. If some of its members have at times given that impression, they have been wrong. It is a campaign to preserve and champion a unique British brewing and cultural institution. The clue is in the name, and it does what it says on the tin. There are plenty of great non-"real" beers out there, and CAMRA members should feel no shame in enjoying and celebrating them. But they don't need campaigning for. Real ale does.



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Letters to the Editor

From Laura Green, Adult Services Manager, Beacon Counselling:

On behalf of Beacon Counselling we would like to thank everyone who came to Stockport Beer & Cider Festival this year and supported us as the chosen charity.

It was an absolute pleasure to be the charity once again and we were successful in raising £7,436.11 to support our local cause. This money is vital in helping children, young people and adults across Stockport through our core counselling service.

Beacon builds resilience in communities by supporting adults, young people and children experiencing mental and emotional distress. We do this by providing one to one counselling, group programmes and through community projects. Beacon delivers counselling in 22 centres across Stockport. We have two Beacon counselling centres and we work from schools, GP surgeries and community centres. The service is open to everyone with the majority of the clients coming from Stockport and the Greater Manchester area.

As a small local charity, the festival is a fantastic opportunity for us to extend our reach and help even more local people who struggle with mental health problems on a daily basis. As well as the thanking all who attended the festival we would like to thank the festival committee for all their help before and during the festival.

We would like to give special thanks to our sponsors: Our main sponsor the Vernon Building Society was a tremendous support throughout the festival and the following cask sponsors meant that we could raise more money on the charity bar: the Hinds Head in Heaton Chapel, the Kenilworth in Cheadle, the Midway Tavern in Stockport, Alex Hobin Graphic Design, Snapes Estate Agents in Bramhall and Bramhall Bakery. We also received donated casks of beer from the following breweries: Robinsons, First Chop Brewing Arm, Hornbeam Brewery, Weetwood Ales, Coach House Brewery and J W Lees. Without their kind support we wouldn't have had a charity bar!

We would also like to thank Parfett's for donating snacks, and Vernon building society, Santander and Lloyds for supporting the event with volunteers.

We look forward to seeing you at next year's festival!

From John O Lewis, Shrewsbury:

Curmudgeon is to be congratulated on his first class article on Draught Bass in the June issue of *Opening Times*. This is an excellent and much underrated beer which I drink very regularly at the four pubs which serve it permanently in Shrewsbury. WE also have one pub to the north of the town and two to the south, all on or near the A49, in which I partake from time to time.

Having been brought up in rural Berkshire I did not come across Bass until I went to university in Aberystwyth in 1960. The local brewery, David Roberts, had just been taken over by Hancocks of Cardiff and Bass was widely available in Hancocks pubs in the town - Hancocks Bitter (HB) at 1/6 (*that's 7½p for our younger viewers - Ed.*) per pint, the cooking bitter, and Bass at 1/10 per pint, the premium bitter.

When I came to work in Stockport in 1968, I frequented what was then the superb George for a double treat - Higsons Bitter and Draught Bass. At this time there was a small Manchester brewery called Swales, taken over by Boddingtons in 1970. Its products were known as 'Swales Swill' but Swales houses had Draught Bass and I remember drinking it in the White Hart on Cheadle High Street.

After Stockport I worked in various locations in England and sought out Bass, frequently without any luck, although I do remember a pub in Walthamstow in the late 1970s, the Flower Pot, which sold only Bass from several handpumps.

Draught Bass is given no advertising by its current owners AB Inbev and, since the brewing is subcontracted out to Marston's (who actually withdrew its sale, despite may protests - and it was the best seller - from a free house they acquired in central Shrewsbury), the beer appears to be an orphan in need of a caring brewery. The last widespread advertising I recall was in the 1970s.

Whilst on CAMRA business in the south west last year I came across the Yacht Inn in Penzance. This is a St Austell house with two Bass handpumps, the Bass outselling all other cask beers on offer. If a historic Bass house is sought the Coopers Tavern - now a Joules pub - in Burton upon Trent, the former Bass brewery tap, should be visited. Bass is the most popular beer there.

(Many thanks for getting in touch John - an informative and entertaining letter - Ed.)

Recent CAMRA Awards

Stockport & South Manchester Branch have been quicker off the mark presenting the Beer of the Festival awards for 2016 than they were for 2015. Two have been presented to date.

The festival's staff party was held at **Cryptic Ales** and the opportunity was taken to present the Bronze Award for **The Ghost**, a tasty hazelnut mild. The Cryptic team are pictured below with their award. Many thanks also to Cryptic for hosting the party.



Last month 20 branch members made the short journey to Sheffield Street behind Piccadilly Station, and **Track Brewing** where a double presentation was made. The Silver Award was won by **Pekoe Blue Lady IPA** and while this was brewed at Track by Sam Dyson, the recipe came from home brewer Ross McFadyen. Ross won the IPA category in the competition to find five new beers for the festival's Bar Nouveau (he also won the stout and porter category too) to they each got an award. Ross (left) and Sam are pictured below with their certificates.



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2010

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Heaton Norris**

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Stockport Beer Week

A celebration of Stockport's Pubs and Breweries

After a successful launch last year, CAMRA and the town of Stockport are again organising a Beer Week. Timed to coincide with National Cask Ale Week (22nd September – 2nd October) the town centre will see eleven days of events celebrating local breweries and pubs.

This year the Beer Week is teaming up with local charity **Walthew House** which supports people in Stockport who have sensory loss. The week is co-sponsored by Stockport's **Metro Taxis**.

The other co-sponsor is **Robinsons Brewery** who will be holding a beer festival featuring beers from several Stockport and other local breweries in their award winning Visitor Centre. In addition you can enjoy discounts on brewery tours there.

Stockport Market Place will be a hub of activity; the cellar tours of some pubs will return as will the beer related tours of the 15th century Staircase House and the historic pub walk. New this year will be an ale trail around a number of Stockport's pubs with T-shirts on offer for those who complete the course.

In addition, you will find a number of brewery open days, tap takeovers, Meet the Brewer evenings, charity events and beer and cider tastings. The Stockport Brewing Company, located under the viaduct will be brewing a special beer for the week; to find out what it is you will have to seek it out! Beers from the other seven Stockport breweries will be found at pubs round the town as well as the usual vast range of cask beers from breweries big and small from across the country.

Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA Chairman John Clarke said "After a successful first event last year highlighting Stockport town centre pubs and breweries, 2016 will see an expanded event. We look forward to welcoming first time visitors and locals alike to sample the beery delights of the town. Whatever your interest in pubs and cask beer, there's something for everyone".

Full information can be found at www.ssmcamra.co.uk/
Twitter - @SSMCAMRA / Facebook www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA/

Events taking place throughout Stockport Beer Week

Robinsons Brewery Visitors Centre, Apsley Street, SK1 1YE: "Two for the price of one" on brewery tours.

Stockport Ale Trail - visit participating pubs, pick up a card, have some cask beer and obtain a sticker. Get 12 stickers and claim a free "Stockport Beer Week" t-shirt.

Participating pubs are:

- Arden Arms (Robinsons) - 23 Millgate, SK1 2LX
- Armoury (Robinsons) - 31 Shaw Heath, Edgeley, SK3 8BD
- Bakers Vaults (Robinsons) - Market Place, SK1 1ES
- Blossoms (Robinsons) - 2 Buxton Road, Heaviley, SK2 6NU
- Boars Head (Samuel Smiths) - 2 Vernon Street, Market Place, SK1 1TY
- Cocked Hat (Free) - 2 Market Place, SK1 1EW
- Crown (Free) - 154 Heaton Lane, SK4 1AR
- Hope (Free) - 118 Wellington Road North, Heaton Norris, SK4 2LL
- Magnet (Free) - 51 Wellington Road North, Heaton Norris, SK4 1HJ
- Midland (Free) - 19 Wellington Road North, Heaton Norris, SK4 1HJ
- Railway Portwood (Free) - 1 Avenue Street, Portwood, SK1 2BZ
- Red Bull (Robinsons) - 14 Middle Hillgate, SK1 3AY
- Remedy Bar (Free) - 10-11 Market Place, SK1 1EW
- Robinsons Brewery Centre (Robinsons) - Apsley Street, SK1 1YE
- Sun and Castle (Holt's) - 54 Middle Hillgate, SK1 3EH

Horse & Jockey
the inn on the green
9 The Green, Chorlton

Many local ales from other breweries will be featured in the Robinson's pubs on the Stockport Ale Trail.

Individual events

THURSDAY 22nd



Opening event: CAMRA Pub of the Month presentation to the **Railway**, 74-76 Wellington Road North SK4 1HF. Starts 8pm; presentation of certificate at around 9pm.

Robinsons Brewery Visitors Centre Beer Festival - Apsley Street, SK1 1YE. Open 5pm- 10pm. £5 entry (£4 in advance). Includes

entry, glass and tasting notes. Five Robinsons Beers and 17 Local Ales. Snacks available and music.

FRIDAY 23rd

Historic Pubs Walk in the Market Place Area. Meet outside Staircase House, 30/31Market Place, SK1 1ES at 7pm. Duration approximately 1 hour. No booking required. Charge £1 - payable on the night.

Stockport Brewing Company Open House. Arch 14, Heaton Lane, SK4 AQ Open night from 8.30pm – 11pm.

Robinsons Brewery Visitors Centre Beer Festival. Apsley Street, SK1 1YE. Open 5pm- 10pm. £5 entry, (£4 in advance). Includes entry, glass and tasting notes. Five Robinsons Beers and 17 Local Ales. Snacks available and music.

SATURDAY 24th



Cellar Tours of the Boars Head, Market Place, SK1 1TY. Tours at 12 noon and 1pm. No booking required, just turn up, No charge. Subject to space and at own risk.

Cellar Tours of the Bakers Vaults, Market Place. Tours at 12.30pm and 1.30pm, No booking required, just turn up. No charge. Subject to space and at own risk.

Staircase House Beer Tour. Staircase House, 30/31Market Place, SK1 1ES. 2pm Booking essential. Cost £5 (£3 for CAMRA members). To book call 0161 474 4444.

Robinsons Brewery Visitors Centre Beer Festival. Apsley Street, SK1 1YE. Open Noon - 5pm. £5 entry, (£4 in advance). Includes entry, glass and tasting notes. 5 Robinsons Beers and 17 Local Ales. Snacks available.

SUNDAY 25th

No individual events planned. Why not go on the Ale Trail to selected pubs or seek out the special Stockport Brewing Beer Week beer at pubs round Stockport?

MONDAY 26th

Thirst Class Brewery Meet the Brewer and pump takeover. Ye Olde Vic, Chatham Street, Edgeley, SK3 9ED. Starts at 7.30pm.

TUESDAY 27th

Cryptic Brewery Open Night. 5pm - 10pm. Unit 3 Carrington Field Street, Stockport, SK1 3JN.

WEDNESDAY 28th

Staircase House Beer Tour. Staircase House, 30/31Market Place, SK1 1ES. 6pm. Booking essential. Cost £5 (£3 for CAMRA members). To book call 0161 474 4444.

Tutored Trappist beer tasting with John Clarke at Bottle Stockport, Market Place Hall, SK1 1ES at 7.30pm. Event and details to be confirmed.

THURSDAY 29th

Walthew House Charity Auction. Blossoms, 2 Buxton Road, Heavily, SK2 6NU. Starts 7.30pm. Approximately 20 items to be auctioned.

FRIDAY 30th



Pub crawl in the Market Place area. Meet at the Sun and Castle, Middle Hillgate, SK1 3DL, 7.30pm Next call is the Red Bull, Middle Hillgate, SK1 3AY, at 8.30pm. Thence to Market Place area pubs; exact route to be decided on the night.

SATURDAY 1st

Tour of Stockport Borough's micropubs in The Heaton's, Marple, Hazel Grove, Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme using public transport (to be confirmed).

SUNDAY 2nd



Tutored Cider and Perry Tasting. The Railway, Avenue Street, Portwood, SK1 2BZ. Starts at 2.00pm. Cost £10 and includes six half-pints of cider/perry and food. Some local cider producers will be present. Just turn up and pay on the day.

Other events may be added; please see the SSM CAMRA web page or SSM Social Media.

Stockport Beer Week has been kindly sponsored by Frederic Robinsons Ltd and Metro Taxis. It is being run in association with Stockport MBC.





HAREWOOD ARMS

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Continental Bottled Beers

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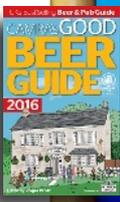
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Greater Manchester Pub of the Year 2015

CAMRA members

20p a pint discount on real ale Sunday to Thursday



Opening Times Monday-Friday 3pm Saturday-Sunday 2pm

The New Home of the Award Winning Greenmill Brewery
Greenmill's Hand Crafted Ales plus Guest Beers and Real Cider

THE BEER SHOP

13 KINGSLEIGH ROAD, HEATON MERSEY



The Beer Shop is now fully open until 22:00 every night for on and off sales.

Hand made pizzas available to eat in or take away Friday & Saturday 5 to 9pm.

Future events, check www.ukbeershop.com or 0161 947 9338 for updated information.

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

High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views

Peak Practice With Robin Wignall

One of the advantages of CAMRA membership is the monthly receipt of the Campaign's newspaper *What's Brewing*. This publication gives a national overview on beer, cider and pubs, as you would expect, as well as comprehensive information on beer festivals and local meetings and events.



Once a quarter included in the mailing is a magazine format publication *Beer*. This covers a whole spectrum of articles on beer and pubs and is particularly strong on history and at the other end of the scale, recent developments.

This leads into an article in the latest edition of *Beer*, Autumn 2016, entitled 'Peak Times'. This looks at the rebirth of brewing in Derbyshire from the late 1970s onwards. Much space is devoted to the 1990s establishment of Whim and Leatherbritches. Following this is reference to Peak Ales and Thornbridge, both established in premises on the estates of stately homes, Chatsworth and Thornbridge Hall respectively. Buxton Brewery is mentioned as a recent successful enterprise. Other newer breweries elsewhere in the county get a mention but there seems to be no space for the new wave of breweries in the north of the Peak District, though this does not detract from the interest and relevance of the article. Some like Howard Town with its award winning Wren's Nest go back more than a decade. OT has picked up on the newer breweries in New Mills, Chapel-en-le-Frith and Whaley Bridge, where brewing has commenced much more recently.

Whaley Bridge Brewery's new premises are actually in Furness Vale, though this is part of the Whaley Bridge township. They have developed some new recipes for a new range of beers. The standard range, with newly designed pump clips, now consists of Hockerley Hole Southern Red, a 4.0% red beer, Crow Hill American Amber, a 4.4% pale amber beer, Mount Famine IPA, a 4.8% pale beer, and Stoneheads West Coast Pale, another 4.8% brew. These beers can be found in the local free trade and bottles can be found in beer shops and off licences in a wider area.

A further press reference is to an article in the *Financial Times Magazine* one recent Saturday.

In an article headed 'Summer Drinking, British Ale Houses', three out of five selected pubs are in the north of England. One is the **Marble Arch** on Rochdale Road in North Manchester and in the OT circulation area. A second is the **Sheffield Tap** at Sheffield Station, on the eastern fringe of the Peak District; always a good place to start and/or finish a visit to Sheffield.



Elsewhere in this month's OT there will be an advert for the Beer and Cider Festival at the **Old Hall** at Whitehough, Chinley, during the weekend of 16th to 18th September. This, for a few years now, has been one of the best pub festivals around with a big range of beers and ciders. It is certainly one to try to get to. The Old Hall is about a 10 minute walk from Chinley Station, Northern Table 23. There is an hourly service on Saturday, though only every two hours on weekdays and Sunday. There are enhancements during the evening rush hour during the week with some express trains stopping at Stockport and Chinley. The nearest bus service is the 190, linking Whaley Bridge, Chinley, Chapel-en-le-Frith and Buxton by a roundabout route. There is roughly a two hour service from Monday to Saturday, but no Sunday service. It's a good half hour's walk from Bridgemont on the 199 bus route, or from Whaley Bridge, and is well worth the effort.



The other imminent beer festival is that at the **Drum & Monkey** during the weekend of 7th to 9th October. This is a much smaller scale festival but still manages to access some interesting beers from local breweries, from over the Pennines, from the area of Greater Manchester, and from further afield. Westwood

beers from Denton have been a recent feature and the Drum & Monkey is a regular outlet for Whaley Bridge beers. A recent curio was Portobello Channel Hopper, from Kensington in London. Portobello beers have appeared on the Marston's festival list when they offer their licensees a wider range of beers beyond those from the Marston's brewing empire. Get to the Drum & Monkey by the 199 bus from Stockport, half hourly during the day weekdays and Saturday, hourly from teatime and on Sunday. Buses stop at the door. It's also a 10 minute walk from Whaley Bridge Station which gives access from the train on the Buxton service, Northern table 20.

High Peak Pub News With Tom Lord



The **Woodley Arms** in Woodley has now reopened. A press photograph from opening night suggests that cask beers – Sharp's Doom Bar and another – are on sale.

On the down side the **Gardeners Arms** in Denton is still to let and in Mottram the former **Wagon Inn** is up for sale as flats. The **Jubilee** in Simmondley just outside Glossop is now up for sale with Fleurets.

In Droylsden the **Beehive** has been selling beers from AllGates and Conwy together with real ciders from Hogan's and the rarely seen over here Colemans from East Yorkshire.



In New Mills work is progressing on the new micropub the **Beer Shed** on Market Street in what used to be video shop premises. It is expected to open

some time in September – you can follow progress on the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/beershednewmills/.

It looks as though there will soon be a new real ale bar in Ashton on Old Street. It is reported that it will be called **Tapsters** and will be selling a range of beers as well as tapas style food.

MOORHOUSE'S

AND NOW WE ARE SIX

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Publicans should contact Stuart Hayes

on 07791 337727

or email: stuart.hayes@moorhouses.co.uk

Pub and Brew

A round-up of what's happening

Stockport Pub Shorts

Well there's good and bad news. Let's get the bad news out of the way first. The **Waterloo** on Waterloo Road looks like it's bitten the dust. It had been "to let" for some time but it seems that Robinsons have decided that there will be no takers. The pub has been boarded up and the signage removed.



Not a million miles away **Little Jack Horners** on Lord Street has finally been sold, having been on the market for quite some time now. Hopes that any purchaser would finally realise the pub's free house potential have been dashed with news of a planning application to convert it into a Baekdu Korean Barbecue Restaurant. This is a

great shame as this is a pub with real potential that seems to have seriously underperformed in recent years and certainly made little of its free house status.

There's also a planning application in for the former **Royal Oak** on Commercial Road in Hazel Grove. Robinsons closed and sold the pub three years ago and the wrecking ball appears to be looming as there are plans to build 10 houses on the site. Also up for sale with "potential alternative use" is the **Frog & Railway** in Heaton Mersey. This Greene King owned pub remains open for business though so perhaps any purchaser will keep it going. Yours for £595,000 freehold.

On a more positive note, the new **Petersgate Tap** now has all the necessary permissions and work is underway to convert this former bookies into Stockport's next free house. If all goes to plan it will be opening its doors towards the end of this month.

Trafford & Hulme Award



As we reported in the July issue of *Opening Times*, Trafford & Hulme CAMRA's Summer Pub of the Season is the J. P. Joule in Sale. Spread over two floors, with a bar on each, there is a total of 13 handpumps ensuring a good range of real ale in this popular Wetherspoons pub. 'House' ales are Greene King Abbot, Ruddles Best, and Sharp's Doom Bar while guest ales are often from local breweries including Dunscair Bridge, Phoenix, Robinsons and

Weetwood (to name but a few). The pub's own 'house-blend', Joule's Gold, brewed by Brightside, is definitely one to keep a look out for. The pub is rarely out of the top 80 in Wetherspoon's rankings of pints of cask beer sold each week. Pictured above, Trafford & Hulme Branch Chair John O'Donnell presents the award to Shift Leader Emma Stubbs.

RCT Romiley 2016 leaf

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The Wharf Green Lane, Romiley

ery News

around the Opening Times area

New Addition

This month we welcome the latest addition to the Greater Manchester brewing scene. **Dan's Brewery** is based in a railway arch on North Western Street on the "Piccadilly Mile" and put through its first brew at the beginning of August.



Dan is Dan Whitehead De Becheval (pictured left) and it's fair to say he has beer and brewing in his blood. His mum is Jan Rogers who owns Marble Brewery and its outlets while dad is Vance De Becheval who owns the Knott in Manchester, the Bar in Chorlton and the Macc in Macclesfield. Despite that background Dan went to university to study maths - but soon decided he'd rather be a brewer!

He learnt the ropes with short spells at Leeds and Burning Sky breweries followed by six months at Marble and about a year at Magic Rock. Impressive names for a CV.

The large unit houses a shiny new 10-barrel kit (although this has not yet been used to its full extent) and the first beer was a summer pale ale at 3.6%. Hopped with Dr Rudi, Chinook and Southern Cross varieties this sounds like an ideal quencher and has appeared at both the Bar and the Knott as a house ale. When *Opening Times* called a stronger version (in the 3.8% to 4% region) was in the mash tun. This was Dan's third brew but it's the second that got us intrigued.

Unusually for a brand new brewery, the second beer is a 10.5% imperial stout. We tried it out of the conditioning tank and think it's going to turn heads when it hits the streets. That's not likely for some time though as, again unusually for a start up, Dan is about to launch a small barrel ageing programme. He's acquired three Welsh whisky casks and two red wine casks and most of the stout will be going in those for six months or so. Look out for it when it finally appears (which might be just in time for Stockport Beer & Cider Festival next year...).



Do look out for these beers - although Dan has yet to really sort out artwork and point of sale material so they may not be easy to spot. Given the competition in today's market we think this is something he needs to tackle very soon.

Brewery Shorts



Dan's Brewery is in fact next door to **Alphabet Brewing** so OT also dropped in to say hello and catch up with head brewer Tom Evans (and check out the impressive murals - shown left). It had been a while since we called and Alphabet has expanded considerably since

then. The core range is A to the K, an oatmeal pale ale, Hoipolloi, a pilsner, and Flat White a pale breakfast stout. In addition a number of seasonal

beers are produced and on the way are an as yet unnamed session IPA in the 3.8% to 4.2% region and Cratedigger, an imperial coffee stout at 8.3%. All of the beers are unfiltered and unpasteurised (this hardly needs saying these days) and are available in key-kegs. The three core beers were bottled but Alphabet has now acquired its own canning line and this is the planned future format for all of their packaged beer. To date the canning has been a huge success with 250 cases sold in the first week.

You'll find Alphabet beers at their bars **Kosmonaut** and **Ply** in the Northern Quarter and these will soon be joined by the **Quick Brown Fox** on the corner of Oldham Street and Swan Street. In addition there's a tap at the brewery every Saturday between 2.00pm and 8.00pm.



Still to come on the "Piccadilly Mile" are **Six O'Clock Beer Co.**, relocating from Blackjack to share premises with Cave Direct on North Western Street. The **UBREW Manchester**, a commercial operation for home brewers, is also set to open on

North Western Street in October while Alex Parkinson's **Vinyl Valley Brewing** should be up and running on Temperance Street by the end of the year.

With nine breweries currently in the approximate square mile behind Piccadilly Station, and 12 by the end of the year, this must make it the highest concentration in the UK. One for the record books perhaps?

It's not only in Greater Manchester where breweries are spreading. The Peak District is becoming a hive of activity. A new entrant there is Tim Boothman's **Chapel-en-le-Frith Craft Brewing Co.** Don't all rush at once as this is a *very* small operation and the bottle conditioned beers are only available at Chapel-en-le-Frith Post Office (yes, really).

Now to put paid to a rumour. Some people seem to have formed the impression that Denton's **Hornbeam Brewery** has shut up shop. Not true - and Hornbeam's Kevin Rothwell got in touch to set the record straight. It is true that he's sold the brewery but he will be continuing brewing for about four months after which he will be gone. The new owner will be continuing from the same premises but may re-brand the brewery. Obviously we'll let you have more news as we get it.



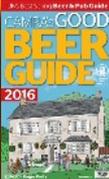
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Opening Times

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11am till Midnight Friday and Saturday
12noon till 11pm on a Sunday



Recent CAMRA Awards

Time to catch up with some of this year's Pub of the Month awards from Stockport & South Manchester Branch.

The award for January was made to the **Grove Inn** in Clayton. Pictured right is landlady Sandra Billings (centre) and her bar staff with the certificate.



February's award was won by the **Chiverton Tap**, a very successful micropub in Cheadle Hulme. This has gone from strength to strength since it opened last year – and has now spawned a spin-off in Bramhall's Mounting Stone. Pictured here are Andy, Mary and Bob with their award.



The winner of the March Pub of the Month was the **Sun & Castle** in Hillgate in Stockport. This excellent community pub is expertly run by landlady Ronnie Bell and her husband Harry (who looks after the cellar to good effect). It's a great community local and Ronnie is pictured here (centre) celebrating the win.



Finally for this round-up, the April award went to **Fred's Ale House** in Levenshulme. This Stockport Road pub has brought welcome cask ale choice and quality to central Levenshulme. Pictured here is manager Mike Nuttall (right) receiving his award from CAMRA's Jim Flynn.



DRUM & MONKEY

Beer Festival

October 7th, 8th & 9th

LIVE MUSIC Saturday & Sunday

WIDE SELECTION OF LOCAL AND NATIONWIDE ALES

62 Chapel Road, Whaley Bridge, High Peak,
SK23 7LB. Tel 01633 73322

Drum & Monkey is situated on the 199 Stockport
to Buxton bus route. Bus stops right outside.



Scandinavia Ales

Jerry Wicken continues his European tour



There are people within CAMRA who will cross the road rather than pay more than £3.20 a pint. These people are fortunate as they have a choice. To them as they read this I suggest a sit down with something stronger than a Hatters Mild.



Sweden is not widely known for craft ale but there are a few dedicated bars which haven't been Carlsberglerized. Top of the list is **Omnipollos Hatt**, a small bar in the inner city Stockholm suburb of Slussen. It brews on the premises and we particularly enjoyed the *Arzachel*, a 3.5% session IPA and the *Esperanto*, a citrusy saison pale ale at 6%. The latter was particularly good. All beers on tap are served in either small 20cl glasses or large, (I don't think so!) 30cl glasses. Now the price; pre-Brexit the *Esperanto* equated to an eye-watering £13.94 a pint. This now becomes £15.15! But the beer must have been good because I ordered another. The bar itself seems to be an after work venue. Mainly locals and a friendly atmosphere with a little outside seating it also offers pizzas which looked very tasty.

Bottled beer is hard to come by outside of bars. Supermarkets tend to offer only Carlsberg related beers and by law only up to 3.5% strength. Otherwise you must find Government alcohol outlets which for us was easier said than done. So bite the bullet and try some pricey bottles in bars from such brewers as *Spendrups*, a long established family firm which has several subsidiaries, the most interesting of which is *Gotlands Brewery*. This is their experimental arm probably in a similar vein to *Hydes Beer Studio*. It brews a huge range of bottled ales in a likewise huge range of styles. If any turn up at your local specialist beer outlet then give them a try.

A showcase for some of their beers could be found on tap at another good suburban bar in Stockholm, **Öleriet**. We tried a few between us and the IPAs were particularly fine and at a cheaper price than at *Omnipollos Hatt*.

As we travelled through the more rural locations it was pretty clear that most of the local breweries had been gobbled up by Carlsberg and the beers we tried on tap or bottled were not of great quality and not cask conditioned.

Lastly to Malmö where again you need to find the specialist beer bars to find something

outside the mundane. Best of these was **Malmö Brewery and Bar**, a large pub with two floors, outside seating, darts board and on tap 14 ales brewed in house and 28 guest beers and ciders. It opens late afternoon till very late. The house brewed *Citra* was good but the *Black IPA* was a real triumph. This is a style I am not familiar with in the UK but is particularly popular in Scandinavia. I'm sure it must be brewed somewhere in the UK; if not, why not? There is at least one thirsty customer waiting to try it (*actually quite a few local brewers produce one - Ed*).



In a slightly less salubrious suburb of Malmö is **Beer Ditch**. It offers some of Malmö Brewery's beers and a few others besides on a list of eight on tap. This is essentially the equivalent of a street corner local. We were there early evening and a few customers popped in on the way home from work but I suspect it gets busier later with quiz nights etc. I'm not quite up to a quiz night in Swedish so we bussed it back to our campsite.

Next over the famous Øresund Bridge into Denmark (£86 toll for our motorhome) and the lovely city of Copenhagen. Before I give you the beery highlights of the capital I should mention that all the small towns we visited were a Carlsberg monopoly. What I find rather disingenuous is that in these towns Carlsberg are trying to reinvent themselves as a craft brewer.

Anyway, jumping now from my soapbox into the excellent **Mikkeller Bar** in *Viktoriagade*, Copenhagen. It served around 20 of their own ales and was a lively, friendly, busy bar both inside and out. The beers we tried were all in top condition: the IPA was excellent, the session porter rather fell between two stools, too weak at 3.5% for a porter and not quite right for a session. The fruit beer was good but the outstanding find was the sour beer on tap, I'd call it a *gueuze*, which was one of the best I've ever tasted. The Mikkeller operation is 10 years old and they have a few bars around the world.

They produce bottled conditioned beers as well and they ship to the UK. Certainly a bar and beers to remember.

Next up was **Fermentoren**, a locals' brewpub on *Halmtorvet*. I tried one of their guest IPAs which wasn't to my taste but probably should have gone for their own bitter. The atmosphere though was a bit cliquy and I was not encouraged to try anything else or steered in any direction.



At the other end of the spectrum is **Warpigs**, a brewpub on a mainly meat packing industrial estate on *Flæsketorvet*. The enterprise was set up by Mikkeller in partnership with the American brewer *3 Floyds*. If you try anywhere make sure it's here. Although we were probably twice the age of the oldest customer the atmosphere is inclusive and we were positively encouraged to discuss their beers with the ridiculously young but immensely knowledgeable barmaid. We first tried the IPA which was great in itself. As it was late afternoon

when we arrived (and considerably later when we left, hic!) I shied away from the black IPA at 7.5% which I protested to the staff was not a session beer. I

was however persuaded to try it and it slipped down rather well. It was smooth, bitter and satisfyingly moreish. The pub also provides 10 x 10cl tastings of most of its range. There are also off-sales for food and beer. The food, mainly barbecued meats from an American chef were top class and by Danish standards incredibly inexpensive. Discussing the 20 odd beers on tap both in house and guests the barmaid proudly explained that they like to keep it simple at *Warpigs*. I pointed to the list and the beetroot and liquorice ale. Well, mostly, she said.



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of Two Halves

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Still Champion at 51

Maris Otter harvest to produce 450 million pints of craft beer



Last year saw very jolly 50th birthday celebrations for a grain variety. An unusual subject for festivities, but Maris Otter, the breed in question, has been bringing satisfaction to the taste buds of beer lovers since 1965. This specialist variety has been an ingredient in 10 of the most recent 16 Champion Beers of

Britain. This harvest-time, Maris Otter's remarkable resilience gives further reason to celebrate.

The weather has not been kind to this year's winter barley crops. Mainstream varieties have taken something of a bashing. But North Norfolk's Maris Otter crop has distinguished itself with what Tom Rivett of H Banham described as "its champion qualities."

"Despite the rain, lack of sunshine and challenging growing conditions, most of the Otter grains have reached optimum size and are, as always, perfect for malting and craft brewing. Looking at the state of the other crops, this is some achievement," says Rivett, "and more proof - if proof were needed - of Maris Otter's trustworthy resilience.

"What it lacks in yields, Otter more than makes up for in quality and reliability. That is the main reason it has survived an unprecedented 51 years. Most varieties last just four or five years before being superseded by new strains. Maris Otter, an ingredient in hundreds of award-winning ales as well as many Champion Beers of Britain, has literally weathered the storms for half a century.



"It behaves well in the malting process - as the traditional floor maltings at Crisp Malting Group can testify. It is then sought after by an ever-increasing number of craft brewers. They swear by it - for its consistent performance in the mash tun and the depth of flavour it delivers to the beer.

"Even in the years of disappointing harvests, Maris Otter manages to hold on to its champion qualities."

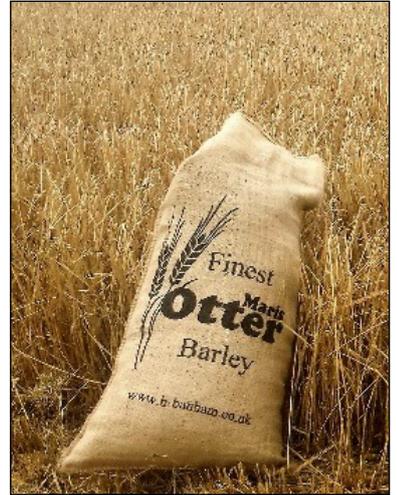
The huge expansion of the craft beer market, alongside the massive growth of interest in food, drink and natural ingredients has heralded a renaissance in the fortunes of Maris Otter. It is still a specialist variety, making up a relatively small proportion of all the barley grown in Britain - just 2.6% in 2014 and 3.4% in 2015. Of barley that is malted and used for brewing, Maris Otter is a higher proportion, but still less than 10%.

"Maris Otter hardly features in the world of large brewers, but it certainly punches above its weight in the craft sector," says Rivett. "There may still be some way to go before this fantastic variety becomes a household name in the way grape varieties such as Merlot, Shiraz and Chardonnay are, but awareness is growing."

The variety is a cross, created from Pioneer and Proctor back in 1965, and its history is well worth exploring. It rose, declined and nearly died out in the late early 1990s - and was then rescued and revived by two grain merchants H Banham and Robin Appel - who now jointly own the rights.

The revival involved starting afresh with just a few grains. The purest, most true-to-type Maris Otter seeds were picked out and used for propagation, and onward breeding. To this day, there is still a 'secret plot' where H Banham continues to carry out what must be one of the most regular and rigorous "re-selection" processes in the farming industry.

Rivett says more brewers are talking about ingredients in their marketing and publicity materials, and those who use Maris Otter are proud to talk about it. "Last year's 50th anniversary celebrations put it in the spotlight. They created huge interest among drinkers as well as brewers.



"Conditions in North Norfolk are ideal for growing Maris Otter, and we work with some of the best growers in the country to maintain the purity of the breed and produce excellent quality crops. This year's harvest is a testament to their work, as well as to the variety itself. Malt from the overall 2016 crop will be used to create around 450 million pints of Maris Otter beer, a miniscule proportion of which I look forward to sampling in the months to come. Champion prospect!"

Double Award Winner

Congratulations to Bollington Brewery's **Park Tavern** in Macclesfield which has won two major awards from the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch of CAMRA. Not only is the Park Lane pub the branch's Cider Pub of the Year but it has also picked up a Community Pub Award.

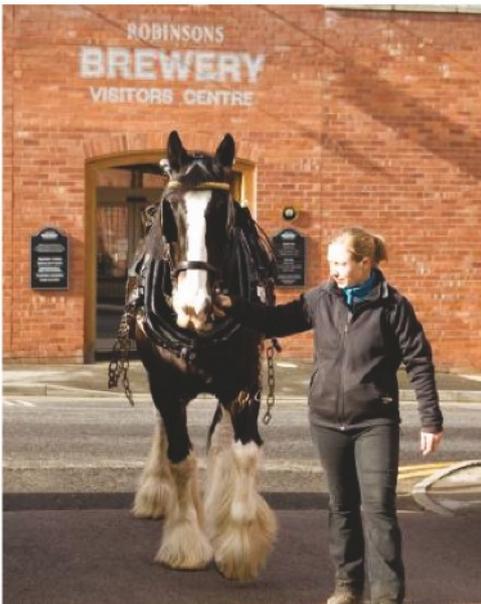


Pictured here the Park Tavern's Tim Jones (centre) receives his Community Pub certificate from Macclesfield Branch Chairman Chris Stairmand (right) while Bollington Brewery's Lee Wainwright looks on.



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