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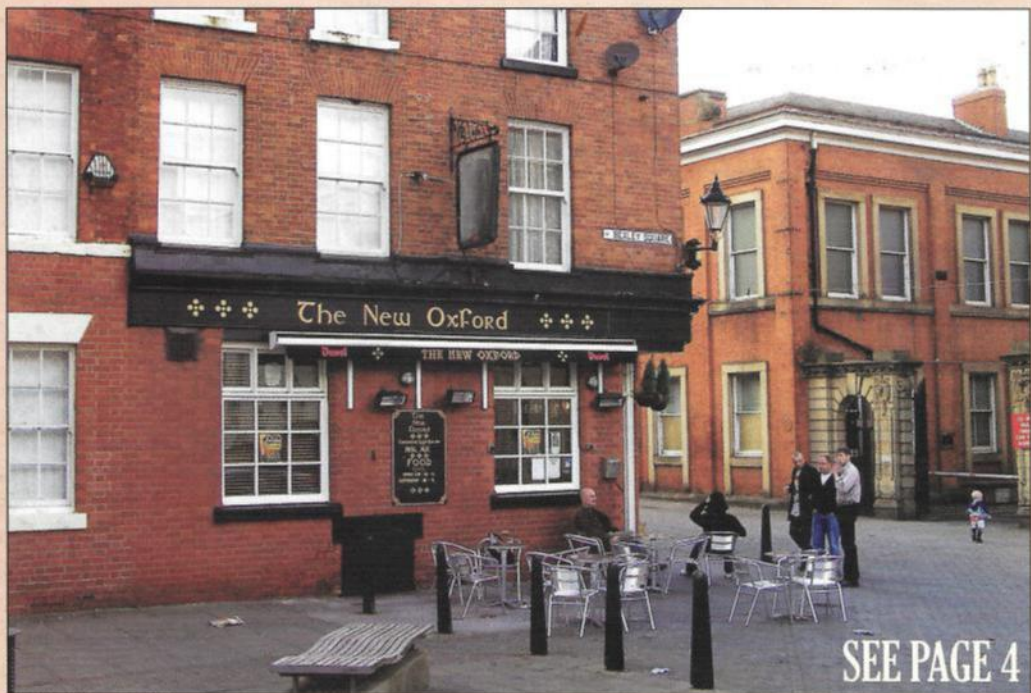


MAY/JUNE 2009  
ISSUE 12

# DRINKER'S ALEMANAC

Covering Manchester, Salford and Beyond

## NEW OXFORD HOLDS THE CROWN!



SEE PAGE 4

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# DRINKER'S ALEMANAC

## FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

Steve Smith, editor of the magazine has stepped down, due to work commitments. We wish him well with grateful thanks for all his efforts, but it is far from a complete break, as he'll continue as a regular contributor. Steve launched Drinker's Alemanac in March 2007, following the last of Britain's first CAMRA magazine 'What's Doing', which ran for over 30 years, due to the editor's (Neil Richardson) untimely death in the summer of 2006.

Steve guided the first ten issues and brought in many innovations, including 'From the Editor's Chair' and the regular column, 'Spotlight on Two Cities' as well as 'News on the Brews' and many special articles and book reviews. All this will continue, under this issue with our Chairman of CAMRA North Manchester, Phil Booton as Co-Editor.

Roger Hall, the subscriptions manager, has retired. We thank him, as not only did he supply subscribers for this organ, but for over 30 years of 'What's Doing'. Welcome to Des French who has taken over the role.

Take a look at North Manchester 'What's On' (page 18), as you'll see there are now Thursday evening events and a Saturday trip out each month. Give it a try, non-members are welcome. Lastly, if you are a CAMRA member and would like to converse about beer on the CAMRA North Manchester Yahoo Group, you can join in by logging in on to: [nmcamra-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:nmcamra-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**Dave Hallows**  
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### Subscription Rates

£2.30 for mailing of six issues should be sent to Des French, 49 Granby House, Granby Row, Manchester M1 7AR Tel: 0161 238 8977.

Email [desmond.french@virgin.net](mailto:desmond.french@virgin.net)  
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### Trading Standards

Should you wish to make a complaint concerning certain aspects of service regarding the pub, firstly it is better to take it up with the management of the establishment concerned. If however the matter cannot be resolved you may wish to contact your local Trading Standards office. These are located as follows:

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# NEW OXFORD HOLDS THE CROWN



*The pub's past awards in pride of place*

The current holder of CAMRA North Manchester's Pub of the Year, the New Oxford in Bexley Square, Salford held off a strong challenge from the nearby Crescent and the Marble Arch in the city centre to win the branch top award for the second year running. The Greater Manchester Regional Pub of the Year for 2007 winner, when the pub was still very new to the trade, now has another chance for the Regional gong. Year by year, the Regional award is more and more demanding to win, such is the calibre of the pubs entered throughout Greater Manchester.

What got the New Oxford the award this time, was that the well-rounded clientele, regular,

passing and new are given a hearty welcome by publican Tim Flynn, partner Paulette Scanlon and their staff team. This gives the pub a great atmosphere, with up to 16 handpumps and 2 real ciders on. The pub, affectionately also known as "Tim's", specialises in draught and bottled Belgian beers with many obscure varieties. There are 9 foreign beers on draught and 120 in bottle – mostly from Belgium.

The pub quickly gained the reputation for beer festivals. Indeed, back in September 2008, the pub held the first Greater Manchester Belgium Beer Festival with masses more Belgium beers on a temporary open air bar in the backyard. Irish luck held out as the weather held and lots more tables out on the historic square resulted in a reported 3000 through the door to enjoy the 'Belgium feel', 16 new brews on the pumps, quality food both in and outside the pub. Latest beer festival was in April with the Spring Beer Festival with over 50 beers on over 5 days. The pub also supports CAMRA's Mild Month of May by putting some interesting milds on, as well as 'LoCALE' (it is well worth a mention that Tim supports local brewers) and most recently National Cask Ale Week In April, with prices for all real ales reduced to £2 pint for the week.

There is always something new coming up in this premier Salford pub – one of the best ones is that Tim saw the excellence of the relatively new Mallinsons beers from Huddersfield and now has the Mallinsons New Oxford Bitter always on, among others.

Presentation of the award to Tim and Paulette will be on Wednesday, 1 July from 8pm. All are welcome.





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## THE CRESCENT

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# SPOTLIGHT ON TWO CITIES

## A COOLER CRESCENT



The Crescent, opposite Salford University has recently been decorated after many a year and looks a lot better for it. Inside, the Festival Vault is undergoing something of a transformation and is being used for live music. The pub itself has up to 13 beers on handpump and one for cider. On a recent visit there were regular beers from local Salford brewery Bazens: Black Pig Mild, and Pacific with guests Pictish Sauvign Blanc, Dunham Massey Dunham Stout, Hydes Bitter, Geo Wright Mocne Pivo, Northern Golden World, Idle Brewery Idle Boggin, Blakemere Landmark Bitter, Shardlow Golden Hop and Kelham Island March of the Mods. There's a good selection of foreign beers on draught and in bottle, too. The new-look pub, but still very much still the Crescent imbibers know and love, is definitely on the up and recently held a beer festival during National Cask Ale Week in April.

## A COOLER SMITHFIELD, TOO.....

After many a year the Smithfield Hotel & Bar on Swan St in the Northern Quarter of the city centre has been redecorated and renovated, making this institution for real ale far more attractive. Recently refurbished inside by the new management, the hostelry has 8 handpumps serving two regular beers – the rare Robinsons Dark Hatters mild and house bitter brewed by Facers brewery in North Wales at 3.5% Abv. In fact, this is a very pleasant weaker version of Facer's Splendid Ale. Guests on last visit were Durham A White Whopper, Fallons Red Merkin,



recently-opened new micro Kirkby Lonsdale Ruskins', Howard Town Dark Peak, Green Mill Dark Side and Hornbeam Winterlong Dark Bitter. Interestingly, there are more dark guest beers on offer these days; occasionally they have Robbies Old Tom

and Chocolate Tom on handpull to cater for trade that came in after the sudden closing of Robinson's Castle Hotel around the corner. The pub also has an interesting and developing bottle range, including Urthel Brewery Hop It and Tripel..... oh, and bottles of Robbies Chocolate Tom, too.

## AND NOT FORGETTING THE KINGS....

The Kings Arms on Bloom St in Salford has had some superb beers on recently with some old favourites on tip-top form. The branch was holding a meeting in the comfortable side room, supping pints of Facers Dave's Hoppy Beer, which did exactly what it said on the beer badge. On last visit there was a stonkingly good hop teaser from Allgates Brewery in Groundhop Day, two milds on with Moorhouses Black Cat and Taylor's Golden Best. Howard Town's Dark Peak and regular beer, Moorhouses Blond Witch completed the beer menu. There are many different facets to this pub, which you will discover if you haven't been in before. Well worth a visit!

## CASTLE RE-OPENS

After a lot of attention from lovers of the pub and from the local media, the Castle on Oldham St has opened its doors in early April. The front room has had something of a spruce-up, the parlour – a tidy-up and the back room, well, part of it is new loos and the other part is temporarily closed. The really pleasing news is there are six on from the Robinsons stable with Hartleys Cumbria Way, Dizzy Blonde, Old Tom, Hatters Mild, Double Hop and Unicorn Best Bitter. More about the pub – next time out.

*Continued...*



The former Ben Brierley pub at the corner of Moston Lane and Kenyon Lane in Moston has now been converted to a change of use. In place of a pub, we now have a resource centre for the local community, due to open in summer. Whilst still in the area, the Moston on Hillier Street North is now closed again after a brief reopening, this time we think for good. Also, the Museum is closed and boarded with the nearby Thatched House up for sale.

## NEWS ON THE BREWS

### BAZENS

January saw a 'shoppers special' to herald in the sales with 'All Must Go' (4.3%). After that there was 'Jog On' (3.8%). Back on the Salford theme from the Salford brewery, there was 'Salford Flyer' (4.1%) to commemorate the pioneering aviator A.V. Rowe, who was born in Patricroft in 1909. We are told he has now retired from flying and living in Wet Wang, Yorkshire. Tally-ho! Out in March with good reports was Mad Hare (4.3%). In April was Soothsayer (4.3%) and Jester Second (4.6%), which was pale and hoppy. Coming out in May for the 'mild Month' will be a strong light mild. Drinker's Almanac can report good things about Bazens' Flatbac, which is on good form at present and is a regular beer at the Crescent in Salford, as well as other outlets.

## BOGGART BULLETIN SPECIAL



With some breweries, after the Christmas & New Year trade - it goes all quiet for a while. Unusually for them, this happened to Boggart this time round, which really meant that something was in the offering. The big news is the opening of

Boggart's first outlet - the Micro Bar in the food hall in Manchester City Centre's Arndale Centre. Formerly the Paradise Brewery Bar, the market stall has been totally refurbished by brewer Mark Dade. It has two Boggart beers on handpump and two are for guest beers from more obscure breweries. Mark is very much in the know about what is new, due to his large and ever-growing beer distribution business. On the opening day there was Boggart's Ray of Sunshine and Rum Porter with guests ABC Heartlands Bitter and Old Spot Spring Forward. On next was Yorkshire Dales Brewery Fremington Edge. Also on the handpull is Sams Medium Devonshire cider and German lager Kupperts Kolsch on draught. On the bottle front, there is a good range of Real-ale-in-a-bottle, including Brewdog beers, amongst others, plus Fentimons Lemonade and Dandelion & Burdock. Opening times of the bar are 11-6 Monday-Saturday, 12-5 on Sunday. Well worth a look-see. New out from the Moston-based brewery is Lemonale (4.2%)

### HOLTS CORNER

Family brewery Joseph Holt has recently brought back popular seasonal bitter '1849' at 4.5% abv, with good reports. The Wellington in the town centre of Eccles is earmarked for demolition, as the Aldi supermarket at the rear of the pub is planning to expand, so wants better access to the site. Sadly, the pub has to make way. On a better note, it is good to see the popularity of the "Happy Mondays" offer of reduced prices on each Monday in selected Holt's pubs - as at start of April -169p for cask bitter and 159p for cask mild. However, cask mild is under threat from the keg Holts Black, though not brewed as a mild it is slightly stronger than the cask mild (3.2% abv) at 3.4% abv. And there's the keg smooth mild, too....

### FROM THE MARBLE VAULTS

The second and third batches of brew 1425 have been produced towards the end of February and the beginning of April respectively. These once again proved to be excellent brews. For 1425(v2), the Green Bullet hops were replaced with Chinook, giving a fruitier taste and flavour. 1425(v3) at 5.9% abv contained Riwaka and New Zealand Cascade hop varieties. Look out for



more versions which may appear, one using Styrian Goldings hops.

The 1,500th brew has been produced; this is a beer in the style of a barley wine and has been cellar stored until nearer Xmas, having an abv of 10.5%. Decadence is also set to reappear around this time too, so there are interesting things ahead. Their beers are normally available in the Marble Arch Inn, Marble Beer House, Bar, Knott and occasionally at the Swan in Kettleshulme.

Forthcoming planned developments on the pub and brewery front include negotiations to obtain the licence for the former Love Saves The Day premises on Thomas Street in Manchester. The Marble Arch Inn is having its back room refurbished. This will include a new coat of paint and new lighting.

Some brewing kit has been delivered which is set to go into the new premises under the railway arches at Williamson Street in Collyhurst, as and when this is ready.

#### **HYDES EMBARKS ON A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY**

The large family brewery has revealed their craft range of beers for 2009. The comically depicted caricatures are still there - but this time not of animals - they now represent people who have made significant strides in discovery and exploration.

This year's range follows hot on the heels of the success of the animal themed Creature Comforts range of 2008 which ended with the release of Mumbo Jumbo in November and Rockin' Robin in December.

The brewery is encouraging customers to explore the world of real ale in 2009, with a new line up of craft ales following a theme of some of history's favourite explorers.

The craft ale range comprises six distinctive ales all produced under the headline 'Great Beers to Discover From Hydes.' Each has an amusing, individually illustrated pump clip depicting historic discoverers of new lands such as Christopher Columbus, Jacques Cousteau and Sir Francis Drake.

Each distinctive beer will vary in style, strength and flavour, in keeping with the seasons, with one beer being released every two months throughout the year. The first in the series was launched

in January/February, a 4.7% abv brew, entitled Finders Keepers (Columbus).

David Safiruddin, Marketing Director at Hydes commented: "Enjoyment of real ale is all about discovering new tastes and styles, and this is the inspiration for this year's craft range.

"Our craft ales have retained popularity both in our own estate and beyond as customers enjoy trying something different, and enjoy the humorous designs and themes. Hydes has developed a great reputation for its seasonal range, and we know that this latest selection won't disappoint."

The remainder of the Hydes craft ale portfolio for the rest of this year will consist of the following: Spin Doctor (Livingstone, March/April, 4.2% abv); Sacre Bleu (Cousteau, May/June, 4.4% abv); Golden Find (Drake, July/ August, 4.1% abv); Rocketeer, (Armstrong, September/October, 4.5% abv); High and Dry (Hillary, November/December, 4.9% abv).

#### **HYDES HAS A LAUGH WITH COMIC RELIEF BEER**

The Brewery also produced a special beer as an exclusive addition to their annual craft ale portfolio, donating 5p of every pint sold to the charity. Designed to provoke a few chuckles whilst it raised much needed funds for Comic Relief, this beer, entitled Laugh and Titter (4.3% abv), its name coming from the Cockney rhyming slang for Bitter, depicts a clown, alongside comedy greats which include Charlie Chaplin and Tommy Cooper on the pump clip.

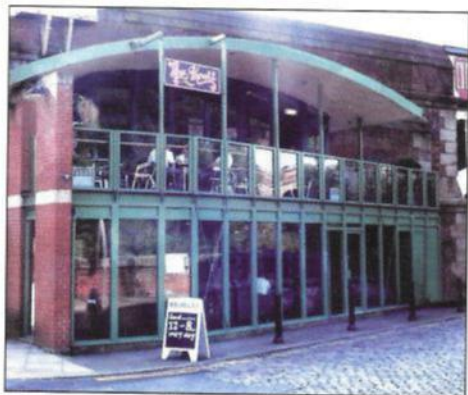
#### **TRAFFORD TALES**

##### **THE KNOTT - TRAFFORD & HULME PUB OF THE YEAR**

Scott Davies thought he had done well when he and his team were told that they had been named the Trafford & Hulme Pub of the Season, spring 2009 but he was not expecting to be named the Pub of the Year for the branch as well.

This bar has been built into the railway arches at Deansgate, opposite the original Knott Mill station (now known as Deansgate station). This bar serves an excellent range of Marble beers and other local micros with the odd, very welcome and unusual micro beers from around the country.

*Continued...*



Besides having a fantastic atmosphere, which is ever changing depending on the time and day of your visit, this bar does the most wonderful food. Their 'head of the kitchen' is Oz. A very talented and passionate man about his food, his team and his kitchen. The Knott hold an Epicurate evening every third Tuesday of the month, where for £10 per head you are treated to various delights by Oz and his team with beers matched up to the menu. If Cask Conditioned beer is not really your scene, then you are also tempted by a range of cask and bottled foreign beers and ciders.

The branch will be presenting the Award on the evening of Wednesday 20th May from 8pm. Please come along and support Scott and his team and enjoy some treats from Oz too.

Commiserations must also go to our two runners up who were the City Arms, Kennedy Street and the Old Market Tavern, Old Market Place, Altrincham. There was only 1 point between these two pubs showing just how close a competition it was this year for our Pub of the Year.

**Jon Gobbett**

Dunham Massey brewery has at last got a regular Altrincham outlet for their beers – the nearest town to the micro brewery. The Station on Stamford New Road sells two of their beers. It's run by Janet Cassidy, former manageress of the Old Market Tavern. There are 3 handpumps and live Blues music takes place on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. Food is served by day.

In Chorlton, Revize bar has shut and been replaced by a trendy bar called Elektrik in the same premises on Wilbraham Rd. As before, 2

Thwaites beers are sold along with a guest beer. Nearby, at the excellent 'Pi' on Manchester Rd, there are now 4 handpumps, good selection of foreign beer on draught and no fewer than 70 foreign bottles from all over the world, including Thailand, China and Mongolia for that 'Far Eastern' feeling to wash down their homemade hearty pies.

## NATIONAL WINTER ALES FESTIVAL ON THE UP



Attendance was up and beer consumption was up at January's National Winter Ales Festival. 8,800 came through the door – up by 1100 on last year (every session had more people in on last year) with all the bars reporting the supping-rate was up both in the main hall and Lancaster Suite in Manchester's New Century Hall in the city centre. The pub trade report that real ale trade is up 10% nationally, which was a good indicator – well, at the Festival this was bettered. On the last night, with beer stocks, well, what was left of it was supped by a large number of revellers in Pirate fancy dress, aided and abetted by the live band – Dr Busker, accompanied by Pirate-themed beers from the West Country. This comes with the news that the Festival will stay in Manchester for the next two years!

## What's this Treasure Hunt, then?

Fancy a chance of winning a Trophy in front of your fellow drinkers with an added prize of beer tokens for your team? The competition is to celebrate Britain's independent breweries (there are over 650 of them!) Check-in for the Treasure Hunt at the CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed



pub, Crown & Kettle, Oldham Rd/Great Ancoats St from 11am – 12.30 on Saturday, 4 July. Teams of 2 to 5 – the entry fee is only £1 per person. There is a beer-related quiz and a course, as you'll be touring some of the best hostelrys nearby to find the answers for a return back at the pub at 7.30 for marking, the result, presentation of the Trophy and food. This year's competition is organised by Mike, Dee, JJ, Neil and Julie – last year's winners in fact..... For more details, email: IDTH@sky.com

### THAT KEN BIRCH EXPERIENCE..... WALKING WITH CAMRA



*The mild-mannered anarchist that is Ken Birch has been known as author, brewer, publican, chef, canal expert, musician and ultra-attractive to women with other qualities, too many to mention. His era was in the Sixties spent in*

*Liverpool, but he is Salford through and through. Never afraid of taking on a challenge – he is now the Branch Social Secretary and, at 64 years young, the Young Members Contact. The Branch claims that he is the oldest 'Under 30s Contact' in CAMRA's 38-year old history! As humble as ever, he states this is only a temporary role, until he finds somebody, who is young in years. But in the meantime, Ken & his cohorts take a stroll....*

The CAMRA walking club undertook its first walk of the season on a Sunday afternoon in March from the Saddleworth area. Setting out from the Railway on Shaw Hall Bank Road at Greenfield, then using the Huddersfield Narrow Canal as a sort of guide brought us to the renowned Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar on Rassbottom Street.

About 20 or so different ales were sampled – not by everyone though! – 15 people turned out for this event, of which four were new CAMRA members and three others gave a definite indication that they would join the campaign. All expressed an active interest in supporting future events. Overall, this venture was deemed a great success.

The club's future events include the following on Sundays throughout the summer, starting mid-morning:

**17th May:** Lymm to Moore, meet at 1050 in St Peter's Square Metrolink stop, Manchester or 1100 in Altrincham Interchange;

**14th June:** Radcliffe, Prestwich and The Cliff, meet at 1100 Prestwich Metrolink Station;

**12th July:** Parbold to Wigan, meet at 1100 Manchester Piccadilly Rail Station;

**16th August:** Middlewood to Macclesfield, meet at 1115 Manchester Piccadilly Rail Station;

**13th September:** Oldham to Droylsden, meet at 1130 Manchester Victoria Rail Station.

**And not forgetting . . .** A special Saturday event on 20th July will be the regional coach trip to the Black Country. For further details on any of these events, contact Ken Birch on Tel: 0161 278 0126.



# HANDLEY'S BREWERY

In 1910 a young man called James Brotherton went to work at Handley's Brewery in Hulme. He spent nearly two years there before the firm decided to sell out to Threlfalls of Salford. Threlfalls closed the plant but employed James at their Cook Street Brewery until he joined the army at the start of World War One. He was immediately drafted to the Western Front where he saw some of the bloodiest trench warfare.

A brewery existed on Sutherland Street, Hulme from at least the late 1850s. Because the entrance to the yard was on Clarence Street, it became known as the Clarence Street Brewery or simply the Clarence Brewery. Henry Carter and Thomas Fowler, trading as Carter & Fowler, are known to have been there in 1862. By 1868 the property was in the hands of Charles Dewse, a brewer originally from York. He was amongst the first members of the Manchester Brewers' Central Association, a group formed in response to the Wine & Beerhouse Act of 1869 (the local brewers feared that the licensing magistrates of Manchester would not be fair in their administration of this legislation).

Charles Dewse moved to a new brewery in 1876 that had been built on the other side of Clarence Street, behind the Bull's Head on Chester Road. He called this the Clarence Brewery as well. Barker & Co took over the old premises vacated by Dewse and in 1878 it was offered for rent as a 60-barrel per week brewery, without there being any obvious takers.

Apart from the usual ales and porter Dewse offered his customers the option of supplying the Scottish beers of Thomas & James Bernard. This Edinburgh based company survived up to 1960 when it was acquired by Scottish Brewers Ltd (later to form part of Scottish & Newcastle Breweries Ltd).

A number of other leading Scottish breweries had agents in Manchester and such companies as John Jeffrey, William McEwan, Thomas Usher, and Taylor Macleod were familiar names in the city.

Seven years after his move, Charles Dewse fell on hard times. He left and in came W.H. Fulford & Co, previously of the Horse Shoe Brewery and then the Monarch Brewery, both in Salford. This was a business going places. After four years in residence they moved to a much bigger, purpose-built brewery further along Chester Road. They became the Old Trafford Brewery Co Ltd, changing to the Empress Brewery Co Ltd later on.

Next on the scene were Hargreaves & Heath around 1888. With the new occupiers came a change in name from Empress Brewery, as used by Fulford & Co, to the Docks Brewery - probably so called because of the close proximity (within 500 yards) of the docks at the end of the Manchester Ship Canal. After Hargreaves & Heath, John James Hargreaves, a mineral water manufacturer, formed a partnership with Arthur Edward Fildes Pilling. The business became styled Fildes & Co, only to vanish within a short period of time.







Several years passed with seemingly no commercial activity. Crosby & Green were next to set up, in 1895, with William Green living in the brewer's house at 2 Clarence Street. Following their departure came Carrington & Sons and a return of the name 'Clarence Brewery'. They were established brewers who had given up their premises at Prestwich and were in the process of selling the rest of the business to the Manchester Brewery Company. The negotiations were so protracted that the firm stayed for a number of years.

Handley's Brewery Ltd was formed in 1904. George Addison moved into 2 Clarence Street as brewer, succeeded by Wallace Breem, then Albert Barrington. George Frederick Osbaldeston Handley and Edward Cowan ran the business. With the brewery came ownership of the adjoining Bull's Head Hotel and in 1908 a mortgage was taken out on the Spring Inn, 55 Junction Street, Hulme. Most of their other properties, however, were off-licenses and much of the beer produced was subsequently bottled for sale in these outlets.

Threlfalls Brewery Company Ltd bought the property and business of Handley's by a conveyance dated 11 November 1912. The Bull's Head Hotel was retained and the premises to the rear leased off the next month as offices, warehouse, stabling and a dwelling house.

George Elliott, who had run Elliott's Brewery Company Ltd on Cheetham Hill, moved into number 2. He might have used the brewery after Handley's but clear evidence has yet to be found. By the time of the purchase, the only pub tied to the Clarence Brewery apart from the Bull's Head was the Wilton Arms, Shudehill, held on a short lease expiring in 1914.

In May 1955 Manchester Corporation served Threlfalls with a Compulsory Purchase Order and the old brewery buildings were pulled down. Part of the site became a car park for the pub, the rest provided space for housing. The Chester Road end of Clarence Street was renamed Cleworth Street and the lower end transformed into gardens for the houses on present day Cleworth Walk. What was Sutherland Street now lies partly under land in front of houses at the top of Brackley Avenue. Another landmark of interest is St George's Park, marking the location of the old Cavalry Barracks that stood just beyond Clarence Mills at the end of Clarence Street. The existing Barrack Street, leading to the park, is so named for obvious reasons.

### Post Script

James Brotherton survived the Great War. He was badly wounded during the conflict but returned home able-bodied in 1919. The Bull's Head Hotel closed in 1993 and Taylor Electronics (Manchester) Ltd at 287 Chester Road now occupies the building.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Frank Cowen, ex-Whitbread West Pennies Ltd, for information on the Clarence Street Brewery, Sue Richardson for the Bull's Head photograph, and to Tim Ashworth of the local history library at Salford.

The beer labels are courtesy of Eric McPherson.

Alan Gall

# THE OUTSTANDING BREWERY

Early in March, a group from CAMRA North Manchester visited David Porter's fabrication plant and brewery in Bury. For a few lucky members it was their second visit of the week because the Bury Beer Festival staff party had been held there four days earlier. A small door on the ground floor of an old mill leads first of all into a hospitality bar fitted with a couple of handpumps and decorated with certificates, maps, a giant lamp and dried hop bines.

Beyond this is a large workshop cum brewery. Much bigger than most microbreweries we have visited, this is partly due to the fact that it houses two businesses. Outstanding Brewery, which opened in April 2008, is run by Paul and Alex, with a large input from Dave as Head Brewer. Separate from this, and largely in the far end of the building is Dave's brewery fabrication and installation business, which he runs with Glen. The large map in the bar shows the hundred or so breweries widely scattered about the British Isles, for which they are responsible. Metalwork is carried out on another site, which leaves the majority of the space for brewing.

On the night we sampled **Standing Out** (5.5%), **SOS** ("stupidly bitter" @ 4.5%), **Smoked** (5.0%), **Smoked Out** (4.8%) **White** (a wheat beer with coriander @ 5.0%), **Stout** (5.5%), **Pilsner** lager (5.0%) and an **experimental**, well hopped beer at 3.8%. Dave explained that this last one was below his normal minimum strength and was unlikely to be sold commercially. Other beers in the regular portfolio are: **Blond** – brewed only with Maris Otter malt - (4.5%), **Ginger** (4.5%), **OSB** (4.4%), **Pushing Out** (7.4%) and **Amberbock** (6.0%).

The Amberbock was not yet available as it uses a special yeast and needs further refinement. The lagers undergo a proper low temperature lagering for a minimum of 6 weeks and up to 4 months. All the beers can be presented as real cask, bottle-conditioned, keg, and filtered and



carbonated bottled. They also are guaranteed as Vegan (but not organic, which is quite a different thing).

During David's talk we were seated close to the racks of hops, whose aroma drifted across to delight our nostrils. There was a vast range of types including many from New Zealand. Amongst the stacked containers were **Saaz** (2.8), **Saviniski Golding** (3.3), **Bobek** (3.7), **NZ Riwaka** (5.1), **Cascade** (5.5), **Brambling Cross** (6.1), **Perle** (6.9), **Pilgrim** (11.4), **NZ Nelson Sanvin** (11.5), **Chinook** (12.0) and **NZ Pacific Gem** (15.0). The figures are the  $\alpha$ -acid content – a measure of bitterness. There are two brewery lines; a 15 barrel and a 2½ barrel one. The smaller one allows experimental brews to be made without affecting the main production. Up to four mashes a day can be carried out, the capacity-limiting factor being the number of fermenters. Output at present is limited to about 30 barrels a week, but there is plenty of room for more fermenters. Water treatment varies according to the type of beer being brewed.

After a lively question and answer session Secretary Dave Hallows presented a commemorative certificate to David Porter and we all retired to the bar, which was now laid out with a generous buffet.

Pete Cash



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# ALONG CHESHIRE LINES - UP THE LINE TO PLUMLEY

It is quite some years ago since the steam locomotives of the Cheshire Lines Committee chuffed and puffed their way through "Plumley" - as it was originally so called - on their journeys from Manchester to Chester. Now we are bestowed with a rather inferior, rattling and somewhat rickety nondescript DMU (Diesel Multiple Unit for those of you not in the know) and the noises it makes, to travel upon. Oh, the price of modern technology! However, one can still enjoy a leisurely scenic journey and only about forty minutes or so from the hustle and bustle of the rainy city.

But this magazine is about pubs and beer, not trains and railways; although one could say that they do play a part, some pubs being sited nearby or specifically built for the purpose.

On arriving at Plumley station this is no exception as the splendid façade of the Golden Pheasant, with its rendered exterior in cream and dark green, the corporate livery of brewers J W Lees from Manchester, sits imposingly on Plumley Moor Road directly across the road as you emerge from the station exit. It blends in rather well with the verdant landscape and Cheshire's rolling plains.

It is ideal for touring the surrounding countryside, as there are letting rooms in which to base oneself. The pub prides itself as one of the brewery's flagship pubs, providing excellent cask ales in the three beers on offer - Bitter, John Willie's and the summer seasonal, Scorchers when I called in late August last year.

The interior is what you'd expect from a country pub, too. The décor borders upon the baronial - dark and with a collection of spacious rooms radiating from the central bar area as you enter, which includes those for a television and fruit machine.

There is also an extensive home cooked food operation with restaurant facilities and *al fresco* dining is also a feature. The pub also boasts a

function room, children's play area and a bowling green.

Turning left from the pub, a walk to the western edge of the village (about 10 minutes) to the junction of Plumley Moor Road and the busy A556 Chester Road, once the old Roman thoroughfare, brings you to The Smoker, a Robinsons' hostelry. Harking back to the days of the old coaching inns one could just imagine a coach and four thundering past!

The Smoker is what your quintessential English country pub is all about - a whitewashed exterior set back from its cobbled frontage with an old mounting block at the side. Named after a racehorse and owned by the first Lord de Tabley, who raised the Cheshire Yeomanry against the threatened invasion by Napoleon.

There are tables at the front, by the busy A556 Chester Road, with an additional beer garden and a small children's play area to the rear.

Inside, it is all cosy low beams and carpeted floors with a collection of rooms radiating from the bar. In a small alcove a table has copies of Cheshire Life for those who indulge in that sort of thing, and to the rear is an extensive restaurant area, which has a very popular food operation.

On the beer front there is Robinsons Unicorn, supplemented by the seasonal Dizzy Blonde and Olympic Gold on my visit there.

The surrounding villages also harbour a number of pubs, so if you're feeling energetic and time permits, the likes of Lach Dennis with the Duke of Portland on Pennys Lane and in Lower Peover the Bells Of Peover, situated on the delightfully named The Cobbles, and the Crown Inn, Crown Lane, Swan Green, are all within reach, as all do cask ales.

Getting there: Trains operate from Manchester Piccadilly via Stockport and Altrincham and usually run about every hour.

Steve Smith



## BEER BY COMMITTEE - HOW TO CHOOSE A PUB

City of steel, Sheffield, while basking in the glory of landing the prodigious mantle of CAMRA National Pub of the Year 2009 for Kelham Island Tavern (beating off the challenge from Stockport's Crown- underneath the arches), it has given rise to the city being regarded as a hotspot for pub venues by some bastions of power, that has resulted in this leaked communiqué as part of the Government's local development plans in the fair city. Blue-sky governance will prevail with a possible long-term scenario of – just which pub do they go to for that crunch off-the-record meeting?

'.....On the subject of a venue for a drink, we should first produce a statement saying how we will decide on where to go, who will be involved in the decision and when various decisions will be made. We should then set out a series of venue options and appraise them for their sustainability and accessibility. We should model the relative impacts of the journeys that will be made to the pub. We should then consult on this with any affected parties, bearing in mind which

pub the Government would want us to go to. Once we have determined a Preferred Option for a pub venue we should hold a public inquiry so that those objecting to this venue can put their case to an independent non-pub-goer who has no knowledge of Sheffield, who can assess the suitability of the pub against a set of government theoretical pub-soundness criteria that may or may not have actual relevance to real life. The current estimated earliest date for this event would be May 2013, assuming this is not affected by any elections.'

What with the Government not liking the idea of the electorate walking into a pub, this is a case of 'don't do as we do, do as we preach.' Let's just hope when they have done a 'feasibility study', that the chosen pub is still open in May 2013..... Thanks go to CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester Branch message board on the World-Wide-Web super highway, which brought this far-reaching matter to us. The unnamed source is protected, unlike the jargon used.



The image displays four distinct beer labels for Oakham ales, each with a unique design and color scheme. From left to right: 'White Dwarf' features a bright sunburst; 'Bishop's Farewell' shows a red and white checkered pattern with a central emblem; 'Inferno' has a fiery orange and red background; and 'JHB Jeffrey Hudson Bitter' is dark blue with silver accents. Each label includes the 'Oakham ales' brand name at the top and its specific alcohol by volume (ABV) at the bottom.

**White Dwarf**  
WHEAT-BEE  
MULTIUM IN PARVO  
ABV 4.3%

**Bishop's Farewell**  
ABV 4.6%

**Inferno**  
4.0% A.B.V.

**JHB**  
JEFFREY HUDSON  
BITTER  
ABV 3.8%

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## WHERE WE GO AND WHAT WE DO THE BRANCH DIARY

### North Manchester What's On

**FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT DAVE HALLOWS** Tel: 07983 944 993

Email: davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk

Tel: 07983 944 992. Non-members are welcome to all events, but you need to be a CAMRA member to vote at branch meetings:

### MAY

**2nd May** National Mild Day Crawl: STARTS 1pm Marble Arch, Rochdale Rd, M'cr City Centre. Finish The Crescent, Salford, 6.30pm.

**6th May** Worsley Village Crawl. John Gilbert, Worsley Brow, 8pm, Barton Arms, Stable Fold, 9pm.

**14th May THURSDAY!** Social at Crescent, Salford. 8pm.

**20th May** Branch Meeting – Unicorn, Church St, Manchester - 8pm

**27th May** Chorlton Crawl: Dulcimer, Wilbraham Rd, 7.30pm. Sedge Lynn, Manchester Rd, 8.15. Marble Beer House, 8.45. Pi 9.15, Jam Street Café, Upper Chorlton Rd, 9.45, Hillary Step, 10.15pm.

### JUNE

**3rd June** Ordsall Two-Pub Social: Welcome, Robert Hall Street 8pm. Union Tavern, Liverpool Street 9.15pm.

**11th June THURSDAY!** Eccles Social: Eccles Cross (opp. tram terminus) 8pm. Lamb Hotel 9pm.

**17th June** Branch Meeting – New Oxford, Bexley Sq, Salford, 8pm.

**20th June** West Midlands Trip: £10 deposit, total cost about £15? Contact Ken Birch, Tel: 0161 278 0126.

**24th June** Greenfield: 18.27 Train from Victoria. Meet Railway, (opp. Station) Greenfield at 7pm. Also visiting King William. Finish at Railway at 9pm for 21.51 return train. later trains @ 22.55, 23.26.

### JULY

**1st July** Branch PUB OF THE YEAR 2009 – New Oxford, Bexley Sq, Salford, 8pm.

**4th July** Independents' Day Treasure Hunt. Starting at the Crown & Kettle, Oldham Rd, M'cr

City Centre, (See article p10).

**9th July THURSDAY!** Social at Stalybridge Station Buffet. 19.27 Train from Victoria or 19.11 Train from Piccadilly. Return trains @ 22.08 (Victoria), 22.19 & 23.16 (Piccadilly).

**15th July** Branch Meeting – Unicorn, Church St, Manchester, 8pm.

**22nd July** BEER GARDENS CRAWL: Ape & Apple, John Dalton St, 7.30pm, Briton's Protection, Great Bridgewater St, 8.30, Knott, Deansgate, 9pm, Cask, Liverpool St, 10pm.

**29th July** Ellenbrook & Boothstown Crawl: Woodside (Newearth Road, just off E. Lancs. Rd. A580) 7pm. No. 32 Bus 18.22 from Piccadilly Gardens. Greyhound, Boothstown 8pm (No.26 bus 19.05 from Shudehill Bus Station). Finish Royal Oak, Boothstown. Return Buses: 33 @ 21.40; 26 @ 22.20, 23.20.

### AUGUST

**5th August** Trans-Irk Valley Crawl: Marble Arch, Rochdale Rd, 7.30, Queen's Arms, Red Bank, 8.30, Derby Brewery Arms, 9pm. Finish at Dutton, Park St. 9.45pm.

**NB: SEE CAMRA WALKING CLUB EVENTS IN KEN BIRCH'S ARTICLE – PAGE 11.**

### Trafford & Hulme What's On

**Branch Contact: John Ison Tel: 0161 962 7976**

### MAY

**7th May** Branch meeting, 8pm, Railway, Ashley Road, Hale.

**9th May** Mild Magic Crawl: starts at The Famous Trevor Arms, Beech Road, Chorlton 1.00pm; Pi, Manchester Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, 2.00pm; Ape And Apple, John Dalton Street, Manchester, 3.30pm; The Waterhouse, Princess Street, Manchester, 4.30pm; The Volunteer, Cross Street, Sale, 7.00pm; Timperley Taverners Social Club, Park Road, Timperley, 8.00pm.

**14th May** Font Bar, 8pm, New Wakefield St, 9pm, Salutation, Higher Chatham St, 9.30pm, Royal Northern College of Music Bar.

**20th May** Presentation of the Pub of The Year Award to the Knott Bar, Deansgate, 8pm.

### JUNE

**4th June** Branch meeting, Venue, TBC, 8pm.

**6th June** Brewery trip to the Outstanding Brewery, Bury, 4pm. Contact Roger Wood on Email: jennywood@akw.co.uk



**20th June** Day out on the train sampling beers. Start 10.27 Piccadilly to Dewsbury Station. Return to Piccadilly at 8pm. Cost max £16 per head, but some savings available.

**27th June** Branch Grand Day Out in Cheshire starting at Altrincham.

## JULY

**2nd July** Branch meeting, Venue TBC, 8pm.

**10-11th July** Chorlton Beer Festival, St. Clements Church, Edge Lane, Chorlton.

## S.E.Lancashire Branch What's On

For details contact Steven Prescott Tel; 01942 719037 Email: [steven.prescott@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:steven.prescott@blueyonder.co.uk)

## Branch Meetings

**May 8th 8.00pm** Cart and Horses – Astley.

**June 4th** Half Moon – Tyldesley.

**July 2nd** Red Lion – Lowton.

**August 13th** Waterside - Leigh (outside venue if nice, Ladies Night).

**Social:** Saturday August 15th Trip to Stalybridge Station.

## LOCAL & REGIONAL BEER FESTIVALS LISTINGS

Not necessarily endorsed by CAMRA.C = Indicates official CAMRA or associated festival.

## APRIL

**Thu 30 - Sat 2 May** Fusilier Real Ale Festival, Elizabethan Suite, Town Hall, Knowsley Street, Bury.

## MAY

**Fri 1 - Sat 2** 17th Frodsham Beer Festival, Community Centre, Fluin Lane, Frodsham.

**Fri 1 - Mon 4** Cellar Bar Beer Festival, Cellar Bar, 51 Station Road, Batley.

**Sat 2 - Sun 3** Mild Festival, Rat & Ratchet, 40 Chapel Hill, Huddersfield.

**Sat 2 - Sun 10** Pump & Truncheon Beer Festival, Pump & Truncheon, 13 Bonny Street, Blackpool.

**C Fri 8 - Sat 9** Mayfest 2009, The Halifax Beer Festival, Square Chapel Arts Centre, 10 Square Road, Halifax.

**C Fri 8 - Sat 9** 15th Macclesfield Beer Festival, Macclesfield Rugby Club, Priory Lane, Macclesfield.

**C Thu 14 - Sat 16** 21st Chester Charity Beer Festival, Chester Rugby Club, Hare Lane, Chester.

**Thu 14 - Sun 17** The Swan Crimble Beer Festival, Carr Lane, Crimble, Slaithwaite.

**C Fri 15 - Sat 16** Barrow Hill Roundhouse Beer Festival, Barrow Hill Roundhouse, Campbell Drive, Barrow Hill, Chesterfield.

**C Fri 15 - Sat 16** Clitheroe Beer Festival, St Marys Centre, Church Street, Clitheroe.

**Fri 15 - Sat 16** 13th Grappenhall Beer Festival, Grappenhall Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane, Grappenhall, near Warrington.

**Thu 21 - Sun 24** Bamber Bridge FC Beer Festival, The Clubhouse, Irongate Ground, Brownedge Road, Bamber Bridge.

**Fri 22 - Sun 24** 1st Beer Festival, The Walmer Bridge, Liverpool Old Road, Walmer Bridge, near Preston.

**Fri 22 - Mon 25** 6th Anniversary Beer Festival, Fox & Goose Inn, Heptonstall Road, Hebden Bridge.

**C Thu 28 - Sat 30** 23rd Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, Edgeley Park Football Ground, Hardcastle Road, Stockport.

## JUNE

**Thu 4 - Sun 7** Boot Beer Festival, Brook House Inn, Boot Inn and Woolpack Inn, Boot.

**Thu 4 - Sun 7** Summer Beer Festival, West Riding Refreshment Rooms, Dewsbury Rail Station, Wellington Road, Dewsbury.

**Fri 5 - Sat 6** Keswick Beer Festival, Keswick Rugby Club, Davidson Park, Keswick.

**Fri 12 - Sun 14** Brewers Weekend, Prince of Wales, Foxfield, Broughton-in-Furness.

**Wed 17 - Sun 21** Ship & Mitre German Beer Festival, Ship & Mitre, 133 Dale Street, Liverpool.

## JULY

**Thu 9 - Sun 12** 3rd Annual Sunfest, The Rising Sun, 471 Fulwood Road, Sheffield.

**Fri 10 - Sat 11** Chorlton Beer Festival, St Clements Church, Edge Lane, Chorlton-cum-Hardy.

**Fri 17 - Sun 19** Cider, Perry and Beer Weekend, Prince of Wales, Foxfield, Broughton-in-Furness.

**Thu 23 - Sun 26** Hawkshead Brewery Summer Beer Festival, The Beer Hall, Mill Yard, Staveley.

## AUGUST

**Wed 29 - Sun 2** Ship & Mitre Belgian Beer Festival, Ship & Mitre, 133 Dale Street, Liverpool.

**Thu 30 - Tue 4** Yorkshire Day Beer Festival, Bay Horse, Marygate, York.

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