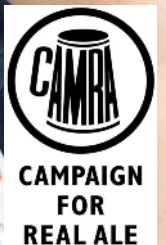


# OPENING TIMES

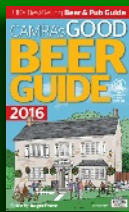
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**INSIDE: LEFT BANK BEER FESTIVAL /  
STOCKPORT BEER FESTIVAL REVIEW /  
TAKEOVERS – GOOD OR BAD? / PUB  
AND BREWERY NEWS**



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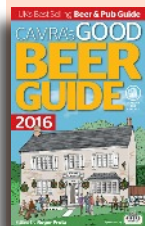
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# OPENING TIMES

*Opening Times* is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch, the Trafford & Hulme Branch, the Central Manchester Branch and the High Peak, Tameside & North East Cheshire Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Additional material is supplied by the Salford Branch and the Macclesfield & E Cheshire Branch. 7,600 copies a month are printed by Oxuniprint Ltd, a division of Oxford University Press and distributed throughout Stockport, Trafford, Manchester and Tameside. There are also many outlets in Macclesfield & East Cheshire, High Peak and Glossop.

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

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice/consumer\\_service.htm](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice/consumer_service.htm)  
Their telephone no. is 03454 04 05 06.

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[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards/)

To find a local office: [www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office](http://www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office)

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\* Transport for Greater Manchester: [www.tfgm.com](http://www.tfgm.com) 0161 244 1000

\* East Cheshire: 0300 123 5500  
[www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public\\_transport.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport.aspx)

\* Derbyshire: [www.derbybus.info](http://www.derbybus.info)

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

**Copy Date for the August issue is Saturday 9th July.**

**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, Jim Flynn, Mike Flynn, Sue Lightfoot, Jerry Wicken, Heather Airlie, Steve Dunkley, Dave Sheldon, Phil Edwards, Beverley Gobbett and Pete O'Brien.

**Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn**

**Front cover – Don't miss this year's Great British Beer Festival - August 9th - 13th.**

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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](http://www.ssmcamra.co.uk)

Contact: Paul Felton; [Secretary@ssmcamra.co.uk](mailto:Secretary@ssmcamra.co.uk)

#### Salford (SAL)

[www.salford.camra.org.uk](http://www.salford.camra.org.uk)

Contact: Dave Hampshire; [talldave@gmail.com](mailto:talldave@gmail.com)

#### High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire (HPNC)

[www.hpneccamra.org.uk](http://www.hpneccamra.org.uk)

Contact: Stewart Taylor 07907 714826; [taylorshouse@supanet.com](mailto:taylorshouse@supanet.com)

#### Trafford & Hulme (T&H)

[www.thcamra.org.uk](http://www.thcamra.org.uk)

Contact: John O'Donnell 07879 880972; [enquiries@thcamra.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@thcamra.org.uk)

#### Central Manchester (CMCR)

[www.centralmanchestercamra.org.uk](http://www.centralmanchestercamra.org.uk)

Contact: Heather Airlie 0773 4622519;  
[chair@centralmanchestercamra.org.uk](mailto:chair@centralmanchestercamra.org.uk)

#### Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)

[www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk](http://www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk)

Contact: Rob Nicholson 07983 524102;  
[social@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk](mailto:social@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk)

### Local CAMRA Events

Public welcome at these events

**Monday 11th** – Branch Meeting: Wharf Tavern, Caroline Street, Stalybridge, SK15 1PD. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

**Wednesday 13th** – Salford Crawl: 7.30pm Union Tavern, 105 Liverpool Street, M5 4LG; 8.30pm Old Pint Pot, 2 Adelphi Street, M3 6EN; 9.30pm Crescent, 20 Crescent, M5 4PF. (SAL)

**Thursday 14th** – Branch Meeting: Hope, 118 Wellington Road North, Stockport SK4 2LL. Includes “Meet the Brewer” with Paul Mellor of Manchester Brewing. Starts 8.15pm. (SSM)

**Friday 15th** – Chorlton Green Social: 8.00pm Bowling Green, M21 9ES; 8.45pm Horse & Jockey; 9.30pm Trevor Arms, M21 9EQ; 10.00pm Beech, M21 9EG. (T&H)

**Saturday 16th** – Greater Manchester Regional Meeting: Eccles Rugby Club, Gorton Street, M30 7LY. Starts 1.00pm. (All)

**Saturday 16th** – Branch Cheshire Pub of the Year presentation: Cask Tavern, Park Lane, Poynton, SK12 1RE. Presentation at 2.00pm followed by Poynton social. (HPNC)

**Wednesday 20th** – Branch Meeting: Salford Arms, 146 Chapel Street, M3 6AF. Starts 7.30pm. (SAL)

**Wednesday 20th** – CAMRA Revitalisation Project Event: Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury, M20 5PG. Runs from 7.00pm – 9.00pm. (All)

**Thursday 21st** – Pub of the Season presentation to the JP Joule, 2A Northenden Road, Sale, M33 3BR. From 8.00pm. (T&H)

**Friday 22nd** – Hazel Grove Stagger: 7.30pm Rising Sun, 2 Buxton Road, SK7 6AD; 8.30pm Wilfred Wood, 204 London Road, SK7 4DQ. (SSM)

**Wednesday 27th** – Ellenbrook Social: 7.30pm Boundary Stone, Bridgewater Road, M28 1AD; 8.45pm Woodside, 501 Ellenbrook Road, M28 1Es. (SAL)

**Thursday 28th** – Pub of the Month presentation to the Moor Top, 172 Heaton Moor Road, SK4 4DU. From 8.00pm. (SSM)

**Thursday 28th** – Branch Meeting: Dulcimer, 567 Wilbraham Road, Chorlton, M21 0AE. Followed by cider and perry appreciation hosted by Branch Cider Rep Ellie Bickle. Starts 8.00pm. (T&H)

**Saturday 30th** – Trip to Huddersfield (joint event with North Cheshire Branch). Visit one of the UK's finest beer destinations. Details to follow – via contact or on website. (T&H)

**Sunday 31st** – West Didsbury Social: 1.00pm George Charles, 246 Burton Road, M20 2LW to be followed by two or three other bars in the village. Note: 12.30pm start if eating – confirm in advance with John Clarke ([stocam@btinternet.com](mailto:stocam@btinternet.com)) who will book table(s). (SSM)

**Wednesday 3rd August** – Salford Social: 7.30pm Eagle Inn, 18 Collier Street, M3 7DW; 8.30pm Black Lion, 65 Chapel Street, M3 5BZ; 9.30pm Rovers Return, 91 Chapel Street, M3 5DF. (SAL)

**Monday 8th August** – Branch Meeting: Beehive, Albion Road, New Mills, SK22 3EY. Starts 8.00pm. (HPNC)

### Social Media

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



**Stockport & South Manchester:**  
[www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA](http://www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA)

**Trafford & Hulme:** [www.facebook.com/thcamra](http://www.facebook.com/thcamra)

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



**Stockport & South Manchester:** @SSMCAMRA

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**North Manchester:** @NorthMancsCAMRA

**Macclesfield & East Cheshire:** @MECCAMRA

**Central Manchester:** @MCRCentralCamra

**CAMRA**  
needs  
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See page 18  
for details

# Pub of the Month

## The Moortop, Heaton Moor



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for July 2016 has been won by the Moortop on Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor. *Sue Lightfoot* explains why it won.

The Moortop was taken over by Steve Pilling - of Damson, Heaton Mersey and Media City, and the Dockyard brand - in July 2015. Until then, real ale was non-existent in this part of the Heaton. The lines were sorted out and decent beer put on, the three pumps being increased to five over time, with the possibility of another in due course.

Tied to Greene King, the Moortop has a best bitter as standard - called Moor Top - and at 3.9% it is a pleasant session ale. The pub's policy with the other pumps is to promote and support Manchester and Stockport beers as well as those from 'outside'. The management and staff are proud of the cellar and have worked hard to ensure beer quality and choice. A flight of thirds is £4 and tasters are readily offered.

Gradually food was introduced and the menu, served from 12 noon until 8.00pm, has expanded. The pies and pizzas are made in-house and are of very good quality, as are the burgers, platters and salads. A very reasonably-priced Sunday lunch is available and there are offers - two pizzas for £10, or a free pint for Dad on Father's Day, for example. A new head chef has recently been appointed and we await developments with interest.

The interior is spacious and comfortable and the pub is dog-friendly, while outside there is a comfortable seating area. Often there is live music at the weekend and there is a weekly quiz night.

Fans of Social Media can find the Moortop on Twitter and Facebook; comments are welcomed as there is a real commitment to making this pub the best in the area. Join us on the evening of Thursday 28th July when we present this well-deserved award.

You'll find the pub opposite the Savoy Cinema and it can be reached by buses 22, 42A, 84 and 197.

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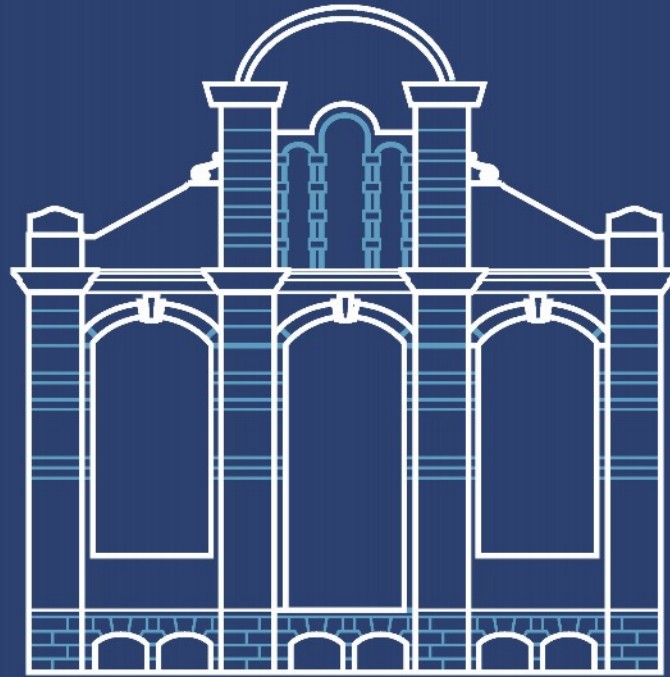
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Noon - 10:30pm Friday 29th  
Noon - 9:30pm Saturday 30th

## July 2016

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People's History Museum  
Left Bank, Spinningfields  
Manchester  
M3 3ER

[www.centralmanchestercamra.org.uk](http://www.centralmanchestercamra.org.uk)



# The Left Bank Beer Festival

## Steve Dunkley on Manchester's newest beer festival

*When CAMRA's new Central Manchester branch was formed in January 2016, one of its main priorities was to promote good-quality local beers. Greater Manchester has over seventy breweries producing anything from familiar pints of milds and best bitters to arguably the finest sours and lagers in the country, with everything in between.*

The region is at the forefront of preserving brewing heritage with four family breweries still supplying their beers to regular drinkers in their tied estates and three new micros now supplying beer in wooden casks. It's not just the heritage though; breweries here are pushing boundaries with modern styles and techniques and producing beers that are sought after globally. Manchester truly is one of the best cities in the world for beer.



The Central Manchester branch decided early on that a beer festival was needed to show people how great the beer around here is. To be able to promote all styles of beer a special venue had to be found, and they don't come much more special than the People's History Museum in Spinningfields (pictured top right), a testament to the spirit of the people of Manchester. The museum also has an on-site licensed cafeteria that already sells a selection of local beers where the festival will be able to stock bottles and cans of the brews that don't fall into the Campaign's definition of Real Ale. This means we're hoping to be able to have a beer from every brewery based in Greater Manchester available at the same venue. With this arrangement, the Left Bank Beer Festival promises to be something special, bringing together all breweries old and new, all styles traditional and modern across all types of dispense, to really show how great Greater Manchester is for its beer.



The selection of the beers themselves is also being done in a different way from previous CAMRA festivals, with the brewers themselves being asked which beers they want to see showcasing their breweries, and so far their choices aren't what you'd expect. The dark milds and the best bitters are represented, but not from the breweries you'd guess, alongside oatmeal stouts, smoked porters, New Zealand IPAs and rye pales. Almost every beer style has so far been put forward by the breweries, covering a wide range of strengths.

The organiser of the event, Graham Donning (pictured left), who also organizes the CAMRA Manchester Beer & Cider Festival at Manchester Central, another iconic Manchester building, said, "This event is going to be really different from any other as the beers are being hand-picked by the brewers themselves. Steve from Beer Nouveau Brewery is in charge of the beer selection so is making sure that the other brewers get their say!"

In addition to that, the Bar Manager is Heather Airlie, who manages a main bar at the Manchester Beer & Cider Festival and is also a deputy Bar Manager at the huge Great British Beer Festival in Olympia, so she knows her stuff. Heather said, "Not only will the beers be tip top but they will also be in tip top condition as we will be using a cooling system to ensure the beer is actually kept and served at cellar temperature. No worries about getting warm beer from me!"

There will also be a selection of ciders and perries from local producers as well as many award-winning products from across the UK. Foreign beers will also be represented on draught, with beers from Sweden's Omnipollo Brewery, The Brussels Beer Project, Boon, De Molen, Oedipus, Oersoep and De La Senne amongst others.

### Festival opening times and prices

Thursday 28th July 4pm to 10:30pm - Free entry to CAMRA members, £2 to non-members;

Friday 29th July noon to 10:30pm - CAMRA Members £1 up to 5pm then £3 afterwards, Non members £3 to 5pm then £5 afterwards;

Saturday 30th July noon to 9.30pm - CAMRA Members £2, non-members £4.

Glass - £3 refundable deposit on a souvenir glass  
Food available all sessions from the in-house Left Bank Cafeteria



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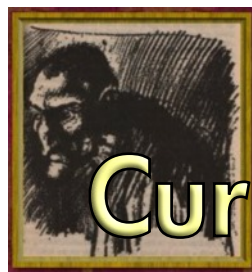
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# Curmudgeon

## Out of Control

We're often told nowadays that pubs provide a "controlled drinking environment". The implication is that the restraint imposed by the presence of the licensee and other customers leads people to drink in a more responsible manner than they would if they had bought a load of booze from Tesco and were drinking it at home.

This idea has only really appeared in the past couple of decades. Back in the 1970s, when pubs accounted for the vast majority of drinking, whether responsible or irresponsible, it would have been unheard of, except perhaps to distinguish well-run pubs from poorly-run ones. It's only in recent years, when on-trade consumption has been clearly losing ground to the off-trade, that it's become popularised as an attempt to distinguish the two.

It has some validity in the context of socialising young people into drinking in a restrained and moderate way. They're much more likely to do that in pubs under the watchful eye of the licensee and older customers than experimenting on their own on a park bench. But, as a concept applied to general adult drinking, it's basically special pleading that bears little relation to reality.

People drinking in pubs on average probably consume considerably more per session than those doing it at home, and are also more likely to be involved in drink-related disorder, whether as victims or perpetrators, and also to be the innocent victims of traffic accidents. For many people, a weekly pub night is an opportunity to cut loose a bit, whereas at home they would probably stick to just one or two glasses of wine or bottles or cans of beer. Even in the best-run community pub, you will find customers towards the end of Friday or Saturday night somewhat the worse for wear, if not actually drunk, and certainly guilty of binge-drinking as defined by the anti-drink lobby.

The alcohol-fuelled disorder that we see in some of our larger towns and cities is often laid at the door of "pre-loading" on cheap off-trade spirits before going out on the town. However, it seems perverse to blame the state people end up in on the first drink they had rather than the last, and people wouldn't be pre-loading in the first place if their intention wasn't to go out afterwards.

Anti-drink campaigners are sometimes heard praising the role of pubs and regretting that they have been allowed to decline. But this really comes across as breathtaking hypocrisy, when over the years they have consistently opposed the liberalisation of licensing hours and supported every anti-pub measure going. It wouldn't surprise me if their equivalents of fifty years ago had advocated a move to more at-home drinking with the family and with meals, as opposed to men boozing together in the pub.

Nobody who reads this column can doubt that I view pubs as a valuable British tradition that has an important role to play in bringing people together and encouraging a sense of community, and at their best are havens of conviviality that bring pleasure to millions. But to claim that pub drinking has some kind of privileged moral status is frankly just silly and unhelpful.

Over the years, social changes have led to a marked shift away from on-trade drinking, and most people now mix the two depending on the context. The attitude of "we never have drink in the house" now comes across as quaintly old-fashioned. Each form of drinking can be done either responsibly or irresponsibly, and the vast majority of drinkers fall into the first category. The anti-drink lobby must be laughing into their sarsaparilla over this pointless squabbling about "my drink is better than yours".



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



# Brewery & Pub News

News covering Stockport, Manchester and beyond

## New Faces

There's a new manager at the **Nelson** on Wellington Road South in Stockport. She is Lynn Kennerley who was previously the tenant at Robinsons' **Waterloo** on Waterloo Road. Cask beer, in the form of Charles Wells Bombardier, has been reintroduced and as this is selling well not only is it to be a permanent feature but a second cask ale is likely to be introduced as well.



Another pub with a new face in charge is the **Anchor** in Hazel Grove where Karen Hartshorn has taken over. While this is Karen's first pub she has many years experience of the local licensed trade as she spent some 34 years working at the **Armoury** on Shaw Heath while it was run by her parents and her brother. She's been gently decluttering the pub, which still retains some interesting nautical memorabilia, and is gradually introducing other changes. Cask beers are Robinsons Unicorn and Hartleys XB, with the possibility that Dizzy Blonde may appear in the future.



In Altrincham the **Old Market Tavern** is also under new management. Peter Carroll is an old Altrincham hand and has returned from many years abroad to take over this iconic local. He and his business partner have great plans for the pub including a complete renovation of the building. Disused parts of the rambling premises are to be brought back into use and there are plans for 18 letting rooms, too. Cask ale will remain a feature with supplies sourced from local brewers.

## Closures



The long-running campaign to save the **High Grove** in Gatley has come to an end following the closure of the pub on 13th June and its subsequent disposal for other use. This has come as a bitter blow to the campaign group who had plans to acquire the pub and run it as a community local. The pub had of course been listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) and while this gained the pub a six-month reprieve, its fate does expose the limitations of ACV status.



Two historic locals have also bitten the dust in Manchester and Salford. In Ancoats the long-closed **Smiths Arms** (popularly known as the Hammer) on Sherratt Street is due for demolition. This is despite an archaeological survey showing it to be the oldest surviving public house of its type in Ancoats. In its heyday as a Tetley house *Opening Times* remembers having enjoyed many a decent pint there and it is shameful that it could not be incorporated in any new development.

And in Salford, the closed but locally-listed **Lord Nelson** on Chapel Street has also met its fate. The demolition of this old pub comes despite assurances from developers and councillors that it would be retained and used in any development. It could indeed have made a handsome addition to the Chapel Street scenery but that was not to be.

It is also worth recording that the closed but Grade II listed **Mawson** in Chorlton-on-Medlock continues to moulder. We believe it may be in use for storage by the owners of the nearby Chinese supermarket who acquired the pub some years ago.

## Carbon Smith

One of the many highlights of last month's Manchester Beer Week was the opportunity to finally try the beers from **Carbon Smith** when the brewery held an open day. To date the beers have largely been available in Edinburgh (from whence Ollie Smith relocated to Manchester) but hopefully they will now start appearing in local bars and beer shops.



The beers sampled were naturally keg-conditioned but had a lower carbonation level than some keged beers which will make them more accessible to the more traditional drinker. The Carbon Copy Pale (3.8%) was tasty but might have benefited from a little extra dry hopping while a Salted Caramel Brown Ale touched the flavour notes you'd expect and was rich and satisfying. The two real star turns were Graphene Porter (4.0%) which was full-bodied, dry and very drinkable, and the A.Rose IPA (6.5%) with a good smack of hops combined with perfumy notes from the addition of dried rose petals. Lovely stuff. Bottle conditioned beers will soon be available and some beers are currently ageing in oak casks too. Look out for them.

## More Newcomers

So, what else is new on the "Piccadilly Mile" – the stretch of railway arches between Piccadilly and Ardwick stations that is fast becoming the centre of craft brewing in Manchester?

In September we'll see the launch of **UBREW Manchester**, essentially a facility for homebrewers, and which is covered in more detail on page 17. Next door to Alphabet Brewing look for an autumn opening for **Dan's Brewery**. No firm details yet but as Dan's mum is Jan Rogers who owns Marble Brewery he clearly has a good grounding in beer. On the other side of the coin, rumours that **Seven Brothers** will be relocating from Salford to a Piccadilly railway arch can be firmly discounted – they are rooted in Salford and that's where they plan to stay.

Elsewhere in the pipeline there's **Fundamentum** inside the yet-to-open Goose Fat and Wild Garlic Restaurant on Blossom Street, and also the **Gasworks Brewbar** on First Street.

# Festival Review

## Stockport Beer & Cider Festival 2016



*Stockport & South Manchester Branch are celebrating after another highly successful Festival. While attendance was marginally down following last year's 16% increase, over 5,000 people still made the journey to Edgeley Park in brilliant sunshine.*

An increased beer order meant that there was still a good selection left by the end of the festival while almost all of the cider and perry was downed by the thirsty crowd. The bottled beer bar had about 50 bottles left by the time the shutters came down for the last time. One of the unsold casks was the excellent 9.5% "Caller the Smaller" barley wine from Runaway Brewery. As this cask remained unopened it is being cellared for a year and will make what we expect to be a spectacular reappearance at the 2017 festival (alongside, we hope, a similarly aged whisky cask version).

Exactly 100 new members of CAMRA were signed up and among these was Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA's 1,550th member – Laura Illingworth of Bramhall. Laura is pictured here holding her welcome pack of beer surrounded by her friends, some of who also promptly signed up!



As usual one of the highlights was the much-awaited result of the beer, cider and perry of the festival votes. This year there was a particularly high number of votes and competition was fierce with just one vote separating the first and second places.

The overall beer of the festival was **Osiris** from Sheffield's **Neepsend Brew Co.** This is a New Zealand Pale Ale hopped with Pacific Jade and Green Bullet. It is clean, crisp and zesty with notes of dried fruit, pine and citrus. It's the first CAMRA award that Neepsend has won and they are obviously delighted with the accolade.



Runner-up was **Pekoe Blue Lady IPA**. This was one of the Bar Nouveau beers and emerged from the homebrew competition run in the Spring to find five new beers for the festival. The home brewer who devised the beer is **Ross McFadyen** of Chorlton while the beer itself was brewed at Manchester's **Track Brewing**. Both of them will be getting a certificate to mark the achievement.

Third place went to Stockport's **Cryptic Ales** and **The Ghost**, a 3.7% Hazelnut Mild brewed in conjunction with the Stockport County Supporters' Co-op.

Let's not forget the cider and perry awards, now named after the late festival stalwart Rhys Jones. The Perry of the Festival went to **Gregg's Pit** and their excellent **Thorn Perry (2014 Vintage)** while the Cider of the Festival was **Williams & Hughes Dabinett (Jura Cask)**.

Congratulations to all of the winners – visits are being arranged to present the various awards. Look for reports in future issues of *Opening Times*.

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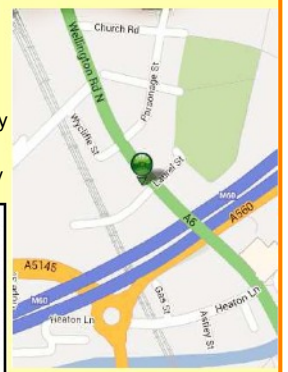
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# Stockport Beer & Cider Festival

A photographic record by Mike Flynn



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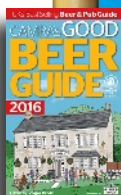
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# High Peak Pub Scene

Robin Wignall & Tom Lord with News and Views

## Peak Practice With Robin Wignall

*Pure Buxton* appears alternate months and is a free glossy magazine published by Nestlé, the owners of Buxton Water. The latest edition carries an article on the **Moon Inn** at Stoney Middleton, on the Chesterfield road between Chapel-en-le-Frith and Baslow. The Moon has recently undergone a good refurbishment and upgrade by its new owners. Food is important, but it is obvious from the article that locals matter. Real ales are a feature and there is a changing list of these, including Pedigree, Wainwright and Bradfield Farmers Blonde. If you happen to be passing I am sure that the Moon will be well worth a call.



Another pub where development work is happening is the **Bridge Inn** at Calver (pictured above). These days the pub lies just off the Chesterfield road as the old road was replaced by a bypass and a new bridge back in 1974. The old road and bridge remain and provide access to local tourist attractions. Currently the Bridge Inn is closed, boarded-up and fenced round. There is evidence of work going on so hopefully before too long a re-opening can be looked forward to. The Bridge was formerly a Hardys & Hansons Kimberley house, so unless it has gone into the free trade could well be a Greene King outlet.

By early May the **Railway** in Whaley Bridge was closed, and not just early in the week as previously reported. Developments are awaited for this town centre pub in the Whaley Bridge Conservation Area. As well as the pub, Robinsons also own some of the adjacent land and buildings. Because of its position in the Conservation Area, presumably any developments would be of interest to High Peak Borough Council.

A Robinsons house that is worth a call is the **Devonshire Arms** in Mellor. Historically in Derbyshire, Mellor is now part of Stockport Borough. A group of us called to dine recently and certainly enjoyed our meals, sensibly priced

and well presented. Liquid refreshment after a couple of hours on the adjoining hills was provided by Robinsons Unicorn, Beerdo (the current seasonal) and a hand pumped cider, Westons Rosie's Pig.



At the **Drum & Monkey** on Chapel Road in Whaley Bridge, beers from the Manchester Brewing Co. went down so well at the recent beer festival that they continue to be ordered. Mad Carew is a hefty 5.9%, and is intensely dry and hoppy. Certainly not a session beer, but nonetheless it is worth more than a cautious try. More like that – please. The Drum & Monkey is often an outlet for beers from the Whaley Bridge Brewery.

Towns and villages in the High Peak become hives of activity during the brief months of summer, with carnivals, May Queens and Rose Queens, Well Dressings and related events such as fell races. In Whaley Bridge June was a busy month. During the second weekend there was Whaley Water Weekend, W3, centred down on the canal basin. There was much to see and do with stalls and attractions and music, much of it live, from brass band to pop group. The beer tent sold Crow Hill, a pale amber ale from the Whaley Bridge Brewery and this was available alongside Bollington Best. W3 is an annual event which brings in locals and visitors alike, and is worth getting along to. Carnival Day is held on the last Saturday of June, too late this year for readers, but reaches much of the town centre with a procession, fell race, well dressing and art exhibition. The pubs make a really big effort on Carnival Day and a visit is recommended.

The Beer Festival at the **Beehive** in New Mills (pictured above right), just down the hill from Newtown Station, was again held during the Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May. 2016 was its third year and it seems to go from strength to strength. There were beers from Shropshire and points south west, Corvedale Oatmeal Stout and Glastonbury Thriller, a porter, were of note and it was good to see Black Country Mild from Holden's. Yorkshire beers included two from Abbeydale and a really good pale and hoppy brew from Roosters in Knaresborough. I missed the beers from Rock



Mill Brewery in New Mills. There were also six or seven ciders and perries. An efficient cooling system meant that beers were kept in good condition. This is a festival which can be happily recommended. A final attraction for this beer festival is the collection of historic local photographs which adorn the walls of the Beehive. Have a history lesson with your beer the next time you call.

## High Peak Pub News With Tom Lord

In Glossop the **George Hotel**, opposite the railway station, has reopened with Black Sheep Bitter on offer.



It is reported that the **Clarke's Arms** at 27 Stockport Road Hyde has now reintroduced real ale. It is a house session ale named after the pub and brewed by Charles Wells. In Ashton the **Half Way House** at 123 Whiteacre Road is now serving a rotating guest beer plus John Smith's cask bitter. This was introduced for a trial period trial and is now so popular that it has become a permanent feature.

In Stalybridge what was previously the Ruby Rooms on Market Street will be reopened at the end of June as the **Stalybridge Tavern**. Not sure about real ales yet.

In New Mills on Market Street work is ongoing with the new micro pub **The Beer Shed** which it is reported should open in September. You can follow progress on Facebook – search on beershednewmills.

# Polish Revolution

Jerry Wicken is on a European Tour – this is the first of his reports



*It was only a few years ago that if you drank beer in Poland you would be faced by a couple of national breweries like Tyskie or Książęce. These were certainly easier to drink than bog standard lagers*

*or pilsners with little but refreshing qualities. Poles would talk passionately about vodka (they still do) but beer would scarce get a mention.*

Nowadays it's all about beer. From the moment we arrived and I tried, on the recommendation of the off-licence staff, a Ciechan Porter at 9% from Ciechanów and Słodowe a malty brew at 6.5% from the same brewery I knew we were going to enjoy it here. Our walking tour guide claimed his passion was for history and craft beer and proceeded to guide me in the right direction. Quite strangely, for us Brits anyway, when I asked him his favourites he simply gave his favourite types of beer. In his case these were porters, stouts and American Pale Ales but didn't hint at any breweries. This was the case with everybody I asked. Probably this is because it is all so new and breweries are popping up quicker than you can say Grodziski (a smoked wheat beer originating in and unique to Poland



and very hard to track down).

The first bar we went to was in Wrocław. Whilst the beer was very good (we tasted a Dunkel and a Pilsner) the bar provided a free snack to soak up the beer. This was a pork dripping sandwich. It was on wholemeal bread so it must have been healthy! Wake up Wetherspoon's there's a good USP.

There is a bit of a battle going on between Wrocław and Kraków as to the beer capital of Poland and there is really little in it. They both have great

many others from across Europe. We certainly enjoyed the bars in Kraków, and the House of Beer was probably the best of the lot. The red ale was excellent, but the Rokokoko Porter (chocolate and coconut) was perhaps a step too far in experimentation. But this is the exuberance of youth; some you'll get right, others not so right but keep trying and you may find perfection. If you happen to be in Warsaw, Same Crafty or across the street Same Buzy, are also bars worthy of mention and which also serve top pizzas.



The Reden brewery pretty much attained perfection with its milk stout which was smooth and creamy with a nice bitter finish. The Jana brewery made Hopoti, a 5.6% American Pale Ale which was exceptional; but these were just two of many wheat beers smoked and unsmoked, rye beers, pilsners, red ales, IPAs, porters, stouts and lagers most of which would rate highly in any country. The Poles have really caught the beer bug and most people, although particularly under 30's, pack into these Multitaps to sample what's new.

It is also worth mentioning that craft ale in Polish terms is what we would call real ale. Every craft beer we tried was either cask or bottle conditioned. What also happens (and I'm not sure whether this happens with British ales) is that all the ingredients including each hop variety is listed on the bottle. For instance the Jana Hopoti had Magnum, Mosaic and Centennial hop varieties: one of the smoked ryes we tried had Zeus, Chinook and Mosaic. I don't know whether any of these beers are available in the UK but if they are I suggest you snap one of them up.

Finally, a little known fact, to me at least, is that Poland is the largest producer of apples in Europe. Its main export markets were Russia and Belarus but they placed an embargo on Polish apples so for a while they were given away free to schools and hospitals. Then a light shone. Why do we import all our cider from UK, France and Sweden? Not any more, Poland can now add a craft cider industry to its recent innovations.

Next on to Lithuania which I'm told has beaver on the menu. I wonder what beer will go with that!



bars called Multitaps which as the name suggests have anything up to 12 beers on tap and so many more in bottles. There are lots from Poland but



# Stagger

## Heaton Norris plus a Reddish starter with Jim Flynn



It was a pleasant spring evening when we arrived at South Reddish's only pub, the **Carousel**, on Reddish Road. This large open-plan pub is food orientated and was full of diners on our visit, so much so we struggled to find seats. The comfortable furnishings, modern paintings and décor give a light feel but it's all a little too corporate for my taste (luckily many others disagree). Over the years it's blown hot and cold with real ale but now it seems to have made cask beer a feature to promote, which is good news. Often two beers are available but on our visit only Greene King IPA was available and this was in reasonable form.



It's a long way to the next pub but half a mile to the south is Beartown Brewery's only Stockport outlet, the **Navigation**, on the Lancashire Hill roundabout. It was built to service the workers from the flour mill next door and the barges on the now long-gone Stockport branch of the Ashton Canal. The central bar serves both the lounge and the vault and while there are TVs and a jukebox neither are intrusive enough to interfere with conversation; we had a good chat about the demise of mild with a fellow drinker at our table. The pub boasts an excellent range of Beartown beers which we found in decent nick; nobody tried the Holts Bitter.

Our proposed route took in the **Grapes** on Quantock Close but despite the signs outside proclaiming real ale there wasn't any. So, on to the **Silver Jubilee** off Belmont Way. As the name suggests this Robinsons estate pub was built in 1977 to replace the nearby Oddfellows but the Queen's Jubilee prompted a change of name. There are two rooms, the back one

having two well-lit pool tables. We however, along most other customers, sat in the front room to drink our Robinsons Unicorn, which was to most people's liking, although I found it unusually sweet.



It's a short walk to the A6 and the **Hope Inn**, the home of Fool Hardy Ales. This pub has been winning awards since it was acquired by Martin and Samantha Wood in 2012 and as it has featured numerous times in this magazine it's difficult to know what to write that is new. To the right as you walk through the door is the comfortable and always popular lounge. To the left is what was the vault (an interesting feature is the library from which you can borrow books on trust) in which we found seats. The downside here is that the handpumps are in the other room but there is a list of the beers chalked up and the bar itself services both rooms. There is an extensive beer range from both Fool Hardy and other breweries, with most of us sticking to the former, which were excellent.

Round the corner from the Hope is **Stockport Labour Club** and as we were ahead of time we chanced our arm and popped in to see if we could try their beers. This may be a very utilitarian building but nevertheless the friendly staff gave it a welcoming feel and we were buzzed in as their guests. It was quiz night in the main function room and so we sat in the bar area to try our Thwaites Bitter and Wainwright, with the former particularly well received; did the price of £1.90 a pint make the beer taste even better?

Our next stop was the **Railway** which was hosting one of the pub's regular entertainment nights in the right hand room, so we went left. This comfortable room has a feature fireplace and photos of old Stockport. To the rear is a popular games room with darts (numerous teams play here) and pool. Normally there are four cask beers, mostly from new or unusual breweries, but on our visit there were three, Springhead Maid Marion, Old School Brewery Junior and Holts Bitter. All but the latter were tried and for some of us the Junior was the beer of the night.



Further down on the opposite side of the A6 is the **Midland**. This cracking boozier is sometimes overlooked, regarded by some as being in the shadow of its illustrious multi-beer neighbours. This a pity because it was one of the first pubs in this part of town to start selling cask beer again and it has real character, with the very distinctive brown art-nouveau tiling worthy of a visit by itself. Let's hope the unnecessary threat of demolition to make way for the mooted new relief road (or rather its pavement!) passes. The Everards Ascalon and Greene King London Glory were well received, the Marstons Help for Heroes less so; no-one tasted the Greene King IPA.



Our final stop on the trail was the nearby **Magnet**. This is one of the big successes of the Stockport pub scene. Rescued from semi dereliction the Magnet is now one of the most popular pubs in the borough. So much so they have extended the outside areas overlooking Stockport's iconic railway viaduct and recently have put in a new set of stairs to the refurbished upstairs room to accommodate all the customers. What draws people to the pub is the incredible range of very well kept beers, including some from Watts Brewing? Co, the in-house brewery. I am not going to go through all the beers available on the night but I will say those tried were on fine form.

To keep *compos mentis* I tend to keep to halves on staggers but the trouble with this excellent stagger is that in too many of the award winning pubs I was sorely tempted to have a pint or even two and it took all my willpower to resist. Well worth a go!

# Stockport Beer and Cider Festival 2016

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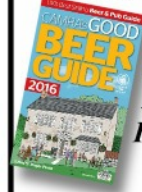
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# Trafford & Hulme Pub of the Season

## 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. regular ales are Greene King Abbot, Ruddles Best, and Sharp's Doom Bar. Supporting LocAle guest ales are from local breweries including Dunscair Bridge, Phoenix, Robinsons and Weetwood (to name but a few). In addition breweries from further afield such as Hawkshead, Moorhouse's, Peerless and Saitaire also feature. The pub regularly offers customer favourites Exmoor Gold, Wychwood Hobgoblin and Hobgoblin Gold, Kelham Island Pale Rider, and Thwaites Wainwright. The pub's own 'house blend', Joule's Gold, brewed by Brightside, is definitely one to keep a look out for. (It's worth pointing out that with the exception of Bank Holidays, the pub's Monday Club offers real ales at reduced prices.)

In terms of the number of pints of real ale sold each week, the JP Joule is rarely out of the top 80 in Wetherspoons rankings (not bad going considering how many pubs there are in the chain!) The pub has achieved, and maintained, Cask Marque status, and the real ale is well kept by the fully trained management team. In addition there are three

(bag-in-box, refrigerated) guest ciders (typically Gwynt Y Draig Black Dragon and Weston's Old Rosie, and Wyld Wood).

As a Wetherspoons pub, it has two popular annual real ale festivals, an annual cider festival, and in addition holds several 'Meet The Brewer'/'Battle of the Brewery' events each year. The pub also organises several community events, such as book sales and regular raffles in aid of CLIC Sargent Charity. All of these together with the pub's own monthly newsletter are advertised on the Community noticeboard and in CAMRA Corner, located on the ground floor at the rear of the pub.

Offering food from 8am-11pm, seven days a week, and with extended licensing until 1am on Fridays and Saturdays, the JP Joule is child friendly, and popular with people of all ages.

Situated on Northenden Road the JP Joule is just a few minutes' walk away from the Metrolink stop, and is on several major bus routes. Join Trafford & Hulme CAMRA when they present their award on the evening of Thursday 21st July.

## Brewery Update



As briefly mentioned on page nine, the latest likely opening on the "Piccadilly Mile" will be **UBREW Manchester**. As the name indicates this is a facility for home brewers, based on an already successful operation in London.

Due to open in September, UBREW offers training, kit and a shop selling ingredients to keen and aspiring home brewers. In London they have 400 members but here in Manchester the target is a more modest 100, and given that 70 have signed up to date that should easily be met. This could in fact spawn yet another wave of commercial brewers. UBREW tell us that in London, 25 of their users have acquired commercial brewing licences, and 12 of these now brew commercially using the UBREW kit (for which an additional fee is payable).

Apart from assisting home brewers, UBREW also produce their own range of beers (certainly in bottle – pictured above; we are unsure whether there is any draught), and also plan to have a tap bar at their North Western Street premises. If possible this will open every Saturday. *Opening Times* will be dropping along once everything is up and running but in the meantime you can check them out online at [ubrew.cc](http://ubrew.cc)

At the tail end of Manchester Beer Week *Opening Times* dropped into the Manchester Homebrew Expo at Beer Nouveau. Not only did we bump into the guys from UBREW but we also chanced across Erin Guy, who has recently left her post as brewer at Chorlton's Bootleg Brewery (based at the Horse & Jockey). Erin has been "gypsy brewing" at Beer Nouveau and her first beer, a best bitter, is destined for Stretford's Sip Club. She also told us that she is also a one-third partner in a new brewery being set up in Stretford – look out for **Origami** beers in due course.

## Scammer Alert

A while ago we alerted local licensees to the activities of a con man who was trying to extract money from local pubs for non-existent adverts in *Opening Times* and other publications. We don't know whether he's back or if it's someone new but we have heard reports of someone trying a similar scam.

The **Jack in the Box** in Altrincham was approached by someone who claimed to be a CAMRA member and one of the editors of the Good Beer Guide. He wanted £75 for an entry into the 2017 Good Beer Guide and handed over a receipt ripped out from a book with no CAMRA logo etc.

**Pubs and bars please note – you don't pay to get in the Good Beer Guide and no-one should be asking you for money.** If anyone approaches you for money turn them down and call the police (they have told us that there is little they can do unless the culprit is more or less caught red-handed).

## Pub Shorts

In Ashton, we hear that the **Ladysmith** (opposite the town hall) has returned to the cask ale fold. There's a house beer from Charles Wells (at a bargain £1.90 a pint) and a changing guest (Taylor's Boltmaker when our reporter called). Meanwhile the **Crown Point Tavern** micropub in Denton is now open and seems to have been a great success to date.

In Manchester we have a couple of new cask outlets to report. **Monroes** on London Road now sells a beer called Dizzy Blonde but it's not clear if it's the Robinsons beer. Meanwhile **Cottonopolis** on Newton Street now sells two changing cask beers – when *Opening Times* called these were a New World Pale (brewery unclear) and Track Toba. Our reporter was told they have been selling cask for about three months now and have featured breweries such as Celt Experience, Squawk and Blackjack.

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# Takeovers – good or bad?

## Phil Edwards weighs up the pros and cons

*What should our attitude be when a small brewer gets bought out? Should we mourn the loss of an independent and never drink their beer again - or should we be happy that the brewer's cashed in and look forward to their beer being more widely available?*



Take Sharp's, the Cornish brewery that was bought by Molson Coors in 2011. You can get four different Sharp's beers from your friendly local supermarket. I tried them all recently, and can report that one of them - Sea Fury - is quite nice. (Doom Bar was almost startlingly bland, Wolf Rock was slightly better and Atlantic was positively hard to drink. None of them is brewed in Cornwall; Sea Fury is brewed on the storm-lashed coasts of, er, Burtonwood.)

At the time of the takeover, reaction among beer bloggers was quite favourable. Molson Coors were maintaining that the beer would continue to be brewed in Cornwall and that Sharp's head brewer Stuart Howe would be able to develop his own projects. Beer writer Pete Brown expressed some scepticism, but suggested that it didn't much matter - the worst that could happen was that Molson Coors messed up the beers and Howe went to work somewhere else. (Stuart Howe moved on to Butcombe in 2015.)

In retrospect, I think we overlooked something: specifically, the difference between a beer and a brand. Imagine that you're given a taster of a beer, without knowing its name or that of the brewery, and you like it enough to buy a pint: you're buying the beer purely because of the qualities of the beer itself. At the other extreme, say that your name is Finlayson, you've had a win on the lottery, and the first pub you go into is serving Finlayson's Lucky Number (NB not a real beer) – obviously you're going to have a pint of that, but for reasons which have nothing to do with the quality of the beer. The beer and the brand usually go together, but fundamentally they're different things.

What makes it more complicated is that there aren't many ways to brand a beer that are totally disconnected from the beer itself – at least, not since the ASA started objecting to attempts to associate alcohol with “irresponsible behaviour, social success or sexual attractiveness”. (Spoilsports!) So a lot of brands are based on a proposition about the quality of the beer. The idea, in other words, is to create the impression that the name of the beer is itself the mark of quality. From that point on, as far as customers are concerned their buying decisions are based on quality – that's why they like the brand. But the brewer doesn't actually have to sell on quality; all they need to do is sell the brand, while doing whatever's necessary to maintain the association between the brand and quality. This may mean keeping quality high, but it doesn't have to; it may just mean keeping prices high (“reassuringly expensive”, anyone?).

You can see how this applies to a beer like Doom Bar. A brand which is supported by a history of product quality is a strong brand, one which a corporation might well want to own. But the beer behind that brand, once it's been bought, doesn't have to maintain its quality – it just needs to be palatable enough not to drive repeat customers away.

So, what do we get when a large brewery buys out a smaller one? We get one less brewery, and the larger brewery gets the assets of the smaller one – including the beers themselves, the beer brands and whatever other assets the smaller brewery had. Even when the new corporate owner of a beer is genuinely committed to maintaining its original quality, the corporate scale creates new dangers. Brakspear Triple survived two

changes of ownership – going to Wychwood in 2002 and Marston's in 2008 – and emerged as a nationally available premium bottled ale, only to fall foul of fluctuations in supermarket beer demand. In the words of a Marston's spokeswoman, “Due to the decline in demand from consumers, Brakspear Triple bottle-conditioned beer was delisted by key retailers which inevitably meant we were unable to continue with the production and sale of it.” This is not to say that everything would have been rosy if Brakspear had refused Wychwood's offer in 2002; the brewery might just have closed down. But it does show that a takeover doesn't secure the future of any beer.

More typically, the main thing the larger brewer is interested in isn't the beer. In the 1960s and 70s, a small brewer's key assets would have been the tied estate; these days it's the brands. For corporate brewers, a strong brand is far more valuable than a high-quality product. Takeovers turn beers into brands – or rather, they turn a beer-with-a-brand into a brand-with-a-beer.

The beer landscape has changed an awful lot since the 1970s, but in key respects it hasn't changed that much. The big companies don't want good beers for their quality, they want them for their market share and their branding – and those things don't require high quality beer, even if high quality beer is what they were built on. One of three things happens when a small brewery is taken over: the beers are kept on with the same quality and standards; or they just disappear; or they're kept on as brands fronting inferior products, impostors standing in for the beers they used to be. History shows that the second is more likely than the first, and the third is most likely of all – particularly now that brands are such a key asset for breweries. In short, takeovers are (still) bad news.

*Phil Edwards is a writer and blogs about beer at [ohgoodale.wordpress.com](http://ohgoodale.wordpress.com)*

## High Peak Derbyshire Pub of the Year



The High Peak, Tameside & North East Cheshire Pub of the Year for Derbyshire is the **Church Inn**, Chelmorton, in the heart of the Peak District.

Set in beautiful surroundings opposite the local church, this traditional village pub caters both for locals and walkers. The main room is laid out for dining and good home-cooked food is available; however a cosy pub atmosphere is maintained. The guest beers are usually sourced from local micro breweries – beers from Abbeydale Brewery, Leatherbritches Brewery and Peak Ales were available on the presentation afternoon. Licensee Justin Satur is pictured above (centre) with High Peak CAMRA members including Geoff Williamson (right).



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