

# OPENING TIMES

MARCH & APRIL 2019 / FREE

Greater  
Manchester  
Magazine of  
The Year  
2019



**INSIDE: LOCAL PUBS OF THE YEAR 2019 /  
PUB WALKS / MANCHESTER BEER &  
CIDER FESTIVAL REVIEW / PUB AND  
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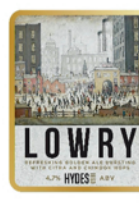
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## ~ OPENING TIMES ~

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- East Cheshire: 0300 123 5500  
[www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public\\_transport.aspx](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.

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Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Front cover – The Bakers Vaults, Stockport. Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year 2019.

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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: John Abrams; [johnabrams1111@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:johnabrams1111@yahoo.co.uk)

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

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

Contact: Tom Lord; [jenni.lord@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jenni.lord@tiscali.co.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)

#### Central Manchester (CMCR)

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

Contact: Steve Davis; [treasurer@centralmanchester.camra.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@centralmanchester.camra.org.uk)

CAMRA Members only

### Local CAMRA Events – March

**Monday 4th** – Branch Meeting: Lass O' Gowrie, Charles Street, Manchester, M1 7DB. From 6:00pm for 6:30pm start. (CMCR)

**Monday 11th** – Branch Meeting: Crown, 142 Victoria Court, Glossop, SK13 8JF. Starts 8:00pm. (HPNC)

**Tuesday 12th** – Branch AGM: Park Tavern, 158 Park Lane, Macclesfield, SK11 6UB. Starts 8:00pm. (MEC)

**Thursday 14th** – Branch Meeting: Armoury, 31 Shaw Heath, Stockport, SK3 8BD. Starts 8:15pm. (SSM)

**Friday 22nd** – Ladybarn & Fallowfield Stagger: starts 7:30pm Ladybarn Social Club, 13 Green Street, Ladybarn, M14 6TL; meet 8:30pm at Friendship, 353 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, M14 6XS; final pub Beer Studio, 256a Wilmslow Road, M14 6LB. (SSM)

**Monday 25th** – Campaigning Meeting: Unicorn, 102 Adlington Road, Dean Row, SK9 2LN. Starts 8:00pm. (MEC)

**Thursday 28th** – Pub of the Month presentation to the Railway, 1 Avenue Street, Portwood, SK1 2BX. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

**Friday 29th** – Pub of the Year presentation to the Crown & Kettle, 2 Oldham Road, Manchester, M4 5FE. From 7:00pm. (CMCR)

### Local CAMRA Events – April

**Friday 5th** – Mild Magic Launch Stagger: meet 7:30pm, Wilfred Wood, 204 London Road, Hazel Grove, SK7 4DQ. (SSM)

**Saturday 6th** – Branch Meeting: Old Cell, 10 Market Place, Chapel-en-le-Frith, SK23 0EN. Starts 12:30pm. Will be followed by a social around local pubs. (HPNC)

**Thursday 11th** – Branch Meeting and AGM: Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. Starts 8:15pm. (SSM)

**Thursday 18th** – Pub of the Month presentation to the Wellington Free House, 59-61 Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3RU. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

**Saturday 20th** – Day out in Sheffield. Check website for full details. (SSM)

**Friday 26th** – Cheadle East Stagger: starts 7:30pm Cheshire Line Tavern, Manchester Road, SK8 3NZ; 8:30pm meeting point Red Lion, 83 Stockport Road, SK8 2AJ; final pub Farmers Arms, 209 Stockport Road, Cheadle Heath, SK3 0LX. (SSM)

**Saturday 27th** – Cider Pub of the Year presentation to the Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. From 2:00pm. (SSM)

**Saturday 27th** – Pub of the Year presentation to Beer Emporium Bottle Bank, 24 London Road, Holmes Chapel, CW4 7AL, and Club of the Year presentation to Victoria Club, Victoria Avenue, Holmes Chapel, CW4 7BE. From 12 noon. (MEC)

### 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)

**High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire:**  
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**Macclesfield & East Cheshire (East Cheshire Pubs & Beer):**  
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**Stockport & South Manchester:** @SSMCAMRA

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**Central Manchester:** @MCRCentralCamra


### CAMRA Discounts

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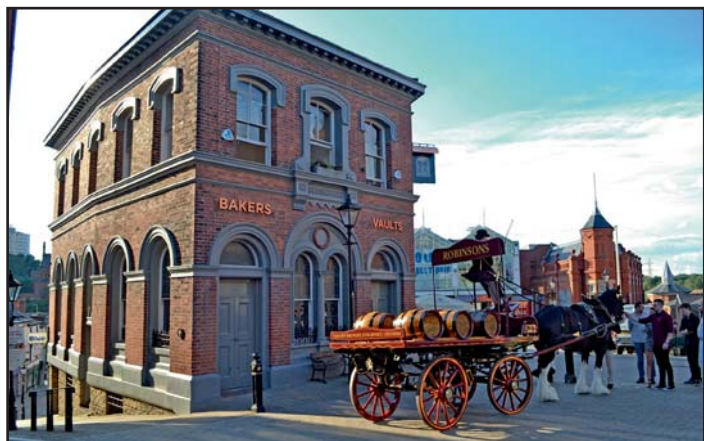
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# Stockport & South Manchester Awards

## Pub of the Year and other winners

*In recent years the voting for the Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Year has been nail-bitingly close and this time was no exception, with just two votes separating the top two pubs for the 2019 award.*



The winner is chosen from the Pubs of the Month for the previous year and the 2018 crop was not only very diverse but also included numerous excellent pubs. Discussion was intense but there can only be one winner and this year the top spot was taken by the **Bakers Vaults** in Stockport Market Place.



The Bakers has been something of a local institution for many years and for a long time had a reputation as a venue for live music. Just under five years ago Robinsons gave it a major makeover, and in July 2014 it reopened with a fresh new look to make it brighter and more welcoming.

It's run by Luke Morgan and his team who work tirelessly to provide a friendly, welcoming pub. As a result the Bakers is frequently bustling with drinkers – no doubt attracted by no fewer than 10 cask ales on handpump.

A delighted Luke told *Opening Times*: "It's an absolute honour to receive the Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Year 2019. Myself and my team always strive to provide the best quality drinking experience we can, with a cheeky smile and a bit of banter in our friendly little pub. I'd like to thank everyone for supporting us over the last five years. You're all amazing".

Five of the beers are from the Robinsons range and five are guests (although Titanic Brewery's Plum Porter seems to be a permanent resident). Weston's Old Rosie cider is also available. In addition is a range of gins – a nod to the pub's history as a gin palace dating back to 1775. A number of chalkboards detail part of the history.

Food comprises a small but well put together menu of gourmet hotdogs and burgers and some delicious fried sides. In keeping with the pub's long-time reputation as a music venue, local and regional bands are showcased every Sunday from 3-6pm, playing anything from jazz and blues to folk-rock and country.

The award was due to be presented on Thursday 21 February so look out for a photo or two in the next issue. The pub is open from 12 noon every day.

## Ye Olde Vic is Runner-up



The runner-up is **Ye Olde Vic** on Chatham Street in Edgeley. This pub is something of a survivor, having faced demolition threats in the 1960s, a period of closure in the early 1980s and some years of neglect under its previous owner.

For many years though it's been run by Steve Brannan and Johanne Quinn and during their reign the pub has won many CAMRA awards and what seems to be a permanent place in the national Good Beer Guide.

When the previous owner put the Olde Vic up for sale Steve and Jo couldn't afford to buy it; but fortunately a consortium of locals banded together to acquire the pub and save it for the future. Since then it has seen considerable investment and the exterior looks smarter than it's done for many years.

Internally little has changed. The pumpclips on the ceiling are a history lesson on forgotten beers and breweries. On the bar you'll find six ever-changing guest beers alongside one or two traditional ciders. The Vic opens at 5pm every day.

## Cider Pub of the Year



It's two in a row for the **Petersgate Tap**, which is once again the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year. Set over two floors, the Tap opened in September 2016 since when it has settled in to become a firm favourite with local beer and cider enthusiasts. Father and son team Alan and Chris Gent are passionate about their beers and ciders. Dark (and usually rather strong) beers are something of a speciality while the cider and perry offer has gone from strength to strength.

The pub now offers no fewer than eight traditional ciders and perries – some from local producers such as Dunham Press (Dunham Massey) and SiDa (Macclesfield) while others are from further afield. You can have your cider at either fridge or cellar temperature, too.

Last time the pub went on to win the regional title too and co-owner Alan Gent is both delighted with the award and looking forward to the county contest this time, as well.

He told *Opening Times*: "After winning last year's regional title, we've continued to develop our cider offer with cooled and cellar temperature cider and perry for sale. We're pleased the branch has supported us once again in winning the title and we're ready for another tilt at the regional."

The award is due to be presented on Saturday 27 April, from 2pm. The Petersgate Tap is at 19a St Petersgate, Stockport. It is closed on Mondays and opens from 4pm Tuesday, 2pm Wednesday, 12 noon Thursday to Saturday and 1pm on Sunday.

*See page 17 for details of the Club of the Year 2019*

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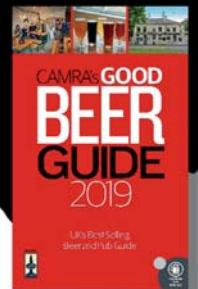
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# Pubs of the Month

## Stockport & South Manchester Winners for March and April



*The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for March 2019 has been won by the Railway, Avenue Street, Portwood. Graham Privett reports.*

This is the fourth time Sue and Vince have won the award at the Railway. Their unfaltering stewardship has also yielded awards for Mild, Cider Pub of the Year (six times) and 18 consecutive years in the Good Beer Guide.

Following a change in beer policy, there are now eight permanent ales from six different breweries (Dunham Massey Dunham Porter; Kelham Island Pale Rider; Outstanding Blond; Outstanding Ultra Pale; Pictish Arizona; Pictish Brewers Gold; Salopian Oracle and Thornbridge Jaipur IPA). Is this the largest range of permanent beers on offer at any venue across Greater Manchester? These eight regular ales are complemented by three guests, one of which is always a mild, not to mention great cider and perry of course.

Furthermore, every effort is made to keep prices as low as possible for the significant band of very loyal regulars, meaning that it's possible to get change out of a tenner for a round of four pints. Happy days!

Mention must be made of the dedicated, enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff, many of whom seem to have worked at the Railway for ever! The service is always swift, attentive and friendly. The banter between staff and regulars, and the complimentary newspapers, are further reasons why I seem to find myself constantly drawn into this wonderful pub, surely one of Stockport's finest and most underrated establishments.

You're all welcome to attend the presentation night on Thursday 28 March (from 8pm) to check out what you've been missing. Sue is even putting on a bit of food to help celebrate.

The Railway is situated just outside Stockport town centre on the corner of Great Portwood Street and Avenue Street, opposite the Peel Centre. There is a bus stop right outside the pub, served by many services (7, 300, 322, 324, 325, 327, 330 & 382).

*The Pub of the Month award is sponsored by Stephenson's, a local family firm that has been supplying the local pub and catering trade for over 150 years. Check out their advert on the previous page.*

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*The centre of Stockport has, over the past twelve months, bucked the national trend with pubs opening rather than closing, writes Dave Carter.*

There are several newcomers and the first of these to open was the Wellington, Wellington Road South, opposite what used to be known as Grand Central. It's filled a gap by providing what has long been missing, namely a pub serving the A6 in this area of Stockport. Speaking for myself and, I am sure, many others, I used to find meeting friends in this part of the world a bit of a bind, especially in bad weather when there was no choice but to go to fast food joints or stand shivering in a bus shelter. Then, last spring, the Wellington opened.

Occupying a site which had formerly been a bookies, the Wellington opened to what can only be described as a mixed reception - the beer being regarded generally as below par. Mercifully, thanks to the work of landlord Lee Goodhall, the teething problems were cured and three good handpumped ales have followed. At the time of my visit they were Marston's Mansfield Brewery England's Pride, Weetwood Ales Cheshire Cat and Three Bs Bees Knees.

Lee is no stranger to this part of Stockport having been landlord of the Unity just down the road, and now flats, and is a great fan of music in his pubs ("If the music is too loud you are too old" is one of the notices on the wall). All forms of music are played on a Saturday night, either by from live performers or a DJ.

The staff members are extremely friendly and are happy to speak to their customers on a variety of subjects. But a word of warning - there are around twenty clocks dotted around the pub, only two of which tell the correct time (other than twice a day). Which ones are they? I'm not going to tell you. Come along to the presentation night on Thursday 18 April at 8pm and see for yourselves.

It is impossible to list all the buses stopping at Grand Central - if it goes towards Hazel Grove or Manchester along the A6 then it should stop there. Trains stopping at Stockport will leave you with a very short walk and the Wellington is directly across on the A6.

So have a great time meeting your friends in a very friendly pub and make it your A6 meeting place. There's no better starting point for a night out.



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# High Peak Awards

## Pub of the Year & Cider Pub of the Year

The High Peak, Tameside & North East Cheshire Branch of CAMRA has announced its 2019 Pub of the Year winners. Both are in Tameside this year.

### Pub of the Year



The Pub of the Year is a long-time favourite, the famous **Stalybridge Station Original Buffet Bar**.

It's never easy to nominate a pub for this award, writes Ben Zwierink, as there are so many excellent pubs in the branch area that are worthy contenders. The Buffet Bar ticks all the right boxes.

Dating from 1885, it opened some forty years after the railway opened as a link between Stockport and Stalybridge to allow passengers from London and the South to transfer to the Huddersfield Line.



The Buffet Bar retains many of its original Victorian features including the marble-topped bar. Indeed, it features on CAMRA's National Inventory of Heritage Pubs and is one of the few railway buffets in the country to retain most of the original layout and fittings.

It is also full of assorted railway memorabilia, making it a veritable museum. The *Guardian* newspaper, in an article last year, gave the Buffet Bar an accolade by naming it one of the top ten railway refreshments stops in the world.



Of course a main factor in the decision-making process is the quality of beer on offer and here the Buffet Bar does not disappoint, with an ever changing range of cask beers kept in good condition, alongside traditional cider, too. Quality is such that the Buffet Bar is a regular entrant in CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide. What's not to like?

A presentation event is scheduled to take place on the afternoon of 17 August from around 2pm. As usual, all CAMRA members are very welcome to join us.

### Cider Pub of the Year



The Cider Pub of the Year award has been won by the **Silly Country** in Droylsden. This comes hot on the heels of the bar winning the Winter Pub of the Season award, which was presented in January.

It is fair to say that in the past Droylsden had never been considered a 'go to' area for real ale and cider drinkers; that's not to say there were no pubs selling cask-conditioned beers. The area just lacked a venue that could offer something beyond the standard range of national brand beers and a new, more contemporary feel.



Step forward a small group of local real ale enthusiasts who changed all that. Drew and Phil Unsworth and Katy White, who are pictured here receiving their Pub of the Season award from High Peak CAMRA Chairman Ben Zwierink (left), along with Anthony Conway and Ben Pike, took a chance on what, at first, appeared to be an unlikely location: a disused retail outlet on the corner of a rather tired-looking shopping centre in the middle of town.



The transformation from a soulless, empty space into a warm and welcoming environment has been truly remarkable. In the relatively short time the Silly Country has been open, the bar has become a great success. An ever-changing range of guest beers, an impressive range of bottled beers and ciders, as well as a variety of social activities, have made the Silly Country a focus for the area.

In addition to attracting a loyal, local clientele, it has also become a destination pub for many people living outside the area. The bar is ideally placed from a public transport point of view as buses and trams pass nearby (Droylsden Metrolink stop is opposite the bar).

The cider enthusiasts in the branch had no hesitation in recommending the Silly Country for Cider Pub of the Year because of the range and quality of ciders available - and who could argue with them? The date for the presentation has been set for the afternoon of 21 September from 2pm. All lovers of good cider (and good beer of course) are very welcome to join us. Make a note of the date in your diaries.

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# Stagger

## Offerton Plus with Chris Morris

January can be a difficult month for pubs. With the high of Christmas festivities over, traditionally this can be a quiet period for your locals. It's even more important then that we give them our support at this time of year. Our group gathered in Offerton to see how they were doing.



Our excursion began at the **Puss in Boots** on Nangreave Road. There seemed to be no problem attracting customers here as it was encouragingly busy. An impressive refurbishment with new furnishings and excellent use of lighting gives it instant appeal. The carvery was proving very popular but plenty of people were also simply enjoying drinks, which was good to see. Three cask beers from Robinsons Brewery were available: Oliver's Twist received good



scores, Dizzy Blonde was on average form with Unicorn untried.

A short walk brought us to the **Finger Post** on Hempshaw Lane. This charming Victorian pub is deceptively large with six separate drinking areas, all with bags of character. The pool table room in

particular was popular with a young crowd. I am always happy to see a pool table, dartboard and other games in a pub. Managed correctly, they can become an important social asset, bringing friends together over a pint or two, which can only be to the advantage of the pub. On ordering our drinks, we settled ourselves down next to a cosy open fire - a particular highlight on a cold winter's evening. Three real ales from Robinsons were available. Wizard and Dizzy Blonde were on good form with the Unicorn untried.

Next on our list was the **Strawberry Gardens** on Offerton Lane,



a lovely rustic-looking pub with a cobbled frontage. Unfortunately, no cask beer was available so we moved on. The pub was very quiet inside; perhaps that would change if real ale was reintroduced!

Continuing along Offerton Lane brought us to the **Gardeners Arms**. In contrast to the last pub,

this was very busy with a good mix of age groups and a great sense of community. A recent refurbishment looks to have been done but without losing any of the pub's character. The pool table was again proving popular with a young crowd - if it wasn't there, would those

customers still visit the pub? Four cask beers were available. Salopian Oracle was in very good form and was the beer of the night. The Coach House Gunpowder Premium Mild wasn't quite as good, with Greene King IPA and Abbott Ale left untried.



A short stroll along Hall Street brought us to the **Emigration**, a traditional locals' pub full of character and characters. Darts and crib are the pub games of choice with the regulars here. The one cask beer on offer was Robinsons Unicorn which was on good form. Just before we were finishing our drinks,

each of us was unexpectedly presented with a pint from one of the regulars whose friend had recently died. A most generous gesture. We clubbed together and bought him a pint in return.

Following along Hall Street we arrived at the Victoria. Despite the pub having reintroduced cask beer recently, we were disappointed to find none available on our visit, so we continued on our way. With the Offerton pubs completed, and still some time left before last orders, we headed the short distance to Stockport Town Centre for further "research".



Heading down Churchgate brought us to the **Old Rectory**, a pub-restaurant converted in 1992 from a Georgian rectory built in 1744. It has kept its impressive interior with lots of characterful features, and the large conservatory is popular

with diners, although it was rather quiet when we visited. The cask beer offering was Greene King IPA which was on good form.

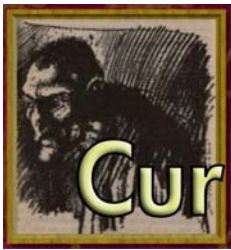
Our final destination for the evening was the Robinsons-owned **Arden Arms** on Millgate. On CAMRA's National Inventory of



Heritage Pubs, this gem of a pub features a hidden snug (accessed through the fine glazed bar), tiled lobby and grandfather clock. Six Robinsons cask beers were available when we visited. Wizard and Unicorn were left untried while Oliver's Twist, Trooper, Dizzy Blonde and Old Tom

were all on good form. A great end to our evening.

Overall then, whilst it was disappointing that two pubs no longer served cask beer, this was outweighed by the positive signs from the others. We encountered some good beer and good atmosphere with fears of empty pubs during January unfounded. Perhaps plenty of others also believe that a pub is for life, not just for Christmas!



# Curmudgeon

## Sense of Place

When I first became interested in real ale, perhaps what fascinated me most was how there was a patchwork of independent breweries the length and breadth of the country, ranging from regional giants such as Vaux and Wolverhampton & Dudley to tiny firms like Bathams and Burts. Each had its own territory, its own distinctive beers and very often its own style of pub. It was a lesson in geography, with strongholds, heartlands and outposts.

To visit an area and sample the beers of one of the more obscure breweries for the first time was a voyage of discovery. You could go to a city only fifty or sixty miles away and be presented with an entirely different selection of beers, such as Home and Shipstone in Nottingham or Mitchells and Yates & Jackson in Lancaster. One of the pleasures of going on holiday was sampling the local brew such as St Austell in Cornwall or Adnams in Suffolk. Progress on a long road journey was marked by the changing brewers' names on the pub signs.

It wasn't confined to the independents, either, as all the Big Six national brewers retained some kind of regional identity in their beer range and pub branding. Indeed, in the early 1980s we saw a revival of local names, something especially marked with Allied Breweries, who created dedicated pub estates for old brands such as Peter Walker and Benskins. Overall it provided a rich tapestry of local and regional identity in beer.

Since those days, the number of independent family breweries has more than halved, with ten being lost in the North-West alone. Very often, those that remain see themselves more as pub companies that happen to have an ale brewery as a sideline. The disruption following the Beer Orders resulted in the transfer of the former tied estates of the Big Six to pub companies and the loss of their distinct identities. Increasingly, pub company outlets have come to offer the market-leading beers regardless of supplier, and the drinker of mainstream kegs and lagers has less choice overall than there was prior to 1990.

Against this has to be set the dramatic rise in the number of microbrewers, and in the sheer variety of beer styles being produced. In theory, there is more choice than ever before, and for many beer enthusiasts it has opened up a cornucopia of delights. But each pub is limited in the number of lines it can stock, especially of cask beer, and what you're actually going to find in the pub often becomes a lottery. You can't exercise choice in a meaningful way if you don't know what to expect, and in effect, "beer range varies" has in itself become a single option.

Some of the new generation of breweries have established a strong regular foothold in pubs, but there's no sign outside to say so, and thus the visible identification between brewery and pub is broken. In 1978, if you wanted to sample an obscure beer, you might have a long journey, but you could probably find it in one of its brewer's pubs, whereas now it can become a wild goose chase. Of course we have gained something through the massive increase in both the number of breweries and beer styles being produced. But we have also lost something valuable in the way the link between beer and place has been eroded through the decline of tied estates.

On a brighter note, it is good to see the trend being reversed in a small way by brewers such as Joules, Titanic and Wye Valley building up their own pub estates. And of course that is exactly what BrewDog is doing by opening a chain of bars in big cities majoring on their own beers.

Curmudgeon Online: [curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com](http://curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com)

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# Mild Magic 2019

## Visit Pubs, Drink Beer, Win Prizes



According to the media, mild is a dying beer style. The axing of Robinsons 1892 might have been seen as another nail in the coffin. Recent statistics show this neglected and misunderstood beer style accounting for just 0.3% of the beer market. Time to take a stand.

This year we have signed up 87 pubs to take part: many will be offering their customers cask

mild just for the duration of Mild Magic and for that they have our thanks. This year will see a greater variety of milds available during Mild Magic than ever before, so here's your chance to seek out and try examples of this tasty and, usually, low strength beer.

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

### How do I win a prize?

To complete the standard **Mild Magic**, collect stickers from **12 different pubs** in **12 different areas** and you will receive a Mild Magic T-shirt plus one free entry ticket to, or a free pint of mild if you are a CAMRA member at, the 2019 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival (30 May to 1 June) at Edgeley Park.

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

**Mild Magic Super** is a little more challenging. Visit **48 pubs** from at least **36 different areas** and you will win a Mild Magic sweatshirt and four entry tickets to the Beer Festival (or four free pints of mild for CAMRA members).

Finally, we have the **Mild Magic Ultra** award for visiting every pub. This will win you a Mild Magic polo shirt and sweat shirt plus six entry tickets to the Beer Festival (or six free pints of mild for CAMRA members).

For a fun challenge we also have **Mild Magic Scrabble**. Each participating pub has an associated letter (shown on the card). Collect enough stickers on the card to spell out MILD MAGIC and win an extra pint (with a maximum of two) at the Beer Festival.

**How long do I have to complete all this?** Mild Magic runs from Friday 5 April to Sunday 19 May inclusive.

**What do I do when I have finished Mild Magic?** Simply send your card(s) to the organiser (details on card) no later than 22 May (only one entry per person). **All entries will be included in a Grand Draw to be one of the people visiting Outstanding**

**Brewery.** Festival entry tickets are valid any session **except Friday evening**. To receive your tickets and mild tokens please enclose a **large-sized, stamped and self-addressed envelope**. Garments will be distributed **between 6pm and 8.30pm on Sunday 30 June** at the **Petersgate Tap**, St Petersgate, Stockport (or as otherwise agreed with you).

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



This year we are delighted to again welcome **Hydes 1863** as the Mild Magic Sponsor. Hydes is one of the few breweries to brew not one but two milds: Old

Indie is a luscious dark mild, while 1863, now badged a light bitter, is unchanged since its days as Hydes Best Mild – a classic northern light mild - they don't all have to be dark!. Look out for both of them as you go round the Mild Magic pubs.

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

### The Mild Magic Pubs

Some of the areas below will be sub-divided on the Mild Magic card.

**Altrincham:** Unicorn; **Ashton under Lyne:** Ash Tree; **Bramhall:** Ladybrook Hotel; **Burnage:** Reasons To Be Cheerful; **Cheadle:** Crown; **Cheadle Hulme:** Platform 5; **Chorlton:** Sedge Lynn; **Denton:** Crown Point Tavern; **Didsbury:** Gateway, Head of Steam, Olde Cock, Wine & Wallop; **Droylsden:** Silly Country; **Dukinfield:** Angel; **Eccles:** Eccles Cross, Lamb Hotel; **Fallowfield:** Friendship Inn, Great Central; **Gatley:** Horse & Farrier; **Gee Cross:** Joshua Bradley; **Glossop:** Four Kings Cask & Kitchen, Smithy Fold, Tweed 2; **Gorton:** Vale Cottage; **Hazel Grove:** Grove Alehouse, Wilfred Wood; **Heaton Moor:** Heaton Hops, Moortop; **Heaton Norris:** Navigation, Nursery Inn; **Heaton Mersey:** Griffin, Heaton; **Hyde:** Cheshire Ring, Queens, Sportsman, Tweed Tap; **Levenshulme:** Fred's Ale House; **Manchester:** Ape & Apple, Britons Protection, City Arms, Crown & Anchor, Font, Grey Horse, Moon Under Water, Old Monkey, Ox noble, Paramount, Piccadilly Tap, Pie & Ale, Waterhouse; **Marple:** Samuel Oldknow; **Marple Bridge:** Norfolk Arms, Northumberland Arms, Spring Gardens; **Monton:** Park Inn; **New Mills:** Beer Shed, Chalkers Snooker Club; **Offerton:** Gardeners Arms; **Old Trafford:** Bishop Blaize; **Patricroft:** Stanley Arms; **Poynton:** Kingfisher; **Romiley:** Jake's Ale House; **Rusholme:** Ford Madox Brown; **Sale:** J P Joule, Old Plough, Volunteer Hotel; **Salford:** New Oxford; **Stalybridge:** Bridge Beers, Society Rooms, Station Buffet Bar; **Stockport:** Angel Inn, Calverts Court, Cocked Hat, Crown Inn, Hope Inn, Petersgate Tap, Railway, Remedy Bar, Ye Olde Vic; **Swinton:** Morning Star; **Timperley:** Quarry Bank Inn; **Urmston:** Lord Nelson, Tim Bobbin; **Whaley Bridge:** Drum & Monkey, Goyt Inn; **Whitehough:** Old Hall; **Withington:** Victoria.

*This year's logo was designed by our competition winner, freelance designer Darren Marks. You can contact Darren at [info@departcreative.com](mailto:info@departcreative.com). Call 07792 122761*

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# Pub Walks with Chris Morris

## The Navigation Inn, Buxworth

I love pubs. I also love a walk in the countryside. It seems obvious then that the very best countryside walks are those involving pubs. You don't have to travel far from the local area to reach some excellent country pubs accessible from some great walks. Using the public transport options at our disposal means you get the freedom to try more beers when you get to the pub! The first pub in this series is reached with an easy three mile walk along the Peak Forest Canal.

### The Navigation Inn



Full of character and charm, this multi-roomed 18th century pub stands next to Bugsworth Basin, and caters for all tastes, with muddy boots welcome. Good value food, a selection of local cask ales and an abundance of history mean sufficient time should be afforded

to fully appreciate this gem. When last visited the real ale available was Storm Brewery's Bosley Cloud and Brainstorm, Howard Town Weisspeak, Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Black Sheep Best Bitter. Opening times are 11-Midnight Monday to Saturday; 11-11 on Sunday.

### Train Information

If catching the train from Stockport, purchase a return ticket to Whaley Bridge. Services for Monday to Saturday run between one and two trains per hour. Services for Sunday are one train per hour. For full timetable information visit [www.northernrailway.co.uk](http://www.northernrailway.co.uk)

### The Walk

It's an easy three mile walk. The OS Map is OL1 The Peak District (OS app also available).

Get off the train at Furness Vale. On leaving the station, turn right at the road and follow it along down the hill. When you see the canal underneath, cross over and walk down the steps and incline to the canal towpath. Take the towpath to the left, under the bridge you have just walked over. Carry on walking for just under a mile keeping the canal on your right at all times. After walking under bridge number 36 the canal splits in two. You take the left canal which means simply keeping on the same path which bends to the left. After half a mile, you enter Bugsworth Basin passing some public toilets on the left and a long footbridge ahead turning to the right. Ignore this bridge and carry on along the towpath keeping the canal on your right. The path begins to climb leaving the canal below. The route continues over the road with the **Navigation Inn** on the opposite side.

Construction of the canal was completed in 1805 and enabled limestone to be brought to Manchester and beyond. The canal declined with the coming of the railways and became impassable in places in the 1960s. Much work was undertaken and Bugsworth Basin was finally re-opened to navigation in 2003.

When it is time to leave the pub, the walk back is a simple matter of retracing your steps back to the fork in the canal and bridge number 37. To get to Whaley Bridge, climb up the steps of bridge 37 and over to the other side. You then continue along the towpath as it bends to the left. After one third of a mile the famous Transshipment Warehouse

can be seen, marking the end of the canal. Cross the long footbridge, go past the public toilets, and along a track with the warehouse on your right which takes you to a road. The centre of Whaley Bridge is found by turning right onto this road and following the bend to the left.

### Whaley Bridge

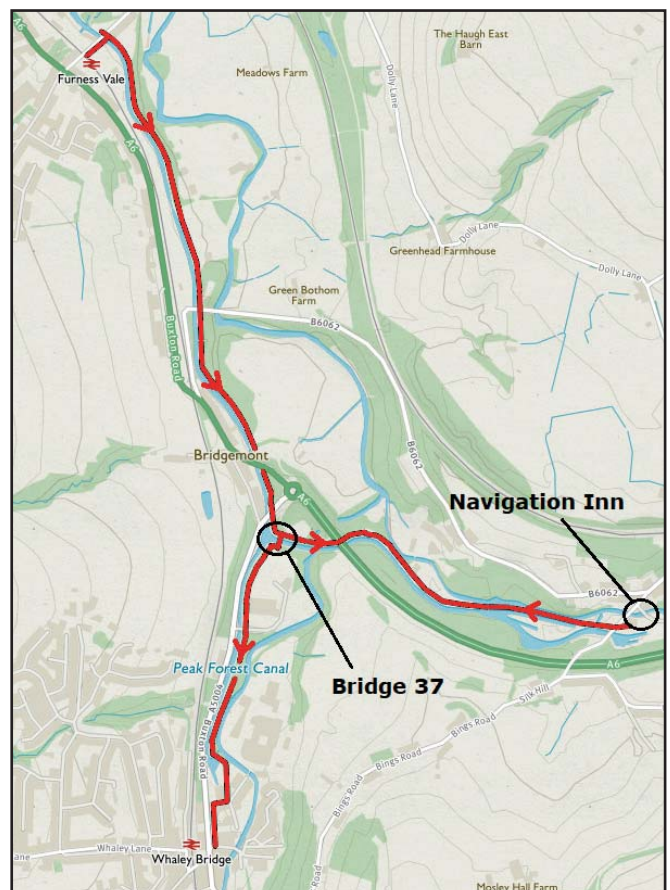
Known as the "Gateway to the Goyt Valley", Whaley Bridge is a great place to explore charming old ginnels and passageways with many independent shops, cafes and restaurants to be discovered. For those wanting a post-walk pint, you don't have to walk far.

The **Goyt Inn** is located on Bridge Street and is tucked away around the corner from the Transshipment Warehouse at the end of the walk. This friendly and characterful pub is popular with locals as well as walkers. With a changing range of real ales, it is definitely worthy of a visit.

A few minutes' walk along Buxton Road and then Old Road brings you to the **Shepherds Arms**. Originally a farmhouse, it is listed on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors and has authentic fixed benches, wood burners, flagged floors and scrubbed table tops. A selection of well kept beers from the Marston's stable is on hand to sample whilst taking in this delightful gem.

For those fancying a post-walk meal, the **Cock Pub & Kitchen** on Buxton Road welcomes muddy boots and serves good food and cask beer from Robinsons.

The train back to Stockport can be boarded at Whaley Bridge station which is located back in the centre of the town, opposite the Goyt Inn.



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# Heard at the Bar

## Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

### Club of the Year



As mentioned on page five, the Stockport & South Manchester Club of the Year for 2019 is the **Moor Club** on Heaton Moor Road.

A previous Club of the Year winner, in 2016, this well-appointed members' club has two lounge areas at the front, and beyond these a members-

only bar and snooker room with three full-size tables – the club takes part in two snooker leagues. The Manchester Backgammon Club meets here every week, too.

Holt's Bitter is the permanent cask ale and this is usually joined by two changing guest beers, often from the Marston's range.

### Remedy Bar Brews Again



After a lengthy hiatus following the departure of Mark West, **Remedy Bar & Brewhouse** in Stockport Market Place is once again living up to its name following the appointment of a new brewer.

Lewis Markham (pictured above) is an experienced hand, having been head brewer at Mobberley Brewhouse and then a production brewer at Arbor Ales in Bristol. Family matters brought him back north and to a job behind the bar at the newly opened Angel Inn just across the way from Remedy.



Learning that Remedy was looking for a new brewer he wandered across, chatted to owner Simon Wells and offered to brew once a week. A trial brew has been done and this went very well so it's now all systems go. Well,

it will be once supply chains have been sorted out but March should see regular beers appearing again. The first two will be a 6.5% IPA using Summit hops and a 5.8% breakfast stout with coffee, chocolate and oats in the brew.

Lewis told *Opening Times* that he holds cask and keg beers in equal standing and this is reflected in his two favourite beer styles – imperial stouts and fruited sour beers – so Remedy's first keg beer is likely to be a kölsch-style beer with cold-steeped limes.

Remedy Bar always has an interesting cask and keg offering on the bar and the house beers will only add to the attraction.

### Cocked Hat



The **Cocked Hat** in Stockport Market Place reopened on 6 February after having closed down in April last year.

The closure was due to the former Atwill pub company offloading its entire estate, but the Cocked Hat has now been bought (by whom

we don't know, to be honest) and, after a redecoration, is once again open for business.

Apart from a lick of paint, little has changed and when *Opening Times* called people were trickling in to have a look. It's been taken on by Matt Bowman, together with his mum Sarah Wiltshire and her husband Dave. Matt told us that they are all experienced hands in the pub trade and have moved to the Cocked Hat from the Swan & Talbot in Wetherby – a rather different operation by the sounds of it, but Matt tells us they fancied a change.

The pub is basically free of tie and the aim is to have three more-or-less permanent beers and three guests, with the regular beers being a pale ale, a blond beer and a darker offering. On our visit, there were five beers on handpump – Draught Bass, Westgate Classic Blonde, Black Sheep Best Bitter, Marston's Wainwright and Robinsons Dizzy Blonde. All sound beers there, but we can't help thinking they may have to push the boat out a bit more to compete with the other Market Place pubs.

### News in Brief

Work is now well underway to convert the former **Produce Hall** in Stockport Market Place into a food and drink venue – we know there will certainly be a bar included but whether there's any cask beer in prospect, we don't know.

But, much like buses, you wait for ages and then two turn up at the same time. John Barratt, who organises Foodie Friday and who used to run 7 Miles Out, was one of the alternative bidders for the Produce Hall development. He has now submitted a planning application for the old Plumbase warehouse on Newbridge Lane, a stone's throw from the Market Place. To be called the **Maverick Market**, the plans are for "a new indoor food and drinks hall with events and entertainment space together with associated external alterations". The application was approved in late January so we await developments.



The **Commercial Inn** in Mossley (pictured here) has now reopened after a refurbishment and now has three or four real ales on sale.

The **Beau Geste** in Ashton-under-Lyne is now selling real ale in the form of Sharp's Doom Bar and Robinsons Dizzy Blonde.

The **Old Cell** in the Market Place in Chapel-en-le-Frith will be holding another beer festival over this coming Easter. Look for the advert elsewhere in this issue for more details.

As from mid-February, **Jake's Ale House** in Romiley has been hosting an open mic night on either Mondays or Tuesdays. In addition, the newly extended back room, complete with log-burning stove, opened on Monday 4 February.

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# Roll out the Barrels

## Beer festival organisers herald another successful event

There was a treat in store for visitors to the preview session of January's Manchester Beer and Cider Festival when the UK's only independent Master Cooper gave a demonstration of his craft, *writes David Rigby*.

Organisers invited Alastair Simms (pictured left) from Yorkshire Cooperage to complement one of the new attractions, the Beers from the Wood bar. Arranged with support from the Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood, both Alastair and the bar proved big hits with festival goers. The bar was so popular it had been drunk dry three hours before final closing time, as drinkers sampled both traditional and new beers put into oak and chestnut barrels.



Organised by the combined expertise of the nine Greater Manchester branches of CAMRA, and others further afield, a team of more than 330 volunteers built the festival in less than four days, served an incredible selection of drinks across 24 bars and dismantled the whole event in just over a day. Although the attendance of 14,644 was less than the record-breaking attendance in 2018, organisers were delighted with the public response which reinforced the event's position as the biggest beer and cider festival in the North.

Many of the bars recorded an increase in consumption, with an average 50 pints a minute consumed. A staggering 51,085 pints of British and Irish beers were sipped, the majority in cask. The Kegstar-sponsored bar almost sold out of its 2,832 pints. The cider and perry bar was also busy, with 3,614 pints consumed of the 117 ciders and perries on offer.

On the brewery bars, Tiny Rebel of Newport won the race to have the first beer to sell out as its Hazelnut Stay Puft disappeared, with Manchester brewer Cloudwater not far behind with the first cask of Pale.



But the festival wasn't just about consumption. CAMRA's Information and Education team had a stand to pilot the Campaign's resolution to improve the knowledge around beer ingredients, production, quality and dispense. The Great Manchester Beer Debate on the

Saturday drew a lively crowd. Focusing on the future of cask beer, the panel of brewers and beer writers interacted with the audience, and issues of quality control and price were to the fore. There were also four popular tutored tastings led by former Good Beer Guide editor Roger Protz, beer blogger Kirsty Walker and your *Opening Times* editor.

## Champion Beer & Ciders

The Manchester Brewers' Challenge caused something of a stir in its inaugural year in 2018 when judges in a blind tasting voted a keg beer the winner. So perhaps it was less of a surprise when this year's winner, **Pomona Island's Love Buzz** was announced as best keg beer and overall champion. Organisers hurriedly arranged with the Salford brewery for more supplies to be brought in as drinkers made a beeline to try the 3.3% table beer. The best cask was adjudged to be **Hophurst Brewery's Porter-esque** (5.5%), a full-bodied milkshake porter.



Last year's runner-up in the North of England Cider competition went one better. **Ampleforth Abbey's Traditional Still** won the gold, but customers voted **Hedge-Hoggers Old Aged Pig**, produced in Seamer, North Yorkshire, as their favourite.

The North of England Perry competition saw another triumph for a 2018 runner-up. **Udders Orchard** from Huddersfield took the honours with **Waterloo Sunset**. The 7.0% perry was also the customers' choice.

Drinkers also voted for their beer of the festival. North Yorkshire's **Brass Castle Brewery** recorded an astonishing double success, with two of its brews topping the poll. It was perhaps even more remarkable as a new beer launched at the festival proved the customers' favourite. **Fruit Lupe**, a 4.8% single hop pale ale, was available in both cask-conditioned and keg styles, and drinkers clearly enjoyed the marriage of Mosaic hops with blueberry. In second place was **Bad Kitty**, a 5.5% chewy chocolate vanilla dream of a porter. Bad Kitty has featured as one of the top beers of the Manchester festival before, taking top spot in 2017 and second place last year. The cask-conditioned beer is part of the brewery's core range, and clearly hits the spot for many festival-goers.

Third place went to **Thornbridge's Lucaria Rocky Road**. The brewery debuted its own brewery bar this year, and the 4.5% porter was a rare cask-conditioned version. Described as a twist on its ice cream porter, the beer attracted those with a sweet tooth!

## Full of praise

Festival organiser Adrian Saunders was full of praise for those contributing to the success of the festival, especially volunteers and sponsors. "We were a little anxious about attendances beforehand. Friday's scheduling of a televised FA Cup tie featuring United, the Northern Rail strike and forecast bad weather for Saturday might have been problems, but Manchester didn't let us down.

"We have a great band of volunteers from all over the UK, and benefited from attracting sponsors new and old to the festival. All our bars were busy and the new bars – Thornbridge, Beers from the Wood and gin – sold well. But as we always recognise, the biggest thanks have to go to those who turn out in their thousands to support the festival. If you were one of them, cheers!"

The festival's charity partner, North West Air Ambulance, was also grateful to visitors. An impressive £5,300 was donated by drinkers to support the essential life-saving work of the helicopter crews.

*All photographs courtesy of James Darcey @JDarceyImages*

# Flute and Firkin

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Tue - Thu 3pm - 11pm

Fri - Sat 12pm - 11.30pm

Sun 12pm - 10.30pm



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Our own Middlewood gin  
Wines Cocktails  
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# Arden Arms



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on  
Handpump

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Saturday 12 - 4 Sunday 12 - 6

## Evenings

Thursday to Saturday 6 - 9

CAMRA  
Pub of the  
Month  
January  
2019



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Join the campaign today at  
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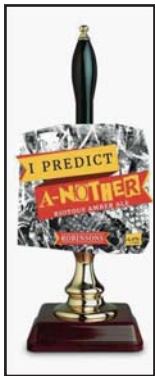
\*Price for paying by Direct Debit and correct at Jan 2018. Under 26 concessionary rates available. Please visit [camra.org.uk/membership-rates](http://camra.org.uk/membership-rates)



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**



Robbins has announced its seasonal beer range for 2019. This year the beers have a musical theme and first up, for February and March (and so available by the time you read this) is Brew Monday (4.1%), a dark amber ale with a “fruity aroma” and a “malty, crisp and salty taste”.



For April and May the seasonal is I Predict Another (4%), a “riotous amber ale” brewed using four different hop varieties to give a “fruity/hoppy nose and a malty hop flavour”. The summer seasonal for June and July is 3.8% “hedonistic blonde ale” Right Beer: Right Now.

Late summer will see #4 Born Hoppy for August and September. This is a 4% pale ale with “zesty, intense flavours that will blow away any other pale, lifeless pretenders”. Moving well into autumn, red ale Rock The Cask Bar is for October and November. This 3.9% beer is described as a “full bodied, toffee, blackcurrant, malty delight.”

The year rounds off with the welcome return of Mr Scrooge for December. This 4.3% copper ale is a “once a year fruity treat with toffee, blackcurrant & grapefruit citrus flavours.”

## Two in Clayton

East Manchester has lost a disproportionate number of pubs in the last 20 years or so. Large parts of the area have almost no pubs at all but two have found an interesting way to survive.



On Croft Street, just off Ashton New Road, the **Victoria** is privately owned by a Mr J Gleave who has been at the pub for 18 years now. The pub only opens when Manchester City are playing at home, but on those days, pre- and post-match, it can shift anything from 800 to 1,000 pints (which is more than some places sell in a week).



Not far away, the **Bridge Inn** on Clayton Lane is also, we think, privately owned, and is run by experienced licensee Susan Haselden. Like the Victoria, the Bridge Inn just opens for City

home games, but here there is also additional evening opening for darts match nights.

Our correspondent, Stuart Bedford, who made a special trip to visit the pubs, reports they are both well-kept and welcoming – but you won’t find a drop of cask ale in either (which, given the unique trading patterns, is not entirely surprising). All credit to both, though, for finding a way to survive and serve their communities.

## Arden Arms



The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month for January was the Arden Arms on Millgate, Stockport, just off the town’s historic market place. The Arden is itself a historic pub, dating back to the 18th century, and since August 2017 has been in the capable hands of Geoff and Maria Troughton. Pictured here Geoff is seen receiving the award from CAMRA’s Margaret O’Brien.

## Stockport Beer Week 2019

Planning has just started for the 2019 edition of Stockport Beer Week, which will run concurrently with National Cask Ale Week at the end of September. The Beer Week is the biggest of all national Beer Weeks to be wholly organised by volunteers from a CAMRA Branch.

If you want to help us promote the undoubted beery delights in the town to both locals and visitors alike, then please get stuck in! The team are always looking for new ideas to keep the event fresh, so pubs and bars are invited to get involved with whatever you think will help your business. All we ask is that venues must be in the Stockport Council area and that any events involve cask beer in some way.

For individuals too, it can be fun to get involved. It may be as simple as liaising with a pub or brewery about an event, helping distribute programmes and posters or assisting the Beer Week charity SCP; it’s whatever you would like to do!

If you would like to discuss things further, please contact the Beer Week Coordinator, Chris Walkden by e-mail - [walkden.chris@googlemail.com](mailto:walkden.chris@googlemail.com)

## Jolly Sailor



The **Jolly Sailor** in Davenport is undergoing a £1m refurbishment ahead of reopening in the spring. As we have previously reported, it has been taken on by the Almond family who have a reputation for taking on and turning around pubs. Their winning formula includes a carvery but the Jolly Sailor will also offer an extended menu of pub classics.

Doug Almond told *Marketing Stockport*: “We have been listening closely to what the locals want and will be doing what we can to make sure the pub works for them. We will serve our famous carvery but, having listened and seen the success of our extended menus in our existing pubs, we will offer a good pub menu alongside and keep dedicated areas for drinkers. It’s safe to say the locals want their pub back and that’s exactly what we’re going to give them.”

# THE BOILERHOUSE

## NEW SMALL BATCH BEERS

### 2019



JANUARY



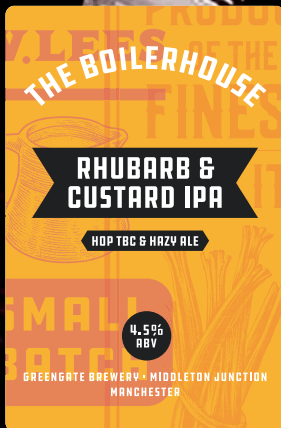
FEBRUARY



MARCH



APRIL



MAY



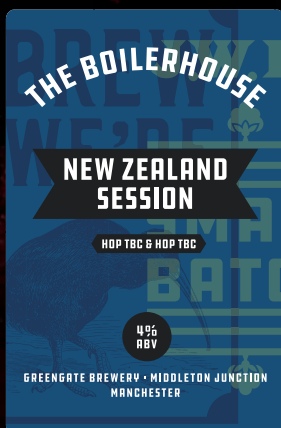
JUNE



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AUGUST



SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER



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