

# OPENING TIMES

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2019 / FREE



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## About Opening Times & Contacts

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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 on the left) 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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## Front Cover

Happy Christmas! Toby Hinson with his choir at the Ladybrook, Bramhall. Photo by Lawrence Devaney.

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**Copy date for the January/February issue is Saturday 7 December.**

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# Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

## Hickory's, Poynton



In Poynton, the former **Vernon Arms** on London Road South reopened on 26 July as **Hickory's Smokehouse**. It was evacuated and closed the following week due to the local flooding. Happily it's all now back up and running.

This Southern USA-themed restaurant has a dedicated bar area so, although foodled, you can still call in for a beer. The house beer, brewed by Purity Brewing in Redditch, is Hickory's Pale Ale, a tasty dark caramel-coloured ale made using Chinook, Galaxy and Simcoe hops. It's 5% ABV and almost £5 a pint!

There are also two further handpumps on the bar, with one for Purity's UBU premium amber ale at 4.5%. The other handpump will feature local beers, with nearby Poynton Brewery ales to the fore.

## Pub Shorts



In Stockport, the **Egerton Arms** on St Petersgate has undergone a major refurbishment courtesy of the Craft Union Pub Company, a division of Enterprise Inns (or Ei Group as they now call themselves). We'd previously heard that Craft Union was keen on cask beer and this has proved to be the case here. The Egerton now has two handpumps on the bar and is selling real ale for the first time in some years. Beers are usually Sharp's Doom Bar or Robinsons Dizzy Blonde and we understand sales are healthy, too.

The **Crystal Ballroom** in Glossop now has two handpumps while the **Old Town House** in Hyde has three.

In Heaton Moor we hear that long-serving landlord Tony Robinson has now left the **Crown**. We have no news yet of his replacement.

The **Grapes** in Hazel Grove closed for five weeks at the end of September for a major refurbishment by owners Robinsons. Reopening was scheduled for early November with the pub becoming much more openplan than before. More next time.

The **Crown** in Great Moor has now increased its food offer. Rather than just pies and bar snacks, meals are now available from 12 noon until 8pm from Wednesday to Sunday.

In New Mills the **Masons Arms** on High Street has added handpumped cider to its range, while at the other end of town **Chalkers Snooker Club** on Buxton Road closed for a refurbishment and was due to reopen at the end of September.

In Stockport, **Vinaböd** on Vernon Street, just off the Market Place, has installed a handpump for the traditional cider, thus ensuring it is now dispensed at cellar temperature.

A couple of issues ago we reported on the closure of the **Suburban** on Gorton Cross Street in Gorton and expressed the hope this might be temporary. Fat chance – the pub has now been demolished. Also gone to meet their maker are the **Kingsway** in Levenshulme and the **Portway** in Wythenshawe.

## Tameside Snippets

In Mossley, the **Butchers Arms** is being refurbished and the number of handpumps is to double to four. The former RBS bank in the town is to reopen as a bar-cum-restaurant called **Gillery's** and is likely to be selling cask beer. Staying in Mossley, the **Billy Goat** on Stamford Street is reported as having introduced cask beer.

A new bar is due to open in Droylsden. This will be the **Jam Works** and occupies the former RBS bank premises on Market Street, across the road from **Silly Country**. *Opening Times* had a sneak preview in September when building work was well under way and can report that it's going to be quite a substantial size (a lift was being installed to connect the ground and first floors), and will offer a wide range of beers, including a good cask choice. More in due course.

Since hearing that the **Bowling Green** on Penny Meadow in Ashton had started selling cask beer, our local 'man on the spot' has called in twice, but real ale has been absent on both occasions in what has been a long term keg only pub.

## Astley Arms, Dukinfield



This prominent pub on Chapel Hill re-opened in August following a £500,000 plus refurbishment by owners Robinsons and multiple operator Inglenook Inns & Taverns.



The pub, managed for Inglenook by Jane Reader, has been opened out to create a larger dining and drinking space, while the bar has been moved to a more central location. The games room remains, and there are also separate drinking areas for nondiners. Upstairs is a function room that can

accommodate up to 60. Outside is a large, walled drinking area.

The regular cask beers are Robinsons Dizzy Blonde and Unicorn and these are supplemented by two additional and changing cask beers from the brewery's range.

Supposedly the deepest coal mine in Britain, the Astley Deep Pit gives its name to the pub as it had been the local of the miners who lost their lives in the disaster of 1874.

*See Page 22 for more Pub News*

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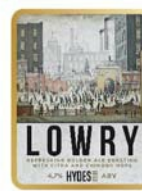
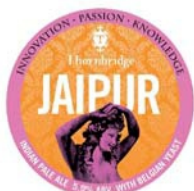
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# Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for November and December



***The Pub of the Month Award for November goes to the Crown Inn, Cheadle. Lawrence Devaney explains why it won.***

I have to admit that Cheadle High Street and the Crown Inn are not on my usual refreshment routes but a chance visit during the Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA Mild Magic event turned out to be a delight.

Although this local pub is relatively new, its appearance is traditional and the small street frontage masks an extensive interior. The décor is enhanced by a selection of old mirrors and photographs of a bygone Cheadle adorning the walls. The Crown is loosely divided into two areas, although in essence it is open-plan, with a large bar area having a mixture of padded bench seating against the walls and conventional pub chairs and tables elsewhere. A smaller bar area is slightly raised, possibly positioned for those watching sport on TV.

Hydes Brewery, together with licensee Karen Williams and her friendly staff, have developed a strong local following, with both a lively group of lunchtime regulars and those looking to combine a few drinks with friends whilst being entertained in the evening.

In modern times, when our traditional locals are closing, Cheadle High Street manages to retain four pubs. Clearly, to remain in business the Crown Inn needs its own personality and it does that through a commitment to entertainment and quality beers.

Any regular drinker of Old Indie will tell you that you will not find a better example anywhere else. There's no need just to focus on Old Indie though – there are six cask ale lines featuring other Hydes and guest beers, and all kept at peak condition. The Crown is a Cask Marque certified pub and is loud and proud about it, with signage prominent around the pub and "Cask Cooled" labelling attached to the six handpumps.

The pub has embraced music to attract regulars, with karaoke on Thursday, live vocal acts on Friday and a DJ on Saturday night, with drinkers not just allowed but encouraged to strut their stuff on the dance floor. Televised weekend and occasionally midweek sports are also a large part of the entertainment.

In short, this is a fine, traditional local that has recognised the need to make that extra effort to be a success in a difficult time for pubs. Join us on the evening of Thursday 28 November when we present this well deserved award.



***The December Pub of the Month Award stays in Cheadle and goes to the George & Dragon. Stuart Ballantyne put the pub forward and here explains why it's a worthy winner.***

Originally the George & Dragon was an ill fated Greenall's pub that closed some eleven years ago and remained closed and boarded up for a lengthy period of six years. Enter then Nicola Foster and Amber Taverns who refurbished and reopened in 2014.

Nicola has a long and distinguished career of running some highly regarded cask ale pubs in this area and beyond – the Prince of Wales in Widnes, two Wetherspoons pubs in London, the Bank on Mosley Street and Rain Bar, both in Manchester city centre. She ran Rain Bar for seven years. Most of these are key pub company or brewery owned pubs that demand the very highest standards from the people who run them.

The George & Dragon is primarily a 'wetted' pub, meaning that no food is served other than just the usual crisps and peanuts etc. To increase trade by a third in these circumstances is almost unknown in an industry where pub/restaurant chains can dominate.

Nicola has done all this by selling good beer at very competitive prices in a community focused local pub. Some of the beer in question comes from the Cheadle Brew House, sited behind the George & Dragon, which also supplies beers to other pubs in the Amber Taverns chain.

So why not join Nicola, her staff and the CAMRA group on Friday 27 December to celebrate the presentation of her award?

***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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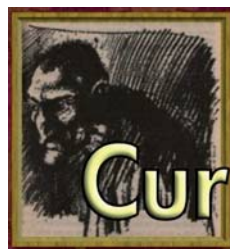
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# Curmudgeon

## Drying Out

A major problem for the pub trade is the growing proportion of young people who have chosen not to drink alcohol at all. In response to this, a recent report has said that 70% of "Generation Z" believe that pubs need to become "more inviting" to those who do not drink. This has to be taken with a pinch of salt, given that it was sponsored by a coffee company, but it does make an important point.

Clearly it makes sense for pubs to widen their appeal so that they can be more inclusive of nondrinkers. Customers are increasingly likely to consist of mixed groups of drinkers and abstainers. This can be achieved by providing higher quality tea and coffee and soft drinks, offering food and putting on events like quizzes and live music. And, to be honest, they have been doing these things to a greater or lesser extent throughout my drinking career. It's nothing new, or exactly a startling revelation.

However, there's an important caveat here. The core purpose of pubs is, and always has been, socialising centred around the consumption of alcoholic drinks. Yes, over the decades they have needed to evolve and change in various ways, but that fundamental fact remains unchanged. If nobody drank alcohol, there would be no pubs. Non drinkers may enjoy various activities and services provided by pubs, but they wouldn't exist in the first place without drinkers. It's rather like nonalcoholic beer – it's only there to mirror to some extent the taste and experience of drinking alcoholic beer.

If they go too far down the road of changing their other, pubs may well find themselves evolving into something entirely different – a restaurant, a music venue or a community centre. It also has to be questioned to what extent all this diversification is actually going to bring new customers into pubs. It may make nondrinkers happier when they are there, but will it encourage them to visit more often?

The reason that the pub trade has declined so much over recent years is essentially because, due to a combination of social and legislative changes, the demand for their core product has fallen. There's a limit to how far they can go in catering for other needs. Realistically, the fortunes of the pub trade are closely linked to the proportion of people in society who enjoy drinking alcohol in a social setting.

## Under Pressure

In a similar vein, another survey has claimed that Millennials feel five times more likely to be pressurised into drinking alcohol when socialising than older generations. Again this was produced on behalf of a company with a vested interest in the results, but I find it very hard to believe.

Over the past twenty years, the pressure to drink alcohol on social occasions has greatly reduced, and in many situations not drinking has become the norm. This is particularly the case with anything connected with work, after hours as well as at lunchtime. Indeed, it is often the person who chooses an alcoholic drink who stands out and ends up being stigmatised. We also have initiatives like "Dry January" where not drinking is presented as virtuous.

Maybe one area where this does happen is in higher education institutions, but they provide a huge range of social activities, most of which don't involve drinking at all. The fact that someone has organised a Carnage pub crawl doesn't mean you're under any obligation to go on it. This is an example of the common phenomenon of something attracting more criticism as it becomes less popular. Forty years ago, there undoubtedly would have been more social pressure to drink, but nobody complained about it back then.

## Fine Art prints of Iconic pubs of Manchester and Stockport by Michael Gutteridge

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# Coasting into the New Year

## Countdown to Manchester Beer & Cider Festival



Coast to coast – it’s a challenge of 182 miles – outdoors. But come January, rather fewer steps will be needed inside Manchester Central to experience some of the best breweries from coast to coast, *writes David Rigby*.

CAMRA’s Manchester Beer and Cider Festival is planning to showcase beers from across the North. The famous cask wall stretching across the width of the hall will invite drinkers to sample their way from west to east. Of course, it won’t just be Northern ales on offer. The festival has always tried to bring the best from the UK and abroad. Its first keykeg bar appeared as long ago as 2016, and has blazed a trail for CAMRA in recognising good beer whatever the dispense method.

Alongside a refreshed selection of international beers and keykeg and modern favourites, the outstanding success of the Beers from the Wood bar last time has guaranteed its return.

The organisers know the attraction of the festival for many visitors are the brewery bars. These give committed local and national brewers the opportunity to serve old favourites and new brews, while meeting drinkers and talking with them about their work. Back for 2020 are some of the past festival favourites. Welsh brewer Tiny Rebel and Brass Castle from North Yorkshire consistently pick up awards for beers of the festival. There’s a strong Greater Manchester contingent including Thirst Class, Blackjack, Runaway, Brightside and Outstanding. Thornbridge from the Peak District is a drinkers’ favourite and the organisers are delighted it will return.

New to the festival for 2020 are RedWillow and Rooster’s brewery bars. RedWillow beers will be familiar to many readers of *Opening Times*, and they join fellow Cheshire brewery Bollington, a longtime supporter of the festival. Rooster’s claims – with some justification – to be the UK’s innovator of new world pale ales back as long ago as 1993.

Another innovation for 2020 is the Micro Bar. This gives the chance for breweries and trade suppliers to offer a small selection of their beers to festivalgoers and get direct feedback on how good they are! Early signups include Saltaire and Donkeystone and trade partners Cave Direct and Pivovar. And for those who don’t drink beer or cider (and if you don’t, give them a try), the Gin Bar will be back.

But the success of the biggest beer festival in the North depends on the quantity - and quality of volunteers. Less than half the 330plus needed came from Greater Manchester CAMRA members in 2019. It’s not just serving beer and cider: there are many different skills and trade backgrounds needed during the week of setup, opening and take down. So if you are a plumber, delivery driver or electrician, the festival needs you too! There’s an improved offer of rewards for volunteers, and even volunteering for one session will allow others to have breaks and maintain an excellent customer experience.



The festival is open from noon each day from Thursday 23 January to Saturday 25 January 2020. Tickets are available online from the festival website, and entry prices have been frozen for online sales. CAMRA members can take advantage of an admission free preview evening from 5pm on Wednesday 22 January.

Keep up with beer and cider news by following the festival on social media: [@MancBeerFest](#). And the festival website has huge amounts of information, including volunteer forms: [www.mancbeerfest.uk](http://www.mancbeerfest.uk).

## High Peak Pub of the Year



award to Jamie Woodvine and his team Patrick, Haley, Beth and Emily.

The High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire CAMRA Pub of the Year for 2019 is the excellent **Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar**.

Featured in many beer publications, and even TV programmes, this enduring Victorian gem is worth missing a train for. Sympathetically restored and refurbished over the years, the unspoilt interior has earned the Bulet Bar a place on CAMRA’s National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. Nine handpumps dispense a variety of ever changing beers, most of which are locally sourced, and the bar is also increasingly committed to traditional cider and perry too.

There’s attention to detail with the food as well. Everything is homemade, including an excellent selection of pies. Friday night is ‘Street Food Friday’ and there are also traditional Sunday lunches served. Pictured here, High Peak CAMRA Chairman Ben Zwierink (left) presents the

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ABV 4.7%

**COSMATI**  
AMERICAN PALE ALE  
HOPPY & FRUITY  
ABV 4.2%

**DEBONAIR**  
STOUT  
ROBUST & RICH  
ABV 4.9%

**TWISTED VINE**  
AMBER BITTER  
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# Stagger

## Universities Quarter with Dave Hanson

The timing of this stagger can be vital. Over the summer when there is not a student to be seen you can approach the bar and order your beer unhindered. The downside with doing the stagger in July is, because of the lack of customers, the choice can be drastically reduced.



We kicked off the evening at the **Ford Madox Brown**, a Wetherspoons outlet located in one unit of the structure which replaced the distinctive Manchester Garages building. Not all the handpumps were in use and several people homed in on one brew which proved to be on the turn. Full marks to the staff as it was replaced without fuss. Both replacements were on good form though, but one person defaulted to cider instead.



Then it was some way along Wilmslow Road, passing that mighty medical edifice, now referred to as Central Manchester University Hospitals, but better known to Mancunians as the MRI (Manchester Royal Infirmary), St Mary's and the Royal Eye Hospital.

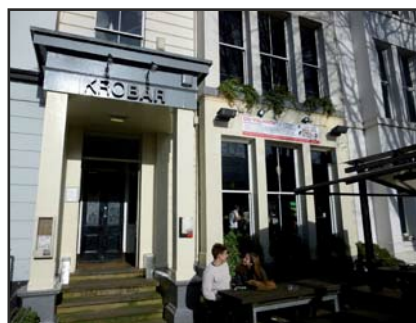
This brought us to the **Turing Tap**, formerly the Oxford. We were greeted by three handpumps but again the first beer tried was not up to scratch. Unfortunately the second also failed the test. Again there was no argument or "it's real ale so it's meant to taste like that" explanation. Third time lucky and this beer was rated as good. This new build is quirky, with 'modern' exposed air ducting and even a football table on the landing of the stairs! Helpful note – don't leave a visit to the toilets until it reaches the leg crossing stage. The journey to the facilities is such that your correspondent nearly had to set up camp, expeditionstyle, to break the journey.



Next up we moved a little further north along Wilmslow Road, followed by a right turn on to Grafton Street, where we entered the **Grafton Arms**. This is a Holts house, so we were surprised to find not one but three

beers on offer. Along with the expected Holts Bitter, both Two Hoots and their heritagecelebrating Ducie Ale were also available. All were rated as good, with the Bitter leading the pack home by a short head.

Back up to Wilmslow Road and turning north again, we found a grand row of Georgian houses complete with porticos over some entrances.



Situated in the middle is **Kro Bar**. This location is interesting in two ways. Firstly Kro is the Danish for bar, hence we were drinking in the bar bar (and not a sheep in sight!) Secondly the building is the former site of the Manchester Temperance Society which may trace its origin back to the

Miles Platting Total Abstinence Society, the first exclusively teetotal public society in England. For the first time that evening we were confronted by a wide range of beers, half a dozen or so. Many were tried and were rated good to very good. Leaving the main bar, we sat in the beer garden at the back, but there's also an upstairs lounge and a paved drinking area at the front.

Another brisk walk ensued as we headed north to the junction of Wilmslow Road and Grosvenor Street where the **Footage** is located. As may be guessed by the name it started life in 1915 as a cinema, the Grosvenor Picture Palace. The availability of real ale here has been on and off over several years; this night, alas, marking a period of dearth.

Next up was the **Deaf Institute**, formally the Trof, which is housed in what was formerly the Adult Deaf and Dumb Institute according to the carving outside. Like the Footage, this was a cask alefree zone.

Salvation was espied across the road in the form of the **Flour & Flagon** (previously known as The Pub/Zoo). Unlike several of the previous pubs this was busy with a mix of young and more senior persons. Four ales were on offer and all were tried and rated as very good. Your correspondent, not being able to make his mind up whether to drink Titanic Plum Porter or their Raspberry Wheat Beer, had both! The pub's interesting name arises because, to the rear is an area reserved for eating, known as the Bread Shed, hence Flour (we were obviously in the Flagon).



Our final destination was **Sandbar** a few doors along Grosvenor Street. Seven real ales were on offer and, as our numbers dwindled due to early departures for last buses, not all were

tried, but those that were, were excellent. The bar occupies one end of what appears to be a Georgian terrace until you realise the sunken drinking area in the middle of the premises must surely have been a loading bay for a manufactory. Whatever its pedigree, it is now a well established watering hole frequented by many from the university, students to dons. Despite the Georgian heritage, this is such a modern place that cash has been consigned to history – if you want a drink make sure you have some form of electronic currency, either card or bitcoin.

Overall, an interesting stagger where the range and quality of the beers improved the nearer Manchester we got. Does this lend credence to the local mantra, "It's better up North"?

*The author apologises for the lack of some detail here but his notes went through a cold wash cycle before being consulted – Ed.*



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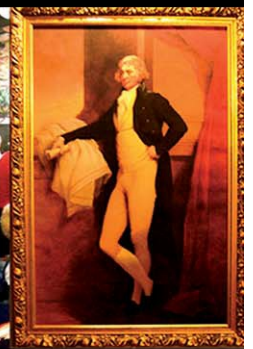
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# Winter Warmer Wander **OLD TOM**

Sponsored by Robinsons Old Tom

Once again we're running the Winter Warmer Wander, our annual celebration of festive beers, to bring you a little winter cheer across the Christmas season. Like Mild Magic and the Cider Circuit, this is the chance for you to visit some new pubs and try some new beers.

What you need to do is...

- \* Buy at least half a pint of caskconditioned **stout, porter, old ale or barley wine** (or if none available, a premium beer 4.5% ABV or over).
- \* Get the pub to put a sticker on its entry below (if they can't find a sticker, just get a signature).
- \* Get 12 stickers and you will win three bottles of premium beer plus a ticket for Manchester Beer & Cider Festival (MBCF).
- \* Get 24 stickers to win a WWW tshirt, a ticket for MBCF, a bottle of beer and entry into a draw for a hamper of beer.
- \* Visit all pubs to win a WWW tshirt, four bottles of beer, a ticket for MBCF and entry into a draw for a deluxe hamper of assorted beers.

Winter Warmer Wander runs from **Friday 8 November to Tuesday 31 December**. Full information at [www.ssmcamra.co.uk/winter.htm](http://www.ssmcamra.co.uk/winter.htm)  
Completed forms need to be with Dave Platt, 138 Broom Lane, Levenshulme, Manchester M19 3LJ by **5 January**. Include your name, address and a contact phone number and/or email address plus tshirt size if applicable.

**Name** **Address** **Contact**

**RESTRICTED OPENING:** Establishments **shown in red** do not open at least 1pm to 10pm every day of the week. Use [WhatPub.com](http://WhatPub.com) to check.

Winter Warmer Wander	Angel	Archive	Arden Arms	Winter Warmer Wander
<b>Ashton Tap House</b> Ashton Market Hall, AshtonuLyne OL6 7JU	<b>Bakers Vaults</b> Market Place, Stockport SK1 1ES	<b>Blossoms</b> 2 Buxton Road, Heaviley, Stockport SK2 6NU	<b>Bridge Beers</b> 55 Melbourne Street, Stalybridge SK15 2JJ	<b>Britons Protection</b> 50 Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester M1 5LE
<b>Calvert's Court</b> 13 St Petersgate, Stockport SK1 1EB	<b>Cask Tavern</b> 42 Park Lane, Poynton SK12 1RE	<b>Castle Hotel</b> 66 Oldham Street, Manchester M4 1LE	<b>Cheshire Ring</b> 72-74 Manchester Road, Hyde SK14 2BJ	<b>City Arms</b> 4648 Kennedy Street, Manchester M2 4BQ
<b>Crown Inn</b> 154 Heaton Lane, Stockport SK4 1AR	<b>Crown &amp; Kettle</b> 2 Oldham Road, Manchester M4 5FE	<b>Flute &amp; Firkin</b> 51 Park Lane, Poynton SK12 1RD	<b>Ford Madox Brown</b> Unit 1, Wilmslow Park, Rusholme M14 5FT	<b>Fred's Ale House</b> 843 Stockport Road, Levenshulme M19 3PW
<b>Friendship</b> 353 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield M14 6XS	<b>Gateway</b> 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury M20 5PG	<b>George &amp; Dragon</b> 1 High Street, Cheadle SK8 1AX	<b>Great Central</b> 306 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield M14 6NL	<b>Grove Alehouse</b> 145 London Road, Hazel Grove SK7 4HH
<b>Head of Steam</b> 653 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury M20 6QZ	<b>Hope Inn</b> 118 Wellington Rd North, Heaton Norris SK4 2LL	<b>Jake's Ale House</b> 27 Compstall Road, Romiley SK6 4BT	<b>James Watts</b> 13 High Street, Cheadle SK8 1AX	<b>Kingfisher</b> London Road South, Poynton SK12 1NJ
<b>Magnet</b> 51 Wellington Road North, Heaton Norris SK4 1HJ	<b>Marble Arch</b> 73 Rochdale Road, Manchester M4 4HY	<b>Masons Arms</b> High Street, New Mills SK22 4BR	<b>Molly House</b> 20 Richmond Street, Manchester M1 3NB	<b>New Oxford</b> 11 Bexley Square, Salford M3 6DB
<b>Pack Horse</b> 2 Market Place, Stockport SK1 1EW	<b>Paramount</b> 3335 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 4BH	<b>Petersgate Tap</b> 19a St Petersgate, Stockport SK1 1EB	<b>Pie and Ale</b> The Hive, Lever Street, Manchester M1 1FN	<b>Railway</b> 1 Avenue Street, Portwood, Stockport SK1 2BZ
<b>Reasons To Be Cheerful</b> 228 Fog Lane, Burnage, Manchester M20 6EL	<b>Remedy Bar &amp; Brewhouse</b> 10-11 Market Place, Stockport SK1 1EW	<b>Royal Oak</b> 22 Stockport Road, Cheadle SK8 2AA	<b>Samuel Oldknow</b> 22 Market Street, Marple, Stockport SK6 7AD	<b>Silly Country</b> 121 Market Street, Droylsden M43 7AR
<b>Society Rooms</b> 4951 Grosvenor Street, Stalybridge SK15 2JN	<b>Station Buffet Bar</b> Platform 4, Rassbottom St, Stalybridge SK15 1RF	<b>Swan With Two Necks</b> 36 Princes Street, Stockport SK1 1RY	<b>Victoria</b> 438 Wilmslow Road, Withington M20 3BW	<b>Waterhouse</b> 6771 Princess Street, Manchester M2 4EG
<b>Winter Warmer Wander</b>	<b>Wilfred Wood</b> 204 London Road, Hazel Grove SK7 4DF	<b>Wine &amp; Wallop</b> 97 Lapwing Lane, West Didsbury M20 6UR	<b>Ye Olde Vic</b> 1 Chatham Street, Edgeley, Stockport SK3 9ED	<b>Winter Warmer Wander</b>

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**THE GRIFFIN HEALD GREEN**

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HEALD GREEN  
CHEADLE  
SK8 3BE

**THE GRIFFIN HEATON MERSEY**

552 DIDSBURY ROAD  
HEATON MERSEY  
STOCKPORT  
SK4 3AJ

**PLATFORM 5**

47 STATION ROAD  
CHEADLE HULME  
CHEADLE  
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# The Disley Scene

Geoff Williamson checks out all the pubs

The village of Disley is located on the A6 between Stockport and Buxton, at the easterly edge of Cheshire, just outside the Stockport boundary and before you pass into Derbyshire and the Peak District. It is home to the magnificent 1,400 acre Lyme Park estate with its medieval deer park and house, and also a varied collection of pubs.

Two have closed in recent years, the Ploughboy (a free house) and the Crescent (Robinsons) and both have been turned into residential properties. Seven pubs remain, though, including a new micropub – more details on this later.



We will start our stroll at the western end of the village centre at Disley station on the Manchester to Buxton line. A short walk will bring you to the village green alongside the junction of Buxton Old Road with the main A6. From here you can take in the view of the adjacent **Ram's Head**, a large former coaching inn dating from around 1840 and now owned by Mitchells & Butlers. This characterful pub, with log fires in winter, has a strong emphasis on food, but usually has two handpumps serving Marston's Wainwright and a cask beer from Black Sheep Brewery plus RedWillow Wreckless on keykeg. The car park has charges for nonpatrons and there is a large beer garden at the rear. At time of writing a complete refurbishment of the pub was planned to start soon.

Adjacent to the Ram's Head is Buxton Old Road where lie both **Frankie's Wine Bar** and the **White Horse**. Despite the name, Frankie's is not just a wine bar but also sells cask beers, a large range of gins and food is also on offer. The old stone building has a spacious, contemporary interior which has been enlarged in recent years by the enclosure of an open area at the back. The four handpumps offer a range of varying beers but usually include national brands such as Wainwright, Timothy Taylor's Landlord, and Wychwood Hobgoblin alongside occasional beers from microbreweries such as RedWillow.



A short walk up the hill on the opposite side of the road sits the recently-refurbished **White Horse**. The repainted exterior, even with its modern Robinsons signage and lighting, still has the air of a traditional pub (it was built in 1869). The interior, however,

is a complete contrast with a new, light open-plan layout and contemporary décor. The revised layout also features a new relocated bar and at the time of visit two Robinsons beers were on offer, Unicorn and Cwrw'r Ddraig Aur; a third handpump was also available but not in use. A varied food menu is available every day from 12 noon until 8pm (126pm on Sundays).

Heading back to the main A6 and turning right you will find **Malt Disley**, a converted shop in the centre of the shopping area. These micropubs have become increasingly common in recent years and are helping to reverse the trend of pub closures we have been witnessing. Malt Disley hit the ground running from its opening day in June 2017

and has achieved entry in the 2019 and 2020 Good Beer Guides. Six handpumps supply four changing cask beers (one usually dark) mainly from local micro-breweries, a house beer, 'Beer Necessities' (note the continuing Disney theme) brewed by Poynton Brewery, and a traditional cider. Six fountains dispense a range of craft beers including two German beers and a further cider. Food is limited to pork pies, nuts, crisps etc. A range of bottles and cans from local microbreweries and further afield are also on sale to drink or take away. Music nights and themed events, such as their recent Octoberfest, occur



frequently and the bar also supports outside 'Gig in't Barn' events at a local farm.

Almost opposite, on the other side of the A6, lies the **Dandy Cock**, one of the earliest houses owned by Robinsons, and which once hosted cock fights (hence the name). Today the pub is popular with both locals and visitors and offers Robinsons Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde, Cumbria Way and Cascade IPA on handpump in the cosy bar area. In addition there is an interesting menu with food being served lunchtime and evening Wednesday to Friday, and through the day on Saturday and Sunday.

A four-minute walk along the A6 in an easterly direction (towards New Mills) will bring you to the **Albert**, a free house and sports bar with bed and breakfast accommodation in recently refurbished rooms above. Popular with local football supporters, the pub has several TV screens in the bar areas where most regular main fixtures are screened live. The pub serves Marston's Wainwright on the single handpump.



After a further two minute walk along the A6 you will arrive at the final pub on our stroll, the **White Lion**. This Enterprise Inns pub had been a permanent entry in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide for ten years, but in May the licensees retired and moved away. The new management have reduced the previous

offer of nine cask beers, but have retained a good selection of five regularly changing beers on handpump from independent brewers. Good quality food is available every day and a pool table has been introduced in one corner of this spacious pub. The team at the White Lion have been doing a splendid job since the new licensees took over in May.

Disley can also be visited on the 199 Skyline bus service from Manchester Airport to Buxton via Stockport, which passes through the village along the A6, or even by canal if you have a narrow boat to hand!



## Calling Home Brewers New Competition Launched

**Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA is again launching a competition for local home brewers to find up to five beers for Bar Nouveau at next year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival.**

Bar Nouveau was introduced in 2015 and features brand new beers launched at the festival. It's proved to be a very successful feature and we will be running it again next year (the festival dates are 2830 May). There will be 10 beers, all served on a separate bar and stored in a temperature controlled cellar to ensure optimum condition.



For the past four years we have involved local home brewers and have been delighted by the response. As before, the festival will purchase two or three firkins of each winning beer and the rest will be sold on to the market by the brewers concerned. If you are a home brewer this is a great chance to join in a brew day at a local brewery and also see one of your beers out there on sale to the public.

The brewers who have kindly agreed to host the winners are:

- Marble Beers, Salford (Speciality)
- Cloudwater Brew Co., Manchester (Mild & Brown Ale)
- Thirst Class Ale, Stockport (Bitter, Pale Ale & Session IPA)
- Torrside Brewing, New Mills (Stout & Porter)
- Howard Town Brewery, Glossop (Strong Pale Ale, ESB & IPA)

Now – the beers. The five categories are quite broadly drawn so that you can use your imagination. Here's what we are looking for:

**Mild & Brown Ale** – This is a chance to take old beer styles and run with them. Maximum ABV 5.5%.

**Bitter, Pale Ale & Session IPA** – session ales, pale ales, brown, amber or blonde – the choice is yours. Maximum ABV 5%.

**Strong Pale Ale, ESB & IPA** – while we're not style fanatics you should aim for a minimum ABV of 5%. Apart from that it's up to you – brown, red, black or white IPAs are all welcome. Maximum ABV 6.5%.

**Stout & Porter** – again this is broadly drawn – added flavours and ingredients optional. Maximum ABV 6%.

**Speciality** – this is where you can really go to town. Saisons, bocks, rauch biers – all are welcome. Maximum ABV 7%.



A few things to bear in mind: although the beers will be judged from bottle they will have to work as cask beers. In previous years we have asked people to think about the hops, and while that's

not really an issue now please do consider commerciality. We will be buying some of each brew for the festival but the host brewers will have to sell the rest into the trade so the beers will have to be commercially viable for them. Please also note that we will be looking to ensure the entries observe the ABV limits for each category – a tiny amount of drift is OK but not huge overshoots.

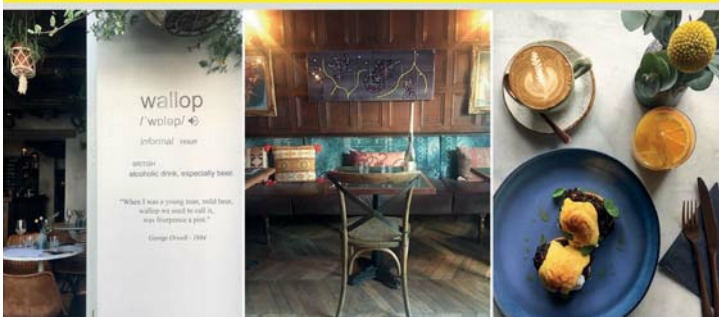
**How to enter** – just email your name, contact details and which categories you want to enter to: [stocam@btinternet.com](mailto:stocam@btinternet.com). **The cutoff date for entering is 15 January (but we won't need details of actual beers until early February).** Judging will take place at the Hope Inn, Wellington Road North, Stockport in mid March next year.

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# Pub Walks with Chris Morris

## The Ship, Styal



At the end of a brisk walk in the cold winter months, you can't beat the comfort of a traditional village pub, and a roaring fire to warm your heart as well as your toes!

This picturesque 17th century inn offers a welcome refuge from the elements with a real fire, a great range of cask beers, excellent home made food and friendly staff. With handsome, traditionally styled rooms giving a cosy and relaxed feel, you might end up staying longer than you planned. The cask beers available when I last visited were from Weetwood, Dunham Massey, Mobberley Brewhouse, Timothy Taylor and Black Sheep. Walkers are encouraged to visit and the staff are able to recommend other suitable walks from the pub. However, they ask you to remove your boots if they are very muddy. Opening times are 11am to 11pm Monday to Saturday and 11am to 10.30pm on Sunday.

## Train Information

This walk starts and finishes at Styal Station. If travelling from Stockport, purchase a return ticket to Styal, changing trains at Wilmslow. Trains run hourly every day. For full timetable information visit [www.northernrailway.co.uk](http://www.northernrailway.co.uk).

## The Walk

This is a gentle three mile walk with only occasional small climbs. The paths are well maintained by the National Trust and there shouldn't be too much mud – ideal for the wet winter months.

Although the walk enters the National Trust-owned Quarry Bank Mill estate, there is no need to be a National Trust member to do this walk as the paths are open to the public. The estate gates open from 8am to 7pm but I would advise checking [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank) beforehand. The OS map is 268 (OS app is also available).

After getting off the train at Styal, exit the station up the hill to Station Road. Turn right and go along the pavement, crossing Styal Road over to the war memorial opposite and left along that pavement. Take the next right along Holts Lane signposted to Quarry Bank Mill, past a row of old cottages and through a gate. Continue along this track until you reach a junction.

Carry straight on past the Apprentice House (on your right) and then the modern National Trust Information Centre (on your left). Continue straight on down the hill along the widest road signposted to 'Mill' until you reach the footbridge that passes overhead. To the right is the Mill, one of the best preserved textile mills of the Industrial

Revolution and well worth a visit. Toilets and cafés are also located in this area.

The route continues straight ahead over some cobbles to the right of the bookshop and through a gate signposted 'Picnic Area'. Follow the main path for 600 yards passing through pleasant woodland until you reach Heron's Pool Bridge. Carry on along the main path for another 300 yards until you reach a fork. Take the path to the left, through a metal kissing gate and up the steps as the path bends 180 degrees to the left. Go through another metal kissing gate and along the path for 600 yards until you reach a wooden gate.

Continue ahead on the path that hugs the left side of the field. Go through the two gates, then left along a gravel track and down the stone steps which brings you back to the Mill and its facilities. Now retrace your steps up the road to the top of the hill back to just outside the National Trust Information Centre. From here take the path to the left signposted to Styal Village, passing the Apprentice House on the right and through a gate. On meeting a road, carry straight over following signs to Styal Village Hub. After exiting the next gate, your route is right past Styal Cross and along the cobbled road to Altrincham Road.

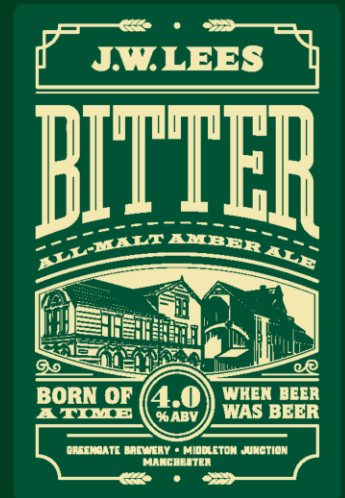
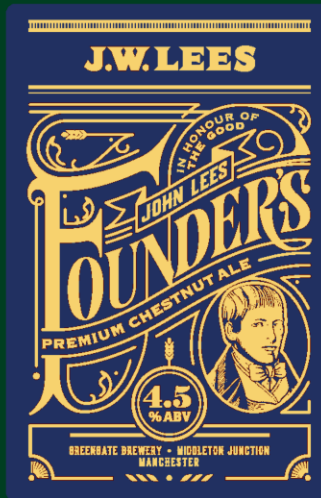
However, a good detour here would be to carry straight ahead and take the cobbled road in the opposite direction. This takes you to Styal Village with its chocolate box cottages and lovely gardens, transporting you back to the 19th century. After reaching Altrincham Road, turn right and continue along the pavement for 300 yards until you reach the Ship Inn on the opposite side.

To get back to Styal Station, turn left when exiting the pub and continue along Altrincham Road to the end. Turn right onto Styal Road, crossing over at the war memorial to Station Road with the station on the left.



# J.W. LEES

## CORE BEERS



## LIMITED EDITION



SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER



SEPTEMBER

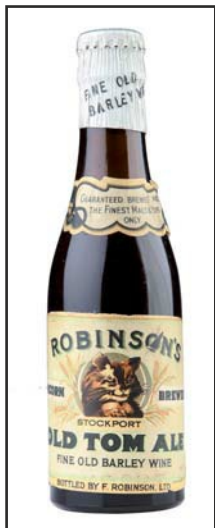


OCTOBER

# What's Brewing

## Brewery News from around the region

### Old Tom at 120



Robinsons Old Tom, the sponsor of our Winter Warmer Wander, celebrates its 120th birthday this year. One of the original winter warmers in the country – and possibly the longest that has been continually brewed – this famous beer has warmed the cockles of many generations of Stockport drinkers. It's also won countless awards in the UK and elsewhere – this year it picked up Three Stars in the international Great Taste Awards.

One of the most precious of the many old documents held at the brewery is the personal brewing book of Victorian head brewer Alfred Munton. The entry for 1 November 1899 includes the original recipe for Old Tom and is topped with a sketch of the iconic cat's head that, in one form or another, has symbolised the beer through the years down to the present day.



Home brewer and blogger Edd Mather has recently been granted access to Robinsons' old brewing records and the old recipes for several of the brewery's beers appear on his entertaining blog at [oldbeersandbrewing.blogspot.com](http://oldbeersandbrewing.blogspot.com). These include Old Tom from back in 1899 when it was a weighty 11% ABV.

It's still 8.5% today – and Robinsons are to be congratulated for maintaining its strength when a higher level of duty for stronger beers was introduced a few years ago. This taxed beers of 7.5% and above at a higher rate, and led to many beers similar to Old Tom being reduced to just below that ceiling.

Today Old Tom is badged as a strong ale, but for most of its life the beer was labelled a 'fine old barley wine' – and in many ways it is a classic example of a traditional beer style that too many breweries overlook (although heads up to newcomers Thirst Class Ale of Reddish and Torrside Brewing of New Mills who have both produced notable, and in the case of Torrside, many, examples of it).

While it's available in bottle all year round, Old Tom really comes into its own on draught – CAMRA has voted it Champion Winter Beer of Britain no fewer than five times. Robinsons make it available on draught from September to March in either 9gallon or 4½gallon casks, and it's fascinating to try the beer as it matures and ages in cask.

Local pubs like the **Arden Arms** and **Swan With Two Necks** in Stockport, the **Blossoms** in Heavily and the **Flying Coach** in Hazel Grove seem to have it on most of the time during the 'season', but as Christmas approaches, many Robinsons pubs tend to

have a cask on the bar (it's one of the few beers that performs well at ambient temperature). Seek it out.

### To The Moon

In our July/August issue we mentioned the new **To The Moon Brewery** in Bramhall. *Lawrence Devaney* went along to have a chat.

Matt Halley (pictured below) was educated as a biochemist and has a PhD in Physiology. He has a passion for good beer and New World hopped IPAs in particular.



In the past Matt played with the idea of being a chef but home brewing was as close as he got. After a four year learning curve and a succession of home brews, a beer he brewed was awarded a second place (judge's choice) in the 2018 Manchester Homebrewers' Expo.

Encouraged by this success the idea grew that a business opportunity might be a great way to combine work and a consuming hobby. Driven to make real his dream, a three-barrel brewing plant was ordered from Hoplex Ltd in

Aberdeen. This started production in May 2019 trading as To The Moon Brewery Ltd.

Thus far the Company has specialised in IPAs, with production being sold to local pubs in keykegs. The brewery's regular beer is Apollo v2, a 5.8% IPA using Simcoe, Mosaic and Enigma hops. The business strategy is to concentrate on a very small number of core beers with Apollo v2 as the figurehead. Although Apollo v2 has received much positive feedback, Matt does not rule out tweaking the production method and recipe, as he believes that even a great beer can be improved over time: Apollo v3 appeared in early October.

To The Moon is not a name you would instantly associate with a brewery, but you could say the same about numerous modern brewery startups. However, Matt tells us the name is influenced by a phrase that was used to describe the performance of cryptocurrencies. Another more romantic option is that the Sinatra song is special to Matt and his wife.

What of the future? At the present To The Moon's production is limited to the weekends, which does reduce potential output, but the plant can produce around 6,000 litres p.a. As Arthur C. Clarke said, "The moon is the first milestone on the road to the stars".

### Made of Stone

You'll often find To The Moon beers on the bar at the **Mounting Stone** in Bramhall. This popular micropub is also home to the **Made of Stone Brewery** and in October they chalked up their 50th brew.

To mark the occasion owner and brewer Andrew O'Shea brewed a 'super juicy' pale ale using Citra, El Dorado and Waiti hops. They named it Jeremy Gyle 'because we can'.

Some wintry beers are being brewed for the colder months, with numerous dark beers, including imperial stouts, in the pipeline. The ever-popular pale ales will also continue to appear, so it sounds like there should be something for everyone.

# Good Beer Guide 2020

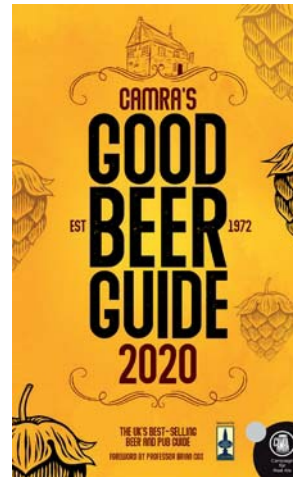


## 10 great reasons to join CAMRA

<b>1</b> CAMPAIGN for great beer, cider and perry	<b>2</b> Become a <b>BEER EXPERT</b>
<b>3</b> Enjoy CAMRA <b>BEER FESTIVALS</b> In front of or behind the bar	<b>4</b> GET INVOLVED and make new friends
<b>5</b> Save <b>YOUR LOCAL</b>	<b>6</b> Find the <b>BEST PUBS IN BRITAIN</b>
<b>7</b> Get great <b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	<b>8</b> DISCOVER pub heritage and the great outdoors
<b>9</b> Enjoy great <b>HEALTH BENEFITS</b> (really!)	<b>10</b> HAVE YOUR SAY

### What's yours?

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*“The definitive rundown of the best places in the UK to get a pint of real ale, from cosy country inns to upmarket style bars” – Time Out Magazine*

CAMRA's premier publication, featuring the very best pubs in the UK serving great pints of cask ale, was released on 12 September. This, the 47th edition of the country's best beer and pub guide, features over 4,500 of the best pubs in the UK, chosen by CAMRA members from across the country.

In Greater Manchester there are 33 newly-featured pubs out of a total of 159. In addition, the county's booming brewery sector now boasts no fewer than 66 breweries, with the Guide welcoming five newcomers including the Cheadle Brew House and Bramhall's Made of Stone.

You can discover all of the pubs listed, and more, with CAMRA's new Good Beer Guide app, available on both iOS and Android devices, or visit the CAMRA shop for your copy: [shop.camra.org.uk](http://shop.camra.org.uk).



Information on the brewing process, beer styles and tastings is front and centre in the 2020 *Good Beer Guide*. New for this year, it boasts an education section to fulfil CAMRA's commitment to play a leading role in helping beer-lovers learn and discover more about

their favourite drink.

The 10 page section includes features on:

- How beer is brewed, outlining the key ingredients of beer and preparation methods.
- How to appreciate beer, from the best temperature and glassware to tasting guidelines to assess quality.
- Guidance on when to take your pint back to the bar, if required.
- Charting beer styles to help find the right style for you.

Tom Stainer, CAMRA's Chief Executive, said: "For nearly five decades, the Good Beer Guide has been a comprehensive guide to the UK's breweries, their ales, and the best outlets to find them in across the country.

"What makes the Guide unique is that all the entries are compiled and vetted by a huge volunteer team, based around the country. We work hard to ensure that all areas of the country are covered and, unlike with some competitor titles, inclusion in this book is dependent only on merit, not on payment.

"The *Good Beer Guide* has always had an important role in acting as a barometer of the beer and pub industry. We believe information gleaned from the Guide is absolutely vital in the drive to save our pubs from closure, and campaign for policies that better support pubs, local brewers and their customers."

*Copies of the Good Beer Guide can be obtained from Jim Flynn at a price of £15.99 (including p&p). Please send a cheque payable to 'CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester' to 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG.*



## MANCHESTER BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL 2020

MORE BEERS FROM THE WOOD

NORTHERN BEERS FROM COAST TO COAST

### 23RD - 25TH JANUARY 2020

### MANCHESTER CENTRAL

22ND JANUARY CAMRA MEMBERS PREVIEW (FREE ENTRY)



INFORMATION AND TICKETS FROM

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# What's On

## Local CAMRA Branch Diaries

Events for November and December for the following local branches:

- \* **Stockport & South Manchester (SSM)**
- \* **High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire (HPNC)**
- \* **Central Manchester (CMCR)**
- \* **Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)**

## Formal Branch Meetings - Member only

**Wednesday 6 November** – Gas Lamp, 50A Bridge Street, M3 3BW. 6:00pm for 6:30pm start. (CMCR)

**Monday 11 November** – Crown, 142 Victoria Street, Glossop, SK13 8JF. Starts 8:00pm. (HPNC)

**Thursday 14 November** – Sun & Castle, 34 Middle Hillgate, Stockport, SK1 3EH. Guest speaker – Jane Kershaw from Joseph Holt Brewery. Starts 8:15pm. (SSM)

**Monday 2 December** – Venue TBC but will also include Christmas Social Part 1. Meet 6:00pm for 6:30pm start. (CMCR)

**Monday 9 December** – Poynton Legion Club, George's Road West, Poynton, SK12 1JY. Starts 8:00pm. (HPNC)

**Thursday 12 December** – Magnet, 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. Includes Christmas Quiz. Starts 8:15pm. (SSM)

## Social Events & Presentations

### All welcome

**Friday 8 November** – Winter Warmer Wander Launch Stagger: 7:00pm Railway, 1 Avenue Street, Portwood, SK1 2BZ; 8:00pm Bakers Vaults, Market Place, SK1 1ES, then visit Market Place pubs. (SSM)

**Saturday 9 November** – Ramsbottom & Rossendale Ale Trail: Catch 11:10 X41 Bus to Ramsbottom from stop EZ on Chorlton Street. (CMCR)

**Saturday 16 November** – Train trip to Halifax. For details see [www.highpeaktamesidenortheastcheshire.camra.org.uk](http://www.highpeaktamesidenortheastcheshire.camra.org.uk) (HPNC)

**Thursday 21 November** – Thirstback Thursday: 66:30pm Font, 79 New Wakefield Street, M1 5NP then moving on to other pubs in the area. (CMCR)

**Friday 22 November** – West Didsbury (Burton Road) Stagger: 7:30pm George Charles, 246 Burton Road, M20 2LW; 8:30pm Folk Cafe Bar 169171 Burton Road, M20 2LN; final pub Metropolitan, 2 Lapwing Lane, M20 2WS. (SSM)

**Thursday 28 November** – Pub of the Month: Crown, 81 High Street, Cheadle, SK8 1AA. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

**Sunday 1 December** – Cider Circuit PrizeGiving and Social: Cheshire Ring, 7274 Manchester Road, Hyde, SK14 2BJ. From 2:00pm. (SSM/HPNC)

**Thursday 5 December** – Thirstback Thursday/Christmas Social Part 2: 66:30pm Waterhouse, 67 Princess Street, M2 4EG, wander round Christmas Market and final drinks in Vine, 42 Kennedy Street, M2 4BQ. (CMCR)

**Saturday 7 December** – Branch Xmas Party: Rose & Monkey, 31 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JZ. From 7:00pm. (HPNC)

**Sunday 8 December** – Mystery Trip/Christmas Social Part 3: meet 10:45:11:00am at Chorlton Street entrance to Bus Station. (CMCR)

**Friday 20 December** – Hillgate & Market Place Stagger: 7:30pm Blossoms, 2 Buxton Road, Heaviley, SK2 6NU; 8:30pm Red Bull, 14 Middle Hillgate, SK1 3AY; final pub Arden Arms, 23 Millgate, SK1 2LX. (SSM)

**Friday 27 December** – Pub of the Month: George & Dragon, 1 High Street, Cheadle, SK8 1AX. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

**Monday 30 December** – Annual City Centre Social: meet Piccadilly Tap, Station Approach, M1 2GH, between 12:00pm. (HPNC)

# CAMRA Awards

## Recent Presentations

### High Peak Cider Pub of the Year



The High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year is **Silly Country** in Droylsden. Since it opened in 2018, Silly Country has not only been a beacon of excellence for good beer and cider in Droylsden, it's also helped kickstart other developments in the local beer scene with at least two new openings planned nearby.

Owners Drew Unsworth, Phil Unsworth and Katy Glover are also cider fans, and apart from five ever changing guest beers, offer a large range of top quality traditional ciders. There were around eight available when this very well deserved award was presented on Saturday 14 September. Pictured above are Bar Manager Ben Pike, High Peak CAMRA Chairman Ben Zwierink, Drew Unsworth, Phil Unsworth and Katy Glover.

Silly Country is at 121 Market Street in the centre of Droylsden – and right next to the tram stop. Well worth a visit.

### Mild Magic Awards

This year's Mild Magic had a commendable 92 people participating – so who says there's no demand for mild these days? All those taking part are asked to vote for their favourite mild pub and two 'Champion Mild Pub' awards are made.



The 'Out of Stockport' award was won by the **Britons Protection** on Great Bridgewater Street in central Manchester. Now independently run, the pub offers a wide range of guest beers including a house mild from Congleton's Beartown Brewery. Pictured above left are Ally and Paul with their certificate.



The Stockport award was won by the **Petersgate Tap** in the town centre. Since opening, the Petersgate Tap has grown a reputation for selling dark beers (often of a spectacular strength) and thus a good mild is often to be found on sale. Pictured here, Stockport & South Manchester Chairman John Clarke presents the award to the Petersgate Tap coowner Alan Gent.

# News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

## Cat Bounces Back



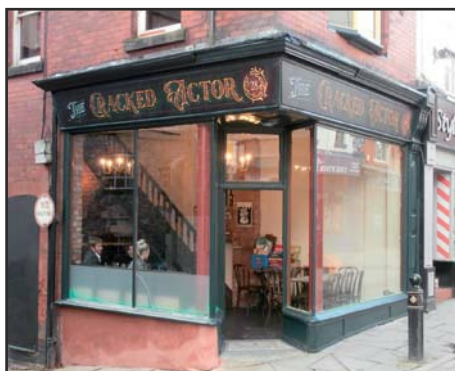
When the iconic **Cat & Fiddle Inn** closed its doors in late 2015 that seemed to be the end of the road.

Owners Robinsons were reluctant to see the end of the famous 200 year old pub (it was built in 1813) which is situated at an isolated spot high up on the A537 between Macclesfield and Buxton. However its trading patterns, and the need for some very expensive structural work, meant that the pub was essentially unsustainable.

But just down the hill is the Forest Distillery, run by Karl and Lindsay Bond. And they have decided to move the whisky part of the business up to the Cat & Fiddle (which will then make the building the highest altitude distillery in Britain). It won't be just a distillery though – there will be an on-site shop and part of the premises will still function as a pub.

There's a lot of work to do (and a lot of money to be spent by both Robinsons and Forest Distillery) but, if all goes well, the Cat & Fiddle will be reopening in the spring.

## The Cracked Actor



Tucked away on Stockport's Little Underbank, the **Cracked Actor** occupies a small corner spot opposite the former Winter's. A project by former actor Joe Patten, this cosy and characterful new bar seems to have been an instant hit since it opened at the end of August.

Great care has been taken over the restoration, including the installation of a period staircase. Sewing machine tables have been repurposed and the bar counter has the air of a Victorian pharmacy. Two floors are in use and upstairs an old kitchen range has been uncovered and retained as a feature. There's still some work to be done – Joe tells us theatrical curtains will be put up in the windows shortly which, we think, will add to the air of intimacy. There's also a big emphasis on blues – both in the background music and the live performances on Thursday nights.

There's no cask beer, but eight keg lines sell a variety of imported European beers (the Belgian Delirium Tremens seems to be a regular) and modern British products. Alongside these is a range of cans and bottles, plus lots of different gins. Well worth a visit.

## Overdraught

While the Cracked Actor seems to have instant appeal, both inside and out, it's difficult to say the same about **Overdraught**, a new bar at 855 Stockport Road in Levenshulme.

Occupying the former TSB premises near the junction with Albert Road, from the outside it appears rather dark and uninviting as the dimly-lit interior is set back behind an outside Terrace cum smoking area.

Inside there's an impressively long bar counter with 30 keg taps behind it. Some of these will be dedicated to rotating beers from the likes of Marble, Beavertown and Tiny Rebel, while the others will be changing guests.

The furniture is a mix of post-industrial and traditional but the hard surfaces everywhere (including a polished concrete floor) make it all rather stark we thought. We visited shortly after opening, so hopefully it's all very much a work in progress (a sign advertised that pizza and ice cream were coming soon) that will bed in and soften over time.



## Howard Town Tap



We're not sure how this slipped past us but Glossop's **Howard Town Brewery** has opened a tap at its Hope Street premises. The cosy bar is open from 49pm on Fridays and from noon to 8pm on Saturdays.

Four Howard Town beers are on handpump, as is a traditional cider from Thatchers. Also available are three keg beers from the brewery's Distant Hills range. An impressive cheeseboard with crusty bread is available to mop up the beer.

## New Outlet for Bollington Brewery



Bollington Brewery has gone into partnership with the Manchester Metropolitan University Students' Union to supply the **Salutation** on Higher Chatham Street in the heart of the university area.

The pub has undergone a major refurbishment, and new windows proclaim the partnership with the brewery which will see Bollington beers featuring permanently on the bar.

Brewery MD Lee Wainwright told *Opening Times*; "We feel this is quite an important step for us, not only because we now have a new customer in Manchester but also because we have had so much involvement in the refurbishment and the future direction of the pub.

"The partnership is a new approach in the fact that we can bring our skills and culture to help someone else make a success of their business and especially such an iconic pub."

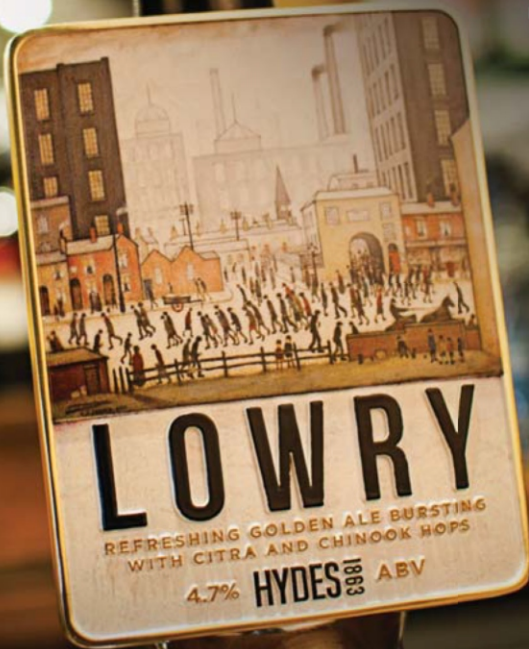
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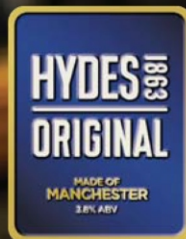
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