

OPENING TIMES

MARCH & APRIL 2020 / FREE

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About Opening Times & Contacts

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- * Transport for Greater Manchester: www.tfgm.com. 0161 244 1000
- * East Cheshire: 0300 123 5500
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport.aspx
- * Derbyshire: www.derbybus.info

Pub Opening Hours

We hope you will visit all of the pubs mentioned in *Opening Times*. There isn't the space to print all of their opening hours – however these can be checked on CAMRA's online pub guide: whatpub.com

Disclaimer

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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Macclesfield & East Cheshire

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Central Manchester

www.centralmanchester.camra.org.uk

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Social Media

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

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Twitter – @SSMCAMRA

High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire:

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Central Manchester:

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CAMRA Discounts

A list of local pubs generously offering a discount to CAMRA members can be found online at www.ssmcamra.co.uk/discount.htm

Front Cover

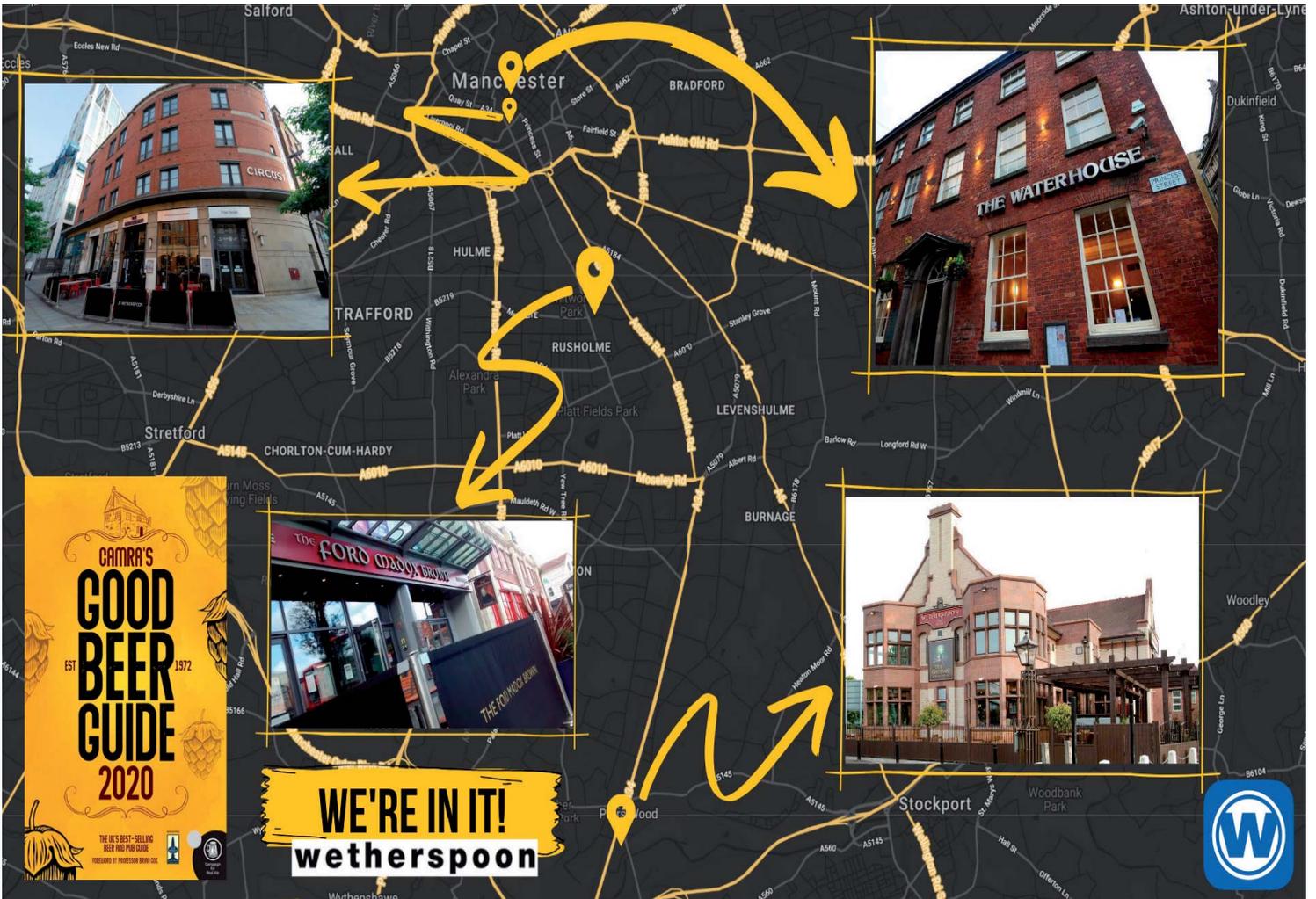
The Magnet on Wellington Road North, Stockport is the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year 2020. Don't miss the presentation night on Saturday 11 April.

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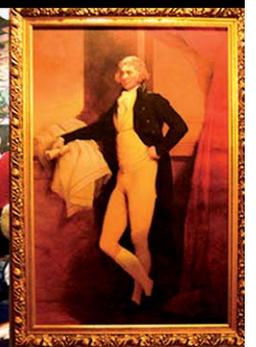


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Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

Bulls Head, Stockport

Robinsons has announced a £400,000 project which will see the **Bulls Head**, the oldest pub in Stockport's Market Place, reopen its doors for the first time in eight years. The grade II listed pub, which dates back to 1731, has been closed since November 2011 following a tough trading period for the pub (and the town as a whole).



The intensive three-month refurbishment scheme is planned to start in June, and Robinsons hope to re-open the pub in September 2020, just in time to raise a glass to the brewery's 182nd birthday. CAMRA's Stockport Beer Week

is planned to run from 24 September this year, so the timing is also perfect for that.

The new look promises to be a celebration of all things Stockport, from the hat museum to the brewery (which can be seen from the external terrace of the pub) and local heritage is planned to be at the heart of the new-look Bulls Head. It is also expected that food will play a major part in the pub's operation and Robinsons are now on the look-out for a suitable person to take the pub on.

This is good news and a very welcome development. Opening Times always likes to see pubs open rather than closed – and this is particularly the case with the Bulls Head, which occupies such a prominent location in the Market Place.

Pub Shorts

In the last issue we reported that the **Farmers Arms** in Cheadle Heath, Stockport, had been sold to a firm of developers. This prompted a call from owners Greene King who confirmed that, while the pub is indeed up for sale, it has **not** been sold. Apologies for any distress caused.

In Stockport town centre, **Vinaböd**, the Viking-themed tapas bar on Vernon Street, closed suddenly in mid-January. Almost immediately came news that the premises had been taken over by Joe Patten, owner of the **Cracked Actor** on Underbank. Joe plans to reopen it as the **Glass Spider**, with a focus on food. Hopefully there will be room for a cask beer on the bar.



Somewhere that certainly will be selling cask beer is the **Milliner** in Davenport. As this was typed, the former shop premises at 179 Bramhall Lane were still undergoing conversion into what promises to be a real community pub (the Facebook page @ **themillinerdavenport** covers this in some detail). It's a project by Eddie Greaves who has long experience

in the trade, including almost 17 years as a regional manager for Wetherspoons. Eddie tells us there will be three cask beers to start with (a house beer from Bollington Brewery and two changing guests)

and also traditional cider from Macclesfield's award-winning SiDa (either bag-in-box or bottle). This promises to be a real asset to the area – more in due course.

Out in Disley, there are new faces at the **White Lion** (135 Buxton Road). Adey and Elizabeth Marrow, who have been an integral part of the team running the **Lowes Arms** in Denton for the last six years, took over on 6 February, and have committed to an initial five-year tenancy. Adey is a huge cask ale enthusiast and has run many beer festivals at the Lowes Arms, which has been in the *Good Beer Guide* for many years. The couple are promising the White Lion will remain a committed cask ale pub, retaining the six handpumps. The pub's high-quality food offering will also continue.



In Withington, JW Lees have bought the former Marston's flagship, the **Red Lion** on Wilmslow Road. Some years ago the **Red Lion** had a reputation as one of Marston's highest turnover pubs, but a visit shortly after the Lees

takeover did see it looking a little bit careworn – our guess is that Lees will be spending a lot of money here sooner or later. At the moment, apart from the new signage, the only changes are in the menu and also the beer range, with Lees Bitter, MPA, Founders Ale and a seasonal on handpump when Opening Times called. The Founders was on notably good form, too.

Swan With Two Necks



Following the departure of Trigger and Pam Dean in January, Stockport's **Swan With Two Necks** has been taken on by Geoff and Maria Troughton, who will be running it in addition to the nearby **Arden Arms**.

Geoff told us that when the opportunity to take on the pub came along it was impossible to turn down. "It's such a beautiful pub and suits what we do," he said. Geoff will be looking after the beer in both pubs and little change is planned at the Swan. Dizzy Blonde has joined the beer range, and lunchtime food

is now available every day. A gentle spruce-up is also on the cards. It is reassuring to know that this classic heritage pub, almost unchanged since it was built in 1926, is in safe hands.

Tameside Inn Brief

In Denton, **Howard's Neighbourhood Bar** (51 Manchester Road) is now offering a 30p pint discount for CAMRA members. Down the road, the **Coach & Horses** on Hyde Road was closed and 'to let' in mid-February.

The **Gillery** (1-3 The Old Brow) in Mossley is now open. There are four handpumps on the bar, two of which feature local beers. Across the road, the **Britannia** also appears to be 'to let'. The **Railway** in Newton, Hyde, has reopened after a short period of closure. There are now two handpumps on the bar – one is for Sharp's Doom Bar while the other should feature a changing guest beer.

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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 for March is the Chiverton Tap in Cheadle Hulme. John Sutcliffe has been along and explains why it won.

The double-fronted shop premises on Mellor Road were for about 70 years occupied by Arthur Chiverton, a drapery and millinery business (and after that by a variety of other concerns). His name can still be seen in mosaic on the entrance step and it is this business that provides the inspiration for the name and design of the pub; framed photographs inside show the building's history.



Lawyers Bob and Mary Ellis, together with catering and hospitality lecturer Andrew O'Shea, opened it in May 2015 as one of Stockport's first micropubs, a new breed of public houses that is rapidly spreading across the country. They are enthusiastic about

beer, and Andrew has gone on to establish their second pub, the Mounting Stone in Bramhall, where he has installed a small brewery which also sometimes supplies beer to the Chiverton Tap.

Six cask beers are regularly sold – two come from Bollington Brewery while the other four are changing guest beers. There is always a dark beer on sale – usually a stout or porter, and sometimes a mild. There is also a bag-in-the-box cider, sometimes two in the summer months.

The ground floor holds about 50 customers. However, in December 2019 the first floor space was brought into use to provide additional seating and can be reserved, without charge, as a small function room holding around 30. At the same time, an outdoor space has been created at the rear which seats about 16 customers. As there is adjacent residential accommodation, this area is non-smoking (there is no smoking area, and customers use the pavement in front of the pub).

This friendly pub with knowledgeable staff is no stranger to CAMRA awards, having previously been a Pub of the Month and also the local Pub of the Year for 2017. This further award recognises both recent innovations and continuing excellence.

The award will be presented on 26 March, so why not join us as we gather from 8pm? Mellor Road is opposite the entrances to Cheadle Hulme station while buses 313, 42B and 368 will all drop you nearby.



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for April is the Queens, on Great Portwood Street in Stockport. Dave Platt called in and tells you why it won.

Portwood used to be teeming with pubs but over the years they have dwindled away. Older hands may remember the Kings Arms, the Brinnington Inn, the Old King, the Coach & Horses and others that have fallen by the wayside. Those that have survived have done so by establishing firm local trade, and so it is with the Queens, run for over 18 years by Sue Igbon.

When Sue arrived in July 2001, the Queens was her first pub, which she came to following a lengthy career at Norweb (remember them?). She'd had some bar experience working at the Crown in Didsbury and told me that when she walked through the doors of the Queens she felt comfortable. Sue also realised that not a lot was happening at the pub, so it was somewhere she could put her own stamp on.

And that's what Sue has done. Over the years, the Queens has become very much a locals' community pub, with a loyal band of regulars supplemented by a fair amount of passing trade. It's basically a wet-let business, with food restricted to sandwiches (available from 12 noon every day). Tea and coffee are always available but really you come here for the beer. It's a Robinsons house and on handpump you'll get Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde and Wizard.

The pub hosts three darts teams, but apart from the darts there is also televised live sport and occasional live music. In fact, popular local band the Casino Allstars practices at the pub on most Thursday nights and occasionally puts on a live performance too. The Queens has adopted Francis House as its charity, and funds are raised by a weekly bonus ball competition and also a book club.

Join us when we present this very well-deserved award to Sue and her team on the evening of Thursday 23 April. The pub is just a short walk from the town centre.

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.



Wood You Believe It?

Despite the choice of 25 bars, drinkers at the recent **Manchester Beer and Cider Festival** made a beeline for the Beers from the Wood, writes *David Rigby*. Almost doubled in size from last year, the popularity of the rare opportunity of tasting old favourites and unique specials served from wooden barrels meant the bar sold out during the last day of another successful festival.



The event at Manchester Central attracted visitors from across the UK and further afield. Almost 14,500 came through the doors to enjoy traditional and modern beer styles, a refreshed cider and perry bar and the return of a gin bar focusing on local distilleries.

This year, organisers enthusiastically promoted CAMRA's Discovery Zone, assisted by regional and nationally-renowned brewers and cider makers. Volunteers from Greater Manchester's vibrant homebrew scene also gave their time to educate visitors about methods of brewing, storage and dispense. But those fortunate to be there on Friday will not forget the hugely impressive display of cooerage from Theakston's Jonathan Manby and Euan Findlay, a noisy reminder of a traditional brewery craft.



Drinkers supped at a rate of more than 42 pints a minute, and there was great interest in voting for their favourites. Beer of the festival was Bad Kitty from Malton's Brass Castle Brewery, no stranger to the accolade at Manchester, as it has been a winner and twice runner-up in previous years. The 2020 runner-up was Tiny Rebel's Salted Caramel Stay Puft, with, unusually, a tie for third place: Tiramisu Imperial Stout, a collaboration by Lost Industry and Navigation couldn't be separated from North Riding's Fudge Brownie Stout. These were all cask dark beers, a fact not unnoticed by organisers.

Pilton's Pomme Pomme took the cider of the festival back to Somerset, just pipping Hogan's Wild Elder. And there was a local success as Dunham Cider Press's Peterloo Perry was a popular winner of the perry of the festival, with Blue Barrel's Colwick Perry a worthy runner-up.

CAMRA's membership stand again recruited new members, mainly from Greater Manchester – if you were one, you'll be welcome at any of the many branch events and meetings. Beer festivals across the region depend on members offering their time and skills to make these enjoyable, so why not consider volunteering?

Finally, the festival has been asked to pass on the grateful thanks of its partner charity, North West Air Ambulance. Visitors were very generous in supporting this essential service, which relies on fundraising to keep in the air and on the ground saving lives. The charity banked a record amount of £7,272. Whether you bought a programme, supported the Games Zone, donated your glass hire or simply threw money into the buckets, thank you!

Photo courtesy of James Darcey, @JDarceyImages

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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 Branch Pub of the Year has been nail-bitingly close. This year, however, there was a clear winner.

The winning pub is chosen from the previous year's Pubs of the Month, and the 2019 crop was not only very varied 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 **Magnet** on Wellington Road North.

The Magnet is one of the best-known and most-visited pubs in the whole of the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA branch area. Last November it celebrated ten years of trading as a free house, and the pub is a testament to the hard work and vision of the whole team, led from the front by Lee and Lesley Watts (pictured below second and third from the right, celebrating the pub's tenth anniversary).



Over the past decade the pub has expanded considerably to accommodate its ever-increasing popularity. There is a large outdoor split-level seating area, fully utilised in those warm summer months. The former function room upstairs has been completely redecorated and converted to an additional public room which comes into its own on busy weekends. Downstairs the pub is multi-roomed and split-level, including a pool room and well-appointed outside smoking area.

The ever-changing range consists of up to 14 cask plus 12 keg and keykeg beers. Salopian Oracle is a permanent beer and there is also one of the highly-acclaimed Tiny Rebel beers regularly available. There are always at least one, and often up to three, cask dark beers available.

The Magnet has always had a strong charitable side with Monday cheese nights, and also has books and pump clips for sale to raise money for good causes.

This multiple award-winning pub continues to have beer quality and choice at its heart – attributes which will certainly be on display when our Pub of the Year award is presented on the evening of April 11. Lee tells us that one or two specially-aged beers may well be available on the night.

Arden Arms is Runner-up



The runner-up is the **Arden Arms** on Millgate in central Stockport, a classic pub with a fine reputation for both its beer and its food.

There was a sense of nervousness in August 2017 when Geoff and Maria Troughton took over what is by any standards a local institution. When *Opening Times* interviewed them shortly afterwards Geoff told us, "We're not here to change anything; we just want to run a great pub." And that is what they've done.

Any changes have been incremental and have only added to the pub's appeal (its historic interior has earned it a place on CAMRA's National Inventory of Heritage Pubs). A redecoration has made the pub look brighter, while cellar improvements show in the consistently high standards of the Robinsons beers. Many say the beer is now better than ever, and the Arden is certainly a real flagship for the brewery.

The food remains varied and excellent, and the pub's reputation for music is also undiminished, with live bands in the outside courtyard every Friday and Saturday night.

Cider Pub of the Year

It's three 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 regional contest this time, as well.

He told *Opening Times*, "Having worked on our cider offer all year, we're very pleased that this has been recognised once again by the branch. We usually have a number of local ciders available (Dunham, Madhatters, SiDa) and we see a steady interest in people drinking cider. Now on to the Regionals again to see what we can do!"

The Club of the Year is the Albert Club in West Didsbury. More on that next time.



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High Peak Pub of the Year

Top Award Goes To Disley Micropub



The 2020 Pub of The Year selected by the High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire Branch of CAMRA is **Malt Disley** in the village of Disley, Cheshire, writes *Geoff Williamson*.

The pub lies in the centre of the village on Market Street (the main A6 road) and like so many micropubs, is a converted shop. It was opened in June 2017 by owners Lauren and Diane Booth, who had a vision to create a new bar in Disley and came up with the Walt Disney/Malt Disley idea. Initially they both lived in Offerton, although Lauren has recently moved to Disley.



Right from its opening, Malt Disley hit the ground running, and has gained an entry in CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide* for both 2019 and 2020, while becoming an established venue with locals. Six handpumps supply four changing cask beers mainly from local micro-breweries (with one usually a dark beer) and a house beer 'The Beer Necessities' (note the continuing Disney theme), which was brewed in collaboration with

Poynton Brewery for the pub's first anniversary, but is now a regular on the bar.

For the pub's second birthday a collaboration with Congleton's Beartown Brewery created 'Buzz Lightbeer', and discussions are taking place with Torrside Brewing at New Mills over a beer for their next birthday this June. The remaining handpump dispenses a real cider. Six fonts feature a range of craft beers, again mainly from micro-breweries, in addition to two German beers, Dortmunder Union and Flensberger, plus a further cider. An extension of the range is planned soon, with the addition of draught Czech lager, Budvar.

Lauren had previous experience working in the Magnet in Stockport and she has a passion for always offering a range of quality, interesting

beers in top condition. The current beers and ciders on sale at any time can be viewed on the Untappd phone app and are displayed on a TV screen within the bar. A range of bottles and cans from local micro-breweries and further afield are also on sale to drink in or take away.

Food is limited to pork pies, nuts, crisps and similar. Music nights and themed events, such as the recent Oktoberfest, occur frequently and the bar also supports outside 'Gig in't Barn' events at a local farm.

In addition to being a great pub, Malt Disley is at the heart of the local community and a place to hold a conversation with people you know and those you've never previously met.

Lauren, Diane and the rest of the fantastic team also add substantially to customers' welcome on arrival and to the ongoing enjoyment of their visit. The award of CAMRA Branch Pub of the Year is very well deserved – congratulations! It is due to be presented on the afternoon of Saturday 13 June – a definite date for your diaries!

Malt Disley is at 22 Market Street, Disley. It's just a short walk from Disley station, while bus 199 (Stockport-Buxton) will drop you close by. Opening hours are 4-10pm Monday; 4-11pm Tuesday to Thursday; 12-11pm Friday and Saturday; 12-10pm Sunday.



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Festival entry free for all CAMRA members on Thursday & Friday afternoon sessions.

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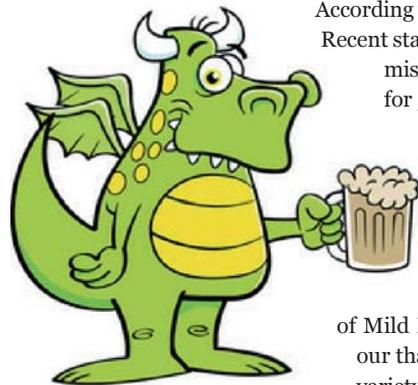


The Hope Inn
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stockport sk4 211
www.thehopestockport.co.uk

Mild Magic 2020

Visit Pubs, Drink Beer, Win Prizes

Friday 3 April to Sunday 17 May



According to the media, mild is dying out. Recent statistics show this neglected and misunderstood beer style accounts for just 0.3% of the beer market. It is time to take a stand.

This year we have signed up 88 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 great variety of milds available during Mild

Magic, 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, now 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).

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 2020 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival (7 to 9 May) at Edgeley Park. See below for redemption details.

Collect stickers from **24 different pubs in 24 different areas** to enter **Mild Magic Extra** and receive a Mild Magic polo shirt plus two Festival entry tickets or two 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 three Festival entry tickets or three 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 plus a sweat shirt along with four Festival entry tickets or four free pints of mild for CAMRA members.

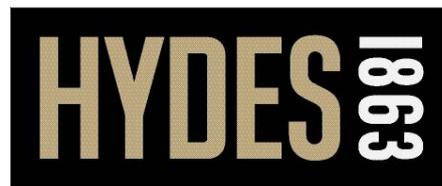
For a fun challenge we also have **Mild Magic Scrabble**. Each participating pub has an associated letter (shown on the card and sticker). Collect enough stickers on a card to spell out MILD MAGIC and win an extra pint (with a maximum of two per person) at the Beer Festival.

How long do I have to complete all this? Mild Magic runs from Friday 3 April to Sunday 17 May inclusive.

How do I claim my Mild Magic tickets? Bring your completed card(s) along to the Beer Festival where you will receive your tickets or mild tokens. Please note, Festival entry tickets are valid any session **except Friday evening**. If you desire to continue collecting stickers for the eight days after the festival (or are unable to attend the Festival) 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 Joseph Holt's Brewery on Friday 26th June (if desired). Garments will be distributed separate to the Festival and can be collected **between 4pm and 7pm** on **Sunday 5 July** at the **Petersgate Tap**, 19A St Petersgate, Stockport SK1 1EB (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 will be invited to attend these award evenings.



This year we are delighted to welcome back **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 places, 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: Costello's Bar, Old Market Tavern; **Ashton under Lyne:** Ash Tree; **Bramhall:** Ladybrook Hotel; **Burnage:** Reasons To Be Cheerful; **Cheadle:** Crown, James Watts; **Cheadle Hulme:** Archive Bar & Bottle, Cross Keys, John Millington, P5; **Chorlton:** Beech Inn, Bowling Green, Horse & Jockey, Sedge Lynn; **Denton:** Howard's Neighbourhood Bar; **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:** Jake's of Gee Cross, Joshua Bradley; **Glossop:** Bar 2, Cask & Kitchen, Smithy Fold; **Hazel Grove:** Grove Alehouse; **Heaton Mersey:** Griffin; **Heaton Moor:** Crown; **Heaton Norris:** Hope Inn, Navigation, Nursery Inn; **Hyde:** Cheshire Ring, Queens; **Manchester:** Ape & Apple, Britons Protection, City Arms, Crown & Anchor (Cateaton Street), Crown & Kettle, Grey Horse, Molly House, Moon Under Water, Old Monkey, Paramount, Piccadilly Tap, Pie & Ale, Waterhouse; **Marple:** Samuel Oldknow; **Marple Bridge:** Norfolk Arms, Northumberland Arms; **Monton:** Park Inn; **New Mills:** Beer Shed, Chalkers Snooker Club; **Northenden:** Northenden Untapped; **Offerton:** Gardeners Arms; **Patricroft:** Stanley Arms; **Poynton:** Poynton Royal British Legion; **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, Bakers Vaults, Calvert's Court, Cocked Hat, Crown Inn, Petersgate Tap, Railway (Portwood), Remedy Bar, Wellington Inn, Ye Olde Vic; **Swinton:** Morning Star; **Timperley:** Quarry Bank Inn; **Urmston:** Lord Nelson, Tim Bobbin; **Whaley Bridge:** Goyt Inn; **Whitehough:** Old Hall; **Withington:** Victoria.

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SK5 1AS

THE GRIFFIN HEALD GREEN

124 WILMSLOW ROAD
HEALD GREEN
CHEADLE
SK8 3BE

THE GRIFFIN HEATON MERSEY

552 DIDSBUY ROAD
HEATON MERSEY
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PLATFORM 5

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Stagger

West Didsbury with Jerry Wicken

Times change. Sometimes very quickly. It wasn't many months ago that a stroll along Burton Road would have taken a strong constitution and a bulging wallet to drink real ale at all the new bars opening week on week.

Now (although by the time you read this, who knows?) the number of bars is, if anything, increasing, but the number selling real ale is in real decline. Craft ales are the flavour, and my goodness there are some weird and wonderful ones, and, cynical as this may sound, stick 'craft' or 'artisan' before a product and you can add a 30% premium. In the case of ale, you can also reduce the temperature by the same amount.

Nevertheless, it would be fair to say that all the outlets along Burton Road, real ale or not, were busy to a degree that most landlords would be happy to see on a Friday evening in late November.



Our first stop was the **George Charles**. On entering, it is not hard to imagine that this was originally a corner shop and greengrocers (Wellington Stores), and it's named after one of the 19th century owners, an Armenian immigrant who took the name George Charles. We took the last available table upstairs, though there is a downstairs drinking area too, and enjoyed the Poynton Brewery All Day IPA and particularly the Brightside Lights Out Porter. So few of us were on the Stagger, the other offering of Weetwood Ales Cheshire Cat went untried. This bar also serves good food and has regular tastings and a variety of events and its website is worth checking out to see if any of the forthcoming activities appeal. A promising start to the evening.



Sadly, the **Boiler Room** no longer had real ale; nor did **Saison** so a little further down and across the road we entered **Folk Cafe Bar**. Once more we found a table minutes before the bar filled up. In warmer weather there is a large outdoor undercover drinking area. The ales for sale were Howard Town Monk's Gold and Saltaire Triple Choc. The latter was clearly nearly at barrel end and the pump clip was turned round after we had been served. Something was clearly amiss as it took more than ten minutes to pour! Despite this, the taste was OK, as it was for the Monk's Gold.

We were now in for a bit of a shock. **Volta**, **Drawing Room**, **Gallery**, **Hula**, **Proove** and **Mary and Archie** were all bereft of real ale forcing us to continue to pubs not officially on our Stagger route.

The first of these, still on Burton Road, is the **Metropolitan**, a quite enormous pub offering many areas to drink and eat. The food



side, mainly in a conservatory which is especially nice in the summer, is very popular but does not impinge on the drinking areas. As ever, the pub was rammed and, despite its size, no seats were available. I don't think the clientele were here for the

beer. One of the ales had just finished and we were left with the choice of Timothy Taylor Landlord or Fuller's London Pride. Both were very disappointing, particularly the London Pride, and we were surprised to see the pub had been given Cask Marque status. Still, this was the result of a snapshot of one evening in November so it would be wrong to draw too many conclusions.



Just across the road is the **Railway**, a long-established Holt's house offering the cheapest beer in the neighbourhood. Friday night is 'music night' with five live bands performing in a smallish area at the back. We managed, eventually, to find a table towards the

front of the bar where we could still listen to the music (one singer sounded remarkably like the late Poly Styrene from her X-Ray Spex period) yet still have a reasonable conversation. The staff were ever helpful in offering a taste of the Paterson's High Strength Bitter, brewed by Joseph Holt, which was decent, although a little sweet for all our tastes. We still managed the Bootleg Pale Ale, Holt's Two Hoots and the Holt's Bitter all of which we judged to be on good form. The Railway is a lively multi-roomed pub at the start of Lapwing Lane and, as well as live music, has a Tuesday quiz and TV screens for those following sports.

Fast running out of pubs, we made enquiries about visiting the **Albert Bowling and Tennis Club** on Old Lansdowne Road. They were happy to accommodate us, provided we moved to the back as there was a live music event on for members and it was packed. We sat in the snooker room overlooking two well-maintained tables. Three ales were available, Seven Brothers IPA, Young's Original and Jennings Atomic Theory. We were very taken by the first two named and nor was there anything wrong with the Jennings.

This was a very agreeable way to finish off the evening. It may not have been what was planned but was certainly deemed an enjoyable and successful Stagger. Indeed, we enjoyed ales from eleven different breweries, seven of which are based in the North West. So see what you think or, better still join us on future Stagers, details of which can be found on our website ssmcamra.co.uk.



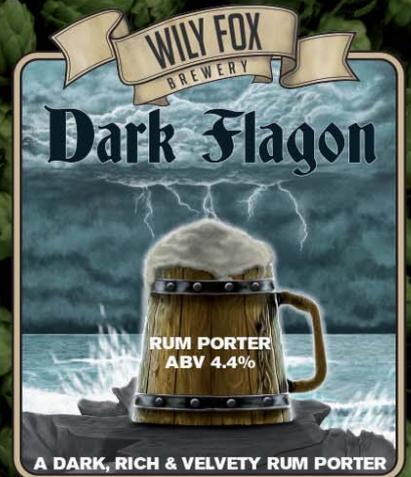
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Pub Walks with Chris Morris

Combs

With the cold winter weather hopefully behind us and the days getting longer, March and April are excellent months to stretch your legs in the great outdoors. As well as enjoying the signs of spring, it's also an opportunity to visit a great country pub!

You don't have to venture far from home; there are some cracking pub walks closer than you think. By using the excellent public transport options that we have in our area, instead of driving, you have the freedom to try more beers when you get to the pub and you get to look at the scenery instead of the road! This walk is not strenuous and has lovely views of Combs Reservoir and the surrounding hills, including the impressive Combs Edge.

The Beehive



Located in the heart of the picturesque Derbyshire village of Combs, this comfortable 19th-century country pub feels far away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. With the absence of main roads nearby, the village offers peace and quiet for all. The pub looks inviting from the outside and this continues inside with lovely wooden floors, beams and wall panelling. With friendly staff, excellent home-cooked food, a cosy real fire plus a good range of well-kept cask beers, you might not want to leave! On my last visit the cask beers were Bradfield Farmers Blonde, Marston's Wainwright and the house beer, Beehive Bitter.

Opening times are noon to 11pm Monday to Saturday and noon to 10.30pm on Sundays. Meal times are noon to 2pm and 6pm to 9pm Monday to Saturday, noon to 9pm on Sundays.

The Walk

This is a straightforward three-mile walk with some stiles and two gradual climbs. One section can get a little muddy after wet weather. The OS Explorer map is OL24 The Peak District (OS app also available).

This walk starts and finishes at my favourite railway station on the Piccadilly to Buxton line, Chapel-en-le-Frith. Unlike most stations which are in the centre of towns or villages, this one is fairly isolated and located halfway up a hillside. It means that, when exiting the train, there are no roads to cross or streets to negotiate – you can start your walk immediately.

The train from Stockport will drop you off on platform 2. Turn left on exiting the train and walk to the end of the platform, through a gate

on the right, along a short path and then to the left. You will then see a path ahead, just to the right of the train tracks. Follow this path, cross over a quiet lane and continue along the path for half a mile. At a gate, turn left over the railway bridge and then right to re-join the path on the opposite side of the tracks.

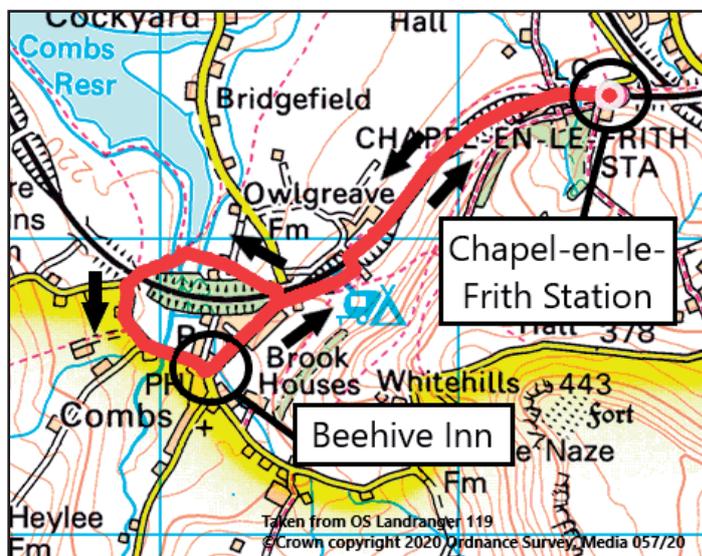
Continue along this path for 300 yards until you reach a road. Turn right here, walking under the railway bridge and then immediately left through a gate. Cross the field towards the old stone barn and over the wall via the stone steps. We now have nice views of Combs Reservoir up ahead.

Walk to the left of the barn and cross the field to the stile on the other side. Our route is now ahead then down and to the left across a footbridge. We now walk ahead and then slightly right over another footbridge. Walk straight ahead up the hill to the gate at the top corner of the field. This area can get muddy. Turn left and walk under the railway arch then straight ahead, exiting at the small gate which leads to the road. Turn left here and walk along the road for 500 yards until you reach the pub on your left. On leaving the pub, turn left and take the road to the left. After 350 yards you come to the railway bridge from earlier. Take the path to the right, before the bridge and retrace your steps along the same path, then over the railway bridge again and back to the station.

Train Information

Purchase a return ticket to Chapel-en-le-Frith. From Stockport there are two trains an hour in the morning and afternoon Monday to Saturday with hourly trains in the evening. The Sunday service is hourly. For full timetable information visit:

www.nationalrail.co.uk.



HYDES CASK ALES - A WORK OF ART

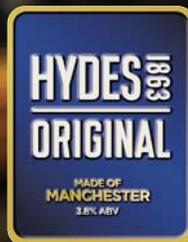
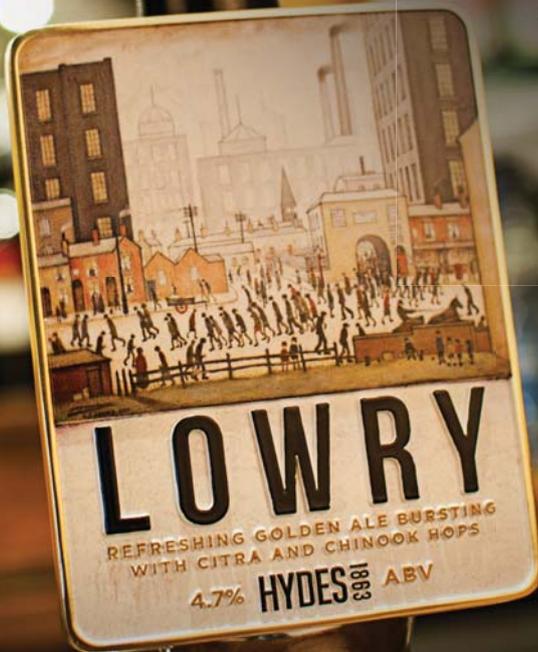
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Visit www.hydesbrewery.com to see a full list of all of our pubs!

The Hat Goes Forth

Andy Sullivan visits Silly Country

Readers from last time will know that instead of Plan A you got Plan B! This time, in part owing to it being a Sunday, I have Plan A for you. Almost. This time I approach Droylsden via Lumb Lane from Audenshaw Tram Stop, past Lumb Farm farmhouse, a wiggle through a housing estate and access Market Street/Moorside Street from Thornhill Road. Turning right, the first pub encountered is the **Strawberry Gardens**. As there is no cask here I do not stay, but the pub looks healthy enough.



On up Moorside Street and on the same side is the **Bush** which claims to be Cask Marque, but the signs say it lapsed and there is no record on the app; however I have to say what a cracking good pint (two) of Thwaites Original (3.6%), a nice strength for a thirsty researcher. Two other cask beers are on offer, both

branded Thwaites, IPA (4%) and Gold (4.1%). I have every expectation of these being of the same quality, not least because someone here pays attention to detail, starting with the welcome (thank you), which would have included my dog had I got one! A proper community local with acts and charitable events, the pub has plenty of good seating and three distinct areas: a tap room and bar parlour, indicated by lovely (highly polished) brass plates, augment the main room and, I am told, the largest beer garden in Tameside. It is spotless throughout. Kids are welcome to 8pm and normal opening is from 5pm Monday to Thursday and 2pm Fridays, then all day at weekend from noon.



Further up along Moorside Street and on the left is another Lumb Lane. Whether these ever joined up I don't know, but there are an awful lot of Lumb Lanes about this side of Manchester. At the end, where it is truncated by the railway, is the **Railway**. I was convinced, given the similarity of other pubs, not least the Railway at Navigation Road, that it is a Holt's establishment. It does not take long for a local to correct me on this and they do like their pub! To the left on entry is a pretty traditional, if tired, vault. Owing to its age and apparent lack of investment over time the pub is "lived in", but what a cracker! A much larger room is accessed to the right on entry and some lovely-looking meals are served on Sundays. Now unusually, there is a well-looked-after snooker table upstairs (ask!) and the whole pub features interesting things: the problem with refurbishments is that often these are stripped out. I like the fact that an ancient, small, black and

white TV is still perched above the door. Heaven knows when it was last used, but it has now been usurped by a modern screen! It's open from 5pm Monday to Thursday, 3pm Friday and all day weekends. There's entertainment on the last Friday of the month. Given where it is, the Railway particularly needs your support and with Timmy Taylors Landlord as the regular beer what's not to like? I should have asked about dogs, but I was having fun!

It is in the Railway that I ruminate on my experience so far of Droylsden, a town I really have never much considered looking at. At times it's really great to have your impressions and prejudgements challenged. Everyone I've met has been so welcoming and generally lovely that I cannot fail to comment. It's a real throwback to old fashioned Northern hospitality. Why is it that when so much local tradition and common courtesy has declined all over the country that Droylsden has maintained a palpable sense of identity? I don't know, but I'm delighted to say that it has.



Down at the crossroads of Manchester and Ashton Roads and in one of the best possible positions, under the unmissable white tower, is the modern, eponymous and fairly well-known **Silly Country**. The three or four decent cask beers are usually accompanied by at least one cider and a few craft ales. Bottles and cans are also on sale. It's dog-friendly, and the warm welcome from knowledgeable staff comforts you in what otherwise might be a cold-feeling pub, the décor being stripped back and hard in the modern style. The shelf and stools around the front provide brilliant people-watching opportunities and there is plenty of outdoor seating too. Open pretty well all day.

To be continued.

The Waters Green

Local CAMRA
Pub of
the Season
Winter '13



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Tel 01625 422653

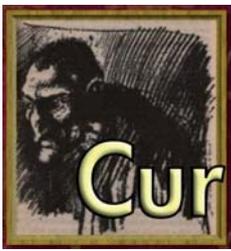
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Curmudgeon

Very Early Doors

The determined band of drinkers who assemble in the average Wetherspoons at 9am are often viewed with a mixture of amusement, derision and pity, and singled out as an example of the downside of extended licensing hours. However, if you actually look at what they're doing, they're not settling in for an all-day session: many will be gone at lunchtime, and pretty well all by mid-afternoon. This isn't all that different from the regular sessions straight through from teatime to 11pm that used to be entirely normal. In many cases, they will only be drinking at a leisurely pace too.

There was recently an outbreak of moral panic in the media when it was reported that a non-Wetherspoons pub in Great Yarmouth was even offering a happy hour from 9am to 11am. But the reality, as reported by the *Eastern Daily Press*, was more a general feeling of conviviality. One customer said, "I love the atmosphere in here and it's great to catch up with my mates. The pints are cheap and everyone is in good spirits", while a barmaid commented, "Everyone knows each other in here and they just have a laugh. There's no trouble." Isn't that what pubs are supposed to be all about?

Other customers gave safety as a reason for coming out earlier. One said, "I don't feel safe coming into the town any later. There are too many yobs on the streets and who knows what might happen", and another added, "It's not safe for someone like me who has health problems to come to the pub in the evening." These fears may seem a touch exaggerated, but many towns that encourage a lively nightlife do develop a distinct "atmosphere" later in the evening that makes older drinkers feel uncomfortable.

It may not be something that appeals to you or me; it's unlikely to meet with the approval of the public health lobby, and it's certainly not compatible with holding down a full-time job. But isn't this really just a case of the liberalisation of licensing hours opening up opportunities for people to go to the pub at times that suit them? Rather than laughing or sneering at the early-morning drinkers, shouldn't we just accept that people now have the freedom to use pubs in different ways, and at different times of day?

Measure for Measure

You sometimes see stories in the media expressing shock over some rare, mega-strong craft beer being sold in a bar for the equivalent of £22 a pint or thereabouts. This inevitably results in some people asking "Why are you expressing it as a price per pint when it isn't going to be drunk in pints?" Well, probably it isn't, but that isn't the point. For any commodity, if you're making price comparisons, it's still desirable to have a consistent yardstick, and given that the pint is the standard unit for draught beer then it seems sensible to use it. This line of argument comes across as trying to cover your embarrassment.

Wine prices are generally quoted by the bottle, even though you drink it by the glass. You often hear of expensive wines being "£100 a bottle" or suchlike. Likewise, in the supermarket, the prices of various cuts of meat are quoted as price per kilogram, although nobody eats a steak that size. Anyone with any knowledge of beer is well aware that stronger beers cost more because of the higher duty and the greater amount of raw materials needed. But, locally, you can buy Robinsons 8.5% Old Tom for the equivalent of £7 to £8 a pint in pubs, so in comparison anything over £20 still seems pretty eye-watering.

Curmudgeon Online: curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

This is an ORDER...

Turns out getting pulled over by the police isn't always bad news

It started as a day much like any other for our delivery driver. But later that morning, as he was carefully navigating the A64 with a precious cargo of Landlord casks, the flashing blue lights of the North Yorkshire constabulary appeared in his mirror. He pulled over, fretting about why the police were stopping him. But rather than issue a ticket, the officer wanted to order a delivery of Landlord to the police social club. Is it the combination of the finest ingredients and our traditional brewing methods that means some drinkers go that little bit further for that *arresting* taste of Taylor's?

All for that taste of Taylor's

What's On

Local CAMRA Branch Diaries

Events for March and April 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

CAMRA members only at these meetings.

Monday 9 March – Bridge Beers, 55 Melbourne Street, Stalybridge, SK15 2JJ. Starts 8:00pm. (HPNC)

Monday 9 March – Harrington Arms, Church Lane, Gawsworth, SK11 9RJ. This will also include the branch AGM. Starts 8:00pm. (MEC)

Thursday 12 March – Blossoms, Buxton Road, Heavily, Stockport, SK2 6NU. Guest speaker from Robinsons brewery. Starts 8:15pm. (SSM)

Monday 6 April – Poynton Legion Club, George's Road West, Poynton, SK12 1JY. Starts 8:00pm. (HPNC)

Tuesday 7 April – Angel, 6 Angel Street, Manchester, M4 4BQ. This will also include the branch AGM. Meet 6pm for 6:30 start. (CMCR)

Thursday 9 April – Magnet, 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. This will also include the Branch AGM. Starts 8:15pm. (SSM)

Social Events & Presentations

Saturday 7 March – Afternoon in Old Glossop. Catch 11:33 train from Piccadilly; first stop Bulls Head, 102 Church Street, SK13 7RN. Then Wheatsheaf, Howard Town Tap and Queens Arms. (SSM)

Friday 20 March – Moss Nook & Heald Green Stagger: 7:30pm Tatton Arms, 2 Trenchard Drive, M22 5LZ; 8:30pm Beefeater, Finney Lane, SK8 3QH; final pub Griffin, 124 Wilmslow Road, SK8 3BE. (SSM)

Thursday 26 March – Pub of the Month presentation to the Chiverton Tap, 8 Mellor Road, Cheadle Hulme, SK8 5AU. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

Thursday 26 March – Thirstback Thursday: 6:00pm Britons Protection, 50 Great Bridgewater Street, M1 5LE, and then heading via numerous bars and pubs towards Deansgate, finishing at the Knott or if time permits the Wharf. (CMCR)

Saturday 28 March – Club of the Year presentation to the Albert Club, 39-41 Old Lansdowne Road, West Didsbury, M20 2PA. Arrive from 7:30pm for 8:00pm presentation. (SSM)

Friday 3 April – Mild Magic Launch Social: 7:30pm Ford Madox Brown, Unit 1, Wilmslow Park, Wilmslow Road, M14 5FT; 8:30pm Victoria, 438 Wilmslow Road, M20 3BW. (SSM)

Saturday 11 April – Pub of the Year presentation to the Magnet, 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

Friday 17 April – Great Moor & Heavily Stagger: 7:30pm George & Dragon, 14 London Road, SK7 4AH; 8:30pm Travellers Call, 352 Buxton Road, SK2 7NL; final pub Blossoms, 2 Buxton Road, SK2 6NU. (SSM)

Saturday 18 April – Saturday Social Awayday: public transport to Clitheroe. The Social Secretaries will be catching the 11:45am train from Victoria, returning on the 5:53pm train. (CMCR)

Saturday 18 April – Spring Pub of the Season presentation to Traders, 111-113 Stockport Road, Marple, SK6 6AF. Followed by a social in other local pubs. From 1:30pm. (HPNC)

Thursday 23 April – Pub of the Month presentation to the Queens, 11 Great Portwood Street, Stockport, SK1 2DW. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

Thursday 30 April – Thirstback Thursday: 6:00pm Molly House, 26 Richmond Street, M1 3NB, then calling at various pubs and bars. Finishes at Jolly Angler, 47 Ducie Street, M1 2JW. (CMCR)

CAMRA Awards

Recent Presentations



On Saturday 11 January, High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire branch presented its Winter Pub of the Season 2020 Award to the **Old Cell** (10 Market Place, Chapel-en-le-Frith). Pictured above, Branch Chairman Ben Zwierink is seen presenting owner Stella Walters with her certificate. The Old Cell is a small and comfortable micropub with a welcoming fire for cold weather. With three changing beers, it is well worth a visit. In former days it was the local 'lock up' for miscreants, with some cells still remaining in the cellar!



The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month award for December was won by the **George & Dragon** in Cheadle. Primarily wet-led, and with a multitude of television screens, the pub is ably run by experienced licensee Nicola Foster. Beers here are competitively priced and many are supplied by the Amber Taverns-owned Cheadle Brew House, conveniently situated behind the pub. Nicola is seen here receiving her certificate from Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA chairman, John Clarke.



The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month winner for January was **Sandbar** on Grosvenor Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock. An interesting conversion of two Georgian townhouses, Sandbar was one of the first modern bars in Manchester when it opened in 1996. Situated in the heart of the university area, it is popular with both students and lecturers. Regular events include live music or DJs in the evenings, life-drawing classes, and wine, whisky and gin tastings, among others. Manager Dave Williams couldn't be present on the night and senior bar staff members Gwen and Sarah are seen here with the certificate.

News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

Award for Opening Times



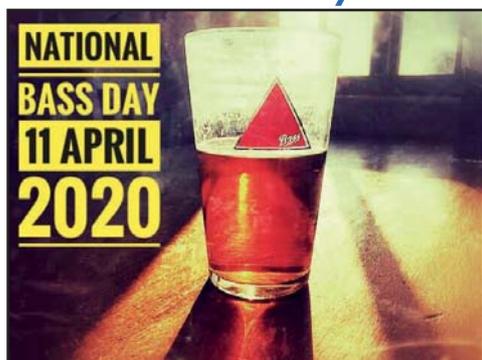
At Greater Manchester CAMRA's Regional Meeting on February 15, it was announced that *Opening Times* has again been judged 'best in class' and is again the Greater Manchester CAMRA Magazine of the Year.

The judge praised all the local magazines for their appearance and content and added that the result was very close. *Opening Times* editor John Clarke commented, "We've worked hard to improve the appearance and content of *Opening Times* this year and I'm pleased this has been recognised. Competition was particularly stiff this time so it

is very gratifying to win for another year.

"The magazine is very much a team effort and I'd like to thank everyone who is involved in its production and distribution for their continued hard work. And of course, the continued support of our advertisers and readers is very much appreciated, too."

National Bass Day



Bass is one of the most famous beer names in the world, and in 1875 the distinctive red triangle became the very first registered trade mark. In the 1980s, the iconic cask ale that bears the name was available in thousands of pubs, but since then the

upheavals in the brewing industry have left it languishing in the bottom drawer of AB InBev's brand portfolio, and the number of regular outlets is down to below 500. Nevertheless, it retains a strong following on its home turf in the Midlands, and is seen as a flagship beer in pubs ranging from Falmouth to Tynemouth.

It is now contract-brewed by Marston's, but the general view amongst Bass devotees is that they're doing an excellent job and producing a highly distinctive, bittersweet, nutty brew that does justice to its heritage. In the words of noted beer writer Roger Protz, "If Timothy Taylor's Landlord... or Draught Bass are bland beers, I am a banana sandwich."

To counteract the lack of official promotion, a group of Bass lovers has come together to nominate Saturday 11 April, the 243rd anniversary of the purchase of the brewery in Burton by William Bass, as National Bass Day. So why not celebrate by seeking out a pub where you can enjoy a pint, or if you run a free house, get a cask in to mark the occasion?

Torrside Taps

Torrside Brewery at New Mills Marina (no more than a five-minute walk from New Mills Newtown station) has announced the dates of its popular brewery taps. The brewery will be open on the Friday and

Saturday of Easter weekend (10 and 11 April), Saturday and Sunday at May Bank Holiday (23 and 24 May) and then on the last weekend of each month (Saturday and Sunday) from June to September inclusive. In addition, the dates of this year's Smokefest have been announced. This is a beer festival devoted to smoked beers (of which there is a huge variety) and this year's event will be on Saturday and Sunday, 7 and 8 November. Tickets for this will be available via the brewery website (torrside.co.uk) in due course.

New for Hyde

Now here's something a bit different. **Relics 'N' Rust**, a 'lifestyle shop' on Commercial Brow in Hyde, has been around for quite a while. It's always specialised in cycle and motorbike repairs and servicing. Part of it is now El Pedro's Barber Shop and there also seems to be an outlet for vintage clothing. However, what caught our correspondent's eye was a sign declaring 'Bar Open'.

One end of the shop has been converted into a bar, with a small kitchen added as well. There is no draught real ale, but bottle-conditioned beers are sold and we believe the intention is to specialise in bottled Belgian beers. Opening hours are, we think, 11am to 7pm. A full report will be in the next issue.

Charity Quiz at Petersgate Tap

The **Petersgate Tap** held another charity quiz night in December in aid of the pub charity, Stockport MIND. Last time, £800 was raised and the aim was to beat £1000. Thanks to a supreme effort by the Stockport community, a staggering £1530 was raised this time around.



Pictured above are Alan and Chris Gent from the Tap, plus student Matty who is working at MIND and also took part in the quiz. Alan said, "We hoped that the beer industry would pull the stops out – and they did – but we were knocked out by donations from stalls in the market hall, our local butchers, Littlewoods, and even customers who came in with raffle prizes, either from themselves or from their companies." Marcus Raymond from Stockport Mind added, "The Tap has now raised an incredible £3300 in total, we're very grateful for all their continuing efforts."

Cheshire Inn Brief

In Kettleshulme, the **Swan Inn** is now fully operational again following flood damage. Over the hill in Disley, the **Rams Head** has also reopened following a refurbishment. In Poynton, the **Bulls Head** has also been refurbished. Four cask beers are now sold with the regular Thwaites Original being joined by three guest beers.

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