

OPENING TIMES

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2021

FREE



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About Opening Times & Contacts

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Trading Standards

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Their telephone no. is 03454 04 05 06. To report a matter to Trading Standards go to:

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Public Transport

Opening Times does not recommend you drink and drive. Local public transport information can be obtained online as follows:

- * 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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www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

Contact: John Barber; secretary@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

Central Manchester

www.centralmanchester.camra.org.uk

Contact: Steve Davis; treasurer@centralmanchester.camra.org.uk

Social Media

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

Stockport & South Manchester:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA

Twitter – @SSMCAMRA

High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire:

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Central Manchester:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/groups/CentralManchesterCamra

Twitter – @MCRCentralCamra

Macclesfield & East Cheshire:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/groups/897449270304045

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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

Happy Christmas! Festive cheer at Ye Olde Vic, Stockport, with local CAMRA man Dave Sharpe (left) and landlord Steve Brannan (right). Photo by Lawrence Devaney.

Contributors

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Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for November and December



The Pub of the Month for November is the Fletcher Moss in Didsbury. Mike Wilson explains why this excellent wet-led pub won the award.

Cast your mind back to the halcyon days of the busy, traditional pub where good ale and conversation were available in equal measure, aided and abetted by attentive and sociable staff. Well you don't need to wallow in nostalgia any longer, because the Fletcher Moss delivers these welcome and popular qualities by the spadeful.



Cask is king here. Six or seven pumps dispense a comprehensive range of Hydes beers, kept in superb condition. Such is the popularity of the Fletcher Moss you need have no concern that, if you happen to catch the last pint out of the cask, its quality will be in any way inferior. Fast turnover will guarantee top quality. Most encouragingly, manager Martin Devlin reports that the student population is turning its back on national lagers in favour of cask-conditioned ale – an education worth leaving home for!

This thriving pub combines a traditional layout at the front along with an extended section at the back, opening into an attractive beer garden which helped to draw many new customers during the semi-lockdown when indoor drinking had been prohibited. Consequently, manager Martin reports a turnover that exceeds pre-Covid levels. As well as attracting new customers, the

pub has retained its loyal band of locals as attested by Pete and Barry, stalwarts for many years, who could speak only in glowing terms about the pub and its staff.

This award is partly in memory of CAMRA member Stuart Ballantyne, who died in August and is fondly remembered here.

Join us on Thursday 25 November from 8pm and celebrate along with Martin, his staff and, of course, Pete and Barry.

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

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The Pub of the Month winner for December is the Moor Top on Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor. Val Jones tells us why it won.

The Moor Top dates from 1955 and for much of its existence was a fairly standard, averagely-run estate pub of no great interest to the cask ale drinker. All that changed in 2015 when it was taken over by Steve Pilling, a very experienced operator who also runs Stockport's Produce Hall along with several other outlets.



The pub then closed in 2017 for a complete makeover that saw it transformed into a modern yet traditional 'pub and kitchen' which, while food-oriented, still welcomes those who just want a drink. Although this is a Greene King-owned outlet, there is a changing range of cask beers available, including a house beer from Bredbury's Stockport Brewing.



Inside, there is a variety of areas including some separate rooms for private dining or meeting. Outside are large sheltered areas surrounded by attractive landscaping.

There is a wide-ranging menu, covering everything from full meals to bar snacks, with the 'Bottomless Brunch' being a popular feature. But it's not entirely food-driven – live sport is shown and there's a regular quiz night, for example.

The Moor Top last received this award in July 2016. Since then, not only has the pub been transformed but high standards have been maintained throughout and, in addition, the Moor Top has anchored itself in the local community.

Join is on the evening of 29 December when this well-deserved award will be presented to Steve Pilling and his team.

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What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region

We'll start by finishing our catch-up with the new breweries we missed last time.

Assembly Brew Co.

Based in Spur Mill, South Reddish, Assembly is the immediate next door neighbour of Dave Foulger's **Ventile Brew Co.** They are literally next door to each other.



Assembly is a project by keen homebrewer Sean Robinson and his brother-in-law Scott Power (pictured left). Sean and Scott already own two bars in Urmston, The Assembly and BrauHaus, and the original plan was to set up a small 100-litre kit on the first floor of The Assembly and just produce a couple of kegs a month, but, during the first lockdown last year, they started thinking about something bigger.

There was a missed opportunity to buy a two-and-a-half barrel

brewhouse, but then Salford's **Pomona Island Brew Co.** decided to upgrade and offered Sean and Scott the opportunity to buy their 10-barrel kit. It's a former Dave Porter installation (supplemented by some shiny new tanks) and had previously been at Seven Bro7hers, so we think it's the third time it has featured in these pages!

The (quite extensive) premises were found in February this year but the keys weren't handed over until June. After that it was all systems go and the first beer went into tank in September. Brewing currently takes place once a week with around 1,600 litres produced at a time. The plan is to get two more tanks before Christmas so capacity can be increased in the New Year.



Beers produced to date have included Go With The Flow, a pale ale at 4.2%, and I Get Around, a West Coast session IPA at 5.2%. It's planned for most of the beers to fall into the 4-6% region, and as both Sean and Scott love drinking a wide

range of styles, this will be reflected in what they produce.

The unfiltered and unpasteurised beers are primarily put into keykegs and they hope to have some cans out before Christmas. A limited amount of some beers will go into cask and be sold exclusively at the on-site tap room when that opens.

Want to try them? You can obviously pick them up at The Assembly and BrauHaus but numerous other local pubs and bars have taken deliveries. And you'll get updates on the Twitter feed at twitter.com/assemblybrewco. Do look out for these as initial feedback looks to have been very good.

Four Kings and P-Noot Brew Co.

The Four Kings Brewery at Flowery Field, Hyde, had an open day in late October, so *Opening Times* took the opportunity to catch up.



There have been quite a few changes since we last called. The team has now reduced to just two, Paul Ashworth and Andy Booth (pictured here), and there have also been changes to the rather impressive tap room, the beers and the branding.

The wood-clad tap room has been expanded with more seating and tables, along with more subdued lighting. The tap should be open monthly, but check with the brewery – and you'll also need to book ahead at drink@fourkingsbrewery.com – it's very popular and filled up quickly while OT was there.



There are three Four Kings beers – 4Tune Best Bitter (4%), 4Ever Session IPA (4.5%) and 4Most Porter Ale (5.5%). They are primarily cask beers, and also sell mainly through the tap, but the Session IPA will be available in cans shortly. The Best Bitter and Session IPA have been substantially reformulated and this is where Jamie Maxwell (pictured left) of P-Noot comes in, as he has helped out on the technical side and sharing brewing expertise.

Some of the P-Noot beers have been brewed at Four Kings, although it is basically the latest incarnation (the fourth we think) of the intermittently-used brewery in the cellar of the Lowes Arms in Denton.

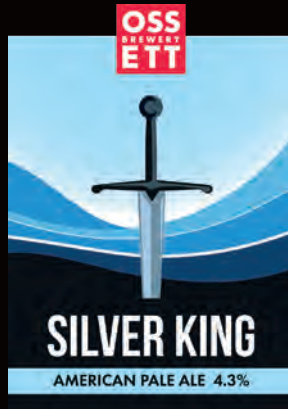
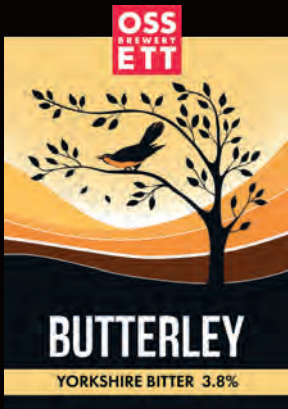
We understand that Peter Wood, long-time owner of the Lowes, decided that as there was a brewery on site it would be a good idea to put it to some use. At the same time, some friends of Jamie mentioned the brewery to him, so he approached Peter with half a dozen beers he had made on his own kit. They were well received so he was asked to re-start the brewery. It hadn't been used for four years so a fair amount of tidying was needed first.

Jamie, who described himself to us as 'the Banksy of the beer world', is based in Denton and has a background in fine art and graphic design. He told us that he has taken his experience of layering colours and applied it to layering aromas and textures in beer. His beers, some of which are very individual, were mainly designed to be unfiltered and unpasteurised and sold via keykeg. However he's really taken to cask as well, and one was on sale at Four Kings – seven have been produced to date, mostly available at the Lowes Arms, where they may be found under the LAB label. There have also been ten keg P-Noot beers so far – one can be found in the Lowes and a couple in Denton's Howard's Neighbourhood Bar. The rest have gone through the Four Kings Tap.

If you check out the website (p-nootbrewco.com) you'll see a wide range of products. Some, in the 'Black Box' series, do have names which some folk might find unacceptable we think. Jamie is quite unapologetic though, explaining they are deliberately ambiguous and reflect the 'underground and edgy' feel he's after with P-Noot. Make up your own minds.

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Obituary

Tony Allen

The brewing world lost a true pioneer on 4 September when Tony Allen, owner of Heywood's Phoenix Brewery, died after a long illness aged 69.



Like many successful micro-brewers from the early days, Tony started his career with a rather larger concern. In his case it was Bass, where he spent 13 years working first at Sheffield and then, from 1973, at Runcorn. In 1980, he read an article by the late Richard Boston talking about the pioneering Penrhos Brewery in Herefordshire. Their stated aim was to make a small amount of top quality beer.

"That sounds like a good idea," Tony recalled thinking when *Opening Times* interviewed him in

2007, and so he used to travel down there on his rest days at Bass, averaging about four days a month. He remembered working on Penrhos Porter, one of the first revivals of what was by then an almost extinct style.

In 1981, a round of redundancies prompted Tony to leave Bass and initially spend three months full-time at Penrhos. This led him to the perhaps inevitable conclusion that he could do something similar for himself. And so, Oak Brewery was born. Living in Frodsham at the time, the search for suitable and not-too-distant premises began. Rejecting a former whale oil processing factory (complete with all its equipment!) in Runcorn, premises were found in Ellesmere Port. Setting up in those days was rather different from today when a whole industry has grown up to support new brewers. Tony recalled that the Customs office in Chester didn't even have a form to register a new brewery. Malt could only be bought by the ton (and had to be crushed by a local farmer), while hops came in huge pockets or half pockets.

A key to Oak's success was the intention to be as professional as possible from the start. So began nine successful years brewing such beers as Oak Best Bitter, Old Oak Ale and Double Dagger, plus the powerful, and cult-ish, Wobbly Bob (6% ABV).



However, as trade built up, the Oak Brewery premises were badly situated for its main trading area, and in 1991 came the move to the old Phoenix Brewery premises in Heywood, prompting a name change from Oak Brewery.

The impressive premises, complete with imposing

brewery tower (although the Phoenix plant is in the old malt store), have received considerable investment over the years and has become home to an impressively-consistent range of beers, many in the 'pale and hoppy' category. Tony was very well known and respected across the local brewing scene, as evidenced by the large attendance at his funeral in Halifax. The wake was held at his local, the Big Six, where, in a tribute to Tony's baking skills, the buffet comprised several groaning tables of pies, pasties and sausage rolls!

Next year would have been the 40th anniversary of Tony starting up, and *Opening Times* was planning a feature on him and his brewery. Sadly that won't now be possible but we hope Phoenix Brewery continues for many years to come.

Talking About Beer

Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA was delighted to be invited to contribute items for the Stockport Talking Newspaper Association's (STNA's) monthly newsletter.

The Stockport Talking Newspaper was founded by local optician Granville Jones over 40 years ago. Today, the aim remains the same - to enable blind and visually-impaired persons (and nowadays word-blind people) access to local news. In the beginning, volunteers started



by recording onto cassette tape, then it was CDs, and now memory sticks are used. The audience of around 150 is located in the borough and beyond. Completely free weekly output uses PO Freepost in high visibility yellow wallets to reach individual listeners.

STNA volunteers also create a free monthly audio magazine about a wide range of subjects, largely Stopfordian, and this is where CAMRA has been helping out. Over the last few months, Jim Flynn has been interviewed about CAMRA and Chris Walkden (pictured above in the studio) has contributed monthly 8-minute items outlining the beer scene in Stockport and surrounding areas. Subjects covered have included Stockport Beer Week as well as local pub and brewery news and Branch meetings. In future editions, he will also narrate some of our articles from *Opening Times* about the Staggers which have now restarted.

If you know of potential listeners – they could be anywhere in the country - who would be interested in knowing more, all the output can be accessed online at stockporttalkingnewspaper.org.uk. Charity volunteers also record a monthly "What's On in the Borough and surrounding Areas", as well as other useful material for visually-impaired people. Anyone, anywhere in the country, unable to access the written word can find details about the STNA service online at stockporttalkingnewspaper.org.uk.

And, if you would like to volunteer in any way, please email the STNA at stna@live.co.uk to discuss any opportunities to help out.

Old Tom Returns



Last month, *Opening Times* became aware of rumours circulating online that Robinsons Old Tom would not be available on draught this winter. A half of this excellent strong ale can be the highlight of a cold December day, so naturally we took this up with the brewery. We are pleased to report that there was no truth at all in these reports and draught Old Tom should be available to local Robinsons pubs from November.

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Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

Open and closed

For some years the **Duke of York** in Heaviley had not exactly been a shining star of the Robinsons estate. It was shabby and run down, and in recent times sold no cask beer more often than not.

Happily, Robinsons have now taken the bull by the horns and invested a significant amount of money to basically refocus the pub as a family-friendly and eating venue.



It reopened in September and early impressions are they have got this right.

The pub has been transformed, both inside and out. Externally, the striking grey colour scheme certainly makes the pub stand out on busy

Buxton Road, while at the back there is an extensive paved drinking area (soon to be extended further), which will eventually be served by an outside bar.

Inside, there has been a thorough makeover in Robinsons' now familiar, but successful, 'modern traditional' style, using a warm and welcoming palette



of greys, creams and browns, with lots of natural wood, too. Three rooms are served by a central bar on the right – a cosy snug, front right, a large lounge, with plenty of padded fixed seating, running from front to back on the left, and at the rear the old games

room has been converted into a dining room (or will be when the kitchen opens in late November). At the moment it is expected that food will be available every day from noon until 9pm.

Cask beer is back as well, with Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde and Cumbria Way on handpump when *Opening Times* called. Quality was good. At the moment, the Duke of York is closed on Mondays and opens from 12 noon until 11pm every other day. Monday opening should coincide with the food coming on stream.

Tenant Jacqui Sykes and her manager Rose Gallagher have a good pub on their hands and it's well worth a visit. The 192 bus will drop you very close by.



However, as one door opens another closes. Sad to say, Robinsons' **Silver Jubilee** in Heaton Norris has now closed for good following the retirement of long-serving licensee Karen Hopkins. The pub, which was only opened in 1977, had been on life support

for some time and recently had sold no cask beer. It's for sale on the open market and hasn't been delicensed, so in theory it could reopen in fresh hands. We're not hopeful.

Macclesfield Moves

There have been two major developments on the Macclesfield pub scene in recent months. One is a brand new pub, while the other sees the return of an old friend.

The newcomer is the, frankly astonishing, **Fountain** on Park Green, just around the corner from Red Willow. To describe this new outlet as vast perhaps understates the dimensions of this stylish conversion of a former Co-op building by Bollington Brewery. It's Bollington's fourth outlet and dwarfs the others by a significant margin.



Described as a 'café, bar and coffee roastery', the Fountain opened at the end of September and seems to have been an immediate success – it was certainly ticking over nicely when *Opening Times* called on a mid-week afternoon. And, despite its size, the clever conversion does seem to have created a surprisingly intimate atmosphere, with various cubicles, traditional colours and lots of natural wood. There is also some window seating which will be great for people-watching.



One end appears to be used primarily for drinking, while diners are at the other. The kitchen was busy when we called, and food is available from 10am to 6pm every day, with the menu running from 'lite bites' to more substantial dishes.

Five Bollington cask beers are on handpump – Long Hop, Bollington Best, White Nancy, Oat Mill Stout and Eastern Nights – along with a variety of keg beers including Moravka Czech-style lager from Taddington Brewery.

The Fountain, which is just a short walk from Macclesfield station, is open every day from 10am and closes at 11pm (midnight Friday and Saturday).

Perhaps closer to the station is the **Castle**, on Church Street, which reopened on 24 September after a long period of closure. Described as an "untouched, timeless and now rare example of an old-fashioned town pub", the Castle is on the CAMRA National Inventory of historic pub interiors and reports are that the new owners have done a fine job in restoring it.

The pub is closed on Tuesday and Wednesday but opens from noon until midnight the rest of the week. Three changing cask beers from local breweries are on handpump.

Scribbles on a Beer Mat



Welcome to Scribbles on a Beer Mat: the quiet corner of a Stockport pub where our Poet in Residence, Carl Burkitt, is sipping a pale ale and scribbling some poems.

The Landlord

You have the posture of a sergeant major,
the pace of a pensioner crossing the road.

Your right elbow has a dent
from leaning in your listening pose.

You are Chief. You are Gov.
You are Boss. You are a lifesaver.

Every time the door swings open
the pages of your phonebook memory flick with ease.

Your mouth rests in the shape of 'Usual?'
Your day has no morning, noon or night.

You have the face of a thousand Christmas card lists.
Your ears are laptop chargers.
You are the warmth of a baby grow.

You are a figure skater across slippery floorboards,
the soundtrack of fingerprint-smearred quiz machines,
the polisher of see-through goblets
for the royalty your customers are treated like.

Glasses, Green Shirt and Shoes

They're talking about their grandchildren
with lips softer than their approach to fatherhood.

Glasses says his grandson is as good as gold
even when he forgets dinnertime.

Green Shirt describes Nibble Day:
a once a week afternoon where you can't

see the coffee table through
bowls of Pom Bears, Haribo and Party Rings.

Shoes talks about eyes that never close;
sky blue fishing nets catching every new moment

of any given minute. The silence as they sip
their tarmac black stouts is a chance

for their tongues to swirl the word
'pride' into foamy white tops.

New Festival Charity Applications invited

Stockport Beer and Cider Festival will be back in June 2022 and we are looking for a new Festival Charity for the 2022-2024 Festivals. Past experience indicates that the chosen charity should expect an income of at least £6,000 per festival through sponsorship, the sale of beer, programmes and other products, and donations from our generous customers. Just as important, however, is the opportunity to significantly raise its profile in the area.

Applicant charities must be registered with the Charities Commission, local to the area (no national charities please), provide a service to the people of Stockport and the surrounding areas, and be willing to have their name/logo used in festival publicity. They should also understand that involvement with the Festival will incur effort on their part, working as an active partner with the Festival Organising Committee before and during the Festival.

Prior to the Festival, the Charity is expected to:

- Source up to 8 firkins of beer to sell at the Festival
- Plan for the numbers of staff and volunteers that will be needed to support the Charity's activities during the Festival
- Provide articles for Opening Times and the Festival Programme
- Publicise their association with the Festival
- Attend Festival Committee meetings

During the Festival, the Charity is expected to generate income by:

- Selling the Festival Programme to customers
- Selling the Charity's beer (and other products as agreed) on the Charity's stall
- Providing about half a dozen bar staff to assist the Festival's bars during the busy evening sessions
- Using the opportunity to engage with the public and collect donations
- Publicising their sponsors

Applications from all interested charities should be emailed to charitycontact@stockportfestival.org.uk, setting out how they will achieve the above activities, what other ideas or initiatives they suggest to support or promote themselves and the Festival, and, most important, why the Festival Committee should choose them as the Festival Charity.

The successful charity may also have the opportunity to be the official charity of the Stockport Beer Week in September each year. Applications should arrive no later than 3rd January 2022. The decision of the Festival Organising Committee will be final.

DAVENPORT ARMS (THIEF'S NECK) Woodford

Good Beer Guide
1988 - 2022

35th Glorious
Consecutive
Year



In the same family for 90 years

Good Beer Guide 2022 Shady Oak



“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 pints of cask ale, was published on 12 November (we suspect most readers will be seeing this after the publication date). This is the 49th edition of the country’s best beer and pub guide, and features over 4,500 of the best pubs in the UK, chosen by CAMRA members across the country.

Once again, Cask Marque, and its sister company Stay In A Pub, are sponsoring the *Guide*.

Paul Nunny, founder of both companies, told *Opening Times*, “CAMRA identify some of the best pubs in the UK and those pubs in the guide who are in Cask Marque will have our symbol by the side of their entry as an endorsement. We work together to ensure consumers enjoy a great pint of cask ale.

“Regarding accommodation, it is becoming an important third income stream for pubs, particularly rural ones, and links on the Good Beer Guide app to the Stay In A Pub website make it easy for consumers to book and enjoy the culture and a pub atmosphere”.

With this issue, three Stockport pubs celebrate remarkably long unbroken runs in the *Guide*, which Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA intends to mark with some special awards.



Both **Ye Olde Vic** on Chatham Street in Edgeley and the under-threat **Railway** on Avenue Street, Portwood, will have been in the *Guide* for 21 consecutive years – formidable achievements given the strength of the local pub and beer scene.

More remarkable still is the achievement of the **Davenport Arms** in Woodford (pictured above), which will celebrate no fewer than 35 consecutive entries. Not only that, but in February the pub will have been run by the Hallworth family for an astonishing 90 years. We don’t know of any local pubs that can match that – so expect celebrations.

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.

It lifts the spirits to see a dying, if not completely dead, pub rising again after serious CPR from a dedicated couple, writes Lawrence Devaney.

Sharon and Gareth, the new licensees since July this year (pictured below outside the pub) are turning the **Shady Oak** around, and it’s great to see the mix of happy drinkers and diners once more socialising at the pub.



They have redefined the front outside space and included a small children’s play area. The whole pub looks revitalised and the extensive food menu provides something for everyone.

When *Opening Times* first called, the cask offering was up to five lines – a mix of Wychwood Hobgoblin, Youngs, Marston’s and Black Sheep, which was the pick of the beers. Recently *Opening Times’* interest has been further stimulated with beers from Blonde Brothers, Goff’s Brewery and Frisky Bear. The Goff’s Black Knight, described as a Ruby Porter, was particularly good.

Sharon moved to this typical local, situated as it is in the heart of the Bramhall ‘New Farm’ estate, from the Parks Inn outside Buxton. Since the Shady was independently built in the 1980s, there has been a series of owners and landlords who have all eventually given up, but Sharon and Gareth bring a new energy and much-needed investment to the pub.

In its early days it was surrounded by the homes of young families with little spare cash and small children to care for. Today, many of these families remain and have more time to visit their local; it’s Sharon and Gareth’s task to encourage them into the Shady.

Crown, Heaton Lane



As this issue of *Opening Times* went to press, it looked as though the **Crown** on Heaton Lane, Stockport, once an iconic local free house, was about to reopen. We do know the pub has had a thorough clean throughout,

and has also been redecorated, both inside and out. It now looks smarter than it’s done for many years.

The new signs outside advertise local cask ales, and we look forward to the Crown regaining its former reputation for choice and quality. All being well, there will be a fuller report next time.



GOOD BEER GUIDE 2022 WE'RE IN IT

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THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 2022 WE'RE IN IT

THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 2022 WE'RE IN IT

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We're in the Good Beer Guide 2022



ENJOY OUR BEER

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Walking In Cider Country

Our trip to Hereford had long been arranged, *writes Alan Gent of Stockport's Petersgate Tap*, so it was with a tinge of disappointment that we set off knowing that we had just lost our regional Cider Pub of the Year award. Still, they let us into Herefordshire at the tollgate and we drove cautiously up a narrow farm track in Much Marcle to the home of Gregg's Pit cider. We were greeted by a very tall apple tree and a much smaller farm house. James Marsden, the owner of both, greeted us warmly and we briefly surveyed the surrounding countryside.

"See those over there?" he said, indicating three gleaming metal structures, which looked like missile silos. "Westons", his tone of voice sounding much like Bilbo Baggins uttering "Mordor". It was a timely indicator of the diversity of the scale of cider production in the UK.

James led us through a farm gate into two orchard fields surrounded by high hedgerows. The first field contained trees of two varieties of perry pears, Butt and the indigenous Thorn, all of them grafted by James some 20 years ago and now fully productive. Walking through a gap in the hedgerow we were confronted by larger, older trees, including the massive "mother tree" of the Thorn variety; towering as tall as an oak, it has been certified as 350 years old. There was a reverential calm about the orchards and we turned somewhat reluctantly to continue our tour. Our brief disappointment was offset by James pausing to pick up some glasses from the house and we descended upon his store to taste the fruits of his labours. The Thorn perry which he gave us to try was simply magnificent, fresh and with a hint of sparkle. This bottle-fermented perry from 2017 was as good as anything I've ever tasted. James also produces a pear spirit; clear, like a grappa, but with much less ferocity: it's a splendid way to end a meal. James sends 800 litres of juice to the distillery and receives 100 litres of spirit back.



Bidding farewell to James (pictured here - left - with Chris Gent), we packed the boot with Gregg's Pit and set off for Ross Cider. This surprised us with the much larger scale of operations, with orchards seemingly going in all directions. Albert, who greeted us, is the third generation to manage the orchards started by his grandfather. He told us that, until relatively recently they had sold 80% of their output to Heineken. Then one day, as Albert put it, "a suit turned up, waved a cheque at us and said they didn't want any more of our output".

This prompted Ross Cider to rethink their entire operation and they now produce some 60 varieties of cider and perry, most of them single varieties, that is to say, produced from the juice of just one variety of cider apple or perry pear. As well as a wide range of 500ml bottles, they produce a more limited number of bottle-fermented varieties in 750ml champagne-stoppered bottles. We wandered through the orchard, as Albert told us his story, treading on windfalls. The air was redolent with the smell of apples in the hot sun.

Even more boxes were piled into the boot and eventually we had to cry "enough!" and turned for home.

James has promised to keep us in the loop of his production schedule, so we'll be going back, but what a day, celebrating two of the best cider and perry makers in the UK.

There is a style of cider for everyone....

Cider has always had a dedicated following, *writes Dick Withecombe*, but most people never drink cider, and many recall bad experiences of poor quality scrumpy while on holiday, or the syrupy fizz of something advertised on television.

A positive sign for the future is that many in the younger generations have developed new approaches to drinking, with openness to a whole range of drinks across beer, wine and, very much, cider. As Gabe Cook says in his new book *Modern British Cider*:

"I truly believe **there is a cider for everyone**: from bone dry to unctuously sweet; zingy and crisp to bold and earthy; still and silky to bright and bubbly; pint to flute."

So which style will suit you?

British styles of cider and perry are informed by three key factors: the selection of apple or pear variety, cider-making methodology and the potential use of additional flavours (from sugar or sweetener to added fruits or flavours).

Western Counties

A wide-ranging style defined by a combination of traditional cider apples producing an interplay of tannic characters, fruitiness and an acidity ranging from non-existent to intense. Tending towards increasing levels of complexity and astringency with a longer finish than other styles of cider.

Keeved

Sometimes known as the French style, using the same western countries apple varieties but using a process to inhibit fermentation early to allow the retention of natural sweetness.

Eastern Counties

A style of cider that is characterised by the relative absence of tannin, and by the predominance of acidity, fruitiness and freshness, achieved through the use of dessert and culinary apples.

Traditional Perry

Made using specific perry pear varieties differentiated from dessert pears by the presence of tannin, and providing varying degrees of boldness and astringency. Flavours of perry have a backbone of fruitiness and acidity ranging from light to zingy, normally accompanied by some creamy sweetness.

Interpretations

Within any one of these styles there will be some considerable variation brought about through decisions made by the cider maker or by natural occurrence.

Dryness or sweetness? If sweetness, is it naturally sweet or sweetened post fermentation?

Still or sparkling? If sparkling, is it naturally fizzy through process or forced carbonation?

Other choices: Yeast: Cultivated yeast or wild ferment? Young or aged? Blends or Single Variety (SV)?

How served

Cider and perry can be dispensed from keg, draught by handpull or gravity pour, or from bottle. Those 'live ciders' most similar to cask beer are keg conditioned or bottle conditioned.

News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

Gold Award for Robinsons

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has awarded Robinsons brewery a Golden Award, marking 50 years of the organisation's campaigns.

As part of its anniversary celebrations throughout 2021, CAMRA is recognising people, groups of people or businesses that have made a significant contribution to CAMRA's aims.

On 1 October the CAMRA Regional Director for Greater Manchester, Phil Moss (pictured below, right), presented William Robinson, Robinsons joint MD, with the award. The citation on the certificate reads, "Being a multiple national award winner, and going above and beyond in delivering brewing excellence over the years".



As coincidence would have it, this was also the anniversary of Frederic Robinson's 100th AGM and CAMRA was invited to attend a Robinsons staff meeting to present the Golden 50 certificate. Hosting the event was Tony Massey, Robinsons' Business Development Manager, with William Robinson providing a speech reviewing the company's

performance throughout the pandemic.

He thanked all their staff for supporting the company in difficult times for themselves and families. In accepting the CAMRA award, William continued with his inclusive philosophy, saying that it wasn't just the Robinson family that had earned the accolade but everyone involved with the company over the past 50 years. He concluded by saying that Frederic Robinson Ltd were delighted to have the business recognised in this way and thanked CAMRA for selecting Robinsons as one of only 50 recipients.

Howard Town

Glossop's Howard Town Brewery has some new beers out and is also returning some old favourites.



Apparition (4.1%) is Martin Wood's first brew with a recipe of his own at Howard Town. The beer is a five-hop elderflower pale, brewed with Willamette and Riwaka hops. *Opening Times* got a sneak preview of this one at the Hope Inn, Stockport, and can confirm it's a beautifully floral beer, with the hops making for a quenching and very moreish session pale.

Apparition is the first beer in a new line of regular specials, 'Howard Town Tales', where the brewery will be celebrating Glossop heritage and folk tales. Apparition is based on the story of Hilda Knight, who fought hard to open Glossop's Partington Players Theatre. Shortly after the opening, Hilda passed away from tuberculosis.

However, it is widely believed she haunts the theatre to this day. The artwork includes the addition of a butterfly as it has been known that a colourful butterfly appears during performances and the players believe this is the manifestation of Hilda's spirit. Partington Theatre also incorporates a butterfly in its logo.

Shining Clough (5.3%), the autumnal malty ruby ale, is back. This is a chestnut-coloured old ale with forest fruit and orange notes in the flavour profile. The beer takes its name from Shining Clough, located near the brewery. The Clough itself is located just off Woodhead Pass and is typically bone dry. After torrential rain, the Clough comes alive and shines with golden peat-stained water.

Two keg beers will also be worth looking out for. One is Hana, a Czech-style lager at 4.7%, brewed using a heritage malt variety first used in the original brews of Pilsner Urquell, the original golden lager. Also out is hazy pale Xanadu (4.3%), full of grapefruit and other citrus flavours, from Olicana hop.

Hydes



There are two new names on the bars of many Hydes pubs, but only one of them is a new beer. The excellent dark mild has undergone a name change from Old Indie to Dark Ruby and is described as a 'malty red ale'. It's been very well received in its new guise and *Opening Times* can confirm it's a very tasty drop.

The other new name is Hopster and we think this might be a bit of a game-changer for Hydes. It's a 3.8% beer described as a 'zesty blonde ale' and we think it's seriously good. Plenty of hops have been thrown at this floral, citrusy quencher, which is exceptionally drinkable and should have widespread appeal.

Pub News in Brief



On 25 October, long-serving manager Sue Wild left the **Boars Head** in Stockport Market Place after 12 years in post. Her replacement at this Sam Smith's pub is Stacey Mather, Sue's long-time friend, who has worked behind the bar for almost all that time. We wish them both well.

Mike Didlick, the club manager at the **Moor Club** in Heaton Moor, has sadly had to retire following very serious illness. Under Mike's stewardship, the Moor Club was the Stockport & South

Manchester CAMRA Club of the Year and hosted a number of branch events including our last annual meal two years ago. We all wish Mike well and thank him for his support.

In Heaton Mersey, the **Crown** was closed as we went to press. We understand that the current tenant will be leaving and the pub will then be re-let by Robinsons.

The **Billy Goat** pub in Mossley has now begun to serve handpulled real ale – more information next time. Also in Mossley we are informed that the **Fleece** increases its cask range to three real ales at weekends, and also that Millstone Tiger Rut is available at **Mossley AFC**.

Finally, the **Governors House** in Cheadle Hulme closed for refurbishment in late October and is planned to reopen on 9 December.

Pub Walks with Chris Morris

Hadfield to Old Glossop

Featuring three traditional pubs and a brewery tap, there is a feast of beer treasures to be found in picturesque Old Glossop. This walk will showcase the delightful local scenery, work up your thirst and demonstrate the perfect setting for Howard Town's beers which proudly dominate the pubs in this area.

Train Information

The walk starts at Hadfield Station and finishes at Glossop Station. If travelling from Stockport, this requires changing at Manchester Piccadilly. Purchase a return ticket to Hadfield. Services run twice an hour all week except for Sunday when it's every hour. For full timetable information visit www.northernrailway.co.uk.

The Walk

This is a moderate three-mile walk with a stream to cross and some short hill climbing. For that reason, walking boots are recommended. There are several stiles, and some fields can be muddy after wet weather. The OS Explorer map is OL1 The Peak District (OS app also available).

On arriving at Hadfield, walk out of the station car park and turn right along Platt Street past the public toilets until you come to a disused bridge. Instead of going underneath, turn left, and follow the ramp up to the Longdendale Trail. Carry on along the straight path for 300 yards. Take the stony path to the left which then bends to the right and up a hill. When exiting the woods, take the first path to the right which then joins a road through a gate. Turn right here and walk along the road until you reach Padfield after 300 yards. Carry on for 100 yards until you see house number 130 on the right. Next to this house's drive is a tarmacked track. Walk along here and then along the footpath leading to fields beyond. Continue on this straight path over six stiles until you reach a lane. Turn left here and, after passing Little Padfield Farm, take a right along the public footpath through an opening in a stone wall followed by a gate.

Walk through the field, keeping the stone wall on your right. Go over the wall stile and through the next field, again hugging the wall on the right. Exit the field through a stile to the right, go over a stream and up a steep hill. At the top of the hill you reach a stone wall with a cemetery on the other side. Walk along here keeping the wall to your right. Walk through a gate and follow the clear path hugging the stone wall which then passes through a farmhouse's back, and then front, garden before reaching the main road. Turn right here, walking a few yards along the road before crossing over and exiting through a gate on the opposite side. Pass through two fields keeping the fence to your left.

When you reach the reservoir, keep the stone wall on your left and follow this round, then down through woods, over a stream and then a road called Blackshaw Clough. Turn right here and follow the road downhill for 600 yards. Instead of carrying straight on, take the road that bends to the right and then left passing a row of terraced houses. Carry on straight ahead along Bute Street keeping the stone wall on your left with a field beyond. At the junction, turn left down Blackshaw Road and then immediately opposite go down a path with a handrail in the middle. At the bottom you will find the Wheatsheaf to the left and the Bulls Head to the right.

The Bulls Head

If the weather has been unkind on your walk, this charming 400-year-old country pub will put a smile on your face. The outstanding interior features low oak-beamed ceilings, wood-burning stoves, stone-flagged floors and wooden settles. The beer selection was impressive too, when I visited, with Howard Town's Kerala and Longdendale plus Robinsons

Unicorn and Greene King's Old Speckled Hen available on cask. Opening times are 4 to 11.30pm Tuesday to Friday, all day at weekends and closed on Mondays.

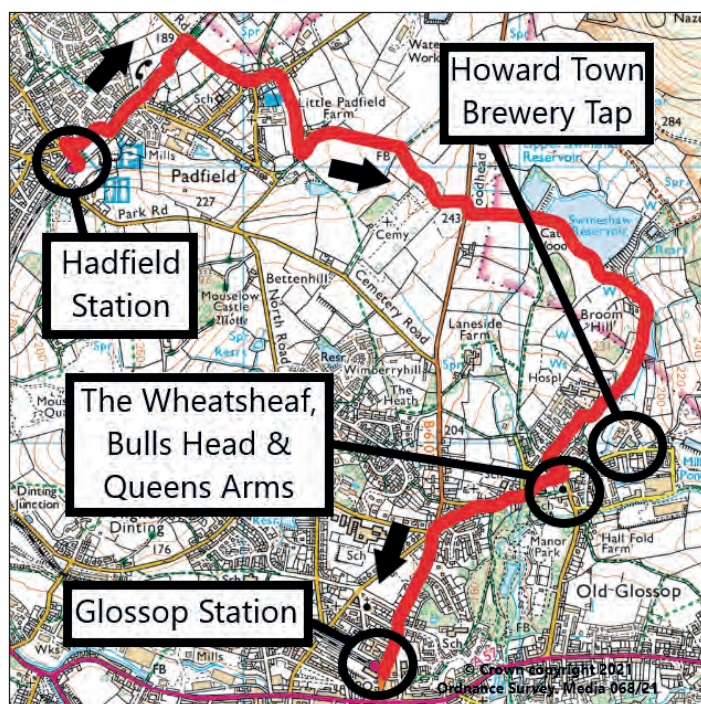


The Wheatsheaf

Arguably the best view in these parts can be found on the front terrace of this small and welcoming traditional pub. Howard Town's Kerala and Super Fortress were the cask ales available on my visit, which were both in excellent condition. Good homemade food is available featuring a Mediterranean influence. Opening times can vary but in general it's after 5pm midweek and all day at weekends.

Howard Town Brewery Tap

Located a few minutes' walk away along Hope Street, the brewery tap is a must-visit for beer enthusiasts. Up to four cask beers plus their Distant Hills keg range are on offer, all set within a relaxed and modern open-plan space. A large outside seating area features when the weather allows. On my visit the cask beers were Monk's Gold, Super Fortress, Wren's Nest and Kerala – all in excellent condition as you would expect. Opening times are currently noon to 10pm Thursday to Saturday, noon to 8.30pm on Sundays.



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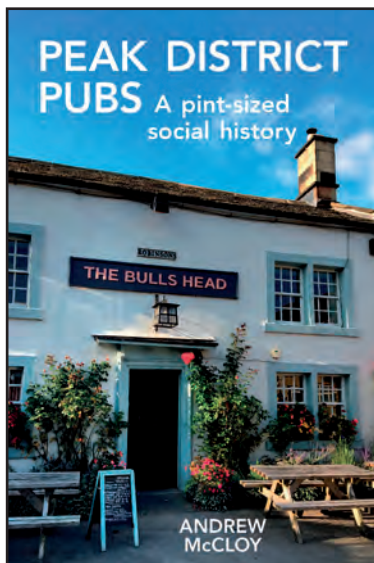


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Peak District Pubs

A Pint Sized Social History

A year ago, Peak District author and CAMRA member Andrew McCloy had a dilemma. Do you publish a book about local pubs in the middle of a lockdown when they're all closed? Will pub-goers opt for the next best thing and read about them instead?



Andrew decided to go ahead and, fortunately, pubs soon reopened and so there was the best of both worlds. *Peak District Pubs – a pint-sized social history* is a richly-illustrated and lively stagger through several centuries of Peak District watering holes. It traces their journey from humble alehouse to modern public house, and along the way covers everything from haunted inns and themed pubs to temperance taverns and even fictional pubs.

Pubs are such a wonderful source of stories, anecdotes and rather tall tales, but many are so bonkers that

you probably couldn't make them up. Take the **Peels Arms** at Padfield, for instance, where there's a long-standing competition to crawl through a tiny hole in an interior wall next to the bar. It was purportedly started in the 1950s by workmen staying in the area erecting new electricity pylons who were keen to show off their agility after a couple of drinks. Or the **Red Lion** at Crich, near Matlock, a grand Victorian pub that started life in the centre of Stoke-on-Trent and, after closing down, was moved – every brick and every tile – to a Derbyshire theme park, where it's once more serving pints. The **Royal Cottage** on the Staffordshire moorlands is the only pub in the UK owned by a National Park, which it was left to it in lieu of death duties when a wealthy landowner died in the 1980s.



In particularly harsh winter weather, straw was laid on the floor of the **Fox House Inn**, on the moors above Hathersage, so that shepherds and their sheep could all take shelter in the bar; while some of the packhorse men who once stayed at the **Cheshire Cheese Inn** at Hope paid for their overnight lodgings in cheese.

Inevitably, there are haunted pubs aplenty, with the title of 'most spooked' probably held by the **Castle Inn** at Castleton (four separate ghosts) and the **Miners Arms** at Eyam (some particularly grisly

stories here), although a supernatural Cavalier at the **Olde Eyre Arms** at Hassop and an ostler disappearing into thin air at the **Wheatsheaf** at Baslow probably run them close.

Of course, there are many intriguing inns and taverns that have long vanished, including the former **Millers Arms** at Saltersbrook, high and remote at the top of the Woodhead Pass, which used to host regular shepherds' gatherings. The **Ashopton Inn** in the Upper Derwent Valley came to a crushingly final end in 1943 when it was dismantled and flooded by the new Ladybower Reservoir. Then there's the story of the former **Childrens Inn** at Rowarth, and how the **Bulls Head** at Monyash became the Hobbit and the **Royal Oak** at Eyam was renamed the Prancing Pony – thankfully the Tolkien obsession passed and both are known by their traditional names once more. Other unique Peak District pub names include the **Knockerdown** (lead mining), **Flying Childers** (thoroughbred racehorse), **Grouse and Claret** (fly fishing) and **Winking Man** (rock formation).

And what of the pubs shuttered up or for sale today? Even in the Peak District, such a popular visitor destination, a number of pubs have succumbed to the dreaded phrase 'change of use', and a recent trend has seen some sold to a developer who has subsequently reopened them as private 'pub-style' group accommodation (such as the **Crewe and Harpur** at Longnor and **Poachers Arms** at Hope). On top of this, the likely long-term impact of the pandemic is still unknown. Already there have been casualties since the book was published, including the death of Ken Mellor, long-time landlord at the **Quiet Woman** at Earl Sterndale.



However, the book ends with some positive reflections on the future for our rural pubs which, despite competition, changing social trends and a global pandemic, are still vital institutions, playing a key role in keeping communities together and providing a focus for local services, as well as helping to reduce social isolation in rural areas. Shops and post offices in pubs, micro-breweries and pub-based cultural events and festivals are all featured in the book. Some places are even bucking the trend, such as the rebuilt **Blind Bull** in the hamlet of Little Hucklow, near Bradwell and the Peak District's first community-owned pub (the CAMRA award-winning **Anglers Rest** at Bamford in the Hope Valley). There is hope for our pubs yet!

Peak District Pubs: A pint-sized history by Andrew McCloy is published by the author-run co-operative Gritstone at £11.99 (ISBN 978-0-9955609-9-4). It's available via local bookshops or online at <https://gritstonecoop.co.uk/>.



It's Festival Season

CAMRA beer festivals are ready to welcome you back!



Find your local CAMRA beer festival
camra.org.uk/festivals




Blossoms Blooms

There was a big turnout in late September when the Blossoms, Buxton Road, Heaviley, received its very belated June 2020 Pub of the Month award from Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA.

The well-deserved award was presented to tenant Roxanne Bailey and her partner, and cellar man, Jerry Evans, in recognition of the high standards maintained at the landmark Robinsons house. However, the extra-large crowd was also there to celebrate the launch of CAMRA's Stockport Beer Week. We were delighted to have the event formally launched by Stockport mayor Councillor Adrian Nottingham.

Councillor Nottingham also stayed to present the award to Roxanne and Jerry and is seen here making the presentation. Also pictured are bar staff members Andrea and Angela, while local CAMRA chair John Clarke looks on.



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Stockport Beer Week



CAMRA member and retiring Stockport Beer Week organiser Chris Walkden reflects on the end of two eras. Chris is stepping down after running SBW successfully for seven years, and the 2021 Beer Week wash-up meeting was his last act as organiser.

Most of the planning meetings have enjoyed the Fool Hardy Ales at the Hope Inn, but with the Hope's owner Martin Wood moving on, it's also the end of an era for the pub – this meeting was probably the last of the CAMRA meetings and events to be hosted here. Chris steps down with a big 'well done' from Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA.

Early Days

Neil Kellett Looks Back

Inspired by the mention of CAMRA in Richard Boston's *Boston on Beer* column in *The Guardian* in 1973, four of us from the Printers Arms in Cheadle decided to pay up 50p and join. The four were Neil and Alan Kellett, Peter Simmons and founder branch chairman, the late David Hall.

In the autumn of 1973, I joined the "Save Joules from closure by Bass" march in Stone, Staffs, and met up with Graham Lees, one of the four founding fathers of CAMRA.



A meeting to test support took place in November 1973 and this was quickly followed by the inaugural meeting of the CAMRA South Manchester branch, held at the Printers on 15 January 1974.

What a night that was! Because the pub could not accommodate the 71 attendees in one room, Chairman Dave formally proposed the setting up of the South Manchester branch standing on a seat in the pub's garden. Those present demonstrated their love of real ale by drinking the pub dry! To say that tenants Harold and Nell Worsley were rather taken aback would be very much an understatement!

The new branch was the first in the region and encompassed a wide area of what is now North Cheshire, Trafford, Manchester and Stockport. Nowadays, other branches cover much of the area, but the Stockport & South Manchester branch, as it is now known, still covers the core area and has 1,400 members instead of a mere handful.



The first meetings were held at the Royal Oak, a Boddington's pub in Alderley Edge. During the second meeting there I received a complaint – the price of bitter had gone up from 12p to 13p! After one of our meetings, whilst partaking of an after-hours pint, I mentioned to the landlady that not only should we be wary of the actions of the big brewers, so should she, as a tenant. She was so upset by my comment that we were then barred! The site of the Royal Oak is now a block of flats!

We then moved to the Gateway in Parrs Wood, then owned by Hydes and managed by Ralph Heatley. The turnover of real ale was legendary – proved by a visit to the cellar where there were ten 36-gallon wooden casks of mild on one side of the cellar and ten 36-gallon metal barrels on the other side!

Meetings in those early days were attended by over 60 members and speakers included a director from Hydes and the head brewer from Holt's.

Another early feature of the branch's activities were away visits which included –

- Lees Brewery at Middleton Junction
- In association with the newly-inaugurated North Manchester branch, a coach to the 1974 National AGM in York. Beers at the AGM bar included Robinsons, Hydes and Boddingtons – we organised for these three beers to be delivered on the same dry. A young brewer called Paul Theakston also supplied beer to the AGM bar.
- Stamford in Lincolnshire to sample the final brew of Melbourn's Brewery. On the way to Stamford, our coach picked up members from the Nottingham branch, including a guy called Chris Holmes. Chris became National Chairman in 1976. Our paths have crossed many times since, with our involvement in Castle Rock Brewery and the CAMRA Members' Investment Club, as well as many forays abroad – perhaps the subject of a future article in *Opening Times*!

I am proud to have been one of the originators of one of the UK's most successful CAMRA branches. I was also proud and honoured to be asked to unveil the branch's blue plaque at The Printers Arms on 29 September.

Blue Plaque Unveiling



In CAMRA's Golden Anniversary year, the Branch felt it was appropriate to commemorate its formation. After an appeal to local members, funds were raised to place a Blue Plaque on the wall of the pub, which is still part of the Robinsons Brewery estate.

Current Branch Chairman, John Clarke, said: "As a founder member and still active in the Branch, Neil was the obvious person to unveil it – especially as he lives round the corner and is still a regular at this Robinsons pub! It was also great to see a number of founder members reunited after many years."

Pictured above left to right - Peter Cook, Neil Kellett, Alan Kellett, John Clarke (current Branch Chairman), John Westwood.

Opposite, the first version of Opening Times from 1977, and presenting Pub of the Month at Duke of Edinburgh, Bradford, in 1984.

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What's On

Local CAMRA Branch Diaries

Events for November to early January 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 6 December – Cheshire Tavern, West Road, Congleton, CW12 4EY. Starts 8:00pm. (MEC)

Thursday 9 December – Magnet, 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. Starts 8:00pm. (SSM)

Monday 13 December – Harewood Arms, 2 Market Street, Broadbottom, SK14 6AX. Starts 8:00pm. (HPNC)

Thursday 13 January – Armoury, 31 Shaw Heath, Stockport, SK3 8BD. Starts 8:00pm. (SSM)

Saturday 15 January – Cheshire Ring, 72 Manchester Road, Hyde, SK14 2BJ. Starts 1:30pm. To be followed by social in Hyde and Dukinfield pubs. (HPNC)

Social Events & Presentations

Saturday 13 November – Cheshire Pub of the Year presentation to Malt Disley, 22 Market Street, Disley, SK12 2AA. Starts 3:00pm. (HPNC)

Friday 19 November – South Didsbury Stagger: 7:30pm Didsbury, 852 Wilmslow Road, M20 2SG; 8:30pm Crown, 770 Wilmslow Road, M20 2DR; final pub Fletcher Moss, 1 William Street, M20 6RQ. (SSM)

Saturday 20 November – Autumn Pub of the Season presentation to the George, 14 Church Street, Hayfield, SK22 2JE. Followed by social in Hayfield pubs. Starts 1:00pm. (HPNC)

Thursday 25 November – Pub of the Month presentation to the Fletcher Moss, 1 William Street, Didsbury, M20 6RQ. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

Saturday 4 December – Autumn Pub of the Season presentation to the Jolly Sailor, 63 Sunderland Street, Macclesfield, SK11 6HN. From 2:00pm. (MEC)

Wednesday 15 December – Christmas Meal at Queens Head, Park Lane, Congleton, CW12 3DE. Evening event. Booking required. (MEC)

Saturday 18 December – Branch Christmas party at the Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. From 7:00pm. (HPNC)

Thursday 23 December – Hillgate & Market Place Stagger: 7:00pm Blossoms, 2 Buxton Road, SK2 6NU; 8:00pm Sun & Castle, 54 Middle Hillgate, SK1 3EH; final pub Arden Arms, 23 Millgate, SK1 2LX. (SSM)

Wednesday 29 December – Post-Christmas social at the Waters Green Tavern, 96 Waters Green, Macclesfield, SK11 6LH. From 8:00pm. (MEC)

Wednesday 29 December – Pub of the Month presentation to the Moor Top, 172 Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor, Stockport, SK4 4DU. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

Thursday 30 December – Manchester City Centre Social. Meet at the Piccadilly Tap on the station approach between 12 noon and 1:15pm. (HPNC)

Saturday 8 January – Congleton Wander. Check branch website for start details. From 12 noon, (MEC)

CAMRA Awards

Recent Presentations

On Saturday 11 September, the High Peak, Tameside and North East Cheshire branch presented two awards to **Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar**. The first was a special branch award for 30 entries in CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide, and the second was for being selected as the



branch Cider Pub of the Year for 2021. We don't think that anyone needs reminding what an excellent and well-known pub this is, and it's well deserving of the awards. Over the years much time has been

spent in here, sometimes resulting in missed trains, occasionally on purpose. The Buffet Bar team is shown here being presented with the Cider Pub of the Year award by branch chair Ben Zwierink (right).



On Saturday 2 October, High Peak CAMRA made the last of their 2020 'catch up' pub awards, when **Traders** in Marple was presented with the Branch Pub of the Month award. A few years ago Traders was one of the first two

micropubs to open in Marple and has since gone from strength to strength, expanding into the premises next door and now with an outdoor drinking area. Cask-conditioned ales and keykeg beers are sourced inventively and with some thought, so a good and changing range is always available. The atmosphere is always friendly. Cheerful and helpful staff make visiting Traders worthwhile and many return visits are made. The photo shows Matt the licensee being presented with the well-deserved award.



Co-owner Darren Shaw with his certificate.

The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for October was the **Wobbly Stamp** in Cheadle. Run by Darren Shaw and his business partner Dave Ramwell, it is located in an old Post Office on Stockport Road.

It has proved a popular addition to the Cheadle beer scene and has four rotating guest cask beers with one of the handpumps given over to a dark beer. The beers are

sourced both from local breweries, such as Stockport Brewing, Poynton Brewery and Seven Brothers, and those further afield like Thornbridge, Tiny Rebel and Spinning Dog.

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