

OPENING TIMES

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2022

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
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- * 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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Central Manchester

www.centralmanchester.camra.org.uk

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Twitter – @MCRCentralCamra

Macclesfield & East Cheshire:

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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 New Year!

Regulars at Stockport's Petersgate tap raise a toast to 2022.

Photo by Lawrence Devaney.

Contributors

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Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Copy date for the March/April issue is Monday 14 February

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The Petersgate Tap



Winner Stockport Cider Pub of the Year
2018, 2019, 2020

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2018, 2019

Good Beer Guide 2018, 2019, 2020,
2021, 2022



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Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for January and February



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for January goes to the Gateway, East Didsbury, writes Jim Flynn.

Kevin Muldoon took over as manager of this large, inter-war, red-stone and white-brick roadhouse almost 10 years ago, not long after JD Wetherspoon had purchased the pub from Hydes. He made an immediate impact, and it has been a roaring success ever since.

Initially, Wetherspoons invested considerably in the place, with new carpets, half-height wooden panelling on most of the walls, improved toilet facilities, exterior lighting, new kitchen and, more recently, substantial improvements to outdoor facilities. However, another refurbishment is planned in the next 12 months, so clearly Wetherspoons see the pub as a long-term success. A big plus for the Gateway is that it was built as a pub, with lots of separate areas and nooks and crannies surrounding the large central bar, giving it the advantage of having a real pub ambience that many Wetherspoons can't have.

Kev's tenure has been marked by the high quality of the beer, such that the pub has been a *Good Beer Guide* regular for nine years, including 2022, along with excellent service to the customer. The public have responded in their numbers and the pub is vibrant and highly popular. Nowadays it is not just seen as a prelude to a trip across the road to the cinema or bowling but very much a night out in its own right.

There is a focus on regional beers supplied direct from the brewers, evidenced by the house beer, Gateway to Heaven, from Brightside Brewing, up in Radcliffe, as well as the usual Wetherspoon's Abbot and Ruddles.

So why not join the local CAMRA branch Thursday, 27 January when their Pub of the Month Award will be presented to Kev and his hard-working staff: I'm sure, a really great night will be enjoyed by all. Don't miss it!

The pub is on many bus routes including the 50, 142, 42, from the city centre, 42, 23 from Stockport, 42A from Reddish and the Heaton and 42B/C (early evening only) from Cheadle. It's also close to East Didsbury train station and Metrolink stop.



The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month winner for February is the Petersgate Tap, on Petersgate in central Stockport. John Clarke tells you all about it.

The Petersgate Tap celebrated its fifth birthday in September last year, and in those few years it has become one of the leading local outlets for quality cask beer, and, most notably, real cider and perry.

It's a stylish conversion of a former bookmaker's shop, operating over two floors – and so is rather more than a traditional 'micropub'. In addition, there has been a constant programme of investment in the pub – smart new windows, an outside area with an awning for the warmer weather, cosy cubicle seating and, most notably, an impressively well-stocked bottle and canned beer shop upstairs. The shop functions on two levels – not only can you buy beers to take away, you can also choose something that takes your eye for fridge-cooling and drinking in.

On the bar you'll find six cask and six keg beers. These are sourced far and wide, although particular attention is paid to the top rank of local craft brewers here in the north-west. Dark beers are a speciality and if they are your thing you'll always find at least a couple available. The Tap also has arrangements with several brewers to get special casks of beers that are otherwise destined for keg, bottle or can. Indeed, owners Alan and Chris Gent have bought several casks themselves for this purpose. Quality is top-notch across the board and the pub is a regular in the national *Good Beer Guide*.

There is also great attention to detail when it comes to real cider and perry. While local producers also feature here, the accent is perhaps more on sourcing top-quality ciders and perries from leading producers such as Ross on Wye, Gregg's Pit and Hecks. All the ciders are either fridge- or cellar-cooled too. This commitment has seen the Petersgate Tap win the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year award for the last four years.


But there's more to the Petersgate Tap than beer, cider and perry. It's something of a community hub too, with regular live music nights, poetry readings, and also charity quiz nights supporting Stockport MIND – notably the annual quiz which sees the whole pub filled with teams of regulars and local brewers who also kindly provide prizes. The last one, in late 2021, raised almost £2,000.

This very well-deserved award will be presented on Thursday 24 February from 8pm. Expect a busy night so get there early. Public transport will serve you well – not only is the Petersgate Tap less than a 10-minute walk from Stockport station, it is also within easy reach of all buses serving the town centre.


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SEASONAL EDITIONS 2022

Boots stomp, stomp down worn wooden steps into ghost-chilled cellars, where  reverberates off low ceilings plip-plipping with moisture.

Upstairs, a  and , the sparge arm hums, a reassuring whoosh and whir.

In the yard, a  over cobbles, empties returning in search of the hair of the dog. Barrels alight, clank-clatter-thud on the pad.

Back in the cellar, arms and heavy mallets swing, a  of firkin and barrel. A tap pours into a half-pint pot, a swirling of beer and air, the head brewer raises his glass in ceremony and anticipation.

J.W. LEES

What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region

Libatory Brewing



One of the newest breweries in the area is Libatory Brewing, based in Timperley. It's a project by keen home brewer Ian Holmes, who has a regular stall in Altrincham Market, so *Opening Times* hot-footed it down there for a chat.

Ian tells us that he always had good feedback for his beers from friends so decided to go part-time from his day job to see if he could make a go of it commercially.

The brewery name derives from the Greek word libation, which refers to a drink (or food) offering to the gods, and the first brew was in August last year.



It's quite a tiny brewery, with just 120 litres being brewed at a time, and Ian brews three to four times a month. The small size does allow him to make a wide range of styles. The Libatory beers so far have included an ESB, a Brown Ale, a German Wheat, a Milk Stout, an IPA and a Pale Ale. When we spoke, he was also planning a Kölsch-style lager, a Dark Mild and a Green Tea IPA, all of which should be available by the time you read this.

Ian wants to try all sorts of styles, and is not sure whether he'll follow the traditional route of having core lines. He's looking to brew beers he likes but which aren't that common in most bottle shops, and he's particularly keen on malt-forward styles. "There are some good hoppy beers out there but personally, I'm a bit bored of them, and I'm enjoying exploring different malts. In the main, I like beer that tastes of beer," he tells us.

Feedback has been good, and we're not surprised. *Opening Times* tried his Milk Stout, IPA and American Brown Ale, and we were seriously impressed by all three. Thus far, the beers have been mainly canned, with the

occasional keg, but this year Ian hopes to produce some cask beer as well.

Distribution is quite local, and regular stockists of Libatory cans are all in Altrincham – Pi, Mort Subite and Batch, and in addition they are also stocked at Dunham Barn Café to enjoy with your meal. Well worth seeking out.

Robinsons

We asked Robinsons if they were planning any seasonal beers for 2022. No news yet, but we understand that they will be reintroduced this year, which is good news. Meanwhile, Old Tom is still available on draught – ideal for these cold winter months!

Lakes Brew Co

There can have been few beer-related events more eagerly awaited than the "What's Matt Clarke going to do next?" decision. *Alan Gent*, owner of Stockport's Petersgate Tap, went to find out.



Matt (pictured here, left, with Alan), you may recall, was the head brewer at Hawkshead Brewery when most of the staff were laid off as part of the increasingly controversial acquisition by Halewood International. As if being laid off wasn't enough, Matt was embargoed from working in the industry for six months as part of his redundancy terms.

Recently, though, the cat has been let out of the bag, and Matt, Michelle and Steve have proudly

unveiled Lakes Brew, a new brewery based in Kendal.

We have already had several casks of their new Pale at the Tap and it's received rave reviews. So, visiting a friend in Kendal, it seemed rude not to call in and say hello. Michelle said they'd be happy to chat and so I swung by before meeting my buddy.

When I arrived, they were in the office huddled round the ubiquitous white board planning brewing schedules, and my eyes lit up at the word "imp" at the bottom of the schedule (and yes, an imperial stout has now been released – Ed.).

Matt was eager to show me the kit; it's a 10-barrel, state of the art unit



with six fermenters to allow for plenty of brewing variety. However, they've taken a cautious approach to their distribution area, delivering solely into Cumbrian outlets before venturing farther afield. At the time of my visit, they had just finished brewing a coffee porter, which

was still under wraps, but that's now out in the market and we have a cask at the Tap waiting to go on sale.

In November, they rearranged things in the brewery to allow for a brewery tap weekend (warm clothing required!) and a regular series of these events is now planned for 2022.

All in all, this team have both the confidence in their abilities and the discipline to walk before they run. I'm sure this is only the start: there are big things to come.

More Brewery News on Page 16



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Stagger

Great Moor and Heaviley with Lawrence Devaney

After a break of nearly two years, the Staggers recommenced, as fate would have it, along a portion of the A6, one of Stockport's main arteries. Great Moor to Heaviley is unusual in that it retains all of the pubs visited on the Stagger in October 1990. At that time, the evening also included three pubs over the border in Hazel Grove – the **Grove, Anchor** and **Woodman** – before arriving at the **George & Dragon**. Either public transport continued later into the night than it does now, or the Staggerati of the day were a lot nimbler on their feet and drank a lot faster.



After a week of mixed weather, the omens were not good on the Friday morning, but by the early evening the rain had cleared off and the night remained largely dry for us. Arriving at the **George & Dragon**, the customer is confronted by an open, spacious and bright interior, in stark contrast to the somewhat grey and unwelcoming exterior. There were plenty of customers around the bar area despite it being only 7.30pm: a few groups of work colleagues, diners, regulars and us, all enjoying quality beers. Although the George & Dragon is a Greene King establishment, Nick the manager is allowed licence with his order. Available on cask tonight were the usual Greene King IPA and Abbot, plus Weetwood Mad Hatter and Brightside Mancunian, three of which were tried with no complaints, the Weetwood and Brightside beers being described as excellent. Nick's suggested addition of a mild beer for winter was a prospect we definitely encouraged.



On leaving the George & Dragon with spirits high, we walked the short distance to the **Crown**, our first Robinsons pub of the night. For a Friday night the pub was disappointingly empty, with only a handful of customers

present. This charmingly appointed local provides space, but with separate areas that feel more personal. Food was available, but beer was our choice; sadly neither of the two on offer (Dizzy Blonde and Cumbria Way) was at its best.



The second Robinsons pub of the night, the **Travellers Call**, was a little livelier, and the Unicorn was considered average to good. It's smaller than the Crown, but attractive and welcoming, with several of the regulars happy to have a spot of banter with us. One of us tried their hand at the dart board, attempting to pass off their woeful attempts at the bull as an attack on random doubles/trebles; at least they all avoided the wall.

Leaving the Travellers Call we had a bit of luck. The **Dog & Partridge**, closed for several months, had reopened only a few hours earlier so we did not expect to find cask ale available. However, this Robinsons pub, now managed by Aspire Inns, had Dizzy Blonde and Cumbria Way on. Amazing, we thought, as Aspire Inns, and the

new manager Carron, had just three days to get the pub ready, and that included sprucing it up and the cellar work. Little has changed in the décor, but Aspire do have plans, including meals, once the chef sorts his pans out. Both cask ales were tried and considered as definitely up to standard.



A bit more of a walk up the A6 (or two stops on the 192) to the **Duke of York**, our fourth Robbies pub. Now under new management, with friendly bar staff, the pub looks every inch the go-to establishment for socialising with friends and neighbours. As reported in last month's *Opening Times*, it's another traditional pub that has been tastefully refurbished, with the occasional lounge chair to relax in. Beers available during our visit were Dizzy Blonde, Cumbria Way and Unicorn, of which the first two were tried and pronounced more than satisfactory to very good.



A short hop along the A6 took us to the **Bamford Arms**. We were not expecting cask ale, but the ubiquitous Doom Bar was displayed in splendid isolation. Unfortunately, probably due to its limited popularity in what is really a Premier Inn/Beefeater, the beer was not at its best. Summed up by one of our group as "not off but not really on either".



Finally, the **Blossoms**, our fifth Robinsons venue, crowded with customers as it was a band night. Fortunately for us, one of the side rooms was a quieter space where we could reflect on the beer. Unicorn on the night was a decent drink and the Dizzy Blonde was acclaimed as good by our only partaker.

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Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

Crown, Heaton Lane



After a long period of closure, the **Crown** on Heaton Lane, Stockport, reopened in November. This was an eagerly awaited event, as the Crown was something of an iconic pub locally, being the town's first multi-beer freehouse (albeit not the first to offer a changing range of guest beers).

It's fair to say that some of the Crown's former regulars have been disappointed that the pub didn't just pick up where it left off, but realistically that was never going to happen. Needless to say, *Opening Times* went along to have a chat.

The pub has been leased by Barnsley-based MAP Taverns, which runs around 28 pubs (including the Cocked Hat just off Stockport Market Place), all of which are free of tie, although there is a loose supply arrangement with Carlsberg Marston's. The Crown is run by Peter and Angela Coates, and we spoke to assistant manager and head chef, Joe McKnight.



There has been a much-needed clean-up and redecoration, both front of house and behind the scenes, together with an external repaint. As a result, the Crown now looks better than it's done for a very long time. There have been no structural changes, so all of the separate rooms are still

there. A pool table has been installed in the right-hand room, which was converted from former living quarters many years ago. The more significant changes are outside at the back, where the potential of the under-used beer garden should now be realised. Complete with bar, barbeque and covered area, the plan is to feature regular live entertainment. Customers can also enjoy quiz nights, karaoke and screened live sports. The aim is to have more of a traditional pub feel inside, with the livelier entertainment at the back. Food is also available now, too. The menu was still evolving as this was typed but already there is a 'Steaks & Grills' menu from 12-9pm every day; a burger menu from 12-10pm and, in addition, Sunday lunches are served.

So, what about the beer? The range is also evolving. There are 12 handpumps on the bar. Two will be empty for cleaning between beers, six are for regular beers such as Marston's 61 Deep, Robinsons Dizzy

Blonde (which is selling very well), Adnams Ghost Ship, St Austell Proper Job and other, what might be called mainstream, beers, while the remaining four will feature ever-changing guests – a range from Wirral-based Brimstage Brewery was on the pumps when we called. So, rather a different offer to the old Crown, but we think it's better to look forward than dwell on the past. The new Crown is open, clean, very professionally run, should have widespread appeal and sells a range of well-kept cask beers. It deserves both support and success.

Spoons Meet the Brewers



A round of applause please, for the **Calverts Court** (St Petersgate, Stockport) and its manager Thomas Jones, *reports Lawrence Devaney*.

On Wednesday 1 December, Thomas hosted a Titanic Brewery tap takeover with five of their cask conditioned beers: Iceberg, a 4.1% pale, Anchor, a 4.1% bitter, Plum Porter at 4.9%, Lifeboat a 4% (gorgeous) mild and Cappuccino Stout at 4.5%. The customers, of whom there were quite a few, were treated to a succession of samples of quality beers, all dispensed by roving JD Wetherspoon staff and Andy Aleksiewicz from the Titanic Brewery.

Sensibly, in this huge pub, Thomas didn't try to hold court with speeches and descriptions of the beers. Details were provided as the beers were offered table by table. Not content with just wooing beer lovers, a cider and a perry were also sampled, both classed as 'real' cider/perry. As a CAMRA member, I was in awe of what was happening – campaigning in the most practical way possible, by this often-maligned company.

Whether drinking keg, cask or wine, all customers were given the opportunity to try some of the finest beers around, in perfect condition, and at the correct temperature. The best way possible to demonstrate the quality of cask conditioned beers to people who never try cask. How many converts on the night? We don't know, but Thomas is determined to repeat the event with another brewery.

It's worth recording that, on the same night, Wetherspoon's **Wilfred Wood** in Hazel Grove hosted a similar event, this time with JW Lees. Our man on the spot tells us this was also very well received.

Closure News

In mid-December we heard the news that the **Railway**, Portwood, Stockport, was likely to be closing by the end of February – the quiz team was apparently told it would need a new home by late January. Meanwhile, the **Hope Inn** on Wellington Road North, Stockport, has announced that it will remain open until March.

More Pub News on page 21

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.

Kicking Off

They need something to argue about so they opt for football:

Blues on one side of the table,
Reds on the other. Confident statements

as empty as the double-figure pint glasses
in perfect formation around them

are thrown left, right, and centre.
No serious damage is caused: it's difficult

to feel a punch when you're too busy
preparing to swing your next blow.

The Christmas lights in the corners
of the pub blink like nervous floodlights.

It's a stalemate so far, neither team are
willing to admit the pressure is getting to them.

Hands fiddle with beer mats or the wood
grain snaking along the legs of their seats.

Fingers tap table tops and wonder
when they can talk about their difficult week

or how they don't have the energy
to care about the small stuff anymore.

Another round arrives. They clink glasses,
put their lips around halftime orange ales

before a Red makes a claim
strong enough to turn a Blue purple...

Smiler's In

Posture like a fireman's pole. Hair slicked
back all the way to tomorrow. Leather jacket
squeaking like a DJ's decks. He doesn't need
to ask for a pint, it's already being poured.

*Good day?
What do you think?*

Smiler's in: the lights are brighter, the volume's
louder, the windows look absolutely spotless.
Smiler's in: deflecting every question
he's asked with questions of his own.

Obituary

Dave Hannan



Dave passed away at the tender age of 72 on 30 November 2021, following a mercifully short illness with cancer.

He was part of the furniture at CAMRA events for many years, being a regular volunteer at both local beer festivals and national events such as the Great British Beer Festival, and valued by many for his ability to fix just about anything.

He was a mechanical engineer and electrician, spending most of his working life at British Airways, as well as serving 12 years in the Territorial Army Volunteer Reserves under REME (the Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers), where he gained the nickname "Crasher", in reference to the number of military vehicles he damaged!

He also had a passion for amateur radio, and he was a keen rambler who regularly joined Mountain Bothy Association "Working Parties", helping to maintain huts and cottages in the wild for walkers to rest their heads. A few weeks before he passed, he was made an Honorary Life Member of Buxton Mountain Rescue Team, in recognition of 45 years' service.

His well-attended funeral and wake on December 22 was testimony to the high regard in which he was held. Practical to the last, he had requested a cardboard coffin on the grounds that "it'll burn just as good".

Dave leaves behind his daughter Katie, his brother Paul, and Katie's mother Karen and her second child, James.

Dave didn't care for having his picture taken but he is seen above judging at the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival Homebrew Competition. Photo courtesy of Lawrence Devaney.

Mild Magic is Back

Pandemic allowing, Mild Magic will be back for 2022. We are rolling forward the pubs who agreed to take part in 2020, so should you have a copy of the March/April 2020 Opening Times lying around, you will know what it entails.



If not, Mild Magic kicks off on 1 April (no fooling!) and will run until 15 May. We anticipate around 90 pubs in total being part of the challenge (unfortunately the pandemic has seen a few casualties), with prizes being won for sampling mild in different areas as follows: 12 areas – t-shirt, 24 areas – polo shirt, or 48 areas for a sweatshirt.

We are also delighted that Manchester family brewer Hydes has agreed to sponsor this year's competition.

By popular demand the cunning anagram challenge will also return. Collect enough letters to spell Mild Magic and this will increase your rewards. Full details will be in the March/April issue.

Regional Pubs of the Year

Greater Manchester and Cheshire Winners

A microbar inside Oldham's Tommyfield Market Hall has defied the problems of the pandemic and beaten the best pubs in the region to be judged **Greater Manchester CAMRA's Pub of the Year 2021**.



The **Cob & Coal** only opened in August 2019 and traded for six months before the first lockdown shut all pubs for months. Continued restrictions disrupted the business again before drinkers were finally welcomed back to the cosy bar last May. Despite this short life, judges comprehensively voted the newcomer the region's Pub of the Year.

Landlady Michelle Riley is no stranger to running pubs across the area, with the **White Lion** in Delph and the **Tandle Hill Tavern** in Middleton among her previous tenancies. But the vision to create her own bar eventually led to a couple of vacant units inside the Tommyfield Market Hall, and the transformation began.

Her commitment to real ale means six handpumps serve a rotating choice, with many drawn from breweries within a 25-mile radius. Cider lovers are also well catered for with a choice of up to eight, which explains why the Cob & Coal has won the local Rochdale Oldham & Bury Branch Cider Pub of the Year for the last two years.

But judges mark more than just the choice and quality of drinks on offer. CAMRA's regional judging organiser Caz O'Donnell said: "Our adjudicators are drawn from across the region, although the local branch is not involved at this level. They look for a commitment to the local community, and whether the venues reflect the wider aims of CAMRA. A friendly welcome and knowledgeable bar staff also feature highly in their assessments.

"Judges described it as 'a little gem'. They liked the co-operation with other market traders providing hot and cold food, and the larger shared space immediately adjacent in which to enjoy meals and snacks with a beer.

"Although its opening hours have to comply with the operation of the Market Hall, it has achieved a loyal customer base in a relatively short, and interrupted, time. Locals and newcomers are equally welcomed. And of course the beer is excellent."

The microbar's name reflects the tradition of Oldham's children singing "we come a cob-coaling" around bonfire night, but Michelle Riley explained the additional reference to her Leicester roots. "What people call a bread roll differs from place to place – and can cause a lot of arguments – but I knew it as a cob," she said. "So trying to combine my birthplace with an Oldham tradition – it just fitted." And visitors are left in no doubt as to Michelle's allegiance to her favourite

football team, Leicester City. Football memorabilia jostles for space with reminders of Oldham's past.

"It was a tricky start, with different pandemic measures meaning a stop-start to trade and a lot of uncertainty. I always believed we could make the Cob & Coal a great little pub. We were finalists in the Manchester Food and Drink Festival awards earlier this year, so I knew we were on the right track. But to win the 2021 regional title in competition with some other seriously good pubs has exceeded my expectations. It's right up there with Leicester City winning the Premier League a few seasons back!"

CAMRA's regional director Phil Moss (pictured, left, with Michelle) was on hand to present the award to Michelle and husband Chris. Phil said: "It's a delight to see how hard work, attention to detail and emphasis on quality has made the Cob & Coal a worthy winner. The hospitality sector has been through the most difficult of times. This pub is valued by its community and I'm sure winning this award will bring it an even bigger audience. I just hope they can all fit in."

Malt Disley Wins Again

The **Malt Disley** in, well, Disley, certainly hasn't rested on its laurels. In our September/October issue, we featured its presentation with the 2021 Pub of the Year award by the local High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire branch of CAMRA.

This excellent bar has now gone one stage further and won the Cheshire county award. CAMRA's Cheshire Regional Organiser, Paul Tench, presented the award and praised the Malt Disley for making extraordinary progress since opening in 2017.



He explained that the Cheshire Pub of the Year was chosen from nearly 800 pubs across four branch areas, all selling cask ales. The selection process involved two sets of independent judges, both visiting every pub and combining their results to arrive at two candidates for the award. This year, everyone came to the same conclusion: the Malt Disley was their Cheshire Pub of the Year.

Licensee Lauren Booth thanked CAMRA for the award, and praised all those who had supported the Malt Disley, especially her family. The event was a great success, crowded as it was with a large number of regulars and well-wishers, and CAMRA members from several branches.

Pictured above from left: Ben Zwierink, Chairman of High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire CAMRA; Di Booth, Lauren's mum and business partner; Lauren Booth, licensee; Paul Tench, Cheshire Regional Organiser.

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Cider and Perry

Wassailing with Gillian Hough



Cider and perry makers tend to have completed their picking and pressing at this time of year. Their precious liquid sunshine is gently fermenting over winter, languidly falling asleep when the temperature drops.

The first tasting samples are drawn off, fully fermented, around Easter. Makers then begin planning their blending, and also which juice is suitable for a single varietal cider or perry.

Focus in January and February turns to the

apple trees themselves because now is their moment to shine and be thanked for their magical crop.

Wassailing is the folk custom that does just this, and this ancient tradition has been revived in both urban and rural orchards. Each year, more Wassails are celebrated as the practice spreads throughout orchards up and down the land.



Let's get the facts out of the way: an orchard is defined as a place where five or more fruit trees are growing. These can be in oil drums out the back of a taproom, pub, club or community centre, or in rows in fields. Both are equally orchards.

Wassailing or Waes Hael is a medieval greeting meaning 'Be of good health'. Wassails happen around the Twelfth Night (either the old 17th or new

5th January) or increasingly around the second full moon of the new year (26/27 February in 2022). Additionally, with Covid, summer Wassails are becoming a growing movement marking the winter solstice in the southern hemisphere.

Whatever the selected date, the aim is common for all Wassails: to thank and bless the trees, and wish them to bear a good crop that year.

There is spiritual significance, some say a pagan aspect to Wassailing, as all four classical elements are present:

- Water** – the liquid cider or perry you will be supping
- Fire** – the bonfire you gather at, or torches you have in your pockets
- Earth** – the ground you consciously move over
- Air** – all around you, because you have to be outside to attend a Wassail!

Like the ancient tradition of beating or walking the bounds, Wassailing creates a sense of place and community. It is a very bonding experience, reverberating through people, land and trees, spreading appreciation and self-worth.



So how do you Wassail? Traditionally, it involved a gathering of people, a statement of intent, a procession, making noise, using shotguns, dipping bread in cider or perry and having the youngest attendee hang it on a branch of the oldest tree, sipping a mulled cider around a bonfire and singing. Nowadays, the shotguns and bread bits tend to be dropped in favour of bunting and apple porridge.

Never changing, everyone is urged to make noise and sing a Wassail song or chant "Rise up sap! Bear forth fruit" as they walk around the trees.

The noise made is to awaken the trees from their winter slumber and urge the sap to rise. The full moon affects tree sap, just as it does tides, and so the second full moon marks the beginning of the trees' reawakening and return to the growing season. It makes perfect sense to me to Wassail around the full moon.

In South Wales, the Mari Lwyd can appear alongside Wassailing. Mari Lwyd heralds the return of light and brings good luck to the places she enters, while being mischievous and moving anything that can be moved. Mummings, also disguised, can be part of a Wassailing troupe, telling their play as part of a winter tradition. In other areas, Sword or Morris dancers can perform alongside Wassailers to help banish winter.

When I wassailed my apple tree, it had the heaviest crop ever. Over twenty bags of apples were collected and made into all sorts of things enjoyed by friends.

Increased cropping is a story I've heard frequently from other apple tree owners and cider and perry makers. So it is worth giving it a go – our trees like to be thanked and respected just as much as people.

There are lots of brilliant pubs supporting real cider and perry, including Stockport's Petersgate Tap and bottle shops like Cat In The Glass (thecatintheglass.co.uk/). As we slip into 2022, please spare a moment to thank the orchards for the fruit that comes from them.

Some links and a great book:

The Orchard Project, CAMRA's 2020 Pomona Award winner, is active in creating community orchards: <https://www.theorchardproject.org.uk/orchards-map/>

What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region

Sureshot Brewing Set to Launch



Next month will finally see the launch of **Sureshot Brewing**, the new project headed by James Campbell (pictured here). James has an impressive CV, having been head brewer at Marble Beers for many years, followed by several more as founding head brewer of Cloudwater Brew Co. Since he left Cloudwater in 2018, James has acted as a brewery consultant both nationally and around the globe, although setting up his own brewing operation was always the end game.

Sureshot has taken on the old Track Brewing premises on Sheffield Street, just behind Manchester's Piccadilly Station, and will be using Track's former 13 hectolitre plant, along with new 30hl fermenters and a five-head canning line. It's all expected to be operational and putting out beer by the end of February.



Alongside James, the team includes Sean Forde (ex-Hammerton Brewery) on the brewing side and James Moffat (ex-Font, Port Street Beerhouse and Cloudwater) as sales manager. James Leaver (ex-London Beer Factory) on branding and marketing, and Michael Fords complete the line-up.

Initially expect a small range of pale and hoppy beers, brewed using one or two different yeasts. More tanks

are planned for the middle of the year, at which point Sureshot will branch out to lagers, with the odd special thrown in. There'll be no cask and the output will be kegged and canned.

We asked James what the target market was. "People who like beer. We're not brewing with a particular audience in mind. We take an egalitarian approach," he told us.

There will also be a taproom, but plans for this are being kept under wraps at the moment. Watch this space!

Ralf & Alf



"Who are they?" you may ask. Time for a bit of history. Back in 1863, **Hydes Brewery** was founded by Ralph and Alfred Hyde, having acquired a small brewery from their grandfather. In celebration of that, Hydes have launched a 'Ralf & Alf' range of beers. This comprises 12 monthly specials throughout this year, each of which references a 19th century profession in its name. We'll cover these as the year progresses and here are the first three:

Mudlark (4.2%) is the beer for January. It's a dark mild brewed with roast barley, and black and chocolate malts to give a 'rich tasting' beer. Hops are Fuggles and Goldings.

Hemp Heckler (4%) is for February. This is a traditional English bitter with a rich, malty profile but also benefitting from generous dry-hopping during the fermentation process.

For March, there's **Legger** (3.9%). This is a golden ale brewed using flaked maize and pale ale malts, and highly hopped using US Cascade hops. The aim is for a strong and lingering citrus character.

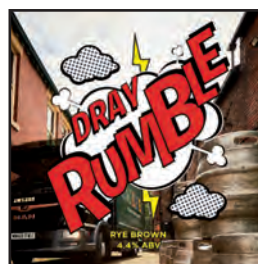


In addition, there will also be a Ralf & Alf bi-monthly range. The names of these beers reference old Manchester nightclubs, and so for January/February we have **Board Walk** (3.9%). This is a "balanced and traditionally brewed English pale ale" using East Kent Goldings and Whitbread Goldings.

Looking at the remainder of the year, there are some very interesting beers coming up from Ralf & Alf – well worth looking out for, we think.

Lees Seasonals

Middleton brewers **JW Lees** have an increasing presence in the *Opening Times* area, a very welcome development we think. They, too, have a range of seasonal beers out this year, one every two months, and the names reference the brewery and brewing. So, here are the first two.



For January/February look out for **Dray Rumble** (4.4%). This is described as a Rye Brown and is brewed using crystal and chocolate rye malts. These will add complexity, and also a spicy dryness to the beer. Hops are Admiral, Columbus and Summit, chosen to bring a notable bitterness to the beer.

The March/April beer is **Malt Crush** (3.7%), described as a Light Ale. It will be a rich golden colour from the use of pale malt and mild ale malt. Hops are Fuggles and Saaz, which will bring rounded and floral notes to the beer.

More from Howard Town

There are some tasty seasonal beers out from Glossop's **Howard Town Brewery**.



Escapade (4.7%) is an oatmeal stout, and Martin Wood's second beer with the company. The tasting notes we have seen describe this as a "smooth oatmeal stout, with aromas of toasted oats, chocolate flavours and a lightly roasted aftertaste". Sounds rather good, we think.

The beer takes its name from a local Longdendale legend 'King Arthur's Adventure', a tale involving a naughty landowner, Sir Terrible, a young squire and King Arthur.

Look out, too, for **Dark Ravine** (5.3%) which is a gingerbread stout brewed in collaboration with Nomadic Brewery of Leeds. The beer includes oats, fresh ginger and cinnamon pods, and is "a real winter warmer with a spicy finish".

Finally, check out **Lords a Leaping** (6%), a chocolate and vanilla porter, which was brewed for the festive season but may still be available now.

Pub Walks with Chris Morris

Bramhall to Cheadle Hulme

Winter is a great time for a pub walk. The weather might be cold but wrapping up warm, going for a brisk nature stroll and finishing with a quality pint is guaranteed to lift the winter gloom. This walk is fairly easy and takes in some lovely woodlands, open fields and visits the 14th century manor house, Bramall Hall. The walk starts from Bramhall Station and finishes at Cheadle Hulme Station.

Train Information

To reach the start of the walk, there is an hourly train service from Manchester to Bramhall on Mondays through to Saturdays. A much-reduced service currently operates on Sundays, although this will hopefully improve in the future. At the end of the walk, trains depart from Cheadle Hulme at least every half-hour, with more in peak times on Monday through to Saturday. There is an hourly service on Sundays. If travelling from Stockport, you will need to purchase a return ticket to Bramhall. For full timetable information, visit nationalrail.co.uk.

The Walk

This three-mile walk is undemanding and there are no hills to climb. The paths are mainly good but there is one section that can get very muddy after wet weather so walking boots are recommended. The OS Explorer map is 268 Wilmslow, Macclesfield & Congleton.

After exiting Bramhall station onto the main road, cross over at the pelican crossing. On the other side, immediately join the path next to a thatched Tudor house. Carry straight on along this path, through the woods, until it reaches another main road. Turn right here and then right again along Hillbrook Road. At the end of the road, walk under the railway arch and left along the next road until you reach a roundabout. Our route now is anticlockwise around the roundabout, along the pavement, and then right after the end of a wall. We are now entering Carr Wood Park. After passing through the kissing gates, continue straight along the main wide path for half a mile, keeping the fence on your left until you reach a main road. Cross over here and carry along the same path signposted for Bramhall Park. At a car park, take the road on the left and continue straight ahead until you reach Bramall Hall. Toilets are available in the café opposite.

From facing the main entrance of Bramall Hall, we now walk in the opposite direction, past the sundial and right, which takes us down steps and towards some ponds. At the bottom of the steps, carry straight ahead on the path between two ponds. Before you reach a bridge, turn left and continue straight along this path until you climb some steps up to a main road. Cross over here and re-join the path on the other side, go down more steps, then walk next to the river. Take care on this stretch as it can get very muddy after wet weather. We take the left fork in the path to leave the river's edge, cross a footbridge before eventually re-joining the river again. Ignore the bridge to the right and continue ahead through a gap in the fence, up a short incline, past a little brick building on the right and straight ahead towards open fields accessed through another gap in the fence. Walk through two fields keeping the river on your right, passing under the railway viaduct and then left at the main road. Walk along the pavement for 100 yards before joining a path to the left, down some steps, signposted to Cheadle Hulme Railway Station. Continue straight along this path for a half mile until you reach the railway station.

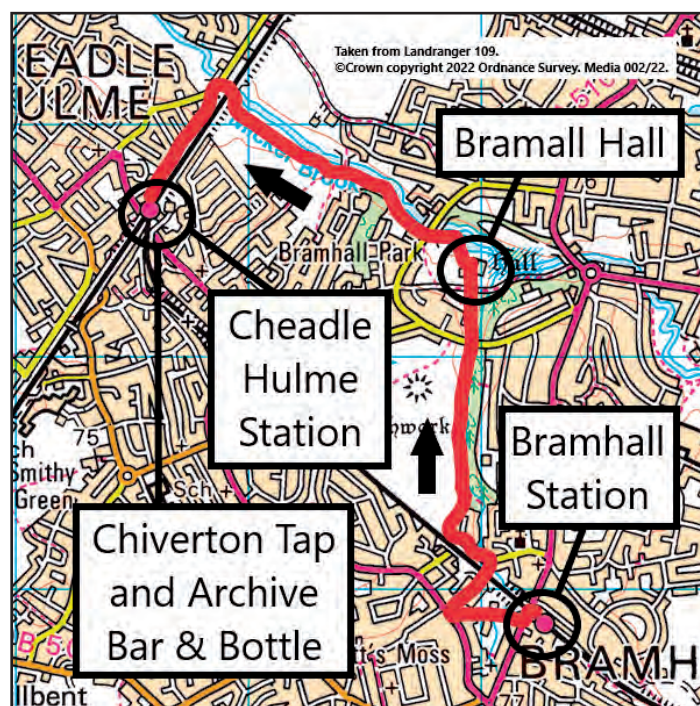
Cheadle Hulme

With your walk over, it's time to rest your legs with a rewarding pint. Conveniently located opposite Cheadle Hulme Station on Mellor Road, the **Chiverton Tap** is a double-fronted former shop that was turned into a micropub in 2015. It's been regularly winning awards

since then for its beer quality, and features in the *Good Beer Guide*. Real ale takes centre stage, with up to six cask beers available. On my last visit, these were Long Hop and Best from Bollington Brewery, Front Man II from Made of Stone, Peekaboo from Salopian, Jaipur from Thornbridge and Simcoe Strata from RedWillow. Several local beers are also on keg and a good selection of ciders feature as well. The relaxed and homely feel might delay that train journey back home! Opening hours are noon to 11pm Monday to Saturday, noon to 9pm on Sunday.



If further refreshment is required, **Archive Bar & Bottle** is also in the *Good Beer Guide* and is just a few yards back along Mellor Road. Up to four casks are available, which were from Wilde Child Brewery and Fyne Ales when I last visited. Up to 14 keg lines also feature.



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Winter Warmers

Cosy Peak Pubs with Real Fires by Chris Morris

As well as beautiful scenery, the Peak District also has a great selection of cosy pubs with real fires - the perfect tonic during these cold winter months. A warm welcome, an inviting and snug interior, a quality pint of beer, all whilst defrosting our icy feet! The following local Peak pubs score highly in all these areas, are accessible using public transport and feature at least one stove or open fire in use.



The 18th century **Fox Inn** is located in the quiet, secluded hamlet of Brookbottom and is a hidden gem. Trains run regularly to nearby Strines, as does the 358 bus. The half-mile climb up to the pub can be a little challenging but it's worth the effort, with your reward waiting at the top. The rustic country-pub exterior is matched inside,

with corner settles, copper-topped tables, a coal stove in one room and an open fire in another. As well as a warm welcome, up to two good Robinsons cask beers are available, as is good-value food.



A little further along, the bus or train takes you to New Mills. Thought to be the oldest surviving pub in the area, the **Masons Arms** is located on the edge of the town and is well worth seeking out. A recent renovation has smartened up the interior but kept key traditional features, with

stone floors and bespoke wooden furniture. Two log burners on either side of the pub will greet you, as will eight handpumps on the bar, for cask beer and cider. Lakeland Brewhouse, Wainwright and two Storm Brewery beers were available when last visited.



From New Mills, the 358 bus (also the 60 and 61) takes you to the delightful village of Hayfield. The **Royal Hotel** is an 18th century former coaching inn that still offers great comfort to visitors today. Oak panelling, Chesterfield sofas and an open log fire make a handsome and relaxing setting. A feature in the *Good Beer Guide* for many years, up to five cask beers are available here, and these were from Howard Town and Wincle Brewery when I last called in.



Hayfield also offers a more contemporary feel with the 16th century **Pack Horse**. A recent sympathetic refurbishment has enhanced this pub's traditional features, with low ceilings, two log burners and secluded lighting, making the perfect spot to recharge after a winter's stroll. The pub is well known for its excellent food but it excels with its beer choice too.

Up to four casks are available, which were from Howard Town and Bradfield Brewery when I last visited.



Continuing the train journey from New Mills Central Station brings you to Chinley. A few minutes' walk takes you to the small hamlet of Whitehough and two recommended pubs run by the same team. The 16th century **Old Hall Inn** has won many awards for its beer but the interior offers similar delights, with

flagstone floors, oak beams and three log burners spread throughout. The six cask beers available when I visited were from Abbeydale, Cloudwater, Big Stone Beer, Thornbridge, RedWillow and Beartown Brewery. Two ciders also featured.



Across the road is the **Paper Mill Inn** which is a real gem for cosy pub seekers. More flagstone floors and oak beams feature here too, but there is also thoughtfully positioned soft lighting which creates the ultimate cosy hideaway,

with an open fire on one side and two log burners on the other. Cask beers available were from Marble, RedWillow and Marston's.



Whaley Bridge is easily accessible by train or the 199 Skyline bus. The stone-built **Shepherds Arms** is listed on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors and is a must-visit. Formerly a farmhouse, fixed benches, a stone floor, scrubbed tables and two log burners give you an insight into what pub life was like

back in the day whilst enjoying the two cask beers from the Marston's stable.



Glossop is easily reached by train, with a frequent service from Manchester Piccadilly. A short walk from the station brings you to the charming village of Old Glossop and the 15th century **Bull's Head**. Character is in abundance here, with low ceilings, soft

lighting, two open fires and one log-burning stove. Up to six cask beers are available which were from Howard Town, Oakham and Robinsons when I last called in.

Some country pubs have restricted opening times, so it's recommended to check beforehand. Full pub details, including opening times, can be found at whatpub.com. Public transport timetables can be found at tfgm.com.

News & Updates



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Track Tap

When it comes to brewery taps, **Track Brewing** seems to have raised the bar in Manchester following their move to new premises last October.

The brewery has upped sticks from its old site on Sheffield Street, behind Piccadilly Station, and moved to a large unit on Piccadilly Trading Estate, just off Great Ancoats Street.



Previously home to the Post Office, the large unit accommodates a much enlarged brewery, with capacity increased almost fourfold, together with an 80-seat taproom. This takes its lead from similar set-ups in the USA, whereby the

brewing operation takes place in the same space, rather than being partitioned off or in a separate room altogether.

The overall effect is that of a huge convivial beerhall. And of course beer takes centre stage. The long bar offers three different lagers, a dozen keg beers and three beers on cask (almost always including flagship brew Sonoma). A variety of Track merchandise is available to buy, and food is provided by the excellent Patel's Pies.

All of this is overseen by manager Katie Brown who, along with her very professional team, keeps everything running very smoothly. The operation is likely to expand significantly in the summer months as there is also a huge, south-facing, outside area which is brimming with potential for various events.

The Track Tap is closed on Monday and Tuesday, and opens at 2pm on Wednesday and Thursday, and 12 noon Friday to Sunday. While there, you might also want to drop into the **Cloudwater** tap, which is just across the road.

Chapel-en-le-Frith



Chapel-en-le-Frith Craft Brewing brews in an outbuilding of the Post Office in central Chapel. The owner is Tim Boothman and he has recently bought the **Old Cell Ale Bar**, which is on the Market Place and just a stone's throw from the Post Office and brewery.

In addition to taking over the pub, Tim has produced a seasonal beer using wet hops. Cracken Edge (4.6%) uses Phoenix hops that were harvested in Chinley. This has been very well received – so much so that it won Gold in the SIBA Midlands Region Bottle and Can Awards, and will be entered in the national finals later this year.

In Brief

The much-anticipated opening of JW Lees' new pub in Woodford, the **Aviator**, is planned for Friday 25 February. A full report next time. In Hazel Grove, the currently-closed **Bullock Smithy** is being advertised as 'to let', with plans for a refurbishment and also a name change back to the **Bulls Head**. We hear that a major refurbishment is also planned for the **Royal Oak** in Edgeley.

News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

The Bottle Mill

The latest addition to the rapidly improving south Reddish beer scene is the **Bottle Mill**, a brand new bar situated in a slightly unexpected location – the second floor of Houldsworth Mill.

This prominent landmark on Houldsworth Street has been converted for both residential and commercial use, with the second floor given over to the Houldsworth Mill Shopping Centre, and it is here that you will find the Bottle Mill, converted from one of the vacant units.



It's been skilfully done, using reclaimed materials and fittings (a fireplace comes from the now-closed **Jolly Angler** in central Manchester). It's quite small but there's plenty of seating out at the front of the unit, so a decent number of people can be accommodated.



The bar is a project by Sam Doolan (seen here), Chris Ballinger and Chris Woodsworth. They all have day jobs, and in fact met regularly in the mill, where the Bottle Mill was born out of a conversation among the three of them.

There's no cask among the five draught beers sold, so your real ale will come from a keykeg, and alongside these is a wide range of cans and bottles, all sourced from local breweries.

Business has been brisk so far. Sam told us that the Reddish locals had really taken to it and it's already established a core of regulars.. Well worth a visit – you can browse around the rest of the shopping centre at the same time.

The Bottle Mill is open from 3-6pm Monday-Wednesday, 4-10pm Thursday, and 3-11pm Friday and Saturday. Sunday opening is being considered for this year.

SupNorth

Staying in Reddish, readers may recall that in our September/October issue we reported on **SupNorth**, an informal part-time brewery. At the time, the four friends who run it didn't have a commercial licence. They have now applied for one, so the next couple of months or so may see more SupNorth beers out in the wild.

Marble Arch Award

The publication of the 2022 edition of CAMRA's national *Good Beer Guide* saw Manchester's famous Marble Arch notch up no fewer than 25 entries.

Given the ever-changing pub scene in the City Centre, this is quite an achievement, and reflects the continuing commitment to excellent beer quality over the years.



The Central Manchester Branch of CAMRA, under whose remit the pub now falls, presented the pub with a certificate to mark the occasion. Members of many local branches thronged the pub on the presentation night in November, such is the pub's reputation across the region.

Pictured above with the award are (left to right) Marble Head Brewer Joe Ince, Marble Beers owner Jan Rogers and Central Manchester branch chair Heather Airlie.

Tameside Update

Peter Wood has retired as landlord at the Lowes Arms in Denton after 23 years at the helm, with the pub appearing in the *Good Beer Guide* every year since 2014. Opening Times sends Peter best wishes for his retirement.

Taking over is Craig Sweatmore, who himself has over 30 years' experience in the hospitality industry. Craig has advised that real ale will remain a fixture at the Lowes Arms, and that beers will also continue to be brewed on site in the cellar for the regulars of this popular establishment. A discount of 20p per pint for CAMRA members is to remain in place. In fact, very little is to change, which is great to hear.

It is reported from Mossley that the **Rising Sun** has begun brewing again.

In Hyde town centre, the former **Tweed Tap** on Hamnett Street has now reopened as **Jack's Bar** with new owners. There are four handpumps serving regularly changing beers.

Also in central Hyde, the **Albion** and the **Jolly Carter** have now reopened after refurbishment. The handpumps in the Jolly Carter appear to have gone but there are still two in the Albion, though our reporter was not sure if these are in use.

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	Direct Debit	Non DD
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Under 26 Membership	£20.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	£22.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Membership (At the same address)	£36.50 <input type="checkbox"/>	£38.50 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Under 26 Membership	£22.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	£30.00 <input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate whether you wish to receive *BEER* by email OR post: Email Post

I wish to Opt-in to General Communications Branch Communications

Concessionary rates are available only for Under 26 Memberships.
I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association which can be found on our website.

Signed

Date Applications will be processed within 21 days.

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Direct Debit Instruction

Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to:
Campaign for Real Ale Ltd. 230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts AL1 4LW
Email: membership@camra.org.uk Telephone: 01727 867201

Name(s) of Account Holder

Billing Address

.....
.....
.....

Bank or Building Society Account Number

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Branch Sort Code

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Postcode

Payments will show as *CAMRA Membership* on your bank statement.

I understand that CAMRA has partnered with Stripe, who collects Direct Debits on behalf of CAMRA and confirm that I am the account holder and the only person required to authorize debits from this account.

Signature



This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit, Stripe will notify you 2 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Stripe to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by Stripe or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Stripe asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us. Setup of Direct Debit Instruction with Stripe on behalf of CAMRA.



Campaign
for
Real Ale

*Price of single membership when paying by Direct Debit. *Calls from landlines charged at standard national rates, cost may vary from mobile phones. New Direct Debit members will receive a 12 month supply of vouchers in their first 15 months of membership. The data you provide will be processed in accordance with our privacy policy in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.
**Joint members receive £40 worth of vouchers.



What's On

Local CAMRA Branch Diaries

Events for January to early March 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.

Thursday 13 January – Armoury, 31 Shaw Heath, SK3 8BD. Branch 2022 awards for Pub of the Year, Cider Pub of the Year and Club of the Year for 2022 will be chosen at this meeting. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 15 January – Cheshire Ring, 72-74 Manchester Road, Hyde, SK14 2BJ. Starts 1.30pm. Will be followed by a social in Hyde and Dukinfield. (HPNC)

Monday 17 January – Park Tavern, 158 Park Lane, Macclesfield, SK11 6UB. Entries for the 2023 GBG will be chosen at this meeting. Starts 8pm. (MEC)

Monday 7 February – Bottle Bank, 24 London Road, Holmes Chapel, CW4 7AL. Starts 8pm. (MEC)

Thursday 10 February – Petersgate Tap, 19A St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. The entries for the 2023 GBG will be chosen at this meeting. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Monday 21 February – Harrington Arms, Gawsworth, SK11 9RJ. Further entries for the 2023 GBG will be chosen at this meeting. Starts 8pm. (MEC)

Saturday 26 February – Rems Café Bar, 29 Market Street, Chapel-en-le-Frith, SK23 0HP. Starts 1.30pm. Will be followed by a social in local pubs. (HPNC)

Social Events & Presentations

Tuesday 18 January – Weekday Wander in Denton. Catch bus 327 at 12 noon from Stockport Bus Station. (SSM)

Friday 21 January – Cheadle East Stagger: 7.30pm Cheshire Line Tavern, Manchester Road, SK8 2NZ; 8.30pm Red Lion, 83 Stockport Road, SK8 2AJ; final pub Printers Arms, 220 Stockport Road, SK8 2BT. (SSM)

Thursday 27 January – Pub of the Month presentation: Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury, M20 5PG. From 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 29 January – Winter Pub of the Season presentation: Windsor Castle, 1 Glossop Road, Marple Bridge, SK6 5EJ. Starts 2pm. To be followed by a social in Marple Bridge and Romiley. (HPNC)

Wednesday 2 February – Weekday Wander in Glossop. Meet Stockport Rail Station 11am. (SSM)

Friday 11 to Monday 14 February – Branch weekend away in Chelmsford. (HPNC)

Friday 18 February – Hazel Grove North Stagger: 7.30pm Grove Alehouse, 145 London Road, SK7 4HH; 8.30pm Flying Coach, 120 London Road, SK7 4DJ; final pub Crown, 616 Buxton Road Great Moor. (SSM)

Thursday 24 February – Pub of the Month presentation: Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. From 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 26 February – 35 Years in the GBG presentation: Davenport Arms, 550 Chester Road, Woodford, SK7 1PS. From 2pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 2 March – Weekday Wander in Altrincham. Check branch website for route but meet at Stockport Rail Station at 11.45am to catch 11.52 train. (SSM)

CAMRA Awards

Recent Presentations



The High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire branch Pub of the Season Award for autumn was presented to the **George Hotel** in Hayfield on Saturday 20 November. The comfortable and welcoming pub is in the centre of Hayfield village. On cold days there's a real fire, in a magnificent old-fashioned range, to sit by and warm your cockles. A good variety of hand-pulled beers from the Marston's stable is available and walkers are welcome. All in all it's a pub well-deserving of the award and well worth a visit. The photograph shows High Peak branch chairman Ben Zwierink, right, presenting the certificate to licensee Steve Nagy.



The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month for November was the **Fletcher Moss** in Didsbury. This very popular local combines a traditional layout at the front with an extended section at the back. It serves a comprehensive range of Hydes beers in superb condition. Manager Martin Devlin is seen here, right, receiving the award from branch chair John Clarke.



Stockport & South Manchester branch continues to catch up with the Pub of the Month awards delayed from 2020. The March winner for that year was the **Chiverton Tap** in Cheadle Hulme. Converted from a former drapery shop, it opened in May 2015 as one of Stockport's first micropubs, since when it has gone from strength to strength. Pictured above, co-owner Bob Ellis (right) receives the award from CAMRA's Dave Pennington.

THREE BEARS HAZEL GROVE

Friendly staff & fresh, homecooked food



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CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU**

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