

OPENING TIMES

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2023

FREE



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About Opening Times & Contacts

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Their telephone number is 03454 04 05 06. To report a matter to Trading Standards go to:

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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
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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.centralmanchester.camra.org.uk

Contact: Cath Potter; chair@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

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High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/HPTNECCAMRA

Central Manchester:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/groups/CentralManchesterCamra

Twitter – @MCRCentralCamra

Macclesfield & East Cheshire:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/groups/897449270304045

Twitter – @MECCAMRA

CAMRA Discounts

A list of local pubs generously offering a discount to CAMRA members can be found online at www.camra.org.uk/join/membership-benefits/real-ale-discount-scheme/

Front Cover

Good times at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Photo by Lawrence Devaney.

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Copy date for the November/December issue is Friday 6 October.

The Petersgate Tap



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 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023

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Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for September and October



The Pub of the Month for September is Reddish Ale on Broadstone Road in Reddish. Sue Lightfoot tells you all about it.

Brothers Craig and Chris Ballinger, together with business partner Samantha Doolan, opened Reddish Ale in September 2022. Craig had gained experience of beer and bars at home and abroad, and Chris had a knowledge of the area because he had lived there – so, when an opportunity came, they took on what had been in the past a shop and then a restaurant, and opened Reddish Ale on Broadstone Road. This one-room pub has mostly refectory-style seating supplemented by narrow counters and stools around the perimeter and at the bar. There are some small tables outside at the front for use on sunnier days. The walls are decorated with mirrors, framed beer mats Craig collected on his travels, and some photos reflecting an interest in football decorate the walls.

Three handpumps dispense changing cask beers, of different styles, both traditional and modern, from a variety of breweries, many of them local, and there are several keg beers too. Real cider is available, and there's a fridge with bottled and canned beer to drink in or take out – information about what's on offer is on a board, and another shows what's 'coming soon'.

In the short time it has been open, Reddish Ale has built up a regular clientele, and people of all ages (and their dogs) enjoy its relaxed and friendly atmosphere. There's a notice board for locals to place advertisements, and for posters about local events. CAMRA corner displays *Opening Times* and the pub supports CAMRA campaigns such as Mild Magic and the Winter Warmer Wander, along with community events like Reddfest. Food waste is recycled by the local Edible Garden.

Various snacks and small meals are available, to eat in or take away, and the mini Sunday roasts, served from 3pm, have proved very popular. Thursday is Specials night, and on Saturdays and Sundays breakfast is served from 10am.

Do come along on Thursday evening, 28 September, and help celebrate Reddish Ale's well-deserved success.

Bus 203 runs from Stockport to Manchester and will drop you close by near Houldsworth Square. Service 42A running from South Manchester to Reddish will drop you almost outside.



October's Pub of the Month is the George & Dragon in Hazel Grove. Lawrence Devaney explains why it won.

You cannot miss the George & Dragon as you pass on a 192 bus, or park at Sainsbury's. It's unusual, as you don't get many pubs built to a mock Tudor style which just about squeezes in two floors. Greene King is the current operator but that doesn't mean that the beer choice is limited to their ales.

Nick Lanigan and Adam White, respectively manager and deputy, offer an interesting selection of guest beers. They are not afraid of providing a dark beer and supported Mild Magic with Coach House Gunpowder Mild, which flew out. As a result, Nick has two regulars who now drink Gunpowder Mild instead of their previous choice, a lager! At the time of my visit, Black Sheep Respire (4%), a seasonal session IPA, was one of three cask ales. The others were Thornbridge Astryd and Greene King Yardbird. Waiting to go on were Gunpowder Mild, now a regular on the bar, and Thornbridge Jaipur. Cider is available, if you like Lilley's.

The pub was originally a Chesters Brewery house and was probably divided into several rooms, as indicated by the residual supporting buttresses. Today, it's as open plan as you can get but with areas functioned for purpose. A long bar dominates, with the space leading to a clear dining area, whilst the other side is used as a mixed drinking and dining space. The menu usually offers typical pub favourites, and is good value. A smaller area to the right as you enter off the A6 has a pool table. The pub was refurbished four years ago, but retains its traditional décor and a ceiling that defies description.

Not a lot of people know this, but the George & Dragon claims that it was the first pub in the country to ban smoking inside, predating Wetherspoons in May 2006 and the legislation of July 2007. Today, the pub supports a quiz night on Mondays at 7:30pm and live music on Saturdays; and four to five times a year hosts a maker's market. By the time you read this, the pub should be able to boast its own pool team.

CAMRA will be there on Thursday 26 October to present the Pub of the Month award. The presentation will be around 9pm but come along early and try a few beers yourself. Transport is straightforward, with the 192 bus service running at regular intervals past the pub.

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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Beer Duty Upheaval

The changes to how your pint is taxed



There were many misleading news reports in early August suggesting that the price of a pint was coming down. It's not, but there have been some big changes in the way beer is taxed. Steve Dunkley takes you through them.

August 1 2023 saw the largest change to the Alcohol Duty System in the UK for 50 years.

One of the main components of this is the introduction of a new Draught Duty Relief, designed to help pubs compete against supermarkets. The Government have said that they couldn't have done this whilst in the EU. Whilst technically correct, this isn't the whole story as they could have simply reduced the amount of VAT on drinks in pubs, which would have been a lot more straightforward to implement and police.

There are a few restrictions on which drinks qualify for the new draught relief:

Strength: can be any beer, wine, cider, spirit, or the new "other fermented products" category that includes mead, sake and fruit ciders of 1.2% ABV and above but below 8.5%. So the stronger Double and Triple IPAs and Imperial Stouts do not qualify for Draught Duty Relief. In fact, anything of 8.5% and over no longer qualifies for any relief, making stronger beers a lot less financially viable for breweries.

Container: any container of 20 litres and above that can be connected to a draught dispense system, such as a hand pull or keg font. It doesn't have to be connected though, so bag-in-boxes in the fridge and gravity pour straight from casks are fine.

On Premises: this is where the problems start. The sale of draught products for takeout is now considered 'repackaging', and any product sold like this is not eligible for Draught Duty Relief. This means that the whole container the drink comes from has to be Full Duty Paid, because pubs are not set up to monitor, record and pay the difference between Draught Duty Relief and the Full Duty Rate. Even if a pub only sells a single two-pint takeout from a cask, that entire cask must be Full Duty Paid.

What is the upshot?

What is the practical upshot of this? For the publican, the main issue is that if they intend to offer takeouts of any of their beers, they have to let the brewery or wholesaler know that they want a Full Duty Paid cask or keg. That order then has to go back up the chain: the brewery has to sort out the differing duty rates, mark the container differently and make sure this is reflected on the invoice, so that when it arrives and is in the pub cellar it's obvious to those pouring it, and to those doing the paperwork that the Full Duty has been paid and this cask or keg can be used for takeouts.

If a pub serves takeouts from a Draught Duty Relief container, then it is the pub that is liable for any fine. Crucially, this also goes for a customer ordering the beer in a glass and pouring it into their own container - 'repackaging without a licence' is now a criminal offence, and licensees are responsible for criminal activities on their

premises.

A lot of extra paperwork is needed, and different breweries are looking to handle this in different ways.

The smallest of breweries, producing around four casks of mid-strength beer a week, will now qualify for 90% relief on full duty, so for these the additional draught relief is negligible. With the lowest rate of duty a 30-litre keg of 4.5% beer would be liable for £2.83 at full rate, and £2.57 with the draught relief, a saving of £0.26 per keg, or about half a penny per pint. Most of the smallest breweries have said the new relief just isn't worth the effort for them, and they will just pay the full rates so that pubs don't have to worry about what they order.

For the average microbrewery, the difference between the two rates gives a saving of £1.20 on that same keg, about £0.02 a pint. Some of these microbreweries have said they will only do full-rate containers; some have said they'll take it on an order-by-order basis.

Those 2ps do add up for the largest breweries, and most of them have stated that they will only be supplying beer in Draught Duty Relief containers. For the largest that still qualify for Small Producers Relief, this can add up to around £140,000 a year in tax savings, but at £1.20 a keg, the reduction is unlikely to be passed on to pubs.

Several wholesalers have said that they'll only be ordering Draught Duty-paid containers simply because it's too much extra work to keep track of the different duty-paid containers for the minimal difference in costs.

All this makes offering draught takeouts a hassle for a lot of pubs; even for those willing to continue, the range of beers available will be reduced. Either way, we're about to see a lot of flagons and growlers gathering dust whilst the supermarkets pick up on the takeout gap. Exactly the opposite of what this new law set out to achieve.

Steve Dunkley is a brewer (at Beer Nouveau), beer and brewing historian, and commentator on the hospitality industry (beernouveau.co.uk).



Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

High Peak Pub of the Season

The High Peak, Tameside and NE Cheshire CAMRA Pub of the Season for summer 2023 was the **Ale Stop** on Chapel Street in Buxton.

This former converted wine shop was the first micropub in Buxton and opened nine years ago. The current owner, Richard Andrew, has been there six years and has continued its aim as a good community pub, offering continually changing beers from microbreweries (both near and far) on four handpumps; there are also two or three boxed ciders.



Richard's objective is to bring to Buxton beers and ciders which are rarely seen in the town. The Ale Stop has always had a music theme which is reflected in the décor. An eclectic choice of background music on vinyl is played, and live music events take place on at least one Sunday each month.

On a wet Saturday in August, all too common this summer, CAMRA members and local patrons met for the presentation, which was made to Richard Andrew (pictured left, above) by High Peak Branch member Geoff Williamson.

Macclesfield Pub of the Season



Ye Olde Kings Head in Gurnett was the winner of the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch Pub of the Season for summer 2023.

Gurnett is a hamlet lying between Macclesfield, Sutton Lane Ends and Langley. The pub lies just west of the historic Gurnett Aqueduct (c.1827) on the Macclesfield canal, a major source of customers for the pub, both walkers and boaters. The pub is managed by friends and business partners Paul Montegrando and Emily Taylor, who have revived the place.

The frequently changing menus are on blackboards, including specials and a curry of the week. Four cask beers are usually served, which include Timothy Taylor's Landlord and their house beer from Wincle, Gurnett Glory, named in honour of John Barlow, a previous long-standing licensee of the pub. There is a wide range of other drinks for the non-beer drinker, including Henney's Cider in bottles and gin from the local Forest Distillery. Pictured above are Mike Wawiorok from CAMRA, with Sally, Paul and Emily.

Pointing Dog

Middleton-based family brewer JW Lees is slowly expanding its presence in the *Opening Times* area, and its latest welcome addition is the **Pointing Dog**, on Grove Lane in Cheadle Hulme.



It had a slightly shaky start when a third-party event in the beer garden got rather out of hand, with the police attending the resulting fracas. However, despite that recent brouhaha, all was serene when *Opening Times* called. So, what's new?

There's some branded signage outside, and a refreshed interior, but essentially the layout remains the same, with the bar in front of you as you walk in, and the rest of the place seemingly given over to food. Although the bar has two handpumps serving Lees' beers (MPA and Bitter when we called), our reporter thought it hard to describe as a pub. With 90% of the space given over to food, it felt more like a restaurant with handpumps. But, having said that, it was doing brisk trade on a Saturday afternoon.

When we were leaving, the bar area was busier, but it seemed that people were waiting for tables, rather than actually 'enjoying a drink in the bar'.

This purchase by Lees seems to be part of a trend also being followed by Robinsons, who often tend to convert their pubs to being food-led when they refurbish them.

Inn Brief



Barry Harvey has retired as the licensee of the **Navigation**, Heaton Norris, after eight and a half years at the helm. There were some rumours that the pub might then be closing but happily that is not the case.

The new licensee, Mandy, who took over in mid-August, tells us that she is planning some improvements and a general clean up. We understand the pub's windows are to be replaced as well. Mandy celebrated her arrival with a 'welcome party' on August bank holiday Saturday, with Turkish street food and live music.

Staying in Heaton Norris, the **Grapes** on Quantock Close was closed as we went to press. The tenancy was being advertised on the Admiral Taverns website, so any closure is likely to be temporary. The closure of the Hope Inn is however looking very permanent, and in early August the builders were on site, apparently converting the pub to another use.

Paul and Pauline Treanor took over the **Midway** on Newbridge Lane, Stockport, back in January 1999. They've worked hard to make the pub a huge success but are now retiring – their last day will be 1 October. We wish them the very best.

What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region

New Beers

There should be new beers out from most of our local family brewers by the time you read this.

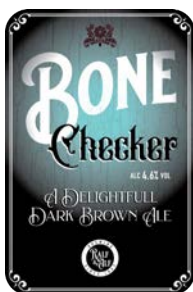


Robinsons have AMO, a 4.4% straw-coloured ale that uses both Cascade and Amarillo hops. The brewery tasting notes suggest this will be a “clean and zesty ale with a hop kick that is complemented by a crisp and dry finish”. We understand that a further limited edition cask beer will be out during October, too – rumours suggest that the very well-received Big Sur will also be returning in October.

Middleton-based **JW Lees** have numerous beers to try. The seasonal is Autumn Drop (4.3%), described as a ‘bramble bitter’: it’s a copper-red beer brewed using roast barley and red crystal malt, plus Bramling Cross hops which impart blackcurrant and spice notes.



In addition, the smaller in-house microbrewery produces the Boilerhouse range, at the rate of one new beer per week, with a target of no fewer than 52 new beers for 2023. In September these will be: All The Way IPA, a 3.8% session IPA; Keep It Going, a festbier at 5.8%; A Minute to Midnight, a schwartzbier at 4.5%; Pear of Berries, a 5% raspberry and pear ale; and Read All About It, a 3.6% extra pale ale. Details of the October Boilerhouse beers hadn’t been released as we went to press.



Finally, **Hydes** have two beers out for September. The Ralf+Alf monthly beer will be Brew Order (4.8%). It’s brewed using amber and crystal malt and should have a “spicy bitter finish and a warm amber glow”. There’s also a new beer out in the Ralf+Alf bi-monthly range. The beer for September and October is Bone Checker (4.6%) which, the brewery tasting notes tell us, is a “dark, flavoursome beer that combines three different malts to give a biscuit, roast flavour. US hops complement the heady malt notes with hints of citrus and a purposeful underlying bitterness”.

Balance Brewing & Blending



Balance is the only Manchester brewer dedicated to mixed-culture, barrel-fermented beers, and now has a taproom to showcase the excellent beers they make.

At the start of the year the brewery moved into its

permanent home at 10 Sheffield Street, a railway arch beneath Piccadilly Station. Since then, they’ve grown considerably, with a grand total of 110 barrels, a rather enormous 5,000 litre capacity foudre (basically a huge wooden vat) and a steady output of new beers. They have been steadily filling all of these new barrels with the brewery’s base beer as well as a few experimental and interesting base beers which will come to fruition going into next year.

The taproom, which occupies the front half of the arch, opened on 12 August to great acclaim. It’s been stylishly fitted out with lots of natural wood which contrasts with the dark red fabrics, and these give



a slightly decadent and theatrical feel. At the rear you can see the barrel store, each cask full of slowly fermenting and ripening beer.

The bar is dominated by two very distinctive fonts, each with two taps, which were specially commissioned from a Stockport-based ceramicist.

Three Balance beers will always be on tap (one will be the house saison, the others will change constantly), and the fourth tap will feature traditional wild-fermented ciders or other mixed-fermentation beers. A fridge features a wide selection of Balance beers, natural wines and guest bottles to drink in or take away.

The Balance Brewing & Blending taproom opens every Saturday from 12 noon until 10pm.

The Old Fire Station



The **Old Fire Station** is at the west end of the Crescent in Salford, about three minutes’ walk from Salford Crescent station. In addition, any bus travelling out of Manchester along the Crescent will drop you right outside. The site is owned by the University of Salford and they opened it after the end of term so that it can bed in before the new one starts. Nevertheless, there were about two dozen customers when *Opening Times* called, many in the garden enjoying a rare moment of sunshine.

As you walk in, the on-site bakery is on the right, and the bar and cake counter is straight ahead. There are two handpumps on the back wall, plus eight taps. There are small beer lists on blackboards on the bar top, with the main listing and prices on a blackboard above the bar.



The **Lark Hill Brewery** is visible on the left hand side of the premises through a large interior window, or from the outside through the old fire station doors. It’s a large and very modern shiny plant which has a capacity of 10hl (just over six barrels), and is run by the very knowledgeable and technically expert brewer Changmin Lee, who has previously brewed at Vocation and assisted at Marble. Changmin told us that he’s not totally happy with the beers yet, as he thinks some are a touch too dry in the finish – although we rather liked them! Six Lark Hill beers were available, one cask (Lark Song at 3.9%), and five

keg, and all of those sampled were excellent, we thought. The Coffee Crema stout (11%) was notably good.

The beers are currently only available at the Old Fire Station, although there is the intention to sell them into the local free trade once resources permit. Well worth a visit.

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News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

Beer Shed Changes Hands

In a surprise move, Russ Degnan has announced his departure from the **Beer Shed** in New Mills. He opened the popular Market Street micropub eight years ago and has now decided to pursue other endeavours.



early September.

It won't be run as a Torrside tied house, though. While Torrside beers might make more regular appearances, the guest beers will still be sourced from independent UK breweries. Essentially the pub has been bought to keep it just the way it is.

This purchase won't be affecting the Torrside brewery tap events either – don't miss the last one for this year which is scheduled for 8 and 9 September.

Pictured above: Russ and Elisha of the Beer Shed (front left and right), along with (clockwise from left) Chris, Angharad, Sarah and Nick from Torrside.

Strines Nightingale



The former Sportsman in Strines reopened a year ago, in September 2022, as the **Strines Nightingale**. It's been a bit of a work in progress since then but, as it's now bedding in, *Opening Times* paid a visit.

It's a project of business partners Chris Slater, Leigh Hanford

and Fuchsia Summerfield (who also run the **Rose & Monkey** on Swan Street in Manchester's Northern Quarter). At first, the pub only opened at the weekend as during the week there was an ongoing programme of refurbishment. Inside, it's pretty much finished, but work continues on the very extensive grounds, although the outside terrace, with its excellent views, is already well used.

It was the land attached to the pub that attracted Chris and his partners to it. The aim is to stage all manner of events outside, such as live music, beer festivals and car boot sales. The pub already hosts live music nights inside.

Inside, it looks very attractive, with mixed and matched furniture and stone walls giving a farmhouse vibe. On one side there is a smaller snug, which is where you can watch sports on the TV.



There are five handpumps on the bar (with some very attractive vintage pump handles); although only two are in regular use at the moment, this will increase to four in the winter months. All of the cask beers are sourced within about 20 miles of the

pub. A beer from Rochdale's Pictish Brewery is permanent, and other beers come from the likes of RedWillow, Blackjack, Beartown and Thornsett. There's a 20p discount for CAMRA members, too.

Food is being developed but will be mainly pies, samosas, and sharing boards.

The pub is closed Monday to Wednesday, open from 4-11 pm Thursday and Friday, 1-11pm Saturday and 1-9.30pm Sunday.

The Strines Nightingale is at 105 Strines Road, Strines, SK6 7GE. The 358 Stockport-Hayfield bus will drop you close by, and it's about a twelve-minute walk from Strines Station.

News Inn Brief

The **Crown Point Tavern** in Denton has changed hands. A brief chat with the new licensee (Emma) has revealed that the venue will continue to provide up to six hand-pulled real ales and also to offer 10% discount to CAMRA members on production of a membership card. More details next issue.

Earlier this year we reported that **Anthology** on Swan Street in Wilmslow had closed. It has now reopened, and features live music around the weekend. Beer-wise they have Taylor's Landlord, Greene King Yardbird and Mighty Squirrels Best Bitter, which is a rebadged GK Hardy & Hansons Bitter. The Squirrels is the nickname for Wilmslow Cricket Club. Guest beers come from the Greene King stable.

A less obvious source of cask beer in Wilmslow is the **Conservative Club** on Grove Avenue, where non-members can be signed in for £2. However, the beer prices are very keen for the area. JW Lees Bitter and Marston's Wainwright Golden are always on, and are supplemented by Draught Bass or beers from either Dunham Massey or Wincle.

Mild Magic Award



As we reported last time, this year's Mild Magic was a huge success, with a 40% increase in both participants and pub visits. As usual we asked all those taking part to vote for their favourite Mild Magic pub. This year's winner was Stockport's **Petersgate Tap**. A special presentation night was held at the pub on 3 August

and co-owner Alan Gent is seen here (right) receiving his Champion Mild Pub certificate from Mild Magic organiser Darren Berry.

News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

Ossett Silver Jubilee

Ossett Brewery is toasting 25 successful years with a series of innovative special cask ales, as sales continue to grow despite market challenges.

Brewer of nationally renowned brands such as Yorkshire Blonde, White Rat, Silver King and Excelsius, the progressive Ossett Brewing Co. began life in 1998 on a five-barrel kit behind the Brewers Pride pub in Ossett, West Yorkshire. Within three years, brewing capacity was 40 barrels a week.

Winner of many national and international awards, today's modern brewery stands only a short distance from the original site in Low Mill Road, and produces an eclectic range of cask ale and lager. The company now brews 440 36-gallon barrels a week, serving a pub estate of 35 outlets, free trade and national customers all over the UK. Ossett has received various CAMRA, *Publican* and SIBA awards over the years, including SIBA Supreme National Champion with Excelsius. Silver King won its first national award in 2001 and, two decades later in 2021, won another national gold medal.

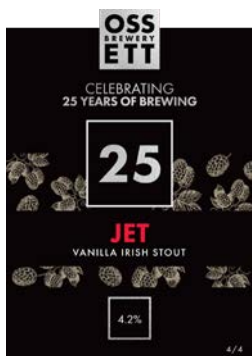
Four special beers in a 'Silver Series' will mark this milestone anniversary. Distinctive pump clips for the series display red and silver lettering on a black background.

Two have already been and gone. First was **Dazzler** (4.5%), one of the very first Ossett beers, being brewed in the summer of 1998, and it came back in the spring, albeit with many more hops than the original. This was followed by **Alter Ego** (5.5%), which was a stronger, hazy and dry-hopped version of the popular White Rat.



The third in the series will be out in September. This is **Easy Does It** (3.4%), an easy-drinking session bitter. It will be clear, pale straw in colour and full-bodied, with hints of peach, pineapple and passion fruit on the aroma, and a balanced dry, citrus bitterness in taste, derived from new

British Harlequin and American Citra hops.



A vanilla stout out in November concludes the celebrations. **Jet** (4.2%) is black, with vanilla, chocolate and coffee notes on the aroma, and a dry and bitter finish from roasted malts, joined with the French Savinjski Goldings hops and US Chinook.

Each month, there are also collaboration brews featuring pioneering ales such as Rose Petal IPA, brewed jointly with Adnams, using the new UK Mystic hop. Alongside these is a Single Hop series of pale ales, exploring hops from the UK, USA, New Zealand, France and Germany.

The company was originally founded as a brewpub in 1998 by Bob Lawson, former career brewer at Joshua Tetley in Leeds. Son Jamie founded an independent pub group, the Izakaya Pub Co. Ltd, alongside the brewery in 2003, which later merged into the Ossett brewing group. Jamie has led the brewery since Bob became Chairman in 2005, with Paul Spencer taking over as Head Brewer at the same time. Paul is still in charge of Ossett's great beer line-up after 22 years with the company. Jamie was also responsible for the founding of its craft beer sister company, SALT, in 2018.

Old Hall Beer Festival is Back



The **Old Hall** at Whitehough was well known for its annual beer and cider festival. That's been in abeyance for the last couple of years but the good news is, it's back. There should be well over 100 beers and ciders, along with a revamped festival food offer.

The dates for your diary are 15-17 September. *Opening Times* certainly plans to be there – the pub is about a 15-minute walk from Chinley railway station.

Cider Award for Petersgate Tap

Stockport's **Petersgate Tap** didn't win the Greater Manchester CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year award; it did, however, come a close second. To mark this, and also the pub's consistent record of excellent cider provision since 2018, a special presentation was made on Saturday 12 August.

Pictured below with the award are (left to right): Dave Preston



(Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA cider officer), Dick Withecombe (regional cider rep), and Alan and Chris Gent (Petersgate Tap co-owners).

Regional Winners

The winners of the Greater Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year and Club of the Year competitions have been announced.

The Regional Pub of the Year is the **Fox & Pine**, Greaves Street, Oldham. It's two years on the trot for the Regional Club of the Year, which once again is **Dobcross Band Social Club**, Platt Lane, Dobcross. Congratulations to both.

Inn Brief

There's a cask ale gain in Manchester City Centre. **Disorder** on High Street, formerly Man with The Fish and before that Walrus, sells two Vocation beers on handpump.

Staying in the city centre, it seems that, after a very long gestation period, the **Victoria Tap**, on the corner of Victoria Station, could well be opening in the next couple of months. It's a sister outlet to the Piccadilly Tap, and has been long anticipated and much awaited. If it does open, we'll be there.

Stagger

Reddish with Lawrence Devaney

It must have been our lucky day. After so much rain in April and early May, we had a fine evening for the Reddish Stagger. It was a somewhat modified one from previous years, because of the numerous pub closures.



Presenting ourselves at the bar of the **Grey Horse** on Broadstone Road, three handpumps were on display, but only one pump clip. So it was Holt's bitter, and a very good example, according to the branch members who had volunteered me to record the evening's offerings. It's a traditional pub (recently awarded the branch's Pub of the Month) with a fresh bit of sprucing up, and clearly has a loyal band of regulars.

The next pub, and literally next door, is the **Union**, a traditional Robinsons establishment with its own regulars who appear to enjoy their karaoke on a Friday night and, to be fair, I have heard a lot worse. As we walked through the door, a member of the bar team was pulling through a new cask of Robinsons Coronation Ale. Mine was the first pint, and very enjoyable it was. My opinion was backed up by the rest of

the members, apart from one who went for the Unicorn, which again was recorded as good. Other Robbie's beers were available, but we exited the bar to enjoy the pub's attractive beer garden/patio. No offence intended to the karaoke. Conversation in full flow, we said our farewell to the Union and continued to our next destination, a short walk up Broadstone Road.

Apparently, the **Bottle Mill** in Houldsworth Mill is open again but, in deference to one of the group who suffers from a Houldsworth



Mill-specific version of escalaphobia, we gave it a miss, continuing to the next stop, **Reddish Ale**, an independent new bar that graces the edge of Houldsworth Square. Easily missed, it's another shop conversion, so not very big, but laid out well for the space available. Having obtained our drinks, we annexed the convenient chairs and mini tables on the

pavement to enjoy alfresco drinking; it could have been Rome. Whilst not large, Reddish Ales has quickly developed a strong reputation for beer choice and quality, and we were not disappointed. The bar offers cask beer on three handpumps, as well as some interesting

and popular modern keg beers often including RedWillow's pilsner, Guileless. Cider drinkers are accommodated with Sheppy's Original Cloudy Cider on draught.

The cask ale selection on our visit included a Vocation and Moersleutel collaboration, Tonka Frappe. It's a latte stout (milk stout to you and me) with Tonka beans and caramel. This was the 5% version, but there is a 12% one. Opinions on this ranged from 'to die for' down to 'meh it's ok'. Not everyone in the branch loves their dark beers, is my only explanation (but what do I know). The other of the dark duo on offer was Distant Hills Dark Mild (3.2%). The three people who sampled it decided it should be graded as good. Lastly, RedWillow's HBC 431, a 4.4% New England IPA, came in as good to very good.

Up a bit and across the road is the **Houldsworth Arms**, believed to be without cask but, more for research than any real hope, the pub was checked out – it had karaoke but no cask ales. The singer on at the time was pretty good and had a bit of a dance routine as an extra dimension. Ditto for the **Thatched Tavern**, but without the dance routine.



A short bus ride later, we tumbled out of the bus and into Greene King's **Carousel** where Timothy Taylor's Landlord was available, but with mixed levels of appreciation, probably best described as satisfactory. The

Greene King IPA was ignored, but Abbot Ale was sampled and described as very good. The Carousel was strangely quiet for a Friday night – surprisingly so, as it is one of Greene King's cavernous eatery pubs.



The official Stagger ends with the Carousel but those who weren't dashing for their last bus home out of Stockport sampled a few of the beers at Beartown's **Navigation** at the top of Lancashire Hill. A good choice of cask ales, with Beartown Brewery's Kodiak, a 4% pale ale, the least gratifying but, having said that, it was rated as very good, as was the 4.1% Classic Mild. Which leaves the Navigation's Beartown Skinful, a 4.2% bitter, and the Vocation Stout at Reddish Ales topping the evening as the beers of the night (for most of us).

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CAMRA Campaigns

News from the Campaign for Real Ale

World First Book on Perry

CAMRA has announced the upcoming release of its groundbreaking new perry book from writer Adam Wells, which will be the first consumer guide to one of the UK's most traditional drinks.



Despite being largely unknown outside of the UK, perry – a drink like cider but produced from pears rather than apples – has for centuries been compared to fine wine and champagne in countries all around the world. Although it fell out of fashion in recent years, it's making a comeback, with producers creating both new and traditional perries to great acclaim.

CAMRA's championing of cider and perry at its festivals over the last 50 years has been credited with playing a significant role in keeping perry alive, and now the Campaign is going further to promote and support this traditional drink.

A new consumer-focused guide to perry is slated for publication by CAMRA Books in 2024, penned by drinks writer, presenter and founder-editor of the popular *Cider Review* site, Adam Wells.

Following the success of recent title *Modern British Cider*, which raised over £5,800 in KickStarter funding, CAMRA Books will again be offering readers the chance to be part of the whole publication journey. A new KickStarter is due to launch as part of CAMRA's October Cider and Perry Month celebration, and will bring exclusive offers, events, tastings and perry news for those who sign up.

Gillan Hough, Real Ale, Cider and Perry Campaigns Director for the Campaign said: "Perry is a long-underappreciated drink, so we're thrilled to have Adam on board to do this book justice. There are very few books about perry, and these are mainly technical manuals for producers. It's nearly 50 years since CAMRA beer festivals first served cider and perry, so a consumer-focused perry book is long overdue!

"As well as producing a delicious drink, perry pears are also of huge ecological value, with trees taking decades to mature before producing fruit for centuries. Now is a critical time, as countless perry pear varieties have already been lost, and others are down to a single mature tree. The best way to keep these orchards viable is to enjoy everything perry has to offer, and I hope Adam's book will be a catalyst for many more consumers to rediscover perry."

Author Adam Wells said: "The last five years or so have seen an incredible upsurge in the interest in and quality of aspirational, high juice content perry – not only in the UK, but in its other ancient heartlands of France and Austria, and in newer perry-making countries around the world.

"Covering growing, making, pear varieties, styles, appreciation, history, countries and producers, I hope this book provides a contribution to a much longer conversation and a useful resource both for long-standing perry lovers and those discovering the joys of great perry for the first time."

For more information visit: camra.org.uk/perry

Pictured above – a Judge Amphlett perry pear tree in full fruit.

Lack of Trust in Politicians

CAMRA has issued a warning to politicians ahead of the approaching general election.

Just two days after Prime Minister Rishi Sunak attended CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival, new research commissioned by the consumer campaigning group showed two in five Brits (43%) don't trust any of the Conservative, Labour or Liberal Democrat political party leaders to look out for the interests of British pubs.

Labour's Keir Starmer fared best, with 17% of Britons saying they would trust him to look out for the interests of pubs, whilst current Conservative PM Rishi Sunak only had the trust of 9%. Liberal Democrat leader Ed Davey came in at the bottom of the pack, with just 3% of Brits saying they would trust him to look out for the interests of pubs.

Neutrality

Consumer organisation CAMRA has always maintained party-political neutrality in its campaigning, having worked closely with all major political parties in its 50-year history. The network of grassroots campaigners that make up the 150,000 strong organisation works with elected representatives at every level, as well as fighting for pubs, social clubs, brewers and cider makers with more direct campaigning. CAMRA's National Chairman, Nik Antona, commented: "Sadly, this data suggests that the public's perception is that our beloved locals have often been an afterthought in politics. We often hear politicians playing lip service to the community and social value of our locals – which is brilliant – but we need that to be backed up with meaningful action.

"With a general election approaching, these results should be a wakeup call for politicians, who need to have substantive policies in place to address the catalogue of issues facing the pub trade.

"CAMRA believes our pubs and social clubs deserve a fighting chance, with urgent action needed on energy prices, Business Rates, a fix for the takeaway pints issue caused by the new Alcohol Duty system, and the right for licensees to choose what products they keep on the bar without stock lists being dictated by pub companies."

Pub Protection Rules Flouted

Shock pub closure figures released by CAMRA show a third of pub losses happen without the required planning permission.

The data – published as part of CAMRA's biennial pub closure figures – shows a total of 96 pubs lost to conversion or demolition across the UK in the first six months of the year, with 31 of those lacking planning permission.

Pubs in England cannot be converted or demolished without planning permission – a vital protection campaigned for by CAMRA – which empowers communities to have their say on the future of their local. However, concerning figures released today by the Campaign show that a third of pub losses happen without this process taking place.

Commenting on the figures, CAMRA Pub and Club Campaigns Director Gary Timmins said: "The pub trade is resilient, but it's simply unacceptable that developers are able to flout planning regulations.

"Today's figures must be a wakeup call for government at all levels to take a more proactive approach in ensuring compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework."

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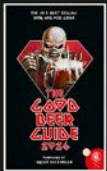
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- Blackcurrant, Lemon, Spicy



100 BARREL

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J.W. LEES



Pub Walks with Chris Morris

Prestbury to Macclesfield

The handsome Cheshire village of Prestbury features a number of picturesque buildings in a charming setting, including an excellent traditional pub. It also marks the start of a number of great nature walks. This one features a mixture of wildflower meadows, peaceful woodland and tranquil riverbanks. The route finishes in Macclesfield where we take in two of the town's finest cask ale pubs.

Train Information

There is an hourly service from Manchester Piccadilly to Prestbury, Monday to Saturday. The Sunday service is reduced to every three hours. Services also stop at Stockport, Cheadle Hulme, Bramhall, Poynton and Adlington. The return journey from Macclesfield is much better if you are going to Stockport or Piccadilly, with up to three additional trains per hour. The ticket to purchase is a return to Macclesfield. Timetables are available at nationalrail.co.uk.

The Walk

This is an easy three-mile walk that is mostly flat. The paths at the start and end are good but, in the middle, the open grassland can get muddy after wet weather, so walking boots are recommended. The OS Explorer map is 268 – Wilmslow, Macclesfield & Congleton (OS app also available). All pubs are dog-friendly.

After exiting Prestbury station, turn left and walk along the pavement for 500 yards until you reach Prestbury village. Over the road, our first pub of the day is waiting for us.



The 17th century coaching inn, **Ye Olde Admiral Rodney**, is perfect for a pre-walk drink or meal. The pub has thankfully avoided a gastro refurbishment, and a traditional pub interior can be found, including low ceilings, panelled walls, bench seating and real fires.

Some nautical memorabilia also features, which links in with the famous 18th century naval officer that the pub is named after. Owned by Robinsons, Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde and Cumbria Way were the cask beers available on my last visit.

On exiting the pub at the front, turn right and cross back over the road. After 40 yards, take a left along Bridge Green for 300 yards until the end of the road, then through a kissing gate where our nature trail starts.

Our route is now straight ahead for the next two miles along the well-trodden path. Ignore all routes to the left or right making sure that the railway embankment stays on your left and the river Bollin stays on your right. After two miles, the path bends to the right and then left before passing under the railway line. On the other side is the car park for Riverside Park where public toilets are available.

Walk out of the car park to a main road. Cross over at the toucan lights, turn right and after 100 yards turn left to walk down Summerlea Close. After passing houses, continue straight ahead along the path and under the large road bridge. Follow the path around to the right with the river now on your left. As we enter the urban area, we meet the exit road of Tesco. Cross over the zebra crossing and continue straight on with the road on your left. At the junction, cross over at the toucan crossing, turning briefly left and then immediately right

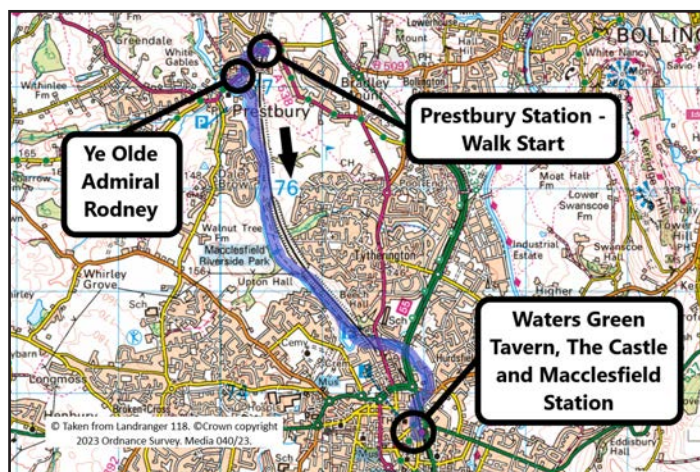
to continue along the Middlewood Way, following the green signpost to the Town Centre. Hugging the brick wall, we turn left, keeping the river on our left as before. Walk under the road bridge, then the railway bridge and continuing straight ahead for a further 150 yards brings us to Macclesfield Town Centre and its beery delights.



The **Waters Green Tavern** is a legendary no-frills local that has been championing cask beers for the last 40 years. A traditional interior awaits, with bench seating and a pool room at the back. Numerous awards have been won over the years, with the pub specialising in pale ales. These were from Acorn, Bradfield, Newby Wyke and Oakham on last inspection. The pub is cash only.



Turning left out of the pub and up the cobbled street, Back Wallgate, we now arrive at Macclesfield's hidden gem. **The Castle** has a three star rating by CAMRA Pub Heritage – “a pub interior of exceptional historic importance”. After six years of closure, the pub has been fully restored, reopening in 2021 and hasn't looked back since. A joint winner in the recent Historic England Conservation Award, the impressive interior features subtle lighting, low ceilings, wood panelling, bench seating and open fires. It's now appreciated by all ages and is a must-visit. Excellent cask beers are on offer, with the pub now listed in the Good Beer Guide and awarded local Pub of the Year. The cask beers on my last visit were from Black Lodge, Tatton and Blackjack.



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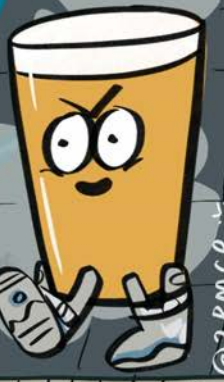
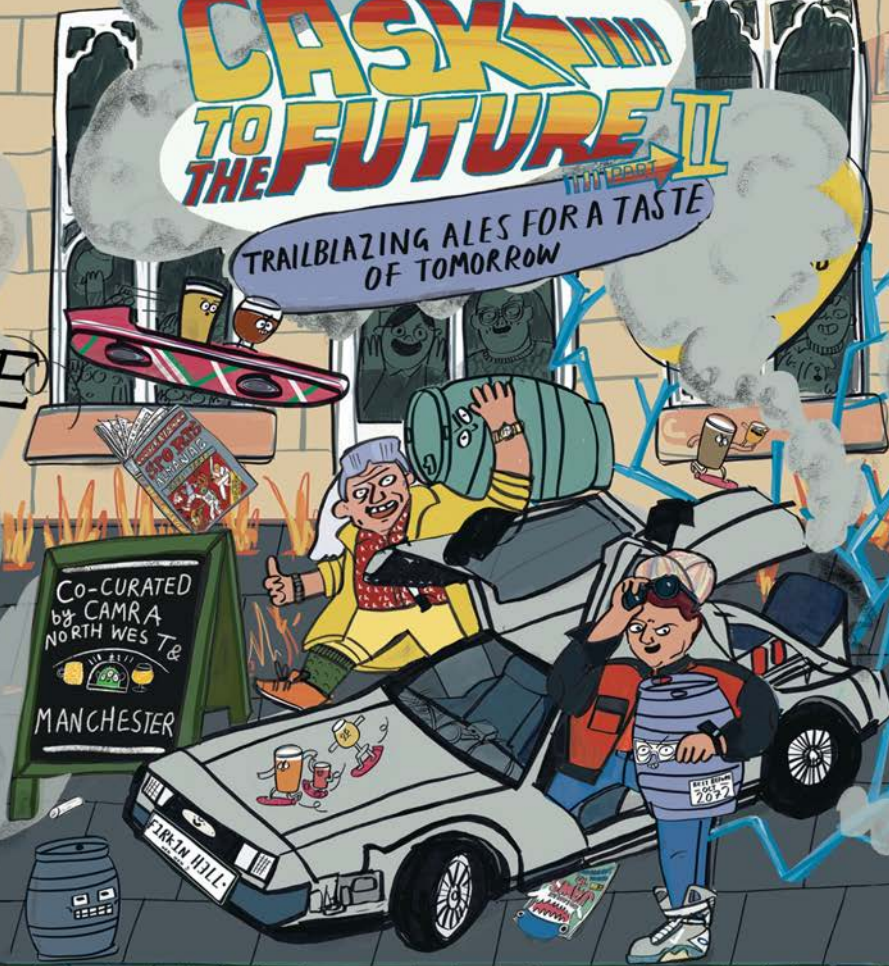
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Night Out in Heaton Mersey

with Peter Edwardson



A July night saw us journey to the Stockport suburb of Heaton Mersey, although we began just over the Manchester border in East Didsbury. It was an untypically balmy summer evening, coinciding with the start of the school holidays, which explained the queue

of cars heading into the Parrswood leisure complex. Opposite was our starting point, Wetherspoon's **Gateway**, which unsurprisingly was extremely crowded and standing room only. As a conversion of an existing pub, it is more characterful than many in the chain, with four distinct seating areas radiating off the central bar.

As we went in, three separate beers had just sold out, and quite a few of us plumped for the strong Acorn Gorlovka stout, which was maybe not the typical summer beer, but nonetheless in pretty good condition. Other beers tried were Brightside Gateway to Heaven and 24/7, and Bank Top Pavilion, all of which were decent, with Gateway to Heaven being the pick of the bunch.



On the other side of the leisure complex is the Barlow Croft, a Greene King carvery outlet located on the ground floor of a Travelodge. We had already checked that they had no cask beer, so we carried on past it and into Stockport to reach the **Dog & Partridge** on Didsbury Road. This is a large modern pub built in 1959, with an airy, open-plan interior. It was reasonably busy, although much less so than the Gateway, and we had no problem finding a seat. There was a children's party in full swing on one side, accompanied by a soundtrack of Abba's Greatest Hits. Beers on the bar were Sharp's Doom Bar and Taylor's Landlord. Everyone plumped for the Landlord, which was above average to good, although some felt it lacked the distinctive flavour associated with the brand.



From here, the remaining pubs were all on Didsbury Road, a short walk from each other. We crossed the road to reach Holt's **Griffin**, a four-square, red-brick pub with a largely unspoilt multi-roomed interior and an

impressive, sash-windowed mahogany bar. An extension was added to one side in the late 1980s which blends well into the rest of the pub and now tends to be the focus of activity. The pub never quite gets as busy as it did back then, but there were a fair number of customers in each of the five sections. The sole cask beer available was Holt's Bitter, which was universally judged to be good.



A short uphill walk brought us to the **Heaton**, which occupies a large frontage amid a terraced row of shops. Previously known as the Frog & Railway (and, for most of its life, just the Railway), it was acquired a few years ago by JW Lees and extensively refurbished to put the emphasis on food. The interior is basically one large open-plan space broken up by a few columns and wall sections. It was by some way the quietest pub of the evening, with no customers at all in the rear dining section. There was only one cask beer, Lees MPA, which was felt to be above average to good.



Our final port of call was Robinsons **Crown**, back on the southern side of Didsbury Road. This is an old, white-painted pub standing at the top of the quaint, cobbled Vale Close. The interior has been modernised somewhat, but retains two distinct rooms, with one separated from the bar area by a short corridor. First tastings of Trooper indicated that it had reached the end of the cask, but it was changed with notably good grace and the replacement was considered very good. Other beers available were Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde and Cumbria Way, all of which ranged between above average and very good.

It was the busiest pub of the evening, apart from the Gateway, with a lively, convivial atmosphere, and provided a good finish to an enjoyable evening's stroll.

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Scribbles on a Beermat



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

A Haiku: For the Six Men in the Pub

Twelve polished loafers
Half a dozen pints of ale
Zero how are yous.

Too Cool for School

He's doing some kind of maths work in the pub
wearing a black and yellow Spice Girls T-shirt

looking like the coolest guy in the world.
Maybe it's the set square jawline,

the smile wider than an Excel spreadsheet,
or the way he just ran out the door

and down the road quicker than Mel C
to hand an old lady the woolly hat

she accidentally left on her booth chair
before leaving. When he returned

with the hat on his head declaring
it was not actually hers, I would have

kissed his calculator-hard pecs
if he'd asked me to.

Just Have a Hug, Lads, it's Easier

I'll get this one.
No, I'll get this one.

No, let me get this one.
But you got the last one.

Yeah, but you got the first two.
Yeah, but you and Debra held the BBQ.

Yeah, but you and Margaret sorted the gig tickets.
Yeah, but you bought the train tickets.

Yeah, but you
Yeah, but

Yeah

Good Beer Guide 2024



"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

The Good Beer Guide, CAMRA's premier publication, featuring the very best pints of real ale, will be published in late September. This is the 51st edition of the country's best beer and pub guide, and features 4,500 of the finest pubs in the UK, chosen by CAMRA members across the country.

The Good Beer Guide is the UK's best-selling beer and pub guide and it continues to represent the best of the best in the brewing and hospitality industry.

With 4,500 pubs, bars and clubs, selected by unpaid volunteers up and down the country, this is the best guide for pub-goers interested in being served a good pint of real ale, as well as those who wish to find a local near them that is welcoming. It also has many other features that may appeal.

Each entry contains a short description, as well as details of regular beers that can be linked to the brewery section, to discover local beers as well as some treasured national favourites.

This guide is compiled by consumers for consumers, and is the most independent and complete guide to finding good beer.

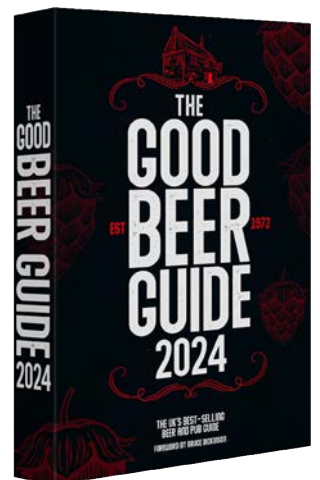
Once again, Cask Marque, and its sister company Stay In A Pub, are sponsoring the Guide.

The standard edition of The Good Beer Guide 2024 will feature the iconic image of Eddie pulling a pint, and the lettering from the world-renowned band Iron Maiden. The foreword is written by Iron Maiden's Bruce Dickinson, whose collaboration with Robinsons produced Trooper, one of the best-known beers in the UK.

To cater for those of you who may find the image of Eddie bursting through the cover a bit too heavy, CAMRA has decided to offer an alternative cover that features the recognisable lettering and imagery of previous editions.

This cover will only be available to pre-order and is exclusively sold by CAMRA – visit camra.org.uk/the-good-beer-guide-2024/.

With a striking black cover and red detailing, this limited-run edition will still feature the foreword by Bruce Dickinson and all of the 4,500 pubs, as well as an up-to-date listing of active breweries from across the UK..



Copies of the Good Beer Guide can be obtained from Jim Flynn at a price of £16.99 (including p&p). Please send a cheque payable to 'CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester' to 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG.

Be part of the **CAMRA** *story*

Real ale is just the start...

Our story is your story.
So join us in supporting
everything from pubs and
drinkers rights, to licensees
and breweries, uniting us
in the story we all love.

To thank you for being a hero
in our story, you receive great
membership benefits, such as
£30 of beer vouchers, quarterly
BEER magazine, access to the
online news platform **What's
Brewing**, partner **benefits and
discounts**... just a few perks
of joining us.

Join the CAMRA story
camra.org.uk/join



Campaign
for
Real Ale

Real stories, real people, **real ale**



What's On

Local CAMRA Branch Diaries

Forthcoming events 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.

Tuesday 5 September – Branch meeting at venue to be confirmed. See website (centralmanchester.camra.org.uk). Starts 6:30pm. (CMCR)

Monday 11 September – Tapsters, 31 Old Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 6LA. Starts 7:30pm. (HPNC)

Thursday 14 September – Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury, M20 5PG. Guest speaker Nav P Mishra MP (Stockport) will focus on the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Pubs. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 7 October – The Gillery, 1-3 Old Brow, Mossley, OL5 0AD. Starts 1:30pm. Will be followed by a social in local pubs. (HPNC)

Thursday 12 October – Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Monday 16 October – Coach & Four, 69-71 Alderley Road, Wilmslow, SK9 1PA. Starts 8pm. (MEC)

Social Events & Presentations

Wednesday 6 September – Weekday Wander in Littleborough. Catch 11:35 train from Victoria to Littleborough, then 587 bus towards Halifax. First pub (at 12:17) will be the White House, Blackstone Edge, Halifax Road, OL15 0LG. (SSM)

Saturday 9 September – Trip to Bakewell. Catch 10:35am TP3 bus from Buxton Market Place. (HPNC)

Tuesday 19 September – Cider Pub of the Year presentation: Stalybridge Station Buffet, Platform 4, Stalybridge Station. Starts 7:30pm. Will be followed by the presentation of a Special Award to the Wharf Tavern, 77 Caroline Street, SK15 1PD at 8:30pm. (HPNC)

Friday 22 September – Bramhall Stagger: 7:30pm Three Bears, Jacksons Lane, Hazel Grove, SK7 5JH; 8:30pm Ladybrook Hotel, Fir Road, Bramhall, SK7 2NP; final pub Mounting Stone, 8 Woodford Road, SK7 1JJ. (SSM)

Saturday 23 September – Stockport to Buxton Ale Trail. Details to be confirmed. From 10am. (HPNC)

Thursday 28 September – Pub of the Month presentation: Reddish Ale, 14 Broadstone Road, Reddish, SK5 7AE. From 8pm. (SSM)

Tuesday 3 October – Weekday Wander in Prestwich. Meet at Manchester Victoria 11:40am and catch Bury tram to Besses o' th' Barn. First pub (12:15pm) will be the Coach & Horses, 71 Bury Old Road, Whitefield, M45 6TB. (SSM)

Thursday 5 October – Social in the Crown & Kettle, 2 Oldham Road, Manchester, M4 5FE. From 6:30pm. (CMCR)

Friday 20 October – Heaton Moor & Heaton Chapel Stagger: 7:30pm Elizabethan, 33 Heaton Moor Road, SK4 4PB; 8:30pm George & Dragon, 422 Manchester Road, SK4 5DH; final pub Hind's Head, Manchester Road, SK4 2RB. (SSM)

Thursday 26 October – Pub of the Month presentation: George & Dragon, 14 London Road, Hazel Grove, SK7 4AH. From 8pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 1 November – Weekday Wander. See branch website www.ssmcamra.co.uk for full details. (SSM)

CAMRA Awards

Recent Presentations

The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month for May was the **Grove**, on Ashton New Road in Clayton.



The Grove Inn represents that archetypal boozer which is fast being replaced by food-orientated destination outlets. At one time, Clayton could boast dozens of pubs, because of its heavy industry, plus street after street of housing. Now, the Grove stands in splendid isolation, but just near enough to the Etihad Stadium to mean it is rammed when City are playing at home.

Chris Booth has been in charge for nearly two years, having put in ten years' apprenticeship managing the

cellar before that. Succumbing to a request, Chris brought back Holt's Mild to satisfy the desire of a 90 year old customer. Sales of this rare beer are sufficient to maintain quality, something Chris doesn't stint on. He is pictured above with his certificate.

The Pub of the Month for June was the **Victoria** on Wilmslow Road in Withington.

The Victoria is a traditional, friendly, hospitable and dog-friendly pub, and the clientele is a harmonious mix of local residents, after-work drinkers and students. There are several television screens, on which various sports are shown, especially football, and there is often a lively community atmosphere on match days. For anyone just wanting to sit and read the paper, there is a quieter area.

Five beers from Hydes are available, including Lowry and the ever-popular Dark Ruby, plus two others, generally from the Ralf+Alf range, and all are consistently well kept. Licensees Alyson and Paul Mitchell are shown here with their certificate.



For July, the Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month was the **Mounting Stone** in Bramhall. This popular bar has been operating since 2016 under the leadership of Andrew O'Shea and his team.



It's a cosy, friendly, community micropub in the centre of the village, operating on two floors, with an additional outdoor seating beer garden to the rear. There is a cosy basement drinking area below the ground floor bar. The shop-front entrance and interior were tastefully redecorated last year.

The pub has six cask lines, including a permanent dark beer and a real cider. Its two house beers are Bollington Brewery's Best Bitter and Long Hop. Andrew recently added two further keg lines, making a total of ten covering all beer styles. Alongside the draught selection there is also a good variety of bottles and cans. In addition, you will find beers from Andrew's Made of Stone brewery, which operates at the back of the pub. Andrew is seen here with his certificate.



BREWING PERFECTION SINCE 1838

