

OPENING TIMES

MARCH / APRIL 2024

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About Opening Times & Contacts

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

Pub Opening Hours

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

Disclaimer

We aim to ensure that the information in *Opening Times* is correct at the time of going to press. If we get something wrong then please get in touch (editorial contact details on the left) and we'll print a correction. Please also note the opinions expressed in *Opening Times* are not necessarily those of CAMRA either locally or nationally.

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Social Media

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

Stockport & South Manchester:

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High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire:

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Macclesfield & East Cheshire:

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Central Manchester:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/groups/CentralManchesterCamra

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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

Just some of the milds you may find on this year's Mild Magic. **See page 11 for full details.** Photo by Lawrence Devaney

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Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Copy date for the May/June issue is Saturday 6 April

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Winner Stockport Cider Pub of the Year
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Our pub charity is Stockport MIND

Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for March and April



The keys obtained, and with about ten days to go, it was all hands to the pump to prepare the Crown, Heaton Mersey, for opening. Goska and Jamie Langrish had been attracted to this whitewashed pub with a country cottage look and were delighted that Robinsons agreed they should take it over, writes Sue Lightfoot.

Since November 2021, they have worked hard to create a welcoming pub which takes the outside look to the inside. The country cottage feel is reflected in the exposed brickwork, the beams and the furniture. The cosy atmosphere is enhanced by the decoration and the pictures, some of which record the history of the area, and of the Crown itself, part of which once served as the village bakery. The pub was acquired by Robinsons in 1912.

On entering, straight ahead is the bar serving two interconnected rooms furnished with wooden tables and chairs, which are also to be found in the larger room, on the left as you walk in. This has a small bar counter at one end, and one of the sash windows doubles as a serving hatch to the outside, as part of the car park is now given over to tables and benches. There is an attractive patio area by the door and across the way is a beer garden.

The aim was to provide an inviting environment suitable for all, and to offer plenty of choice. To this end, Goska and Jamie added lines for both keg and cask, and new handpulls. There are staple and rotating keg offerings for beer and cider; the four cask beers are very well kept – Unicorn, Trooper, Dizzy Blonde and Cumbria Way (which was briefly replaced by Old Tom during the Winter Warmer Wander event). There's also a good selection of quality wines, spirits and soft drinks.

Goska, Jamie and their team have created a home from home for their customers of all ages (and their dogs). Please come along to this thriving and popular pub on Thursday 28 March, from 8pm, when we will be presenting them with their well-deserved award. You'll be sure of a very warm welcome.

Buses 23, 42 and 42A stop almost outside

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.

STEPHENSON'S
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The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for April 2024 has been awarded to the Ford Madox Brown on Oxford Road, Rusholme, writes Jim Flynn.

The Ford Madox Brown is named after the famous Pre-Raphaelite artist, who was a one-time resident of nearby Victoria Park (you can see his large murals in Manchester Town Hall). Given the dearth of pubs in Rusholme, an area faced with changing demographics and blighted by pub closures, this is a real sanctuary for the pub goer. Built on the site of the old Manchester Garages (under a student hall of residence) it benefits from being on the edge of the university area close to the Whitworth Art Gallery and Park, as well as being at the end of the famous Curry Mile.

While open plan and clearly displaying all the hallmarks of being a Wetherspoons, it has a warm atmosphere with a very mixed clientele, from students, workers from the nearby hospital complex and people calling in prior to a meal at a nearby Indian restaurant. It boasts the usual Wetherspoons attributes of value for money, a range of beers and confidence that you will not be short-changed on standards. However, what has earned the Ford Madox Brown the accolade is the improvement in choice and quality of its cask beers, which has resulted in a massive upturn in cask beer sales, when much of the market is in somewhat of a decline. The pub has also over this time promoted a number of beer festivals, and supported Mild Magic and the Winter Warmer Wander.

The pub itself is one open-plan room with the bar dominating much of the right-hand side. However, surprisingly it has a warmer feel than you might expect, and given its location, there is always a real buzz about the place, especially in term time. A seated drinking patio at the front gives a continental feel in summer, looking over to the park across the always busy Wilmslow Road.

Congratulations to Olivia 'Liv' Sunderland, the pub manager, whose sterling efforts over the last two years since her arrival have undoubtedly led to this award. So why not join the local CAMRA branch to celebrate with her and her staff on Thursday 25 April when a great night will be enjoyed, especially with all cask beer priced at only £1.99 for that night only!!

In conjunction with Liv we will be running a CAMRA young members evening alongside the Pub of the Month when you will be able to learn more about the Campaign for Real Ale – see article on page 8.

The pub must have more buses passing its front door than any other pub in Britain so there is no excuse. Don't miss it whatever your age! If Rusholme is a closed book to you take this opportunity to open it.

Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

Britons Protection Update



Following an interim hearing in December, the team at Manchester's **Britons Protection** is hopeful that a final hearing will be scheduled in April, which will bring to a successful conclusion the disagreement about the lease in favour of the pub's business partnership.

Allan and the team remain confident that the judge at the hearing will decide in their favour, and against Heineken subsidiary Star Pubs & Bars. Please visit the Central Manchester CAMRA website (centralmanchester.camra.org.uk) and follow the link to the fundraising effort to help defray the costs of the campaign.

Please offer some practical support and patronise the Britons Protection in what normally is a quiet time for the hospitality fraternity and voice your support to the staff. The pub is in the City Centre on Great Bridgewater Street.

Thread



Last time we reported that when Mobberley Brew House closed down **Project 53** in Stockport Market Place, it was swiftly replaced by **Thread**, a joint venture by Luke Morgan, manager of the **Bakers Vaults**, and Craig Johnson, co-owner of the neighbouring **Angel**.



It's now formally opened and is quite a transformation from its predecessor. Most significantly the old kitchen has been knocked out and the public area extended right to the back, where a large window offers an impressive view over the rooftops.

It still has an echo of Project 53's post-industrial aesthetic but is significantly warmer and more comfortable. While there is an emphasis on Belgian beers (both draught and bottled – with a further fridge for an enhanced range in the pipeline), there is a cask beer offer. At the moment only one of the two handpumps on the bar is used but, as throughput builds, the second should come into use, and there may even be scope for a third.

It's obviously early days, and to some extent it's a bit of a work in progress but, nonetheless, Thread seems set fair to be a real asset to the Market Place beer scene. As we went to press it was open Thursday to Saturday, but it is hoped that before long that will extend to Tuesday to Sunday.

Castle Inn, Dane in Shaw



On Saturday 3 February, the **Castle Inn** at Dane in Shaw, one mile beyond Congleton railway station, reopened after having been closed since the start of May 2022. This Punch-owned pub is in a semi-rural location close to the Biddulph Valley Way trail, so it is bound to be a popular stopping point for

walkers. The couple who have taken the pub on have many years of experience in their previous pub the **Roaring Meg** in Biddulph a few miles away.

There are two rooms: a lounge where the full food menu is served and a public bar where bar snacks are available. Although not a feature popular in February, the pub has a large beer garden with a view of a small stream and Congleton Golf Course.

Three cask beers are available: Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Wainwright Amber and a guest, which was Wadworth 6X on the opening day. The 94 Congleton-Newcastle bus passes close by the pub.

Inn Brief



In Cheadle Heath, the **Farmers Arms** was in an advanced state of demolition as this was typed, and by the time you read this it will be a vacant site awaiting the erection of a Greggs

Drive-Thru.

A planning application has also been lodged to demolish the long-closed **George** on Wellington Road South in Stockport. This time the plan is to replace it with a 15-16 storey block of apartments.

In Heaton Moor, the **Moor Top** was scheduled to reopen on 22 February. More on this one next time. Meanwhile in Cheadle Hulme, the plans to convert the currently closed **Hesketh** into an Italian restaurant-bar appear to have fallen through, so the pub is once more in limbo.

The **Victoria Tap** at Manchester Victoria Station has now fully reopened after being forced to close in January because of a blocked drain. The recently installed wooden floor had to be removed and a replacement hard floor put down. Well-kept cask ale and real cider continue to be big sellers here. The owners of the **Piccadilly Tap** and **Victoria Tap**, Bloomsbury Leisure, are hinting that a third city centre tap, **Oxford Road Tap**, is in the offing. The exact location of this is not yet known.

Staying in central Manchester, by the time you read this, JW Lees will have reopened **Duttons** on Albert Square after a major refurbishment which sees it renamed **Founder's Hall** and become something of a showcase for the brewery's products. More next time.

Finally, in Stockport, the **Crown** on Heaton Lane has new managers. We welcome Mick 'Buster' Brown and his partner Pauline. They have previously spent time running Stockport's **Cocked Hat** and the **Castle** in Clitheroe.

National Bass Day

April 2024 marks the 247th anniversary of William Bass buying his first brewery in Burton-upon-Trent in 1777, writes Peter Edwardson.



The following century saw Bass become one of the most famous beer names in the world, and in 1875 the distinctive red triangle became the first registered trade mark. In the 20th century, a series of mergers and takeovers made the company the largest

brewing concern in Britain, and the iconic cask ale that bears its name was available in thousands of pubs.

However, the upheavals in the brewing industry following the Beer Orders of 1989 led Draught Bass to become something of an orphan of the storm. Ownership of the brand passed to AB InBev, while the Burton brewery that brewed it went to Molson Coors. In 2005, production was contracted out to fellow Burton brewers, Marston's. By the mid-2010s, the number of regular outlets had fallen to fewer than 500.



Despite an almost total lack of advertising and promotion, and the absence of the support provided by a tied house network, it nevertheless retained a strong following and huge reserves of customer loyalty, both in its home territory and across the country in pubs from Tynemouth to Falmouth. The general view amongst Bass devotees is that Marston's have done an excellent job in producing a highly distinctive, bittersweet, nutty brew that does justice to its heritage. Without the muscle of a PR machine behind it, or any pressure to bundle it in with other products, every pub that stocks Bass has made a positive choice to have it on the bar, meaning that it's generally well cared for.

To remedy the lack of publicity, a group of beer enthusiasts decided to get together and launch an independent initiative to celebrate it on the anniversary of the original purchase of the brewery. The first National Bass Day was due to be held in April 2020, but of course that ended up falling victim to Covid lockdown, as did the following year's. However, it duly went ahead in April 2022 and has now become an annual fixture on Easter Saturday, which this year falls on 30 March. Several pubs in the Burton area will be organising special events to mark the day.

So why not take the opportunity to go out and celebrate this piece of Britain's brewing heritage for yourself? Bass is now most frequently found in the areas of Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire surrounding its home in Burton. However, permanent outlets in Greater Manchester include the White Hart in Cheadle, the Fox and Pine in Oldham and the Swan and Railway in Wigan, and it is often available at the Unicorn in central Manchester. A short train ride will take you to Macclesfield where it is on the bar of the Jolly Sailor and the Waters Green Tavern. Other local outlets

Derbyshire CAMRA member Ian Thurman has created and maintains a database of current Draught Bass outlets which can be downloaded from his blog at thewickingman.wordpress.com.

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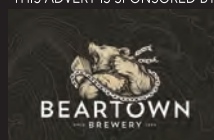
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Celebrating 50 Years



It was on 15 January 1974 that over 70 hardy souls gathered in the beer garden of the **Printers Arms** in Cheadle to form the first CAMRA branch in what, three months later, would become Greater Manchester. There is now a blue plaque on the pub to mark the event.

What was then called South Manchester branch covered a wide area, which stretched from Warrington to Buxton and down to Macclesfield. Luckily, numerous other branches were soon formed and today the Stockport & South Manchester branch is a rather more manageable size.

Celebrations kicked off in mid-January when 50 members enjoyed a special anniversary meal at the **Nursery** pub in Heaton Norris.



CAMRA's Chief Executive, Tom Stainer, and Damian O'Shea, of the award-winning micropub, **Heaton Hops**, were the guest speakers and provoked much discussion about the state of the industry today. Pictured here are Damian (left) and Tom (right) with branch chair John Clarke.



Also present were founder members, Alan and Neil Kellett (seen here cutting the anniversary cake), and there were plenty of documents and artefacts on show from the early years.

It is estimated that since those early days, Branch volunteer members have spent something in the region of a quarter of a million hours to produce over 2000 events, including 35 Beer Festivals, as well as ale trails, brewery visits, and monthly branch meetings and social meet-ups.

And this activism continues. **Mild Magic 2024** launches on 12 April (full details on page 11) and around one hundred pubs are again expected to take part. Contributions continue to flood in for *Opening Times*, and the May/June edition will mark the anniversary of its foundation in 1984 with historic articles, as well as the regular features including pub and brewery news.

Branch chairman John Clarke said: "I would like to thank all the volunteers who have given their time over the last half century to organise local events to promote real ale, pubs and breweries. The fact that our area has a thriving beer scene is no coincidence, as we have worked with local outlets and brewers to promote good beer.

"We will continue to do this as we move forward, and already have a full programme for the next 12 months. However, we are not complacent, as the hospitality industry still faces many challenges. If anyone fancies joining us as we do our bit to help, you are welcome to come to our meetings and events."

Real Ale Experience at the Ford Madox Brown



We're holding a special young members' event at the **Ford Madox Brown** on Wilmslow Road in Rusholme on Thursday, 25 April from 7.30pm. This promotion will be held alongside our presentation to the pub of the Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month Award.

The event will allow all our current and prospective young members to meet their peers and discuss activities with both them and other active branch members.

We will have a membership stand where you will be able to learn more about the Campaign and discover all about the activities we undertake. This includes our annual beer and cider festival, day trips to pubs in different towns, regular monthly branch meetings, often with a guest speaker, annual campaigns to promote different styles of beer, and visits to breweries, amongst many other campaigning activities.

If you're not a member then you'll be able to learn more about the Campaign for Real Ale and, if you join on the night, there will be some attractive inducements including T-shirts, discount vouchers and reduced entry for CAMRA beer festivals.

A great night is to be enjoyed especially as our hosts, Wetherspoons, will have all cask beers at £1.99 for the event.

So come along and bring your colleagues, and meet like-minded people for a great night out.

You can learn more details about our aims and activities at ssm.camra.org.uk

Macclesfield Beer Fest is back

Friday 10 and Saturday 11 May see the return of the popular Macclesfield Beer Festival, which is run jointly by Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA and Macclesfield Round Table.

The location is in a marquee in the grounds of Macclesfield RUFC, at Priory Park on Priory Lane. Evening sessions are ticketed but the Saturday lunchtime session is free and requires no ticket. The festival is raising money for Cheshire Search & Rescue and other local charities. There will be over 150 cask beers and around 80 real ciders and many other drinks.

A charity bus service will run from outside the **Waters Green** pub near the railway station to and from the festival.

More details are available from the festival website macclesfieldbeerfestival.org

Stockport & South Manchester Awards

Pub, Cider Pub and Club of the Year 2024

Heaton Hops is Pub of the Year



As ever, the voting was close but there can only be one winner – and this year's Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year is **Heaton Hops** on School Lane in Heaton Chapel.

Heaton Hops was opened by Damian O'Shea ('the Aleman') and his partner Charlotte back in April 2015, and since then

they have won numerous awards from far and wide.

The bar is based in converted shop premises with just two small rooms (the second is downstairs) and a seemingly ever-expanding outside pavement drinking area which, in the summer especially, gives a continental feel. Damian has certainly created a friendly, hospitable and innovative place to have a drink.

There are now three changing cask beers, traditional cider and keg beers, along with bottled and canned beers from the UK and around the world (Damian started out selling bottled beers in local markets). The aim is to promote local beers as far as possible, although not to the exclusion of high-quality products from around the country. Indeed, one of the cask beers is now always supplied by Taylor's, as the bar is a member of Taylor's Champions Club.

On learning of the award, Damian told *Opening Times*: "Myself, Charlotte and the Heaton Hops team are honoured to win Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Year 2024 in what is a very special year for the branch which is celebrating its 50th Anniversary."

The presentation will be on the evening of Thursday 30 May from 8pm – but get there early if you want a seat!

The Victoria is Runner-up

This year's runner-up is the **Victoria** on Wilmslow Road in Withington, another pub that has won multiple awards over the years.



Run by Alyson and Paul Mitchell, this Hydes house is very much a centre of Withington's diverse community.

There's a competitive darts team, and a poker school on Mondays. A quiz is held twice a week and there is live music on Fridays and Saturdays. The Victoria holds regular raffles to support local

charities. Frequent posts on social media provide information about forthcoming events, TV showings and offers.

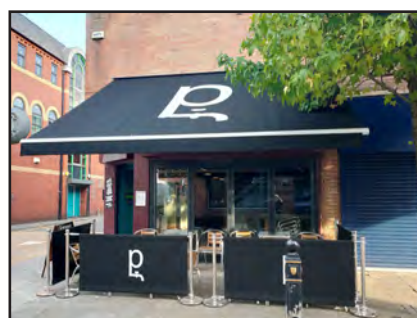
Five Hydes beers are available, usually including Lowry and the ever-popular Dark Ruby, plus two others, generally from the Ralf+Alf

range, and all are consistently well kept. There are discounts on cask ale at certain times.

The award was due to be presented on Thursday 29 February – look for a report in our next issue.

Petersgate Tap is Cider Pub of the Year

It's six Cider Pub of the Year awards in a row for Stockport's **Petersgate Tap**, which is a tribute to management team Alan and Chris Gent.



Centrally located on Stockport's St Petersgate, the pub is 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,

including smart new windows, an outside area with an awning for the warmer weather, and cosy cubicle seating.

There is 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, with no fewer than eight traditional ciders and perries regularly available. A new innovation last year was the occasional 'Cider Circle', a round-table type discussion and tasting, sometimes featuring guest appearances by local cider makers.

The presentation will be from 2pm on Sunday 7 April.

Club of the Year goes to Ladybarn

For the third year running, the Stockport & South Manchester Club of the year is the **Ladybarn Social Club**, on Green Street in Ladybarn.



As we reported last time, club secretary Phil Cowtan, who also orders and looks after the beer, won a national award from CAMRA in recognition of all his work in improving the cask beer range.

There are now four cask beers on the bar.

Permanent is Robinsons Unicorn, which is very popular with the regulars (in a previous life, the club was a Robinsons pub called the White Swan). This is joined by three ever-changing guest beers, usually obtained from small, local brewers. Phil makes a point of visiting Manchester pubs to see what's new and what's selling well. He's a big fan of Manchester-based Steelfish Brewing, whose beers have been very well received.

The club has a growing membership – it only costs £20 a year (and just £10 if you are over 65). Non-members can visit three times before being asked to join. The presentation will be on the evening of Friday June 14 from 8pm.

Mild Magic 2024

30 Years of Campaigning — Visit Pubs, Drink Beer, Win Prizes

Friday 12 April to Sunday 19 May

According to the media, mild is dying out. Recent statistics show this neglected and misunderstood beer style accounts for just 0.3% of the beer market. To support this, we have organised yet another Mild Magic trail for you to enjoy. This is the country's largest and longest-running mild trail; the first one was in 1994. Luckily, mild continues to flourish in our region, but it is now non-existent in many places.



This year, we have signed up just short of 100 pubs to take part, many will be offering their customers cask mild just for the duration of Mild Magic and for that they have our thanks. Last year, at least 65 different milds were noted during Mild Magic, so here's your chance to seek out and try examples of this tasty beer style. Milds are not necessarily dark, nor low ABV; there are light-coloured milds, as well as some rather strong ones!

So what are we asking you to do?

First, enter a participating pub (see end) and pick up an entry card, or you can download one from our website (ssm.camra.org.uk). Second, buy a cask mild (pint or half) and ask the bar staff for a sticker to affix to your card. If no stickers are available, please get the card signed. Third, drink the mild and savour its taste. Fourth, enter a participating pub in a different area as shown on the card. Repeat from step two until you have filled your card. NB: check the pub opening hours, especially if you are making a special journey (details available at whatpub.com).

How do I win a prize?

To complete the standard **Mild Magic**, collect stickers from **12 different areas** and you will receive a Mild Magic T-shirt and two ½ pint vouchers to be redeemed for milds of your choice at the 2024 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. This will be held between 20 and 22 June at the Masonic Hall on Wellington Road South, Stockport SK1 3UA. See below for redemption details.

Collect stickers from **24 different areas** to enter **Mild Magic Extra** and receive a Mild Magic polo shirt and three ½ pint vouchers for mild at the Festival.

Mild Magic Super is a little more challenging. Visit **48 pubs from at least 36 different areas** and you will win a Mild Magic sweatshirt and four ½ pint vouchers for mild at the Festival.

Finally, we have the **Mild Magic Ultra** award for **visiting every pub**. This will win you a Mild Magic polo shirt, plus a sweatshirt, along with six ½ pint vouchers for mild at the Festival.

For an optional fun challenge, we also have **Mild Magic Scrabble**. Each participating pub has an associated letter (shown on the card and sticker). Collect enough stickers on one card to spell out MILD MAGIC and win an extra two ½ pint mild vouchers for redemption at the Beer Festival.

To add even more interest, everyone participating is invited to vote for the most appealing pub where you enjoyed a mild. In addition, you can vote for the best mild you encountered on the trail – which may not have been in the most appealing pub! The winning pubs will then be presented with a 'Mild Champion' award and everyone will be invited to attend these award ceremonies.

How long do I have to complete all this?

Mild Magic runs from Friday 12 April to Sunday 19 May 2024 inclusive.

What do I do when I have finished?

Post all your completed cards to the Mild Magic address given on the card to arrive by 25 May (only one entry per person). Receipt of the cards will be acknowledged electronically, so an email address or mobile number is required. All entries are eligible for inclusion in a **Grand Draw** to be one

of the people invited along to a brewery tour, final details to be confirmed. If you are successful, full details will be included with your invitation.

Where do I claim my garment and vouchers?

Garments and mild vouchers will be dispensed at the Stockport Beer and Cider Festival from the CAMRA Shop. If you are not attending the Festival, other provisions will have to be agreed.

Thanks to our Sponsor – Hydes Brewery

We are delighted to welcome back Hydes as the Mild Magic Sponsor. Hydes is one of the few breweries to regularly brew not one, but two milds:

Dark Ruby is a luscious dark mild, while 1863, now badged as a session amber ale, was originally sold as Hydes Best Mild, a classic northern light mild. They don't all have to be dark! Look out for both as you go round the Mild Magic pubs.



As an added bonus this year, Hydes have delved into their old recipe books and are brewing Anvil Light Ale. This mild from the 1940s was originally only available in bottles, but will now be on cask during May and June. Thus it could be available at some participating pubs, so why not search it out?

There will also be trips organised to enable you to tick off a few Mild Magic pubs. Dates and routes still to be finalised, but will be published on the branch website at ssm.camra.org.uk under the Events link.

If you haven't taken part in Mild Magic before (What! Not once in its 30 year history?), you must have a go this year; it's great fun and it's so easy – you only need to visit 12 pubs in 12 different areas over a five-week period – and there are 72 areas to choose from! It's an excellent chance to visit some new places, try some new beers and win great prizes while voting with your feet in favour of Britain's proud brewing heritage. Please support our campaign to preserve cask-conditioned mild in this area!

The Mild Magic Pubs

Some of the areas below **are subdivided** on the card. Confirmed as we go to press (but there could be last-minute additions):

Altrincham: Costello's Bar, Unicorn; **Ashton u Lyne:** Ash Tree, Forester's Call, Halfway House, Tapsters; **Bredbury:** Arden Arms; **Chapel-en-le-Frith:** Old Cell Ale Bar; **Cheadle:** Crown, James Watts, Wobbly Stamp; **Cheadle Hulme:** Cross Keys, John Millington, P5; **Chorlton:** Horse & Jockey, Sedge Lynn; **Clayton:** Grove; **Davenport:** Milliner; **Didsbury:** Fletcher Moss, Gateway, Head of Steam; **Drolydsden:** Silly Country; **Dukinfield:** Angel, Wheatsheaf; **Eccles:** Eccles Cross, Lamb Hotel; **Fallowfield:** Friendship Inn, Great Central; **Gatley:** Horse & Farrier; **Glossop:** Bar 2, Smithy Fold; **Gorton:** Vale Cottage; **Hadfield:** The Chieftain; **Hazel Grove:** George & Dragon, Wilfred Wood; **Heaton:** Griffin, Heaton Hops, Navigation, Nursery; **Hyde:** Jack's Bar, Queens; **Ladybarn:** Ladybarn Social Club; **Macclesfield:** Castle, Jack in the Box, RedWillow, Society Rooms; **Manchester:** Angel, Ape & Apple, Britons Protection, City Arms, Crown & Anchor, Grey Horse, Lower Turk's Head, Marble Arch, Molly House, Old Monkey, Paramount, Piccadilly Tap, Smithfield, Victoria Tap, Waterhouse; **Marple:** Norfolk Arms, Northumberland Arms, Samuel Oldknow, Spring Gardens; **Monton:** Park; **New Mills:** Beer Shed; **Patricroft:** Stanley Arms; **Poynton:** Kingfisher, Royal British Legion; **Reddish:** Reddish Ale; **Rusholme:** Ford Madox Brown; **Sale:** JP Joule, Old Plough, Volunteer; **Salford:** New Oxford; **Stalybridge:** Bridge Beers, Q Bar, Society Rooms, Station Buffet Bar, White House; **Stockport:** Bakers Vaults, Calverts Court, Cocked Hat, Crown Inn, Magnet, Petersgate Tap, Ye Olde Vic; **Swinton:** Morning Star; **Urmston:** Lord Nelson, Prairie Schooner, Tim Bobbin; **Whaley Bridge:** Whaley Nook; **Whitehough:** Old Hall; **Withington:** Victoria.

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What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region

International Women's Day Beer



On Saturday 10 February, the team at Stockport's Runaway Brewery opened its doors to create a beer with the Manchester branch of Crafty Beer Girls – a social group for beer-loving women which has a monthly meet-up in independent pubs, venues and taprooms across Greater Manchester.

The beer was brewed to mark International Women's Collaboration Brew Day, which falls on 8 March. The 4%-ish ABV beer is described as a "light, dry, wheat-driven Spring Ale with hints of forced Yorkshire rhubarb, wild honey from Halifax hives, and root ginger". It will be available in cask, keg and bottle – look out for it.

The Crafty Beer Girls (and Runaway's Mark Welsby) are pictured above.

Squawk and Stockport Brewing to Close

The local beer scene will be poorer at the end of March when two highly respected local brewers close down.



Squawk Brewing, founded in 2013, is based in a railway arch close to Ardwick station in Manchester. Unfortunately

that has proved to be an issue. The arch apparently needs a full safety check, which would involve Squawk having to pack up and move out for some considerable time. Owner Oliver Turton decided this was unsustainable and so took the very difficult decision to close the brewery. The final beer, a brew of the popular Pavo Pale Ale, will be released at the end of March. It might not be the absolute end of Squawk, though, as we understand Oliver is involved in a project with **Runaway Brewery**. More on this in future issues.

The good news is that this will *not* mean the closure of the Squawk-run **Pelican** on Dale Street in Manchester City Centre. It's business as usual there – albeit with no Squawk beers on the bar after March.

Bredbury-based **Stockport Brewing** is also due to close. The lease is up on the unit that the brewery occupies and owner Andy Pass has taken the decision to retire. He told *Opening Times*:

"After ten years of successful trading I have made the bitter-sweet decision to retire. Bitter because it has taken lots of hard work to build the brewery to where it is today, but sweet because, after 44 years of working-life graft, it's time to take a step back.

"So, after the ten great years, 750 brews, two million pints drunk and a good few awards, it's time to put the mash shovel down for Stockport Brewing Company."

The closure of Stockport will also leave quite a hole in the local guest beer market – a significant part of the brewery's production was swapped with other breweries around the country, which saw many unusual guest beers appear in local pubs.

We wish Oliver and Andy all the best for the future.

Bollington on the Move



Bollington Brewery is relocating to Brook Mill on Parker Street in Macclesfield. After 16 years at its Adlington Road premises in Bollington, the brewery has finally outgrown them – it has opened four additional pubs and bars since starting up. Production will be moved to the new premises over the next three months and the new site offers the possibility of a taproom to host events, too. Despite the relocation the brewery is keen to let everyone know the name will not be changing!

News in Brief

Ossett Brewery is continuing with its monthly series of collaboration beers. In March they are brewing a West Coast Session (4.3%) with Nottingham's **Castle Rock** brewery, while in April they collaborate with Leeds-based **Northern Monk** to produce a Cask Kellerbier (4.8%). Look out for them in local freehouses.

Robinsons' move from central Stockport to Bredbury gathers pace, with great progress being made on the new brewhouse. The latest development is the installation of 20 Dual Purpose Fermenting Vessels. These are fully enclosed, and contrast with the open fermenters that have traditionally been used at the Unicorn Brewery.





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THE CHURCH INN
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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.

Morning After

Man and Labrador
walking slowly down the street.

One foot. Two paws.
One foot. Two paws.

A simple pattern unrehearsed.
They're not talking to each other

in that way humans and animals
don't talk to each other that much

or hungover best mates
having spent the evening before

using up every in-joke carved
out of a mountain of friendships,

their personalities exhausted,
warm, relaxed. One of them

does a poo
on the pavement.

Together

The barman asks if we're together
and the woman on my right laughs
as hard as she would

in a poem designed to beat myself up.
I let my ego grow a pair of gruesome wings
made of old skin and greying pubic hair

and crash through the wall,
leaving bits of guts stuck to brick and cement.
I fly my way into a reluctant sky,

rooftops pretend to chat to each other.
I go fast enough for my spine to reject me,
the pores in my skin to scream bloody murder

and the corners of my lips rip wider
than a Chelsea smile saying
Haha, yeah, we've never met.

Stockport's Lost Pubs with Dave Stearn

We continue our series looking at the Lost Pubs of Stockport. This issue: the letter C.

We start with a very old pub, the **Cotton Tree** (pictured below, c.1901). It was first mentioned in 1797, and started out as the Cotton Tree Brewery under William Adamson. Popular with workers at nearby cotton mills, it was located on Heaton Lane and predated the construction of the 'New Road', or Wellington Road, a bypass aimed at saving stagecoaches from having to navigate steep and narrow Hillgate to get through the town centre. In fact, when the New Road cut across Heaton Lane, the Cotton Tree was in the way. It was demolished in the 1820s and was reborn in a slightly different location at the junction of Heaton Lane and Wellington Road. Around this time, competition sprang up in the form of the George, built on the opposite corner, a coaching inn catering for travellers on the popular new route to Manchester and further afield.



The Cotton Tree became a meeting place for workers to air their grievances during widespread unrest in the town in the 1840s. The pub survived for a hundred years in its new location before closing in the 1920s. It was replaced by the tram depot. More

recently, it is the site of a multi-storey car park and the temporary bus station. Cotton Tree Street still exists off Heaton Lane, to the side of the Travelodge.

Our second lost pub under the letter 'C' is the **County Hotel** on Millgate (shown here in 1978).



This large mock-Tudor Edwardian hotel was built around 1904, on the site of two neighbouring half-timbered ancient inns, the Lamb and the Packhorse. Both pubs are thought to have dated back hundreds of years.

The pub is well known for giving a break to a struggling artist from the town. Alan Lowndes was born in Heaton Norris just over 100 years ago. He is often compared with LS Lowry, although he disliked the comparison. Lowndes is a celebrated artist, with four works at the Tate, and his works sell for tens of thousands of pounds.

But in the 1950s, to earn a few extra bob, he worked at the County Hotel doing odd jobs. In 1953 the landlord wanted to turn the upstairs room into a cocktail bar, so he suggested Alan do a mural on the walls. Alan provided the labour, the landlord the paints – and, no doubt, the occasional pint of artistic lubrication. The mural was of a fairground with a merry-go-round and circus scenes around the walls.

Despite some objections, the pub, along with Alan Lowndes' artwork, was demolished in 1984. It's now the rear entrance to Asda.

Dave Stearn works for Stockport Local Heritage Library, and all the photos in this article are courtesy of them. More images can be seen at www.stockport.gov.uk/stockport-image-archive

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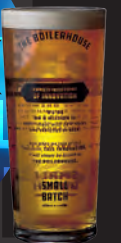
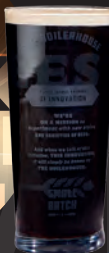


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Pub Walks with Chris Morris

Stockport Pub Round, Part 1 - Stockport to Romiley

Welcome to a new series of pub walks. The idea of the Stockport Pub Round is to walk along scenic, traffic-free nature trails throughout our region, whilst visiting fine pubs in the process. The circular walk starts from Stockport Town Centre, visiting Romiley, Marple, High Lane, Bramhall and Cheadle, before returning to Stockport. Split into six easily managed stages, there are excellent public transport links throughout, meaning you can leave and restart the route whenever it suits you.

Public Transport Information

Stage one starts in Stockport at the **Arden Arms**, which is a short walk from the railway and bus stations. There are bus stops for the 330, 383 and 384 at the **Midway** pub, which the walk passes. At the walk's finish in Romiley, there are frequent train services, plus the 383, 384, and 382 buses.

The Walk

Stage one is five miles and features a few challenging short climbs and descents in places. After wet weather, some of the paths will be muddy, so hiking boots are recommended. All pubs welcome dogs.



The **Arden Arms** is the perfect pub to start this walk from, with the bar set high right from the off. As well as the range of expertly kept Robinsons cask beers, earning *Good Beer Guide* entry, the interior is a delight, with a three-star rating by CAMRA Pub Heritage Group. A pre-

walk meal is recommended here, too, with as much care and attention paid to the food as it is to the beer.

From outside the pub, cross over to walk along Millgate, passing Millgate Cars on our right and then Aldi. After 600 yards, cross straight over at the junction with St Mary's Way. After a further 300 yards, we have the option of another pub stop. The **Midway** is a smart dining pub which has won many awards for its excellent food, but drinkers are equally welcome. Real ale is not forgotten either, with a single cask of Eagle's Bombardier on offer when I last visited. Dogs are allowed inside at the front of the pub.

Carrying on along New Bridge Lane for 300 yards to the crossroads, we now cross over to enter Vernon Park, Stockport's oldest public park. Taking a right, we walk up the hill, past the bandstand to the café at the top. Public toilets are available downstairs when the café is open. Our route is to now enter the adjacent Woodbank Memorial Park, around the sunken circular rose garden and through a metal gate, signed Fred Perry Way. With the car park on your right, we walk straight ahead following the well-trodden track, until we bear left to meet the main tarmacked path. Just before we reach Woodbank Hall, take the path to the right, then next left to walk downhill, signposted to Pear Mill and Route 55.

After 400 yards, at the bottom, we reach a map on display which includes our next path, along the River Goyt. With the map behind us, our route is now straight ahead along the well-trodden path between the trees. After 100 yards we turn right at a mossy stone with an engraved arrow showing the way. Walk up the wooden steps and turn left to join a nature trail. The path weaves through picturesque woodland with the river on your left at all times. As well as a number

of ups and downs, watch out for one tricky descent where the path has been eroded.

We then pass Offerton Cricket Club where we walk to the left of the club house. After almost a mile of the trail, we see a footbridge over the river to the left. Follow the path down to the bridge, cross over and carry on along the path on the other side. At the top we turn right and join a bridleway, signposted to Chadkirk. After a half-mile the path becomes a lane after passing a farm, then bends left at Valley Cottage and passes Stockport Hydro. At the main road take a left along the pavement, then cross over at the pedestrian lights. Take the next right along Vale Road to enter the Chadkirk Country Estate. After 500 yards, when the lane bends to the left, use the footpath on the left that runs parallel to the road. After 250 yards, a recommended diversion is to turn right to cross the road so that we can explore the impressive 18th century Chadkirk Chapel and its walled garden.

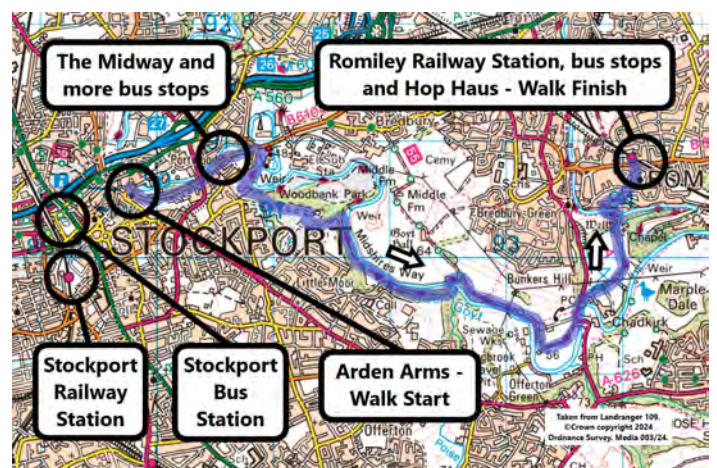


Retracing our steps back over the road, and carrying on along the path as before, we rejoin Vale Road which climbs steeply, passing St Chad's Well and Kirkwood Cottage before passing under the Peak Forest Canal. Continue along the road as it climbs up the other side, now becoming Chadkirk Road. Ignore Gregory

Avenue to the right and fork left. Carry on straight ahead for 500 yards to find the centre of Romiley, its railway station, bus stops and a rewarding pint.

Converted from an old double-fronted shop, **Hop Haus** offers a cosy and welcoming space, with the delightful window seats in high demand. Excellent cask beers are a speciality here, with a deserved entry in the *Good Beer Guide*. Up to five cask beers are available, plus a number of quality keg beers. On my last visit, the cask beers were from Millstone, Empire and Milestone.

Next time, we tackle stage two – Romiley to Marple.



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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.

Monday 11 March – The Snug, 122 Market Street, Droylsden, M43 7AA. Will also include Spring Pub of the Season presentation. Starts 7:30pm. (HPNC)

Tuesday 12 March – Piccadilly Tap, Gateway House, Station Approach, M1 2GH. This will also be the branch AGM. Starts 6:30pm. (CMCR)

Thursday 14 March – Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury, M20 3HF. Guest speaker from Theakston's Brewery. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Tuesday 19 March – Alderley Edge Union Club, Union Building, Stevens Street, Alderley Edge, SK9 7NL. This will also be the branch AGM. Starts 8pm. (MEC)

Thursday 11 April – Runaway Brewery Tap, 9-11 Astley Street, Stockport, SK4 1AW. This will also be the branch AGM. Meeting in upstairs room. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 13 April – Cheshire Cheese, 37-39 High Street, Buxton, SK17 6HA. Will be followed by a social around local pubs. Starts 1:30pm. (HPNC)

Social Events & Presentations

Friday 8 March – Chorlton Social. Catch 23 bus at noon from Heaton Lane Bus Station. Exact route to be decided on the day. (SSM)

Saturday 16 March – Social in Rochdale. Catch 11:21am from Manchester Victoria, (HPNC)

Friday 22 March – Heaton Norris East Stagger: 7:30pm Navigation, 1 Manchester Road, SK4 1TY; 8:30pm Railway, 74-76 Wellington Road North, SK4 1HF; final pub Magnet, 51 Wellington Road North, SK4 1HJ. (SSM)

Thursday 28 March – Pub of the Month presentation: Crown, 6 Vale Close, Heaton Mersey, SK3 3DS. From 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 30 March – Pub Walk and Social around Chinley. Meet Green Lane Social, 20 Green Lane, Chinley, SK23 6AA at noon. Walk starts 1pm. (HPNC)

Tuesday 2 April – Weekday Wander in High Lane and Disley. Catch 11:35 Buxton-bound 199 bus in Mersey Square. First pub Royal Oak, Buxton Road, High Lane. Full details on branch website. (SSM)

Sunday 7 April – Cider Pub of the Year presentation: Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. From 2pm. (SSM)

Friday 12 April – Mild Magic Launch. See website for details. (SSM)

Friday 19 April – Chorlton-on-Medlock & University Stagger: 7:30pm Ford Madox Brown, Unit 1 Wilmslow Park Oxford Road, M14 5FT; 8:30pm Grafton Arms, 27 Grafton Street, M13 9WU; final pub Sandbar 120-122 Grosvenor Street, M1 7HL. (SSM)

Thursday 25 April – Pub of the Month presentation: Ford Madox Brown, Unit 1, Wilmslow Park, Oxford Road, M14 5FT. Will include Membership Promotion night – see page 8 for details. From 8pm. (SSM)

CAMRA Awards

Recent Presentations

The Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA Winter Pub of the Season was BarleyHops in Congleton.

BarleyHops began in 2013, principally as a small can and bottle shop on the corner of West Street and Mill Street in Congleton, and run by Paul and Linda Plant from Macclesfield. It also sold some cask ale, though, which was very popular, so it quickly developed more as a micro-pub than a bottle shop. This popularity was due to the excellent cask beers from regional and local brewers and the laid-back ambience of the venue.



However, it did get very busy and crowded some evenings and therefore when the opportunity came in 2020 to move to larger and more practical premises on High Street, BarleyHops was on the move. Now located in a former card shop, the excellent reputation of its

cask ale was maintained, with usually four handpumps in use, plus SiDa Holmes Chapel Apple real cider together with an interesting range of keg beers. There is now an upstairs room which can accommodate parties, and an occasional gin and cocktail bar, while the larger capacity downstairs is more suitable for live music, vinyl records and games evenings.

The fridge containing an enticing range of cans and bottles from home and abroad is still in place and the quality of the cask beer remains very impressive.

The presentation was made on 3 February to Paul (holding certificate) & Linda by Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA Branch Secretary, John Barber.

The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for December was the **Runaway Brewery Tap** on Astley Street, just off the town centre.



This is a skilful conversion of old industrial premises into a bright and modern bar which, nonetheless, also manages to feel comfortable and pub-like. The furniture is modern and functional, but clever lighting, plants and statement lamps soften the appearance to good effect. The brewery can be seen through glass panels, while outside is a large and secluded beer garden, where you will find Honest Crust Pizza providing excellent food.

And the beer? Almost all Runaway beer is keg-conditioned, and so 'real ale', but the brewery relocation from Manchester to Stockport prompted a greater move into cask, in recognition of local drinking preferences. Consequently, there are two changing handpumped beers alongside the keg range. In addition, there is a large fridge with a bottle and can range, put together by Manchester's Beermoth shop.

Pictured above are Runaway Tap manager Sam Juleff (right) and Sofie Waite with their certificate.

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