

OPENING TIMES

JULY / AUGUST 2024

FREE



**INSIDE: STOCKPORT BEER & CIDER
FESTIVAL REVIEW / PUB WALKS /
MORE LOCAL PUB OF THE YEAR
AWARDS AND MUCH MORE...**



Campaign
for
Real Ale

REDWILLOW BARS LOYALTY CARD

DRINK PINTS, GET POINTS!

SCAN THE QR TO JOIN AND
START EARNING REWARDS IN
OUR MACC AND BUXTON BARS.



AFFORDABLE ALES, ALL YEAR LONG

WATERHOUSE

67-71 Princess Street
M2 4EG
0161 200 5380

MOON UNDER WATER

68-74 Deansgate
M3 2FN
0161 834 5882

THE SEVEN STARS

6-8 Dantzic Street
M4 2BS
0161 817 2980

THE PARAMOUNT

33-35 Oxford Street
M1 4BH
0161 223 1820

PICCADILLY

49 Piccadilly
M1 2AP
0161 236 9206

WETHERSPOON MANCHESTER

THE GATEWAY

882 Wilmslow Road
East Didsbury
0161 438 1700

FORD MADDOX

Wilmslow Rd
M13 9NG
0161 256 6660

GREAT CENTRAL

306 Wilmslow Road
Fallowfield
0161 248 1740



- USE ALE FINDER ON THE JDW APP TO SEARCH THE AREA FOR YOUR FAVOURITE ALE,
OR SEARCH FOR NEW ONES - 

Contents & Information

In this issue...

Pubs of the Month	5	Mild Magic Update	16
More Pubs of the Year	7	Pub Walk	17
Beer Festival Review	9 & 10	Stagger	19
Heard at the Bar	11	News Extra	21
What's Brewing	13	Night Out In C-on-M	22
Poem & Lost Pubs	15	Diary & Awards	23

About Opening Times & Contacts

Opening Times is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Additional material is supplied by the High Peak, Tameside & North East Cheshire Branch, Central Manchester Branch and the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch. It is printed by Paper Red Media and distributed throughout Stockport, Tameside, South Manchester and East Manchester. There are also numerous outlets in Macclesfield & East Cheshire, Manchester City Centre, High Peak and Glossop.

News, articles and letters are welcome to the editorial address – John Clarke, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9HD. Email - stocam@btinternet.com. Phone 0161 477 1973. Advertising rates on request or online at: ssm.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=192265 Local advertising John Clarke (as above) or contact Neil Richards MBE at n.richards@btinternet.com

Trading Standards

For complaints about short measure pints etc. contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service. This works with all the Trading Standards services in the North West and is supported by the Office of Fair Trading. You can contact the Consumer Service at the following address:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/if-you-need-more-help-about-a-consumer-issue

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

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards

Subscriptions

Available at £10.50 for one year (make cheques payable to Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA). Apply to Lawrence Devaney, 2 Kingsway, Bramhall, Stockport, SK7 3BG.

Copyright

Unless otherwise stated, all material in *Opening Times* is the copyright of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Please contact the editorial address if you wish to reproduce anything in *Opening Times*.

Public Transport

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

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

Your Local CAMRA Contacts & Websites

Stockport & South Manchester

www.ssm.camra.org.uk

Contact: Lawrence Devaney; secretary@ssm.camra.org.uk

High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire

www.highpeak.camra.org.uk

Contact: Peter Mitchell; peter.mitchell31@gmail.com

Macclesfield & East Cheshire

www.eastcheshire.camra.org.uk

Contact: contact@eastcheshire.camra.org.uk

Central Manchester

www.centralmanchester.camra.org.uk

Contact: Sean O'Mahoney; chair@centralmanchester.camra.org.uk

Social Media

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

Stockport & South Manchester:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA

X – @SSMCAMRA

High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/HPTNECCAMRA

Central Manchester:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/groups/CentralManchesterCamra

X – @MCRCentralCamra

Macclesfield & East Cheshire:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/groups/897449270304045

X – @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 Sarah Devaney.

Contributors

John Clarke, Alan Gent, Dave Hanson, Peter Butler, Paul Felton, Dave Burston, Steve Davis, Chris Morris, Lawrence Devaney, Peter Mitchell, Neil Worthington, Sue Lightfoot, Chris Walkden, Carl Burkitt, Neil Farrell, Dave Stearn, Jim Flynn, Simon Green, Graham Privett, Ben Zwierink, Darren Berry, Nick Earle, John Barber, Matthew Thompson, Sarah Devaney, Steve Ingham.

Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Copy date for the Sept/Oct issue is Monday 5 August

A FAMILY BUSINESS
STEPHENSONS

Supporting The Catering Trade Since 1868



PROUD SPONSORS OF
PUB OF THE MONTH

A forgotten British classic:
The 10-sided **Lantern Tankard**

VISIT THE NORTH'S LARGEST CATERING
CASH & CARRY

tableware • catering equipment • disposables



stephensons.com

161 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 6EQ

The Petersgate Tap



Winner, Stockport Pub of the Year, 2023

Winner Stockport Cider Pub of the Year
2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024

Winner Gtr Manchester Region
Cider Pub of the Year, 2018, 2019

Champion Mild Pub 2018, 2019, 2023

Good Beer Guide
2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024

6 rotating cask ales, 8-10 real ciders
Bottle Shop with 150+ beers and ciders

Events:

Leaf Promotions live music, 1st Fri
Double Indemnity (music & poetry) 3rd
Wed

Torrside Brewing Monsters Weekends
6 tutored tastings a year

19a St Petersgate, Stockport SK1 1EB
Our pub charity is Stockport Mentell



OPENING TIMES: MONDAY - THURSDAY 1-11 FRIDAY - SUNDAY 12-11

SIX REAL ALES, CRAFT BEER & LAGER

22 MARKET STREET, MARPLE
0161 425 9530 - samueloldknow.co.uk

Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for July and August



The Railway on Lapwing Lane in West Didsbury is the July Pub of the Month. Simon Green explains why it won.

The Railway is a thriving, traditional pub that champions cask beer and serves the community in West Didsbury. Entertainment includes a Tuesday quiz night, Thursday night performances from the pub's own band, 'The Railway Men' and an open mic night on the last Thursday of each month. Complimentary food is available on Sundays during the football season for televised matches, and, on the first Monday in July, the Railway hosted its first comedy night.

The beer and food are amongst the most affordable in the area. The pizzas are made by the local restaurant, Proove, and the seven handpumps include regular beers of Holt's Bitter, Mild and Two Hoots, along with Bootleg Brewing's Chorlton Pale Ale and Fools Gold. The other two handpumps change seasonally, usually featuring Old Rosie cider and a seasonal ale, which in winter months is Sixex, rarely seen elsewhere on cask. Other ciders are available in bottles.

The Railway is a great pub with a friendly atmosphere, good beer and attentive staff, making it popular with lifelong residents and new visitors alike, but less than a year ago it had few customers and only one handpump. *Opening Times* dropped by to find out about the transformation that began when Stacy Saunders and her partner Mark Wilson took over in October 2023.

Stacy began work for Joseph Holt with a bar job whilst still a student, and says she progressed to be Holt's youngest landlady at the **Ape & Apple** in Manchester, which she managed for eight years before moving to another city centre pub, the **Old Monkey**, for twelve years. The Railway was her dream pub, and it is that enthusiasm along with the experience that is now bringing the rewards. The first change was to increase from one to seven cask beers, which proved popular immediately. New events brought more customers, and the community aspects of the pub were extended. The Railway sponsors a Sunday league football team, holds events to raise funds for charities of personal interest to regulars, and hosts relevant local community groups, including a silent book-reading club and a menopause awareness group.

The Railway is highly recommended, so join us on Thursday 25 July, when the Pub of the Month Award will be presented. The Railway is close to the Burton Road Metro station and is about half a mile from bus routes such as the 42 on Wilmslow Road and the 23 on Barlow Moor Road.



The August Pub of the Month is the Wobbly Stamp on Stockport Road in Cheadle. Darren Berry has been along.

The Wobbly Stamp opened its doors on 10 September 2020 in a former Post Office. Darren Shaw and Dave Ramwell took a massive gamble to open not long after the first COVID lockdown. Unfortunately for them, a second lockdown shortly followed. However, they managed to survive by selling their beer in takeaway cartons. This proved to be a massive success, endearing them to many local residents in a time of need.

Roll forward nearly four years and the 'Stamp' is now a popular meeting point for many locals, with a strong cask line up and a varied keg selection. Four casks are made up of the regular Stancill Brewery Wobbly Best Bitter, plus three rotating guests: one dark, one pale and a stronger IPA. The high quality of the cask beers has made the pub a regular in the national *Good Beer Guide*. There are also rotating guest keg beers, continental beers from Germany and a traditional bag-in-box cider from Madhatters. There is a good selection of local gin from Stockport Gin, alongside a range of other spirits and wines.

The inside of the pub is deceptively large. It can seat about 40 people, with two large booths at the back accommodating around eight people each. The interior is a mix of rough-planed timber, bare brick and plastered walls. The walls are adorned with breweriana, local artwork and several mirrors. There is an outside drinking area at the side of the pub and a further area to the front when the weather is dry.

Beer can be taken away in four-pint pouches if the need arises. A small range of bottled beers can be purchased to take home. Occasional live music takes place on Sunday afternoons. There is a discount for CAMRA members and forces personnel.

Join us on Thursday 22 August at 8:30pm and help Darren and Dave celebrate their well-deserved award. Buses 11, 310, 312 and 370 will drop you close by.

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.

A FAMILY BUSINESS
STEPHENSONS
Celebrating 150 Years of Inspiring the Caterer



A BREED APART.

BLACKSHEEPBREWERY.COM



GREAT BEER. REAL CHARACTER.

PURITYBREWING.COM



Our mission is to navigate an exhilarating journey through **the world of beer**. A world where traditional quality brands are fused with a passion for innovation.

We are dedicated to pushing the boundaries of flavour; constantly exploring and creating new and exciting beers that captivate the senses, while energising the UK brewing community

More Pubs of the Year

High Peak and Macclesfield Winners

Thumbs Up for High Peak Pub of the Year

Back in January we presented the High Peak, Tameside and North East Cheshire Winter Pub of the Year award to the **Northumberland Arms** on Compstall Road in Marple Bridge, writes *Nick Earle*. "The



'Thumb', as it is known locally, was then shortlisted for our branch Pub of the Year 2024.

It was unanimously judged to be the winner and on 27 April it was very busy as we presented our Pub of the Year certificate.

This was already a special pub in the branch area as it is the only community-owned pub. Originally a Robinsons house, it was put up for sale in January 2017. It was then successfully listed as an Asset of Community Value. A Community Benefit Society was then set up, which had raised enough money to buy the pub by the end of September 2017.



There are five handpumps serving three or more beers, including Track Sonoma and Robinsons Unicorn alongside other ales, which are generally local and include a dark beer.

The pub is small and still has multiple rooms, so has the character that has been lost in many pubs today. A quick look at the noticeboard will show you how many community events are based at the pub. Although there is no kitchen, they regularly have mobile street food outlets on the car park at the front. Football and sports are shown but do not dominate. There are plans to make further improvements to the building, create a community café and expand the small but perfectly formed beer garden.

While presenting the certificate, Peter Mitchell, branch secretary said: "...the three judges were unanimous that this was the best of the shortlisted pubs we had in the area. The pub is very good all round. It's owned by the community, it's managed by the community and it's totally engaged with the community; it couldn't be more of a community pub. So I'd like to congratulate everybody who's involved with it: the shareholders, the people who put up the money to buy it,

the management committee, who are unpaid and do a fantastic job, and Phil and all his staff who also do an excellent job, and of course the community of drinkers who come in here and make it such a great pub."

The picture shows Peter Mitchell (left), presenting the award to the landlord, Phil Jarvis.

Macclesfield CAMRA Pub of the Year

Trading has probably never been so tough for our beloved pubs, writes *John Barber*. Rising prices, rents, utility bills etc. are driving up costs, while similar factors send consumers to look for cheaper options such as the local supermarket.



But, arguably, it's even tougher for rural pubs, especially ones which have little local housing and no public transport options. So it's a considerable testament to the incredible skill and hard work of Ian Evans and his team that they have overcome these odds, and achieving such success at our 2024 Pub of the Year, the **Bulls Head** on Newcastle Road at Smallwood.

The Bulls Head has all the usual ingredients of a great country pub – a pleasant garden for summer days, an open fire for winter evenings, wholesome and generous home-cooked food, and a warm welcome for all. But, not surprisingly, it's the beer choice that catches the eye. The handpumps proudly stand at the centre of the small central bar offering three regularly changing beers from local and regional breweries, and always in perfect condition. The pub is a focal point for its local community, with events throughout the year, music nights and the provision of a relaxed meeting place for local groups and societies.



Typically, they turned our Pub of the Year award presentation on 1 June into an all-day celebration, with a barbecue, four musical acts and even more great cask beer on their outdoor pop-up bar. Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA chair Dave Gittins is seen above (right) presenting the award to Ian and his team.

HOLD ON TO YOUR

TANKARDS!

THE ONLY DATE YOU NEED TO KNOW

20TH - 22ND SEPTEMBER



WWW.OLD-HALL-INN.CO.UK

Stockport Beer & Cider Festival 2024

Review, News & Winners



After the excessive heat at the 2023 event, there was some concern that this might put off people from coming along to this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. As it turns out, it was the football that slightly knocked attendance on the Thursday night at Stockport's Masonic Guildhall. Luckily, the festival bounced back and, while there was a slight drop in overall numbers, almost 3,000 people came along. Over 1,000 advance tickets were sold, which was a festival record. Among our visitors, we were delighted to welcome the Mayor of Stockport, Councillor Suzanne Wyatt, along with the mayoress.



Between Thursday and Saturday, our customers were able to enjoy over 200 different draught beers, ciders and perries, and enjoy them



they did! If that wasn't enough, the stock of over 1,000 bottles and cans, all fridge-chilled, also sold well.

In addition to the many visitors from Stockport and the North West, beer and cider enthusiasts arrived from places as far away as London, Birmingham, York and Newcastle, to sup the extensive offering of local beers available.

The crowds took advantage of the warm weather to use the outside seating, which was very popular throughout the festival. The Reuben's Retreat charity stand was busy selling beer and snacks and, to complement the drinks, visitors also enjoyed the music and food on offer.

All of the festival glasses and t-shirts sold out, and no fewer than 51 new members signed up to CAMRA.

Festival organiser Jim Flynn told *Opening Times*: "I am delighted that so many people came along to sample the great variety of drinks available in the friendly atmosphere at the Guildhall. It was great to see lots of regular visitors and also plenty of festival newcomers, too.

"I would like to thank the 150 CAMRA volunteers who gave their time to organise and staff the festival, as well as our sponsors and the team

at the Guildhall; without them, none of this would have been possible. "And, finally, thanks to everyone who came along and made it such an enjoyable event."

Festival photos by Sarah Devaney

Beers of the Festival

One of the many highlights of the festival has always been the public vote for Beer, Cider and Perry of the Festival. Despite the festival being held in June, our customers over the years have shown a particular liking for dark beers, and that was again the case this year.

We have previously reported how entries from the Levenshulme Homebrew Club dominated the festival's homebrew competition and the winning streak continued in the Beer of the Festival competition, where the club chalked up all three winners.



The Bronze award went to **King of the Mild Frontier**, a 6.5% 'double dark mild' brewed by Manchester's **Steelfish Brewing Co.** along with Mike Cunliffe and Enda Bradley from the homebrew club. They won the homebrew competition with a 3.9% dark mild (also sold at the festival under its trade name of Mild at Heart), but using a system of parti-gyling Steelfish also produced a very limited amount of this stronger version. This is also the first CAMRA award for Steelfish and we are sure it won't be the last.



The Silver award winner was brewed by **Torrside Brewing** in New Mills in conjunction with Adam Pierce and Will Shaddock. Adam and Will's competition winner was a delicious hemp porter called Dark Hempstress. Torrside also uses the parti-gyling system to produce a second, stronger, beer at the same time as the main brew, and so it was here. While Dark Hempstress itself was 5.6%, there was also a stronger version at 10.2% and it was this **Imperial Dark Hempstress** that got the votes. As we went to press, plans were already in place to present this award at the Torrside Tap (at the brewery) on Saturday 27 July.



And, finally, we come to the Beer of the Festival. It's back to Manchester now and **Blackjack Brew Co.** who produced **Nice One Cyril** with Levenshulme's George Lee and Martin Parsons. At 6.2%, this is a classic West Coast IPA, with a good malt body supporting a hugely hoppy beer which has a classic big and bitter finish. You might still catch this one in local pubs and bars by the time this issue of *Opening Times* comes out.

Continues on page 10



The beer festival coverage is kindly sponsored by Black Sheep Brewery and Purity Brewing..



Stockport Beer & Cider Festival 2024

Review, News & Winners

Cider and Perry of the Festival



Over the years, one of the features of Stockport Beer & Cider Festival has been the cider & perry bar. Ours was one of the very first festivals to badge itself a 'Beer & Cider' festival and the cider team always make a point of balancing old favourites with newer or more obscure producers. A recent innovation has

been the introduction of bottled ciders – either for customers to drink by the glass, or to take away. Pictured above are Stockport & South Manchester cider officer Dave Preston and cider bar deputy manager Marie Moss with bottles of the ever-popular Gregg's Pit cider and perry.



The results of the voting for cider and perry of the festival are always eagerly awaited – and this year both went to Welsh makers. Cider of the Festival was won by **Pride of Llanblethian** from **Llanblethian Orchards**, near Cowbridge in the Vale of Glamorgan, where Alex Simmens has been making cider for almost 20 years. This isn't the first award Alex has won from the festival. In 2022 he was voted Best

Newcomer and is seen here receiving his award from cider bar manager Charlotte Bulmer.

The Perry of the Festival was won by **Penallt Cider** near Monmouth with a **Butt Perry**. Penallt is a very long-established producer which has been making cider and perry for several generations. A visit to both producers is planned for the autumn so look out for a report in a future issue of *Opening Times*.

Charity Update



This year's festival charity was Glossop-based Reuben's Retreat. We asked their funding champion, Kate Bradley, to let us know how it went. This is what she told us:

"We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to

the committee members of SBCF for selecting Reuben's Retreat as their designated charity this year and welcoming us with open arms. From the very beginning, we felt completely included and part of the team. This venture was new for us as a charity, and their expertise and guidance were invaluable.

"We also want to thank our sponsors – P-Noot, Kudos drinks, Phoenix, JW Lees and Timothy Taylor – for generously donating beer for us to sell. Working with them has been wonderful.

"A big thank you to the volunteers who staffed the bar, as well as to Costco, Vernon, and Spacefit UK for their generous sponsorships.

"Thanks to everyone's support, we have raised over £3,500 to help support families facing uncertain futures, and parents who have experienced child loss."

Voting Winner

We always ask people to put their contact details on the voting forms for beer, cider and perry of the festival. That's because we then enter them in a draw for a case of beer. This year's lucky winner was Sharon Davidson from Heaton Mersey. Congratulations!

More Festival Images



Above - the festival glasses team headed up by Peter Mitchell (left) and Pete Soane (right).

Below, one of the hard-working bar teams (photo by Sarah Devaney).



Feedback from the festival has been overwhelmingly positive – so see you all next year! Cheers!



The beer festival coverage is kindly sponsored by Black Sheep Brewery and Purity Brewing



GREAT BEER. REAL CHARACTER.

Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

The Nico Ditch, Ashton



We trailed this new bar in the last issue but didn't know much about it. However, it's now open and *Neil Farrell* has paid it a visit.

It's at 52 Old Street, in the former premises of Holloways Leather Goods

shop, and has been opened by Tom Hughes and Dean Brocklehurst, who also own the **Talleyrand** in Levenshulme.



The **Nico Ditch** can in fact be entered from two streets. The smart, tiled, wooden-topped bar faces the entrance on Old Street. From there, two spacious wooden-floored rooms stretch back to an entrance on Bow Street. Upstairs is additional seating in a room which is also available for functions and, as we went to press, was being used for a free-to-enter art exhibition. Outside seating is available at both entrances, too. Acoustic music sessions are planned for the future.

Two changing cask beers are available, one of which will always be a session pale ale or bitter. Alongside these are eight keg taps featuring local, national and continental beers, plus a cider. A well-stocked fridge has cans of local craft beers, bottles from Belgium and Germany, and real ciders and perries.

The bar is named after a scheduled ancient monument, which is a six-mile long linear earthwork between Ashton and Manchester, and which was dug as a boundary fortification between the fifth and eleventh centuries. Apparently it's visible in Levenshulme.

The Nico Ditch is closed on Monday and Tuesday. Opening times are 3-11pm Wednesday and Thursday; 3pm-12am Friday; 12pm-12am Saturday and 2-10pm on Sunday. Well worth a visit.

The Rat & Pigeon



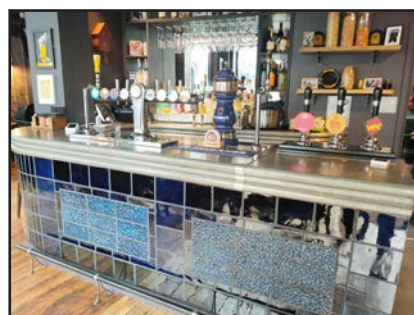
From the team behind the **Crown and Kettle**, and therefore of good pedigree and with implied quality ale and cider, the **Rat & Pigeon** is nestled behind Piccadilly in central Manchester and opened on 6 June. *Steve Ingham* went along.

Formerly known as **Mother Mac's**, it's a short step from the hustle and bustle of Piccadilly and Oldham Street, and is a welcome refuge which is already proving to be a popular place. The pub is located at 33 Back Piccadilly, a short walk from Lever Street, and is situated

on the corner of Little Lever Street and Back Piccadilly. The nearest

tram stop is Piccadilly Gardens and numerous buses stop at Piccadilly and Newton Street from the north of the city.

The author can confess that he had his first legal pint in the former Mother Mac's whilst working at the old F.W.Woolworth building in Piccadilly in the 1970s. That building is now a Morrisons Local and a Travelodge hotel. All that aside, Sam and the staff are ready to welcome you. The CAMRA WhatPub App should have been updated by the time you read this but, alternatively, just check the pub's web page (ratandpigeon.co.uk).



The pub operates over three floors but the real heart has to be the ground floor with its fixed bench seating, bare wooden floor and a very impressive tiled bar. Three handpumps dispense Heart & Soul and Bread & Butter from Vocation Brewery, plus a changing guest – Track Sonoma and Pomona

Island beers have been spotted. Real cider is on keg and comes from Pulpt.

A long-standing Manchester pub has been given a new lease of life – well worth a visit. The Rat & Pigeon is open from 12pm-11pm Monday and Tuesday; 12pm-1am Wednesday-Friday and 11am-1am Saturday and Sunday.

More City Centre News

April saw the sudden and unexpected closure of one-time *Good Beer Guide* entry, **Pie and Ale**, in the Northern Quarter. This was announced by a note on the door saying it had ceased trading and thanking customers for their previous business. We can only surmise that this is another victim of the ongoing cost pressures facing the hospitality trade.

A licence application has been approved for the **Oxford Road Tap** and so we hope that things move quickly now to the bar opening and joining its stablemates the **Piccadilly Tap** and the **Victoria Tap**.



A court showdown to save the Britons Protection has been put on hold for several months. The leaseholders expected a five-day civic court hearing to begin on 17 June in their battle against a Star Pubs & Bars plan to end their tenure and take the historic pub in-house.

On the second day of the hearing the case was adjourned on a procedural

matter. Licensee Allan Hudd has taken a positive view of the development and says he can at least plan for a full summer of trading.

Finally, a little bit of good news. Fell Brewery, based in Grange-over-Sands, and which already has a bar in Chorlton, has now acquired the **Pelican** on the corner of Dale Street and Tariff Street. The bar had previously functioned as a tap for the now-closed Squawk Brewery (and before that it had been run by the also-now-closed Beatnikz Republic brewery).

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF BREWING

A progressive and passionate independent brewery located in the heart of Yorkshire. Borne of family values; unity, team work and integrity. Crafted over two decades, we've perfected the science of producing ales of consistently high quality and honed the art of brewing beers that are loved by all.



What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region

Blackjack



2024 has definitely kicked off with a hectic first half for BlackJack Brewing Co. Following on from the expansion in 2020 with the arrival of a new brewkit, 2024 has not only seen BlackJack taking up a residency at **Station Hop** in Stockport Road, Levenshulme, but in June the brewery released an entirely new brand and visual identity, writes *George Charlton*.

Much-loved Station Hop has been an integral part in championing good beer in Manchester since it was opened in 2018 by Amanda Finch and Chris Buxton. BlackJack moving in to run Station Hop as a residency has brought the brewery back to something of an ancestral home. Glassworks, the mothballed distribution arm of BlackJack, began life in Levenshulme. In addition, directors Jon Hartley and Joe Bird established and ran the Levenshulme Beer Festival.

Talking to Amanda about why they decided BlackJack would be the right people for the job, she tells me: "BlackJack's heritage in Levenshulme was a big part of it (Station Hop) being a community place – it's important to us that we have people who care about the bar, know its history, and get us".

Heritage is an important concept to BlackJack as a company. June saw the launch of BlackJack's new branding; this new visual identity draws heavily on the brewery's location.



"Our location in Manchester is dripping in rich and important history, albeit both quite dark and revolutionary," Jon tells me as we discuss the new branding. "Working with the design and branding studio Ensemble, who helped us eke out a method to subtly convey both our own histories and the history of the area we feel privileged to call home has been quite the journey and one that we are excited to share."

As well as its residency in Station Hop, plus the **Smithfield Market Tavern** and their three market bars in the **Mackie Mayor**, Altrincham and Macclesfield, the brewery is opening its on-site taproom for the last weekend of each month until 28 September, providing a range of cask and keg beers, food and music.

Tatton Brewery is Back



When **Tatton Brewery** closed its doors in February, after 14 years of trading, there was widespread sadness, and responses to the final social media post revealed just how much Tatton Brewery's beers would be missed in the local pubs and bars.



That was the bad news. Now for some good news – the brewery is back, under new ownership and with many of the old team. Continuing with the Tatton name and reputation, the brewery is now in partnership with the well-established Wantsum Brewery, based in Kent.

First on the job sheet is to get the brewery back up and running, and the team is looking to have beer ready to drink in the coming weeks. Tatton favourites like Tatton Best, Tatton Blonde, Lazy Haze, Tatton Black, Tatton Gold and the award-winning Pennine Mild are all on the brew schedule.

Head Brewer, Gazza Prescott (pictured here), who had been brewing the Tatton Beers for the last 12 months, said: "This is an exciting time for the brewery and the team, I'm looking forward to getting things back up and running again, plus we've some exciting ideas for future brews."



Also on board is Nicky Arnell who will be involved in supporting customers and operations. Any pub or bar which would like to talk about stocking Tatton beer, can contact Nicky at nicky@wantsumbrewery.co.uk.

Both photos courtesy of Tatton Brewery.

Holt's at 175

Affectionately known as 'Joey Holts' throughout the region and further afield, the Joseph Holt Brewery is gearing up to celebrate 175 years of achievement – so it is entirely appropriate that mention be made again of its forthcoming 175th Anniversary celebrations, writes *Steve Ingham*.

To celebrate this milestone, Holt's will hold various events in September; including trips round the brewery on Empire Street, Cheetham Hill, together with a beer festival (see the advert on page 18).

A salutation, acknowledging the anniversary, will be included in the next edition of the *Good Beer Guide*.

More Brewery Birthdays



At the end of May, Stockport's **Runaway Brewery** marked its tenth birthday with four days of celebrations from 30 May to 2 June (as we mentioned in the last issue). The brewery tap was full to bursting (at one stage on the Saturday afternoon it was 'one in, one out') which shows

in what high regard the brewery is held. Apart from the main bar, there was additional beer available outside, and on the first floor Manchester's Café Beermoth hosted a pop-up bar with a range of unusual keg beers. Food came from the regular Honest Crust Pizzas and was supplemented by an additional food stall run by **Reddish Ale**.

Coinciding with Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, Manchester's **Balance Brewing & Blending** marked its third birthday with a weekend of celebrations at the brewery taproom on Sheffield Street. There was a release of new beers and, on Sunday 23 June, the barrel store was opened up for what will be an annual birthday blending session. Congratulations to both!

Central Manchester CAMRA Annual Award Winners



On 1 May, Central Manchester branch chair Sean O'Mahoney, presented the branch **Pub of the Year** award to the **City Arms** at an event well attended by CAMRA members and pub staff.

A stalwart of the Manchester pub scene for as long as any of us can remember, this Kennedy Street pub, serving eight cask ales, always well-kept. The pub has been a runner-up in the Central

Manchester Pub of the Year voting many times, so this year was a welcome win. Pictured above are City Arms staff Caitlin O'Shea and Josh Schofield, with their certificate.

Central Manchester's **Best Newcomer Award** went to the **Victoria Tap** at Victoria Station. This is a sister pub to the popular Piccadilly Tap, and, later this year, will be joined by a third 'Tap' at Oxford Road station.



The Victoria Tap features five changing cask beers, a real cider and a range of varying keg beers, including German imports. Our picture shows Sean O'Mahoney presenting the award to managers Amie Black (left) and Ciara Woods (right). Amie is the general

manager across both the Victoria and Piccadilly Tap, while Ciara is the Victoria Tap on-site manager.

Last, but certainly not least, the Central Manchester **Cider Pub of the Year** is the famous **Marble Arch** on Rochdale Road. While known for its superbly kept Marble Brewery beers, the pub also sells a range of real ciders, on handpump, keg and in bottle. Sean O'Mahoney is shown above presenting this very well-deserved award.



Congratulations to all three winners.



Only the finest farmers make it into our beauty parade

Shortly after harvest each year the best hop farmers in the UK journey to our brewery in Yorkshire. They bring with them carefully packed parcels of their finest crops. In what has become known as the *hop beauty parade* our expert brewers meticulously assess each batch, judging not just looks but also personality. The brewers rub each hop in their warm hands to feel the quality of the resins and release the delicate aromas that are vital to the signature flavour and balance of our beer. Only then are the *choicest* whole leaf hops selected to brew your *beautiful* pint of Landlord.

All for that taste of Taylor's



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.

Pub

For Oliver and Beth

Practicing writing

Under a roof they trust – two minds with
Beer glasses of blackcurrant squash,

Packets of Mini Cheddars,
Untold smiles and
Bags of giggles.

Poems fall out of their brains about
Urinal stench, poo from the loo,
Beer blobs peppered on floorboards,

Peanuts dropping into hungry hands,
Urgent corks popping from wine bottles,
Beer blobs splashing into moustaches,

Powerful dragon landlords,
Undead zombies ordering stouts,
Beer blob monsters taking over the world.

Punters chuckle and join in, offer
Up similes from surrounding tables like
Bar staff

Pouring
Unlimited joy from bubbling
Barrels. The creative

Pair scribble the suggestions down
Under titles like:
Beer Blobs And Friendly Dogs,

Paper Planes And Word Searches,
Unicorns In the Beer Garden,
Beer Burps And Homework.

Practicing writing
Under a roof they trust – two minds with
Buzzing imaginations opposite their

Proud dad
Urging them to keep
Being brilliant, like his 6% ale.

Stockport's Lost Pubs with Dave Stearn

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

Our first pub, the **Egerton Arms**, 142 Brinksway Road, is not to be confused with the pub of the same name which is still open on St Petersgate.



It was named after the famous Stockport family who were the largest landowners in Heaton Norris. Wilbraham Egerton of Tatton was also an MP for Cheshire in the 1820s. The Brinksway Road establishment was first mentioned in the Stockport trade directory of

1825, when the landlord was Henry Heywood. It originally had its own brewhouse, but ale production came to an end in the 1850s. In the 1890s it became a Chesters Brewery house. The Egerton was commonly referred to by its nickname of 'The Cracker', although the origin of the name seems to have faded from the collective memory. The pub stayed open until 1979, when it was compulsorily purchased to make way for the motorway.



Our second lost pub under the letter 'E' was officially known as the **Spread Eagle** but in some records in the 19th century was simply referred to as the Eagle. It was situated on 31 Lower Hillgate. The inn was one of the oldest in the town, dating back to the 1720s. It was a large site, which, when it was listed for sale in the 1830s, comprised the inn with billiard room, an extensive yard, brewhouse and stables. The Eagle Brewery was based there, and expanded under various owners through the 19th century. Under the Pearson family, who took it on in the 1870s, it became a thriving business, eventually having four houses tied to it by around 1900. It was a few doors up from the Unicorn Inn, situated at number 23 and they shared a yard. This was a similarly old building dating back

to the 1720s, which William Robinson took over as landlord in the 1830s, ahead of his sons starting the family brewing empire.

In fact, the Spread Eagle became part of the Robbies' pub stable in 1905, when the Pearson family switched its business interests from brewing to the spinning industry. The move would prove unsuccessful with Sydney Pearson being declared bankrupt seven years later. The Spread Eagle welcomed customers as a Robinsons pub for the next hundred years, finally closing its doors in 2007, when it was converted into offices for the brewery. The building that you see today on Lower Hillgate has a similar frontage to that of the original building, but it was largely rebuilt in the late 1970s.

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

ASK, "IS IT CASK?"

The launch of 'Fresh Ale' by Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company (CMBC) is a handpump hijack, which misleads consumers into thinking they will be served a cask-conditioned beer – which is far from the case.

Serving so-called 'Fresh Ale' though a handpump also boots a genuine cask beer off the bar, depriving consumers of choice.

CMBC claim to champion cask beer but have instead closed breweries and removed cask lines from bars.

Mild Magic Update

Even the organisers were surprised by the success of this year's Mild Magic, which broke all previous records.

No fewer than 203 entries were received, up from 153 in 2023 and 107 in 2022! These entries generated no fewer than 3,793 pub visits.

We always ask those taking part to vote for their favourite mild, and also their top mild pub.

The top mild was the potent **Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby** (6%), which hails from the Beacon at Sedgely in the Black Country. The organisers also want to give a hat-tip to the milds produced by Hyde-based Bridge Beers – although they haven't topped the votes in any year they have always featured prominently in the voting – so well done them.




Mild Magic
2024

The Champion Mild Pub vote went to a Mild Magic newcomer this year – the **Castle** on Church Street in Macclesfield. This superb heritage pub really does seem to do everything well, so this is a well-deserved win. We will be arranging for presentations to both winners later in the year.

Plans are already being put in place for Mild Magic 2025 – can we break more records next time?

J.W. LEES
(INDEPENDENT BREWERY) MARRIOTT




FRUITED ALE
 3.8% ABV


A BRIGHT AND JUICY ALE
 WITH SUMMER FRUITS AND
 BERRY TONES


Style Fruited Ale


Hops Cardinal, Mandarina Bavaria


Malt Lager Malt

 Rosey

 Strawberries, Raspberries, Orange

 Blackberry, Summer Fruits, Citrus

Bitter 

Sweet 

J.W. LEES

Pub Walks with Chris Morris

Stockport Pub Round, Part 3 - Marple to Middlewood

The Stockport Pub Round is a series of linked pub walks, along traffic-free nature trails, visiting fine pubs in the process. Continuing from where we finished stage two (Romiley to Marple), stage three takes us along the Peak Forest and Macclesfield Canals. Both provide an escape to a corridor of tranquillity, and, if you're lucky, the occasional whiff of nostalgia from coal-fired narrowboats. There are two pub options at the start, one in the middle and two at the end. As with all these walks, they are easily accessible by public transport.

Public Transport Information

Stage three starts in Marple, which has a regular train service from Piccadilly and bus stops for the frequent 383, 384 and 358 services from Stockport. The walk has two finishes, depending on your mode of public transport. For bus users, the 199 at High Lane will take you to Stockport. For train users, the railway station at Middlewood will do the same. As Middlewood is a remote station, services are reduced to every two hours, on average.

The Walk

Part three is straightforward and three miles long. As the route is mainly along canals, the terrain is generally quite flat and the paths are good. All pubs welcome dogs.

For bus users, get off at the bus stop in the centre of Marple, nearest to the Navigation pub. Walking past the pub, our route is to the canal beyond, but if a pre-walk drink or meeting point is required, a visit is recommended. For train users, exit Marple Station to the main road and turn right to walk up the hill. After 300 yards, cross over and turn left to join the canal, with the water on your left. Walk along the Marple lock flight for 600 yards until you reach bridge 18, with the Navigation pub at the top of the steps.

Recently refurbished in a modern style, the **Navigation** has kept its multi-room layout and pub feel, as well as a warm welcome. Robinsons Unicorn was the cask beer available when I last popped in. Turning right on exiting the pub along the main road, we continue to the canal by turning right onto Lockside and join the canal towpath, with the water on our left. Just after lock 16 we reach the point where the canal forks. Walk over the road bridge and turn right to join the Macclesfield Canal with the water now on our right. After 100 yards the towpath joins a road with the day's second pub opposite.



The **Ring O' Bells** is a traditional Robinsons local with a traditional

multi-room layout, welcoming staff and comfortable surroundings. As well as the food being popular, so too, during the warmer months, is the large outdoor area overlooking the canal. On my last visit, the cask beers were Robinsons Unicorn and Dizzy Blonde.

On exiting the pub, turn left and cross back over the main road to re-join the canal via the impressive snake bridge that spirals down, with the water now on our left. After a mile when we reach bridge 5, there is the option to leave the canal for another pub stop. For this, cross over the bridge and carry on along Barnsfold Road for 500 yards, until you reach the **Crown** at Hawk Green. This is an upmarket Robinsons gastropub that also welcomes drinkers. Unicorn and Dizzy Blonde were available when I last dropped in. This is also a suitable

place to end your walk early, if required, with a bus stop for the 385 located opposite.



Back on the canal, we carry on as before with the water on our left for a further mile, which takes us to High Lane. A few yards past bridge 11, we now leave the canal to the right by walking up the steps to the beer garden of our next pub. With a cosy interior full of rustic charm and a friendly welcome, the

Bull's Head is as popular with locals as it is with visiting walkers. As well as bands regularly playing, food is available, and the pizzas are a big hit. On last inspection, the cask beers on offer were Wadworth 6X, Black Sheep Bitter and Wainwright Gold.

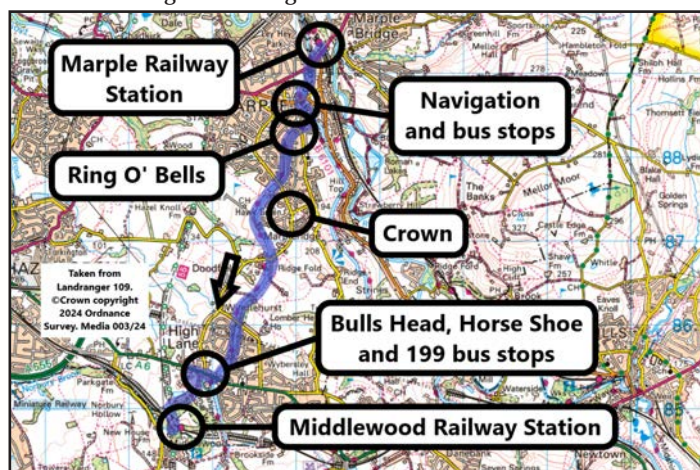
If further refreshment is required, the **Horse Shoe** nearby



has recently been refurbished to a high standard. Other than the odd scatter cushion, the interior remains delightfully pubby, with the cosiness and charm unchanged. A log burner features for the colder months. Robinsons Unicorn and Dizzy Blonde were the cask beers available when I last visited.

For bus users, stops for the 199 service can be found here. For train users, Middlewood Station is half a mile away, with a pleasant stroll through attractive woodland. For this, walk away from the Bulls Head, past the Horse Shoe and, just before you reach the Royal Oak (more on this pub next time), turn left and walk along Middlewood Road. After 300 yards, ignore the turning to the left for High Lane Cricket Club and carry on straight ahead, following the many signs for Middlewood Station. After a further 150 yards, take a right and follow the trail for 200 yards until you join the wide Middlewood Way track. Turn left here and, after 200 yards, the station is under the railway bridge.

For full pub details, including opening times, visit whatpub.com. Next time is stage four – High Lane and Middlewood to Bramhall.





175 YEARS
1849 — 2024

LIVE MUSIC

FOOD TRUCKS

INTERNATIONAL
BEERS

BREWERY
TOURS



EARLY
BIRD TICKETS
£8

GENERAL
SALE TICKETS
£10

UPGRADE YOUR
TICKET TO INCLUDE
A BREWERY TOUR
£5

BEER FESTIVAL

**FRIDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER
& SATURDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER**

HELD AT JOSEPH HOLT BREWERY, EMPIRE STREET, MANCHESTER, M3 1JD

**ALL TICKETS INCLUDE
2 FREE DRINKS OF YOUR CHOICE**

BEERS FROM UK BREWERIES INCLUDING
BEARTOWN BREWERY, VOCATION BREWERY,
ST AUSTELL BREWERY, PALMERS BREWERY AND MORE.



ORDER YOUR TICKETS HERE

ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO SEE JOSEPH HOLT BREWERY, MANCHESTER

Stagger

Stockport Market Place with Matthew Thompson

Stockport town centre has two main areas for pubs: the so-called beer slope, running north of the Mersey and up Wellington Road North, and that around the historic market place south of the river.

Both have seen redevelopment in the last decade or so, with more to come (the new Berlin, an unlikely moniker an international DJ dubbed the place with last year, now just needs the long-awaited trams to arrive at its lately transformed bus station). It was to the latter area that around a dozen of us headed early on a sunny Friday night in mid-May for a stagger around the contrasting pubs and bars there. When we arrived it was already busy with sun-glassed toppers topping up their tans at the outdoor trestle tables, despite it being a fortnight



before the next of the end-of-month food events which have contributed to its rejuvenation as a drinking destination.

The **Bakers Vaults** is a much made-over market place pub which hosts live music and has a range of guest beers on the bar alongside those of the town's major brewer, Robinsons, of whose estate it forms part. The high ceiling and arched windows around an open space of dark wood tables recall a Czech or Bavarian beer hall, but the food offering, largely consisting of burgers and Tex-Mex dishes, is more inspired by the cuisines of

North America than those of central Europe. Vale Black Beauty Porter and Robinsons Unicorn and Hopp were the drinks chosen here, and all received scores of good or very good.



Phones firmly in pockets, we crossed the road to the **Boars Head**, a Sam Smith's pub with the traditional atmosphere and cheap prices you'd expect from the idiosyncratic Tadcaster brewery. This is now its only outlet in the town after the sudden closure of the nearby **Queens Head**. The Old Brewery Bitter was

judged good, albeit served a little on the cool side.



The former Project 53 is now **Thread**, a Belgian-themed bar which focusses on bottle-conditioned beers from the breweries of Flanders and Wallonia, but also has draught lines for cask and keg. We sat in the quieter back room – a talented but rather

loud Glaswegian country & western singer complete with cowgirl hat was performing in the front one – and enjoyed pale ales from

microbreweries Bank Top of Bolton and the Lewes-based Only With Love.



Next door is the white brick-fronted **Angel**, a long-lost pub which was converted for other use and then stood empty before being restored to its original function. It too offers a selection of cask and keg lines, including German lagers and wheat beers, to a mostly younger clientele. Thornbridge Jaipur IPA and Market Porter – an appropriate beer given the location – were sampled here, and given good to very good scores.



With **Amp** (the ex-Remedy Brewhouse) and the **Egerton Arms** both caskless, we called at the **Cockeyed Hat** (ex-Pack Horse), where the Lancaster Blonde and IPA were deemed good, but the Banks's Mild was found to be only average.



Down a steep side street from the marketplace stands the **Arden Arms** on Millgate. An early nineteenth century Grade II listed building which appears on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Interiors, unusual features here include handpumps mounted at the back of the bar

and, beyond it, a snug only accessible at the licensee's invitation, a privilege kindly extended to us. Robinsons Unicorn, Trooper and Citra all scored good to very good here.

The older part of Stockport town centre is split between two levels, connected by sloping flagged passageways and stone-stepped stairs. A pub crawl around it therefore entails a few ups and downs, much like those experienced by the pubs within it through the years, although happily on our Stagger the former far outnumbered the latter.

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



News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

White Lion



What has been described as Stockport's oldest pub reopened at the end of May after being closed for almost 15 years – and it looks like it was worth the wait.

There has been a pub on this site since the 15th century, although the impressive structure you now see was built in 1904 by the old Chesters Brewery in Ardwick. A series of takeovers saw it end up in the hands of Whitbread, which at one stage turned it into a multi-beer 'ale house', and finally some pub company or other until closing in June 2009. The upper floors have been converted into flats, so the 'new' White Lion trades over the ground floor and basement.



The ground floor comprises distinct areas, all fitted out in a traditional manner. Walls vary from bare brick to wood panelling, while the seating ranges from cosy cubicles to formal dining chairs.

Much use has been made of original or reclaimed wood and stained glass, and it has to be said the end result is very impressive. An old mosaic floor featuring a white lion has been uncovered in what would have been an entrance corridor, and makes for a distinctive feature.

The rooms downstairs follow a similar pattern but look to be more games or TV sport oriented – and the pub's website (whitelioncoachinghouse.co.uk) describes this area as a sports bar.

Quiz nights and live music are on the agenda, and there's a wide-ranging menu of freshly cooked food.

So, what about the beer? We like the fact that the two handpumps are one of the first things you see when you walk in. These dispense Sharp's Doom Bar and Taylor's Landlord. The Landlord was on particularly good form when *Opening Times* called and we have also seen good reports about the Doom Bar (a beer which, we find, can sometimes struggle to impress).

It's taken quite a while for the White Lion to reopen, but we'd say it's been worth waiting for.

The White Lion is at 20 Great Underbank and opens 11-11 Monday to Friday and 10am-midnight Saturday and Sunday.

Pub News in Brief



The **Treacle Tap** on Sunderland Street, operated by Buxton Brewery, has closed its doors. The brewery's other outlets in Buxton, including their new Trackside venue at the brewery, are unaffected. The reasons for the closure were cited as "economic uncertainty, higher operating costs and lower footfall."

According to a post on a local Facebook group, the pub operation at the **Heald Green Hotel** was due to close at the beginning of July, with the building being converted into extra rooms for the adjoining Premier Inn. This is part of a national programme of pub/restaurant closures by Whitbread, which will also see the **Cheadle Royal**, on the business park of the same name at the other end of the village, cease trading. We assume a similar fate will await Stockport's **Bamford Arms**.

Real ale is no longer available at the **Old Peg** in Denton. However, real ale has been introduced just a few doors along at the **Coach & Horses**, in the shape of Robinsons Trooper.

The **Turing Tap** near the University has reopened under the Craft Union brand. It is now wet-led, with no food, and just two cask beers: Carlsberg Marston's Wainwright and Taylor's Landlord. Everything seems to have been pared back to the basics so it will be interesting to see how it fares in this guise.

Over in West Didsbury, the **Elk** has opened, but with no cask. It has a Scandinavian/Alpine look about it inside, with pale sauna-type wood on the walls, lots of TVs and an extensive outside drinking area.

As this edition went to press, news had been released of a new bar opening in mid- to late June on Queens Walk in Droylsden called the **Sparrows in the Snow**. The new venue is being launched by the team behind Droylsden's wonderful The Silly Country and will further enhance the burgeoning cask ale presence in the area. According to the venue's Facebook page, the establishment will be 'a chilled bar/distillery for everyone to enjoy'. More details on the new opening will be in the August/September issue of *Opening Times*.

Moorhouse's Take On Squawk



In a surprising, but welcome, move Moorhouse's Brewery in Burnley has announced the acquisition of the brands and recipes from Squawk Brewing, which recently closed down.

We understand that Moorhouse's may have acquired the brewing plant from the now-defunct First Chop, and this will run as a stand-alone operation with its own dedicated lead brewer (advertised for this post were online as we went to press).

It was planned to have the 'new' Squawk beers ready for delivery by mid-June, so you may have come across them already. In addition to the old regulars, some specials may be in the pipeline, too – beers that Squawk's Oliver Turton has down on paper but never had time to brew.

Night Out in Chorlton-on-Medlock

With Matthew Thompson

If April showers brought forth May flowers, Manchester should have been in brilliant bloom by then. Thankfully, the heavy rain which had persisted all day finally relented as we gathered in Rusholme on a Friday night at the back end of the former month for a tramp along Wilmslow Road through Chorlton-on-Medlock towards the southern edge of the city centre.



Housed in the ground floor of a large student accommodation block at the northern tip of Rusholme, Wetherspoons' **Ford Madox Brown** has an unsurprisingly youthful clientele, but there were also a few more senior drinkers enjoying the usual keen prices and dining options. From a wide range of cask beers on the bar, we opted for Rudgate Ruby Mild and Double Maxim Premium, both of which were judged good.



We struck out for our next stop, the **Turing Tap** at the corner of Nelson Street, but a sign on the door informed us that it would be closing after that evening and the choice of food and drink would therefore be very limited. A quick look inside the empty

premises confirmed this, as did a chat with the rather dispirited staff, whose future employment there seemed as uncertain as the fate of the debt-laden Stonegate Group which owns it.



A short walk through the grounds of Manchester Royal Infirmary, past the blue-plaques Pankhurst house and a very pub-like social club for NHS workers, brought us to the **Grafton Arms**. This is the kind of basic boozers that Holt's still does well, and it retains a community feel – unlike some of their smartened up, and much pricier, dining places. It was mostly older male drinkers, but a

smattering of students too, supping beneath the mural of Mancunian sporting and entertainment icons on the wall, no doubt drawn by the rather impressive Buzzcocks-esque teenage band playing on the low stage at the far end of the room. The sole cask beer, Holt's Bitter, was considered good.



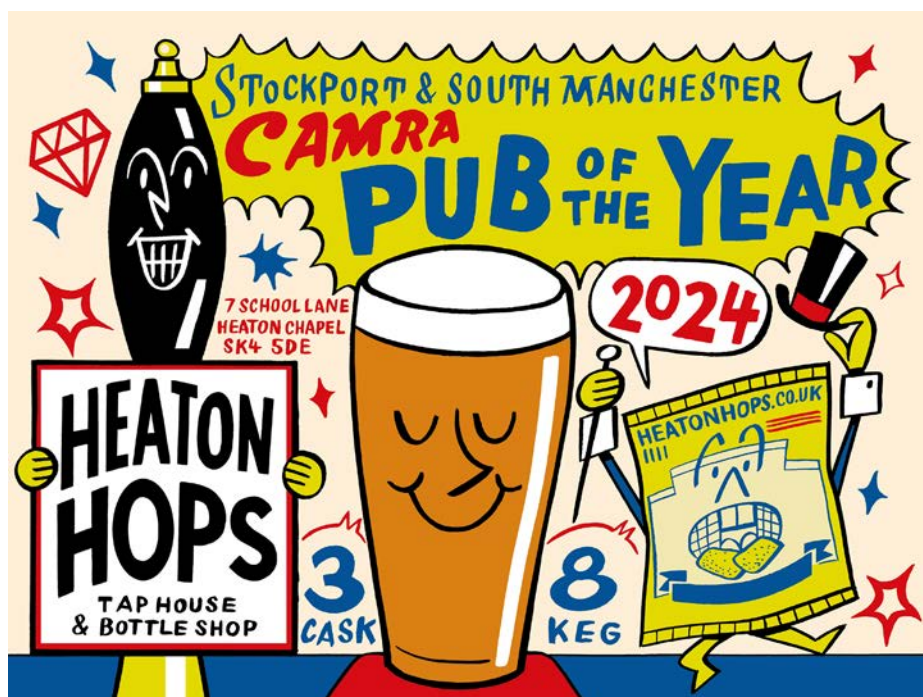
Kro Bar opposite the students' union is a large, white-fronted converted Victorian house with a very long beer garden to the rear, whose benches were, again unsurprisingly, filled with younger drinkers. Alongside pale ales from Brightside and Vocation, we plumped

for a light mild from the other side of the Pennines, Timothy Taylor's Golden Best, which we deemed good.



Now in sight of the Mancunian Way, the sixties flyover that bisects Chorlton-on-Medlock, and beyond which lies the river that both forms its northern border and gives the district its name, we stuck our heads into the

keg-only **Footage** (which has now closed) and **Flour & Flagon** near the corner of Grosvenor Street before entering our final pub, the *Good Beer Guide* regular **Sandbar**, where, amongst handpumps for local microbreweries including Phoenix, we found the beer of the night, a superbly smooth and well-kept Blackjack Stout which attracted general acclaim, and scores in the very good to almost perfect range. A fitting end to what had been an enjoyable and interesting evening touring some contrasting drinking spots in this cosmopolitan suburb of inner south Manchester.



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.

Thursday 1 August – Magnet, 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. Will include prize quiz. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 17 August – Sportsman, 57 Mottram Road, Hyde, SK14 2NN. Will be followed by a social in other local pubs. Starts 1:30pm. (HPNC)

Tuesday 10 September – Town Hall Tavern, 20 Tib Lane, Manchester, M2 4JA. Starts 6:30pm. (CMCR)

Thursday 12 September – Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury, M20 5PG. Guest speaker from Phoenix Brewery. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Social Events & Presentations

Everyone welcome at these meetings

Friday 19 July – Levenshulme Stagger: 7:30pm Station Hop, 815 Stockport Road, M19 3BS; 8:30pm Blue Bell, 170 Barlow Road, M19 3HF; final pub Talleyrand, 1030 Stockport Road, M19 3WX. (SSM)

Saturday 20 July – Cider Pub of the Year presentation: Poachers, 95 Ingersley Road, Bollington, SK10 5RE. From 1pm. (MEC)

Saturday 20 July – Visit Thornsett Brewery Tap. Meet at Beer Shed, New Mills at 1:30pm for shared taxis. (HPNC)

Thursday 25 July – Pub of the Month presentation: Railway, 3 Lapwing Lane, West Didsbury, M20 2NT. From 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 27 July – Beer of the Festival Silver Award: Torrside Brewery, Wharf Warehouse, Hibbert Street, New Mills, SK22 3JJ. From 12 noon.

Saturday 27 July – Summer Pub of the Season presentation: Queens Head, Park Lane, Congleton, CW12 3DE. From 1:30pm. (MEC)

Saturday 3 August – Pub of the Season presentation: Kingfisher, London Road South, Poynton, SK12 1NJ. Will be followed by a social in other local pubs. Starts 1:30pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 7 August – Weekday Wander to Woodford: catch 11:45 bus 313 from Stockport Interchange. First pub: Pointing Dog, Grove Lane, Cheadle Hulme, then Aviator and Davenport Arms in Woodford, finishing in Mounting Stone, Bramhall. (SSM)

Saturday 10 August – Geoff Lees Memorial Dinner. Armenian Taverna, 3-5 Princess Street, M2 4DF. Timings TBC. (HPNC)

Sunday 11 August – Regional Cider Pub of the Year presentation: Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. From 1pm. (All)

Friday 16 August – Stockport North & Portwood Stagger: 7:30pm Midway, 263 New Bridge Lane, SK1 2NX; 8:30pm Queens, 11 Great Portwood Street, SL1 2DW; finishing at the Crown, 154 Heaton Lane, SK4 1AR. (SSM)

Thursday 22 August – Pub of the Month presentation: Wobbly Stamp, 130 Stockport Road, Cheadle, SK8 2DP. From 8pm. (SSM)

Tuesday 3 September – Weekday Wander to Rochdale: catching the 11:35 Northern train from Manchester Victoria. First pub: Flying Horse, 37 Packer Street, Rochdale OL16 1NJ then Regal Moon, Baum and finishing in the Cemetery Hotel. (SSM)

CAMRA Awards

Recent Presentations

The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year 2024 is **Heaton Hops** on School Lane in Heaton Chapel. It was a full house, and then some, when the award was presented on Thursday 30 May.

Among the many treats available was the powerful Good King Henry imperial stout – a 10% wonder now brewed at Grain Brewery in Norfolk. Pictured below with the certificate is Heaton Hops owner Damian O'Shea, along with staff members Amy Tierney (left) and Mirabai Abbate (right).



The Stockport & South Manchester Club of the Year 2024 is the multi-award-winning **Ladybarn Social Club** on Green Street in Ladybarn.



The club was buzzing on Friday 14 June when we presented the award to club secretary Phil Cowtan, who is pictured here with his certificate.

Apart from the presentation, guests and club members were able to enjoy live entertainment and food from a fish and chip van, along with an excellent range of cask beers – there are always three changing guests alongside the regular Robinsons Unicorn.

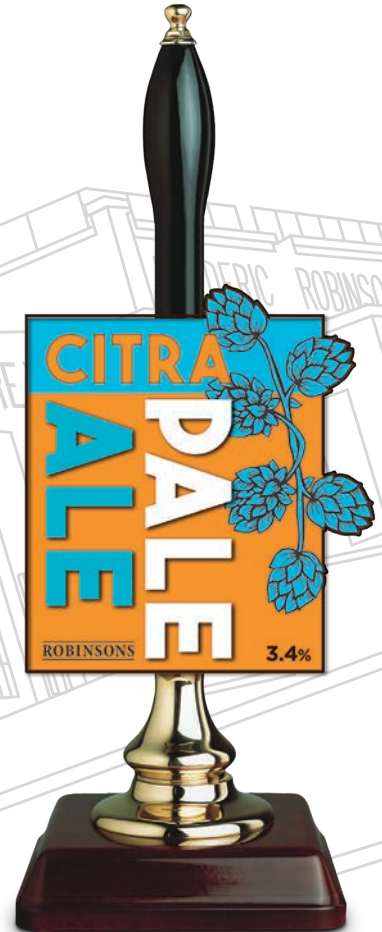
The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month for April was the **Ford Madox Brown** in Rusholme. The branch combined this with a high-profile membership recruitment night, aimed at younger members. It was judged to be a huge success – so

much so that manager Olivia Sunderland has suggested a repeat event just after Freshers' Week. Pictured here with Olivia (right) is assistant manager Kai Marshall.



BREWING EXCELLENCE

Since 1838



ROBINSONS

1838
BREWERY

find your nearest pub at
www.robinsonsbrewery.com