

OPENING TIMES

MARCH / APRIL 2025

FREE



**MILD MAGIC IS BACK
SEE PAGE 11**



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Contents & Information

In this issue...

Pubs of the Month	5	Scribbles on a Beermat	15
Stockport Beer Festival	6	Stockport's Lost Pubs	15
Stockport & S Mcr Awards	7	What's Brewing	16
More Awards & News	9	Pub Walks	17
Mild Magic	11	Diary & Awards	19
Heard at the Bar	13		

About Opening Times & Contacts

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Their telephone number is 03454 04 05 06. To report a matter to Trading Standards go to: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards

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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
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Pub Opening Hours

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

Disclaimer

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

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www.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

CAMRA National website: camra.org.uk

Social Media

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

Stockport & South Manchester:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA

X – @SSMCAMRA

High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire:

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Central Manchester:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/groups/CentralManchesterCamra

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Macclesfield & East Cheshire:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/groups/897449270304045

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CAMRA Discounts

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

Front Cover

Mild Magic returns – see page 11. Image by Lawrence Devaney.

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Copy date for the May/June issue is Friday 28 March

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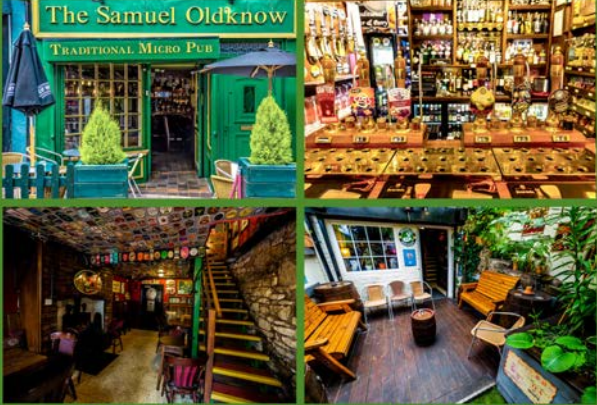
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The Petersgate Tap



Winner, Stockport Pub of the Year, 2023

Winner Stockport Cider Pub of the Year
2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

Winner Gtr Manchester Region
Cider Pub of the Year, 2018, 2019, 2024

Champion Mild Pub 2018, 2019, 2023

Good Beer Guide
2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

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Our pub charity is Stockport Mentell

Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for March and April



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for March is the Gateway on Wilmslow Road in East Didsbury. Mark Clayton tells you all about it.

The Gateway is an interwar road house pub originally built on the junction of Kingsway and Wilmslow Road for passing trade. Operated by Hydes for many years, it sadly became the 'black sheep' of their estate. I visited this pub prior to its sale to Wetherspoon's and it was tired and outdated, with poor beer, few customers and no food. Unlike other pubs owned by Hydes, with many in the Stockport & South Manchester branch area making Pub of the Month. I also tried four or five in their 2023 Hyde's Ale Trail – all were excellent.



Hydes sold it to Wetherspoons, who were eyeing a replacement for their (leased) Milson Rhodes in Didsbury (2010 - 2016). One refurbishment and a deep clean later, we have the excellent premises we see today – spacious, comfortable, friendly, able staff, good food, a sizable

beer garden, a cosy fireplace, usually busy and an excellent choice of well-kept fine ales. There is even a small car park, which was transformed into an extended beer garden during Covid.

Kevin Muldoon was manager for many years, earning three Pub of the Month awards before moving on to revitalise the JP Joule in Sale. A hard act to follow, but bright and cheery Adele Graham took over as manager after 2022 and kept up (and even improved), its high standards, in particular cellarage. The pub has continued to thrive, with a rotating offer of a wide variety of real ales on the eight hand pumps on the bar, a long menu and various offers throughout the week, including reduced prices on ale on Mondays and Wednesdays.

As well as the Pub of the Month award, the pub hosts CAMRA meetings in the large function room upstairs, and allows visiting brewers to take over several taps. To sum up, if it is hospitality and good ale that you are looking for, then Wetherspoons and the Gateway manager Adele know their business!

The award will be presented on the evening of Thursday 27 March, from 8pm. The Gateway is well served by buses (too numerous to mention) and is close to East Didsbury train station and tram terminus.



The Pub of the Month for April is Sandbar on Grosvenor Street in Chorlton-on-Medlock. Jack Lyons has been along.

Opened in 1996, Sandbar was one of the first modern bars in Manchester – and certainly the first in the heart of the University area. Originally importing bottled beers from Europe when no one else was, the bar now concentrates on locally produced beers on cask and keg, furthering its environmental credentials, which accounts for its long-term popularity with both students and lecturers from the surrounding colleges.

Originally three Georgian townhouses, Sandbar is a veritable time machine which has witnessed Georgian, then industrial, Manchester and now finds itself in the city's Knowledge Quarter. Frequent painting and photography exhibitions line the walls. Regular events include life-drawing classes and free Yoga among others. Also, check out the Cabinet of Curiosities. Outdoor seating is provided at the front and side of the buildings.

Cask ales confront you immediately on entering. with a pulpit-like bar of eight handpumps, include house beers Facers Clwyd Gold and Phoenix Arizona, and a line for Courier Brewing (down the road in Ardwick), they also aim to have a stout/porter and a traditional cider. There's a hymn board displaying beers on tap. Food comprises a selection of (very tasty) homemade pizzas.

Sandbar has been quietly excellent for years now, while at the same time remaining slightly below the radar. However, it's been a regular in the national *Good Beer Guide* for many years, and won 'Best Pub/Craft Ale Bar' in the Manchester Food & Drink Festival awards.

All this is overseen by general manager Dave Williams and his team. Dave has been at Sandbar for twelve years and the smooth operation shows a sure touch by all concerned. It's not the first time Sandbar has been Pub of the Month, but this further award is well overdue. Join us on the night of Thursday 17 April when we present this well-deserved award.

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



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Advance Package for each session £17.50 including £1.50 discount and express entry - covers discounted entry + glass (refundable) + £10.00 of beer/cider.

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Stockport & South Manchester Awards

Pub, Cider Pub and Club of the Year 2024

Crown 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 the **Crown** on Vale Close in Heaton Mersey.

Since taking over this Robinsons pub in November 2021, Goska and Jamie Langrish, and their team, have worked hard to create a welcoming pub which takes the outside look to the inside. 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 aim is to provide an inviting environment suitable for all, and to offer plenty of choice. 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). There's also a good selection of quality wines, spirits and soft drinks.

On learning of the award, Jamie and Goska told *Opening Times*: "We are so very proud and honoured to be awarded Pub of the Year for Stockport and South Manchester. In what are very tough times for all of us in this industry, it's lovely for our excellent team to be recognised for all the hard work and love they are putting into the Crown. Of course, a massive thank you to all of our loyal customers (old and new) who make the Crown so endearing, and what is a true hub of the community!"

Look out for details of the presentation.

The Magnet is Runner-Up



The runner-up this time needs no introduction to *Opening Times* readers – the **Magnet** on Wellington Road North, Stockport.

The pub, which celebrated its 15th anniversary as a free house last November, has won many awards from both CAMRA and other organisations. Indeed, in

January last year it was identified as "one of the UK's best boozers" by *National Geographic* magazine.

There are no fewer than 14 cask beers available, one permanent and 13 ever-changing, alongside 12 craft kegs, five of which are permanent. The quality is always impressively good – which is quite an achievement for a pub serving this number of beers. Unsurprisingly, it has a regular spot in CAMRA's national *Good Beer Guide*.

The pub's charity is Kidneys for Life at MINT (Manchester Institute For Nephrology and Transplantation) and so far over £15,000 has been raised through donations and the sale of pumpclips.

All of this is overseen by mother and son, Lesley and Lee Watts, not to mention their hard-working bar team.

Petersgate Tap is Cider Pub of the Year



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

While the pub is known to many for its ever-changing range of beers, both cask and keg, there is also great attention to detail when it comes to real cider and perry. While local producers also feature here, the accent is perhaps more on sourcing top-quality ciders and perries from leading producers such as Ross-on-Wye, Gregg's Pit and Hecks. All the ciders are either fridge- or cellar-cooled too, with no fewer than eight traditional ciders and perries regularly available. One innovation has been the occasional 'Cider Circle', featuring guest appearances from cider makers – James Marsden from Gregg's Pit was one of last year's highlights.

The award will be presented on Sunday 9 March from 2pm.

Club of the Year goes to Ladybarn



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

There are 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. Secretary Phil Cowtan 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.

We will be presenting this award on Friday 6 June, from 7.30pm.

Two New Awards

This year, two new awards are also being presented, as it was felt the two recipients are particularly deserving in their given categories.



One is a **Most Improved Pub** award and this has gone to the **Railway** on Lapwing Lane in West Didsbury. This Holt's pub was taken over in October 2023 by Stacy Saunders and her partner, Mark Wilson, who had previously run the Ape & Apple in Central Manchester.

The Railway was Stacy's dream pub, and it is that enthusiasm along with their experience that is

Continued on page 9

Isle of Man Branch
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2025 Awards and Pub News

New Awards continued...

now bringing the rewards. The first change was to increase from one to six 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 several local community groups.



The other new award is for **Community Pub of the Year**. This isn't in fact brand new because it has been presented once before, many years ago. However, the branch thought there was one particularly deserving pub this time and that is the **Blue Bell** on Barlow Road in Levenshulme.

Since Mark and Mary Dunn took over in 2006, they have worked hard to make the Blue Bell a true centre of the local community. Numerous groups meet at the pub, there are fundraising events for local community projects, along with many other initiatives.

Central Manchester Award

A few issues ago, we printed a photograph of what we suggested was the **Marble Arch** pub on Rochdale Road receiving its **2024 Cider Pub of the Year** award from Central Manchester CAMRA.

Well, we got that one wrong! Turns out it was Marble Brewery getting yet another well-deserved award. Anyway, here is the actual presentation (made in September) with Central Manchester branch chair Sean O'Mahoney (centre) handing the certificate over to the Marble Arch's Christopher Makin and Salma Sanchez.



Apologies for both getting the photo wrong in the first place and the delay in printing the right one!



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*The festival reserves the right to close early

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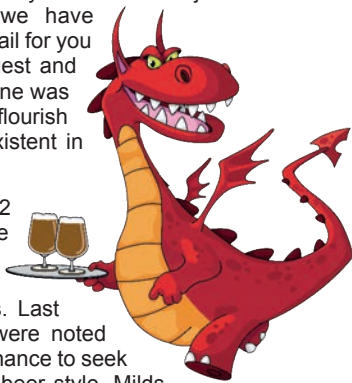
Mild Magic 2025

Visit Pubs, Drink Beer, Win Prizes

Friday 11 April to Sunday 18 May

According to the media, mild is dying out. Recent statistics show this neglected and misunderstood beer style accounts for just 0.5% 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 102 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 80 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 many 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(s). 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 2025 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. This will be held between 19 and 21 June at the Masonic Hall on Wellington Road South, Stockport SK1 3UA.

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.

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 two extra 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 pub and brewery will then be presented with a 'Mild Champion' award with everyone invited along.

How long do I have to complete all this?

Mild Magic runs from Friday 11 April to Sunday 18 May 2025 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 24 May (only one entry per person). Receipt of the card(s) will be acknowledged electronically, so an email address or phone number is desirable. All entries are eligible for inclusion in a **Grand Draw** to be one of the people invited along to a brewery tour around Bollington Brewery, final details still to be confirmed. If you are successful, full details

of the time and date of the visit will be included with your invitation.

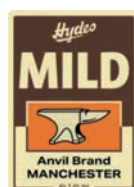
Where do I claim my garment and vouchers?

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 **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, Holts and Robinsons are bringing out special milds. Hydes have released Anvil Mild in March, so why not search it out now and start practising drinking mild early? Holts are again brewing their Unmistakably Mild especially for Mild Magic. Robinsons, however, aren't releasing their seasonal mild until autumn.



There will also be trips organised to enable you to tick off a few Mild Magic pubs. Dates and routes are 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, 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 70+ 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

Here are all the pubs, with the larger areas below being subdivided on the card: **Altrincham:** Costello's Bar, Unicorn; **Ashton under Lyne:** Ash Tree, Forester's Call, Halfway House, Tapsters; **Bollington:** Vale; **Bredbury:** Steelworks; **Burnage:** Reasons to be Cheerful; **Buxton:** Ale Stop, Cheshire Cheese, RedWillow, Wye Bridge; **Chapel-en-le-Frith:** Old Cell Ale Bar; **Cheadle:** Crown, James Watts, Wobbly Stamp; **Cheadle Hulme:** Cross Keys, John Millington; **Davenport:** Milliner; **Didsbury:** Fletcher Moss, Gateway, Head of Steam, Railway, Wallop; **Droylsden:** Silly Country, Snug; **Dukinfield:** Angel; **Eccles:** Eccles Cross, Lamb Hotel; **Fallowfield:** Friendship, Great Central; **Gatley:** Horse & Farrier; **Gee Cross:** 3 Drinks Behind; **Glossop:** Bar 2, Smithy Fold; **Gorton:** Vale Cottage; **Hadfield:** Chieftain; **Hayfield:** Kinder Lodge; **Hazel Grove:** George & Dragon; **Heald Green:** Griffin; **Heatons:** Heaton Hops, Nursery; **Hyde:** Jack's Bar, Queens; **Ladybarn:** Ladybarn Social Club; **Levenshulme:** Station Hop; **Macclesfield:** Bollington Brewery Tap, Castle, Jack in the Box, RedWillow, Society Rooms; **Manchester:** Angel, Britons Protection, City Arms, Grey Horse, Lower Turk's Head, Marble Arch, Molly House, Old Monkey, Oxford Road Tap, Paramount, Piccadilly Tap, Smithfield, Victoria Tap, Waldorf, Waterhouse; **Marple:** Norfolk Arms, Northumberland Arms, Samuel Oldknow; **Monton:** Park; **Patricroft:** Stanley Arms; **Poynton:** Cask Tavern, Kingfisher, Royal British Legion; **Romiley:** Voltigeur; **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, Cocked Hat, Crown Inn, Magnet, Petersgate Tap, White Lion, Ye Olde Vic; **Stretford:** Bishop Blaize; **Swinton:** Morning Star; **Urmston:** Barking Dog, Lord Nelson, Tim Bobbin; **Whaley Bridge:** Whaley Nook; **Whalley Range:** Carlton Club; **Whitehough:** Old Hall; **Withington:** Victoria.



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BREWING PASSION

**BROOK MILL
MACCLESFIELD, SK11 7BQ**



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



Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

Britons Protection Update

Following the return of the **Britons Protection** (Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester City Centre) to Heineken, and now under the management of Mark Brennan, I am sure people will be curious to know what developments have taken place, *writes Steve Ingham.*



Following Mark's assumption of the role, and with his new team in place, we can confirm that four real ales are currently on offer. Two are regional (Millstone Tiger Rut and Brightside Mancunian) and two national (Wadworth 6X and Theakston's Old

Peculier). Mark's ambition is to have eight cask ales available for weekends and six available during the week. Discussions are in hand with JW Lees and Robinsons to include these local brewers in the future. Mark is offering a loyalty card under the banner 'I love Cask. Buy 5 pints get one free', and has asked customers to bear with him until he has settled in.

In terms of the whisky selection for which the BP was well known, Mark has over thirty currently on offer, which is much better than many other outlets. A visit recently revealed a freshened-up look to the pub, with new flooring and decoration sympathetic to its iconic interior.

Members of the Central Manchester branch wish Mark and his staff good luck and every success in their new enterprise. Why not pay the BP a visit if you have not already done so? I think you will agree that some positive changes have been made, and the sympathetic redecoration has certainly freshened things up and provided a good ambience.

When I was there I asked two customers what their impressions were; a customer who had visited some while ago and friend who had not visited before were both complimentary about the new feel of the pub. Why not drop in yourselves and see what you think?

Cheadle Hulme News

In early February, *Opening Times* dropped down to Cheadle Hulme to catch up with a couple of newish openings.



First stop was the **Watchmakers** on Station Road, the latest incarnation of the Kings Tap and Kings Hall. Inside, not much seems to have changed and it's still big and cavernous – the sort of pub that needs to be really busy to have much of an atmosphere. When we called, there was just a handful of customers rattling around –

which may perhaps be the reason why our Taylor's Landlord, the only cask beer available, was fairly indifferent. Full marks, though, for the prominent sticker on the entrance door promoting cask ale.

At least the Watchmakers was making an effort, which was more than could be said for the newly reopened **Archive** on Mellor Road. The bank of handpumps was bare, and, on enquiring, we were told the

single cask beer had sold out. Despite this being a Saturday afternoon, there seemed to be little interest in putting on a replacement. The direction of travel can perhaps be deduced from the chalked-up beer list, which has no room for any cask ales.

Even the keg list had few highlights, which is a shame, because the bar has been refurbished to a high standard, and is bright, airy and comfortable. There's also a decent menu with interesting pizzas, amongst other things. A bit of a missed opportunity, perhaps – especially as the **Chiverton Tap**, a couple of doors up the road, was buzzing at the time.

News in Brief

The **Red Lion** on Stockport Road in Cheadle had an extension to the rear constructed in December. It is a multi-purpose space in that it serves as an additional room when the pub is busy at weekends, a function room, and the retractable roof can be pulled back leaving an outside area.



Full marks to the **Grey Horse**, on Broadstone Road in Reddish, for burnishing its community credentials during the cold spell in early January. The pub's Facebook page included the following message:

If you are struggling and can't afford to put the heating on, please feel free to come to the Grey Horse, have a warm drink on us and be safe. The bar staff will not ask for any money: just say Helen has invited you for a coffee/tea, whichever is your preference. Stay warm and safe, especially the poor people from the mill near Tesco.

An excellent gesture, there, by licensee Helen Partington, who works hard to put this Holt's pub at the heart of the community.



A new bottle shop has opened in Heaton Moor, in the row of huts on Tatton Road South, just across the road from Heaton Chapel station. Small but perfectly formed perhaps sums up **Rail & Ale**. There is a range of UK craft beers in can along with a few bottles from Europe, and a respectable assortment of

wines. It also may win the prize for Stockport's smallest bar, as there is a table and a handful of chairs if you want to drink in. In the warmer weather, we think they may have to find room for a fridge or two. Well worth a visit.

In central Stockport, **Amp** on the Market Place has closed and there is no news yet of what is likely to replace it. Not far away on Great Underbank, the former **Syndikat** is set to be turned into the **Underbank**. This is a project by Benji Taylor, who used to run **Bask** near Stockport station. The drinks offer is promised to include "the finest worldwide and local beers". It's scheduled to open in March.

In Didsbury, the **Dockyard** has closed and the premises are to become the second branch of the wonderfully named **Salmon of Knowledge**. The first branch is on Stevenson Square in the City Centre. Don't expect cask, but there will be lots of Guinness and beers from Cork-based Franciscan Well Brewery.

MANCHESTER RAIL ALE TRAIL



*Three is the
magic number*

Take the challenge

DRINK CASK

*PICCADILLY TAP, VICTORIA TAP
& THE NEW OXFORD ROAD TAP*

Scribbles on a Beermat



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

A Month Without Going To The Pub

No headaches.
No sawdust tongue.
No slower than normal mornings.
No struggling to remember.

No pretending to definitely know what on Earth hops are to people who definitely know what on Earth hops are.

No watching dogs excitedly wander in.
No watching dogs sneaking Mini Cheddars.
No watching dogs snoozing on soft seats.
No watching dogs snoring, twitching, farting.

No hearing terrible opinions.
No hearing wonderful opinions.
No discovering new worlds.
No escaping this world.

No melting into a newspaper.
No melting into a pie.
No melting into a conversation.
No melting into your brain.

No making best friends with someone you'll never see again.
No barman to argue with.
No barman to fall in love with.

No landlords to know your name and your family's names and your favourite drink and your favourite crisp flavour.

No gossip.
No gossip.
No gossip.
No gossip.

No beer mat towers not doing as they are told, playlists wanting you to take them home, pint glasses not wanting you to take them home.

No getting lost.
No feeling found.

Stockport's Lost Pubs with Dave Stearn

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



Our first pub, the **Imperial Hotel**, St Petersgate, was first mentioned in 1877, but it could go back earlier. It was originally a plumber's shop; the proprietor was a chap called Dooley. It is thought the rather grand name was inspired by its location, next door to the Theatre Royal. This guaranteed a clientele

of entertainment-goers, before and after performances. Cab drivers from the rank opposite were also regulars.

The Imperial in the late nineteenth century was a Showell's Brewery house, which had taken over Marsland's Brookfield Brewery, based on Hemphaw Lane. By the mid-20th century, after a series of takeovers, it became a Wilson's Brewery pub.

The building, which still stands, is a survivor. The Theatre Royal was burned to the ground in 1887 before being rebuilt. It was finally demolished in the early 1960s, with a building society branch built in its place. It is now an estate agent's premises with apartments above. To the left of the Imperial, a neighbouring shop unit was also demolished to allow widening of St. Peter's Square.

After the theatre's demise, the Imperial was renamed, becoming Irish-themed bar the Blarney Stone and later being named the Peters Square Tavern. It reverted to its old name of the Imperial with a short-lived relaunch in 2011 but closed a few years later. Since closing, the pub has been converted to shop premises and is currently a convenience store. The pub is shown above during the demolition of the Theatre Royal in October 1962.



Our second lost pub under the letter 'I' is **Inn with a Chance**, 6 Tiviot Dale, pictured here in March 1979.

This was the pub's third incarnation. It started life as the Bowling Green, first mentioned in 1764. In those days, there were pleasure grounds to the rear, where travelling fairs and circuses were held. It was a mid-terraced pub located next door to the Tiviot Hotel, a Robinsons house.

In the 1860s, Tiviot Dale Station opened. It took 30 years, but the pub was eventually renamed the Station Hotel in 1895. The Wilson's Brewery house was given a major overhaul in the 1970s and renamed 'Inn with a Chance'. The makeover ultimately did not prevent its closure just a few years later. It was demolished around 1982, after part of the frontage collapsed. The area remains undeveloped and is currently a car park, along with the site of the neighbouring Tiviot Hotel.

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.

What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region

Bridge Beers to Close



Dave Bridge, owner of **Bridge Beers**, now based at Flowery Field in Hyde, has announced he is to retire and close down the brewery (which was formerly the premises of Four

Kings Brewery).

There are only a handful of brew days left, with the last one scheduled to be on 1 April. After that, the brewery equipment will be put up for sale (and has now been advertised online at a price of £9,000).

Some of the last beers to be produced will be for this year's Mild Magic when no fewer than three milds are planned – Golden Mild, Ruby Mild and Ruby Cherry Mild. Mild Magic will be one of the very last chances you'll have to try these fine beers – so do look out for them.

There remain a number of events planned for the brewery, one of which will be a Sly Fox gig on Saturday 10 May. The brewery's doors will finally close on 31 May.

Dave's business partner Glenn Hall is, however, continuing to run the **Bridge Beers 'Bottle Shop & Micro Pub'** on Melbourne Street in Stalybridge.

We wish Dave all the best for his retirement and Glenn continuing success with the bar.

Steelfish on the Move

Steelfish Brewing will be on the move this spring. While they have some of their own items of brewing kit, they currently share premises with Courier Brewing, with most of the output produced on the Courier kit.



However, due to some restructuring and investment, Courier will be expanding operations at their site on Temperance Street in Ardwick. As a result they will no longer be able to accommodate Steelfish.

It's not the end of the road though, as Steelfish's Simon

Goodier and Ali Coombes (pictured above) are actively looking at relocation options. It's worth stressing, though, that until late March it's very much business as usual and their popular beers will continue to be available. When the relocation takes place, they will also be taking their current equipment with them.

Made of Stone Brewing

This has been based at the **Mounting Stone** pub in Bramhall since it started in 2018. For some time, it had been planned to move the brewery to a shipping container at Woodford Cricket Club, but due to a number of difficulties, this idea has now been abandoned.

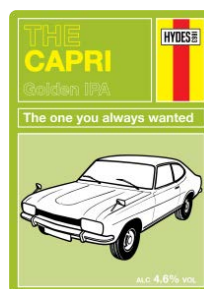
Instead, a new, smaller kit has recently been installed at the Mounting Stone which can only brew one cask or keg at a time. Owner Andrew O'Shea remains the same, however he now has someone helping him brew. At the same time, the brewery has now been renamed **Bramhall Beers**.

As a result of the reduced production, these beers will only be available at the Mounting Stone and will no longer feature in the sister pub, the **Chiverton Tap** in Cheadle Hulme.

It **may be** that a Bramhall Beers beer will appear at the Stockport Beer Festival in June; we shall see.

News from Hydes

Local family brewer **Hydes** always has an extensive programme of seasonal and special beers. March and April will see no fewer than three of them out.



Hopefully still available for Mild Magic will be a mild, produced under the heritage 'Anvil Brand'. This 3.4% beer is brewed with brown and best ale malts to give a "rich tasting brown mild ale." March will also see Sierra (4.5%) out in the Classic Car range. This is described as "a ruby red ale brewed exclusively with US Mosaic hops to give hints of blueberry, rose, stone fruit and papaya."

The third beer, out in April, is another Classic Car beer. Capri (4.6%) is "a golden coloured ale bursting with Mediterranean citrus fruit flavours which linger on the taste buds." Look out for all of them in local Hydes houses.

RedWillow Celebrates 15 Years



2025 marks a proud milestone for RedWillow Brewery – 15 years of crafting exceptional beer. Through triumphs and industry challenges, the brewery has maintained a commitment to quality and flavour.

The start of the year also coincided with the release of the 3,000th beer brewed.

Founded with a passion for outstanding cask ale, RedWillow quickly built a reputation for excellence. Over the years, the range has expanded to include award-winning ales, hop-forward modern styles, crisp lagers and innovative mixed fermentation beers.

To celebrate, classics like Ageless (a 7.2% West Coast IPA) and Soulless (a 6.5% black IPA) will be returning, along with some other favourites from the back catalogue, including a few Faithless beers from way back when.

In addition, there will be a series of special collaborations with breweries that have inspired RedWillow along their journey.

They will also be running two Lager and Sausage festivals at the Macclesfield bar this year – one in the spring on Sunday 25 May, and the second in the autumn on Saturday 20 September.

Here's to 15 years of brewing, and hopefully a few more to come!

Pictured above is the RedWillow team, with owners Caroline and Toby McKenzie second and third left.

Pub Walks with Chris Morris

Old Glossop

Full of old-world charm, with its core of picturesque stone buildings, Old Glossop has attracted many admirers. It's also home to four great pubs selling good cask beer, and is surrounded by spectacular scenery of the surrounding hills. This walk shows you how to get there, visit the pubs, and with the option of a pre-pub walk up to Cock Hill, offering stunning moorland views.

Public Transport Information

The walk starts from Glossop railway station, with services from Manchester Piccadilly running every half hour, Monday to Saturday, slightly reduced on Sunday. If you don't fancy the walk, the 390 bus (Monday to Saturday until 6pm) will take you to Old Glossop from outside the railway station.

The Walk

The urban walk to Old Glossop and back to the station is two miles. For the hill walk, add a further three miles and 250 metres (820 feet) of ascent. The hill climb is challenging with rocky terrain and will be muddy after wet weather, so hiking boots are recommended. All pubs welcome dogs.

Exiting the railway station to Norfolk Street opposite, we turn left, passing the **Star Inn** on our left. After a third of a mile, cross over and take a right along Hall Meadow Road. Bear right after 200 yards to join Church Street. After 150 yards we reach some cobbles at Church Close which marks the start of Old Glossop. Cross over Church Street here to the raised pavement opposite, passing a splendid row of terraced houses. Passing the **Bulls Head** and then the **Wheatsheaf** on our left, continue straight ahead down Well Gate, then bear left to walk up Hope Street, where we find **Distant Hills Brewing**. If the weather is poor, or you didn't fancy the hill climb, you could just pop in here, ignore the next paragraph and explore the pubs described below.

The hill walk was shown to me by my friend and walking enthusiast Paul Jackson, who also loves cask beer. It starts by walking further along Hope Street, passing the brewery on our left. We then bear left and walk up Charles Lane. At the top, continue straight ahead, up a large step, through a small wooden gate, and then follow the rough and rocky path beyond. After 300 yards we reach a stone wall across the path. Walk through the side gate and follow the path on the other side between two stone walls and along the course of a ditch. Some exposed rock surfaces will be slippery when wet, so take care here. After walking a half mile and passing through a couple of gates, the stone walls spread out with the ditch turning slightly to the left. Follow the path to the right of the ditch's stone wall, with Cock Hill directly ahead of us. At the end of the ditch, carry on straight ahead over the remains of a stone wall, then right, aiming towards a small wooden gate (one hinge is broken so please ensure this is closed afterwards). After 300 yards the path forks. Take the left one with a post now visible at the summit. Follow this path as it winds itself up to the trig point at the top. The return is merely a matter of retracing our steps back to the brewery.

Distant Hills Brewing is popular with both walkers and fans of their quality food. This modern taproom has been skilfully decorated with comfortable furnishings and soft lighting to give a welcoming space. The cask beers available when I last visited were Distant Hills Kerala, plus Unicorn and Citra Pale Ale from Robinsons. Further seating is available upstairs and in the large beer garden at the side.

Walk back down Hope Street then left along Wesley Street, passing a delightful stream on our right. At the end of the road, turn right to find our next pub, the **Queens Arms**. A comfortable interior awaits here with lots of bench seating, traditional pub furniture, an impressive wood

burner and a popular Indian restaurant upstairs. Cask beer is kept in great nick here, with their regular place in the *Good Beer Guide* well deserved. Available when I last popped in were Ossett White Rat, Holt's Bitter, Carlsberg Wainwright, Greene King Old Speckled Hen, and Robinsons Unicorn and Citra Pale Ale. Turning right outside the pub, we walk up Church Street South, passing yet more chocolate-box



houses, with the two pubs we passed earlier beckoning us in. It would be rude not to.

You'll find a warm welcome at the cosy **Wheatsheaf**, popular with all ages, featuring bench seating and subtle lighting. The two cask beers on offer were Robinsons Unicorn and Theakston Best Bitter when I was last in. A range of dog treats is available. As picturesque pubs go, the **Bulls Head** has the volume cranked high with the interior equally

as splendid as the exterior. Low ceilings, stone-flagged floors, wooden settles and log burners complete the charming country pub feel. The cask beer range doesn't disappoint either, with Oakham Citra, Thornbridge Brother Rabbit, Robinsons Unicorn and Wainwright available on last inspection. Food is popular here as well.

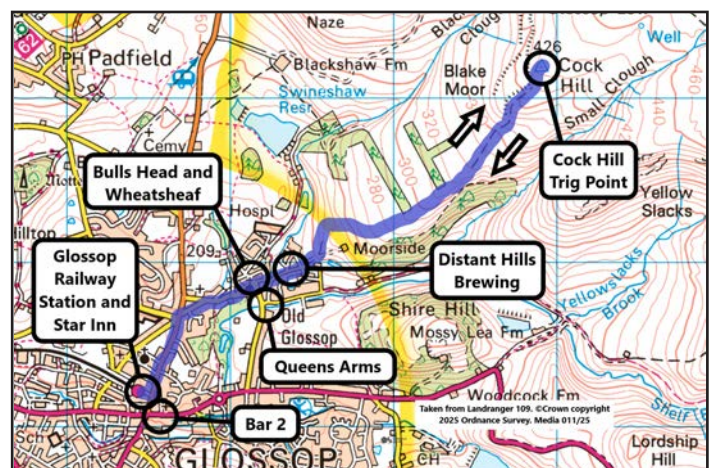


as splendid as the exterior. Low ceilings, stone-flagged floors, wooden settles and log burners complete the charming country pub feel. The cask beer range doesn't disappoint either, with Oakham Citra, Thornbridge Brother Rabbit, Robinsons Unicorn and Wainwright available on last inspection. Food is popular here as well.

Before getting the train home, the **Star Inn** next to the station is the town's longstanding champion of cask beer and also *Good Beer Guide*-listed. Abbeydale Renaissance, Beartown Lit, Pictish Doctor Rudi, and Rooster's London Thunder and Yorkshire's Best were available when I last dropped by.

For full pub details, including opening times, visit camra.org.uk/pubs.

For full pub details, including opening times, visit camra.org.uk/pubs.





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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.

Tuesday 11 March – Park Tavern, 158 Park Lane, Macclesfield, SK11 6UB. This is the branch AGM. Starts 8pm. (MEC)

Tuesday 11 March – Gas Lamp (back room), 50A Bridge Street, Manchester, M3 3BW. This will also include the branch AGM. Starts 6:30pm. (CMCR)

Thursday 13 March – Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Rd, East Didsbury, Manchester M20 5PG. Possible guest speaker. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 15 March – New Inn, 2-3 Market Place, Buxton, SK17 6EB. Starts 1pm. (HPNC)

Thursday 10 April – Runaway Brewery Tap, 9-11 Astley Street, Stockport, SK4 1WA. This will also include the branch AGM. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Social Events & Presentations

Wednesday 5 March – Weekday Wander: Rawtenstall: Meet 10:30am Manchester Shudehill Interchange, Stand E for 10:40 bus X43 WitchWay. First pub: Hop Micro Pub, 70 Bank Street, Rawtenstall BB4 8EG. (SSM)

Saturday 8 March – Ashton Crawl visiting pubs not listed in the *Good Beer Guide*. Starts 2pm at Ash Tree, 9-11 Wellington Road, OL6 6DA. (HPNC)

Sunday 9 March – Cider Pub of the Year presentation: Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. From 2pm. (SSM)

Friday 21 March – Cheadle Hulme Stagger: 7:30pm Kenilworth, Cheadle Road, SK8 5DX; 8:30pm Church Inn, 90 Ravenoak Road, SK8 7EG; final pub Chiverton Tap, 8 Mellor Road, SK8 5AU. (SSM)

Saturday 22 March – Pub of the Year presentation: Albert Hotel, 75 Buxton Road, Disley, SK12 2HA. From 3pm. (HPNC)

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

Saturday 29 March – Poynton Wander: 11:45am Kingfisher, London Road South, SK12 1NJ then 1pm Legion Club, Georges Road West, SK12 1JY; followed by others. (MEC)

Saturday 29 March – Branch social to Chorley. Catch 12:02 train from Manchester Piccadilly. (HPNC)

Tuesday 1 April – Weekday Wander: Compstall, Romiley & Bredbury: Meet 11:25am Stockport Interchange for 11:35 bus 384. First pub: Andrew Arms, George Street, Compstall, SK6 5JD 12:15pm. (SSM)

Friday 11 April – Start of Mild Magic. Check branch website for launch event. (SSM)

Thursday 17 April – Pub of the Month presentation: Sandbar, 120-122 Grosvenor Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock, M1 7HL. From 8pm. (SSM)

Thursday 24 April – Withington Stagger: 7:30pm Orion, 8 Burton Road, M20 3ED; 8:30pm Victoria, 438 Wilmslow Road, M20 3BW; final pub Red Lion, 532 Wilmslow Road, M20 4BT. (SSM)

Tuesday 30 April – Weekday Wander: Urmston: Meet 10:45am Stockport Rail Station for 10:54am train direct to Urmston. First pub: Tim Bobbins, 41 Flixton Road, Urmston M41 5AN at 11:30pm. (SSM)

CAMRA Awards

Recent Presentations



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for December was the **Blue Bell** on Barlow Road in Levenshulme. Sam Smith's have owned this impressive pub since 1948, and in 2005 it was shut for 11 months while a very extensive refurbishment took place.

Prior to its reopening very early the following year, Mark and Mary Dunn were appointed as licensees (Mark has worked for Sam Smith's for over 30 years). They have been at the pub ever since and it must be said what a fine job they have made of it. Not very long after their appointment came the excellent cask beer, Old Brewery Bitter.

What really makes the Blue Bell special though is the dedication of Mark and Mary, the fine beer and the pub's special position at the heart of the community. They are pictured above with their award.

The pub's commitment to local events and the local community has also seen it win a rarely presented Community Pub of the Year award from Stockport & South Manchester branch. See page 9 for more information.

The Pub of the Month for January was the **Chiverton Tap** on Mellor Road in Cheadle Hulme.

Mary and Bob Ellis (seen here with their Pub of the Month certificate), who opened the pub, together with Andrew O'Shea, who is now operating their sister pub the Mounting Stone in Bramhall, remain true to their original ethos. Back in 2022, they told *Opening Times*:

"Whilst we personally enjoy many craft beers from brewers all over the world, our mission has always been to promote and celebrate all that is great on the British craft ale scene, and to source the best from the best of small breweries all over the country.

"We will never get complacent, because there are so many ways this business presents challenges, and we will always want to rise to them. We do what we love, and we love what we do. It has to be love, otherwise it just wouldn't work."

That commitment remains true to this day – and hence this further recognition of the Chiverton Tap with the branch's first Pub of the Month award for 2025. The quality and choice of beers is still second to none. Six cask beers, with Bollington Best and Long Hop the regulars, complemented by four ever-changing guests, are accompanied by a range of changing kegs, often from local brewers.



UNICORN BREWING | 25



NEW FOR 2025



AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY AT ROBINSONS PUBS
THROUGHOUT 2025