

OPENING TIMES

JULY/AUGUST 2025

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About Opening Times & Contacts

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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

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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 X accounts you can follow:

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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

Good times at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Photo by Rebecca Cowtan.


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Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Copy date for the September/October issue is Sunday 3 August

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The Petersgate Tap



Winner, Stockport Pub of the Year, 2023

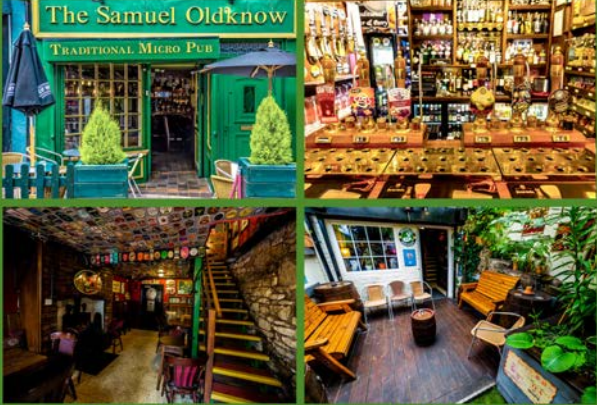
Winner Stockport Cider Pub of the Year
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Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for July and August



The Pub of the Month for July is the Bakers Vaults on Stockport Market Place. Lawrence Devaney explains why it's won.

The **Bakers Vaults** is notable for several reasons. It's a listed building on the National Heritage list, described as a "late 19th-century public house of two storeys, built in brick with a hipped roof that overhangs on a modillion bracket cornice with a string course below. The building has three windows, with segmental arches and stucco-shaped heads on two of them, and a centre window with a stucco surround and a moulded apron on brackets. The ground floor features two round-headed doorways and a two-light round-headed window in a round-headed reveal with an ornamental laurel wreath motif, along with an ornamental iron guard on the window. The building is included primarily as part of a group." Although the pub is listed as late 19th century, it's clear from the cellars (pictured here) that there must have been an earlier inn on the site. It is also one of Robinsons' 'Beer Shrines', so offers guest beers outside the Robinsons range.



The Bakers is a pub that packs a lot in. Luke Morgan continues to offer a good range of Robinsons ales, along with three to four guest beers. Fans of Titanic Plum Porter are regularly treated to this popular tippie. Cider drinkers are well catered for, as are gin lovers. The pub boasts a 19th-century gin store in one of its lower cellars, which is well worth a visit when open days are arranged. Live music on Sunday afternoons is a popular attraction, with bands playing on what must be one of the most miniature stages in the UK. The live bands cover a wide range of music styles, and a popular music quiz rounds off the entertainment events.

As hospitality reopened after Covid, the beer garden at the front of the pub was expanded and has become so popular that it's stayed that way and never reverted to just a couple of tables. Although there's a lot of competition for customers in the Market Place, the Bakers stands out as one of the most popular, especially on Foodie Fridays. It's this dedication to providing a great pub atmosphere, combined with consistent ale quality, that has been recognised by Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA. We have awarded the Bakers, Luke Morgan and the team with Pub of the Month for July 2025. Join us on 24 July from 8pm for the presentation.



August's Pub of the Month is the Midland, on Wellington Road North, Stockport. Phil Rowbotham is a regular visitor.

The **Midland** is something of a survivor. Back in 2016, Stockport Council had plans to demolish the pub as part of a road scheme. It was to be replaced by landscaping and a cycle path. However, CAMRA, Stockport Heritage and owner Mark Hayter (pictured below) had other ideas. A vigorous campaign saw the pub reprieved, and it continues to this day as a well-run community local, with a large clientele of loyal regulars.

The pub dates back to 1833, having been built in the reign of William IV (and in fact pre-dates Stockport's famous viaduct), but it was remodelled in the late 19th century, and still boasts some impressive art nouveau tilework from that time. It's been altered quite a lot since then, and Mark continues to invest in the building.



The 'No Riff Raff' sign in the window tells you this is a well-run pub, and also hints at Mark's dry sense of humour. Don't let that put you off, as this is a welcoming pub used by various local groups, including the Love Heaton Norris Community Group. There are also folk nights, and two darts teams play out of the pub.

Up to four cask beers are sold, although earlier in the week there may be fewer, which sensibly ensures the turnover is there to maintain quality, which is invariably high. The range tends to comprise more traditional bitters, and beers from the Wincle brewery often feature, these being a rare but welcome sight locally. Draught Bass, which seems to be turning into something of a cult beer, makes an appearance from time to time – and is usually sold at a bargain £3 a pint! Indeed, Mark's prices are always very reasonable. Food is restricted to bar snacks such as crisps and nuts.

Join us on the evening of Thursday, 21 August when we present Mark with this very well-deserved award. The pub is on the main A6, and buses 192, 191 and 25 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.



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More Pubs of the Year

High Peak and Central Manchester Winners

Old Hall, Whitehough



The High Peak, Tameside and NE Cheshire CAMRA Pub of the Year 2025 is the **Old Hall Hotel** at Whitehough near Chinley, Derbyshire.

The Old Hall is run by Dan Capper and his partner Holly. We asked Dan to tell us a bit about this historic building:

"Whitehough Hall, which is attached to the Old Hall Inn, was my childhood family home. About 20 years ago, the Inn went bankrupt and our family took back control. I was loosely involved whilst pursuing my career in London.



"However, 15 years ago, I came back full time, extended the business to include Whitehough Hall as a restaurant, purchased the Paper Mill Inn (just across the road) where we expanded both our beer and casual food offer, and expanded the letting accommodation.

"The emphasis was all about craft, local, quality, community and above all else, the importance of great hospitality – the sort of hospitality that gives justice to all that a traditional country inn should stand for."

Beers are sourced from a variety of breweries, including local micros. The quality is consistently high, and the Old Hall is regularly in CAMRA's national *Good Beer Guide*. The pub is also known for its annual beer festival which, this year, runs from 19-21 September. This always features a huge range of beers, with an additional bar built in the pub and another in the large fixed tent in the garden. Don't miss it.

On receiving news of the award, Dan told *Opening Times*: "We couldn't be more thrilled and honoured to be named Pub of the Year; it means so much to be recognised by CAMRA, and great for the fantastic team we have to see the impact of their hard work and enthusiasm. Here's to another year where we have some exciting developments for you..."



The award was presented on May 31, when there was a large attendance by High Peak branch members. Pictured here, receiving the award from High Peak CAMRA chair Ben Zwierink (right), are front of house managers Holly and Annabel, with Dan Capper

looking on. Missing from the photo is cellar manager Barney Hannah, who has a big influence on the beer offering at the Old Hall.

The Old Hall is an easy 10-15 minute walk from Chinley station, so do visit if you can.

Central Manchester Winners



It's two years on the trot for the **City Arms**, on Kennedy Street in the City Centre, which has once again scooped the Central Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year award.

This traditional, compact two-room pub is just four years off its bicentenary. There are eight handpumps on the bar, and seven of these feature rotating guest beers. One of these is always vegan, and one is often a mild. There are two guest keg

lines, two bag-in-box ciders and ten whiskies, along with 150 gins. The pub has been a regular entry in the *Good Beer Guide* for many years.

Pictured above is Central Manchester branch chair Sean O'Mahoney (right) presenting the award to (from left) Caitlin O'Shea, Josh Schofield and Joe Holliean.

The Central Manchester Cider Pub of the Year 2025 is newcomer, **Fell Northern Quarter**, on the corner of Dale Street and Tariff Street in the City Centre.

Although the venue was recently acquired by Cumbria-based Fell Brewery, it has been transformed into a strong supporter of real cider and perry under the management of Denny Rogers.



Denny, who previously worked at Fierce Bar NQ, has been a great supporter of CAMRA's aims over the years, including hosting Manchester Cider Club, which was initiated with the help of Central Manchester CAMRA. Fell Northern Quarter offers a brilliant selection of cider and perry, from traditional bag-in-box options through to an extensive range of bottles, making it a fantastic venue for cider lovers.

Sean O'Mahoney is pictured above presenting Denny with the award.

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Stockport Beer & Cider Festival 2025

Review, News & Winners



With a heatwave forecast, there was some concern that this might put off people from coming along to this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Luckily, that didn't happen and attendance was slightly up



on the 2024 event, with almost 3,000 people coming through the doors of Stockport's Masonic Guildhall. Mind you, many then made a bee line for the extensive outdoor seating area, which was packed at every session. Among our visitors, we were delighted to welcome Stockport's mayor, Councillor Kerry Waters, along with the mayoress Wendy Nadin (both pictured left).



Fortunately, the cask and cider cooling systems worked a treat, with the cider and perry bar having a particularly good year. This year we had over 160 different cask and keykeg beers on offer from 66

different brewers, including some very well-regarded beers from the T.E.A. Time brewpub in Krakow, which really went down a treat. The fridge-chilled bottled and canned beers were, unsurprisingly, pretty much cleared out.

All of the festival t-shirts sold out, as did almost all of the special glasses. The games stall proved extremely popular, and had to stock up with additional prizes! No fewer than 40 new members were signed up to CAMRA, too.

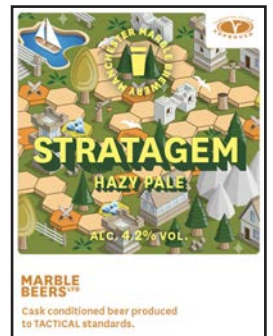
Festival organiser Jim Flynn told *Opening Times*: "We were extremely pleased that attendance at the Festival increased, with lots of regular visitors and also plenty of festival newcomers, too. I would really

like to thank everybody who supported us this year and of course our CAMRA volunteers and partners, and the team at the Guildhall, without whom there would be no Festival."

Beers of the Festival

One of the 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. Two of the winners came from the festival's homebrew competition.

The bronze award went to **Stratagem**, a 4.2% hazy pale brewed by Manchester's **Marble Beers** along with Sheffield-based homebrewer Joe Lee, who won the Bitter, Pale Ale & Session IPA category. This hazy pale beer, loaded with Citra, Mosaic and Strata hops, is exceptionally drinkable.

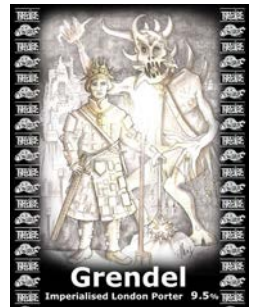


The silver award went to **Bridgehouse Brewery**, based in Keighley, West Yorkshire, for their **Rum & Raisin Stout** (4.9%). Infused with rum, this stout has a chewy malt backbone and a rum and raisin flavour.



And, finally, we come to the Beer of the Festival. This year the award goes to New Mills and **Torrside Brewing** who produced **Grendel** (9.5%) with another Sheffield-based homebrewer, Jon Britton. Jon's winning beer in the Stout & Porter category of the homebrew

competition was Beowulf, a historic-style London Porter (4.8%), which itself was a great beer, and, as usual, Torrside also treated us to an imperial version. This beer is dark, rich and intense.



As we went to press, plans were in hand to present this award at the Torrside Tap on Saturday 30 August, which also happens to be the brewery's tenth birthday.

Congratulations to all the winners – and look out for details of the other presentations in due course.

The winner of the draw from the beer, cider and perry of the festival voting forms was Lisa Wright, from Shaw Heath, Stockport. Lisa wins a case of beer. Congratulations!

Festival photographs by Sarah Devaney and Rebecca Cowtan. See also page 13.

The beer festival coverage is kindly sponsored by Bloomsbury Leisure. Be sure to visit their three bars in Manchester City Centre.





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Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

Sandbar Withington

Sandbar, the long-established bar on Grosvenor Street in Chorlton-on-Medlock, now has a companion on Wilmslow Road in Withington.



Sandbar Withington opened on 23 May and occupies the old bank premises that were previously the home of first Libertine, and then Almost Famous. Both of these ventures closed in fairly short order, so hopefully it will be third time lucky.



Although we understand it's something of a work in progress, the interior is, currently, largely no different from the previous incarnations. The bar counter, dominated by mirrors above, faces you on entry; to the left is a big, cavernous room with large windows, distressed walls and a large glitter ball; to the right is another large

space, which may be used for community events, and a pizza oven (pizzas are available every day from midday).

Arguably, there are too many hard surfaces, so it can easily get very noisy, and those walls are crying out for huge pieces of artwork to break up the empty spaces. Having said that, it's a welcome addition to the area and, hopefully, will succeed where its predecessors didn't. On the beer front, there are six cask beers on the bar – three guests and three mirroring the Sandbar range of Blackjack Manchester Stout, Facer's Clwyd Gold and Phoenix Arizona. One of the guests, and several of the keg beers, are from Manchester's Courier Brewing. Sandbar Withington is open every day from 12 noon until 11pm.

Dolphin, Macclesfield

In the May/June copy of *Opening Times* we reported that the **Dolphin** on Windmill Street in Macclesfield was going to be 'mothballed'. Well, it didn't stay that way for long! There is a new licensee, Angela Hogg, who is a refugee from the banking industry, and she's running her first pub, within Robinsons' operator partnership.



She is enthusiastic, but wants the pub to be sensitive to the needs of the local community. The only changes are that the pool table has returned in the back room and there is now a jukebox, but it is not loud. Presently, there is Robinsons Unicorn and Dizzy Blonde on the bar, but this may change.

The Armoury, Shaw Heath



Despite being largely hidden behind the fencing that has been erected outside while the Greek Street railway bridge and roundabout are replaced, the **Armoury**, on Shaw Heath, Stockport, is very much open for business.



It's obviously something of a challenge for new-ish licensees Pete Johnson (pictured left) and Holly Scotts, who took over in October last year, but, undeterred, they are soldiering on. Luckily, although the Armoury is their first pub, they both have a decade's worth of experience in the licensed trade to call on. They took on the Armoury because they know the area (they are both from Offerton),

were familiar with the pub and wanted to be their own bosses.

The pub was drastically refurbished by Robinsons a few years ago, when most of its heritage features were sacrificed (some of the old Bell's Brewery internal glasswork remains) but it does now seem to have bedded in. The work on the upstairs meeting/function room is almost complete, and that will host the new darts team. Other activities in the pub include quiz nights and acoustic sessions that alternate on Wednesdays.

Food is available from 12 noon until 9pm, from Thursday to Sunday, and is catered by Argots, who specialise in street food, such as loaded fries, subs and crispy fried chicken, all of which have gone very well. On the beer front, you'll find Robinsons Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde, Trooper and the current Robinsons seasonal, which was the rather good AMO when *Opening Times* called.

The Armoury is open from 1:30 to 11pm Monday-Wednesday and 12noon to midnight Thursday-Sunday. Well worth a visit.

Pub News In Brief

There are, sadly, one or two closures to record. In Reddish, the **Thatched Tavern** closed down for good on 21 May. It hadn't sold cask beer for a long time, but nevertheless it had been a popular community local. Gorton has seen two more closures – the **Cotton Tree** on Cross Lane and the **Friendship** on Hyde Road have both served their final pints.

In Northenden, the **Crown** has reintroduced cask beer – Taylor's Boltmaker was on handpump when *Opening Times* called. On the downside, **Nook** on Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor has taken cask out – very much a retrograde step, we think.

Holt's are closing **P5** in Cheadle Hulme for a major refurbishment. We understand that, on reopening, it will be run by Almond Family Pubs, so a major food operation is in prospect there.

More News on Page 16

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Cider and Perry

News, Awards and Events

Festival Cider & Perry Bar



Over the years, one of the features of Stockport Beer & Cider Festival has been the cider and perry bar. Ours was one of the very first festivals to badge itself a 'Beer & Cider' festival, and the cider team always makes a point of balancing old favourites with newer or more obscure producers. A recent innovation has been the introduction of bottled ciders and perries, either for customers to drink by the glass or to take away – some of this year's selection are shown here.

The results of the cider and perry of the festival vote are always eagerly awaited. Due to a very limited supply of perry this year, the festival decided not to award a Perry of the Festival. There was, however, strong competition for the Cider of the Festival prize, which was won by **Llanblethian Orchards** for their **Hedge Kipper** cider.



Llanblethian Orchards is based near Cowbridge in the Vale of Glamorgan, where Alex Simmens has been making cider for around 20 years. This isn't Alex's first award from the festival. He won Cider of the Festival last year too, for **Pride of Llanblethian**, while in 2022 he was voted best newcomer. We only managed to present him with his 2024 award a few weeks

before the festival and he is seen here receiving the certificate from cider bar manager Charlotte Bulmer.

We plan to present the award for his 2025 win rather sooner than we managed for 2024. Look out for a report in a future issue.

Last year's Perry of the Festival was won by **Penallt Cider** near Monmouth with a **Butt Perry**. Al Stenner has been making cider and perry for decades, and also has an interesting backstory which includes spells in both the SAS and the Foreign Legion! His products can often be found at the **Boat Inn** at Penallt (which is highly recommended for a visit, by the way). He is seen here celebrating his award with the Boat Inn's Ewan O'Brien.



Top Awards for Petersgate Tap



As we have previously reported, Stockport's **Petersgate Tap** is the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Cider Pub of the year. It's a serial winner, in fact.

As it was the local CAMRA branch winner it went on to the Greater

Manchester Cider Pub of the Year competition and we are delighted to report that it won that as well. That makes it two years in a row that the pub has been the Greater Manchester champion. Once again the **Grocers Micropub** in Cadishead was a very worthy runner-up.

The Greater Manchester win then put the Petersgate Tap in the North West competition, up against the champion cider pubs from Lancashire, Cumbria and the Isle of Man. We are delighted to report that it has won that, too.

Petersgate Tap owners Alan and Chris Gent were delighted at the news. Alan told *Opening Times*: "To say we are surprised at these awards would be an understatement. However, we are massively pleased that our efforts promoting cider have been recognised. We continue to push ourselves (we have just collected our annual supply of cider from Greggs Pit) and hope we can go forward and win the National title, an award not only for the pub but for the Stockport branch whose support we value so highly".

As Alan indicates, the Tap is now in the final 16 of the national Cider Pub of the Year competition. We wish them well. The presentation of the Greater Manchester and North West awards hadn't been finalised as we went to press.

Beer Festival Charity Update

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

Kate told us: "This year's festival was incredible. Not only did we sell out of all our beer and raise over £4,700, but we also made some meaningful connections with people who may benefit from our support. It was a real honour to be the SBCF chosen charity for the second year running."



Woodford CC Beer Festival

Woodford Cricket Club will hold its annual Beer Festival over the August Bank Holiday Weekend from Friday 22 to Sunday 24 August. Entry is free and there will be real ales, cider, food and music on the agenda for all to enjoy, so put the dates in your diary and head on down to Woodford for a great weekend.

The festival opens at 6pm on 22 August and 12 noon on the other two days. Woodford Cricket Club is on Moor Lane, Woodford, SK7 1PW. Until the early evening it is served by the hourly 42B bus from Cheadle Hulme and Bramhall. This is always a great event – don't miss it.

Night Out in Withington

With Jim Flynn



It was a very pleasant spring evening when we met at the **Orion** at the start of our Withington Stagger which, over recent years, has become a leisurely pub crawl. The Orion on Burton Road is a no-nonsense street-corner Holt's pub with a busy comfortable lounge, where we sat, and a popular down-to-earth vault at the side. At the back is quite a pleasant garden which was very popular on the night. Inside, the pub was having a refurbishment and the corridor to the toilets was closed off (there were temporary toilets in the garden). The Holt's Bitter was enjoyed by all.

We cut through the shopping area and went down Wilmslow Road past the time warp (Dublin circa 1960) that is the **Albert**, which is keg but well worth a nosy, and on to the ever-marvellous **Victoria**.



This very busy, 19th century pub, with its period exterior and etched windows, has been a Hydes house for 120 years. Outside was a scene that exemplified the whole culture of the pub. The landlady, Alyson, was helping an elderly customer out of a taxi and into the pub where a seat had already been earmarked for him – amazing customer care! Inside, the pub has been opened out but nevertheless still gives you a feeling of separate rooms.

At the rear of the pub is an attractive outdoor beer patio. Along with the excellence of the beer, the prevailing feature of the pub is the friendliness the longstanding licensees, Alyson and Paul Mitchell, engender. The beers available on the night were Original, Lowry, Dark Ruby and two seasonals, Capri and Anvil Mild. We were all participating in Mild Magic, so the Dark Ruby and Anvil Mild were favourites, and these were very well received. In fact, the Dark Ruby was so good it was the beer of the night for us all, and for me one of the beers of 2025 to date!

Back down Wilmslow Road and on to Burton Road again (we know how to confuse you), to the **Withington Public Hall Institute**. Over 160 years old, for a very long time this was a private, men-only members' club which had the unfortunate nickname of 'The



Homewreckers' as it provided the men of the area with early and late drinking facilities in the days of restricted pub opening hours. It's now a social enterprise, with all profits reinvested in the building, which does need some attention, and for community initiatives. Downstairs is a popular small wood-panelled snug and a much larger room, which is used as a performance space/drinking area, where there was a band on but very few customers enjoying the music. There's a further room upstairs where we went, once we had purchased 'It's Dark and We're Wearing Sunglasses' from Silent Brew Co. in Buxton. This hazy beer is anything but dark and I would describe it as a Marmite beer: some people certainly liked it but although it was well kept it wasn't really for me. Worth a visit, but check the opening hours.



We crossed Wilmslow Road past Sam Smith's **Turnpike**, long closed but interestingly, still advertising for a manager in the window; come on Humphrey Smith, get this sorted! So, to our next and final stop, JW Lees' **Red Lion**. The oldest pub in Withington (Grade II listed), this 17th century inn has a long, low whitewashed exterior. Inside, the original structure at the front of the building is a low-ceilinged area but, as you progress back through the building, it opens up into a larger bar with a more mainstream feel that leads off into a conservatory, which was very popular on the night. The garden was a former bowling green which now consists of an extensive and most welcome outdoor seating area – sad, though, to see a loss of the community asset. Lees bought the pub from Marston's and refurbished it, stripping out all the televisions, with the aim of moving it upmarket. On previous visits there were several beers available, but tonight it was Lees Bitter and Manchester Pale Ale, which were both considered on good form. A good end to the night.

Overall, an excellent stagger of contrasts, with good to outstanding beer, which is relatively easily accessible by public transport and very well worth a go.

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.

Hungry in a Pub That Doesn't Serve Food

The barman with gammon cheeks and cauliflower cheese hair is pouring a porter like gravy.

It's raining peanuts outside. The door mat on the way in is a thick pork scratching. There's a labradoodle in the corner with Pot Noodle fur.

Have you ever noticed how the row of booths on the back wall are a rack of BBQ ribs? How the coasters are dauphinoise potatoes? How the floorboards are rolled out strips of yet to be cooked puff pastry?

The aftershave on the neck of the regular to my left is an open bag of Scampi Fries.

The snores of the baby in her mum's arms are the grunts of an almost empty ketchup bottle.

The dandruff on the toddler's shoulders playing Jenga are sausage roll crumbs.

Have you ever noticed how beer barrels look like steak and ale suet puddings? How a beer pump is a chicken goujon? How pub windows are the soon to be white of a ready to be fried egg?

A bloke at the bar is talking about the weather. He reckons tomorrow will be dry with zero percent chance of grain. Saturday is set to be sunny side down. Sunday will be roasting (beef or lamb).

The hatch to the basement just opened like a jar of spiced tomato chutney. The landlord climbs inside like a teaspoon. My chair is a cheese and onion pie. And I think it's time for me to leave.

Stockport's Lost Pubs with Dave Stearn

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



Our first pub is the **Kossuth Inn**, Hindley Street off Hillgate, a large Robinsons house on a street corner. It dated back to 1855 and was named after Louis Kossuth, a leader in the campaign to gain Hungarian independence from Austria, and who famously visited Manchester in the 1850s to muster support for his campaign. The inn,

which was situated in an area of town where public meetings were regularly held by reformers, was named in his honour. Originally, it was a Bell's Hempshaw Brook Brewery house but it passed to Robinsons when they acquired the business and the tied estate in 1949. It closed in 1974 and was demolished.



Also under the letter 'K' we have two lost pubs called the **King's Arms**, although both still stand. One was on the corner of King Street East and Warren Street and dates to around 1830. In addition to being a public house, it was a police station used by the 'Peelers' until 1841, when a new police station was built in Vernon

Street. The area was originally known as Andrew Square, named after a warehouse owned by William Andrew. After the warehouse was demolished, before the Asda supermarket development in the 1980s, it was an open square with a bus shelter and car parking. The pub, which was a Boddingtons house, closed in 1990 and is now commercial premises, with part of it used as a taxi office.



The other **King's Arms**, on Bridge Street Brow, dates to 1824 but it is believed to have succeeded the Greyhound pub from the early 1800s. In the 1840s the pub, nicknamed 'The Hole in the Wall', was run by the Baker family, latterly of the Bakers Vaults, who owned much of the property on that left hand side of the Brow heading up towards

Market Place. The King's Arms had its own brew house around that time, but brewing on the site tailed off in the late 1840s, and concluded in 1850 when the pub was taken over by George Foster, who had his own brewery elsewhere. In 1975, the building was given Grade II listing. It eventually became a wine bar, and most recently a furniture shop, but the premises is currently empty.

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.

News Extra

Plus Mild Magic Update

Mild Magic Records Broken

For the third year running, Mild Magic managed to break all previous records.

No fewer than 260 entries were received, 22 per cent up on last year's 203. For the record there were 153 entries in 2023 and just 107 in 2022. Despite there being 102 pubs taking part, the most ever, four hardy souls managed to do the lot! We also calculate that this year's Mild Magic also broke the 5,000 barrier for pub visits – in fact, we think there were in excess of 5,500.



As ever, we asked those taking part to vote for their favourite mild and also their top mild pub.

The Champion Mild was **Blackjack Dark Ruby Mild** (5.2%), which just beat last year's winner, the iconic Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby. Bollington Brewery's Bollington Nights (3.9%) was a close third, too. It's also worth recording that the number of milds spotted during this year's Mild Magic was another record, with an impressive 88 recorded.

The Champion Mild Pub went to top cask ale pub – the **Magnet** on Wellington Road North, Stockport. This just beat last year's winner, the Castle in Macclesfield and, in a close third place, Ye Olde Vic in Edgeley.

We will be arranging for the presentations to both winners later this year. And now for Mild Magic 2026!

Saints Club, Stockport

Stockport's latest opening is **Saints Club** on St Petersgate in the town centre. It's directly opposite the Vernon Building Society, and close to the Petersgate Tap, which it should complement well.



It's a project by Dave Thorley, who used to be a partner in Bury's Broad Street Social, which is the tap for Brewsmith Brewery. When he moved from Bury to Holmes Chapel, Dave looked at various possible locations for his own bar, and the local buzz in Stockport was something that appealed to him.



The premises used to be a charity shop – and very good use has been made of the fairly limited space, resulting in a very welcoming bar with a cosy and intimate feel. There's also a small outside area set back from the street.

There are three cask beers, one of which will usually be from Brewsmith. In addition, there are 16 keg taps – two for Hogan's cider and one for Ayinger Helles lager. Of the rest, two will usually be for imperial stouts, and two for sour beers, with the remainder for IPAs and the like.

Saints Club is open from 3-11pm on Wednesday and Thursday; 3pm to midnight on Friday; 1pm to midnight on Saturday and 2-10pm on Sunday.

Coley's Brewery

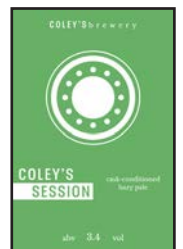


Seemingly coming from nowhere, **Coley's Brewery** was suddenly popping up all over social media. So, *Opening Times* caught up with owner and head brewer Lee Coates to find out a bit more.

Although Coley's was launched at the start of May, Lee has been involved in the brewing industry for 11 years or more. Indeed, he has quite a pedigree. Starting at the much-missed Tickety Brew in 2014, he progressed via Blackjack, Beatnikz Republic and Manchester Union to Green Arches, which he co-founded.

However, Lee always wanted to work for himself and so Coley's was born. He brews his beers at Salford's Hideaway Brewing, which works well for both parties – Hideaway makes no cask, whereas Coley's is entirely cask-focussed. Lee has therefore bought his own cask washer and second-hand casks, and also uses two out of Hideaway's four fermenting vessels. So, it's a bit more than the usual cuckoo brewery arrangement.

Coley's has produced half a dozen beers so far (just one brew of each at the time of our chat) and feedback has been very positive. Lee reckons the core range is settled (subject to one or two tweaks), and further, perhaps more experimental, beers will come from a series of collaborations. He has already brewed one with Rivington, and the next one will be with Poynton's Neighbourhood Brew Co (this will be a pale ale using Nelson Sauvign hops).



We also asked Lee about the logo – turns out it's the end-on view of a handpump sparkler!

Anyone wanting to buy any of Coley's beer can contact Lee at lee@coleysbrewery.com.

Underbank, Stockport



Another addition to the burgeoning Underbank area opened its doors recently. Situated on the corner of Great Underbank, facing the White Lion, and appropriately called **Underbank**, it's run by the people who also have **Nook** in Heaton Moor. It's styled as a

'beer hall and sound system'.

The bar is (or will be) on several levels but, on opening night, only the ground floor was open. For a 'beer hall' the beer range is a bit limited. There's no cask, but of interest are keg beers from Runaway and Pomona Island, along with an Erdinger Weissbier, while the rest of the range is fairly standard.

There's a good range of seating options and quite an extensive outside space. There's an interesting food offer, too, courtesy of Indian street food specialist Vaso Kitchen. Worth a look.

Pub Walks with Chris Morris

Hayfield to New Mills (via Thornsett Brewery)

Sett Valley

The Sett Valley Trail is a scenic nature path that runs along the track bed of the former railway line between Hayfield and New Mills. The journey used to take 10 minutes by train before the line was closed in 1970. This walk will take considerably longer, but a slower pace reaps the rewards of admiring the beauty of the local flora and fauna, the surrounding hills and quality cask beers from the local pubs. These pubs are at the start and finish, with an optional mid-walk pub stop on Saturdays – which is a must visit for the beer-loving hiker.

Public Transport Information

This walk starts at Hayfield, which is easily reached by the hourly 358 bus from Stockport. Other services include the 60 and 61. At the walk finish in New Mills, the 358, 60 and 61 services are complemented with train services at New Mills Central.

The Walk

This four-mile linear walk has over 100 metres (340 feet) of ascent and the paths are generally good. If walking on a Saturday, there is the option of a further two miles to **Thornsett Brewery & Hop Yard**. All pubs are dog-friendly.



When exiting the bus at Hayfield Bus Station, a useful pre-walk drink can be found at the **Kinder Lodge**. It's located back on the main road that the bus came along and turning left. Although small in size, this popular local is big on character, with low ceilings, exposed timbers

and a wood-burning stove completing the rustic feel. It deserves its *Good Beer Guide* listing, with up to four cask beers at the heart of operations, often from local breweries. These were from Stancil, Thornbridge and Peak Ales on my last visit.

Starting the walk from the bus station, with the church clockface behind us, walk along the car park road and past a sign for the Sett Valley Trail. Continue straight ahead along the trail for one mile. When you reach a road, ignore the gate ahead and follow the path around to the right. Shortly after, the path turns left and crosses the road. Continue along the trail for half a mile, until we reach the cream-coloured Wildes Crossings Cottage.



For the optional walk to **Thornsett Brewery**, take a right here and walk down the cobbled lane. Passing a warehouse on the left, we carry on straight ahead and up the other side with a stone wall on our right. On reaching a road, we now turn left and walk along the pavement. After the second road junction at the Old School

House, we take the road to the right. This then bears right shortly afterwards, passing a school with superb views of the nearby hills. Following the road for half a mile, we turn left at the junction and then immediately right to enter through a gate to the brewery bar on the right.

With numerous footpaths criss-crossing close by, the Thornsett Brewery Bar is a hikers' paradise, with quality beers waiting to be drunk, straight off the trail. A large wooden outbuilding houses the bar and indoor seating. When it's dry, though, it's best to sit on one of the many seats outside, where outstanding views of the nearby countryside can be enjoyed fully. On last inspection, the four Thornsett beers were Strong Ale, Best Bitter, Stout and Ruby Red Ale. Big Stone Beer's Downfall, from nearby Chinley, was the other cask beer. The bar opens on Saturdays all year round, but best check their Facebook page beforehand.

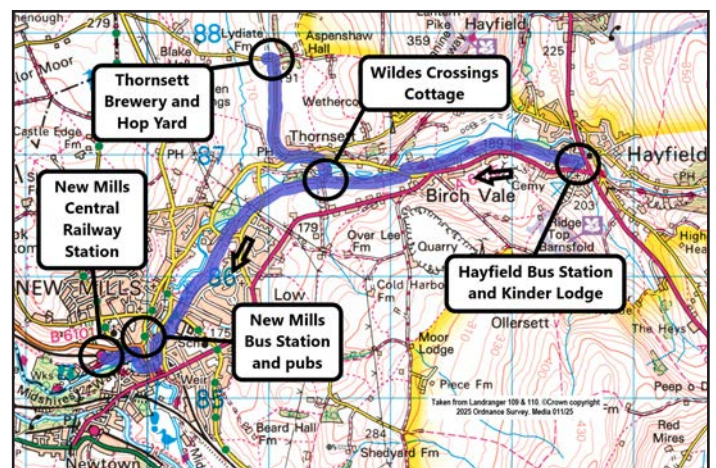
Retracing our steps back to Wildes Crossings Cottage, we carry on along the Sett Valley Trail as before in the direction of New Mills for one mile, crossing over two roads in the process. After the path snakes about, turn left and climb the steps, then straight across the road to the trail beyond. Walk under the arched bridge, with the closed tunnel beyond. Take a left now and walk down the steps to enter The Torrs Riverside Park – time to get your cameras out. Passing under the viaduct, cross over the water at Torr Top Bridge, then keep right to cross back over the river again. Bear right and walk under the high viaduct, keeping the water on our left along the main path. After crossing over the spectacular Millennium Walkway, take the first right to climb up to the road. Ahead of us is New Mills Central Station. Turning right takes us to the bus station, but let's not forget about those beers you've been looking forward to.



The **Beer Shed** is a must-visit for beer enthusiasts, with a fine selection of cask and quality keg on offer. As a result, it is often busy, with a great atmosphere further enhanced by the cosiness of the narrow space available. More seating can be found downstairs. On last inspection the cask beers were from Thornbridge, Big Trip and Alter Ego Brewing. When Beer Shed is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, another recommended pub is the nearby **Royal Oak**, which opens all week. This wet-leted Robinsons local was given a recent refurbishment and provides plenty of

space with a number of comfortable seating arrangements. The three cask beers were Robinsons Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde and Trooper when I last visited. If food is required, I would recommend the nearby **Pride of the Peaks**, which had a single cask of Timothy Taylor's Boltmaker when I last dropped by. There's a good chippy opposite, too.

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.

Thursday 14 August – Magnet, 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. This short meeting will be followed by presentation (see below). Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Social Events & Presentations

Friday 18 July – Reddish Stagger: 7:30pm Grey Horse, 50 Broadstone Road, SK5 7AS; 8:30pm Union, 93 Broadstone Road, SK5 7AS; final pub Navigation, 1 Manchester Road, Heaton Norris, SK4 1TY. (SSM)

Saturday 19 July – Pub of the Season presentation: Jack's Bar, 3 Hamnett Street, Hyde, SK14 2EX. From 2pm. (HPNC)

Thursday 24 July – Pub of the Month presentation: Bakers Vaults, Market Place, Stockport, SK1 1ES. From 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 26 July – Social trip to Kendal. Catch 11:21 train from Piccadilly. (HPNC)

Saturday 26 July – Pub of the Year presentation: Throstles Nest, 11 Buxton Road, Buglawton, Congleton, CW12 2DW. From 1pm. (MEC)

Sunday 27 July – Most Improved Pub of the Year Presentation: Railway, 3 Lapwing Lane, West Didsbury, M20 2NT. From 4pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 30 July – Deansgate Social. From 6:25pm. Further details TBC. (CMCR)

Thursday 31 July – Community Pub of the Year presentation: Blue Bell, 170 Barlow Road, Levenshulme, M19 3HF. From 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 2 August – Bredbury, Romiley and Marple Bridge Ale Trail. Starts 1pm. Further details on branch website. (HPNC)

Tuesday 5 August: Weekday Wander: Hadfield and environs. Meet at 10:50am in Manchester Piccadilly Station by ticket barrier opposite platform 2 ready for the 11:01am train to Glossop. First pub: Smithy Fold, Victoria Street, Glossop SK13 8HS then a bus 393 mystery tour around Hadfield. (SSM)

Thursday 14 August – Magnet, 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. Presentation of both the 2025 Pub of the Year Runner-up award and the Mild Magic Champion Mild Pub award. From 9pm. (SSM)

Thursday 21 August – Pub of the Month presentation: Midland, 19 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. From 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 23 August – Social at Blackjack Brewery Tap, Irk Street, Manchester, M4 4JT. Details TBC. (CMCR)

Friday 29 August – Burnage Stagger: 7:30pm Beer Shop, 13 Kingsleigh Road, SK4 3QF; 8:30 Sun in September, 588 Burnage Lane, M19 1NA; final pub Parrswood, 356 Parrs Wood Road, M20 6JD. (SSM)

Saturday 30 August – Beer of the Festival presentation: Torrside Brewing, The Wharf Warehouse, Hibbert Street, New Mills, SK22 3JJ. From 12 noon (presentation around 1pm). (SSM)

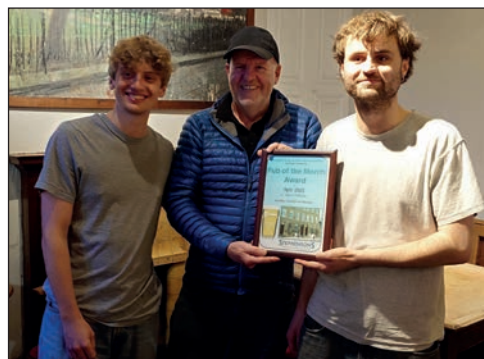
Saturday 30 August – Social at Poynton Beer Festival, Poynton Sports Club, London Road North, SK12 1AG. From 12 noon. (MEC)

Saturday 3 September – Weekday Wander: Visiting Sally in her Alley. Meet at 11:10am in Manchester Victoria Station by ticket line under departure board ready for 11:21 train to Rochdale. First pub: Flying Horse Hotel, 37 Packer Street, Rochdale OL16 1NJ. (SSM)

CAMRA Awards

Recent Presentations

The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month Award for April was **Sandbar** on Grosvenor Street in Chorlton-on-Medlock. Opened in 1996, Sandbar was one of the first modern bars in Manchester – and certainly



the first in the heart of the University area. It started importing bottled beers from Europe when no one else did, but 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. Pictured above presenting the award to two of the Sandbar team is CAMRA's Jack Lyons (centre).

The May Pub of the Month was the **Grey Horse**, on Broadstone Road in Reddish. This popular Holt's pub is overseen by licensee Helen Partington, who has been in charge for almost five years. During this time, she has worked hard to make the Grey Horse a real centre of the community. A walking club has recently been set up, and over Easter there was a Community Weekend including crafts for children and, on Easter Monday, a performance by Stockport Youth Music Project. Helen is pictured above (centre) with her award, along with bar team members Freya Booth (left) and Jess Hopwood (right).



It was a full house at **Ladybarn Social Club** on Friday 6 June when Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA presented its Club of the Year 2025 award.



Given the dearth of pubs in the area, the club really acts as a proper community local, and has had a great deal of investment in recent years. It now features four cask beers, with a great focus on local breweries. The quality of the beer is second to none – all down to the efforts of club secretary and beer fan Phil Cowtan. Phil is pictured with the certificate along with members of the Ladybarn team, including daughter Rebecca (left).

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NEW FOR 2025



AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY AT ROBINSONS PUBS
THROUGHOUT 2025