

OPENING TIMES

JULY / AUGUST 2026

FREE



**INSIDE: STOCKPORT BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL
REVIEW / MORE CAMRA AWARDS /
GOOD BEER GUIDE BELGIUM /
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About Opening Times & Contacts

Opening Times is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Additional material is supplied by the High Peak, Tameside & Goyt Valley Branch, Central Manchester Branch and the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch.

It is printed by Paper Red Media and distributed throughout Stockport, Tameside, South Manchester and East Manchester. There are also numerous outlets in Macclesfield & East Cheshire, Manchester City Centre, High Peak and Glossop. Online copies are available at: ssm.camra.org.uk/magazine

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Subscriptions

Available at £12.00 for one year (make cheques payable to Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA). Apply to Lawrence Devaney, 2 Kingsway, Bramhall, Stockport, SK7 3BG.

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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: camra.org.uk/pubs

Front Cover

Robinsons joint managing director Oliver Robinson pulls a pint of Unicorn, which celebrates its 130th birthday this year, at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Photo by Becca Cowtan.

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

Welcome

Thanks to everyone who supported this year's Mild Magic. It was always going to be hard to beat last year's record number of entries but we did it – albeit by a very narrow margin. No fewer than 257 entries were received, and we estimate these would have generated in excess of 5,000 pub visits. So, thanks again. Thanks also to all those pubs who took part and Hydes brewery for sponsoring it all. There's more on page 14.

More thanks now – this time to those who came along to this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Attendance and sales were both up, and we welcomed 38 new members to CAMRA. There's more on page seven, including details of the Beer, Cider and Perry of the Festival winners. Thanks again to everyone who came along – the feedback from our customers was very positive indeed, which really does make all the hard work worthwhile. See you all again next June!

We aren't resting on our laurels, though, as planning will soon be under way for this year's Winter Warmer Wander which will launch in November. Also launching in November will be the Homebrew Competition for next year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival.

Finally, congratulations to two pubs in the *Opening Times* circulation area which have won regional CAMRA awards. In Marple Bridge, the Northumberland Arms is the North West regional Pub of the Year, while in central Stockport; the Petersgate Tap is the regional Cider champ. More about both is on page 11.

In what will be a busy weekend, the Northumberland Arms is due to be presented with its award on Saturday 25 July, while the Petersgate Tap gets its award the very next day. All are very welcome to both events, of course.

John Clarke, Editor

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Good Beer Guide, 2018, 2019,
2020 - 2025, 2026
Stockport Cider Pub of the Year
2018, 2019, 2020-2025, 2026

Originally a brewery in 1823
Runner up in CAMRA's National Heritage
Awards.
Winner, Stockport CAMRA's Most
Improved Pub 2025
What's On in Stockport Pub of the
Month, February 2026

Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for July and August



July's Pub of the Month is the Crown on Heaton Lane, just off Stockport town centre. Neil Martin tells you all about it.

The **Crown** on Heaton Lane has had something of a mixed history. Originally a brewery, it was the branch Pub of the Year in 2008, but that was followed by a period of decline culminating in several closures and reopenings: when I first came to Stockport it was clearly a pub limping and on the way down.

Salvation arrived in the form of Alan, Chris and Amy from the Petersgate Tap, who reopened the Crown in August 2025: I caught up with Chris to talk about where the pub is going. The first thing he emphasised to me was taking the atmosphere back to what it was ten years ago and how important a sympathetic refurbishment has been for that: the refurb has been so in keeping that the pub was the runner-up in CAMRA's National Heritage Pub Awards last year. The team also picked up the Stockport & South Manchester Most Improved Pub of the Year award.



The pub has a good rotating choice of beers (Bass is always on and has developed a bit of a cult following) and their own branded snacks, which have been a huge hit. The bar area can get a bit packed but has an extra space on the right-hand side up a step, and there

are three other rooms, named for colours, all complete with comfy leather seating. I'm a fan of the largest room directly behind the bar (pictured here) but the two smaller snugs are also popular and are especially good for groups.

There is a large outside area at the rear of the pub, which is a real sun trap despite being under the viaduct. This features a marquee that will be up for the rest of the summer, with live music managed by Amy every Friday and Saturday, and there are plans to get the outside bar in use by midsummer. The team are looking at food in the near future. During our conversation, it was obvious how grateful the team are for the support they've had in Stockport and further afield, especially from former regulars who have returned. This level of support should ensure that the Crown doesn't face the same problems that plagued it before.

We will be presenting our Pub of the Month award from 8pm on Thursday 23 July. The Crown is just a short walk from the Mersey Square bus stops and Stockport Interchange, so getting there is easy.



August's Pub of the Month is the Grapes on London Road in Hazel Grove. Dave Pennington has been along.

The **Grapes** is a traditional, community pub and one of the most distinctive and oldest pubs in the heart of Hazel Grove, with its prime location on the A6. It has a warm, welcoming feel and atmosphere, and it attracts customers who enjoy either a quiet relaxing drink or those involved in local sports teams.

A wet-led Robinsons pub, the Grapes' cask ale offerings are the two Robinsons mainstays Unicorn and Dizzy Blonde.

Recently, the Grapes was awarded a 2025 'Best In Glass' Beer Quality award Robinsons, which is testimony to the quality of its cask beer. The Grapes is one of only twelve pubs in the Robinsons estate to be given this prestigious award, which is given to pubs achieving scores based on an unannounced cellar audit.



The pub had its interior redesigned and refurbished in 2020 – just before lockdown! The layout comprises a lounge area which is split into two distinct drinking areas – the bar situated to the left, and a snug with a welcoming fireplace to the right. The rear room is a dedicated and quite secluded, pool room. Furnishings vary from fixed seating, to high chairs and stools. To the rear is a large fenced-off patio with plenty of seating and well-tended floral baskets, and a car park.

The Grapes hosts karaoke and disco nights every Friday and Saturday.

So come along to meet Sue and her team on Thursday 27 August to celebrate the pub's success and join the regulars enjoying traditional beers. The full address is 196 London Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 4DQ. As it's on the A6, a 192 bus heading for the Park & Ride will drop you off close by, as will the 199 and the 374. Hazel Grove station is a five-minute walk away.

(Interior photo above courtesy of Robinsons)

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 (see advert on previous page).

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Stockport Beer & Cider Festival 2026 Review, News & Winners



While the weather was warm enough, we managed to avoid heatwave conditions at this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, and so people came along in large numbers to make this one of the most successful



festivals for some years. Almost 3,000 people came through the doors of Stockport's Masonic Guildhall. And many made a beeline for the extensive outdoor seating area, which was packed at every session. Among our visitors we were delighted to welcome along Stockport's mayor, Councillor Mark Hunter, along with the mayoress Rachel Hunter (both pictured left).



Beer and cider sales increased by over five per cent, and this year we had approximately 160 different cask and keykeg beers from around 70 breweries. These ranged from local family brewers Robinsons to well-regarded beers from the T.E.A. Time pub and brewery in Krakow, which came back for a second year running.



The fridge-chilled bottled and canned beers also sold extremely well, with many lines sold out.

Our enthusiastic customers bought most of the festival T-shirts and all of the souvenir glasses. Both the tombola and festival games stall were cleared out of prizes and had to restock. We also welcomed 38 new members to CAMRA.

Festival organiser Jim Flynn told *Opening Times*: "We were extremely pleased that attendance at the festival increased, with lots of regular visitors and plenty of newcomers – in particular, advance bookings were the highest ever, so the festival is obviously eagerly anticipated. "I would 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."

Beer of the Festival Awards

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 **Pennyless**, an 8.4% pastry barley wine from Macclesfield's **RedWillow Brewery**. We had two small casks of this superb beer and, despite only going on sale on the Saturday morning, it proved an immediate hit.



The silver award was won by **Project 192**, a 5.8% ESB with old ale leanings, brewed by **Cloudwater Brew Co** along with homebrewers Mike Cunliffe and Dan Leaman from Levenshulme Homebrew Club, who won the ESB, Strong Pale Ale & IPA category in the festival's homebrew competition.

And finally, we come to Beer of the Festival. For the second year running, the award goes to New Mills and **Torrside Brewing** who produced **Dark Corridors** (4.5%) with another homebrewer, Rob Walsh from the Chiverton Tap Brew Club. Rob's winning beer in the Stout & Porter category of the homebrew competition was based on a recipe used by London-based Truman's Brewery in 1812.



Cider and Perry Awards

The voting for Cider of the Festival produced a clear winner in **Dabinett & Yarlinton Mill**, a superb cider from Much Marcle-based **Gregg's Pit Cider & Perry**, who are no strangers to awards, from both our festival and many others. The voting for Perry of the Festival was much closer but Gregg's Pit did the double with **Blakeney Red**, **Brandy & Winnalls Longdon**, a wonderfully smooth and fruity perry.

In addition, we are making a special award to festival newcomer **Monkey Bridge Cider** of Riddings, near Ripley in Derbyshire. This very tiny producer supplied the festival with two superb perries, which it was thought deserved recognition.

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

Regional Stout Winner

Apart from the in-house awards, the festival also hosted the judging for CAMRA's Champion Stout & Porter of the North West, Merseyside & Cheshire, as part of the regional heats for the Champion Beer of Britain competition.

This was won by **Manchester Stout** (4.8%) from **Blackjack Brew Co**. A close runner-up was **The Mighty Stout** (4.8%) from Crewe-based **Tom's Tap and Brewhouse**.



The beer festival coverage in Opening Times is kindly sponsored by the Old Hall Inn at Whitehough, near Chinley. We can heartily recommend a visit to this excellent pub (an easy 15-minute walk from

Chinley station). Scan the QR code for details.

SEBASTIAN BENNETT
PHOTOGRAPHY

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Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

Golden Hind set for Relaunch

Locals were shocked when national brewery chain Greene King closed the **Golden Hind** on Lisburne Lane in Offerton back in November 2023.

Since then, the pub has presented a sorry sight, with the tinned-up building continuing to decay. Received opinion was that the site was most likely to be cleared for a residential development. However, both the local community and *Opening Times* were surprised and delighted when news broke in early May that the pub has been bought by Manchester family brewer Joseph Holt.



Confirming the purchase, Richard Kershaw, CEO of Joseph Holt, said: "Joseph Holt is a brewery committed to putting pubs back into the heart of local communities, so we were thrilled to have the opportunity to acquire the former Golden Hind."

"We are now investing over £1 million in a comprehensive and carefully considered redevelopment, creating a pub in the truest traditional sense — complete with open fireplaces, generous outdoor spaces and comfortable, characterful furnishings."

"We firmly believe in the vital role pubs play within their communities — not just as places to enjoy a drink, but as welcoming spaces to meet others, take part in social groups, and enjoy live events. All of this, and more, will be at the heart of the new Golden Hind."

We think this is excellent news, and look forward to welcoming the Golden Hind back into the Stockport pub scene.

However, as one door opens, another slams shut. Courtesy of Greene King (again!), the **Old Rectory** just off Stockport Market Place closed on 30 April. We understand that the pub is now up for sale, so perhaps another of the region's family brewers will be able to ride to the rescue.

More Greene King Closures

As part of a more general shake-up, national brewer and pub operator Greene King has closed two pubs near Macclesfield, writes *Pete Farrand*. These are the Greene King-branded **Rising Sun** on Congleton Road in Gawsorth and the Chef & Brewer-branded **Butley Ash** on London Road. Both pubs closed in mid-April. A second Chef & Brewer-branded pub that was also rumoured to be closing, the **Blacksmiths** in Henbury, is likely to become a tenanted or franchised pub.

Another closure that looks certain is the Whitbread-owned **Springwood Park**, with Beefeater restaurant, located on Tytherington Business Park. This comes as Whitbread departs the branded restaurant business, which has only continued to exist on sites shared with Whitbread-owned Premier Inn. It is likely that some of the space

will be converted to extra bedrooms, with a smaller restaurant for Premier Inn customers only. This is what happened to the **Bamford Arms** in Stockport in 2024.

Pub owner/operator Mitchells & Butlers have put the **Frozen Mop** in Great Warford (very near Mobberley) up for sale with agents Savills for offers in excess of £950,000 with vacant possession. This pub was last run by pub operator Cheshire Pub Company, who closed it in October 2023 citing excessive running costs.

JW Lees to the Rescue

A surprising recent development is that local brewers JW Lees have put in a licensing application for the **Bull's Head** on London Road in Poynton. Once upon a time this was a thriving and popular Boddingtons house, but in recent years it has only been open for very limited hours, and lately it has been looking neglected before eventually closing. We look forward to a revival in its fortunes. The photo shows the pub in happier times circa 2019.



Another pub that closed in 2023 was the **Royal Oak** on Sheffield Road in Glossop. That, too, has now been saved by a local family brewer, having also been acquired by JW Lees.

The pub was built in 1818, ten years before

Lees was founded, and is now in line for a £500,000 investment "to transform the site into a modern fit-for-purpose family dining pub". The refurbished pub is expected to open later in the summer.

The Badger

In Manchester City Centre, the **Badger** opened in early May on Dale Street in the premises previously occupied by sports bar **Calcio**, before



that the **Allotment** and, for many years, **Nicklebys**. This is run by the same team that are behind both the **Rat & Pigeon** and **Crown & Kettle**, also in the city centre. Unlike the other two, the Badger is more

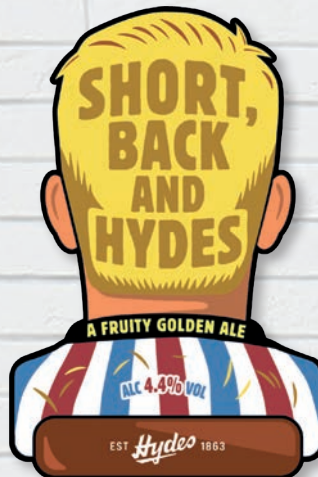
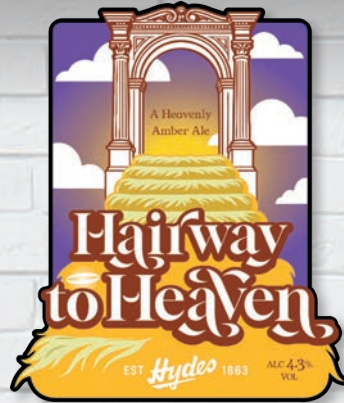
food-oriented, and comprises one large room tastefully decorated and with many nooks and crannies. It serves up to three cask ales, and Thornbridge Jaipur has been frequently on sale. It's good to see the site back open after a period of closure.

Photo by Chris Allsop.

More news on pages 15 and 20

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More CAMRA Awards

Presentations from across the area

Thumb Does the Double

In the last issue we reported that the community-owned **Northumberland Arms**, on Compstall Road in Marple Bridge, was the High Peak, Tameside & Goyt Valley CAMRA Pub of the Year for 2026.



Known locally as 'The Thumb', this is the only community owned pub in the High Peak branch area, and was also the branch Pub of the Year for 2024. This latest award was presented on 30 May, and High Peak branch chairman Ben

Zwierink is shown here (right) presenting the award to landlord Phil Jarvis.

Back in 2024, the Thumb went on to win the Greater Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year award – and it's done it again! On hearing the news, a stunned Phil Jarvis told *Opening Times*, "I'm absolutely amazed and over the moon, not just to win our CAMRA branch Pub of the Year, but to once again be voted best in Greater Manchester is, to be honest, a bit surreal."

The Greater Manchester award hadn't been presented as we went to press, but we'll bring you coverage from when it is. Meanwhile, the Northumberland Arms goes forward to the CAMRA North West regional competition, where it will be up against the winners from Cumbria, Lancashire and the Isle of Man. We wish it the very best of luck – the results should be announced in August.

The award for Greater Manchester Pub of the Year is due to be presented on Saturday 25 July from 2pm. All welcome to what should be a great afternoon.

Macclesfield Cider Pub of the Year

Competing for the Merseyside and Cheshire regional Cider Pub of the Year will be the winner from the Macclesfield & East Cheshire branch. This year, the branch torch will be carried by Macclesfield's **RedWillow** on Park Green, just a short walk from Macclesfield station. Here you will always find two or three boxes of still cider, plus a Hogan's cider on keg and a good selection of bottled ciders in the fridge. There is plenty to choose from, whether your taste is dry, medium or sweet.



RedWillow hosts regular events, a recent one being a well-attended cider, perry and cheese evening featuring drinks from Ross-on-Wye Cider & Perry paired with a surprisingly interesting choice of cheeses from a local cheesemonger.

RedWillow is also well known for its beers brewed under half a mile away. With at least four (and often more) cask beers to choose from, plus a wide range of keg beers, there is something for everyone.

Pictured below left are RedWillow owners Caroline and Toby McKenzie after receiving their award on 8 April.

Central Manchester Cider Winner



The Central Manchester Cider Pub of the Year is that Manchester institution, the **Marble Arch** on Rochdale Road. This is a pub that's always done cider seriously and you'll always find a good selection on draught and in bottle.

The award was made on Saturday 6 June, and pictured here is branch chair Sean O'Mahoney presenting the award to Marble Arch general manager Becky Holden.

Victoria Presentation



As we have previously covered, the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year 2026 is Hydes' **Victoria**, on Wilmslow Road in the centre of Withington.

It's a pub with universal appeal, and is a standard-bearer for both the warmth of its welcome and the quality of its cask beers, with

four or five regularly available.

There was a big crowd in attendance when the award was presented to managers Alyson and Paul Mitchell on Thursday 30 April. They are pictured here with their certificate.

Tap is North West Cider Champ



One set of results that has been announced is the judging for the CAMRA North West Region Cider Pub of the Year. For the second year running, the award has gone to Stockport's **Petersgate Tap**, which beat contenders from the Isle of Man and Lancashire.

The Tap's co-owner Alan Gent was delighted on hearing the news, telling *Opening Times*, "We are very proud to be voted, once again, the region's best cider pub. It's what we aim for with our constant search for new and interesting cider makers, plus of course our splendid relationship with James Marsden at Greggs Pit, who co-operates so well with us on his ciders and perries."

The presentation is due to be made on Sunday 26 July from 2pm – all welcome to what should be a very enjoyable event.



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You must be registered with the Charities Commission, provide a service to the people of Stockport and the surrounding areas (no national charities please), have a professional fund raiser/organiser on the staff and be willing to have your name/logo used in Festival publicity.

NEXT STEP

Interested charities should email Jim Flynn at jim@flynnfam.co.uk setting out the following:

- Details of your professional raiser/organiser.
- How you will be able to guarantee to supply sufficient staff to staff your stall, collect donations and sell the programmes at the Festival for all open sessions and the trade session.
- In addition how you will be able to provide half a dozen bar staff during the busy evening sessions as required (for which you will receive a donation).
- How you will be able to guarantee to be able to obtain 5 to 6 firkins of cask beer free of charge for you to sell at each of the three Festivals.
- How you will be able to attract sponsors for yourself.
- How you will promote the Festival.
- What you can do to assist and support the Festival e.g. first aiders et cetera.
- New ideas or initiatives.
- Why the Festival Organising Committee should choose your charity.

**Applications should arrive no later than
15th September 2026.**

The decision of the Organising Committee will be final and no correspondence can be entered into.

In The Wood

SPBW Greater Manchester

Opening Times is happy to feature twice-yearly updates from the local branch of the Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood. Mike Langley brings you national and local news.

The society has been busy since January, both locally and nationally.

National News

On 7 March, several Greater Manchester members travelled up to York to participate in the York Wood Crawl. Organised by Marcus from the York branch, it included 13 beers from the wood in 11 pubs around York. Over 40 people attended from across the branches and it was a wonderful way to try special beers in some pubs off the beaten tourist track. Marcus is in the process of organising another wood crawl in Hull later in the year.

In April, Greater Manchester branch travelled to Macclesfield to meet contingents from other branches around the country to attend the second annual Roger's Ramble. Roger was the long-time editor of *Pint in Hand*, the SPBW's magazine, and, on stepping away from the role last year, he was awarded a national event in his honour. The Macclesfield crawl was his choice. It is a national event open to all, where we follow a pub crawl of Roger's favourite Macclesfield pubs and have a lovely relaxed catch-up with our friends from other branches whilst drinking some very fine beers. We aim to have at least one beer from the wood available on the day, but sadly this year the logistics did not allow for this.

May saw the return of Woodfest (an all-wooden-barrel beer festival) to the Musical Museum in Brentford, where there was a strong showing of beers from the North West. These included offerings from Joseph Holt, Phoenix, and three from Wakey Wakey. A number of the Greater Manchester members travelled down to attend the event and to volunteer helping to set up and take down the stillage.

The Local Scene



Closer to home, we have been continuing with our quarterly meetings and monthly socials. Our socials have seen us visit the **Hopwood Arms** in Slattocks, which has been regularly offering Wakey Wakey beers in the wood. February saw a return visit (pictured above) to the gem that is the **Ladybarn Social Club**, where a very special 6.4% Belgian dark ale, Matmos by Serious Brewing, was being served. March was the trip to York, April included the Macclesfield trip and also a visit to the We Are Wolf Brewery in Uppermill, where their 4% Cali Pale was served from the wood.

Our May social took us to the **Swinton Hop House** (Salford CAMRA Pub of the Year for 2026). We have lent one of our casks to the Hop House, who had it filled with the house bitter, Marble Manchester Bitter.

Another highlight of this time of year is Mild Magic. As someone who enjoys a good pint of mild, I look forward to getting my booklet



and going off sticker hunting. There have been some fantastic milds on offer this year, but for me one of the highlights was when my sticker hunt took me to Droylsden where two central pubs, the **Snug** and **Silly Country**, were both stocking mild from the wood. The Snug was offering The Cat's Sparge Armers by Greenmill Brewery, and Silly Country was selling Mild & Mighty by Joseph Holt. What filled me with

joy about this was seeing two small independent pubs promoting the sale of a heritage style of beer through Mild Magic, and having the beer matured and dispensed from traditional wooden casks, and the two pubs counted as separate areas, so I gained two stickers for my booklet.

Join SPBW

The Greater Manchester branch of SPBW includes as members any national member of SPBW from Greater Manchester and the surrounding area. If you'd like to join, please access the national website at www.spbw.beer/information/join/. Annual membership is from £7 and includes the quarterly magazine *Pint in Hand*. Or you can keep an eye out for one of our information leaflets which can be found in the beer literature area or on the noticeboard in many pubs around Greater Manchester.

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Mild Magic Update



The entries have been submitted, the prize draws have been made and the stats collated – and once again, the annual Mild Magic trail has proved to be a huge success.

This year no fewer than 257 people took part, which is one up on last year's record-breaking number (and a hard act to follow). The number of pub visits again comfortably exceeded 5,000, giving a welcome boost to those pubs taking part.

For what is often called an endangered beer style, the number of milds making an appearance during Mild Magic again broke all records, with no fewer than 96 different milds from 72 breweries being recorded.

We think the rarest mild to appear was the 5% Magpie Mild from the Lady Luck Brewpub in Whitby – and was sold at **Silly Country** in Droylsden.

The most commonly found mild was Brightside Brewing SUP, which appeared in 17 pubs, mainly **Wetherspoons** but also places like the **Voltigeur** in Romiley and the **Halfway House** in Ashton.

The strongest mild reported was the 7% Ashover Victorian Ruby Mild in the **Crown** on Heaton Lane, Stockport, on opening day, while the most prolific supplier of mild was Warrington's 4Ts Brewery with five different milds, two of which were under their Warrington Ales Brand.



As usual, we ask all of those taking part to vote for their favourite mild and also their favourite mild pub. It was a close call in both votes, but was can declare the Mild Magic Champion Mild to be **Holt's Mild & Mighty**. This was a dark and rich 5.3% strong mild brewed specially for Mild Magic. We plan to present the award at the **Spinner's Rest**, the new Holt's pub in Ancoats, sometime after it has opened.

The vote for Mild Magic Champion Mild Pub was particularly close with only a handful of votes separating the top pubs, with several previous winners performing strongly. Emerging top of the heap, though, was **Stalybridge Buffet Bar**, which just beat the **Castle** in Macclesfield and Stockport's **Ye Olde Vic**, both previous Champion Mild Pub winners. The Buffet Bar had one of the widest ranges of milds during Mild Magic, so the award is well deserved. As we went to press, a presentation date had not yet been arranged.

The Spinners Rest



Long-established local family brewers Joseph Holt have announced the opening of their new addition to the Manchester pub scene in the Ancoats area of the city.

The **Spinners Rest**, situated on Bengal Street, was due to open

on Monday 29 June after a significant refurbishment representing a £2-million-plus investment by the brewery. Final preparations commenced on Monday 15 June to ensure the venue would be ready for an eager public to walk through the doors on the opening day.

The opening represents an exciting prospect for locals and visitors to the city. Being on the fringe of the centre, it can be easily reached on foot. What better way to support the brewery's investment in providing a new focal point for the local community and visitors, than by paying

a visit? The pub will be a welcome addition to those visiting venues on the northern fringe of the City Centre.

Homebrewers at Work

As part of the run-up to Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, the winners of our homebrew competition visit the various host brewers to brew their winning beers. *Opening Times* always goes along to see them in action and also present certificates to mark their winning beers.



The Mild & Brown Ale category was won by Jonny Taylor, Adam Peirce and George Lee from the Levenshulme Homebrew Club with a Kentucky Common (a mild/brown ale hybrid). This was brewed at **Steelfish Brewery** in Manchester and they

are seen here with (left) Simon Goodier and (right) Ali Combs from Steelfish. An imperial 'Kentucky Strong' was also produced.



The Bitter, Pale Ale & Session IPA category was won by Howard Crook from the Chiverton Tap Brew Club with a Black Rye Bitter which was brewed at **Marble Beers** in Salford. Howard is seen here (centre) with (left to right) Wyn Davies, Joe Ince, Carl Eccles

and Paul Walker from Marble.



The Levenshulme home brewers won again in the ESB, Strong Pale Ale & IPA category with their ESB (Extra Special Bitter) which had some old ale leanings. They went to **Cloudwater Brew Co** to brew this, and seen here are (left) Dan Leaman and (right) Mike Cunliffe with

Cloudwater brewer Keir Allen (centre).



The Stout & Porter honours went to Rob Walsh from the Chiverton Tap Brew Club, with a brown stout inspired by an 1812 recipe. This was brewed at **Torrside Brewing** in New Mills, so naturally an imperial version was also made. Rob is seen here (centre)

with Torrside's Sarah Rothko-Wright and Chris Clough.



The Levenshulme/Chiverton Tap duopoly was broken in the Speciality category, won by Nigel Townshend from Sheffield Homebrew Club. His winning beer was a saison using Saphir hops. This was brewed at Stockport's

Runaway Brewery and Nigel is seen here, second left, with (left to right) Runaway's Mark Welsby, Oli Edwards and Jake Duncan.

News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

Macclesfield Pub of the Season

The Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA Pub of the Season for Spring 2026 was the **Hanging Gate** at Higher Sutton.

For many years, Hydes Brewery owned this exceptional pub, until in late 2017 they decided that too much money needed spending on it. The pub was then closed down, bringing fears that the 400-year-old pub would be no more. There were even rumours of it becoming a wedding venue!



Fortunately, couple Hilary Spokes and James Schofield (pictured here with their certificate) had other ideas, and are slowly adapting the pub at a pace that is sustainable. The white paint that formerly covered the building has been stripped away revealing the beautiful stonework. Presently there are just two rooms open and no kitchen as yet. Food is provided by 'pop ups' – see social media for these and other events. They can serve up to three cask beers but the range is adjusted according to the expected custom.

The most spectacular thing about this pub is the view. At 320 metres above sea level, you can see a long way on a clear day and a viewing shed, the part of the pub that will have the best views, is currently under construction. With Macclesfield Forest being less than a mile away it is popular with walkers and the more energetic cyclists, but if you are not up to the walk there is a car park.

The nearest public transport is the 14A bus at Langley village from which it is a less than two-mile walk to the pub. By car, follow signs from Macclesfield for Langley, then when you see the Church House pub, take the road on the left hand side of it and drive for 1.7 miles.

The award was presented on Saturday 25 April.

Beer Shed Available



The team behind **Beer Shed** on Market Street in New Mills (which is basically two-thirds of the team behind Torrside Brewing) have announced the time is right to hand over to someone else.

After three years running what is a successful and profitable pub, the team say they need to focus all their energies on Torrside, as that side of things has been pretty tough going recently. As they explained in a Facebook post, the priority is “keeping the fires burning at Torrside”.

Since the announcement was made on 8 June, there have apparently been numerous expressions of interest in taking Beer Shed on, so here at *Opening Times* we are quietly optimistic that it will continue in a very similar format – and hopefully remain a regular outlet for the excellent Torrside beers. More information as we get it.

Woodford Beer Festival

Woodford Cricket Club will hold its annual Beer Festival over the August Bank Holiday Weekend from Friday 28 to Sunday 30 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 event was first held in 2013, and has gone from strength to strength. This year will see a choice of 16 different real ales plus a selection of lagers and ciders from local and national breweries, including Bollington Brewery, Bramhall Beers, Thornbridge, Track

and Pomona Island. Tasting notes will also be available. It's sure to be a busy festival, so make sure you get to Woodford early to be certain all the beers are on tap to sample, and feel free to bring a chair as seating is limited.

Club Chairman Dave Williams told *Opening Times*: “We’re looking forward to welcoming even more people this year. The beer festival is a brilliant three days that helps boost club funds, especially for our thriving junior section which runs teams and provides coaching for boys and girls from the age of 5 to 18. There will be cricket to watch on the Saturday afternoon, so please join us for what is sure to be a great weekend.”

Event times are Friday 28 August: 6pm to 11pm; Saturday 29 August: 12 noon to 11pm and Sunday 30 August 12 noon to 9pm. Woodford Cricket Club is on Moor Lane, Woodford, SK7 1PW and can be reached by the 42B bus service from Manchester via Cheadle Hulme and Bramhall.

Robinsons Refurbishments

Robinsons have recently completed work on the **Swan With Two Necks** in Stockport town centre. This has involved converting the former first floor living quarters into an overflow-cum-meeting room – and a first-class job they have done, too. Rich colours, traditional furniture, a feature fireplace and panelling all go to make a space which is both intimate and welcoming.



In Ashton, the **Sycamore** on Stamford Square reopened in mid-April following a six-week makeover. This has seen the entire downstairs area redesigned to create a more open layout. New sliding doors have been added to allow the space to be divided into separate areas for functions and events.

Following a four-week closure, the **Puss in Boots** in Offerton reopened on Friday 8 May after a major refurbishment made possible by a joint investment by Robinsons and pub operators Almond Family Pubs. It has to be said the end result is very impressive, with warm panelling, new flooring and seating, and period light fittings and mirrors.



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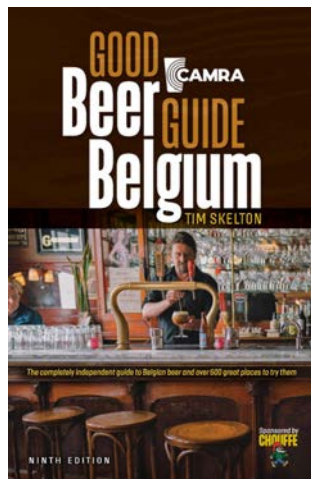
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Timely Return for Belgium Guide

by Roger Protz

Good Beer Guide Belgium. Tim Skelton (CAMRA, £17.99)



This is a remarkable book about a remarkable country. Who would have thought, back in 1992, that a guide to Belgian beers and bars would run to nine editions, with a clamour for a new edition after a break of eight years?

The origins of the guide go back earlier than 1992. A group of British beer writers were on a tour of Belgium in 1987 and ended up one evening in 't Brugs Beertje – the Little Bruges Bear. We were joined by Michael Jackson who flew in from Scandinavia to sup with us in a bar that specialised in Belgian craft beers and refused to sell any lager.

Tim Webb and Michael Jackson were sufficiently inspired by the bibulous experience to launch, in Tim's case, the Belgian guide, while Michael painstakingly researched and wrote the first edition of his *Great Beers of Belgium*.

Over the following years, Tim Webb was joined by Joe Stange as joint editor. They have now passed the baton to Tim Skelton (pictured here at Bruges Beer Festival) who has lived in the neighbouring Netherlands for 35 years. He put on his bicycle clips and helmet and went on many long tours of Belgium to update the guide.



And so once again we can marvel at a country where Trappist monks brew ale, beers are aged for years in giant oak tuns and – most amazingly of all – brewers still produce the world's oldest beer style, Lambic, allowing wild yeasts in the atmosphere to start fermentation and the long journey to finished beer.

Timely

The new edition is timely. Yvan de Baets, brewmaster at the acclaimed Brasserie de la Senne in Brussels, details in a foreword to the guide the problems facing Belgian brewers. They are problems created by Covid and the current conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East.

They are compounded by changing consumer attitudes. Yvan says many drinkers are turning away from dark beers. "Modern Belgian beer drinkers have only one colour in mind: blond," he says. "As a consequence, beer biodiversity is in danger."

For those coming fresh to Belgian beers, the section on the styles available will be a useful introduction to the pleasures that follow. Astonishingly, in the 21st century with half-empty churches, there are still five breweries run by Trappist monks – Chimay, Orval, Rochefort, Westmalle and Westvleteren.

Tim Skelton points out that the monks are anxious to deny there is any such thing as a Trappist 'style'. Each monastery has its own

distinctive recipes, though the brothers, naturally, work in harmony as a brewing community.

Tim then takes the reader through the variety of other styles available: amber, brown, black, white/wheat, strong dubbels and tripels, and the overlooked but superb saisons from Wallonia, the French-speaking region.

Wild Beers

He leaves what he calls the best for the last section: wild beers. These are lambic and gueuze beers made with wild yeasts and then stored for many years in oak tuns where they pick up further attack by micro-flora and other organisms locked in the wood.

Not content with all this yeasty activity, the brewers then add such fruits as cherries and raspberries which add their distinctive flavours to the beer. The Lambic family is protected by both Belgian and EU laws to ensure both their future and their authenticity.

There then follows an 80-page brewery section which details all the producers, with their beers and brief tasting notes. It's a superb guide to knowing what to drink and what to avoid.

I don't know how Yvan de Baets feels about Belgian IPAs as they are an oddity. IPA was first brewed in England for the Brits running India in the 19th century. Belgium, when the country was established, had colonies in Africa and played no role further east. But you can't keep IPA down and the guide lists several, including the version from Achouffe in the beautifully wooded Ardennes, home to the mythical Chouffe gnome.



Gazetteer

The bulk of the book is a city by city, region by region, gazetteer of the best bars and taprooms to visit. I don't know how Tim Skelton managed this many visits without falling off his bike, but I salute his fortitude and his liver.

In spite of the consumer changes mentioned by Yvan de Baets, the Belgians remain proud of their beers and their heritage. While Britain no longer has a single museum dedicated to its national drink, Belgium has several.

They include the Museum of Gueuze that's part of the Cantillon Brewery in Anderlecht. It's easy to reach from Brussels Midi Eurostar station.

And the old Stock Exchange – the Bourse – in central Brussels is now Belgian Beer World celebrating the history of brewing, with a rooftop bar at the end of the visit.

Edition nine of the guide has been a long time coming, but it's been worth the wait.

This article first appeared on Roger's website, Protz on Beer (protzonbeer.co.uk) which is well worth a regular read. It appears here with Roger's kind permission.

The Good Beer Guide Belgium is available in the CAMRA shop at shop1.camra.org.uk.

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Bitter



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Pub Walks with Chris Morris

Chapel-en-le-Frith to Whaley Bridge

It has often been suggested that real ale enthusiasts have a fondness for transport heritage. In addition to fine pubs throughout, there's much to digest in this scenic adventure. As well as walking along a canal and former tramway, we pass under the unique twin railway viaducts at Chapel Milton. The walk uses the 199 bus, which connects Stockport to Buxton and runs hourly all week. This straightforward, five-mile walk is mostly flat with good paths. All pubs are dog friendly.



At Chapel-en-le-Frith, get off the bus at the Town Hall stop. Walk back up Market Street for 150 yards, and then turn right to the town's picturesque marketplace. Here you will find a number of pubs selling cask beer, including our pre-walk venue – the **Old Cell Ale Bar**. This welcoming micropub opened in 2016 and has set the standard for cask beer in the town ever since. The

cosy interior is tastefully furnished with comfortable seating, with a generous log burner in use during the colder months. On my last visit the cask beers were Winkle Bad Bill, Stancil Citra, Hobgoblin Gold and Amarillo from the pub's own Chapel-en-le-Frith Craft Brewing Co.

To start our walk, turn right out of the pub and walk along Market Place. When the road narrows, take the footpath between the road and St Thomas Becket Church. We then rejoin the road which we follow for 400 yards until we reach the main road, where we turn left. After 50 yards, cross over at the traffic island and turn right to join Burnside Avenue. Take the next left and follow the right-side pavement to the end, when it turns right and takes us between two houses. Follow the path through woodland, then across a main road to the path opposite. We now walk through another woodland which leads to a quiet lane where we turn left. After 500 yards we come to a busy main road which we need to cross over. For maximum visibility, I would recommend walking to the left side of the footbridge opposite.

On the other side, turn right to cross the water on the footbridge, then take the first left to join the Peak Forest Tramway Trail. Keep straight ahead to cross another bridge before walking underneath the impressive twin viaducts. Exiting through a gate, we now follow the trail beyond, through a field. Looking back you now get the best view of the viaducts. At the end of the field and through a metal gate, walk straight ahead through a small industrial estate to the road beyond. Bear left here to walk along the road briefly before taking the path to the right, over a little stone bridge and newly gritted path. Follow the riverbank path keeping the water on your right. Follow this path for



400 yards before leaving the riverbank to climb a small slope and rejoin the tramway, where we turn right. Following the trail for a half mile takes us to a road where we have the option of a mid-walk pub stop with a choice of two excellent pubs. For this, turn left and walk up the hill for 200 yards.

The 16th century **Old Hall Inn** (pictured above) excels in all aspects of an upmarket country pub, with a charming interior of exposed timbers, flagstone floors and log burners throughout. The quality

continues with their popular food offerings and excellent cask beer, with Good Beer Guide entry awarded every year from 2010. On last inspection, the cask beers were Abbeydale Deception, Whim's Hartington IPA and Arbor Light, Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Charm and Big Love from Duration, with cider and perry from Hogan's. The relaxing beer garden hosts an annual beer festival in September.

Over the road, the **Paper Mill Inn** is a fine establishment run by the same team as the Old Hall and keeping to the same high standards. As well as another cosy interior with more flagstone floors, oak beams and log burners; a recent renovation has proved very popular. An investment in their food offering has given more seating at the rear of the pub, with an impressive pizza oven now taking centre stage. The cask beers were Burning Sky Springtime, Timothy Taylor's Boltmaker, Thornbridge Brewers Best and Jaipur when I last dropped by.

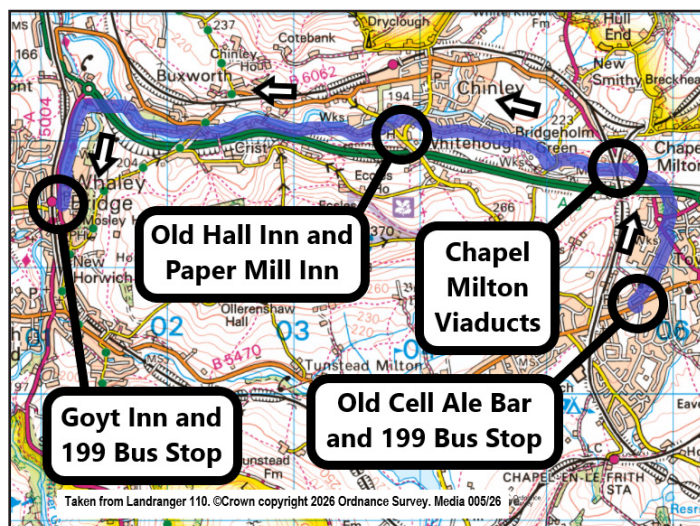
Retracing our steps back down the hill, take a left to continue on the Tramway Trail as before. Crossing the next road to carry on straight ahead, walk through the industrial estate, which eventually leads us back to the traffic free trail. After half a mile at the junction, take a left and immediate right, signposted to Bugsworth Canal Basin. Walking through the car park, we pass the **Navigation**. Closed at the time of writing, hopefully this delightful pub will reopen in the near future. Carry straight on, over the road, and along the track that lowers us to the canal side with the water on our left. Follow the towpath for a half mile until the canal forks. Here we cross over the water using the footbridge and follow the towpath around to the left with the water now on our right. After a further half mile and across a footbridge,



we enter Whaley Bridge. Passing the Transhipment Warehouse on our right, at the road we turn right, then follow the road as it turns left to the centre of Whaley Bridge and the 199 bus stop.

Before heading back, I recommend post-walk

drinks at the nearby **Goyt Inn**. Full of charming canal memorabilia, this cosy pub offers a warm welcome, an enduring quirkiness and a rewarding pint of cask beer. When last sampled these were Tetley's, Boddingtons, Abbeydale Moonshine, Coach House Gunpowder Premium Mild and Timothy Taylor's Golden Best.



More Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

Macclesfield Pub of the Year



As we reported last time, the Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA Pub of the Year 2026 is the **Cotton Tree** in Bollington. The award was presented on Saturday 13 June, and licensees Jayne and Christina Blackshaw are shown here with their certificate. The pub is something of a serial award-winner as it was also the branch's Cider Pub of the Year for 2025.

Congleton Update



The big news in Congleton recently has been the long-awaited reopening of the former Piano (perhaps better known locally as the Lion & Bell), which had been closed since the month before lockdown. It has reopened as the **Bell on Mulneestrete**, after an extensive amount of work repairing the

building, which had deteriorated into a poor condition. The result is stunning, with the extensive beer garden at the back brought into use, and separate restaurant and pub areas. There are four cask ales available, with only Beartown Glacier being permanent, and the others being sourced from a wide range of breweries. The restaurant is pitched at the quality end of the market, with some imaginative menu choices, and the bar snack offering sees oysters sitting alongside a more traditional chip butty. A very welcome arrival, and one that we hope does well. It's on Mill Street (Mulneestrete apparently being its mediaeval name!).

Barley Hops has changed hands, and indeed name. Linda and Paul have retired and the business has been acquired by Tatton Brewery, which is itself owned by Wantsum Brewery. The renamed **Barley Hops & Grape** has also had a bit of a makeover, with increased soft furnishings being added to the pub. The beer offerings have naturally seen a greater focus on Tatton and Wantsum beers, but they have been some from other breweries as well. Hopefully the new owners will be able to retain the community feel of this micropub.



The **Black Bear** on Lawton Street (in the premises occupied by the Young Pretender a few years ago) has seen the introduction of two cask beers, a few months after it opened. Old Speckled Hen and Wadworth's Horizon are the current offering, with the latter replacing Wainwright, which hadn't been selling so well.

Finally, some sad news is that the **Queen's Head** opposite the railway station was due to close before the end of June. It is hoped that a purchaser will be found quite soon for this excellent pub which has been a *Good Beer Guide* regular in recent years.

Central Manchester Pub of the Year



Another local Pub of the Year we reported last time was the Central Manchester branch winner. This is the always-excellent **Café Beermoth** on Brown Street, right in the heart of the City Centre.

This award was presented on Friday 12 June, and branch officer Steve Davis is shown here (left) presenting the certificate

to Matt Boylan, the general manager. The evening was attended by many members of Café Beermoth staff and CAMRA members from various branches. To celebrate the occasion they had put a cask of Robinsons Old Tom on sale which was much enjoyed by all present.

Unfortunately, the Central Manchester CAMRA beer festival, in association with The People's History Museum, planned for the autumn, will not now take place. This is due to changes at the museum and the room it was planned to use is about to undergo a major refurbishment. The museum does wish to keep in touch with the branch with the goal of holding a beer festival sometime in the future.

Next Beer Bash Bus

The **Steel Works** in Bredbury has announced the latest in its successful Beer Bash Bus initiative.

The date is Saturday 8 August between 2pm and 8pm. Two free-to-use minibuses will be circulating around 12 pubs in Bredbury, Romiley, Marple Bridge, Marple and Hyde (on two different routes).



The pubs participating are **Steel Works** and **Crown** in Bredbury (no real ale in the Crown); **Hop Haus** and **Voltigeur** (Romiley); **Spring Gardens**, **Northumberland Arms** and **Windsor Castle** (Marple Bridge); **Samuel Oldknow** and **Aggie's Bar** in Marple (real ale not available in Aggie's Bar); and **Jack's Bar**, the **Shepherds Call** and the **Sportsman Inn** (Hyde).

Brewery Merry-go-Round

Rochdale's **Serious Brewing** has sadly closed. This has prompted something of a reshuffle. **Brid's Cross Brewing** used the Serious kit to make their own beer. They have now relocated to Salford where they will instead be using the kit at **Hideaway Brewing**. In turn, **Coley's Brewery**, which also brewed at Hideaway, has taken over the old Serious Brewing premises and brewing kit (and was due to move there in mid-June).

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.

We've not had a chance to discuss our ailments yet

The old boys are having a beer.
Their tweed mate joins them.
Perfect timing, they laugh.
*We've not a chance to discuss
our ailments yet. Care to kick us off?*
He rolls his eyes, undoes his jacket,
sips the only red wine the pub sells
at the pace of a slow-motion replay.
He puts his glass on the table,
tuts at their question, and begins
to tell them how he's been walking
a lot more lately. The old boys smile.
And your ailments? one asks.
Their mate pauses, picks up his glass,
and replies: The arse is a nightmare.

Beer Garden

The sun was shining as Marcus dived
into the pint of cider. He smiled as he enjoyed
the sweet taste of apples, before joining
the rest of his family in wasp heaven.

They say you should think of a better word than 'love' when writing a poem about love

but the man on the table next to me
in the pub loves his daughter.
His mouth is saying how much he loves her
as much as his body leaning in
to listen to her is telling her he loves her.
He loves the way she loves her husband.
He loves the way she is buying the house
that her and her husband love. He loves
the way she ordered a three half pint beer tapas
because she loves all three beers
and can't decide which one she loves more.
He loves her laugh. He loves her opinions
on people who step off of a kerb without
looking left and right. He loves her anger.
Her loves how she loves. He loves how
she loves her husband. He loves how
she hates her husband. He loves how
she loves him. He loves how he loves her.
He loves how he loves him around her.
He loves.

Stockport's Lost Pubs with Dave Stearn

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

Our first pub is the **Queen Caroline** on Lancaster Street, off Great Portwood Street.

It was first mentioned in 1837, when John Booth was the landlord. The name suggests it dates back further, as Queen Caroline was the estranged wife of George IV, who ascended the throne in 1820, a year after the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester. Caroline, who was prevented from being crowned Queen Consort, had widespread public support and was a figurehead for the reform cause. There was large support for the radical movement in the town, the rivalry highlighted by the location of the George IV inn (later the Old King) just around the corner on Great Portwood Street.



There was brewing on site in the 1840s, started by John Booth and then continued by his widow Hannah, who took over as licensee in 1850. James Booth also joined the family brewing business, although beer production had ceased by the end of the 1850s.

The pub was closed by Bell's brewery just before the Second World War but given a new lease of life, being used for the billeting of soldiers. It served as the officers' mess for the territorials. The photo from around 1960 shows the pub in a derelict state. It was eventually demolished, along with the rest of the buildings on the street. Lancaster Street now runs through the Peel Centre, between Curry's and The Range.



Also under the letter 'Q' is another pub with a royal connection, the **Queen's Head** on Little Underbank (pictured here in 1979). This pub was originally known as the Good Queen Anne, who reigned in the early part of the eighteenth century. It was first mentioned in the 1790s and it is thought it took on the licence transferred from the ancient Royal Oak Inn in Royal Oak Yard.

The Turner family, who had been wine and spirit merchants in Stockport for 50 years and had their own distillery in Royal Oak Yard, took over the Queen's Head in 1809. The pub was originally a very large establishment, but in the 1860s ninety per cent of the building was demolished to allow the construction of St Petersgate Bridge and the steps alongside it. The vastly truncated pub became known as Turner's Vaults, with three narrow rooms, cellars and passages cut out of the solid rock and ghostly residents. It also boasted the "world's smallest" gents' toilet. A Samuel Smith house, it is currently closed but the outside decoration has recently been spruced up, and the brewery is advertising for new tenants, so hopefully soon the Queen's Head/Turner's Vaults will again be part of the thriving Underbank social scene.

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.



Unmistakably Northern

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Events, Socials and Meetings

Plus local CAMRA Contacts

Local CAMRA Contacts

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CAMRA National website: camra.org.uk

Formal Branch Meetings

CAMRA members only at these meetings.

Thursday 9 July – Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. Guest speaker Peter Grady from Mount St Bernard Trappist Brewery. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 15 July – Oakwood, 67 High Street West, Glossop, SK13 8AZ. The branch meeting and AGM will be preceded by a speaker from Robinsons. Prompt start at 7:30pm. (HPTGV)

Wednesday 29 July – Dulcimer, 567 Wilbraham Road, Chorlton, M21 0AE. Guest speaker: Matt Curtis, beer writer. Starts 8pm. (T&H)

Monday 3 August – Flute & Firkin, 51 Park Lane, Poynton, SK12 1RD. Starts 8pm. (MEC)

Thursday 13 August – Magnet, 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. Meeting will be followed by a quiz with beery prizes. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Social Events & Presentations

Everyone very welcome at these events.

Friday 17 July – Bramhall Stagger: 7:30pm Three Bears, Jacksons Lane, Hazel Grove, SK7 5JH; 8:30pm Ladybrook Hotel, Fir Road, Bramhall, SK7 2NP; final pub Mounting Stone, 8 Woodford Road, Bramhall, SK7 1JJ. (SSM)

Tuesday 21 July – Tuesday Tipples in Chorley. Meet Manchester Piccadilly concourse 11:15am. (T&H)

Thursday 23 July – Pub of the Month presentation: Crown, 154 Heaton Lane, Stockport, SK4 1AR. From 8pm. (SSM)

Friday 24 July – Branch trip to Liverpool. Trains depart Stockport at 11:25 (Piccadilly 11:37) or 11:54 (Piccadilly 12:07). First pub: Crown Hotel, Lime Street (next to the station) at 12:30pm. (SSM)

Saturday 25 July – Greater Manchester 2026 Pub of the Year presentation: Northumberland Arms, 64 Compstall Road, Marple Bridge, SK6 5HD. From 2pm. (HPTGV)

Saturday 25 July – Branch trip to Liverpool. Meet 10:45am at Manchester Victoria. (T&H)

Sunday 26 July – Presentation of North West regional Cider Pub of the Year: Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. From 2pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 29 July – Trip to Birmingham City Centre. Train departs Manchester Piccadilly at 10:25 and Stockport at 10:33. (HPTGV)

Thursday 30 July – Pub of the Year Silver Award presentation: Bakers Vaults, Market Place, Stockport, SK1 1EU. From 8pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 5 August – Weekday Wander: Egerton to Bromley Cross. Meet 10:45am in Manchester Piccadilly's Platform 13/14 'waiting room' to catch the 11:02 Blackpool train, alighting at Bolton. First pub: Cross Guns, 390 Blackburn Road, Egerton, BL7 9TR. (SSM)

Tuesday 18 August – Tuesday Tipples in Warrington. Meet Manchester Piccadilly concourse 10:50am. (T&H)

Friday 21 August – Stockport Market Place Stagger: 7:30pm Bakers Vaults, SK1 1EU; 8:30pm Angel Inn, 19-20 Market Place, SK1 1EU; final pub Arden Arms, 23 Millgate, SK1 2LX. (SSM)

Saturday 22 August – Buxton Wander: An opportunity to try some of the town's excellent pubs. See branch website for various travel options. Starts 12 noon. (MEC)

Thursday 27 August – Pub of the Month presentation: Grapes, 196 London Road, Hazel Grove, SK7 4DQ. From 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 29 August – Congleton Jazz and Blues Social: Barley Hops, 29 High Street, Congleton, CW12 1BG. From 2pm. (MEC)

Tuesday 1 September – Weekday Wander: Swigging in Wigan. Meet at 10:45am in Manchester Victoria to board the 10:55am Leeds to Wigan Wallgate train. First pub: Bocket Arms, 38 Mesnes Road, Wigan, WN1 2DD. (SSM)

News in Brief

Women in Beer®, the 'Women Who Beer' community, has announced the dates for its fourth festival, with five days of events celebrating women in the brewing industry taking place from Tuesday 20 to Saturday 24 October. For this year, Women in Beer® is choosing Manchester as the host city to make the event even more accessible to both beer lovers and industry professionals. More details next time.

It's congratulations to Mark and Natalie Hodgson who have just marked 25 years working with JD Wetherspoon, including 20 years managing the **Paramount** on Oxford Street in Manchester City Centre.

Opening just a bit too late for full coverage this time is **Pigeon** on Sheffield Street, in one of the railway arches close to Piccadilly Station. It's at number 7, close to both **Sureshot** at number 4 and **Balance Brewing & Blending** at number 10. More next time.

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