

OPENING TIMES

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2026

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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: camra.org.uk/pubs

Front Cover

Hard at work on the Cider Bar at this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Photo by Becca Cowtan.

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Welcome

Congratulations to the Northumberland Arms (or the Thumb, as it's widely known) in Marple Bridge for winning the CAMRA North West Pub of the Year title. There are more details on page 14, and next time we'll bring you coverage of the actual presentation. In the meantime, do try and get there – buses 383 and 384 from Stockport Interchange will drop you outside.

The Thumb's victory means that the *Opening Times* circulation area (and indeed, Stockport) now has two North West champs, as the Petersgate Tap in the town centre is the regional Cider Pub of the Year. That award has already been presented and you can see that on page 11.

We also highlight on page 11 the ludicrous situation whereby cider in the UK has to contain only 35% apple juice to qualify as such. There are moves to increase that to 50%, not ideal but a step in the right direction, and which CAMRA is fully supporting. Meanwhile, our own definition of real cider and perry stipulates that they have to be made from 100% apple or pear juice – something pretty much every small scale cider maker has no problem with.

We were all saddened to learn of the death, at the age on 96, of Nancy Swanick, long-serving landlady of Manchester's famous Peveril of the Peak. She'd been at the helm for 55 years and had made the pub very much her own. The family fully intend to keep the pub going, which is good news. There's a small tribute to Nancy on page 13.

I'd also like to welcome our new regular columnist, Phil Edwards, whose first 'Oh Good Ale' appears in page 12. Phil is a great writer, so I'm sure you'll find this an entertaining addition to *Opening Times*.

Finally, plans are now well in hand for this year's Winter Warmer Wander. This will start on 13 November and features an increased number of pubs this year. There will be full details in our next issue.

John Clarke, Editor



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NW region Cider POTY 2025 & 2026

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**Winner, Stockport CAMRA's Most
Improved Pub 2025**
**What's On in Stockport Pub of the
Month, February 2026**
SSM CAMRA Pub of the Month July 2026

Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for September and October



The Pub of the Month for September is the Spinning Top on Wellington Road South in central Stockport, next to the Garrick Theatre. Jack Lyons tells you all about it.

Since opening the pub in 2014, Mike Swann (pictured below) has been the driving force behind this grassroots music venue, championing the UK music scene, with a diverse lineup of acts, from hard rock to blues. But it's not just about the music; Mike's a big fan of real ale and real cider, too.



There are loose tables, chairs and sofas, with fixed seating around the spacious room, with the bar on the right – both cash and cards are accepted. You can enjoy coffees and teas, plus two changing cask guest ales, sourced both locally and nationally, along with a variety of real ciders, plus an interesting selection of bottles and a good selection of keg lagers and German beers.

Styled as Stockport's premier live music venue, the music is featured on three or four nights a week, including most Thursdays. The pub also showcases local artists' work on the walls. Entertainment goes beyond bands, there having been a variety of acts in the past. It's also worth mentioning bar closing times can vary each night.

Mike comes from Devon, where there are many real cider and perry producers, and so real cider and perry, made entirely from apples or pears without any added water or sugar, are also a feature here. Typically, you might expect to find SiDa Holme & Dry, Saxby's Straight Outta Orchard, and various others from makers such as Sandford Orchards and Cock Eyed.

We'd love for you to join us as we present this well-deserved award to Mike and his team on their regular third week of the month blues night, on Thursday 17 September, starting at 7pm before the music begins.

The Spinning Top is on the 192 bus route and a short walk from both Stockport Interchange and Stockport station.

The Pub of the Month award is sponsored by Stephensons, 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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October's winner is the historic Arden Arms, also in central Stockport, just off the Market Place. Sue Lightfoot has been along.

The Arden Arms, built in what was then a convenient place for a coach house, is now conveniently situated near the Peel Centre shops, the market place and the centre of Stockport. It was acquired by Frederic Robinson in 1890, is Grade-II listed and is on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors.

Outside this attractive building there's a blue plaque in honour of Elizabeth Raffald, whose family built the Arden Arms and who, amongst other things, produced the first town directory for Manchester and Salford in 1772.

The main entrance to this traditional pub takes you past a lovely old dresser and leads you to a dining area to the right. To the left is the distinctive, curved, glazed bar through which a hidden snug can be accessed, one of only a very few remaining in the UK. The decoration and furnishings create a Victorian ambience, (even some of the old bell pushes work!) and this combines well with the newly revamped courtyard, which is a real find and allows views of the old stables. Live music is played there every Saturday evening and a board outside advertises forthcoming events.

When the pub changed hands at the beginning of May last year, there were many who thought it was going to be a hard act to follow because of the reputation the pub had built up over time, in particular for its food offer.

No need for concern, however, as Nichole Binnie and her welcoming staff have more than risen to the challenge. The refurbishment has been a sympathetic one and the new menu has something for everyone, from snacks and small plates to full meals, including Sunday lunch.

Beers on offer, and always in good condition, are Robinsons Dizzy Blonde, Trooper and Unicorn, with a fourth pump for a different Robinsons beer each week, depending on availability. Old Tom appears during the winter months.

The presentation evening will be from 8pm on Thursday 22 October – please come along to celebrate with Nichole and her team, and enjoy some well-kept traditional beers. The address is 23 Millgate SK1 2LX. Alas, no horse-drawn coaches go past these days, but the pub is not far from the Asda bus stop – and there's always Shanks' pony ...



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Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

The Flying Fox



The building next to **Bruk** on Stockport's Little Underbank was covered in scaffolding as this was typed (and is pictured here). However, unless somewhere beats it to it, it will open as the **Flying Fox**, Stockport's newest pub, in October (depending on licence applications and actually kitting it out – in our experience these things never quite run to schedule).

It's a project by Lucy Clarke and Joe Carletti, and it will be more than just a pub, as it will also feature an on-site brewery. Lucy had been a

familiar face behind bars in Manchester and Stockport, and so brings plenty of experience to the project. Joe will be the brewer and he also brings plenty of experience, having worked at Manchester's Sureshot Brewery in its early days and then spending time as head brewer at Silent Brew Co. in Buxton.

The brewery, which will trade as **Method Brewing**, should be installed in January, and in the meantime the beers are being brewed by Joe at Manchester's Steelfish Brewing. The beers will be available in both cask and keg formats (with quite a lot of cask, we think).

This is an exciting project, which will bring brewing back to the Underbanks/Hillgate area following Robinsons' move to Bredbury, and will also cement Stockport's growing reputation as a serious destination for both pub and beer enthusiasts.

We will have a full report when the Flying Fox opens.

Still Closed

While Stockport's Underbanks and Market Place areas are hives of activity, redevelopment and regeneration, the pall of closure still hangs over a handful of pubs in the vicinity. For a long time, Robinsons have had plans to reopen the **Bull's Head** but have been stymied by access issues, we understand.



Two others are owned by Tadcaster-based Sam Smiths. We think both the **Boars Head** in the Market Place and the **Queens Head** on Little Underbank closed after falling foul of one of the numerous edicts from brewery owner Humphrey Smith. However, Humphrey recently died and since then we have picked up anecdotal evidence that some of the many closed Sam Smiths pubs around the country (amounting to as much as half the total tied estate by some people's reckoning) are slowly starting to reopen. The Queens Head in particular has a notably historic interior (part seen here in

this photo by Mick Slaughter) and could be a real addition to the town centre pub scene.

For completeness, we should also mention the **Pineapple** on Heaton Lane. Robinsons have definite plans to reopen this but have been hanging fire until the Weir Mill development around the corner comes to fruition and is bedded in. Work on this is now pretty much complete and an open day was held on 22 August, to preview the new public areas, so watch this space.

Macclesfield & Congleton



Good news from Congleton. The **Queen's Head Hotel** opposite the railway station, which was reported closed in the last issue of *Opening Times*, has reopened rather quickly. It remains independently operated, and, while it's early days for the new owner, there are some encouraging

signs. Beer-wise, Bass and Abbot Ale have been retained and are joined as permanent offerings by two Beartown beers, Kodiak and Glacier. The latter was available as Queen's Head Pale a couple of years ago, so should be a welcome return. There will also be two changing guest ales. Plans include the reintroduction of a pool table and Sky Sports. A food operation is expected to launch during August. We wish them well.

Not such good news from Macclesfield, where the **Snow Goose** on Sunderland Street closed at the end of July, after fifteen years. A Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch Pub of the Season back in Autumn 2024, this independent café bar was a great showcase for Storm and Winkle beers, as well as being regarded as a welcoming place for people dropping in on their own. It will be much missed.



Inn Brief



The million pound-plus refurbishment of the **Golden Hind** in Offerton by Joseph Holt is now well underway, following their purchase of the long-closed pub from Greene King. Published plans show a major

reordering on the internal layout to create a central bar with numerous areas off it. Outside there will be a major re-landscaping. Banners outside say the pub will be opening in late autumn. Prior to its closure, the pub has been looking rundown, both inside and out (see picture), so this should be a real plus for the local community.

On Little Underbank in Stockport town centre, the **Cracked Actor** apparently closed down in mid-July, with owner Joe Paton saying he planned to concentrate on his other town centre bars, the **Banshee** and the **Holy Diver**. The Cracked Actor was something of a pioneer in the regeneration of the Underbanks area and will be missed. Hopefully, someone else will take on the premises (and perhaps offer cask beers, too).

In Kettleshulme, the **Swan Inn** announced its closure 'until further notice' via a Facebook post on 6 July. This took a lot of people by surprise, but we now learn there has been a community rescue bid and the pub should be reopening, although we do not know when this is likely to be.

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CAMRA Awards

Recent Presentations

Here's a roundup of some recent Pub of the Month presentations by Stockport & South Manchester branch.



The April winner was **Heaton Hops** on School Lane in Heaton Chapel. Despite its small size, Heaton Hops has developed into a real community local with a loyal crowd of regulars. It also features regularly in CAMRA's national *Good Beer Guide*.

Owner Damian O'Shea took a back seat when the presentation was made, and here we see team members Eleanor Kenny (left) and Amy Mellor with their certificate.



May's winner was **Reddish Ale** on Broadstone Road in South Reddish.

It's another very small pub with a loyal local following, along with a growing reputation for excellent food, prepared by owner Craig Ballinger who is a skilled chef.

The beer's good too, and Reddish Ale is another *Good Beer Guide* regular. Craig is seen here with his certificate, along with members of the team and some of the regulars.



Pub of the Month for May was the **Red Bull** on Hillgate in central Stockport.

The pub has been revitalised since Emma Plant took over last year, and it really has gone from strength to strength.

Emma stood back to let her team members share the honours at the presentation and they are seen here with

CAMRA's Neil Martin (right).

Almost catching up now (the August Pub of the Month will be presented after this issue has gone to press), the July Pub of the Month was the **Crown** on Heaton Lane in Stockport.

It's another pub that has been revitalised under new and keen ownership, namely Alan and Chris Gent from the Petersgate Tap. So impressive has the change been, the Crown has been getting national attention. It's mainly run by Chris Gent and his partner Amy Barker. They are seen here with their certificate, alongside Alan Gent (left).



Greater Manchester Club of the Year

Trafford & Hulme branch was very pleased to present **Flixton Conservative Club** with the Greater Manchester 2026 Club of the Year award.

Flixton Con Club has received many branch and regional awards over the years and was CAMRA national club of the year in 2018.



This year, the club also came runner-up in the next stage of the national Club of the Year contest, which is the North West title, losing out to Blackpool Cricket Club, which is clearly worth a visit.

Flixton Con Club always has a good selection of mostly local and regional ales on the bar, with beers from Dunham Massey and Pictish breweries often featuring. Pictured above presenting the award is Trafford & Hulme branch chair Mark Reeves (left) and bar/cellar manager Tom Pritchard.

At the same time, the club was also presented with a certificate marking ten years in CAMRA's national *Good Beer Guide*.

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Cider and Perry

News, Awards and Events

Cider Season

September is often the start of the cider- and perry-making season for the hundreds of traditional makers up and down the country. Apples and pears are now ripe for pressing to extract the juice that will slowly ferment over the dark winter months, and then emerge next spring as traditional ciders and perries. For these makers, cider and perry are produced in tune with the seasons and the rhythms of the year.

However, it's not all like that, though. In terms of volume, most cider-making in the UK is a year-round industrial process. Not only that, but, while most people think cider is made from apples (and perry from pears), that's very often not entirely the case.

Legally, it only has to contain 35% apple juice. That's just over a third. The rest can be water, sugar and concentrate – and there is currently no legal requirement to tell you what is in the glass.

It wasn't always this way. Traditionally, cider was made by pressing whole apples, fermenting the juice and letting nature do the rest, as we describe above. Over time, many of the biggest producers switched to imported apple concentrate. This is cheaper, easier to transport, and simpler to produce at scale.

When the Government introduced a legal minimum juice content in 2010, it was designed to clean up cheap, high-strength white ciders that were claiming cider's lower duty rate while containing almost no fruit. The largest mainstream producers argued for 35% because that was already how many of their products were made. A rule designed to push out the worst of the market became the ceiling for much of it.

That's more water than juice, sold as cider, benefiting from reduced cider duty.



As the biggest producers moved to imported concentrate, they needed fewer British cider apples. Around 2,000 acres of traditional cider orchards have disappeared in under a decade.

Heineken (which owns Bulmers) alone cut down 300 acres of orchard in Monmouthshire. That's the equivalent of 140 football pitches.

These are not just fields of fruit. Traditional orchards are Government-designated priority habitats, home to thousands of species of plants, insects, birds and mammals that struggle to survive anywhere else.

Independent makers are taking a different approach. Around three quarters of today's estimated 480 active cider producers have started since 2000, many working with local orchards, planting new trees and producing from freshly-pressed fruit rather than imported concentrate.

Every pint of real cider and perry is a small vote for that future. The easiest way to spot the difference is to look for three words on the label: **Not From Concentrate**. You'll find them on real cider and perry made from freshly-pressed fruit. That phrase is your shortcut to the good stuff. In addition, CAMRA is pressing the government to increase the minimum juice content to at least 50%.

Cider Awards



Llanblethian Orchards is based near Cowbridge in the Vale of Glamorgan, where Alex Simmens has been making cider for around 20 years. He is something of a serial award-winner at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival – in 2022 he was voted best newcomer, while in both 2024 and 2025 he picked up the Cider of the Festival award.

The 2025 award was for his Hedge Kipper cider and we finally managed to present him with this just before the 2026 festival. He is seen here receiving his certificate

from cider bar manager Charlotte Bulmer.

That was the only cider and perry award won at last year's festival. For 2026, we have no fewer than three awards to present. As covered in the last issue, both the Cider and Perry of the Festival awards were won by **Gregg's Pit Cider & Perry** of Much Marcle, while a Best Newcomer award is going to **Monkey Bridge Cider** of Riddings, near Ripley in Derbyshire. We plan to have all of these presented by the end of the year and we'll cover them in future issues.

As we reported in the last issue, Stockport's **Petersgate Tap** has won the Cider Pub of the Year award for CAMRA's North West region, which covers Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Cumbria and the Isle of Man. The award was presented on Sunday 26 July, along with a further certificate for winning the vote amongst the Greater Manchester entries in the regional competition.

Petersgate Tap owners are shown below with their certificates alongside (left to right) CAMRA's North West cider co-ordinator Sean O'Mahoney, North West regional director Ralph Warrington and Stockport & South Manchester cider officer Dave Preston. Some of the pub's numerous other awards can be seen in the background.



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Oh Good Ale by Phil Edwards

Here's a pub scene, from a novel published in 1958 (Mary Kelly's *The Christmas Egg*):

"The walls of the public bar ... were composed, to waist level, of reddish wood. The upper part was adorned on one side by glazed tiles which formed pictures of pseudo-classical half-draped women, and on the other two ... by plate glass with an engraved border."



Dark wood panelling, waist-height dado rails, glazed tiles, engraved mirrors – it all sounds rather contemporary (although the tasteful classical decorations sound more like the Trafford Centre). Features like these are often seen in contemporary pub refits, from the **Crown** in Stockport to the city-centre

Pomona Island flagship **North Westward Ho** (pictured here).

Traditional styles seem to be on the rise in beer as well: look at the current resurgence of interest in the none-more-traditional Bass bitter, not to mention the by-'eck-it's-traditional Boddington's. This year, there have even been signs of life in the most old-school of all beer styles. 'Boring brown bitter' was a favourite target when 'craft beer' hit in the 00s; pales and IPAs have ruled the roost ever since. Nevertheless, dark, malty bitters won both the 'bitter' and the 'strong bitter' category in Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA's annual homebrew competition, and were put into production by Marble and Cloudwater respectively – and leading-edge Mancunian brewers Coley's and Courier have both recently produced strong dark bitters of their own.

It's as if we were going back to ... well, to when exactly? North Westward Ho opened in 2023 – and if you drink Bass bitter now you're drinking a Marston's beer (Bass the company got out of brewing in 2000). As for Boddington's, their celebrated 1970s cask bitter had lost its quality long before the company sold out in 1989 (although nobody agrees exactly when). JW Lees' Boddington's bitter, to give it its full title, first appeared in 2025 – and the "by 'eck" catchphrase dates back to a mid-90s marketing campaign, for a different beer again.

People drinking 1970s-style beer in 1950s-style surroundings aren't simply being fooled, though, or indulging in Trafford Centre-style fakery. The 'craft beer' years – brought to a symbolic close by the collapse of BrewDog – were characterised by a constant pressure for innovation, a search for the next big thing. At least, that was the idea; there hasn't really been much innovation in beer styles for a few years now. The time was right for the revival of some 'good old' styles: things we'd neglected or forgotten, but that were good quality nevertheless.

I think this is the mood underlying the current enthusiasm for dark wood and dark beers, for half-height panelling and Boddington's. It's not revivalism as such: the 'good old' alternatives don't need to be from the same period – they don't even need to be all that old. All that's needed is that they're old enough to have gone out of fashion, and stayed out of fashion for at least one generation of drinkers.

Malty bitters from the 1990s, Boddies' from the 70s, dado rails and wall tiles from the 50s, it's all new and different – or rather, old and different. And, ironically, it makes a refreshing change for a beer culture that had been starting to look rather tired. Forward to the past!

Phil Edwards is a local beer blogger and his very entertaining writings can be found at ohgoodale.wordpress.com. Check it out as it's always worth reading.

More Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

The Spinners Rest



The old **Shamrock Inn** on Bengal Street in Ancoats was over 200 years old when it was closed by Marston's in 2018. It was arguably the last traditional pub in the area and had spent its last years as a keg-only Irish theme pub.

Luckily, local family brewer Joseph Holt came to the rescue and bought it in 2019. The Covid pandemic slowed things down but it finally reopened as the **Spinners Rest** on 29 June after a £2.5 million refurbishment. You can see where the money went. The pub has been gutted and an extension built on the side, the latter catering for diners (food is served every day from 12 noon until 8pm).



The bar occupies much of the rear wall in the main building and off this there are a variety of different areas, with seating varying from high stools to traditional fixed benches. The finish is very traditional, with lots of dark wood, and all finished to the highest standard – the pub is air-conditioned, too. A lot of thought has obviously gone into all of this.

From offering no cask beer, there is now a full array from Holt's. When *Opening Times* called there was a choice of Mild, Bitter, Two Hoots and Spun Gold IPA (which we think is an experimental new beer being given a try-out here). Another handpump was blank but we understand this is for Holt's Bitter from a wooden cask, which goes on sale on Fridays.

The pub has been a hit with the locals, too. Reports are that it has varied from being very busy to packed out pretty much every day since opening. Justifiably so, we think. Highly recommended.

Mild Magic Award



As we reported in the last issue, this year's Mild Magic Champion Mild was won by Holt's for their Mild & Mighty. The brewery suggested we present the award in the Spinners Rest and so a large group of local CAMRA members duly assembled on Thursday 6 August to present the award to brewer Joel Graves. It was particularly appropriate for Joel to receive the award as Mild & Mighty was brewed to his recipe, his first for Joseph Holt. He is pictured here, right, receiving the award from Mild Magic organiser Glenn Males.

Macclesfield Pub of the Season

The **Greyhound Inn** at Ashley is what most people visualise when they imagine the typical Cheshire country pub, writes Ali Warrington.

Food is a major draw here; there's an extensive menu available, with pub favourites, all well made and served, they won't make your wallet cry either. Despite the focus on dining, the layout, centred around a traditional bar counter, gives a proper 'pubby' feel to the Greyhound.



It's been run as a managed house by JW Lees for a dozen-plus years, and the cask offering is front and centre. Lees' flagship bitter is always available, and this is complemented by Manchester Pale Ale, plus another beer from the regular Lees range or one of their seasonal beers. Despite having an above

ground cellar, these are always well kept.

In charge is Emily Edwards, a ten-year veteran of the brewery, who came into the business after six years working at the Boathouse, Chester. Emily has now been at the Greyhound for over four years and has firmly put her stamp on the pub, keeping a keen eye on quality and making the Greyhound much more dog friendly. Backing up Emily is a fantastic team. The regulars most definitely appreciate their skills and dedication.

The Pub of the Season award was presented to Jodie by branch chair Dave Gittins on 11 July as Emily was not available on that day. The Greyhound is a short walk from Ashley railway station.

Nancy Swanick

On Tuesday 28 July, Manchester said goodbye to one of its most cherished publicans, writes Dan Leonard. Nancy Swanick passed away peacefully at the age of 96, leaving behind a legacy that extends far beyond one of the city's most famous pubs.



For over 55 years, Nancy dedicated her life to the **Peveril of the Peak**, on Great Bridgewater Street in the City Centre. She became far more than its landlady; she became one of the defining faces of Manchester's hospitality. Warm yet wonderfully forthright, fiercely protective of the pub's character, and deeply proud of what it represented, she ensured that the Pev remained exactly what it had always been – a proper pub, full of history, conversation, laughter and community.

Although Nancy is no longer behind the scenes, her legacy will live on. The Swanick family have confirmed that the Peveril of the Peak will remain in family hands, continuing the values she spent decades protecting. Every pint poured, every story shared across the bar, and every new visitor discovering the Pev for the first time will become part of the legacy she leaves behind. Manchester has lost one of its great characters.

Nancy is pictured above with a mirror presented by CAMRA to mark her 40th year in the pub. Photo courtesy John O'Donnell.

News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

The Thumb Does It Again

The CAMRA awards just keep rolling in at the **Northumberland Arms** in Marple Bridge. Having won the 2026 Pub of the Year award from the High Peak, Tameside & Goyt Valley branch, it went on to win the award for the Greater Manchester Area. Winning this put it in the North West regional competition, where it went up against the winners from Lancashire, Cumbria and the Isle of Man. And once again, it came up trumps. That puts this excellent, community-owned local in the final 16 of the National Pub of the Year contest.



Landlord Phil Jarvis was over the moon, telling *Opening Times*: "To go

from closure just over nine years ago to becoming CAMRA North West pub of the year is an amazing achievement.

"And it goes to prove, if you can create a welcoming friendly atmosphere, good beers and a nice pub that people want to revisit, good things can happen. A massive thanks to all involved on the community side, helping out at the pub, and everyone on the bar who works so hard and always serves with a smile no matter how busy we get."

The North West award was due to be presented on Saturday 19 September. Meanwhile, the Greater Manchester award was handed over on Saturday 25 July.

Blackjack



On Friday 17 July, Cath Potter from the Central Manchester branch presented two CAMRA beer awards to Keenan McDonald from Blackjack Brewery for their Manchester Stout.

The first was Bronze in the Session Stouts and Porters category at the 2025 Champion Beer of Britain competition final, awarded at Cambridge beer festival earlier this year. The second was Gold in the same category at the North West 2026 regional competition held at Stockport Beer festival in June.

Manchester Stout will now go forward to the 2027 Champion Winter Beer of Britain final held next year, hopefully to be successful again.

East Cheshire News

The **White Lion** in Disley was scheduled to reopen in August after shutting at some point in May. At one time, this was one of Disley's best pubs but, after a succession of half-hearted attempts to make a go of it, there is now new hope in the shape of Paul Johnson, previously of the **Horse & Jockey**, Wilmslow. Paul has extensive experience in the trade and he tells us that he will be reintroducing cask ales to the pub in a sustainable manner.

At the other end of Disley, popular licensees Diane and Geof at the **White Horse** are leaving at the end of August. It was feared that the pub would close, however we learn that new tenants will take over when they leave.

Award for Steelfish Tap

Since it opened last December, the **Steelfish Brewery Tap** has become a must-visit stop for any beer lover visiting central Manchester. Conveniently located at 108 Temperance Street (just around the corner from the **Star & Garter**), it's just a short walk from Piccadilly station.

Three cask and six keg lines feature changing beers from the Steelfish range and guest ales from local breweries. Good quality, simple bar snacks are available, such as huge cheese cobs and sausage rolls, but only until they are gone each day. There's also a fridge which is well-stocked with various cans and bottles.



This all prompted the Central Manchester branch of CAMRA to make it their Best Newcomer for 2026. This well-deserved award was presented on 25 June – Central Manchester branch chair Sean O'Mahoney (right) is seen above presenting the award to Steelfish's Simon Goodier (left) and Gideon Foster (centre). The third member of the Steelfish team, Ali Combes, was unfortunately ill.

Beer Shed Sold

We reported last month that **Beer Shed** on Market Street in New Mills was up for sale. We also said we were quietly optimistic that it would be continuing in a very similar format.



Well, so it has proved to be. It's been bought by a group of regulars: Kerri Perkins, Ben Body, Fraser Brisbane and Nicola Munro. Kerri used to run **Archie's**, the short-lived but excellent pub and cafe at The Torrs on Market Street in New Mills, and the others are all very familiar with Beer Shed. So far, it seems to have been a seamless transition – we hope to get up there for a chat in

time for the next issue.

Bulls Head, Stalybridge

High Peak branch has been in contact with Andy Kleek, the CEO of the company that owns the **Sportsman** in Hyde. He advised that renovation work is now underway at the long closed **Bull's Head** in Stalybridge. It was due to open shortly, and may well be up and running by the time you read this. The beer range was still to be confirmed.

Scribbles on a Beermat



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

A Poem Written By A Book Sitting On A Pub's Shelf

Don't be fooled by my dust duvet.
I'm ready whenever you need me.

I'm the chap wedged between
a pub quiz hardback from 1993

and a collection of 1001 walks
You Must Walk Before You Die.

They're good lads. Self-confessed
know-it-alls, but at least they don't

cut a fun debate short by Googling
the answer like more modern pubgoers.

They're certainly more interesting
than the poetry anthology collated

by a disgraced newsreader and the
long filled-in Reader's Digest crossword.

I can't remember when I got here
But I've seen the door open and close

several million times now, watching
dogs, cyclists, commuters, first dates,

funeral parties, families, countless regulars
walk in for a warm ale and a cold pork pie.

When was the last time you looked at me?
Do you even know the colour of my spine

or the name of the writer who gave me life?
I love listening to the stories in this room.

Like the guy who just taught himself
how to make his own BBQ sauce,

the one-handed Rubik's Cube solver,
the woman who lived in Japan for a few years,

the kid who just started MMA lessons,
the man who has never eaten a Twix.

If I had hands, I would write them all down
for a book to join me on this shelf,
ready for whenever people need it.

Stockport's Lost Pubs with Dave Stearn

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

There are three significant lost pubs in Stockport called the **Royal Oak**. The oldest was one of the few landmarks featured on a 1680 map of the town. This large coaching inn gave its name to Royal Oak Yard off Little Underbank, where horses were stabled. The pub stood on the bank of the now-culverted Tin Brook. A sketch on the map showed it was triple-gabled and, it is thought, half-timbered, although we are not sure exactly what it looked like. It was demolished in 1794 and replaced with a building which for many years was the home to the *Stockport Advertiser*. The licence was transferred to the Good Queen Anne (now Queen's Head) on Little Underbank.



A new **Royal Oak** opened soon afterwards up on High Street. The original low-key building from the 1820s, pictured in 1978, was demolished in 1985 and rebuilt in much the same style. It stayed open until 2013, when it was converted into apartments. It is most famous these days for the mural of Girls Aloud singer, and daughter of Stockport, Sarah Harding, painted on the side wall, which has put it on the Stockport Music Story tourist trail.

Another **Royal Oak** was located at 1 Higher Hillgate, and was where the brewery of the same name started beer production in the 1840s before moving to a site further up Hillgate. This pub closed in 1957 and was later demolished.

Also under the letter 'R': the **Railway**. It was a popular name for Stockport pubs in the nineteenth century, with no fewer than seven different pubs of that name. The final two town centre Railway pubs closed in the 2020s. One was on Wellington Road North, a cask ale house popular with CAMRA members and jazz lovers. It closed in 2024 following the sad death of licensee, Ray Ford.



Another **Railway** pub was the one which stood on the corner of Great Portwood Street and Avenue Street (pictured in 1978). The building dated back to the 1820s but it was converted into a cottage-style pub in the middle of the nineteenth century after the Cheshire

Lines railway arrived in Portwood with the opening of the Stockport and Woodley Junction Railway in 1863. It went through several incarnations over the years, being renamed as Byrons and Cheekies before going back to its roots in 1997, after it was acquired by the Porter Brewing Company. Its reputation as a real ale local grew and in 2007 it was voted Stockport CAMRA Pub of the Year. It closed in 2022 and was demolished to make way for a planned 16,000 square foot retail unit.

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



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Pub Walks with Chris Morris

East Didsbury

You don't have to travel far to experience a scenic pub walk. Easily accessed using tram, train or bus, this pub adventure takes us along the banks of the River Mersey and its neighbouring woodlands. As well as providing the chance to experience some quality time amongst nature, excellent cask beer awaits at the start and end.

Public Transport and Walk Details

This walk starts at East Didsbury Metrolink station, with East Didsbury railway station nearby, and numerous bus services stopping at Parrs Wood. Mostly flat and four miles long, the paths are mainly good. However, some riverbank paths are slightly uneven and might be muddy after wet weather, so suitable footwear is needed. All pubs are dog-friendly.



If pre-walk food and drinks are required, these can be found close to the walk start at the **Gateway**. A *Good Beer Guide* regular, this Wetherspoons pub has excelled since it was purchased from Hydes in 2011. Unlike most Wetherspoons premises, it was originally designed as

a public house and so maintains the atmosphere of a much-loved local, with wood panelling and a central bar. The welcome is warm here, with friendly and knowledgeable staff key to its success, and it has built up a local band of regulars enjoying the expertly kept ale. Up to eight cask beers are available which, on last inspection, were Brightside Bobby Dazzler, Wilde Child Impending Suspension, Acorn Old Moor, Moorhouse's Off Grid, Kelham Island Pale Rider, Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King's Abbot Ale and Ruddles Best.

The Walk

From East Didsbury Metrolink stop, walk to the end of the tram tracks along the platform, away from the road bridge. Don't walk up the incline but follow the signs for the Transpennine Trail Stockport, which takes you through woodland and through a tunnel. After 150 yards, take a right, signposted to Transpennine Trail Stockport town centre. Then walk straight on through a residential estate before entering woodland.

At the next junction, ignore the path to the left and bear right. After 350 yards we reach the banks of the River Mersey, where we turn right and follow the riverside path, with the water on our left. After 500 yards we reach Cheadle Bridge, marking the boundary between the historic counties of Lancashire and Cheshire. Walking up the steps and crossing straight over the main road, follow the road on the other side, next to the river, keeping to the left. After passing a leisure club on the left, keep straight ahead along the narrow road. When we reach the car park, carry straight on as before, past the overflow car park, to find a path that enters more woodland.

At the fork, keep right and follow the meandering path, which then passes under a road bridge and then a railway bridge. With the river back on our left, we have a choice of two paths along the riverbank – lower to the left and upper to the right. Take either, but after a further 700 yards make sure to pass the sluice station on the upper path, with the building on your left. After a further 350 yards, at a slight kink in the trail, take the narrow path to the right that enters woodland. Carry on straight ahead, ignoring a right turn, to join a much wider

gravel track. Walk straight ahead here and after 500 yards turn right to continue along the wide track, which then delivers us back to the riverbank.

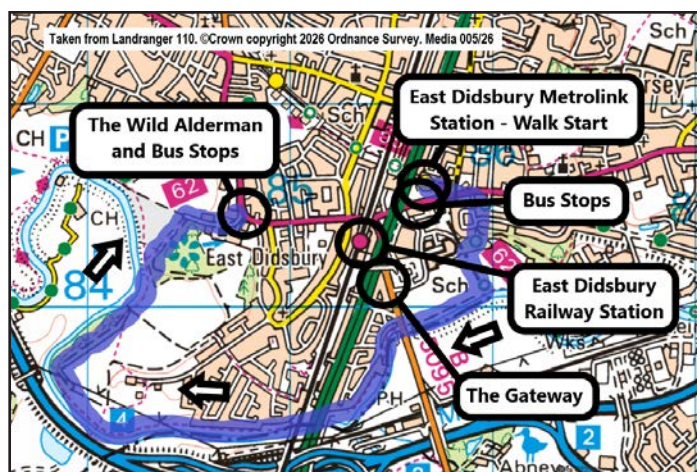
Carry straight on ahead, with the water on your left as before. After passing eight benches on your right, bear right to leave the riverbank, then take an immediate left, opposite a Mersey Valley Health Walk sign. At the next junction, bear right and continue along the wide path which passes through an impressive avenue of trees. At the end of the path, turn right and follow the road uphill, then left, where your rewarding pint awaits.



The **Wild Alderman** is a new addition to the local beer scene, having opened in July 2025. In that short space of time, it has made a big impression, it offering being slightly different from the other two neighbouring pubs – especially with the cask beer. Housed in much smaller premises, it presents a cosy and intimate atmosphere, further enhanced by

the friendly staff. The interior has been tastefully furnished with a mixture of bespoke furniture, adding to the individual and relaxing space. The pub is also a tap for Beartown Brewery, often offering up to three of their cask beers plus a guest. When I last visited, these were Beartown's Citra Smash and Lit, with Thornbridge's Kipling as the guest. The quality food is popular, with Sunday roasts a speciality. When I visited, the pub was discounting all cask beer on Mondays, 'beer and a burger' was on offer on Wednesdays, quizzes are on Tuesdays and live jazz is every month.

For your journey home, bear right from the pub's door for the nearby bus stops. Walking a further half mile along Wilmslow Road takes you to East Didsbury's Railway and Metrolink Stations.





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Events, Socials and Meetings

Plus local CAMRA Contacts

Local CAMRA Contacts

Stockport & South Manchester (SSM)

ssm.camra.org.uk

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

Facebook – facebook.com/SSMCAMRA

X – @SSMCAMRA

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Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)

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X – @MECCAMRA

Central Manchester (CMCR)

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X – @MCRCentralCamra

Trafford & Hulme (T&H)

thcamra.org.uk

Contact: Mark Reeves; enquiries@thcamra.org.uk

Facebook – facebook.com/groups/336531787379

X – @THCAMRA

CAMRA National website: camra.org.uk

Formal Branch Meetings

CAMRA members only at these meetings.

Wednesday 2 September – Old Roebuck, 42 Victoria Street, Altrincham, WA14 1ET. Starts 8pm. (T&H)

Thursday 10 September – Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury, M20 5PG. Guest speaker from Thornbridge Brewery. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 12 September – Branch meeting: venue to be confirmed. See branch website for more information. (HPTGV)

Thursday 8 October – Runaway Brewery Taproom, 9-11 Astley Street, Stockport, SJ4 1AW. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Thursday 8 October – Branch AGM: Stubborn Mule Brewery, Unit 1, Skelton Road, Timperley, Altrincham, WA14 1SJ. Starts 8pm. (T&H)

Social Events & Presentations

Everyone very welcome at these events.

Wednesday 9 September – Branch social to Newcastle-under-Lyme. Catch 11:03 train from Stockport to Stoke, and then onward bus from Stoke. (HPTGV)

Saturday 12 September – Wilmslow Wander. Details to be confirmed – see branch website for information. Starts 12 noon. (MEC)

Tuesday 15 September – Tuesday Tipples in Warrington. See branch website for more information. (T&H)

Thursday 17 September – Pub of the Month presentation: Spinning Top, 20 Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK4 1AA. Presentation will be at 7pm – note early start. (SSM)

Saturday 19 September – CAMRA North West Regional Pub of the Year presentation: Northumberland Arms, 64 Compstall Road, Marple Bridge, SK6 5HD. From 2pm. (HPTGV)

Tuesday 22 September to Tuesday 29 September – Branch trip to Bamberg and Franconia. (HPTGV)

Friday 25 September – Northenden Stagger: 7:30pm Farmers Arms, 26 Longley Lane, M22 4JR; then Wythenshawe Club, 78 Longley Lane, M22 4JF; 8:30pm Lounge About, 424 Palatine Road, M22 4JT; final pub Crown Inn, 19 Ford Lane, M22 4WE (SSM)

Saturday 26 September – Beer Adventure to Nottingham. Catch 9:30am train from Piccadilly. More details on branch website, (T&H)

Saturday 26 September – Branch social trip to Wigan. See branch website calendar for more details. (CMCR)

Saturday 26 September – Wolverhampton and Sedgeley Wander. Catch 10:30am train from Macclesfield. More details on branch website. (MEC)

Wednesday 30 September – Weekday Wander to Tyldesley and Atherton. Meet 11am at St Peters Square, Manchester City Centre to catch buses V1 or V2. First pub Colliers Arms, 105 Sale Lane, Tyldesley, M29 8PA at 12 noon. (SSM)

Saturday 3 October – Leek Wander. Details to be confirmed – see branch website for more information. Starts 12 noon. (MEC)

Friday 16 October – Levenshulme Stagger: 7:30pm Blue Bell, 170 Barlow Road, M18 3HF; 8:30pm Station Hop, 815 Stockport Road, M19 3BS; final pub Sidings, Broom Lane, M19 2UB. (SSM)

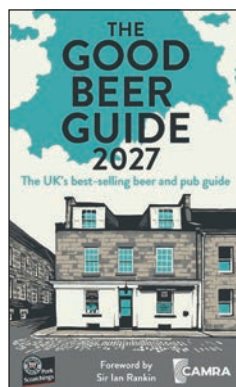
Tuesday 20 October – Tuesday Tipples in Newton-le-Willows. See branch website for more information. (T&H)

Thursday 22 October – Pub of the Month presentation: Arden Arms, 23 Millgate, Stockport, SK1 2LX. From 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 24 October – Pub of the Season presentation: Winkle Brewery Tap, Tolls Farm Barn, Danebridge, Winkle, Macclesfield, SK11 0QE. Starts 1pm. (MEC)

Tuesday 3 November – Weekday Wander to Urmston. Meet at Stockport Rail Station at 10:45 for direct train to Urmston. First pub the Tim Bobbin, 41 Flixton Road, Urmston, M41 5AN, from 11:30am. (SSM)

Good Beer Guide 2027



The 2027 edition of CAMRA's national *Good Beer Guide* is published on Thursday 24 September. This is the 54th edition of the country's best beer and pub guide, and features 4,500 of the finest pubs in the UK, chosen by CAMRA members across the country.

We'll have more about it next time. Copies will be available from Jim Flynn at a price of £16.99 (including p&p). Please send a cheque payable to 'CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester' to 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG. You can also pay by BACS using sort code 16-34-27, account number 11363511.

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