

# OPENING TIMES

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2023

FREE



**INSIDE: MILD MAGIC 2023 COMING SOON /  
WINTER BEER FESTIVAL / PUB WALKS /  
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# Contents & Information

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## About Opening Times & Contacts

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Their telephone no. is 03454 04 05 06. To report a matter to Trading Standards go to:

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## Pub Opening Hours

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

## Disclaimer

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

## Your Local CAMRA Contacts & Websites

### Stockport & South Manchester

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Contact: Cath Potter; [chair@centralmanchester.camra.org.uk](mailto:chair@centralmanchester.camra.org.uk)

## Social Media

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### Stockport & South Manchester:

Facebook – [www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA](http://www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA)

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### Macclesfield & East Cheshire:

Facebook – [www.facebook.com/groups/897449270304045](http://www.facebook.com/groups/897449270304045)

Twitter – @MECCAMRA

## CAMRA Discounts

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

## Front Cover

Happy New Year! Runaway Brewery's Mark Welsby and happy customers at the brewery's pop-up tap in Stockport. See story on page 10. Photo by Lawrence Devaney.

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**Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn**

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# Pubs of the Month

## Stockport & South Manchester Winners for January and February



*The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month for January is the Swan With Two Necks on Princes Street, Stockport. John Clarke tells you all about it.*

This lively Robinsons house is one of several local pubs to feature on CAMRA's National Inventory of Heritage Pubs – a record of around 270 pubs from all over the country which retain more or less unspoilt interiors. The Swan With Two Necks was rebuilt in 1926 and, apart from the loss of some fixed

seating in the front room, it has remained pretty much untouched since then.



To the left of the entrance is the panelled vault (complete with piano) and ahead is a classic northern drinking lobby. Further on is a superb smoke room with a Tudor-style fireplace and oak panelling which have a notably warm and comfortable feel. Some say it is one of the best pub rooms in town. At the back is another small room and outside is a secluded drinking area (pictured here). This latter underwent an impressive upgrade a few years ago and this, together with a more prominent back entrance to the pub, led to a welcome increase in trade from

the Redrock development across the road.

Two years ago, in January 2020, the tenancy of the Swan With Two Necks was taken on by Geoff and Maria Troughton, who had already made a name for themselves at the nearby Arden Arms, which they also still run very successfully. Geoff looks after the cellar at both pubs and so the beer quality at the Swan is second-to-none. Three or four Robinsons beers are on handpump, and these usually include the current seasonal and, for the winter months, the powerful Old Tom too. It is good to know this classic pub is in safe hands.

Please join us on the evening of Thursday 26 January when this very well-deserved award will be presented to Geoff and Maria. A great night is in prospect.

Given its location, the Swan With Two Necks is well served by public transport, and is within easy walking distance of all the town centre bus stops.



*The Stockport & South Manchester Branch's Pub of the Month award for February 2023 goes to the Grey Horse, Broadstone Road, Reddish. Ray Cronie is a fan and explains why it won.*

This prominent pub, with its ornate brick and terracotta exterior, was built in 1909, originally for the nearby Richard Clarke brewery. Clarke's was bought out and closed down by Boddingtons in 1963. Takeover and closure also befell them too, and in 2007 it was bought by Manchester brewer Joseph Holt.

In recent times, the Grey Horse has undergone a couple of refurbishments, the most recent in August 2022. The main body of the pub is a large comfortable lounge. This was created from two former rooms joined together. The vault is a large L-shaped bar, containing a pool table, high tables, and access to the rear outside area, where there is a large garden and a smoking area. At the front is another outdoor drinking area giving views of Broadstone Road and the mill. Licensee Helen Partington has been in charge for almost three years. She has numerous years of experience in the licensing trade, and has worked hard to make the pub a centre of the community.

Holt's Bitter is the main beer on sale, and there is a 'Happy Hour', which sees 20p off the price of a pint, between 12 noon and 6pm from Monday to Thursday inclusive. There is free pool all day on Mondays and a quiz night every Tuesday. There are numerous large TV screens showing sport, the main topic being predominantly football.

So why not join the local CAMRA Branch on Thursday 23 February, when the Pub of the Month Award will be presented to Helen and her hard-working staff? It promises to be a very good night.

The once-a-week train service to Reddish South won't help you, but there are convenient buses to take you to the Grey Horse. The 42A, running from South Manchester to Reddish, and the 7, from Stockport to East Manchester, will drop you very close by. The 203 will drop you off near Houldsworth Square from where it's a short walk.

***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. Check out their advert on the previous page.***

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# Scribbles on a Beermat



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

## Floats

The man sits in the pub  
with the wardrobe of a football pundit:  
navy blue chinos, salmon shirt,  
trainers pretending to be shoes.  
The froth of bitter snows from his moustache  
while he nods to his own opinions  
*They just need to clear their lines.*  
*The fullbacks need to sit.*  
*The keeper can't command his box.*  
The barman, all skull tattoos and flesh tunnels,  
gently puts his book on the bar and says  
*I love the way Phil Foden floats*  
*as if the pitch doesn't deserve him.*  
The man crunches a dry roasted peanut.

## "I Don't Enjoy Spending Time With Him. He's Too Simple."

I spend hours in the pub  
listening to strangers talking to each other  
picturing sitting on their sofa  
drinking the cheapest beer from ASDA,  
chewing on oven-cooked cheese pizzas  
(because it's the quickest thing to do)  
while asking where they got their cutlery from,  
pointing out the number of condiments  
stacked in their fridge door and nodding  
at the photo on the wall of a mate  
we both miss with all our bones  
and then one of them says a sentence  
and I'm back in the pub remembering  
it's best to be on your own sometimes.

## Scene

The pub window has a winter scene painted  
across it. White line illustrations of ale and wine  
bottles dangle like decorations above a skyline  
of a town that looks like the one I'm in.  
A four-inch snowman stands next to a three storey  
house topped with snow dripping  
down like icing on a trendy wedding cake.  
The house has a door I can picture you closing  
to keep the warm air from getting out.  
I bet you're happy in there. It's nice to imagine  
you growing up without a motorbike licence,  
struggling to fit your latest food delivery  
in the freezer, play fighting over the TV remote  
with kids you will never meet.

# My Favourite Beer Spot

## Sarah Hopes visits Reason To Be Cheerful



Just a stone's throw from Burnage train station, Reasons To Be Cheerful, or R2BC as it's regularly known, is a small, contemporary bar at 228 Fog Lane.

This friendly, family-run bar was established in late 2016, serving ever-changing quality beers from both local and national breweries. Usually there are three cask beers available, including pales, bitters and stouts; and a variety of keg beers across eight

taps, including sours, Belgians, nitro-stouts and hoppy pales. The beer conditioning is outstanding and you'll always receive a friendly, knowledgeable welcome from the staff.

Once you have finished your draft beer, you can look in the fridge at the collection of cans and bottles to take away and continue your evening. There is also a selection of quality bottled ciders, and a range of snacks that take you back to the 70s!

If you are with friends who aren't into beer or cider, there is also a selection of wines, gins, rums and single malts.

And there's a quiz on the last Tuesday of each Month!

**Transport:** Bus Routes: 23 42 42A 44 171 172 727 728 750 769 (all less than a 10-minute walk). Train: Burnage (1 min). Tram: Didsbury Village or East Didsbury (both 15 mins).

**Opening Hours:** Monday: closed (except for bank holidays); Tuesday to Thursday: 4pm to 10pm; Friday: 4pm to 11pm; Saturday: 2pm to 11pm; Sunday: 2pm to 10pm.

**Do you have a favourite beer spot? If so, then why not write about it for Opening Times? Just send us two or three hundred words, plus details of public transport and opening hours. The editorial address is on page 3.**

## Mild Magic 2023

Mild Magic will be back for 2023. Mild Magic kicks off on 31 March and will run until 14 May. We anticipate around 100 pubs in total being part of the challenge, with prizes being won for sampling mild in different areas as follows: 12 areas – t-shirt, 24 areas – polo shirt, or 48 areas for a sweatshirt.

We are also delighted that Manchester family brewer Hydes has agreed to sponsor this year's competition. By popular demand, the cunning anagram challenge will also return. Collect enough letters to spell Mild Magic and this will add to your rewards. Full details will be in the March/April issue.





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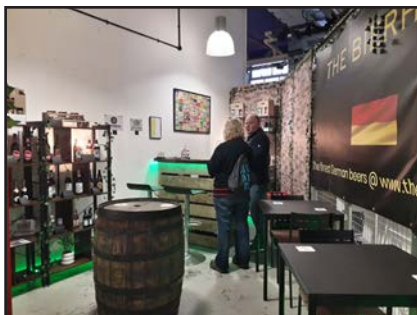




# Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

## The Bierhaus, Reddish



online shop at [thebierhaus.co.uk](http://thebierhaus.co.uk).

In the longer term, Steve is looking to move his bar to a high street location as he is currently limited by the opening hours of the mill. He also has premises in Stalybridge from where he operates his home delivery (or collect in person) operation.

There has been yet another addition to the burgeoning Reddish beer scene. The **Bierhaus**, a small bottled beer bar on the first floor of Broadstone Mill, opened in late December. It's run by Steve Worrall and specialises in German bottled beers that can't normally be found in the supermarkets – there is an

## The Gateway, East Didsbury



Long-serving manager Kevin Muldoon has left the **Gateway** in East Didsbury to run the **JP Joule** in Sale. During his ten-plus year tenure at the Gateway, Kevin made the pub something of a *Good Beer Guide* fixture and also garnered more than one Pub of the Month award.

Kevin's successor as manager is Adele Graham who has worked for Wetherspoons for 12 years at a number of their pubs across the area. In recent years the majority of her time was spent at the Gateway, where she was responsible for the cellar. Adele told Opening Times: "I really hope to build on the reputation the Gateway has developed for fantastic beer and a welcoming atmosphere." She is a fan of dark beers, especially Saltaire Triple Choc!

## Archive, Cheadle Hulme



we do hope that cask beer features in them, as Archive has been a very welcome addition to the local scene. One major change has already been announced, though. The bar's Facebook page advised that: "Due to some changes being made...we have decided to go a different direction and have removed the bottle shop fridges from the business." More news as we get it.

Archive Bar & Bottle, on Mellor Road in Cheadle Hulme, was on the market for most of 2022. Late last year came news that it has now been sold. We are told that the buyers are Simon and Edward Bromley, who are also tenants of the **Church Inn**.

We don't know what the plans are, although

## Griffin, Heald Green



The **Griffin**, on Wilmslow Road in Heald Green, reopened in late November after its most recent refurbishment – there have been a few, and we reckon this is Griffin Mark V or VI, depending on whether you count the original location further south on Wilmslow Road at Griffin Farm.

It's pretty much the same externally, apart from a new, larger sign, and not massively different inside either, with perhaps a little more opening up around the bar, and also a refit with some darker wood. Two cask beers were on sale – Holt's Bitter and Two Hoots, the former was the same price (£4.10) and condition (good) as the last time our reporter called prior to the refurbishment.

## News in Brief

In Hazel Grove, the **Bird in Hand** is currently closed. Robinsons tell us that this is pending a (much-needed) refurbishment which is planned for this year, although the dates have still to be finalised.

Also closed is Robinsons' **Victoria** in Dukinfield. In this case Robinsons are letting the pub go – and it is for sale, complete with licence, via Fleurets. We will be interested to see whether anyone buys it with the intention of keeping it going as a pub.



In Strines, the former **Sportsman** has reopened as the **Strines Nightingale**. It was due to close again between 8 and 26 January for further refurbishment work so we'll bring you a fuller report next time. For the moment, we can say that the pub plans to offer a range of locally-brewed cask ales, and the

website also mentions a beer festival in August.

The **Milliner** in Davenport is now running a 'happy hour' between 12 noon and 5pm, Monday to Friday, with one cask beer at £1.99 a pint.

The **Deansgate**, on Deansgate in central Manchester, reopened in November. It is now operating as a Greene King pub with a full food menu, and has added a second function room, which was formerly the manager's flat, on the second floor. When visited, there were three cask beers on sale: Greene King IPA, Taylor's Landlord and a house beer of unknown origin (but the smart money is on Greene King).

Also in the city centre, the site of the **Brink** on Bridge Street, which never reopened after the first lockdown, is now operating as a cocktail bar called **Bar 11** – inevitably with no cask ale. The Brink was much loved and is a sad loss.

Rui Defreitas, lately of the **Plough & Flail**, Mobberley, has taken over the **Heaton**, Heaton Mersey, in addition to the **Parrswood**, which he already runs. The pub reopened on 16 December, after some redecoration. JW Lees Bitter and MPA are the cask beers, and there is an extensive menu available every day from 12 noon.



# What's Brewing

## Brewery News from around the region

### News from Distant Hills

There has been a change of personnel at Glossop's **Distant Hills Brewery**. Head brewer Jack Dewison has left to work closer to home and in his place, as a brewery advisor, is a familiar face from Manchester's brewing past.



Don Burgess (pictured left) was at university in Manchester, and then went on to brew with Brendan Dobbin at the pioneering West Coast Brewery based in Chorlton-on-Medlock. More significantly, Don was the founder of the well-regarded Freeminer Brewery based in the Forest of Dean. Freeminer brewed from 1992 to 2016, and in that time produced many award-winning beers, including Shakemantle ginger beer and the potent Deep Shaft Stout.

*Opening Times* caught up with Don, and Distant Hills MD Danny James, at a Distant Hills Members' Event on 21 December, and both were very excited for the future.

Don described the very high-spec Distant Hills kit as a 'Lamborghini', but one which has not so far been fully put through its paces. That will be changing this year. Danny ran through a list of forthcoming specials which included American-inspired IPAs, and Belgian-style brews such as a triple and a 'brut' dark beer.

Danny told us: "Don brings a wealth of experience with him from running Freeminer and Enfield Brewery. In increasingly challenging times, we want to ensure that we are getting the most out of the setup here, and we believe Don can help us do that by working with myself and our growing team. We are incredibly excited for 2023."

In addition, the current Distant Hills range is likely to be tweaked. Available at the Members' Event was Distant Sessions, a new 3.8% quaffing bitter with a hoppy fruitiness at the front and a growing moreish bitterness, plus, on keg, Rapture, a 6% chocolate and orange stout. Both were excellent and augur very well for the future. And, who knows, perhaps Don will be allowed to resurrect a couple of the old Freeminer beers as well?

All in all, 2023 should be a very exciting year for Distant Hills. We are very much looking forward to it.

### Runaway Brewery moves to Stockport

**Runaway Brewery**, one of Manchester's favourite small brewers, is coming to Stockport this year.

The move follows a year of planning, design and refurbishment between themselves and landlord Orbit Developments, with the brewery entering into a 20-year lease at Crossley House, a former sheet metal works, on Astley Street, just off Heaton Lane.

Runaway Brewery's founder Mark Welsby, told *Opening Times*: "We're all really excited by our move to Stockport and to be shifting Runaway's focus a little. We hope our move from the inner city will allow us a bit more time to explore the things that inspire us and our beer. We're really looking forward to engaging with a new community

here in Stockport – especially opportunities to collaborate with other indie food and drink producers!"



He added that the team at Runaway is inspired by the positive impact that other small, independent businesses are having as part of Stockport's ongoing resurgence, saying: "It feels like a fantastic opportunity for us to offer something new in the town and hopefully, like those who are already here, we can

have a positive influence on what comes next!"

As a taster, Runaway ran a pop-up tap at the new premises over the first three weekends in December. This saw full houses every night so it looks like the Stockport beer drinking community has already taken Runaway to its heart. The tap will be open again later this year after the brewery move is complete.

### Temperance Street Brewery

In the last issue, we reported that Steve Dunkley was selling his **Beer Nouveau** brewery, based in a railway arch on North Western Street in Ardwick.



"If there are no buyers it will close by the end of November," we said. Well, there is good news: a buyer has come forward in the form of Katie Sutton (pictured above with Steve), daughter of the late CAMRA activist Dave Hannan.

This came about following a conversation Katie, who is an active CAMRA volunteer herself, had with Steve at a beer festival in September. She found that, with help from her father's estate, she would be able to buy the business. She initially hoped that Steve would stay on to run the brewery and tap, but he had other plans. Luckily, Matt Gibson, who runs Temperance Street Cider, was interested in Katie's plans so he will be helping run the taproom with her.

It's going to be pretty much business as usual, albeit with a few tweaks. Katie told us: "I intend to keep the 'vibe' much the same as it currently is – but with some added cosiness, because I know I'm always too cold in there. We will continue to have cask and keg beer on, as well as cider, wines, mead and soft drinks. People will still be welcome to order in food."

Steve is taking the Beer Nouveau name with him so the tap will now be called the **Temperance Street Taproom**. The brewery will still operate under the Temperance Street name; beers will be brewed by Katie when she has the time; guest beers will also be bought in. In addition, Steve will be using the kit to brew some of his Beer Nouveau beers, so they may well appear too.

The Temperance Street Taproom is at 75 North Western Street, M12 6DY. Opening hours are Friday 4pm-10.30pm and Saturday noon-10.30pm. Well worth a visit.



# News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

## Crown & Kettle



Prominently situated on the corner of Great Ancoats Street and Oldham Road in central Manchester, the **Crown & Kettle** is one of the city's more famous pubs.

Known for its elaborate ceiling pendants, this is a pub that has had more than its fair share of ups and downs over the years. The biggest down was a sixteen-year closure which came to an end in 2005. Since then, there has been steady progress and *Opening Times* paid a long-overdue visit to have a chat.

Internally it's very impressive. Apart from the famous ceiling, there are three rooms around a central bar, each with its own character. In the warmer months there is extensive outdoor seating, which was certainly very popular during last year's hot weather.



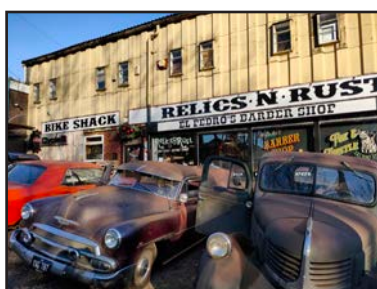
The pub changed hands around May 2021 and we spoke to manager Henry Glew (pictured here). Henry, a cask ale fan (and also a fan of red ales), told us that he likes to keep the cask range very varied – low ABV beers and gluten-free beers feature as do milds and stouts. He likes to support local brewers, and in fact has collaborated with Ancoats neighbours Big Trip to brew a strawberry and vanilla vegan milkshake IPA, which sold extremely well. Hopefully more collaborations are in the pipeline.

During the week, there will be six or seven cask beers sold, increasing to nine at the weekend. Cask volumes are increasing all the time, with last year's Cask Ale Week providing a significant boost. Further themed weeks are planned, including a Heritage Week, featuring well-established cask beers, and then a 'Cask to the Future' Week showcasing more modern takes on the category. St David's Day (which is on 1 March) will see a Welsh tap takeover.

In addition to the cask range, there is also an impressive keg choice and, in addition, there are a couple of traditional ciders.

The Crown & Kettle is well worth a visit on its own, but it's also just a short walk from many other good beer outlets.

## Relics'n'Rust



And now for something completely different. We first heard about **Relics'n'Rust** almost three years ago but a call from owner Howard Pedder prompted a visit in early December.

How to describe it? Certainly, it's the first time in a very long while that *Opening Times*

has walked into somewhere and been lost for words. Inside the very eclectically decorated and furnished building, described as a 'lifestyle shop', you'll find a tattoo studio, a barber shop, a florist, a clothes store and, of course, a bar.

It first opened in 2015 with the bar following in February 2020. We all know what happened shortly after that and it didn't reopen until late 2021. It's very much a family operation and Howard has sons, daughters-in-law, and their sisters, working in the various businesses. His son Jack (pictured here with Howard) is in fact the licensee.



Jack was also a racing cyclist who competed in California and Belgium. They were both inspired by what

they saw in southern California and this was what in turn inspired Relics'n'Rust – there's certainly a bit of a Californian vibe in the bar area.

There is no draught beer, but what you will find is a good range of bottles and cans, with beers from Belgium, Germany and the UK featuring. There is bottled and canned cider, too. You can buy these to either drink in or take away. Coffee is also available, and you'll find a selection of cigars as well.

Howard told us that he plans to expand the range, which he likes to keep varied, and also tweaks to include what his locals like to drink. To help you choose your beer there is also a 'Beer Bible' with details of all the beers and breweries.

Do visit. It's on Commercial Brow in Hyde, right next to Newton for Hyde station. You can't miss it – it's the place with all the vintage cars outside. It's closed on Sunday and Monday, and open from 11am to around 9pm every other day.

## P-Noot Moves



For convenience and practicality **P-Noot** has moved its brewing operation from the cellar in the **Lowes Arms** in Denton, to the **Four Kings Brewery** in Hyde. However, cask ale will continue to be brewed for the Lowes Arms, including a new beer called Stark BA, described by the brewer as "a

refreshing blonde ale, lightly hopped with subtle sweet notes and a delicate citrus aroma." Whilst cask ales from P-Noot currently remain exclusively available at the Lowes Arms, moving the brewery to Four Kings is anticipated to lead to availability at other pubs in the locality.

## In Brief

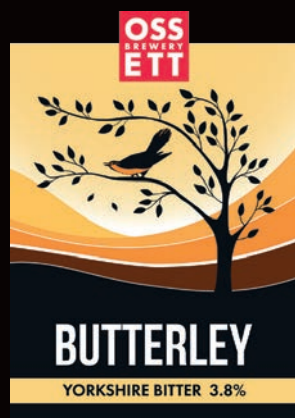
Last time we said we'd bring you more this time on both **Green Arches** brewery and the new **Sureshot Brewing** tap. We have failed on both counts but there will definitely be more on both next time. We can however say that the **Sureshot Tap** is at 4 Sheffield Street, next door to the brewery, and is open every day apart from Monday.

Sureshot is getting some exciting neighbours, too. **Balance Brewing & Blending** has taken on the arch at 10 Sheffield Street, and was in the process of setting up there as we went to press. Plans include a brewery tap as well.

Two more for the next issue are Salford's **Strange Times Brewing** and also more on **Mount Crescent Brewing Co.** This is the latest incarnation of the brewery at the back of Stockport's **Magnet** on Wellington Road North. Several beers have been produced to date and reports have been very positive.



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All for that taste of Taylor's





# East Side Story

## Clayton, Openshaw & Gorton with Paul Felton

More than most parts of the Stockport & South Manchester branch, East Manchester has suffered a lot from a loss of much of its pub stock. The one notable exception to this is Gorton and Abbey Hey, which still retain a dozen or more pubs – only a couple sell cask beer, but sooner a pub be open not selling cask than not open at all.

The monthly Staggers around various areas of the branch don't get into East Manchester these days, other than the aforementioned Gorton, because the pubs are few and far apart, and evening bus services are limited. Even the excellent Friday night minibuses that used to happen once or twice a year have faded away, as the pubs themselves have faded away.



Then someone had the bright idea of trying a Saturday afternoon, and so five of us found ourselves at the **Grove Inn** on Ashton New Road, near the junction with Clayton Lane, not too far from the Etihad. It's a two-room Holt's pub: vault on the left, with some splendid large windows, lounge on the right. It's been done up fairly recently, though in the disappointing drab grey colour so loved by Robinsons these days. Holt's bitter was to be expected, and it was pretty good, but to our great surprise, cask mild was also available – a great rarity in Holt's pubs these days. It had only recently been reintroduced – the new-ish landlord is a fan, and had decided to give it another try. Dark and always surprisingly bitter for a mild, it was really very good indeed. A slight disappointment is that the War Memorial, which as I remember once had pride of place on the rear wall of the lounge, is now rather hidden away behind the doorway into the vault. But it's a fine pub.



We then went right out of the pub, right down Clayton Lane and then left onto the towpath of the Ashton Canal, heading for the **Strawberry Duck** on Crabtree Lane, just south of Ashton New Road. It's quite a large pub, with two standard pub rooms, plus a large extension for live entertainment. Holt's bitter should have been on; however, on the day there wasn't even that, as a problem with the handpump meant that none was available.



Disappointed, we left without drinking anything, but happily it was only a short walk along the New Road towards Droylsden to the **Halfway House**, another Holt's pub, on the corner of the New Road and Edge Lane. Note: this is a big pub! The massive lounge is on the New Road, one large high-ceilinged space with three distinct areas and several TVs. The very busy vault is on Edge Lane, a proper vault, lots of Holt's etched glass; and there's a Best Room at the back

as well. The only beer available was the bitter, and very good it was too.

Then we had a long walk, 25 minutes or so, down Edge Lane and across to the east on Fairfield Street, past several former pubs (some standing, some not), through the Moravian settlement, past Fairfield High School for Girls, finally ending up at our third Holt's pub, the **Railway Hotel** on Manshaw Road, just off Ashton Old Road. Large, impressive and multi-roomed, this is a personal favourite from days past. Note



the famous lamp outside the front door. Again, only the bitter was available, and again it was pretty darned good. If you are wondering why the pub is so named, it's because the original Fairfield station was at the bottom of the street.

A bus ride next, down through Abbey Hey, took us to Hyde Road. No cask beer at the **Plough**, a rarity for Robinsons – though still worth a visit for its unspoiled Victorian interior; and no cask beer either at the nearby **Nelson**.




Our penultimate venue was – shock horror – another Holt's pub, the **Waggon & Horses** on Hyde Road. The upper-floor Tudor is obviously mock! Several areas surround the island bar: the large lounge is on the right hand side, one big room with three different areas; the smaller vault is on the left. Again, bitter only; again, rather good. But it was all a bit quiet.




Our final visit was just over the main road and through the Butterfly Garden (yes, really), to the **Vale Cottage** on Kirk Street. The cliché of 'a country pub in the city' is a perfect description: several drinking areas, low beams, a garden, friendly, a terrific pub. The beer here was superb, the best of the day, even better than any of the fine Holt's we'd had earlier. Timothy Taylor's Landlord is a regular, and was top-notch; their Boltmaker was also available, and possibly even better. There was a third cask beer on the bar, Moorhouse's White Witch, but so good were the other two that it went untried. Great pub.

So a truly excellent afternoon: very good Holt's topped by super Taylor's. As we always say, try to visit them yourselves and see what you think.





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# Stagger

## Cheadle Hulme with Chris Walkden



The November Stagger was to part of Cheadle Hulme, and so it was that five of us pitched up for the 7.30pm start at the **Kenilworth** on Cheadle Road. This large open-plan pub, divided into several

areas, was nicely busy with a good mix of clientele covering all ages. Two cask beers were on offer, both from Moorhouses brewery in Burnley, one being Premier and the other K2. This latter is actually their Broomstick Bitter, rebranded for the pub, we were told by the friendly landlord who came over for a chat. The K2 was rated as good; no one tried the Premier.



The on-off rain and drizzle that had characterised the day was on again as we made our way to the **Hesketh Tavern**. This pub has the dubious honour of being one that I have been thrown out of, but this was in

1967 when it was a Wilson's house. It was probably not a good idea to go in in school uniform! It's now a Star pub and was, for a while until Covid, run by Almond Pubs, but they gave it up. The next tenants only lasted a few months, but it recently reopened and is now being run by Fine & Country Inns which is based in Barnsley.

There are multiple rooms and a large garden, but that was not for us tonight. The handpulls on the bar were offering Taylor's Landlord, Theakston's Best Bitter and Bradfield Farmers Blonde. All the beers were rated as good.



Leaving this busy pub, it was a 10-minute dry walk to Robinson's **Church Inn**. During Covid, a large tent was erected in the small adjacent car park, initially as a coffee shop. This has been retained and was pretty busy. Inside, the pub was equally busy, but we found the snug

round the back unoccupied. This was just large enough for our group which had now swelled to a dozen. In decades gone by, the snug was very definitely the preserve of regulars only as I remember! The beers available were Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde, Trooper and Cumbria Way. All the beers were sampled and opinions varied from average/good to good.

Crossing the road, we were soon in the **Governors House**, which was at one stage the northern outpost of the Hardys & Hansons empire. Before that, it was the Ravenoak Hotel, known locally as the Raving Oak, as it was run at one stage by a Basil Fawlty character! Greene King took over in 2006 and since then the pub has been refurbished a few times, most recently in 2021. It consists of several large rooms and a large garden, the latter obviously unoccupied tonight. As well as GK IPA and Old Speckled Hen, Thornbridge Jaipur and Taylor's Landlord were on offer. The Landlord quickly ran out, which may



account for its average score, but the Jaipur was rated as good, whilst the Hen scored a 2 and 3.5 – it just shows how people's opinions differ! No one tried the IPA.

The drizzle had restarted as we set off for Hydes' **John Millington**. This is a 2006 development of an

historic building and has been sensitively done by the brewery. There are lots of rooms, which meant that by standing near the entrance conversation was not drowned out by the singer/guitarist strumming away. Hydes Lowry, Hopster and Original were available, as well as



one of their Ralf+Alf branded beers, Ballad Monger. The Hopster and Lowry were judged to be very good with the rest being good.



Leaving the busy Millington, the final call tonight was the **Chiverton Tap**, our 2022 Pub of the Year. Again the place was busy, with six cask beers on offer as well as a number of interesting keg and key-keg beers. In addition to the regular Bollington Best and Long Hop, there were cask beers from Mill Hill (a new brewery in Leicestershire),

Rivington, Turning Point from North Yorkshire and Squawk. All were adjudged to be very good with several people scoring beers four out of five.

It was a fine end to an extensive walk round some of the spread-out pubs of the village and there are others that will be covered by another stagger in the near future. Many different beers were available, and quality throughout was mainly good or above. Pubs were busy, with a good mix of ages which was encouraging. This is just what we found on the night; why not go and try them for yourselves and see what you think?



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# Pub Walks with Chris Morris

## The River Mersey

Winter is a great time for a walk, and even better with the added comforts of a welcoming pub, with great cask beer. Adapted from my friend Pete Turner's idea, this walk is along the banks of the River Mersey and its corridor of nature - starting in a pub, finishing in a pub, with another in the middle. The paths are excellent and straightforward - ideal when the weather isn't kind.

### Bus and Train Information

As this walk starts at Stockport and finishes at East Didsbury, getting there and back couldn't be easier as both are public transport hubs with numerous bus and train services throughout the day. For timetable information, visit [tfgm.com](http://tfgm.com).

### The Walk

This is a straightforward walk, just under four miles and mostly flat, except for a slight climb in the middle. The paths are good and you shouldn't encounter any mud. The OS Explorer map is 277 Manchester & Salford (OS app also available).

### Crown Inn, Stockport



Located on Heaton Lane, next to the famous viaduct, this pub is conveniently close to Stockport bus station and just a short walk down the hill from Stockport train station. A recent refurbishment has meant a smartening up of the traditional décor, a welcome reupholstering of the glorious bench seating and a brightening up of the interior. With reasonably priced food, and up to twelve cask beers available, it gives us the perfect preparation for our walk. When I last visited, the cask beers were from Fuller's, Ossett, Pictish, Greene King, and Brimstage breweries.

After exiting the pub to the right, cross over to the opposite side of Heaton Lane with Kwik Fit on your left. After a few steps along King Street West, cross over at the pedestrian lights and walk down the steps opposite signed 'Trans Pennine Trail' and 'Didsbury 62' which follow the River Mersey. Continue straight along this path for 600 yards, keeping the river on your left at all times. When the famous Stockport pyramid appears on your right, continue along the same Trans Pennine Trail, again keeping the river on your left, for just over a mile. The trail then forks on the edge of a business park, with two benches next to an information board for Heaton Mersey Bleach Works. The path to the left will continue along the Trans Pennine Trail (62) and the path to the right gives us the option of walking to the Crown at Heaton Mersey.

For this detour, enter the business park to the right and walk along the straight pavement on Vale Road with the business units on your

left, crossing over when the pavement ends. When the road bends to the left, cross the road again and continue straight ahead, through a metal gate and up the cobbled hill, past some delightfully picturesque terraced houses, to the pub at the top.

### The Crown, Heaton Mersey



With some parts dating back to the 17th century, this traditional Robinsons pub is full of charm, and has the feel of a cosy country village local - far away from the hustle and bustle of urban living. A characterful interior awaits, with low-level lighting, an eclectic mix of furniture and low ceilings completing the rustic feel. A beer garden is located to the side for the warmer months of the year. When I last visited, the cask beers available were Robinsons Cumbria Way, Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde and Trooper.

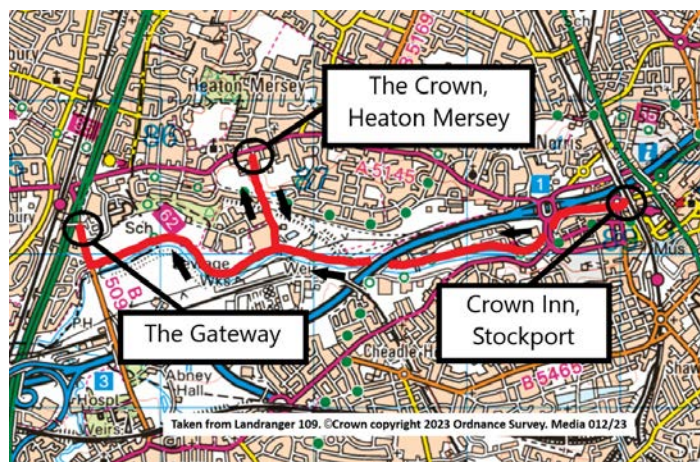
Returning to our walk, we retrace our steps down the hill and back to the information board. We now take the path to the right, through the metal gate and continue along the main path, keeping the river on our left at all times. After a mile we reach Cheadle Bridge, spanning the river with three arches. After climbing the steps to the main road, we turn right and walk along the pavement for 300 yards until we reach the Gateway on the left.

### The Gateway, East Didsbury



Winner of numerous local CAMRA awards and regularly featuring in the Good Beer Guide, this Wetherspoon's pub has excelled since it was purchased from Hydes Brewery in 2011. Tastefully decorated inside, with wood panelling throughout, this large inter-war roadhouse has a real pub feel as well as being good value. Up to eight cask beers are available. On my last visit these were from Titanic, Ossett, Bank Top, Greene King, Peerless and Saltaire breweries, as well as the house beer - Gateway to Heaven from Brightside.

On exiting the pub, the main bus stops are 100 yards away, outside the entertainment centre. East Didsbury tram stop is a little further ahead, and East Didsbury train station is to the left.





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# What's On

## Local CAMRA Branch Diaries

Forthcoming events for the following local branches:

- \* **Stockport & South Manchester (SSM)**
- \* **High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire (HPNC)**
- \* **Central Manchester (CMCR)**
- \* **Macclesfield & East Cheshire (MEC)**

## Formal Branch Meetings

**CAMRA members only at these meetings.**

**Thursday 12 January** – Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. Will include voting for Club of the Year, Cider Pub of the Year and Pub of the Year. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

**Monday 16 January** – Sportsman, 57 Mottram Road, Hyde, SK14 2NN. Starts 7:30pm. (HPNC)

**Thursday 9 February** – Magnet, 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. Entries for the 2024 *Good Beer Guide* will be chosen at this meeting. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

**Saturday 11 February** – Rems Café Bar, 29 Market Street, Chapel-en-le-Frith, SK23 0HP. Meeting to be followed by a social. Starts 1pm. (HPNC)

**Tuesday 21 February** – Beartown Tap, 18 Willow Street, Congleton, CW12 1RL. Final *Good Beer Guide* selection meeting. Starts 8pm. (MEC)

**Wednesday 1 March** – Final *Good Beer Guide* selection meeting. Venue to be arranged. (CMCR)

**Thursday 9 March** – Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury, M20 5PG. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

**Monday 13 March** – Halfway House, 123 Whiteacre Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 9PS. Starts 7:30pm. (HPNC)

## Social Events & Presentations

**Friday 20 January** – Heaton Moor Stagger: 7:30pm Elizabethan, 33 Heaton Moor Road, SK4 4PB; 8:30pm Crown, 98-100 Heaton Moor Road, SK4 4NZ; final pub Nursery, 258 Green Lane, SK4 2NA. (SSM)

**Thursday 26 January** – Pub of the Month presentation to the Swan With Two Necks, 36 Princes Street, Stockport, SK1 1RY. From 8pm. (SSM)

**Saturday 28 January** – Winter Pub of the Season presentation to Jakes Ale House, 27 Compstall Road, Romiley, SK6 4BP. Starts 1:30pm. Will be followed by a social around local pubs. (HPNC)

**Saturday 28 January** – Rochdale Social. See branch website for details. (CMCR)

**Wednesday 1 February** – Weekday Wander in Oldham. Meet Stockport train station at 11:20am. First pub Ashton Arms, 28 Clegg Street OL1 1PL at 12:30pm. Full details on branch website. (SSM)

**Friday 17 February** – Cheadle Hulme North Stagger: 7:30pm Cross Keys, 10 Adswold Road, SK8 5QA; 8:30pm March Hare, Mill Lane, SK8 5PG; final pub Archive Bar & Bottle, 2 Mellor Road, SK8 5AU. (SSM)

**Thursday 23 February** – Pub of the Month presentation to the Grey Horse, 99 Broadstone Road, Reddish, SK5 7AS. From 8pm. (SSM)

**Friday 24 to Monday 27 February** – Branch weekend away to Glasgow. (HPNC)

**Tuesday 28 February** – Weekday Wander to Manchester's Northern Sixteenth. Meet Stockport train station at 11:30am. First pub Edinburgh Castle, 17 Blossom Street, Manchester M4 5AN at 12:10pm. Full details on branch website. And why the Northern Sixteenth, well we will only be covering about a quarter of the Northern Quarter! (SSM)

# CAMRA Awards

## Recent Presentations

High Peak, Tameside and NE Cheshire CAMRA's autumn Pub of the Season was the **Harewood Arms** in Broadbottom.

When we make our nominations, we look at a number of criteria such as the value of a pub to its community, ambience and, of course, the quality of the beers on offer, *writes branch chairman Ben Zwierink*. The Harewood Arms ticks all the right boxes. Mat, Phil and Yvonne Wild who own the pub have created a thriving and welcoming local at the heart of the community, with a range of well-attended social activities taking place.

On the beer front, the Harewood Arms is also the home of Greenmill Brewery, which is located in the basement of the pub. A range of consistently good beers (some brewed using their own home-grown hops) is on offer, at some of the lowest prices in the area. The Harewood Arms is just a short walk uphill from Broadbottom railway station on the Glossop line. Well worth a visit. Ben is pictured below (left) presenting the award to Phil Wild (the Greenmill head brewer) and pub managers Angela Walker and Mark Shutter.



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for November was the **John Millington** in Cheadle Hulme. While the pub hosts an impressive all-day food operation, it was also recognised for the great range of cask beers on sale.

Three Hydes cask beers are sold, with Lowry and Original being ever-present alongside a third beer, often Hopster or Dark Ruby. In addition, there are two seasonal beers from the inventive Ralf+Alf range. CAMRA's

Dave Pennington is pictured here presenting the award to deputy manager Sharon Fogg.

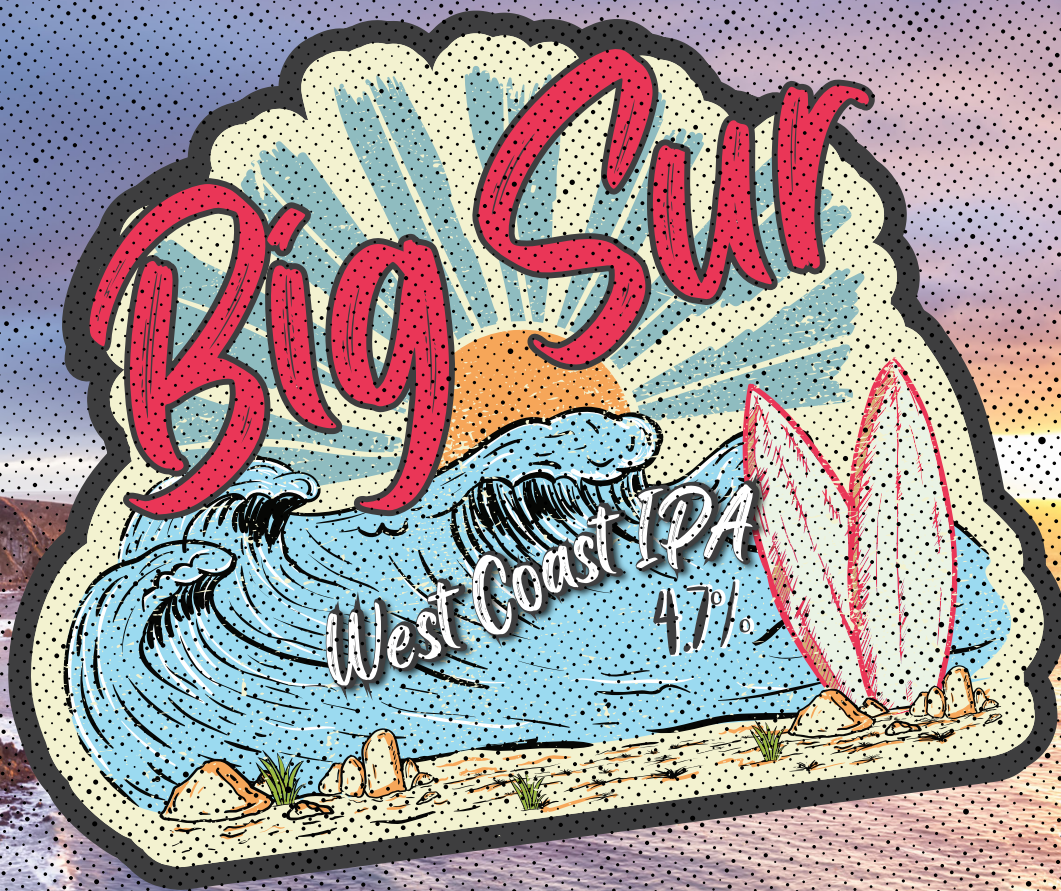
On the principle that it's better late than never, Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA finally presented its 2020 Pub of the Year runner-up award to the **Arden Arms** in Stockport. This classic pub really needs no introduction, such is its reputation. Branch chair John Clarke, left, is seen here presenting the award to Arden Arms landlord Geoff Troughton.





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