

OPENING TIMES

MARCH / APRIL 2022

FREE



INSIDE: MILD MAGIC IS BACK / ROBINSONS ON THE MOVE / LOCAL PUBS OF THE YEAR / STOCKPORT BEER FESTIVAL RETURNS / AND MUCH MORE...



Campaign
for
Real Ale

Quality Brewing Since 1863

Enjoy...



HYDES 1863

GREATER MANCHESTER BEER

drinkaware.co.uk

[f HydesBrewery](https://www.facebook.com/HydesBrewery) [@hydesbrewery](https://www.instagram.com/hydesbrewery) [wi hydesbrewery.com](http://hydesbrewery.com)

Hydes Brewery Ltd, The Beer Studio, 30 Kansas Avenue, Salford M50 2GL Tel: 0161 226 1317

- SERVING YOU THE NEWEST AND VERY BEST, VARIED GUEST ALE RANGE, ALWAYS AT A COMPETITIVE PRICE -

A NEW YEAR FOR GREAT BEER!

**WELCOME TO
WETHERSPOON
MANCHESTER**

WATERHOUSE
67-71 PRINCESS STREET
M2 4EG
0161 200 5380

MOON UNDER WATER
68-74 DEANSGATE
M3 2FN
0161 834 5882

SEVEN STARS
6-8 DANTZIC STREET
M4 2BS
0161 817 2980

THE PARAMOUNT
33-35 OXFORD STREET
M1 4BH
0161 223 1820

PICCADILLY
49 PICCADILLY
M1 2AP
0161 236 9206

GREAT CENTRAL
306 WILMSLOW ROAD
FALLOWFIELD
0161 248 1740

FORD MADDOX
WILMSLOW PARK
WILMSLOW RD
M13 9NG
0161 256 6660

THE GATEWAY
882 WILMSLOW ROAD
EAST DIDSURY
0161 438 1700

Contents & Information

Contents – March & April 2022

Pubs of the Month	5	Brewery News	15
Pubs of the Year	7	Club of the Year	16
Pub News	8 & 12	Focus on RedWillow	16
Stagger	9	Pub Walk	17
Mild Magic	11	A Visit to Buxton	19
Scribbles on a Beermat	13	News Extra	21

About Opening Times & Contacts

Opening Times is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Additional material is supplied by the High Peak, Tameside & North East Cheshire Branch, and the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch. It is printed by Paper Red Media and distributed throughout Stockport, Tameside, South Manchester and East Manchester. There are also numerous outlets in Macclesfield & East Cheshire, Manchester City Centre, High Peak and Glossop.

News, articles and letters are welcome to the editorial address – John Clarke, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9HD. E-mail – stocam@btinternet.com. Phone 0161 477 1973. Advertising rates on request or online at: <http://www.ssmcamra.co.uk/magazine.htm>. Local advertising John Clarke (as above) or contact Neil Richards MBE at n.richards@btinternet.com.

Trading Standards

For complaints about short measure pints etc. contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service. This works with all the Trading Standards services in the North West and is supported by the Office of Fair Trading. You can contact the Consumer Service at the following address:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/if-you-need-more-help-about-a-consumer-issue

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

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards

Subscriptions

Available at £9 for one year (make cheques payable to Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA). Apply to Apply to Lawrence Devaney, 2 Kingsway, Bramhall, Stockport, SK7 3BG.

Copyright

Unless otherwise stated all material in *Opening Times* is the copyright of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Please contact the editorial address if you wish to reproduce anything in *Opening Times*.

Public Transport

Opening Times does not recommend you drink and drive. Local public transport information can be obtained online as follows:

- * Transport for Greater Manchester: www.tfgm.com. 0161 244 1000
- * East Cheshire: 0300 123 5500
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport.aspx
- * Derbyshire: www.derbybus.info

Pub Opening Hours

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

Disclaimer

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

Your Local CAMRA Contacts & Websites

Stockport & South Manchester

www.ssmcamra.co.uk

Contact: John Abrams; johnabrams1111@yahoo.co.uk

High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire

www.highpeaktamesidenortheastcheshire.camra.org.uk

Contact: Peter Mitchell; peter.mitchell31@gmail.com

Macclesfield & East Cheshire

www.eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

Contact: John Barber; secretary@eastcheshirecamra.org.uk

Central Manchester

www.centralmanchester.camra.org.uk

Contact: Steve Davis; treasurer@centralmanchester.camra.org.uk

Social Media

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

Stockport & South Manchester:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/SSMCAMRA

Twitter – @SSMCAMRA

High Peak, Tameside & NE Cheshire:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/HPTNECCAMRA

Central Manchester:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/groups/CentralManchesterCamra

Twitter – @MCRCentralCamra

Macclesfield & East Cheshire:

Facebook – 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.ssmcamra.co.uk/discount.htm

Front Cover

While Robinsons plan to move their brewery to Bredbury, it was still all systems go in Stockport when this photo was taken by Lawrence Devaney in January 2022..

Contributors

John Clarke, Alan Gent, Dave Hanson, Peter Butler, Paul Felton, Dave Burston, Sue Lightfoot, Tom Lord, Chris Morris, Lawrence Devaney, Pete Farrand, Carl Burkitt, Jim Flynn, Graham Privett, Bob Stukins, Mark McConachie, Peter Mitchell.

Distribution Manager – Janet Flynn

Copy date for the May/June issue is Friday 15 April

The Petersgate Tap



Winner Stockport Cider Pub of the Year
2018, 2019, 2020

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

Good Beer Guide 2018, 2019, 2020,
2021, 2022



6 rotating cask ales

8-10 real ciders

Bottle shop with 150+ beers

Leaf Promotions live music 1st Fri

Quiz Night 2nd & 4th Tues

Coalition Poetry last Thurs

**19a St Petersgate, Stockport
SK1 1EB**

**FAMILY RUN,
MULTI AWARD WINNING
FREE HOUSE**

14 hand pumps and an extensive
range of bottled beers and cider.

CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR 2020

**GOOD BEER GUIDE
2020
WE'RE IN IT!**

**We now have
8 Craft Kegs**

THE MAGNET
51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ
www.themagnetfreehouse.co.uk
Open: Mon-Thur 4-11pm, Fri-Sun 12-11pm

A photograph of the interior of The Magnet pub. A staff member is behind the bar, and a customer is in the foreground. The bar has several hand pumps and bottles.

A FAMILY BUSINESS

STEPHENSONS

Supporting The Catering Trade Since 1868

PROUD SPONSORS OF
**PUB OF THE
MONTH**

A forgotten British classic:
The 10-sided **Lantern Tankard**

VISIT THE NORTH'S LARGEST CATERING
CASH & CARRY

tableware • catering equipment • disposables

stephensons.com
161 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 6EQ

A photograph of a large glass of beer with a thick head of foam, next to a plate of golden fries.

Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for March and April



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for March is the Nursery in Heaton Norris. Jim Flynn has been along and explains why it won.

What can be said about this 1930s gem of a multi-roomed pub that hasn't already been written before? With its classic unspoilt structure and décor, superb light-oak panelling, delightful windows decorated with horticultural images and well-manicured bowling green to the rear, this is a true classic. Indeed, in 2001 the Nursery was CAMRA's National Pub of the Year, an unheard-of accolade for an urban pub owned by an independent regional brewery.



However, over the last few years the pub has had somewhat of a chequered history, with a succession of licensees. In mid-2020, Paul Harper was appointed to manage the pub by Hydes, and since then it has most definitely been on the up. Paul has had 30 years' extensive experience in the pub trade, in Essex and, more recently, in Manchester City Centre at the Town Hall Tavern and the Oxnoble. This experience is certainly starting to show at the Nursery.

The beer quality has been excellent since his arrival, earning a five-star rating from Cask Marque, with an extensive range of Hydes beers, including both milds, 1863 and Dark Ruby, and the excellent Hopster. The food is taking off, the upstairs function room has been refurbished, attracting numerous bookings, and very soon a refurbishment of the downstairs of the pub will commence – this is promised to be sympathetically carried out in view of the pub's listed status.

So why not join the local CAMRA branch to celebrate with Paul and his staff on Thursday 24 March, when a great night will be enjoyed by all!



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for April is the Vale Cottage in Gorton. John Clarke has visited and tells you all about this excellent pub.

The phrase "a country pub in the heart of town" can be rather over-used, but in the case of the Vale Cottage it is a very appropriate description.

Set back from Hyde Road, well hidden in the Gore Brook conservation area, the pub has a definite rural feel. Standing outside the front of the pub, it seems a million miles from busy Hyde Road. There's a warm, country feel inside, too, with low-beamed ceilings, an open fire and several different drinking areas.

It's a real community local, with plenty going on. On Tuesdays there is a quiz night, on Saturday it's karaoke and on Sundays the pub hosts a folk night. Lunchtime food is available every day except Saturday – it has a good reputation, too.

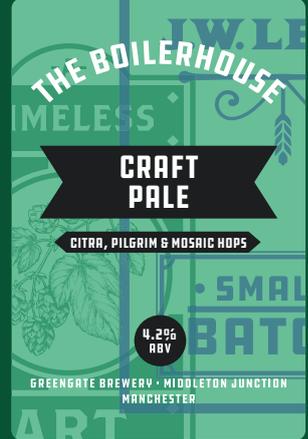
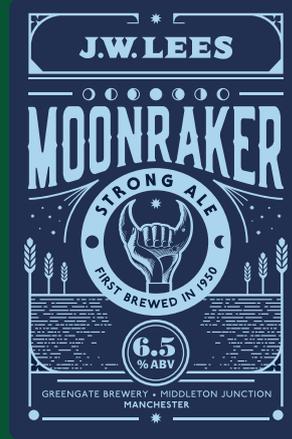
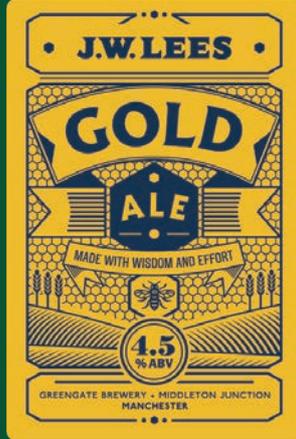
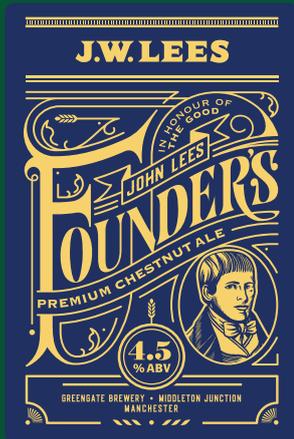
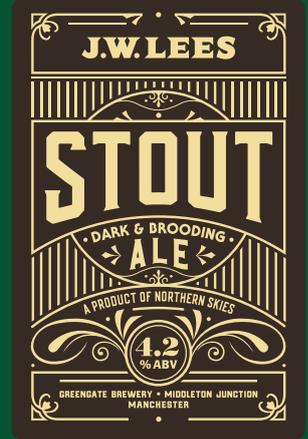
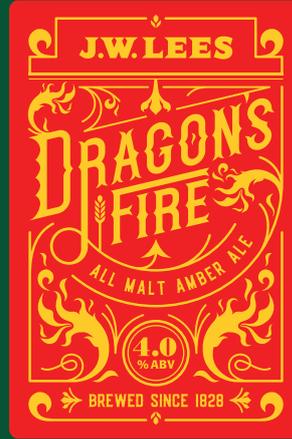
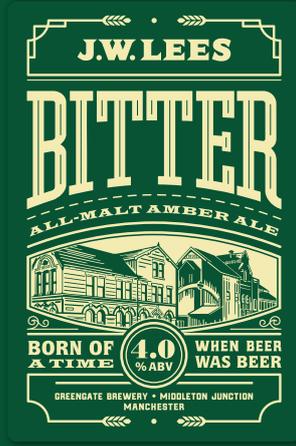
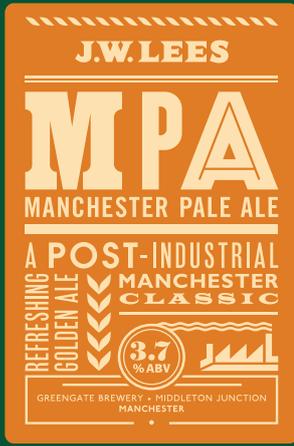
There's a well-appointed beer garden at the back and this has also been the venue for the pub's annual beer festival. This nicely leads on to the cask beers. This was a Wilsons pub in years gone by, and eventually ended up in the hands of Enterprise Inns. However, for some years now it's been an independently owned free house, with three cask beers available. These generally come from Timothy Taylor (with Landlord making regular appearances) and Moorhouse's. Keen licensee Geoff McCabe ensures the beer quality is invariably high, and the Vale Cottage is a regular in CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide.

Please do join us when we present this well-deserved award on Thursday 28 April, from 8pm. The pub is well served by the numerous buses that travel Hyde Road, and from Stockport the 203 will take you there, with the 53, 150, 171 and 172 connecting to other points of the compass.

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

A FAMILY BUSINESS
STEPHENSONS
Celebrating 150 Years of Inspiring the Caterer

CORE CASK RANGE



J.W. LEES



Hops:
Fuggles,
Saaz

Seasonal
Limited
Edition 2022

Stockport & South Manchester Awards

Pub, Cider Pub and Club of the Year 2022



Once again there was a close vote when it came to deciding the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year. However there can only be one winner and for 2022 it is the **Chiverton Tap**, on Mellor Road in Cheadle Hulme.

Opened in May 2015, the Chiverton Tap was initially a one-roomed pub, and one of the first micropubs in Stockport. In 2017, it was voted Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Year and was subsequently runner-up in the Greater Manchester Pub of The Year awards.

2019 saw 'Chiv Next Level' upstairs seating and 'Chiv Outback' outside drinking areas opening. This completed the takeover of the whole of this historic building, a former draper's shop from the turn of the 20th century, trading under the name of Arthur Chiverton.



Lockdown saw many hospitality business owners face the greatest challenges of their careers and, for the Chiverton Tap, this was no exception. But, rolling forward, the Chiverton Tap is now back operating as it was always intended, as a pub, with bar service, a community feel and the ability to chat unimpeded with the locals.

Mary and Bob Ellis, who opened the pub, together with Andrew O'Shea, who is now operating their sister pub the **Mounting Stone** in Bramhall, remain true to their original ethos. They told *Opening Times*:

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

"It's always such a buzz to see the fruits of that labour, the enthusiasm of the regulars to try something new, their pleasure when a previous favourite reappears on the pumps or the divine joy of a convert who realises there is a whole world of great British beer out there to be tried. We will never get complacent because there are so many ways this business presents challenges and we will always want to rise to them. We do what we love, and we love what we do. It has to be love, otherwise it just wouldn't work".

Join us for the presentation on Saturday 21 May at 4pm. The Chiverton Tap is served by buses from Stockport (313 and 368) and

Manchester (42B). Mellor Road is also directly opposite Cheadle Hulme station.

Fletcher Moss is Runner-up



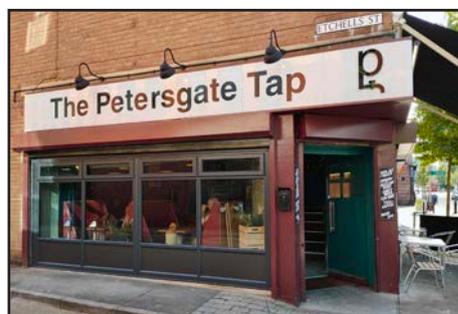
This year's runner-up is Hydes' Fletcher Moss on William Street in Didsbury.

This thriving pub combines a traditional layout at the front, along with an extended section at the back, opening into an attractive beer garden, which helped bring in many new customers when indoor drinking had been prohibited.

Real ale enthusiast Martin Devlin is the manager, so cask is king here. Six or seven handpumps dispense a comprehensive range of Hydes beers, kept in superb condition. Such is the popularity of the Fletcher Moss you need have no concern that, if you happen to catch the last pint out of the cask, its quality will be in any way inferior. The fast turnover guarantees top quality.

Look out for the presentation date which had yet to be arranged as we went to press.

Cider Pub of the Year



It's four in a row for the **Petersgate Tap**, which is once again the CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester Cider Pub of the Year.

Set over two floors, the Tap opened in September 2016, since when it

has settled in to become a firm favourite with local beer and cider drinkers. Father and son team Alan and Chris Gent are passionate about their beers and ciders. Dark (and often quite strong) beers are something of a speciality, while the cider and perry selection has gone from strength to strength. No fewer than eight traditional ciders and perries are now regularly available.

While local producers feature here, such as Dunham Press (Dunham Massey) and SiDa (Macclesfield), there is also an accent on sourcing high-quality ciders and perries from leading producers further afield. Top names such as Ross on Wye, Gregg's Pit and Hecks now often feature on the cider list. All of the ciders are either fridge- or cellar-cooled too.

Alan Gent told *Opening Times*: "We are obviously very pleased that our efforts on cider and perry have been recognised by the branch. This year, we have continued to diversify our range and stockists, sadly losing the legendary (cider supplier) John Reek along the way. We're looking forward to contending for the regional title in the near future".

The Stockport & South Manchester Club of the Year for 2022 is the Ladybarn Social Club. See page 16.

Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Tameside, Manchester and beyond



The **Railway**, Portwood, finally closed its doors on Sunday 30 January. Having been under the threat of redevelopment for many years, this very popular and, to many, irreplaceable community pub is now closed and awaiting its fate.



Exactly what that fate is remains unclear. At a council meeting last year, the developers said they would not be proceeding unless they had a tenant for the speculative retail unit that is to replace the pub, and the former carpet shop next door. Given the current economic climate, this raised, clearly false, hopes that the Railway

might have a couple of years' life still left. We assume, therefore, that a tenant has been found and the redevelopment of the site will now proceed quickly. If the pub lingers, empty and decaying, for a period of time, this will just add insult to the injury felt by its now-displaced regulars.



The Railway went out in style, though. It was busy during the week leading up to its closure and, on the final day, it was bursting at the seams as people piled in to pay their last respects. Licensees Sue and Vince Mathers, though, made sure there was beer to last until the end. Here at *Opening Times* we'd like to thank Sue and Vince,

and all of their hardworking staff members, for fond memories of a great local.

Sue & Vince are pictured above with one of the many CAMRA awards won by the Railway. Main picture by Rob Colville

More Closed Pubs



The Railway wasn't the only Stockport pub to close this year. The **Anchor** in Hazel Grove has been closed by Robinsons and, unusually, is being sold without a licence, presumably to safeguard the trade of their remaining Hazel Grove pubs.

Another ex-Robinsons pub, the much-missed **Manchester Arms**, latterly the not-so-much-missed **Cobdens**, has been sold and is the subject of a planning application to convert it into flats. An application has also been lodged to demolish the now-closed **Dog & Partridge** in High Lane and replace it with a Co-op convenience store.

The **Adswood Hotel**, an ex-Robinsons pub in Cale Green, has now been substantially demolished and will be replaced by a nursing home.



Finally, two former Hydes houses. In Burnage, the **Albion**, after a spell as a restaurant, is now closed and for sale. In Gorton, the former **Travellers Call** on Hyde Road, after spending several years in some sort of stasis, is now being converted into offices.

Finally, there is the **Hope Inn** on Wellington Road North, Stockport. This was still open and trading as we went to press but we believe it won't be by the time the next issue of *Opening Times* comes out. It's still serving good beers, so do call in and give it some support in its closing weeks.

More Pub News on page 12.

Stagger

Didsbury with Jerry Wicken

A mild November evening saw a select eight of us meet up in the **Didsbury** to start a wander around a few Didsbury's watering holes.



The Didsbury itself is now largely a dining pub, and Xmas parties were already in full swing as the evening began. Housed in an 18th century former coaching house, it is now a Chef and Brewer establishment which continues to offer a selection of cask ales. Most of us were able

to sit down, albeit at separate tables, to enjoy what was on offer. In warmer weather, the front beer garden would have been ideal. It is a good size and is immensely popular on afternoons and evenings. On this occasion we were offered the untried Greene King IPA, a rather lacklustre Robinsons Unicorn but very decent Greene King Autumn Wonder. Timothy Taylor's Landlord was waiting in the wings.



Just opposite stands **Ye Olde Cock Inn**, owned by Greene King. There was room to take a seat inside or out, and the outdoor drinking area is served by heaters which were not needed this evening. This space has expanded and been upgraded in recent times, and there is room even for

a table tennis table! Inside, there was an acoustic guitar player, and three ales on tap served by friendly staff. St Austell Tribute, Greene King IPA and Fireside were available, alongside an extensive menu and TVs for the footie. Tribute wasn't tried, while the other beers were rated above average but neither hit the heights.



It was then a short(ish) walk into Didsbury Village. We passed the **Famous Crown** which closed over a year ago. Whether it reopens continues to be a matter of conjecture. A little further on, and turning left down Barlow Moor Road, is the **Nelson**. Very much a locals' pub, it offered karaoke and just one cask ale, Wadworth 6X. Most of us agreed it was a decent pint. The pub is undoubtedly popular and there was not a free seat in the house. During the day, the TV broadcasts live horse racing. It is owned by Craft Union Pub Company who have a number of outlets in Greater Manchester and elsewhere; in the

Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA branch area these include the Prince Albert in Edgeley and the Egerton Arms on St Petersgate. Not wishing to strain our voices, we returned to the high street and crossed the road to the **Royal Oak**.



The Royal Oak is a long-established Marston's pub, famous particularly for its spectacular cheese and pâté lunches. It had a wide range of ales from the Marston's stable. Wainwright and Ringwood Boondoggle were left in the barrel, but we still had the highly regarded Pedigree and two Banks's beers to choose from. These were Amber and Sunbeam,

both of which scored well, the latter particularly so. Again, we were well received in the pub, and found plenty of space to sit together in the front room. There are also other separate drinking areas, which were quite busy, and even a couple of trestle tables outside. A collection of old music hall posters still adorns the walls, although sadly much reduced from the original collection, many of which were destroyed by fire 25 years or so ago. Live sport is televised on screens throughout the pub.



On to our final destination, the **Fletcher Moss**. As a recent Pub of the Month winner, we expected great cask ale from Hyde's brewery and we weren't disappointed. Although extended from its previous incarnation as the Albert, it still retains separate rooms and alcoves as well as a large back garden. It is invariably busy, but luckily for us not too busy to prevent us taking over a couple of adjacent tables in a side room, allowing us all to sit together. The ales from which we chose were Dark Ruby, Original, Lowry, Hopster, California Red and München. None were less than good and most substantially better. The last two named come from the Provenance range of beer styles from around the world. Hydes, in my opinion, are very progressive with this beer range and deserve our full support.

So ended an interesting stagger, encompassing most tastes. Have a good meal in the Didsbury then work it off with a game of table tennis in Ye Olde Cock. Walk to the Nelson and exercise those vocal chords with Karaoke. Have a quiet relaxing pint and maybe watch a spot of football in the Royal Oak and end up with some excellent ale in the Fletcher Moss. What's not to like?



WHITEHOUGH. A VILLAGE OF TWO INN'S

THE OLD HALL INN



CHECK
OUT OUR
lock down
RENOVATIONS



&

THE PAPER MILL INN

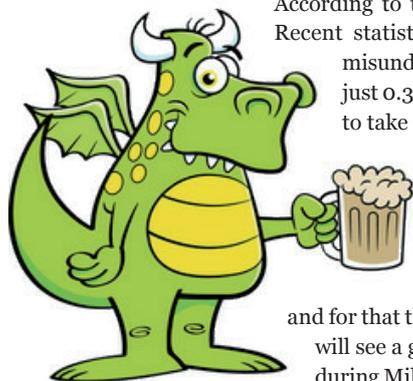
Award winning & family run. From classic country hospitality with farm to table at the old hall to cocktails, pizza & pop up kitchens at the paper mill. Combined one of the peak districts largest collections of craft ales, keg and world beers. A short walk from Chinley Train Station

WWW.OLD-HALL-INN.CO.UK

Mild Magic 2022

Visit Pubs, Drink Beer, Win Prizes

Friday 1 April to Sunday 15 May



According to the media, mild is dying out. Recent statistics show this neglected and misunderstood beer style accounts for just 0.3% of the beer market. It is time to take a stand.

This year, we have signed up 94 pubs to take part: many will be offering their customers cask mild just for the duration of Mild Magic, and for that they have our thanks. This year will see a great variety of milds available during Mild Magic, so here's your chance

to seek out and try examples of this tasty beer style.

So what are we asking you to do?

First, enter a participating pub (see end) and pick up an entry card. Second, buy a cask mild (pint or half) and ask the bar staff to put a sticker on your card. Third, drink the mild and enjoy its taste. Fourth, now enter a different participating pub – check below as this may influence your choice. Repeat from step two until you have filled your card. NB – check the times of pub opening hours, especially if you are making a special journey (details available at whatpub.com).

How do I win a prize?

To complete the standard **Mild Magic**, collect stickers from **12 different pubs in 12 different areas** and you will receive a Mild Magic T-shirt plus one free entry ticket to the 2022 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival (16 to 18 June) at Edgeley Park, or a free pint of mild at the Festival if you are a CAMRA member. See below for redemption details.

Collect stickers from **24 different pubs in 24 different areas** to enter **Mild Magic Extra** and receive a Mild Magic polo shirt plus two Festival entry tickets, or two pints of mild for CAMRA members.

Mild Magic Super is a little more challenging. Visit **48 pubs** from at least **36 different areas** and you will win a Mild Magic sweatshirt and three Festival entry tickets, or three pints of mild for CAMRA members.

Finally, we have the **Mild Magic Ultra** award for visiting every pub. This will win you a Mild Magic polo shirt plus a sweat shirt along with four Festival entry tickets, or four free pints of mild for CAMRA members.

For a fun challenge we also have **Mild Magic Scrabble**. Each participating pub has an associated letter (shown on the card and sticker). Collect enough stickers on a card to spell out MILD MAGIC and win an extra pint at the Beer Festival (with a maximum of two per person).

To add even more interest, everyone participating is invited to vote for the pub where you most enjoyed a mild. The winning pubs will then be presented with a 'Mild Champion' award and everyone will be invited to attend these award ceremonies.

How long do I have to complete all this?

Mild Magic runs from Friday 1 April to Sunday 15 May inclusive.

How do I claim my Mild Magic tickets?

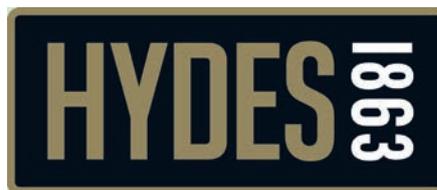
Post all your completed cards to the Mild Magic address given on the card to arrive by 21 May (only **one entry** per person). Receipt of the cards will be acknowledged electronically, so an email address or mobile

number is required. Please note, Festival entry tickets are valid any session **except Friday evening**. All entries are eligible for inclusion in a **Grand Draw to be one of the people visiting Joseph Holt's Brewery** on either Thursday 30 June at 3pm or Thursday 7 July at 6pm.

Where do I claim my garment?

Garments will be dispensed at the Stockport Beer and Cider Festival from the CAMRA Shop. If you are not attending the Festival, other provisions will have to be agreed.

This year, we are delighted to welcome back **Hydes** as the Mild Magic Sponsor. Hydes is one of the few breweries to brew not one but two milds:



Dark Ruby is a luscious dark mild, while **1863**, now badged as a session amber ale, was originally sold as Hydes Best Mild, a classic northern light mild. They don't all have

to be dark! Look out for both as you go round the Mild Magic pubs.

If you haven't taken part before, you must have a go this time; it's great fun and it's so easy – you only need to visit 12 pubs over a six-week period. It's an excellent chance to visit some new places, try new beers and win some great prizes while voting with your feet in favour of Britain's proud brewing heritage. Please support our campaign to preserve cask-conditioned mild in this area!

The Mild Magic Pubs

Some of the areas below will be sub-divided on the Mild Magic card.

Adswold: Cross Keys; **Altrincham:** Costello's Bar, Old Market Tavern; **Ashton under Lyne:** Ash Tree, Half Way House, Tapsters; **Bramhall:** Ladybrook Hotel, Shady Oak, Victorian; **Bredbury:** Arden Arms; **Burnage:** Reasons To Be Cheerful; **Chapel en le Frith:** Old Cell; **Cheadle:** Crown, James Watts, Wobbly Stamp; **Cheadle Hulme:** Governor's House, John Millington, P5; **Chorlton:** Beech Inn, Bowling Green, Horse & Jockey, Sedge Lynn; **Davenport:** Milliner; **Didsbury:** Dog & Partridge, Fletcher Moss, Gateway, Head of Steam, Olde Cock, Wine & Wallop; **Droylsden:** Silly Country; **Eccles:** Eccles Cross, Lamb Hotel; **Fallowfield:** Friendship Inn; **Gatley:** Horse & Farrier; **Gee Cross:** Joshua Bradley; **Glossop:** Bar 2, Smithy Fold; **Hazel Grove:** George & Dragon, Grove Alehouse, Wilfred Wood; **Heaton Chapel:** Heaton Hops; **Heaton Mersey:** Griffin; **Heaton Moor:** Crown, Moortop; **Heaton Norris:** Navigation, Nursery Inn; **Hyde:** Cheshire Ring, Queens; **Ladybarn:** Ladybarn Social Club; **Levenshulme:** Fred's Ale House; **Manchester:** Ape & Apple, Britons Protection, City Arms, Crown & Anchor (Cateaton Street), Grey Horse, Lower Turks Head, Molly House, Old Monkey, Paramount, Piccadilly Tap, Pie & Ale, Waterhouse; **Marple:** Samuel Oldknow; **Marple Bridge:** Norfolk Arms, Northumberland Arms; **Monton:** Park Inn; **New Mills:** Beer Shed, Chalkers Snooker Club; **Northenden:** Northenden Untapped; **Offerton:** Gardeners Arms; **Patricroft:** Stanley Arms; **Poynton:** Poynton Royal British Legion; **Romiley:** Jake's Ale House, Romiley Arms; **Sale:** J P Joule, Old Plough, Volunteer Hotel; **Salford:** New Oxford; **Stalybridge:** Bridge Beers, Society Rooms, Station Buffet Bar; **Stockport:** Angel Inn, Calverts Court, Cocked Hat, Crown Inn, Petersgate Tap, Ye Olde Vic; **Swinton:** Morning Star; **Timperley:** Quarry Bank Inn; **Urmston:** Lord Nelson, Tim Bobbin; **Whaley Bridge:** Goyt Inn; **Whitehough:** Old Hall Inn; **Withington:** Victoria.

Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

Beer Shop, Heaton Moor

Tucked away in deepest suburbia on Kingsleigh Road, the **Beer Shop** has long been something of a hidden oasis in this part of Stockport.

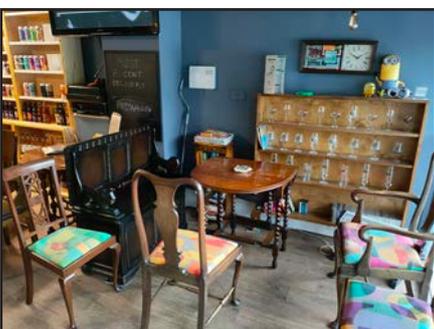


It was opened in 2011 by Dean Hilton as a retirement project. This rapidly got out of hand and Dean finally retired in September 2020, when the business was taken over by ex-pat Finn, Markus Sorsa (pictured here). *Opening Times* finally got round to paying a visit in February.

CAMRA member Markus, who had a production job in

the media, moved to the north west from London when his wife got a job in Hyde. Deciding it was time for a career change, his first venture into the licensed trade was running the **Shepherds Call** in Hyde, but even then he was looking at potential premises for a micropub. He then saw the Beer Shop was for sale and thought it would be better to buy an established business rather than start from scratch.

Since Markus took over he has refocused the Beer Shop so that it is more of a bar and a bit less of a shop. That's not to say there isn't a good range of beers to take away. The focus here is mainly bottles and cans



from local breweries, plus a decent range of German bottled beers.

Two cask beers were available when we called, although this will be increasing to three soon. The plan is to offer one dark beer and two pales. These are supplemented by three keg beers – two from local brewers and

one a German lager. We tried a cask session IPA from Eyam Brewery and it was very good.

There has also been a refurbishment and redecoration. There's lots of natural wood and mixed furniture, with brightly coloured fabrics adding a sixties vibe. It's all very pleasant and comfortable. In the warmer months there is also outside drinking at the front.

The Beer Shop is currently open from 4-9pm, Wednesday to Sunday. As trade settles down, and the weather improves, these hours are likely to change and expand. Buses 25 and 197 from Stockport and Manchester will drop you close by. Well worth seeking out.

Crown & Conspirator, Bramhall

A relative newcomer to Bramhall, the **Crown & Conspirator** opened its doors in October 2020. It's owned by the Cheshire Pub Co., a group that also includes the **Ship** in Styal, the **Frozen Mop** in Moberley and the **Churchill Tree** in Alderley Park.

Although a food led pub, the interior includes a large area for casual drinkers and tables for over 90 covers. Décor in this area is industrial chic, with table-top barrels and bar stools providing for the casual drinker who enjoys drinking in comfort. In warmer weather the bar area can be opened out onto to the street.

The team is led by Michael Khalsa, the general manager at the Crown and Conspirator. On the quiet Wednesday when *Opening Times* enjoyed the beers, the bar and restaurant were being supervised by Collette and Paula (pictured here).



The site, in the centre of Bramhall, has seen numerous uses over the years, some more successful than others. The Cheshire Pub Co. has spared no expense investing heavily to bring the pub up to their high standards of comfort and décor.

In the bar area, the pub has three handpumps, one dedicated to Timothy Taylor Boltmaker and two for ales from Tarpoley-based Weetwood Ales (branded as Conspirator beers). Weetwood also supplies the other pubs in the group.

The pub is easy to reach by bus from Stockport, with the 378, 378A and 379 buses dropping you off by the front door. From Manchester, the 42B will do the honours.

Mounting Stone, Bramhall



In Bramhall the **Mounting Stone** has had a makeover. A new shop front, with vertically opening windows, has been fitted, which has enabled a significant improvement in the pub's ventilation. Other works include portioning the downstairs into booths with long tables for large groups. The toilets have had a lick of paint, and on the ground floor, the panels displaying hand tools have been removed and greenery in the form of a living wall has been installed. It all makes for a very calming environment and will

certainly enhance its appeal to new customers.

News in Brief

On page 21 you can read about the opening of JW Lee's **Aviator** in Woodford. In 2019 they also acquired the **Red Lion** in Withington. For many years this was something of a flagship for Marston's, and was reputedly their highest volume pub at one point. However, they did seem to lose interest, and it's good to report that Lees are currently carrying out the major investment the pub has needed for a long time. As we went to press, it was covered in scaffolding – more when it reopens.

At **Fred's Ale House** in Levenshulme, we welcome new(-ish) manager Ben Krnjulac who took over last year. He's worked at other local bars so knows the area well. Fred's usually has six cask beers available as well as a real cider.

Scribbles on a Beer Mat



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.

Fancy City for the Win Tomorrow?

You say you don't really follow them anymore.
You say football isn't how it used to be.

You say you used to love turning up
down the road from the stadium

and having a quick beer in the Whatsit Called Arms
before grabbing chips from the kebab van

around the corner and curry sauce
from the Chinese takeaway then picking up

a £1.00 match day programme outside the ground,
eating the chips, the curry sauce, and drinking

one more beer and how it would be 15 minutes
after kick off by the time you got to your seat.

Your mate agrees all ritual has gone.
You say the beer was pretty crap, to be honest.

I Don't Know Anyone in Here

but I've stroked two dogs, raised both eyebrows
at an overheard story or three, returned a hat
to the owner of the pocket it fell out of,
smiled at the woman who said *Oh, heck yeah!*

to a packet of salt and vinegar coated peanuts,
popped a thumb up to the guy who popped
a thumb up to me for no reason, offered a crisp
to a man who said he'd never tried that brand

before, said Are you sure? to the barman
who was adamant I had the soft chair
in the corner and moved his laptop so I could
sit there, recommended a particular pale ale

to someone who was unsure what to buy,
explained to an old chap I'd love to try
his pork pie but I am a vegetarian
and tried to convince the bloke by the window

I am not writing about him in my notebook,
he's just sitting in my thinking space.

Beer Festival Returns

16 - 18 June



We're back! The all new 34th Stockport Beer and Cider Festival will be held at Edgeley Park from 16 to 18 June 2022. With this being a real summer festival with masses of outdoor

seating, we are very optimistic that it will be a great success.

Although preparations are in their infancy, we already have plans for completely new beers for you to try, and we will have a focus on beers from the West Country and the Channel Islands to reinforce that warm feeling of summer. Similarly, we will be refreshing our cider and perry range, and our Entertainment Manager is beavering away to bring you some great bands and performers in a new intimate entertainment suite.

This year, we are extremely pleased to welcome back Walthew House, the Shaw Heath-based charity for the blind and deaf, as our new Festival Charity. We hope, with your help and generosity, to raise as much as possible for this very worthwhile local cause.

So put those dates in your diary, 16 to 18 June, and go to www.stockportfestival.org.uk or any of our social media to find out more.

Much more information will be provided in the next edition of Opening Times.

News from Walthew House



Walthew House is delighted to be chosen as the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival charity for 2022 and the following two years, writes *Walthew House CEO Kay Kelly*.

As festival charity from 2012 to 2014, Walthew House raised more than £20,000 over the three years. As a small local charity, this support made a huge impact on our income.

It is estimated that there are around 60,000 people in Stockport who have a sight or hearing loss that affects their everyday life, making Walthew House relevant to a large proportion of residents and their families, whom we also support. This festival provides an opportunity to reach people who don't know of the services of the charity, and extend the reach of our support.

Walthew House is reliant on local fundraising to provide services and support each week to over 300 people with sight or hearing loss. The charity receives no contracted income and now needs to raise around £300,000 each year to support its services.

We look forward to seeing you in June!



Brewed
in
Glossop



REAL ALE | CRAFT BEER | FOOD | TOURS

**COME ENJOY OUR BEER
STRAIGHT FROM THE TANK
AT OUR TAP ROOM | HOPE
STREET, OLD GLOSSOP**



Howard Town Brewery

01457 869800

WWW.HOWARDTOWNBREWERY.COM

Know more at howardtownbrewery.com

What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region

Robinsons on the Move

On 20 January, Robinsons announced that they would be closing the Unicorn Brewery in central Stockport. A £12 million investment will see all of their brewing and office operations move to a new facility, to be built on the site of the former Horsfield Arms, next to their Unicorn Packaging Centre in Bredbury (artist's impression below).



The move effectively resurrects and takes forward plans which were already in place in the 1980s, so shouldn't come as the biggest surprise. It also means that Robinsons will be operating from just one site for the first time since 1949, when the old Bell & Co brewery on Hempsshaw Lane was acquired.

The new brew house will have a smaller maximum brew-length than the current plant, which itself is pretty new and is now destined to be scrapped. The upside is that this will bring greater flexibility to the brewing operations. The new design should also make them more eco-friendly and efficient, and of course, it will no longer mean the beer being brewed in central Stockport and then sent by tanker to be packaged in Bredbury.

The current cask-racking line in Bredbury will also be replaced. The new line will be able to fill pins (small four-and-a-half-gallon casks) which the current one is unable to do. Indeed, Robinsons see a greater demand for beer in pins and plan to invest £200,000 in a new stock of them.

The current time-line should see brewing taking place in Bredbury in 2024 with the final move of office and support staff completed by 2025.

This massive investment in the future of the brewery is a very positive commitment by Robinsons and is something we welcome.

However, this does beg the question as to what will happen to the Stockport site, and the other bits of the business located there. Reassuringly, the shire horses will be retained and found new quarters. The bar and café at the Visitors Centre are currently closed and look unlikely to re-open. We understand that no decision has yet been taken about what to do with the small on-site museum and its contents.

Opening Times has a suggestion. While most of the site is probably destined for conversion into flats, with possibly some retail, too, we'd like to see Robinsons maintain a presence there as well. Perhaps this could incorporate a museum, shop, bar and also perhaps a small pilot brewery for one-off specials (something the other family brewers in the area already have but which, uniquely, Robinsons don't).

In the meantime, the shop at the Visitors Centre remains open, and brewery tours can still be booked – we expect these to be in demand as folk take a last look at the old brewery. Tour details are here: www.robinsonsbrewery.com/visitors-centre-and-shires/about-tours/booking/.

Ventile Brew Co

We covered this new start-up in our September/October issue. With the opening of a tap at the brewery every Saturday (from 4-10pm), we decided to pay a visit and catch up.



The brewery is based in Spur Mill on Broadstone Hall Road South in Reddish, right next door to Assembly Brew Co in fact, and it was good to chat with Ventile's owner and head brewer, Dave Foulger (pictured here), in the flesh.

He's still part-time but is brewing more regularly these days, with a core range of four beers. These are Transparent Radiation, a hazy pale ale at 4%; Beat Quest; a 5.8% West Coast IPA; Sacred Trickster a double dry-hopped IPA at 6%; and also at 6% Science Killer, a black IPA. We tried them all and were very impressed. The beers are currently only available in keykegs, but cask beers are in the pipeline. Dave tells us that Transparent Radiation will always be available on cask, and so too may Science Killer.

There are more beers to come, too. When *Opening Times* visited, he was talking about a fruited sour, and also an imperial stout was being planned.

We also just had to ask Dave where he got the name Ventile from. It turns out this is a material developed in Manchester during WW2, and used to make pilots' immersion suits. So it is intended to be something of a homage to Manchester's industrial past.

While we were at Ventile, we also bumped into Tom Roberts from Reddish-based **SupNorth Brew Co**. Tom told us that he and the three friends who brew together had just got a commercial licence, so their beers can now be sold to pubs and bars. We plan to catch up with SupNorth for the next issue.

While we were at Ventile, we also bumped into Tom Roberts from Reddish-based **SupNorth Brew Co**. Tom told us that he and the three friends who brew together had just got a commercial licence, so their beers can now be sold to pubs and bars. We plan to catch up with SupNorth for the next issue.

Steelfish Brewing

Ventile is now also the home to **Steelfish Brewing**, run by Simon Goodier and Ali Coombes, who in January relocated their cuckoo brewing operation there from the Beer Nouveau premises in Ardwick.



This has given Simon and Ali access to Ventile's three-barrel kit (pictured here), which they use to brew once a fortnight. During their stay at Beer Nouveau they produced no fewer than 21 different beers, mainly pitched at the

3.8% to 4.2% band, with a couple hitting 5%. All of the beer is draught at the moment, with a cask to keg ratio of 80:20.

Steelfish beers seem to have taken off very well, with repeat orders coming in, and the beers appearing in some of the top cask pubs in both Manchester and Stockport. Steelfish also supplied last year's Didsbury Beer Festival, where their beers sold out in the second session. Good news all round, really.

More Brewery News on page 21.

Club of the Year 2022

Ladybarn Social Club



The Stockport & South Manchester Club of the Year is the **Ladybarn Social Club**, on Green Street, in Ladybarn. This prompted *Opening Times* to pay a long-planned visit and have a chat with club secretary, and self-confessed cask ale freak, Phil Cowtan.

The club occupies a building that was originally the White Swan pub – a Robinsons house, although originally belonging to Kay's Atlas Brewery of Ardwick. When Robinsons closed the pub around ten years ago, it was acquired by the club committee, which had recently sold its nearby premises for housing. It has gone from strength to strength ever since, and has also been the Stockport & South Manchester Club of the Year in 2015 and 2017.

The past 18 months have seen considerable changes, though. During the first lockdown, some £30,000 was spent improving the building and its facilities. There was a major refurbishment upstairs (where you will find two full-size snooker tables), downstairs the furniture was replaced, and outside the building was made watertight. The opportunity was also taken to restore the "Kay's Ales" signage that can be seen on photographs taken in the 1950s.



There have also been significant changes in the cask beer range. There was previously a tie to Carlsberg Marston's, which was finally bought out in 2019. Latterly this has enabled Phil (pictured left), who also looks after the cellar, to become rather more adventurous. There are three cask beers on the bar. Permanent is Robinsons Unicorn, which is very popular with many of the regulars. This is joined

by two ever-changing guest beers, usually obtained from small, local brewers. Phil makes a point of visiting Manchester pubs to see what's new and what's selling well. He's a big fan of the new Steelfish Brewing (see page 15), whose products have been very well received.

Aside from the popular Unicorn, Phil aims to have one darker beer and one pale beer on tap. He has also been surprised how well-received some of the newer unfiltered and hazy cask beers have been. He also tells us that cask in general has really taken off since the club properly reopened in July last year.

The club currently has 300-320 members, and this is steadily increasing. It only costs £20 a year (and just £10 if you are over 65). Non-members can pay three visits before being asked to join.

The presentation date hadn't been arranged when *Opening Times* went to press but it should be in the next couple of months.

Focus On

RedWillow Brewery

It was back in December 2010 that *Opening Times* paid its first visit to Macclesfield's **RedWillow Brewery**. Owner Toby McKenzie was running a one-man operation at the time, and had started brewing on a six-barrel (just under ten hectolitre) kit in November that year.

There have been many changes, and considerable expansion, since then. Not least the original premises are now used as a warehouse



and barrel-ageing store, while the centre of operations is in a substantially bigger property nearby. Last year saw a further expansion, when a new brewhouse (pictured here) increased capacity to 25 hectolitres, with additional tank space meaning RedWillow

can now brew twice a day. It's no longer a one-man operation either. Toby and his wife Caroline head up a sizeable team these days – every one of whom is committed to producing the best beers they can.

The biggest-selling beer remains **Weightless**, a 4.2%, Mosaic-hopped session IPA. It's won many awards, and it's not hard to see why. While the recipe for Weightless is now settled, all of the other beers are subject to constant review to see if, and how, they could be improved. For example, the latest batch of Feckless, the popular best bitter which is now brewed weekly, had been generously dry-hopped with some fresh Goldings, which really brought out the earthy bitterness of the hop.



So, what else is new? One beer with a long gestation period is a **damson sour**. This beer spent six months in a foeder (that's a large wooden cask – shown here behind Toby), and was also inoculated with some local wild yeasts. It's now been transferred to a metal tank, and *Opening Times* got a taste: we thought it was delightfully sharp and fruity. However before release, in keykegs and 75cl bottles, it will be blended 70:30 with a fresh saison to broaden its appeal.

The soaked damsons have been put to further use. A **table saison** at 2.5% has been put onto the fruit to mature. It's now around 3.4% and is something like a fruity pink lemonade. This should be out soon in keg and can.

Dark beer fans can look forward to **Double Heritage Porter** (8.8%) which should be available in March. Even more special is the small amount which is to be matured in calvados casks. This is primarily intended for Christmas, but some may see the light of day sooner than that.

Another experiment to look forward to is a 3.9% pale beer which will be split three ways, each hopped with a different variety – Target, Goldings and Challenger. This will let you compare the character of each hop against the same background beer.

We came away very impressed by what we saw (and tasted!). Toby, Caroline and their team can be very proud of what they are achieving here. Seek these beers out – you'll be in for a treat.

Pub Walks with Chris Morris

Mellor

Located high up on the edge of Stockport's south-east boundary, Mellor is surrounded by scenic hills, with stunning views in every direction, including across to Kinder Scout. This walk boasts an archaeological site, a replica Iron Age roundhouse, a commanding hill-located church and many rustic village houses from the 18th century – including a classic country pub.



The stone-built **Oddfellows Arms** has a rich history, as you'd expect from a building that has been a pub for over 300 years. The numerous alterations that have been made by each generation over that time have added to its charm. The cosy and welcoming ground floor features low ceilings with exposed timbers, flagstone and old oak flooring, together with two log burners – one of which is double-sided. The dining room upstairs offers more space and light, but keeps with the same handsome styling as downstairs. Locally sourced food is a speciality here, and has been awarded a Michelin plate. Drinkers are very much catered for too, though, with a well-stocked bar offering up to five cask beers. These were Wren's Nest from Howard Town, Abbeydale Absolution, Marston's Pedigree and Oddfellows Pale from Beartown Brewery on my last visit. The opening times are noon to late Wednesday to Saturday, noon to 8pm on Sunday. The pub is closed on Monday and Tuesday.

Bus Information

The 375 bus runs regularly during the morning and afternoon, from Stockport to Mellor, six days a week. There is no service on Sundays. The last bus back leaves Mellor Terminus at 7.06pm mid-week and 5.25pm on Saturdays. A quicker journey time can be achieved by travelling to Marple, using the train or 383/384 buses and boarding the 375 from there for the short 10-minute journey up the hill to Mellor. Timetables can be found at tfgm.com and littlegem.info/services/375.

The Walk

This is a moderate two-mile walk with some hill climbing. The paths are mainly good but there is one section that can get muddy after wet weather, so hiking boots are recommended. The OS map is OL1 The Peak District (OS app also available).

Exit the bus at Mellor Terminus and walk along the pavement with the road on your right and a playing field on your left. After 100 yards, turn left onto Church Lane and follow the pavement, then the road, up the hill to the church car park at the top. The church to the left is a good place of interest, as is the archaeological site and replica roundhouse straight ahead.

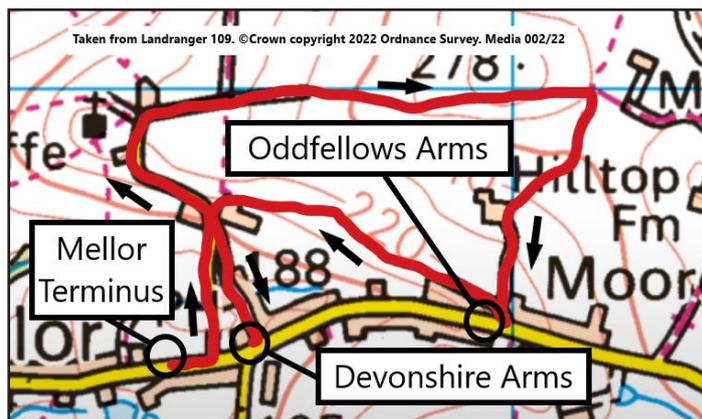
To continue our walk, we turn right, walking away from the church and along the road that passes the vicarage. After 200 yards, when the road bends to the left, we carry on straight ahead, through a gate and up the hill along a track. Carry on straight along this track for a half a mile, passing through a gate halfway along. You then reach a gate with a field beyond and a bridleway sign to the left. Our route is right, through the open field with the bridleway sign behind us. After 100 yards on the right, walk through the gap in the wall, next to a gate, before following the fence on the other side until you reach Podnor Farm. Turn left here and walk along the track and into the village, where you should see some empty casks on the lane. The entrance to the Oddfellows Arms is at the front on the main road.

After exiting the pub, retrace your steps back to the path and the empty casks. Our route is now along the track with the rear of the pub on your left. Follow the well-trodden path for 300 yards which passes through two gates into a field. Turn left here and follow the stone wall through a stile and then through a large metal gate next to a house. Carry on along the track until you rejoin Church Road. Turn left here and walk down the hill for a few yards until you spot the "Church Road 1-14" sign on the left. Walk down this track and then up the other side until it reaches the main road. The Devonshire Arms is on your right.



The 19th-century **Devonshire Arms** is a large country pub that is popular with diners, but also walkers after a drink. Recently refurbished, the interior is now a modern country style that is both comfortable and inviting, with a log-burning stove and an impressive beer garden at the back. The cask beers available on my last visit were Robinsons Unicorn and Dizzy Blonde. The pub opens at noon until late every day.

After exiting the pub, turn right and the 375 bus stop at Mellor Terminus is 100 yards along the pavement.





10 great reasons to join CAMRA

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 CAMPAIGN
for great beer, cider and perry | 2 Become a BEER EXPERT |
| 3 Enjoy CAMRA BEER FESTIVALS
in front of or behind the bar | 4 GET INVOLVED
and make new friends |
| 5 Save YOUR LOCAL | 6 Find the BEST PUBS IN BRITAIN |
| 7 Get great VALUE FOR MONEY | 8 DISCOVER
pub heritage and the great outdoors |
| 9 Enjoy great HEALTH BENEFITS
(really!) | 10 HAVE YOUR SAY |

What's yours?

Discover your reason and join the campaign today:
www.camra.org.uk/10reasons



SERVING ONLY THE BEST.
 HOME OF MADE OF STONE BREWING.

BREW DAY EXPERIENCES, GROWLERS,
 CANS AND OF COURSE A FINE
 SELECTION OF CASK & KEG ALES,
 CIDERS, GINS & WINE

8 Woodford Rd, Bramhall, Stockport SK7 1JJ



 themountingstone.co.uk
 0161 439 7563
 [TheMountingB](#)
 [TheMountingStone](#)



A Passion Shared

www.redwillowbrewery.com

Brewery Tours | Online Shop | Festivals | Beer | Bars

Visit Our Bars - RedWillow Macclesfield & RedWillow Buxton

Pubs in the Peak

Chris Morris visits Buxton

The spa town of Buxton is known to many for its mineral water and Opera House. Great drinking and entertainment comes in other forms too, with the town's impressive collection of pubs and bars.



Located close to the station, **RedWillow Buxton** opened in 2017, in the premises of a former bank. The conversion was undertaken with great attention to detail. It has now established itself as a must-visit for beer enthusiasts, showcasing the many offerings from RedWillow

Brewery. The grand interior features a mahogany bank manager's office, subtle lighting, bench seating and, with the high ceiling, an impressive mezzanine floor has been added. Up to five cask beers are available along with 18 keg lines, including cider. On my last visit, the RedWillow cask beers were Headless, Wreckless, Feckless and Breakfast Stout.



A short stroll brings you to two venues run by a collaboration between 53 Degrees North (a local bar and restaurant) and Buxton Brewery. The first is the wet-led **53 Degrees North @ The Cellar Bar**. A recent refurbishment gives a relaxed setting, with wooden floors,

low-level lighting and an interesting scattering of memorabilia. The well-stocked bar, located under an original stone archway, has up to four cask beers available, plus up to 12 keg lines, mainly from Buxton Brewery. The cask beers were Wincle Brewery's Sir Philip and Lord Lucan as well as Buxton Mild when I last visited.



Located almost next door, **53 Degrees @ Buxton Tap House** offers a similar drinks set-up but adds a popular food offering, and more space. The contemporary interior features exposed stone walls, a stone bar, wooden furniture and low-level lighting, with large windows

adding to the refinement. Up to four cask beers are available, with up to a dozen keg lines. The cask beers, all from Buxton Brewery, were Right to Roam, Buxton Blonde, Buxton Spa and Buxton Mild when I last dropped in.

Passing the Opera House, and climbing up Hall Bank towards the marketplace, we find **Lubens** (pictured, top right), a restaurant and bar that could claim to be Buxton's hidden gem. The stylish interior has soft lighting, wooden floors and an open log fire that create a warm and friendly welcome away from the crowds. Recently opened



in October 2021, this was once the premises of 53 Degrees North, which has now collaborated with Buxton Brewery. Good food has therefore always been a main feature here, but at the back is a well-stocked bar, with up to four cask beers available from local breweries. When I called in, these were Thornbridge Jaipur, Beartown Bearskinful, Banks's Sunbeam and Elgood's Greyhound.



Towards the far end of the marketplace is **Ale Stop**, Buxton's first micropub. The space might be small but, like the log-burning stove, the welcome is warm. Cask

beer is king here, with up to five available from microbreweries across the country, and often ones rarely seen in the region. The old pump clips decorating the walls are testament to the variety on offer. On my last visit, the cask beers were ESB from Stancill Brewery, The Cap Bitter from Ampersand Brew, Mutiny from Peregrine Brewing and Supa-Citra from Jolly Boys' Brewery.



Around the corner is the **Old Sun Inn**, a 17th century coaching inn that claims to be the second oldest building in Buxton. It could also claim to be the cosiest pub in Buxton, with low ceilings,

oak beams and panelling, old stone and wooden floors, soft lighting, an open fire and a wood-burning stove. Up to four cask beers from the Marston's stable are available and these were Hobgoblin Ruby, Pedigree, Banks's Sunbeam and Wainwright when I last visited. Good traditional pub food is also available.



A few doors down you will find the double-fronted **Cheshire Cheese**, taken over by Titanic Brewery in 2013. A large comfortable seating awaits inside, with low ceilings, oak beams and intimate

lighting. Traditional home-cooked food is popular here, but drinkers will not be disappointed, with ten hand pumps on display at the bar – although not all are in use during quieter times. Everards Tiger, Funky Monkey from Frome Brewing, plus White Star and Iceberg from Titanic, were the cask beers available on my visit.

It is easy to get to Buxton with an hourly train service from Manchester Piccadilly, via Stockport. The 199 Skyline bus service is even more regular, with services from Manchester Airport, via Stockport, running every 30 minutes during peak times. Public transport timetables can be found at tfgm.com. Full pub details, including opening times, can be found at whatpub.com.

YOUR LOCAL
JOSEPH HOLT PUBS

THE FIVEWAYS

MACCLESFIELD ROAD
HAZEL GROVE
SK7 6BE

THE GREY HORSE

99 BROADSTONE ROAD
REDDISH
STOCKPORT
SK5 1AS

THE GRIFFIN HEALD GREEN

124 WILMSLOW ROAD
HEALD GREEN
CHEADLE
SK8 3BE

THE GRIFFIN HEATON MERSEY

552 DIDSBURY ROAD
HEATON MERSEY
STOCKPORT
SK4 3AJ

PLATFORM 5

47 STATION ROAD
CHEADLE HULME
CHEADLE
SK8 7AA

THE SUN & CASTLE

MIDDLE HILLGATE
STOCKPORT
SK1 3DG



170 YEARS OF
AWARD-WINNING
ALES AND LAGERS



JOSEPHHOLTBREWERY



@JOSEPHHOLT



@JOSEPHHOLT1849

News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

The Aviator, Woodford



It's almost 20 years since JW Lees last opened a new-build pub but, after six years of planning and two years of Covid-19 and building, the **Aviator** opened its doors to the public on 25 February. It's part of a huge development on the former Woodford

Airfield and Avro factory site. The aeronautical connection is echoed in both the pub's name, and in a wonderful collection of photographs of bygone days at the works. This collection is on display in the stairwell that leads to the toilets on the first floor.

The first impression is how spacious the pub is, not just the building but also the ample parking facilities.



The open-plan design has two lounge areas which are primarily for those customers who just want to relax over a drink. Separate from this is a substantial dining area, which is both elegant and comfortable. This opens onto a south-facing patio, which will be very popular in the summer months.

There is also a specific area where if you want to bring your dog with you, you can, although the management recommends getting in touch with them first so they can make you and your canine friends welcome.

When dining, to avoid disappointment, it is always advisable to book in advance. The menus are comprehensive and cater for all appetites; there is everything from 'nibbles' to a full dining menu. On the day Opening Times visited, the JW Lees cask beer range included MPA, Bitter and a seasonal beer which in this case was Dray Rumble, a rather excellent 4.4% rye bitter. The cellar is in fact organised so that up to four different cask beers can be served if required.

The attentive staff is overseen by the manager Hugh Smyth, who is one of JW Lees' most experienced managers, having spent 17 years with the brewery, latterly at the **Elizabethan**, Heaton Moor. Hugh is ably assisted by deputy manager Jake and a friendly, hard-working team.

We are sure the Aviator will be a very welcome addition to the local pub scene and wish it well. Public transport to Woodford isn't very good although the 42B bus from Manchester will drop you very close to the Aviator, but note it stops running early evening.

The Curly Hetchins

Blackjack Brewery is releasing a beer on 15 March, in both cask and can, in memory and celebration of the life of Dr Andy Fowell, the father of Richard Fowell (a director of Blackjack).



50p from every pint and can sold will be donated to the Motor Neurone Disease Association, a charity that was very close to Andy's heart. He was a trustee of the charity, and had previously raised £25,000 cycling across Europe.

He was an extremely enthusiastic and competent cyclist, and the beer is named after his much-loved bike, the Curly Hetchins, which he bought with his first pay as a doctor, and still rode most weeks.

The beer itself is an extremely drinkable, 4% pale ale hopped with Idaho 7, Cashmere and Meridian. It's designed to be the sort of beer you'd look forward to after a long bike ride. It has been brewed by Andy's son, Richard, and his two good friends, Steve MacVicar and Roger Thomas.

News from the Old Hall, Whitehough



There has been quite a lot going on at the **Old Hall** and the neighbouring **Paper Mill** (pictured above). The bottle shop at the Paper Mill has significantly expanded and is going down very well, and now includes off-sales of world beers and wine. The Paper Mill has expanded to include a cottage next door. This has been knocked through, making for some very comfy and cosy nooks to enjoy the extended beer range (with the addition of eight sofas, often next to open fires).

Both bars have been completely replaced, making an already great offer even better. There are also stretch tents at both venues. Tap takeovers have become a regular thing at the Paper Mill, often tied into pop-up world kitchens.

It's also good to hear that the popular beer festival will return this year. The festival will be relaunched, taking advantage of the new covered outdoor space and the expanded pubs. Dates and details should be in the next issue.

In Brief

In Timperley, **Libatory Brewing** will be producing cask beers in the near future, having previously concentrated on cans and occasional keykegs. In Levenshulme, **Station South** is about to open in the former, and long-closed, Levenshulme South station. It sounds like it aims to be a real community hub. Hopefully more next time.

BARROW HILL ROUNDHOUSE PRESENTS
RAIL ALE 2022

THE MOST ATMOSPHERIC BEER & MUSIC FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR!



BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW!
www.seetickets.com

**THURSDAY
19TH MAY**
12 noon to 6pm

**MARTIN KEMP
19TH MAY**
Doors open at 6:30pm

**FRIDAY
20TH MAY**
12 noon to 11pm

**SATURDAY
21ST MAY**
12 noon to 11pm

GETTING THE PARTY STARTED
ON THURSDAY EVENING...

MARTIN KEMP
THE ULTIMATE
BACK TO THE 80s DJ SET

SUPPORTED BY SOUL FUNK & BLUES BAND
HIGHWAY CHILD

FRIDAY'S
HEADLINE ACT
SKA BAND
JUNGLE LION

SATURDAY'S
HEADLINE ACT
THE
**EVERLY PREGNANT
BROTHERS**



*Booking fee applies. No under 18s allowed after 5pm. Train rides until 5pm on Friday & Saturday



BARROW HILL
ROUNDHOUSE



CAMPBELL DRIVE, BARROW HILL,
CHESTERFIELD, DERBYSHIRE S43 2PR
www.railalefestival.com



Supported
Festival

What's On

Local CAMRA Branch Diaries

Events for January to early March 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 10 March – Gateway, 882 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, M20 5PG. Possible guest speaker from Titanic Brewery. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Monday 14 March – Sportsman, 57 Mottram Road, Hyde, SK14 2NN. Starts 8pm. (HPNC)

Tuesday 5 April – Cotton Tree, Ingersley Road, Bollington, SK10 5RE. Starts 8pm. (MEC)

Thursday 14 April – Magnet, 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. This will also be the branch AGM. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 16 April – Commercial Inn, 137 Manor Park Road, Glossop, SK13 7SH. Starts 1:30pm. Will be followed by a social around other local pubs. (HPNC)

Social Events & Presentations

Friday 18 March – Levenshulme Stagger: 7:30pm Blue Bell, 170 Barlow Road, M19 3HF; 8:30pm Station Hop, 815 Stockport Road, M19 3BS; final pub Sidings, Broom Lane, M19 3WU. (SSM)

Saturday 19 March – Joint social in Urmston with Trafford & Hulme Branch. Details to be confirmed. (CMCR)

Thursday 24 March – Pub of the Month presentation: Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris, SK4 2NA. From 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 26 March – Day out in Preston. Catch 11:11am Hazel Grove to Blackpool North train. First pub in Preston (at 12:25pm) will be the Old Vic, 79 Fishergate, PR1 2HU. (SSM)

Saturday 26 March – Pub of the Year presentation: Silly Country, 121 Market Street, Droylsden, M43 7AR. Starts 2pm. Will be followed by a social around other local pubs. (HPNC)

Thursday 31 March – Pub of the Month presentation: delayed from December last year. Moortop, 172 Heaton Moor Road, SK4 4DU. From 8pm. (SSM)

Friday 1 April – Mild Magic Launch Stagger: 6:45pm Grey Horse, 80 Portland Street, M1 4QX; 7:40pm Britons Protection, 50 Great Bridgewater Street, M1 5LE. (SSM)

Tuesday 5 April – Weekday Wander in Hyde: meet 11:15am at TFGM Travel Shop in Mersey Square, Stockport. First pub in Hyde (at 12:15) Queens, 23 Clarendon Place, SK14 2ND. (SSM)

Friday 22 April – Stockport North & Portwood Stagger: 7:30pm Midway, 263 Newbridge Lane, SK1 2NX; 8pm Queens, 11 Great Portwood Street, SK1 2DW. Note – the delayed Pub of the Month award from April 2020(!) will be presented while we are here. (SSM)

Saturday 23 April – Spring Pub of the Season presentation: Gillery, 1-3 Old Brow, Mossley, OL5 0AD. Starts 1:30pm. Will be followed by a social around other local pubs. (HPNC)

Saturday 23 April – Spring Pub of the Season presentation: Railway, Station Road, Mobblerley, WA16 6LA. From 12noon. (MEC)

Thursday 28 April – Pub of the Month presentation: Vale Cottage, 1 Croft Bank, Kirk Street, Gorton, M18 8UE. From 8pm. (SSM)

Wednesday 4 May – Weekday Wander in Stalybridge: meet Stockport Rail Station 11:00am. First pub Station Buffet Bar 11:50am-12:45pm. (SSM)

CAMRA Awards

Recent Presentations



The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month for January was the **Gateway** in East Didsbury. Kevin Muldoon took over this large, inter-war roadhouse almost ten years ago, not long after JD

Wetherspoon purchased it from Hydes.

Kevin's tenure has been marked by the high quality of the beer, such that the pub has been a *Good Beer Guide* regular for nine years, including 2022, along with excellent service to the customer. He is pictured above (centre) receiving his award from CAMRA's John Clarke (left) and Jim Flynn (right).



The High Peak, Tameside and North East Cheshire Branch's Pub of the Winter 2022 award was presented to Robinsons' **Windsor Castle** in Marple Bridge. The licensee, Jo Farrell, has been in charge for 14 years, and these days it is rare to find a licensee dedicated to a particular pub for that length of time. This is a true local and community pub, and is a reflection of the approach that Jo has to managing it, and of her welcoming outlook for all customers.

Jo ensures that the pub is a base for many activities such as the Thursday quiz, Friday or Saturday night entertainment, and sporting events. Many of these activities and others also benefit charities, including an outdoor fruit and vegetable stall on Fridays and Saturdays, which is due to recommence again soon. It is a fine

example of the traditional local of the type getting regrettably rarer these days.

The photograph shows Jo receiving the award certificate from Tom Lord, the Branch Social Secretary.



The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month for February was the **Petersgate Tap** in central Stockport. The Tap celebrated its fifth birthday in September last year, and in those few years it has become one of the leading local outlets for quality cask beer, and, most notably, real cider and perry.

On the bar, you'll find six cask and six keg beers. These are sourced from far and wide, although particular attention is paid to the top rank of local craft brewers here in the north-west. There is also great attention to detail when it comes to real cider and perry. Local producers feature, but leading national cider makers such as Gregg's Pit, Ross on Wye and Hecks are regular suppliers.

Pictured above are owners Alan and Chris Gent with their certificate.

THE DAVENPORT ARMS

Yvonne Hallworth celebrates 30 years as licensee



“We take pride in running The Davenport, serving the local community and offering a space for people to socialise with good food and drinks. We are very proud to be celebrating our time at the pub”
Yvonne



550 Chester Rd, Woodford, Stockport SK7 1PS | 0161 439 2435
robinsonsbrewery.com/pubs/davenport-arms-woodford/