

OPENING TIMES

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2022

FREE

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About Opening Times & Contacts

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Pub Opening Hours

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

Disclaimer

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

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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 all pubs generously offering a discount to CAMRA members can be found at camra.org.uk/join/membership-benefits/real-ale-discount-scheme/

Front Cover

Happy Christmas! Lots of Christmas ales for you to enjoy. Photo by Lawrence Devaney.

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2018, 2019

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2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023

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Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for November and December



This month, Dave Pennington tells you about the John Millington in Cheadle Hulme, which receives November's Pub of the Month award from the Stockport & South Manchester branch of CAMRA.

In 2006, Hydes Brewery opened their fourth Heritage Inn in Cheadle Hulme: a £1m restoration of the 1683 Grade II listed Millington Hall. The conversion was done sympathetically, retaining the old Cheshire brickwork and many period features, such as the large original fireplace and surviving arched windows and doorways. The John Millington has a multi-area layout, with an effective use of walls and furniture which breaks the space in this large building into a number of interesting sections. Outside is an attractive part-covered, part-heated seating area.



While there is an impressive all-day food operation, the pub also deserves recognition 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 casks from the inventive Ralf+Alf range. If you drop in on a Monday you'll also get 50p off a pint of cask beer.

All in all the John Millington is a great, busy community pub in the centre of Cheadle Hulme, popular

with all ages. There is an excellent range of well-kept cask beers, and prices are keen for the area. What's not to like?

Join us for the presentation on the evening of Thursday 24 November when a great night is in prospect. The pub is easily accessible by public transport, too. It's within walking distance of Cheadle Hulme railway station and in the evening buses 378A, 313 and 368 will drop you close by.

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

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The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for December has been awarded to the Fred's Ale House on Stockport Road, Levenshulme. Jim Flynn tells you why it won.

The opening of Fred's Ale House by the Hennigan family in 2015 was really the first recognition that the Levenshulme pub scene was changing, and that there was a demand for real ale in the area. This independent bar, named because the building once housed a Betfred bookies, is set over three floors. It is part bar, part coffee shop, and also an art gallery, but the emphasis is very much on the beer.

The entrance area, which can be opened to the elements in the summer, has comfortable furnishing and is marked by decorative tiling from when this was once a UCP tripe shop. Inside the narrow interior, the stylish bar is set to the left, with seating at the front and rear leading to an outside drinking and smoking area. The more spartan basement is a large drinking area-cum-gallery space, and can accommodate live gigs and acoustic acts. The upstairs lounge has more seating and a sun terrace balcony.

Ben Krnjulac, the manager, has worked for the Hennigans for 15 years, previously at M19, and has been licensee at Fred's Ale House since the end of lockdown. Prior to that, the bar had struggled for management and Ben has certainly steadied the ship, so much so that Fred's is now back in the 2023 Good Beer Guide after a period in the wilderness.

Fred's has six cask beers, usually including Marston's Wainwright, beers from Blackjack and Brightside, as well as rotating guest beers from a wide range of breweries. Often a real cider is also found on handpump. Thursday (the night of the presentation) is designated as 'Thirsty Thursday', with designated cask beers at £2.50 per pint from 4pm.

So why not join the local CAMRA branch on Thursday 29 December, when the Pub of the Month Award will be presented to Ben and his hard-working staff? I am sure a really great night will be enjoyed by all. Don't miss it!

The pub is on the 192 bus route, with buses every few minutes throughout the evening, as well as on the 150, 197 and 172 cross-city bus routes which also serve Levenshulme, and within a few hundred metres is Levenshulme station; so there is no excuse for missing out on what will be an excellent evening!



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What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region

Marble at 25



December sees the Silver Jubilee of **Marble Beers** which opened on 8 December 1997 (the front page of *Opening Times* for that month is shown here). The brewery was the culmination a year-long project by Mark Dade, then the licensee of the **Marble Arch** pub (and now the owner of the Arndale Centre's **MicroBar**).

He received encouragement from the Marble Arch owners Jan Rogers and Vance de Bechevel, and the brewery was designed and installed by legendary Manchester brewer Brendan Dobbin. The five-barrel

plant was situated in the pub's cellar, and a small ground floor room which now forms part of the kitchen. The first two beers were a golden Marble Bitter (4%) and the stronger Totally Marbled (5%).

Many famous brewing names have passed through the brewery in the intervening 25 years, all of whom have gone on to make a mark elsewhere in the UK craft beer scene. These include James Campbell (Cloudwater and Sureshot), Colin Stronge (Buxton and Salt Beer Factory), Dominic Driscoll (Thornbridge), Rob Hamilton (Blackjack), Matt Howgate (Vocation) and James Kemp (BrewDog).



The brewing team is now headed up by Joe Ince, who has earned a reputation for consistently good beers. The brewery is now many times bigger and located in a large unit in Salford, which is also home to the excellent brewery tap (pictured above).

Various celebratory beers have been produced to mark the anniversary, but perhaps the most significant has been a modern iteration of the iconic Dobber IPA, eagerly awaited by beer fans both across Greater Manchester and further afield.

We could probably devote a whole issue of *Opening Times* to the history of Marble, such has been its impact over the years, but of course space does not permit. Here's to the next 25 years!

Beer Nouveau

In a move which didn't surprise, (but did dismay) many local beer lovers was the announcement in early October that Manchester's **Beer Nouveau** is to close after some seven years.

Owner Steve Dunkley has been trying to sell his brewery, based in a railway arch on North Western Street, for some time. While the brewery equipment and the lease on the railway arch are still for

sale, if there are no buyers, it will in all likelihood close by the end of November.



During his time at Beer Nouveau, Steve has made a name for himself in pioneering the recreation of many historic beers – even to the extent of getting heritage malts specially kilned. Many of the beers have also been

barrel-aged too. He's been an active supporter of local homebrewers, hosting numerous events and get-togethers for them. The last event held at the brewery was a 'Greenhopfest' in late October, which featured many beers brewed with the new season's fresh hops.

Apart from the brewery, the regular weekend brewery taps (pictured above with Steve and his wife Lesley behind the bar) have become something of a local institution. Steve and Lesley run something more akin to an old-style community pub, with good conversation (and often impromptu beer tastings).

Beer Nouveau is at 75 North Western Street, M12 6DY. It will be missed – get there while you can.

Lees Specials

Middleton based family brewers **JW Lees**, who have an increasing presence in the *Opening Times* area, have been using their smaller 'Boilerhouse' kit to collaborate with several craft brewers. Collaboration brews with **Cloudwater** and **North Brewing** have already been seen, and in the pipeline are brews with **Salt**, **Bundobust** and **Thornbridge**. Look out for them.

Local drinkers can also look forward to the return of one of Lees' most famous seasonal beers. Plum Pudding, a rich and fruity ale at 4.8%, will be hitting the bars of Lees houses from the middle of November and will be available until the end of the year.

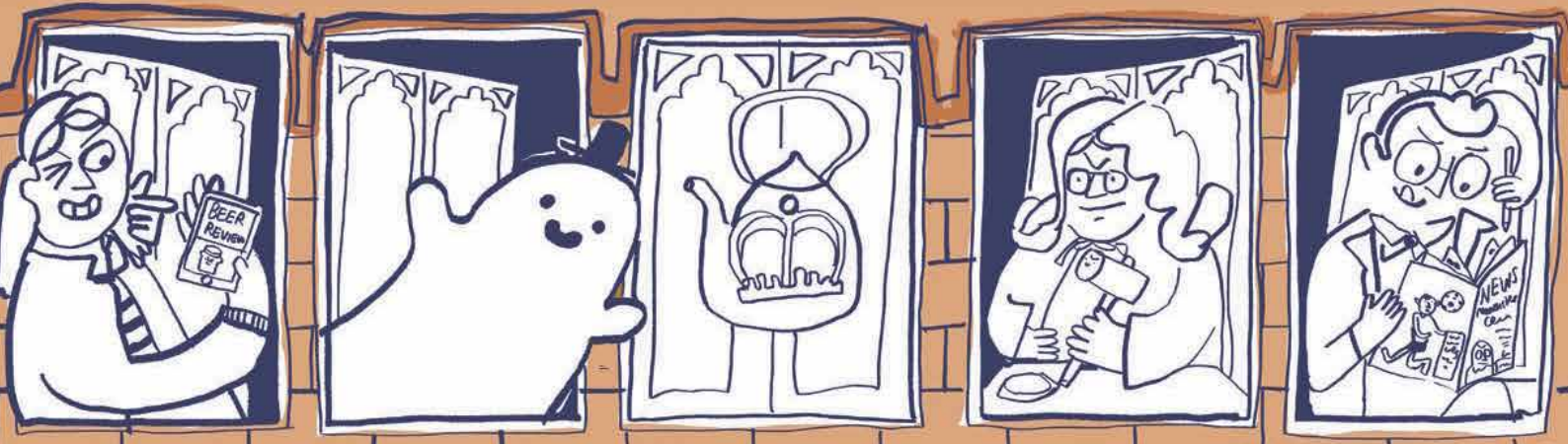


News in Brief

Popping up in early October from almost nowhere was Manchester's newest brewery, **Green Arches**. The brewery has been set up by Sam Flahive and Lee Coates, both of whom previously brewed at the now defunct Beatnikz Republic. In fact, their new brewery is at 11 Red Bank, just down the road from the former Beatnikz premises at number 15.

There's a brewery tap on site, and this opens from 4pm-12am Thursday and Friday, 12noon-midnight Saturday and 12pm-11pm on Sundays. We had hoped to pay a visit and will certainly be dropping by before our next issue comes out.

Another brewery tap due to open in November (and which may already be up and running by the time you read this) is from **Sureshot Brewing**. The new tap will be next door to the brewery, which is at 5 Sheffield Street, behind Piccadilly Station. More on this one next time, too.



The **CROWN & KETTLE**
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Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

Reddish Ale



Following our report last time, **Reddish Ale** (14 Broadstone Road, Reddish) is now up and running, and seems to have been an instant success.

The single room has been stylishly fitted out to create a warm and welcoming bar where the accent is on quality, and support for local producers.



Three cask beers are available and, when *Opening Times* called, these were from local stalwarts Thirst Class, RedWillow and Distant Hills. Local beers also dominated the keg offer (including two excellent lagers from RedWillow) while real cider is

Sheppy's on tap, and this is selling very well, we understand.

You'll not go hungry either as there is an extensive selection of small plate dishes, with different menus for lunchtime and evening, and everything being homemade, including the bread. Meats come from local heroes Littlewoods, which is based just down the road in Heaton Chapel.

This really is well worth a visit. The number 7 and 42A buses will drop you outside, while it's just a short walk from Houldsworth Square which is well served by the 203.

Reddish Ale is closed on Tuesdays and opens from 12 noon Wednesday to Sunday (closing at 10pm Wednesday and Thursday, 11pm Friday and Saturday, and 8pm on Sundays). Monday hours are 2-10pm.

Heaton Hops



If you hop on a bus from Reddish Ale it's only a short journey down to Heaton Chapel where you will find **Heaton Hops** (7 School Lane), where a third handpump has been installed, and which is pretty much a permanent outlet for a beer from Timothy Taylor's.

Taylor's have recognised the bar's commitment to quality by adding it to their Champion Club Establishment list. We are told this will be only the fifth such venue in the Stockport & South Manchester area to be awarded the accolade, and

only the second in Stockport (the other being the **Jolly Sailor** in Davenport). Our congratulations to Damien O'Shea and his team for winning this award.

Famous Crown



If you want to make a day of it, you can hop on the 42A near Heaton Hops and head on down to Didsbury, where the **Famous Crown** (770 Wilmslow Road) has finally reopened.

Dionne Blackshaw and her partner Lee have taken a ten-year lease on the pub, which is owned by Punch

Taverns. They were previously at **Jackson's Boat** in Sale for 12 years. The pub is free of tie and they apparently have a good relationship with several breweries, including Thornbridge and Beartown.

There are nine handpumps, which featured three cask beers when *Opening Times* called, and they expect to add two more within the next few weeks. Taylor's Landlord will be the staple beer and the others will rotate weekly – the other two guest beers when we called were Black Sheep Best Bitter and Purity Ubu.

There will be snacks, small plates and full meals available, and these were due to come on stream in mid-October. Everything will be prepared from fresh ingredients.

The pub is nicely done out with plenty of nooks and crannies to choose from. There are settles and upholstered chairs, a couple of TV screens (covered by pictures when not in use) and a pleasant seating area outside at the back, with another TV. The tiled floors, Victorian fireplace and wood panelling have been retained, and the fire will be lit as the weather grows colder. The pub is dog-friendly.

Dionne and Lee are very welcoming – and very enthusiastic about their new venture. They hold regular training sessions for their staff and are committed to providing a pub which caters for everyone, from someone wanting a quiet read of the paper to a group doing the Didsbury Dozen.

It's good to see this pub up and running again, and in safe hands.

Tatton Arms





The **Tatton Arms** on Trenchard Drive at Moss Nook recently reopened after a refurbishment by Robinsons.

The exterior looks exactly the same, and inside the changes appear to be minimal. Entering by the side door, the bar has been moved to the right as you go in, and the space where it was has been filled with posing tables. We think the room to the left might have been opened up slightly, and become a bit more dining, but the dark wooden panelling, low ceilings and beams have all been retained. Overall, the décor is Robinsons' by-now-familiar 'modern traditional' – and is very easy on the eye.

Three handpumps are on the bar and, spotting a chalkboard near the Gents saying 'Ask for Cask, our reporter duly did; but the Unicorn was pretty average, unfortunately.

More Pub News on page 11....

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News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

Old Fire Station, Ashton



The **Old Fire Station** (previously the Engine Room) in Ashton-under-Lyne (46 Wellington Road) has reopened following significant investment from PubCo Amber Taverns. Sarah Greaves is at the helm, and Barry Garrish is

looking after the cellar. This is the fifth pub the couple have managed for the company.

Barry describes himself as a real ale enthusiast and the best cellarman in the whole Amber Taverns estate! Initially, three constantly changing handpumped ales are available, typically from local breweries. The plan is to establish one permanent ale based on what regulars want, complemented by two changing guests. All real ale is £2.50 a pint, so it's well worth a visit. The pub will be entirely wet-led, with no food, and no dogs or children allowed.

An interesting feature is the ceiling, which has been restored to show off the design that ensured that fire engines could fit in with their ladders on top of the vehicles. Fire engine and fire station memorabilia are being sought to display in the pub, and donations are most welcome. The pub intends to become an active part of the local community, with the Ambitions Social Club already making use of the extensive premises.

North Westward Ho



Pomona Island Brew Co. is stepping out of **Escape To Freight Island** (situated behind the old Mayfield Station in central Manchester) and embarking on a new venture. Pomona Island beers will still be available at the new craft beer bar at Freight Island, but the Pomona team won't be involved: they've set their sights on something a bit different.

Many of the Pomona team have worked in hospitality for years, and two of the directors set up the **Gas Lamp** on Bridge Street, so it's natural that they should return to their first love.

The name **North Westward Ho** comes from the legendary old pub ship that was moored at Pomona Docks in the seventies. The Pomona Island version will be firmly on dry land.

Taking over part of the former Chaophraya site (pictured above) on Chapel Walks and Pall Mall, right above **Sam's Chophouse**, the Pomona team are renovating the beautiful building in a move they feel will bring something special to the area. They told *Opening Times*:

"We want the space to feel like a pub, not a bar, and we want all the good things that come with that. Pub spaces are for anyone, places where people come to commune, we need a bit of that right now. We want it to feel inclusive. This will be a, sort-of taproom for the brewery, but that on its own doesn't really interest us.

"We like a venue with its own identity, where everyone's welcome and catered for. This won't just be a beer bar, it will have an incredible selection of drinks. It won't just look like a bar, it will have that feel of a proper boozer. Something that will, hopefully, be around for years."

The pub is due to open early to mid-2023 and sounds like it will be a major addition to the City Centre beer scene.

Tameside Beer Festival Is Back



Tameside Rotary Beer Festival organisers have pulled out all the stops to rearrange the beer festival following its postponement in September. The Beer Festival will now go ahead on Friday 18 and Saturday 19 November, at Stalybridge Civic Hall, Trinity Street, Stalybridge. It will be open from 12 noon to 11 pm each day. Admission is by programme, purchased on the door at a cost of £3.00.

Offering over 40 beers, including local craft beers, alongside a selection of ciders and wines, the festival will also offer visitors live music and entertainment, with a lineup including Mossley Ukulele Group, Pattison Fog, Tameside Community Voices, Steely Don and the Potcheen Chasers.

The event is organised by Tameside Rotary whose President, Mohammed Shamsul Karim, says: "We are delighted that we have been able to rearrange this popular community event which helps us to raise money for local and national charities. There will be plenty to toast at this year's festival, which would not be possible without the avid support of local businesses, individuals and volunteers. I would like to thank all our advertisers, sponsors and partners for their continued support."

The profits raised from this year's festival will go to Smallshaw Hurst Community Action Group, Cancer Research UK and other charities supported by Tameside Rotary.

Rock Mill Brewery To Close

In a very unexpected development we learn that Rock Mill Brewery in New Mills is having to close. It's not that owner and brewer Ray



Barton wants to shut up shop, but he has been given notice by the owner of the premises who wants vacant possession. The last of the popular brewery taps was due to be on Tuesday 25 October.

Hopefully, this won't be the end of Rock Mill, though.

Ray tells us that he is keeping his eyes open for suitable new premises and in fact he already has one in mind that ticks all the right boxes for him. The only snag is that it's currently occupied, although there is an indication that it might become available in the New Year. Ray wants to stay in New Mills so the choice of premises is a rather limited one.

This is a real blow to the New Mills beer scene and *Opening Times* hopes that Ray is up and running again before long. Obviously we'll let you know when that happens.

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.

You Could Be My Dad

It's the neck as wide as your head.
The shoulders as wide as globes,
the ability to talk about the smallest thing.
I've seen three people walk past the window,
point at you and say There he is! Their smiles
are white vans freshly out of a car wash.

I wonder if you watch Channel 5 documentaries
about how giant machines are built.
Your feet are tapping along to the playlist
like you put it together. Your hands look heavy,
capable of damage you've never dreamed of.

Ace

You offer up conversation starters like a tennis coach
throwing desperate-to-be-hit balls to any child
paying attention. No-one brought their rackets today,
it seems, but you keep serving just in case one gets returned.

Private

I'm looking through a door
into a pub's store cupboard.
I can see piles of raring-to-go peanuts,

queues of patient WKD Blues,
rows and rows of lager
not even bothering getting to know each other.

I wonder if the man plonking Budweisers
into the green plastic carriers,
the kind that holds 10 bottles at a time,
has ever called the room his pantry.

The fruit ciders are scattered on shelves
like memories of mixed berries
on countryside bushes.

The man plonking Budweisers
into the green plastic carriers
kicks the door shut with his heel
to show a sign saying PRIVATE.

Maybe that explains my heart rate
or the ache of feeling uninvited.

Calling Home Brewers New Competition Launched

Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA is again running a competition for local home brewers, to find five beers for Bar Nouveau at next year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival.

Bar Nouveau was introduced in 2015 and features brand new beers launched at the festival. It's proved to be a very successful feature and we will be running it again next year (the festival dates are 22-24 June). There will be up to ten beers, all served on a separate bar and properly cooled to ensure optimum condition.



For the past few years we have involved local home brewers and have been delighted by the response. As in past years, each of the five winners will have their beer brewed by a different local,

professional brewery. The festival will purchase three firkins of each winning beer and the rest will be sold on to the market by the brewers concerned. If you are a home brewer this is a great chance to join in a brew day at a local brewery and also see one of your beers out there on sale to the public.

The brewers who have kindly agreed to host the winners are:

- Marble Beers, Salford (Speciality)
- Runaway Brewery, Stockport (Mild & Brown Ale)
- Thirst Class Ale, Stockport (Strong Pale Ale, ESB and IPA)
- Torrside Brewing, New Mills (Stout & Porter)
- Blackjack Brewing, Manchester (Pale Ale, Bitter and Session IPA)

The five categories are quite broadly drawn so that you can use your imagination. Here's what we are looking for:

Mild & Brown Ale – this is a chance to take old beer styles and run with them. Maximum ABV 5.5%.

Bitter, Pale Ale & Session IPA – session ales, pale ales, brown, amber or blonde – the choice is yours. Maximum ABV 5%.

Strong Pale Ale, ESB & IPA – while we're not style fanatics you should aim for a minimum ABV of 5%. Apart from that it's up to you – brown, red, black or white IPAs are all welcome. Maximum ABV 6.5%.

Stout & Porter – again this is broadly drawn – added flavours and ingredients optional. Maximum ABV 6%.

Speciality – this is where you can really go to town. Saisons, bocks, rauch biers – all are welcome. Note – all beers with lactose will fall in this category. Maximum ABV 7%.

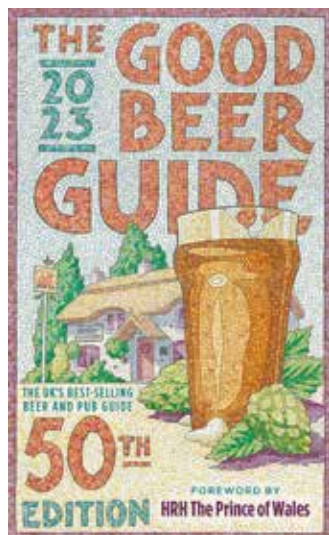


A few things to bear in mind: although the beers will be judged from bottle, they will have to work as cask beers. In previous years, we have asked people to think about the hops and, while

that's not really an issue now please do consider commerciality. We will be buying some of each brew for the festival but the host brewers will have to sell the rest into the trade so the beers will have to be commercially viable for them. Please also note that we will be looking to ensure the entries observe the ABV limits for each category – a tiny amount of drift is OK but not huge overshoots.

How to enter – just email your name, contact details and which categories you want to enter to: stocam@btinternet.com. **The cut-off date for entering is 15 January (but we won't need details of actual beers until early February).** Judging will take place in late March/early April next year.

Good Beer Guide 2023



“The definitive rundown of the best places in the UK to get a pint of real ale, from cosy country inns to upmarket style bars.” – Time Out Magazine

The Good Beer Guide, CAMRA's premier publication, featuring the very best pints of real ale, was published on 27 October. This is the 50th edition of the country's best beer and pub guide, and features over 4,500 of the finest pubs in the UK, chosen by CAMRA members across the country.

Once again, Cask Marque, and its sister company Stay In A Pub, are sponsoring the *Guide*.

The *Good Beer Guide* has evolved and developed over the last 50 years, and this edition is another step in its evolution. This year the *Guide* has been made much more user-friendly and accessible, featuring regional entries introduced by the award-winning writer of *50 Years of CAMRA*, Laura Hadland, and bringing together pub and brewery information for the first time, making it easier to find your new favourite local ale.



The cover is strikingly different this year, having been designed by world-renowned artist and designer Neil Gower, well known for his work on Bill Bryson's travel series and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

Describing his approach to the cover, Neil said:

“...something I tried out recently, which I think could make a really striking and attractive approach for the 50th cover. It is to give the feeling of an elaborate colourful mosaic. This provides a good combination of a jewel-like, crafted quality while still having plenty of punch. It is the sense of ‘craftsmanship’ that should glow from it.”



Last year *Opening Times* recorded that three Stockport pubs marked very long runs in the *Guide*. The **Davenport Arms** in Woodford and **Ye Olde Vic** in Edgeley continue their stints this time, with 36 years

and 22 years respectively. The other veteran, the **Railway**, Portwood, is of course sadly no more. Another pub building up a steady run of entries is the **Magnet** in Stockport, which this year marks its 13th consecutive appearance.

We should also record that this year the foreword to the *Guide* is written by none other than HM King Charles III (albeit when he was HRH the Prince of Wales)!

Copies of the Good Beer Guide can be obtained from Jim Flynn at a price of £16.99 (including p&p). Please send a cheque payable to ‘CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester’ to 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG.

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Stagger

Gatley & Cheadle with Jim Flynn



It was a fine summer's evening when we met up in the fenced garden of Hydes' **Prince of Wales** in Gatley. What a very pleasant spot it is too, next to the village church and overlooking the village green.

Inside the pub there are three rooms, with their low doors and ceilings revealing the pub's history as a pair of cottages, and the bench seating giving a country pub atmosphere, but given the weather, most people were outside. Available were 1863, Original and Ralf+Alf Brewing Fruity Pig (Ralf+Alf being a new range of beers from Hydes). The 1863 was tried and in good form.



With the **Red Lion** now a Tesco and the **Gothic Bar** now a restaurant, off we went down Church Road, past new keg and gin bar, **Bar 57** (one of a plethora of such places

that has opened in Gatley recently), to another Hydes pub, the **Horse and Farrier** on Gatley Road opposite the war memorial. With its mock-Tudor exterior and bay windows, this is certainly an imposing building. Inside, this low-ceilinged, multi-roomed characterful pub is even bigger than it seems from outside. Despite this, on our visit it was packed both inside and in the garden. Alongside the Hydes Original, Hopster and 1863 were Lowry and Ralf+Alf Brewing Fruity Pig. As at the Prince of Wales, the beers we tried were certainly in good to very good nick.

Both the Gatley pubs are really well worth a longer visit, so it was with some reluctance that we made our way to Cheadle. Before catching the bus we checked out two more of the recently opened bars – **The Spinn**, which was almost empty, and **Bibita**, which was far more popular; neither though provided much interest to the real ale drinker. A few days after our visit, it was announced that The Spinn was to close.



Our first port of call in Cheadle was another imposing pub, Greene King's **White Hart**, situated next to St Mary's parish church. Again, most people seemed to be outside in the garden to the rear, which seemed to have been extensively enlarged since my last visit, before lockdown.

We sat to the right-hand side of the bar, where there was plenty of seating, rather than in either of the snugs to the left. We sampled Wily Fox's Crafty Fox, Yardbird Pale Ale (Greene King) and Coach House Blonde, with mixed reviews (the Greene King IPA was not tried).



Further down Cheadle High Street is the **Crown**. Hydes (yes, them again) converted this shop into a pub some years ago, long before it was fashionable to do so. As a result, I sometimes think it lacks some of the character of the first three pubs. Normally

on my visits the pub is busy, but on this night it was the quietest of the evening. The beer range seems to have been reduced as the guest beers have been dropped. 1863, Lowry and Original were available, with the Lowry considered the pick of the bunch.



With the **Vine** now a restaurant, we moved on to the **James Watts**, another Hydes pub with a mock-Tudor exterior. Previously called the Old Star or latterly the Star, the pub changed its name after a makeover some years ago. It has two comfortable rooms at the front

(the left area was at one time the separate vault), a middle section with high posing tables near the bar and an area to the rear set out with more traditionally. With the makeover came a more exciting beer policy, with Dark Ruby, 1863, Lowry, Original and two beers from the Ralf+Alf range to be sampled. However, the place was only moderately busy and, on the basis of that night, I wonder whether this footfall can sustain the number of beers that were available.



Our final stop was the **George and Dragon** where we were greeted by the first and only door staff of the night. The pub has become famous (or is that infamous) for its generous provision of television sets but my impression was that the number had been somewhat reduced

since my last visit. The place was as quiet as I have ever known for a Friday evening, and this enabled me to notice more of the décor including the former coaching archway which has been incorporated into the pub, and the great hanging sign above the door. The cask beers were limited to one, Deuchars Caledonian IPA, which was generally well received.

Altogether an enjoyable stagger, with the pubs and beers in Gatley shading it on the night.

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Pub Walks with Chris Morris

Woodford

The Davenport Arms (Thief's Neck)



At the end of a brisk walk in the cold winter months, you can't beat the comfort of a classic village pub with a roaring fire, together with a quality, well-earned pint. The **Davenport Arms** fits the bill perfectly with an inviting and cosy space, filled with delightful character, which you will find difficult to leave. The impressive double-sided wood-burner is as warm as the welcome from the Hallworth family, who have been expertly running the pub for 90 years. Numerous awards have been won over this time, including one marking 35 continuous years in the *Good Beer Guide*. On my last visit, the Robinsons cask beers available were Unicorn, Wizard and Dizzy Blonde. The excellent home-made food is recommended.

Bus Information

The bus required for this walk is the 42B, which runs hourly between Manchester and Woodford. The bus route passes through Fallowfield, Withington, Didsbury, Cheadle, Cheadle Hulme and Bramhall. We will leave the bus at the 'Copperfield Road' stop (ask the bus driver if in doubt), which is just after the bus turns left from Grove Lane, on the western edge of Bramhall.

After our walk and pub visit, we rejoin the same bus at Woodford. There are a number of ticket options, but I would recommend an all-day bus ticket for value and convenience. The last bus leaves Woodford just before 8pm, Monday to Saturday, and 7.10pm on Sunday. For full timetable information visit tfgm.com or bustimes.org.

The Walk

This two-and-a-half-mile walk is flat, with a number of stiles and gates on the route. It passes through some fields which will be muddy after bad weather, so hiking boots are recommended. Don't forget to close farm gates after you pass through them. The OS Explorer Map is 268 Wilmslow, Macclesfield & Congleton (OS app also available).

After getting off the bus at Copperfield Road, walk back along Acre Lane from where the bus came, towards the main road. Turn left at the junction and walk along Grove Lane for half a mile until you go over the A555 bypass. Immediately afterwards, turn right and walk along Dairy House Lane for 300 yards. Don't take the path on the right but walk on the pavement next to the road, where we have our first countryside views.

Stay with the road as it bends to the left, but when it then bends right continue straight ahead along the narrower road. After 500 yards we reach a private dwelling's metal gates. Walk through a wooden gate to the right into a field on the other side. Our route is now to the stile on the opposite corner of the field; however, our right of way is anti-clockwise around the edge of the field. When you get to the stile,

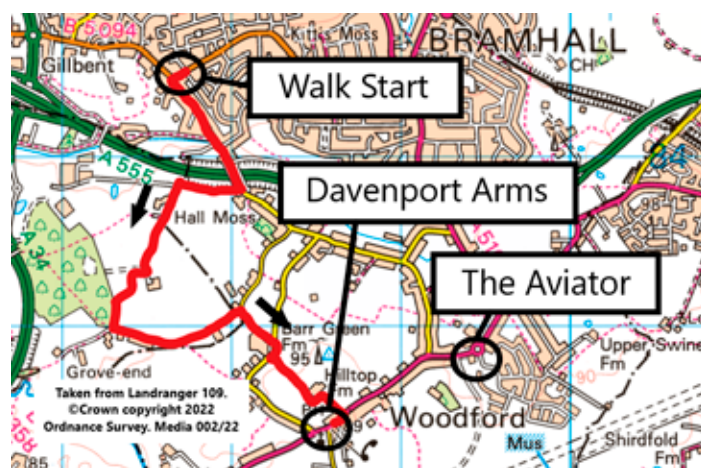
follow the arrow marker and continue straight ahead at the next field for 200 yards, to the other side, then left along the edge of the field for a further 100 yards towards a house and over a stile. Turn left and walk along the country lane for half a mile until we reach Blossoms Lane.

We now turn right and follow the quiet road for 300 yards until we reach Church Lane. Take a right here, then after 100 yards we leave the road over a stile on the left into a field. Walk straight ahead over the next stile and straight ahead again in the next field, keeping the hedgerow on your left for 200 yards, then climb over the stile. Walk into the next field and keep to the left side in the same direction as before with the church ahead and to the right. At the end of the field, walk through the small metal gate, then left to another gate and right along the track until you reach the main road. Turn right here and, after 100 yards, the Davenport Arms is on your right for your well-deserved pint.



On exiting the pub to catch the 42B bus back, turn right and walk along the main road for 100 yards where you will find the bus stop. If further refreshment is required, getting off the bus after three stops will bring you to the newly-built **Aviator**, owned by JW Lees. Constructed on the site of the former Woodford Aerodrome, an impressive new building now awaits that has been skilfully furnished with quality fittings throughout. The home-cooked food is popular here, with an extensive menu on offer. Drinkers are also catered for, with JW Lees Bitter and MPA available on cask when I last visited.

For full pub details, including opening times, visit whatpub.com.



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Pubs in the Peak

Chris Morris visits Stalybridge

Greater Manchester's current Town of Culture has much to offer visitors. Rich in industrial heritage, the town centre is the perfect place to explore architecturally impressive structures and buildings, with the Huddersfield Canal and River Tame flowing gracefully beneath its streets. The town also boasts a number of pubs and bars selling quality cask beers that are equally worth exploring. With up to four trains an hour, fifteen minutes is all it takes to reach Stalybridge from Manchester's Piccadilly and Victoria stations.



No trip to Stalybridge would be complete without a visit to the famous **Station Buffet Bar** on platform 4. As well as a warm welcome, an impressive Victorian interior awaits with all four exceptional rooms worth seeking out. Old railway signs and pictures are lovingly on display throughout, with wooden floorboards, vintage furniture and high ceilings giving an air of grandeur. Fittingly, the pub features on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. The delights do not end there as the pub is also a beer enthusiast's dream with ten handpumps offering a mixture of excellent cask ales and ciders, plus eight beers on keg. On my last visit the cask beers were from Thornbridge, Black Edge, Strange Times, Timothy Taylor's, Millstone, Northern Monkey and North Riding Brewery, with cider from Hogan's. It goes without saying that the pub also features in the *Good Beer Guide*.

The Station Buffet Bar is certainly an exceptional place and a lot of visitors' experience of Stalybridge will go no further than here. However, the town has a number of other quality establishments that are recommended. The following all sell quality cask beer and most are reasonably priced.



A 100-yard walk down from the station, and under the railway bridge, brings us to two neighbouring pubs with contrasting names. The **Q Inn** is a popular local, offering live entertainment, televised sports and a large beer garden for the warmer months. The cask beers available when I last called by were Hopster, Original and Lowry from owners Hydes Brewery, plus the house beer Q Ale. It holds the record for the shortest-named pub in the UK.



A few yards away we arrive at the **Old Thirteenth Cheshire Volunteer Rifleman Corps Inn**. Yes, you guessed, it holds the record for the longest-named pub in the UK. This modern lounge bar is spread over two levels, offering

live music, a pool table and popular food options. A single cask beer of Willows Wood, from Old Mill Brewery, was available on last inspection.



A short stroll further along Market Street brings us to the **White House** which has an entry in the *Good Beer Guide*. As well as a comfortable and pleasant interior, beer enthusiasts are well catered for with six cask beers available from owners Hydes and their experimental brewery Ralf+Alf. Live music

events are regularly booked for peak evenings and a large beer garden is available.



Continuing along Market Street, and then right along Melbourne Street, will bring you to two excellent micropubs. Offering a relaxing space and a warm welcome, **Cracking Pint** (previously the Crafty Pint) features in the *Good Beer Guide* and offers four hand pumps for cask beer and cider. The focus on quality also extends to bottled beers and the extensive gin menu. The cask beers were Lancaster Cascade, Vocation Bread & Butter and Abbeydale Absolution when I last visited. For those wishing to walk along the canal, access is available to the side of the building.



A few yards further along Melbourne Street brings you to another *Good Beer Guide* entry, which is a bit of a gem. **Bridge Beers** has been so skilfully converted from a retail unit that you'd think it's been a pub for generations. With a warm welcome, an eclectic mix of furniture and low-level lighting, it's

a cosy and relaxing space, continued in the delightful room above. Up to eight stillaged casks, from their own brewery, are gravity-dispensed from behind the bar. A good mixture of styles is available, with tasters being enthusiastically offered.



For lovers of traditional pub interiors, and something a bit different, a few minutes' walk west to the **Wharf Tavern** on Caroline Street is recommended. Thankfully, this has escaped the developer's eye for now, with the charming interior seemingly untouched for a number of years. As well as traditional pub carpets

and furniture, the cosy snug to the right on entering is a particular highlight, with a classic example of bench seating. When I last dropped by the cask beer available was Marston's Wainwright Gold. Interestingly, food from the chip shop next door can be eaten in here.

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News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

Mild Magic Needs You

Mild Magic will be back next year – but what is a campaign without a striking logo?

Mild Magic requires a new design each year, and we are asking for **your** input. Do you have artistic skills, and wish to see your design displayed on posters, as well as emblazoned on the shirts of all people completing Mild Magic? If yes, then why not submit your design? Submissions need to be fully electronic and not be a scanned hand-drawn image.

The deadline is 8 January and there are prizes to be won. Full details can be found at www.ssmcamra.co.uk/MildLogo.htm

Cider Awards

In late October, a party from Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA made their way to Wales and Herefordshire to present two awards from this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival.



First stop was Cowbridge in South Glamorgan, where Alex Simmens has been running **Llanblethian Orchards** since 2006. His ciders made their debut at this year's festival, and such was their quality he won the votes for 'Best Newcomer to the Festival'. Alex gave

the party a fascinating tour of his orchard, where he's planted a wide variety of cider apple and perry pear trees, particularly traditional varieties, including rare Welsh ones. Alex is pictured here receiving his award from the festival's cider bar manager Charlotte Bulmer.

After that, it was off to Herefordshire to visit **Gregg's Pit Cider & Perry** at Much Marcle. James Marsden and Helen Woodman are arguably the best perry makers in the UK and are serial award winners, both at Stockport and elsewhere. This time, their award-winning perry was



Aylton Red, Blakeney Red and Gregg's Pit. Helen and James are seen here relaxing with their award after the first pressing of this year's cider apples. This was a mixture of Kingston Black and Brown's Apple, and we are looking forward to tasting the finished product at next year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival.

The Cider of the Festival award was won by local makers Dunham Press Cider, based in Dunham Massey. We have not yet arranged their presentation – look out for a report in a later issue of *Opening Times*.

News in Brief

The long-closed **Bull's Head** on Fairfield Road in Buxton will be developed into new apartments. The pub business was liquidated in May, having failed to file annual accounts since 2015. There has been no interest from other parties to retain the public house function following its 'for sale' advert in 2019.

On a more positive note, an application to turn the **Fickle Mermaid** in Chapel-en-le-Frith into a drive-through coffee shop and petrol station has been refused by councillors. The pub serves two regular Marston's beers.

Good news for public transport users. The 358 bus service, connecting Stockport, Marple, New Mills and Hayfield, has been saved from the chop. This very useful service connects many good pubs and its loss would have been a notable blow.

In West Didsbury, the **Lapwing Deli** on Lapwing Lane, not far from **Wine & Wallop**, has introduced real ale. Two beers from Burton Road Brewing are available on keykeg.



Holt's **Griffin** in Heald Green closed for a four-week refurbishment on 24 October. Presumably, the intention is to get it open again in time for the World Cup and Christmas dining. Again, more next time.

In Cheadle Hulme, the **Hesketh** has been taken over by a company called Fine & Country Inns. Hopefully, the pub will be open again by the time you read this, so we'll bring you a bit more next time. It's good to see that the pub hasn't been lost for good.

In Manchester city centre, the **Britons Protection** has now been made an Asset of Community Value by Manchester City Council. The designation runs for five years from 13 September. Landlord Allan Hudd greatly appreciated CAMRA's help in assisting with the application by The Friends of the Britons Protection.



So far as the 'battle' with Star Heineken is concerned, the Britons Protection tenants continue to resist existing plans to introduce a management team by the pub company on the expiration of the current tenancy.

Dialogue between the parties is continuing, and CAMRA remains committed to supporting the pub in any way it can until the resolution of the tenancy matter.

Staying in the city centre, the **Old Monkey** on Portland Street has reintroduced the rare Holts Mild. The beer was on very good form when sampled recently.

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What's On

Local CAMRA Branch Diaries

Events for September and October 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 November – Nursery, 258 Green Lane, Heaton Norris, SK4 2NA. Guest speaker – Paul Jefferies, Hydes Head Brewer. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Monday 14 November – Bridge Beers, 55 Melbourne Street, Stalybridge, SK12 2JJ. Starts 7:30pm. (HPNC)

Tuesday 6 December – Branch Meeting and Christmas Social. Venue to be confirmed – check website. Starts 6:30pm. (CMCR)

Tuesday 6 December – Egerton Arms, Knutsford Road, Chelford, SK11 9BB. Starts 8pm. (MEC)

Saturday 10 December – Branch meeting and social in Denton. Venue to be confirmed. Starts 1pm. (HPNC)

Thursday 15 December – Magnet, 51 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1HJ. Will include prize quiz. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Social Events & Presentations

Saturday 12 November – Joint Social in Mossley. Meet 1pm at the Gillery, 1-3 Old Brow, Mossley, OL5 0AD. (HPNC/SSM)

Friday 18 November – Cheadle Hulme Stagger: 7:30pm Kenilworth, Cheadle Road, SK8 5DX; 8:30pm Church Inn, 90 Ravenoak Road, SK8 7EG; final pub Chiverton Tap, 8 Mellor Road, SK8 5AU. (SSM)

Thursday 24 November – Pub of the Month presentation to the John Millington, 67 Station Road, Cheadle Hulme, SK8 7AA. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Saturday 26 November – High Lane Social. Starts 1pm at the Red Lion, 112 Buxton Road, SK6 8ED. (HPNC)

Tuesday 29 November – Weekday Wander in Bolton. Meet at Stockport station to catch the 11:11am train to Blackpool (arrives Bolton 11:50am). Starting at One For The Road, Ashburner Street Market Hall, BL1 1TJ. (SSM)

Saturday 17 December – Christmas Party. Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. Cost £12 per head (includes food). Contact branch secretary. (HPNC)

Friday 23 December – Hillgate and Stockport Market Place Stagger. 7:30pm Blossoms, 2 Buxton Road, SK2 6NU; 8:30pm Red Bull, 14 Middle Hillgate, SK1 3AY; final pub Arden Arms, 23 Millgate, SK1 2LX. (SSM)

Wednesday 28 December – Post-Christmas Social at the Castle, 29 Church Street, Macclesfield, SK11 6LB. Starts 7:30pm. (MEC)

Thursday 29 December – Pub of the Month presentation to Fred's Ale House, 843 Stockport Road, Levenshulme, M19 3PW. Starts 8pm. (SSM)

Thursday 29 December – Drown the Turkey Christmas Social in Manchester City Centre. Meet 12 noon at the Salisbury, 2 Wakefield Street, M1 5NE. The plan is to head out of the city down Oxford Road and visit some pubs in the University area. (HPNC)

Wednesday 4 January – Weekday Wander to Romiley. Meet at Stockport Bus station stand H3 to catch the 11:29am 384 Romiley Circular (arrives Compstall 12:10pm). Visiting first the Andrew Arms, George Street, Compstall SK6 5JD. (SSM)

CAMRA Awards

Recent Presentations



The scheduled presentation of Stockport and South Manchester Branch's September Pub of the Month award to the **Milliner** in Davenport coincided with the first day of Cask Marque's Cask Ale week.

A strong gathering of branch members and pub regulars was present as committee member Lawrence Devaney handed over the framed certificate to bar manager Louis Carroll, as the proprietor Eddie Greaves was held up returning from a business trip. The

presentation was greeted with a loud round of applause as everyone present clearly demonstrated their approval. The Milliner has continued to grow its customer base from early days, with great beers and an interesting menu. Pictured above are Louis and staff member Megan Ringrow with the certificate.

The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month for October was the **Beer Shop** in Heaton Moor. The business was taken over by Markus Sorsa in September 2020 and since then he has refocused the business so it is much less a shop and much more a pub.

The cask beer range has now settled down to three beers on handpump, usually from local breweries and including one dark beer. Alongside these are three on keg, one of which is an imported German lager.



The award was presented on Thursday 20 October when a large crowd of appreciative CAMRA members and regulars packed the place out. Markus is pictured here with his certificate.



Central Manchester branch has presented the excellent **Track Brewery Taproom** with a Best Newcomer award. Since opening, the Taproom has arguably set the bar for brewery taps in the region; despite its size the tap manages to

maintain a very pub-like feel. Up to three cask beers are sold, alongside a wide range of keg beers, from both Track and guest breweries.

The award was presented by Central Manchester vice chair Heather Airlie, who is pictured above handing the certificate to Taproom manager Dev Hare, and Stefan Melbourne from the brewery. Heather praised the tap for both its warm, welcoming atmosphere and good beers.

OLD TOM

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