

OPENING TIMES

JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2020 / FREE



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- * East Cheshire: 0300 123 5500
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport.aspx
- * Derbyshire: www.derbybus.info

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www.centralmanchester.camra.org.uk

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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

Happy customers at the 2019 Manchester Beer & Cider Festival. Will you be there this year? Photo courtesy of James Darcey.

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Heard at the Bar

Pub News from Stockport, Manchester, Tameside and beyond

Northenden Untapped

The Northenden pub scene seems to have suffered more than most in recent years. Many of the pubs have either been demolished, repurposed or, in the case of the Tatton Arms, left in an advanced state of decay.



Things looked up a couple of years ago when beer enthusiast John Rogers took over the Crown on Church Road. Things have taken another step forward with the opening of Northenden Untapped, a project by John and his business partner Lee Duplex.



Just a few doors down from the Crown, it's a skilful conversion of a former yoga studio into a very appealing bar which seems to have something for everyone. For the beer drinkers there are three changing cask beers and eight on keg. While

some of the beers come from further afield, there is an emphasis on local products – when *Opening Times* called, the cask beers were from Squawk, Saltaire and Rudgate (the latter being the brewery's award-winning Ruby Mild). Bottled ciders from Gwynt Y Ddraig are also available.

You'll get fed too, with bar snacks, cheese boards, charcuterie boards and pork pies all available to mop up the drinks.

The appearance is clean and modern, with exposed brick, wooden flooring and stylish hand-made furniture.

Lee told us that he and John were inspired to open the bar because of the changing local demographics, with many young professionals moving into the area but finding little in the way of cask or craft beers to drink. They spent their money in Chorlton and Didsbury, but a fair number are now making their way to Untapped. While it's early days, Lee told us that trade had been very brisk. Unfortunately, shortly after the pub opened there was a robbery at the nearby Crown so, as a precautionary measure, Untapped now accepts cards only and no cash.

Northenden Untapped is at 67 Church Road, M22 4NW. It's closed on Monday and open from 4.30 to 10pm Tuesday to Thursday; 1.30 to 11pm Friday and Saturday; 1.30 to 10pm Sunday. Bus 43 will drop you close by. Well worth a visit.

Jam Works, Droylsden

Briefly mentioned in the last issue, Jam Works opened its doors on 29 November, the name alluding to the old Robertson's jam factory nearby. Too big to be called a micropub, it occupies the former Royal Bank of Scotland premises on Market Street, just across the road from Silly Country. It's a clever conversion, with much use made of the considerable space over two floors, which are linked by both stairs and a lift for those who need it.



Downstairs is smart and bright, but not too bright, with settees, low slate-topped tables and posing tables towards the front. There are three TVs showing sport and notable features are the 'street art' murals covering

the walls. The upstairs room was still being worked on when *Opening Times* called, but this will host live music every Friday and act as more of a restaurant, with food planned to be available from mid-December. It will also serve as a function room accommodating up to 60 people.

Five cask beers are available downstairs, and of these Seven Bro7hers Session Pale will be a permanent feature alongside four changing guests. In addition there will be 12 keg beers dispensed from some very striking fonts.

The bar is managed by Chellsea Dagger and owned by local man Stuart Mackinnon, who told us that the aim was to create something different for Droylsden. He's certainly succeeded – do pay it a visit and have a look.

The Jam Works is at 118-120 Market Street, M43 7AA. It is open from 12.30 to 11.30pm every day. Buses 7 and 216 will take you there and it is also just around the corner from Droylsden tram stop on the Ashton line.

Howard's Neighbourhood Bar



This welcome addition to the Denton pub scene (on Manchester Road, near to Crown Point) opened in early December. It's a project by local entrepreneurs Jack and Amy Howard who hope that it will eventually take over from their day jobs in

the hospitality industry.

Previously a baby boutique and wedding dress shop, it has been refitted as a bar to a high standard using mostly light natural wood, with an area behind the bar set aside for sofas (and where you will find the unisex toilets). Large mirrors on the wall facing the bar make the venue seem even larger than it is, a macropub rather than a micropub perhaps.

There are three cask beers, and one of these will usually be from Congleton's Beartown Brewery, which helped install the cellar equipment. In addition, there are six craft keg taps at the back of the bar. Food in the form of cheese and meat boards was planned for early this year (and may be available by the time you read this).

Howard's Neighbourhood Bar is at 49 Manchester Road, M34 2AF. It's closed on Monday and Tuesday and open from 5 to 11.30pm Wednesday and Thursday; 3pm to midnight Friday and Saturday; 2 to 9.30pm on Sundays. Buses 201, 204 and 205 from Manchester will get you there, as will the 327 from Stockport.



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Pubs of the Month

Stockport & South Manchester Winners for January and February



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA winner for January is Sandbar on Grosvenor Street, All Saints. John Clarke put it forward and explains why it won.

When it first opened in 1996, Sandbar was one of the first modern bars in Manchester and certainly the first in the heart of the University area, which accounts for its long-term popularity with both students and lecturers from the surrounding colleges.

It's an interesting conversion of two old Georgian townhouses, with several old features still in situ to give some hint of the buildings' past lives. Today, though, it's a bohemian and arty hangout with frequent painting and photography exhibitions lining the walls. Regular events include DJs or live music in the evenings, life-drawing classes, and wine, whisky and gin tastings, among others.

Of course Sandbar has evolved over time – with perhaps the biggest change occurring many years ago when it effectively doubled in size by expanding into the neighbouring building. The beer range has changed too, with an early emphasis on imported German and Belgian beers giving way to an increased focus on local brewers for the enterprising cask and keg offering (and the cask range usually includes a dark beer). There's a traditional cider too, from Moss Cider. Food comprises a selection of (very tasty) homemade pizzas.

Sandbar has been quietly excellent for years now, while at the same time remaining slightly below the radar. However it's been a regular in the national *Good Beer Guide* for many years and last year it won the award for 'Best Pub/Craft Ale Bar' in the Manchester Food & Drink Festival awards.

All this is overseen by general manager Dave Williams and his team. Dave has been at Sandbar for three years now and the smooth operation shows a sure touch by all concerned. It's not the first time Sandbar has been Pub of the Month but, given that the last time was almost 15 years ago, this further award is well overdue. Join us on the night of Thursday 30 January when we present this well-deserved award. Remember though, Sandbar doesn't take cash – it's card only across the bar.

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 Pub of the Month for February is relative newcomer Archive Bar & Bottle in Cheadle Hulme. Dave Pennington is a fan and tells us all about this relative newcomer.

The business project of Will Yeomans and Kristina Garner came to fruition when the Archive Bar & Bottle opened last June in former restaurant premises on Mellor Road, Cheadle Hulme – opposite the railway station and a few doors down from the Chiverton Tap. The result is a great addition to the local beer scene.

Both Will and Kristina have considerable experience in the beer industry and have put a good deal of thought into the design of Archive, with good use made of both floors in the building. Downstairs there's a large entrance lobby: to the left is the main bar area while to the right is a room with a small elevated area containing some seating and well-stocked fridges (with 300 beers ranging from old school to very modern, and including Belgian and German classics). Pride of place goes to four handpumps, with Squawk Pavo as the house beer alongside three guests including a dark beer. Twelve eclectic, well-chosen and ever-changing keg beers and two ciders are dispensed from the bar back, so there's always something for every taste.



A spiral staircase takes you to another room divided into a lounge area and a snug, with leather sofas and low tables (pictured here). Throughout, much use is made of natural wood and vintage furniture giving the room a homely feel, while the large windows make it all very light and airy. Features of the decoration are the displays of beer bottles on shelves throughout every room – the whole place really is an archive of great beers, past and present.

Food is served until early evening and consists of appetising small bites and more substantial meals. Artisanal gins, a cocktails menu and well-chosen wines also feature.

Join us on Thursday 27 February when we will be presenting this very well-deserved award to Will and Kristina. The Archive is easily accessible by rail; it's opposite the railway station. Buses 313, 368 and 42B stop on Station Road.

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Get MBCF Done This January

Final Countdown to Manchester Beer & Cider Festival

MANCHESTER BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL 2020



Photos courtesy of James Darcey

There's one certainty for drinkers in Manchester each year – a stunning choice of the very best beers and ciders at Manchester Beer & Cider Festival, writes David Rigby. And, for 2020, the organisers have refreshed the parts other festivals don't reach, while promising old favourites, new contenders and unique collaborations.

Although known for innovation, the Greater Manchester CAMRA branches will always champion cask beer, this year focused on the 'Coast to Coast' and 'Beers from the Wood' bars. Across the back wall of Manchester Central, the northern counties from the Mersey to the Humber will showcase some of their best breweries. The big decision will be whether to start with Birkenhead's Peerless and Maghull's Neptune and head east; or begin with Hull's Atom and Bone Machine from Pocklington and meander west. Between, beers from Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Yorkshire will demand attention. There'll be several collaboration brews, commissioned for the festival, including a heavyweight from Track and Wander Beyond, and a bringing together of the four-legged friends Donkeystone and Stubborn Mule. And, with almost 180 handpumps, it's sure to be the photographic souvenir most visitors will want!

Beers from the Wood

The 'Beers from the Wood' bar was introduced last year and was an immediate hit with visitors. This year it expands in size to 75 beers, with all beers served by gravity from wooden casks. Assisted by the Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood, organisers and brewers have sourced more casks, and beers from brewers committed to using oak barrels such as Ossett, Elland and Beer Nouveau will be alongside exclusives from, among others, Abbeydale, Pomona Island and Runaway.

Cider & Perry

One of the biggest refreshes will be the Cider and Perry bar. Relocated to be alongside the 'Coast to Coast' bar, it features cooled ciders and perries served from handpumps, boxes and in bottle. A first for the festival is that at least three ciders will be real cider, keg-conditioned. All of the ciders and perries will be arranged by region and style, using new indicators of sweetness, tannin and acidity.

Talks & Tastings

New styles will be a feature of one of several tutored tastings. CAMRA's new beer styles for judging beer competitions will be launched at Manchester and explained by Christine Cryne, who chaired the Beer Style Review Group. Christine is one of several engaging and entertaining speakers at the festival, and others include cider producer Tom Oliver plus beer writers John Clarke and Roger Protz.

Keg & International Beers

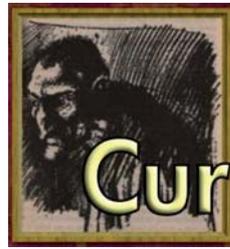
For those who like their beers served colder, the Kegstar bar will again provide some of the modern styles. The foreign beer bars have also had a makeover, with all draught beers served from an enlarged keg wall. New beers from the popular countries of Belgium, Germany, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands will be joined by beers from Australia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, Spain, the United States and Canada.

A revised layout will see the brewery bars and micro bars (*featured in last issue*) positioned on one of two central islands. The Gin bar, featuring the best local distillers, will be next to an expanded Learning and Discovery zone. Part of CAMRA's commitment to improving education and knowledge of beer and cider, the area will feature brewers and producers each day chatting about what goes into our national drinks.

And, following customer feedback, a new VIP area is available to advance purchasers. The Tiny Rebel VIP Experience is a package which gives entry, guaranteed private seating, glass, programme and even a few beer tokens. It makes a great gift, but why not treat yourself?

Manchester Beer and Cider Festival is open to the public Thursday 23 to Saturday 25 January at Manchester Central. The festival opens at noon every day closing at 10.30pm on Thursday and Friday and 7pm on Saturday.

A preview evening for CAMRA/SPBW members (free entry) is on Wednesday 22 January from 5pm. Advance tickets which give early entry are available now from www.mancbeerfest.uk. Get all the latest festival news on [@MancBeerFest](https://twitter.com/MancBeerFest) (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram).



Curmudgeon

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Charge More, Sell Less

Last autumn, the latest edition of the annual Cask Report was published. It recorded cask sales falling more quickly than beer volumes in total, with a 5% drop over the past year, and cask now only accounting for one in seven pints sold in pubs, whereas only a few years ago it was one in six. The report argues that the way to combat this trend is to move towards "premiumisation", in terms of quality, price and strength. But is that a realistic strategy, or just wishful thinking?

Quality should be taken as a given, and it's certainly true that inconsistent and often downright poor beer is one of the key reasons deterring people from drinking cask. It is sometimes argued that higher prices will give brewers and pubs more to invest in quality, but that really is putting the cart before the horse. You can't command a price premium until you have achieved that consistent quality, and, at present drinkers won't pay top dollar for a product that is often something of a lottery. Plus, by charging more, you will inevitably sell less, which may well make the quality issues even worse. Cask is a perishable product that is critically dependent on turnover. It is ill-suited to occupying a low-volume niche.

The historical reason that cask sells at a discount to keg ales and lagers is that it was originally the standard beer in pubs. Keg beers commanded a premium both because they were new innovations and because they incurred more processing and storage costs, with pasteurisation, cooling and CO2 cylinders. Although cask is often portrayed as "better", it doesn't inherently cost any more to make than keg, and, while it does take a little more care in the cellar, it isn't really that difficult to keep well so long as you stick to a few simple rules.

Most cask is consumed by ordinary drinkers, not beer enthusiasts. It is usually the staple ale brand in pubs and is compared with lagers and smooth ales, not with craft keg. Many cask drinkers are people on a limited budget who have little scope to absorb hefty price increases. If cask goes up by 50p a pint, they will switch to smooth or lager. The report says that 59% of drinkers agreed in a poll that cask should cost more, but in practice would they be happy to pay it? In any case, cask beer isn't exactly cheap at the moment, with the £4 pint very common now. The major exception is Wetherspoons, who are both the single biggest retailer of cask beer, and an aggressive discounter, which makes it very difficult to shift the perception of the market.

The aspiration to move cask to a higher strength band also seems unrealistic. Yes, in general stronger beers are perceived as "premium" and can command higher prices, but there's a limit to how much of them people want to drink. Most pub customers want to pace their drinking over a few hours, or will be going on to do something else later, and so don't want anything too mindblowing. Pubs find it difficult to sell much cask beer above 4.5% ABV: if stronger beers are drunk at all, it's often just one at the end of the evening.

With effort, premium pricing can certainly be achieved for individual brands and pubs, and for some this may represent a sensible business plan. But it's just not going to happen for the category in general, and I get rather tired of commentators arguing that cask should cost more while displaying a failure to appreciate the reality of the market on the ground.

Curmudgeon Online: curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

(comments on these articles can be left on the website)

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The Hat Goes Forth

Andy Sullivan visits Silly Country

It didn't start well! Having done a little research, but clearly not enough, I arrive at the site of the former Droylsden railway station. This once boasted four platforms, but it closed in 1968 and there is pretty little sign of it now – except for the **Railway** pub on Lumb Lane, now adrift from the main road.



Unfortunately, it is 3pm and doesn't open until 5pm, so Google tells me now! Along with the other pubs in this area that I had planned to visit it is very much not open. I shouldn't be surprised as many pubs do not open much before

tea time. As few people now can realistically get away with a pint or two at lunchtime, not least due to not having a lunch hour, it is to be expected that licensees decide to open when there will be customers. When margins were better, many used to open much earlier and not bother too much about the amount of custom: the feeling was that you didn't get customers if you weren't open. Now though, customers are just not there outside of town centres. However...



Plan B has me wandering around for some time trying to locate the pub, the name of which celebrates one reason why Droylsden is locally referred to as Silly Country: the **Pig on the Wall** on Greenside Lane. The story goes that local farmers sat their pigs on the wall so they could see the annual carnival. It is not clear whether this was for the pigs' benefit. The 'Pig' is open all day. It can do this, despite being away from the centre, as it has good value pub meals, one cask ale and customers. Today the beer is Trooper (4.7%), not my go-to beer, but lots love it. Outside the pub has a corporate feel, and this extends to the interior, but there are features from its farmhouse days, plus a searingly hot wood fire at the back, immaculate gents toilets and some of the best staff I have found anywhere. The really warm welcome (thank you) extends to dogs away from the restaurant-y area.

Leaving the pub, I note just how much Droylsden expanded from around 1930. Think on that the last farmers at what is now the Pig on the Wall converted it from a farmhouse only in 1979 and you get a picture of a small mill town surrounded by farmsteads until relatively recently.

Walking back to Market Street along Greenside Lane, one passes to the left the remains of what I imagine would surely have been a 1920s pub of immense proportions. I have little to go on as Droylsden's pubs seem not to have left, (or merited) much historical record. The local archives are sadly short of detail. If anyone does have access to such resources I'd be very grateful for the nod.

Ten minutes stroll takes me to the **Kings Head**, a large, modernish red-brick building dominating its corner along with Droylsden F.C. Guardsman Neil (Tony) Downes is remembered: forever 20 years old. It's a classic Holts outlet with the seemingly ubiquitous, stonkingly good bitter (4%). Not everyone's cup of tea perhaps, but credit Holts for getting such great consistency across the estate. The latest seasonal is also on offer. The interior cannot decide what style it is, or even which century it's in. So you have a mediaeval-like hall structure



alongside heavy wood and glass, reminiscent of neo-Jacobean with more modern furniture, but it works! There are three rooms, one for pool, and a rare log-end dart

board. Toilets are adequate for this size of pub, but may strain to cope on match days. I find them in great condition. Dogs are welcome throughout; open all day, no food.



Just across the junction is the **Beehive**, with another lovely welcome from the staff and customers (thank you). To the right is a large lounge with wood panelling, old photos, bits and

bobs and a Pinocchio. The vault is a classic, of which there are now very few left it seems, with hard-backed punched benches and basic furniture. The pub is well presented throughout, including the toilets. There's usually one cask beer and today it is Empire APA (4.3%). No dogs are allowed, but the pub is open all day and lunchtime favourites are on the menu, hearty stuff, but the sign underneath today's board for prime sirloin steak at 35p is not aimed at today's clientele (and dates from 1974)!

If you fancy visiting some of these pubs, there are good bus services to/from Manchester and Ashton, and the tram also serves the centre of Droylsden. Bus 231 will take you to the Pig on the Wall. I'll be back next time.

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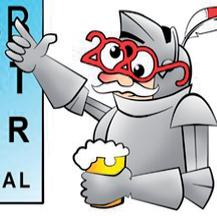
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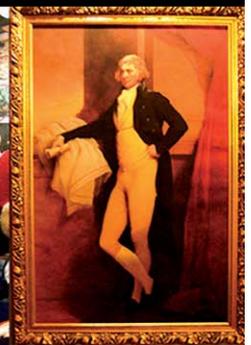


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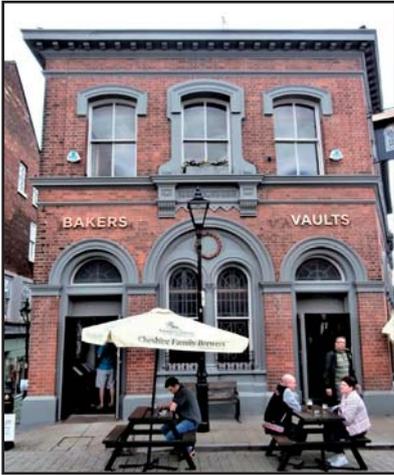
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Stagger

Stockport Market Place with Peter Edwardson

To mark Stockport Beer Week, September's Stagger covered eight pubs and bars very close together on and around the Market Place. It had been a warm, sunny day and there were still plenty of people sitting outside the row of bars facing the Market Hall.



We began at the **Bakers Vaults**, an imposing Victorian pub that was given a thorough refurbishment by Robinsons Brewery a few years ago, which left it oddly short of seating inside. This wasn't a problem tonight as we were able to find seats in the outside drinking area. The Bakers is allowed to sell guest ales alongside Robinsons' own. Amongst the beers we sampled, Unicorn, Trooper and Dizzy Blonde, together with Titanic Plum Porter and Milestone Missy Sippy Jazz Ale, were

all in good condition, although Milestone Honey Porter was thought rather past its best.



We then headed down Vernon Street to **Vinaböd**, which rather bizarrely is billed as a Viking-themed tapas bar, although there is little apparent Scandinavian influence on the menu. The interior is decked out as a Viking mead hall, with drinking horns and fake animal furs. It usually has two cask beers, but there

was only one on tonight, Beartown Crème Bearlee, served in oversize tankards, which was generally thought pretty good, although at £4 a pint rather on the expensive side.



We returned up the hill to the **Boars Head**, a substantial brick-built Sam Smith's pub facing the market place. Although sometimes thought of as a pub that is busier at lunchtimes, it was fairly crowded around the bar, but we were able to find seats in the large rear room. The sole cask beer, Old Brewery Bitter, as so often

divided opinion, with verdicts ranging from above average to good. The price was exactly half that of the previous beer.

The next venue, Mobberley Brewery's **Project 53**, provided a complete contrast, being very much in a modern industrial-chic style with bare boards, posing tables in the front and long wooden forms towards the rear. It was also playing very loud music, but we were able to avoid this by sitting outside. There were two cask beers on the bar, Mobberley's Bunji and Raindance, both of which produced a variety of opinions from OK to very good. The beers were served in unusual bowl-shaped glasses marked with third, half and two-thirds lines.



Right next door is another place that only opened in the last 18 months, although the **Angel Inn**, with its impressive plasterwork frontage, has more of the feel of a traditional pub. It is surprisingly spacious, with a variety of areas at the rear, plus an extensive outside drinking area where we were able to find some seats. Beers on the bar included Crème Bearlee again, which was excellent, a good drop of

Oakham Mandarin Bavaria, Torrside Small Victories and Stockport Brewing Cascade, which were both above average to good, and Avant Garde Cutting Edge, again from Stockport Brewing, which did not rate better than OK.



Passing Robinsons' closed Bulls Head, we reached **Remedy Bar**, which is another relatively new opening in a contemporary style, but it does have a fair amount of comfortable

seating. While it has an on-site brewery, none of its beers were on the bar tonight. There were six handpumps, from which we selected Outstanding Ratatosk and Lancaster IPA, which were both very good, slightly shading the Donkeystone Kaihe.

We then moved on to the **Cocked Hat**, an inter-war mock-Tudor pub originally known as the Pack Horse, which reopened earlier this year following a period of closure. There was karaoke in progress and it was standing room only. Taylor's Landlord and Westgate Classic Blonde (actually brewed by Greene King) were both pretty good, but Nottingham Rock Mild and Pennine Blackcurrant Porter seemed a little past their best.



Our final call was the **Arden Arms**, a classic unspoilt pub situated just off the Market Place on Millgate. It was pretty busy, with live music in progress in the courtyard, but we were able to find a berth in the unique snug that can only be reached by walking through the bar. It's a Robinsons pub,

and we tried the Trooper and Light Brigade, both of which were very good; Unicorn, Wizard and Dizzy Blonde were also available.

While Friday night is not necessarily representative of the rest of the week, it was good to see the Market Place so busy, and we noted that four of the eight pubs visited were not even in existence five years ago.

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Cider and Perry

News, Awards and Events



Cider and perry seem to be having a bit of a moment right now, writes *John Clarke*. New makers, new products and new publications are all driving forward long-overdue conversations about what good cider and perry are, and what they can be.

There's even a Manchester Cider Club (which meets on the second Thursday of each month at the **Crown & Kettle** in the City Centre). The hashtag #RethinkCider appears widely across social media.

While this new-found enthusiasm is extremely welcome, it's perhaps easy to forget that many people in CAMRA have been what today would be called cider evangelists for a very long time. It almost seems at times that this history is rather inconvenient for the current narrative.



Stockport Beer Festival became a 'Beer & Cider Festival' for the sixth event back in May 1992 (the cider and perry list from that year's programme is shown here) and was one of the very first beer festivals to adopt that title.

The 1992 festival also saw the inaugural awards for Cider and Perry of the Festival, voted for by our customers. The winning cider that year was Westons Special Vintage while the champion perry was one that didn't appear in the programme! This was made by Dennis Gwatkin and was the very first time this superb

perry had been commercially available anywhere outside Abbeydore in Herefordshire, where Dennis was, and indeed still is, based.



The awards have been presented every year since and in late October a very enjoyable weekend was spent visiting the 2019 festival winners. The winning cider was the superbly drinkable medium-dry Janet's Jungle Juice made by **West Croft Cider** (near Highbridge in Somerset). This has in fact won the award at twice before and it was good to revisit John Harris and present him with another certificate. During a tour of his main orchard, John explained that the trees, which fruit every other year, had synchronised and were all having a year off! John is pictured above receiving his certificate from Stockport's Cider Bar manager Charlotte Bulmer.

The winning perry came from arguably the best perry makers in the UK, namely James Marsden and Helen Woodman at **Gregg's Pit Cider & Perry**. Based at Gregg's Pit Farm (home of the rare Gregg's

Pit perry pear) in Much Marcle, they are serial award winners. We often bring dubious weather with us when we visit James and Helen, and true to form, it was a wet and blustery Saturday afternoon when we drove up to present the certificate for the winning perry, Brandy, Hendre Huffcap and Winnals Longdon.



Kingston Black cider apples were being pressed as we arrived, which gave us the chance to sample the sweet, rich juice straight off the press. James explained that the late-season single varietal ciders he'd be making would all be keeved (that is to say, naturally sweet and sparkling). After sampling various vintage perries and making some purchases (including a new pear spirit and magnums of perry) it was time to present the award, and Charlotte is pictured here doing the honours.

No trip to Herefordshire would really be complete without a visit to **Ross on Wye Cider & Perry**, old friends of Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, and festival award winners on more than one occasion. We met Ross Cider's Albert Johnson at the Yew Tree pub in Peterstow, after which we drove the short distance to Broome Farm, where Ross's cider and perry are actually made.



Pressing was well under way when we arrived and it was good to catch up with Albert's father Mike who, despite being semi-retired, was in the thick of it. Mike showed us the water-powered cider presses which were pressing Harry Masters Jersey with the juice going into whisky casks. Lined up behind them were rows of Armagnac casks – these had initially been filled with Dabinett juice and when that had done its work they were then filled with Michelin apple juice. When these ciders are finally released they should be magnificent.



After that we sat down to an excellent lunch kindly laid on by Albert, which was accompanied by jugs of the new Polytheism blended cider which made its official debut at the Salford Independent Beer Festival the following weekend – and a superb drink it is too. Look out for it in local suppliers of good cider.

HYDES CASK ALES - A WORK OF ART

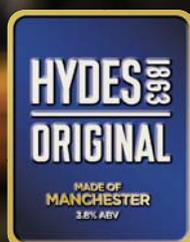
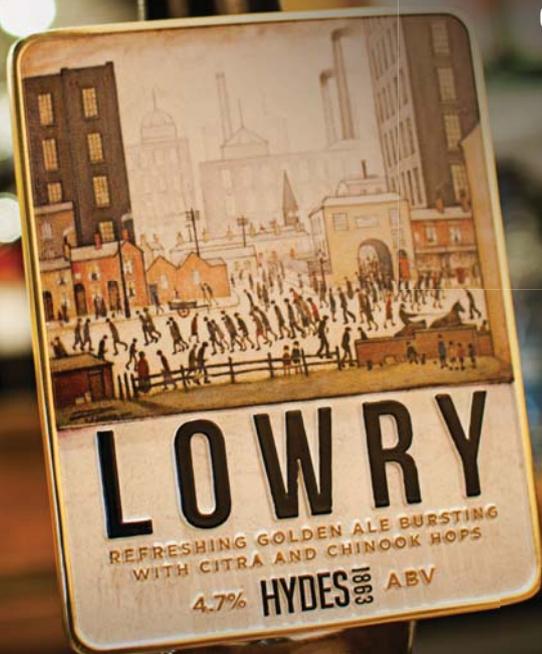
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Pub Walks with Chris Morris

Saddleworth

January and February are great months for a pub walk. The weather might be cold, but wrapping up warm and going on a brisk stroll to some excellent pubs is guaranteed to lift any winter gloom. This walk is along a lovely stretch of the Huddersfield Canal.

Train Information

Purchase a return ticket to Greenfield. A good connection from Manchester Piccadilly means it often only takes 50 minutes to get to Greenfield from Stockport. There are one or two trains every hour from Piccadilly all week. For full timetable information visit:

www.nationalrail.co.uk.

The Walk

This is an easy three mile canal walk with an optional extra half mile. The OS Map is OL1 The Peak District (OS app also available).

Turn right on exiting Greenfield Station and walk down the hill. As the road bends sharply to the left, cross over to the opposite pavement and carry on down Chew Valley Road. After 100 yards, the canal will pass underneath. To avoid crossing the busy road, walk down the steps on the right to the canal path and under the bridge (number 80). Continue along the path keeping the canal on your left for half a mile. When the path reaches a main road, cross over to the other side via the traffic island and continue along the canal path, now with the canal on your right. At bridge 77, cross over the canal and continue along the path with the canal on your left again. After walking under the impressive Saddleworth viaduct, some public toilets can be found just before bridge 73. After a further 100 yards, the canal path passes through a car park. Keep to the left side and rejoin the canal path. Just before bridge 70, climb up the path almost behind your to the right. At the top, turn left and walk over the cobbled bridge. The **Navigation Inn** can now be seen ahead of you.

The Navigation Inn



Built in 1806 to quench the thirst of canal-building navvies, it still offers a welcome pint today. Listed in the *Good Beer Guide*, there is always a good selection of cask beers here. These were from Millstone, Adnams and Timothy Taylor's when I last visited. Good food

is also available. Opening hours are noon to 3pm and 5pm onwards during the week, noon to 11pm on Saturdays and noon to 8.30pm on Sundays.

After leaving the pub, there is a decision to make. You can retrace your steps back along the canal to bridge 77 and explore Uppermill (continue to Uppermill paragraph below). Alternatively, if it is a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, you are feeling energetic and the weather is kind, there is the option to climb up to Dobcross Square and the impressive Swan Inn. For this route, turn left out of the pub and walk along the pavement for 100 yards, then around to the left and up Sugar Lane. Dobcross Square is at the top of the hill with the **Swan Inn** on the right.

The Swan Inn



Built in 1765, this handsome stone pub has a rich history and is well worth seeking out. Up to five cask beers are available from the Marston's stable. Food is also a speciality. The pub is open all day Friday to Sunday but only from 4pm Monday to Thursday.

After the pub, retrace your steps down Sugar Lane but when the road bends to the left, take the path signed Nicker Brow to the right and then go left down the hill. Carry straight on down the lane through metal bollards until it meets a road at the bottom. Cross here and take the pavement to the left, over the canal, right at the road junction and right again back to the public toilets and down the steps to rejoin the canal.

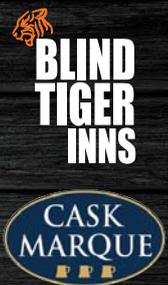
Uppermill

Whichever route you took, you now walk back under the viaduct towards Uppermill and bridge 77. Here there is the option of exiting the canal to the left, along Moorgate Street, to explore the delights



of Uppermill with its numerous cafés, restaurants, bespoke shops and a number of excellent pubs. The **Albion Tap** is in the *Good Beer Guide* and is recommended, having an excellent selection of up to four cask beers – usually from Donkeystone, Millstone and other local breweries.

After you have finished exploring, it is simply a question of rejoining the canal back to Greenfield, where, if further refreshment is required, the **Wellington Inn** on Chew Valley Road is highly recommended. A range of up to eight cask beers is available, always in great condition and justifying its *Good Beer Guide* status. The reasonably priced food is also highly regarded.



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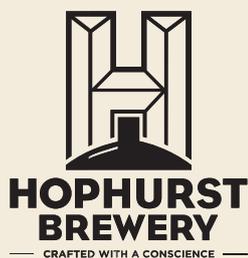


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What's Brewing

Brewery News from around the region



Robinsons Seasonals

Robinsons have announced their range of 2020 seasonal beers, and the theme is 'The Best Brews of the Last Decade'. This will see the return of some of the most popular seasonal beers from the last 10 years.

The beer for February/March is Twisted Sister, a 4% ruby-red ale with Amarillo, Cascade and Nelson Sauvin Hops. For April/May the 4.1% Beardo is back, with a 'fruity, citrus zing'. In June and July it's Hop Gun, a 3.8% light golden beer, with Admiral, First Gold and Galaxy hops to deliver 'a distinctive mix of peaches, passionfruit and orange' flavours.

Magnum IPA returns for August/September. This 4% pale ale has 'hints of lemon, lime and exotic flora' and a long, bitter finish. Moving into autumn, Hoptimus Prime, at 4.1%, returns for October and November. This is a 'malty English ale' with a 'long-lasting hop character'. The line-up concludes in December with Mr Scrooge, a 4.3% 'festive copper ale' with 'toffee, blackcurrant and grapefruit' flavours.



In a slightly surprising move, Robinsons have also acquired a company called **Individual Inns**.

This comprises a small group of free houses in Cumbria and Yorkshire – and includes some famous names like the **Masons Arms**

at Cartmel Fell (pictured here). All of the pubs have an extensive food offering and also sell guest beers, often from local brewers. Robinsons have told *Opening Times* that there are no fixed plans to change the cask range in these pubs at the present time.

JW Lees Seasonals



In 2020 JW Lees will release a series of beers they say will celebrate the variety cask has to offer. The collection 'showcases exciting limited-edition beers to cater for the drinker with a thirst for something new'. The beers will be released in two-month cycles, starting in January with Big Bad Wolf, a 3.6% forest fruit red ale, and ending with festive favourite Plum Pudding at 4.8%.

Other beers in the range include Run Rabbit Run for March/April, which will be a 4.3% golden ale using a new citrus

hop blend and which promises passionfruit, citrus and pine notes in the flavour profile.

A very welcome beer is that for May and June: this is 100 Years Brew and will be a light mild at 3.9%. Brewed using Fuggles hops, it is inspired by a 1920 recipe from the brewery archives. The July/August beer is something of a departure for Lees. It's a take on the fashionable radler beer (basically a German shandy but which has been adopted by craft brewers as a low gravity beer with, usually, fruit additions). Lees' version is Summer Time Lime at 2.8% and, while it has no fruit, it is brewed using lager malt and a citrus hop blend.

We head into autumn with California Dreaming at 4.1% for September to November. This is a take on the 'California Common' or steam beer, a 'hybrid style that has all the crispness of a lager while retaining the full-bodied flavours of a malty ale'. Finally, there's Plum Pudding at 4.8%, and described by the brewery as 'Christmas in a glass'.

Holts Refreshes FC United

Joseph Holt has beaten competitors to continue its reign at FC United as the club's exclusive brewery supplier. Having already supplied the club throughout its four-year stay at Broadhurst Park, this new three-year agreement will forge an even closer relationship between the two Manchester-based brands.

The brewery is also consolidating its sponsorship by providing a match day shuttle bus between Manchester and the Moston-based ground, as well as promoting matches and club events through its 120 pubs.

Hyde Breweries

It's congratulations to **Four Kings Brewery**, based at Newton Moor Industrial Estate. They won the best food and drink category in the Pride of Tameside Business Awards, held at Dukinfield Town Hall in late October. The brewery holds regular open days and evening events at its plush on-site bar.

Owner and brewer Anthony Lewis has decided to retire and sell **Tweed Brewery**, based at Grey Street, following the latest in a series of back injuries. The intention is that the new owner will continue to brew Tweed beers, overseen by Anthony. The **Tweed Tap** on Hamnett Street in the town will be unaffected by these changes.

Thirst Class Ale



North Reddish-based **Thirst Class Ale** now has an on-site shop which is open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. The brewery is at Unit 16, Station Road Industrial Estate, SK5 6ND, if you want to drop by and stock up.

December saw the return of the luscious Black Forest Imperial Stout (8.9%) and also the launch of Don't Panic, a 3.5% session IPA, hopped with Galaxy and Comet.

The brewery will again be having its own bar at Manchester Beer & Cider Festival (Thirst Class in fact launched at the 2015 event) and before that will be collaborating on a beer with **Burton Road Brewing** – the outcome of that will certainly be worth seeking out.

Photo courtesy of Thirst Class Ale.

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What's On

Local CAMRA Branch Diaries

Events for January and February 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

Members only

Tuesday 7 January – Gullivers, 109 Oldham Street, M4 1EL. Meet 6pm for 6:30pm start. (CMCR)

Thursday 9 January – Hope Inn, 118 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 2LL. Note – Pub of the Year, Cider Pub of the Year and Club of the Year will be chosen at this meeting. Starts 8:15pm. (SSM)

Monday 13 January – Harewood Arms, 2 Market Street, Broadbottom, SK14 6AX. Starts 8:00pm. (HPNC)

Wednesday 5 February – Meeting venue TBC. Meet 6pm for 6:30pm start. (CMCR)

Monday 10 February – Royal Hotel, Market Street, Hayfield, SK22 2EP. Starts 8:00pm. (HPNC)

Thursday 13 February – Petersgate Tap, 19a St Petersgate, Stockport, SK1 1EB. Note – the entries for the 2021 Good Beer Guide will be chosen at this meeting. Starts 8:15pm. (SSM)

Social Events & Presentations

All welcome

Saturday 11 January – Branch Anniversary Celebration: Moor Club, 35 Heaton Moor Road, Stockport, SK4 4PB. Meet from 7pm for 7:30pm start. Buffet, prize raffle, guest speaker. Two guest beers and a guest cider will be available. Price £6.50 a head. Book with John Clarke (stocam@btinternet.com; 0775 383 6898). (SSM)

Saturday 11 January – Winter Pub of the Season presentation to the Old Cell Ale Bar, 10 Market Place, Chapel-en-le-Frith, SK23 0EN. From 1:30pm. Will be followed by a social around other local pubs. (HPNC)

Friday 17 January – Edgeley & Shaw Heath Stagger: 7:30pm Alexandra, 195 Northgate Road, SK3 9NJ; 8:30pm Royal Oak, 124 Castle Street, SK3 9AL; final pub Olde Vic, 1 Chatham Street, SK3 9ED. (SSM)

Thursday 30 January – Pub of the Month presentation to Sandbar, 120 Grosvenor Street, Manchester, M1 7HK. From 8:00pm. Note – Sandbar is card only – no cash. (SSM)

Thursday 30 January – Thirstback Thursday: 6pm Brink, 65 Bridge Street, M3 3BQ then visit pubs in Spinningfields and Deansgate area. (CMCR)

Saturday 8 February – Day out in Wigan. Check website for details. (SSM)

Saturday 8 February – Day out to GBBF Winter. Details TBC. (CMCR)

Friday 21 February – Northenden Stagger: 7:30pm Farmers Arms, 26 Longley Lane, M22 4JR; 8:30pm Lounge About, 424 Palatine Road, M22 4JT; final pub Crown, 19 Ford Lane, M22 4WE. (SSM)

Thursday 27 February – Pub of the Month presentation to Archive, 2 Mellor Road, Cheadle Hulme, SK8 5AU. From 8:00pm. (SSM)

Thursday 27 February – Thirstback Thursday: 6pm Cask, Cottonfield Wharf, 2 Union Street, M4 6FQ. Then visit other pubs in Ancoats. (CMCR)

CAMRA Awards

Recent Presentations



The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month for August was the **Station Hop** in Levenshulme. Opening in February 2018, it brought something new to the local pub scene as it had more of a craft beer vibe than the other nearby outlets at the time. In the almost two years since it opened the pub has put down real roots in the community and



has become a home-from-home for many locals. Pictured above are owners Chris Buxton and Amanda Finch with their certificate.

The September Pub of the Month was the **Angel Inn** on Stockport Market Place. This pub closed down in 1951 and reopened some 67 years later in November 2018, since when it's not looked back. A project by business partners Craig Johnson and Anthony Meynell, plus other investors, the Angel seems to have been an instant hit. The formal launch of Stockport Beer Week coincided with the presentation so there was a full house. Pictured above with the certificate are manager Rob Loader and assistant manager Pete Killip.



entertained in the evening. Six cask ale lines feature Hydes and guest beers (with Hydes Old Indie being particularly well-regarded.)

Karen wasn't able to be present on the night as she had just returned home from hospital following an operation. However, assistant manager Sarah was on hand and she is pictured here receiving the certificate from local CAMRA Chairman John Clarke.

News Extra

More pub and brewery news from across the area

Tameside Snippets

The **Boundary** in Audenshaw has now reopened under new ownership. The bad news is that real ale has been discontinued and the two handpumps removed. This is a sad turn of events for a pub that was once known for its beer festivals.



In addition to the opening of **Howard's Neighbourhood Bar** (see page 4) there has been a flurry of activity in Denton. The **Angel** (147 Hyde Road) has had a £130,000 makeover by the Craft Union Pub Company and is now known as the **Old Peg**. As seems to be the norm with Craft Union refurbishments, the new look has seen the introduction of real ale: two nationally-sourced cask beers are now available. Not too far away, the **Coach & Horses** (125 Hyde Road) has also reintroduced real ale with one cask beer, often Black Sheep Best Bitter, on handpump.

There's no such good news down the road in Hyde, though. Real ale failed to materialise at the **Olde Town House** despite three handpumps being installed over the summer. Our reporter was told that the plan was to install cask beer over Christmas. Meanwhile, the **Shepherds Call** has a new licensee, which has resulted in the removal of both real ale and real cider.

In Droylsden, the **Lazy Toad** (14 Ashton Hill Lane) now opens at 10am for both beer and food. The cask beers here are now supplied by Stockport Brewing.

Stockport Pub Shorts



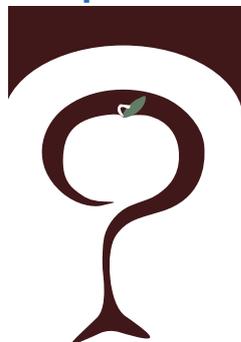
In something of a shock move, Trigger and Pam Dean announced on the pub's Facebook page that they will be leaving the **Swan With Two Necks** (36 Prince's Street) by the end of January, after 11 years in charge. Trigger and Pam have been excellent custodians of the pub, which not only features in the current *Good Beer Guide* but also appears on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. They will be a hard act to follow and we wish them well.

Dennis Davies, who has run many pubs in the town over the years, was due to retire from the **Printers Arms** in Cheadle in early January. The Printers is of course the pub where the Stockport & South Manchester Branch of CAMRA was founded way back in 1974. We wish Dennis all the best for his well-earned retirement.

In Cheadle Heath, the **Farmers Arms** was put up for sale by owners Greene King at an asking price of £650,000, and we are told that the pub has been sold to a firm of developers. Not a million miles away, the long-closed **Ye Olde Woolpack** on Brinksway has almost certainly come to the end of the road as a pub, and was being thoroughly gutted in early December.

Long-serving lessee Steve Alexander has put the lease of the **Crown**, Heaton Lane, up for grabs as he plans to retire to North Wales. In the meantime, the bank of five handpumps on the left of the bar has been removed, presumably to improve the turnover and quality of the remaining seven cask beers.

Temperance Street Cider



New local cider makers are few and far between so it's a warm welcome to **Temperance Street Cider**, based at Beer Nouveau on North Western Street in Ardwick (which also has an entrance on Temperance Street by the way).

It's a project by Beer Nouveau's Steve Dunkley, a long-time cider fan, together with business partners Rob Muir and Matthew Gibson. Steve told us that they have picked up where the Moss Cider Project (which has now moved to Furness

Vale and no longer uses Manchester apples) left off. However, they'll not just be using locally-collected cooking and eating apples as Rob has an orchard growing proper cider apples.

There will be several product ranges. Single varietal ciders will be made using cider apple juice from fruit grown in a number of local orchards (a Black Dabinett is currently fermenting in oak casks). Carrying on from the Moss Cider Project, donations of apples grown locally in people's gardens and allotments will be welcome. The juice from these will be turned into 'Local Cider' and some will be fermented in oak casks with a house yeast to give a fuller, richer flavour. The ciders will be available in bottle, keg and the occasional 'bag-in-box'. They will also be working with Surplus Manchester to produce fruited apple wines and 'Temperance Street Juices' made with apples and fresh fruit.

The first test batch including local apple juice, citra hops, melons and was fermented in oak. This was a very enjoyable drink which both nodded to tradition and pushed boundaries. There's a lot of exciting potential here so it's certainly one to keep an eye on.

Magnet Reaches 10

The **Magnet** on Wellington Road North in Stockport celebrated the



tenth anniversary of its reopening as a free house in November.

A very busy weekend saw the pub packed at all times – hardly surprising given that it has become something of a local institution over the past

decade. With no fewer than 14 cask beers (and a dozen on keg) the Magnet must have the widest choice in town – and turnover is such that quality is consistently good. Pictured above are Laura, Leslie and Lee Watts with the team (Lucy and Holly, left, and Andrea, right) celebrating with a cake and pork pies!

Manchester Matters In Brief

In Burnage, Sam Smith's **Sun In September** has now reopened with new managers; unfortunately their **Turnpike** in Withington remains closed. Following a robbery, the **Crown** in Northenden now only accepts payment by card to reduce the amount of cash on the premises. In West Didsbury, both **Mary & Archie** and the **Boiler Room** have been advertised for sale. Both remain open and trading but neither now sells cask beer.

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STYLE BITTER
ABV 3.5%
SEE AMBER
SMELL MALTY, BISCUITY, ROAST
TASTE MALTY, HOPPY

BITTER 🍷🍷🍷🍷
SWEET 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Available in 9 gallon cask

STYLE BITTER
ABV 4%
SEE DEEP GOLDEN
SMELL FRUITY, HOPPY, SPICY
TASTE BALANCED, CRISP, BITTERNESS

BITTER 🍷🍷🍷🍷
SWEET 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Available in 9 gallon cask

STYLE IPA
ABV 3.8%
SEE STRAW
SMELL CITRUS, PINE
TASTE FULL BODIED

BITTER 🍷🍷🍷🍷
SWEET 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Available in 9 gallon cask

STYLE PALE ALE
ABV 4%
SEE LIGHT GOLDEN
SMELL AROMATIC, ZESTY, HOPPY
TASTE CRISP, REFRESHING, TROPICAL FRUIT

BITTER +b +b +b +b +b
SWEET +b +b +b +b +b

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