

THE UNICORN

NEWS, BREWS AND VIEWS FROM ROBINSONS



The Queens Head, Troutbeck

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Welcome to the Unicorn Magazine. In this issue, we share the latest pub refurbishments, events, news and brews from the world of Robinsons. We’re excited to tell you all about our most recent pub purchase of the Craven Heifer Inn in Yorkshire, seeing our managed pub portfolio flourish.

We have put together an ale trail in Marple with some great pubs to visit, some beautiful venues for a white wedding, and some fantastic spots for water sports in Wales – so whatever you fancy, we have the perfect pub for you to visit.

We’re thrilled to share a range of innovative beers this year. Introducing Beer Goggles, Neon Sunset, Hopp and Idaho, you won’t be disappointed!

Read all about our four pub refurbishments, employees (past and present) sharing their stories and achievements at Robinsons, and a special feature of one of our pub Business Partners who has been in her Robinsons pub for 37 years!

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of the Unicorn Magazine.

Oliver
Managing Director, Beer Division

Divian
Managing Director, Pub Division

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We are proud to announce that we’ve acquired The Craven Heifer Inn in Yorkshire, a significant addition to our managed pub estate. This latest endeavor marks a pivotal moment for Robinsons, fortifying our dedication to expanding our pubs for customers seeking quality establishments.

William Robinson, Managed Director (Pub Division) said: “We are thrilled to welcome the Craven Heifer Inn into our family of exceptional pubs. This acquisition is a testament to our commitment to providing consumers with great venues that offer memorable experiences.”

“This acquisition is a testament to our commitment to providing consumers with great venues,”

William Robinson, Managing Director

With the first Robinsons pub purchased in 1838, Robinsons comes with a rich heritage and constantly strives to create warm and welcoming environments that bring people together. By adding this pub to our portfolio, we are reinforcing our dedication to expanding our estate and serving diverse needs.

Craven Heifer Inn, nestled in the picturesque countryside, boasts a charming and inviting atmosphere. Situated in Kelbrook, it is located right on the Lancashire Yorkshire border, just a few miles away from the long established tourist destination of Skipton in Yorkshire, and the vibrant and up-and-coming town of Colne in Lancashire. With 25 en-suite bedrooms situated across 3 buildings complimented by a busy restaurant serving high quality food daily, it is the perfect spot to visit when exploring Yorkshire.

Following 8 other successful acquisitions and transitions over the last 12 months for our managed pub estate, Robinsons are demonstrating a positive level of business growth and are very pleased to welcome this pub to their estate.



The Craven Heifer Inn website

The Mill Inn in Mungrisdale has undergone a stunning makeover, marking a new chapter in its history. The refurbishment focused on enhancing the internal space, whilst creating a fresh look for the external drinking area. The project was mainly an internal renovation with a replacement of signage and the addition of greenery to the outside areas, creating an inviting atmosphere for you to enjoy.

Internal walls were removed and new glazed screens added, providing unobstructed views throughout the pub. The result is a cohesive and welcoming environment that has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the local community.

“The re-design incorporates a visual journey into the history of the pub, the surrounding area, and local maps.”

The pub boasts a fresh coat of paint brightening up the interior. The re-design incorporates a visual journey into the history of the pub, the surrounding area, and local maps. It has embraced a significant amount of bric-a-brac, paying homage to its heritage.

The exterior has received a facelift with updated signage, contributing to the overall refreshed look of the Mill Inn. Existing imagery has been replaced with historical elements, reflecting the commitment to preserving the pub's rich history while embracing a modern aesthetic.

Situated in Mungrisdale just below the iconic Blencathra Fell, one of the largest in the North Lakes, the Mill Inn is conveniently located not far from Keswick.



Mill Inn website



Business Partners Geri & Steve



THE SHIP

Coniston



The Ship in Coniston has been transformed after a joint renovation between Robinsons and pub business partners Paola and Cecil.

The pub's name, The Ship, draws inspiration from its history as an old English cow shed, originally spelled "Shippon." To pay homage to its roots, the interior design focused on creating small stables in alcoves, embracing stable booths while consciously avoiding nautical references. The lighting fixtures have been carefully selected to mirror farm lighting, completing the harmonious blend of tradition and modernity.

As a dog-friendly pub, The Ship aims to make all guests feel at home, even those after a long day of walking with muddy boots! The terrace at the back of the car park offers a refreshed outdoor space to sit and relax and take in the local scenery.

Internally, the pub has two distinct rooms, with the main area featuring a re-located bar showcasing a range of handpumps and draught beers. The pub exudes a country theme throughout, inspired by the Lake District, featuring new artwork showcasing local imagery from old railways, local maps, highlighting the surrounding area. Forest fabric accents, inspired by the local environment, contribute to the overall theme.

The exterior has embraced a fresh new look with all-new signage, decorations, and a thorough cleanup. The surrounding area has been

“Inspired by the Lake District, featuring new artwork showcasing local imagery from old railways and local maps.”

enhanced, allowing customers to stroll through the car park, leading to the Cumbria Way walk and a campsite located just opposite. The front of the pub offers new outdoor furniture, set against a backdrop of steep driveways and a convenient car park. It also just a short walk from Coniston Village.

The addition of a new log burner and a real fire on either side of the renovated chimney breast enhances the relaxed atmosphere, making The Ship, Coniston a perfect haven during the colder months.

The fresh exterior and tastefully re-designed interior, featuring new furniture and decor, creates an inviting space for customers. Ideal for a post-walk retreat in the picturesque surroundings. The pub is also proud to be a dog-friendly establishment, ensuring that all guests feel right at home! Business Partners Paola and Cecil look forward to welcoming you.





THE NAVIGATION MARPLE

We're happy to share that The Navigation pub has benefited from an extensive refurbishment! The pub now offers a transformed space that promises a fresh and comfortable feel.

The Navigation offers four distinct areas which have all been spruced up, including a local bar, bar lounge, main bar trading space, and another cosy room at the back where a new log burner has been installed, creating a charming focal point. Walls have been removed and clear glazed screens added, providing a more open and inviting atmosphere.

“The Navigation offers four distinct areas which have all been spruced up, including a local bar, bar lounge, main bar trading space, and another cosy room at the back where a new log burner has been installed”

The interior underwent a remarkable transformation, with the introduction of new flooring, furniture and decorations brightening up the whole area. The re-designed bar features two counters and serves as a focal point in the pub.

Notable updates include the replacement of all lighting with mood lighting, pendant lights over the bar and seating. A rich colour palette of warm red and off black creates a warm and welcoming area. Wallpapers featuring local history and country images line the walls adding a touch of character to the interior.

The makeover also extended to the restroom facilities, with the gentlemen's toilets receiving a facelift and the ladies' facilities reconfigured to accommodate a baby changing unit.

Situated next to the canal locks in Marple town centre, the pub offers a convenient car park. Upstairs, a redecorated function room awaits, complete with new toilets for special events. The function room doubles as a meeting space, providing a versatile venue for various occasions.



The Navigation website

“I think the amount of time I’ve been at Robinsons is testament to the people who I work with. That’s from my colleagues in the property team right up to William, Oliver and all the directors.”

*A Day
in the Life*
Duncan Thorpe
A Senior Designer

This January, Duncan celebrated his 10 year anniversary at Robinsons. To mark the occasion, we caught up with him to learn more about his time here, what motivates him and what a day in the life of a Senior Designer at Robinsons looks like.

What brought you to Robinsons?

Well, I’ve always lived in Stockport, so to be asked to be part of a team designing Robinsons pubs was a something that really excited me, and something that still does, and I’m very proud of it. I worked for several external design companies, always designing pubs, bars, hotels, and restaurants. Then the opportunity came along to join Robinsons when John Riley (Director of Property) was putting together a team of in-house designers. I primarily came into the business to be the lead designer for our Managed Houses, something which was being put together by Dave Harrison (Director of Managed Operations). Dave and John were bringing in a team of people to start building up a portfolio of managed houses alongside our existing business partner estate. The very first managed house we refurbished was The Airport Pub back in 2014. The first ever design scheme I did for Robinsons was the Farmers Arms in Poynton, and coincidentally, that’s design scheme I’m currently working on again now, 10 years on, which is quite nice.

You recently won an award, which isn’t your first one. Tell us about your awards!

I think I’ve won 9 in total. At Robinsons, I’m most proud of the Restaurant Design Award for The Airport, it was our first ever Managed House, so it was quite an achievement for us. Also, winning Commercial Designer of the Year, which was for a collection of awards – The Airport, The Mulberry and one more, I can’t remember now. That felt like quite a big deal at the time.

What was the most stressful pub refurbishment you’ve done?

They’re all very stressful, but I think the first time we did the Queens Head in Troutbeck was possibly the most stressful. The pub received a big refurbishment after a serious fire seven years ago. The Mulberry was also stressful the first time round, we were totally changing the image of the pub, it was a very divisive design, and at the time it was very different to what Robinsons had done before.

What do you like most about working at Robinsons?

My colleagues, they’re all lovely people and they’ve become good friends over the years. I think the amount of time I’ve been at Robinsons is testament to the people who I work with. That’s from my colleagues in the property team right up to William, Oliver and all the directors. I think you can genuinely say you’d be happy to have a drink with everyone outside of work. Also, being from Stockport, I’ve got a lot of pride in designing pubs that my friends and family can go into and enjoy.

What’s the best bit of feedback you have ever been given?

I suppose the best bit of feedback is when you win an award. It’s the people in your industry, your peers that are giving you recognition for your designs. I think people perhaps don’t always recognise the intricate details and consideration that go into a design scheme. So, for example, when Swan & Chequers won Bar Design of the Year at The Northern Design awards this winter, they listed the reasons why it had won – and the judges had seen and picked up on all the small details, that possibly isn’t even noticed or may be not recognised to the untrained eye who just pops in for a drink. So, to get recognised by industry peers is always nice.

What’s the hardest part of the job?

Everyone has an opinion when you do a creative job. I think I do deal with it better as I’ve got older and more experienced. But you receive opinions on absolutely everything. Over the years I think I’ll have designed about 100 pubs, 60 or so at Robinsons, and the design scheme will provoke thoughts and feelings in everyone who steps foot in the place, be it a business partner, a pensioner or a friend. That’s part of being in a creative role though, I suppose. But everyone gets to have an opinion on your work, and they’ll openly share that with you.

But, design is subjective, right?

It’s so subjective, be it based on the personality, mood or even the weather. And I like to think most of the time I get it right, but you can’t please everyone all the time. But I think anything that is a creative art evokes emotion and opinion. And I’m the worst for that too... if I don’t like a piece of music or art, I’m the first to say, ‘I don’t like that’.

So, what does your job as a Senior Designer at Robinsons involve?

It’s a lot more than people might often think. Its every element of an internal scheme, so all the drawings – which can be up to 20 or 30 drawings for some pubs. Things such as floor plans, electrical and lighting plans, ceiling plans, detailed drawings, all the co-ordinated services and operational requirements. It can also be more intricate aspects like joinery details to specifying all the finishes, fabrics, furniture, and lighting etc. Everything you see within an interior basically; the bar, waitress stations, partition screens - all sorts. Detailed drawings can take a lot of time, it could be up to three or four days for a bar drawing. Then you’ve got all the furniture, fabrics, upholstery and artwork schedules etc too.

Which do you prefer, the drawing or the furnishings?

I like the drawings, you think of something, design and draw it and then its costed and then manufactured. It’s your ideas becoming a reality. For example, the engine booths at The Airport, that won furniture design of the year. So that took a day to draw it, about eight hours, but it was an idea that I had. It went from an idea in my head to being made and that is so satisfying.

I also enjoy the on-site management of my design, going to site meetings every week. Making sure things aren’t going too far before they’re checked. Towards the end of the larger investments, I’ll go to site every other day to make sure everything is as I intended before it’s too late.

If you could pick any pub that you could go and have a drink in which would it be?

I think it’d pick the Baker Vaults in Stockport or the Royal Scot in Marple as they are both great pubs with a good vibe. I think Bakers is great though because since we refurbished that pub, it was the catalyst for making Stockport market place a desirable place to go out again. Also, The Bakers is my favourite building of all within our estate.

What are you most excited for in 2024?

Ooh, can we say? I’m excited for The Pineapple in Stockport, that’s exciting with all the development happening in Stockport. That’ll be a big project with lots of investment going in. That’s going to be a brilliant business partner pub. The refresh of the Farmers Arms in Poynton is going to be great too.

QUEENS HEAD

TROUTBECK

In the picturesque Troutbeck, the Queens Head has undergone a great transformation. The popular pub has revamped its interior, offering a blend of contemporary charm and timeless elegance. From restored bedrooms to a refreshed pub interior it has hit the reset button, breathing new life into this beloved pub.

Guests can now indulge in a night of luxury and comfort, surrounded

by tasteful decor, stylish dressings, and brand-new furniture. The interior has undergone a thorough refresh, creating a warm and inviting ambiance. The new decor, seating, and upholstery contribute to a cosy feel, making the Queens Head an ideal spot for a delightful meal after exploring Cumbria. Whether you're savoring a hearty meal with friends or enjoying a quiet dinner for two, the pub caters for all.



The Queens Head website



20 NORTHERN 23 DESIGN AWARDS

We recently scooped up an award for Swan & Chequers in Sandbach in the 2023 Northern Design Awards. The town centre pub was awarded the winner in the 'bar' category. The judges noted the use of the pub's history in the design scheme and the team's attention to detail.

The Swan & Chequers re-opened last summer following a total transformation of the tired Cheshire town-centre pub. The new space

is open, perfect for large groups to gather and spend time with a large outdoor space created to be a community hub in the summer months. The design scheme was influenced by the pub's links to Winston Churchill and a speech held on the balcony. We were up against strong competition with the likes of JW Lees' Rain Bar also in the finals. Robinsons had three pub design schemes in the finals this year. The Crown Inn, Coniston and the Tempest Arms, Elslack were also shortlisted in the 'hotel-lodging' category.

37 YEARS AT THE PALATINE



We caught up with Gill, our Business Partner who celebrates an astounding 37 years of running The Palatine in Hadfield this April. We learnt about what brought her into the industry, how things have changed over time and some of her memorable moments so far.

So where did it all begin?

Life at The Palatine started on April Fool's Day back in 1987. It was the first pub we took on and I've got no intentions of leaving it yet!

My husband, well we weren't married at the time, was a full-time fire fighter and he was coming out of the trade. He was fed up with getting thrown out of a pub after a late call out or job, and so when he was retiring from the fire service, we decided we wanted a pub for ourselves.

We used to do a bit of relief work for some good friends, who were both in Robbies pubs. There was the Bulls Head in Marple with Sam Filarty, and Carol and Ray Hatton at the New Inn in Hattersley, that is no longer there. But they encouraged us to go for it!

We were interviewed for the Brinnington Arms, but when we never got that pub, they said come and have a look at The Palatine. So, my husband and his friend came up to see it and returned saying "we're having it". But, I wasn't agreeing until I'd had a look! There was just something about it when you walked in, so we took it on! In fact, they asked if we could be in within 24 hours! We moved in on the 28th April, 28 days after we signed for it.

And you're still here 37 years later...

Yes! When my husband died in 1992, I thought that was the end. Robinsons came to see me, even the fire service came to see me, they said "don't give up, go forward". The backing I got from Robinsons was unbelievable. It was the old generation, Mr Peter, Mr David and Mr Dennis, and they an older generation approach too. It was "come on girl, get on with it you've got this, and you can do it". And I did.

I had a son, he was 10 and he mucked in. He was very supportive. The best thing about this, is as long as you've got good backing from Robinsons, an accountant, a stock taker, you'll go far. They keep you doing the right thing. I mean my accountant would come and tell me off if I've done something wrong.. it was all new to me! I was writing things down on paper and I'd get in touch with my accountant who assured me I was doing things right, and I progressed and got better at it.

You don't really know people until you spend time with them to understand them. But they always stuck by me. Mr Peter always used to call in. When the Visitors Centre opened, me and my son went, and he knew my name straight away.. That speaks volumes. I was quite impressed with it, it feels like you're not a number, you're part of the family and they know you. You really know where you stand. I suppose that might seem strange saying 'part of the family' but, it does feel like that.

What were those first moments walking into the pub like?

It was lovely, friendly, full of characters. Most of them aren't here anymore, its 37 years ago, but real characters. The true locals of the community. Just different characters about them, we had this corner (Gill points behind her to a plaque which says 'head bangers corner', there were teachers, politicians, scientists, all sorts, plenty of different characters.

How have things changed for the pub over the years?

At one point, things were getting a little bit rough, people's drinking habits were changing, and I was a bit worried. People were going into Manchester and doing different things. Alan, my Business Development Manager came to see me and said "I think we'll give you a mini sparkle". I'd just bought a brand-new carpet, it cost me thousands. Alan said "don't worry,

everything will be alright". Meanwhile I was having sleepless nights, I couldn't tell you what things were like.

Robinsons brought in builders, architect, and designers and they told me we'd have to shut for a month. I wanted to work around it, and they said no, you'll have to close. A fantastic company came in alongside Nick to do the design work.

When it came to the final moment, I sat there on the stairs and thought, this is the pub I always wanted, I cried. Its nine years on now, and if I see anyone not looking after things, I tell them. It used to be a man's ale house, but after the refurb, I began to see these people's wives and families – half of them I didn't even know they were married!

Before we opened, Alan had said, leave the wines to me, I'll bring them. He arrived on the day we were opening with boxes and boxes of wine. I looked and thought "I'm never going to sell all that". Anyway, it was my grandson at the time, he's going out to Alan's car getting all these boxes and I'm worrying about how I'm going to pay for it. Alan was telling me to have faith, it's a new start, but I was unsure. But, I couldn't believe it, on the Tuesday my son had to go to brewery to get more wine! I couldn't believe it. The refurb had just opened a brand-new door for me. Nine years on and I'm just going from strength to strength. It's been really good for me.

So what sort of people visit The Palatine?

I'm meeting a lot of different people; couples, families, really nice people. And we all interact with each other. It's not if you sit apart, you're a stranger, we talk to one another. It's a proper family pub. We get a lot of walkers because we're on the edge of the Longdendale Trail, or people who come off the train from Manchester to see the League of Gentleman stuff that's around the village. There's quite a lot of stuff around the pub too actually.

You need a good team to succeed. I've got great bar staff. If I'm a bit of a hinderance – they tell me to get out! I've got a good team around..

I enjoy meeting people. I don't interfere with people, but it's nice to be around people. If they want to chat, we can talk about all sorts. Football is a big thing in here, we show the football, we've got three telly's so we can show

up to three matches. But then, there is always good banter about who gets the big screen and which supporters get the little room.

My customers come in and I'll ask them their opinion, if I think I need to change things up, their opinion and habits are important.

What's been the most memorable moment?

I did get married in here, the first year we moved in. But there's so many, some I can't tell you! One I remember is when the Tour de France were passing by. The entire of Glossop had gotten prepared for the day, stocked up, staffed up, geared up for a real big event. But it didn't quite go as any of us had expected. The coaches to take people to the event ended up parking right outside the pub and everyone would get off the train outside and then be getting on buses up the hill. So, it was bedlam. You looked out of the window, and it was as busy as a football stadium, the pub was heaving. We'd done burgers and a bit of food that day, and it was so busy. They then all jumped on the coaches and disappeared. At the next pubwatch meeting I went to in Glossop, I don't think I was too popular.

Have you got any funny stories you can remember?

When we first got here, there was all these blue plates hanging above the picture rails, but there was a few missing. And I'd wondered what had happened to them. Well, there was an old customer who used to come in and drink Old Tom which we had on draught. After a few, he used to flick things and try knock these plates off the wall. I didn't have a clue about this until I came in, and at the time I thought oh gosh, what the heck have I come in to!. He's not with us anymore, God rest his soul. But these were the old school, the old locals. There was even a piano in here when we moved in, but we had to wait to see if the customers actually wanted it. All you could here was 'plonk plonk plonk'. I can tell you, that soon got moved!

The Palatine is a warm and friendly pub in Hadfield, a stone's throw from the train station. It's well located for the Longdendale Trail and is also popular with the local community. You can expect to see three hand-pull ales, a selection of lagers, wines and spirits.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF HOSPITALITY WITH ASPIRE

Ever wondered where we find our amazing general managers, or what kind of pathways and opportunities are available for those looking to work in hospitality? As a family business in an industry as fast-paced as hospitality, we think it's important that our front-of-

house and kitchen teams are given opportunities to rise within the business and grow within our family. That's why we have the Aspire programme - an exciting 12-month apprenticeship available to all our Managed House team members across all levels, designed to support them and

“Beth was keen to get stuck in and continued her training with us, completing her course with flying colours and taking on the challenging Duty Manager role at one of our busiest and most popular Managed Houses!”

provide them with the skills and experience to progress into managerial positions, all whilst continuing to work and apply their new found knowledge in real in-pub experiences. Our Aspire apprenticeship is led by our Training Executive, James Robinson, who has many training qualifications as well as 25 years' experience working in hospitality. He even still works in a pub on weekends because he's just not ready to give up bar work and is a true hospitality champion!

Beth Donnelly, a shining example of Aspire's success story, our friendly faced Duty Manager, event planner, social media guru and former Aspire student. Beth joined the Bulls Head in Hale Barns half way through her managerial training. Nicky, the General Manager of the Bulls Head took her on intending to assist her with the completion of her training, so that she could step into a managerial position. Beth was keen to get stuck in and continued

her training with us, completing her course with flying colours and taking on the challenging Duty Manager role at one of our busiest and most popular Managed Houses! Beth showed a strong passion in the events and social media side of the business, therefore Nicky delegated these responsibilities to her, and we must say Beth has been doing a cracking job. Beth is certain to make waves at Robinsons and we are confident we will see her as a General Manager of her own pub in the coming years following further training from Aspire.

Our Aspire programme and opportunities for growth truly represent that a pub job is the doorway for a career in hospitality, rather than a stepping stone along the way. As a family business, we truly value the growth of the people who are the beating hearts of our pubs, and we will continue to support them to grown on their journeys. If you're considering a career within hospitality, take a look at our careers page and join the family.

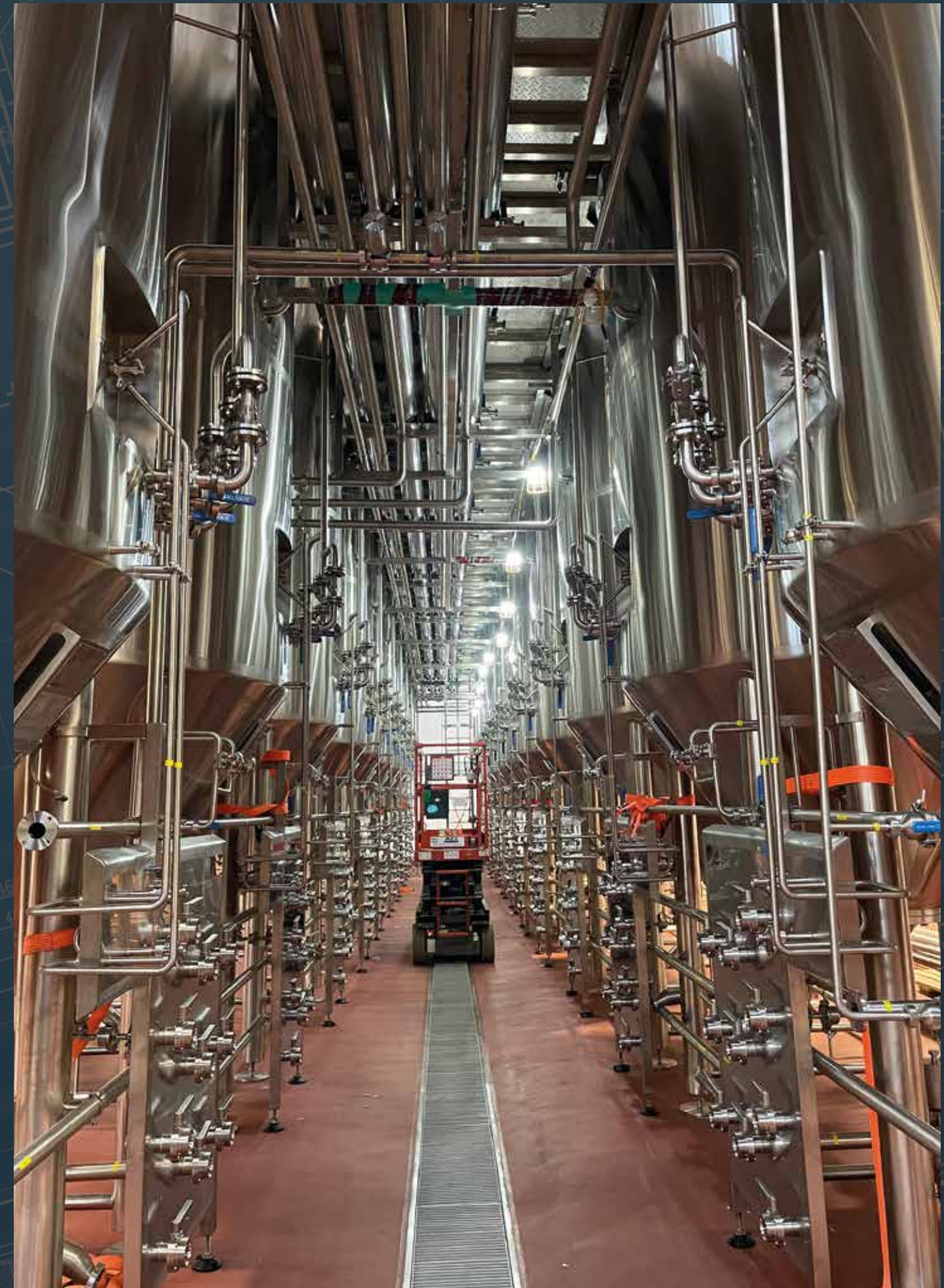


BREWING IN BREDBURY

Update

The installation of the new brewhouse in Bredbury is progressing well! 20 Dual Purpose Fermenting Vessels (DPV's) have been installed, plus an overhead gantry to access the top of the vessels. These DPV's are enclosed, unlike our existing fermenting tanks at the brewery in Stockport. In addition, they have the option to chill the

brew whilst fermenting. The advantage of this is better control of the yeast during the fermenting process and the capability of capturing Co2 for other processes. Various connections have also been made to the site services to supply steam, water, nitrogen, Co2, CIP and beer to the new brewhouse.



New Beers!



New year, new beer? By the time you're reading this we'll already be well into 2024, and we're excited for the year ahead with our range Unicorn Brewing beers.

After a landmark 2023, which saw the launch of Unicorn Brewing – (a new collaborative project between the next generation of brewers at Robinsons and our pubs) 2024 is looking to be even busier with the release of six seasonal cask ales and a whooping seven craft kegged beers including the return of some favourites.

Oliver Robinson, Managing Director (Beer Division) said: “2024 marks an exciting chapter for Unicorn Brewing, where innovation takes centre stage. We're in sync to the evolving tastes of our consumers, and I think our creations reflect that.”

So what's in store for 2024?

Kicking off the year, we introduced Euphoria – a 4.5% co2 charged coffee stout. A unique beer if ever there was one. Forget the creamy head on your Guinness, Euphoria's light carbonation makes it one of the more unique stouts you're likely to try this year.

As we move closer towards spring, we introduce Beer Goggles – a 4.6% Hazy New England style kegged IPA – and IDAHO – a 4.6% cask IPA which uses IDAHO 7 hops; known for their juicy and fruit aroma and taste.

Rounding up the first quarter of the year, we present Neon Sunset – a 4.4% ABV Pale Ale in keg packed full of Amarillo hops. We also see the return of HOPP, our popular 4.4% transatlantic hoppy pale ale which uses both American and English hops to create a great tippie.

Moving into summer, we welcome Aloha - a 4.6% Tropical Pale Ale in keg and the return of AMO in cask; our most popular seasonal of 2024 followed quickly by 2024 favourites Big Bang and Hazy Pale Ale in keg to enjoy in the sun.

As the leaves start to turn, you'll meet Beret – a 3.8% Raspberry Pale Ale in cask, the return of pub favourite Big Sur in cask and Clockwork – an orange infused pale with a zesty kick in keg.

“2024 is already shaping up to be one of the most creative years for our brewery”

Sam Kennerley, Brand Manager

The end of 2024 sees the return of some of the best sellers from the year along with our favourite festive feline – Tom & Berry – a dark amber 4.4%, cranberry infused festive ale – perfect for a knees up over Christmas.

Sam Kennerley, Drinks and Brands Manager for Robinsons said: “2024 is already shaping up to be one of the most creative years for our brewery. The beers we have created hand in hand with our pubs are really exciting and we can't wait for everyone to try them in their local over the coming months”.

We can't wait to share these delicious brews with you across the bar through the year, and don't forget to keep your eyes on our Facebook and Instagram for updates of when they'll be landing at your local pub!

DOUBLE WHAMMY: CAMRA HONORS THE HAWK INN AND THE BLACK HORSE



We are proud to announce that two of our pubs, The Hawk Inn in Haslington and the Black Horse in Preston, are recipients of prestigious CAMRA awards.

Hawk Inn

Pub of the Season (Winter) 2023

The Hawk Inn was awarded Pub of the Season (Winter) 2023 title at the CAMRA awards, a testament to the dedication of Business Partner Jenny and her team – Stacy, June, and Ross. Jenny expressed her thanks for the recognition, saying: “It is an honour to receive this award. This achievement shows the hard work and passion that our team invests in providing a great pub experience for our customers. We are really proud and grateful for this acknowledgment.”

Black Horse

Camra Central Lancashire's Pub of the Year 2024

The Black Horse in Preston celebrates its second consecutive win as Camra Central Lancashire's Pub of the Year. Business Partner Dan and his team have consistently demonstrated a commitment to outstanding quality and service. Dan, Business Partner, expressed his thanks for the acknowledgment, stating: “It is an honour to be recognised as Camra Central Lancashire's Pub of the Year again. This achievement shows the hard work and enthusiasm of our entire team over the past year, who consistently go above and beyond to ensure our customers have a great experience at the pub.”

As The Hawk Inn and The Black Horse continue to shine in the world of real ale and community pubs, their wins underscore their continuing spirit and dedication, demonstrating the basis of a great British pub experience.

1. Windsor Castle

Marple Ale Trail

Marple Station to Rose Hill Marple Station 7 pubs - 4.8 km

Looking for a new destination to head to for a day out and a few drinks at different places all within walking distance? Sitting on the edge of Derbyshire, just 30 minutes away from Manchester City Centre sits the town of Marple.

Split in two halves, Marple Bridge sits lower in the town and where you'll find Marple train station with pretty scenery and walks close-by. This is where our route starts. Marple town centre (a little higher), is where you'll find the high street and plenty of pubs, bars and retailers to wander around - and another train station, Rose Hill Marple. This is where our route ends.

The train stations sit on different railway lines, both direct to Manchester City Centre in 30 minutes (worth knowing when buying your tickets!)

If you fancy working up your thirst, there are a few historical sights you can visit in Marple too.

Have a wander along the canal and see the impressively tall Marple Aqueduct which is about 15 minutes along the canal towpath from the train station. The aqueduct crosses the River Goyt and is one of the remaining aqueducts you can cross by canal boat.

Or, head in the other direction towards Marple Lime Kilns, a 10-minute walk away from Marple town centre. These Kilns were built to burn limestone that was quarried from The Peak District back in the 1700s.

Where to head for a pint

We'll recommend a pretty ambitious route of places to go for an afternoon-into-evening of pub hopping around Marple, and you can choose where you pick up the trail. If you manage to make a stop at every pub (you'll be a faster drinker/walker than us!), then this route is a total of 3 miles (4.8km), so less than your Saturday morning park run!

2. Royal Scot

3. The Navigation

First stop – Windsor Castle

A bit of a stretch of the legs after being on the train for a while, take a left out of the station and head down, cross the river and up the hill to the first watering hole. This pretty stone-faced pub sits looks great with its flowers in Spring time and has all the traditional character of a pub on the inside.

Second stop – Royal Scot

It's back down the hill from here to the Royal Scot. Sitting adjacent to the river, this pub is quite the contrast to the first stop. This pub takes a modern and bold approach to pub interiors and has a small beer garden at the front to enjoy.

Third stop – The Navigation

Head upwards past the station, cross over the canal and take a left on the canal tow path. Walk straight down the canal until you reach The Navigation. This newly refurbished pub is warm and inviting inside with a new beer garden to make use of outside too.

Fourth stop – Ring O' Bells

Hop back on the canal in the same direction for a few more minutes to arrive at Ring O' Bells. (This is the closest pub to the Lime Kilns). This white-washed traditional pub also has a large beer garden overlooking the canal with some cosy corners to enjoy inside too.

Fifth stop – Bulls Head

Another short 5 minute stroll to the next pub in Marple town centre is the Bulls Head. This modern open plan pub is well-known for its good food as well as drinks. The pub has an enclosed beer garden and plenty of bright space indoors too.

Sixth stop – Hatters Arms

It's onto the homeward stretch now, first stopping off at this beautiful stone pub. Almost hidden from the walking route back but one not to miss. It's a small traditional pub with low ceilings and cosy tables.

Seventh stop – The Railway

Continue towards Rose Hill Marple station and you'll find The Railway waiting for the 'one for the road'. The pub features traditional dark mahogany and brass furniture with lots of bright open spaces.

We've chosen a few pubs all within walking distance to one another, but we do have plenty of other great pubs in the surrounding areas of Mellor, Millbrow, Compstall and Hawk Green.

6. Hatters Arms

5. Bulls Head

4. Ring O' Bells

7. The Railway

Tying the Knot Inn Style

Discover Stunning Wedding Venues with Robinsons

Embarking on the journey of marriage is a unique story for every couple and finding the perfect setting to say 'I do' is a crucial part of that tale.

At Robinsons and Individual Inns, we understand the importance of this choice and offer a range of wedding venues, each brimming with its own unique charm and character. From the rustic elegance of the Tempest Arms to the picturesque beauty of The Swettenham Arms, our venues cater to a diverse range of tastes and preferences.

Explore our wonderful collection of venues, showcasing why a wedding at a Robinsons location is not just an event, but the beginning of a beautiful journey in your life together.



The Tempest Arms

Tempest Arms

Nestled in the heart of the Yorkshire countryside, the Tempest Arms is a venue that exudes rustic charm. Known for its warm, welcoming atmosphere, this venue is perfect for couples looking for a cosy yet elegant setting. With its beautiful stone architecture and rolling hills as a backdrop, the Tempest Arms provides a picturesque setting for both ceremonies and receptions.



The Swettenham Arms

The Swettenham Arms

The Swettenham Arms, a hidden gem in the Cheshire countryside, offers a magical setting with its lavender gardens and sprawling landscapes. Ideal for both intimate gatherings and grand celebrations, its Lovell Suite opens up to the stunning gardens, offering a perfect blend of indoor and outdoor festivities. The lavender fields, in full bloom during the summer, not only provide a sensational backdrop for photos but also add a unique touch to the wedding aesthetics. The pub also has a beautiful Arboretum providing a stunning Spring backdrop.

The Crown

The Crown, Hawk Green really is the perfect canvas on which to paint your plans, and our business partner Simon and his team will make it all happen. Their stunning new Frederic Suite is the perfect place for intimate marriage ceremonies but can also be transformed into a perfect party venue. With the licence to perform legal weddings this Greater Manchester pub will help you plan and execute your fairy tale wedding right from the "I do's" to putting on your dancing shoes.



The Crown
Wedding Brochure

Woodman Inn

The Woodman Inn offers two stunning venues, one with quaint charm and traditional décor and the second is a favourite for those who dream of a marquee country wedding. The Woodman Inn's dedication to providing personalised service ensures that every wedding is as unique as the couple celebrating it.

Spread Eagle

Overlooking stunning landscapes, the Spread Eagle is renowned for its breath-taking views set against the romantic backdrop of the River Ribble and the ruins of the historic Sawley Abbey. Offering picturesque photo opportunities to create memories that last a lifetime, you can celebrate your dream wedding here in this cosy bar and elegant dining room setting.

Wynnstay Arms

The Wynnstay Arms, with its historic charm and modern facilities, offers a seamless blend of old and new. This venue is perfect for those who appreciate the elegance of traditional architecture, complemented by contemporary comforts. The Wynnstay Arms prides itself on creating a luxurious experience, ensuring every wedding is both grand and personal.



The Wynnstay Arms

The Wheatley Arms

Although not as large as the other venues, The Wheatley Arms holds its own with its stunning enclosed gardens, perfect for summer weddings and outdoor events. Its intimate setting is ideal for smaller weddings, where every detail is catered to perfection. The enclosed gardens, beautifully lit and decorated, creates a romantic ambiance that's hard to replicate.

With their commitment to quality service and attention to detail, Robinsons wedding venues ensure that each day is as special and unique as the couple themselves.

So, if you're planning your big day and looking for a venue with character, consider Robinsons' stunning venues – where your dream wedding can become a reality.



The Spread Eagle

Water Sports in North Wales

As a popular tourist hotspot and an area of incredible landscapes and terrains, there are unsurprisingly a million different water activities available in North Wales, so we've compiled a summary of our favorites and where to find them! Please note that all the following activities are hosted in or around water, and therefore we fully recommend that you and anyone joining you are strong swimmers and take extra care when taking part. Please follow the guidelines provided on activity websites and do not enter water if you cannot swim.

White Water Rafting

White water rafting is a thrilling sport perfect for those craving adventure! Using an inflatable raft, you and your group will paddle through the rough waters of a fast-flowing river - it's essentially a natural rollercoaster. But not all white water rafting experiences have to be intense, most rafting centers also offer a calmer route, focused more on scenery and nature spotting, so be sure to ask if you'd prefer this option! Tryweryn River near Bala has some fantastic rapids - Upper Tryweryn is one of the most intense sections of white water rafting in Wales, while just 4 miles down the river, Lower Tryweryn is far calmer while still having enough fun rapids to keep you entertained, otters have often been spotted in this area too! The River Dee in Llangollen is also one of the best rafting rivers in the UK, with plenty of twists and turns to explore you certainly won't be bored!

Fishing

Whether you're a professional or complete beginner, if you're interested at all in fishing, Wales is the best place to give it a go. With designated fisheries across North Wales, there's something for everyone; from a relaxed family day away from the screens to competitive fly fishing. Well known for trout fly fishing, Llyn Brenig in Corwen is a great spot for both boat and peg fishing with pike as large as 30lbs being caught here! Boats are available to hire on-site, including accessible wheelyboats for those in wheelchairs. Eisteddfa Fishery in Criccieth is an area made up of five, tranquil lakes - the family lake, pleasure lake, new carp lake and old carp lake. Fishing tutors are available upon request.

Coasteering



Did you know coasteering started in Wales? There's no better way of exploring the Welsh coastline than scrambling over rocks, jumping from high cliffs and swimming through the crashing waves, all while amazing marine wildlife roam around you! Coasteering is especially great on Anglesey's coastline - the rocky terrain and varied wildlife means it's a truly incredible day out for all abilities - try to spot a puffin during your adventure.

Aqueduct Canoeing

Did you know that the world's highest aqueduct is in North Wales? Based in Llangollen, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct is located 38m above ground, crossing two major river valleys and has some truly spectacular views! Canoers will feel like they're floating on the edge of the world while looking down at the huge drop of this World Heritage Site - it's a fantastic one for those who enjoy some risk while also having a relaxing journey along the canal.

Canyoning & Gorge Walking

Gorge walking is essentially following a river or river bed, exploring and climbing over rocky terrain, sliding down smooth slopes or jumping into deeper parts of the river... any way to get to your final destination. Canyoning on the other hand is like Gorge Walking on steroids, focusing specifically on the faster flowing and trickier terrain, involving riskier leaps of faith, abseiling and swimming under heavy waterfalls - it's definitely one for the adrenaline junkies. Activities are available at the Prysor Canyon near Blaenau Ffestiniog, Afon Tryweryn near Bala and Glyn Calland in Caernarfon.

Wind, Kite & Wave Surfing

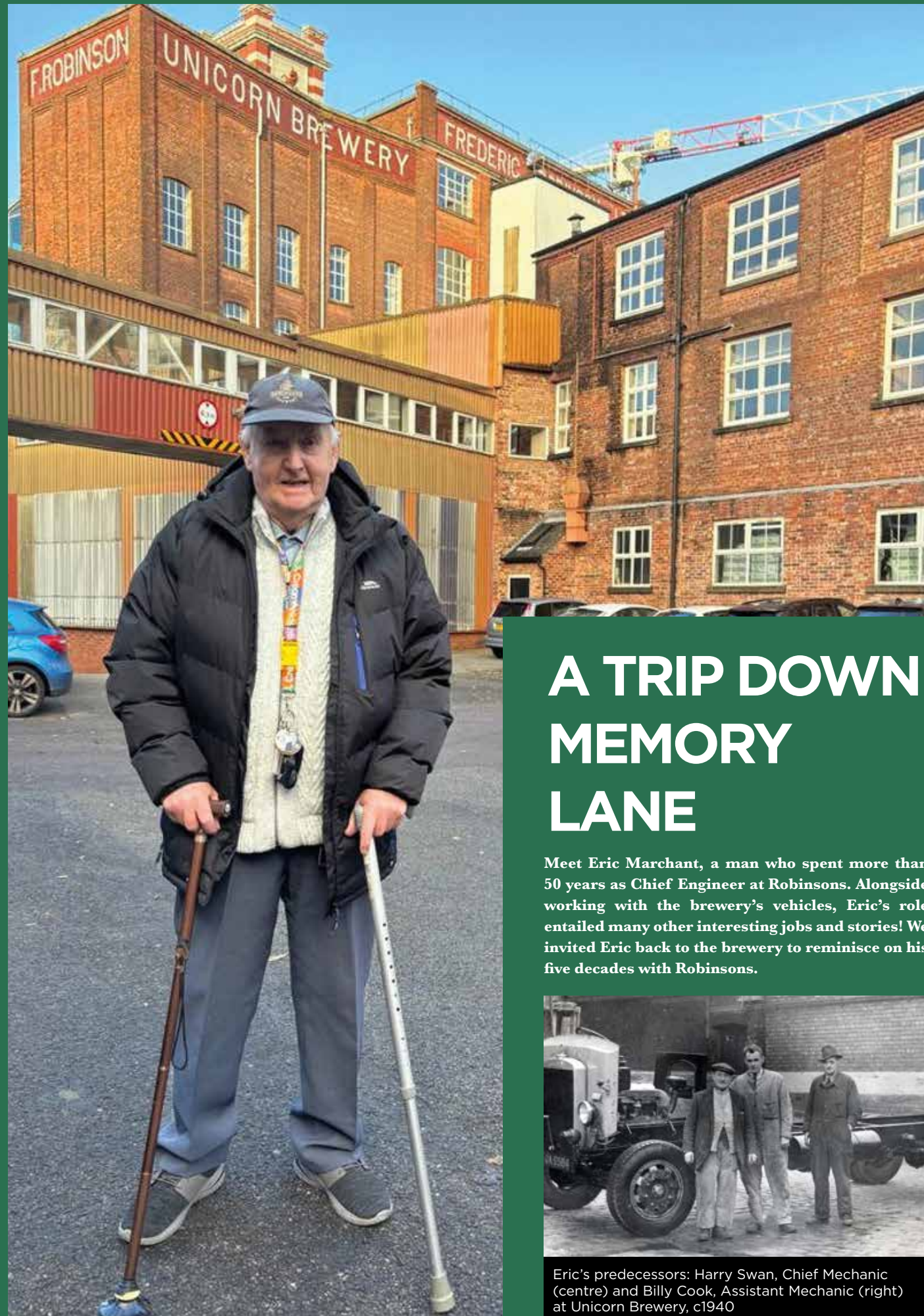


The Llŷn Peninsula is the perfect area for wind chasers, with some of the windiest shorelines on the west coast, wind and kite surfers can have a field day planing across the waves! If you're looking to learn how to kite or wind surf, there are some great schools in both Rhyl and Rhosneigr. Although the peninsula's waves are far from the constant shores of Hawaii, there are often enough waves for wave surfing beginners and with schools in Abersoch and Pwllheli it's a great place to learn. If you're going out alone make sure to check out Surfline for the wind, wave and swell forecasts!

Paddleboarding & Kayaking

If you love the water but don't want anything too fast-paced, paddleboarding and kayaking are great ways of exploring coastlines, rivers or lakes. You can take it at your own pace, observe the surrounding wildlife, explore caves and even jump in for a swim when you're ready. We advise booking a guided session, especially if you'd like to explore open water as your guide will know the area and it's most interesting sites as well as having proper safety training as the Irish Sea can be rough. Tours are available in Llangollen, Llyn Padarn, Llyn Tegid, Llyn Gwynant and across Anglesey.





A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

Meet Eric Marchant, a man who spent more than 50 years as Chief Engineer at Robinsons. Alongside working with the brewery's vehicles, Eric's role entailed many other interesting jobs and stories! We invited Eric back to the brewery to reminisce on his five decades with Robinsons.



Eric's predecessors: Harry Swan, Chief Mechanic (centre) and Billy Cook, Assistant Mechanic (right) at Unicorn Brewery, c1940

A Letter From Sir John Robinson

Before starting the role of Chief Mechanic, Eric's journey began in a local garage, where he serviced the cars of Sir John and Lady Robinson. Fate intervened when he received a letter from Sir John himself, accompanied by an application form for the position of Chief Mechanic.

Post-War Vehicle Overhauls

Upon stepping into his role, Eric faced the challenge of tending to a fleet of historic waggons, some of which dated back to the 1920s. "We re-conditioned them and then sent them off to be re-painted," he says, recalling the work on delivery wagons and directors' cars. The brewery yard served as their makeshift main garage, where all of the work was carried out.

"As the years passed, wartime rationing gave way to a resurgence in vehicle production. Travelling became really frequent for me, especially after Sir John's acquisition of the Ulverston brewery (Hartley's), expanding the scope of my responsibilities."

"As the years passed, wartime rationing gave way to a resurgence in vehicle production. Travelling became really frequent for me, expanding the scope of my responsibilities,"

Eric Marchant

The Stockport Plane Crash

Besides the routine, a Sunday morning brought about an extraordinary event – the 1967 Stockport plane crash, which took place on Hillgate, right next to the brewery. "With my wife's frantic call and the noise of a crash, I rushed to the scene in my car, and helped the shocked pilot out of the plane after the catastrophic incident. The aftermath, now commemorated by a monument, left a great mark on Stockport's history and it is something I will never forget."

Bonds with the Robinson Family

A highlight of Eric's time was the close-knit relationship formed with the Robinson family. Over the years, he witnessed the current directors' growth from infancy, creating bonds that exceeded professional duties. "I would often pick the kids up from school, or take them to swimming, and now they're the directors at Robinsons!"

Thornycroft Rides and New Garages

With a career spanning over five decades, retirement wasn't on Eric's mind, who didn't say goodbye until the age of 80. He fondly recalls traversing the Lakes with a Thornycroft waggon from 1927 and the joy of receiving a new, more expansive garage from Sir John.



Life Beyond the Workshop

"For me, life wasn't just about engines and repairs. Visiting the Snipe pub in Audenshaw became a tradition as I lived close by. The love for my job extended beyond the vehicles, I even found myself accompanying the Shire horses to their shows and I loved it, as well as visiting lots of Robbies pubs.. and I still do."

Reflections on Retirement

"Inevitably, the dynamics of the brewery changed, and external companies took over my role – with the number of pubs growing, I couldn't get to every single area where a vehicle needed a repair. So, I left behind a job I considered the best in the country and it also meant I was Robinsons' last Chief Mechanic. Retirement brought me a new chapter, I joined the pensioners' party at Robinsons and maintain a connection with the pubs. P.S, my favourite drink is Old Tom!"

Our Sustainability Team Have Been Busy...

Greener Retailing Guide

We have recently released an updated Greener Retailing guide for our Business Partners and Managers! Originally released in 2016 in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University, the guide provides recommendations on how pubs can be 'greener' and more sustainable, whilst also saving money. This revision reflects changes in attitudes, behaviours and working practices, and includes updated facts and figures, additional recommendations and examples of cost savings from across the Robinsons estate. Just one of the ways we are supporting our Business Partners and Managers!

Here's some of our ongoing projects to become more sustainable at our Unicorn Packing Centre in Bredbury

We are working on a sitewide optimisation of machinery start-ups and shut down, with the project continuing into 2024.

We've saved over £35,000 in 2023, and are hopeful to save even more in 2024! We also have some boiler optimisation

plans to reduce gas usage by 40% in the next 3 years. The 2023 projects saw the boiler use 18% less gas for its standby usage. Further to this, we're looking to create as many closed-loop systems as possible to slash our water usage. So far, we have saved over 2.5 million litres of usage by introducing timers to water-based lubrication systems!

THE VAULT

Iconic Stockport band take name from Robinsons pub



“The Blossoms stands as a historic landmark pub with a unique connection to the local music scene. Did you know that the popular Stockport-based band, Blossoms, takes its name from the pub?”

Nestled just south of Stockport town centre along the A6, The Blossoms stands as a historic landmark pub with a unique connection to the local music scene. Did you know that the popular Stockport-based band, Blossoms, takes its name from the pub?

The band began their musical journey playing gigs nearby Alma Lodge Hotel and later graced the stage of the Stockport pub. Their sudden rise culminated in the 2016 hit “Charlemagne,” and their latest album, “Ribbon Around The Bomb,” released in 2022, continues to resonate with fans.

This Grade II listed former Coaching House boasts a distinctive triangular shape owing to its corner location. Unlike many open-plan pubs of the late 20th century, The Blossoms has preserved its original small intimate rooms, central curved

bar, and a spacious first-floor function room. The latter serves as a hub for various community events. The pub's interior is adorned with pictures capturing the essence of both the pub and the brewery's evolution over time.

Beyond its rich history and architectural charm, The Blossoms caters to diverse tastes, offering a variety of cask ales, fresh coffee, live music, and free Wi-Fi.

Blossoms are set to headline their largest ever show at Wythenshawe Park this August Bank Holiday weekend, promising a landmark moment in Manchester's music scene! Scan the QR code for tickets





Business Partners Cecil and Paola

THINKING OF RUNNING YOUR OWN PUB?

We're always looking for great licensees with the skills, personality and ambition to run our pubs. With around 250 pubs, inns and hotels across the North West and Wales, we are sure to have a business that is perfect for licensees looking for great pubs in wonderful locations.

We are a truly independent family run brewery, making all our own beers right in the heart of Stockport. We have been that way for almost two centuries, and that is the way we are going to stay, so you can plan for your future with confidence.

IS IT FOR YOU?

There are lots of reasons why our business partners enjoy running a pub. Probably one of the biggest reasons is that they're 'people' people. By doing what they do, they have the opportunity to not only have an enjoyable career, but also a very rewarding and profitable one.

A pub can provide you with a charming home, a superb social life... but most of all, a successful business.

SUPPORTING YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY!

Whether you are new to running a pub or an experienced landlord with us, we offer an unrivalled range of support and training for our licensees.

LICENSEE INDUCTION PROGRAMME

We believe that training is very important to running a successful business. Our Induction Programme is compulsory for all new business partners joining us and gives you the skills and knowledge required to run a successful pub.

We will cover a selection of subjects and offer a range of licensee support to suit varying needs!

Get in touch with Alex, our Recruitment and Training Executive, to start your journey towards a fantastic career in this exciting industry.



Find your next opportunity

* **0161 612 4112**
* **recruitment@frederic-robinson.co.uk**