

BOLTON BEER BREAKS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BOLTON BRANCH OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

SEPTEMBER 2015

ISSUE No.12



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A look at Bob's Smithy Inn

How much is a half pint

Bank Top Brewery in Westminster Abbey

All the latest pub news plus much more

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FROM THE EDITOR

I must start with some bad news. The Dog and Partridge is to be demolished after the horrendous events of nearly a year ago. Neil and his associates & friends have worked hard to try and restart the pub, but the work, effort and cost required was simply too much. It is a real shame, because besides being a pub which served an excellent range of well kept real ales, it was a showcase for local bands, up and coming bands and some bands you would never have seen on Top of the Pops, whose names are not printable! Like any pub, it was more than just a building to go and drink beer, but to locals was a place where they could meet, converse and be part of a family. It will be missed by most who enjoyed the atmosphere, but to understand what it meant to a lot of people visit their website below:

<http://www.thedogbolton.co.uk/>

In addition, there are reports that the Rocket pub in Brightmet is also to be demolished, and replaced by a convenience store. This is another pub that is a very important part of the local community and the branch are to start a campaign to get the pub saved from demolition. If you too would like to get involved, then come along to the next branch meetings, details of which are inside.

This edition features:

- Bob's Smithy Inn, a CAMRA favourite, which has been in the Good Beer Guide for 20 out of the last 22 years.
- Campaign corner looks at the disparity in costs which sometimes arises when ordering a half pint
- A sideways look at CAMRA membership
- News of Bank Top in Westminster Abbey

I hope you enjoy the read and if you have any comments or submissions, please email me at the address below.

*Cheers,
Jez Wadd*

Last date for submission of articles or adverts for the next issue is 6th November

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230 Hatfield Road,
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AL1 4LW

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To advertise contact Cliff Burgess on 07510 328085

Bob's Smithy Inn

Bob's Smithy Inn is on the edge of the moors, and is over 200 years old. The inn is named after the blacksmith who allegedly spent more time in the pub than in his smithy across the road. Local knowledge (aka Bolton CAMRA Pubs Officer) points to the fact that it was a Tetley pub in February 1983 selling Tetley Mild and Walkers Best Bitter on hand pumps having previously been on electric diaphragm pumps when it was Tetley Bitter too.

In 1990, the year Nelson Mandela was released after 27 years & the world wide web was invented, Stewart and Lorraine Brookes took over at the Bob's Smithy, after 3 years running the Grey Mare on Tottington Road.

The pub is, and has been, in the Good Beer Guide from 2011 to 2016, 2002 to 2009 and 1995 to 2000 plus 1987 - 20 out of the last 22 years – quite an achievement. There is always a good selection of ales which are well kept and served. It is possibly the only place for miles where there is usually a pint of Champion Beer of Britain, Timothy Taylor Boltmaker.

Handy for walkers on the west Pennine Moors and visitors to the Macron stadium which is 2 miles away, it has several seats at the front to enjoy the panoramic views over the South Lancashire plain.

Twenty five years later and Stewart & Lorraine, with the help of son Jordan, are as keen and enthusiastic as ever. They have transformed the "Smithy" into probably the best country pub/restaurant in the Bolton area.

Here's to the next 25 years!



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Bob's Smithy Inn

1448 Chorley Old Road, Bolton, BL1 7PX

Who is a CAMRA member?

For some years now my brother in law has been an avid real ale fan. He and four of his friends are out every Thursday with a copy of the good beer guide, sometimes travelling up to 100 miles to find a decent pint (designated driver excepted). He gently tried to persuade me that real ale was the best drink to have regardless of your particular tastes. I am always open to new ideas and would give anything a try on his recommendation or not. He also invited us out on the Leicester CAMRA branch outings to Liverpool & Manchester, where my eyes were opened to some fabulous pubs that I may otherwise have bypassed. On the strength of my enthusiasm for these visits, my wife purchased me a CAMRA membership as a very welcome birthday present. That was nearly 5 years ago and in that period of time I have come to understand that there is no such thing as an average CAMRA member. We come from all walks of life and vary in age from students to pensioners, and (surprisingly to some) there are many female members. Having said that, there are some readily identifiable types of member, some of whom you may immediately recognise. These can be broadly categorised (in my opinion only) and are described below.

THE TICKER

This person is what can only be described as an obsessive. They will list (usually in a very anal manner) each of the ales they drink. These will be marked according to, amongst other things, taste, colour, availability and cost. This data is then used in paper or electronic form to catalogue everything they have drunk. The number of different beers within their catalogue is very important. The more obsessive Tickers will not have a drink if there is not something that they have not tried in the pub. I witnessed this at first hand last year and no matter what I said the Ticker sat for half an hour empty handed, while we all enjoyed a pint.

NO KEG PLEASE

This person will turn round out of a pub if it sells only keg beer and has no hand pumps. In a similar way to the Ticker mentioned above they would rather sit with no drink at all than be reduced to having a keg beer. If there is an unusual foreign bottled beer available this may be drunk, providing it is not mass produced by an international brewing conglomerate.

"AAH! AMERICAN FUGGLES"

You may well ask what American Fuggles are. Well this type of member will tell you that they are a variety of hops from the USA which will give a mild, soft, grassy, floral aroma. Invariably they will be able to tell you what hops are used in each particular ale and where they are from. You will be told about "the rising citrus flavours that are complemented by a hint of ginger" and any other taste simile that sounds vaguely intelligent. They are very closely related to certain wine obsessives for whom "terroire" is hugely important.

DOES IT TASTE GOOD?"

This member will be quite happy to try anything that is real ale, be it dark, light or mild. Invariably they will be drawn to paler brews and will willingly drink keg, lager, cider or anything else providing it tastes good (see Ticker and "no keg please" above).

Maybe you know people who fit in to the categories above. Maybe you yourself fit in to one of them. Either way I feel that CAMRA membership is incredibly diverse, and is constantly growing.

If you have not already then join us. www.boltoncamra.org.uk

Tiny Rebel's Cwtch crowned Champion Beer of Britain at the Great British Beer Festival

After over a year of local tasting panels and regional heats leading up to the finals, the Campaign for Real Ale, CAMRA, has announced that today Tiny Rebel's Cwtch has been crowned the Best Beer in Britain at the Great British Beer Festival, Olympia, London.

The Newport brewed real ale was named the Supreme Champion over a host of other finalists in ten different beer categories (Bitters, Best Bitters, Strong Bitters, Golden Ales, Milds, the Speciality class and also the winter beer styles of Porter, Stouts, Barley Wines and Old Ales, and Strong Old Ales and Strong Milds), including beers from both small microbrewers and large regional brewers.

Nik Antona, Champion Beer of Britain Director, spoke in praise of today's winner saying: *"The Champion Beer of Britain title is the most coveted titles in British beer, for over 30 years brewers have put forward their real ale in the hope it will win and this year Tiny Rebel's Cwtch is a very worthy winner of this prestigious award"*

The man who brewed Cwtch – which is pronounced 'cutch' and means cuddle in Welsh – Head Brewer Gareth Williams said what it meant to win,

"I feel like I'm dreaming! This is the ultimate award to win in our eyes and after winning at the Great Welsh a few years ago this feels even better. It's just a crazy feeling and we're massively proud."

Co-founder of the brewery Bradley Cummings, added this on the beer itself,

"We were brought up on real ale and we love traditional styles, Cwtch is our modern version of a traditional bitter, with extra hopping for a more pronounced bitterness and aroma. It's new world and old world all in one."

This year's Silver went to Kelburn, Jaguär (Renfrewshire) whilst the Bronze award went to Dancing Duck, Dark Drake (Derby).

Overall winners-

Gold – Tiny Rebel, Cwtch

Silver – Kelburn, Jaguar

Bronze – Dancing Duck, Dark Drake

Mild -

Gold – Williams Bros, Black

Silver – Rudgate, Ruby Mild

Bronze – Great Orme, Welsh Black

Bitter -

Gold – Pheasantry, Best Bitter

Silver – Acorn, Barnsley Bitter

Joint Bronze – Purple Moose, Madog's Ale & Timothy Taylor, Boltmaker

Best Bitter-

Gold – Tiny Rebel, Cwtch

Silver – Highland, Scapa Special

Joint Bronze – Barngates, Tag Lag & Salopian, Darwin's Origin

Golden Ale-

Gold – Kelburn, Jaguar

Silver – Adnams, Explorer

Bronze – Blue Monkey, Infinity



Strong Bitter-

Gold – Dark Star, Revelation

Silver – Salopian, Golden Thread

Bronze – Grain, India Pale Ale

Speciality Beer -

Gold – Titanic, Plum Porter

Joint Silver – Kissinggate, Black Cherry Mild & Saltaire, Triple Chocolate

Bronze – Hanlons, Port Stout

Champion Winter Beer of Britain (from category winners announced in January 2015)-

Porter - Elland Brewery

Stout – Dancing Duck, Dark Drake

Barley Wines and Strong Old Ales – Lees, Moonraker

Old Ales and Strong Milds – Purple Moose

Champion Bottled Beer of Britain winners

(Sponsored by Beer Hawk)

Gold – Harveys, Imperial Extra Double Stout

Silver – Fyne Ales, Superior India Pale Ale

Bronze – Mordue, India Pale Ale



Beer Hawk, sponsors of the Champion Bottled Beer of Britain competition, has put together a case of 15 beers made up of this year's finalists, available at

www.beerhawk.co.uk/cbbob

Cider and Perry News

Congratulations to the Bank Top Brewery Tap – following the award for Branch Cider and Perry Pub of the Year, it has now been voted Greater Manchester Cider and Perry Pub of the Year. Caron and Neil Turner from the pub, together with Dave and Angela Sweeney, were presented with the award at the Manchester Cider and Perry Festival on Friday 26 June. The Brewery Tap will now go forward to the competition to find the best cider pub in the North West.

There are a couple of recent additions to the list of pubs in the Bolton Branch area where you can find real cider and perry.

The Hen and Chickens now has a couple of boxes of cider on the bar - on a recent visit these were ciders from Thatchers and Shepton Mallett. The Blackedge Brewery Bar has up to 8 ciders available, including several from Red Bank Cider. October is Cider Month and we hope to organise some events to mark this. Keep an eye on the Bolton CAMRA website for further news.



To advertise contact Cliff Burgess on 07510 328085



Bank Top

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BREWERY



Bank Top

BREWERY TAP

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ASTLEY BRIDGE,
BOLTON.
BL1 7AN



BANK TOP IN PARLIAMENT

The latest beer to be launched by the team at Bank Top is a 3.8% deep golden, hoppy session ale called 'DeMontfort 1265', but why the unusual name?

To mark the 750th anniversary of the De Montfort Parliament of 1265, The History of Parliament has published a book which covers the long history of parliament and representative government.

Bank Top Brewery are honoured to have been included as an Industry Champion, Made in Britain in this publication - *The Story of Parliament: Celebrating 750 years of parliament in Britain*.



Story of Parliament: Celebrating 750 years of parliament in Britain.

David and Claire, from the brewery were delighted to attend The History of Parliament Trust book launch at Westminster Abbey London, June 22, 2015. More than 300 VIP guests, including prominent historians, politicians and senior public figures, gathered to mark the publication of *The Story of Parliament: Celebrating 750 years of parliament in Britain*, which celebrates the 750th anniversary of Simon de Montfort's Parliament of 1265—a key moment in the origins of parliament—at a champagne reception in the Cloisters of Westminster Abbey.



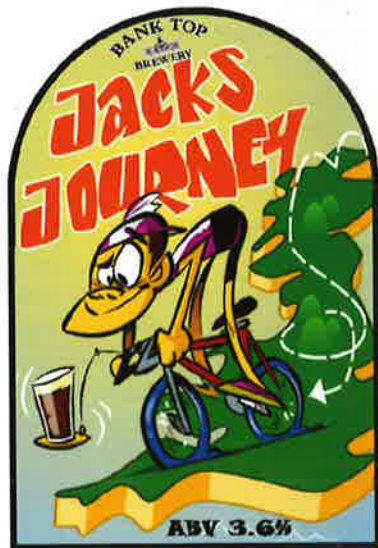
Jack's Journey

Superfit Jack Liddell, a member of the Bank Top Brewery Estates bar staff, recently completed the challenging 900 mile cycle, solo and unsupported, from John O'Groats to Lands End to raise awareness and funds for the Epilepsy Society. The motivation behind the challenge is his young niece Bethany who sadly passed away eleven years ago, at the age of four after struggling with epilepsy throughout her life. To aid his fund raising efforts Bank Top Brewery have commissioned a new beer – Jack's Journey, for each barrel sold, the brewery will be donating £5 to the Epilepsy Society and both of our pubs the Tap and the Ale House will donate 10p per pint sold.

The beer, a golden 3.6% ABV will be available from 24 August 2015.

Should anyone – customers and landlords alike also wish to support this worthy cause they can do so by visiting Jack's Just Giving page – Jack's JOGLE 2015.

<https://www.justgiving.com/JacksJOGLE2015/>



PUB NEWS AUGUST 2015

Awards

The vote for Branch Pub of the Season for Summer 2015 ended up a close race between the Bank Top Brewery Tap in Astley Bridge and the House Without a Name in Harwood. Such was the quality of both establishments that it was decided to give an award to both pubs. Presentations will be made in the coming months. Congratulations to both of them for their continued success.

The Bank Top Brewery Tap continues to be showered with awards. After being voted Branch Cider Pub of the Year during the spring, it went head to head with the winners from other CAMRA Branches in Greater Manchester. Mystery shopper-style cider experts from across the Region visited all the pubs and we are very pleased to say that the Brewery Tap came out as the Regional Cider Pub of the Year 2015. The announcement was made at the recent Cider Festival in Manchester and the certificate was recently presented awarded at the pub. It serves up to 6 changing cellar-cool real ciders and perries from a range of producers.

Town Centre News

The Flying Flute on Bradshawgate now has 2 hand pumps. These were dispensing Thwaites Wainwright and Tetley's Gold in the early weeks. The price of £2.10 a pint is competitive, but £1.55 for a half seems unreasonably expensive by comparison.

The Hen & Chickens have recently been serving Bag-in-Box real ciders.

The Founders Arms on St Georges Rd, for sale since October 2013 is now thought to have been sold subject to contract.

South Bolton News

The Market St Tavern at Stoneclough is the latest pub to be LocAle accredited by the Branch. The venue has 5 handpumps and recent beers have been from Blackedge, Bank Top and Brightside. The licensees are looking to source the best beers from a range of local breweries. LocAle status is awarded to pubs serving beers to a consistently good standard from breweries within 15 miles of Bolton centre



The Freemasons on Market St in Farnworth has the same owners, Amber Taverns, as Hogarths on Churchgate. No surprise then that the pub has been serving some of the excellent beers from Hogarths brewery. On a recent visit Beer Street was on the bar at £2 a pint.

North Bolton

The Bolton News reported that "Plans to create a new orangery at the front of a run-down pub in Astley Bridge have been approved. Developer Nick Howcroft is developing the former Three Pigeons Pub into the Henighans Mediterranean restaurant and bar as well as creating seven apartments in the rear of the building. He has now been granted permission by the council to create an orangery at the front of the Georgian building where drinkers and diners will be able to sit out. Mr Howcroft has previously stated that the Astley Bridge project is now his top priority."

The Flag Inn at Bromley Cross now has a 25p a pint Camra members discount. Usually on the bar are a range of guest beers from breweries such as Phoenix, Hopstar and Moorhouse's.

Deane

The Queen Anne on Junction Rd has recently had Robinsons Beers on the bar. These have included Dizzy Blonde and a rare cask offering, the strong and very wonderful Old Tom.

Horwich and Blackrod

The Bridge in Horwich has now stopped serving real ale due to lack of demand, which is perhaps surprising given that several nearby pubs have many handpumps on the bar. You lose some, you win some.

The nearby Toll Bar Inn on Chorley New Road has just installed a handpump and has begun serving Lancaster Blonde at £1.95 a pint. This is thought to be a first for owners Bravo Inns, at least in their Bolton pubs. Let's hope it's not their last.

The Brewery Bar at Blackedge Brewery has extended its hours to open 4-10.30pm on Thursday and 2-7pm on Sunday as well as the usual Friday and Saturday hours.

Across the road the Bowling Green, reported in the last edition as being closed, is thought now to be being refurbished for reopening later in the autumn.

The Crown is also undergoing major refurbishment, but will only be closed for a short period. Bolton Council have decided that prior approval is not required to demolish the Red Lion in Blackrod. Expectations are that it will be gone very soon. An application for new housing was submitted immediately after the decision.

Other News

It was reported in the last edition that the Tansy Green at Brightmet serves Theakstons cask ales. Since then the pub has unfortunately stopped serving real ale.

Closed Pub News

Plans to convert to flats both the Kings Arms on Chorley Old Road and Smudges on St Georges Road junction with Chorley Old and New Road have received planning approval.

The application to convert the Stags Head on St Helens Road to a Wedding Hall/Conference centre has been refused. The pub closed in 2009.

The former Park Inn Egerton Street in Farnworth, has been approved for conversion to flats. The pub closed in November 2013.

Sparkles Nitespot formerly known as the Anchor, 14/16 Union Buildings (off Bradshawgate near the Alma Inn) is up for sale for £125K. It closed as a pub in 2007 and was empty until 2010. Photographs show it still has the bar installed by Bass in 1987.

The Branch tries its hardest to keep up with the ever-changing pub scene. If you visit a pub, check it out on CAMRA's comprehensive pub database at whatpub.com and let us know if there are any changes. Camra Members can also score the quality of the beer which will help us to decide on Branch pub awards. Alternatively email us at pubs@boltoncamra.org.uk.

STOP PRESS

It has recently been announced that the Dog & Partridge is to be demolished. This is a great shame that we are to lose another of Boltons iconic pubs.



BREWERY HISTORY SOCIETY

On Saturday 18th July Bank Top Brewery hosted the inaugural NW regional Meeting of The Brewery History Society.

The Brewery History Society brings together people with a common interest in the history of brewing. It was founded in 1972 to promote research into all aspects of the brewing industry, to encourage the interchange of information about breweries and brewing, and to collect photographic and other archive information about brewery history. Meetings are held in different parts of the country at which members can get together for a chat and a pint or two and regular visits to breweries and malting's are arranged.



A dozen or so members and friends spent a most enjoyable Saturday sampling some Bank Top ales while being entertained by both Dave from Bank Top and guest speaker Steve Fielding, previous head brewer at Daniel Thwaites.

Dave, in addition to a brief history of Bank Top Brewery, gave an account of the brewing process with a history narrative of changes in flavours and aromas due to environmental and historical methods in farming.

Then Steve Fielding provided some fascinating insights about the history of Thwaites and their earlier competitors Matthew Brown Lion Brewery and Duttons Blackburn Breweries. Along with some entertaining tales from his time at Thwaites and his impressive career. He also very kindly donated a box of the official hard back book charting the Life and Times of Daniel Thwaites Brewery -1807 - 2007 to those attending.

A great day was had by all and hopefully the first of many such meetings. Further information on the Brewing History Society and its events can be found at www.breweryhistory.com

Pub of the Season

CAMRA presented the Summer pub of the Season to the **House Without a Name**, in recognition of their continued efforts to serve excellently kept ales in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. On the right is branch chair Gill Smart presenting the certificate to Jon-Paul Nolan. Well done to all and keep up the good work.



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Tel: 01942 831609

Popular community local

Serving 5-8 real ales including Brakspear Oxford Gold, Jennings Cumberland Ale & Dark Mild, Marstons EPA and Banks Sunbeam + 2 guests from the Marstons range

COST OF A HALF PINT

It seems to be an increasing practice to charge significantly more for half a pint of beer than the proportional cost of half of a pint. It is not uncommon to see offers of say £2 a pint and find that, if you only want a half you end up paying £1.50. This charging policy militates against those that enjoy sampling the fabulous ranges of beers now on offer in pubs. It discourages responsible drinking and if you only want a swift half because you are driving, you can get taken for a ride.

At the recent CAMRA AGM a motion was passed to look into this practice of disproportionate charging. During the debate on the subject, it was realised that there are fixed costs that may make it sensible to charge a little more for a half. However some establishments take this too far and consumers can be misled and short-changed. It is not illegal to charge significantly more for half and because pubs no longer have a legal requirement to display prices there is little way of knowing. To help to formulate a sensible campaign on this issue, members are being asked to supply examples of unreasonable pricing practice, particularly where there are significant discrepancies rather than just a few pence.

If you know of pubs overcharging for halves in Bolton, please let the Branch know. Please supply details of the beers and the prices, including whether these prices were clearly on display prior to purchase. You may wish to discuss the disparity with the licensee to find out the reasons put forward to justify such charging.

Guess the Pub

Two interiors for you this edition. Both are out of town pubs, and both also have a reasonably long history.



Last months answers:

The Finishers and Hogarths

Dates for your diary

October 29th – Branch meeting, 8:15pm at the Hen & Chickens

November 27th – AGM, 8:15pm at the Balmoral. Election of branch officers and nominations are, welcome via website, at October meeting, or on the night.

December 17th – Branch Social, venue TBA

A Campaign

of Two Halves

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I enclose a cheque for _____

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01/15

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well, there's more where that came from!

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dubfire

fully balanced American Amber
hops complimented by a
strong malty base

dubwhite

Boston's first ever Hefeweizen,
notes of banana and cloves

dubESB

strong malt-forward English Bitter
brown but no means boring!

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classic**

traditional Dark Mild,
seasonable and roasty

**dub
summer**

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