

BOLTON BEER BREAKS

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

WINTER 2016

ISSUE No.13



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A CAMRA award for a branch and local favourite

News of Bolton CAMRA Beer Festival

A visit to Boltons newest micro bar

A canal walk with added beer

Find out where pub names originate and much more

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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the latest edition of Beer Breaks. We hope you enjoy the magazine and as ever any comments, positive or otherwise would be very welcome.

The winter pub of the season has been awarded to the **Bob's Smithy Inn**. This has long been a local and branch favourite, and it can only be said that the award is fully deserved. The ale is always on top form and the food in the restaurant area is very good also.

Branch committee membership has changed since the last edition. Our chair, Gill Smart, has decided to stand down. She has represented the branch very well in her time and I personally would like to thank her very much. Our secretary Graham Walsh has taken over the chair, and both of them write a few words overleaf. With Graham moving on, Keith Sowerby has decided to take on the relatively arduous task of branch secretary. We wish him well and hope that all branch members will do their best to support all of the committee.

The 2016 Bolton CAMRA Beer Festival will be held at the Ukrainian Club on Castle Street, over Thursday to Saturday 14th to 16th April. This festival over the last 3 years has built quite a following and the beer list is always good, with a mixture of local favourites and ales from further away, which local drinkers might not generally see in local hostelryes. The festival is staffed entirely by volunteers and we are always looking for help. If you feel that you may be able to provide some of your time to assist, then please visit the website and complete the online application. There is no need for experience in any form as you will be well looked after by some of our more experienced members. There is also the opportunity to sample a couple of beers for free.

In this issue, there is a visit to Bunburys, the latest micro bar to open in Bolton; a walk along the Leeds to Liverpool canal; guess the pub; all the latest pub news (including some bad news about more closures) and much more.

Happy reading

Jez Wadd

Last date for submission of articles or adverts for the next issue is 30th April

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FROM THE RETIRED CHAIR

It was with regret that I was unable to stand again as Chair of Bolton CAMRA but work commitments mean my time is limited. I want to thank all the Committee and branch members who have supported me so well over the past two years. It was a pleasure to do the job. I'm not bowing out of the branch and will still be active. I was elected as Social Secretary at the AGM and hope to have some events lined up over the coming year. I was happy to support Graham Walsh as Chair at the AGM and I am sure he will be a great success and take the Branch forward over the coming months.

Gill Smart

TO THE NEW CHAIR

As new Chair of Bolton CAMRA I wanted to write a few words of welcome. Most of all I wanted to provide my sincere thanks to my predecessor Gill Smart who expertly led the Branch over the past couple of years. I hope that I can do the role proud by carrying on her good work and, of course, all those that came before. Thankfully Gill will still be around leading social activities for the Branch and I hope many of you can take advantage of some of our trips out over the coming months.

This is an exciting time to be a member of CAMRA. Critics say our work is done. Consumers have an unparalleled choice of beers from a record number of breweries. I say that we should celebrate this success and build on it. Real ale is a unique product that requires care, attention, knowledge and experience, not just from the brewer but from the cellar manager. With so many new brewers and with some pubs having rapid turnover of tenants and little training, the ingredients required for a perfect pint of cask ale can often be lacking. And let's not forget the resurgence in real cider and perry. Our small producers turn out some of the world best and these deserve to be showcased in the best possible way. As a huge grass roots consumer group no-one is better placed to influence the quality of the drinks that we pay our hard-earned money for.

Bolton has benefitted from some wonderful new venues over the past couple of years, Bank Top Ale House, Blackedge Brewery Bar and the two Great Ale bars in the town centre for instance. There have also been significant investment in some already great pubs, The Finishers Arms, The Crown in Horwich and The Bridgewater Hotel in Farnworth to name a few recent ones. But pubs are still being lost and many parts of the town lack the community focus that a pub can bring. There is an opportunity for us all to look to make sure that we register pubs that we care about as Assets of Community Value (ACVs) and I urge anyone that cares about their local to do this. It's simple to do this on the CAMRA website or by contacting the Branch.

In many ways it's an easy job to campaign for real ale and cider. Go down to your favourite pub or club or bar or restaurant a bit more often. If they don't have real ale or cider that you like, ask them why. If they do, let them, us, and everyone else know about it.

Cheers

Graham Walsh



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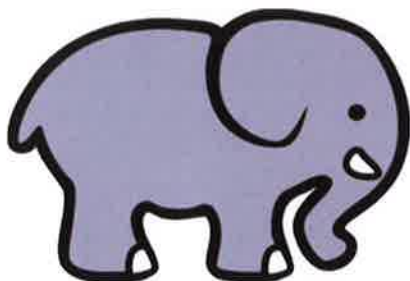
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Friday 15th April

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www.boltonbeerfestival.org.uk



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<http://www.boltonbeerfestival.org.uk/volunteer/>

CIDER AND PERRY NEWS

I took advantage of an October holiday in Herefordshire to visit Butford Organics to present the 2015 Bolton CAMRA Cider/Perry of the Festival certificate to producer Martin Harris for his Blakeney Red Perry. While there, I collected two boxes of cider for the Cider Month event at Great Ale the following week. From Butford Farm it was only a short distance along the road to Oliver's Cider and Perry to pick up another box for Great Ale.

Bolton CAMRA organised two events during October Cider Month. The first was on Saturday 10 October at the Bank Top Brewery Tap, the Bolton Branch and Greater Manchester Regional Cider and Perry Pub of the Year. Caron Turner had put on an interesting range of nine ciders and perries which were available to sample in 1/3 pint glasses. Participants were asked to score the ciders on three criteria; aroma, taste and 'would I buy it again'. When all the scores were in, the favourite cider proved to be Harry Taylor's Thrown Hat from Once Upon a Tree who are based in Putley, Herefordshire. Between 45 and 50 people gathered at Great Ale at the Market on Tuesday 27 October for a Cider



and Cheese Tasting evening. The three ciders I had brought back from Herefordshire were Butford Organics Dabinett (medium dry single variety cider), Butford Organics Medium and Oliver's Making Hay (medium sweet). These were tasted alongside three cheeses from Saddleworth Cheese Company – 'Muldoon's Picnic' crumbly Lancashire, 'How's Your Father' creamy Lancashire and 'Smelly Ha'peth' blue cheese. Anne Simms also provided some interesting accompaniments including artisan bread, crackers and chutneys.

I would be interested to hear feedback from anyone who attended either or both of the events

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Bolton Camra Beer Festival **14th—16th April, Bolton Ukrainian Club. Opening times vary (see ad on previous page)**

March 31st—Branch meeting, **Olde Man & Scythe**, Churchgate. Start 8:15pm

April 28th—Branch meeting, **The Balmoral**, Bradshawgate. Start 8:15pm

26th May—Branch meeting, **Blackedge Brewery Bar**, Horwich. Start 8:15pm

30th June—Branch meeting, **The Millstone**, Crown Street. Start 8:15pm

At time of going to press, the only confirmed venue for the branch meetings above is the March meeting at the Olde Man & Scythe. Please keep an eye on our website, where all branch meeting dates and venues are confirmed

http://bolton.camra.org.uk/category/diary_events/

There be Great Ale in the Market Place!

I just happened to be strolling through the Market Place on a cold mid-November evening, when I chanced upon the Great Ale at the Vaults temporary pop-up bar? Situated in the unit next to New Look, and a much larger space than I'd expected, it was full of customers enjoying real ales from Marble, Brightside, Front Row, and Seven Bro7hers breweries, with all found to be in good condition.

Proprietors, Steve and Anne Simms, had been hoping to locate their bar in its permanent position in the Market Place vaults in December, but as work on the building is running a little behind schedule, Bolton Council had worked with the couple to provide this temporary arrangement in the meantime. Steve said, "We're really excited with the way people have already taken to the bar, and the Council have been pretty good with us."

Guess we'll all have to wait until Spring 2016 when the bar really does enter the vaults, but sampling a few beers and ciders at the, busy, pop-up bar is a great way to pass the time!

<http://whatpub.com/pubs/BOL/406/great-ale-at-the-vaults-bolton>



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On a pleasant late October afternoon I embarked upon what could be described as an extended pub crawl along the Leeds – Liverpool canal.

Following a little research I discovered that disembarking the train at Gathurst would not be worthwhile as the only pubs close to the station do not open until 17:30 on weekdays so instead with a 30 minutes layover time at Wigan there was sufficient time for a swift pint in The Raven on Wallgate. A fine hostelry offering Gwynt Y Ddraig Black Dragon Cider 7.2%, Reedley Hallows Owd Laund Bitter 3.6%, Moorhouses Blond Witch 4.5%, Hophurst Brewery Debonair Stout 4.9%, All-gates Nellie Melba 4.3% and Tetley Cask 3.6%. As I had a long day ahead of me I opted for the Reedley Hollows which cost me £2.65 and was more than acceptable.

After a short train journey I got off at Appley Bridge for The Boathouse a modern looking Pub/Restaurant which has an attractive patio overlooking the canal. I was slightly disappointed to learn that my favourite of the three regular beers Prospects Silver Tally 3.7% was off but Robinsons Dizzy Blonde 3.8% and Thwaites Wainwright were available. I opted for the latter which was very palatable costing me £3.50. After a couple of pubs I could now actually have a walk in a westerly direction along the canal. Some 40 minutes later I arrived at Parbold. I am not entirely "Billy No Mates" but chose to undertake what was a reconnaissance trip for a proposed summer adventure alone so as a guide my walking speed was reasonable without marching. The Windmill is another Restaurant dominated pub which purveyed Shepherd Neame Spitfire 4.2%, Lytham Brewery Berry Blonde 4.1%, Copper Dragon Golden Pippin 3.9%, Wells Bombadier 4.3%, Southport Golden Sands 4.0%. I played a bit safe and the Golden Pippin was ok and cost me £3.40. The Windmill was fine but as an alternative from recent experience I would recommend The Stocks which also does food but has an area with a TV more suitable for drinkers than diners.

Incidentally if you prefer to do rather more drinking and less walking then it is admissible to get off and board the next train, which normally run hourly, provided you are heading in the same direction. For example you could have a couple of pints at The Boathouse and catch the next train to Parbold rather than walk along the towpath.



My next port of call was The Ring O' Bells at Lathom which is another 40 minute stroll – or at least it should have been. A cautionary note – the towpath when heading in a westerly direction out of Wigan is the left bank. It changes at Parbold. After leaving the pub I foolishly set off on the left bank which offers a pathway believing there would soon be an opportunity to cross the canal – there isn't – after 10 minutes I gave up and returned to Parbold and access to the towpath. The Ring of Bells was my favourite pub. A lovely setting selling local beers with a rustic feel to the place. On offer during my visit were Gwynt Y Ddraig Haymaker Cider 6.5%, a local Lager Hart of Preston Lord of the Glen 4.0%, Cottage Brewing Southern Bitter 3.7%, Milton Brewery Pegasus 4.1%, Slaters Queen Bee 4.2%, Thwaites Hardy Tup 3.6%, and my

choice and my favourite tipple of the day Black Edge Cascade 4.0% which was beautiful retailing at £3.00. A couple of locals were drinking the Hardy Tup so out of curiosity I sampled a swift half. It was alright but as expected a bit "thin."

Another 15 minutes or so and I arrived at The Ship also known as The Blood Tub – apparently



there are two explanations for the name both of which are plausible but I will allow you to investigate and make your own mind up. Again right next to the canal a lovely boozier full of character. Beers on offer Lancaster Blonde 4.1%, Sharps Doombar 4.0%, Salopian Gold 3.8%, Cross Bay Hurricane 4.1%, Marstons New World 3.8%, and the house beer Moorhouses Ship Special 4.2%. Becoming somewhat more confident as I was nearing the finishing line I chose the Hurricane which was pretty good. Another cautionary note be careful to return to the Leeds Liverpool canal and not follow the subsidiary branch which takes you to Rufford.

It was around this point it struck me that not only am I heading towards alcoholism but I am becoming an Anorak!

My final destination was the Hop Vine in Burscough Bridge which thankfully is only another big 10 minutes walk along the canal and through the village. The Hop Vine is home to Burscough Brewing

Company and is an excellent establishment. By now it was early Friday evening and the pub was packed but the service and welcome were to be commended. On offer were the full range of Burscough Beers plus Timothy Taylor Landlord 4.3 and something from George Wright but a tad fatigued I didn't gather full data. I did partake of Hop Vine Blonde 4.0 costing £2.70 which was very nice and Hop Vine 3.8% at £2.50 which I liked better.

I then stumbled off for my train home after a thoroughly informative and enjoyable day. This beer research is a dirty job – but somebody has got to do it!

Beer Break Delivery Man

N.B. Prices correct at time of writing



PUB NAMES

Have you ever wondered where pub names originated. Below are two of the more traditional names and their possible origins. This not necessarily the true origin, but may cause some discussion over your pint.

RED LION

James VI of Scotland inherited the throne of England, as the great grand-son of Mary Tudor, and legitimate heir of Elizabeth I, who had died childless in 1603. In order to reinforce his authority to rule, James I of England decreed that all public buildings (including taverns) must display in prominent places, a heraldic red lion.

In earlier times, the crest of the red lion was the badge of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and the fourth son of Edward III. Gaunt was a corruption of the Belgian town of Ghent, where he was born. It is estimated that there are over 500 pubs named the Red Lion

THE WHITE HORSE

The name refers to the standard of the Saxons, was adopted by the kings of Wessex and is the traditional emblem of Kent. A galloping white horse refers specifically to the House of Hanover - see the entry for George above - and dates from the accession of George I in 1714.

It is somewhat strange that whereas there are numerous pub signs named simply The Dog, The Bull or The Swan, the sign of the horse is invariably qualified by a colour, usually black or white.

For more info visit <http://www.innsignsociety.com>

PUB NEWS FEBRUARY 2016

September 2015 was a bad month for pub closures with **Daisy Hill Hotel** closing on the 3rd, it's now being converted to residential use. This was followed on the 16th by the **Founders** on St Georges St and then by the **Dunscar Arms** on the 30th, there is a planning application pending for conversion to flats although the pub itself has a large banner outside indicating a potential restaurant opportunity. January 10th was the last day at Bolton's most infamous pub the **Rock-et**, apparently local souvenir hunters had a field day.

Up in Egerton the **Cross Guns** is currently closed as Enterprise Inns are looking for new a tenant. Also currently closed is the Karaoke Bar on Bradshawgate.

Another of our Bravo Inns pubs the **Shakespeare** in Farnworth has introduced Lancaster Blonde at £1.99 a pint. This was closely followed by the Market on Brackley Street where cask beer has been reintroduced after many years absence, Timothy Taylors Landlord at £2.00 a pint has been one of their guest beers. **The Kings Arms** on Plodder Lane/Mossfield Rd has installed additional handpumps with recent guest beers available from Exmoor, Oakham and Phoenix breweries.

Meanwhile in Horwich the **Bridge** has reintroduced two cask beers, the **Rabbit Saloon** now has a handpump on the bar selling Hophurst beers from Wigan. The Crown is now refurbished and offers a selection of Guest Beers from local breweries as well as those from the Holts range. The **Horwich Park Inn**, also known as the Harvesters near the Macron Stadium, is now serving cask beer, recently Thwaites Wainwright and Sharps Doom Bar.

Bunbury's, a Micro Bar has opened at 397, Chorley Old Road with three cask beers available from a wide range of local breweries as well as a choice of bottled beers. Also opened on Market Street in Westhoughton is **Provenance** a first floor bar restaurant which has been selling a Blackedge beer, usually Pike, although this may not now be the case.

A temporary sister Micro Bar to Great Ale at the Market, called **Great Ale at the Vaults** opened in the Market Place in time for Christmas, but has now closed pending a move downstairs to a permanent location. Opening is expected in mid March.

Other new cask beer outlets are at the **Lever Bridge** on Radcliffe Road where Robinsons Dizzy Blonde is now available, the **Morris Dancers** in Morris Green is now putting the handpumps to good use where Bank Top Flat Cap has replaced the Lees Bitter that was originally available. The takeover of Spirit group by Greene King has meant Greene King IPA is now on sale at their Fayre and Square outlet Cotton Kier at the Valley Leisure Park.

The Red Lion at Blackrod is expected to close and be demolished soon, but it has been noted as selling Reedley Hallows beers, so a good excuse for a last visit. The Bolton News reported that the landlord would be moving across the road to the Conservative Club, so we might get a New Red Lion or a Blue Lion as a replacement?

In Bromley Cross the **Railway Venue** is to change from being a music venue to a food venue, it is not thought the house beer Misty Mountain Hop will survive the pubs transformation, but hopefully other cask beers will replace it. Also in Bromley Cross at the **Courtyard Bar and Drop Inn** at the **Last Drop** have been noted selling a Dunscar Bridge beer.

The council's second refusal for the already completed alterations to retail at the closed **Ante-**



lope in Kearsley was over ruled by the planning inspectorate on appeal by the owner. The closed **Stags Head** on St Helens Road also has a second planning application pending after a previous refusal, whilst in Farnworth the 'old' Rose and Crown opposite the Freemasons had a successful planning application to reopen as a pub/restaurant after retail/office use.

On Blackburn Road the **Brierfield** has been sold and closed on January 6th it is now fenced off. The **Brass Cat** on Churchgate is for sale, but no takers yet. The Bolton News told us that the **Swan** and the **Flying Flute** were up for sale too but failed to mention that this had been the case for at least the last two years. Are the rumours true that Wetherspoons have made a move for the Swan, only time will tell.

After bringing the **Hen & Chickens** back to its former glory, licencees Ian and Sue are moving on to take life easy. We wish them the very best. It is hoped the pub will continue to serve some of the best real ale in the town although there are concerns about its long term future if the Cheadle Square area is redeveloped along with the bus station. The Branch will keep an eye on the plans.



Finally, congratulations go to **Bob's Smithy Inn** on Chorley Old Rd who were voted the Branch Pub of the Season for Winter 2015/16. The award was reward for their wonderful ales, including former Champion Beer of Britain Timothy Taylor's Boltmaker, as well as the excellent service and immaculate surroundings.

Graham Walsh, branch chair is shown presenting the award to Stewart Brookes

EDITORS NOTE

Sharp eyed readers will have noted that one of the pubs on our cover was the cover star for our previous issue. The image then was from a picture library and turned out to be over 5 years old. This was an oversight on my part and I would like to take the opportunity to apologise to Stewart, Lorraine & Jordan. It was in no way a reflection on them or the pub

GUESS THE PUB

Below are two more internal images from two of our out of town, and possibly less visited pubs. Both are different in character and provide very different atmospheres.

The images in the last edition were from the House Without a Name and the Brooklyn. Good luck





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ATTENTION REAL-ALE DRINKERS!!!

If you want to try a genuinely new experience and a different type of watering-hole, then make your way to 397 Chorley Old Road, just above the junction with Ivy Road. The proprietors are Darryl Leech and his wife, Sarah who have given up their jobs as teachers at a local comprehensive school to take up a new career running this recently opened Minibar which they have named **BUNBURY'S** after a character in Oscar Wilde's classic play "The Importance Of Being Earnest".

Darryl admits that to move from a loose idea of selling real ale to the concrete reality of Bunbury's entailed an arduous process which lasted the best part of two years. Darryl and Sarah Had to develop and later redraft a business plan, negotiate and take on a business/career loan and get involved with local government to obtain planning permission for Bunbury's. This latter point Darryl regards as the biggest hurdle to get over and one which was only managed at the second attempt.

As a newcomer to the business, Darryl worked part-time at the Great Ale bar in Bolton Market to gain experience and expertise. When Bunbury's opened, he dealt with local breweries, Black Edge, Brightside, Irwell Works and Rivington. But as well as serving draught beers, Darryl also sees the bottled trade as at least as important; the distributors he uses here are in particular Cave Direct and Vertical Drinks.

Given that Bunbury's is an out of town minibar, it is important to point out the difference between sales of draught beer and sales of bottled beer. After a few weeks of business, it is apparent, says Darryl, that he is selling slightly more bottled beers than draught, perhaps in the ratio of 5.5 to 4.5. In bottled beers Bunbury's has a wide range (which is increasing weekly) both of British and foreign ales. For instance, there are currently beers from France, Belgium, Holland, Germany and other European countries and even from as far away as Brazil.

While talking about beer and what he is trying to promote, Darryl's eyes light up with the fervour of the true evangelist. He is quite passionate about choice and diversity of taste so much so that he currently has at least 85 different bottled beers available and is hopeful that sometime in the future there will be up to 200. His bottle sales are also divided between in-house drinking of bottles and the takeaway trade. About the former he waxed lyrical, arguing that customers have been won over to new taste experiences by trying a bottle at the bar. Indeed, a small group of regulars aged under 40, has, he reckons, started to drink their way through his bottle range. In Bunbury's the small L-shaped bar has three beer engines for real ale and three taps for lager and keg beers. Darryl estimates that of his draught sales approximately 50% is cask, 30% is lager and 20% keg. His broad objective is to have as cask ales one tap generally serving a pale or bitter beer, one serving a darker beer, say mild or porter, and one serving a strong brew of 5.5% ABV and upwards.

He only serves good quality lager; the one available on my visit was Paulaner. When it comes to keg, Darryl says he has introduced a couple of samples of Key Kegs which are, according to the December edition of What's Brewing, classifiable as real ale. He is hoping to hold events there; the first one was a book reading session by Dave Hadfield, a local journalist, which was well attended. But there will also be "meet the brewer promotions" and tasting sessions. To sum up, I would say that Bunbury's is nothing like your average pub and rather different to the other minibars I have visited in the north west and you are strongly recommended to try it.

Telemachus



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(Signature)

Date

This Guarantee should be obtained and retained by the payer

**The Direct Debit
Guarantee**

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debit.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or so otherwise agreed. If you request The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the account and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
 - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to your money back when The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please note early on.

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of accounts.



Bank Top

ALE HOUSE

TEL: 01204 693793

36 CHURCH STREET,
HORWICH, BOLTON.
BL6 6AD



Bank Top BREWERY



Bank Top

BREWERY TAP

TEL: 01204 302837

68-70 BELMONT ROAD,
ASTLEY BRIDGE,
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