

BOLTON BEER BREAKS



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

Summer 2017

Issue 18

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Welcome to Summer 17 - Issue 18

Hello readers,
The branch has been very busy since our last edition.

We have held another remarkably successful beer festival, with many visitors enjoying the event for the first time. There were some new additions to our offerings, including a keg wall, which went down very well indeed. The whole event is run by a small band of dedicated volunteers, and more are always welcome. If you would like to assist in organising next year's festival, details can be found on the branch website.

As part of CAMRA's celebration of Mild Month, a small number of members followed a mild trail from the town centre out to Horwich, details of which can be found inside.

In June our Keith Sowerby organised a "beer walk" in and around Horwich & Rivington, which was very well attended and more information is inside.

The Bank Top Brewery Tap has been awarded the honour of branch Cider pub of the Year, and very well deserved it is, and the Masons Arms in Bromley Cross has been awarded the Summer pub of the Season.

Information regarding up and coming events, meetings and presentations can be found on our website.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Cheers,

Jez Wadd

Last date for submission of articles or adverts for the next issue is October

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Pub & Cider News

PUB NEWS

The removal of the handpump at the **Lever Bridge** in Darcy Lever was only temporary and Bank Top Flat Cap and Old Slapper have been noted since.

In Horwich, **dubTAP** has been renamed **Tap & Cork** where you can expect to find Epicurus beers on the bar amongst others. Further down Lee Lane the **Rabbit Saloon** is being completely refurbished and will be renamed **Tails and Ale** and it is expected to see 4 real ales on the bar when it reopens. Across the road the **V&A** is now being run by the McGinlays and contrary to earlier rumours, 3 real ales remain on the bar. Moving to 174-176 Chorley New Road close to the Winter Hey Lane traffic lights a new Micropub is planned, change of use and licensing have been applied for.

At the Macron stadium what was called the **Pure Bar** in the Bolton Whites Hotel has been renamed the **Whites Bar and Lounge** after being refurbished and handpulled ales are promised which hopefully will be an improvement on the irregular appearance of Sharps Doom Bar in the past.

At the **Blundell Arms** on Chorley Old Road it is believed that a micro brewery to serve the pub is going to be installed in the near future.

In the Market Place vaults the **Eagle and Child** 'pop up' bar and restaurant only lasted two months. The **Brass Cat** on Churchgate was sold by Punch



Taverns last year and now refurbishment including a much needed new layout is almost complete. Five handpumps are already on the bar of what in future will be known as the Churchgate. Elsewhere in Bolton town centre, **McCauleys** has had its licence

revoked after an early morning brawl. Another pub to close its doors at the end of May was the **Starkie Arms** the unbranded Thwaites long term keg pub on Tonge Moor Rd.

On Halliwell Road, Bravo Inns **Lord Raglan** has been noted as selling Lancaster Amber, whilst the nearby **Mop (Weavers Arms)** rarely sells any real ale now, several recent visits have only resulted in promises that never seem to materialise. The **Claremont** was noted as being up for sale on Pugh's Auction in July for £135,000, but was sold prior to the auction.

The **White Horse** on Stitch-mi Lane in Harwood has reopened after refurbishment and is now more orientated towards food, though two or three real ales are on offer too. The previously external decorated windows featuring Chaucer's Canterbury Tales have been transferred to inside the pub, other unique features of the pub have also been retained. At the opposite end of the branch area the **Unity Brook** on Manchester Road in Kearsley now has two handpumps on the bar, one serving Wolverhampton brewed 'Thwaites' Wainwright and the other a guest beer.

The fate of the **Moses Gate** has been determined after the council planners decided that no prior approval was required for it to be demolished. The pub had been in use as a music venue for many years and judging by the bushes and plants growing and with the old Vaux signs still hanging outside, little or no maintenance had been undertaken since Vaux Brewery closed in 1999. It is expected that the site will be reused for housing.

The newly built **Lostock Sports Club** on Chew Moor Lane, Chew Moor has started selling Blackedge beers, Pike was the first available but others will be tried too.

The new pub being built by Greene King on the A6 at the Cutacre site in Over Hulton was nearing completion for a mid-August opening, it will be one

of their Farmhouse Inn brand and will be called the **Pine Tree Farm**.

CIDER AND PERRY NEWS

On Thursday 11th May, the certificate for Branch Cider Pub of the Year was presented to Bank Top Brewery Tap.

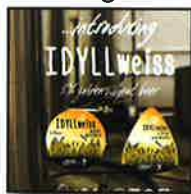
At Bolton CAMRA Beer Festival in April, we had ten ciders and perries from producers in Somerset, Lincolnshire, Gloucestershire, Cheshire, Stockport and Bury. Skidbrooke Cyder Co Vintage Cider was voted Cider/Perry of the Festival, and in mid-June I travelled over to Skidbrooke in North Lincolnshire to present producer Guy Williams with his certificate. The photo was taken in the orchard with a Somerset Redstreak cider apple tree in the background.



Alison Whitaker

Local Brewery Reports

Blackedge Brewery



Blackedge recently forayed into the world of collaboration beers, teaming up with nearby Rivington Brewery in Anderton to create IDYLLweiss a 5% golden wheat beer brewed with German hops. As well as being in familiar casks, some was put into "keykeg" a first for Blackedge but a format well practiced by Rivington. The keykeg allows the beer to undergo secondary fermentation in a disposable bag from which it can be dispensed through a keg font.

Both formats were served on a launch night for the beer held at the Brewery Bar in Horwich, an event which received good coverage on local radio and on social media.

Holy Well Brewery

This nano-brewery, based in Egerton, brew by hand in small batches using an idiosyncratic 400 litre boiler known as "Big Bertha." They recently received the great accolade of winning Beer of the Festival at our Branch Beer Festival in April for their Belmont Midge v3, a 6.4% Double IPA made with citra hops. We were privileged to receive a firkin of this special beer as only a small amount was put into cask. The remainder was bottled and supplemented the brewery's increasingly successful bottle-conditioned range showcased at various local produce markets. Hand-pull lovers can rest easy though as Holy Well will continue to supply cask beer regularly to a small number of local outlets.



A Mild Celebration

May is a month of double celebration for me. My birthday coincides with the Annual Branch Mild Trail when we celebrate Mild Month by visiting pubs which regularly serve a cask-conditioned mild and encouraging other pubs along the route to stock one. Mild is a misunderstood and underrated style of beer, developed from ancient unhopped British ales. The term "mild" applied to different styles of ale and simply meant "fresh", served within 2-3 weeks of being put in the cask. It later became characterised by low bitterness and low strength, making it hugely popular as a working man's thirst-quencher.

This year the Trail had a good turnout and we began at **Great Ale at the Market**, 2016 Branch Pub of the Year. Not being dark in colour, their mild offering, **Potbelly Brewery Ambrosia** took some people by surprise. Although this one was brewed in Kettering, light milds such as these were once common in the Pennine fringes where the soft water was "perfect for creating a sweeter beer."

A short trip on the 125 bus took us to **Bunbury's** on Chorley Old Road, 2017 Branch Pub of the Year. Owner Daryl greeted us not just with a perfect pint of **Beartown Black Bear** but also with a fabulous cake made by friend of the Beer Festival, Julie Ritchie. The addition of German Dunkel beer to the recipe gave the fruit cake a taste of liquorice which married perfectly with the chocolate maltiness of the excellent ruby mild.

Bank Top Brewery Ale House in Horwich is a must visit on these days out. A ten minute bus ride and we were dropped off at its front door. **Bank Top Dark Mild** is always on the bar. Winner of Champion Mild of Britain in 2015, it never disappoints and was certainly a favourite amongst the group.

Next was a new stop for many, the **Tap & Cork** further down the road on Lee Lane. This modern-styled microbar serves real ale mostly from Epicurus Brewery, but there was a special place on the pumps for **Rammy Craft Whimberry Mild**. At 6.1% this is an example of another formerly common beer style, strong mild, brilliantly executed with the addition of real whimberries by brewer Matt Holmes working from his microbrewery in Ramsbottom. I first tried this beer last year and it remains one of my favourites. Its dry fruitiness is dangerously moreish.



We ended our Trail in the **Crown** with **Joseph Holt Mild**. With its subtle malty sweetness and a mere kiss of earthy English hops this beer exemplifies what most people think of as mild. It's a shame that the Crown remains one of the few pubs still serving this excellent beer. Hopefully Holt's won't go the way of Robinsons, a similar local family brewery, who axed their cask mild completely a couple of years ago.

This year turned out to be one of the best mild trails that the Branch has ever run. Each pub had a different variation on the style and each pint was perfectly served. We even matched the flavours with a slice of cake! Thanks to all the pubs who took part.



Graham Walsh

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The First Rivington Beer Walk

The Thirstiest Walk of All

I had been talking with Ben, the brewer at Rivington BrewCo - wouldn't it be really good if you had an occasional brew tap, so that drinkers could combine a country walk with the delights of your beer - get a feeling for the terroir. Ben had been thinking the same, so an idea

was germinated. Ben also suggested that the walk take in local hostelries Spring Cottage and The Rivington (aka The Rivington Bowling Club)



A group within Bolton CAMRA Branch had been working on a published ale trail between Bunbury's on Chorley Old Road and the far pubs of Horwich and it seemed like a natural extension. June 17th looked like the best date, so hope was for fine weather.

Though Rivington has also seemed a Boltonian playground, strictly it is just over the border into the Chorley Badlands, so naturally most of the walkers were ethically bound to take in refreshment from some of the Horwich pubs and clubs first. The mass gathering of some 40 intrepid beer pioneers (many from further afield than our beautiful town and some with children and dogs in tow) was in the

forecourt of The Brewery Bar (Blackedge). I could no longer evade my responsibility and I unleashed my inner dictator, marching the enthusiasts into a blazingly lovely blue yonder.

You have to at least notionally earn your jars of ale through physical effort, and though thoughts of a route march over Rivvy Pike had been long abandoned, we all managed a two mile walk through woods and alongside reservoir, taking in Lord L's Liverpool Castle folly to Spring Cottage.



Spring Cottage occupies a gorgeous woodland setting and was perfect for our first stop, most choosing to drink from Rivington Brewco's arsenal of bottles. Then onto The Rivington, with pints of cask Abbeydale around the bowling green, and adjacent to the blue blue reservoir; in my eyes a honorary lake. A lot of group happiness in the sunshine there.

Final stop, just two minutes further, was Rivington Brew Co's The Tap Beneath the Trees at Home Farm - the bar under an awning with plenty of constructed seating and accompanying sausage and Pimms vans. On tap were three hand pumped beers - Sunset Strip, Chillen and Rye 'n' Gosling and a wall with five keykeg-conditioned beers. Many tried the completely opaque Never Knew Fog Like It, which was not found wanting.



A success then, with general demand for a repeat walk, though no one can guarantee a repeat of the lovely weather.



Ben and Mike are opening their Tap Beneath the Trees for a second time during the August Bank Holiday Weekend-Saturday to Sunday August 26th - 27th from 2pm. This time growlers (beer carryouts) can be purchased or filled for home consumption. Camping is also available on site; contact Home Farm or Rivvy Brewery for details.

Keith Sowerby



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Beer in Mallorca

We certainly weren't looking for sea, sun and sangria when we went to Mallorca. The main reason for our visit was to hunt out some traditional dance customs we've wanted to see for years. A bonus was the discovery of a number of small artisan breweries on the island.



We had a good start as our arrival in Palma coincided with 'Beer Palma', a two-week long event starting at the end of April. It was held in the Parc de la Mer which is by the old city wall below Palma Cathedral. There were lots of small stalls selling beer or food. Over 100 beers were available, including some from other parts of Europe and beyond. However, we concentrated on the local brews. The beers were both on draught and in bottles, the latter mainly bottle-conditioned.

We had: Blat (4.5%), a Belgian-style wheat beer and Porter (5.5%), both from Beer Lovers brewery in Alcúdia; Ocre (4.9%), a malty, pale brown beer from Foresteria brewery in Es Molinar; Boscana Cervesa Evolutiva Cream Ale (4.5%) brewed at Sullerica Cervesa Artesana by Gypsy Brewers; Rubia Bohemia (4.9%), a Pilsner style beer from Nau brewery; Cor de Cirera (6.9%), a barrel-aged cherry sour ale from Cas Cerveser in Galilea.



So, suitably refreshed, we set off for Sóller, optimistic that other artisanal beers would be easy to find. However, despite the fact that Sóller is home to Sullerica Cervesa Artesana, anything apart from Estrella (Damm or Galicia) and San Miguel was conspicuous by its absence. Later in the holiday, we talked to Sebastian, the brewer from Cas Cerveser, at his stall at a mediaeval fair in Capdepera. He told us that it has been very difficult for artisan breweries to find outlets for their beers. Bars that do take them tend to hide the bottles away in fridges so that no one knows they are available. We noticed that many bars had no drinks list, and those that did mention alcohol on their menus didn't include beer. The only way to find out what's available is to ask. By the way, Cas Cerveser's brewkit was supplied by David Porter.

Anyway, with a bit of perseverance it was possible to find some more interesting beer, although a lot of the time we ended up buying bottles to drink in our accommodation. The Agromart chain of farm shops had a good selection, as did some specialist drinks shops and delicatessens such as Es Raco de Ronda in Alcúdia. As for bars, we found some Beer Lovers beers in Sa Birreria in Pollensa, though we had to ask as there was no mention of them on their chalk board.

Once we were back in Palma, artisanal beer was much easier to find. At Bar S'UC the beers of the week were Rossa (4.5%) and Negre (5.3%) from Cervesa des Pla in Algaida. The excellent Café Barroco had a good selection. We tried: Blats (5.2%), a wheat beer by Talaiòtika in Porreres; La Blanche (6%), a Belgian-style wheat beer flavoured with coriander and jasmine by Toutatis in Sencelles; Valenta (4.3%), an IPA flavoured with rose petals by Sullerica Cervesa Artesana; Blat (5%) a wheat beer by Banyarriquer in Algaida.

So, the beer is there if you are willing to do a bit of hunting. Bottled beers are most likely to be bottle-conditioned, and the draught beers unfiltered and unpasteurised – nothing like the cold fizzy industrial alternative. Like anywhere else, the quality of the beer was variable, but we found that those from Beer Lovers and Cas Cerveser were consistently good. Our overall favourites were Beer Lovers Porter and Cas Cerveser Cor de Cirera.

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www.cerveza-nau.com
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Alison Whitaker

The Elephant in the Room

This wasn't here last year. Rising behind the cider pumps in the 2017 Bolton CAMRA Beer Festival was a line of keg taps accompanied by pressure gauges. Surely this wasn't an actual CAMRA Festival you walked into?



As a national organisation CAMRA now approves a beer packaging known as "Keykeg" or "Keycask", providing the contents are a living beer which has usually undergone a secondary fermentation within a large bag within a rigid frame. On no accounts has external CO₂ to be introduced to the beer directly and within CAMRA Festivals external air pressure is used to squeeze the beer out like toothpaste from a tube should internal fizz be lacking.

At the Festival launch the vast majority of attendees avoided the station, with usually just ardent cider drinkers approaching. It was really only on that Thursday though that one participant approached voicing his total opposition to the "keg wall" with most comments over the course of the festival being humorously about "evil keg filth".

There is a collective memory of CAMRA being set up as a response to BIGBREW (in those days - the Big Six) turning swathes of the country into beer deserts where choice was limited to denatured, cheaply made fizzy products more suited to the drains than the thirsty gullet. Difficult to reconcile that to products of great quality served with a variant dispense.

Well many of you did gradually drift over to try the keykeg beers and many of you enjoyed, although it was the younger crowd on Saturday who really attacked the fonts. A new generation used to beer happenings and the beer caves of Manchester will decide for themselves, as did the CAMRA pioneers four decades ago.

A Visit to the First National Woodfest in Castleford

I've wanted to go to the Junction pub in Castleford ever since finding out that most of the beers are served from wooden barrels. The pub has its own set of wooden barrels that they send to breweries to be filled. On Friday 7th July, Alison and I visited Castleford, but we walked straight past the Junction to the building next door but one. This was an ex-pub called the Horse & Jockey which is slowly being restored as a pub-cum-brewery by the owners of the Junction. But why pass the Junction and visit a closed pub? Well, for this weekend only, it was the venue of the first ever National Woodfest put together by the Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood (SPBW). You may not have come across SPBW, but they predate CAMRA by a number of years.



They were formed in 1963 when most cask beer was still being served from wooden barrels. Although they've never been a large society, they have hung on, and after all these years are coming back into their own as many of the new 'craft' breweries are experimenting with the effect of wooden barrels for storing (and sometimes ageing) their beers. So, what of the festival? We thought it was wonderful. There were over 55 beers served from the wood, many on gravity. There was a good proportion of stouts and porters, many of them over 5%. The beers seemed to have a much greater depth of flavour than normal, but whether this was due to the use of wooden barrels is hard to quantify. It would be interesting to compare the same beer served from the wood and from a normal cask. The pricing structure of Woodfest was more like some

Dutch festivals we have visited. A token system was used with one token buying half a pint of the beers up to 5% or a third of a pint of the beers over 5%.



There were several beers from Irish breweries, particularly from Northern Ireland, none of which I had encountered before. Apparently Northern Ireland is a burgeoning 'beers from the wood' country. Although SPBW is a much smaller organisation than CAMRA, it was good to see that 16 members of the Chesapeake Bay branch had come over from America especially for the event. Finally, the forthcoming brewery attached to the pub (Lagentium) is one to keep an eye out for. Apparently they will have the first wooden mash tun to be installed in this country for over 100 years. All in all, an excellent day out. As an afterthought, perhaps the Bolton CAMRA beer festival in 2018 could consider an experiment by getting three versions of the same beer – one served from a standard cask, one served from the wood and one served from KeyKeg – just an idea!

Peter Bearon



Guess The Pub

Two more for you, one in town and the other on the outskirts.

Last edition answers are the Stopes Tavern in Little Lever & the White Horse in Harwood



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