

BOLTON BEER BREAKS



Campaign
for
Real Ale

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

Spring 2020

Issue 24

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Also in this Issue

Bolton CAMRA Socials, Pub & Cider News, The near demise of Bolton Wanderers, Blackedge Brewery, Beer Travels in Belgium & The Netherlands with a little side trip into France, Beer Scoring Results 2019 & Membership Form

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Bolton CAMRA Socials

Bolton CAMRA branch have monthly socials where we visit nearby towns to sample real ale in a few of the pubs. In the past year the trips have included Clitheroe, Wigan, Chorley, Manchester, Liverpool, Buxton plus the annual Rivi Beer Walk, May mild trail and the October Cider trail. The Rvi beer walk is now the last event in the Bolton Beer and Cider Week in June.

We are a small group, generally around eight to ten of us with a love of real ale and cider. We always use public transport and generally no further than one hours journey away. We always start off with a plan of the pubs to be visited but if a pub has several interesting beers, we will stay for more than one beer, which means we don't always get to all the pubs on the list.

The aim of our socials is good beer, good company and good conversation. We discuss everything and anything but don't fall out over any of the topics despite different

viewpoints. Anything contentious we just agree to disagree. It is, after all, about the beer.

There are many new micropubs around the area and also a great many older established pubs that have a good selection of beers, very well served.

In 2020 we are hoping to travel a bit further afield and include an overnight stay for those who wish to. Suggestions have included Sheffield, Leeds and Wolverhampton. We are always open to new suggestions.

Details of all the branch socials can be found on our website; www.bolton.camra.org.uk for anyone thinking of joining us on one of our socials. For more information contact Gill Smart, social secretary at:

social@bolton.camra.org.uk

Last date for submission of articles or adverts for the next issue is April 2020

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<http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/pages/Tradingstandardsadvice.aspx>



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Latest News

PUB NEWS

In Horwich the **Bridge** reopened in early November and it has been transformed from the pub Enterprise Inns closed and sold a year earlier. The function room on the first floor has been restored, plus on the top floor 9 En Suite bedrooms are available. A selection of food is now available on a daily basis too and there are up to 4 cask beers on the bar, though the choice is less than inspiring, given what is available in many of the other local pubs. Greene King IPA and Abbot and Moorhouse's White Witch, also available is Lancashire Gold which fails to mention who brews it both on the pumpclip and cask label too.

The **Blackedge Brewery Tap** on Market Street Westhoughton opened in late September with seven of their wide selection of real ales on handpump plus others on the keg taps. There is also a selection of six or seven ciders available as well.

In Morris Green the **Morris Dancers** no longer sells Holts Bitter, elsewhere the recently opened **Little Vic** on Chorley New Road in Horwich no longer sells real ale either, perhaps the real ale drinkers were a bit put off by the bright pink spotlights round the bar?

It seems that Punch Taverns have changed their minds about selling the **Hen & Chickens** so the activation of the ACV for community bids was not required.

The planning application to build new houses behind **Roka** on Bradshaw Brow was refused by the council planning because of the awkward access to the properties, though this means the original plan with access through the traffic lighted pub car park is still OK, but needs to be actioned quickly otherwise the three year planning validity will expire.

The council planners also refused permission for the now closed **Church Hotel** in Kearsley to be demolished and rebuilt as 20 flats rather than the retention of the pub building to downstairs offices as originally approved by the planners. Currently with the planners

are plans to partially demolish the **Albion** on Moor Lane to make way for yet three more takeaways and 16 flats. The application also mentions that the new frontage will blend in with the adjacent properties, looking at these one would imagine this would be the last thing anyone would want to do intentionally.

The **Kings Arms** in Farnworth has been up for sale as a going concern for over a year now, but now a speculative planning permission has been made to convert the pub to supported living accommodation, this did not go down well with the local residents. It would also wipe out a significant part of the real ale choice in Farnworth, which is already very poor compared to the rest of Bolton Metro. Both the **Shakespeare** and the **Black Horse** seem to have joined the ranks of the non real ale outlets recently.

Another Planning application has been for a retail outlet at 116/118 Bradshawgate to become a Cafe during the day and a Bar during the evening and early hours similar to the **Sparkles bar** on Union Buildings.

Also there is a restaurant and bar element to the new hotel in the old magistrates court, this was approved in double quick time by the council.

The **Alma** has been sold by Marston's to Admiral Taverns as part of a 137 pub disposal.



Bravo Inns have sold out to Hawthorn Leisure who is one of the New River Retail operating brands. Current thinking is that Bravo Inns will continue under that name. The pubs in Bolton are the **Lamb Inn**, Astley Bridge, **Lord Raglan**, Halliwell Road, **Royal Hotel**, Vernon Street, **Gilnow**, Deane Road, **Shakespeare**, Glynne Street, Farnworth and **Beeley's** in Horwich. (Though for the latter Bravo still think it is called the **Toll Bar** and it's in Chorley, which surprisingly is better than it used to be as they had it in **Maryport** in Cumbria on their old website pub map)

On the A6, the **Brinsop** was externally refurbished not long ago, though they seemed to forget having any signs to attract the customers in, it appears on the one small sign that it is now called 'The One' unfortunately it seems to be the one that closed in mid November. It has been up for sale since July 2015 (initially confidentially for £1.8 million), now the current listed price is a mere £1.6 million. Rumour Denial a certain well known in the vicinity, Mr Anderson, has never been interested in buying it, Phew!

CIDER AND PERRY NEWS

Judging of pubs for Bolton Branch Cider/Perry Pub of the Year is currently underway and the winner will be announced at the Branch Meeting on Thursday 5 March. This year, in addition to voting at the meeting, the pubs on the short list are being assessed according to the criteria used for the Greater Manchester regional competition. The rankings from both will be combined to decide the winning pub.

There were awards for two Greater Manchester cider and perry producers at the North of England Cider and Perry Competition which was held at Manchester Beer and Cider Festival. **Red Bank Cider** came second in the cider category with **Autumn Orchard Cider** and third in the perry category with Crackin' Pear. **Dunham Press** took gold in the perry competition with Peterloo Perry and previous Bolton CAMRA Beer Festival Award Winner **Udders Orchard** won silver for Addle Croft Perry.

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The near demise of Bolton Wanderers



Before penning this article I have purposely waited until new owners are finally in place at the University of Bolton stadium. I cannot imagine too many readers would not have been aware of the recent financial problems at Bolton

Sadly long gone are the days when you could take your pint on to the terraces though this is allowed at Rugby and Cricket among other sporting events. It seems football supporters cannot be trusted to behave themselves though in my experience 99% are genuinely nice law abiding folk. Perhaps guilty of a little choice language now and again but nothing worse. So the pre-match and usually post-match pint in a local hostelry is absolutely essential to the quality of the match day experience as the refreshments available within stadia are always well over-priced and invariably of extremely poor quality.

Wanderers including those who have no interest whatsoever in football.

To witness the collapse of the club from regular top ten finishers in the Premier League just over a decade ago to being minutes away from folding on more than one occasion has been agonising.

So you might ask has this got to do with beer? Well the two are intertwined. Beer and football go together "like a horse and carriage" I cannot recall the last time I attended a match without some level of anaesthetic in my veins.

Home games are easy, me and the missus plus friends know where to go for a decent pint beforehand. Discerning followers of other clubs will also show up having been alerted to the better local watering holes by The Good Beer Guide and it is nice to share stories, be they football related or otherwise, with like-minded real ale connoisseurs.



Away games, though we don't attend too many, are a real adventure. We travel by train arriving around midday which facilitates a mini pub crawl which we will have plotted beforehand. Those who do follow football and Wanderers in particular will be aware that this is definitely the highlight of the day, more so if it a new venue, as we nearly always get beaten. The excitement and anticipation soon dissolves once you are three down after 25 minutes! In recent years we have visited many less than exotic places including Hull, Nottingham, Birmingham, Scunthorpe and Chesterfield amongst others always having an excellent day out despite the football.

If Wanderers had been forced into liquidation - and it was very close this is what I would have missed the most. I enjoy visiting other towns and cities and sampling the Cask Ale on offer but if there wasn't a football match to attend I would not bother. I could not conceivably offer my allegiance to another club - it would be like drinking Satan's Urine (John Smith's).

The money available to clubs in the Premier League is obscene and my heart goes out to our good friends at Bury have been expelled from the Football League for a sum which amounts to around 6 weeks pay for Alexis Sanchez who prior to his loan deal to Italy did no more than sit on the Substitutes bench at Manchester United. Bolton survived - just - but the vast inequality in the gravy train means other clubs will follow Bury to the wall sadly with the subsequent loss of jobs and impact on the local communities most markedly the Licensing Trade. Dependent upon location pubs across the nation rely heavily on revenue generated on match days by fans who like myself simply need the anaesthetic.

Ian Brown



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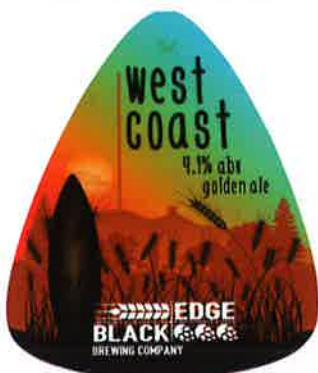
DUBLIN' UP
IRISH STOUT
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Blackedge Brewery



Blackedge Brewery sealed victory once again in Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) North West Beer Awards. West Coast, their 4.1% golden ale laden with punchy hops from the Pacific West Coast of America, took top spot in the cask category for the second year in a row. The prestigious competition is held in October



prior to the Bolton Beer Festival at the University of Bolton Stadium. Head Brewer Wayne Roper said he was "absolutely overwhelmed" to win the trophy for the second year. Look out for the beer (and the trophy) at the Brewery Bar in

Horwich or the Brewery Tap in Westhoughton.

Blackedge bucked the trend for pale hoppy beers with their new seasonal, appropriately called Autumn. It is a rich, classic 4.2% ruby mild made with UK hops Bullion and Bramling Cross.

Wayne and Shaun, the founders of Blackedge, have been putting their creativity to good use. Throughout the winter months they have been experimenting with hops such as Mandarin and Mosaic to develop a series of one-off beers called Directors Sessions. Drinkers have been able to provide instant feedback in both of the brewery's outlets and the beers may inspire some future brews.

Manchester Beer and Cider Festival held in January heralded a first for the brewery. Their 4.6% Dark Rum porter was available in a wooden cask. This traditional method of storing beers allows them to develop new and interesting flavours, in this case the wood mellowing the sweetness of the rum. Festival goers drank the lot in two days!

The Brewery have plans for expansion over the coming months. Alterations will be made to the foyer at the Brewery Bar to allow space for the introduction of some new brewing vessels. This will increase brewing capacity, allowing production of even more award-winning ales!



AWARD WINNING BEERS....AGAIN

7



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Beer Travels in Belgium & The Netherlands with a little side trip into France

This summer we (the wife and I) went on a little road trip across Belgium & Holland we will try to give you a bit of a flavour about the places we visited, some of the bars and some of the beers we sampled.

BELGIUM:

1. BRUGES

This was probably the most well known of all the places we visited. Expect lots of tourists, frites and mayonnaise, as well as some wonderful bars and strong Belgian beers.



Bar De Garre

Your first task is to find this one, down what looks like a doorway on the street between the two main squares. This is our favourite bar in Bruges it has a massive list of different beers and the bar staff are fluent in multiple languages including English. Try the house beer a beautiful amber beer but, beware it's strong.



't Brugs Beertje (The Little Bruges Bear)

This beer bar is world famous. People come from all around the globe to try beers from the extensive list (all served in the correct glass of course). On the night we visited we chatted to locals, a guy from Chicago, a couple from Panama and two couples from London. This is the one bar you must visit when in Bruges.



Yesterday's World

This is a very odd place to drink. A cross between a junk/ antique shop and a bar. They have a very good beer list which includes several local beers. We only discovered this bar this trip and the fact that it was just around the corner from our hotel helped. The lady behind the bar was very helpful and knowledgeable.

There are many other good bars in Bruges and a couple of breweries you can visit and sample the beers. There is now a bar in Historium on The Maarkt called the Duvelorium, it's the only place we have ever seen Duvel on tap. If you want to do the touristy things take a canal tour, visit the main squares, the Basilica of The Holy Blood and for some peace and quiet the Begijnhof.

2. NAMUR

We were not impressed at all by Namur. OK it didn't help that when we got there that it was raining so hard that you got wet twice, once from above and the second time from the rebound off the pavement. What



we couldn't understand was why many of the bars were closed on Saturday and Sunday nights. We never found a bar that we would recommend. The bar in the Ibis hotel had as good a beer selection as any of the few open bars we found. We did manage to sample a local beer Houppé by the local brewer L'Échasse in Namur a hoppy & bitter Belgium Ale with 7.5% ABV.

3. MECHELEN

We discovered Mechelen a few years ago, a small city near Antwerp with a thirteenth century cathedral, St Rumbold's which is well worth a visit. There are a couple of interesting squares with some interesting architecture and of course many excellent bars.



This is perhaps our favourite hotel in Europe, well how many hotels do you know that have a brewery attached? They have a bar that



*Golden Carolus Hotel at the
Het Anker Brewery*

serves their full range of beers on tap. I must confess that we never moved out of here all night. My personal favourite was the Triple a golden 9% ABV ale. Although I have to say we really enjoyed all their beers. They also have a restaurant attached (upstairs) or you can order off the same menu in the downstairs bar. There is also a shop so if you are in your car you can stock up for when you get home.

THE NETHERLANDS:

Just like Belgium you will find lots of bars with large beer lists although most of the beers listed will be Belgian. There are lots of small craft Dutch breweries making some very tasty beers and lots of bars stock them. It's not always obvious from the beer menus which are Dutch and which are Belgian, so you need to ask. Also don't assume that you will only find them in specialist beer bars our hotel bar in Tilburg had a couple of beers from a small local micro-brewery.

1. MAASTRICHT

Most Brits have only heard of Maastricht because of the Maastricht treaty. It's a lovely city with two big squares



*Bar Oak 34 and other bars
around the Markt.*

but most of them had a good if limited selection of Dutch beers from some of the smaller breweries like the refreshing IPA Bird of Prey from the craft brewery Uiltje in Haarlem near Amsterdam and a 6.2% ABV Blood Orange IPA from the Brouwerij De Molen located in Bodegraven.

both lined with lots of bars, the river Maas runs through the city and you can take boat trips on it.

You won't find any of these bars in any beer guide



Café 't Pothuiske

when I visited and I must admit I did enjoy a pint of Gulpener pils (nothing like the lager you get in the UK). There are lots of other beer bars in Maastricht the one with the largest list we found was Café de Gouverneur, just around the corner from the Markt once again nearly all Belgian beers.

2. TILBURG.



Café 't Buitenbeentje

across the road from the main square). This is a friendly pretty little town and although we didn't see much of it, we will be back.

A bar with a large beer list the menu was very helpful as it told you which beers were Belgian, and which were Dutch. I had a very nice Dutch Trappiest beer (Triple 8% ABV) from the La Trappe Brewery near Eindhoven.

Our surprise of the night was when we returned to our hotel to find that they had on a local beer, Puur Blond brewed specially for the Tilburg Grand Café Puur. A citrus flavoured beer with sweet and bitter undertones.



3. EINDHOVEN

Very much a modern city. If you are into art the Van Abbe Museum of modern art is well worth a visit. The main area for bars is around the Markt with its statue of Frits Philips. The Philips organization is of course synonymous with Eindhoven.



Grand Café Central

This is a bustling bar in the Grand Café style with lots of outside seating available. It has an extensive beer menu and



helpfully differentiates between the Belgian and Dutch beers; they even had their own beer on tap although I never found out who brewed it for them.

4. NIJMEGEN

This is a city where the ancient meets the modern. Beautiful old squares medieval gothic buildings, the Het Valkhof museum and modern shopping streets. There are lots of bars and many sell an excellent beer selection.



Café Opera Koningstraat



This was probably the best bar we found in Nijmegen. It's on a square with several other bars all of which do food. In fact, we had dinner on the square both nights we were

there. The café Opera had a wide and varied beer list with a number of Dutch beers. Another beer bar well worth a visit is Café Camelot near the Waag.

5. UTRECHT



Café Oliver

This small city was probably the highlight of the whole tour. Visit the Dom the vast Medieval Gothic Cathedral and

stroll along the canal. Unfortunately, during our visit, the Dom Tower was covered in scaffolding.



Once again, many bars with lots of different beers even the most unlikely looking bars where the vast majority of customers are drinking Heineken or wine will have a number of different Dutch and Belgian beers.



The outstanding beer bar in Utrecht it specialises in Belgian beers but, it does have Dutch beers available. They even had a

Dutch house beer on tap. You could spend many days in here and not get through the extensive beer list.

FRANCE LILLE

Whenever we are anywhere near Lille we can't resist visiting. There is lots to see; beautiful squares, two art museums and a fully automated driverless metro. For the shoppers there is the vast Euralille.

There are also lots of bars most sell a good range of Belgium beers. A good area for bars is near the railway station. Our favourites are the Les 3 Brasseurs and the Taverne Flamande.

3 BRASSEURS



Yes, we know it's a chain but, they do brew their own beer on the premises. The beers include a Blond, an Amber,

a Brown ale, an IPA and various special brews. There is a terrace outside and a large amount of seating inside. They do food all day and will provide you with a menu in English, just ask.

Beer Scoring Results 2019

CAMRA members in Bolton, like other members nationwide can 'score' the quality of the real ales that they drink in pubs. This is done using a members only section of the particular pubs WhatPub entry (<https://whatpub.com/>).

Last year 3,962 scores were recorded in Bolton Metro, this included 35 members of the local Bolton Branch, plus 96 other members from 47 branches from all over the country.

Scoring was made in 133 Real Ale stocking pubs and clubs in the Bolton Metro area, the result was that 1,248 different real ales were scored from 316 different breweries. It is no doubt that many more would have been available on the bar during the year, but not when one of our members was there to score them.

Top three most scored breweries were probably not surprising given their brewery presence and availability in the branch are Bank Top, Northern Monkey and Blackedge.

The most scored pubs were all in Bolton Town Centre, Spinning Mule, Northern Monkey Bar, One for the Road and Great Ale at the Vaults.

As for the real ales, the most scored were Bank Top Flat Cap, Joseph Holt Bitter, Bank Top Pavilion and Bank Top Dark Mild.

Whilst the Breweries and Beers are scored from Drop down lists, they can be manually keyed in, this can result in some misspelt entries from a member who may not be drinking their first half of the day. Most interesting in 2019 was the manual keying of Brewery Fallopien instead of Salopian, the beer was their Lemon Dream, perhaps just as well it wasn't their beer called Entire Butt!

All CAMRA members can score the beers that they drink, it provides a useful record to help you recollect which pubs and their real ales you have drunk and when, plus it provides the local branch with useful information about their pubs which is very much needed in the remoter parts which you might be visiting.



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