# BEER BREAKS

Magazine of the Bolton Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale

Issue 3 | March - May 2013

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### HOUSE WITHOUT A NAME



PUB OF THE SEASON The No Name is the 2012 Winter Winner

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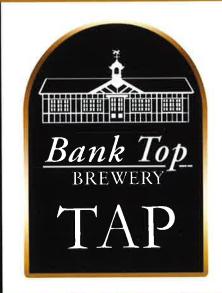
Bolton CAMRA Branch Pub of the Year 2012

# Bolton CAMRA Pub of the Year 2011

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## The House Without A Name

# Winter Pub of the Season 2012

The House Without a Name is a small publin the village of Bradshaw, to the north of Bolton. It is the only pub with that name in the entire country, and the origins of its name are a little unclear. In 1832 two cottages were knocked together to form a brew house and the publican at the time needed a license. At the licensing hearing the judge asked him what the name would be aid whether too drunk or just forgetful, he said he didn't have a name. From then onwards it became the House without a Name, although to those in the area it is known universally as The No Name.

The pub changed hands when Jon & Beth Nolan took over in March 2012, with plans to improve the pub, having spent 12 years in the trade in Bolton Centre. When they were granted the lease in August they started a full refurbishment programme reopening late September. The refurbishment went down well with locals and newcomers alike, with the general consensus being that the refurbishment was very well done and little of the original character was lost.

Jon said that the refurbishment increased the customer base and in response started theme nights throughout the week, with live music Sunday & Thursday, a quiz night Monday and a poker league on Tuesday. There are unobtrusive televisions which regularly show major sports events, particularly football. A wine list is available, which Jon has specified with knowledge gained from his time in the industry and there is a small selection of food always available.

Throughout all of the changes, one thing has remained consistent - the quality of the ales on offer is excellent. There are six hand pumps on the bar



Cliff Burgess presents Jon and Beth with the certificate

and these are rotated regularly. Three of the pumps are tied to Punch Taverns, whereas the other three are left to the choice of Jon & Beth. Robinsons Unicorn is generally on, there was a good variety of Christmas ales available and a short while ago, there was even (whisper it!) a cask lager available. The Lancaster 1842 Pilsner went down very well!

The dearth of pubs like the No Name is a loss to many communities and Jon & Beth have worked hard to create a proper pub for the Bradshaw area. Traditional beams, flag flooring, the restored open fire giving the house a warm, cosy atmosphere and welcome along with the good range of well kept ales, all meant that CAMRA members had no hesitation in awarding the No Name the Winter pub of the Season 2012.

www.housewithoutaname.co.uk @HouseWithNoName





Ales on the bar on presentation night

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### Chairman's Letter

#### Hello All!

elcome to our first hard copy of Bolton Beer Breaks. It's looking like 2013 is going to be a very important and exciting one for our branch, what with our new magazine and the rebirth of



THE BOLTON CAMRA BEER FESTIVAL in April, its all hands to the pumps for our small team of active members. The branch has grown to 586 members as of January 15th, a yearly increase of 43% which is absolutely amazing, but with only a dozen or so active members it makes the organising of the magazine and beer festival hard work for the 3% who get involved. Yes we need all the help we can get from all our branch members and friends from other branches to deliver a quality beer festival.

Congratulations go to all our award winners this year the 2012 pub of the year The Victoria and Albert and our seasonal winners The Kings Arms, The Brewery Tap, The Bowling Green and The House Without A Name, 5 quality houses.

Finally, if you are a CAMRA member and would like to volunteer to help at the beer festival, please contact our staffing officer Gill Smart, via the website and register now.

Cheers,

Cliff Burgess
Bolton Branch Chairman

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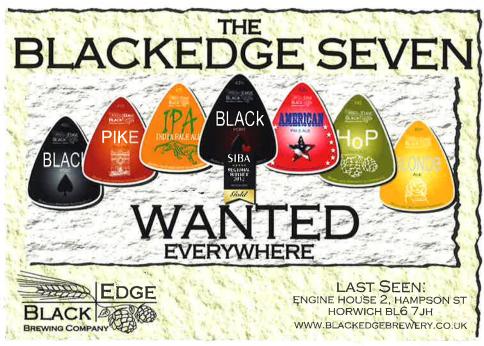
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# Blackedge Brewery

### A brief history

Blackedge Brewery was established in 2011 and is based in Horwich, near Bolton in an old Engine House of a textile company. The 4 barrel brewery was started by 2 friends, Wayne Roper and Shaun Reynolds and only recently started to operate on a full time basis having previously been more of a weekend set up. The brewery equipment itself is very traditional with no real technology so the ale brewed is truly hand crafted. The brewers source only natural ingredients and use no extracts or pellets and the yeasts used are specific to the beer type they produce.

The brewery has had a successful start and having picked up a local Gold award at the Edgworth beer festival in 2011, their 'Speciality Beer', Black Port, more recently won the Regional Gold Award at the SIBA North Beer Festival in Manchester in October 2012.

There is a planned expansion of the brewery early in 2013 which involves a move to a larger unit on the same site and investment in additional equipment to meet the increasing demand.

Having originally brewed just 2 beers, HoP pale ale and Pike pale ale, Blackedge now produce a core range of 7 permanent beers and a range of occasional monthly specials based on particular hops from around the globe named as 'World Hop Series' beers:

HoP Pale Ale 3.8% (OG 1.040) - Generously hopped with Challenger & first Gold to give a clean, dry, refreshing & hoppy citrus, floral flavoured session beer.

Pike Pale Ale 4.0% (OG 1.041) - Generous additions of Challenger, Cascade & Pioneer hops. A pale ale with plenty of sweet citrus hop aroma.

Blonde Ale 4.5% (OG 1.046) - Full flavoured, full bodied blonde ale, well hopped to give clean, crisp fruit like flavour and aroma.









American Pale Ale 4.2% (OG 1.044) - A light and hoppy beer made using US Columbus, Willamette, Amarillo, Cascade and Summit hops. Intense citrus aromas.

IPA 4.7% (OG 1.047) - Generously hopped with US Willamette, Cascade, Columbus, Summit & Amarillo hops. Full bodied, full flavoured and well balanced, hoppy and intensely citrus with grapefruit aroma.

Black Stout 4.0% (OG 1.045) - A velvety stout with intense roasted barley flavours and rich undertones of chocolate and coffee with liquorice finish.

Black Port Stout Porter 4.9% (OG 1.045) -Deliciously complex, roasted coffee and chocolate flavours with a hint of liquorice and sweet port finish.

www.blackedgebrewery.co.uk



### Campaign Corner

#### PubCos

A round 50% of pubs in the UK are owned by Pub Companies, property companies who lease pubs out to tenants to run as their own business. Around two-thirds of pubs that close are tied to these Pub Companies.

PubCos, as they are colloquially known, usually impose a Beer Tie so that tenants are contractually obliged to buy their beer only from a limited list provided by the Pubco. The tied model is one that has served some pubs well over many years and can providing security for pubs and breweries. But many larger PubCos have abused it. The average cost of a keg of draught beer purchased through a PubCo is 50% more than one bought on the open market. These prices are inevitably passed on to the customer. Alongside this, PubCo licensees generally find themselves paying above market value rents.

Although there are many great pubs tied to PubCos, even popular, well-run ones with healthy turnover suffer as profits are gradually sucked away from the core business of the pub itself. It's no wonder that many PubCo tenants throw in the towel. Despite working long hours, nearly half end up earning less than £15,000 a year.

CAMRA has been campaigning for many years for a rebalance to the current unfair relationship between the PubCos and their licensees, including an option for lessees to become free of tie.

A major and fundamental first step in the reform was achieved in January when, long after CAMRA's call an independent assessor to be established, the Government announced "a new statutory Code" to look at the relationship between large pub companies and publicans, which will be enforced by the Adjudicator. This new Code will ensure fair practices for a number of issues including rents and the prices publicans pay for beer. It would also have the power to investigate and deal with disputes between pub companies and publicans, and in some cases have the power to fine. In particular, the proposed Code would prevent abuses of the beer tie...It would enshrine the fundamental

principle that 'a tied licensee should be no worse off than a free-of-tie-licensee' which will ensure a level playing field is maintained in the pub sector...The formal consultation on these proposed measures will be launched in the spring.<sup>1</sup>

The Statutory Code is likely to affect the six biggest PubCos - Enterprise Inns, Punch Taverns, Star Pubs & Bars, Greene King, Marstons and Admiral Taverns. Following CAMRA advice and subject to consultation, the government has exempted smaller companies who own less than 500 pubs, often family brewers with their own pub estates. Research suggests that these have been following the existing Voluntary code, although it is one area that will clearly need to be monitored.

The introduction of a Statutory Code and in particular the principle that tied licensees should be no worse off, which should apply to rents, is something that has been achieved through a long campaign led by CAMRA. Many thousands of members wrote to their MPs, forcing a parliamentary debate on the issue. During the recent debate in January, MPs from all parties praised CAMRA in the House of Commons for its continued campaign over many years.

And CAMRA will continue the Campaign, providing further input to the consultation and ensuring that the new system is working. Keep track of it at www.camra.org.uk/beertie. But for now, this is a change we should all celebrate with a quality beer down the local pub. Free or tied.

www.gov.uk/government/news/press-release-newproposals-to-stand-up-for-british-pubs-and-preventunfair-practices



### Belfast Beer

John **C**orcoran enjoys a short break in Belfast

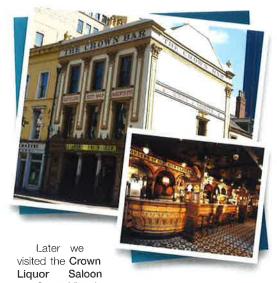
y wife Christine and I started our trip with a flight from Liverpool airport which boasts two Wetherspoons outlets after security.

The Argosy is the larger one with George Wrights Longboat priced at £3.10 and Abbot at £3.45 for a pint. The smaller Wetherspoons Express had George Wrights Golden Moment at £3.10. These beers were all sampled and pronounced to be very good. Unfortunately CAMRA vouchers are not accepted at either pub; only a snack menu is available. These prices appear to be high for Wetherspoons, but I suppose that they are fairly reasonable for the airside of an airport.

On reaching Belfast we made the **Bridge House** on Bedford Street our main eating place. This is one of eight Wetherspoons in the province and in addition to interesting UK beers, starting at £1.95 per pint; there were beers from Hilden, in particular Scullions Irish Ale which was excellent.

As in most pubs the 2012 European Football Championships were usually being shown on the TV. At one side of the screen was the flag of St. George, whilst at the other side of the screen was the flag of the Irish republic. Only a few years ago this would have been unimaginable.





on Great Victoria
Street. This is perhaps Ireland's most famous pub
being ornate and unspoilt externally and internally.
The pub was full of tourists (us included!) and one
of them tried to pinch my beer which was Belfast
Ale from the Whitewater Brewery. It was in good
condition, but was not as good as some of the

other ales tried on our trip.

A more relaxed atmosphere was found in the pub next door, named **Robinsons**. This is also a splendid venue, with many interesting Titanic artefacts. Unfortunately no real ale is sold, but there is a Bolton connection; one of the exhibits is a watch presented by three Titanic survivors to their rescuer, Captain Arthur Rostron, captain of the

Also adjacent to the Crown is what used to be called the Beaten Docket. This was a former

Carpathia who originated in the town.

Good Beer Guide entry and rather disappointingly has now been rebuilt as Brennans bar with no real ale sold.

The next day we made our way to Bangor by way of the North Downs Coastal Path – highly recommended – and the local train. There are six pubs on Bangor high street, two of which are Coyle's bars, but only one pub sells real ales. This pub is called **Jenny Watts**, and is highly

recommended, with ale available when we were there being Whitewater Crown and Glory. Sitting in the parlour bar was like sitting in someone's front room. The service was friendly, whilst the food and ale were both very good.

On our way back to Belfast we alighted the train at Holywood and visited the **Dirty Duck** ale house very close to the station. This is Rory McIlroy's local but he was not in, apparently playing golf somewhere. Three ales were on offer; Tom Woods Imperial Stout, Scullions Irish Ale and College Green Headless Dog. The stout in particular was very good.

On returning to Belfast, by train we called in at the **Botanic Inn**, close to Botanic station and adjacent to Queens university. This large student's pub sells Whitewater Belfast Ale, which we found to be adequate.

Back in the city centre there were a few more pubs to explore. The Kitchen Bar is an old established Good Beer Guide entry, but the original pub was demolished a few years ago and has been relocated to Victoria Square shopping centre. The one hand pump dispensed Whitewater Crown and Glory, which we both agreed was the best ale of our trip. It is a pale and hoppy beer which was quite exceptional.

On nearby Chichester Street is a fine pub, The Garrick. Although no real ales are served, it is worth a visit to sample 50 beers from around the world (although all 50 in one visit may be a little excessive!).

A short walk away near the imposing Albert Clock Tower is one of Belfast's oldest pubs, **McHughs**. The real ale on offer was Belfast Ale and when we were there traditional music competed with the Euro 2012 football.

Our final visit was to the **John Hewitt**, near St. Anne's Cathedral, which is unusual in so far as it is run by the Unemployed Resource Centre. All profits are used to help fund the centre, which seems more ethical than supporting a PubCo. The pub was busy, hosting one of its regular charity quiz nights. The ale on offer was a very good Hilden Ale and there was also a good selection of Belgian bottled beers.

In conclusion, the real ale scene in Belfast seems reasonably healthy, although, Wetherspoons apart, prices are quite high. Expect to pay around £3.60 for a pint of real ale in friendly pubs, with lots of character. Some pubs advertised "Mis-Strength" Guinness at 2.8%, with even this selling at £3.40 a pint. We declined to try any!



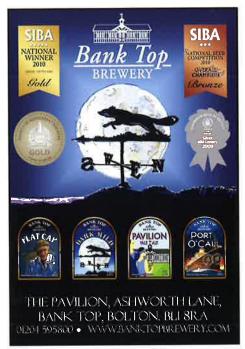


### Good Beer Guide 2013

### 40th Anniversary

his year marks the 40th anniversary of the UK's best-selling and most comprehensive guide to beer and pubs. CAMRA's Good Beer Guide lists over 4,500 pubs across the country which CAMRA members see as the best for real ale. Each pub gets a full review with a list of facilities, opening hours and regular beers so you can easily see if it's the one for you.

There are 14 entries from the Bolton Branch area in the Guide, some of these are long standing favourites, others are new pubs on the block. All are places where you can get a pint served to the best standards, year-round. Every Branch takes a vote on which places deserve a place in





Branch members launch the Good Beer Guide 2013 with landlord Dennis at the Finishers Arms, one of this year's new entries.

the Guide, based on surveys throughout the year. Any member of the local Branch can put forward nominations and take part in the surveys and voting. So the entries are not the views of the Good Beer Guide Editor or of the local Branch Chair, but of whole Branches and their members.

The Guide also lists each of the Breweries in the UK producing real ale. This year has a record number, topping the 1000 mark for the first time. The Breweries range from Global giants, through National brewers such as Marston's and Greene King to the huge number of small independent brewers such as Bolton's own Blackedge, Dunscar Bridge and Bank Top. For each brewery there are contact details, a short description and a list of regular beers often with tasting notes.

To top it all there are some excellent features

on brewing and beer styles and a look back over the last 40 years. If that's not enough, vou can even download the e-book version or get an app for your phone which will lead you straight to the door of each of the pubs.

If you haven't got a copy then buy it from the local Branch or from the CAMRA website at www.camra. org.uk/gbg. Or ask your bookshop to get it for you.



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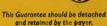
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