

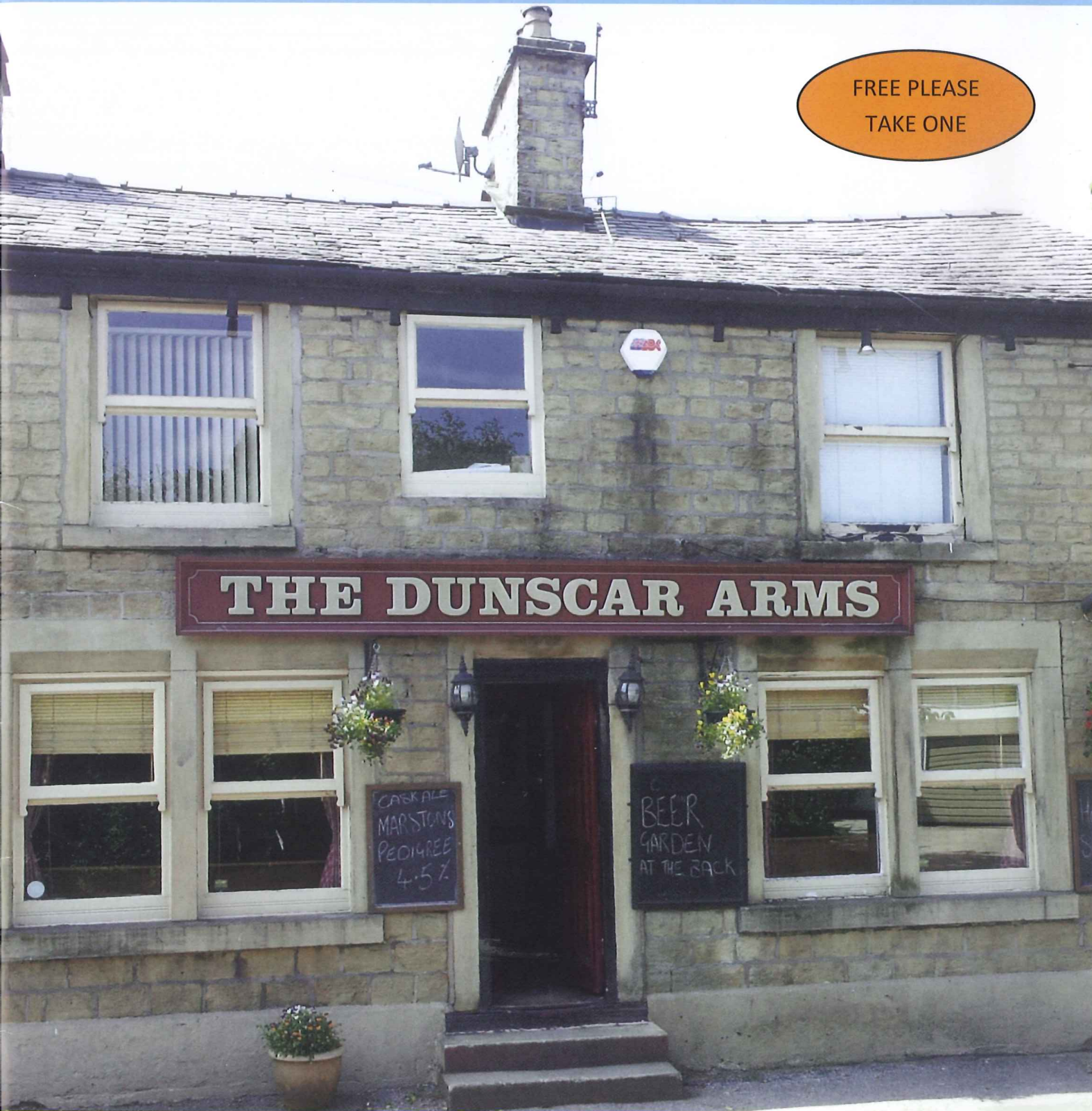
# BOLTON BEER BREAKS

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

FEBRUARY 2014

ISSUE No.7

FREE PLEASE  
TAKE ONE



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A NEW MICRO PUB OPENS, A BRIEF HISTORY OF BANK TOP AND AN AWARD FOR THE DUNSCAR ARMS

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the new look Bolton Beer Breaks. This has been somewhat a voyage of discovery as the agreement with our previous publishers ended with the last edition. The look of the magazine may well evolve over the next few months, but the content will hopefully remain informative and entertaining as it always has. Many thanks must go to Jonathan at Multicopy in Bolton. His input and assistance has and continues to be very useful. Inside you will find news of two new real ale outlets that have recently opened in Bolton. One is an extension of the Bank Top Brewery estate. The pub that was the Brown Cow in Horwich is now the Bank Top Ale House. It has been refurbished to a high standard and you can find out more by reading on. There is also Great Ale Year Round, which had its official opening on the same day as the refurbished Bolton Market Hall, where it can be found. Serving primarily local brews, in either bottle or on hand pull it would appear worth a visit. We also have news of upcoming festivals, pub seasonal awards and a tour round perhaps some of the lesser known real ale establishments in Bolton town centre.

Happy reading.

Jez Wadd

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It should also be noted that acceptance of an advertisement in this publication should not be deemed an endorsement of quality by Bolton CAMRA.

**To place an advert contact Cliff Burgess – 07717028677**

Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.

230 Hatfield Road

St. Albans

AL1 4LW



Campaign for Real Ale  
Bolton Branch



## Is it time to be braver?

I am Chris Kay, I work at The Spinning Mule and I have a strong love for cask ale. At The Spinning Mule we sell a large range of cask beers ranging from larger breweries i.e. Moorhouses, Green King and Marston's to the smaller more local breweries such as Dunscar Bridge, Allgates



and George Wright. Even though we have 12 hand pumps on we are constantly hearing that there is 'nothing on', mainly because Blonde Witch or another large well known beer is not on sale. As much as I do see that these ales are of high quality it would be nice to see customers being braver choosing ales from smaller breweries or beers that are unusual or different. We miss out on some great beers styles such as wheat beers, stouts and porters just because when breweries ring up for their orders we often play it safe ordering blonde beers, beers that we know have sold well in the past or will say no to the smaller breweries in favour of ordering from breweries with recognisable pump clips and well known brand names. Next time you are in The Spinning Mule try something different I promise it will not make you ill and I guarantee

that you will taste some great and unusual beers. If you are unsure ask the person behind the bar who will explain what beers are on sale and will happily allow you to taste them before you buy.

Chris Kay



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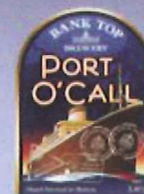
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## BANK TOP—A BRIEF HISTORY

Established in 1995 and originating from Back Lane, Bolton, Bank Top Brewery has seen great development over the years. Dave Sweeney joined the successful company in December 1999, and in 2002 helped John Feeney realise his dream of transforming the old tennis pavilion at Bank Top into a Brewery. Dave joined John in partnership in November 2004, and became sole owner after John's retirement in 2008. The success of Bank Top beer has reaped many awards over the years with Dark Mild being its most prestigious Champion, however Flat Cap remains the best seller out of the 10 Core Cask Ales available. Hitting regular sales figures of 1.1million pints per year, probably confirms that Bank Top are Bolton's biggest and most popular brewery.

Bank Top Brewery is a member of SIBA, the Society of Independent Brewers. This trade association was set up to promote and protect the interests of independent breweries. As SIBA members we aim to preserve the traditional styles and methods of brewing while at the same time raising the profile of craft beer. The Brewery's well established reputation has enabled Dave to be voted in as Trustee for the newly formed North West Region of SIBA.

There is a simple belief at Bank Top... *of making fine ale in a traditional manner with a great customer service.*

The success of the Brewery has lead to the development of Bank Top Brewery Estates with the acquisition of the Brewery Tap in 2010, the first of a proposed 4 pub portfolio. In December 2013 The Ale House, Horwich, was unveiled as the latest addition to the pub portfolio after undergoing an extensive refurbishment programme. The Brewery Tap has had a flying start with numerous accolades to its name, including 'Spring Pub of the Season 2013' and 'Cider Pub of the Year 2013' by Bolton CAMRA and its members. We would be delighted if The Ale House were to achieve similar status' and create a little rivalry between the two. Both pubs share a similar ethos... *a local pub, for local people with affordable quality*, and we look forward to welcoming you soon.



'The 28<sup>th</sup> Stockport Beer and Cider Festival will be held from Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> May to Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May at Edgeley Park Football Ground the home of Stockport County FC which is under 10 minutes from the train station and A6. The organisers are promising a minimum of 80 or 90 different cask beers available during each session (while stocks last), plus ciders, perries and bottled conditioned beers from across Europe and the USA. New this year is a 'Bar Nouveau' with up to a dozen cask beers which have never been seen before, all on hand pump.

The use of the stadium gives festival goers the guarantee of a seat and the chance to drink outside during what it is to be hoped will be balmy summer days and evenings while downstairs great live entertainment is promised in the large entertainment suite. The headline act on the Saturday evening is the fabulous Kyla Brox Band. Kyla is a Stockport girl and the daughter of Manchester blues singer, Victor Brox and this promises to be a fabulous homecoming for Kyla.

In addition as always there a specially brewed festival ale, stalls, programme, souvenir T-shirts and glasses and hot and cold food! Families are very welcome in the stand and limited disabled access is available. Families are very welcome in the stand and limited disabled access is available.

For more information visit the Festival web site at [www.stockportfestival.org.uk](http://www.stockportfestival.org.uk) or follow the Festival at @skbeerfestival





The Poacher  
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Traditional Inn serving 4 regular real ales plus up to 5 guest ales

Regulars include Jennings Dark Mild, Cumberland Ale, Brakspear Oxford Gold and Marston's Pedigree

Mini beer festival March 25-29 2014 with 15 rarer beers from the Marston's range

---

The Manchester Beer and Cider Festival

22-25 January, 2014

The National Winter Ales Festival moved to Derby for 2014 after nine years in Manchester. It was felt by local CAMRA volunteers that the expertise accrued over past years could be put to good use by putting on the Manchester Beer and Cider Festival, venue to be The National Cycling Centre at the Velodrome. Over 300 real ales, 75 ciders and perrys and a good selection of bottled continental beers were spread over several bars in the centre of the iconic track. During the four days the festival was open over 10.000 visitors come through the doors.

These visitors along with the many volunteers had the chance to sample some very good ales from breweries across the country while watching the cyclists train on the track. Team GB were training each day in preparation for the Commonwealth Games later this year. I think they were quite envious of us being allowed to sample many of the beers.

Prior to opening on the first day judging took place for the Champion Beer of the North West 2014 and the winners were;

Gold	Hawkshead Cumbrian Five Hop
Silver	Bank Top Dark Mild
Bronze	Offbeat Way Out Wheat

Congratulations to all the winners and special congratulations to Bolton's own Bank Top Brewery winning another award for the consistently good Dark Mild.

The Festival was a great success.

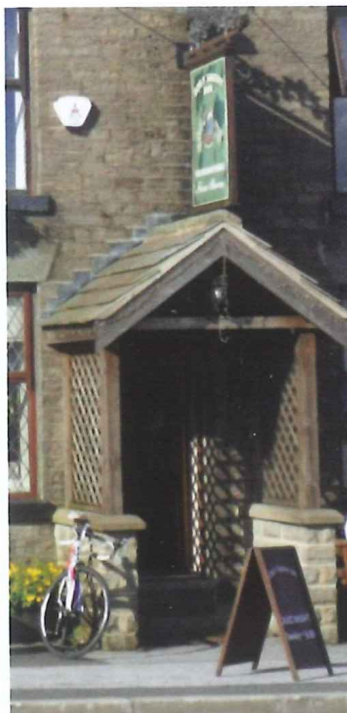


## GUESS THE PUB

Just for fun, take a look at the two pictures on the left. They are both decent real ale outlets in the Bolton area.

Answers in the next edition.

The answer to last editions teaser is the Rocket in Brightmet, that is described by the pubco as "offering a wonderful atmosphere along with an excellent service. There are a wide variety of drinks available to ensure customers are made to feel welcome and at home" (Interesting—Ed)



## PUB NEWS

### Openings, re-openings and new real ale outlets

Great Ale Year Round is a new micro-bar in the Lifestyle Hall of Bolton Market on Ashburner St. There are two hand pumps serving a changing range of ales from local breweries such as Blackedge, Brightside, Privateer and Deeply Vale, and real cider, typically from local producer Red Bank. Bottles are also available from many local brewers including Ramsbottom Craft, First Chop, Quantum and Wilson Potter, plus ones rarely seen in the area such as Five Points and Beavertown. Opening times are restricted to market days, Tuesday and Thursday-Saturday, normally until 5pm but could be later once the market is fully open. Follow them on twitter @greataleyear.

The Bank Top Ale House, formerly the Brown Cow, on Church Street in Horwich is fully open after an extensive refurbishment and serves real ale from 9 handpumps plus real cider. Ales are from the award-winning Bank Top range plus at least one guest beer from another brewery.

The Daisy Hill Hotel is now open and is being run by the former landlord of the Grapes in Farnworth. On a recent visit there was one hand pump with Thwaites Lancaster Bomber.

The Grey Mare Inn in Harwood opened again in mid-December and has been refurbished and taken over by the licensees of the House Without a Name. There is an increased range of real ales. Follow them on Twitter @greymareinn.

The former British Legion Club in Blackrod has reopened as Heroes Bar and is open to all. It serves real ale from two handpumps.

The Brass Cat has reopened. On a recent visit the single handpump was not in use.

The Waggon & Horses on the A6 in Westhoughton was only briefly closed following a change of licensee by Marston's, the pub continues to sell at least two of the cask beer range from Marston's. The Crofters in Harwood reopened in mid January after closing following a fire in late November, the previous policy of having a hand pump on the bar for decorative purposes has been changed and there are now 2 hand pumps selling 2 Bank Top Flat Cap, Old Slapper or Gold Digger, in early February these were on 'sale' at £2 a pint, which is a long way from the reported £3.80 a pint for John Smiths keg in 2013. Decor and furnishings are very much upmarket providing shades of grey are your thing.

The Railway opposite Bromley Cross station has recently had two hand pumps installed, one of which now sells a cask house beer Misty Mountain Hop brewed by Caledonian. Note that the pub is a popular Live music venue and admission may be by ticket only or incur a charge if near to the performance



### Closures and real ale losses

The former Cross Guns in Westhoughton is now delicensed.

The Volunteer in Bromley Cross which has been closed for some time is to be demolished.

The Sportsman's on Chorley Old Rd is now Chianti's Restaurant.

The Park Inn in Farnworth, recently serving real ale from one handpump, has closed for good and has been sold for development.

The New Globe (formerly the Rock House) on Duke St behind Topp Way is closed and has been delicensed.

If you think something is wrong or wish to update us on Pub News then let us know instantly by using the Submit Changes option for the pub on the new CAMRA on-line Pub database at [whatpub.com](http://whatpub.com).

### **The Hen & Chickens has been awarded the Winter pub of the season**

### **AUTUMN PUB OF THE SEASON**

The **Dunscar Arms** was the deserved winner of our Autumn Pub of the Season and therefore the title of most improved, Bolton, real ale pub of the year 2013. Publicans, Andy and Mandy, (pictured right receiving their award) are to be congratulated after they took the pub on two-and-a-half years ago, when at the time it had been closed for yet another lengthy spell (one of many over the last twenty, or so, years) and immediately brightened the place up. Through their great commitment to serving real ale, they began to attract more local regulars back to the pub and consequently the beers have steadily improved. The result being, that over the last 12 months, or more, the beer quality has been witnessed to be consistently very good indeed! Usually serving two locally brewed ales (Moorhouses, Hopstar, etc.) and replete with a real fire and pub cat, the Dunscar Arms has become a must visit pub!



### **Dates for your diary**

26th March - Branch Meeting and EGM, The Spinning Mule, Nelson Sq

24th to 26th April— Bolton CAMRA beer festival, Bolton Ukrainian Club

30th April - Branch Meeting, Dog & Partridge

28th May - Branch Meeting, venue TBC

29th to 31st May— Stockport CAMRA beer festival, Edgeley Park, Stockport

**Volunteers are required to help out at our own beer festival. For more information and application form visit our website and look for the link**

**<http://www.boltoncamra.org.uk/>**



## Cider News

By the time you read this issue, we will have selected the Branch Cider Pub of the Year. As the number of pubs in the Bolton Branch area selling real cider and perry has greatly increased over the last year, the Cider Pub of the Year will be chosen from a shortlist of five. The pubs are: The Alma Inn, The Bank Top Brewery Tap, The Bowling Green, Horwich, The Levers Arms, Darcy Lever and The Victoria and Albert, Horwich. The winner will go forward to the Regional Cider Pub of the Year competition which will be judged during April and May.

Among the recent additions to the list of pubs selling real cider and perry are Bolton Ukrainian Club, Bank Top Ale House in Horwich and the new Great Ale Micro Bar in Ashburner Street market.

Red Bank Cider have produced a perry this year using pears from Worcestershire. Lee Thorne reports that it should be medium to dry and around 7% ABV.

Once again, Manchester will be holding a Grand Cider & Perry Festival, at the Palace Hotel, Oxford Road, Manchester, on Friday and Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> June 2014. Open from noon until 10:30 pm each day, admission is £3 (£2 for card carrying Camra members). With over 60 ciders & perries available to choose from this should be



## Great British Beer Festival (GBBF)

GBBF 2014:

When? 12-16 August 2014

Where? Olympia, London

I have worked at GBBF as a CAMRA volunteer on a bar for the past three years. The first year was held at Earls Court but for the past two it's been at Olympia. I have not been on my own as over the twelve days of set up, opening and take down about 1000 CAMRA volunteers are involved. There are a multitude of tasks to do so it's not just serving behind a bar. Last year there were eighteen bars with over 800 real ales, ciders, perrys and international beers. Volunteers are needed to man the door, sell tickets, glasses, stewarding and many other jobs.

I work really hard, the days are long but working with so many great people who all give up their time is awesome. Many of us take annual holidays from our normal jobs to work at GBBF. If you are a CAMRA member, like real ale and like meeting people from all over the country from different backgrounds then you should give it a go at least once.

Keep your eye on the website for more details

[www.gbbf.org.uk](http://www.gbbf.org.uk)





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## GREAT ALE YEAR ROUND

A new micro pub has opened in the recently refurbished Bolton Market Hall. Below the owners tell their story in their own words

We are a Micro-bar in Bolton's indoor market. Its run and owned by myself (Gina) and my husband Daniel Buck. Dan is from Salford and I'm originally from Essex and we currently are living in Swinton. We both have a passion for great beer and ciders - and a main focus of ours from the beginning was that the majority of it will be locally sourced.

We have two cask ale taps which we rotate the beer weekly on so that there is a good variety, we tend to have one dark beer and one light/golden beer on tap!

We have recently had Dark Revenge from Privateer Beers in Manchester, Blackedge Brewerys Dark Port from Horwich, which has gone down a storm, and also we have had quite a few of Brightside Brewery from Radcliffe's beers on too such as Manchester Skyline, Solstice, Best Bitter!

We have at least 60 different beers available in bottles and including the draft beers too.



We discount or bottle of beer by 5p for CAMRA members and we also have a great loyalty scheme which allows you to collect stamps for each pint or bottle you buy and when the card is filled you get a free draught pint!

We also stock red bank cider which is crafted in Bolton and is recognised by CAMRA.

Every day we do a pint of draught ale and a pork pie for just £3. We intend to do a meet the brewer event

each month. Some bottles we are stocking at the moment - Brightside Brewery which includes the award winning Amarillo American single hop IPA, Quantum brewing co from Stockport, First Chop Brewing Arm from Salford, Tickety Brew from Stalybridge and Ramsbottom Craft Brewery are just a few of them available!

We can be contacted on Twitter - @GreatAleYear, Facebook - [www.facebook.com/greataleyearround](http://www.facebook.com/greataleyearround) and on our website -

[www.greataleyearround.co.uk](http://www.greataleyearround.co.uk) where very soon we will be selling our bottles online for local delivery or collection from the bar.

We keep everybody up to date on new and upcoming beers via social networking and we are also on the Perfect Pint website.

**(Editors note—this has had some fantastic reviews give it a try when you can)**





## THE WANDERER VISITS BOLTON TOWN CENTRE

The **Sweet Green Tavern** lies just across the junction from Bolton train station and generally has 5/6 real ales available on the bar from varying micro breweries, including: Hopstar; Acorn; Dunham Massy; and Liverpool Organic to name but a few, and tonight I've chosen a decent pint of **Wick-war Coopers WPA**. The bar and drinking areas are to the right as you enter the pub, with a small games room to the left. There are 4 'rooms' including a cosy snug to your right, a larger room facing the bar, and smaller 'meeting' room behind the far side of the bar. In the beer garden/smoking area the pub boasts several comfortable sofas, but it's time to nip across the road.

The **York Hotel** stands opposite the interchange and as a Marston's house generally serves one beer only from their range (occasionally there may be two). Open planned, the bar is straight ahead, but there are four distinct drinking areas, one of which is the small 'pool room' to the left. This evening I get to drink a very pleasant pint of **Jennings Red Breast** before it's time to move along. Less than a 5 minute walk down by the side of the railway station and on to Bradshawgate, I soon arrive at



the **Alma Inn**, which is another Marston's house. The pub is split level and down to the left is the pool table, though they often showcase live bands in that area (there may occasionally be a small charge on the door at weekends when more well known acts are performing). The bar is immediately on your right and boasts 4 four hand pumps, one of which is dedicated to a real cider. Here I enjoy a very tasty pint of wintertime beer: a gorgeous dark **Ringwood Porter** goes down a treat.

A short amble down Bradshawgate and I'm in the lively **Balmoral** almost before I know it. A relatively new convert to cask ale it serves two beers sourced from the publican's Enterprise Inns list and I opt for a sparkling form **Wychwood**

**Dog's Bollocks**. The central bar services two large rooms and a slightly smaller parlour (where the hand pumps are located). There is often well attended karaoke in front large room throughout the day and into the evening and a large meeting room upstairs.

Finally, it's a short saunter round the corner to the Wetherspoons **Spinning Mule** on Nelson Square, which delivers what you'd expect from such an establishment, and I eventually get served a pretty decent form **Robinson's Tom & Berry**.

There are several more real ale pubs beyond, if you've got the time, but for me it's home. It's been a rather pleasant little wander through the South side of our metropolis, with some quality beers along the way.

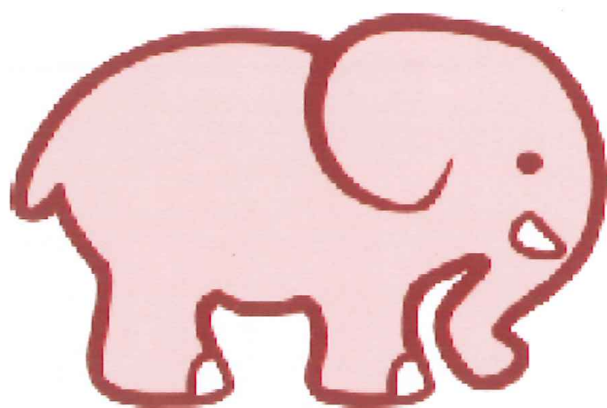






**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

# Bolton CAMRA



# Beer Festival

**April 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> 2014**

**Thursday - Saturday**

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April**

4:00-10:30pm

ADMISSION £2

+ £2 refundable glass hire

at

**Bolton Ukrainian Club**

99 Castle Street

Bolton BL2 1JP

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April**

12:00-10:30pm

ADMISSION £2

before 5:30pm

then £3 after

+ £2 refundable glass hire

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I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association

I enclose a cheque for \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applications will be processed within 21 days

01/06

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SPECIALITY BEERS

*Gold*

4.9%

EDGE  
BLACK  
BREWING COMPANY

BLACK  
PORT

BORN AND BREWED IN HORWICH

SIBA

★★★  
REGIONAL  
WINNER  
2013

SPECIALITY BEERS

*Bronze*

4.4%

EDGE  
BLACK  
BREWING COMPANY

platinum

BLONDE ALE



BORN AND

ORWICH

4.7%

EDGE  
BLACK  
BREWING COMPANY

IPA  
INDIA PALE ALE



BORN AND

ORWICH

3.8%

EDGE  
BLACK  
BREWING COMPANY

HoP  
PALE ALE



BORN AND BREWED IN HORWICH

4.6%

EDGE  
BLACK  
BREWING COMPANY

DARk  
RUM



BORN AND BREWED IN HORWICH

3.5%

EDGE  
BLACK  
BREWING COMPANY

session  
PALE ALE



BORN AND BREWED IN HORWICH

4.0%

EDGE  
BLACK  
BREWING COMPANY

PIKE  
PALE ALE



BORN AND BREWED IN HORWICH

4.5%

EDGE  
BLACK  
BREWING COMPANY

AMERICAN  
PALE ALE



BORN AND

ORWICH

4.0%

EDGE  
BLACK  
BREWING COMPANY

BLACK  
STOUT



BORN AND BREWED IN HORWICH

EDGE  
BLACK  
BREWING COMPANY



@BLACKEDGE BEERS

BLACKEDGE BREWING COMPANY



LOOK ON OUR WEBSITE FOR FREQUENT SPECIALS

TEL : 01204 692976

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