

# BOLTON BEER BREAKS

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

SUMMER 2014

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A DOUBLE AWARD FOR THE BANK TOP BREWERY TAP

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to a very full edition of Bolton Beer Breaks. Inside we have news of a double award for the Bank top Brewery Tap, both being well deserved. Also regular (and loyal) readers will be interested in the second part of a travelogue around Bavaria, the first part being in issue one of the relaunched Beer Breaks. We have an alternative look at the very successful Bolton CAMRA Beer Festival, along with more good news for the excellent venue of the Bolton Ukrainian Club. The wanderer visits Darcy lever & The Haulgh, and for the more knowledgeable, a short quiz loosely based on Bolton and beer.

I hope you enjoy the read and please let me have any articles, comments or criticisms (all welcome) at the email address below.

Cheers, **Jez Wadd** (Editor)

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## **BRANCH PUB OF THE YEAR**

Congratulations to the **Bank Top Brewery Tap**, winners of the **Bolton CAMRA Pub of the Year and Cider Pub of the Year**. Although just a two room street corner local, this is an extremely popular pub which has deservedly won various local Camra awards including Pub of the year 2014. It is immaculately kept with superb service and the eight rotating Bank Top beers are very fairly priced. The Brewery owner and staff are regulars and with a good social mix everyone feels at home. There is a guest beer, real cider and a good selection of bottled Belgian beers available.



Branch Chair Gill Smart presents Bank Top Staff with their awards

## **PUB NEWS**

**The Ainsworth Arms** on Halliwell Road has reopened under the new ownership of Welcome Taverns/Dunscar Bridge Brewery. It has undergone an extensive refurbishment and serves up to 3 **Dunscar Bridge** ales and 3 guest ales.

**The Stork Tavern**, also on Halliwell Rd, has been renamed from the **Fox and Stork** and undergone a tasteful refurbishment. It serves up to 6 quality real ales from **Holts, Thwaites** and **Bank Top**

**The Beaumont Arms** on Ladybridge has just reopened after a £200,000 refurbishment and reports are that it is serving cask ale.

**The Original British Queen** on Blackburn Rd is now closed and delicensed.

**The Hen & Chickens** on Deansgate has a new licensee. While the pub is still under Punch Taverns ownership, the cask ales are now free from tie and the five handpumps are dispensing a varying range of beers, at least two rotating **Bank Top** ales and three from other microbreweries, recently including the rarely seen **Goosnargh** Brewery. There is a 20p per pint discount on cask ales for card-carrying CAMRA members. Home-cooked food is also being re-introduced during the day.

Three other pubs are also offering a discount to card-carrying CAMRA members. **The Jolly Crofters** in Horwich has a 20p discount on up to three real ales, generally from the **Bank Top** range, but also including the marvellous **Moorhouse's Black Cat**. The **Tavern Fayre** at Hunger Hill has a 40p discount on its real ales which include **Thwaites Wainwright** and up to 2 guests from local microbreweries. The **Dragonfly** on Bradshawgate gives a 10% discount on its choice of three real ales which often include one from **Moorhouses**. Meanwhile, **Great Ale Year Round** in Bolton Market now runs a Tuesday Club where its cask ales are £2.25 a pint.

**The Jolly Carter** in Little Lever has recently changed tenants and there are up to 3 real ales available. In Stoneclough, **The Hare and Hounds** is now serving **Bank Top Flat Cap**, while the **Market St Tavern** was serving **Theakstons Best** and is now doing **Deuchars IPA**.

**The Old Three Crowns** on Deansgate has been awarded cask marque accreditation. This is an award based on independent inspections of the condition of cask ales.

**The Bar** on Nelson Square has now stopped dispensing real ale after a short spell serving Black Sheep Bitter.

The café/restaurant at **Curleys Fisheries** in Horwich is now serving **Bank Top Flat Cap** on handpull. It is reported that some pubs in the town centre have instigated a policy of not serving people wearing hoodies. Any reports should be checked and the Branch can express their displeasure at these pubs discriminating on grounds of dress.

## **CLUB NEWS**

**The Ellesmere Club** in Morris Green now has **Blackedge** beers on the bar plus 2 others.

**Kearsley and Ringley Conservative Club** is serving **Bank Top Flat Cap** and one other real ale.

## JUST FOR FUN

Below is a short, beer related quiz set for us by someone who would only like to be known as **Telemachus (hope I've spelt that right—Ed)**

1. Which north Bolton pub is known as the calendar pub?
2. Why is it called the calendar pub?
3. In Germany the Beer Purity Law which dates from the Middle Ages and was only repealed in 1987, only permitted the use of three ingredients for brewing beer, with an additional allowed later only after it was discovered. What are the four?
4. Who was Lord Clyde and for what was he famous?
5. One specific drink in the early 1970s so antagonised drinkers, it helped bring about the birth of the real ale movement. What was the drink?
6. How many pints are there in a kilderkin?
7. Which famous brew was said to be Madonnas favourite?
8. A former Bolton pub was called the General Havelock. Who was he?
9. In the brewing process what may a hydrometer be used for?
10. Not so long ago the Daily Mail described a former Bolton pub as the "roughest in England". It was later raided by a squad of 13 police, and subsequently lost its license. Name the pub.
11. After his career as a footballer, Nat Lofthouse became a publican for a short period, at which Bolton pub?
12. Which town is widely regarded as the centre of the English brewing industry?
13. What is different about Old Peculier?
14. The first and only English pope bequeathed his name to a successful brewing company. Which pope?

**Answers over on the next page**

**GUESS THE PUB** Here is an interior shot of one of Boltons pubs. See if you can identify it.

Answer in the next edition.  
The photographs in the last edition were of the Bobs Smithy Inn and the Ukrainian Club



### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Branch meetings (all start @ 8:15pm):**

- 25 June – Old Three Crowns
- 23 July – Ye Olde Man & Scythe
- 27 August – The Balmoral

**Brewery Trip to Deeply Vale, and Beer of festival presentation, Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> August. £5 deposit at branch meetings**  
**Edgworth real ale festival—26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September**

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## The Wanderer visits Darcy Lever & The Haulgh

The **536** bus, after a 12 minute journey from town, drops me off right outside the **Lever Arms** at the top of Darcy Lever. On entering the pub, the bar is ahead to the left and boasts two hand pulls serving Hopstar brewery (Darwen) beers and tonight are the regular *JC* and their take on *Saaz Blonde*, which was on good form. Open-planned, but with three distinct areas (games to the right and lounges to the left) it has very much a community feel where local groups meet.

A short amble down the hill and sharp right leads me through the doors of the **Farmers Arms**. With an award winning chef in charge, this pub is unapologetically more of a fine eating establishment, but warmly welcomes those who'd just like a pint, or two. The room layout is open-planned with a small lower section in the right corner for the pool table. The two hand pulls on the bar serve rotating guest beers, but often (as tonight) you can find a Blackedge brewery beer: the

*IPA* was very pleasant, indeed.

A gentle trot to the bottom of the hill and I fall, softly, into **The Volunteer** for a good form Holt's *Bitter*. A central bar, with a lounge area to the left, games to the right and just beyond, to the rear, a more taproom feel area; this again has a very local and vibrant ambience.

My longest walk of the night (No cantering up Darcy Hill!) into The Haulgh (sadly, no pubs of any description left here these days) but within 15 minutes I reach the **Ukrainian Club**. Now, this place just keeps winning awards, why? As a Bank Top ales outlet, with three hand pulls, they also

often serve Blackedge beers, but tonight I get chance to drink one of their increasingly available guests: Wilson Potter brewery *In The Black*, which was on great form! The regular Bank Top *Pavilion* and a Deeply Vale brewery *Citra Storm*, were also on the bar and on great form, too. Perhaps, it does justify its selection as current Regional Club of the Year 2013 and, once again, Bolton Branch Club of the Year 2014.

It's been a grand wander down through the pubs of Darcy Lever, drinking a good variety and quality of real ale.

**Want information about Bolton real ale pubs? Visit:**

**[www.whatpub.com](http://www.whatpub.com)**



**To advertise contact Cliff Burgess on 07717028677**

## EDGWORTH REAL ALE FESTIVAL

At the end of September, the doors of Edgworth Real Ale Festival will open again as the charity beer festival takes place for the 9<sup>th</sup> time. Run and staffed by a team of volunteers, the Festival has so far donated £65,000 to various different charities that all have some kind of connection to Edgworth or the surrounding areas. This year the Festival is planning on donating £3,000 to local organisations (whether clubs, teams, groups or associations) who are in some way connected to Edgworth. This funding will be granted once a successful application has been made. More information can be obtained by emailing [charity@eraf.org.uk](mailto:charity@eraf.org.uk). We will also be raising money for the Motor Neurone Disease Association and the North West Air Ambulance. Both of these causes have very close and personal connections to the Real Ale Festival, and more information can be found on the website [www.eraf.org.uk](http://www.eraf.org.uk). If you wish to sponsor the Festival, whether a barrel or even the glasses packages start from as little as £100 and more information can be obtained by emailing [sponsorship@eraf.org.uk](mailto:sponsorship@eraf.org.uk). An earlier start time of midday, will allow visitors to sample real ale, Red Bank Cider, wine and also lager in the beautiful venue of The Barlow. There are many breweries who are supplying beer this year, and are supporting us to raise as much money as we can for these good causes. Beers are expected from Bolton, Bury, and Rochdale as well as further afield – Burnley, West Yorkshire and even up into the Yorkshire Dales so there will be some beers that you may not have tried in the local area. All the casks are cooled using a state of the art cooling system, so even if the sun is shining, the beer will be cooled. Not only are we proud of the drinks we source, but food from local suppliers will be also available throughout the Festival (while stocks last). Transport to Edgworth is not always easy, but there will be a shuttle bus in operation and the routes are being finalised in the coming weeks, so please see the website for more information nearer the time. Admission to the Festival is £4 on Friday and Saturday (free on Sunday) and commemorative glasses are available for £1. CAMRA members will be able to get half price entry for the first time in 2014. Lastly, all that remains for us to do is to make sure everything is ready for you, and we look forward to welcoming you to the Festival on 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at The Barlow in Edgworth.



### QUIZ ANSWERS

**1.** The Doffcocker; **2.** When built the specification was 4 floors (seasons), each with 7 rooms (days), 12 cellars (months), 52 doors (weeks), & 365 windows (days); **3.** Water, malt, hops & yeast; **4.** Colin Campbell, British General; **5.** Watneys Red Barrel; **6.** 144; **7.** Timothy Taylors Landlord; **8.** An English general who led the relief of Cawnpore & Lucknow in 1857 during the Indian Mutiny; **9.** To measure the density of a liquid to determine its specific gravity; **10.** The Flying Shuttle; **11.** The Castle (now Bolton Castle); **12.** Burton upon Trent; **13.** The spelling of Peculier; **14.** Nicholas Brakspear

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## BEER FESTIVAL 2014

Thank you to all for visiting our festival this year. Many of you voted for the beer of the festival with **DV8 Tippy Porridge Stout** winning overall and dark beer. The pale winner was **Geltsdale Sno** and **Newton Court Sweet** was cider of the festival. We know our beer festival was good, but below, after some excellent news about our venue, we leave the reviews to 3 entirely independent (& unpaid!) bloggers

### Bolton Ukrainians Make It Four-in-a-Row

Bolton Ukrainian Social Club, has once again, been voted Bolton's best club, by the local branch of Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). The award means that the club now goes forward to be judged against the seven other winners in the Greater Manchester region, and as 2013 winners, they'll be looking to hold on to the crown again this year. The club, on Castle Street, serves 3 cask beers, mainly from Bolton breweries Bank Top and Blackedge, but also has regular guest beers too.

"We're well chuffed" said Paul Hnylycia, secretary of the social club. "Real ale has become a big hit with club members over the last several years and to win our first CAMRA award three years ago was fantastic recognition, but to make it four-in-a-row is unbelievable!"

The award presentation was made at the recent Bolton CAMRA Beer Festival, by Branch Chairman Gill Smart.

"We're pleased to recognise the Ukrainian Club's commitment to real ale. The quality of the beer served is to a very high standard, and their support of CAMRA aims and our local breweries makes them worthy winners" says Gill. For the last two years they have hosted the local CAMRA branch's beer festival in their hall, at the rear of the club. "It's a great venue and festival visitors seem to really enjoy the atmosphere" beer festival organiser, Pete Kobryn, commented.

"Winning these awards certainly attracts extra custom, with many travelling quite a distance, including real ale enthusiasts from Surrey" added Paul.



Ukrainian Social Club Secretary Paul Hnylycia receives the, Bolton CAMRA Club of the Year 2014, Award from Branch Chairman Gill Smart, with beer festival organiser Pete Kobryn

<http://boozyp procrastinator.wordpress.com/2014/05/01/bolton-camra-beer-festival-2014/>

About 12 minutes walk from Bolton train station and add another 10 minutes if you get the bus. The beer is served by the half pint, the prices ranged from £1.10 to £1.70 per half. This was met with chagrin by one bloke, bemoaning that some drinks were over £3 a pint (only 2 were + the ciders, all priced more or less by their ABV) who'd brought his own bottle and must have last been to a beer festival in 1976 when beer prices weren't at the mercy of the escalator.

Of course with any kind of festival that entertains people by their hundreds you will get some moans... Some even complained there were too many 'local' beers...I suppose if you've tried them you wish for more choice, but there is no harm in having them again if you liked them first time.

This year I went to all sessions. I tried more or less of all the drinks. One of the reasons this has taken so long to compose is how do I review the 50+ beers I tried over the 3 days? In short, I can't. In shorter, there was only 1 beer I truly didn't like and I didn't like it when I first tried it and was experimenting to see if my palate had changed, it hadn't, it is still pants. But I still can't review 49 beers. So I figured I'd just review the festival itself.

17. Milds, Stouts and Porters. 17.

Now I did here chatter that this time there were too many dark beers. But I'm never going to complain about that. Too many dark beers is not a statement I'd ever be at odds with. Though I can understand



people's trepidation. But that still left 33 non-dark beers to go at, plus the 8 Ciders & Perries. As did the steady stream of punters coming through the doors, milling around the fairly large, open planned main hall, or sitting in the back area/dining room. The food was never more than £4 and it was all good stodge. Curry, chilli, burgers, sausages, veggie lasagne and Steak Canadian with lashing of onions, plus a few sarnies. But I have to mention some beers...

Deeply Vale Brewery had the always excellent DV8 4.8% stout and their Topsy Porridge Stout (5.5%) which won beer of the festival. Other excellent and purely coincidentally dark brews were:

Five Points Brewing with their Railway Porter (4.8%).

Great Heck Brewery and the Voodoo Mild (4.3%).

Ramsbottom Craft Brewery and their very quick selling Chocolate Porter (4.2%).

The 6.0% Manifesto Strong Stout by Revolutions Brewing Co.

Three Quarter Porter (4.5%) by Stringers.

Outstanding Beers and their 4.4% Red.

Blackedge Brewing and their 4.6% Dark Rum. Their One Citra (4.3%) was also a highlight of the lighter ales.

Along with Hand Drawn Monkey Beers with their 2.8% Smaller IPA.

So with that it is thanks to the many volunteers; Gill, Graham, Linda, Peter, Jez and all the others, and the kitchen staff and the staff of the Bolton Ukrainian Club. Same time next year I'd hope. @Deekos

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<http://beersmanchester.wordpress.com/2014/04/29/bolton-beer-festival-camra-24-25042014/>

I blame Dan & Gina. It was all their fault. Really it was. I mean, putting temptation in the way of a boy utterly without will-power! I live in Bolton. There is a Beer Festival AND I have Friday off? I simply HAD to go to The Ukrainian Club, didn't I? Well, that was part of it. The other part was that Revolutions had put the message out that there was a cask of Manifesto at the festival. Those oh so nice Bolton CAMRA people! Let me get my one disappointment out of the way. I REALLY wanted it to be in the club. I'd never been in, you see, and I made the

assumption....(Assume = Ass U Me!) The festival was held in what appeared to be like a little "function room" annexe to the Club itself, fairly rectangular, with the entrance and "facilities" at one end and a performance stage at the other and the long – firkin festooned – bar to the left side upon entry.

The beer selection for this bijou festival was mightily impressive! Yes, the best of the most local breweries were represented, with Blackedge, Deeply Vale, Dunscair Bridge, Bank Top, Brightside et al, but there were some impressive "foreign" breweries represented too, including my favourite bottled beer of 2013, Revolutions Manifesto strong stout. For drinking purposes, I went along with Atilla on Thursday, primarily to ensure a pint of Manifesto as a number of people who'd been there from opening time tweeted me about how much they were enjoying it. I call it "winding me up"! To be-honest, for the small size of venue, it was disappointingly quiet. The beers that Graham Walsh & the crew had put on were superb, I couldn't understand it! Made for a really comfortable evening and lots of opportunity to

chat with some top people like Dan, Gina and the anarchic Beerhound himself, Tyson. How I envy his verbal economy! With about 50 beers on draught (about 25% of which were on handpull) I got the chance to sample most of my "priority beers" which were all in perfect condition (and temperature!). These were...

Revolutions Brewing Co Manifesto (6%) – Black as Hades, rich, deep and luxurious. A big old body with roasted coffee,



tobacco, licorice and a balancing bitterness with a hint of bitter chocolate. Everything I wanted and more....More than worth the wait. (Just wish it could have been through a sparkler!); Mallinsons Indulgence (3.9%) – Pale gold, a feast of citrus hoppiness from the mistresses of Pale Ales, so sharp and zesty without being a punch in the kisser. Beautifully balanced and so refreshing; Geltsdale Brewing Co – Sno – A Scandinavian White Beer (a style I can't say I'm familiar with!) A floral and fruity aroma to this pale beer, fruity and refreshing in the mouth with a dry hoppy finish. (Never had this Cumbrian brewery's beers before. One to look out for.)

I also worked a session (for 3 hours) on the Friday. First time I had volunteered for a CAMRA festival in over 25 years (when Bolton Beer Fest was the Great North West Beer Fest and it was held on Silverwell Street, remember that anyone?), warmly welcomed and with minimal instructions (I do like a bit of trust!) I was on the bar. 3 hours of fun! For a short while, I was by far the youngest behind that bar, which felt ever so slightly weird! Then I met Shaun from Wigan Branch, a top bloke who both knew his beer and entertained me for the rest of the evening!

I do love working behind a bar and this was good fun. Hard work, but fun. The beers were all in tip-top nick too and perfectly cool given that the room was warming up with more bodies. (Note to self : wet towels on casks still work!) On my section of the bar, the beers getting the most hammer were – in order: Dunham Massey – Porter (unsurprisingly, being National Champion Winter Beer 2014); the superb Topsy Porridge Stout by Deeply Vale and – towards the end, Railway Porter by Five Points Brewery. (Really fond of that last two me!)



This was an excellent bijou wee festival. Small in scale, but big on selection & heart. Nice to be able to hear the chatter of conversation too, without the distraction of a live band. Beer and conversation....there's a thought! An excellent local festival. Well done Bolton Branch. There. I said it would be brief (for me!)

On that note....'til next time...

**@BeersManchester**

**<http://gmcr.alenewsnet.com/2014/05/02/good-times-bolton-camra-beer-festival-2014/>**

This year's Bolton CAMRA beer festival featured around 50 cask ales; not only from many Greater Manchester breweries but from as far afield as Surrey and London. The Ukrainian Club was within easy walking distance of the railway station and was easy to find. Entry to the festival was swift with a reasonable entry fee (£2 Friday afternoon – CAMRA members were charged £1 to all sessions) with a £2 deposit on the glass and tokens available in £5 sheets. Unusually, there were only half pint glasses available to hire but the beers were priced in pints and halves. The beer prices themselves were averaging 1.40 / 1.50 per half. This year saw a far better bar layout in the spacious room with the usual happy and enthusiastic volunteers ensuring the ale flowed smoothly. Seating was at a premium in the hall but as with most festivals, this seems to be the norm. As for the beers, a great range was on offer from golden ales to stouts, best bitter to IPAs with strengths from 3.6% to 6%. Of particular note was the By The Horns Diamond Geezer, a 4.9% red ale. But the most unusual / unexpected beer was the Deeply Vale 5.5% Topsy Porridge Stout with strong smoky whisky tones.

All in all a very good festival, with good updates via @BoltonCAMRABeer on Twitter throughout.

(Although I do think that the organisers should have refrained from 'naming and shaming' beers that were not ready on their Twitter feed. Although meant in jest, this could have had a negative effect on our excellent brewers, as it's not necessarily the beer that could have been the issue; late delivery, stillaging, venting tapping etc could be the cause or even the fact some beers take a little longer to clear than others.)

**Steve @GM\_AleNewsNet**



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## **A Beer Break in Bavaria – Part 2—by Alison Whittaker**

Our base for the second part of our holiday in Bavaria was Memmelsdorf, about 7km east of Bamberg and home to the Höhn and Drie Kronen breweries.

On the first evening, we went to the Höhn Keller, an outdoor drinking area just up the hill from the centre of the village. The Görschla beer was served straight from the barrel in half litre pot mugs. We were given plain ones, but the locals used their own metal-lidded tankards which were kept on a labelled shelf behind the bar. It was difficult to be sure about the colour and clarity of the beer, but it was probably brown and definitely unfiltered (including optional barley husk!). It was a malty, toffee-flavoured sweetish brew with just a hint of hop in the aftertaste. Sitting under fragrant lime trees on a mild evening, we were entertained by a carrion crow which had obviously learnt that humans were a source of food and was sufficiently tame to take bread from someone's hand.



Beer engine, Drie Kronen, Memmelsdorf

You might be wondering how we came to be sitting outside in a "Keller", rather than in the basement of a pub. This is because in Franconia the term Bierkeller or Sommerkeller refers to a beer garden usually found on a hill outside a town or village. Before the days of refrigeration, beer would be brewed during the winter months and stored in cellar caves in the hills. The provision of tables and benches under the trees that were planted to give extra shade means that these Keller can be used as brewery taps during fine weather in summer. The beer is usually served directly from barrels set up behind a simple counter. Food, if served, tends to be basic but wholesome.

Unfortunately, the showery weather over the next few days meant that we were unable to visit any more Keller in that area. However, we resumed our cycle trips and visited several interesting brewpubs in villages around Memmelsdorf, managing to stay dry most of the time.

Wagner in Merkendorf makes an Ungespundetes Lagerbier at 5.3%, brown in colour, fairly clear, malty and low in carbonation. According to the 'Bamberg and Franconia Beer Guide', Ungespundet is a term that applies to a beer that has been vented to the atmosphere when lagering and has low carbonation. The beer was served in pot mugs from a barrel behind the bar. It seemed very much a locals' bar, with most of the customers coming in from work for their dinner. In contrast, the Hummel brewpub around the corner was very busy serving meals to people on a coach trip. There we sampled the Hummel-Bräu Kellerbier at 4.9% and the Hummel-Bräu Räucherla at 5.6%. The latter is one of the smoked beers for which the Bamberg area is renowned.

On to Drosendorf, where the beers at the Göller brewpub were probably the least inspiring we had, especially the Dunkel, which had a pronounced musty flavour. The Helles, which we think was Ungespundet, had a flowery taste, a bit like elderflower, but was also vaguely mus-

ty. The bar is obviously a meeting place for the local pigeon fanciers, as there were certificates for 25 and 50 years membership and various trophies.

Our last stop on that day was Knoblach in Schammelsdorf. We ordered two different beers, the Lagerbier and the Räuschla smoked beer, both 5.1%, but found it very hard to distinguish any difference between them and neither tasted particularly smoky. A house speciality is beef smoked over wood from damson trees, which was excellent. Knoblach is also a distillery, which gave Peter an opportunity to buy some Zwetchgenwasser (damson schnapps) to start this holiday's collection of bottles of fruit spirit to bring home.

The people from the apartment where we were staying insisted on feeding us that evening, as they were having a barbecue party - it was their turn to do the food and drink for friends who had come to watch Germany play Netherlands in the Euro2012 competition. Anyway, the food was excellent (including grilled lamb and whole trout) and there was a barrel of Wagner Festbier.

Next day, as the bars we wanted to cycle to weren't due to open till at least 3:30pm, we took the opportunity for a bus trip into Bamberg to sample one of Peter's favourite beers, Heller Schlenkerla Rauchbier-Märzen at 5.1 %. The beer didn't seem quite as smoky as we remembered from our previous visit (that suited me). It was dark brown, and there was definitely a malty sweetness before the smoky flavour kicked in. Part of the Schlenkerla beer house was once the Chapel of a 14th century Dominican Priory, a complete contrast to the automatic sliding door through to the toilets which seemed more like the entrance to the flight deck of the Starship Enterprise.

In the afternoon, we managed to cycle to the Sauer Gasthof in Rossdorf before a heavy thunder shower started. The Sauer Rossdorfer Urbräu Lagerbier was pale and hoppy, with a sulphury aroma and quite high carbonation. The Braunbier was much softer, tasting of malt and caramel and was one of our favourite beers of the holiday up to that point. The beers were served from a wooden barrel, but as there were two taps coming out of the same barrel we suspect they weren't on gravity.

We continued to Geisfeld in bright sunshine, where we visited both brewpubs. At Griess, the Kellerbier (5.5%) was pale yellow, with a slight haze and a citrus hop flavour - not one of our favourites. However, it was served straight from the barrel. The other bar in Geisfeld, the Krug Gasthof, was really nice. It had a very cosy, peaceful atmosphere with the smooth deal tables typical of many bars in the area. We think the Lagerbier was straight from a wooden barrel,



Pot beer mug, Knoblach Brauerei



Sauer Brauerei Keller, Rossdorf



though as it was quite cold, we were not sure. It was gold in colour and rather hoppy, but less so than the Griess beer.

On our last day in Memmelsdorf we started very local with a visit to Drei Kronen, which was just as good as we remembered from when we were there in 2008. The Drei Kronen Stöffla was tawny in colour and gently smoked, and the Lagerbier was very soft, dark gold, malty and mild. This year, the brewery is celebrating its 555th Jubilee.

Back on the tandem, our first stop was Köttensdorf, where the Hoh Lagerbier was available, unusually, in both 50cl and 25cl measures (50cl and above being the norm). My 25cl came in a 50cl pot which had been filled with at

least 40cl - very good value! The beer was quite dark brown, with a sweet malty flavour and lightly hopped. Shortly after we'd been served, the small barrel behind the bar was removed and replaced with a much larger barrel - so it was definitely being served by gravity.

On to Schesslitz, and another Drei Kronen. This is the last remaining brewery here, Schmitt having closed several years ago, and Sanger this April. The Schäazer Kronabier Lagerbier was pale brown with a pronounced caramel toffee flavour. At first glance it appeared to be served from a wooden barrel from what was more a counter than a proper bar. However, when we went to pay, we could see the gas bottles. The room we sat in was quite old-fashioned with Formica topped tables.

The ride back to Memmelsdorf took us to the third Drei Kronen of the day, in Strassgiech.

This used to be a brewery (dating back to 1308 according to the beer mats), but brewing is now supposed to take place in Schnaid which is south of Bamberg. They were serving a beer they called Zoigl, which is 5.8%, gold in colour, malty with a flowery sweetness and some hoppiness in the aftertaste.

The menu promised a 1 L siphon bottle, but we just got the beer in 50cl glasses.

We had originally planned to stay two more nights in Memmelsdorf, but unfortunately the apartment wasn't available over the weekend. To find out what we did then, you'll have to wait for part 3. My thanks to Richard Blagg for the loan of his copies of Brauns Brauerei Atlas.

### Recommended reading

Bamberg and Franconia: a guide to beers, breweries and pubs by John Conen

Brauns Brauerei Atlas Franken by Boris Braun



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