

BOLTON BEER BREAKS

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

AUTUMN 2014

ISSUE No.9



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A National award for Bank Top. How you can get your local noticed. A brief trip around West Bolton. AND MUCH MORE



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FROM THE EDITOR

The real ale scene is thriving in and around Bolton at present. The best news comes from the Great British Beer Festival, held earlier this year. **Bank Top** was presented with the gold award as **Champion Mild** for their excellent **Dark Mild** (I don't visit the dark side very often, but even I know it is good). This is a tremendous, hard won achievement and Dave Sweeney and all at **Bank Top** should be congratulated. In addition, in August the brewery was awarded the **Bronze Medal** for **Port O'Call** at the **2014 International Beer Challenge** tasting competition in the Bottled Speciality Beers Category. This is an annual event which has awarded and promoted excellent beers for 18 years, and attracts entries from no fewer than 30 Countries, along with highly experienced judges from across Europe.

Blackedge Brewery are gaining a reputation for brewing some tremendous ales and are shortly moving into larger premises. Their **Tottering Temple** bottle shop sells local, independent and craft beers, with a wide and varied selection.

Great Ale Year in Bolton Market, continues with new owners, Anne & Steve, who have pledged to provide the same bottled and draught service as Dan & Gina always did.

Dunscar Bridge has recently expanded their estate with the **Ainsworth Arms**, and **Red Bank Cider** continues to get good reviews. The future really is bright.

In this issue, the method of beer scoring is explained using the "What Pub" website and app. This is a way of getting your local noticed for its excellent (or otherwise!) beer quality. It may effect its future inclusion in the CAMRA good beer guide, the 2015 edition of which is out now. There is information on the Greater Manchester Alcohol Strategy, and one of our volunteers recounts his trip around West Bolton delivering Beer Breaks. I should point out that all CAMRA branch members are volunteers and publication costs of this magazine are entirely self funded by adverts. These adverts start from as little as £20 and information on how to place an advert is below. All the articles and layout of the magazine is done voluntarily, and we are always looking for new branch members. The CAMRA application form is inside the back cover

Cheers, Jez Wadd

Last date for submission of articles or adverts for the next issue is 12th December

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

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To advertise contact Cliff Burgess on 07717028677



WHAT? PUB

What Pub, Beer Scoring and the Good Beer Guide

You are probably aware of the 'Good Beer Guide', National CAMRA's flagship publication which lists the best pubs in the UK. But what you may not know is how those pubs are selected to appear in the Guide. The answer is that it is partly via beer scores submitted by CAMRA members from all over the country. So if you are a CAMRA member you can send in beer scores. If you've ever wondered why your favourite pub isn't in the Guide, this may well be because you, and others, haven't entered scores rating the quality of beer there. By beer scoring, you can contribute to the selection process of pubs that go in the Good Beer Guide.

So how do I score the quality of the beer?

You don't have to be an 'expert' to begin scoring your beer. However, it is not about your personal favourite beer receiving the highest scores! You may try a beer that isn't to your normal taste but what you need to consider is the quality of that beer, how well the pub has kept it and served it, and score it according to the general guide below. It is a simple system of a ten point range from 0 to 5, with half points being used if your opinion of the beer falls between two categories.

0. No cask ale available
1. Poor. Beer is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
2. Average. Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
3. Good. Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again
4. Very Good. Excellent beer in excellent condition. You stay put!
5. Perfect. Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

How do I submit my scores?

In order to submit your scores you need to login to CAMRA's online pub guide www.whatpub.com either on a computer or by smart phone. Here you will find a list of over 35,800 real ale pubs from all over the UK; these are not all Good Beer Guide pubs, merely pubs that serve real ale. In order to start submitting scores via What Pub you need to:-

1. Login. You only require your membership number and your CAMRA password which will be your post code unless you have joint membership when it may be your surname.
2. You can then search for your pub by name. Be careful here as many pubs in the coun-

try share the same name. My advice is to search by the pub name and the town. The WhatPub smart phone web page also gives you the option to search for real ale pubs nearby, very useful if you are in an unfamiliar town.

3. Once you have found your pub a 'Submit Beer Scores' box will appear on the left hand side of the screen (or on the tab bar underneath the pub photo if you are using a smart phone).

4. Simply fill in the date and your score then as you begin typing the brewery name should automatically appear underneath were you are typing. Then click on the arrow in the Beer box and a drop down list of that brewery's beers should appear. In some cases the beer you are drinking may be new or a one off seasonal by the Brewery so may not appear on the list, if this is the case you can simply type in the beer name otherwise select the correct one. In the Additional Options please add the price of your pint, and you can also add any comments you feel appropriate, especially if no real ale was available. Click 'submit score' and your score will be entered into the database.

It is as simple as that. An added bonus is that it will keep a record of your scores so you can look back to see what beers you have had and how you rated them by using the view scores. You can also check and provide feedback to the branch on the facilities and beers at the pub by using the submit changes icon at the top of the WhatPub page .

This article by Sonia James-Henry originally appeared in Mersey Ale. Thanks to Sonia and magazine editor John Armstrong for giving permission for it to be used by other branches. If your branch has any questions about beer scoring, please do visit

www.camra.org.uk/nbss or contact brett.laniosh@camra.org.uk

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Cider Month Cider Passport Competition

October is Cider Month, and to mark it Bolton CAMRA is running a Cider Passport competition. From 1 October, passports will be available in 15 pubs which regularly serve real cider and perry. When you visit one of the pubs listed on the passport and buy a pint or a half pint of real draught cider or perry, you will be awarded a sticker. You can only collect one sticker per pub.

The participating pubs are: Alma Inn, Balmoral Hotel, Bank Top Brewery Tap, Blue Boar, Brewhouse, Dog & Partridge, Great Ale Year Round, Levers Arms, Spinning Mule, Sweet Green Tavern, Ye Olde Man & Scythe, Bank Top Brewery Ale House, Bowling Green, Victoria & Albert, Robert Shaw.

The event is being sponsored by the Bank Top Brewery Tap, the Bolton CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year 2014.

All the pubs should be serving at least one real cider or perry, i.e. one made from pressed apples or pears (not concentrate) that has not been flavoured with other fruit or artificially carbonated. Examples of these are Westons Old Rosie, Red Bank Autumn Orchard and Gwynt-y-Ddraig Black Dragon. Nearer the time, we hope to have a list of some ciders and perries that the pubs are planning to stock.

Please note that bottled ciders and products from brands such as Bulmers, Magners and Stella Cidre do not qualify for a sticker. In general, you should avoid ciders and perries served by keg dispense, unless the pub can guarantee that no external gas has come into contact with the cider.

At the end of October, please hand in your passport even if you haven't managed to collect all the stickers, as you may still be eligible for a prize. You can return the passports in one of the following ways:

- At a Bolton CAMRA branch meeting – Thursday 30 October at The Albion, Moor Lane or Thursday 27 November at The Spinning Mule, Nelson Square.
- By post to: Cider Passport, 14 Church Street, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 3RS

At the meeting on 27 November, the completed passports will be entered into a prize draw. Prizes confirmed so far are a bag-in-box of cider or perry and some Bolton CAMRA T-shirts.

Please check out the Bolton CAMRA website for further details including the pub addresses and a fuller list of non-real ciders to avoid.

Alison Whitaker,
Cider Officer

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Boltonians Just Love Bury Black Beer!

On a warm August Saturday, umpteen Bolton branch members made the short trip to Bury to present this years 'Beer of Festival' award to Deeply Vale Brewery's, James Stewart.

The winning beer, Tippy Porridge Stout, was based on last years winner, DV8 Stout, but had been aged for 6 months in a whisky oak barrel to provide a uniquely infused taste.



Deeply Vale Brewer James Stewart (centre) flanked by Bolton CAMRA beer festival organiser Pete Kobryn (right) and bar manager Graham Walsh (left)

James certainly puts a lot of imagination and passion into his brewing, and whilst the strong, complex flavours in Tippy Porridge Stout might not be to everyone's liking, our festival goers lapped it up in pretty quick time! Our second Bolton CAMRA festival again had a larger proportion of dark beers than most beer festivals. However, this has been fully justified, as we tend to sell out of stouts, porters and dark milds first! And our drinkers keep voting for them!

James runs Deeply Vale Brewery on his own, so apart from brewing the beers, he is also sales, delivery, administration and cask cleaner! "I just love CAMRA awards, they mean a lot," said James, "but I'll have to try to come up with something even more special for next years festival."

GUESS THE PUB

Last months photo was the interior of the Bridgewater Hotel in Farnworth. Two more for you to guess, below and right. Answers in the next edition



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Branch Meetings:

Thurs 30 Oct – The Albion

Thurs 27 Nov – Spinning Mule – AGM also

Thurs 18 Dec – Bolton Ukrainian Club

All 8:15pm starts—ALL WELCOME

24,25 October - Salford independent beer festival

ADVANCED NOTICE

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Pub News

The former **Capitol** pub on Churchgate is to reopen as a “Victorian gin palace themed” bar called Hogarths. Interestingly it will also have its own in-house Brewery, the fourth in the borough.

The **Bradford Arms** on Buckley Lane in Farnworth now has one handpump. This was selling Ringwood Brewery Bitter on a recent visit and in pretty good nick.

The **Market Street Tavern**, Stoneclough, now has four cask ales.

The **Kings Arms Hotel** in Farnworth has a 20p CAMRA discount.

The **Clock Face** in Kearsley, the **Craven Heifer** in Astley Bridge, the **Masons** at Egerton and **Dunscar Arms** are all for sale.

The **Cotton Tree** on Prince St near Aldi on Higher Bridge St, recently sold, has reopened under new licencees Kevin and Debbie. They have moved from the Royal Oak in Runcorn where they had real ale on 2 pumps. Reports are that real ale might soon be arriving on the Cotton Tree bar.

The **V&A** in Horwich has announced that it is one of the very few pubs to get a cask of Moorhouse's Black Cat Reserve, a rare 7% version of their award winning Dark Mild. This will be on the bar at a Moorhouse's roadshow on the 1st October 5pm-8pm when there will be a range of Moorhouse's beers on the bar and Brewery representatives present.

The **Original Bay Horse** in Horwich has been refurbished and is now open under the ownership of Bolton Wanderers legend John McGinlay and his family.

There is a new manager at the **Blue Boar** on Deansgate. Sadly there is still no real ale on the bar, but real cider is served and what better time to try it than during October Cider Month when they will be taking part in our cider passport scheme.

Dan & Gina Buck have sold their **Great Ale Year Round** micro-bar on Bolton Markets. The bar received a loyal following in a short time and did much to promote real ale within the town. Our best wishes go with them for future ventures. The bar will continue under new owners Anne and Steve who are looking to use the existing formula to further its success.

Trust Inns have closed **Arkwrights Ale House** on Valletts Lane which was delicensed on June 23rd, this was the same day that Marstons delicensed the **Cotton Tree**, but that was then relicensed on July 2nd. (See above)

The **Greenwood Arms** on Chorley New Road in Horwich, closed since 2011, is to become a

Morrisons "local shop". The shameful loss of this thriving, landmark, community pub follows the overturning by the Government Planning Inspector of Bolton Council's planning refusal for conversion to retail units

Club News

Horwich RMI Club on Chorley New Road have opened a beer lounge with 6 hand pumps. Four are from their supplier, Heineken, and at least one is from award-winning local brewery Blackedge. CAMRA members are accepted at any time with 20p discount on the beer. Open 12-12 every day.

Farnworth Social Circle Cricket Club has two handpumps with Bank Top or Thwaites on the bar when the Club is open.

Bank Top Brewery, Bolton's oldest and most acclaimed brewery, continue to reap awards for their splendid cask ales as **Dark Mild** is crowned **Champion Mild of Britain** at the **Great British Beer Festival (GBBF)** in the Mild Category, one of just 7 Categories being judged. Over 350 different breweries were featured at the Great British Beer Festival held at London's Olympia Exhibition Centre, where 55,000 people are expected to attend over the 5 day event. The Festival commenced on Tuesday 12 August with the judging session and subsequent announcement at 3.30pm being the highlight of the day where Brewers from across the Country waited with baited breath for judges to seal their fate!



None more so than Dave Sweeney who had travelled down to the Festival with his wife Angela, Brewery Manager Neil Turner and his wife Caron, the foursome together also manage Bank Top Brewery Estates – **The Brewery Tap** and **The Ale House**, two fine Bolton establishments. Sales and Marketing Manager Mick Finn also joined them on the trip, so when the announcement was made the cheers and whoops of celebration could be heard across the Hall at Olympia from the large Bank Top Brewery contingent.

Dave Sweeney for the first time, almost speechless did comment 'I am absolutely overwhelmed, we are all shaking with shock and delight at this prestigious accolade being awarded to **Bank Top Brewery**. Our win has had a fantastic reception from all Brewer's here at the GBBF – thank you'.

Once he had regained his composure from the shock, Dave also said 'This annual event has always been fantastic to attend, and it is obvious that the enthusiasm for beer drinking is still going strong and people are as passionate as they have ever been'.

Dave also said of the Dark Mild 'Apart from winning many Beer Festival awards, Bank Top Dark Mild has beaten off stiff competition and gained 5 major SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers Association) awards and 6 major CAMRA awards over the years. In fact, if the Dark Mild were a horse it would quite possibly have been put out to stud by now having proved itself on so many occasions.

Dave is now looking forward to accepting the GBBF Champion Mild award when it is officially presented at a presentation dinner being held at Kettering Park Hotel, Northamptonshire on 25 October 2014

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The Adventures of a Beer Break delivery man - Part One

First drop off was **Tavern Fayre (formerly Tavern on the Hill)** Hunger Hill a large open plan pub restaurant predominantly geared for diners but with Real Ale. The only negative aspect was achieving access to the establishment. The two doors at the front are emergency exit only. I had earned a pint by the time I had found my way in round the back across a huge car park. If you have mobility difficulties don't bother and if you don't have walking difficulties but are as dumb as me you will have by the time you make it to the bar. Nevertheless I was greeted most warmly in a very CAMRA friendly pub. Three hand-pumps dispensing *Copper Dragon Sun Chaser* £2:60 *Pictish Alchemy* and *St Austell Liquid Sunshine*. I sampled the former which scored a very acceptable 3

made all the more satisfying with the extremely generous 60p off for CAMRA members. The enthusiastic young barman sent over the manageress who explained that Craft Beers also attract a discount for CAMRA members. She added that the beers rotate with Harvest Pale and Summer Lightening next up. Future events planned include Home Made Pork Pie with a pint initiative to illustrate that beer can be enjoyed as an accompaniment to savoury pastries as well as wine.

Next stop was **Three Pigeons** Wigan Road. I had been warned not to expect Cask and sure enough this was the case. Consequently I had to resort to a pint of "Satans Urine" (smooth flow beer) *Greene King Smoothflow* £2:80 wasn't too offensive and the barmaid happily accepted my pamphlets.

Queen Anne Wigan Road was a slightly surreal experience. One room with lots of wood and a group of regulars who seemed perplexed that I was sat down scribbling notes. Two hand-pumps but only one active. The chap on the bar took my pamphlets but he seemed puzzled by the concept of a Real Ale magazine. I must admit I feared the worst as he pulled a pint of *Cross Bay Zenith* 5% ABV imagining it would be better served over my chips! How wrong could I be? - it was gorgeous and cost a staggering £2:10 scoring 3.5. I would happily have stayed for another pint but duty called.

I was brought up in the area and for no better reason than to reminisce I next visited the **Vulcan** Junction Road. No Real Ale but I was made very welcome sunk half a pint of *Stella* @ £1:50 chatted to the three other punters in attendance about Bolton Wanderers, dropped off my pamphlets and left.

I had purposely left one of my favourite pubs until last **Kings Head** Junction Road. A charming Olde Worlde pub full of Horse Brasses with several defined drinking areas, a Bowling Green and views over Deane Clough and Deane Golf Club. Perhaps it was the Cross Bay Zenith seeping through but I announced myself to Bob the landlord before I ordered my beer. Bob insisted it was "on the house" which left me feeling somewhat embarrassed. I explained that wasn't what I was looking for. Appropriately I has a very decent pint of *Timothy Taylor Landlord* which scored 2.5.



Given the generosity of my welcome I felt obliged to pay for the other Cask Ale available a pint of *Bank Top Flat Cap* £2:60 which scored an equally acceptable 2.5. I confirmed that I will return with the next issue of Beer Breaks and that I do not expect a free pint! Overall a very pleasant and entertaining afternoon.

Best Regards—**BBDM**

The Greater Manchester Alcohol Strategy

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (who knew such a thing existed) has launched a new Alcohol Strategy. At the same time, separate statistics show that alcohol consumption has fallen 18% in the last decade¹ Alcohol-related crime is down by nearly a third since 2004² while alcohol-related traffic accidents are down 44% since 2000³. Maybe the strategy has taken this sort of evidence into account?

Perhaps it also celebrated the fabulous success of beer producers in the area? Bank Top, one of the town's great local businesses, has just won one of the top accolades for a brewer in this country by winning Gold for its Dark Mild at CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain awards. Bolton's other breweries, Blackedge and Dunsar Bridge, were also represented at Britain's showpiece Great British Beer Festival and are both expanding businesses that reflect very well on the town.

But the new Alcohol Strategy is nothing but negative. In the press release, Mike Connelly, Leader of Bury Council calls the impact of alcohol "a scourge on our society." The Strategy suggests that alcohol abuse costs Greater Manchester £1.2 billion a year. Yes, you read it right. £1.2 BILLION! This figure includes such things as alcohol related crime, which we know is decreasing. It measures alcohol-related health harm, certainly a serious issue, but the purported rise in alcohol-related hospital admissions is largely down to changes in the way these are recorded by including more incidents not directly related to alcohol consumption. Even

the supposed cost of unemployment amongst drinkers is taken into account! No mention of the £33 billion reportedly brought into the country's economy by beer and pubs².

The Strategy states that it wants to "establishing diverse, vibrant and safe night-time economies."

Political rhetoric at its best.

Much of the Strategy simply suggests stronger implementation of regulations which have already been working for years to reduce crime. And to add further insult, its co-signatory is none other than Leader of Bolton Council, Cliff Morris. Not many people would believe that someone who has helped to oversee planning and licensing policies that have helped to destroy the diversity of Bolton town centre nightlife is now putting his name behind these words.

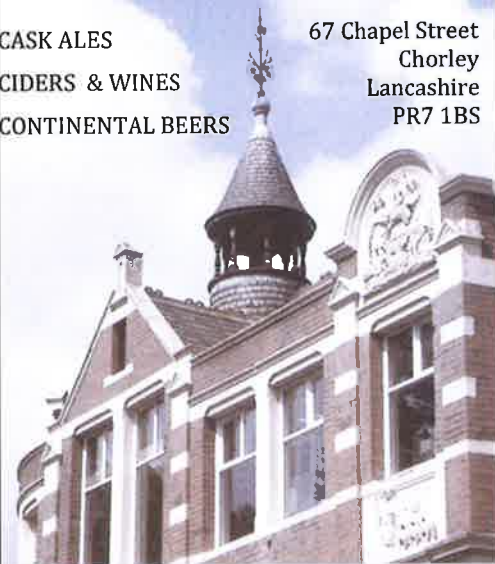
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Of course the document also proposes to press for limits on strong alcoholic drinks. So that could be the end of some of Britain's finest beers which come in at more than 5%. It also is fully behind the Minimum Unit Pricing policy which, if it ever comes to pass, will probably raise the price of your pint over time.

Despite all the Greater Manchester authorities backing the Strategy, it seems unlikely that the Authority will have the power or desire to do anything about supermarkets, the biggest offenders when it comes to virtually uncontrolled marketing of cheap alcohol. Pubs and bars, despite demonstrating that they are mostly controlled and safe drinking environments, will probably take the brunt of any action by being forced to pay for increased restrictions and security. Imagine a happier world where instead of demonising drink the Council promoted beer served in the pub, one of Britain's greatest products served in probably our finest institution, as means to help revitalise our town centre. Unfortunately this Strategy seems to be one that will just bring more closed pubs and boarded up properties.

¹ British Beer & Pub Association

² Office of National Statistics

³ Dept of Transport

You can read the Greater Manchester Alcohol Strategy at:

http://www.agma.gov.uk/cms_media/files/gm_alcohol_strategy_web.pdf?static=1

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