

Camra Bolton Branch and its Pubs 2016

Bolton Branch Pubs included in the 2016 Good Beer Guide were

Bolton – Alma, Bank Top Brewery Tap, Barristers, Bob's Smithy, Bolton Ukrainian Club, Hen & Chickens, Kings Head, Spinning Mule, Tavern Fayre

Harwood – House Without a Name

Horwich – Bank Top Brewery Ale House, Crown, Old Original Bay Horse, Victoria & Albert

Branch Meetings 2016 (Incomplete)

Bob's Smithy 17/02/16 Committee

Black Horse (Kearsley) 16/03/16

Old Man & Scythe 31/03/16

Millstone 19/04/16 Committee

Balmoral 28/04/16

Doffcocker 19/05/16 Committee

Millstone 02/06/16

Ellesmere Club 23/06/16 Committee

Great Ale at the Market 07/07/16

Bank Top Brewery 04/08/16

Blackedge Brewery Bar 18/08/16 Committee

UKI Club 07/09/16

Star & Garter 22/09/16 Committee

Millstone 06/10/16

Millstone 03/11/16

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Bolton Camra Beer Festival **14th—16th April, Bolton Ukrainian Club. Opening times vary (see ad on previous page)**

March 31st—Branch meeting, **Olde Man & Scythe**, Churchgate. Start 8:15pm

April 28th—Branch meeting, **The Balmoral**, Bradshawgate. Start 8:15pm

26th May—Branch meeting, **Blackedge Brewery Bar**, Horwich. Start 8:15pm

30th June—Branch meeting, **The Millstone**, Crown Street. Start 8:15pm

At time of going to press, the only confirmed venue for the branch meetings above is the March meeting at the Olde Man & Scythe. Please keep an eye on our website, where all branch meeting dates and venues are confirmed

http://bolton.camra.org.uk/category/diary_events/

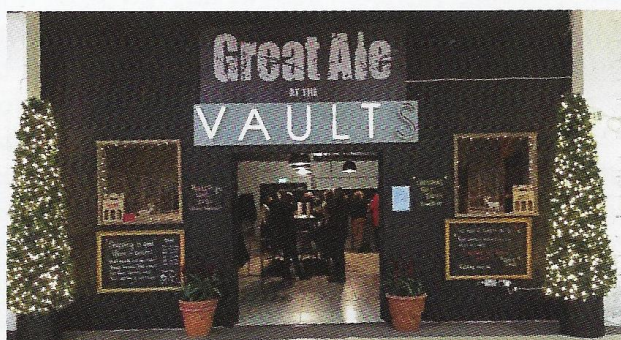
There be Great Ale in the Market Place!

I just happened to be strolling through the Market Place on a cold mid-November evening, when I chanced upon the Great Ale at the Vaults temporary pop-up bar? Situated in the unit next to New Look, and a much larger space than I'd expected, it was full of customers enjoying real ales from Marble, Brightside, Front Row, and Seven Bro7hers breweries, with all found to be in good condition.

Proprietors, Steve and Anne Simms, had been hoping to locate their bar in its permanent position in the Market Place vaults in December, but as work on the building is running a little behind schedule, Bolton Council had worked with the couple to provide this temporary arrangement in the meantime. Steve said, "We're really excited with the way people have already taken to the bar, and the Council have been pretty good with us."

Guess we'll all have to wait until Spring 2016 when the bar really does enter the vaults, but sampling a few beers and ciders at the, busy, pop-up bar is a great way to pass the time!

<http://whatpub.com/pubs/BOL/406/great-ale-at-the-vaults-bolton>



Black Beered

PUB NEWS FEBRUARY 2016

September 2015 was a bad month for pub closures with **Daisy Hill Hotel** closing on the 3rd, it's now being converted to residential use. This was followed on the 16th by the **Founders** on St Georges St and then by the **Dunscar Arms** on the 30th, there is a planning application pending for conversion to flats although the pub itself has a large banner outside indicating a potential restaurant opportunity. January 10th was the last day at Bolton's most infamous pub the **Rocket**, apparently local souvenir hunters had a field day.

Up in Egerton the **Cross Guns** is currently closed as Enterprise Inns are looking for new a tenant. Also currently closed is the Karaoke Bar on Bradshawgate.

Another of our Bravo Inns pubs the **Shakespeare** in Farnworth has introduced Lancaster Blonde at £1.99 a pint. This was closely followed by the Market on Brackley Street where cask beer has been reintroduced after many years absence, Timothy Taylors Landlord at £2.00 a pint has been one of their guest beers. **The Kings Arms** on Plodder Lane/Mossfield Rd has installed additional handpumps with recent guest beers available from Exmoor, Oakham and Phoenix breweries.



Meanwhile in Horwich the **Bridge** has reintroduced two cask beers, the **Rabbit Saloon** now has a handpump on the bar selling Hophurst beers from Wigan. The Crown is now refurbished and offers a selection of Guest Beers from local breweries as well as those from the Holts range. The **Horwich Park Inn**, also known as the Harvesters near the Macron Stadium, is now serving cask beer, recently Thwaites Wainwright and Sharps Doom Bar.

Bunbury's, a Micro Bar has opened at 397, Chorley Old Road with three cask beers available from a wide range of local breweries as well as a choice of bottled beers. Also opened on Market Street in Westhoughton is **Provenance** a first floor bar restaurant which has been selling a Blackedge beer, usually Pike, although this may not now be the case.

A temporary sister Micro Bar to Great Ale at the Market, called **Great Ale at the Vaults** opened in the Market Place in time for Christmas, but has now closed pending a move downstairs to a permanent location. Opening is expected in mid March.

Other new cask beer outlets are at the **Lever Bridge** on Radcliffe Road where Robinsons Dizzy Blonde is now available, the **Morris Dancers** in Morris Green is now putting the handpumps to good use where Bank Top Flat Cap has replaced the Lees Bitter that was originally available. The takeover of Spirit group by Greene King has meant Greene King IPA is now on sale at their Fayre and Square outlet Cotton Kier at the Valley Leisure Park.



The Red Lion at Blackrod is expected to close and be demolished soon, but it has been noted as selling Reedley Hallows beers, so a good excuse for a last visit. The Bolton News reported that the landlord would be moving across the road to the Conservative Club, so we might get a New Red Lion or a Blue Lion as a replacement?

In Bromley Cross the **Railway Venue** is to change from being a music venue to a food venue, it is not thought the house beer Misty Mountain Hop will survive the pubs transformation, but hopefully other cask beers will replace it. Also in Bromley Cross at the **Courtyard Bar and Drop Inn** at the **Last Drop** have been noted selling a Dunscar Bridge beer.

The council's second refusal for the already completed alterations to retail at the closed **Ante-**

lope in Kearsley was over ruled by the planning inspectorate on appeal by the owner. The closed **Stags Head** on St Helens Road also has a second planning application pending after a previous refusal, whilst in Farnworth the 'old' Rose and Crown opposite the Freemasons had a successful planning application to reopen as a pub/restaurant after retail/office use.

On Blackburn Road the **Brierfield** has been sold and closed on January 6th it is now fenced off. The **Brass Cat** on Churchgate is for sale, but no takers yet. The Bolton News told us that the **Swan** and the **Flying Flute** were up for sale too but failed to mention that this had been the case for at least the last two years. Are the rumours true that Wetherspoons have made a move for the Swan, only time will tell.

After bringing the **Hen & Chickens** back to its former glory, licencees Ian and Sue are moving on to take life easy. We wish them the very best. It is hoped the pub will continue to serve some of the best real ale in the town although there are concerns about its long term future if the Cheadle Square area is redeveloped along with the bus station. The Branch will keep an eye on the plans.



Finally, congratulations go to **Bob's Smithy Inn** on Chorley Old Rd who were voted the Branch Pub of the Season for Winter 2015/16. The award was reward for their wonderful ales, including former Champion Beer of Britain Timothy Taylor's Boltmaker, as well as the excellent service and immaculate surroundings.

Graham Walsh, branch chair is shown presenting the award to Stewart Brookes

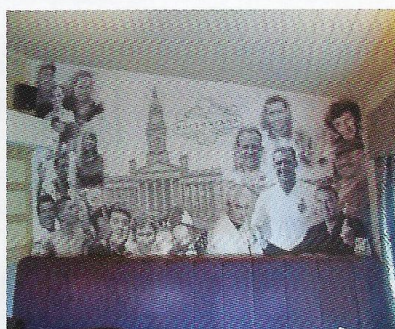
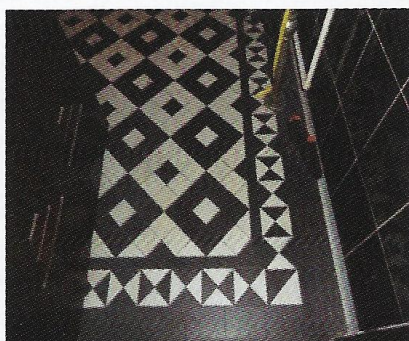
EDITORS NOTE

Sharp eyed readers will have noted that one of the pubs on our cover was the cover star for our previous issue. The image then was from a picture library and turned out to be over 5 years old. This was an oversight on my part and I would like to take the opportunity to apologise to Stewart, Lorraine & Jordan. It was in no way a reflection on them or the pub

GUESS THE PUB

Below are two more internal images from two of our out of town, and possibly less visited pubs. Both are different in character and provide very different atmospheres.

The images in the last edition were from the House Without a Name and the Brooklyn. Good luck



ATTENTION REAL-ALE DRINKERS!!!

If you want to try a genuinely new experience and a different type of watering-hole, then make your way to 397 Chorley Old Road, just above the junction with Ivy Road. The proprietors are Darryl Leech and his wife, Sarah who have given up their jobs as teachers at a local comprehensive school to take up a new career running this recently opened Minibar which they have named **BUNBURY'S** after a character in Oscar Wilde's classic play "The Importance Of Being Earnest".

Darryl admits that to move from a loose idea of selling real ale to the concrete reality of Bunbury's entailed an arduous process which lasted the best part of two years. Darryl and Sarah had to develop and later redraft a business plan, negotiate and take on a business/career loan and get involved with local government to obtain planning permission for Bunbury's. This latter point Darryl regards as the biggest hurdle to get over and one which was only managed at the second attempt.

As a newcomer to the business, Darryl worked part-time at the Great Ale bar in Bolton Market to gain experience and expertise. When Bunbury's opened, he dealt with local breweries, Black Edge, Brightside, Irwell Works and Rivington. But as well as serving draught beers, Darryl also sees the bottled



trade as at least as important; the distributors he uses here are in particular Cave Direct and Vertical Drinks.

Given that Bunbury's is an out of town minibar, it is important to point out the difference between sales of draught beer and sales of bottled beer. After a few weeks of business, it is apparent, says Darryl, that he is selling slightly more bottled beers than draught, perhaps in the ratio of 5.5 to 4.5. In bottled beers Bunbury's has a wide range (which is increasing weekly) both of British and foreign ales. For instance, there are currently beers from France, Belgium, Holland, Germany and other European countries and even from as far away as Brazil.

While talking about beer and what he is trying to promote, Darryl's eyes light up with the fervour of the true evangelist. He is quite passionate about choice and diversity of taste so much so that he currently has at least 85 different bottled beers available and is hopeful that sometime in the future there will be up to 200. His bottle sales are also divided between in-house drinking of bottles and the takeaway trade. About the former he waxes lyrical, arguing that customers have been won over to new taste experiences by trying a bottle at the bar. Indeed, a small group of regulars aged under 40, has, he reckons, started to drink their way through his bottle range. In Bunbury's the small L-shaped bar has three beer engines for real ale and three taps for lager and keg beers. Darryl estimates that of his draught sales approximately 50% is cask, 30% is lager and 20% keg. His broad objective is to have as cask ales one tap generally serving a pale or bitter beer, one serving a darker beer, say mild or porter, and one serving a strong brew of 5.5% ABV and upwards.

He only serves good quality lager; the one available on my visit was Paulaner. When it comes to keg,

Darryl says he has introduced a couple of samples of Key Kegs which are, according to the December edition of What's Brewing, classifiable as real ale.

He is hoping to hold events there; the first one was a book reading session by Dave Hadfield, a local journalist, which was well attended. But there will also be "meet the brewer promotions" and tasting sessions. To sum up, I would say that Bunbury's is nothing like your average pub and rather different to the other minibars I have visited in the north west and you are strongly recommended to try it.

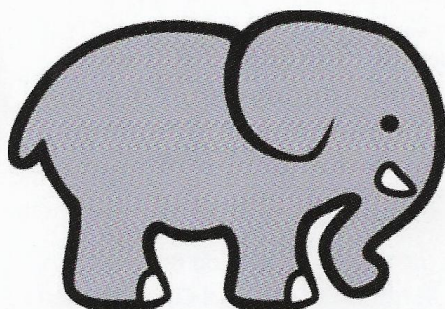
Telemachus





**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Bolton CAMRA



Beer Festival

April 14th – 16th 2016

Thursday - Saturday

Thursday 14th April

4:00-10:30pm

Friday 15th April

12:00-10:30pm

Saturday 16th April

12:00-10:30pm

at

Bolton Ukrainian Club

99 Castle Street
Bolton BL2 1JP

ADMISSION £2

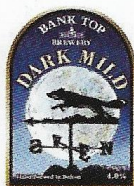
(except Friday
after 5:30pm £3)
plus £2 (refundable)
glass hire

**50+ Real Ales
Cider & Perry**

**Plus selection of bottled
Continental Beers**

HOT FOOD,
Soft Drinks & snacks
available at all sessions

*Poster kindly
sponsored by:*



CAMRA members **FREE ADMISSION**
Except Friday after 5:30pm, only £2
(on production of valid membership card)

Over 18s ONLY except Saturday before 7:00pm

Supporting



Bolton Hospice
caring from the heart

Registered Charity
No. 519704

www.boltonbeerfestival.org.uk



@BoltonCAMRAbeer



BoltonCAMRAfestival

This festival is entirely staffed by volunteers and if you feel you can offer some time (even if it is only an hour!) please go to the website and complete the online application:

<http://www.boltonbeerfestival.org.uk/volunteer/>

Pub News

As part of a national campaign using new government legislation to provide more protection for pubs from being indiscriminately closed and sold for alternative uses, three pubs in Bolton have now been listed as Assets of Community Value by Bolton Council, following requests from Bolton CAMRA Branch members. These are the Shakespeare in Farnworth, the Bridge in Horwich and the Finishers in Bolton. More pubs are in the pipeline and requests will be made for these to be listed in the coming months. This legislation came too late for the more than 60 pubs that were closed in Bolton Metro from 2009 to 2015.

The temporary Great Ale at the Vaults closed and was replaced by the new bar downstairs in the new vaults development at the Market Place, expect to find four hand pumps on the bar, one serving a house beer brewed by Outstanding in Bury and three guest beers from small breweries far and wide. Elsewhere in the town centre The Flying Flute has started selling Bank Top Flat Cap and Thatchers Cheddar Valley Cider, whilst upstairs it is the new home to the ex Moses Gate Music venue, which moved after failing to agree terms with the owners of the Moses Gate which is now closed. The Brass Cat has also reopened but the opportunity to install cask beer has once again been missed.

The Red Lion in Blackrod is still open but is no longer selling cask beer, demolition has been expected for the last couple of months following planning approval for new houses.

Fine words by council planners in 2014 when they approved conversion of the recently closed Arkwrights Ale House from a pub to a house counted for nothing when new owners applied to demolish the pub, presumably for an identikit style new house build.

The retention of the public house building is welcomed, it is an attractive red brick, Victorian structure which has great presence in the built environment. The change of use of the redundant building will ensure its long term retention which is central to the conservation and enhancement of local distinctiveness.

By 2016 this became an EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) for the demolition of the building is therefore not required and prior approval is not required for this reason.

The Elephant and Castle on Deansgate were granted planning approval for tables and chairs outside on the pavement adjacent to Preston's. Not surprisingly Preston's had objected as this might put off their customers window shopping prior to spending a few grand on a new Rolex or gold chain etc, but to no avail. Similarly the York applied for tables and chairs at the side of the pub but this was refused as it is contrary to the aspirations of the council's street cafe guidelines. It seems the council planners believe the good customers of the Elephant and Castle will all be eating food outside and will thus be quiet and well behaved, whereas those at the York will only be drinking and will be very noisy and rowdy over and above the noise coming from the interchange opposite.

Plans have been submitted for a new Micropub at the bottom end of Market Street in Westhoughton near the Wheatsheaf, plans have also been submitted by Drink Up Brewery for Horwich's first Micropub called DubTAP at 179 Lee Lane, next door but one to the Bowling Green.

However the planning officer's report dated 24th May recommends refusal to the planning committee mainly on the grounds of noise to the residents living either side of the DubTAP. Horwich town council did not object, let's see who the planning committee will agree with.

The Gypsy's Tent closed back in 2009 and has been a boarded up eyesore ever since but it is up for auction in mid June with a guide price of £70,000, though you can buy from an estate agent now for £120,000!

Also up for auction is the ex Rose and Crown on Market Street in Farnworth, this has a guide price of £200,000 and comes with planning permission for conversion back to a pub and restaurant upstairs.

Presentations

Club of the Year & Pub of the Year



The **Ukrainian Club** has once again been voted CAMRA Club of the Year, which is a fine achievement for a club that always has three hand pumps, generally serving one dark and two lighter ales, along with a range of Ukrainian beers also.

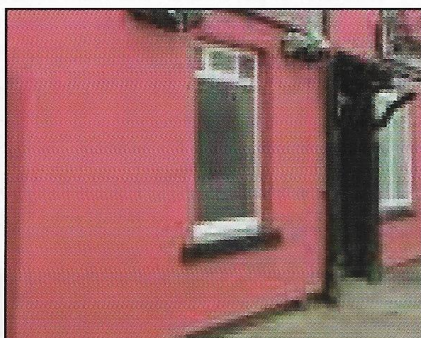


Great Ale at the Market has been voted Bolton Pub of the Year and is entirely deserved.

Here, our chair presents the certificates to Paul at the club and Steve and Anne in the market.

Guess the Pub

Here are two more for you to try, both of them relatively close to the town centre.



The answers from the last edition were the **Shakespeare** in Farnworth and the **Beaumont Arms** in Ladybridge.

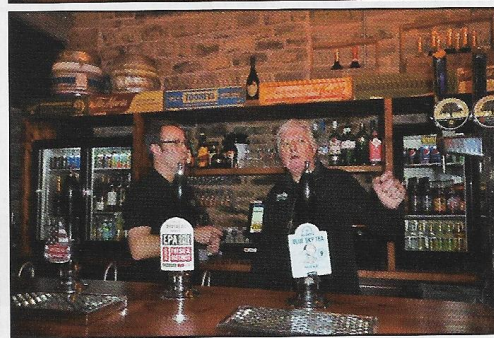
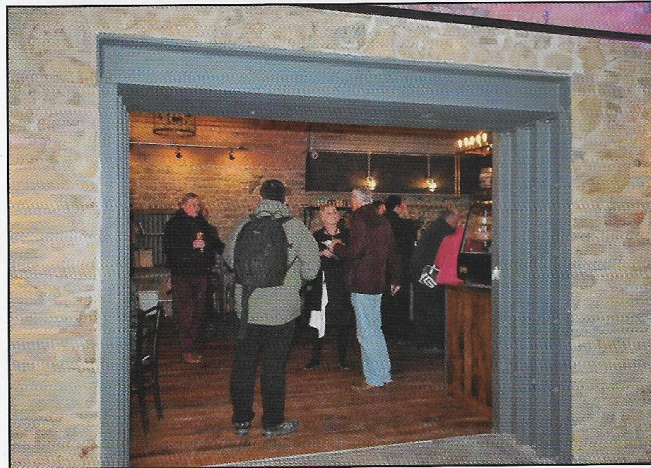
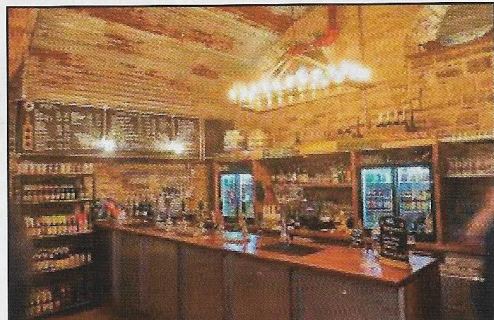
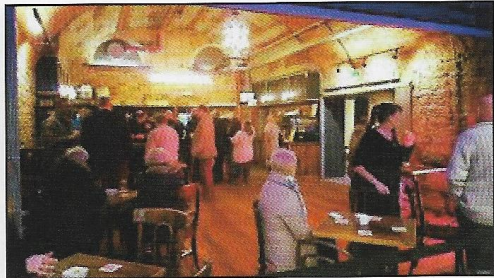
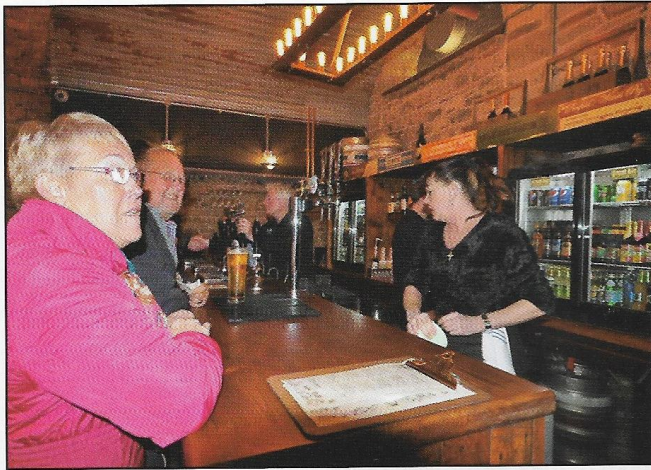


Great Ale at the Vaults

Opened on Wednesday March 23rd 2016, this is the sister micro pub to Great Ale at the Market and is located in the new lower Market Place Vaults development.

It is housed in one of the below ground level arches of the former Market Hall. The area has been refurbished and when completed will include several 'big-name' chain eateries as well as for what real ale drinkers would call the Great Ale in the Vaults as the 'jewel in the crown' of the development, which will include a nine-screen cinema later in the year.

The overall appearance of the bar is well in keeping with the Victorian Cellar in which it is housed. The long bar has four hand pumps serving three guest beers and one specially brewed ale for the Vaults by the Outstanding Brewery using Australian Hops. There is more connection with the antipodes as Steve Simms originates from down under and behind the bar is several interesting Aussie brewery and beer advertising metal plaques. The beer is kept in glass fronted chilled cupboards behind the bar. Paddles of 3 1/3rds of cask ale are available. The Vaults opens all year round except on Easter Sunday and Christmas Day. May close earlier when quiet!



Beer Festival Unstirred by “Milk Shake” Success!

The recent Bolton CAMRA Beer Festival showcased 50 UK beers, of which two were ‘milk stouts’. The old beer style (most commonly associated with ‘Coronation Street’ characters, Ena Sharples and Minnie Caldwell: circa 1960s/70s) made a strong impression, claiming first and third places in the attendees’ popular vote.

In the end, it was Bristol based brewers, Wiper & True who topped the vote with their “Milk Shake”, whilst Bury based brewers Outstanding, had to settle for overall third place with their collaboratively brewed “Lacuna”, a modern take on this beer style, using the Sorachi Ace hop.



“Milk stout is a traditional beer which isn’t found in our pubs very often these days, but to have two of them voted into our top three is fantastic, and shows that people are gaining an appreciation for the style”, said Festival Organiser, Pete Kobryn.

In offering a Boltonian menu, a big success was the Saturday barbecue provided by Nkono (from Bolton Markets) and the mead, produced in Horwich, by Lancashire Mead Co. All six Bolton brewers’ (Bank Top; Blackedge; Dunsar Bridge; Drink Up Brewing; Hogarths; and nano-brewery, Holywell) were represented in the beer line-up.



The eclectic and challenging list of 50 beers and the

10 ciders were lapped up by near 1000 enthusiastic drinkers; in particular, the milk stouts.

“First time, absolutely loving it! Thanks to all volunteers, you make it such a fun experience!”, Emma.

“I go to lots of beer festivals, this is one of the best...great beer, great food, great people; I love it!”, Rebecca.



“We were treated to three delicious cakes (made by DecorCakes) made with beer and cider! Thanks.”, Bolton Live.

“Amazing selection of ciders.....and not the usual suspects!”, Steve.

“Mmmmm proper food!”, Caroline.

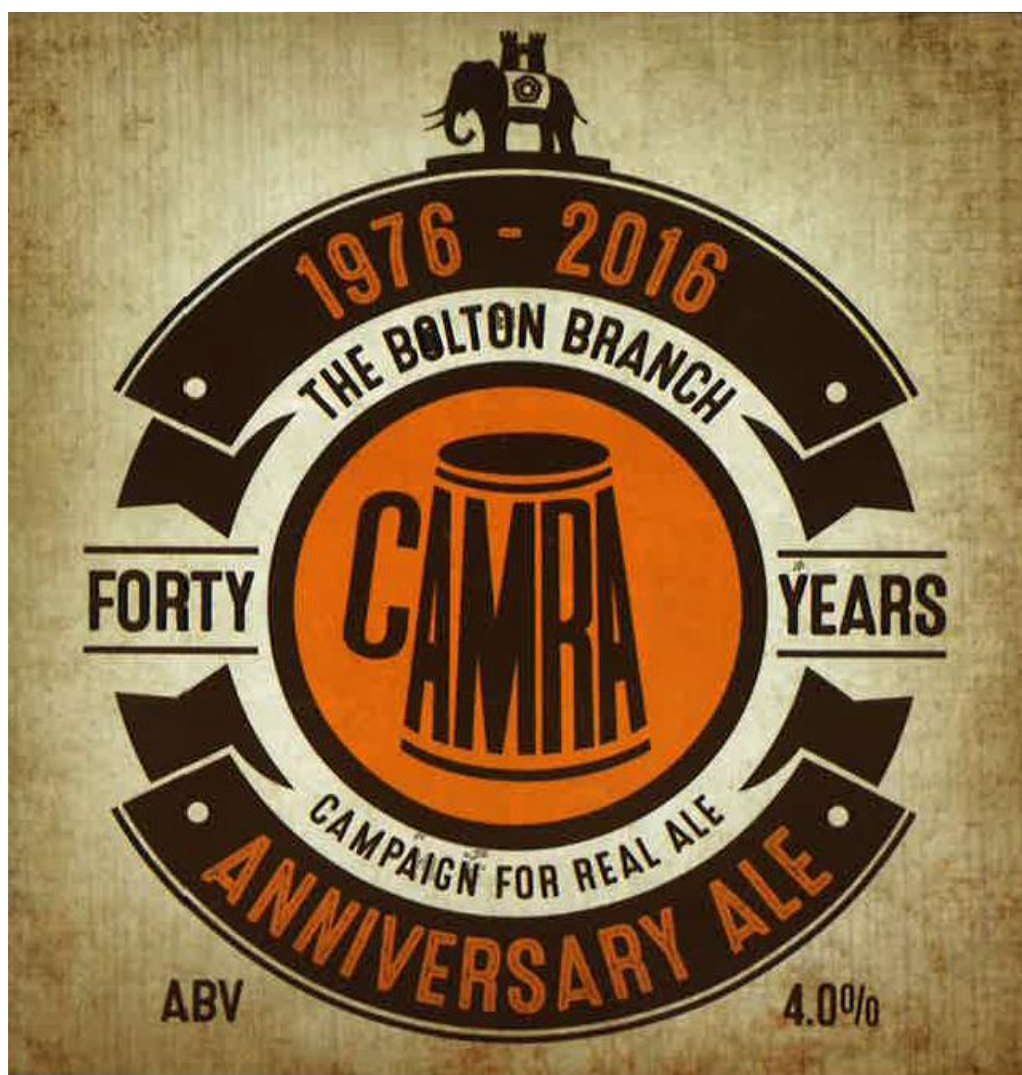
“Already on the Lacuna Milk Stout!”, Daniel.

“I am at (Bolton CAMRA Beer Festival) and it’s BRILLIANT! Lots of brilliant beers and lovely volunteers. Woohoo!”, Rachel.

As the festival closed, Pete mused, “Guess we’ll have to order more beer and cider next year, but can we improve on the line-up? We just can’t stop planning!”

For more information about cask beer and real cider around Bolton

please visit www.bolton.camra.org.uk



What a pleasure and honour it gives me to be Chairman of Bolton CAMRA on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Branch. I am far too young to remember its formation at the inaugural Branch Meeting in November 1976 in the Gypsy's Tent, a landmark pub now sadly long-closed. But I do know that, like all Branches, ours came about because people cared enough about saving real ale and pubs in their local area to campaign for their salvation. There are far too many to mention but I have great respect for the Chairs, officers and active members of the Branch who have played their part over the last 40 years. Thanks to all their efforts, the Branch now numbers around 800 members and has achieved many great successes.

Bolton Branch is probably more active than ever. Pub surveys are carried out across the town by members to help judging of annual and seasonal awards, updating of the fantastic WhatPub website and campaigning against damaging pub closures. Our Beer Festival, held in April at Bolton Ukrainian Club, takes months of careful planning. And not forgetting this publication, Beer Breaks, which is distributed by members to pubs across the town and beyond.

The last 40 years has seen massive changes in the beer industry, driven to a large extent by consumer pressure led by CAMRA and its passionate grassroots membership. In 1976, large brewers dominated, serving a limited choice of beer. Fast forward to today and Bolton reflects wider changes. It houses award-winning breweries such as Bank Top and Blackedge. There are even local cider producers. While numbers of pubs have dwindled, the proportion serving cask-conditioned beer and real cider has increased and the choice of styles is now better than ever.

The other day I wandered around the area where I grew up in Halliwell. The Gardeners Arms, lately Arkwrights, is now rubble, the Kings Arms now offices, the Sally Up Steps now a Thai Restaurant. But there is also Bunburys, one of the new era of microbars serving the very best of the wave of so-called craft beers. It is how CAMRA Branches respond to these changes in drinking culture which is likely to define the organisation's future and to some extent that of the industry. I am confident that real ale and real cider will continue to thrive because there are too many people in CAMRA, like those in Bolton over the last 40 years, who will demand it.

40th Anniversary

On Wednesday November 9th 1976 Wanderers beat Burnley 2-1 at Burnden Park in the 'old' Division 2. On the other side of town at the Gypsy's Tent on Deansgate the inaugural meeting of Camra Bolton Branch was held in the upstairs room. It is not possible to repeat the football match in 2016, nor can we hold our 40th anniversary meeting in the upstairs room at the Gypsy's Tent as it has been closed for nearly 10 years now, though recently it has been sold and a Planning Application is pending to convert it into apartments, just the same fate that has happened to many other Bolton Pubs open in 1976 but which have since closed.

A Guide to Good Beer in Bolton (100 Bolton Pubs) by John Stott in 1976 (cost 20p) makes reference to 'The only real voice of the beer drinker is the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) and it needs all the support it can get. Thanks to CAMRA the brewers are no longer having it their own way. All drinkers who are seriously concerned about having true and reasonable choice in British pubs, have a responsibility to join and to actively support CAMRA. A branch of CAMRA is being set up in Bolton at the present time.'

Originally Bolton Branch which covers the same area as the council's boundaries was part of the North Manchester Branch which covered most of the northern half of what was then the 2 year old but still new County of Greater Manchester. In 1975 the Metropolitan Boroughs of Rochdale, Oldham and Bury had been devolved into a separate Camra Branch and Bolton followed suit in 1976 after a meeting to test support held in the Sweet Green Tavern had overwhelmed the then much smaller pub.

The March 1977 edition of What's Doing (The Greater Manchester Beer Drinkers Monthly Magazine) contained the first article from the new Bolton Branch.

BOLTON BRANCH

At last, after many months of planning and organising, Bolton's own branch of CAMRA has got off the ground.

Bolton is often regarded by some members of neighbouring branches as somewhat of a desert for real ale drinkers. Although there is a certain amount of truth in this idea when Bolton is compared to some other areas of Greater Manchester, it has, nevertheless, not only got a high proportion of pubs selling real ale but also has a large number of brews available in the town centre and surrounding area.

Bolton no longer has any of its own working breweries, the last ones to brew in the town being Magee Marshall and Company (whose Crown Brewery still stands) and Howcroft's Brewery, both of which closed in 1978. Many remnants of once popular Boltonian brews can still be seen in the form of monograms on buildings and frosted glass windows. These include such names as John Hamers Voluntary Brewery, Joseph Sharman's Merehall Brewery, William Tong and Sons Diamond Brewery and the Rose and Crown Brewery.

The fact that the town once had a number of its own breweries reflects in the choice the real ale drinker now has in Bolton. The brews available in or around the town centre include Boddingtons, Bass Charringtons, Wilsons, Greenall Whitleys, Telleys, Burtonwoods and Thwaites. Farther out from the centre, Holts and Lion Ales (sadly now nearly all top pressure in the Bolton area) are available. Bolton comes close to also having a Hydes pub in its area. This arises from the fact that the border between Bolton and Bury at one point runs down the old Roman road of Watling Street. The Pack Horse Hotel (an excellent Hydes pub) stands on one side - the Bury side - whilst the 'unofficial' car park stands on the other, Bolton, side. Incidentally, the 'unofficial' car park is owned by a local farmer who, no matter what the weather, takes care of your car for a fee of 12p per evening. Inflation must strike all, as originally this fee was, I'm told, only 1p.

A meeting to test support for the formation of a Bolton branch of CAMRA was held in October in the Sweet Green Tavern. A room set aside for the meeting, capable of holding perhaps a dozen or so people, was seen to be completely insufficient when 30 or 40 people turned up.

A second meeting was quickly arranged for the following month at a larger venue in the Gypsy's Tent on Deansgate. On this occasion it coincided with a re-arranged midweek match at Burnden Park and consequently the meeting suffered quite heavily from this. It looked as if nothing could go wrong for the inaugural but three weeks before the meeting Tetley Walker (in one of whose houses the inaugural was to be held) went on strike! Fortunately, thanks to Harry, the landlord of the Gypsy's Tent, the meeting was blessed with Jennings beer from Cockermouth and everything went well. It could be pointed out that during the period of the strike the number of brews in Bolton could have put even the best areas of Greater Manchester to shame: such exotic brews as Jennings, Hartleys of Ulverston and Theakstons were available as well as Robinsons, Camerons and Scottish and Newcastle.

The branch has now been active for about four months and good relationships have been built up with a number of landlords in the area. The recent takeover by Burtonwoods of the Rawson Arms in Farnworth provided a good opportunity to meet officials from the brewery and to talk about Burtonwoods!

More detailed information about historical branch activities in the early days, Bolton's Pubs and their beers can be found on the branch website at <http://bolton.camra.org.uk/bolton-camra-quiz> and yes there is a quiz too.

Look out for future Beer Breaks articles in our anniversary year about Bolton Pubs, Breweries and their beers in Bolton and our Beer Festivals.

Pub News

The 2016 Good Beer Guide listed **Hen & Chickens** on Deansgate was closed by Punch Taverns on August Bank Holiday Monday. There had been a succession of temporary managers at the pub since April and many of the regulars and the Quiz teams had moved on elsewhere. As the pub is adjacent to the soon to be closed Moor Lane Bus Station rumours were rife that a 'deal' had been done with the council over the closure, but the Bolton News reported it would soon reopen, but a month later it hasn't. Punch Taverns website normally lists their pubs that are available to let, but the Hen & Chickens is yet to appear. Like in many parts of the country Punch Taverns don't have a good track record with their pubs, since 2009 in Bolton Metro 16 out of their 36 pubs have been closed. However, the good news is that the pub has been listed as Asset of Community Value by Bolton Council which provides some level of protection regarding its future use.

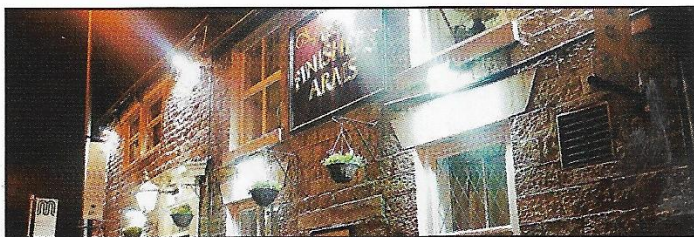
Other pubs recently closed are **The Railway** at Bromley Cross, **Lever Bridge** at Darcy Lever who are looking for new tenants whilst in Brightmet the **Withins** is boarded up and fenced off, future unknown. The **Blue Boar** on Deansgate was also closed in early August, here Corporate Property at the town hall are showing as the business rates account holders.

The new micropub at 88, Market Street in Westhoughton, will be called **The Beer School** and is expecting to open in early October.

Elsewhere two Fayre & Square outlets, the **Red Lion** at Over Hulton and **Cotton Kier**, off Watersmeeting Road have been converted to Hungry Horse outlets, no doubt the **Beehive** near the Macron will soon follow. The **Three Pigeons** on Wigan Road has started selling cask beer again with Sharps Doom Bar and a guest beer being available. In Blackrod Hilltops Sports and Social on Hill Lane just off the

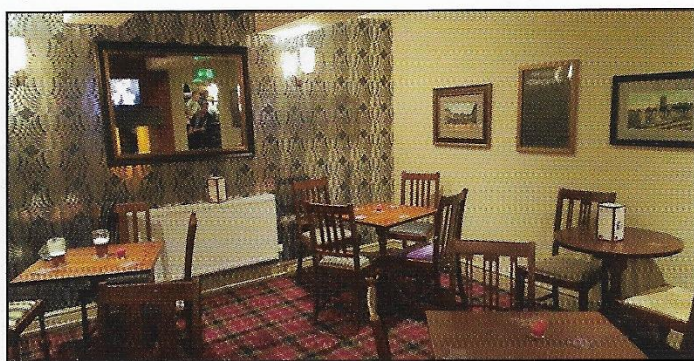
town centre has two handpumps which sell JW Lees beers, usually including the current seasonal one.

Finishers call to Arms Complete!



After a long-running planning battle, the Finishers Arms (Church Road, Heaton) has recently undergone a significant refurbishment, leading to it reopening late last year.

The bar has been relocated to the far end of the initial room, on entrance, and the two separate rooms to the right have been opened up somewhat, to permit easy access between them and the bar. Whilst an old curmudgeon, such as I, might lament the passing of the quaint front lounge, the overall effect of the modernisation is actually quite splendid!



The pub maintains its vibrant community feel and the local clientele on a Saturday night seemed appreciative of the alterations. Landlord, Dennis Holmes said, "We had to open up the layout of the pub so that customers can make full use of the rooms, yet still feel part of the overall atmosphere and what's going on. This refurbishment should help the pub to continue to serve the community for another 20 years."

The bar serves 4 real ales and a real cider on hand-pull; and with well-kept Bank Top and Blackedge beers available, I certainly enjoyed my pint, or 3.

<http://whatpub.com/pubs/BOL/035/finishers-arms-bolton>

Black Beered

Guess The Pub

Here are two more for you to try, one in the town centre, and one on a bus route out.

The answers from the last edition were the Lord Clyde and the Albion opposite the bus station.



The Following Pubs Closed in 2016

Brierfield Hotel 721, Blackburn Road. The pub just made it into 2016 and was closed by Punch Taverns on 06/01/2016. It had been for sale since September 2015; it was soon fenced off. On No Business Rates list 06/01/16, and was now owned by Ramsey Street Madrasah, Demolished w/c 27/03/20. Planning application 06545/19 was for approval to demolish the building. See Approved Planning Application 09635/20 for a new educational facility and Mosque.

Moses Gate 5, Bolton Road Moses Gate. The Pub/Music Venue had closed 18/03/16 after the pub landlord was unable to agree new terms with the owner, the pub itself looked in need of repairs and some maintenance. The music venue moved to the upstairs Function Room at the Flying Flute on Bradshawgate. On No Business Rates list 07/04/16, noted as for sale by Brookes Commercial Properties and boarded up 18/06/16. 07/16 now owned by GM Properties (Bolton) Ltd. Application 00902/17 is to demolish the property is adjudged not to require prior approval, earmarked for replacement with dwellings. Water main burst opposite pub requiring rebuild of railway embankment, caused road closure and pub to be cordoned off. See March 2018 Photos. It was demolished in June 2018. See also Bolton News 22/09/18 for comparative photos of pub from a Dutton pub in 1967 to a pile of rubble in 2018, the houses have never been built, it remains a vacant overgrown plot of land in 2026. It retained a Vaux Breweries sign high up on the rear wall until the end.

Rocket New Lane, Brightmet. Bolton's most infamous pub. Planning application 94799/15 was to demolish the pub and replace with a Spar convenience store is given the go ahead 19/11/15, pub closes 10/01/16, pub drunk dry and contents stripped out by souvenir hunters on last night. Boarded up and fenced off 12/04/16. Pub had been sold by Marston's to Spar before closure was announced in June 2015, the locals were very unhappy, and attempts were made to get an Asset of Community Value (ACV) from the council, but time was against this to meet the criteria. The pub was demolished and the Supermarket built on the car park. The pub had included a 'proper' Chippy using the left-hand entrance, so this brought even more resentment regarding the closure.

Blue Boar 96, Deansgate. The pub had closed in August with their facebook page advising that this was only temporary whilst it was refurbished it turned out that it been sold to Bolton Council Property arm so that it could become part of a development area. There were rumours that it would be reopened by the council, but this never happened. Given the council involvement it was not surprising perhaps that it took until July 2022 before it was eventually demolished.

Downtown 63, Bradshawgate. Pub closed on 31/10/2016 when the business transferred to Oscar's Bar on Nelson Square. It was leased to Castlefield Gallery then became empty premises.

The Following were new pubs in 2016.

dubTap 179, Lee Lane, Horwich. New Micropub called dubTap after nearby dub Brewery opened 03/06/16. Later known as Tap and Cork and then Loft.

Beer School 88, Market Street, Westhoughton. New Micropub opened 29/10/16 by Rachel Birch. There were four cask beers available, plus real Cider and a selection of bottled beers.

