

Camra Bolton Branch and its Pubs 2020

Bolton Branch Pubs included in the 2020 Good Beer Guide were

Bolton – Bank Top Brewery Tap, Barristers, Bolton Ukrainian Club, Bunburys, Great Ale at the Vaults, Hen & Chickens, Old Man & Scythe, One for the Road, Spinning Mule

Bromley Cross – Nook & Cranny

Harwood – House Without a Name

Horwich – Bank Top Brewery Ale House, Brewery Bar, Crown

Branch Meetings in 2020

Spinning Mule 09/01/2020

Sweet Green Tavern 16/01/2020 Committee

Swan 06/02/2020

Stopes Tavern 19/02/2020 Committee

Millstone 05/03/2020

Hope & Anchor 25/03/2020 Committee

Next Meeting was due to be at the Bridge Horwich 02/04/2020 but Covid intervened

Online Committee Meeting 18/05/2020

Online Committee Meeting 02/07/2020

Online Committee Meeting 23/07/2020

Online Committee Meeting 20/08/2020

Online Branch Meeting 03/09/2020

Online Committee Meeting 24/09/2020

Online Branch Meeting 01/10/2020

Online Committee Meeting 28/10/2020

Online Branch Meeting 05/11/2020

Latest News

PUB NEWS

In Horwich the **Bridge** reopened in early November and it has been transformed from the pub Enterprise Inns closed and sold a year earlier. The function room on the first floor has been restored, plus on the top floor 9 En Suite bedrooms are available. A selection of food is now available on a daily basis too and there are up to 4 cask beers on the bar, though the choice is less than inspiring, given what is available in many of the other local pubs. Greene King IPA and Abbot and Moorhouse's White Witch, also available is Lancashire Gold which fails to mention who brews it both on the pumpclip and cask label too.

The **Blackedge Brewery Tap** on Market Street Westhoughton opened in late September with seven of their wide selection of real ales on handpump plus others on the keg taps. There is also a selection of six or seven ciders available as well.

In Morris Green the **Morris Dancers** no longer sells Holts Bitter, elsewhere the recently opened **Little Vic** on Chorley New Road in Horwich no longer sells real ale either, perhaps the real ale drinkers were a bit put off by the bright pink spotlights round the bar?

It seems that Punch Taverns have changed their minds about selling the **Hen & Chickens** so the activation of the ACV for community bids was not required.

The planning application to build new houses behind **Roka** on Bradshaw Brow was refused by the council planning because of the awkward access to the properties, though this means the original plan with access through the traffic lighted pub car park is still OK, but needs to be actioned quickly otherwise the three year planning validity will expire.

The council planners also refused permission for the now closed **Church Hotel** in Kearsley to be demolished and rebuilt as 20 flats rather than the retention of the pub building to downstairs offices as originally approved by the planners. Currently with the planners

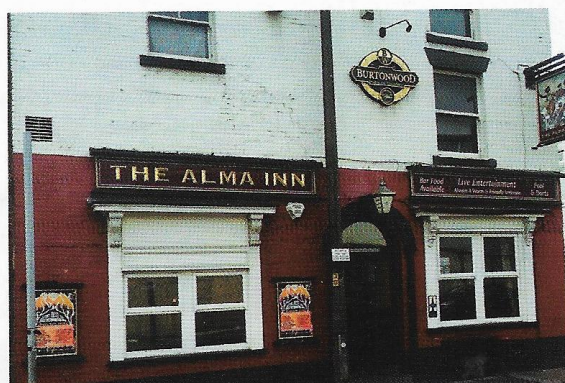
are plans to partially demolish the **Albion** on Moor Lane to make way for yet three more takeaways and 16 flats. The application also mentions that the new frontage will blend in with the adjacent properties, looking at these one would imagine this would be the last thing anyone would want to do intentionally.

The **Kings Arms** in Farnworth has been up for sale as a going concern for over a year now, but now a speculative planning permission has been made to convert the pub to supported living accommodation, this did not go down well with the local residents. It would also wipe out a significant part of the real ale choice in Farnworth, which is already very poor compared to the rest of Bolton Metro. Both the **Shakespeare** and the **Black Horse** seem to have joined the ranks of the non real ale outlets recently.

Another Planning application has been for a retail outlet at 116/118 Bradshawgate to become a Cafe during the day and a Bar during the evening and early hours similar to the **Sparkles bar** on Union Buildings.

Also there is a restaurant and bar element to the new hotel in the old magistrates court, this was approved in double quick time by the council.

The **Alma** has been sold by Marston's to Admiral Taverns as part of a 137 pub disposal.



Bravo Inns have sold out to Hawthorn Leisure who is one of the New River Retail operating brands. Current thinking is that Bravo Inns will continue under that name. The pubs in Bolton are the **Lamb Inn**, Astley Bridge, **Lord Raglan**, Halliwell Road, **Royal Hotel**, Vernon Street, **Gilnow**, Deane Road, **Shakespeare**, Glynne Street, Farnworth and **Beeley's** in Horwich. (Though for the latter Bravo still think it is called the **Toll Bar** and it's in Chorley, which surprisingly is better than it used to be as they had it in **Maryport** in Cumbria on their old website pub map)

On the A6, the **Brinsop** was externally refurbished not long ago, though they seemed to forget having any signs to attract the customers in, it appears on the one small sign that it is now called 'The One' unfortunately it seems to be the one that closed in mid November. It has been up for sale since July 2015 (initially confidentially for £1.8 million), now the current listed price is a mere £1.6 million. Rumour Denial a certain well known in the vicinity, Mr Anderson, has never been interested in buying it. Phew!

And then COVID struck.....

Hancock: New restrictions for Bolton 06/09/2020

The health secretary continues his statement: "This is not over, just because we have come through one peak doesn't mean we can't see another one coming to our shores."

He goes on to say local lockdown action has worked in Leicester and Luton but further action is needed in Bolton.

He says the rise in cases was due to people in their 20s and 30s socialising and says the government had identified pubs where the spread is most significant.

New restrictions will be put in place:

- Restrict all hospitality to take-away only.
- All venues must close from 10pm to 5am.
- No socialising outside households will be put into law

Commenting on the Government's decision to close pubs in Bolton as part of local lockdown measures, CAMRA's National Chairman Nik Antona said:

“Many pubs have struggled to re-open this summer, having invested their dwindling reserves to do so safely and securely in line with COVID-safe guidance. A second shutdown in Bolton is a devastating blow for these pubs and local people’s livelihoods.

"Given the significant impact a second shutdown would have on the industry, the Government must introduce a new financial support package and extend the furlough scheme for pubs that are forced to close in local lockdowns. This is the only way to avoid permanent closures and further job losses.

“Pub companies must also immediately cancel rent for tied pub tenants in Bolton. Tenants shouldn't be forced to pay rent if they have no turnover.

"CAMRA continues to encourage people to use pubs in safe and responsible way. While people in Bolton are unable to enjoy a pub pint with friends and family at the moment, they can still show support for their local pub by using takeaway or delivery services.”

Letter to Bolton MP's and GM Mayor

I am writing on behalf of the Bolton Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. I wrote to you during your election campaign asking for your support for Bolton’s pubs and the services they provide to their local communities. I know you have promoted Bolton businesses in Parliament, so I am sure that you share CAMRA’s concerns over the plight in which Bolton’s hospitality industry now finds itself.

CAMRA understands the dilemma which the government faces in trying to keep infection levels under control and would not advocate anything which might lead to an increase in those levels. Whilst certain pubs have been identified as potential drivers of the increased rates of infection in Bolton, the blanket lockdown does feel a bit like a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Even though Bolton had the highest levels of infection in the country, one can’t help feeling, particularly now that the whole country has been made subject to increased yet lesser restrictions, that Bolton seems to have been singled out for the harshest measures. It was particularly disappointing to hear politicians on national television and in parliament yesterday referring to Bolton having been subject to pubs closing early for 10 days, apparently unaware that the pubs are completely closed. It is little wonder that some publicans have posted on Facebook that they feel they have been forgotten.

You will understand the frustration of the business owners who find themselves closed down again having only just got used to operating their premises in a Covid compliant way. I am personally aware of publicans who have made significant investment in facilities to give them a fighting chance of operating a profitable business within the restraints that Covid imposes. Now they have had their opportunity to make a return on that investment suddenly taken away. Restaurants and pubs in the outer areas of the borough can also see their business leaking into the adjoining districts as people make short journeys to the nearest places just over the border which are still open.

I know that additional grants are being made available to those businesses which have been forced to close. My understanding is that this amounts to up to £1500 over three weeks depending on turnover. I do not know whether this is an indication that the lockdown will be lifted after three weeks but in any event, as the furlough scheme continues to wind down, this amount is unlikely to

cover the costs these businesses are going to meet under the lockdown. It is also not clear whether those settings that offer takeaways are technically open and therefore ineligible. Furthermore, the Council website says that details of how this funding can be accessed are not yet available which does not help when those costs need to be met now.

The Bolton branch of CAMRA would appreciate your support in the following areas.

- Lobbying the government for the release of the local lockdown at the earliest opportunity, without prejudicing the infection levels, to bring it in line with the rest of the country so that hospitality businesses can operate on a level playing field with those in neighbouring boroughs.
- Asking the government to make details of the additional funding available as soon as possible so that business who are now facing cash flow problems because of the lockdown are not further disadvantaged.
- Asking the government to review the amount of funding available to ensure that hospitality businesses are not left with unsustainable costs which may result in some of our best loved community facilities unable to survive.

Although I am writing on behalf of the Bolton branch, any lessons learned from the Bolton experience would assist CAMRA nationally in supporting pubs across the country if they face similar issues. In particular, more transparency in how decisions to impose such measures are reached would help us understand how we can avoid them in the future. I would reiterate that CAMRA does not advocate any measures which might lead to an increase in the infection levels but I hope we can rely on your support to help Bolton's hospitality industry survive this current crisis.

COVID Closure dates in Bolton

2020			
From	To	Days	
	27/03/20	03/07/20	98
Bolton Only!	06/09/20	02/10/20	26
	05/11/20	31/12/20	57
		Days	<u>181</u>
2021			
	01/01/2021	13/04/2021	<u>103</u>
Total Days Closed			<u><u>284</u></u>

Total Days 27/03/2020 to 13/04/2021

382

**% Total Days Closed 27/03/2020 to
13/04/2021**

74%

Further Restrictions included closing time being 10pm when
the pubs were open

CAMRA members in Bolton, like other members nationwide can 'score' the quality of the real ales that they drink in pubs. This is done using a members only section of the particular pubs WhatPub entry (<https://whatpub.com/>).

Last year 3,962 scores were recorded in Bolton Metro, this included 35 members of the local Bolton Branch, plus 96 other members from 47 branches from all over the country.

Scoring was made in 133 Real Ale stocking pubs and clubs in the Bolton Metro area, the result was that 1,248 different real ales were scored from 316 different breweries. It is no doubt that many more would have been available on the bar during the year, but not when one of our members was there to score them.

Top three most scored breweries were probably not surprising given their brewery presence and availability in the branch are Bank Top, Northern Monkey and Blackedge.

The most scored pubs were all in Bolton Town Centre, Spinning Mule, Northern Monkey Bar, One for the Road and Great Ale at the Vaults.

As for the real ales, the most scored were Bank Top Flat Cap, Joseph Holt Bitter, Bank Top Pavilion and Bank Top Dark Mild.

Whilst the Breweries and Beers are scored from Drop down lists, they can be manually keyed in, this can result in some misspelt entries from a member who may not be drinking their first half of the day. Most interesting in 2019 was the manual keying of Brewery Fallopian instead of Salopian, the beer was their Lemon Dream, perhaps just as well it wasn't their beer called Entire Butt!

The following Pubs closed in 2020.

NONE except during the periods of Covid restrictions

The following pubs opened in 2020

Not surprisingly NONE