

Ey Up!! Wigan CAMRA Newsletter

December 2015

Welcome to the December edition of our monthly newsletter. You may notice a slightly different look-and-feel to this edition – we're just trying to keep it simple and uncluttered. As always, we welcome your feedback about this newsletter as we still need to decide whether we continue with it in the current format throughout 2016. Please send any feedback to social@wigancamra.org.uk

LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

ALLGATES BREWERY: There is a new beer in the pipeline called 'Uncle Joe's Peppermint Stout'. 'Old Boston Plum Porter' is still very popular and is being considered as a semi-permanent beer due to its popularity. Soon to appear in the bars is 'Sloe Stout', 'Hung Drawn and Portered', 'Mad Monk' and 'Cassar' in the lead up to Christmas. 'Pepper Lane' is another beer that is selling well. On the bottle front Blue Sky Tea is still selling well and consideration is being given to the bottling of Patchcroft. Gift sets are being produced for Christmas presents.

HOPHURST BREWERY: Flaxen has made its way to the Stranger's Bar in the House of Commons on 9th November. The third fermenter is now on site giving more flexibility on beers that can be offered. The anniversary beer '50 Gyle' has received good feedback and there have been requests to brew it again. This will continue in the Specials range. The as yet un-named Christmas beer will be 4.5% spiced beer.

MARTLAND MILL BREWERY: The Christmas Beer will be named 'Santa's Tipple'. The first dark beer will be brewed next week, it is an oatmeal and treacle stout, about 4.5-5.0% ABV. Overall the brewery is doing well and sales are up. Two more fermenters are to be purchased allowing for five days a week brewing. It has not been possible to bottle at present due to technical issues at the bottling plant.

PROBLEM CHILD BREWERY : No report at last branch meeting.

PROSPECT BREWERY: At the recent SIBA North West Beer Competition, 'Nutty Slack' won a bronze award in its category. This maintains their proud record of picking up a SIBA award for 8 consecutive years – ever since the brewery was founded. Currently the brewery has two main activities – building up stock for the Xmas demand and searching for new premises for when their current lease expires next Autumn. Apart from their core beers, they have recently produced 'Prosperity #5' – a 4.6% milk stout which is attracting rave reviews. Bottling of core beers continues with Silver Tally, Blinding Light and Gold Rush currently available.

WILY FOX BREWERY: One month on but not much to report about this new brewery. We still gather it will be a 20-barrel plant and located in Martland Mill. Their website still proclaims the brewery to be 'coming soon' but has announced that the head brewer will be John Williams, but have not yet posted a biography. Rumours are that the brewer may have previous connections with Thwaites brewery – time will tell (?).

LOCAL PUB NEWS

Let's start with some fantastic news – the **TUDOR HOUSE** in Wigan appears to be on the verge of re-opening. Having seemingly closed its doors for good in November 2014, the pub has recently undergone refurbishment and are currently advertising for staff. Let's hope it's not too long before it once again joins Wigan's real ale circuit.

The boom in micropubs seems to be never ending. The Albion Ale House in Standish has just been joined by **THE HOOT**, a few doors down the High Street. It would also seem that Leigh has recently acquired its first micropub - **THE BOBBIN**, reported to be serving 3 cask ales and a craft keg, all sourced from Blackedge Brewery in Horwich. Beers are from £2 a pint.

LAST ORDERS, on Wallgate, closed its doors for refurbishment during November. It has subsequently re-opened but with a subtle name change for the pub. It has now reverted back to one of its former names and is now known as the '**LAST ORDERS AT THE DOG AND PARTRIDGE**'. Sadly, still no real ale.

The **TAP 'N' BARREL** became the latest recipient of Wigan CAMRA's LocAle award. A presentation was held on November 30th.

A planning application has been recently submitted to convert the **ROYAL OAK** in Standish Lower Ground from a pub into a restaurant.

Monday seems to be becoming a good night to go out for a cheap beer (or two). Both the **TAP 'N' BARREL** in Wigan and the **WHITE LION** in Leigh offer cask ale for £2 a pint.

THE RAILWAY in Parbold has recently become a freehouse and is now serving real ale – 6 handpulls with an emphasis on local breweries such as Problem Child and Prospect.

DOWNTOWN CROFTERS, in Market Street, now has a full complement of 4 handpumps in operation. Upon last visit these were Tetley Gold, Hobgoblin, plus two beers from Hogarth's - Beer Street and Enraged Musician. Refurbishment is still in progress - the floor is to be fully replaced shortly, and the kitchen is expected to be next allowing food to be on offer.

SACRED HEART SOCIAL CLUB, in Springfield, serves one real ale - Jennings Cumberland Bitter on recent visit.

Refurbishment work continues on the **ROYAL OAK**, in Standishgate. Opening date is anticipated towards the end of January 2016.

LIFE'S A HOOT IN STANDISH

Yet another micropub has exploded onto our local pub scene. The Hoot in Standish opened its doors on 27th November. The opening night saw 8 handpulls serving real ale including beers from Prospect, Blackedge, Moorhouses and, making a guest appearance, a barrel of Fyne Ales' 'Jarl'. The house beer is 'Wise Owl' (4.0%), sourced from the nearby Prospect Brewery.

The Hoot is located in the centre of Standish, at the junction of Cross Street and High Street. It was previously a fast food take away shop (Sofra's).

BENT 'N BONGS FESTIVAL ON THE MOVE AGAIN!!

Having been forced to relocate from the Formby Hall in Atherton, plans were initially made for this popular beer festival to relocate to Atherton Community School, starting on 18th February 2016. However, these plans have now been scuppered and another venue (and date) had to be found.

The festival will now take place at Atherton Roller Rink, Victoria Mill, Bolton Road, Atherton, M46 9JQ. The dates for the festival are now Thursday, 4th February to Saturday, 6th February.

BEER FESTIVALS (AND OTHER BEERY EVENTS)

December is traditionally a quiet month for beer festivals, so we've had to search far and wide to provide you with this month's listings. :-

- 3rd-5th: Furness Real Ale & Cider Festival, Furness College, Lancaster University
- 3rd-5th: Cockermouth Beer Festival, Kirkgate Centre, Cockermouth, Cumbria
- 3rd-6th: Silver Tally Beer Festival, Shevington Moor, Standish, Wigan
- 4th: Firsty Friday Festival at Offbeat Brewery, 4-6 Thomas Street, Crewe, CW1 2BD
- 4th-5th: Beer Tasting at Keswick Brewery, Brewery Lane, Keswick, Cumbria, CA12 5BY
- 5th-6th: Hawkshead Christmas Fair & Beer Festival (featuring all pubs in Hawkshead, Cumbria)
- 12th: Real Ale Train at Llangollen Railway, Abbey Road, Llangollen, LL20 8SN
- 12th: Track/Squawk Christmas Brew Tap Extravaganza at Track Brewery, Sheffield Street, Mcr
- 18th: Beer Club at Saltaire Brewery, Dockfield Road, Shipley, BD17 7AR
- 26th Dec to 1st Jan: Beer and Cider Festival at the Cricketers Arms, St Helens

CELEBRATIONS AND FESTIVITIES FOR PROSPECT PUBS

For the first time in over a year, the **SILVER TALLY** in Shevington Moor is hosting a beer festival. If previous festivals are anything to go by, it should be a cracker. The festival starts on Thursday 3rd December and runs until Sunday 6th December.

There will be 16 festival beers, all served on handpull, and you can expect some excellent beers from some outstanding breweries including *Hawkshead, Fyne Ales, Marble, Magic Rock, Vocation, Rat, Hardknott, Cumbrian Legendary Ales, Stod Fold, Deeply Vale, Sevenbro7hers and Abbeydale*. Even the Champion Beer of Britain will be making an appearance – 'Cwtch' by *Tiny Rebel* brewery.

Also that same weekend, Prospect Brewery's other pub – **WIGAN CENTRAL** – will be celebrating their 1st Anniversary having opened on December 4th in 2014. They have lined-up some very special beers over the course of the weekend and will be providing live music to keep you entertained on Friday and Saturday evenings and on Sunday afternoon.

SOCIAL TRIP TO HALIFAX AND HEBDEN BRIDGE

Wigan CAMRA's final coach trip for 2015 took place on 14th November. The customary brewery stop on the outward journey was Elland Brewery, home of the legendary 1872 Porter, which was sampled together with two other beers. As much as you could drink in 90 minutes for just £3 per person put us in good spirits for the rest of the day.

This was followed by a short visit to the Three Pigeons in Halifax – a CAMRA national inventory pub owned by the excellent Ossett brewery.

Our final destination was Hebden Bridge where there was no shortage of quality real ale pubs and bars to keep us amused. A few people even made it to the local CAMRA beer festival which just happened to coincide with our visit.

Despite some gloomy weather, everyone seemed to enjoy the trip. We were 'royally' entertained on the return journey by two of our tripsters (Lance and Dave) leading the way with Elvis tribute songs.

WIGAN BEER FESTIVAL 2016

Make a note in your diaries for our biggest event of the year – the Wigan CAMRA Beer Festival. It takes place between Thursday, 3rd March and Saturday, 5th March.

As usual, the venue will be the Robin Park Sports Centre, opposite the DW Stadium. Once again, we will be providing 'special' buses from the town centre to the festival venue.

The theme for this year's festival is 'at the seaside' so you can expect some beery fun and frolics. Well, not donkey rides but perhaps plenty of beers from coastal breweries?

FORTHCOMING BRANCH EVENTS

The next **BRANCH MEETING** takes place on **8TH DECEMBER** at 8pm. The venue is the **TAP'N' BARREL** in Jaxons Court, Wigan. Voting will take place for the Wigan CAMRA Pub of the Season (Winter 2015/2016). The nominations for this award were agreed at the November branch meeting and are:- Wigan Central, Tap 'n' Barrel, The Silverwell, Blundells Café Bar and the Hare and Hounds in Billinge.

Our **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** has been planned for Wednesday, 13th January 2016 starting at 7.30pm. The venue is the **BROCKET ARMS**. Voting will take place for all our annual pub and club awards, including the prestigious Pub of the Year. Be there to make your vote count!!

St Helens CAMRA Branch have organized a social event to Wigan (by train) to sample some of our excellent town centre pubs. Look out for them on Saturday, 12th December and give them a warm welcome.

SNIPPETS (FROM NEAR AND FAR)

To the dismay of local residents, permission has been granted to bulldoze the **RED LION** on Church Street in Blackrod and it will be replaced by 5 houses.

Could this be a first? A taxi firm (Metro Taxis) in Bolton has sponsored a local pub. As part of the deal, the DG Bar in Bradshawgate has been renamed '**BAR METRO 696969**' – no prizes for guessing the taxi firm's telephone number. The pub is no stranger to name changes having been formerly known as Durty Gurtys, Durty Nellys and Muldoons.

Staying in Bolton - **THE DOG AND PARTRIDGE**, just off the town centre, is to be demolished after a car collision and subsequent break-ins. It was a noted live music venue and regular Good Beer Guide entry.

Still in Bolton - the good folk behind the fantastic little real ale bar in Bolton Market (Great Ale at the Market) have now opened up another venue within the market complex – **GREAT ALE IN THE VAULTS**.

The Sportsman in Duke Street, St Helens re-opened on 21st November and has been renamed the **TALBOT ALEHOUSE**. The pub is now owned by Gary Wright, one of the brewers at George Wright Brewery in Rainford. You can expect 6-9 casks of real ale, 2 handpulled ciders plus a range of draught craft beers. Card-carrying CAMRA members get a massive 50p per pint off George Wright beers and 20p per pint off guest casks and ciders.

Staying in St Helens - another pub on Duke Street re-opened on 28th November. The **BAR RIFLE** aims to sell interesting beers in cask, keg and bottle as well as imported beers.

Still in St Helens - **CONNOISSEUR BREWERY** are holding their popular brewery open days on Saturdays throughout December (5th, 12th and 19th). Open from noon until 10pm if you want a rest from the hurly burly of Christmas shopping.

The **HAND DRAWN MONKEY** (HDM) brewery in Huddersfield has ceased trading and, together with its bar in Huddersfield town centre, seem to be permanently closed. HDM was well respected and commonly acknowledged as one of the pioneers of the craft brewing scene. Their beers will be sadly missed.

Like cats? Like real ale pubs? Like cats in real ale pubs? If so, you might like to visit the **BAG OF NAILS** pub in Bristol. They currently have 15 cats living and roaming freely on the premises – at one time, there was up to 24. For more info, check <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-34871580>. The pub itself doesn't look too shabby either – see the description on CAMRA's pub database. <http://whatpub.com/pubs/AVN/46/bag-of-nails-bristol>

Continuing along the same theme but a lot closer to home. Like vintage cars? Like real ale pubs? On New Year's Day there is a 'Vintage and Classic Car Meet' at the Corner House in Wroughton from 11am. Regular monthly meets start from 6th March 2016 on the first Sunday of each month.