

Ey Up!! Wigan CAMRA Newsletter

February 2016

Welcome to the February edition of our monthly newsletter. My name is Jo, and I will be bringing you as up to date news as I can about what's happening in the Wigan area. If you have anything you would like to be included in the newsletter, please contact me on the email below and I will include it in the next edition. 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 pub information or feedback to eyup@wigancamra.org.uk

LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

ALLGATES BREWERY The brewery's beers on offer at the MBCF were well received, those being Mad Monk Stout and Wigan Junction and also a collaborative brew with some people from Manchester Beer Week - Coffee IPA. Allgates are to have a presence at the forthcoming Bent & Bongs and Pendle Beer Festivals with Mad Monk, Pepper Lane and Sloe Stout at Atherton with Dry Bones, Wigan Junction and Sloe Stout available at Pendle. On the pub front following the surprise departure of Jenny and Greg from the Crooke Hall one of our old acquaintances Dean McDonald has stepped into the breach.

HOPHURST BREWERY: Sales continue to be strong, especially over the Christmas period. The Christmas beer Antler seems to have gone down well and bottles are selling very well at the moment. The brewery will be kegging Cosmati at the end of the month as a trial and if successful they will look at taking other beers forward for keg. Several new beers are planned for 2016 which will be a specials series, so watch this space.

MARTLAND MILL BREWERY: Beer sales are continuing to do well and the beers are in greater demand as a direct result of having a new brewery rep expanding the sales in the East Lancashire area. The brewery is also looking for another apprentice in the near future. Two new fermenters are on order and are due to be delivered mid-February and there are plans to purchase some new casks this month. The brewery will be looking at getting their beers bottled as soon as possible and the latest beer called Arctic Convoy a 4.5%ABV Oatmeal Stout is being brewed next week. The Tap n Barrel continues to do well and Paul and Delia were really pleased with the Pub of the Season award. They are currently looking for new staff at the bar to cope with increased demand.

PROBLEM CHILD BREWERY: The brewery is going from strength to strength with pints being served (and well received) in far flung corners of Derbyshire, Liverpool and Warrington. The team has doubled in size with Phoebe joining to provide dedicated sales support and Jonny has been busy ferrying beer for bottling in Cockermouth. Good Spankin (5.1%), Rascal (3.8%), Scallywag (3.7%), Scoundrel (4.6%) and Tantrum (4%) are all now available in 500ml bottles from the Wayfarer in Parbold. A top secret new brew is currently in development and promises to have "ein" continental influence.

PROSPECT BREWERY: The brewery has had a golden month so far with local awards going to both pubs, including the prestigious Pub of the Year award. They were also delighted for Nutty Slack to be named Champion Beer of the North West. The Prosperity range continues to be well received and the brewery are working to develop other beers to add to the range throughout the year. Planning permission has been put in for an extension to Wigan Central, into the next arch, and things hope to move forward over the next few months.

WILY FOX BREWERY: The updates from Wily Fox haven't changed much since the last Newsletter. The brew plant is close to completion and they are anticipating three core beers to become available. Information is as yet undetermined as to whether we will see them at Wigan Beer Festival.

LOCAL PUB NEWS

The results are in for the Wigan Camra Annual Pub Awards as voted for at the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 13th January:

Pub of the Year: Wigan Central

Club of the Year: Standish Unity Club

Community Pub of the Year: The Silver Tally

Cider Pub of the Year: Wigan Central

Best New Cask Outlet: Wigan Central

Congratulations to all the winners, presentation dates have not yet been announced but we will keep you informed.

It was announced early in January that the Crown at Worthington has closed its doors. It's a sad end to a pub that has been held in such high regard and in 2009 was voted the Regional Pub of the Year. The pub was a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide and well known for its selection of Real Ale and food. The owner Dan Prince had told newspapers previously that the business rates were too high and it was making life difficult. Unfortunately, there hasn't been any comment from the owners as to why the pub has had to close its doors. Rumours are circulating as to what will happen to the building, however, at this point there is nothing concrete. We will keep you abreast of any developments.

As mentioned in the Allgates' Brewery update, the Crooke Hall Inn has undergone a change of management. Wigan Camra is sad to see Greg and Jenny leaving the pub trade after their contribution to Real Ale and continuing hard work. They had received the Community Pub of the Year award on more than one occasion and were credited with Pub of the Year in 2013. We wish Greg and Jenny good luck in their future, thank them again for all their hard work and hope they continue to make an appearance from time to time at beer festivals and local pubs. The new manager Dean McDonald is now in place and will be a familiar face for a lot of you – Good Luck to Dean and his team, we're sure that Crooke Hall will continue to make a lasting impression on Wigan Camra's members.

FORTHCOMING BRANCH EVENTS

The next branch meeting takes place on Tuesday 16th February at Blundell's Bar on Wigan Lane at 8pm. Everyone is welcome to attend and we encourage you to join us to discuss the events happening in the Real Ale industry. You'll get an insight into how the breweries are doing and what new beers might be available at your local soon. What's happening in the pubs and bars around town and you can have your say on which pubs should be considered for awards and recognition. We're a friendly bunch who welcome new faces and hope to see you there.

LOCAL EVENTS THIS MONTH

Toad in the Hole Beer Festival Albion Ale House, Standish 12th & 13th February 2016

There will be 16 fine beers, none that have been seen on the Albion pumps before. It will also see the return of the red hot chilli sausage. Wines, 2 real ciders, single malt whiskys, gin & vodka are now available for those who don't enjoy the beers. Monday & Tuesdays every week beers only £2.50 per pint.

BEER FESTIVALS (AND OTHER BEERY EVENTS)

February and March play host to our two local Beer Festivals – Bent 'n Bongs Beer Bash and Wigan Beer Festival. If you're looking for something to fill the gap between the two, here's what else is on offer.

February 4th-6th : Bent 'n Bongs Beer Bash - Roller Rink, Bolton Road, Atherton, M46 9JQ

February 4th-6th : Pendle Beer Festival - Muni Theatre, Albert Road, Colne, BB8 0AE

February 11th-13th : Fleetwood Beer Festival – Marine Hall, The Esplanade, Fleetwood, FY7 6HF

February 17th-20th : National Winter Ales Festival – The Roundhouse, Pride Park, Derby, DE24 8JE

February 18th-20th : Liverpool Beer Festival – Metropolitan Cathedral, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L3 5TQ

February 20th : Oswaldtwistle Beer Festival – Civic Arts Centre, 155 Union Road, Oswaldtwistle, BB5 3HZ

February 25th-27th : Prestwich Beer Festival – Longfield Centre, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 1AY

March 3rd – 5th : Wigan CAMRA Beer Festival 2016 - Robin Park Sports Centre, Loire Drive, Wigan, WN5 0UH

March 11th – 12th : Oldham Beer Festival – Quuen Elizabeth Hall Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1NL

March 16th – 19th : SIBA Beer X @ Sheffield – iceSheffield, Coleridge Road, Sheffield, S9 5DA

March 18th – 20th : Spring Beer Festival @ Hawkshead Brewery Beer Hall – Hawkshead Brewery Mill Yard, Staveley, Cumbria, LA8 9LR

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?

Wigan Beer Festival is now looking for volunteers for the event, fancy getting involved in a great event? Interested in trying lots of different beers and spending time with likeminded people?

Contact Carol at wbfstaffing@gmail.com for a volunteers form.

Did you know you could sponsor a barrel at Wigan Beer Festival? Sponsorship is just £40 and includes tickets to the sponsor's session on the Thursday afternoon, before the festival is open to the public. If you would like to know more please contact joanna-whalley@sky.com for a sponsorship form.

MANCHESTER BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL 2016

For those of you who missed the chance to go to the festival this year, it was resounding success. The venue was generally accepted to be an improvement to the velodrome allowing easy access around the bars and well situated eating space and toilets. There were over 500 different beers to suit many tastes and a few familiar faces from the Wigan Camra Branch serving up the Real Ale for you to enjoy. There was happy news for Wigan's Brewing Industry as Prospect Brewery was voted Champion Beer of the North West for their Nutty Slack. A big thank you goes out to the organisers who have once again delivered an excellent festival and thoroughly enjoyable weekend. Cheers Guys!