

Ey Up!! Wigan CAMRA Newsletter

January 2016

Happy New Year and welcome to the January edition of our monthly newsletter. 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: Due to demand, the brewery intend to add 'Boston Plum Porter' and 'Patchcroft' beers to the regular range as these are now being produced every fortnight. 'Foggs Fold', 'Chocolate Stout', 'Sloe Stout', 'Mad Monk' and 'Cassicar Coffee Stout' are the next monthly beers with 'Blue Sky Tea' still available in bottles. The low ABV 'Half Devil' is still in regular demand for the Delph Tavern in Tontine.

HOPHURST BREWERY: Their Spiced Christmas Beer, 'Antler' has now been casked and there has been a lot of interest and pre-orders. The new fermenter is operational and will help to satisfy growing demand and enable more beer variety. '50 Gyle' will be brewed again due to very good feedback. The 'Stout' has now been bottled, so there are five bottled beers currently available.

MARTLAND MILL BREWERY: Plans for bottled beers have been hampered by problems with the bottling plant at the George Wright brewery. The Tap 'n' Barrel continues to exceed expectations.

PROBLEM CHILD BREWERY: Now have 5 beers available in bottles – Scoundrel, Rascal, Good Spanking, Scallywag and Tantrum.

PROSPECT BREWERY: For Christmas and the New Year, old-favourite 'Clementine' will be available together with 'Raisins to be Cheerful' – a golden beer made with raisins and Earl Grey tea. Advance orders of 'Nuttty Slack' and 'Gold Rush' have been received from the Manchester Beer & Cider Festival. There appears to be a move by Network Rail to refurbish and lease out the premise adjacent to Wigan Central.

WILY FOX BREWERY: According to recent updates on their website, the brewery is just about ready for the brewing kit to be installed. The brewing kit also seems to be in the final stages of production. A Sales Director (Bev Cox) has also been appointed with substantial experience of supplying beer to the licensed trade. Three launch beers are promised but no details have yet been provided.

LOCAL PUB NEWS

Not too much to report this month but the really big news is that there are strong rumours that another micropub will be opening in Wigan town centre very soon. Hopefully we'll have more details in our next edition.

Sam's Country Inn in Appley Bridge no longer serves real ale. On a recent visit, the sole handpump had been removed.

Despite having advertised for staff, the Tudor House Hotel in Wigan doesn't seem to be ready to open just yet. Watch this space.

Plans have been submitted for the demolition of the Crooked Wheel pub in Worsley Mesnes Drive, Poolstock.

Plans have also been submitted for the mooring of a narrowboat for use as a restaurant on the Leeds Liverpool Canal at Gathurst, to the west of Dean Lock House. Hopefully they can be persuaded to stock some local ales?

Docs Symposium in Wigan will be closed for most of January whilst Chris and June have a well-deserved holiday. They will be closed from Monday, January 4th and will reopen on Friday, 22nd January.

The Griffin Hotel on Standishgate in Wigan is now a hotel again offering 5 guest rooms. Sadly, no real ale as the sole handpump seems to have been removed during the transition.

The Raven in Wigan serves Senior Citizens meals for just £2.99 every Wednesday. What's more, it's also Cask Critics Day so everyone can buy a pint of cask ale for just £1.95 a pint and they even take Wetherspoons vouchers.

BRANCH SOCIAL TRIPS

There are no planned social trips for 2016 yet. However, since the last newsletter, there have been two social trips. The first trip on Friday, 11th December was by train to Parbold which took in the The Railway, the Windmill, Stocks Tavern and the Wayfarer brewpub.

The other trip was again by train but to St Helens on Monday, 28th December. The trip started in the Tap 'n Barrel in Wigan where Paul and Delia were presented with our Pub of the Season award for Winter 2015 – their second CAMRA award in a matter of weeks. Onwards to St Helens where our first port-of-call was to the Connoisseur Brewery near to St Helens Central railway station. After that, it was to the Cricketers Arms for their Xmas Beer Festival followed by the Bar Rifle, Turks Head, Talbot Alehouse and the Phoenix. A very enjoyable and social day.

FORTHCOMING BRANCH EVENTS

The next branch event is our Annual General Meeting which takes place at the Bocket Arms in Wigan on Wednesday, January 13th from 7.30pm.

Voting will take place for our annual pub and club awards including the prestigious Pub of the Year. All branch members are welcomed but proof of membership may be required to partake in the voting so please bring along your CAMRA membership cards.

BEER FESTIVALS (AND OTHER BEERY EVENTS)

January and February are traditionally quiet months for beer festivals, so we've had to search far and wide to provide you with this month's listings. :-

- January 20th-23rd : Manchester Beer & Cider Festival (see article below)
- January 28th-30th : St Georges Hall Beer Festival - St George's Place, Liverpool, L1 1JJ
- January 28th-31st : Pied Bull Beer Festival – Pied Bull, 57 Northgate Street, Chester, CH1 2HQ
- January 29th-30th : Tarporley Beer Festival - Community Centre, High Street, Tarporley, CW6 0AY
- **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

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?

Before then, why not give another local beer festival a try? The Bent n Bongs Beer Bash may have a new venue and new dates but the 27th running of this event will no doubt be as excellent as always (see above for details). The new venue is bigger and even closer to Atherton railway station than previously.

MANCHESTER BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

This fantastic festival takes place from Wednesday, 20th January to Saturday 23rd January. After two years at Manchester Velodrome, the festival will move into the Central Hall under the famous barreled roof of the old Manchester Central Station.

Once again, there will be over 500 of the finest beers, ciders and perries. Featuring the very best beers from the UK's burgeoning craft beer brewery scene alongside a massive range of traditional ciders & perries. The Bière Sans Frontières bars will bring an even larger range of draught and bottled beers from innovative & exciting breweries around the world.

MAKE 'TRYANUARY' A RESOLUTION

It's the time of year for making resolutions and giving up booze for a month is a common one – there's even a well publicised campaign encouraging you to do just that (Dry January). However, this can only have an adverse effect upon the beer industry (particularly pubs and breweries) which depend upon your year-round support. So this year, why not make a resolution with a bit of a difference?

'Tryanuary' is a campaign which aims to get people to use January to 'seek out new independent breweries, beers, bars and bottle shops, and share their discoveries with people'.

The campaign encourages UK beer drinkers to 'try something different', 'taste something new' and 'experience something interesting'. It also invites them to support charities by 'skipping' a couple of pints a week and give what they would have spent to their chosen charity. Pubs, breweries and beer drinkers are all encouraged to use the #tryanuary hashtag to promote the campaign and for beer drinkers to provide tasting notes of their discoveries.

Now in its second year, the Tryanuary campaign was created by Manchester-based Andy Heggs, a beer lover and director of a creative agency. The initiative was praised by the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA), whose managing director Mike Benner said: 'We're delighted to be supporting Tryanuary and hope that it captures the imagination and engagement of consumers who want to do something different but don't want to give up beer completely.'

BEERS AND BEARDS

For the past 16 years, the Beard Liberation Front have run an annual 'Beard of the Year' competition. Distinguished past winners include Robert Plant (Led Zeppelin), Gerry Adams (Sinn Féin), Rowan Williams (Archbishop of Canterbury), Freddie Flintoff and Monty Panesar (both cricketers). However, in 2015, craft brewers have taken both 1st and 3rd places by Bryan Spooner (Weird Beard Brewing) and Stuart Ross (Magic Rock Brewing) respectively. Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader, finished in 2nd place having previously won the award in 2001.

TROUBLE BREWING ON THE HIGHWAY TO HELLS?

As far back as April 2015, Camden Town Brewery were one of the founder members of the United Craft Brewers Association (UCBA) together with Brewdog, Magic Rock Brewing, Beavertown Brewery and distributor James Clay.

UCBA adopted strapline was 'taking a stand for craft beer' and their mission was 'to promote and protect the interests of British craft brewers and their beers'. Basically, protecting the craft beer industry in the UK from big brewery predators with sub-standard beers that trade on the language and design of craft. All very credible.

However, in December 2015, Camden Town sold out to Anheuser-Busch InBev, the world's biggest brewer whose brands currently include Stella Artois, Budweiser, Corona, Becks and Skol. The deal is estimated to be worth £85 million – not a bad pay day for a company that only started up in 2010.

As a consequence, Brewdog made a very public statement by no longer stocking any Camden Town beers in any of their bars across the UK and Europe, including their best seller - Camden Hells Lager. Trouble brewing?

SNIPPETS (FROM NEAR AND FAR)

JAMES KEMP has recently become head brewer at **MARBLE BEERS** in Manchester. James previously worked as head brewer at Buxton Brewery and started his brewing career at Thornbridge. As such, I guess we can expect more seriously good beers from Marble.

Liverpool has a brand new brewery and craft beer bar. **BLACK LODGE BREWERY** opened on 4th December and is located on Kitchen Street, in what is known as the Baltic Triangle area. The bar has 13 taps and also has a small eatery serving cheese and charcuterie.

A blast from the past!! Higsons Brewery Limited is seeking to convert two vacant warehouses into a brewery, and also including a distillery, visitors centre, retail and sampling hall. The proposed site of the brewery is on the corner of Bridgewater Street and Simpson Street in the Baltic Triangle area of Liverpool.

Finally on November 29th 2015, an intruder entered a secured area at the Budweiser brewery in St Louis, Missouri, USA. Police were called after an altercation with security officers and a 19-year old man was subsequently arrested. His name – Bud Weisser.