

Welcome

Welcome to 'Ey up!' - the third edition of our monthly branch newsletter. This was planned to be the final edition of a three-month trial period but this will now be extended for a further two editions, until January 2016, when our Annual General Meeting will be held. However, we still need your feedback about this newsletter whether it be good, bad or indifferent, so that we can decide on whether it's worth continuing with it in this format. Please send any feedback via e-mail to swiggin@wigancamra.org.uk

Local Brewery News

ALL GATES BREWERY: The bi-annual "Road to Wigan Beer" festival was a success with the beer bus taking around twenty five thirsty souls to all of the brewery pubs on the first Saturday. On the brewing front, expect to see a new beer called 'Pepper Lane' in the pubs shortly. A 4.1% pale ale using a blend of American hops. Also expect the bi-monthly special 'Hardybutts'. This is 'Winter Zing' but with the ABV lowered and the powdered ginger replaced with root ginger to give it extra "zing". A further beer, using an experimental hop, will be named "Rule of 72", with an anticipated ABV of around 4.5%. As winter approaches, expect to see darker beers such as 'Boston Plum Porter' and 'Hung, Drawn and Portered' amongst them. Bottled beers currently available are 'Blue Sky Tea' and 'Dairy Pit'.

HOPHURST BREWERY: The brewery celebrated its first birthday on 7th October which coincided with their 50th brew. A beer called '50 Gyle' was produced - a 4.4% ABV session IPA with lots of American hops. Bottled beers will be available from October 2015 and a third fermenter has been introduced to cope with growing demand. Beers will be kegged soon.

MARTLAND MILL BREWERY: Sales are continuing well and the brewery has been approached by two major brewery groups to supply their outlets on a regular basis. The brewery still has its regular customers supplied in the local area. The Tap 'n' Barrel goes from strength to strength and it's hoped to increase the variety of beer found on the bar. Beers are soon to be bottled and will be on sale in time for Christmas with gift packs available. A recipe has been formulated for the next dark beer which will be available this month.

PROBLEM CHILD BREWERY: Business as usual with the core range unchanged. 'One Night Stand' (3.8%), a light session ale, was launched at the Problem Child Beer Festival on 4th September.

PROSPECT BREWERY: There is only one year left at the current premises with the lease having been terminated for 8th November 2016. Wigan Central was a finalist in the Manchester Food and Drink Pub of the Year awards, with the eventual winner being the Marble Arch in Manchester. Bottles beers are being produced in readiness for Christmas using the state-of-the-art facilities at Morrow Brothers Packaging in Buckshaw village, near Chorley.

Local Pub News

On 9th October, the Railway in Parbold was bought from Marstons by existing licensees, Adam and Jane Haigh. Real ale on up to 6 handpulls can be expected in the near future with further plans for beer festivals.

Reports suggest that 'Douglas Valley', brewed by Mayflower Brewery, will be back on sale shortly in Docherty's Hotel and Bar. Although Mayflower Brewery no longer exists, it is rumoured that the beer is being brewed at a brewery in Horwich.

An Asset of Community Value (ACV) application is currently being processed for the Hare and Hounds pub on the Billinge/Upholland boundary. Although the pub is not under threat of closure, an ACV would provide a degree of future protection.

The Crown in New Springs has recommenced serving food but currently only on Sundays - a good value two-course Sunday lunch for just £6.95.

Still no progress on the reopening of the Prodesse Ale House in Hindley although some activity inside the pub has been recently noticed.

On a recent visit to the newly-opened Downtown Crofters, three out of four handpumps were in use serving Tetley Gold, Hobgoblin, and JW Lees Draymans Reward. All cask ales are £1.95 per pint on Wednesdays.

The Moon under Water in Wigan is still offering card-carrying CAMRA members 20% discount on food.

Fifteens of Swinley and The Raven have recently been selling a house-beer from Moorhouses, badged as "Fifteens".

Painters and decorators are now working on The Royal Oak, Standishgate. Some activity at long last.

The Fox and Goose, Wigan Lane now have Chorlton Pale Ale from Bootleg Brewery as their standard offering.

Cunning new brewery to open in Wigan

The Wily Fox brewery is set to open in Wigan, just around the corner from Martland Mill brewery. Details are still very sketchy and it states on their website - 'We're keeping things quiet at the moment until our big unveiling. We have three superb recipes for our starting ales that we can't wait to deliver to your lips.' So I guess it's a case of 'watch this space'.

However, perhaps we can expect big things as it's believed that the brewery will have a brand new 20-barrel plant, which dwarfs all other existing Wigan breweries – Prospect (12-barrel); All Gates (5-barrel); Martland Mill (6-barrel); Hophurst (5.5 barrel) and Problem Child (5-barrel).

Wily Fox website - <http://www.wilyfoxbrewery.co.uk/>

Beer Oscars for breweries in the North West

The Society of Independent Brewers Association (SIBA) held their annual North West beer competition in Bolton on 14th October. Over 200 beers were initially judged by category. The category winners were as follows:-

- Standard Mild Ales & Brown Ales : Coach House Brewing - Gunpowder Mild
- Standard Bitters & Pale Ales : Brewsmith Beer - Brewsmith Bitter
- Best Bitters & Pale Ales : Blackjack Beers - New Deck
- Premium Bitters & Pale Ales : Green Mill Brewery - On the Tiles
- Strong Bitters & Pale Ales : Hooded Ram Brewing - Mosaic Single Hop Pale Ale
- Premium Strong Beers : Hawkshead Brewery - IPA
- Porters, Stouts, Old Ales, Strong Mild/Brown Ales : Green Mill Brewery - Shortand Stout
- Speciality Beers : Red Star - Weissbier

The eight category winners went into a final round of judging and the overall champion beer was judged to be 'New Deck' by Blackjack Beers. The silver award went to Brewsmith Beers for 'Brewsmith Bitter' and the bronze award went to Hawkshead Brewery for their 'IPA'.

Prospect Brewery picked up a bronze award with 'Nuttly Slack' in the 'Standard Mild Ales & Brown Ales' category. This award keeps up their winning sequence of picking up an award for 8 consecutive years (ever since the brewery was formed).

For a full list of award winners, see <http://www.siba.co.uk/events/regional-competitions/north-west/2015-2>

The Pope visits All Gates Brewery

Charles (Charlie) Bamforth is probably not a name known to most but, in brewing circles, he is known as the 'Pope of foam' and the 'brewmaster general' – a name given to him back in 2010 in Playboy magazine's 'roll call' of the USA's most intriguing college professors. Although now living in California, he was born in Upholland and was educated at Upholland Grammar School and Hull University.

He boasts an impressive CV and his current roles include: Anheuser-Busch Endowed Professor of Malting and Brewing Sciences; President of the Institute of Brewing and Distilling; editor-in-chief of the Journal of the American Society of Brewing Chemists. In short, he is probably the world's #1 expert on every aspect of beer and author of numerous books on brewing and brewing science, including "Beer Is Proof God Loves Us".

On 14th October, All Gates Brewery was privileged and honoured to receive a visit from Charlie and to provide him with a tour of their brewery. Dave Mayhall, director of All Gates, says – 'I can't pay him any greater compliment, than he came across as a proper 'Wiganer', down to earth and someone who calls a spade a bloody shovel. I also got the impression of someone who would rather enjoy a pint in a pub rather than a 'beer' at a formal event, in the company of leaders of industry, but been very comfortable in either situation.'

Charlie seems like a great bloke but he's not perfect he supports Wolverhampton Wanderers!!

Celebrations at the Albion Ale House

October was a busy month at the Albion Ale House in Standish. They celebrated their very first Beer & Sausage Festival on the weekend commencing 16th October. A superb range of ales not previously served at the Albion was accompanied by an equally superb range of locally-sourced sausages – the chilli sausages were very popular but eye-watering!

This was followed by the presentation of the Wigan CAMRA Pub of the Season award on 21st October. This is fully deserved recognition for their commitment to serving quality real ales, with an emphasis upon local breweries.

Further celebrations can be expected as the micropub is due to celebrate its first anniversary on 18th November.

Wigan CAMRA social trip to Sheffield

This month's social trip, on 24th October, took us to Sheffield. After a slightly delayed start and longer than expected coach journey, we arrived at our first stop – the Toolmakers Brewery on the outskirts of Sheffield. We were warmly welcomed by owners Olie and Marion who kept us well fed and watered – their excellent beers went down well with their complimentary homemade chilli, snacks and nibbles.

Olie gave us a tour around their small but perfectly formed brewery with the chance to sample their stout straight out of the fermenter. We were joined at the brewery by Dave Szwejkowski, head brewer at Steel City Brewery who cuckoo brews at the premises. As well as being head brewer, Dave is also one of the country's leading beer tickers where he is better known as Dave Unpronounceable.

With Dave tagging along, we then headed off into Sheffield city centre to sample the many good pubs on offer. Although our visit coincided with the Sheffield Beer Festival, not many attended as the pubs of Sheffield proved to be too inviting. Overall, an excellent day in excellent company with some excellent beers.

Our next social trip is to Halifax and Hebden Bridge on 14th November. This trip is fully booked and a waiting list is in operation.

What's in a beer name?

Over the past few months, All Gates Brewery has been going through a bit of a change. Firstly, they revamped their website, which includes an excellent blog by Dave Mayhall, one of the breweries directors. They have also incorporated an ingenious strap line for their beers - 'brewed with northern soul'. As well as rebranding their pumpclips, they have also been gradually renaming many of their beers. So if you're a fan of Napoleon's Retreat, Ostara or All Black, don't worry, they've not disappeared but you will find them under a different name. See below for a list of current beers in the All Gates beer range:-

PERMANENT BEERS: 'Tag' (3.6%) was 'All Black'; 'Florida' (3.6%) was 'Ostara'; 'California' (3.8%); 'Wigan Junction' (3.9%) was 'Napoleon's Retreat'; 'Dry Bones' (4.0%) was 'Brigantia'; 'Hic Bibi' (4.2%) was 'Citra';

BI-MONTHLY & OCCASSIONAL BEERS: 'Bugle Horn' (4.3%) was 'Admiral'; 'Urchinsnapes' (4.0%) was 'Celtic Pale'; 'Victoria' (4.0%) was 'Ella'; 'Industrious Bee' (3.8%); 'Hardybutts' (4.5%) was 'Winter Zing'; 'Foggs Fold' (4.5%); 'Pretoria' (3.9%) was 'Saving a pint for Ryan'; 'Hop Hop Hop No. 3' (4.0%); 'Equinox' (4.1%); 'Blue Sky Tea' (4.2%); 'Pony Dick' (4.2%); 'Gin Pit' (4.3%); 'Calypso' (4.4%); 'Old Boston Plum Porter' (4.4%); 'Calico Deep Engine' (4.6%); 'Quaker House Oatmeal Stout' (4.9%); 'Station to Station' (5.6%); 'Dark Lane' (5.2%) was 'Pot calling the Kettle'

MONTHLY BEERS: 'Samhain' (4.5%); 'Pepper Lane Pale' (4.1%); 'Hung, Drawn and Portered' (5.2%); 'Meadow Pit' (4.5%) was 'Poppy'; 'Cassica' (4.4%) was 'Double Espresso'; 'Mad Monk' (7.1%); 'Seven Feet' (4.3%) was 'Summit'; 'Gidlow Wash' (4.1%); 'Dairy Pit' (4.5%) was 'Milk Stout'; 'Patchcroft' (4.2%) was 'Mosaic'; 'Edith and Mabel' (4.2%) was 'Golden Aeld'; 'Summersales' (4.1%); 'Back of Bourke' (4.2%) was 'Galaxy'; 'Barley Brook' (4.4%) was 'Weapon of Mash Destruction'; 'Gorners Drift' (3.7%); 'St Georges' (4.0%) was 'Challenger'; 'Cripplegate Sloe Stout' (7.2%) - based upon recipe for 'Mad Monk'; 'Stone House Oz' (4.2%).

The Magnificent Seven become the Famous Five

In the 40th edition of the Good Beer Guide in 2013, there were 7 pubs which had appeared in every edition of the guide since its launch in 1973. The Good Beer Guide 2014 saw The Star at Netherton in Northumberland depart which was followed by the New Inn at Kilmington in Devon.

As such, there are now just 5 pubs in this elite group, which are:-

- Roscoe Head, 24 Roscoe Street, Liverpool
- Queens Head, Newton, Cambridgeshire
- Square and Compass, Worth Maltravers, Dorset
- Star Tavern, 6 Belgrave Mews West, London SW1
- Buckingham Arms, 62 Petty France, London SW1

However, the Roscoe Head is currently under threat of closure. CAMRA National Chairman, Colin Valentine, is to visit the pub on 7th November to spearhead a rally in support of the pub and of its long term licensee, Carol Ross.

The rally starts at 12.30pm. Why not go along and show your support?

Beer Festivals in November

.....

As the nights draw in, what better place to while away a few hours than at a beer festival. (*) denotes a CAMRA event.

5th-7th : Carlisle Beer Festival (*), Hallmark Hotel, Court Square, Carlisle

5th-7th : Great Welsh Beer & Cider Festival, The Depot, 22 Dumballs Road, Cardiff CF10 5FE

6th-7th : Brewers Market, Canal Mills, Brandon Street, Leeds LS12 2EB

6th-7th : Wharfedale Beer Festival, Town Hall, Grassington, North Yorkshire

6th-7th : PyvoFest 2015, Ukrainian Club, Hilton Road, Bradford, BD7 2EA

12th-14th : Rochdale Beer Festival (*), Town Hall, The Esplanade, Rochdale, OL16 1AB

12th-14th : Colne Cricket Club Beer Festival, Colne Cricket Club, The Horsfield, Colne BB8 0RF

12th-14th : Moonraker Beer Festival, Slaithwaite Conservative Club, 19 Britannia Road, Slaithwaite, HD7 5HF

12th-14th : Rainhill Beer Festival, Rainhill Recreation Club, Victoria Terrace, Rainhill, L35 0LH

12th-15th : Halifax and Calderdale Beer Festival (*), Town Hall, St George's Street, Hebden Bridge, HX7 7BY

12th-15th : Wirral Beer Festival, Hulme Hall, 23 Bolton Road, Port Sunlight, Wirral CH62 5DH

13th-14th : Cheshire Beer Festival (*), The Racecourse, Chester, CH1 2LY

13th-14th : Sale Winter Ales Festival, Sale Masonic Hall, Tatton Road, Sale, M33 7EE

14th-15th : Batley Beer & Music Festival, Town Hall, Batley, West Yorkshire

19th-21st : Belfast Beer Festival (*), Ulster Hall, Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7FF

19th-21st : Waterloo Beer Festival, Old Christ Church, Waterloo Road, Merseyside, L22 1RF

20th-21st : Otley Beer Festival, Otley Rugby Club, Cross Green, Otley, LS21 1HE

20th-21st : Bury Beer Festival, The Met, Market Street, Bury BL9 0BW

20th-22nd : Fox and Goose Beer Festival, Fox and Goose Inn, Hebden Bridge, HX7 6AZ

26th-28th : Dudley Winter Ales Festival (*), Town Hall, St James Rd, Dudley, DL1 1LZ

27th-28th : St Helens Beer Festival, Town Hall, Victoria Square, St Helens. WA10 1DY

Snippets

.....

Although not confirmed, it has been reported that Northern/Blakemere Brewery, based near Northwich in Cheshire, has gone into administration.

Sudarghara Dusanj, former owner of the defunct Cains Brewery in Liverpool, has submitted plans to build a £250 million 'brewery village'. The plans include the building of a new craft brewery on the site of the Toxteth brewing plant.

The Cock T'Alehouse micropub in Eccleston, nearly Chorley, opened at 4pm on 30th October. Initial reports are all positive which is not surprising as the pub is owned by Richard and Ruth Hull, licensees of the multi-award winning Allgates-owned 'Victoria' in Haigh/Aspull.

Gary Wright, head brewer at George Wright brewery in Rainford, is in the process of launching his first pub – the Talbot Alehouse on Duke Street in St Helens. Refurbishment is well under way and painting of the exterior started a few days ago.

The Firkin micropub in Newton-le-Willows celebrated their first anniversary on 23rd October.

Ma Egerton's, another of Liverpool's iconic pubs, is up for sale. On this occasion, it's a matter of the owners relocating abroad rather than a sell-off by a pub company.

Albert's Schloss is a new beer hall which opened on Peter Street in Manchester on October 18th. Uniquely, it serves fresh, unpasteurised Pilsner Urquell tank beer the like of which yet get in tankova pubs in Prague. Four copper barrels, each filled with 900 pints, brought in from the Czech Republic every week which must be drunk within seven days.

Candidates for beer name of the year? Shiny Brewery (Derby) with 'Unkel Funkel Derby Dunkel'; Watermill Brewery (Cumbria) with 'Shih Tzu Faced'.

Next Branch Meeting and Swiggin

.....

The next branch meeting will take place on Thursday, 19th November at 8pm. The venue for the meeting is All Gates Brewery in Wigan town centre. Nominations will be received on the evening for Wigan CAMRA Pub of the Season (Winter 2015/2016). Pub of the Season voting will take place at the following branch meeting on Tuesday, 8th December at 8pm. The venue for this meeting has yet to be confirmed. For more details, check our website nearer to the time of the meeting - www.wigancamra.org.uk.

The next edition of Swiggin (November 2015 to January 2016) is due back from the printers on 2nd November. As such, it should be in your local pub or club very soon. Keep a look out for it!!