

Welcome

It seems a long time until the next edition of Swiggin in Wiggin is due - at the beginning of November, actually. There's also lots of beery happenings during the summer months, so we thought we'd introduce a monthly newsletter, for a trial period, and see how it goes and, hopefully, to keep you better informed.

So why have we called it 'ey up !!'? Well, why not ... after all, it is a often used in our dialect as a friendly way of greeting people which is what the newsletter is all about. However, we are open to suggestions for an alternative name.

Meanwhile, we would appreciate any feedback about this newsletter whether it be good, bad or indifferent, via e-mail to swiggin@wigancamra.org.uk

Tap 'n' Barrel opens in Jaxons Court

Thursday 30th July saw the official opening of Wigan's newest micropub – the Tap 'n' Barrel. The pub is the brainchild of Paul and Delia Wood, owners of Martland Mill Brewery on the outskirts of Wigan.

The pub is centrally located in Jaxons Court in the Victorian Quarter of Wigan. It is a unique bar situated over two floors and to the rear is a heated under cover beer garden. The pub has six hand pumps featuring their own Martland Mill range of real ales, plus others from further afield.

Although it has only been open a few weeks, the pub is proving to be extremely popular and is a welcome addition to the real ale scene in Wigan.

Local Brewery News

ALLGATES BREWERY: 'Edith and Mabel', All Gates' presence at the Great British Beer Festival, was received with great success although there are no immediate plans to brew this beer again. A couple of new beers have been produced recently :- 'Pony Dick' (4.2%), pale and hoppy; 'Patchcroft' (4.2%), single hopped with Mosaic. Last seen on the pumpclips as 'Milk Stout', 'Dairy Pit' will soon be available in bottled form along with the ever popular 'Blue Sky Tea Pale Ale'. The bi-monthly beer for August and September is 'Industrious Bee' (3.8%).

PROSPECT BREWERY: Sales have continued to be strong through the summer months. Still no progress on movement of the brewery to another premises. First batch of beers have recently been sent for bottling at the newly-opened Morrow Packaging in Buckshaw Village - featuring brand new state-of-the-art bottling facilities.

HOPHURST BREWERY: Currently three special beers are available at the moment including a blonde, a bitter and an IPA (5%) made with New Zealand hops. Currently undertaking half brews to test occasional brews. 'Campfire' was very well received at the Great British Beer Festival with positive feedback via social media.

MARTLAND MILL: All recent efforts have been concentrated upon the opening of their brewery tap, the Tap 'n' Barrel in Wigan town centre.

PROBLEM CHILD BREWERY: Currently concentrating production on their core range of ales but have produced a special called "One Night Stand".

WELLCROSS BREWERY: Nothing to report beer wise, although it is rumoured that they may have produced a brew for the Boathouse in Appley Bridge (?).

Pub awards & nominations

CAMRA's Locale scheme is simply about local people enjoying local beers in local pubs. Wigan CAMRA Branch acknowledges pubs that keep it 'local' by serving consistently good quality beers from 'local' breweries. With this aim, Wigan CAMRA operates a LocAle Accreditation Scheme whereby publicans are able to nominate their own pubs, subject to scrutiny of course.

During August, LocAle accreditations have been awarded and presented to :- Prodesse Ale House in Hindley ; Albion Ale House in Standish ; Standish Unity Club and the Silver Tally in Shevington Moor.

At the CAMRA Branch meeting in August, nominations were received for the 'Pub of the Season, Autumn 2015' which are Albion Ale House in Standish, Delph Tavern in Tontine (Orrell) and Wigan Central. Voting takes place at the September Branch meeting.

Branch Social Trips

The next round of Wigan CAMRA social trips were announced less than two weeks ago (via website, twitter and facebook) and are nearly all sold out.

All social trips follow a similar pattern and include return transport by 29-seater executive coach from Wigan town centre; visit to a brewery on outward journey; visit a town/city with a good selection of real ale pubs AND hosting a CAMRA Beer Festival; time-permitting, call at real ale pub on return journey. The transportation costs for each trip is just £12, which includes a tip for the driver. A £5 non-refundable deposit (per person) is required to reserve your place on each trip.

The trips to Shrewsbury (26th September) and Hebden Bridge (14th November) are both now fully booked, subject to payment of deposits. A waiting list is now in operation for both of these trips. There are just a few places left to Sheffield (24th October) but you'll have to be quick to reserve your place if you want to come along.

For more info and to reserve your place, please contact social@wigancamra.org.uk

DIY social outing to Lancaster Pub Fest

With our social outings by coach selling up fast, there is still an opportunity to join us on our next social outing by train to Lancaster on September 12th for the Lancaster Pub Fest. No booking ahead, no deposits to pay just turn up on the day at Wigan North Western station and buy your train ticket(s).

Lancaster Pub Fest is a 5-day festival with 29 participating pubs with 177 handpumps serving real ale, celebrating the amazing variety and quality of cask ale pubs that Lancaster has to offer. All pubs are within a half-mile of the city centre.

Suggested trains - Depart Wigan North Western 11.43 (arrive Lancaster 12.14) ; Depart Lancaster 19.25 (arrive Wigan North Western 19.58). Advance fares are available for £12.20 return (£8.10 with a railcard) on these specific trains. For more flexibility an 'anytime' return fare would cost £16.40 (£10.85 with a railcard).

Beer Festivals in September 2015

Beer festivals are a great place to try a range of different beers and beer styles that you may not come across in your local pubs and clubs. Listed below are just some of the beer festivals and events happening in and around our region (and some a bit further away) during September 2015 :-

3rd-5th - * **Ulverston Beer Festival** : Coronation Hall, County Road, Ulverston LA12 7LZ
3rd-6th - **Leeds International Beer Festival** : Leeds Town Hall, The Headrow, Leeds, LS1 3AD
4th-6th - * **Crewe Rail Ale Beer Festival** : Crewe Heritage Centre, Vernon Way, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 2DB
4th-6th - **Garstang Beer Festival** : Kirkland and Catterall Memorial Hall, The Avenue, Churchtown, Garstang, PR3 0HR
4th-6th - **Grasmere Guzzler Beer & Music Festival** : Tweedies Bar, Red Bank Road, Grasmere, Cumbria, LA22 9SW
4th-6th - **Lymm Beer Festival** : Lymm Village Hall Pepper Street, Lymm, Warrington, Cheshire, WA13 0JB
4th-6th - **Problem Child Beer Festival** : Wayfarer Brewpub, 1-3 Alder Lane, Parbold, Wigan, WN8 7NL
10th-12th - * **Burnley Beer Festival** : Burnley Mechanics, Manchester Road, Burnley BB11 1BH
10th-13th - **Horwich Beer Festival** : Horwich RMI Social Club, Ramsbottom Road, Horwich, Bolton BL6 5NH
11th - **Offbeat's Firsty Friday** : Offbeat Brewery, Units 4-6 Thomas Street, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 2BD
11th-12th - **Culcheth Beer Festival** : Culcheth Sports Club, Charnock Road, Culcheth, Warrington WA3 5SH
11th-12th - **Dunscar Golf Club Beer Festival** : Dunscar Golf Club, Egerton, Bolton, BL7 9QY
11th-12th - **Saltaire Beer Festival** : Saltaire Brewery, County Works, Dockfield Road, Shipley, BD17 7AR
11th-13th - **5th Annual Beer, Sausage and Pie Festival** : Ship Inn, 4 Wheat Lane, Lathom, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L40 4BX
12th - **Wigan Diggers Festival (Beer Tent)** : The Wiend, Wigan, WN1 1PF
14th-20th - **100 Greatest Manchester Beers Festival** : Food & Drink Festival Hub, Albert Square, Manchester, M2 5DB
16th-19th - * **York Beer and Cider Festival** : Knavesmire, Tadcaster Road, York, YO24 1DJ
17th-20th - **Reet Good Beer Festival** : Wigan Youth Zone, Parsons Walk, Wigan, WN1 1RU
18th-19th - **Northwich Beer Festival** : Northwich Memorial Court, Chester Way, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 5QJ
18th-20th - **Crooke Hall Charity Boat, Beer & Music Festival** : Crooke Hall Inn, Crooke, Wigan, WN6 8LR
24th-26th - * **Cannock Beer Festival** : Prince of Wales Theatre, Church Street, Cannock, WS11 1DE
24th-26th - * **Morecambe Beer Festival** : Trimpell Sports & Social Club, Out Moss Lane, Morecambe
24th-27th - **New Oxford Beer & Cider Festival** : The New Oxford, 11 Bexley Square, Salford, Manchester M3 6DB
24th-27th - **Ale Emporium Beer Festival** : The Ale Emporium, 53 Fylde Road, Preston PR1 2XQ
24th-4th Oct - **Stockport Beer Week** (11 days actually)
25th-26th - **North East Wales Brewers Beer Festival** : Northop Golf Club, Northop, Flintshire CH7 6WA
25th-27th - **Let's Get Beer'd** : Unit 5, 1st Floor, Great Northern Warehouse, 235 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 4EN
25th-27th - **Ormskirk Beer & Wine Festival** : Altys Lane, Ormskirk, L39 4RG
26th - **Alderley Edge & Wilmslow Beer & Wine Festival** : Lindow Cricket Club, SK9 6EH
26th-27th - **Taste Cumbria Beer Festival** : Jennings Brewery, Castle Brewery, Cockermouth, CA13 9NE
29th-3rd Oct - * **Westmorland Beer Festival** : Kendal Town Hall, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4DL

* denotes beer festivals organised by the local branch of CAMRA

Crooke Hall Inn Beer, Boat & Music Festival

A beer festival that's simply too good to be missed!!

This annual Charity Beer, Boat and Music Festival weekend, starring local bands and solo artists, all who are providing their talents free of charge for two worthy causes. The charities for this year are Wigan and Leigh Hospice and The Stroke Association.

The festival runs from September 18th-20th. Entrance fee to the festival is £2.50 including festival glass. Sponsor a barrel package is £20 which includes 2 festival glasses/entrance fees, 2 beer tokens and your name/ business name displayed on the barrel.

Road to Wigan Beer Festival

The dates for this extremely popular festival have just been announced – 1st to 11th October.

This is not your usual beer festival. It's not held in a cavernous sports hall or in a tent in the middle of a field. Instead, AllGates' pubs have once again joined forces to give you the chance to get out and enjoy some great beers in some great pubs in the Wigan area.

All you need to get started is to pick up a festival guide in any AllGates pub. This will tell you which pubs are selling which beers during the 11 day festival. Take your time, enjoy a beer or two and later, or another day, visit a different AllGates' pub.

Once again, a heritage bus will be running between all participating AllGates pubs on Saturday 3rd October. A day out not to be missed if previous festivals are anything to go by.

Keep checking the AllGates website for more details – www.allgatesbrewery.com

Reet Good Beer Festival

Make a note in your diaries September 17th-20th. There's a brand new beer festival about to take Wigan by storm and all for a worthy cause.

The festival will take place on Mesnes Field, slap-bang in the heart of Wigan, across the road from Morrisons and behind Wigan Youth Zone. Entry to the beer festival is from Mesnes Park Terrace, off Bridgeman Terrace.

The festival will feature a fine selection of ales from all our local breweries – AllGates, Prospect, Martland Mill, Hophurst and Problem Child. Other beers will be sourced from across the North West and further afield. There will also be a good selection of ciders, perry and Prosecco. The festival also promises some great music and cracking food.

Although the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) is not directly involved in the organisation and running of this event, all money raised will go towards a worthy cause - helping young people at Wigan Youth Zone.

Wigan Youth Zone is a registered charity offering young people somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to. More than just a youth club, the Youth Zone aims to help young people develop real and achievable aspirations so they can fulfil their dreams for the future.

Do your bit by going along and enjoying a few pints for a worthy cause. Keeping it local !!!

Parbold Street Festival of Arts and Music

The first ever Parbold Street Festival of Arts and Music will celebrate everything good about the village. So far 12 venues have agreed to take part in the event, which will take place on September 5th and 6th.

Streets will be filled with stalls, food, music and entertainment. A children's bouncy playground will be sited on the Royal Bank of Scotland car park and a live music stage will be put up on the car park behind the Railway Hotel.

The Wayfarer brewery/pub will hold a 'Problem Child' beer festival, the Stocks Tavern will have a German Beer and Sausage event and the Windmill will be hosting a Hog Roast and Cider event.

Saturday night on the canal will host a Festival of Light with barges from Douglas Valley Cruising Club lit up with fairy lights.

Bent 'n Bongs on the move

The Formby Hall in Atherton, home to one of the most successful local beer festivals (Bent 'n Bongs Beer Bash) for many years, closed at the end of July. The venue was sold to Formby Hall Limited and was earmarked for demolition to make way for an extra care facility for the elderly.

Now, after a timely intervention by South-East Lancashire CAMRA branch, the building has been added to Wigan Council's Assets of Community Value list where it will remain for five years.

This means the building has protection from development under the Localism Act 2011 and the owner therefore must inform Wigan Council if they wish to sell it or make changes to it. As part of the order, any community group who wants to buy the asset can trigger a six month freeze on the sale to give them a chance to raise funds. It also protects the building from planning applications.

Former Councillor Norman Bradbury is now calling for residents to sign a petition to get the hall given back to the community once and for all. The petition demands that Formby Hall should be returned to the Atherton community, as this was originally intended when the hall was gifted to Atherton by the Burrows family in 1917.

Meanwhile, amidst this uncertainty, Bent 'n Bongs Beer Bash has had no alternative but to relocate the 2016 festival which will now be held at Atherton Community School, Hamilton Street, Atherton, M46 0AY.

On a more positive note, this provides the festival with a larger and more central venue. There has had to be a slight change in dates due to the use of school premises. The festival will now take place on 18th-20th February 2016, during half-term week.

Great British Beer Festival

The Great British Beer Festival (GBBF), the grand-daddy of all beer festivals, is now over for another year. This annual event took place at Olympia in London on August 11th-15th.

The festival featured over 350 British breweries, including several of our local ones. There were over 900 real ales on sale across 27 bars. If that wasn't enough, there was also a wide selection of ciders, perries and international beers. Throw in some fantastic entertainment, a variety of food and traditional pub games and you have an event not to be missed.

Of course, none of this could happen without the unpaid volunteer workforce of over 1,000 all of which are CAMRA members. Many of our local branch members selflessly make the annual pilgrimage to London and do their bit in making this such a massively successful event.

Another highlight of the GBBF, is the judging and announcement of CAMRA's Champion Beers of Britain. This years overall winner was 'Cwtch' by Tiny Rebel brewery in South Wales. The silver award went to 'Jaguar' by the Kelburn brewery in Scotland. The bronze award went to 'Dark Drake' by Dancing Duck brewery in Derby.

Good Beer Guide 2016

CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2016 is the perfect package for pub-goers everywhere. Packed with details of the best real ale pubs in the UK and information on every real ale brewery currently operating and their key beers.

The Good Beer Guide is fully revised and updated every year with details of more than 4,500 pubs across the country serving the best real ale. From country inns to urban style bars and backstreet boozers, all selected and reviewed by over 170,000 CAMRA members, this is your definitive guide to finding the perfect pint.

The publication is to be 'officially' launched on September 10th, however you can buy the Good Beer Guide 2016 (paper copy) online now direct from CAMRA for just £10 (RRP £15.99) - see www.camra.org.uk/gbg. By doing so, you are investing directly into campaigning for real ale, community pubs and drinkers' rights.

At a later date, an e-book version (kindle and e-pub) of the guide will also be available as will Mobile Applications (Apple and Android).

Where in the world ?

Where in the world, within a half-mile stretch, would you have :- 12 pubs serving real ale, 3 of which are owned/operated by local breweries; an award-winning brewery; 2 railway stations (serving London, Scotland and both the east and west coasts); 1 bus station (serving surrounding areas and other local towns); several pie shops ?

Welcome to Wigan!! It's so good, one of the regular drinkers in Wigan has written a poem about it.

The train arrives bang on queue ; Off for a beer in Wigan's chosen few
A town that offer many a surprise ; It sells more beer than traditional pies
That's what I like about Wiggin

Out the Station and up the road ; Choose your pub there's no dress code
Left or right the choice is yours ; There's old and new on the real ale tours
That's what I like about Wiggin

A busy day at the pavement tables ; Lager drinkers telling fables
Falling over they've had enough ; Follow us for some decent stuff.
That's what I like about Wiggin

We go for a bite in Wetherspoons ; Moon under Water late afternoon
A burger and a pint it's cheap as chips ; And a tomato sauce relish to use as dips.
That's what I like about Wiggin.

New pubs opening Keg and Craft ; Fine selection of bottles and draught
Good town folk from the CAMRA scene ; From Wigan Central to Little Fifteens
That's what I like about Wiggin
That's what I like about Wiggin

[Poem courtesy of Dennis Swift]

Piccadilly Beer Mile

Next time you find yourself in Manchester on a Saturday afternoon, why not try a beer crawl with a bit of a difference ?

The four microbreweries and one beer distributor that occupy the one mile stretch of railway arches between Piccadilly and Ardwick stations in Manchester opened directly to the public from 25th July.

Track Brewing Company, Alphabet Brewing Company, Cave Direct, Chorlton Brewing Company and Squawk Brewing Company all plan to sell their beer direct on Saturday afternoons. Some of these will be open sporadically due to other commitments, and some every week. Before setting off it may be worthwhile to check www.piccadillybeermile.co.uk to see which breweries will be open.

This will be an opportunity to taste beers brewery-fresh and talk to their creators directly about the brewing process. In addition Cave Direct will showcase some of the most highly regarded beers from London and the South of England.

The five stops along the Piccadilly Beer Mile are located at the following addresses:

Track - 5 Sheffield Street, M1 2ND

Alphabet and Shindigger - 99 North Western Street, M12 6JL

Cave Direct - 75 North Western Street, M12 6DY

Chorlton - 69 North Western Street, M12 6DX

Squawk - 4 Tonge Street M12 6LY

Concerns over iconic Liverpool pub

The Roscoe Head in Liverpool has featured in every edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide since it was first published in 1974 - the only pub in the North West to do so and one of only seven pubs nationally.

However, it is now in the process of being sold by Punch Taverns to New River Retail Ltd - 158 pubs are being sold on as part of a £53.5m deal which is due to be completed on September 11th.

Despite being a Grade II listed building, there are now genuine concerns about the pub's future amidst rumours that it will be turned into a convenience store, although this has been denied by the new owners.

A campaign has now been launched to list the pub as an asset of community value which is being supported by Nick Small, Assistant Mayor of Liverpool City Council.

Let's hope common sense prevails and this cracking little boozer gets an extended lease of life.

Bowling Green is bowled over ?

A former pub could be knocked down to make way for housing for disabled people. An application has been submitted to Wigan Council's planners to replace the former Bowling Green on Ormskirk Road, Newtown, with 12 self-contained flats, car parking and communal gardens.

The pub closed in February last year after chain owners Gee Taverns revoked the landlord and landlady's licence. The move angered Bowling Green customers who started a petition threatening to boycott it in future if the chain did not allow the couple to remain.

Next Branch Meeting

The date of the next branch meeting has been changed to avoid conflict with the opening night of the Reet Good Beer Festival.

As such, the meeting will now take place on Tuesday, 15th September at 8pm. The venue for the meeting is still the Tap 'n' Barrel in Wigan town centre who are opening especially for the meeting. Our thanks to Paul and Delia for this. Paul has even re-arranged a Meet the Brewer at the Albion Ale House to accommodate the meeting.

Voting will take place for the 'Pub of the Season, Autumn 2015'. All welcome but only CAMRA members can participate in the voting.

Bits and Pieces

The Prodesse Ale House in Hindley is closed until 10th September due to staff holidays.

Meet the Brewer evening with Martland Mill Brewery at the Albion Ale House in Standish on Tuesday, September 22nd.

The ex-Rileys Bar is currently undergoing internal refurbishment with a poster denoting "Q8 Bar & Grill. Coming soon". The poster suggests it may be a sports bar.

No apparent progress on the opening of Marty's Kitchen and Bar on Wallgate (on the site of the old Poole's pie shop). Classing itself as an American restaurant, it was originally scheduled for opening on July 4th (American Independence Day). Their Facebook page was last updated in June when they were in the process of hiring staff. Guess it's a case of watch this space ?

The long-closed Crofters Arms on Market Street has finally re-opened as a pub, after a spell of being a Thai restaurant. It has been renamed 'Downtown Crofters Wigan' and is described as 'home of live entertainment' and already has it's own website - see www.downtownwigan.net. When our roving reporters called by there were two handpulls serving Tetley Gold and Black Sheep. Yet another welcome addition to the thriving pub and real ale scene in Wigan.

Local pubs to let by Admiral Taverns :- Hockery Brook, Hindley; Royal Oak, Standishgate, Wigan (under offer).

Pubs for sale :- Colliers Arms, Frog Lane, Wigan (£150k); Sams Bar, Church Street, Golborne (£175k); Harts Bar (formerly the Officers Club), Barracks Square, Wigan (£195k); The Crown, Bentinck Street, Wigan (£65k) - sold subject to contract Black Bull, Hardybutts, Wigan (£100k).

New Premises Licence Application for supply of alcohol (pending) :- Hindley Labour Club, Romford Street, Hindley, Wigan, WN2 3LW; The Orchid Room, 220 Wigan Lane, Wigan, WN1 2LA; The Bakehouse, Foundry Yard, Wallgate, Wigan, WN1 1DJ.

And finally

Our reigning Pub of the Year, the John Bull Chophouse in Wigan, currently has a job vacancy. We reckon their Facebook posting must be one of the best job adverts of all time. What do you think?

"Job vacancy: Glass collector/cleaner required for weekend evenings. Must have sense of humour and be able to put up with doing 90% of the work while the rest of the staff have a good skive. Previous experience would be preferred but full training will be given to the successful applicant. Ability to pretend to find rubbish jokes really funny is also desirable as the current staff have "jokes" that make Paddy McGuinness look funny."