

# beer buzz



Buzzing about beer, cider, pubs and breweries across Manchester, Salford and Trafford

**FREE**

**Winter, January – March 2019: Issue Number 1**



**Manchester  
Beer & Cider  
Festival**

**In this issue...**

**Updates and features on  
local breweries and pubs  
News about Manchester  
Beer & Cider Festival 2019  
And LOTS more**

**The magazine of the Central Manchester, Salford &  
District and Trafford & Hulme branches of CAMRA**



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# Contents

Editor's Welcome	5
Join CAMRA	5
Pub News	6-9
Brewers' Corner	10-11
Beatnikz	12-15
Manchester Beer & Cider Festival	16-17
Casks, Kegs and KeyKegs	19-23
Tuesday Tipples	24
Cider and Perry	25
Micropubs - The New Big Thing?	26-27
Branch Diaries	28-29
Letters Page	30

## All About Beer Buzz

**Beer Buzz** is the cross-branch magazine which covers the Central Manchester, Salford & District and Trafford & Hulme branches of CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale). Check out Beer Buzz EXTRA at [beerbuzz.beer/extra](http://beerbuzz.beer/extra) for additional articles including: Chorlton Pubs, more info on Beatnikz Republic, more info on Cloudwater Brew Co.

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*Information supplied courtesy of TfGM*

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### **Disclaimer:**

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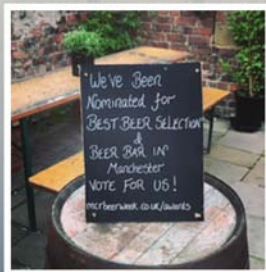
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# Editor's Welcome

Firstly, I would like to start by welcoming all readers to the new Beer Buzz magazine, covering all three CAMRA branches located in Central Manchester, Salford & District and Trafford & Hulme. It reaches the places other magazines don't reach!

It is quite some time since there has been a branch magazine covering the areas of Manchester, Salford and Trafford.

I, together with a good editorial team have come up with what should be a topical and popular magazine. It behoves me to try and keep this on a permanent basis, so let's hope it appeals to those interested in what's going on in the beer and cider world.

A lot of thought, planning and effort has gone into putting such a publication as this together, so it can be enjoyed by all.

We welcome contributions and opinions to [editor@beerbuzz.beer](mailto:editor@beerbuzz.beer) from those of you out there and are happy to receive newsworthy items, comments and suggestions. As a quarterly magazine, the next issue is due out in April 2019.

The copy date for the next issue is the 26th February 2019.

This issue should reach you before the advent of one of Manchester's biggest events on the beer calendar, namely the MBCF (Manchester Beer & Cider Festival). See elsewhere in this issue for more details.

Here's to happy reading, and don't forget, drink responsibly.

As a quarterly magazine, the next issue is due out in April 2019.

**Steve Smith**

[editor@beerbuzz.beer](mailto:editor@beerbuzz.beer)

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# Pub News

in and around the region

The last quarter of 2018 was a mixed period for the bar scene in central Manchester. With 18 pubs a week closing nationally, it should be no secret that times are tough for those who run the city's pubs and bars as austerity bites into the drinkers' pockets and the temperance movement drives into our lives.

Nevertheless, it was a big blow when four of the city's best-known bars along with three more in the southern suburbs closed as their parent company went into administration. Mark Andrew Developments (known as MAD Ltd) may not have been a household name, but the firm was behind Northern Quarter bars **Walrus**, **Rosylee**, **Hula** and **The Blue Pig** along with two more **Hula** bars in West Didsbury and Heaton Moor and **Tusk**, also in Heaton Moor. The firm has only rescued **The Blue Pig** earlier this year when its former owner Odd Group also collapsed. All the bars closed suddenly on 30th October with the loss of over 120 jobs.

However, October also saw a boost for beer drinkers in the city with two major new beer-led bars opening on Tariff Street in the Northern Quarter within a couple of weeks of each other. Leeds based micro-brewery Northern Monk raised over £1 million in a crowdfunding exercise earlier in the year with a pledge to open tap rooms in Manchester and London with some of the proceeds. The Manchester bar originally wasn't expected to emerge until at least mid-2019 so it was a surprise when it was

announced in August that the brewery had bought **Kosmonaut** bar. The stripped back décor of the bar already echoed Northern Monk's Leeds **Refectory** meaning a quick turnaround was possible with the major work involving stripping out the bar area to install a 16 line keg wall alongside four cask lines (three for Northern Monk beers along with Timothy Taylor's Landlord) which are positioned to the right of the bar. The bar's opening day saw queues around the block and it has quickly established itself as a major addition to the bar scene.

Manchester brewery **Beatnikz Republic** opened their tap a week after Northern Monk, just down the road on the corner of Tariff Street and Dale Street. Here 12 keg lines draw directly from a cellar immediately behind the bar with four cask lines coincidentally mimicking their neighbour's layout being positioned side-on along the right hand end of the bar. See our interview with brewery founder Paul Greetham elsewhere in this issue.

Another addition to the city's enviable beer scene arrived at the end of November with the long-awaited sister to Liverpool Road's legendary **Cask** opening in Ancoats. The bar which was originally expected to open in the spring of 2018 is located in a glass fronted double unit on the canal side in the new Cotton Field Wharf apartment complex (behind the defunct Ancoats Retail Park). The interior is spacious with a mixture of banquette seating, free standing tables and high drinking shelves.

The bar running along the rear of the unit is festooned with 20 fonts including permanent lines from Paulaner, Beaverton, Cloudwater, Kona, La Pirata and Lervig along with fixed nitro stout

and gluten-free lines and five rotating guest lines.

With one of the city's most experienced and knowledgeable landlords in Warren McCoubry, moving across the city from Liverpool Road to lead the new bar, there was never any doubt that beer quality and range would be second to none. Six cask lines feature at the end of the bar, with a similar focus on local breweries as their Castlefield sibling - there is a permanent Squawk pump and five guests; when Beer Buzz called there were offerings from Pictish, Thirst Class, Mallinsons, Roosters and Cromarty.



*The Stonemasons Arms*

In Timperley, **The Stonemasons Arms** has reopened under the leadership of Simon and Rachael Delaney — the team behind the Firbank Pub & Kitchen in Wythenshawe which they have had for 21 years taking the title of Best Community Pub in the 2016 Great British Pub Awards. They have taken on the Greene King owned pub in Timperley following an ill-fated attempt by previous tenants to turn it into a 'Gastro-pub'. The couple have committed to putting the same emphasis on the pub being at the heart

of the community that they apply in their Wythenshawe outlet. Three cask ales feature including Greene King IPA and Robinsons Dizzy Blonde.

Locals in Altrincham were alarmed when news broke that the town's **Old Market Tavern** had been sold by owners Punch Taverns. There were concerns that the new owners may be seeking to develop the pub for alternative use leading regulars to start an online petition to ask Trafford Council to reject any change of use.

The popular live music and real ale outlet became a regular in the Good Beer

Guide under the stewardship of John Glover who passed away suddenly in 2016. The pub was taken on by local businessman Steven Dale, who has been in extended discussions with Punch to get the same free of tie lease which the

pub enjoyed previously and had hoped to buy from Punch himself.

Following an application by Trafford & Hulme CAMRA, the pub was listed as an Asset Of Community Value by Trafford Council in 2016. This should have seen the local community advised when the pub was put on the market, however, the council were very slow in advising CAMRA as the applicant and failed to advertise the fact in the local area as required by the Localism Act.

However on 23rd November the pub posted on their Facebook page that they



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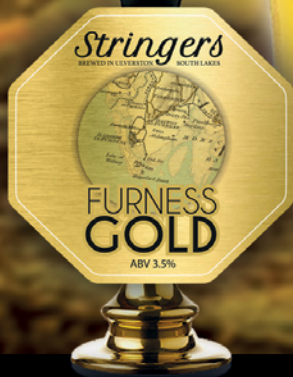
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had met with the new owners of the building who had assured them that they intend to keep it open as a working pub, with additional refurbishment of hotel facilities throughout.

News has also reached Beer Buzz HQ of a new specialist beer bar heading to Altrincham. **The Black Cat** is expected to open in late January or early February. It will be co-owned by Rowan Molyneux who has spent 10 years working in pubs, bars and breweries in Manchester and London, and Rodger Molyneux, licensee of the community owned **The Hope**, Carshalton, which has five times been named CAMRA's London Pub Of The Year, and **The Trafalgar**, South Wimbledon (five times South West London Branch Pub of the Year). The



*Old Market Tavern*

offering is likely to consist of four real ale handpumps and twelve keg fonts, with a roster of 'meet the brewer' events, tap takeovers, quiz nights and live music. As Beer Buzz went to press the location was still under wraps but will be revealed in our expanded online edition Beer Buzz Extra at [beerbuzz.beer/extra/](http://beerbuzz.beer/extra/) as soon as the covers come off.

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# Brewers' Corner

## Blackjack

**F**ormer Marble Beers and North Bar (Leeds) manager Bryony James has joined Green Quarter's Blackjack Beers as Brand Ambassador, responsible for organising tastings, tap takeovers and other events at pubs and bars across the north. For the annual Tryanuary campaign, which counters the temperance movement's dry January campaign by encouraging drinkers to expand their beer horizons by trying new styles and new venues, Bryony has organised the Blackjack Tryanuary tour which will see the Blackjack team present at over 20 events stretching from Chester to York and Nottingham over the month of January.

Bryony has also taken over some of the brewery's social media presence from co-owner Rob Hamilton who continues to focus on sourcing beers for the Glassworks Drinks distribution business which is responsible for delivering many of the craft beers in cask and keg which you see on bars across the city.

Day to day operation of the expanded brewery which is now capable of producing 15,000 pints a week falls to Brewery Manager Rich Andrew and head brewer Keiran Johnson.

Blackjack Beers will also be present at Manchester Beer & Cider Festival from 23rd - 26th January.

## Cloudwater

**S**cheduled to take place between Friday March 1st and Saturday March 2nd 2019 is their Friends & Family & Beer



*Barrel filling at Cloudwater Brewery*

Festival at Upper Campfield Market. This will be taking place in the Grade II-listed Victorian market hall in the heart of Manchester, very close to a range of transport links, accommodation, independent restaurants, and Manchester's best independent bars and pubs. There are two sessions each day, with the first running from 11am to 3.30pm and the second from 4.30pm to 9pm with an all-inclusive single-session ticket, on sale for £60, covering entry, your festival glass and unlimited pours of beer, with measures ranging from 50ml to 100ml depending on the brewery and beer. Also provided will be a selection of high-quality and wholesome food from a range of independent traders at each session, which will not be included in the ticket price.

## Manchester Union Brewery

**A**s this edition of Beer Buzz hits the bars of Manchester, we should be just days away from being able to sample the product of Manchester's first dedicated lager brewery. Manchester Union Brewery



*Manchester Union Brewery*

is another addition to the 'Piccadilly Beer Mile' of breweries occupying railway arches along Temperance Street and North Western Street but aims to produce a very different type of drink. The brewery has been put together by Will Evans of nearby Cave Direct North and events and marketing specialist Jamie Scahill. Head Brewer Dr Ian Johnson previously ran Six O'Clock Brew Co out of a small corner of Blackjack Beers' Green Quarter arch.

Although the first brew day on the 40 hecto-litre plant took place in mid-November, good lager can't be rushed - each drop of Manchester Union Lager takes eight weeks to reach maturity.

They believe that they are the only commercial brewery in the UK to use a decoction mash technique - a process that extracts more from the malts by separating part of the mash (the soup of water and grain that is at the heart of every beer), boiling it and then returning it to the main mash. The system is commonly used with German and Czech styles such as pilsners, bocks and doppelbocks with Pilsner Urquell being one leading example of a decoction mashed beer. The technique

is used to release melanoidin to make Manchester Union Lager an authentic Czech style lager brewed in the North of England.

Look out for Manchester Union's Pilsner at bars across the city from mid-January.

## Runaway

Runaway brewery have said farewell to brewer John Major (no, not that one) after four and a half years with the brewery. John has set off for a new career in the Lake District with Hawkshead Brewery.



*John Major from Runaway Brewery*

John was Runaway's first employee back in 2014 - initially helping Mark hand bottle beers and helping to set up the quality focussed process they still use today. He went on to become their first formally qualified brewer in 2017 and was literally part of the fabric of Runaway whether out delivering beers, behind the bar in the brewery tap or on the road representing them at Meet The Brewer sessions. Regulars at The Smithfield Market Tavern may also have encountered him knocking out a rendition of Toto's Africa on the piano.

Everybody at Beer Buzz wishes John all the best for the future and we hope we'll see him back in the city in the future.

*Images courtesy of Cloudwater Brewery, Manchester Union and Runaway Brewery.*



# Interview With The Beatnikz

John O'Donnell

## BEATNIKZ REPUBLIC

Grimsby born Paul Greetham is the founder of Beatnikz Republic Brewery, based on Red Bank in Manchester's Green Quarter and their eponymous bar on the corner of Tariff Street and Dale Street in the Northern Quarter. Beer Buzz met up to learn about his beer journey so far...

### Where did your beer journey begin?

At Big Hands and Sandbar when I came to Manchester as a student. At Big Hands I remember being blown away by a bottle of Schneider Aventinus Eisbock.

I was living in London when Kernel started in 2010 and travelling to New York for work where one seminal night I first tasted Bear Republic's Racer 5 IPA - wow!!!! That was the night I first decided I was going to start brewing.

### So did you?

Yes - from the kitchen of a one bed flat in London I brewed constantly every Saturday - I must have done 100 brews in that flat.

In 2015, I brewed my first commercial beer, Beach Bum, on UBrew's 100 litre kit, selling the bottles around bars in South East London. A year later, I was gypsy and

contract brewing but it became clear I needed my own brewery to keep control - which brought me to a railway arch in Manchester in January 2017.



### When you moved to Manchester, what were your ambitions?

My interest was in recipes and the business side — brewing as a one man band was damned hard work. Fifteen months in, I'd reached my targets but the physical work was taking its toll and I decided that I needed to increase volumes to afford to employ a brewer.

### Was that where you started producing cask ale?

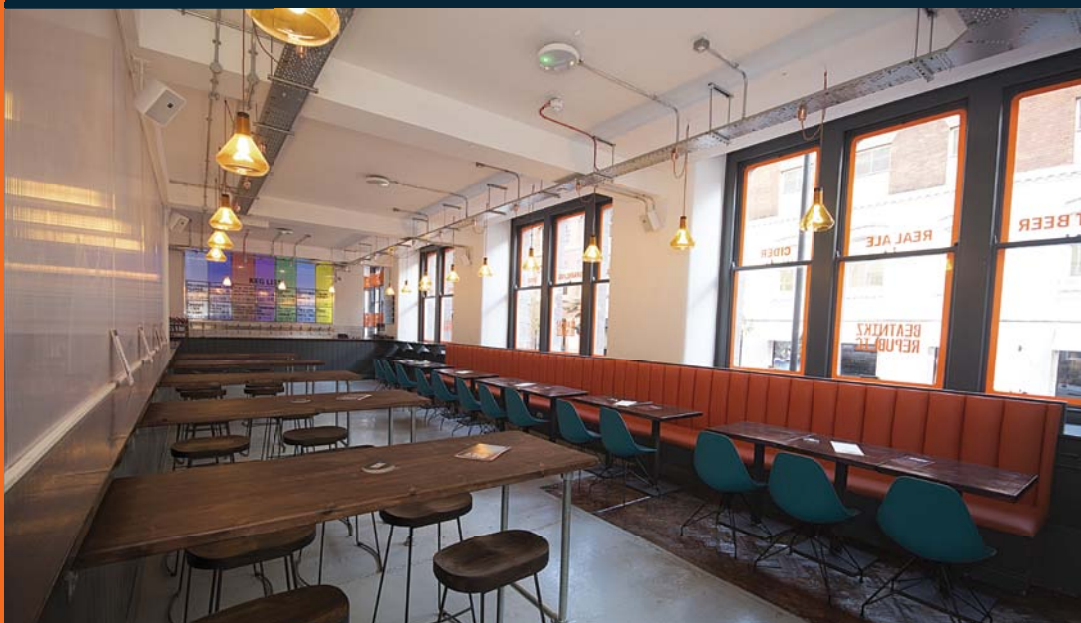
Not directly. In my time in London, cask wasn't on my radar - it didn't feature greatly in the bars I frequented.

Coming to Manchester, I started drinking in The Pilcrow, The Marble Arch and The Smithfield and I was loving cask beer. When rental company KegStar offered me a pallet of rental casks I grabbed them - that pallet was pre-sold before it was brewed, as were the next two pallets and the next...

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Now around 70% of our production is cask.

## And now you have your own bar. How did that come about?

It wasn't really in the plans but a friend who is a commercial surveyor kept talking to me about properties and when I was contacted by an investor who wanted to invest in the brewery, I suggested opening a bar. A few days later the deal was done and we started looking for the right site.

## How was the process?

We lost our first site due to legal delays but when I walked into the site on the corner of Tariff Street and Dale Street, I knew it would be perfect. Our contractors Lancaster Construction were amazing, working day & night to turn a 12 week fit out around in 5 weeks.

The bar's been really well received - even when we were in our soft opening phase without proper seating or toilets. Now it is fully finished we are really



pleased with it and are working on a regular programme of events.

And the future?

We've just started exporting and we're going to start canning again in January which will take up all of our remaining capacity so growth by some means or other is on the cards.

Read more of our interview with Beatnikz Republic at

[beerbuzz.beer/extra](http://beerbuzz.beer/extra)



# Manchester Beer & Cider Festival 2019

## - It's Impossible to Miss!



15,558 in 2018. But organisers, mainly drawn from the nine Greater Manchester CAMRA branches, carefully examine trends to refresh the parts other festivals can't reach.

Retained from the last festival is the popular 100 Club bar, featuring some of the historic names in UK brewing with at least a century of brewing experience

Whatever the weather, the Manchester Beer and Cider Festival (MBCF) is the North's biggest crawl. Safely protected from the winter, the Manchester Central hosts the January drinkers' treat for the fourth year.

2019 will mark the 50th anniversary since the former rail station saw its last locomotive, and with 750 or so different drinks, there's bound to be something to wet all whistles.

The festival is a great way to 'Tryanuary' — a drinkers' response to the killjoys promoting Dry January. This campaign aims to inspire people to seek out and try new beers in what is often a slow month for the trade. And the festival beer and cider orderers never disappoint with a selection which will feature specially commissioned beers, collaborations and ales rarely, if ever, seen in Greater Manchester.

MBCF has a winning formula, evidenced by the record-breaking attendance of

- including local favourites J W Lees and Holts alongside Harveys of Sussex and Wiltshire's Wadworth among others. The Little Ireland bar sold out last time and will be back with an extended and improved selection from both sides of the border — so, not so Little...

New for 2019 will be a bar featuring beers all served from the wood. The



festival is working with the Society for the Preservation of Beer from the Wood (SPBW) to encourage breweries to provide interesting beers in a range of aged oak

casks. Expect a strong representation from the North East and Yorkshire where several breweries, including Ossett,



Elland and Wylam have consistently supplied beer in the wood, but maybe also a few surprises. And if you'd like to know more about the history of beers from the wood, esteemed beer writer and Good Beer Guide editor Roger Protz will be running a special tasting event on the Friday.

The huge main bars will be split into two, not three as in past years. But tickers and traditionalists will still be treated



to a fantastic range of cask ales from across the UK. The lineup of brewery bars looks formidable with a baker's dozen of local and national favourites.

Bollington returns alongside the perennially popular Hawkshead, Tiny Rebel, Runaway and Blackjack; and another big name, Thornbridge, makes its debut at the Manchester festival.

KeyKeg was introduced by the festival in 2016, and the dedicated bar has grown

gradually since. Many drinkers relish the chance to sample and compare the same beer in cask and keg.

The cider and perry bar will have the largest selection in the North. Fans of the foreign stuff can expect a superb range of beers from Belgium, Germany and the Czech Republic supplemented by a curated choice of beers from the rest of the world. And for those who like their ales in bottles — or would just like to take some home — the Real Ale in Bottle bar will have a UK-wide selection.

Organisers are grateful to the generosity of the many sponsors who support the festival, mainly drawn from the brewing industry.

The public sessions are from Thursday 24th to Saturday 26th January 2019 and advance tickets are on sale from the festival website [mancheerfest.uk](http://mancheerfest.uk). Card carrying CAMRA and SPBW members are also



welcome admission-free to the preview evening from 5pm on Wednesday 23rd January. And if you're a CAMRA member, have you considered volunteering at the festival? Such a mammoth event needs around 330 helpers and you'd be most welcome — details on the website,

**STOP PRESS - MBCF will be running a Gin Bar with specialist Gins from local distilleries and Fever Tree will be sponsoring a special, limited edition, souvenir glass!**

[www.mancheerfest.uk](http://www.mancheerfest.uk)





**Manchester Beer & Cider Festival 24 - 26th January at Manchester Central**

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# Explaining Beer Containers – Casks, Kegs and KeyKegs

by Jack Summers-Glass and John O'Donnell

On the way from the brewery to your glass, beer is delivered from a variety of containers, including bottles, cans, kegs, casks and KeyKegs. You all know about bottles and cans, you probably know about casks but what about keg and KeyKeg?

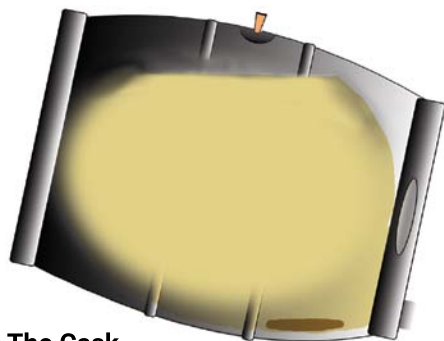
Before we go on, we had better briefly mention the difference between container conditioning or not - we will return to this subject in more detail in future issues.

If beer is container conditioned it means that when put into the container, it still has some yeast and sugars and can continue to ferment and mature in the container. This gives a natural carbon dioxide ( $\text{CO}_2$ ) 'condition' to the beer—gas is dissolved in the beer naturally and produces the head and 'bubbles' when released into your glass. If the beer is pasteurised and/or filtered, then yeast is killed / removed and the beer doesn't 'condition' and will typically have  $\text{CO}_2$  (or nitrogen) injected under pressure to give the head and bubbles.

Some beers are conditioned in tanks at the brewery before put into casks so the beer in the container is 'bright' — it contains very little yeast but is not pasteurised. Brewery conditioned beer can be "primed" with the addition of sugar and/or a small amount of yeast at packaging to gain condition

in the container without having any significant impact on the flavour.

Generally, most cask beer contains yeast, while mass market keg lagers and 'smooth' beers are filtered/ pasteurised and artificially carbonated. The modern generation of Keg and KeyKeg beers blur the boundaries as the beer they contain can be container or brewery conditioned.



## The Cask

The cask is the container from which most 'real ale' is served. Most casks are made of stainless steel, although many smaller breweries use lower cost plastic casks and some traditional wooden casks are retained.

Usually containing some yeast when filled, cask real ale continues to 'condition' in the brewery and/or pub cellar. Cask beer is "vented" before service, allowing the carbonation to settle to a natural low level prior to

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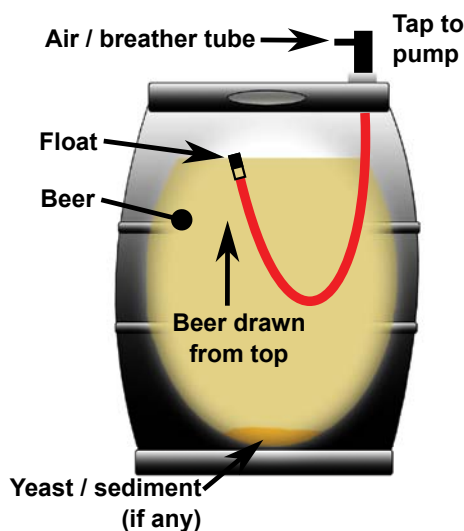
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being served — most commonly from handpumps, sometimes directly from the cask and in a small number of pubs by pumps to a tap.

Cask beer can be 'fined' (where a material, usually isinglass, is added to help the yeast drop to the bottom), or 'unfined' when the yeast drops naturally, sometimes leaving a 'haze' to the beer which is quite natural and not a fault.



Traditionally, the cask is placed horizontally and beer poured or drawn from a tap at the bottom. Casks can also be stored upright and served using 'spears' that draw beer from the bottom or 'widges' that float just below the surface of the beer. This means the beer is always drawn from the top and avoids risk of drawing yeast sediment into the feed - assuming of course that the cask has been allowed to settle in the cellar!

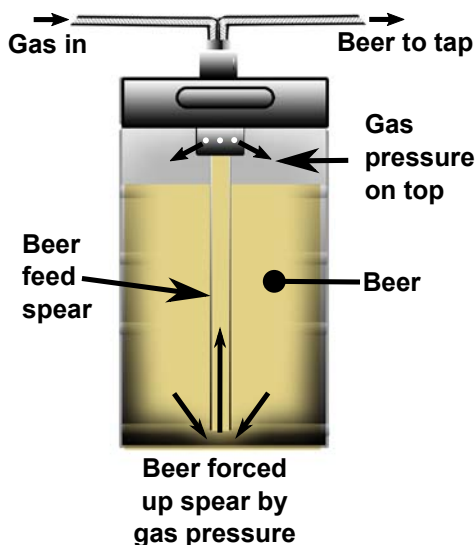
As the beer is drawn out, air is drawn in either through a porous spile placed in the shive or, if the cask is vertical, through a vent that forms part of the extractor. Air is cask beer's enemy and

will result in the beer oxidising and spoiling if not sold within around 3 days. There is a device called a 'cask breather' that draws  $\text{CO}_2$  at low pressure to replace the beer drawn out to prolong the life of a cask. Some drinkers don't approve and for many years CAMRA barred beers served on cask breathers from the Good Beer Guide, but this has now been withdrawn.

## The Keg

This is the container that most of the major mass-market beers come in. These have no yeast in the keg and the beer is pressured from a gas bottle (usually a mix of 60%  $\text{CO}_2$  and 40% nitrogen) in order to get it from the cellar to the tap, usually through a flash cooler to give the 'ice cold' beer that the marketing folks love.

'Smoothflow' keg beers (including Guinness) use nitrogen as well as  $\text{CO}_2$  and are served using a mix of 70% nitrogen and 30%  $\text{CO}_2$ .





Many newer 'craft' beers are also served from kegs. Most of these are not 'conditioned' in the keg but they will often have lower carbonation than the mass-market lagers and are intended to be served warmer.

The keg connector applies pressure from the top, forcing the beer out from the bottom of the keg via the spear. The pressure applied and the gas used can affect the product in the glass and it is up to the landlord to set the pressure appropriately for the beer although many pub cellars are set up for serving mass market lagers without the adjustment needed for serving lower carbonation 'craft kegs'.

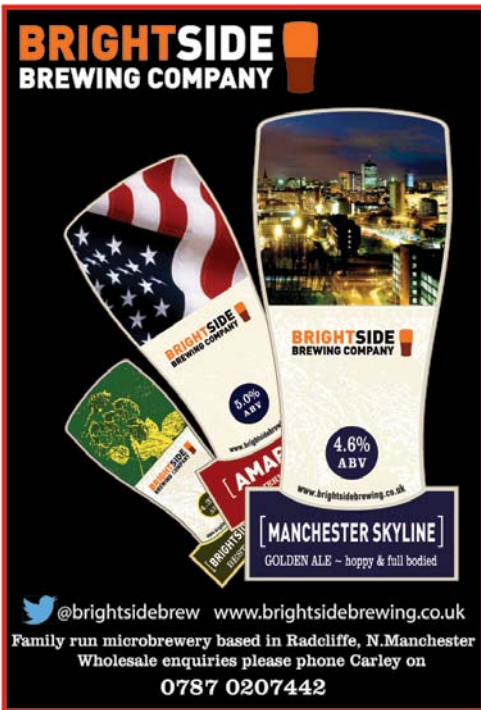
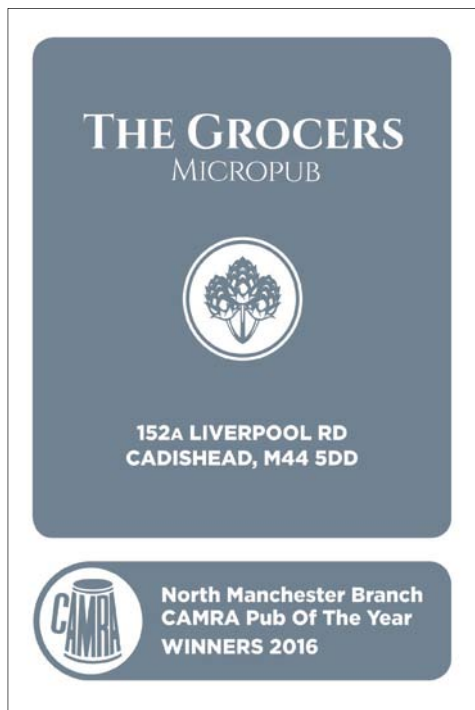
Most kegs are made from stainless steel, but there are now several variants of plastic keg in use which are intended to be disposable, removing the need for

brewers to collect empty kegs. You should not confuse a keg with a KeyKeg, which is a relatively recent invention...

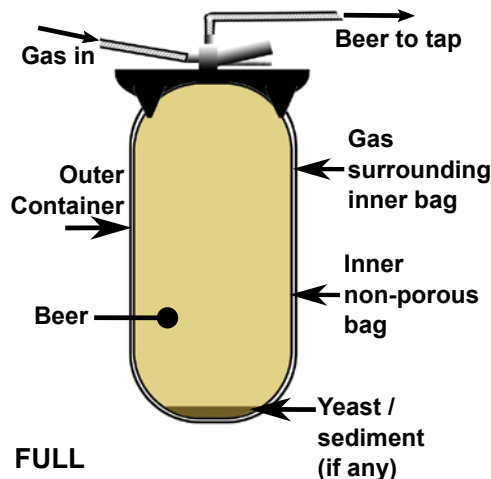
### The KeyKeg

KeyKegs are an invention of a Dutch company called Lightweight Containers and consist of an outer plastic container with an inner non-porous flexible bag that contains the beer. Pressurised gas or air is fed into the gap between the outer and inner containers and the beer is forced out of the feed at the top to the tap. The gas never touches the beer so the carbonation level is set by the brewer and cannot be changed by settings in the pub cellar.

If the beer is conditioned in the KeyKeg, as gas never touches the beer, such beers meet CAMRA's definition of 'real ale'. Some brewers are intentionally producing



KeyKeg conditioned ales which contain active yeast but the majority of KeyKeg beers are brewery conditioned.



## FULL KEYKEG

The beer exits via the top of the container with any yeast/sediment collecting at the bottom of the bag

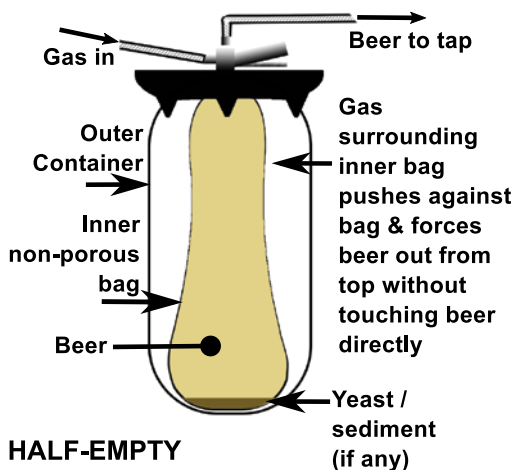
— KeyKeg conditioned beers need to be settled in the cellar just like a cask (although KeyKeg conditioned beers are rarely fined so will likely have a 'haze').

The majority of the plastic of a KeyKeg is PET, the same material as plastic bottles, however the UK's recycling industry still makes recycling KeyKegs difficult. To counter this, the manufacturers have initiated a "OneCircle" project to build a network to recover used plastic kegs for recycling.

Hopefully, this helps you understand how your beer gets from the Brewer to your glass. Now what the Brewer puts into the container, that is an entirely different discussion!

*This article has been adapted from an original piece written by Jack Summers-Glass for InnQuirer, the magazine of CAMRA's Furness branch.*

## Picture Quiz



## HALF-EMPTY KEYKEG



Can you guess on the side of which Manchester pub wall this is?

The answer will appear in the next issue.

# Trafford & Hulme Tuesday Tipples ... Goes To Stalybridge

Jon Gobbett

Our November tour was to Stalybridge, so we arranged to meet at Manchester Piccadilly at midday with the intention of catching the 12:17 to Stalybridge. However, Transpennine had other ideas and we arrived on the concourse to find that our train had been cancelled and the next available being the 12:47. So, to save wasting time the group decamped to the Piccadilly Tap for a 'quick half'; after all why not? On returning to the station concourse we found another regular Tippler waiting for us so five became six.

Eventually we caught the 12:47 although that was eight minutes late and off we went. First port of call, obviously, was the Stalybridge Buffet Bar for food and refreshment where at least two of us sampled one of the new cask ales from Cloudwater, the Brown Ale and very good it was too. On leaving the station we discovered that the weather had turned very inclement; ie, it was pouring with rain, so as quickly as we were able, we made our way down Market Street to the White House on Water Street.

This is an interesting Hydes' house in the fact that as well as a good range of Hydes beers there were three other guests, Bradfield Brewery Farmers Blonde and Belgian Blue along with Ahopcalypse. All the beers sampled were in fine form and were much enjoyed by our group. We also spent some quality time with the pub dog, Rosie, who was very friendly. Back out into the rain and off down Water

Street to the Wharf Tavern, our next stop. Unfortunately, as our timings were awry due to the cancelled train, the pub was closed and we had missed the 12 - 2pm lunchtime opening session. So onward, still in the pouring rain, to the Society Rooms, a Wetherspoons' establishment which, as is fairly usual for a 'Spoons, had a reasonable selection of cask ales available and all of the ones tried by our group were in pretty good condition. We also had a very genial conversation with the Manager who had picked up on social media that our group was on tour.

Our final port of call was Bridge Beers. This is where the organiser's navigation and map reading skills went out of the window. We walked for fully 10 minutes, still in the rain, to locate this very fine little bar only to discover, as we reached the door that we were in fact less than 50 yards from our previous hostelry! I guess you'd have to call Bridge Beers a micro bar as the arrival of the six of us along with about eight existing customers just about filled the place. All the beers are stillaged on a purpose-built wooden stillage behind the bar and served by gravity. The stillage has room for eight firkins and on our visit three were available. The beers we tried were in such good form that several of us delayed our departure in order to sample yet another one.

For anyone interested, see the Trafford & Hulme branch diary for more of our Tuesday Tipples and the [thcamra.org.uk](http://thcamra.org.uk) website for more details.

# What Is Meant By Real Cider and Perry?

Richard Withecombe

CAMRA and its Cider and Perry wing have long campaigned to promote the merits of real cider, and a definition of real cider can be found on CAMRA's website — with a list of ciders that unfortunately do not conform to that standard.

Sadly, British legislation is very poor when it comes to guaranteeing quality cider; only 35% of cider actually has to come from apple juice. As an example, in recent correspondence Carling Customer Services replied to James Finch @TheCiderCritic, disclosing that the juice content in Rekorderlig Premium Apple Cider is 36.4%.

CAMRA's Cider and Perry wing has, therefore, welcomed a new body which campaigns for a 90% minimum juice



standard, the Small Independent Cidermakers Association (SICA).

<https://www.smallindependentcidermakers.co.uk/>

SICA believe that cider and perry should be made from fresh juice, not from concentrate. They are the first association of cidermakers to offer a National Quality Mark of there being at least 90% fresh apple juice in ciders and at least 90% fresh pear juice in perries. This translates into the highest quality drinks with a fascinating range and depth of flavours. Cider from fresh apple juice, never from concentrate. Cider makers who have publicly signed up to SICA include Udders Cider from Huddersfield and Hallett's cider.

CAMRA recommend that members look out for the SICA quality mark when they make their cider choices.





# Micropubs - The New Big Thing?

Tim Field

*Tim Field, CAMRA's Greater Manchester Pub Protection Advisor, reflects on beer drinking trends over the years whilst enjoying the odd pint or two in some of Greater Manchester's burgeoning supply of micropubs.*

If you sit in the back bar of the iconic City Arms in Manchester, you can gaze up at the words of Hilaire Belloc, an anglophile French writer, who once penned:

*"When you have lost your Inns, drown your empty selves, for you will have lost the last of England".*

With pub closures still running at 18 per week you might well feel that his stark warning was prophetic but I'm not so sure.

Around the time Belloc was writing those words of wisdom, my great grandfather was downing pints of real ale in the Berkshire countryside. Quite a few of them accompanied his breakfast having already worked a few hours in the surrounding fields. Habits change, and very few, if any, rural pubs would now open that early and, sadly, many do not open at all. Much of the media coverage about pub closures have featured headlines such as 'the loss of the last pub in the village'. Some, often involving CAMRA's support, have managed to raise the funds to keep going as community facilities with the banner of 'pub as the hub', often achieved at the price of hosting a seemingly obligatory royal visit.

Outer estates have suffered such losses too. When I first moved to Manchester,

my nearest pub was the Raven in Little Hulton. At the weekends it often benefited from a free supply of additional strobe lighting provided by the emergency services. It has gone now and although a new pub did open nearby often such pubs close with little prospect of a community take over. However, Salford does boast the country's first cooperatively owned urban pub, the Star Inn in Broughton. It has been going now for over 9 years and proves that the community pub is not just a rural model.

My next port of call was Chorlton and in the late 1980's pub losses were creeping in there too, including the disappearance of the Feathers (made famous by the other Royle Family). Little did we know then that things were about to change and the arrival of the Marble Beer House (now simplified to just Beer House) in the late 1990's was the vanguard of what was to become an explosion of new real ale outlets over the following 15 years or so; transforming places where I had once bought a newspaper, a loaf of bread or washed my underpants.

Chorlton was well ahead of the game in filling the holes left by those retreating from the traditional high street and perhaps this would happen more often were it not for business rate levels and unbalanced beer taxes choking off entrepreneurial spirit. There are now well in excess of 25 real ale establishments in Chorlton which really does make Trafford & Hulme CAMRA branch's annual 'Chorlton Challenge' (an audit of the local hostelrys) live up to its name.

Most of these newcomers are not pubs

in the traditional sense, so what are they? The current fashion is to call yourself a micropub but when is it a bar, or an ale house, or a brew tap, licenced market stall, or a micropub?

The Micropub and Microbrewery Association was founded in 2012 following the opening of the first micropub in Herne, Kent in 2005 (Manchester's MicroBar in the Arndale Market was quick to follow in 2006). It sets out to share experiences on matters relating to running a micropub and defines such an establishment as 'a small freehouse which listens to its customers, mainly serves cask ales, promotes conversation, shuns all forms of electronic entertainment and dabbles in traditional pub snacks' Mmmm. A bit vague if you ask me and yet also a bit arbitrary as to what this definition might exclude.

A website called Pubs Galore tries to list micropubs but its definition is pretty much based on how people want

to define themselves. A quick glance at the list and you'll spot quite a few omissions. CAMRA's own Whatpub, which probably contains the most comprehensive list of pubs, doesn't even attempt to define a micropub. The reason given is that it is difficult to agree a subjective, evidence-based definition.

I imagine Hilaire Belloc would have struggled with definitions too. In his quote he refers to Inns. Coaching Inns? Who knows, but he was also likely to be referring to pubs, ale houses, hotel lounge bars, etc. Whilst we might be unsure how to define a micropub, the new wave of drinking establishments do in my view have certain general characteristics that differentiate them from what existed previously. These might not apply in every case and certainly there are fuzzy, sometimes interchangeable, boundaries between them but I see the differences as follows:

Traditional Pub	New Style Pub - Micropub
Long established (often with some sort of history, good or bad)	Established since around the turn of the Century
Of a particular architecture (sometimes worthy of listing)	Shopfront style
Has a car park/garden/yard	In a row of existing buildings
Purpose built cellar	Cellarage at ground level (often cramped)
Traditional selection of ales	Real ales and craft beer range
Increasingly food based	Focussed mainly on (quality) wet sales
Brewery of Beer Company owned	Independent

I admit that this is crude but no doubt you'll get my drift and will also see the potential pros and cons that could result from these different characteristics on both sides of the list. It would be interesting to hear what you, the Reader, think about this. A key differentiator of 'micropubs' is that they have been established since around the new Millennium and therefore, are new stock offsetting (at least in part) the haemorrhage of traditional pubs and a new source of draught real ale.

So, we are still losing pubs at a rate of 18 per week but this is slowing. Perhaps this is due in no small part to the campaigning work that CAMRA has done to save pubs. Just recently, Central Manchester CAMRA Branch worked with others to mount a successful lobby to save the Sir Ralph Abercromby from demolition, another of Manchester's iconic pubs.

The challenge of pub preservation remains, particularly for many outer estate pubs, those in the suburbs and in certain town centres. If you, like me (and Hilaire), love British pubs, we must remain vigilant. However, that should not stop us from enjoying the new wave of smaller pubs. It is argued that the range and quality of beer has never been so good and I would imagine that it is a far better experience than that had by my great Grandfather. Yep, things are much better in the good new days, so let's do all we can to keep it that way by preserving traditional pubs where we can and promoting new ones where trends are changing. To remain relevant CAMRA must look forward as well as back ... and have a pint in the meantime.



The poster for the Manchester Beer & Cider Festival features a bright yellow background. At the top left, four glasses of different colored beers (orange, red, dark red, and black) are displayed. Below them, the text 'Manchester Beer & Cider Festival' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. To the right, the dates '24th - 26th January 2019' and the location 'Manchester Central' are listed. A stylized illustration of the Manchester skyline, including the Arndale Centre and the Manchester Cathedral, is shown in the center. At the bottom, the text 'TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW FROM manbeerfest.uk' is displayed. Logos for the festival charity, CAMRA, and social media handles are at the bottom.

### Advertising Rates

Size	Cost	Dimensions (h x w)
Quarter page	£55	93.5 x 62mm
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# Branch Diaries

**Tue 8th Jan** 6pm Branch Meeting, Briton's Protection (CM).

**Tue 8th Jan** 8pm Branch Meeting, Beech Inn, Chorlton (T&H).

**Wed 9th Jan** 7.30pm Neil Richardson Award, Presentation to the Duke Of York (S&D).

**Fri 11th Jan** 8pm Altrincham Social Malt Shovels (T&H).

**Tue 15th Jan** 11.45am Tuesday Tipples in Marple. (T&H).

**Wed 16th Jan** 7.30pm Branch Meeting, John Gilbert. (S&D).

**Wed 23rd Jan** 5pm: Manchester Beer & Cider Festival 2019 (Trade and CAMRA Members Only) (All).

**Wed 6th Feb** 6pm Annual General Meeting Town Hall Tavern (CM).

**Mon 11th Feb** 6pm Good Beer Guide Final Selection Meeting at Terrace (CM).

**Thu 7th Feb** 8pm. Branch Meeting, Barking Dog, Urmston (T&H).

**Thu 14th Feb** 8pm Whalley Range Social, Nip & Tipple (T&H).

**Tue 19th Feb** 12pm Tuesday Tipples in Hyde. (T&H).

**Sat 23rd Feb** 12pm to 5.30pm Brewery Trip to Seven Bro7hers. £10 per person (T&H).

**Tue 5th Mar** 8pm Branch Meeting, Old Packet House, Altrincham (T&H).

**Thu 7th Mar** 8pm Sale Moor Social, Carter's Arms (T&H).

**Tue 19th Mar** 12pm Tuesday Tipples in Ashton-under-Lyne. (T&H).

**Sat 23rd Mar** 11.15am: Away Day to Chester. (T&H).

**Fri 29 March** 8pm Sale Social, Kings Ransom Volunteer Hotel (T&H).

*See branch websites / social media for further information.*

## Branch Contacts

### Central Manchester (CM)

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### Trafford & Hulme (T&H)

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@thcamra

[facebook.com/thcamra](https://facebook.com/thcamra)

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# Your letters

Dear Editor,

What is it that pubs have got against people drinking halves? We get the same thick head on a shorter glass, meaning we lose a greater proportion of the beer we've ordered than if we'd asked for a pint. We're not even guaranteed a stamped half pint glass - several pubs intermix stamped and unstamped glasses on the grounds that they all look the same. Or, like the Piccadilly Tap, they just don't stock stamped halves. And increasingly we are paying over the odds for halves.

I recently went in the Royal Sovereign (formerly the Hope) near Salford Royal Hospital (formerly Hope Hospital). I was pleasantly surprised to find cask ale on offer - Greene King IPA and Abbot Ale. I ordered a half of Abbot and was charged £2.05. I asked how much a pint would have been. The answer? £3.34. That makes two half pints 23% dearer than one single pint. The barmaid couldn't explain

it; it was just what the electronic till demanded.

This is inflation by stealth. Most people know the price of a pint, and would object vociferously if charged over the odds for a drink that wasn't worth it. But halves are often bought as part of a round or at the end of a long session. Perhaps the pubcos think we won't notice.

Yours faithfully

Arfur Bitter  
(Trafford & Hulme branch)

*[It appears to me that pubs in this country are now adopting the Irish influence, where for a number of years now, two half pints were always more expensive than a single pint. Ed.]*

Camra.shop.org.uk

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