

beer buzz



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

FREE

September - December 2019, Issue Number 4



Nicky Kong

In this issue:

Queen Kong's Crown,
Blackjack Beers shock,
Historic Unicorn saved,
Councils shamed,
IndyMan vs IndySalford.

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Welcome to beer buzz

September - December 2019 Edition

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Editorial

September sees the publication of the new Good Beer Guide, CAMRA's annual directory of the UK's best cask ale pubs. Cask ale is far too often served in poor condition – the Good Beer Guide's purpose is to highlight where drinkers can expect to find cask ales kept at their very best.

In this issue, our Talking Tech series looks at how pubs start that care when the beer reaches them. We talk to a master brewer of cask ale in Squawk's Ollie Turton and an expert of caring for it in the Crown & Kettle's Nicky Kong.

Sadly the pubs in the Guide are selected from a shrinking pool as we continue to lose 14 pubs a week nationally. We report on corporate deals and council failings that threaten our pub stock.

Our pubs need you – use them and tell our political leaders that they need to protect them - or you may find your local is no more.

John O'Donnell

The next issue of Beer Buzz will be published on 15th December 2019

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Bar Buzz

News from our local pubs, clubs and bars

Greater Manchester CAMRA has announced the winners of the Greater Manchester Pub and Club of the Year awards – with both titles being retained by their 2018 winners. Rochdale's **Flying Horse Hotel** held on to the Pub Of The Year title, beating off strong competition from Blackedge Brewery's **Brewery Bar** in Horwich and **Stalybridge Buffet Bar**.

The Club Of The Year title remained in the Beer Buzz area with **Flixton Conservative Club** coming out on top for the fifth consecutive year. However, it is the first win for new Stewards Pat and Andrea Doherty who took over in March and have maintained the high standards set by their predecessors, Nigel and Sharon Porter. The presentation will be made at the club's Brewery Night with Brightside Brewery on 27th September.



Photo © Steve Davis

Cask Ancoats has been named Central Manchester CAMRA's 'Best Newcomer' for 2019. The sibling to the long-established **Cask** on Liverpool Road opened at Cotton Field Wharf in December 2018 offering

six cask ales, real cider and twenty keg lines. Manager Warren McCoubrey was presented with their certificate in August by Branch Chair Heather Airlie.

Staying in Ancoats, the historic **Edinburgh Castle** pub on the corner of Blossom Street and Henry Street is to be reopened this autumn by the team behind Northern Quarter cocktail bar **Cottonopolis**. The Victorian pub dates back to 1811 but has stood empty and abandoned for many years. **Cottonopolis** directors Nick and Hayley Muir are reportedly going to operate the ground floor as a proper pub while the first floor will host a restaurant to be known as The Cutting Room.



Photo © Steve Ingham

Nick told the Manchester Evening News: "The Edinburgh Castle pub has been popular and serving locals for centuries, so we've got big boots to fill. We truly believe that our plans will ensure we're giving the area, our neighbours and visitors what they want – a quality place to eat and drink."

The Molly House on Richmond Street in the Gay Village has been sold to a first-time buyer. Brian Flockhart who has owned the popular multi-level pub for 21 years has sold it and the late-night Company Bar in the basement as he plans to retire. It had been listed for sale at an asking price of £1.29 million.

The new owner is Henry Kennedy-Skipton who is reported to be planning to run the business under management with plans to update its interior. Reporting the sale, property advisor Christie and Co reported Henry saying: "This is an iconic venue in a vibrant part of the city. The previous owner did a great job; now the opportunity exists to improve the venue even further, something which excites me greatly. This will benefit our customers and the Village as a whole."

Beer Buzz hopes the new owner continues to showcase both cask and quality keg beers and doesn't adopt the generic

mass-produced products available in every other bar in the Village.

The Sir Ralph Abercromby in Bootle Street, Manchester, took part in the commemorations of the 200th anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre on 16th August. The pub is the only surviving building in the area from the time of the massacre and has a permanent memorial to those who died in the form of a mural inside the pub.

The expansion of the Hatch site on Oxford Road continues. Hatch is a space for small food outlets, bars and small shops created initially out of converted containers. The established **Öl Nano Brewery and Bar** and **Elektrik Box** (sibling to Chorlton's Elektrik) has been joined by **Beer Box**, primarily a takeaway beer shop which has two taps serving KeyKeg beers for drinking on the premises. The new shop is owned by Black Storm brewery from Whitley Bay.

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Nearby, Scottish publicity stunt loving brewery BrewDog have opened their new **BrewDog Outpost** brewpub on Oxford Road on the site of the former Precinct Centre. The two-level bar has an on-site 5000 litre micro-brewery for small batch runs. Although they advertise a dedicated 'cask ale' tap on their line-up of 20 beers, there is no cask conditioned ale on offer – what BrewDog have branded 'cask' actually being KeyKeg conditioned beer served at cask style carbonation and temperature.

The company has also announced that their city centre bar will be relocating next March with their existing Peter Street location due to be redeveloped.

BAR MERRY-GO-ROUND IN THE NORTHERN QUARTER CONTINUES

Wilderness Bar and Kitchen has opened on the Thomas Street site of previous bar/restaurants **Odd** and the short-lived **Folk and Soul**. It offers 'craft keg' but no cask ale.

7 -Sins has opened on the site of the closed **Bakerie** on Lever Street, again no cask available.

Wilson's Corner, named in memory of Tony Wilson, has replaced the popular **Patron** on the corner of Oldham St and Stevenson Square following the sale of the site including the Hatter's Hotel next door to boutique hostel group Selina.

IN THE SUBURBS

The developer who plans to knock

down **The Church** on Upper Cambridge Street, Hulme has had their application for planning permission rejected by Manchester City Council's planning committee for a second time. A revised application was submitted after the council rejected plans for a large tower block on the site of the former JW Lees pub earlier this year. The hearing heard evidence submitted by CAMRA on the value of pubs to their local communities, the number of pubs in Hulme which have been lost and challenging claims that the site was unviable for a pub.

The Flying Horse on Crab Lane in Blackley no longer sells cask ale due to poor sales. The new landlady is going to try again at Christmas time. Steve Ingham, Pub Preservation Officer for the branch, visited the nearby **Duke of Wellington**, in Weardale Road, Higher Blackley, M9 8WR. This Holt's establishment has retained many interesting architectural features and is well worth a visit, not least for its extraordinary memorial plaque to local fallen soldiers.



Photo © John O'Donnell

Whalley Range's **Hillary Step** has been acquired by the team behind some of South Manchester's most popular

venues. The busy bar on Upper Chorlton Road becomes ex-DJs Justin Crawford and Luke Cowdrey's fifth outlet, joining Chorlton's **Electrik**, West Didsbury bar and restaurant **Volta**, **The Refuge** at The Palace Hotel and Hatch's **Electrik Box**. Since taking control in July, it's been business as usual at the Good Beer Guide listed bar which stocks five cask ales.

Manager Kuba Brudnicki remains in charge although he is leaving later this year to return to his native Poland. The new owners have replaced the bar's canopy and installed new furniture in the outdoor area and are planning to rework the bar area by removing the pillar which separates the bar into two sections and install new seating inside.

The Library on Beech Road, Chorlton closed just as our last issue came out. It has been rebranded The Beech Road Tap House. The owner has plans to launch an associated brewery Beech Road Brewing. There is currently no cask ale available.



Photo © John O'Donnell

The team behind Ancoats General Store have opened **Stretford Food Hall** in the former Argos unit at Stretford Mall. The front of the building is taken up by a large open plan area (pictured above) with booth seating down one side and four twelve-seater 'sharing' tables in the centre. Three stations host three guest food vendors who rotate weekly. When Beer Buzz visited these were Manzoku

Asian street food, The Bootle Oyster vegan chippy and Churros Hermanos. To the rear is the general store which includes an impressive beer selection, all in chilled cabinets.

There is no cask ale at the bar but eight fonts dispense a mix of local and international beers. On our visit Manchester Union's Pils and Dark were available along with offerings from Northern Monk and Chorlton Brewing Co, the remainder being imports from distributor Cave Direct including Lervig and Collective Arts. We were disappointed to find that while advertised at £5 a pint, our pint and a half of Manchester Union Dark came to £8, a hefty mark up of 50p on the half pint.



Photo © John O'Donnell

A few doors down towards the mall entrance, the much-anticipated **Longford Tap** opened on 12th September. This is a bar in the micro-pub style which will have a small outdoor seating area, offers four cask ales and seven keg beers plus gluten free and organic lager. The house bitter 'Longford Tap' is being brewed for them by Beatnikz Republic brewery whose Leather Soul bitter will also feature. Salford's Seven Bro7hers will also be regulars.

Timperley's **Gardeners Arms** opened on 6th September after a £380,000 refurbishment. The pub is owned by Heineken's Star Pubs division but, after a merry-go-round of tenants and

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temporary managers in recent years, has been leased by Warrington-based pub operator Priory Inns North West. The pub's new manager will be Darren Barton who has moved from another of Priory's pubs, The Saracen's Head at Warburton.



Photo © Dave Wade

The new operators have promised a new "relaxed open-plan space" with a dining area, an island bar and snug. The garden is to be given a family friendly makeover as well. Like many refurbishments these days, there will be much more focus on food with the kitchen being extended to offer pub classics and Sunday roasts. Priory Inns have also said that it will "make entertainment a key feature" with Live Sky & BT Sports, a weekly pub quiz, acoustic music on a Friday and live bands on Saturdays.



Photo © Dave Wade

Another Timperley pub which has been refitted with a food-based focus is JW Lees' **The Moss Trooper**. The pub has had a thorough makeover inside and out with Beer Buzz's correspondent describing the new look as "the modern nothing matches interior". There is an extensive new dining area and a line-up

of food offers including Fish Friday, Steak Saturday and £10 burgers on Tuesdays.



Photo © Dave Wade

Hale's **Cheshire Midland Hotel** has become the latest pub in the Sam Smiths Brewery stable to close suddenly, reportedly after chairman Humphrey Smith visited and discovered

customers at the pub breaching the company's ban on mobile phones and swearing. Similar snap closures by the brewery boss have been reported across the brewery's portfolio. Adverts in the pub window and online seek applicants for a "live-in joint management couple" but the pub remained closed as Beer Buzz went to press.

Real ale has been re-introduced at Sale Moor's **The Temple Inn**. When Beer Buzz called, Sharp's Doom Bar and Robinson's Dizzy Blonde were available.

Both **The Temple Inn** on Northenden Rd and **The Bulls Head** on Church Road in Sale have been taken into Ei Group's 'Craft Union' managed division.

Altrincham's **Orange Tree** is under new management. The tenants who have successfully run the pub for the last two years announced their departure on 18th August after reportedly being unable to negotiate a new lease with owners Ei Group. The Market Place pub was understood to be being advertised for rent under one of Ei's Beacon Partnership models - a fully tied deal with no guest beer rights. Although the pub was open as Beer Buzz went to press, the pub was still advertised on Ei's website under a regular 'Retail Partnership Tenancy'.

Focus on... Monton

Margaret Corlett and Ann Ward sample the pubs of this Salford suburb.

The Salford village of Monton is located to the north of the M602 north-west of Eccles. Although its own railway station fell victim to Dr Beeching in 1969, it is served by rail services along the Manchester Victoria - Liverpool Lime Street line with Patricroft and Eccles stations both within walking distance.

Bus services also serve the village, with service 34 being the main direct service from Manchester. The nearest Metrolink station is in Eccles which is approximately a 15 minute walk. However, on the wet and windy Wednesday afternoon that we had chosen for our visit, we took a tram to Eccles and then caught the number 2 bus to Monton.



Our first call was **The Park** (formerly Park Hotel) on Monton Road, not a traditional looking Joseph Holts pub as it has been refurbished into a friendly cafe bar style pub with two rooms. Branded by Holts as a modern community ale house, this pub now fits into the local cafe bar scene in the area with hot and cold sandwiches as well as soup available. Four cask ales are available, including a Bootleg branded ale (actually brewed at Holts' Cheetham Hill brewery). We decided on the Mild which was on good form.

Onto the **The Bluebell** on Monton Green, a JW Lees pub with four cask ales available, JW Lees Bitter (4.0%), seasonal Ever Fallen In Love, a pale ale at 3.9%, MPA (3.7%) and The Boilerhouse (their 'micro' brewery) Apricot American Pale Ale (3.8%) - all good session beers. It's a nice looking pub with a rustic-style interior and patio area but we were disappointed with slow service in a quiet pub and a barman who served short pints and disappeared before we could ask for a top up.

We continued to **Waterside** located next to the canal on Parrin Lane. A restaurant bar with a pleasant eating area outside and with friendly staff, it had sadly stopped selling cask ale, only having keg ales and lagers available.



We headed back on to Monton Road as time had crept on and several of the local micro-pubs had now opened. **Malt Dog**, a small cosy bar which opened in June 2013, has upstairs seating as well as an outside area. Three cask ales were available, all light in colour -



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Blackjack Euchre Pale (3.9%), Blackjack Pokerface (4.2%) and Gloucester Brewery Gloucester Gold (3.9%) plus a selection of bottles and keg. Bar snacks are available but you can also bring in food purchased from the deli next door.



Photo © Ann Ward

A couple of doors up and into **The Monton Tap** a small single bar room micro-bar which was very friendly with good 'banter' at the bar. Three cask ales were on: Torrside Brewing Wolf (4.5%), Brightside Brewery B-Side (4.2%) and Iron Pier brewery Joined at the Hop Wolf & Olicana (3.8%). The bar features regular changing guest beers typically including Brightside and Salopian breweries. Bottles and keg also available.

Monton Road seems to have a lively cafe bar scene with lots of food outlets, coffee bars and drink establishments such as **The Blind Pig** which, while not serving cask ale, is a coffee bar and dining experience during the day and wine bar in the evening. Altogether a good mix for everyone.

Apart from dodging the rain and a disappointing lack of stouts or porters in cask, it was an interesting afternoon spent in an area well worth a visit.

Planning to visit your local?

Does your local council value its pubs?



Tim Field, CAMRA's Greater Manchester Pub Protection Advisor, assesses the prospects for the planning system in Greater Manchester helping to keep your local pub going.

CAMRA is fighting hard to save pubs. No doubt, you are aware of CAMRA's 'Pub of the Season/Year awards' which can give a pub a welcome and deserved boost and you may also have seen the recent 'Summer of Pub' initiative, encouraging us to visit our local more often.

Perhaps less high profile, CAMRA has lobbied hard on the high tax on beer, high business rates on pubs and bars, and successfully won changes to the planning system which now requires planning permission to be sought for all changes of use from a pub and also when it is proposed to demolish one. However, despite this, we are still losing pubs at a rate of 14 per week, and although this loss is slowing, there is a danger that your local could be next.



The Junction in Holme – closed and sold for development;

Photo © Mark Reeves

Planning permission is now needed for any change of use from a pub but is this likely to stem the loss of pubs? A large part of the answer to this lies in the

quality of the planning policy documents, known as local plans, that councils use to assess and judge the applications they receive.

CAMRA recently conducted a national survey as to how effective these were in relation to protecting pubs, categorising each council's plans into one of four categories:

- 'Excellent' – a specific pub protection policy and a need to demonstrate non-viability in any proposal to change;
- 'Good' – a specific pub protection policy is in place;
- 'Room for improvement' – general protection for community facilities;
- 'Poor' – no policies at all.

The results are not good for drinkers in Greater Manchester with the table below showing how each of Manchester's ten district councils fared:

Local authority	Rating for Pub Protection Policy
Bury	Poor
Bolton	Poor
Manchester	Poor
Oldham	Poor
Rochdale	Poor
Salford	Room for improvement
Stockport	Room for improvement
Tameside	Poor
Trafford	Poor
Wigan	Room for improvement

The upshot of this is if you wish to campaign to save your local, it will have to be entirely on the best case you can muster and with no real sense as to how this will be assessed. This runs the risk

of both inconsistency in how each case is assessed by your local council and having to face the mismatch that often exists between local campaigners and developers and large pub chains who can generally devote more resources to arguing and lobbying their case.



You might ask why do councils not have such policies in place? You might think they would see the benefit that a good range of local facilities can play in supporting community cohesion? And, despite pressures from the public health agenda to curb alcohol consumption, many local politicians realise the huge value that pubs play in encouraging active and cohesive communities.

For example, Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, is in no doubt on this and the recently revised Greater London Plan reflects the importance attached to the public house. There are also many

examples across Britain of local authorities who have developed 'excellent' policies in relation to protecting pubs and Lancaster and Calderdale are two examples not a million miles away from us in Manchester.

Why Greater Manchester fares so badly is not entirely clear. A cynical view might be that many councils would like to keep development options flexible, especially when many are under pressure to find land to meeting housing targets without releasing green-belt land. Perhaps more likely is that there is a lack of awareness of how such policies can be included in plans or existing ones improved. With this in mind, CAMRA locally will be lobbying hard during the next phases of consultation about to happen this autumn/winter on the Greater Manchester Strategic Framework and many of the councils' local plans.

CAMRA branches try to support individuals and community groups to protect their local pub. If you want to contact someone to do this, either contact Tim Field at **tim.field@camragreatermanchester.org.uk** or, for Central Manchester, Steve Ingham at **stevemingham@btinternet.com**. I would also encourage you to look out for consultations on local plans in your area and ask your council to include policies that help maintain one of the country's finest traditions, a trip to the local.

Save your local pub from extinction

Ask your councillors and MPs to protect our pubs

camra.org.uk/pubs

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Grade II listing for Unicorn Hotel

CAMRA's Pubs Heritage Group helps preserve historic pub



In June this year, The Unicorn on Church Street, Manchester was added to England's National Heritage List maintained by Historic England (HE) and is now a Grade II listed building. This followed steps by CAMRA's Pub Heritage Group (PHG) to inform them of possible changes at the pub.



Photo © Michael Slaughter LRPS

The decision taken represents an important step in preserving the distinctive and beautiful interior of this Manchester gem. Like pubs in the city with similar interiors – **The Hare & Hounds**, Shudehill and **The Briton's Protection**, Great Bridgewater Street – the Unicorn is distinctive because it remains largely unaltered since it was built in 1924, save for minor alterations in 1934.

It has featured in the CAMRA regional Real Heritage Pubs of the North West (Pub Interiors of Special Historic Interest), because of its distinctive interior and is now included in CAMRA's National Inventory. I urge you to go along and try the cask ale on offer and see for yourself the wonderful interior. It is also the only

pub in the centre of Manchester regularly selling Draught Bass.



Photo © Michael Slaughter LRPS

BACKGROUND

HE acted rapidly when CAMRA informed them that moves were afoot for owners Ei Group (formerly Enterprise Inns) to carry out alterations to the interior which may well have seen the significant features of the interior changed or elements disappear altogether. HE submitted a detailed application to the Department for Culture Media and Sport, the government department responsible for deciding which premises should receive the protection afforded by law.

The listing now achieved means that Ei cannot undertake works without their proposals being submitted and scrutinised under the regulations and law which now apply. Ei are the current owners but they are more importantly custodians acting on behalf of us all and future generations as guardians of the property. HE were sufficiently concerned that they took the unusual step of shortening the consultation period, from three weeks to one week because building work was imminent.

CAMRA's PHG worked very hard on behalf of us all to ensure that this

special building will be preserved for future generations of pub goers, visitors and resident Mancunians. Even if you don't drink alcohol, go in and enjoy a soft drink or cup of tea in the wonderful surroundings - the staff will be pleased to welcome you.

CAMRA will be keeping a close eye on developments and monitoring planning applications which must now be submitted and is mindful that an appeal against listing is possible.



WHY IS THE UNICORN SO SPECIAL?

It is one of only 200 pubs that survive well-preserved in the UK. It represents 'improvement' typical of moves in the inter-war years to make drinking and pubs more respectable by designing pubs that were attractive and appealing. Practically, because of greater glazing, limited partitioning and a smaller centrally placed bar, observation by



bar staff was easier and encouraged the use of the available fixed seating. Manchester was not a great focus of this type of improvement during this period and there are no listed inter-war pubs in Manchester. While the Hare and Hounds has an interior of about 1925, the pub itself is much older. The Unicorn is therefore the only known example of a completely inter-war pub in the city.

The Unicorn survives well both internally and externally. The whole interior is of good quality. Its fireplaces, door surrounds and tiling in particular are very characteristic of the period. Its bell pushes which were once used to get waiter service are now rare. Take time to look at the exterior which includes nearly all of the original windows with extensive original glazing is. Nationally The Unicorn compares well with the Palm Tree in Mile End, London and the Royal Oak, Bethnal Green, London.

Steve Ingham



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CAMRA responds to Government review of the Pubs Code

CAMRA echo calls for urgent reform from the Government to help local tied tenants



A survey of over 400 tied pub tenants in England and Wales has revealed significant failures in the Pubs Code, which governs the relationship between tenants and large pub-owning companies.

CAMRA campaigned for nearly a decade for a Pubs Code to be put in place, but the survey has revealed the Code is currently failing tenants, sparking Greater Manchester CAMRA to call on the Government to act to protect tied licensees in the region.

75% of tenants reported that they don't think they are treated fairly and lawfully by their parent pub companies, while 73% felt that they were worse off than a free of tie tenant.

Furthermore, one in five tenants who have legal rights under the Code was completely unaware of the Market Rent Only option - an important component of the legislation that allows them to buy beer on the open market at the point of their contract renewal.



Photo © CAMRA

Nik Antona, CAMRA National Chairman said: "We wanted to gain an accurate picture of the views of tied licensees in England and Wales. The Pubs Code Adjudicator currently relies on pub

companies to audit licensees' opinions, which we believe has skewed responses.

"It's clear from our survey that there are significant failures with the current Pubs Code. With a new Prime Minister and Cabinet, the ongoing Review is the first chance for the new Government to show that they will be taking positive action to support tied pub tenants and consumer choice."



Photo © CAMRA

Phil Moss, CAMRA Regional Director for Greater Manchester said: "It is clear from the feedback we get from pub company tenants that the Pubs Code is not working for them.

We've seen tenants across the region lose their livelihoods as pub companies ignore requests for lease renewals and convert successful pubs to alternative arrangements that go against the spirit of the Pubs Code".

The results of the CAMRA survey have been submitted to the Government to feed into the much-anticipated review of the Pubs Code. Any interested parties can read the full submission on the CAMRA website at **www.camra.org.uk/campaign-resources**.

If you support CAMRA's position on this, why not write to your MP drawing their attention to CAMRA's consultation submission? You can look up your MP's contact details at **www.parliament.uk**.

Making Nectar



News from the breweries of Manchester, Salford & Trafford

BEATNIKZ REPUBLIC

Beatnikz Republic

The Redbank based brewery has completed

its expansion with a new brew kit from PBC Brewery Installations doubling their brewing capacity. With the brewery cold store removed to make way for the new fermenting vessels, they've taken out a lease on a second unit just around the corner from the brewery which has become their warehouse.

With a renewed focus on ensuring their beers are of the highest quality possible, they have invested over £10,000 in a dedicated laboratory at the brewery.

The sales team has been strengthened with Tom Bacon joining the company

from Brew York. Tom will work alongside Rosie Setterfield-Price in Manchester covering the north of England, with Tash Olive-Wolf serving London and the south from her base in Reading.

The brewery has added a new beer to their core range – Boardwalk is a 4% gluten free pale ale which uses US hops to give a crisp citrus character. It is available in can, cask or keg and, as well as being suitable for coeliacs, like all Beatnikz Beers it's also suitable for vegans. In one of its first outings it won a Silver award at Peterborough Beer & Cider Festival.

They have also just completed their first overseas exports with beer delivered to customers in both Denmark and Germany.



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Beer Nouveau

Owner Steve Dunkley has become so fed up with the fake Oktoberfest clone events which spring up every year that he's organised his

own OktoberFaust to celebrate locally-brewed lagers.

Writing on his blog, he said "Every year identikit versions tour around the country pouring a mass-produced beer that can't even legally be called an Oktoberfest Beer, shipped in by tanker for the occasion and served in scratched, chipped plastic tankards for a price that'd make an MP rethink the legitimacy of their expenses claims."

The alternative event will be held at the Temperance Street brewery on the 18th & 19th of October with a range of Märzens (including their own barrel-

lagered version) and Weisens, Helles and Bocks, Rauch lagers and even Pils - all brewed by independent brewers. Announced so far are Torrside, Liverpool's Neptune (Even Flow Helles), Reading's Elusive Brewing and Keighley's Wishbone (Boilerplate beechwood smoked lager)



BLACKJACK

Blackjack

In a move which shocked many in the beer scene in Manchester and far beyond, founder Robert Hamilton has sold his share in the

Green Quarter brewery to his co-owners and left the business.

Rob started Blackjack Beers in 2012 when he bought the 4.5 barrel brew kit from his former employer Marble Beers and installed it in a railway arch just

Pi (Chorlton)

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down the road from its original home in the Marble Arch pub. In 2014 the brewery merged with Joe Bird and Jon Hartley's Glassworks Drinks distribution business. Over the last five years, both sides of the business have expanded, now employing a dozen people, brewing half a million pints of beer a year and distributing beers to pubs and bars as far afield as Birmingham and Yorkshire.

Rob has also sold his share of **The Smithfield Market Tavern** and **Jack In The Box** bars in Altrincham and Manchester's Mackie Mayor. He told Beer Buzz that he has no immediate plans for the future other than taking some time off to "recharge the batteries". The messages of support he received from across the brewing world when making the announcement is testament to how well respected Rob is throughout the industry. Beer Buzz hopes to see him back in beer as soon as he is ready.

In unrelated news, Blackjack's brand ambassador and events organiser Bryony James is leaving to return to university to pursue a psychology teaching degree.

Meanwhile, by the time you read this, a third **Jack In The Box** bar should have opened at Macclesfield's redeveloped Picturedrome. The former cinema in the town has been redeveloped into a food court by the team behind Altrincham Market Hall with seating for 180 inside and a further 80 outside in a year-round covered area. The **Jack In The Box** bar will be double-sided serving both the inside and outside areas, offering ten cask and twelve keg lines.



Joseph Holt

The brewery's Jane Kershaw has been named Brewer of the Year 2019 by the

Institute Of Brewing and Distilling (IBD).

Jane, the 33 year old great-great-great granddaughter of Joseph Holt himself, is currently studying to become a Master Brewer - the highest level of brewing qualification offered by the IBD.

Jane's younger brother Andrew, 29, has also recently joined the company where their father is Chief Executive. Andrew will spend the next six months training in all aspects of the business

The third beer in the brewery's series of six beers to celebrate their 170th anniversary will be released in October. Named '1932' after the year the Christie and the Holt Radium Institute merged and moved to the Withington site, where the Christie Hospital still stands today. It will be a 5% Joseph Holt Bitter made with dry hops.



POMONA ISLAND

Pomona Island

The brewery tap room is now open every weekend – from 4pm to 8pm on Fridays and noon to 8pm on Saturdays with later opening for special events. The tap room is on the same Waybridge Industrial Estate as the brewery, less than half a mile from Weaste Metrolink stop and 15 minutes from MediaCity.

Pomona Island share the industrial estate with Seven Bro7hers brewery whose own tap room opens 4pm – 8pm Fridays and Noon – 6pm Saturdays.

The Pomona team has also expanded with the addition of George Charlton as general brewery assistant. George joins Pomona from **ÖL Nano Brewery & Bar** having previously worked alongside Pomona's Gaz Bee at **Jack In The Box**, Mackie Mayor.



Runaway

There are some comings and goings at the Dantzic Street brewery.

Former Ludlow Brewery man Oli Edwards is taking on more responsibility in the brewhouse, as well

as studying for the General Certificate in Brewing from the Institute of Brewing & Distilling.

Josh Chappell and Sofie Waite, both formerly of The Smithfield Market Tavern, have also joined the Runaway team, assisting with sales and deliveries, with Josh now training as a brewer as well.

The brewery recently had two beers, Pale Ale and Kaffir Lime & Chilli Wit, featured on the first ever UK keg beer bar at the Great British Beer Festival in London. They'll also be pouring at Indy Man Beer Con at Victoria Baths in October.

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Worker Bee

Beer Buzz's Graham Donning meets Squawk Brewing Co's Ollie Turton

Oliver Turton (Ollie), the founder and head brewer of Squawk set up the brewery back in 2013. The brewery is situated under a railway arch tucked away in Tonge Street, just off Devonshire Street North in Ardwick. Although railway arches are now synonymous with breweries, back in 2013 Manchester only had a couple in Blackjack and Marble. However, even then Ollie was advised that there were too many breweries in Manchester. Thankfully for local drinkers, he persevered.

Ollie entered the brewing trade in what he calls the 'classic' fashion. He was a chef in Huddersfield and started whole grain mash home brewing using some of the large pans from the kitchen he worked in. He loved brewing and the end product so much that he volunteered as much as he could with the now defunct Huddersfield microbrewery Hand Drawn Monkey, learning from Tom Evans (later of Alphabet Brewery Company and now Master Brewer with JW Lees). He also volunteered with Mallinsons who he says were running a "proper business" and from whom he learnt a lot.

Ollie has no formal training, learning his trade hands-on but remains keen to continue to learn whatever he can to improve his beers. On the day Beer Buzz visited, he had a microbiologist due to visit in order to conduct a thorough examination of all his plant. In his words, "As many a brewer will know, infections can happen easily and are difficult to get rid of. Prevention is better than cure."

For the first couple of years, there was just Ollie and his dog Bernie, the 'office manager', at the brewery. Squawk's first



Photo © John O'Donnell

employee was Graham Canny, a friend Ollie met while Graham was manager of the Victorian Craft Beer Cafe in Halifax. Graham initially worked part-time before becoming a full-time brewer and sales manager a couple of years ago. The team has recently expanded to three with James Horrocks joining from Chorlton Brewery Co, bringing his expertise with sour beers into the business. Although he is now the lead brewer, Ollie acknowledges that James is probably technically the best brewer of the three of them.

Recently the brewery expanded in situ and the kit was moved around, adding two 8 barrel fermenting vessels (pictured right), doubling the total brewing capacity to 32 barrels. Squawk brews three or four times



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a week depending on demand. If the fermenting vessels are empty they will brew more beer.

Squawk has built its considerable reputation on hop forward pale ales and IPAs but on a recent day off, Ollie gave Graham and James free reign to brew whatever beer they wanted. They produced a 4% traditional bitter named Roller that sold out in one week with demand now threatening to make the beer permanent.

With James on board, the brewery has also introduced several sour beers to the range. Ollie says they are becoming very popular, especially in surprising places like Hebden Bridge. Even Ollie's mother, who does not drink or like beer at all, loves the sours saying they "sort of remind her of wine".

The reshuffle of the brewery has also allowed an expanded aged barrel store to be added, currently with Corvus stout aging in whiskey barrels, Chocolate Milk Stout in bourbon barrels and sours in red wine barrels.

While predominantly a cask brewery, Ollie told us that it has seen an increase in demand for keg beers from small bars in and around Manchester which has now seen keg and KeyKeg increase to 35% of sales. Unfortunately, they are force carbonated rather than keg-conditioned. However, having tasted several of his beers in both cask and keg I can say that they are all excellent – apart from the sours, I just can't do them! Must try harder!

Ollie told us that Squawk is passionate about beers, brewing progressive hop-forward beers and brewing many collaborations with other modern brewers. Its latest was Go Mingle, a 6.5% passion fruit IPA brewed with Huddersfield-based cuckoo brewers Zapato.



While the brewery does not have enough space for a brewery tap, it now has a tap room connected to GRUB's new Chapeltown Picture House in Crusader Mill, Ancoats (also home to Track Tap Room & Yerr Bar). This has a 60-seater cinema and VR gaming space and space for 60 in the bar. After initial problems with sound leakage between the bar and cinema, new soundproofing has sorted that so the tap room now remains open while a film is showing. Chapeltown Picture House is open 3pm – 10pm Friday, noon – 10pm Saturday and noon – 8pm Sunday, although Squawk is free to use the tap room for its own events on other nights.

As well as the tap room, Squawk also regularly holds tap takeover events. As Ollie lives in Holmfirth, and is normally in the brewery each day for 7am after a drive over Saddleworth Moor, driving doesn't bother him so he is happy to go anywhere that invites him – with one proviso. Bernie is now 15 years old and can't be left alone for long, so any tap takeover or collab brew has to have dog-friendly accommodation nearby!

Follow Squawk Brewing Co at

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**22ND-25TH JANUARY
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The big one is back at Manchester Central this January as plans for the seventh Manchester Beer and Cider Festival (MBCF) take shape. Running from Thursday 23rd to Saturday 25th (with a preview evening for CAMRA members on 22nd), the festival will be the biggest yet.

The festival is known for its innovation, with traditional and modern beer styles showcased side by side up here in Manchester well before the Great British Beer Festival in London took the keg plunge last month. Multiple bars give drinkers overwhelming choice, but each part of the event is reviewed to present improvements.

The resounding success of the Beers from the Wood bar at this year's festival has guaranteed an expanded return in 2020.

There'll also be some familiar brewery bars with 2019 Beer Of The Festival winners Brass Castle returning and Tiny Rebel, Runaway, Thirst Class, Blackjack and Thornbridge already confirmed. Harrogate's Roosters will make its debut, and with the immense interest from local and regional brewers the full line up will be announced shortly. Work is underway to refresh the overseas offering with international brewers keen

to be represented at the North's biggest beer celebration.

Tickets for the festival will be launched on Wednesday 23rd October, exactly three months before the doors open. Follow MancBeerFest on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for details.



Photo © James Duffell

But to be the biggest and aim to be the best, volunteers are always needed. If you are a CAMRA member, please consider lending a hand. It's not all welcoming customers and serving drinks - the festival needs people with diverse skills such as plumbing, electrics, video, van driving, joinery...

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beer buzz

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Buzzin In The Orchards

A Manchester City Centre Cider Crawl



To find out what the current buzz about Cider is all about, follow this short cider crawl around central Manchester. For a full guide to the city's cider pubs, Manchester cider maps are available at www.ciderbuzz.co.uk and centralmanchester.camra.org.uk

The Brink

Bridge Street, M3 3BQ

This subterranean bar was Central Manchester CAMRA's Cider Pub of the Year for 2018 for its superb showcasing of local ciders. You are usually able to get orchard-based ciders from Dunham Press. Try out the Dabbler, made from bittersweet Dabinett apples and compare to the bitter sharp apple varieties Tom Putt or Porters Perfection.

The Smithfield Market

Tavern

37 Swan St M4 5JZ

Cross the city centre to the Central Manchester CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year 2019.

Here you will find Halletts cider on draught and some of the finest real ciders in a bottle supplied by Felix Nash of the Fine Cider Company who also supply some of these fine ciders to top Michelin starred restaurants including Tom Kerridge's The Hand & Flowers.

Crown & Kettle

2 Oldham Rd M4 5FE

A short walk to Central Manchester CAMRA's Pub of the Year 2019 and home of Manchester Cider Club. Here you will find the finest selection of real ciders in keg, draught and bottles in the North West. Little Pomona launched their 'real cider' in a keg here in July. 'Root and Branch' is a 7.8% keg conditioned natural dry cider, unfiltered and unpasteurised.

Cloudwater Unit 9 Tap

Unit 9, Gidding Road M1 2NP

Next up is a fifteen-minute stroll to Cloudwater and their selection of Tom Oliver ciders.

You'll be able to compare the tannic rich 'Fine Dry Cider' with its balance of sweet and sharp flavours and then try how extra 'natural' sweetness is introduced into his single variety 'Yarlington Mill', through the clever addition of keeved cider and a touch of ice cider.

The latest in a string of collaborations which has included Thornbridge, Brooklyn and Mills Brewing is with Cloudwater themselves; we don't know when it will be ready to try other than "when it's ready".

GRUB / Fairfield Social Club

At this stage you can always take a short walk for street food and excellent craft cider at GRUB's Fairfield Social Club (6 Temperance Street M12 6HR) or their Mayfield Depot food fayre.

Beer Nouveau

75 North Western Street M12 6DY

Another 15-minute stroll will take you to the Beer Nouveau Brewery Tap. Owned by #Mcrciderclub stalwart Steve Dunkley, there is always a good cider to be found here amongst the selection of beers and mead. Here we recommend the ciders and perries from BBC Drinks winner Ross on Wye Cider and Perry and from local orchard-based cider maker Dunham Press.

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Destination pub: Nicky Kong and the Crown of Ancoats

If you're from Manchester and you pick this up, you'll likely know the pub on the corner of Ancoats and Oldham Road. If you're not, you'll more likely have heard of the boozier with the fabled ceiling of yore. And if you haven't heard of such a place, then it's time we tell you all about it. The Crown and Kettle, one of Manchester's truest gems, is a must-visit spot for all, and since Nicky Kong took the reins as manager in June 2016 has only gone from strength to strength.



In a nutshell, the Crown and Kettle sits on a site where a pub has been since at least 1734, likely originally built as a local courthouse. The current Victorian gothic building has been around since the 19th century, standing strong in the midst of an ever-changing cityscape. Other than a 16-year closure from 1989 to 2005, the pub has consistently served thirsty individuals from all walks of life, dispensing all manner of cask, keg, cider and everything else in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

The intrinsic value of the pub cannot be denied. It is a part of Manchester's heritage of beautiful buildings (in particular a ceiling that demands attention, though it may delay the ordering of your beer

or beverage). But a beautiful building is only one aspect of a good pub. As we all know the atmosphere, often curated by the enthusiasm of the people who run it, is just as important. A pub should be welcoming, should understand the needs of all its patrons from the real ale reveller to the designated driver, and should take an active place within the community that surrounds it. In our sit down chat with Nicky on a calm weekday evening, it was clear the passion she has for keeping the Crown and Kettle's reputation as one of Ancoats' best boozers.



Nicky has worked for over a decade in hotel and pub management, working in the Lake District at a range of five-star inns and hotels. When the opportunity arose to move from the more food-focused Plough at Lupton to the beer-centric Manchester scene, it spoke to a lifelong interest in the intricate and ever-changing world of beer. Having been educated in Manchester, familiarity with our fair city certainly helped her to navigate her way when thrown into the deep end.

The contribution she has made to the pub and to keeping its distinctly Mancunian spirit alive is undeniable. Although CAMRA awarded the Crown and Kettle the Greater Manchester Pub of the Year before her tenure since her arrival it has

continued to win awards and was this year crowned the Central Manchester Pub of the Year. Perhaps it is the focus on the future while retaining the principles of the past that have allowed the pub to continue to successfully navigate an increasingly complex modern world.

Already in her time at the pub, Nicky has shown a tendency to be inspired and pro-active. A trip to Cornwall sparked an interest in cider, which has led her to build up relationships with local enthusiasts, producers near and far, and open-minded members of the community. The result? Sold out monthly cider club events that have expanded the palate of many an adventurous soul. A couple of chats with like-minded individuals has also led to two successful Beardless Beer Weeks – celebrating the proud herstory of women in the beer industry. These are just two areas in which Nicky has continued to push the boundaries of a modern boozier, but, as was clear in our chat, she holds one eye on the future.

When asked what's next for the pub, her answer was clear – keep moving forward. Refurbishments are ongoing, bringing a fresher feel but retaining the

unique spirit. Unfortunately, no plans yet to restore that beautiful ceiling, but there is hope for one day. The already excellent spread of events will continue to grow – cider meetings, live music, charitable events are all on the cards; along with plans for further events celebrating diversity and beer.

There are opportunities around the corner (the rapid redevelopment of the Ancoats area for one), as there are also challenges (I won't mention the B-word because we're in polite company aren't we?). In an industry in which beloved boozers are closing every day, it's the dedication and hard work of such willing warriors that will help to keep these centres of the community alive. So with people like Nicky leading the charge, it's our duty as drinkers to do our fair share.

So maybe not tonight, maybe not tomorrow, but soon take a wander out. Go beyond the Northern Quarter and take a break at the Crown and Kettle. Take a chance on a cider or get a recommendation from the bar. Once you've sat down with your drink of choice, soak in the relaxed friendly atmosphere. Do that first. *Then* look up.

Andrew Rodbourne



Photo © Andrew Rodbourne



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beer buzz

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Pubs go for a king's ransom

Big business trades 6500 pubs in a month



Two gigantic corporate deals within a month this summer could have a massive impact on Britain's pub scene.

In July, Stonegate Pub, the owner of bar chains **Slug & Lettuce** and **Walkabout**, announced that it was buying larger rival Ei Group, the 4000-strong pub group formerly known as Enterprise Inns, after a 285p a share offer was recommended by the Ei board. The £1.3 billion offer by Stonegate — owned by private equity firm TDR — values Ei at nearly £3 billion including debt. The tie-up will bring together Stonegate's 765 pubs and bars with Ei's vast empire.



Photo © John O'Donnell

Just a month later, the UK's largest independent brewer Greene King, which owns 2700 pubs, restaurants and hotels including the **Chef & Brewer** and **Hungry Horse** chains, announced that it had agreed to be bought by Hong Kong based property and investment company CK Asset Management (CKA). That deal values Greene King at £2.7bn or £4.6bn including the debt that CKA will be taking on.

Both deals are subject to shareholder approval and both are likely to attract attention from competition watchdogs but are expected to complete early next year with relatively minor changes.

The enlarged Stonegate group will be led by chief executive Simon Longbottom. Stonegate's existing portfolio is almost entirely made up of managed venues including the **Be At One**, **Living Room**, **Yates** and **Popworld** chains along with what they describe as 'independent-feel' high-street pubs including Manchester's **Lost Dene** and Sale's **Buck Inn** and **The Vine**.



Photo © John O'Donnell

This is in contrast to Ei's portfolio which is predominantly pubs leased to tenants. However, recent Ei strategy has been shifting its estate to various managed models and away from the 'beer-tie' model that involves publicans (the 'tenants') buying beer solely from Ei, usually at way above the market rate, in return for a lower rent on the premises. Locally the company has been aggressively pursuing this strategy — most recently Chorlton's **The Beech Inn** and Sale Moor's **The Temple Inn**.

Stonegate has said it is too early to say whether more tenants will lose their livelihoods in converting sites to managed, noting that they have plenty of experience of tenanted operations (with Longbottom having previously been managing director of one of Greene King's pubs divisions while Stonegate chairman Ian Payne was chief executive of Laurel Pub Company).

However, analysts Peel Hunt commented, "The combined estate should provide a substantial pool of pubs to either convert (from leased to managed) or sell. This could trigger a lot of follow-on corporate activity in the sector."

Other commentators have highlighted that Stonegate has a good record of investing in their premises with over £350m invested since the group was founded in 2010 via the purchase of 333 pubs from Mitchells & Butlers.

Responding to news of the sale, CAMRA National Director Ben Wilkinson said:

"For many, Ei (formerly EiG) has become a byword for unfair business practices and disregard for the social value of pubs. Its custodianship of thousands of community pubs has not been a happy period and it's clear many will welcome this news. However, such a significant change will create anxiety and we call on Stonegate to be clear and open about their [sic] plans as early as possible.

"This deal will make Stonegate the largest pub owner in the UK, and that brings a huge responsibility both to consumers and to their [sic] tenants. We hope Stonegate seize this opportunity to make a firm commitment to adhere to the spirit and letter of the Pubs Code and spearhead a new, more positive era in the industry by setting a gold standard for thriving pubs based on fair and equitable business practices."

Although there are grave concerns about the Stonegate deal, the Greene King purchase is potentially more worrying for drinkers as the new owner CKA is primarily a property investor whose primary interest will be seeing a return on its investment.

Neil Wilson, analyst at Markets.com, told BBC News that while the deal was good news for shareholders, it was likely to be bad news for Greene King's customers.

"I think we can comfortably expect more pub closures. It's a whopping price that



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implies CKA sees significant value in the property portfolio," he said.

Greene King's property portfolio has been estimated to have a current market value of £4.6 billion with many properties in desirable parts of the country which would

be worth more if converted into homes or demolished for development than if they stayed as pubs.

Commenting on the Greene King acquisition, Nik Antona, CAMRA National Chair said: "The news that Britain's largest pub and brewery company has been sold to an international asset company is very concerning for our beer scene."

"We are always wary of one company controlling a large share of the market, which is seldom beneficial for consumers. Greene King has been in operation for over 200 years and it is a very sad day to see such a well-known, historic and respected name exit the brewing and pub business."

"We hope that Greene King will continue its operations as normal without any disappointing changes. We will be calling on the new owners to retain the current pub portfolio to safeguard thousands of pubs and jobs across the country."

Bob Dunbar

Pi (Altrincham)





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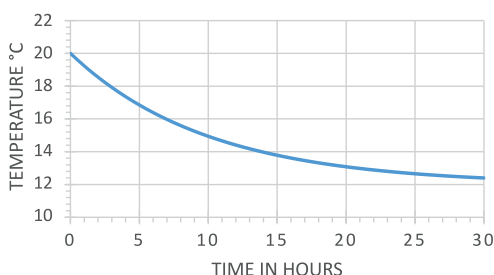
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Earlier this year, we looked at the efforts brewers go to ensure the beer in their casks has enough dissolved carbon dioxide to allow pubs to serve it with the gentle carbonation associated with the format (see www.beerbuzz.beer/EXTRA). In this issue, we look at what happens when that cask reaches the pub cellar.

Pubs may buy their beer direct from their local brewers, they may have to source it from their Pub Company landlords, or they may purchase it from a beer wholesaler who supplies beers from many breweries. We will look at how these arrangements work in a future issue.

Once casks are delivered into the care of a pub's cellar team, the first thing they need to do is give them time to adjust to cellar temperature. In an ideal world, to keep beer at its very best, it would be stored in temperature-controlled warehouses and delivered to the pub in refrigerated vans. However, such 'total cold chain' distribution is rare in the UK and casks may arrive at the pub at ambient temperature. It will take beer in a typical cask at 20°C over 24 hours to cool to recommended cellar temperature of 12°C.

BEER COOLING TIME IN 12°C CELLAR



Pub cellars should be meticulously clean places, especially when keeping cask ales which, while they are being served, are open to the atmosphere and whatever airborne bacteria it contains. Food has no place in the cellar with dairy products a particular risk – lactobacillus, the natural bacteria which turns milk into yoghurt or cottage cheese, is one of only a few bacteria that is equally at home in beer, but its sour flavours are not usually welcome in your best bitter.

Spillages should be mopped up at once – open beer puddles are the chief route for the spread of wild yeast and bacterial infections. Cellar walls and ceilings should be painted with anti-fungal paint and washed down frequently.

Cask ale needs time to mature and condition ('secondary fermentation') after it is racked into casks – typically anywhere from a week to a month or more depending on style. Beer which has not had time to mature will be what is known as 'green' – containing off flavours masking the true flavour of the beer.

Traditionally casks would mature in the pub cellar but increasingly brewers will complete most of the conditioning at the brewery – either in tanks before racking or by holding newly racked casks at the brewery before being delivered to customers. However, some brewers still retain traditional methods and will expect pubs to hold casks in the cellar for a week or more before preparing them to be put on sale.

Some pubs have the good fortune to have large cellars where they can routinely have their beers delivered two or more weeks before they expect to need them. As casks rarely indicate how long the beer has been in the cask, the less fortunate

cellarman needs to know how his or her chosen brewers condition their beers so they can rotate the beers in their cellar to ensure those that need additional time to mature in the cellar are allowed it.

Cask ales contain live yeast so to prepare a cask for service, it needs to be left undisturbed in its final serving position, be this on its side on a traditional stillage or on its end for modern 'vertical extract', for long enough to allow the yeast to drop out of the beer before serving. A beer that has been largely conditioned in the brewery can 'drop bright' in as little as a few hours, whereas a more traditionally conditioned ale may need 48 hours or more.

Venting is the process where the seal on the cask (which may be wooden but is now more commonly plastic) is breached to release the pressure which has built up



during secondary fermentation. Traditionally the cask is vented through the 'shive' – the seal on the hole in the side of the cask where the cask is filled – but with modern vertical extraction,

the cask is vented through the 'keystone' through which beer will also be drawn out.

The purpose of venting is two-fold. Firstly, it allows excess carbon dioxide (CO₂) to slowly bubble out of solution until an equilibrium is reached where each pint of beer will contain just over one pint of CO₂ – the gentle carbonation level associated with good cask ale. However, the second purpose is to allow purging of volatile substances such as acetaldehyde (green apples flavour) which are generated during fermentation.

Venting must always be delayed until the cask has reached cellar temperature.

With the volume of CO₂ beer can hold in solution being related to its temperature, to vent a warm beer will result in loss of much of the hard earned 'condition'. If dissolved CO₂ escapes when a beer is warm, it cannot be regained when the beer later reaches cellar temperature.

After venting, the cellarman may initially insert a porous soft peg ('spile'), allowing a beer actively generating carbon dioxide (CO₂) to breathe or go straight to the semi-porous hard spile which preserves carbonation **until the beer is needed**.



Which leads us to the final, but perhaps most important skill of the cellarman – that of timing their own art. Whereas a beer festival knows exactly when their casks are expected to be ready for sale, the pub cellarman can be juggling the maturation and venting of multiple casks, trying to get each to perfect condition at just the time the preceding cask is emptied by their thirsty customers. With the variety of factors that affect how busy or pubs are - from TV events to the vagaries of the British weather - meaning that casks can sell out in anything from 2 to 72 hours or more, this is no mean task.

When you get that perfect pint – remember the skill that has been involved in getting it there.

John O'Donnell



WhatPub



The Campaign for Real Ale's online pub guide featuring 35,452 real ale pubs.

CAMRA members:
Log in and score the beers you drink. Your scores help select pubs to be featured in the Good Beer Guide.

Find something wrong?
Check you local and use the feedback form on the website to send in updates.

WhatPub.com

Forthcoming Beer & Cider Festivals

Independent Manchester Beer Convention

3rd – 6th October
Victoria Baths, Manchester
indymanbeercon.co.uk

Nottingham 'Robin Hood' Beer & Cider Festival

9th – 12th October
Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham
nottinghamcamra.org

Steel City Beer & Cider Festival

16 – 20 October
Kelham Island Industrial Museum, Sheffield
steelcitybeerfestival.co.uk

Oktoberfaust

18th – 19th October
Beer Nouveau, North Western St, Manchester
beernouveau.co.uk

Didsbury Beer Festival

31st October – 2nd November~
St Catherine's, School Lane, Didsbury
didsburybeerfestival.org.uk

Independent Salford Beer Festival

31st October – 2nd November
Hemsley House, Salford
salfordbeerfest.com

Smokefest

9th November
Torrside Brewery, New Mills Marina
torrside.co.uk

Manchester Beer & Cider Festival

23rd – 25th January 2020
Manchester Central
mancheerfest.uk

Battle of the Independents

October festival bonanza for local drinkers



As this issue hits the pubs, it will be almost four months until Manchester Beer & Cider Festival (MBCF) returns to Manchester Central (23rd to 25th January - see page 25). However as well as great CAMRA festivals like MBCF, Stockport and Chorlton, drinkers in Manchester are blessed with some of the country's best independent festivals. And two of them take place in October.



First up is the **Independent Manchester Beer Convention**, commonly known as Indy Man Beer Con, a commercial festival from the Port Street

Beer House and The Beagle group, which comes to Victoria Baths from 3rd to 6th October. Although not truly reflecting the best of the UK's beer scene having ceased to include cask ales some years ago, this event always boasts a pretty stellar line up of many of the finest modern breweries from the UK and beyond and attracts visitors from across the country.

The three main rooms of the restored baths on Hathersage Road are each lined with bars with some brewers present throughout the four days with others pouring on either Thursday/Friday or Saturday/Sunday. More bars are secreted in the side rooms around the site with international brewers Lervig and Stone Brewing having bars in the tented food village at the rear of the site.

Tickets for the most popular Friday and Saturday sessions sell out well in advance. As Beer Buzz went to press, Sunday had also sold out leaving only Thursday evening session tickets available from www.indymanbeercon.co.uk.



Now in its 6th year, the **Independent Salford Beer Festival** (ISBF) returns to Hemsley House on The Crescent in Salford from Thursday 31st October to Saturday 2nd November.

Unlike IMBC, this event is entirely run by volunteers with all proceeds going to charity Start Inspiring Minds (aka Start in Salford), which uses creative arts to help vulnerable people from all walks of life improve their skills and gain confidence.

With cask, keg and cider bars, this festival's big boast is that all beers served at the festival will be on sale in the Manchester area for the first time. There will be many rare beers available in limited quantity including several collaboration beers with members of the ISBF team.

The brewery line up has been confirmed and includes local favourites such as Pictish, Squawk and Brewsmith, along with those from further afield including Newcastle's Box Social and Peterborough's Bexar County (including a Meet The Brewer event at the Friday daytime session).

ISBF is a much smaller event than either MBCF or IMBC with entry by advance ticket only. At time of writing Friday evening and Saturday afternoon were already sold out with limited tickets for other sessions.

More info and tickets from www.salfordbeerfest.com

Good Beer Guide 2020

Manchester's beer scene booming, according to new guide



CAMRA's premier publication featuring the very best pubs in the UK to find a great pint of cask ale was released on 12th September.

Across Greater Manchester there are 33 newly featured pubs out of a total of 159 and five new breweries including Manchester Union Brewery, the Cheadle Brew House, Howfen Brew Co, Made of Stone Brewery and Tin Head.

The Good Beer Guide reviews over 4,500 pubs across the UK and is the definitive beer drinkers' guide to the very best pints of cask ale. Compiled by thousands of independent volunteers, it helps identify significant trends and themes locally and nationally.

Tom Stainer, CAMRA's Chief Executive said: "For nearly five decades, the Good Beer Guide has been a comprehensive guide to the UK's breweries, their ales, and the best outlets to find them in across the country."

"What makes the Guide unique is that all the entries are compiled and vetted by a huge volunteer team. Unlike some competitor titles, inclusion in this book is dependent on merit, not on payment."

Discover all of the pubs listed, and more, with CAMRA's new Good Beer Guide app, available on both iOS and Android device or visit the CAMRA shop for your copy: shop.camra.org.uk

CAMRA members may be able to get a discounted copy from their local branch – see contact details on page 41.

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What's On

CAMRA Meetings & events

This is a summary of meetings & key socials across Central Manchester (CM), Salford (S&D) and Trafford & Hulme (T&H) branches. For more events & full details see **beerbuzz.beer/diary**

27th Sep 7.30pm Gtr Manchester Club Of The Year Presentation (GM), Flixton Conservative Club, M41 5DF

1st Oct 6pm Branch Meeting (CM), Angel, 6 Angel St, Manchester M4 4BQ

10th Oct 8pm Annual General Meeting (T&H), Stubborn Mule Brewery, Altrincham, WA14 1LZ

12th Oct 10.30am South Yorkshire Mystery Tour (CM)

12th Oct 1.30pm Gtr Manchester Regional Meeting (GM), The Swan, Bolton, BL1 1HJ

16th Oct 7.30pm Branch Meeting (S&D), Worsley Road Sports & Social Club, Swinton, M27 5WN

22nd Oct 10am Tuesday Tipples in Oldham (T&H)

26th Oct 1.30pm Manchester Beer & Cider Festival Meeting (GM), Britons Protection, Manchester, M1 5LE

5th Nov 8pm Branch Meeting (T&H), Legh Arms, Sale, M33 2SR

6th Nov 6pm Branch Meeting (CM), Gas Lamp, Manchester M3 3BW

9th Nov 1.30pm Manchester Beer & Cider Festival Meeting (GM), Britons Protection, M1 5LE

9th Nov 11am Ramsbottom & Rossendale Ale Trail (CM),

19th Nov 11.15am Tuesday Tipples in Buxton (T&H)

2nd Dec 6.30pm Branch Meeting (CM), TBC

5th Dec 8pm Branch Meeting (T&H), TBC

7th Dec 1.30pm Manchester Beer & Cider Festival Meeting (GM), Waldorf, M1 3AQ

beerbuzz.beer/diary

Contacts

Central Manchester (CM)

📧 **centralmanchester.camra.org.uk**

📍 mcrcentralcamra

Branch Contact: Steve Davis

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Salford & District (S&D)

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📍 SalfordCAMRA

Branch Contact: Joanne Massey

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Trafford & Hulme (T&H)

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📞 01727 867201

Trading Standards

For problems such as consistent short measures, no price lists etc. Contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service at

📧 **citizensadvice.org.uk**

📞 0345 04 05 06.

Advertising Standards

To complain about deceptive advertising, contact: Advertising Standards Authority

📧 **asa.org.uk**

📞 020 7492 2222

Public Transport

For information on buses, trams & trains

📧 **tfgm.com**

Bee In My Bonnet



Runaway's Mark Welsby on the barriers small brewers face

Over the years, many people mentioned their surprise at finding Runaway beers in JD Wetherspoon (JDW) pubs around Manchester. I guess it wasn't perceived as being very 'craft' of us to work with a chain often associated with high volume, quick turnover and ultimately low-cost beer. Maybe turn off as many as it might introduce to our beer?

While there may be some truth in that, we try to brew beer that's as inclusive and accessible as it is interesting, and flavour-focussed. We want to brew affordable beer with flavour, not cost efficiency, our top priority. In our view, engaging a fresh generation of beer drinkers is critical to the long-term health of British beer.

So when a forward-thinking local JDW pub manager approached us about stocking our beer we saw it as an opportunity. The chain promotes itself as a supporter of locally produced beer, something we wholeheartedly believe in, but in our experience it isn't always evident on the bar. The enthusiasm of a particular pub manager opened the door for us and once added to the approved list, a number of other local JDW managers got in touch and away we went.

Finding a way through the maze of administration and pseudo-bureaucracy of dealing with a large business isn't always easy for a small brewer but we did our best to make it work.

However, in the end it seems the big guys can always find a way to make things untenable for the small producer – to create barriers where there were none. I'm sorry to say that we're no longer able to supply JDW. A new form of 'quality standard' is being introduced, similar to that required by big supermarkets.

All suppliers are required to hold accreditation from SIBA's Food Safety & Quality (FSQ) or the Institute of Food Science & Technology' SALSA scheme. Presumably the beer they've been serving up until now has not been up to scratch?

To gain FSQ we'd have to join SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers) paying an annual subscription and inspection fees. SALSA also comes at a financial and resource cost. We chose not to pay to play, thanks.

JDW is by no means alone, but it's the most recent case of what seems to be a growing and worrying trend in beer: the gradual introduction of corporate practices which, inadvertently or not, limit access to the market to genuinely small brewers. As if we need any more barriers! The fact that JDW's representative justified the decision by explaining that it's required by all the other big pub chains says everything.

So unfortunately, you will no longer find our beer in JDW pubs. You will, however, find it in any number of other pubs, bars, restaurants, bottle shops and micro-pubs who take the time to undertake their own quality control accreditation before stocking our beer. Cheers to that!

**www.runawaybrewery.com
@RunawayBrewery**

**Tap room on Dantzic Street,
Manchester open Saturdays 12 - 8pm**

Got a Bee In Your Bonnet?

Do you work in beer or cider and think drinkers should be aware of something going on in the industry?

This is your space - get in touch at **editor@beerbuzz.beer**

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