

beer buzz



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

FREE

December 2019 - March 2020, Issue Number 5



In this issue:

Manchester Beer & Cider Festival,
Brew your own beer,
Exploring Castlefield,
Meet Seven Brothers,
The Cask Report
and more....



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Welcome to beer buzz

December 2019 - March 2020 Edition

Beer Buzz is published by the Central Manchester, Trafford & Hulme and Salford & District branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.

6000 copies are distributed free of charge to pubs, bars & other outlets across Manchester, Trafford & Salford.

Expanded articles and PDF downloads of past issues are available at

www.beerbuzz.beer

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Designed and printed by Renbrand Creative. **www.renbrand.co.uk**

Please send contributions to the editor at the above email address. The editor reserves the right to edit contributions sent for publication.

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Editorial

If you are reading this in December, hopefully you're in a pub busy with drinkers enjoying the festival season. However, once January comes around, things change for our pubs. The annual Tryanuary campaign encourages you to shun the misguided abstinence campaigns and instead to support independent breweries, pubs and bars during what can be a challenging month for the industry.

January also sees Manchester Beer & Cider Festival return to Manchester Central. Our city can be rightly proud of this event which has gained a nationwide reputation as one of the most forward-thinking celebrations of beer and cider. Cask ale will of course be the heart of the festival with a showcasing of Northern breweries and this year the festival team are also embracing the moves to ReThink Cider with a completely revamped offer of craft cider and perry.

You can also begin ReThinking cider in this issue with the first in a series of features exploring how real cider and perry is made.

John O'Donnell

The next issue of Beer Buzz will be published on 13th March 2020

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New openings in the city

Manchester's latest cask ale outlet is one of the more surprising. **The Bull and Bear** is located within the newly opened Stock Exchange Hotel on Norfolk Street (between Market Street and King Street). The city's former Stock Exchange has been converted into a hotel by a consortium headed by former footballers Gary Neville and Ryan Giggs and hotelier Winston Zahra.



Photo © Len Hodgkinson

While it sounds like a pub, **The Bull and Bear** is primarily a restaurant from celebrity chef Tom Kerridge (pictured with fellow chef and local CAMRA activist Len Hodgkinson). The TV chef will be hoping to bring similar adulation

as his two pubs in Marlow, Buckinghamshire - The Coach has one Michelin star, while The Hand & Flowers boasts two of the coveted stars. Both are known for menus featuring British 'comfort food'. Kerridge himself is expected to spend two days a week until the New Year helping establish the menu. The team behind Alphabet Brewery and PLY have opened **The Quick Brown Fox** on the corner of Swan Street and Oldham Street. The bar which was first rumoured over two years ago finally opened at the start of October. There is no cask ale available (not surprising given the operators) but 12 of the 24 taps on the back bar will dispense craft beers including three from Alphabet. The



Photo © John O'Donnell

remaining taps serve premixed cocktails and natural wines.

Historic Victorian pub, **The Edinburgh Castle** in Ancoats reopened in mid-November. As reported in the last issue of Beer Buzz, the 200 year old building which sits on the corner of Blossom Street and Henry Street has been relaunched by the team behind Northern Quarter cocktail bar **Cottonopolis**, after spending decades abandoned and forgotten.

It has been very tastefully renovated with a long impressive marble topped bar opposite the corner door. In the area behind the bar there is more seating with another room on the right with mirrors and dark wood panelling. Two cask ales feature including a house beer from Marston's Ringwood brewery.

Pilcrow on last orders

The Co-operative backed NOMA scheme have announced plans to convert the grade two-listed Old Bank building on Hanover Street into offices. A new seven storey extension is to be built extending the building into Saddlers Yard - and the space where **The Pilcrow** pub currently stands. The wooden structure is expected to be relocated elsewhere in the NOMA development but rather than remaining a pub, it will be 'repurposed' for community use. The team behind the pub (**Port Street Beer House** owners Common &

Co) are reported to be in talks about a new venue within NOMA.

New home for GRUB

After completing their summer season at Mayfield Depot, food fair operator **GRUB** has moved to The Red Bank Project on the fringes of the 'Green Quarter'. After alternating between summers at Mayfield and winters at nearby Fairfield Social Club, the move will allow them to stay in the same venue throughout the seasons.



Visitors can expect the same rotating choice of the very best street food operators with the multi-room indoor are offering a bar with 22 keg and two cask lines, a second bar upstairs and even a playroom for toddlers complete with miniature street food stalls. Opening hours at 50 Red Bank will be Friday 4pm to 10pm, Saturday noon to 10pm and 100% vegan 'Plant Powered Sundays' Sunday noon to 6pm. Check **www.facebook.com/GRUBMCR/** for weekly food vendor listings.

Fairfield Social Club on Temperance Street continues to operate as a live music and events venue.

Coming soon

The new site for Manchester's **Brewdog** bar has been confirmed to be on Fountain Street off Market Street (just along from The Shakespeare pub and Primark). It was confirmed in August that they would be leaving their current home on Peter Street as the block in which it is located is to be redeveloped into a hotel. The new bar will be located in the former Enzo

pizza restaurant. It is expected that the Peter Street bar will close and new bar open in March 2020.

Piccadilly Tap owners Bloomsbury Leisure have applied for a licence to convert a former refuse store on Victoria Station Approach into a new craft beer bar expected to be called **Victoria Tap**.

All change in Manchester suburbs

Technically in Hulme, **The Salutation** lies in the midst of Manchester Metropolitan University's Eastern campus, dwarfed by the adjacent Student Union Building and surrounded on two sides by building work for MMU's new School Of Digital Arts. The pub is owned by MMU itself and operated under the umbrella of the Students Union but, in an interesting move, when it reopened for the new academic year it revealed a new look and a new partnership with Bollington Brewery.

The brewery already has three successful pubs of its own, **The Vale Inn** in Bollington itself, **The Park Tavern** in Macclesfield and **The Cask Tavern** in Poynton. Its first venture into Manchester sees the pub adopt Bollington branding and four cask pumps dedicated to Bollington's award winning beer range - Bollington Best, Long Hop and Oatmill Stout are permanent plus a guest from Bollington and space for two other guest beers.



Removal of overhead glass storage shelving and supporting pillars from the



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bar and a contemporary colour scheme of greys and deep reds has opened up the space while the snug has been redesigned and there is new seating throughout. Big brand lagers have been removed from the bar with a new 10-line font wall at one end of the bar serving a range of beers and ciders from micro-breweries including Moravka lager and Shindigger ales.

Moving further out of the city, **The Ducie Arms** in Greenheys behind the Manchester University campus is reported to be one of the 137 pubs which Chester based Admiral Taverns has purchased from Marston's. The pub company which is owned by (Bulmers, Tennent's Lager and Magners owner) C&C Group has been on the acquisition trail over recent months, including 150 pubs purchased from Heineken's Star Pubs in October. Following completion of the Marston's deal they will own around 1075 pubs, the majority 'wet led' pubs with limited or no food operations.



Photo © Maxine Silcock

Levenshulme's ever growing beer scene has another new addition with the October opening of **OverDraught MCR**, the second venue from Martha Winder owner of Prestwich's First Draught. A copper clad back bar wall boasts an impressive number of taps. Nine core lines are mostly from the Carlsberg family including Brooklyn lager, Mahou and Sommersby 'cider' and the rarer Carlsberg Unfiltered

lager, alongside Beavertown's 'Bloody 'Ell' and Shindigger's West Coast IPA. The bar is located at 855 Stockport Road close to Levenshulme Rail station – the unit was formerly the TSB Bank.

Just down the road in Burnage, **The Sun in September** has bucked the recent trend for closures amongst the Sam Smiths brewery estate and reopened after around twelve months boarded up.

Across in Chorlton, **Cask and Kiln** on Wilbraham Road closed in early November, just over two years after first opening its doors. Despite the best efforts of the owners in selecting a changing range of cask beers and offering a range of events, including comedy nights and open mic nights plus pool tournaments, the venue never really seemed to find its market.

Manchester Road, Swinton

The Farmers Arms has re-opened after a major refurbishment. After a couple of years which saw it go on a downward spiral, losing its way and its 'Arms' before closure, it is now on the up again. New landlords Tracey & Red have an aim to be the social hub of the neighbourhood. There is only one cask ale on sale at the moment, but when Beer Buzz correspondent Phil Stout called, he rated his Timothy Taylor's Landlord to be in excellent well-kept form.



Photo © Ian Massey

Just up the road is the **Cricketers Arms**.

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Also recently refurbished, this small red brick Joseph Holt pub prides itself on its entertainment offering including sport from Sky and BT as well as darts, live music, quiz nights and karaoke. Holts Bitter is the regular cask ale and when Beer Buzz called, this was supplemented by the latest offer in Holts' Generations series celebrating their 150th anniversary.

A new kid of the block is the **Wobbly**



Stool just a few doors along from the Cricketers at 233 Manchester Road. This 'micro-pub' opened in September 2019 in what was formally a flower shop. There are usually three cask ales available which are constantly changing. When our Swinton correspondent called, there were two cask ales that had travelled some distance - Old Growler from Suffolk's Nethergate Brewery and Wooha Brewing Company's Rouge Smash, all the way from Kilnross, near Inverness.

In contrast to the newly opened bar, at the end of Manchester Road is Robinson's **White Lion** – a pub which is over 200 years old and is the spiritual home of Swinton Rugby League Football Club. The cask ale available here was Robinson's Dizzy Blonde.

Assembly change

Urmston's **The Assembly** has changed its opening hours and is no longer open on Mondays & Tuesdays

Stretford gains an Asset

The Robin Hood pub in Stretford

has finally been listed as an Asset of Community Value by Trafford council. The listing comes some six months after a local group made the application even though councils should only take eight weeks to reach a decision on ACV applications.

The pub was sold to developers by Greene King late last year with plans to build multiple homes on the pub's car park and convert the pub building to apartments put out for consultation.

However this development has not progressed and the site is being marketed for sale.

Under the terms of the Localism Act 2011, local community groups interested in bidding for the site should contact Trafford Council within six weeks of an ACV being put up for sale to trigger a six month moratorium on the sale.

Sale Sports

The redevelopment of Sale Sports club has progressed with the new clubhouse up and running and the old clubhouse now being demolished. The site will be redeveloped for housing.

The new club house has the same two cask ales on sale as before – Wainwright and Jennings Cumberland Ale – both from the Marston's stable.



Trouble in Timperley?

As Beer Buzz went to press, locals in Timperley were in a state of confusion about the future of **The Stonemasons**

Arms. After restaurateur Steve Pilling's venture to take the pub upmarket failed after just seven months, the pub was taken on by Simon and Rachael Delaney, who also run the **Firbank Pub & Kitchen** in Wythenshawe, in October 2018. The couple have returned the pub to be a community focussed local hub and it seemed to be on the up.

Regulars were therefore surprised when on 22nd October, Simon Delaney (pictured below) released a statement on social media saying, "It is with great regret that I have to make this announcement, unfortunately because of personal reasons out of my control my time at **The Stonemasons Arms** is coming to an end. My intention is to carry on as usual until the end of the year. The new business owner will take over the business as a going concern."



A week later, he posted a heartfelt video statement on Facebook where he said that since the announcement, they had received messages of encouragement from the people of Timperley, the local council and police telling them that they were

doing a great job. However, he then explained that the rent and rates that he had to pay were based on the pub being a lot busier than it currently is and pleaded with the local community to bear them in mind for their leisure activities and choose them over other options as the only independent pub in Timperley.

For an insight into the passion of a publican facing commercial realities of operating a pub company owned pub with high business rates, it is well worth seeking out the video on their Facebook

page ([thestonemasonsarms](https://www.facebook.com/thestonemasonsarms))

In West Timperley, **The Pelican Inn** is reported to have been sold for redevelopment. It was reported in July that owner Greene King was marketing the pub and the adjacent vacant Altrincham Lodge hotel site. The current building dates back to 1931 but there has been a pub on the site from at least the early 19th Century. Locals have been advised that the site has been sold but that pub will continue to operate until at least March 2020. No planning application has been submitted to date, but with the combined site being large, there are fears that developers will seek to demolish the pub.

All change in Altrincham

In Altrincham, the management at **The Old Market Tavern** are working hard to get the pub's kitchen back up and running in time for the New Year.

The redevelopment of the upper floors into letting rooms is now complete and the 12 bedrooms are trading as **The Old Market Coaching Inn**.

Two years after developers purchased the Grade II listed building from Punch Taverns, it is now back on the market with an asking price of £2.29 million. It is being listed as a 12-bedroom house.

The pub, which is a free house, is unaffected by the sale and will remain open. The pub is listed as an Asset of Community Value by Trafford Council.

Batch Bottlestore in Kings Court has removed its handpump, citing being unhappy with the quality of product they were serving.

Correction

In our last issue, we mistakenly listed Sale's **The Bulls Head** as being on Church Road – it is of course at No. 2 Cross Street

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What's coming up at January's Manchester Beer & Cider Festival

As Christmas passes by and the New Year dawns, beer and cider fans from across the country look forward to Manchester Beer & Cider Festival. With its range of cask ales, modern keg beers and international ales and lagers, every beer lover is spoilt for choice. And for 2020, the festival at Manchester Central also invites its visitors to ReThink Cider with a shake-up of the traditional cider and Perry bar.



Photo © James Darcey

The fifth incarnation of the event at the railway station turned events venue in the centre of Manchester will see a new layout and some new features introduced alongside some old favourites. The festival will open to CAMRA members on Wednesday 22nd January before opening for three public days from noon on the 23rd (with advance ticket holders entering from 11.45).

The festival team have teamed up with the Society For The Preservation of Beers From The Wood for a second year. After 2019's sell-out success, they plan to bring even more beers served directly from traditional oak casks to the bar. Highlights already confirmed include a Sticky Toffee Porter from North Riding Brewery and an exclusive cask of three-year barrel-aged Ace Of Spades imperial

stout from Manchester's own Blackjack Beers.

On Friday 25th, leading beer writer Roger Protz will lead a Tutored Tasting session where he will talk attendees through the times when all draught beer was dispensed from wooden barrels. A sellout in 2019, tickets are on sale now.



Photo © John O'Donnell

New for 2020 is the Tiny Rebel VIP Area which will be located at the heart of the festival. The VIP package, available to buy in advance only, offers buyers the complete festival experience in one easy ticket – entry, glass, programme and beer tokens plus a guaranteed seat in the separate Tiny Rebel VIP area. Making an ideal gift for a loved one or great for parties of friends or colleagues, packages can be bought at **www.mancbeerfest.uk**.

The new Coast to Coast bar promises to be a spectacular sight. Over fifty metres long, this mammoth bar and the adjacent cider bar will boast almost two hundred handpumps between them. Drinkers will be able to start at one end of the bar in Merseyside with beers from breweries including Neptune, Peerless and Team Toxic and then work their way east. Or they can start at the opposite end in Humberside drinking beers from Atom, Bone Machine and others before heading west.

As you work along the bar you can travel

through Lancashire where the county town's eponymous brewery will be joined by Rivington Brewing Co and more. In Greater Manchester you'll be spoilt for choice by Bank Top, Hophurst, Marble, Seven Brothers and Serious to name just a few. Yorkshire will offer no less choice including Kirkstall and Elland from the West of the county, Bradfield and Ossett from the South, Bad Seed and Brew York from the North.



After debuting at MBCF in 2019, CAMRA has been developing its Learning & Discovery zones at festivals up and down the country. Part of CAMRA's core commitment to education, visitors have flocked to learn about how beer and cider are made and take part in tastings. The MBCF20 zone will be located at the very centre of the festival. Each day there will be brewers and cider producers on hand to talk about their work and host a range of side by side tastings allowing drinkers to explore different beer formats and styles. Visitors can also get up close and personal to experience the aroma, taste and feel of different malts and hops.

The revamped Cider and Perry bar will introduce a range of bottled craft ciders and perries from some of the country's top producers plus a selection of keg-conditioned ciders. Fifteen handpulls and shelves of your favourite bag in box ciders will all be cooled to a refreshing temperature. Ciders and perries will be zoned by region and style using new

Sweetness, Tannin and Acidity flavour descriptors.

World renowned cider maker Tom Oliver will be at the festival on Thursday 24th to present an exclusive blending masterclass.

The international beer range is also being expanded across two bars with new age brewers from Norway's Lervig, Ireland's White Hag and Canada's Collective Arts attending alongside the finest Czech Pilsners, German lagers and many more. An expanded Kegstar keg and KeyKeg bar will feature 40 lines of the very best of the UK's modern brewers.

All your favourite brewery bars will be back including Tiny Rebel, Brass Castle, Thornbridge, Runaway and Bollington. Macclesfield's RedWillow Bar returns after a break while Harrogate's Roosters get their first invitation. There will also be even more brewers present with pop-up 'micro-bars' from Hawkshead, Brewsmith, Joseph Holt, Saltaire and more.

Non beer and cider fans can head for the enlarged New Oxford Gin Bar.

Once again, visitors will be able to choose from an unrivalled selection of locally produced gins served with carefully selected garnishes.

Thurs 23rd January: Noon – 10.30pm

Fri 24th January: Noon – 10.30pm

Sat 25th January: Noon – 7pm

Advance entry tickets, VIP pages and Tutoed Tasting tickets are available from **www.mancbeerfest.uk/tickets**

Wed 22nd : 5 – 9pm. Preview session for CAMRA and SPBW members – Free Entry to members.

Get all the latest festival news on **@MancBeerFest** (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram).

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Making Nectar

News from our local breweries

BEATNIKZ REPUBLIC

Beatnikz Republic

The brewery has reopened its on-site tap

room. The tap was a regular feature of the brewery in their early days in Manchester but gave way to fermenting vessels and conditioning tanks as the brewery expanded. Now with a new warehouse unit for their stock, they are once again able to welcome visitors to the brewery. Open every Saturday from noon to 9pm the tap room offers four Beatnikz beers fresh from the source, is dog-friendly and welcomes children until 7pm. The brewery is located at 15 Red Bank, M4 4HF a few doors down from the new home of GRUB Food Fair (see Bar Buzz).



Photo © John O'Donnell



Beer Nouveau

The North Western Street brewery and tap room have confirmed that the weekly SURPLUS residency by Open Kitchen MCR is now permanent. Formerly Real Junk Food, Open Kitchen MCR is a not for profit community interest company which takes waste food from supermarkets and other outlets and transforms it into wholesome meals. Every Friday, SURPLUS will offer a weekly changing menu of street food dishes made from food that would have gone to waste. The bar at 75 North Western Street will be open from 4pm and street-food available from 5.30pm.

You can check the menu each week on twitter at @SurplusMCR.



Joseph Holt

The latest beer in the brewery's special series of beers to celebrate their 170th year is The Sportsman, a 4.1% brown beer brewed with oranges, cloves and allspice. Its name salutes fourth generation family member and Chairman, the late Peter Kershaw, who was a former rackets and real tennis champion. It's on sale across the Holt estate in December and January. It will be followed by Ruby 40, a red ale made with red ale crystal malts and named to mark chief executive Richard Kershaw's 40 year Ruby anniversary at the brewery.



Manchester Union

Sales at Manchester's only dedicated lager brewery are booming. To keep up with demand a host of new lagering tanks have been installed at the North Western Street site and the brewing schedule has been intensified. One casualty of this success is the brewery's tap room. Because the brewery will be brewing on some weekends, the tap room is reducing its open days to one Saturday per month. The bar at 96 North Western Street, four doors down from Alphabet Brewing Co, is now open 2pm – 7pm on the last Saturday of the month. The bar is cashless.



Pomona Island

By the time Beer Buzz hits pubs, the brewery, which recently celebrated its second birthday, will be midway through a pop-up residency on the first floor of Port Street Beer House offering four beers on draft and a full range of cans. The Pomona Street Beer Island will be open Fridays and Saturdays throughout December. The brewery's tap room in Salford will be closed while they are in residency on Port Street.



Seven Bro7hers

The Salford based siblings are set to open their second

Seven Bro7hers Beerhouse. The new bar will be located at the new Middlewood Locks development in Salford. The development, which will eventually include over 2200 homes, is located on the Salford side of Trinity Way to the west of the city centre and just north of Regent Road Retail Park. Although originally due to open in October, as Beer Buzz went to press, the bar was just being fitted out and expected to be open before Christmas.

The brewery is expected to open a third bar in Liverpool in 2020.



Shindigger

Growing demand for their brand has seen the Manchester based 'shadow' brewers take out a lease on a new cold store warehouse

unit on Springfield Lane Business Centre

close to the banks of the River Irwell on the Salford/Manchester border.

Shindigger beers are developed on a pilot kit at their Ancoats headquarters and then brewed and packaged at one of four partner breweries across the North-West before being delivered to the Manchester warehouse for delivery to local bars. When the new unit is completed, the warehouse and development kit will move from Ancoats to Salford.



★ STUBBORN MULE ★
BREWERY

Stubborn Mule

After five years as a one man band, the workforce has increased to three with Michelle Crosby and Steven Turner joining owner and brewer Ed Bright at the Altrincham brewery. Michelle, who

has been a regular at the brewery's tap events, and Steven, a chef by trade but branching out into beer, will look after sales leaving Ed to concentrate on brewing, cleaning, delivery, canning, marketing, accounts....

The brewery celebrates three years at their Radium House home at the brewtap event on 21st December.



Temperance Street

The Temperance Street Brewery is a new community brew space launching in January.

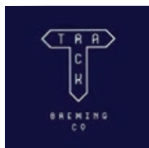
Based at Beer Nouveau's premises in Ardwick (which straddles North Western Street and Temperance Street), the project has been created by three friends with extensive commercial and home-brewing experience who now want to share their knowledge by helping others to brew beer.

Initially starting with custom made 25 litre equipment they will offer a range of services from fully tutored brewing days, aimed at beginners, to kit hire for experienced brewers who need more space to take their hobby further.

Additionally, there is a 1-barrel (160 litre) kit which is available for anyone looking to produce and sell their beers into the trade.

The Temperance Street Brewery will also be selling brewing ingredients and packaging to homebrewers in the area.

The team are on twitter at @**Temperance_Brew** and they can also be found on Facebook at **TemperanceStreetBrewery**.



Track

Development works at Crusader Mill have forced the brewery to temporarily close their tap room in the building. They've set up a temporary tap room just across the tram tracks from the Mill at Cloudwater's Unit 9. Although the works by developers Capital & Centric were only expected to take a couple of weeks, complications have led to this being extended until the New Year.

The pop-up space offers eight keg and one cask beers from Track alongside one cask from Cloudwater (Thursday to Sunday only). Opening hours are Wednesday to Friday 3pm to 10pm, Saturday Noon to 10pm and Sunday noon to 8pm.

The works have also closed Squawk Brewery's bar at Chapeltown Picture House on the floor above Track.

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Talking Tech

Pumping beer – from cellar to glass

One thing that is guaranteed to set the lifelong cask ale drinker's alarm bells ringing is when the bar server pulling their pint of cask tells them – “oh, I'll just have to go and change the gas”. Having spent all their drinking lives believing that cask ale is unsullied by dreaded CO₂, a pub that requires gas to serve their cask ales is surely up to no good?

Well usually, they aren't, it's just part of the modern pub cellar. In this piece, we'll look at how your cask ale gets from the pub cellar to the bar.

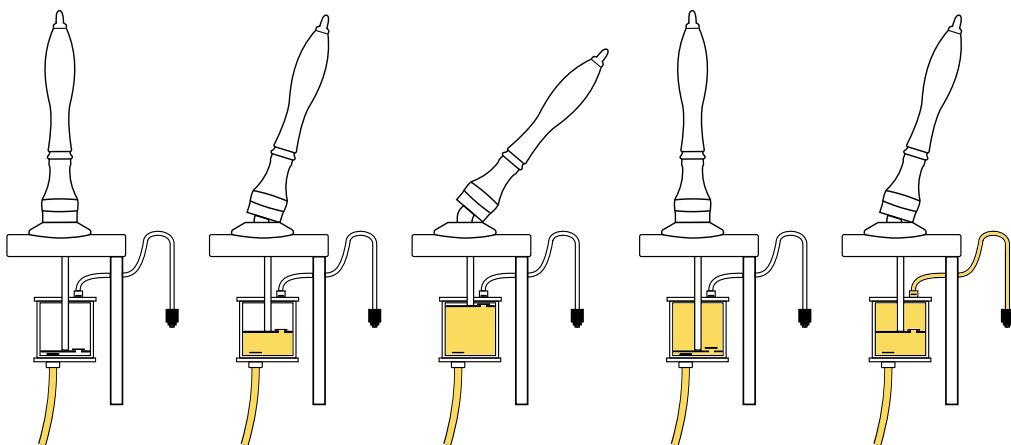
The first thing to remember is that not all pubs are the same. How the beer gets to the pump in somewhere like Manchester Arndale's **Micro Bar** is going to be very different from its route from one of the three cellars in JD Wetherspoon's **Moon Under Water**.

While pins of Old Tom have seasonally appeared on the bar of Robinsons' pubs, the recent growth of the 'micro-pub' has seen a revival of this most traditional method of serving – your beer poured directly from a cask. Micro-pubs like

Stalybridge's Bridge Beers have their casks on display on a rack behind the bar and use nothing more than gravity to fill your glass.

In the 70s, cask ales were regularly served by metered electric pumps but since the 1980s, the bar mounted handpump has become synonymous with cask ale.

The simple syphon pump, also known as a beer engine, was first patented in 1691 by a Dutch inventor called John Lofting. The principle of operation is simple – an airtight chamber sits between the line from the cask and the pump's nozzle. A piston in the chamber is connected to the pump's handle. When the server pulls the handle, the piston is pulled up, drawing beer into the chamber via a one-way valve. When the handle is returned, another one-way valve allows the beer to pass through the piston. On the next pull, the beer is pushed out of the chamber and through the nozzle while more beer is pulled into the chamber.



© John O'Donnell

As beer may be sat in the cylinder for some time between pulls, pumps are typically fitted with a cooling system which circulates chilled water through a jacket surrounding the cylinder.

The amount of beer dispensed on each pull can be a quarter, a third or half a pint. The larger the volume dispensed with each pull, the larger the effort required. With casks located in a traditional cellar, the beer engine must create enough suction to lift the beer from the cask. It must also overcome the natural resistance to flow of the beer line – the longer the line, the more effort required.

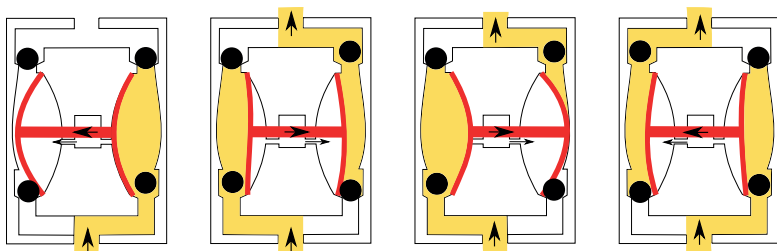
Where the length of line and/or height between cellar and bar is too long, the handpump must be assisted with an additional pump in the pub cellar. While electric pumps can be used, the most common type of pump is a gas driven diaphragm pump – usually known as a Flojet pump, the trade name of the most commonly seen model.



© John O'Donnell

In a diaphragm pump, two flexible diaphragms oscillate back and forth, creating chambers which suck in and then push out the beer. The diaphragms are connected by a shaft so as one sucks, the other pushes. The movement of the diaphragms is driven by compressed gas which does not come into contact with the beer.

On the first stroke, the gas moves one diaphragm to push beer from the first chamber via a one-way ball valve. At



© John O'Donnell

the same time, the second diaphragm is sucking beer into a second chamber. At the end of the stroke, the gas flow is diverted to push the second diaphragm, pushing out the beer drawn in on the previous stroke, while more beer is drawn into the first chamber. The cycle then repeats.

Flojet pumps allow pubs to serve cask ale from cellars some distance from the bar and allow smaller diameter lines to be used, reducing the amount of beer in the lines at any given time. As they reduce the effort required to operate handpumps and reduce wear on the pump seals, they are regularly fitted in lines even where they aren't strictly necessary.

Although electric powered flojet pumps are available, as pub cellars usually have a ready supply of gas, the gas-powered models are the most common – which leads to that unfortunate situation where the gas running out does stop cask ale flowing.

The Flojet is also the secret behind cask ale service from back bar taps such as those seen at the **The Oast House** and **Stubborn Mule's** tap room. When the tap is opened, the flojet sets to work pumping the beer through the tap. They can easily generate enough pressure to force beer through a cask sparkler.

John O'Donnell

Tryanuary

Support independent breweries, pubs and bars in January

While December is the beer industry's busiest time as pubs fill with Christmas revellers, as New Year's Day comes around, many people in the UK set New Year's resolutions around health, fitness and saving money.

For the beer industry, that makes January a difficult month. As pubs and bars are quiet, there are less shifts for bar staff, and fewer drinkers in pubs resulting in lower sales for our brewers. Charity campaigns to encourage abstinence in the month have only added to these problems.

Tryanuary is volunteer-led month-long action aimed at supporting the beer industry throughout this difficult month. Founded right here in Manchester in 2015, the campaign encourages you to support local, independent beer businesses be they pubs, bars, clubs, brewery taps or bottle shops.

Whether it's a trip to the pub or seeking out new beers from your local bottle shops or breweries, every little helps. If you have overindulged in December, rather than swinging to zero consumption only to binge again in February, use the month to reset your drinking to enjoy beer in moderation, as part of a continuing healthy lifestyle.

If you're still intent on taking part in Dry January, you can still support Tryanuary. A visit to the pub for some food and a soft drink or trying zero alcohol beers from independent UK brewers, is still not only supporting the beer industry, but keeping you on track with your resolutions too.

Pubs, clubs, bottle shops and breweries can help with the campaign by brewing #Tryanuary beers, putting on events and offers to keep people coming to places and buying beer in January. If you work



for a pub or brewery, encourage your manager and owners to get involved.

Tryanuary started as a Twitter campaign and social media remains the best medium to pick up on news of events and offers. The national campaign has a presence on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram (@tryanuary) and you can look out for the hashtag #Tryanuary.

Events submitted will also be listed on the Tryanuary website at **www.tryanuary.com**

If you are supporting your local pubs and breweries in January then a share and a '#Tryanuary' gives independent breweries exposure and recognition at the time they need it most.

Tryanuary also supports the charity The Benevolent which provides help and support to current and former employees of the drinks industry and their families. Find out more about The Benevolent at **www.thebenevolent.org.uk**

John O'Donnell



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21

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SIBA Beer Judging



Tony Mitchell reflects on judging at Bolton Beer Festival

Bolton Beer Festival, held at the University of Bolton Stadium, opened on Thursday 10 October. The day began at 10.30 am with registration of the judges for the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) North West best beer competition. I was one of those judges. There were a few faces I recognised from breweries and allied trades; the local brewers were not allowed to take part in the judging. Instead they acted as runners, bringing the beer to our tables when the time came to judge.



There were 12 tables of judges, with 4 to 6 people on each and each trying different categories: pales, best bitters, speciality, small pack (bottles and cans), IPAs etc. I was due to be on three tables, the first and third round were for dark beers up to 4.4% while the second was cask bitters between 4.5 and 6.4%.

Guy Sheppard from Exe Valley Brewery in Devon was our MC and he explained the task ahead. Scoring was recorded on printed sheets with marks out of 10 for appearance, aroma, aftertaste and saleability with 20 for taste. It was all blind tasting. We sampled six to eight beers in each round and also took water and crackers to clear our palates. We were made aware of any unfined beers. There was nothing however which jumped out at me as being a really good

ale so my marks tended to be in the top 30's to mid 40's out of 60.



After lunch, which included a free bar with five local ales available, the judging continued until the finalists were nominated. Only 20 judges assessed those and the winning entries in each category identified. Certificates for 1st, 2nd and 3rd were presented, with a plaque for each of the winners. Finally, the Champion was announced and of all the breweries throughout the region the overall winner in the Cask category was from two miles away – Blackedge 'West Coast' Pale Ale (4.1%) - the second year in a row that this beer has won the Cask category. Silver went to Hophurst's 'Porteresque' Stout (5.5%)

The festival opened to the general public at 6pm although we judges had a free hour beforehand, which allowed for networking among the assembled tradespeople, more friends made all round, and generally more things discovered about our fellow tasters.

For an extended account of Tony's experience as a beer judge, visit **beerbuzz.beer/EXTRA**

Tony Mitchell

How We Make Cider

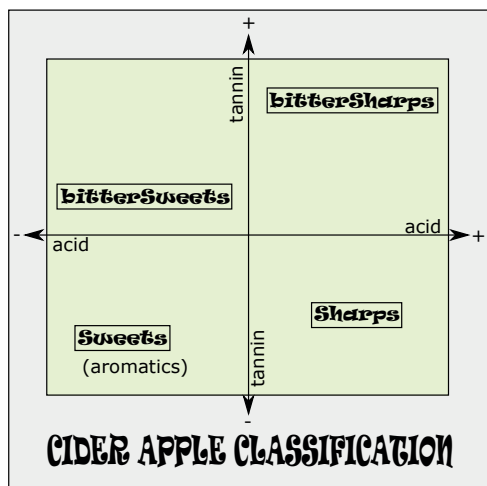
Part One – The Apple, the Harvest and the Pressing

In this series of four pieces we look at How We Make Cider and Perry - alcoholic drinks fermented from apples and pears respectively. The UK is still the largest producer and consumer of these drinks although other countries are catching up fast!

The apple

Apple variety is a defining characteristic in cider; the best ciders are made with cider specific varieties. Like wine grapes, cider apples have the tannin, acid, sugar and aromatic precursors necessary to make a complex fermented drink. These characteristics are sometimes contained within one variety, but more often are blended.

Apples used in cidermaking are classified as bittersweet, bittersharp, sweet or sharp. These terms don't explicitly include the sugar content of the apples, though this is also an important factor in cidermaking as it drives the alcohol content of the finished product.



A variety such as Dabinett or Yarlington Mill is called **bittersweet** as it has a

low level of acidity and a high level of tannin; others like Kingston Black or the lipsmacking Foxwhelp are classified as **bittersharp** as they contain high levels of both.

A sharp such as Braeburn is high in acidity but low in tannin; in a Cider made from 'eaters and cookers', a cooking apple such as Bramley could be considered a 'sharp'.

A Sweet Coppin or Sweet Alford apple is categorised as **sweet** due to low tannin and low acidity. The term doesn't necessarily refer to its sugar content relative to other apples, but more to the perception of sweetness, because of this lack of sharp flavours. In an Eastern Counties acid led cider using eaters and cookers, apples such as Discovery would be classified as sweet.

For Perry, there are two classifications: Perry Pears are rich in tannins, with varying degrees of acidity and sweetness (though all Perry Pears retain some sweetness after fermentation due to a natural sorbitol). Table pears which are very low in tannins are sometimes used to produce a Pear Cider, sometimes called a modern Perry.

The harvest

Craft Cider is a seasonal drink, it gets made just once a year during the apple harvest.

Unlike apples bound for the supermarket, which are often picked before fully ripe to prolong shelf life, for cider ripeness is critical. Part of the skill of an Orchard based cider maker is knowing exactly when to harvest, by hand or from the ground, to attain optimum sugar and flavour levels.

Harvesting season can be roughly



Chris Hewitt (Dunham Press Cider) and Nicky Kong (The Crown & Kettle) harvesting apples

Photo © Richard Withecombe

divided into two halves, early and late. The early apple varieties such as Major and Foxwhelp start to ripen in early to mid-September. The later varieties such as Dabinett and Yarlington Mill tend to start coming in late-October to mid-November.

Pressing is in three important stages; first scrupulously cleaning the apples, second using a scrapper to break up into a pressable pulp, and third pressing. At home chopping up apples or using a hand scrapper and a hand press will produce a low yield of juice. The more powerful the press, the higher the juice yield that can be achieved.

Factory produced ciders

Industrial cider making does not follow the seasonal nature of craft, orchard-based, cider making. Therefore, it manipulates the process in several ways, one of which is very prevalent. This is to use concentrated apple juice, which can be stored and fermented year-round by industrial processes.



With the growth of many industrial fruit ciders, we have seen an increase in use of bulk concentrates and as more fruit or concentrate is brought in from the world market, orchards in the UK are in further decline. This is a trend which stretches back several decades due to other factors such as improvements in agricultural techniques and technology, causing the price of apples as a commodity to consistently fail to rise even in line with inflation. For UK apple growers, it is an uncertain future.

The actual apple content required in UK ciders is shamefully low; a paltry 35% minimum.

Even worse, fruit ciders are regulated differently as 'made wines' for which there is NO minimum juice content. Virtually all "Fruit Ciders" regardless of production scale or quality of ingredients are diluted to 4% abv because of exorbitant tax bands above that.

There are exceptions such as Tom Oliver's At The Hop range and Turners Elderflower, both coming in at 5.5% abv. Here the makers have made the decision to not add more water or unfermented juice to hit the 4% mark and have taken the hit on the extra duty this alcohol level incurs. This takes a degree of integrity as a cider maker and, in my view, should be recognised and celebrated.

Part Two of this series – Terroir and Fermentation - will appear in the March 2020 issue of Beer Buzz

Richard Withecombe

Buzzin In The Orchards

News from our local cider producers



Dunham Press 'Peterloo Perry' was recently named overall Best Perry in the Perry category of the National Fruit Show's Love British Cider competition.

Cider maker Chris Hewitt travelled to the show at the Kent Event Centre in Detling to collect his award. Peterloo Perry is the Dunham Massey based producer's first commercial perry, made with Herefordshire perry pears.



Photo © Dunham Press

Manchester is set to get a new cider maker with Temperance Street Cider just waiting for final paperwork from HMRC as Beer Buzz went to press.

Beer Nouveau brewer Steve Dunkley, a long time cider lover, is behind the new venture which will share premises with his existing brewery.

He plans to produce single varietal ciders from apples grown in northern orchards and will also carry on the work started by Moss Cider Project by accepting donations of home-grown apples which he will turn into local cider – some of which will be oak aged.

They will also work with Surplus Manchester to make fruited apple wines and juices blended with left over fresh fruit.

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Worker Beers

Graham Donning meets (one of) Seven Bro7hers

Seven Bro7hers Brewery is based on the Waybridge Enterprise Centre, a short walk from MediaCity and they also run **Seven Bro7hers Beerhouse** in Manchester's Ancoats district.

It should be no surprise to learn that the brewery is owned and run by seven brothers of the McAvoy family - Guy, Keith, Luke, Daniel, Nathan, Kit and Greg. Their father was a keen homebrewer so they grew up in a household that knew about beers. Both their mother and father were hard-working entrepreneurs and that ethos has been inherited by the children: it is in their DNA – all eleven of them. While the male offspring run the brewery, their four sisters are involved in Four Sis7ers Gin which is based in another unit at the Enterprise Centre.

The brewery was set up six years ago after many years of the brothers seeking their own way in life in a wide variety of professions ranging from teaching to IT Project Management and even professional Rugby League player with Nathan playing for Salford Reds and Bradford Bulls.



It was when eldest brother Keith (pictured), who played host to me for this interview in the brewery, was freelancing in Oslo that he was blown away by the craft beer scene. Initially

getting two of his brothers on board, their first ambition was to open a craft brew bar as back then there were not so many in the UK. However, having done the research they changed plans and made the decision to open a brewery instead

- with all seven male siblings on board.



The original brewing kit was designed by Dave Porter of PBC Brewery Installations who has helped many a brewer get going (and now a near neighbour of the Brothers with PBC relocating from Bury to Ordsall a couple of years ago). Although the brothers learnt a lot through the home brewing scene, they enlisted Dave's services to expand their knowledge to a professional level.

Starting with a ten-barrel brew kit and 5,000 litres of capacity in two fermenting vessels (FV), Kit initially took the role of Head Brewer. Greg, ever the perfectionist, later took the brewing to another level, wanting the beers to be 'spot on'. As the brewery has expanded more staff have come on board with the creative brewer now being Jack Dixon who Keith rates as "super talented".

By October 2017, the brewery had outgrown their original unit and, after a successful crowdfunding campaign, the brothers relocated to their current site with a new 20-barrel brew plant. Their original unit, just across the yard from the new site, and brewing kit was acquired by Pomona Island Brewery.

Currently Seven Bro7hers have a fermenting capacity of 60,000 litres but are already at 80% of capacity are looking



©Graham Donning

to install more FVs to take capacity up to 100,000 litres.

In late 2018 they launched a collaboration with cereal maker Kellogg's to use grains discarded in the production of Corn Flakes as part of the grain bill in production

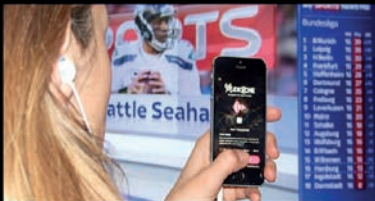
of 'Throwaway IPA'. The range was expanded to three beers earlier this year with 'Cast Off Pale Ale' and 'Sling it Out Stout' utilising edible but not-sellable cereal from Rice Krispies and Coco Pops respectively.

The first **Seven Bro7hers Beerhouse** bar in Ancoats opened in December 2016 and is doing extremely well. The Brothers love to see the community getting together with mixed ages and people from all walks of life enjoying a beer and conversation.

Following a further crowdfunder which raised half a million pounds, a second bar is due to open in Middlewood Locks, proudly said to be in Salford, and another in Wolstenholme Square in Liverpool – a new development which is being built on a site which used to include Nation, the nightclub which housed the legendary Cream club nights.

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They need to create more space in the brewery so the Brewery Tap (pictured below) will be moved to a mezzanine floor releasing more space on the brewery floor for the additional FVs. The target is to produce 2,000,000 litres per annum by mid-2020.

Their canning system has only been in place for 12 months, but they have already upgraded to a new line that gives

them more capacity to aim for more exposure in the convenience market. They currently sell small pack to Asda, Ocado and Booths having intentionally limited their presence in this market to a minimum pending the upgrade. "One step at a time", as Keith says. They have minimum exports but are looking to the Scandinavian and Baltic areas to develop an overseas market. Having a barrel aging store is on the list but they are not rushing into it.

The Brewery currently employs 32 people including four of the Brothers full time – Keith, Nathan, Kit and Greg – with the others on a part time basis as and when required. They have built a talented infrastructure in finance, marketing and production and the forecast is that by 2022 they will employ some 130 staff across the brewery and up to eight bars.

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Lying just to the west of the vast Manchester University complex is the historic district of Greenheys, now largely dominated by the Heineken Brewery and the modern Manchester Science Park. And in the middle of the Science Park lies the **Old Abbey Taphouse**.

Originally the **Old Abbey Inn** (a name still displayed on one external wall), a search into the history of the area reveals the existence of the now demolished Chorlton Abbey from which the pub takes its name. The building was built sometime between 1884 and 1891 and prior to the development of the Science Park it sat on the corner of Gore Street and Park Street with terraced houses on either side. By the 1970s the **Old Abbey Inn** had become a Wilsons brewery pub but in 1972 it became isolated as the terraces were demolished.

The new millennium saw it in the hands of the **Kro** group which based its catering operation at the pub. Since October 2016 it's been independent, run by business partners Rachele Evaroa and Craig Thomas and styling itself as a STEAM (that's Science Technology Engineering Arts and Maths) focused 'hub in a pub' – seeking to create networks between academics, residents and local businesses and to build communities through events at the pub.

The team have carved a niche for the pub by taking advantage of the Old Abbey's somewhat unusual location. Being in the middle of a business district with little in the way of local residents means that the focus can be on music. The pub's upper floor now hosts a rehearsal room for bands to practise and a small studio for recording while the main pub hosts regular live music events including an



open mic night every other Wednesday and regular 'all dayer' festivals.

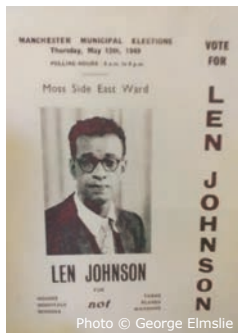
Rachele and Craig and their team have a mission to serve the community using their knowledge in events and academia and their connections to the nearby area of Hulme. They work with local schools on sustainability projects, assist Community Groups such as Hulme Community Garden and are home to the Gaiskil Garden Project who help support asylum seekers and refugees.

Events such as the regular Board Games Night encourage people to come on their own to meet new people and they have helped a number of people set up their businesses at the pub by offering space for free, help with marketing, setting up websites and informal networking.

In 2019 they set out to work with local historians, archaeologists and former residents to survey the former Greenheys Estate (of which the pub is the last building remaining) and preserving the history of their community in new media.

They also set out to be an inclusive space, building on an important event in the pub's history. Not long after the second world war, Manchester sporting hero Len

Johnson, a former Empire middleweight champion, was refused a drink with the landlord reportedly telling him people of his 'colour' had caused trouble there in the past. The police were called, and Len was told to leave.



This caused outrage in the local community not least because Len had been a firefighter during the war. Len gained support from Lord Mayor and the Bishop of Manchester and four days later,

he returned to **The Old Abbey** in the company of the local councillor for Moss Side West. After a talk with the licensee they had a drink together and it was established that there was no longer a bar on, in the language of the time, 'coloured' people. Len Johnson's role in establishing this early precedent in the fight for inclusivity is commemorated in a display of newspaper clippings on one wall of the pub.

The pubs décor reflects the DIY nature of the tenants – out of place lampshades, abstract artwork on the walls, an upright piano topped with historic photos.

The external areas are spacious. On one side is a seating area made out of



Photo © George Elmslie

up-cycled pallets and on the other side a partially covered area with an outside bar for summer events, furnished with disused cable reels and more pallets.

The pub's menu is 80% vegan with Italian style stone-baked pizza and a range of fresh salads and soups for the gluten intolerant. A delivery service using electric bikes is available and plastics used in catering are biodegradable. Food is served 11.30am – 3pm and 5 – 10pm.

Cask ales come from a variety of breweries including Salford's Outstanding Brewery and the Mill Valley Brewery (MVB) from Cleckheaton.

Opening times are 11 – Midnight Monday to Thursday, 11 – 1am Friday and Saturday (unless there is an event on) and 4 – 11pm Sunday. Check up on social media for events and find out more about the pub's community work at **theoldabbeytaphouse.co.uk**

George Elmslie

Focus on... Castlefield

Steve Davis explores the pubs amongst Manchester's Roman ruins and canals

Having been designated a conservation area in 1980 and the UK's first urban heritage park in 1982, Manchester's Castlefield district kick-started the urban regeneration which has now extended all around the city. While the modern buzz around Manchester's beer scene seems to be concentrated on areas to the north of the city, this is one area of the city where the pubs have been consistently serving quality ales for years.

The area can be easily reached by public transport with the Metrolink stop at Deansgate/Castlefield, Deansgate railway station and from Piccadilly station, the No 1 Free Bus around the city centre (Saturdays only) or No 3 (Evenings only).



Photo © Steve Davis

I started at the **OxnoBLE** on Liverpool Road opposite the Museum of Science and Industry. While this is a food-led pub, there are areas in front and to the side of the bar for drinkers. There were a few small groups eating and just a group of Norwegian Manchester United fans drinking. There is a bank of four handpumps but two clips were turned around, leaving the not very inspiring choice of Sharp's Doom Bar or Robinsons Dizzy Blonde. I chose Dizzy Blonde and the welcoming barman did pull some through before serving me a half which

was actually quite good.

Now joined by fellow Central Manchester CAMRA member Steve Ingham, we moved on to **The White Lion** 100 yards up the road, passing the remains of Manchester's Roman origins en route.

Again, we found four handpumps with two clips turned around leaving the choice of Doom Bar (again) and Sharp's Atlantic. The Atlantic was very lively meaning our server struggled a little to serve it, but the beer tasted fine. At £5 for two halves, this was the most expensive pub we visited in what is generally an expensive part of the city. The only other customers were the same group of Norwegians we'd met earlier, but the pub can be much busier during the summer with the large outdoor area facing Liverpool Road proving a draw. The pub itself is pleasant: bare wooden floorboards, a nice fireplace and lots of United memorabilia on the walls including signed player photos mixed in with old prints of Manchester and some of the pub when it was a Threlfall house.

Our next destination was **Cask**, a Good Beer Guide regular on Liverpool Road. This was by far the busiest pub that we visited; we couldn't get a seat. Many office workers were having a pint and their lunch there having brought their fish and chips in from the Fish Hut next door. There were four cask ales on. I chose Ilkley Fireside, a smoky Porter - not bad but I couldn't detect smokiness in the taste or the aroma. Steve chose Thirst Class Mosaic, a pale ale which he pronounced very good. The other cask ales on offer were Pictish Wakatu and Rooster's Highway Fifty-One. This pub does also serve many excellent keg and continental bottled beers.

We next proceeded to **The Wharf**, a



Photo © Steve Davis

pub which possesses, I believe, the best outdoor drinking area in central Manchester (although maybe not on a cold October afternoon when we visited) with a view over the canal basin (where the Rochdale Canal meets the Bridgewater Canal) surrounded by warehouses converted to offices. The pub is from the Brunning and Price pub chain who do deck their pubs out to a very high

standard. Inside there were small clusters of drinkers, around the open plan ground floor many also dining. Upstairs there is a balcony set out for dining. There were ten cask ales and a cider on, pleasingly three of the ten ales were dark beers. I chose an Epic Beetle Juice which was very good. Steve had one of the regular beers, Weetwood Cheshire Cat, which he really liked.

Our next stop was **Dukes 92**, named after the adjacent lock number 92 also known as Duke's Lock as the Duke Of Bridgewater controlled it as it gave access to the canal bearing his name. I had no great expectations as on my only previous visit about four years ago I had a very poorly kept pint of Holts bitter here. We walked in and the place was certainly busier than the Wharf. The two handpumps are on the left of the bar. Only one beer on, Joseph Holts Paterson's, one



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of a series of one-off beers being brewed to celebrate 170 years of the brewery. It tasted to me like a stronger version of Holts IPA and was very pleasant. I warmed to the place, it had a buzz to it and whilst the many indoor artificial trees might not be to everyone's taste they did separate the large room up well.

Our final destination was **The Knott**, a one-time Greater Manchester Pub Of The Year. Now described as 'The Home of Wander Beyond', the brewery under the same ownership provided one of the six cask ales on sale, Peak pale ale. Steve tried and liked this while, I had the Beatnikz Republic Boardwalk, a gluten free pale ale which was my favourite of the day. As well as the cask ales there is a bank of 25 keg fonts which featured beers from such highly rated breweries as Cloudwater, Buxton, Pilot, Tiny Rebel, Northern Monk as well as four keg beers from Wander Beyond.



In summary a very enjoyable afternoon with friendly bar staff in all the pubs and neither of us had a bad pint, even in pubs where cask ale is not a big seller. So, if you don't know this part of town get out and explore!

Visit **beerbuzz.beer/EXTRA** for an extended account of Steve's trip round Castlefield.

Steve Davis

Pi (Altrincham)




Manchester Beer Week Nominations
Best Pub 2018
Best Beer Selection 2018


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Kit, Extract or Full Mash?



An introduction to brewing at home from Chorlton Homebrewers' Alex Pembroke.

The beer scene in Manchester has changed radically in recent years with dozens of new breweries brewing hundreds of new beers. Drinkers enjoying these beers can thank the hobby of homebrewing for many of these - many of Manchester's new commercial brewers started their careers as homebrewers.

Homebrewing, like commercial brewing, has also changed massively and moved on a long way from the stereotypical Boots kit of the 70s and 80s. The vast range of equipment and ingredients now available gives homebrewers the ability to produce beers that previously could only be made by commercial breweries.

Homebrewing Methods

There are essentially three ways of brewing beer at home. The first (and simplest) option is using kits. Many homebrew suppliers will offer a complete starter pack comprising of a brew kit plus all the equipment needed to brew and store the beer. Kits are a great introduction to homebrewing, there is an extensive range of styles to choose from and they can produce some tremendous beers. They also serve to familiarise budding brewers with the cleaning and sterilising routines which form an essential part of the brewing process.

The second option is extract brewing. This approach takes a little more time than a kit but allows the brewer more flexibility in creating their own recipes. Here the brewer uses un-hopped malt extract, available as liquid or a spray dried powder, to which they add hops and speciality grains. This method involves boiling the dissolved malt extract with hops (boiling extracts the bitterness) so a large stock pot is required. Speciality grains, such as crystal or roasted malts,

and additional hops can be used in small quantities to add colour, flavour and aroma.



The third method is all-grain brewing; this basically replicates a commercial operation on a small scale. Traditionally homebrewers have used a three-vessel

approach. A hot liquor tank (HLT) to heat the brewing water, a mash tun where the malt is soaked in the hot water (a process called mashing) and a copper which is used to boil the resulting wort (sweet unfermented raw beer) with the hops.

A more recent innovation is the introduction of all-in-one brewing systems such as the Grainfather. These combine all three vessels into a single unit. A more basic approach to single vessel brewing is the Brew in a Bag (BIAB) method where the brewer uses a fine mesh bag to soak the grains in a large stock pot. Once the bag is removed and drained the resulting wort is boiled in the pot. All-grain brewing requires the most equipment and is the most time consuming but allows the brewer complete flexibility and control over their recipes.

Getting Started

For a complete novice homebrewing can seem daunting at first but it is a rewarding hobby and can soon turn into an obsession and sometimes even a career. An initial outlay of around £60

will get everything needed to brew 40 pints of beer (such as the starter kit pictured) and after that there are kits available that can cost anything from £10 for a budget range to £30 for premium branded kits. There are multiple retailers online (Brew UK and Malt Miller are two well-known suppliers but there are many more), Wilko stock a good range of kits and basic equipment and there are still two local homebrew shops in Salford Homebrew in Langworthy and Julie's Homebrew in New Heath.



Photo © Mark Reeves



Photo © Alex Pembroke

For advice and information there is a wealth of resources online with discussion forums such as Jim's Beer Kit and The Homebrew Forum offering advice on all aspects of homebrewing. There are also Facebook groups and plenty of YouTube videos but a good place to start is John Palmer's How to Brew website. John Palmer's How to Brew is also one of the best home brewing books covering everything from the basics

right up to advanced techniques. Two other recommended books are Home Brew Beer by Greg Hughes, another good all-round homebrewing book, and CAMRA's Essential Home Brewing. The latter is written by Andy Parker, an ex-homebrewer and current owner of Elusive Brewing, and contains recipes from breweries including Elusive Brewing, Siren Craft, Verdant, Thornbridge and many more.

Meeting Other Homebrewers

There are dozens of homebrew clubs throughout the country with at least five in Manchester who meet every month - Chorlton Homebrewers every second Wednesday at **Font** in Chorlton, Manchester Homebrewers at **Café Beermoth** every third Sunday, Levensulme Home Brew Club at **Station Hop** every fourth Thursday, Brew Club at the **Chiverton Tap** (Cheadle Hulme) every second Tuesday and the Urmston Brew Club every first Wednesday at the **Prairie Schooner Tap House**.



Photo © Chorlton Homebrewers

All clubs are always happy to welcome new members regardless of brewing experience. The meetings offer an opportunity to try a variety of different beers and discuss any homebrewing issues. The clubs sometimes have talks from professional brewers and occasionally arrange to brew at friendly local breweries.

The Cask Report

Are cask ale's fortunes on the turn?



The Cask Report is a document which is published annually looking at the fortunes of cask ale. Sponsored by industry quality scheme Cask Marque, the 2019 edition was published in October and set out mixed fortunes for cask ale.

While reporting that sales of cask ale had continued to fall, it indicated that there are early signs of this decline being halted and cask returning to growth. It reports that 'Premium Cask Ale' (defined by the British Beer and Pub Association as stronger than 4.2 per cent ABV) is booming with growth in four consecutive months from April to July.

On the counter side, it also reported that poor beer quality remains cask's biggest enemy with customers reporting that one bad pint can put them off drinking cask again as well as damaging their opinion of the pub that served it and the brewery whose beer it is.

Beer writer Pete Brown led a survey of 1700 licensees about what they think about cask beer which was followed up by interviews with licensees, managers

and staff at different styles of pub from across the country.

The resulting report found that specialist cask venues are outperforming the rest of the market when it comes to cask beer sales. There were clear correlations between pubs which consider cask as core to their offer and sales of cask ale in those pubs. Meanwhile those pubs who don't see themselves as 'cask pubs' have low sales but when they continue to stock cask ale, they are potentially damaging the whole of the category due to selling cask in poor condition.

A survey of drinkers found that seven out of ten cask drinkers have been served an off pint, and the report says that a poor pint will stop 40 per cent from going back to that pub. Cask Marque reported that nearly half of pubs it monitored in July 2019 served beer above the recommended maximum temperature of 14°C.

Cask Marque director Paul Nunny said: "If you can't get the quality right, please don't stock cask. Get it right and build a name for your pub on the back of it. Get the selection of beers right for the size, type and location of the pub that you run. Involve your staff, making sure they are well trained, knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and watch your sales grow."

"As our research shows, that's what is happening in successful cask pubs where licensees care about their beer."

The report also found the average number of cask brands on the bar has fallen from 4.4 to 2.8 in two years, possibly indicating that some pubs are realising the benefits of quality over quantity. It sets out that pubs face a balancing act between offering an interesting range of



Photo © CAMRA

styles and ABVs and limiting the number of cask ales offered in order to maintain throughput and therefore quality.

CAMRA chief executive Tom Stainer said: "It's clear from the report cask still faces a lot

of challenges, but there are signs we should be feeling positive.

"The decline in sales may be showing signs of halting and premium cask is back into growth. It's not a time to be complacent, however, as the industry still faces the same issues about ensuring quality, training staff and marketing cask to drinkers in a more effective way.

"The encouraging signs can only be realised if we continue to campaign to improve quality in all pubs, help more drinkers understand what makes cask so special and continue to encourage people to visit pubs – the only places you can get cask ale."

The report opined "Cask beer is arguably under-priced on the bar and undervalued by customers". Profit margin is a serious issue for licensees who can struggle to make money from cask ale, especially considering the effort required to keep it. Its survey found that drinkers are paying, on average, £1.50 per pint more for craft keg than they are for cask.

It suggested that in order for pubs to achieve the required margin on cask ale sales, emphasis must be placed on treating cask as a quality premium product. However, it also says that a good range should still include an appropriately priced entry-level cask beer.

For a copy of the report go to **www.cask-marque.co.uk**



What?Pub



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

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Buzzin' Around

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**

18th Dec 7.30pm

Branch Meeting (S&D), Kings Arms, 11 Bloom Street, Salford, M3 6AN

7th Jan 6pm Branch Meeting (CM), Castle Hotel, 66 Oldham St, Manchester M4 1LE

7th Jan 8pm Branch Meeting (T&H), Rustic, 41 Stamford Street, Altrincham, WA14 1EP

15th Jan 7.30pm Branch Meeting (S&D), TBC

5th Feb 6pm Branch Meeting (CM), TBC

5th Feb 7.30pm GBG Shortlist Meeting (S&D), Swinton Catholic Club, 11 Worsley Rd, Swinton, M27 5WN

6th Feb 8pm Branch Meeting (T&H), TBC

19th Feb 7.30pm Branch Meeting (S&D), Windmill, 690 Bolton Road, Pendlebury, M27 8FH

2nd Mar 6pm Branch Meeting (CM), The Rose & Monkey, 31 Swan St, Manchester, M4 5JZ

3rd Mar 8pm Branch Meeting (T&H), TBC

4th Mar 7.30pm GBG Selection Meeting (), White Swan, 186 Worsley Rd, Swinton, M27 5SN

3rd – 5th Apr CAMRA AGM & Members Weekend (GM), York

beerbuzz.beer/diary

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Buzzin' Around Cider and Perry events

For more events & full details see

beerbuzz.beer/diary

9th Jan 7pm Manchester Cider Club at The Crown and Kettle with Albert Johnson from Ross on Wye Cider and Perry Co.

19th Jan 5pm City Centre Wassail organised by #Mcrcider Club and The Orchard Project and City of Trees – meet at The Marble Arch. Supported by Central Manchester CAMRA.

20th Jan Dunham Press Wassail

13th Feb 7pm Manchester Cider Club at The Crown and Kettle with Sophie Fitton from Hogans Cider, a Romantic Ciders special.

12th Mar 7pm Manchester Cider Club at The Crown and Kettle with Polly and Mat Hilton from Find and Foster Cider

Forthcoming Beer & Cider Festivals

Manchester Beer & Cider Festival
23rd – 25th January 2020
Manchester Central
mancbeerfest.uk

Great British Beer Festival Winter
4th – 8th February 2020
New Bingley Hall, Birmingham
winter.gbbf.org.uk

Bent and Bongs Beer Bash
6th – 8th February 2020
Atherton Roller Rink, Atherton
www.bentnbongs.com

Fleetwood Beer And Cider Festival
6th – 8th February 2020
Marine Hall, Fleetwood
blackpool.camra.org.uk

Chesterfield Winding Wheel Festival
7th – 8th February
The Winding Wheel, Chesterfield
chesterfield.camra.org.uk

Liverpool Beer Festival
20th – 22nd February 2020
Metropolitan Cathedral Crypt, Liverpool
liverpoolcamra.org.uk

Bradford Beer Festival
20th – 22nd February
Victoria Hall, Saltaire
bradfordcamra.org.uk

Friends & Family & Beer 2020
21st – 22nd February 2020
Manchester Central
friendsandfamily.beer

Wigan CAMRA Beer Festival
5th – 7th March 2020
Robin Park Arena, Wigan
beerfestival.wigancamra.org.uk

CAMRA Isle Of Man Beer Festival
9th – 11th April 2020
The Royal Hall, Douglas
iombeerfestival.com



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