



← The Cracker Barrel, Bradford

a micropub, but they soon realise how difficult it is to run one.”

However, Kirsty Franks, owner of The Cracker Barrel, also in Bradford, believes that competition is actually good for trade. By collaborating with micropubs, she believes there’s enough business to go around for everyone.

“At the end of the day it gives the punters more choice and can make your town or village a destination,” she says. “By working together and playing to your strengths everyone can have a slice of the pie.”

Standing out from the crowd

Such is the pressure of competition on micropubs, that Emmett, who also has a brewery attached,

says they are having to reinvent themselves to stand out. That means offering something a bit different, he says.

“It’s not enough to be just a micropub anymore,” he says. “You have got to give the customer something more: in our case we put on brewing days and show films in the small cinema around the back, as well as offering guitar and German lessons.”

Dave Morris, owner of Chip N Ern in Bingley, also uses his spare room upstairs to host meetings for the local council, the Women’s Institute and the National Autistic Society. It works both ways as he gets many customers in return.

“I do it for free and a lot of people pop into the micropub for a drink

afterwards – if they are lucky I might even rustle up a bit of my famous game stew, supplemented by veggies from the allotment,” says Morris. “I’m not in this to make a profit: I want to do my bit for the community, make friends, be sustainable and support the local economy at the same time.”

Bigger competition

The larger traditional pubs have also seen the potential and started to muscle in, according to Michael Ainsworth, who runs The Grayston Unity in Halifax. But micropubs have been fighting back, he says, selling themselves on the fact that they are intimate venues where drinkers can enjoy real ale.

Area Focus:

West Yorkshire

The micropub industry in West Yorkshire is booming right now. Alex Wright reports.

According to research by **Micropub Magazine** there are just over 30 micropubs in the county and that number is set to rise exponentially over the next few years.

But with more micropubs opening on an almost daily basis, there’s a danger that many will go to the wall because competition has become so fierce. That’s the main fear for owners across the region who believe that the number of micropubs in West Yorkshire has reached a tipping point.

“There are so many of them popping up everywhere these days,” says Jim Emmett, owner of The Idle Draper, a Grade II former draper’s shop in Bradford. “Three have opened within a mile of us in the last six months alone. Everyone is jumping on the bandwagon and that’s diluting sales for everyone else. For many people it seems like a good idea at the time to open



→ Dave Morris, owner of Chip N Ern in Bingley

← The Grayston Unity, Halifax

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Kirsty Franks, owner of The Cracker Barrel

Area Focus: West Yorkshire

↓ Bier Huis, a microbar-cum-bottle shop in Wakefield



“ There’s a big chain pub up the road that we’re never going to beat on price, so instead we focus on offering a top-quality product at a reasonable price ”

Robert Naylor, owner, The Brewhouse, Yeadon

“There’s been a sea change in people’s attitudes: they no longer want to go to some big Brexit-loving Wetherspoon pub dominated by food and plasma TVs,” he says. “They would rather go to a local micropub for some beer and a chat with their mates.”

Robert Naylor, owner of The Brewhouse in Yeadon, which also has its own brewery, Naylor’s Brewery, says that because he’s unable to compete on price with the large pub chains, his focus is instead on quality. He also takes advantage of his position as a brewery owner to swap beers with other local microbreweries.

“There’s a big chain pub up the road that we’re never going to beat on price,” he says. “So instead we focus on offering a top-quality product at a reasonable price.”

By the same token, size is a big limitation on the stock and potential customer base, says

Ainsworth. That means micropubs must work even harder when they are open to turn a profit, he says.

“By their very nature, you are restricted by the number of people you can have in a micropub at any one time,” he says. “So it’s important you build up a loyal customer base and make sure that you’re stocking the right beer.”

Spoilt for choice

One of the biggest stumbling blocks to setting up a micropub in the first place is getting planning permission and a premises licence, according to David Jones, owner of Bier Huis, a microbar-cum-bottle shop in Wakefield. Often, he says, local residents object because they wrongly perceive that micropubs are rowdy places, or councils won’t allow a change in use.

“You can understand it where it’s a residential area,” he says. “People are often fearful of the noise and trouble it will create, but nothing

could be further from the truth.”

On the plus side, Jones adds that the region is spoilt for choice for breweries. It’s also close to other breweries in the North West, North East and East Midlands, he says.

“Being in West Yorkshire there’s access to so many different types of beer,” he says. “So there’s no excuse for micropubs to be putting on national brands.”

Brexit pressures

While most of his beer comes from local microbreweries, Jones says that Belgian beers account for much of his trade. As a result of the uncertainty which has surrounded Brexit, his business has been hit by the falling pound.

“There’s a big market here for Belgian beer: we stock about 90 different types,” says Jones. “But with Britain leaving the EU we don’t know what’s going to happen with rising costs across the board.”

Area Focus: West Yorkshire

Emmett, in contrast, produces most of his beer on site at the brewery. And because he doesn’t import much, he doesn’t envisage many problems with leaving the European Union.

“We source most of our raw ingredients such as malt from here and even many of our lagers, despite being foreign brands, are brewed locally,” he says.

“But if I have to start brewing my own lager, then I’ll do that.” All micropub owners do, however, want to see the new Government alleviate the growing pressure on margins by reducing beer duty, says Ainsworth. They also want to see an increase in the tax on supermarket alcohol to level the playing field, he says.

“Once we leave Europe many of the breweries who source their ingredients from the EU won’t be able to sustain it and will ultimately have to pass on the cost to the pubs,” he says. “While the bigger

players can absorb these costs by screwing down their bigger suppliers, micropubs can’t afford to do that.”

Dave Atkinson, at Goose Eye Brewery in Bingley, which supplies to micropubs across Yorkshire and Lancashire, says that the growth of micropubs in the region has only been beneficial for his business. For a start most pay in cash, he says.

“They only make up about 10% of my business right now but with 12 to 20 on the books at any one time that number’s only going to increase,” he says. “And they want to work with us because we are local and offer local beers at reasonable prices and can pick up their empties quickly.”

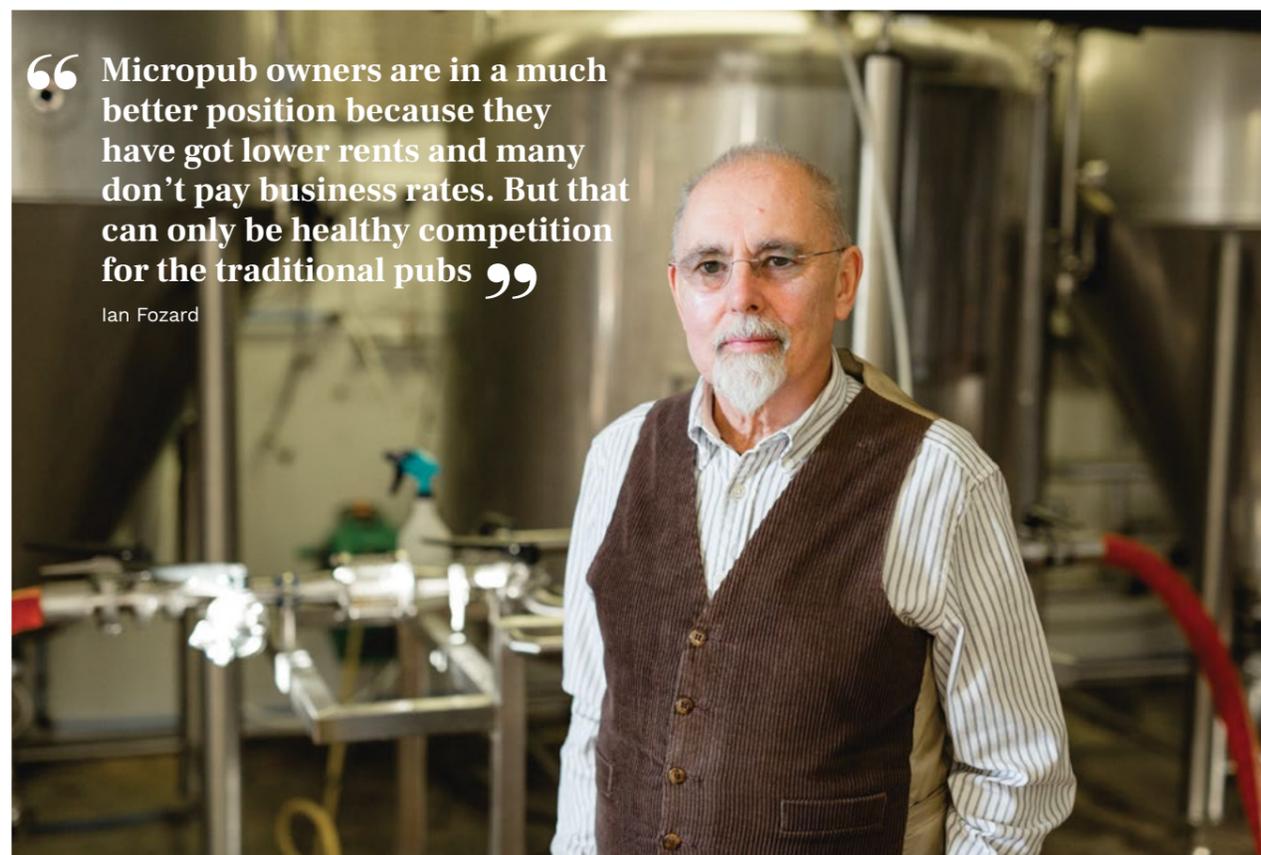
Ian Fozard, Society of Independent Brewers national chairman and owner of Yorkshire-based Rooster’s Brewery, says micropubs are increasing the pressure on traditional pubs because they are able to compete with much lower

overheads. But he welcomes the competition which gives much greater choice to the public.

“Micropub owners are in a much better position because they have got lower rents and many don’t pay business rates,” he says. “But that can only be healthy competition for the traditional pubs.”

While competition among West Yorkshire micropubs is increasing by the day and planning permission and Brexit present a host of different challenges, there are still plenty of opportunities for those willing to carve a niche for themselves.

↓ Ian Fozard, Society of Independent Brewers national chairman and owner of Yorkshire-based Rooster’s Brewery



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Ian Fozard

Area Focus: West Yorkshire



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BD10 0RS
Tel: 07930 158856



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Halifax HX1 1BS
Tel: 07712 172088
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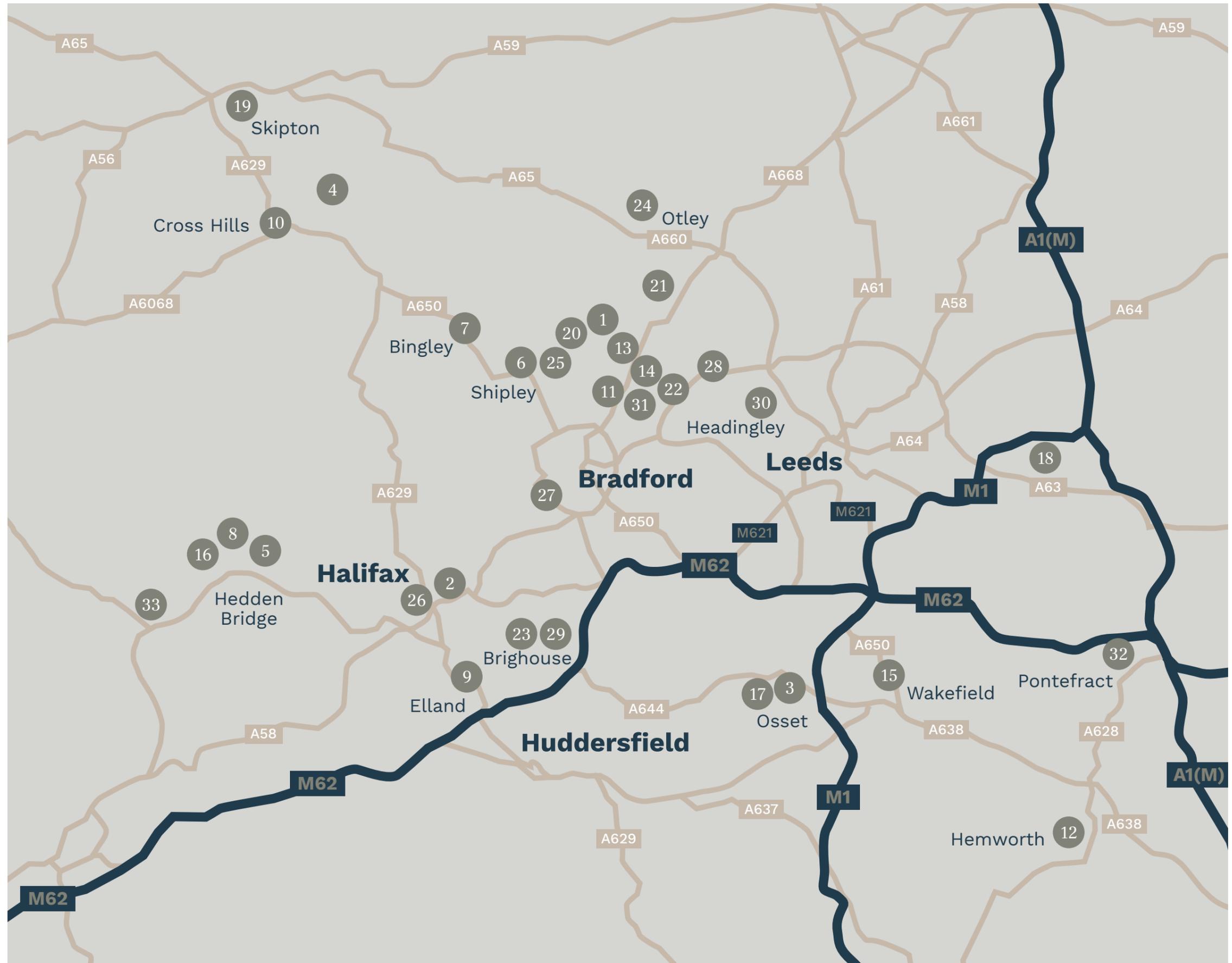
Bier Huis
17 Towngate
Ossett WF5 9BL
Tel: 01924 565121
www.bierhuis.co.uk



Butchers Arms
6 Bradley Road
Silsden
BD20 9LS



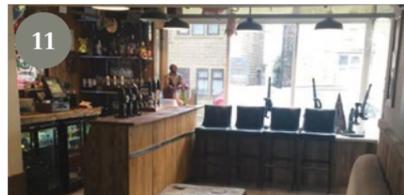
Calan's Micropub
3 The Courtyard,
Bridge Gate
Hebden Bridge HX7 8EX
Tel: 07739 565983



Area Focus: West Yorkshire



6
Cap and Collar
4 Queens Road, Shipley
Bradford BD18 4SJ
Tel: 07739 962980



11
Greedy Pig
17 Stony Lane, Eccleshill
Bradford BD2 2HL



16
Nightjar
The Picture House Buildings, New Road
Hebden Bridge HX7 8AD
Tel: 07778 620800
www.nightjarhebden.co.uk



21
The Brewhouse
9 High Street
Yeadon LS19 7SP
Tel: 0113 426 8130
www.naylorsbrewery.co.uk



26
The Grayston Unity
1-3 Wesley Court
Halifax HX1 1UH
Tel: 07807 136520
www.thegraystonunity.co.uk



31
The New Line
60 New Line, Greengates
Bradford BD10 9AP
Tel: 01274 61385
www.thenewline.co.uk



7
Chip N Ern
73 Main Street
Bingley BD16 2JA
Tel: 01274 985501 / 07937 317098



12
Hilltop Brewery Tap
41B Kirkby Road, Hemsworth
Pontefract WF9 4BA
Tel: 01977 613619



17
Prop'ur Baa
3 New Street
Ossett WF5 8BH
Tel: 01924 265530



22
The Cracker Barrel
832 Harrogate Road
Bradford BD10 0RA
Tel: 07525 475158



27
The Hooper Micropub
209 High Street, Wibsey
Bradford BD6 1JU
www.thehoopermicropub.co.uk



32
The Old Grocers
25 Beastfair
Pontefract WF8 1AL



8
Drink?
15 Market Street
Hebden Bridge HX7 6EU
Tel: 01422 844366



13
Idle Draper
28 The Green
Bradford BD10 9PX
Tel: 07525 751574
www.theidledraper.co.uk



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Quirky Ales
Unit 3, Ash Lane, Garforth
Leeds LS25 2HG
Tel: 0113 286 2072
www.quirkyales.com



23
The Crafty Fox
44 Commercial Street
Brighouse HD6 1AQ
Tel: 07847 205425



28
The Hop Shack
135 New Road Side
Horsforth LS18 4QD
Tel: 0113 281 9148
www.thehopshack.co.uk



33
The Pub
3 Brook Street
Todmorden OL14 5AJ
Tel: 01706 812145



9
Elland Craft & Tap
102 Southgate
Elland HX5 0EP
Tel: 01422 370630
www.craftandtap.co.uk



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Jok's Ale House
98 Victoria Road, Eccleshill
Bradford BD2 2DD



19
The Beer Engine
1 Albert Street
Skipton BD23 1JD
Tel: 07834 456134
www.thebeerengine.co



24
The Curious Hop
18 New Market
Otley LS21 3AE
Tel: 01943 851353
www.curioushop.com



29
The Market Tavern
2 Ship Street
Brighouse HD6 1JX
Tel: 07908 698360



10
Gallagher's Ale House
1-3 East Keltus Street, Crosshills
Keighley BD20 8TD
Tel: 07834 456134



15
Jolly Tap
43 Northgate
Wakefield WF1 3BH
Tel: 07939 439166
www.jollyboys-brewery.co.uk



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The Black Rat
530 Leeds Road, Thackley
Bradford BD10 8JH
Tel: 07920 061671



25
The Fox
41 Briggate
Shipley BD17 7BP
Tel: 01274 594826
www.thefoxshipley.co.uk



30
The New George
2-4 Commercial Road
Kirkstall LS5 3AQ
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 East Sussex**
 Comprehensive
 listing of all
 micropubs and
 contact details