



Solihull drinker



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT
BRANCH OF CAMRA, THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

Issue No: 36

website: www.solihullcamra.org

Spring 2006

National Pubs Week

February 2006

National Pubs Week is a joint event by CAMRA and pubs and breweries across the UK, to promote and celebrate all that is best about our pubs.

This year, Solihull and District CAMRA were invited to the Bluebell Cider House at Warings Green, where we welcomed both CAMRA and non-CAMRA members to a corner of fun and frivolity with three quizzes designed to raise money for charity.

The quizzes – 'What am I for': strange objects whose purpose was open to conjecture; 'Under the Microscope': well-known items seen in close-up; and 'Match the slogan to the Brewery', were enthusiastically entered, and the bonus round of funniest guess for the 'What am I for' objects raised a lot of laughs.

The quizzes raised a total of £23 for one of the pub's charities, the Solihull Association for the Blind, and in addition several people requested membership forms during the evening, so we look forward to seeing an increase in our membership shortly.

We hope that everyone who took part in the evening enjoyed themselves, and eagerly anticipate next year's event in February 2007.



**Inside: Don't miss the Dates for your
Diary—We hope to see you at one of our
events!**

Message from the Editor

In this world, everything changes. In this instance, the change is that I have taken over the role of editor of the Drinker. I hope you will all continue to enjoy its content, and that you will feel free to write or email me with any comments or suggestions for future issues. My contact details can be found on the inner back page.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Steve Dyson, the outgoing editor of this magazine, for all his dedicated hard work in producing the magazine over the last few years, and to wish him all the best for his "retirement" from its editorship.

Pub & Brewery Watch

The Old Royal Oak Hockley Heath is no more, having recently shut its doors. The pub has been sold to a group of food suppliers who plan to transform it into a multi-million pound organic delicatessen, with the reopening scheduled for April this year. Following on from the Engine in Hampton in Arden, this would appear to be another example of where the site is of greater value to the owners than the returns from the pub.

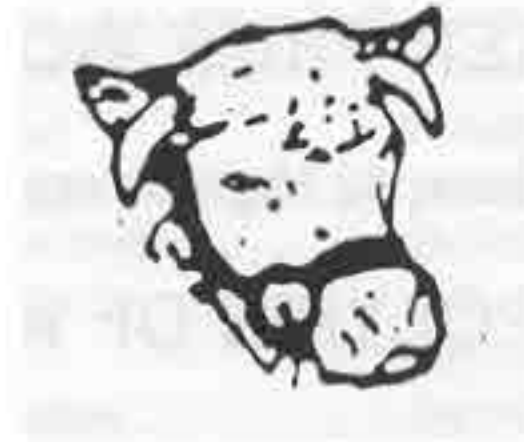
Whilst Solihull and District CAMRA continues to lack a brewery in its area, another micro-brewery has opened in Warwickshire. Purity Brewery, based in converted sheep sheds at Upper Spemall farm, Great Alne near Alcester, has been set up by two ex Bass employees, Paul Halsey and Jim Minkin. A number of us took a break from the Redditch Winter Ales Festival and visited the brewery, courtesy of Worcester CAMRA. Currently two beers are brewed, Pure Gold at 3.8% and Pure UBU (pronounced oo – boo) at 4.5%. The former, as its name suggests, has East Kent and Styrian Golding hops and the latter, named after the farm dog, Challenger and Cascade hops. For those interested in trivia the dog was named after the pop group Pere UBU and only subsequently was UBU said to be an acronym for Useless Bloody Urchin. The conversion of the farm buildings has been done to a high standard, with lots of shiny stainless steel and a strong emphasis on brew consistency. For further information tel. 01789 488 007 or visit www.puritybrewing.com.

Following on from their very successful summer festivals at Bromsgrove Rugby Club, Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA held a festival in Redditch for the first time since 1982. The Redditch Winter Ales festival had 31 real ales as well as cider and perry. Given the numbers there on Saturday it was a great success. For more information on this year's Bromsgrove Beer Festival go to www.bromsgrovebeerfestival.org.uk.

The Winged Spur in Ullenhall, voted Solihull and District CAMRA's most improved pub of 2004, is improving further. Licensees Clive and Mary are well advanced with plans to extend the pub. This will allow them to expand their range of real ales and ciders from the current four real ales (three guests) and two ciders.

The Red Lion at Claverdon has been closed for refurbishment. The pub was already very food orientated and it is hoped that any changes will not result in the loss of the separate public bar. The other pub in Claverdon, The Crown Inn, still continues as a traditional village local, with separate public bar and lounge. Two real ales are offered, Brew XI and a guest. The Crown Inn is one of the few free houses in the branch's area.

Malcolm Harry



THE BULL'S HEAD

Barston Lane, Barston

TEL: 01675 442830



**VISIT OUR 15th CENTURY VILLAGE INN
WITH A SELECTION OF REAL ALES AND
REGULAR GUEST BEERS**

Most recently listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2006

Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year 2000 and 2002

**HOME COOKED MEALS ARE AVAILABLE
LUNCHTIMES AND EVENINGS MONDAY TO SATURDAY
IN THE PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS OF THE PUB,
OR IN OUR SEPARATE NON SMOKING RESTAURANT
(Sundays 12 to 3pm only, no evening meals)
TELEPHONE RESERVATIONS WELCOME**

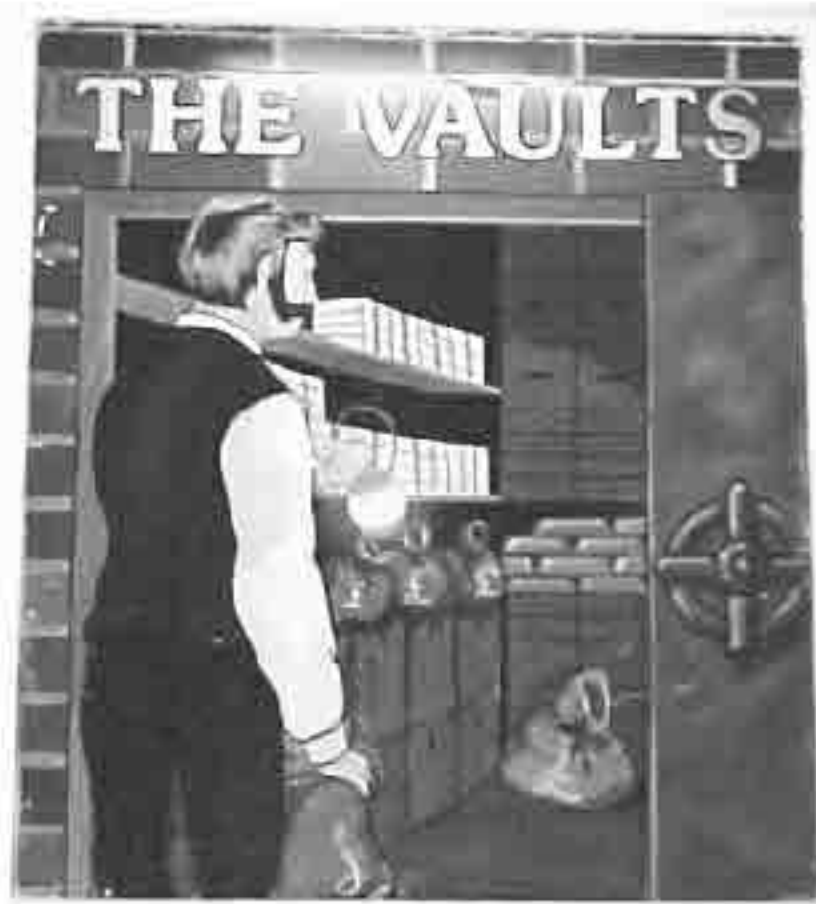
**DELIGHT IN OUR SECLUDED GARDEN ON THESE LIGHT SPRING
EVENINGS... BUT IF IT'S COLD, RELAX IN OUR COMFORTABLE BAR AND
LOUNGE IN FRONT OF A ROARING LOG FIRE, SUPPING OUR GOOD BEER!**

Nick and Gwen welcome you to The Vaults, Knowle...

The Real Ale venue in Knowle with:

- ◆ Six hand-pumped beers including regulars, Ansell's Mild, Greene King IPA, Burton Ale, Tetley Bitter and two guest beers
- ◆ Real cider from Weston's
- ◆ Food available lunchtimes Monday - Saturday
- ◆ Forthcoming Beer Festival
20 Plus Beers week commencing 24th April

Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year 2003, 2004 and 2005



CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed since 1993



The Vaults, St John's Close, Knowle.

Tel: 01564 773656

Off Our Patch

Expedition to The Bartons Arms Beer Festival

A merry band of Solihull CAMRA dignitaries made a visit to the Bartons Arms Beer Festival on its opening Thursday to sample a few of the Real Ales, and additionally to try out the lunchtime special price £4.00 Thai curry. We also met the new Australian Landlord, Mick, and his wife, who had been Oakham ales trained as most often there is only the amber nectar style stuff in his native land. He kindly offered to go into the cellars to draw off beers that had not yet found a tap in the bar but we felt the choice on the bar was so good that this service was not needed.

The excellent beers we tried between us were

- Bartrams Dizzy Debbie 4.2% abv
- Beechams Crystal Wheat Beer 5.0% abv
- Bowland Sawly Tempted 3.7% abv
- Buntingford Pargetters Mild 3.7% abv
- Fox LJB 4.0% abv (too malty for my palate)
- Green Tye Coal Porter 4.5% abv
- Hart Siren 4.5% abv from the marvellous Preston brewery
- Hopstar Spinning Jenny 4.0% abv
- Leyden Nanny Flyer 3.8% abv
- Oakham Attila 7.5% abv (the drinker of the half looked very sleepy afterwards)
- Three Rivers Old Disreputable 5.2% abv
- Tring Tea Kettle Stout 4.7% abv
- Oakham JHB (oops that's always on but an excellent ale)
- Tring Walter's Winter Ale 4.0% abv



We left our host and a group of staff from the Wellington in Birmingham and should have gone straight back to Solihull in good health. However we visited the Bull on Price Street and were able to commend the bar maid on the jugs displayed! We tried the Osset pale ale but left the Adnams Broadsword.

We then wandered to the Shakespeare taking care of the steps in the doorway and had a reasonable Timothy Taylors Landlord. From this pleasant interlude we adjourned to the Wetherspoons for curry night and a little silent football on the TV before finally finding our Solihull bus again and enjoying the bus tour home.

Ian Hunter

The Golden Acres

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**Joint Solihull & District CAMRA
Most Improved Pub of the Year 2005**

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Real Ales
plus a
regularly-
changing
traditional
Cider



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coverage a
regular
feature

Children
Welcome

Try our authentic Chinese food
Eat in or Take-away

Mondays-Saturdays (except Tuesdays) 5.00-11.30pm
Sundays: Eat-in 5.00-10.30pm Take-away 5.00-11.30pm

Traditional Sunday Lunches 12.00 - 4.00pm

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale



Join CAMRA Today...

Just fill in the form below and send, with a cheque (payable to CAMRA Ltd) or for Three Months Free membership (for those renewing or joining by Direct Debit) complete the Direct Debit Form. All forms should be addressed to membership secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LN. Alternatively you can join online at www.camra.org.uk. Rates for single membership are £18 and joint £21. Concession rates are available on request.

.....
 Title Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth

 Partner Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth

 Address Postcode

 Tel. no.(s)

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association

I enclose a cheque for..... Signed..... Date
 Applications will be processed within 21 days



Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the form and send to Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LN
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To The Manager Bank of Building Society
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Name (if different from above)

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This Direct Debit is authorised by your Bank or Building Society

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Please pay CAMRA Direct Debit from the account details on this instruction. Please do not alter the details. If you do, the Direct Debit Guarantee will not apply. Please do not alter the details. If you do, the Direct Debit Guarantee will not apply.

Bank Building Society

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Date



This Guarantee is issued by the Bank or Building Society and is subject to the terms and conditions of the Direct Debit Guarantee.

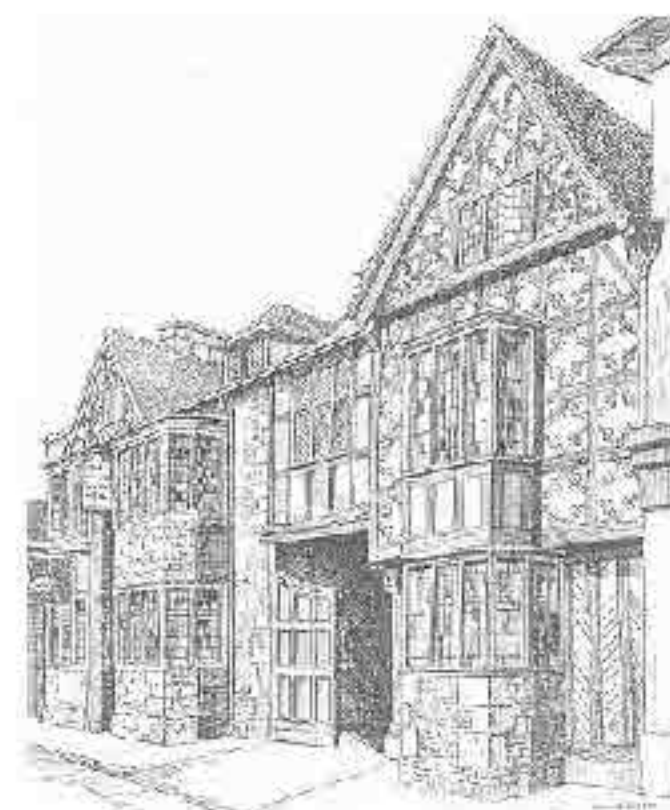
The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is guaranteed and guaranteed by your own Bank or Building Society.
- If the amount to be paid at the payment date changes, CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or of a new instruction being issued.
- If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your Bank or Building Society.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by notifying your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

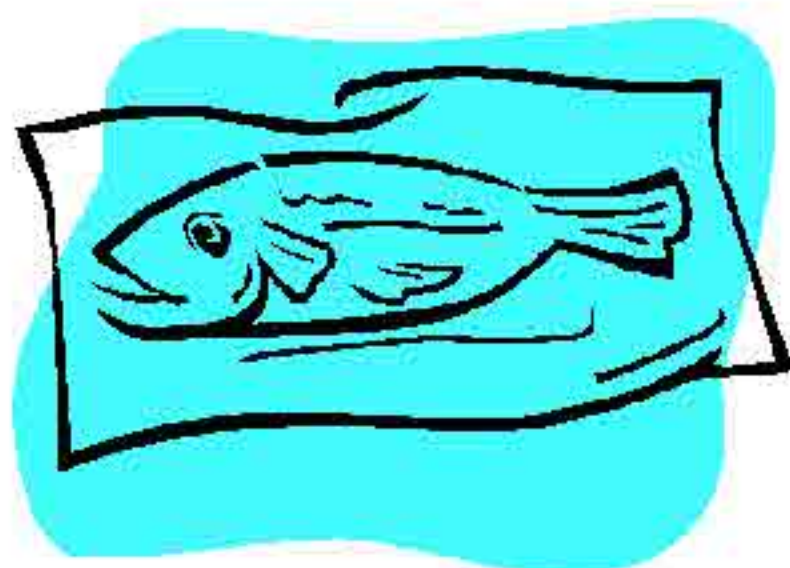
Bank and Building Societies may now accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of accounts.

CAMRA Pub & Grub

**The White Swan
Henley-in-Arden**



FISH AND CHIP SUPPER



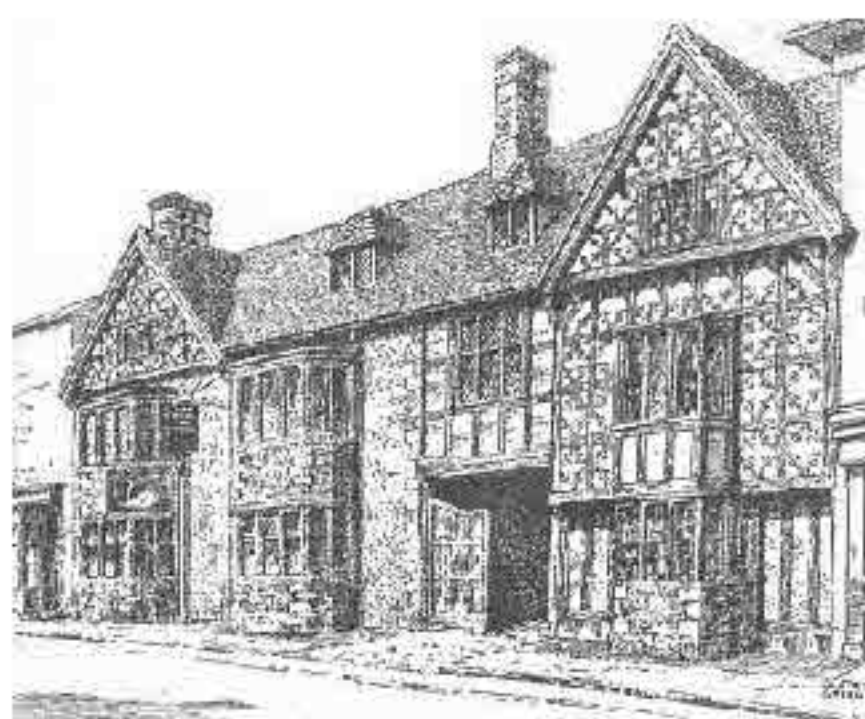
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**Start: 7.30 – 8.00pm
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Email: DavidPreston22@BTinternet.com

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The White Swan Hotel
01564 792 623
Email: White.SwanHotel@Virgin.net



Dates For Your Diary

Socials

Saturday 11 th March	Mini bus trip to the Cotswolds
Saturday 6 th May	Mild Month event
Saturday 17 th June	Olton Survey Crawl

Special Event

Friday 7 th April	Fish & Chip Supper followed by an Irish night out with De Kelten at the White Swan, Henley-in-Arden	7.30pm for 8.00pm
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Branch Meetings

Monday 6 th March	Heron's Nest, Heronfield, Knowle	8.30pm
Monday 3 rd April	Drum & Monkey, Bentley Heath	8.30pm
Monday 8 th May	Cock Horse, Rowington	8.30pm
Monday 5 th June	Bluebell, Warings Green	8.30pm

For those meetings/socials as yet unconfirmed or where more details are needed please contact the Secretary Steve Wood on 0121 704 5258

Membership Matters

Solihull and District CAMRA is well on the way to breaking the 300 members milestone, this month alone we gained 11 new members, but unfortunately we lost 2. Still, a net gain of 9 is really good news. Our growth reflects CAMRA HQ's recent announcement that it is anticipating crashing through the 80,000 mark in early 2006.

As your local Membership Secretary, I'd love to see more of you at our meetings and other events, please introduce yourself to me at any time and who knows I might even buy you a pint!

Carl Wright

Knowle Survey Crawl

In January the Branch visited Knowle with the aims of meeting new local members and checking up on the local pubs. Unfortunately despite some excellent publicity in the local press, it ended up being the same group of active regulars who toured the Knowle hostelrys. [Come on members, support your local branch and have fun to boot! Ed.]



We had intended to start at the Wilsons Arms, but their one remaining Real Ale (Fullers London Pride) had failed to settle properly, so we convened at the nearby Greswolde Hotel instead. There we had the choice of Tetley Bitter and Marstons Pedigree, though they are still served via unmarked hand-pumps. It makes you wonder if they sell as much Real Ale as they could, as most people wouldn't know it was available.

After a quick check of the Wilsons to ensure no one was still waiting for us, we moved on to the Red Lion. Here we were pleasantly surprised to find a choice of 6 ales: Charles Wells Bombardier, Greene King IPA, Brew XI, Hooky Bitter, Marstons Pedigree & Timothy Taylor Landlord. The (Taylor) Landlord was in particular good form, so good we stayed for a second. One of 4 Ember Inns in our area, this one is worth keeping a close eye on.

The tour ended in the Vaults. As usual 6 beers were on: Ansells Mild, Burton Ale, Greene King IPA, Tetley Bitter, Caledonian Deuchars IPA & Windsor Castle Sadlers IPA. The Windsor Castle didn't last long, it was replaced by Phoenix Thirsty Moon while we were there. As usual the Vaults is maintaining its own high standards.

Steve Wood

Beer Quote

.... but when I am really hungry and the white road lies behind me mile upon mile, give me bread, cheese, and beer.

H V Morton "In Search of England" 1927

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Comfortable En-Suite Accommodation
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Saturday Evening 6pm to 9pm

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Opening hours:
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With your support we can even increase the range of ales!

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Live music most Saturdays
Quiz nights every month
Large car park

Forthcoming Events

Irish Night with **De Kelten** Saturday March 11th 9.00pm

—

The Emulsions Saturday March 18th 9.00pm

—

St George's Day celebrations Sunday April 23rd 12 noon till late

—

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—

ROWINGTON CHARITY REAL ALE AND MUSIC FESTIVAL
20 REAL ALES, LIVE BANDS, PIG ROAST AND BARBEQUES

Bank Holiday Saturday 26th – Monday 28th August

For full details of all forthcoming events, please ring
Adrian or Alison at Rowington Club



A Drink or Two in Hull...Continued...

The Friday was our "day out" on the coach. Three breweries and a town pub-crawl were on our agenda.

Having breakfasted well we all boarded the coach and were off to our first brewery, Old Mill in Snaith some twenty miles from Hull and a brewery well hidden in this small town. Nevertheless our intrepid driver found it and we were soon piling off the coach and into the brewery where Head Brewer Paul Simpson was there to greet us. Housed in a former 18th century corn mill and maltings the brewery was set up around about 1982 by a businessman who enjoyed his real

ales. A stoutish Mild, a session Bitter and Best Bitter Bullion are the staple residents supported by a cast of occasionals and monthly brews. Comments from the floor concerning the future of mild in the area were met with Paul saying that mild is declining but Old Mill will continue to brew it. I for one was glad to hear this after the quality of this beer I enjoyed when I had tried it the previous night in the Hole in the Wall. Tongues hanging out we were introduced to the tasting room where the Bitter was the only brew on tap. Paul apologised to us for the lack of choice but we had come on a day not usually set up for brewery tours and the tasting room was not as fully stocked as usual. Nevertheless we managed to drink our fill before Ray our leader hounded us onto the bus for our next brewery, the brewpub The Goodmanham Arms in the folds of the Yorkshire Wolds.



Solihull CAMRA outside Old Mill Brewery

Just outside Market Weighton, on the route of the Wolds Way, the Goodmanham Arms is a classic village local. Multi roomed and packed full of character, it is a pub off the beaten track boasting its own brewery. Peter Southcott has been at the pub since 2003 and can brew 1000 litres at a time and uses both Target and Fuggles hops. Beers we sampled were Choir Boys Dread a standard Bitter; Randy Monk a Best Bitter; Monks Revenge and Filthy Habit, both strong beers. Only one other person came in whilst we were there, a lone walker on the Wolds Way who likewise was impressed to find a pub with its own brewery.

Checking the watch Ray marshalled us back on to the coach for our final brewery of the day, Wold Top. So we left Peter in the calm, quiet atmosphere of the Goodmanham Arms.

Wold Top Brewery is not the easiest brewery to find. Hunmanby Grange, Wold Newton is not far from Driffield but it seems like it's in the back of beyond. The brewery is in an old farm granary building of gargantuan proportions. Indeed I've never seen a microbrewery in such massive premises... stacks of potential for growth! It has its own pub at Thwing, The Falling Stone. Set up in May 2003 by partners Derek Gray and Tom Mellor there is a selection of beers brewed including a Bitter; Falling Stone a Best Bitter and Wold Gold, a light coloured strong beer. We were disappointed however that only bottled beers were available in the tasting room. Apparently some 30% of the beer is bottled and interestingly enough, the brewery brewed a beer, Mars Magic for the fated Beagle project. The leader of the project Professor Colin Pillinger stays at Derek's B&B when in the area.

And so to finish the day the coach headed for Beverley, Ray distributing maps with all the pubs shown to enable us to undertake an orderly pub-crawl.

Beverley is a Minster town with a medieval central core with stacks of pubs. Our first port of call was the Sun, from the Tap and Spile stable. A little characterless and sporting an unimaginative range of beers, it was not the best of starts to our evening. However, the Deucher's IPA was on top form and I do believe the pub holds a CAMRA Solihull branch record. The accompanying picture shows Ken Jackson with a half pint, surely a first!



A record surely... Ken with a half!

Feeling a little peckish now, we decided to head for the Green Dragon in Saturday Market. The pub must obviously be on the site of an old burgage plot as it went back for miles and was quite narrow. Having a front bar and restaurant at the rear it served us well for a bite to eat. A good beer range but not in the best of condition. Broadstone Two Water Grog; Wold Top Mars Magic; and Ramsbottom Tomfoolery. We left here just as the Friday night circuit was starting.



The White Horse, aka Nellie's, Beverley

On then to an institution... Nellie's or the White Horse to give it its correct name. Lit by gas lamps it is a superb time warp pub, multi roomed with a warren of connecting corridors. It has a ground level cellar where I spied at least eight 36 gallon barrels of Sam Smith's OBB on stillage. At £1.30 a pint they would not last long either as the pub was heaving!

From here we went to the Dog and Duck just round the corner in Ladygate, another pub which was disappointing beer quality wise. John Smith's Bitter; Greene King Abbott Ale; Deuchar's IPA; Hambleton Stallion and Cropton Endeavour which most of us left as it was definitely over the top. A pretty ordinary pub inside with a potentially good range of beers, which were not at their best plus the barmaid was smoking behind the bar and serving at the same time... not impressed.

Onward to the Durham Ox where the service was appalling. The young barman served all his friends first and popped back to me every once in a while to top my beer up. Wychwood Hobgoblin; John Smith's Bitter; Deuchar's IPA and Tetley Bitter, not very inspiring and depending on your viewpoint the Wychwood and Deuchar's were either cheap or expensive both at £2.20 a pint [3.8% and 5% respectively].

We soon vacated here to the Cornerhouse. The circuit was in full swing by now. The pub was full of 30+ somethings so we did not feel too out of it. A bank of hand-pumps met us. Rooster's Yankee; Greene King Abbott Ale; Tetley Bitter; Wadworth 6X; Black Sheep Bitter; Banks's Original; Timothy Taylor Landlord and Jennings Cumberland Ale. The pub is on a split-level, beer quality was OK and we were assured it is much more pleasant to visit this pub earlier in the day.



Our last port of call in Beverley... The Royal Standard Inn

Our final pub was the Royal Standard Inn in North Bar Within. The GBG shows a guest, but all that was on offer was Tetley Bitter and Jennings Cumberland Ale, which was at least in good condition.

From here a tired bunch of CAMRA folk headed home after a long day with highs and lows. The highs, definitely Nellie's; the lows, no real ale at Wold Top Brewery but you can't win them all... there's always tomorrow! [Final instalment in the next Drinker].

Steve Dyson

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5.00 - 10.00; Sat 11.00 - 3.00 + 4.00 - 10.00; Sun 10.00 - 2.00



Solihull 2006 Beer Festival

Solihull and District CAMRA are pleased to announce that they will be holding their 8th Beer Festival this Autumn. This will again be at the Royal British Legion, Union Road, Solihull and we look forward to bringing you an excellent and varied selection of approximately 30 different real ales plus cider and perry choices.

Watch for further details in future issues of this magazine!

The Solihull Drinker is the newsletter of the Solihull & District
Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign of Real Ale.

All contributions, comments and enquiries should be sent to Julia Hammonds:

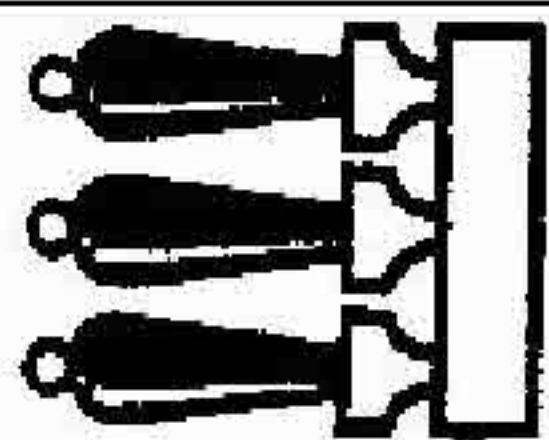
**The Editor, Solihull Drinker, c/o 4, Kendrick Close, Solihull, B92 0QD
or e-mail julia.hammonds@blueyonder.co.uk**

The Editor reserves the right to amend or shorten any contributions in the Solihull Drinker,
but will always honour the spirit of the contribution.

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The 37th edition of *Solihull Drinker* will be published on Monday 5th June, 2006.
Copy deadline for advertising and contributions will be Sunday 21st May, 2006



BERRIDGES

REAL ALE

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***AN EVER CHANGING SCENE
OF EXCITING DRAUGHT
BEERS THROUGHOUT THE
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*** 200 DIFFERENT BEERS
DURING A YEAR**

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CONTINUOUSLY
SINCE 1983**



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