



Solihull drinker



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

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Summer 2006

May the Mild be with you!

May was National Mild Month so a party of CAMRA members from Solihull & District branch set off on a minibus trip of the area to enjoy the milds available.

Now you would think that with the number of pubs locally (over 90-please correct me if I'm wrong!) that there might be a goodly number of pubs that would sell this beverage, but (sadly) to our knowledge there are only five pubs that regularly have a mild. It shows how hard it is to find mild, a sorry indictment of the fact that mild seems to be becoming an endangered species.

Our journey started at The Hob's Meadow in Hob's Moat where we had a pint of Ansells' Mild.

Somewhat bizarrely the other real ale on offer was Old Speckled Hen, so a low gravity mild and a high gravity ale, with nowt in-between! The mild was OK, but I can't say that Ansells is my favourite mild, even though it is widely sold in The Midlands: to my taste it lacks character.

We had intended to go to The (excellent) *Good Beer Guide*-listed Red Lion in Shirley, but I had rung round all the pubs on the planned itinerary beforehand, and unfortunately The Red Lion had been experiencing quality problems with their cask mild, which is usually either Ansells' or the far superior Highgate Dark, the latter being one of the tastiest pints I've ever had.

I had also had a similar message from The Case Is Altered in Five Ways, Warwickshire, i.e. quality problems, in fact exploding barrels from Hook Norton - The Case is not the easiest pub to get to because of the lack of local transport but we still went there, particularly as it serves a good selection of bitters, and we weren't disappointed. It might just be out of our area but it's well worth the visit: no food (apart from crisps etc), no children, no mobiles, just good beer and conversation.

Next we set off for Henley. Despite the fact that the only chippy in the town was closed for refurbishment we did manage a Chinese takeaway as our food stop, and then sallied forth to The Black Swan, with some stopping en route either in The Three Tuns and/or The Blue Bell. By common consent the beers served at The Three Tuns were too cold, is this to tempt lager drinkers? At The Black Swan we had Banks's Original, and we were left to consider the question: is it a mild or not?

Our next port of call was The Navigation at Lapworth where we were treated to the delights of Theakston's Mild, which I must say I enjoyed. There is quite a good range of ales at The Navy, plus a real cider, plus very good (if a bit pricy) food, so well worth a visit.

Finally, The Vaults in Knowle, our Pub of the Year for the last three years. They always have Ansells' mild on to complement their very good range of ales (always including a guest), but when I rang them they kindly offered to put on an extra mild as their guest, which in this case was Dark Star Mild for May, and very quaffable it was, probably a case of saving the best for last.

An enjoyable trip indeed. But if we don't drink it, we'll lose it, so seek out the pubs that serve mild, otherwise it'll disappear.

Martin Collinge

Inside: Don't miss the Dates for your Diary

Message from the Editor

Welcome to the Summer edition of The Drinker—along with yourselves, we fervently hope that the weather is going to brighten up soon so that we can all enjoy the pleasure of sitting in our favourite beer garden, relaxing and drinking a great pint.

The weather is also important for those pubs in our patch who will be holding beer-related events over the summer—log onto our website to see what we've been advised of, or check 'What's Brewing', CAMRA's magazine for its members, for details of beer festivals both locally and further afield.

Lastly, with Father's Day coming up shortly, don't forget what a wonderful present membership of CAMRA would make—special offer details can be found further on in the magazine courtesy of our Publicity Officer.

Have a great summer!!

Julia Hammonds

Pub, Beer & Brewery Watch

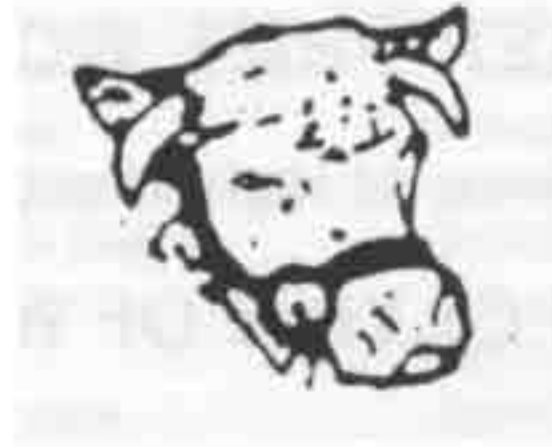
After just 5 months of brewing, The Purity Brewing Co's ale Pure UBU ('oo-boo') scooped Silver for the Champion Beer of Warwickshire 2006. The customers at this year's Warwickshire Beer Festival recognised the quality and flavour of this new beer—this is very much a reflection of Purity Brewing Co's passion and commitment to creating a perfect pint. All 13 Warwickshire independent breweries participated and were challenged to produce the beer that best complements cheese. These were narrowed down to the most popular 6, and in the final, Purity was awarded the Silver Medal, their first award. For further information tel. 01789 488 007 or visit www.puritybrewing.com.

The next Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA Branch Summer Festival is to be held again at the Bromsgrove Rugby Club, over Thursday 13th—Saturday 15th July. For more information on this year's Festival go to www.bromsgrovebeerfestival.org.uk.

Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries is to spend £20m on patios and shelters as it prepares for the introduction of next summer's smoking ban. It said providing somewhere for smokers to go would counter any impact the change in the law may have on its business, also hinting that it could soon be back on the acquisition trail: food-serving pubs with gardens would be high on its target list. W&D expect to spend a total of £29m on smoking zones, which also include garden areas, by the end of October 2007.

Pub group JD Wetherspoon has decided to scrap plans to put a halt to smoking in all its pubs within the next three months. The group said it would put off a ban until the new legislation preventing smoking in the workplace comes into force in 2007. Sales at the 49 pubs that JD Wetherspoon converted into non-smoking outlets, including the Brier Rose in Birmingham city and the Abraham Derby at Merry Hill, have fallen as customers spent less. The group is introducing products such as cappuccinos, and also increasing investment in existing pubs on refurbishments, gardens, kitchens and IT systems.

Andrew, the landlord at The Navigation, Lapworth, now has 4 hand-pumps. The Bass is due to be replaced by Timothy Taylor Landlord as a regular, the other regular being Brew XI. The guest recently was Everard's Beacon, but most interestingly he has decided to regularly stock Theakston's Mild so we have a real mild gain on our patch



THE BULL'S HEAD

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Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year 2000 and 2002

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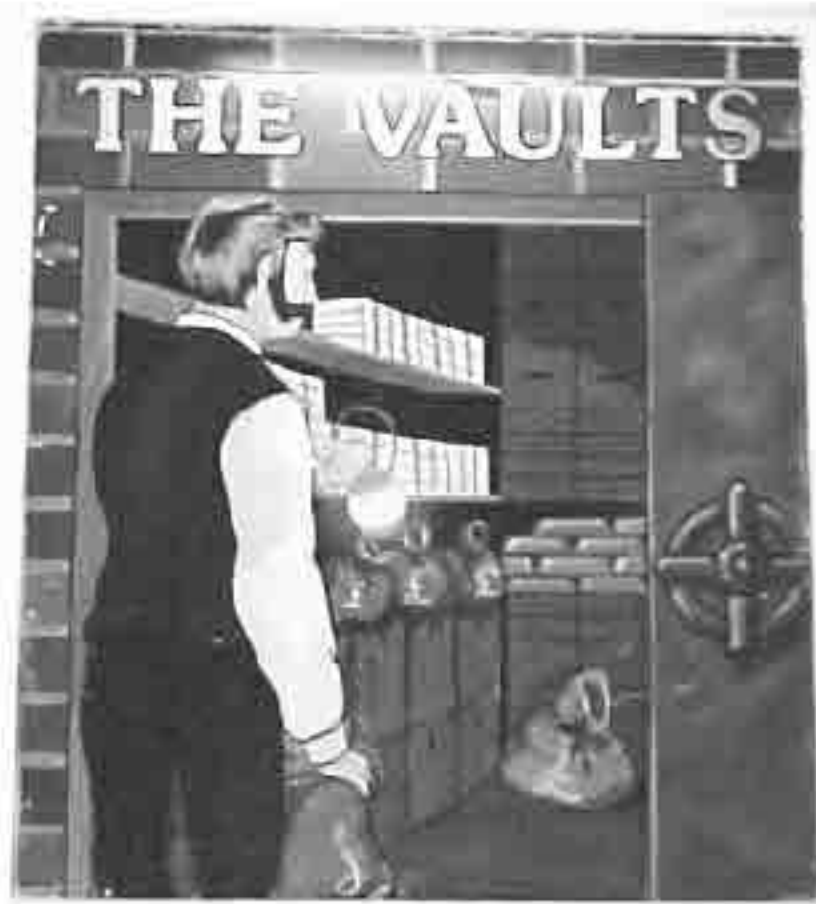
DELIGHT IN OUR SECLUDED GARDEN AS SUMMER APPROACHES... BATHE IN
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FAVOURITE BEER IN YOUR HAND!

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**

**Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year 2003, 2004 and 2005—
come and see for yourself what we have to offer and why
locals vote us a really great pub!**



CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed since 1993



The Vaults, St John's Close, Knowle.

Tel: 01564 773656

Off Our Patch

NORTH COTSWOLDS TRIP

Saturday March 11th saw the realisation of a long-awaited mini-bus trip down into the heart of the Cotswolds, with the intention of visiting a couple of micro-breweries and nearby real ale pubs.

Our first destination was the North Cotswold Brewery, a 10-barrel brewery situated in the farm buildings on the edge of Warwickshire. The brewery itself consists of just one building containing 5 stainless steel vats of various shapes and sizes, helpfully labelled up for the uninitiated! The owner, Jon Piling, tells us how he got into the brewing business a few years ago, and talks eagerly about the brewery's plans, including the revival of an old 'Nettle Ale' recipe and a celebration to mark Brunel's 200th birthday: their 'Isambard Kingdom Brunel'.



The North Cotswold Brewery: Jon the owner in front of the vats

We then move on to sample some of their wares, in a room with a small bar with a pair of beer taps. 'Stour Stout', a rich Irish-style stout, and 'Cockles of your Heart', a dark ale brewed with roasted chocolate malt, are available. We are urged to try the latter together with chunks of plain chocolate—an intriguing experiment which surprisingly worked well!! The kind offer of nibbles was also very welcome, especially the real ale sausages which went down a treat.

From here, we drive onto the village of Whichford. The pub, The Norman Knight, has a micro-brewery at the back which is the home of Wizard Ales. This has recently upgraded from a 1.25 to a 5-barrel plant, and a good variety of its ales are on offer in the pub: 'Apprentice', 'One for the Toad', 'Sorcerer', and 'Druid's Fluid', in increasing order of strength. Some bold souls decide to try them all!



The many delights of The Falkland Arms...

'Mild' along with regulars Wadsworth's '6X' and Henry's IPA. Inch's 'Harvest Dry Cider' is also on draught.

The interior is known for its displays of jugs and pitchers hanging from the rafters, and in winter, a roaring fire warms travellers in a traditional recessed fireplace. The Falkland Arms often has folk bands on, but today, entertainment is supplied by some of the party sampling choices from the surprisingly large selection of snuff, and trying out the odd clay pipe (well, there's no accounting for taste...).

A short trip into Oxfordshire takes us to The Falkland Arms in Great Tew, a pub that takes you back in time with its low-beamed ceilings, flag-stoned floors and wooden settles. Plenty of traditional ales are offer together with a bewildering array of fruit wines. Today's guest selection includes Timothy Taylor 'Landlord', St. Peter's 'Golden Ale', Everards. 'Buddings Bitter', Batemans 'Jester's IPA', and Pint-size



...and some of its vices...



Off Our Patch: NORTH COTSWOLDS TRIP continued.....

Onto Charlbury, where we have the choice of The Rose & Crown, The Olde Horseshoes and The Bell Hotel (The Bull is unfortunately closed for the afternoon). The beer range across the 3 pubs is very good, including some of the ales from the breweries we've visited.

From there to Chipping Camden, where a few people take a short detour to the local chippy. Others sample the fare at The Volunteer, and then all survey the selection of Fullers 'London Pride', Hook Norton 'Hooky Bitter', Goffs 'Tournament' and Archers 'Little Gem'. Thatchers 'Traditional Somerset Cider' is also available.



The exterior of The Olde Horseshoes, Charlbury

The end is almost in sight now as we head back north and make our final call at The Hollybush in Akester—an old-fashioned pub with large bay windows and scrubbed wooden floors. The daunting choice of Morgans 'Churchill's Best', Black Sheep 'Best Bitter', Wychwood 'Wychcraft', Cannon Royall 'Fruiterer's Mild', Goff's 'Launcelot', Purity 'Pure Gold', Belhaven 'Six Nations' and Uley 'Bitter' offer themselves up for quaffing.



A sample of the motley crew assembles in The Rose and Crown, Charlbury

T



Another pub, another beer—someone's got to do it!



A good time was had by all...

So, to conclude:

Two breweries, four counties, at least six pubs, and up to 36 different real ales later, our objective is achieved, and we head for home, tired, but happy, looking forward to our next outing.

Gordon Clarke

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 4LW. 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
.....
P'tner Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth
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Address Postcode
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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

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Old Solihull Pub Names (Part Five)

We're getting there!! Another episode in our occasional series concerning the origin of and changes to pub names in the Solihull and District area.

OLD ROYAL OAK

Hockley Heath

This pub has recently closed and the site is now a French-style food shop & restaurant called ORO The Market Place. It had a spell as a Greek restaurant bar called the TAVERNA before reverting back to a pub called the OLD ROYAL OAK in 1996.

OLD TOM

Chadwick End

Listed in a Warwickshire Directory of 1874. NB NOT the same pub as the TOM O'BEDLAM which is listed as well.

OLIVERS REAL ALE BAR

Station Road, Solihull

A short-lived pub which opened on Station Road in 1993, formerly SHADES WINE BAR. It was re-named HOOTERS in 1994 before becoming a restaurant in 1995.

OLTON HALL

Lode Lane, Olton

Now known as the OLTON TAVERN, it became the NEWPORT DINER in 1983. For a time between 1987 & 1989 it was also called the BALTIMORE DINER.

PAVILION

Stratford Road, Monkspath

A separately run bar next to the Regency Hotel which it opened in 1986. When sold in the 1990's it became an Irish theme pub called MORRISSEYS. In 2004 the bar & hotel were acquired by the Corus Hotel chain. It is now the REGENCY HOTEL BAR.

PICKWICK

Shirley

Renamed the CHESWICK GREEN INN in 1996. The building dates back to 1935, when the original large house on the site known as the Cider Mill was demolished, and was replaced by a public house called the THREE MAYPOLES.

PITCHER & PIANO

Solihull

A former shop which opened as JACK BARROW'S BAR & GRILL in 1996. Became the PITCHER & PIANO in 1999, but has been the METRO BAR & GRILL since 2004.

Steve Wood



From Country Pub to Organic Market Place

I must confess to a special interest in The Old Royal Oak at Hockley Heath. My Great Grandfather, Jacob Dutton, kept the original Old Royal Oak, which stood much closer to the track that was the Stratford Road at the time. The original pub was demolished to make way for the much larger current building.

In my Great Grandfather's time, the well-to-do from Birmingham and surrounding areas used to ride out in their horse-drawn carriages to sample his ales and listen to the nightingales that were resident in the surrounding woods. During the swinging 60's the new building thrived as a music venue with the Downbeats as resident group. After a period as 'La Taverna' nightclub it was sold to Marstons and restored as a pub/restaurant in 1996.



Joseph Dutton (back, centre) pictured with family in front of the original Old Royal Oak, circa 1900)

Greene King later acquired the pub and Graham Carter and Tracy Smith tried hard to rebuild its reputation, even earning the converted Cask Marque accreditation for the quality of the beers. Despite their sterling efforts, Greene King seemed reluctant to invest in the property and more interested in capitalising on the property investment.

After a period of considerable uncertainty and speculation, the pub has been sold to a consortium branded as ORO, and has opened as 'the organic market place'. The opening adverts claimed 'a wholesome fusion of organic French style market place, reviving café and inspirational restaurant'.

This sounds very nice, but what about some good wholesome British organic ales and ciders too?

Roger Dipple

Share your recollections of the place – email: roger.dipple@blueyonder.co.uk

Editor's note: has anyone ventured to the new ORO Market Place since it opened, and if so, what were your views on the food and drink on offer and the new use of the building? Send comments to me at the postal or email addresses on the inner back page, and I will print them next issue.



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Exclusive importers of Veltins Pilsner and Maisels Weisse from Germany.
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10% DISCOUNT on all products for CAMRA members.



Dates For Your Diary

Socials

Saturday 17 th June	Survey Crawl, Olton
Saturday 15 th July	Family BBQ, Millright, Warwick
Sunday 13 th August	Survey Crawl, Henley in Arden
Friday 29 th & Saturday 30 th September	Solihull & District Beer Festival
October:	Weekend away (dates and venue to be confirmed)

Branch Meetings

Monday 5 th June	Bluebell, Warings Green
Monday 3 rd July	The Wharf, Hockley Heath
Monday 7 th August	Golden Acres, Damsonwood (tbc)
Monday 4 th September	Royal British Legion, Union Road, Solihull (tbc)
Monday 2 nd October	Black Swan, Henley in Arden

(NB. All Branch meetings start at 8.30pm)

Special Events

Friday 29 th September	}Solihull and District Beer 2006 Festival,
Saturday 30 th September	}the Royal British Legion, Solihull

For meetings/socials yet to be confirmed or if more details are needed please contact Secretary Steve Wood on 0121 704 5258.

Father's Day—Sunday 18th June

If you struggle buy your father something different every year for Father's Day then CAMRA membership plus the Big Book of Beer will be the ideal gift.

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is offering a fantastic offer of CAMRA membership and a copy of the Big Book of Beer for Father's Day for just £25, or £17 if he is over 60 years old. That's a saving of £7.99! If your Dad loves beer and pubs then CAMRA membership and all it entails will be the ideal gift. Not only will you save £7.99, but your dad will receive the following:

A monthly copy of CAMRA's exclusive members' newspaper, What's Brewing
A newly designed membership pack which includes a CAMRA membership handbook, information on CAMRA's campaigns, real ale fact sheets, flyers on CAMRA books and merchandise and of course his special membership card
Free / discounted entry to over 150 beer festivals across the UK
A free copy of the Big Book of Beer plus book discounts including the annual Good Beer Guide
Information on Branch social activities, Brewery Complimentary Clubs, and access to the Member's area of the new CAMRA website

So what are you waiting for? Contact CAMRA Membership Services on 01727 867201 and sign your Dad up for his special day, quoting 'Father's Day Promotion' to receive the discount, and giving all your details.

(NB. Orders for the above received after 5th June cannot be guaranteed to be sent in time for Father's Day although CAMRA will make every effort not to disappoint.)

ALISON AND ADRIAN WELCOME YOU TO

The Rowington Club

Rowington Green, Rowington, Warwickshire CV35 7BD

Telephone: 01564 782087

Opening hours: Weekdays: 2.00pm – 11.00pm

Weekends and Bank Holidays: 12 noon – 11.00pm

Large car park

Come and relax playing dominoes, cards, snooker and pool

Three real ales available (With your support we can even increase the range of ales!)

Live music most Saturdays and Quiz Nights every month

As a club, we charge £1.00 per visit (free to card-carrying CAMRA members)
(full membership: £10.00 per annum)

Forthcoming Events

Saturday June 10th—Sunday July 9th: World Cup TV coverage (42" flat screen)

Saturday July 15th, 9pm: Live music—Phil De Kettley 70s Disco and Glam Pop Idol Show

(Dress up as your favourite performer and win a bottle of bubbly!)

Saturday August 5th: Dennis Christie, all-round Entertainer

Saturday 26th – Monday August 28th: Rowington Beer and Music Festival
Wide selection of real ales, live music day and night, BBQ and pig roast!

Sunday October 1st: Marrow Sunday - a cornucopia of vegetables!
Competitions for Heaviest Marrow, Heaviest Onion, Longest Runner Bean,
Longest Carrot, Best Jar of Chutney, Best Jar of Jam, Best Fruit Cake,
Best Victoria Sandwich Cake.

Start growing your vegetables and making your preserves now!

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



A Drink or Two in Hull...Part Three

So, onto the third and final instalment....

Saturday began bright and sunny. Plans for today included a good bash at the pubs in Hull and two brewery visits, one of which Ray told us would be based around a garage, intriguing indeed! A small party of us left our digs quite early and wandered down to the city centre. Our first stop off was the Olde White Hart in Silver Street, well hidden from the road. It has a lovely courtyard and it is

reputed that from here the 1642 English Civil War started. Today it is a superb pub on CAMRA's National Inventory of heritage pubs. Beers on were McEwan's 80/-; Deuchar's IPA; Theakston's Old Peculiar; and Morland Old Speckled Hen. I stuck with the Deuchars as it was only about 10.45 in the Extra Stout which was stunning!. With time getting short as Ray had given us instructions to be back at the digs soon after lunch we headed back homeward dropping into the Editorial not far from the B&B to try the Garton Woldsman which was in excellent condition.



The Olde White Hart, Silver Street

Our early afternoon session started at Pete Haley's pub "The Moon", a fully functional tower brewery with a pub attached in a converted garage. Believe me, we could just not believe it... it really was decked out just like a typical pub. I must stress this is a private venture for Pete and his friends to enjoy the beers he brews and very pleasant they are too. Haley's Styrian God weighed in at 4.2% followed by Haley's Best Bitter at 4.6%. Moving up a notch, Haley's Challenger is 4.7% and to finish a small dose of EE Bye Gum at 8.5% and all wonderfully hoppy. We were so comfortable here it would have been easy for us to stay all afternoon and on into the evening. Nevertheless, time came to leave and boarding the bus we headed into Hull for the last session of our trip.

A variety of views of Pete's Pub, The Moon



Our evening commenced with another brewery tour at Whalebone Brewery named after the whaling industry once based in Hull. The pub housing the brewery is called the Whalebone Inn and the room we were in was both large, comfortable and unpretentious. Alex Craig the brewer showed us into his brewery just off the bar area. Set up in 2003 it is housed in a small room and can brew two and a half barrels at a time. The equipment was some of the most basic I have ever seen and seemed very Heath Robinson-ish. Alex stated that he liked to brew beers which are typically English in character using English ingredients. All the beers names are linked to the whaling industry. For instance Diana Mild is named after a whaling ship and at £1.25 a pint must be a strong contender for the cheapest pint in Hull. Personally I was not too impressed with the beers as they seemed to lack character but to be fair to Alex, I do prefer beers with a punchy bite so don't take my point of view as a criticism.



Outside the Bay Horse, the only Batemans pub in the area

Not 300 yards from the Whalebone is Bateman's only pub in the area The Bay Horse. We could not possibly pass it by so in we went to find XB Bitter and the stronger XXXB Bitter both in excellent condition. Being about 6pm the pub was a little quiet but this corner pub with a comfortable bar and restaurant serving excellent beer is an oasis in a drab part of the city.

We passed by The English Country Gentleman as time was getting on and had no great desire to try the familiar beers from the Wolverhampton and Dudley lists who's we surmised owned the pub. Our next port of call was the Wetherspoon, Three John Scotts a large town centre pub. With Wetherspoon's you can never tell what to expect. A poor range as is found in Solihull and in Birmingham or luckily as at this one, a superb range including Rooster Special; Oakham Bishop's Farewell; Shepherd Neame Bishop's Finger; Ringwood Old

Thumper and as to be expected Marston's Pedigree. I tried the Rooster and Oakham... excellent!

The circuit system of drinkers was beginning to get in full swing now, so after a quick bite here we moved on to the Olde Black Boy in the High Street, another on CAMRA's list of heritage pubs and worthy of it having a wonderful interior! The beers were Deuchar's IPA; Rooster's Yankee and Wychwood Hobgoblin. I went for the latter two. The Hobgoblin, a beer I am not usually very keen on was superb!



Outside the Olde Black Boy

The Mission in Posterngate was our next port of call. A large town centre pub converted from a Seaman's Mission, the chapel forming part of the pub interior. Sporting 12 hand-pumps all that was on offer was Old Mill Bitter. What a waste of hand-pumps!



The interior of the Mission

Down towards the Docks again now and a pop into the Oberon, a pub with little character. We had been unable to slot this in on Friday morning so felt we ought to go out of our way to fit it in today. There was debate as to whether it was worth it. The beers were Tetley Bitter; tasting Malton Ginger Whinger.

Where to finish our evening entered the conversation.... No competition! Back to the Wellington and finish at the Hole in the Wall was the cry.

New beers at the Wellington were Abbeydale Moonshine; Anglo Dutch Ghost Run and Timothy Taylor Landlord, whilst the Hole in the Wall had Archer's Cloak and Dagger as usual in top condition.

A long day, but most enjoyable. Hull certainly has a lot going for it.

Sunday saw our return to Solihull but not before stopping off at Kimberley to view the Hardy and Hanson brewery and visit the brewery "tap" the Nelson and Railway to sample one or two beers and take a light lunch.

Everyone on the trip had a great time and we must thank the Hull CAMRA branch for suggesting pubs to visit and to Ray our capable organiser for his work on making the weekend a success. If you are ever in Hull take time out to visit its pubs and take a look around the city, particularly the public loos!

Steve Dyson

Membership Matters

Firstly, a few facts—CAMRA HQ stated that the total membership was 80,506 as at 1st June. This continues to make CAMRA the largest voluntary organisation in the UK. Those who like beer can't be all wrong! CAMRA HQ acknowledges all its members' assistance with its aims and campaigns by joining, and hopes that they will all continue in their support with the promotion, protection and way forward for Real Ale in the 21st Century—after all, the history of brewing goes back centuries, so you are all following in the footsteps of a great tradition!

We are still approaching the joining of the 300th member of the Solihull and District Branch of CAMRA—will it be you? We have a fantastic beery prize waiting for the lucky member; so go on join CAMRA today it could be you.

Talking of membership (well, after all, it's my role!): are you 26 or under and really like beer? If so, why not think about becoming a Young CAMRA Member?

CAMRA is extremely proud of its hugely diverse membership. Individuals of all ages, backgrounds and both sexes enjoy their CAMRA membership, and over 6% of the total national membership is aged between 18 - 30 years old. There is a separate section for Young Members on the main CAMRA website (the Young Members Group (YMG)), and most branches have a member who can be contacted and can put you in touch with other young members.

As a Young Member, you will receive all the benefits of ordinary membership, but at a reduced rate of £9.00 per year instead of £18.00. If you fit the description above, then you are the future of CAMRA and could really help to keep it afloat in future years, protecting the production of real ale, cider and perry (yes, we promote those too) for generations to follow. This all sounds serious stuff, but any of you out there who have met any of us Branch and Committee members know that while it's not just a bit of fun, it can be a lot of laughs, with guaranteed meetings and other events held regularly every month, which will add an extra dimension to your social life.

Go on—give it some thought—and serious consideration!

Carl Wright
Membership Secretary & Young Members Contact

It's a Funny Old World

A woman said she thought she was in heaven when she turned on the kitchen tap to find a plentiful supply of beer. Haldis Gundersen was planning to do the washing up when she made the unusual discovery at her apartment in Kristiansund, West Norway.

But two flights below, workers in a bar faced the more disappointing realisation that water was flowing from their beer taps. A worker had connected a beer barrel to the apartment water pipe by mistake.

"I turned on the tap to clean some knives and forks, and beer came out," Ms Gundersen told Reuters news agency. "We thought we were in heaven." But the beer was flat and tasted odd, she said.

Downstairs at the Big Tower Bar, workers realised what the problem was - a new barrel had been misconnected to Ms Gundersen's water supply. "The water and beer pipes do touch each other, but you have to be really creative to connect them together," said Per Egil Myrvang from the local beer distributor. He helped employees to rectify the problem over the telephone.

Ms Gundersen bore no grudge. "If it happens again, I'm going to order Baileys," she said.

In Norway, the sale of alcohol is controlled through a state monopoly and beer prices are some of the highest in the world.

(Editor's note: It is not reported whether she started singing 'I should be so lucky, lucky lucky lucky'...)

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The Word on the Street....

Is the lunchtime pint facing extinction?

Only a minority of companies now allow staff to drink during the working day. It's a sunny Friday lunchtime, the kind of weather that brings on a thirst for a long, cold drink. After a week spent hunched over a computer monitor, it's easy to feel like the dust-encrusted, thirst-crazed soldier who's driven across the desert in the classic film *Ice Cold in Alex*. You can almost see the condensation running down the curves of a pint, the sun glinting on a wine glass... But hold on. Re-wind the tape, because that lunchtime pint - a cultural tradition in its own right - is disappearing. A survey from law firm, Browne Jacobson, says that 57% of businesses now ban drinking during the working day. There have always been drinking restrictions on safety-sensitive jobs, such as anyone driving or operating machinery, but now the booze ban is being extended much more widely. In many parts of the country, particularly outside London, an even higher proportion of companies don't allow staff to drink. In the West Midlands, the survey says that 75% of businesses don't allow drinking during the working day.

"If you'd carried out such a survey 10 years ago or more, it would have been a much lower figure," says employment lawyer at Browne Jacobson, Peter Jones. The trend has been driven by a combination of changing attitudes to alcohol - and a fear of litigation among employers.

A local pub has become the first in Britain to offer its customers the chance to acquire a tattoo alongside their pints. The Harvester in Solihull hopes its tattoo studio in a converted storeroom will give the edge over rival inns.

Phil Jones, a tattoo artist who runs the hostelry in Tanhouse Farm Road, said of the unusual venture: "The idea behind it was to actually bring more people into the pub. While they are waiting for a tattoo we hope they will come in and have something to eat and have a pint"

Beer contains female hormones!

The theory is that beer contains female hormones and that by drinking enough beer, men turn into women.

To test the theory, 100 men were given 8 pints of beer each to consume.

Within a one hour period. It was then observed that 100% of the test subjects...

- 1) Gained weight,
- 2) Talked excessively without making sense,
- 3) Became overly emotional,
- 4) Couldn't drive,
- 5) Failed to think rationally,
- 6) Argued over nothing,
- 7) Refused to apologize when obviously wrong.

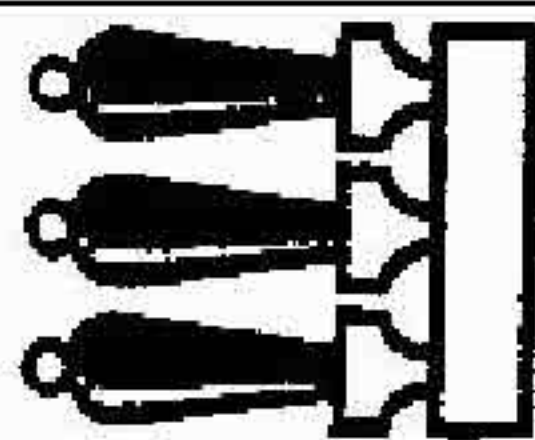
No further testing was considered necessary!!!!

(Ed's note—ladies, please take the above in good part—you are welcome to get your own back next issue!)

Finally:

Our Press & Publicity Officer Martin Collinge, aka The Solihull Beer Hunter (read his weekly article in The Solihull Times) made page 2 of The Sun on Friday, April 14th. The previous evening he was phoned by a Sun journalist for his comments on the story that HM Government is considering putting health warnings on beer mats, bottles, etc, basically warning of the dangers of drinking to excess. Martin was accurately reported, saying most people are aware of the limits and are sensible, so the plan seemed a bit much.

As a tunne is an Olde English word for barrel, maybe a case of Martin being a page 2 'tunna', rather than a page 3 'stunna'?



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Solihull 2006 Beer Festival

The 8th Solihull and District CAMRA Beer Festival dates have now been confirmed: we will be hosting this event at The Royal British Legion, Union Road, Solihull, on Friday 29th September (evening session) and Saturday 30th September (lunchtime and evening sessions), with a gourmet selection of approximately 30 different real ales plus cider and perry choices. Entry prices will be confirmed in next issue and in 'What's Brewing' 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.

Solihull CAMRA 2006 ©

Complaints about short measures: Contact Solihull Trading Standards on 0121 704 6844

The 38th edition of *Solihull Drinker* will be published on Monday 4th September, 2006.
Copy deadline for advertising and contributions will be Sunday 20th August, 2006

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