

The newsletter of the Solihull & District branch  
of CAMRA - the Campaign for Real Ale

www.solihullcamra.org.uk



# Solihull Drinker

Issue No: 44

Spring 2008

## Who *is* the Perfect Pint Puller??

Community Pubs Week took place 16-23 February 2008

It's a frightening reality that at least 56 pubs are closing in Britain each month and early indications of new research being carried out by CAMRA suggest that this figure could actually be significantly higher. Worse still, the majority of these pubs are not high street chain bars or theme pubs, but community pubs, recognised by most people these days, as important amenities. The local pub, after all, is often the heart of the community.

CAMRA has successfully run National Pubs Week for four years in an attempt to convince more people to visit more pubs more of the time. CAMRA members across the country have worked hard to promote pub-going in response to the growth in home drinking. Despite low supermarket prices, nothing can match the British pub for its service and atmosphere.

Community Pubs Week celebrates and promotes all community pubs - not just village locals, but urban gems too; and CAMRA aims to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to use community pubs more.

Solihull and District CAMRA Branch wholeheartedly support Community Pubs Week, and this year came up with the idea of finding out who is the 'Perfect Pint Puller' on our patch; so in conjunction with the *Solihull Times*, the competition was born.

Packs were handed out to local pubs inviting them to promote the PPP competition throughout the week in addition to any other initiatives they might be undertaking, by asking drinkers at their pub to vote for their PPP. The highest scorer wins a certificate and dinner for two at a pub of their choice, plus the result will feature in the local press.

The votes were counted by the Branch after the closing date, and at the time of going to press, the five highest scoring finalist were (in no particular order): Liz Robinson, the Bull's Head, Barston; Lou Ford, the Vaults; Sarah Worrall, also the Vaults; Sophie Clark, the White Lion, Hampton in Arden; and Rebecca Perry, Hobs Meadow, Hobs Moat.

Judging is ongoing—what is looked for is a warm welcome, efficient service with a smile, a full pint in a clean glass together with knowledge on the choice of drinks; the lucky winner should know in the very near future. There will also be spot prizes of beer drawn at random from the nominees.

So watch your 'local' paper for the results, and we'll feature the presentation next issue of the Solihull Drinker!!!

Community Pubs; Use them or lose them!! [Ed]



**Inside: Don't miss the Dates for your Diary**



# THE BULL'S HEAD

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***Spring is on its way and it won't be long before those lighter nights are  
tempting you out for a glass of something tasty. You're always assured of  
a warm welcome here, whatever the weather or time of year!***

## All Hail to the Ale! - local Beer, Pub and Brewery news

### New Wetherspoon's pub

Solihull has gained a second Wetherspoon's pub: the Assembly Rooms opened its doors to the public on 4th February. This was preceded by a long weekend of staff training, at which some local CAMRA members attended. There will be a good range of real ales across two bars, and the upstairs will see music and entertainment whilst the downstairs will be kept quiet. The usual Wetherspoon's quality food and good meal deals will be on offer at all times. Try a visit and see what you think.

### The Drum and Monkey

The new manager at the Drum and Monkey, Ed, is committed to real ale and already knows what his wet sales bring in, and has no intention of messing with that steady stream of income. He is going to begin an 8 week 'beer festival' involving one extra guest ale at a time.

### Long Itchington Beer Festival 2008

Six pubs in Long Itchington, South Warwickshire, are planning a joint beer festival in May. From Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May to Monday 5<sup>th</sup> of May, rather than being based on one site this festival will take place at all six pubs simultaneously: The Buck And Bell; The Cuttle Inn; The Duck On The Pond; The Green Man; The Harvester, and The Two Boats,. You will be able to sample approximately 80 different real ales and ciders from breweries all over the country with at least one pub offering genuine Czech lagers. Food will be available from basic bar snacks to A la Carte depending upon which pub you are in. Entertainments is planned for the weekend and festival glasses will be available. If this festival is successful then it is planned to make it an annual event.

### The Forest, Dorridge

The Forest held a very successful Beer Festival last year –on one visit, ten beers were available: Timothy Taylor Ram Tam; Wadworth JCB; Hook Norton Old Hooky; Fullers Chiswick Bitter; Black Sheep Bitter; Jennings Cumberland; Wychwood Hobgoblin; Brains Reverend James; Ruddles County and Wyre Piddle Piddle in the Hole, the only beer from a micro brewery. All the beers were served direct and were all in good condition, and prices were reasonable for the area.. Cider drinkers had a choice of two real ciders. The Forest has continued to have two real ales on at all times, most recently St Austell's Tribute Ale, and Henry's Original IPA. Both beers are changed regularly.

### Most Improved Pubs are Blooming Winners

Two winners of Solihull & District's Most Improved Pub award came out winners in the Pub/Hotel/Restaurant Frontage category of this year's Solihull in Bloom competition. 2007 Most Improved Pub the White Lion in Hampton in Arden was placed second, with 2005 joint winner the Golden Acres, Damson Wood taking first place.

### Purity Brewery

<http://www.puritybrewing.com/images/PureNewsEdition1Winter2007.pdf> will take you to the brewery's new newsletter; see also their new online shop at [www.puritybrewing.com/online\\_shop.cfm](http://www.puritybrewing.com/online_shop.cfm). They are also the first beverage company to attain a Red Tractor Seal, meaning they use only British farmed malt and hops and have met the high standards of The Assured Foods Standards Agency.

## The Annual Trip — Exeter, September 2007

### Solihull CAMRA explores Exeter and the Exe Estuary—Part Two

Every year Solihull CAMRA visits a part of the country with good pubs and breweries. Late last year Exeter was our base for the weekend. Many of you will have read the last Drinker which retold our first days adventures. Below I recall our second day.

Friday began with a filling breakfast in the Brunel's Restaurant where discussion centred round today's itinerary. At 10am we were all outside boarding our coach and heading towards our first brewery for the day

Navigating Devon's famous country lanes we found Red Rock Brewery at High Humber Farm near



Bishopstegton, in a converted barn in the farmyard. The brewery was set up in 2006 by two ex teachers, of whom John Parkes is the active half of the duo. The brewer is his son Lewis who used to work for Teignworthy Brewery. Whilst on our visit Lewis arrived the worse for wear having celebrated his Port Stout winning Dark Beer of the Festival at the South Devon CAMRA Beer Festival at Newton Abbott. The brew house consists of four fermentation vessels with a total capacity of about four barrels each and John brews three - four brews a week. The hops used are Goldings, Cluster and Styrian Goldings. Tuckers supply the malt and Palmers from Bridport in Dorset supply the yeast. Unfortunately no

cask beer was available to sample on our visit so John kindly broached innumerable bottles of his bottle-conditioned beers: Driftwood, a dry, nutty beer; Break Water a lager style beer; and Port Stout, all in excellent condition and unusually not at all gassy, each one distinctive and with plenty of flavour.

Savouring the beer in the sunshine with buzzards circling overhead we reluctantly took our leave and headed to our first pub of the day, the Lamb Inn at Longdown, only to meet with our one and only disaster. The pub was closed—and I mean really closed, having apparently shut down a month ago. A substitute was right on hand and so without further ado we were on our way to the Nobody Inn at Doddiscombsleigh—and what a substitute!

A superb country pub dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it sits in the centre of the village, snuggling under the Halden Hills. It became an inn in the 1700's when it was known as the New Inn. Its interior is timeless and to top it all serves beer direct from the two barrels: Cottage



Metropolitan Ale, only just put on and still a little young; and Malton Crown Bitter, just taken off. Oh well. We contented ourselves with hand pumped Red Rock Back Beach and their house ale brewed by Branscombe Vale called Nobody Inn, a fine best bitter. The pub's excellence doesn't just stop at the beer; it also does meals and has an excellent selection of local cheeses with a wine and whisky list which is unbeatable. In fact Kevin and I wondered where they kept all the wines and whiskeys... so I asked the friendly staff who promptly invited us to take a look. We were shown into the cellar behind the bar to find it packed floor to ceiling with bottles. There are 2000 wines and 200 whiskies in there! So cramped was it in there that you could not literally turn round easily. As a final accolade they even do B&B... what a pub and we hadn't even planned to visit it!

Our next port of call saw us in the deep-sided lanes of Devon heading for O'Hanlon's Brewery in Whimple. This brewery has for many years been on my agenda to visit due to its fantastic beers. Like Red Rock it is based in a farm complex. Indeed, it seemed more brewery than farm. On arriving our guide Alex apologised that they were too busy to give us a tour of the brewery but a colleague Sarah showed us the bottling plant and pointed us in the direction of the sampling room. We didn't mind that. We plumped for the sample room first where we charged our glasses with Yellowhammer, Royal Oak or recently bottled Thomas Hardy Ale, which at 11.7% was maybe a little bit too strong at lunchtime! Apparently over 10,000 bottles are brewed a year, most of which are exported all over the world. Thus set up we followed Sarah through to the cacophony of the bottling plant. The noise was overpowering in there so we quickly gravitated back to the sampling room where we were joined by the brewery owner John O'Hanlon. John is an unassuming Irish man from County Kerry whose family have been in the trade for some ninety years. Seeing how busy the brewery was we said our farewells to John leaving him to do some concreting. On the coach and we were on our way to our next brewery at Newton St. Clyst.



Beer Engine is based in the pub of the same name and has been in operation since 1983. A brewery trip was not arranged for us but we could view the brewery through a glass window on our way to the conveniences. In the pub Piston Bitter, Rail Ale and Sleeper heavy were on hand pump. A real cider, Dragon Teas from Clyst St. George was also available. With a full glass I explored the pub. It has a balcony leading down to a garden with much decking in evidence. However, the noise from the railway line at the bottom of the garden does distract from the peace of the garden. Nevertheless we all sat outside savouring the September sunshine. The interior of the pub is a little bland, one roomed with an adjacent restaurant but quite acceptable. A short visit was planned here so we were soon supping up and ready for the off.



Crediton was next on our list and the Crediton Inn. A disappointing pub with little character or so it seemed to us although to be fair it was a Friday afternoon so we may have not seen it at its best. Unfortunately the beer range was not up to scratch either being Badger Fursty Ferret and Tanglefoot; Fullers London Pride and Sharps Doom Bar. However they were in good condition. The pub's saving grace was the Light Bites, fantastic value at £1.75. We did not need to be chivvied back on to the coach as we felt we had "done" the Crediton Inn and were keen to be on the road to our next pub.

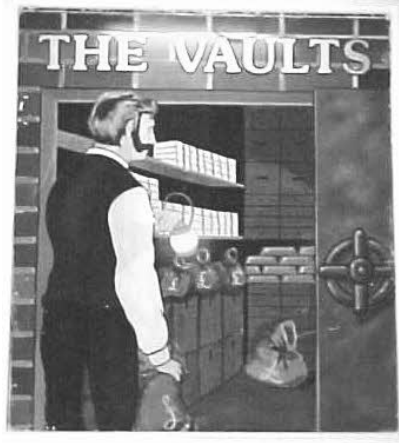
Yeoford and the Mare and Foal was our objective. The pub is in a beautiful setting, again in a typical Devon village. It is also surprisingly large and rambling and also acted as a small village store. It is also keen on draught cider. We in the main kept on the beer, which again was a little disappointing being Teignworthy Real Ale; Brains Reverend James and Black Sheep Bitter, although all in good condition.

So again, back on the coach for our last pub of the day, which as it was the current National CAMRA Pub of the Year had to be stupendous... didn't it?

*(continued on Page 7)*



Nick and Gwen welcome you to



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## The Annual Trip (cont.)

Nothing quite prepared me for the Tom Cobleigh Tavern at Spreyton. Reading the Good Beer Guide led me to believe that we were in for a treat. We were not disappointed. It is as the Good Beer Guide says "a true gem". Licensed in 1589 it is said to be the pub from which the famed Tom Cobleigh and crew set out to Widdecombe Fair in 1802. Why they would want to leave such a cracking pub I really don't know because believe me this pub is worthy of its accolade as National Pub of the year.



On entering there is a large bar to the right, whilst straight on leads to the restaurant area. Accommodation is also available so you are set up for a fine weekend if you choose to stay here. Indeed I doubt if you would venture far past the pub front door as it serves some twenty beers, or did so on the night of our visit. I did not try them all but sampled twelve of them all of which were in good to excellent condition. On tap were Cotleigh Tawney; Cottage Atlantic and Brunel's Eastern; O'Hanlon's Yellowhammer; St Austell Tribute and Proper Job; Sharps Doom Bar; Lizard Ales An Got; Teignworthy Reel Ale; Wizard Ales Druids Fluid; Palmers Bitter; Exe Valley Exeter Old Bitter; RCH Firebox, Pitchfork and Steam Special; Butcombe Gold; Summerskills Devon Dew; South Hams; Eddystone and Clearwater Cavalier and Olives Nectar.

With a range like that everything else was a bonus and at the very least that came in the form of the publican Paul Cutlip, a larger than life character with an enthusiasm for his pub that is unsurpassed [other publicans take note]. He took time out to talk to us and was more than willing to show a small party of us his cellar and to talk about the pub and the beers. We sat down here to a superb meal accompanied by beers after which we retired to the bar to complete our sampling exercise! All too soon it was time to leave (with Paul the publican insisting on accompanying us to our coach and saying farewell) for our home base, where yet again we were to be disappointed with the same restricted range of beers as last night... still we had had a cracker of a day!

Steve Dyson

The Solihull Drinker is the newsletter of the Solihull & District. Branch  
of CAMRA, the Campaign for 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](mailto: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.

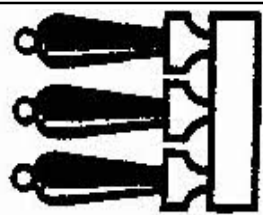
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# Dates For Your Diary

## Socials

Saturday 8th March	Halesowen Pub Crawl
Saturday 19th April	Harborne Pub Crawl
May (date/details tbc)	Long Itchington pubs combined Beer Festival

## Branch Meetings

Monday 7th April	Navigation, Lapworth (tbc)
Monday 12th May	Fieldhouse, Monkspath (tbc)
Monday 2nd June	Boat, Catherine de Barnes (tbc)
Monday 7th July	Rowington Club, Rowington (tbc)

(NB. All Branch meetings start at 8.30pm except where noted otherwise)

## Forthcoming Beer Festivals

13th—18th March	St Patrick's Day Festival, Anchor Inn, Digbeth
28th—29th March	1st Burton upon Trent Spring Beer & Cider Festival
3rd-5th April	Walsall Beer Festival
11th—12th April	Coventry Beer Festival
2nd—5th May	Long Itchington pubs: combined beer festival

*For meetings/socials yet to be confirmed or if more details are needed, visit our website: [www.SolihullCamra.org.uk](http://www.SolihullCamra.org.uk), or contact Branch Secretary Steve Wood on 0121 704 5258.*

## Membership Matters

Now that the weather will increasingly improve as we approach Spring, people's thoughts turn to getting out and about, especially once we turn the clocks forwards and start to enjoy those light evenings.

In the wake of Community Pubs week, it is vital that we all do what we can to help save pubs from closure through lack of interest, especially those already highlighted as at risk.

Becoming a CAMRA member makes funds available for CAMRA to go on fighting for pubs, pub amenities and the right to a local pub for your community.

Membership for a year for yourself or as a present for someone else is easily available from CAMRA HQ's website: <http://www.camra.org.uk>

Carl Wright  
Membership Secretary

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## Old Solihull Pub Names (Update)

Is this the final instalment on old Solihull pub names from Steve Wood? Who **knows.....**

**BEAR & RAGGED STAFF** Henley-in-Arden  
In Whites Directory of 1874 - prop. Thomas Matthews.

**COACH & HORSES** Henley-in-Arden  
In Whites Directory of 1874 - prop. Thos. Hawkes.

**CROSS GUNS** Beaudesert nr Henley-in-Arden  
In Whites Directory of 1874 – Alfred Barlow, victualler & blacksmith.

**CROWN INN** Lapworth  
In Whites Directory of 1874 - prop. William Enston.

**DRAGON** Pinley Green nr Claverdon  
In White's Directory of 1874 - prop. Chas. Edwards.

**ELEPHANT & CASTLE** Rowington  
Now a private house called Elephant Cottage on the Old Warwick Road between the Navigation & the Cock Horse. In Whites Directory of 1874 - prop. Wm. Wheeler.

**GEORGE & DRAGON** Henley-in-Arden  
In White's directory of 1874 - prop. John Edkins.

**GEORGE & DRAGON** Tanworth-in-Arden  
In White's Directory of 1974 - prop. Frederick Checkley

**KING'S HEAD** Henley-in-Arden  
In White's Directory of 1874 - prop. Thos. Bills.

**MALT SHOVEL** Tanworth-in-Arden  
Whites Directory - prop. Thomas Wilcox.

**NEW INN** Rowington  
Original name of the TOM O'THE WOOD (later the OLD NEW INN).

This pub dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century it was run as a combined Inn & Butchers shop selling local reared meat by several generations of Hansons (all with the first name Anthony). At some point it was renamed the TOM O'THE WOOD after a local corn mill. A change in image resulted in it temporarily becoming THE WOOD AT ROWINGTON in 2005. However by the end of 2006, it reverted to the TOM O'THE WOOD.

**RED LION** Lapworth  
In White's Directory of 1874 - prop. Wm. Hawkes.

**WHITE HORSE** Henley-in-Arden  
Now a private house on the High Street. Listed in White's Directory of 1874 - prop Wm. Upton.

**WHITE HORSE** Lowsonford  
In White's Directory of 1874 - prop. John Taylor, the pub was still around in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Thanks to everyone who provided feedback about the original articles which has enabled these updates. The details will be added to the full list which can be found on the Solihull CAMRA website.

Steve Wood



The White Horse, Lowsonford, 1900s  
(courtesy of Windows on Warwickshire)

ALISON AND ADRIAN WARMLY WELCOME YOU TO

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(full membership: £10.00 per annum)

## Forthcoming Events

(No booking necessary, usual entry fees apply unless stated otherwise)

Saturday 15th March - live music: The Emulsions

Saturday 19th April— live music: Out of the Blue

There will be plenty of entertainment going on during Spring 2008, so either ring the Club for details, or just turn up — all who come will be welcome.

For full details of all events, please ring Adrian or Alison at The Rowington Club, and they will be only too pleased to talk to you about a wonderful night out.

# The Golden Acres

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## Out with the old...

Due to our copy-**deadline for the last issue, there were several articles and news stories we couldn't** include. This is a brief taste of what was happening towards the end of 2007.

### Tunnel Brewery Launches new real ale

The Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre was the venue for the launch of a new ale from Tunnel Brewery on 14<sup>th</sup> November. An Ale & Pie night was the occasion for the launch and was held in the Tithe Barn restaurant, which is situated next door to the Heritage Centre's gift shop. The new ale, brewed specially for the Battlefield Heritage Centre, is called 'Let Battle Commence' and is an easy-drinking session beer, made with traditional English ingredients and with an ABV of 3.8%.

Tunnel Brewery had been approached by the Battlefield Heritage Centre to brew a special ale for them. The brewers at Tunnel produced 'Let Battle Commence' in both draught and bottled form, with the bottled version being sold in the gift shop. The draught version was available at the launch from a nine-gallon cask dispensed by gravity. The bottled beer states on the label that it has been brewed by the Battlefield Brewery! However, the mystery surrounding the name was soon cleared up when there was a short talk about Tunnel Brewery and the new beer. The Battlefield Heritage Centre is in the process of building a pub, as part of the site's medieval village. Most towns and villages would have had a pub and a brewery, and a piece of land has been set aside for the construction of a brewery once the pub is completed. The Centre's website indicates that the pub is to be called The Old Salt Road. The brewery, which will be run by Bob and Mike from Tunnel Brewery, will be known as the Battlefield Brewery.

Two more real ales are set to be produced by Tunnel in 2008, one in honour of King Richard III and one for Henry Tudor (later Henry VII). It has not yet been decided what the new ales are to be called and the strengths have not yet been finalised, but Bob stated that both will be stronger than 'Let Battle Commence'. The latter is well worth trying, and keep an eye open for the newcomers!

Chris Lloyd

### Real Ale Gain with O'Neill's, Poplar Road, Solihull

The Barley Mow reopened on 12<sup>th</sup> December, now calling itself O'Neill's – an Irish themed pub- one of an M&B owned chain. I wasn't sure what to expect by way of "Oirishness" and first impressions were of a well appointed but ordinary pub. Closer observation reveals more however, and Guinness and Irish Whiskey adverts, several sorts of draught Guinness and Irish folk muzak give the pub its credentials. Even the manager, Andy Thompson, is Irish.

He told me that since opening in December they'd done quite well generally and they would continue to have two cask beers on, perhaps replacing one of the beers with a changing guest. Both beers on the day were in first class condition and Andy must know his stuff because his last pub, The Billet in Essex, had four real ales accounting for 50% of sales. The food prices are about average, but the quality definitely above average. Oh, and what about the Irish hospitality? Very pleasing.

Bob Jackson

### The Oak, Hockley Heath

The recent refurbishment of ORO The Market Place (previously the Old Royal Oak and before that the Taverna), on the A3400 south of Hockley Heath, has resulted not only in a change of name to The Oak but a very welcome change in the beer choice. The two regular beers are Pure Gold (3.8%) and Pure UBU (4.5%) from Purity and the guest a monthly-changing beer from Tunnel brewery. This fits in with the ethos of buying locally where possible to cut down transport miles. A small selection of bottled beer is also stocked in the market place area, including when I visited beers from Tunnel and an organic beer from Black Isle. The bar/restaurant section has a number of specific areas for those who only want to drink.

Malcolm Harry



## Other news

### Drink more beer!

The humble pint used to be the backbone of the local pub, it was what they were all about. But seven million fewer pints per day are now being sold in Britain than in 1979 - the beer market's peak. It's a drop of 22%. Beer has an image problem and there is a "common misconception" that it is less healthy than other alcoholic drinks, says Adam Withrington, drinks editor of the Publican magazine. It's what he refers to as the "beer-belly notion". People assume that drinking pints will lead to weight gain, making the drink less appealing at a time when people are increasingly health conscious. But beer is about 96% water and made up of natural ingredients, unlike many other alternatives, says Mr Withrington. When comparing it to other alcoholic drinks, it's wrong to label it as unhealthy. In these days of ever-shrinking local pub numbers, by drinking beer at your local pub—but drinking sensibly— you can help preserve the pub heritage for future generations. Alcopops in front of the TV just aren't the same!

### Beer from the Bronze Age

Two Irish archaeologists have tried to brew beer like their ancestors used to make -- 3,000 years ago -- in an effort to uncover the purpose of common, ancient stone mounds. They were pondering the mysteries of an excavation site, when it hit them: the depressions surrounded by a horseshoe circle of charred stones could well be part of an old brewing area. After some experimentation, they are now waiting for Spring when local bog plants will begin to bloom, in the hopes of recreating a Bronze Age brew.

### 11 things you never knew about beer...

1. Workers on the pyramids some 4,500 years ago had five types of beer available during beer breaks.
2. The Czech Republic leads the world in beer consumption, with an average of 157 litres a year for every person of drinking age.
3. Ireland comes second with 142 litres, while the UK average is just over 100 litres.
4. In 2004, total worldwide beer consumption was 150 billion litres, which works out at just under a pint a week for everybody on Earth.
5. Records dating from 1632 for a children's hospital in Norwich show that the weekly ration allocated to each young patient included two gallons of beer.
6. Henry VIII's court regulations included this: "Such pages as cause maids of the King's household to become mothers shall go without beer for a month".
7. In the 16th century, St. Brigid of Ireland is said to have transformed her bath water into beer for visiting clerics.
8. Germany has a type of flea that lives and breeds only in beer mats.
9. Collecting beer mats is called tegestology.
10. The Sumerian goddess of beer was called Ninkasi.
11. The difference between ale and beer is that beer is flavoured with hops during the brewing process, whereas hops are NOT used in the brewing of ale.

## The Wetherspoon's Survey Crawl

Traditionally a quiet time in the CAMRA calendar, January was chosen to check out the growing number of Wetherspoon's outlets to be found in the Solihull area.

Eight intrepid travellers boarded at the White Swan. The pre-flight check revealed five beers on offer, including Purity Gold & UBU.

We then took off for the airport where our next port of call was the Dragonfly, the Wetherspoon's outlet in Terminal 1. Here we had the choice of four beers, including two from Wyre Piddle - Piddle in the Wind & Piddle in the Snow. Friendly bar-staff and discounts due to one of the party having a BHX loyalty card made this a relaxing stop.



Unfortunately we couldn't try the Wetherspoon's in Terminal 2 as it is air-side, so any reports on their beer range and quality by other travellers would be much appreciated.

Instead we caught the mono-rail shuttle to the NEC, timed to perfection as one had just pulled in (actually not difficult though, as they run every 90 seconds).

We encountered our first turbulence at the NEC - the new Wetherspoon's Cellar Bar in the Piazza was closed. So we

pressed on to the Wetherspoon's Atrium Bar. Just the two beers on offer - GK Abbot & Marston's Pedigree. We were slightly perturbed to see very soupy looking bottles of Marston's Imperial Ale behind the bar which we pointed out to the bar-staff. We then left the NEC - hopefully without having made an exhibition of ourselves.

It was time for the return flight - back on the bus for an unscheduled stop at the Golden Acres in Damsonwood - three beers including Highgate Old Ale & Highgate Stocking Filler.

While in the area we called in at the new-look Greville Arms, recently refurbished with three new hand pumps. Here we shot down a few Spitfires of the Shepherd Neame variety. A few people baled out at this point, but five of us landed back in Solihull for our final destination. This was O'Neills (formerly the Barley Mow), another recent Real Ale gain. Here we flew Caledonian - Deuchars IPA to be exact. O'Neills is opposite what should be another local Wetherspoon's by the time you read this - the Assembly Rooms opening in February.

A successful trip, but the challenge is there: to repeat the exercise and get round all six Wetherspoon's. To do this would mean finding a time when both NEC outlets were open at the same time, and taking a (short) flight from T2. Mission impossible?

Steve Wood

## CAMRA West Midlands Beer of the Year Competition 2007 Results

### Mild - Held at Rugby Beer Festival May 2007

- 1<sup>st</sup> Cannon Royall Fruiterer's Mild
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Church End Gravediggers Ale
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Hobsons Mild

### Bitter - Held at Wolverhampton Beer Festival June 2007

- 1<sup>st</sup> Hobsons Best Bitter
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Purity Pure Gold
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Holden's Black Country Bitter

### Best Bitter - Held at Tamworth Beer Festival Sept 2007

- 1<sup>st</sup> Malvern Hills Black Pear
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Wye Valley HPA
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Kinver Edge

### Strong - Held at Hereford Beer Festival July 2007

- 1<sup>st</sup> Wood Wonderfull
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby
- 3<sup>rd</sup> No Award

### Golden - Held at Bromsgrove Beer Festival July 2007

- 1<sup>st</sup> Salopian Golden Thread
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Wye Valley Dorothy Goodbody's Golden Ale
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Ludlow Gold

### Stout - Held at Birmingham Beer Festival Sept 2007

- 1<sup>st</sup> Beowulf Dragon Smoke Stout
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Titanic Stout
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Burton Bridge Top Dog Stout

### Porter - Held at Burton Beer Festival Sept 2007

- 1<sup>st</sup> Church End Pews Porter
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Enville Porter
- 3<sup>rd</sup> North Cotswold Hung, Drawn 'n' Portered

### Speciality - Held at Shrewsbury Beer Festival Sept 2007

- 1<sup>st</sup> Salopian Lemon Dream
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Enville Ginger
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Hanby Cherry Bomb

### Winter - TBH at Dudley Winter Ales Festival November 2007

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sarah Hughes Snowflake
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Burton Bridge Thomas Sykes
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Kinver Over The Edge

### Real Ale in a Bottle (RAIB) - Held at Harbury Beer Festival Sept 2007

- 1<sup>st</sup> Wye Valley Dorothy Goodbody's Wholesome Stout
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Coors Worthington White Shield
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Hobsons Manor Ale

### Cider - Held at Stoke Beer Festival October 2007

- 1<sup>st</sup> Olivers Medium
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Gwatkins Yarlington Mill Medium
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Gwatkins Norman

### Perry - Held at Stoke Beer Festival October 2007

- 1<sup>st</sup> Olivers Medium
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Olivers Perry
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Brook Farm Perry

### West Midlands Beer of the Year 2007

- Gold Hobsons Best Bitter
- Silver Church End Pews Porter
- Bronze Beowulf Dragon Smoke Stout



# J.D. Wetherspoon

## **Now two Wetherspoon's pubs In Solihull Town Centre offer you a choice of casual drinking or wining and dining.**

Over the last 10 years, JD Wetherspoon has won over 50 national and regional awards, acknowledging excellence in all aspects of the business; and they are consistently in the top 100 employers. Cask Marque has awarded 650 of their pubs with their accreditation so you can be sure of the perfect pint. They offer carefully chosen menus, with leaflets available to explain where all their produce comes from; and have an award winning children's' menu which combines quality, healthy goodness and value with organic options.

The White Swan, opened on March 2004, and now The Assembly Rooms, opened in February 2008, are proud to serve Solihull town centre in their separate establishments. As you can see from the above, quality produce and excellent service is a watchword, and we do hope that you will take the time to visit us at any time during the day or night during our extensive opening hours. You will be sure of a warm welcome.

### **The Assembly Rooms**

21 Poplar Road, Solihull, B91 3AD  
Phone: 0121 711 6990

Opening times: Sun—Wed: 9.00am—1.00am; Thurs—Sat: 9.00am—2.00am

Some Lloyds No.1 bars have background music all day, with some not starting until 5pm. At the weekends, in busy towns, the party continues into the evenings – many with live DJs getting you in the mood for a great night out! We restrict music to the upper floor, leaving downstairs visitors to enjoy a more peaceful visit.

Next to an exit from Mell Square shopping centre and car park, The Assembly Rooms is ideally situated for a shopping trip break, and our opening hours should suit everyone.

Want to know more? Contact James, the manager or one of his staff on: 0121 711 6990.

### **The White Swan**

32–34 Station Road, Solihull, B91 3SB  
Phone: 0121 711 5180

Opening times: Sun—Thurs: 9am—midnight; Fri/Sat: 9am—1am

The White Swan was an old coaching inn at the corner of Station Road, which became a private residence known as Silhill House in the 1820s. 'Silhill' was once a popular variation of 'Solihull'. Demolished around 1926, they were replaced by the present Tudor-style shops.

Solihull's transformation from a sleepy market town to a Metropolitan Borough dates from the opening of the railway in 1852. The redevelopment of the town centre in the 1960s claimed several historic buildings, including Touchwood Hall, although its name lives on in the recently-opened shopping mall.

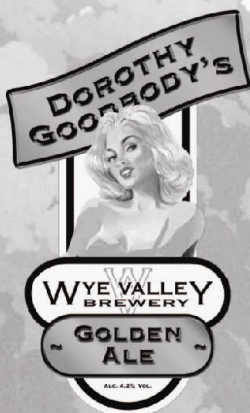
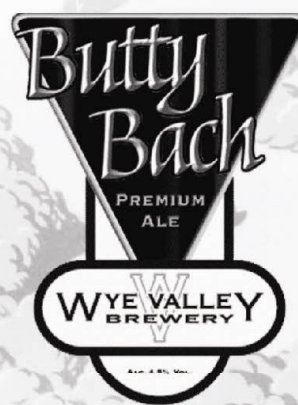
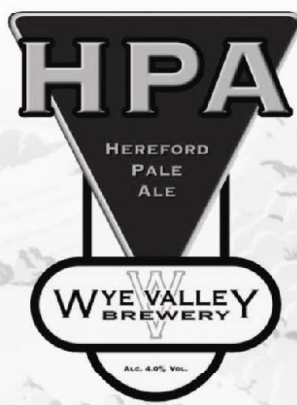
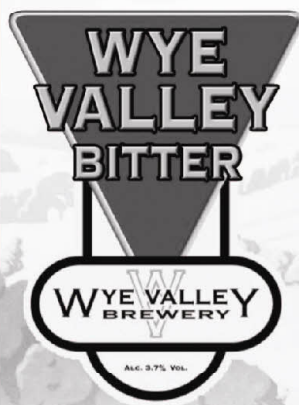
### **JD Wetherspoon Spring promotions:**

If you have received a Wetherspoon's magazine, you can use the vouchers in it at many of the Wetherspoon outlets until 9th June 2008, subject to terms and conditions (see website for details).

JD Wetherspoon's International Beet Festival will be taking place from Thursday 27 March to Monday 14th April. Visit your nearest Wetherspoon's pub for details, or check the website—[www.idwetherspoon.co.uk](http://www.idwetherspoon.co.uk) featuring up to 50 beers in total over the duration of the festival, there really will be a beer for everyone.



## HEREFORDSHIRE'S LEADING BREWERY



### HPA

Awarded Silver: West Midlands CAMRA  
Beer of the Year 2007  
(Best Bitters category)

### Dorothy Goodbody's Golden Ale

Awarded Silver: West Midlands CAMRA  
Beer of the Year 2007  
(Golden Ales category)

**Wye Valley Brewery, Herefordshire**  
[www.wyevalleybrewery.co.uk](http://www.wyevalleybrewery.co.uk)