

Solihull Drinker

Issue No: 49

Summer 2009

Colour comes to the Solihull Drinker magazine!



No, you're not really seeing pink elephants—from this issue onwards we have upgraded to glossy pages throughout and colour outer pages and centrefold. We hope you find that these changes improve the look of the magazine and enhance your enjoyment in reading it.

What's coming up this Summer?? Plenty of beer festivals, we hope—especially as the weathermen are predicting a hot and sunny one (about time too!).

Locally, the Rowington Club have a 3 -day extravaganza over the August Bank Holiday —see inside for more details. Further afield we can expect showings from Here-

ford Branch, 3rd -5th July (www.HerefordCamra.org.uk);

Bromsgrove Branch, 9th July (CAMRA members only) and

10th -11th July (www.BromsgroveBeerfestival.org.uk);

Cotswolds Branch, 24th -26th July (www.GloucestershireCamra.org.uk);

Worcester Branch, 13th -15th August (www.WorcesterBeerfest.org.uk), and

Heart of Warwickshire Branch at Harbury, 29th -30th August (www.CamraHOW.org.uk).



Once the summer is over, you'll have your own local beer festival to look forward to—the 11th Solihull and District Beer Festival will take place in early October, again with two ciders and a perry; but this year, we're going up to 40 beers over the course of the weekend. Further details in the September issue.



FREE BEER!!!

Yes, it's really true—you can get your hands on free beer!! See Membership Matters for more details.



Inside: Don't miss the Dates for your Diary



THE BULL'S HEAD



Barston Lane, Barston

Tel: 01675 442830

www.TheBullsHeadBarston.co.uk

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

Most recently listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009, and
Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year 2000, 2002 and 2009

Cask Marque accredited

HOME COOKED MEALS ARE AVAILABLE LUNCHTIMES AND
EVENINGS MONDAY TO SATURDAY IN THE PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS
OF THE PUB OR IN OUR SEPARATE INTIMATE RESTAURANT
(Sundays 12 to 3pm for lunch - no evening meals)
TELEPHONE RESERVATIONS WELCOME

*An English summer is unpredictable —rain: events cancelled, streets awash,
Bank Holidays spoilt —or sun: heatwaves and sunburn, hosepipe bans and
brown lawns. But the beer quality and warm welcome at the Bulls Head
never fails, come rain or shine. Come and see for yourself —very soon.*

Wye Valley Brewery

The Wye Valley Brewery have been having a busy couple of months. The brewery turns 25 next years, and for the last 24 years the supply of cask ales has been their forte, but branching into high quality bottled beers has led to a new state of the art bottling line being installed at the brewery, allowing for more efficiency and flexibility to meet bottled beer demands. Following this, they gained a regional listing at Tesco, with two of the region's most popular beers, Butty Bach and Dorothy Goodbody's Golden Ale going on sale in Tesco West Midlands stores at the beginning of March.

A joint venture to celebrate 100 years of Morgan Cars has resulted in the production of Morgan Centenary Ale, 4.4% abv. This is the second beer that Wye Valley Brewery has brewed in association with Morgan. Both companies have a link with Stoke Lacy, and they both use a blend of traditional craftsmanship and modern production techniques to produce qualities that go beyond the ordinary. Morgan Centenary Ale is available now in bottles and will be available in cask from August.

For more information on the Wye Valley Brewery and its cask and bottled beers, go to www.WyeValleyBrewery.co.uk



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**

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

Printed by The Printing House, Hornbrook Grove, Olton.
Solihull CAMRA 2009 ©

The 50th edition of *Solihull Drinker* will be published on Monday 7th September, 2009.

Copy deadline for advertising and contributions will be Saturday 14th August, 2009

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Hail to the Ale! - local Beer, Pub, Club & Brewery news

Solihull and District CAMRA Pub of the Year

The Bulls Head at Barston is the winner of the Solihull and District CAMRA Pub of the Year award for 2009. The pub, which has been run by Martin (aka Brad) and Joy Bradley for over 25 years, is a worthy winner, with regular real ales and an ever-changing selection of guest beers. Martin prides himself on providing an interesting beer choice for pub goers at all times, and having achieved Cask Marque accreditation a few years ago, this affirms that their beers are always in tip-top condition.



The pub serves home-made food using seasonal produce every day, with a regular menu and a specials board on display at all times—in fact, sometimes it's hard to know what to choose from the wonderful meals on offer. All meals can be eaten in the restaurant—the oldest part of the building, originally a coaching inn—or in either of the two bars.

In summer the beer garden at the back of the pub provides a wonderful setting for ale-sipping, and the pub proves very popular on August Bank Holiday Monday when the Barston village fete is held in fields just behind the pub.

In winter, each bar has a log fire, making for a warm drinking experience on a cold night, and if you're lucky, chestnuts may be roasted on the fire and handed round.

The Solihull and District Pub of the Year presentation will be held on Wednesday 3rd June at 8.30pm—9.30pm at the Bulls Head, Barston. All are welcome, CAMRA members or not—drop in and see why this pub has won the best local CAMRA branch award of the year.

The Assembly Rooms

The recent JD Wetherspoon's beer festival aimed to be the biggest selling ever across the country—and news is in that the chain achieved this, selling a world record 3 million pints during the festival's duration. The range of real ciders went down so well that there will be a changing choice of real cider on a handpump for the whole of the summer months.

For more information about JD Wetherspoon pubs, go to www.jdwetherspoon.co.uk.

The Cock Horse, Rowington

An excellent cider festival was held over the early May Bank Holiday—25 choices of real cider were available over the weekend, and over 1,000 pints were sold. This bodes well for the next bank holidays and indeed the forthcoming summer generally.

In addition, the pub is celebrating having recently received Cask Marque accreditation. Drop in anytime and check out the range of beers and ciders on offer for yourself—you won't be disappointed.

All change at the Coach and Horses

After many years' brewing at this excellent pub on Weatheroak Hill, Dave Smith of Weatheroak Ales has moved his brewery to new premises near Alvechurch. Phil Meads of the Coach and Horses then persuaded a keen home brewer, Mark Shepherd, to start brewing commercially in the same premises at the front of the pub. This is now trading as Weatheroak Hill Brewery on a six -barrel plant from Dave Porter's company in Lancashire. Two beers now go down very well at the Coach and Horses: Icknield Pale Ale (3.8%) is a pale, tasty hoppy bitter, and is flying out of the taps almost faster than Mark can brew it. Wetheroak Hill Bitter (4.2%) is slightly darker and more full -bodied, much in the nature of a winter ale, and in fact won a silver medal at the Redditch and Bromsgrove Winter Ale Festival in February this year. All being well, we should see at least one of Mark's brews at the Solihull & District Beer Festival in early October.



The Fieldhouse



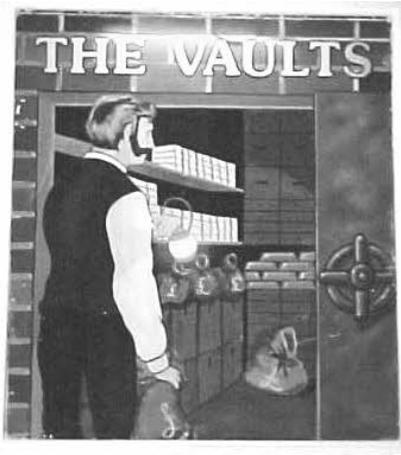
The Fieldhouse in Monkspath has set its sights on raising £1,000 for the RSPCA's Birmingham Animal Centre. In order to achieve this, they will be organising and running various events, including quizzes and raffles. To give you an idea of the Centre's needs, it costs £50 to keep a dog there for a week. In the current credit crunch many people are giving up pets that they cannot afford to keep and rescues centres such as the Birmingham Animal Centre are bearing the brunt of the influx.

The pub recently organised a '70s night, and many more events are planned to help reach its target. There is also a quiz every Tuesday and Sunday evening. If you fancy a pint out, then head for The Fieldhouse and either take part in one of the events, or dip into your pockets for a worthy cause —all donations will go straight to the fund. Further information on forthcoming events can be had from the pub on 0121 703 9209.

The Bluebell

The Bluebell at Henley -in-Arden launched its new spring menu in mid -April. Having its own allotment means that fresh produce can be on the table the same day, including sorrel, rhubarb, cabbage and herbs galore. Seasonal main dishes feature open Scottish fillet steak wellington, Old Spot pork outlet with braised pigs trotter, and pan -roasted sea-bass fillet with wild mushroom risotto. Home -made breads and ice -creams are a speciality. Special menus and events are planned for early summer, and their ever popular afternoon tea is back every Tuesday to Sunday afternoon —homemade scones, homemade Snitterfield strawberry jam, finger sandwiches and delightful cakes served with tea, coffee, or if you are feeling truly decadent, a glass of champagne.

Nick and Gwen welcome you to



The Real Ale venue in Knowle

- ◆ Six hand -pumped beers including regulars Ansell's Mild, Greene King IPA, Tetley Bitter, Wadworth 6X; and two guest beers
- ◆ Real cider from Westons
- ◆ Food available lunchtimes Monday - Saturday

**Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year
2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, & 2008**

Wi-Fi now available in the pub for your convenience whether on your own or at a meeting —ask at the bar for details.

Nick, Gwen and their great staff look forward to welcoming you.

CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed since 1993



The Vaults, St John's Close, Knowle.
Tel: 01564 773656

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For concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201.

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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Off Licence

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AN EVER CHANGING SCENE
OF EXCITING DRAUGHT
BEERS THROUGHOUT THE
SEASONS

200 DIFFERENT BEERS
DURING THE YEAR

CAMRA GOOD BEER GUIDE
LISTED
CONTINUOUSLY
SINCE 1983



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ANY OCCASION

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RETURN ON
SEALED GOODS



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BOTTLED BEERS

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Off Our Patch

A Trans - Pennine Rail Ale Trip and the Best Laid Plans..Part 3

Readers may remember that we left our intrepid travellers intent on finding the New Wharf pub in Huddersfield. Now read on.....

As we entered the pub we noticed it was almost deserted. I cast a quick glance along the bar and...yes! There were hand pumps! The choice, however, was very limited—the only cask ale on was Wells Bombardier. Black Sheep Best Bitter is also usually offered but on this occasion it had run out. Okay I thought, Bombardier may not be a very exciting find and is not even a local brew but it is a perfectly acceptable beer. My son joined me in trying a pint and it turned out to be in very good condition indeed. Food was available too: basically standard pub fare and we opted for an 8oz sirloin steak with the usual trimmings. While we were waiting for our food, we looked around the pub and admired the beamed ceiling and the stone floor. The interior was what I would consider to be a typical Yorkshire pub. We also noticed a number of unusual features: next to the table at which we were sitting was a small upright piano fixed to the wall – but with the feet at table height! Also, built into the bar was a chest of drawers. There was also a cast-iron radiator which featured raised moulding in the iron-work and was painted gold, a truly unusual piece of central heating.



Raising a glass to the
New Wharf

Our food duly arrived and we tucked in. The steak turned out to be one of the most succulent and tender I have ever tasted – and was cooked to perfection. At only £6.95 it was excellent value, too. The New Wharf is now definitely on our list of pubs to visit again. This is a real find as far as good-value food is concerned, and has been voted the winner of the “Best Pub Grub” award by the students at Huddersfield University for the last four years. As a real ale outlet, it may not offer a great choice of brews but, if our experience is anything to go by, the ales it does stock are well-kept and served in good condition.

CAMRA's Roger Protz published a book of 300 beers to try before you die. From our trip across the Pennines I would say that, if there were 300 real ale pubs to visit before you die, then the Stalybridge Buffet & Bar should certainly be one of them. If it is good pub food you want at a very reasonable price, the New Wharf should be another. As for the West Riding Refreshment Rooms at Dewsbury, I would include this, too, despite the disappointment experienced on our trip this time. Will we go back there? No,” says my wife.

We'll see

Chris Lloyd

CAMRA National Cider and Perry Championships

CAMRA announced at the beginning of May that Gwatkin's Yarlington Mill cider of Abbey Dore, Herefordshire, and Broadoak Perry of Clutton, Somerset, won Gold medals at CAMRA's National Cider and Perry Championships 2009, held at the Reading Beer and Cider Festival over the May bank holiday weekend. The Championships proved a doubly special occasion for Gwatkin cider, after also picking up the Bronze medal in the perry category for their Blakeney Red perry.

CAMRA's National Cider and Perry Championships 2009 featured 24 ciders and 20 perries, selected from different regions throughout the country, and assessed on aroma, flavour, finish and personal enjoyment by a judging panel including award-winning producers and publicans.

On hearing the news of this success, Denis Gwatkin of Gwatkin cider, said: "I am over the moon to hear that both my cider and perry have won CAMRA awards. The fact that I planted the trees and have seen them come to fruition makes it even more special".

In the National perry category, Broadoak Perry of Somerset won Gold for what the judges described as a 'lovely, drinkable perry with a true pear aroma that starts with a medium sweet taste and is followed by a dry finish.'

The full results of the CAMRA National Cider and Perry Championships are:

CIDER

GOLD	Gwatkin, Yarlington Mill	(Abbey Dore, Herefordshire. 01981 550258)
SILVER (Joint)	Orchards, Wye Cider	(Brockweir, Gloucestershire. 01291 689536)
SILVER (Joint)	Rosie's, Triple D Cider	(Llandegla, Denbighshire. 01978 790222)

PERRY

GOLD	Broadoak, Perry	(Clutton, Somerset. 01275 333154)
SILVER	Seidr Dai, Painted Lady	(Cardiff, Glamorgan. 029 2075 8193)
BRONZE	Gwatkin, Blakeney Red	(Abbey Dore, Herefordshire. 01981 550258)

CAMRA National Club of the Year 2009

Guiseley Factory Workers Club, a working men's club renowned for its outstanding beer quality and choice, has today been announced as CAMRA's National Club of the Year for 2009. Situated in the town of Guiseley, West Yorkshire, the club previously won the CAMRA Leeds Pub of the Year in 2006, and is a regular in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide. CAMRA judges noted how the club has consistently maintained a large range of quality real ales thanks to a dedicated beer selection panel on the club's managing committee.

The traditional three-roomed layout of the club consists of a lounge, snooker room and concert room, and has become a meeting place for community clubs and societies. The club holds an annual beer festival in April, and maintains a strong relationship with local brewers; this consideration for the local economy being another reason why CAMRA judges were so impressed by the club.

Since 2003, when the club began serving real ale, the management has dealt with over 142 different breweries, subsequently serving a staggering 627 different real ales from their 4 guest ale hand pumps.



The Cock Horse Inn Rowington



Warwickshire's Specialist Cyder House

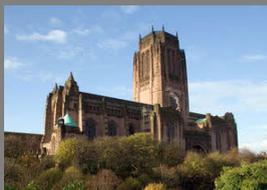
Range of up to 20 traditional Ciders including Westons, Thatchers, Gwent Y Ddraig and small craft producers from around the country

Three Cask Conditioned Ales
Cask Marque Accredited
Traditional Pub Meals & Bar Snacks.

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Telephone 01926 842183

CAMRA Liverpool Weekend Away - Part 3: Cains Brewery and another pub crawl



Liverpool as City of Culture 2008 welcomed Solihull CAMRA to try the city's pubs and beers. Having arrived on the Thursday for our long weekend we spent the first day north of the city centre, the second in Southport visiting Southport Beer Festival and Southport Brewery. Below describes our last day and a Sunday morning foray to Birkenhead.

This morning's breakfast was taken at the Welkin, where Wetherspoons served up a huge cooked breakfast. We also sank a Titanic Ensign and George Wright Cheeky Pheasant which were OK but not exceptional.

We then made our way to Cains Brewery, dropping off at the Baltic Fleet wishing to see if the beers were a little better than on our visit on Thursday. New beers on tap were Baltic Gold which was excellent and Baltic Sovereign which was OK. We soon had to leave the Fleet for our tour of Cains Brewery, which was just around the corner.

For me, our visit to Cains was a little disappointing. I had visited the brewery before but found this new tour not as informative. Indeed, our tour guide Lou seemed to treat the whole tour as a stand up comic routine which after a while I found quite galling. I don't think she was even aware that we were a CAMRA group. Having survived the tour we were ready for the superb Victorian brewery tap. On the pumps were Bitter, FA, IPA, Dark Mild and 2008. I tried the IPA, Dark Mild and 2008: all in good condition. I particularly liked the Mild, which at 3.2% was full of flavour. After a few sandwiches we were soon on our way for a tour of the pubs in the south of the city.



Cains Brewery

Our first port of call was the Peter Kavanagh, a gem of a pub and CAMRA National Inventory-listed. This is a pub that would have to be seen to be believed even if it had no real ale. However on the bar was Deuchers IPA; Green King Abbott Ale; George Wright Kings Shilling; Hanby Premium and Cherry Bomb all in good condition. As to the pub it has musical instruments and radios hanging from the ceilings. Abundant wood carvings and wall paintings dating from 1929 adorn the interior, whilst unusual tables have gullies

which drain spilt beer into a central tray. A wander round this pub will reveal many fascinating oddities.

Our next pub was to be the Cambridge but it was closed. A quick peek through the window revealed it only had Mansfield Cask, so no great loss there.

We moved on to the Augustus John, located in the student quarter not far from the RC cathedral. Resembling a 1960's estate pub, it sported three hand pumps with Green King Abbott Ale, Tetley Cask and Spitting Feather Thirst Quencher, which I tried and found wanting. A bit of a disappointing pub really. We soon left and made our way to another of Liverpool's gems... The Philharmonic.



Grade 11 listed, built in 1898, and again CAMRA National Inventory -listed (they describe it as the most spectacular pub in England) this is a massive classic Victorian pub opposite the Philharmonic Hall. Its interior décor is outstanding. Of particular note is the gents' loo in brown marble. It is a shame that the beer range did not match up to the variety of



The renowned Philharmonic pub

magnificent Victorian tiles, carving, plaster and copper friezes, stained glass and mosaic floors. On the bar was Caledonian Golden Promise which I tried and found reasonable and also available was Black Sheep Bitter, Well's Bombardier, Jennings Cumberland Ale and Greene King Old Speckled Hen.

Moving ever onwards: to our next pub just round the corner, the Fly in the Loaf. One of two Okells pubs, this used to be a bakery serving Okells beers and guest beers. I found the interior a little soulless. Concentrating on the guests there was Leeds Eager Owl, Fullers Discovery, Hardy and Hansons Olde Trip, Cotswold English Rose and

Nethergate Wild Goose, all in acceptable condition. With another six pubs to visit we could not tarry so we headed off the Belvedere Arms, a street corner community pub. The beers were not up to much, however: Hornbeam Lemon Blossom, which tasted miles too lemony, Caledonian Marching Orders and Northern Wonder -ful Wheat, both of which were not too good. Our stay here was short due to an intense argument which erupted between an elderly couple, which seemed likely to end in a fight!

Our quick exit led to one of Liverpool's most historic pubs, Ye Cracke. Built in the 1850's, it is a friendly, much extended pub and at the time of our visit was most comfortable, being vibrant with jovial drinkers. A fine display of hand pumps sported Cottage Comet

and Somerset and Dorset, Boggart Angel Hill and Bog Eyed, and Phoenix Hopsack and Wobbly Bob, all in OK to pretty good condition.

Off again to the Pilgrim, a busy cellar bar, very studenty, but with a good selection of beers. On the bar were Copper Dragon Golden Pippin, which I thoroughly enjoyed. I gave a miss to Young's Bitter, Thwaites Original and Hydes Jekyll's Gold however.



The Roscoe Head

Then just round the corner to the Roscoe Head, a multiroomed unspoilt pub. Somehow we managed to squeeze into the small front room joining some very friendly locals. This pub has been in every edition of the Good Beer Guide to date, and justifiably so, it is a superb little pub. Beers available were Hanby Golden Admiral, All Gates Hoppiness, Jennings Bitter, Tetley Bitter and unusually, Burton Bitter. I succumbed to the Hanby and excellent it was too.

Ever onwards to the Dispensary owned by Cains. It's a Victorian style alehouse decked out with pharmaceutical fixtures and fittings. Down to the beers. Riverhead Sparth Mild, Yankee IPA, Ossett Pale Gold and Cains Dark Mild, FA and

Bitter. I tried the guest beers and they were very drinkable. Alas, we could not dawdle here as we had one other pub to visit.

Our last pub of the night was The Swan, a basic pub renowned for its music which was very noisy. Some of the party were happy to stay but the fogies amongst us had time to enjoy Nottingham Bullion, Spire Sovereign, Thwaites Bomber, Titanic Lookout, Heather Grozet Gooseberry Wheat Beer, Phoenix Wobbly Bob and a Cottage beer which I could not see the name of properly as the pub was so packed. I tried the Bullion which was tasty but the Sovereign left a lot to be desired. The noise however drove us away to our beds pondering which pubs we would manage tomorrow morning.

Sunday morning and the decision was made. Allan, Brenda and I would pop over to Birkenhead to visit the Stork. Another Grade 11 listed Edwardian pub, and CAMRA National Inventory - listed, this is well worth the ferry trip across the Mersey. It has a bar, lounge and a corridor servery and abounds with original Edwardian fittings, tiles, mosaics and stained glass. As to the beers, Holts Pioneer, Moorehouses' Blond Witch, Northern Soul Time and Fred Hughes Keep Tryin and Butcome Bitter. I only tried the Blond Witch and Soul time, both of which were tasty and hoppy.



Home time soon came round and we reflected on Liverpool as a drinking venue. Superb, excellent, superlative, astounding! But don't just take my word, go and try it for yourself.

Steve Dyson

The White Lion

Hampton in Arden



Now returned to its former glory

Traditional Bar Meals
A la carte restaurant dining
Family Sunday Lunches
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Children's Menu Options

En-suite Accommodation

All this *and* a Great Atmosphere

"The return of the village pub"

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Dates For Your Diary

Branch Meetings

Monday 1st June	The Boat, Catherine de Barnes
Monday 6th July	Red Lion, Earlswood
Monday 3rd August,	Navigation Lapworth
Monday 17th Sept	White Swan, Solihull

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

Committee Meetings

Monday 8th June	Bulls Head, Earlswood
Monday 17th Aug	Woodmans Rest

(8.30pm start. Members may attend Committee meetings but only participate if invited to do so by the Committee)

Socials

Wednesday 3rd June	Solihull Pub of The Year 2008 presentation, Bulls Head, Barston
Saturday 18th July	Coventry Crawl by Train (details tbc)
Saturday 15th August	Worcester Beer Festival (details tbc)
September	Proposed weekend away (date and details tbc)
October	Cider month trip, Cock Horse, Rowington (details tbc)

For more details, contact Secretary Allan Duffy on 01564 200 431 or visit our website : www.solihullcamra.org.uk

Membership Matters

Have you ever thought about joining CAMRA? At only about £20pa, it's well worth while and you will become a member of an ever -increasing organisation which is the most successful consumer group in Europe (see the membership form in this issue for further details). And about that free beer (front page) - JD Wetherspoons are offering new members £20 worth of beer when they join via one of their pubs —in fact, the value of your membership back in beer! What a bargain!

Bob Jackson, Membership Secretary

ADRIAN AND THE COMMITTEE WARMLY WELCOME YOU TO

The Rowington Club

On Rowington Green, Rowington, Warwickshire CV35 7BD

Telephone: 01564 782087

Opening hours: Weekdays: 2.00 pm – 11.00 pm

Weekends and Bank Holidays: 12 Noon – 11.00 pm

Large car park

Come and relax playing dominoes, cards, snooker and pool

Three regularly changing real ales available

(With your support we can really increase the range of ales!)

**Live music most Saturdays, and Special Events
every month**

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

Summer Events:

Sunday 21st June: Ladies' Day, afternoon onwards—free champagne and strawberries and cream for the ladies. Glam up, girls, as there is a prize for the Best Dressed Lady!!

Saturday 11th July (9pm onwards): 60's cover band Out of The Blue

August Bank Holiday: Beer Festival, Saturday, Sunday and Monday —live music throughout, starting with The Emulsions on Saturday afternoon @3pm. 15+ real ales, 4+ real ciders; BBQ Saturday, pig roast Sunday and Monday.

Saturday evening events a speciality: phone the Club for details of who's on - all who come will be welcome.

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

The Golden Acre

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



Three guest ales
plus a regularly
changing
traditional cider

Children Welcome
Beer garden with
play frames

Rowood Drive

Damsonwood, Solihull

Tel. 0121 704 9002

Entertainment for all....

Dominoes & Nuts Poker League
(newcomers welcome!): Mondays

Darts: Tuesdays and Thursdays

Karaoke: Every Thursday

Regular entertainment Saturdays

Big screen sports regularly featured

Why not join one of our sports teams?

Further information from the pub on
0121 704 9002

Try our authentic Chinese food

Eat in and/or Take -away

0121 711 8130

Mondays -Saturdays (except Tuesdays) 5.00 - 11.30pm

Sundays: Eat -in 5.00 -10.30pm Take -away 5.00 -11.30pm

York's great for a pub crawl

At the last count York had over 200 pubs —so how to be sure you pick a winner? Richard Lewis, a CAMRA member who lives in York but subscribes to our magazine, is keen to pass on details of his favourite pubs there. Alphabetically, this is a rundown of some of the most popular pubs in the City.

The Ackhorne has a good beer choice, whilst the Bluebell has won many CAMRA awards and features a CAMRA National Inventory interior, 5 regular real ales plus guest beers. Brigantes Bar & Brasserie might sound ultra -modern, but dates back to the 1800s and boasts 8 cask beers, plus several European choices. The Golden Lion, although a City pub, has a country feel, with 4 regulars plus guest beers. The Maltings, near the station, has 6 guest beers plus real ciders —watch out for the home -cooked chilli. The multi -roomed Minster Inn features traditional games with its ales; whilst the Old Starre Inn claims to be the oldest pub in York, with little snugs, although it can get busy. The Rook and Gaskill has 12 hand pumps and a well -balanced range of beers.

Moving slightly further afield, the Runchbowl in Stonegate (not to be confused with the JD Wetherspoon pub of the same name in the City centre) has a traditional appearance with a gabled black -and -white frontage. It is supposed to be haunted —but don't let that put you off a great selection of food and a good choice of ales.

Richard says “There are some excellent pubs and a day or weekend visit is a must”.

Further information on pubs in York can be found on www.YorkCamra.free-online.co.uk and, of course, in the Good Beer Guide, past and present.

The Grenville Club

The premier snooker venue in Solihull, at 702 Warwick Road



Open to guests from 7pm to midnight, Mondays to Saturdays.

Open longer hours to members. One real ale always available.

Ring 0121 705 0701 for further details and membership information.

Community pubs drawn to MPs attention

On Wednesday 13th May, at a meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group, MPs were presented with a new report which highlighted the importance of pubs to society and called for urgent action to avert the closure of 40 pubs a week. The report included a pioneering new method of calculating the social and economic benefit generated by well run community pubs and finds that pubs are:

- the most popular place where people can mix socially with others from different backgrounds
- a great supporter of charity, with over £3,000 raised per pub every year
- outside of the home the most popular place for people to meet their neighbours
- a place for people to make new friends - more than one in five pub goers has made a new friend in a pub in the past six months.

Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, said "At a time of unprecedented pub closures, this report will help Local Councils and National Government recognise the importance of well run pubs to strong communities and thriving local economies. Well-run community pubs not only provide a safe and relaxed environment for people to enjoy a drink but they also form the bedrock of community life and people's social networks. Virtual networking sites will never replace the experience of socialising in person in the Great British Pub."

Pub shares rattled

Shares in UK pub firms plunged after MPs called for the pub industry to be investigated over practices that may be forcing up drinks prices. MPs want the Competition Commission to investigate arrangements that oblige pub tenants to take beer supplies only from their landlords. The Business and Enterprise Select Committee said the practice, known as the beer tie, led to an ever-increasing disparity between pubs and shop prices. It was noted that the Office of Fair Trading had been reluctant to look again at the beer tie's impact since a 2004 study.

There have been claims that firms are imposing high rents but failing to pass on the discounts they get on beer to tenants. This in turn prevents the lessees from passing on the benefit to the consumer in terms of reduced prices. The wide disparity between pub prices and those in off-licences and supermarkets was undermining the viability of many pubs as a result. An average of 39 pubs closed every week in 2008, compared with 8 in 2004, the report added. Other pressures on pubs, such as changing consumer preferences and recession were conceded by the MPs, but they said "It is to the overall detriment of the consumer if pubs are forced to close due to uncompetitive practices in the market."

The MPs also criticised pub firms selling sites with restrictive clauses stating that they should no longer be used as pubs, with the report saying that it should be for the market to decide whether a pub is unviable and not for a pubco to restrict the building's use.

The Federation of Small Businesses welcomed an OFT investigation, saying that the tie was unfair and beer prices should be capped at 10% above the wholesale price.

Pub firm Enterprise angry at Beer Tie probe

Enterprise Inns, one of the UK's largest pub companies, has hit out at campaigners seeking the end of the beer tie, following a the request from a committee of MPs for the practice to be investigated. Enterprise Inns' Chief Executive Ted Tuppen warned in a letter to MPs that pub landlords seeking to end the tie were "in danger of creating misunderstandings about the pub industry as a whole" and diverting attention from the "real issues that require urgent action now to avoid increasing business failures, job losses and falling tax revenues".

Enterprise saw pre-tax profit fall from £122million to £9million for the half year to March 2009, which together with other measures taken by the pubco, meant its shares tumbled 13p to 160p. Around 100 "poor quality and underperforming licensees" have been removed, at a total cost of to Enterprise of £5million.

The pubco is also expected to sell 200 -300 pubs. Enterprise Inns is Shirley -based but it is not known whether any of the pubs in Shirley or immediate areas will be hit. Ted Tuppen said that most of the firm's pubs continued to trade successfully thanks to their flexible and innovative landlords, and added that "good-quality licensees" would succeed.

CAMRA offers up a recipe for success

CAMRA is offering the chance to recreate some of Britain's best-loved beers and learn the historic art of brewing with *Brew Your Own British Real Ale*, a new CAMRA publication by Graham Wheeler. Heralding the recent success of craft brewing in the UK, Wheeler's self-proclaimed 'recipe book' is a simple step by step guide to producing great beer, breaking down technical jargon to simplify the brewing experience for the reader.

Brew Your Own British Real Ale is a perennial favourite among real ale aficionados, and thanks in part to recent television documentaries such as Neil Morrissey's 'Risky Business', which have increased public interest in brewing real ale, there has never been a better time for a novice to learn the art. Simon Hall, Managing Editor, CAMRA Books, said: 'With more small brewers in operation across the UK than at any other time since the Second World War, *Brew Your Own British Real Ale* is a fantastic insight into this thriving industry. Since the previous edition of the book there have been wholesale changes in the brewing field and this book seeks to address some of these recent developments.'

For ease of use, the book begins with a handful of basic brewing methods before targeting the staple ingredients of hops, yeast and water. Instructions are bullet-pointed and numbered, with the text divided up by simple diagrams. The actual recipes feature near the end of the text, with a vast array of brew types ranging from CAMRA Champion beers past and present, to a few unusual selections for avid home-brewers to emulate.

Brew Your Own British Real Ale can be bought directly from the CAMRA website at www.camra.org.uk, as well from all good book stores. The book is priced at £12.99 for CAMRA members and £14.99 for non-members.

"Not until about halfway through your pint do you stop drinking for the Government and start drinking for yourself."

Comedian Al 'The Pub' Landlord' Murray on the tax on beer.

From further afield.....

It's a long way to go for a pint!

Safi Qurashi, a millionaire who is one of Dubai's most successful property developers, is still a UK lad at heart. Hailing originally from Balham, he says he is proud of his British



heritage —and to prove it, has bought the island of Britain in the stunning new World island development off the coast of Dubai.

The archipelago, which is constructed largely from sand dredged for the sea —similar to the Palm Tree development of a few years ago —resembles a map of the world and will cost an estimated £10billion to complete. Mr Qurashi has great plans for his 11 acres, and

aims to recreate the best of Great Britain in the sunshine by building apartments not only for the super-rich, but also those on more limited budgets. He also intends to bring a touch of nostalgia to his island by importing architectural styles from home and building a replica of a traditional London pub.

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Beer quotes from Dave Barry, American author and columnist

"Not all chemicals are bad. Without chemicals such as hydrogen and oxygen, for example, there would be no way to make water, a vital ingredient in beer."

"Without question, the greatest invention in the history of mankind is beer. Oh, I grant you that the wheel was also a fine invention, but the wheel does not go nearly as well with pizza."

"The letters in 'Brace Beemer' can be arranged to spell 'Embrace Beer' (referring to the actor who played the Lone Ranger on radio).



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 in 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

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.

Lloyds No.1 bars have pleasant background music; 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. With 15 hand pumps, we are proud that we can offer discerning drinkers a wide range of real ales plus other drinks to enhance their visit.

For any queries: 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, it was 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 White Swan is enjoying its popularity within the town and is hoping to run a mini -beer festival in the near future.



Wye Valley Brewery
Herefordshire

www.wyevalleybrewery.co.uk