



Solihull



Drinker

Issue No 103
Winter 2024

Free
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Help us support local pubs and real ale.

CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale) has been campaigning for years supporting pubs and clubs, recognising that they are vital community resources - a place people can meet in a relaxed, social environment, helping to prevent loneliness, and where local teams or clubs are run from.

For our Solihull & District branch a core campaigning tool is this Solihull Drinker magazine, which is printed quarterly and distributed to pubs and clubs across our branch area, plus a few other nearby locations. It's also carried on our social media pages, so we have a very good overall local reach.

We need your help to allow us to continue supporting you and your community locally. We need advertisers to cover the cost of printing this free magazine. So, can you help us to help you, by advertising in the magazine?

Advertisers definitely do not need to be directly beer or pub related. We are very happy to accept adverts from tradespeople, businesses, restaurants or

take-aways, taxi companies or other services looking for local reach.

It might be possible for certain sectors to advertise with us on an exclusive basis (if you wanted to be the only taxi business or take-away for example).

We publish quarterly at the start of March, June, September and December and it doesn't cost the earth (see page 15 for our advertising rates).

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Discounts are available to CAMRA members (10% off) and we also offer 10% off for anyone taking out an advert for 4 consecutive editions (you can amend your advert for each issue, for example if you wanted to include time bound offers).

If you qualify for both, then we offer a 20% total discount.

If you can help us, then you will find examples of adverts in this issue or in back copies on our website www.solihullcamra.org.uk, or our editor Ray (editor@solihullcamra.org.uk) is very happy to discuss potential adverts with you, and may be able to help you put an advert together.

If you're already advertising with us, many thanks for your continued support.

ALE HUB

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Both our micropubs have 4 rotating cask ales and 2 craft beers as well as a range of other drinks. We are dog friendly and under 18's are welcome until 6pm.

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Thursday - Saturday: 09:00 - 23:00

Coffee Served from: 09:00 - 14:00

Ale Hub Shirley, 277 Longmore Road, Shirley, Solihull, B90 3ER



Ale Hub Dickens Heath

Opening Hours:

Sunday - Wednesday: 12:00 - 22:00

Thursday - Saturday: 12:00 - 23:00

Ale Hub Dickens Heath, 73 Main Street, Dickens Heath, Solihull, B90 1UB



Dogs Are Welcome!

Dates for your diary

Branch Meetings

(Branch meetings start at 8.00pm except where noted otherwise)

Monday 6 January	The Wharf, Hockley Heath
Monday 3 February – AGM	KDCC
Monday 3 March	Bell, Tanworth in Arden

For more details and contacts for the above, please call Secretary Allan Duffy on 01564 200431 or visit our website www.solihull.camra.org.uk

Committee Meetings

(8.00 start. Members may attend but only participate if invited to do so)

Monday 20 January	KDRC
Monday 17 March	Crown, Claverdon

Socials

Friday 10 January	Halesowen crawl
Saturday 25 January	(possible) GBG trip
Wed 5 – Fri 7 March	Liverpool trip

For more details of socials please email steve_dyson@solihull.camra.org.uk

Most, though not all, of our local pubs have disabled access. If you wish to attend a meeting and require assistance please contact us beforehand and we will do our best to help

Upcoming Midlands Area Beer Festivals and Events

FOR NATIONAL BEER FESTIVALS PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING LINK:

www.camra.org.uk/beer-festivals-events/

20 - 21 Dec 2024 (Fri – Sat)

Jingle Brews
Green Duck Brewing Co
Rufford Road
Stourbridge
DY9 7ND

6 - 8 Feb 2025 (Thurs– Sat)

Tewkesbury winter ales festival
65 Barton Street
Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire
GL20 5PX (Cont pg 4)

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Contributions, comments and advertising enquiries should be sent to editor@solihull.camra.org.uk

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The Editor reserves the right to amend or shorten any items in the newsletter, but will always strive to honour the spirit & intention of the contribution



Campaign
for
Real Ale

12 - 15 Feb 2025 (Wed - Sat)

Great British Beer Festival Winter
Magna Science Adventure Centre
Magna Way
Templeborough
Rotherham S60 1FD

27 - 29 March 2025 (Thurs – Sat)

Burton beer festival
Burton Town Hall
further details still to be announced

Notice of Branch Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the Solihull & District CAMRA AGM, which will take place at the Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club on Monday 3 February 2025, starting at 8.30pm.

The AGM will be preceded by a short branch meeting, starting at 8.0pm.

If any current committee member wishes to stand down, or if anyone wishes to apply to take up a Committee Post (all Committee Posts are open to any Solihull & District branch member), in both instances it would be appreciated if you would please email your intentions at least two weeks before the AGM to the Chair Martin Buck at martin@durlston.com.

There will be the usual beery raffle, to go towards the costs of the AGM buffet, for which beer related prize donations would be gratefully received on the night.

Kelham Island Visit

Personally, I never can turn down the opportunity to visit Kelham Island in Sheffield, and its superb pubs. Furthermore, it is easily undertaken in a day. The 10.03 train from Birmingham New Street arrives in Sheffield at 11.18 (*train times should be checked before travel - editor*).

Our first port of call was the Sheffield Tap on platform 1b of the station. It opens at 11.00 and is run by Thornbridge Brewery. Originally the first-class refreshments room and stationmasters' accommodation, it now sports an onsite brewery, Tapped (pictured above), and has up to 10 handpumps. Half an hour here I am afraid, but you may be able to pop in for a quick one before your train home. Cross all the platforms now to get the tram [signed Malin Bridge and on the Blue Line].



Conductors are on the trams and if you hold a concessionary bus pass there is no charge.

Alight at Shalesmoor, and just round the corner is the Wellington, a Neepsend pub, and very traditional. 4 beers here

including a guest. Back on the tram alighting at Infirmary [the next stop]. Cross the road and head down Bedford Street. Cross the A61 into Rutland Street. As you cross the river look left - something strange? Well, turn next left and find the Gardeners Rest. A truly superb pub with up to 5 beers. Do pop outside and look at the garden. This is what you saw on crossing the river.

Double back now. Hungry? Then pop into the Cutlery Works where various street foods are available together with 2 beers on handpull. Leaving, turn right and head to Ball Street. Right here to cross the river. Immediately after the bridge turn left down the alleyway and this brings you into the heart of Kelham Island. You enter a large open space and to the right you will see Salt. This is a modern bar with 4 handpulls. The draw here is Salts' own beers. Owned by Ossett the beers taste very similar to Ossetts' range.

Continue down Green Lane and ahead of you is the Kelham Island Tavern.

Spoilt for choice here with up to 12 beers served in a friendly, no frills local. Backtrack into Alma Street and to the Fat Cat, home to the original Kelham Island Brewery and its flagship beer Pale Rider. The pub is a Victorian street corner, multi roomed establishment with up to 8 beers. Pale Rider is usually available and is now brewed by Thornbridge.

Left out of here towards the A61. Cross it to enter Gibraltar Street and Shakespeare's is just ahead of you. Another multi roomed pub, much larger than the Fat Cat and with 7 beers to try. There are many more to try in Kelham Island, such as Alder and the Harlequin - you can't do them all! A short walk uphill to the cathedral where trams will take you back to the station and maybe a quick one in the Tap!

A worthwhile whirlwind tour of Sheffield.

Steve Dyson

Solihull

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Day trip to Banbury

Banbury? Surely there aren't many pubs worth visiting there? Well, that was the question I put to Paul when he suggested this. But he'd visited a few times recently on business and done a little research (I wonder exactly what that entails?) while there, and he was very clear that it was well worth a day out.

I tend to value his opinion on matters beer related (though definitely not his adverse position on Belgian beers) so a plan was put in place for a branch social. After all, it's only a relatively short hop down the Chiltern line from Solihull/Dorridge. Others agreed as we had a pretty good turnout.

Our first port of call was a recommendation by the local branch, the Bell on Middleton Road, which is only a short walk from the railway station. A decent pub, though with only 2 real ales on at the time of our visit. A good place to start though and we sat outside (Paul always seems to manage to plan these days out when it's good weather!) in their back yard while waiting for latecomers to arrive.

From there, Paul led us into town and along the canal side to the Tap Social Movement at Lock 29, which has seating both next to the canal and also inside the Castle Quay Shopping Centre. They do have real ale on at times (none today) though their main offering comes in the form of around 10 craft ales. As some of our group are simply not into craft they didn't stop. However, I had a pleasant enough half of strawberry sour (yes, I like sour beers - just as long as that was the intention of the brewer...), before we moved on, to catch up with the others at the Three Pigeons Inn on Southam Road.

As far as buildings go, I was intrigued with this one. It's a 17th-century thatched coaching inn situated very close to Banbury town centre (photo above right).

I had an excellent pint of Purity Pure Gold, but it's the low beams in the main bar area that amused me. Even Paul had to duck, and I couldn't even stand fully upright between them.



A short walk then took us to the local branch pub of the year, the White Horse (pictured below) on North Bar Street. Easy to see why the local branch like it so much. An excellent choice of real ales with offerings from Everards, Little Ox and Mighty Oak and a very friendly welcome make this a definite place to linger for a while. There's also a very interesting wall in the garden showing the lost pubs of Banbury, which rather drives home the point regarding how many pubs there used to be.



Another very short walk, just around the corner into Parson's Street, where we

arrived at Ye Olde Reine Deer (photo of our motley looking bunch outside pictured below), an unapologetically Hook Norton pub with the widest range of its beers I'd seen in one place in a while, including seasonal ones. It's a traditional old English pub which first became an inn in 1570 and features original wood panelling dating from the English Civil War. It is reported to be the location where Cromwell's men met to plan the Battle of Edge Hill.

Such 'facts' are always interesting. I volunteer as a room guide at Packwood House in Warwickshire (National Trust) and they have a bedroom named after General Henry Ireton, who was one of Cromwell's generals and fought at Edge Hill. He is supposed to have stayed at Packwood on the eve of the battle. So, if he was there, he couldn't really have been with the others in Banbury, unless of course he could be in two places at once....clever chaps, these Roundheads.



It was at Ye Olde Reine Deer that most of us decided to have lunch. The food was good too.

The Old Auctioneer is only a few doors away in Parson's Street and is another quirky old pub, being the third oldest building (1596) in Banbury, and a survivor of their great fire of 1628. It has a lovely large garden area to the rear, with plenty of olive trees, and they seem to have a good thing going with using recycled materials. Paul has eaten here before and says the food is

good. Definitely have a wander around to get a feel for the history of this place. My only disappointment was the limited choice of real ales (2) for a pub of this size.

That meant we didn't stop long, and soon made our way to the Apothecary Tap in Butcher's Row. By this point our numbers had thinned out somewhat and probably no bad thing as this place is very much craft only, with around 10 different offerings. Its website says it's Banbury's only specialist craft beer bar and bottle shop. It was very welcoming, but obviously not to everyone's liking. They opened in April 2019 and specialise in small batch craft beers from independent brewers, both local and from around the globe.

It was only a very short walk then to the Wetherspoon Coach & Horses which, in my opinion, looks nicer outside than in. Again, we didn't stop long.

By the point we moved on it was only Paul and I left. We decided to call in on the Cherwell in Broad Street but were very disappointed to see glasses over the hand pulls, so no real ale at that time.

As we wanted a final couple of halves we chose to return to the White Horse in North Bar Street. Although we'd only been in the White Horse a few hours earlier, quite a few of the handpumps had changed their offering and it was considerably busier. I had a rather pleasant Everard's Ricochet.

The day was a definite eye-opener for me. I'd never considered Banbury as a decent venue for a day out drinking. The pubs are interesting (some more so than others, but that's the same anywhere), it's easy to walk round, easy to get to and from on the train and you can find some unusual real ales.

Thanks to Paul for organising.

Ray Cooke



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CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2024/25



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Steak nights Thurs from 5.0pm
Curry nights Wed from 5.0pm

<p>MONDAY & THURSDAY</p> <p>CASK Ales £1 OFF ALL DAY</p>	<p><i>Cocktails</i></p> <p>2 FOR £12.50</p> <p>SHOTS 4 FOR £12.00</p>
<p>THURSDAY & SUNDAY</p> <p>WINE Club Bottles FROM £12.99</p>	<p>FRIDAY & SATURDAY</p> <p>Fizz WEEKEND Bottles FROM £14</p>

GRESWOLDE ARMS (formerly the Mermaid Inn), Knowle

The Greswolde was originally an early 17th century coaching inn, which was called "The Mermaid Inn" from about 1630. In the early 18th century the premises were acquired by the Greswolde family of Malvern Hall and remained in their ownership for over two centuries. In 1829 the name was changed, in recognition of the Greswolde Family, to the "Mermaid and Greswolde Arms Inn". It became known simply as the Greswolde Arms in 1858. The oldest part of The Greswolde Arms is the central section, where its steep gables appear to have been a timber-framed structure.

During the stagecoach era the Mermaid became an important coaching inn and posting house with extensive stabling for both stage and post coach horses. After the turnpike road to Warwick was opened in the 18th century, it became the

Dorridge Station) in 1852 the coaching trade rapidly declined and the Greswolde adapted to cater for different clientele. According to Pigot's Directory of 1888 the Proprietor was Joseph Morrill and the Greswolde advertised itself as a "*family & commercial hotel; headquarters for the Tourists Cycling Club; agent for Ind, Coope & Co.'s Burton Ales; picnic parties & clubs catered for; good lawn tennis and bowling green; horses & carriages for hire on the shortest notice*". (The bowling green was where Crabmill Close is now.)

In 1935 the Greswolde Arms was sold to the Bendall family who extended the inn, adding 12 new bedrooms. The following year an open-air lido was built with wide terraces for sun-bathing surrounded by lawns. The Lido closed in the mid-1960's. In more recent years the Greswolde has changed hands several



times including being owned by the Spirit Pub Company's Good Night Inns chain and is currently part of the Chef & Brewer brand of Greene King.

This is an aerial view of the Greswolde Arms c.1936 depicting the extensive Lido

stop for up to 11 stagecoaches on their journey from Birmingham to London as well as to places such as Warwick, Leamington and Oxford.

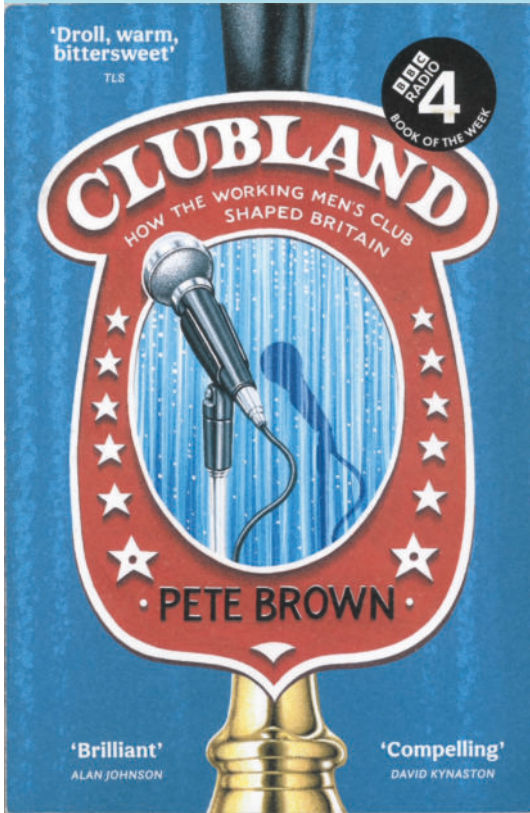
Throughout the 18th and into the 19th centuries the Greswoldes continued to extend the property to accommodate the expanding coaching trade. After the opening of a station on the Great Western Railway at Knowle (now

in the rear and garage to the left. Courtesy of the Knowle Local History Society (Information about the society and its publications can be found here- <http://knowlehistory.org.uk/>).

If you would like your pub to be featured in this series please contact the editor (editor@solihullcamra.org.uk)

(Dr) Iain Wells

CLUBLAND – book review Martin Buck



rooms and libraries, lectures on worthy topics – and no alcohol.

Unsurprisingly, this wasn't a great success; clubs only became popular and successful once they started serving beer. To be honest, I found the first two chapters or so of Brown's book to be quite hard work; meticulously researched, it veered a bit further towards social history to be truly gripping. Brown doesn't go out of his way to hide his disdain for how the upper classes viewed the working poor; there were multiple attempts to shut down the club movement, simply on the basis that if working men were enjoying themselves it couldn't be good.

Brown goes on to look at clubs as entertainment venues – whether it was communal singing (inherited from rural village traditions, an early version of karaoke!) or professional singers, comedians and bingo, which contributed to the rise of the music hall. The second half of the book looks at clubs in the north; with the concentration of heavy industry and mining, there were more clubs than in the south.

I grew up in a north Warwickshire village, in mining country as well as brickworks. Within a quarter of a mile of my home were Conservative, Liberal and Social clubs; the Social was demolished a few years back, replaced by housing, but the other two remain (although the 'Conny' has dropped that part of its name).

In *Clubland*, Pete Brown charts the rise of Working Men's clubs along with the umbrella organisation the CIU – and their more recent decline. In the early days clubs were set up by the upper class, both because they were concerned at men spending all their free time in pubs and gin palaces, and because they thought the working class should be encouraged to 'improve' themselves. So, there were reading

Snooker has always been popular in the clubs – those with the space to accommodate the tables, and the profit to cover the considerable expense. Brown has a chapter on games, mostly focusing on bingo and snooker. In 1965 the National Individual Snooker Championship was held at the Canley Social Club and was won by Ray Rearden; Alex 'Hurricane' Higgins won his first World Championship at the Selly Park War Memorial Royal British Legion club.

He also looks at how the club movement treated women as second-class citizens for far too long – private member clubs were exempt from equality legislation until 2010. This was a factor in the decline of clubs – some clubs would allow women to be members, but not to

join the committee or sign in visitors, others would allow women in when accompanied by their spouse (but, heaven forbid, not buy their own drinks) – and some flatly refused to allow even that. So, the world changed around them; in the 90s Bass did research and found that women didn't like going into pubs on their own because they couldn't see inside before they went in, they didn't like waiting at a bar where there was a row of men sat on bar stools, and the wine was usually rubbish. So, Bass launched the All Bar One chain, which addressed all those issues.

There's an interesting contradiction at the heart of this book. It's a (mostly) affectionate and nostalgic look at the history and social importance of the club movement, while not shying away from pointing out the flaws – especially of the CIU. Yet it's a movement that Brown, apart from childhood Christmases, never really experienced. He grew up in Barnsley, deep in northern clubland; but instead of mining or heavy industry, he went to university for Management Studies. Early in chapter 1 he recounts being taken by his dad to the club on a

return home from uni... and simply not fitting in, not being accepted by his dad's friends. I get the feeling that, as he's grown older, he's come to realise – and regret – what he missed out on; the camaraderie, the warmth, the sheer sense of community that's at the heart of any successful club.

This book is a bit of a departure for Pete Brown. His others have generally been celebrations of some aspect of beer and pubs – whether it's the brewing process and ingredients (*Miracle Brew*), pubs, bars and drinking culture (*Three Sheets to the Wind*) or the classic India Pale Ale (*Hops and Glory*). This one feels like a requiem for the club movement as it continues its decline, a continuing slide into oblivion caused by an aging clientele, a decline in the number of people going out drinking as well as the ever-increasing entertainment alternatives. It's definitely worth a read, especially because the club movement has been so neglected in books and literature.

Martin Buck
Branch Chair

London (heritage pubs) trail

Paul organised a trip to visit some of the older and more interesting pubs in London, though in a day you can only ever touch on a few of these, and we were not necessarily sticking to any strict definition of what are heritage pubs.

Having arrived at Marylebone Station we headed off on the tube to Euston and our first stop the Euston Tap, which occupies the stunning Grade II listed West Lodge in Euston Square. It regularly features up to 7 changing cask beers and one cider, plus various interesting keg beer taps bringing exotic and unusual brews from around the world. We took our well-kept cask ales upstairs via the spiral metal staircase.

From here we walked toward the stunning St Pancras Station and the

Scottish Stores. Another interesting and quirky building and one where Paul had 'bigged up' the beer selection. Unfortunately, I felt somewhat underwhelmed, though it seems we visited on a poor day. However, I knew our next stop would not disappoint, as Paul and I had undertaken a recce a few months earlier and this had been one of my favourites, the Queen's Head in Acton Street (pictured on next page). We'd had excellent Redemption Ales that time but there were Iron Pier and Burning Sky on as well Redemption this time. The Iron Pier dark mild was the best I had all day.

From here it was off to the Lamb in Bloomsbury, a beautifully preserved, Grade II listed and CAMRA Heritage Victorian pub with dark blue upholstery, a small snug bar and etched glass snob



Queen's Head, Acton Street

screens in place above the bar. Not a huge selection of ales but kept in decent condition. Then a short walk to the Grade II listed Duke (formerly Duke of York) in Roger Street. As they only had Landlord (nothing wrong with that of course) we decided not to stop, so made our way to the Lady Ottoline in Northington Street. This is a single bar pub with décor very much featuring information about Lady Ottoline, a literary hostess and patron of the arts, and a strong supporter of the Bloomsbury Set.

A bit of a walk next, along Gray's Inn Road, and on to the Sam Smith's Cittie of Yorke, another Grade II listed building and CAMRA Heritage Pub. A pub has been on this site since 1430; a coffee house in the C17, and its brick cellars may be from this era. However, the main splendour, the rear room, comes from a 1923/4 rebuild as a romantic evocation of Olde Englande. Though it's a fabulous building, none of us fancied

Sam Smith's beer so we moved on to the Olde Mitre.

Ye Olde Mitre is basically hidden in an alley off Ely Place. Again, Grade II listed and Identified by CAMRA as having a nationally important historic interior. It's one of my favourite London pubs and always has a great selection of ales and my half each of Pig & Porter Cosmic Jive, and Dark Star American Pale Ale definitely didn't disappoint. As we were leaving a delivery of wooden firkins was arriving – not often you see beer in the wood.

Then we were off to the Viaduct Tavern, a Grade II listed Victorian pub and former gin palace in Newgate Street. It's a Fullers' pub with an ornate interior and tall mirrors alternating with three fine paintings of Pre-Raphaelite style women. It was here our party of 8 split with most heading back to Marylebone, leaving only 3 of us to walk on to Ye Olde Watling, near St Pauls. It was built by Christopher Wren in 1668, reputedly using wood salvaged from old ships, though the old-world timber-framed interior largely dates from a sympathetic 1901 refit. It's a relatively small pub so we were glad the weather was kind enough for us to drink outside.

Walking past Cannon Street Station, we came to the Bell, an even smaller pub and with crowds standing around outside and in, so we decided not to stop but walked down to London Bridge and across the river into Borough High Street, where you will find the George Inn, in a courtyard just off the main road. It's owned by the National Trust and is the last galleried pub in London (see photo on page 12), so unsurprisingly this is Grade I listed. It was rebuilt in 1676 after a major fire in Southwark, is run by Greene King and is one of 39 pubs the National Trust look after. Though the beer isn't always exciting, it's a must visit for the building.

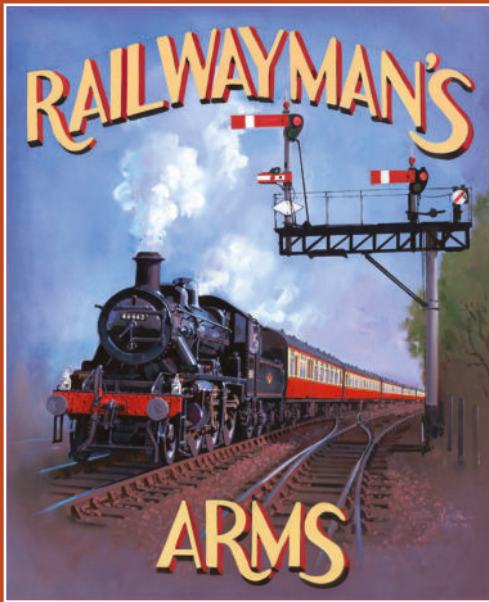
It's only a short walk then to the King's Arms in Newcomen Street, a Grade II listed, single-room pub with a traditional and comfortable interior. Had a nice half



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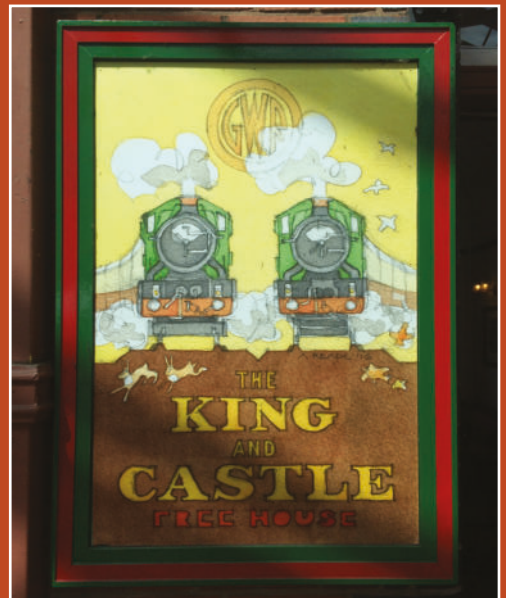
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Galleried exterior at George Inn

of Dark Star Hophead here but was looking forward to our next, location, the

Miller which is very close to Guy's Hospital. This is most definitely not a heritage pub, but a 'boxy' non-descript structure and we'd visited this on our recce previously and been more than pleasantly impressed, both with the selection of real ales and the quality of the burgers. Though there was nothing wrong with either the food or the beer we were hugely underwhelmed this time. So, I'd say it's worth calling in, but you might decide not to stay.

By now we were a little 'beered out' so off to London Bridge tube station and out at Baker Street, where we decided on a final half at the Volunteer, before walking up to Marylebone and catching the train home.

It was a long day, with plenty of walking but the heritage pubs were fascinating and it does kind of top things off when you also find good, and tasty real ale too. Thanks to Paul for organising.

Ray Cooke

Useful Contact Numbers

Chair/Beer Festival Organiser

Martin Buck. 01564 770708

Secretary

Allan Duffy 01564 200431

Membership

Dave Mckowen 01564 778955

Social media

Martin Robins 07771 842046

Website

Keith Whitehouse

webmaster@solihull.camra.org.uk

Pubs Campaigning / Cider & Perry

Paul Wigley 07402 312457

Treasurer

Brenda Duffy 01564 200431

Solihull Drinker Editor

Ray Cooke 01564 777890

Social co-ordinator

Steve Dyson

steve_dyson@solihull.camra.org.uk

Young Members

Iain Wells

07810 827043

Trading Standards contacts:

For local consumer advice in our area please contact the following

Solihull – www.solihull.gov.uk/tradingstandards

Warwickshire – www.warwickshire.gov.uk/contactustradingstandards

Citizens Advice Consumer Service – phone 03454 040506

Advertise Your Business Here With Us

We distribute around 2500 free copies to some 80 pubs (and some clubs, restaurants and off licences) around Solihull, and local parts of Warwickshire and Birmingham. This magazine also goes onto our website and onto our social media pages. This gives you the opportunity to put your business in front of people who are in the habit of visiting pubs and restaurants, etc.

You definitely don't have to be a pub or restaurant to advertise. Any business seeking local reach (tradespeople, take aways, taxi companies etc) could benefit. For further details or information about advertising, or to discuss any proposed advert, please contact editor@solihull.camra.org.uk

It might be possible for us to offer adverts for certain sectors on an exclusive basis, so if you run a taxi company (as an example) we might be able to agree that yours would be the only such advertiser benefitting from being in our magazine.

Our advertising is competitively priced, see rates set out below.

We offer a 10% discount for advertisements by CAMRA members (membership number required). We also offer a 10% discount for advertisers taking out an advert for 4 consecutive editions (the advert can be amended for each edition, if you needed to include time related offers for example). If both discounts are applied, it is 20% off the advertising rate quoted below.

SIZE	INNER PAGES	FRONT COVER
Full (A5) page	£120.00	Not available
1 / 2 page	£90.00	£120 (landscape only)
1 / 3 page	£66.00	£90.00
1 / 4 page	£54.00	£72.00
1 / 6 page	£42.00	£56.00

CAMRA Real Ale, Cider and Perry Vouchers

The CAMRA Voucher scheme is a member benefit that entitles members to £30 (60 x 50p) vouchers off a pint of Real Ale, Cider or Perry. The vouchers in this CAMRA owned and operated scheme remain valid for the length of membership for added flexibility.

They are redeemable at over 1,550 pubs nationwide, including J D Wetherspoon and Amber Taverns managed pubs. To get an up-to-date listing for pubs participating near you, enter your postcode at www.camra.org.uk/join/membership-benefits/camra-voucher-scheme

CAMRA promotes responsible drinking and thus encourages all vouchers to be used responsibly at all times.



A Warm Welcome to the English Riviera



**CAMRA Members' Weekend,
AGM & Conference
Riviera Centre, Torquay**

11-13 April 2025

Hosted by Devon Branches



CAMRA AGM

CAMRA hold a Members' Weekend, AGM & Conference in April each year, and this popular event is open to all CAMRA members. In 2025 the Devon branches are set to host the event at the Riviera Centre in Torquay.

It gives all a chance to discuss motions at Conference, and over 500 members have already registered. You have a great opportunity to socialise in the onsite bar, which will be showcasing great beer, cider and perries from the region.

There will be information sessions plus talks, tastings and pub trails taking place outside of the formal AGM and Conference. It's a chance to meet likeminded people and have a great time.

If you'd like to register or to volunteer to help out, or just have a question to ask then please contact

membersweekend@camra.org.uk

Christmas gift ideas

Christmas is nearly upon us, and you might still be wondering what to get a loved one or friend, or even want to pass on gift ideas to those that might be buying for you (the best way to get a present you actually want!).

One ideal present is to buy a gift of CAMRA membership, or to suggest someone get that for you.

Our membership secretary Dave sets out some advantages of membership on page 19, and how to go about obtaining it. Just to remind you, go to the CAMRA website www.camra.org.uk and open the membership pages.

For only £32.50 (around 58p a week), give the gift of CAMRA Membership, a whole year's worth of enjoyment, for the beer or pub lover in your life. And while they're out enjoying good beer and great

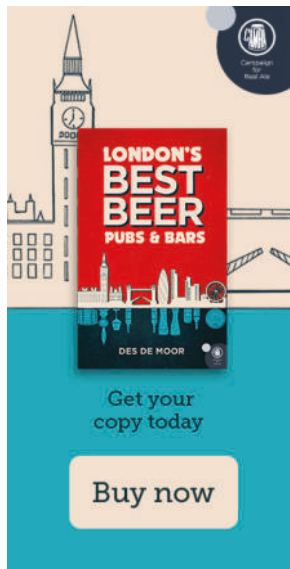
pubs, your gift will be helping us to protect the great British pub and everything that goes with it.



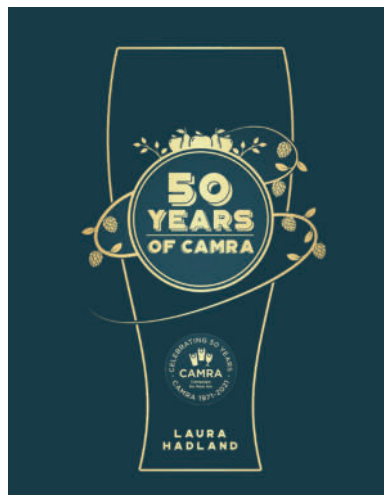
Or you might be interested in one of the publications from CAMRA Books.

Here you can buy the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2025, which lists the carefully chosen (by each CAMRA branch) pubs that consistently offer good quality real ale, cider & perry, and in a setting that you will want to experience.

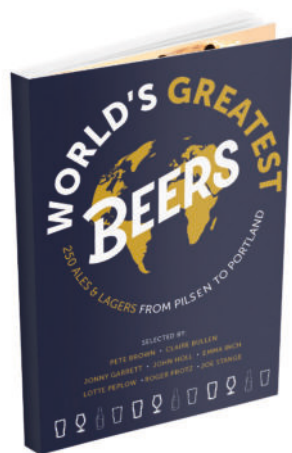
Or you might want to obtain a regional or local guide to pubs in an area you'd like to visit,.....



....or maybe a history of CAMRA's first 50 years



....or something about beers on a worldwide stage



....or perhaps a guide to heritage pubs



Whatever you might be interested in, do have a look at the publications area of our website www.camra.org.uk. You could well find the ideal Christmas present.

Hail to the Ale

The Saracens Head in Shirley is being marketed as a Greene King franchise opportunity, with one offer in at present. It will also close briefly for a makeover during November.

The Wharf has reopened under the Stout & Stones banner, though it remains under Greene King ownership & appears possibly to be tied into their beers? The pub will close for refurbishment sometime in the New Year.

It's pleasing to see that the Crown at Claverdon has reopened. It also appears to have some form of tie in with Greene King.

The Fieldhouse has reopened following refurbishment and continues to host occasional meet the brewer evenings. The Red Lion in Knowle is due to close for refurbishment around May 2025. The Bell at Tanworth in Arden has reopened and is being run by a father & son team.

3 real ales and open to suggestions on what to stock. Good reports on home cooked food.

The Station at Henley appears to have come to some agreement with Silhill Brewery. We are unclear if this means they will stock Silhill beers or whether Silhill will brew beers for the Station under some form of Station name.

Due to a welcome increase in numbers, the Knowle & Dorridge Racquets Club is removing its open-door policy. However, it will accept CAMRA members (you may need your membership card to gain access).

There has been some recent concern that the Royal British Legion club in Shirley might have to close but we've heard that this is no longer the case, which is good news.

Paul Wigley - Pubs Officer

Join the CAMRA story

Real ale is just the start...



Campaign
for
Real Ale

Join the CAMRA story
camra.org.uk/join

*Price for paying by Direct Debit correct from July 2023.
Prices subject to change. Please check our website for the latest rates.

Join
CAMRA
from
£30.50*

Real stories, real people, real ale

Membership Matters

During the last few years, the landscape for drinkers, publicans and the whole pub industry including breweries has been turbulent to say the least, with pubs feeling the effects of increased energy costs/business rates and other cost rises etc. I for one believe that whilst the situation might take a long time to fix, many pubs are also struggling with a lack of customers. By going out for a pint even if it's only once a week with friends and family you will possibly be helping the pub/club to remain open, which in turn surely benefits your community.

So come on - Join CAMRA (or rejoin / renew your membership) and help us support the brewing industry, publicans, consumers rights and community groups nationwide who are either trying to prevent their pub from being sold to developers or being closed for good.

It's not just about supporting the industry, join us and you can become involved in your local branch, which includes social events, meeting new people, helping out at our beer festival and campaigning. Our branch social events vary from weekends away, pub crawls, brewery visits and beer and curry nights. We are a friendly bunch and you will be made more than welcome.

Our branch meetings, where a variety of topics are discussed in relation to the local real ale scene, are usually held on the first Monday of each month at a local pub/club. There is plenty of time to chat and socialise. As a bonus, on attending your first branch meeting you will receive a FREE PINT of real ale or cider courtesy of Solihull & District CAMRA. For a full list of forthcoming events see the Dates for the Diary section in the

magazine or visit www.solihull.camra.org.uk.

And it doesn't cost the earth. A years CAMRA single person membership starts from as little as £30.50 per annum (Direct Debit) which equates to about 58p per week. Excellent value in this current economic climate.

If you become a member of CAMRA you will also receive a monthly newsletter called "What's Brewing" with articles on what's happening within CAMRA and the real ale scene nationally, plus a very nice quarterly informative magazine titled "Beer" which has many interesting articles with colour photographs covering a wide range of topics from breweries, bottled beers & heritage pub interiors.

Both of these are available to download to enable you read them at a time/place to suit yourself.

Another benefit from the good people at CAMRA HQ is that you get £30 worth of CAMRA Real Ale/Cider vouchers which can be used at Wetherspoons, Stonegate & Brains pubs plus many more besides. There are many other great money saving deals offered to CAMRA members so visit www.camra.org.uk for full details.

Finally, I would like to wish all of you reading this publication a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and enjoy whatever ale you try/buy or pub you visit over the festive season and beyond.

Dave Mckowen
Membership Secretary

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The 104th edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 3 March 2025. Please note that the deadline for copy, advertising and any other contribution for this issue is **Friday 14th February**. Thank you in advance to all contributors.

HENLEY IN ARDEN

THE STATION

2024



COMMUNITY BAR OPENING HOURS

THURS	4pm - 10pm
FRI	1pm - 10pm
SAT	12pm - 10pm
SUN	12pm - 7pm*

PRIVATE HIRE VENUE

Available*

Corporate Events

Meetings

Wakes

*outside of normal opening hours

*Private events may take place on a Sunday, check our facebook page for up-to-date opening hours

Visit thestationhenley.co.uk for more information
or follow  friendsofhenleyrailway for event information