



solihull
drinker



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOLIHULL & DISTRICT BRANCH OF
THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

Issue No. 1

Summer 1997

HARVESTER GATHERS AWARD

Congratulations to the Harvester on being voted Solihull's Pub of the Year 1997. But wait! This is not one of those Bass-tardized eating houses which have sprung up across the country over the past few years. This is the Harvester, Tanhouse Farm Road, in Olton, Solihull, an excellent suburban pub which was deservedly honoured recently by Solihull and District CAMRA.

Licenseses Peter and Christine Scoltock have turned this estate pub into a thriving community establishment which serves excellent beer, and now also good value food. In addition to the John Smiths Bitter and Theakstons XB, the pub always serves a guest beer, usually from an independent brewery, and has actively supported local breweries such as Judges and Warwickshire.



Our picture shows Peter and Christine receiving their award from Branch Chairman Brenda Duffy, prior to a few celebratory pints of Everards Old Original. The Harvester is well worth a visit, and is located only a few hundred yards from the bus stops on Old Lode Lane. Make the effort to go and see for yourself why the Harvester is Solihull Pub of the Year 1997.

Inside.....Margaret Beckett halts the Bass-Carlsberg Tetley merger, page 5.....win 9 pints of ale, page 8..... and all the local news, from page 14

.....editor's round

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Welcome to the first edition of the Solihull Drinker, the newsletter of the Solihull and District branch of CAMRA. Despite the 'Issue No 1' on the cover, this is by no means the first newsletter produced by the branch. Under the previous title of *Boro' Banter*, more than fifty editions were published from its foundation in 1984; most recently the *Banter* was edited by former branch secretary Malcolm Field.

Malcolm stood down from the top job earlier this year, and after a gap of more than a year since the last edition, it was decided to relaunch our publication under a new name and in a new format, and hopefully at the same time to

increase its circulation around the local pubs. Following on from the success of our second Knowle Beer Festival a year ago, it was felt that the branch needed to maintain its public presence in the Borough and to attempt to continue the good publicity which the festival brought.

To begin with, the *Drinker* will be published quarterly, but should the supply of suitable material for inclusion and sufficient advertising revenue increase, then editions may appear more frequently. Contributions from individuals are very important. My predecessor received very little help from the branch or other individuals in producing the *Boro Banter*, it is too big a

job for one person to do alone. All readers are most welcome to contribute their views on local pubs and beers, in the form of letters, articles and items of news. These should be sent to the Editor at the address below. Please contact the editor too for advertising rates or to order copies of the *Drinker* for your pub or business.

And finally, once you have read your copy of the *Drinker*, please circulate it amongst your friends, colleagues and local licensees. The success of our Campaign depends upon your support.

Matthew Bullock, Editor

Tory MP Nicholas Winterton, MP for Macclesfield in Cheshire, has presented a private members bill to Parliament to prevent marketing men changing centuries-old pub names without consultation with locals, magistrates and planning officials.

London brewers Youngs of Wandsworth have been forced to stop regular deliveries to its pubs by horse-drawn dray due to an increasing number of road rage incidents! Youngs have delivered beer in this way since Charles Young bought the brewery back in 1831.

The 2nd edition of the **Solihull Drinker** is due out in time for the Solihull Branch AGM in November. Please note that the advertising deadline for this issue will be Saturday 1 November 1997

The Solihull Drinker is the newsletter of the Solihull & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. The views expressed are those of the individual contributor and are not necessarily the views of the Solihull Branch, or the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, or least of all the Editor.

All contributions, comments and enquiries should be sent to:

The Editor, Solihull Drinker, c/o 1255 Yardley Wood Road, Solihull B90 1LA.

Please contact the editor for advertising rates, which start from as little as £10. The Editor reserves the right to amend or shorten any contributions for inclusion in the Solihull Drinker.

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Slaters brewery began production in 1995. **Dave Queenborough**, of **Bernies Off Licence** in **Shirley**, knows their products well.....

Slaters is a superb small 12 barrel brewery based in outbuildings behind the George Hotel at Eccleshall in Staffordshire, a pleasant country market town in the Vale of Trent a few miles west of Stafford.

The Slater family originate from Lancashire and are long time hoteliers, whilst Andrew Slater, the son of the owners, took a brewing course in preparation for the opening of the brewery in March 1995.

The George Hotel is a pleasant town pub which sells a selection from the range of Slaters Ales, as well as guest beers. The Hotel has ten en-suite rooms and has a reputation for good food.

The range of ales is quite

extensive. The light Bitter (OG 1036) and Original (OG 1040) are clean tasting, hoppy, refreshing beers, whilst the Premium (OG 1044) is a good full-bodied, dry best bitter. More recent additions are Supreme (OG 1048), HiDuck (OG 1041), which is only available



from March to June, and is a darker, maltier brew, and Top Totty (OG 1040), a wheat beer. The brewery

also produces a house beer for Bernies Off Licence, dubbed Festival Special, which despite being a brewery mix of two regular brews, encompasses all the enticing flavours of the other Slater's beers.

Slaters beers are sadly fairly rare in the area at present, but can be found frequently at Bernies and at the Anchor Inn in Bradford Street, Birmingham, who both stock a variety of interesting guest beers.

Slaters brewery can be found at The George Hotel, Castle Street, Eccleshall ST21 6DF (Tel: 01785 850300). Bernies Real Ale Off Licence is at 266 Cranmore Boulevard, Shirley, (Tel: 0121 744 2827).

BIRMINGHAM BEER FESTIVAL 1997

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Opening hours : 12-3pm, 5:30-11pm.

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traditional-ley, reassuring-ley.....Bass?

....now the new Labour government has rejected the proposed Bass and Carlsberg-Tetley merger, Dave Hobbis reflects on the impact a merger would have had on drinkers in Solihull.....

Ever since they became aware that they would have to dispose of around 1,900 pubs to satisfy the requirements of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, it has been widely known that Bass has been looking for a face-saving excuse to pull out of the Carlsberg-Tetley merger. But the news that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Margaret Beckett, has vetoed the proposed merger will not just be good news to Bass but is most welcome news too to drinkers in Solihull.

With Bass represented locally by its Mitchells and Butlers pubs and Carlsberg-Tetley by Ansell's, the merger would have hit Solihull drinkers particularly hard. Beer choice in the

area is bad enough already, indeed almost non-existent in parts, but any merger would have diminished this choice even further with Bass-Carlsberg-Tetley (or whatever they called themselves) concentrating its sales on its premium brands. Bass controls a large slice of the market with its Caffreys (best selling nitro-keg pseudo-Irish stuff), Carling Black Label (best selling lager), and cask ale brands Stones, Worthington and Draught Bass. The future of big brand names such as Carlsberg and Castlemaine XXXX might therefore have been in doubt (how sad!).

However, for a non-Bass controlled Carlsberg-Tetley, the future is not so bright. C-T are brewers and own no pubs, and it is quite likely that

the company will pull out of brewing altogether in this country, leaving its Carlsberg wing to brew in Europe and probably subcontracting its major brand, Tetley Bitter, in the UK. The company will survive through its pub-owning chain, Allied-Domecq, who own such establishments as Firkin pubs, Mr Q's, Scruffy Murphy's and the wonderful Wacky Ware-houses.

Since CAMRA was formed in 1971 to campaign for choice in the brewing industry there have been many successful campaigns to stop takeovers and mergers. Though not down entirely to CAMRA, Mrs Beckett's actions are a victory for drinkers across the country, and especially in Solihull.

- More than half of the 85 pubs in Solihull CAMRA's area are owned by either Bass or Allied-Domecq, which is why any merger would have had such an effect on the area.
- Carlsberg-Tetley brew real ales for Greenalls, who ceased brewing in 1991 to concentrate on pub-ownership. What will happen to these if Carlsberg-Tetley do the same is unclear.

Allied announces expansion

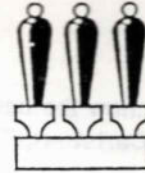
Allied-Domecq has announced that it is to create 4000 jobs nationally with a £150 million expansion programme.

The company will add to its estate 50 more family-orientated Big Steak houses with adjoining Wacky Warehouses (see local news on page 14), 45 new Firkin pubs, and will turn 40 other pubs into Mr Q's, which are

aimed at younger drinkers.

It also hopes to expand its country pub chain, called Golden Oak Inns, which are supposed to appeal to the older drinkers amongst us. It seems that Allied is going for the theme pub in a big way, which, considering the company's alleged difficulties, seems a bit short sighted.

BERNIES



Good Beer Guide Listed

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	CLOSED MONDAY LUNCHTIME		



BREWERIES REPRESENTED AT BERNIES SO FAR IN 1997

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| CAIN | FREEMINER | ORKNEY |
| CHARLES WELLS | FULLERS | OTTER |
| COTLEIGH | GRENEKING | RCH |
| COTTAGE | HAMBLETON | REBELLION |
| ELDRIDGE POPE | HARVEYS | RIDLEYS |
| ENVILLE | HOGS BACK | ROBINSONS |
| EXE VALLEY | HOLDENS | SARAH HUGHES |
| EXMOOR | HOOK NORTON | SHEPHERD NEAME |
| ADNAMS | HOP BACK | SLATERS |
| ARCHERS | LARKINS | TAYLORS |
| ARKELLS | MARSTONS | TOLLY COBBALD |
| BADGER | MOORHOUSES | WADWORTH |
| BATHAMS | NETHERGATE | WOODFORDE |
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| BRAKSPEAR | OAKHAM | YORK |
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THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) celebrated its 25th anniversary last year. In 1971, cask-conditioned beer (which became known as "real ale") was fast disappearing, being rapidly replaced by "keg" beers, filtered, pasteurised beers pressurised by carbon dioxide gas - a fizzy, cold, bland product. This had a much longer shelf-life than real ale, and required less expertise from the pub landlord to keep and serve it, but was considered by many, including the founders of CAMRA, to be an inferior product lacking the flavour and character of real ale.

Without CAMRA's efforts over the years, real ale would probably have died out. However, today there is probably a wider choice of

real ales available than at any time in the past 25 years, with many pubs now stocking a "guest" beer, and many small micro-breweries being set up each year to brew them.

CAMRA has also been hugely successful in representing the interests of the pubgoer in general: flexible opening hours, including all-day Sunday opening may never have come about without the strenuous campaigning efforts of CAMRA members.

However, there is still a need for CAMRA to remain active if real ale is to survive into the 21st century. The latest threat is the emergence of "nitro-keg" brands, which use a mixed gas dispense method of nitrogen and carbon dioxide, making them smooth, but just as cold and bland as original "keg"

beers. CAMRA and its 50,000 plus members will continue to campaign actively to protect and promote real ale. But to do so, we still need your support.

The Solihull and District branch holds monthly meetings and new members are always welcome. The branch also organises a wide range of social activities, including visits to pubs, breweries and beer festivals, so CAMRA membership is enjoyable too! A branch diary listing future events is printed on page 16. Why not fill in the application form on page 15 of the *Solihull Drinker* and join us?

Brenda Duffy, Chairman,
Solihull CAMRA

AN ADVERT IN THE SOLIHULL DRINKER COSTS AS LITTLE AS £10. FOR DETAILS TELEPHONE 0121-430 4792 (EVENINGS) OR WRITE TO THE EDITOR.

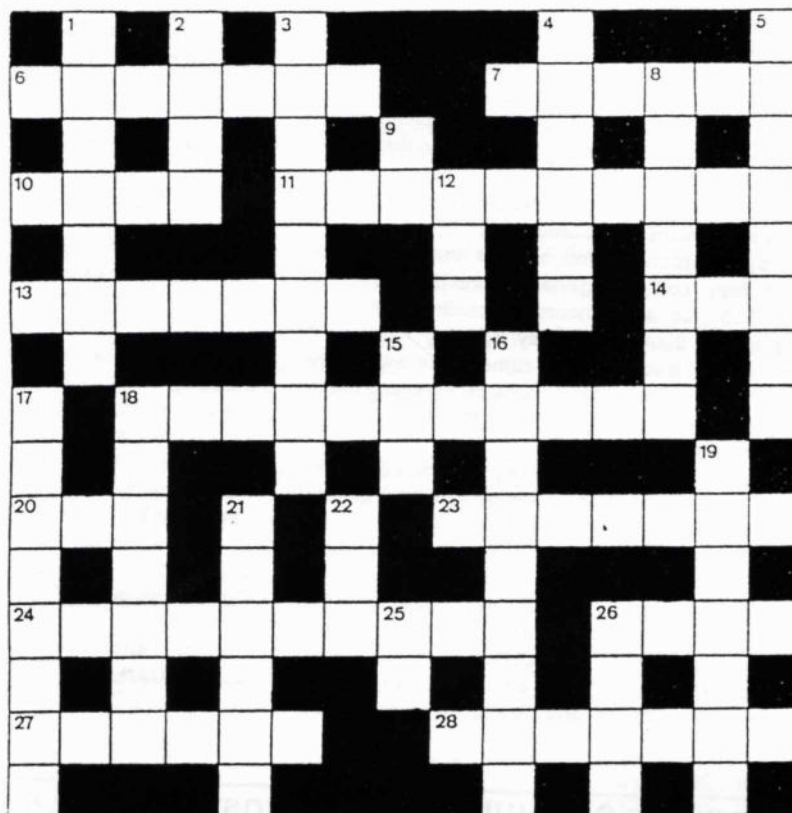
Now get out your copies of the **Good Beer Guide 1997** and enter our **prize crossword** over the page. The prize up for grabs is **nine pints** of a Warwickshire Brewery beer. All the answers are beer related and most can be found in GBG 1997 if you look carefully - the very best of luck to you all.....

SOLIHULL DRINKER PRIZE CROSSWORD

Sponsored by Hampton Wines, 42 High Street, Hampton-in-Arden

Crossword compiled by, and copyright of, Matthew Bullock

WIN A 9-PINT POLYPIN OF REAL ALE



Completed entries should be sent to the Editor, along with entrant's name and address, to the address given on page two (to arrive no later than 11 October 1997). Photocopies are acceptable. Should more than one correct entry be received, the winner of the prize shall be determined by drawing one winner from a hat. Who's hat we're going to use has yet to be decided, but the Editor's decision on this matter (and on the competition result itself) will be final, and no correspondence will be entered into (unless you're female, single, mid-20s....) (sorry-Ed.) The prize offered is one 9-pint take-out polypin of real ale supplied by Hampton Wines. There is no cash alternative. The name of the winner and the solution to the crossword will be printed in the next issue, along with another opportunity to win a prize.

down

1. Beers from the wood, closed by Robinson's in 1991 (7)
2. A Yorkshire Fountain, or a belonging to a Plymouth King? (4)
3. Ross's potent relative (5,4)
4. Coming from Little Ecclestone at Easter (6)
5. Fine fish (8)
8. Brave Bateman's beer (7)
9. Initially, absolutely nothing from Cains (2)
12. Blackmoor beer (3)
15. Caledonian's local real ale (3)
16. Black Bullmastif (5,4)
17. Guernsey Brewers (8)
18. Once a cigarette, now a Flagship ale? (7)
19. After a merry Sutton Christmas eve? (6,1)
21. Sunderland strong man (6)
22. Owner of the bollocks? (3)

25. Whitbread Mild and Bitter (2)
26. It's Evesham, locally (4)

across

6. Spectacular procession in Wisbech? (7)
7. Lloyd's winter porter (6)
10. Hambleton's breeding ground (4)
11. Heavy beer for hot work, but a plumb job (10)
13. Hart's retribution (7)
14. Would we be CAMR without it? (3)
18. Finest Devon hues (7,4)
20. One third of a pint (3)
23. Carlsberg-Tetley's local brandname (7)
24. Post-Summer colour in Huddersfield (6,4)
26. Church End's wheat beer (1,3)
27. Smith and Turner take pride in it, too (6)
28. Maybe Bass, but not with a widget (7)

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Squire's Bitter - 4.0 ABV

Currently Fermenting

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Dragon Smoke Stout - 4.7 ABV

Posh day out

The Solihull branch's August social was a trip to Peterborough Beer Festival. Social Secretary Keven Parker reports.....

One of the most popular aspects of being a member of Solihull CAMRA is the variety of social events we organise. We hold regular pub crawls, brewery visits and day trips to beer festivals both far and near, Liverpool, Stockport and The Great British Beer Festival at Olympia having already been visited this year.

Our August social was a trip to Peterborough Beer Festival. The coach trip was jointly organised with the Birmingham branch of CAMRA, and proved to be an excellent day out at the biggest festival in the UK outside of London. Each year around August Bank Holiday weekend, three huge marquees are erected near to the football ground and upwards of 30,000 people (I said *near* the football ground) enjoy the 200+ different brews from all over the country and even parts of Europe.

It's a hard job sampling all these wonderful beers, but as a CAMRA member, I'm afraid it's your duty! Everyone dutifully obliged. One of the strongest beers on offer at Peterborough this year was from the Parish Brewery in Leicestershire. Entitled "Baz's Bonce Blower", it weighed in at a hefty 10%, and was a very potent concoction of treacly toffee malt flavour, aptly described by the

programme as "Very very very nasty indeed. Vimto with attitude. Guaranteed to evacuate you at both ends." Enough said.

After an exhausting lunchtime visiting several pubs and the beer festival, several of the party paid a visit to London Road to watch Peterborough United and their team of Birmingham City rejects (including their manager, a certain Mr Barry Fry), mainly as a respite from the beer and as an opportunity to sober up.

A comprehensive home victory against poor opposition (perhaps they too had spent too long at the festival?) delivered us back to the city's pubs, the GBG-listed Bogarts and Charters Cafe Bar (the latter based on a boat moored on the River Nene beside the main bridge) proving the most popular, and we were also able to return to the beer festival for a last sample before heading homewards, via another excellent pub. This was the Vane Arms, at Sudborough, Northamptonshire, the local CAMRA branch's Pub of the Year 1996. The Vane is an outstanding free house in a picturesque thatched village, which offered eight unusual and excellent independent beers and a real cider. After an excellent hour or so here,

the party headed for home (or was it another pub?).

If you enjoy real ale and visiting pubs, and this sort of day out I have just described would be of interest to you (maybe excepting the football!), why not come along to our next branch meeting or social event. We are a very informal bunch and you will be made very welcome. Our forthcoming social events are detailed on the back cover of your copy of the Solihull Drinker, the highlight in the next few months being our Brewery Weekend in York, sampling the products of Theakstons and Black Sheep at Masham, and no doubt discovering a few of this famous city's fine pubs. We also hope to have a Walsall crawl in November, and we will be visiting Birmingham beer festival in September. Join us if you can.

See you soon!

Keven Parker

Final Score:
Peterborough United 2
(Carruthers 30, Quinn 88)
Hull City 0
Entertainment value: Can't remember.

[Keven can be contacted in the evenings on 0121 706 0162 and will provide you with details of our future events]



The Golden Cross in High Street, Henley-in-Arden, has finally been demolished to make way for a new development of homes and apartments. The pub, pictured above, had been closed and empty since September 1996. Allied-Domecq sold the site to Central Homes earlier this year.

YATES'S OPENS

By the time you read this, Yates's Wine Lodges should be trading at the old Wendovers premises on Station Road, Solihull. The development has been somewhat controversial after an initial planning refusal, but permission was finally granted earlier this year. All of Yates's establishments stock cask ales, albeit in limited quantities and from an uninspiring range. Some Wine Lodges do however stock a local beer from an independent regional brewer (in the North West this is Cains): whether this will happen in Solihull is unclear

but unlikely. Remember that the last new pub to open in the town centre, The Coach House, has since discontinued its guest beer due to lack of sales.

SOLIHULL CAMRA AGM 1997....

The Annual General Meeting of Solihull & District CAMRA will be held on Monday November 10th at the usual venue, the Red Lion in Shirley. We have the back room reserved for our use. All members are encouraged to attend; the proceedings begin at 8.00pm with a brief branch meeting, and the business of the AGM is then completed

afterwards. The evening is not as formal as its title might suggest, and in past years, John Fewtrell, the licensee of the Red Lion, has put on a guest beer (actually two last year), so come along and enjoy a few pints with us.

BEER FESTIVAL?

Solihull CAMRA held their 2nd beer festival in Knowle one year ago. Naturally, we are keen to hold another, but suitable venues are few and far between in Solihull town centre. If you know of a suitable venue, which must have a fire limit of around 400 and be available for a period of 7 days, please let me know.

LOCAL CAMRA CONTACTS

For information on CAMRA and details of your local branch's events, contact the appropriate person in your area from the following, alphabetical, list:

Dudley and South Staffs	Steve AMOS	01384 252266
Kidderminster	Peter BASSETT	01562 69967
Walsall	Rob BENTLEY	01922 861626
Stourbridge	Patrick BIRD	0121 422 5394
Heart of Warwickshire	John CROSSLING	01926 613256
Bridgnorth	David HADDON	01746 862454
Coventry	Paul HAMBLETT	01203 417675
Shakespeare	Vaughan HULLY	01789 778726
Redditch & Bromsgrove	Brett LANIOSH	01527 872890
Wolverhampton	Fred MORTON	01902 26513
Solihull & District	Keven PARKER	0121 706 0162
Birmingham	Robert WALKER	0121 478 1653
Tamworth & Sutton Coldfield	Andy WRIGHT	01827 68652
Regional Director	Adrian ZAWIERKA	01952 590467



The Scottish & Newcastle guide to cheating customers: the short pint scandal

It appears that Scottish and Newcastle (Retail), the pub owning wing of Scottish Courage, and Britain's fourth biggest pub operator with 2,600 pubs, has been actively encouraging its managers to serve beer in short measures with large heads in order to maximise profits. The information, leaked last month to a national newspaper by some former S&N managers, showed that this was brewery policy, and all managers were encouraged to comply and were ordered not to discuss the matter with their customers.

Peter Love, the Secretary-General of the National Association of Licensed House Managers, pointed out that on average, managers

could get 10% more pints from each barrel by serving short measures, which at £1.50 a pint equated several pints surplus and which can generate an extra £10-12 income per barrel. Were they paying tax and VAT on this extra amount? Surplus beer can be sold again, and Mr Love estimated that a pub could generate a surplus of up to £2,000 every two months, all of which is profit for the brewery, and all of which rightfully belongs to the customer.

The obvious answer to short measures is a standard size lined glass, as promoted by CAMRA and used at all CAMRA beer festivals. But very few pubs use them, for fear of having to serve more

beer to each customer to ensure a full pint of liquid. A pint currently has to be 95% liquid.

But recently, Consumer Affairs Minister Nigel Griffiths backed a private member's bill which would ensure full pints for pub customers. The bill comes from Wolverhampton South East Labour MP Dennis Turner and will be heard in the next Parliamentary session. It is up to CAMRA members to lobby the Government to ensure the bill gets sufficient time in Parliament and to ensure its success. Until then, make sure you get a full pint every time you order one. Especially in a Scottish and Newcastle house.



solihull

news

On this page in future issues we hope to keep you informed of any news regarding pubs in our local area.

Firstly this issue, we have some planning news. Allied-Domecq's application for a Wacky Warehouse at the Clock, Coventry Road, Bickenhill, was turned down by Solihull planners in August. The proposals were said to be "contrary to green belt policy, poor in design (!), and detrimental to local woodland". Detrimental to getting a good pint away from screaming children was not mentioned, however. I wonder why? And whilst on planning issues, Bass have finally got round to putting in an application for their monstrous illuminated sign at the Engine, Hampton-in-Arden, many months after it was first erected. Perhaps they'll try a Dave & Buster's-style flag pole next just to maintain their popularity in the village.

On the guest beer front, recent tastings reveal Hartleys XB and Old Speckled Hen in the Bulls Head, Barston; Saddlers Bitter in the Malt Shovel in the same village; Shepherd Neame Best Bitter in the Forest, Dorridge (rare in the area, that one);

Cottage Brewery beers at The Vaults, Knowle (Golden Arrow) and Navigation, Lapworth (Gold Rush); Highgate Bains 535 and Hardy & Hansons Frisky Farmer at the Railway in Dorridge, as well as Beowulf Brewery Heroes Bitter (see page 11); Exmoor Gold at the Drawbridge (allegedly, see back page); and Everards Old Original continues strongly at the Harvester, the Solihull Pub of the Year 1997.

Rumour has it, however, that Highgate beers which feature strongly in Bass pubs in the area (eg. Railway, Dorridge), are no longer to be classed as house beers, following the ending of an agreement which had been in force since Highgate became independent from Bass following a management buyout in 1995. This could mean the end of true guest beers in some pubs, unless they cease to stock Highgate altogether. We hope not.

Some of the above beers are quite rare in the area, which is nice to see. However, the prices charged for guest beers in some establishments cannot do much to increase sales. Most guest beers in Solihull retail for about £1.80-£2.00. Star prize for ridiculous prices this month goes to

the Shelley Farm, where a pint of the standard 3.4% Ansells Mild costs a staggering £1.75. I hope they never try to sell Marstons Old Rodger. If you like inflated prices, why not try the Hogshead in Moseley Village, which opened during August? (Whilst I am on this subject, I must mention seeing Hobsons Best Bitter (OG 1038, 3.8% ABV) retailing for £2.33 a pint at a certain T&J RipOff pub in London recently.)

Finally, I'd just like to point out here that, unfortunately, I cannot manage to visit all the pubs in the Solihull area every three months to write this, so reports for this page depend very much on other members, publicans and readers. If you have any news or information which could be included in this section, please send it to the editor. Many thanks.

Please note: Because the majority of the information printed in the Solihull News column is the result of members' observations, may I apologise now for any inaccuracies in the information which may occur from time to time.

sd

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Address:

..... Postcode:

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

I enclose a cheque for £.....

Signature(s):

Date:

solihull times

Non-members and guests are welcome to attend our branch meetings and social events. Branch meetings are held on the second Monday of each month and commence at 8.30pm. Beer & Balti nights are held on the last Friday of each month (Balti not compulsory!)

Mon 8 September	Branch Meeting	The Blue Bell, Henley-in-Arden 8.30pm
Fri 19 September	Social	Birmingham Beer Festival, Aston University Students Guild from 8.00pm (opens 5.30pm)
Fri 26 September	Beer & Balti	Greswolde Arms, Knowle, 8.00pm
Mon 13 October	Branch Meeting	Hobs Meadow, Ulleries Road, Olton 8.30pm
Sat 25 October	Brewery Weekend	York weekend with visits to Black Sheep and Theakstons breweries at Masham. Numbers limited and likely to sell out quickly.
Fri 31 October	Beer & Balti	Anchor, Rea Street, Birmingham, 8.00pm
Mon 10 November	Branch AGM	Red Lion, Shirley (back room), start 8.00pm

Keven Parker is the branch social secretary and you can contact him during the evenings on 0121 706 0162.

The branch secretary is **Ken Jackson**, on 0121 705 8743

BYE BYE BURTON

Carlsberg-Tetley is preparing to discontinue production of its best real ale brand, Ind Coope Burton Ale. Burton Ale was voted CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain in 1990 (the only beer from a National to win the award), but recently it has become scarce and has been withdrawn from many Carlsberg-Tetley pubs and distribution depots. However,

there is usually a good pint of it in the Vaults in Knowle or the Barley Mow in Solihull (albeit at a price); enjoy one while you can.

EXMOOR OR NO MORE?

I happened to visit a local pub of mine, the Drawbridge, one Sunday evening recently and was pleasantly surprised to see an ExmoorGold pumpclip amongst the range of regular

ales. Sadly, when I ordered a pint, I was informed that the Exmoor had sold out. And yet, despite this, the pumpclip continued to be displayed. Whilst I applaud the choice of guest beers now available in this pub, and I'm sure they wish to promote them as much as possible, surely this practice is most undesirable. I doubt I was the only disappointed customer that day.