



solihull
drinker

free

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

Issue No: 12

Spring, 2000

Two new Solihull town centre pubs...

Since the last edition of the Drinker Solihull town centre has gained two new pubs.



Most welcome to the scene is the Whitbread Hogshead in Station Road. Opened just before Christmas the pub has 6 real ales plus 1 or 2 guests depending on demand and time of the week. Standard range consists of Pedigree, 6X, Boddington's, Shepherd Neame's Master Brew, Brakspear Bitter and Everard's Old Original. Although not very inspiring, the guest beers such as Greene King Milleni-humbug more than make up for the lacklustre standard range. The reputation held by some Hogsheads for being expensive does not, at present, apply here. Chris Hough, manager hopes to run some mini beer festivals when the time is right. Beers available to him come from the Hogshead regional list and are supplied by The Beer Seller wholesaler. On the subject of a discount for CAMRA members, offered by some Hogsheads, Chris was reticent to commit himself. However he doesn't rule it at some time in the future.

The pub is convivial, providing daily newspapers with background music and food available, but the music level may be wound up later in the evenings. The pub is a plus for the real ale drinker in Solihull providing stiff competition for the other town centre pubs.

Our other acquisition is Bar Censsa in Poplar Road, all keg, an eatery, run by ScotCo, nuff said.

In this issue

Spotlight on the Lyndon, Olton... Great British Beer festival 2000 and other local festivals... Wilson's, Knowle improves real ale range... new government beer enquiry... Yates's Wine Lodge blow... and a story from the past at the Old Royal Oak, Wood End

editor's round:

The start of a new century has sent everyone into a reflective mood. So, as editor of the Drinker, I may as well toe the line. Without doubt, this last year has been pretty bad for Britain's real ale breweries and drinkers. Marston's has been taken over by Banks's, Morland by Greene King, whilst Mitchell's of Lancaster closed, as well as Vaux of Sunderland, Ward's of Sheffield, Morrell's of Oxford and Courage's George's Brewery in Bristol. Mansfield's future is grim, despite Banks's assurance that it will remain open for at least 2 years. The list of disasters goes on. Our traditional breweries which date back 200 years plus have drastically altered their business profile. Allied sold their estate to Punch Taverns. Bass, it appears, may be selling their brewing arm and Whitbread is not enamoured with brewing anymore. If these breweries are sold they will go to overseas brewing companies who are queuing up to get a toe hold in Europe. I'm sure there will be more consolidation this coming year.

Not all is doom and gloom though. Every year there are more pub breweries setting up along with a plethora of micro's run by enthusiast brewers. These brewers are determined to give drinkers more choice and quality real ale. Let us hope that the announcement by the Office of Fair Trading to look into the Beer orders will assist these new brewers in finding it easier to get into both new nationals and pubco estates.

Well, Bar Censsa and the Hogshed are now up and running in Solihull town centre. I've been to both I stayed at one I left the other within a minute. No prizes for the correct answer. Happy new century.

The Solihull Drinker is the newsletter of the Solihull & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign of 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 at least of the Editor.

All contributions, comments and enquiries should be sent to:

The Editor, Solihull Drinker, c/o 79, Walsgrave Drive, Solihull B92 9PP
or e-mail steve_dy@yahoo.com

For advertising contact Dave Hobbis on 0121 706 0162 who can offer very competitive rates!

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

Persons whose scribing appears in this edition of the Drinker are Steve Dyson, Steve Wood and thanks also to Allan and Brenda Duffy
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Sun 10:00-3:00, 7:00-9:30



Advertising in the Solihull Drinker

Advertising in the Drinker is very reasonable. A full page is £40; half, £30 and a quarter page £20. Discounts available for block bookings. The Drinker is published quarterly and reaches 700 Solihull pubgoers and is distributed to pubs throughout the Solihull area and beyond. Interested? Contact Dave Hobbis on 0121 706 0162

Old Royal Oak, Wood End

Our sister magazine from the Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA branch ran this story in their recent edition of *Pint Taken*.

...An interesting story about the pub is that it is probably the only pub to have been connected to the Great Western Railway signaling system. This came about due to the pubs popularity around the time of World War 2 with people from Birmingham's suburbs, who travelled there by train. When the last train to Birmingham left Danzey Green station a bell on a line from Wood End station would sound on the bar enabling the drinkers to sup up their pints and be on the platform next door in time to catch the train.

BERNIES



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Great British Beer Festival 2000: Advance notice

At London Olympia between Tuesday 1st and Saturday 5th August, this year's festival will highlight 300+ beers from all over Britain. Children's room, food, music, pub games... a must for all real ale drinkers. More details to come in the next Drinker.



Beers around here!

Seen on "our patch" recently. Harvester, Olton, Green King Abbott Ale, Courage Directors, Hook Norton Old Hookey, Tisbury Jays, Kimberley Classic, Gibbs Mew Bishops Tipple, Hampshire Pendragon, Wood's Wonderful, Church End Cutter Ale. Red Lion, Shirley, Church End Avon, Slater's Bitter. Railway, Dorridge, Adnams Old Ale, Jennings Cumberland Ale. Boat, Catherine De Barnes, Caledonian 80/-, Wychwood Hobgoblin, Broughton Merlin. Vaults, Knowle, Orkney Dark Island. Wharf, Hockley Heath, Brakespear Resolution. Red Lion, Claverdon, Timothy Taylors Best Bitter. Navigation, Lapworth, Weatheroak Chestnut and at the Hogshead, Batemans XB, Greene King Milleni-humbug, Highwood Tom Wood Lincolnshire Legend, Woodforde Wherry, Hop Back Winter Lightning, Titanic Steerage, Smiles Old Tosser, Caledonian Burns Ale, Nethergate Exmas Ale, Titanic Golden Age.

Wilson's Arms, Knowle improves real ale choice

The Wilson's has been a bit like a yo yo in terms of real ale over the last few years. Many will remember it from its pre Toby days when Draught Bass and the M&B range were available and over the Christmas period Highgate Old was occasionally available. Since Tobyisation the availability of real ale has been anything but predictable.

However a recent visit revealed a bank of handpumps that included Morland Old Speckled Hen and Fuller's London Pride. In fact members of Solihull CAMRA had considered including the Wilson's as a nomination for the Most Improved Pub award, but the unpredictability in stocking real ales meant it had to be withdrawn from the nomination list.

in brief....

Old Colonial, Damson Lane

With the intention of arranging a branch meeting and undertaking a pub survey the editor discovered that this once popular real ale outlet, where the occasional guest beer used to be available was to close for refurbishment. On reopening, sad to say the pub is now all keg. Under the Arena pubs badge it is more of an entertainment/eating centre with something on every night where presumably quality beer is of secondary importance.

...and Yates's goes the same way

Yates's Wine Lodge has removed its ice cold real ale from their Solihull town centre pub, replacing it with cool [sic] nitro keg. This seems to be company policy as other pubs in the chain have done likewise. This is a serious blow to real ale drinkers. However, luckily, ex Yates's real ale drinkers now have The Hogshead 100 yards away with both a better choice and superior quality. A real ale loss yes, but countered by a real ale gain, however still disturbing to see in a national pub chain.

Letter to the Editor

To the editor,

We have just received a copy of the Solihull Drinker Issue 11, and would like to thank Keven Parker for his kind words about our pub. We have only been at the Lyndon for a few months. In the time that we have been here we already have a good reputation for our real ale and especially our mild.

We have 4 real ales at the moment, and are hoping to increase that soon and have guest ales, which our customers have requested.

Two years ago our company [*Punch .ed*] started a no filtering back policy. Yes we lose a lot of beer but the quality has gone up 100%... the secret of a good pint is cleanliness and a lot of hard work. Our customers staff and ourselves know we are the best in the area, it is nice to see other people agree with us.

Regards Martin and Steph Weldon
The Lyndon, Olton

* Thanks for putting pen to paper Martin and Steph and welcome to Solihull. Solihull CAMRA believes in giving praise where it is due and hope to see the Lyndon go from strength to strength. See elsewhere in the Drinker for more info on the Lyndon. *Ed.*



Walsall Beer Festival

Town Hall, Leicester Street, Walsall. Thur 13 - Sat 15 April. Thur 5.30-11; Fri, Sat 11-3; 5.30-11. Over 90 beers. Live music, quiet Thur eve. Food and soft drinks. Continental bottle conditioned beers. Souvenir glass. Side stalls. Free lunchtimes and before 7pm, free at all times for CAMRA members. Otherwise: £1 Thur after 7pm; £2 Fri after 7pm; £1.50 Sat after 7pm.

Office of Fair Trading to review Beer Orders

Pubco's to come under microscope

Pub chains are to come under the microscope in the Office of Fair Trading's review of the Beer Orders.

And the review will take a fresh look at whether the axing of guest beers by non-brewing companies, which own 40% of Britain's pubs, is freezing small brewers out of the market.

There will be 3 main areas of enquiry:

- Whether the adverse effects the Beer Orders were meant to cure still existed.
- Whether scrapping the Orders would mean the return of adverse effects which had disappeared.
- Whether the Orders needed to be changed to overcome any adverse effects that still existed.

Issues to be examined would include beer prices and choice, structural changes – mainly the emergence of the pubco's during the last decade, and the effects on competition of the withdrawal of companies like Greenalls, Morrells, Vaux etc. and the guest ale rights in pubco leased estates. There will not be, however an enquiry into supply deals between brewers and pubco's.

Consulting bodies including CAMRA have until 31st March to make their submissions, and the report is due to be given to minister Steven Byers by mid August.

Mike Benner from CAMRA welcomes this review saying, "There is no doubt that the current legislation has been left behind by developments in the industry and we welcome the opportunity to show the OFT that there are still problems with consumer choice and access to the market for small brewers".

Solihull Drinker acknowledges CAMRA's *Whats Brewing* for this article.

in brief...

Ushers Brewery is set to close unless a management buy out is successful.

in brief...

Real ale losses and pub closures around Solihull

The last couple of months has seen the Blue Bell, Henley in Arden close; Cheswick Green Inn remove Draught Bass; Prince of Wales, Solihull Lodge remove its real ale; rumours that the Black Swan, Henley may close.

...not so good news but...

The Felons and Firkin, Knowle now has Burton Ale, Tetley Bitter and Ansells Mild. Guests have included Wadworth 6X and Old Speckled Hen.

...and a bit of good news...

Colebrook, Haslucks Green now serves Draught Bass, Brew XI and M&B Mild. Crab Mill, Preston Bagot after refurb has 3-4 real ales including reene King Abbott Ale. Wharf, Hockley Heath has started taking a guest ale.

Banks's to axe Marston's Bitter

Not a lot to say other than it was to be expected as yet another brew is lost due to Banks's takeover of Marston's. Mansfield beers next?



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Spotlight Inn...

The Lyndon, Olton

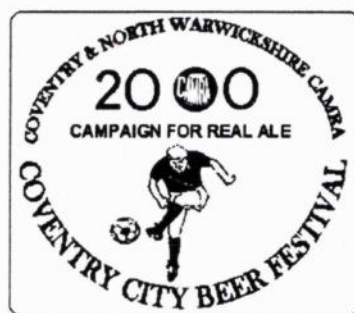
The Lyndon in Barn Lane, Olton has been a real ale outlet for many years and has justifiably been popular with local CAMRA members. Guest beers used to be available from Carlsberg Tetley's Tapster's Choice range. As mentioned in the last edition of the Drinker, it is one of Solihull's best Ansells suburban pubs, albeit that it is now owned by Punch Taverns. It has always had a strong following for the quality of its Ansells Mild, which is becoming increasingly rare to find.

The pub is a typical large inter war suburban pub and, in the main, it has retained much of its original internal layout, consisting of a bar, lounge and snug. It was run for some 18 years by Dave Plant but is now under new managers Martin and Steph Weldon, who took over in May 1999. Martin comes from Sutton Coldfield and moved to the Lyndon from the Harriers at Perry Barr, Birmingham. Whilst there he was awarded Carlsberg Tetley's Cellermanship award, so he's a man who knows how to look after real ale. The most popular beer Martin sells is the Mild, shifting 5 barrels a week. Other real ales are Ansells Bitter, Tetley Bitter and Marston's Pedigree.

It's an active pub in the local community supporting 2 domino teams, a football team Lyndon FC, a crib team and 2 darts teams, 1 of which is all female

Martin and Steph have made changes during the last 9 months. The front snug is now used as a children's room from 12-9 every day. They hope this summer to improve the outdoor drinking area, including refurbishment of the children's play area. The old children's room has been converted into a kitchen resulting in the pub going into food in a big way, with a varied menu including vegetarian dishes.

However, it's the beer CAMRA members go for, and Martin is keen to extend the range to include guest beers. It is a pub well worth a visit and let's hope that the guest beers reappear soon.



Coventry Beer Festival

This year's festival is to be held at Coventry City Football Ground, East Stand Mall, Swan Lane over the weekend April 28th-29th. Over 65 beers will be available, including themed special beers from local breweries. Ciders, country wines and foreign bottled beers available. Open 11.30-4; 6-11. Entrance fee £1 lunch, £2 evenings, [CAMRA members 50p +£1] Glass hire £1.50. Food will be available at all sessions. For more details contact Mick or Louise Madder on 024 7643 1470.

Photoshot News

The branch presenting Mark and Louise Jaeger of the Golden Lion, Solihull with the Most Improved Pub of the Year Award, 1999.



in brief...

...an enjoyable evening was had by all!

Judges Brewery, which was the subject of a fracas with the Inland Revenue last year, is to be resurrected in Birmingham. This will see Birmingham become the home to 3 breweries; Beowulf, Judges and the all keg Aston Manor.

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:

Birmingham	Robert Walker	0121 478 1653
Bridgnorth	Adrian Zawierka	01952 590467
Burton on Trent	John Hoddy	01283 225669
Coventry	Paul Hamblett	024 7641 7615
Dudley and South Staffs	Steve Amos	01384 252266
Heart of Warwickshire	Dave Rosling	01926 431376
Kidderminster	Gill Waller	01562 515040
Lichfield & Mid Staffs	Ray Jennett	01543 255195
Nuneaton & Bedworth	Les Hall	024 7631 1835
Redditch and Bromsgrove	Paul Long	07973 596650
Shakespeare	Vaughan Hully	01789 778726
Solihull & District	Keven Parker	0121 242 5548
Stafford & District	Paul Mudge	01785 226529
Stourbridge	Patrick Bird	0121 422 5394
Tamworth & Sutton Coldfield	Gary Clay	01827 705711
Telford & East Shropshire	Simon Bruce-Jones	01952 728738
Walsall	Rob Bentley	01922 861626
Wolverhampton	Fred Morton	01902 426513
Worcester	Jane Thompson	01386 750178

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times

Non-members and guests are welcome to attend our branch meetings and social events. Branch members are welcome to attend Committee meetings but will be unable to participate unless invited to do so.

Branch meetings are held on the second Monday of each month and commence at 8.30pm.

Beer and Balti nights are generally held on the last Friday of each month [Balti not compulsory!]

An evening social at the Rising Sun, Tipton, National Pub of the Year, Saturday 22nd April

The Rising Sun, Horseley Road, Tipton is the current CAMRA National Pub of the Year. Not far off our patch, this evening social will be most enjoyable. No fixed time to meet

West Midland CAMRA Quiz Night, Saturday 13th May

Contact Keven for details

Social at the Waggon and Horses, Halesowen., Saturday 10th June

Our annual outing to the Waggon... 10 beers to sup, always a good night. Make your own way there.

Bishops Castle Beer Festival Saturday 8th July

A guaranteed excellent time in this town with two breweries. Coach fare £15 to Keven asap... places will go fast!!

Beer & Baltis

Friday 31st March
Friday 28th April
Friday 23 May

Red Lion, Shirley
Vaults, Knowle
Churh Inn, Great Hampton Street [Steak and Ale Night]

Branch Meetings

Monday 10th April
Monday 8th May
Monday 5th June

Coalbrook, Haslucks Green Road, Shirley
Greswolde Arms, Knowle
Boat, Catherine De Barnes [tbc]

Keven Parker is the Branch Social Secretary and you can contact him for information about events during the evenings on 0121 242 5548

Jamie Crompton is the Branch Secretary on 0121 704 4987

The 13th edition of *Solihull Drinker* will be published on 12th June, 2000.

The deadline for advertising or contributions will therefore be

Saturday 20th May 2000

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