



Solihull drinker

free

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOLIHULL BRANCH OF
CAMRA, THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

Issue No: 20

Spring, 2002

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Plus Local News and Beers around 'ere

CAMRA slams DTI decision to revoke 'Beer Orders'...

The Campaign for Real Ale, the World's largest drinkers' consumer group, has reacted with anger and disbelief at the DTI's decision to revoke the Beer Orders. CAMRA is predicting the loss of hundreds of community pubs and the closure of dozens of small brewing companies should deregulation be allowed to proceed. Mike Benner, Head of Campaigns and Communications said, "The revocation of the Beer Orders will send shock waves through the industry as there will be nothing to stop large brewers and pub chains tying up huge chunks of the market, restricting access to smaller brewers and smashing consumer choice".

CAMRA claims:

1. That the DTI is acting against the advice of the Office of Fair Trading following its review in 2000
2. That the move to allow brewers to prevent pubs from being pubs in the future if sold will lead to HUNDREDS of community pub closures particularly in rural areas where pubs are most at risk. This is despite steps by DTLR to protect rural pubs through improved planning measures and rate relief.
3. That breweries will be allowed to refuse to supply beer for

resale enabling large players with key brands to FORCE smaller wholesalers and retailers to stock all or most of their products, even if they only want one.

4. That revocation will allow brewers to charge different prices to any number of different customers as they will not be obliged to publish wholesale price lists.
5. Revoking the guest beer provision will allow any brewer to buy and tie many thousands of pubs to its own products, excluding smaller brewers and wrecking consumer choice
6. Lack of alternative anti-competitive controls specific to the industry will hand more brewing, distribution and retailing power to the large brewers and pub retailers.

Mike Benner added, "The DTI is pulling the rug from under Britain's 15 million beer drinkers and 400 small brewing companies and leaving us all to the mercy of global brewing giants and massive pub chains who will now be able to control the market unhindered. The decision, made with no consultation of the parties involved, demonstrates a mind-boggling lack of understanding of the industry and it will have a huge impact on choice and competition for years to come." "Revocation of the Orders is untimely and inappropriate as they still play an important role in protecting consumers and smaller operators. There must be an urgent consultative review of the entire industry which would result in a detailed Government strategy to ensure access to market for small brewers, fair choice for consumers and steps to protect community pubs from closure. Otherwise our unique beer and pubs industries are likely to be consumed entirely by a small handful of global giants."

CAMRA 2002 ©

Editors round:

Like you I am getting completely confused over which pub company owns which pubs, and which global breweries own which beer brands. International brewers Coors have purchased the Bass brands from Interbrew, which means that our local M&B beers are in foreign ownership and are likely to disappear. Draught Bass, although still owned by Interbrew, another international brewer, is now contracted out to brewed by Coors. The last few years has seen not only some of our most respected beer brands such as Bass being sold off, but also the wholesale disposal of some of our most historic brewing companies such as Whitbread. The future for our brewing tradition may be with the regionals [but don't hold your breath] and the micro breweries, which in my opinion tend to brew better qualities beers that usually taste better than most of the regionals brands

Disastrous news on the guest beer front. If the government does revoke the Beer Orders I really fear for the future of the many superb micro breweries, which lets face it, are the only brewers in the main offering good quality, distinctive beers. Just what is this government playing at? In one foul swoop they will deny the discerning real ale drinker the opportunity given them by law, to sample beers from other brewers.

Same applies to the short measure fracas. This situation, it was promised in 1997 by the Labour government, was high on their agenda. It is now five years down the line and nothing has happened. Many times when drinking in the Solihull area I've been given short measure. I usually ask for a top up, but I wonder how many other drinkers can't be bothered, so end up giving the publican a free cash handout. The government really should stamp on this scandal, taking the side of the consumer.

And finally, rumour abounds that Solihull CAMRA may have a beer festival this year... keep the first two Fridays and Saturdays in October free

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 Hobbs 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.

Solihull CAMRA 2002 ©

Spotlight Inn...

Black Boy, Heronfield

Along the A4141, through Knowle, pass the Heron's Nest and about a mile or so further on, standing well back from the road, is the Black Boy. This old boatman's pub stands by the Grand Union Canal, once the main transport artery between London and Birmingham. The original pub, which I only just about remember has been overwhelmed by massive extensions. Once an M&B pub, it is now a free house owned by John Rigby and under his guidance has certainly improved. The emphasis is firmly on food which is available from 12-10 every day. It's priced in the medium price bracket and has a wide selection including vegetarian, and has a reputation for large portions. Children are welcome, but must vacate the pub by 8pm... but what of the beer?



On my recent visit Draught Bass [4.4%] and Highgate Special Bitter [3.8%] were the only real ales amongst a bank of keg fonts for ciders, lagers, Worthington Smoothflow, Guinness, Caffrey's and keg M&B Mild and Brew X1. Surprisingly for their differences in strength the Bass and Highgate were the same price at £2.04 a pint. Either the Highgate is expensive or the Bass is cheap! However, both were in good condition.

The pub also has a no smoking area for both drinkers and eaters and has no smoking notices around the bar area, something unusual but encouraging to see. I did not venture outside, but the pub has excellent play facilities and overlooks the canal, ideal in summer, but can get noisy with children.

Steve Dyson

Coventry Beer Festival April 5th/6th 2002

For the fourth year in succession this local festival will take place at the East Stand Mall [Swan Lane] entrance of Coventry City Football Club. It will have the widest range of Real Ales available anywhere in Coventry with over 70 different beers. As usual, the Festival will showcase beers from our local breweries such as Church End, Weatheroak, Frankton Bagby and Beowulf of Birmingham. There will also be an opportunity to sample beers from around the country, from Scotland to the South West, many rarely seen in Coventry and of course there will be some beers never previously available. That means a full range of real ales, from dark stouts to light [real] lagers with nearly everything in between.

Also featured will be some of the CAMRA Champion Beers of Britain as selected at the Great British Beer Festival last year. It is hoped to have Oakham JHB, the overall winner, as well as beers from other award winning breweries such as Harviestoun, Hop Back and Woodfordes.

In addition to the full range of real ales, there will also be a number of traditional ciders and perries and a wide selection of country fruit wines.

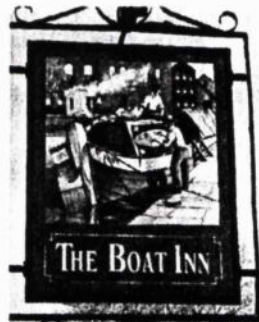
Also, if you are not currently a CAMRA member, a free pint awaits you if you join at the festival



*Opening times:
Friday and Saturday
12-4; 6-11
£1.00 afternoon
£2.00 evening.
Discount for card
carrying CAMRA
members*

in brief....

Boat Beer Festival...



As the Drinker was going to press we learnt that The Boat, Catherine De Barnes, winner of Solihull CAMRA's Pub of the Year for 2001 is planning to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee over the June Bank holiday with an event for all the family, including a beer festival. Nigel hopes to have 15 to 20 beers available on the Monday Bank Holiday supplemented with a pig roast. Its in the early planning stages at the moment so phone and check nearer the date

Case is Altered corrections...

In the last Drinker there were errors in the article on the Case is Altered at Five Ways. The Case is in the Heart of Warwickshire CAMRA branch area, not Coventry as stated. Brains Mild is now discontinued, being replaced by Jennings Mild. The mild is normally served from a second handpump, leaving the regular bitters on the small cask pumps unique at the Case. Many thanks to Heart of Warwickshire branch for these corrections. They also tell us that the Case was their Pub of the Year 2001. If you have not been to this pub, on CAMRA's National Inventory of Unspoiled pubs then do so. It is in Case Lane just off Five Ways before Hatton

The Solihull 'Thinker'

Whilst you're reading your copy of "The Solihull Drinker" and your are reading the mix of informative articles, some serious and some (hopefully) amusing, do you ever think that something is missing, something that most regular publications have? I am thinking of a letters page. Like in most regular publications you could comment on articles that appear therein, raise issues not covered in the



"Drinker" or you could also give your suggestions about articles you'd like to see regularly featured.

On a personal level I would suggest a regular column on beers from outside the area which exiles, i.e. those of us

(like me) who are not originally from the Solihull & District area, could write about. After all, many of these beers will be available as guest beers.

In these days of modern technology* you could e-mail or Royal Mail your comments to the editor of the "Drinker"-who knows, maybe this can be a platform for debate, discussion and exchange of views, news and information.

Over to you, fellow Solihull & District drinkers....

*I think a 24-hour comment line-cum-answer phone is stretching it a bit though... you don't want a premium rate appearing on your phone bill..... people might think that one of those 0906 numbers was one of those sordid 'bored housewives' chatlines....er, I think I've put myself in a comprising position.. (ooh, matron)
PS- please see above re (hopefully) amusing articles.

Martin Collinge
Press Officer
Solihull & District CAMRA

Bulls Head, Barston... ten years in the Good Beer Guide

The branch recently spent a very pleasant evening at the Bulls Head in Barston celebrating Brad's achievement of ten consecutive years in the Good Beer Guide. The pub is under the control of Punch Taverns and sports real ales from their portfolio including guest beers which are sometimes not seen in the Solihull area.

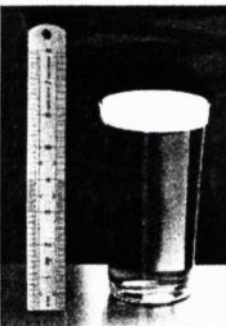
Dave Hobbs Solihull CAMRA Chairman presents Brad with his plaque celebrating ten years in the Good Beer Guide



- CAMRA pushes for full pint measure

CAMRA has launched a new campaign calling on the government to honour it's 1997 election pledge to introduce an honest pint law after years of delay. Robin Cook when questioned recently in the House of Commons responded by saying that he recognised it as a "clear public scandal and that we [the government] would seek to bear down as hard as we can".

To put further pressure on the government you can help by writing to your local MP at the House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA and to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Patricia Hewitt at The Department of Trade and Industry, 1, Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET. If you don't know who your MP is you can phone 020 7219 4272 or if you are on the net visit www.locata.co.uk/commons. Points to mention are:



HOW DOES YOUR PINT MEASURE UP?

- Current law fails to protect consumers from short measures
- When you order a pint you expect 100% liquid, a full pint
- Remind your MP of the government pledge in 1997
- Short measure, it is reputed cost drinkers £1million per day
- Wine and spirit drinkers are already protected by law. Why should beer drinkers be treated differently

Swift Half

Cox's Yard Brewery has closed due to lack of trade. The local CAMRA branch has slammed Charles Wells for not supporting the brewery. Apparently they did not allow it to sell to the free trade or to Charles Wells own pubs.

in brief...

2002 National Winter Ales Festival winners

The Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain was Wye Valley's Dorothy Goodbody's Wholesome Stout.

The 4.6% ABV stout is described in the 2002 edition of the Good Beer Guide as a "smooth and satisfying stout with a bitter edge to its roast flavours. The finish combines roast grain and malt".

At the announcement, Steve Prescott, Organiser of the National Winter Ales Festival congratulated Wye Valley on their ability to produce beers to perform on the national stage with companies a hundred times their size. He said, "Year after year we see beers from smaller breweries taking the top gong and leading the field with high quality and distinctive beers. Well done Wye Valley."

Winner of the Silver Medal was Bath Ales, Festivity, whilst the Bronze went to Robinson's Old Tom

Walsall Beer Festival 2002

Opening times: This year the festival opens at 5.00 pm. on Thursday to 11.00 pm. Friday and Saturday opening times will be 11.00 am - 3.00 pm and 5.30 - 11.00 pm.

Beers, Ciders and Perries: Walsall's longest bar, 90 feet long, will be serving approximately 90 different cask beers over the 3 days of the event with a partial emphasis on those brewed in the greater Midlands region and East Anglia. A range of around 10 - 15 perries and ciders will be available, plus Derek Bishop's Barbarian bottled beer stall.

Entertainment: Thursday evening and Friday lunchtime will be quiet sessions, i.e. free of entertainment. On Friday evening The Herbs will be playing a selection of 90's rock and pop covers. Saturday lunchtime Peter Morris will entertain on the Town Hall concert organ, and on Saturday evening Borderline return with their brand of 70's glam rock.

Other attractions: There will be the CAMRA shop, the tombola which sold out so quickly last year, and the Friends of Highgate Brewery stand. A commemorative glass will be available, and hot and cold food will be on sale in the Town Hall restaurant



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Solihull CAMRA weekend + away part 2...

In the first part of this article I left you zonked out after a full day drinking... Friday was to be no different. Kev had planned a Pennine Rail pub crawl with precision timing involving ten different trains, surely a recipe for disaster given the state of the rail network. Still, off we went, first stop Todmorden and the Queens Hotel where at 11am they opened up, seeing us crowding round the door. In a comfortable hotel lounge we drank Timmy Taylor's Landlord, Fullers ESB, Lees Bitter, Black Sheep Bitter, Bass and Morland Old Speckled Hen. Having only 25 minutes here we left out the in-house gym, sauna or swimming pool facilities. Neither did all of us pop down to White Hart apart from the dedicated few. Back on board and off to Hebden Bridge, a superb town hugging the hillside. Quick walk through the park and up the main drag to the Fox and Goose on Heptonstall Road, a consistent GBG entry and deservedly so. Daleside Blond, Wentworth Oatmeal Stout and WPA, Abbeydale Archangel all in smacking condition. What an ace of a pub with no intrusive juke box, just drink and conversation. Two pubs were planned here the Fox and Goose and the White Lion. However, having recently stayed at the White Lion, I decided to remain at the Fox and Goose and tried as many beers as possible. Still we had to go, so on to Sowerby Bridge and the Rams Head Inn home of the Ryburn Brewer and our designated lunch stop. We were lucky to be taken on a brewery tour which is located in the pub cellar. I had a swift mild sitting on the patio just near the brewery chimney pipe which exuded that lovely smell of hops and malt. After a quick bite I decided to head off to the Puzzle Hall Inn, not an easy pub to find. However, Greene King IPA, Abbott and Jennings Cumberland were on offer. I tried the Jennings which was a superb 4 out of 5 [I'm a hard marker!]. It's an unusual pub architecturally, comfortably dilapidated with a terraced garden overlooking the river



The Rams Head, home of Ryburn Brewery

Our next port of call was Halifax. We headed off on a long trek to the Shears Inn, a superb little pub dating from the 17th century as I remember. It sat among large old mills, not easy to find and was surrounded by woodland and a stream ran in front. Here the beers were Tim Taylor's. I tried the Ram Tam, a cracker. Resisting the other Taylor beers I decided to move onto the Pump Room, a welcome addition to the Halifax beer scene, whilst the others tried the Three Pigeons Ale House. What a range they had, including one of my favourite brewers beers, Ossett. I only had time for one here, so I went for Ossett Mellow Yellow, lovely! Also available there was Springhead Bitter, Abbeydale Moonshine, Black Sheep Bitter, Tim Taylor Landlord and Golden Best and Caledonian Deutchers IPA. Apparently at the Three Pigeons on offer was Barge and Barrel Best Bitter, Ferdinand's Mild, was it Darwin October Fest?, Tim Taylor's Landlord, Golden Best and Dark Mild. The great thing about these two pubs is how close together they are, you can see one from the other. The Pump Room could possibly do with some work on it, whilst the Three Pigeons, from the little I saw of it is a comfortable, architecturally interesting pub. Our hour and a bit in Halifax was soon over and we were off to Dewsbury and the West Riding Licensed Refreshment Room on the station platform. I think this is where we lost Ken here whilst changing train at Leeds. However, miraculously he somehow got to Dewsbury by bus just as we were about to leave, so we decided to have another drink so that he could take the waters, or beer to be more precise. The pub was busy with a mixed bunch of after work drinkers. A bank of handpumps presented us with nine beers including Durham Magus, Oldershaw Regal Blonde and Hop Bine, Anglo Dutch Imperial Pint and their mild, [the brewer of which runs the pub], Ryburn Stabbers among others. I didn't try them all, but what I did were in



Head of Steam, Huddersfield Station

good nick. Turned 6pm now and into the evening session and onto the famous Head of Steam on Huddersfield station platform. Here I tried Hart Chinook and Bank Top The Haka which were most enjoyable. Also on tap were Moorhouse's Black Cat, Cropton Two Pints, Coach House Bitter, Holts Bitter and Black Sheep Bitter. The pub was busy, but there was seating space on the platform, which as the weather was warm we took advantage of. Some of us were flagging now this late in the day, including me, but on we went to Marsden and the Riverhead Brewery Tap where we had an hour to while away the time sampling the full range. I only managed the Butterley Bitter before forming part of an expedition to find a chippie. Success, but we had to move on to our last visit of the day... Stalybridge and Dot's Diner or to give it its official title, Station Buffet Bar. I remember visiting many years ago, it hadn't changed much apart from a modern extension on the side. The main bar was much as I remembered it. Beers here were Barnsley Umpires Finger, Fisherrow SB Bitter and Great Expectations, Burton Bridge Paradise, Marlbury Mild and surprisingly given the excellent range so far during the day there was the ubiquitous 6X and of all beers Flowers IPA! Well that finished us all. Into Manchester, train change and onto Rochdale for about 10.30. Bed was the order of the day having been on the go since 11am and all the trains had turned up, amazing isn't it.... part 3 next time around!

A quick note... some of us kept to halves during the day, advisable if you wish to repeat this itinerary yourself. Alcohol kills, then again, if you gotta go, do it after a binge like this one! Well done Kev

Steve Dyson

SUPERMARKET SWEEP

As much as Solihull CAMRA wishes to encourage readers to frequent the pubs and bars of the locality, we have to accept that social behaviour patterns are changing. People are being asked to work longer and longer hours and inevitably have less and less leisure time at their disposal. With this in mind I decided to tear myself away from my work and 'check out' what the local supermarkets have to offer to fuel the thirst of our hard working labour force. All in all I was pleasantly surprised.

The first stop on my travels was Tesco's in Shirley where I first noticed a range of beers displaying the 'Tesco Beer Challenge' motif. Proudly showing 'Tesco Champion Ale 2001' was 'Wulfic' (5.5%), a bottle conditioned beer brewed by the Museum Brewery in Burton on Trent. The label explained the name of the ale came from Wulfic Spott a 10th century nobleman who established Burton Abbey, and indicated that its contents were subtly infused with ginger. I was particularly pleased that this beer won, as CAMRA openly encourages the promotion of beers that enjoy a secondary fermentation in the bottle, i.e. Bottle Conditioned. Another beer in the 'Beer Challenge' was Wickwar Brewery in Gloucestershire 'Mr Perrot's Traditional Stout' (5.9%). Upon investigation I find that the name derives from the original brewery on the site namely 'Arnold Perret and Co' and I can vouch after sampling a bottle (At home, not in the supermarket!) that the beer (bottle conditioned), possesses a rich dark chocolaty aroma and slips down rather nicely. Continuing along the shelf I discovered a beer brewed by Shepherd Neame of Kent going by the name of 'Sun and Planet Steam Ale' (6%). The label provided hints as to the original equipment still in use at the brewery, which include steam engines, and I was also reassured by the endorsement of its qualities by the renowned beer writer Michael Jackson. Next came Young's of London 'Acclaimed Champion Beer' (4%) which made claims to a subtle flavour of passion fruit, (A good one for Valentines night maybe?). Jumping out at me on the shelf in its distinctive bright red bottle was the very familiar name of 'Spitfire' (4.5%), this famous beer originally brewed by Shepherd Neame to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, now appears, as far as I can tell, to make reference to two defeats by England of the German Football Team (Most likely to be limited edition bottle!).

Organic beers are starting to become more and more popular and I spotted in Tesco's two such beers. Firstly 'Whitstable Bay Organic Ale' (4.5%) brewed by the above-mentioned brewery and also Tesco's own organic beer (4.6%), which after much scanning of the bottle I found to be brewed by Caledonian Brewery up in Edinburgh.

Therefore together with the usual range of bottle beers you would expect to see in any off licence being the likes of, Black Sheep, Pedigree, London Pride, Bombardier, Bass, 6X and Tanglefoot, I came away from the shop full of optimism and satisfied that the choice of ales has improved considerably even in the past 2 years.

I entered Safeway with great hope as previous experience had shown me that their choice of bottled beers had improved dramatically.

However on my visit I found on this occasion only a limited choice of bottled conditioned beers although its range of pasteurised beers remained very good. The first beer to get a mention is Brakespear's of Henley on Thames 'Live Organic' (4.6%) a very significant Bottled Conditioned beer that Safeway can proudly boast was specially brewed for them before becoming widely available in other outlets in recent times. As far as I could see the only other Bottled Conditioned beer on offer was O'Hanlon's 'Organic Rye Beer' (5%). O'Hanlon's is based in Devon and according to the GBG was set up to supply the pub of the same name on Clerkenwell London. Of the pasteurised beers on offer I was particularly interested to see on the shelf Brakespear's '2.5' being exactly as its states a 2.5% ABV low alcohol beer, and from the same brewer the award winning and quite superb Bluebird Bitter (4.2%). At the other end of the scale was Harviestoun brewery in Scotland 'Old Engine Oil' (6%) a chocolaty after dinner ale, which I was interested to see, is considerably stronger than the cask version stated in the GBG to be 4.4%. As always Safeway had on offer a good range of St Peters beers from Bungay Suffolk. In their distinctive shaped green bottles they are very eye-catching and I would imagine sell very well. Offered on my visit were Golden Ale (4.7%) and Strong Ale (5.1%). I was particularly pleased to see on offer Caledonian 'Deuchar's IPA' (4.4%) which proved irresistible to me and did not disappoint with its wonderful bitter and hoppy characteristics. Finally another favourite that I discovered from Wood Brewery of Shropshire was 'Shropshire Lad' (5%), named of course after the poems by AE Housman and I believe a popular bottled beer countrywide.

But all you supermarkets where is the king of all Bottle Conditioned beers I mean of course Worthington's White Shield? I looked in vain but as far as I can see it wasn't on offer. Perhaps one for the future?

Finally no article about bottled beers cannot possibly end without mentioning Bernie's Real Ale Off Licence in Cranmore Boulevard Shirley were you can be assured of a warm welcome from Brian and Dave and be confident in finding a wide range of bottled beers both Bottle Conditioned and Pasteurised.

Dave Hobbis



Worthington White Shield a classic bottle conditioned beer absent from supermarket shelves

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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	Pete Clarkson	0121 420 1901
Burton on Trent	Dick Allen	01332 865790
Coventry	Paul Hamblett	024 7641 7675
Dudley and South Staffs	Steve Amos	01384 252266
Heart of Warwickshire	Dave Rosling	01926 493379
Kidderminster	Gill Waller	01562 824760
Lichfield & Mid Staffs	Ray Jennett	01543 255195
Nuneaton & Bedworth	Les Hall	024 7631 1835
Redditch and Bromsgrove	Stuart Dench	01527 501175
Shakespeare	Vaughan Hully	01789 778726
Solihull & District	Keven Parker	0121 242 5548
Stafford & District	Trevor Edwards	01785 252546
Stourbridge	Patrick Bird	0121 422 5394
Tamworth & Sutton Coldfield	Gary Clay	01827 705711
Telford & East Shropshire	Peter Arden	01952 244954
Walsall	Rob Bentley	01922 861626
Wolverhampton	Dave Powell	mobile: 07754077399
Worcester	Peter Bottomley	01684 573018

**If you have any complaints about short measure, contact Solihull Trading
Standards on 0121 704 6844.**

BERNIES



REAL ALES

- AN EVER CHANGING SCENE OF EXCITING DRAUGHT BEERS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR
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- PARTY BEER BARRELS AVAILABLE FOR ANY OCCASION!
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solihull
drinker

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**BIRMINGHAM CAMRA
PUB OF THE YEAR 1998/9**

www.the-anchor-inn@fsnet.co.uk

The Durham Ox, Shrewley is closed pending a major extension.

The White Lion, Hampton in Arden has now reopened following a refurbishment with Bass and Brew XI available when we visited.

The Vaults, Knowle has now reopened in its new premises with six handpulls. Usual range plus guests are available. **The Fieldhouse, Monkspath** has reopened after a minor refurbishment with Fuller London Pride M&B Brew XI, and Tetley's. **The Bird in Hand, Beadesert** has completed its extension, haven't visited yet but Everard's beers are available there. **The Clock, Bickenhill** has reopened as a Two for One meal deal pub, haven't been there either, so pop in and see what you think. The future of the **Crown, Claverdon** is in some doubt following the licensee's decision to retire. A Planning application has been lodged to convert **Hillfield Hall, Solihull** into apartments plus 16 new dwellings. It only reopened as a Toby Carvery after an extensive costly refurbishment in January 1999.

Local News...

Beers around 'ere...

The Hogshead, Solihull has had Hook Norton Old Hooky and Caledonian Deuchars IPA, Robinson's Bitter, Everard's Tiger Gold, Mauldon's Pickwick, Nethergate

Winter Draught and Wychwood Goliath. *The Harvester, Olton* has served Hardy and Hanson's Rockin' Robin and Everard's Golden Tiger at 5%, a stronger hoppier version of Tiger, and at *The Navigation, Lapworth* Everard's Tiger Triple Gold 5% [are these the same beers?], Everard's Old Original and Charles Wells Banana Bread have been on offer. *The Vaults, Knowle* has had Slater's Top Totty, Brains SA, Young's Special and Hampshire Pride of Romsey. *The Railway, Dorridge* has sported Highgate Fox's Nob, Smiles Original, Belhaven St Andrews Ale whilst *The Fleur-de-Lys at Lowsonford* has sold Gales HSB. *The Bulls Head, Barston* has sold Ushers Winter Storm whilst *The Boat, Catherine De Barnes* has had Wychwood Goliath, Morrell's Varsity, Elwood's Thin Ice, Bateman's XXXB, Hampshire Pride of Romsey and Brakspear's Pride of the River. *The Black Boy, Heronfield* has offered Highgate Special Bitter whilst the *Red Lion, Shirley* has sported Slater's Best. *The Tom O' the Wood, Rowington* has had Wyre Piddle Piddle Down Under and *The Wharf, Hockley Heath*, Charles Wells Banana Bread



Solihull 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 first 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!]

Socials

Our long weekend away is to Edinburgh from Thursday 26th-Saturday 28th September. Brewery tours of Caledonian and Belhaven are planned with time to sample Edinburgh's pubs. On return journey a visit to Dent Brewery is on the cards. More details from Kev... first come, first served, show Kev the colour of your deposit!

Saturday 20th April Mystery Coach Trip [£15]

Beer & Baltis

Friday 29th March Anchor, Bradford Street, Digbeth, Birmingham

Friday 26th April Vaults, Knowle

Friday 31st May Church Inn, Great Hampton Street, Birmingham
[Steak and Ale] tbc

Branch Meetings

Monday 8th April Sharman's Cross, Sharman's Cross Road/Prospect Lane

Monday 6th May Phone Kev for details

Monday 10th June Phone Kev for details

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

Brenda Duffy is the Branch Secretary on 01564 200 431

The 21st edition of *Solihull Drinker* will be published on June 10th, 2002

The deadline for advertising or contributions will therefore be

May 25th, 2002