



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Solihull drinker



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

Issue No: 31

website: www.solihullcamra.org

Winter, 2004

Local pub earns its spurs

The Winged Spur at Ullenhall is celebrating winning the Solihull & District Branch of CAMRA's (The Campaign for Real Ale) Most Improved Pub of The Year, 2004.

The publican Clive Minshall received the award from local CAMRA branch chairman Ray Cooke. "The licensees, Clive and Mary, have made a good pub even better. They've increased the range of beers on offer so that lovers of good quality ales have a greater choice" stated Ray. "As well as four real ales they also have two real ciders, plus a guest bottled beer. The pub is in picturesque countryside near Henley, so it makes an ideal detour for anyone visiting that town. The pub also offers home cooked food sourced from local produce and the diners we saw seemed to be tucking in with relish!"

Beers available on the night were Flowers IPA, Greene King Abbott Ale, Young's Bitter and Hartley's Cumbria Way, whilst the real cider buffs could enjoy Weston's Old Rosie and Weston's Vintage Cider. If you do visit the pub, beware the beers are a little expensive compared to other pubs in the Solihull area.



Ray Cooke [right] presents Clive with his award

Solihull Beer Festival a Sell Out!



The branch is celebrating a successful beer festival and true to form, like last year, we had 8 beers on until 11pm on Saturday but all but ran out at the staff party afterwards.

Beer of the Festival was Bank Top Port O' Call beating Kelham Island Pale Rider, the current Champion Beer of Britain into second place. Although visitors were down on last year all the beer got shifted and a great time was had by all particularly on Saturday night when we were entertained by branch member Roger Dipple under his stage name Roger Dean and his Music Machine. 12 new members were signed up, one of which was our 250th member, Adam James Gilson from Shirley who wins a flagon of beer from Bernies, Shirley

From The Fringe-the 900 Bus Route (or Three Merry Men in Meriden?)

Once again Solihull & District CAMRA took to the road, courtesy of Travel West Midlands, this time embarking on the 900 route. Keen readers of past *Drinkers* will know we have reported on the 57 route both ways, each time starting in The Shooting Star on the Sheldon/South Yardley border, firstly going into Solihull and secondly (at a later date) heading into Brum.

Time prevented me from starting off drinking at the said pub, but I did catch the bus (yes, the 900!) that took me to Birmingham Airport. There I had a rendezvous with Steve



and Steve, Messrs Dyson and Wood. We started off at The Abraham Darby. We had a choice of M&B Brew XI ('Beer of the Month'!), Highgate Saddler's Bitter or Worthington's 1744. Unfortunately the latter was not at 1744 prices, costing £1.35 a half (or £2.70 a pint if you're not quick on mental arithmetic). It was actually my first try of this beer, supposedly a flagship beer 2 or 3 years ago to counter Bass, but I've rarely seen it. It was a bit sweet I thought, but drinkable. The jury was out on the condition of the Saddler's, I was more convinced by it than my colleagues I think.

Then we went up the stairs to The Dragonfly, the other 'landside' pub, which is a Wetherspoon's. But alas, none of the usual Wetherspoon's range, nor the cheap prices. Available were Boddington's and Bass, each occupying two hand pumps. A Marston's Bitter hand pump was also in view but with none of that beer. Hardly holding up your flight for, and at £1.25 a half it is almost the same as the £1.29 a pint offer you can get at some Wetherspoon's as part of their Monday night offer (Acock's Green, sadly not Solihull!) Being a Mancunian by birth I had to have the Boddies, a sign of solidarity with a beer from a brewery that is under threat.

Not the Boddies I knew in the 80s, and none of us were enthusiastic about the beer.

There is one pub 'airside' at the airport, namely The Shakespeare Inn, but having recently returned from Barcelona and having surveyed it Steve D assured it was keg only.

On then to Meriden. Well, before we get there, just as short note about the super-duper new bus shelters-or not. There is gap between the roof and the side, so the rain came in on us. No design award there, methinks!

So, now on to Meriden. We decided to forego the obvious 'charms' of The Bull's Head, as when we did the 'Real Ale Ramble' earlier in the year the choice was not very inspiring. Bass and Brew XI I seem to recall. Instead we went into The Queen's Head, which was until this year a *Good Beer Guide* entry. Well, inside it is like a traditional pub, i.e. beams and brass but without the fake nature that a lot of modern identikit pubs have. As well as Bass and Brew XI (again!) there was a guest, Steeplejack from Lichfield Brewery. Cheaper at £2.30 a pint, and not bad, but the beer seemed to be served too cold, thus robbing it of some of its flavour. Shame!

Our next port of call was Allesley village, just off the A45. The obvious destination was The Rainbow, a brewpub. In addition to Courage Directors', Highgate Dark Mild and good old (?) Greene King IPA, we could choose their very own Piddlebrook. Only £1.50 a pint, this their own brew, and it was, by common consent, the best beer of the evening.

Onwards towards Coventry itself. We alighted at The Holyhead Inn on the eponymous road. They were not only in the throes of a quiz night but also an Ember Inns' Beer Festival, Oct 15th-Nov 28th. A bit disappointing, though. In their helpful leaflet they stated that up to 60 beers would be on offer during that period, with 3 or 4 being available every week, but a lot of the festival beers were from Nationals or big Regionals, with only the odd micro brewery getting a look in. As well as Marston's Pedigree and Brew XI the festival beers on then were Everard's Original and Marston's Wicked Witch. I found the latter palatable and would have gone back for another but I was keen myself to make our final staging post The Nursery Tavern on the outskirts of Spon End. I admit I stop off there normally once a week on my way home from my job in Cov and have a couple of haves. As per usual there was a wide choice of ales, some pretty standard, some more interesting. On offer were John Smith's Bitter, Charles Wells' Bombardier, Courage Best Bitter, Highgate Dark Mild, Deuchar's IPA, Wychwood Hobgoblin and Highgate Breacais, a self-styled 'whisky beer': being a lover of that spirit I could taste a bit of a wee dram in there even if my colleagues couldn't. The Deuchar's IPA was pronounced in good form, so the pub showed once again that they know how to keep their beer. In fact we could have also had a cider, as Thatcher's was available, but sadly we had to wend our merry way back.

An interesting and enjoyable evening, even though a lot of the beers were somewhat ubiquitous. Many thanks to the two Steves for their company, 'Wood' one of them only take the plunge and start his own brewery.... (sorry, an in-joke within our branch!)

Martin Collinge

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale



Join CAMRA Today...

Just fill in the form below and send, with a cheque (payable to CAMRA Ltd) or for Three Months Free membership (for those renewing or joining by Direct Debit) complete the Direct Debit Form. All forms should be addressed to membership secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW. Alternatively you can join online at www.camra.org.uk. Rates for single membership are £16 and joint £19. Concession rates are available on request.

.....

Title Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth

.....

P'tner Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth

.....

Address Postcode

.....

Tel. no.(s)

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

I enclose a cheque for..... Signed..... Date.....

Applications will be processed within 21 days

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit		
Please fill in the form and send to: Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society		The Direct Debit Guarantee This Guarantee is shared by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and guaranteed by your own Bank or Building Society. If the amount to be paid or the payment dates change CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid. You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.
To The Manager Bank or Building Society Address Postcode Name (if of Account Holder (s))	Originator's Identification Number 9 2 6 1 2 9 FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY This is not part of the instruction to your bank or Building Society Membership Number Name Postcode	
Bank or Building Society account number Branch Sort Code Reference Number	Instruction to your Bank or Building Society Please pay CAMRA Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards accorded by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with CAMRA and if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society. Signature: Date	
<small>Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of accounts.</small>		



THE BULL'S HEAD

Barston Lane, Barston

TEL: 01675 442830



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

Listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2004

Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year 2000 and 2002

**HOME COOKED MEALS ARE AVAILABLE
LUNCHTIMES AND EVENINGS MONDAY TO SATURDAY
IN THE PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS OF THE PUB,
OR IN OUR SEPARATE NON SMOKING RESTAURANT
(Sundays 12 to 3pm only, no evening meals)
TELEPHONE RESERVATIONS WELCOME**

**THE COLD WINTER NIGHTS ARE HERE. WHY NOT RELAX IN OUR
COMFORTABLE BAR AND LOUNGE IN FRONT OF OUR ROARING LOG FIRES,
SUPPING OUR GOOD BEER!**

in brief...

Punch Bowl, Lapworth

The recently refurbished Punch Bowl in Lapworth has changed substantially. The inside of the pub been opened up and no longer has a cosy feel about it. It's very much a gastropub with prices to match. The beer range has also changed. The Banks's range has been replaced by the ubiquitous Green King IPA and equally unimaginative Fullers London Pride. Furthermore our reporter was not impressed with the pint of Pride he partook of.

Saddler's Arms, Solihull

It's probably common knowledge now that the Saddler's has been taken over by Wolverhampton and Dudley and we await the appearance of Banks's beers and Marston's Pedigree replacing the variety of real ales we have all got used to at the Saddler's. Granted we have Wetherspoons but many would argue that the Saddler's have the edge on quality complimented by an interesting range. Why not pop in and make your feelings known about the possible loss of choice.

Boat, Catherine De Barnes and Drum and Monkey, Bentley Heath

The Boat reopened on December 1st as a Chef and Brewer. Now even more a foody pub all the staff wear uniform, a little uncomfotrable maybe for someone just popping in for a drink. As to beers; Well's Bobbardier, Marston's Pedigree and Shepherd Neame Spitfire. The Editor's verdict? Mediocre beers; mediocre food; mediocre décor; mediocre pub chain... bit like thousands of others throughout the country. Presumably the Drum and Monkey, Bentley Heath which has also become a Chef and Brewer will be exactly the same.

Engine, Hampton in Arden

At present the future of this pub is in doubt having gone to appeal following the rejection of plans to demolish it and build housing on the site. Not a sad loss many would say real ale wise and pretty dire inside if you've ever ventured in there. However it's a worrying trend among our local pubs as this follows hard on the heels the loss of the Golden Arrow, Olton recently to development.

Real beer becomes trendy...

- It's official following another successful Solihull CAMRA real ale festival. Treated to the many different tastes, colours, smells from the real ale market near and far, the Solihull CAMRA Festival sold out every session and proved, by the range of clientele, that real ale is no longer the drink of the fanatic in the corner. Rather the discerning choice of the modern consumer.

Solihull town pubs like J D Wetherspoon's White Swan, The Saddlers and The Hogshead support the delivery of real ales to its customers. Some even complimented the Solihull CAMRAS' real ale festival with a couple of their own (The White Swan).

The White Swan, The Saddler's and The Hogshead don't stop there - working with Cask Marque (a quality standard for real beer) and CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale), they have their standard real ales and some new beers throughout the year. The White Swan and The Saddler's rotate them so that customers can try even more excellent flavours! Away from the town centre The Vaults in Knowle (double pub of the year winner), The Bulls Head Barston and many more take the real ale experience to the Warwickshire countryside.

Where company policy allows, the championing of small breweries adds local flavour and entrepreneurship to the drinking experience. Wherever you choose to drink your real ale, remember to ask if its cask and for a full pint for your money. You will be pleasantly surprised by the range of flavors and enjoyment real ales can provide.

Ian Hunter

Wendy Owen and David Preston invite you
to

The Cock Horse

Country Pub and Restaurant
Old Warwick Road, Rowington,
Warwick, CV35 7AA



5 cask conditioned ales - Fuller's London Pride, Adnam's Broadside, Hook
Norton Bitter, Charles Wells Bombardier, a guest and Old Rosie Cider.

We are a small family run pub and restaurant and look forward to extending
you a warm welcome.

Special two course menu available Mon-Fri 12-2, and Mon-Thurs 6-7.
Blackboard specials and a la carte available lunchtimes and evenings.
Christmas menu available December 6th-24th, 3 course lunch £10.95, 5 course
dinner £19.95

Friday night is music night and the folk club is held on the 3rd Wednesday of
every month. Admission is free.

***CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2004 and 2005**
*** Solihull CAMRA Most Improved Pub of the Year 2003**

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I thoroughly enjoy 'The Solihull Drinker' but have to question the prudence of denigrating 'The Vaults' as you did so roundly in the last issue. Surely you ought to be praising this bastion of decent beer, not least as it is again the 'Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year'.

Putting aside the inaccuracy of Solihull's most costly cider, I did take exception to David Elliott's ill considered letter. Whilst I would agree with him that 'The Bull's Head' and 'The Case is Altered' are excellent establishments what could any fair minded ale enthusiast possibly have against 'The Vaults'? The latter is very much better than 'ok' and as for 'smoky and noisy' perhaps he has something against pubs where people go to enjoy themselves, even to the extent of a little self indulgence and lively conversation?

However, as beer drinking is indeed a 'broad church' I have a few suggestions that might appeal to the more puritanical imbibers. Since clearly 'The Vaults' is accessible to him he might venture a hundred yards or so up the road. I'm confident 'The Red Lion' would prove more to his tastes, not only does it provide what purports to be 'real ale', even an excuse for a mild, but this will be presented by amiable, if adolescent, bar staff. The likelihood of his reveries being disturbed by intrusive chatter is remote except, of course, for the seemingly ever present 'musak' and pub quiz, or more occasional 'punch up'. Moreover, smoking is actively discouraged, witness how frequently the ashtrays are removed, and is especially taboo at the bar for all other than the manager, who is, as he would put it, in a position to do as he pleases. Though improbable, should one tire of the delights of 'The Lion' a short stroll in the other direction offers the comforts of 'The Greswolde Arms', now re-vamped as an exorbitantly expensive discotheque, or even 'The Wilsons Arms', a restaurant with bar attached. Despite the doubtless charms of Knowle's other hostelrys, my 'local' will continue to be 'The Vaults' and should David Elliot overcome his prejudices and care to join me, I'll even buy him a pint! In the meantime: 'Vive la difference!'

Brian Parkes.

[I do think you are being a little harsh on David Elliott and maybe on the Red Lion. As you say beer drinking is a "broad church" and Mr. Elliott's views are as valid as either yours or mine. Concerning the Red Lion, there are worse pubs in Knowle which you mention in your letter. As to The Drinker castigating The Vaults, nothing could be further from the truth. First David Elliott's letter is not necessarily the view of Solihull CAMRA. However, The Drinker will always encourage free debate about beers and pubs. Indeed David's letter only contained eight words about the Vaults. Furthermore the article on prices did carry a proviso that it was only a sample of ten pubs in the area and that there could be others cheaper or conversely more expensive. Finally, back to the Vaults. I have known Nick Worrall the publican for some ten years now and without doubt he has done more for real ale drinkers in the Solihull area than any other pub. He has achieved this by sticking his neck out and promoting real ales from a variety of sources and has reaped the rewards of perseverance. Indeed I guarantee that most CAMRA members were at the Festival held at the Vaults at the end of November. Ed]

A long weekend in Newcastle on Tyne...

Part 1

Thursday - Newcastle Pub Crawl



Each year, a group from Solihull Branch of CAMRA visit a different part of the country in search of some interesting pubs and real ales. This year, we ventured to the North East, an area not previously visited by the branch, although my husband Allan and I, having lived in Newcastle for 12 years some time ago, have frequently sung the praises of the excellent pubs and beers available on Tyneside.

We set off on a fairly bright Thursday morning, and made good time to our lunchtime rendezvous, the Kings Arms at Sandhutton, not far off the A1

in North Yorkshire. This was a pleasant pub with a friendly licensee. It has a lounge and public bar and offers a range of real ales. We chose the Taylor's Landlord, which went down very well. There was an extensive menu of meals and snacks. Allan & I decided to try the filled Yorkshire puddings, with a generous helping of beef or pork and gravy. Just the job to set us up for the rest of the journey north.

After a slight detour to visit family on the outskirts of Newcastle, we joined the rest of the party at our hotel in the Jesmond area of Newcastle, just in time to head off for the evening. Jesmond is not renowned for real ale, but we found it conveniently close to the Metro



system, which could whisk us off into Newcastle in a matter of minutes.

Our first evening was to be spent exploring Newcastle City Centre. We set off around 5pm and our first visit was to the Punchbowl in Jesmond, which used to be one of my husband's locals when he was a student in Newcastle in the dim distant past. We did not remember it being anything special, but seeing it had an entry in the 2004 Good Beer Guide, we persuaded the others to try it on our way into town. The building is quite grand, and the furnishings were comfortable, but both the choice (Theakston's XB & Theakston's Cool Cask) and the quality of the beer was disappointing! The local branch appear to agree with us, as the pub is not listed in the 2005 GBG.

Our first priority on arriving in the centre of Newcastle was to eat, so we headed for the Union Rooms opposite Central Station. This Wetherspoon's pub was opened a few years ago and, as the name suggests, it is housed in a former Trade Union building. There are a number of different bars, on two floors, and we headed up the sweeping

staircase to the dining area. The choice of beers included Darwin Evolution and Wylam Bohemia as well as Theakston's Old Peculier, Greene King Abbot Ale and John Smith's Bitter. Some of us went for the Curry Night menu, others for a more traditional meal. We were then ready to move on to explore further.

The Bodega Bar is on Westgate Road, a short distance away from the original site of Big Lamp Brewery, before it outgrew the premises and relocated to Newburn on the outskirts of the city. It is appropriate that one of the regular beers is Big Lamp Prince Bishop Ale. The other regulars are also from local breweries, Durham Magus and Mordue Workie Ticket. The guest beers at the time of our visit were from City of Cambridge, Black Sheep and Enville. The Bodega has a striking interior, with two original glass ceiling domes, and has a welcoming atmosphere.

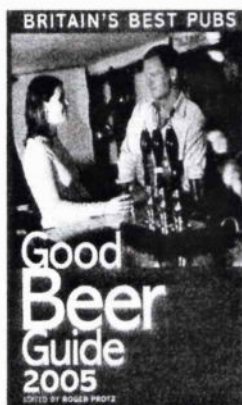
We moved on to the Newcastle Arms, a down to earth pub near St. James' Park football ground. Here we were slightly disappointed to find no local beers, but consoled ourselves with an excellent pint of Oakham Bishops Farewell.

We then had a lengthy stroll through the centre of town to the Bridge Hotel, next to the High Level Bridge, overlooking the Tyne. This is a lively and popular pub and appears to attract a wide range of people. There were local beers on offer here, being Mordue Workie Ticket and Darwin Forest XB, as well as Roosters Hooligan, Black Sheep Best Bitter and Caledonian Deuchars IPA.

Eventually it was time to move on to what is, in my opinion, the best pub in Newcastle, the Crown Posada. Grade II listed, the pub is on CAMRA's National Inventory of pub interiors. There is a beautiful stained glass window to the front of the long, narrow bar area. At busy times, it can be almost impossible to squeeze through to the seating area at the back! There were 6 beers available, including Jennings' Bitter, Rooster's Yankee and Taylor's Landlord.

We left, reluctantly, at closing time, and since we were almost on the Quayside, we decided to do some sightseeing, so at almost midnight, we found ourselves walking across the new Millennium footbridge to Gateshead and back. This is a stunning construction, and has enhanced the Quayside area. The whole vista of the Tyne by night is a marvellous sight. We then headed back to Central Station for the Metro back to Jesmond.

Brenda and Allan Duffy



Good Beer Guide 2005 launched

The 2005 Good Beer Guide is now in the hands of most CAMRA members. If you have not got yours then Solihull branch still have a few left. With over 4500 real ale pubs listed throughout the country including facilities such as food, accommodation, family welcome and much more it is very much the drinkers bible. Of great use is the most comprehensive listing of all real ale breweries and their real ales you will ever find. If you are a CAMRA member a substantial discount on the cover price is available on the cover price of £13.99. Interested? Phone the Drinker Editor.

HAMPTON WINES

42 High Street, Hampton-in-Arden

01675 442305

Come and browse our extensive choice of wines, beers and spirits

Over 200 carefully selected wines and 30 bottled beers
always in stock

Polypins of Church End beers available to order

Glass Hire * Sale or return for parties

Cash discounts * Home delivery * All major cards
accepted

Opening times:

Mon-Thur 11.30-2.00, 5.00-10.00, Fri/Sat 11.30-10.00,
Sun 10.00-3.00



Coach and Horses October Beer Festival...

The Coach and Horses at Weatheroak Hill held a Shropshire Beer Festival on Friday and Saturday 15th-16th October. The interesting and varied range featured 11 beers from 8 small Shropshire micros. Corvedale, Hanby, Hobson's, Three Tun's [John Robert's], Salopian, Six Bell's, Wood's and Worfield were all represented. Hobson's Mild at 3.2% was the weakest whilst Three Tun's Old Scrooge weighing in at 6.5% was the strongest with several new and established beers in between. Hopefully it was a successful occasion. Many of the beers were running out whilst I was there on Saturday night. Fortunately, with the pubs usual range of 7 to 8 beers available it was still a worthwhile drinking experience.

Dave Queenborough

Major Improvements at the Golden Acres, Damsonwood...

Estate pubs face difficulties in today's market place so it's nice to see that the new tenants at the Family Inn determined to make their pub a "locals" pub with real ale. Kerry and Simon Carter took over the pub early in September. Since then they have had a variety of real ales including Wychwood Philosophers Tipple; Shardlow Own Ghoul and forthcoming guest will come from Wye Valley and Bakehouse from Warwick. This is a pub well worth keeping an eye on, not only for the beer but also for the live entertainment and food which is on the menu! The pub also issues a Newsletter, an idea that many other pubs might consider emulating.

Old Solihull Pub Names (Part One)...

ALEXANDERS TAVERN, Gospel Lane, Olton

Formerly the **MOONRAKER**, the pub was demolished in 2003 to make way for housing.

ANCHOR, Wharf Lane, Solihull

Closed in 1937

AVIATOR BAR, Elmdon

Changed it's name to the **SHAKESPEARE**, now it is the **ABRAHAM DARBY**

BALTIMORE DINER, Lode Lane, Olton

Was **OLTON HALL**, renamed the **NEWPORT DINER** in 1983. Became the **BALTIMORE DINER** in 1987. Has been called the **OLTON TAVERN** since 1989.

BAR CO, Warwick Road, Solihull
Formerly the **GOLDEN LION**, it had this name from 2001 to 2004. It is now called the **TOWN HOUSE**.

BELL, New Road, Solihull

Was the **NAGS HEAD** from 1693 to 1715, then the **BELL** until 1738 when it was renamed the **GEORGE HOTEL**.

BELL, Wharf Lane, Lapworth
Existed from about 1700 to 1890

BIRD IN HAND, Lapworth

Was near the **BOOT**. Opened for the canal trade in 1871

BLUE BOAR, Heronfield

Became the **KING'S ARMS**, then officially called the **CAT IN THE WINDOW** in 1959, although this had been it's nickname for some time. Later renamed the **BRIDGEWATER HOTEL**, and then the **HERONS NEST** in the 1990's.

CALENDARS, Stratford Road, Shirley

Built in 1987 on the site of the **GEORGE & DRAGON**. Was renamed the **DALLAS EXCHANGE** in 1994, but has now been demolished. Originally called the **GREEN MAN**, renamed the **TRAVELLERS REST** in 1861, then the **GEORGE & DRAGON** in 1881.

CAPTAINS LOCKER, High Street, Solihull

Originally on this site was the **GARDNERS ARMS** which opened in the 1860's and was demolished in 1971. It became **BAR NEVADA** in the 1990's, before closing during the Touchwood redevelopment in 2001. It is now a members-only club called the **OPAL LOUNGE**.

CATHERLOUGH ARMS, Ullenhall

Became the **SPUR** in the 1870's, now called the **WINGED SPUR**.

CHERRY TREES, Lapworth

Across the road from the **PUNCHBOWL**, the licence was transferred in 1861.

CHEQUERS, Monkspath Hall Road, Monkspath

Built in 1988. Changed name to the **FIELD HOUSE** in 1998

COCK INN, Elmdon

No details known.

COCK INN, Stratford Road, Shirley

On the corner of **Cock Lane** (now **Olton Road**). Reputedly Prince Rupert, nephew of Charles I, stayed there in 1643 on his way to sack Birmingham for their insurrection against the King in the Civil War.

CROWN, Stratford Road, Monkspath

Knocked down in the 1980's for Stratford Road widening, replaced by **JEFFERSONS**.

CUDDLES, Chadwick End

Opened in 1985, it was an old Ansell's training centre. Formerly the **TOM O'BEDLAM**. Became the **LION ROCK** before being demolished for housing in the 1990's.



The Anchor, alongside the canal at Wharf Lane from Sue Bates's book Solihull A Pictorial History

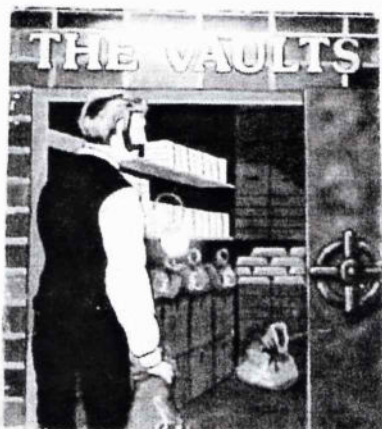
Steve Wood

Nick and Gwen welcome you to The Vaults, Knowle...

The Real Ale venue in Knowle with:

- ◆ Six handpumped beers including regulars, Ansell's Mild, Greene King IPA, Burton Ale, Tetley Bitter and two guest beers
- ◆ Real cider from Weston's
- ◆ Food available lunchtimes Monday - Saturday
- ◆ Occasional Beer Festivals

Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year 2003 and 2004



CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed since 1993



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

Local pub gets cocky!

During the recent run of local festivals, i.e. The Sixth Solihull, The Boat (in Catherine-de-Barnes) and The White Swan (Wetherspoon's) in Solihull another pub in area had its own festival, namely The Cock Horse at Rowington.

The Festival took place from Sat 28th-Mon 30th, in other words Bank Holiday weekend. 25 real ales (*see below*) were on offer and were supped gratefully by drinkers who came from all over the Midlands.



As well as fine ales there were 6 bands that provided an eclectic mix of folk and jazz to entertain the festival goers. Live music is common in this pub, taking place on..... and People's feet were certainly tapping and the music was enjoyed by all, offering a good atmosphere by which to appreciate the beer.

The Cock Horse was Solihull & District CAMRA's Most Improved Pub of The Year for 2003 and was a *Good Beer Guide* entry for 2004, repeating this feat in the new guide for 2005. Mine host and hostess David Owen and Wendy Preston

offer a warm welcome to locals and visitors alike, and four ales are on offer, being Adnams' Broadside, Fuller's London Pride, Hook Norton Best Bitter, plus a guest beer and real cider. The pub is located just south of Rowington village and is a 300-year-old coaching inn. It consists of a single oak-beamed lounge bar and an intimate restaurant offering an extensive menu.

And why the 'cocky' reference in the title? Well, the festival went so well I am pleased to say that David and Wendy are thinking about organising a May Bank Holiday Festival too, something we shall be pleased to support.

The stars of the festival, starting at 3.5% and going up to 6% (a mild!):

Old Stockport and Sunny Jim (*Robinson's*), Summer Hog (*Gale's*), Summer Swallow (*Bateman's*), Fit As A Fiddle (*Hyde's*), Summer Madness (*Usher's*), Pole Jolter (*Wychwood*), Smuggler (*Rebellion*), Chariot of Fire (*York*), London Pride (*Fuller's*), Tribute (*St.Austell*), Summertime (*Wye Valley*), Greece Lightning (*Hampshire*), Pageant (*Elgood*), Olympic (*Titanic*), Bombardier (*Charles Wells'*), Pedigree (*Marston's*), Roosters (*Rooster's*), Tanglefoot (*Badger*), Bishop's Finger (*Shepherd Neame*), Dark Ruby Mild (*Sarah Hughes*).

Martin Collinge

Weighbridge Beer Festival

Held over the weekend 13th-14th November in a marquee behind the Weighbridge Inn, just outside Alvechurch. Driving over on the Saturday evening, the car thermometer registered 0°C and we did wonder if it was the right time of year to be holding an outdoor event in a tent. However when we arrived the place was buzzing, many of the beers had run out and several calor gas fires did provide some useful warmth! The pub itself was so full of people you couldn't even get into it, so it looked like being a successful event. Twenty beers had been available from Slaughterhouse, Bakehouse Cottage, Millstone, Glastonbury, Archers, Tower, Beowulf, and the nearby Weatheroak. Local cidemaker Tardibigge also supplied three of their products.

If you haven't been to the pub, then go! It's a pleasant place in an interesting situation right beside the Worcester and Birmingham Canal and adjacent to a boat yard. Well worth a visit... especially Beer Festival time!

Dave Queenboroug

Do you rate your beer?

How many of you are actually using the CAMRA National Beer Scoring System (NBSS), filling in the scoring cards and returning them? I have, though I confess not on a regular enough basis. But I will be trying harder in future

So what is the NBSS? All CAMRA members like good beer, but how much and how good is good? If we are to recommend pubs or beers to others, or to judge what pubs should go in the Good Beer Guide, then we need to be objective in determining this. The NBSS helps by standardising the approach in a simple and easy to use format - introducing a 0 - 5 scale scoring system for the beer, as follows:

0: Undrinkable. No cask ale available or so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it

1: Poor. Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment

2: Average. Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing

3: Good. Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again

4: Very good. Excellent beer in excellent condition

5: Excellent. Probably the best you are likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely

As Brett Laniosh, the NBSS co-ordinator, points out, one immediate benefit of completing the credit card sized form is that those branches which have the fewest members are normally those with large rural areas to cover. And where do the townies often go on their holidays? The rural areas, where they sample lots of beers. By completing the card and returning it to CAMRA HQ (or to me or Julia) the information on beer quality will be passed back to the rural branch concerned and they can build up a better picture of whether pubs on their patch are consistently serving good beer or otherwise. Of course the same goes for cards completed for city pubs

There's no point us completing cards for our own pubs (though we are already receiving them from visitors to pubs on our patch) as we know what they are like and can feed the information back at branch meetings. But do please try to complete them for pubs off our patch. It literally takes only a minute to fill in. NBSS cards are available either from www.camra.org.uk or Julia (pubs officer).

So, get out there and score!

Ray Cooke

InBev to close Boddington's...

Oh how the great have fallen. Until the 1970's Boddington's Bitter was a byword for a magnificent beer. Now Interbrew renamed InBev are to close the Strangeways Brewery next year. Visit CAMRA's website and register your objections.

Bought by Whitbread in 1989, it was acquired by InBev in 2000. A local brewer is being sought to brew Cask Boddingtons, so it can retain it's "Cream of Manchester" tag.



Solihull times

Socials

- Wednesday 15th December Christmas Pub Crawl, Solihull town centre. Saddlers Arms 7.30pm; Metro Bar and Grill 8.15pm; Town House 8.30pm... then the rest
- Saturday 15th January Birmingham Mystery Tour. Meet at the Anchor, 7pm
- Saturday 19th February National Pubs Week. Music, guest beers, a great night at the pub. The Reservoir, Earlswood
- Saturday 12th March Shirley Pub Crawl. Sharmans Cross at 7.30pm, Woodmans Rest at 8.30pm... then we'll do the rest!

Pub & Grub

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Friday 7th January | Old Joint Stock, Birmingham | 7.30-8pm |
| Friday 28th January | Vaults, Knowle | 7.30-8pm |
| Friday 25th February | Bartons Arms, Aston | 7.30-8pm |
| Friday 18th March | Harvester, Olton | 7.30-8pm |

Branch Meetings

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Monday 10th January | Old Royal Oak, Hockley Heath | 8.30pm |
| Monday 7th February | Sharmans Cross, Solihull | 8.30pm |
| Monday 7th March | Drum and Monkey, Bentley Heath | 8.30pm |

For those meetings/socials as yet unconfirmed or where more details are needed please contact the Secretary, Steve Wood on 704 5258 or visit the branch website

The Solihull Drinker is the newsletter of the Solihull & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign of Real Ale.

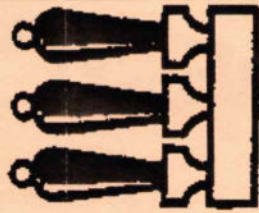
All contributions, comments and enquiries should be sent to:

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

The Editor reserves the right to amend or shorten any contributions in the Solihull

**Any complaints about short measure? Contact Solihull Trading Standards on
0121 704 6844.**

The 32nd edition of *Solihull Drinker* will be published on March 7th, 2005.
Copy deadline for advertising and contributions will be Sunday 20th February,
2005



BERRIDGES

REAL ALE

Off Licence

*** AN EVER CHANGING SCENE
OF EXCITING DRAUGHT
BEERS THROUGHOUT THE
YEAR**

*** 200 DIFFERENT BEERS
DURING A YEAR**

*** CAMRA GOOD BEER GUIDE
LISTED
CONTINUOUSLY
SINCE 1983**



*** PARTY BARRELS
AVAILABLE FOR
ANY OCCASSION**

*** ORDER EARLY TO AVOID
DISAPOINTMENT**

*** SALE OR RETURN ON
SEALED GOODS**

*** EXCITING
RANGE OF
BOTTLED BEERS**



Telephone

0121 744 2827

**266 CRANMORE BOULEVARD
SHIRLEY SOLIHULL**

**Order your
Christmas
beer now!**

