

Solihull Drinker

Issue No 108
Spring 2026



Free
Please take one

It's Beer Festival Time!

It's been a long, soggy winter - but the good news is that spring is here, which means it's time for beer festivals! By the time you read this, there'll have been four local festivals already, with more to come.



Two festival which, at the time of writing, hadn't taken place were the Lord Leycester Beer Festival and the Warwick University Real Ale

Festival.

The photo here shows a busy Saturday evening at the Knowle & Dorridge Round Table Beer Festival, held at the Knowle British Legion Club. Featuring over 20 real ales, there was the added attraction of live Six Nations rugby union, shown on TV and projected on the big screen. It certainly attracted a good crowd.

On the same weekend the Pup & Duckling, our branch West Midlands Pub of the Year, celebrated its 10th birthday with a beer festival. Over 20 real ales were on offer over the course of the festival, plus craft beers and ciders. As ever with events at the Pup & Duckling, it all proved very popular.

The Lord Leycester festival was 20 - 21 February, once again held in the magnificent Great Hall of The Lord Leycester - which is actually in Warwick. There were 20 beers and ales, eight ciders and a prosecco bar.

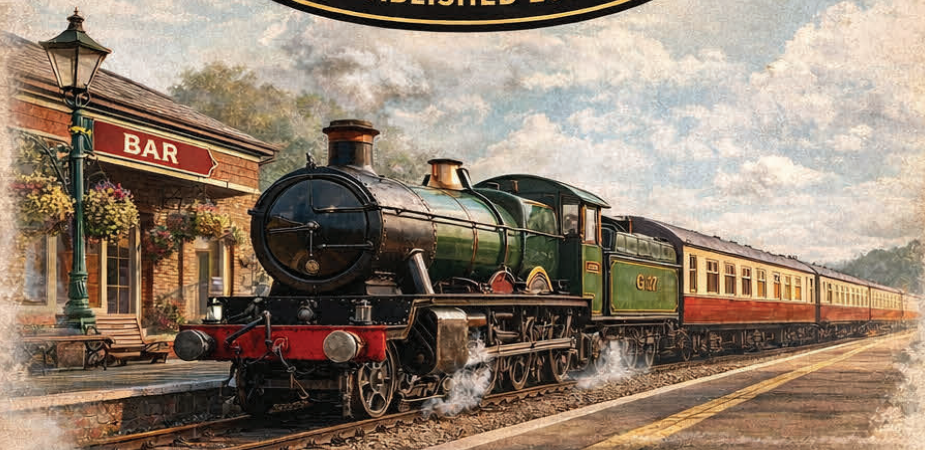
The Warwick Uni festival is one of the largest in our area; in fact, it's the largest student-run beer festival in Europe, with over 100 beers, 50 ciders, plus mead and wine. Running from 19 to 21 February, in the Warwick Students' Union (which is in Coventry...) it's an easy one to get to; the U1 bus goes from Leamington Spa to the University Interchange - and runs until well after the last train home!

(Continued on Page 5)

THE
STATION BAR

HENLEY-IN-ARDEN

ESTABLISHED 2024



NOW OPEN IN HENLEY-IN-ARDEN!



- 3 GUEST ALES ROTATED WEEKLY
- CAMRA MEMBER DISCOUNT
- OPENING TIMES

THURSDAY 12 NOON - 9.30PM

FRIDAY 1PM - 9.30PM

SATURDAY 12 NOON - 9.30PM

SUNDAY CHECK  FOR OPENING HRS



/FRIENDSOFHENLEYRAILWAY

FIND US NEXT TO HENLEY-IN-ARDEN TRAIN STATION



Upcoming Midlands Area Beer Festivals and Events

FOR NATIONAL BEER FESTIVALS PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING LINK:
www.camra.org.uk/beer-festivals-events/

5 - 7 March (Thu – Sat)

Loughborough Beer Festival
Polish Social Club
True Lovers Walk
Loughborough LE11 3DB

17 - 19 April (Fri - Sun)

CAMRA AGM & Members' Weekend
The Alban Arena
Civic Close
St Albans AL1 3LD

19 - 21 March (Thu - Sat)

Burton & South Derbyshire Beer & Cider
Festival
Town Hall
Burton Upon Trent DE14 2EB

12 - 14 June (Fri - Sat)

GWR 26th Ale & Steam Festival
Winchcombe & Toddington GWR
Stations
Gloucestershire

27 - 28 March (Fri - Sat)

40th Coventry Beer Festival
Coventry Rugby Football Ground
Butts Park Arena
Coventry CV1 3GE

27 June (Sat)

Blossomfield Club
The Wardens
Widney Lane
Solihull B91 3JY

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

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Leeds



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



Dates for your diary

Branch Meetings

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

Monday 13th April

Knowle & Dorridge Racquets Club

Monday 11th May

Colebrook

Monday 1st June

Wharf, Hockley Heath

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

Committee Meetings

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

Wednesday 22 April

Ale Hub, Shirley

Monday 15 June

Crown, Claverdon

Socials

12 - 14 March

Weekend Away - Halifax

15 May

Day Trip to Chester

23 - 24 October

Weekend Away - Swindon, including Beer Festival

For more details of socials please contact us at www.solihull.camra.org.uk

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

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unforgettable experiences

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Solihull B91 3SB

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3 Craft Beers

Opening Hours

09.00 - 23.00 Sun - Thur

09.00 - 24.00 Fri - Sat

KNOWLE AND DORRIDGE CRICKET CLUB
STATION ROAD, DORRIDGE, B93 8ET



(Continued from Page 1)
Still to come at the time of writing is the Loughborough Beer Festival, taking place the first weekend of March; from 19th to 21st March it's the Burton & South Derbyshire festival, held in the impressive Town Hall in Burton.

At the end of March, on 27th and 28th, it's the 40th Coventry Beer Festival - held as usual at the Butts Park Arena. This will feature over 50 real ales; there will also be a craft beer bar plus ciders and perries.

From this year, CAMRA members have a new benefit: free entry to all CAMRA beer festivals. As if

you needed a reason to join the campaign!

Finally, while it's not a beer festival, CAMRA's AGM and Members' Weekend takes place in St Albans from 17th to 19th April. This is open to all CAMRA members, who can also watch and vote online. As the name suggests, there will be plenty of time for socialising and visiting the pubs in the area; St Albans is home to no fewer than nine pubs in CAMRA's flagship Good Beer Guide.

We hope to see you at an event soon!

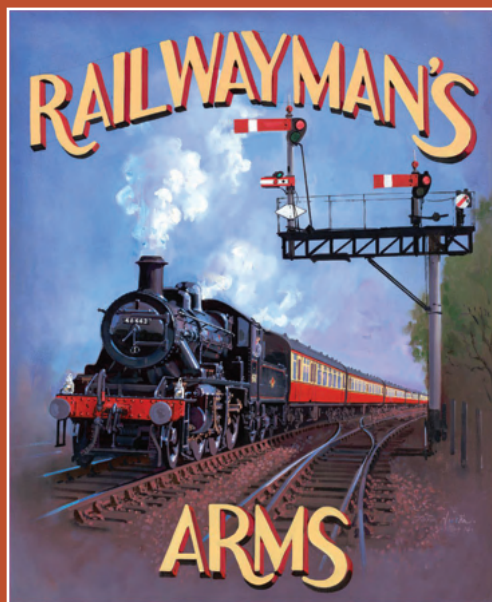
Martin Buck
Branch Chair



TWO CAMRA Good Beer Guide Free Houses!

Travel by train between the two.

For details, see SVR.CO.UK



and

THE KING & CASTLE

on the concourse at
KIDDERMINSTER TOWN Station

8 real ales including:
Batham's Best Bitter,
Bewdley Brewery Worcestershire Way,
Hobsons Best Bitter

also
Hobsons Oldfield Cider

THE RAILWAYMAN'S ARMS

on Platform 1 at
BRIDGNORTH Station

Serving 9 Real Ales including:
Hobsons Town Crier,
Hobsons Best Bitter,
Bewdley Brewery's Station Porter &
Worcestershire Way,
Batham's Best Bitter
plus one Traditional Cider





'Pub Finder' Website and LocAle

Pubs have been part of the fabric of life in Britain for centuries; despite recent tough times, there are still around 45,000 of them. And then there are clubs - from working men's clubs to sports and social clubs. So how can you figure out where to go, especially if you fancy a good pint of real ale?

One of CAMRA's core campaigns is to support pubs and clubs; as part of that, there's a comprehensive database of them, maintained by members. It's available via camra.org.uk/pubs, and has comprehensive search and filtering facilities. To begin, you specify where you're interested in - for example, Solihull. If you're out with your phone, the mobile site can search using your current location.

Once you've got the initial list, you can then start filtering - I always check the 'Serves Real Ale' box! You can limit it to just pubs, or just clubs; under Facilities you can check for lunchtime or evening meals, family or dog friendly, whether there's a separate restaurant room, or if there's parking.

If you're a CAMRA member, once you've signed in on the site you can also filter the list to show only the pubs/clubs that are listed in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide - they represent the top 10%, as judged by CAMRA members. Members can also enter scores for their beers, which provides

valuable feedback on quality and consistency.

Another feature that can be used as a filter is LocAle; this is a CAMRA initiative, dating back to 2007, to highlight pubs/clubs which regularly serve a locally-brewed real ale. This allows drinkers to find out about what breweries are in their area, and which helps increase the resilience of the local economy and reduce 'beer miles'.

We've already highlighted the Henley Mile brewery in Henley-in-Arden, and there's Infinity, brewing on the premises of the Warwickshire Lad. For LocAle in our branch there's the various breweries in Birmingham, plus Church End, Purity, Fixed Wheel, Green Duck, Byatt's, North Cotswold...

We have a number of 'LocAle' pubs; the White Swan in Solihull often has Silhill beers, the Three Tuns in Henley-in-Arden has two Church End regular beers plus Batham's Bitter, the Ale Rooms in Knowle has a constantly changing range including Church End, Hobsons and Froth Blowers. The ultimate in LocAle is the Henley Mile bar; the beer has to travel all of ten metres down the alley from the brewery, which is in the evocatively named Hangman's Yard!

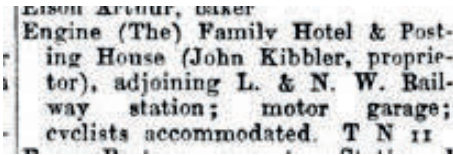
Martin Buck



Hampton in Arden - A Bit of History

From around 1850 there were three pubs located in Hampton in Arden: The Engine Hotel (aka Railway), the White Lion, and Ring Of Bells which opened that year; only the White Lion survives.

The Engine Hotel, which was converted from a private house, opened in 1838 as the Railway Inn, near the original station built by the London and Birmingham Railway. The Engine Inn was listed in a contemporary trade directory of 1850, with William



The Engine - 1912 Kelly's Directory

Wagstaff as innkeeper. At both the 1871 and 1881 census, Nathaniel Allen of Kings Norton was the innkeeper of The Engine and Railway Inn, as it was then called. Allen remained the licensee until the end of the 19th century. By the early 20th century John Kibbler had become the owner of the Engine, as it was referred to. In 1912 it was described in Kellys directory as a “family hotel and posting house with a motor garage and accommodation for cyclists”. Kibbler remained the

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2026



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Steak nights Thurs from 5.0pm
Curry night Wednesday from 5.0pm
Music Quiz first Monday every month
10th March - Meet the Brewer, St Austell
28th March - Vinyl Revival Disco, 60s to 90s
28th March - Elvis/Neil Diamond show
11th April - Rod Stewart show

<p>MONDAY & THURSDAY</p> <p>CASK </p> <p>Ales £3.50</p> <p>ALL DAY</p>	<p><i>Cocktails</i></p> <p>2 for £13.50</p> <p>SHOTS</p> <p>4 for £14.50</p>
<p>THURSDAY & SUNDAY</p> <p>FROM 5.00PM</p> <p>WINE Club</p> <p>Bottles</p> <p>FROM £13.99</p> <p>ADD OFFER</p>	<p>FRIDAY & SATURDAY</p> <p>FROM 5.00PM</p> <p>FIZZ WEEKEND</p> <p>Bottles</p> <p>£15.00</p> <p>ADD OFFER</p>



owner until 1916 when Edward Palmer became licensee. From 1921 until at least 1933, when the dining room was extended, Mr B. W. Shipton was the licensee. It was reported in 1938 that the Engine had ceased to be a licensed premises. However, it was regularly advertising for staff in the Birmingham Post and Mail between 1961 - 70. Latterly it was a Mitchells and Butlers pub. In 1974 Luigi Gaeta murdered his wife in the car park of the Engine Hotel, where she worked, and was subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment. This was a crime of passion, as Joyce was having an affair with another of the pub workers. Most of the building was demolished c. 2005 and the site is now occupied by the Engine Mews housing development. Part of the original building, on the corner of Fentham Road, has been preserved and is incorporated in Engine Mews.

Mary Gilbert (John's unmarried daughter) was the licensed victualler but by 1879 it was Henry Gilbert who was another relative. By 1883 the owner had become John Peters followed briefly by Jim Kington. The Ring of Bells is described as a commercial hotel with James Tall as proprietor from 1892 until 1908, when James died. He was succeeded by Edward Palmer who was followed from 1921 until 1933, by Mrs Peg Jones. In the early part of the 20th century it was supplied by Mitchells & Butlers. The Ring of Bells closed on 11th October 1938 when the licence was transferred to the Greville Arms in Solihull. The building is now a private house known as "The Old Ring of Bells".

The White Lion, which is situated opposite the church in High Street, is an 17th century timber-framed building with Grade II status (1976).

The Ring of Bells was located on the Solihull Road opposite the church (i.e. before the sharp corner at the top of the village) and the earliest reference was in an 1850 trade directory of a John Gilbert as the licensee. According to the 1871 census



Ring O' Bells - Colourised Postcard, circa 1912





The building was originally a farmhouse that was later converted into an inn with accommodation. It is plastered externally with old beams exposed inside. The date of the conversion is unknown but it was before 1812 when the White Lion was advertised for sale by auction. In the 1850 History, Gazetteer & Directory of Warwickshire, George Jennings is listed as the innkeeper. By the 1871 census Robert Grosvenor of Church Eaton, Staffordshire had become the innkeeper (in the 1851 census he is listed as a brewer and living in Birmingham) and by 1896 Mrs Lucy

Whitehead Bros. coal merchants
White Lion Hotel (William Owen, proprietor); cyclists & large or small parties catered for on the shortest notice; beer, wines & spirits of the best quality. Free house

White Lion - 1912 Kelly's Directory

Sames. In the early 20th century it was supplied by Davenports brewery. In a trade directory of 1912 William Owen was listed as the proprietor of the White Lion Hotel, which was described as a free house. By 1916 an unmarried daughter of his was the licensee.

The White Lion is still open and today not only offers a choice of four real ales but excellent food and accommodation. The freehold is currently held by Heineken UK with Chris Roach as tenant.

(Dr) Iain Wells

Useful Contact Numbers

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Social co-ordinator

Steve Dyson
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Iain Wells 07810 827043

Trading Standards contacts:

For local consumer advice in our area please contact the following

Solihull – www.solihull.gov.uk/tradingstandards

Warwickshire – www.warwickshire.gov.uk/contactustradingstandards

Citizens Advice Consumer Service – phone 03454 040506



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Advertise Your Business Here With Us

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

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

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

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

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

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

CAMRA Real Ale, Cider and Perry Vouchers

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

They are redeemable at over 1,550 pubs nationwide, including Wetherspoon, Proper Pubs, and City Taverns. To get an up-to-date listing for pubs participating near you, enter your postcode at <https://bit.ly/4qt2ICE>

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





Crowdfunding the Drinker - Update

In our Spring 2025 issue we announced the introduction of a new initiative – a kind of ‘crowdfunding’ approach to help support the Drinker magazine. As we explained, the magazine needs to be self-funding; without businesses placing adverts (if you do want to advertise with us please see page 15 for details) there simply wouldn't be a magazine, so many thanks to our advertisers, old and new.

To supplement that, and to allow businesses to support us without committing to advertising, we're asking for contributions of a nominal £10 per quarter. I'm delighted that we have four businesses doing just that – **huge**

thanks to the Pup & Duckling, the Station (Henley-in-Arden), Tap & Tandoor and the White Lion.

As we explained in the previous issue, if you make this contribution for six issues, you'll be entitled to a free ¼ page ad in the magazine – consider it micropayments towards your own ad.

Please do consider joining the scheme; the magazine is our main tool for campaigning for clubs, pubs and real ale, as well as informing people of local matters and events. If you're interested, just get in touch.

Hail to the Ale

This is the section where we update you on news related to pubs, clubs, off licences or breweries in our area. We rely heavily on you, our readers, to keep us updated so, as always, if you hear of anything you feel we or others should know about then please do drop us a line at pubs@solihull.camra.org.uk.

In the centre of Solihull the Assembly Rooms (previously Yates's, and Lloyds No.1) has been let and there has been activity inside; no details on who has taken it on or what will be done with it.

As reported in the previous issue, the Blue Bell Cider House has been bought by Thwaites; there have been two Thwaites beers on when we've visited, but unlike the nearby Bull's Head, which serves four Thwaites beers, there has also been another beer on offer.

Henley Mile brewery has added a third beer. Run Charlie, Run! is a 4.5% best bitter, and is available in the Henley Mile tap.

The Shaking Hand in Shirley is again stocking real cider.

Keystone Brewing Group went into administration in November; the group included Purity, and also Black Sheep. The newly-formed Great British Drinks Company has completed a pre-pack purchase of the breweries, saving 145 jobs.

The Flute & Flagon in Solihull is under new management; it remains a Stonegate pub.

The Mason's Arms in Solihull is to undergo an internal refurbishment; the outdoor area is also to be expanded.

Paul Wigley - Pubs Officer



Pubs, Pints, People.

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Membership Matters

As Spring approaches, CAMRA members' thoughts turn to beer festivals, some run by local pubs, others by charities and many others run by CAMRA branches situated all over the country. A new initiative is that, at all CAMRA run beer festivals, members will get free entry - an excellent reason to join CAMRA. One of the other benefits you get as a CAMRA member is £30 worth of real ale/cider vouchers valid at numerous pub chains including JD Wetherspoons - details can be found at <https://bit.ly/4qt2ICE>. There are numerous other money saving benefits on becoming a member of CAMRA which can all be found if you visit www.camra.org.uk.

As well as those benefits, we're happy to buy a pint for new members of the Solihull & District CAMRA branch when they attend their first meeting/social; just introduce yourself to me and we'll visit the bar. All new Solihull CAMRA members are sent a welcome letter from myself which contains the free pint voucher.

As a branch, we would like to see some new faces - like all social organisations, we rely on our members to get involved, so I'm calling on all new members and members who have never been to a meeting/social event, why not come along and see for yourself. We reckon you'll be pleasantly surprised and as a branch we are a friendly group of liked

minded real ale/cider fans; you will be made most welcome whilst enjoying a pint with other real ale/cider drinkers. A list of our branch meetings/social events is in the Dates For Your Diary section in this publication or see our website www.solihull.camra.org.uk for more information.

If you do become a member of CAMRA you will get a monthly digital newsletter titled *What's Brewing* with articles on what's happening within CAMRA and the real ale scene nationally; there is also a very nice quarterly informative magazine titled *Beer* which has many interesting articles with colour photographs covering a wide range of topics from breweries to bottled beers. Both of these items are available to download to your pc/tablet/smartphone so you are able to read them at a time/place to suit yourself. These used to be in a printed format however in order for CAMRA to be more cost effective and enhance their green credentials they are now available as downloads.

With prices of membership starting from £30.00 per annum (just 57p per week), I think you will agree this represents good value for money; and how about giving a year's membership as a gift for Father's Day on the 21st June.

Dave Mckowen
Membership Secretary

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The 109th edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 1st June 2026. Please note that the deadline for copy, advertising and any other contribution for this issue is **Wednesday 13th May**. Thank you in advance to all contributors.



THE THREE TUNS HENLEY IN ARDEN



CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2025
Serving 5 real ales, including Batham's Best Bitter
Consistently good real ales
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Solihull CAMRA branch overall Pub of the Year 2025
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The three tuns



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