



Issue No 66

Winter 2013

November Campaigning Trip



Featured in this issue:

Solihull Pub, Club & Brewery News



Solihull 2013 Beer Festival Report



4th-5th October

Our first Club of the Year award

solihull camra
SOLIHULL DISTRICT

The Rowington Club

Club of the Year
2013

2013 Beer Festival

The fifteenth annual Solihull Beer Festival took place over the first weekend of October, and it featured our biggest and best line up of real ales to date. Thanks to the hard work of our bar manager, Kevin Sumner, we had both the Champion Beer of Britain – 1872 Porter, from the Elland Brewery – and the runner-up, Buntingford Brewery's



Friday evening at the bar

Twitchell. They were alongside no fewer than 41 other real ales covering all types, from Mild to Old Ale. We also had five real ciders, of varying strengths and sweetnesses.

The festival was officially opened at 5:30 pm on Friday by Tom Lackey, Solihull's record-breaking 93-year-old wing-walker. As usual the opening session was busy, with plenty of people eager to sample the wide range of beers on offer. After opening at noon, Saturday afternoon was more relaxed – with eleven hours until last orders, there was plenty of time to try a variety of styles.

With the festival again sponsored by the Whitworth Brewing Company, there

(Continued on page 3)

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Winter's on the way, but let's not be downhearted: snow and ice outside mean warmth and cheer inside! Come along and sit in our bars next to the log fires, and with a pint of seasonal real ale in your hand you'll soon feel less like Jack Frost and more like Good King Wenceslas. Cheers!!!



www.TheBullsHeadBarston.co.uk

(Continued from front page)

was a Meet the Brewer session on Saturday afternoon, giving attendees the chance to talk to Steve and Charlotte about how they got started and their different beers. They also brought along samples of the different malts and hops used in the brewing process.

Steve and Charlotte at the festival



MEET THE BREWER - WHITWORTH

The Warwick University Brass Quintet entertained people from 5pm, and the Strumtroopers once again put on a storming set in the evening: they claimed they had to finish at 10pm as they had played all the songs they knew! An excellent lively end to another great festival.

With more beers on the racks, a good selection remained on sale until the end of Saturday. The first to run out was



A few of our happy festival visitors

Whitworth's Sobriety Blonde, followed by Blue Monkey's Hop Air Baboon and Warwick Bear, from The Shed – so both of our local breweries featured at the festival had a sold-out beer.

In the Beer of the Festival contest – voted on by festival-goers – there was a tie, with honours shared between Black Voodoo, by Fernandes, and Salopian's Boomerang – at 6.9%, the strongest beer at the festival. The mystery ale was Oakham's Inferno, and two people identified it perfectly.

A big thank you to all our volunteers, without whom there wouldn't be a festival. Kevin in particular did a sterling job of securing top-notch beers for us; due in no small part to the help and support of our supplier, Baby Bottles.



We are already thinking about next year's festival, looking at ways we can improve to make the sixteenth edition even better. 3rd and 4th October 2014 – put it in your diary!

Martin Buck, Festival Organiser

The 67th edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 3rd March, 2014.

Please note that the deadline for copy, advertising and contributions will be no later than Wednesday 12th February.

Hail to the Ale!

- local Beer, Pub, Club & Brewery news

The Boat, Catherine-de-Barnes



The Boat at Catherine de Barnes has had Black Sheep Best Bitter on for a while as well as regular offering Wells Bombardier. The guest ales have recently included Sharp's Doom Bar and Hook Norton Old Hooky, all in good condition.

The Highwood, Olton

The Highwood at Olton is now serving one real ale: Sharp's Doombar, at £2.50 per pint (£2.20 on Wednesdays). It has been available for two months, getting through a barrel a week, and it is reported to be in very good condition.

Red Lion, Knowle

The Red Lion was one of our local Ember Inns promoting the chain's real ale festival with a free pint for those filling in an online survey and another free pint for trying at least one beer in each of the first four weeks of a five week festival. There was also 20p off the first pint each night for card carrying CAMRA

members. In addition to the 5-week festival, the Autumn Ales selection resulted in the following ales being on offer: Brains' Bragging Rights (5.0%); Orkney Dragonhead (4.0%); Rudgate Zest is Best (3.6%); Kelburn Dark Moor (4.5%); Belhaven Black Scottish Stout (4.2%); Revolutions' E.P. (4.5%); Lancaster Ginger Snap (4.4%); Cameron's Gold Bullion (4.3%) and Adams' Ghost Ship (4.5%).

The Woodman's Rest, Shirley

The Woodman's Rest reopened in mid-October after a short refurbishment. Beers seen there recently include a very tasty pint of Okell's Olaf. Additional lines have been installed to allow for expansion of the beer range from 4 regulars and two ever-changing guests in the future. Manager Helen O'Neill is currently planning the real ale choice for the festive season, and wishes to remind CAMRA members that there is a discount of 20p per pint on production of their CAMRA card.



The Woodman's Rest

White Lion, Hampton in Arden

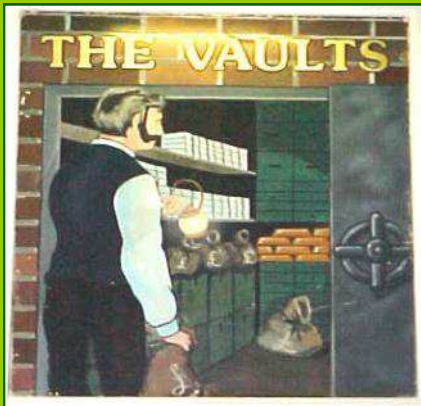
The Hook Norton Lion has gone from the White Lion, temporarily replaced by Castle Rock Black Gold (dark mild) for a couple of weeks, which was replaced by Barnsey, a dark ale from Bath Ales. The Barnsey was subsequently changed to Castle Rock's Harvest Pale. The six real ales now on offer are: M & B Brew XI (3.6%); Hobsons Best Bitter (3.8%); Sharp's Doom Bar (4.0%); Banks's Sunbeam (4.2%); Purity Pure Ubu (4.5%) and Castle Rock Pale Ale (3.8%)

Whitworth Brewing Company

Whitworth has recently produced a new one-off 4.6% Porter called 'Solihops', to celebrate their 100th commercial brew. Made with locally grown hops supplied by Gordon Clarke at the Solihull beer festival, it is only available locally: first showcasing at the Warwickshire Lad from Saturday 16th November, it can now also be found at the Forest Hotel, Dorridge, the Lady Lane Wharf, Earlswood, and Bernies off-licence in Shirley.



Nick, Gwen and staff welcome you to



the Real Ale venue in

CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed since 1993

**Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year 2013
(& 7 times between 1992-2008)**

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

***Opening hours: Mon-Thurs 12.00-2.30pm and 5.00-11.30pm;
Fri & Sat: 12.00-11.30pm; Sun 12.00-11.00pm.***

Hail to the Ale! (continued)

The Rowington Club

The Rowing ton Club held its annual beer festival at the end of August: the weather favoured visitors, and with bands, a barbecue, and a marquee with plenty of real ales and traditional ciders over the weekend, there was something for everyone.



Mason's Arms, Solihull

Seen in the Mason's Arms on two separate occasions were Wold Top Golden Summer, Daleside Old Le-gover, Wye Valley Butty Bach and Mole Brewery Molecatcher, as well as (regular) Marston's EPA—a very good selection indeed.

The Boat, Catherine de Barnes

The Boat at Catherine de Barnes has had Black Sheep Best Bitter on for a while as well as regular offering Wells Bombardier. The guest ales have recently included Sharp's Doom Bar and Hook Norton Old Hooky, all in good condition.

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Solihull CAMRA's Club of the Year 2013: The Rowington Club

The Rowington Club has featured many times in the pages of this magazine since steward and manager Adrian Cotton and the club committee turned its fortunes around a few years ago. The Club was voted into CAMRA's Good Beer Guide for the first time back in 2010, when it was presented with a certificate to mark the occasion; and has been in all subsequent editions thanks to its choice of real ales, community support, and warm welcome to CAMRA members.

The Rowington Club is at the heart of its local community, supporting junior cricket at the cricket club next door; and is well-known for its regular entertainment including seasonal fixtures such as Ladies' Day in June, its beer festival in August, the game fair in September, and Marrow Sunday in October.

Clubs are now starting to open their doors to CAMRA members who are not also club members, and earlier this year it was felt that the branch

should make an annual award to the club in our area which most fulfilled CAMRA's aims including good quality well-kept real ales, a fair pint, and a warm welcome.

It came as no surprise that of all the Solihull and District clubs nominated, the Rowington Club should gain the initial award. The branch were pleased to present Adrian on behalf of the club and the committee with a framed certificate for Club of the Year 2013, and to wish them all the best for their continuing popularity and success.



Adrian Cotton thanks the branch for the award

The Solihull Drinker is the quarterly newsletter of the Solihull & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. The views expressed in the Drinker are not necessarily those of the Branch or of CAMRA.



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Contributions, comments and enquiries should be sent to the Editor, Solihull Drinker, c/o 4 Kendrick Close, Solihull B92 0QD or email julia.hammonds@blueyonder.co.uk

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

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Solihull CAMRA 2013 ©

Pub Co Has Problems

The Bramwell Pub Co went into administration at the end of October, with 25 of its 185 pubs closing immediately. The Goodridge in Burton closed abruptly at lunchtime on 31st October with customers being ushered out of the pub, and the Courtyard in Cannock and the Glass Works in Rugeley also closed that day. Fortunately the Solihull area is not affected, the nearest Bramwell pubs to us being the Proverbial, in Harborne; the Castle, in Coventry; the Varsity, half-way between Coventry and Kenilworth; the Abbey, in Redditch, and the Grapevine in Bromsgrove. The administrators have successfully secured the sale of 78 former Bramwell sites to the Stonegate Pub Co. Ltd. in a deal which safeguards about 1700 jobs nationwide.

New Solihull Micro-Brewery

Mark Shepherd, the owner of the Rock & Roll Brewhouse, which used to be in the Solihull area before moving to Birmingham, has recently started up another micro-brewery at the Blue Bell Cider House, Warings Green, in the same building where brewing used to take place many years ago. Called the Blue Bell Brewhouse, it will be brewing exclusively for the pub, and test brews are currently being undertaken. Triton, a .5.0% ABV pale ale, is on the bar at the time of going to print; and visitors to the pub can look forward to a Chocolate Milk Stout over the festive season.

THE WHITE LION

High Street, Hampton in Arden, Solihull B92 0AA

Tel: 01675 442833

www.thewhitelioninn.com

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Opening hours:

Monday — Saturday:

11.00am — 11.00pm

Sunday: 11.00pm — 10.30pm

Food served: 9.30am — 9.00pm

Find us: From the crossroads by Earlswood Post Office turn NE onto Valley Road and continue for roughly 650 metres / half a mile then turn right onto Lady Lane, turning right into the pub car park just before the canal.

November Campaigning Trip

On Saturday 16th November we undertook another of our periodic minibus campaigning trips to part of our outlying patch. These are aimed at visiting pubs that perhaps don't get as much attention as those located more centrally to Solihull. I know one or two were not looking forward to a couple of the pubs as they have not been up to much as real ale outlets, but that's one of the reasons to undertake these campaigning days out. By turning up en masse we hope to make a positive impact, and judging by the feedback at several of the ones visited we certainly achieved that. We updated or completed survey forms for each of the pubs visited; these will be used to input to both our and the national pubs database.

Our first stop was the Crabmill at Preston Bagot. This is a charming old building with exposed beams and a lovely real fire. It's part of the Lovely Pubs Group (including the Boot at Lapworth and the Orange Tree) so, as you would expect, it has a good reputation for food. We arrived a little bit early but as they knew we were coming they kindly opened early for us. Purity UBU, Greene King Abbot Ale and Sharps' Doom Bar were the offering, all in good condition. From here it was up the hill to Claverdon and to the Red Lion, another pub

with character and lots of exposed beams. This is another foodie pub but still has a bar area where we sat and drank our Hook Norton Lion (4% and Pride of the Cotswolds as the beer clip pronounces). OK, so there is only the one real ale, but at least it's one that isn't seen very often on our patch. Though we'd been in touch in advance to say we were coming, the manager didn't know and it was great to see how pleased he was to see us.



Heading for the door of the Crown Inn

We then returned slightly back downhill to the Crown Inn at Claverdon, which is yet another charming older building, again with exposed wooden beams and an open fire. This pub has an Italian feel as it is Italian-run and that is the theme to its food. Again, it has only the one real ale, but again it was pleasing to see this was something more unusual to our patch, being from Weatheroak Brewery and badged as Crown Inn best bitter (3.8%). It's not always Crown Inn best bitter as they do stock other beers from the Weatheroak range. They made us all feel very welcome and even brought out a couple of plates of snacks.

(Continued overleaf)



It was soon time to move onward to our lunch stop at the Winged Spur in Ullenhall. Yet another pub with beams and again an open fire, this pub is not on a main road so will not get the same passing trade like the others, though Ullenhall is a reasonable size so as long as the locals use this place it should be a success. It certainly deserves to be as they were very friendly and generously provided us with sandwiches and chips. They had three real ales on: Sharps' Doom Bar, Marston Pedigree and interestingly Weatheroak Hill Brewery IPA (3.8%). The latter was popular and I certainly enjoyed my pint. They have an interesting looking menu, with more than just standard pub 'fayre'. The portion size looked generous too, so this is somewhere to which I think I will be bringing my better half Carol.



The Winged Spur, Ullenhall

From here it was off to the Bell at Tanworth in Arden, another friendly location. The Bell is one of only a few pubs in the area that is part of "the Pub is the Hub", as it contains a post office and a shop (of sorts). This is another pub that relies heavily on bringing in trade via its food menu, and there were some interesting looking dishes on offer. It was pleasing to see another unusual offering in addition to Timothy Taylor Landlord, in the shape of Whale Ale Ruby Moby (4%).



The Warwickshire Lad, Woodend

Our next stop was the Warwickshire Lad at Woodend. One thing I'd been looking forward to is that our local Whitworth Brewery had just achieved its 100th commercial brew and its new Solihops Porter (4.6%) would be on offer here. Steve and Charlotte, the brewery owners, were also here so it was good for members to get a chance to chat with them. As well as the porter, the pub also had Whitworth's The Lad (4.3%), Greene King Old Golden Hen (4.1%) and Wye Valley Butty Bach. I was pleasantly surprised when plates of cheese and black pudding came out, and more so when I was told this is standard and hadn't just been done because we were there. We stayed longer here than we'd planned because the beer was so good.

But at the end of the day you have to move on, so it was off to our final location, Hockley Heath, starting at the Oak. This pub has seen many incarnations in the last few years, with changes of ownership and use, though always retaining a pub but not always with real ale. So it was pleasing to see real ale on, albeit the somewhat uninspiring choice of Bombardier. It's slightly outside Hockley Heath itself, but I really hope they make a good go of the

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place this time and that more real ale is on offer in future.

From here we moved on to the recently refurbished Barn (a Beefeater restaurant). This is quite a large venue that feels a little cavernous, with painted beams same colour as the ceiling. Our member undertaking the survey here was told by the manager that he was too busy to spend time to help with the survey. Personally I couldn't see huge numbers of customers, so all I got was the feel we were not exactly welcome. Not sure that's a sensible way to run a business and I won't be coming back in a hurry. On offer were Wadworth 6X and Marston's Pedigree, so we were quite happy to move on to the Miller & Carter. Though this is a good quality steak restaurant this still has a bar with one real ale - a nicely kept Purity UBU. At our final destination at the Wharf I was

pleased to find 4 real ales available: Courage Directors, Courage Take Courage best bitter, and Walsall's Backyard Brewhouse Gold (4.4%) and Blonde (4.1%).

By now it was time for the minibus to take us home and being dropped off in Knowle we "had" to pop into the Vaults for a final drink. Imagine our heartache to find we'd walked into the start of their winter beer festival. Seriously, it was a bit of an issue as none of us really had much capacity left to try anything more than one each. On offer were Cameron's Gold Bullion (4.3%), Whitepark Brewery "That One"(4.7%), Limestone Brewery Nose to the Grindstone (4.3%), the Rat Brewery Rat-atouille (5.0%), Saltaire Brewery Amarillo Gold (4.4%) and Hopback Autumn Glow (4.2%). Oh well, just have to come back again soon.

Ray Cooke

ADRIAN AND THE COMMITTEE WARMLY WELCOME YOU TO

The Rowington Club



Rowington Green, Rowington, Warwickshire CV35 7DB

Telephone: 01564 782087

Featured in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide

Solihull & District CAMRA Branch's Club of the Year 2013

Normal opening hours: Mon-Fri: 2.00 – 11pm; Sat-Sun/Bank Hols: 12 noon – 11pm

Large car park. Games available (dominoes, darts, snooker and pool)

Three regularly changing real ales

Full membership: £20.00 per annum.

Single visits for guests: £1.00 (free to card-carrying CAMRA members)

Christmas and New Year opening:

Christmas Eve: 2pm—12 midnight, featuring the Christmas Eve raffle draw.

Christmas Day: 12 midday—3.00pm. Boxing Day: 12 midday—8.00pm.

Fri 27th: 2—11.00pm; Sat 28th: 2pm—11.00pm.

Sun 29th: 12 noon—10.30pm; Mon 30th: 2—11pm

New Year's Day: 2—8.00pm

New Year's Eve: 2pm—after Midnight (children welcome until 9pm) incl Disco.

—Recycle your Christmas leftovers and bring your own picnic to the Club!!

Entry free to Club members; £20 to non-members

(Limited tickets available so ring to book without delay)

HAPPY CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR TO ALL FROM THE COMMITTEE!

Dates For Your Diary

Branch Meetings 2014

(Branch meetings start at 8.30pm except where noted otherwise)

Monday 6th January	The Reservoir, Hockley Heath
Monday 3rd February	The Acres, Damsonwood
Monday 3rd March	The Blossomfield Club, Solihull

Committee Meetings

(8.30pm start. Ordinary members may attend Committee meetings but may only participate if invited to do so by the Committee)

Monday 20th Jan	TBC—please check our website nearer the time.
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Socials

Fri. 31st January	Beer & Balti Trip, Warwick (<i>see below</i>)
February (date TBC)	Pin, Pie & Pint Night, Fleur de Lys, Lowsonford
March (date TBC)	Worcester Trip

For more details and contacts where appropriate, please call Secretary Allan Duffy on 01564 200 431 or visit our website: www.solihullcamra.org.uk

NB. Most, though not all, of our local pubs are accessible to disabled people. If you would like to come to one of our meetings and wish assistance to get inside, please let us know beforehand and we will do our best to help.

Midlands Beer Festivals 2014

Thurs 6th—Sat 8th Feb: **Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival:** George Watson Hall, Barton Street. 80+ Winter ales plus local cider & perry. Open Thurs (members only) 7—11pm, free entry with card; Fri 11am—4.30pm then 6.30-11pm (both £5 including glass) Sat 11am—8.00pm (£5 including glass); card-carrying members get a £2 beer token at all paid sessions. www.tewkesburycamra.org.uk

Wed 19th—Sat 22nd Feb: **National Winter Ales Festival:** Roundhouse, Derby (across road from Pride Park exit from Derby train station). 350+ real ales, ciders, perries, continental beers + mead. Open 4.00pm Wed following Trade Invite only session; Thurs-Sat 11—11.00pm. For more details & entrance costs (no tickets: pay on door) see www.nwaf.org.uk

Beer & Balti: 31st January

Travelling by train via Solihull & Dorridge to Warwick we will then take a 2 minute walk from the station to the Wild Boar pub in Lakin Road, Heart of Warwickshire CAMRA Pub of the Year 2013, also the Slaughterhouse brewery tap which always has 3 guest beers on and 1 real cider. After a few drinks, it will then be a short walk to "The Castle Balti" restaurant for food, afterwards returning to Warwick station to catch the train back to Dorridge/Solihull.

Please visit the branch website <http://www.solihullcamra.org.uk/diary> for more details.

If you are interested, please let me know ASAP—Dave Mckowen: 01564 778955 or david_mckowen@lineone.net

Shed News

The Shed recently held its second anniversary Shed Awards celebration, at which the Blue Bell in Henley in Arden was voted by attendees as their Best Pub of the Year.

The brewery is now supplying a recently-opened bar in Bromsgrove town centre, the Little Ale House. The micro-pub, which opened in October, has 6 real ales on at all times, plus bottled beers, cider and perry.

(See the website www.littlealehouse.co.uk or CAMRA's WhatPub? site for further information about the Little Ale House and its opening hours.)

NO FININGS IN OUR BEER - IT MAY BE CLOUDY BUT HEY, NO FISH DIED IN THE PROCESS!!

The Forest Beer Festival

Mid October saw the Forest Hotel, Dorridge hold one of its many festivals. CAMRA members were invited to a preview on the Wednesday evening. About a dozen of us turned up to sample the beers without crowds around the bar. It is fair to say that some of the beers were not quite ready as some had only been put up on the racking earlier that day. However, we had a thoroughly enjoyable evening, with many of the beers in good condition.

The beer list was as follows: Backyard Brewhouse; North Yorkshire Crystal Tips; Abbeydale Deception; Wye Valley Hop Harvest; Otley Hop Angels; Springhead Maid Marion; Animal Mioung; Milestone October-



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fest; Hobsons Old Prickly; Great Orme Orme; Salopian Shropshire Gold; Elland Styrian Pale Ale and XT XT Two, an excellent range.

Two ciders were also on tap – Vitual Hogs Head and Gwynt Ddraig Farmers Pride.

Not being a cider drinker I stuck to the beers. My favourites were Abbeydale Deception, Springhead Maid Marion and Animal Mioung. Some of the other beers were a little young and by Friday or Saturday they would have matured into excellent condition. A shame I could not have



returned. Congratulations to the Forest for a cracking festival...I look forward to the next one.

Steve Dyson

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Oakham Ales are an innovative Peterborough-based brewery that's been notching up awards left, right and centre. You'll find their handcrafted and superbly hoppy real ales available in all leading supermarkets, including Sainsbury's, M&S and Waitrose, but we hope you'll come and enjoy a glass straight from the pump.



We're delighted that Oakham Ales have chosen **The Bartons Arms** as their Birmingham flagship. Their award-winning brews include JHB, Citra, Inferno, Bishops Farewell and Scarlet Macaw, each one as lip-smacking as the next and a surprising, but perfect accompaniment to Thai cuisine.



The Bartons Arms | 144 High Street | Aston | Birmingham B6 4UP | 0121 333 5988 | thebartonsarms.com

Most Improved Pub of the Year: The Navigation, Lapworth

It was with pleasure that branch members gathered at the Navigation in Lapworth on Monday 18th November, to present the 2013 branch award for Most Improved Pub of the Year to landlords Mark and Alison. The pub had suffered under previous management over the past few years and closed in September 2012 as a result. However, after a major refurbishment this summer it was open again, revitalised and ready for business. Mark and Alison's 30 years in the pub trade have brought new life to the pub, which is valued for both its beer choice and food by locals and visitors alike, in addition to the

beautiful canal-side location and warm welcome that are extended to all.

With six real ales available, all excellently kept, the Navigation fully deserves this branch award, and the branch wishes the pub and staff all the best for the future.



John and Alison accepting the award

Sumner Bar Services

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For more information & bookings please call Kevin on 07715 584067 or email SumnerBarServices@BTinternet.com

New Purity Beer

Purity Brewing Co. launched its first ever black craft beer at The Wellington in Birmingham on 25th November. Saddle Black, a full-flavoured black beer, is made using smoked, chocolate and black malts and New World hops Chinook and Cascade: together these create a well-rounded 5.1% beer with aromas of citrus, chocolate and espresso.

The beer is dedicated to cyclists and available in cask from the end of November until March 2014. The cycling theme is complemented by bespoke Brooks England leather saddles embossed with the Purity Brewing Co. logo. The handmade saddles will be displayed on branded Pashley bicycles, as a tribute to cycling around the UK. Paul Halsey, MD of Purity Brewing Co. comments: "As a keen cyclist, I wanted to create a beer dedicated to the British cycling community and as a celebration of the craft that goes into making both beer and bicycles. Brooks England and Pashley Cycles are long established West Midland companies at the forefront of their trade and we saw a synergy between their passion and craftsmanship and our values".

This is the first of many seasonal beers that Purity hope to release. It is made possible by the new semi-automated Braukon brewing system, which allows them to produce the equivalent of 140,000 pints of beer a week, a 150% increase compared to the facility it replaced.



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Opening hours:

Mon.–Sat: 11.30am–11.00pm
Sunday: 12.00-10.30pm



Yorkshire Dales Diary: Part 1

Back in August: "How do you fancy a mid-week break in the Yorkshire Dales - the part that's in Cumbria?" I asked my wife. The George and Dragon Hotel in Dent (Dent brewery's tap) was offering a mid-week B&B deal of three nights for the price of two - hence the question, to which Jeannette agreed.

We headed up the M6 to Junction 36, then via Kirkby Lonsdale to Sedbergh. Dent was then only a few miles further on along a single track road. We were in good time so we stopped at the Swan at Middleton for lunch. This is a somewhat isolated but very pleasant pub with a good selection of bar food. The beers available here were Black Sheep *Best Bitter*, Thwaites *Original* and Derwent *Cote Light*. I decided to sample the Derwent *Cote Light* (3.6%), a pale, triple-hopped light ale.

Suitably refreshed, we proceeded to Dent. The George and Dragon is situated in the centre of the village and has been voted 'Westmoreland CAMRA Craft Cider and Perry Pub of the Year 2013'. Walkers, cyclists and dogs are welcomed here. After checking in, we explored the village then returned for our evening meal and to sample the beers, which were all from the Dent Brewery range. On the day these were *Golden Fleece* (3.7%), *Aviator* (4.0%), *T'Owd Tup* (6.0%) and *Kamikaze* (5.0%); two new beers, *Fellranger* and *Woolly Jumper* (both 3.7% and on offer at £2.20 per pint), and two ciders on handpump to complete a good line-up. I went for the *Golden Fleece*, a lovely, refreshing bright golden beer with a well-balanced hop flavour, which complemented my meal very well.



The George & Dragon at Dent

Next day we headed towards Ingleton and visited the White Scar Caves. This took us through Cowgill and then southwards, roughly following the route of the Settle to Carlisle railway line, past the impressive and much-photographed Ribbleshead viaduct. The White Scar caves are well worth a visit but warm clothing is recommended and a hard hat (supplied before entering) essential!

On the way back we called in at the Station Inn at Ribbleshead for some refreshment. This stone-built pub is at



The Station Inn, Ribbleshead

the bottom of the station approach. There are superb views of the viaduct and also of Ingleborough which, at 2,372ft is the second highest mountain in the Yorkshire Dales. The choice of ales here were Thwaites *13 Guns* and *Wainwright*, plus *Dent Station Ale* which is brewed specially for the pub. I opted for the *Station Ale*, which was in excellent condition. We decided to make this a quick stop as it was beginning to rain and we headed back to Dent for a quick change and a drink in the George and Dragon. This time I sampled the *Fellranger*, a light golden bitter not too dissimilar to *Golden Fleece* and in very good condition.



The Sun Inn, Dent

We decided to try the other pub in Dent, the Sun Inn, which is just up the road from the George, and also provides accommodation as well as good value pub food. The beer range here comprised two beers from Kirkby Lonsdale brewery, *Tiffin Gold* and *Monumental*. Also on handpump were Marston Moor *Fairfax Special* and Long Man Brewery *Long Blonde* - from Sussex! I elected to try the *Tiffin Gold*, a 3.6% seasonal beer, pale gold in colour with distinct grapefruit aromas and flavour. After our meal I tried the Marston Moor *Fairfax Special*, a 4.2% full bodied pre-

mium bitter, pale in colour with a well balanced slightly citrus aroma. We then strolled back to our hotel for a nightcap which, in my case, was a swift half of *Dent T'Owd Tup*.

The next day saw us headed into the Lake District to visit the Stott Park Bobbin Mill, which is located near Fins-thwaite on the SW side of Lake Windermere. After a very interesting visit to this working museum, we continued north to Far Sawrey crossing via the ferry to Bowness, then through Windermere to our lunch stop at the Watermill Inn at Ings. This hostelry is well worth a visit as it has up to 16 real ales on at any one time. The food is extremely good here, too. I had the *Watermill Blackbeard (3.7%)*, a superb dark mild, near black in colour, very light-bodied with its flavour dominated by malt and a bitter-sweet finish. I also took the opportunity to purchase some bottles of the splendid beers that are brewed in the small brewery behind the pub.

The Sun Inn was the choice for our evening meal again, this time washed down with Kirkby Lonsdale *Monumental (4.5%)*. This is a wonderful golden coloured ale brewed with Maris Otter malted extra pale barley and blended with English and Slovenian Golding Hops. I also sampled the Sussex-brewed Long Man *Long Blonde (3.8%)* which is a light golden hoppy brew with a crisp, clean bitterness.

Friday at last, and time to leave Dent. Unable to extend our stay, the 'George's' manager kindly phoned the Dalesman Hotel in Sedbergh for us to get us a room there for a further 3 nights; then we stocked up with Dent beers and set off...

Chris Lloyd

(See next issue of this magazine for Part 2)

2nd Yardley Beer Festival

In early September Carol and I ventured off patch and into Yardley, to catch up with friends and visit the second Yardley beer festival. This festival is run at St Edburgha's church parish hall, and is in aid of the church restoration fund. There is documentary evidence to date the church back to at least 1165, though the oldest part of the building that is visible is a 13th century doorway. The main building was built sometime after 1300 and the tower in the 15th century. It is the tower that is the current subject of the renovation, with the spire having been completed previously.

The festival is organised and run by one of our ex-Solihull branch members Martin Collinge - now an active member with Birmingham branch. Martin had cleverly managed to get all the ale sponsored by various organisations or individuals, including our friend Robin Mortimer who ministers at another church. There were 17 real ales from Church End brewery (fitting really—it helps to be church-themed after all) plus a mystery ale and several ciders and perries. Entry was a very reasonable £1, with a refundable £3 souvenir glass. Martin had chosen a good range of ale types and had also tried to continue the church theme with a number of them - Grave Diggers; Vicar's Ruin; Stout Coffin; Fallen Angel; and Bats in the Belfry. Some might also argue that Goat's

Milk and It's Goat to Be have a religious angle, but possibly more to do with Old Nick...? Anyway, the ales were in good condition and I did stick to the religious-themed ones with my favourite being the Fallen Angel: a 5% sharp, full flavoured pale bitter with plenty of hops and a lemony edge. If you like that kind of style then I thoroughly recommend you try this if you come across it.

There was a very mixed group at the festival with as many bikers (the Outlaws) in one place as I'd seen in some time. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves and we were blessed with the weather and able to spend our time there outside in the parish hall yard (I definitely hesitate to call it a garden). Shortly after we'd left though, there was a heavy downpour, but there is plenty of space inside for people to shelter and the rain didn't last long.

All told this was an enjoyable afternoon. Once the work on the tower

is complete, the church roof is the next target, so I have no doubt Martin will be fighting the good fight and laying on another festival next year. Do try to make it!

Ray Cooke



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CAMRA Good Beer Guide-listed continuously since 1983



A choice of 200 beers during the year, available in bottles or on draught.

Party barrels to order and supplied for any occasion.

Sale or return on sealed goods.

Opening hours:

Mon to Thurs: 11.30am-2pm & 4.00pm-10.00pm

Friday & Saturday: 11.30am-10.00pm

(Sunday: Closed)

266 Cranmore Boulevard, Shirley,
Solihull B90 4PX Tel. 0121 744 2827

Wines, aperitifs, and other alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are also available for your day or evening get-togethers and parties—please come in and talk to us about your requirements and we will always be glad to help.



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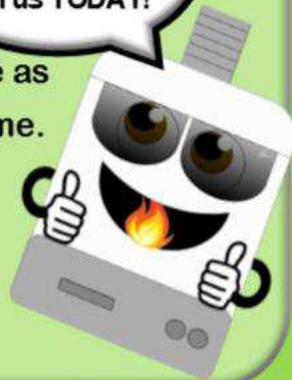
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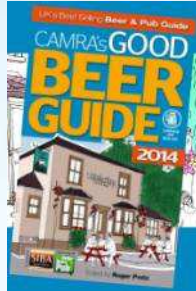
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£££ Go GREEN & save MONEY! £££

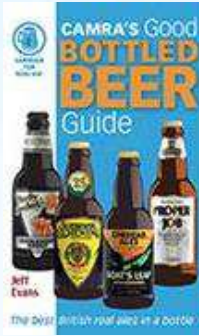
CAMRA Gifts for Christmas

In addition to CAMRA membership, an eclectic range of books can be purchased online from the CAMRA website. Current choices include:

The "*Good Beer Guide 2014*": the Guide's listings - featuring over 4,500 pubs and over 1,000 breweries from all around the UK - have been fully revised and updated by CAMRA volunteers. A very handy book to have with you on UK holidays and other journeys! The *GBG 2014* costs £10.00 to CAMRA members (RRP £15.99).

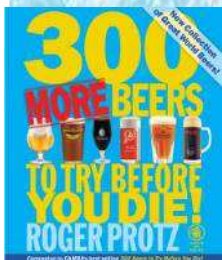


"CAMRA'S *Good Bottled Beer Guide*" is perfect for anyone interested in finding the best real ale in a bottle at the local shop or in the local pub, and is the definitive guide to bottled beer around the UK. The book features listings for over 550 bottle-conditioned beers from beer expert Jeff Evans, a full directory of breweries around the UK that produce real ale in the bottle and their bottle-conditioned products and selected details of independent bottle-conditioned beer retailers. CAMRA member price: £10.99 (RRP £12.99).



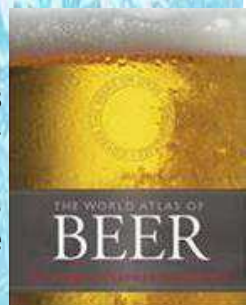
"*300 More Beers To Try Before Your Die!*" by Roger Protz is an all-new collection of 300 unmissable world beers. In this follow-up to the best-selling *300 Beers to Try Before You Die!*, the award-winning beer writer selects 300 more beers that represent the very best and most interesting products of the brewer's art available today. The beers are organised by style and indexed by country and name so you can jump right in and explore beers of a style

you've enjoyed before or dare to try something a bit different. The price to CAMRA members is £12.99 (RRP £14.99).



If you want to go bigger, then the "*World Atlas of Beer*" beckons: this definitive guide to world beer contains comprehensive details on brews from more than 35 countries, full tasting notes for 500 international beers, detailed maps locating key breweries, and charts crucial trends worldwide. The CAMRA members' price is £17.50 (RRP £25.00).

For these and many more, plus P & P and payment information, visit CAMRA's website www.camra.org.uk



J.D. Wetherspoon

The two Solihull JDW pubs each offer two regular ales and a good selection of guest ales from both regional UK breweries. Both pubs are pleased to announce consistent 'Cask Marque' and 'Best Bar None' accreditations and both hold 5-star accreditations for Food Hygiene Standards.

The White Swan, 32–34 Station Road, Solihull, B91 3SB

Phone: 0121 711 5180

Opening times:

Sun — Wed: 8.00am — 12.00am

Thurs — Sat: 8.00am — 12.30am

Offering 4 guest ales daily + Ruddles & a cider.

A music-free venue screening live Freeview sporting events.

2010 Solihull 'Best Bar None' Best Town Centre Pub & Overall Winner of 2010 'Best Bar Non'



Now in the 2013 CAMRA Good Beer Guide

The Assembly Rooms, 21 Poplar Road, Solihull, B91 3AD

Phone: 0121 711 6990

Opening times:

Sun — Wed: 7.00am — 1.00am

Thurs — Sat: 7.00am — 2.00am

2 regular ales, 3 guest ales and 2 real ciders on hand-pull.

Live sporting events screened weekly
DJ's and dancing Thursday-Saturday.



Having a party? Our atmospheric upstairs bar with seating for 70 is available for hire and can include music arrangements as well as food and drink, all chosen by you and tailored to your needs. Ask at bar for further details.

New Pricing!!

The White Swan has now lowered its ale prices to make it a more competitive and value for money destination for the discerning drinker.

The new maximum price point for a pint of ale is £2.30 and this will include Abbot Reserve, Jaipur, Kelham Island Pale Rider and Marstons Old Empire, to name but a few; all are subject to availability.

www.jdwetherspoon.co.uk

Be a real JDWetherspoon fan – join us on Facebook!

Pub Reform: What Next??

Thanks to the 7715 CAMRA members who have lobbied their MP and Vince Cable this year, Early Day Motion 57 on pub company reform has secured 162 signatures. 39 MPs have also signed up via the website, meaning a total of 201 have now backed the Fair Deal for Your Local campaign. EDM 57, which urges the Government to secure a more sustainable future for Britain's pubs/tied licensees through introducing a statutory code of practice and Market Rent Only option, is the most-supported EDM this year. CAMRA said: "The level of support from MPs for the Early Day Motion and the Fair Deal for Your Local campaign has been excellent. The motion has received more signatures than any other of this session in Parliament which is a fantastic achievement and a great indication to Business Secretary Vince Cable that reform is paramount for the future of the industry. The success

of the EDM is a fantastic landmark in our campaign to safeguard the industry, as it showcases to Business Secretary Vince Cable the demand for reform.



Since May, it has acquired more support than the Pilot Badger Cull motion (147 signatures), the reform of Legal Aid (102 signatures), and even CAMRA's campaign to scrap the Beer Duty Escalator which last year secured 159 MP signatures. The Government is expected to announce their response to the PubCo reform consultation in a matter of weeks. In order to ensure Vince Cable acts, CAMRA now requests supporters take 2 minutes to write directly to the Business Secretary.

You can find details on how to do this at: www.campaign.publicaffairsbriefing.co.uk/
Please find 2 minutes to take this further!

Football in Birmingham?

Following extensive social media advertising by the Anchor in Digbeth a few of us tried out a Saturday football game there. Along with other visitors we found that it turns out the Anchor is not normally a 'footy' venue. The bar manager left the bar in charge of a non-technical assistant, who unfortunately could not turn the Sports Channel on!

On the plus side we did an excellent mini-pub crawl round Brum. In contrast to the Anchor, the Shakespeare was providing very fruit-laden beers and the BrewDog pub was selling their usual overwhelming flavours. We followed this with the Post Office Vaults' excellent beer range, including Styrian Pale Ale and the fabulous Salopian Oracle.

We rounded this off with a scouting trip to find the Queens Arms on Newhall street, with 6 excellent ales including Wye Valley HPA and Timothy Taylors Landlord. The Queens Arms is halfway to the Lord Clifton in the Jewellery Quarter; however, having played six rounds of 'Trivial Pursuit' we decided to head home and away from the Lord Clifden's undoubted temptations.

An excellent sojourn, but no football! The Anchor had excellent beer: my favourite being Parklife from the Windsor and Eton brewery.

Ian Hunter



(The footie fans chose pubs from Birmingham CAMRA's recent Beer Festival—Ale and Cider Trail, comprising 40 pubs and 40 ales.

Membership Matters

It's that time of year again, when you're struggling to find a Christmas present for a relative/friend/loved one—forget the hassle of traipsing up and down the high street: I have the perfect solution to the problem. A year's CAMRA membership won't break the bank and even if you don't feel like filling the membership form opposite, if you visit www.camra.org.uk you will find various types of gift membership, from as little as £23 (concessions for Under-26 and Over-60) which include a copy of the 2014 Good Beer Guide.

What would they get if they were to become members as a Christmas present I hear you ask? To start with, they will get a monthly newsletter called "What's Brewing", a very informative quarterly magazine entitled "Beer", and free or reduced entry to the many beer festivals organised by local CAMRA branches all over the country; and lastly, he/she will get £20 pounds worth of J.D. Wetherspoon vouchers as well as other great money saving deals.

So why bother joining CAMRA in the first place? We are not just about real

ale (even though the interest in real ale continues to grow which is reflected by an ever increasing choice of real ale in pubs), we also support the brewing industry, publicans and consumers rights. Some of the membership fee helps to provide funds for campaigning: eg. earlier this year, after a long haul, CAMRA successfully persuaded the Chancellor to abolish the beer duty escalator. Without the force of CAMRA members supporting this campaign it would not have happened.

We hold monthly meetings at a local pub with good real ale, but if you don't fancy that come along to one of our social events; we are a friendly bunch and will make you more than welcome—someone might even buy you a pint!!!. See the 'Dates for your Diary' section of this magazine or visit www.solihullcamra.org.uk for details.

Finally, I would like to wish all of you reading this publication a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and enjoy whatever ale you try over the festive season.

Dave Mckowen
Membership Secretary

2014 CAMRA Members' Weekend

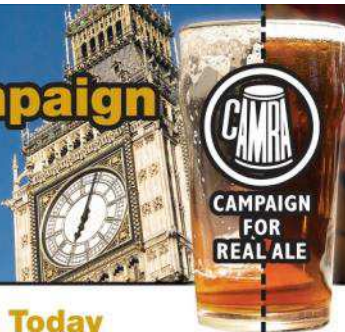
The CAMRA Members' Weekend, featuring the National AGM and Conference, is where our members discuss our future policy and direction. The weekend also offers the opportunity to members to socialise with friends, visit recommended pubs and go on organised trips. The Members' Weekend is open to all CAMRA members and will be held at The Spa Complex, Scarborough from 25th April to 27th April 2014.

You can pre-register for the Members' Weekend up until 28th March 2014 through the website www.camraagm.org.uk, or by filling in and returning the form which is also available on the main CAMRA website.



A Campaign

of Two Halves



Join CAMRA Today

Complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive 15 months membership for the price of 12 and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription.

Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

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Single Membership (UK & EU)	£23 <input type="checkbox"/>	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Membership (Partner at the same address)	£28 <input type="checkbox"/>	£30 <input type="checkbox"/>

For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201.

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

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title _____ Surname _____
 Forename(s) _____
 Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

01/06

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