

Free

Solihull



Drinker

Free

Issue No 64

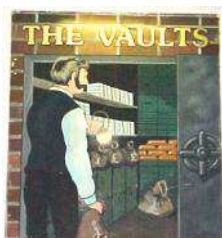
Summer 2013

Featured in this issue:

Solihull pub, club & brewery news updates



Pin Pie & Pint night at the Fleur de Lys



Pub of the Year Award 2013

2012 Beer Festival Thank-You Trip to the Black Country



Third Annual Cider Festival

Thursday 20th to Saturday 22nd June

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Special VIP Wednesday night for our real ale club card holders and CAMRA Members
7.00—9.00pm

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THE BULL'S HEAD



Barston Lane, Barston Tel: 01675 442830

**Open Monday—Thursday: 11.00am—2.30pm & 5.00pm—11.00pm;
Friday, Saturday and Sunday: 11.00am—11.00pm.**

Brad, Joy and team welcome you to their award-winning 15th century village inn with its selection of real ales: the Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year 1998, 2000, 2002, 2009, 2011 and 2012

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Home-cooked meals are available lunchtimes and evenings Mondays to Saturdays in the comfortable pub bars or in our separate intimate restaurant

(Sundays: 12 to 3pm for lunch - no evening meals)

TELEPHONE RESERVATIONS WELCOME



*Haven't we waited such a long time for a decent summer!
Here's hoping that this year's is brilliant, bright, sunny
and unforgettable. Make the most of the sunshine in our
lovely beer garden; our seasonal home-cooked food
awaits, and, of course, a wonderful pint or two!*



www.TheBullsHeadBarston.co.uk

Pub of the Year 2013

On 4th May, the branch had the enjoyable task of presenting the Vaults, Knowle, with a certificate confirming it as our Pub of the Year 2013.



Carl presents landlord Nick Worrall and daughter Sarah with the award

This is the 8th time that the Vaults has won this award, the first occasion being back in 1992.

The award is given each year to the Solihull & District pub voted by members at branch meetings to be the most deserving, having a varied choice of real ale on offer, from both main and micro-breweries, which maintains its beer in superlative condition, and provides a pleasant and friendly hostelry in which to drink.

The Vaults, a Free House, scores highly by stocking a good range of real ales from St Austell, Tetley, Wadworth 6X and Adnams, plus two rotating guests from around the country. It is a traditional community pub, attracting a wide range of customers. Regular events are held including mini beer festivals, race days, fishing trips, charity events and its famous Pickled Onion and Sloe Gin competitions.

Carl Wright, branch chairman, said "It is a pleasure to present this award to Nick and his team in recognition of the hard work that goes into making the Vaults, 'a proper pub', the success that it undoubtedly is".



Nick, centre back, with (l-r): Jack, Sarah, Katy, Mike and Joel.



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

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.

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 of the contribution.

Hail to the Ale!

- local Beer, Pub, Club & Brewery news

Ember Inns: free pint

Back in the early Spring Ember Inns were offering 5 pints for the price of 4 on production of your CAMRA card. There are four E.I. pubs in Solihull: the Fieldhouse, Monkspath, the Woodman's Rest, Shirley, the Colebrook, Haslucks Green and the Red Lion Knowle—look out for the same production later in the year.

Blue Bell Cider House, Warings Green

The Blue Bell Cider House is now under the new management of Alan Fox, ex-landlord of the Lady Lane Wharf, and his wife. They are in the process of restoring the Blue Bell and very much hope that you will visit and enjoy the atmosphere, the food and the real ales in this lovely canal-side pub.



The Drum and Monkey, Bentley Heath

The Drum and Monkey want to sell a true 'guest' ale but must prove that there is demand, so if you're in the area, do pop in and support this.

The Oak, Hockley Heath

As reported in the last Drinker, the pub has reverted to its former name and is no longer the Warwick. They intend to increase the range of real ales once the good weather begins.



The White Lion, H in Arden

The White Lion has now reverted back to 6 handpumps (see opposite for the range of ales on offer), and should have all 6 on unless a cask runs out.

The Bulls Head, Earlswood

The Bulls Head has been refurbished and is now a community pub. It will still sell Thwaites including a seasonal ale, and a new initiative means that you can try 3 x 1/3 pints in their new glasses, for the price of a pint.

Purity Brewing Company

The recent winner of the Beer of the Festival at Walsall beer festival was Purity's Pure Gold.

The Prince of Wales and **The Lodge, Solihull Lodge** are not serving real ale any more.

Beers seen in Solihull

The Fieldhouse, Monkspath: Old Engine Oil, Norfolk Gold, Trawlerboys, Wye Valley Butty Bach, UBU and Ossian

The White Lion, Hampton in Arden: M&B Brew XI, Hobson's Best Bitter, Sharp's Doom Bar, Banks's Sunbeam, Purity UBU, Hobson's Town Crier and Hook Norton Lion.

O'Neills, town centre: Sharp's Doom Bar and Purity UBU.

Saracen's Head, Shirley: Green King IPA (though not necessarily all the time).

The Wilsons Arms, Knowle: Tetley Pedigree and Wadworth 6X.

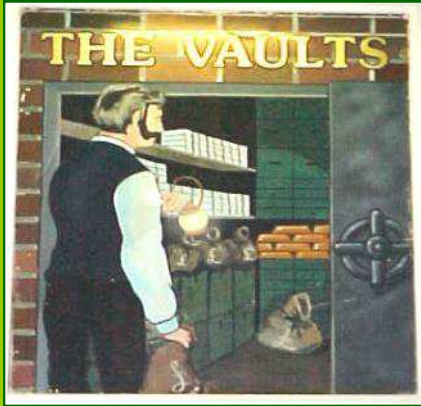
The Arden Club: Hancock's and Golden Hen.



The 64th edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 2nd September, 2013.

Please note: copy deadline for advertising and contributions will be no later than Sunday 18th August.

Nick, Gwen and staff welcome you to



the Real Ale venue in Knowle

CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed since 1993

**Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year
7 times between 1992 & 2008**

Wi-Fi now available for individuals or meetings:
ask at the bar for details.

Food available lunchtimes from Monday - Saturday, 12.00-2.00pm

6 hand-pumped beers including regulars Tetley Bitter, Wadworth 6X, Adnams Lighthouse and St Austell Tribute, plus 2 ever-changing guests, and featuring **real cider** from Westons

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.***

The 2012 Beer Festival Thank You Trip

As a thank you to all the hard-working staff at last year's Solihull Beer Festival, a cracking day out to the Black Country was arranged.

We headed towards that mecca of a drinking emporium, the Waggon and Horses in Halesowen. This pub on the Stourbridge Road dates from the 1830's and although basic is very comfortable, with a constant throng of people coming and going. There is a long basic bar leading to the "Barbara Cartland Suite" decorated in pink. There is also a spacious room to one side of the pub so there was plenty

of room for our large party. On handpump there are 14 beers, so there was something for everyone. Here's the list of beers; Blue Monkey Tie A Yellow Gibbon; Nottingham DPA [Nottingham EPA re-badged]; Brew Company Muscavado Stout; Bank Top Dark Mild; Derby Silver Lining; Wentworth The Full Malty;



Inside the Waggon & Horses

Broughs Bitter; Bathams Bitter; Oakham Inferno; Holdens Bitter; Axholme Isle Pale Ale; Bobs White Lion; Dark Star Critical Mass and Milltown Two Little Ducks.

I tried 11 of them and all were in good condition ,with one or two

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1	BLUE MONKEY	4.30	£2.90
2	THE 2nd WALKER GARDEN	4.20	£2.90
3	NOTTINGHAM D.P.A	4.20	£2.90
4	PLAIN COUNTRY MORGAN'S SCOTCH	5.70	£3.90
5	FRANK TOP DARK MILD	4.00	£2.90
6	DERBY CRISP LAGER	4.20	£2.90
7	MOUNTAINS OF FULL MALT	5.10	£3.10
8	BROUGHTON BITTER	4.30	£2.90
9	BATHAM'S BITT ER	4.30	£2.90
10	OAKHAM INFERNAL	4.00	£2.90
11	HOLDENS BITTER	5.70	£2.90
12	AVONLIME ISLE PALE ALE	4.10	£2.90
13	BOBS WHITE LION	4.30	£2.90
14	DAKOTA CRISP MALT	7.40	£4.00
15	NATIONAL INDIAN DUCKS	4.30	£2.90
16	4 TASTERS (GENERAL VALLEY CIDER)	£2.00	
17	4 TASTERS (QUALITY CIDER)	£2.00	
18	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	
19	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	
20	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	
21	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	
22	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	
23	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	
24	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	
25	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	
26	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	
27	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	
28	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	
29	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	
30	4 TASTERS (CIDER)	£2.00	

The 'beer menu' at the Waggon & Horses

absolutely superb. For those wanting a quick bite, food is now available at the Waggon, a pub well deserving of its perpetual place in the Good Beer Guide.

Our next port of call for the day was the major event. Fownes Brewery is located at the Jolly

Crispin in Upper Gornal. There has been a pub on the site since the 1840's, but following a disastrous fire in the 1930's the pub was rebuilt. In 1940 the pub was in the hands of Simpkins Brewery until they sold out to Greenhall Whitley. Now independently owned, it is another great Black Country pub with a wide selection of about 8 ales. We settled down to a pint and a buffet before breaking taking a tour of the brewery. Set up in late 2012 by CAMRA members James and Tom Fownes, the brewery is in a small outhouse at the back of the pub. It is so small we had to split our party into 3 groups of 8. Tom is the brewer and our host for the day was his brother James, a very amiable chap who likes his beer! They brew a beer exclusively for the Jolly Crispin called Omer. It is pale, bitter with a hint of citrus, which of course was on the bar on that

day. Other beers were Titanic Steerage; York Terrier; Ossett Silver King; Oakham Bishops Farewell; Otley O-Garden and O5 Gold; Abbeydale Absolution; and Fownes Firebeard Old Favourite No. 5, a 5% ruby ale. Whilst the brewery tours took place,



The motley crew outside the Jolly Crispin

we all enjoyed a leisurely sampling of ales in the lounge, but had to move onto our final pub of the night, the Olde White Rose in Bilston.

Like both previous pubs, the Olde White Rose is an inevitable regular in the GBG. Situated in the centre of Bilston, it has undergone a refurbishment recently and now has rooms to let, ideal for local gigs. For us, 9 real ales and a carvery with which to finish the night off seemed more than ideal! Propping up the bar was Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild; Belhaven IPA and 80/-; Cottage Norman Conquest; Greene King Abbott Ale, St Edmunds and Old Speckled Hen; Derby Quintessential and Wychwood Hobgoblin. I plumped for the Derby Quintessential at 5.8% a fruity citrusy beer, just right to finish the night off.

After a few pints and on full stomachs, a contented coachful of Solihull CAMRA members headed back for Solihull and home to their beds...although a hardy few, as ever, were waylaid by a pub or two in Solihull and Knowle before then!



Raising a glass at the tiny Fownes Brewery

Steve Dyson

A Campaigning Day Out

This campaigning day was certainly less arduous than the last - with a cluster in Henley, before the trip to the Old Pie Factory brewery and an early evening trip to Long Itchington

The Bluebell offered a fine pint of Slaughterhouse Saddleback, proving that a pub well known for good food or even perceived as a restaurant can still offer fine ales to complement. We were waiting outside the Tree Tuns as the doors opened, and were made most welcome since we managed to fill the place; the beer did not disappoint, offering some of the better known beers such as Butty Bach and Doombar in fine condition. The Black Swan welcomed us with a buffet lunch and Tim Taylor's Landlord - what more could you want? The White Swan has changed hands and been 'refurbed' yet again although the beer choice was fairly conventional. The Nag's Head was disappointing in that it offered I think 3 beers of which the least usual was Caledonian's Flying Scotsman which I had first seen only earlier that week (elsewhere) and so tried it in an award winning pub; today's pint was not nearly as good.

Right: Part of the group outside the Three Tuns

Then onto pastures further afield.

The Old Pie Factory brewery is equipped with the type of wooden clad kit we are used to - and as always there are some curious bits of plumbing to hold it all together, showing that you still have to build your own to finish the job off. I think there was general agreement that the Bitter was better than the Pale Ale and I look forward to trying it in The Case is Altered. Next to the brewery was a fine wine shop with a range of interesting and unusual wines and spirits and not all at eye watering prices.

Lastly, a dash to Long Itchington - sadly the bus had adjusted the times so that we were in a bit of a rush, but I had time for some Hopping Mad at my favourite pub in that village, the Buck and Bell, before saying goodbye until the bank holiday village beer festival.

Robert Cawte



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The Lady Lane Wharf

The Lady Lane Wharf is set in a wonderful, tranquil environment in the heart of Earlswood. It has a friendly family atmosphere, where well-behaved children are welcome and secure in the garden.

The Lady Lane now has a new owner and management team with a dedication to 'putting this meeting place on the map', making it the hidden treasure in Earlswood that it really is.

Plans are afoot for a new, wide-ranging menu, with the emphasis on truly home-cooked food to suit all tastes, with a regular 'Specials' board which maximises locally-sourced produce.

For real ale lovers, there is a healthy

range of casks, currently with 2 regular and 2 guest ales from both national and local breweries; plus their specialist Thatchers' ciders.

There will also be live music events covering a wide spectrum of genre.

The website is currently being regenerated but when complete, will provide details of what visitors can look forward to discovering at this lovely gem.



A Message from CAMRA

On 20th March the Chancellor said in the Budget those words we have all been waiting for: "We will now scrap the beer duty escalator altogether". He is even going one step further and cutting beer duty by 1p a pint – which will mean that pubs won't need to increase their prices this year.

The Chancellor was very clear in his speech that he is scrapping the Escalator because of the incredible campaign by people like you over the past year – so on behalf of CAMRA, thank you for helping us get here! Our campaign to Scrap The Beer Duty Escalator started just after the 2012 Budget. You, our members have been fantastic in the way you have supported our E-Petition which secured almost 109,000 signatures and in turn forced a Parlia-

mentary Debate. The next step in the campaign came with the Mass Lobby Day on 12:12:12 and you continued this campaigning effort by meeting with your MPs to demand the Escalator be scrapped right up to today's Budget.

Over 8,000 of you have written to your MP this year calling for a fair deal for beer and pubs. Your determination and dedication to the Campaign has shone through in many ways, and I am so proud of what we have achieved – the first cut in beer duty since the 1970s. Let's not lose sight of the fact that there will be other taxation threats to pubs, clubs and beer, but we will rise to those challenges and fight them to the best of our ability.

Please accept this as a personal thank you for the help and continued support you have given to this Campaign; we couldn't have done it without you!

**Best wishes from Jackie Parker,
CAMRA Director Beer Tax Campaign**



Community Pubs Month

Pubs & Charity campaign is the second of four initiatives that CAMRA is running in 2013 as part of its national promotion to 'To raise the profile of pub-going and increase the number of people using pubs regularly'.

Pubs raise in excess of £100million a year for charities and CAMRA will be working hard to spread this message in July. CAMRA are asking pubs to organise charity events throughout July and advertise them for free on its website. Free promotional packs are available for pubs to advertise

to their customers what they have planned and brand the pub up to show they are participating in this campaign. All GBG 2013 pubs will automatically receive a pack, as will any pub who highlighted they would like to take part in this campaign when they signed up for April's Community Pubs Month.

If you are a licensee and would like to take part but have not signed up yet, simply register at:

www.communitypubscampaign.org.uk

Packs will be sent out during late May and early June.

THE WHITE LION

High Street, Hampton in Arden, Solihull B92 0AA

Tel: 01675 442833

www.thewhitelioninn.com

Mon—Wed: 12.00—11.00pm; Thurs—Sat: 12.00-12.00

Sunday 12.00—10.30pm



Solihull CAMRA Most Improved Pub of the Year 2011

Bars Six real ales on at all times

Restaurant A la Carte menu; Sunday roasts from £9.50

Accommodation All en-suite; 2 miles from the NEC,
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A proper pub with a bit of je ne sais quoi!

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Hot and cold meals served all day
All meals home cooked

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Opening hours:

Monday — Saturday:
11.00am — 11.00pm

Sunday: 11.00pm — 10.30pm

Food served 9.00am — 9.00pm

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

Dates For Your Diary

Branch Meetings

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

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Monday 1st July | Bulls Head, Barston |
| Monday 5th August | Rowington Club, Rowington |
| Monday 2nd Sept | Heron's Nest, Heronfield |

Committee Meetings

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Monday 15th July | Lady Lane Wharf, Earlswood |
| Monday 16th Sept | Blue Bell Cider House, Warings Green |
- (8.30pm start. Ordinary members may attend Committee meetings but may only participate if invited to do so by the Committee)*

Socials

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Saturday 29th June: | Trip to the North Cotswold Brewery |
| Saturday 27th July: | Pub Ramble round Earlswood, Hockley Heath & Dorridge |
| August social: | TBA |
| September social: | TBA |

For more details, please contact 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.

Local Beer Festivals

- | | |
|---|--|
| Fri 14th—Sat 15th June Rugby CAMRA BF: Thornfield Indoor Bowls Club—over 50+ ales, ciders, and foreign beer bar. See www.rugbybeerfestival.com for more details. | Thurs 4th—Sat 6th July Bromsgrove CAMRA BF: Bromsgrove Rugby Football Club—over 100 real ales + 50 different ciders and perries. See www.bromsgrovebeerfestival.org.uk for more details. |
| Thurs 20th—Sat 22nd June 3rd Annual Cider Festival: The Forest Hotel, Dorridge—a variety of ciders and local real ales. <i>VIP evening Wed 19th June for their real ale club card holders & CAMRA members: 7—9pm.</i> See www.forest-hotel.com for more details. | Thurs 1st—Sat 3rd August 6th Stafford CAMRA BF: Blessed William Howard School—80+ real ales plus ciders, perries and country wines. Includes LocAle Bar. See www.heartofstaffordshire.org.uk for more details. |

Proms in the Park

ABBA, Rule Britannia and local beers on the menu at Hockley Heath

Local breweries The Shed and Backyard Brewhouse will be providing the liquid refreshment at Hockley Heath Proms in the Park, Saturday 20th July.

The Shed's ale will be Warwick Bear (4.0%, blonde and hoppy), while Backyard Brewhouse will be providing The Hoard (3.9%, golden straw-coloured and SIBA national beer competition 2011 gold medal winner) and Backyard Blonde (4.1%, platinum-blond bitter).



The music will be performed by a joint band comprising West Midlands Police Band and The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (Warwickshire) Band. Proceeds from the event will go to improving a wooded area at the park on Old Warwick Road, and Care of Police Survivors as well as The Army Benevolent Fund.

In addition to flag waving favourites such as Rule Britannia, Jerusalem and Land of Hope and Glory, there will be sing-along favourites including a selection from ABBA, The Seekers and the Carpenters.



The event is being organised by local residents, Hockley Heath Parish Council and Hockley Heath Residents Association. Organiser Gary Campbell said "Our bandmaster Barney Barnes has put together a playlist which is designed to appeal to a wide audience – from a series of familiar marches and classical favourites to others performed by guest vocalists; something for youngsters to dance along to and a grand fireworks finale set to Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture.

"We have had lots of interest in tickets, and support from local businesses and we are looking forward to a really successful event."



Go to hockleyheathproms@hotmail.co.uk to buy tickets at £15 per adult or £10 for 18's & under or to www.hockleyheathpromsinthepark.com for more information.

Why Beer Cheers....

Scientists say beer really does cheer us up. A sip of beer is enough to set off a craving for...more beer. Just the taste, without any alcohol effect, creates chemical pleasure reactions by releasing dopamine, scientists say.

The study, in the US journal *Neuropsychopharmacology*, has a serious side – dopamine release may explain why alcoholics find it hard to abstain. Indiana University researchers used scans to test the reaction of 49 men to beer or a sports drink, with the result that beer caused significantly more dopamine activity.

pharmacology, has a serious side – dopamine release may explain why alcoholics find it hard to abstain. Indiana University researchers used scans to test the reaction of 49 men to beer or a sports drink, with the result that beer caused significantly more dopamine activity.

Published: Tue, April 16, 2013 – Daily Express

Welcome to a new Pubs Officer

Martin Buck has recently taken on the role of Pubs Officer for Solihull CAMRA, and here he introduces himself.

Martin said "I have always been a beer drinker, a habit acquired from my father. I studied Computer Science at Portsmouth, where Brickwoods Pompey Royal and Eldridge Pope Royal Oak soon became favourites.

"My work on software projects took me all over the country, and it was on one of these jaunts that I joined CAMRA, at the 1993 Grampian Beer Festival in Aberdeen. I've been to a good few festivals but it's only been in the last couple of years that I've become an active CAMRA member, going to branch meetings and helping the set-

up of the Solihull beer festival. Recently I organised the vote to decide which of 'our' pubs will be in the 2014 Good Beer Guide, and now I'm Pubs Officer.

"I plan to keep the branch informed of how our pubs are doing, together with any changes—for good or bad—and updates on what real ales are out there. I'll also be the point of contact for our local pubs, all our branch award arrangements, and GBG coordination amongst other things.

"For the record, my favourite beers are Timothy Taylor Landlord and Gales HSB; my favourite pub outside Solihull is the Boot Inn, Boot, Eskdale, Cumbria (I have a favourite local pub, but I visit plenty of others too!); and my favourite beery recipe is Chicken in Beer from *Floyd on France*."

2013 Good Bottled Beer Guide

The brand-new edition of the *Good Bottled Beer Guide* is comprehensively updated and revised to cover the expansion of British brewing since 2009.

There are now well over 1,800 bottle-conditioned beers produced around the UK available in pubs, online and on the high street. Inside this new edition, bottled beer expert Jeff Evans showcases the very best real ales in a bottle currently available and the best places to buy them around the country.

The book is also packed with tasting notes, ingredients, a full directory of real ale in a bottle breweries, a listing of every bottle-conditioned beer they

produce and an international section, this is a book bursting with beers for you to enjoy.

You can buy the *Good Bottled Beer Guide* at the price (excluding postage) of £10.99 for CAMRA members

and £12.99 for non-members from the CAMRA website: www.camra.org.uk (CAMRA members must login to their CAMRA shop account to receive the special member price).

The Shed Brewery features for the first time this year—look out for their entry!



ADRIAN AND THE COMMITTEE WARMLY WELCOME YOU TO

The Rowington Club



Rowington Green, Rowington, Warwickshire CV35 7DB

Telephone: 01564 782087

Featured in 2011, 2012 and 2013 CAMRA Good Beer Guides

Recipient of Solihull & District Branch award for GBG newcomer in 2010

Opening hours: Mon-Fri: 2.00 – 11.00 pm; Sat-Sun Bank Hols: 12 noon – 11.00 pm

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)

Forthcoming Events:

Ladies' Day: Sunday 23rd June (afternoon) - free champagne, strawberries and ice-cream for the lady attendees, prize for best hat & entertainment (feel free to bring your gentlemen, although they won't get the freebies—sorry!!)

Beer Festival: August Bank Holiday weekend (Saturday 24th, Sunday 25th and Monday 26th August) with live music each day, many excellent guest ales and ciders, pig roast, and other hot food available throughout.

Saturday evening events a speciality: phone the Club for details of who's on

**We also have a private function room available -
please phone for rates and more information.**

The Real Ale Reporter



Have you ever been in a pub, and had the perfect pint – a drink so good, you want to tell other people to try it? Well, CAMRA has a system which lets you give marks to a beer – and if

enough people provide scores, it gives us all a way to judge how good a pub is at serving real ale.

The CAMRA National Beer Scoring System (NBBS) has been running for a number of years, and now it is being integrated into the new CAMRA website, What Pub (www.whatpub.com). The site is currently in beta testing; all its features are accessible to CAMRA members, while non-members can see a sample entry for a pub. The NBSS helps CAMRA by standardising the approach in a simple and easy to use format, introducing a 0–5 scale score for the beer, as follows:

0 – No real ale available.

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

2– Average. A 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 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 same 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 very rarely.

(If you feel a beer falls between two scores then 1/2 marks are permitted, e.g. 3.5, 4.5.)

The main benefit of entering your scores is that it allows the local CAMRA branch to see whether the pubs on our patch are consistently serving good, well-kept beer because you were there, drank it, and rated it. If a pub falls short of the standards that we would wish others to see then we can do something about it by approaching the pub in question, letting them know their scores aren't great and advising them on improving their performance.

When the What Pub site is ready for prime time we'll be publicising it as widely as possible. In the meantime, if you aren't a CAMRA member you can use the form on our website, at www.solihullcamra.org.uk/reportbook.htm to rate a beer. Please add an entry for each beer you try, on each visit – the more scores, the more accurate the overall ratings.

Martin Buck



Shed News...

Following its trial at the Bluebell, Henley in Arden, as reported in this magazine back in March, the Shed Brewery is now supplying a cask of Warwick Bear a month to the pub.

'The Shed' also sponsored the recent Shirley Round Table Beer Festival, (at

which Shed Gold won Beer of the Festival last year) and provided a cask of their beer, which co-owner and brewer Perry Clarke took great care to quality-check before the festival commenced.

"Hey lads, the cask goes this way up!!"



Perry and Co also sent a cask of beer to the Coventry beer festival, and as Shed beers do not use any additives when brewing, a new sticker adorned the cask, ensuring that vegetarians and vegans could enjoy the Shed's offering with a clear conscience.

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

THE SHED  **BREWERY**SM

Smooth,

Crisp,

Hand crafted,

And unmistakably English...

Coming to a pub near you soon!

'The Shed' is also featuring for the first time in the 2014 edition of the CAMRA Good Bottled Beer Guide, which is available to buy now from the CAMRA online bookshop.

Social: Ramble, Saturday 27th July

Meet at Dorridge railway station at 10:30 am for a 10:40 am start. The walk will be around ten miles, and will take in the Drum and Monkey, Lady Lane Wharf, Blue Bell Cider House, the Wharf and the Miller & Carter in Hockley Heath, the Railway and the Forest

Hotel. If there's anyone wanting more by then, another couple of miles can be included to go to the Red Lion and the Vaults. The route will include paths across fields and canal tow-paths, so suitable footwear should be worn – and if it looks like rain, water-proofs would be a good idea!

Martin Buck

a real ale obsession

Enjoy our **award-winning real ales**, regular guest ales or traditional ciders, with delicious fresh **Thai cuisine**, it's the perfect combination.

The Grade II listed interior was once enjoyed by Laurel and Hardy and Charlie Chaplin - it's a **unique experience** not to be missed

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Shirley Round Table Beer Festival 2013

Thanks to Shirley RT and Ladies Circle for another good little beer festival in the park; actually not so little - this is growing year on year, with 26 beers and 7 ciders. By Saturday afternoon there was still a good choice of beers although a couple of the locals had sold out quickly and it looked like the cider and perry had sold well too. The choice was only limited by Saturday evening.

All too often a beer festival seems to require a lot of halves or thirds to sample so many beers. This was one to choose a few pints of what looked interesting or was recommended by the early shift. Black Flood Porter (who needs golden ales?) Dorset Dur-

dle Door, Oakham Scarlet Macaw were all good choices and Patriot's Nelson was a really good hoppy beer.

The weather was kind with sunshine and a pleasant breeze, but plenty of cover should it be needed, and long tables that encouraged conversation between groups. As usual, you plan to meet a couple of friends there, and meet many more friends and neighbours that you did not expect - "didn't I see you at the Steve Hackett concert on Thursday?" - this is a friendly local beer festival for all-comers.

Robert Cawte



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



...10 Years Ago in Solihull...

Can you remember your local pub this time 10 years ago?? Here's a reminder of then....

- The Vaults, Knowle, won this branch's Pub of the Year Award for 2003 (having won it precisely 10 years previously in 1993);
- Our 5th beer festival was held at the Royal British Legion;
- Ember Inns held a beer festival: the Red Lion, Knowle; the Colebrook, Hasluck's Green; the Woodman's Rest, Shirley and the Fieldhouse, Monkspath all took part (during which the most expensive real ale was £2.50 a pint);
- The first Solihull JD Wetherspoon's pub, the White Swan, was opened;
- The Lazy Cow was called Bar Co (formerly the Golden Lion and later to be renamed the Town House);
- The Cock Horse, Rowington (now sadly closed) held one of its frequent beer festivals, featuring 25 real ales and a traditional cider;
- Bernie's Real Ale off-Licence and the Navigation, Lapworth, both celebrated 20 years in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

Pubs have gone, management or ownership changed, and now many are under threat from decreasing visitors, uncaring PubCo's and government taxation. One thing, however, remains the same—pubs are a part of the great heritage of our country, and it's either use them or lose them. So make a special effort to visit a pub near you soon and show your support for Britain's pubs and their wonderful selection of real ales.

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www.thebluebellciderhouse.co.uk

Opening hours:

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



Pin, Pie and Pint Night

There is a saying: Life is not all beer and skittles—but in February it was!!

Our February branch social was to the Fleur de Lys pub in Lowsonford. This lovely pub dates back to around 1690 and was originally a couple of cottages and a barn. The barn (lower bar area) doubled as the village mortuary from 1877 until 1936, though the pub ghost (a little girl) resides in the back bedroom above this area rather than in the old mortuary.

The Fleur de Lys has a good sized beer garden that runs down to the Stratford canal. Not that we were interested in that on a cold February evening. No, we were there for a pin, pie and pint evening. The



Fleur is famous for its pies. This is the pub where the original Fleur de Lys pies originated. Mr Brookes, the licensee here from 1950 - 1958 was also a baker and began baking pub skittles alley. These became so



They also play who only sit at the table...

popular that he ended up buying Emscote Mill in Warwick to expand his business. The current pies are no longer original Fleur de Lys pies as that business was sold on and, according to the pub website, eventually became part of Pukka Pies.

That said, they still do excellent pies here, as well as a range of other choice food on their menu. The pies are imaginatively named - Kate & Sidney; matador; Heidi; Deerstalker etc. Provided you have enough people and agree to buy food, the pub will reserve the upper area and move the tables and chairs out of the way so they can set up their traditional pub skittles alley. And that's what we



Bob Jackson surveys the alley

Bowling techniques varied considerably on the night, as the photos below demonstrate...



Allan Duffy gets his eye in

guest ales and



Stern concentration from Harry Rowe

bringing their better halves for what was a



A confident Ian Hunter

were here for - the claim it was beginner's luck but how course as CAMRA long through the members we were evening and for so here for a pint (or many ladies can beginner's luck last ? two) too!

Though this is a Greene King pub they also have we were pleased to see a couple on that night - Greene King Celebration Pale Ale (4.2%) and Coach House Flintlock (4.4%).

The evening saw one of our better turnouts for a social event, with a number of new faces and with many better halves for what was a very enjoyable and fairly relaxed time. I say fairly relaxed as one or two did seem to take the skittles a little seriously ! It has to be said though, that the males were generally outplayed by the females. It would be nice to

claim it was beginner's luck but how course as CAMRA long through the members we were evening and for so here for a pint (or many ladies can beginner's luck last ? two) too!



Malcolm Harry in action

All told a very enjoyable evening, so thank you to all at the Fleur de Lys for their efforts making it so.



Left: Paul Wigley at a critical moment

Ray Cooke



Brenda Duffy awaits the result of her throw



Left: But Steve, who's taking the photos if you're bowling?!

Thanks to Steve Evans of Seven Star Photography for his photos of the event.

CHEERS TO THE MERRIE MONARCH!!

Chris Sadler of Sadler's Ales & David Craddock of Craddock's Brewery have come together to open The King Charles II as a Real Ale & food pub in the heart of Worcester.

King Charles House is one of Worcester's most historic buildings and was the building from which King Charles II escaped his enemies after the Battle of Worcester in 1651. The King Charles II has been lovingly restored by Chris & Dave who have worked closely with archaeologists and preservation experts throughout the refurbishment to ensure this Grade II* listed building remains one of Worcester's true treasures.

The King Charles II is proud to offer 10 real ales, local cider, local perry, Belgian and American Beers and a menu of traditional pies and bar snacks. It will be open 7 days a week from 11am – 11pm and will serve food all day.

Chris Sadler said "It's been an absolute privilege to be involved with this fantastic building and to make it a pub that can now be enjoyed by all", while Dave Craddock commented "It's a truly wonderful pub and we feel the Merrie Monarch would be proud. Cheers!"



The beautiful historic interior of the refurbished King Charles II pub

**The King
Charles II is
now Open.**

GBBF 2013

Great British Beer Festival tickets are now on sale and can be bought by visiting www.gbbf.org.uk/tickets or calling **0844 412 4640**.

As a CAMRA member you will receive a £2 discount plus an additional £2 discount if you buy in advance meaning a daily ticket costs just £8.



Following last year's success, the Great British Beer Festival will again take place at London Olympia. 55,000 people are expected to visit the festival over the five days and with more than 800 real ales, ciders, perries and foreign beers to choose from in Olympia's Grand and National Halls, GBBF 2013 expects to be even bigger and better than last year!

Visit the new GBBF website and stand a chance of winning free tickets!



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CAMRA Good Beer Guide-listed continuously since 1983



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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

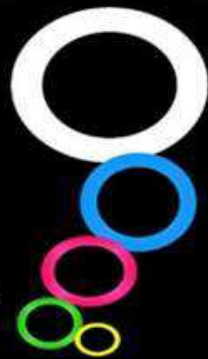
Wines, aperitifs, and other alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are also available for your day or evening get-togethers and parties—please come in and talk to us about your requirements and we will always be glad to help.



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Long Itchington Beer Festival

The Long Itch beer festival now runs for 4 days over the first week-end of May. Everyone seemed to go under their own steam this year, so a friend with a people-carrier helped out (thanks Andy).

Gravity works well with beer, so we started at the top of the village at the Cuttle Inn. This operates in the pub and a shed by the canal, offering a good range with Nelson's Friggin' in the Rigging, a Kelham Island beer and several Castle Rock beers on the list for the weekend. .

On to the Two Boats Inn across the canal, where we got a comfortable table in the corner to enjoy a Loddon Hoppit and a good Wells & Young's Waggle Dance.

We then headed for the Duck on the Pond. When the festival first started this was an expensive foodie with a limited beer choice, but it has changed a lot—a wide choice of beers and a range of food including some good roast pork baps went down well with a Skinner's Betty Stoggs in fine form.

Next the Buck and Bell, by now getting busy with queues for the bar, but they have an extra one outside which helps a lot. A range of beers featured but draught Worthington White Shield is hard to resist—a very fine pint, followed by

a pleasant St George from Milestone.

Out of the centre of the village towards the church is the Harvester, with time-warped decor, where the Vale Red Kite made a pleasant contrast to the many lighter beers we see so often. The yard was crowded, with buffalo burgers and ice-cream on sale and plenty of empty casks to sit on.

Finally, the Green Man with the usual crowd and a long wait at the very small bar for a Concertina Directors.



The crowd outside the Green Man

It is important to acknowledge that not all beers are on at once - each pub may have 6 on at a time and they are replaced as they run out, but my overall impression of Saturday was that we saw very few of the best beers promised. Still, this was an enjoyable day with friends and several good beers.

Robert Cawte

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. Please ask staff for further details.



Coming soon:

There will be another Solihull Wetherspoons Real Ale festival over the week of Saturday 7th to Sunday 15th September, featuring another Battle of the Brewers! Up-to four local breweries will be represented, including Purity who will be back to defend their title, following their closely fought victory in the first local ale festival. A sampling and meet the brewer session will be held on Saturday 7th where customers will be able to try a selection of ales from each brewery. The brewery with the most votes after at the end of the week will win a 6-month residency at The White Swan. Come along and support your favourite local brewery!

www.jdwetherspoon.co.uk

Be a real JD Wetherspoon's fan – join us on Facebook!

Pub Reform—lobby your MP!

CAMRA is asking people to take part in the next stage of their campaign calling for reform of the big pub companies to help save the nation's pubs. These big pubcos are making life difficult for hard working licensees by taking excessive profits from pubs – so licensees and pub-goers alike suffer. The Government has now launched a consultation and is proposing:

- A powerful new Code and Watchdog to ensure fair dealing by big pub companies;
- A new choice for licensees to opt out of restrictive tied agreements and just pay a fair market rent to their PubCo;
- Fair rents and beer prices charged to tied publicans, allowing them to thrive.

A Beery Book Review

Pubs and beer are central to *Man Walks Into a Pub* by Pete Brown. Over its 400 pages it covers a lot of ground from the earliest known writings some 5,000 years ago to the current state of the industry and pub trade in Britain. Both amusing and informative, it's as much about beer's importance and the social standing of the pub in British society as the drink itself.

The book is full of fascinating snippets of trivia (Watneys creating the drip mat in 1920 so they could advertise their beers to drinkers; and calling someone barmy, meaning crazy, means that their head is full of barm – the froth on top of beer when it is actively fermenting). Larger incidents are also documented, like the 1814 beer flood in London when a vat used to hold porter for aging burst. The loss of some 2.5 million pints was bad for the brewer, Meaux, but it proved fatal to 8 people caught up in the torrent.

CAMRA gets quite a lot of coverage, going

To ensure the Government sees through this package of reform, CAMRA needs to secure the support of as many MPs as possible.



Please take two minutes to **Lobby your MP now** and ask them to sign EDM 57 (a Parliamentary petition) and lobby Business Department Ministers on your behalf. You can email them, or send your own written submission—we have provided draft text on the website which you can use if you wish. Also, take a minute to complete the Government's survey for PubCo reform.

For further details and draft wording, visit www.fairdealforyourlocal.com.

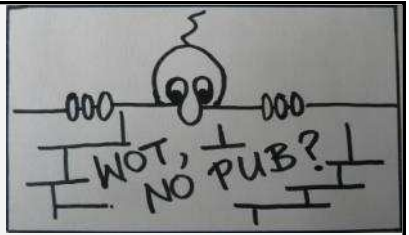
back to it being founded in 1972 and Brown credits CAMRA with inventing the term 'real ale', calling it "a stroke of marketing genius" – not only was it easy to understand, it also implied that other beers – the keg bitter and lager served in most pubs—was not 'real', and thus inferior (which, of course, for the most part it was).

Brown admits that beer has become an obsession for him. In a past marketing study there were 20-odd guys who within ten minutes were talking passionately about beer, how the choice of bottled lager in a club said something about you, how they would drink real ale with their fathers. Intrigued, he wanted to investigate why beer has this effect, why so important, so central to social life in Britain, in a way that that isn't true anywhere else in the world. *Man Walks Into a Pub* is an excellent read and thoroughly recommended to anyone with even a passing interest in beer and pubs.

Martin Buck

Pubs Wanted

Readers of this magazine are most welcome to write an article about their own favourite Solihull & District pub, describing its real ales, special events that it puts on, what it does for the community and why you recommend it. Please send information to the editor at the contact addresses on page 3.



Publicans- don't be left out! If your pub doesn't appear in the Drinker, ask your regulars to tell the editor all about it

Bartons Arms Recognised in new CAMRA Publication

Birmingham's The Bartons Arms has been included by CAMRA in their new publication *"Britain's Best Real Heritage Pubs"* as one of 270 pubs in the UK with interiors of real historic significance. This is the first time details on these historic pubs have been collated in one single volume, with high quality photographs. The guide has extensive listings and is the product of many years of research by CAMRA volunteers dedicated to preserving and protecting our rich pub heritage.

Author Geoff Brandwood is a long-standing member of CAMRA's Pub Heritage Group, regularly writes for CAMRA's *Beer* magazine and is co-author of English Heritage's best-selling *"Licensed to sell: The History and Heritage of the Public House"*.

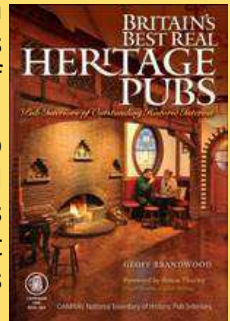


The magnificent interior of The Bartons Arms

The Bartons', which was saved from dereliction in 2002 by Oakham Ales, an award winning

brewery based in Peterborough, is one of the finest examples of Heritage Victorian pub architectural grandeur with palatial archways, original snob screens, a grand staircase and Minton Hollins tiles. It boasts an impressive list of famous drinkers such as Laurel and Hardy, Charlie Chaplin and Enrico Caruso who were all frequent visitors to the venue when appearing at the Aston Hippodrome; and in more recent years, Birmingham's legendary rocker Ozzy Osborne. Today the pub prides itself on serving real ale and traditional ciders alongside a great range of bottled Belgian and continental beers, which can be enjoyed whilst sampling the fantastic Thai cuisine which is prepared by a team of Thai chefs.

The venue really is a 'must-see', and plays an important part of Birmingham's heritage. The Bartons' also offers conference and function room facilities making it the perfect choice for a business or social gathering.



A Campaign

of Two Halves

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Save Britain's Pubs!



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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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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

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Title _____ Surname _____

Forename(s) _____

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

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- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you require The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
 - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign For Real Ale Ltd asks you to.
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