

# Solihull



# Drinker

Issue No: 58

Autumn.2011

## 2011 Solihull Beer Festival

Put the dates in your diary now—Friday 30th September and Saturday 1st October sees the 13th Solihull Beer Festival, as usual at the Royal British Legion, Union Road, Solihull town centre. This year we will be opening from 5.30pm till 11.00pm on Friday, and 12 noon till 11.00pm on Saturday (no afternoon closing this year) and if you visit on Friday evening and come back on Saturday bringing your Friday slip, we will waive the Saturday entry fee.



We have a great range of 40 real ales being planned as you read this, chosen with care to tempt every palate and to echo this year's theme of 'Urbs versus Rure' - which are better, town-brewed or country-brewed beers? A cider and a perry complete the line-up.



The Two Towers Brewery, based in Birmingham, are the kind sponsors of this year's festival—look out for a selection of their beers among those on offer.

(Continued on page 3)

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TELEPHONE RESERVATIONS WELCOME**

*Autumn will be upon us all too soon, with its chill mornings and misty weather. Oh, the pleasure of sitting by a glowing fire, banishing the dark evening gloom, with an excellent pint in your hand, and maybe a plate of seasonal food in front of you—the game is very good at this time of year!*

## 2011 Beer Festival (cont.)

As usual we will be using a beer token system, with part of your admission fee of £10 on the door paying for your entry to the festival (reduced rate for CAMRA members both days), first set of tokens, and refundable souvenir glass hire. Top-up tokens will be available in the beer hall, and unused tokens can either be refunded or donated to this year's charity, Midlands Air Ambulance, at the end of your visit.

There will be entertainment on Saturday with our Homebrew competition over lunchtime, giving local amateur brewers the chance to showcase one of their real ales, which visitors to the festival will be able to sample while judging goes on.

The Warwick University Band will serenade us with an 'Urbs v. Rure' performance during Saturday teatime, and up and coming band The Strumtroopers will hit the stage in the evening in the evening, playing a wide selection of covers with their eclectic mix of ukulele, percussion and guitar.



We look forward very much to seeing you this year—please spread the word!

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

**All contributions, comments and enquiries should be sent to Julia Hammonds,  
The Editor, Solihull Drinker, c/o 4 Kendrick Close, Solihull, B92 0QD  
or e-mail [julia.hammonds@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto: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.

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Solihull CAMRA 2011 ©

The 59th edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 5th December, 2011.

Copy deadline for advertising and contributions will be Wednesday 17th November, 2011.

**Notice is hereby given that this year's Solihull & District CAMRA branch AGM will take place at The Cock Horse, Rowington, at 8.30pm on November 7th 2011, preceded by a short branch meeting starting at 8.00pm. CAMRA branch members are welcome to attend, as are non-members though the latter will not have a vote at the AGM. Contributions to the annual raffle in the form of prizes on the night would be appreciated.**

# Hail to the Ale!

## Local Beer, Pub, Club & Brewery news

### The Tom o' The Wood, Rowington

After reporting last issue that sisters Sue and Debbie had reopened the pub and were doing very well, with several real ales and good menus, it is very sad to have to report that the pub has closed once more. It seems that Enterprise Inns, the owner, clearly delighted at the pub's success, responded by putting their rent up by a staggering degree, which led to the sisters walking out. It is a real pity that Pubcos can't see that when a pub is being run successfully, the best thing to do is leave it alone. Supposedly there is another manager lined up—but our sympathies are with Sue and Debbie, and we hope they find another pub soon with an owner more suited to their aims and abilities.

### Silhill Brewery

The brewery have launched their third beer, a dark 4.5% with a nutty taste which has gone down well with drinkers. It is called 'Progress', to commemorate progressing to the next beer. They are about to rebrand the first two beers and the former 4.0 per cent will be SPA (Silhill Pale Ale) and the 3.7 per cent will be LDA (Light Dry Ale). They are also considering a 2.8% for the new duty change, and a lager is also on the books later in the Autumn. They will be bottling the SPA in September and in November will start a home deliver service, so fans will be able to get their hands on SPA very easily in future.

### The White Swan, Henley-in-Arden

The White Swan now features 5 real ales: regulars Black Sheep, Sharp's Doombur, St Austell Tribute and Purity Gold, plus a regularly changing guest beer. Cask Marque status means you can always be sure of an excellently-kept pint. The pub also has a new chef and the menu is being revamped with Thai and Spanish food now being on offer as well as tradition British dishes. See their website [www.thewhiteswanhotel.com](http://www.thewhiteswanhotel.com) for further details.



### Knowle Royal British Legion

The Legion are planning their first beer festival, from Friday 25th to Sunday 27th November, at 1611 Warwick Road, Knowle—further information awaited.

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For more information about local pubs, see our website [www.solihullcamra.org.uk](http://www.solihullcamra.org.uk)

## **The Cock Horse, Rowington**

The Cock Horse is an old coaching inn on the Warwick Road in Rowington, near the canal, and popular with walkers, boaters and cyclists. The pub has a great selection of real ales and ciders, and achieved Casque Marque status some years ago. Fans of the Cock Horse hope to try to fight the planning application submitted by Punch Taverns to change



the use of the pub to a residential dwelling. It may not be too late to save this historic pub, but you need to vote with your feet and with your pen—visit the pub, and sign the petition to save it which has been got up by some of the locals. Once a pub like this gets sold on it will never revert back to pub use, and they're certainly not building them any more in country locations, so it's up to you to help if you want this historic pub to survive and thrive.

## **The Golden Acres, Elmdon**

Yet another chapter for the Golden Acres: after shutting abruptly earlier this year and reopening for a only few weeks, it reopened on Saturday 27th August after a major refit and rebrand as 'The Acres'. Brothers and landlords Steve and Roy Bassie will be serving 4 real ales, currently Wadworth 6X, Greene King IPA, Morland Old Speckled Hen and a Wye Valley ale, with the intention being to have one of these as a regularly-changing guest. The pub will be serving traditional home-cooked food. An invitation-only night on Thursday 25th August saw a lot of enthusiasm for the changes and we wish Steve and Roy all the best with their venture in revamping and re-opening this community pub.

## **The White Swan, Solihull**

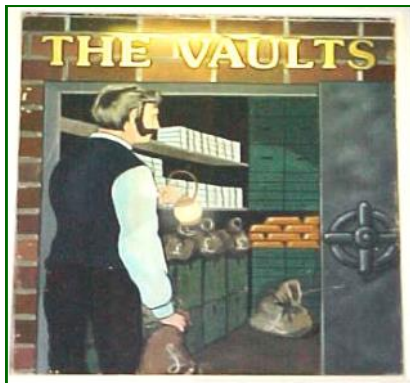
Dawn Lingley-Webster, manager of the White Swan, recently raised £350 doing the Two Castles run in June for CLIC Sargent. She completed the 10k run in driving rain in 1hr & 14mins. Well done Dawn for such a worthy effort.

## **The Forest, Dorridge**

If you sign up to the Forest's Real Ale Club they will stamp your card each purchase each visit and the 20th pint purchased is free (good news as there is a forthcoming beer festival in November); plus, if you give them your email address you will receive regular newsletters.

**Nick, Gwen and staff  
welcome you to**

***CAMRA Good Beer Guide  
listed since 1993***



**the Real Ale venue  
in Knowle**

**Solihull CAMRA Pub of the  
Year for 7 years between  
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convenience whether on your own or at a  
meeting—ask at the bar for details.

- ◆ 6 hand-pumped beers including regulars Tetley Bitter, Wadworth 6X, Adnams Lighthouse and St Austell Tribute, plus 2 guest beers, and featuring Real cider from Westons
- ◆ Food available lunchtimes Monday - Saturday, 12.00-2.00pm

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THIS  
NOVEMBER**

***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.***

**Social, Saturday 26th November  
...Around Dudley Day Out...**

We leave Solihull at 11am via minibus and head off to tour Enville Brewery, followed by a visit to their pub the Cat in Enville. From there we drop into Kinver to visit the Constitutional Club, CAMRA's 2011 Club of The Year. Then up to the Fountain, Lower Gornal, where food is available followed by a visit to Dudley Winter Ales festival if they have any beer left. Arrive home with usual drop off at about 10pm. Cost is £26 per head to cover transport and brewery tour which includes free beer, a brewery glass and nibbles.



There are only 15 places available so book early with Steve Dyson on 0121 603 8994. Payment with booking please.

## Solihull CAMRA Young Members

This is my second article and this time I would like to talk to you about a new initiative that I am setting up to attract new young members. FREE BEER!

Yep, you heard it right, for any new young member (under 35) who joins the Solihull Branch of CAMRA, they will receive £10 worth of vouchers to spend on real ale (or free entry to the Solihull Beer Festival 2011). If they have been nominated by an existing member, that person will also receive £5 worth of vouchers (or half price entry to the Solihull Beer Festival 2011). This offer is limited, so get in fast while you can and tell your friends!

once you have joined, email me at [youngmembers@solihullcamra.co.uk](mailto:youngmembers@solihullcamra.co.uk) with your details and membership number (and name of the existing member who nominated you if appropriate). I will then send you a voucher to spend on real ale. Simple!

What are the other benefits of joining? For just £20 a year you will get: £20 worth of JD Wetherspoon vouchers; Discount holiday and hotel bookings; Monthly 'What's Brewing' and quarterly 'Beer' magazines; Free or Discounted entry to 160+ CAMRA beer festivals; and local Branch social activities. For more information, visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk).

If you need another incentive, the White Swan in Solihull has offered a free gallon of ale to the 400<sup>th</sup> member to join our branch.

I am really keen to get more young people drinking real ale so if anyone has any good ideas, please do get in touch using the email above.

Simon Tomlinson  
Solihull CAMRA Young Persons Contact

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[www.thebluebellciderhouse.co.uk](http://www.thebluebellciderhouse.co.uk)





## Solihull CAMRA social – Warwick – Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2011

This was an impromptu social trip to Warwick as Dawn (of the White Swan) had an invitation for us to visit the Slaughterhouse brewery, which produces a few good beers, so it seemed like a good idea. Meet in the sunshine at Solihull station around 11.15 and all the pubs are within an easy walk of Warwick station. The plan was simple:

The Wild Boar – time for a pint before we meet Steve, director of Slaughterhouse, at 12.30. From there the plan was: The Great Western, Coventry Road (Tim Taylor, St.Austell Tribute and a guest ale, so Bob B will be happy) then The Oak, Coten End, The New Bowling Green, St Nicholas Church Street and finally The Roebuck Inn, Smith Street, Warwick's oldest pub dating back to 1470.



For those who don't know it, Slaughterhouse ([www.slaughterhousebrewery.com](http://www.slaughterhousebrewery.com)) started brewing in 2003 in a former slaughterhouse (obviously) but had now opened an additional brewhouse at the back of the newly-restored (in a joint venture with Everards, [www.everards.co.uk](http://www.everards.co.uk)), Wild Boar pub ([thewildboarwarwick.co.uk](http://thewildboarwarwick.co.uk)) which they run. Most breweries go up in size; this one has done the opposite. The 4-barrel plant keeps up the main production of Saddleback bitter and the new plant deals with specials and seasonal brews on a 2-barrel plant. Their logic was partly that it gives flexibility and uses a space at the back of the pub, but also with the glass walls it is a feature of the pub and will hopefully encourage interest in real ale and its provenance. Brewers are renowned for an early start (Steve favours 4am so that he can be done by lunchtime and then deliver beers to pubs in the afternoon) but this one is different, they plan to brew on Friday afternoons for maximum attention; with luck the aroma will waft into the bar and the street.

We arrived at The Wild Boar just as the landlord was opening the curtains, so he knew we were serious and made us welcome. There were 9 real ales (and a cider) and it looked good. We settled for halves, which were served in an attractive oversized stem glass. They'd just had a mini beer festival and there were plenty of Fyne Ales ([www.fyneales.com](http://www.fyneales.com)) to try, which was great as you rarely see them in these



parts. Their Fiddlers Gold was light in colour as you would expect, but unusually for the genre it was also hoppy with a good bitter finish. Maverick was a dark beer, not typical summer ale, but at 4.2% it makes a change from all the golden ales, while the Avalanche was a delightful, aromatic pale ale. Naturally we also had a Saddleback bitter as well, a good pint, before Steve arrived, when we wandered round to see the brewery, which was a squeeze and consisted of



some smart stainless steel vessels (ex dairy) which had been modified a bit; some very professionally, so you would not notice, and some were clearly hand made – which had saved the brewery a few thousand on the purchase price. They also lacked space for a hot liquor tank so had a series of pipes across the ceiling so that they could use the copper and empty fermenting vessels instead; ingenious. With a brewery so small, it does not take long to see it all so Steve suggested a visit to the original plant a couple of miles away, transport care of his dray – an ex-army Land Rover. Dawn sat in business class, while the rest of us piled into the back and the lucky ones got to sit on a firkin. Picture Fred Dibnah's trusty steeplejack steed (not the steam roller) and you get the idea.

The main brewery was a 2-level affair with the dry goods upstairs so that the grist can fall under gravity into the mash tun. This too was a smart stainless steel kit (ex Church End) with some home made modifications. Steve rifled through his stores to find some bottled samples including a stout and very dark Wild Boar – superb with a hint of liquorice.



At this stage it would have been simple to go back to our planned route, but as Steve had us at his mercy he suggested he take us to Leamington Spa to visit one of his outlets that he reckons serves the best pint of Saddleback bitter. How could we refuse? Well, as he was driving, we couldn't, so off we went in the trusty dray. The Woodland Tavern in Regent Street is a comfortable local and does not appear in the Good Beer Guide (mental note, must visit Leamington Spa to try the good ones). As promised, they did serve a very good pint of Saddleback, yes, even better than The Wild Boar. Mission accomplished Steve drove us back to Warwick and dropped us at The Oak.



At The Oak Pub we had a good choice from the familiar and the new. Cotleigh Sea Eagle was a good choice as was the 4.2% Phoenix Gold from Byatt's Brewery ([www.byattsbrewery.co.uk](http://www.byattsbrewery.co.uk)) a new business in Coventry. At this stage things slowed down a bit and we sat in the beer garden to enjoy the late afternoon sunshine. Finally Dawn headed home and we stopped off at The Great Western on the corner by the road up to the station. Choice here was limited to Tribute, or Landlord, tough choice as they are both good beers so it was a split vote.

And that was it, we timed it just right for the train and were back home in time for tea after a fun day out. Many thanks to Dawn for organising it and Steve for the impromptu visit to twice as many breweries as we'd expected.



Robert Cawte and Gordon Clarke

# Solihull Beer Festival 2011



**Saturday 1st October 2011**

**Royal British Legion, Union Rd, Solihull**



To submit your nomination please email  
[youngmembers@SolihullCAMRA.org.uk](mailto:youngmembers@SolihullCAMRA.org.uk)  
by 25<sup>th</sup> September 2011



**Rules:**

One brew per entrant; 2.5lts of the home brew must be provided for tasting & judging, entrant must be present at the beer festival for judging. Over 16's only

## Homebrew Competition

Are you a home brewer of real ales? If so, you may want to enter our free competition at the 13<sup>th</sup> Solihull & District Beer Festival on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October. The competition takes place at lunchtime, and there will be prizes and certificates for the top three brews, judged by local branch CAMRA officials.

Entrants must submit 2.5 litres of one real ale to compete, and be present at the festival for judging (limited to over-18s only). Last year our worthy winner was Perry Clarke with a real ale that won him first prize – is your brew better??

To submit your nomination and for further details, email by 25<sup>th</sup> September to: [youngmembers@SolihullCAMRA.org.uk](mailto:youngmembers@SolihullCAMRA.org.uk)

## Membership Matters

It was reported in the Autumn edition of "BEER" (the plush mag you get when you join CAMRA) that the university bar is an important place for the introduction of young people to real ale. For most of us, our tastes mature, and although we might start with alcopops and shots it becomes clear that there are better drinks to be had.

CAMRA beer festivals are also very attractive to young people where they can be seen to be enjoying the huge variety of ales as well as lively company, food and music.

That young people should become interested in real ale is very important to CAMRA and encouragement to join is essential for its future. If you think you would like to become a member have a look at the application form in this publication, or, since you are young(!), join on line: [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)

And have a look at: Facebook.: [www.facebook.com/pages/solihull-camra/154207611309607](http://www.facebook.com/pages/solihull-camra/154207611309607) and Twitter: [http://twitter.com/#!/CAMRA\\_Official](http://twitter.com/#!/CAMRA_Official)

Bob Jackson, Membership Secretary

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**Three regularly changing real ales**

Full membership: £20.00 per annum; single visits for guests: £1.00 (free to card-carrying CAMRA members)

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

**Sunday 2nd October—Marrow Sunday, featuring various events: Heaviest Marrow, Longest Carrot, Longest Runner Bean, Longest Parsnip and Heaviest Onion, plus cake and jam classes. Entry only £1 per person regardless of number of entries! Proceeds to charity. Plus competitions, Tombola, stalls and wacky games including welly-whanging.**

**Sunday 9th October—Game Fair commencing with a Breakfast BBQ from 10.30am; featuring working gundogs, falconry displays, archery, air rifle range, laser clay-pigeon shooting and home-cooked country food throughout the day.**

**Ring for further details and opening times.**

## Organising the 1st Shirley Beer Festival

In Shirley Round Table, we like a drink or two, and a couple of years ago I thought "why don't we organise a beer festival?".....After all, how difficult can it be?! So after a busy year "researching" (hic, burp) followed by a busy year organising we held the 1<sup>st</sup> Shirley Beer Festival at Camp Hill Rugby Club on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> May 2011. As a fan of Real Ale and a member of Solihull Camra, I'd been to a number of Beer Festivals. Throughout the country there seem to be as many Beer Festivals run by Round Tables as there are by Camra, and I've been involved in one or two, and attended three or four (or more)....

In Round Table, everything is done by committee. As it was my idea, I would be Chairman but I needed a whole gang of people to help. There's publicity, sponsorship, treasurer, labour, logo design, printing, ordering the glasses....the list seemed to grow longer and longer as I thought the process through. So a gang of about 10 of us became the "Shirley Beer Festival Committee" and began to meet regularly.

Our first dilemma was where to hold the event. I was determined to find a venue in the heart of Shirley. We looked at various clubs and rooms, and finally decided on Camp Hill Rugby Club. It's in the very centre of Shirley, just behind the park, and it also has excellent security with a good strong metal fencing around.

The rugby club were very enthusiastic and welcomed us with open arms, but now we had to decide upon a date. The club has hundreds of members and a number of successful teams and is always busy, so we had to choose a date outside of their regular playing season - we would have to take up a lot of space in the clubhouse, and we planned to erect marquees in the car park or on the grass, so basically we would take over their club for a week.

There were also several other events we needed to avoid clashing with: Solihull Camra have their Beer Festival in October, and Shirley organise Solihull Carhelp Santa around the end of the year and Hall Green Carnival. Eventually we were all happy of the rugby season, Solihull Carnival.



The fruits of all our hard work—the calm before the storm!!

eral other events we clashing with: Solihull Beer Festival in October Round Table also nival in June and streets of Shirley throughout December found a week that with right at the end a few weeks before

Next, more things to decide upon, all involving budgets – how many beers to have, how many glasses, which beers from where, ***(continued overleaf)***



how to rack the casks, how should they be cooled, who would look after the beers throughout the event.... Crikey - another long list of decisions to be made, and all with the use of that well known phenomenon 'guestimating'!

This is where Julia and Carl from Solihull Camra came to our rescue! We had a meeting (over a pint of course) where they very graciously let us know the ins-and-outs of organising the Solihull Beer Festival.



Just about this time Kings Heath Cricket Club had a small Beer Festival. Peter Hunt, an ex-tabler, invited me along for a taster. They had 18 beers, all racked nicely and with a cooling system that I had seen at a few of the larger beer festivals. This is where I met Ian from Titanic, and to cut a long story short, after a couple of meetings we had agreed that they would supply beers from different breweries, the racking and the cooling.

We'd pay above the odds for the beer, but they would supply the racking and cooling. So we decided that the help that we would receive from Titanic would minimise the number of issues we were likely to come across.

The logo was designed, beer glasses were ordered, website thrown together, and before we knew it the time was upon us to choose the beers. We selected a range of strengths and flavours of beers from as close by as Aston Brewing Company to as far away as Inverness-shire, plus we also included three ciders. We also decided to include a cloudy wheat beer. The beer, racking and cooling was delivered on Tuesday, and was tapped on Wednesday evening ready for the sponsors night on Thursday, where a number of the sponsors and a few select 'friends' came along to see what they had paid for – and I think they enjoyed themselves!

I was extremely nervous on the Friday. The gates opened at 5:30pm and there was a queue of people waiting to come in! We had calculated the number of entrants and amount of beer that we would need to sell for us to 'break even', and I had the people working on the gate keep a tally.... and once we had passed the breakeven figure, I finally relaxed a little and began to enjoy the evening.

The weather was good to us, we had a few glasses remaining at the end of the event and we ran out of beer at 11pm on the Saturday – perfect timing! But the main thing was that everyone who came seemed to enjoy themselves! What a cracking event. I would like to personally thank everyone on the organising committee, plus those who helped on the two days and Camp Hill



Mayor Cllr Ian Courts gets in a bit of pouring practice

Rugby Club, but most of all, I'd like to thank those people who came along and drank the beer!.

Should we do it again next year? Well, watch this space...and as I said in the programme - as this was our first Beer Festival, please let us have any comments by email to beer@shirleybeerfestival.co.uk.




Happy drinkers

*Gary* Chairman, Shirley Beer Festival Committee

PS. I'm chairman of Shirley Round Table this year. If you are a man aged 18 to 45 and would like to find out more about how much 'fun' it was to organise the beer festival, and what we do to relax, have a look at [www.shirley.roundtable.co.uk](http://www.shirley.roundtable.co.uk) to find out about the fun we have planned like Paintball, Laser Quest, volleyball, Black Country pub tour, Brewery tour...the list goes on!

PPS. Shirley Ladies Circle helped to organise the festival and you will have seen many of them manning the pumps!! If you are female aged between 18 and 45 and would like to find out more about it, have a look at [www.shirleyladiescircle.co.uk](http://www.shirleyladiescircle.co.uk)

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# Dates For Your Diary

## Branch Meetings

Monday 10th Oct      The Woodman's Rest, Shirley

Monday 7th Nov      The Cock Horse, Rowington

**NB. Branch Meeting: 8.00pm followed by AGM at 8.30pm)**

Monday 5th Dec      The Reservoir, Earlswood

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

## Committee Meetings

Monday 24th Oct      The Hobs Meadow, Hobs Moat

Monday 19th Dec      The Colebrook Inn, Haslucks Green

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

## Socials

**Friday 30th Sept—Sat 1st Oct Solihull Beer Festival**

Saturday 26th Nov      'Staffordshire Stumble' pub crawl (see the article in this magazine or our branch website for details)

December              Christmas Pub Crawl (date to be confirmed—see branch website for details)

***For more details, contact Secretary Allan Duffy on 01564 200 431 and visit our website: [www.solihullcamra.org.uk](http://www.solihullcamra.org.uk)***

Many, though not all, of our local pubs are accessible to disabled people. If you would like to come to one of our meetings and would need assistance getting inside, please let us know ahead of time and we will do our best to help.

## Beer Festivals

Solihull      As above—make sure you're there!!

Wythall      Fri 14th (6.30-11.30pm) & Sat 15th October (12 noon-11.30pm), Wythall Community Club; 20 real ales + ciders, food available, music both evenings, Entry fee £2.00 (31 concessions)

Visit website [www.wythallbeerfestival.co.uk](http://www.wythallbeerfestival.co.uk) for further details.

Dudley: Winter Ales Festival, Dudley Concert Hall, Thurs 24th—Sat 26th November; 70+ real ales + ciders and perrys, and a German bottled beer stall. Food and entertainment currently being planned.

Visit [www.dudleycamra.org.uk/#/beer-festival-2011](http://www.dudleycamra.org.uk/#/beer-festival-2011) for more details.

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## THE LAKE DISTRICT - (BEER) HEAVEN ON EARTH?

Our visit to the Lake District came about almost by chance. Some friends mentioned that they were going to the Lake District in late August and, as we had not booked anything, the idea of a break in probably the most beautiful part of England was tempting. Having selected a B&B in Windermere and made our booking, I then searched the local CAMRA websites for hosteleries serving real ale. An impressive list was found, as was a list of local breweries – 29 of them! I also obtained a copy of the excellent Lakes Line Real Ale Guide, a handy pamphlet giving details of real ale outlets which are easily accessible from stations on the branch line between Oxenholme and Windermere. This is jointly produced by train operator First Trans-Pennine Express and CAMRA.

Our B&B was located between Windermere (a 10 minute walk up the hill) and Bowness-on-Windermere (15 minutes downhill). Being a tourist area, pub grub in most hosteleries is priced accordingly but we found one pub, the Old John Peel Inn, in Bowness where good food was served at very reasonable prices. Real ale was also served, with Wychwood *Hobgoblin*, Theakstons *Best Bitter* and Greene King *Abbot* available. The following day we headed for Rydal and patronised the Badger Bar at the Glen Rothay Hotel. This offers three local real ales and on this occasion Derwent *Whitwell & Mark Mild Ale* (3.7%), Bitter End *Lakeland Bitter* (3.6%) and Tirril *1823* (4.1%) were available on handpump; after which we spent a pleasant afternoon walking along Rydal Water, stopping to take some photos.



The Angel Inn, Bowness

That evening, we walked down into Bowness and stopped off at the Angel Inn to sample the ales there. Three hand-pumps adorned the bar, dispensing Hawkshead *H-Ale-O* (3.9%), Coniston *Bluebird Bitter* (3.6%) and Stringer's *West Coast Blond Pale Ale* (4.4%), all at £2.85 per pint. I opted for the Hawkshead *H-Ale-O*, which, according to the pump clip, is specially brewed for the Angel Inn. The barman asked me if I was interested in real ale, and offered me a taste of the *West Coast Blond Pale Ale*, which I found to be light and citrusy in taste, very refreshing and also served in very good condition.

The following day we decided to take a trip on the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway. This is a 15 inch narrow-gauge line dating back to 1875 and was originally built to ferry iron ore from workings near the village of Boot to the coast. Nowadays, it is a major tourist attraction. The quickest (and shortest) route is via the Wrynose and Hard Knott passes to Dalegarth, the end of the line from Ravenglass. Having made our way over the passes, we travelled through the beautifully green Eskdale and found the Woolpack Inn, on the outskirts of the village of Boot. The pub had been closed for refurbishment but was now open again, albeit with a lot of work still being done on it. This pub used to be the home of the Hard Knott Brewery but brewing now takes place at a new installation in Millom. We stopped for refreshment and found a selection of six real ales on handpump, these being Stringer's *Sunbird* (4.0%), Ennerdale *Blonde* (4.3%), Rooster's *Silver Lining* (4.3%), Bank Top *Port O'Call* (5.0%), Woodlands *Ash Blonde* (4.1%) and Jennings *Cumberland Ale*.

There was a wait of around 45 minutes at Dalegarth for the next train so we explored the visitor centre and shop. The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway is affectionately known as "La'al Ratty" and a bottle-conditioned beer, named 'Ratty Ale' was advertised for sale in the shop. However, the only beer on the shelf was 'Steamer Ale', brewed by Heskett Newmarket brewery. This is also a bottle-conditioned beer and is brewed specially for the railway's sister company which operates the steamers on Ullswater. We had talked about taking a boat trip on Ullswater later in the week anyway, so I bought a bottle. The next day was spent exploring Beatrix Potter country, visiting 'Hill Top', the house at Near Sawrey where she lived and wrote her Peter Rabbit books. The Tower Bank Arms in the village was very busy serving food and drink to the

many tourists. It is yet another real ale outlet, with Yates's *Solway Summer*, Barnegates *Tag Lag*, Ulverston *Lonesome Pine* plus Hawkshead *Bitter* and *Brodie's Prime* all on handpump. We then continued through Hawkshead to Waterhead, Ambleside, where we stopped for a late lunch at the Wateredge Inn. This is a fairly new pub, overlooking Lake Windermere and designed in such a way that it does not look out of place with the surrounding buildings. The beer garden is right on the water's edge. Inside, the furnishings are contemporary and comfortable and a modern bar sports five handpumps. Beers available were Barnegates *Westmorland Gold* (4.2%) and *Cat Nap*, Watermill *Collie Wobbles* (3.7%), Tirril *Academy Ale* (4.2%) and Cumberland *Corby Ale*. Later in the week, we arranged to meet up with our friends at the historic Kirkstone Pass Inn, just short of the summit of the pass. Records for the Kirkstone Pass Inn date back to 1496 and are believed to be linked to a 15<sup>th</sup> Century monastery. At nearly 1500 feet above sea level, it is the highest inhabited building in Cumbria and the third highest Inn in England. Three real ales are normally available and, on this occasion, the choice was Tirril *Charles Gough's Old Faithful*, Thwaites' *Wainwright* and Langdale *Tup*.



The Kirkstone Pass Inn

The following day found us traversing the Kirkstone Pass en route to Glenrhydding, for a boat trip on Ullswater. We arrived at Glenrhydding in good time for the boat and had time to look round the gift shop. Having remembered that the "Ratty" sold bottles of 'Steamer Ale', I wondered if I might be able to obtain a bottle of 'Ratty Ale' here, and was successful this time.

After a relaxing and enjoyable cruise to Pooley Bridge, at the North end of Ullswater and then back to Glenrhydding, we set off back through Patterdale and stopped at the Brotherswater Inn in Hartsop for refreshment. This is a fairly nondescript pub but comfortable nonetheless. Real ales available were Barnegates *Tag Lag* (4.4%), Tirril *1823* plus Jennings *Bitter* and *Cumberland Ale*. Having re-crossed the Kirkstone Pass, we descended into Troutbeck, where we stopped at the Queens Head Hotel. This had caught our eye on the outward journey and we decided to give it a try. It turned out to be a superb hostelry, full of character and with a healthy selection of real ales on offer. Food was also available, so we ordered our drinks and settled down with a menu. The real ales available here were *Double Top*, *Bizzie Bee*, *Dissy Blonde* and *Unicorn*, all from Robinson's of Stockport, together with Hartley's *XB* and *Cumbrian Way*. One of the



The Queens Head Hotel,  
Troutbeck

most unusual features of this pub is the four-poster bed which has

been built into the bar!

That evening, we ventured into Ambleside and visited the White Lion Hotel, where we found Coach House *Cheshire Gold*, Black Sheep *Golden Sheep*, Davenport's *Heatwave* and Greene King *IPA*, all on handpull.

Our week in the Lake District was almost at an end and, on our final evening, we reflected on a really enjoyable break in the comfort of the Watermill Inn at Ings. Had we found heaven on earth? Well, with stunning scenery, superb pubs, good beer and locally-produced food plus a wide selection of leisure pursuits, I reckon we came close.



Nightcap anyone??

## Riots affect Birmingham Pubs

It was reported that there was rioting in Aston near the Bartons Arms pub, an historic and CAMRA-recognised building. The pub had had 6 large windows smashed, none of the ornate frosted glass or the ornate glass interior was damaged though a small part of the bar was damaged by fire but thankfully it didn't spread far. The staff called the police and the rioting was quickly quelled so media reports that it was burned out and ransacked were greatly overstated. Because of these reports, business had dropped off somewhat but in actual fact the pub was only closed for two days and the Bartons Arms is open for business as usual. A recent visit showed plenty of diners enjoying the pub's Thai food and Oakham ales.



The ornate stained glass interior window at the Bartons Arms



The Lamp Tavern

Similarly, a report reached us of a disturbance at much the same time at the Lamp Tavern in the centre of Birmingham, with a small mob bursting into the pub, pushing the landlord over and stealing takings and a charity box.

We wish both pubs a speedy return to normal and hope that this recent bad experience does not put them off running their wonderful establishments.

## Attention keen cyclists!!

Hockley Heath drinkers' bicycle club cycle on Sunday evenings and stop at various pubs on the way.

Recently they went to the Boot at Lapworth, where they have 3 real ales on: London Pride, Speckled Hen and St Austell's Tribute. The beer is always well presented by the friendly staff and food is to die for, or so say the Club.

For more information about the bicycle club and details of forthcoming rides, email Perry Clarke on [perryclarke1@aol.com](mailto:perryclarke1@aol.com).



**For complaints about short measures or other beer-related problems, contact Solihull Trading Standards on 0121 704 6844**



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For concessionary rates please visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://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 .....

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Applications will be processed within 21 days



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# J.D. Wetherspoon

The White Swan and The Assembly Rooms each offer two regular ales and a good selection of guest ales from both regional and UK breweries. Both pubs are pleased to announce consistent 'Cask Marque' and 'Best Bar None' accreditations and last year both received a 4-star accreditation from the Scores on the Doors, Food Hygiene Standards.

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

**Phone:** 0121 711 5180

**Opening times:**

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Offering 5 guest ales daily.

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**New entry in the 2011 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 5 real ciders on hand-pull. Live sporting events screened weekly; DJ's and dancing Thurs-Saturday; and all-new Sunday Quiz Night coming soon.

Having a party? Our upstairs bar with seating for 70 is available to hire and can include music arrangements: as well as food and drink, tailored to your needs: please ask for details.



Both pubs: JWD Autumn Beer Festival: 5th to 23rd October—featuring many choices of real ale and cider

Battle of the Brewers Night at both pubs in November (date tbc: please contact Dawn@The White Swan and Keir@The Assembly Rooms)

Christmas Bookings now being taken—ring for details of menus and prices.

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