

Solihull Drinker

Issue No 73
Autumn 2015



Free
Please take one

17th Solihull Beer Festival

Thursday 1st, Friday 2nd & Saturday 3rd October 2015



Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club
Station Road, Knowle B93 8ET

Member's Preview: Thurs: 6pm—11pm
(CAMRA & KDCC members only)

Public Sessions: Friday & Saturday: 12 noon—11pm

Entry £10.00 including programme, refundable glass
& beer tokens (includes discounts for card-carrying
CAMRA and K&DCC members)



55 Beers & 8 Ciders

The more things change... the more they stay the same... the first weekend of October again sees the Solihull Beer Festival being held – but this year, the 17th annual festival brings big changes. We're aiming to make the festival bigger and better, and that meant a change in venue. For 2015, the festival will be held in a marquee in the grounds of the Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club; we will have more beers than ever before, and there will be an additional session.

On Thursday 1st October it will be 'Members Preview Night' from 6 pm to 11 pm – entry will be limited to CAMRA members and members of the Cricket Club. On Friday and Saturday, 2nd and 3rd October, the festival will be open as normal, from noon to 11 pm each day.

In the previous issue of the Drinker magazine, you may have seen that the festival was going to be held at the Assembly Rooms, in Solihull—that was indeed the plan, until we learned that JD Wetherspoon has put the pub up for sale. For a week or two it looked like we might have to cancel the festival altogether, but the Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club has stepped up to the crease (pun intended) and they are as happy to be playing host as we are to be visiting them. Just half a mile from Dorridge railway station, the move means that there will be more space than in previous years. The club bar will be open during the festival selling wine, spirits and soft drinks, and festival visitors will be welcome to use the club facilities.

Continued on Page 8

THE BULL'S HEAD



Barston Lane, Barston

Tel: 01675 442830

**Opening hours: Mon—Thurs: 11am—2.30pm & 5.00pm—11pm
Friday, Saturday and Sunday: 11.00am—11.00pm.**

***Brad, Joy & the team welcome you to their award-winning
15th century village inn***

**Listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide for over 20 years
and previous Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year**

Cask Marque accredited—3 real ales on at all times

**Home-cooked meals available lunchtimes and evenings Mondays to
Saturdays in the comfortable pub bars or separate intimate restaurant
(Sundays: Lunch only: available from 12 noon to 3pm)**

TELEPHONE RESERVATIONS WELCOME

"Autumn, season of mists and mellow fruitfulness..." - so mused John Keats. It is not known whether he was penning this poem in a welcoming hostelry such as the Bulls Head, with a foaming pint of ale in front of him, but he could have been. Here's to Poetry!!



www.TheBullsHeadBarston.co.uk

2015 Club of the Year: The Lady Lane Wharf

The Lady Lane Wharf appeared in these pages last year when it won our Most Improved Pub or Club accolade. Now the club is the worthy winner of this year's Club of the Year award following a vote last month, at which it beat the other contenders in a very close finish.

The occasion was marked with a presentation on 19th August, when several branch members gathered at the club together with local customers to congratulate Grant, Lyn and their team on their win.

Since taking over management of the Lady Lane Wharf in early 2013, Grant and Lyn have strived to put it

on the Earlswood map, making it family-friendly and an asset to the local community, with regular themed events, an annual beer festival, and a never-ending array of excellently-kept real ales, thanks to cellarman Neil Ford. The number of hand-pumps was increased from 4 to 6 and the weekly line-up frequently includes beers not usually seen in the Solihull area, while a revamp of the menu has the kitchen staff serving up great value pub food.

Solihull CAMRA wishes the Lady Lane Wharf all the best for the coming year and beyond.



Branch chair Carl Wright together with the Lady Lane Wharf team



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Hail to the Ale!

Local Beer, Pub, Club & Brewery news

The Railway Inn, Dorridge

The Railway continues its centenary celebrations with a special brew, 'Watson's Centenary Ale', a 4% Deep Gold Ale brewed by Marstons, which will be available throughout October. There are also more food and drink offers—see their advert on page 11 for more details.

The Pup & Duckling, Hatchford Brook

Solihull can expect a new Micropub to open towards the end of October - the Pup and Duckling, owned and run by local Jeff Berry, will be offering discerning beer-drinkers a choice of real ales from the premises on Hatchford Brook Road, off Old Lode Lane. Easily accessible by public transport, the pub will focus on real ales from local breweries, plus a selection of wines and real ciders. Those who hate busy, noisy pubs will love this one: with seating for a maximum of 40, it's never going to get over-crowded; and with no TV, slot machines or music a peaceful visit is guaranteed. See the pub's website www.pupandduckling.co.uk for further details. You can also find it on Facebook.

Hillfield Farm, Monkspath

The Hillfield Farm is a new purpose-built pub off the A34 on Cranbrook Way, opposite the David Lloyd gym and Porsche garage. The pub, opened on 3rd August by the Farmhouse Inns chain, is a family restaurant catering for families and office work-



HILLFIELD FARM

ers, and featuring an indoor children's play area, homemade cakes, an ice-cream counter and a carvery, plus up to four hand pumps.

The Olton Tavern, Olton

The Olton Tavern closed for a major refurbishment on 16th August and will reopen on Saturday 26th September, changing in the process to an Ember Inn. There is further information plus a competition to win a £20 Ember Inn gift card on their new FB page: www.facebook.com/emberoltontavern

Bulls Head, Earlswood

Beers from 12 breweries within 12 miles of the Bulls Head were available at the pub over the Bank Holiday weekend at the end of August.

The Assembly Rooms, Solihull

JD Wetherspoon has put the Assembly Rooms up for sale along with another 19 of its UK pubs. It is thought that the high cost of running a town/city-centre pub when there is already another JWD pub nearby has prompted the decision.

The Oktagon, Knowle

The Oktagon is another new pub that has recently opened in Knowle, located in a little alleyway next to the Knowle Auction Rooms on Station Road. It is a Scandinavian bar and doesn't have real ale, but does have about 9 or 10 craft keg beers on draught at a time from craft breweries such as Stones, Camden and Brewdog; plus a great range of bottled beers. Be warned though: it's not cheap at circa £5.00 a pint!

The Blue Bell Cider House, Warrings Green

The Blue Bell Cider House continues to feature beers from the its own brewery, the Blue Bell Brewhouse. In recent weeks this has included 'Pinkshinyultrablast', an unusual beer infused with strawberries, and an elderflower-infused ale using blossoms picked at the farm across the road from the brewery. The pub

held its 2nd annual beer and cider festival over August Bank Holiday



weekend, with several Brewhouse beers and other LocAles.

Wharf Tavern, Hockley Heath

Former landlord Sam Buckingham has left the Wharf and gone to run a pub in Bedfordshire. Temporary manager Stacey Celik is looking after things until new managers are appointed.

The Fieldhouse, Monkspath

The Fieldhouse held a very successful 'Meet the Brewer' night towards the end of August, where visitors had a chance to try a range of Timothy Taylor beers and talk to a representative from the brewery. Another TT 'Meet the Brewer' night is planned for November.

Nick, Gwen & staff welcome you to

The Vaults

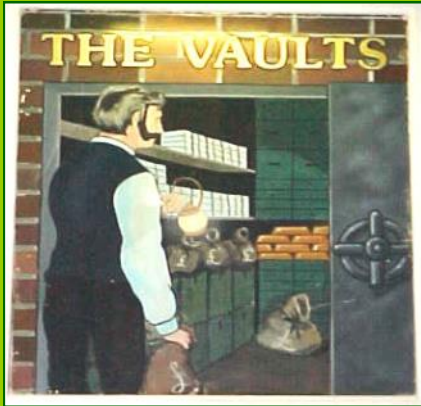
St John's Close, Knowle

01564 773656

- *the Real Ale venue in Knowle*

Previous Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year award winner

Continuously listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide since 1993



6 hand-pumped beers including Tetley Gold, Sharp's Doom Bar, Adnams Lighthouse and St Austell Tribute + 2 ever-changing guests, and currently: Rattler's Cornish Cyder.

Opening hours:

Mon—Thurs 12.00-2.30pm and 5.00-11.30pm;

Fri & Sat: 12.00-11.30pm

Sun 12.00-11.00pm.

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

Food available lunchtimes from Mon - Sat, 12.00-2.00pm

Cocktail nights from 6.30pm Fridays & Saturdays



Dates For Your Diary

Branch Meetings

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

Monday 12th October	Red Lion, Shirley
Monday 2nd November	Nag's Head, Henley-in-Arden
Monday 7th December	Black Boy, Heronfield

Committee Meetings

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

Monday 19th October	Hobs Meadow, Hobs Moat
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Socials

Saturday 12th September	Trip to Lancaster's City of Ales Festival
Fri 2nd—Sat 3rd October	17th Solihull Beer Festival, Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club, Station Road, Knowle
Fri 19th—Sun 22nd Nov	Weekend away in Bath & N. Somerset visiting various pubs and breweries

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

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

Midlands Area Beer Festivals

Thurs 10th—Sat 12th September: **8th Hinckley Beer Festival**, Atkins Building, Lower Bond St, Hinckley, Leics. 70+ real ales, many from local breweries, plus ciders/perries/fruit wines. Open 12 noon—11pm each day. Entry £3, CAMRA members free at all times. Entertainment Fri eve. Info. at: www.hinckleyandbosworthcamra.org.uk

Fri. 11th—Sun 13th September: **Silhillians Beer Festival**, Silhillians Sports Club, Warwick Road, Copt Heath. Up to 15 real ales, Open Fri. 7pm—12 midnight; Sat 12 noon—12 midnight; Sun 12 noon—9pm. Free entry. Food available.

Fri 18th—Sat 19th September: **Rugby CAMRA 32nd Beer & Cider Festival**, Thornfield Bowling Club, Bruce Williams Way, Rugby. 50+ real ales plus ciders/perries/foreign beer bar. Open Fri 2—11pm; Sat 11am—11pm Entry £2.50 all sessions (£1 to card-carrying CAMRA members). Rugby World Cup theme. More details at

www.rugbybeerfestival.com

Thurs 24th—Sat 26th September: **2nd Cannock Chase CAMRA Beer Festival**, Prince of Wales Theatre, Church St, Cannock. 70 beers, 25 ciders/perries. Open Thurs. 5-11pm; Fri & Sat 12 noon—11pm. £10 entry package (CAMRA discounts), VIP package available. Entertainment Fri & Sat. See: www.cannockchase.camra.org.uk

[Thurs 1st—Sat 3rd October:](#)
17th Solihull Beer Festival
—see feature on front page.

Wed 28th—Sat 31st October: **2015 Birmingham Beer & Cider Festival**, New Bingley Hall, 1 Hockley Circus, Birmingham. 300 beers and 100 ciders. Open Wed. 6—10pm (Trade & CAMRA members only); Thurs, Fri. & Sat. 11am—10.30pm. Entry: Wed Free (restricted: as above); Thurs, Fri. & Sat: £5.00. (3-day pass also available for £12.). More details available at: www.birminghambeerfestival.org.uk

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



Bars **Six real ales on at all times**

(currently St Austell Proper Job, Castle Rock Harvest Pale, Sharps Doom Bar, Wye Valley HPA, Brew XI & Hobson's Best)

Restaurant A la Carte menu; Sunday roasts from £9.50

Accommodation All en-suite; 2 miles from the NEC, Birmingham airport and Birmingham International station

A proper pub with a bit of je ne sais quoi!

Continued from front page

We are delighted to announce that Silhill Brewery will be our main sponsor: head brewer Mark Gregory has been a keen supporter of our festival and jumped at the chance of sponsoring us. We will have all 3 of his regular beers, Gold Star, Blonde Star and North Star, available, plus a festival special. As well as those, with more space in the marquee we're intending to



have another **50** beers on offer, plus around eight ciders.

We will be using the usual beer token system: the admission charge of £10 includes your entry fee, festival glass and programme and £5.50 of beer tokens (£6.50 of tokens for CAMRA and K & D Cricket Club members). Top-up tokens are available in the main hall; unused tokens can be refunded or donated to this year's chosen good cause, Dorridge Explorer group. If you don't want to keep your festival glass, you can return it for a £2.50 refund. Even better: attend on Friday, come back on Saturday with your Friday entry slip and we will only charge £6 for entry (incl. glass and £3.50 in tokens).

The marquee is large enough for us to operate a single long bar, which should help cut down on crowding to order drinks. The extra session on Thursday evening will offer CAMRA and Cricket Club members the opportunity to avoid the traditional Friday evening rush and enjoy beer in a quieter session. As we did in 2014, the festival will be opening at noon on Friday, with the aim of spreading the Friday rush

over more of the day. The free beer offer last year proved popular so once again everyone who comes along on Saturday afternoon before 3 pm will receive vouchers for two free half-pints of beer. Yes, that includes everyone with free entry because they were there on Friday – how generous is that?

Saturday afternoon will see the return of our popular Home Brew competition, where enthusiastic amateurs take centre stage. Once again The Shed Brewery is sponsoring and head brewer, Perry Clarke, a past winner of the competition before he went commercial, is competing on the day. If you have a brew that you want to enter, contact the competition organiser, Max Lanham at solihull-homebrew@gmail.com.



Timings aren't yet known but hot food will be available during all sessions and we hope there will be sandwiches and rolls available throughout. Finally, many thanks to those without whom there would be no festival – the Festival Committee, all our hard-working volunteer staff, our beer suppliers, advertisers, Silhill Brewery, The Shed Brewery, and the Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club for hosting us. An even greater range of real ales and ciders, good company, even free beer – what more could you ask for? We look forward to seeing you there- bring your friends along.

Martin Buck
Festival Organiser

*For directions to the Beer Festival
and a map, please see Page 18*



KNOWLE
& DORRIDGE
CRICKET CLUB
ESTABLISHED 1896



Tel: 01564
774338

info@knowleand
dorridgecc.co.uk

Knowle & Dorrige Cricket Club offers a warm & comfortable environment in which to enjoy your favourite ales. 3 guest beers on every week with varieties changing all the time - we have members' favourites Salopian, Oakham and St Austell on a regular basis and the bar manager is always open to suggestions for new ales.



The bar is open every day, featuring Sky TV with key sporting events such as Six Nations Rugby, Premiership Football and, naturally, Cricket being shown. Of course in the summer months you can just relax with your favourite ale while watching Birmingham Premier League Cricket with many past and present county players on view.

While the club is a private members club, and is popular on match days, there is no charge for admission and guests who are CAMRA members are welcome at any time on production of a CAMRA membership card. Social membership to the club is also available which comes with discount entitlement at the bar to make your favourite beers even better value.

Station Road
Dorrige
B93 8ET



Opening Hours:

Mon-Thurs 5.30pm - 10.30pm
Fridays: 5.30pm - 11.00pm
Saturdays 12.00noon - 11.00pm
Sundays 12.00 noon - 10.30pm

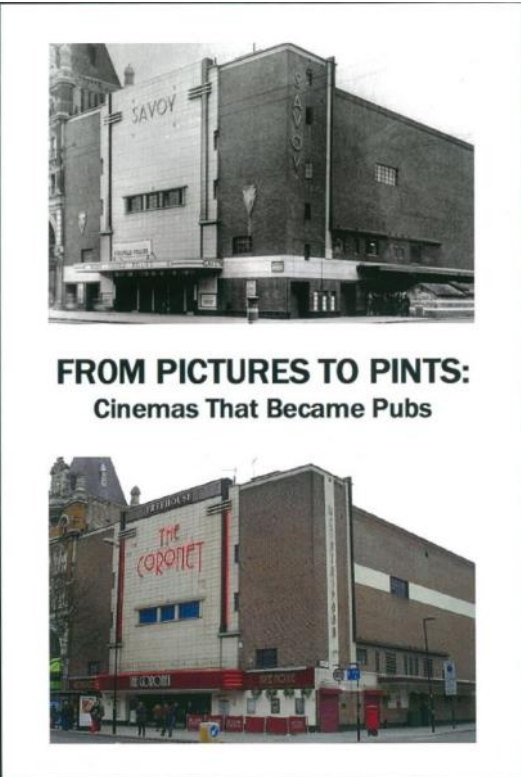
K & D CC Membership enquiries should be made to fellow CAMRA member Jon Knibb at jknibb@virginmedia.com

From Pictures To Pints: Cinemas that Became Pubs

An interesting new magazine-style publication by Gavin McGrath has just hit the market: Gavin has researched pubs around the country that were once old cinemas and now enjoy a new lease of life as hosterlies.

Each entry details the history of the cinema, including when it was built, opening and final films and when it closed, as well as its conversation to use as a public house, and most have an accompanying photo of its current incarnation.

The cinemas, many of which date back to the film heyday of the Thirties, range from the mundane to the wonderfully elaborate, and many of the original features can still be seen.



FROM PICTURES TO PINTS:
Cinemas That Became Pubs

Here is a sample entry, featuring the Savoy cinema on Holloway Road in London, pictured opposite on the front cover of the publication:

“The Savoy cinema on Holloway Road opened on 5 February 1940 and was designed by ABCs in-house architect William R. Glen with seats for 1826 patrons. Renamed the ABC in 1962, as with most of the circuit’s cinemas, it was leased to the Coronet circuit from 1979 until 22 June 1983 when the cinema closed. The last films to play here were *Blade Runner* and *Body Heat* in what was a still undivided auditorium.

The building became a snooker hall for a while but it wasn’t long before it was converted to a pub called **The Coronet**, using up the entire lower floor. The pub opened on 14 March 1996 and, with its distinctive cream faience, still commands a huge presence on the main road. Part of the side of the building at the screen end has been opened up to allow more light into the building. It is featured in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide.”

If you wish to purchase a copy, you can contact Gavin using [pics to pints@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pics_to_pints@yahoo.co.uk) or by writing to Flat E, 4 Meadow Close, London E9 5NZ. The publication costs £4.40 including postage.

Editor’s Note:

A fascinating read, especially if you are a fan of Thirties’ cinemas.

Nice to see buildings being converted to pubs for a change, instead of, as happens all too often nowadays, the other way around.



Home-cooked food daily—service times:

Monday 12-2.00pm and 5.30-8.00pm

Tuesday-Thursday 12-2.00pm and 5.30-9.00pm

Friday-Saturday 12-2.00pm and 5.30-9.30pm

Sunday 12-9.00pm



6 Real Ales on hand pump: 3 regulars
+ 3 ever-changing guests

THE RAILWAY INN

GRANGE ROAD, DORRIDGE

Tel. 01564 773531

Opening Hours:

Mon—Fri: 11.00—3.00pm 4.30—11.00pm

Saturday: 11.00—11.00pm

Sunday: 12 noon—10.30pm

www.railwaydorridge.com

*The 2015 Centenary Celebrations continue
and so do the monthly special offers!*

September - Pie Month, choice of home-made pies all £5.75

October - Magnificent 7 - buy six pints of Real Ale and get the seventh **Free**

November - All Game dishes 25% off

December - Mulled wine and Mince pie £5.00

** Christmas Menu available 1st-
22nd December - bookings now
being taken **



CAMRA calls time on unfair half pint

CAMRA has launched a new campaign to end the 'unjustified practice' of pubs charging more for the proportional cost of a half pint.

A motion at April's AGM raised the issue and received strong support from members, who commented that they bought half pints in order to drink responsibly, or to try higher strength beers in smaller quantities, but that charging substantially more, proportionately, in effect penalised drinkers.

In a recent survey, 34% of drinkers said they would rather drink their favourite tittle from a half pint glass; and a half pint is the most popular way to try a new beer.

There are reports of half pints costing up to 50p more than the proportional cost of a pint. Whilst it is appreciated that the cost to licensees of serving a half pint is not necessarily half that of serving a pint, CAMRA believes that a difference of a few pence may be justified, but not prices at this level.

CAMRA also called on licensees to clearly display prices, especially if the cost of a half pint were more than half the cost of a pint.

CAMRA's National Executive is now consulting on the best way to take the campaign forward, with branches and members being called on to highlight the worst examples of the practice.

Solihull CAMRA Club of the Year 2015

LADY LANE WHARF

Lady Lane • Earlswood • Solihull • B94 6AH



open:
monday — saturday:
11.00am — 11.00pm
sunday: 11.00pm — 10.30pm

Lady Lane, Earlswood
Solihull B94 6AH
t: 01564 703 821/01564 702 552
e: granthyland@hotmail.co.uk
www.ladylanewharf.co.uk

- breakfast from 9.30am
 - hot and cold meals served all day
 - fresh, home cooked food to order
 - live entertainment every weekend
 - the finest cask ales - 1 regular and 3 guest
 - speciality ciders
- www.ladylanewharf.co.uk
Tel: 01564 702552

Come and try us. A friendly, relaxed atmosphere awaits you!

FOOD • REAL ALE • TRANQUILITY



Hands On at Silhill

An intrepid group (Bob Bell, Bob Jackson, Ian Hunter, Iain Wells and Steve Dyson) cycled or walked to Silhill Brewery on a sunny Saturday.



Mark Gregory with, in the mash tun (clockwise from top): Steve, Bob B, Iain, Ian and Bob J.

We landed in the middle of a charity ride to London stopover and expected a normal mash tun and liquor tour. Instead, our host, brewery owner Mark Gregory, treated us to a brewing master-class of temperatures, flow rates and careful control to ensure beer quality and taste. We were all pressed into the mash tun to empty the grains into sacks, which we were told would be delivered to a local children's charity farm: a nice way to use up waste matter. Having seen the process and care taken in brewing, we sam-

pled the main beers out of bottles which had a fizz to them that allowed the flavour to be enjoyed. Mark asked us to bear with him as he was new to bottling his beers but they were quite perfect!

Despite having an urgent order to deliver to the Warwick beer festival our host did not rush us, and we enjoyed one of the most interesting

brewery tours of recent times. I was able to offer a couple of brewery related jokes to be used on future tours. All in all an

excellent morning. We adjourned to the Boat for an inspection of the brewery

beer on tap. Before the peloton Bob, Bob and Ian took to the delightful country lanes to visit the White Lion in Hampton, which had some 6 excellent real ales on. I tried Proper Job and Hobsons—any more would not have been conducive to a safe ride home. The sun shone, the tour was great and the small group had a lovely day out. Why not join us next time? - bike not required!.....

Ian Hunter (aided and abetted by Bob, Bob, Iain and Steve)

Hook Norton & Charlbury Beer Festival Trip

Back at the end of June, a band of more than 20 Solihull CAMRA members headed off to Oxfordshire to taste the twin delights of Hook Norton Brewery and the annual Charlbury Beer Festival.

Hook Norton Brewery is a family-owned and run Victorian tower brewery nestled among the rolling hills in the village of the same name. Once there, we divided into two groups for our tour round the premises. You don't have to mind a few stairs if you do the tour: the brewery is 5 storeys high and the original steep cast-iron steps feature on every floor. Our guide led us on a route which mostly followed the order in which the beers are brewed, including the malt and hop store, the grist mill, the hoist, the mash tuns, the coppers, the original cooling tray on the top floor (now no longer in use) and the bottling and cask preparation areas.



The brewery's iconic steam engine

One of the most remarkable survivors of time at this iconic brewery is the 25hp steam engine that can still drive the machinery, just as it has done for the past hundred—plus years. Installed in 1899, it is believed to be the last steam engine in the country that can still be used for its original purpose, and is still run occasionally for show. In addition to the tower and the steam engine and its workings, the brewery has many interesting and unique features—for instance, it has its own yeast

culture and has been using the same strain of yeast for many years; the water travels 200 feet upwards from the wells in the ground beneath the brewery; and virtually all other ingredients are sourced in the UK.

After our tour and an inspection of the fascinating items in the brewery museum, we settled in the bar area of the visitor centre and a veritable plethora of Hook Norton ales came our way.



Above: Quaffing samples in the brewery's visitor centre bar area



One of the mash tuns

There were a dozen beers on tap on the bar, and generous amounts poured for us to slake our thirsts; but all too soon this pleasant interlude ended and it was time to head on to Charlbury.

Charlbury Beer Festival, now in its 18th year, funds a charity, Charlbury Overseas & Community Projects, plus money is raised for other local organisations—this year, the total was more than £28k. The festival is held in a large field adjoining the village cricket club, with a marquee containing the beers, and activities in smaller tents around the field, live music, food stalls, Morris dancers, and the fifth World Aunt Sally Singles Championship kept everyone amused. The weather on the day was sunny and clement, and the

Winner: Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year award 2015



THE FIELDHOUSE

10 Knightcote Drive,
Solihull B91 3JU
Tel: 0121 703 9209



www.emberinns.co.uk/the-fieldhouse-solihull



Opening Hours:

Mon—Sat: 11.30am —12 midnight
Sun: 11.30am —11.30pm

Hot & cold meals served Monday to Sunday all day till 10.00pm

Special Offer:
Card-carrying CAMRA members get a 20% discount on food during September & October.

Music @9pm
Sat 19 Sept
Soul Matters
Sat 26 Sept:
Old Rascals
(Ska & 2-tone)

5 Real Ales on at all times including 3 regularly changing guests. All Cask Ales are £2.49 a pint on Mondays CAMRA members receive a 20p discount off the price of any pint of Cask Ale on other nights.

40 beers in the marquee offered plenty of choice, ABV's ranging from an easy-drinking 3.5% to a fearsome 7.1%, with all styles to suit all tastes.

In celebration of the sealing of the Magna Carta 800 years ago, the beers were sourced from along the length of the Thames including Runnymede. As I favour golden, hoppy beers, among those I tried during our 6 hour stay the ones that stood out were Blue Monkey's Ape Ale (5.4%), a pale, refreshing IPA with mixed citrus hints; Charnwood's American Pale Ale (4.8%), fruity and very hoppy with 4 American hops; Hopback summer Lightning (5.0%) - an old favourite but none the less welcome for that, being a bitter, hoppy straw-coloured ale great for supping on a hot summer's day; and Revolution's Go Go American Pale



Left: the beer marquee; below: the Aunt Sally competition



(4.5%), another pale ale with three hops and a citrus finish.

It would have been pleasant to linger but at 7pm our coach was waiting—and the beer had just sold out. All in all, a great day—many thanks to Paul Wigley for organising such an enjoyable social event.

Carl Wright

Hook Norton Brewery: www.hooky.co.uk

See more about Charlbury beer festival at www.charlburybeerfestival.org

ADRIAN AND THE COMMITTEE WARMLY WELCOME YOU TO

The Rowington Club



Featured in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide

**Rowington Green, Rowington, Warwickshire CV35 7DB
Telephone: 01564 782087**

Three regularly changing real ales always on

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

**Full membership: £20.00 p.a.
Single visits for guests: £1.00
(free to card-carrying
CAMRA members)**

Large car park

Games available: Snooker, Pool, Darts, Dominoes

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 4th October: *Marrow Sunday*, from 12.00 noon, 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 Tombola, competitions, stalls and wacky games including welly-whanging.

**Bands on most weekends. Venue available for hire.
Please ring Adrian at the Club for further information.**

28-30 Station Parade

Solihull B92 3SB

Tel: 0121 711 3630

www.fluteandflagonsolihull.co.uk



The Flute & Flagon



10% off food & drink for card-carrying CAMRA members *

(*not valid in conjunction with any other offer)

Opening Hours

08.00—23.00 Sun—Wed

08.00—24.00 Thurs

08.00—01.00 Fri—Sat

6 hand pumps with 5 Real Ales & a Traditional Cider + 4 Craft Beers

Selected Sky Sports showings

Solihull

THE FLUTE & FLAGON

....serving up delicious food, great drinks, & unforgettable experiences

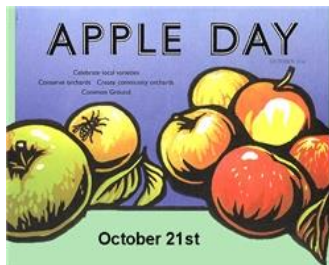
CAMRA Campaign News

The Chancellor announced in July that the Government will retain the current duty exemption for small cider producers. Thanks to the support of members, CAMRA were able to hand in a petition with over 26,000 signatures urging the Government to back small cider producers, which resulted in the Government responding in its Budget.

This is excellent news for real cider drinkers and small producers alike. CAMRA is delighted with the Government's commitment and will now be working hard to ensure that they can keep the promise with a legal exemption in the EU Directive.

CAMRA's Cider and Perry Promotion Month takes place in October, and it is hoped that more pubs than ev-

er will feature real ciders and perry to help celebrate this win and the Government's support for small cider producers.



Apple Day, which was launched back in 1990 by Common Ground, is the time when cider producers are pressing their apples and perry producers (their pears) is an excellent time for a trip to see how real cider and perry are made. See www.commonground.org.uk for more information about cider and perry production and Apple Day.

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Mondays—Sundays
12 noon—12 midnight
Food Service:
12 noon—9.00pm

Continued from Page 8

Directions to the Solihull Beer Festival

Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club,
Station Road, Knowle, Solihull B93 8ET

Buses

From Birmingham, Olton, Acocks Green & Tyseley: Bus 37 to Solihull, then change to buses S2/S3 (S3 stops near Club; on bus S2, get off at Mill Lane)

From Solihull & Widney Manor - Buses S2/S3 (as above)

(NB. Return journeys: S2 only, from Mill Lane)

From/to Lapworth, Hatton, Warwick and Leamington Spa - No public transport alternative to rail available.

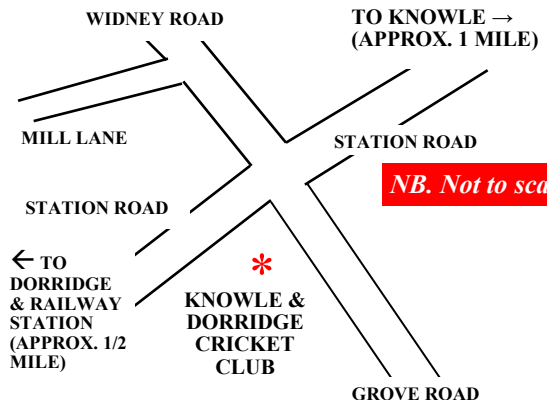
From/to Stratford-upon-Avon - Bus X20 to Hockley Heath, then change to bus S3

There may be service restrictions on some buses—for further information on West Midlands bus routes and timetables, please see

<http://www.networkwestmidlands.com/bus/busindex.aspx>

Rail

Direct services to Dorridge Station from: Banbury/Leamington Spa/Warwick/W. Parkway/Hatton/Stratford-upon-Avon &



Lapworth

Worcester/Kidderminster/Stourbridge/Birmingham Snow Hill & Moor St/Acocks Green/Olton/Solihull & Widney Manor

From/to rail stations not listed above, you may need to change at Birmingham Snow Hill, Moor Street or another station; and some services may be limited and may finish early. More information at: <http://www.networkwestmidlands.com/train/times2.aspx>

For more West Midlands rail timetables, please see <http://www.londonmidland.com/your-journey/timetables/>

NB. The above is only a guide and may be subject to change at short notice. You are strongly advised to check your own travel route and requirements before travelling.

Shed News

After receiving an award for best beer at the Redditch Winter Ale Festival with Spotted Cock, presented at the Bromsgrove Summer Festival, the Shed microbrewery has gone from strength to strength. Bottled beers are selling out within 30 minutes of going on sale and they have barrels on at the Lady Lane Wharf and the Bulls Head, Earlswood, and at the Wharf, Hockley Heath.

Expect barrels of Shed beers to feature at Solihull CAMRA's 17th beer festival on 1st—3rd October, (where



The Shed is again sponsoring the Homebrew Competition - Perry having won the first one as an amateur brewer back in 2010) and at Nottingham CAMRA beer festival, 7th—10th October.

Left: Perry Clarke receiving the Shed's award from Richard Wood of Redditch & Bromsgrove CAMRA

Call 07910 004041 to buy Shed bottle-conditioned beer direct from the microbrewery in Hockley Heath.

Casks also available (as no finings are used, please allow 5 weeks for orders to be fulfilled to permit natural settlement).

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Just a Reminder

In the last issue of the Drinker, branch members were informed that to encourage greater participation at our branch meetings, eligibility to vote at meetings on our branch's entries in the Good Beer Guide, and for Pub of the Year, Club of the Year and Most Improved Pub/Club of the Year, was to change.

Commencing with next year's GBG entries vote in February 2016, members will be eligible to vote if they have attended at least THREE meetings in the 12 months before the vote. (This requirement does not extend to nominating or seconding entries. Exemption from this rule will be at the Chairman's discretion. Meetings do not have to be consecutive to count towards the minimum of 3.)

If anyone has any queries on this matter, please contact Carl Wright, Chairman.

Gloucs & Warks Real Ale Weekend

I can think of no better way to spend a summer's afternoon than on a steam train enjoying real ale. So a Saturday in early August found my friends Dave, Brian and I on the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire's line supping beer. The line runs from Cheltenham to Toddington with restoration in hand up to Broadway. We made for Toddington, although the line has been restored to Lavington Holt which at present has no facilities. There was plenty of free parking at Toddington and on payment of £15 we could ride the train all day and gain access to the beer festival. As usual there was a refundable glass charge and vouchers for the beer which cost £10 with extra vouchers for CAMRA members.

A small selection of some 10 beers were served at Toddington Station with a wider selection at Winchcombe Station. We had a few at Toddington before boarding the train to Cheltenham, where we stayed on the train back to Winchcombe where some 20+ were available. There was a very good selection of beer styles with the promise of some real crackers. However, there was a very real problem with the beer, as there was no effective cooling system—towels had been draped over the barrels which did not appear to have had seen water on them for a considerable time. This resulted in warm and tired beers lacking conditioning; such a shame for what promised to be a great day. On our way home we dropped into Broadway to find the old station being actively restored with platforms in situ and work is near complete on a new signal box. Let's hope that in the future they will be able to restore the line all the way to Stratford.

Steve
Dyson



*Dave
and Bri
supping
beer on
the train*

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Opening hours:

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



A Weekday Crawl round Wollaston and Stourbridge

Martin Buck led an experimental weekday crawl on Thursday 13th August, following his successful weekend social. The group: Martin, John Tilley, Andrew Towers, Bob Bell, Steve Dyson and myself, commenced at *The Foresters Arms*, Wollaston where there was a choice of 5 hand pulled beers.



The group at the first pub, The Foresters Arms

A gentle amble down the road brought us to *The Plough Inn* for an excellent lunch washed down with a choice of 7 ales including their own Wollaston Wobbler, brewed by Castle Rock.

A short saunter brought us to the first of two Batham's pubs, *The*



The bar at The Plough Inn, Wollaston

Unicorn, an old fashioned house that eschews music enabling the party to engage in a discussion on the relative merits of bitter and mild. Our next port of call was *Graham's Place* where the party slumped into sofas after the arduous journey downhill for a choice of 6 ales.

Enjoying Bathams at the Royal Exchange



A visit to Lang's the Butchers to stock up on sustenance ensured that by the time we dropped into Batham's *Royal Exchange* we were suitably thirsty for more of their distinctive Black Country beer. The visit concluded at the *Duke William* in Stourbridge town centre, where the activation of a smoke alarm didn't interfere with our enjoyment of 8 hand pulled beers.

The smoke alarm goes off at the Duke William



Here's to the next weekday crawl!

Iain Wells

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Choice which cannot be bettered

Membership Matters

Since it was started over 40 years ago, the membership of CAMRA has, and continues to, grow both nationally and locally, and at present there are more than 172,000 members, of which over 540 live within the Solihull & District CAMRA branch boundary.

Having just visited the Great British Beer Festival at Olympia in London where there was over 900 beers on offer in many different styles, I can't help but wonder at the amazing choice now available to real ale drinkers since the bad old days of Watneys Red Barrel is amazing. Some people might say there is too much choice nowadays, but I would rather have a choice than none at all. CAMRA supports many of the breweries offering us these beers in various ways via membership fees.

I would like every member of Solihull & District CAMRA branch to be more active within our branch; although I do understand the pressure of work and family, it would be nice to see some new faces now and again whether it be at one of our branch meetings or at a social event.

Branch meetings are held on the first Monday of every month at local pub where a certain amount of branch

business takes place, but we do try to make them as friendly as possible, and we always makes sure we enjoy a pint or two of real ale at the same time. If you don't fancy coming to a meeting try venturing on one of our social events: these are less formal and allow people to get to know each other more easily. A full list of the next quarter's dates for meetings & social events is listed on page 6 of this magazine.

CAMRA membership starts from as little as £24 per year (that works out at about 46p per week), so how about joining over 540 other like minded individuals with a love of real ale residing in the Solihull area, by completing the membership form in this magazine or going to the CAMRA website www.camra.org.uk, where there is also a comprehensive list of other benefits that you receive by becoming a member.

And as a bonus, all new members will get within their branch welcome pack a voucher for a FREE PINT courtesy of Solihull & District CAMRA Branch, which is redeemable in conjunction with a valid membership card upon attendance at their first Branch meeting

Dave Mckowen
Membership Secretary



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Black Country Beer Festival

Lye has Sadlers Brewery Tap bar and the Windsor Castle so a visit to the Black Country Beer Festival at Lye Cricket Club sounded a good day out.

Dave and Brian Queenborough and I went to the beer festival first. Luckily for a Friday afternoon it was not too busy and we were able to get a table and chairs with ease. There were 74 beers on offer from all over the country. However, there was no active cooling of the beers and on a hot August day the beers were already starting to flag.



They must have been flat and warm by Saturday. I tried over 20 beers all which had they been in condition would have been superb.

We moved on to the Windsor Castle to sample some of Sadlers beers. There were about 8 on handpump at the bar, although our short visit saw us only have one or two. We then went on to Sadlers Tap and Brewhouse by the railway station where we had a couple more before catching the train home to Solihull.

In short: it was a worthwhile trip; but don't expect the best beer quality at the festival under the circumstances!

Steve Dyson



Right: The Windsor Castle, Lye, owned by Sadlers Brewery

CHAMPION Beer Of Britain Results

The 2015 Champion Beers of Britain, as announced at the Great British Beer Festival last month, are:

Mild

Gold	Williams Brothers: Black
Silver	Rudgate: Ruby Mild
Bronze	Great Orme: Welsh Black

Best Bitter

Gold	Tiny Rebel: Cwtch
Silver	Highland: Scapa Special
Joint Bronze	Barnegates: Tag Lag
	Salopian: Darwin's Origin

Speciality

Gold	Titanic: Plum Porter
Joint Silver	Kissingate: Black Cherry Mild
	Saltaire: Triple Chocolate
Bronze	Great Orme: Welsh Black

Bitter

Gold	Pheasantry: Best Bitter
Silver	Acorn: Barnsley Bitter
Joint Bronze	Purple Moose: Madog's Ale
	Great Orme: Welsh Black

Golden

Gold	Kelburn: Jaguar
Silver	Adnams: Explorer
Bronze	Blue Monkey: Infinity

Strong Bitter

Gold	Dark Star:
Silver	Salopian: Golden Thread
Bronze	Grain: India Pale Ale

Champion Bottle-Conditioned Beer

Gold	Harveys: Imperial Extra Double Stout
Silver	Fyne Ales: Superior IPA
Bronze	Mordue: India Pale Ale

And finally, the overall winner and runners-up:

Supreme Champions

Gold	Tiny Rebel: Cwtch
Silver	Kelburn: Jaguar
Bronze	Dancing Dark: Dark Drake

Supreme Gold Tiny Rebel's Cwtch—('cuddle' in Welsh) is the brewery's modern version of a traditional bitter.

South Atlantic Booze Cruise

Part 2: Ultimate Ushuaia

For those who missed Part 1 of this article, John was on a 3-week trip to the Antarctic Peninsula on the M/V Ushuaia, on a 'Voyage to Remember' the 27 British scientists and other staff employed by the British Antarctic Survey who died in the course of their time 'South', never returning to the UK.

Ushuaia is the capital of Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. In the language of the native Yagan people it means "inner harbour to the west", and is the main port for cruise ships heading for Cape Horn or the Antarctic Peninsula, which is why most people visit this 'Fin del Mundo' town.



Above: Bar Ideal, Ushuaia, Argentina

Things seem to have improved beer-wise since my last stop there in 2000, when the only brew was the standard Argentinian 4.9% 'Quilmes' crystal lager. Now there are lots of pubs and lots of different beer styles, some on draught.

After eating at Moustacchio, one of the better town restaurants, we headed along Avenida San Martin to the oldest building in town, a yellow corrugated iron structure which has been a pub since 1951. Currently named Bar Ideal, it calls

itself an 'Irish Pub & Restaurant' but it has an international rather than a Gaelic feel and serves Beagle Beer produced locally by the Fuegian Beverage Company, which was set up in 1999 on the Av. Heroes de Malvinas (the Argentinians retain much stronger feelings for the Falklands than the majority of the UK). Their standard 'Rubia' Golden Ale (4.8%) is a good, medium-hoppy bitter but better was their 'Roja', a 6.1% malty red ale with hints of caramel.

If you're lucky you may be greeted by one or two of the 'penguin mascots' that pop into bars at night so that tourists can have their photo taken with them, surprisingly they don't always ask for money!

I can't remember most of the other bars we called in at but one served a delicious 8% red beer "La Burra" brewed at the other end of Argentina at Salta not far from the Bolivian border. On a spare day I hiked up to the snout of the Martial Glacier and was able to pick up a cheap 970ml bottle of "Iguana Summer" beer



Above: A tourist makes a new friend

from a roadside store. It was bland American lager style of (5.2%) strength but it served its purpose, keeping me refreshed in the heat.

On board ship it was mostly standard cans of lager that were available but there were a few of Quilmes 4.8% American Stout. I tried one and went back to the lager! After 3 weeks rolling around in the Southern Ocean, we docked back at Ushuaia and I took the local bus out west to the National Park, where there were lots of trails to follow and one or two refreshment stops.

At one I was able to try 4.5% 'Patagonia Amber' lager, which I thought had more flavour than the ubiquitous Quilmes, but the highlight of the day was a wheat beer called "Cape Horn" (5.0%). The Fuegian Beverage Co. claim this to be the

'World's Southernmost Beer' brewed with Andean glacier water (although all the town's drinking water comes from the local glacier!), malted barley from the Pampas and Patagonian hops, and it certainly made a refreshing change from lager. However, as beer is brewed intermittently by scientists on the research stations in Antarctica itself, the title is a little optimistic.

And so after three weeks at sea, several stops and a few bars, it was homeward bound. One place that sticks in my mind was the bar in the Ukrainian base 'Vernadsky', the largest bar in Antarctica, where ladies can pay for a tot of vodka by leaving their bra behind the bar—certainly a colourful place, as you can see from the photos.

John Edwards



The bar in the Ukrainian base 'Vernadsky'

The vodka 'fees' hanging up in the bar



The Solihull Drinker is the quarterly newsletter of the Solihull & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. 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, 4 Kendrick Close, Solihull B92 0QD; or via email to julia.hammonds@blueyonder.co.uk.

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

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On't Trans-Pennine Rail Ale Trail (Again)...

Or, at least, on the Yorkshire part of it. Back in time when evenings went dark early, I took a trip up North to meet up with some former colleagues from the railway industry. Our meeting point was the Station Bar, a Wetherspoon's outlet, located in the north concourse of Leeds station.

The Yorkshire contingent had already



Leeds Station pub The White Rose

arrived and were perusing the choice of ales available, which were Springhead Outlawed, Harviestoun Old Engine Oil, Hop Studio XS (Extra Special), Naylor's Pinnacle Porter, Greene King Abbot and IPA, Sharps Doom Bar, Theakston Old Peculier and Ilkley The Mayan.

Although tempted by the Harviestoun Old Engine Oil, I decided that a 6.0% ale was a bit too hefty for 10:30 in the morning and started instead with the Springhead Outlawed (3.8%), an enjoyable session bitter. The attendees from the Manchester area arrived but the London group plus a couple of guys from the South West had still to turn up so the more thirsty of the group ordered a second pint.

Whilst orders were being placed, however, a text message was received from the Londoners, stating that they were going straight to our next venue in Huddersfield, as they were on a later train than originally intended.

This caused some discussion as to which train we should now catch so I decided to make my initial pint last in case of a quick getaway.

The conversations went something like: "What time's the next train?"

"11:09".

"It's nearly that now, we'll never make it".

"Okay, we'll get the 11:23 then".

"Eh up, where's Nigel?"

"In the lager plant".

"Where? Oh, ha ha! I've never heard it called that before".....

Pints downed and errant members rounded up, we set off for the next stop, the Head of Steam on Huddersfield station. This was our lunch stop, where we found those from "down South" had already ordered their food.

The choice of ales here were Roosters Yankee, Anarchy Cascade, Little Valley Cragg Vale and Vanilla Porter, Small World Spikes Gold, Cameron's Strongarm, Holts IPA and Copper Dragon Golden Pippin. I decided to sample the Anarchy Cascade (4.1%), a light, hoppy American-style pale ale. It was in really good condition, too. Food was quickly provided and I opted this time to try the Little Valley Cragg Vale (4.2%), a full-flavoured malty, traditional bitter, again in very good nick.



The Head of Steam, Huddersfield

With lunch duly consumed and with such a good choice of ales to choose from, it was decided to delay our departure for the next port of call, so I stayed with the Little Valley beers and subsequently tried the Vanilla Porter (4.5%). This was a taste sensation! There was a strong hint of chocolate and vanilla, which gave a rather dry feel to this full-flavoured beer.

Then it was off to our final stop, the West Riding Refreshment Rooms on Dewsbury station. On handpump here were Black Sheep Best Bitter,



The West Riding Refreshment Rooms, Dewsbury Station

Thwaites Nutty Black, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Sky's Edge Hop Master and Stateside Pale, Ilkley Dunkel and Sunbeam Blinded by the Light. I opted for the latter (4.0%), a single hopped pale ale using Citra hops, making for a pleasantly refreshing beer with a citrusy, hoppy bite.

With darkness now falling, it was time to head for home, and faced with a choice of route via either Leeds or Manchester I bade farewell to the others and plumped for the Manchester to Birmingham option.

Chris Lloyd

GOOD BEER GUIDE 2016... AVAILABLE NOW!

The Campaign for Real Ale's (CAMRA) best-selling beer and pub guide is back for 2016. Fully updated with the input of CAMRA's 170,000 +plus members, the Guide is indispensable for beer and pub lovers young and old.

Buying the book directly from CAMRA helps us campaign to support and protect real ale, real cider & real perry, and pubs & pub-goers.

The new Guide will be published in **September 2015**, you can order a copy now (details below).

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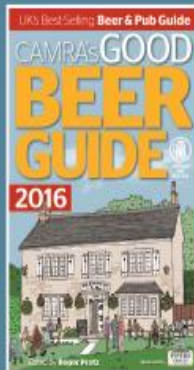
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Beers Around Here

Beers reported around Solihull over the last Quarter

Should you taste any great and/or unusual beers at local pubs or beer festivals, please send details for the next issue to editor@solihullcamra.org.uk

Black Boy, Heronfield: Ab-beydale's Wellesley, Brampton Brewery's Buddy's Best Beer.

Boat Inn, Catherine-de-Barnes: Silhill Gold Star.

Bulls Head, Earlswood: Shed Brewery's Spotted Dick, Thwaites' Wainwright.

Fieldhouse, Monkspath: Brains' Rev. James Gold; Brakspear Brewing Co.'s Bitter; Everard's Tiger; Fuller's London Pride; Glamorgan Brewing Co.'s My Darlin' Lemon-time; Greene King Abbot Ale & Speckled Hen; Hop Back's Summer Lightning; Marstons Pedigree New World Pale Ale; Marston's Pedigree; Purity Brewing Co.'s Pure Ubu; Ramsgate Brewer's Al Murray's Beautiful British Beer; Sharp's Doom Bar; St Austell's Tribute; Timothy Taylor's Boltmaker, Landlord & Ram Tam; Wadworth's 6X and Woodforde's Norfolk Hawker.

Flute & Flagon, Solihull TC: Adnam's Ghost Ship, Silhill Pure Star, Marston's Pedigree New World & Marston's Pedigree, Purity Brewing Co.'s UBU & Mad Goose, Ambridge Just Jane and Orchard Pig's The Hog Father Cider.

Forest Hotel, Dorridge: Down-ton Brewery's Get Carta.

Greswolde Arms, Knowle: Taylor Walker's 1730 Special Pale Ale, Westons Rosie's Pig Cloudy Cider.

Hillfield Farm, Monkspath (opened 3rd August): Greene King IPA & Abbot Ale; Two Towers' Jewellery Porter, Chamberlain Brewery's Pale Ale, Electric & Complete Muppetry.' Wye Valley Butty Bach.

Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club: Buntingford Brewery's Drop Gold; Jennings' Cocky Blonde.

Pump House, Shirley: Greene King Abbot Ale & IPA; Burton Bridge Brewery's Stairway to Heaven and Backyard Brewery's Summer.

Wharf Tavern, Hockley Heath: Adams Ghost Ship; Courage Directors; Purity Mad Goose; Black Sheep Bitter; Wharf Tavern Blonde by Backyard Brewhouse and Morland's Old Golden Hen.

White Lion, Hampton-in-Arden: Wye Valley HPA; Wychwood Hobgoblin Gold; St Austell Proper Job.

Solihull Drinker Issue No. 74

The 74th edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 7th December 2015.

Please note that the deadline for copy, advertising and any other contributions is Monday 16th November.

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Press & Publicity Paul Wigley	07402 312457
Pubs Campaigning/ Beer Festival (general enquiries) Martin Buck	01564 770708

St Giles Beer Festival

On Saturday 13th June, a beer festival was held at St. Giles Church in Sheldon. This was not a CAMRA festival but was organised locally to raise funds to be split between various local good causes and the upkeep of the church. After the success of last year's initial festival it was decided to repeat it this year.



Two views of the bar, seating area & kitchen at the St Giles Beer Festival.

There were nine beers on offer from Church End Brewery, plus two each from Sperrin, Burton Bridge and Slaughterhouse breweries, together with a small selection of ciders and perries. Food was available all day and, for those who did not relish sampling the ales, red and white wine plus soft drinks were also provided. I began with Sperrin brewery's *Head Hunter*, 3.8%, a triple hopped amber-coloured ale having hints of fruit with a dry, bitter but mellow finish, a very easy drinking bitter. Next I turned to Slaughterhouse brewery and their *Pacific Pale Ale* (4.2%), a superbly refreshing pale golden ale with a strong hint of citrus in the flavour, presumably from the use of hop varieties from the New World.

I then sampled Church End's *Blue Norther*, a pale, citrusy bitter named after an American weather system, with lots of hop aroma and flavour from the use of four types of American hops and a superb, refreshing beer for a hot summer's day. If a lager drinker looking for something with a bit of bite, you could do far worse than switch to this style of ale.

After a food break, I turned my attention to Burton Bridge's *Stairway to Heaven*, a strong, pale 5.0% bitter with a distinctive hoppy aroma. It is brewed with Fuggles and Goldings hops, with late copper hops added. A very easy drinking ale but beware of its strength! Then it was back to Sperrin and their *Band of Brothers* (4.2%). This is also an amazingly hoppy, full-flavoured golden ale with long lasting smooth, citrusy overtones. My next beer was



one of the Church End brews, *What The Fox's Hat*, a deep golden beer with a soft hop flavour and finish. Finally I sampled the *Grave Diggers Ale*, a dark, red/black mild with complex chocolate and roast flavours and a smooth finish. I was then persuaded to ask for tasters of some of the other Church End beers. The bar staff were most obliging and I tried *Fallen Angel*, *Stout Coffin* and *Vicar's Ruin*, all excellent. The *Fallen Angel* is a sharp, full flavoured pale bitter with a hoppy, lemony edge, the *Vicar's Ruin* is a straw coloured best bitter, hoppy with a delicate malt finish and *Stout Coffin* is black, chewy and creamy, just what a stout should be.

In summary: not a large festival but very well organised and showcasing a number of different beers from local breweries. My enquiries about future festivals brought the response that it is hoped to make this an annual occurrence. Brethren and sisters, let us pray...

Chris Lloyd