

Solihull

Issue No 78
Winter 2016



Drinker

Free
Please take one

The Colebrook, Hasluck's Green

Solihull & District CAMRA's Most Improved Pub of the Year 2016-17

On Wednesday 16th November, Solihull CAMRA members met at The Colebrook to celebrate a special event, after the pub was voted Most Improved Pub of the Year 2016-17 at a recent branch meeting. Manager Shivaun McCormack (known as Shiv) took over the running of the pub back in April, and she and her team have worked hard to improve the beers, the food and the atmosphere of the place. The pub, which underwent a major refurbishment a few months ago, now boasts a friendly, homey feel, with a revamped menu and between 7 and 9 real ales at any one time, including up to 7 guests.

More people are now visiting and enjoying drinks and meals, such as the popular pub classics and weekend brunch, and the pub is expected to get even busier over the Christmas period with festive meals now available as 2 or 3-course options, together with Christmas or Boxing Day lunches.

Carl Wright, Branch Chairman, said as he presented the certificate "Solihull CAMRA keep an eye on all our local pubs and clubs to check the quality and range of the real ales and ciders, friendliness and expertise of the bar staff, and the ambience of these hostleries.

It has not gone unnoticed that the real ales here, all Cask Marque standard, are well-kept and keenly priced with a good choice always on offer. We make this award to reflect the hard work that all the staff have made over a period to improve their beers, their pub and its standing in the eyes of the local community. Shiv and her team at the Colebrook are the worthy recipients of this end-of-year award."

Julia Wright



*Branch chairman Carl Wright presents Shivaun McCormack, manager of the Colebrook, with the award.
(Photo by Martin Buck)*

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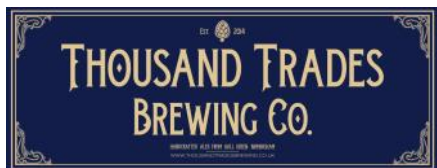


www.TheBullsHeadBarston.co.uk

Hail to the Ale!

Local Beer, Pub, Club & Brewery news

The White Lion, Hampton In Arden was one of only two local pubs to obtain a full listing in the 2017 Good Pub Guide (*not to be confused with the Good Beer Guide*). The only other was the **Malt Shovel at Barston**.



A new brewery, the **Thousand Trades Brewing Company**, based in Hall Green and run by Solihull member, Paul Scrivens, is due to start brewing shortly. Expect to see some of his beers at the Pup and Duckling (see page 22). We will have more details in our Spring Drinker.

A new micropub opened in Knowle on the 1st December. The **Ale Rooms** is described as a small wine bar and real ale bar in a high class venue.

Local beers are mentioned in the initial advertising, and Silhill Brewery ales will feature strongly there. Silhill are also brewing a beer that will be unique to the Ale Rooms.



The **Fieldhouse, Solihull**, reopened on the 21st October after a £500,000 refurbishment. The interior has been opened up and the whole pub feels brighter inside now. The addition of extra handpumps means that up to 7 real ales are available at any time. For pictures of the interior see the advert on page 4. The exterior has also undergone a significant improvement with a new patio area.

Watch out on Facebook for details of the next brewer's evening, possibly February.

The **Greswolde Arms Hotel, Knowle** has also been refurbished and reopened on the 1st November.

The **Red Lion, Knowle** is due for a refurbishment around February.

The **Station Bar, Dorridge** closed in September. While still identified as a new Black Tap pub development, we have no further news.

The **Hobs Meadow, Solihull** and **The Lodge, Solihull Lodge** have both reopened after undergoing significant refurbishment. For more details see page 18.

Features in this issue include:



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FOR
REAL ALE**

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Come and check out the new look Fieldhouse



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Sat 10 December - Abba Dream Girls

Sat 17 December - Birmingham's Famous Blues Brothers

Sat 28 January - Freddie Mercury Tribute

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Fieldhouse,
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Dates For Your Diary

Branch Meetings

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

Monday 9th January	Hobs Meadow, Solihull
Monday 6th February	Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club, Dorridge (8.00pm start followed by the AGM)
Monday 6th March	The Royal British Legion, Solihull

Committee Meetings

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

Monday 16th January	Grenville Club, Solihull
Monday 20th March	The Wharf Tavern, Hockley Heath

Socials

Saturday 10th December	Christmas pub crawl around Stourbridge
Saturday 14th January	GBG campaigning trip
February (to be confirmed)	Pin, Pie & Pint Night, Fleur de Lys, Lowsonford

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

Notice of the 2017 AGM

Notice is hereby given of the Solihull & District CAMRA AGM, which will take place at the Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club, Dorridge, on Monday 6th February 2017, starting at **8.30pm**.

If any current Committee member wishes to stand down, or anyone wishes to apply to take up a Committee post (all Committee posts are open to any Solihull & District branch member), in both instances it would be appreciated if you could please email your intentions to Chairman Carl Wright at carl.wright@swisslog.com at least two weeks before the meeting.

The AGM will be preceded by a short Branch Meeting starting at **8.00pm**.

Members are reminded that they will be eligible 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 only 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.)

The criteria for qualification for these awards are published on the Solihull CAMRA website.

There will be the usual beery raffle to go towards the cost of the AGM buffet, for which beer related prize donations would be gratefully received on the night.

Tales from the Black Country

I have lived and worked in the Midlands all my life, but during that time haven't visited many pubs in The Black Country. My good friend Geoff however was born and bred in Bilston, so was the perfect person to take me on a tour in the neighbourhood where he grew up.



Nick agreed to drive and we arrived at The Park Inn, (George Street, Woodsetton DY1 4LW) just after midday. The pub is the brewery tap for Holdens. It has clearly been extended over the years with a large conservatory, which is the main eating area. They have a good bar menu at very reasonable prices. Three of us had the excellent steak pie, chips and peas which at £4.90 was really good value. I had grey peas and bacon with bread ,£1.90. Wonderful! We had a couple of pints of Holdens Bitter which was excellent. Unusually for a brewery tap they do have other beers on offer; Joules Pale Ale, Buttcombe Gold, Oakham Citra, and Purple Moose Snowdonia.

It was only a short drive from The Park Inn to our next stop, the Beacon Hotel (129 Bilston Street, Sedgley DY3 1JE). This was the star of the afternoon. I had heard a lot about the Beacon and the adjoining Sarah

Hughes brewery. It did not disappoint. It has 2 snug rooms at the front, a wide passage area where you can order a beer, plus a large smoke room and another smaller room at the back. The unusual bar has 3 small serving hatches on 3 sides of the bar to serve each room. You have to stoop down to order and pay for your beer which is only served in dimple glasses.



We joined the locals in the smoke room which still has an adjoining Victorian conservatory. I understand from an article I read that the pub was last refurbished in 1921! I wandered into the Snug Bar and got talking to a couple of the locals. I said how lucky they were to have such a

wonderful pub near where they lived. It turned out that was slightly wrong. They both drink there most days but one comes by bus from Walsall and the other by train and bus from Sutton Coldfield! I understand they are not the only ones to travel many miles to enjoy what the Beacon has to offer.





The star beer was definitely Sarah Hughes Ruby Mild. At 6%, not what you would normally call a mild! They also had an IPA and Amber, both 5%, plus a beer called Surprise and Hedgerow at 7.4% which was sweet, almost like a sherry. A customer who was drinking Hedgerow recommended that we come back near Christmas to sample Snowdrop at a mere 8.5%.

If you have not been to the Beacon you are missing a unique pub which sells some outstanding beers. Be aware however that the pub has traditional opening hours, 12-00 to 2-30 and 5-30 to 11-00pm and can also have coach parties visiting at weekends. We stayed longer than we intended!



The Britannia

Several of the pubs in the area like The Beacon also close in the afternoon so we moved on to the Britannia (109 Kent Street, Upper Gornal DY3 1UX), which is owned by Bathams. If you go, make sure you visit the room at the

back. It is most unusual as you are sitting behind what was a bar with hand pumps, Victorian beer engine and till still in place. The beer as always from Bathams was excellent.



The Britannia Back Room



Our final stop was the Fountain (8 Temple Street, Lower Gornal DY3 2PE). This lacked some of the atmosphere of the other pubs but as you can see from the photo had an outstanding range of beers on offer.

The 4 pubs we visited were within about 3 miles of each other, plus others that were not open in the afternoon. The beer drinkers in the Black Country are certainly spoilt for choice and we will be back!

John Byron (author) Geoff Hickman (tour guide) Keith Whitehouse (photographer) Nick Stothart (driver)

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Midlands Area Beer Festival News

UPCOMING FESTIVALS

January 12-15 (Thu-Sun):

INN ON THE GREEN BEER FEST

2 Westley Road, Acocks Green, B27 7UH. 20 ales, 5 ciders. Bottle shed and craft bar now open. Music Fri and Sat live and free. 20p per pint off for CAMRA members.

Redditch Winter Ale Festival

Unfortunately the Redditch Winter Ale Festival 2017, which would usually take place in early February, has had to be cancelled. They were unable to secure the space and access required to put on a successful festival and therefore had no option but to cancel.

Land Rover Sports & Social Club Beer Festival

It is such a shame that not many people attended this beer festival as it had a superb range of beers. Organised for the club by Kevin Sumner, Solihull CAMRA member, the beers were second to none.

Prior to opening we tested all the beers on Thursday night and I was constantly giving them 4 out of 5 for flavour. Clarity was a bit of a problem but by opening time 90% were as clear as a bell.

Entertainment was arranged for both Friday and Saturday with a hog roast on the Saturday.

With 30 beers on I'll just mention my favourites. Ossett Riverhead Leggers Light, Liverpool Organic Cascade, Oakham Study in Scarlet, Abbeydale Born To Be Wild, Ossett Vivienne May, Castle Rock Andy Turner, Fernandes Brown Ale, Eiland Ichor, Brunswick Rocket, Abbeydale Illumination, Black Jack Double Bluff and Osset North South Divide IPA.

That's over a third of the beers available. It's a great venue too with plenty of room and enough tables to seat a couple of hundred. Let's hope they will repeat it next year and with more publicity get more people through the door.

Steve Dyson

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Contact the Club Steward Adrian Cotton on:

01564 782087

rowingtonclub@live.co.uk

[facebook.com/RowingtonSocialClub](https://www.facebook.com/RowingtonSocialClub)



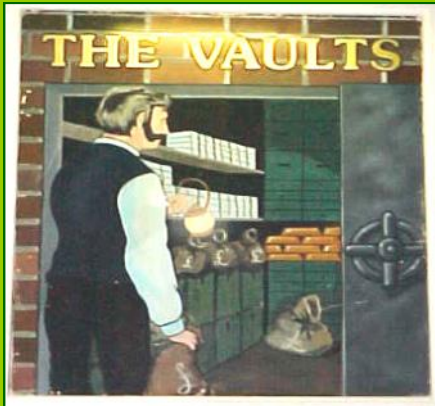
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Sun: 12.00-11.00pm

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A Huddersfield Weekend Away

I like Huddersfield; I go at least once or twice a year. Why? - I hear you ask. My reply is the beer and pubs, with a cracking range and great pubs leaving many other towns in the shade. So, I thought, why not organise a weekend away for my friends in Solihull CAMRA. Hence on a Friday in late May, a small party booked into Huddersfield Central Lodge and were keen to get started.

Firstly, a word of praise for our lodgings, which is bang in the centre of Huddersfield, provides free parking for residents, and some rooms have kitchenettes in both their double and triple

rooms. In short, great value B&B and very convenient.

Our first port of call was a brewery tour of Mallinsons. I love their beers, full of hops and a mouthfeel full of flavour. Founded in 2008, its brewers and owners Tara Mallinson and Elaine Yendall were teachers before giving it up and setting up their own brewery. Their initial premises were in the suburb of Lindley, but when demand outgrew the brewery in 2012 they moved into a former Autoglass garage in Lockwood Road. Renowned for their dedication to very hoppy beers, Mallinsons

has always been on my wish list for a visit.

Our visit was very much an informal affair, with discussion of the brewing process interspersed with witty comment and observations on the brewing industry, accompanied with copious amounts of Mallinsons Simcoe; lightly citrus, bitter and dry in the mouth. We also tried their key keg Citra, full of flavour but still keg. Tara and Elaine were keen to bring our visit to an end, and we were all keen to get moving as Tara had informed me when I arranged the visit that there were three pub beer festivals in Huddersfield at the time of our visit.



Enjoying the beer at Mallinsons Brewery

The first festival was our next venue. No more than 5 minutes from Mallinsons, the Star always has a Mallinsons beer on, and at the festival they were strongly in evidence. The Mallinsons

beers were Shall We Begin, PRN, Extra Time, Let's Go Crazy, Raspberry Beret, Tangerine, Elmley Moor Mild, Hop Slap, Mountains, and Curious Poses. Also available were Cryptic 1049 Grey, Raw Baby Chocolate Ghost, Raw Majic Mild, Green Duck Lynns Figgy, Salamander Mildly Offensive, Sandstone Mild, Mithril Jamaica, VOG Dark Matter, Flagship 5% IPA, Titanic Plum Porter, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Pictish Brewers Gold, Torrside Futureproof, Ayr Brewery Hiphopotomus, Briggs Experimental, and Lytham Berry Blonde.

What a start to the day! Where to begin? I stuck with the Mallinsons Shall We Begin, which was superb, but I did have tasters of the other beers. What of the pub itself? Someway out of the city centre this has to be one of the many must-visit pubs in Huddersfield, and its opening times should be checked before a visit. No jukebox, pool table, or game machines, it truly is a locals' local. Of course it was packed when we arrived, and it was with some reluctance I called our party to order to move onto our next pub, the Rat and Ratchet. I made our beer count so as 28; the Rat was to add another 13!

Part of the Ossett empire, the Rat is a fifteen minute walk from the Star. With its own on-site brewery it is another must visit, but again check the opening times first. Ossett own quite a few pubs which also brew, the Riverhead on our itinerary for the following day being one.

The Rat Brewery was first set up at the pub in 1994. It ceased brewing in 2004 and was subsequently purchased by Ossett who recommenced brewing in 2011. The pub has been opened up; nevertheless there are plenty of nooks

and crannies to ensconce you. It was very busy when we arrived, the bar sporting 13 real ales and ciders.

Shall I give you a list of beers I wonder... yes I think so just to remind you of the barrenness of the unimaginative pubs in the Solihull area; Rat King Rat and White Rat, a cracking hoppy beer; Maxim Darkside; Wishbone Rascal, another superb hoppy beer; Prospect Nutty Slack a dark mild; Deventio Hoplite; Revolution Pale Ale; Orkney Blast; Spitting Feathers Session Beer; Hadrian Border Platinum; Pennine Brewed with Passion; Bank Top Bad to the Bone; and Daleside Square Rigged.

For most mortals these two pubs would be more than enough for one session. But, with time to spare and the need to eat we popped into the Cherry Tree, a Wetherspoons in the centre of town. Apart for the usual range they also had Elland 1872 Porter, Bradfield Yorkshire Farmer, Stancill Porter, Phoenix Wobbly Bob, Rudgate Hop Spin, Goose Eye Over and Stout, and Exmoor Gold. What a choice compared with the beers on offer in our own Wetherspoons. I put it down to the competition.

After suitable repast, we moved on a short distance to the Wood Street Craft Beer House which used to be the shop front for Hand Drawn Monkey Brewery. I find it difficult to describe this pub, you just have to go and experience it yourself. Bohemian may be a good way to describe it. Take a footstool with you so that you can see over the bar too! Three handpulls proffered Mallinsons Brewers Gold and a Three Fiends Brewhouse beer, the name of which escapes me. It goes without saying I went for the Mallin-

sons. It did not disappoint. So, with the evening coming to a close, how could we better end it than with another cracker of a pub, namely the Kings Head.

Housed at one end of the superb Grade 1 Victorian station, the Kings Head, when first opened, needed a lot of work done on it. The roof had to be supported to stop it falling down and it was very basic and down at heel. Since 2009 this ex-first class waiting room has undergone restoration to the tune of £200,000, and to my mind it has been well worth it. As you enter, halt a while to look at the pub sign.... yes you are right, the Kings Head is Jimmy Hendrix!



A new bar has been installed to the right as you enter, and there are tables large enough to accommodate a large party such as ours.

We opted for the bar first where Bradfield Farmers Blonde, Timothy Taylor Landlord and Best, Magic Rock Ringmaster, (one of my favourites), Oaham JHB, Elland Blonde, Golcar Pennine Blonde, Gloucester BX Mild, Abbeyle Black Mass and Brimstone awaited us. The Ringmaster was in great condition, a 4 out of 5 from me, and what a beer to finish the day on. So, counting back, I made it just over 60 different beers to choose from. Could we beat it tomorrow I wondered as I lay in bed finalising plans for the following day.

Steve Dyson

To be continued in our next issue

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Beers

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Food service from

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Craft Beer In The USA 2016

My sister has lived in Houston, Texas for well over 30 years and we have visited her several times during that period, starting way back in 1980. In those days, cask or craft beer was unheard of. For many years we either endured the cold, fizzy, tasteless so-called beer that was readily available throughout the USA, or drank cocktails!

Small craft breweries started to spring up in other parts of the USA from the 1990s but sadly Texas lagged behind somewhat. However, on our most recent visit in March, helped by a beer-loving niece, we discovered that things have improved considerably. Now there are 9 breweries in Houston alone, and their beers are readily available in bars and restaurants throughout the city.

The first brewery we encountered was on a day out to Austin. We stopped for lunch in Brenham and found the Brazos Valley Brewery, where we tried 5.2% Golden Ale, as well as The Cause IPA and Big Spoon Stout, both 7%, and bristling with flavour. There was no food at the brewery, so we moved on to Ninety Six West, a restaurant where we had lunch, washed down by Uncle Billy's Green Room IPA 6.5%, and Atwater Vanilla Porter 5%. We then moved on to Farm Sweet Home, a farm produce shop, selling beer and snacks, where we ordered a float (sample tray of 4 x 4oz glasses) of local brews.

A few days later we visited a popular bar in Houston called Watson's. Unfortunately, as it was St Patrick's Day, they were adding green dye to all the beer. Not so noticeable in Brenda's 1512 Pecan Porter, but it did nothing for my Goose Island IPA. The second glass, with normal colour restored, was much more enjoyable!



St Arnold's Brewery

Our next visit was to the St Arnold Brewery in Downtown Houston, recommended by our niece Stephanie. This is the oldest craft brewery in Texas, having been founded in 1994. (In the seventh century, St Arnold preached of the dangers of drinking water, and advocated beer instead.) The large hall was set out with long tables and benches in the style of a bierkeller. We were able to try virtually the full range of beers, the highlights being Art Car IPA 7.1% (IBU55) and Endeavour IPA 9% (IBU68). Being a lover of hoppy beers, it was good to note that the Americans use the IBU measure for bitterness. A bland IPA such as Greene King would probably only register 9 or 10 on the IBU scale, but most American IPAs register at least 50, and some go up to 90, giving your tongue a real kick. There are regular brewery tours and all those present at the time are invited to join in. This gave us the opportunity to learn more about the history of the brewery. At 5.30 the much-awaited cask beer was tapped. Sadly it was hazy and not one of their best, but they readily changed it.



Allan, Carole & Brenda at St Arnold's Brewery

The other downtown Houston brewery is Karbach. We visited on a sunny Saturday afternoon, and sat in the garden in a very noisy but relaxed atmosphere. We tried a float of 5 of their beers, the highlight being the magnificent Hopadillo, only 4.9% but full of flavour. We also sampled my sister's glass of BBH Chocolate Stout. At 12.5%, a small sip was enough. This is only served in a wineglass measure. Brewery tours are available if booked in advance. (We had not).

On Easter Saturday, we decided to visit No Label Brewery at Katy, on the outskirts of Houston. We were not aware that they were holding a Crawfish festival, and the place was absolutely packed! They were also charging \$10 admission for the event. I managed to blag my way in for free, after explaining I had come all the way from England to try their beers. I then managed to sample all 4 beers on offer, a Blonde Ale, an American Pale, a dark Wheat Beer and a rather tasty Stout. One of the stalls featured the Texas Beer Bus which runs every Saturday and takes in 3 breweries. Quite pricy at \$99 for 2, even including a souvenir glass. An indication, perhaps, of the increasing popularity of Craft Beer in Houston.

On our last Sunday, we did some sight-seeing among the high-rise towers in Houston, but finished off with a visit to the Raven Tower, which offers com-

manding views of the city. Again, we sat outside in the sunshine and sampled Town in City Brewing Co. Mosquito's Revenge, Left Hand Brewing Sweet Stout, Real Ale Brewery Lost Gold, and finished with our favourite Hopadillo.

On a couple of occasions, Stephanie took us to her favourite bars, some of which offered over 50 different craft ales. For those who like a wide choice, perhaps keg has an advantage over cask, as we did not have a single beer that tasted off during our visit, and the US keg craft beers are less fizzy than keg beer in the UK.



Stephanie & Allan enjoying a beer at Raven Tower

On occasions when we fancied a beer in the house, we discovered that the liquor stores offer bottled ales from all the local breweries and many from further afield to drink at home. We even discovered a Taco diner one lunchtime with 3 craft beers on tap, so not once in our 3 week stay did we have to resort to the dreaded Budweiser!

All in all, a great holiday to visit family was made extra special by the wide range of craft beers available, which my sister and niece also enjoyed. We are already planning our next trip!

Allan and Brenda Duffy

THE FIELDHOUSE

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WOODMANS REST

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Lode Lane, Solihull. 0121 742 0515

THE RED LION

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Local Pub news (part two)

Punch Taverns has invested £620,000 into the refurbishment of the **Hobs Meadow pub**.

The Ulleries Road pub reopened on the 8th September with an evening of celebration, attended by several CAMRA members. Beers available were Abbott, Doombar, Enville, & Castle Rock Pale.



The refurbishment includes alterations to the pub's layout creating an open plan feel.

Externally, the Hobs Meadow has new signage and lighting

to improve its appearance, and outdoor seating areas to the front and rear, offering customers an al fresco drinking and dining space. Car parking is charged but refundable at the bar.

The pub is set to become one of Punch's new flagship sites across the UK that will be used as a training centre of excellence for Punch publicans and their teams.

Tom Tomlinson-Greenway, the new manager said: "This is a significant investment by Punch and the design team have come up with a great scheme to turn the pub into the perfect 'local'.

"The Hobs Meadow has always been a popular venue but I plan to broaden its appeal and turn it into a great 'all rounder'."

Join us at the Hobs Meadow on the 9th January for a branch meeting

Solihull has a real ale gain. Not one of the new pubs opening up, but the refurbished **Lodge** on Yardley Wood Road, Solihull Lodge.

Greene King have totally refurbished the pub, which re-opened on the 11th October and is now under new management. One of the changes they have made is to introduce cask ale on three handpumps to a pub that previously didn't offer real ale. On a recent visit Greene King IPA (in good condition) and Speckled Hen were on the bar. Depending on how well the cask beers are received a third choice is likely to follow.



There are live bands on Saturday nights—check Facebook for details of these and other events.

The pub has been totally transformed with a new bright open look and is worth a visit.

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CAMRA News Digest

Revitalisation Update

CAMRA issued a third and final survey to all members on the 1st November, exploring further some of the issues raised by the previous two surveys.

CAMRA chairman Colin Valentine has confirmed that, to ensure members have enough time to consider proposals, and debate the issues, the final decision will not be taken at the Members' Weekend in April.

"As the implications of any decision will be far-reaching, the National Executive believe that it would be prudent to use the 2017 Conference for a debate on the proposals and their implications for CAMRA and to then hold a vote at a general meeting at a later date, either within an extraordinary general meeting or at the 2018 Members Weekend in Coventry."

CAMRA has launched a new Discourse forum for members to discuss Campaign issues.

The new forum – which will replace the CAMRA forum next year – has been chosen as it's more user friendly and easier to use on computers, mobiles and tablets.

CAMRA national director Alexander Wright said: "The old forum had provided a place for interesting and vital discussions but was showing signs of age. Discourse is modern and there's information on the site to guide you. Like the old forum we'll use a light touch moderation system to make sure conversations remain constructive and views are respected. I'd encourage everyone to get involved."

Users can converse via the website or get emails to reply directly to conversations. Go to <https://discourse.camra.org.uk> and log in with your membership number and password. Discourse relies on email, so you must have one registered on your CAMRA membership.

CAMRA is looking for volunteer tasters to join our network of tasting panels. No previous experience is required as full training is given. CAMRA's tasting panels play an important role within the Campaign.

Tasters primarily develop the tasting notes for beers in the Brewery section of the Good Beer Guide. and can move on to judging at festivals .

Solihull Pubs & Clubs CAMRA Member Discounts

Ember Inns (**Fieldhouse, Colebrook, Woodmans Rest, Olton Tavern, Red Lion Knowle**) - 20p/ pint except Mondays where all cask ales are £2.49.

Fieldhouse additionally gives 20% off food with a discount card available from the bar. For other offers see the advert on page 4

Flute and Flagon and **Assembly Rooms** give 10% off real ales

Lady Lane Wharf 30p/pint Monday to Thursday between 5pm and 8pm

Drum and Monkey, Wharf Tavern, The Greswolde Arms give 10% off real ales

Vintage Inns (**Red Lion Earlswood**) 20p/ pint

A Solihull Christmas Carol

We three drinkers of Solihull are
Drinking ale, looking for a bar
Fieldhouse and Red Lion
Forest and White Lion
Following yonder star



Oh, ale of wonder, pub of might
Beer always served right
Earlswood leading
Still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect pint

Wandering round on Shirley's plain
To the Pumphouse and Colebrook again
Merry forever, sobering never
Visiting Brum by train

Oh, ale of wonder, pub of might
Beer always served right
Dorridge leading
Still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect pint

Shropshire Gold to offer have I
Jaipur owns a deity nigh
Taylor's Landlord, all men drinking
Finish with a Salopian high

Oh, ale of wonder, pub of might
Beer always served right
Barston leading
Still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect pint

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 CAMRA.



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Contributions, comments and advertising enquiries should be sent to Solihull Drinker Editor, 2 Dunton Hall Road, Shirley, Solihull B90 2RA; or via email to

davidcove@hotmail.co.uk

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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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Sunday: 12.00–10.30pm



Beer News

Moor brews first real ale in a can.



CASK beer in a can? It's real. A Bristol-brewery has become the first in the world that can officially call its canned beer real ale. CAMRA has given its first accreditation for real ale in a can to the Moor Beer Company.

CAMRA tested the canned beer at the Great British Beer Festival, and confirmed it was real ale. They found the beer still contained live yeast, one of the ingredients of real ale, and showed any carbonation was created by natural secondary fermentation.

All this makes Moor Beer the first brewery in the world to be granted the right to put the "CAMRA says this is real ale" logo on a can of beer.

You can buy the beer locally at the **Inn on The Green** Bottle Shed and Craft Bar in Acocks Green.

This venture opened on the 5th November. With up to 400 bottled beers, 7 craft keg, 7 ciders and retro gaming machines it will be worth a visit before Christmas.

Marston's rebranding announced

On the 1st November Marston's announced an ambitious project, costing over £1 million, to reinvent its image to attract a new, younger generation of real ale lovers. The first to face a re-design is the brewery's best selling

beer - Pedigree, which sees its traditional red stripe and white background disappear to be replaced with the face of an unsung hero of Marston's history. It is also now called an Amber Ale, but interestingly the bottled version is now bottle conditioned.



Oyster Stout and Burton Bitter are also to be renamed as Pearl Jet and Saddle Tank respectively.

Marston's announcement followed other rebranding announcements recently from Shepherd Neame and the Bombardier brand.

The Pup and Duckling will be extending its opening hours Mon - Sat 5pm - 10pm and Sunday 12 noon - 3pm.

There will be a MINIMUM of 24 different beers on during this period.

The beer list will be on Facebook nearer the time, as it depends upon beer availability, but they intend to feature local breweries including Byatt's, Church End, Silhill, Fixed Wheel, Twisted Barrel, Purity, Sadlers, Green Duck, Backyard and Slaughterhouse. Also, two new breweries: Burning Soul and Thousand Trades, subject to availability.

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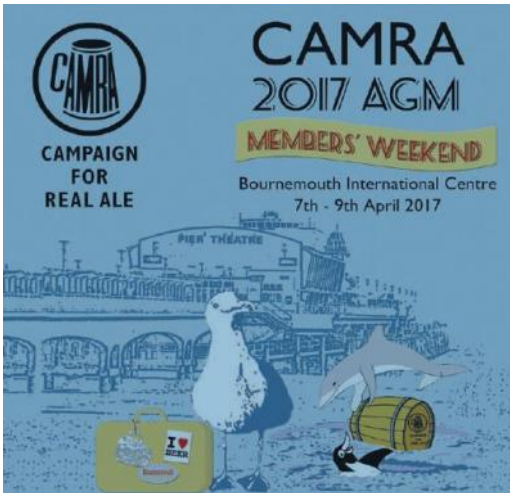
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Alcohol served from 10.00am

Food available from 7.00am to 11.00pm daily

CAMRA Members' Weekend 2017



How would you like a weekend by the seaside, drinking some good beers, and meeting up with like-minded CAMRA members from all over the country?

If so, why not plan a trip to the CAMRA 2017 AGM and Members' weekend in Bournemouth from the 7th—9th April 2017.

As well as enjoying the local hostellers, attending the AGM gives you the opportunity to participate in deciding the future direction of CAMRA.

With the final proposals arising from the Revitalisation being delayed, national chairman Colin Valentine, said "We feel CAMRA's AGM and Conference in 2017 will serve as the perfect place for CAMRA members to properly debate and discuss the implications and impact of the options being considered. We'll then have time to refine the proposal further based on input from our members and a final vote on adopting the proposal will be taken later."

Are you new to CAMRA's Members' Weekend & AGM? For useful help and advice go to <http://tinyurl.com/AGMforbeginners>.

Don't forget a football match between Bournemouth and Chelsea is the same weekend as our Members' Weekend so accommodation prices may increase, and are likely to book up quickly.

Keep an eye out for more information about the Bournemouth Members' Weekend and AGM in coming issues of What's Brewing, or online at camra.org.uk

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An Afternoon in Lichfield

Continuing our series of midweek day-time crawls, Lichfield was a destination this summer. A party of 10 of us arrived not long after midday to taste Lichfield's real ale delights. Alighting from the train we made our way across the city to one of the two micropubs. The Whippet on Tamworth Street was the first micropub in the city and a GBG entry. This was followed by Beerbohm next door, our destination. Converted from a shop, it has a wine bar feel to it. 3 beers were on handpump; Salopian Shropshire Gold, Whim Dandy Bitter, and Davenports Original. We sat in the upstairs room where a large table accommodated us all. Unfortunately we all came to the conclusion that the beers were not at their best.



Invasion of Beerbohm!

A short walk next door brought us to the Whippet, again converted from an old shop where a better range of beers met us; Black Brewery Snake Eyes, Arbor Triple Hop [very nice], Hop and Stagger Triple Hop, Nene Valley Dark

Horse, and Downton New Forest. Real ciders are also available here along with snacks such as pork pies. Smaller than Beerbohm, as it is only on one floor, it feels more like a café/bar.



Our next pub, the Duke of York, is just up the road and one of two Joules houses in Lichfield. Being a little out of the city centre, it has on my other visits been rather quiet. The same could be said on our visit. An ex-Davenports pub, and one of the oldest in Lichfield, it is situated on Greenhill. It has its own bowling green and is altogether much more spacious than the micropubs. It has a varied menu which we took advantage of, whilst trying the Joules beers which were Blond, Pale Ale, Slumbering Monk, Shropshire Hop, and something I feel sure was Strike Ale No 1. A guest was also on, Wickwar Falling Star. I kept on the Joules beers. They were OK but I've always found them a little bland in flavour.

Returning to the city centre, we popped our heads into the Wetherspoons on our way to the Horse and Jockey, an ex-Banks' pub, now a free house. In Sandford Street, the pub is a longstanding GBG entry with 5 regular beers and 3 guests. Plenty of space to sit down inside, and food is

available the latter part of the week. At the time of our visit regulars Wye Valley HPA, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Holdens Golden Glow, and Marstons Pedigree were supplemented by Greene King London Glory, Burton Bridge Bitter, Flipside Sterling, and Oakham Endless Summer. I sampled the Flipside [acceptable] and the Oakham [4 out of 5]... a cracker.



All too soon it was time to make our way back to the station, but not before dropping into the Malt Bar in Wade Street, some 5 minutes from the station. It was one of the first café bars in Lichfield and is not too far from the Garrick Theatre. It does have interesting guest beers on. We found Castle Rock HPA, Peakstones Chained Oak, Conwy Beachcomber Blonde, and Wye Valley HPA. I tried the Castle Rock and the Beachcomber Blonde, both nice beers.

That concluded our Lichfield trip. There are plenty of other pubs in Lichfield but I suspect we did the best of them. If you are inspired to visit Lichfield it does have a rich history, and a visit to the cathedral and Dr Johnson's House is recommended. As for the pubs, a visit later in the week is best, do check out opening times.

Steve Dyson

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A Trip down Memory Lane — Solihull Drinker Winter 2006

Can you remember what was going on in our branch 10 years ago?

Thanks to my library of back copies of the Solihull Drinker, I am able to tell you what was reported in the 39th issue from December 2006.

The Drinker in those days was a 20-page, mostly black-and-white publication, with only seven coloured photos scattered among the articles and other features. Colour printing cost a lot of money and we could only aspire to more pages and full colour in those days!

Branch members turned out on November 22nd to celebrate the awarding of the Branch's 'Most Improved Pub of the Year 2006' certificate to The Drawbridge Inn on Haslucks Green Road. The beer choice on the night were regulars Marstons Pedigree, Charles Wells Bombardier and Moorlands Speckled Hen, plus guests Black Sheep Bitter and Hydes Stormtrooper.

The smoking ban was pending and thus big news: the implications for pubs and other hostelrys were being debated with interest and possible trepidation by pub-goers and publicans alike. The Red Lion in Earlswood bit the bullet early by announcing that it would become no-smoking ahead of the ban.

Our evergreen Christmas Crawl was due to take place round Solihull on Sunday 10th December, and would have seen imbibers visiting many of the town-centre pubs which are still with us. (Nowadays we cast our net a bit wider and travel further at this time of year).

Part 6 of the popular feature on old Solihull pub names by ex-branch secretary Steve Wood dealt with pubs beginning with T and U: the Talbot, Ullenhall, the Tom O'Bedlam, Chadwick End, the Travellers Rest and the Union, Shirley were no longer in existence by the time of publication, but still extant albeit with name changes are the Three Maypoles, Cheswick Green, now the Miller & Carter; the Tavern, Hockley Heath, now the Oak; and the Tom o' Wood at Rowington which has undergone various name changes since then but is now the Tom o' the Wood.

Julia Wright

Solihull Drinker Issue No. 78

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Thank you to all contributors.

The 79th edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 6th March 2017.

Please note that the deadline for copy, advertising and any other contributions is Friday 5th February.



Membership Matters

It's that time of year again, when you're struggling to find a Christmas present for a relative/friend/loved one who is also a real ale fan and drinker. Forget the hassle of traipsing up and down the high street. I may have the answer to your problem, a year's CAMRA membership. It won't break the bank, and if you don't feel like filling in the membership form opposite, just visit www.camra.org.uk and you will find various types of gift membership. Some start from as little as £24 (concessions for Under-26 and Over-60), and some gift memberships include a copy of the 2017 Good Beer Guide (see the back page advert for more information).

So what would they get if they were to become members as a Christmas present, I hear you ask. They will get a monthly newsletter called "What's Brewing" with articles on what's happening within CAMRA and the real ale scene nationally, a very nice quarterly informative magazine titled "Beer" which has many interesting articles with colour photographs covering a range of topics from breweries to bottled beers, free or reduced entry to the many beer festivals organised by local CAMRA branches all over the country, and lastly they will get £20 pounds worth of J.D. Wetherspoon Real Ale or

Cider vouchers as well as many other great money saving deals. Visit the national website www.camra.org.uk for full details of gift memberships.

So why bother joining CAMRA? We are not just about real ale, even though interest in real ale continues to grow, reflected by an ever increasing choice of real ale in pubs; we also support the brewing industry, publicans, consumer's rights, and community groups nationwide who are either trying to prevent their pub from being sold to developers, or being closed for good. Some of the membership fee helps to provide funds for campaigning and for some of the groups indicated above.

We hold monthly meetings at a local pub with good real ale, but if you don't fancy that come along to one of our social events. We are a friendly bunch and will make you more than welcome and someone might even buy you a pint! Please see the Dates for your Diary section on page 5 of this magazine or visit www.solihull.camra.org.uk

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

Dave Mckowen
Membership Secretary

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<i>Pubs Campaigning/</i>	
<i>Beer Festival (general enquiries)</i>	
Martin Buck	01564 770708
<i>Solihull Drinker Editor</i>	
David Cove	0121 603 6057

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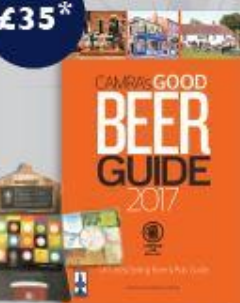
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