

Solihull



Drinker

Issue No 79
Spring 2017

Free
Please take one

Bumper Beer Festival Year Ahead

As Spring approaches CAMRA members' thoughts turn to ... Beer Festivals!

Last year in Solihull we were spoilt for choice in and around Solihull, even though we missed out on the Solihull CAMRA festival. Some were successful, others less so; some will return, while new ones may spring up to take the place of those that don't. Whatever happens it looks like 2017 will be a very interesting festival year.

The year kicked off in February with festivals at the Pup & Duckling, Coach & Horses at Weatheroak, and Moseley Round Table, all the same weekend.

In Solihull we will see the return of the Knowle & Dorridge Round Table festival on the 17th & 18th March followed on May 12th & 13th by what is now the largest festival in Solihull, run by the Shirley Round Table with 105 beers.

Adding to that we will see pub festivals at the Inn On The Green (Acocks Green) over Easter weekend and the Nag's Head, Henley In Arden, over the early May Bank Holiday weekend.

Going a little further afield, but easy to get to by train, are the Stourbridge and Kidderminster CAMRA festivals that are well worth a visit.

We have great news about our own Solihull CAMRA festival on page 4, and hopefully, we will see the return of the Solihull Round Table festival.

For details of these festivals, plus more, check out the Beer Festivals page in every Solihull Drinker magazine, and the latest festival news on our website www.solihull.camra.org and Solihull CAMRA Members on Facebook.

Looking forward to seeing you at a local festival this year. Cheers!



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Hail to the Ale!

Local Beer, Pub, Club & Brewery news

The **Pup and Duckling** celebrated its first year in business on the 4th February with a "micro beer festival". Including "Arts of Teleforce", an oatmeal stout, from the Thousand Trades brewery, 12 beers were on sale plus 12 ciders. Now we're looking forward to the 2nd birthday!

The **Ale Rooms** in Knowle opened successfully in early December and has been busy ever since. It has been a welcome addition to Knowle High Street.

Refurbishments continue apace around Solihull. The **Saracen's Head**, Shirley is being converted to a Sizzling Pub and Grill, reopening on the 23rd February. The **Highwood** is also being refurbished, delayed from last year due to obtaining planning permission for the outside drinking area.

The **Red Lion** in Knowle is "having a facelift". It reopened on the 3rd March.

Ember Inns are holding a mini "Cask Festival" from the 10th to 12th of March. Beers are My Generation Session Pale Ale by Black Sheep, Old Empire by Marston's, Sharp's Atlantic, and Bombardier Pale Ale. This follows a similar festival held in February.

Just over the border in Birmingham the **Inn On The Green** is Birmingham Pub Of The Year for the second year in a row. The next beer festival there is over Easter weekend, and you can enjoy one every three months thereafter.

Indian Brewery have opened a new premises serving beer and street food in the rail arches under Snow Hill Station in Birmingham. They have revamped the former Brewsmiths coffee shop at 16 Livery Street and it opened its doors on 13 January 2017.

London Social 10th June

The branch plan a social on Saturday 10th June, travelling via Chiltern Railways to London arriving at 11.30 to hit our first pub at 12noon.

Return fare should hopefully be about £25 depending on train timings. The aim is to be back in Solihull by 10.30pm. 10 pubs will be attempted.

We'll start at The George and Dragon, Firovia (microbrewery) then onto Soho and the Lyric. Into Covent Garden and High Holborn for the Old Coffee House, Cross Keys, White Swan, Harp, and Craft Beer Co. Heading towards Euston, we'll pop into the Museum Tavern and at Euston we'll finish off at the Bree Louise and Euston Tap. More details will appear on the website shortly or get in touch with Steve Dyson. e-mail: steve_dyson1952@yahoo.co.uk

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(membership cards must be shown)

- *Mother's Day Lunch 26th March*
Free bottle of Prosecco
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- *20p discount off a pint of Cask Ale*
- *20% off food with a food discount card*
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in this advert.
- *Keep a look out for*
more events, like Meet
The Brewer later in
the year.



Solihull CAMRA Beer Festival 2017

After circumstances meant we were unable to hold a beer festival last year, we have some great news.

There will be a beer festival in 2017!

We are returning to the Solihull Royal British Legion, Union Road, which played host to the festival for over a decade, our last visit there was the 2014 festival.

Specifics are still being confirmed; but what we do know is that the festival will be open from noon to 11

pm on both Friday 6th and Saturday 7th October. We anticipate having around 45 real ales on offer, plus real ciders.

The next issue of the Solihull Drinker magazine will have more details.

Keep your eyes open on our website and Facebook (Solihull CAMRA Members) for details of how to get involved nearer the time, or come along to one of our Branch meetings listed on the next page.



Martin Buck

Dates For Your Diary

Branch Meetings

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

Monday 3rd April	Bulls Head, Barston
Monday 8th May	Pup & Duckling, Solihull
Monday 5th June	Forest Hotel, Dorridge

Committee Meetings

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

Monday 20th March	Wharf Tavern, Hockley Heath
Monday 22nd May	Ale Rooms, Knowle

Socials

Saturday 25th March	Stafford Pub Crawl
April (date tbc)	Beer and Balti near the Pup & Duckling
Wednesday 10th May	Daytime crawl around Beeston
Saturday 10th June	Train trip to Euston & Soho areas of London
Saturday 15th July	Bus trip to Ludlow

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.

Upcoming Midlands Area Beer Festivals

March 9-11 (Thu-Sat):

WALSALL BEER & CIDER FEST

MPV, Whittemere St, Intown Row, Walsall WS1 2AD (NEW VENUE; 250 yards from Town Hall, close to bus/ rail stns). 80 Ales, 20 ciders + good selection of foreign bottled beers + free soft drinks for drivers. Live entertainment Fri/Sat evenings, hot/cold food avail. Open: Thu 5-11pm; Fri/Sat Noon-11pm, £5 entry inc souvenir glass + prog, CAMRA membs (with cards), Students (18+ only, with ID +NUS card) + OAPs get free 1/2 pint. See www.walsallcamra.org for details.

March 17-18 (Fri-Sat):

KNOWLE & DORRIDGE ROUND TABLE BEER FESTIVAL Royal British Legion, Warwick Rd, Knowle B93 9LF.

Open Fri from 6.30pm, Sat 12 noon, till late both nights. both nights. £10 entry incl. souvenir glass and £5 tokens. More info in the advert on page 8.

March 17-18(Fri-Sat):

COVENTRY BEER FEST

Coventry Rugby Football Ground, Butts Park Arena, Butts Rd, CV1 3GE 80+ beers (inc special beers from local breweries), Ciders, perries, bottled beers +country wines. Open: Fri 12noon-4pm, 6pm-11pm; Sat 12noon-11pm (or until beer runs out). Entrance card-carrying CAMRA membs: Free all sessions except Fri evening £2; others £2, except Fri evening £3. Entry pack in operation inc beer tokens + souvenir glass, both refundable. Food available. Website: www.coventry.camra.org.uk



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or email kevin.j.sumner@btinternet.com

22 Mar-2 April (Wed-Sun):

WETHERSPOON REAL ALE FESTIVAL

For details of the beers on offer visit www.jdwetherspoon.com/real-ale-festival.

30 Mar-1 Apr (Thu-Sat):

38TH BURTON & S DERBYSHIRE CAMRA BEER & CIDER FEST

Burton Town Hall, King Edward Place, Burton Upon Trent, DE14 2EB. 130+ real ales + 30 real ciders + perries, country wines + Driver's Bar. CAMRA membs get free or discounted entry (must show memb card). Open: Thu 6pm-11pm; Fri 11am-11pm; Sat 11am-10pm. Live music Fri/Sat evenings from around 630pm.

April 13-16 (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. 20p per pint off for CAMRA members.

April 29-30 (Sat-Sun):

NAGS HEAD HENLEY IN ARDEN

Details in the advert on page 7 .

May 10th—13th: (Wed—Sat)

STOURBRIDGE BEER FESTIVAL

Stourbridge CAMRA Beer Festival, Town Hall, Crown Centre. Open Wed 7pm-10pm (CAMRA members only or join on door); Thurs 7pm-11pm; Fri 12 noon—11pm; Sat 12 noon—9pm or beer runs out! £10 entry includes refundable souvenir glass and tokens. Hot and cold food. For more details visit www.stourbridgebeerfest.org.uk.

May 12th—13th: (Fri—Sat)

SHIRLEY BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

7th Shirley Beer & Cider Festival, Camp Hill Rugby Club. Open Fri 6pm –11pm, Sat 12 noon—11pm. 105 beers and 20 ciders. See advert on page 18 and www.shirleybeerfestival.co.uk for more information.

June 1st—3rd: (Thur—Sat)

KIDDERMINSTER BEER FESTIVAL

Kidderminster Town Hall. 54 beers+15 ciders and perries. CAMRA member's preview session 4-6pm on Thursday. Opens to all 6pm Thursday, 11 am Friday and Saturday.

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Saturday 12— 9pm

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St Patricks Day
6:30pm **Friday 17th**
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Where?
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Cost?
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12 noon—12.00pm
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Great British Beer Festival Tickets On Sale

Britain's biggest beer festival's tickets are now on sale.

A range of tickets are available with discounted prices to CAMRA members, including season tickets for only £24.

The Great British Beer Festival is celebrating its 40th year on the 8th-12th August at London Olympia.

To celebrate this, CAMRA will be expanding their drinks offering of real ales and other craft beer, cider and perry to include fruit ciders and fine English wine for the first time.

The food offering is also extended to include some of the best London street foods, and artists will be providing entertainment for you.



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A Huddersfield Weekend Away (Part 2)

Continued from Solihull Drinker 78

Saturday's plan was to do some of the Pennine Rail Trail towards Manchester. We boarded the train heading for our first port of call, Stalybridge Buffet Bar. A Victorian gem, better known as Dot's Diner, and a longstanding Good Beer Guide pub, it stands on the station platform and proved a great start to the day. However, when we got off the train we were joined by about forty others piling off, all doing the Rail Ale Trail. They were well prepared with plenty of staff, so we were served pretty quickly. 8 handpumps dispensed Thornbridge Windle, Magpie Pour Me a Boy, Rat and Ratchet White Rat and Pet Rat (a 4 out of 5 from me), Brass Castle Best Bitter, Millstone Vale Mill, Redwillow Smokeless Smoked Porter, and Timothy Taylor Landlord. The pub stretches along the station and does food, however today it would have been difficult to find a table to eat. We found a corner table near the outside drinking area and consulted the train timetable for the next train to Greenfield. It proved tight on timing so we supped up only to join the same forty people awaiting the same train.

Arriving at Greenfield, the rain started. We quickly made our way down to the Wellington in time to get a seat before the deluge of wet people came in behind us. The Wellington is a free house with a strong Thwaites showing, but as well as Original, Wainwright, and Nutty Black, there was Salopian Lemon Dream, Nook Blond, and Greenfield Silver Owl all in good condition. The pub itself doesn't have much character but was enlivened by the appearance of a bunch of girls dressed as fish fingers!

Fancy dress is all part of the pageant that is the Rail Ale Trail. We also saw others in full fancy dress; a girl in a Madonna outfit and four chaps completely green carrying what looked like a crate. They were a crate of beer... surreal but humorous. I pitied them all as they were looking like drowned rats as the rain was quite heavy by now. We made our way back to the station via the Railway which was a little disappointing having only Theakstons Old Peculiar, Adnams Lighthouse, Greenfield Silver Owl, and Millstone Tiger Rut. I tried the Tiger Rut which proved OK.



In the Stalybridge Buffet Bar

Boarding the train, it was only a short journey to Marsden and our next pub the Riverhead Brewery Tap, another microbrewery owned by Ossett. We were pleased to see 10 beers on hand-pump; Ossett Yorkshire Blond and Silver King, Riverhead Butterley and March Haigh, Cuckoo, Black Moss Stout, and guests Stamps Ahtanum, Brass Castle Comet, Kelham Island Easy Rider, and Salamander Mind Bog-gling. The Cuckoo was my favourite followed by the Brass Castle, both clean

and hoppy. Pubs were a little quieter now as I assumed some people missed out some of the pubs on the Trail. We found a seat and could look through the window to the microbrewery, but all too soon it was time to make tracks (no pun intended) to our next pub down the line.



The Riverhead Brewery Tap

Slaithwaite is an interesting little town. When the Huddersfield Canal was restored in 2000 they had to take the canal right along the main road in the town centre. A feat of engineering to behold, it has certainly given the town a tourism boost with the colourful canal boats passing along the main street. Our interest today lay with two pubs.

The Swan is a little distant from the town centre and, although bland inside, had a good range of beers and was quiet, a boon after the hectic nature of other pubs today. Naylor's Spring Loaded, Bradfield Farmers Blond, and Magpie Hoppy were consumed. I plumped for Magpie Hoppy.

Into the scrum again, just a short stroll around the corner was The Commercial, a longstanding Good Beer Guide entry. It was busy, and as a pub resembles more a wine bar. However, it

had 7 beers on; Black Country Chain ale, Fell Robust Porter, Partners Tabatha, Flipside Stirling Pale, Scarborough Transmission, Empire Commercial, and Moonraker Mild. Empire is brewed locally and is always on. I tried the Commercial, Tabatha, and Sterling Pale, that were all acceptable but not reaching first class status. However, considering the wide choice of beers we had sampled so far it was a minor criticism.

That ended our Trans Pennine Rail Ale Trail. If you fancy it you can download a leaflet from the web. Be warned though we only did a small section of it. To do it justice I reckon you need two days!

Although we were making our way back to Huddersfield the day was still young and 3 pubs, one with a beer festival (and over 40 different beers) still stood in the way of our beds!

At the opposite end of Huddersfield Station from the Kings Head is the Head of Steam. I have always been a little wary of this pub as I have had poor quality beer here on occasion but today all was fine. It's a grand pub too. Once the booking hall of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, it is full of railway memorabilia. On hand-pump was Black Sheep Special Ale, Roosters Kushty Rye, Yorkshire Black-out, Anarchy Up in Smoke, Hop Studio Elder and Fudge, Fell Cascadian; Camerons Sunburst, Ahop-Alypse-Now, Fridge Magnet Pale Ale, Sonic 43, and Springhead Outlawed. The Roosters was ok, but Fell Cascadian and Camerons Ahop-Alypse-Now were truly superb, a real mouthful of hops.

Keeping the momentum, we went on to the Sportsman, not too far from the

station where a beer festival was in progress. We settled down to sample Northern Monk Eternal Session IPA, Red Willow Weightless Session IPA, Windsor and Eaton Kohinoor IPA, Allendale Legion Four Hop IPA, Acorn Cardinal IPA, North Riding US IPA, Highpeak India Pale Ale, Northern Monk Eternal Darkness, Wishbone Collarbone Session IPA, Black Flag El Dorado, Pilot House Unfinished IPA, Bristol Beer Factory Southville Hop IPA, Almasty MK6 IPA, and Black Jack Black Maria Black IPA. Where do you start with a list like that? You're bound to miss a cracker out as you can't try them all! I went for Eternal Northern Monk, Red Willow Weightless, and North Riding US IPA, and hit the right note; 4 out of 5 for all of them...magic!

Let's turn to the pub though. On a street corner near the railway viaduct, it was built in the 1930s and a recent restoration saw many Art Deco fittings reinstated, and it subsequently won a CAMRA English Heritage Conservation Pub Design award. The tiles in the gents are truly magnificent works in the Art Deco style. There is one main bar area with a couple of rooms going off, and it is a very comfortable and unspoilt popular pub. It used to have an onsite brewery but that has been suspended for a while now, pending a search for new premises.

Well, you would be forgiven to think that things cannot get better than this. Maybe not better, but our last pub of the night, one of my favourite Huddersfield hostelrys the Grove, is certainly on a par with the best Huddersfield has to offer. *(Editor's note. The Grove was a finalist in the Great British Pub Awards 2016 Best Beer Pub Category, won by the Sheffield Tap).*



You can't miss the Grove. 10 minutes from the station, the outside looks like a Co-Op, and to the right are two massive air shafts from the railway lines below. It has a bar and lounge, and to say that its décor is eccentric is no understatement. With 19 handpumps, a 200+ bottled beer menu, 15 craft kegs and three real ciders can you possibly go wrong? Although it had been a long day I had saved myself for the Grove... I was not to be disappointed. The beers first; Oakham Citra and Akhenaten, Thornbridge Jaipur, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Vocation Bread and Butter, Atom Schrodingers Cat, Durham Magus, Hawkshead Bitter, Northern Monk Wasted, First Chop Sen [gluten free], Harveys Knots of May, Odyssey Pocket Nuke and Zombie Blood, Shiny Abyss, Wild Stalker, Black Isle Migrator IPA, Cloudwater Imperial Stout, and Tiny Rebel Billabong. I am sure you will forgive me not listing the ciders, bottled beers and craft kegs! I sampled six here; the Citra, Vocation, and Black Isle all with 4 out of 5. The Durham, Landlord, and First Chop, scored a respectable 3.

This ended our trip to Huddersfield and, with nearly 150 beers to choose from, not a bad weekend at all!

Steve Dyson

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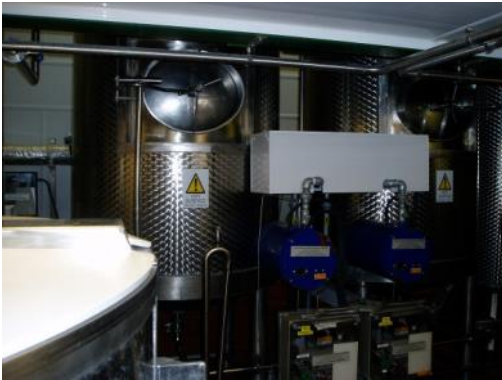
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A Trip to Bishops Castle

A mini bus full of Solihull CAMRA members spent a very pleasant day in Bishops Castle, Shropshire sampling the town's wares and visiting its two breweries. Starting off at the Six Bells and its on-site brewery, we suspected that they had forgotten we were coming, but things were soon organised for our tour. In the meantime we acquainted ourselves with an ex Solihull member who now lives in Bishops Castle, Jim Roberts, who met us at the pub over pints of Noggin, Karma, Sutra, Cloud Nine, and Spikey Blonde (named after the female brewer). The pub consists of two rooms; a bar and lounge where food is served. It exudes a friendly atmosphere and has the accolade of appearing in the first Good Beer Guide in 1974.



Six Bells Brewery

After a pint or two, John Spalding the owner took us on a tour of the brewery. The brewery was set up in 1997 and as with many microbreweries things were tight there, with space used as economically as possible. I have to admit that I have never seen a microbrewery as clean as the Six Bells; you could eat your dinner off the floor.

From the Six Bells we headed up to the Boars Head for a bite to eat and a pint

or so. Adequate for our purposes we consumed Ludlow Gold, Theakston Best Bitter and St Austell Proper Job. A comfortable pub, however the kitchen was not very well organised, being only able to handle one table order at a time, so things were held up a little.

We then took a look in the Kings Head which served Stonehouse Station Bitter and Wye Valley Butty Bach. Deciding to give it a miss we headed uphill to the Castle Hotel.

The Castle dates back to the 18th Century and overlooks a square in the town. A hotel in the real sense of the word, it has 12 bedrooms in combinations to suit all tastes and a garden that is a delight to sit in. The bar was well stocked and Three Tuns Rantipole, Clun Pale Ale, Salopian Oracle, Six Bells Big Nev's and Hobsons Best were tried. I went for the Oracle, one of my favourites.

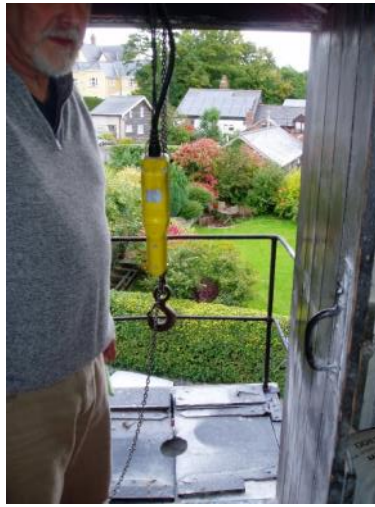
We could not tarry to long here as we were due for a tour of the Three Tuns Brewery, where Steve Wilmer was waiting to take us around the brewery. What a contrast to the Six Bells. It is a traditional tower brewery and was one of only 4 microbreweries in existence when CAMRA was born in 1974. Brewing has been carried out on this site since the 1640's. The adjoining pub is not owned by the brewery but stocks their beers.

Let's get into the brewery tour. Steve proved a very



Sampling at Three Tuns

enthusiastic devotee of his beers. He constantly disappeared to the sampling rooms, returning with jugs of nearly every beer they brewed for us to try. The tour, as with all tower breweries, started at the top where we viewed the hoist which still transports the malt up to the top of the brewery, no lifts here. It certainly is a great example of a tower brewery. Oh, and the beers in the pub were Three Tuns Triple X, Stout, 1642, and Clerics Cure. It's a large pub with food having a strong presence.



Hoisting at Three Tuns

Finally we took advantage of visiting the Crown and Anchor Vaults, which did not open until 4pm. It was a basic pub which served Ludlow Gold and Blonde and Six Bells Spikey Blonde. Time not being on our side, we were soon on the coach and on our way back home to Solihull, with us all thanking Paul for organising a great day out.

Steve Dyson

Nick, Gwen & staff welcome you to

The Vaults

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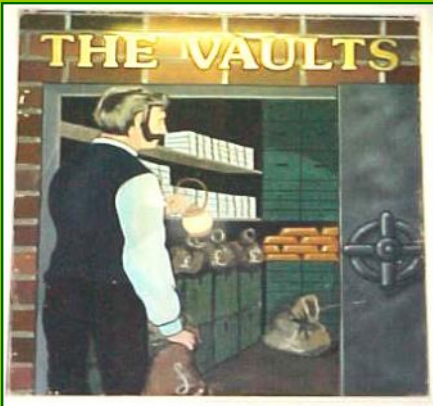
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SPOTLIGHT ON.....

The Thousand Trades Brewing Co. & The Pup & Duckling

Paul Scrivens and Jeff Berry have known each other for a long time — since 1969, in fact, when they first met aged four at infant school.

Fast-forward to some five years ago, when evenings and weekends were spent on snooker and fishing trips, and talk inevitably turned to beer. Jeff used to take along his homebrew, about which Paul was somewhat disparaging thanks to childhood memories of his dad's efforts in that direction.



Paul Scrivens (left) and Jeff Berry, owner of the Pup & Duckling pub, outside Paul's brewery)

However the idea quietly fermented and with an eye to the future he commenced homebrew operations in his garage, winning first prize in the homebrew competition with 'Sparky IPA' at the King's Heath & Moseley Beer festival in February 2014. An equally positive reception with another brew at the second Shirley Round Table Beer Festival at Camp Hill in May 2014 spurred Paul into searching for brewery premises finding his current Hall Green location lock-up in summer 2014.

When Jeff announced in December 2014 that he was thinking of changing jobs, Paul made the off-the-cuff remark "The hardest part of being a brewer isn't the red tape or dealing with HMRC but selling your first pint", which ignited the idea of Jeff being a point of sale for Paul's future beers.

Paul moved his first brew-kit into the lock-up, acquired his commercial brewing licence, and the Thousand Trades Brewing Co. was born. He says "The name came from the fact that I wanted to represent Birmingham as the 'City of a thousand trades' and identify with the specialist craftsmen working away in small workshops in the late 19th & early 20th centuries". (In 1901 when the term was coined, levels of enterprise were high and unemployment was low). "There's also a bit of a 'Steampunk' connection: I wanted to stay in the Industrial Revolution/Victorian era for the marketing and branding and to reference its trades, crafts, philosophies, science and technology but to make it a bit more fun, throw in some science-fiction from the same period" Paul added.



Onto Jeff Berry and his vision.

Having rejected the idea of an off-licence or online sales point, he started thinking about premises for rent near his home in Hatchford Brook which could be converted into a hostelry, as reported in the March 2016 Drinker (NB. View this article online at www.solihull.camra.org.uk). Reading about old 'parlour pubs led him to the concept of the modern micropub, Jeff's ideal pub format.



It's a family affair—The Berry family: (from left) Jeff, Katrina, Sue, Emily and Sam.

The family-run Pup and Duckling opened its doors to its first paying customers on 4th February 2016 (the anniversary was celebrated with a 2-day beer festival) and since then has gone from strength to strength, building a loyal local following who really appreciate the varied, well-kept beers on offer and the atmosphere where the only noise is the buzz of animated conversation and maybe the click of dominoes or chess from the back room.

There have been notable highlights over the past year.

August 19th saw a whole cask of Wye Valley Brewery's Samba Ale sell out in a record 1 hour and 8 minutes, beating the record by nearly

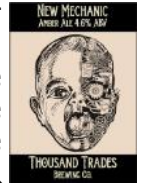


2 hours, the BATS ('Black Country Ale Tairsters') visited the pub on October 19th and pronounced themselves more than happy with the ales on offer, iconic Black Country chorizo scratchings made an appearance on November 4th, and the 4th beer of Paul Scrivens' test batches, 'New Mechanic', a 4.6% ABV English Amber Ale, was considered good enough to go on sale at the pub on 24th November, where the whole cask sold out in one evening. Christmas was celebrated by opening every day up to 24th December and featuring The 24 Beers Of Christmas ranging from 14th Noel, Acorn to White Christmas by Saltaire.



*"¿ ¿Uno momento Señor, son tradicionales Black Country chorizo scratchings?"
"Ar, bostin', mate!"*

Keep an eye out for Thousand Trades' beers this year at local beer festivals and pub outlets the Inn on the Green, the Wellington, the Ivy Leaf, and, of course, the Pup & Duckling. Solihull & District CAMRA wish the Thousand Trades Brewing Co. and the Pup and Duckling all the best for 2017 and their mutual enterprises.



Julia Wright

Brewery contact details:

Paul Scrivens ,Thousand Trades Brewing Co.

Telephone no: 07768 454741

pscrivens@thousandtradesbrewing.co.uk

To order:

Twitter: @thousandtrades

Facebook:www.facebook.com/thousandtradesbrewingco

The Pup & Duckling, 1 Hatchford Brook Road, Solihull B92 9EU Tel: 0121 247 8358

Opening Hours: Monday—Tuesday: Closed

Wednesday—Saturday: 5.00pm—10.00pm

Sunday—12.00 noon—3.00pm

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pup.and.duckling

Website: www.pupandduckling.co.uk

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CAMRA Revitalisation Project

The Revitalisation Project was launched in April 2016, and CAMRA's National Executive commissioned the Revitalisation Project Steering Committee to carry out an independent review of CAMRA's positioning, purpose and activity.

Led by one of CAMRA's founders, Michael Hardman MBE, the RPSC carried out a large-scale consultation of CAMRA members this summer. Tens of thousands of CAMRA members responded to online surveys and almost two thousand attended consultation events across the country.

The RSPC also sought the views of those with involvement and expertise in the pub and beer industries, including publicans, brewers, politicians and journalists.

The Committee considered this wide range of information and was confident that it provided a representative view of those who took part in the surveys and attended consultation meetings, informed by understanding of the sector. It has now submitted its proposals for CAMRA's future to the Na-

tional Executive. While the Committee has suggested new opportunities for CAMRA, key to its proposals is that campaigning to protect community pubs and clubs, real ale, cider and per-ry, will continue to be its main campaigning objectives.

The National Executive has accepted the report as an independent, representative and unbiased review of its activities and will now take the strategic review forward to a conclusion - deciding if, how, and when to make recommendations about implementing the proposals.

CAMRA members will continue to be fully involved in the process, and will be invited to discuss the Revitalisation Project proposals at the Members' Weekend and Conference to be held in Bournemouth in April 2017.

A final decision on adopting the proposals/recommendations will be taken at the Members' Weekend and Conference to be held in Coventry in 2018.

Proposal details can be found at <https://revitalisation.camra.org.uk/>

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 17

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

The **Ale Rooms, Knowle** 50p/pint

Your Local Pub

For Centuries, the local pub, has been our nation's heart, Its heart and soul where people meet and revolutions start.

But cheaper drink in supermarkets, tax and sky high rates,

Have all combined to sadly leave our pubs in dire straits...

What has happened? What's gone wrong? Why can't we see the fact?

That without pubs our nation's health is tarnished, chipped and cracked...

It has no centre, has no soul, it has no 'Welcome Mat', No place to drink a foaming pint, no place to meet and chat,

No place where people leave their lives and worries at the door,

No place where people, if they choose, can all their woes ignore,

No place where they can quaff and sup and while away the nights,

No place where they can simply talk and put the world to rights!

Community is everything, and pubs are its foundation, The bedrock of this country, of this proud, distinguished nation!

If you frequent your local pub, I think that you will find: You're really rather happy, that you have great 'peace of mind',

So help protect our nation's health, support its social hub:

Support your Nation's heart and soul, support your local pub!

Reproduced with permission from "Beer Is Poetry"

For more beer related poems please visit Facebook "Beer Is Poetry" and "like".

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

Cask Ale Controversy

On the 1st January, Cloudwater Brew Co kicked off a major controversy in the beer world by announcing on their brewery blog that they were to cease production of cask ale.

A couple of weeks later, renowned beer writer Pete Brown (author of the annual Cask Ale Report up until this year) announced that he has "mostly stopped drinking cask ale". The primary reason was given as the poor quality of cask ale served up in pubs. Served in good condition there is still nothing to beat cask ale, but too many pubs do not know how to keep the beer well.

This statement provoked a rapid response from Roger Protz, author of the Good Beer Guide, and from Colin Valentine, CAMRA's national chairman.

While the debate was based around beer quality, which we would all agree can be variable, the elephant in the room was cost of producing cask vs keg and the profitability of each.

Entering into the cost debate, the Beer Nouveau brewery in Manchester published some costings for each type of beer packaging. It showed only around a £3 better profit per batch for keg over cask (£108 without staff wages or sales costs). Producing only keg or cask leaves the brewer with a wage of less than £500 per month for a 60 hour week. The profit per batch for bottles comes to nearly £1600 in comparison.

The other interesting figure is profit per cask. The brewer makes £5.73 (£8.63 loss if sold to Wetherspoons), while the pub makes £210, hence the value of tap houses to brewers.

Roger Protz summed it up. "... the return it makes on cask beer is too low to make it worthwhile. There's no easy answer to this. Cask should not be seen as the "poor man's drink" but on the other hand many drinkers find the prices demanded for craft keg to be exorbitant. In one pub in St Albans, where I live, a glass of BrewDog is £4.50 – and that's for a special glass holding two-thirds of a pint.

How cask beer should be priced to make a decent living for small brewers while reaching out to drinkers who're not joining Bill Gates in Davos this week is an urgent debate that needs to involve CAMRA, SIBA and the family brewers."

Titanic Boss Gets MBE

Titanic Brewery boss Keith Bott was awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours list.

Keith received the honour for services to the brewing industry and the economy of Staffordshire. He led the growth of the business from a micro-brewery to a thriving firm employing more than 150 people.

Butcombe Rebrands

Butcombe brewery from Somerset is one of the latest breweries to rebrand and rename part of their range.



Heineken and Patron To Acquire Punch Taverns

On the 10th February Punch Taverns shareholders voted to approve Heineken's takeover offer.

Under the terms of the deal Heineken will acquire 1,900 pubs from Punch Taverns. Heineken runs 1,049 pubs in the UK in its Star Bars and Pubs estate. If the Punch deal goes through, Heineken will be Britain's third largest pub group, after Greene King and Enterprise Inns.

The Competition and Markets Authority said it would assess whether the Heineken deal could reduce competition and choice for customers.

The investment company Patron Capital will take the remaining pubs; Punch operates more than 3,000 pubs across the UK.

CAMRA sent an open letter to Lawson Mountstevens, MD of Heineken's Star Pubs & Bars, to seek assurances about maintaining choice for drinkers in the range of beers and ciders offered.

Heineken has dismissed these fears, saying pubs will still have a say over which beers they sell, and pledged to work with independent brewers. Its spokesperson said: "We want to work constructively with licensees to grow our businesses together, and we have no intention of imposing blanket conditions on them which are detrimental to that shared aim. We will start with what is right for each of the pubs joining us and we will work together with licensees to ensure they have the right drinks on offer to suit the specific needs of each pub."



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The National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) is a 0-5 point scale for judging beer quality in pubs.

0. No cask ale available.

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

2. Average. Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.

3. Good. Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.

4. Very Good. Excellent beer enjoyed in excellent condition.

5. Perfect. Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

Half points can also be awarded.

It is an easy to use system that has been designed to assist CAMRA branches in selecting pubs for the Good Beer Guide and also monitor beer quality by encouraging CAMRA members from any part of the world to report beer quality in any UK pub.

If you are a CAMRA member, we want you to tell us about the quality of beer in the pubs you visit.

As an incentive, when you score a beer you get entered into a prize draw to win free CAMRA books!

How do I score my beer?

You can score your beer online at home, or if you have a smart phone in the pub, by visiting whatpub.com.

Log into the site using your CAMRA membership number and password. Once you have agreed to the terms and conditions and found a pub on the site, you can start scoring.

You can find out more here :

<http://whatpub.com/beerscoring>

By regularly doing this you can help pubs consistently serving good beer to be recognised in CAMRA branches' entries in the **Good Beer Guide**, and **Pub or Club Of The Year**, and help us to incentivise others to improve.



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CAMRA At The BBC Food & Drink Show 2016

It was a different sort of Great British Beer Experience (GBBE) this year. With the judging of the Champion Bottled Beer of Britain (CBBob) taking place on the Thursday morning, there were no cask ales or racking behind the scenes, and participants at the tutored tastings had the chance to sample 6 of the 15 bottled contenders, as selected by “the experts” fronting the show; Daniel Neilson of Beer Hawk, Sally Lavender, and Des de Moor. Beer Hawk, the online supplier of over 500 brews from all over the world, co-sponsored the GBBE with CAMRA and they sourced the 150 cases of the beer needed for the show.

Early volunteers on the Thursday had to set out the tables for the 2 tasting panels involved in the 1st round of judging, each judge being given a copy of the CAMRA Beer Style Guidelines and a score

sheet. They were given the onerous task giving the beers a score out of 10 for each of 4 parameters; appearance, aroma, taste and aftertaste, having only been told the beer’s style and strength. They brought a variety of torches, spotlights, and remote temperature-measuring devices as well as their noses & palates.

Panel 1 sampled 7 porters and stouts which had been stored at 11 degrees before being decanted into jugs and served in the following order: Beowulf’s “Finn’s Hall Porter” (5.2%), Elland’s “1872 Porter” (6.5%), Fyne Ales’ “Sublime Stout” (6.8%), Flipside Brewery’s “Russian Rouble” (7.3%), Bristol Beer Factory’s “Ultimate Stout” (7.5%), Harvey’s “Imperial Extra Double Stout” (9%) and Stringers of Ulverston “Mutiny Double Stout” (9.3%).

Panel 2 sampled 8 paler beers, which had also been lightly chilled, in the following order: Monty's "Hill Top" (3.6%), Crouch Vale's "Yakima Gold" (4.2%), St Austell's "Proper Job" (5.5%), Fullers' "1845" (6.3%), Amber Ales' "Imperial IPA" (6.5%), Wye Valley's "Butty Bach" (4.5%), Consiton's "Bluebird Bitter" (4.2%) and Stewart Brewing's "Radical Road" (6.4%). These beers had come through from the various regional tasting panels to the NEC and the top 3 from each panel went into the final. Here they were judged by a fresh panel of experts which included Roger Protz (Beer writer), Daniel Neilson (Beer Hawk), Charlie Gorham (Charles Faram Hop Factors & Merchants), Geoff Cross (beer taster) and 4 others, one of whom was the wife of the late Bob Jones, who regularly introduced the CAMRA tastings until his death in 2014.



Judges hard at work!

The 6 finalists as described in the tasting notes given to the public (but not of course the panels!) were:-

Beowulf's "Finn's Hall Porter" (5.2%) - a nearly black beer with a dark chocolate, caramel aroma with hints of pear & pineapple.

Flipside Brewery's "Russian Rouble" (7.3%) - brewed with traditional English hops this strong dark Russian Imperial Stout has rich chocolate and malt flavours.



Stringers' "Mutiny Double Stout" (9.3%) - a rich black beer. The aroma is leathery with subtle caramel and bonfire smoke. The equally complex, mostly sweetest fuses more leather and prune notes with a touch of caramel but there are also suggestions of pear, blackcurrant, cola and peppery alcohol and a bitter finish with caramel and liquorice.

Crouch Vale's "Yakima Gold" (4.2%) - a very pale ale with the punchy taste of US Amarillo hops, which are earthily aromatic.

Fullers' "1845" (6.3%) - an amber red beer with a biscuity cake-like aroma. The cake like taste is generally sweet but not cloying, with nutty malt undertones. Roasted grains emerge in the dry finish, alongside a rounded hop bitterness.

Stewart Brewing's "Radical Road" (6.4%) - a golden ale with a zesty aroma of grapefruit and lemon, following through into the mostly sweet taste. Pithy grapefruit-citrus notes continue into the dry finish that turns slowly bitter.

When the tellers totalled up the scores the Champion Bottled Beer 2016 was Stringers' "Mutiny Double Stout", with Flipside's "Russian Rouble" runner up and Crouch Vale's "Yakima Gold" in third.



All the contenders were enjoyed (in very small amounts) by the volunteers, with the 750ml ceramic & wire-capped bottles of Sublime Stout being particularly appreciated. This could have been in the final but the judges (or at least some of them) seemed to feel it was mis-categorised and was more a dark IPA than a matured imperial stout. We could see they were right for, although the tasting notes said it was 'a deep ruby red stout with a taste of mellow sweetness then a large malty fruitiness followed by a long smooth dry finish', the bottle label proclaimed it to have been "generously hopped at four points in the brewing process, including a dry hopping in the conditioning vessel. Each bottle is matured for at least 4 weeks and krausened for a champagne mouth-feel". The addition of freshly fermenting wort to beer that is ready to bottle certainly made some bottles of this beer more lively than others!



The winners pick up their prize.

Perhaps the most unusual beer was Bristol Beer Factory's "Ultimate Stout". Described as "a dark beer with a leather and chocolate aroma which leads to a bittersweet taste with a mixture of dark malt flavours, also floral notes plus a little orange and pineapple running through", I thought it was like a rich dark saison beer but overheard a couple of the judges say they thought it was off. I was pleased to hear from the Beer Hawk maestro that my opinion was the correct one!

Once the judging was over there were 2 tasting sessions on the Thursday with 4 more on Friday, 4 on Saturday and 3 on Sunday. This year they all sold out, 50 show visitors each paying £6 for the privilege of a tutored tasting. As usual, volunteering to set tables, serve, clear & wash meant taking turns at lots of glassware handing, especially drying. In fact I calculated that over 4 days the 30 volunteers must have washed and dried around 400 jugs and 4,500 glasses between them, whilst another 6 - 10 took turns to recruit new members, sell CAMRA merchandise, and talk to visitors to the stall.

Thanks to Emma Porrett, who coordinated the CAMRA stall and tasting, the whole thing went off well. The volunteers enjoyed ourselves, even though it was hard work and we all felt tired at the end of the day, CAMRA gained lots of new members and at least 650 individuals are much wiser about beer - and real ale in particular. Oh yes, and a small, very environmentally-friendly, independent, family-run Lake District "craft" brewery won the Bottled Beer competition with a real ale! Well done indeed Rebecca Stringer and Jonathan Kyme!

John Edwards

Solihull Drinker Issue No. 79

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Thank you to all contributors.

The 80th edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 5th June 2017.

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

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Rowington Club, Rowington Green, Rowington, Warwick CV35 7DB

Membership Matters

Our current branch membership stands at nearly 600, however it would be nice if this were to increase significantly in line with the national figure, which saw an increase last year of 5.2%, and now means that there are 185,000 like-minded individuals in this country with an appreciation of real ale and real cider. CAMRA is one of the largest not-for-profit consumer groups in the country, and have more members than some of the major political parties.

We would still like to see this number increase, both locally and nationally, so with this in mind CAMRA is launching a "Member get Member" scheme, the goal of which is to encourage as many members as possible to refer a friend or family member to CAMRA. If they join, the existing member is rewarded with a discount code for the CAMRA shop and a chance to win a case of beer.

A dedicated on-line referral tool has been launched, and can be accessed via the members' area of the website. For this you will need your membership number and password, which will allow you to refer friends and family. So, if you are a CAMRA member and know somebody who has, like you, an interest in real ale and cider please refer them to us via the website.

Hopefully, we can see our local membership go past 600 and see some new faces at our events.

We publish forthcoming meetings and social events in this magazine and at www.solihull.camra.org.uk. Follow the links to either the Branch Diary or Socials page for details. Do try to come along to one near you as we are a friendly bunch. You can enjoy good company whilst having a good pint of real ale. Our socials vary from local meet-ups at pubs, to brewery visits, or sometimes pub & grub nights. These use public transport or travel arrangements are organised.

You can also participate by rating pubs via Whatpub.com, as well as judging and selecting pubs for the CAMRA Good Beer Guide and our Branch Pub & Club of the Year.

A decision was made recently to increase the membership rates in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI). This increase will take effect as of 1st April 2017, and will mean the majority of member subscriptions will increase by either 50p or £1 per annum So why not join CAMRA before the price increase, and enjoy all the great benefits such as a monthly newsletter called "What's Brewing" an award winning quarterly magazine titled "Beer", free or reduced entry to beer festivals, £20 of JD Wetherspoon vouchers and numerous other benefits. Please see www.camra.org.uk for full details.

Dave Mckowen
Membership Secretary

<i>Useful Contact Numbers</i>		<i>Socials</i>	
<i>Chairman</i>		Paul Wigley	07402 312457
Carl Wright	0121 603 1621	<i>Pubs Campaigning/Beer Festival</i>	
<i>Secretary</i>		Martin Buck	01564 770708
Allan Duffy	01564 200431	<i>Solihull Drinker Editor</i>	
<i>Membership</i>		David Cove	0121 603 6057
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