

# Solihull



# Drinker

Issue No 80  
Summer 2017

**Free**  
Please take one

## Pup and Duckling - Solihull CAMRA Pub of The Year 2017



*Chairman Carl Wright congratulates Jeff and Sue Berry on winning Solihull CAMRA Pub of The Year 2017 only 15 months after opening. Find out more on page 3.*

**GOLD  
STAR**

GOLDEN HONEY ALE

39%

**SILHILL  
BREWERY**

AWARD WINNING HAND CRAFTED ALES

**BLONDE  
STAR**

TRIPLE HOPPED  
PALE ALE

41%

**SILHILL  
BREWERY**

AWARD WINNING HAND CRAFTED ALES

**SILHILL  
BREWERY**

**PURE  
STAR**

PREMIUM AMBER ALE

43%

**SILHILL  
BREWERY**

AWARD WINNING HAND CRAFTED ALES

**NORTH  
STAR**

PREMIUM BLACK ALE

4.5%

**SILHILL  
BREWERY**

AWARD WINNING HAND CRAFTED ALES

# THE NAGS HEAD



## Opening hours:

**Monday—Thursday 12—11pm**

**Friday—Sunday 12—Midnight**

## Meals served

**Weekdays 12—3pm & 6pm —9pm**

**Saturday 12— 9pm**

**Sunday 12— 7pm**

**[www.thenagsheadhenley.co.uk](http://www.thenagsheadhenley.co.uk)**

**5 Real Ales at all times**

## Henley Music Festival

**Friday 25th - Monday 28th August**

**Join us for Live Music and more!**

**Food available**

**Free Entry**



**Book our beautiful garden  
for your private event.  
Wedding or Garden Party**

**161 High St,  
Henley-in-Arden  
B95 5BA  
Tel : 01564 793120**



**f** The Nags Head  
Henley In Arden

# Solihull CAMRA Pub of The Year Award 2017

On Friday 4th February 2016 at 5.00pm the first paying customers arrived at the Pup and Duckling, met by an admittedly nervous Jeff Berry.

On Wednesday 17th May 2017, after around 450 different beers had been sold, Solihull CAMRA arrived to present Jeff and his family with the 2017 Pub of The Year award.

Branch Chairman Carl Wright said "It's commendable that the Pup and Duckling have won this award after only 15 months – we know that has been a period of hard work on the part of Jeff and his family, which has not gone unnoticed by the branch. The pub has had a great variety of real ales on offer since it opened, with all casks selling out very quickly – I believe the record is 1 hour and 8 minutes for one beer!

"The support that the pub has received from both local people and real ale fans from further afield is testament to the effort that the family have put into making this a place where people can come to drink interesting, well-kept beers without the usual modern distractions of noisy music and machines – good conversation is the priority here. Solihull CAMRA is pleased to present our 2017 Pub of the Year award to

the Pup and Duckling, and wish it, and the Berry family, success for the rest of the year and the foreseeable future."

Jeff thanked CAMRA for their support since he opened, and spoke about how things have moved on since that nervous opening.

The first year has seen a continual increase in the range of drinks available, and opening of the beer garden. The second year promises more improvements and we all looking forward to seeing what Jeff has up his sleeve next.



Those present on Wednesday will have seen the Pup and Duckling's adopted mascot. Like the pub itself, the pup in the picture has grown up a lot. It will be interesting to see how they grow together over the coming years.

## Features in this issue include:

<b>Dates for the Diary &amp; Beer Festival News</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Bulls Head, Barston – A Pearl among Pubs</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>600th Member &amp; Counting</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Some "Must Visit" Pubs in Central London</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>A Pub Crawl of Northampton</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Hail To The Ale - Local News</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Midweek Crawl of Sutton Coldfield</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Long Weekend in Stockport and Manchester</b>	<b>28</b>





## Dates For Your Diary

### Branch Meetings

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

Monday 3rd July	Woodman's Rest, Shirley
Monday 7th August	Fleur De Lys, Lowsonford
Monday 4th September	Red Lion, Earlswood

### Committee Meetings

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

Monday 17th July	Saxon, Cheswick Green
------------------	-----------------------

### Socials

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](http://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.***

**SOLIHULL CAMRA**  
*is proud to present*



**Solihull Royal British Legion**  
**Union Road, Solihull B91 3DH**

£10 entry (inc. programme/glass/beer tokens  
& CAMRA members' discount)

**Fri. 6th & Sat. 7th**  
**October**  
**12 noon—11.00pm**

**45 Beers, plus Cider & Perry**

**Food available both days**

**Homebrew competition**  
**Saturday afternoon**

**Live Music Saturday Night**



[www.facebook.com/Solihull-CAMRA-2017-Beer-Festival-1688672281434504](https://www.facebook.com/Solihull-CAMRA-2017-Beer-Festival-1688672281434504)

## Upcoming Midlands Area Beer Festivals

**June 8–10 (Thu-Sat):**

### **42nd Wolverhampton Beer & Cider Fest**

Newhampton Arts Centre, Dunkley St, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN. National Express no 6 bus from Wolverhampton Bus Stn/a 20 min walk from the railway, bus + Metro stns. 75+ real ales & range of ciders/perries & foreign bottled beer. Entertainment Fri eve only. Open: Thu 5-11pm (£3.50), Fri 12noon-5pm (£2.50), 5-11pm (£4.50), Sat 12noon-11pm (free all day). CAMRA membs get £1 beer token except Sat. More info [wolverhampton.camra.org.uk](http://wolverhampton.camra.org.uk)

**June 16-17 (Fri-Sat):**

### **Nuneaton & Bedworth Beer Fest**

Nuneaton Co-operative Sports Club, 23 Dugdale St, Nuneaton CV11 5QJ, 15mins walk from Railway Station. Open: Fri 12 noon -1030pm, Sat: 12noon-9pm. 30+ Real Ales, & cider/perry (10+ sourced from Local Breweries). Live entertainment Friday only. Hot/cold food available including veggie option. Accompanied children with a responsible adult welcome both days until 6pm. Entry CAMRA members 50p, Non CAMRA members £2.

**June 17 (Sat):**

### **St Giles Beer Festival**

St Giles church, 149 Church Rd, Birmingham B25 8UP. 12 noon to 10pm. Over 15 ales and ciders. Hot and cold food served throughout the day. Further details on Facebook @stgilesbeerfest.

**June 23-25 (Fri- Sun):**

### **Lady Lane Wharf Beer Festival**

Lady Lane, Earlswood—16 beers and 6 ciders. Fri 6pm-11pm, Sat 11am – 11pm, Sun from 11am. Music Fri eve and all day Saturday. Beer festival snack food. Free entry and tasting notes.

**June 23-25 (Fri- Sun):**

### **10th Griffin Beer Festival**

Griffin Inn, Church Road, Shustoke, B46 2LB total of 100 ales, 50 ciders. From noon each day

**June 24 (Sat):**

### **Blue Bell Cider & Beer Fest**

The Blue Bell Cider House, Warings Green Road, Hockley Heath, Warks. B94 6BP

**June 29– July 1 (Thu-Sat):**

### **Bromsgrove Beer & Cider Fest**

Bromsgrove Rugby Club, Finstall Rd, Bromsgrove B603DH. 10min walk from Bromsgrove station + buses from town centre. 144 beers / 50+ ciders / perries. Open: Thu 6pm-11pm (CAMRA membs/Trade only); Fri 12pm-11pm; Sat 11am-9.30pm. Entry £3 (Members £1) & £2 refundable souvenir glass. Variety of food stalls available; live music on Fri eve, Sat afternoon + eve. Room outside marquee for picnics + family games. [www.bromsgrovebeerfestival.org.uk](http://www.bromsgrovebeerfestival.org.uk)

**July 5-9 (Wed-Sun):**

### **Derby CAMRA Summer Beer Fest**

Market Place, Derby. 200+ real ales & cider/ continental/ mead. Open: Wed 6.30pm -11pm, Thu-Sat 11am—11pm, Sun 12noon - 2pm. Live music & food available. Free entry to all sessions for CAMRA members with a valid card. [www.derbycamra.org.uk/summer-beer-festival](http://www.derbycamra.org.uk/summer-beer-festival) for info.

**July 7-8 (Fri-Sat):**

### **Stratford-Upon-Avon Beer & Cider Fest**

Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse, Luddington Rd, Warwickshire CV37 9SE. Approx 20 mins walk from train station or minibus, brown tourist signs to Racecourse. 70+ real ales, 30+ ciders/perries. Food available all sessions. Live entertainment on Sat. Quiet room available. Open: Fri 12noon-11pm; Sat 11am-11pm. Tickets available at entry, £10 package incl fest glass (£1 refund for unwanted glass) prog +£5 beer/cider tokens. CAMRA members with valid card get 2 free half pint tokens. Info: [stratfordbeerfestival.org.uk](http://stratfordbeerfestival.org.uk)

**July 7-23 (Fri-Sun):**

### **Wetherspoon's Cider Festival**

All Wetherspoons pubs including the Pumpouse, Stratford Road, Shirley, and the White Swan, Station Road, Solihull. Up to 30 ciders normally.

**July 13-16 (Thur-Sun):**

**Inn On The Green Beer Fest**

2 Westley Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 7UH. 20+ales, 6 ciders. Music Fri and Sat live and free. 20p per pint off for CAMRA members.

**July 21-23 (Fri-Sun):**

**Market Bosworth Rail Ale Festival**

80 Real Ales, over 30 Ciders & Perries. Fruit Wines, Pimms bar, plus beers and ciders on the trains. Dr. Busker will perform on Friday & Saturday evenings from 8pm. Natalie Nightingale will be performing Saturday afternoon & Sunday lunch. Steam & diesel locos, plus Traction Engines, Road Rollers and Steam Lorries. Morris Dancers (Sunday afternoon), Childrens entertainment, Hot & Cold Food. Families & Children welcome. Fri 12-11pm, Sat 11 -11pm, Sun 11-6pm. ENTRY Friday £1 before 6pm, £5 after 6pm Saturday & Sunday £5. Card carrying CAMRA members free admission at all times. The Battlefield Line, The Goods Shed, Market Bosworth Railway Station, Market Bosworth, Leicestershire CV13 0PF

**July 27-29 (Thu-Sat):**

**10th Stafford Beer & Cider Fest**

Blessed William Howard School, Rowley Avenue, Stafford, ST17 9AB. Under 10 mins walk from Stafford rail stn, off Newport Rd. 70 real ales + 30 ciders/ perries + country wines + bottled beer bar. Food avail all sessions. Live music, semi acoustic Fri & Sat eve, brass band Sat aft. Open: Thu 6-11pm; Fri 1130am-4pm + 4-11pm;

Sat 12noon- 7pm + 7-11pm. Fri/Sat aft families welcome, other sessions over 18's. Admission £1 Thu, Fri aft & Sat eve; £3 Fri eve; £2 Sat aft. £1 entrance discount to CAMRA members with valid cards . Refundable glass hire £3 or souvenir glass £3 Info: [www.staffordbeerfestival.co.uk](http://www.staffordbeerfestival.co.uk)

**August 10-12 (Thu-Sat):**

**Black Country Beer Festival**

Lye Cricket Club, Stourbridge Road Sports Ground, Lye, West Mids DY9 7DH. Up to 130 real ales, ciders and perrys. £10 entry includes glass and £5 of drinks vouchers. £2 off for CAMRA members. Live music, Black Country BBQ. Times: Thur 6-11pm, Fri & Sat 12pm -11pm Contact 07916 620 934 or [www.blackcountrybeerfestival.com/](http://www.blackcountrybeerfestival.com/) for more details.

**August 17-19 (Thu-Sat):**

**Worcester Beer, Cider & Perry Fest**

Worcester Racecourse, Grand Stand Rd, Worcester, WR1 3EJ. 170+ real ales, 100+ ciders & perries + a good selection of fruit & grape wines, food/ soft drinks. Open: Thu 5pm-11pm, Fri 12pm-11pm, Sat 12pm -10pm. Entry Thu £6, Fri £10, Sat £6. Attendance numbers will be limited per session and advance tickets, available through the fest website, are **essential** to guarantee entry especially on Fri/Sat – likely to be all-ticket. Advance tickets will cost the same as cash entry, no booking fee. CAMRA members receive a half pint beer voucher. Entry includes a souvenir fest glass/ programme. Entertainment provided



GREAT BRITISH  
**BEER**  
FESTIVAL 2017  
8-12 AUGUST  
OLYMPIA LONDON



The Award Winning  
**LADY LANE WHARF**

Lady Lane • Earlswood • Solihull • B94 6AH



Voted "Most Improved Pub 2014" and  
"Best Newcomer of the Year"

- ◇ breakfast from 9.30am
- ◇ hot and cold meals served all day
- ◇ fresh, home-cooked food to order
- ◇ live music every Saturday

- ◇ the finest cask ales — 4 constantly changing locals and nationals
- ◇ speciality ciders

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

Tel: 01564 703821

open:

Monday — Saturday:

11.00am — 11.00pm

Sunday: 11.00am — 10.30pm

email: [granthyland@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:granthyland@hotmail.co.uk)

Join us at our next *Beer Festival*  
*June 23rd, 24th and 25th*

*16 Beers and 6 ciders*

*Live music Friday evening and all  
day Saturday*

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

**FOOD • REAL ALE • TRANQUILITY**





## The Bulls Head, Barston – A Pearl among Pubs

30 years is a long time in anybody's book, but that's how long Martin ('Brad') and Joy Bradley have been managing the Bulls Head at Barston. Their tenure dates back to September 1987, and were this a wedding anniversary, for which the symbol is a pearl, the pub would be covered in them.



Brad and Joy commenced work in the Solihull area back in 1965 when Brad began his pub career at the Wayfarer in Hockley Heath (now the Miller and Carter). Both worked in relief pub management for the next 12 years, including Brad being manager of the Wilsons Arms, Knowle. They then took over the Bulls Head and are still running this friendly pub 30 years later.

This old coaching inn has existed in the tiny village since the 1490's, and is mentioned in Shakespeare's play 'King Henry IV Part II'. The frontage is modern, but the rear wing has antiquated

square framing, and there is a priest-hole in the building dating from Cromwellian times. The 20-seat restaurant is in the oldest part of the building, while the two bars boast real fires which are very popular in winter.

Brad can be found both behind the bar and 'front of house', and the décor and memorabilia confirms his life-long love of horse-racing.

Joy is in charge of the kitchen and her team produces home-cooked food and seasonal specials, available very day with the exception of Sunday evenings.

Comments on TripAdvisor are invariably complimentary, with visitors praising the food and beer—both in terms of quality and value—and the genial atmosphere.

The pub is a popular stopping point for ramblers and dog-walkers, and welcomes both locals and visitors from further afield with unfailing and equal cheeriness. It has been in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide for more than 20 years, and is a regular contender for Solihull CAMRA's Pub of the Year competition, winning it jointly once and outright no fewer than six times.

Having just extended his lease with Punch Taverns for a further five years, Brad looks forward to continuing to serve their customers and welcome new and old faces alike. Do drop by for a visit—you won't be disappointed.

*Julia Wright*



# THE BULLS HEAD

Barston Lane, Barston B92 0JU

Tel: 01675 442830

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



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

**Listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide for over 20  
years & 7 times Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year**

**Cask Marque accredited—4 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**

Let a man walk ten miles steadily on a hot summer's day along a dusty  
English road, and he will soon discover why beer was invented.

Gilbert K. Chesterton



***[www.TheBullsHeadBarston.co.uk](http://www.TheBullsHeadBarston.co.uk)***

## 600th Member & Counting

There is speculation that CAMRA is the fastest-growing voluntary organisation in the UK, so it was with great pleasure but no surprise that our branch numbers reached 600 recently.

Members gathered at The Fieldhouse, Monkspath on Wednesday 19th April in order to welcome Ian Murrie to our ranks and present him with a certificate to mark the occasion.

John Maguire, manager of the Fieldhouse, one of our local Solihull Ember Inns, had donated a gallon of beer for the 600th member and will now be arranging with Ian for the consumption of his prize.

Asked why he'd chosen to join CAMRA, Ian said "My friends and I have come to really enjoy real ales, especially the variety of beers available nowadays, which we find always on

offer at the pubs we tend to frequent in Knowle and Birmingham. A couple of my friends had joined CAMRA recently and it seemed a good idea to support the organisation that's fighting for pubs and well-kept beer".

After photos of the assembled crowd had been taken, a buffet kindly provided

by the pub was enthusiastically received by the branch attendees, and the remainder of the evening was spent relaxing and chatting.

So, now we eagerly await our 700th member—could it be you?

*Julia Wright*



**Chairman Carl Wright and John Maguire  
congratulate Ian Murrie**

### The Wharf Tavern

2390 Stratford Road  
Hockley Heath  
B94 6QT

Tel: 01564 782075

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



*Great beer garden*

*Home Cooked  
Roasts every  
Sunday*

*Live Music every  
month*

*6 frequently changing cask taps  
Wide range of World & Craft Beers  
10% discount for CAMRA members  
For updates & more information go to  
[www.facebook.com/wharftavern](https://www.facebook.com/wharftavern)*

Opening Hours:  
Sundays—Thursdays  
12 noon—11.00pm  
Fridays & Saturdays  
12 noon—12.00pm  
Food Service: 12 noon—10.00pm

## Some “Must Visit” Pubs in Central London

A day course followed by an England football match the following day enabled me to justify a cheap weekend in London so I turned down the chance to see 'Book of Mormon' (at £92 a ticket!) and made use of my CAMRA 'Best Real Heritage Pubs' book instead.

First night I ate at Shakespeare's Head, a Wetherspoon pub in Holborn that was heaving with people and very noisy. I managed to sample 3 thirds with my fish & chips; a non-Festival bitter, Salopian Lemon Dream (4.5%) that was nice and crisp, and Daleside's Thai P.A. (4.0%) which was unusual and definitely worth trying. I then moved on to The Duke (of York) which wasn't far away. It was an 'Art Deco treasure' according to my Bible and did have some nice drinking booths, although the loos, which the guide said not to miss because they were 'amazingly intact' were nothing special and very dirty!

The next day I was delighted to find that my course venue was opposite "The Craft Beer Co" pub and I was able to nip out at lunchtime for a swift half of Siren's Sound Wave IPA (5.6%) - a fine example of a great tasting craft beer.

When the course ended I went back there with 2 other attendees and sampled Firestone Brewery's Luponic Distortion (5.9%) and Wild Beer Co's Sourdough (3.6%). The first was an IPA with rotating hops, so it will taste different depending on the time of the year. In March 2017 this craft ale was eminently quaffable! The Sourdough was so named because yeasts from Hobbs House Bakery were used in conjunction with Berliner Weisse style

yeast to ferment the brew. The result was a drink sour enough to wipe the smile off anybody's face on first sip but, after a couple of mouthfuls, it morphed into something amazingly drinkable. We were still chatting so I had to go back to the bar to get another half and spotted a 6.2% Rauchbier-style real ale Franconia by Torrside Brewing. As I like the smoked beer from Bamberg "Aecht Schlenkerla" (that I can never pronounce!), I had to see how it tasted and it was another superbly different, enjoyable drinking experience.

Sadly we had to leave this fine Islington establishment and went our separate ways. I went to get some food before taking the tube to Blackfriars station, as the Black Friar sounded interesting.



I could then go up Fleet St to High Holborn taking in 4 or 5 pubs mentioned in the Heritage guide. I was hoping that Saturday night would have something more special than the previous night - and it did in spades! The first establishment was the star of the night for me: an incredible

wedge of beautiful stone, brass & bronze monks and quotes from fables & nursery rhymes, plus history and good beer as well. There was a Dominican monastery on the site for 260

years from 1276 and it was here in 1529 that Henry VIII attempted to persuade a delegation from Rome that his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was against church laws. The present building was built in 1875, but did not acquire its exquisite mosaic exterior and spectacular fat & jolly friar interior until a landlord called Petit bought it in 1906. It was scheduled for demolition in the early 60's but saved by public outcry led by Sir John Betjeman & Lady Dartmouth.



Now owned by Nicholson's Pubs, I spurned their own 'named' bitter in favour of Etta's Ale (4.0%) brewed at Rudgate Brewery by Hoghead of Denver, Colorado using barley and wheat, and it proved an excellent choice, although it did come at a London price - £4.60 a pint. However, I'd have drunk almost anything to be able to wander inside, outside & downstairs to the gents, taking around 20 photos of the Art Nouveau decor. I used to rave about the Philharmonic Hotel in my home town of Liverpool but this was right up there with that.

At around 8pm I moved on to the Olde Cheshire Cheese in Fleet Street which was fascinating in a different way. Rebuilt in 1667 after the original was destroyed in the Great Fire, the Wine Of-

fice Court notice outside indicates that its customers were likely to have included Voltaire, Pope, Dr Johnson, Dickens, Teddy Roosevelt, Conan Doyle, Yeats and other literary luminaries.

Almost as soon as I went into the 'old bar' on the right a local struck up conversation, and on hearing I was a CAM-RA member, seemed surprised that I only ordered a half of Samuel Smith's Sovereign Bitter (4.1%) and not a pint. Soon I spotted that they also had Sam Smith's India Ale (5%) so, as we were getting on well, I ordered a half of that as well. The tiny pewter lined sink mentioned in the guide was still there with its working tap, and I could imagine the panelled Chop Room opposite, with its caged African Grey Parrot and Boswell & Johnson paintings, being used as an eating area back in Victorian times. "You must have a look at the downstairs, over 800 years old!" said my friend (for these had survived the Fire of London), and sure enough the brick vaulted arches were impressively ancient, although surprisingly received no mention in the Heritage Pubs book.

Before I knew it my intended swift visit had turned into a couple of hours, so I made my excuses and hurriedly left, intent on visiting Citty of Yorke in High Holborn. En route I passed 2 interesting pubs I might normally have stopped at; The Tipperary - the first pub in the UK to serve Guinness according to my friend; and Ye Olde Cock Tavern. Ye Olde Mitre was also tucked away up an alley nearby, but I'd been warned that this pub is only open during the week so I didn't divert. The Citty is an extraordinary pub with a huge high roof and drinking booths with HR (Henry

*Continued on page 14*





# Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club

Established 1896



**Winner of Solihull & District CAMRA Club Of The Year 2016**

Knowle & Dorridge 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.

In the summer months you can relax with your favourite ale 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 is also available which comes with discount entitlement at the bar to make your favourite beers even better value.

**Station Road  
Dorridge  
B93 8ET**

**Tel 01564 774338**



## Opening Hours:

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

**Play:** [KDCC.play-cricket.com](http://KDCC.play-cricket.com)  
**Website :** [knowleanddorridgecc.co.uk](http://knowleanddorridgecc.co.uk)  
**Email:** [knowledorridgecc@gmail.com](mailto:knowledorridgecc@gmail.com)

 **KnowleAndDorridgeCC**

 **@The\_Shire**

Rex) monograms down the side, giving it the appearance of a medieval hall. Above the bar are huge 50 and 100 gallon barrels which were still in use after WWII, when the owners were Henekeys the wine merchants, but today it's another Sam Smith establishment so I settled for a half of Old Brewery Bitter: oak cask (4.0%) which was in good condition.

There were still 2 other pubs I hoped to visit, so, after having a good look around and supping up, I headed for the Princess Louise up the road. Alas, they were no longer serving by the time I got there but I was able to have a good look around the late-Victorian interior. The layout of a peninsula-style servery with intimate screened off spaces wrapped around it, accessible via 2 corridors on the outside, dates from the 1890's but Sam Smith's refurbished it & lovingly replaced some of the lost screenwork as recently as 2008. With gilded mirrors, some spectacular urinals, lovely ceilings, tiling, glasswork & floors it was a drinking establishment I'd definitely return to.



I wondered if the final Heritage Pub on my list, Fitzrovia at the end of Oxford Street, might still be serving, but I walked straight past it without realising because it was shut and it's now called

The Flying Horse! However, I was able to view the fancy mirrors and one of the large paintings of ladies representing the Four Seasons through the windows.

Sunday was devoted to culture of a different kind: an interesting visit to the British Library, and a trip to Wembley to find the memorial stone to Ian Edwards (*a much missed Solihull CAM-RA member*) we had laid on Wembley Way in 2012, and to see the Lithuania game.



Before the match I had a pint of London Pride at The Torch, the nearest Cask Marque pub to the stadium, and after the 2-0 win I managed to get back to Euston with an hour to spare before my £7.50 train back to Brum. What better way to spend it than in the excellent Euston Tap with its great range of cask, craft & bottled ales. So a great weekend came to a close supping a pint of Vocation Brewery's American pale Pride and Joy (5.3%) while sitting outside on a balmy March evening. That just leaves another 20 pubs with interiors of outstanding historic interest for me to visit next time I've some spare time in Central London!

*John Edwards*

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

## ***The Vaults***

*St John's Close, Knowle*

*01564 773656*

***the Real Ale venue in Knowle***

**6 hand-pumped beers** including  
Shepherd Neame Spitfire, Sharp's  
Atlantic, Wadworth Henry's Original IPA,  
Salopian Shropshire Gold and Timothy  
Taylor's Knowle Spring + 1 changing  
guest, plus Rattler's Cornish Cyder

**Previous multiple Solihull CAMRA Pub  
of the Year award winner**

***Continuously listed in the CAMRA  
Good Beer Guide since 1993***

**New Opening hours:**

**Open every day**

**12.00 noon -11.30pm**

***Food available lunchtimes***

***Mondays - Saturdays***

***12.00-2.00pm***

***Freshly made cocktails***

***from 6.30pm***

***Fridays & Saturdays***



***We also have a great Gin  
collection to please everyone.  
Come and try us.***

## **Solihull CAMRA Home Brew Competition 2017**

As you can see from the advert on page 4, the Solihull Beer Festival returns in October.

More good news: the Home Brew competition is returning as well.

Held on Saturday afternoon, the rules are simple. Any amateur brewer (i.e. no commercial licence) can enter, providing they have brewed the beer themselves. Whether you brew using ready-to-go kits or grind your own malt and grow your own hops, all you need to do is come along on Saturday afternoon with samples of your beer.



Many thanks to Thousand Trades Brewing, who have kindly agreed to sponsor the competition. The winner will enjoy a day at the brewery with owner Paul Scrivens, who won this competition in 2015, while runners-up will receive bottles of Thousand Trades beers.

For further details please contact the competition organiser, Max Lanham at [solihullhomebrew@gmail.com](mailto:solihullhomebrew@gmail.com). Who knows, maybe the competition could be your inspiration to follow Paul's lead!

# A Pub Crawl of Northampton

Last year the branch went on a brewery and pub tour of Northampton (see Solihull Drinker 76, Summer 2016). Unfortunately I could not join them due to other commitments. However, I was walking the MacMillan Way and Northampton was close to my route. Given the recommendations of those who went on the tour, I decided to kill two birds with one stone. For me walking and beer go together extremely well.

I stayed at the Plough. Despite the modern reception and bar area the single room I occupied was serviceable but in need of modernisation. I didn't think it was very good value for money, but ok for a night. The great advantage was that it is half way between the Albion Brewery Bar and the Malt Shovel. On with the pub crawl!

I headed down Bridge Street to pass the Malt Shovel on the way to the Pomfret Arms in Cotton End. It set up its own brewery in 2014 and has 6 handpumps. I knew I would not be able to try all the beers, however, Roger the barman insisted on giving me tasters of all of them. I particularly liked White Park Gypsy Warning, a 5.1% porter. Unfortunately, some of the other beers were not up to scratch, but I can say that the Cotton End Goldings Pale and Great Oakley Tiffield Thunderbolt were ok.



***The Malt Shovel, Northampton***

Heading back towards the city centre I dropped into the Malt Shovel, which has a history for CAMRA members. Sitting oppo-

site Carlsberg Brewery it cocks a snook at the mega keg factory. On entering, I noted that the pub was holding a beer festival with Oakham's beers on the pumps. I was in heaven, but had to be selective as I had another 7 pubs to visit. Of the 15 beers on offer I could only try 2, so I went for Scarlet Macaw, a beautiful hoppy beer at only 4.1%, and Helter Skelter at 5.1%. Built in 1914, and in later years a Watney Mann house, the present owners took it over in 1996, since when it has become a must on any visit to Northampton. Today it has been joined by many other good pubs too.

So off I went to the pub furthest way from the city centre, the Olde England. An unusual pub, 3 stories high, you have to go upstairs to the compact bar. I loved the idiosyncrasy of it. I decided to eat here whilst partaking of only 1 of the 14 beers on offer. Towcester Black Fire, a dark beer at 5.1% went well with my pie but was not very inspirational.



***The Black Prince, Northampton***

Heading back to the city centre I popped into the Lamplighter, a traditional local near the ring road. With 5 handpumps and 2 ciders I again only went for 1 beer, Vale's Something Wicked, a 4% beer, tasty but a little on the strong side.

My next port of call was to be the Pen and Wig, but Roger at the Pomfret Arms recommended a visit to the recently reopened Black Prince. Can you imagine my surprise





# THE FIELDHOUSE

10 Knightcote Drive,

Solihull B91 3JU

Tel: 0121 703 9209



[www.emberinns.co.uk/the-fieldhouse-solihull](http://www.emberinns.co.uk/the-fieldhouse-solihull)



Fieldhouse,  
Solihull

*7 Real Ales on at all times*

*Ember Pale Ale, Brakspear,  
plus 5 regularly changing guests.*

*All Cask Ales £2.49 a pint on Mondays*

Open from 10.00am every day

Close : 11.30 Sunday –Wednesday

Midnight Thursday –Saturday

Hot & cold meals served all week from  
10.00 am to 10.00 pm  
Brunch now from 10 am every day

## Live Music

Sat 1 July - Olly Murs Tribute

Sat 29th July - Tom Jones Tribute

*Special Offers for CAMRA members.  
(membership cards must be shown)*

- 20p discount off a pint of Cask Ale
- 20% off food with a food discount card
- Keep a look out for more events, like Meet The Brewer later in the year.



to be met with 19 handpumps, and for the cider drinker a choice of 6! Which 1 to try? I went for the Vale Gravitas, 4.8% golden ale, which was distinctly lacking in flavour. The pub itself is quite characterless unfortunately due to the largeness of the rooms; it could do with a cosy snug.

On to the Wig and Pen, a 300 year old city centre inn with 11 handpumps and 2 ciders. The bar goes back for some way and has an outside drinking area. Again I restricted myself to 1 beer as this was an evening crawl and I had 2 more pubs to go yet. Goffs Lancer, 3.8% golden ale, supposedly packed full of Cascade hops. Unfortunately it didn't hit the spot with me.

My next port of call was to be the Mail Coach, but a look at the range saw me back off and head for my last pub of the

night, the Albion Brewery Bar which fronts the old Northampton Phipps Brewery. A little more history is called for here. Phipps first came to Northampton in 1817 and was closed by Watney Mann in 1974. In 2008 the recipe and name was acquired and brewing commenced at Grainstore until 2014, when the beers returned to the original brewery. The bar is massive, with windows to view the brewing process, and sports 8 handpumps. I plumped for the Cascadia, a superb American style IPA.

Thankfully my hotel was only a short stagger from here and I contentedly hit the hay, having finished off with a cracker of a beer. All the pubs visited are in the current GBG, except the Black Prince, and I thoroughly recommend you visit Northampton.

*Steve Dyson*



EMBER INNS

GREAT REWARDS

DOWNLOAD  
OUR APP

FREE DRINK ON US

---

JOIN US TODAY

---

THE OLTON TAVERN - THE WOODMANS REST - THE FIELDHOUSE  
THE COLEBROOK - THE BULLS HEAD - THE RED LION

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

DELICIOUS  
**SUNDAY LUNCH**  
EVERY WEEK  
FROM 12 NOON



BE OUR GUEST  
**BIRTHDAY PROSECCO**  
ON US WHEN YOU JOIN OUR CLUB  
SIGN UP ONLINE



TRY OUR  
**BRUNCH**



FREE PINT FOR DAD\*  
**FATHERS DAY**

BOOK TODAY



# Hail to the Ale!

## *Local Beer, Pub, Club & Brewery news*

Over the past couple of months several pubs have updated their opening times.

**Ember Inns** are now open every day from 10.00am, offering Brunch. As well as this they have introduced a new app (see advert on the centre pages) offering a free drink, as well as various loyalty deals on cask ales. For details go to [www.emberinns.co.uk/offers](http://www.emberinns.co.uk/offers).

**The Vaults** in Knowle is now open all day every day. Timothy Taylor's Knowle Spring Blonde, the new member of the Taylor's family, is now a regular beer. Introduced in 2017, it's a light, refreshing 4.2% blonde ale. It is named after the Knowle Spring upon which their brewery sits, and which provides the fresh spring water for all their brews.

**The Ale Rooms** in Knowle also updated their closing time. They are now open every day from 2pm to 11pm. In April they hosted a tasting session for a new dry "Red" Ale from Silhill Brewery, Red Star. Two alternatives were available and hopefully we will see the winner in pubs round here soon.

Hot on the heels of the **Saracen's Head** refurbishment the **Plume of Feathers** reopened on the 24th March as a Stonehouse Pizza and Carvery. Real ale availability in the Saracen's Head has improved since the refurbishment.

The **Highwood** has completed its refurbishment and looks like it has a skittle alley for hire as well as live bands.

**The Nag's Head** in Henley held their first beer festival over the early May Bank Holiday weekend. With some less-

er known beers from local breweries, and barbeque food available it was a very pleasant day out. Now that they have their own racking available, hopefully there will be another one soon. It may be worth visiting them for the Henley Music Festival over the August Bank Holiday.

**The Fieldhouse** is planning another "Meet The Brewer" evening, possibly for July with Timothy Taylor. Keep a lookout on "Solihull CAMRA Members" Facebook for details.

**Thousand Trades** current outlets are the Pup and Duckling, Ale Rooms, Inn on the Green, Wild Cat Tap & Ivy Leaf. As well as these, casks have been recently supplied to Shirley, Newark and Kinver beer festivals. There are 2 core beers and 1 monthly special.

The May monthly special Infernal Device, a Rye IPA at 5.7%, has earned such positive reviews that it may even become a core beer. As well as going down very well at our May branch meeting, at the recent, highly successful, **Shirley Beer Festival**, Infernal Device was rated 7th out of 105 beers on the excellent new scoring app.

**Silhill Brewery** has a Meet The Brewer evening at the Sack of Potatoes in Birmingham on the 6th June. They have named the month's special brew as Spudnik Star in honour of the hosts. In May they visited the Hogshead in Wolverhampton. Blonde Star also went down well according to the Shirley Beer Festival app, rating 17th out of the 105 beers on offer, with Gold Star ranking 35th.



Solihull  
**THE FLUTE & FLAGON**

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

28-30 Station Parade

Solihull B91 3SB

Tel: 0121 711 3630

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



**The Flute & Flagon**



10% off real ales for  
card-carrying CAMRA  
members \*

*(\*not valid in conjunction  
with any other offer)*

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

**Opening Hours**  
09.00—23.00 Sun—Wed  
09.00—24.00 Thurs  
09.00—01.00 Fri—Sat

## Yates's Returns To Solihull

The Assembly Rooms closes on the 4th June for a major refurbishment, and plans to re-open a month later as Yates's.



Yates's could be found up to 2005 in Solihull on Station Road, where Jimmy Spices recently used to be.

The first Yates Wine Lodge opened in Oldham in 1884, but has undergone

significant change through numerous owners since that time.

The chain was acquired by the Stonegate Pub Company in 2011, and now comprises around 50 venues around the country.

Yates's motto is "All Day Long" and will provide a day long experience.

We don't know at the moment what real ales will be on offer, but craft beers and ciders will also feature in the drinks range when it is announced.

Meanwhile, there is an ongoing offer at the Flute & Flagon where cask ales are £1.99 /pint. This could finish at short notice so take advantage while it is there. Please note: while this offer is running the 10% CAMRA discount is not valid.

# Victory in Fight to Secure Pubs Planning Protection

CAMPAIGNERS are celebrating “a fantastic victory” which sees the government backing plans to prevent pubs in England being demolished or turned into convenience stores without planning permission.

The breakthrough followed a CAMRA-led campaign, which saw more than 8,000 emails sent to MPs and peers calling for planning reform. CAMRA campaigners worked closely with the shadow spokesman for Communities and Local Government, Lord Roy Kennedy and with ministers, MPs, peers and officials to achieve the victory.

After many years of unsuccessfully attempting to secure this change through the House of Commons, it was the effort in lobbying peers which created the breakthrough.

Now the government has announced its support for a measure closing a planning loophole which has allowed pubs to be demolished or converted to a wide range of retail uses without any planning application.

The government conceded defeat, following a 90-vote majority in the House of Lords, led by Lord Roy Kennedy of Southwark, to an amendment to the

Neighbourhood Planning Bill.

Lord Kennedy of Southwark said: “I am delighted that the government has listened to the Lords and my amendment to close the loophole that allowed pubs to be lost without the local community having a say. This is a victory for common sense, the much-loved British pub and responsible drinkers everywhere.”

CAMRA chief executive Tim Page said: “Politicians are chosen to represent the views of those who elect them. We are delighted that in deciding to require owners to apply for planning permission if they want to close a pub, the government has put the opinions of those who recognise the value that pubs provide to them and their communities above the commercial interests of a few organisations and individuals.

“The decision to respond positively to our campaign is further evidence of government’s support for the pub sector and follows the decision earlier this month to provide most English pubs with a £1,000 discount in the business rates they pay. We will work to ensure these measures are implemented as soon as possible.”

*Reproduced from What’s Brewing May 2017*

---

## 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



# WHAT?UB

## Win a prize with Whatpub!

Did you know that CAMRA runs a quarterly prize draw for all members who take part in the National Beer Scoring Scheme or update whatpub.com?

If you would like to get involved, please see <http://whatpub.com/beerscoring> or send an update on a pub listing at whatpub.com.

Login to whatpub.com on mobile or computer when making your updates to be eligible to enter the prize draw.

As well as qualifying for the prize draw you are also contributing to the branch selection of worthy pubs for the Good Beer Guide and Pubs and Clubs of the Year.

This is your chance to be involved even if you can't make it along to branch meetings.

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.



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](mailto:davidcove@hotmail.co.uk)**

Printed by Thistle Print Ltd, Leeds

Solihull CAMRA 2017©

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

## THE BLUE BELL CIDER HOUSE

Warings Green Road  
Hockley Heath, Warks. B94 6BP  
Tel. 01564 702328



**5 real ales** at all times including beers brewed on site, plus 4 traditional & 3 sparkling ciders

Homemade food with a wide variety of steaks now served Mon–Sat 12.00 noon - 8.30pm. Carvery served every Sunday 1200 - 5.00pm

Live music. Large car parking area  
Children & pets welcome  
Large beer garden with canal views.

Join us at our Cider and Beer Festival on Saturday 24th June

*Keep up to date with what's on and what's new at our website:*

**<http://www.bluebellciderhouse.org/>**

### Opening hours:

Mon.–Sat: 11.30am–11.00pm

Sunday: 12.00-10.30pm



# THE COLEBROOK INN

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



Haslucks Green Road  
Haslucks Green  
Solihull  
B90 2LL

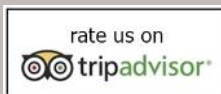
Tel : 0121 744 6871



The Colebrook Pub Shirley



@TheColebrook



*Now open from 10.00 am  
EVERY DAY for brunch*

*Closing times*

*Monday- Wednesday 11pm*

*Thursday- Sunday Midnight*

*Food served 10.00–10.00 pm  
every day*

*Download our Ember app for a  
FREE drink and other offers*

*Serving between 7 and 9 cask  
ales, including up to 7 guests*

*Monday Cask Ale Club*

*All cask ales £2.49/ pint*

*CAMRA members get 20p/ pint  
discount Tues- Sun*

## Midweek Crawl of Sutton Coldfield

Continuing our midweek crawls, 10 of us descended on the Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield. Turning out of the station we fell into the Station. The pub now is not as I remember it many years ago when it was more traditional and homely.



*Enjoying a pint in the Station, Sutton Coldfield*

Now owned by Stonegate, it is a stripped back café bar style pub lacking a cosy atmosphere. However, the beers; Holdens Golden Glow, Marston's New World, Marston's Pedigree and Holden's house beer Station Master were in superb condition. The pub does food, has an upstairs function room where comedy nights and discos are held, so there is something for everyone. Thank goodness it was quiet at our lunchtime visit.

Just a short wander down the road and we were at the Gate Inn. As soon as you go through the door you know this is a musically inclined pub. Guitars hang from all surfaces. Polished wooden floors and large plain glassed windows made it feel a little cold inside,



but what of the beers? Not very inspiring I'm afraid. Charles Wells Poppy was OK but Moorhouse's Pride of Pendle left a lot to be desired, definitely not worth a second pint.

We now headed up the hill to the Three Tuns, an old coaching inn. Again this seemed like a soulless place, granted there were very few people in. Maybe it feels cosier in the evening? The beers are in the main supplied by Thwaites; Bomber, Original, and Wainrights being on tap. One guest, Wychwood Wickerman, was available so I went for that and I have to say it was in excellent condition, just as well because I really am not keen on Thwaites beers.

We thought now that it was time to eat so off to the ubiquitous Wetherspoons in the town centre. Once you've been to one Wetherspoons you've been to them all. With the same interior decoration, same menu, same chance of getting a decent beer I never expect too much. Surprisingly, the beer range here was good. We forgot the usual range and sampled Hobgoblin Gold, Oakham JHB, Stonehouse Great Bustard, Peerless Shabash IPA, and Surley Todd the Axeman. Not bad for Wetherspoons. I stuck with Oakham JHB, a beautiful light hoppy beer.

Now on to a pub that was new to me. It used to be called the Cup in my day, and was under the wing of M&B. It is now completely transformed into the Brewhouse and Kitchen. With its own brewery, it opened at the end of December 2015. 6 beers were on tap for us, all brewed on the premises; Marksman, which was quite a nice IPA at 5%, with The Cup, 004 Oaks, Harry Mears Black IPA, Tramshed, and Shoe-string on the other pumps.



***The brewery at the Brewhouse and Kitchen***

Our next visit was to a longstanding Good Beer Guide entry, the Duke Inn in Duke Street. This pub is on a side street off the Birmingham Road. At last a traditional pub interior. My only issue with the pub was the uninteresting range of beers it had on offer. I had been there on previous occasions and was disappointed with the beer range. Today was to prove similar. There were 4 handpumps with Young's Bitter, Caledonian Deuchars IPA, Wells Bombadier, and Greene King Abbot Ale.

Frankly I sat this one out whilst the others downed a quick pint so that we could visit a newish addition to the Sutton drinking scene, the Sutton Tap. Oh, what a disappointment. A converted shop in South Parade, the place was dead. Being a free house I was expecting something more than Greene King Old Speckled Hen, Greene King IPA and Wold Top Keepers Light. The Keepers Light was OK but not a very inspiring beer. We chatted to the owner encouraging him to try more interesting beers, so time will tell. It was a shame to end our tour of Sutton Coldfield with two disappointing venues, but overall I think we all enjoyed the day.

*Steve Dyson*



JD WETHERSPOON proudly presents

## ***The Pump House***

**Unit 1A, Parkgate, Stratford Road, Shirley**

**0121 701 5460**

**Open: Sun—Wed: 7.00am—12.00 midnight  
& Thurs—Sat: 7.00am—1.00am**

**12  
hand  
pumps for  
the best  
choice of  
real ales**

**Greene King Abbot Ale &  
IPA and Sharp's Doom Bar  
all day every day; plus 9  
ever changing guests**



**Alcohol served from  
10.00am**

**Food available from  
7.00am to 11.00pm daily**

## **2016 Club of The Year Gets a New Look**



Knowle & Dorridge C.C have rounded off their successful pre-season preparation with the completion of an eagerly anticipated refurbishment project at their club

home at Station Road, Dorridge. The project was completed in rapid time in time for the start of Birmingham League season and has delivered a first class facility for the future.

K&D Club Chairman, Nigel Allen explained; "I am delighted we've been able to complete a transformative club-house refurbishment project. We have worked exceptionally hard as a club to plan and fund this project and we've had great support from locally based businesses such as Novo Interiors, Acorn Flooring and Harwood & English.

We have always been conscious that the club has needed to offer more to its members as well attracting a new generation of local families through engagement with the wider community. Therefore, it was crucial that we

made these improvements to bring it up to modern design standards, provide first class facilities to our players and offer new and exciting events to our members."



The project completion was marked with a launch event containing live music, freshly baked pizzas from Peel & Stone and a visit from the 'Gintleman' - offering Gin tasting and making tips. The club also relaunched its club badge and logo.

The Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club won the Solihull & District CAMRA Club of The Year in 2016, and recently hosted the AGM in February.

# BERNIES REAL ALE OFF LICENCE

The best of its kind there is!!!

An ever-changing range of exciting draught beers from season to season—you're welcome to try before you buy.

**Now stocking a variety of Craft Ales!**



A choice of 350 beers and ciders during the year, available in bottles or on draught.

Party barrels to order and supplied for any occasion.

Sale or return on sealed goods.

Was listed in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide for over 30 years.

**266 Cranmore Boulevard, Shirley, Solihull B90 4PX**

**Tel. 0121 744 2827**

**Opening Hours:**

**Mondays to Saturdays: 11.00am to 10.00pm**

**Sundays & Bank Holidays: 12 noon to 6.00pm**

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

**Now also stocking snacks and confectionery.**



**Choice which cannot be bettered**

# Long Weekend in Stockport and Manchester

Regular readers of the Drinker will know that the branch go away for a few days in November to a city with a reputation for good beer, breweries and pubs. Paul, our organiser decided that our destination this year was Greater Manchester, arguably one of the best drinking areas in the country. Who was I to argue? But before I go any further I have an apology. I usually give quite a lot of detail about the beers in the pubs, but there were so many pubs, beers, and breweries visited I lost the plot. I might even get which pubs we went to on which days confused so please bear with me! I shall try my best, but at least you will get a good idea what a fantastic area this is for the drinker.

Our base was in Stockport, which has good transport links to the areas of Greater Manchester we had in mind. Arriving at our hotel mid-afternoon, we decided to spend the rest of the day in Stockport as we had a brewery tour arranged for the evening. Stockport is the home of Robinsons Brewery, so a visit to one of their pubs seemed a must. However, hold back, as there are pubs here with a better and more interesting range of beers.

First port of call was the Fairway in Higher Hillgate. Recently refurbished, it has a comfortable modern interior with 8 beers on tap. Breweries represented were Elland, Phoenix, Dunham Masset, Coach House, and Greene King. Elland Prussian and Phoenix Monkeytown Mild were my choices, which proved a good start to the day.

The next pub was a little more difficult to locate, as when you first approach the Old Vic, Chatham Street, it looks as though it is closed. However, pop round the corner and you will find a vibrant pub

run by a beer enthusiast, and most important of all, good beer! This pub is a traditional local full of bric-a-brac from times gone past. This cannot be said of the beers; Oakham, Thornbridge, Mallinsons and Squawk were on the bar - Mallinson's Kohatu a magnificently hoppy beer. Whilst here the next contingent of our party arrived, so we made our way to one of Stockport's gems.



*The Old Vic, Stockport*

The Crown, situated in Heaton Lane underneath the railway viaduct is a longstanding GBG entry, and well worthy of it. It has four rooms and is redolent of pubs past with many original features and a lively atmosphere. The beer range is extensive with a mild or stout always available. On our visit Prospect, Burtonbridge, Bradfield, Pictish, Bank Top, Mallinsons, Froth Blowers, Bingham's, Salopian, Weetwood, and Copper Dragon sported the bar, with real cider also available. I tried Mallinsons Doukan Duck and Prospect Whatever Next, both very drinkable! Time was getting on with still one more pub to visit, but our brewery tour beckoned.

Foolhardy Ales is in Wellington Road North. The owners Martin and Samantha Wood have a brewery in the basement of the Hope Inn, but surprisingly we found



that brewer Martin is teetotal! However, he has good judgement when it comes to brewing. With 11 cask ales in his portfolio, the brewery is always busy, even though some are brewed elsewhere. After a quick tour we retired to the bar of The Hope to sample some of his beers. On tap were Foolhardy Rash, Risky, Russian Roulette, Rhidonkulous, Radioactive, and Revolution. Other breweries' beers on offer came from Elland, Penpoint, and Outstanding. So many beers that I forgot to note down what beers I tried, however there was a beer to suit every taste.



***A tight fit into Foolhardy Brewery***

On to our last must do pub of the night, The Magnet in Wellington Road North. Rescued from closure in 2011, refurbished, and with its own on-site brewery this pub has gone from strength to strength. In the GBG since 2011 it is a must visit. 14 handpumps decorate the bar; Bingham's, Vocation, Fraoch, Rat, Riverhead, Ossett, Bowland, Titanic, Millstone, Oakham, Dark Star, and a new brewery to me, Sammy Craft. I could only manage the Vocation Chop and Change at 4%, an absolute cracker. Other than a visit to eat at the Weatherspoon's, that concluded our Stockport tour, with Manchester's Northern Quarter tomorrow.

Friday proved a cold day, with a long bus journey into Manchester. Deciding which pubs to do in Manchester is not easy. You cannot do justice to the city in a day, so we decided to concentrate on the northern quarter as it has a wealth of cracking pubs. We started at the Marble Arch, where we met some day visitors from Solihull. The Marble Arch has its own onsite brewery, and the pub is a magnificent example of a Victorian pub with a barrel vaulted ceiling and is full of tiles. To match it there are up to 10 beers on tap, including their own Marble beers, of which I had Pint and Built to Fall, both scoring 4 out of 5. Food is also served.

Our next port of call was Black Jack Brewery, just down the road from the Marble Arch. We were not formally welcomed by anyone, but they were completely unconcerned with us wandering around the brewery whilst they were brewing. It's lovely beer too! Shame that the brewery bar was not open.

A short walk back towards the city centre brings you to the Angel. I remember it as a rough and ready Beerhouse. It is a little more sedate now, but it was heaving when we arrived. It was a battle to get to the bar never mind get a seat. Pretty ordinary inside, it has an upstairs restaurant, but it is the beers that are of interest to us with 12 handpumps available. Beers included Howard Town, Saltaire, and Siren. I tried Hawkshead Windemere Pale Ale and Fell Yolo.

Another short walk brought us to the Smithfield Market Tavern. This pub has had a few ups and downs over the years, but now under the wing of Black Jack Brewery it has undergone a renaissance. Refurbished inside and serving 7 real ales, Black Jack is well represented. I went for their Rabbit Hunt, which was superbly hoppy, but they also had beers

from Moor, Hawkshead, and Five Towns. One thing to remember is that the pub has erratic opening hours, so check before you go.

Across the road now to the Crown and Kettle. A Grade 2 listed free house, it was restored to its former glory in 2005. With 9 handpumps on the bar there was a good choice; Sonnet 43 The Raven, Mobberley Brew House US Single Hop, and Exit 33 Mosaic all scored 4 out of 5.

I suppose we had to do a Robinsons' house as we were in their neck of the woods, and there is arguably no better place than the Castle in Oldham Street. With 5 Robinsons' beers and 4 guests it is a bit of a saving grace for me, as I am not keen on Robinsons' beers. I didn't fancy Titanic, Goffs, Hop Back or True Norths beers, so I sat this one out before moving on. However, the Castle is a gem of a pub stretching back for what seems to be miles, having a front bar, small middle room, and a large room at the back, accessed by one long corridor. Like the Crown and Kettle, it is listed.

Another short walk brought us to the Port Street Beer House. A small pub converted from a shop, with an upstairs room, it is well worth a visit even if it is a little expensive. 7 beers are available, with Black Jack Poker Face my choice: beautiful. The Thornbridge Hubble was quite nice too!

That completed our Northern Quarter tour, however we were not done yet. Paul our organiser had arranged two more brewery visits. A long walk took us to our first, Beer Nouveau Brewery in Prestwich. Set up in 2014 it occupies a railway arch, ideal premises for a brewery; according to brewer Steve Dunkley there are 15 other breweries in the same row of arches! Brewer Steve is an enthusiastic brewer of traditional style English beers so I knew that this may not be my

cup of tea, but his enthusiasm became more infectious as we tried his beers; Wee Beastie at 9.6%, Adrift 3.9%, Sister to Nun 4.9%, Rum Porter 4% (which I thought was superb), and Peterloo at 4%.



*Supping in Beer Nouveau Brewery*

We couldn't sit there all night, although sorely tempted, as we were due at Cloudwater Brewery next. This brewery is all keg. Our reason for visiting was that it was run by an old school friend of organiser Paul. Unfortunately he was ill and was not there but we were still game and took our seats. The tap is in the brewery, which is a large industrial unit, and it was cold in there. However, it was teeming with people, mainly youngsters enjoying the beers. I can't remember what I tried but it all seemed rather clinical to me. 6 taps came out of a wall; Bourbon Old Fashioned at 9%, DIPAv9 at 6%, BA Imperial Stout PX at 11%, and 3 others, the names of which escape me. Time marched on and it was soon time to leave to make our way back to Stockport, with tomorrow a big day too as we were to do a crawl of Chorlton cum Hardy. Take a look in your GBG before we go... believe me it's even better!

*Steve Dyson*

*To be continued in Drinker 81*



The Birmingham home of **Oakham ales**



## One of the finest Victorian pubs

Where you can enjoy the unique combination of  
award winning real ales & authentic Thai cuisine.

*Book now for a 'Taste & Tour'  
see website for details*



Bus Number 51, 52, 33 from the City Centre

144 High Street, Aston, Birmingham B6 4UP | 0121 333 5988 | [thebartonsarms.com](http://thebartonsarms.com)



\*Photocopies or printed copies not accepted

**50P OFF ALL  
GUEST CASK ALES**  
On production of this voucher \*Valid between 03/06/17 - 03/09/17  
one voucher per person - offer applies to cask beer only!  
This offer is redeemable from The Bartons Arms only



# Old Freddy Walker, Champion Winter Beer of Britain

Bristol-based Moor Beer Company has marked the 10th anniversary of their reopening in style, with one of their brews being named CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain.



A presentation event was held at Moor Beer Company on Friday, 12th May to honour Old Freddy Walker, which was crowned the winner at the National Winter Ales Festival in February, following a year of local tasting panels and regional heats.

Old Freddy Walker (7.5 per cent ABV) impressed the judges in Norwich with its incredible balance of flavours, and was described as "a strong ale, with a rich flavour perfectly balanced between chocolate, honey, dark roasts and a hint of liquorice".

Presentations were also made to other breweries recognised in the Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition including London Brewing Company, Grainstore Brewery and Tavy Ales.

Justin Moor of Moor Beer Company said: "It's fantastic for the other win-

ning brewers and CAMRA members to join us today for the awards presentation. We're still super excited about the win and really pleased that we continue to lead the way with our modern real ale, which is down to the hard work and dedication of everyone at Moor."

CAMRA's South West Regional Director, Gareth MacDonald said: "Moor Beer Company is an excellent example of a 21st century brewery that has not forgotten the roots and tradition of real ale, and all of its values."

The Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition provides an opportunity to showcase the best traditional winter brews in the country, in categories including barley wine, strong old ales, porters and stouts.

## THE WHITE LION

High Street, Hampton in Arden, Solihull B92 0AA

Tel: 01675 442833 [www.thewhitelioninn.com](http://www.thewhitelioninn.com)

Mon—Wed: 12.00—11.00pm; Thurs—Sat: 12.00—12.00  
Sunday 12.00—10.30pm



6 real ales on at all times  
(currently Proper Job, Brew XI, Doom Bar, Castle Rock  
Harvest Pale, Hobson's Best & Golden Glow)

Restaurant - A la Carte menu; Sunday roasts from  
£11.50

Accommodation from £85  
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!



# Charles Wells Sells Brewery and Brands to Marston's

Charles Wells agreed terms to sell its brewery and brands for £55 million on the 18th May. Charles Wells pubs in the UK and France are not included in the sale.

The Bedford brewery site is the home of Bombardier, Courage, and McEwan's and the sale also includes the UK distribution rights for Kirin Lager, Estrella Damm, Erdinger and Founders and the exclusive global license of the Young's brand. Charlie Wells and John Bull beers will remain part of Charles Wells Ltd.

In the next couple of years Charles Wells will invest in a small new, Bedford based, brewery to supply beers to its pub customers.

The strategy of Charles Wells has been to develop specialty ale and lager brands and a high-quality pub estate which is either tenanted or managed according to location. This announcement signals an exit from higher volume national sales in favour of a more local and smaller scale brewing future in Bedford.

In response to this news, CAMRA issued the following comment.

Tim Page, CAMRA's Chief Executive says: "CAMRA is always concerned about any consolidation in the brewing industry as it could result in a reduction in choice, value for money and quality for beer drinkers. We're also wary of one company increasingly controlling a larger and larger share of the market, which is seldom beneficial for consumers.

"Marston's has a positive track record of keeping the breweries it acquires open, in situ, and in many cases investing in the sites to increase capacity, and we urge them to continue that policy. We'd also encourage them to protect the brands that they have acquired and increase the range available to beer drinkers, by continuing to supply them alongside the existing beers produced by Marston's owned breweries.

It's reassuring to hear that Charles Wells intends to continue brewing in Bedford, ensuring that whatever Marston's chooses to do with the brewery and brands it has acquired, local people will continue to be able to enjoy locally brewed beers in the region."

## Cask Marque for Purity and Ricoh Arena

Purity Brewing Company and Ricoh Arena are celebrating achieving Cask Marque accreditation for the quality of the Purity beers served at the stadium, a UK first!

The brewery has two of its cask ales, Pure UBU and Pure Gold, across five of the Ricoh Arena's concourse bars and a further bar in the arena's Ericsson Exhibition Hall as well as hospitality suites.

The Ricoh has become the first stadium in the UK to be awarded Cask Marque status.

The home of top-of-the-Premiership Wasps Rugby and host to a range of international performers, the Ricoh Arena has seen unprecedented growth in beer sales following the introduction of Purity ales in 2015.

# ROWINGTON CLUB

*A Friendly Member's club  
in the heart of the  
Warwickshire Countryside*

## New Members Welcome!

Real Ales and guest beers always available.  
Featured in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide and winner of  
Club of the Year 3 years running!

Enjoy imaginative events throught the year or why not  
come along and enjoy a drink while watching the cricket  
on Rowington Green.

### Facilities include:

- 2 Full size Snooker Tables
- Pool Table
- Darts Board
- Dominoes
- Sky Sports
- Large Car Park

Parties, Events, Pig Roasts, BBQ's and Live Music can be  
organised by arrangement.

Opening hours: Mon - Thurs 3pm - 11pm (Fri 2pm - 11pm )  
Sat - Sun: 12 Noon - 11pm

Full Membership £20 yearly or £1 guest fee.  
Free to card-carrying CAMRA Members.

Contact the Club Steward Adrian Cotton on:

**01564 782087**

[rowingtonclub@live.co.uk](mailto:rowingtonclub@live.co.uk)

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



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

# Membership Matters

With an Election being announced for the 8th of June we, as a campaign organisation, will be hoping to persuade all of the political parties and local MPs to support the British pub & brewing industry in their election manifestos, and it will fall upon CAMRA as a campaign to see that these promises are implemented.

This type of campaign, like everything, costs money. By joining CAMRA your membership fee will be put to good use in persuading whichever political party is in power to support well run community pubs, real ale brewers, and the consumer rights of drinkers. Membership starts from as little as £25 per year (that works out at about 48p per week). You can also purchase gift memberships; how about giving membership as a gift for Fathers Day on 18th June.

If you were to join CAMRA, as well as supporting our many campaigns, you would receive £20 of JD Wetherspoon

vouchers, a monthly newsletter called "What's Brewing" and a quarterly magazine "Beer" which has many articles by leading journalists within the industry. For a comprehensive list of other numerous benefits, go to the CAMRA website [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk).

So come on, what are you waiting for? Become a CAMRA member and join 185,000 other like-minded individuals with a liking for real ale and pubs by going to the CAMRA membership page [www.camra.org.uk/join](http://www.camra.org.uk/join)

Don't forget, each new member in our area receives a welcome pack from the Solihull & District branch which will contain a voucher for a FREE PINT which is redeemable in conjunction with a valid membership card upon attendance at their first Branch meeting. Yes, we will buy your first pint!

We're really looking forward to meeting you, so why not join today and hopefully we'll see you soon.

*Dave Mckowen*

<b>Useful Contact Numbers</b>		<b>Socials</b>	
<b>Chairman</b>		Paul Wigley	07402 312457
Carl Wright	0121 603 1621	<b>Pubs Campaigning/Beer Festival</b>	
<b>Secretary</b>		Martin Buck	01564 770708
Allan Duffy	01564 200431	<b>Solihull Drinker Editor</b>	
<b>Membership</b>		David Cove	0121 603 6057
Dave Mckowen	01564 778955	<b>Press &amp; Publicity</b>	
		Julia Wright	0121 603 1621

**Considering advertising with us? Get your pub, club or business in the public eye!!**  
**For advertising rates: call 0121 603 6057 or email [davidcove@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:davidcove@hotmail.co.uk)**

**Solihull Drinker Issue No. 80** Solihull CAMRA 2017 ©

Printed by Thistle Print Ltd, Leeds.

The 81st edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 4th September 2017. Please note that the deadline for copy, advertising and any other contributions is Friday 4th August. Thank you to all contributors.



# Join up, join in, join the campaign



From  
as little as  
**£25\***  
a year. That's less  
than a pint a  
month!

Discover  
why we joined.  
[camra.org.uk/  
members](http://camra.org.uk/members)



**Join us, and together we can protect the traditions of great British pubs and everything that goes with them.**

Become part of the CAMRA community today - enjoy discounted entry to beer festivals and exclusive member offers. Learn about brewing and beer and join like-minded people supporting our campaigns to save pubs, clubs, your pint and more.

Join the campaign today at  
**[www.camra.org.uk/joinup](http://www.camra.org.uk/joinup)**

\*Price for paying by Direct Debit and correct at April 2017. Concessionary rates available. Please visit [camra.org.uk/membership-rates](http://camra.org.uk/membership-rates)



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**