

Solihull Drinker

Issue No 88
Summer 2019



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Venue For Great British Beer Festival Winter Announced

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for
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*"In wine there is wisdom, in beer there is Freedom, in
water there is bacteria."
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Venue For Great British Beer Festival Winter Announced

Following the news we gave you in the Spring edition of the Drinker, we can now confirm the venue and dates for the Great British Beer Festival Winter 2020.

After three superb years in Norwich, it will be time in 2020 for the Great British Beer Festival Winter to once again set up in a new city, and we are excited to announce that the next edition of the festival will be held at the **New Bingley Hall in Birmingham, from Tuesday 4th to Saturday 8th February 2020.**

For CAMRA members this represents a great opportunity to volunteer for roles in the organisation and/or helping at one of the premier beer festivals in the country.

For everyone in the Midlands it is a chance to sample over 400 excellent beers, ciders and perries in a single venue over a 5 day period.

Alongside the drinks, the festival will feature games and activities, musical entertainment throughout, a range of mouth-watering food stalls, and a selection of tastings and talks for those looking to expand their horizons further.

As always the Great British Beer Festival Winter will



tival Winter will host the finals of the winter beer categories in the Champion Beer of Britain Competition, with the winners going forwards to that year's final at GBBF in August.

"This is an incredibly exciting opportunity for

us to showcase the fantastic food and drinks that the region has to offer", said West Midlands Regional Director Gary Timmins. "The region has a rich history in brewing and we're looking forward to working with local museums, charities and organisations to tell visitors a story that will go hand in hand with their drink of choice."

Planning for the festival is already well underway, and further details can be found online at winter.gbbf.org.uk, and across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

We will bring you the latest news in the next Drinker. Make a note in your diary for 4-8th February 2020.

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Campaign
for
Real Ale

Dates For Your Diary

Branch Meetings

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

Monday 1st July	Flute and Flagon, Solihull
Monday 5th August	The Railway, Dorridge
Monday 2nd September	Sharman's Cross, Solihull

Committee Meetings

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

Monday 15th July	Royal British Legion, Shirley
Monday 16th September	Platform 3, Olton

Socials

Saturday 29th June	Visit To Charlbury Real Ale Festival
Saturday 17th August	Real Ale Ramble

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, contact us beforehand and we will do our best to help.

Upcoming Midlands Area Beer Festivals and Events

**FOR NATIONAL BEER FESTIVALS
PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING LINK**

<https://www.camra.org.uk/beer-festivals-events/>

June 6-8 (Thu-Sat):

SHIRLEY BEER & CIDER FEST

9th Shirley Beer & Cider Festival, Camp Hill Rugby Club. Open Thursday 6.30pm -11pm comedy night by advance ticket only. Friday 6pm-11pm, Saturday 12 noon-11pm including family day up to 6pm. Over 100 beers and 25 ciders. Visit www.shirleybeerfestival.co.uk for more information.

June 15 (Sat):

ST GILES BEER FESTIVAL

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

June 21-22 (Fri-Sat):

STRATFORD BEER & CIDER FEST

Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse, Ludington Rd, Stratford CV37 9SE. 70+ beers & ciders. Food available. Shuttle bus from railway station, camping via www.stratfordtouringpark.com. £10 entrance to include glass, programme, & £5 tokens. Free pint for card-carrying CAMRA members Fri 12noon-11pm (quiet day), Sat 11am-11pm with afternoon and evening entertainment. Info: www.stratfordbeerfestival.org.uk

June 27- 29 (Thu-Sat):

BROMSGROVE BEER & CIDER FEST

Bromsgrove Rugby Club, Fininstall Rd, Bromsgrove B60 3DH. 144 beers & 60+ ciders/perries. Open Thursday 2-6pm (CAMRA members & Trade Only), 6-11pm public; Fri 12noon-11pm; Sat 11am-9.30pm. Entry £3 (members £1) + £2 Souvenir glass. Food available and live music from Friday (see website for details). Plenty of room outside, mar-

quee for picnics, & family games. Camping available from Rugby club. 10mins walk from Bromsgrove station & buses available from town centre. www.bromsgrovebeerfestival.org.uk

July 11-13 (Thu-Sat):

WOLVERHAMPTON BEER FEST

Newhampton Arts Centre, Dunkley St, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN. 70 real ales and a range of ciders/perries & foreign bottled beer & gin bar. National Express no 6 bus from Wolverhampton Bus Station or a 20 min walk from the railway, bus & Metro stations. Open Thu 3-11pm, Fri 12noon-11pm, Sat 12noon-11pm. Admission prices: Thu £3.50, Fri £3.50, Sat free all day. CAMRA members get £1 beer token except Sat. Facebook: Wolverhampton CAMRA Beer Festival 2018, details on website: www.wolverhampton.camra.org.uk

July 11-14 (Thur-Sun):

INN ON THE GREEN BEER FEST

2 Westley Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 7UH. 20+real ales and craft beers, 6 ciders. Music Fri and Sat live and free.

July 25-27 (Thu-Sat):

STAFFORD BEER & CIDER FEST

Blessed William Howard School, Rowley Avenue, Stafford, ST17 9AB. Under 10 mins walk from Stafford rail station, off Newport Rd. 65 ales, 25 ciders/perries, country wines, gin bar & bottled beers. Hot food, live music Fri/Sat evening, brass band Sat afternoon. Thu 6-11pm; Fri 11.30am-4pm + 4-11pm; Sat 12 noon-10.30pm. Fri/Sat afternoon families welcome. Other sessions over 18s. Admission £1 Thu & Fri afternoon & Sat evening; £3 Fri evening; £2 Sat afternoon. £1 entrance discount to CAMRA members with valid cards. Glass hire or souvenir glass £3. www.staffordbeerfestival.co.uk

July 26-28 (Fri-Sun):

MKT BOSWORTH RAIL ALE FEST

The Goods Shed, Station Rd, Market Bosworth, CV13 0PF. 80 beers, 30 ciders & perries, fruit wine, Pimms &

Prosecco bars. Trains running & traction engine displays. Live music Sat aft; Fri & Sat eves Dr Busker. Food & soft drinks available all day. Camping on site. Admission £6 (£1 with valid CAMRA card), children welcome daytime 4-16 yrs £3 (free on Fri). Bars open 11am-1130pm Fri and Sat, 11am-5pm Sun. For more details see www.battlefieldline.co.uk or www.hinckleyandbosworth.camra.org.uk

August 8-10 (Thu-Sat):

WORCESTER BEER FEST

Worcester Racecourse, Grand Stand Rd, Worcester, WR1 3EJ. Details not yet available but can be found at www.worcesterbeerfest.org.uk

September 13-14 (Fri-Sat) :

LIONS' BEER AND CIDER FESTIVAL

Shirley Royal British Legion, Parkgate Centre, Shirley, Solihull. 16 real ales and 4 ciders. Open: Fri and Sat 12.00 noon to 10.00 pm. £10 entry includes souvenir glass, £5 tokens and programme. For more details visit www.shirleylions.co.uk/events/beerfestival.html or facebook or twitter.

October 3-5 (Thu-Sat):

SOLIHULL CAMRA BEER FESTIVAL

The Royal British Legion, Union Road, Solihull B91 3DH. Approximately 40 real ales plus cider and perry. Homebrew competition and live music Saturday. Check our website and Facebook for updates www.solihull.camra.org.uk.

Holding a beer festival locally? Let us know and we can include it here. 1st August deadline for the September issue.

Unfortunately one of our favourites, due to the ease of getting there from Solihull, the **Black Country Beer Festival** at Lye will not happen this year. This is not a CAMRA event, but had grown from a 30 cask event into a three day event with 100+ casks, 30+ ciders, and other attractions. We hope that they can hold their 10th festival next year after a fallow year in 2019.

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Choice which cannot be bettered

CAMRA's Bottled Beer Judging at the N.E.C.

For the 8th successive year, at the end of November, I volunteered on the CAMRA stall at the “BBC Winter Food & Drink Show”, held in Halls 17-20 at the NEC.

The Thursday morning was again taken up with judging the 16 finalists for the Champion Bottled Beer of Britain, with 2 panels blind-tasting 8 different real ales, all carefully poured so as to avoid disturbing the sediment. They were all chilled to 12 degrees C before opening, and judged on Appearance, Aroma, Taste & Aftertaste. Some of the beers and breweries are ‘old friends’ having featured in previous years’ competitions, but several were new to me.

Panel 1 tasted the following pale ales:-

Merlin Brewery “Merlin’s Gold” (3.8%) - a “golden ale with German and American hops by a small Cheshire craft brewer”

Salopian “Kashmir” (5.5%) an “elegant version of an IPA with citrus, pines & tropical fruit that caresses the senses”

Ashover “Butts Pale Ale” (5.5%) - “strong & pale with plenty of American hops, in the style of a west coast IPA. The Butts refers to a local quarry which is part of the brewery address.”

Kirkstall “Dissolution Extra IPA” (6.0%) a “classic IPA with a resolute hoppy kick & lasting citrus finish”

Fullers “1845” (6.3%) - a “strong, rich & fruity ale, brewed to mature over time.” This beer was the Champion bottled beer in 1998 & 2002 and placed 2nd or 3rd in 4 other years since 1991.

Wells “Young’s Special London Ale” (6.4%) - “a wonderfully balanced, deep-golden strong ale with a lively, fruity character with suggestions of banana & orange zest”: another previous winner in 1999 and placed on 3 other occasions.

St Austell “Big Job” (7.2%) - “dry as a bone and jammed full of Cornish barley and as many Citra and Centennial hops as they could get their hands on. It’s not subtle but it’s a BIG beer”. The winner in 2017.

Fyne Ales “Superior IPA” (7.3%) - “choked full of Citra & Cascade hops, this is assertively bitter with a champagne-like finish”: 2nd placed bottled beer in 2015.

Of course the judges didn’t see the descriptions! These are taken from the CAMRA Finalists Sheet which was given to everyone who attended a tutored tasting.



The final judging panel decides on the winning bottle conditioned beers

Panel 2 tasted the mostly dark beers :-

Leatherbritches “Porter” (5.5%) - “plenty of chocolate & cara malts make this a beer a complex yet satisfying choice for a pint (or three)”

Black Metal “Blood Revenge” (6.6%) - I expect it’s really 6.66%! - “has a wonderful stout bitterness with a roasted taste & silky feel of rye; smooth on the tongue & even a little bit creamy.”

Salopian “Polygraph” (7.4%) “full-flavoured stout with toast, liquorice, hints of dark fruit, chocolate & mocha that are tempered by a crisp tart bitterness & smooth velvety texture.”

Arbor “Breakfast Stout” (7.4%) - an

"elegant creamy stout whose soothing, silky character combines evocative coffee notes with luxurious bittersweet chocolate".

Coniston "No 9" (8.5%) - "a delightful sipping beer. Brewed once a year, this classic strong golden beer has a long maturation to give a smooth & warming character. Rich in fruit flavours with marzipan, herbal happens and Cognac overtones."

Dark Star "Imperial" (10.5%) - a "densely rich beer with a dark brown head, it has coffee & berry-like aromas and a velvety feel; deserves to be savoured slowly."

Durham "Temptation Imperial" (10%) - "crystal, amber & dark malts plus roast barley in generous quantities generate a deep black colour and flavours to match. A full and sweetish body is balanced by traditional Goldings hops." Durham won in 2015 with "Evensong".

Green Jack "Baltic Trader" (10.5%) - a strong export stout brewed with molasses and 3 roasted malts, giving fruity flavours with hints of vanilla and roasted coffee: like a rich plum pudding in a glass."

The **6 highlighted beers**, interestingly (or coincidentally) the 5th, 6th & 7th tastings of each panel, went on to a different final panel of judges. Due to problems on the railways there were only 5 final judges; Bill Austin, John Clarke, David King, Amy Nash and Nick Yarwood, who selected the top 3 for 2018 as:-

Gold: Fullers "1845" (6.3%)

Silver: Durham "Temptation Imperial" (10%)

Bronze: St Austell "Big Job" (7.2%)

Thursday afternoon, to the end of the show on Sunday, was taken up with 13 sessions of tutored beer tastings led by Roger Protz, Adrian Tierney-Jones and Annabel Smith. This year the CAM-

RA stall was partly sponsored by Mr. Porky and every participant in a tutored tasting received a goodies bag containing a packet each of their "Crackles" and "Crispy Strips", plus a voucher. The people who paid for the Thursday afternoon tasting got to sample the top 3 from the morning's competition, plus 2 others including Coniston "No 9 Barley Wine".



Roger Protz leads the tutored tasting

The punters on Friday and Saturday also got to taste 5 of the finalist beers, and on Sunday Annabel Smith did snack pairing sessions with Kirkstall "Dissolution IPA" & poppadums; "Young's Special London Ale" & pork scratchings; "Big Job" & Doritos; Arbor "Breakfast Stout" & Monster Munch; and Fullers "1845" with McCoys cheese & onion crisps.

At the other part of the CAMRA stall, volunteers were selling the Good Beer Guide and other CAMRA books, chatting to attendees, and offering more personal ale samplings: they also persuaded around 70 people to sign up as new CAMRA members over the 4 days of the show. Next year I must see if I can do the volunteering AND get to the Dudley Winter Ales Festival which now always seems to be on the same weekend!

John Edwards

Editor's note: The Good Food Show dates for 2019 are the 28th November to the 1st December. We don't have a final confirmed date yet for the Dudley Winter Ales Festival. Good luck John.



Winner of Solihull & District CAMRA Club Of The Year 2016, 2017, 2018

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



The bar is open every day, featuring Sky TV with sporting events such as Six Nations Rugby, Premiership Football and, naturally, Cricket being shown. In the summer you can relax with your favourite ale watching Birmingham Premier League Cricket with many past and present county players on view. K&D's 1st XI were crowned CHAMPIONS of the Birmingham & District Premier Cricket League in 2017, which was a great achievement for the club.

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 a 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

Website: knowleanddorridgecc.co.uk
Email: knowledorridgecc@gmail.com
Instagram [@knowledorridgecc](https://www.instagram.com/knowledorridgecc)

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Editorial

The beer scene around the Solihull area is certainly looking up this year, with new openings, re-openings, and existing pubs and clubs becoming more adventurous with their beer choice. Combined with the beer festival season getting into full swing in June, things are looking up for real ale and cider drinkers in our region.

While on the subject of ciders and perries, you will find more mention of these in this and forthcoming editions. More and more pubs are starting to offer real ciders and perries, and Solihull & District CAMRA now has a cider and perry officer. As you can see from the article opposite this is a fun job! If you find any good ciders or perries around the area, please let him know.

In the first weekend in October we will again be holding the Solihull & District beer festival at the Solihull British Legion. This follows the Lions festival in the Shirley Legion on the 13th and 14th

September, and the Shirley Round Table Festival on June 6th to 8th. We will again be looking for CAMRA volunteers to help closer to the time. Keep an eye open for branch emails.

The most exciting news is that the Great British Beer Festival Winter will be held at the Bingley Hall in February 2020. The organisation is now in full swing, and offers a great opportunity to volunteer at one of the country's leading beer festivals, and of course sample more than 400 beers and ciders.

This is a West Midlands organised festival, where our Regional Director, Gary Timmins, played a major role in making the successful bid. Gary was elected to the CAMRA National Executive at the recent AGM, so the West Midlands region will shortly elect a new Regional Director. We wish Gary every success in his new role.

David Cove, Editor

Midlands Region Cider Pub of the Year Judging

At the 2019 AGM I stuck my head above the parapet and agreed to volunteer as branch cider and perry representative. Not much of an election contest as I was the only candidate, though not entirely surprising given that so many of those who attend branch meetings or events don't seem to drink either cider or perry.

I know many of you don't believe it but you are missing out! The variation in types of both cider and perry is very much equivalent to the breadth of real ales. I don't like all real ales and I don't like all real ciders or perries. But, as with real ale, it is most definitely worth giving them a go.

Anyway, having taken on board my new mantle, the regional Cider and Perry Pub Of The Year (CPOTY) judging came my way very early on. Fortunately the two reprobates in the branch I am closest to (Paul and Martin) both appreciate cider and perry, so that set us up, with a little judicial organisation, to try and visit as many of the nominated pubs as possible. There were 18, but in the first round of judging you are not allowed to judge your own branch's nomination (for us that was the Pup & Duckling).

So we had 17 as a target with one in Herefordshire (Yew Tree in Ross on Wye), one in Shropshire (Salopian in Shrewsbury), five in Staffordshire, three in Warwickshire, six in the West Midlands (though one was ours), and two in Worcestershire. The scoring for the judging will be familiar to those who get involved in voting for our Good Beer Guide (GBG) entries each year as it follows a very similar system.

That's quite a geographical spread and a bit of a logistics nightmare, so I volunteered to drive and get a few in on a Saturday. First up was the Black Country Arms in Walsall, with a selection of 4, though far more in the way of real ales. This set a good marker for the day

in terms of quality. Next was the Kings Arms in Stafford and a further selection of 4, and here we picked up a passenger in the form of Steve, the CAMRA Regional Cider Co-ordinator (RCC).

Steve travelled with us to the Last Heretic in Burton, where he attempted to lead us astray as he was convinced he knew where it was, as he'd been before. No he didn't, and his geography is pants! Paul did find it for us, and again a selection of 4, including a rhubarb flavoured one. Before you go turn your noses up, it was pretty good and there were several other rhubarb flavoured ciders during our tasting sessions, with all being good.

Steve then accompanied us to the Kings Ditch in Tamworth, and left us there to catch his bus. Wow! This place was memorable for a number of reasons. One was that he didn't seem that welcome (ask me over a pint!), and the other was the menu of ciders and perries at this micro - 16 regulars on at our visit, with some additional fruit ciders, plus 6 unusual real ales. They even have menus on the tables with tasting notes and descriptions of all their ciders and perries.



From Tamworth it was off to the Lord Hop in Nuneaton, with a choice of 5. One of the scoring aspects for CPOTY is knowledge and promotion of the product, but were caught out here with no

sign that a couple of these were fruit ciders. We made up for that when we got to the Merchants Inn in Rugby with a selection of 13, and a very good choice of real ales too. Indeed, that was a recurring theme as all the pubs are good real ale venues.

We finished our first day of judging at the Old Windmill in Coventry, with a choice of 6. I have to say I was surprised at this being that branch's nomination as I would have selected the Broomfield Tavern, but I learned later that confusion during the nominations meant Steve the RCC had simply accepted the first nomination from any Coventry branch member. We came home via the Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club where, having dropped the car off, I could now have a drink or two. I know they will deny it but Paul and Martin were both pretty pickled by now.

I was up in Liverpool the following week so decided to call in and visit the Bridge Street Ale House in Newcastle under Lyme on the way home. Paul said he was also interested, and I picked him up at Stoke on Trent railway station from the Bod café bar, which sells Titanic beers. There were 10 ciders and perries on in the Bridge Street Ale House, and the chap behind the bar was very knowledgeable, even mixing a raspberry flavoured cider with Applejack and creating a very drinkable product.

From here we drove to one of the hard-



Bridge Street Ale House, Newcastle

er to reach pubs you might come across, the Black Lion at Consall Forge. Although I had been here before it was during the daytime. Even with Satnav we took a couple of wrong turns, and the final stretch looked more like the surface of the moon than a road. But the reward is a super little friendly pub with 5 on offer. The Flat Tyre Cloudy & Rhubarb was particularly good.

On a subsequent evening Martin, Paul and I took the train from Dorridge to Rowley Regis, and the Britannia Pub & Brewery with its 5 ciders and perries, yet another pub I'd never visited before: that is definitely one of the good aspects of getting involved in judging. Next, we visited the Beer Emporium & Cider House in Kidderminster with 4, and returned to the station via the chippy. The trip back to Birmingham was via the Wagon & Horses in Stourbridge, where it would have been nice to stop for the pub quiz, but we were on a mission,, so sampled the 5 on offer, before making our way to Birmingham and the Post Office Vaults with its 14 offerings. Unfortunately I remain unconvinced that we actually got what we ordered. However, as none of them were bad we drank what we had.

So, that was 12 of the possible 17 pubs out of the way. We still had one that was relatively close, the Old Post Office in Warwick, with 5 to sample. With a Chinese take away and a chippy both nearby they allow you to bring your own food in, and provide disposable cutlery.

This was just the first stage of judging. Having submitted our scores the top entry from each of the 6 counties goes through, plus the top 4 of the rest. So it now starts all over again with 10 to judgewell someone has to do it!

Ray Cooke

Editor's Note. After this round of judging the Pup and Duckling made it into the final 10. We await the outcome of the next round and wish them luck.

Ember Inns Pub Of The Year 2018



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(must advise you are a member at time of booking)

Branch Beer Quality Scoring - Points Win Beer!

CAMRA has long promoted the National Beer Scoring System (NBSS), and encouraged branches to make it a key part of selecting pubs for the Good Beer Guide (GBG). Solihull & District has always looked at the scores, but the issue we've had is that our pubs don't get enough scores to make it reliable.

We discussed this in a committee meeting and have decided that we will look at the number of scores submitted by each branch member (*excluding committee members*), and the top three will be awarded bottles of beer as an incentive to enter scores. If you want to be in with a chance of free beer, all you have to do is make use of NBSS. The next period will be from 1st June to the end

of August. Results will be announced at the following branch meeting and via email, and the winners will be presented with their prizes at a future branch meeting. Only scores in pubs in our branch area will be counted as we cannot see scores for other areas.

To score beers you can use the WhatPub.com website. When viewing a pub's details, choose 'Beer Scoring', then simply choose your score (from 0 to 5), the brewery and the beer. That can be done on a smartphone at the time, or using a computer back at home. Now NBSS has also been incorporated into CAMRA's GBG smartphone app.



WhatPub

Out and About in Wigan, Southport and Preston...

What a Weekend! - Part 1

Not quite a weekend, but Thursday to Sunday, our annual branch drinking holiday. Heading north west this year to take in the towns of Wigan, Southport and Preston with accommodation in the Mercure Hotel, Wigan. Due to accidents and roadworks we did not arrive in Wigan until 5.30 on Thursday evening. Sorting ourselves out, and noting that most of the pubs are almost next door to each other, we sought the early arrivers at a nearby pub, The Berkeley on Wallgate. An ex-coaching inn the pub is large, rambling, and traditional in appearance. Sports on TV is popular here, but more popular with me was the good beer on tap. Of the 4 beers, I found Bank Tops Waxing Crescent, a 3.8% IPA, followed by a rather strong Cross Bays Zenith IPA at 5% to be in beautiful condition. 2 more beers were available, both from Cheadle, a stout and a bitter. What a great start to the holiday.



The group assemble at The Berkeley

With the party together now we were informed that Little Fifteen was not up to much, and likewise we found the same with Harrys Bar. Moving on down Wallgate we found The Swan and Railway closed whilst building work was in progress, so we aimed for Wigan Central, a Prospect Brewery pub just under the railway viaduct on Wallgate. Another 2 great beers here; Prospect Silver Tally at 3.7% and a typical Salopian brew,

Disintegration at 5.1%. Both a 4 out of 5 for me. The pub is under the arches of the railway, and multi-roomed, serving 7 beers in all. Prospect, Tyne Bank, Wild Beer, Doghouse and Neptune Breweries were represented.

We then moved back up Wallgate to The Boulevard, a popular music venue in a large basement bar. The sign outside advertises it as a place for Real Beer, Real Music, and Real People. I found it a little soulless. Looking along the bar there were 5 beers and a cider. I tried 4 of the beers. Big Clocks James Blonde In Diet Another Day and Wigan Brewhouse Kicker Session IPA, a 4% American Pale Ale both in superb condition, followed not far behind by Prospect Whatever Next at 4%, and at 4.5% Cameron's Motorhead Road Crew American Pale Ale. I gave the Robinsons Trooper marching orders! We went back to the Boulevard later in the evening when it was much busier and karaoke was in progress. With what we heard the performers left a lot to be desired. However, the place did have a little more atmosphere.

Heading back up Wallgate we popped into the Raven, a traditional pub with many historic features. We found Taylors Landlord, Phoenix Arizona, Tetley Original, Wigan Brewhouse Old Borth, and Beer Monkey Evolution Pilsner. All pleasant enough but we did not tarry as we were getting peckish and headed for the inevitable Wetherspoons.

Moving on having eaten, our next port of call was the John Bull Chophouse just off the Market Place in Coopers Row. Thwaites beers were on the bar, with Thwaites John Bull Chophouse Pale Ale and Heritage being the only ones of interest to me. Sin Bin and Bomber were also on offer. I tried the Heritage which was nothing remarkable. According to Whatpub there should have been more beers on the premises on the top floor

called Hop House. We must have missed it. The pub is quite old and traditional in character, but it did not hold us as we wandered round to the Anvil in Dorning Street. Another traditional pub with 8 beers on tap; Brakspear Oxford Gold; Thwaites Wainwright; Sharps Atlantic; Banks's Mild; Wigan Brewhouse Casino Pale Ale at 3.9%, a beautiful beer, likewise Abbeydale Speculation at 4% and Stockport West Coast IPA at 4.3%, another cracker. There were also 2 real ciders on handpump.

Last one for the night was the Tap and Barrel owned by Martland Mill brewery. Quite well hidden, and with 7 ciders available, a mecca for cider drinkers. True to form yours truly was by now a little worse for wear, but I remember sampling Maitland's Lancashire Loom, a 4.2% golden ale which was very nice. The others on tap were OK but not memorable. However, after a full evening on the beer my comment may be

unjustified! Time for the hotel and bed.

Our trip on Friday was to Southport. Having been there recently with friends for a spot of birdwatching (of the feathered kind) I volunteered to head the tour. Frequent trains go to Southport from Wigan, so not long after 11.30 we arrived there. Southport has the feel of an elegant Edwardian seaside town, maybe slightly down on its luck. Lord Street, the main thoroughfare, is a wide boulevard with cast iron shop canopies running along its northern side. Luckily too, most of the pubs are on this main drag or radiate off it.

We made our first port of call the Willow Grove, one of two Wetherspoons in the town. Named after a Victorian villa that once stood on the site, it is a typical Wetherspoons with Abbot, Doom Bar, Wainwright and Ruddles as staple fare with 4 guests. I enjoyed a very nice Salopian Hop Twister in superb condition. A good start to the day.

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Thursday
Midnight Friday and Saturday
10.30 pm on Sunday

A short walk brought us to Peakyl Blinders on the corner of Lord Street and New Street. Originally a corner shop, this large modern style bar hosted 5 beers, Taylors Landlord being the only well-known beer on. Of the other 4 beers available the 5.2 % Appleby Middle Aged Spread, a full bodied stout, and Bowness Bay Brew 1000 Tropical at 4.5%, were both in excellent condition.



Checking out the Peakyl Blinders

Not too far away to our next port of call, The Bottle Room. This micro is in an old shop, and as well as stocking cask beers it has a wide selection of bottled beers. A long walk to the back of the micro brought us to the bar and seating area. Surveying the handpumps local brewers Parker was represented by Boadicea IPA at 5%, very nice and at 3.9% Southport Brewery with Dark Night, a dark fruity mild which went down well.



Settling in the back of The Bottle Room

Our next pub was almost across the road, the Punch Tarmey's. Advertised as an Irish pub, we found it very quiet

inside. Looking along the bar it had Salopian Shropshire Gold, which proved to be over the top; Titanic Plum Porter, a universally popular brew and Lancaster Blonde, malty but with a dry finish which was very good.

We did not tarry for long here as we were heading to The Guest House for food. A GBG entry in a listed building this is a really comfortable pub to be in. With 7 beers on I was a little disappointed in the range. Ruddles, Theakston's, Timothy Taylor, Lees, Marston's and Fullers commandeered the bar, the only one of interest being Southport Guest House. However Marston's 61 Deep and Fullers Swing Low were in excellent condition, and the food went down a treat too!

Another micro now, Tap and Bottles in Cambridge Walk. Small and very busy with an eclectic interior it had 4 beers on. Black Jack Fusion 4.8%; Hawkshead Morail; Nightjar At One With Citra, very nice 3.9% and very dry and hoppy, and a Plum Porter, the brewer I am afraid I've forgotten.

Reluctantly leaving we made our way to the Barons Bar in The Scarisbrick Hotel, a longstanding GBG entry. It is a little dilapidated inside and does not have a very good reputation as a place to stay. However, once you have found the bar you will find a possible 9 beers. On our visit 7 were available, namely 4 Moorhouses beers, Tetley Original, George Wright Drunken Duck, and a very tasty 4 % Doghouse Cappuccino Stout.

We did not stay long here, as it is a very run down bar, so we were soon on our way to the second Wetherspoons in town, The Sir Henry Segrave, where 9 beers faced us on the bar. I was intrigued to find out who Sir Henry was. Apparently he was an early 20th century pioneer in land and water speed sports. His only link with Southport is that he reached 152 mph on Ainsdale Beach close by. We did not quite race to the bar but it did have 6 guest beers on so was well worth the visit.

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 The Lyndon Pub Solihull



Opening Hours:

Sun – Wed: 12.00pm – 11:30pm

Thu – Fri: 12.00pm – 12.00am

Sat: 12.00pm – 1.00am

We left after a quick one moving on to the Phoenix, a large free house on Coronation Walk, just off Lord Street. Castle Rock Elsie Mo, Salopian Midnight Express, and Upham 1st Drop. Very sports orientated but well worth popping into.

Our next pub was the Cheshire Lines in King Street. A very friendly locals pub at the back of Lord Street, it had 2 of its 4 handpumps in operation. Black Sheep Bitter and Martland Knocker Upper, a 3.9% straw coloured beer, which I tried and found to be quite bland. A shame really as I liked the pub, but don't let it put you off visiting.

Beer Den next, a little bit of a welcome walk. The tap for Parker Brewery, this micro had 4 beers; Beer Brothers Gold (3.8%) and Engine Room No. 2 (4.5%), and Parker Viking Blonde (4.7%) and Centurion Pale Ale (3.9%). Swift halves here found the beers in excellent form.

A train awaited so we headed back to

Wigan visiting Docs Symposium, a great micro with 5 handpumps; Prospect Silver Tally, a 3.7% pale, citrusy beer; Vocation Bread and Butter, a 3.9% American APA with a sweetish and soft hoppy finish; Weetwood Cheshire Cat, a typical Blonde ale at 4%; Listers Best Bitter, a traditional English style bitter at 3.9% and Wily Fox Crafty Fox another 4% traditional bitter, all in reasonable condition. Wigan's first micro, it is only a short walk from the town centre near Mesnes Park. It's a modern one room bar with snacks available.

Tiring now just one more pub, The Royal Oak in Standishgate, a comfortable traditional pub serving 4 beers. Black Edge's 3.5% Session Ale, and the much stronger Moorhouses 6% Vanilla Stout, were both lovely. Big Bog Billabong, using the new Australian hop Ella (4.4%) was not quite as good and I missed out on the Hobgoblin. It's bedtime!

Steve Dyson

Hail To The Ale

Local Beer, Pub, Club and Brewery News

You will see from the advert on page 2, that after 31 years Brad and Joy, licensees at the **Bulls Head in Barston**, will be retiring when the lease is sold. During their tenure the Bulls Head has been in the Good Beer Guide for over 20 years, and has been the Solihull Pub Of The Year no less than 7 times. They will be missed, but you still have a chance to visit them this summer.

To celebrate their first birthday, the **Tap & Tandoor** is holding a beer festival from **Saturday 15th June to Sunday 16th June** in support of Solihull Round Table. Set up in the beer garden, the day will start at noon, and feature a range of ales from Purity as well as 'weird and wonderful beers' from around the world. Drinks tokens can be bought on the day or in advance at a discount at www.tapandtandoor.co.uk.

Shirley continues to expand it's real ale offering still further. As well as the opening of the **Shaking Hand** on the 29th March (see page 25), the **Red Lion** also reopened on the 6th April. Real ales seem to be limited to 2 currently, but are reported to be good quality. The **Lions beer festival** at the **Shirley Legion** in September will be a good excuse to try out these pubs.

Broomfields Hall, the **Solihull British Legion** has been refurbished, resulting in a much brighter and cleaner looking bar area. Recently the choices of beer have also become more unusual, adding more welcome diversity to the beer offerings in Solihull.

The **Red House**, just outside the Solihull centre, is due to be refurbished shortly and we hope to bring you some details in our next issue.

Mentioning increasing diversity of beers, **The Forest** in Dorridge has recently been selling unusual beers not seen in this area before. With plans for a fourth handpull, the range will grow further. Added to that there is a deal for card carrying CAMRA members, with real ales £3 a pint Sunday to Wednesday. At a discount of 80-90p per pint it makes CAMRA membership even more attractive financially.

The **Ale Rooms** have now expanded to the **Ale Rooms Kenilworth**. Let's hope that the success of the Knowle Ale Rooms is continued. Just a shame that it isn't around Solihull.

Work is continuing on the **Indian Brewery** site in Solihull. There is still no confirmed opening date as we go to print, apart from the "opening soon" that we have seen for a while now. Hopefully there will be something to report in the next Drinker, and visitors to the Solihull Beer Festival in October can experience another newly opened bar.

The **Crabmill at Preston Bagot** has been refurbished by the new owners Brunning and Price. While it is classed as a Gastro Pub, the real ale offering currently numbers 6 and could have up to 8 in the future. The new manager comes from the Physician in Edgbaston, which bodes well for the quality and range of beers in the future.

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Useful Contact Numbers

Chair/ Beer Festival		Pubs Campaigning/Socials	
Martin Buck	01564 770708	Paul Wigley	07402 312457
Secretary		Treasurer	
Allan Duffy	01564 200431	Laurence Loy	email on website
Membership		Solihull Drinker Editor	
Dave Mckowen	01564 778955	David Cove	0121 603 6057
Cider and Perry/ Vice Chair		Press & Publicity	
Ray Cooke	01564 777890	Vacant	

Trading Standards contacts:

For local consumer advice in our area please contact the following

Solihull - www.solihull.gov.uk/tradingstandards

Warwickshire - www.warwickshire.gov.uk/contactustradingstandards

Citizens Advice Consumer Service phone 03454 040506

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 13.

Flute and Flaggon gives 10% off real ales (may not applicable when other low price promotions are taking place).

The Lyndon give 20p/pint except Thursdays when a pint is £2.70. Also 5% off food for card carrying members.

Drum and Monkey, Wharf Tavern, Drawbridge Inn, Boat Inn, Greswolde Arms, give 10% off real ales.

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

The **Ale Rooms, Knowle** 40p/pint or 20p/ half pint

Tap and Tandoor, Solihull 10% off a pint of selected Craft Beers.

The Forest, Dorridge From Sunday 11 a.m to Wednesday 11 p.m £3/pint for card carrying members (around 80p-90p discount)

Please note that discounts given to CAMRA members are at the discretion of the licensee, and these may be withdrawn or amended at any time. They are a privilege given to **card carrying CAMRA members** as a gesture of goodwill.

CAMRA believes that no CAMRA member or Branch should ask for, or expect, a discount from any pub or brewery.

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Warwick Folk Festival is one of the premier folk events in the country and will be celebrating its 40th Festival with a mix of local, national and international artists, family events, workshops, and a **mini beer festival** onsite. Artists this year include Billy Bragg, Skerryvore, Karan Casey, Calan, Will Pound & Eddy Jay, Breabach, Kabantu and many more.

Formed in 1980 and originally held at the Lord Leycester Hotel and Courthouse in town, this fes-

tival rapidly outgrew its surroundings and moved its base to Warwick School on Myton Road.

The Real Ale & Cider tent will stock between 35 and 40 real ales plus 20 ciders and perries. The bar is run by Nigel Smith from the Fleece Inn at Bretforton, and beers from Slaughterhouse, Church Farm, Church End, as well as Purity, Hobson's, Sarah Hughes and Salopian can be expected.

There is also a wine tent serving wine, prosecco, and cocktails.

CAMRA members should show their card for a discount on a pint, or bring your Wetherspoons vouchers.

See www.warwickfolkfestival.co.uk to book tickets and to find out more.

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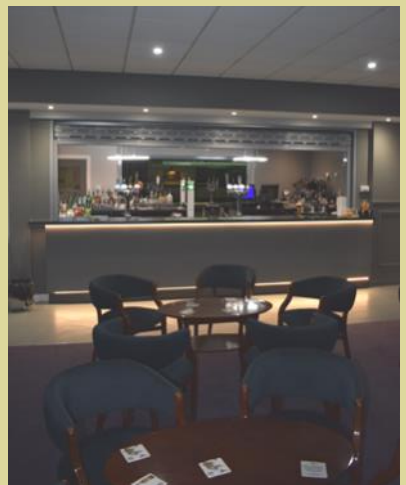
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**Further details from the
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Shaking Hand Micro Bar Opens In Shirley



A new addition to Shirley's beer offering arrived on the 29th March when Jav Fennelly opened the Shaking Hand near the Asda Supermarket in the Parkgate complex.

When the Metro Bar and Kitchen, which he managed, closed down around 18 months ago, Jav decided to go it alone. 6 months later he found his premises, but it took another year to turn it into reality.

He prefers to call it a Micro Bar, rather than a Micro Pub, as there is music and a television. However, with 4 hand pulls, 4 craft beers, 2 real ciders, and a selection of cans and bottles, there is plenty to interest the beer and cider drinker.

Beers are sourced from a variety of breweries, but he plans to normally have two local brews and two sourced from further afield. So far Anarchy, Turning Point, Birmingham Brewing Company, Frothblowers, Tiny Rebel, Titanic and Church End are examples of brewers seen on the bar.

The bar is small (with a maximum capacity of 52), but with a friendly atmosphere. Business is initially good with lots of passing trade, especially amongst shoppers. Maybe next time you are thinking of doing yours you should pop into Asda and recover with a well earned pint in the Shaking Hand.



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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Campaign
for
Real Ale

Membership Matters

CAMRA was founded in 1971 by four real ale enthusiasts, and since that time membership has grown quite substantially. Today the national membership stands at just over 191,000, which is why CAMRA is now considered to be one of Europe's most successful consumer organisations. The Solihull & District CAMRA branch membership continues to grow at a steady rate and is currently at 675.

Some of CAMRA's aims are to see good quality real ale, cider and perry in well run thriving pubs and clubs across every community. It does this by encouraging responsible beer drinking and pub going with beer festivals, good pub guides, awards, and by lobbying government for change to support the industry.

Within CAMRA there's plenty for everyone, whether you are a dedicated campaigner, a beer or cider connoisseur looking to learn more, or you want to meet up with like minded people who have a love of real ale or cider in a local pub.

We have recently seen a few new members attending their first branch meetings or socials, and taking advantage of the free pint incentive we offer to all new members. However, we would still like to see more new faces, so I'm calling on all new members who are reading this to come along to the next branch meeting. These are always held at a local pub serving decent real ale, and possibly cider, where you will be made most welcome, and be able to enjoy a free pint courtesy of Solihull &

District CAMRA branch. If you don't fancy joining us for a branch meeting, why not come along on one of our organised social trips using either public transport or minibus. These range from pub crawls, brewery visits, and beer/curry nights. See our website www.solihull.camra.org.uk or the dates in the diary section on page 4 for a list of upcoming branch events.

Recently a decision was made by the CAMRA National Executive to increase the membership rates in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI). This increase will take effect from 1st July 2019. This will mean the cost of subscriptions will increase by either £1.00 or £1.50 per annum. You can still join CAMRA before the price increase and enjoy all the great benefits such as a monthly newsletter called "Whats Brewing", an award winning quarterly magazine titled "Beer", free or reduced entry to beer festivals, £20 of JD Wetherspoon vouchers and numerous other benefits. Go to www.camra.org.uk for full details.

Even with the price increase, a one year membership will not break the bank, currently at £25.00 per year using direct debit (concessions for Under-26). This roughly equals 48p per week, and with Fathers Day on 16th June a this could be the ideal gift.

So why not take the plunge and join over 191,000 other like minded people with a love of real ale and cider and good pubs.

Dave Mckowen
Membership Secretary

Solihull Drinker Issue No. 88 Solihull CAMRA 2019©

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The 89th edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 2nd September 2019. Please note that the deadline for copy, advertising and any other contributions for this issue is **Thursday 1st August**. Thank you in advance to all contributors.

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