



# Solihull Drinker

Issue No 99  
Autumn 2023



**Free**  
*Please take one*

## Solihull CAMRA beer & cider festival (change of date)



The festival will **now** take place from **Thursday 5 to Saturday 7 October 2023** (this is a change from our previously advertised dates).

**Opening hours**  
5.0 pm - 11.00pm Thursday  
Midday - 11.00pm Friday & Saturday

**40 real ales plus 6 ciders/perries**

Paul Wigley is again ordering the beers, ciders & perries, so we know the selection will be both interesting and varied.

For anyone reading this who'd like to give their business a mention, it would be great to have you as a sponsor and to see your name in print. That could be sponsoring a cask of beer/cider or advertising in our festival programme. Anyone wishing to do so or who wants to discuss other possibilities should contact the festival organiser Martin Buck on [chair@solihull.camra.org.uk](mailto:chair@solihull.camra.org.uk).

**We look forward to welcoming you all**

**Details of the festival are still being finalised so please check our website for any changes**  
[www.solihull.camra.org.uk](http://www.solihull.camra.org.uk)

I'm delighted to open this edition with news of our 22<sup>nd</sup> annual beer and cider festival

**Venue -**  
**Solihull Royal British Legion**  
**(Broomfield Hall),**  
**Union Road**  
**Solihull B91 3DH**

# ALE HUB

★ MICROPUB ★

Both our micropubs have 4 rotating cask ales and 2 craft beers as well as a range of other drinks. We are dog friendly and under 18's are welcome until 6pm.

## LOCATIONS:



### **Ale Hub Shirley**

Opening Hours:

Sunday - Wednesday: 09:00 - 22:00

Thursday - Saturday: 09:00 - 23:00

Coffee Served from: 09:00 - 14:00

Ale Hub Shirley, 277 Longmore Road, Shirley, Solihull, B90 3ER



### **Ale Hub Dickens Heath**

Opening Hours:

Sunday - Wednesday: 12:00 - 22:00

Thursday - Saturday: 12:00 - 23:00

Ale Hub Dickens Heath, 73 Main Street, Dickens Heath, Solihull, B90 1UB



**Dogs Are Welcome!**

## Dates for your diary

### Branch Meetings

(Branch meetings start at 8.00pm except where noted otherwise)

Monday 2 October  
Monday 6 November  
Monday 4 December

Solihull British Legion  
K&D Racquets Club  
The Lyndon

For more details and contacts for the above, please call Secretary Allan Duffy on 01564 200431 or visit our website [www.solihull.camra.org.uk](http://www.solihull.camra.org.uk)

### Committee Meetings

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

Monday 18 September  
Monday 13 November

Fleur de Lys  
Woodmans Rest

### Socials

Friday 22 September  
Friday 10 November  
Saturday 9 December

Leamington Spa crawl  
Litchfield crawl  
Christmas crawl, Birmingham

For more details of socials please email [steve\\_dyson@solihull.camra.org.uk](mailto:steve_dyson@solihull.camra.org.uk)

**Most, though not all, of our local pubs have disabled access. If you wish to attend a meeting and require assistance please 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:**

[www.camra.org.uk/beer-festivals-events/](http://www.camra.org.uk/beer-festivals-events/)

**7 - 9 Sept (Thurs – Sat)**

Tamworth beer festival  
Assembly Rooms  
Corporation St  
Tamworth B79 7DN

**7 - 9 Sept (Thurs - Sat)**

Bridgnorth beer festival  
Severn Valley Railway Station  
Bridgnorth  
WV16 4AT

more festivals on next page

## Features in this issue include:

Upcoming Beer Festivals	3
Sheffield weekend part 3	5
Wolverhampton beer festival	7
John O'Groats Brewery	8
Late Night Levy	10
Pub closures	12
Micropubs	14
Champion beer of Britain 2023	16
Useful contacts	17
Hail to the Ale	18
Membership Matters	19

The Solihull Drinker is the quarterly newsletter of the Solihull & District branch of CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale). Views expressed are not necessarily those of the branch or CAMRA. Contributions, comments and advertising enquiries should be sent to

[editor@solihull.camra.org.uk](mailto:editor@solihull.camra.org.uk)

Printed by Thistle Print Ltd.,

Leeds

Solihull CAMRA 2023 ©

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



Campaign  
for  
Real Ale

Local beer festivals cont.

**8 - 9 Sept (Fri - Sat)**

Three Lions beer & cider festival  
Shirley British Legion  
186 Stratford Road  
Shirley  
B90 3BQ

**14 - 16 Sept (Thurs - Sat)**

Cannock Chase beer festival  
Prince of Wales Theatre  
Church Street  
Cannock WS11 1DE

**5 - 7 Oct (Thurs - Sat)**

Solihull CAMRA beer & cider festival  
Solihull British Legion  
Union Road  
Solihull  
B91 3DH

**9 - 11 Nov (Thurs - Sat)**

Kidderminster beer & cider festival  
Stadium Close  
Kidderminster  
DY10 1DB

**8 - 9 Sept (Fri - Sat)**

Moreton beer & cider festival  
Moreton in Marsh cricket club  
Batsford Road  
Moreton in Marsh  
GL56 0AB

**27 - 30 Sept (Wed - Sat)**

Shrewsbury beer festival  
St Mary's Church  
St Mary's Street  
Shrewsbury  
SY1 1DX

**11 - 14 Oct (Wed - Sat)**

Nottingham beer & cider festival  
Bridgford Road  
Nottingham  
NG2 6AG

*Solihull*  
**THE FLUTE & FLAGON**

**28-30 Station Parade**

**Solihull B91 3SB**

**Tel: 0121 711 3630**

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



The Flute & Flagon

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



**sky sports**

**BT Sport**

**6 Real Ales  
&  
3 Craft Beers**

**Opening Hours**

**09.00 - 23.00 Sun - Thur**

**09.00 - 24.00 Fri - Sat**



## Sheffield weekend part 3

Saturday saw us on the short train journey from Sheffield to Doncaster. I'd been in touch with the local CAMRA branch and they'd kindly offered to take us around.

However, before meeting up with them we popped into the Draughtsman Alehouse on platform 3B at the station. The place was crammed. It's small with an on-platform seating area and obviously popular. We fought our way in admiring the superb Victorian wall tiles to find the beers on the bar. Three cask beers and very good value at £3.50 (not a price you'll easily find in Solihull these days). My first for the day was Atom Wave Function a 4.5% APA. A great start to the day, the only downside was we had to sit outside with our beer in plastic glasses.

Just off the ring road is a true locals pub. The Little Plough in West Laith Gate is on CAMRA's Inventory of Historic Pub interiors. The outside is pretty stunning, informing us it was once owned by Hewitt's Grimsby Ales. It's multi roomed inside having a front bar, lounge and a corridor. It has a 1930s feel to it. I settled for a Bradfield Blonde, in perfect condition but a little bland. Looking at the time we needed to meet our hosts.

It's a long walk to the Salutation on South Parade. A former coaching inn, owned by Greene King it has a good range of beers with up to seven on tap, three regulars and four guests. Leeds Pale is one of the regulars and the guests were from Little Critters and Milestone. I had the Leeds Pale, in great condition if a little on the sweet side. The pub is a large single roomed affair but has a superb garden, most of it undercover. It also includes a stage and

outside bar too, great on a warm summer's day.

Just a short walk back towards the town centre is the Hallcross on Hallgate, which used to brew its own beer (Stocks) many years ago. These have now been reinstated it albeit brewed by Welbeck. The Stocks beers were Old Horizontal, Select Best Bitter and St Leger Gold all between £2.50 and £3.00. However, I went for one of the guests, Little Critters Little Hopper Pale Ale, in good condition, sweet and it seemed to me a little wheaty and not very hoppy either.

A bit of a walk now to Sunny Bar and the Queen Crafthouse and Kitchen (see photo below). It was very noisy in the bar, but the beers were interesting. Bristol Beer Factory, two from Nailmaker, Kent and Wild Child. I went for the Nailmakers Chinook [sweet, hoppy and floral] and Kent Pale Ale, OK but lacking in flavour. They were, however in good condition.

Leaving the noise, it was a short hop round the corner to the quiet oasis that is the Market Place Alehouse and Deli. It is



a typical shop front bar with an outside seating area overlooking the marketplace. It serves food as well as

beer and I opted for the Jolly Sailor - Sailors Gold, brewed in nearby Selby. I found it ok but uninspiring.

Close by in the Woolmarket complex is the Don Valley Tap. This was another very busy and again very noisy pub. Don Valley also have another bar in the complex concentrating on craft beers. Of the three Don Valley beers I went for the Atomic Blond Ale, hoppy and dry, and quite superb. There is seating around the bar but I found that you had to form a single file queue to be served.



Onto another tap now, Doncaster Brewery Tap (see photo above). This was a pleasant and quiet oasis, in another ex-shop with 6 ciders and a perry complimented by four real ales, three from Doncaster and a guest from Tom's Tap and Brewhouse, based in Crewe. The Doncaster Sand House Citra Edition was truly wonderful, for me the best beer of the day. The beers don't travel too far to the bar as they are brewed on site.

Heading back towards the station now we aimed for the Leopard. You can't miss it on West Street with its superb, tiled frontage advertising Warwick and Richardson's Ltd, Newark Ales and Stouts. Serving food, it also has a fine range of beers and plenty of space to

both eat and drink. Six beers are the norm, and today's listings included Dr Mortin's, Deeply Vale, Ten Eighty-Six and two from Rat. I naturally go for Rat, but often wonder if it is brewed at the Rat Brewery in Huddersfield or by Ossett at the main brewery. The 7% Rat Against the Machine was my style though a bit on the strong side, so I went for the Atella a milk chocolate and hazelnut stout, a perfect stout.

It was time to go so we said our goodbyes to the local branch members still with us

and made our way back to Sheffield popping into the Sheffield Tap at the station. An ever-popular destination on any trip to Sheffield my only gripe is the price - £5 a pint, expensive compared to other pubs in Sheffield. It has a long main bar with a bank of handpumps surrounded by various seating areas. With ten beers and ciders to choose from there is something for everyone, though it makes choosing one difficult. Anarchy Shatters won, both hoppy and a little sweet but a fine end to our visit to Sheffield.

Steve Dyson

190 Barn Lane  
Solihull  
B92 7LY  
0121 743 2179  
www.thelyndonpub.co.uk

The Lyndon

**Live Music and  
entertainment  
every Saturday**

Up to 4 cask ales (20p CAMRA discount)) and 4 real ciders

Free function room to hire for all occasions

Monday Club - Carling £3.20  
and Tetleys £2.70

Tuesday - Quiz and Games  
Night from 8pm

Wednesday - Bingo

Thursday - all cask ales £2.80



**Opening Hours:**

Sun – Wed: 12.00pm – 11.00pm

Thu – Sat: 12.00pm – 12.00am



The Lyndon Pub Solihull

## Wolverhampton summer festival of beer & cider 2023

The 46<sup>th</sup> Wolverhampton Beer and Cider Festival was held from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> July at the Newhampton Arts Centre located close to the home of Wolves, Molineux Stadium and a 10 minute bus ride from the railway station.

Your reporter took advantage of an online offer of admittance for two persons at just £5, which included a glass and for CAMRA members a half pint. An innovation, not previously encountered by me at a festival, was the facility to pay for the beers by means of card readers on the counter. Alternatively it was also possible to obtain strike cards by card or cash.

Now for the beers. There were 42 beers listed in the programme but two of these had failed to come into condition. There was a mixture of local beers from the likes of Banks, who were sponsors, and Holdens who also provided support for the Festival programme etc. The

majority of the beers were supplied by local independent breweries including Byatts, Enville, Fixed Wheel, Fownes, Green Duck, Kinver, Lymestone (Stone), Newbridge (Bilston), Old Pie Factory (Warwick), Purity, Sarah Hughes, Tamworth, Titanic, Trinity and Twisted Barrel.

From further afield there were Fyne Ales (located at the head of Loch Fyne), Pennine (from Bedale), Redemption (Tottenham) and Stewart (Edinburgh).

My friend from Halesowen CAMRA and I only sampled those ales from breweries with which we were unfamiliar. Three worthy of mention were Newbridge *Little Fox*, Pennine *Pacific* and without doubt our favourite of the session, Fyne Ales *Jarl*, first brewed in 2010 and flavoured with Citra hops and the epitome of a modern classic - an easy-drinking,



beautifully balanced session ale bursting with flavour.

(Dr) Iain Wells



## John O'Groats Brewery

*[John Edwards kindly sent in the following article, which he wrote in the aftermath of COVID, hence reference to masks. Thank goodness we've moved on since then]*

It's not often that one gets to visit what is probably the UK mainland's newest and definitely the mainland's northernmost brewery but that's what happened in October 2020 by accident while my wife and I were driving an anticlockwise route around Scotland's North Coast 500 in our motorhome.



*[Three local home brewers combined forces with a hotelier and set up a 4 barrel brewery in the Old Fire Station in John o Groats in 2015. From there they began producing a range of cask ales, starting*

*by selling bottles locally and then distributing across the north of Scotland. When John visited, this brewery was in the process of relocating, expanding into the oldest building in John O' Groats, "The Last House", in 2019, and installing a new brewery, bar and visitor centre.]*

It had rained all Thursday night at Shona View campsite and was still a dismal wet Friday morning as we drove the short distance back to John O'Groats - so bad that I couldn't even get my better half to stand by the famous sign for the obligatory 'selfie'! The shops nearby were reminiscent of Gretna Green i.e. VERY touristy and nothing to make me want to linger but as I drove out I caught a glimpse of a low white building with John O'Groats Brewery written on the side.

Now that was one I felt I had to visit! Putting on my mask I entered and found I was the only customer in a well-stocked & decorated shop, with a masked young man waiting at the till. I mentioned that I was a CAMRA member and that I'd no idea there was a brewery at the end of one of Britain's greatest challenge walks and was told that it had only opened 2





# KNOWLE & DORRIDGE CRICKET CLUB



**SOLIHULL & DISTRICT CAMRA CLUB OF THE YEAR 2016 - 2019**  
**CASK MARQUE ACCREDITATION 2021**  
**- STATION ROAD, DORRIDGE, B93 8ET -**

 @KNOWLEANDDORRIDGECC

 @KNOWLEDORRIDGECC

 @KANDECC

 FIND US!

**FEATURED  
BREWERIES**  
 SALOPIAN,  
 OAKHAM,  
 ABBEYDALE,  
 MALLINSONS,  
 THORNBURGH,  
 CASTLE ROCK  
 PLUS MANY  
 MANY MORE



**OPEN MON TO THURS 4PM - 10:30PM**  **FRIDAY 4PM - 11PM**  **SATURDAY 12PM - 11PM**  **SUNDAY 12PM - 10:30PM**

**KNOWLE & DORRIDGE CRICKET CLUB OFFERS A WARM & COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO ENJOY YOUR FAVOURITE ALES.**






**3 GUEST ALES & A REAL CIDER**  
 VARIETIES CHANGING ALL  
 THE TIME

**SKY SPORTS, BT**  
 SPORTS & MULTI-  
 SCREEN

**ALL CAMRA**  
 MEMBERS  
 WELCOME

**SOCIAL MEMBERSHIP**  
 AVAILABLE  
 FOR DISCOUNT ON DRINKS

#TMH


**TEL: 01564 774338**  
**WWW.KNOWLEANDDORRIDGECC.CO.UK**

#TAKE  
ME  
HOME

## CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2023



### THE FIELDHOUSE

 10 Knightcote Drive  
 Solihull B91 3JU  
 0121 703 9209



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

6 Real Ales on at all times – Landlord, UBU,  
 Proper Job plus regularly changing guests.

£1 off a pint of all cask ales Mon & Thurs

Wine club Mon & Thurs £12 per bottle.

Open 11.00 – 23.00 Mon – Thurs  
 11.00 – 24.00 Fri / 10.00 – 24.00 Sat  
 10.00 – 23.00 Sun

Hot & cold meals served all week from  
 11.00 am to 9.00 pm  
 Brunch 10 am – 12 noon  
 weekends

#### Live Music & Events

Quiz nights Tues & Sun  
 8.0pm  
 Curry nights Wed 5.0pm  
 Steak nights Thurs from  
 5.0pm

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

- 20p off pint of cask ale
- 10% off food



While chatting about the beers I was told that there was a small bar area almost ready to open (when Nicola Sturgeon allowed) where their draught beers could be sampled. As I was the only customer at the time, I was very kindly given a wee peep into this and the brewing area.

You could see how new this was as most of the stainless-steel vessels were still sheathed in cling film! After all too short a visit - my wife was still

months before. The usual selection of branded souvenirs was on show and 3 types of bottled beer, so I opted for one of each of the latter: -

Golden Groat (4.0%) Floral & citrus flavours from a marriage of New & Old-World hops.

Amber Groat (4.5%) Challenger & Brambling hops to give a toffee flavour base with gently berry overtones.

Deep Groat (4.8%) Oatmeal stout with dark chocolate & subtle coffee flavours.

waiting in the parked vehicle - I left the warmth of the brewery and headed out into the wind and rain clutching my precious bottles.

If you're ever up in the 'Far North' make sure you pop in: alternatively, you could try them via mail order from their website

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

John Edwards

## Late Night Levy scheme

CAMRA is calling on government ministers to axe the controversial Late Night Levy scheme which sees extra costs charged by some councils in England and Wales on pubs and hospitality businesses.

The Home Office has announced that from 13 July 2023 the law around Late Night Levies – which are designed to raise money towards policing the late-night economy – will be changed slightly so that they can apply only to specific geographic areas rather than a whole council area as at present. Local authorities will also be able to apply the levy to businesses offering late night

refreshment like cafés and takeaways, as well as to those serving alcohol.

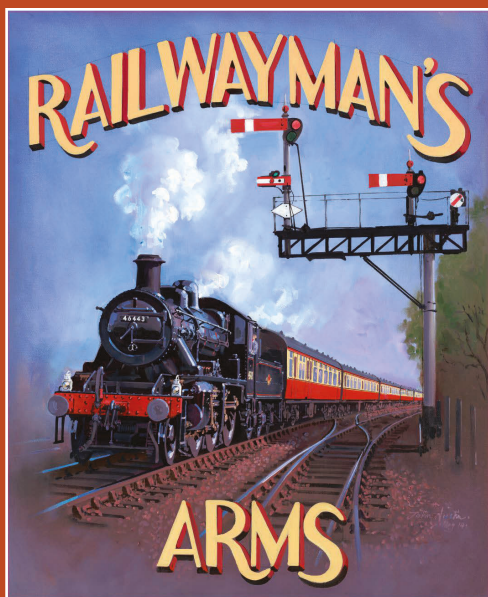
CAMRA Chairman Nik Antona commented “These changes to the controversial Late Night Levy scheme are a step in the right direction, allowing councils to make sure they can apply to a smaller area like a city centre rather than penalising business across the whole council area. However, CAMRA is still calling on the Government to abolish the unfair Late Night Levy scheme completely due to its detrimental impact on well run and responsible pubs, social clubs and taprooms which are at the heart of communities and bring people



## TWO CAMRA Good Beer Guide Free Houses!

Travel by train between the two.

For details, see **SVR.CO.UK**



and

### THE KING & CASTLE

on the concourse at

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN Station**

8 real ales including:

Batham's Best Bitter,

Bewdley Brewery Worcestershire Way,

Hobsons Best Bitter

also

Hobsons Oldfield Cider

### THE RAILWAYMAN'S ARMS

on Platform 1 at

**BRIDGNORTH Station**

Serving 9 Real Ales including:

Hobsons Town Crier,

Hobsons Best Bitter,

Bewdley Brewery's Station Porter &

Worcestershire Way,

Batham's Best Bitter

plus one Traditional Cider





together to tackle loneliness and social isolation.

It is for these very reasons that the Government is changing the alcohol duty system in August to support and encourage people to consume beer and cider in the regulated setting of the pub. It makes no sense to support pubs through the tax system but penalise them through the unfair Late Night Levy.

The best way to tackle the problems of safety in the night-time economy is for councillors, the police and hospitality business to work closely together to tackle local issues – not through a punitive and blunt measure like the Late Night Levy that applies to businesses even if they don't open late into the night or aren't a source of anti-social behaviour."

## Pub Closures

In Issue 98, we included a short article on the High Street Rental Auctions proposals, which are designed to bring empty buildings back into use but would relax requirements such that pubs could be allowed to be converted to other uses or divided up into multiple units, gutted of their bars or other integral features.

I think some people, sometimes still believe pub closures are not as serious as CAMRA makes out. However, according to What's Brewing, figures released by CAMRA show a third of pubs converted or bulldozed already do not have the required planning permission.

The data shows 95 pubs were lost to conversion or demolition across the UK in the first six months of the year, with 31 of those lacking planning permission.

A further 772 were classed as "long-term closed", equivalent to 30 pubs a week, and by far the highest figure seen since CAMRA started producing comparable figures in 2021.

It's not all bad news as there are still some new pubs opening but, if local authorities fail to enforce current legislation and provide protection then CAMRA is calling on government to provide them with clearer guidance.

CAMRA pub and club campaigns director Gary Timmins said: "The variation that our campaigners see between councils with the strongest pub protection policies, and those that view pubs as an inconvenience, is shocking."

Marston's recently sold (one of 61 being sold off) The Crooked House in Himley reportedly to a 'private buyer for alternative use'. Please note that I am not suggesting either Marston's or the council have done anything wrong here.

Many of you may well have visited this unique pub at some stage. It was famous for being the place where coins and marbles seemingly rolled uphill along the bar. If unused to this peculiarity it was easy to become a little disorientated and even feel as if you might be drunk (it did so for me and honest, it wasn't the beer!)

Sad then to report (and it has been all over local and national news) that the site subsequently suffered a very serious fire and the pub was gutted. Even more sad, the shell of the building was then very quickly demolished and only a pile of rubble remains. The Police are currently investigating potential arson and council looking at possible planning breaches.

A sad end to a unique pub. Or is it? Suggestions have been made that the pub could be rebuilt. Who knows - planning authorities have required complete rebuilds before where pubs have been found to be demolished illegally.

And it has shone a brighter light onto the whole issue of planning and changes in use, so something positive may yet come out of this sorry situation.



# Proud supporters of Solihull Beer Festival 2023



[www.xtbrewing.com](http://www.xtbrewing.com)

## Micropubs – what are they?

What follows is my take on the situation. To begin I'll just make the point whether the term is Micropub, MicroPub, Micro Pub or Micro-Pub - all are used, and all seem to have the same meaning. I'm going to stick with micropub for this article and indeed, it appears to be a relatively new word as it does not seem to make any kind of appearance until the first micropub itself.

The first micropub is generally regarded to be the Butchers Arms in Herne, Kent, which originally operated as an off-licence. Following the passing of the Licensing Act 2003, which became effective in 2005, Martyn Hillier was able to change its use to become a licensed pub.

According to the Micropub Association, such a pub is defined as follows: "A micropub is a small freehouse which listens to its customers, mainly serves cask ales, promotes conversation, shuns all forms of electronic entertainment and dabbles in traditional pub snacks".

I have to say I'm not sure what is meant by 'dabbles'.

They are not the only ones to have thoughts on the matter as some articles I've seen suggest a micropub may or may not even have a bar, instead serving beer straight from the cask. Well, there are still a few traditional pubs around the country that dispense beer in this way, so that's not a clear distinction to me.

Equally, I've seen it suggested that a micropub should usually consist of just one small room (with a bar). So 'Micro' might refer to the size of the pub itself, as they are often located in converted shops, so the smallest micropubs could be the size of your living room.

The focus (as per the Micropub Association 'definition' above) is on cask ales though I've seen suggestions that they should only be from microbreweries

for the term micropub to apply. Where does that leave those that sell very good real ales from larger breweries, those that serve craft beers, or those that serve lager – I've definitely seen more than one say that if it serves lager then it's not a micropub.

So there can clearly be some debate / disagreement as to what actually does or does not constitute a micropub.

One thing I do consider important is that despite their small size, micropubs should be big on choice. Because they are often a one-person operation, a micropub can be the ultimate freehouse. Free of tie means free to choose, with a typical micropub capable of selling hundreds of different beers over the course of a year and, rightly, being proud of doing so.

In 2009 owner of The Butcher's Arms in Herne, Martyn Hillier, gave a presentation to the CAMRA AGM at Eastbourne showing the simplicity of the micropub model and encouraging other people to follow.

And they did, so the rest, as they say, is history. It took a while for micropubs to find their way to our Solihull & District area, with the Pup & Duckling opening in February 2016, closely followed by the Ale Rooms in December that year. But we do now have a few, with our two Ale Hubs (Dickens Heath and Longmore Road) and the Shaking Hand having also joined us.

In June 2012, the Micropub Association was set up as a resource for other would-be micropubs, to give free advice on the setting up and running of a successful micropub, with Martyn Hillier as one of its founders. In 2014 the MA launched its official micropub recognition scheme, which allows micropub owners to register as a Recognised Micropub Member.

I have not checked to see whether any of those that I regard as micropubs in our area are members, though I suspect that some of the ways in which they operate mean they wouldn't pass MA muster. For example, the Pup has too many rooms (is therefore too big) and the Ale Rooms sometimes shows major events on TV (so has electronic entertainment).

In 2017 'The Micropub Guide: Enjoying the Pint-Sized Pub Revolution' was published. Interestingly it says "Here is the definitive guide to the UK's micropubs: small, owner-managed pubs with an uncompromising focus on cask-conditioned craft beers and ales, personal service and good conversation. No electronic games; no table football; no gassy beer or lager; only the simplest bar snacks."

I can't say I really understand why table football gets such a specific mention, and this 'definitive' guide is beginning to sound somewhat straightjacketed. What happened to listening to your customers (as set out in the original Micropub

Association definition)? Listening to them has to be important as, at the end of the day, these are still businesses that need to make money and stay afloat.

So, if there is demand for a TV to be brought in for specific high profile events (World Cup for example) then it might make good business sense to do so. Personally, I'd rather see the pub do this on an occasional basis, if that helps them stay afloat.

I'm not a great one for definitions as there are usually a few very good reasons/examples why a definition doesn't apply, so it's down to each of us as individuals to decide whether we believe a pub is a micropub or not or, indeed, whether we really care.

I just want to know it's a pub where I can find a good choice of ales that are consistently in good condition. Having a good conversation can be a plus – though it does depend on who I'm drinking with.....

Ray Cooke



**The ales vary  
Abbeydale, Thornbridge,  
Salopian and Ossett  
regulars**

**£3.70 a pint**

**Last Friday of the month £3 a pint**

**Knowle and Dorridge Racquets Club**

**Grove Road, Knowle B93 0PH**

**Non members welcome**

**The bar is open:  
Monday to Friday 6 - 10 p.m.  
Saturday 3:30 - 8 p.m.**

<http://www.kdrc.info>



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



[barandsocial@kdrc.info](mailto:barandsocial@kdrc.info)

## Champion Beer of Britain Awards 2023

The Champion Beer of Britain final judging took place at the Great British Beer Festival at Olympia, London in August. Elland brewery's 1872 Porter (6.5 per cent ABV) struck gold and was crowned the best in the country.

The beer has been CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain four times previously, the most recent win being earlier this year.

1872 Porter is described as a ruby black porter, with chocolate and caramelised fruit flavours with a hint of black toffee on the nose. The judges enjoyed its smooth mouthfeel with a finish that is roasty and dry. A satisfying and remarkably easy drinking porter.

Elland brewer Rob Thomas said: "It is absolutely unbelievable to win this accolade, we really didn't expect it. For a team of three people to win the supreme award is fantastic. There is a real passion for more traditional styles and for a very good reason, they taste fantastic!"

"The beer is steeped in history with the recipe dating back more than 150 years. We thrive on these sorts of styles and this is testament to what people enjoy drinking: steeped in history, tradition while embracing innovation".

Green King's Abbot Ale (5 per cent) took silver and was described as a classic premium bitter with typical fruit hops and malty throughout.

Bronze was awarded to Salopian's Darwin's Origin (4.3 per cent). It impressed judges with citrus, earthy hops and a flavour that starts fruity and fades into a pleasant bittersweet finish.

And before anyone starts getting (in my turn of phrase) beer snobbish about second place, the judging is undertaken blind.

The winners of the various categories were as follows:

### **Mild**

Gold: Harvey's Dark Mild  
Silver: Bank Top Dark Mild  
Bronze: Church End Gravediggers

### **Session bitter**

Gold: Salopian Darwin's Origin  
Silver: Timothy Taylor Landlord  
Bronze: Mighty Oak Captain Bob

### **Premium bitter**

Gold: Greene King Abbot Ale  
Silver: Glamorgan Jemima's Pitchfork  
Bronze: Batemans XXXB

### **IPA**

Gold: Bragdy Twt Lol Diablo Dragon  
Silver: Loch Lomond Bravehop  
Bronze: Thornbridge Jaipur

### **Session pale, blonde, and golden ales**

Gold: Swannay Island Hopping  
Silver: Oakham Inferno  
Bronze: Salopian Oracle

### **Premium pale, blonde, and golden ales**

Gold: Baker's Dozen Electric Landlady  
Silver: Blackedge Kiwi  
Bronze: St Austell Proper Job

### **Champion Winter Beer of Britain**

Gold: Elland 1872 Porter  
Silver: Robinsons Old Tom  
Bronze: Dancing Duck Dark Drake

### **Champion Bottled Beer of Britain winners**

Gold: Green Jack Baltic Trade  
Silver: Hobsons Dhustone Stout  
Bronze: Five Kingdoms McGregors Mild



## Useful Contact Numbers

### **Chair/Beer Festival**

**Martin Buck.** 01564 770708

### **Secretary**

**Allan Duffy** 01564 200431

### **Membership**

**Dave Mckowen** 01564 778955

### **Cider & Perry/Vice Chair**

**Ray Cooke** 01564 777890

### **Pubs Campaigning**

**Paul Wigley** 07402 312457

### **Treasurer**

**Brenda Duffy** 01564 200431

### **Solihull Drinker Editor**

**Ray Cooke** 01564 777890

### **Social co-ordinator**

[steve\\_dyson@solihull.camra.org.uk](mailto:steve_dyson@solihull.camra.org.uk)

### **Trading Standards contacts:**

For local consumer advice in our area please contact the following

Solihull – [www.solihull.gov.uk/tradingstandards](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/tradingstandards)

Warwickshire – [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/contactustradingstandards](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/contactustradingstandards)

Citizens Advice Consumer Service – phone 03454 040506

## **Advertise Your Business Here With Us**

We distribute to around 80 pubs (and some clubs, restaurants and off licences) around Solihull, and parts of Warwickshire and Birmingham.

This gives you the opportunity to put your business in front of people who are in the habit of visiting pubs and restaurants.

You don't have to be a pub or restaurant to advertise. Any business seeking local reach (tradespeople, take aways, taxi companies etc) could benefit. For further details or information about advertising with us, or to discuss your proposed advert, please contact [editor@solihull.camra.org.uk](mailto:editor@solihull.camra.org.uk)

We offer a 10% discount for advertisements by CAMRA members (membership number required). We also offer a 10% discount for advertisers taking out an advert for 4 consecutive editions (the advert can be amended for each edition). If both discounts are applied, it is 20% off the advertising rate quoted below.

SIZE	INNER PAGES	FRONT COVER
<b>Full (A5) page</b>	<b>£100.00</b>	<b>Not available</b>
<b>1 / 2 page</b>	<b>£75.00</b>	<b>£100 (landscape only)</b>
<b>1 / 3 page</b>	<b>£55.00</b>	<b>£75.00</b>
<b>1 / 4 page</b>	<b>£45.00</b>	<b>£60.00</b>
<b>1 / 6 page</b>	<b>£35.00</b>	<b>£47.00</b>

## **CAMRA Real Ale, Cider and Perry Vouchers**

The CAMRA Voucher scheme is a member benefit that entitles members to £30 (60 x 50p) vouchers off a pint of Real Ale, Cider or Perry. The vouchers in this CAMRA owned and operated scheme remain valid for the length of membership for added flexibility.

They are redeemable at over 1,550 pubs nationwide, including J D Wetherspoon, Brains, Castle Rock and Amber Taverns managed pubs. To get an up-to-date listing for pubs participating near you, enter your postcode at [www.camra.org.uk/join/membership-benefits/camra-voucher-scheme](http://www.camra.org.uk/join/membership-benefits/camra-voucher-scheme)

CAMRA promotes responsible drinking and thus encourages all vouchers to be used responsibly at all times.



## Hail to the Ale

This is the section where we update you on news related to pubs, clubs, off licences or breweries in our area. We rely heavily on you, our readers, to keep us updated so, as always, if you hear of anything you feel we or our wider branch should know about then please drop us a line at [pubs@solihull.camra.org.uk](mailto:pubs@solihull.camra.org.uk)

The proposed new Brunning & Price pub at Tidbury Green, the Mallard, is again on hold.

The Black Swan at Henley in Arden has finally reopened as part of the Heartwood Inns group and has 2 real ales (Landlord and Tribute when visited).

The Olton Tavern has been closed for significant refurbishment but has now reopened.

Also having work undertaken is the

Reservoir at Earlswood, which will become a Hickory Smokehouse (part of Greene King group).

Henley Mile Brewing will not now be opening on our patch as there have been changes at the company and they have moved to Redditch.

Ale Hub has opened 2 further sites (Perton and Wellingborough - though neither of these are in our area) and now has 9 pubs. Good to see a small group doing well and expanding.

Paul Wigley  
Pubs Officer



**Love beer?**

**Love pubs?**

**Join CAMRA today**

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 [camra.org.uk/joinup](https://camra.org.uk/joinup)

\*Price for paying by Direct Debit and correct at 1 July 2021. Concessionary rates available. Please visit [camra.org.uk/membership-rates](https://camra.org.uk/membership-rates) †Joint members receive £40 worth of vouchers.

From as little as **£28.50\*** a year. That's less than a pint a month!

Includes **£30†** Real Ale Cider & Perry Vouchers

  
Campaign for Real Ale

## Membership Matters

Some of CAMRA's aims are to see good quality real ale, cider & 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. With the state of the pub and brewing industry at present there are numerous breweries/pubs facing closure or extinction, I think now more than ever is a good time to support CAMRA by joining the key organisation who are trying to campaign for more support for this vital part of our economy.

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 people who have the same love for a pint of real ale or cider in a well-run local pub on a social day trip.

Membership provides many benefits including:- £30 of Real Ale/Cider vouchers, valid at many pub companies; an online quarterly colour magazine "Beer", which is packed with great articles, plus our online newspaper "Whats Brewing" informing you of all the latest beer and pub news as well as detailing events/beer festivals from around the country. Both above publications can be downloaded in various formats (PC, laptop, tablet & smartphone).

You will also be entitled to free or discounted admission at over 180 CAMRA organised beer festivals across

the country, including our very own Solihull CAMRA Beer & Cider festival, to be held at the Royal British Legion, Solihull from the 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

If you come to the festival, why not think about joining CAMRA there as you will receive a voucher for an additional 2 free pints of real ale/cider to use at that time.

With membership prices starting from £28.50 per annum (55p per week) and including such benefits, I think you will agree this represents great value for money in the current economic climate. You could become involved in your local branch. We have many social events such as brewery visits, curry nights, pub crawls, meeting friends, helping at our beer festival or campaigning. Our branch meetings are usually held on the first Monday of each month at a local pub, where we enjoy a pint or two of real ale whilst briefly discussing items relating to the Real Ale scene nationally and locally, followed by a chance for a chat over a beer/cider with fellow members.

Within a new member's branch welcome pack there is a voucher for a FREE PINT of real ale or cider when attending your first Solihull CAMRA Branch meeting. All our activities are listed in this magazine and on [www.solihull.camra.org.uk](http://www.solihull.camra.org.uk) with contact details for each event. To join, visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) and save postage. So come on, what are you waiting for? Join up, Join in, Join the Campaign.

Dave Mckowen  
Membership Secretary

**Solihull Drinker Issue No. 99 Solihull CAMRA 2023 ©**

**Printed by Thistle Print Ltd., Leeds**

**The 100th edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 4 December 2023. Please note that the deadline for copy, advertising and any other contribution for this issue is Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November. Thank you in advance to all contributors.**



The Pub Snack Company

# PORKY BLINDERS

## Pork Scratchings & Crunch



We also stock a various  
range of Crisps, Nuts & more!



Telephone Steve or Richard 07845 835 562

The Original & Best Pork Scratchings & Crunch - by order of The Porky Blinders