

# Solihull Drinker

Issue No: 54

Autumn 2010

## Solihull & District CAMRA 12th Beer Festival

Our 12th beer festival will be held this year on Friday 1st October from 5.30-11.00pm, and Saturday 2nd October from 11.30am-3.30pm and 5.30-11.00pm. Once again the Royal British Legion in Solihull town centre will be our host and will supply hot food throughout each session.

We have a fantastic range of well over 35 real ales for you, plus two ciders and a perry. Our beer choices range from Ossett's Silver King through Exmoor Fox, Newman's Wolver's Ale, Willams Midnight Sun Porter and Derventio Cleopatra to this year's Champion Beer of Britain, Castle Rock's Harvest Pale.

Admission is £10 each session on the door for a sheet including your entry fee, refundable souvenir glass hire and

tokens for beer purchase. **This year we have a special offer:** if you visit on the Friday evening or the Saturday

lunchtime session and want to come back again on Saturday evening, keep the tear-off portion from your admission sheet, present it when you return on Saturday evening, and receive free entry to that session—we will change your entry fee into additional refundable beer tokens instead! Top-up beer tokens will also be available from the Membership stand inside the main beer hall.

On Saturday lunchtime we welcome back the Silhill Morris Men, followed by a homebrew competition, where you will be able to try a taste of the beer entries put forward

*(Continued on page 3)*



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*Autumn chills will soon be setting in, but if you are looking out of your window at a dreary landscape then change the view and come to a place where the welcome is warm, the atmosphere is friendly, and a perfect pint and superb home-cooked food await your foot over the doorstep. See you soon!*

### Solihull & District CAMRA Beer Festival (*continued*)

by hopeful local home brewers which will then be judged by a team of CAMRA festival officers with certificates for the top three and a prize for the overall winner.

The theme this year is Oktoberfest, as it is the 200th anniversary of the first ever famous Munich festival of that name, so as well as our branch mascot the Griffin sporting lederhosen on our publicity leaflets, entertainment on Saturday evening sees the Warwick University Oompah Band serenading us with a medley of tunes to fit the occasion.

If you do not wish to keep your souvenir glass at the end of your visit, then return it to the entry desk on your way out and the cost of its hire will be refunded.

Unused beer tokens can either be cashed in, or donated to this year's charity, Cure Leukaemia, chosen by Solihull CAMRA member Ian Edwards who himself is suffering from the disease and at the time of the festival will be undergoing extensive treatment.

We wish him all the best for a positive outcome and a speedy recovery.

We very much look forward to seeing you this year and hope that all who attend will enjoy what's on offer. Find more festival articles inside the purple boxes in the centre pages.

*NB. Beers may be subject to change but we will ensure a full selection.*



The Festival Committee put in a bit of ale-pouring practice! (*Photo courtesy of Seven Star Photography*)

The Solihull Drinker is the newsletter of the Solihull & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.

**All contributions, comments and enquiries should be sent to Julia Hammonds:  
The Editor, Solihull Drinker, c/o 4, Kendrick Close, Solihull, B92 0QD  
or e-mail [julia.hammonds@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:julia.hammonds@blueyonder.co.uk)**

The Editor reserves the right to amend or shorten any items in the Solihull Drinker, but will always honour the spirit of the contribution.

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The 55th edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 6th December, 2010.  
Copy deadline for advertising and contributions will be Sunday 14th November, 2010.

**For complaints about short measures, contact Solihull Trading Standards on 0121 704 6844**

## Hail to the Ale!

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

#### **The Assembly Rooms, Solihull**

James, the manager of the Assembly Rooms, has moved onto pastures new to run his own pub in Halifax. We welcome his successors, John Grant and Anne Marie Morris, and wish them every success for the future following their takeover of the pub.

#### **The Bulls Head, Barston**

The Bulls Head had the following beers on at a recent visit: St Austell Tribute, Hook Norton Old Hooky, and Purity Mad Goose. The pub, along with other Punch Taverns in the area, is taking part in real ale promotion called 'Finest Cask'. This aims to bring to Punch Tavern pubs the finest ales from around the country, including Box Steam Brewery's Derail Ale, Black Sheep Brewery's Golden Sheep, Wyre Piddle Brewery's Piddle through the Leaves, and Westgate Brewery's Sun Dance, and many more, of which eight have won the title of Supreme Champion Beer of Britain in previous years. (Other Punch Taverns in the Solihull area are The Cock Horse, Rowington, the Greswolde Arms Hotel, Knowle, the Highwood, Olton, the Reservoir, Earlswood and the Drawbridge, Haslucks Green. *(Please note that the Finest Cask beer range and number of beers on offer will vary from pub to pub.)*)

#### **The White Swan, Solihull**

The White Swan is celebrating after winning two recent awards, Best Town Centre Pub and Overall Best Bar None, presented at this year's awards ceremony at the National Motorcycle Museum. The awards, organised by the Safer Solihull Partnership, aim to recognise Solihull's licensed premises which strive to reduce alcohol-related crime and promote responsible drinking. Dawn Lingley-Webster, manager, is seen here celebrating at the award ceremony along with her team.

The White Swan, together with the Assembly Rooms and other J D Wetherspoons pubs, will also be holding one of its regular beer festivals from 27th October to 14th November, at which a number of interesting beers will be featured. For more information, visit the JD Wetherspoons own website.



## Solihull CAMRA Pub of the Year

The Winged Spur, Ullenhall, has won this branch's Pub of the Year award. On Wednesday 7th July, branch members visited the pub to hand over the award and try a taste of their well-kept ales.

Carl Wright, branch Chairman, spoke of the history of the pub which goes back to the 1700's when it played a significant part in the life of the local area by hosting chapel meetings where bread, cheese and ale were provided by the then publican.



Carl (right of picture) presents Clive with the award for the branch's 2010 Pub of the Year

Today, although various alterations have been made over the years, the pub continues to play host to a variety of visitors and groups, with home-made food on offer and a range of excellently-kept guest beers and ciders, which had not gone unnoticed by local CAMRA members.

Solihull and District CAMRA were pleased to announce to the pub that it had named the Winged Spur as the branch's Pub of the

Year 2010, and the award was duly handed over to much applause.

Publicans Clive and Mary, together with their staff, were successful in obtaining this award due to their hard work in maintaining the high standards evident in the presentation of their real ales.

*(Photo courtesy of Seven Star Photography)*

## The Rowington Club, Rowington

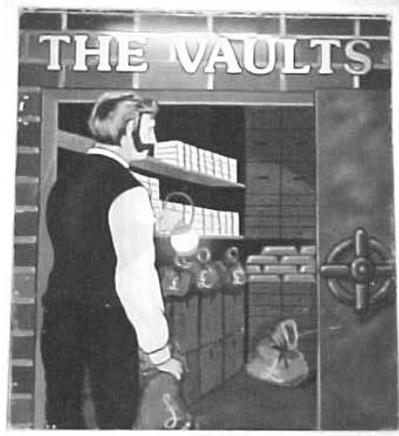
The Rowington Club continues to offer a wide range of events for its regulars and other visitors.

Not content with running their now annual beer festival over the August Bank Holiday weekend, it is holding a one-day Game Fair on Sunday 26th September.

There will be working gun-dogs, falconry displays, archery and an air rifle range, fly tying demonstrations and much more, including wonderful traditional country food and not forgetting the clubs' extremely good real ales.

The day kicks off at 10.30am with a BBQ breakfast. For more information about the event, call the Rowington Club on 01564 782087.

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## Off Our Patch

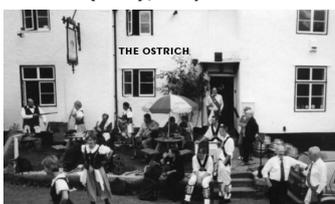
The Ostrich Inn sits in the pretty village of Newland, which lies on the edge of the Forest of Dean and adjoins the Wye Valley, both areas of outstanding natural beauty. The pub lies in the middle of the village, and is thought to take its name from the ostrich emblem used by the previous landowners for centuries, the Probyns. The church opposite, All Saints, is known as the Cathedral of the Forest, and the pub, dating back to the thirteenth century, was originally built to house the workers who built the church.



The Ostrich Inn

This pub is a real gem: a true village pub, at the heart of its community, where events happen all year round, starting with New Year celebrations and including Easter, Mayday, early Summer, Halloween, Christmas and Wassail-time. It prides itself on its food which ranges from bar food and upmarket snacks, to full lunch and evening meals. There is one room dedicated to dining, and a country bar, with a working inglenook fireplace, settles, and wooden shutters.

The small bar belies its size when you realise that they have up to 8 excellently-kept real ales. On the day of visiting there were 7 available: Archers' Crystal Clear (5%), Wychwood Hobgoblin (5%), Hopback's Hopfest (4.6%), Shepherd Neame's Late Red (4.5%), Butcombe's Blond Bitter (4.3%), Sharps' Doombar Bitter (4%) and Firefly Bitter (3.7%), the Brains' Merlin's Oak (4.3%) having just gone. Also available were Budvar lager, Westons Old Rosie and Stowford Press ciders. Kathryn, the landlady, explained that she has to use top pressure to assist with beer pouring, as the cellars where the beer is stored are 40 feet away from the bar. She did try it without when she first took over, but was



Local dancer groups relax after their exertions

throwing away at least half of what she was serving so had to resort to the frowned-upon method. For this reason, you will not find the Ostrich in the Good Beer Guide; - a shame.

The pub is an excellent find in an out-of-the-way place, well worth a visit and also a good starting point for exploring the beautiful countryside all around.

Julia Hammonds

## Sidra Take Two

Last year I told you how we drank real cider (sidra) in northern Spain. That was in Cantabria, where Rioja is the favourite tippie, but this year we went further west along the coast to Asturias. Here the bars give way to *Siderias* and sidra is king. A traditional way to pour cider in these parts is to hold the bottle above head height holding the glass below waist level but we experienced a far more intriguing method.



We arrived in the lively port of Ribadesella, just in time for lunch, and easily found *La Parrilla*, a very unpromising exterior belying an excellent restaurant.

The photographs show the pouring apparatus (there must surely be a better way of describing it) in its full glory. First to arrive is the device itself and then the cider which is in a primitive-looking bottle; no stopper or label.

The inverted u-bend tube is inserted into the bottle and the special cider glass laid almost horizontally in its holder. You then press the button and a hidden pump fills the glass from a great height. Not filling the glass exactly; only about an inch is the right amount but frequent re-fillings not frowned upon. Pouring from the great height is presumably to remove some of the sparkle and the result was refreshingly delightful.



Eventually the *La Parrilla* became quite full and we noted that almost everyone was on the sidra. Surely an experience worth crossing the Bay of Biscay for?

Bob & Margaret Jackson

## CAMRA National Awards

CAMRA recently announced the following national awards:

- Champion Beer of Britain 2010: Castle Rock Harvest Pale
- Champion Beer of Scotland 2010: Highland Orkney Blast
- National Club of the Year 2010: Rushden Historical Transport Society, Rushden, Northamptonshire

The West Midlands Pub of the Year was also announced, with 1st, The Beacon Hotel, Sedgley; 2nd, The Bell, Pensax; and 3rd, The Bell, Trysull

CAMRA's 2010 Pub Design Award competition also opened, aiming to encourage high standards of architectural design in the refurbishment and conservation of existing public houses and in the construction of the new. The closing date for nominations is September 30th.

## New Magazine Name

Many thanks to those who sent in suggestions for a new name for this magazine. After considering them all, the branch's Committee decided that there wasn't one this time that lent itself to being an outstanding replacement, so for the time being we will stick with the title of 'Solihull Drinker'.

However it is possible that we will ask again in the future, as there are plans to redesign the mast-head; so keep your thinking caps on: jot any good ideas down and watch this space for future renaming opportunities.



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## Solihull & District Beer Festival Homebrew Competition

Are you a home brewer who would love to see your ale tasted, judged and maybe win a prize? We'd like to invite home-brewers to take part in our competition, running for the first time this year as part of this year's beer festival. The competition will run from 1.30pm on Saturday 2nd October at the Solihull Royal British Legion, with judging taking place at 3.00pm.

It's not too late to enter—to take part, you will need to register your details at mail address [SBFhomebrew2010@gmail.com](mailto:SBFhomebrew2010@gmail.com), which will then supply you with a copy of the rules by return. Once registered, you will need to provide 5 bottles of your chosen beer for tasting, and bring them to the festival for 1.15pm on the day to be set out for tasting. The brewers of the top three beers nominated by the CAMRA judges will each win a certificate and the winner will also win a prize. Entry to the competition is free, although those wanting to drink at the festival will have to pay the normal festival entry fee.

If you brew your own beer but have never entered it into a competition, do have a go—we are looking forward to a good turnout of entries and exciting new taste experiences from all you home brewers out there!!

**ADRIAN AND THE COMMITTEE WARMLY WELCOME YOU TO**

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**Sunday 26th September—Game Fair commencing with a Breakfast BBQ and featuring working gundogs, falconry displays, archery, air rifle range, fly-tying demonstrations, and traditional country food throughout the day.**

**Sunday 3rd October—Marrow Sunday, featuring various events: Heaviest Marrow, Longest Carrot, Longest Runner Bean, Longest Parsnip and Heaviest Onion, plus cake and jam classes. Entry only £1 per person regardless of number of entries! Proceeds to charity. Plus competitions, Tombola, stalls and wacky games including welly-whanging.**

**Ring for further details and opening times.**

## Perry at the Beer Festival

Nowadays people have a tendency to confuse perry with pear cider. Do not be fooled! Pear cider is cider made from apples with a bit of pear juice added. Perry, however, is made from 100% perry pears, which are inedible but when pulped and pressed do an admirable job of making perry. There are very few perry pear orchards left in this country, those still in existence being mainly in Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. There were once several hundred varieties of perry pear, with exotic names like Huffcap, Stinking Bishop, Merrylegs and Mumblehead, named for the shape of the fruit, a notable person, or the effects of the drink itself!. Many varieties have been lost over the years and perry is therefore only produced in small quantities and hard to get hold of, but we hope to have two kegs at our beer festival at the beginning of October. If you've never tried perry, give it a go—it's not quite as sweet as cider and an interesting change from real ale.

## A Visit to St Peter's Brewery

During a recent visit to friends in Suffolk, six of us visited St Peter's Hall and Brewery in South Elmham near Bungay. St Peter's Hall is a 13th and 14th century building which was extended in 1539 with earlier architectural elements taken from a nearby former nunnery, and which is surrounded by a 10th century moat. The Hall's rooms are now used for functions including weddings, and it also features a wonderful restaurant, split between its bar and the Great Hall, the latter sumptuous with tapestry hangings, carved wood and stonework and atmospheric lighting. Lunches and evening meals are also available, including a Sunday menu featuring a choice of roasts.

The grounds are also home to a 21st-century brewery, St Peter's, which produced its first brew in June 1996. Its real ales are now technically cask only as the bottles are pasteurised (a technique somewhat frowned upon by CAM-RA) but no less a wonderful drink despite that, as tastings after the brewery tour proved. The brewery started production with a unique oval green 500ml bottle, believed to be a copy of one from Philadelphia dating back to 1770, and the bottling plant, set up in 2002, was specially designed to handle the shape. A large part of their output now goes overseas and the bottle shape is slowly changing to round to make exporting easier—so hang onto your oval St Peter's bottles, they may be worth good money one day!



## A Visit to St Peter's Brewery (continued)

The stainless steel brewing equipment is a mixture of original wood-clad plus newer copper-clad vessels, and the whole has been laid out in buildings set around a courtyard so brewing is almost 'in the round': the raw materials come in at one end and are milled; brewing takes place next door; the fermentation vessels are mainly on the other two sides; and



cask filling takes place on the 4th side and in an adjoining building, with bottling taking place across the brewery yard. The water is drawn from the brewery's own well deep down in the chalk layers. Traditional beers such as bitters, porters and stouts are brewed here, with more modern tipples such as wheat beers and fruit beers, but there are seasonal variations such as their Winter and Summer Ales, and the popular Organic Ale.



After a little beer-tasting, ably guided and hosted by well-informed Don Watt, a former employee of Grand Metropolitan and Adnams before joining forces with St Peter's, we repaired

to the Hall for lunch. As we went on a Sunday it would have been rude not to try the roasts, so two of our party had the beef, one the chicken, and one the pork belly, while vegetarian/vegan appetites were sated with a mushroom and vegetable cannelloni with cheese sauce and mushroom pasta with tomato sauce respectively. The food, and there was plenty of



it, was served piping hot, with wonderful service from the friendly staff throughout, and accompanied by a great selection of St. Peter's ales. The whole experience was pronounced excellent by us all—great location, great ales, great food—what could be better! If you have it in mind to visit, find more information at [www.stpetersbrewery.co.uk](http://www.stpetersbrewery.co.uk) and [www.stpetershallsuffolk.co.uk](http://www.stpetershallsuffolk.co.uk)

Julia Hammonds

### Beer Festival Entertainment

This year's theme is Oktoberfest as it is the 200th anniversary of the Munich beer festival, so to celebrate the occasion the Warwick University Oompah Band will serenade drinkers with tunes such as Alpenblumen, Eine Kleine Biermusik, The Strudel Polka, Bierwalzer and the Oompah Polka. Oddly enough, the students in the band are not studying music as the University does not offer a music degree. But the University Music Centre nonetheless provides great opportunities for performance for students of all abilities and welcomes anyone with a passion for playing or singing even though they have chosen not to study music as their first degree. The Oompah Band comprises 2 clarinets, a trombone, a tenor sax, 2 trumpets, a tuba and a euphonium. We hope that the tunes they play will please and amuse you as you enjoy your beers!

# The White Lion

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# Dates For Your Diary

## Branch Meetings

Monday 6th Sept      The Harvester, Olton  
Monday 11th Oct      The Black Swan, Henley-in-Arden  
Monday 1st Nov      The Red Lion, Shirley \*  
                                 (\* AGM preceded by brief BM—8.00pm start)  
Monday 6th Dec      The Drum & Monkey, Bentley Heath  
*(Branch meetings start at 8.30pm except where noted otherwise)*

## Committee Meetings

Monday 18th Oct      The Crown, Claverdon  
Monday 13th Dec      The Punchbowl, Lapworth  
*(8.30pm start. Ordinary members may attend Committee meetings  
but only participate if invited to do so by the Committee)*

## Socials

Saturday 28th Aug      Rowington Club beer festival (meet up  
                                 in afternoon or early evening)  
Fri. 1st & Sat. 2nd Oct Solihull Beer Festival, R. British Legion,  
Union Rd, town centre. (Fri: 5.30-11.00pm; Sat: 11.30am-  
3.30pm & 5.30- 11.00pm)  
Saturday 13th Nov      The Bartons Arms, Aston: 1.00pm for  
lunch; followed by visit to The Wellington, Birmingham  
December: Christmas pub crawl (date/time TBC)

***For more details, contact Secretary Allan Duffy on  
01564 200 431 and visit our website: [www.solihullcamra.org.uk](http://www.solihullcamra.org.uk)***

Many, though not all, of our local pubs are accessible to disabled people.  
If you would like to come to one of our meetings and would need assistance getting  
inside, please let us know ahead of time and we will do our best to help.

Notice is hereby given that the Solihull & District CAMRA Annual General Meeting will take place at the Red Lion, Shirley, on Monday 1st November 2010. This will be preceded by a short branch meeting starting at 8.00pm. All Solihull & District CAMRA members are welcome to attend, and may express their interest in taking on any of the current Committee roles. A raffle will be held; donated items for this would be welcome.

## Membership Matters

As I write the Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) has just finished and again the beers from the USA are worthy of note. They are recognised by many as being the amongst the best in the world, and their brewers the most innovative. In the USA they have the equivalent of CAMRA; the Brewers Association, which is driven by passion for real ale, just as CAMRA is in Britain. If the Americans turn to real ale in numbers, and rid themselves of their fizzy water, there is surely scope for change in the whole world. How can you help? Join CAMRA, of course, or if you live on that side of the pond, The Brewers Association. You never know, one day, perhaps, you may even be able to go away on holiday *and* drink beer.

Bob Jackson, Membership Secretary

## The Strawberry

"Wey aye man gis a pint of strawberry wine, and a Newcastle Brown for the missus!" - It doesn't sound very realistic does it? If you have ever visited Newcastle it is hard to image those rough, tough Geordie laddies even frequenting a pub that sold strawberry wine. Surprise: "The Strawberry" the pub opposite the front of St James' Park, the home of those black and white clad footie fanatics of that northern city, would not be there if it had not been a favourite tipple at one time.

The producers of this drink were in fact the nuns of St Bartholomew's Nunnery that were reliant on making strawberry wine for their survival. They tended their strawberries in this field and turned their crop into wine which they sold to the locals. The Bishop of Durham disapproved of the use to which the strawberries were put. The nuns even ignored his threats of excommunication and continued their trade until 1840 having grown strawberries on this site since the mid 1700's.

In 1859 a John Brunton left in his will the buildings on the site for use as a beer house. The use of the surrounding areas as a place of entertainment saw the demise of the strawberry plots. There was the need for a public washing baths and this was located behind the pub in Strawberry Lane.



The present day Metro that brings so many football spectators to the grounds was once the site of a St James' Boxing Hall.

The Strawberry has a licensee that holds the Cask Marque for the quality of the ale and frequently partakes in beer festivals during the year. Situated only a stones-throw from Newcastle's Chinese Quarter this pub quenches the thirst and gives an appetite for a nice Chow Mein.

Les Homer

# The Golden Acres

Joint Solihull & District CAMRA Most Improved Pub of the Year 2005

A real community  
and family pub

Three guest ales  
plus a regularly  
changing  
traditional cider



Children welcome  
Beer garden with  
play frames

**Rowood Drive**

**Damsonwood, Solihull**

**Tel. 0121 704 9002**

## **Entertainment for all....**

**Dominoes & Nuts Poker League  
(newcomers welcome!): Mondays**

**Darts: Tuesdays and Thursdays**

**Karaoke: Every Thursday**

**Regular entertainment: Saturdays**

**Big screen sports regularly featured**

**Why not join one of our sports teams?**

**Further information from the pub on  
0121 704 9002**

**Try our authentic Chinese food  
Eat in and/or Take-away**

**0121 711 8130**

**Mondays-Saturdays (except Tuesdays) 5.00-11.30pm  
Sundays: Eat-in 5.00-10.30pm Take-away 5.00-11.30pm**

## Remotest mainland pub up for sale

Fancy your chances at running a pub far from the madding crowd? Then you might like to put in a bid for the Old Forge in Inverie on the Knoydart Peninsula., which has been offered for sale at offers above £790,000. The stagger back



from the pub is a bit challenging: if you do not live in the village, the only way of reaching or leaving is by walking 18 miles or making a seven-mile sea crossing.

The Old Forge, which started life as a smithy and later a workers' social club, has an entry in the Guinness World Records as the remotest pub on mainland Britain. The pub Knoydart's coast and mountains have been described as mainland Britain's last wilderness. In the middle of the 19th Century, the land was cleared of crofters and turned over to sheep and deer. In 1948, a group of crofters known as the Seven Men of Knoydart launched an unsuccessful land raid in a bid to live independently from the landlord system. However, the community achieved what the seven had set out to do in 1999 when the Knoydart Foundation purchased 17,200 acres (6,960 ha) of estate land for £750,000.

## West Midlands Club of the Year

Following The Rowington Club receiving this Branch's Club of the Year award towards the end of last year (the first time a local club had been deemed worthy of its receipt), it was decided to nominate it for entry into CAMRA's West Midlands Region Club of the Year award competition.

This has now been judged, with the top three winners being the Kinver Constitutional Club, Dudley; the Bignall End Cricket Club, Bignall End; and the Whitchurch Cricket Club, Whitchurch. These clubs are very large and so can afford and manage to run a significant number of hand pumps, although the competition was not judged on beers alone.

The Rowington Club came sixth out of the top nine clubs, and was particularly commended by the judges for its warm welcome, accommodating behaviour following their arrival in a coach, and general helpfulness during their stay.

This is an excellent result considering that the Club only won its first award in 2009, and shows how well they are doing and how highly they are regarded within the community.

We wish them all the best for the future and hope that this is just the start of many more such accolades.

## **A Branch meeting in Henley?**

We have our branch meetings in as many of our area's pubs as possible and usually choose one of the pubs in Henley in Arden during the summer to make the most of the village's charm.

Our last Henley meeting was at the White Swan, where we enjoyed a separate room upstairs, nicely appointed, and quiet enough to make ourselves heard. We don't have the funds for hiring meeting spaces, but the room was free if we fetched our own beer, which suited everybody. When we tried to book another meeting there this year, however, we were told by the new landlord that if we wanted one of their separate rooms (the bar area's too small) we would have to pay—even if the room would otherwise be empty that night. We therefore had to look elsewhere and this involved extensive research into the other Henley pubs (a hard job, but someone's got to do it!).

**Black Swan**—The landlord very obligingly said we could have the exclusive use of a little-used bar adjoining the lounge and he said there would be no charge. This is where we have booked for our October meeting

**Bluebell**—A gastro pub but the manager said that Monday evenings were quiet because of no food that day. Yes, he would be very pleased to see us and would reserve an area for us. No charge.

**Three Tuns**—Also encouraging and would probably be able to accommodate us when we contact them again. No charge.

**Nags Head**—Most welcoming and can accommodate us easily. No charge.

What a pity that the White Swan should not be more hospitable. As our chairman, Carl Wright, said, "CAMRA is after all acting on behalf of pubs and publicans: we're both on the same side". In addition, as we are thirsty folk at our meetings the pub has lost the income from a good 40-50 pints' worth of beer: usually considered a good trade-off by local landlords in return for a bit of space.

Bob Jackson

## **A Grand Day out in Derbyshire**

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, a group of 15 of us ventured out into wildest Derbyshire for a tour of some of the best pubs in the county courtesy of Roger Dipple, past Branch Chairman, who organised it, and Charlie's Minibuses, who chauffeured us.

Our first call was the Green Man in Ashbourne, home of Leatherbritches Brewery. We were given a fine welcome and a quick tour of the brewery which was one of the smaller ones we have visited. Beers sampled included Leatherbritches Goldings 3.8% Belter 4.4% & Ashbourne Ale at 4%. The shop supplies bottled beers which they bottle themselves.



The Green Man

We then moved on to the Charles Cotton Hotel in Hartington where we had an al fresco lunch to make the most of the sunshine. We tried 4 beers - Whim Hartington Bitter 4% & IPA 4.5%, Spire Twist and Stout which was really stouty at 4.5% and Oakham Citra which was excellent as most Oakham ales tend to be.

This was followed by the Red Lion, Birchover where we tasted Derby Hop Till You Drop 3.9%, Peakstones Rock Nine Ladies 4.2%, Buxton Ramblers 3.6% & Murfs Win the World at 4.2%.

Next was the 3 Stags Heads at Wardlow Mires (don't ask where that is!) It was like sitting in someone's front room only back in the 1930s. It was a genuine unspoilt pub and even better, it sold Abbeydale beers! Brimstone and Deception both 4% were tasty but the Black Lurcher, brewed for the pub at 8% was something else!



The Three Stags Heads



The Old Poets Corner

Poets Corner at Ashover is the home of Ashover Brewery and again we managed a short tour and tasting. Light Rale, Hydro, Poets Tipple and Butts Pale Ale were the ones we tried and very enjoyable they all were.

As we moved on to our 6<sup>th</sup> port of call, the memory gets a bit hazy. It was the Barley Mow at Kirk Ireton and I think we had Lord Marples (Thornbridge?) and Storm Typhoon (or was it Typhoon Storm?)

At The Old Oak at Horsley Woodhouse, we drank Tom Woods Taste of 66 & Shepherds Delight, Leadmill IPA, Derby Mine Host, Marlpool Scatty Ratty and finished off (literally) with Leadmill Imperial Russian Stout at a deceptive 8%.



The John Thompson Inn

The day was concluded at the John Thompson Inn which again brews its own beer - JTS XXX 4.1% and Gold at 4.5%. Our thirst had waned a little by 9.30pm so we headed back to the bus for a quiet drive back to Solihull. I would stress that I personally did not drink a pint of each of the beers mentioned (we were mainly on halves) but I did have a good try!

Needless to say, the following Sunday morning was a bit quiet in our house.!

Allan Duffy

***Look out for more Derbyshire recollections in the next magazine. Ed.***

## **The Merchants Inn, Rugby**

The Merchants Inn is a popular pub in the heart of Rugby, known for its real ales and regular festivals.



Coming up in the near future: Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September sees the return of German Night with live music, food and the finest beers that Bavaria has to offer.

The pub's 14<sup>th</sup> Beerfest will be commencing on the 25<sup>th</sup> October right through the week, finishing up on Sunday the 31<sup>st</sup> October.

The bar at the Merchants Inn

All these events will be helping raise money for Myton Hospice. The pub can be found at 5-7 Little Church Street, Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 3AN. For more information ring the pub on 01788 571119 or visit [www.merchantsinn.co.uk](http://www.merchantsinn.co.uk)

## **CAMRA Hails Big Society Support for Community Owned Pubs**

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, welcomed the Prime Minister's recent endorsement of pubs as local assets and the promise of Government support for communities wishing to save threatened pubs through community ownership. CAMRA's new polling research shows that 43% of people would be willing to join efforts to save their local favourite pub if it was under threat. Among regular pub goers this figure rises to 63%.

CAMRA has written to the Government seeking assurances that adequate resources will be allocated to provide business, legal and financial advice to communities wishing to save their local pub by running it as a mutual, co-operative or social enterprise.

Jonathan Mail, CAMRA Head of Policy and Public Affairs, said: 'Pubs provide the vibrant heart of our communities and provide an invaluable meeting place and the centre for countless local activities. The loss of such pubs can be devastating to community spirit and identity and Government has a key role to play in enabling communities to come together to save their local pubs. CAMRA is committed to ensuring the Government back up their vision of a Big Society with practical legal, business and financial advice to ensure the success of community attempts to save local pubs through community ownership.'

For people interested in saving a local pub, CAMRA can supply a list of over 30 community owned pubs on request as case studies and to assist with action plans.

For further information ring the CAMRA Press Office on 01727 798443.

## **J.D. Wetherspoon**

Solihull Town Centre now boasts two pubs, serving breakfast daily until noon. Plus Steak Club on Tuesdays, Curry Club on Thursdays & not forgetting the roasts at our Sunday Club.

**Both pubs are 'Cask Marque' and 'Best Bar None' accredited.**

**The Assembly Rooms**, 21 Poplar Road, Solihull, B91 3AD

**Phone:** 0121 711 6990

**Opening times:**

Sun — Wed: 8.00am — 1.00am

Thurs — Sat: 8.00am — 2.00am



Offering a total of 15 hand pulls featuring a range of regular and guest ales.

Live SKY sporting events screened weekly. Live Tribute acts last Friday of every month.

**Winner of 'Solihull & District CAMRA Most Improved Pub of the Year 2008'  
New entry in the CAMRA 'Good Beer Guide'.2010**

**The White Swan**, 32-34 Station Road, Solihull, B91 3SB

**Phone:** 0121 711 5180

**Opening times:**

Sun — Wed: 8.30am — 12.00am

Thurs — Sat: 8.30am — 12.30am

Offering 2 regular and 5 guest ales daily.

A music-free venue screening live Freeview sporting events.



**Watch out for our Meet the Brewer nights.**

### **J.D. Wetherspoon Real Ale Festival 27th October—14th November**

Christmas bookings diary opens from 8th Sept. with dates available from 15 November until 23rd December inclusive - traditional fare of buffet options available

**Ask staff for further details**



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