

Solihull Drinker



Issue No 97
Spring 2023

Free
Please take one

Solihull & District CAMRA Pub of the Year 2023



fantastic range of real ales and cider, which branch members have consistently found to be in great condition.

Within the first month of 2023 they had more than 50 different real ales and that typifies what you will find when you visit. This really is a no nonsense, award winning micro-pub and well deserving of this accolade.

Pictured is branch chair Martin Buck, presenting the award to landlords Jeff and Sue. Congratulations to them and all their hard-working team.

Congratulations to the Pup & Duckling

Competition to be our branch pub of the year was, as usual, hard fought and our winner is the Pup & Duckling in Hatchford Brook Road. This is the third time they've won this accolade in its 7 years and if you visit you can easily see why. They have a

Congratulations also to our second and third placed pubs, the Three Tuns in Henley in Arden, and Ale Rooms in Knowle. Please find time to support these and all our other pubs in the area. Times are difficult in the industry and it's your support that will help them pull through.



Liquor Cellar

755 Old Lode Lane, Solihull B92 8JE
Tel: 0121 722 3700

A warm & welcoming off-licence, specialising in bottled and craft ales, with an ever-changing range, including beers not often seen locally. Award winning scratchings & snacks

Opening Hours

Mon – Thurs 1 – 9.15pm; Fri – Sat 12 – 9.30pm
Sunday 12pm – 8pm



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 3 April	Flying Elephant
Wednesday 3 May	Fieldhouse
Monday 5 June	Sharman's Cross

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

Committee Meetings

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

Monday 20 March	The Wharf
Monday 15 May	Highwood

Socials

Saturday 11 March	Beer festival thank you trip
Friday 31 March	Tamworth crawl
Saturday 22 April	Walsall crawl
Saturday 20 May	Rugby crawl

For more details of socials please email committee@solihull.camra.org.uk – for Tamworth trip contact 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/

10 - 11 March (Fri – Sat)

Coventry beer festival
Coventry Rugby Club
Butts Road
Coventry CV1 3GE

17 - 18 March (Fri - Sat)

Knowle Round Table festival
Knowle British Legion
Knowle B93 9LU
(23 ales + 2 ciders)

more festivals on next page

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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

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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.

11 - 13 May (Thurs - Sat)

Shirley beer & cider festival

Camp Hill Rugby Club

Shirley B90 2EF

2 - 4 June (Fri - Sun)

Case Is Altered beer festival

Case Lane

Five Ways

Hatton nr. Warwick CV35 7JD

18th Century ale glasses by Iain Wells

We are all familiar with the ½ and 1 pint glasses that we commonly drink our beer from in pubs these days. However, these did not come into widespread use until the 19th century. Generally, ale from the medieval period into the early 19th century was far stronger than their modern equivalents and in order to make at least a cursory gesture towards limiting the amount of debilitating liquor that might be consumed during



one sitting, the glasses were of a relatively small capacity befitting of strong ales. Known as dwarf or short ale glasses, they were made with only slight variations in form for over 150 years from the late 17th century, through to the early 19th century.

Ale glasses had a typical capacity of around 3 fluid ounces (85ml) and whilst many were plain, from the first half of the 18th century onwards, glasses with a hop and barley engraving to their bowl, as exemplified by Picture 1 became popular. Also commonly produced were wrythen-moulded ale glasses of various types as shown in Picture 2. The purpose of these, often



elaborate, patterns was to disguise any suspended detritus in the ale from the consumer.

More elaborate ale glasses were introduced in the mid-18th century onwards as glassmaking became more skilled. Picture 3 illustrates an example from around 1760 engraved with a hop spray and barley ear,



with an opaque twist stem with four spiral threads over vertical gauze. Such glasses are highly desirable and command a much higher price than their plainer cousins.

In the 18th century the ale was generally not dispensed from a hand pump but poured initially into a jug direct from the barrel, often located in the cellar, and then brought to the serving hatch and decanted into the glasses. The jugs could be made from pottery, glass, copper or even silver. The final picture (4) illustrates a glass ale jug dating to about 1780 and engraved with the publicans' name, W Newell, within a spray of hops and barley.

Iain Wells

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sky sports

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6 hand pumps with
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a Traditional
Cider
3 Craft Beers

Opening Hours

09.00 - 23.00 Sun - Thur

09.00 - 24.00 Friday

09.00 - 01.00 Saturday

Sheffield to host Members' Weekend, AGM & Conference next April



CAMRA is delighted to invite you to Sheffield - the 'Steel City' - for our Members' Weekend, AGM & Conference 2023 – to be held 21st-23rd April at the Octagon Centre (University of Sheffield).

The national AGM is held on the Saturday morning, but activities start from Friday

afternoon with the dedicated Members' Bar open (showcasing some of the area's best real ales, ciders and perries) as well as the opportunity to take part in brewery trips and other activities.

Conference on Saturday afternoon is when members get to discuss and vote on motions put forward on a variety of issues. In addition, we'll have guest speakers and presenters from the beer and brewing industry, along with fringe sessions on a range of subjects.

It's open to all CAMRA members and free to attend. Members can also register on the day for all or any part of the weekend.

Find out more and register for the weekend on the CAMRA website www.camra.org.uk

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West Midlands County
PUB OF THE YEAR



WINNER 2022



Ale Rooms, 1592 High Street, Knowle, Solihull, B93 0LF.
Tel: 01564 400040



National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) and the Good Beer Guide

You are probably aware of the 'Good Beer Guide', CAMRA's flagship publication which lists the best pubs in the UK. You can order a copy of the 2023 Good Beer Guide (our 50th edition of the guide) via the CAMRA book shop at <https://camra.org.uk>

Many of those pubs are selected to appear based on beer scores submitted by CAMRA members from all over the country, using the NBSS (National Beer Scoring System).

If you've ever wondered why your favourite pub isn't in the Guide, this may well be because you, and others, haven't entered scores rating the quality of beer there. By beer scoring, you can contribute to the process of selection of pubs that go in the Good Beer Guide.

How do you score the quality of the beer?

You don't have to be an 'expert' to begin scoring your beer. But a key point to consider is that scoring is not about your personal favourite beer receiving the highest scores! You may try a beer that isn't to your normal taste but what you need to consider is the quality of that beer, how well the pub has kept it and served it and score it according to the general guide below. It is a simple 0 to 5 point system, with half points being used if your opinion of the beer falls between two categories.

1. No cask ale available
2. Poor. Beer is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
3. Average. Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
3. Good. Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again
4. Very Good. Excellent beer in

excellent condition. You stay put!
5. Perfect. Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

50 years of celebrating
Good Beer, Good Pubs and Good Times

THE GOOD BEER GUIDE
2023

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BEER AND PUB GUIDE

50TH
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HRH The Prince of Wales

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Laura Hadland

Cover art by
Neil Gower

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CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
CAMRA
1971-2021

How do you submit your scores?

It is straightforward and you simply need to login to CAMRA's online pub guide www.whatpub.com either on a computer or by smart phone. Here you will find a list of over 55,000 pubs from all over the UK. In order to start submitting scores via What Pub just use the following guide:

1. Login. To do this you need your membership number and your CAMRA password.
2. You can then search for your pub by name. Be careful here as there are many pubs in the country which share the

same name. My advice is to search by the pub name and the town or postcode. The What Pub smart phone web page also gives you the option to search for real ale pubs nearby, very useful if you are in an unfamiliar town.

3. Once you have found your pub a 'Submit Beer Scores' box will appear on the righthand side of the screen (or on the tab bar underneath the pub photo if you are using a smart phone).

4. Simply fill in the date and your score then as you begin typing the brewery name should automatically appear underneath where you are typing. You do not have to enter the name of the beer you are drinking but if you wish to do so once you have entered the brewery name you should be able to click on the arrow in the beer box and a dropdown list of that brewery's beers should appear. In some cases, the beer you are drinking may be new or a one off by the brewery so may not appear on the list, if this is the case you can simply type in the beer name.

and your score will be entered into the database.

It is as simple as that. An added bonus is that it will keep a record of your scores so you can look back to see what beers you have had and how you rated them if you want.

This article is slightly adapted from one by Sonia James-Henry that originally appeared in Mersey Ale. Thanks to Sonia and magazine editor John Armstrong for giving permission for it to be used by other branches.

Do please get involved in NBSS scoring as it helps us locally understand how consistent (or otherwise) our pubs are in serving good real ale. We can't get round all of them all of the time, so your input really does help.

Cheers
Ray Cooke

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Tuesday - Quiz and Games Night from 8pm

Wednesday - Bingo

Thursday - all cask ales £2.80



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Opening Hours:
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Thu – Sat: 12.00pm – 12.00am

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Sheffield weekend

It was with anticipation we set off for Sheffield in mid February for a branch weekend away. Sheffield is well known as one of the foremost cities in the UK for a wide range of well-kept real ales and cider. Indeed, the New York Times rates it as one of the top 10 in the world.

Four of us (Paul W, Paul B, Martin and myself) went up on the Thursday, with the others joining on the Friday. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to complete the weekend so only experienced the joys of part of Sheffield on the Thursday evening, but even that was impressive.

We commenced the Thursday with a short walk to the Sheffield Tap, which is in a building that directly connects with Sheffield Railway Station. It also houses the Tapped Brew Co microbrewery

If you ever find yourself at Sheffield Station, then do ensure you make time to try the beers here.

From here it was a short walk to the Rutland Arms on Brown Street, a traditional corner pub with features retained from the now defunct Duncan Gilmour Brewery. This looked to be very much a student pub and I think this was where we experienced the best value for 4 pints, coming in at less than £15 (outstanding value). There is a juke box, but the blackboard showed the staff humour as there is forbidden music, which all appeared to be related to cats.

This pub regularly features beers from Blue Bee Brewery in the city, and had its Hillfoot Best, Lemondrop and Reet Pale on at the time of our visit. It also had 4



(pictured above) at one end of a range of interesting rooms. Although you will see its beers on, there is always a good range of guest beers too. I had a hazy pale ale, Spine Trickle, from Pentrich which was in very good condition and the others had Cromarty Hit the Lip, Brewsmith Oatmeal Pale, and Thornbridge Lowline all in good condition.

other ales and I settled for the Bang The Elephant, Not One of Your Five a Day which is a chocolate orange stout. Having had such stouts before and having been disappointed at them being too 'in your face' I opted to try before I buy. This was a drinkable version of chocolate orange stout, so I was happy to have a pint.

A further walk took us to the Triple Point Brewery on Shoreham Street, which has

extensive seating outside as well as booth style seating along the glass



where the bar was. They had 5 guest beers on - Brass Castle Splash, Neepsend Chulupa, Moberley Concept 41, Vocation How Now, and Liquid Light Gravity Chasm. I had the Chulupa and confess that though it wasn't off I definitely did not enjoy the taste and ended up leaving half a pint. The others all enjoyed their beers though.

fronted brewery inside (see above). Though they claim, 'The Beer Comes First' and that many of their beers are cask there was only one beer actually on a handpull and that was the Gold, so I opted for that. It was certainly a drinkable pint, but in my opinion nothing to really write home about. Nonetheless, it's an interesting brewery and I'd be quite happy to try more of its beers.

We then walked on to the Clubhouse on London Road, which is a boxy and somewhat unimpressive looking building from the outside (well certainly from the direction we approached) and advertising Sky Sports, which is often something that puts me off looking inside. However, don't let that put you off as they had 5 real ales including Cortado Flat White, Saltaire Titus, Blue Bee Tempest Stout, Bradfield Farmers Blonde and Vocation Heart and Soul. I opted for the latter and was far from disappointed as it was in great condition.

A relatively short walk took us to the Beer Engine on Cemetery Road, another rather studenty pub. It's a traditional multi-roomed pub though we only made it as far as the room we entered as that's

A further walk took us to the Cremorne on London Road, a basic and unpretentious open plan pub that often has music on. They had 4 ales on offer, including two from Vocation – Heart & Soul and Bread & Butter, and two from Abbeydale – Daily Bread and Through the Hopback Mosaic, which is the one I was very happy to drink. This part of London Road has lots of interesting and varied restaurants and take aways and seems very colourful, which was great timing as we all needed food by now and ended up in Mother Hubbard's fish and chip shop, where we were able to sit and eat whilst watching the world go by.

By this stage I'd had my fill so left the others to visit a few additional establishments while I wandered back into town and the hotel. I was disappointed to have to leave the following morning as Friday was to be centred around the Kelham Island area and Saturday would feature a trip to Doncaster. Oh well, there's always next time.

Ray Cooke



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CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2022



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Fieldhouse,
Solihull

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All Cask Ales £2.89 a pint on Mondays
and Thursdays – Wine club Monday
& Thursday £10 per bottle

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

- 20p discount off a pint of Cask Ale
- 10% off food
- Festive Bookings : £10 off any bookings for 4 or more

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

The Forest in Dorridge has real ales at £4 a pint all the time with a 50p discount for CAMRA members Monday - Thursday.

I mentioned in our last edition that the Lyndon is now free of tie and they continue to stock a wide range of interesting ales, so do please go along and support them.

The Winged Spur in Ullenhall has been closed for some time and I suspect some of us wondered whether it would ever reopen. I'm pleased to say that by the time you read this it should hopefully already have done so.

The Beeches at Hampton in Arden is set to reopen as the Soho Tavern, a family run bar and Indian restaurant. As their Birmingham parent tavern is known to stock real ale (Purity and Wye Valley) it's very likely this one will too.

Yates in Solihull has closed and is one of the 1,000 Stonegate pubs being sold off. We had heard that a prospective buyer had been found, but we now know they have pulled out. This is a lovely building and it's hoped whoever does buy it will continue to serve real ale. Another one we'll be keeping an eye on.

It's been a while since a planning proposal was submitted for Henley in Arden railway station, but a local Friends group has adopted the station building (together with the Parish Council) after lengthy negotiations with Network Rail, and they now have planning permission

for restoration of the site. That will include a community café and a microbrewery – the Henley Mile Brewing Company, which is excellent news.

The Crabmill at Preston Bagot remains closed, following the fire in February last year. Owners Brunning & Price are still working with the insurers on plans for its future. We hope it will reopen sometime during 2023 and we'll keep you updated as and when we get any news.

They've also been working with the planners on their proposed new pub at Tidbury Green, the Mallard. When we began compiling this edition they were awaiting more ecology reports, to submit to the planners and were re-costing the whole project as things have very much moved on financially since they initially costed up the building works. I'm pleased to report that recently they have received planning permission to go ahead.

News just in is that the Lion in Shirley has new owners. No further details as yet but we'll keep you informed when we have them.

A new bar (The Crafty Cat) opens this month in the old Perio's building in Parkgate, Shirley. Warren's Bar at Cheales, Knowle is now open, and Bonds, Knowle is to reopen as the Dry Spy, a 1920s themed bar serving cocktails. None of these are anticipated to serve real ale but we will keep an eye on things and let you know if anything changes. The Entree Steakhouse, Shirley will sell craft ale.

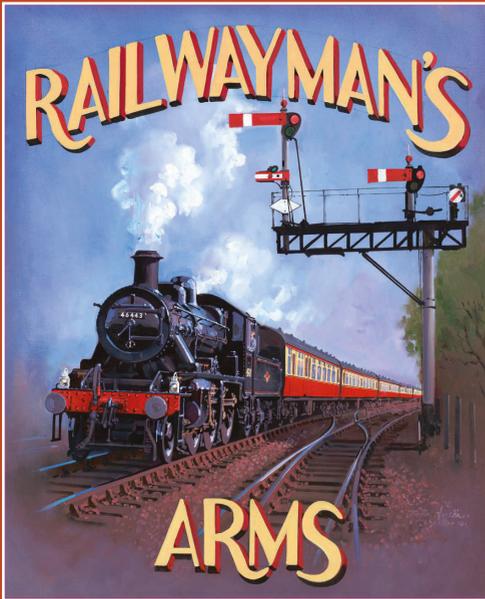
Paul Wigley
Pubs Officer



TWO CAMRA Good Beer Guide Free Houses!

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For details, see SVR.CO.UK



and

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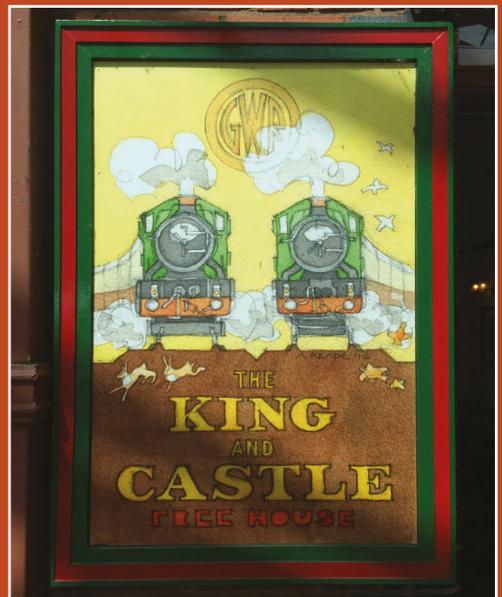
Hobsons Best Bitter,

Bewdley Brewery's Station Porter &

Worcestershire Way,

Batham's Best Bitter

plus one Traditional Cider



Useful Contact Numbers

Chair/Beer Festival

Martin Buck. 01564 770708
Secretary
Allan Duffy 01564 200431
Membership
Dave Mckown 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
Press & Publicity
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

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

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
Full (A5) page	£100.00	Not available
1 / 2 page	£75.00	£100 (landscape only)
1 / 3 page	£55.00	£75.00
1 / 4 page	£45.00	£60.00
1 / 6 page	£35.00	£47.00

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, Stonegate, 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

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



CAMRA MEMBERSHIP COUNTS

Campaigning for pubs, pints and people since 1971.

We're leading the fight to keep pubs alive and thriving in every community, serving a broad selection of quality ales and ciders.

Here's how CAMRA makes a difference

www.camra.org.uk/campaigns

Our Campaigns ▼

Promoting live beer, cider & perry

CAMRA promotes local, small and independent producers. Initiatives include *LocAle* (promoting locally brewed ale) and the *Real Cider Served Here* scheme.



Helping you save your local

Our in-depth pub-saving guides for England, Scotland and Wales, and advice on Assets of Community Value listing and Community Pub Ownership, provide campaigners with all the tools required to save your local, if it is under threat.



Lobbying Government at all levels

CAMRA members across the UK actively lobby their MPs, devolved elected representatives and councillors via email and social media. Our branches talk to politicians about a range of vital topics including taxation, regulation and consumer choice.



Pubs as a force for good

Pubs play a vital role in tackling loneliness and social isolation, foster community spirit and encourage social interaction. Research commissioned by CAMRA found that people with a local pub are happier, have more friends and are more engaged with their local communities.



Pub Company Reform

CAMRA campaigned for over ten years to introduce a Pubs Code and Adjudicator in England and Wales, to address the imbalance of power between pub companies and tenants. We continue to make sure tenants are treated fairly by pub companies, so they can thrive and run great pubs for us to enjoy, and are seeking a Pubs Code for Scotland too.



COVID Campaign Response ▼

Pulling Together

Our cross-industry campaign supports pubs, clubs, taprooms, breweries and cider makers through the COVID-19 crisis. They need your support now more than ever. We are campaigning on their behalf and providing resources to help them survive. This includes promoting *Cheers for Choice* to ensure beer stocks in reopened pubs, *Brew2You* and *Save our Pubs*.



Brew2You

This digital platform has been a vital tool in connecting beer lovers to local pubs, breweries and cider makers offering takeaway and delivery during lockdowns and beyond.



Speaking up for pubs, clubs, brewers and cider makers

CAMRA is at the forefront of lobbying for better support, and against unfair restrictions during the Coronavirus pandemic. We support a cut in beer duty on draught beer served in pubs to ensure fair competition with supermarkets and changes to the Business Rates system to end the unfair burden on pubs.



For member benefits visit
www.camra.org.uk/benefits

If you love beer and pubs,
CAMRA membership is for you!

join.camra.org.uk



Membership Matters

As Spring approaches CAMRA members' thoughts turn to beer festivals, some run by local pubs others by charities and many others run by CAMRA branches situated all over the country. At the majority of the CAMRA run beer festivals members will get some type of benefit either in the form of a reduced entry fee or free beer tokens - surely a couple of reasons to join CAMRA. One of the other many benefits you get as a CAMRA member is £30 worth of real ale/cider vouchers valid at numerous pub chains including JD Wetherspoons etc. There are many other money saving benefits to becoming a CAMRA member, which can all be found if you visit the website www.camra.org.uk

You also get an online monthly colour newspaper called "What's Brewing" informing you of all the latest beer and pub news as well as detailing events/beer festivals from around the country. In conjunction you will also receive an online quarterly magazine titled "Beer" which is packed with great articles by award winning writers all about real ale pubs, beer & breweries.

With prices of membership starting from £28.50 per annum (54p per week) and including all of the above, I think you will agree this represents good value for money, so why not join now, or how about giving a year's membership as a gift for Father's Day on 18th June. An even greater advantage of joining CAMRA is the opportunity to become involved with your local branch, including social events, meeting new friends, helping at our beer festival, as well as campaigning. I believe as a branch we are a friendly bunch, and

you will be made most welcome whilst enjoying a good pint of real ale/cider with like-minded people.

As a branch, our social outings vary from pub crawls, brewery visits to beer & curry nights, so there is something for everyone. Our branch meetings, where a variety of topics are discussed in relation to the local real ale scene, are held on the first Monday of each month at a local pub. They do contain a certain amount of CAMRA business, but we endeavour to make them short and friendly, only lasting on average an hour, to allow more time for socialising etc. It may come as a surprise but we also enjoy a pint or two of real ale at the same time. And as a bonus, within your branch welcome pack all new members will get a voucher for a FREE PINT which is redeemable, in conjunction with a valid membership card, upon attendance at your first Branch meeting, courtesy of Solihull & District CAMRA Branch.

For a full list of forthcoming events see the Dates for the Diary section in this magazine or visit www.solihull.camra.org.uk.

So come on what are you waiting for - Join up, Join in, Join the Campaign.

Dave Mckowen,
Membership Secretary

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