

# Solihull



# Drinker

Issue No 101  
Spring 2024

*Free*  
*Please take one*

## Real Ale Heroes, Allan & Brenda Duffy



Steve Dyson, our longest standing branch member, is pictured presenting a well-deserved Real Ale Heroes award to Allan & Brenda Duffy.

Allan & Brenda joined CAMRA as joint members in Wolverhampton in 1978. Membership was £5 per annum (single or joint) and life membership was 10 times that. Brenda very much wishes they had had £50 to spare so they could have become life members! They never got round to becoming life members subsequently.

They moved to Newcastle in 1979 and Brenda served as Treasurer for Tyneside & Northumberland branch for a few years in the 1980s. They also gained experience working at, and later helping to organise the Newcastle beer festival.

They came to Solihull in 1992 and both served on the festival committee for the first Solihull beer festival at the Vaults in Knowle (1993?). Brenda was the Festival Treasurer, and both have worked at every Solihull CAMRA beer festival since, with Allan having been on a number of earlier festival committees. In addition to treasurer, Brenda organised the staffing one year, and the products stall when we had one in the earlier years.

Brenda served as branch Chair from 1995 to 2000, and she's also been branch secretary for a couple of years and treasurer. She took a (well earned) break taking up the post of treasurer again in 2020. Allan became branch secretary after Steve Wood moved away and has continued in the role for the past 15+ years.

Congratulations on the award and many thanks for all the support you have both shown and continue to show to our branch and to CAMRA.

# 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)

Wednesday 3 April  
Monday 13 May  
Monday 3 June

Ale Hub, Longmore Rd, Shirley  
Winged Spur, Ullenhall  
Drum & Monkey

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 20 May

Red Lion, Claverdon

### Socials

Saturday 23 March  
Friday 12 April  
20 – 25 May

Codsall crawl  
Stourbridge crawl  
Cambridge & beer festival trip (actual dates tbc)

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 March 2024 (Thurs – Sat)  
47<sup>th</sup> Loughborough beer festival  
Polish Club  
True Lovers Walk  
Loughborough  
LE11 3DB

16 - 18 May 2024 (Fri - Sat)  
Shirley Round Table beer & cider festival  
Camp Hill Rugby Club  
Hasluck's Green Road  
Shirley  
B90 2EF

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

Printed by Thistle Print Ltd.,  
Leeds  
Solihull CAMRA 2024 ©

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

31 May - 2 June 2024 (Fri – Sun)

Beer festival  
Case Is Altered  
Case Lane  
Five Ways  
CV35 7JD

21 - 22 June 2024 (Fri – Sat)

16<sup>th</sup> Shakespeare beer & cider festival  
Stratford Racecourse  
Luddington Road  
Stratford  
CV37 9SE

## White Swan Inn, Knowle



This is the first article in an occasional series about local inns and pubs.

The White Swan was established as an inn around the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century following the founding of the Guild of St Anne (Knowle) by Walter Cook and six others in 1413. Many members of the guild (an early form of friendly society) had to travel considerable distances to attend meetings in Knowle.

Consequently, a need arose for an Inn to provide accommodation and sustenance. Hence the establishment of the White Swan Inn.

Documents of the medieval period indicate that the land on which the White Swan stood was owned by the Guild itself. The Poll Tax of 1660 reveals that Knowle had two innkeepers, at the White Swan and most probably the adjacent Grade II listed Red Lion, which Historic England describes as “an early 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed building”. In 1939, immediately prior to the demolition of the White Swan, it was described as a “late 15<sup>th</sup> century building with a hall-block between gabled cross-wings, which preserved many of its original features”.



In 1879 a sale of furniture from the White Swan included four-poster beds, mahogany and Windsor chairs and "about 18 spittoons". We can only speculate why a modest inn needed 18 spittoons!

From at least as early as 1828 (Pigot's Directory) until 1850 the licensee was Ann Sowley. Then there was a succession of landlords until 1900 when William McHardy was described as the proprietor. However, in 1907 he became bankrupt, during the recession that year, according to the Coleshill Chronicle. From the end of World War I until the closure the landlord was Fred Hotchkiss.

From late Victorian times until 1928, the Swan Inn was supplied by Lucas & Co Ltd brewery of Leamington Spa. Ansell's acquired Lucas and its estate in 1928 and as Ansell's already owned the adjacent Red Lion it is no surprise that in 1937 they sold the White Swan as a de-licensed property.

The inn was demolished in 1939 with some of the material labelled and carted off by Fletcher's haulage firm to be stored in a field behind Haycocks farm in Bakers Lane to await re-building at a new site. All the pieces were numbered but unfortunately due to the intervention of the Second World War they were overlooked and used in the renovation of an adjacent house and possibly other buildings too.

However, one item from the White Swan has survived and that is the splendid sign which now adorns the Red Lion.

The illustration on page 4 is taken from a coloured postcard of about 1900 clearly showing the sign with the Red Lion beyond.

(Dr) Iain Wells

The site was until recently occupied by the Nat West Bank and had a carved swan on its front as a nod to the site's history.

## *Solihull* **THE FLUTE & FLAGON**

**28-30 Station Parade**

**Solihull B91 3SB**

**Tel: 0121 711 3630**

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



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**09.00 - 23.00 Sun - Thur  
09.00 - 24.00 Fri - Sat**

## Walk with a happy ending by John Edwards

When you do the same walk twice within 5 weeks you know it must be a good one, so this is particularly for those CAMRA members holidaying in East Devon & Dorset. It starts at the village of Rousdon on the A3052 east of Seaton and follows an undulating route along paths & lanes north and east to Uplyme, passing the spectacular viaduct of the disused railway line near Shapwick Grange. From there the route goes behind “The Talbot Arms” and becomes a beautiful wooded, waterside walk down into Lyme Regis along the River Lim Path, passing weirs, mills, and a ford – well signed with pink arrows.



In total it's around 4 – 5 miles and one of the best bits is that it emerges at the Town Mill complex where the Lyme Regis Brewery, founded in 2010 in an old malthouse / power station battery room, has a Tap Room serving a great range of draught beers & ciders!

Conveniently it has its own sheltered seating area in the courtyard, where there is weekly live music in summer, and on my first visit I was able to relax there and try a float of “Lyme Gold” (4.2% golden ale), “Steady Habits” (5% New England IPA) & “Town Mill Best” (4.5%), before trying a pint of “Black Ven”, their 5% London Porter.

I came away with a carry-out box containing 500ml bottles of “Rebellion”

(5% honey-spiced rum stout), “Dorset Pearl” (4.3% pale ale), “Revenge” (5.3% IPA), “Golden Cap” (5.4% craft lager) & “Sailor’s Delight” (8% barrel-aged Imperial Stout infused with cherry & vanilla). This was all made possible by the bus stop just around the corner with an approximately hourly service (free with an OAP bus pass) back to Rousdon!



On my second visit I was able to try their new canned, limited-edition “Curious Mary” (8% double IPA) which was created in collaboration with the charity Mary Anning Rocks. This successfully fund-raised to have a bronze statue of Lyme’s most famous fossil hunting palaeontologist made and erected in her home town. Created by Denise Dutton, this was unveiled in May 2022, and she now looks across Black Ven, the cliff where she made most of her amazing finds.

My wife tried the “Lilley’s Rhubarb Cider” (4%) that was on draught, and this was as delicious as all the Lyme Regis beers. However, if I had to pick a favourite it’d have to be the “Sailor’s Delight” with its subtle flavours imparted by the cherries and 9 months ageing in rum barrels!

If you're ever down that way I can really recommend a visit to the Brewery.....and the walk!

Proof on the right - we actually did do some walking !

John Edwards



## A quickie in Bristol !

If you are ever stuck in Bristol and fancy a few beers, there are more than enough to choose from. If you need to stay close to the station, then you can't go far wrong with this selection. Head up Friary Street, crossing the river on the footbridge and continue up to Burton Road where you will find the Barley Mow. Up to 8 beers are available here. It's a Bristol Beer Factory pub and gives you a good selection of their beer. Food is available too.

Retrace your steps over the footbridge and turn right up to St Philips Bridge. Turn right, ahead will be the Bridge Inn. Can't miss it... it has a large mural of Jimi Hendrix on it. An unpretentious local with 4 beers.



Next, we are heading to Victoria Street. Just past Temple Backs you'll find the Kings Head. This is a superb 17<sup>th</sup>



century pub. It has a very unusual layout and serves up to 4 beers. Another true classic is just round the corner in Temple Street, Cornubia. Dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century it is not easy to find but persevere. It has a wonderful garden and is incongruous amongst the skyscrapers hemming it in. Inside expect 6 beers.

So, to our final pub the Seven Stars in Thomas Lane, a walk of about 5 minutes. Another gem here dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century with up to 6 beers. From here it is only 10 minutes back to Temple Meads station. A note though. Check opening times they do vary during the week.

Steve Dyson





# KNOWLE & DORRIDGE CRICKET CLUB



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HOME

## CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2024



Open 11.00 – 23.00 Mon – Thurs;  
11.00 – 23.30 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  
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Live Music & Events  
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6 Real Ales on at all times – eg  
Oakham Cira, Adnams Ghost  
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changing guests.

CAMRA members (membership card must be  
shown) 20p off pint of cask ale all other days

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— ALL DAY —

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£1 OFF  
ALL CASK

THURS & SUNDAY  
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**WINE**  
Club  
Bottles  
from  
£12.00

FRIDAY & SAT  
— FROM 5PM —

**FIZZ**  
Bottles  
from  
£14

COCKTAIL  
& SHOTS  
2 COCKTAILS £12  
ON ALL COCKTAILS  
4 SHOTS £12  
ON ALL SHOTS  
DAILY FROM 5PM

APP  
CRUISE





## 2024 AGM

We held a successful AGM at KDCC and thanks go to John & Pauline Nibb for arranging things and sorting out the buffet, which was much appreciated.

The only committee member standing down was Ray Cooke as Cider & Perry Representative. However, he stood again for Deputy Chair and as Editor of the Solihull Drinker, and Paul Wigley added the Cider & Perry role to his portfolio.

The new committee was voted in unopposed at the meeting and is as follows (you can find contact details in the Useful Contacts section on page 12);

Chair  
Deputy Chair  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Pubs Officer  
Membership Secretary  
Newsletter Editor  
Cider & Perry  
Website  
Social Secretary  
Beer Festival Organiser  
Social Media  
Young Members  
Accounts Examiner

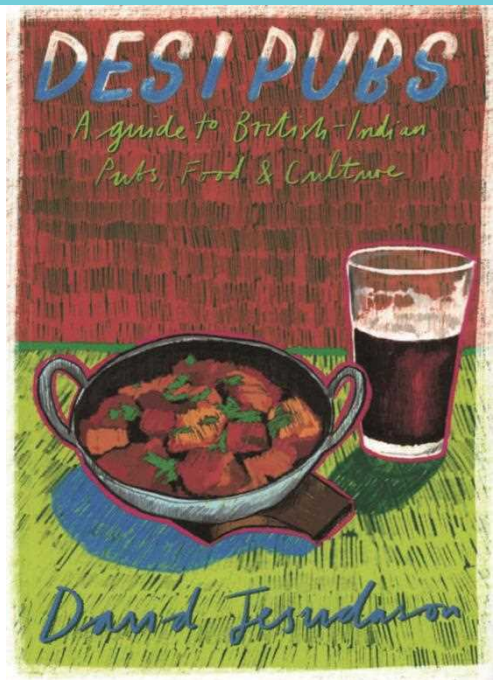
Martin Buck  
Ray Cooke  
Allan Duffy  
Brenda Duffy  
Paul Wigley  
Dave Mckowen  
Ray Cooke  
Paul Wigley  
Keith Whitehouse  
Steve Dyson (non-committee)  
Martin Buck  
Martin Robins  
Iain Wells  
Malcolm Harry (non-committee)

## Review of David Jesudason's Desi Pubs

Now here's an intriguing book: a CAMRA publication where many – possibly the majority – of pubs featured don't serve real ale. Bear in mind that CAMRA is at least as interested in supporting our pubs and clubs as in campaigning for real ale, and it starts to make sense.

Factor in that the book may be unique in documenting the history and the rise of 'desi' pubs – and the demand for Indian and south Asian food pretty much everywhere – and the book makes perfect sense.

You may be wondering, what is a 'desi' pub; the author, David Jesudason, spends the first 20-odd pages attempting to explain, though without reaching a single definitive conclusion – the term means different things to different people. The closest you might get would be a pub run by someone of British-Asian descent, which usually serves

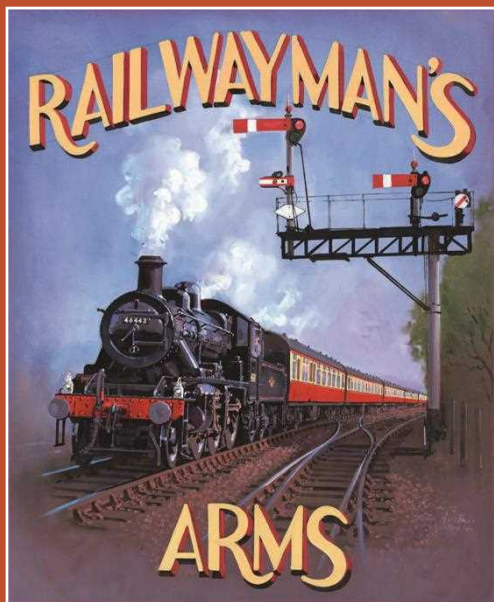




## TWO CAMRA Good Beer Guide Free Houses!

Travel by train between the two.

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



and

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on the concourse at

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Bewdley Brewery Worcestershire Way,

Hobsons Best Bitter

also

Hobsons Oldfield Cider

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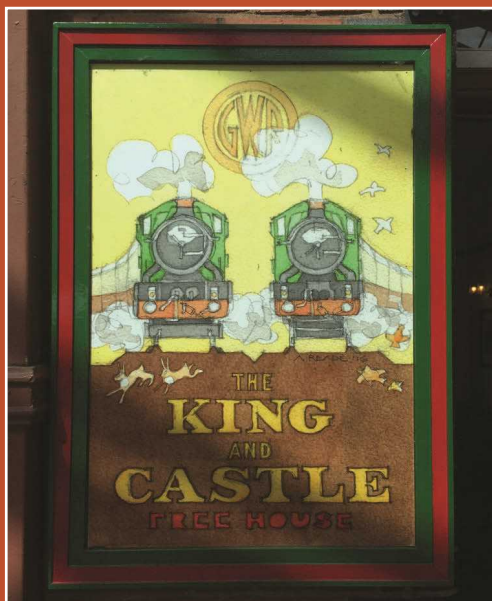
Hobsons Best Bitter,

Bewdley Brewery's Station Porter &

Worcestershire Way,

Batham's Best Bitter

plus one Traditional Cider



good food with an Indian/south Asian flavour – and which is welcoming to all.

Reading the opening section, that last part is crucial; the roots of desi pubs can be traced to the days of open discrimination, of British Asians being made to feel uncomfortable – or flat-out being refused service – in traditional pubs. Some enterprising folk, in areas with numbers of British-Asian residents, started opening pubs that refused to bow to such prejudices. Over the ensuing decades the concept has evolved and matured, to the point where David has visited and reviewed 40-odd pubs for his book.

These aren't your normal reviews; each pub gets several pages, and the author has usually spoken to the proprietor. The reviews are as much about their approach, their aspirations for the pub and its clientele, as it is about the food.

I should make it clear: there's not much mention of beer in the book. That's perfectly fine – the book focuses on the cultural aspects of desi pubs, both in their appeal to non-white drinkers and the food.

What's notable is that the West Midlands punches well above its weight when it comes to desi pubs; of the 41 main reviews, 16 are in our region, more than any other area. That includes the Blue Gates Hotel in Smethwick, notorious for refusing to serve the American activist Malcolm X in 1965, but now one of three Smethwick pubs featured in the book. Jesudason notes, with some surprise, that the local white population has embraced desi pubs, just as much as the British-Asians.

There's five pubs in Birmingham, including the Indian Brewery at Snow Hill – and our very own Tap and Tandoor in Solihull. The author doesn't really agree with the view of the T&T's owner, Ajay Kenth, that it should be viewed as an Indian gastropub rather than a desi pub, mostly because Jesudason tends to my own view that 'gastropub' usually means small portions of expensive, over-

elaborate food, with drinkers not really being catered for.

Here's how good the book is: at the 2023 Awards by the British Guild of Beer Writers it was named Best Book about Beer or Pubs, while David Jesudason also claimed the Michael Jackson Award for Beer Writer of the Year.

Be warned: about every other photo in the book is of the food on offer at the pubs, and it all looks mouth-wateringly delicious!

Numerous pubs are easy to reach by train – Birmingham, West Bromwich, Smethwick, Rowley Regis, so for a future edition of the Drinker magazine, I'm intending to visit various pubs and write up my experience of eating and drinking in desi pubs. It's a dirty job, but someone's got to do it...

Martin Buck  
Branch chair, beer & food aficionado

If this book appeals to you (how can you resist reading about the joyful festival of mixed grills, naans and curries all washed down with plenty of beer, and the British-Indian landlords who have stamped their unique identity on a beloved institution and helped to challenge our preconceptions of the pub customer: from rowdy cricket fans to vibrant bhangra nights via football supporters enjoying pre-match mixed grills and beers) then you can order a copy via CAMRA Books [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk).





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<http://www.kdrc.info>



knowleanddorridgeracquets



barandsocial@kdrc.info

### **Useful Contact Numbers**

***Chair/Beer Festival Organiser***

Martin Buck. 01564 770708

***Secretary***

Allan Duffy 01564 200431

***Membership***

Dave Mckowen 01564 778955

***Social media***

Martin Robins 07771 842046

***Website***

Keith Whitehouse  
[webmaster@solihull.camra.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@solihull.camra.org.uk)

***Pubs Campaigning / Cider & Perry***

Paul Wigley 07402 312457

***Treasurer***

Brenda Duffy 01564 200431

***Solihull Drinker Editor***

Ray Cooke 01564 777890

***Social co-ordinator***

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

***Young Members***

Iain Wells 07810 827043

**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 around 2500 free copies to some 80 pubs (and some clubs, restaurants and off licences) around Solihull, and local 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, etc.

You definitely 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, or to discuss any proposed advert, please contact [editor@solihull.camra.org.uk](mailto:editor@solihull.camra.org.uk)

It might be possible for us to offer adverts for certain sectors on an exclusive basis, so if you run a taxi company (as an example) we might be able to agree that yours would be the only such advertiser benefitting from being in our magazine.

Our advertising is competitively priced, see rates set out below.

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 you needed to include time related offers for example). 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>£120.00</b>	<b>Not available</b>
<b>1 / 2 page</b>	<b>£90.00</b>	<b>£120 (landscape only)</b>
<b>1 / 3 page</b>	<b>£66.00</b>	<b>£90.00</b>
<b>1 / 4 page</b>	<b>£54.00</b>	<b>£72.00</b>
<b>1 / 6 page</b>	<b>£42.00</b>	<b>£56.00</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 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 refurbishment work at the Reservoir in Earlswood, to become a Hickory Smokehouse, has taken longer than hoped, but should be open by the time you read this.

The Harvester on Stratford Road has been refurbished and should also, by the time we go to print, have reopened as an Orleans Smokehouse. We don't know whether it will have real ale or not, so do let us know.

Knowle & Dorridge CC definitely do serve real ale, and their clubhouse has been

under refurbishment for some months, though they have remained open during this time. This work should also be complete by the time you read this.

The Colebrook has recently reopened following refurbishment and we understand the Fieldhouse (both Ember Inns pubs) is due to be refurbished at some point this year.

The Crown in Claverdon remains closed and, as yet, we have no information on its future. If any of you reading this have further information then please let us know.

Just down the road, the badly fire-damaged Crabmill is now up for sale by Brunning & Price, and is so on the basis of being a licensed premises. We do not know whether there are any plans to try and sell it for non-licensed development.



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\*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.

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Campaign for Real Ale



Silhill are no longer using the microbrewery at the rear of the Warwickshire Lad and we've been told that Infinity Brewery will be taking it on, though brewing under a different name? They currently brew in Birmingham in a nanobrewery producing small batch craft

ale. This is definitely an interesting development for us.

We understand that the tenants at the Bull's Head in Barston are changing.

Paul Wigley - Pubs Officer

## Membership Matters

We have not seen any new members of Solihull & District CAMRA branch attending their first meeting/social for some time. This means they are not taking advantage of the free pint incentive we offer to all new members. The free pint ticket is redeemable in conjunction with a valid membership card upon the new members' attendance at their first branch meeting/social event.

So, if you come along this month or within 12 months of joining CAMRA the free pint voucher is still valid. All new Solihull CAMRA members are sent a welcome letter from myself which contains the free pint voucher.

We as a branch would like to see some new faces amongst us, so I'm calling on all new members and members who have never been to a meeting/social event why not come along and see for yourself - you might be pleasantly surprised. We are a friendly group of liked minded real ale/cider fans and you will be made most welcome whilst enjoying a pint with other real ale/cider drinkers. A list of our branch social events is in the Dates For Your Diary section in this publication or see our website [www.solihull.camra.org.uk](http://www.solihull.camra.org.uk) for more information etc.

Recently some of our branch have been out and about surveying/visiting local pubs which have been nominated for inclusion in the next issue of the GBG

(Good Beer Guide). As a branch we would like to see more members if not all of our members rating our nominated real ale pubs, so that we can only put the best real ale pubs that Solihull & District has to offer into the GBG. Why not join CAMRA and help us out next year in the 'really difficult job' of going to our local pubs, trying their real ale and then rating the pubs using our online voting system. Think about it, all of the pubs included in the guide have been voted in by CAMRA members actually visiting the pubs. So come on join the campaign and have your chance to vote for the best real ales pubs/clubs in and around the Solihull area.

When you join CAMRA you will get a monthly newsletter called "What's Brewing" and a quarterly informative magazine titled "Beer", both containing many interesting articles and news. You will also get free or reduced entry to the many beer festivals organised by local CAMRA branches all over the country, and with £30 pounds worth of Real Ale/ Cider vouchers along with many other great money saving deals, I think joining CAMRA is still great value for money, so visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) for full details of the different types of memberships available.

Join up, Join in, Join the campaign.

Dave Mckowen  
Membership Secretary

### **Solihull Drinker Issue No. 101 Solihull CAMRA 2024 ©**

Printed by Thistle Print Ltd., Leeds

The 102<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 3 June 2024. Please note that the deadline for copy, advertising and any other contribution for this issue is **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May**. Thank you in advance to all contributors.



**16th-18th May**  
**Camp Hill Rugby Club**

Real Ales  
Craft Beers  
Ciders  
Cocktails

Street Food  
Live Music  
Kids Bouncy Castles  
Comedy Night

