



Solihull Drinker

Issue No 85
Autumn 2018



Free
Please take one

5pm - 11pm Thursday 4th October
12 noon—11pm Friday 5th & Saturday 6th October

The Royal British Legion
Union Road. Solihull B91 3DH

45 Real Ales
+ Ciders & Perry

£10 inc. £5 beer tokens, refundable
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BREWERY

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SILHILL
BREWERY

AWARD WINNING HAND CRAFTED ALES


SILHILL
BREWERY

AWARD WINNING HAND CRAFTED ALES


SILHILL
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"Thirstily he set it to his lips, and as its cool refreshment began to soothe his throat, he thanked Heaven that in a world of much evil there was still so good a thing as ale."

— Rafael Sabatini, Fortune's Fool



www.TheBullsHeadBarston.co.uk

Help Us To Select Our Good Beer Guide Pubs

One of the most important functions of a branch is to select pubs and clubs to appear in the annual CAMRA Good Beer Guide. Each year we look at the process used for Solihull & District, with the dual aim of encouraging as wide a participation by the branch membership as possible, and ensuring the end result is our most worthy pubs and clubs being chosen.

At the December and January branch meetings we accept nominations from the floor. Any member can nominate a pub or club. As long as another member seconds the proposal, it goes into the selection process. We insist on nominations being in person, as **the nominator has to commit to completing a survey form of their nominated pub or club.**

This year judging is open to all branch members. Each nomination is scored out of ten on a number of categories; beer quality, service and welcome, overall impression, and so on. A member can score as many or as few pubs as they like. Obviously, we want people to get out and visit as many as they can, but our main request is for scores to be consistent across the pubs being judged. Once all votes have been cast,

nominations are ranked on average score. The five West Midlands and two Warwickshire premises with the highest averages are our selection.

We are trialling an electronic voting form this year, which will be accessible after the January nominations. Branch members will be able to log in via a link to be sent out in an email, and enter their scores. We will still accept paper judging forms at the February branch meeting.

Look out for emails on the run up to the meetings for nominations and judging. With the introduction of the online form, we're hoping for even more participation by our members.

Martin Buck

See page 20 of this issue for details of the 2019 Good Beer Guide and phone app.



Features in this issue include:

Dates for the Diary & Midlands Area Events	4
Goodbye Harvester, Hello The Dingle	6
West Midlands Pub Of The Year - The Ale Rooms	8
Southampton Long Weekend	10
Hail To The Ale	16
Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club Score Hat-Trick	18
Leicester: "A Journey into the Unknown"	22
Durham Ox Goes Super Size	28



Dates For Your Diary

Branch Meetings

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

Monday 1st October	British Legion, Solihull
Monday 5th November	The Vaults, Knowle
Monday 3rd December	Fieldhouse, Monkspath

Committee Meetings

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

Monday 17th September	Grenville Club, Solihull
Monday 19th November	Tom O' The Wood

Socials

Saturday 22nd September	Kentish Town Crawl
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For more details and contacts for the above, please call Secretary Allan Duffy on 01564 200 431 or visit our website: www.solihull.camra.org.uk

Most, though not all, of our local pubs have disabled access. If you wish to come to a meeting and require assistance to get inside, contact us beforehand and we will do our best to help.

Upcoming Midlands Area Beer Festivals and Events

September 6-8 (Thu-Sat):

25TH TAMWORTH BEER FEST

Masonic Rooms, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, B79 7QE. 75+ ales including festival specials and many new ales, also ciders/ perries. Hot & cold food and soft drinks available. Live music Friday and Saturday. Inside bars and plenty of outdoor/ covered seating. Celebrating 50 years since the first screenings of Dad's Army. Festival T-shirts available and refundable souvenir tankard. Open 11am-11pm daily. Entry £3 except Friday 5-11pm (£4) and all day Saturday (£3). CAMRA members **FREE** entry at all times. Supervised children permitted until 5pm. Beer list on website week before: www.lstcamra.org.uk

September 8 (Sat):

BLAKESLEY HALL ALE FESTIVAL

Blakesley Road, Yardley, B25 8RN Bir-

mingham. Open 11am to 8pm. Craft beers, ales and ciders from local breweries including Church End, Two Towers, Froth Blowers & Snails Bank. Entry £5 includes glass. Hot food and live music.

September 14-15 (Fri-Sat):

1st SHIRLEY & SOLIHULL LIONS BEER FESTIVAL

The Royal British Legion, Union Road, Solihull B91 3DH. 16 ales and 3 ciders. 12-10pm daily. Entrance £10 to include free glass and £5 of beer tokens. Free Prize draw, including rail travel and Purity brewery tour. 50% of all profits will go directly to Troop-Aid and the other 50% will be shared with local charities.

September 20-22 (Thu-Sat):

5TH CANNOCK CHASE BEER FEST

Prince of Wales Theatre, Church St, Cannock, WS11 1DE. 63 ales, 20 ci-

ders/perries, World beers bottle bar, hot and cold food all sessions, Tombola, CAMRA membership and merchandise stalls. Free soft drinks for designated drivers. Admission £3 general public, £2 senior citizens and HM Forces, £1 CAMRA members. £10 package to include admission, programme, festival glass (refundable) and beer tokens. Opening hours : Thurs 5-11pm, Fri/Sat noon-11pm, last orders 10 mins before closing time. Entertainment, Thursday quiet night with CBOB judging. Friday evening Chevvy Bel Air, Saturday afternoon Karmalyte, evening Alchemy. Info at www.cannockbeerfestival.co.uk

Home Brew Competition

The Solihull Beer Festival will again play host to our popular Home Brew competition. Open to home brewers (i.e. anyone who doesn't have a professional licence), the judging will be held at 2 pm on Saturday 6th October in the Solihull British Legion. For further details, please contact the competition organiser, Max Lanham – solihullhomebrew@gmail.com

October 4-6 (Thur-Sat):

19TH SOLIHULL BEER FESTIVAL

Broomfields Hall, The Royal British Legion, Union Road, Solihull B91 3DH. 5pm - 11pm Thursday. 12 noon - 11pm

Friday and Saturday. 45 real ales, cider & perry. See front page for more details.

October 5-6 (Fri-Sat):

WYTHALL'S 9TH BEER FESTIVAL

Wythall Community Club, Silver Street, Wythall, Birmingham B47 6LZ. Check www.wythall-park.org.uk for details.

October 10-21 (Wed-Sun):

WETHERSPOONS BEER FESTIVAL

Normally up to 50 real ales available, including beers specially brewed for the occasion. This festival will also include real ciders. Locally pop into either the White Swan, Solihull Centre, or the Pump House, Shirley.

October 11-14 (Thu-Sun):

INN ON THE GREEN BEER FEST

2 Westley Road, Acocks Green, B27 7UH. 20 ales, 5 ciders. Music Friday and Saturday live and free. 20p per pint off for CAMRA members.

November 1-4 (Thur-Sun):

BARTONS ARMS AUTUMN FEST

144 High Street, Aston, Birmingham B6 4UP. 18+ real ales. Free entry. Details www.thebartonsarms.com

Week Commencing November 24

ALE ROOMS 2ND ANNIVERSARY

1592 High Street, Knowle, Solihull B93 0LF. Check Facebook for details in November.

"Save Our Pubs" Mass Lobby Day 30th October

CAMRA are looking for delegates to take part in a national "Save Our Pubs" Mass Lobby Day in Westminster, London on Tuesday 30 October 2018.

This will be a fantastic opportunity to be part of an historic lobby day where you will get to meet your MP and take part in a pubs rally.

To volunteer click the link on the email

that has been sent to you, or contact your local branch. There are two volunteers per branch, allocated on a first come, first served basis.

You will need to be able to communicate CAMRA's campaigns effectively, feel confident in speaking to MPs, be presentable and be a positive ambassador for CAMRA.

Goodbye Harvester, Hello The Dingle



Those of you reading our Summer issue may have noted the closure of the Harvester in Tanhouse Lane.

In Mid July the pub re-opened as The Dingle, now forming part of the Craft Union Pub Company portfolio. Locals have known the pub as the Dingle for years, and making this official removes an awful lot of previous confusion with a restaurant chain!

Dawn and Phil Jones are still in charge, but the pub has been transformed through a major refurbishment.

First thing you will notice in entering the pub is how open, light and airy it now is, comprising a large single room. The furniture looks all new and the décor gives an impression of space.

Sports are something promoted by the Craft Union through their interest in the darts and football team. For sports fans

the pub has a table tennis table in the large beer garden, and also now has Sky and BT Sports inside. Other entertainment includes live bands, normally on a Saturday night.

The beer range should be better than previously possible, with more of a free choice available to Dawn and Phil. When I visited a week after re-opening the choice was Doombard and Purple Moose, Dark Side Of the Moose. With two beers on sale at any one time, and a fast turnaround of up to 4 different ales a week, the focus is on quality. On the evidence of the Dark Side of The Moose I tried, it seems to work.



I must admit that prior to visiting the Dingle I had not heard of the Craft Union Pub Company. Looking at their website they state that their philosophy is about putting brilliant pubs back at the heart of local communities. "We believe pubs play a vital role in the lives of their customers and we are committed to nurturing this."

"We stand shoulder to shoulder with our publicans, supporting them as they practice their craft of running outstanding pubs. For us, they are our local heroes."



Drawbridge Gets A Makeover

The Drawbridge Inn reopened on June 14th after a significant refurbishment and rebranding as a Greene King pub.



The first noticeable thing is the 5 hand pumps on the bar facing the entrance. During the previous refurbishment the hand pumps had been replaced by wine taps, but they are now back where they belong. As well as the reg-

ular Greene King IPA and Abbott, there will be a Timothy Taylor beer and two changing SIBA beers. Even better, there is a 10% discount for CAMRA members sampling these real ales.

The whole pub seems so much lighter and airy now, with fully refurbished furniture and brightened up décor. There is also a private area available, suitable for around 20 people, that can be reserved. Maybe we will see you here at a future branch meeting.



The Wharf Tavern

Elysha and the team Welcome you!



- Cask Marque accredited real ales.
- Large craft bottle and draught range.
- Healthy gin and spirit choice
- Tasty pub grub served 12pm - 9pm each day with great deals!



Come in and see for yourself!

The Wharf Tavern, 2390 Stratford Road, Hockley Heath, Solihull, B946QT

01564782075

West Midlands Pub Of The Year - The Ale Rooms



Solihull Chair Carl Wright and Ash Corbett-Collins, West Midlands CAMRA, congratulate Mark Caldicott on the Ale Rooms becoming the West Midlands County Pub Of The Year

It's official! For the first time ever, the best real ale pub in the West Midlands county resides in Solihull. Less than 2 years after opening, judges from the West Midlands region of CAMRA have voted the Ale Rooms in Knowle as the West Midlands County Pub Of The Year. The Ale Rooms will now move forward to the next stage in the national CAMRA Pub Of The Year competition.

What makes this award more special is that it was voted for by experienced CAMRA members from outside Solihull, unfamiliar with the pubs being judged, and going in un-announced, making it a completely unbiased judgement.

On Wednesday 22nd August 2018, Solihull CAMRA members arrived to

sample the 7 beers on offer and present Mark and his team with their latest award, just 6 months after scooping the Solihull & District CAMRA Pub Of The Year after just one year.

Branch Chair Carl Wright said "Solihull CAMRA would like to congratulate The Ale Rooms on winning the West Midlands County Pub of the Year Award for 2018. For a pub which has only been open for 18 months to win at this level of judging for CAMRA Pub of the Year is amazing, and the award also marks the first occasion of a Solihull pub getting so far in the competition. The Branch is very proud of the pub and the fact that it showcases Solihull at its best."

"Owners Mark and Amanda and their

staff support and promote real ale with a vengeance, showcasing beers from local breweries as well as many from further afield, and the Ale Rooms – our second micro-pub in the Solihull area – has gained a name for itself as a great real ale venue, each week's real ales being eagerly awaited, drunk, and discussed by its many visitors."

"We know that Mark and Amanda plan to continue in the same vein and to improve the Ale Rooms wherever possible, and to open similar bars elsewhere as time goes on. We wish them every success and look forward to being able to celebrate their unique brand of hospitality for many years to come."

Mark Caldicott is rightly proud as well as slightly shocked to have achieved so much, so soon.

"Coming up to 2 years of being open and being crowned county champions (a Solihull first) is beyond belief. I could not get this far without customers, CAMRA support and above all my management and staff. Just yesterday Callum and myself have spend the day at the Great British Beer Festival tasting new ales."

"This is just the start for us. We want to continue trying new ales, maintain quality and also introduce great new ideas coming before the end of the year. On a final note we hope to make Solihull branch proud, and now the county, and let's see where we can all go in terms of promoting real ale"

Mark and the team are planning the Ale Rooms 2nd anniversary beer festival from 24th November. It will no doubt turn into a double celebration.

CAMRA West Midlands County Pub Of The Year 2018



Open Daily 2-11pm
01564 400 040

7 Real Ales
Ales £3.50 a pint
& only £3.00 for
CAMRA members
(cards must be shown)

Solihull & District
PUB OF THE YEAR

 **WINNER 2018**

1592 High Street, Knowle, Solihull B93 0LF

Southampton, Portsmouth and Winchester Long Weekend

A party of 4 of us arrived at our hotel, Hotel Mercure Southampton Centre Dolphin, nicely timed to meet our fellow CAMRA members. Our evening plan was to cover some of the Southampton pubs, so we dropped our bags and boarded the bus heading for our first port of call, the Great Western Arms.

Unfortunately the bus got caught in a traffic snarl up, and having alighted we were held up by a level crossing. To compound the disaster so far the pub had closed, and on returning to the main road we were again caught by the level crossing. Not a good start!

After a little bit of a walk we crossed the River Itchen to reach the Butchers Hook. Was this more bad luck? A queue had formed outside the micro which appeared to be closed. Shortly a figure came running up, apologising for his late arrival, and so we were soon inside.



Tiled picture in the Butchers Hook

With the choice of Broken Bridge Forbidden Fruit, Vibrant Forest Summit, and Flowerpots Perridge Pale, I quickly tried the latter two to find them pleasantly hoppy. The micro is in an old butchers shop and still has some of the original fittings, including a superb tiled wall picture. Craft keg is also served, but we'll forgive that as it really is a great place to drink!

Moving back towards the city centre we headed for the Bookshop Alehouse,

another micro on Portswood Road. Opened in 2016, bookshelves greet you, but we passed them to the beers. Sherfield Village Pioneer Stout, Broken Bridge Make Brown Ale Great Again, Ilkley Mary Jane, and a cracking hoppy Dancing Cows AIPA, which I thoroughly enjoyed. The pub was Southern Hampshire CAMRA Pub of the Year and Wessex Region runner up for 2017. Drinking our beers we were taken with the range of books to peruse here, a most enjoyable venue.



Ray peruses the books in the Bookshop

On the move again for a short walk to the Guide Dog. Tucked away on Earls Road, just off Onslow Road this traditional pub was really busy. 2018 Pub of the Year for the local CAMRA branch, and with 11 handpumps, it's not surprising it won the award. Not all pumps were in use at the time of our visit. Sporting the bar was Dark Star Hophead and American Pale Ale (not bad for a chap who likes his beers hoppy), Yeovil Ales Yolo#5 and Hopkandi, Red Cat Scratch Golden Ale and Prowler Pale, and Flowerpots Cheriton's Porter and Gooden Ale. Nothing really hit me here suffice to say that the beers were all perfectly acceptable.

Onto the Rockstone next. We couldn't miss this pub situated on a fork in the main road, as the fairy lights announced its presence. Refurbished in 2011 it has the feel of a traditional pub and is heavily into food. A good selection of bottled beers, craft kegs, and in tune with ourselves, 6 cask ales. Some of us ordered food. On handpump were Animal Gribbet, Navigation Tuttonic Peach, Mumby's Ginger Pale, Downlands Best, Ascot 5/4 Favourite, and West Berkshire Bounty Hunter. A good range here, and for me the Gribbet went down very well indeed.



Fairy lights welcome us to the Rockstone

So, food finished, beer supped, we were off to Sadlers Brewhouse. We never gave it a thought, but, yes, it was a pub owned by Sadlers Brewery in Lye. We popped in for a quick one, Hop Bomb being my choice: quite surprised how quiet it was though.

The London Road Brewhouse was just a short walk away. This is a massive pub on multiple floors, even boasting a table tennis table, and also has its own small onsite brewery. Very busy too. We fought our way to the bar to be greeted with Flack Manor Flack's Double and their own brewery's Tame Impala, a very nice Blonde, Athena Pale Ale, Kodiak Best Bitter, and Red Scorpion Red IPA. It was a shame that more guest beers were not available. They were,

however, heavily into craft kegs. There was, a great atmosphere here and much fun was had by drunks playing table tennis.

Well that was enough for our first night, apart from popping into the Wetherspoons Standing Orders near our hotel. Usual range enlivened by Woodfordes Nelson's Revenge, Flack Manor Flack's Double, Itchen Valley 6 Nations Hop, West Berkshire's Dr Hexter's Healer, and a very nice Fallen Acorn Black Hearted Black IPA. And so to bed!

Friday was our train trip out to Winchester to sample some of the pubs of that fair city. Trains are quite frequent and it wasn't long before we were seated in the Westgate.

A refurb in 2016 with the addition of accommodation makes this a convenient pub to stay at. Nevertheless, the beers were our concern. 4 handpumps greeted us with Flack Manor Union Flack, Itchen Valley 6 Nations Hop and Hampshire Rose, Red Cat American Pale Ale, and Flowerpots Flowerpots Bitter. Going for the 6 Nations I found it hoppy but not a clean flavour.

Our itinerary listed the Old Vine as next, but I had spied a new micro, Overdraft, in Jewry Street. Opened in 2017 I only had a short time here to try a beer from a new brewery to me, Pig and Porter from Tunbridge Wells. Their Secrets We Share Strong Pale and Ashcan Rantings, a Citra hopped Ale, my preferred beer, were on tap and went down well.

Time to catch up with the others at the Old Vine. A traditional pub with modern extensions it had 4 beers, Timmy Taylor's Landlord, Bowman Wallops Wood, Upham Tipster, and Flowerpots Perridge Pale. Not too impressed with the beer range, but the Upham was OK.

Eclipse in The Square was our next pub. An uninspiring pub with little character interior wise, and the beer range was not brilliant. Taylor Landlord and Doombar, saved by Longdog Lamplight Porter and Exile Whakatu. However, I learned that the Exile was brewed by Exmoor, not my favourite brewery. Still I tried them both and gave them a tolerable 3 out of 5.

Moving on now to the Wykham Arms, a Fullers pub. It's a rambling, traditional, food orientated pub, with a blazing log fire. It was really busy and standing was the only option for some of us. It was a short visit, but let's talk about the beer: George Gales Spring Sprinter, a zesty summer ale, quite nice and their HSB. The rest were from the Fullers stable apart from Flowerpots Goodens Gold.

A short walk from the Wykeham brought us to the Queen Inn on Kingsgate Road. A Greene King pub, much modernised inside, but with a surprisingly good range of beer on tap. Furthermore it has its own brewery on site, but only brews occasionally. All the beers I tried were well kept. I particularly liked Fallen Angel Fake News, a really tasty black IPA. It was one of three served direct from the cask, the others being Alfreds Saxon Blonde and Flowerpots Cheriton Porter. On handpump were Canopy SXS Pale Ale, Red Cat Mosaic Pale, Good Chemistry Time Lapse, and the usual suspects in Greene King pubs. Having said that I wish the Greene King pubs in Solihull stocked such a range of beers!

What can I say about the Black Boy on Wharf Hill? You need to visit yourself to understand what a delight this pub is. This was our next pub and to call it

quirky is an understatement. Surprises abound around every corner. Stuffed animals like an elephants leg, a giraffe, donkeys, not to mention all the other bric a brac around the pub. Well worth a visit even if you don't fancy a pint. We did and were met with Alfreds Saxon Blonde, Flowerpots Bitter and Cheriton Porter, Hop Back Summer Lightening, and Winchester Pale Ale which was my choice, OK but nothing special.



Stuffed Donkeys in the Black Boy

On to our last pub in Winchester, the Hyde Tavern. But what was this? A freehouse called Alfie came into view on our way to the Hyde, so popping our heads round we saw 10 barrels on stillage and 3 being served. Can't remember all the beers, but I tried Mr M's Porter before going onto the Hyde Tavern in Hyde Street, a really comfortable traditional multi roomed pub, serving beers on gravity and handpump. On gravity were Yeovil Yolo and Flowerpots. Through the handpumps poured Red Cat Mr. M's Porter, Flowerpots Bitter, Harveys Sussex Best Bitter, and my choice a nice hoppy White Horse Village Idiot. Time was getting on now and so we made our way back to Southampton. However, I had not quite finished my day as you'll find out in the next edition of the Drinker.

Steve Dyson

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Siren Wins Champion Beer Of Britain

Siren Brewery based in Berkshire has won the Campaign for Real Ale's prestigious Champion Beer of Britain award, one of the highest accolades in the beer industry.

Awarded on the opening day of the Great British Beer Festival, Broken Dream Breakfast Stout (6.5% ABV) scooped gold thanks to its deep and complex blend of chocolate, coffee and a touch of smoke. The judges commented that it stood out for its aroma, taste and finish, all of which were superb.

Named after the Sirens of Greek mythology, Siren Brewery captivated judges for the second time this year, having taken home silver in this year's Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition

at the Great British Beer Festival Winter back in February.

The silver winner this year went to Suffolk-based Green Jack's Ripper (8.5% ABV), a strong barley wine that is both dangerously smooth and yet well-hopped, and winner of CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition earlier this year.

Bronze was taken by Tyne & Wear based Mordue for their Workie Ticket (4.5% ABV). A complex and tasty bitter, this brew boasts plenty of malt and hops and a long, satisfying, bitter finish.

The final decision was made after a year of local tasting panels and regional heats, as well as the final judging.

Source: What's Brewing

Editorial Comment

What an amazing summer we have had. The hottest, driest summer in over 40 years, combined with a World Cup, has provided a great boost to the pub sector. The Olton Tavern led the way with an outdoor fanzone which was blessed by the excellent weather.

There were worries as well when a shortage of CO2 threatened shortages of some of the top selling beers. However, CAMRA members weren't worried as real ales are naturally carbonated and do not rely on CO2 for either "fizz" or dispense.

A recent BBC report showed that 747 pubs and inns closed during 2017, however Solihull and District, despite one or two sad losses, recently seems to attracting a lot of investment, as seen in refurbishments and takeovers. We have also seen two new companies investing in our pubs: the Craft Union and Suburban Inns.

In this issue you can read about upgrades to the Drawbridge, Durham Ox, The Dingle (formerly the Harvester), and the opening of the Tap and Tandoor. This follows on from the Winged Spur, the Saxon, the Vaults,...and the list goes on.

One of our more recent new openings, the Ale Rooms in Knowle, surpassed all comers, not only in the 2018 Solihull Pub Of The Year, but also the West Midlands County Pub of The Year. This is a first for one of our pubs, and is a great honour for a pub that has only been open just under 2 years. It is a tribute to Mark, Callum, and all the Ale Rooms team to win this prestigious award. Both the Ale Rooms and the Pup and Duckling have raised the bar

on real ales over the past two years, and we look forward to somebody else taking up the challenge as well.

However, cask itself is being challenged again. The Tap and Tandoor took over from the Saddler's and do not currently offer any cask ales (though the desire is there), a Craft Inn outlet is opening on September 6th in Shirley opposite the Pump House, and the rebuilt Station Café Bar in Dorridge looks like it will be another Oktagon type of bar. There is good news that Platform 3, opening in Olton, will have 3 cask beers, very keenly priced.

October is beer festival time in Solihull and we are opening for an extra night this year. You can now visit us on Thursday 4th, Friday 5th and Saturday 6th October at the British Legion in Knowle. We are trying to get quite a special beer that you don't see too often in cask so watch this space.

There will also be a new beer festival in Solihull, at the Legion, 3 weeks before the CAMRA festival, with the first combined Solihull and Shirley Lions Beer Festival. With 16 beers and 3 ciders it should be a good appetiser for beer festival fans in advance of the 45 beers that we are expecting, and raise money for good causes.

Sadly, there will not be a Birmingham Beer Festival this year due to the lack of an organiser. This is a reminder that beer festivals and other CAMRA events rely on volunteers. All branches need a variety of skills, some of which you may have. Go along to your local branch and get involved, it can be very satisfying when you are part of it.

David Cove, Editor



THE FIELDHOUSE

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Hot & cold meals served all week from
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Brunch now from 10 am weekends

Live Music

Sat 29 September - Ultimate Madonna

Sat 27 October - Bootleg Barlow

Sat 24 November - David Bowie Tribute

Sat 1 December - Tom Jones Tribute

Sat 8 December - Abba-Riginal

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

- 20p discount off a pint of Cask Ale
- 20% off food with a food discount card



Hazy or Soupy?



This is a question that seems to be vexing many CAMRA members. Having posted some beers that I have really enjoyed on Facebook, there is always a question raised about soup!

The beer on the left

was served at the Stourbridge CAMRA beer festival this year, Salopian Slipstream. There were also "soupy beers from Tiny Rebel and

other brewers, all perfectly acceptable, if not very nice indeed.

There does seem to be a perception that these beers will give stomach upsets (not had one yet!), but could be stretching the definition of hazy somewhat. CAMRA debated the labelling of hazy beers at the recent AGM in Coventry.

Maybe we should look for a symbol to define the really soupy ones.



Hail to the Ale!

Local Beer, Pub, Club & Brewery news

The **Black Swan** in Henley In Arden has now re-opened under new management.

The **Damson** reopened on the 21st July under new management. From photographs it looks like there are two handpumps, one dispensing Doombar, and there is an offer of 20% off all draught beers Monday to Friday for JLR workers.

Platform 3, near Olton Station has opened with three cask ales initially. These are Enville Ale, Tribute, and Holden's Golden Glow. Described as a wine bar and eatery the beers look well priced, and it should be a welcome addition for real ale drinkers in that area.

The **Blue Bell Cider House** is currently being refurbished while still open. The bar and pipes have been renewed already, and the rest of the pub is receiving some tender care and attention. More details in our next issue.

The **Craft Inn**, described as "an independent Craft Beer tasting rooms with a wide selection of the worlds greatest beers including some of the great beers the West Midlands has to offer" opens in Shirley on the 6th September. With a bottle shop and "unique Pegas growler fill" it will have an emphasis on craft beers. The opening of the Shirley premises follows on from the initial Craft Inn in Sutton Coldfield.

The **Fieldhouse** is holding two "Meet The Brewer" events. On October 30th St Austell will be visiting (hopefully with some Bucket of Blood again!), and in November (date to be confirmed) Timo-

thy Taylor are expected to bring Landlord, Boltmaker and Champion. Both of these events will feature half price beers, a quiz, a buffet, and no doubt some giveaways as well. Keep an eye on the pub's Facebook for more details nearer the time.

Things seem to have gone quiet on the reported **Indian Brewery** bar/ restaurant in Solihull. There is a "To Let" sign on the premises, and we have heard no further news.

The **Head of Steam** has opened in Birmingham. Serving up to 10 cask ales and 18 kegs, as well as a range of Belgian beers, it is well worth a visit. There is also a range of 5 beer cocktails; Espresso Tontini, Gateux Stout, Lagerita, Mai-TaIPA, and Pink Elephant!

Silhill Brewery is still finalising its move from Catherine De Barnes. Meanwhile its new beer Super Star (5.1%) has gone down well at local pubs, including the White Swan, and will become a regular.

Recent specials have been Stars and Stripes, and breaking the Star tradition, From Russia With Love, brewed for the World Cup. Gold Star, Blonde Star, and Hop Star will be available in bottles from September in Bernies, Connolly's, and Selfridges.

There seem to be a number of pubs around our area stocking **Box Steam** beers. We sampled Spoke at the Club of The Year Award, and in the last few weeks their beers have been spotted in the **Winged Spur**, and the **Blue Bell Cider House**.

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FIELDHOUSE
WOODMANS REST
OLTON TAVERN
BULLS HEAD



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CHRISTMAS

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20% OFF WHEN YOU DINE WITH US
THIS OCTOBER

Offer valid for September 2018 when ordering a main meal from our core menu.
Not valid on set menu's. Valid Monday - Saturday - No Cash Alternative, Value 0.001p



Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club Score Hat-Trick

Congratulations yet again to Knowle and Dorridge Cricket Club (K&DCC) who were the winners of the Solihull CAMRA Club of the Year for a third successive year.

The award was presented to the bar team on the 15th August, as they served up Salopian Oracle, Box Steam Spoke, and Bombardier to the CAMRA members in attendance.

Branch Chair Carl Wright said "We are delighted that the Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club has won this award for the third year running. The effort that the club committee, cellar manager and the bar staff put into the management of the club, and the fact that they showcase many and varied real ales from all over the country, all in excellent condition, is always evident every time one visits the premises. We at CAMRA know we are always sure of a warm welcome, and their pride in the club is obvious to all who visit and partake of their hospitality, and benefit from their high standards.

We offer our congratulations to the Club and everyone involved with it, and wish them all another successful year."

Jon Knibb, K&DCC Membership Chair-



Branch Chair Carl Wright presents the award to the team (left to right) Harry Royle (bar manager), Jacqui Redmond, and Amelia Crees.

man said "Being awarded the Solihull CAMRA Club of the Year for the third consecutive year has been seen as a tremendous accolade by the members and committee of Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club.

Bar Manager, Harry Royle, has endeavoured to offer a wide range of cask ale to members and visitors to the club. We pride ourselves on ensuring that beer is served as the brewers would wish it to be, with cleanliness from cellar to glass being our priority. Our selection of ales, often including those from Salopian and Oakham has been supplemented by fine brews from Thornbridge, Rat, Abbeysdale, Castle Rock, Elland and Hop-Back among others. The club welcome visitors from CAMRA, who are encouraged to show their membership cards at the bar."

The White Swan



Opening Hours
Sunday to Thursday 07.00 - midnight
Friday & Saturday 07.00 - 01.30
Food served until 11pm each day



8 cask Handpulls on at all times including 5 guest ales from a range of local & national breweries

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2019 Good Beer Guide—On Sale from September 13th



The 46th edition of the Good Beer Guide is published on the 13th September.

Fully revised and updated each year to feature the very best pubs across the United Kingdom, the Good Beer Guide is completely independent, with every one of its 4,500 pub listings recommended and evaluated by CAMRA volunteers - who know a thing or two about good beer.

Buying direct from CAMRA helps them to invest directly into campaigning for real ale, pubs and drinkers' rights.



Keep notes, favourites and plan your trips to pubs and bars across the UK with the Good Beer Guide App

CAMRA's Good Beer Guide App is a live database of over 4500 Good beer guide pubs as well as a further 30,000 pubs and bars and 1750+ breweries across the UK.

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Subscriptions start at 99p per month or £4.99 for a full year

(* A subscription is required to unlock the full functionality of the app)

Solihull Pubs & Clubs CAMRA Member Discounts

Ember Inns (**Fieldhouse, Colebrook, Woodmans Rest, Olton Tavern, Red Lion Knowle**) - 20p/ pint except Mondays where all cask ales are £2.49.

Fieldhouse additionally gives 20% off food with a discount card available from the bar. For other offers see the advert on page 15.

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

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

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

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

The **Ale Rooms, Knowle** 50p/pint or 50p/ half pint

Tap and Tandoor, Solihull 10% off a pint of selected craft beers.

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

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

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Leicester: “A Journey into the Unknown”

On our branch campaigning trip earlier in the year we discussed arranging a social to somewhere the branch had never visited before using public transport. The idea of Leicester came up as somebody had seen the Leicester CAMRA City centre pubs map. Having looked at the map and researching the Good Beer Guide (GBG), I found 7 entries within easy walking distance of the train station and duly decided to organise this social.

So, on the 23rd June, using the train from New St Station, ten trail blazing Solihull CAMRA members plus 2 guests set off to investigate the real ale pubs of Leicester. We arrived at about 11.15 and made the short walk to the first port of call, The Parcel Yard, a conversion of old railway station parcel offices by Steamin Billy, as the name would suggest.



Starting The Day At Steamin Billy

This fairly large pub had a very modern warehouse type spacious interior, but with some of the interior features tastefully retained. There was a good choice of about 6 beers here, with one waiting to settle. The available beers were JW Lees Bullseye (4.0%), Charnwood Three Foxes (4.6%), Butcombe Gold (4.4%), Steamin Billy “Billy” (4.3%)

and Steamin Billy 1485 (5%). I tasted the Bullseye, which I felt was not at its best.

After a short walk we arrived at our second port of call, Broood. From the outside it looked like a café bar, but it had more of a micropub feel when inside. We were warmly welcomed by the barman and with 7 beers on offer, this pub was certainly worth the trip.

The beers on offer were Shiny Brewing Tea Party-Jasmine (4.5%), Intrepid Brewing Co Navio (3.7%), Bakers Dozen Brewing Co “Bakers Dozen” (3.8%) plus four others.

Sampling the Navio beer, I wasn’t disappointed as it was in superb condition. One of the locals also told us about a new micropub that had opened the day before our visit, and was only two doors away from one of our scheduled stops, so this was duly noted for a visit later in the day.



One of the Stars Of The Day - Broood

From here we literally went round the corner to the Kings Head, our first GBG pub of the day. This is a one roomed city centre local owned by Black Country Ales, with an outdoor upstairs decking area which we took full advantage of whilst enjoying our beers.

On offer were 5 beers; Black Country Ales BFG (4.2%), Pig on the Wall (4.3%), Fireside (5%), Roosters Yankee, and a Leatherbritches Bitter. The ciders were Moonshine (7.5%) & Old Rosie (7.3%). I sampled the Roosters Yankee, but unfortunately I think it was on its way out. After enjoying our beers in the sunshine we headed off to our lunch stop.



Beer In The Sunshine At The Kings Head

The Bowling Green, a Stonegate pub, was nicely re-furbished, but had a disappointing range of beers on offer, so after lunch we moved swiftly on as our next stop was about 10 to 15 mins walk away.

We duly arrived at the West End Brewery, so named as it is situated in the West End area of Leicester. The interior had a micropub feel to it with the brewery situated at the back of the premises which the owner showed to some interested members of our group. Beers on offer obviously included some West End offerings; US Amber (4.7%), Stout (4.1%), Copper Best Bitter (4.3%) and Project Pale (3.8%).

I enjoyed a half pint of Stout which was in superb condition, whilst discussing whether to miss the next pub to claw back a bit of time in the schedule. Therefore a group decision was taken

to miss out the Black Horse.



The West End Brewery

Our next stop was now the Queen of Bradgate, a lovely refurbished traditional looking town centre pub with a twist: it had 3 bars situated over 2 floors. The main bar was our centre of interest as there were 8 beers on offer. At the back of the pub was a nice decked patio area where we enjoyed our beers which were all in good condition.

A short walk, which took slightly longer after a wrong turn, brought us to our next stopping point, the GBG listed Blue Boar, which is Leicester CAMRA's Pub Of the Year 2018, and it was obvious why it was in the GBG as soon as we walked in.

It was very busy (standing room only), with the cellar situated behind the bar, glass fronted with barrels on blue racking. Eleven beers were on offer including Salamander Sixth Sense (3.8%), Kelham Island Kingston (4.2%), Pig & Porter Smash the Violins (4.5%), Wilde Child Distorting Horizons (5.9%), and Coastal Brewery Kernow Imperial Stout (9.0%). I opted for the Sixth Sense, a nice light hoppy session beer in great condition. Some of our party now departed to make the journey back to Solihull, while the rest of us moved on

to the new micro-pub which we were told about earlier in the day, two doors down from here.

The Two Tailed Lion had only opened the day before we arrived, and we could still smell the paint. It was a nicely appointed micro-pub without much room by the bar area, selling mainly craft beers, with only one cask ale available. I sampled a stout which was very good, and one of our party tried a pint of the cask ale that was on offer.

Now our party was only four strong as the rest of the group headed back to Solihull, but we soldiered on down the road to the next pub on the itinerary, which was the Criterion, a fairly large free house with 6 beers available for us to try. The pub has a separate room where live music was playing.

We moved onto the Ale Wagon, a Hoskin Brothers pub with a 1930's style interior, a traditional type of wet sales only pub which I thought needed a bit of re-decoration. The only beers available were Hoskin Brothers, and I ordered a honey beer, which was not the best example of this type of ale.

From here the intrepid four Solihull CAMRA members made the short journey to the last pub of the day, the JD Wetherspoon Last Plantagenet, where we sampled beers mainly from the East Midlands area.

After finishing our pints, we decided it was time to start heading back home to Solihull. We all agreed it had been a good day with a great choice of beers in different types of pubs, a journey into the unknown enjoyed by all who attended.

Dave McKowen (photos Steve Evans)

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Choice which cannot be bettered

Tap and Tandoor Opens In Solihull

The Saddler's Arms on Warwick Road in Solihull has a new independent owner. The building has undergone an extensive refurbishment transforming the space into an open plan bar and 80-seater restaurant, mixing a traditional pub with Indian heritage, a unique offering for Solihull



Tap & Tandoor, created by husband and wife team, Ajay and Shivani Kenth, specialises in craft beers, cocktails and Indian food including small plates, mixed grills and home-style curries. Tap & Tandoor opened in June and is Ajay and Shivani's second venue, the first being Zindiya, an Indian Stretery and bar, in Moseley in February 2017.

At present there is a range of around 7 craft beers at any time, from brewers such as Tiny Rebel, Beavertown, Magic Rock and Purity. A unique beer served there is Kona Big Wave on draught, imported from Hawaii. Kona beers are also available in bottles.

While there are currently no cask ales, the manager has experience with cask, and there is a desire from both himself and Ajay to offer them in the future. In the meantime they are offering a 10% discount on a pint of selected craft beers, on production of a valid CAMRA membership card.

Located close to our beer festival in October, this may an opportunity to sample something new during your visit.



The Solihull Drinker is the quarterly newsletter of the Solihull & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Views expressed in the Drinker are not necessarily those of the Branch or CAMRA.



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Contributions, comments and advertising enquiries should be sent to Solihull Drinker Editor, 2 Dunton Hall Road, Shirley, Solihull B90 2RA; or via email to

davidcove@hotmail.co.uk

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

Advertise Your Business Here With Us

We distribute nearly 3,000 copies of the well read Drinker out to pubs, around Solihull, Warwickshire, and parts of 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.

For details on rates, and help in producing your advert, please contact the Editor.

Durham Ox Goes Super Size

In January this year the Durham Ox in Shrewley closed for major refurbishment. Seven long months later on the 9th August it reopened in a new super size form, more than doubling the size of the old pub.



From the front, apart from the large outside seating area that can seat over 130 people, you don't get an impression of the size. However, when you go round the back you can see the large extension, housing a 142 seater restaurant, more clearly.



Previously a Greene King pub, it has now been taken over by Suburban Inns, who have obviously put a large investment into their 4th site, all in the Midlands. St Pauls House in the Jewellery Quarter, the Village in Moseley, and the Royal in Sutton Coldfield are their three other establishments.

One of the first things you notice looking from the back of the pub is a huge tepee. Catering for up to 180 people



this will primarily be a wedding venue, but can be adapted for many different functions.

The décor inside is quite traditional and the drinking area is open plan, light and airy with seating for around 60 people.



Most important are the beers. Six taps are available but currently only three are used to gauge demand, and build the range slowly to maintain quality. Doombar, a Silhill beer, and a Church Farm beer are initially available. The Church Farm Session IPA I tried was very good. Go along and give it a try.



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Full Membership £20 yearly or £1 guest fee.
Free to card-carrying CAMRA Members.

Contact the Club Steward Adrian Cotton on:

01564 782087

rowingtonclub@live.co.uk

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



Rowington Club, Rowington Green, Rowington, Warwick CV35 7DB

Membership Matters

You may be aware of reasons why lovers of real ale and good pubs should become a member of CAMRA, joining over 635 people locally and well over 192,000 nationally, in supporting the forty year old campaign.

Membership provides benefits including:-

£20 of JD Wetherspoon real ale vouchers.

10% discount with cottages.com, Original Cottages, Hoseasons, non sale/non offer products at Cotswold Outdoor, beerhawk.co.uk and Brewhouse & Kitchen.

15% off National Express coach travel.

You will receive an online monthly colour newspaper called "Whats Brewing", informing you of all the latest beer and pub news as well as detailing events/beer festivals from around the country. 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, and breweries.

Both are available to download in different formats to read at your leisure using PC, laptop, tablet & smartphone.

You are also entitled to free or discounted admission at over 160 CAMRA organised beer festivals, including the Great British

Beer Festival, the National Winter Ales Festival, and the 19th Solihull CAMRA Beer & Cider festival to be held at the Royal British Legion from the 4th - 6th October inclusive. If you join CAMRA at our festival you will get a voucher for an additional 2 free pints.

With membership prices starting from £25 per annum (48p per week) and including all of the above benefits, I think you will agree this represents great value for money.

You can become involved in your local branch, including social events (such as brewery visits, bowling nights) meeting new friends, helping out at our beer festival or campaigning. Our branch meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at a local pub, where we also enjoy a pint or two of real ale. Within a new member's branch welcome pack there is a voucher for a FREE PINT, when attending your first Solihull CAMRA Branch meeting.

All our activities are listed in this magazine and on www.solihull.camra.org.uk with contact details for each event. To join, visit www.camra.org.uk and save postage. So come on, what are you waiting for? Join up, Join in, Join the Campaign.

Dave Mckowen

Useful Contact Numbers

Chairman

Carl Wright 0121 603 1621

Secretary

Allan Duffy 01564 200431

Membership

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Paul Wigley 07402 312457

Beer Festival / Treasurer

Martin Buck 01564 770708

Solihull Drinker Editor

David Cove 0121 603 6057

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The 86th edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 3rd December 2018. Please note that the deadline for copy, advertising and any other contributions for this issue is **Friday 12th October**. Thank you in advance to all contributors.

Join up, join in, join the campaign



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*Price for paying by Direct Debit and correct at April 2017. Concessionary rates available.
Please visit camra.org.uk/membership-rates



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