

ALES & TALES

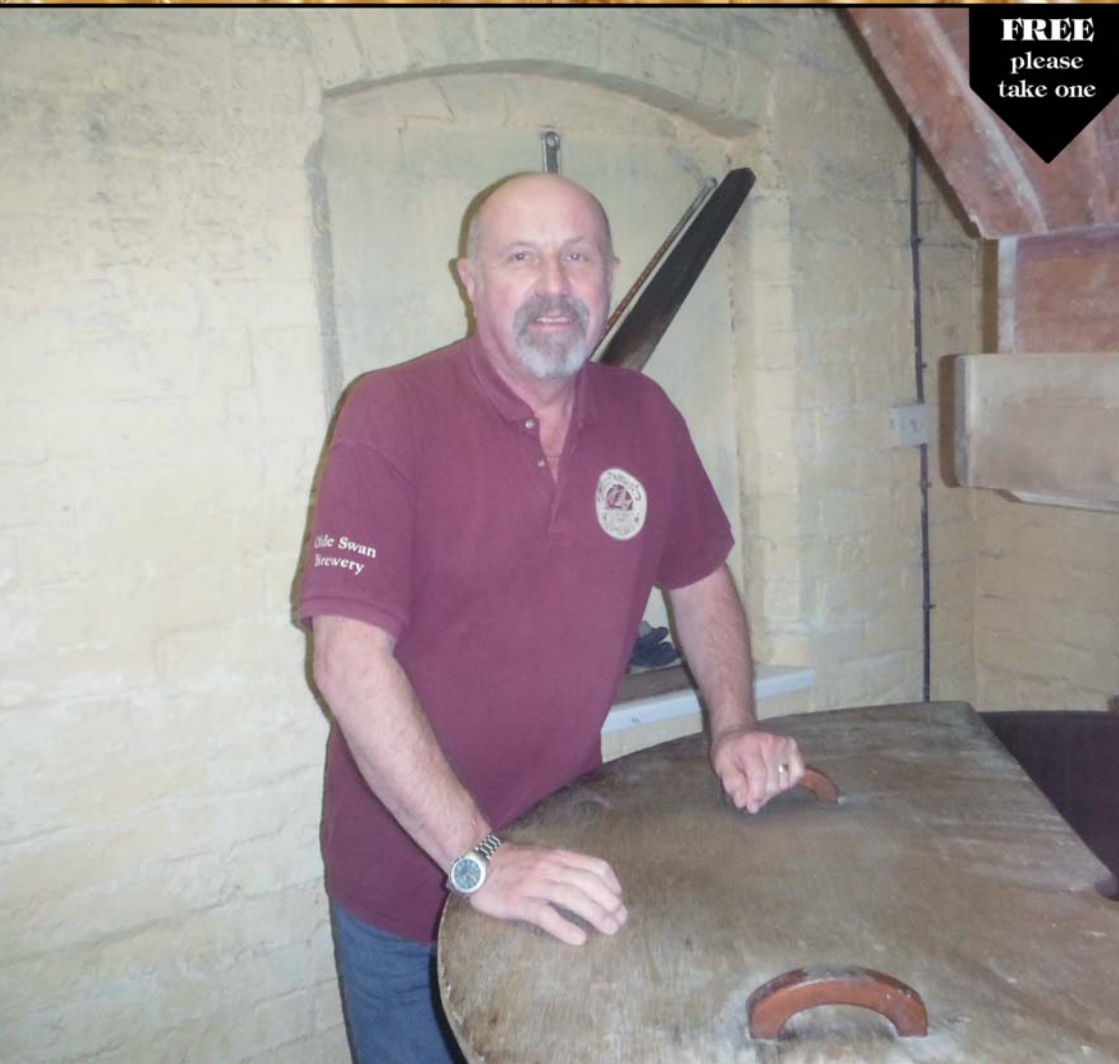


Campaign
for
Real Ale

*The Newsletter for the Campaign for Real Ale in
Stourbridge & Halesowen and Dudley & South Staffordshire*

**Issue 43
Winter 2019/20**

FREE
please
take one



www.stourhales.camra.org.uk
www.dudley.camra.org.uk



THE MAD BREWER

A BONKERS
NEW CREATION
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BE RELEASED...

previous concoctions...



A constant series of ever changing madness!

from
LEATHERBRITCHES BREWERY
at The Tap House, Smisby, Leicestershire LE65 2TA

Contents

PAGE 4

Welcome & Branch Contacts

PAGES 5, 6 & 7

Meet The Brewer – The Old Swan Netherton

PAGE 8

Branch Diaries

PAGE 11

Hitchmough's Lost Pubs

PAGES 13, 14 & 15

Pub News

PAGES 16 & 17

Spoonathon

PAGES 18 & 19

Some of the Branch's Events 2019

PAGES 20 & 21

Pub Art

PAGES 23 & 24

Haarlem Globetrotting

PAGES 26 & 29

BEER DAYS OUT - Rail 'n ale around
The Wrekin

PAGE 30, 31 & 33, 34

A Not-So-Sombre Saturday

PAGE 36

Obituaries – John Carter & Roly Collins

PAGE 37 & 38

Grains of Paradise

PAGES 39, 40 & 41

Brewery News

PAGE 42

Membership



THE WHITE HORSE

New St, Quarry Bank,
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The White Horse Inn serves
real Ales including Sarah
Hughes' Surprise and
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Food including Punjabi
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breakfasts and kids meals

Family pub open from 2pm
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We also serve pre booked
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Children play area which
includes jumbo garden games
We also have a car park

Welcome Back

Welcome to the first edition of Ales and Tales for 2020! It's open to some debate whether it is the start of a new decade, but it is the start of the 2020's, and it's definitely a new year.

It's a shame that we get the year off to a negative start rather than a positive one, both for people and pubs. In this issue we will report on the passing of another former Stourbridge & Halesowen branch founder member (Roly Collins) and the closure of two venues, Sadler's Brewhouse (potential) and Wheelie Thirsty Lye (confirmed).

The potential closure of Sadler's is extensively documented in our Brewery News section, but as we go to press towards the end of January there is no official outcome of the current consultation period.

Which brings me to a couple of themes to introduce the magazine with. Firstly is that for many of us, drinking real ale is a pastime, something we do to relax after a hard day or week at work, but for many people in the industry, it IS work. Whether that is the bar staff who are serving your pint, the brewers producing the beer, the owners and investors in pubs and breweries, or those who work in support industries such as transport, marketing, sales or accountancy.

Those who choose to enter the brewing industry may do so through a love of beer and brewing, but ultimately it is to earn a living. We go on about CAMRA being a volunteer-led organisation, which is true, but the activities we do and the decisions we make affect the pounds, shillings and pence of businesses. Sometimes to their detriment, although this is never intentional. Brewing is a big industry from top to bottom, with huge multinationals operating, and not everyone can work for the trendiest small producers, making the newest, boldest and best beers.

Whether we like it or not, money is the driving force behind business large and small, and it is also behind the two recent closures, but for different reasons. Firstly, the nature of big business, I am guessing, has in part led to the potential closure of Sadler's. It is not good enough for a business to turn a profit if even more profit can be made by operating more efficiently. Why run two breweries if you have the capacity to do all your

brewing at one?

So, my second theme is 'use it or lose it! If we don't spend our money as consumers in these venues then there is a chance that they may not be there next month, especially during times of abstinence during January. We all have limited resources, and a consumer's money can only be spent once, so we must choose where to spend it. Of course, we can split our spending between various venues if we choose, but the total spend is down to us to decide. You also have to wonder what is the capacity of the market, and have we reached some kind of saturation point? Do we now have enough breweries, pubs and bars? The pie can only be split into so many pieces, but it does depend how big that pie is.

In that case, there must surely be some merit in spending our money locally or at the very least independently. Of course, we all like to try the newest beer from a little bit further afield, which is hopefully available in your nearest independent bottle shop, micropub or bar.

Despite the tone offered on the Sadler's closure, the pub owner isn't there to provide a service to the community at any cost. A venue must attract sufficient custom and revenue for it to be viable, and if it is not, the owner will have no choice but to close.

PubCo's are also there to run a business, often to the detriment of their pub tenants or leaseholders. It could be argued that if we do not support these individuals and their businesses too, who are serving our communities, then it will only be a matter of time before we can expect our local traditional pub to be replaced by a supermarket.

So, let's also finish this piece on a positive note, with a reminder that 'The Good Intent' in Birmingham, the brainchild of David Craddock of Craddock's Brewery seeks to help good causes as part of its business model as a not-for-profit venue. In terms of independence, the latest sole-trader bar opening is from friend-of-the-branch Roberto Ross, who has achieved his ambition to open his own eponymously named bar in Digbeth, which promises to serve the choicest local beers as well as the best from the international beer scene.

Tim Cadwell

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The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, or the editor. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the information in this publication is accurate and up to date, no responsibility for errors and omissions can be accepted. ALES & TALES is published by "Stourbridge & Halesowen" and "Dudley & South Staffordshire" branches of CAMRA - the Campaign for Real Ale.

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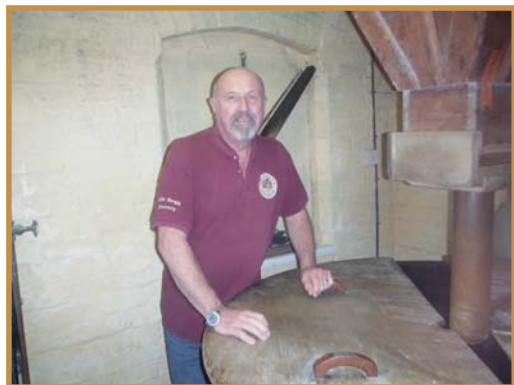
Textphone: 18001 03454 04 05 06

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Meet The Brewer

Paul Cooksey, Old Swan

A brief history



The Old/Olde Swan brewpub is one of the older brewpubs still in existence; dating back to 1835 although the pub is dated later (around the 1860s). In the mid-20th Century, the Business was run by the Pardoe Family; the Pub is affectionately known as Ma Pardoe's following her death in 1984.

The buildings are listed, and they still retain the decor and charm of days gone by. The decor is embellished by decorative enamelled iron tiles dating back to 1863. This type of ceiling decor is one of only two in the country with tiles of this type, the other is in the Royal Victoria and Albert Museum. The brewing ceased in 1989 when George Cooksey retired.

Following a major refurbishment in February 2001, the brewery reopened with David Rawstone as the Head Brewer. David worked for Holt, Plant and Deakin in Langley, Oldbury, before he moved on. He was succeeded by Paul Cooksey, the present Head Brewer for the Olde Swan brewery. Paul worked at John Thompson's as a Structural Engineer but because of his love for motor vehicles he went into business repairing cars and commercial vehicles.

Then in 2001 he joined Tim Newey in running the Old Swan Inn and brewery. Paul now has more than 19 years' experience in brewing; he follows 2 generations of his family dating back to the 1830s. Paul works alongside three staff, John Taylor Hill, Stuart Dockerty and Karl Willets to run the brewery.



The brewery premises – which houses an original Mash Tun – are situated at the rear of the Old Swan Pub, which is affiliated to the brewery. The Pub is the Brewery's main customer, but the brewery also distributes to pubs and clubs across the Midlands with venues including the White Lion Bridgnorth, Kinver Constitutional Club, White Lion Sedgley, and the Old Blue Ball Wednesbury.

In 2019, the brewery supplied the Netherton Canal Festival with 6 barrels of its finest ales which were well appreciated. Don't be surprised if you find the Olde Swan ales further afield because the brewery also supplies several Wholesalers.

Paul told me in confidence about a couple of projects that he will be working on in 2020 so it looks like a very exciting year ahead for the



brewery. At this present time Paul is brewing up to five traditional ales (around 20 barrels a week), including:

Pardoe's Original "Number One" ABV 3.5% A light refreshingly smooth session beer with a malty finish.

Pardoe's Dark Swan Mild ABV 4.2% Smooth and full tasting with an intriguing mixture of chocolate and roast flavours blended with a light hop.

Pardoe's Entire ABV 4.4% Smooth and full-bodied creamy session beer well balanced and hoppy with a light floral aroma. Decidedly More-ish.

NPA ABV 4.8% A well balanced pale ale, which is initially sweet with a hoppy aftertaste.

Pardoe's Bumblehole ABV 5.2% A strong clean, full tasting, pale bitter with a delicate hop and long lingering finish.

If you would like to contact Paul or Tim at the Pub, you can call 01384 253075. The best time to call is after 11 am. Messages and orders will be taken and passed on to the brewery. The brewery's business time is 07.00 till 12.00.



Paul or Tim will be only too pleased to give a talk and tour of the pub and brewery but please make requests in advance.

There is a 20-space large car park at the rear of the pub on Northfield Road. Coach Parties are welcome, please check availability for parking in advance.

ASK THE BREWER

What are the challenges of working in an older brewery?

Making sure that you keep on top of general maintenance.

What was your first alcoholic drink?

Double Diamond or Hansons.

What makes a brewer happy?

Seeing customers and friends enjoying our brews.

What's your favourite beer and food pairing?

Pardoe's Entire and a nice rare steak with a pepper sauce.

Other than the Old Swan, what is your favourite pub and why?

Beacon Hotel (Sarah Hughes Brewery). Real Ale similar to the Old Swan.

What are your hobbies and interests outside of brewing?

My interests are old cars and motorcycles. I used to build and race Hot Rods. I still own some of them, recently I have purchased a similar bike to the one I owned 40 years ago. So, my wife and I can once again enjoy biking.

What are your aspirations for the future?

To introduce a small bottling plant, on Site. To sell and deliver to our customers, to carry on brewing but to add the occasional special beer.

What advice would you give to someone who is thinking of starting up a brewery?

Make sure you do your homework first. Don't be afraid to approach other brewers - it's a friendly community and most brewers are happy to give help and advice.

THE TENTH LOCK

0138479041



In your opinion, what is the best and worst things happening in the industry in the last 5 years?

Best: A good choice of Real Ales.

Worst: Too many Pubs closing. We need to encourage customers to support their locals.

How would you like CAMRA to help you in your business?

Carry on doing what you do promoting Real Ale and pubs.

Any famous people that have used the Old Swan?

The Swan has received visits from Robert Plant from Led Zeppelin. Simon "Si" King and Dave Myres (The Hairy Bikers, British Television Chefs). Also, the former Archbishop of Canterbury.

Mick Challis

Brewery Liaison Coordinator, Dudley & South Staffs

2 Ever changing Real Ales

Food 12-8

Live entertainment every other Saturday
SKY & BT Sports

Hold events to raise money for
Mary Stevens Hospice

Nigel and Staff offer warm welcome to
all old and new customers

154 Delph Road, Delph, Brierley Hill. DY5 2TY

King Edward VII Halesowen

88 Stourbridge Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 3UP



The King Edward is located next to Halesowen Town Football Club and serves 8 different Real Ales including Wye Valley's Butty Bach and Holden's Golden Glow.

Sunday lunches are served between 12 and 3pm and advise that you pre book to save disappointed on 0121 602 2537.

Fresh cobs and snacks available 7 days a week.

Quiz nights every 1st and 3rd
Wednesdays in the month.

Heated outdoor area and large car park.

BT Sport



Branch Diaries

DUDLEY & SOUTH STAFFS

FEBRUARY

Monday 17th February 8.00pm

Branch Meeting, Cabin, Alderwood Precinct, Sedgley DY3 3QY

MARCH

Wednesday 11th March 7.30pm

Tividale Scoring Social. Meet Tivi Ale, then Beeches (Tividale Football Club) and Wonder

Saturday 21st March

'Thank You' Trip by coach to Leek (for all volunteers at Dudley Winter Ales Fayre 2019). Open to non-volunteers for £10pp (contact Jacqui Edwards on 07939 480 746)

Monday 23rd March 8.00pm

Branch Meeting, Wall Heath Tavern, 14 High Street, Wall Heath, DY6 0HB

APRIL

Wednesday 1st April 7.30pm

West Bromwich Scoring Social. Meet Billiard Hall, then Sandwell, Queen Inn, Wheatsheaf and Old Hop Pole

Wednesday 22nd April 7.30pm

Dudley Scoring Social. Meet Olde Foundry, then Full Moon, Shrewsbury Arms, Griffin, Saracens Head, Court House, Malt Shovel and Fellows

Monday 27th April 8.00pm

Branch Meeting, White Lion, 104 Bilston Street, Sedgley, DY3 1JF

STOURBRIDGE & HALESOWEN

FEBRUARY

Wednesday 12th February 8.00pm

Branch Meeting, Duke William, Coventry Street, Stourbridge

Thursday 20th February 8.00pm

Oldswinford Marking Social. Meet Crown then Bird in Hand, Shrubbery Cottage and Seven Stars

MARCH

Thursday 5th March 8.00pm

Branch Meeting, Edward VII, Stourbridge Road, Halesowen (Note: Thursday Meeting)

Wednesday 18th March 8.00pm

Norton Marking Social. Meet Gigmill then New Inn, Longlands, Garibaldi and Plough & Harrow

APRIL

Wednesday 8th April 8.00pm

Branch Meeting TBC (Branch Pub of the Year 2020 Winners & Presentation)

Wednesday 22nd April 8.00pm

Lapal Marking Social. Meet Cobham Arms then Royal Oak, Swan, Snooks and Shelter Bar

MAY

Wednesday 13th May 8.00pm

Branch Meeting TBC (Branch Club of the Year 2020 Winners & Presentation)

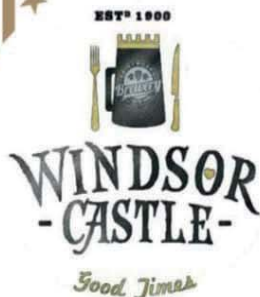
Thursday 21st May 8.00pm

Lye Marking Social Meet Fox then Holly Bush, Shovel, Railway Tavern and Windsor Castle

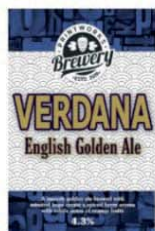
JUNE

Wednesday 3rd June 8.00pm

Branch Meeting TBC (Branch Cider Pub of the Year 2020 Winners & Presentation)



The Windsor Castle Inn ^{home to} Printworks Brewery



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Amazing food

Ten Craft Beers

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The Plough Inn

AT WOLLASTON

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www.theploughinnwollaston.co.uk



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Food served everyday, Lunchtimes 12 - 2.30pm Mon - Sat
Monday 5 - 8pm; Tues - Sat 5 - 9pm; All day Sunday til 8pm

Wednesday Nights "Cask and a Curry" £7.95

Thursday Nights "Pie and a Pud" £6.95

Live Music every second and last Thursday of the Month

Pub Quiz every third Thursday of the Month

Meeting Room now available

Book our new Meeting Room for your family gatherings, wakes & christenings

BOOKINGS BEING TAKEN FOR MOTHERS DAY, 3 COURSES.

Plough Inn, 154 Bridgnorth Road, Wollaston, Stourbridge. DY8 3PD

THE BRITANNIA PUB & BREWERY

TUES...POKER

WEDNESDAY....OPEN MIKE NIGHT

FRIDAY....GIN DISCOUNT NIGHT

SAT LIVE MUSIC FROM 9PM (FREE ENTRY)

SUNDAY ROASTS - £7.50

FOOD SERVED ALL WEEK - 2 4 £10

MON TO FRIDAY 12 TILL 5PM.

SPECIALS BOARD FROM 5PM - 2 4 £15

9 ALES 6 CIDERS

FAMILY AND DOG FRIENDLY PUB WITH
A GREAT MODERN PATIO OUT BACK

HOME OF THE
WORKING MON'S MILD



0121 559 3415

18 ROWLEY VILLAGE,
ROWLEY REGIS B65 9AT

Hitchmough's Lost Pubs

Here is a photograph of another mystery pub.
Can you identify it?



The solution to last issue's lost pub is the Lion Hotel, High Street, Pensnett. It was acquired by Hansons in 1934. The original building was demolished and the rebuilt pub opened in 1965. In 2003 it was renamed Poets Corner. It was situated opposite Russells Hall hospital. Demolished in 2012, shops were built on the site.

In an advert from January 1856 the Lion Hotel is stated to be of very recent erection, well and substantially built. In an advert from December 1858 it is stated to be one of the best houses in the parish. Despite this, no one seems to have been well settled there. In the fifty years between 1856 and 1906 there were nineteen different licensees that we are aware of.

County Advertiser 17/4/1875

"On Monday a meeting of the creditors of John Hayward Candlin, formerly of the Lion Inn, Pensnett, licensed victualler, now of Enville Street, Stourbridge, was held at the offices of Mr. J. W. Clulow, solicitor. The liabilities of the debtor were stated to be £221, and the assets £47. A composition of 2s 6d in the pound, payable half in three months, and the balance

in six months from the date of resolution was accepted."

Dudley Herald 2/9/1876

"William Evans, landlord of the Lion Inn, Pensnett, was fined 20s and costs for being drunk and refusing to quit the licensed premises of Mrs. Wright, the Vine Inn, New Street, Dudley."

Birmingham Daily Post 22/12/1876

"Yesterday, at the Police Court, before Mr. Spooner, Stipendiary.....

Thomas Allsopp, a labourer, of Wolverhampton, was charged with being drunk and stealing a pint and half of gin from the Lion Hotel, Pensnett. Prisoner went into the house, and during the temporary absence of the landlady he purloined about a quart of gin, part of which he drank. He was detected with the remainder in a jug, which he was trying to tie in a handkerchief, a proceeding which Mr. Spooner said was convincing as to his drunken state. Allsopp was fined 10s and costs for being drunk, and ordered to go to gaol for a month for the theft."

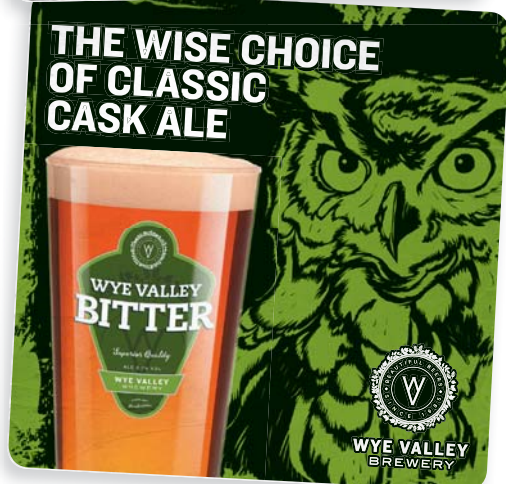
County Advertiser 2/2/1878

"Samuel Gibson, painter, Pensnett, was summoned for wilfully breaking a plate-glass window, value 8s, belonging to Mrs. Mary Furness, Lion Hotel, Pensnett. It was shown that defendant, who did not appear, was ejected from the house, and the door locked against him, after which he put his fist through the window. He was fined 10s and costs, including 8s value; or a month."

Dudley Herald 14/8/1880

"Joseph Smith, landlord of the Lion Inn, Pensnett, was fined 10s and costs for allowing his house to be open for the sale of intoxicating drinks at midnight on the 31st July."

Hitchmough's Black Country Pubs
longpull.co.uk



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Pub News

Dudley & South Staffs

95 Bar & Lounge, 95 High St, Cradley Heath B64 5HE

Closed in November 2019.

Bell, 172 Delph Road, Delph, Brierley Hill DY5 2TZ

Is continuing to experience some licensing issues, which caused disruption to trading hours before and over the Christmas period. These remain unresolved as of January 2020, which means the pub is open for limited hours on certain days each week – please check the relevant Facebook page for updates.

Black Horse, 52 Delph Road, Delph, Brierley Hill DY5 2TP

Reopened under new management – Hayden and Jules – on 11th November 2019. There's now live music (singers) every Wednesday night – see the relevant Facebook page for latest information.

Brierley Hop House, Level Street, Waterfront, Brierley Hill DY5 1XD

Is under new management (Donna and Paul) since 31st October 2019.

British Legion, 137 Londonderry Ln, Smethwick B67 7EL

Has reportedly reopened and is now trading as the "Local".

Bulls Head Bar & Grill, 404 Himley Rd, Lower Gornal, DY3 2TS

No longer sells Real Ale. It had originally sold beers from Sharp's Brewery alongside the Indian food offering. Both cask handpulls have been removed from the bar.

Cradley Heath Labour Club, 5 Graingers Ln, Cradley Heath B64 6AH

Has reopened as Cherrywood Smokehouse Bar & Grill. Early observations suggest that there is no cask availability but there may be space for non-diners to convene for drinks only.

Craft Inn, 608 Bearwood Road, Bearwood B66 4BW

Opened 18th December 2019. The craft beer bar, which accepts card payments, runs a 'Hoppy Monday' promotion where all drinks are discounted by 20%.

Crooked House, Coppice Mill, Himley DY3 4DA

No longer opens Monday and Tuesday. A recent survey confirmed a solitary cask beer – 'Tilted Tipple' (rebadged Marston's EPA fast cask).

Dog, 8 Hagley Rd W, Bearwood B67 5EU

Has a new manager – Matt Appleford. This large Ember Inns pub now sells real cider (Stan's Big Apple). The new house beer is Black Sheep Twilighter Fresh IPA.

Dog & Lamppost, 62 Dudley Rd, Brierley Hill DY5 1HB

Reopened shortly before Christmas Day. Information received is indicating that this now operated by Graham and Deborah. Holden's Golden Glow has been available in early 2020 and Sky Sports television has been installed.

Dr Eamers' Distillery Bar, Unit 20 Waterfront E, Brierley Hill DY5 1XG

Is selling Black Country Tapas! Licensee, Jordan Lunn, has confirmed that the three cask beers will be of local/regional origin.

Garrison, Waterfront E Waterfront Brierley Hill DY5 1XL

Was privileged to be visited by Cllr David Stanley, Mayor of Dudley, in December 2019.

Holly Bush, The Uplands, Smethwick B67 6BL

Reopened 8th November 2019 (alas there is no Real Ale).

Laurel Tree, 349 Stourbridge Road, Harts Hill, Dudley DY5 1JD

Has seen further investment in the pub features and facilities including a new football table! The drinks continue to rotate including changing Real Ales and also 4% fruit ciders.





Little Beech, 158 Halesowen Street, Blackheath B65 0ES

Has had a modern refurbishment, and now has living room-like features including a low-hanging pebble fire, and flatscreen televisions. The beer offering (Marston's selection) remains unchanged.

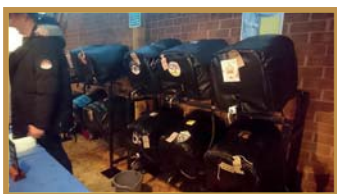


Malt Shovel, 46 Tower St, Dudley DY1 1NB

Has a new manageress, Michelle. Still a key member of the Red Pub Company portfolio of pubs, the business continues to trade as it did under the auspices of the previous manager Fiona. You can expect five ever-changing real ales, on which CAMRA members are given a discount.

New Inn, 90 Oldbury Road, Blackheath, B65 0PH Reopened 6th December 2019.

Old Dispensary, Causeway Green Road, Langley B68 8LS



No longer opens Thursday day time (now opening at 4pm rather than 12pm). Simon and Emma ran a terrific 'Winter Beer Festival' from Friday 6th December 2019 which included branded glasses, a range of real ciders, and seasonal beers such as Oakham Below Zero, Envile Blizzard, Abbeydale Night Before Christmas and Welbeck Abbey Santa Baby.

Park Tavern, 182 Cot Ln, Kingswinford DY6 9QG

The pub, which has always offered a CAMRA discount, now runs a 'Happy Hour' scheme between Monday-Saturday 12-5pm where drinks are discounted by 30p to all customers.

Red By Night, Unit 11 Waterfront E, Level St, Brierley Hill DY5 1XG

Is an 'Adults Only' entertainment venue with live music every day (open Wednesday – Sunday). Licensee Rachel Marson confirmed that the venue is dog friendly. Whilst Real Ale might be available (e.g. Envile Ale), in the event of no cask availability there is an array of canned craft products.

Rose & Crown, 161 Bank St, Brierley Hill DY5 3DD

Has undergone a bar refurbishment in November 2019. Retaining all of the original character, upgrade works have been completed including the installation of a new bar.

Samson & Lion, 140 Brierley Hill Road, Wordsley DY8 5SP

Has been purchased by Admiral Taverns from Marston's. The availability of Real Ale seems inconsistent in recent months.

Shrewsbury Arms, 2 Wolverhampton St, Dudley DY1 1DA

Has been purchased by Admiral Taverns from Marston's.

Tenth Lock, 154 Delph Road, Delph, Brierley Hill DY5 2TY

Has a new manager, Nigel. He's a familiar face for the locals having worked at the pub for several years. There're no changes in the day-to-day operations.

Windsor Theatre Bar, 377 Bearwood Rd, Smethwick B66 4DL

Sold in October 2019 for a figure in the region of £475,000 (markedly below original auction price). There's an unsubstantiated rumour that it has been purchased by JD Wetherspoon.

Stourbridge & Halesowen

Bird in Hand 147 Hagley Rd, Oldswinford, Stourbridge DY8 2JB

Wonderful news, the pub is saved! Bathams have taken over the Bird in Oldswinford. Once under threat of becoming a supermarket or similar. Bathams have taken over and saved this traditional pub.

**Seven Stars, Brook Road, Oldswinford, Stourbridge
DY8 1NQ**

Is now open! Fifteen hand pulls in the main bar and ten more in the lounge area providing real ales, four bed and breakfast rooms and food being served. Paul and Liz previously of The Swan in Halesowen have taken over this beautiful establishment for Black Country Ales.

Swan, Long Lane, Halesowen B62 9JY1

Due to the above the Swan is now in the capable hands of Simon & Marie who continue to have on 11 real ales and 5 ciders. Having run other Black Country Ales pubs we're certain this team will continue to keep up the standard that has become traditional at The Swan.

Wheelie Thirsty 11 High St, Lye DY9 8JT

Sadly, we have lost The Wheelie Thirsty in Lye which has closed its doors shortly after Christmas. Unfortunately, it was a case of use us or lose, this does not affect the Wheelie at Old Hill or the Blackheath brewery tap.

**Brewery, Bar &
Visitor Centre**



GREAT BEER. NATURALLY

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Monday-Thursday

10am - 5pm

Friday

10am - 6pm

Saturday

10am - 4pm

Sunday

11am - 4pm

Brewery Tours:

Weekdays 3pm

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RLBS

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Spoonathon

The attraction of a beer festival in Wetherspoon pubs persuaded me to revive the Black Country Spoonathon. A social day out visiting all the Wetherspoon pubs in our own branch area of Dudley and South Staffs. The last time the event was held proved to be a voyage of discovery proving that Wetherspoon pubs can get it right some of the time.

Our day out started at the **Waterfront Inn** adjacent to the canal pound. A standard Wetherspoon breakfast and a cancelled Rugby game ensured a prompt start. Generally, this serves good quality beer but often the choice can disappoint with the 5 handpumps stocked by the usual regulars of GK (Greene King) Abbot, GK Ruddles Bitter and Sharps Doom Bar. Fortunately, today's offering was excellent and with 3 thirds for the price of a pint supported by a CAMRA Wetherspoons voucher the day started in style. Beers on offer were Hyde Ruby Celebration, Shepherd Neame Sheps Light, Mauldons Cherry Porter and Theakstons Old Peculier. The group decided that the RANGE of beers was good, the SERVICE was quick and efficient, the staff knew enough about the beers to advise, and the pub was clean and tidy (stale plates removed and tables wiped). The cider offering was reasonable with 2 different ciders on offer. All the beers were scored in accordance with CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) resulting in 3.08 average.

The second pub on our itinerary was the **Abraham Darby** at the Merry Hill Centre. Oft referred to as probably one of the worst Wetherspoon pubs in the country for beer choice, availability and quality. Plenty of handpumps on the bar but only 7 in use dispensing beers. On arrival there was only one person behind the bar and the queue stretched out of the pub to such an extent that a wheelchair user could not gain access. There was only one festival beer available so the option of 3 thirds for the price of a pint wasn't available.

For some strange reason there were plenty of beers available but they were all from Shepherd Neame - almost a tap takeover. Our single choice from the festival listing was Alesmith Nut Brown Ale; a Californian brewer's beer brewed in the UK, guess where - Shepherd Neame in Kent. The group decided the RANGE of festival beers was poor, the SERVICE was slow and the quality of service was poor with one of the staff apologising for the short measure because the beer was too fizzy. The cider offering appeared to be non-existent. All in all, this pub was as expected. NBSS beer score averaged 1.60.

A short walk to the bus station and a trip through Quarry Bank took us to the **Moon Under Water** in Cradley Heath. 10 handpumps on the bar dispensing 9 different beers. GK Abbot, and Sharps Doom Bar as usual plus 7 festival beers on offer; Arkell's 3B, Exmoor Barista (Coffee Stout), Evan Evans Fire Island Buffalo and Wadworth JD Boss Hogg were chosen by the majority of the group. Only 1 cider available. Overall the group decided the RANGE of festival beers was excellent, the SERVICE was quick and efficient and the staff were knowledgeable about the beers. The tables were clean and tidy, plates were removed quickly and wiped clean. Well Done! NBSS score 3.34

The **Britannia** in Blackheath was the next pub to visit. Generally, this pub provides a good offering of beers. The 10 handpumps offered 8 different beers with a good choice from the festival listing. Hook Norton Steaming On, Acorn Life Begins, Butcombe Haka and Wolf Voyager tended to be chosen the most. The RANGE of beers was good although another dark beer would have enhanced the offering, the SERVICE was quick and efficient and the staff were well trained and offered good advice, the tables were cleared and cleaned efficiently. 2 ciders available. NBSS achieved a 3.40 average.



A short journey to Oldbury took us to the **Court of Requests**. 10 handpumps featuring 10 different beers but unfortunately no dark beer, with such a large range of beers there could have been at least one dark ale. Beers of choice here tended to focus around Arkell's 3B, Bath Gem Gold, Batemans Combined Harvester and Belhaven Barn Dancer. An excellent choice on the Ciders with 3 products available. Our group was disappointed in the RANGE of beer styles available, the SERVICE was quick and efficient at the bars but quite a few tables were littered with dirty plates. NBSS achieved a 3.06 average.

A short hop on the bus to **West Bromwich** and the next pub was the Billiard Hall. 12 handpumps offering a range of 9 different beers including 7 festival beers were available. Sadly, it took 10 minutes to get served with staff seeming to serve "locals" before those of us who were also waiting. Arkell's 3B, Shepherd Neame Sheps Light, Ishii Minagof Juicy IPA and Brewster's Punk is Dead seemed to be the beers of choice for our group. 2 ciders were on offer. The RANGE of styles of beer was poor as was the SERVICE to our group. A question about the Cask Marque scanning point was met with utter bewilderment by the staff behind the bar. NBSS achieved a 3.18 average.

The **Full Moon** in Dudley was our next port of call. 12 handpumps festooned the bar but with 5 pumps with duplicate pumpclips the choice of beers was pretty limited. Only 2 festival beers were available so the option of 3 thirds of festival beers for the price of a pint was also a non-starter. Birrificio Argo Terzo Tempo (Parma, brewed at Wadworth) and Belhaven Barn Dancer were the only festival beers on offer. As a result, we decided the RANGE of beers was poor. Most of our group also felt the beers were too cold. The SERVICE was acceptable but the tables were littered with used plates and glasses. NBSS scored an average of 2.25.

The final pub on our sojourn was the **Clifton** in Sedgley. 12 handpumps offering a choice of 8 beers but only 5 festival beers. Our group focused around Liberation Colney Hatch, Birrificio Argo Terzo Tempo, Ishii Minagof Juicy IPA and Wolf Voyager. This pub did have the best Cider selection of all the pubs we visited with 4 ciders on offer. The RANGE of beers on offer was reasonably good and the SERVICE was relatively quick and efficient bearing in mind the pub was quite busy. NBSS score achieved a 3.00 average from the group.

Overall, we had a good day out, drank a wide selection of festival beers and experienced the extremes of our branch Wetherspoon pubs. Beer choices overall need to be improved as most of the pubs offered Pale or Malty beers. There was a distinct lack of Dark beers in the pubs and probably too many mid-brown malty beers.

And now the awards:

- **Best Service** – Court of Requests, Oldbury
- **Quickest service** – Britannia, Blackheath
- **Slowest service** – Billiard Hall, West Bromwich
- **Best Festival Range** – Britannia, Blackheath & Moon under Water, Cradley Heath
- **Most Ciders** – Clifton, Sedgley
- **Best Festival beer** – Exmoor Barista
- **Surprise of the Day** – Moon Under Water, Cradley Heath
- **Pub of the day and the GOLD SPOON AWARD** – Britannia, Blackheath
- **Worst Pub of the Day and the WOODEN SPOON AWARD** -You decide!

For more information on beer scoring visit <https://www.camra.org.uk/beer/learn-more/national-beer-scoring-system/>.

Steve Thompson
Dudley & South Staffs

Some of the Branch's Events in 2019

Stourbridge & Halesowen

Hopefully some of these pics will entice you to join CAMRA? We're an outgoing bunch with a shared love of good beer, new places and interesting conversation.



*Amsterdam Trip
February 2019 we ventured abroad*



*Bus No. 9 Pub Crawl Windsor Castle & Beat –
Old friends came back to the Midlands to
visit so naturally we had show them what
they'd been missing*



*2019 Pub of the Year Presentation at Waggon
& Horses Halesowen. Will they win again in
2020?*

Why don't you check out our branch diary and come join us on this year's socials?

Tony Skirving



*Sheffield Beer Festival Trip –
what another festival? Of course!*



*Stourbridge Crawl BarBridge.
Always a great range of changing beers across
all formats. Never the same beer twice?*



Meet the Brewer (Titanic) at the Queens Head.



*Sadler's Brewery Trip
The Brewhouse will be sadly missed by us all.
We would like to take this opportunity to
thank the whole team for taking delivery of
Ales & Tales magazine for us over the years.*



*Red House Boutique
Arbor Tap Takeover*

PUB ART

CAMRA's original challenge to fight to retain traditional British ales proved the power of consumer pressure. Coupled with this, CAMRA recognized the unique part that the pub plays in the British way of life. Much research has been carried out into pub names and signs, which were early forms of easily recognisable logos at a time when much of the population was illiterate. However, I am always fascinated by the artwork within pubs. Often an important hub of the community, our pubs showcase some amazing artwork and are an undervalued tourist attraction. Several establishments are

rightly protected by Grade listings. The Philharmonic in Liverpool is one obvious pub in this category. The interior is illuminated by impressive chandeliers but its most famous feature is the granite men's urinals – not for the faint hearted, this dubious attraction!

And whilst on the subject of toilets – how about this for an innovative approach to celebrating the Isle of Man's famous sons. The Bee-Gees at the Shore Hotel, Port St. Mary, Isle of Man.



them being replaced.

One of our holidays in 2018 took us to Lyme Regis. We were fortunate enough to be staying near a proper local, The Ship. On our first visit here, we were greeted by a very large black and white cat, waiting for us to push open the front door for him to gain entry. The importance of the cat was immediately clear, with his basket on the bar and his unrestricted freedom to roam anywhere he liked..... you wouldn't argue with him! Anyone fortunate enough

Another example of pub decoration is the beer pumps adorning the bar. The Volunteer at Ventnor on the Isle of Wight boasts a set of 6 hand pulls illustrating the Hall & Woodhouse Badgers. During our visit the landlord told us of his battle to save





to stumble into this pub would be struck by the fantastic painted window, in which the cat is immortalized.



One of our favourite pubs in more recent times, is the Australia in Porthmadog. The pub itself traces its roots and name back to the slate export trade, in particular the ships which transported Welsh slate to 'roof the world.' It has had a rather chequered history but has been taken over by the Purple Moose brewery who have turned it into an homage to brewing. Pub art is generally about branding and this is true of the Australia but with a touch of humour.



Next to a couple of selections from Beer Festival thank you trips in recent years, namely the Golden Eagle in Derby and the Crafty Crow in Nottingham.



Closer to home, the Bartons Arms in Birmingham is justly famous for many interior features. Then there is the Old Swan in Netherton, which is listed in the National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. Behind the bar are magnificent mirrors engraved with swans, whilst the rest of the pub boasts some unusual features.

More recently we attended a beer festival at the Cricketers Arms in St. Helens. The pub houses its own brewery, Howzat and was voted national CAMRA Pub of the Year in 2017. To celebrate this award, the end wall of the pub displays a large drawing illustrating all the pubs that have won POTY, including a listing.



This article could have been restricted to pub signs, beer handles or even toilets. There is so much more artwork out there if anyone is interested in adding to this all-too-brief view of the creativity on display in our pubs nationwide please get in touch.

Joy Stevens



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Kingswinford*



Haarlem Globetrotting

Haarlem, not to be confused with Harlem, is the capital of the Province of North Holland. It is however almost a suburb of Amsterdam, a nine-minute train ride away. The American Harlem is a suburb of New York, originally a Dutch settlement called New Amsterdam. History lesson over.



We caught the 13:20 KLM flight from Birmingham. Unlike most airlines they still serve a meal and drink in with the price. At Amsterdam airport we boarded bus 300, a 30-minute journey to central Haarlem. Our B&B Hotel Malts was only a few minutes' walk away. The reception was above a restaurant on the first floor and our bedroom was on the second floor, a total of 51 steep steps. In spite of that we would recommend it.

Why Haarlem, well, on our last visit to Amsterdam we fell in love with a brewery from there called Uiltje, which means Little Owl, especially a beer called Bird of Prey, so we decided to try it at source. Their brewery was not on any bus route and about one hour's walk away but luckily for us they had their own craft beer bar only 50 yards away from our B&B. On our visit there were 30 taps, 12 with their own beers and 150 cans/bottles. Since our visit they have installed two beer engines as well. The bar seemed small at first but was long and narrow. It was dimly lit with a mix of seating. Would you believe the

beer we had come for was not on! We consoled ourselves with a couple of different New England IPAs. The bar had a pizza oven but I never eat this Neapolitan street snack except in Naples where it costs a pittance, so we left to get something to eat elsewhere.



About 200 yards away was another favourite Dutch brewery of ours Jopen. A former church in the bustling centre of Haarlem has been transformed into a modern city brewery, grand café and restaurant. You can watch the brewing process while you enjoy drinks, lunch or dinner. It has a laid-back atmosphere, contemporary interior and has retained its large stained-glass windows. There were 30 of their own beers on tap plus another 50 bottles/cans. Some of the beers were collaborations with other breweries. We tried "Mooie Nel IPA 6.5%," "Yankee Punch 7.6%," "Hoppenbier 6.8%" and "Totally Yuzu Black IPA 6.8%" before moving on to Eet Biercafe Bruxelles, a local's bar where the locals were watching Chelsea v Ajax on telly. They were supporting Ajax, so were we! It ended 4-4. We drank 't "IJ IPA 7%" and a "Lindeboom Gouverneur Tripel 8.2%" and staggered home.

We explored some more of the city next morning, tourist office, St. Bavo Cathedral, the narrow streets of shops and cafes and had lunch at the roof garden of Hudson Bay Company, a



very large department store in the city centre. Intending to rest we walked back towards our B&B but couldn't resist calling in Jopenkerk where we had "Blame it on the Monks 7.5%", a collaboration beer by Jopen and Monnik USA. Wow, we enjoyed this so much we had 3 more of the same beer even though there was a 100+ to choose from. By now it was evening, so we went for a meal accompanied by a beer and a bottle of wine. We saw Lokaal Bar, another of our planned to visit bars on the way back so called in for a couple. We sat at the bar chatting to the barman and Ruben, who must have become my new best friend as next day I found I had written his phone number down. Nor do we know what we drank.

We were a bit worse for wear the next day so explored some more of the town including the Roman Catholic Cathedral also called St. Bavo. A very impressive building and worth the long walk but it was closed. We returned to our B&B early afternoon for a rest and set out again at 7pm to a fish restaurant called Fishbar Monk, recommended by the B&B owner. Superb. We



she insisted we were in the previous evening. We continued denying this, but she wouldn't believe us. We ordered a "Leute Bockbier 7.5% "and a "Mooie Nel IPA" and sat down. Bridget

followed this with a visit to Koops Bar, a cosy little place where the barmaid greeted us with "Welcome back, it's good to see you again." We assured her she was mistaking us for some other couple, but

checked the timeline on her phone and found we had been in last night and even found a photo of me drinking in there. We apologised to the waitress when she brought our beer over. No wonder we were rough this morning. Embarrassed we moved on to Bierlokaal de Uiver, a really nice spotless bar with 40 world beers on tap. Not many in as it was Thursday and we chatted with the Bar Manager. We drank an American beer called "Convicted Souls 8.5 % imperial IPA", a Dutch "A Night in Krakow 8.5%" and Norwegian "Unknown Universe 7%."



Next day we caught the 11-minute train ride to the coastal town of Zandvoort to blow the cobwebs away. We walked along the beach, explored the fortifications and had a great lunch. We returned mid afternoon and revisited Bierlokaal de Uiver. This time it was packed but we managed to get a seat as someone left. We enjoyed "Towel Day IPA 2019 Don't Panic," a 5.5% English IPA, "Maria Albertipa 9% IPA" before returning to the Uiltje Bar for "Bravo Brontosaurus 7%" and at last, "Bird of Prey 5.8% IPA."

A great little city, well worth a visit.

Tony Skirving



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BEER DAYS OUT

Rail 'n ale around The Wrekin

There are many pubs worth visiting on the railway journey from Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury, including a couple of bars on the stations. We recently decided to let the train take the strain and stop off at various stations to visit good pubs.

We started our journey at **Wolverhampton**, with our first stop at **Codsall**. Here we visited the **Codsall Station** pub, right on the platform. Holden's beers are always available and beer festivals are usually at the end of April and in September, with up to 30 beers served direct from the cask. A short walk away in Station Road is **The Firs**, a local CAMRA award-winning club with a range of real ales. Nearby, in Wood Road, is **The Crown**, which offers a range of Joules beers, with nice home-cooked meals too.



Passing by Cosford and its excellent aircraft museum, our next stop was **Shifnal**. Turning right and walking down Aston Road, we found the **Anvil**, recently refurbished by Black Country Ales. It offers 10 cask ales, including their own and guest beers and ciders, along with generous bar snacks. Other recommended pubs in Shifnal Broadway include the recently opened **Crown & Anchor** (5 handpulls, including Woods), the 17th century **Plough Inn** (Bathams, Hobsons, Sarah Hughes and Six Bells), **Wheatsheaf** (Marstons), and the local CAMRA award-winning pub, the historic **White Hart**, offering 9 hand-pulled beers, including beers from Enville, Holdens and Wye Valley, along with 4 ever-changing guest ales.



Our next stop was **Albrighton**, where there was a micropub in the old station building - the **Platform Ale House**. This single-room bar, decorated in GWR-style, opened in 2016 but ceased trading in 2019. It served 4 local cask ales, often including beers from the local Rowton Brewery. The **Harp Hotel** on High Street is still worth visiting, and usually offers 5 cask beers, including Hop Back, Ludlow Gold and Three Tuns XXX.

Returning to the train, the more adventurous of us stopped off at **Telford Central**. Here, we took the No.8 bus (hourly) from the main bus station to **Ironbridge**. We then headed for the recently-opened **Coracle** micro-pub, overlooking the iconic 1779-built bridge. It offers 4 cask ales, 8 taps and over 100 bottles and cans of craft beer, including beers from the local Gorgeous Beer Company. Next, we took the No. 8/18 bus to **Madeley**, and a short walk downhill to the **All Nations**. This is another cosy, traditional pub,

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ESTD 2008

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ESTD 2008

GOLD
ALC 4.5% VOL
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ESTD 2008

COALTOWN
CARBON STOUT
ALC 5.0% VOL
ESTD 2008

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All for that taste of Taylor's





dating back to 1832, with old photographs and Jackfield tiles around the fireplace. It is one of the original CAMRA GBG home-brew houses, and Andy Brough still brews the beers in the tiny 10-barrel Brewhouse “out the back”. Beers from Hobsons, Ludlow and Gorgeous breweries are also available. We then walked back up the hill to Madeley and took the No.18 bus back to Telford and the railway station.



Our next stop was **Oakengates**, where there were three pubs to visit in Market Street. Firstly, the **Crown Inn**, a traditional pub which occasionally holds beer festivals with over 30 different cask ales. We were there on a “normal” day, but the beer range was excellent, with Hobsons Twisted Spire, Purity Bunny Hop and several other guest beers. Almost next door is the **Old Fighting Cocks**, an old coaching inn on the former Watling Street. 12 cask ales are usually available, including Everards Tiger, Hop & Stagger Golden Wander and several guest beers. Finally, we visited the local CAMRA award-winning **Station Hotel**, which often offers beers from Yorkshire, along with Bathams Best Bitter and Salopian beers. The pub hosts two beer festivals annually and the Shropshire fidgets are worth eating too!

Our final stopping-off point was **Wellington**. Walking down Station Road to Market Street, we first visited the **Pheasant Inn** in Market Street.

This is the taphouse for the Rowton Brewery, and not only offers its own beers (including Ironbridge Gold), but also guest beers from Everards, Oakham and Wye Valley. There’s also a lovely garden which catches the sun in summer. A fairly long walk through the town centre along High Street and Mill Bank brought us to the **Cock Hotel** in Holyhead Road. A former 18th century coaching inn, this comfortable pub offers 8 cask ales, including Hobsons, Holdens and Six Bells, and often a dark beer. The pork pies are excellent!



A word about train timetables. On weekdays and Saturdays, there is usually an hourly service between Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury and vice-versa which stops at the intermediate stations. This means you have an hour to find the pub and have a drink to catch the next train onwards. There are two trains an hour which stop at Telford and Wellington. On Sundays, there is generally a two-hourly service for the intermediate stations. An anytime day return “get-on-and-off” ticket costs less than £11. If you’re thinking of visiting the pubs in Telford, please note the buses are not frequent and some don’t run on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

So, let the train take the strain and sample some excellent beers around The Wrekin!

Steve James

A Not-So-Sombre Saturday

Annual datasets published by a reputable research consultancy continue to verify that alcohol consumption rockets in the month of December – temporarily boosting pub sales. The statistics, released by CGA, also show that Christmas intake in boozers is increasing year-on-year with some 4% more cash crossing the counter in December 2018 compared to 2017.

We should all celebrate the greater footfall in pubs and clubs over the festive period, especially as for many the alternative is drinking oneself to oblivion at home without the community cheer of the local. 'Winter depression' – or *seasonal affective disorder* (SAD) – debilitates approximately 5% of the population and disproportionately impacts more women than men. Those people that experience SAD typically lack energy and tend to avoid seeing people which leads to self-exclusion from the pub hype. At Christmas, more than ever, the safest and most rewarding environment to drink alcohol is in the pub, not at home.

The CGA data also shows an inevitable lull as the January blues sweeps the nation. Of even greater concern to us campaigners must be the fact that January pub takings are falling year-on-year with like-for-like sales in January 2019 almost 2% down on 2018. The January 2020 figures will be published in February 2020, but it is predicted that the industry will be hit by another slump – caused largely by the normalisation (or fanaticism, arguably) of sobriety.

By means of 'doing our bit' to offset the post-New Year's Day decline in pub visits, the Dudley & South Staffordshire CAMRA branch started an annual outing on the very first Saturday of each year back in 2018. Now in its third year, the 2020 '**Ten to Target**' mini bus excursion (4th January) was another sell out with fifteen thirsty friends destined for a carefully selected tensome of breweries, pubs and clubs.

The daytrip occurred on the pub trade's hitherto unchristened equivalent of the office world's 'Blue Monday' – let's label it 'Sombre Saturday', shall we. The primary purpose is to inject some £600-£700 into the local pub economy whilst simultaneously scoring a hit list of pubs which are apparent contenders for the next edition of the Good Beer Guide (due to be published in September 2020).



At 12pm sharp, we commenced the day's social at the **Rising Sun**, Tipton. It was an opportunity to exchange New Year greetings with Macca (who attentively stoked up the lounge fire) and Julie (who served beers from Leatherbritches, Wantsum, and Beartown Brewery amongst others). There were also multiple Welsh breweries represented including Mantle, and the incognito 'J Buckley Brewer' – one of several brands contained within the Evan Evans umbrella. The average beer score on this occasion was 3.1 (out of 5).

With our lips coated from the inaugural beers of the day, we made the short journey to Hurst Lane where we were all promptly served our pre-ordered '**100% Bullocks**' Steak Pie at **Mad O'Rourke's Pie Factory**. The meat was tender



and the chips were the perfect accompaniment for dipping in the gravy. Despite being the first weekend since the country's sustained period of festive overindulgence, it was impressive to see that all tables in the restaurant were reserved. The Lump Hammer range of house beers, now supplied by Dig Brew Co., were scored an average of 2.4 – which is “average/good” according to CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System.



That concluded our time on Tipton terrain and so we took the A457 into Sedgley where we visited the **White Lion**. During this lunchtime visit, the second half of the Emirates FA Cup Third



Round fixture between League One outfit Rochdale and top-flight Newcastle United was being shown on a large flat screen television. That said, as the bar is partitioned

into two distinct drinking spaces, it is easy to escape the live sports coverage. A number of pale hoppy beers on offer, including a tropical Session IPA from Thornbridge called *'AM:PM'*, were kept competently which will have strengthened the pub's chances of featuring in the next edition of the Good Beer Guide. Overall, the average score was a respectable 3.2.



With sunset expected at 4pm, we headed to South Staffordshire to visit some rural delights before conditions for our bus driver worsened. The fourth pub on the schedule was the **Navigation** in Greensforge; an iconic lockside pub which tempts drinkers, diners, and dogwalkers alike. As we observed at the Pie Factory, there was a definite diagnosis of post-Christmas diet denial in DY6 as the number of customers eating easily dwarfed the number of wet-only patrons. Nevertheless, the three locales on offer (Enville Ale, Holden's Golden Glow and Three Tuns XXX) were rated a commendable average of 3.25. There's tough competition for securing a spot in the next Good Beer Guide, however, as our number of entries for South Staffordshire pubs/clubs has been cut from five to four following a regional reallocation exercise. This will fall further in the following year to just three positions.

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*Price for single and joint
membership paying by Direct Debit



Crossing the road to reunite with our vehicle, we set off destined for the **Cat Inn**, Enville – a logical Good Beer Guide candidate to include on such trip given the lack of public transport access. Not only had Aimee and Dan kindly reserved tables for our arrival, the hosts (who have managed the pub since 2012) were exceedingly hospitable by means of supplying platters of samosas and spring rolls – thanks guys! Five Enville beers plus other options from Hobsons, Olde Swan and Sarah Hughes guaranteed us an enjoyable hour. The conversation flowed between us and the many locals – most of which was dominated by discussions regarding the superb beer quality which received an average score in excess of 3.65!



As early evening snook upon us, we travelled to Brierley Hill to see how some recent TLC had enhanced the pub interior of the **Rose & Crown**. In order to appreciate

this, you will need to sit/stand in the bar area which leads to the conservatory. Kudos to Michael Dyer and the team for sustaining a large

customer base at this Holden's outlet which was evident by the small number of vacant seats on our visit. In an area no longer blessed with reliable or inspiring real ale pubs, you can count on this traditional boozer to serve up a good quality pint. The average beer score on this 4th January 'inspection' was a solid 3.2.



In a slight plot twist at this stage of the proceedings, we went to see James and Tom at the new **Fownes Brewing Company** premises on Two Woods Estate (DY5 2YX). We're really pleased that the brothers have been able to secure a great brewing unit within our branch boundaries. For now, the plan is to open to the public monthly (see Facebook for dates) and these events will deservedly grow in popularity over time with increased exposure and social media promotion. Of course, you can still find their beers with relative ease in more conventional pubs and clubs across the area. Our attendees enjoyed both cask and KeyKeg offerings which were all keenly priced.

A recently reimaged Dudley & South Staffs branch venue can be found alongside Haden Hill Park where the bar and function room at Old Hill Cricket Club (still functional) now operates under the alias **Long Hop Taphouse**. This is a quirky venue with a lot of potential and the management are still testing the appetite for different events (both recurring and one-off).

We're going to monitor this exciting business develops and we're pleased that the CAMRA branch is regularly contacted for input on such matters as future festivals. On our visit, the four available cask beers (which included Wye Valley HPA and Church End What The Fox's Hat – both photographed) were scored an average of 3.1.



For our penultimate stop, we 'downsized' by visiting one of our local micropubs – the **Old Dispensary**. Debate was soon provoked by the eyebrow-raising 'Lion's Pride' – a thick 5.8% NEIPA collaboration brew between Two By Two (a former Brewlab cuckoo project and now an established brewery based in North Tyneside) and Stu Brew (an experimental student-led microbrewery at Newcastle University – what a cool concept!). You can always bank on the Old Dispensary sourcing original beers/breweries and it was great to see that the beer board clearly stated that the beer was "hazy" – useful to know at the point-of-sale. The average beer

score across the bar was 2.75 which I sense was influenced to some degree by some people's reservations (or strong opinions) regarding unfinned beers!

And finally, as we returned to the centre of the universe (cough, cough... Dudley), we had a last drink and said our farewells in the **Lamp Tavern**. A bonus discovery was the availability of both Best Bitter and Mild – something which isn't necessarily replicated in every Bathams pub (commercial decisions are understandably taken on a pub-by-pub basis). Between the group we enjoyed both brews and the pub achieved an average score of 3.25.

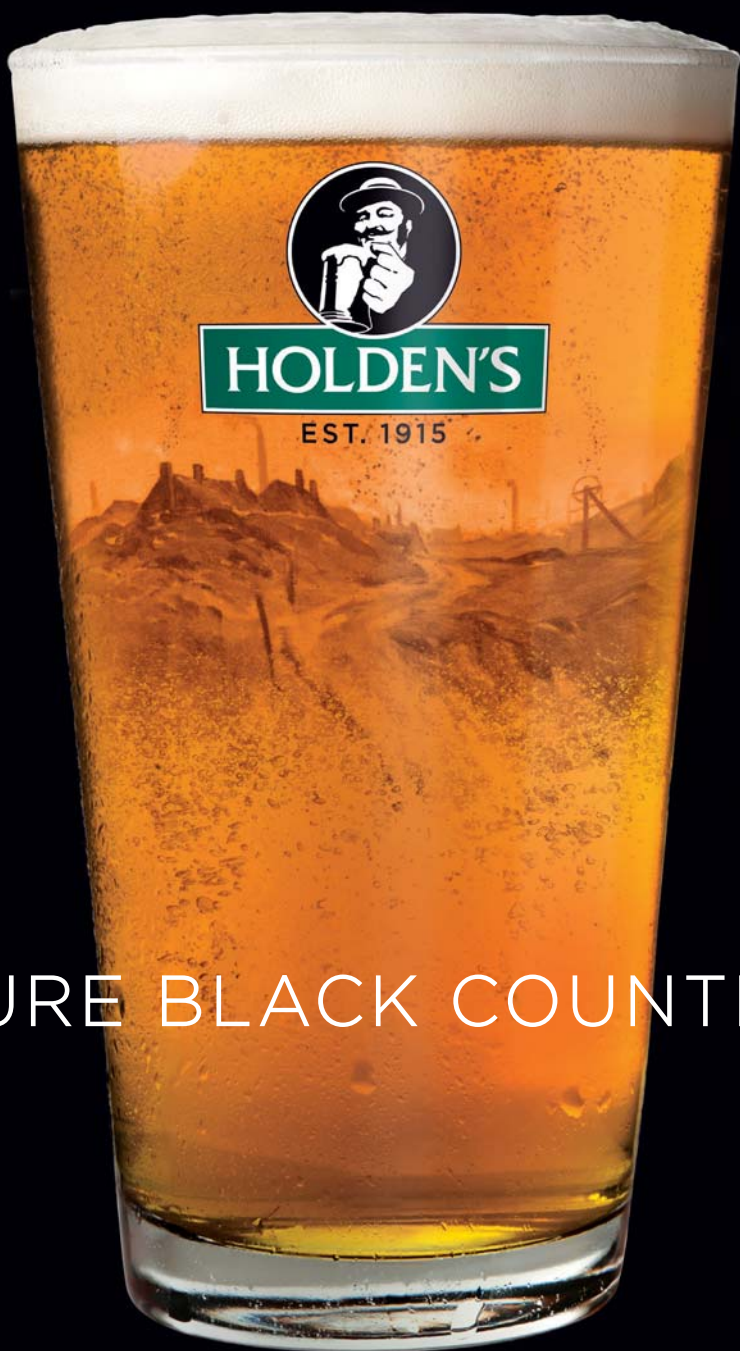


All in all, a long day (and article, sorry!) and you wouldn't want to 'squeeze' ten calling points into your Saturday crawl every week, of course. But with effective pre-planning, our contingent of CAMRA members spread its support across a diverse selection of wonderful breweries, pubs and clubs and had some damn good beer. Prost!

Ryan Hunt

Chair, Dudley & South Staffs CAMRA

Edwin Butler Bayliss, Black Country Landscape, early 1900s, oil on canvas.
Courtesy of Wolverhampton Arts and Culture © The artist's estate



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Obituaries

JOHN CARTER



It is with a very heavy heart that I have to report that we lost one of our stalwart members at the beginning of October this year.

I first met John in 1972 at a college in Smethwick where we spent our lunchtimes in the Red Cow and evenings in the Royal Exchange,

now the Cock 'n' Bull drinking whatever was on offer, not so discerning back in those days.

I joined CAMRA in the late '80's and John followed soon afterwards and we both became quite active members. John also became interested in walking, camping and cycling and we managed to combine these activities with our growing love of real ale.

In the early days of the Dudley Beer Festival when it was held in a tent in Horseley Gardens we would spend many nights camped in the tent to guard the beer (honestly!).

The Stourbridge and Kidderminster Branch as it was then started our own Festival on the SVR station at Kidderminster where John threw everything into setting up and running the event, he even got to meet Ian Botham one Sunday lunchtime.

Time moved on and we started to hold a Stourbridge Beer Festival as well as the SVR one but this proved too much, even for John, so we stopped the Kidderminster one and eventually the branch was transferred to Redditch and Bromsgrove as a sub-branch.

We became Stourbridge and Halesowen branch and John took over the role of Chairman.

During his time as Chair he spent many hours recruiting new members and persuading many older members to take a more active role in the activities, many of the members are still active today and have told me that if it hadn't been for John they would never have become involved.

In more recent times he took more of a back seat but always attended meetings when possible and continued to chat to new faces with his very persuasive attitude.

We would also like to say thank you to Kinver Brewery producing the ale "Get Carter" in his memory.

If you have a glass in your hand as you read this please raise it to John, you will be sorely missed my old friend.

John Midwood

ROLAND (ROLY) COLLINS



2019 was not a great year for the Stourbridge and Halesowen Branch as we not only lost John Carter but we also lost one of our founder members, Roland (Roly) Collins on Christmas Day.

In the early days of CAMRA in this area there was a West Midlands

Branch, chaired by the late John Salter from Kinver. On June 3rd 1974 a group decided to form their own Branch and had a meeting at the Waterloo in Wollaston, now Indus Express, to identify any potential.

On July 10th 1974 an inaugural meeting was held at the Longlands Tavern. A committee was formed with Phil Cracknell as Chair with his wife on the Committee, sadly both are no longer with us. Colin Hackett became Honourable Secretary and Roly Collins became Honourable Treasurer. Colin now lives near Whitchurch but returned every year to our Beer Festival to meet up with Roly and other old friends.

Roly continued to be a member of the Committee until 2014 when he decided he had done enough and it

was time to let the younger generation take over.

During his years with the Branch he held many positions but in later years he concentrated on our Festivals, both Kidderminster and Stourbridge as Treasurer until he let Tony Morgan take over.

In his private life Roly was very active with cycling, walking and camping being high on his list, apart from raising his glass of course. Never one to be side-tracked one time when he couldn't find a beer glass in someone's house he discovered a fruit-bowl, just visualise that!

Roly contacted bowel cancer a few years ago but was given the all clear but sadly another, more aggressive strain returned recently. However, even during his illness there was only one thing on his mind – "Can we go to the pub now please?"

We would like to say thanks to Kinver Brewery for producing a tribute ale for Roly and to Ben at the Robin Hood for arranging the wake.

Please raise a glass to Roly wherever you are. Cheers my old friend

John Midwood



Hitchmough's Archives

Paradise in a Pint?

In the 19th century, brewers got up to some strange things, adding, among other things, sugar, treacle, ground rice, liquorice powder, tobacco, &c. to their brewing, but perhaps the strangest was adding a narcotic – ‘grains of paradise’ – *Aframomum melegueta*, native to West Africa, reportedly tasting of pepper zing with citrus notes, pine aroma. The authorities took a very dim view of this practice....

Wolverhampton Chronicle 9/10/1850

“Eleanor Lees, Springsmire, Zachariah Spittle, Netherton, Benjamin Whitehouse, Baptist End, and Moses Hancocks, Mushroom, were charged with having ‘grains of paradise’ in their possession, and also with using that delirious material in making beer, contrary to the Act of Parliament. Mr. Shacklock, collector, together with Mr. Heathcote, the supervisor, and other inland revenue officers, were in attendance to conduct and prove the charges, but the defendants severally pleaded guilty to one of the counts (the other was not pressed), and were convicted in the penalty of £50 each and costs, being one quarter of the full penalty of £200 and the lowest sum to which the Bench had power to reduce the fine. After some hesitation, the Bench consented to join in recommending to the Board to further reduce the fine in each case to £25 the present appearing to be first offences; at the same time, however, expressed its indignation at such practices.”

Wolverhampton Chronicle 28/6/1854

“Henry Woodhall, of New Street, appeared on two informations laid by Mr. Coleman, officer of excise, West Bromwich, for having in his possession ½lb of grains of paradise; and with also using them to adulterate 100 gallons of ale. The defendant admitted the offence, and Mr. Dance, collector of Inland Revenue, Lichfield, who attended to conduct the case, elected to proceed on the information charging the use of seeds. The Bench convicted the defendant in the mitigated penalty of £50. Mr. Fellowes said that it was his opinion that the Legislature ought to have added imprisonment to the fine – it was poisoning the public as well as defrauding the revenue.”

Staffordshire Advertiser 5/1/1856

“Charles Jones, of Great Bridge, pleaded guilty to an information charging him with having used grains of paradise in the brewing of his beer. He was convicted in the mitigated penalty of £50.”

Worcester Herald 21/2/1857

“John Cartwright, a publican residing at the Dock, Dudley, was charged with using grains of paradise in his brewing operations. John Martin, an analytical chemist at the laboratory of Inland Revenue, proved the existence of the drug in the hops by the aid of a microscope. The Bench, addressing the defendant, told him they had the power of fining him the sum of £200, but in consideration of his poverty they should mitigate the fine to £50, with a recommendation to the Board of Inland Revenue to further reduce it to £10.”

Wolverhampton Chronicle 22/12/1858

“James Harthill, beerseller, of Himley Road, was charged with having in his possession and using grains of paradise in brewing. Mr. Shacklock, collector, and Mr. Henry Hoyte, supervisor of excise, appeared in support of the charge. The minimum fine of £50 was inflicted, and on account of the defendant’s good character the Magistrates recommended to the Commissioner a reduction of the penalty to £10.”

Stourbridge Observer 26/11/1864

“Theresa Gwilt, The Level, was charged on two informations with having in her possession, a quantity of grains of paradise, and with using the same in the brewing of ale, for each offence of which she was liable to a penalty of £200.

John Evans deposed that he was an excise officer, in the Brierley Hill district. He visited the defendant and examined the spent hops and found that they contained grains of paradise. Miss Gwilt replied that she knew nothing about it.

Edward Thomas deposed that he was Supervisor for the Inland Revenue for the Stourbridge district, and said he received two parcels from Mr. Evans, sealed with his initials, and forwarded them to the principal of the laboratory at Somerset House, London.

Jenner Moxon said he was assistant chemist at the laboratory. He received the sealed parcel and examined the contents of spent hops and found grains of paradise to the amount of 4 per cent.

For the defence, Mr. Ebsworth submitted that upon



the facts the defendant was not guilty, as it was shown that she knew nothing at all about the matter, as she did not brew herself, and she had only been in business a short time. He afterwards referred to the very heavy penalty which the law enforced and said that it was very hard upon a poor woman.

Mr. Spooner said that he must think of the poor public who were being poisoned by such ingredients.

Mr. Spooner then commented very severely upon the dangerous and wicked nature of the offence. Grains of paradise were most exciting, and had a very serious effect upon those who consumed beverages containing them. He had only power to mitigate the fine to one fourth of the maximum, and defendant must pay a fine of £50 and costs."

Staffordshire Advertiser 3/12/1864

"Benjamin Millward, beerhouse keeper, Cradley Heath, was fined £50 for using a quantity of grains of paradise in the brewing of ale."

Staffordshire Sentinel 18/9/1869

"Joseph Rowley, publican and licensed brewer, Halesowen Street, Oldbury, was charged with 'having in his possession a quantity of grains of paradise, being a substitute for malt, contrary to the statute.' The district supervisor of excise proved the case. On the occasion of his visit eight bushels of malt had been brewed, and an examination of the spent hops showed that grains of paradise had been used. The effect of the adulteration, it was stated, would be 'to give the beer a false strength, and to make it more palatable.' The defendant's servant alleged that it was he who infringed the law, without the knowledge of the defendant. The magistrates imposed the mitigated penalty of £50, and, in view of all the circumstances of the case, they promised to recommend the Board of Inland Revenue to reduce the penalty to £10."

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Brewery News

Stourbridge & Halesowen

SADLERS BREWHOUSE

2, Conyers Trading Estate, Station Drive, Stourbridge DY9 8ER

In late December 2019, Halewood International announced their intention to close the Sadler's brewery at Lye and transfer production of Peaky Blinder and other Sadler's beers to their Hawkshead brewery in Cumbria. About 25 people, including those in the brewery, offices and taproom, face redundancy.

Halewood International, the Merseyside-based drinks manufacturer and distributor, bought a controlling interest in Sadler's Brewing Company in June 2017. At that time, Halewood said that Sadler's will continue to operate independently, and later invested heavily in the brewery, adding a new 60-barrel brewing facility to the existing 30-barrel plant. More recently, the Sadler family are understood to have sold their remaining shares to Halewood. Part of the reason to close the Lye site seems to be related to the growth in Peaky Blinder Irish whiskey. Halewood plan to accelerate a project to distil its own Irish whiskey in Ireland. They say that "No decision has been made regarding Sadler's Brewery and the production of Peaky Blinder beer. The 30-day consultation process also includes the affected jobs, but there will not be a decision until the end of January". If the proposal were to go ahead, they would cease operations and close the leased site at Lye early in 2020. However, the two micro-pubs at Harborne (Brewer's Social) and Quinton (Taproom) would not be affected by the closure.

Sadler's was originally a family business that began in Oldbury in 1861. The brewery was founded by Benjamin Sadler and later expanded by Nathaniel Sadler in 1900. It was inherited by his son, Thomas, who ran the brewery for several years and also raised his son, John, who was brought up in the brewhouse. John later passed on his passion and knowledge to his son and grandson, John and Chris Sadler. From 2004, brewing took place behind the Windsor Castle pub in Lye before moving to a new £500,000 brewery in 2015 on the Conyers Trading Estate, opposite Lye railway station. The new Brewhouse and Taproom was opened in March 2015 by TV presenter, Eamonn Holmes, and was extended in 2018. Sadler's launched their Peaky Blinder beer following the success of the BBC TV series, which was partly filmed at the Black Country Museum in Dudley. Sadler's beers

are popular, both locally and across the country, and have won many awards. They are available locally in a dozen or more pubs, as well as in free houses, restaurants and shops. Earlier in the year, Sadler's also announced a major partnership with both Birmingham City and West Bromwich Albion football clubs, sponsored the Tour of Britain cycle race and collaborated with West Midlands Trains on launching a limited-edition beer. Other monthly limited-edition beers were also being produced.

As the Local CAMRA Brewery Liaison Officer, I have said "This is a devastating blow, not only for the hard-working employees at the Brewhouse and taproom at Lye, but also for the traditions and history of local brewing in the Black Country. Sadler's has become a thriving local brewery, supplying bars, restaurants and shops across the country, particularly the iconic Peaky Blinder IPA and Black IPA beers. This decision will rip the heart and soul out of Peaky Blinder beers whose spiritual home is in the Black Country. This is yet another example of a multi-national company riding roughshod over local traditions and history, milking the Peaky Blinder brand and stripping the company's assets. Our thoughts go out to all the wonderful staff that will be affected if this decision is ratified. The only saving grace is that Emily Sadler has restarted brewing at the Windsor Castle pub at the new Printworks Brewery, continuing the traditions of the Sadler family".

Steve James

PRINTWORKS BREWERY

Windsor Castle 7 Stourbridge Rd, Stourbridge DY9 7BS

Have plans to add new beers to their full-time range. The first new beer is called Caleb, a 3.9% extra pale ale brewed with all English hops packed full of zesty citrus and grapefruit flavours. This is a font name (like all their beers) plus it has a lovely family connection, Emily's son Caleb was named after Jack Caleb Nathaniel, Emily's grandfather who was born and brought up in the original brew house of the family brewery. Emily is now 5th generation brewer in the family.

The second beer to the range is Black Fox 4.9%, this started as an experimental brew last year and due to its popularity and feedback they are bringing it on full time. Black Fox is our Black IPA. They will of course be showcased at The Windsor Castle Inn but they have



also started selling out into the free trade a little so look out for Printworks beers whilst you are out and about.

CRADDOCKS

25 Coventry St, Stourbridge DY8 1EP



Following the report in the last edition of this magazine, Craddock's have the UK's first Not-for-Profit bar opened in October to excellent

reviews, and has been acclaimed as a 'proper pub' in the Great Western Arcade in Birmingham's city centre. Well worth a visit to see the features and layout, as well as drinking Craddock's and other beers, with the 10% profit going to charity. The Good Intent - 32-33 Great Western Arcade, Birmingham B2 5HU



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Dudley & South Staffs

BATHAMS BREWERY

10 Delph Rd, Brierley Hill DY5 2TN

Was awarded Bronze at the West Midlands CAMRA Regional Awards Extravaganza for Mild in the Mild category and Silver for XXX in the Old Ale / Strong Mild category – well done!

BLACK COUNTRY ALES

1 Redhall Rd, Dudley DY3 2NU

BCA opened the Seven Stars in Stourbridge in early December and the new landlord is the current manager of the Swan, Long Lane, Blackheath. The

brewery is also planning to brew 7 times a week, virtually doubling capacity, from January 2020, to expand into the free trade and to actively seek out even more breweries to swap with.

ENVILLE ALES

Hollies Lane, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY7 5LG

Was awarded Bronze at the West Midlands CAMRA Regional Awards Extravaganza for Enville Ale in the Speciality Beer category and Gold for Enville Ginger in the Speciality Beer category – well done! The brewery has supplied a number of 'tap takeovers' over winter including Chequers, Stourbridge, and the Anvil, Shifnal. Blizzard was a huge hit over the festive period and was the highest scored beer (enjoyed at the Cat Inn) on the Dudley & South Staffs Ten to Target mini bus on 4th January 2020.

FOWNES BREWING COMPANY

Unit 2 Two Woods Ln, Talbots Ln, Brierley Hill, Estate DY5 2YX

The Fownes brothers have a new location for their brewery! They have continued with their home brew events and the last one of 2019 was held on 7th December at the premises. They will continue with these events into 2020 and members from Wolverhampton and Dudley & South Staffs attended their Tryanuary opening on 4th January. There are plans to open a taproom at the new premises but days and times are uncertain at this early stage. New beers are as follows: The Doomed Prophets - black IPA 5.7%; Astrid's Ascent - IPA 4.6%; Costa Del Gornal - Pale Ale 5%; Gwendolyn's Guile - English Bitter 4.6%. The brewery was awarded Gold at the West Midlands CAMRA Regional Awards Extravaganza for King Korvaks Saga in the Porter category – well done!

HOLDEN'S BREWERY

George St, Dudley DY1 4LW

Was awarded Bronze at the West Midlands CAMRA Regional Awards Extravaganza for Golden Glow in the Golden Ale category – well done! The New Inn, Coseley, has closed for a large part of January 2020 to undergo a refurbishment which we are excited to see. The brewery rewarded all staff for their sterling efforts over the Christmas period with a party and 'tongue in cheek' awards ceremony on 5th January – a great idea.

KINVER BREWERY

Unit 1, Britch Farm, Rocky Wall, Compton Rd, Kinver DY7 5NW

New year, new decade, new baby girl, new generation... New beer! To commemorate the birth of a new Kelly, 'Seren' (4.7%) a premium pale celebration beer has been brewed. The beer contains lager yeast and all German hops (Brewer's Gold and Herkules) so is a cask conditioned (traditional) lager. The name Seren is Welsh for star.

Following the popularity of Witchfinder General, a new batch has been brewed and will be available in cask and bottles shortly.

Fans of Kinver Brewery should look forward to the Kinver Craft Beer & Cider Festival 15-16 May 2020 at the Kinver KCSA. Last year's was a tremendous success and this year's definitely should not be missed!

The brewery was awarded Bronze at the West Midlands CAMRA Regional Awards Extravaganza for Over the Edge in the Barley Wine/Strong Old Ale category – well done!

OLDE SWAN

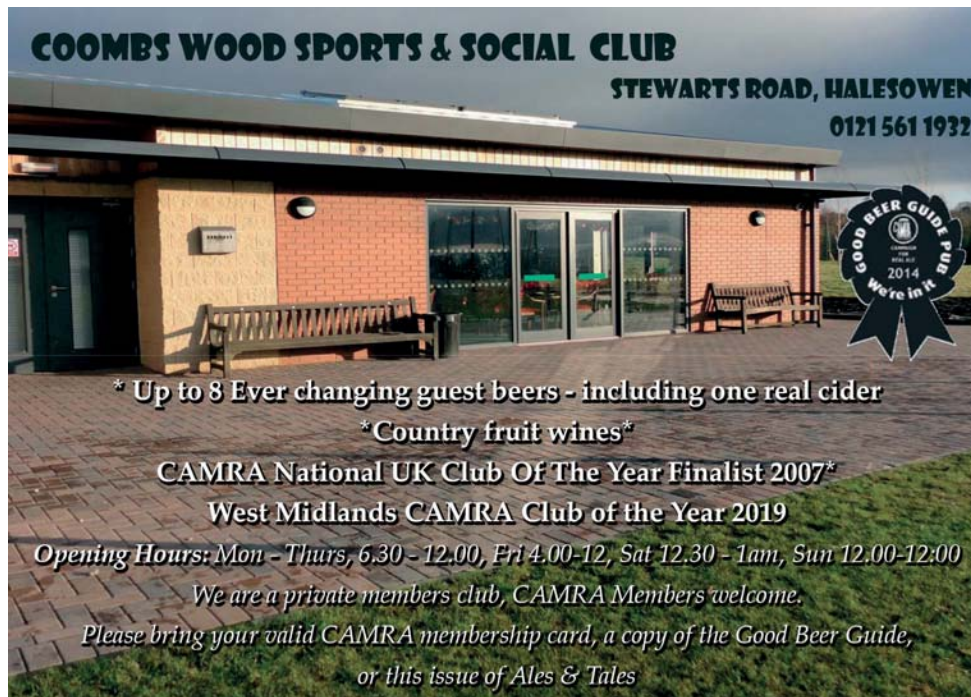
89 Halesowen Rd, Netherton, DY2 9PY

Olde Swan Black Widow beer was on sale in the Old Swan Pub (Netherton) in December 2019. It has been a few years since this was sold at the Old Swan.

SARAH HUGHES

129 Bilston St, Sedgley DY3 1JE

Was awarded Gold at the West Midlands CAMRA Regional Awards Extravaganza for Dark Ruby in the Old Ale/Strong Mild category and Gold for Snowflake in the Barley Wine/Strong Old Ale category. Even more impressively, Snowflake was awarded Bronze in the overall West Midlands Champion Beer competition – superb!



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