

Issue 29

Spring 2016

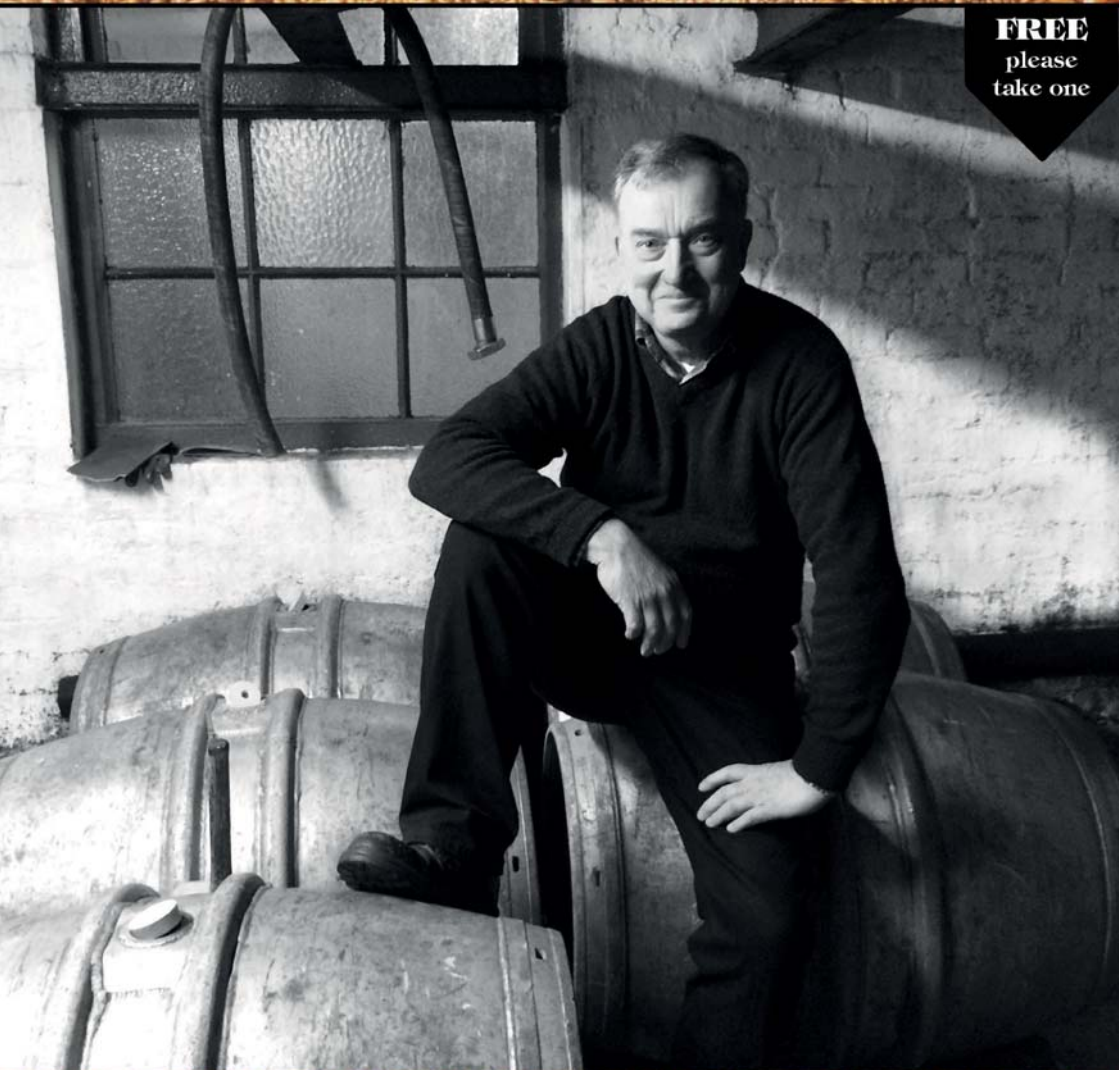


CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Ales & Tales

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

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www.stourbridgecamra.org.uk
www.dudleycamra.org.uk



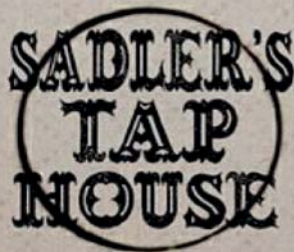
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NEXT ONE
ON US

Welcome Back

It has been rather a gloomy old Winter, neither one thing nor the other, but for beer drinkers a small glimmer of sunshine was heralded in the March budget when tax on beer was frozen. An article on CAMRA's viewpoint is in this edition of the magazine. There is also an article by Mick Lewis on the EU and cider duty which is a personal view and reflects some of the issues regarding the EU debate. As a non political organisation we try to present a balanced view so if you would like to contribute to the debate please e-mail the editor.



Somewhere on this page you will see a photograph of me and my co-editor. We were both overwhelmed at receiving an award at the Regional

awards presentation for the most improved branch magazine. It wasn't the only award which was presented within our 2 branches as you can see if you glance at the awards page from the Regional presentation at the Bartons Arms.

After a few quiet months Spring also means that the festival season starts again in earnest. Stourbridge and Halesowen festival is one of the earliest, see their poster for full details. We endeavour to include information on all our local CAMRA festivals but if you have details on local pub festivals we will try to include those as well. Of course the GBBF - Great British Beer Festival, the largest beer festival under one roof, is running again in London. With over 900 real ales plus ciders, perries and foreign beers it's always a great day out and details of how you can get there with Dudley and South Staffs are in the diary section. Another event that we assist in, held on Fathers Day, is Kinver Country Fair. You will find some of us manning the beer tent. In fact if you fancy working at this small event contact the editor. Training will be given!

As we keep saying brewery news and pub news reflect the information we have been given. We would like to say thank you to all our contributors. If your favourite pub or brewery hasn't been included and there is news to share then let us know. Send to editor@dudleycamra.org.uk. You will find details

about the Pubs of the Year chosen by Dudley and South Staffs and Stourbridge and Halesowen. Try them and see if your tastes and opinions match those of the branches – and if they don't, join a branch and make your voice heard!

We hope that you enjoy some of the articles contributed by members of the branches and if you feel you would like to put pen to paper then send your views, comments or articles to editor@dudleycamra.org.uk. We would also like to thank our advertisers whose support means that Ales and Tales is distributed across our branches and beyond as a free publication.

Next Ales and Tales will be due out in July, hope you enjoyed this issue.

Cheers

Pam and Tony

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Pubs of the Year

CAMRA accept that it's not an exact science judging something like the Pub of the Year. However by exceeding the standards laid down by CAMRA by achieving excellent standards of service, serving the highest quality real ales and supporting CAMRA aims, this years award for Pub of the Year, Dudley and South Staffs CAMRA 2016 goes to **The Vine, Brierley Hill.**

Known locally as the Bull and Bladder, the Vine is the brewery tap for Batham's brewery, and having been run by Mel and Wendy for more years than they would like to remember it has been a Good Beer Guide pub throughout their tenure.

As one Trip Advisor reviewer commented, "Real Ale brewed on site is amazing. The food is limited but you can choose what you want from what they have on view, from a selection of cooked meats, cheeses and home made pies and faggotts at lunchtimes. Very reasonable in price and a nice size plate of food.

Real Pub, Real Ale, Real food, couldn't want anything else."



The Vine aka the Bull and Bladder

The Swan Pub, Long Lane, Blackheath which was in danger of being bulldozed to make way for a supermarket last year, was taken over by a popular brewery, Black Country Ales, over 12 months ago. After a rigorous Pub of the Year round of judging using the criteria laid down by CAMRA, it gained the accolade of being named as Stourbridge and Halesowen Pub of the Year 2016. Not only is it

appreciated by CAMRA members but it seems the locals appreciate it too if the latest Trip Advisor review is anything to go by, "Following what was indeed a fantastic refurb they have created a gem of a pub outclassing anywhere else locally!! This is all a pub should be, good beer, fantastic cobs and bar snacks at a great price and friendly staff."



The Swan, Blackheath

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Canal Side Family Friendly Pub

Real Ales

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Skittle Alley

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Pub News

Barbridge, Stourbridge's newest bar located in Victoria Passage are giving 20p/pint and 10p/half discount to card carrying CAMRA members.

Waggon & Horses, Oldbury has re-opened with three Real Ales.

Waterfall, Blackheath, has been refurbished with considerable internal restructuring including the removal of original fixed bench seating. The new style is that of a café with distressed décor and four seater dining tables.

Union, Water Street Kingswinford, will be holding its first beer festival between Friday 29th April and Monday 2nd May. 11 Real Ales. Live music from 3.00pm Saturday and 2.00pm Sunday featuring: Dave Bradshaw, Rob Pritchard, Ties Unbroken, and Matt Bough. Classic car meet at 2.00pm Sunday.

Lawnswood, Wordsley, has now reopened following a £200,000 refurb. 6 cask ales and 2 craft ales are being served.

Brook, Woodsetton has re-opened with three Real Ales.

Malt Shovel, Blackheath has re-opened with four Real Ales.

Duke William, Stourbridge 25th - 27th March Cider & Sausage Festival. 9th April Canal boat trip from Kinver to Stourbridge with beer and fish & chips on the boat.

The Bell on the Delph is now fully open.

The Waggon and Horses Halesowen after a full refurbishment re-opened on 24th March. Long regarded as a fixture in the Good Beer Guide it will be interesting to see how Dawn and Mick (formerly the Court House, Dudley) lead it into the future.

Starving Rascal, Amblecote. By the time this magazine is published we will have lost one of the best publicans in our branch. Steve Robinson took over the Starving Rascal 9 years ago and turned it round into a multi-award winning pub. Owners Enterprise Inns offered him terms he couldn't accept. Steve's excellent beer quality and vast selection of whiskies will be sadly missed. We wish him success in his future ventures.

Have you seen our elephant?

It is with deep regret that we have to report that elephant poaching is rife in the Gornals. It appears that during the festive period (the season of goodwill!) Jumbo, one of the pair of brass elephants that stand guard over the lounge at the Jolly Crispin public-house, Clarence Street, Upper Gornal, was purloined by persons unknown.



Whether this was done in a state of intoxication, when the stupidest of ideas can seem to be brilliant, or a deliberate attempt to put the internationally renowned brass elephant breeding programme at the Jolly Crispin in jeopardy, is unknown, but no ransom demand has been received. The elephant's companion, Nellie, is now lonely and pining, and there are fears for her well-being. Any information as to the identity of the poachers, or the return of the elephant will be very much appreciated. NB. If Jumbo is returned and found to be pregnant on its return there will be consequences!

Meet the Production Director



Name: Tim Batham

Age: 58

Background before brewing?

Always been involved. Brewing pupillage with W&D Brewery 1976 - 1979.

What was your first alcohol drink?

Batham's Mild Ale.

What are your hobbies and interests?

Motorbikes and Motorcycle Racing. Football - West Bromwich Albion.

What is your favourite:- Beer - your own and someone else's

Batham's Best Bitter; Taylor's Landlord, Banks's Bitter.

Food?

Roast Dinner; Rib of Beef and all the trimmings.

Music?

Progrock - old stuff from the 60s & 70s. Yes, Kinks.

Pub? (Could be anywhere in the country as long as you don't own it.)

The Ship Inn, Kingswear.

How did you get started in the trade?

Have helped in the brewery ever since I can remember.

What is the development period to bring a new brew to the market?

N.A.

What are your aspirations for the business?

For it to continue brewing quality ales for our Black Country customers.

Batham Brewery

What's the best & worst thing to happen to the industry in the last 5 years?

Best :- Technology has helped in the production of consistent quality cask beer.

Worst :- MMC Report of the 80s killing/stopping vertical integration of breweries.

How do you think CAMRA could help you in your business?

Spread the word about our beers.



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6 Home Brewed Beers on offer

Olde Swan Original 3.5% ABV

Dark Swan Mild 4.2% ABV

Olde Swan Entire 4.4% ABV

Bumble Hole 5.2% ABV

NPA 4.8% ABV

Opening Times:

Mon-Sat 11am-11pm, Sun 12noon-11pm

Food Available:

Mon 12noon-2pm & 6pm-9pm, Tues-Sun 12noon-9pm
(Menus vary throughout the day)

Upstairs Function Room Available

(up to 60 persons - No disco or any other form of row!)

Contact Tim Newey on 01384 253075



Brewery News

Sarah Hughes

Their winter beer Snowflake sold out at the Beacon Hotel (apart from one firkin which is being saved for Black Country Weekend in July). A new 7.4% copper-coloured beer has been brewed and should be available in the Spring. As yet unnamed, it uses British Bramling Cross and Admiral hops for flavouring and aroma. Later on, some of the 4.6% specials from last year will be repeated. Expect Bramling Cross in Spring, with Pilot and Admiral to follow.

Holden's

Tales of lost brewing notes are the stuff of myth and legend in the brewing industry. These words launch a series of seasonal beers from Holden's brewery. The year started with Holden's 101, a Black Pale Ale. The tasting notes indicate a combination of the finest English dark roasted malts and Green Bullet and Willamette hops to produce a luxuriously smooth, easy drinking IPA with a tremendous depth of caramel like flavour and a long lingering bitter finish. The ABV is an easy drinking 4.1%.

Their next beer in the series which will be available from March through to May is Woodsetton Pale Ale – WPA. The ABV of this beer is 4.5% and is described as a Classic Old-English Pale Ale brewed using the finest English pale and crystal malts giving both biscuit and caramel notes on the nose followed with a burst of traditional Fuggles and Goldings hops leading to a lingering, moreish, fresh dry finish. Other beers are planned for later in the year – Slack Tub at 3.8% from June through to August, Red by Night at 4% will be available from September through to November and finally Dragon's Blood at 5.6% will be available from November.

Pig Iron

Hog Ore Best Bitter has been re-launched recently and is available in a selection of local free houses.

Bathams

Work on land adjacent to the brewery is progressing in that houses have now been demolished to allow proposed access. The tied estate is now 10 pubs, one less than before, with the sale of the Giler Arms.

Black Country Ales

The Salmon, Leicester has started well, plus another pub in the same city has been acquired. The former GBG listed Waggon and Horses, Halesowen has also been acquired. It has been refurbished and has recently reopened.

The brewery had a new floor and stairs fitted so no beer was brewed from December to February. It is back to normal now.

The Real Ale Trail (Jan to Mar) has been going well.

Toll End

A new beer, Retribution, has been brewed at 5.2% being a strong bitter Pale Ale.

A range of special beers are being brewed, initially for sale in the Waggon & Horses only. The most popular will be made more widely available. These 'Hoss' beers will feature a range of hops from Slovenia, Germany and Poland. ('Hoss' is Black Country for horse). Six beers have been brewed so far: Flying Hoss 4%, Dark Hoss 5.4%, Tattin' Hoss 4.7%, Stripey Hoss 4.2-4.4%, Loffin' Hoss 4.7%, Scabby Hoss (abv varies). Limited bottling is ongoing. 10% discount still available for CAMRA members on Toll End beers at Waggon & Horses.

Craddock's

The current monthly special is the single-hopped El Dorado IPA. It was the first beer to sell out at MAB (Mercian Alliance of Brewers) Festival this weekend. The head brewer Dan Rybinski was interviewed live on BBC Radio.

The other new beer (or rather new recipe) is English Amber, brewed in the style of Black Country bitter.

Fixed Wheel

Fixed Wheel have recently been experiencing some very busy Saturdays at the brewery, having welcomed some travelling visiting groups to the brewery, along with the regulars.

With Spring is here and for a brewery that is cycle orientated that means one thing, Classic's Season! – To celebrate the first great events of the cycling season, 'Fixed Wheel monthly special is:- Spartacus, a Belgian IPA brewed 6.5%, with a bright Amber

colour and full of orange flavours with a hint of spice from the yeast, it's the perfect impacting beer to kick off and celebrate the Pro cycling Season range. Available in cask, keg and bottles, it has been very well received within the brewery, by the customers and was featured at the recent MABFEST.

Fownes

Fownes Brewery has produced a new beer called Cnebba and it is a 7% Robust Baltic Porter. This was the culmination of a collaboration brew with all the alliance members' participation.

Kinver Brewery

Still working to capacity Kinver brewery has collected another award for Over the Edge. Congratulations on your Silver National SIBA award 2016 Premium Strong Beers.

STOP PRESS!

Over the Edge also won Gold in Barley Wines & Strong Old Ales CAMRA competition held at Burton on Trent Beer Festival.

May is Mild Month

CAMRA promotes mild throughout May. As part of this for several years there has been a Regional Mild Crawl.

This year it has been organised by the Potteries CAMRA Branch on May 14th. Covering the 3 towns of Stoke, Burslem and Newcastle it covers 12 pubs. Local brewers have also produced a mild for



the day, many of which are special event brews, which will never have been seen before. There are coaches for travel between pubs, real ciders available in most pubs and a full guide and map available on the day

So what is mild?

Milds are black to dark brown to pale amber in colour and come in a variety of styles from warming roasty ales to light refreshing lunchtime thirst quenchers. Malty and possibly sweet tones dominate the flavour profile but there may be a light hop flavour or aroma. Slight diacetyl (toffee/butterscotch) flavours are not inappropriate. Alcohol levels are typically low.

Pale milds tend to have a lighter, more fruity aroma with gentle hoppiness.

Dark milds may have a light roast malt or caramel character in aroma and taste.

Scottish cask beers may have mild characteristics with a dominance of sweetness, smooth body and light bitterness.

Original gravity: less than 1043

Typical alcohol by volume: less than 4.3%

Final gravity 1004 - 1010

Bitterness 14 - 28 EBU

Why not join the crawl and try some, it is a cracking day out!

HAWNE TAVERN

An oval-shaped photograph showing the exterior of a two-story brick building with white window frames and a green door. There are flower boxes under the windows.

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A circular award seal with a ribbon. The text around the border reads "GOOD BEER GUIDE 2016" and "We're in it".

Opening Times
Mon - Fri 4:30pm
All day Sat, Sun & Bank Holidays
from 12 noon

76 Attwood Street, Halesowen

Budget 2016: Another Budget for Beer Drinkers?

Although this is intended for CAMRA members it highlights the work that all those in the Campaign do and is part of Key Campaign 1 - Stop Tax Killing Beer and Pubs. If you love your beer and your pub why not think about joining?

The Chancellor has delivered his 2016 Budget.

Naturally we are disappointed that there will not be a fourth consecutive cut in beer duty, but a freeze on beer and cider duty.

This freeze can be seen as a positive move as it is effectively a cut, because beer duty has not increased in line with inflation. It also means that the duty charged on a pint of beer is now around 10p below what it would have been under previous plans to increase duty above inflation each year.

The failure to cut beer duty is a missed opportunity to support the ongoing revival of brewing in the UK; and a further cut would have prompted additional investment in the industry, protected jobs and more importantly, supported stable prices for customers.

Business Rate Relief extended to protect small pubs

The good news is the extension of small business rate relief, which will save publicans of smaller pubs thousands of pounds annually; and will assist in keeping community pubs viable as small businesses at the very heart of each community and serving the needs of local people. Around one in three pubs in England will benefit from this change.



We have had a tremendous amount of support in this year's Campaign to cut beer duty from MPs, Lords, our colleagues in the industry, but more importantly from you our members. Your support has been fantastic and 6,924 of you wrote to your MPs to lobby them to support this initiative.

Let's not forget that beer remains the most important element of drink sales in pubs across the country and let's raise a glass (or two) for our national drink!

Thank you for writing to your MPs, your continued support to our Campaigns and here's too many more successes in 2016.

With best wishes.

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Bathams

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3.5% ABV

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Festival Focus

April, May, June, July

COVENTRY BEER FESTIVAL takes place on 15th and 16th April offering 90+ Real Ales with a fine selection of Cider & Perry and bottled beers from around the world as well as Country Wines. The festival takes place at Coventry Rugby Ground, Butts Park Arena, Butts Road, Spon End, Coventry CV1 3GE. Opening times are Friday & Saturday, 12noon-4pm & 6pm-11pm. Admission charges apply including glass and tokens (both refundable).

For more information visit:

www.coventry.camra.org.uk

STOURBRIDGE BEER FESTIVAL will take place at Stourbridge Town Hall on Market Street starting on Wednesday 20th April with a CAMRA members only preview evening which is open from 7pm until 10pm. The festival is open to the public on Thursday evening from 7pm until 10pm, Friday from 12noon until 11pm and on Saturday the festival opens at noon until 9pm. Featuring 90 Real Ales, Cider and Perry. Admission package of £10 includes your entrance charge, glass hire and beer tokens. Free entrance on Saturday - simply hire your glass and purchase your beer tokens.

For further information visit:

www.stourhalescamra.org.uk

KIDDERMINSTER BEER FESTIVAL takes place in the Town Hall in the centre of Kidderminster at the end of May. The festival opens on the evening of the 26th, continuing on the Friday and Saturday. Thursday is CAMRA members preview from 4pm until 6pm with the festival open to the public from 6pm until 11pm. Fri & Sat hours are 11am to 11pm

For further information visit:

www.wyreforest.camra.org.uk

WOLVERHAMPTON BEER FESTIVAL will be held at a NEW VENUE this year. With refurbishment taking place at the Wulfrun Hall the local branch have secured the use of the Newhampton Arts Centre. The Newhampton centre is on Dunkley Street just off Newhampton Road East (WV1 4AN). The festival opens on Thursday 9th June at 5pm with a closure at 11pm. Friday 10th and Saturday 11th will open at 12noon and close at 11pm.

For more information visit:

www.wolverhamptoncamra.org.uk

STRATFORD-upon-AVON BEER FESTIVAL will be held at Stratford Racecourse as usual starting on Friday 10th June at 12noon until 11pm and on Saturday 11th June with opening time at 11am. Be aware that camping and caravan opportunities are available at this event.

For further details visit:

www.stratfordbeerfestival.org.uk

NUNEATON BEER FESTIVAL takes place on 17th and 18th June at the Co-op Social Club on Dugdale Street. The festival opens at 12noon until 10.30pm on both days.

For further details visit:

www.nuneaton.camra.org.uk

BROMSGROVE BEER FESTIVAL will this year take place at its usual venue of Bromsgrove Rugby Club. For further details visit:

www.bromsgrovebeerfestival.org.uk

HEREFORD BEER FESTIVAL – Beer on the Wye – will again be held adjacent to Hereford Rowing Club overlooking the river Wye between 8th and 10th July

For further information visit:

www.herefordcamra.org.uk

Four Clubs of the Year 2016

Eight Times Local Champion named as Finalist in the Campaign for Real Ale's National Club of the Year Competition

The Kinver Constitutional Club is looking to reclaim the Campaign for Real Ale's Club of the Year crown it last won in 2011. The Kinver is one of four clubs catering to members with interests as far ranging as motoring, the RAF and politics - but sharing a love of real ale - which have been named the finalists in the Campaign for Real Ale's Club of the Year competition.

Kinver has won the Dudley & South Staffordshire local branch COTY every year since 2007 and National Club of the Year in 2011.

Club Mirror magazine and CAMRA joined forces three years ago in the quest to find the best clubs serving real ale - those which offer a fantastic atmosphere, welcoming surroundings and most importantly, top quality real ale served in great condition. John Holland, Chairman of CAMRA's Clubs Advisory Group and one of the judges to determine the finalists commented: "CAMRA's Club of the Year Competition continues to go from strength to strength as more and more clubs show great commitment to quality real ale.

This has made it increasingly difficult to become a CAMRA Regional Club of the Year and then get through to the final. Therefore I anticipate an extremely close fight to become CAMRA's Club of the Year 2016".

Clubs are nominated by CAMRA branches across the country and judged by a panel of volunteer CAMRA members throughout the year. There are four finalists who will now have to wait until spring next year to discover which will be named CAMRA's Club of the Year.

The four finalists are:

Albatross RAFA Club, Bexhill-on-Sea

This friendly club welcomes CAMRA members; it has been the local Club of the Year since 2012 and regional Club of the Year in 2013.

It hosts popular beer festivals in April and September in its large function room and has a full diary of regular social events including jazz, folk and quiz nights. They stock beers from local brewers such as Rother Valley, Weltons and Dark Star.

The comprehensive range of upcoming beers is listed on a blackboard behind the bar. The club boasts an interesting collection of RAF memorabilia.

Cheltenham Motor Club

This friendly and welcoming club, formed in 1906, is open to all including CAMRA members that have their membership cards with them.

It usually has five ales on tap and Thatcher's Heritage cider. The club is divided into a bar/TV room and a games room separated by a folding partition.

The bar is decorated with motoring paraphernalia and an extensive collection of pump clips.

Kinver Constitutional Club

Built in 1902 on the site of an old pub, this converted hotel has three main areas: a smart restaurant, a large snooker room and a bar always dispensing 8-10 real ales and as many as 18 for special events, at reasonable prices.

The club enjoys an enviable sporting reputation and hosts regular quiz and music nights. Card-carrying CAMRA members welcome but must be signed in; groups should book ahead.

Kinver has won the local branch COTY every year since 2007 and National Club of the Year in 2011.

Orpington Liberal Club

This superb club is a runner-up in the 2014 CAMRA National Club of the year competition. It is also the Greater London Club of the Year for 2013, and has been the Club of the Year for the local CAMRA branch (Bromley) for the last three years.

The refurbished club is free of tie and is run by a real ale enthusiast who doesn't serve regular beers, but purely guests with particular focus on local beers and micro breweries. Nearly 200 different real ales were served in 2013 and prices are extremely competitive.

The club has regular live music, runs occasional beer festivals, and has a large rear garden.

It would be nice to visit them all but that could be difficult so why not visit the Con Club (as the village calls it) and see if your opinion matches the judges. There are also several other hostelrys in Kinver worth a visit!

Good luck to the Con Club.

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Cyprus Real Ale Microbrewery gets the final go-ahead!



It is not often that we are contacted directly with articles for Ales & Tales but we thought what with summer soon to arrive and holidays in the pipeline that this article might be of interest to our readers. Who knew that there was a micro-brewery in Cyprus! This is the story so far straight from the owners, and if any of you do make a visit we would be very interested to hear of your experiences.

The Yorkshire-family owners of the Paphos-based Aphrodite's Rock Microbrewery & Brewpub, the first licensed microbrewery in Cyprus, tell CAMRA their incredible story of how they overcame years of the former administration's rampant bureaucracy to start the business. William Ginn, 'Bill', said, "We started working on our licences shortly after arriving in Cyprus in October of 2010 but, as you'll see, the process was very drawn out and made extremely difficult and expensive for us". He added, "leaving Cyprus was never an option as Jean, my wife, and I and our daughters, Laura & Melanie, whilst proud of our Yorkshire heritage and of being British, just love living in beautiful Paphos."

Why Did You Decide to Start a Microbrewery in Cyprus?

I'm a Chartered Engineer in the oil industry and travelled all my life. I enjoy good beer but I've spent a lot of time in places where good beer, often where any beer, is impossible to find. Cyprus, like most Mediterranean resorts, only had bland, mass-produced commercial lagers and with nearly three

million tourists every year, half being British, we saw real potential to establish our craft microbrewery in Paphos.

Melanie, our youngest daughter, studied at Sunderland University, as one of a growing band of British women brewers, and worked with several top breweries in the UK honing her skills. We researched the market, prepared a detailed business plan and presented this to the Cyprus Investment Promotion Agency, CIPA, who agreed to help. We didn't enter into this lightly nor, knowing Cyprus, did we expect things to be easy but no market research, business plan or MBA could have prepared us for the sheer extent of the government nightmare to follow...

What Were the Problems You Encountered in Cyprus?

We found an old defunct winery, near Tsada village, set in a lush green valley in the beautiful hills above Paphos. The size was perfect plus it was full of charm and character and had all the permits as a winery. CIPA said the Change of Use application, from winery to brewery, should be straightforward. It was, however, an interminably slow and expensive process and it was Easter 2012, eighteen months of continuous work later, when our thick dossier of documentation was complete. We were assured all was in order and that we should receive the Permit to Brew in about a week. You can imagine our shock on receiving notification from Nicosia not with our promised Permit to Brew but with further demands followed by further and then still further increasingly unreasonable, impractical and, often, impossible demands.

It must be said that Jean and I were treated very badly during these years and our health undoubtedly suffered. For over two years our equipment stood idle and we incurred huge costs with no income. CIPA was shocked by the extent of the bureaucratic obstacles we encountered but was powerless to help. It almost felt as if there was a deliberate attempt by the government to drive us out of Cyprus for some reason!

We persevered and met all demands making it very clear we would not just go away. Cyprus Customs & Excise then dropped their bombshell announcement, never previously mentioned,

that should we ever receive a Permit to Brew we would need to pay a €51,000 bond and have a full-time Inspector on our premises whose salary and all expenses would be to our account and, after lunchtime, the salary would be at double time. The total cost of this resident Inspector could amount to well in excess of €100,000pa; a crippling sum for a small family business.

To Brussels and the European Parliament...

With no options left to us, and feeling very alone, we took this matter to the European Parliament in Brussels where, with the kind support of our former Yorkshire MEPs, questions were raised on our behalf over the legality of the Cyprus brewing industry and whether fair & equitable and non-discriminatory treatment should be expected for foreign direct investors into Cyprus as dictated under EU policies. As a result of the EU intervention, our Permit to Brew was granted with the resident Inspector and bond dropped. All seemed well but this was followed by a letter stating that we were 'Forbidden to trade outside the city of Paphos' and 'Forbidden to trade via the retail industry'. We objected and pointed out that this unfairly and unreasonably restricted our ability to compete with the Cyprus brewing duopoly of Keo and Carlsberg and was against the founding principle of 'freedom of movement of goods' in the EU. So our fight against Cyprus bureaucracy went on. It was nearly four years after we started when we finally received an unrestricted permit to brew and to distribute in Cyprus. People liken our story to David vs Goliath; I don't know about that but I do know that we couldn't just meekly accept such unfair treatment without a fight.

After all these years of Cyprus bureaucracy, I nearly called our Irish Red Ale 'Red Tape!' I am, however, now pleased to announce that a Mediterranean holiday no longer condemns CAMRA real ale drinkers to suffering long days of bland, mass-produced commercial lagers. Cheap flights and low cost accommodation make even a long weekend break possible so come to our little oasis in Paphos in 2016 and have a few great days with us!

Aphrodite's Rock Microbrewery & Brewpub Today

Aphrodite's Rock Microbrewery & Brewpub operates from a picturesque old winery just 20 minutes drive from Paphos or the recommended, clean, safe and direct No.645 bus from the Old Town; simply ring for the brewery shuttle on arrival at Tsada bus stop.



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Real ales and craft lagers are brewed to exacting standards by Head Brewer, Melanie, and her team. Four core ales (Yorkshire Rose Bitter, Lian Shee Irish Red Ale, ESB and London Porter) are cask-conditioned and dispensed by hand. Aphrodite's Rock Microbrewery & Brewpub is also the only cider producer in Cyprus. Brewery tours take place at 2pm Monday to Friday.

The Ginn family extends a warm welcome to all CAMRA members, and friends & family, to come and say 'Hello' when you're in Cyprus.

Opening Hours:

Monday – Saturday: 11.30am – 10.00pm
(breakfast from 9.30am)

Sunday Roast: 12.00noon – 4.00pm

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CIDER

Barcelona

On Thursday 11th February, Stourbridge and Halesowen's new Cider Rep Lizzie, and Social Media Coordinator Tim, celebrated their recent marriage with a long weekend away in Barcelona.

Wherever we go on holiday we always like to seek out new places for a quiet (or noisy) pint, usually after walking our legs off seeing the sights of a new town. We didn't expect many places would offer cask ale or real cider, however we soon found that there were plenty of other options rather than resorting to the usual 'holiday beers' of Estrella Damm and San Miguel.

A quick 'Google' when we arrived revealed a couple of articles on 'craft beer' (whatever that means) so we chose to give a couple a try throughout the course of the weekend.

Shortly after our arrival on the Thursday afternoon we literally bumped into 'Maestro'. A selection of their beer bottles was prominently on display outside the front door, so we decided to call in for a closer look. There were four 'standard' house beers plus one 'special'. Brewing equipment was on show upstairs so we found ourselves fortunate to have stumbled upon a beer-oasis so early on.

Our best intentions were to not be typical English tourists, and try and take in the local customs and traditions. However, we failed at the first hurdle after finding 'Brewdog'! Where possible we tried to choose Spanish or Catalan brews but in some ways it was good to see some British beer being sold abroad.

A short hop around the corner to 'BierCab', a great but busy bar offering around 30 beer taps, plus too many bottles to count! It may be the case that Cask Ale is firmly rooted in the British Isles, but a taste for different and flavoursome beer is now growing worldwide. The standout beer was 'The Chocolate Manifesto' by Flying Monkey.

Despite our appearance at a 'Brewdog' it did seem a shame to have any Belgian beer when there were

local brews on offer. As one bar was reputed to specialise in Belgian beer, we decided to give that one a miss.

Another day, another brewery, and a pleasant afternoon was spent at 'Black Lab' brewery close to the sea front. A fantastic range of ales in varying styles all brewed on the premises were available. Porters, Stouts, IPA's, all great!

Not a brewery, but again a fantastic selection of taps available next at Kælderkold; as close to a micropub as we were going to find, with what looked like capacity for no more than a couple-of-dozen people.



Later on we managed to find our way to Garage Brew-pub. We'd already had a couple of their beers earlier in the weekend at Kælderkold so it was great to drink it 'at source'. Being a Sunday the city seemed to be a little on the wind down, or it could be that everyone was at 'Camp Nou' watching the home side against Celta Vigo.

We tried to find a couple of other places on our beer tour on the Monday, but with reduced success. Being a weekend it should be noted that some opening hours were scaled back on Sunday, and other places were even closed on Monday to compensate.

All in all a great weekend trip to a great city. If any lessons are to be learned about craft beer on holiday it should be that a little forward planning will play dividends. That, and definitely try and master a little more than basic Spanish... or Catalan!

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www.stourbridgebeerfest.org.uk



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Ludlow Spring Festival & Surrounding Pubs

Every year we make our way over to the Ludlow Spring Festival on the Friday afternoon straight after work. Straightaway the car is packed with camping gear, the dogs are put in the back and we're off! The weather is always changeable in May but on a sunny day there is nothing better than a good beer or cider in the grounds of the castle with the dogs quietly watching the other visitors. The smell of food wafts over from the stalls and there is an array of classic cars on show. All of our favourite things!



It is definitely a date to be put in your diary especially if you have a willing, sober designated driver as B&Bs are booked up well in advance and last year even camping pitches were in demand. We can highly recommend camping at the Rugby Club which is only a short walk away. The staff on site were very friendly and the facilities are great due to having to accommodate all those rugby players during the season! On the Friday evening the castle opens up for a Meet the Brewer in the beer tent with over 200 beers to choose from. With this in mind we spent the evening in the local pubs knowing there would still be plenty left to sample on the Saturday!

The Rose & Crown

Just off the market square it would be very easy to walk past. The pub seems to have changed hands every year we have attended the festival, we remember it fondly as the Joules pub, inside remains the same. On our last visit it served Ludlow, Timothy Taylors & Castle Rock Harvest Pale. Unfortunately we couldn't find any real cider so it

was either Strongbow or Stowford Press here!

The Church

This must be one of the friendliest pubs in existence! There's a good range of well-kept beers including 2 Milds (Hobsons and Woods Chestnut). Also on offer was Wye Valley's Butty Bach and a lovely IPA called Zen from The Six Bells Brewery. Obviously we had to check that all the beers were in great condition so it was a good job they served batons of thirds! For cider drinkers there was Robinsons and a Hereford medium sweet, both went very well with the delicious pie we had for dinner. There's a dining room to the side of the bar and more seating upstairs.

Ludlow Brewery

Only a short walk from the centre, we stopped off at their brew house with a couple of friends who were collecting a mini keg they had pre-ordered. Like some breweries the opening times were limited so plan your visit wisely! The building itself is lovely. It's modern, clean, comfortable, and spacious with plenty of seating. They had on at the time their Blonde, Boiling Well, Best and Stairway beers, all in great condition as you would perhaps expect. It was also great to have Weston's Family Reserve on hand-pull.



Ludlow pubs are well worth a visit even when the festival isn't on, and as per usual with us these ones are all dog friendly! Don't forget there's the market every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, as well the main Food Festival in September.

The SIBA beer tent at the fair is arranged by type

and by strength, so you can target the style of beer you particularly like. Personal favourites last year were the Salopian Automaton, Grey Trees Valley Porter and Pithead Porter. The ciders were equally as good including some of Gwatkin's, Barbourne, and Ralph's (love the name!) with their Ciders and Perries. Pip's from Hereford, was a new cider to us which was very tasty indeed and great to try something different.

We had a nice chat with the guys from the Grey Trees brewery who came for a pint in The Church when the festival was winding down, even after serving beer all day they still looked like they were enjoying their pints!

This year the festival opens 5pm Friday 13th May to Sunday 15th May.

See <http://www.ludlowspringfestival.co.uk/>

Lizzie Ralph & Tim Cadwell

Litchfield Winter Beer Festival

This is a non-CAMRA event organised at the Guildhall, Bore Street by Lichfield Arts and is held over two days. Brian Pretty, the Chief Steward and long time friend of my son invited us to attend. A difficult decision, whether to go to a beer festival or not, it took micro-seconds to accept. Brian has been involved in organizing beer and jazz festivals for more years than he cares to remember.



Our train arrived at noon which was festival opening time. The Guildhall is just a 5 minute walk from the station if you know the way, it took us longer but we also popped in the tourist office en route so we arrived about twenty past. As we climbed the stairs we spotted a notice "Last Orders at 8pm"; we thought this was rather early for a beer festival to finish but later found out it was the name of the band playing that evening! There was plenty of seating but by then it was nearly all occupied. There was just one table and 3 chairs free, so Bridget grabbed them while I got some glasses for £1 deposit each, refunded on leaving.

A choice of 32 beers ranging from 3.5% to 6% and a selection of 6 ciders were on offer, many of which we were unfamiliar with. It is always a difficult choice to decide whether to enjoy an old favourite or try something new, I opted for the former: Fixed



Wheel Single Speed Centennial 4.5%, Bridget the latter: GWB Hambrook Pale 4%. Both were in top condition, as indeed were the other ten beers we tried. There was a good range of beer styles: wheat, pale, amber, mild, bitter, hoppy, golden, stout and porter. Of those we tried, Fixed Wheel No Brakes IPA 5.9% was my favourite and Pennine 2000 & Sixteen 4% was Bridget's.

As is usual, especially at smaller festivals like this, it was good to enjoy chatting to others sitting nearby as we had so many similar interests and time passed far too quickly. We left around 6 o'clock and headed for the station. It so happened, our route took us past the Whippet, Lichfield's only micro pub. We couldn't resist and checked it out. Cosy and friendly, but unfortunately two of their four guest ales were Ma Pardoe's, nothing wrong with that except we had been drinking it at source earlier that week. Never mind, we spent another hour supping the other two and chatting to locals. A great day out.

Tony Skirving

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Best Bitter Joint Silver
Batham's Bitter



Barley Wine Silver
Sarah Hughes Snowflake

The EU & Cider Duty

Written by one of CAMRA's foremost campaigners for real cider and as we are all being asked to review how we look at Britain's membership of the EU this article brings both these topics together to hopefully stimulate debate?



It seems that these days it is impossible to turn on the radio, TV or open a newspaper without seeing something about the UK and its relationship with the EU. So it is appropriate at this point to write something about how the UK levies duty on cider, and the latest proposals coming out of Europe about how we levy duty on our own ciders and perries. But first, an explanation of the current situation seems appropriate. Unlike beer, which has a sliding scale of duty, cider rates are based solely on strength, regardless of how much is produced. This means that Bulmer's pay the same duty rate as producers who make relatively small amounts. But there is one exception to this. The very small producers, who make less than 70 hectolitres a year (around 1500 gallons) are exempt from duty. The EU, which does not seem to like exceptions to any rule, has told the UK Government that they must levy duty on all cider producers, regardless of their size. This could have a devastating effect on the UK cider industry. There are now more cider producers in the UK than there have been for many, many years. New cider makers are cropping up almost on a weekly basis. Many of these are part-time, making cider as part of their main business, and many are hobby producers who have decided to expand and perhaps sell to their local pubs and beer festivals. The industry is

currently buoyant and the range of both ciders and perries gives the consumer a wide choice of drinks, similarly to what we have seen from small breweries in recent years. But what will happen if they have to start paying duty on top of the exorbitant costs of their production? Unfortunately, the majority of them will disappear. To make it financially viable, they will have to increase their production by three or four times their current output. For many, this is just not possible. The very small producers do not have either the space or time to be able to do this. This level of production is a hobby or an add on to an existing business – something they can make a bit of money at by selling their product at local festivals or farmers markets. They are entirely reliant on how many apples are grown each year, and if they increased production where would all of the extra apples come from? On top of this, the real cider market is only a small percentage of the UK's total output, so where would they sell their extra product? If they have to start paying duty, possibly up to several hundred would have to stop. At the moment there is a consultation into how duty is levied on alcohol products by the EU, and both the National Association of Cider Makers and CAMRA have been lobbying to keep the status quo. In fact, CAMRA's on-line petition about this collected over 20,000 names, and CAMRA has also been over to Europe to meet with the EU officials and MEPs to discuss the issue. It would also seem that the UK government is in favour of keeping things as they are, but I would assume that, in the current economic climate, it is way down the list of Mr Cameron's priorities. So now it is a matter of waiting to see what happens. Remember, most of these small producers are not big businessmen, they are cider enthusiasts, and as such they need to be supported. The alternative could see an enormous amount of producers closing, and we must not let that happen.

Mick Lewis



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Changing Hours/A Personal Viewpoint

When I began drinking beer in the 1960s, pubs opened in Carlisle at noon and closed at 2.30pm before opening their doors again at 6.00pm and closing at 10.30pm (this was better than across the Border as we got used to thirsty Scots arriving for last orders). I didn't think much about it in those days. It was just how it was. Nobody complained much or so it seemed.

I was later to learn that licensing hours had been reduced way back in the 1940s nationally to address excess consumption during the war years and nobody had done anything about it since. This was after the introduction of the State Management Scheme in Carlisle in the First World War when hours had already been reduced.

A further twenty years passed before the Blair Government introduced Flexible Licensing Hours which was dubbed 24 hour drinking by political opponents, health bodies, religious groups and the media. Even many publicans felt they would be working longer hours for little or no greater reward. Of course, such scaremongering was nonsense. Nobody expected or wanted pubs in Dudley and the surrounding areas to stay open until the small hours of the morning but it gave licensees the flexibility to meet the drinking needs of their customers or, to put it another way, the likes of you and I could go for a pint over tea time if we so wished. It also alleviated the problem of all pubs turning out their customers at the same time and all the associated problems that caused.

Times change and recent research suggests that drinking in pubs is not as popular now as in the past, which is another topic for discussion. However, there is a frustrating problem which I have encountered and that is going to the pub only to find it closed! The licensee has unexpectedly closed early due to lack of customers. Or after checking a website, going to a pub that advertised 11am

opening and having to stand outside waiting for it to open, which as a group of ladies of a certain age, we found hilarious. Opening hours are published in What Pub, Good Beer Guides etc and particularly if you are visiting a new area are used to make an informed choice on which pub to visit.

I believe licensees should state their opening and closing times on the door or window of their pub, advertise times and stick to them! It would mean a licensee would need to analyse their trading patterns and decide on the best option for their pub, even if this means closing up at 8.00pm early in the week and publishing it. At least the punter will know and surely this is what Flexible Licensing is all about.



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"100 FACT ON PUBS": The Third Chapter

Devotees and ardent followers of these 'masterpieces' of modern investigative journalism relax.....

It's what you've all been waiting for, Chapter Three, comprising complete and utter balderdash from the era that belonged to so many of our parents.

For the uninitiated this drivel comes from a little red book published in the 50's given to me by my late father. Smatterbooks No. 17 '100 Facts on Pubs' published by the Naldrett Press of London.

I left you dangling last time with the shocking revelation that Saloon Bars were becoming crowded again because women were going to the pubs with their husbands! Gasp..... horror! Whatever next?

Well, Fact 46 tells us that..... "many 'old-fashioned' pubs had small rooms, with no counter, where half-a-dozen 'cronies' would forgather nightly, or where farmers and market-buyers could discuss a 'deal' without being overheard". These 'furtive snugs' and drinking dens were denounced by..... yes, you've guessed, Temperance Reformers and the odd devout Methodist..... good job the Taxman didn't find out about these little rooms!

Let us move on to 'Staffing' of the Pub..... I hear nervous shuffling from behind the bar.....

Fact 54 informs us that... "the 'commonest' grade of staff are cellarman, bar-cellarman, barman, barmaid, potman, chef or cook, kitchen-porter or kitchen-maid, waiter, waitress and staff-maid. There may be a roundsman to deliver to customers of the off-sale department. There may be a whole-time or part-time gardener or green-keeper. In a big house, the landlord sometimes sub-divides the supervision and appoints a banquet-manager, a bar-manager and so on. You may not always find a cellarman or bar-cellarman, there is a good tradition that 'the Governor' looks after the cellar himself".

I wonder if the Department of Employment realise the potential of easing unemployment by staffing a pub properly, reintroducing all these archaic positions? It could even be made compulsory for landlords to venture down to the cellar once or twice a month to 'have a look'. (Contentious remark!)

Fact 56. "Some of the permanent staff prefer to sleep-in, some to sleep-out (I feel a song coming on). In the licensed trade, where the business may go on till 10.30 or 11 at night, there is more to be said for sleeping-in than in many other businesses, especially where it is difficult to get lodgings near the pub concerned".

Fact 58 tells us about wages for the 'common' staff.....

The Catering Wages Act states the typical rates for a 48 hour week should be.....

Cellarman in London, living-out

101/- [£5.05]

Barman outside London, living-out

90/- [£4.50]

Head Barmaid in London, living-in

58/- [£2.70]

Barmaid (over 21) outside London, living-in

50/- [£2.50]

Holidays with pay are also provided.

(I didn't get paid that much 10 years ago..... you know who you are!!!)

Fact 59 Assures us that.... "Such conditions are attracting a better type of man or woman to pub-service. Pub-service is beginning to offer a career".

Fact 60 Re-assures us that "training schemes under the joint auspices of the brewing industry and the education authority are already working in a few places. More are needed".

Fact 61 reminds the publican that he is "committing an offence if he sells liquor to a drunken person – not merely 'if he knowingly sells'. The law having imposed this obligation leaves him free to refuse to supply drink to anyone. No customer can demand drink".

I think that's a suitable place to end Chapter Three. I need a nice clear refreshing pint, served at the correct temperature, to stimulate the old grey matter for my final delve into the past, any recommendations?

Adrian Stephens



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Brewfist!

Now I'm a cider drinker and to be honest I rarely drink ale, possibly a porter at Christmas or if I'm at a pub where there's only Strongbow on offer.



However, this summer we found a tippie that might just tempt me to try more beers. To be honest when we arrived in Venice we weren't expecting to have a great deal of choice in real ale and cider (the only 'Italian' cider happened to be shipped over from Shepton Mallet!) We quite literally stumbled upon this beautiful find which is Brewfist's Spaceman and it is delicious! Fruity and rich it was a breath of fresh air after numerous fizzy German lagers, so if you manage to spot this little beauty definitely give it a try.

Oh and the bottle of Burocracy was good too! I think we had a few more after.....

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Black Country Drinking in the 1970s

As he reaches pensionable age Keith Hodgkins looks back on drinking in the Black Country 40 years ago.

I was in my early twenties when I started to make the connection between local beers and the heritage and identity of the Black Country. The trigger was the purchase of the 1972 Black Country Society calendar which had the theme of Black Country pubs and I spent the closing weeks of 1971 seeking out the twelve featured hostelries, most of which were completely new to me.* I was surprised to discover that two of them, the Old Swan in Netherton and the Vine (Bull and Bladder) in Brierley Hill, even had their own breweries attached and that their ales were quite different to the M&B and Banks's beers that I usually drank.



This set me off to discover more pubs and ales of character, a quest given added impetus in 1974 when I joined the Black Country Society and found several like-minded enthusiasts, some of whom were also members of the infant CAMRA and I quickly followed suit. The Society made a point of holding all their meetings in pubs around the area as a deliberate policy of experiencing varied aspects of the Black Country in just the way I was attempting. I was delighted to find that the Industrial Archaeology Group of the Society, to which I quickly gravitated, held their monthly meetings alternately in the Old Swan and the Bull and Bladder, giving a further opportunity to sample these brews on a regular basis. In the days before OGs were declared (they first appeared in the GBG in 1976) it didn't take much working out to realise that Batham's Bitter was a lot stronger than Pardoe's and that consumption had to be tailored

accordingly. 1974 also saw the appearance of the first Good Beer Guide which gave further resolve to visit more pubs. That first edition was a bit skimpy, listing just 23 Black Country houses but the 1975 version was more organised and informative with 46 entries and a good selection of pubs owned by the smaller independent and family brewers.

So what was the choice of beer in the early 1970s Black Country? Mitchells and Butlers was the dominant player with its three breweries at Cape Hill, Springfield and Highgate, each with very different histories, but by then part of the national Bass Charrington group. The massive Cape Hill brewery, not really of the Black Country but technically in it by a whisker being on the Smethwick side of the Hockley Brook, produced the forgettable Brew XI and the respectable M&B Mild. The Springfield brewery of William Butler (no relation to the other one) in Wolverhampton had been taken over by M&B in 1960 and by the time I started drinking its identity had been subsumed into the corporate style of Bass Charrington and its beers superseded by the drinkable but unexciting Springfield bitter. The former Butler's pubs could be identified by the fact that they sold Springfield and Highgate mild whereas the original M&B houses sold the Cape Hill products. Meanwhile the much smaller Highgate Brewery in Walsall seemingly carried on in much the same way as it had since being bought by M&B in 1939, brewing just its tasty mild and a winter old ale. All these beers were widely available in cask form in the 1970s with hand-pulled dispense being still quite common.

Running a close second to M&B with the number of pubs across the Black Country was the regional independent brewer Wolverhampton and Dudley. This consisted of Banks's of Wolverhampton and Julia Hanson and Sons of Dudley, which had been acquired in 1943. By the 1970s the two had developed a corporate identity which even applied to the Hanson's and Banks's beer recipes which were identical, or so I was told on my first visit to Banks's brewery in 1977. But the different

yeast, water and brewery infrastructure made for quite different beers and Hanson's was always my preferred choice of the two. W&D did brew good beer but for ale buffs it was something of a love-hate relationship. Despite championing real ale they had since the mid-1960s been pursuing a ruthless policy of ripping out hand-pulls and replacing them with charmless electric pumps. They also did immense damage to their architectural heritage at this time with insensitive pub refurb, perhaps in a vain desire to appear just as 'modern' as the larger national brewing conglomerates. Paradoxically, many more of the smaller M&B pubs remained 'unspoilt by progress' in this period, although most did not survive the rounds of closures over the next generation.



But it was with the small family brewers of Batham's, Holden's, Simpkiess and the tiny Old Swan that the allegiances of serious beer enthusiasts lay. Looking back, Simpkiess was always my favourite, although that memory is perhaps clouded by the fact that it's the one that did not survive. I remember Simpkiess pubs as being particularly cosy, all with coal fires and almost always with real ale although they did produce some keg bitter. Batham's never went in for keg and in some ways is the brewery that has changed least in the last 40 years with its almost singular emphasis on its distinctive bitter, drunk in vast quantities by its dedicated followers and often, even now, delivered in 54 gallon hogsheads. Holden's by contrast took up kegging in quite a big way in the early 1970s and it was difficult to find their bitter in cask form even though most of their pubs sold real mild.

I got the impression that mild ale generally wasn't as popular on the southern side of the Black Country as in the north. Simpkiess stopped brewing mild around 1981 and for Batham's it was never

a big seller, whereas Holden's mild seemed to have a much higher profile and of course Highgate was very popular in a five mile radius of Walsall. I can even remember a couple of my local pubs in Tipton, the Black Cock (Hanson's) and the Victoria (Banks's) selling mild only; a real anachronism by the 1970s.

In addition to the products of its nine indigenous breweries the Black Country also had a scattering of pubs from the Birmingham brewer Ansells, but by this time their real ales were in retreat. Davenport's also made a token appearance with just three or four houses all of which sold the real thing and whose rarity value made them worth seeking out. Their Rose and Crown at Wordsley became a GBG regular in the early 1980s.

Most heritage enthusiasts have a gripe about being born too late to have experienced a particular aspect of the disappeared past. For me it was missing the home brew at the Druids Head in Coseley, which closed in 1971 leaving Mrs Pardoe's as the last of the line. From the mid-1960s the Druids Head had become a Mecca for the then rising tide of Black Country enthusiasts and is where the founder members of the Black Country Society, Dr John Fletcher of Wednesbury and John Brimble of Tipton, first met each other and hatched plans to save the area's name and identity from oblivion. Despite the tragic losses of so many well-loved beers and breweries over the last 40 years they would be proud to know that the Black Country's brewing output still plays a massive part in proclaiming the identity of the area.

*The pubs featured on that 1972 Black Country Calendar were:

- Old Swan, Netherton
- Star Vaults, Bilston (closed))
- Victoria Hotel, Old Hill (closed)
- Navigation, Wednesfield
- White Swan, Tipton (closed)
- Fiddlers Arms, Gornal
- Five Ways, Cradley Heath (closed)
- Rollers Arms Coseley (closed)
- Bell, Oldbury
- Vine (Bull & Bladder) Brierley Hill.
- Britannia, Tipton (closed)
- Swan, Darlaston

Branch Diaries

Dudley & South Staffs

APRIL

Sat 23rd

Branch Social - South Staffordshire. Cat, Enville - 12noon then Kinver Constitutional Club - 2pm followed by Kinver pubs. Transport being arranged from Wallheath to Enville and from Enville to Kinver. To book a seat contact:

socialsecretary@dudleycamra.org.uk

Sat 23rd

Regional St. George's Day crawl in Coventry. Start 1pm Twisted Barrel Brewery. Optional dress code red and white.

Mon 25th

Branch Meeting - 8pm. Vine (Bull & Bladder), 10 Delph Road, Brierley Hill DY5 2TN. All Welcome

Wed 27th

Beer Quality Scoring Campaign - Brierley Hill Details TBC

MAY

Wed 4th

Beer Quality Scoring Campaign - Cradley Heath / Netherton. Details TBC

Sat 14th

Minibus Trip - Ludlow Spring Festival of Food and Drink. There will be two costs to this trip in that I will be charging for the transport. Should anyone wish to attend the main festival in the castle courtyard a payment at the gate will have to be made. As there is plenty to see or do outside the castle as well, it will be left to the individual to pay entry themselves if they want to go into the castle. Cost for minibus approx £12

Contact: socialsecretary@dudleycamra.org.uk

Mon 23rd

Branch Meeting - EGM - 8pm. Rose & Crown, 161 Bank Street, Brierley Hill DY5 3DD

Wed 25th

Beer Quality Scoring Campaign - Lower Gornal Details TBC

Fri 27th

Branch Social - Cider Festival at Jolly Crispin, 25 Clarence Street, Upper Gornal DY3 1UL

JUNE

Sat 4th

Beer Quality Scoring Campaign - Kinver Details TBC

Wed 8th

Beer Quality Scoring Campaign - Kingswinford Details TBC

Wed 22nd

Beer Quality Scoring Campaign - Wordsley Details TBC

Mon 27th

Branch Meeting - 8pm.

Old Swan, 89 Halesowen Road, Netherton DY2 9PY

JULY

Wed 13th

Beer Quality Scoring Campaign - Blackheath Details TBC

Sun 19th

Kinver Country Fayre volunteers for beer tent contact Pam - editor

Mon 25th

Branch Meeting -8pm. Lamp Tavern, 116 High Street, Dudley DY1 1QT

AUGUST

Sat 6th

Beer Quality Scoring Campaign - Wombourne/ Swindon/Himley/Wallheath. Details TBC

Thurs 11th

Great British Beer Festival Trip. Entry fee for tickets for members entry cost will be included in the total price. I am trying to keep the cost as close to last years price as possible The final price will be available asap. Estimated at £28

Contact: socialsecretary@dudleycamra.org.uk

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Stourbridge & Halesowen

APRIL

Thursday, 21st – Saturday 23rd

Stourbridge Beer Festival, Stourbridge Town Hall
(See separate entry for details)

MAY

Wednesday, 18th – 8.00pm.

Branch Meeting and Club of the Year presentation
Coombs Wood Sports & Social Club, Stewarts
Road, Halesowen B63 4 HB. Bring CAMRA
Membership Card

Saturday, 14th – 12 Noon

Regional Mild Crawl Stoke-on-Trent (See Branch
Website for full itinerary when known)

Saturday, 21st – 9.00am

Stourbridge Beer Festival Thank-You trip to Bristol.
Free to Festival workers £10 others

Thursday, 26th – Saturday, 28th

Kidderminster Beer Festival, Town Hall,
Kidderminster. (See Branch Website for fuller
details nearer the time)

Tuesday, 31st – 8.00pm

Norton Crawl. Start New Inn, Cherry Street DY8
3YQ then Gigmill, Longlands, Garibaldi and Plough
& Harrow

JUNE

Wednesday, 8th – 8.00pm.

Branch Meeting Waggon & Horses, 31 Worcester
Street Stourbridge DY8 1AT

Monday, 20th – 8.00pm

Halesowen Crawl start Cobham Arms 217 Howley
Grange Road, B62 0JD then Royal Oak, Stag &
Three Horseshoes, Snooks and Swan

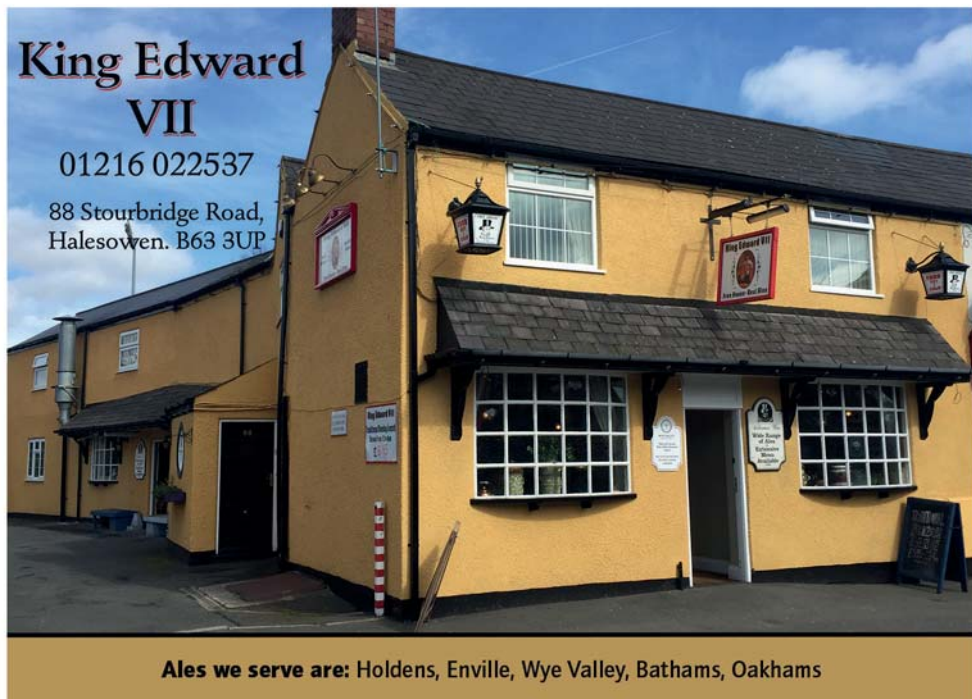
JULY

Wednesday, 6th – 8.00pm

Branch Meeting Waggon & Horses, 21 Stourbridge
Road, Halesowen B63 3TU

Thursday, 21st – 8.00pm

Hayley Green Crawl start Maypole 93 Bassnage
Road, B63 4HB then Crafty Pint and Rose & Crown



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Hitchmough's Archives

PACK HORSE 29, Hill Street, Netherton

Dudley Herald 22/4/1876

"Early on Saturday morning the Netherton Hill Brewery, belonging to Mr. Richard Rollinson, was totally destroyed by fire. The building has only recently been completed, and it was raised at considerable cost, internal fittings of superior character having been adopted, as well as the most modern appliances. Mr. Rollinson was attending to some ale in working, and when he left the brewery all was right. At half past two in the morning a whitesmith named Joseph Rann, whilst passing over Church Hill, discovered that a fire had broken out and flames were issuing from the basement storey. He raised an alarm and Mr. Rollinson with the other inmates of the PACK HORSE INN, adjoining the brewery, were at once aroused.

Efforts to arrest what had now become a tremendous conflagration were quite unavailing. There were no stand pipes and the only way in which water could be got was by buckets. Considering that the building is situated upon the highest point of Netherton and that the flames were fanned by strong winds, it is not surprising that in a very short time the main portion of the brewery was a roofless ruin. Although the fire brigade arrived in 12 minutes after information had been conveyed to the Dudley Police Station they found the brewery with little exception completely gutted. Nothing was left but the bare and tottering walls. All that could be done was to prevent the spread of the fire and to save some of the property from further destruction. Approach to the wrecked building was highly dangerous, and whilst the debris was being removed there were slight casualties. The origin of the fire is unknown.

During the progress of the fire, scandalous robberies were committed by the mob. £30 is an amount mentioned as having been taken out of the PACK HORSE INN and quantities of liquors as well as furniture. The brewery was insured in the Commercial Union Assurance Society for £4,500 and the damage done amounts to £2,500. Mr. Rollinson had only been recently insured and paid the premium two days previous to the fire."



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The Big Event

Stourbridge & Halesowen branch had a great reason to celebrate early in February – 2 of our most active members had decided to get married and appropriately arranged the afternoon/evening reception at a brewery. Sadler's Brewhouse was a popular choice with all other members of our branch and we dutifully set about toasting the happy couple.

Tim Cadwell is Social Secretary and Lizzie Ralph our Apple representative – cider was also laid on to accompany Sadler's wide range of beers. Unusually the reception was dog-friendly, Tim and Lizzie being the proud owners of 2 Staffies and ... Alfie. All were suitably adorned with wedding bows.



In short, a great venue, great beer, dad dancing, wonderful company, beautiful bride and groom – the perfect recipe for an enjoyable evening as evidenced by the photographs.



Back Room Tales

"It's a mad house" said Wizza, and I have to say that I agreed with him on this occasion. It was getting late and the back room had gotten a bit rowdy, it had been a long session. Jojo had her harmonica out and was accompanying Vera who was giving renditions of bawdy music hall songs. Dave was leering at Vera, with open mouth, as once again she demonstrated the current lyrics by lifting up her jumper and revealing some underwear that looked like a medieval torture device, in fluorescent pink. Wizza shook his head and said "I really wish she would stop that, she's got to be a least hundred and it's not a pretty sight". "I think you're being a bit hard," I said "she's only 83 and enjoying herself". Wizza said "she can't sing, Jojo can't play and the pub doesn't have a music license". "I don't see the problem then" I retorted. Then Wizza said "is Dave drooling?" Everyone turned and looked at Dave who, on becoming aware of the close attention, looked sheepish, wiped his mouth, and said "it's

disgraceful and shouldn't be allowed, a woman her age should set an example". Deedee, the barmaid, had appeared, Dave smiled at her and continued "although, maybe Vera is setting a good example?" Deedee looked down at Dave, smiled sweetly, and said "in your dreams". Dave blushed like a traffic light. She then turned to Jojo and asked "do you do requests?" Jojo nodded enthusiastically and said "what would you like dear?" To which Deedee replied "how about a bit of peace and quiet?" Vera, who had gotten very excited, said "peace and quiet? How does it go?"

Jeffrey Hudson writes about the doings in his Black Country local.

(some names have been changed to protect the innocent)



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