

**Issue 31**

**Autumn 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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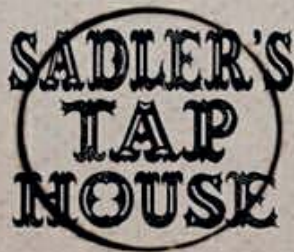
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# Welcome Back

The Autumnal Equinox has been and gone, the nights are drawing in, but don't be downhearted as the hops have been harvested ready for the next twelve months' beers. Catch up with local breweries on our Brewery News page. The main talking point of the last few months has been the Dudley Winter Ales Fayre. It was feared that it wouldn't take place due a shortage of volunteers to organise and run it. The good news is its going ahead. See DWAF page.

Stourbridge is certainly bucking the national trend with new pubs and bars opening or being refurbished under new ownership. First the Scary Canary opened as a music/film venue with cask and keg beer. What was a furniture shop in Victoria Passage is now the popular Barbridge. Bordeaux House, re-opened as Red House Boutique, now under the watchful eye of Tim Hodgkinson and is going from strength to strength. The Old Bank which had been closed for years is now a new public house appropriately named the Old Bank. Halesowen not wishing to be left out has a new micro pub, The Crafty Pint and the ever popular Fixed Wheel Brewery serves direct to the public on Saturdays. More information can be found in the Stourbridge & Halesowen article, the Crafty Pint article and in Brewery News.

After the disappointment of the flooded out Kinver Fayre in June it was re-scheduled to September and was a huge success. We were there manning the real ale bar which was right next to the main music stand and kept us entertained as we served a great selection of Enville and Kinver beers. Speaking of Enville, Jerry Hedges features on our front cover, find out more about him on our Meet the Director & Co-Owner page.

Each year CAMRA announces the Champion Beer of Britain. If you've ever wondered how it is chosen and want to know this year's winner see how in our Best of Britain page. The new CAMRA Good Beer Guide came out last month and there have been a few changes locally. This doesn't mean that those pubs that are not in the guide are not worth going in; it's just that we are only allowed a limited number of entries. CAMRA members can buy the guide at preferential prices direct from <https://shop.camra.org.uk/books.html>

We don't know if you have noticed but more and more breweries are changing to cans. Read Leigh Norwood's excellent explanation of why in his Canned Beer pages.

Brewery news and pub news reflect the information we have been given and are as up to date as we can make them. 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](mailto:editor@dudleycamra.org.uk). or [editor@stourhales.camra.org.uk](mailto:editor@stourhales.camra.org.uk)

We try to include something for everybody and hope that you enjoy some of the articles contributed by members of the branches. We are always pleased to receive new contributions, if you feel you would like to put pen to paper then send your views, comments or articles to [editor@dudleycamra.org.uk](mailto:editor@dudleycamra.org.uk) or [editor@stourhales.camra.org.uk](mailto:editor@stourhales.camra.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 January, hope you enjoy this issue.

Cheers

Pam and Tony

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# Pub News

## Chapel House (formerly Miners Arms), Ruiton Street, Lower Gornal DY3 2EG

This small, traditional, Holden's pub has reopened under the new management of James Stevens and Katie Ann. In addition to Holden's Bitter, Golden Glow and Special, there is one guest beer, which is often dark and from a Black Country brewery. There is one real cider (which varies) served on handpump. Cobs are available (bread made on the premises by chef Ben Parkes) and there are hot offerings at weekends, all home-made. Opening times are 3-11 Mon-Thu, 12-11 Fri-Sat, 11-10:30 Sun.

## Red House Boutique, Stourbridge



*Tim & Andy*

After a successful three months trading the Red House Boutique has added to the team with Tim Hodgkinson and Andy Franks, both of whom have a wealth of experience within the local hospitality scene which will add fantastic value to the already popular venue.

8 cask ales are on offer, 5 of which are local. Specialised Keg lines are to be added with Fixed Wheel the first of these planned.

An amazing Belgian Bottle Beer range is also evident.

## Sadlers

Sadlers Broomhouse is pleased to have been included in the Good Beer Guide 2017 for the first time only 18 months after opening.



New bar manager Frankie Heekin was over the moon to learn of the news and is dedicated to providing a great selection to our loyal customers.

As a special celebration why not have a pint on us? We are giving away 72 pints of cask ale to CAMRA members who come to us in the month of November. Proof of current membership must be shown at time of purchase and one pint per member will be given until our celebration cask is drunk! Come early to avoid disappointment.

## Licensees/Customers

If you have something happening in your pub that you would like included in the next PUB NEWS, send it to [editor@stourhailes.camra.org.uk](mailto:editor@stourhailes.camra.org.uk)



# Meet the Director & Co-Owner

## **Name - Jerry Hedges - Director and Co-Owner of Enville Ales Limited**

**Age** - 'Doing the garden, digging the weeds, who could ask for more'. (Paul McCartney)

### **Background before Brewing?**

Managing Director of an IT company developing software solutions for the publishing industry. Started as a trainee programmer with Legal and General in 1970 and retired after 37 years in 2007.

### **What was your first alcoholic drink?**

A pint of L&B (light and bitter) in the Ye Olde White Lion in Warlingham, Surrey. School lunch in the 5th form was a pint (2 on a Friday) and a game of bar billiards! Everyone drank light and bitter. A good landlord served 3/4 of a pint in a pint glass and gave you a 1/2 pint bottle of light ale WTO (With Top Off) to add yourself. It was the fastest way to serve in a busy bar as the barman didn't have to wait for anything to settle. Adding the Light Ale without an 'eruption' was a skill we all learnt quickly!

### **What are your hobbies and interests?**

My wonderful wife Jill, my two lads James and Jordan and man's best friend, our large black lab, Monty. Sport particularly cricket (England and Surrey), rugby (England and Stourbridge), football (Crystal Palace) F1 and performance cars. I love my TVR Griffith 500 which I've owned for 18 years and it's still only done 22,000 miles. My day car is a Golf 'R' which is so much fun to drive. Cooking especially using my BBQ and Smoker. (I threw the gas away this year and went back to charcoal in a Weber. So much more flavour)

### **What is your favourite?**

#### **Beer your own?**

Enville Ginger. It's so moreish and is 90% responsible for most of the 4 stone I've gained in the last 9 years!

#### **and someone else's?**

There are so many from which to choose which is part of the pleasure of cask ale but one beer is stand out in that I have enjoyed it since I moved to Stourton 34 years ago and still do; Bathams Bitter. I also enjoy craft ale and have acquired the taste for American hops. At just 3.8% Dead Pony Club is sessionable, Sierra Nevada Pale Ale is the 'Daddy' and inspiration behind pioneers like Brewdog (try their Elvis Juice) and back to cask, the guys at Oakham do a fine job with Citra and Green Devil.

#### **Food?**

Cantonese (with a pint or six of Citra at the Barton Arms) and American wings, Hooter's particularly and smoke ribs (so sad about the fire at Hickory's. We have to go to Rubs in Birmingham until it's rebuilt). Birthdays and special occasions you'll find our family in Il Michelangelo in Brockmoor enjoying Leonardo's fine Italian cuisine. Drink that's not real ale? Tea (made in a pot with leaf tea and served in a pint mug) and Sharish Gin (from Monsaraz in Portugal) with Fever Tree Mediterranean Tonic, crushed ice and lime.

#### **Music?**

I could write a book about the diversity of music I enjoy from last night at the proms to Welsh Male Voice Choirs but Soul, Blues and Motown from my youth, Ska, Paul Carrack (How long), Ellie Goulding, Matt Bianco, Jools Holland; the list is endless.

#### **Pub - could be anywhere in the country as long as you don't own it?**

The Lamb, Lamb's Conduit Street, London WC1. Always known as the best Young's pub in London especially when Youngs brewed in Wandsworth. It has a fabulous mahogany bar and fittings, a really deep cellar which helps condition the ale and the finest Victorian snob screens with cut glass I have ever seen. I celebrated 18, 21 and my stag night there and still manage to get back there two or three times a year.



## How did you get started in the trade?

Malcolm, Peter, Owen and I all drank in the Foresters Arms in Wollaston. Enville Ale was our favourite ale. We met Enville's entrepreneurial founder, Will Cort who was enthusiastic and passionate about cask ale. Will invited us to invest in the brewery's expansion in 2001 which we did and in 2007 we bought Will out and were joined by Lynn who had been running the office since almost day one. Will asked us to support Mary Stevens Hospice in memory of his late wife Debbie and we still do this through each brewery tour along with the Acorns children's cancer charity.

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

2-3 months from sample brewing, tasting, refinement and finally a commercial brew. Martyn Powell our Head Brewer is great at interpreting and meeting our requests. We can define a style, give him a sample of something similar that we like and say that's what we want but with more aroma and a drier finish for example. Next board meeting it's ready to taste which is why I like board meetings! Our Winter Ale first brewed in 2014 was tweaked in 2015 and will be even better this year so look out for Blizzard ABV 6.5% in December.

## What are your aspirations for the business?

To maintain Enville's reputation for quality, consistency and service and hopefully continue to sell to our maximum production capacity. In my dreams I'd like a 45BB brew length and the ability to treble our capacity but given the average age of the owners I just wish we'd all joined the industry 30 years earlier, but you never know.....

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

Without a doubt the best has been the ending of the duty escalator. If it had continued over the past 4 years we'd all be paying £4.50 - £5.00 a pint by now. Why? Each time the government raised duty it provided a 'smokescreen' for brewers, wholesalers,

Pubcos and licensees to add their bit such that each penny in duty resulted in a 25p increase at the bar. Enville hasn't increased in over 4 years and neither has the duty so if your pint has gone up.....On the downside pub closures continue to be a worry. Tied house paying £150 a barrel in 'Wet Rent' to Pubcos doesn't incentivise licensees but sadly I can't see the introduction of MRO's (Market Rent Only) making much difference.

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

Without CAMRA we simply wouldn't have a business. I do think CAMRA needs to focus on the next generation and help us brewers make sure cask ale doesn't become like newspapers where very few people under 50 read them anymore due to emerging technology. Talk up flavours and styles, match ale and food, embrace emerging trends (don't simply discount 'craft beer' or perceive it as a competitor) and help widen the appeal of ale especially to the female sector.



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# Brewery News

**Holden's Brewery** has launched The Great Holden's Beer Hunt which runs from Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September to Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December. Visit Holden's pubs, order a pint of Holden's and get your card stamped at the bar. There are two options: **The Mini Beer Hunt** - Visit 9 pubs then the Brewery Bottle Shop and you'll receive a Holden's tankard, a car sticker and a packet of Hand-cooked Pork Scratchings. **The Big Beer Hunt** - Visit all pubs, go to the Brewery Bottle Shop, then arrange the 20 letters and numbers into a well-known phrase associated with Holden's. Submit your card and become an official Holden's Beer Hunter. You will receive a Holden's tankard, a packet of Hand-cooked Pork Scratchings, a limited edition 'Holden's Beer Hunter' T-shirt, a car sticker and a bottle of award-winning Black Country Ale.

**Pig Iron Brewery** of Brierley Hill are rumoured to be looking to open another pub. As yet no details are available as to where the establishment will be.

**Blue Bear Brewery** in Smethwick is the home of the Highgate and Davenport's brewing operation these days. Older readers may well remember Davenport's Top Brew De Luxe. Hopefully this beer is going to be recreated for Dudley Winter Ales Fayre in November.

**Craddock's Brewery** have opened a fourth pub to add to the Duke William and the Plough and Harrow in Stourbridge, and the King Charles II in Worcester. The Talbot in Droitwich High Street is offering a full range of ales from Craddock's and Bridgnorth Brewery.

**Green Duck Brewery** has seen further success in the last 3 months of Green Duck's monthly specials. Hoppy Hopkins sold out to trade orders in one day and Genner's Gargantuan Ale was also popular. Sales of cask beers continue to grow, and the brewery is also making their beer available in Key Keg form. The brewery is experimenting with different malts in their beers, which started with a 5% 'Wheat Malt' showcase beer. The Badelynge

Brewery Bar also hosted a Gin festival in September, but soon returns to hosting its 'Oktoberfest' (20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> October). Green Duck will also be hosting Stourbridge & Halesowen CAMRA branch members' night on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October. 2 x 4BBL fermenters have been delivered, and are intended for use on Key Keg and experimental beers. Beers to look out for in the run up to Christmas include Dazzling Chocolate Stout and Groovy Green Hopped Ale.

**Fixed Wheel Brewery** is enjoying a manic but satisfying phase where the brewery is operating at full capacity and maintaining supplies to meet the high demand for their products.

The brewery has just invested in a new bottling line which has the capacity to deliver 480 litres an hour, which equates to 1450 bottles an hour.

The family member (Harriet), who was working part time, is now working full time to meet the capacity for the demand, by both the suppliers and the public for their beer.

Fixed Wheel has applied for an extension to their existing licence to sell from the brewery. Subject to approval by the licensing authority, it is anticipated that the brewery will be opening Friday evening and Sunday lunch time.

Friday 16.00 to 20.00

Sunday 11.00 to 15.00

Fixed Wheel has undertaken a CoLab special with Brewdog Birmingham which will be released late October throughout the country, at all Brewdog outlets, with them taking the whole batch in Key Keg, however Scott has stated that there will be an opportunity to sample a limited amount at the brewery.

The latest monthly special is 'Milk Race Stout' a true quaffable milk stout which has been well received. At the Birmingham Beer Festival Fixed Wheel have their own bar and will feature their 4 core beers, 'Chain Reaction', 'No Brakes IPA', 'Century Gold' and the award winning 'Black Heath Stout', supplementing those beers will be 'Ride It Like You Stole It' and 'Single Speed Equinox'. Additionally,



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at the Birmingham Beer Festival, Fixed Wheel have entered their 4 core beers into the SIBA Midlands Regional Competition for cask and bottled beers. Their now traditional brewery Christmas party for customers will be held on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December and to thank all the customers for their support throughout the year, they will again offer their second pint free of charge.

**Batham's** - No change regarding regular beers. Production of XXX in the offing and anticipated at Dudley Winter Ales Fayre 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> November. After demolition of adjacent housing and site clearance service yard now complete with attractive iron gates facing Delph Road.

Plough & Harrow, Kinver now taken over by Tim Batham's daughter Claire, currently recruiting additional staff due to increase in sales.

### Sadler's Gets Parliamentary Approval

Sadler's is proud to share that JPA is to be served in none other than the Houses of Parliament. Margo James (MP for Stourbridge since 2010), was photographed pulling a perfect pint in the 'Strangers' Bar' in the Houses of Parliament. Margot has long been a supporter of Sadler's in her work championing small local businesses. JPA has been brewed at Sadler's since it started in 2004 and with its straw colour and low 3.8% abv it has stuck around as a firm favourite.



### Enville

Enville Seasonals coming in October/November; Gothic Ale and Ginger Gothic (both 5.2% ABV Dark Stouts) for Halloween and Bonfire Night and December/January Blizzard (6.5% strong Winter Ale)

## The Plough Inn

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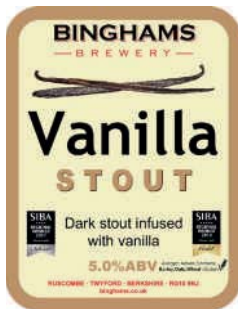
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# Best in Britain...

A speciality beer has been crowned best in Britain after a year-long competition.

Binghams Vanilla Stout, brewed in Berkshire, was named the best beer of 2016 by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Local tasting panels and regional heats culminated in the country's best beers competing at CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival in London.



Binghams Vanilla Stout is a 5% Dark Stout infused with vanilla and dark malts to create a smooth and dark beer.

Nik Antona of CAMRA said: 'This year all the judges commented on how high the quality was in all the beers in the final stages of the competition and what a wide range of styles and beers they had to try and choose between. Binghams Vanilla Stout is packed full of comforting flavours and I'm sure it will be a popular Champion Beer Choice.'

Chris Bingham is delighted with the interest the award has attracted, saying: 'The Gold award in Supreme Champion Beer of Britain 2016 means a huge amount to Binghams Brewery and has created a surge of interest in Vanilla Stout and our other beers from not only the public at our brewery shop but also pubs and wholesalers.'

## Now to 2017.....

Now that we have crowned this year's Champion Beers it's time for you to consider the beers you want to nominate for the next Champion Beer of Britain (CBoB) competition.

All CAMRA members have the chance to nominate beers from their local area via the CBoB voting website. This means that beers from all parts of the country have an equal chance to be nominated.

You can nominate up to five beers in each of the eleven categories to be put forward for the CBoB competition, but if you only want to nominate beers in one category, or even just one beer, that's fine. The more votes we get, the better the results will be.

You do not have to nominate all the beers in one go. You can alter your selections anytime up to the deadline on 1<sup>st</sup> November.

Not all beers are eligible for CBoB; mainstream beer styles like Bitters, Best Bitters, Strong Bitters & Golden Ales have to be available for at least 7 months of the year. Other beer styles have to be available for a lesser period depending on the rarity and seasonality of the beer style.

Initial nominations for CBoB are made at a local level so only beers that are produced in the area near you (based on your registered address) will be available for nomination. We realise that some of you will drink beers from a wider area, but many members find very long lists of beers with which they are unfamiliar very off-putting.

If you want to give your favourite beer a chance you need to vote, if you are a CAMRA member. If you are not a CAMRA member and feel that JOE BLOGGS IPA is the best beer in the world then join CAMRA and make sure that next year you can cast your vote.

# Festival News

The beer festival season is coming to a close for 2016 with only a few regional events to alert you to. Even so, they are probably some of the more interesting places to visit.

## STOKE BEER FESTIVAL

In mid October Stoke Beer Festival takes place in Fenton Manor Sports Complex, just off City Road, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2RR. The festival opens its doors on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October and finishes on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and you can drink from Noon until 11pm on all days. 200 Beers, Ciders, Perry, Fruit Wines and Bottled Beers will be available to tickle your taste-buds. Entrance is FREE for CAMRA members at all sessions. Glass hire is £2.50.

[www.camrapotteries.co.uk](http://www.camrapotteries.co.uk)

## BIRMINGHAM BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

Birmingham Beer and Cider Festival follows on the following weekend. It takes place from Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> October until Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October. The venue is again the former Hockley bus garage just off the Hockley Flyover or more officially the festival is at New Bingley Hall, 1 Hockley Circus, B18 5PP. With regular 74 buses from the Dudley area and Jewellery Quarter station just up the road close to Midlands metro it is an ideal festival to visit. The festival opens its doors at 11am each day and closes at 10.30pm. Entrance to the event is from £5 plus you will need to hire (cost refundable) a festival glass and purchase some drinks tokens. 250+ beers and 70+ ciders should give everyone plenty to pick from. Plenty of seating is available and entertainment is in an adjoining area with another bar. The festival is also hosting several beer and cider tutored tastings and tickets for these can be obtained by visiting the beer festival website.

<http://www.birminghambeerfestival.org.uk>

## DUDLEY WINTER ALES FAYRE

Finally, and detailed elsewhere, the final festival of the year is Dudley Winter Ales Fayre. A dedicated strong beer event this festival was uncertain due to the lack of support from CAMRA MEMBERS in the local branch area. Dudley & South Staffs CAMRA

has 1100 members yet only a dozen or so are committed to the organisation and planning of this event. Without significant support the viability of this festival is still uncertain. THIS IS YOUR EVENT – PLEASE SUPPORT IT.

The festival takes place at its usual slot of the last weekend in November. Opening as usual on the evening of Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>, at 5.30pm until 11pm. Friday is noon until 11pm and Saturday will be Noon until 11pm (unless the beer runs out earlier). 70+ Real Ales, Cider and fruit wine are accompanied by a small range of foreign bottled beers. Traditional Black Country food will again be provided by Little Devils Diner. Entertainment Friday evening and Saturday. Seating is very limited at this festival. Under 18's not admitted on Thursday & Friday. Entrance bundle is £15 and includes your drinks vouchers and glass hire (refundable).

[www.dudleycamra.org.uk](http://www.dudleycamra.org.uk)

Steve Thompson



**Church End Brewery**  
Ridge Lane, Nr Atherstone  
CV10 0RD

**Brewery Tap Opening Times:**  
Thursday 6pm - 11pm  
Friday 12pm - 11pm  
Saturday 12pm - 11pm  
Sunday 12pm - 10.30pm

**For Brewery Tours or for further  
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# Black Country Beer Day Out

Since the dawn of the industrial revolution, that made and shaped the Black Country and carried its name and reputation through the world, good beer and ale has been synonymous with that revolution. Since the introduction of Black Country Day two of the local Black Country CAMRA branches, Stourbridge & Halesowen and Dudley & South Staffs, join together to organise and promote good beer as part of the Black Country celebrations.



This year's event on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> July started at 11am, when everyone came together at one of the Black Country's newest and award winning breweries, the 'Fixed Wheel' Brewery located in Blackheath.

As part of the celebration the brewery was awarded 2 certificates for achieving 1st in the 'Best Beer' category and a joint 3rd category for 2 of its beers at the recently held Stourbridge Beer Festival.

The assembled entourage then moved to another award winning establishment, the Swan in Long Lane, where the licensee received the award for Pub of the Year for Stourbridge & Halesowen. From here we moved to Halesowen for a walkabout covering

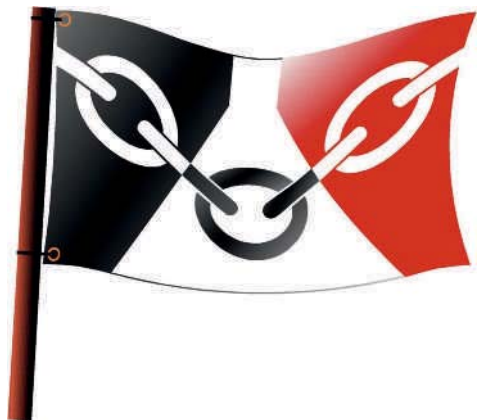
3 Good Beer Guide pubs, after which we hopped on a bus to 'Ma Pardoes', the Old Swan, in Netherton. Being suitably refreshed the group continued on, calling at the Black Country Day Festival in Stone Street, Dudley.

From there we took another bus to complete a Gornal walkabout, visiting a further 5 hostelries. It was then back on a bus to return home. You may have noticed that buses were the only form of transport used and great care was taken in providing information on what bus and where you caught it by the organisers.

Yorkshire people claim that they live in 'God's own County', but this group, after sampling the delights of the Black Country's real ales and beers, would certainly offer a challenge up to that claim.

Look out for information on next years Black Country Beer Day, it's a bostin' day out.

Phil Zalic





# Hitchmough's Archives

**BRITANNIA, Springfield Lane, Rowley Regis**

*West Bromwich Weekly News 28/5/1881*

"Benjamin Round, jun, was charged with being drunk and refusing to quit his father's house, the BRITANNIA INN, Springfield, on the 19th inst. He was also charged with breaking the windows, and assaulting Mary Davis, and using threats towards his mother. It appeared that on the night in question defendant was at his father's house drunk. He asked for some beer, and being refused he drew it himself. Being remonstrated with he broke the cups, and then assaulted his sister by pulling her hair and striking her. He was put out, and he then used threats towards his mother, and also smashed 14 panes of glass, doing damage to the extent of 14s.

Defendant said he was very sorry for what he had done.

He was sent to prison for one month for assaulting his sister, and ordered to pay the costs, amounting to 32s 6d in the other cases, or another month."

**COURT HOUSE, Gospel End Street, Sedgley**

*Evening Express 13/6/1881*

"Samuel Bennett, a labourer, was charged with refusing to quit the COURT HOUSE INN, and doing wilful damage to the property of Mr. John Hughes, the proprietor.

On Saturday, defendant went to this inn while drunk, and asked to be supplied with some ale. This was refused and he then went into another room and began drinking another person's liquor. This being objected to, he struck several persons, and broke some glasses and jugs. He refused to leave the house when requested, and, after being ejected, returned again and made a great disturbance.

Mr. Hughes did not wish to press the case.

The Stipendiary said that but for Mr. Hughes leniency defendant would have been heavily fined, for such conduct could not be tolerated. He would be fined 5s and costs for each case, and to pay damages, or 14 days' hard labour in default."

## 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 SUN, which was situated at the top of Quarry Bank High Street. The original building dates back to at least 1868, when it was called the HAPPY RETURN, but by 1871 its name had changed to the SUN. It was rebuilt in the 1930s and demolished c.2008.

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# Where to Next Year?

Wonder how many of you remember Netherton Arts Centre? Freezing in the cold to get in, paying cash for your beer and enjoying a sausage cob. Glasses were all one shape and featured some iconic local figures, Duncan Edwards and Geoff Astle to name but two. Then there was Big Ade!

When we moved to the Town Hall, lots of people said it wouldn't last, it would change it or how could it be the same.

But it was the same - but better - as more people could get in, the range of beers grew and the volunteers still worked hard to keep everyone happy.

Not this year though. It has been an almighty struggle to form a committee to organise and run this year's festival. It is only with support from other branches that it is going ahead at all.

Dudley & South Staffs Branch has over one thousand members of CAMRA. It is disheartening to not have some of those members coming forward to help to organise one of the oldest and most prestigious festival's in the country.

The committee is getting old, it needs new blood. If you want the festival to survive it needs you to join in, take on a role, organise something, bring new ideas, get involved before it's too late.

If you are coming to DWAF for a beer, then talk to one of the team about what's involved and how you could make a contribution next year. To pinch the words of Lord Kitchener;

## Dudley Winter Ales Fayre needs you

This year's organiser makes her own plea .....

### Ode to DWAF

- D** is for Dudley & Duty and Drink,  
where barrels are tapped and glasses go clink.  
Dedication of staff with service supreme  
that makes up the ethos of our Dudley Team.
- W** is for Winter when weather turns cold  
and OUR Winter Fayre turns 30 years old.  
Team members have come  
and some members have gone,  
BUT 30 years later the Fayre is still on!
- A** is for anyone whose help they will give  
no matter in which branch they currently live.  
Our thanks to them all, is heartfelt and true,  
next year perhaps we can even thank you?
- F** is for fayre, festivities and fun,  
& we hope this festival's time is not done  
by serving you beer that flows on and on,  
until the last day when we hope it's all gone.  
It's also for future and DWAF is unsure

**SO STEP FORWARD MEMBERS AND MAKE IT  
SECURE.**

**Jacqui Edwards**

*Privileged to be 30th DWAF Organiser*





If you have visited Favourite Beers or any other specialist beer shop in the last couple of years you cannot have failed to notice that beer in cans (generally the smaller 330ml packaging) is starting to monopolise more and more shelf space at the expense of bottled beers. Additionally, many good pubs and bars are starting to have a range of cans as an extension to their draught beer range. These cans bear little or no resemblance to the mass produced and highly pasteurised products (London Pride, Boddingtons, Abbot Ale, 6X etc.) that have been available in supermarkets for many years – you will find that instead of the cardboard-like tastes that are so often associated with these more traditional offerings, the new wave of so called 'Craft' cans are offering fresh, spritzy aromas and flavours that are a match for anything you will get in a good pub or bar.

### **My Own Journey with Canned Beer**

Now I must admit that when I first opened Favourite Beers in 2010 I pretty much vowed to never have a canned beer in the shop due to the many prejudices I had built up over the previous 30 years. In that time, I had had many sub-standard drinking experiences, not just with the sorts of products mentioned above but also with the old style slabs of second-rate beers and even the old party sevens (now I am

showing my age). However, I had my mind changed in 2011 when Brewdog first put their new recipe Punk IPA into cans. At that point I had resisted stocking any of the US craft beers that were starting to regularly appear on wholesale lists in cans but I was challenged by a colleague to do a blind taste test of the two different packagings of Punk IPA (bottle and can). I was somewhat surprised when I and two other friends all agreed that one sample was slightly fresher and hoppier than the other and that this turned out to be the canned product (although I did later find that the canned product wasn't pasteurised whereas the bottled product was). Anyway, my previous prejudices about canned beer had been put to question and all I needed to do now was see how my customers would react to canned products.

I started off by just introducing three or four lines of very popular products (Punk IPA and three leading US brands) into the shop and although sales were sluggish to start with they definitely started moving over the next two years as I continued to expand the range. I think the big breakthrough came in 2014 when a lot of UK breweries started to get in on the action, installing their own canning lines and making the effort to make their products look attractive as well as tasting incredible. This was definitely led by some of the leading London breweries to start with (Beavertown, Camden and Fourpure), but in the last couple of years I would guess that just about every UK brewery that puts their beer into bottles have at least considered making the move into cans, with many making the jump in the last 12 months or so (Moor, Glastonbury, Vocation, Northern Monk, Red Willow) and with Manchester's Cloudwater about to follow suit this Autumn! This year I invested in two additional chillers for the shop to cater for our range of well over 100 cans that we now have regularly available.



## So why is canned beer suddenly so popular?

The current trend, as with many that have driven the modern UK beer scene, first originated in the US. In 2002 Colorado based Oscar Blues became the first independent brewery to can a beer called Dale's Pale Ale. This went on to win lots of awards and started a craze for canning across the Atlantic that is still going today. In fact if the UK had the same percentage of breweries canning their beers as the US we would have over 300, so there is still some way for us to go.



There are many advantages of canned products over bottles from the perspective of the brewery, cans are lighter and smaller making them easier to store and cheaper to transport.

They are opaque which removes any possibility of the beer getting 'light-struck' or 'skunked' due to contact with ultra-violet light and the canning process allows less chance of oxygen (the biggest enemy of packaged beer) being present in the can. From a consumers point of view they can be taken into places where bottles are not allowed or aren't practical (music festivals, cinemas etc.), are less likely to break, easier to store and are quicker to cool down in a fridge. A lot of people still hold the belief that canned beers have a metallic tang to them; this is not something that you find in any modern cans as the manufacturing process creates an ultra-thin, water-based lining which stops the metal imparting any negative flavours to the beer.

The one area where the jury is still out is whether cans are any more environmentally friendly than bottles. Aluminium is much more energy intensive to mine, refine, process, transport, and shape into beer containers than glass is, but cans use less raw material, are cheaper to transport have a smaller footprint and are more likely to be recycled than bottles. As such it generally depends on how far the product has travelled to determine which is the 'greener' option.

## So can you get 'Real Ale' in a Can?

The answer to this question is a resounding YES. Many of the modern canning lines are enabling breweries to create 'Can Conditioned Beer' where just as with the bottled versions, the beer is allowed to undergo a secondary fermentation in the can with the



requisite amount of yeast and fermentable sugars still present in the beer (Sierra Nevada in California were one of the pioneers of this with their Pale Ale). Other breweries (notably Beavertown, Moor and Fourpure) are fully conditioning their beer in tanks at the brewery and then canning the unfiltered and unfiltered beer, with the inevitability of some yeast remaining in the can – maybe strictly not can conditioned, but the flavour profile is very much the same. It would seem that these modern breweries are happy to risk their beers having a slight haze for the reward of great packaged beer with bags full of flavour (I can't wait to try the new Cloudwater cans!). One particular example I came across that particularly impressed me last year was from the Hastings Brewery, we managed to get two of their beers in cans for the shop, both 'can conditioned' and both very good, but their Mosaic Pale Ale was

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a real eye-opener for what is possible with canned beer now.

I asked Jeff Evans, the author of the CAMRA Good Bottled Beer Guide (which just lists bottle conditioned beers) whether for his next edition he would be happy to include can conditioned beers, this was his response: "Personally, I see no problem with including such beers in the next edition but it would have to be CAMRA's call and I haven't discussed it with them yet."

### Enjoy canned beers – but from a glass!

Finally, an important bit of guidance I would offer when consuming a canned beer is to (where possible) not drink it straight from the can – the whole experience of drinking and savouring a beer depends as much upon aroma as it does on taste and you don't get much aroma when drinking straight from a can (unless it's one of the new US

style cans where the entire lid comes away!). I hope you have fun discovering some great new beers in cans.

### About the Author

For the last eleven years, Leigh Norwood has been an organiser of the Cheltenham Beer Festival (raising money for Cheltenham Samaritans). He is also an active member of Cheltenham CAMRA, a member of the British Guild of Beer Writers, a judge at the International Beer Challenge (and many beer festivals), the organiser of Cheltenham Beer Week and since October 2010 the owner of Favourite Beers – Gloucestershire's only specialist beer and cider shop.



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# Cider Awards



It was with great pleasure that in early July we presented the certificate for Cider of the Stourbridge Beer Festival 2016 to David Millward for Wrongbow. It was the first time that I had met with David at his home where he produces Wrongbow in his garage and it is clear to see his enthusiasm and passion for his work. It is the second year in a row that David has won the award and he will soon be starting on production for next year's batch. October is the second month that us CAMRA members celebrate cider, while the producers are out in the orchards collecting the apples we are in the pubs drinking their cider. David has a few trees in his garden and a donation of extra apples from a relative that he uses to create the wonderfully named Wrongbow. As a branch we are extremely proud to have David in our area, he is such a creative (he built his own apple press!) and supportive producer. Wrongbow has also won a much coveted second prize at the Hereford Cider Museum Cider and Perry competition of 2016. We are all eagerly awaiting to see how next year's batch turns out.

Unfortunately the winner of Perry of the Festival – Waulkmill's Mooseheid is just too far away to be delivered by hand so we left it to the good old Royal Mail to deliver this one for us. Since our festival in April, Waulkmill are experiencing what can only be called an explosion in interest in their fine cider and perry collection, even sending some over to a festival in Copenhagen!

Our annual family camping holiday this year introduced us to two producers that we have not come across before and both are well worth keeping an eye out for. It just happened that the campsite we booked outside of Paignton has a well-established orchard supplying a local producer called Yarde. We couldn't have planned it better (it really was by pure luck!) to have one cider producer less than a mile away from our tent but it turned out the second, called Hunts, was not much further. The Yarde cider has a very clean crisp taste. It was nice to have a chat to Paul about how he produces his cider solely from the local apples on the campsite. We were so impressed we ordered a box to bring back home with us. The Hunts we found to be much drier in taste but just as clear in colour and as refreshing as the Yarde. One thing is for certain all the cider producers we have met so far have been extremely friendly and enthusiastic.

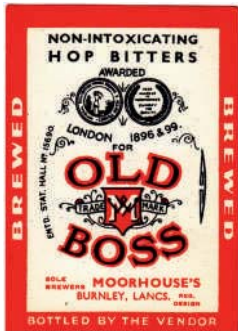
<http://www.yardecider.co.uk/>  
<http://www.huntscider.co.uk>

Lizzie Ralph

# What Are Hop Bitters?

*The Mercury (Hobart, Tasmania)*  
25th February 1882

When the report of Elias Laycock's victory in the Hop Bitters' Regatta in England, in November, 1880, reached Australia, everybody asked 'What are Hop Bitters?' Some people thought them a variety of Beer; others that they were a bitter like Angostina or Orange Bitters, specially for using with alcoholic beverages; others that they were in the form of a medical herb. But in reality they are simply a medicine appetiser and tonic. They are compounded of Hops, Buchu, Podophyllin, and Dandelion, the oldest standing medicinal herbs in existence, and they owe their success to the fact of being carefully and skilfully prepared of the above standard medicinal agents, which ages have proved to have extraordinary efficiency in their action on the blood, stomach, liver, and kidneys. They act directly on the blood, restore tone to the stomach, and seem to have remarkable success in searching out and correcting those small derangements of the internal organs which upset the whole system and lead to the gravest complications of the bodily functions. In the short time since they have been introduced into the colonies their sterling worth has been attested by the constantly increasing sale, and by the fact that wherever persons have taken a bottle to use in their families they have invariably continued their use, thus attesting the value of the Bitters as one of those invaluable family medicines whose timely presence in the house often averts a serious illness. In presenting the Hop Bitters to the Australian public, we



have done so with the entire confidence that we are bringing into use an article whose real innate value would fully carry out all the statements made regarding it, and the many flattering and unsolicited testimonies received by us already, prove that we were entirely justified in our confidence.....

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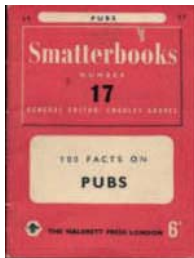
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# "100 Facts on Pubs"

## The Fourth Chapter by Adrian Stevens



Fact 62 is a variation on the ten commandments, some real 'bosters' here.....The landlord is responsible for instructing his staff...

"Thou shalt not"..... Allow betting in the pub; Allow billiards on Sunday; Supply liquor to any person on the 'Black-list'; Allow

the pub to be used as a Brothel; Serve liquor to a policeman on duty;

Deliver liquor to off-sales customers unless it has been previously ordered. (Bad business?);

Harbour thieves, reputed thieves, policemen on duty or prostitutes....

And finally Barmaids should not give 'long-pull'. (No..... it refers to excessive measures!).

Cellars next; Fact 73 is really helpful.... "Cellars are meant for storing beer, wines and spirits", (Publicans please take note).

Fact 74 may also be of help.... "Some are on the ground floor and a few upstairs but (except in Scotland) most of them are underground. This is not because builders love to dig holes, draymen to lower beer into them, or publicans to lift it out again; but because underground is the easiest place to keep an even temperature".

Fact 75; "the proper storage temperature for beer is 55° - 60° F". (Publicans please take note).

It gets really technical now! The next half-dozen facts explain the best way to keep your cellar at the right temperature using items such as a small gas stove, a pail of water and of course, wet sacks. A good cellar also needs 'cross ventilation'. This may be a little complicated for many so we'll move rapidly on.....

Dispense of beer is covered by Facts 80 – 85. "The oldest way of serving beer is to draw it straight from the 'wood' into the glass, tankard or mug. This remains the best way of serving certain kinds of draught beer and stout". "The main trouble about drawing from the wood is that you cannot keep the casks in an underground cellar; in small country

pubs you can – you fill a jug 'from the wood' in the cellar, and fill customers glasses from the jug (bet you didn't see that coming); but in a busy house 'jug-service' is too slow for practical purposes". "In a busy house, since you must store beer underground, you need a 'machine' to raise your beer to the ground floor". "The beer is either pulled through the pipes by suction from above (the traditional beer-engine), or it is pushed through them by pressure applied to the cask below (the pressure system). Pressure is common in Scotland; beer-engines overwhelmingly predominate in England and Wales". (Pressure! Sorry.... ugh!)

"Fixed beer pipes nowadays are made of glass, Monel-metal (nickel-copper) or stainless steel, in the 'old days' they were often made of lead (aaaaagh), lined with tin 'to prevent the risk of lead poisoning'. Flexible pipes, necessary to link the casks to the fixed pipework are generally made of short lengths of glass or porcelain connected together by rubber joints. 'Plastics', which are flexible, may provide the ideal beer-piping of the future" (a man with vision, at last).

And finally on the topic of cellars and dispense.....

"cleaning his pipes is among the most important routine duties of the publican".

(I expect they all know that, though).

I think that's a suitable place to end Chapter Four.

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?

P.S. Anyone know where the Scots put their cellars?

Answers on a postcard to the Editor, big prizes!

(This article was not aimed at any particular individuals..... honest Ben!!).

# Pub Crawling, In Amblecote, Bus Timetable Magic in Halesowen and Leicester .... Always a Pleasure

## Amblecote Crawl

Brettell Lane offers one of the finest collections of real ale pubs in the West Midlands. Where else will you find five pubs that are often in the Good Beer Guide within half a mile of each other? I reckon that full walk is about a kilometre (bit more than half a mile in old money). All the pubs are welcoming and friendly, serving a broad range of ales in good condition, but each with distinctive features that make this crawl such a pleasure. This time it was the branch's September social on a Tuesday evening.

We started at the **Robin Hood** in Collis Street, Branch Pub of the Year in 2015, which offers 9 beers with an emphasis on breweries in the region. Spoilt for choice as always, this time I drank Holden's Special and Kelham Island's Easy Rider. Then it was a few minutes up the road to the **Starving Rascal**, Pub of the Year in 2013. It has changed management this year but Carol and David are ensuring a choice of 4 or 5 ales. Woodforde's Reedlighter was very refreshing. Avoiding the temptation to stay and watch the football, the group continued one minute downhill on Brettell Lane to the **Swan**. Very cosy in the lounge and Fixed Wheel's Chain Reaction Ale to drink. How good can life get?

Next it was little more than five minutes' walk downhill to the **Maverick Drinking House** (or two stops on the 246 bus if that is too much). The pub has a quirky Western theme which, if you haven't been there before, makes a visit doubly interesting, and there are always 4 ales to choose from. That night I drank Felinfoel's Double Dragon. Finally it's across the road and fifty yards to the **Red Lion** for a choice of two Green Duck or two Salopian ales. No hesitation in choosing Green Duck's Duck Under, excellent ale.

So, fine ales in good condition all evening (I reckon 26 different ones to choose from across the

evening) and good bus links home. It's within easy range of Stourbridge Football Club on match days if you fancy something different from the town centre. Tradition has it that we start at the Robin Hood but of course it can be done in any order.

## September Saturday around Halesowen Bus Timetable Magic

An impromptu social was held on 10<sup>th</sup> September. I met branch committee members Tim and Lizzie and their two staffies (Sasha and Reggie) at the Bumble Hole Nature Reserve in Netherton for the **Black Country Boating Festival**. Or, to be more specific, to visit the excellent beer tent that Dudley Branch members help with as part of the festival. A host of local breweries were represented – Kinver, Pig Iron, Fixed Wheel, Green Duck and so on. Many fine beers and ciders to sample and compare and we did our best for an hour or two.



Following a visit to the homemade scratchings and pork roast stalls we walked up through the reserve to catch the 241 bus that perfectly dropped us in Long Lane outside **Fixed Wheel's** brewery. Scott and Sharon currently open the brewery every Saturday from 11am to 6pm and host a great range of beers. I happily compared the Milk Race Stout with the Blackheath Stout, both terrific, then a half of Big Mig for something completely different.



Fixed Wheel brewery is always a difficult place to leave, very convivial company, but the newly opened micro pub in Halesowen. **The Crafty Pint** beckoned. There is a very handy 4H bus available nearby to take you to the door. We were very pleased to see the pub busy with five ales on offer including Green Duck's Duck and Cover and Fixed Wheel's Chain Reaction. I'm sure more will be written about this new venture in future, but we were very impressed with Alan and his team.



If all that wasn't enough excitement for the afternoon some of the group went back to Short Cross for a swift half in the Waggon and Horses.

Of course the boating festival isn't on every week but creative use of the bus timetable can offer many combinations. There's the **Rose and Crown** near to The Crafty Pint, our Pub of the Year **The Swan** in Long Lane, and the Short Cross combinations of the **Waggon & Horses**, **King Edward VII** and the **Hawne Tavern** – cannot go wrong.

### Leicester – Richard III and all that

I just happened to be in Leicester for an afternoon the other day. It's a fine city centre with plenty of good pubs, including of course the two excellent Black Country Ales pubs – **The Black Horse** and **The Salmon**. I couldn't visit the city without seeing Richard III's tomb in the cathedral. It was a very hot and humid day and inspired by the references to Richard III we were ready to 'murder a pint'. There

are three excellent pubs nearby, in fact so close that you could 'throw a towel over them'. **The Criterion**, **The Charlotte**, and the new micro pub **The Blue Boar**.



Experienced beer drinkers will know and probably revere the first two pubs, but we were grateful to the knowledgeable lady running The Charlotte for recommending the micro pub that had only been open a week. If you do happen to be going to see Richard III's tomb and visitor centre these pubs will not disappoint. Check out **The Parcel Yard** at the railway station on your way home, a real surprise with its Steamin' Billy beers and huge cavernous space underground.



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**Bumble Hole** 5.2% ABV

**Ma Pardoe's Black Widow Brew** 6.7% ABV

**NPA** 4.8% ABV

**Opening Times:**

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**Food Available:**

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# Halesowen's new micro-pub opens

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2016 saw the opening of Halesowen's newest (and first) micro-pub. The **Crafty Pint** opened in Wassell Road, across the road from the Tesco shop and close to the Rose & Crown. Owner Andy Davies (with his partner Sherry) have converted this former pet shop and hope to establish a small, friendly bar for the local community. Andy has been a big real-ale fan for as long as he can remember and wanted to open a micro-pub because there are none in the local area.



*The Crafty Pint on opening day*

The bar is open on Wednesday-Friday from 4.30pm-9.30pm, Saturday from 12noon until 10.00pm and on Sundays & Bank Holidays from 12noon-3.00pm; it is closed on Mondays & Tuesdays. The bar has 5 hand-pulls, which at the time of my recent visits were serving Fixed Wheel Chain Reaction, Salopian Oracle/Lemon Dream, Sadler's Jack's Pale Ale, Wye Valley Butty Bach and Green Duck Blonde. Four craft taps offer Wye Valley Craft Lager, Fixed Wheel Citra and two ciders, Lily the Pink and Westons Rosie Pig. Coffee, wine and soft drinks are also on offer. Food snacks include locally sourced pork pies, sausage rolls and Scotch eggs, along with home-made cake. The micro-pub seats around 25 people and CAMRA members are always welcome. A truly traditional small micro-pub which thoroughly deserves a visit from CAMRA members.

Steve James



*Andy behind the bar waiting to serve you ...*



# Berlin Beer Festival

We flew from Birmingham on FlyBe direct to Tegel Airport, which used to be in the French Sector of West Berlin. We were met at the airport by Bob, Bridget's brother, who has lived in East Berlin since Margaret Thatcher was re-elected. He said if she gets in again I'm leaving and he did. Bob drove us to our Holiday Inn at Prenzlauer Allee which is about 5km from the city centre, not far from where he lives. We got to the hotel about 9:30pm, our daughter Anna and her partner Michal had already arrived from Prague so after unpacking we all went straight out for a few beers and a meal.



Being 5km from city centre...not problem as Berlin's transport system is superb. A €2.70 ticket allows you travel on the bus, tram, U-Bahn (underground), or S-Bahn (local trains) for two hours. The M2 tram stopped just outside our hotel and took us to Alexanderplatz, where the East Germans built a huge tower, the Berliner Fernsehturm, to look down

on the Wessies. 368m tall, built between 1965-9 it is still the second tallest structure in the EU after the Riga TV mast. It has a revolving restaurant at 209m which is a major tourist attraction.

From Alexanderplatz Station we boarded the U5 underground to Strausburger Platz, where the beer festival begins. It is held along Karl-Markx-Allee for 2.2 km, that's 1 mile 633 yards! There are 340 breweries from 87 countries offering 2,400 unique beer specialities, and 22 beer regions presenting their culinary specialities. On 20 stages spread out along the street, German and international bands played live music. All this and admission is free.

At the festival we concentrated on finding non-traditional German, Polish and Czech beers. We weren't disappointed. We arrived 10 minutes before the official opening time but managed to buy a Hofbrauhaus Helles while we waited. The festival glasses held 200ml and it was €2 for a beer no matter what strength or type. Once we obtained our festival glasses we strolled along looking for something to take our fancy. I spotted the words Craft Beer. We tried Rittmayer Hopfen-Knaller which was a pilsner but quite hoppy, as its name suggests. We continued along and came across a brewery stand called Eulenspiegel where we enjoyed a 5% porter, it would have benefitted with a bit more oomf but a good start. Our glasses were empty so we opted for another conventional pilsner, Zischke Kellerbier which was unpasteurized and unfiltered. We much prefer our German beer like this, it's much tastier. Our next stop was a local brew called Lemke. This was more like it, on offer were a 6.5% IPA, a Hopfen Weisse at 7%, an Imperial IPA 10% and an Imperial Stout 11%. We tried both IPAs, superb.

At this point we were joined by Bob, wife Cathy and daughter Zoe. We moved on to a Polish Brewery, Zloty Pies for more IPA and Porter. If you are ever in Wroclaw this brewpub is a must. The Hops Brewing stand was our next stop, The barman was a



Glaswegian who now lived in Germany. He advised us to try the 7.2% Black Magic imperial stout. Who were we to argue, smooth and tasty.



Our friend Pete Clarkson joined us at our next port of call, Rohozec, from Turnov, Czech Republic. We had a traditional beer here, as Michal was pining for his native brew. We continued along sampling various IPAs but it was now that the beer took over and my notes run out. Often the way on a good crawl. We never got to the other end of festival but returned two days later and started at the other end. If you are interested in going in the future, check out <http://www.bierfestival-berlin.de/index%20eng.html> next year.

T. Skirving

## King Edward VII

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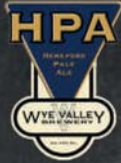
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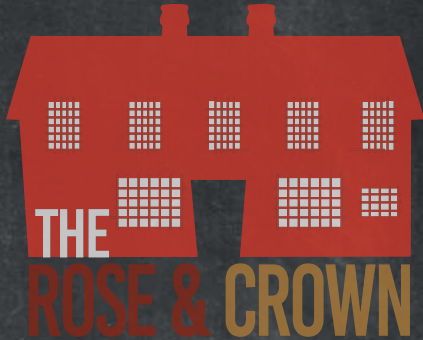
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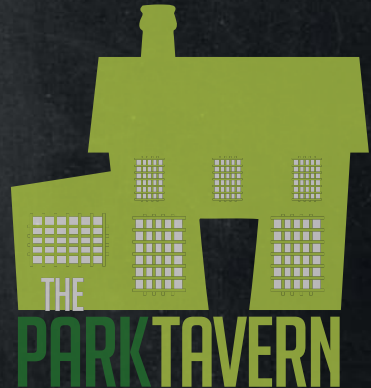
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# FREE PINT

## Dudley & South Staffordshire

### OCTOBER

#### Wednesday, 19th

Scoring Social - Langley/Oldbury  
See website for details

#### Monday, 24th

Branch Meeting - 8pm  
Cottage, 534 High Street, Kingswinford DY6 8AW

### NOVEMBER

#### Wednesday, 9th

Scoring Social - Dudley  
See website for details

#### Wednesday, 16th

Scoring Social - Coseley/Woodsetton  
See website for details

#### Thursday, 24th - Saturday, 26th

Dudley Winter Ales Fayre

### DECEMBER

#### Monday, 12th

Branch Meeting - 8pm  
Brickmakers, 36 Mount Pleasant, Quarry Bank DY5 2YZ

#### Saturday, 24th

Scoring Social - Sedgley/Upper Gornal  
See website for details

## Stourbridge & Halesowen

### NOVEMBER

#### Thursday 3rd

8.00pm. Branch Meeting Gigmill, South Road,  
Norton DY8 3UL (Note: Meeting is on Thursday)

#### Thursday 10th

8.00pm. Marking Social Halesowen (Royal Oak,  
Manor Lane, Halesowen B62 8PZ then Coombs  
Wood Sports & Social Club, Snooks and Swan)

#### Wednesday 16th

8.00pm. Stourbridge Beer Festival Meeting  
(Provisional – Date & venue to be confirmed)

#### Thursday 24th

8.00pm. Branch Social Dudley Winter Ales Festival,  
Dudley Town Hall

### DECEMBER

#### Wednesday 7th

8.00pm.  
Branch Meeting Robin Hood, 196 Collis Street,  
Amblecote, DY8 4EQ

#### Thursday 15th

8.00pm. Marking Social Stourbridge (Waggon &  
Horses, 31 Worcester Street DY8 1AT, then Red  
House, Scary Canary, Barbridge, Old Bank, Royal  
Exchange)

### JANUARY

#### Wednesday 11th

8.00pm. Branch Meeting King Edward VII, 88  
Stourbridge Road, Halesowen B63 3UP

#### Saturday 14th

12 Noon Branch Pubs by Buzz (Start point and  
itinerary to be confirmed)

#### Wednesday 18th

8.00pm. Stourbridge Beer Festival Meeting  
(Provisional – Date & venue to be confirmed)

#### Thursday 26th

8.00pm. Marking Social Lye. Start Fox, Green Lane  
Lye, DY9 7EW then The Shovel, Railway Tavern,  
Windsor Castle and Sadler's Brewhouse and Bar.  
See What's Brewing for details.

# Kinver Country Fayre



Visitors to the rescheduled 2016 Kinver Country Fayre held on 4<sup>th</sup> September were treated to a stunning motorcycle display by the Royal Signals White Helmets, and a large range of locally brewed beers and ciders from the beer tent, organised by Dudley & South Staffs CAMRA.



The White Helmets jumped through fire, over vehicles and performed perfectly balanced acrobatic pillion juggling displays whilst the rider faced the wrong direction.



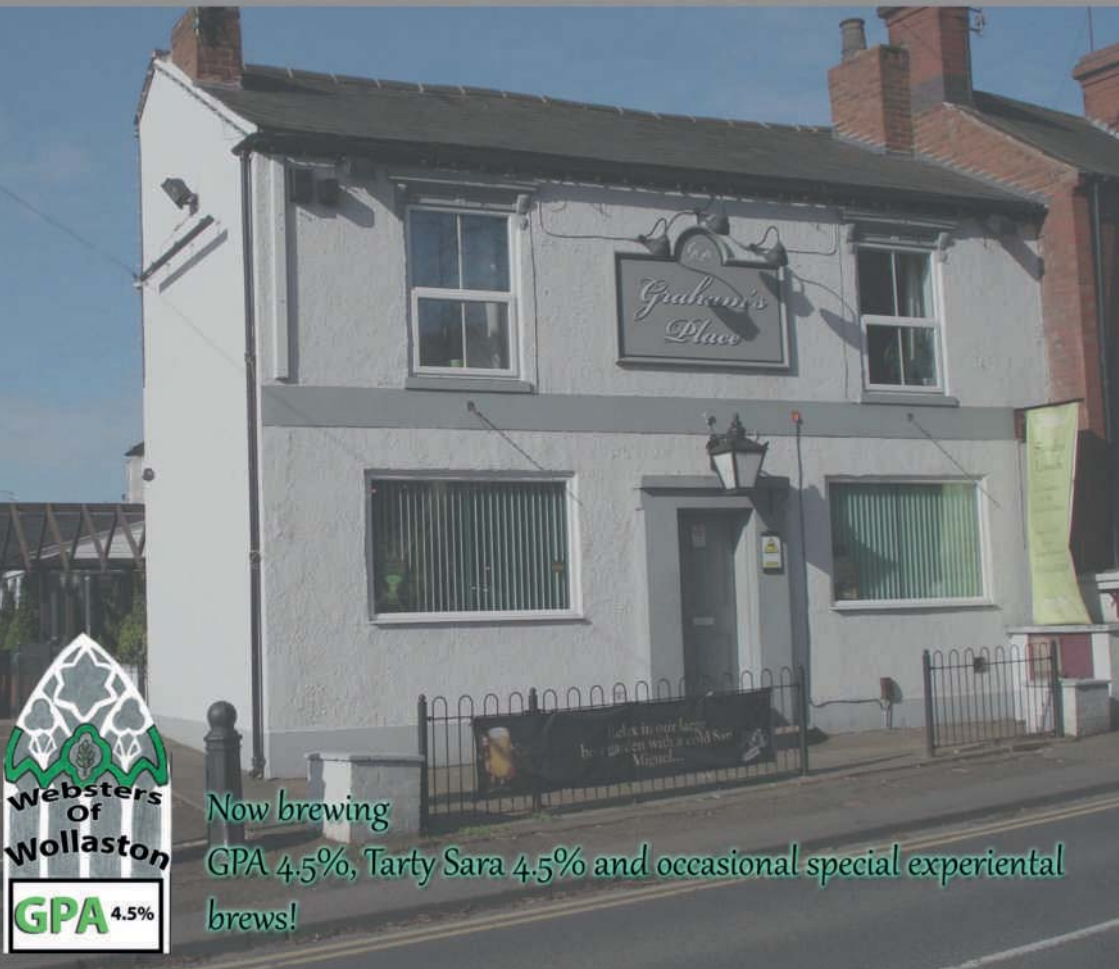
The annual event is normally held in June, but had to be rescheduled due flooding caused by heavy rain.

Whilst the White Helmets performed their juggling display facing in opposite directions, volunteers in the beer tent juggled with the glasses whilst facing many directions.

Volunteers manning the beer tent were able to have a break to enjoy the event themselves.



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# Stourbridge vs Halesowen

## A resurgence in Real Ale

In modern times we hear a lot of information about the rate of pub closures and how the nation is losing this vital community resource. This is true of course but there is another side to the story: what about the pubs that are either completely new, or reopened? Both Stourbridge and Halesowen have a number of both, and have successfully shaken up the real ale 'scene' in these towns.

Let us start with Halesowen. It is barely two years since our current Pub of the Year 'The Swan' reopened its doors under the ownership of Black Country Ales. It has since become a firm local favourite for both the quality and variety of real ale and cider on offer. Since then, the Waggon and Horses (Stourbridge Road, Halesowen) has also been refurbished and rejuvenated by the same owners. The branch also now has its own micropub 'The Crafty Pint' which you can read about elsewhere in this magazine.

Various tap-rooms have opened up over the last few years between both towns, including the Green Duck Badelynge Bar, Fixed Wheel Brewery, and Sadler's Brewhouse. You may have to check the opening hours carefully but these offer a great opportunity to drink real ale at source. They are certainly different to the traditional public house!

Moving across to Stourbridge and Barbridge is now firmly established in the town, serving a great selection of both 'craft' keg beer and real cider in addition to their real ale. Can anyone recall what their premises were before? Scary Canary is also in the main high street serving gravity dispensed real ale from a converted venue upstairs in a row of shops.

Summer 2016 saw the opening of two venues in Stourbridge, 'The Old Bank' and 'Last Orders at The Red House'.

'The Old Bank' is completely new, having been converted from, you've guessed it, a bank! Serving a vast array of regional ales it is sure to attract a number of new customers in the coming months. Some of the furniture inside is old church pews, and a mezzanine floor has been created to offer an alternative and distinctive environment.



*Old Bank*

'The Red House' is a new name for what was in my day, a 'Hogshead'. A number of guest ales are available here in addition to the firm regional favourites, as well as our own Fixed Wheel, plus a few 'craft' keg beers. Live sport is often shown on the TV screens for those who like to gather for the big game and the place has a nice warm feel.





'Regional favourites' is an interesting expression. There are number of excellent regional breweries whose beers are to a great standard but are widely available. The above two new venues tend to focus on beers from Holdens, Wye Valley, Hobson's and Enville. There are certainly two different views as to whether you would visit a pub because it had a 'safe' selection of ales on, or whether you prefer a venue which offers brews which are less widely seen in the area. Whichever your point of view, pubs in our branch offer the best of both worlds.

Rightly or wrongly, Stourbridge and Halesowen still only has 11 entries to submit to CAMRA for the Good Beer Guide each year, so the increase in pubs serving real ale will mean that competition for these 11 places will become even more fierce. It may mean in coming years that some pubs that were virtually guaranteed a place in the Guide may well find their inclusion less assured. As always, the

only way to secure a place in the Good Beer Guide is for a pub, club or bar to serve excellent real ale on a consistent basis, and for their customers to score their beer using [www.whatpub.com](http://www.whatpub.com)

Tim Cadwell

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