

# ALES & TALES



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

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

Issue 38  
Autumn 2018



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# 5 GENERATIONS OF **HARD** CRAFT



**FORGED IN THE BLACK COUNTRY**



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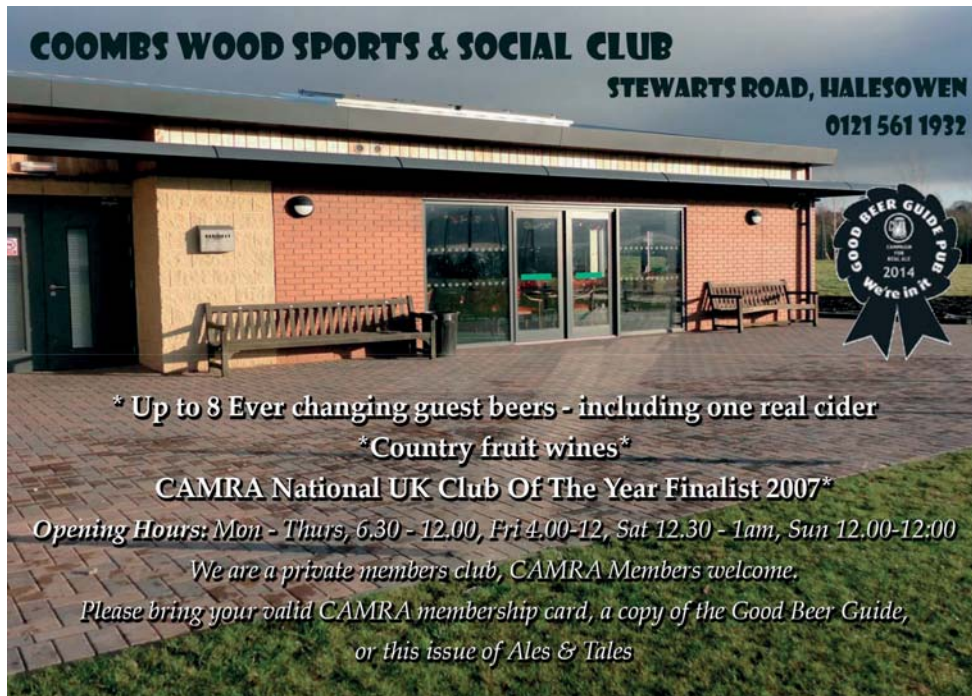
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Membership



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*or this issue of Ales & Tales*

# Welcome Back

A very warm welcome to Edition 38 of Ales & Tales – Autumn 2018.

Please note for your diaries that this year's **Dudley Winter Ales Fayre** (DWAFF) will be taking place at Dudley Town Hall on **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November, Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November and Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December.**

After the pleasing reception for the improved seating capacity in 2017, we are continuing to try and improve the standards of the festival this year to give you the best possible experience. Naturally, quite a few of the committee members took time out from their trip to this year's Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) to find out what worked well and hopefully we can incorporate some of those observations into DWAFF.

On that note, may we say a massive thank you and well done to all of the organisers and volunteers that worked tirelessly to make this year's GBBF a huge success – we all enjoyed sampling beers from new and familiar breweries alike as well as tasting Kinver's 'Half Centurion' which was awarded Bronze in the Strong Bitter category of the 2018 Champion Beer of Britain competition. Well done to Dave, Carol, and all of the team.

Incidentally, Kinver Brewery was also victorious at last year's DWAFF, winning the Beer of the Festival 2017 award for Half Centurion's big brother Full Centurion. This year we will be trialing, amongst other things, priority seating for less able visitors, large print beer lists for those with limited sight, and easily identifiable staff and security personnel to help with advice or answer queries. As usual, by prior notification, a few family tables in the food lounge will be available for a limited time on Saturday to cater for those with young children. The Dudley Driver scheme will continue to be available.

Having come so close to losing the festival a few years ago we are now back and as enthusiastic as ever, BUT, it still is dependent upon sufficient personnel to not

only offer their time to work at the festival no matter how briefly (and any training will always be given), but also on "new blood" volunteers stepping up to help organise the festival to ensure it continues for years to come. Current committee members are always willing to help newcomers learn whatever role they are interested in. Our committee has a wide range of experience from civil servants, teachers, construction & engineering to name but a few. Why



*Jess Silk performing at DWAFF 2017*

not contact us and see how you might be able to contribute and hopefully enjoy the experience.

At DWAFF 2018 we are hosting several CAMRA competitions. We will continue to serve a wide range of local and national beers as well as cider and continental beers. Hot and cold food and entertainment will also be available. We hope you will come and start off the Christmas party season by joining us. In the meantime, be sure to follow @**Dudley\_WAF** for all of the build-up.

In other news, we are saddened to hear of the decision taken by Stourbridge & Halesowen CAMRA Chair, Phil Zjalic, to not stand again at their Branch AGM in September 2018. Phil has been instrumental for the delivery of both this inter-branch magazine and, of course, all branch activities over the border. We wish him the very best.

**Karl Denning and Jacqui Edwards**  
*DWAFF Festival Organiser &  
Deputy Festival Organiser*  
[dwafl@dudley.camra.org.uk](mailto:dwafl@dudley.camra.org.uk)

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# Meet The Landlord

## The Swan, Brettel Lane, Amblecote



*Pictured Geoff and Barmaid Rachel Evans*

**Name:** Geoffrey Cook.

**Age:** 79.

Geoff has run the Swan for the last thirty-five years and we believe is the longest serving licensee in the Stourbridge & Halesowen branch area.

### **What did you do before taking over the Swan?**

I started my pub journey as bar manager at the Golden Arrow in Solihull where I worked for eight years. I then became landlord of the Crown in Redditch for two years before moving to the Sugarbrook in Bromsgrove for a further three years. I then moved into the Black Country, Quarry Bank to be precise, where I became the landlord of the Cottage in the Bower for six and a half years then, thirty-five years ago, I moved here to the Swan.

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

Like many others my first alcoholic drink was M&B Mild at the Golden Arrow for the princely sum of one shilling and four pence a pint.

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

My main concern is looking after my business and keeping my customers happy. We do have a loyal group of regular drinkers here, but strangers are always made to feel welcome. I also like my holidays, usually in Goa but I also enjoy going to Greece.

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

These days I find the flavour of some ales just a little bit too much, so I tend to stick to Carling Black Label.

### **What is your favourite drink that is not beer?**

I find that later in the evening I like to sit down with a large Whyte and Mackay whisky with a little water.

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

I really like a nice juicy steak, but I am also very fond of good Indian food.

### **How do you see your business in the future?**

I am very pleased with the way the business is running at the moment, I have an excellent group of bar staff and an extremely good cross section of customers.

### **What is the best and worse things to have happened to the industry in the last five years?**

I believe that the worst thing that has happened and still is happening is the persistent closing of so many pubs and conversion to supermarkets or residential properties. I also think that larger breweries have a lot to answer for by selling too cheaply to supermarkets which is killing off much of the pub trade, I mean they are selling it at lower prices than I can buy it for.

The best thing has to be the increasing number of small breweries offering so much more choice to what was available as I was growing up.

### How do you think that CAMRA can help your business?

I know that we get a lot of local support from the branch and we do get groups of CAMRA people coming from outside of the area but as a national organisation I think that they must campaign against these low supermarket prices and still try to stop pubs being closed down.

### Which ales tend to sell the quickest?

When we have Salopian or Fixed Wheel ales on offer they tend to sell out very quickly. I do like to vary the general offering that we sell to give everyone a good choice.

**John Midwood**

## Stourbridge & Halesowen 2018 Pub Survey

Back in July 2017, members from Stourbridge & Halesowen carried out their very first real ale and pub survey. It was a great success and the Branch agreed to repeat the exercise this year. A date was fixed for Saturday 14 July this year. Luckily this fell right in the middle of the very hot spell of sunny weather and avoided a clash with any of England's important World Cup games (though they were playing Belgium to see who came third).

The census followed much the same plan as last year. There were four ale-trails of six pubs that all finished with a pub in Stourbridge. They were all timed to finish around the same time before a final meet up in the Red House Boutique, near the bus station. In addition, individual members were encouraged to visit our other real ale pubs during the day. On the day, we managed to visit 64 of our local pubs. At each one, a record was made of the different cask ales and real ciders on sale, as well as collecting other details and scoring beers on WhatPub!.

The list of real ale pubs in the Branch area for the survey totalled 93 this year, a reduction of one from 2017. During the year four pubs were lost (the Maypole & the Gate in Halesowen and Eleven and Scary Canary in Stourbridge). We have though three new pubs (Cock 'n' Bull in Stourbridge, Swankys in Halesowen and the Shell-Ter on Shell Corner).

The main purpose of the census was to record the different beers and ciders being served but members also picked up some information on prices. The cheapest pint of real ale available was just £1.89 and the most expensive was £4.00. On average though, a pint cost £3.11, which compares with £3.08 last year.

This compares well with a recent national survey where the average was £3.50. The average strength of the beers being served also increased slightly from 4.3% to 4.4%.

Members also took the opportunity to score various beers on the CAMRA WhatPub! website. 37 beers were given scores ranging from 2.0 (Average) to 4.0 (Very Good) and the average score was 3.2.

Local breweries were well represented including the three in the Branch area; Sadler's from Lye, Green Duck from Stourbridge and Fixed Wheel from Halesowen. However, the most popular beers (or at least the ones that were in the highest number of pubs) were Enville Ale (17 pubs) Holden's Golden Glow (15) and Wye Valley HPA (11).

The organiser for the day was Andy Koszary. "It's been another success. The fantastic weather certainly helped and although we didn't manage to visit as many pubs as last year, there were still 129 different beers available from 69 different breweries. As well as collecting some useful information, it was an enjoyable, sociable event. What better way can you think of spending a sunny afternoon than going around visiting local pubs!"

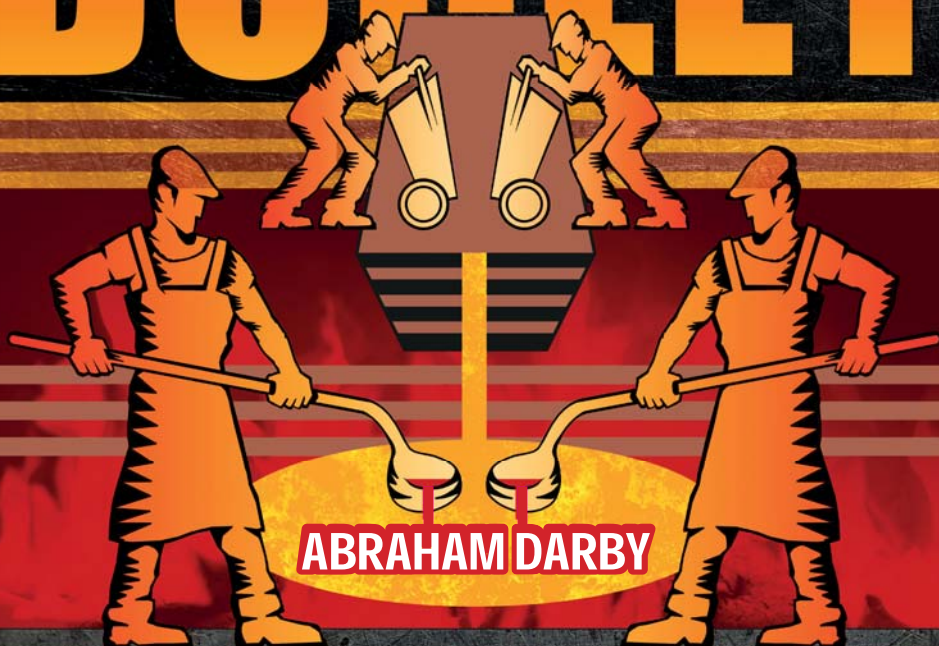
Following this success, the Branch plan to repeat the exercise in July 2019 to measure how well their campaigning efforts are working, in support of local pubs and breweries. The aim next year will be to attract more volunteers and to try and get around all of our pubs.

**Andy Koszary**



DUDLEY & SOUTH STAFFS CAMRA PRESENTS

# DUDLEY



## WINTER ALES FAYRE 2018

**Dudley Town Hall, St James's Road, Dudley DY1 1HP**

**Thursday 29 November 5.30-11pm • Friday 30 November 12noon-11pm**

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# Branch Diaries

## Stourbridge & Halesowen

### SEPTEMBER

#### Wednesday 12th 8.00pm

Branch AGM. Duke William, Coventry St. Stourbridge (Upstairs Room Booked)

#### Thursday 20th 8.00pm

Short Cross Marking Social. Meet Whitley, Stourbridge Road then Hawne Tavern, Edward VII and Waggon & Horses

### OCTOBER

#### Wednesday 3rd 8.00pm

Branch Meeting. Whitley Hotel, 211 Stourbridge Rd, Halesowen B63 3QX

#### Thursday 11th 8.00pm

Lye Marking Social. Meet Fox, Green Lane, then Shovel, Wheelie Thirsty, Sadler's Brewhouse and Windsor Castle

#### Saturday 27th 12noon

Stourbridge Cider Crawl. Meet Waggon & Horses, Stourbridge, then Barbridge, Red House and Duke William

### NOVEMBER

#### Wednesday 7th 8.00pm

Branch Meeting. Wheelie Thirsty, High St. Lye

#### Saturday 10th 12noon

Armistice Heritage Crawl – Itinerary TBC

#### Thursday 22nd 8.00pm

Amblecote Marking Social. Meet New Talbot then New Wellington, Starving Rascal, Swan and Robin Hood

#### Thursday 29th 8.00pm

Branch Social. Dudley Winter Ales Fayre, Dudley Town Hall

### DECEMBER

#### Wednesday 5th 8.00pm

Branch Meeting. Robin Hood, Collis Street, Amblecote

#### Wednesday, 12th 8.00pm

Wollaston Marking Social. Meet Foresters, then Plough, Gate Hangs Well, Unicorn, Princess and Graham's Place.

## Dudley & South Staffordshire

### SEPTEMBER

#### Saturday 15th 12noon

Branch Social. Black Country Boating Festival, DY2 9HB

#### Monday 17th 8.00pm

Branch Meeting Britannia, Upper Gornal, DY3 1UX

#### Wednesday 19th

Kingswinford Scoring Social

### OCTOBER

#### Monday 1st 8.00pm

DWAF Meeting, Park Inn, Woodsetton, DY1 4LW

#### Saturday 6th

Green Hop Mini Bus Trip

#### Wednesday 10th

Langley & Oldbury Scoring Social

#### Saturday 13th

South Staffs Scoring Social

#### Monday 22nd 8.00pm

Branch Meeting, Bell, Delph, DY5 2TZ (to be confirmed)

### NOVEMBER

#### Monday 5th 8.00pm

DWAF Meeting, Park Inn, Woodsetton, DY1 4LW

#### Wednesday 7th

Bearwood Scoring Social

#### Monday 19th 8.00pm

DWAF Meeting, Park Inn, Woodsetton, DY1 4LW

#### Wednesday 21st

Delph & Quarry Bank Scoring Social

#### Thursday 29th – Saturday 1st December

Dudley Winter Ales Fayre, Town Hall, DY1 1HP

### DECEMBER

#### Wednesday 5th

Dudley Town Centre Scoring Social

#### Monday 10th 8.00pm

Branch Meeting, Brickmakers Arms, Quarry Bank. DY5 2YZ

#### Saturday 15th

Christmas Market Mini Bus Trip (likely Chester)





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# Dudley Thank You Trip - Chorley

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March dawned brightly as a group of hardy travellers set forth from the West Midlands for the latest Thank You Trip for people who had helped at Dudley Winter Ales Fayre in November 2017. The destination, unanimously chosen, was Chorley in Lancashire. A strange destination to choose? Not at all, as it is home to some excellent pubs and is arguably the micropub capital of England.

Micropubs are a fairly new phenomenon. They are usually ex-shop premises converted into a pub. The emphasis is on good beer/cider and conversation with no music or distractions and it could serve traditional pub fayre. The first one opened in Kent in 2005 and they have proliferated since with at least several opening every week up and down the country.

Anyway, we eagerly disembarked, most of us having already roughly planned out our itineraries. On a previous visit (for 'research' purposes, you understand!) I had picked up the 'Chorley Real Ale Guide', a local CAMRA publication which gave brief descriptions and map of the town. All of the pubs are within walking distance as Chorley is fairly compact.

We all started at 'The Crown' on Chapel Street, an open plan pub serving up to 6 guests, mostly local and a cider. We were surprised by the relative cheapness of the prices which was to be a recurring theme throughout the day. The



second was the first micro, 'The Bob Inn', located in the market which has a small bar and a seating

area opposite. This is the oldest of the micros in Chorley, having opened in 2013. It serves 4 beers and a cider. It is very friendly and conversation easily flowed between ourselves and the locals. The seating area has a lot of beer memorabilia and old comics! It is open 10-6 but closed Wednesday and Sunday. Our next pub was 'The Flat Iron' on Cleveland Street. The pleasant landlord explained he serves up to 9 ales, here we sampled beers from Worsthorne and Hopstar breweries before moving on to another micro, 'The Shed' around the corner on Fazackerly Place. Opened in 2017, this modern bar had a distinctly modern feel and it resembles a smart garden shed. It serves 3 beers, mainly from local breweries and is open 12-11 daily.



Some of our fellow imbibers went on to visit the local Wetherspoons where a lot of local beers were present but our party next went to the 'Toastie Tavern' at the far end of Market Street. This is a comfortable, split level micropub serving 3 beers at £2 a pint. The friendly landlord said it was re-opened and rebranded last year and is under the same ownership as 'The Church'. Next was the latest Chorley micropub to open, 'The Ginnell' just around the corner on Pall Mall. This is a modern, narrow bar which opened in February and is open 12-11 Friday to Sunday and 4-12 Wednesday and Thursday and is closed on Monday and Tuesday. The pub was also deafeningly loud and the beer poor so we swiftly left to go to the next micro, 'Bootleggers' which is quite large by micropub standards, operating on two levels. The convivial Irish landlord filled



us in on the history of the pub which was very busy with a good customer mix and is closed Mondays but varies its hours depending on the day. It is open from 1pm-12am on Saturdays. It serves up to 4 mostly local beers.

The next pub was a bit of a trek to the other side of the station to visit the 'Malt N Hops', a traditional L-shaped pub and regular GBG entry which serves up to 9 beers, principally from Lancashire and Yorkshire micros. Indeed, the Irwell Works Coffee Stout was delicious and went down a treat.

We exited quite quickly as time was getting short in our quest to visit the final two micros, conveniently located close to the station. 'The Ale Station' at the top of Chapel Street serves 6 changing guests from North Western brewers and is very modern with a café bar feel (open 1-12.30 Saturday; closed on Mondays) and the

'Shepherds' Hall Ale House further down. This is a more traditional bar which perfectly defines what a micropub should be. A knowledgeable and friendly landlord serves 5 changing guests and up to 3 ciders and utilises fittings from other closed pubs. In my opinion, this was the best of the lot.

It was hoped to visit other pubs in Leyland but time simply ran out. Everybody boarded the coach, thirsts slaked and feeling very happy after a great day out. Thank you Jacqui for organising!

Prost!

Pete Clarkson

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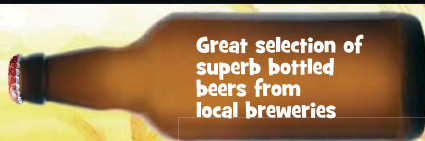
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# On The Road Again...

A key benefit to volunteers of giving up their free time to work at Stourbridge Beer Festival is the 'Thank you' trip. A number of suggestions were made during the festival planning meetings and eventually Nottingham was chosen as a destination. When the festival itself was all done-and-dusted, the coach arrangements were made and pickups planned.

The day started for many with a slap-up breakfast to ensure that stomachs were suitably lined. Some even started off with a beer as an accompaniment; I wonder if it was a breakfast stout?



The journey itself was smooth and uneventful and before long we found ourselves at the drop-off point. Nottingham is only a stones-throw up the M42, and like any modern city there are plenty of hotels and also good rail links for a weekend away. Sports fans can factor in the two city football teams and the county cricket team too. The advantage of choosing a location relatively close to home is that it gives the opportunity for an enlarged drinking day without wasting too much time travelling.

Luckily the drop off point was right outside a fantastic bar; I'm sure some of us started and ended the day sampling beers with ABVs approaching double figures. Even a few 'coach

beers' for the way home were ordered before we left. Drink responsibly folks!

A couple of keen committee members conducted a reconnaissance mission in the weeks leading up to the trip to ensure the best drinking locations were found, and maps were made available detailing a large choice of drinking establishments. As usual, the coach party divided themselves in manageable groups in order to cover different parts of the city. Active CAMRA volunteers enjoy all kinds of different ales, served both from cask and key-keg, so our attendees were able to align themselves to a group seeking a similar drinking experience. Of course, CAMRA's 'Good Beer Guide' also served as a great basis for choosing a number of pubs to sample the best in cask beer throughout the day.

As is often the case, this article is being written some months after the actual trip, and memories of the rest of day are now a little fuzzy. Thankfully, resources such as CAMRA's [whatpub.com](http://whatpub.com), and third-party applications such as 'Untappd' are there to preserve a record of the day's drinking. There are however several members who still rely on good old pen-and-paper to record their activities!



There are way too many pubs to go into detail about what was consumed on the day, but a



couple of things stood out. We were fortunate that our trip coincided with 'Nottingham Beer Week', which resulted in a couple of tap-takeovers, mini-festivals and other similar events. In terms of stand-out venues, a narrowboat inside a pub must surely be one of the quirkiest sights seen during the day!

Sadly, there were just too many pubs and bars to fit in on just one day, which sounds like a great excuse for a return trip. Pubs of note were the Organ Grinder, Falcon, Overdraught, Sir John Borlase Warren, Hand & Heart, Room with a Brew, Barrel Drop, Bell Inn and Malt Cross.

Whatever happens in the future, without a willing supply of volunteers, CAMRA Beer Festivals as we know them are in jeopardy, so I would urge anyone reading this that is able to contribute, particularly with the organisation of festivals, to step forward, come and attend a branch meeting and find out what it is all about.

See you next year!

**Tim Cadwell**



Returning to the reason for the trip, the beer festival itself was covered in more detail in edition 37 of Ales & Tales. However, I make no apologies for labouring a certain point: CAMRA beer festivals are organised, run and staffed by volunteers who give up their spare time so that we can all enjoy them, and trips such as these are a great reward.

Whether the traditional Beer Festival format remains relevant today is certainly open to debate; in fact, a single visit to Stourbridge Town Centre can be a festival of beer in itself, with a variety of venues showcasing multiple well-kept beers from local, regional and national brewers.

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## GIN TASTING EVENINGS

# 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 Gladstone Arms, High Street, Audnam, Wordsley.

The building which was pictured was built at the rear of the original pub. The original pub was demolished after the new one was completed. The later building, after rebranding as Roosters, Holt Plant & Deakin, and Mr. Qs was demolished in 2006.

## **Birmingham Daily Post 30/8/1962**

"A large school-sized blackboard is built into the wall of the children's room at the Gladstone Arms at Audnam, near Brierley Hill, which has just been completed to replace a century-old public house of the same name on almost the same site. The children's room is completely separate from the rest of the accommodation and children will be provided with chalk to amuse themselves at the blackboard.

The Scandinavian-style building has been designed by a Brierley Hill architect, Mr. W. E. Homer, who described it as 'one of the longest commissions I have undertaken.' He was originally approached by Ansells Brewery in 1938, but the war put a stop to the plans.

The opening ceremony yesterday was performed by Mr. E. Foster, a director of the brewery, and was attended by the chairman, Coun. A. G. Skelding and members of Brierley Hill Urban Council."

The first landlord we have recorded at the Gladstone Arms is Samuel Grainger. He was fined 2s 6d and costs in 1869 for keeping the pub open during prohibited hours. He was again fined, £1 this time, for the same offence in 1872. Following on from this latter case the policeman involved was charged with perjury, several things he had said in court being disputed. Grainger maintained that the bottles of beer had been served before closing time and left in the hedge, to be collected at four in the morning by someone who was returning from work and who was to wake him up early to start brewing. He said that, due to the wall around the yard, the policeman could not have seen him pass the bottles to this person from his back door. The policeman seems to have alleged that the landlord was drunk and riotous, challenging him to fight and attracting a crowd of people, all of which was denied by Grainger. However, several witnesses supported the policeman's version of events and the case was dismissed.

Samuel Grainger left the Gladstone Arms in 1872 and was succeeded by Charles Skelding who was landlord of the pub for 36 years. It is possible that Charles Skelding was married to the daughter of Samuel Grainger.

Charles Skelding appears to have run the house in an orderly fashion. Following his death in 1908 his son-in-law Joseph Howard Pargeter took over as landlord and remained until 1915.

Subsequently the pub was run briefly by a Jones and then by members of the Parrish family for many years, but we have not established any family connections with the earlier landlords.

## **County Advertiser 8/12/1906**

"Henry Timmins, fish hawker, New Street, Stourbridge, was charged with not having control of his horse on the highway on the 3rd inst.

Police-constable Harrison said he watched the horse standing outside the Gladstone Inn, Audnam, for thirty minutes. When spoken to on the matter the defendant said he was only waiting while the pony had his dinner.

Fined 2s 6d and costs."



# PORTLAND

## The Progressive-minded Paradise

In the Middle Ages, ale was flavoured with a blend of spices and herbs called 'gruit', whilst hops were typically cultivated for an array of medicinal objectives. In fact, 15th and 16th century Englishmen were rumoured to have been so appalled by the use of hops in beer production in neighbouring France and Germany that they lobbied the then ruling class to outlaw it in the industry. Consider it the Tudor period's very own Campaign for Real Ale! These days, hops are seen as an integral ingredient in a beer recipe. If anything, gruit-based beers full of rosemary and ginger are now labelled "speciality".

By the 1930s, the US state of Oregon was the hop farming capital of the world. In the following decades, Oregon State University would generate new hop varieties including Cascade which brewmaster John Bryan and his team back in Blighty at Oakham Ales continue to source for the cult beer, and a personal favourite of mine, Bishops Farewell. In July 2018, I visited some of the many breweries and cider producers dotted around Oregon's largest city, Portland. In this article, I will open your eyes to a progressive-minded paradise.

It's hard to believe it but this article will only just scratch the surface. The ten Portland breweries and ciderhouses that I review here are merely a fraction of the city's total offering. Each taproom has it all – the knowledgeable bartender that brings a feeling of depth and purpose to the transaction, the quirky merchandise shelf that makes you regret already maximising your 23kg travel allowance, and the ridiculously unpredictable range of beers and ciders that makes for an experience akin to buying pick 'n' mix.

Up first, a sampling session at the **Oregon Mead and Cider Co.** Tasting Room in the Kerns commercial area. They produce one 'base mead'

called "Trinity" (6.25%) which consists purely of honey, water, and yeast. The base mead is then enhanced with mosaic hops (to make "Mosaic Mead"), Jacobsen sea salt and toasted coriander seeds (to make "Gose Mead"), and finally orange blossom honey and raspberries (to make "She Blended Mead with Science"). The company has a distribution map which spans Oregon (as the name implies). I was shocked to hear that only 5% of the producer's time is actually spent 'making cider'. A staggering 80% of his hours are consumed by cleaning alone. We also sampled "Dry Cider" (made with champagne yeast), "Torula Dry Cider" (the only one that is made with wine yeast), "Pink Guava Cider" (which was rich with a natural haze from the fruit), and "Cranberry Cardamom Cider" (which resembled a scented Christmas candle).

Adjacent to the above is **Culmination Brewing** which scooped the Best New Brewery award



at the 2016 Oregon Beer Awards.

Upon hearing my accent, the barman advised me to opt for the "Away Days English Inspired IPA" (5.8%) brewed with Columbus, Chinook,

and Willamette hops. This, my first beer in Portland, was crisp and punchy and I couldn't resist buying the obligatory souvenir t-shirt.

What is your preferred snack between pints? Pork Crunch? Bombay Mix? How about doughnuts? As we strolled towards our next 'port' of call, we were side-tracked by a local superbrand called 'Voodoo Doughnuts'. This place is so popular that it has an outdoor zig-zag queuing system. My order of a doughnut with chocolate frosting, Oreo cookies, and peanut butter was tame compared to the alternatives which included a



characteristically American doughnut with maple frosting and bacon on top (photographed).



Having exceeded our recommended daily intake of sugar several times over, we returned to liquid indulgence at **Natian Brewery**. This is an unpretentious café-style outlet where I would have what turned out to be my favourite beer in the city – “Everyday IPA” (5.5%). A welcome difference between the US and UK drinking scene is the opportunity to choose between a far less restricted set of measurements. Here, I started with a 5 oz. splash costing \$2 (which would roughly equate to one quarter of a pint on home soil) but it wasn’t long before those famous words were uttered: “same again, please”. I was also intrigued by the advertised canning service where your favourite draught beer can be sealed in a tin for consumption off site. I put the technology to the test and ordered a takeout of said beer. Impressively, some 48 hours later, the beer poured in excellent condition having retained both its carbonation and flavour.



The rest of our first day would be spent in the Buckman neighbourhood, Southeast Portland, where a disproportionately high number of breweries and cider houses are located. Whilst **Burnside Brewing** self-identifies as an ‘alchemist craft beer company’ which employs ‘risk takers’, my “Fizzy Hands” Session IPA (5%) was complex but not necessarily that original. The opposite was true at **Wayfinder Beer**, though, where I was fortunate enough to come across a Wayfinder & Holy Mountain experimental collaboration beer called “As Above, So Below” (6%). The brew is loaded with a trio of juicy hops (Mosaic, Vic Secret, and Cryo-Simcoe) and then fermented as cold as possible. For me, this was Portland in a glass. The standard was upheld at **Base Camp Brewing Company** where I opted for a relatively new-to-the-market Pacific Northwest-style IPA called “Send It” (7%).



A brewery with a good reputation locally is **Cascade Brewing** and, at their flagship ‘Barrel House’, I tried a duo of their core range. Sadly, I was disappointed with both the Brightwork Pale (5.1%) and Cascade IPA (6.1%). Neither displayed any memorable aroma or flavour. As a result, I plucked up the courage to try the “Figaro 2015” (8.4%) – a Chardonnay barrel-aged sour beer with white figs and citrus peel – as recommended by the waitress. I confess that I have zilch expertise on what could absolutely be considered to be a luxurious tippable, but I don’t have a positive review for this beer/style. I’ll just conclude that it is an acquired taste.

At this point we return to cider – and a heck of a lot of it because the **Schilling Cider House** boasts a choice of 50! Of the three that I tried, “Strawberry Hop” (6.9%) from local nano producer ^5 (read High Five) was the perfect thirst-quencher during the ensuing heatwave. I was also impressed with the unexpected use of hops in certain ciders including “Lupine” (8.5%) from Evenfall and “Citrus Hop” (6.2%) from Bauman’s. The venue is cashless which caught us by surprise but isn’t this simply a sign of things to come? Apparently, they ‘reluctantly’ decided to go ‘Card Only’ after the tills got robbed during the opening week.

As night fell, we made the 0.1 mile walk to **Rogue Eastside Pub & Pilot Brewery** where, lo and behold, a handpull sat upon the bar! The cask beer being dispensed was Rogue’s own “Younger’s Special Bitter” (5.5%); a smooth, premium copper ale – something of a cliché British beer style

which is a little ‘too’ traditional for my curiosity, although I did have one for research purposes! I was then drawn to “Cryo-Chronic IPA” (6.9%) from Washington-based Everybody’s Brewing. This unbelievably fantastic hop bomb uses Mosaic powder which is separated from the hop cone using an innovative cryogenic process. My kind of Science lesson!

There was just about time for a nightcap at the aptly-named **Hair of the Dog Brewing Company** where I had a Maibock Lager called “Lila” (6%). This taproom sits on the pedestrian Eastbank Esplanade along the east shore of the Willamette River and is one of the relatively older breweries in Portland having been founded in 1993.

“I’ll be back”.

**Ryan Hunt**

*Chair, Dudley & South Staffordshire CAMRA*

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# The Bishop and The Virgin

Now that's got your attention, I should explain it's a newcomer's experience of the Bishops Castle Real Ale and Cider Trail. For those who have never visited Bishops Castle, it's a small picturesque village built on the side of a hill, located in southwest Shropshire (or Welsh borders dependent on who you ask). It has rich and colourful history, and although only small, boasts 6 pubs and 2 breweries, along with museums, restaurants and many craft shops.

On 7<sup>th</sup> July, a bunch from Dudley & South Staffs CAMRA, climbed aboard a minibus and headed there. The day started well with bright sunshine and right on time we were picked up in Dudley, after a couple of hours chatting and enjoying some of the best views of the English countryside, we arrived.

For the day the main high street is closed to traffic :-



The place was buzzing and most pubs full, this was no surprise as the 22nd festival advertised over 100 real ales and more than 50 cider and perries to sample.

The village is built on a hill with a one-in-six gradient so we decided to start our Real Ale

Trail at the top and work our way down and duly parked at The Castle Hotel. As part of the celebrations the pub had erected a small marquee outside in the beer garden and it was stocked with over a dozen ales ready to drink, in an effort to keep the beer cool they had placed damp towels over the casks, something of a trend in all the pubs with outside bars.

A novel feature of the trail experience is a cleverly designed beer container with the handle designed to slot into one another :-



this enables you to easily carry a couple of pints in one hand and you are allowed to take it from one venue to another. We arrived just after midday, it was a little too early for the entertainment but a live band were practising for the sound check whilst I sampled a fine Hop Back, Summer Lightning and a tasty Hobsons Twisted Spire.

Later we ambled on to the bar with the oldest working brewery in Britain, The Three Tuns, although extended and modified over the years the building still has many fine features and the character of a bygone age, I tried the interestingly titled 'Popcorn Double Feature'





being served in the courtyard from what appeared to be an old stable, and later moved indoors to try the legendary XXX, I was not disappointed.

The focus suddenly changed when someone noticed that the big game kick-off was nearing and we needed to find a pub with a decent television ready for the England-Sweden game, so moved back to the Castle Hotel, after a couple more fine beers with football (and then a brief celebration of the England win) we moved on.

After a quick look at the town hall we moved on to Crown & Anchor Vaults (commonly known as The Vaults), a very interesting building which has unusual ceiling decoration in the form of Long Player records, but as it was such a fine day I sat outside in the beer garden listening to the DJ playing records of varying tastes, whilst drinking a Woods Shropshire Lad and Ludlow Blonde.

The next port of call was the Kings Head, another superb free house and though almost tempted by the Wye Valley Butty Bach I decided to sample Ushers Celtic Gold. On the way out had a chuckle at the amusing cartoons in the gents, not the normal coarse graffiti, but samples from the Beano and Dandy.

Then on to the next, The Boars Head a fine building which claims to be the oldest licensed premises in Bishop's Castle, a genuine 16th Century coaching inn dating back to 1597, first licensed in 1642, although the place was packed I was served quickly as plenty of staff were on hand, offering a great selection of ales and food, I decided on quick bite whilst enjoying the warm sunshine in the garden.

At the last pub on the trail, The Six Bells, who besides their own beer had ales from Stamps, Big Clock, Moorhouse, Pictish, Neptune and Fuzzy Duck. I settled for one of their own,

Spikey Blonde and moved outside to the beer garden, settled down and listened to a live acoustic set of recognisable cover tunes from a talented young musician. I was starting to relax in the warm sunshine when I was reminded it was time for the journey home.

That was it, visited six pubs with excellent company, a real enjoyable day, just to top it off we had a welcome break on the way back, calling at The Pheasant at Neenton, a freehouse with a good selection of real ales, including some of Shropshire's finest. Then all returned safely to Dudley.

**Bill Gladwin**

*Public Health Officer,  
Dudley & South Staffs CAMRA*

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Queen's Head, High Street, Wordsley DY8 5QS  
Swan, Long Lane, Halesowen B62 6JY  
Waggon & Horses, Stourbridge Road, Halesowen B63 3TU  
Whitley, 21 Stourbridge Road, Halesowen B63 3QX



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# Czech These Beers Out

As we and others have brought to your attention the many great traditional bars and beer halls in Prague before, on our recent trip we decided to hunt out some of the newer craft beer establishments and their brews. Note Czech beers are still quoted in °Plato not % ABV. As a rough guide 10 = 4%, 14 = 6%, 16 = 7.2% I was going to list the beers on tap at each bar but as they are continually changing I've put a link to their websites.

Restaurace Kulový Blesk, Sokolská 13, Praha 2, 150 m from I. P. Pavlova Metro Station, has 10 local microbrewery beers on tap and a fridge full of world and Czech beers. Good value local snacks and meals too. We ordered some chips and a large plateful of freshly cooked crisps arrived complete with three different dips. Have a look at their website [www.restauracekulovyblesk.cz](http://www.restauracekulovyblesk.cz) Favourite beer - Bad Flash Double IPA 17°

Beer Geek, Vinohradská 62, Praha 3, 50 m from Vinohradská Metro Station has 32 beers on draft, 16 world, 14 Czech and two cask ales. They also do 8 differently spiced chicken wing meals and they are superb. Look at their beer list on <http://beergeek.cz/en/> they are also on Untappd. Best beer list of all we visited. Favourite beer - Mazak Single Hop Ale Calypso 13°

Bad Flash Bar, Krymská 126/2, Praha 10, 20 m from Tram 22 or 23 stop Krymska. This has a very large bottle beer selection from all over the world, in a bank of fridges and about a ten of their own beers on tap plus a couple of guests. Favourite beer - Matuska Wet Hop Speciaini Svetle 13°



(A)VOID Craft Beer Barge, which is moored on the River Vltava next to the railway bridge towards the south of town. Pleasant sitting here on a balmy evening with

a breeze from the river and there is usually singer or group playing. Only about 8 beers on tap. Have a look at their facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/AVOIDFloatingGallery/?locale2=cs\\_CZ](https://www.facebook.com/AVOIDFloatingGallery/?locale2=cs_CZ)

We broke our quest for Czech micros here and had a Wild Beer from Shepton Mallet.

20 PIP Craft Beer Bar, Slezská 1357/1, Praha 2, just around the corner from the Náměstí Míru Metro Station. 20 beers on tap you can see a typical selection on their Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/20pip/> Although it was 10pm when we were there, there were only two other customers, which doesn't look good, but we liked the place. Favourite beer - Cerny Potoka Blitzkrieeeg 16°

Ale! Bar, Elišky Peškové 79/9, Praha-Smíchov, cross the river on the bridge with an island in the middle and it's just a 5 minute walk away. 6 or 8 beers on tap, can't remember for sure. Lovely, cosy, little bar with 6 tables, away from the tourist spots. See their facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/alebar.smichov/> Favourite beer - Cerny Potoka Cloud Scanner 15°



Illegal beer, Ve Smečkách 590/16, Nové Město, in the city centre, off Wenceslas Square, but the other end of this rather sleazy street of brothels and strip joints. Another cosy bar away from the crowds, of about 6 tables with about 6 to 8 beers on tap. See <http://www.illegalbeer.cz> Favourite beer - Falcon Triple Idiot 22°

Vinohradsky Pivovar, Korunni 2506/106, vinohrady, Praha 10, get tram 10 or 16 and it drops you almost outside at stop Orionka. Super clean, modern brewpub on two floors with viewing access to the brewery. Just 5 of their own beers which vary day to day, we had a couple including an APA but were recommended to try the IPA another day when it was on. The snacks were delicious I had cold rare roast beef with mustard sauce and cucumber, Bridget marinated cheese with salad. See <http://www.vinohradskypivovar.cz/> restaurace Favourite beer - Vinohradsky Jantar 13°

Tony Skirving





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# Pub News

## Dudley & South Staffordshire

**PLOUGH & HARROW**, CRADLEY HEATH B64 7BT  
Has been acquired by Birmingham-based restaurant and hotel management company 'Westbourne Leisure'. Very little will change from a customer point of view, with Gary and Sarah remaining in place.

**SADLER'S TAP ROOM**, QUINTON B32 2AA  
Now offers a 20p CAMRA discount.

**WALL HEATH TAVERN**, WALL HEATH DY6 0HB  
Has reopened on 27<sup>th</sup> July. We welcome Simon and Marie from the Horse & Jockey, Penkridge.

**WOODMAN**, LOWER GORNAL DY3 2UD  
The previous manager, 'Curly' Dave, has stepped down due to ill health. His successor is a new manageress called 'Faith'. Some improvements are being made to the interior.

## Stourbridge & Halesowen

**WAGGON & HORSES**, STOURBRIDGE DY8 1AW  
A new lunch time menu is being served 12-3.30pm in their back-room bar, hopefully they will be serving Amy's famous scotch eggs and pies (yum!). Also, dates to be confirmed, there's going to be an October beer festival, all ales will be on hand pull and complimented with traditional ciders (4 on hand pull and the others from the boxes).

**THE FORESTERS**, WOLLASTON DY8 3PL  
Are currently planning their Christmas Fayre menu for this year and there's sure to be some festive events in the run up to the big day, dates to be confirmed so keep an eye on their Facebook page.

### RED HOUSE, STOURBRIDGE DY8 1EL

Will be holding monthly tap take overs starting Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September with Salopian, 11<sup>th</sup> October with Thornbridge and 15<sup>th</sup> November with Elland. We can't wait!

Sadly, it's not all good news, after a lengthy battle to rescue it The Maypole in Halesowen has been pulled down. Rumours on social media are circulating at a number of other pubs that are threatened with closure, so let's make this winter season a good one for all our local landlords and drink up! – Responsibly of course.



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# Brewery News

## Stourbridge & Halesowen

Stourbridge & Halesowen has a new brewery in the branch! **Beat Brewery** are new on the scene in this area at least having been previously brewing in Somerset. Their ales are



based around a musical theme with beers such as 'Glam', 'Raver' and 'New Wave'. Moreover, shortly before A&T deadline day, the brewery showed a photo of a new sister brewery

'Topcat' Brewery. We're expecting more details from these guys over the coming months, but in the meantime be sure to look out for their beers locally. Keep your eyes peeled for a future feature in A&T.

### CRADDOCKS – STOURBRIDGE

Craddock's have recently released a new beer called "Wasted". It was brewed using 100kg of fresh surplus bread saved from landfill. It's a light golden beer, single hopped with Citra, then dry hopped in the fermenting vessel with lemongrass, at 5% and available on keg. The beer is a collaboration with Toast Ale, so 10% of the profit goes to Feedback, an environmental campaigning to end food waste. The beer will be available regionally and maybe further afield. The Duke William are planning on running a beer bus around the local pubs, date to be confirmed.

### GREEN DUCK - STOURBRIDGE DY9 7ND

Green Duck have recently taken over The Harriers Arms at Kidderminster Harriers FC and their Oktoberfest dates for this year are Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October to Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October.

## Dudley & South Staffs

### ENVILLE BREWERY

A new 4.3% house ale - "Shovelicious" - has been launched on 17<sup>th</sup> August at the Shovel, Lye.

### HOLDEN'S BREWERY

The Woodsetton brewery has collaborated with Dig Brew Co. to produce "9<sup>th</sup> July" described as a 4.4% 'Modern Black Country Bitter' made with Simcoe, Summit, Citra & Mosaic hops plus Holden's house yeast. It is available in 440ml cans.

### KINVER BREWERY

This quarter's brewery news is one of mixed emotions. Firstly, we would like to announce the retirement of Kinver Brewery co-founder Ian 'Iggy' Davies. Iggy established the brewery with Dave in 2004 and was instrumental in the formation of the company, persuading Dave to convert his passion to a profession. We would like to wish Iggy all the very best in his retirement. Moving forward, Dave is to be joined by his family investing to become partners in the brewery – wife Carol, sons Rob and Tommy, and daughter Steph. Whilst Carol has been working with the brewery for some years, the offspring are no strangers themselves; all three having been involved in the brewing and distribution processes at some point in their lives (and certainly enjoying their time as ambassadors at beer festivals). In celebration of the Kelly family takeover, the brewery has released a commemorative beer – 'The Kids are Ale-Right!' (4.5%), which has been available since early August. The brewery is also planning to brew a green hop beer in September with fresh hops from the Charles Faram Hopwalk at Pridewood Hop Farm Ledbury. Finally, we are proud to announce that Kinver Brewery's 'Half Centurion' was the winner of the Strong Bitter Bronze Award in the 2018 Champion Beer of Britain competition at the Great British Beer Festival.



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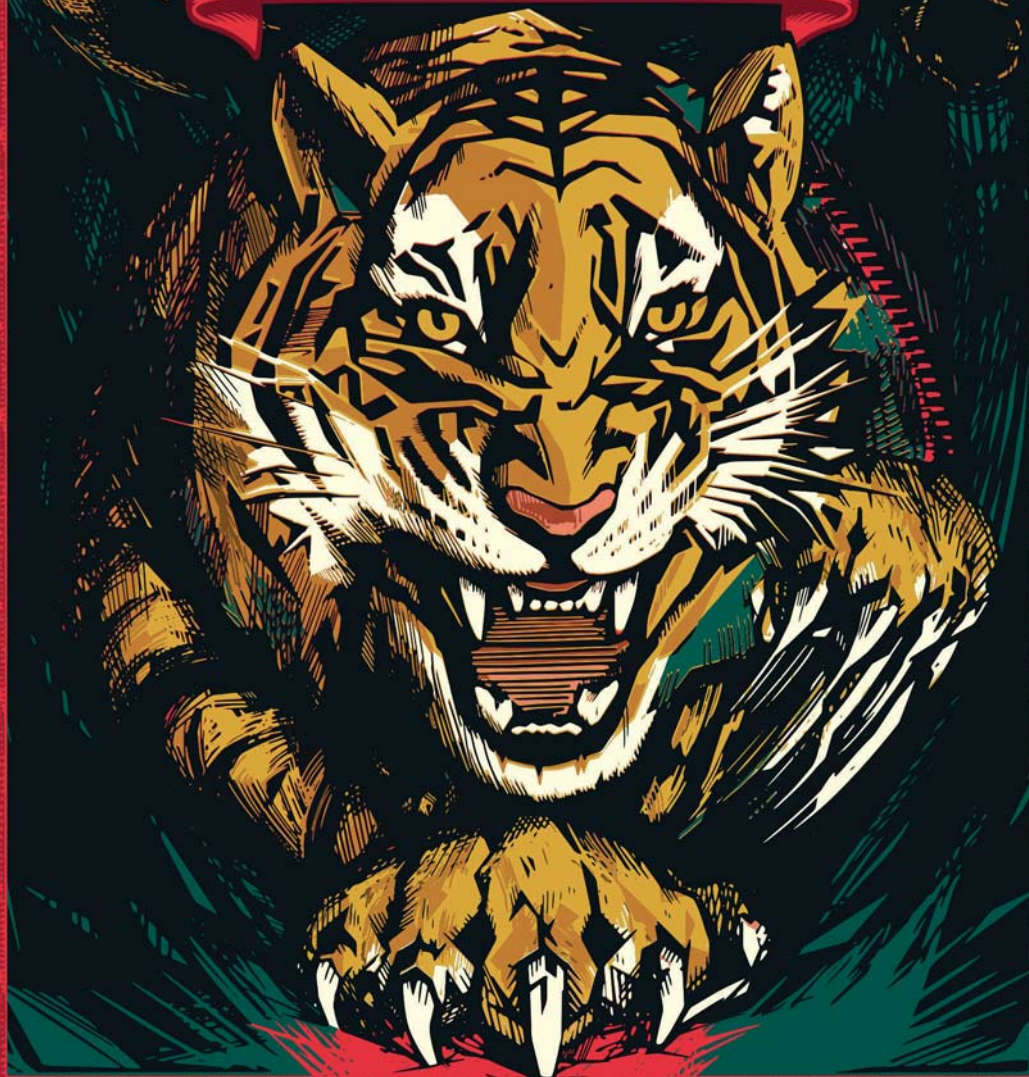


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# TIGER

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# Take A Walk On The Strong Side

Each Winter some of our great local brewers produce beers that are much stronger than their normal fayre. Last year I managed to sample a good few in pubs across the area.

**Snowflake** is produced by Sarah Hughes brewery behind the Beacon Hotel in Sedgley. The beer at 8% ABV is a rich, well-rounded strong barley wine, reminiscent of a good Madeira. This year it seems that it was not as sweet as I have had in previous years, perhaps a sign that it was brewed earlier in the year and hence had a bit of time to mature.

**Blizzard** is the Strong Winter beer brewed by Enville brewery and its strength is 6.5%. The



brewery describes this beer as a traditional copper coloured, premium quality strong bitter with well-rounded barley malt aroma. Initial slight sweetness is followed by a gentle transition to a dry

hoppy finish with just a hint of pear drops. In my humble opinion it seemed to be a shade lighter in colour this year. Excellent when I sampled it in the Kinver Constitutional Club.

**Holden's Old Ale** regularly features at Dudley Winter Ales Fayre thanks to the generous sponsorship of Holden's brewery. This strong dark sweet Old Ale at 7.2% is probably the darkest of the beers featured here. This year it seemed to have lost a bit of its sweetness and so much the better for that. I sampled it for a second time at the Bulls Head in Sedgley on Christmas eve and it seemed to be even better. Slightly more of a liquorice flavour this year!

**White Widow** was the name given to the Winter warmer from the Olde Swan brewery in Netherton. Situated behind the pub this brewery tends to produce a slightly different beer each year. At about 6.8% this beer was basically their well known Black Widow beer without any of the dark malts in the recipe. Slightly sweet went it first went on sale but later in December it had developed a much more mellow flavour.

Kinver brewery had two strong beers available this year with both **Full Centurion** and Over the Edge available locally. The Full Centurion at 10% was superb when sampled at Dudley festival 2017 and that was also the opinion of the judges who placed it first in a blind tasting competition for Beer of the Festival.

**Bathams XXX** must be the most elusive beer in the world. Social media sites were full of requests for information on where the beer was available. Annoyingly when drinkers arrived at the particular pub it had often just sold out. I cannot understand the planning process that doesn't allow time in the brewing schedule to get this beer brewed earlier in the year giving it the benefit of some maturation time. What did it taste like this year? Who Knows!

Steve Thompson





# Pub of the Year Presentations

Over the past few months Stourbridge & Halesowen branch has done a number of certificate presentations. We covered the presentation to Waggon and Horses Halesowen in our previous issue, but that still leaves a number of other presentations to tell you about.

## Branch Pub of the Year 2nd Place Robin Hood, Amblecote



The Robin Hood is a Good Beer Guide regular and always features near the top of our score sheets each year. This welcoming, cosy pub offers a great range of traditional ales, but also a number of regular and non-regular guests to provide a bit of variety. This was a busy evening for the pub as between us we had managed to arrange it on their popular 'steak night' on a Wednesday evening. The weather was on our side on this occasion and the presentation was conducted in the garden. Well done the Ben, Matt and the team on their awards.

## Branch Pub of the Year 3rd Place Red House Boutique, Stourbridge

This presentation was certainly conducted in a much more on-the-hoof fashion! Our Honorary Secretary miraculously appeared with certificate in hand during one of their tap-takeover events, and no sooner had he appeared, he had vanished! The vice-chair took

the decision to make the presentation there and then as the pub was busy and CAMRA members were already in attendance. Congratulations to Paul, Dani and the team at the Red House. They've put on a great range of diverse quality beers this year, whilst retaining the traditional ales favoured by many.



## Branch Cider Pub of the Year Waggon & Horses, Stourbridge



Dan appeared genuinely overwhelmed at the award, which now takes pride of place behind the bar. The fact that Wychelm cider, locally produced in Stourbridge, is a regular here is definitely a feather in their cap and earns extra marks for real, local cider.

For those who enjoy a fizzy cider as many do in the summer, there is also a large range to choose from, however this award represents the range and quality of real ciders served here via traditional handpull.

**BREAKING NEWS THE WAGGON & HORSES HALESOWEN ARE THE RUNNERS UP IN THE WEST MIDLAND REGION PUB OF THE YEAR COMPETITION! WELL DONE GUYS!**

## Branch Club of the Year Coombs Wood Sports and Social Club



We made this presentation as part of our July branch meeting, which maybe more by luck than judgment fell on a gloriously sunny evening. The club was busy both inside and out, with a junior cricket match in full swing and bowls taking place on the green. Our host and Club Steward, Nick offered us a great range of beer and a warm welcome to go with the weather! The club is open to CAMRA members on production of a valid CAMRA membership card.

The presentation of 2nd and 3rd place Pub of the Year certificates isn't something the branch has done consistently in the past. If you have any views on the subject, please feel free to get in touch with the branch and we will consider it for next year.

Before the next issue of Ales and Tales comes out, we will already be thinking of nominations for our 2019 crop of winners, so do keep an eye on branch social media and email communications for a chance to nominate the pub or club you feel worthy of an award.

All of our circa 700 branch members are welcome to attend any of our branch meetings and have their say on how the process is run, and make their vote count!

**Tim Cadwell**

## Branch Community Pub of the Year Plough & Harrow, Cradley Heath

Earlier in the year, Dudley & South Staffs CAMRA announced the results of the annual branch Pub of the Year and Club of the Year competition. To jog your memory, if required, the Cat Inn, Enville, and Kinver Constitutional Club, Kinver, were the respective winners following a methodical judging process. You can never congratulate hard work and high standards enough so, again, a very big well done to all involved.



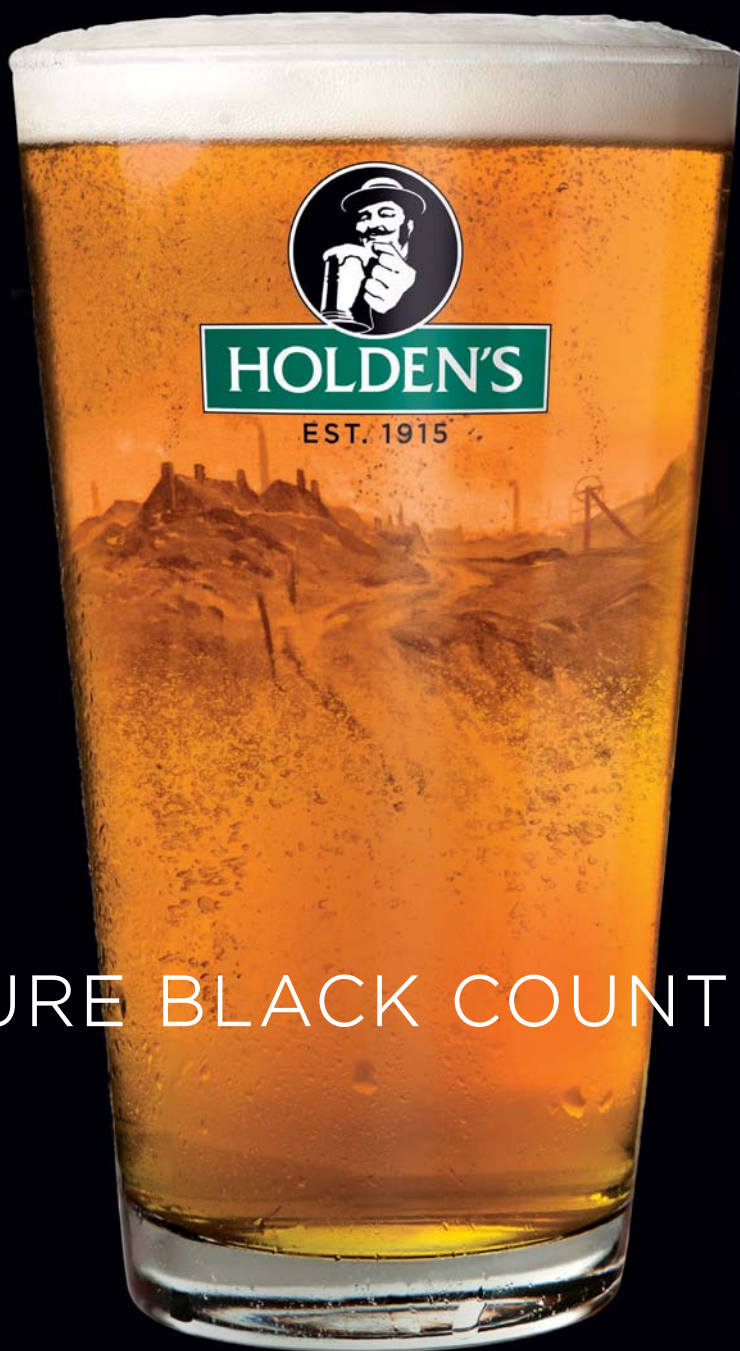
This year, the Dudley & South Staffs branch committee decided to introduce a new award – the Community Pub of the Year. We felt that identifying and rewarding a landlord/lady and his/her team for creating the conditions in which a diverse clientele intermingle whilst enjoying a good quality Real Ale or cider was important given the well-known crisis of pub closures. After all, pubs are only going to stay open with bums on seats.

The award will be presented, annually, to the Pub of the Year finalist which scores highest on the criteria 'Community Focus and Atmosphere'. This guarantees that not only must the recipient run an establishment which welcomes customers from all backgrounds and with a variety of interests, but they must also serve excellent beer in accordance with our overall modus operandi. The inaugural winner is Sarah and Gary Davies at the Plough & Harrow, Cradley Heath. Well done!

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**Ryan Hunt**  
*Chair, Dudley & South Staffs CAMRA*

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



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# Desert Island Beers

A choice of 6 beers, a book and a luxury item - what would be your choice if you were marooned on a desert island. Here are ours. We decided not to pick our favourite beers because they vary from day to day depending on the weather, where we are, our mood or on what we are eating. We chose instead beers that have some significance to us, though some favourites are amongst them.

I have always been a real ale drinker, though I didn't realise it at the time. My choice of beer when I first bought my own was Highgate or Banks's Mild. Not so Bridget who had to be weaned off lager. We decided we must take a local beer to remind us of home. We are spoilt for choice with 12 great breweries in our area such as Green Duck, Kinver, Fixed Wheel, Sadler's, etc. but we have chosen **Bathams Bitter** for four reasons.



- It is the brewery closest to where we live.
- Even in pre-CAMRA days before we lived in Wordsley, my friends and I would occasionally make the trip to the Bull and Bladder to drink it.
- Although we both enjoy the variety of brews produced by brewers these days, Bathams must be the only brewery who haven't gone down that route and are making the same beers now as they did 50 years ago, which we kind of admire.
- Our local is a Bathams pub, the New Inn, Wordsley. This was a Banks's pub when we moved here until 10 years ago. We will never forget receiving a phone call on April 1, 2008, from Pub Historian Kieron McMahon of <https://www.midlandspubs.co.uk> informing us Bathams had bought it. We never believed him of course but a few weeks later we had to apologise to him.

The beer that changed me from a Banks's Mild drinker and Bridget from a lager drinker and deserves to be on our list, is **Hopback Summer Lightning**. We came across this beer at a beer festival held at the Old White Horse, on the corner of South Road, near Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge. These mini-beer festivals pre-date Stourbridge Beer Festival and were held in a marquee erected on the pub car park. We had a pint of Summer Lightning, a new straw coloured summer ale that changed the tastes of the nation. It was superb, so we decided to drink it at source, set off to Salisbury for a couple of days and visited the Wyndham Arms, where it was first brewed and even met the brewer John Gilbert. This probably kick-started our beer related holidays.



It was after watching Michael Jackson's Beer Hunter programmes on Channel 4 in 1990 that we first learned about Belgian beers. Up to that point we, like many others, thought it was all Eurolager like Stella Artois and didn't know most of was top fermented ale, in a great variety of styles. A trip to Belgium was called for. It was a few years later that we made our first trip, we drove to Ghent and our first beer was Orval, a Trappist brew made by monks. We still have the



occasional one today, but it is not our choice for the desert island. We drank the Orval at Het Waterhuis aan de Bierkant, a bar we still frequent. We love their draft house beer **Gandavum Dry Hopping**,

brewed specially for them by De Proefbrouwerij. It is an unfiltered, slightly spicy Belgian Pale Ale. Gandavum by the way is the Roman name for Ghent.

Over the years we've made many friends in Belgium, not always Belgians but other nationalities too. At the first Bruges Beer Festival, on our table there was a Belgian Beer Sommelier who was in the national archery team, an American Professor of Psychology, an Egyptian sub-aqua instructor, his Spanish beautician partner and an Italian ship's Chief



Engineer from Venice who became a firm friend. It was at a subsequent Bruges Beer Festival that our Venetian friend Daniele introduced us to **Troubadour Magma**, an imperial IPA. Now when we go to Belgium we always bring a couple of crates of this beer back. Scott Povey of Fixed Wheel,

also a fan of Magma, produced a similar beer called Spartacus, which was the first beer to run out at 2017 Stourbridge Beer Festival.

Co-founder of Brewdog, Martin Dickie with his colleague Steffano Cossi developed the wonderful Jaipur IPA, one of our favourite beers. When Michael Jackson tasted his beer, he encouraged him to start his own venture and he returned to Scotland and teamed up with his old school pal James Watt. They formed BrewDog and their flagship brew Punk IPA is very similar to Jaipur. The original Punk was the same original gravity, ABV, mash & fermentation temperature and had many of the same hops. Love them or hate them, BrewDog revolutionised the British brewing industry by being one of the first to produce the flavour packed beers that has lead

to the "Craft Keg" scene we can all enjoy today. So our choice would be original **BrewDog Punk IPA**.

Neither of us are fond of the modern trend of brewing stouts and porters to taste overwhelmingly of coffee or chocolate but we do enjoy some dark beers. Three that immediately spring to mind are Westvleteren 12, Rochefort 10 and St. Bernardus 12. Any one of these would be our ideal but forced to choose it would be **St. Bernardus 12** to remind us of when we stayed at the B&B attached to the brewery. B&B Brouwershuis is probably the most luxurious B&B we've ever stayed in, large comfortable rooms, great breakfast, lovely garden with a tennis court and best of all, a fridge stocked with St. Bernardus beers that you can help yourself to at no extra charge.

Our luxury item would be our Table Tennis Table so we can keep practicing to beat Kinver Dave when we are rescued and also we can shelter underneath it when it rains.

Hoping our desert island would be in a temperate zone, the book would be Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's 'A Cook on the Wild Side.' This was his first book based on his 1997 TV programme of the same name, where he cooked such delicacies as squirrel on a spit, road kill rabbit, and nettle soup.

**Tony & Bridget Skirving**

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# Cider Cooling in Pubs

It's great to see the increase in real cider available in pubs and clubs over the last few years and, although there are still cider deserts, real cider or perry can usually be found at a pub or club near you. One of our concerns though is that some pubs are putting boxes or tubs on a shelf behind the bar without any temperature control for long periods of time which will affect the quality of the product on sale. This will not help the reputation of the drink, or the pub.

Understandably, space is restricted in many pubs, but if you are able to find a way of storing it at the correct temperature, your customers are more likely to enjoy the drink and have another. It will also reduce wastage. Like real ale, real cider can become stale or go off if it is not kept at the right temperature, which is typical cellar temperature (between 10-14 degrees). Over the years, a number of cider cooling systems that help achieve this have been seen. Below is a brief overview of them (in approximate order of effectiveness), along with their pros and cons.

It should be noted that cider tubs are plastic, which means they are good insulators. This helps if the cider is cool to start with, but hinders if external forced cooling is required. Bag-In-Box is more common but they have the drawback of being impossible to handle when they become wet, which limits the cooling methods that can be used.

## KEEP BOX OR TUB IN THE CELLAR

The layout of some pubs allow the box or tub to be kept in the cellar and served through a hand pump or served from the cellar on draught by staff. If this isn't achievable, real cider and perry does not need to settle when it has been moved so it is possible to keep it in the cellar when the pub is closed or at quiet times and move it into the bar area when required.

**PROS:** Effective.

**CONS:** It can be hard work, and the container will warm up after a few hours if it is to be moved to the bar.

## PROBES OR TUBE IN THE TUB

Here, a metal probe or plastic tube carrying cold water is inserted into the cider tub. Metal probes would be made with a bung of some form that fits into the top of the cider tub. There will then be stiff or flexible plastic pipes to connect them together. For a plastic tube, holes can be drilled in a shive (used for beer barrels) and a tube fed through the holes. Either a continuous tube is used, or a short tube with connectors can be used. A short-cut is to remove the original cap, feed a length of tube into the tub, and then use tape to part seal the hole and hold the tube in place. The pipe or tube is then connected to a conventional cooler unit. For boxes, the probe or tube can be fed in to the box at the bottom (between the cardboard and bag) by carefully cutting a hole in the cardboard while the box is up-side-down.

**PROS:** Very effective and suitable for boxes.

**CONS:** It's cumbersome and expensive. The probe or tube needs to be sterilised before inserting into a tub. It's a lot of work when a box or tub is finished and is replaced. Care must be taken if the box has to be cut. Strong tape may be required to re-seal the box.

## CIDER SADDLES

Specially made cider saddles can be used in the same way as firkin saddles. These are then connected to a conventional cooler unit. An insulating jacket (of some form) over or around the tub is also required.

**PROS:** Effective, and most equipment easily available.

**CONS:** Takes time to cool the cider. It's cumbersome and expensive. Not suitable for boxes.

### STORE IN A FRIDGE

If there is space, boxes can easily slot into many fridges behind the bar. However, in some cases the fridge holds other products, some of which are kept at below cellar temperature, which can lead to the cider being served too cold. Ideally, the fridge should be set to cellar temperature.

**PROS:** Effective.

**CONS:** Will be difficult to achieve in small bar areas.

### ICE PACKS

Here, you use ice packs round the bottom of the tub, or under the bag for Bag-In-Box.

**PROS:** Effective (while the ice is still ice) and very simple.

**CONS:** Takes time to cool the cider. There can be a lot of water when the ice melts. There will still be condensation, even if the ice is in a sealed bag, which can be a problem of boxes.

### REFRIGERATED TRAYS

You place the tub or box on a refrigerated tray (the type used for cooling bottles).

**PROS:** Effective and easy to implement. The cider at the bottom, where it's dispensed, is being cooled.

**CONS:** Takes time to cool the cider. The tubs can get frozen to the refrigerated surface. Condensation can be an issue for boxes. Sturdy trays are required. They are cumbersome and expensive.

### TUBE AROUND THE TUB

Here, a tube carrying cold water is wrapped around the box or tub. The tube is then connected to a conventional cooler unit. An insulating jacket (of some form) over or around the box or tub is also required.

**PROS:** Easy to implement. Most equipment is easily available.

**CONS:** Not that effective, and takes time to cool the cider.

### WET TOWELS

Cover the tub in a wet towel (with a cut-out for the cap and handle).

**PROS:** Very simple and cheap.

**CONS:** Not that effective, and takes time to cool the cider. Need to keep the towels wet. It's less effective when tub is below half full. Not suitable for Bag-In-Box.

Andrea Briers and Chris Rouse



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# CAMRA Needs You!

## Like Cider... Like Beer... Then Volunteer!

### Working at Worcester Beer Festival - August 9th - 11th

Whatever your interests, experience or time available, there's something for everyone with CAMRA. Maybe you heard about CAMRA at a beer festival – but did you know without our wonderful volunteers, CAMRA Beer Festivals just could not happen!

We volunteer on a regular basis and enjoy the social aspect of all the beer festivals we work at. Worcester Beer Festival is a large venue and takes place on Worcester Race course.

We took the opportunity of a free camping space and decided to work on the Friday evening as this is the busiest time and Saturday day time giving us chance to enjoy the festival on the Saturday afternoon.

We arrived, pitched our tent and went to introduce ourselves to Mark who we already know.

We received a free T shirt and signed in with a start time of 8pm for our late shift. Small tasters are encouraged to enable the volunteer to identify the beers within their area. There is no cash involved

only the marking off of the value of the tokens of the beer served. With over 170 beers and 100 real ciders and perry there was a lot of ground to cover when serving but to speak to like-minded people and offer your knowledge is extremely rewarding and doesn't feel like work.



Friday is always the busiest time, so we decided to walk into Worcester first before our shift started. We visited the new Hop Lord – Pump Street which had a tap takeover from Cloudwater so we enjoyed a couple of thirds before heading to the Postal Order where we had a real ale with our afternoon Fish n chips. After recharging our batteries with food and drink we headed back to the Festival for a quick shower.

Our shift started at 8pm but due to the large crowds we went onto Bar 1 at 7.30 pm. We introduced ourselves to the Bar Manager, Ted and the other Volunteers and started serving straight away. We spoke to so many different people, young and old all enjoying themselves while asking for assistance in choosing a beer type that they liked.

I had a young Polish guy who was studying at Oxford asking me to explain the differences between stout and porters. We didn't have hundreds of dark beers however we chose a couple for him to taste and explained the differences to which he decided on a nice Dark Rum Porter. Closing time was 11pm, so we sat down and had a chat about our favourite beers with the other volunteers and retired to our tent very tired and looking forward to the next day.

We woke up fairly early and took advantage of the hot showers close to where the tents and other campers were pitched. We had some breakfast and a nice hot drink which is available in the kitchen area close to the showers and toilets. Saturday means another T shirt as each day Worcester Beer Festival is sponsored by a different organisation.



We started at 11.30 and went to sign in, this time we were asked to work Bar 3 which is where the Beer Festival Visitors enter, so you can imagine how busy we were.

We had some amazing beers and managed to sell all the beers within our area within 3 hours. Highlights for me were Totally Brewed, VOG, Hop Shed, Tiny Rebel and Twisted Barrel. What really made my Saturday was meeting a brewer who was visiting the UK from Italy, he had been to many of our Craft Beer sites, including Verdant in Cornwall, Cloudwater and Magic Rock as well as many more Pubs and Tap rooms. He asked us if we knew anywhere close by, so we gave

him directions to DEYA brewery in Cheltenham. It was wonderful to speak to him and he told us about his outlet in Italy and how he loved the beers in the UK and the massive variety that comes with CAMRA and the UK love of good beer, cider and Perries.



We finished our shift late due to the large amount of people who wanted to be served so our Bar Manager thanked us and as well as having beer tokens to spend he gave us some food vouchers as we had worked a 6 hours shift. We gladly took these and went to have a sit down in the outside area. We had one more beer and a nice cold Oliver's Perry while we decided what to eat.

After having a very tasty naan bread filled with chicken we moved into the music tent and were joined by some other volunteers who we had met the previous day.

The music was excellent, and the overall experience was fantastic there were volunteers from Wales, Malvern and Tamworth and we took advantage of our free evening.

We spent our beer tokens and moved to the main marquee. We were asked if we wanted to stay for the end of festival party and wrap up session which we did.



The end of festival celebration started with Fred giving us an overview of the festival. He thanked all of us and we were asked to try any beers, ciders or perries that were left. One of the food suppliers also came in and furnished the table with lots of spicy Mexican food which was greatly appreciated.

CAMRA volunteers are a wonderful mix of people, of all ages, from all walks of life we all have the same thing in common our campaign for Real Ale, Ciders and Perries which makes volunteering so worthwhile. It was truly a wonderful weekend and even the rain didn't dampen our weekend.

To get involved contact your local Branch or email [volunteer@camra.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@camra.org.uk)

**Tanya Rhead**





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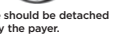
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