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Beer at Heart

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Coming Home

Joule's long-awaited return to Stone

Also in this issue:

Candid Beer chat
Local pub and brewery news
and loads more

Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA magazine
Issue 38 | Autumn 2019



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Beer at Heart

Covering Stafford • Stone • Eccleshall • Penkridge • Gnosall • Uttoxeter and surrounding areas

Chair's Chat

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the award-winning **Beer at Heart** magazine.

We have just held our annual Beer & Cider Festival at Blessed William Howard school and a hectic week it was. For the first time ever I had the time to help with getting the hall ready for 66 beers and the many drinkers over three days, which was an eye opener. Luckily we have members who have participated for several years who know the ropes and what is required day by day; hopefully I will be more skilled in the future!

The *Good Beer Guide 2020* is due for release on 12th September. Voted for by the drinking public and checked by volunteers, with reviews and information, this is always a good read. Get yours from the CAMRA website and start to tick the hostelries off?

We recently had a social trip to Derby which was well attended with excellent pubs and beer; as usual a good time was had by all. There are several more being planned in the coming months, including a trip to Manchester on 12th October and a social to the Wellington Beer Trail on 2nd November (see page 5). If you can 'arrange' a free Saturday please think about joining in and meeting some of your fellow CAMRA members.

Frank Bryden, Branch Chair

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Branch Diary



NB dates and venues are subject to change, so before making a special journey please check the diary on our website:
www.heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk/diary

SEPTEMBER 2019

THURSDAY 5th: RURAL PUB OF THE YEAR PRESENTATION - WOOLPACK, Weston, 8pm.

SATURDAY 7th: SOCIAL in ECCLESHALL. Meet 11.30 KINGS ARMS (14 bus 11.03 from Stafford)

*WEDNESDAY 11th: BRANCH MEETING. GREEN MAN, Milwich, 8pm.

THURSDAY 12th: AUTUMN PUB OF THE SEASON PRESENTATION - SUN INN, Stafford, 8pm

WEDNESDAY 18th: BEER FESTIVAL 'WASH UP' MEETING. SUN INN, Stafford, 8pm.

OCTOBER 2019

SATURDAY 12th: SOCIAL TRIP TO MANCHESTER. See panel below.

NOVEMBER 2019

SATURDAY 2nd: SOCIAL - WOLVES TO WELLINGTON BEER TRAIL. See panel below.

*WEDNESDAY 13th: BRANCH MEETING. LITTLE GEORGE, Eccleshall, 8pm.

*Branch meetings for CAMRA members only; all welcome to other events

SUGGESTIONS FOR SOCIALS? Contact social@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

MANCHESTER SOCIAL SATURDAY 12th OCTOBER

10.28 Stafford to Manchester Piccadilly
(10.43 at Stoke for connection from Stone)

Crown and Kettle, Oldham Road
Marble Arch Inn, Rochdale Road
The Angel Pub, Angel Street
Sam's Chop House, Chapel Walks
City Arms, Kennedy Street
Britons Protection, Great Bridgewater St
Peveril of the Peak, Great Bridgewater St
Circus Tavern or Grey Horse, Portland St
Piccadilly Tap, Gateway House

Returning on 18.27 Piccadilly to Stafford
(19:07 at Stoke for connection to Stone)

WOLVES TO WELLINGTON BEER TRAIL SOCIAL SATURDAY 2nd NOVEMBER

10.45 from Stafford / 10.34 from Stone
Buy an Anytime Day Return to Wellington
so you can hop on and off the train

Holden's Station Pub, Codsall
The Harp, Albrighton
The Plough and the White Heart in Shifnal
Station Hotel, the Crown, and the Old
Fighting Cocks in Oakengates
Pheasant, Wellington (Rowton Brewery tap)

Then returning via the Great Western in
Wolverhampton (time TBA)

Pub and Club news

STAFFORD

A new micropub called the **Ship Aground** could be opening soon in a former shop on Market Street. The change of use application promises “high quality craft beer” and “a playlist of excellent music.”

The **Sun** is our Autumn Pub of the Season. Join us for the presentation on Thursday 12th September at 8pm. This Titanic Brewery pub was also a runner-up in our 2018 Pub of the Year competition.

Planning permission has been granted to demolish the **Princess Royal**, however this is not for the first time and we understand that it is not due to close anytime soon.

The **Bird in Hand** hosts a real ale and cider festival from 12th-15th September. It's plastic free—festival glasses cost £1, the proceeds from which go to charity.

Hogarth's has opened on Gaolgate Street. Edwardian-style décor. No food or children. Two or three cask ales mainly from national breweries, at Wetherspoons prices.

Hogarth's accept the new CAMRA vouchers (replacing the Wetherspoons-only vouchers) as do **Yates** on Espley's Yard. More pubs are expected to join the scheme.

New management took over at the **Spittal Brook** in June and the pub seems to be thriving, if its Wednesday night quiz is anything to go by! Four real ales on tap.

HIXON

The **Green Man** is still trading [at the time of writing], and locals are making a fresh attempt to buy it. [Search Facebook for ‘Save the Green Man Hixon’.] However an Asset of Community Value application has been rejected and a source tells **Beer at Heart** that the Section 106 agreement is finally about to be signed off.

STONE

The **Swan Inn** is showcasing the best of local breweries between 20th September and 7th October to tie in with Cask Ale Week and the Stone Food & Drink Festival.

The Food & Drink Festival is offering exclusive tours of the new Joule's site at Crown Wharf on 5th & 6th October. Tickets cost £5 from www.stonefooddrink.org.uk

HAUGHTON

We're pleased to report that the **Bell** re-opened just after our last issue went to press.

GNOSALL

Our roving reporter sent us this:

*“We are pleased to see the **Horns** has re-opened, now being run by Huw and Karen.*

On the day we visited they were serving a cracking pint of their permanent beer, Hobson's Town Crier plus one guest ale (two at busier times).

Good old-fashioned pub food is now offered, all home cooked by Karen. Lunchtimes and evenings Tuesday to Saturday, with a roast on Sundays (no food on Mondays).

The pub opening times are Monday 4pm to midnight, Tuesdays to Fridays 12noon to 2pm and 4pm to midnight, Saturdays and Sundays 12noon to midnight.”

ECCLESHALL

An addition to the list in BaH37 of discounts for card-carrying CAMRA members: 10p off a pint of real ale or cider at the **Bell**.

MARCHINGTON

The owner of the **Dog & Partridge** has submitted a planning application to convert the pub into a family home. The pub was our Uttoxeter sub-branch's 2017 Pub of the Year.

A Reader Writes

On Craft Beer and Real Ale

Sir, in the Pub and Club News section of Issue 37 you mention the new bar, **Candid**, and say "Selling craft beer rather than real ale...". Craft beer and real ale are not necessarily different types of beer, and a significant number of craft beers are real ale.

Readers of a nervous disposition might like to ignore the next two paragraphs of boring technical detail:

CAMRA's definition of real ale says that it must be unpasteurised, not filtered and undergo secondary fermentation in the container from which it is dispensed. It must not be dispensed by any method which applies any gas or gas mixture directly to the beer.

Most craft beers are not pasteurised and many are not filtered so that they can undergo fermentation in the container from which they are dispensed, meeting CAMRA's definition. If they are bottled then they are to be regarded as "real ale in a bottle". Many craft ales are served from a container known as a KeyKeg. The beer is contained in a flexible bag inside a rigid container, low gas pressure is applied to the space between the outer container and the bag to serve the beer. As the gas does not come into contact with the beer this also meets CAMRA's definition of real ale.

So unfiltered craft beers served from a KeyKeg are real ale whereas filtered craft beers from a KeyKeg are not. How can you tell the difference? You can't, and the licensee or barperson probably doesn't know either. CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival will have a bar devoted to real craft ales, but as I write the beer list isn't available to give any help to identify beers in a pub. Tiny Rebel, Magic Rock, Wild Beer Co and Siren are amongst the craft breweries whose beer can be "real".

I would say go on, take the risk. All too many modern cask ales are boring, identikit over-hopped pale ales often with an unpleasant citrus taste. Craft ales on the other hand vary considerably in type and have an incredible range of flavours. Even if you pick one that doesn't meet CAMRA's definition of real ale I wouldn't worry too much, you might enjoy it. They are nothing like the dreaded keg beers of the 1960s; craft beers even if filtered or dispensed from a keg do not have the burnt pasteurised taste and are not highly carbonated.

I remain, yours sincerely,
Pro Bono Cerevisia

Thanks Bono, I will be more careful in future. All fair comment although surely the trend for 'over-hopped pale ales' started with the craft beer scene? More on Candid on page 16. The Editor.

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Pub of the Season

Summer 2019: The Swan, Whiston

Despite its remote location (about three miles from Penkridge), the Swan at Whiston is a thriving pub, due in large part to a diverse selection of very well-kept ales and superb food.

Built in 1593, burnt down and rebuilt in 1711, the oldest surviving part is the small bar housing an inglenook fireplace, which was heaving when we made the presentation. There is a larger restaurant area and six acres of grounds with a children's play area, aviary, and a large beer garden.

CAMRA members can get a 15p discount on real ale or cider on production of a valid membership card. Four cask ales are offered: Holden's *Black Country Bitter* is something of a regular, but the other three pumps change constantly. As a freehouse they can – and do – source beers from any brewery so no two weeks are the same.

The Swan always has real ciders available. The range increases during summer when demand is higher (four when we visited).

The cellar is managed by Hannah Davies, remarkably young at 20 but the pub is in her blood, having been rescued from closure by her late father Jim circa 2000 and in the family ever since.

The Swan has been a long-time fixture in the Good Beer Guide but it had not won any branch awards since the heady days of 2011, when it was our inaugural Cider Pub of the Year and overall Pub of the Year. It gave me great pleasure to rectify that by presenting Hannah with the Pub of the Season trophy in the week of the summer solstice.

Andrew Murray
Editor, Beer at Heart

• Photo courtesy of Paul Newman



Cellar manager Hannah proudly displaying the Pub of the Season certificate and trophy

THE SWAN AT WHISTON

Whiston Road, nr Penkridge ST19 5QH
Tel: 01785 716200
www.swanwhiston.co.uk
Facebook: @swanatwhiston
<https://whatpub.com/pubs/STA/2508>

Opening Times

5-11 Mon; 12-3, 5-11 Tue-Fri; 12-11 Sat;
12-10.30 Sun

Food served

6-8.30 Mon; 12-2, 6-9 Tue-Fri;
12-9 Sat; 12-6 Sun

Brewery news

LYMESTONE of Stone

www.lymestonebrewery.co.uk

The brewery is in full production, brewing EIN STEIN for Wetherspoons, which will be available nationwide throughout



September, October and November. There is no change to the other core beers which are in regular production.

Monthly beers up until the end of the year will be:

September STONE BROOD 4.4% ABV, made with honey from the brewery's hives.

October TAMAISHI 4.5%, a new beer to celebrate the Rugby World Cup in Japan, which starts at the end of September and continues through October. A golden beer with the addition of rice.

November FIRE AND BRIMSTONE 4.5%, a copper coloured beer.

December STONE COLD 4.7%, a copper coloured strong bitter.

STRAY CAT Lager and Pilsner are still widely available, with TROPICAL PUNCH IPA 4.5% having been recently kegged, along with Lymestone STONE DEAD 6.66%. Sarah has a number of ideas which will hopefully be available in 2020.

Both pubs are still busy, with the **Borehole** feeling the benefits of being awarded the branch Pub of the Year. Works to the **Vaults** in Newcastle are almost complete, some lighting and re-decoration being outstanding.

Brewery tours are still available, and the Tasting Nights, together with Sunday

Reapers events continue. Lymestone will be attending both Nantwich and Stone Food and Drink Festivals, hosting the Chilli Off night on behalf of the latter.

Neil Butler

Lymestone Brewery Liaison Officer (BLO)

IZAAK WALTON BREWHOUSE of Norton Bridge

izaakbrew@mail.com 01785 760780

Since the last magazine Steve Bainbridge and Andy Brough have been carrying out some alterations to the brewing plant, but the main change is the rebranding and relaunch of the beers under the slogan 'CATCH OF THE DAY'. As befits Izaak Walton they all have a connection with freshwater fish native to the British Isles. (Please excuse any errors you expert fishermen as I mainly eat fish out of a tin!)

The range will be: GRAYLING 3.9%; a blonde, light, citrus session beer.

RAINBOW TROUT 4.2%; a light citrus tasting golden ale.

GUDGEON 4.5%; a rich fruity amber bitter.

KING CARP 4.8%; golden IPA.

PIKE 6.0%; a dark ruby beer.

I have found the best places to net examples of the beers are the Kings Arms and the Bell in Eccleshall, plus the Swan in Stone. A preview was also available at our beer festival in July. Hopefully a more extensive distribution network will have been built up by the time you read this, as the business develops.

Neil Butler, Izaak Walton BLO

SLATER'S of Stafford

www.slattersales.co.uk
Tel: 01785 257976



Slater's won three awards at the **SIBA**

Midlands

Independent Beer Awards in August. In the bottled beer section Haka and Premium won Bronze in their categories, and 1 Hop won Gold!

Seasonal beers between now and the end of the year are likely to be:

September: AUTUMN RED

October: COLOMBIA COFFEE STOUT

November & December: BLITZEN

Oktoberfest returns on Saturday 12th October with oompah band and prize for best costume. Tickets for this fantastic event available from the Slater's website.

PEAKSTONES ROCK of Alton

www.peakstonesrock.co.uk



Business has been steady. The pub trade is still depressed, however our ales have sold quickly at local beer festivals. At both Uttoxeter and Alton they were amongst the first to sell out. Crossways micropub in Blythe Bridge has been trading steadily with many new faces turning up.

As usual we will have a bar at Stone Food and Drink over the first weekend of October. Our beers will also be available at Checkley Cricket Club Beer Festival in September. I have purchased some Olicana hops, so look out for a new brew in the near future.

David Edwards

TITANIC of Burslem

www.titanicbrewery.co.uk
Facebook: @titanicbrewery
Twitter: @Titanic_Brewers



bod Newport Drum roll please... our fourth bod café bar and first in Shropshire is now open. This former NatWest is the second bank we have converted to a bod. For all the very latest updates please give the Facebook page a like: @bodnewport

The Old Poets' Corner in the picturesque village of Ashover has become the latest Titanic pub! Ashover is located just off the main Chesterfield to Matlock road. It is a multi-award-winning pub, with B&B rooms and an historic holiday cottage and is located in a countryside setting just a few miles from Chatsworth House. Originally a 17th Century coaching inn, the pub became known as the Old Poets' Corner in 2004. Why not book your stay with us and enjoy a peaceful break in the beautiful surroundings of Ashover? The Old Poets Corner, 1 Butts Road, Ashover, Chesterfield, S45 0EW. Tel: 01246 590888

CHRISTMAS! We are now taking booking for our festive menus at the Sun, Stafford; the White Star, Stoke; the Roebuck, Leek; the Cheshire Cheese, Buxton and of course the latest edition to our line-up the Old Poets' Corner, Ashover.

Recyclable & Reusable Cups Keen on being as environmentally friendly as possible, we have had some recyclable, branded hot drinks cups created for our bod café bars and some branded reusable cups too! The reusable cups are made from recycled takeaway cups and what's more, when you buy one, your first fill is FREE! Plus, you'll receive 50p off the price of any hot drink when you use a reusable cup at any bod outlet.

Amy Vickers

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Joule's returning to Stone

Tom Kelt looks forward to the legendary local brand's homecoming

In 1974, Joule's Brewery, a key industry in Stone, Staffordshire, closed its doors having been bought-out by Bass. This ended 200 years of brewing history in Stone, which included the development of IPA to be shipped round the cape to refresh the thirsty troops in India. Bass continued to brew a version of the beer in Burton-on-Trent.

I moved to Stone in 1975 having visited and sampled the beer for several years and could not really tell the difference but many could and sales dwindled and the beer was discontinued. Bass now owned the estate of over 200 pubs, the brand name and the famous Red Cross trademark (the 6th oldest in the world). Ironically the Beer Orders legislation of 1989 forced Bass to divest of many pubs and the business was eventually sold to Molson Coors along with the Joule's brand.

Fast forward to 2010 and Steve Nuttall got agreement to brew Joule's and built a brewery in Market Drayton, Shropshire, using the same freshwater aquifer as the original brewery in Stone. Gradually they built up a local pub estate but, ironically, you could not buy Joule's in its original home except as a guest ale in one of its many fine pubs. In 2017 they finally bought the name for a jaw-dropping £500,000.



Cooper's Tavern replica

Now 45 years later, Joule's are returning to a purpose-built Brewery Tap on the canalside in the town, where they will sell their various ales from a rather large 33 metre bar with several smaller bars and a function room. The site is important to Stone having been a key location in the building of the Trent and Mersey canal and had been part of the brewery, but the site had more recently been used as a carpark.

Joule's have taken over the repair and refurbishment of key historic buildings, incorporating them into the development. They're providing the town with a performance area for theatre, music and events and a long-awaited Heritage Centre (in the former Fire Station), where the rich history of canal building, brewing and shoemaking can be presented. Currently the footings for the Taphouse have been dug, the outbuildings have been built or repaired and the steel frame for the performance area has been erected. The replica of the well-known Coopers Tavern in Burton will be used as a storehouse.

The opening of the facility is expected in late summer 2020. The message from the people in Stone is "Welcome Home."

More information can be found at www.joulesbrewery.co.uk



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12th Stafford Beer & Cider Festival

Festival Organiser Paul Hewitt reports



Another successful festival is complete and all the hard work over the last six months is just a distant memory, but hey what memories!

On behalf of the Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA branch I'd like to thank everyone who volunteered for the festival this year. Now we are in our twelfth year, which is a great achievement and over fifty people volunteered to work over the week of the festival to carry out the setup, take down and obviously the three days of the festival itself. There were people travelling a fair distance to help us, one volunteer Ian from Kent so a big thank you. As I keep saying "we can't do it without you!"

Family Friendly

As a committee we're very keen to attract more families and on Saturday afternoon our Family Friendly session featured a face painter, the concert band and children's play area. It was a shame about the awful weather but there were many smiling faces and that's what the festival is about.

Beer and Cider of the Festival

This year's Beer of the Festival was Ran Ales *Honey Chilli Fly*. Runner Up: Ran Ales *Ranbo*. Honourable mentions to both Fownes' beers and the Uttoxeter *Groundbreaker*. With over 60 casks, ordering the beer is a mammoth task and very time consuming, so personal thanks to Frank Bryden for producing a fantastic choice. This year's Cider of the Festival was Snail's Bank Fruit Bat.

The gin bar goes from strength to strength and for the first time we offered prosecco and bellinis.

Festival Food

Hindles catered for our visitors again this year. Several people I spoke to throughout the festival gave them rave reviews. It was

great to work with a local company and I hope we do so again in the future.

Entertainment

I felt the bands were fabulous this year, so a big thank you to Alex Jayne, Dan Walsh and the Blackwell Concert Band.

Sponsorship

A massive thank you to everyone who sponsored the festival in various ways and advertised in our programme. Find a full list of sponsors at staffordbeerfestival.co.uk

Membership

We managed to sign up 28 new members over the three days which is an excellent achievement. Thanks to Jack, Lynn and David for all their hard work.

Charity

Our festival charity this year was Multiple Sclerosis North Staffs branch. They enjoyed their time with us and were very grateful for the £260 raised in unspent beer tokens. Thanks to all who donated.

Well, my third year of being Festival Organiser has come to an end...I don't think I have experienced so many different emotions over a sixth month period, but I am very proud that the team have delivered another brilliant three days. It was great to meet and speak to many of you while at the festival and I would like to personally thank you for your support.

Paul Hewitt
Festival Organiser 2019

- a 'Wash up' meeting is booked for the 18th September at 8pm in the Sun Inn. Anyone who volunteered or attended is welcome to share their views on this year's festival and ideas for the future.

Candid meets CAMRA

CANDID—a brand new venture tucked away in Woodings Yard opened in Stafford in the Spring. Beer at Heart spoke to owner Mark Bamping

BaH: How did Candid come about?

MB: Candid's been five years in the making. I've always been very passionate about beer, ever since our music teacher took us on a brilliant pub crawl round London, where I'm from. I joined CAMRA and always went to the Great British Beer Festival. That was the start of my 'beer journey' in terms of discovering and tasting and enjoying and it has stuck!

Then in 2015 I started home-brewing, and through a brew club I was introduced to craft beer – all those American-influenced, hop-forward beers like Neck Oil and a smoked porter called Smog Rocket (both Beavertown). There were taprooms and bottle shops popping up all over London – I thought "wow, this is really exciting!"

Around the same time my wife realised I was choosing holiday destinations based on their proximity to breweries!

I always had a desire to work for myself and am also interested in community, which pubs have always been an important part of. I started thinking about what 'Pub mk.2' might look like, still using beer as focal point for gathering people together. Candid is the outpouring of those ideas - I

didn't want it to be a pub, a bar, a café, or an office but wanted to take the best of all those things and put them under one roof. We describe it as a community hub.

Was it a conscious choice to focus on craft keg, cans etc.?

Yes – I still enjoy real ale and there are lots of fantastic real ale outlets in and around Stafford but there was nowhere doing craft. We aim to complement the existing beer scene – not compete but add another flavour to what's on offer. We want to be part of a wider beer family and we're delighted to be part of a 'beer triangle' with the Sun and the Floodgate.

I've met lots of local CAMRA members who are happy to drink from keg and can. I hope people will give it a go – yes it's carbonated, yes it's served cold, but it's not nitrokeg! it's still a fantastic product.

There's also the possibility that some of the keg beers meet CAMRA's definition of real ale...

There is consumer confusion over the terms. For me, Craft Beer is taking the American influences – experimental, hop-

forward – and is generally served from keg, can or bottle; while real ale is from a cask or bottle-conditioned. There is a middle ground – breweries like Tiny Rebel, Mobberley – who started with cask beer and now do both. Ultimately don't get too hung up about labelling it – they're both great products, let's just enjoy it. ["It's not Carling!", a customer pipes up.]



Full Candid (Mark peeking out top left)

We talked about the variety on offer (“We’re aiming to not serve the same beer twice, because craft is an ever-expanding market. Brewers constantly exploring different flavours, different hop combinations and bringing out new beers on a weekly basis”) and how helpful it is when brewers list which malt and hops they’ve used.

It's about giving people knowledge to explore. I love it when brewers put what hops they've used. And yeast – this is often overlooked but it's crucial to your understanding of what you enjoy in your beer. It enhances the flavour profiles you're extracting from the hops during fermentation. It can be just as important as the malt and hops.

Which are your favourite brewers?

Polly's Brew Co from Mold are fantastic, and I love Mobberley Brewhouse and Neon Raptor, who do really fruity, hop-forward, hazy beers.

What's next for Candid?

Thursday event nights – including monthly beer tasting events, a pop-up pizzeria night, or board game nights. Our kit is portable too – we can do outside events and festivals. And there are plans to brew Candid beers on the horizon...the semi-distant horizon!

Mark expressed disappointment that CAMRA didn't fully embrace craft in the revitalisation project – “we're stronger together”. Some members were worried that we'd lose our focus if we tried to represent all products and all drinkers. But CAMRA is gradually starting to feature craft beer in its festivals and publications.

My dream is to see Candid at a future Stafford CAMRA beer festival.



Empty Candid

What would you say to any readers who may still be a bit sceptical?

Please come and give it a go. We do third, half and two-thirds measures...come and risk a third: the worst case is you've lost £1-and-a-bit and confirmed what you've always thought; but you may discover that you really do enjoy it and your beer journey expands.

Andrew Murray

• Photos: Jonathan Cherry

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Forty Years On: Beer Festivals

The ramblings of a grumpy old man

Lurching around this year's Stafford Beer Festival it occurred to me that it is 40 years since I joined CAMRA, I think, and certainly 40 years since I worked at my first beer festival. So clearly it is time for me to bore you with articles on the past, present and even thoughts on the future—starting with festivals.

I rapidly discovered that working behind a festival bar was not for me. In the usual way for awkward characters I was put on security and stayed there for about eight years, not just at my local festival but at others around the region and even at the Great British Beer Festival before it moved to London.

Worst experience? When someone reported a drunken Scotsman threatening people with a knife. Well he was Scottish, certainly with drink, had a ceremonial dirk in his sock and was very upset about something. Persuaded him to talk about his problem. He had been friendly with an elderly lady who used to frequent beer festivals collecting for a charity and she wasn't at the festival. He had assumed for some reason that we had banned her from the festival which was why he was so upset. I had to explain to him that she had died three months before. Have you ever had a very large, very hairy, very drunken Glaswegian cradled in your arms sobbing his heart out on your shoulder? We eventually settled him down and got him to the place he was staying, with someone to keep him company.

After that I had a spell on staff food. Bread, cheese, pork pie etc were popular but we also provided a hot meal as well. The vegetarian option came from a little restaurant around the corner, we had a couple of trays of their dish of the day in return for a few entry tickets and beer vouchers. Fine until the day of the aduki bean bake. It was delicious. Trouble was most of the meat eaters thought it smelt and tasted delicious too and came back for seconds. All that fibre affected their digestive systems and there were nearly fights for the toilets in the morning—and the hall staff had to get someone out to unblock the drains. Worse, one of the volunteers was taking all the food scraps home for her chickens, and they loved the bean bake. But for the next week they laid shell-less eggs and the grass died



Above: two views of an early-1980s Beer Festival

on the patch where she tipped the food. Nothing grew there ever again.

I then moved on to things like the membership stand, CAMRA products and the tombola. Persuading people that they actually wanted prizes from the tombola sometimes got interesting "ah, you hate children in pubs and you've just won a copy of Pubs for Families, well at least you'll know some to avoid"..."I'm sorry we don't have any small festival T-shirts for your girlfriend but why not buy her a large one as a nightdress?" That usually worked, but there was no real answer to the customer who complained that by not stocking 4XL t-shirts we weren't catering for the serious drinker.

Then there was the year that CAMRA had optimistically had far too many copies of the Good Beer Guide printed and our festival had a large number dumped on us to get rid of. You won a tombola prize, you got a copy, you didn't win you got a consolation copy, you bought anything from the product stall, you got a free copy, you joined CAMRA you got a copy. Not enough, volunteers got very adept at slipping copies into any open bag or rucksack, even into people's pockets. Probably some very puzzled customers the following morning.

Other highlights, everyone watching two very respectable elderly ladies berate the festival organiser with their umbrellas for having straight glasses ("Everyone knows that draught beer should be served in tankards."). Security throwing a member of CAMRA's National Executive out; they relented the following day, they felt they had to: he was also the festival organiser.

What do I do nowadays? I work largely behind the scenes, however I still like wandering around and talking to people about CAMRA and its aims.

Have festivals changed over the years, yes of course they have. Things like proper bar counters instead of tables, decent stillage for the casks instead of something knocked up out of scaffold poles, proper cooling instead

of sacks with blocks of ice ... What we were trying to do changed from showing what local beers could be like when live and served from casks rather than dead and served chilled and gassy to showing the large array of different types of beer available around the country. Cider and perry appeared, then bottled beers, followed by country wines and more recently things like gin and prosecco. Entertainment was introduced not long after cider & perry, and it is still debated as to whether that was a good thing.

So beer festivals have changed, but they need to continue changing. They need to renew their sense of purpose in promoting CAMRA's campaigns on beer and pubs, the new Learn and Discover initiative that is appearing might help there. They need to make themselves more attractive to customers, do you have any ideas there?



Does Stafford Beer Festival need to change? Certainly in line with the general need to change but possibly in other ways as well. There are some problems with the venue: it is rather large, bleak and without character, should it move? Would a smaller and more intimate festival be better? What about a small summer festival and a small winter ale festival? Where could it move to? Are there improvements or changes you would like to see, and if so, what? Please contact the Editor and let us know your views.

Ian Edwards

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Andy Wainwright, managing director for Barcare Supreme Ltd (left) and Nick Burrige, sales director for Classeq at Classeq's new manufacturing facility at Beacon Business Park, Stafford.

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Over the next two pages Phil Vickers outlines our branch's new processes for selecting our Pubs of the Year and Good Beer Guide entries

Vote, vote, vote!

For your Pub of the Year 2019

Soon we will be asking branch members to vote for the branch Pub of the Year (PotY). You will be able to choose from a list either online or via a printed insert in the Winter edition of **Beer at Heart**. Members will be kept informed via our regular e-newsletter.

Members can vote for up to five pubs. If you vote for five pubs, your first choice will score five points down to your fifth choice scoring one. If you only vote for one pub it will score one point, voting for two will score two points for your first choice and one for your second and so on.

A selection committee (open to all

members) will adjudge the top three Urban and Rural pubs and then judges will be appointed to visit and assess the six finalists. Any member can volunteer to be a judge, but note you must undertake to visit all six pubs (to ensure consistency) or your judging will not count.

The outcome will be an Urban and a Rural PotY; the highest scorer will be our overall PotY and enter into the competition to find the Staffordshire PotY. Results will be announced in Tryanuary with awards scheduled for Febrewery (the new names for January and February).



Good Beer Guide 2021

Yes – it's still 2019 but the Good Beer Guide (GBG) for 2020 is already done and dusted and in the shops and we now have to start thinking about GBG21. Competition will be more intense this time as the branch allocation has been reduced from 19 to 17.

A shortlist of around 25 pubs will be drawn up by a selection committee using data from NBSS (*). Any member can be on the selection committee – we will publicise the dates and you can simply turn up.

Members will then be asked to vote online for up to 17 pubs from this list. The 22 pubs with the most votes will then be visited to carry out a survey. This is a formal process with a CAMRA form to fill in. (Any member can be a 'surveyor' – just apply.)

Then a final selection meeting, probably next February, will choose the 17 entries plus

three reserves. Members will be notified of events etc via our regular e-newsletter.

(* NBSS? Wossat?? It is CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System. Access it via WhatPub on your phone or computer. All CAMRA members can score their beer and this is the first hurdle that GBG candidates must cross. Unfortunately not many members beer score which can lead to great pubs being excluded. Score the beers in pubs you feel are worthy. (Actually, score the unworthy too – it all helps). Licensees – ask your CAMRA visitors to score your beer. We generally require at least three scoring visits from separate people and a good average score for an establishment to qualify.

Phil Vickers

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So how do I score the quality of the beer?

A beer should be scored to reflect how well it has been kept (its 'condition') and served. It is not really about personal taste! It is a simple 0 to 5 point system, with half points being used if your opinion of the beer falls between two categories:

0. No cask ale available
1. Poor. Beer is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
2. Average. Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
3. Good. Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again
4. Very Good. Excellent beer in excellent condition. You stay put!
5. Perfect. Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

Uttoxeter & District News

In CAMRA we are known for our support for Real Ale, but it needs to be served fresh and the best place for that is a pub; but we also support and recognise the important role pubs play in serving the community.

If you ask ten people "what makes a great pub?" you will probably get 11 different answers. However, I'm sure that at the top of the list for at least nine of them would be great beer and staff, with the location and interior being up there. In summer, a beer garden and rural location adds to the allure.

In CAMRA there is an image of old men with beards and bellies pontificating about obscure beers that no one has ever heard of. In Uttoxeter and District that only describes a few of us but we are all passionate about beer quality and great pubs. We also know that pubs should include everybody and being family friendly is important to many people. Incidentally a third of CAMRA's national executive are women, showing that real ale and good pubs aren't just about old men.

In the Uttoxeter and District area we have recently recognised two pubs which may not fit what some consider to be traditional, but both meet the 'great Summer pub' criteria: good beer, good staff and family friendly with a beer garden. Both pubs have had good scores for beer quality from the CAMRA members who have visited them as well as excelling in the other criteria too. So we pass on our heartiest congratulations to the **New Broom, Checkley** and the **Raddle, Hollington** and say to the landlords, keep up the great work.

Simon Ardron, Uttoxeter Branch Chair

Rising Star Award: New Broom, Checkley

The first award is to a pub that has had something of a chequered history, with many uses in an attempt to find its market over the last 15 years. Being part of the Marston's empire, it has been kept open during its troubled period.

However, Phil took over as landlord of the New Broom, Checkley at the start of this year and has made some great improvements. He has fully supported CAMRA and offers a variety of real ales with four being common and not all from the Marston's stable. In addition, there is a comprehensive food offering.

We are expecting great things from this pub and wish Phil and his team every success.



THE NEW BROOM, Checkley
Uttoxeter Rd, Checkley, Stoke-on-Trent ST10 4NB
www.newbroompubcheckley.co.uk

Pub of The Season (Summer) The Raddle, Hollington

The second award, for the Summer Pub of the Season, recognises a pub that as well as being in the 2019 Good Beer Guide, also has a reputation of being family friendly. The biggest difference between the two pubs is that Peter has run the Raddle successfully for many years. This pub is a great place to visit, with four real ales consistently on sale and a good range of meals available.

It is a lunchtime favourite with both families and walkers, with a nice pub garden to sit in (weather permitting of course), and views over the valley to Croxton Abbey and beyond.



THE RADDLE, Hollington

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<https://raddleinn.com>

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Email: dedwards@peakstonesrock.co.uk

WWW.PEAKSTONESROCK.CO.UK

Uttoxeter Brewing Company news



Good news for local drinkers in Uttoxeter: the Uttoxeter Brewing Company are now set up and ready to sell beer direct to the public from their new premises. Although the principal function of the site is to brew their very popular beers, both Andy and Tom are delighted that they can now sell beers from the newly installed pumps and cellar. They plan to allow local drinkers access for brewery tours, local functions and CAMRA meetings. Firkins and pins of real ale are now on sale to the public and within the next couple of months bottles will also be available.

The Uttoxeter CAMRA branch Pub Officer, Dave Felthouse is in the process of adding the new outlet for real ales to the local CAMRA branch pub list.

Andy and Tom have decided to call the new outlet

The Brewery, as it seemed a most imaginative name.

For further details contact Andy or Tom on 07789 476817 / 07734 392321. Or email contact@uttoxeterbrewingcompany.com

Local CAMRA Branch Chairman, Simon Ardron said "Uttoxeter is a market town and although the market every Wednesday and Saturday is a shadow of its former self, I hope the brewery will become an integral part of that and the take-home beer market, giving another reason to visit the town centre. Reviving the off-sales tradition where people would take their own container to be refilled is to be applauded."



Autumn Pub of the Season preview

Our Pub of the Season will be the Bull's Head in Marchington. The award will be made at midday on Saturday 12th October. The Bull's Head is a Marston's pub and ordinarily would be limited to that brewery's ales. However the landlord at the Bull's Head, which incidentally is a wet-only pub, has secured one hand pump for a guest ale. Seen recently have been Titanic and Boot ales, hence our nomination.

BRANCH MEETINGS & SOCIALS

MONDAY 14th OCTOBER:
Dog & Partridge, Marchington, 8pm

MONDAY 11th NOVEMBER:
Dapple Grey, Uttoxeter, 8pm

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CAMRA branch Pub of the Season Autumn 2018



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 Wheaton Aston, Stafford ST19 9QP

A yellow poster for the Stoke Beer & Cider Festival. At the top, the number '39' is displayed twice in a decorative font, flanking the 'SPODE WORKS' logo. Below this is a red banner with 'Stoke Beer & Cider Festival' in white. The website 'sbf.camrapotteries.co.uk' is listed, with a note that details could be subject to change. A central graphic is a red brick bottle with a black CAMRA logo on it. To the left of the bottle, a list of activities includes Traditional Ales, Cider & Perry Bar, Foreign Bottle Beer Bar, Country Wines Bar, Gin Bar, and Specialist Keg Craft Beer T&C. To the right, it lists 'Entry Charges', 'Commemorative Glasses', and 'Online Advance Tickets TBC'. Below the bottle, it states 'Live Entertainment' and 'Street Food Stalls T&C'. The opening times are '12noon - 11pm' with 'FREE Entry till 5pm Every day'. It also notes 'Children Welcome up to 5pm'. The event location is 'China Halls, Spode Works, Stoke' on '7th - 9th November, 2019'.

 An advertisement for Black Country Ales. At the top right is the 'BLACK COUNTRY ALES' logo featuring a windmill. The main text reads: 'There's a Beer Festival *EVERY DAY* at these 2 fabulous real ale pubs:'. Below this, two pubs are listed: 'The Bird In Hand, Victoria Square, Stafford, ST16 2AQ' and 'Shrewsbury Arms, Eastgate Street, Stafford, ST16 2NG'. At the bottom, there are four beer cans: 'BLACK COUNTRY ALES', 'BFG', 'PIG WALL', and 'BLACK COUNTRY ALES HILLSIDE'. To the right of the cans, the text says 'Great beer, brewed in the Black Country.' with a small 'CAMRA' logo.

Contact Us

Heart of Staffordshire branch

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chair@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

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webmaster@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

Clubs Officer: Paul Dykta

clubs@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

The following positions are still vacant:

Social Secretary

Social Media

Publicity Officer

Public Affairs Officer

New committee members always welcome!

So if you're interested in taking on a role, or joining the committee in a general capacity, please contact Frank Bryden, Branch Chair.

Uttoxeter & District sub-branch

Branch contact & Chair: Simon Ardron

Email: chair@uttoxetercamra.org

Website: www.uttoxetercamra.org

Find us on Facebook:

Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA

Uttoxeter & District CAMRA

Contacting You

We endeavour to contact all our members regularly via email with details of socials, meetings, beer festivals and news items.

If you aren't receiving any emails from the branch please contact our Membership Secretary Jack Taylor.

Beer at Heart should be readily available from your local real ale pub and is published in PDF on the branch website but if you would like to take out a postal subscription for £4 per year (to cover costs) please contact the Editor.

Thank You:

Tom Abbott, Simon Ardron, Frank Bryden, Neil Butler, Paul Dykta, Ian Edwards, Dave Felthouse, Paul Hewitt, Tom Kelt, Paul Newman, Dave Tomkinson, Phil Vickers, Warwick Printing and all our advertisers and distributors.

Articles, letters and suggestions for the next issue gratefully received by the Editor. The next issue of **Beer at Heart** will appear in December 2019.

Consumer information

If you have any complaints over short measures etc. and have no satisfaction from the pub in question please contact Citizens Advice on 03454 040506

On the buses: 825

Paul Dykta is back in Rugeley (brave man)

To continue this pensioners outing: in the last issue we left the **Crown** to get the bus home; we now arrive back at Rugeley Bus Station to push forward.

We decided our first port of call would be the **Plaza** – take the main road in the same direction the bus is facing (Horse Fair) and it's on your left; you can't miss it as it looks like a cinema. Being a Wetherspoons the usual mixtures of ales (ten in fact) and food, which looked good and plentiful, were on offer. Their gin festival was in full swing when we arrived, but a little early for that so beer it was. The two we sampled were *West Coast Baby* from Byatts and *Backyard's Bitter*, both good.

Retrace your steps to the bus station but turn right at the iron gateway. You should pass the **Crown** on your left, and carry on up the street to the **Vaults**, which sadly had all three hand pumps turned round (no real ale, as WhatPub states). Never mind – go down the road opposite and you will find the **Albion**, a small, traditional (and very clean) pub with one ale on offer, Banks's *Sunbeam*. A pleasant welcome was delivered with a very nice beer.



Odd lights at the Albion

Go back to the main street, turn right and continue until it changes to Market Street. On your left you will come across the **Red Lion** (Marston's again), this time offering three beers – *Hobgoblin* plus Banks's *Amber* and *Mild*. We had the latter two, again very nice drinks and a very friendly pub. You know it makes all the difference when the customers say hello or goodbye to strangers.

One point of interest: the Red Lion features in one of CAMRA's heritage publications. In that book is a photograph of a man sitting playing dominoes (I think); well that same man still goes in there today, although he now drinks cider and not proper beer.

Now we've run out of venues in Rugeley that don't just sell Marston's ales; some that do are the **Stags Leap** (on the way into town) and by the railway station is the **Yorkshireman**. We've decided to pay a second visit to the **Rusty Barrel**, passing on the way - because we took the wrong road - the **Chase Inn** (another Marston's). The Rusty Barrel was certainly the busiest place that afternoon, with beers from Titanic, Slater's, Backyard and Tiny Rebel.

Without the trio of Rusty Barrel (micro), **Vine** (brewery) and Plaza ('spoons), Rugeley appears to be a Marston's town, but saying that I never had a bad beer all afternoon.

Well that was a short visit, but I'm off to Prague in the morning, perhaps I'll get something different there.

Check WhatPub.com for pub opening times as well as bus timetables as they can both vary according to the day

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