

Beer at Heart

West Midlands CAMRA Branch Magazine of the Year 2017
Magazine of the Heart of Staffordshire branch of CAMRA
Incorporating Uttoxeter & District sub-branch and covering Stafford
• Stone • Eccleshall • Penkridge • Gnosall • and surrounding areas



The Compleat Brewers

Phil, Bernard & Andy of Izaak Walton



Read the story of our newest brewery—page 16

Also in this issue:

- Eccleshall crawl | Page 18
- Tributes to Mike and Sally | Pages 9, 32
- Beer Festival dates announced | Page 11
- CAMRA's big decision | Page 24 *and much more...*



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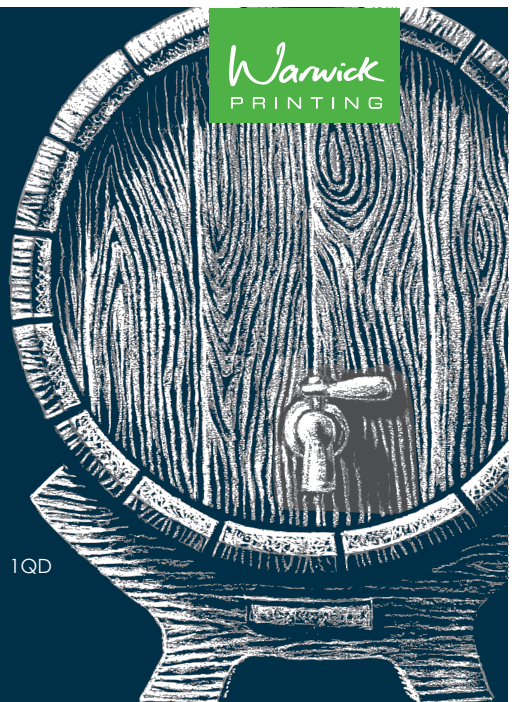
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Spring 2018

Beer at Heart

Winner of West Midlands CAMRA Branch Magazine of the Year 2017

Welcome

I have to begin with the sad news that Mike Harker, well-known and much-loved stalwart of Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA, has died. It is fair to say that Mike's dedication to CAMRA was second to none, and without him this magazine would not have got back up off the ground. But most importantly we have lost a really good mate. We pay full tribute to Mike on page 9.

We lost another friend recently in Sally Lavender—it was only last issue that I wrote about the cider tasting session I attended that Sally led. How brilliant and engaging she was. Mike and Sally both put in so much to their communities, and have left us all thankful for having known them.

We're in Eccleshall this issue, with a guide to the seven drinking establishments there, and the new brewery just down the road. We've also just announced the dates for our 11th annual Beer and Cider Festival—all the gen on page 11.

I hope that you enjoy reading **Beer at Heart**. Your feedback is welcome, as are ideas for articles, help with advertising, distribution...and my puns are still feeble. [That's not a spelling mistake on the front cover though.]

All the best,

Andy Murray

editor@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

In this issue

Chair's chat / Branch Diary	5
Pub and Club news	6
Remembering Mike	9
11th Beer & Cider Festival	11
Brewery news	12
Pub of the Season	15
Izaak Walton Brewhouse	16
Eccleshall trail	18
A Walk on the Mild Side	21
Pubs on the 101	23
CAMRA members weekend	24
Uttoxeter & District news	26
Potteries news	31
Contact us / Contacting you	33
'Doing the 19'	34
CAMRA membership	35

Beer at Heart is published quarterly by Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA. Designed and edited by Andrew Murray. Opinions expressed are those of the author and may not represent those of CAMRA, the local branch or editor. Beer at Heart is (c) CAMRA Ltd.

Printed by Warwick Printing
www.warwickprinting.co.uk

Next copy deadline: 12th MAY 2018 ADVERTISING RATES ON PAGE 29

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Chair's Chat

Welcome to the first magazine of the new year. Hopefully by the time you read this the worst of the winter will be over, it seems to have dragged on relentlessly. Also by now all the groundwork for Good Beer Guide 2019 will be completed along with the selection of our various Pubs of the Year.

An item close to my heart now that the Railway in Norton Bridge has been closed for over 18 months is the role of the 'Pubs at the Heart of the Community'. Research by Oxford University shows that "people who regularly use a local pub have more close friends, are happier, are more trusting of others and feel more engaged with their community." Reliable research also confirms that "sensible drinking is good for you!"

I agree with both these statements. Rural communities like mine are becoming more and more isolated, and Staffordshire County Council's decimation of subsidised bus services will be a further blow to villages and country pubs, also having some effect on urban areas and facilities.

So sit back with a pint and enjoy our award-winning magazine.*

Neil Butler

Chair, Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA



*Beer at Heart won 'Best Branch Magazine' at the West Midlands CAMRA awards ceremony on 30th December. It is our second award in two years, following Best Newcomer in 2016.

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

MARCH

THURSDAY 15th: 'RISING STAR' AWARD PRESENTATION—the STAR INN, Penkridge, 8.30pm. All welcome.

THURSDAY 29th: BEER FESTIVAL PLANNING MEETING—Bird in Hand, Stafford 8pm. All welcome.

APRIL

THURSDAY 12th: SPRING PUB OF THE SEASON PRESENTATION - the RED LION, Bradley, 8.30pm. All welcome.

TUESDAY 17th: BRANCH MEETING - ROYAL EXCHANGE, STONE, 8pm. All members welcome.

THURSDAY 19th: BRANCH TRIP TO STAFFORD HOCKEY CLUB BEER FESTIVAL Riverway, Stafford, 7pm. All welcome.

FRIDAY 20th—SUNDAY 22nd: MEMBERS' WEEKEND & AGM—University of Warwick near Coventry.

MAY

SATURDAY 12th: BRANCH TRIP TO 'MILD IN MAY' TRAIL, BIRMINGHAM - depart from Stafford station at 11.25am. All welcome.

JUNE

TUESDAY 5th: BRANCH A.G.M. - SHREWSBURY ARMS, Stafford, 8pm. All members welcome.

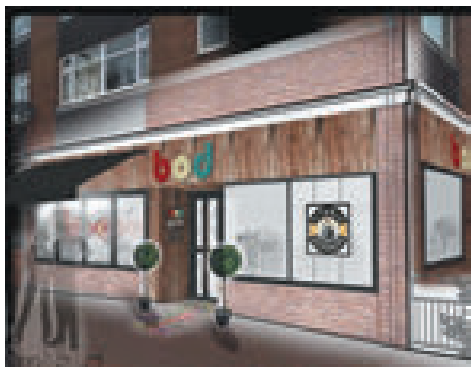
SUGGESTIONS FOR SOCIALS? Contact social@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

Pub and Club news

STAFFORD

Good news: Slater's application to open a bar in Stafford has been approved and work has started on the premises. It's next door to the **Butler's Bell**.

More good news: Titanic are opening a café/bar in Baswich/Weeping Cross called **bod** after its address in Bodmin Avenue. They are hoping to welcome their first customers at the end of March.



Even more good news: the **Star & Garter** has extended its CAMRA discount: 15p off a half, 30p off a pint, all day every day! The offer applies to their real ciders too.

Even even more etc etc: real ale is coming back to **No.7 Market Square**.

The **Spittal Brook** closed unexpectedly before Christmas and is still closed as we go to press. The **Bell** in Houghton also remains closed. The **Tap & Spile** re-opened in November but closed again in mid-February.

The **Floodgate** and the **Bird in Hand** are both looking for cribbage players. Apply within.

Stafford Hockey Club's annual Beer and Cider Festival, usually the first of the year

round these parts, will take place from Thursday 19th—Saturday 21st April.

The **Princess Royal** was in the local paper as planning permission was granted (for the fourth time) to demolish it and build houses on the site. However, we are told that its future as a pub is secure for now.

KNIGHTON

The **Haberdashers Arms** is hosting a gig by banjo man Dan Walsh on 6th April.

STONE

Edison's opened in the high street October last year, closed shortly after Christmas. There's a repossession notice in the window and the inside has been gutted. Pubs are a tough business right enough.

Langtrys which has been closed for several months is undergoing a bit of a facelift. Freshly painted and seemingly some new windows and hanging baskets. Fingers crossed we may yet see a revival.

We have a new licensee at the **Talbot** – welcome to Trudi & partner. Three handpulls (and maybe more to come) along with both Sky and BT Sport and pool. Live music on Saturday nights and Trudi has lots of plans!

Joule's have purchased Crown Wharf with the intention of putting a pub (taphouse in their words) on it. It adjoins the canal and was part of the original Joule's brewery complex. More on this in our next issue.

In mid-February it was announced that the **Darlaston Inn** has been sold and would close on 1st March. We do not know at present if it will continue to be a pub.

BROCTON

The **Seven Stars** finally reopened on 20th February and is serving three or four ales

although the emphasis is as an upmarket dining venue.

Rising Star

PENKRIDGE

In recognition of the great work that Ali and Richard Heath have done at the **Star Inn** since taking over last Autumn, we'll be presenting them with our Rising Star award (appropriately enough) on Thursday 15th March at 8.30pm. All welcome to join the celebration.

ANYPLACE

Anypub

Landlords—your pub news could have been here. Drop me a line with short snippets about your upcoming events, real ale promotions, beer festivals etc.

editor@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

Tenancies/leases etc. available include:

Star, Copmere End (freehold)

Swan, Forton (freehold)

Red Lion, Great Chatwell (retail Partnership, Marston's)

Crown, Hyde Lea (lease)

Shrewsbury Arms, Kingstone (freehold)

Horse & Jockey, Penkridge (tenancy).

Lamb, Stafford (tenancy)

Luck Penny, Stafford (lease)

Spittal Brook, Stafford (tenancy)

Tap & Spile, Stafford (lease)

Hare and Hounds, Stramshall (freehold)

Pheasant, Stone (lease)



There's a Beer Festival EVERY DAY at these two new real ale pubs:

Bird In Hand, Victoria Square, Stafford ST16 2AQ

Shrewsbury Arms, 75-75A Eastgate Street, Stafford ST16 2NG



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AA Recommended, AA Pick of the Pubs, The Good Pub Guide's Staffordshire Dining Pub of the Year. As recommended in: *Les Routiers in Britain; Which? Guide.* **FREEHOUSE**

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Remembering Mike

We were much saddened by the loss of Mike Harker who passed away on Friday 12th January 2018 at the age of 71.

Mike's last 12 months had been tough following a fall in January 2017 in which he sustained a fractured skull. He spent six months in hospital and although he appeared to be making good progress his health never fully recovered.

Mike had been a CAMRA member since the seventies and had attended many CAMRA national AGMs over the years but it was in 2006 that he started attending local branch meetings and socials.

He re-joined the local branch during a transitional period as in 2007 the branch amended its constitution and changed its name from Stafford and Stone branch to Heart of Staffordshire branch in an effort to better represent our geographical area and broaden our appeal to the membership. These changes were something that Mike supported and helped the branch to achieve as he believed they would regenerate and energise the branch.

Following his initial election to the branch committee in 2007 he subsequently held numerous posts including Secretary (2007 to 2012), Chair (2012 to 2014) and Membership Secretary (2014 to 2017). He also served for a year as CAMRA West Midlands Regional Director from March 2009. At the time of his accident he was branch Membership Secretary, Cider Officer and Social Secretary and he also dealt with publicity and advertising for Beer at Heart. Not only did we miss his company and attendance at meetings we also realised just how much work he was doing within the branch.



Over the last twelve months, understandably with all he'd been through, Mike wasn't himself. The Mike that we will remember was the jovial, talkative man (sometimes it was hard to get a word in edgeways!), who cared about real ale, cider and pubs. He was always good company and didn't take life or indeed himself too seriously.

Outside of his involvement with CAMRA he was also a volunteer for Hospital Radio Stafford where he did two breakfast shows a week and in the past had served as a committee member. Mike was a big Elvis fan and had twice visited the States to make the pilgrimage to Graceland. His knowledge of '50s, '60s and '70s popular music made him a useful member of our HoS pub quiz team.

Mike has left us with fond memories of time spent on numerous socials, brewery trips, beer festivals and pub crawls.

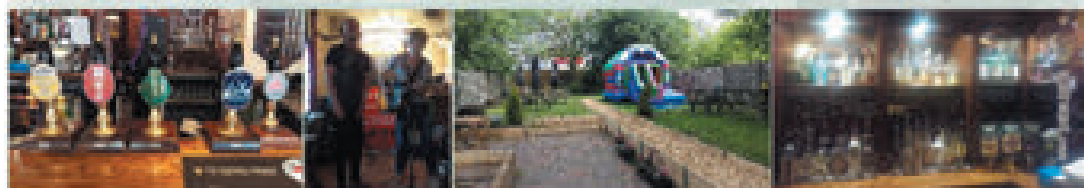
We are sure you are up there somewhere Mike, no doubt enjoying a dry cider. We all miss you mate – rest in peace.

We offer our sympathies and condolences to his partner Elaine and family.

Dave Tomkinson

The Kings Arms

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2018 Festival announced

Hello Everyone—with Christmas and New Year celebrations now a distant memory, we start the ‘hard yards’ to plan this year’s Beer & Cider festival. This is my second year in the role of Festival Organiser and you certainly learn a lot from your previous experiences, but I am positive that we will make this another successful festival.

We have decided to order 65+ beers, 30+ ciders and a range of country wines and bottled beers. We will start to advertise these via Twitter [@Staffs Beer Festival](#) and Facebook [@staffordbeerfestival](#) nearer the time. Please let us know if there are any beers you would like to see this year.

We’ve chosen two charities: Hospital Radio Stafford, in remembrance of our dear friend Mike Harker, and Staffordshire Women’s Aid. Both are very worthy causes which will benefit from your unspent beer tokens.

In terms of entertainment we are very lucky on Friday night to have the very talented

Alexandra Jayne joining us again after her successful slot last year and on Saturday afternoon our regulars The Blackwell Concert Band will get your feet tapping!

I have an excellent team of volunteers working with me to make this festival happen, but we still need more – the more the merrier. We especially need helpers for setup and takedown but every little helps, even a few hours.

Please contact me at paul.hewitt00@hotmail.com if you would like to get involved; I promise you we’re a friendly bunch and there’s always a good atmosphere.

To be a sponsor of the Festival, please contact Beer at Heart editor Andy Murray.

More updates from me in the next issue. Hope to see you at the Festival!

**Paul Hewitt, Festival Organiser,
Stafford Beer and Cider Festival 2018**

11th STAFFORD BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

**THURSDAY [evening] 26th JULY —
SATURDAY 28th JULY 2018**

**BLESSED WILLIAM HOWARD HIGH SCHOOL
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**LIVE MUSIC FRIDAY NIGHT, SATURDAY AFTER-
NOON, SATURDAY EVENING**

VOLUNTEERS AND SPONSORS WELCOMED

Next organising meeting: Thurs 29th March, 8pm, Bird in Hand. All welcome

Brewery news

LYMESTONE of Stone www.lymestonebrewery.co.uk

After a lull in brewing over Christmas and New Year things are picking up again. There is another Wetherspoon contract from April onwards.



During the downtime the opportunity was taken to re-lay the brew room floor. The original hard quality tiles were coming loose but have been salvaged as the majority are in very good condition. At the end of January Brad had the second part of his operations, so we wish him well.

Monthly beers will be:

MAR – POUNAMU 4.2% Straw coloured for the international rugby

APR – FLAGSTONE 4.2% Golden beer for St George's Day

MAY – SON OF STONEMAN 4% Copper coloured weaker version of the winter beer

JUNE – STONEWALL PENALTY % TBC, a beer for the World Cup

This year the brewery celebrates 10 years in business with some special events including a 10-10-10 Festival in March (10 beers, 10 ciders, 10 gins). Brewery tours continue every month, with a different charity supported at each.

Work has finally started on the beer garden to be situated on the area of void land to the rear of the Borehole. This establishment was voted Dog Friendly Business for the second year in 2017. Other accolades in 2017 include Brewery of the Year for Taste of Staffordshire and a silver in the Brewery Tours category.

Meanwhile, Sarah is helping out with the

main brewing but her Stray Cat STRUT is still available in all three pubs. A new brew of Stray Cat MILK 4.2% has been produced and is available in keg form, again in all three pubs and for purchase to the free trade.

Neil Butler
Lymestone Brewery Liaison Officer (BLO)

IZAAK WALTON BREWHOUSE of Norton Bridge

izaakbrew@mail.com
01785 760780

The winter has been a time of consolidation and developing the brews. The beers are still readily available in Stone, Eccleshall and parts of the Potteries.

AMBER NYMPH is the core product, with T.E.A. (Traditional English Ale) 5% ABV and newly developed LAST DROP 5%. The latter is a tasty Black Country-style mild with an Irish-style creamy head.

An English Pale Ale at 4% is being tested ready for the Spring/Summer.

At the time of my last visit at the end of January a new conditioning room was being constructed within the unit; a jigsaw of pieces but a bargain. This will give more consistency with stored beers and ingredients, as the unit has large temperature swings due to its roof construction.

Hopefully by the time you read this these tasks will have been completed.

Neil Butler, Izaak Walton BLO

Read more about our newest brewery and cover stars on pages 16 and 17

SLATER'S of Stafford

www.slattersales.co.uk

Hazel from Slater's

writes: our new craft beer bar will be

opening in Gaolgate Street, Stafford in the Spring serving the full range of Slater's ales, as well as guest ales in cask and keg.

Further details will be made available via our Facebook page ([@slattersales](https://www.facebook.com/slattersales)) as soon as we have them.

Our popular BITTER is making a brief reappearance alongside ORIGINAL, HIGH DUCK and an as yet un-named brew at 5.5%, brewed to a brand new recipe.

The next brewery tours are on March 2nd, April 6th and May 11th, starting at 7.30pm.



Seasonal Beers

MAGNUM PI(A) came out in February so hopefully you managed to get a drop of it. We have another seasonal heading out in April—NINE DOGS—which is our first recipe using Galaxy hops. The name pays homage to the nine dogs that were on board the Titanic. This 4.9% ABV pale beer is hoppy and crisp with light tones of passion fruit.

CAMRA West Midlands Regional Awards

We picked up awards for PLUM PORTER, CHOCOLATE & VANILLA STOUT and MILD! It was a great afternoon (as always) and we are delighted with our award haul! We're now into our 33rd year of brewing and we still feel overwhelmed with the support from our local communities, thank you to you all!

Vegan food

All of our pubs that serve food daily now offer vegan options. So, if you or a family member or friend are vegan, or even if you aren't but would like to see how delicious the dishes are, please do ask a member of staff for more info and they will be able to highlight which dishes on the menu are or can be served vegan.

Brewery Tours

Our fabulous brewery tours are as popular as ever! It's a great way to spend a Saturday afternoon and we would be delighted to welcome you - www.titanicbrewery.co.uk/events or call us on 01782 823447.

TITANIC of Burslem

www.titanicbrewery.co.uk

Facebook: [@titanicbrewery](https://www.facebook.com/titanicbrewery)

Twitter: [@Titanic_Brewers](https://twitter.com/Titanic_Brewers)



Amy from Titanic writes:

Exciting times ahead!

Over the next 6 months, we will be opening TWO new Titanic premises. You can read about our first ever café/bar, in Weeping Cross, on page 6. Project number two is another café/bar. Recently, we were included in discussions about creating a bar at Stoke Station and I am very pleased to say that we are now in the process of getting this off the ground! There's still a lot of work to do before we can even get our hands dirty but I wanted to update you all with this exciting prospect. Keep an eye on our social media pages for updates.

PEAKSTONES ROCK of Alton

www.peakstonesrock.co.uk

SUBMISSION won the Gold Award in the Old Ale Strong Mild category at the West Midlands CAMRA awards in December.

Congrats to David on this fantastic award.

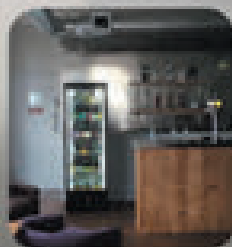
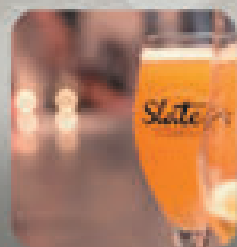


UTTOXETER BREWING COMPANY's news can be found on page 27

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Pub of the Season

The Woolpack, Weston

We presented our Winter PotS award to the **Woolpack** in Weston on a cold Thursday in January. The Woolpack is a quintessential English village pub in a quintessential English village – it's beside the village green for goodness' sake.

Last year the pub was in the doldrums and locals were sufficiently concerned to apply for an Asset of Community Value listing (ACV—which was granted) but fears have been allayed by the arrival of new manager Kelly, who has brought stability and consistent quality to the pub. Food is served all day every day and five beers from the Marston's range are offered – Ringwood *Boondoggle* is their best-seller.



Manager Kelly and staff presented with the trophy and certificate by branch chair Neil Butler who as usual is not looking at the camera!



A cosy pub in winter (think oak beams, low ceiling, a real fire), a visit on a warm, sunny day is highly recommended also – and why not visit the nearby **Saracen's Head**, the **Holly Bush** in Salt, and Hixon's two inns the **Bank House** and the **Green Man** whilst you're there?

Andy Murray

WOOLPACK INN

The Green, Weston, Stafford ST18 0JH

Tel: 01889 270238

<https://www.woolpackpubweston.co.uk>

Facebook: @woolpackwestonpub

<https://whatpub.com/pubs/STA/2680>

Opening Times

11-11 Mon-Thu; 11-Midnight Fri & Sat;

11.30-11 Sun

Meals served 12-10 (12-9 Sun)

Our Spring Pub of the Season will be the **Red Lion at Bradley**. We're presenting the award at the pub on Thursday 12th April at 8.30pm. All welcome.

As this magazine goes to press, our members are being asked to vote for the pubs and clubs of the year 2017. Full results in the next issue of Beer at Heart.

Izaak Walton Brewhouse

Meet the new addition to the cast

For quite a few years we were used to having just two breweries in the Heart of Staffordshire area: Slater's and Lymestone. Then in the Autumn of 2016 Uttoxeter Brewing Company appeared on the scene, and happily we now have another new brewery to report on (and seek out their ales!).

Last year, in the obscure setting of Cold Norton – the sort of place nothing ever happens – something was happening. Izaak Walton Brewhouse (taking its name from the famous author of *The Compleat Angler*, who resided in nearby Shallowford) was slowly taking shape, getting ready to unveil its wares on an unsuspecting public.

The idea grew from a conversation between three friends Andy Cadwallader, Phil Littlehales and Bernard Ramsay, all motorcycling and real ale enthusiasts. As Andy told me, “we were chatting about our favourite things in Phil’s motorcycle shop one day a couple of years back. Bernard had come across a brewery plant that was for sale, and we thought long and hard about buying it. I have worked in and around the brewery world and had always fancied a chance to brew my own beer.”

The friends took the plunge and spent a year working hard installing and testing, finally registering the brewery in October 2017. Their first products went out in November 2017, supplying local pubs in Eccleshall, the Potteries and Stone.

Andy says “our aim was to produce three distinct beers, all of them traditional English style ales.” The core range is:



Andy and Bernard pulling pints of Izaak's brews at the Little George, Eccleshall

Amber Nymph 4.5%, easy drinking, rich golden ale using only British hops and the best malt we could buy.

Traditional English Ale (T.E.A.), 5% a more complex ale moving towards a copper colour, full-bodied and tasty. Again, using only fine British hops and malts.

The Last Drop, 5%, dark ale, a simple refreshing Midlands-style Mild with a hint of dark Stout.

Andy says “the dark is a wonderful sight in the glass, as black and white as could be, again all British ingredients.”

They're following this with a new spring Pale Ale called **One Last Cast**, which should be ready by the time you read this. They also plan to branch out somewhat to take in some American hops, using the Pale recipe as a base.

Andy credits Bernard with getting the plant up and running (“he’s a technical

genius”). Phil specialises in marketing and product testing (that sounds like a plum job) and also puts his excellent business knowledge to good use. Phil still runs his bike business but puts in as many hours as he can in the brewery, while Andy and Bernard work at the brewery full time.

Andy thanked all the local pubs that have given their beers an outlet, paying particular credit to the King Arms and the Little George in Eccleshall: “they are both fab boozers in very different ways and have offered us excellent support and guidance. We drink in the pubs we supply and with their customers, a massive thanks to all the good folk who have been drinking our ale.”

Andy sums it up nicely: “What could be better: beer, bikes and good friends.” Let’s all drink to that.

Andy Murray



Some brewkit: (above) big and little kettles; (top) chiller and hopback

Front cover photo taken in the Kings Arms, Eccleshall



Eight Regularly Changing Real Ales
Freshly Prepared Food Available Seven Days a Week
Beer Garden
Real Fire
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sky sports
Quiz Night Thursday 21-30 Start
Live Music Most Weekends

The Bell at Eccleshall

Dating back to the 18th Century The Bell is a vibrant community pub in the heart of historic Eccleshall.

Whether it's a quick drink, or something from our menu you can always be assured of a warm welcome from Jo, Duncan, Jane and the team.



The Bell : 16, High Street : Eccleshall : Stafford : ST21 6BZ
 T : 01785 850378

An Eccleshall Crawl

It's been quite some time since anything about Eccleshall appeared in this journal – time to put that right. Here's our Branch Chair Neil Butler's guide to the town's watering holes

A lot has happened in Eccleshall over the past few years, with various closures, alterations and changes of ownership or management. After the last permanent closure (the Badger) there were six pubs in the town/village, now there are seven, not a bad average in the present climate.

Starting a tour clockwise at the **Old Smithy**, a place that has not changed with Martin King and his team being very busy when I visited just before Christmas. The restaurant was fully booked and the small drinking and seating area was also full. Regular beers are Timothy Taylor *Landlord* and Greene King *Abbot Ale*. The third handpull is either Deuchars *IPA* or a guest.



This establishment is handy for the bus stop opposite, with the 14 bus serving either Stafford or Stone and Hanley in the opposite direction. Even closer to the bus stop is the **Little George**.

Perhaps the biggest change is to the George Hotel. The property was finally sold by the Slater family after some time on the market to a property developer. Fears at the time

that it was the end of the road as a licensed premises have luckily been proved wrong. A lot of work has been carried out within the constraints of its listed building status and location in a conservation area. The main building has been extensively refurbished internally and externally, with most of the rear single storey projections demolished to form a better car park and patio area. The majority of the main building is now residential but the part that interests us the most is the former dining room, situated at the road junction end of the building. This is the Little George, refitted in a modern style with real fire and new kitchen and toilet block; the seats in the bay windows at the front are an ideal place to watch Eccleshall's traffic chaos. Opening at 9.30am for coffee and cake or a light breakfast, other snacks are available throughout the day. All the beers are locally sourced, the house beer is to an original Bents recipe, which Adrian, the building's owner, has acquired the rights to. The beer is brewed



The Little George

by Limestone, who occupy premises on the former Bents brewery site in Mount Road,

Stone. Other regulars are *Limestone Ein Stein* and *Amber Nymph* or *TEA* from Izaak Walton Brewhouse in Norton Bridge.

The **Kings Arms** is our next stop and again, has suffered from a period of neglect and uncertainty, but the freehold has been purchased by a consortium of local business people and its future looks very bright. Again, a full refurbishment has taken place inside and out, sympathetic to its listed building status. Although the



majority of the ground floor is set up for dining, the original rear bar is retained with two serving counters and a small drinking area to the right. Six handpulls are available selling a range of ales including regulars Marston's *Pedigree*, and *Wainwright*. The other four pulls are for seasonal and less mainstream beers, for example at the time of my visit *Wadworth 6X*, *Castle Rock Springtime* and *Ilkley Rombald*.

During the last two months the first floor refurbishment has been completed, resulting in the availability of four ensuite bedrooms, which are a bit rare in this area.

The **Eagle** is titled Eccleshall's sports bar. Large screen televisions show every kind of event. There is also a pool table, darts and musical entertainment, pub games and bingo. There are various snacks and early evening is set aside for the Young Eccleshall Eagles, the local junior football club. Wye

Valley *HPA* is usually available.

The full range of Joule's beers are available at the **Royal Oak**. Fully refurbished a few years ago, to the usual high Joule's standard, with light oak panelling and stained glass windows. Meals are available whilst at first floor level the former ballroom is now a meeting room for hire. Events include Eccleshall Folk Club and the Community Cinema.

A new addition about two years ago is the **Merckx** bar. A Belgian-style bar in a former pet shop with a good choice of Belgian beer on fonts and in bottles, together with various gins. Some interesting ecclesiastical furniture can be found here. A similar bar opened in Bridgnorth at the end of 2017 and there are organised coach exchange trips between the two.

Finally we come to the **Bell**, which was being redecorated at the time of my visit, and had been decluttered, creating a more spacious atmosphere. There are eight handpulls, with *Abbot Ale*, *Sharps Doom Bar* and *Holdens Black Country Bitter* on all the time, complemented by a diverse selection of guest ales. By the time this magazine is published food should be available in the two dedicated dining areas. Everything else is pretty much as before.



So there are a few good reasons for a day out in Eccleshall. In the surrounding area there is also the **Star** at Copmere, **Cock Inn** at Woodseaves and the **Labour in Vain** at Yarnfield.



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Take a Walk on the Mild Side

As part of CAMRA's 'Mild in May' campaign our region hosts a mild ale trail each year. A branch bids to host the trail - there's often a competition - and folks descend on the venue from all six counties. The host branch gets a number of pubs - could be anything from ten to thirty - to agree to sell at least one mild on the day and produces a mild trail map. There's no fixed route or time, nor do you have to visit all the pubs! It is, as the saying goes, a grand day out.

Of course, there's a campaigning aspect to this: we want to promote this unfashionable beer style and persuade pubs that it is worth stocking it and drinkers that it is an excellent quaff. It is interesting that punters elected Beowulf's *Dark Raven* mild as the champion beer of the region for 2017. Bound to be some

available on the day!

This year's trail is hosted by Birmingham branch on **Saturday 12th May**.

More details later but the start point is likely to be The Inn on the Green in Acocks Green at 11am. Five minutes walk from Acocks Green station. Get the train to Birmingham New Street, ten minute walk to Moor Street station and a few minutes thence to Acocks Green.

Groups will be led to both City Centre and the Jewellery Quarter destinations - finishing all together at the Wellington at 5.30pm.

There will be four new local milds to 'collect' throughout the day.

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Phil Vickers



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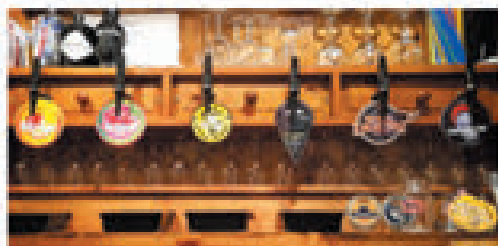
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Pubs on the 101:

Newcastle town centre part 1

Picking up from the last issue, you are either on the 101 or still in the Castle Mona. On the bus you need to get off at the first stop past the Cherry Tree/Castle Mona, follow the direction of the bus and turn left down Refinery Street. When you reach the end, you will see on your right the very blue **Boat & Horses**. It's a pleasant one-room pub where we drank a very palatable Abbot Ale alongside Doom Bar and draught Bass. On leaving the Boat & Horses look right and uphill against the flow of traffic and you should see the Black Friar.



The Boat & Horses: he's not kidding



Take the subway to the **Black Friar**, which is on the end of Newcastle's High Street. Judging by the interior it looks like a rock pub (is there any such thing?) [*Try the Freebird next time—Ed.*], anyway after a very warm welcome we ordered a Black Sheep Bitter and Monty Python's Holy Grail. A third beer was available plus Old Rosie cider. The welcome might have been warm but the pub was cold, though to be fair the barman was in the process of lighting a fire.

We gave our thanks, turned left out of the door across the High Street and roadworks to the **Golden Lion**. With market stalls outside this was a busy place with drinkers and diners, the ales drank were Pedigree

from Marston's and Titanic's Plum Porter. The food looked tempting with some good food/beer offers. But no time to eat - the weather's getting nasty, must move on.

Getting really cold now so cutting the day short we head for the **Jolly Potter** on Barracks Road, across the lights from the bus station. Built in the 19th century it is a proper two room pub, which comes with its own inquisitive but harmless dog.

Good beers here - mine is Peakstones Black Hole (nice and dark), but the surprise was an even better golden ale called New Resolution, alas with no brewery name on the pump clip. After a chat with the landlord I was informed that the beer was actually brewed by the pub's owners, PLAN B brewery. Not really being a drinker of light (in ABV also) beers I was impressed by the flavour so much we missed the bus.

So what can one do? Got it: a pint and half of New Resolution please landlord.

PS you don't have to do this in the winter like some.

Paul Dykta

Get involved in CAMRA's big decision

Members' Weekend AGM & Conference is in Coventry 20th—22nd April 2018

CAMRA members will congregate at the University of Warwick, near Coventry, on 21st April to make one of the most important decisions in the organisation's history. The recommendations which emerged following the two-year Revitalisation Project will be debated and put to the vote.

The National Executive is seeking to amend CAMRA's articles of association, which requires 75% of those voting to approve them. Some are non-contentious, e.g. "1. To secure the long term future of real ale, real cider and real perry by increasing their quality, availability and popularity."

The most contentious proposals are 4 and 5, which seek to widen CAMRA's remit to represent all pubgoers and drinkers of beer, cider and perry "of any type" as it would embrace what is often called "craft keg" beer, much of which does not meet our definition of real ale.

The National Executive see it as essential in order to be increase our clout to protect pubs (as without pubs there is no real ale), and to appeal more to a younger constituency, who are embracing the new craft beers (and not joining CAMRA). They insist that "CAMRA should remain the Campaign for Real Ale" and "CAMRA should promote the virtues of well produced, well kept, cask-conditioned beer as the pinnacle of the brewer's craft".

Dissenters say CAMRA's message will become diluted and that craft keg beers are



inherently inferior products.

From the surveys carried out as part of the Revitalisation Project it is by no means certain that the proposals will achieve the required 75% of votes.

There is still time to register to attend the AGM, just go to agm.camra.org.uk. But if you can't be there in person, it is possible to cast a vote by proxy. Details of this will be sent to you by email and with March's *What's Brewing*.

You will find tons more information at revitalisationdecision.camra.org.uk. NB this website has been set up by the National Executive so it is very "pro" the proposals.

The Members' Weekend is also a great way to meet other CAMRA members from across the UK and participate in CAMRA's day-to-day policy making processes.

Come along and join the debate.

Andy Murray

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Steve and Bonita look forward to your visit

Uttoxeter & District News

Pub of the Season Winter 2017-18

The Tavern, Denstone

If you travel north from Uttoxeter towards Ashbourne and take a left turn after passing JCB HQ you will reach the small rural village of Denstone in the Churnet valley. The village is overlooked by the Weaver Hills, the southernmost part of the Peak District. Most drivers miss the village centre, on their way to a certain well-known theme park the other side of the neighbouring village of Alton, but it is well worth a detour. Of course, as with all proper villages, it has a pub at the heart of its community, in this case the **Tavern**, a 17th century pub with an open fire and which still retains some original features.

Like most rural pubs it attracts visitors from nearby towns and villages by the quality of its food but this has not prevented it from being a proper local, where villagers and visitors alike can enjoy a good pint. There are 4 cask ales regularly on tap from the Marston's stable, usually including at least one from the Ringwood brewery.



Chris Podmore (*above left*), the landlord at the Tavern was presented with the Uttox-



eter sub-branch's Winter Pub of the Season 2017-18 award on Monday 29th January by Simon Ardron, chair of Uttoxeter and District sub-branch. Simon said:

"For a winter pub of the season we were on the lookout not just for great beer but a warm welcoming atmosphere, the sort of place any self-respecting real ale drinker would be glad to walk into on a cold winter's day. The Tavern, with its welcoming real fire and quality well-kept beers is just what we were looking for."

The latest award is just the latest in a series the Uttoxeter sub-branch have given the Tavern. It was winner of the 2015 Spring Pub of the Season and 2016 Pub of the Year. So if you are north of Uttoxeter and don't feel like being thrown round in mid-air at 80 miles an hour, why not pop in to Denstone village and sample what the Tavern has to offer.

Dave Scorer

The Tavern, College Road, Denstone,
Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 5HR

Tel: 01889 590847

<http://www.thetaverndenstone.co.uk>

Uttoxeter Brewing Co.



A busy time for the brewery across the Christmas period saw us post another record month for sales. In fact, as we pass our twelve month anniversary it's still hard to believe how much beer we have brewed and distributed bearing in mind our current tiny brewing capacity. Massive thanks to everyone who has supported us, both landlords and drinkers in the locality. Special mention to the **Horse & Dove** in Uttoxeter town and the **Dog & Partridge** Marchington for helping us get established in the area. We were really pleased to supply some firkins to the **Swan** in Stone for the first time just before Christmas as well. Thanks also to the support from CAMRA in both our local Uttoxeter and District sub branch and HoS.

Plans to increase our capacity and build a 'proper size' microbrewery in the town continue to take shape. We hope to have news about new premises very soon. As we increase capacity we will be installing new, bigger brewing equipment and with that in mind both Tom and Andy will be training up on techniques used in larger scale brewing. As part of that Andy was lucky enough to attend a brew day at The

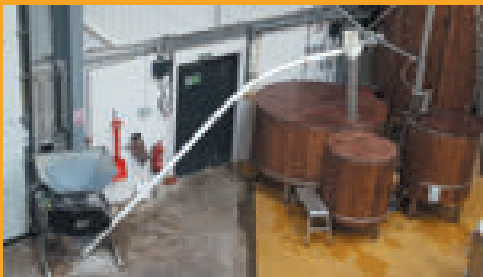
mash tun (pictured) was certainly heavier work than we've had to date!



The next few months will see us focused on the expansion project but we'll be working hard to keep our loyal customers supplied with our beers. If everything goes to plan the second twelve months of our brewing life should certainly be exciting. Cheers!

Andy Ockleton

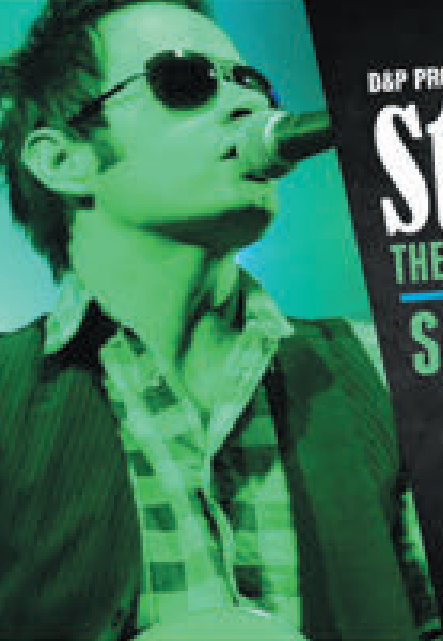
Facebook: @UttoxeterBrewingCompany



Outstanding Brewing Company in Salford in January. Brewing on their 24bbl kit was certainly a step up from what we're used to but the experience gained was invaluable. Digging out half a ton of grain from the

Uttoxeter & District CAMRA meets every month. Our Annual General Meeting will take place on Monday 9th April at the Old Swan, Uttoxeter, starting at 8pm.

For those who live out of the town there are other people and we may be able to arrange transport sharing. For further details contact us via Facebook or send an email to chair@uttoxetercamra.org



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Pottering around the Potteries

Despite winter coming in enshrouded by darkness and being gripped in the acrid clutch of cold, a new year is meant to be a time for instituting a fresh start, a sign of optimism of better things to come; however, for the good CAMRA folk of the Potteries, 2018 started as anything thus, with the devastating news that not one, but two of their local friends had passed away. After suffering from a nasty fall last year, Mike Harker succumbed to his illness and slipped away in January. I'm sure that there are other tributes to Mike elsewhere in this magazine; speaking from a personal point of view, it was with Mike that I first envisaged the idea of swapping short articles to include in the other's branch magazine. I saw this as a way to keep the two branches in touch. I am pleased that this tradition has been maintained now that Andy is the esteemed editor of Beer at Heart.

Then, a couple of weeks later, the shocking news broke that Sally Lavender had been taken; although Sally was mainly based around the Birmingham area, she had many friends in the Potteries branch and much influence around these parts. Local CAMRA member Lorna Denny had known Sally since schooldays and writes an affectionate and moving tribute in the current Potter's Bar; we in the Potteries raise a pint to the memory of both Mike and Sally.

Naturally, there is no better place to toast the memory of a member of CAMRA than in a pub, and, happy to say, there have been a few new pubs opening in the Potteries area recently. In Newcastle, **Mellards Bar** opened quietly last November; Mellards was once a famous DIY store in town and this smart, modern bar is housed in their old warehouse, located in Market Lane, the alleyway that connects Hassell Street to The Ironmarket. Based on two levels, the bar is downstairs, complete with some high, so-called "posing

chairs", whilst up a short flight of stairs to the right is a more comfortable area, with sofas abounding. Two real ales are served from hand-pumps, complemented by a good range of canned and bottled beer.

Elsewhere in Newcastle, **Thirsty Giraffe** opened its doors in the middle of December; run along the lines of a microbar, this single-roomed pub houses a mixtures of stools, tables and chairs, plus a couple of rows of



comfortable bench seats along the back wall. The main interest, however, is the beer and here the Giraffe does not disappoint, with four ever-changing real ales on hand-pump, two bag-in-a-box real ciders, complemented by a good range of British and foreign bottled beer in the fridge, all watched over by the thirsty (and rather colourful) giraffe that sits atop the bar.

Up into the village of Penkhull, and **The Manor Court Ale House** opened its doors in January; located next door to the noble Greyhound Inn, this is the second pub to be opened by jovial John Rowlands, following on from **Johnys Micro Pub** in Burslem. The Manor Court is a comfortable little bar, with most of the seating in the front area, encouraging customers to engage in conversation. Beer-wise, there are two House real ales brewed by Staffordshire Brewery including the excellent *Honeywall Stout*, plus



two guest beers from elsewhere in the country. Very much a gain for Penkhull.

So be it in a new venue or an established pub, wherever you choose to toast friends lost, it is hoped that the good folk to the south of The Wall have a great Spring, safe in the knowledge that winter is quite a bit away yet.

Martin Perry
Editor, Potters Bar
www.camrapotteries.co.uk

Sally Lavender

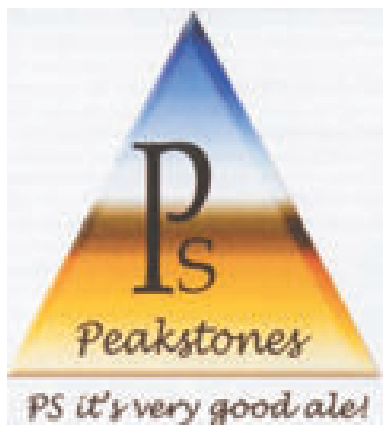
We at Heart of Staffordshire branch were also deeply saddened by the unexpected and untimely death of Sally, who lived in our neighbouring



branch to the north. A flamboyant figure and never seen without one of 'er big 'ats, Sally was a familiar face at CAMRA events and festivals around the country. Amongst other things she did taste training around the region and at the BBC Food & Drink Show, so many of us benefitted from her expertise in beer and cider. In recognition she had recently been invited onto CAMRA's national cider committee. Sadly missed.

Phil Vickers

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Contact Us

Heart of Staffordshire branch

Branch officers prior to AGM on 5th June:

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contact@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

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Stone, Staffs ST15 0PD. Tel: 07810 142664

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chair@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

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secretary@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

Treasurer: **Dave Tomkinson**

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clubs@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

Pubs Officer: **Frank Bryden**

pubsofficer@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

Young Members Officer: **vacant**

If you're interested in taking on a role, or joining the committee in a general capacity, please contact the Secretary or come to our AGM.

Uttoxeter & District sub-branch

Branch contact & Chair: **Simon Ardron**

Email: chair@utttoxetercamra.org

Website: www.utttoxetercamra.org

Contacting You

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

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.

Find us on Facebook:

Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA
Uttoxeter & District CAMRA

Thank You:

Chris Bedford, Neil Butler, Paul Dykta, Robert Flood, Paul Hewitt, Andy Ockleton, Martin Perry, Kelly Porter, Dave Scorer, Dave Tomkinson, Phil Vickers, Warwick Printing and all our advertisers.

Articles, letters and suggestions for the next issue gratefully received by the Editor. The next issue of **Beer at Heart** will appear in June 2018.

Consumer information

If you have any complaints over short measures etc. and have no satisfaction from the pub in question please contact Staffordshire Trading Standards:

Tel: 0300 111 8045

E: businessadvice@staffordshire.gov.uk

Post: Staffordshire County Council,
2 Staffordshire Place, Stafford ST16 2DH

'Doing the 19' or could it be 88?

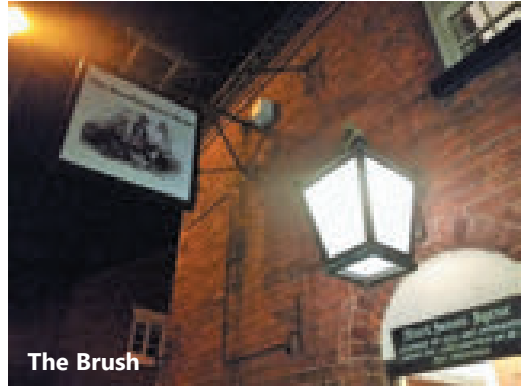
Ever picked up the **Good Beer Guide** and wondered if it is possible to visit every pub included in that year's book? Well, as mentioned in the latest edition of *Beer* magazine, one Duncan Mackay completed the feat in 2015 and last year came within three pubs of visiting every entry in the 2017 GBG. What is more remarkable is that he lives in Scotland and a 1,100-mile round trip away from the most westerly pub in Cornwall.

Mr Mackay's feat got me thinking, especially after voting for my choices for next year's GBG and finding a fair few pubs on the shortlist I either hadn't visited or not frequented since the 1980s. Could we (i.e. Diana and I) visit all 19 of Heart of Staffordshire's entries in the 2018 guide before the next one is published? Could we visit all of the Staffordshire's 88 GBG pubs, or is that target taking things too far?

Back in September, we headed for Gnosall and more specifically **George and the Dragon**, our branch's 2016 Pub of the Year. We do like micropubs, so, without thinking about it at the time, we moved one step closer to 'doing the 19'.

To move closer to our target, recently I took Diana on a mystery trip and the first stop was the **Brushmakers Arms** in Oulton, a pub that fell into our 'hadn't visited' category. It is very much a traditional local pub with two rooms and during our visit the oche was being set up for darts. Three ales were on offer including two from Thwaites and Castle Rock's *Snowwhite*.

Of course, it would have been rude not to move a few paces down the hill to the **Wheatsheaf**. Very much a country pub and restaurant with a nice interior, we were made most welcome with plenty of chatting at the bar. Not in the GBG, it does serve real ale – they had Limestone Brewery's *Stone*



The Brush

the Crows, Timothy Taylor *Landlord* as well as *Doom Bar* – and we left with a bottle of *Limestone Cherry Stone* to enjoy at home.

From Oulton, it was back to Stone to another of our 2018 GBG entries which we'd not previously visited, the **Royal Exchange**. A recent branch Pub of the Season, there is a range of Titanic beers plus Everards *Tiger* and several guest beers including, on our visit, 4T's *IPA* and Lytham Brewery's *Lytham Blonde*. I particularly liked the beer board which has each ale giving the brewery, name, ABV, price and a sketch describing its name.



Diana and the Rex's helpful beer board

So I make that 14 of our 19 entries visited and around 30 of Staffordshire entries. We'll keep you updated!

Chris Bedford



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From as little as £25* today, be part of the CAMRA community and enjoy discounted entry to around 200 beer festivals, exclusive member offers and more. Discover all the ins and outs of brewing and beer with fantastic magazines and newsletters, but even more importantly support various causes and campaigns to save pubs, cut beer tax and more.

Join CAMRA today

Enter your details and complete the Direct Debit form below to get 15 months for the price of 12 for the first year and save £2 on your membership fee.

Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinup or call 01727 798440. All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 330 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4JW

Your details:

Title _____ Surname _____

Forename(s) _____

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email address _____

Tel No(s) _____

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title _____ Surname _____

Forename(s) _____

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Joint member's Email _____

Joint member's Tel No _____

	Direct Debit	Non DD
Single Membership (UK)	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>	£27 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Membership (Partner at the same address)	£30 <input type="checkbox"/>	£32 <input type="checkbox"/>

*For information on Young Member and other concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk/membership-rates or call 01727 798440.

I/we wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association these are available at camra.org.uk/memorandum

Signed _____

Date _____

Applications will be processed within 21 days of receipt of this form. 04/21

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 330 Hatfield Road St. Albans, Herts AL1 4JW

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the Manager Bank or Building Society

Address _____

Postcode _____

Name(s) of Account Holder _____

Bank or Building Society Account Number _____

Branch Sort Code _____

Reference _____

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of accounts.

Service User Number

9 2 6 1 2 9

FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY

This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Membership Number

Name _____

Postcode _____

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Campaign For Real Ale Limited Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the authorisation provided by the Direct Debit Guarantee. It is understood that this instruction may remain with Campaign For Real Ale Limited and, if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/ Building Society

Signature(s) _____

Date _____



This Guarantee should be attached and retained by the payer

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- The Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debit.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or an alternative amount if you request. The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will refund a payment, continuation of the account and debit will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back unless The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply notifying your Bank or Building Society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

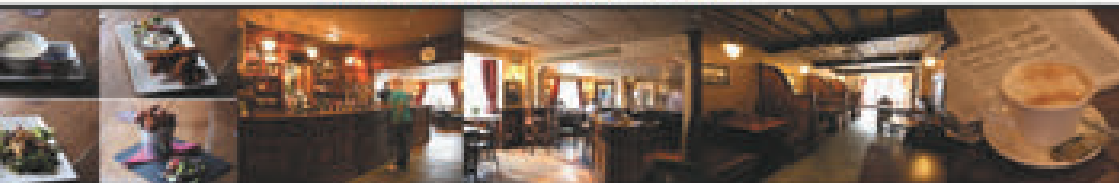


The Sun Inn

7 Lichfield Road, Stafford, ST17 4JX

T: 01785 248361

- * Home cooked food * 12 hand pumps *
- * Biannual Beer & Cider Festival *



The Royal Exchange

28 Radford Street, Stone, ST15 8DA

T: 01785 812685

- * 12 hand pumps * Regular live music *
- * Great local feel *

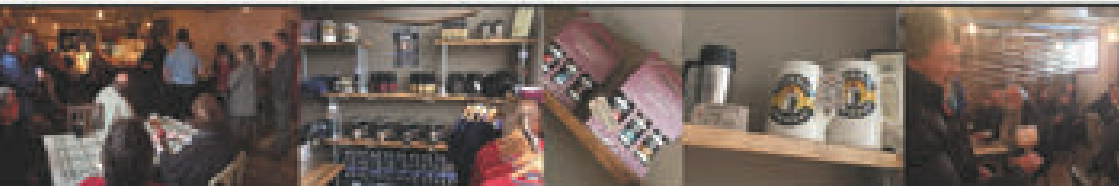


Titanic Brewery

Callender Place, Lingard Street, Burslem, ST5 1JL

T: 01782 823447

- * Brewery tours * Brewery shop *
- * Private functions *



WWW.TITANICBREWERY.CO.UK