

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

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL:



1: Slater's open Slater's



2: Titanic open bod

3: CAMRA open Beer Festival!



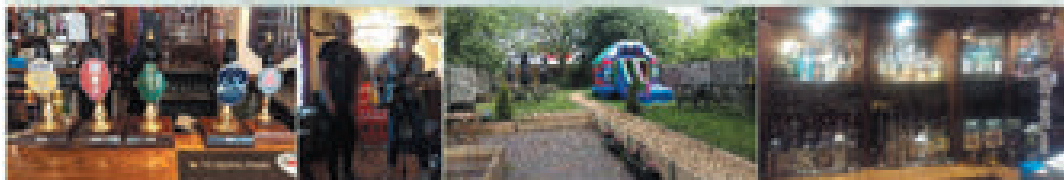
Plus: we announce our Pubs of the Year



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Summer 2018

Beer at Heart

Winner of West Midlands CAMRA Branch Magazine of the Year 2017

Welcome from the Editor

For once, CAMRA's national Annual General Meeting made the national news. Saturday 21st April was set to be an epoch-defining day in CAMRA's history, due to the membership meeting in Coventry to vote on Special Resolutions (SRs) aimed at 'revitalising' the organisation.

As it happened, due to the large number of votes cast online or by proxy prior to the AGM, those (like me) attending in person could not sway the results. Despite each SR requiring 75% in favour to carry, all but one achieved it. So we now concern ourselves with 'beer, cider and perry *of any type*' [my italics] but members narrowly drew the line at representing 'the interests of all pub-goers'.

The sky hasn't fallen in; in fact, so far it feels like nothing has changed at all. But really the AGM was the beginning of revitalisation rather than the end. Change will probably be gradual when it comes; maybe the new wording only reflects what has become commonplace in most CAMRA branches anyway. Whatever it all means, one thing's for sure: people will still enjoy drinking real ale, cider and perry in pubs and clubs and we will keep campaigning for them.

Hope to see you at our beer and cider festival (this year with added gin)—save the dates: Thursday 26th to Saturday 28th July.

Andy Murray

editor@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

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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: 15th AUGUST 2018 ADVERTISING RATES ON PAGE 8



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Chair's Chat

Winter was supposed to be over with several days of sunshine and the hottest London Marathon ever, but as I write this temperatures are almost back to freezing so should we pick a pub with a log fire as Summer Pub of the Season?

As this year marches on the annual beer festival approaches, with organisation and planning well underway. The venue's the same, the date's the same (last weekend in July) and the format's roughly similar. An alteration this year is the trialling of a gin bar, a very popular drink at present. As usual we are appealing for volunteers to assist especially with the set up and take down which can be frantic without enough personnel. All details can be found on our website www.staffordbeerfestival.co.uk. Hope to see you there.

The branch Annual General Meeting occurs at the beginning of June, just as this magazine comes out. But at any time of year, if you are interested in taking a more active role in the branch and campaigning on behalf of CAMRA we'd be delighted to hear from you.

We're also presenting our various annual awards. The Green Man at Milwich won Rural Pub of the Year, Stafford Hockey & Cricket Club is our Club of the Year, while the Swan in Stone won the Urban and Cider categories and is our overall champ. Congratulations to all our winners!

The presentation to the Swan takes place on Wednesday 4th July at 8pm, coinciding with the first day of their annual beer festival. And therefore well worth attending!

Don't forget to keep supporting your local pub, brewery etc. to ensure they remain viable and profitable in the continuing hostile trading environment.

Neil Butler
Chair, Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA

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

JUNE

TUESDAY 5th: BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - SHREWSBURY ARMS, Stafford, 8pm. All members welcome.

FRIDAY 29th: CLUB OF THE YEAR PRESENTATION - Stafford Hockey & Cricket Club, Riverway, 8pm. All welcome.

JULY

WEDNESDAY 4th: PUB OF THE YEAR & CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR PRESENTATION - the SWAN, Stone, 8pm. All welcome.

THURSDAY 12th: PUB OF THE SEASON SUMMER PRESENTATION - the Boat, Penkridge, 8pm. All welcome.

THURSDAY 26th—SATURDAY 28th: 11th STAFFORD BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL Blessed William Howard School, Stafford (full details on pages 15-17).

AUGUST

Check online diary for events closer to the time.

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



Pub and Club news

STAFFORD

Slater's and Titanic's bars are open and going great guns—read more about them on pages 12 and 23.

Happily, the **Spittal Brook** is due to re-open in August or September, having been closed since late last year.

Stafford Hockey & Cricket Club is our Club of the Year 2017 and we'll be making a presentation to them on Friday 29th June around 8pm. All welcome.

The **Kings Arms** is celebrating Armed Forces Day on 30th June with a party to raise money for a PTSD charity. Extra ales are promised...

Oli Kendall is leaving the Good Beer Guide-listed **Market Vaults** in August for pastures new—we wish him all the best.

The Lewis Partnership have not renewed their lease on the **Bear Grill** (a Marston's pub) and there are rumours they are about to leave **the Swan** too. They are intending to focus on their country dining establishments such as the **Red Lion** at Bradley (our Spring Pub of the Season—see page 14).

HAUGHTON

The Bell will be re-opening soon. This welcome and long-overdue news was announced just as we went to press—no further details known as yet.

STONE

The **Swan** is our Pub of the Year winner. In a fantastic year for the Swan they also scooped our Cider Pub of the Year accolade. Their 20th beer festival takes place from 4th-8th July, and as it promises the beers will be 'the best of the best' plus a 20% CAMRA discount it should be rather good!

In a bit of good timing, we'll be there on the Wednesday at 8pm to present the certificates and trophies to Geoff and his team. Do come!

Plans have been submitted to demolish the closed **Darlaston Inn** and create a petrol station and drive-thru restaurant.

ECCLESHALL

The **Kings Arms** has a new General Manager, Linda Vanner. Linda arrives from the Red Lion in Market Drayton, which won multiple CAMRA awards during her time there. With Linda's skills the pub is looking to hold more events and festivals. The pub now has several rooms available for visitors to stay in.

KNIGHTON

The **Haberdashers Arms'** 72nd annual Potato Show will take place over the August bank holiday weekend. For more info on this unique event (which isn't just about spuds) contact the pub on 01785 280650.

HIGH OFFLEY

Mikron Theatre will be performing in the garden at the **Anchor** on Sunday 2nd September (2pm start).

PENKRIDGE

The **Boat** will be our Summer Pub of the Season. Join us for the presentation and a canal-side beer on Thursday 12th July, at 8pm if you can.

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

Save the Green Man!

Hixon's community pub under threat

At the time of going to press the future of the Green Man at Hixon hangs in the balance. The current owner wishes to sell the pub and a planning application (ref 18/28351/FUL) has been submitted to Stafford Borough Council to demolish the pub and replace it with a Co-op convenience store.

However a Hixon Parish Council survey of local residents found 70% of respondents wished to see the Green Man retained as a public house. A group of residents has submitted an application to the borough council for the pub to be listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) and the application was signed by almost 100 people from the Hixon area.

Spokeswoman for the group Claire Pritchard said "As you will see from the amount of signatures that we have received in a very short amount of time there is significant support in maintaining the building as a pub and stopping the change of use. The pub is considered to be the hub of the community as outlined in our application. There is real support in the community for this pub and we don't believe the current owner has made any attempt to sell the property as a public house."

We can't find any evidence either from trade press or commercial estate agents that the pub has been advertised for sale as a public house. Stafford's Local Plan, Policy E8 states 'Loss of an existing facility will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer needed or it can be established that the services provided by the facility can be served in an alternative location and manner that is equally accessible by the local community'. This



Under threat; Note the 'keyhole' entrance and window and the Bass lantern sign

condition certainly applies to the Green Man as the other Hixon pub the Bank House, run by the Lewis Partnership, is dining orientated and caters for a different clientele. The Green Man plays a big role in the social life of Hixon and is used by groups to host fundraising events for charity such as the Charity for Hixon Elderly Folk (CHEF), family fun days, music events, quiz nights and darts and dominoes teams. No other place in the village provides for these community activities.

At the time of writing there are 41 comments on the Stafford Borough Council planning application website with the vast majority (35) objecting to the proposals and wanting to see the retention of the Green Man as a pub. Hixon Parish Council has voted to object to the proposed development and support retention of the pub. So the message from the local community is clear - they want the Green Man retained as a public house.

Dave Tomkinson

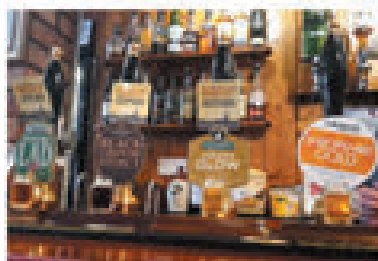
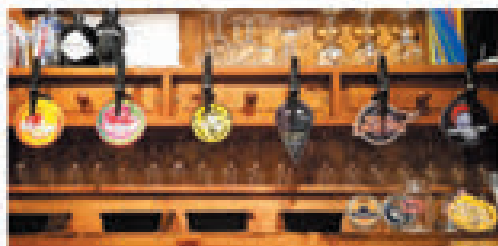
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CAMRA branch Pub of the Year 2016

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Rising Star The Star, Penkridge

The Heart of Staffordshire branch was pleased to present a well-deserved Rising Star award to the **Star** in Penkridge on a cold Thursday evening in March. The Star is a really thriving community pub which offers a cosy feel with its roaring log burner, particularly on winter nights. There are patio and seating areas outside for those summer evenings.

The pub is situated in the old Market Place and first traded in 1830. After becoming a private house and a shop it was restored as a pub in 1981. It is a very important part of the town and community life, with an excellent choice of permanent and changing ales. Not to be missed on your travels around the area.

Alison and Rob Heath took over the pub around six months ago after successfully running the Bell at Haughton. They have transformed the new drinking area giving it a very modern feel but not losing its core values, live music is also available on some evenings. Excellent food is served between 12-3 Tuesday to Sunday, and beers available are Banks's Amber Ale, Marston's Pedigree, Wainwright from the Marston's range plus three changing beers.

While in Penkridge why not visit the nearby **Boat, White Hart, Horse and Jockey**, and **Littleton Arms**, all in walking distance, offering you an excellent afternoon's or evening's drinking in this market town. If driving I would also recommend the **Swan at Whiston**, another pub not to be missed on your travels.

Paul Hewitt



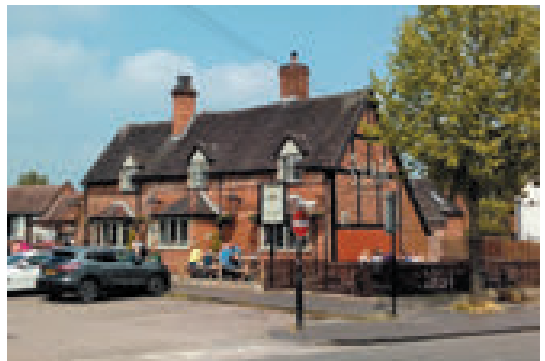
Neil Butler (centre) presents the award to the Star's landlady Ali and cellar manager Matt

STAR INN

Market Place, Penkridge, Staffs ST19 5DJ
(150 yards off the A449 along New Road).
Tel: 01785 712513
<https://thestarpenkridge.wixsite.com/home>
Facebook: @thestarpenk

Opening Times

12-11 Mon-Wed; 12-11.30 Thu;
12-Midnight Fri & Sat; 12-11 Sun
Meals served 12-3 Tue-Sun



Our Pubs of the Year

What's the only thing you can (usually) get in a pub that you can't get in the supermarket? Yup. Real Ale. The RA in CAMRA. And so we are really all about pubs. And we realise this and give recognition where it's due. Each year our branch, and the other 200+ branches in the country, find their PotY (Pub of the Year).

*Heart of Staffordshire branch vote for a Rural and an Urban PotY and then we visit and judge an overall winner. In the 2017 competition our rural PotY is **The Green Man, Milwich** and our urban and overall winner is **The Swan Inn, in Stone**.*

The Green Man Two times twenty-five!



Like the Swan, the Green Man has garnered a truck-load of awards from CAMRA over the years. I would especially like to note the 2016 'silver award' to landlord Rod Webb for twenty-five years in the job. The Green Man has also earned its place in the Good Beer Guide for 25 consecutive years (1994-2018). What does that tell you about the beer quality? Up to five cask beers are on offer. Bass is a fixture but the others rotate and there is usually a mild on offer. Being a rural pub the Green Man does not open every lunchtime. Check with whatpub.com for opening and food times.

The Green Man is truly at the heart of the Milwich community and hosts many an event. The annual free weekend music festival is a must (21st July this year). The pub has a surprisingly large and verdant

beer garden to host these occasions. If you like a beer in lush surroundings then the Green Man is for you.

Hikers will also love the Green Man as it is at the heart of a network of local footpaths; a local guide is on sale in the pub. Walkers can use the pub car park but, of course, ask permission beforehand. As a bonus you get to slake your thirst after your perambulations with an excellent pint of cask beer!

Although a rural pub the Green Man is not hard to get to. By car that is (or bike for the fit), public transport is a non-starter. A 10-minute drive from Stone and just a bit longer from Stafford. As the saying goes "use it or lose it". Take a drive out and enjoy the garden (summer) and the real coal fire (winter). Children and dogs are welcome. What's not to like?

Phil Vickers



The Swan Inn Two times winner

Geoff Blundell reopened the **Swan** some twenty years ago and instantly put on nine cask beers. It remains the same to this day with only one permanent offering, the other eight constantly change and are anything from anywhere, though a local beer or three is usually on offer. The Swan also keeps three or four real ciders and perries for lovers of orchard products, and also bagged our cider pub-of-the-year prize. It now has a gin bar. CAMRA members get a discount on all real ales and cider.

The Swan is famed far and wide for its annual beer festival in July. It is usually themed e.g. all beers from Wales or inside the M25. This draws the 'tickers' who like to sample beers they can't usually get. This year is the twentieth Swan Beer Festival and it runs from the 4th-8th July. We will be awarding the Swan their PotY certificates and cup on the evening of 4th July.



The Swan is also well known for the eclectic live music sessions on Friday & Saturday evenings which can feature national acts. Out to the back is a sun-trap beer garden. It should be noted that the Swan is a traditional town pub, no car-park, it does not do food and is adults-only at all times but dogs are very welcome.

This is not the first time the Swan has been our PotY and probably not the last! A worthy winner, if you haven't visited then put it on your bucket list!

Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA Pub and Cider Pub of the Year 2017



The Swan Inn
Stone's only true free house



20th BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

'THE BEST OF THE BEST'

Wednesday 4th - Sunday 8th July

The best REAL ALES from the past 20 years plus a selection of REAL CIDERS

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Brewery news

LYMESTONE of Stone

www.lymestonebrewery.co.uk

Brewery busy with a couple of months still to run on the Wetherspoons contract. Whilst Brad is recovering from surgery Sarah has been attending to duties. Good news is Brad's op has been successful and he is now undergoing a period of extended physio. Somehow Sarah has also fitted in another volunteering trip to Southern Africa!



Seasonal beers coming up are:

MAY – COBBLESTONE 4.7%

Very well hopped brown beer, which has not been brewed for some time. This is a 10th anniversary brew with original style pump clip.

JUNE – STONEWALL PENALTY 4.6%

A World Cup beer not brewed since the European Championships two years ago.

JULY—LYMESTONE COWBOY 4.2%

An annual favourite.

The 10th Anniversary celebrations are continuing with a lot of charity events at the brewery and the Borehole.

The Borehole's beer garden has finally opened ready for the summer. It makes use of a small area of land to the rear of the building which was overgrown and used for dumping rubbish over a period of time. Evidenced by Viv, who was planting shrubs when I visited, digging out bricks, rubble, plastic and car parts. Once mature it will be a great asset. Most of the garden furniture has been reclaimed from the Darlaston Inn, which closed recently. Very substantial items need some TLC during next winter.

The Lymestone Vaults was awarded Potteries CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year, whilst the Quiet Woman in Leek was the Moorlands branch Spring Pub of the Season.

Sarah is rebranding the Black Cat brewery products. A pilsner lager 5.2% has been developed and will be trialled at the Lymelight Festival in Newcastle soon. With this and to save confusion Stray Cat Strut will become Stray Cat Lager. Another batch of Black Cat Milk Stout has been produced.

Neil Butler

Lymestone Brewery Liaison Officer (BLO)

SLATER'S of Stafford

www.slatersales.co.uk

Hazel from Slater's

writes: Slater's new bar on Gaolgate Street in

Stafford opened in April. With the full range of Slater's Ales and an excellent selection of craft gins, wines and cider, the bar is open from 11am each morning.

At the brewery, upcoming seasonal specials are QUEEN BEE and PACIFICA.

Slater's are also featuring in the Aldi Summer Beer Festival. PREMIUM BEST BITTER will be stocked in stores across the country from late May. [91,840 bottles of it to be precise—Ed.]

The next brewery tours are on June 8th and July 6th.

We'll also be at Stafford Cheese and Ale Festival from 15th–17th June. Slater's bar is a stone's throw from Market Square, so why not pop to the bar afterwards for a post-shopping refreshment?!



IZAAK WALTON BREWHOUSE of Norton Bridge

Whitehouse Farm, Cold Norton, Stone,
Staffordshire ST15 0NS
izaakbrew@mail.com
01785 760780

The last couple of months have been relatively quiet with the consolidation of the brews and also some red tape to be dealt with. The three original brews have been well received locally and the next step is to introduce the beers to a wider audience. Hopefully a selection will be available at our beer festival in July as part of this process.

ONE LAST CAST, a 4% pale ale has now been tweaked enough and is ready to join the portfolio.

The brews have been available at a number of local events including an open day on Easter Sunday at Izaak Walton Fishery near

Chebsey. With the brewers and band Moley's Junkmen it was a reunion of the Railway at Norton Bridge. An open day at Shallowford House is planned for 7th July where the beers will be available.

Neil Butler, Izaak Walton BLO

STOP PRESS! A deal has been agreed with the new owners of NORTON BRIDGE GOLF CLUB (formerly Izaak Walton Golf Club) at Cold Norton for the bar in the clubhouse to become the 'brewery tap'. The golf course is adjacent to the industrial estate where the brewery is situated, so no 'beer miles'. At present the cellar is being renewed. A grand opening evening is scheduled for 6th July from about 17.30 onwards, with some live music. Several charity events are also booked for the summer.



Pub of the Season

The Red Lion, Bradley

Our Spring pub of the season was the **Red Lion**, in Bradley, a pretty village about four miles south west of Stafford. Most of the building dates from the 16th century. The Lewis Partnership bought the Red Lion in 2015 and completely refurbished it, adding a new entrance which enhances the sense of light and space in the bar. Three beers were on at the time of our presentation: Lancaster Bomber, Wainwright and Wye Valley HPA, all of which scored highly.

Anyone over 5ft 4in needs to duck when making their way to the toilets or restaurant area. Speaking of which, as you'd expect from the Lewis Partnership, the food here is rather good.



Branch chair Neil Butler presents bar manager Thomas Galvin with the Pub of the Season award. We've finally got one of Neil looking at the camera!

An advertisement for the LP Rewards app. On the left, a smartphone displays the app's interface with various icons. In the background, there is a large, white, two-story pub building with a red roof. On the right, there is a dark blue square logo with five white stars at the top, the letters 'LP' in a large serif font, and the word 'REWARDS' in a smaller sans-serif font below it.

SPECIAL OFFER ★ 10% off cask ales at any Lewis Partnership property. Input coupon code 4585 into the Rewards Zone to obtain the discount voucher.

THE REWARD SCHEME YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!

With the new 'LP REWARDS APP' you earn loyalty points for every £1 spent on food and drink. Downloadable now from the App Store or Google Play.



YOUR GUIDE TO THE 11TH

STAFFORD BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

65+ 30+
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COUNTRY
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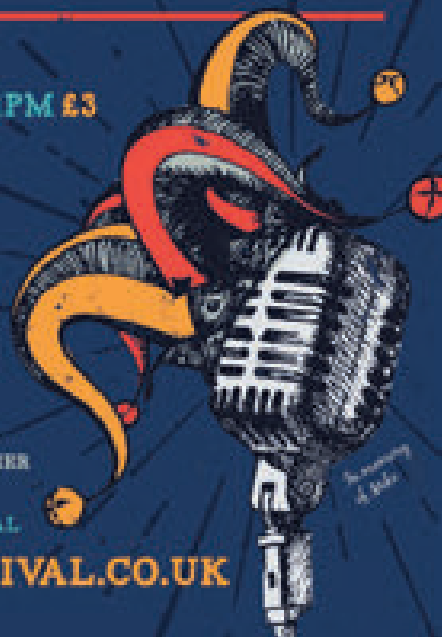
ENTERTAINMENT ON
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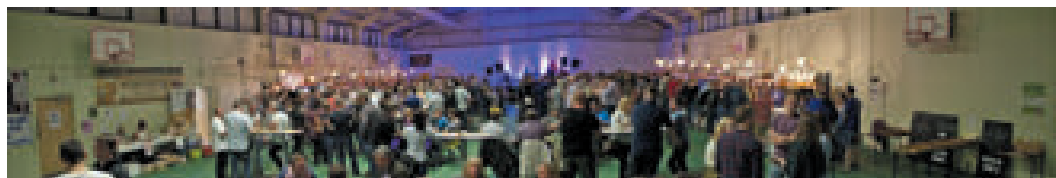
PLEASE NOTE: FRIDAY AFTERNOON AND SATURDAY
AFTERNOON ARE FAMILY FRIENDLY SESSIONS. ALL OTHER
SESSIONS ARE OPEN TO OVER 18S ONLY.

@STAFFSBEERFEST STAFFORD BEER FESTIVAL

WWW.STAFFORDBEERFESTIVAL.CO.UK



A preview of the 11th annual Stafford Beer and Cider Festival 26th–28th July 2018



The venue

As usual the festival will be held in the sports hall of Blessed William Howard School, Rowley Avenue, Stafford. There is plenty of parking space on site; for anybody wishing to drive enter ST17 9AB into your sat-nav/smartphone.

For people travelling by train, when you arrive at Stafford Station, go out of the main entrance and turn right, heading past the car park towards the T-junction. Turn right at this junction, go over the railway bridge and continue until you get to the pedestrian crossing. Cross the road and then proceed to the next road along on the left called Rowley Avenue. Go down this road for about 200 yards and the entrance to the school is on the left hand side (about 10 minutes' walk).

Entertainment

Live music will be provided for your eardrums on:

Friday 27th July (evening)

Singer-songwriter *Alexandra Jayne*, who wowed the crowd last year will be back with her stylish blend of classic covers and original material.



Saturday 28th July (afternoon)

The Blackwell Concert Band are back by popular demand. Rock and pop covers played on brass and woodwind instruments!

Saturday 28th July (evening): to be confirmed

NB Thursday evening & Friday afternoon are 'quiet sessions', with no background music.

Opening times/ entry prices

For full details see the poster on page 15. £10 on entry will get you in, your festival glass (refundable deposit of £3) and the rest in drinks tokens. CAMRA members will receive a discount via an extra £1 of tokens. Tokens can be topped up at any time from the front desk.

BEER! CIDER! GIN! WINE!

There will be at least 65 real ales and 30 real ciders & perries. In addition we'll have country wines and for the first time a gin bar so there will be something to suit everyone. Stay tuned to our social media sites for the first glimpse of our beer and cider lists.

Food

Following great feedback last year, Hindles will once again be providing the likes of hot pork baps, baguettes, pasties and veggie curry.

Additionally, scratchings and sweets will be available from the country wine bar.

Volunteers

The beer festival is entirely run and staffed by volunteers. No volunteers = no festival!

If you would like to help out head to staffordbeerfestival.co.uk/volunteers and complete the online form. There are various jobs to do, not just during the opening hours but also with setting-up and taking-down. All volunteers are trained and well-looked after. You don't need to have worked behind a bar before and it's lots of fun!



Charities

This year we'll be raising money for Staffordshire Women's Aid and Hospital Radio Stafford. The jester's hat and microphone on the festival poster are a tribute to our late friend Mike Harker (*above*), who was a hospital radio DJ. Simply donate your unused beer tokens in the box by the front desk before you go.

Families

The evening sessions are for over-18s only but Friday and Saturday afternoons are 'family-friendly' so you can bring your children along. On Saturday afternoon between 2—5pm there'll be face painting and a bouncy castle to keep the little ones entertained.

Sponsorship

Various packages are available, from as little as £20. Sponsor a barrel, a bar, a band, or place an ad in the festival programme. Sponsors receive thank-yous on the website, in the programme and via social media. Email sponsor@staffordbeerfestival.co.uk



Latest news

Keep up-to-date with festival developments and get in touch via the web/social media:

www.staffordbeerfestival.co.uk



@StaffsBeerFest



Stafford Beer Festival

THE GREYHOUND

CAMRA branch Pub of the Season Winter 2015/16



In the CAMRA Good Beer Guide every year since 2005
8 Real Ales available, including a dark beer
30 gins available with choice of Fever-Tree tonics



Quiz nights Tuesday and Sunday
(entry just £1 per team)
Sky & BT Sports
Card payments accepted

Opening times:
4pm – 11:30pm Mon-Thu
4pm – 12midnight Fri
12noon – 12midnight Sat
12noon – 11pm Sun



The Greyhound

County Road, Stafford ST16 2PU Tel: 01785 222432

Steve and Bonita look forward to your visit

Pubs on the 101:

Newcastle town centre part deux

Here we are back in Newcastle, it's midday, midweek, so a bit of back and forth to match up with opening times. Off the bus and straight up Market Lane and into **Mellards**, aka the four C's: Cocktails, Coffee, Craft and Cask. The cask sampled was *FS Porter* from Brinkburn St. brewery, and in good nick it was. The bar was very nice with a quiet courtyard. The next customer was offered no less than five bottled stouts.

Carry on up Market Lane, take a left then right on to High Street, on your left you will find Pepper Lane and the **Limestone Vaults**, a brewery tap which has nine handpulls: six Limestone, three guests. Mine was a very good *Stone the Crows*. Snacks are really nice here, also coffee and cake. **Wellers** just down the lane was closed at this time.

Back to the High Street turn left and keep going till you come to Bridge St. and the **Bridge Street Ale House**, a lovely little micro pub serving four ales and six ciders. Ale of choice was *Steam Stout* from New Brew, well above average. Talking of new brews, there was a beer ready to go on that evening that was brewed for them, now a very nice lady gave us a sample: WOW! I can't remember the last time I'd given a beer 5 out of 5. Well done Sandstone with *4 Girls 1 Stout*.

Time to eat, a short way back is a butcher's selling hot beef/pork baguettes which were very full, very tasty at £3.20, extra for onions/mushrooms. That did the job.

Over the road from the Ale House is bottle shop called **Hopwater Cellar**, 500 bottles and at this time one cask, *Reprezent* by the Furnace brewpub. Not my style but a nice drink. A CAMRA discount was given.



Paul forgot his camera so had to draw the Hopinn

Back on High Street to the **Old Bulls Head**, a Joule's pub with the usual beers plus our choice of Everards *Tubby* dark ale. Still killing time we call in the local 'spoons the **Arnold Machin** for a Titanic *Chocolate & Vanilla Stout*. Then onward up King Street (I mean uphill) to Albert Street and the **Hopinn**, where the eight ales are from eight different breweries; predictably I go for *DV8 Stout* from Deeply Vale. (The 101 passes the other end of the road.)

Back down the road and right on to the A52 called Ryecroft, right again on to Liverpool Road then up to the **Freebird**, someone named Ed in the last issue told me to try here [*that was me—Ed.*]. A bikers/rock pub with up to 12 real ales, of which I chose *Scoundrel* by Leatherbritches.

Back into town and the **Thirsty Giraffe** on Merrial Street selling four ales of which I picked (wait for it) Waymans *Milk Stout*, a good beer to finish the day.

Back at the bus station, there's a choice: go home or go and see if the *4 Girls 1 Stout* is on...the bus pulls in, we go home; might never had made it otherwise.

Paul Dykta

Uttoxeter & District News

Pub of the Year 2018

Horse & Dove, Uttoxeter

Local CAMRA members turned out in force on Saturday 12th May to present the **Horse & Dove** with their well-deserved award certificate and cup for Uttoxeter District Pub of the Year. Simon Ardon, local branch Chairman, presented the awards to owners Paul and Yogi and staff, Jules and Mark.

Paul and Yogi said the award was immensely pleasing because they had only been trading for a year and were initially unsure how their new venture would be met by the local Uttoxeter drinkers, and their very traditional tastes. Yogi said “We feel we now have the right balance to make for a successful pub, by ensuring that we have a pleasant, bright and welcoming environment where customers feel relaxed and can engage in conversation with other locals. We also provide a large range of excellent beers from some of the finest microbreweries in the country”. Paul stated “during the last 14 months we have supplied over 420 different real ales.” Regular breweries supplying include the Uttoxeter Brewing Company, Titanic, Heritage, Leather Britches, Oakham, Ludlow, Thornbridge and Backyard, Burton Bridge and Brunswick.

Since opening in March 2017 the Horse & Dove has changed the scene in Uttoxeter, nearly doubling the range of real ales available in the town with a choice of six additional ever-changing beers. Since opening it has also expanded its choice of gins and ciders and added a premium lager to cater for all tastes.

The pub has created a new safe place for everybody of any age or sex to meet



friends, sit alone and read a book or join in with the friendly conversations held inside the hostelry. Many people have said to me how much they enjoy the pub, and while it does have customers who would have frequented other establishments in the town, there are many people who would not venture into town before but do so now on a regular basis to visit the Horse & Dove.

Aided by the core staff of Mark, Mel and Jules, Paul and Yogi have invested heavily in time, effort and money to make this a very friendly pub serving a wide variety of excellent ales changing at the rate of nearly one new beer a day. For these reasons Uttoxeter and District CAMRA have voted the Horse & Dove as our Pub of the Year for 2018 and it now goes forward to the next round of the competition.

**The Horse & Dove, 21 Market Place,
Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 8HY**
Tel: 01889 735942
www.horsendove.co.uk

Uttoxeter Brewing Company news



Progress on the move to a new, larger premises is going well. Hopefully contracts on the new brewery building should be exchanged soon, and submissions have been made to the local planning office for alterations to the listed building. We hope to move in at the beginning of the Autumn.

At the end of April one of the most successful and highly rated real ale pubs in the Uttoxeter area held a Uttoxeter Brewing Company week.

The **Dog and Partridge** in Marchington, renowned for its food, music and quality real ale offered four beers from the local Uttoxeter brewery: FINAL FURLONG, a traditional English style amber ale; ADMIRAL GARDNER, a light, fruity and citrus pale ale; UXONIAN, a 'New World' pale ale and FULL GALLOP, a very traditional, sweet and nutty brown ale.

Tom Abbott

Facebook:

@UttoxeterBrewingCompany

Pub of the Season Spring 2018 The Old Swan, Uttoxeter

Local CAMRA members were there to present the Pub of the Season, Spring 2018 award to the **Old Swan**.

Located close to the town's market place this Wetherspoon pub has six handpulls offering a wide selection of local and national ales including Milestone, Slater's, Backyard, Titanic, Batemans and Greene King Abbot. A large open plan seating area downstairs is supplemented with a quieter upper level to the rear.

The Award was presented by the local Branch Chairman, Simon Ardron and accepted on behalf of the Old Swan by the Pub Manager, Simon Aitkin. Although a regular winner of CAMRA awards, Simon, who has been a support to the local branch, was very pleased to win further recognition for their efforts to support local real ale producers. Watch out for this Summer's edition of the Wetherspoons News and see more pictures of the well-deserved award.

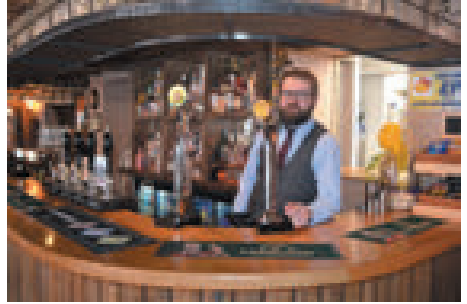


More Uttoxeter & District news over the page...

Great news from a successful, rapidly developing Alton public house

At a recent branch meeting, James Miller, landlord of the **Bulls Head**, Alton, spoke to us about his recent investments to help attract more visitors to his excellent establishment. James, a strong supporter of CAMRA and lover of quality beer, believes it is important to always have four top class real ales on his bar. Two of his handpumps he reserves for the excellent Boltmaker and Landlord by Timothy Taylor's (who have awarded Champion Club status to the pub). The other two he uses to rotate among many of our local microbreweries.

Major kitchen and restaurant renovations (costing £25,000 and creating 15 jobs) are nearing completion. The final stage is the completion of the oak-beamed function



room at the top of the historic building, which will be available for weddings, parties, community gatherings and corporate events.

Uttoxeter & District News written and compiled by Tom Abbott and Simon Ardron



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

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



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Brewery news extra

TITANIC of Burslem

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Any from Titanic writes:

All things bod!

bod Stafford is now OPEN! First opening its doors at Weeping Cross, Stafford over the Easter weekend, we have been overwhelmed with support from the local community. Bod Stafford is a great retreat for breakfast, lunch, coffee and cake, evening snacks and of course a pint of Titanic or one of our guest ales. As with all of Titanic premises, we are dog friendly so you can bring your four-legged friend with you or even stop off for a swift drink while out walking. We are extremely pleased with the transformation from the old Co-op shop into a comfortable and quirky café bar. If you haven't been to visit us yet, please do pop by – we're open from 8am until 11pm, 7 days a week.

bod Stoke Station is progressing well and we are currently going through the planning stages which takes a little longer than normal due to the building being listed but we hope to have the keys in the next few months so work can start.

There's another new bod being added to the list! It's also currently going through planning, but we are delighted to tell you it will be **bod Trentham**. We will be transforming the old NatWest bank and we can't wait to get started!

Seasonal Beers

Demand for our seasonal beers has been crazy with all selling out within a week – some sold out before we even managed to rack them into casks! Our next seasonal

beer will be released in early July and is called AVALON. Avalon uses all American hops to mark American Independence Day and is a punchy 4.8%. It's a distinctive beer which is orange in colour with floral notes on the nose and citrusy tastes on the palette. A cask will be heading out to each of our Titanic pubs so keep an eye out for it.

World's Biggest Pub Quiz 4th-8th March

All our pubs took part in the World's Biggest Pub Quiz for the second year running. You came out in force to help support Prostate Cancer UK and together we raised a very impressive £2,252.91. A HUGE thank you for taking part and for your donations!

Brewery Tours

Come and see how we brew our Titanic beers! Our Titanic brewery tours remain as popular as ever so please do book as early as you can to avoid disappointment. 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. Group of 12 or more? Why not have the brewery to yourself! Call us and ask about our private tours.

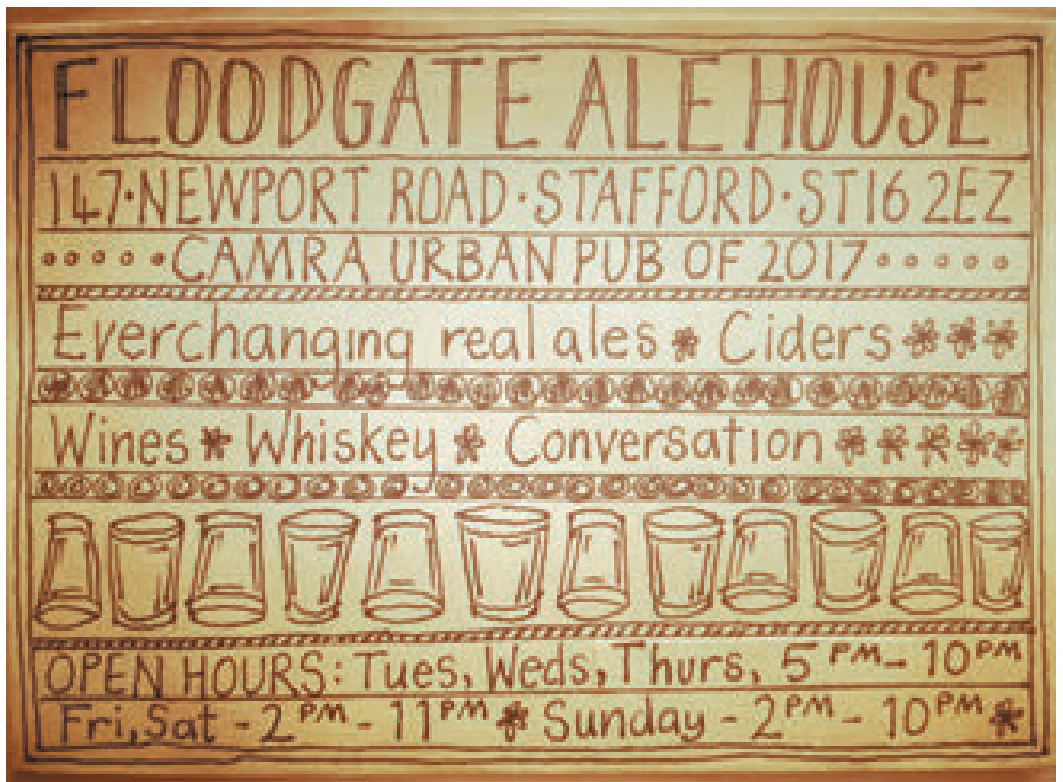
PEAKSTONES ROCK of Alton

www.peakstonesrock.co.uk

David writes: Been brewing at a steady rate. New beer Wayman's Milk Stout is going very well. Beer is named in remembrance of the Highway nightclub at Thrapwood. Many a good rock night was held there.



We are brewing Dimmingsdale Blonde again for the summer. We have also upgraded our website.



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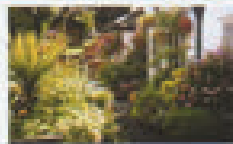
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Pottering around the Potteries

Festival on the move

The most important news from The Potteries is that our beer festival is on the move once more, in the relative dimensions of both time and space; the new time will be the second weekend in November, the new space will be the **Spode Works** in Stoke, now officially the fourth venue to house our august and elaborate beer festival in 38 years. More news will be forthcoming, in both the Autumn editions of **Beer at Heart** and *Potter's Bar*. We hope to see you all there, Dead Pirates included!

Moving on, a few items of Pub News. The **Potter** in Fenton re-opened in the middle of February after undergoing a small refurbishment; now a Free House, it is owned by local real ale legend Mark Aston (who used to run the **Duke William** in Burslem) and is managed by his daughter Hollie. The pub still looks pretty much the same inside, the licks of paint here and there bringing it more in line with Mark's other pub, the **Wheatsheaf** in Tunstall. Five real ales sit atop the bar; Draught Bass is the only permanent, while at least

one of the guests will hail from Mark's brewery behind the afore-mentioned Wheatsheaf, meaning that the pub instantly qualified for the branch's LocAle scheme. The Potter also offers a discount to card-carrying CAMRA members.

The **Blue Bell** in Kidsgrove closed suddenly in the middle of April, the tenants having cut their losses and walked out of the business. Much speculation about the pub's future ensued from



worried regulars and locals; fear not, the pub is most definitely not for sale, still being owned by Dave & Kay Washbrook, veritable real ale legends themselves. Currently undergoing a series of repairs and being subjected to a lick of paint, Kay assures *Potter's Bar* that new and enthusiastic tenants have already been found. All being well and equal, The New Look Blue Bell should re-open sometime in June; with any luck, this

will mark a new dawn of prosperity for this much-loved Potteries real ale institution. Watch, as they say, this space...

Last but not least, the historic **Coachmaker's Arms** in Hanley closed its doors in the middle of May. But fear not! All is not lost and there will be more news about this next issue...

Pilsener Beer	Brewery	Price	Availability
Blue Bell Hat Trick	Blue Bell Hat Trick	£1.50	Available
Blue Bell Hat Trick	Blue Bell Hat Trick	£1.50	Available
Blue Bell Hat Trick	Blue Bell Hat Trick	£1.50	Available
Blue Bell Hat Trick	Blue Bell Hat Trick	£1.50	Available
Blue Bell Hat Trick	Blue Bell Hat Trick	£1.50	Available

Martin Perry
Editor, **Potters Bar**
CAMRA Potteries Branch
www.camrapotteries.co.uk

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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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chair@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

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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:

Tom Abbott, Simon Ardron, Chris Bedford, Neil Butler, Pauls Dykta, Haycock and Hewitt, Martin Perry, Kelly Porter, Alex Round, 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 September 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 87?

Lichfield has four of the 87 Staffordshire entries in the 2018 Good Beer Guide (GBG) and two of them happen to be at the top end of Tamworth Street. The **Whippet Inn** is a typical micropub in a former women's clothes shop where the Oakham *Slovenian Wolf* and Hippy Killer Brew Co. *Natty Dread Milk Stout* were excellent. It was a short walk of a few yards to the pub next door, **Beerbohm**, which had a real wow factor with a distinctly continental feel. We sampled all four ales and liked three of them, Derby Brewing's *Bern Stein*, Boss Brewing's *Blaze* and Nene Valley Brewery's *Egyptian Cream* stout.

Our quest to visit every pub listed for Heart of Staffordshire in the 2018 GBG took us to the **Greyhound**, which I'd not visited since the 1980s. Located on County Road near the prison, this award-winning pub has enjoyed a continuous run in the GBG since 2005. Considering it was a week night, the Greyhound was lively and there is no disputing the quality of the beer. Diana fancied a dark beer and opted for Salopian *Mangata*.

The Greyhound moved us on to 15 Heart of Staffordshire pubs and that total edged one more step closer to the magic 19 with a trip to the **Borehole** in Stone, Limestone Brewery's mini pub on the site of the old Bent's Brewery well. Not knowing it was quiz night, we arrived too late to participate and instead spent an enjoyable hour or so sitting at the bar, chatting to the knowledgeable and welcoming staff and sampling a number of the six Limestone ales available. One treat was *Cherry Stone*, previous had out of a bottle, which really does have a really strong cherry fragrance and taste. Try it! Of course, we couldn't leave without a half of *Ein Stein* (German for 'a stone').

Located a few miles west of Penkrigde is the **Swan at Whiston**, which was our branch's 2011 Pub of the Year and 2011 Cider Pub of the



Year. The Swan has been a traditional country freehouse since around 1593, which was bought back in October 2000 by the late James Davies after it had been boarded up and closed for over two years. Moving our total to 17, we found a nice spot in the lounge/restaurant amongst the diners and enjoyed both Holden's *Golden Glow* and Wye Valley's *Butty Bach*.

Continuing the Penkrigde theme, I stumbled upon the **Cross Keys** on a hot sunny Sunday afternoon while cycling along the Staffs and Worcs Canal. It was certainly nice to sit on the canal-side patio where I enjoyed Holden's *Golden Glow*. Also on offer was Banks's *Numero Nuno*, a new look for *Amber Bitter* to commemorate Wolves' promotion to the Premier League. Looking back, the pub was listed in my 1992 copy of the GBG, and may have been in other years as well. Worth a visit.

Barton-under-Needwood has no fewer than 53 pubs, with a couple in the GBG. The **Royal Oak** found on the southern edge of the village on The Green was previously local CAMRA branch Pub of the Year 2011, 2012 and 2013. There were three ales on offer when I visited, my choice Bombardier *Burning Gold* plus Marston's *Pedigree* and Young's *Special*, served from an unusual sunken bar. So that's another Staffordshire GBG pub ticked off the list!

Chris Bedford

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