

Beer at Heart



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



HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

**Dead
Pirate
Vickers
at Stafford
Beer Festival**

Also in this issue:

- **The Pub that Dares to be Different** | Page 16
- **The Bird and the George are Back** | Pages 6 & 7
- **New Brewery Opening Soon** | Page 10
- **Desert Island Pub** | Page 30 *and much more...*



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Autumn 2017

Beer at Heart

Winner of West Midlands CAMRA Branch Magazine Best Newcomer Award

Welcome

The Oxleathers, Highfields is not the sort of pub that gets much attention from CAMRA. It does not serve an ever-changing, extensive selection of lesser-spotted ales. It is not in a picturesque rural setting. It is not steeped in history. But it is absolutely everything a pub should be, and then a bit more.

Many pubs are the focal point of their community but Debbie at the Oxleathers has found new ways of achieving this. The pub was this close to being demolished but now it's thriving. Read all about it in the centre pages and why not see for yourself by paying a visit? (Our next branch meeting is there on Tuesday 3rd October.)

A few pirates showed up at our beer and cider festival, including the scary chap on the cover. Aply, he is the castaway as our much-missed (by me, at least) feature Desert Island Pubs returns.

Thanks to the Haberdashers Arms in Knighton and the Crown Inn at Hyde Lea for their hospitality at our recent branch meeting and Pub of the Season presentation respectively.

Finally, if you took the photo on the cover please let me know and I'll credit you in the next issue!

Andy Murray

editor@heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

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Chair's Chat

I am writing this after the take down of the beer festival has been completed. Very hard work over the week, but a lot of happy customers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody and every organisation that helped throughout the process, from the commencement of planning in January until now. A further 'wash up' meeting is planned together with a thank you trip, then it's time to think about next year...no doubt there are other details in this issue.

I wrote in my last introduction in May how hot the weather was, as I was sitting in a beer garden composing the article. Well, the British weather has taken its usual turn for the worse, with loads of rain and a drop in temperatures, so at this stage it's time to start looking at tasks we have to complete as a branch towards the end of the year.

The next two items are submissions for the 2019 Good Beer Guide and the various branch Pub of the Year awards. Since the last issue we are pleased to announce that our entrant, GEORGE AND THE DRAGON, in Gnosall came joint second in the county round of the competition. A brilliant result for the proprietors, George and Lyn, also the highest place the branch has achieved. This considering the strong competition such as the winner the Earl Grey, Leek, and joint second, the Holy Inadequate, Etruria.

This leads me to remind you of the importance of submitting your beer scores under the NBSS scheme. Details can be found in this and other CAMRA publications and websites. Thank you for your co-operation. *[You sound like Robocop—Ed.]*

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

SEPTEMBER 2017

THURSDAY 14th: LYMESTONE 20/20 TRIP - meet 7.30pm at brewery, Mount Rd, Stone.

SATURDAY 16th: BEER FESTIVAL THANK-YOU TRIP TO LEEK - booking essential. Full details on our website

SATURDAY 23rd: CANNOCK BEER FESTIVAL - catch 11.26 bus from Chell Road, Stafford

OCTOBER 2017

TUESDAY 3rd: BRANCH MEETING - Oxleathers, Western Downs, Stafford, 8pm. All members welcome.

THURSDAY 12th: AUTUMN PUB OF THE SEASON PRESENTATION - the Royal Exchange, Stone, 8pm. All welcome.

SATURDAY 21st: STOKE BEER FESTIVAL TRIP - Fenton Manor Sports Complex. Catch 11.42 train from Stafford, (11.51 from Stone)

SATURDAY 28th: SLATER'S OKTOBERFEST TRIP - Free tickets available from Slater's brewery: St. Alban's Rd, Stafford, 7.30pm.

NOVEMBER 2017

SATURDAY 4th: BEER OF FESTIVAL TRIP - Shiny Brewery, Derby. Details TBA (will be circulated via members' email)

DECEMBER 2017

SUNDAY 17th: CAROL SINGING at the ANCHOR, HIGH OFFLEY. Full details in next issue and via members' email

Pub and Club news

STAFFORD

The **Bird in Hand** reopened on 6th July. It's the second pub bought and rejuvenated by Black Country Ales in Stafford in the space of eight months. The tasteful refurb and congenial atmosphere have gone down well with punters old and new.

The **Kings Arms** came a highly respectable third place in the county round of CAMRA's Cider Pub of the Year contest. They lost out to Tamworth's Kings Ditch which went on to win the regional title.

Ye **Olde Rose & Crown** has a new tenant (Tim). Shaun is now running the Three Tuns in Sheffield city centre.

Dark beer lovers rejoice! The **Greyhound** has taken Bombardier off and will now have at least one stout, porter or mild on the bar.

The **Floodgate** is planning a film season, which will feature classics such as It's a Wonderful Life, Underground, Blade Runner, Arsenic and Old Lace and Kes.

STONE

The **Royal Exchange** is our Autumn Pub of the Season. Join us for the presentation at the pub at 8pm on Thursday 12th October. Full write-up in the next issue.

The **Swan Inn** is following the success of their July beer festival by supporting CAMRA LocAle and promoting the very best from all the local breweries. Between 21st September and 8th October they're celebrating Cask Ale Week and the Stone Food and Drink Festival by offering 30 real ales from in and around Staffordshire.

A new bar/restaurant at Aston Marina called **No. 26** opened at the end of May. Three ales, one of which is house beer Aston Marina Best Bitter, brewed by

Marston's (Spoiler alert: apparently it is Brakspear Oxford Gold).

GREAT CHATWELL

There is a new licensee at the **Red Lion**. Elaine Duncan took over on 11th July at this Marston's pub which sells Banks's Amber and Mild. Meals too – rave reviews so far. This is one of the remotest pubs in our branch – please give it your support!

HIXON

The Lewis Partnership have leased the **Bank House** from Joule's Brewery. Four real ales and an emphasis on food - a new kitchen was installed straightaway.

PUBS FOR SALE & LEASE

Star, Copmere End - still for sale
Roebuck, Hilderstone - still closed & for sale
Darlaston Inn, Meaford - freehold for sale (Colliers) £875,000
Horse & Jockey, Penkridge - tenancy under offer (Punch)
Hop Pole, Stafford - lease still available
Lamb, Stafford - partnership tenancy (Punch)
Tap & Spile, Stafford - retail partnership tenancy (Enterprise Inns)
Langtrys, Stone - retail partnership tenancy (Enterprise Inns)
Talbot, Stone - available to let (Admiral)
Hare & Hounds, Stramshall - still closed & for sale
Red Lion, Sutton - available to let (Admiral)

ANYTOWN

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

ECCLESHALL

The **Little George** opened its doors on 28th July. Formerly the George Hotel, where Slater’s brewery began all those years ago, which had been closed since early 2015. It has been completely refurbished in a modern, craft beer



bar style. Four real ales are offered, although there is scope to increase this to eight. The handpumps are unadorned, so to see what beers are on raise your gaze to the blackboard at the back of the bar.

There is a permanent house beer, called Monty and brewed for them by Limestone. The other three beers will regularly change. There is also an extensive range of international bottled beers.

Bents Brewhouse is emblazoned on the side of the building—owner Adrian has bought the rights to use this historic name and fittingly Limestone is based at the site of the former Bents Brewery in Stone.

The Little George opens at 9.30am serving coffee and cake. Later in the day the large blackboard in the picture is removed, revealing craft keg taps. It’s great to have this place open as a pub again!





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Brewery news

LYMESTONE of Stone

www.lymestonebrewery.co.uk

The brewery is still very busy. A new agreement with Wetherspoons has been made to supply EIN STEIN for September, October and November. A number of beer festivals have also been supplied and orders taken for future ones. An important one is Cannock at the end of September, where EIN STEIN is included in the Champion Beer judging, the first time in the brewery's history!

Seasonal beers coming up include:

September: STONE INJUNCTION 4.6%, a new golden ale.

October: STONE DEAD 6.66%, ink black and an old favourite for Halloween.

November: FIRE & BRIMSTONE 4.5%, another new beer whose exact description has yet to be decided by the brewer.

December: STONE COLD 4.7%, copper coloured.

In respect of STRAY CAT BREWERY, Sarah's STRAY CAT STRUT is being developed following customer feedback. Hopefully STRAY CAT MILK will be brewed



again in cask before Christmas. In fact when I visited the brewery researching this article Sarah was in Southern Africa on an adventure safari, in the mountains of Lesotho.

All the pubs are busy with the Quiet Woman in Leek opening during July, after acquisition and refurbishment. The staff are settling in and a food menu is being developed.

There is another 20/20 beer festival at the brewery, being held on 15th and 16th September. Opening times are 19.00 on Friday and midday on Saturday. There is a special preview evening for CAMRA members only on Thursday 14th, opening at 19.00.

Finally, the branch would like to wish Ian well with some arm surgery he is having in the near future. Whilst he is convalescing Sarah will be in charge of the brewing.

Neil Butler, Limestone BLO

SLATER'S of Stafford

www.slatersales.co.uk

Hazel from Slater's writes: Our next seasonal brews are AUTUMN RED, a malty 5% red ale, and GREEN HOP IPA, packing a powerful 5.9% hoppy punch. This will be followed by COLOMBIA COFFEE STOUT in November, 4.5%: a rich, velvety stout made with freshly ground coffee beans.

We had a very busy summer doubling the size of our fleet of vehicles and are now looking for an extra sales team member.



Our bar in Wolverhampton were thrilled to win the WIRE Best New Business Award 2017.

Our popular Oktoberfest returns on Saturday 28th October. As with last year, tickets are free and available online or by calling in at the brewery. Bavarian fancy dress is encouraged but not compulsory. We hope to see you there!

New Brewery News!

Neil Butler reports on the almost compleat [*sic*] Izaak Walton Brewhouse in Norton Bridge (well, Cold Norton to be precise)

The brewery is the idea of two motorcycling friends, which has come to fruition after years of thought. Phil Littlehales and Andy Cadwallader who were regulars in the Railway, Norton Bridge, with myself until it closed last year, have a small unit on Cold Norton Trading Estate. Part of a food production factory built during the last war to increase homegrown beef supplies, the unit is being upgraded as it was in almost original condition. The brew room has been completed and work is progressing on a despatch/store/taproom area. The services have been renewed, water being supplied by an adjacent borehole 30m deep, sunk during the war. The water quality has been rated excellent.

The brewing plant was purchased from Black Iris Brewery of The Flowerpot in Derby, as they have moved to larger premises. The plant has been installed and modified with the great assistance of friend Bernard Ramsay.

I was privileged to be invited to the grand

switch on and start of the first brew, on 19th July. The equipment worked well and the brew was successful, only some minor modifications/improvements are required.

Part of the preparations has been honing the beer recipes, which are based on traditional ones using English ingredients. The first two beers will be:

AMBER NYMPH 5.0%, a traditional copper-coloured English ale, named after a fishing fly, mentioned in Izaak Walton's book *The Compleat Angler*, partially written in nearby Shallowford.

JAMES BROWN 4.5%, a darker ale, not tasted, and not connected with the legendary American soul singer.

Hopefully the beers will become available later in September when production is stepped up and some red tape sorted out. Keep up the good work lads!



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Wheaton Aston, Stafford ST19 9QP**

Guided by choices

As the 2018 Good Beer Guide hits the shelves it is time to start thinking about which pubs should be in the 2019 guide. And it's in your hands!

Yes, it's still 2017 but nominations are open for the 2019 *Good Beer Guide*! This is the first stage in the selection process, and the only part in which anyone, not just CAMRA members, can participate.

You can nominate up to 10 pubs in the Heart of Staffordshire branch area (whatpub.com is a great resource for checking whether a pub is in our area).

Just head for our branch website www.heartofstaffordshirecamra.org.uk

Deadline for nominations is **Tuesday 31st October**. Without a nomination, a pub cannot proceed to the voting stage.

The voting will be open from mid-November until 31st December. Only members of the branch will be eligible to vote. Look out for details in the branch members' email from Kelly Porter closer to the time.

National Beer Scoring Scheme (NBSS)

In conjunction with members' votes, beer scores logged by CAMRA members in the past 12 months are an important factor in whether a pub will get into the guide, as it is a measure of the consistency of beer quality.

Many of us are already using the NBSS but if it's all new to you here are some instructions and a simple visual guide!

How to score:

You do have to be a CAMRA member!

1. On a PC/Mac/tablet/smartphone – go to www.whatpub.com
2. Click on member login and log in with your CAMRA membership number and password.
3. Enter the name of the pub, e.g. “Red Lion Anytown” and click Search. Or if your device is GPS enabled, and you are at/near the pub you want to enter scores for, click Nearby pubs.
4. Select the right pub, then click the Submit Beer Scores tab. NBSS uses a slider to pick half-scores out of five. Scoring guidelines are shown right.
5. Choose the date, plus (optionally) brewery and beer name and click Submit Beer Score. You're done!



THE GREYHOUND

CAMRA branch Pub of the Season

Winter 2015/16



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Meet the brewer nights
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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

Pub of the Season

The Crown Inn, Hyde Lea

Congratulations to the Crown, which our branch voted Summer Pub of the Season. It's well worth a visit at any time of year, as **Frank Bryden** explains

John and Julia Williams have been resident at this village pub on the outskirts of Stafford since 2015 and have turned it into an excellent place to call in for a drink or a meal. It's family friendly, dog friendly...in fact it is very friendly.

Holdens Black Country Bitter is always on tap and starts the evening well. There is then a choice of three or four other ales to keep you occupied, for example Bass, Abbot Ale (always excellent) and London Pride and these are changed on a very regular basis with the board marked so you can see what is coming next. Ciders are available for those who prefer their drink that way. Don't delay if a favourite is on the board, as they can go very fast!

There is always a whisky and gin of the week and John keeps more excellent malts and varieties of gin that will tempt the aficionados to try something new.

There isn't much better than a good pint in the sun to keep you happy when you are sharing the time with friends and family, and fittingly for the Summer Pub of the Season the Crown has a lovely beer garden with plenty of tables, offering views of Stafford Castle.

On sunny days the garden is very well attended as well as is the smallish bar, and in the back, a larger lounge where you can enjoy your meal and drinks. Meals are available in the evenings and at lunch time on a Sunday with a varied and tasty menu to choose from especially now that a new chef has been installed. Sandwiches are always available if you just want a snack.

To get a good insight to the friendliness of the pub look on their Facebook page. Just ignore the pictures of the roaring fire—this is the Summer Pub of the Season after all!



CROWN INN

Hyde Lea, Stafford ST18 9BG

Tel: 01785 253332

Facebook: the Crown Hyde Lea 2015

<https://whatpub.com/pubs/STA/2510>

Opening Times

4-11 Mon-Thu; 12-11.30 Fri & Sat;

12-10 Sun

Meals served 12-9 Fri & Sat; 12-6 Sun



Julia and John presented with the trophy and certificate by branch chairman Neil Butler

Festival success



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

Can I take this opportunity on behalf of the Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA Branch to thank everyone who has volunteered over the last ten years, it's certainly a great achievement to be celebrating our tenth iteration of the Festival and this year over fifty people volunteered over the course of the week to carry out the setup, take down and the three days of the festival itself. As I keep saying "we can't do it without you!".

We wanted to make our tenth festival a memorable one and as you will be aware we decided on the Pirate theme which we then used on all our publicity material and new tulip glasses for this year. I was personally keen to attract more families along to the event and in particular the Family Friendly sessions on the Saturday afternoon: face painters, bouncy castles, and brass band were all available and it was great to see so many mums and dads and their children joining us on what turned out to be a beautiful afternoon weather-wise. You will also have seen that some members of the committee and the Concert Band took the theme to a new level and dressed up and had their faces painted. The Captain Pugwash dance by Steve Swain will live long in the memory and went virile over Facebook. It was great to see the hall and bars dressed up and we brought in some appropriately pirate-named beers.



Steven Swain: about to go virile apparently

We had over seventy casks of beer this year. Ordering it is a mammoth task in itself, very time consuming and also disheartening at times so personal thanks to Martin Salt who worked really hard to produce a fantastic choice of beers and some old favourites.



The Mayor popped in for a swift half

Steve Swain curated a range of thirty Ciders and thanks also go to Louise Carter (Country Wines) and Phil Vickers (Bottled Beers).

Special mention goes to Norma and Paul Haycock for the return of the Tombola and also agreeing for the MS charity, so close to Paul's heart, to take over for the Saturday. Great to hear that bell ringing again!!!

Thanks also goes to Hindles for supplying some really excellent, quality food this year, it was great to work with a local company and I hope we can work with them again in the future.

I would also like to thank the

Picture courtesy of the Express & Star

bands that played. Entertainment doesn't always please everyone but I felt the bands were fabulous this year: on the Friday night Stone Cold Sober...ish; on Saturday night a personal favourite and a very talented lady who I believe has a long and successful career ahead of her, Alexandra Jayne; and how could I possibly forget our resident Blackwell Concert Band who get better every year.

We raised more in sponsorship this year than ever before which is a fantastic achievement. Can I take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to everyone who sponsored the festival in different guises or advertised in our programme this year.

Well done and thanks to Kelly Porter and Andy Murray and the two get extra thanks: Andy for such an excellent festival programme and Kelly for managing to sign up twenty seven new CAMRA members this year, a terrific achievement!

Well my first year of being Festival Organiser has come to an end, I don't think I have

As voted by the punters:

BEER OF THE FESTIVAL
Furnace—C Bomb

CIDER OF THE FESTIVAL
Biddenden—Dry

PERRY OF THE FESTIVAL
Minchews Blakeney—Red
Bourbon Cask

experienced so many different emotions over a six month period but I am very proud to say that the team have delivered another brilliant three days and I was very pleased to be able to steer the ship (tenuous Pirate comment there!) Hope you enjoyed the Festival and you will come back and visit us again next year in 2018.

Paul Hewitt, Festival Organiser



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



**Great beer,
brewed in the
Black Country.**



The Pub That Dares To Be **DIFFERENT!**

Nestled between the Highfields and Western Downs estates, the Oxleathers stretches the boundaries of what a pub can be, as **Kelly Porter** finds out

A loud squawk welcomed me to the Oxleathers car park. Looking round I spotted a macaw staring at me over the beer garden fence. I was soon to discover that this was not the only animal residing at the pub. But more on that later.

Landlady Debbie Howe, who many of you will know from her time running the Shrewsbury Arms in Stafford town centre, has been at the Oxleathers since 2015. At the time this estate pub was in the process of being sold off to a developer who intended to demolish it. Debbie recalls: "It was a done deal; furniture was being removed." But there was a spirited community campaign and Marston's saw the pub's potential with the right person in charge. "At the last minute Marston's pulled out and asked if I wanted to keep it for the community." Since then, she has turned the place around and with the help of some local councillors, achieved Asset of Community Value (ACV) status, which will protect the pub until 2020.

And it is easy to see why this pub is an asset to its community. On Fridays, Debs runs an upcycle group, where people can bring in their old, tired looking furniture and get help to rejuvenate it. She runs a hugely popular toddler group on Saturday mornings called 'Tiny Tots at the Ox', where parents can bring their children for toast and a craft session. There is a library which punters can borrow books from.

Then there are the animals: what started



Debbie with pub pig Peppa
(try saying that after five pints)

off with a rescued iguana (Iggy) when Debs ran the Shrew has turned into a full-scale animal sanctuary: "People were chucking rabbits over the fence" she (half) jokes. In the beer garden there are 15 chickens, 16 ducks, 15 rabbits, two macaws and even a pig named Peppa! Iggy has moved to the Oxleathers and lives just at the end of the bar. The animals are mainly cared for by Debbie's mum Rose. Customers can rehome or foster the animals.

Even more unusually, on the 4th Sunday of every month the pub hosts 'Pub Church', run by young, dog-collarless vicar Matt from the Beacon Church group. "I came in one night for a drink," says Matt, "and was just amazed by it. What we do wouldn't work in most pubs but it does here." Debbie adds:

“It’s fantastic – we get 35 to 40 people here. It’s relaxed, uplifting and not at all preachy.”

As Matt says, “Debbie’s job is similar to mine as a minister – you’re there for people.” She is something of a one-woman community bulletin board; she often receives requests for help and will put an appeal on Facebook. “Some days the phone doesn’t stop. I need a PA!” One young mum needed a pushchair and within minutes five offers came through. Debbie recently helped an old lady sell a washing machine. “The only thing I can’t get rid of is my own stuff!” So if anyone wants – *gratis* – a 1970s electric organ (weight: one ton) contact Debbie.

In July the pub holds a Family Fun Day to raise money for good causes and before Christmas there’s a shoebox appeal to make up boxes for people in need. Debbie praises the generosity of her community.

Debbie likes to go all out on any festivals. At Halloween, she holds a big party and is wheeled out in a proper, full-sized coffin, which is great for a photo opportunity (and scaring the kids).



Fireworks at the Christmas lights switch-on

firework display and the Town Crier. “Last year we had over 300 people here – they filled the whole street. We stopped the traffic!” This year she’s hoping to get some reindeer.

As well as all these great things Debbie has going on, she has ‘normal’ pub things happening – there are dominoes, darts and pool teams, and she wants to set up a crib team. She serves breakfasts on Friday and Saturday mornings and lunch on Sundays. She also has regular entertainment nights, with comedians, karaoke and tribute acts.

I know you ale lovers are probably screaming at this point: “But does it serve real ale??” and the answer is: Yes! Debbie only offers one beer – Banks’s Bitter – but her reason for this is to ensure a quick turnover and keep the quality high. She puts on a fresh barrel every other day.

With so many of our pubs under threat at the moment, I think we might see more pubs branching out and trying new things. But, for now, Debbie is running a unique pub, and it is well worth a visit.



The Ox decked out for Halloween (coffin not pictured, sadly)

Then on the first Saturday of December, Debbie has an official switch on for the pub’s Christmas lights, complete with

The OXLEATHERS

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Pubs on the 101: Stone

Hello, wherever you finished in Stafford and get on the 101, you will head north to Stone.

Alight from the bus just after it passes between the Star and the Swan pubs. Cross the road and go through the shops to the High Street, turn left and head for the **Crown Hotel**, real ale is not always available, when it is it will be a Limestone brew. Time's short so on to the **Crown & Anchor** (*right*), which is serving Marston's Pedigree and Limestone's Ein Stein (that's mine). Onward, very close is **Granvilles**, a well-known restaurant and music venue.



choice. You will also get a warm welcome at this CAMRA award winning pub (even if you're from Stafford).

Feeling fit and ready for a walk? Leave the Royal going left walk as far as the railway (line not pub). Don't cross but turn left and follow the track to the level crossing, cross and stay on that road till you reach the **Borehole** (*left*), the Limestone pub which is situated next to the brewery. Here you will get a good selection of Limestone ales plus at least one guest. True it's not on the 101 route and a good walk but worth it.

Alas you also have to walk back (taxi for the well off); when you find yourself back on the high street go past the Crown and



This place also usually stocks a Limestone ale, but we miss this one and go straight into the **Poste of Stone**.

Stone's ex-post office, this is a typical Wetherspoons pub, serving the usual Abbot Ale, Ruddles and a number of guest ales, some local; it's a pleasant pub with good food.

Turning left out of the 'spoons and directly left again will put you on the road to the **Royal Exchange**, being a Titanic/Everards pub you would expect and get a range of Titanic beers with Everards Tiger plus a number of guests to give you a good



Pubs on the 101 continued...

on the left you will find the **Red Lion**, larger inside than it looks. Ales on offer here were St. Austell Tribute, Jennings



Cumberland Ale and Tiny Rebel's Fubar.

Now left out of the Red Lion, right at the end of the high street will bring you back to the bus stops and the **Star** (canalside) a Marston's pub with the usual ales and also good food. Across the road is the **Swan**, a popular freehouse and CAMRA award winning pub, with up to eight ales on offer and again a very warm welcome, with really warm coal fires in the winter. The Swan has regular music and an excellent beer festival in the summer.

Time to leave, a few yards away is the stop to Stafford or if you dare go to the stop you got off and get the bus towards Stoke. Passports ready!

Paul Dykta

Journey planner including buses and trains: www.travelinemidlands.co.uk

Photo of the Borehole from fizzical-attraction.blogspot.co.uk



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Brewery news extra continued from page 10

TITANIC of Burslem

www.titanicbrewery.co.uk

Amy from Titanic writes: New Seasonal Brew for September/October

We've brewed a new, German inspired beer ready for Oktoberfest celebrations. Keep an eye out on our social media for more info as it's revealed:

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

Twitter: @Titanic_Brewers

Plum Porter Grand Reserve

Following the special batch of Plum Porter Grand Reserve we did for GBBF, we can confirm it will return for its second year as we head into the Christmas season. If you didn't

manage to taste this nectar last year, be sure to get it in your diary as a must over the festive period. It's a strong 6.5% ABV and is based on our multi award winning



Plum Porter. It will be available in both cask and bottles so again, keep an eye out on our social media pages for updates.

Great British Beer Festival

We took our Titanic bar down to GBBF again this year and it was FANTASTIC! On the bar



we had Steerage, Iceberg, Plum Porter, Raspberry Wheat, Chocolate & Vanilla Stout & Plum Porter Grand Reserve, all of which went down very well (sorry, had to squeeze that in there!). At the event we also launched our new pump clip designs and they're looking nice and fresh, look out for them!

PEAKSTONES ROCK of Alton

www.peakstonesrock.co.uk

David from the brewery writes: Crossways, our micropub in Blythe Bridge is included in the 2018 CAMRA Good Beer Guide.



The brewery has been involved with the Checkley Cricket Club Beer and Gin Festival.

We will soon start brewing our winter beer Submission 5.0% ABV.

UTTOXETER BREWING COMPANY

Facebook: @UttoxeterBrewingCompany

Tom from the brewery writes:

The Uttoxeter Brewing Company was invited to supply beers to Stafford Beer & Cider Festival. Our beers, Final Furlong (a dark malty ale) and Paddock Porter (a chocolate porter) went down well.



We produced special beers for new micropub the Horse & Dove, and the 10th Marchington Mele (see pages 22-23 for more details).

Uttoxeter & District News

by Tom Abbott

Pub of the Season Spring 2017 The Raddle Inn, Hollington

At the August branch meeting, held at the **Raddle Inn**, the award for Summer Pub of the Season was presented to landlord, Pete Wilkinson. The pub is well known in the locality for its well-kept real ales, normally five on tap. The pub, situated in the beautiful Staffordshire countryside, also has a well-deserved reputation for excellent food and a pleasant family-friendly environment; it is popular for family events and caters for large parties.

Quarry Lane, Hollington, ST10 4HQ



(L-R) Alan Fulford, Steve Barton (Moorlands sub-branch), Bob Beaumont, Andy Radley, Peter Wilkinson (landlord of the Raddle), Alan Noyes, Simon Ardron (Branch Chair), Dave Scorer

Rising Star Award 2017 The Horse & Dove, Uttoxeter

Since opening their micro pub in the spring, it is safe to say that the **Horse and Dove** has had quite a dramatic effect on the availability of new real ales in a town dominated by Marston's and Bass pubs.



(L-R) Andy Ockleton, Andy Radley, Carol Scorer, Simon Ardron, Yogi Gupta (landlord), Dave Scorer

Since March the pub has introduced over 150 different beers to the discerning Uttoxeter drinker and in a relatively short time it has developed a reputation as a really friendly pub with an atmosphere that has a real buzz about it. The owners Paul and Yogi work hard to make visitors welcome and to become part of the local community. The pub holds regular quiz nights and special cheese evenings, the lads also provide food to order and the pub is now well known for the quality of its Indian snacks, including kakori kebabs, samosas, onion bhajis and chicken tikka bites, not forgetting an excellent range of pork pies.

The local Uttoxeter Brewing Company has

even designed a special beer to commemorate their arrival, YOGI BEER, a really dangerous beer at 6% ABV.

Simon Ardron, Chair of the Uttoxeter sub branch said: "Paul and Yogi have taken an empty shop and re-purposed it into a great meeting space for everyone to enjoy. The pub isn't just about the beer but is about society and community; it has certainly become a centre for friends and acquaintances of all ages and sexes to congregate. It is now an established and popular meeting place for women and men with its open airy interior and contemporary decor where people can feel safe and comfortable.

"Many people have told me that before the

Horse and Dove was opened in town they never ventured into Uttoxeter for a drink, now they are regulars. It has added to the pub scene and nearly doubled the beer choice for real ale enthusiasts.



Landlord Paul Blick

"In recognition of the effort put in by Paul and Yogi Uttoxeter and District CAMRA are delighted to award the 'Rising Star' award to the Horse and Dove. We expect many great things from them in the coming years."

CAMRA Members Discount

A number of local pubs now offer discount to CAMRA members. These include the **Dog and Partridge**, Marchington, **The Raddle** at Hollington and **The Bulls Head** in Alton, as well as the usual CAMRA members Wetherspoons vouchers at the **Old Swan** in Uttoxeter. The Raddle are offering 20p a pint off real ale for CAMRA members and the Bulls Head Alton are offering 10% off a pint of real ale.



Marchington Melee

The weekend of the 18-20th August saw the return of the bi-annual beer and music festival, THE MARCHINGTON MELEE, at Uttoxeter's Pub of the Year, the **Dog & Partridge**, Marchington. Paul Needham, the landlord, had 20 different real ales available over the weekend as well as music from the likes of Scott MacCall, Richard Castle, the Herron Brothers and Dawson Smith. The event was as ever well attended. The Melee events are definitely ones to put into your diary and should not be missed.

Newark Beer Fest



A small number of local members took to local trains to attend the CAMRA Newark

continues over...

continued from previous page

beer festival for the first time. The event is held in lovely park grounds next to the Trent river, below the edifice of Newark castle. On a beautiful summer day we enjoyed a good range of beers with the focus of providing local drinkers with beers from very newest microbreweries.

On such a warm day the only disappointment was the lack of effective cooling systems, with the beers being cooled by dousing them in water at regular intervals!

Stafford Beer Fest

This festival is always enjoyed by Uttoxeter branch members, with its wide variety of national beers and the excellent range of beers from local breweries.

Helping out on the setting up day at the festival I always find interesting and I can honestly say is really good fun, something I

would recommend to any local members who fancy a good day out with an excellent free lunch.



Kev and Andy getting stuck in to some cracking beers at Stafford Beer Festival. They were impressed and liked the new design of glasses used at the festival this year. Strange not to see Andy on the Paddock Porter though!

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Stoke Beer & Cider Festival



@stokebeerfest

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POTTERING AROUND THE POTTERIES... Of Local Ale & Beer Festivals

In early June, a rumour started circulating around the Potteries branch area, a rumour that hardly seemed credible after waiting around four years for this rumour to become fact: simply put, the rumour told of a beer that was currently being served in the **Holy Inadequate** in Etruria that was actually brewed on the premises. The denizens of the Holy having talked about an onsite brewery virtually since the pub first opened its doors way back in the halcyon days of March 2011, this was one rumour that definitely deserved a bit of investigation, and so, armed with his trusted drinking hand, a lone member of the Potteries Branch set forth one Sunday afternoon to verify the truth of this incredulous rumour. Cautiously opening the door to the Holy, fighting his way through the crowds, a holy thirst burgeoning upon his tongue, he was greeted by the transcendent news that...

The beer had run out a mere twenty minutes before he stepped into the pub.

Such is life for the hardened beer traveller; but at least it proved that the rumour was not a rumour at all, more in the way of a fact. A mere week later, this intrepid member of the Potteries branch was rewarded with a pint of the very first beer from the nascent Inadequate Brewery.

Brewpubs, it seems, have much in common with buses: you wait years for one to spring up and almost immediately, another one appears, this one going by the name of Rogue Elephant, based behind the **London Road Ale House** in Stoke. Indeed, it has been a very good few years for new breweries around this neck of the woods; RAN Ales (surely the only brewery that is an acronym for itself) and Weal Ales set up but a few short years ago and, besides the two breweries mentioned above, have recently been joined by Bike Shed and Mart's Ales.



2017 BREWERY ASSEMBLE OF HONOUR (l-r) **Will Haywood** from Mart's Ales of Knutton; **Tonk** representing Inadequate of Etruria; **Ian Palmer**, partner **Emma** plus baby **Felix** representing Bike Shed of Stoke; **Andrea & Paul Wealleans** from Weal Ales of Chesterton; **Mike Gough** representing Rogue Elephant of Stoke

Add to this the fact that Staffordshire Brewery in Cheddleton are now producing real ale once more and it seems that our local area has transformed into something akin to a brewery magnet. A glorious fact very much worth celebrating.

And where better to celebrate it than at the 37th Stoke Beer & Cider Festival, held as always in Fenton Manor Sports Complex on the 19th to 21st October? With luck, all of the breweries mentioned will be represented, alongside more established local luminaries such as Titanic, Townhouse and Lymestone, officially in the Heart of Staffs branch, but still very much a friend of the Potteries. With around 200 real ales & 60 real ciders/perries, plus country wines, foreign bottled beer and much more, we hope that everyone in the Heart of Staffs branch enjoys our festival as much as we enjoyed yours back in July.

Martin Perry
Editor, Potters Bar

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Pubs Officer: **vacant**

Young Members Officer: **vacant**

If you're interested in taking on any of the vacant roles, or joining the committee in a general capacity, please contact the Secretary.

Uttoxeter & District sub-branch

Branch contact & Chair: **Simon Ardron**

Email: chair@uttoxetercamra.org

Website: www.uttoxetercamra.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, Frank Bryden, Neil Butler, Paul Dykta, Robert Flood, Paul Hewitt, Martin Perry, Kelly Porter, 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 December 2017.

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

Desert Island Pubs

No. 4: The Wasdale Head Inn, Lake District

Phil Vickers' pirate ship has run aground in the Lake District...could've been worse.

To be stranded in a pub! Often the subject of a “wouldn't it nice if...” In practical terms one would need a nice cosy pub (preferably with a fire in winter), food, good beer, some sort of accommodation and, ideally, a nice location too.

I've been to many pubs that could qualify on most of these but two come to mind offering complete satisfaction. One would be England's highest pub, the **Tan Hill Inn** near Keld. What a great feeling when it looms up out of the teeming rain after a hard day on the Pennine Way—even if you do have to face Sleightholme Moor the next day. (On the latter I complained about going knee-deep in the bog to a passing rambler. “That's nothing”, he replied, pulling up his capoule to demonstrate, “I went in right up to my b**ls.”)

However, I think I would finally opt for the **Wasdale Head Inn**, in the Lake District. For those who've never been, it is at the terminus of the road through Wasdale, home of West Water, England's deepest lake. Surrounded by iconic mountains such as Scafell Pike (England's highest mountain), Great Gable and Yewbarrow it is a superb location. Nearby is England's smallest church with the graves of early climbers of



the crags. Behind the inn is the ancient packhorse bridge leading to the nearby Black Sail pass into Ennerdale, an even more remote place than Wasdale. No inn here but there is the famous isolated Black Sail YH hut below Haystacks, the hill where Alfred Wainwright had his ashes scattered.

Back at Wasdale Head, you can bed down at the inn itself, camp on the nearby field or grab a bunk in their bunkhouse. Meals always available and a great range of real ale, nearly always from Lake District micro-breweries. Fell walking in the day in the magical Lakes scenery and a convivial place to imbibe away the evening. What's not to like? Perhaps one could also take part in the World's Biggest Liar contest, though the local liars are fearsome competition. Or try your hand at gurning while draped with a horse collar.

I've lost count of the number of times I've been semi-marooned here. It was an-every-bank-holiday must-visit destination for many, many years. Try it – you can't fail to like it. Add it to your bucket list!

More info: whatpub.com/pubs/CUM/508



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