

Pint Taken

www.pinttaken.org.uk



Autumn 2007

FREE

The Worcestershire County CAMRA Newsletter

FREE

West Midlands Brewery scoops Champion Beer of Britain award

Hobsons Mild voted champion beer!

In August 2007 Hobsons Mild from Hobsons Brewery in Shropshire was judged to be the best beer in Britain by a panel of brewers, beer writers and journalists at the Great British Beer Festival at Earls Court.



A CLASSIC MILD

The beer is described in the 2007 edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide as: "A classic mild. Complex layers of taste come from roasted malts that predominate and give lots of flavour."

OVER FIFTY FINALISTS

The Shropshire brewed beer was chosen as the overall

winner from over fifty finalists in eight categories including beers from tiny micros to major regional brewers.

Roger Protz, one of the finalist judges and Editor of the



Tim Sant and Nick Davis from Hobsons at GBBF

Good Beer Guide said: "It's a great victory for a traditional British beer. It's bursting with flavour and, unusually for a Mild, it's got plenty of hop character. It's great to see a classic

copper coloured beer take the top award."

Nik Antona, CAMRA's West Midlands Regional Director said "A West Midlands win has been long overdue and I am delighted for Nick and everyone else at Hobsons".

SURPRISE

Nick Davis, Director of Hobsons said: "What a great surprise! It's a nutty mild and despite being only 3.2% abv it's packed full of flavour.

"I would like to thank all the team at Hobsons in Cleobury Mortimer for their outstanding work in achieving this prestigious award."

OTHER AWARDS

The Silver award went to Mighty Oak brewery in Essex for their Maldon Gold. The Bronze was awarded to Green Jack brewery in Suffolk for Ripper.

Triple success for the Bell at Pensax

Pub scoops two more awards

Earlier this year members of local CAMRA branches voted for their Branch pub of the year. The winners of this award go forward to be judged for the County pub of the year award. The winner of this competition is then considered for the CAMRA Re-

gional pub of the year award.

COUNTY & REGIONAL WINNER

Judging has now taken place and not only has the **Bell** at Pensax been voted the Worcestershire pub of the year, but also the West Mid-

lands region pub of the year!

Congratulations to John and Trudy and their team. The pub which serves a wide range of cask ales from independent microbreweries will now go on to be judged for the CAMRA National pub of the year competition.

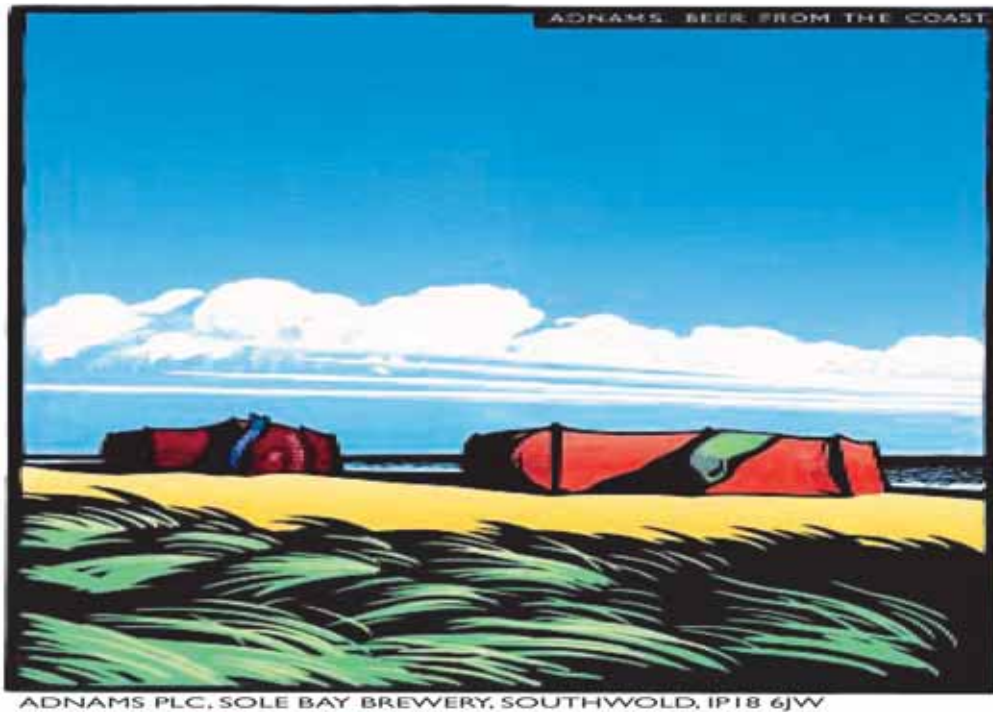



73 High Street
Bromsgrove
Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA
Pub of the Year
2003 and 2004

- Up to seven real ales changing daily
- Newly refurbished
- Smoking area
- Home-made, home-cooked food every day (except Sunday)
- Curry night each Monday 5 - 8 pm

Regular Beer Festivals Held

The little pub with the big welcome



Drinking partners



Finding the right beer style for you is much like trying to find the perfect drinking partner, so the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has come up with characters that best describe traditional British beers. Leeds based illustrator Christine Joplin has come up with quirky cartoon characters that represent Mild, Light Bitter, Porters, Stouts and Old Ales – five of the most traditional and flavoursome beer styles.

THE CHARACTERS
CHARACTER OF A DARK MILD: Usually tall, dark and mysterious. Smooth, suave and effortlessly tasteful.

CHARACTER OF A LIGHT BITTER: Blonde and bright, refreshing lively while being cool and easy-going. Fun and feisty company.

CHARACTER OF OLD ALE: Demands respect, Old Ale is formidable but friendly, mature but robust.

CHARACTER OF PORTER AND STOUT: These are distinguished dudes with smooth characters. Recognisable by their rich dark bodies and thick creamy heads.

STYLES TO SUIT EVERYONE

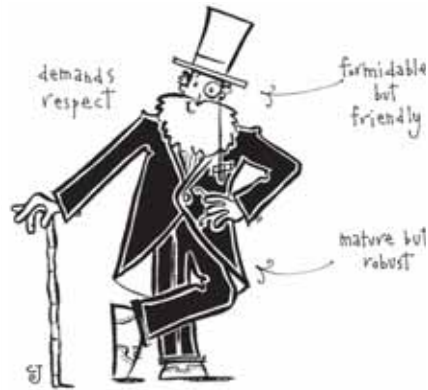
CAMRA Press Officer Owen Morris said: "The superb versatility of British beer means that there is a style to suit everyone. However people that are new to real ale may not know what to expect. These cartoon characters are fun and also provide an insight into what to expect from the beer.

"Arouse your interest with a smooth and mysterious dark

mild, or find favour in a fun and feisty light bitter. Become engrossed in a formidable old ale, or relax with smooth stout and porter. Whatever your character, there is a

beer style to match."

CAMRA has produced posters, leaflets and pump clip crowners featuring the characters so that licensees can advertise the beers in their pubs.



Old Ale



Porter & Stout

THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 2008

September sees the publication of the 35th anniversary edition of CAMRA's The Good Beer Guide 2008.

The original Good Beer Guide was published by CAMRA in 1974 and was priced at 75p. It featured all the breweries that existed at the time, which totalled just 104. This year's guide, packed with information, will feature more than 600 breweries, and over 4,500 pubs.

To order a copy visit www.camra.org.uk

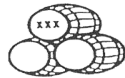
Bill Ottaway, festival organiser tells why

Festival cancelled

At the end of July, and after several months of planning for the largest ever Worcester Beer, Cider and Perry Festival, it was decided to cancel this year's event due to the flooding that occurred on 20th July.

SIX FEET UNDER

At the time of cancellation, the site normally used was under about six feet of water and had not recovered from the previous flooding. Although setting up would not occur until early August it was felt best to cancel so that as many people as possible could be informed.



PUBLIC SAFETY

With up to 10,000 people expected to attend, public safety had to be taken into account. Not only the state of the ground had to be considered, but there was no idea what the water would leave behind, which may have been very unpleasant and potentially harmful.

Attempts were made to try and identify other possible sites with help from both the city council and Arena, who run the Pitchcroft racecourse, but the suggested sites were not large enough.

HARD DECISION

Bill Ottaway, organiser of the Worcester Beer, Cider and



Perry Festival said "It is hoped that everyone that was looking forward to attending this year's festival understands this decision. It was very hard to make because of the effort put into organising this year's festival, and those involved also enjoy it as much as everyone else."

NEXT YEAR

The festival will be back next year and it is hoped that this year's unprecedented flooding will not put people off from coming in the future.

The Tal bot

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Local News

HIGHGATE BREWERY SOLD

A little-known pubco has bought Walsall's historic Highgate Brewery. Global Star, which operates around 100 pubs in the West Midlands, paid an undisclosed sum to Aston Manor Brewery - the owner of Highgate. Global Star will add Highgate's nine pubs to its estate and also plans to expand brewery capacity to supply Highgate beers to the entire estate. Global Star is owned by three directors - Wayne Toon and brothers Kulvinder and Harvinder Uppal - and runs a tenanted estate of mainly community and town-centre pubs, most of them freeholds. Toon said the deal with Aston Manor had taken around eight weeks to finalise: "It is (the) ultimate thing for us to own Highgate so that we can service our own pubs." He added: "We will also be investing around £500,000 in new bottling plant and new kegging plant at the brewery to increase production. The brewery is currently running at around 25,000 barrels a year - half of its production capacity."

ALMA TAVERN - PERMISSION REFUSED

Planning permission to knock down the **Alma Tavern** in Mill Street, Worcester and replace it with a pre-preparatory

school building for the King's School has been refused. In summing up the decision the Head of Urban Environment recommended that conservation area consent and planning permission were refused. "In the opinion of the local planning authority, the proposed development would be seriously detrimental to the character and appearance of the Historic City Conservation Area as a whole, which would render it a prominent, intrusive and incongruous feature in the street scene of this part of Mill Street".

BRANDY CASK UPDATE

The planning applications to destroy the Brandy Cask Pub and Brewery in Pershore have been resubmitted. There are no substantive differences between the new applications and those previously submitted in February and withdrawn in March. The closing date for objections was 16th August 2007. Members from Worcester CAMRA will be attending the appeal meeting, and an update will appear in the next edition of Pint Taken.

NEW BREWERY

Nigel Smith, the landlord, along with Andy Davies, who will be the brewer, are setting up a new brewery at **The Fleece** at Bretforton. They plan to produce two regular ales - a quaffing ale at about 3.7% and a best bitter at approximately 4.5% - as well as the occasional special brew. Initially the beers will be served at The Fleece but, if successful, they will then start to market them more widely. If all goes well,

they may expand the plant and move to larger premises. No names have yet been decided for the brews or even the brewery.

SHAKESPEARE SURVEY

Shakespeare branch of CAMRA have surveyed all 170 of the pubs in their branch area which includes part of Worcestershire around Evesham. The survey which includes both real and non-real ale pubs was completed over a 12 month period. Branch chairman Lloyd Evans has thanked branch member Vaughan Hully for taking on this mammoth task. The results can be seen on the brand new branch website at www.shakespearecamra.org.uk



The Bell at Pensay
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Open Mon-Sat 12-2.30 (Closed Mon lunch), 5-11 Sun 12-10.30

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Lynne Laniosh visits Tardebigge Cider

Cider and Perry season

It's official! CAMRA has now set October aside as Cider and Perry Month. At this time of year, cider and perry producers are harvesting, selecting, pressing and blending the best quality fruit in order to create this year's unique vintage.



Steve Cooper checks this year's crop in his orchard

GOOD HARVEST DUE

CAMRA hopes that as the overall popularity of cider and perry increases, there will be more examples of the traditional varieties in pubs.

At Tardebigge Cider, Steve Cooper is "looking forward to a good harvest this year as there has been lots of lovely rain". As usual, local scout groups from Barnt Green and Bromsgrove will be helping him with the apple picking at his orchard in Tutnall.

LEARN THE SKILLS

At the time of writing, Steve is also looking for a local young person who is interested in the traditional cider making process, to work weekends and during the October half

term holiday to help produce this year's cider.

PERRY PROBLEMS

Although Steve has also successfully produced perry in the past, it has not been possible to obtain perry pears of sufficient quality in recent years. However, if anyone can supply a large enough quantity of perry pears at the right point of ripeness this year, Steve says he might be persuaded to have another go. I can think of several people who would be very happy if this were to happen.

WHERE TO GET IT

Tardebigge Cider can be obtained direct from Steve at

Tutnall. Follow the 'cider' signs off the B4184, Alcester Road or check the internet



www.tardebiggecider.co.uk for directions.

It is also available on a regular basis at **The Gate Hangs Well**, Woodgate and **The Cross**, Finstall.

PREPARATIONS

Local CAMRA branches will be organising Cider and Perry Month events. These will soon be listed at www.camra.org.uk/cidermonth.

Don't forget that most beer festivals now serve real cider and perry too. Also, why not ask your local if they are planning to stock a real cider and perry in October.



in association with

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Foregate Street
Astwood Bank
Worcestershire

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12th-14th October 2007

Fantastic range of real ales and ciders
Hot Food Friday and Saturday
Live Music & Morris Dancing Friday & Saturday
Entry £6.00 includes souvenir tasting glass,
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[Extra tokens for CAMRA members with membership card]
Proceeds to local charities

For details contact Graeme by email on:
publicity@astwoodbankcarnival.co.uk



All Fitton investigates the pubs in Astwood Bank

Nearly no real ale

On a recent trip with my colleague, Paul, we sampled the pubs in the area around Astwood Bank.

NO REAL ALE

To start, we visited the **Red Lion**, Hunt End, where we found no real ale available, even though we noticed a sign outside the pub that says it has "cask conditioned ales".

On the way into Astwood Bank, we walked past the closed down and boarded up **Red Lion**. This is another community pub due to be demolished and then of course, lost forever to the drinking public.

Moving on, we came to the **Coach House**, again the same story 'No real ale available'. At this stage, having got fed up of staying dry and not having any luck on the ale front, we decided to go to the **Oddfellows Arms** in Foregate Street where we had a refreshing pint of Wye Valley HPA, followed by a pint of Brew XI in cask, (quite rare these days).

REFRESHED

After the two pints in the Oddfellows, we moved onto the main Evesham Road to see if the **Bell** on Avenue Road had been re-opened after its refurbishment. Unfortunately it was still closed on the night, but we did manage to speak to the licensee about his plans for when he was re-opening. He said that he intended to have at least two cask ales on all the time and one of them changing regularly. As it was the Astwood Bank Carnival the next day, he was opening for

the occasion and was going to put on a barrel of Purity Pure Gold, and have some bottles of UBU as well. The pub was also serving food for the Carnival.

ADVENTUROUS

After chatting with the licensee in the Bell, we went back to the **White Lion**, where we had a pint of Banks's Bitter, and it also had Pedigree on cask.

Being adventurous, we decided to go for a couple in the well renowned **Astwood Bank Club**. This is a members club which normally requires an annual fee. However, we were told that CAMRA members who displayed their cards



were welcome. Inside the club there was a selection of beers including Wye Valley HPA, M&B Brew XI and a changing guest beer which that night was Sharp's Cornish Coaster. They change the guest beer often as these selections are so popular.

After a poor and disappointing start to the night, at least it ended on a fine note.



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ONE MILE FROM JUNCTION 3 M42

Doug Fitton reflects on Bromsgrove Beer Festival 2007

Best Festival yet!

Apparently there's no demand for real ale! Five years ago we decided to test the waters by setting up our first beer festival at Bromsgrove Rugby Club. It was a success. We had 31 firkins of beer and had to bring in more on Saturday as we were in danger of running out. The following year we increased the order to 57 firkins and we've increased it every year since.

2007

This year, we had 94 firkins of real ale, 24 tubs of cider and perry and even a range of fruit wines.

On Friday, the weather hit us heavily but 600 enthusiasts still managed to cram into the marquee and had a great time squelching from bar to bar.

It's now obvious that the Gods are pro real ale. On Saturday the sun shone, the crowds arrived and, by the end of the day 6000 pints had been sold! 1800 people came through the door and 42 new CAMRA members were signed up, including Lee Kiteley, who claimed the honour of being Redditch & Bromsgrove CAMRA's 500th member. As a reward, he was given a goody bag and a meal for two at the



Lee Kiteley receiving his certificate from Doug Robinson



Gate Hangs Well, Woodgate kindly donated by Neil McMahon.

PRIMROSE CHARITY

Through the generous donations of the visitors £696 was raised for our charity, The Primrose Hospice.

We look forward to welcoming you at Bromsgrove Beer Festival in July 2008.

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Courage Directors, Bateman's
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Colin Scrivener travels to Walsall

A Highgate night out

At 6.30pm on a wet May evening sixteen Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA members set off from the **Red Lion** in Bromsgrove bound for Walsall.

IMPRESSIVE BREWERY

Having negotiated crowded traffic conditions on the motorway and got a little lost in the side streets we arrived at a grand pair of wrought iron gates at the entrance to the Highgate brewery. Immediately I was sorry not to have brought the camera for, instead of the usual industrial unit that so often houses breweries these days, there was a magnificent brick Victorian tower brewery, complete with lucam and chimney, with a range of original buildings enclosing the courtyard.

INFORMATIVE TOUR

At the visitor centre we were greeted by two members of "The Friends of Highgate Brewery", a unique supporters group, who welcomed us by dispensing free pints from the three hand-pumps on the bar. As it was May I began with Highgate Dark Mild, the other pumps having Davenports Bitter and a new brew, Davenports IPA.

As soon as we had downed our first pints we went across the yard to the brewery and climbed several flights of steep stairs to the top floor where the grain was stored. The brewery has been in continuous production since it was built in 1898 and much of the original equipment and machinery is still in place, although to meet modern health and safety requirements the wooden vats have been

lined with stainless steel. Unfortunately the steam engine was removed in the 1930's and plant converted to electric motors. I liked things like the original customs officer's desk and the grain riddle that was supported on spring legs made of cricket bat willow.

After a comprehensive and very informative tour we returned to the visitor centre, refilled our glasses and enjoyed



an excellent cold buffet that the Friends had laid on. The Davenports IPA was very good and refills were constantly available so we could keep supping as we ate and took part in a musical acts quiz, that was won by Richard Scott and his team. Unfortunately all good things have to end and at 10pm, having thanked our hosts and contributed to the breast cancer charity they support, our happy band climbed back aboard the bus after a most enjoyable experience.

TRUMP CARD

The evening was not over, however, as organiser Doug had a trump card up his sleeve. This was a stop at the **Bartons Arms** on the way home. Many of the party had never been there and the expressions of wonderment at the interior were many. By popular request the manager also gave us a cellar tour and



opened up the upstairs function rooms for those newcomers to marvel at. The beer was good as well and a pint of Oakham JHB rounded off the drinking nicely ready for the late return to Bromsgrove. Many thanks to Doug Robinson for organising such a super evening.

THE OLD OAK



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- * Open all day every day from 12 noon

Editoreale



You have to admit it's been a different summer! One moment sunshine, and then almost monsoon conditions. For areas of our county to be flooded once was bad enough, but twice is dreadful, and just because it is not now a major news item doesn't mean that it's finished with. The clearing up will go on for some time.

Obviously the cancellation of the Worcester Beer, Cider and Perry Festival was a major blow to the organisers who had put so much effort into their preparations. In early July there was hope that another part of Pitchcroft Racecourse could be used, but the rains and floods of late July put paid to that. I know the organisers are already thinking about next year - so good luck to them.

SMOKING BAN

July also saw the commencement of the smoking ban. So far the ban appears to have been accepted without too many problems or reduction in folks going to the pub. On a personal note I find coming home after an enjoyable evening out and not smelling of smoke great, but the full impact may not be felt until the winter. It is interesting to see the different and innovative approaches pubs have taken to provide facilities for smokers, and to ensure that their customers are encouraged to stay at their favourite local.

BEER FESTIVALS EVERYWHERE!

I recently celebrated my 25th wedding anniversary, and booked a trip to Cyprus to see the sites we first visited all those years ago. I accepted the fact that two weeks away from beer festivals and great real ale was likely, so imagine my surprise when I was offered tickets for free to the fourth Paphos beer festival! Despite featuring brews from our national brands, I decided that it was prudent on this occasion not to attend!

Here's to the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness.
Cheers

Charlie Ayres, Editor



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We also enjoy serving local and interesting beverages. Our entries in the Good Beer Guide since 2002 are a credit to the local beers & ciders of the area. We are open to the public for breakfast, lunch and evening meals from Monday - Saturday.

Phone 01684 563411 for reservations.

Local real ale events

Pub events & Festivals

ALVECHURCH

The **Weighbridge**, Alvechurch will be holding its Autumn Beer Festival on Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd September. Opening times are 11am to 11pm. There will be 15 real ales plus cider and perry. Food will also be available.

BIRMINGHAM

The **Bartons Arms**, Aston is holding a September Beer Festival from 21st - 23rd September. A large selection of real ales will be available sourced from all over the country.

KNIGHTWICK

Despite being flooded out twice this summer, Chris Gooch from the Teme Valley Brewery has confirmed that the **Talbot** at Knightwick will be holding its popular Green Hop Beer Festival from the evening of 12th, and all day on 13th and 14th October. The market will also be open on the Sunday.

HANLEY CASTLE

The **Three Kings**, Hanley Castle is holding its beer festival from 9th - 11th November. 30 beers will be available from across the country.

HALESOWEN

On 17th November the award winning **Waggon & Horses**, Halesowen will be holding a special event to celebrate 20 years as a free house under the ownership of Bob Dummons.



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GBBF news

Beer theft!

This year's Great British Beer Festival Organiser, Marc Holmes, was shocked to hear some of the beer was missing!

15,000 PINTS
STOLEN

On the night of 4th August 2007 a lorry packed full of real ale was stolen from a hauliers yard in Lincoln, on its way to satisfy the 60,000 thirsty beer drinkers expected at the Great British Beer Festival at London's Earls Court.

Marc Holmes, Organiser of the Festival said, "We knew it was going to be popular, but we've never had the beer stolen before! 15,000 pints is a lot of beer, but no one was disappointed as we had another 335,000 pints already at the Festival and we had the missing beer replaced by Monday morning."

FANTASTIC RESPONSE

Tony Eastwood, Managing Director of Small Beer said, "The crisis was averted, we pulled out all the stops to get the beer to London by Monday morning and ready to drink for the opening on the Tuesday. I'd like to thank Dave Scott and Glyn Williams at Small Beer for working so hard today to find replacement beer, to the brewers for rising to the challenge and to Tom Wood of Highwood for letting us borrow a truck and driver to replace our stolen vehicle."

Marc Holmes said, "It's amazing to see how all the brewers pulled together to make sure that no one visiting the Festival missed out."



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Good Beer Guide 2006 - AA Pub Guide 2006 - The Good Pub Guide 2006

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Voted '2005 Midland Mild of the year' CAMRA, '2004 Mild of the year' SIBA and three times winner at the International Brewing Awards. Judges from around the world agree that Highgate Dark Mild is big on taste.



We've been producing ales from the nation's heart for over 100 years. Small enough to keep in touch with our drinkers, but big enough to serve leading pub companies across the UK.



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Opening hours
Mon - Fri 12 noon - 3pm ■ 5.30pm - 11.30pm
Saturday & Sunday - Open all day

Ruth Breese reports on her first CAMRA social

A Mystery trip to Herefordshire

One cloudy Saturday morning in June, Doug Robinson led 14 members of Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA on a mystery brewery tour.

NO CLUES GIVEN

As we drove westward, despite numerous requests, Doug wouldn't give any clues to where we were going. Guesses were made, only to be crossed off as we passed key junctions. Eventually we turned down a narrow road somewhere in Herefordshire and Doug announced that we had arrived at our first destination.

HIGH PERCENTAGE BREW

The **Three Horseshoes** is the home of the Shoes Brewery in Norton Canon. After a quick half, Frank Goodwin, the



The Three Horseshoes

brewer and landlord showed us his brewery - a shed in the bottom of the garden. He produces around four barrels a month; five excellent beers and a lager, ranging from a 3.6% Norton ale to the 15.5% Farrier's Beer, which we decided tasted like a smooth sherry. After another beer and a competitive game of quoits, Doug forced us to leave. Luck-

ily Frank bottles the beer so we bought a few supplies and returned happily to the coach and on to our next destination.

LOST IN HEREFORD

Only half an hour later we were lost on the Hereford ring road! A few experienced drinkers guessed where we were going, and we soon arrived at the

Victory; home of the Spinning Dog Brewery.

Inside this city centre pub was a bar shaped like a wooden galleon, with cannons and a



Interior of the Victory

full range of ale to choose from. As well as four Spinning Dog Beers, there were three from Slater's Brewery, three Westons ciders, a perry and a Gwatkin cider.

BUSY BREWER

While half of us went on the first tour round the brewery, the rest had another drink and demolished a pile of sausages and chips. The sausages were made by the brother in law of Jim Kenyon our host and their spicy meaty taste saw us through a few more ales. The flavour comes from adding the spent grains to the feed.

Although Jim brews up to four different beers a week, and has a lot of storage space outside, the actual brewery was not much bigger than Frank's, with everything packed in tightly. He has three tanks for brewing beers including Hereford organic ale, Mutley's Revenge, Mutley's Pitstop and a stout which he

also bottles for ASDA. Jim is passionate about producing good quality beer and talked about the importance of training licensees

and how he visits pubs that stock his beer to ensure that the beer is served at its best.

PRESENTATIONS

After both visits Doug presented Frank and Jim with a certificate to commemorate our visit and appreciation of their hard work in producing



Jim Kenyon receives his award from Doug Robinson

such excellent brews. It was fascinating seeing how tasty



The Barrels in Hereford beer could be produced in such small breweries.

We then walked three minutes to the **Barrels**, the former Wye Valley Brewery. After selecting from six of the available beers from their range including Wye Valley Bitter and Butty Bach, we had time to relax, chat and read the paper before moving on to

our final destination – a recommendation from Hereford CAMRA.

FINAL DESTINATION

We arrived at the **Green Dragon** in the small village of Bishops Frome to discover the village fete was on. Some, feeling a little thirsty (we'd been travelling for at least 20 minutes) went straight into the pub; others went to look round the fete joining in the fun. In progress were the usual tombola, tug of war and an egg throwing competition which Andy, one of our party, entered.

By 7pm, we had to leave. We still had

time for a last drink in the **Red Lion**, Bromsgrove, before saying our good byes. Exhausted, we didn't even have the energy to discover who did eat more sausages than Doug, or remember the 19th Century quote about British Inns Brett had tried to remember for the last four hours.

Maybe next time.....



The Green Dragon





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John and Jayne are on the move!

New licensees for the Weighbridge

After turning a keg only pub into an award winning real ale gem, the licensees of the **Weighbridge** in Alvechurch have decided to move on. John and Jayne Humphries have decided that they wish to expand the food side of their business and will be taking on the **Royal Oak** in Studley in September.

REGRETS

Speaking to Pint Taken, John and Jayne said that they had regrets about leaving the pub they had worked so hard for in order to make it the success that it is: "In particular we will miss our locals and the canal-side location", said John. "We

do hope to see many of them at the Royal Oak", he added. Since opening as a keg only pub in 2002 in a building previously used for offloading coal barges to horse and cart, the Weighbridge started serving real ale later that year after a much publicised campaign in Pint Taken. As well as locally brewed Tillerman's Tipple from Weatheroak Brewery, a second guest ale invariably from a microbrewery is served.

REGULAR EVENTS

The pub which holds regular beer festivals and other events was awarded Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA Pub of


the Year in 2005.

POSITIVE FUTURE

Speaking to Pint Taken, David Arrand, Company Secretary for ABC Leisure Group who own the pub said that the company are committed to keeping the free house as an integral part of the marina as it brings in interest from boaters and visitors generally. "We do not plan to close the Weighbridge or make any drastic changes such as turning it into a theme pub", he said.



SADLERS



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1900 ORIGINAL BITTER - "A blend of malts and wheat form a soft, malty bitter, lifted by delicate, floral hop characters, and rounded by a good strength. An excellent traditional premium bitter." 4.4%

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ALES
into
HALESOWEN



Glenda Harvey describes some of her local pubs

A visitor's guide to Kidderminster

There's a good chance that, as a reader of *Pint Taken*, you enjoy visiting the odd real ale venue or two. So, let me introduce you to the delights of my local town – Kidderminster. Kidderminster drinkers have a good selection of real ale pubs to choose from and I am going to mention a few here; all within walking distance of each other and most inside the town centre Ringway.

STARTING POINT

The easiest place to start for visitors is the **King and Castle**, situated by the Severn Valley Railway right next to Kidderminster mainline railway station at the top of Comberton Hill. There are thoughtful brown SVR signs on the main roads pointing you in the right direction and should you happen to have a driver there is a large car park but beware - it's Pay and Display!

REGULAR ENTRY

The King and Castle is a Good Beer Guide regular entry serving well-kept ales in a replica of a GWR refreshment room. Batham's Bitter is available as standard along with Royal Piddle, which is brewed specially for the pub by Wyre Piddle brewery. There is always a good selection of guest beers, often from local independents. Whilst you may be tempted to stay here, let me entice you into the town with other venues to sample.

INTERESTING INTERIOR

Leave the King and Castle and turn left down the hill, negoti-

ate the underpass going straight ahead into Worcester Road. A few paces on your right you will find the **Boar's Head Taphouse**. This Banks's pub has well kept and served guest beers, with an interesting pub interior to keep you happy as you sample the wares. Choose from the oak panelled lounge, the busy bar or the covered courtyard and do note the red telephone box in a most unusual position.

TOWN CENTRE

From the Boar's Head turn right towards the town, at the crossroads turn left then right at the mini roundabout. Follow this road and you will come across the **Swan** opposite the town hall. This town centre pub interior is 'u' shaped and rather dark, but it has six handpulls and provides a welcome pint to a weary shopper.

After the Swan turn right along the pedestrianised Vicar Street until it meets the High Street by Lloyds Bank. You can at this point go straight ahead to Wetherspoons **Penny Black** or turn right heading towards WH Smith and Woolworths. Just before you reach them take a left turn and you will see **Ye Olde Seven Stars** facing you on your right.

CATERING FOR ALL

The Stars is a quiet, comfortable friendly pub with up to four guest ales on offer. You will often find beers from Enville, Sadler's or Caledonian all in good condition. My hint here is to go to the back bar to



see the full range of beers.

The pub serves no food itself, but has menus from local 'take away' restaurants and provides plates and cutlery for you to use. They even do the washing up for you afterwards!

LIVELY PUB

After the Stars turn right and follow the road round Blackwell Street heading back towards the Ringway. Just before the roundabout you will come to the **Red Man**. This is a lively, friendly pub with welcoming and helpful staff. Most ales are from nationals but one or two guests are usually available. If you want quiet choose the front lounge, but if sport is your thing, then the back bar is for you with its pool tables and sports TV. Tasty, good value meals are served until 7pm.

MORE AVAILABLE

For those still full of vim and vigour, turning right off Comberton Hill into Hoo Road will lead you to Kidderminster Harriers football ground and their supporters club where more real ale can be found.

I trust you will find this mini guide useful and we look forward to welcoming you to our Kidderminster real ale pubs.

Two local people need your help

Fund raising events

Visitors to Beer Festivals in the County contribute much to local charities through their donations. Here are two which are raising funds locally which need our help.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Bromsgrove's Tony Turpin along with his wife Jackie and friend Yvonne, are currently raising funds for Multiple Sclerosis. Tony has involved Chris Gooch of Teme Valley Brewery in this venture, and Chris will be giving a talk in aid of the Multiple Sclerosis charity on 28th September 2007 at the **Red Lion** in Bromsgrove.

TALK AND TASTING

Brewery manager Chris will be giving an informative talk on the history of the brewery leading up to the sampling of four different ales from the brewery. So come along and learn about "This, That and T`other" of brewing ales.

Tickets for this event are just £7 each to include the talk itself and four different halves of ale. The evening commences at 8pm at the Red Lion, 73 High Street, Bromsgrove on Friday 28th September. For more details call Tony on 01527 874072 or visit www.jay.org.uk

PAY FOR A VIRTUAL PINT

Ian Stevenson, an active member of Worcester CAMRA, and regular contributor to Pint Taken was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease late last year. Normally supporters of Worcester

Beer, Cider and Perry Festival would have raised money for the Motor Neurone Disease Association, but this year with the cancellation of the festival Ian has come up with a novel fundraising idea.

He wants us all to donate the price of a pint (or much more) via his 'Justgiving' web page. He hopes to raise £2000 by November this year and so far £285 has been raised. For more details go to www.justgiving.com/virtualpint



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Mike Lee reports on a Worcester CAMRA trip

A Cheshire away day

Precision military planning was supposed to be the preserve of Eisenhower. Very few people, apart from the Worcester Branch, know that our Social Secretary, Keven Parker, is also up there with the greats!

TRAIN DEAL

So it was on a lovely sunny morning in July, eleven of us set out early from Worcester Foregate Station, undeterred that Wetherspoons was not open for the planned breakfast! Keven's saving grace was that he understands how to get the best train deal and the Groupsave ticket (travelling in groups of three or four) cost us £11 return!

Our military commander's objective was a beer festival in the south Cheshire countryside but naturally this would be interspersed by a "few stops" along the way for our discerning drinkers.

FIRST STOP

First stop was the lovely town of Shrewsbury, which I personally had not visited before, but which we were to see a lot more of later. A brisk walk up the road from the station enabled us to have a pint or two in the **Dolphin**, a brew pub. This venue is thoroughly recommended, as is the Dizzy Lizzy, which proved an excellent start to the day.

THE FESTIVAL

Onwards to the **Bhurlton Inn**, which is located near Nantwich, just over the Cheshire border. Eleven real ales are

always available, but this was upped to over 70 beers for the festival, and they did not disappoint. Our favourite was a real hoppy number from the Elland Brewery called 7 by 7. It was nice to chat to people from as far afield as Weston-super-Mare but before we knew it, by mid afternoon, we were trekking back along the footpath to Wrenbury Station.

SHREWSBURY AGAIN

Back on the train, we stopped off again at Shrewsbury, and this time Keven was generous, and allowed us an hour and a half! We managed three pubs in quick succession – **Coach & Horses**, **Admiral Benbow** and the **Three Fishes**. The Ludlow Gold proved to be as good as before when we drunk it at the Ludlow Festival, and other noteworthy beers were Snowdonia (Purple Moose Brewery) and Big Nev's from the Six Bells Brewery. With more military precision, by the time we got back to the station, Keven had organised a pizza for a bunch of us (although he forgot mine – I forgive you Keven!).

JOURNEY HOME

Next stop on the line was Oakengates, which I had not heard of before, but which proved to have an excellent pub on this epic tour. The **Crown Hotel** not only had fourteen real ales on, but had the friendliest locals that I have had the pleasure to meet. Excellent ales included Hanby Pure Gold, Slater's




Scorcher and Purple Moose.

The **Station Hotel** also proved very popular and the local chippie was superb, which led to a piranha feeding frenzy on the train.

THANKS

After some suitable "power naps" on the train, we managed a final stop at the famous **Great Western** in Wolverhampton, where all the Holden's range was excellent.

We arrived back in Worcester tired but happy! Many thanks to Keven for yet another whirlwind, precision "tour of duty".



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Letters

Dear Editor,

I really must take you to task over your somewhat blinkered attitude to a full pint. The problem is much more complex as the landlord in this fiercely competitive industry should have taken the head into account when costing his beer. My own preference for a headless pint, which used to be called an 'Anne Boleyn' in the **Brewery Tap** in Lowesmoor, is based on different logic.

1. When I was an apprentice drinker the best beers in the district were Bass and Worthington E served on gravity, and you couldn't get a head on these no matter how hard you tried.

2. When I used to be a brewer for Jolly Roger, I resented brewing beer with the correct amount of conditioning gas only to see it squirted out at the point of dispense by the use of those abominations, the swan neck and the sparkler.

3. I used to have a moustache and beard and the froth was a nuisance.

Yours faithfully

David J Weaver
Malvern (by letter)

Hello ...

I have just received the Summer edition of Pint Taken, which I receive by subscription. I had a 10-mile round trip to the sorting office, where I had to pay £1.60 surcharge, in order to get it. It seems the Royal Mail objected to the stamp being cut, from the self addressed enve-

lope I provided, and attached to the larger envelope needed for this edition. 12 pages being triplicated probably put it up to the next price band.

Please inform the person who deals with subscriptions.
Regards

Richard Moreton (by email)

The were some technical issues with the last edition of Pint Taken. We apologise to anyone who suffered from the problem described in this letter. This we understand has been compounded by the new postal sizing arrangements recently introduced. Our Subscriptions Officer has provided a summary concerning subscriptions and posting.

Ed

RECEIVING PINT TAKEN BY POST

Since last August postage has been based on the size of letters etc. as well as their weight. The appropriate size for one copy of Pint Taken is a C5 envelope. This is the size that one copy will comfortably just fit into. Weight is not a problem as you are allowed up to 100gm. You may use first or second class stamps.

To get your envelopes to us please fold them into two and put them into another C5 envelope. This will be classed as a letter. If you use a larger envelope it will be classed as a large letter and a surcharge will have to be paid on receipt.

If in doubt check with your Post Office.

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Quick Halves

- The **Bell**, Astwood Bank has been taken over by Peter and Lin who have moved from Headless Cross. The pub has been redecorated in a rustic but modern style. There are two handpumps at present with plans to extend this to three or possibly four. The two regular beers are Timothy Taylor Landlord and Black Sheep Best Bitter. Food is traditional English main meals plus hot and cold sandwiches. There is a themed food night once a month and a quiz night every Tuesday. There are plans for a small beer festival in the autumn.

- The **Coach House**, Astwood Bank. The lease of this village pub from Oxford Inns has been taken by Mark. The pub is in need of complete refurbishment, including the replacement of all the beer lines. This is proceeding steadily. When work is complete it is proposed that there will be two real ales on sale. These will be a mild and a bitter. Mark has been working in pubs for about ten years and is a trained chef so food will also be available.

- **White Bear**, from the Blue Bear brewery in Worcester, has been the guest ale at the **Why Not** for some time now. It has proved to be so popular that it is set to continue and even if it is sometimes replaced, it is bound to return.

- Marston's recently took over Ringwood Brewery in Hampshire. Assurances have

been given that the identity of the brewery will remain, with Marston's committed to the retention of the brewery, as they have done with Jennings. Planning permission had apparently been obtained prior to the sale for extending the brewery with a new boiler, mill, and malt handling plant. This is understood to be going ahead which is good news for the staff at Ringwood.

- The **Dodford Inn**, Dodford. Currently the pub is boarded up and the managing agents are looking for new tenants. Apparently the lease terms are not very favourable so there are no interested parties at the moment.

- Morrison's in Bromsgrove now has a range of 52 bottled ales including four bottle conditioned beers. A monthly guest ale recently featured Thwaites Double Century, Bateman's Valiant and Springhead 'Roaring Meg'! Many of the beers feature the new Cyclops Tasting Guide.

- If you are out in the Alvechurch or Hopwood area why not visit Barnt Green and take a look at the **Victoria Inn**. It has three real ales; M & B Bitter is the regular ale with two guest ales a week. The bar area features pictures of Barnt Green and Bromsgrove railway stations.

- Jonathan Smith is the new owner of The **Fox** at Hanley Broadheath. He plans to have at



least four real ales and a traditional cider on the bar. An ex-employee of Marston's, he plans to brew at the pub, but not until next year. To mark this new venture he will produce a one off brew called Foxy Lady.

- The **White Heart** in Sidbury, Worcester has closed for refurbishment and will re-open soon under a new name and new management with three cask ales after being taken over by the landlord of the **Fire Fly**, Lowesmoor, Worcester.

- The **Unicorn**, in Malvern is to close. The landlord blames this on exorbitant rent rises.

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Pubs worth seeking out

Little Gems

THE BEERHOUSE,
FUNCHALL, MADEIRA

Madeira is a wonderful island to visit with stunning scenery, superb food and wines, friendly people and even the beer from 'Coral' has a lot more flavour than most Euro-fizz. Notwithstanding this, it was a delight to find a micro-brewery at a restaurant on the seafront at Funchal, the main town.

Called **Beerhouse** this pleasant establishment is situated on a jetty into the marina and has a balcony on each side.

The brewing equipment, dated 1995, came from Munich. Only rye malt, hops, water and yeast are used in the brew and no chemical products such as

antioxidants, preservatives, froth stabilizers or artificial colourings are added. The beer is brewed in the traditional method to comply with the German Reinheitsgebot of 1516. It is not filtered or pasteurised and is a medium strength, cloudy beer, lightish in flavour but with malty overtones. A half litre is served in a dimpled tankard and there is a selection of souvenir glasses available.

The restaurant has a traditional Portuguese kitchen serving specialties such as Acorda of Prawns and Lobster, Beerhouse Style Sirloin Steak and Oven Smoked Leg of Pork.



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Worcester CAMRA present new award

Most improved Pub

An innovative Malvern pub celebrated after being named most improved pub of the year. The **Star**, in Cowleigh Road, has received the inaugural honour from the Worcester branch of the Campaign For Real Ale.

THRIVING

The Star was closed only three years ago but is now thriving, offering up to five real ales, often from local breweries, as well as a range of authentic Chinese and European food.

CAMRA chairman Alan Grainger said The Star had shown great commitment to real ale, and used innovative techniques to build trade up from a low base. "A pint of ale with a

chicken satay is a rare combination, especially when they are as fresh and tasty as they are at The Star," he said.

HARD WORK PAID OFF

Landlord Michael Choi said it was good to be acknowledged for the hard work that had gone on at the pub, adding that the combination of food and beer had proved a real winner. "I love cask ale myself, so it's not really something that I've had to go out of the way to push," he said. "There are around 45 pubs in a three-mile radius in Malvern, so you try to offer customers something different."



23

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And Finally...

Powdered Alcohol?

Dutch students have developed what might be the ultimate alcoholics survival aid - a powdered alcohol beverage going out at €1- €1.50 for a 20 gram packet, Reuters reports.

Just add water to Booz2Go and you get a "bubbly, lime-colored and flavored drink with just three percent alcohol content", ideal for those journalistic Bravo Two Zero situations where you find yourself pinned down by a corporate PowerPoint presentation with nothing more than a plastic cup and a water cooler between you and a sobriety-heightened two-hour torture session.

Mind you, no self-respecting real ale enthusiast would drink anything tasting of lime unless he or

she was truly under the cosh! In reality, Booz2Go is aimed at the tearaway alcopop market, as developer Harm van Elderen explained: "We are aiming for the youth market. They are really more into it because you can compare it with Bacardi-mixed drinks."

Van Elderen and four classmates at Helicon Vocational Institute brewed up Booz2Go as part of a final year project. Fellow student Martyn van Nierop showed his WKD side by announcing one major attraction of the concoction for the yoof demographic: "Because the alcohol is not in liquid form, we can sell it to people below 16." The team says a number of companies are interested in marketing the product on the

grounds that powdered alcohol might be exempt from booze taxation.



I think we all know where this is going! - reminds me of my days behind the cricket pavilion with a bottle of cider....

Ed

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale...



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Meetings & Events

Worcestershire branches of the Campaign for Real Ale

*You are most welcome to attend our meetings.
All meetings start at 8 pm unless stated.*

Kidderminster sub-branch (07818 401046)
Wed 12 Sept Social event - Crawl around Arley starting at Bellmans Cross

See Website for details www.kidderminstercamra.org.uk

Redditch and Bromsgrove branch (07957 451190)
Tue 11 Sept Branch meeting - Lygon Arms, Feckenham
Sat 6 Oct Social event - Solihull Beer Festival. Ring for details
Tue 9 Oct Branch meeting - Live & Let Live, Cutnall Green
Tue 13 Nov Branch meeting - Bird in Hand, Stockwood
Tue 11 Dec Branch meeting - Unionist Club, Bromsgrove

Worcester branch (01684 573018)
Tue 11 Sept New members meeting - The Plough, Worcester
Tue 9 Oct Branch meeting - The Admiral Rodney, Berrow Green
Fri 9 Nov Social event - trip to Three King's Beer Festival (ring for details)
Tue 13 Nov Branch meeting - The Drum & Monkey, Upton upon Severn
Tue 11 Dec Festive branch meeting - The Saracen's Head, Worcester

Shakespeare branch (01789 778726)
Covering Evesham area

CAMRA Beer Festivals

14th Tamworth Beer Festival
Assembly Rooms, Corporation Street
September 6th - 8th

Birmingham Beer Festival
Aston Students Guild
Aston University Campus, Gosta Green
September 13th - 15th

28th Burton Summer Beer Festival
Burton-on-Trent Town Hall, Burton-on-Trent
September 20th - 22nd

9th Solihull Beer Festival
Royal British Legion, Solihull
October 5th - 6th

Dudley Winter Ales Festival
Dudley Concert Hall, Dudley
November 22nd - 24th

For more information on these events go to
www.pinttaken.org.uk

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Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

I enclose a cheque for

Signed Date

Applications will be processed within 21 days

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To the Manager Bank or Building Society

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The Postal Order

Foregate Street, Worcester

Telephone: 01905 22373

Cask Marque Approved



A traditional Wetherspoon's pub offering a wide range of cask conditioned real ales and traditional ciders. A minimum of 6 real ales on at any time and 2 ciders.

Monthly mini-beer festivals are held featuring local breweries.

A small smoking area has been constructed in the rear to accommodate those who wish to have a drink and a smoke.

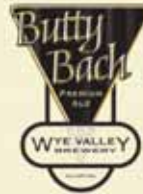
Opening times: Sunday – Thursday 9am 'til Midnight

Friday/Saturday 9am 'til 1am

Good value meals are served all day every day from 9am 'til 11pm



THREE GOLDS FOR WYE VALLEY



HPA - Awarded West Midlands CAMRA Bitter of the Year 2006

Butty Bach - Awarded West Midlands CAMRA Best Bitter of the Year 2006

Dorothy Goodbody's Wholesome Stout - Awarded West Midlands Bottled Beer of the Year 2006

ALSO

HPA - Silver Medal winner at West Midlands CAMRA Beer of the Year 2006

Wye Valley Brewery
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www.wyevalleybrewery.co.uk



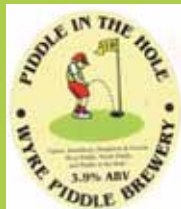
ANCHOR INN — Wyre Piddle



Home cooked food served lunchtimes
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Riverside gardens

Real ales, including local ale
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