

# AWARD WINNING *Pint Taken* www.pinttaken.org.uk



Spring 2008

FREE

The Worcestershire County CAMRA Newsletter

FREE

Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA present their winter award

## Pub of the Season

The **Boat and Railway**, located in Stoke Prior, on the side of the Worcester & Birmingham Canal is a very tranquil setting for a pub. It was here in late January that members of Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA met to present Rachel and Tony Barnet with the coveted Pub of the Winter Season 2007 award.



Paul Richards (seen on the left of the picture) made the presentation to Rachel and Tony, commenting on the quality and variety of the beer available at the Boat and Railway.

The Boat and Railway also has an extensive food menu and is very popular with boaters on the canal who are preparing to tackle the Tardebigge flight of locks.



National Pub of the Year 2007

## Old Spot, Dursley, Gloucester



The **Old Spot Inn**, Dursley, Gloucestershire was crowned National Pub of the Year in February, as voted for by CAMRA members and regional judges.

WELL RUN

Julian Hough, CAMRA's Pubs

Director, who presented the award said "The Old Spot Inn is a great example of how successful a well-run community pub can be. I would like to congratulate everybody at the Old Spot Inn on being judged Britain's finest pub."

(See page 8 for more details)

Consumers demand a fair deal

## Reduce the Tax

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale has launched its Cut the Tax on Beer campaign.

The Campaign is calling for the Government to deliver a fair deal to beer drinkers by cutting beer tax by a penny a pint.

### HIGHEST RATE

CAMRA Head of Policy and Public Affairs Jonathan Mail said: "Britain has the highest rate of Excise Duty on beer in the European Union and this is leading to a decline in UK beer production and the closure of pubs. The first seven months of 2007-2008 have seen a 7.9 percent fall in UK production. If the Government does not



act soon hundreds of community pubs could be under threat."

Brewing lobby groups have spent the last few weeks explaining the difficult position of the brewing industry to

MPs and CAMRA representatives and have already met with Treasury ministers during February to discuss this further.

## 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

National information and updates

## CAMRA news

### MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Over the last thirty six years, CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, has been campaigning on all different kinds of beer and pub issues. We have helped to save breweries and pubs, helped to introduce more flexible licensing hours, run numerous beer festivals, and created the environment for new breweries to open and thrive, but our work doesn't end there!

Research in February 2007 showed that we are losing more pubs now than ever before. A staggering 56 pubs close every month and CAMRA needs your help to campaign and save the pubs that are under threat from closure in the future before it is too late. Currently there are just under 90,000 members and CAMRA is aiming to reach 100,000 members to help promote and protect real ale throughout the UK.

By becoming a CAMRA member you can help to make a difference, so why not join CAMRA today by completing the form included in this newsletter, by visiting [www.camra.org.uk/joinus](http://www.camra.org.uk/joinus) or calling CAMRA HQ on 01727 867201.

### SCOTTISH & NEWCASTLE TAKEOVER

The announcement in late January that Scottish and Newcastle (S&N) was to be acquired and divided between Carlsberg and Heineken has been condemned by the Cam-



paign for Real Ale (CAMRA). S&N's UK activities are set to be acquired by Heineken and CAMRA is seeking urgent reassurances over the future of S&N's real ale interests.

Mike Benner, CAMRA's Chief Executive said, "The relentless obsession with pushing global lager brands is a failing strategy in the UK beer market and this is fuelling consolidation and hitting profits hard. The inevitable result of consolidation is brewery closures, brand losses and less choice for Britain's consumers."

It is expected that the takeover will be considered by the European Commission and CAMRA is calling for an in-depth review of competition and consumer choice in the EU beer market.

### PUNCH MERGER WITH M&B

Punch Taverns have made an offer to merge with Mitchells & Butlers. Although a shareholding in the enlarged company is promised and a cash incentive is on the table, it is unlikely that this first offer will be accepted by most M&B shareholders and Punch will have to come back with an increased offer. The new company would be valued at £11bn and have 10,500 pubs - more than a sixth of the total pub stock in the UK.

**The Talbot**

Newlands, Pershore

 ...plus one other guest ale always available.

☞ Homemade lunches ☞  
☞ Sunday Roast ☞

**Wednesday Roast night!**

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**WR10 1BW**  
[the.talbot@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:the.talbot@tiscali.co.uk)

TIMOTHY TAYLOR  
CHAMPIONSHIP BEERS

*The Bell at Pensav*

Abberley, Worcs, WR6 6AE

 01299 896677

**Herefordshire & Worcestershire CAMRA Pub of the Year 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2007 West Midlands Region Pub of the Year 2003 and 2007**

At least five real ales, all from independent and micro-breweries

Real Cider and Perry  
Home made food available  
Lunchtime Specials

**Open Mon-Sat 12-2.30  
(Closed Mon lunch), 5-11  
Sun 12-10.30**

*Near Abberley on the B4202*

The licensees view from

## The other side of the Bar

Each quarter we will be interviewing licensees from around the county, and asking them their opinions on matters seen from the other side of the bar. For this edition John Maiden interviewed Martin Lloyd-Morris from the **Walter de Cantelupe** in Kempsey.

**Your name:** Martin Lloyd-Morris

**Your pub and location:** The Walter de Cantelupe Inn, Kempsey.

**What makes for a successful real ale pub?** Plenty of real ale loving drinkers.

**CAMRA – help or hindrance?** Help. I've always found CAMRA supporting pubs and real ale and long may they continue the cause for con-



sumer choice.

**Most memorable event last year:** Receiving a letter of commendation from the head brewer from Timothy Taylor, who unbeknown to me was staying a few days, for the quality of the Landlord in the

pub – best he'd tasted outside Yorkshire and better than some in Yorkshire.

**Biggest challenge facing pubs this year:** Raising the profile of pubs throughout the UK to avoid further closures and face head-on the competition from other choices of leisure activities which the consumer has.

**Single wish for the future:** To gain more recognition for the quality of real ales in the pub.

**Favourite tippie:** Any good quality craft brewed real ale.

**Most enjoyable thing to do when away from the pub:** I'll tell you when I get the opportunity to take a few days away from the pub!

### THE OLD OAK



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# Local News

## PURITY WINS THE RED TRACTOR MARK

Local brewery Purity, based in Warwickshire, has become the first ever brewery or beverage company to receive the Red Tractor assurance mark. The mark symbolises that the ale has been produced in the UK using British farmed malt and hops and meets the high standards that are expected and examined through independent inspections by the Assured Food Standards Agency.

Paul Halsey, director at Purity, said "We're really excited to be the first brewery to display the Red Tractor stamp. This reflects our commitment to use only British farmed produce in all of our ales. Including the Red Tractor symbol on our ales will work to reassure consumers and demonstrate our support for British farming."

In addition to securing the Red Tractor mark for their ales, Purity has also been chosen to brew the National Farmers Union's commemorative ale, which has been formulated to celebrate 100 years of the NFU. Farmers Harvest is a full flavoured beer with an ABV of 4.8 per cent and a great balance of sweetness and bitterness.

## ALMA, WORCESTER

The Kings School have resubmitted applications to demol-

ish the Alma in Diglis and to construct a new school. The deadline for comments was 15th February and Worcester CAMRA have mounted a strong campaign backed by local support to again fight this development for which permission was previously refused in 2007.

## RE-OPENED PUB

With pubs shutting down at an alarming rate, here is some positive news - the **Royal Oak** in Studley has re-opened. This pub was closed for some time but this changed on 7th February when a ten year lease was signed by a couple who intend to return it to a traditional public house. The couple are local to Studley with no previous experience of the pub trade, but very keen to succeed.

## TALBOT INN

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www.talbotinn.net



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## ALES



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REAL ALE to take away 1 to 72 pints  
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A great range of bottled British beers  
Selection of wines & spirits

e-mail: [dave@weatheroakales.co.uk](mailto:dave@weatheroakales.co.uk)

*North Worcestershire's only Real Ale Off Licence*

Colin Scrivener takes the bus to Alcester

## A Christmas crawl



In mid December, a group of six members from Bromsgrove, making full use of public transport, caught the X3 to Redditch where we were to meet the others. Arriving with 20 minutes before our connection it was decided that the **Golden Cross** was worth a visit, so a swift half of Marston's Ugly Sisters set the day off to a good start.

### OFF TO ALCESTER

We only just made it back to the bus station in time to join organiser Paul and the rest of the party for the bus to Alcester, where the crawl proper began. First stop was the **Lord Nelson**, where the Wadworth Henry's IPA was quite good. Braving the chill weather we headed for the High Street pubs. But indecisions at a pedestrian crossing resulted in a brief separation of the group with some heading to the **Dog and Partridge**, a pub with a bright warm welcome from a pleasant barmaid and where the Hooky proved to be the best drink of the day so far. We did not stay long - even if there were those who wanted to watch the football on the television, (or was it the barmaid), before we had to set off again and headed to the **Three Tuns**.

### REAL ALE MECCA

At this real ale Mecca, which has a very old fashioned feel, no music or modern games, just a good choice of beer, more joined the party. We had a little more time here for two drinks and to socialise. I sam-

pled Hobsons Bitter and Sharp's Doom Bar and the beers definitely lived up to the pub's Good Beer Guide status. As this pub did not do food, which was now becoming uppermost in our minds, we moved on up the High Street and decided to try the **Turks Head**. Here a modern style interior with a welcoming fire, an interesting menu and three cask ales greeted us so we decided to stop. The Purity Gold and Wye Valley HPA, whose hand pull sported the old style clip, were very good and the food delicious.

### BACK ON THE BUS


The final stop in Alcester was at the **Holly Bush**. The beer choice in this smart and extensive pub was the widest so far. I particularly enjoyed the Uley Bitter but the Blackwater Almighty and Downton Black Knight were also excellent. On the word from Paul we all departed and hurried as fast as possible back to the bus stop where we just managed to scramble aboard. There was hardly time to get our breath back before we all de-camped at the **Throckmorton Arms** at Coughton, just for a quick sample. The St. Austell Tribute certainly passed muster. This time we left in good time for the bus but the driver was obviously not expecting customers at that stop and only noticed our waving at the last minute so stopped a hundred yards up the road. We got off in Studley outside the **Bell Inn**, whose Purity UBU

was good, before going to the **Shakespeare Inn**. This seemed a lively pub with keen staff and we had time to enjoy a Bateman's Rosey Nosey before crossing the road to the bus stop to get our buses back to Bromsgrove. The day was rounded off in the **Golden Cross Hotel**, Bromsgrove with a meal and a Beowulf Dragon's Smoke Stout before heading back to home.

### MARATHON MAN?

It had been a very enjoyable day with good beer and excellent company. Alcester looked a most interesting little town, very well endowed with good pubs, but I wonder if I am getting past doing a marathon?





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Up to three guest  
beers including  
Hobsons  
Town Crier

Local real ale events

## Pub festivals and events

### KNIGHTWICK

The **Talbot**, Knightwick will be holding a mini beer festival on 18th, 19th, and 20th April (or while stocks last). The festival theme will be St George with six patriotic ales available. For more details email [info@the-talbot.co.uk](mailto:info@the-talbot.co.uk) or check out the Talbot website [www.the-talbot.co.uk](http://www.the-talbot.co.uk)

### LONG ITCHINGTON

From Friday 2nd May to Monday 5th May the six village pubs of Long Itchington in South Warwickshire are getting together to put on a beer festival with a difference. Rather than being based on one site this festival will take place at all six pubs simultaneously offering the chance to visit six very different pubs through the weekend and to sample approximately 80 different real ales and ciders from breweries all over the country, with at least one pub offering genuine Czech lagers. The pubs involved (in no particular order) are the **Buck And Bell**, the **Cuttle Inn**, the **Duck On The Pond**, the **Green Man**, the **Harvester** and the **Two Boats**.

Food will be available from basic bar snacks to 'A la Carte' depending upon which pub you are in. A diverse range of entertainments is planned for the weekend and festival glasses will be available. If successful, it is planned to make this an annual event. So for a festival with a difference head to the Long Itchington beer festival 2008!

### ECKINGTON

The **Anchor** at Eckington will be holding a beer festival over the weekend of the early May Bank Holiday to coincide with the village's Flower Festival and Open Gardens event. Visit [www.eckington.info](http://www.eckington.info) for more information on events happening around the village.

### ALVECHURCH

The **Weighbridge** by the Worcester & Birmingham Canal in Alvechurch have changed the date of their beer festival. It will now be held on 30th and 31st May 2008. Opening times will be from 5pm to 11pm on Friday and 11am to 11pm Saturday.

### ALCESTER

The annual Alcester Folk Festival is taking place from Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd June. The **Holly Bush** will be holding a beer festival for the duration with approximately 30 beers and 10 ciders available.



**Are you planning to hold a beer festival, and want everyone to know about it ?**

Contact:  
[editor@pinttaken.org.uk](mailto:editor@pinttaken.org.uk)  
by 30th April 2008 with the details to publicise your event in the next edition of

*Pint Taken*

## COACH & HORSES INN

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WEATHEROAK HILL, ALVECHURCH

ONE MILE FROM JUNCTION 3 M42

Winner announced from four finalists

## National Pub of the Year

After many months of judging, four pubs were left to battle it out to be crowned National Pub of the Year. CAMRA members from across the UK visited thousands of pubs before deciding on 16 regional winners. Each of the 197 branches vote for their favourite pub. They were judged on criteria such as customer service, décor, clientele mix, value for money, and the quality of their real ale.

WEST MIDLANDS WINNER



John and locals at the Bell, Pensax

The West Midlands region winner was the Bell, Pensax and the photograph above shows John with members and local pub-goers proudly displaying his award.

### FINAL FOUR

Judges visited each of the pubs and the 'super-region' stage decided the four finalists. These were the **Blue Peter Hotel**, Kirkcolm, the **Old Spot Inn**, Dursley, the **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty**, Heronsgate and the **Turks Head**, St Helens.

### OLD SPOT, DURSLEY DECLARED WINNER

This year's winner is the Old Spot Inn, Dursley, Gloucestershire. The award for 'National

Pub of the Year' was presented to Steve and Belinda Herbert by Julian Hough, CAMRA's Pubs Director, in



Steve and Belinda Herbert with their presentation certificate

February in the run up to Community Pubs Week.

### OVERWHELMED

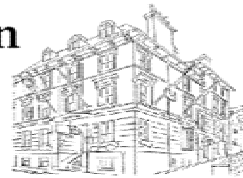
Steve Herbert, licensee of the Old Spot Inn said, "I am overwhelmed at winning the National Pub of the Year award. To be judged the best pub in Britain is a dream come true. Belinda and I would like to thank all the staff for their hard work over the last year, and the locals for their loyalty to the Old Spot Inn. Without them this wouldn't be possible."

More details on the Old Spot can be found on page 176 of the Good Beer Guide 2008, telephone number 01453 542870 or from the pub website [www.oldspotinn.co.uk](http://www.oldspotinn.co.uk)

## The Great Malvern Hotel

The Great Malvern Hotel,  
Graham Road,  
Great Malvern,  
Worcestershire WR14 2JN  
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Fax: 01684 560514

e-mail: [sutton@great-malvern-hotel.co.uk](mailto:sutton@great-malvern-hotel.co.uk)  
[www.great-malvern-hotel.co.uk](http://www.great-malvern-hotel.co.uk)



The Great Malvern Hotel is conveniently located to the Theatre and therefore specialises in pre & post Theatre meals.

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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.



Alan Grainger pays tribute to a respected CAMRA member

## Ian Stevenson 1954 - 2007

One of Worcester CAMRA's most loyal and best liked members died suddenly on 23rd December 2007. Ian Stevenson was someone I had only known a short time but felt I knew very well because of his remarkable character. He was born and raised in Scotland where he joined the fire service at the earliest opportunity; a lifetime career which was to take him to London then, on retirement, to Worcestershire.

Ian had three main interests outside his family and work which were bird watching, aircraft and, of course, good beer. Hardly surprising the two of us got on as these are three of my main interests as well!

### GREAT SUPPORTER

Ian heartily enjoyed the CAMRA socials and was a supporter of the annual beer festival too. It was extremely sad news when we heard that he had been diagnosed in 2006 with motor neurone disease, but he did not let it stop him from enjoying his hobbies whenever possible.

He was delighted when the charity proceeds from the 2007 Worcester Beer Festival were earmarked for the Motor Neurone Disease Association and upset, of course, when the festival had to be cancelled. But Ian was not one to give up that easily! He set up his own scheme of 'Donate a Virtual Pint' which raised a superb £4,600 for the charity and he continued to support

this to the last.

Recently Ian had been writing a column for Pint Taken about his favourite Real Ales in a Bottle which he enjoyed when he could not make the pub - a true CAMRA stalwart!

### MOVING SERVICE

I last saw Ian at the Bell, Pensax for the County Award presentation and, although now in a wheelchair, he was still his cheery, smiley self. We chatted about falcons and sparrowhawks whilst sampling the Bell's superb ales.

On Wednesday 9th January, I attended, along with a host of others, a very moving service at Martley church which celebrated Ian's life with great dignity and respect.



### SADLY MISSED

We at CAMRA will all miss Ian very much and send to Carol and his family our best wishes. Donations would be appreciated from anyone who wishes to give to the Motor Neurone Disease Association or St. Richard's Hospice, Worcester in his memory.



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## Editoreale



The start of the year has already had some highs and lows for me.

I was delighted to receive a telephone call from Nik Antona (Regional Director for CAMRA in the West Midlands) advising me that Pint Taken has been voted the West Midlands region Newsletter of the Year. However this was tinged with sadness as we lost a respected CAMRA member in Ian Stevenson who died in December. Ian became a regular contributor to Pint Taken when Motor Neurone disease prevented him from venturing out - hence his articles on bottled beer.

### CHAMPION PUB

I had the opportunity to attend the National Pub of the Year presentation at the **Old Spot Inn**, Dursley in February. What a great day out that was! Apart from the fact that the licensee Steve Herbert and his wife Belinda had gone all out to receive the award, the pub was fantastic with a wide selection of ales available. If you want to see what a champion pub is like, do make the effort and go there - I don't think you will be disappointed.

### HERE COMES SUMMER

With Mild in May coming up and another summer of local beer festivals, may I wish you all a very happy Easter.

Cheers,  
Charlie Ayres, Editor



Steve and Lesley  
welcome you to the  
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Three real ales including London Pride, Black Sheep,  
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**MILD** - "Traditional Black Country Mild with hints of chocolate. A dry finish complements the aroma of the Goldings Hops." 4.3%

**WORCESTER SORCERER** - "A light golden bitter, light and refreshing, yet smooth and fruity with hints of mint and lemon. A floral aroma and crisp bitterness combining to give a balanced and clean tasting ale." 4.3%

**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%

**THIN ICE** - "An extremely pale bitter, with a delicate pine lemon crispness, softly complemented with a satisfying spiced orange". 4.5%

**IPA (First Prize Winner)** - "A light tangy Indian Pale Ale. Strong and full of flavour, yet mellow and very drinkable". An award winning premium ale. 4.8%

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[www.windsorcastlebrewery.com](http://www.windsorcastlebrewery.com)

News on beer festival planning

## Festival update 2008

Although barely into Spring the beer festival planning committees from the local CAMRA branches have begun their preparations for this summer's beer festivals .



### STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Shakespeare CAMRA's first festival was a great success and they have started to organise the runners and riders for their second one. The event will take place again at Stratford Race Course from Friday 16th to Sunday 18th May. Opening times will be from 6pm until 11pm on Friday, noon until 11pm on Saturday and from noon until 3pm on Sunday (if there is any beer left). The entrance fee will be £3 plus £2 per glass. The festival will use a token system and tokens for beer purchases will be £5 per card.

More details will be available on the Shakespeare CAMRA beer festival web-site, [www.stratfordbeerfestival.org.uk](http://www.stratfordbeerfestival.org.uk)

### REDDITCH & BROMSGROVE

This will be the sixth festival that Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA will have held at the Bromsgrove Rugby Club.

Plans are well under way, and following a personal letter to all 500 members of Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA a number of new faces have joined the planning committee in various capacities. Last year's festival was a sell-out success despite the torrential rain on the Friday night.

Being the sixth festival the committee have chosen a



theme around the 1960's cult TV show 'The Prisoner' and this is reflected in the logo that has been chosen for the festival. 100 beers are planned with 25 ciders and perries and also fruit wines. For regular updates on this festival go to [www.bromsgrovebeerfestival.org.uk](http://www.bromsgrovebeerfestival.org.uk)

### WORCESTER

After a disastrous summer for residents and visitors to Worcester and the surrounding areas last year, everyone is hoping and praying for fine weather this year. The dates for your diaries are 14th to 16th August 2008. More details will be on the web-site as they become available. [www.worcesterbeerfest.org.uk](http://www.worcesterbeerfest.org.uk)

Time to try a great beer style

## Mild in May

Discover Mild in May to give a boost to a beer style that is full-flavoured, refreshing and perfect for spring.

### DISTINCTIVE TASTE

Mild is a beer that is less hopped and usually of a lower alcohol content than many other styles. It gets much of its flavour from malts or roasted barley and is both distinctive and tasty.

Despite a resurgence in popularity amongst real ale fans mild is still a rare find in some parts of the country, and so CAMRA has dedicated the month of May 2008 to this refreshing real ale.

### PLENTY OF CHOICE

Thankfully this area has plenty of great mild ales including the Champion Beer of Britain, Hobsons Mild from Cleobury Mortimer and the newly announced West Midlands Regional Mild of the Year, Fruiterer's Mild from Ombersley's Cannon Royall Brewery. Other great milds to look out for are Bathams (Brierley Hill), Banks's Original (Wolverhampton), Hook Norton Dark (Hook Norton, Oxfordshire) and Jennings Dark (Cockermouth, Cumbria). You might even be lucky and find Timothy Taylor Golden Best (Keighley, Yorkshire) a rare example of a golden coloured light mild.

Look out for leaflets on mild and other beers with personality in your local pub.



# AleWrightNow



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# Purity

## BREWING CO

Brewers of **Pure Gold** 3.8% and **Pure UBU** (oo-boo) 4.5%  
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Exclusive importers of Veltins Pilsner and Maisels Weisse from Germany.

Also Dunkertons Organic Ciders & Milliat Juices and Nectars.

Visitors centre is available for pre-booked brewery tours. Please contact us for more details.

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Kidderminster CAMRA present their award to the Eagle and Spur in Cookley

## Pub of the Season - Autumn 2007

Kidderminster sub branch presented the **Eagle and Spur**, Cookley with the Pub of the Season award for Autumn. Paul Hall and his wife Jean run the pub with their daughters

Tori and Sarah and provide a friendly and welcoming service.

### GOOD SELECTION

There is always a good selection of real ales on offer, more than 200 have been available at different times during the past 18 months, and all are kept to a very good standard.

### POPULAR FOR FOOD

The Eagle and Spur is also becoming popular for its food as they serve well presented and cooked meals and cheerfully try to accommodate those with food intolerances.

This is a worthy pub of the season winner and well worth checking out.



Tori, Paul and Sarah Hall with Ian Mercer and Glenda Harvey of Kidderminster sub branch





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Colin Scrivener reports on the West Midlands CAMRA regional awards

## The Beer Oscars 2007

On Saturday 29th December CAMRA members from around the West Midlands travelled by various methods to Aston where, as in previous years, the West Midlands Regional Social & Presentation was booked to take place at the **Bartons Arms**.



The impressive façade of the Bartons Arms

The Bartons Arms is a Victorian gem of a pub, which has a long list of beers on offer. My group decided to start with Hobsons Mild before making our way up the magnificent staircase to the large function room where we secured a table and met with friends from other branches.

### MEMBERS WEEKEND - A GREAT SUCCESS

Nik Antona, the West Midlands Regional Director, opened the meeting by welcoming the members to the event, some of whom had travelled long distances to attend, before calling on Sarah Edmondson to report on the highly successful Members Weekend that had taken place during April 2007 in Wolverhampton. It had attracted 1009 pre-booked

members, more than ever before, with more attending on a daily basis. 91 volunteers had helped with all of the organisation and running the bar and the smooth running of the event had been praised throughout the whole of CAMRA.

### FORMAL PRESENTATIONS

The business now turned to the presentation of the awards for the best beers that had been brewed in the West Midlands and judged at the various CAMRA beer festivals around the region.

At Rugby, the mild had been judged, and the winner was Cannon Royall Fruiterer's Mild. The winning bitter judged at Wolverhampton was Hobsons Best Bitter. Woods Wonderful came top of the strong bitters at Hereford. Tamworth festival judged the best bitter category and the winner was Malvern Hills Black Pear while Birmingham chose Beowulf Dragons



Bronze medal winner Beowulf Dragon Smoke Stout



Smoke Stout the best in that class. Porters were judged at the Shakespeare branch festival and Church End Pews Porter came top.

### TWO FOR SALOPIAN



Silver medal winner Church End Pews Porter

Bromsgrove had the honour of judging the golden ale and chose Salopian Golden Thread and Salopian brewery also won the speciality class at Shrewsbury with their Lemon Dream. Wye Valley Dorothy Goodbody's Wholesome Stout was selected as the best real ale in a bottle at Harbury while Dudley festival chose Sarah Hughes Snowflake as the best winter ale. Both cider and perry were judged at Stoke and both classes were won by Olivers with Medium Cider and Medium Perry. The final award of the afternoon was for the champion beer of the West Midlands and the overall winner was Hobsons Best Bitter which rounded off their very successful year.



Gold medal winner Hobsons Best Bitter

#### TIME TO SOCIALISE

Once the official business was over we were welcomed to partake of the buffet by the team at the Bartons Arms. The pub does an amazing range of Thai food and we were quite rapidly served to a very tasty selection of this by the staff.

We sat and chatted as we enjoyed the food, helped by sampling some good beers. Greenjack Orange Wheat beer and Oakham JHB were both good but I enjoyed the Oakham Bishop's Farewell the best.

#### BEER UTOPIA

As the meeting finished in the middle of the afternoon we decided to stop in Birmingham city centre on the way

home. The first stop was at **Utopia**, a modern bar in a very nice old building, that had been recommended. We tried the Hooky which was average but then the next beer put on was Church End Goats Milk which was very good. It was not really my kind of bar and the prices were high.

#### FINALE

From there we moved to the **Wellington**, very crowded as usual, to finish off our day and enjoyed Discovery Pioneer and Purity Farmers Harvest which was a new brew to me. This meeting makes a very pleasant finale to the local CAMRA year.

For those who have not been to a regional meeting or visited the Bartons Arms it is well worth taking part and putting a note in the diary for the end of this year's calendar.

#### OTHER RESULTS

The other results for last year were as follows: -  
Mild: 2nd place Church End Gravediggers Ale, 3rd place

Hobsons Mild.

Bitter: 2nd place Purity Pure Gold, 3rd place Holden's Black Country Bitter.

Best Bitter: 2nd place Wye Valley HPA, 3rd place Kinver Edge.

Strong: 2nd place Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby, 3rd place No Award.

Golden: 2nd place Wye Valley Dorothy Goodbody's Golden Ale, 3rd place Ludlow Gold.

Stout: 2nd place Titanic Stout, 3rd place Burton Bridge Top Dog Stout.

Porter: 2nd place Enville Porter, 3rd place North Cotswold Hung, Drawn 'n' Portered.

Winter: 2nd place Burton Bridge Thomas Sykes, 3rd place Kinver Over The Edge.  
Speciality: 2nd place Enville Ginger, 3rd place Hanby Cherry Bomb.

Real Ale in a Bottle : 2nd place Coors Worthington White Shield, 3rd place Hobsons Manor Ale.

Cider: 2nd place Gwatkins Yarlington Mill Medium, 3rd place Gwatkins Norman.

Perry: 2nd place Olivers Perry, 3rd place Brook Farm Perry.



West Midlands region CAMRA members enjoying the end of year awards at the Bartons Arms

*Presentation photographs courtesy Simon Hansen of Stourbridge CAMRA*

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Brian Partridge reviews Phil and Sheila Meads life in the licensing trade

## 40 years at the Coach and Horses

In 1792 the **Coach and Horses** on Weatheroak Hill was a coaching inn and was the first stop on the southern coaching route out of Birmingham. By the time Phil and Sheila became involved with it, it was owned by the Bournville Village Trust formed by the well known Cadbury family. This is a little strange as the Cadburys were Quakers and there were no pubs in Bournville.

However it is believed that the trust bought the whole area and the pub was included.

### STARTED AS MANAGER

Initially, Phil was employed as manager to the licensee and tenant Mr Milne and

arrived at the pub on February 7th 1968. The stillage was a large brick shelf at the back of the bar and beer was served straight from the cask. Normally there would be five 36 gallon barrels of Ansells Mild, two nine gallon barrels of Ansells Bitter and two nines of M & B Brew XI. At this time the pub consisted of the currently existing, stone flagged bar with an open fire and a lounge bar.

### PUB FOR SALE

After eight years as manager Phil bought the tenancy from Mr Milne in 1976. In 1978 Phil and Sheila tried to buy the freehold but Bournville Village Trust refused to sell. However,

work was required on the building and also on surrounding farms and in 1981 the trust offered the pub for sale and Phil bought it. The lounge was extended in 1983 and a kitchen was added to cater for the increasing demand for food in pubs. The gammon and egg sandwiches were famous. Real ale was always a priority for Phil although beers had to be varied



to suit customers' changing tastes. Beers from the Wood Brewery Ltd were taken almost from their inception and are still served today. In 1991 a restaurant and a large kitchen were added so that now a full range of food is available from cheese and onion or ham cobs in the bar to complete meals in the restaurant. All is excellent value and quality.

### BREWERY ESTABLISHED

Weatheroak Brewery was set up in 1997 by Dave and Pat Smith. This is in an outhouse of the pub and run by private arrangement with Phil and Sheila. It is a separate busi-

ness but the pub sells the four excellent regular ales and guests produced. The first experimental ale was called 'Maybe' as they didn't know how it would be received. Following comments from customers, adjustments were made and this eventually became the delicious Weatheroak Ale.

Twelve real ales are normally on sale in the pub and, besides popular regulars from Hobsons and Wood, there are guests from breweries not often seen in this area.

### BUSINESS PARTNER

Phil and Sheila's son Gary, who was born on the premises, has become a partner in the business and is responsible for the day-to-day running with Phil in the

background. The pub has won many local awards including Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA Pub of the Year on several occasions. Congratulations to Phil and Sheila on their achievements.

Look out for the fortieth anniversary celebrations at the pub in April or May when beer could be at 1968 prices!



Glenda Harvey digests her local pub food scene

## Pubs and Grub

Some pubs sell first class real ale. Some pubs serve finely cooked fresh meals. Some pubs serve both and oh what joy it is to be able to enjoy real ale and fine food in the same venue.

In the Kidderminster area we have several country and village pubs where fine food and real ale are served in the same establishment. Let me introduce you to my favourites.

### BELL, PENSAX

First up has to be the **Bell** at Pensax. As West Midlands Pub of the Year the beer is superb and always served in tip top condition with an ever changing choice. The food is good too. At the recent presentation we were served with a variety of sandwiches made with thick fresh bread and generous fillings all served with piles of hot, crisp chips.

When not catering for a presentation the food is just as good and as generous. The steak sandwich with onions



Bell, Pensax

and mushrooms is just divine and my hubby's favourite is the locally sourced sausages with egg, chips and beans. More restaurant type meals are also available and dishes include local seasonal ingredi-

ents such as game pie and there is usually a fish choice as well. Lovely beer, lovely food, well recommended.

### EAGLE AND SPUR, COOKLEY

My next choice is the **Eagle and Spur** at Cookley. This was recently awarded the Kidderminster branch Pub of the Season award for its well kept, often changing real ales. They are also popular for their well cooked and presented meals.

The friendly staff are ready



Eagle & Spur

to discuss the menu with you and offer advice to help you choose. A relaxed atmosphere and the excellent beer all contribute to show why this pub is so popular with diners and drinkers alike.

### PLOUGH INN, FAR FOREST

For a different experience try the **Plough Inn** at Far Forest. On first entering it can give the impression of being a food chain pub, but fear not, the food and menu are first class.

There is a wide choice to suit most tastes and the carvery is good value. Portions are generously sized – a woman at the next table or-



Plough Inn

dered fish and chips and when it arrived she exclaimed "I didn't realise I'd ordered a \*\*\*\*\* whale!". The beer is good here too with locally produced ales such as Purity and Hobsons served. This is a very popular award winning venue so at busy times booking is recommended.

I'm running out of space to mention my next two, the **Colliers Arms** on the A456 Tenbury Road between Bewdley and Clows Top and the **Sun and Slipper** at Mamble.

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COLLIERS ARMS,  
CLOWS TOP

The Colliers Arms is featured in the 2008 Michelin Eating out In Pubs Guide so the food is well rated. The beer is worth a visit as well, Hobsons is usually featured and Sadlers



Colliers Arms

was available on my last visit. The food menu can be viewed on their website [www.colliersarms.com](http://www.colliersarms.com) and this may be just the place you are looking for if you want somewhere different for that special meal.

SUN AND SLIPPER,  
MAMBLE

The Sun and Slipper is a regular GBG entry for its well kept locally sourced beers. Hobsons is usually on and the



Sun & Slipper

food has a good reputation as well. Sample menus can be found on their website [www.sunandslipperinn.co.uk](http://www.sunandslipperinn.co.uk).

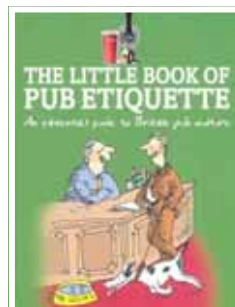
So go on, give the Kidderminster country and village pubs a try for fine food and excellent ale.

New publication

## Pub Etiquette

The British boozier is a great place. However, the unspoken rules of pub behaviour are many and varied, from ordering a drink to sharing a table.

The Little Book of Pub Etiquette will give you the heads up on the minutiae of drinking behaviour from how to nurse a drink to while away the hours to how to accept a drink graciously with just the right amount of protest. We've all been though it: walking into a pub...all heads at the bar turning, meeting your friendly gaze with a hostile stare. You quickly realise that the locals do not welcome your presence - they despise your choice of drink, your choice of



attire and your choice of friends. But fear not, The Little Book of Pub Etiquette will allow you to instantly recognise the telltale clues that signal the difference between a hostile hostility and the warm embrace of the welcoming watering hole.

This little book will guide you through the intricacies of the drinking scene. It also doubles up as a beer mat, and a table-leveller...

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Sharon Laird reports on the first Tenbury Wells festival

## Real ale found in Tenbury

In late October, Tenbury Wells Agricultural Society hosted their first beer festival, which now looks set to become an annual event. As part of the society's autumn show the festival, which had 10 real ales, 8 real ciders and a perry was held at the Bridge Hotel in Tenbury.

### WELL RECEIVED

Despite little previous experience at hosting beer festivals the organisers did a superb job, helped with equipment and advice from John at the Bell, Pensax and Tim from the Bridge, Stamford Bridge. The festival coincided with Tenbury's popular annual Applefest and although not

widely advertised it was still well attended and certainly very well received. The festival was held next to the show's exhibition hall so drinkers were able to watch the proceedings including the judging of exhibits such as 'Best Sample of Hops Suitable for Pale Ales', 'Best Tray of Perry Pears' and 'Home Produced Sparkling Cider'.

### 150TH ANNIVERSARY

The Society celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2008 and next October's festival will be bigger and better. Plans are afoot to change the venue to a more central location in Tenbury, hopefully near to the historic Pump Rooms.

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## Letters

Dear Editor,  
I enjoy reading your newsletter. In the Autumn edition I spotted a minor error, and as I'm a pedant liking correct metric symbols here is the bad news. On page 21 there was 'gm', which isn't the correct symbol for gram. In the past the Post Office and Royal Mail have also got things wrong including the following incorrect symbols 'Kg' and 'Kgs'. The good news for pub quiz organisers is my book on International Symbols. It's a useful resource for creating original questions there is more information by visiting [www.simetricmatters.com](http://www.simetricmatters.com) The book has hundreds of symbols (together with unit names); here are four unusual ones to ponder over during your drink: 'zS', 'ZS', 'Zs' and 'zs'.

Philip Bladon  
Southcrest (by letter)

*I will have a word with my proof readers! Ed.*

Dear Sir,  
I was interested to read your review of the pubs in Worcester, particularly as I was going there the next day. The **Plough** - a pub I had not been to in years was much praised. Subsequently my wife and I sought it out, looking forward to 'good food made with local produce... at lunchtimes'. On entering, I immediately enquired about food. "Oh, we

don't have any demand for it in the week. Food only at weekends" I was told. "Just this week?" I asked. "No, all the time", I was told. Thus much disappointed, we repaired to the **Farriers** for a meal and some excellent Hobgoblin.

What I want to know is why both yourselves and the 2008 Good Beer Guide are so inaccurate? In passing I expected a clean and welcoming atmosphere at the **Plough**, a good selection of ale as well as food. Some pumps had no clips, and from the outside it was not obvious that it was even open. If the new owners are to thrive, I think a bigger effort is needed to present the pub as a place worth visiting.

David John  
Great Barr (by letter)

*Usual practice when a beer is finished is to have the clip turned around. Often it indicates that one should have been there earlier as the beer was good! Ed.*

Dear Editor,  
It's bad enough with Wetherspoon's dragging the trade through the mud with its cut-price drinks offers, in our area of Redditch town centre there are licensed premises selling alcohol irresponsibly. Chicago Rock does buy one get one free, and reduced prices from 5pm to 9pm. Fuse nightclub runs a £1 entry, all drinks £1.20 promotion on Thursday nights and the Academy offers drinks at £1.50. These offers came in around the smoking ban and in my opinion is a knee-jerk reaction to it, this at

a time when our alcohol related crime and disorder figures are soaring at a 66 per cent increase upon last year. We have recently had a letter from a very concerned police inspector who has warned licensees that these figures will not be tolerated. I do not now and have never believed that price cuts are the way to lure customers into your pub for the following reasons: If you cut prices people will drink more and get drunk in the process, people have a given amount of money to spend regardless of the prices, however human nature tells us that with certain groups of people, if you can buy ten pints for £10 in one pub and five pints for £10 in another, some would venture into the cheapest pubs. If you raise your standards in your pub then the price you charge can reflect it. Our pub has a Cask Marque award for good beer and we are recognised by CAMRA in the Good Beer Guide 2008 - the only pub in Redditch to be included in it. Advertising this will win people over. Most people are not price conscious if they feel they are getting value for their money. This is where our strategy appears to differ from some of the big pubco's, knocking out cheap booze as though they were competing with big super-markets and off-licences.

Paul Thornas, FBII, MHI  
The **Golden Cross** Redditch

*This was originally published in the Publican in October 2007. Ed.*

# Quick Halves



- On 17th December a major fire swept through the **Lyttelton Arms** in Hagley. At the height of the blaze 11 fire appliances were in use to bring the fire under control. The pub is closed indefinitely.
- The **Washford Mill** in Redditch has re-opened for trade following an extensive refurbishment. The pub was closed as a result of the summer floods. A range of cask ales are available along with a daily carvery menu.
- Five new bottled ales have been introduced to the 58 currently stocked at Morrisons in Bromsgrove. The beers are Morland Original, Cain's Raisin Beer and Well's Bombardier 'Burning Gold' also Brain's 'S.A' Gold - the CAMRA Bronze awarded Champion Beer of Britain in 2007 and Bateman's 'Dark Lord' described by Roger Protz in his book '300 Beers To Try Before You Die'. All are available at four for £5 or £1.49 each. Contact Morrisons via Lee Kiteley on 01527 576713.
- The **Cross and Bowling Green**, Branson's Cross was taken over in December by Tony Shew and Bev Turner. They haven't run a pub before but are very keen to make a success of it. They have smartened the premises considerably and the dining room has a light and airy feel to it. The real ales on offer are Tetley's Mild and Youngs Bitter and there are plans for a changing guest. There is a lunch menu of traditional pub

food and a quality evening menu of dishes cooked by a local chef. Food is served Wednesday to Saturday plus Sunday lunches. There is a quiz evening on Mondays and look out for theme days and nights.

- Paul Hall, licensee of the **Eagle and Spur** in Cookley is likely to be leaving the pub within the next three months. He and his family are moving back to the North West after just under three years at the pub. Paul cited the industry's nightmare of trying to make a profit when rent and utility bills are rising faster than income as the main reason for leaving.
- Adults with children are allowed only two alcoholic drinks at JD Wetherspoon pubs in order to limit their stay. A spokesman for the company said it was "uncomfortable" with children being on the premises for long periods because of a lack of play facilities. The chain has no policy to put notices up to this effect, rather leaving refusal at the discretion of their managers. One couple who were recently refused were advised that it was to comply with child cruelty legislation.
- The **White Heart** that became **Seamus O'Donells** in Sidbury has now re-opened after a long refurbishment as the **Glove in Hand**. The cask beers will rotate between Sadlers and Wye Valley. There is also Leffe on draught and bottles of Belgian beers and continental lagers.

- Sadly, the **Peacock Inn** at Newnham Bridge has closed suddenly. The historic pub, a building of great character on the A456 is owned by Punch Taverns who have advertised the lease for sale.
- The **Ship Inn**, Tenbury Wells has reopened after suffering severe flood damage in the summer. The friendly pub on Teme Street which has a warm, welcoming atmosphere serves two real ales including Hobsons Best.
- The **Lion** at Clifton upon Teme, owned by Punch Taverns, has a change of licensees. The current licensees have decided to take early retirement. It is not known whether the new owners will make changes.

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Pubs worth seeking out

## Little Gems

OLD BULL, INKBERROW

The **Old Bull**, situated adjacent to the village green in Inkberrow, is a delightful pub. It has exposed beams, brass ornaments, stone flagged floors and has two open fires. Local legend has it that William Shakespeare took refreshment at the inn on his way from Stratford to obtain his marriage bond in Worcester. This would have been about 1582 although the first recorded deeds indicating that The Old Bull was a public house are for 1750. A modern connection with the entertainment world is its Archers theme and members of the cast have been known to visit. The pub has

recently been taken over by Mike McCarthy. Mike is well known in the area as he has previously run the **Oddfelows**, the **Country Girl** and has been steward at Redditch Golf Club.

### THREE REAL ALES

There are three real ales available, these are Flowers Original, Fuller's London Pride and Wye Valley HPA. Food consists of tasty baguettes, starters and a good variety of main courses. Lunch and evening meals are available Tuesday to Saturday and there is a traditional Sunday lunch. One Saturday per month there is a food theme night. Some live music evenings are to be arranged. A warm welcome is assured at this friendly pub.



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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 (Contact Ian on: 07818 401046)

[www.kidderminstercamra.org.uk](http://www.kidderminstercamra.org.uk)

Tue 18 Mar Branch meeting - See website for more details

Redditch and Bromsgrove branch (contact Doug on: 07842 135354)

[www.rbcamra.org.uk](http://www.rbcamra.org.uk)

Tue 11 Mar Branch meeting - Wildmoor Oak, Bromsgrove B61 0RB

Sun 16 Mar Social event - Branch presentation of Pub of the Year Award  
12.30pm

Tue 8 Apr Branch meeting - Why Not, Astwood Bank B96 6LU

Sat 3 May Social event - Long Itchington Beer Festival

Tue 13 May Annual General Meeting - The Railway Inn, Studley B80 7JS

Worcester branch (contact Peter on: 01684 573018)

[www.worcestercamra.org.uk](http://www.worcestercamra.org.uk)

Thur 13 Mar Planning meeting Worcester Beer Cider & Perry Festival 2008 -  
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern WR14 2HN

Sat 15 Mar Malvern crawl & curry night - meet at Foley Arms WR14 4QS  
7.30pm

Tue 18 Mar Branch meeting - The Walter de Cantelupe, Kempsey WR5 3NA

Sat 5 Apr Worcester St Johns crawl - meet at Berkeley Arms WR2 4HF

Tue 15 Apr Branch meeting - Three Nuns, Powick WR2 4SB

Tue 20 May Annual General Meeting - The Plough, Worcester WR1 2JF

Tue 17 Jun Branch meeting at Tally Ho - Tenbury Broadheath WR15 8QX

Shakespeare branch (contact Lloyd on: 01789 778726)

[www.shakespearecamra.org.uk](http://www.shakespearecamra.org.uk)

Covering Evesham area

## CAMRA Beer Festivals

Burton & South Derbyshire 1st Spring Beer & Cider Festival

Town Hall, Burton Upon Trent

March 28th - 29th

Coventry Beer Festival

Coventry Rugby Football Club Ground, Butts Road, Coventry

April 11th - 12th

Stourbridge Beer Festival

Stourbridge Town Hall, Stourbridge

May 22nd - 24th

For more information on these events go to

[www.pinttaken.org.uk](http://www.pinttaken.org.uk)

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## And Finally...

### Bionade

This is apparently a health drink that looks like beer and tastes like fizzy pop and is a family-brewed health drink that's taken Europe by storm.

Bionade was launched in the UK in December and the makers of the German health drink may be thankful that we are a nation of beer drinkers as they won't have to explain what fermentation is.

That fermentation has anything at all to do with a health drink may take some explaining, as might the fact that Bionade is made by a brewery. "We have had people assume that Bionade must be some low-alcohol beer, espe-

cially because it comes in what looks like a beer bottle," said Peter Kowalsky, the company's managing director. "And in Germany we do have a lot of beer drinkers that drink Bionade when they can't drink beer, because it has that similar malty, tangy taste they recognise. But it is a health drink."

Bionade was the product of desperation, the Peter brewery was a small Bavarian family business that was being squeezed towards closure by major beer brands. Dieter Leipold, Kowalsky's stepfather, was its master brewer and he spent five years finding a way in which the fermentation process could be used to turn sugars into something drinkable but alcohol-free. The breakthrough came when he

experimented with the bacterium kombucha, using it to convert sugars into gluconic acid. The result was Bionade, a naturally-flavoured soft drink made to the same ancient and exacting purity laws as German beer.

The drink was originally targeted at children, but getting parents to buy a health drink from a brewery, proved tricky. Bionade has recently rocketed in popularity thanks to being picked up by the more stylish bars as an urban sophisticate's alternative to some fizzy, syrup-based sugar rush or an unexciting alcohol-free beer.

Unusually for a healthy drink, which tend to be strongly favoured by women, sales are apparently evenly split between the sexes.



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