



Forward to the Bar

Beer, brewery and pub news for the discerning Birmingham drinker

Special Online Version
April - June 2020

Birmingham CAMRA Pub of
the Year

Brewery News



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forward.camra.org.uk



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Hello dear readers. Because of the Coronavirus outbreak we have had to currently put our second *Forward To The Bar* on line. We intend distributing paper copies of the magazine when normality returns. We do hope you enjoyed the first edition of *Forward To The Bar*, and judging by the responses we have had, it has proved very popular.

Something else that we hope you enjoyed was the recent Great British Beer Festival Winter, or GBBF-W. February's event was the first of three years that the Second City is the venue for this national CAMRA event, hosted by the West Midlands' CAMRA region. Read a report about GBBF-W in this edition!

We want your magazine to be full of interesting articles and features, so if you think you can contribute, please send me your piece for me to read.

A new feature in this edition is the letters page, so please email your comments, whether positive or negative, to the address given below.

Can I take this opportunity to encourage Birmingham Branch members to come to more events, be they socials or meetings, when we are back? We try to make both of them fun: naturally socials seem more so, but we do try and keep the 'business' side of meetings as brief as possible, so that members can socialise and enjoy great beer in the great pubs that the city has to offer.

Remember, you can email me with your comments and suggestions. We want *Forward To The Bar* to be not just the best branch magazine but our branch to be the best! I would personally like to thank all of those who made this edition and our very first one possible.

To conclude, have you considered ordering beer online from our local breweries to support them? Some of them are endeavouring to do this, so why not contact them?

Cheers!

Martin
Editor and Branch Chairman



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Citizens Advice consumer helpline: If you have a complaint about beer quality, short measure, lack of price list or a misleading product promotion, inform the licensee. If you do not get a satisfactory response you can contact 03454 040506 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm).

Disclaimer: The views expressed in articles are those of individual contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Birmingham Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.

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Branch Diary and Events

The following events are open to all CAMRA members, but non-members are also welcome to join us.

Details are correct at the time of going to press. Please visit our website, birminghamcamra.org.uk for details, which should also appear (nearer the time) on our weekly WOW (What's On this Week) email. If you don't receive it, please check with CAMRA central office whether they have your correct email address. Please also check your spam!

All meetings start at 8pm unless otherwise indicated.

April

Saturday 18th Pub of the Year certificate awards

Saturday 25th Beer & Skittles Social with Solihull & District CAMRA

May

Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd - Social at Coventry Beer & Cider Festival

Monday 4th - Branch & Committee Meeting

Saturday 9th - Trip to Stockport Beer & Cider Festival (and pubs!)

Saturday 16th - Regional Mild Trail (check WM CAMRA website)

Saturday 23rd - Birmingham Mild Meander (check our website)

June

Monday 1st - Branch & Committee Meeting

July

Monday 6th - Branch & Committee Meeting



Birmingham CAMRA



Cover photo of the Black Horse, Aston by David Johnston

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or call 01727 867 201**

An update of what is happening within the

Attic. The brewery continues to produce exciting new beers that can be found at the brewery open days and in some of the pubs in the Birmingham area. Recent releases include Bostin Bass, a nitro poured bitter and LL Coulis, a Raspberry and Vanilla wheat beer. Watch out for their beer being released in cans shortly. The brewery is hosting a series of charity events over the coming months, see their Facebook page for details.



Birmingham Brewing Company. The brewery has expanded its capacity following a short move to another unit on the same trading estate it has occupied since the business started. Another brewery experimenting with new beers, they have added a single hop Citra to the list of specials they have produced. They brewed a special beer, Love Brummie, for the Great British Beer Festival-Winter (GBBF-W) which was held in Birmingham in February.



Burning Soul. Following the departure of Richard Murphey, one of the founders of the brewery, some personnel changes have taken place with Quinlan Hart joining the team. For a long time, the beers were available only in KeyKeg, but they are now increasing the amount that will be put in casks for the trade, they have also added a handpull to the bar at the brewery so they can sell cask beers there as well. The range continues to vary throughout the year.



Dig Brew. Dig Brew specialises in one off beers so there is always a changing range available at their bar in the brewery during their popular open weekends. Usually a couple of new ones each week, they regularly have seven or eight on the bar at any one time, with fresh made pizzas available if you need some blotting paper during your visit!



Froth Blowers. This Erdington based brewery is currently looking to expand their distribution area beyond the 30 miles that most of their beers are currently sold within. Their brewery bar at GBBF-W was a fine showcase for their beers, with them selling out by the end of the event.



Glasshouse. Another brewery that produces new beers all the time. Recent specials include a 7% Vermont Pale, Searching for Pylons, and Floating Emotions, a 5.4% Citra/Mosaic/Enigma Pale. Demand for the beers has increased so much they have added three more large fermenting vessels to the plant to satisfy orders.



Halton Turner. Halton Turner has started the year strongly with a series of Tap Takeovers planned at certain pubs within the Birmingham area. The first at the Hop Garden in Harborne in January went down well so watch out for them coming to a pub near you sometime. The small plant is working to capacity and the team are thinking about expansion in the near future.



breweries of Birmingham

Indian. Indian Brewery in Hall Green continues to supply their two pubs located near Snow Hill station and in Solihull along with some beers going into the free trade.



Moseley. Still brewing occasionally with the beers being bottled for sale at the local market.



Ostlers. Ostlers continues to brew on site at the White Horse in Harborne, the bulk of their production being for sale in the pub with very little getting into the trade.



Red Moon. The brewery is currently searching for a site to allow them to set up their own tap house, this will be in the area near the brewery in Yardley. The beers have been seen in certain pubs in the area.



Rock & Roll Brewhouse. The move to the new premises on Hall Street in the Jewellery Quarter will be complete by the time you read this. The new venue is on two levels, with the brewery being visible as you enter the building, and the bar is upstairs. They have maintained a lot of the quirky nature of the previous site with lots of concert posters and other oddities adorning the walls and ceilings. The tap house is now open on Thursdays as well as the usual Friday and Saturday.



Two Towers. Birmingham's oldest active brewery will be celebrating its 10th anniversary later in the year



and plans are being made to celebrate in style, including special beers for the event. This will be followed towards the end of the year by the 200th anniversary of their pub, the Gunmakers Arms, a busy year ahead!

In the last issue, I mentioned that the **Davenports** brand is now back with us, but no longer brewed in Birmingham. The Davenports Brewery was merged with Greenall Whitley in 1986 and was wound down and closed soon afterwards, with the brands being sold to Empire Star, then owners of Highgate Brewery, which in turn closed down. The Blue Bear brewery in Worcestershire subsequently bought the brands and released small amounts of Davenports beers into the market. Following a move to Smethwick a few years ago, they dropped the Blue Bear name and rebranded themselves as Davenports, resurrecting a lot of the old marketing identity and beers.



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Jewel in the Crown of Brum Pubs!

Birmingham Pub of the Year Announced

The results are in and white smoke has appeared from our Birmingham CAMRA chimney! After many weeks of voting people's decisions have been totted up and we are proud to announce the top three in this year's branch Pub of the Year (POTY).

And the winners are...

1st **The Jeweller's Arms**,
Hockley

2nd **The Old Moseley Arms**,
Balsall Heath

3rd **The Lamp Tavern**,
Highgate

The other finalists, in alphabetical order were:

Burning Soul, Hockley; **The Craven Arms**, City Centre; **The Post Office Vaults**, City Centre; **The Spotted Dog**, Digbeth; **The Woodman**, City Centre; **The Wellington**, City Centre. **Rock & Roll Brewhouse** moved during the voting period so with great regret it could not be included in the final voting.

We shall be giving certificates to the top three soon, but we shall be having a social to all these three to raise a glass (or two...) on Saturday 18th April, details of which will be given on both our website and our weekly What's on this Week email (WOW) nearer the time. We hope to see you there, and we will be providing a full report with photos on our



The Jewellers Arms



The Old Moseley Arms



The Lamp Tavern

social in the very next edition of *Forward To The Bar*.

The **Good Intent** in the Great Western Arcade in the city centre has reduced its Sunday opening hours to 12-6pm. The pub donates its profits to charity, hence its name. It is owned by Craddock's brewery from Stourbridge.

The Indian Brewery (see Brewery News) supplies beers as well as Indian street food to the **Snowhill** in Livery Street and also the **Solihull** in Station Road, Solihull. More details and opening times from indianbrewery.com.

The new **Rock & Roll Taphouse** location is 19 Hall Street, still in Hockley though! It is open each Friday 5-9 pm and Saturday 1-7 pm.

Yardley's Red Moon microbrewery has recently opened **Ivy's** a café adjacent to the Yew Tree traffic island. At the time of typing (early March) they were hoping to have the bar part of the venue by the time *Forward to the Bar* went to press.

Dear reader, can you help? Do you have any pub or indeed club news? Then please email the information to yours truly editor@forward.camra.org.uk

Martin Collinge

Jewellers Arms



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Can you help improve *Forward to the Bar?*

Would you like to be involved in Birmingham's new Beer and Pub Magazine?

The *Forward to the Bar* team is looking for volunteers who can help put the magazine together and distribute it across the city.

We are particularly looking for:

- Pub and brewery photographs for use in the magazine and the front cover
- Contributions of articles and content - especially pub news
- Help with delivering the magazine to pubs and other venues

Email editor@forward.camra.org.uk for more details.

Letters

Dear Ed (Martin)

Good to see a Brummie CAMRA magazine on the street again. A most enjoyable and well-produced first edition read.

I thought you might like to share a picture of a badge that I recently obtained on eBay with your readers as of local interest.

Cheers

Roger Corbett

Ed: we hope readers can make out the Atkinson's name on the badge. Certain members will remember this local brewery and its sad demise, like too many others, through takeovers and selling of the brewery. Atkinson's finally closed in 1961.



Dear Ed

Firstly, many thanks to you and your team for relaunching our branch magazine, which was a very interesting read!

Secondly, I was wondering what other events our branch could hold to attract members to come along. It's a shame we don't see more of them throughout the year, as we are a friendly lot who welcome

members old and new. Maybe this letters page will give people an opportunity to suggest socials they would like to see.

Keep up the good work.

Ed's note: the author asked that their name not be given.

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Great British Beer Festival Winter

The Great British Beer Festival-Winter is a national event that moves around the country and has a three year tenure in any given location. In February, the West Midlands Region of CAMRA hosted the festival at the New Bingley Hall in Birmingham.

As many Birmingham CAMRA members will know, this used to be the venue for the Birmingham Beer and Cider Festival, so it was nice to return there for another event, only this time it was being organised by a team of volunteers from all over the West Midlands, and featured some innovations to try and make the event more relevant to the younger attendees we hoped to attract. This included a Gin and Prosecco bar, KeyKeg beers and a retro games area featuring some old favourites like PacMan and Space Invaders. Of course, we still had a wide range of cask beers from local brewers and those further afield, including classics and brand new beers, giving visitors a wide range of beers in just about every style imaginable.

The Tuesday started with trade and members only for a few hours, and it was great to see so many brewers and publicans there enjoying the large range of ales and ciders available from the start. This period also hosted the Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition which judged four different styles of beers, and led to a local brew, Fixed Wheel's Blackheath Stout, being judged the overall winner of the competition, a well-deserved accolade for this excellent Black Country brewery.

Over the week, the event welcomed in excess of 5000 visitors from all parts of the UK as well as others from Denmark, Germany and America, who enjoyed the various drinks that were available, along with a variety of food offerings to soak it all up. As in the past, we had a festival charity, and this



Visitors enjoying the festival

year we were proud to have Love Brum as our chosen team, and they did great work looking after visitors' coats and bags whilst they went around enjoying the event and in doing so, raised money to help a host of local specialist charities.

Thornbridge, Davenports and Froth Blowers all had their own bars, giving visitors an opportunity to talk to the teams behind these ventures as well as trying the beers they were showcasing. Entertainment was also in the outer hall alongside the food and brewery bars and featured a varied diet of buskers during the later days of the festival, with some excellent headline bands, including 12.15 and the Rooters.

If this has whetted your appetite, the GBBF-W will be back at New Bingley Hall next February, or if you cannot wait that long, there are many other smaller but still excellent festivals being run across the region.

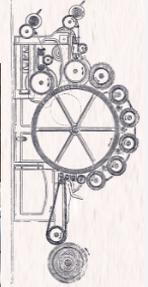
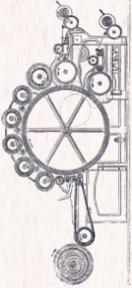
My thanks go to all the volunteers who helped organise the event, and everyone who came along to enjoy what we had to offer. It was especially nice to see the return of a former branch chairman and beer festival organiser who took time out from his busy schedule in Hertfordshire to volunteer for a few hours!

Mark Parkes

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BREWERY

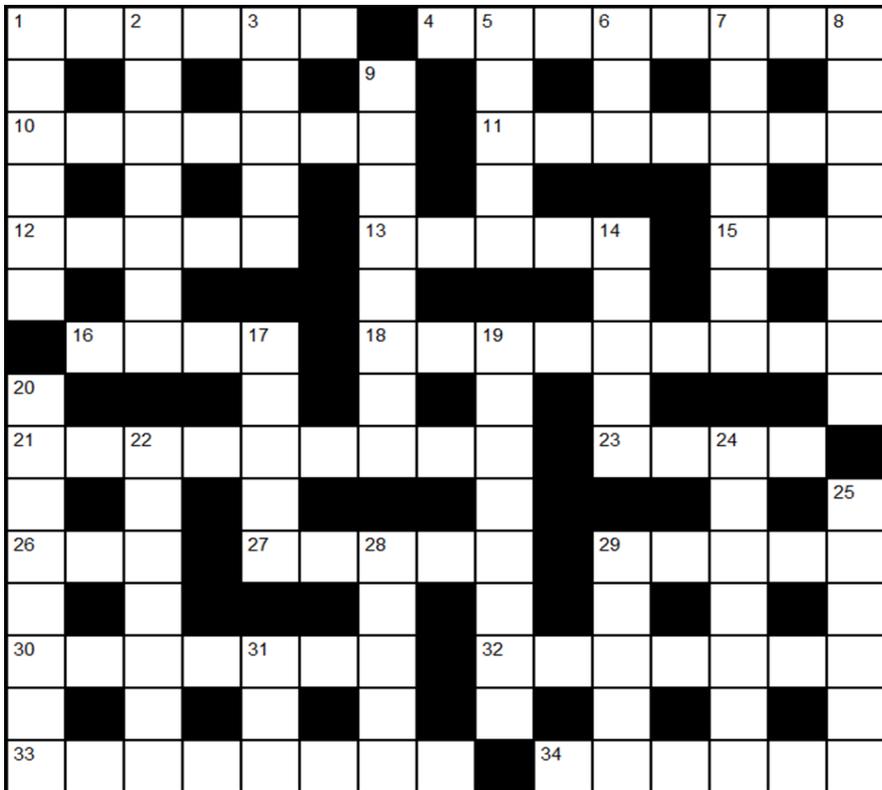
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Crossword



Across

1. Yorkshire brewer to a t? (6)
4. What we all like doing (8)
10. Where beer comes from (7)
11. Not what I always drink (7)
12. Need these to buy beer in SA (5)
13. Pale Ale? (5)
15. Not a wrong bar, a sphere (3)
16. Long time in a barrel? (4)
18. Birmingham brewery (3,6)
21. Word to describe your pint (9)
23. Brewery in London? (4)
26. Insignificant ABV? (3)
27. For alcohol, all the same (5)
29. Can't afford to drink (5)
30. As 14 down (7)
32. Shape of a glass. (7)
33. Buy me a drink! (3,3,2)
34. A copper is a type of this Drink (6)

Down

1. Danish lager (6)
2. Part of a pub (3,4)
3. Odds it's not Evan Evans (5)
5. Circular drinks? (5)
6. A new German beer? (3)
7. An errand I do for my pal (1,3,3)
8. Burton best? (4,4)
9. Drink belonging to me (2,4,2)
14. To love your pint? (5)
17. Bottom of the glass? (5)
19. Neck? Smooth? (3,5)
20. Drinking a lot (8)
22. Town of Tiny Rebel (7)
24. Accept lack of ale? (7)
25. Where beer is kept (6)
28. Thetford beers - tribal (5)
29. Popular pub game? (5)
31. Place to drink and stay (3)

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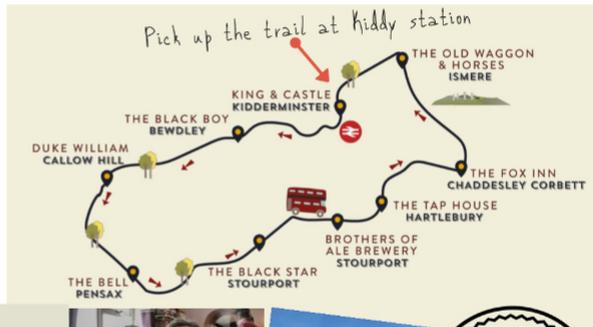
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All the adverts were created before the Corona virus restrictions.

Please check online and through social media and do *not* assume they will be trading as previously or that physical events will be taking place.

No advertisers have been invoiced for inclusion in this issue of *Forward to the Bar*.

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- FARTHINGS: GREEN LANE, B36 0AY
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Tim Webb Looks at the Changing World of Beer



Beer designations are changing. Dark beers struggle when called Mild. Bitter has become Amber or Golden. Cask ale is up and down, (undefined) craft beer is rising and brewers have started adding all manner of stuff to recipes. It's a bit of a mess isn't it?

As diversity takes root in brewing, older-style session beers, such as cask ale, are challenged to become good enough to survive as new types of beer arrive that vary in quality from stunning to sad.

Across beer styles as a whole, cask-conditioning improves relatively few but prominent among these are the lower alcohol ales that dominated late 20th century British drinking culture. But if the UK follows the rest of the world - and whatever happens with Brexit it probably will - folksy cask ale will come up against styles that might broadly be divided into the classic and the experimental.

Classic styles are represented by pale ale (including IPAs), porters and stouts, stronger brown ales, and some foreign examples like Weizenbier, or even properly made Pilsner or Helles. The most revered will become those that represent consistent, well-made exemplars of the best in style, with plausible, cheaper, less

good imitations enjoying a wider market in their wake.

Experimental styles will produce a few classics of the future, though most will launch and fizzle, none more so than flavoured beers. Wine remains the drink of choice for people who care about flavour and wine makers do not add flavourings to their wines. Rather they pull the best flavours from their grapes. Brewers can learn from this.

“Competition will continue from brewers large and small, making brands that look and sound good but in truth are just dull beers with a bit of eye liner.”

It is inevitable that semi-classic, semi-folksy cask ale will be challenged to re-establish 'brand cask' as a superior and distinctive type of session beer, distancing itself as far as

possible from those top-selling cask brands more associated with cheap than good, produced industrially and sold without conviction.

It is also predictable that the nature of breweries will change too.

The next decade will likely see more local breweries with taphouses, acting as brewpubs that serve a bit of free trade. The survivors will produce beers good enough to be the local variants of more popular beer styles, while a much smaller proportion of independent brewers will likely emerge as 'top

names', producing bespoke ranges of distinctive beers for the wider beer trade at home and abroad.

Competition will continue from brewers large and small, making brands that look and sound good but in truth are just dull beers with a bit of eye liner. But provided consumer groups keep putting forward arguments that counter the global companies' desire to retain unfair control over large parts of the retail trade, top brand beers will continue to lose market share to the benefit of all.

I suspect it will be a better world for most of us who like beer, but I am a long way off being convinced that beers with 'citrus, pepper, juniper berries, lemon peel and coriander' will have much place in it.

Tim Webb is co-author of The World Atlas of Beer and Good Beer Guide Belgium and is a project coordinator for the European Beer Consumers Union.

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#PullingTogether Campaign

The Government's closure of pubs and other social venues throughout the COVID-19 pandemic will threaten the very survival of our pubs, breweries and cider makers. This page aims to provide helpful resources for the publicans, brewers and cider makers while highlighting ways the public can help protect these venues from permanent closure.

Support your local during this crisis

Pubs, breweries and taprooms are fighting for their very survival against the Coronavirus. Many are finding different and innovative ways to help their business weather the crisis. Whether this is by launching hot food deliveries, encouraging locals to buy 'gift cards' for the summer or crowdfunding, there are plenty of ways that you can help support your favourite local business.

<https://camra.org.uk/pullingtogether>





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