



# SHAKES BEER

Newsletter of Shakespeare branch of CAMRA - Real ale in Shakespeare country & The Vale

## Which is the best pub in Warwickshire?

No question according to CAMRA judges from the West Midlands Region. It's **The Boars Head at Hampton Lucy**. After twice being voted Shakespeare CAMRA Pub of the Year for their own Warwickshire area and coming runner up in the County competition last year, this cracking country pub now has the

recognition it deserves and has been voted the best pub in the whole of Warwickshire. Licensee Sue Mairdonald and her number one Angela Heron, with over 60 years experience in the trade between them, form the basis of the winning team who got it right for the CAMRA judges. Others in Sue's winning

team include a nephew, a cousin and hardworking teenagers who have been with her for 4 years. Young bar and cellar staff Jack and Olly, both BIJ trained are knowledgeable about the beers they sell and happy to share their expertise on request.

Sue was presented with her award on 29th July in front of a house packed with friends and admirers. Gary Timmins, West Midlands CAMRA Regional Director made the presentation following which in typical Sue style, Sue called each member of her team forward to thank them and make presentations of her own.

To mark the fact that The Boars Head now goes forward to the West Midlands Regional Pub of the Year competition, Sue laid on a beer from each of the other competitors areas, six in all, and matched each with appropriate food. Needless to say the celebrations continued late into the night. Once again we have to thank Sue and her team for a great night out and for running a fantastic pub.



Sue, Nigel and the Team

## Shakespeare at the Great British Beer Festival

Shakespeare CAMRA were pleased as punch to be well represented in many ways at Britains largest beer festival, GBBF, at Earls Court, London, in August.

CAMRA's showcase festival featured over 500 beers ciders and perries from all over the world. This year's festival was hailed as a great success by organisers with over 200,000 pints sold at a rate of over 75 pints poured per

minute. Attendance figures were also up about 5% on last year with nearly 67,000 customers through the door. Local brewer and branch member Nigel Smith of **Buckle Street Brewery** took the train from Honeybourne down to the festival and took the opportunity to chat with other brewers. Apparently he enthusiastically researched as many milds, stouts and porters as he could, all for the sake of product comparison, of course. He even diligently continued his



Brewer Andy Davies and Nigel at GBBF

research beyond the festival confines in **The Princess Louise** of High Holborn which he reports as being "exquisite and high on the list of "must visit" heritage pubs". (Continued on page 6)

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# Pub News...

## Evesham

Rumours that **The Fairfield Inn**, Battleton Road has reopened proved sadly incorrect. Encouraging signs of life though in late July, ladders and tools were visible through the windows. Watch this space.

Sadly the **Crown** at Waterside remains closed having shut its door in June this year. The agents board outside is advertising it as an Enterprise let so hopefully it won't be too long before this delightful pub, overlooking the river and park, reopens.

More worrying news is that **The Talbot**, Port Street has closed. It looks very sad with windows boarded and at present its future is somewhat uncertain.



The Oak Taverns group have bought the Enterprise lease of town Centre pub and carvery **The Vauxhall**. Temporary Manager Raymond Patrick hopes to become a permanent fixture there and in due course to add more real ales to their current offering of London Pride. Bill trained Ray has been in the trade for 2 1/2 yrs and was previously working at a Thame pub with six ales.

## Aston Cantlow

On a happier note we are pleased to report that **The Kings Head**, a regular in The Good Pub guide and previous winner of Warwickshire Dining Pub of the Year has been awarded Casque Marque status. Now, as well as enjoying the delightful ambience of this 15th Century country pub &

restaurant with low beams, flagged stone floors and open crackling log fires, you can be assured of a first class pint. On offer are Purity, Pure Gold, M & B, Brew XI and Greene King, Abbot Ale.

## Weston-sub-Edge

Another relatively long term closure has come to an end as **The Seagrave Arms** opened its refurbished doors at the beginning of July. This charming Cotswold inn now boasts a restaurant and six en-suite letting rooms. Licensee Kevin Davies reports they are doing well and, judging by the crowds when we were there, he's right. All food and real ales are purchased from local suppliers and breweries. Hooky Bitter and Purity UBU were the ales on offer.

## Tiddington

**The Crown** is holding a charity fun day on Sunday 12 September with live music all day, for details visit [www.thecrowntiddington.com](http://www.thecrowntiddington.com)

## Defford

We can't help feel partly responsible for the rumours about the **Monkey House** in Defford being about to close. The situation has been clarified by Jill, the landlady, and you'll be pleased to hear that whilst Jill is fit enough she intends to continue to keep the Monkey House open. Unfortunately, it seems unlikely that anyone will take over once she is no longer able to run

it. Let's hope that will be many years from now.

## Great Alne, Alcester

The long awaited re-opening of The Mother Huff Cap, now simply called **The Huff Cap** has happened at last. Extensively refurbished, this once struggling pub opened its doors as a Country Pub, Kitchen and Smokehouse on 19th June to welcome discerning customers. New General Manager, Theo Gibson has plenty of experience in the trade, starting as a 'potwasher' at the age of 13. He may be familiar to some as four out of the last eight years have been spent working in this area. Theo insists he wants to avoid giving just the image of a restaurant and emphasised that locals and others are very welcome to pop in for a pint or two with no pressure to eat.

The Huff Cap opens all day every day from 8.30 am Monday to Friday and 9.30 am at weekends so there's plenty of time to sample the four ales on offer. Two from Purity, Mad Goose and Gold, Old Speckled Hen and Green King IPA at the time of our visit. Have a look at it at [www.huffcappgreatalne.com](http://www.huffcappgreatalne.com)

As their self representation suggests, The Huff Cap has the facility to smoke their own produce for fine dining. They are happy also for locals to bring in their own prize catch of fish, meat etc. and will gladly 'smoke it' for them overnight.



Theo Gibson and The Huff Cap team

# More Pub News...

## Honeybourne

Sad to report that **The Gate**, Weston Road remains closed with no signs of activity. Whilst in the village however I can report that **The Thatched Tavern**, High Street, appears to be thriving. We shamefully neglected to report the reopening of this classic village local in May last year under the management of Carys Lloyd and chef Richard Burton. It was standing room only at the time of our visit. Three real ales, Abotts, Green



King IPA and a guest, plus an excellent food offering together with Carys and Richard are obviously a winning combination.

## Salford Priors

Congratulations to Dave and Sally at **The Bell** who celebrated their first year in the pub in July. They marked the occasion with a well received Caribbean night. Dave reports that the cask offer goes from strength to strength and they now offer four in total. (Wye Valley HPA, Wickwar BOB, Sharps Doombar & Butcombe Gold) as well as a cask cider.

## Bretforton

Following the success of last year's *Apple & Ale Festival* at **The Fleece**, the dates of the 2010 weekend have been announced as Friday 1st-Sunday

3rd October. This year is set to be even bigger and better with local produce stalls and a completely new selection of ales to try.

## Iron Cross

On the B4088, the back road running between Evesham and Alcester, lies **The Queens Head**. In its heyday the home of the now defunct 'Fat Gods' brewery the pub struggled and stumbled along for some years before finally closing its door in January this year.



A warm welcome from Dawn

Well, it's back! Licensee Carl Fox, with over 20 years in the hotel and pub trades, aided by his sister Dawn Brown hope to breathe new life into the pub and recover its former glory. Chef Naiomi Regan aims to provide the best of British pub food, locally sourced where possible and served at reasonable prices. Carl hopes to retain the friendly local image with sports teams and bar snacks, whilst at the same time, developing a reputation for good food. He hopes also to resurrect the bed and breakfast business in due course. Carl is still experimenting with the real ales; currently on offer are Theakstons at a very reasonable £2.00 a pint and Wye Valley HPA. Hopefully a third tap will be added when trade

allows. We wish them the very best of luck and whatever happens, thanks for trying.

## Shipston

**Shipston Sports Club** is holding its annual beer festival on Saturday 11th September. A dozen beers, two ciders and a perry will be accompanied by three bands from 4pm onwards. £5.00 entry includes a festival glass and programme with all beers and ciders priced at only £2.50 a pint. Laurence Jones and his band together with Bigger Picture and Kathleen Turner Overdrive (KTO) provide a great musical line-up and a BBQ will be running. Organiser Merryn Jones particularly thanks Purity Brewery for their help with cellar services and setting up the bar.

## Broadway

Welcome to the new faces at the **Horse and Hound**, David Truesdale and wife Diane. It's David's first venture into the licensing trade, having been in IT for the last 15 years or so, but he's enjoying it, so far at least. He plans to keep four real ales, currently Flowers IPA, Purity Mad Goose, Wye Valley HPA and Sharp's Doombar. No sign of rough cider yet but Hogans is available on keg.

## Little Kineton

On the 3rd October in conjunction with 'Get Kineton Growing' **Kineton Sports and Social Club** are hoping to host their second annual apple pressing day using apples from local gardens which are collected by volunteers, mainly youngsters. The juice is usually free to anyone bringing along a suitable container, and some people have even 'accidentally' converted this juice into cider! A few ciders and perries will also be on offer, (but you'll have to pay for those).

*Lots more happening at Kineton, including a beer festival and a bit of a punch up. See page 14.*



Warwickshire  
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# More Pub News...

## Alcester

What's pink and wrinkly and hangs out your pyjamas? Your mum of course, (groan)! All things pink are welcome at **The White Lion** on 29th October at their annual 'Pink Casino'. Enjoy various casino games, a pig roast and raffle with all proceeds going to Breast Cancer Care and Breast Cancer Campaign and of course, wear something pink. Forthcoming beers from Sadlers and Church End.

## Lower Brailes

It's a shame that hard times have gotten to two of our favourite local licensees. Dave and Sue Wiggins from **The George Hotel**, are throwing in the towel at the end of October as the lure of retirement wins out against higher costs and falling profits. Always time though for one final fling; The George beer festival will take place over the weekend 3rd - 5th October

accompanied by Friday night blues and live music Saturday night and Sunday lunchtime. Eight beers in addition to their normal Hooky range should make for a great weekend.

**Thanks to Dave and Sue for all their hard work, good luck for the future and watch this space for details of the new licensees.**

## Stratford

Finally, in these uncertain days of recession and pub closures it is a real pleasure to announce the opening of a brand new licensed premises, **The Church Street Townhouse**. Transformed from dentist's surgery and accountants the Townhouse was recently opened as a small hotel with all day bar and brasserie in the very heart of historic Stratford, in a 400 year old Grade II listed building. The business is owned by Sue Hawkins and her niece Rachel, both well known locally

having opened and worked in many local pubs and hotels including **The Fox and Goose**, Armscote, **The One Elm**, Stratford and most recently **The George Hotel**, Shipston.

There are two bars, 'The Library' a cosy, oak beamed room with bookshelves and oil paintings and 'The Blue Bar', light and airy with views over the ancient, half timbered buildings the area is famous for. Ales on offer are Fullers, London Pride and the bars own 'Townhouse Ale', (believed to be Tetleys ask). Open all day every day from 11.00 am, closing 11.00 pm and midnight on Friday and Saturday, offering good food, good drinks and 12 en-suite letting rooms, The Townhouse appears to have all it needs to be a success. Good Luck Sue and Rachel from Shakespeare CAMRA.

**See it for yourselves at [www.churchstreettownhouse.com](http://www.churchstreettownhouse.com).**

# Shakespeare at the GBBF

*(Continued from front page)*

Nigel from **The Fleece**, Bretforton wasn't the only 'high profile' branch member spotted by our 'eyes at GBBF'. Paul Halsey & brewer Flo from **Purity Brewery** were in the crowds, Tim Young from **The Norman Knight** and **Patriot Brewery** and **North Cotswold Brewer** Jon Pilling were also enjoying the event. In addition, landlady Sue Mairdonauld & Nigel from **The Boar's Head**, Hampton Lucy were seen, proudly sporting their Warwickshire Pub of The Year 2010 shirts. It was nice also to see the branch

represented in the beer department. Buckle Street Porter was featured on the Wetherspoons sponsored 'Young & Upcoming Breweries' bar Purity Pure Gold was in evidence on the Kitchener Bar and **North Cotswold** had Pig Brook on offer. Our neighbours **Cannon Royall** were also delighted to showcase their popular Fruiterers Mild. It goes without saying that such a huge event takes a lot of organisation and a lot of volunteer workers to keep it going. We're proud that the branch were represented in this respect also with Branch Members John Ross and Alan

'Growler' Jennings who have worked at GBBF for many years and this year for his first time, Geoff Hinks. There's not room here to list all the advantages and perks of working but needless to say they all had great fun. Thanks to Geoff for his impressions which you can read on page 11.

*As always the final tastings for Champion Beer of Britain were held at the festival and the results announced. The winning beers were:*

The Champion Beer of Britain:

**Castle Rock's Harvest Pale (3.8% ABV Nottingham)**

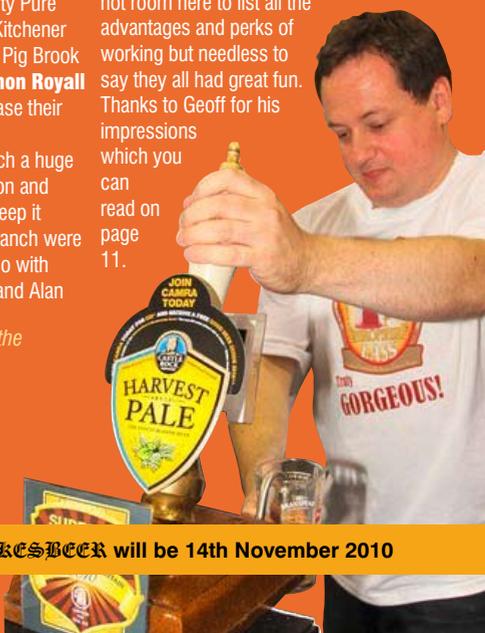
Second: Timothy Taylor, Landlord (4.3% Keighley, West Yorks)

Third: Surrey Hills, Hammer Mild (3.8% Guildford, Surrey)



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Closing date for copy for the next issue of **SHAKESPEARE** will be 14th November 2010





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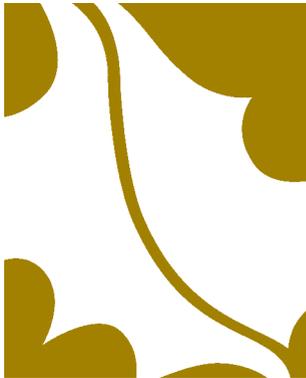
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# Beer Festival Round-up

## The 4th Stratford Beer and Cider festival, held at Stratford Racecourse in June, at last had something to celebrate. **Sunshine!**

The last couple of festival were somewhat marred by bad weather but this year, despite a bit of rain on the opening day, we celebrated in the main, in brilliant sunshine. We also celebrated record crowds as more than 1200 people visited and record numbers of new CAMRA members as 57 were signed up at the festival. Eager punters took advantage of the excellent facilities available at Stratford Racecourse and relaxed both inside and out enjoying their beers and ciders. Off to a good start, the Festival was opened in grand style by Shakespeare Branch's founding Chairman and still very active member, Alan Whitbread. Most will know him as our favourite minstrel generally featured in this publication, Alan is also an 'Ale Taster' for the Alcester Court Leet. Another auspicious guest was welcomed on Saturday afternoon, the new Member of Parliament for Stratford, Nadhim Sahawi who enjoyed a pint or three in the June sunshine.

Festival Bar Manager, Nigel Smith of The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, put together a great selection of beers following an East meets West Midlands theme, one that went down particularly well. Coming out on top, 'Kipling', a 5.2% ABV pale golden beer from Thornbridge brewery in Derbyshire, was voted beer of the festival. It seems a popular choice having recently won similar accolades from beers festivals in Sheffield and Cambridge amongst others. It seems that Thornbridge, based in Bakewell,

do make exceedingly good beer, (sorry).

Festival goers, as always, generous to a fault supported The Shakespeare Hospice by donating over £300 in unspent beer tokens and twice buying the tombola out of prizes. As usual the branch will round up the amount raised and add it to other donations making a grand total of £600 to be donated in due course.

Always a heartwarming sight the Hook Norton Brewery Dray, led by festival regulars Consul and Major, (the horses of course), advertised the event throughout Stratford.

Entertainment, on Saturday afternoon provided by aging rock band The SOFAs, (I'm reliably informed this is an acronym for 'Sad Old Farts' which they certainly weren't), and in the evening by a cracking

midlands based folk rock band, Green Man Rising, went down as well as the beers, ciders and sunshine to create a memorable event for all. A special thanks to our sponsors, Cannon Royall, Wye Valley and Buckle Street Breweries, The Holly Bush, Alcester, The Fleece Inn Bretforton and The Bear at The Swans's Nest, Stratford. Thank you to all those who donated and discounted beers and thanks finally from Festival Organiser, Julian Stobinski to all the volunteers, the racecourse, the caterers and entertainers for making it happen, but mainly to the festival goers who made it great.

*See you next year!*



Festival goers enjoying the 'Sun Terrace'



Alan Whitbread gets things started



Our guest Nadhim Sahawi MP with members Ted Williams, Laura Benet and Festival Organiser Julian Stobinski



Hook Norton's Consul and Major



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The Fox is not a Gastro Pub but a traditional ale pub which specialises in fresh fish from all over the world and offers a range of more traditional British dishes such as fresh **Haddock and Chips**, **Gammon steaks** and **organic Oxfordshire Pork**, our dishes are cooked to order by one of our three chefs, while you sit relax and enjoy a tranquil relaxing atmosphere and your pint of beer or wine.

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# Sparklers & Swan Necks - What's it all about?



**Isn't it glorious that beers come in all different styles and tastes. Not only do most people have a favourite beer or at least a favoured style but many are quite fussy about how it looks in the glass.**

Some prefer a large head (northern style) and some a more natural (southern) look. So much so that different ways of dispensing and the beers themselves have been developed to get the appearance right. (Although the traditional divide between northern and southern UK beer styles is definitely becoming less distinct).

So what's it all about? Whilst failing miserably to remain impartial I shall explain the purposes of 'swan-necks' and 'sparklers' to let you draw your own conclusions. It may be that you have no preference but at least you'll know what the fuss is about.

The traditional, age old best, (my opinion), method of dispensing beer is to pour it into a glass or jug straight from the cask using gravity, (hence the term gravity dispense). Lack of room behind pub bars and difficulties in keeping the beer cool made cellar storage much more sensible and the use of beer engines, (or hand pulls) became the norm. Serving the beer through any handpump agitates and aerates it to some extent but whether gravity or pump, if a customer wanted a pretty head on the beer the glass was

held further below the tap or the barman or barmaid would put a little more effort into the pull, forcing the beer through quicker. The natural carbon dioxide in the beer causes it to foam up and form a head when agitated.

The hairpin shaped 'swan neck' is thinner than the normal tap and shaped to restrict the flow of beer, forcing it out faster and maximising the agitation so as to produce a head whether the beer is designed for one or not and whether the customer wants one or not. This effect is further augmented by placing the end of the spout at the bottom of the glass. By squirting the beer through a 'sparkler', basically a nozzle containing small holes in it, an even greater effect is obtained. Sometimes a very dull beer can have 'life' added to it by passing it through a swan neck or sparkler producing the visual effect you see on advertisements. It's unfortunate that many people wrongly consider a beer to be dead or flat if it doesn't have a head on it, especially as the opposite is often the case.

Whilst this agitation produces a head it also removes much of the natural carbonation from the body of the beer,

and drives much of the hop bitterness into the head of the pint. In parts of the north where such dispense is traditional, many beers are brewed with more bitterness with this in mind. Certainly a sparkler will give many beers a smoother mouth feel and take away some of the harsh bitterness, an effect which many prefer. Used on other beers it can lead to a different flavour balance than the brewer intended, diminishing the aroma and destroying the bitterness of those brewed with flowery, hoppy tastes. At the same time, the more 'life' there is in the head, the less natural carbonation there can be in the body of the beer.

Many breweries state whether or not a sparkler is preferred when serving their beers, 'Boddingtons', 'The cream of Manchester' is definitely designed to dispense through a sparkler whilst 'London Pride' is definitely not. The Good Beer Guide suggests that when no preference has been stated, beers should ideally be served without sparklers. Unfortunately pubs don't always agree and for 'health and safety reasons' are often reluctant to remove sparklers where fitted.

One enterprising beer lover, who just happens to be a West Country CAMRA member, has come up with a very simple solution. Now commercially available through 'Ultimate Bar Products', 'Vari-Head' is a device fitted in the same way as a simple sparkler with an integral slider, operated by the inside of the glass prior to pouring, (so no taking off and replacing). One side of the 'slide' comprises sparkler style holes whilst the other allows beer to flow naturally. A variable amount of agitation can be selected simply by pushing the slide part way across. I've seen Vari-Head in operation at The Castle, Edgehill where landlord Tom would be only too delighted to demonstrate. Brilliant but simple and no apologies for the free plug.

**(See the vari-head at [www.ultimatebarproducts.co.uk](http://www.ultimatebarproducts.co.uk)).**

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## Jottings from a GBBF volunteer

The GBBF must be one of the world's biggest pubs! The beers and ciders available are legion, all kept in fine fettle by the major breweries technical support crew and the minor breweries local experts. It isn't in their interest to serve iffy beer! It is impossible to navigate your way round the various acres of bars and test all your favourite beers (yes, everyone's favourite beer is there unless you have an extremely limited set of taste buds) in a day or even two. There are plenty of establishments selling food so there is no reason not to make a day of it. If you haven't been before - just do it. You won't be disappointed.

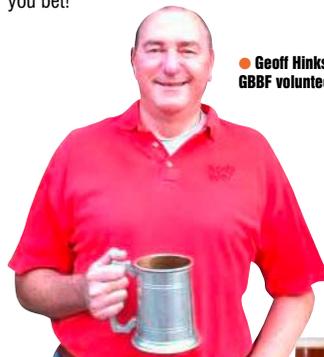
From a volunteer's perspective, if you're going to treat the job seriously be prepared for 16 hour days - from breakfast to getting back to your digs. Your feet will ache and you will feel like you've flown to Australia in one hit. (jetlag; been there done it got the tee shirt!) You will be the busiest you've probably been in your life unless you're

used to working on a shop floor when the January sales are on and they're queuing for 100 yards down the road! Just remember, as at all beer festivals, you have to purchase a glass before battle commences. No glass, no beer. Just imagine when the doors open and the first thirsty hordes bear down on you demanding glasses. Once you see the

**If you're going to treat the job seriously be prepared for 16 hour days...your feet will ache and you will feel like you've flown to Australia in one hit...**

whites of their eyes you can imagine what they felt like at Rorke's Drift in 1879. But time flies when you're busy and soon the last thirst is quenched and the merry hordes are sent on their way. After clearing up it's time for the unique phenomenon known as the "Volunteers Arms". This is the volunteers own bar where all beer is FREE. Such

delectations as *Hobsons* and *Wye Valley* are there, amongst the 30 or so hand pumps, dispensing beers from far and wide, all to be enjoyed. Yes, this really is the proverbial sweet shop to be enjoyed by all. All too soon it's closing time, the coaches leave to take your tired but happy selves back to your digs all to be repeated again throughout the duration of the festival. Yes, it is hard work, but eminently enjoyable. Will I do it again next year - you bet!



● Geoff Hinks, GBBF volunteer

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

# Brewery News

## Buckle Street Brewery

We are sad to report that **Buckle Street**, for the time being at least, has stopped brewing. Licensee Nigel Smith and Brewer Andy Davies, (pictured on the front cover), have decided that brewing is a full time occupation and their numerous other commitments, (like running a pub), mean that they can't devote the time they want to the job. Thankfully they do intend to continue and develop their very successful cider operation,

increasing last years output from 3000 to 7000 litres, diversifying into some single varieties and perhaps adding a perry too. Nigel is working on increasing The Fleece real cider range to at least five and improving the dispense to give a consistently correct temperature. Last years apple and ale weekend will be repeated but bigger and better over the weekend 1st - 3rd October and of course Plum Jerkum will still be made.



Still a few bottles of the limited edition Dorothy Goodbody's Imperial Stout available at the brewery shop or on line at [www.wyevallybrewery.co.uk/shop/index.html](http://www.wyevallybrewery.co.uk/shop/index.html).

Hereford CAMRA voted Dorothy Goodbody's Golden Ale the Best Beer in Hereford at their Beer Festival, Beer on the Wye, (always

well attended by Shakespeare Branch) in July.

July also saw the opening of the latest pub in the Wye Valley stable, The Britannia, Cotterell Street, Hereford. As you'd expect, the full range of Wye Valley beers are available there.

Interesting times at the brewery where 'one-offs' are appearing every couple of months

or so. Both Drakes Drum and Quartet have been and gone having both been favourably received. Next in the pipeline is 'Teddy Bear' an amber coloured, smooth and flavoursome bitter. This is named for Fruiterers Arms licensee Ted May, (so called by wife Doreen and



some of the braver customers). One 'one off' which stayed the course, Trafalgar Stout, (4.7% ABV), will be available again in late September and October. This rich stout fortified with rum is brewed to commemorate Trafalgar Day and the battle where the English thrashed the French - (nice to win at something).



As many Twitters and Facebook members will be aware, Purity fully intend to take over the world. Not content with their truly phenomenal growth over the past five years they're offering great prizes (cases of Purity beer), to twitter followers whose recommendations of new outlets lead to new sales. If you don't yet 'tweet', have a look at <http://twitter.com/purityale> for details.

Apparently Purity beers went down as well as the 'vibes' and sunshine at the Mostly Jazz Festival, at Moseley in July. The brewery look forward to an equally good reception at Moseley Folk Festival from 3rd - 5th September where Folk lovers can also enjoy the Purity bar.



Hook Norton is again riding high in the award stakes following accolades for Double Stout and Hooky Bitter. A blind tasting of over 500 entries from 27 countries resulted in top honours in 'The Worlds Best Stouts and Porters' and a Gold in Europe's Best English Bitters category in The Worlds Best Beers awards 2010. It's a shame that England performances in the 2010 World Cup will be less well remembered I think than Hook Norton's 'Striker' brewed in honour of the occasion.

As Autumn comes and goes we welcome the brewery's monthly specials adding to the excellent Hook Norton permanent range.; September's Copper Ale 4.8%, October's Flagship 5.3% and November's Jackpot 3.8%.



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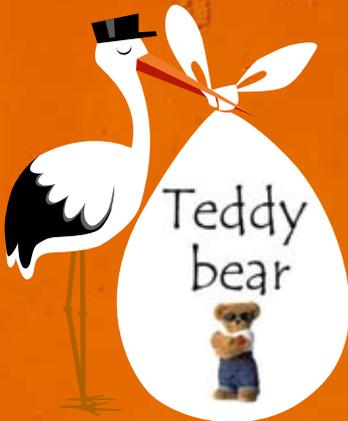


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# They're fighting again at Edgehill

Kineton Sports and Social Club Bridge Street, Norton Grange, Little Kineton will be hosting a mini beer festival during the 368th Edgehill Battle anniversary and Annual Edgehill Parade over 23rd and 24th October. The Sealed Knot will be there in force and any still living by the end of Saturday's skirmish can find refuge and entertainment at the club where a live band will be performing on both nights. The Club, under the stewardship of Adrian Davey, is working hard to increase the quantity and variety of cask ales on offer and will have three additional to the eight or so plus six

those involved is available if booked in advance.

Kineton also offers the comforts of **The Carpenters Arms**, in the words of Sue Venuto the licensee, 'a good, old fashioned boozer'.

Although not directly involved in the fighting the pub generally welcomes a few weary cavaliers and Roundheads who call a truce over well kept Everards, Beacon or



**Sunday will see a parade and memorial service in the morning followed by another battle. This wonderful display which organisers promise will be 'the best yet', plus good beer is an event not to be missed...**

ciders and perries, available at the festival, (three from Tom Olivers in Herefordshire). Normally visitors would need to be signed in by a member to use the main bar but a social membership of just £10.00 (or £15.00 a couple) will save any messing about. Well worth it as cask beers are on sale at £2.20 - £2.40 a pint.

Sunday will see a parade and memorial service in the morning followed by another battle. This wonderful display which organisers promise will be 'the best yet', plus good beer is an event not to be missed. Limited camping for

the two guest ales generally available, (often featured are the aptly named Buccaneer or Pilgrim, from Little Drinks Company).

Although The Carpenters don't do meals as such they do house a 'Chinese takeaway' which, (if you ask nicely), you can normally just take as far as the garden and eat it there.

For those wanting more comfortable accommodation and surroundings befitting the event I can't recommend anywhere more suitable than **The Castle**. The pub is built on the summit of Edgehill, some 700ft above sea

level, overlooks the battlefield of Edgehill, site of the first major battle of the English Civil War. Decorated with civil war memorabilia, boasting four letting rooms, (two in the tower) and the finest views in the area, punters can be sure of an

excellent pint from the full Hooky range, great food including their famous 'Poachers Pie' and a real welcome from the irrepressible landlord Tom Douglas.



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**Telephone: 01295 688060**



Coming up at The Peacock...

13th September  
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in aid of Shipston  
Nursing Home**  
(4 courses and 16 wines)

29th September  
**Italian Night**

26th October  
**Bordeaux Evening**

29th-31st October  
**Halloween Weekend -  
music & cider festival**



**QUIZ NIGHT - first Sunday of every month from 8.00pm (in aid of Air Ambulance)**

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# The Fleece Inn

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Check out the website for forthcoming events

**Shakespeare CAMRA Worcestershire Pub of the Year 2009**

Roger and Sharon would love to welcome you to The Bulls Head. We have a fine selection of beers, lagers and real ales. We offer a good range of home cooked food. A new **Coffee Lounge** is now open from 9.00am every day, serving tea, latte, cappuccino, chocolate and expresso. Home made cakes are also on offer. We have a lovely beer garden and most weeks there are artists performing live.

**The Bulls Head**  
High Street  
Bidford-on-Avon  
**Tel: 01789 772242**

Once again, this National Trust owned pub has been voted **best in Worcestershire....**

## **Fleece earns Branch Worcestershire Pub of the Year**

It's becoming a bit of a habit handing awards to Nigel Smith, licensee of The Fleece, Bretforton. Once again this National Trust owned pub has been voted best in the Worcestershire half of the branch area. Being set in a wonderful and historic building isn't enough in itself and excellent choice and quality of beer are a natural prerequisite for any CAMRA award winning pub. Nigel is first to admit that it's hard work and a love of real ale that keeps the pub on top. Virtually any week of the year you'll find something happening at The Fleece and if it isn't, you can be sure he's running a function elsewhere. Brewing, cider making and morris dancing are amongst this tireless chaps extracurricular activities. He's quite a character and that's why a huge turnout of CAMRA members and locals came to say, Well done again!



Nigel celebrates another award with Branch Member, Roger Smith

## **A little of what you fancy does you good**

A recent report by The Beer Academy\* reiterated what many of us believe - beer is good for you. Beer is packed full of vitamins and minerals. Back in the middle of the twentieth century, when diets were poor and nutritional levels often low, beers such as stouts were frequently prescribed by doctors as a quick and cheap way of giving patients access to deficient vitamins and minerals, explains Dr Jack Edmonds, a private GP in central London.

There are many healthy reasons to drink a pint of beer. This report shows that beer, as well as promoting 'good' cholesterol, contains B vitamins, various minerals and antioxidants including high levels of silicon which is good for bones, skin and hair. There

is some evidence that beer is beneficial in preventing dementia, Parkinson's Disease, Type II diabetes and atherosclerosis. This report also debunks the myth that beer makes you fat. Beer is around 95% water, contains very

### **Did you know...**

**Half a pint of an average 3.8% beer has about 85 calories, half a pint of orange juice has 125**

**A pint of beer will supply about 5% of your daily protein needs, whereas wine will provide none**

**Beer has no cholesterol or fat**

few free sugars to convert into fat - which gives it a low glycaemic load - and has a relatively low level of alcohol (ethanol) per volume. "This all means that it is less fattening

than spirits or wine. It is not beer that makes you fat but the lifestyle and eating habits which may go along with beer drinking. If you are going to accept that people want to drink alcohol then, on balance, beer is one of the healthier ways to do so."

A 2003 study said that moderate beer consumption in women is linked to a lower BMI (Body Mass Index) than those who drank no beer.

Polyphenols in beer are as effective at scavenging harmful cancer inducing free radicals as those in red wine.

**So enjoy that beer, but as always, in moderation.**

*\*The Beer Academy is an arm of the Institute of Brewing and Distilling, an educational charity delivering education and training to professional brewers and distillers worldwide. It is run as an independent subsidiary specifically focussed on engendering a wider understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the wide range and diversity of beer styles. The full report is on its website [www.beeracademy.co.uk](http://www.beeracademy.co.uk)*

# The Horseshoe Inn, Shipston Pub of the Summer

**It was standing room only and squeezed together at that as hordes of well wishers, local customers, CAMRA members and even suppliers turned out to say well done to the wonderfully unconventional Baggy Saunders, licensee of The Horseshoe, Shipston, as he received Shakespeare CAMRA Pub of the Season Award for Summer 2010.**

No apologies for repeating the fact that a good range of well kept real ale, (and in this case real cider), is a prerequisite for winning any CAMRA award. It takes something else, something a little special to be voted one of the best pubs in the branch. In this case it's not only the fact that there's always something going on there, it's Baggy's quirky outlook and attitude to life as a whole, (on the pubs 'facebook' site he quotes

Hunter Thompson, "I wouldn't recommend sex, drugs or insanity for everyone, but they've always worked for me"). A love of the pub and of his customers coupled with a slightly irreverent attitude to authority make the man hard to resist. Purity Mad Goose, Sharp's Doombard and Jennings Cumberland Ale were on offer alongside Hogans Warwickshire Wobblers cider all at knock down prices with free nibbles and

entertainment for the presentation evening. Typically, on receiving the award Baggy insisted on including wife Sheelagh and son Gabe but made the excellent point that it's the customers who make a pub great. We think it's the landlord too so thanks again Baggy and well done.



Vice Chairman John Ross presents the award to Baggy, Sheelagh and Gabe

## Ciders and Perries of the Year

**Shakespeare CAMRA were delighted to join colleagues from Gloucestershire and North Cotswold at Tirley Villa, Tirley, Gloucestershire, (just outside Tewkesbury), where Derek Hartland of Hartland's Cider was presented with CAMRA's prestigious Gold award for National Perry of the Year for his Farmhouse Perry.**



Derek Hartland

The finals of CAMRA's National Cider and Perry Championships 2010 took place in Reading and featured 24 ciders and 24 perries, selected from different regions of the UK. The ciders and perries were assessed on factors such as aroma, flavour, overall balance and finish by a judging panel consisting of publicans, drinks writers and CAMRA members.

The judges described Derek's Farmhouse as "a beautiful perry, well-balanced in aroma and taste, with a great combination of spice and sweetness", and having sampled it at the presentation, I and the other guests totally agree.

Customers at Hartland's have been sampling their special brews for over 20 years since the business now spanning three generations, was started by Derek's father. Visitors to the Tirley site have reaped the benefits of Derek and brother Dave's passion since they moved there in 1994 and witnessed previous accolades when Hartlands Perries were awarded Golds in 2003 and 2007 and a bronze in 2008.

On hearing the results of the perry competition, Derek said, 'it's wonderful news, and to say I'm delighted is an understatement. I can retire a happy man and it's the highlight of my year!'

### CIDER

**Gold - Sandford Orchards, Cider (Devon)**

**Silver - Gwynt y Ddraig, Black Dragon (South Wales)**

**Bronze - Pickled Pig, Porker's Snouth (Cambridgeshire)**

### PERRY

**Gold - Hartlands Farmhouse Perry (Gloucestershire)**

**Silver - Rathays, Brandy (Herefordshire)**

**Bronze - Ralph's, Old Badland Perry (Powys)**

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# Like our wandering minstrel... John Barleycorn is a Hero Bold



The first known version of 'John Barleycorn' was published in the Samuel Pepys Collection printed by H. Gosson (1607-1641) since when there have been numerous versions and general parodies. In the song the barley is personified, foully treated and murdered by various artisans. Nonetheless, he rises from the dead and lives, only to be deemed vital to man's existence!

There was a version of the song written by Robert Burns in 1782, which had no less than fifteen verses! Of course it sung the praises of whisky rather than ale, obliquely referring to the process of reaping the barley, malting and distilling to create the 'uisge beatha' (Scottish Gaelic for whisky). The story was even used as the basis for a mummies play devised by the Bradshaw Mummies from Halifax. They describe the play as follows: "*the script does call for a hero, a spot of cross-dressing, a couple of punch-ups, a doctor and a request for donations at the end. No change there then!*"

I've yet to see them perform that play but, on the basis of having seen them perform other plays, including at our own Alcester Folk Festival, I bet it ends with several of the mummies having to deal with the after effects of drinking the ale!

The popular current version is as collected by Cecil Sharp from the singing of 'Shepherd' Haden of Bampton in Oxfordshire in 1909. It has ten verses, starting and ending as follows:-

*There were three men come out of the west,  
their fortunes for to try,  
And they have made a solemn vow:  
John Barleycorn must die.  
Fa la la la, it's a lovely day, fa la la la lay o  
Fa la la la, it's a lovely day. Sing fa la la la lay*

*They ploughed him in three furrows deep,  
laid clods all on his head,  
And they have made a solemn oath:  
John Barleycorn was dead.*

*Then they let him lie for a very long time,  
till the rain from heaven did fall,  
Then little Sir John sprung up his head  
and soon amazed them all.*

*Here's little Sir John in a nut-brown bowl  
and brandy in a glass,  
And little Sir John in the nut-brown bowl,  
proved the stronger man at last.*

*And the huntsman he can't hunt the fox,  
nor so loudly blow his horn,  
And the tinker he can't mend kettles or pots,  
without a little of Barleycorn.*

Alan Whitbread

Ale Taster for the Alcester Court Leet, Folk Singer and Concertina Player - [www.alanwhitbread.co.uk](http://www.alanwhitbread.co.uk)

The version here is: 'John Barleycorn is a Hero Bold', written by Joseph Bryan Geoghegan about 1859 and according to the Bodleian Library ballads website, printed as a broadsheet by J. Harkness of Preston between 1859 & 1866. The tune was collected by Bob Copper, one the famous singing family from Rottingdean in Sussex. It is very much an anthem to the joys of drinking English ale:-

*John Barleycorn is a hero bold, as any in the land  
His fame has stood for ages good, and forever shall stand  
The whole wide world respects him, no matter friend or foe,  
And where they be that makes him too free he's sure to lay them low.  
Hey! John Barleycorn, Ho John Barleycorn,  
Old and young his praise is sung: John Barleycorn!*

*To see him in his pride of growth, his robes are rich and green,  
His head is speared with goodly beard, fit neigh to serve a Queen,  
And the harvest time comes round and John is stricken down,  
He'll use his blood for England's good and Englishmen's' renown.*

*The lord in courtly castle, the squire in stately hall,  
The great name, of birth, and fame on John for succor call,  
He bids the troubled heart rejoice, gives warmth to Nature's call,  
Makes weak men strong and old men and all men brave and bold.*

*Then shout for great John Barleycorn, nor heed the luscious vine.  
I've not the mind much charm to find, in potent draught of wine.  
Give me my native nut-brown ale, all other drinks I scorn  
True English cheer is English beer: our own John Barleycorn.*

If you want to hear (and join in with!) such traditional songs being sung try the following places:-

**2nd Tuesday at The Cottage of Content** at Barton (over the river from Bidford), B50 4NP;

**Last Tuesday at The Shakespeare Inn** at Welford-on-Avon, CV37 8PX;  
and **Every Thursdays at The Fleece Inn** at Bretforton, WR11 7JE.



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# Shakespeare Branch Diary and Beer Festival Round up



## Meetings and Branch Events

### September

**8th** Branch meeting 8.30pm, meet at **Horse and Hound**, Broadway, then on to **Swan Hotel and Crown and Trumpet**

**18th** All day - Festival helpers trip to Derbyshire

### October

**20th** - 8.30 pm Branch meeting, Shipston, **Black Horse** then 'around the town'

### November

**6th** All day - branch social, trip to Wye Valley Brewery

**17th** 8.30 pm Branch meeting, Wooton Waven, **Bulls Head** then on to **The Navigation, The Dun Cow**, Pathlow and **The Golden Cross** Bearley

### December

**15th** 8.30 pm Alcester Christmas pub crawl, meet **Holly Bush**

## Local Festivals

### September

**3rd - 4th** CAMRA Beer Fest. Harbury Village Hall, (Heart of Warwicks. see [www.camrahow.org.uk](http://www.camrahow.org.uk))

**11th** Shipston on Stour, Sports Club one day beer festival

**24th - 26th** CAMRA Beer Fest. Moreton-in-Marsh Cricket Club see [www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk](http://www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk) (45+ Beers, Perrys and Ciders)

**24th - 25th** Ettington Real Ale Festival, Community Centre, see [www.ettingtoncommunitycentre.co.uk](http://www.ettingtoncommunitycentre.co.uk)

**24th - 26th** Stratford Food Fest. Stratford-upon-Avon

### October

**1st - 3rd** The Fleece, Bretforton. Apple and Ale Festival

**29th - 31st** Holly Bush, Alcester Halloween Beer Fest.

**29th - 31st** Peacock, Oxhill Halloween Music and Cider Fest.

### November

**25th - 27th** CAMRA Beer Fest. Dudley Concert Hall, (over 75 ales)

**Keep an eye on the branch website for updates to the diary and what's on at**

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

## Subscribe to Shakesbeer

If you are a CAMRA member in the Shakespeare branch, you should receive a copy of Shakesbeer through the post (one per household). If you prefer, a PDF copy can be sent to you by email - just let the Shakesbeer know.

If you live outside the area or are not a CAMRA member but would like to subscribe and receive copies through the post, then please send a cheque made out to "Shakespeare CAMRA" for £5 for four issues, published quarterly, to:

**Shakesbeer, 21 Monks Walk,  
Bridge St, Evesham, WR11 4SL**

## CAMRA Branch contacts

- **Chair - vacant**
- **Vice Chair - John Ross**  
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- **Secretary - vacant**
- **Treasurer - Julian Stobinski**  
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0709



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# Champion Bitter

*of West Midlands '09*



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