

Barnsley CAMRA Pub Survey of Ardsley & Stairfoot

Barnsley CAMRA's November Pub survey to take us to the eastern side of town to the Ardsley & Stairfoot area and below is our findings:

The Pheasant Inn

Cask Ale: Courage Directors

We started the evening at The Pheasant Inn situated half way up the hill on the main Doncaster Rd. The pub has an impressive exterior with a large car park and terrace with Pergola and seating. The pub has a reputation for good food and this was evident when entering the pub. The layout is split into two with one area a dining room and the other a tap room with Pool and Darts. On our visit the pub was quiet with just a few locals and the remaining guests from an earlier function. We were welcomed however with the sight of a hand pump a rarity on recent surveys. The service was good and my pint was topped up without asking. The real ale was decent value and the condition was excellent. The licensees are offering the single cask ale as a rotating guest beer. Unfortunately a recent change in the pub co has meant the Acorn Brewery Beers have had to go the owners can only choose from a list offered by the pub co. This is in my opinion another tactic by pub co's which is destroying local community's choice hence Barnsley CAMRA's recent launch of the Locale scheme.

Ardsley House Hotel

Cask Ale: None Available

We then crossed over the busy dual carriageway to our next stop the Ardsley House Hotel. This Best Western Hotel stands in large grounds as well as a hotel and function venue it also has a health spa and fitness gym. In the last twelve months the single hand pump dispensing Tetley's Cask has been removed apparently as it took too much looking after (not heard that one before!). On our visit we found the pub was mainly being used by the hotel residents who must have had deep pockets or large wallets to afford the eye watering bar and food prices. The bar service was also very poor with what seemed like one member of staff expected to serve all of the hotels three bars. We left feeling disappointed and ripped off.

Ardsley Oaks W.M.C

Cask Ale: John Smiths Cask

We then crossed back over the dual carriage way and to the Oaks W.M.C next door to the Pheasant Inn. On entering the club we were made extremely welcome and were surprised to find a great pint of John Smith's Cask, great value too. The club was a typical club layout with concert room, tap room and lounge. On entering the club you're met with posters advertising up and coming groups and gigs. The tap room was fairly busy mainly with men watching the football on the two TVs. The club was a great asset to area and I hope the community continue to support it

The Black Bull

Cask Ale: None Available

We then made our way down the hill past the site of the former Coach & Horses pub which was controversially demolished a few years to make way for a new housing development (déjà vu!) We arrived at The Black Bull located just off the main Stairfoot roundabout on Grange Lane. The pub has in the past sold Cask ale however this has recently removed. The pub has a long narrow layout with a more country inn feel than a community roadside pub. The pub had a games area at one end with Pool and Darts and a lounge area at the other. Located in the middle of the pub is the bar which sadly offered the discerning drinker a poor choice. One of our members commented on the lack of brick a brac in the pub something typical of pubs of this type.

The Keel Inn

Cask Ale: None Available

We then crossed over the roundabout to the Keel Inn situated opposite the site of the former Cross Keys pub which is now sadly a Mac Donald's restaurant. The Keel Inn is home to Barnsley's longest serving licensee. The pub is of Red Brick Construction and due the recent road alterations now stands on an Island opposite the new B & Q store. Inside the pub has an unusual layout comprising of a central bar with serving small rooms. The pub was fairly busy with locals and hosts groups during the week. Sadly the pub was keg only but did have a good range of drinks on offer and was good value.

Frankie & Benny's

Cask Ale: None Available:

This American/ Italian themed bar/ restaurant is part of the national chain and is situated in the former Little Chef restaurant. The restaurant and bar were very quiet and I was amused when I ordered half a Boddingtons in was served in what could only be described as a 'pop glass' although by the size of it I probably got the most generous serving of the night. We quickly drank up and left unimpressed.

Ardsley Lodge

Cask Ale: None Available

A huge impressive Victorian stone pub situated just off the main Doncaster Rd. The pub has recently changed hands and seemed to be on the market for an age. On entering the pub you are at first hit by the sheer size of the place. A large impressive staircase leads to the upstairs function room. To the right is a games area and to the left is the long bar. The Bar was stocked with a wealth of beverages but sadly no Cask ale. The bar did however have a hand pump indicating that it had previously sold cask ale but this had been de commissioned by being taped up with 'Gaffa' tape (bizarre?)

Stairfoot Club

Cask Ale: None Available:

Situated on the corner of Doncaster Rd and Hoyle Mil Lane. The club was typical of others in the area busy and welcoming. Although keg only the bar stocked a good selection of beverages. The club had a great clientele mix who were mainly friendly locals all taking advantage of this great local asset. AS with many clubs the bar prices offered great value for money. The cosy lounge area was very welcoming but sadly we had to leave as our buses were due.

On the whole this was a great survey in a great area. The only disappointment was with the major chain outlets which were poor to say the least.