

## MARGATE ARENAS (or ANAGRAM TEASER) - No 1

The clues below are all anagrams of either stations or locations on the Stourbridge line or stations served by direct trains from the Stourbridge line.

All you have to do is unravel the anagrams. The answers will be given in the next issue.

- |                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. ADORE OWLS             | 8. CLIMBING THE STAG WORKED    |
| 2. ANAL LAWYERS VERY VILE | 9. CORNISH BETTER              |
| 3. ANY MORE WIND          | 10. COW HAD SPIRIT             |
| 4. ANY NINE LED HER       | 11. DOUBT SONGWRITER           |
| 5. APOSTLE NAMING         | 12. EARTHLY RUB                |
| 6. ARNOLD NOBLE MONEY     | and in case you are struggling |
| 7. BEMOAN TERRORISM MIGHT | 13. ELY                        |

## SIGN OF THE TIMES - UNFORTUNATELY

DEPARTURES			
Time	Destination	Plat	Expected
1922	Brighton	1	Cancelled
1932	Newhaven Harbour	2	Cancelled
Due to a train crew shortage			
1937	Brighton	1	Cancelled
1946	Brighton	1	Cancelled
Due to shortage of train crew			
1949	Seaford	2	On Time
2002	Eastbourne	2	Cancelled
2004	Brighton	1	On Time
-- Time Now 19:18 --			
on our live service page at <a href="http://www">www</a>			

I hope that passengers on the Stourbridge line never have to suffer mass cancellations as witnessed by Southern Railway passengers this year due to the intransigence of both Southern Railway management and the Trade Unions.

The station is Falmer, which serves 2 universities and the Amex Stadium. The winner was Brighton & Hove Bus which operates regular services from the station entrance.

## NAME THE STATION ANSWERS - No 1 : ROAD

Here are the answers to Name The Station 1 which featured in the previous issue.

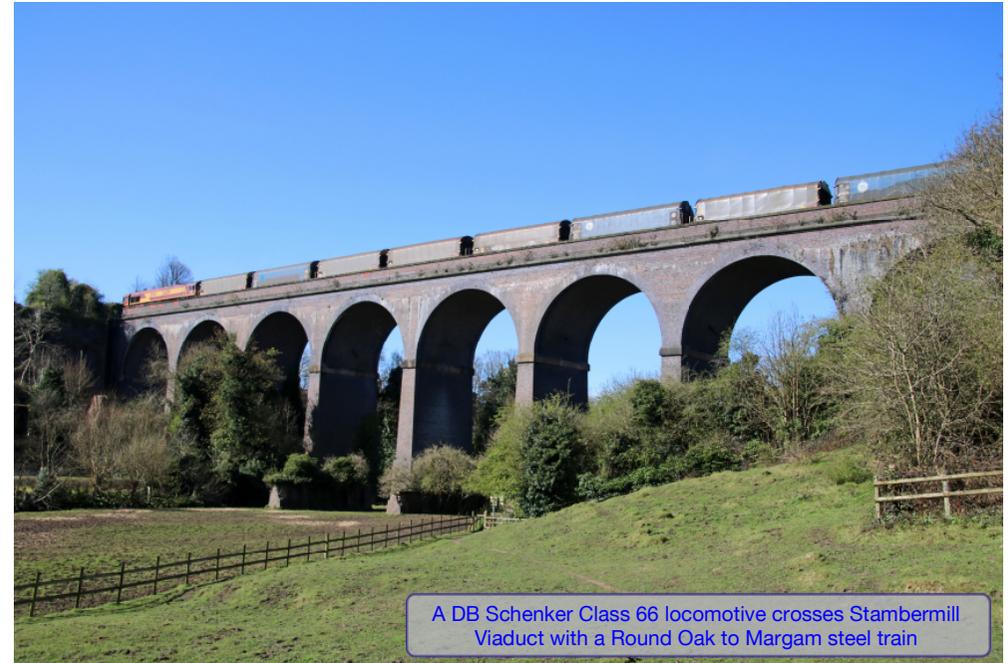
1 - Bodmin Road, 2 - Beaulieu Road, 3 - Berkeley Road, 4 - Pontypool Road, 5- St Columb Road, 6 - Bulth Road, 7 - Quainton Road, 8 - Gwinear Road, 9 - Wantage Road, 10 - St Andrews Road

# PLATFORM 2



Issue 5

September 2016



A DB Schenker Class 66 locomotive crosses Stambermill Viaduct with a Round Oak to Margam steel train

## CONTENTS

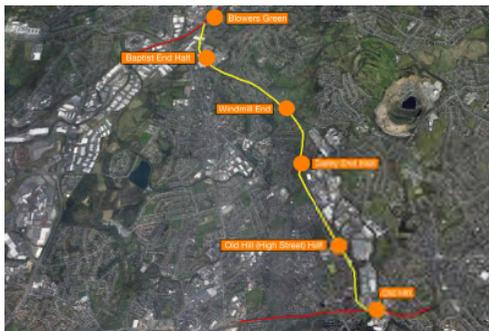
- 2 Stourbridge Line Branches : Old Hill to Blowers Green and Dudley
- 5 Do You Know ?
- 6 Return To Bumble Hole
- 7 Independent Breweries Along The Stourbridge Line - Part 2
- 8 DB Schenker Class 66s on Round Oak Freight Trains
- 9 Bananas and Bubbles
- 11 Steam Locomotives With Stourbridge Line Connections
- 12 Anagram Teaser 1
- 12 Sign Of The Times - Unfortunately
- 12 Name The Station 1 - Answers

PLATFORM 2 is published by:  
The Stourbridge Line User Group, 46 Sandringham Road, Wordsley, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 5HL

**PASSENGER BRANCHES OF THE STOURBRIDGE LINE**  
**3 : OLD HILL TO BLOWERS GREEN AND DUDLEY by Roger Davis**

*This is the third in a series of seven articles that looks at the branch lines that fed into the Stourbridge line between Smethwick and Droitwich Spa, working down the line from north to south.*

The line, locally known as the “Bumble Hole” line, opened on 1 March 1878 together with the other branch line from Old Hill - to Halesowen. It left the Stourbridge line at the western end of Old Hill station and curved around to the right, heading through a highly industrialised landscape to join the OWW Stourbridge Junction to Dudley line just to the south of Dudley Tunnel at Netherton Junction. A station on the OWW line at Netherton closed on the same day and a new station opened a few hundred yards towards Dudley so that it could be served by both lines. The new station was named “Dudley (South) & Netherton”.



The Bumble Hole line was double track throughout and had one intermediate station which served the small community at Windmill End. A year later, on 10 March 1879, a goods branch left the southbound line south of Baptist End Road and north of Windmill End and veered to the right to serve a goods station at Withymoor Basin. This goods shed was on the eastern side of Halesowen Road (A459) just south of the centre of Netherton and the area is now covered by an Industrial Park along a road now aptly named Railwharf Sidings.



Windmill End Station

(Stephenson Loco Society)

By 1895, there were 8 services on Monday to Saturday services from Old Hill, with 6 starting from Birmingham Snow Hill. In the opposite direction, there were 9 services with 8 continuing to Snow Hill.

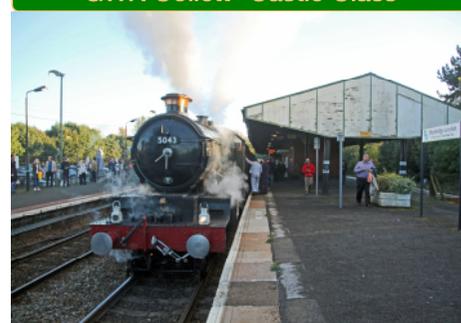
In 1901, Windmill End station gained a footbridge to link the two platforms and it was thought that this bridge had been brought from the original Stourbridge Junction station which closed that year.

On 21 August 1905, the line gained three new halts at Baptist End Halt (just to the north of Baptist End Road), Darby End Halt (just to the south of Withymoor Road) and Old Hill High Street Halt (just to the south of High Street). All three were typical GWR halts consisting of two wooden platforms with a corrugated iron hut on each and no lighting whatsoever. In the same year, the GWR introduced Railmotors on the line.

**STEAM LOCOMOTIVES WITH STOURBRIDGE LINE CONNECTIONS**  
**by John Warren**

The following are named steam locomotives with Stourbridge line connections. Please let us know if you can add to this list and we will publish them.

**GWR Collett “Castle Class”**



- 4091 Dudley Castle
- 5045 Earl of Dudley
- 7005 Sir Edward Elgar
- 7033 Hartlebury Castle

**GWR Collett “Hall Class”**



- 4930 Hagley Hall
- 4931 Hanbury Hall (near Droitwich)
- 4933 Himlip Hall (near Dudley)
- 4934 Hindlip Hall (near Fernhill Heath)

**GWR Churchward “County Class”**



- 3820 County of Worcester
- 3836 County of Warwick
- 3837 County of Stafford

**GWR Hawksworth “County Class”**



- 1027 County of Stafford
- 1028 County of Warwick
- 1029 County of Worcester

**GWR Collett “King Class”**



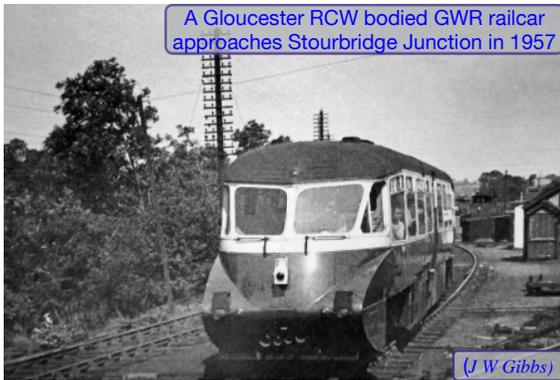
- 6009 King Charles II (defeated at Worcester 1651)

**LMS Stanier “Coronation Class”**



- 46235 City of Birmingham

I have to turn back the clock even further to find the original railcar. Back in the days of the Great Western Railway, economies of operation were being sought and even then, the company was looking for an alternative to steam power. The answer was found in the revolutionary AEC diesel railcar which was introduced in 1933. The bodywork of the first models, built by Park Royal and Gloucester Railway & Carriage Company, was streamlined and rounded in appearance and consequently the railcars earned the nickname "Flying Bananas". The later models, built by Swindon Works, were more angular. The diesel engines within the railcars were capable of exerting up to 130 horse power which was more than enough to transport dwindling numbers of passengers. In fact, the standard single car, built in 1935 and withdrawn in 1959, could carry 70 persons but had no toilets.



Three of the GWR railcars have survived into preservation, as follows:

*W4W, which has a Park Royal body, is part of the National Collection and is on display at Steam Museum, Swindon.*

*W20W, which has a GWR Swindon Works body, is at the Kent & East Sussex Railway which runs from Tenterden to Bodiam.*

*W22W, which has a GWR Swindon Works body, is owned by the Great Western Society at their Didcot headquarters.*

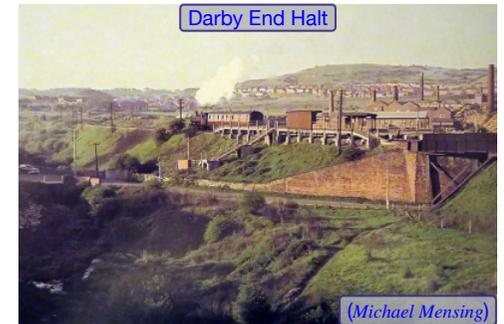
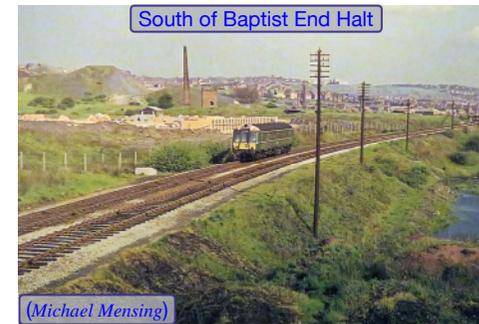


Before railcars took over the service in the mid 1950s, auto-trains using 14xx 0-4-2T locomotives or 64xx 0-6-0PT locomotives were regularly used for passenger traffic while steam locomotives hauled goods trains up and down the branch to Amblecote Goods Depot. Therefore, trains *did* actually run on the Stourbridge Town branch line but not anymore!

1921 saw some renaming along the line. On 1 August, the Withymoor Basin Goods Shed was renamed the Netherton Basin Goods Station. On 21 August, Netherton Junction became Blowers Green Junction, and Dudley (South) & Netherton station became Blowers Green station. At this time, there were 22 services in each direction along the line, with one morning through service to Birmingham Snow Hill with a return through service in the evening.



As well as the local passenger and goods services, the line was a very useful diversionary route when the main Birmingham Snow Hill to Wolverhampton Low Level line was closed between Handsworth and Priestfield for engineering works. Through trains were diverted via the Stourbridge line to Old Hill, over the Bumble Hole line to Blowers Green and then over the OWW to Priestfield and Wolverhampton.



By the 1950s, the line was starting to go downhill. Windmill End station was reduced to "halt" status in September 1952. In 1950, the service was still operating at the same level as it had done in 1921 but, by 1955, the service level had reduced to 13 in each direction on Mondays to Fridays during rush hours only, and 10 in each direction on Saturdays, with the last journey at 1325 from Dudley and 1415 from Old Hill. The three original halts were becoming very dilapidated, but it is surprising that they were refurbished with new prefabricated concrete platforms and bus style shelters in 1957. No lighting was provided at this stage, but very basic lighting was introduced at all stations shortly afterwards.



By 1961, the timetable had been reduced to a skeleton service.

MONDAY TO SATURDAY	SX	SX	SO	SX	SX	SX	SX	SX
Old Hill 0646	0720	0730	1245	1736	1749	1804	1830	1846
Old Hill (High St) Halt 0648	0722	0732	1247	1738	1751	1806	1832	1848
Darby End Halt 0650	0724	0734	1249	1740	1753	1808	1834	1850
Windmill End Halt 0652	0726	0736	1251	1742	1755	1810	1836	1852
Baptist End Halt 0655	0729	0739	1254	1745	1758	1813	1839	1855
Blowers Green 0658	0732	0742	1257	1748	1801	1816	1842	1858
Dudley 0700	0735	0744	1259	1750	1803	1818	1845	1901

MONDAY TO SATURDAY	SX	SX	SO	SX	SX	SX	SX
Dudley 0620	0654	0709	1225	1630	1725	1807	1824
Blowers Green 0623	0657	0712	1228	1633	1728	1810	1827
Baptist End Halt 0625	0659	0714	1230	1635	1730	1812	1829
Windmill End Halt 0628	0702	0717	1233	1638	1733	1815	1832
Darby End Halt 0630	0704	0719	1235	1640	1735	1817	1834
Old Hill (High St) Halt 0632	0706	0721	1237	1642	1737	1819	1836
Old Hill 0634	0708	0723	1239	1644	1739	1821	1838

so Saturdays only, sx Saturday excepted

No Sunday service

The first stage of closure occurred on 30 July 1962 when all local stations between Priestfield and Dudley and between Dudley and Stourbridge Junction were closed. This included Blowers Green even though the Bumble Hole line was still open and their trains still passed through the station.



On 27 March 1963, the death knell was sounded when the line was mentioned in Section 1 of "The Reshaping of British Railways" under the heading "Passenger services to be withdrawn". Unfortunately, the line did not fare as well as Exeter Central to Exmouth, St Erth to St Ives (Cornwall) and Liskeard to Looe, which all escaped their intended doom, and passenger services succumbed to Beeching's Axe on 15 June 1964.

Goods services survived a little longer with the branch to Netherton Basin closing on 5 July 1965, and the line between Blowers Green Junction and Old Hill closing completely at the end of 1967.

Today, it is difficult to find traces of the line. At Blowers Green, the Dudley southern bypass completely obliterates the path that the line took from Blowers Green Junction. Grass mounds on either side of Baptist End Road shows the path of the line, although the railway bridge is long gone.

## BANANAS AND BUBBLES

by Rob Hebron

There is a common misconception that the Stourbridge Town branch line is operated with a train. By definition, a train is either a locomotive drawing carriages or an ensemble of diesel units with a cab at both ends. In fact, the Town branch line is served by a railcar which is a self-contained and self-propelled rail vehicle designated Class 139. Caspar Lucas, Phil Tonks and I have covered the history and technical aspects of the Parry People Mover (PPM), as it is also known but not its predecessors. I will try to complete the story by travelling back in time.

Immediately before the PPM was installed on the shuttle between Stourbridge Town and Stourbridge Junction, Central Trains and London Midland employed a Class 153 railcar.



This class was a modification of a Class 155 two car unit with each coach given an extra cab and driving gear. Class 153 units still exist on the UK rail network and either work on short rural lines in isolation or are coupled with other Sprinter sets to strengthen them when required. A Class 153/170 combination is often employed on the Stourbridge Line, while Class 150/153 combinations are regularly seen on the Great Western Railway network.

Going back further when the old Stourbridge Town still stood in Vauxhall Road, another railcar in BR blue livery worked the branch line. This was affectionately known as the "Bubble Car" and provided a good, reliable and comfortable ride with its spring-imbedded upholstered seats.

The Bubble Cars used on the branch came from two different classes. The Class 122 railcars were built by Gloucester Railway and Carriage Company and entered service in 1958, while the Class 121 railcars had Pressed Steel bodywork and entered service from 1960. The two classes were easily distinguished as the Class 122 had a small destination screen at roof level, while the Class 121 had the destination screen in the driver's windscreen with a large four track panel at roof level to display the train's reporting number. The Bubble Car is best remembered for overriding the buffers and breaking through the barrier to the demolished Foster Street Bridge. The scene was very reminiscent of the film "Italian Job" but replacing the balancing car with a train.



**WINNING POST BREWERY**  
Pope Iron Road, Worcester  
Founded 2013

🚩 Worcester Foregate Street  
[www.winningpostworcester.co.uk](http://www.winningpostworcester.co.uk)



A small brewery close to Worcester Racecourse. It is based at the Winning Post pub.

**THREE SHIRES BREWERY**  
Park Foulard, Worcester  
Founded 2013

🚩 Worcester Foregate Street  
[www.threeshiresbrewery.co.uk](http://www.threeshiresbrewery.co.uk)



The Three Shires Brewery has been creating high quality ales since 2013, with the brewery being hand built by the head brewer, in Worcester.

**THE FRIDAY BEER COMPANY**  
Link Business Centre, Great Malvern  
Founded 2012

🚩 Malvern Link  
[www.thefridaybeer.com](http://www.thefridaybeer.com)



Situated at the foot of the Malvern Hills in Worcestershire and owned and run by three beer-mad scientists, it brews quality premium bottled ales

**MALVERN HILLS BREWERY**  
West Malvern Road, Great Malvern  
Founded 1998

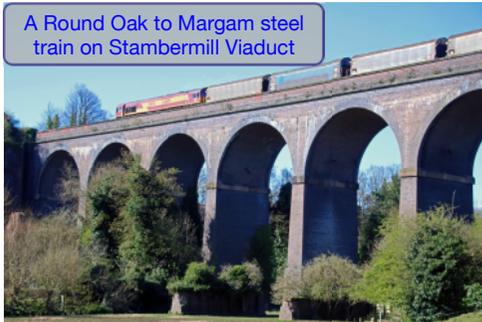
🚩 Great Malvern  
[www.malvernhillsbrewery.co.uk](http://www.malvernhillsbrewery.co.uk)



The brewery was established in an old quarryman's gunpowder store back in September 1998 and uses hops sourced from a local hop merchant.

**DB SCHENKER CLASS 66s ON ROUND OAK FREIGHT TRAINS**

A Round Oak to Margam steel train on Stambermill Viaduct



A Round Oak to Margam steel train at Vicarage Road



A Margam to Round Oak steel train at Moor Street



A Round Oak to Margam steel train leaves Round Oak



At St Peter's Road, the line passed underneath and the bridge still exists while the abutments of the bridge that took the line over the Netherton Tunnel Branch Canal just west of the 1¼ mile long tunnel can be seen today. The formation of the line close to Darby End has long since disappeared, with Withymoore Road both widened and straightened since the line closed. At Old Hill High Street, a grassy bank on the north side of the road shows the location of the line, although the south side has been levelled and built on. Finally, close to Old Hill station, one abutment of the bridge that took the line over Beauty Bank can be seen clearly from trains on the Stourbridge line.

The abutments show where the Bumble Hole line crossed the Netherton Tunnel Canal



It's difficult to believe this is the site of Blowers Green Junction



The abutments of the bridge taking the Bumble Hole line over Beauty Bank with the Stourbridge main line behind



**DO YOU KNOW ....?**

**What happened to the last service from the old Stourbridge Junction**

The last train from the original Stourbridge Junction station to Stourbridge Town in 1901 was memorable for all the wrong reasons. Having got the "right away", it pulled out of the station in a cloud of steam and whistle blowing. However, much shouting, gesticulation and lamp waving from people on the platform alerted the driver to the embarrassing fact that he had left one of the carriages behind in the station. He halted his train, reversed back into the station and picked up the remaining carriage.



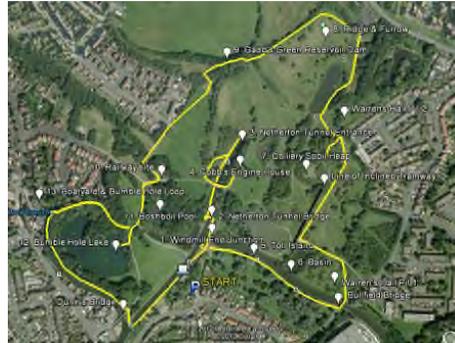
(Stourbridge Library)

As the local newspaper pointed out, "it was like one of Bo-peep's sheep, it left its tail behind it".

## RETURN TO BUMBLE HOLE by Roger Davis

As part of my research into the Bumble Hole line from Old Hill to Blowers Green, I visited locations along the line to see what parts of the line still existed. One of my trips was to the Bumble Hole Nature Reserve and I was amazed to find that the industrial waste land that surrounded the railway line at its time of closure has been transformed into a green oasis of outstanding beauty.

For anybody wanting a pleasant walk on a sunny afternoon, I would highly recommend the area to you. There are two main access points. The first is at St Peter's Road in Netherton just to the north of its junction with Northfield Road. Car parking is available alongside the, now closed, Dry Dock public house in Windmill End. Bus service 276 operates from Dudley, Merry Hill, Lye Station, Stourbridge Junction or Stourbridge to St Peter's Road and runs every 20 minutes on Mondays to Saturdays and every 30 minutes on Sundays. The alternative is on New Rowley Road, Rowley Regis (the main Dudley to Blackheath road) where there is a small car park close to point



8 on the map. Bus service 140 from Dudley, Blackheath, Quinton and Birmingham operates every 30 minutes on Mondays to Saturdays and hourly on Sundays and 241 from Dudley, Blackheath and Halesowen operates every 30 minutes on Mondays to Saturdays (services 140/241 combine to provide a 15 minutes service between Dudley and Blackheath, a 10-15 minutes walk from Rowley Regis station).

8 on the map. Bus service 140 from Dudley, Blackheath, Quinton and Birmingham operates every 30 minutes on Mondays to Saturdays and hourly on Sundays and 241 from Dudley, Blackheath and Halesowen operates every 30 minutes on Mondays to Saturdays (services 140/241 combine to provide a 15 minutes service between Dudley and Blackheath, a 10-15 minutes walk from Rowley Regis station).

Here is a selection of photographs taken on a beautiful February 2016 afternoon.



## INDEPENDENT BREWERIES ALONG THE STOURBRIDGE LINE Part 2 : The Southern Section by Arthur Bitter



In the last issue of Platform 2, the rise of small independent breweries was discussed and all examples at the northern end of the line were detailed. We now continue our journey south along the Stourbridge line finding more small breweries that have been set up close to the line. We start this journey at Stourbridge Town.

**ENVILLE ALES**  
Hollies Lane, Enville  
Founded 1993  
🚉 Stourbridge Town  
[www.envilleales.com](http://www.envilleales.com)



Enville Ales produce a range of prize winning ales including Simpikiss Bitter using the recipe from a now defunct Brettell Lane brewery.

**WORCESTERSHIRE BREWING CO**  
Station Forecourt, Hartlebury  
Founded 2011  
🚉 Hartlebury  
[www.worcestershirebrewingcompany.co.uk](http://www.worcestershirebrewingcompany.co.uk)



You can enjoy the brewery's ales from a number of local public houses and from any of their owned pubs; Tap House at Hartlebury Station, Crown at Martley, Hare & Hounds at Shenstone, Plough & Harrow at Cradley Heath and Coventry Arms, in Upton Snodsbury.

**BEWDLEY BREWERY**  
Lax Lane, Bewdley  
Founded 2008  
🚉 Kidderminster  
[www.bewdleybrewery.co.uk](http://www.bewdleybrewery.co.uk)



Bewdley began brewing in 2008 on a six-barrel plant in an old school. They were the first brewery in Bewdley for 96 years.

**POPE'S BREWING COMPANY**  
Blackpole Trading Estate, Worcester  
Founded 2012  
🚉 Worcester Shrub Hill  
[www.popesbrew.wix.com/beers](http://www.popesbrew.wix.com/beers)



This is a microbrewery on the Blackpole Trading Estate.

**CANNON ROYALL BREWERY**  
Uphampton Lane, Ombersley  
Founded 1993  
🚉 Droitwich Spa  
[www.cannonroyall.co.uk](http://www.cannonroyall.co.uk)



Cannon Royall Brewery occupies a rear portion of the Fruiterers Arms, Uphampton in what was once an old cider house. It brews 8 regular beers.

**FIREFLY BREWERY**  
Lowesmoor, Worcester  
Founded 2012  
🚉 Worcester Shrub Hill  
[www.facebook.com/firefly.worcester](http://www.facebook.com/firefly.worcester)



Based on the Firefly pub in Lowesmoor