

Unveiling due at brewery with exhibition on historic site

Ale's well for launch of venue's unique art

A unique piece of art that celebrates the colourful history of one of the country's oldest Victorian breweries will be unveiled in Walsall tomorrow.

Artist Pam Ginn will reveal her creation at Highgate Brewery, the inspiring venue behind the installation called Ale.

There will also be an exhibition of photographs that show the borough brewery at the very heart of the community.

Ale has been designed to recreate the sights, sounds and smells of the brewery using yards of tubing, a traditional cask and a hand pump which visitors can use to pull their own pint.

The artwork will move to MADE (Midland Architect Design Environment) in Birmingham on July 26 and from August 3 it will form part of the Campaign for Real Ale's beer and folk festival UK tour.

Ms Ginn was challenged to create Ale with a budget of only £500 and it is her tribute to the real ale heritage of the region.

The brewery provided her with know-how, materials and real ale for the project while the friends' group came up with design ideas and helped to build the installation.

Report by Lyndsey Hunt

The artist said: "For years, the pub was the centre of the community, a place where people gathered to socialise, to do business, to celebrate and to relax.

"It is important to acknowledge this important part of our heritage as our society changes and we are in danger of losing this traditional working and life experience."

Ale was created as part of the Festival of Xtreme Building. The historic brewery, founded in 1899, was taken over by the Global Star group in an undisclosed multi-million pound deal at the start of this month.

Global Star, which already boasts a portfolio of more than 100 pubs across the Midlands, pledged to expand the brewery, safe-guarding 25 jobs. The group, formed in 2002, plans to introduce Highgate Brewery ales into some of its existing pubs.

Pupils' big day at church

