



Winter 2022

FREE

Magazine of the Rugby & District branch  
of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale



[rugby.camra.org.uk](http://rugby.camra.org.uk)  
Rugby & District CAMRA Branch

[inntouch.camra.org.uk](http://inntouch.camra.org.uk)

## CONTINENTAL BEERS



Fri 4<sup>th</sup> - Sat 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022

CRAFT

# RUGBY & DISTRICT CAMRA BEER FESTIVAL

The Arnold House, Elsee Road, Rugby, CV21 3BA

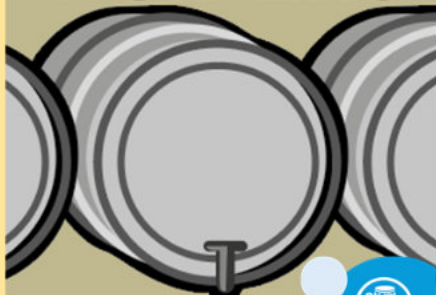
For more information visit our website ([rugby.camra.org.uk](http://rugby.camra.org.uk))  
or follow us on Facebook (Rugby & District CAMRA Branch)

Saturday Night  
20:00 - 23:00

BLUES  
extra

FOOD

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& CIDERS



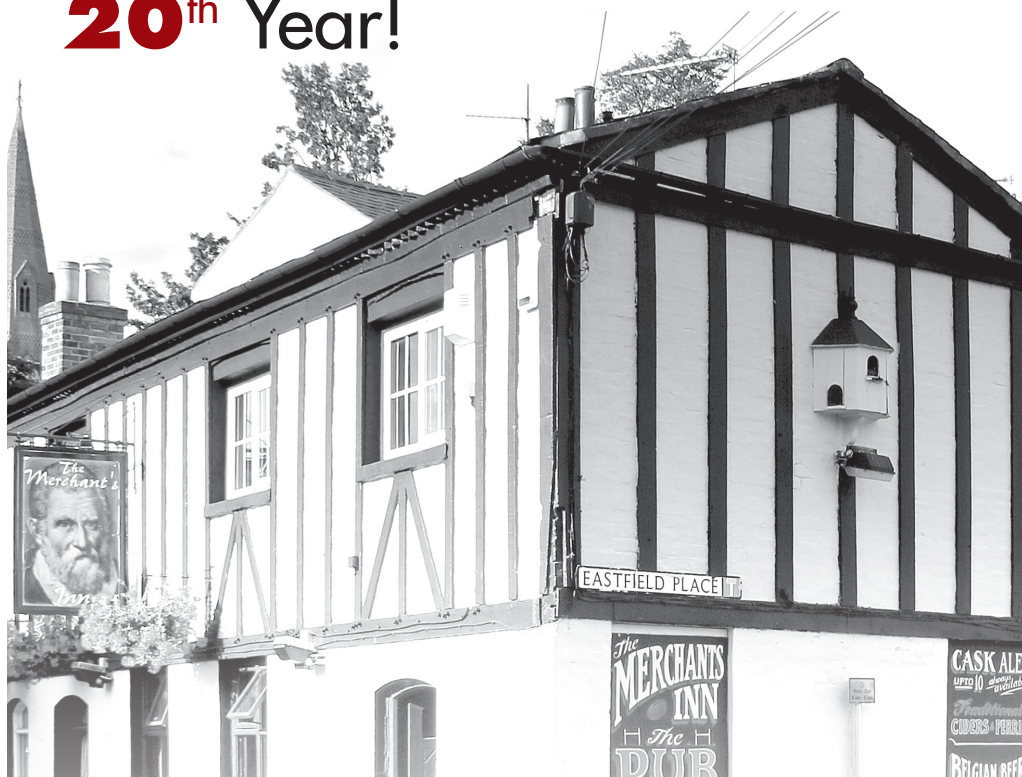
Friday 14:00-23:00 Saturday 12:00-23:00  
CAMRA Members £2 / Non-members £3



# HAPPY NEW YEAR

from All @ *The Merchants*  
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**Citizens Advice consumer helpline** 03454  
040506 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm)

**CAMRA Ltd** 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1  
4LW Tel: 01272 867201

*The views expressed in articles are those of individual contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Rugby & District Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.*

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## Branch Diary and Events

*You will receive a warm welcome at our Branch Meetings and Socials. We try and have a monthly social, visiting some great local pubs, and beer festivals.*

*Please visit our website, [rugby.camra.org.uk](http://rugby.camra.org.uk) for up to date information. Find a local beer festival at [bit.ly/WestMidBEEER](http://bit.ly/WestMidBEEER)*

Branch Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month with a 8pm start. Please check the website and Facebook page for venues.

### Please keep an eye on Social Media



Facebook Rugby & District CAMRA Branch and the website for all the latest information on branch meetings and trips out.

**Social Secretary** Steve Durant 07969 199 135

March 2022 Rugby and District CAMRA Beer  
Festival 4th and 5th March Arnold House  
See website for more details  
[rugby.camra.org.uk](http://rugby.camra.org.uk)

## A Note from The Chairman

As I start my third year as Branch Chairman, I wanted to reflect on my first two years and how strange they have been. For the first six months I chaired branch meetings and attended regional meetings, then COVID-19 hit and our world changed.

The main challenge during lockdown (apart from not being able to go to the pub) was holding meetings, we decided to hold on-line social events on a monthly basis and I would like to thank everyone who managed to join one. Now that we can hold face2face meetings again, I would like to extend an invitation to all branch members to get involved, whether that is volunteering at the beer festival, writing an article or helping distribute the magazine or just to attend meetings.

The Mystery Minibus Trips have started up again, which normally visit pubs in our area which are difficult to get to by public transport.

Join our Facebook site for pub information or log onto our [website rugby.camra.org.uk](http://website.rugby.camra.org.uk) for details of meetings & trips.....and don't forget to use our pubs as we don't want to lose them.

Cheers & keep safe, Andy





# The Squirrel Takes Gold

Rugby Pub Recognised by Receiving a Gold Award from CAMRA

## The Squirrel, Sheep Street, Rugby

It was June 2003 when Chris and Sue stepped into the Squirrel with a vision of what they wanted to make of it. Chris had a long-standing love of the Squirrel as his Dad and Grandad used to drink here and it was an ambition of his to be the landlord.

Over the next couple of years cask ale and live music became regular features, in 2006 CAMRA presented Chris and Sue with the most improved pub during that year. The rest is history with Chris's legacy continuing. Sue always promotes local talent with open mic on a Wednesday, live bands on a Saturday, with a few Sunday treats thrown in. The Squirrel boasts the best darts teams in town.

Sue wants to thank everyone for their continued support and everyone will get a warm welcome and friendly service but remember **"NO effin' & jeffin"**

So, it was no surprise to the Local CAMRA branch that the Squirrel was awarded a Gold Award in CAMRA's 50th year.

Well done to Sue and the Squirrel family.




*Gaynor Imrie*

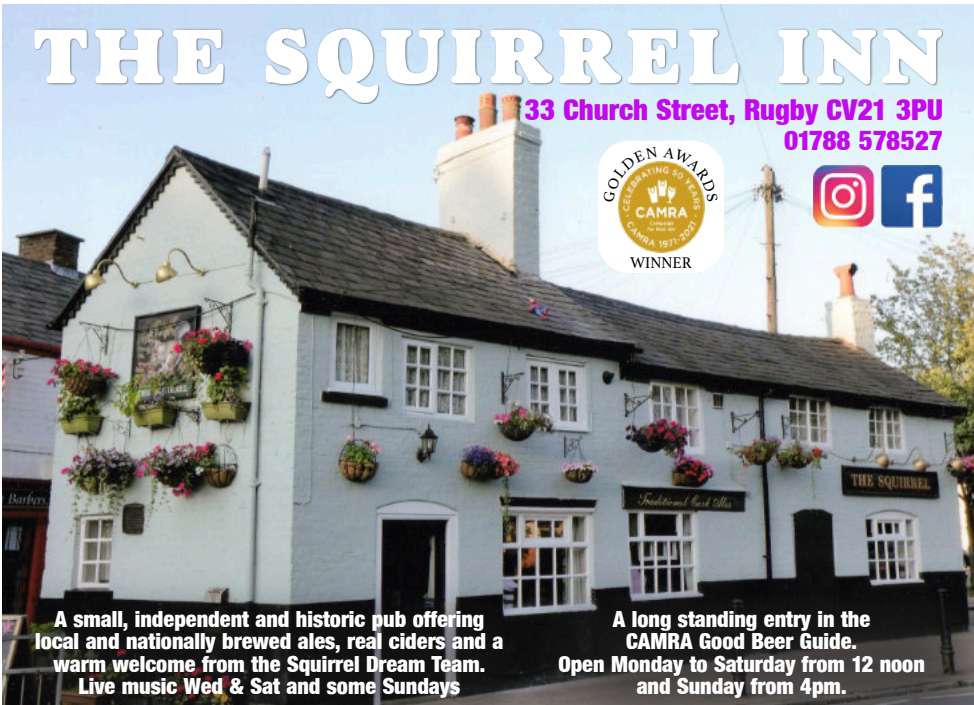


*Sue and the Squirrel Team receiving their Gold award from Cy Day Regional Director and Gary Timmins National Executive Member*

# THE SQUIRREL INN

**33 Church Street, Rugby CV21 3PU**  
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**A small, independent and historic pub offering local and nationally brewed ales, real ciders and a warm welcome from the Squirrel Dream Team. Live music Wed & Sat and some Sundays**

**A long standing entry in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide. Open Monday to Saturday from 12 noon and Sunday from 4pm.**

# What is That in My Beer?

First Rant of the Year (to be read with a smile)

*Bleep Bleep Bleep... What is that in my beer?*

Beer is made from four ingredients: water, malt, hops and yeast but for years brewers have been adding other substances as well. These substances are called adjuncts and can be anything from rice to fruit to spices. If done well, like in Cantillon Kriek, they can turn an excellent beer into a world class one adding another subtle level of complexity to the taste but in many the result is a horrible tasting substance that tastes nothing like beer.

This was never a big issue as most such beers were bottled and rarely seen in the pub, but these days every time I walk into a pub one or more of the hand pulls seems to have a beer that has been adulterated with an unsuitable ingredient. For this I blame the Americans, like most trends in "craft" beer American brewers took an old European concept and ran with it. As the Americans have no concept of subtlety, if they brew a watermelon wheat beer it tastes like

a watermelon smoothy, which believe me is not pleasant!

But there is one ingredient that seems to becoming omnipresent in dark beers that really concerns me and that is vanilla. Now, when used as an adjective vanilla means ordinary or standard but this definition cannot be applied to vanilla beers. Vanilla beers smell of vanilla, taste of vanilla and have an aftertaste of vanilla and it doesn't matter who brews it or what the beer is, they all taste the same and are quite frankly disgusting.

This awful trend must stop! If you are a brewer please stop adding these terrible substances to your beer, if you are a publican please stop giving them bar space and if you are a drinker ask yourself why are you drinking beer that tastes nothing like beer, do you not like beer?

Please remember this is a personal view :)

*Ivan Farroll*



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who produce the UK's  
best beer & pub guide

# It's Not All Doom and Gloom

## New Pubs Opening in Rugby

Doom and gloom merchants were predicting mass closures of pubs and bars, because of the effects of COVID. In Rugby we appear to have had the opposite problem, with four new bars opening up in the last few months. The only problem with these new bars is that none serve real ale and three have very little to offer for the serious beer drinker. At least they are here though and that there are people out there willing to take the first steps in the industry.

So we have the **Kanko Lounge** on Clifton Road, **Jags** on the High Street and **Par n' Bar** opposite ASDA, and **Cave** on the High Street.

Of the four, Cave in the old Somersault building is the most interesting. They stock a good range of unusual Czech and

Polish bottled beers, with a menu explaining the styles available. The bar also hosts rock bands and has regular biker nights. If you have not been, it's well worth a visit.

*Richard Potter*



*Cave - High Street Rugby*

An advertisement for CAMRA membership. It features a central image of a glass of beer on a bar counter. Overlaid on the image are several text elements: 'Love beer?' in a purple box, 'Love pubs?' in a purple box, and 'CAMRA membership is for you!' in large white text. At the bottom, it says 'Join CAMRA today' and 'camra.org.uk/joinup' in purple text.

Love beer?

Love pubs?

CAMRA membership is for you!

Join CAMRA today

[camra.org.uk/joinup](http://camra.org.uk/joinup)



# HEAD OF STEAM

## COME AND TRY US OUT

To book call 07933 100850

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10 Station Road, Lilbourne, Warwickshire

## IN STOCK NOW

### Matoaka 82

This New Zealand IPA is infused with **passion fruit** and grapefruit flavour notes to get your thirst quenched fast, abv of 4.5%. This beer won our first blind taste testing!



### Enchilager

The Enchilager is made for Mexican nights, this summer lager is made for when you are sat on the veranda watching the world go by. You will get a **wonderful lime** flavour and the love of an **earthy jalapeno**.

## COMING SOON

### January

The Flamango gets to spread it's wings, this is a **Mango and Hibiscus IPA**, a very fruity and desirable ale.

Available start of January in keg and 500ml bottles.

### February

Subscription box - the **Buddy Box** comes to town, with a special first box of Leicestershire fellow brewerles! Spreading the love - it's in our DNA



## FUEL YOUR FUN

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# Meet the Licensee

*This is a new feature to showcase Rugby & District pubs and clubs. If you are a licensee and would like to be included please email the editor at [editor@inttouch.camra.org.uk](mailto:editor@inttouch.camra.org.uk)*

## Andy from The Bull, Rugby

Andy Dunkly has been in the trade for the last 25 years. He is passionate about his pub, customers and real ale. The **Bull** forms part of a large number of pubs owned by the Stonegate Pub Company.

The Bull is situated on Sheep Street and has a range of activities and events taking place during the week. Tuesday - Pool Night, Thursday - Quiz Night (with the prize being a £20 beer tab), Saturday - 70's & 80's disco.

The Bull has regular beers from Greene King, Timothy Taylors, Wadsworth and Fullers and if any real ale drinkers have a favourite - ask Andy and he will see if he can get the beer in for you.

The Bull does accept your CAMRA vouchers - this is a great move by Stonegate Pub Company and is well received by Andy's regular CAMRA members. When you join CAMRA one of the benefits is £30 of vouchers to use in a year.

This pub shows the key sports events on screens around the pub, but there are quiet sections if you just want a chat and chill.

Go give it a try and enjoy the warm welcome you will receive from Andy, Liz and the team.

*Gaynor Imrie*



*Andy and Liz*

**There's a Beer Festival **EVERY DAY** at these  
2 fabulous real ale pubs:**

**The Raglan Arms, 50 Dunchurch Road, Rugby, CV22 6AD**

**The Windmill, 1 North Street, Rugby, CV21 2AB  
(under NEW management early December 2021)**

**Great beer,  
brewed in the  
Black Country.**



## Amy and Chris from The Cherry Tree, Catthorpe

**The Cherry Tree** is a picture-postcard free house nestled in the most southerly tip of rural Leicestershire. Minutes from the M1/M6/A14 interchange and just off the A5, it enjoys a quiet and peaceful position on Main Street in a bustling little village.

Landlords Chris and Amy are passionate about real ales, you'll always find Dow Bridge (brewed in Catthorpe village), sitting alongside other small local breweries, currently Purity from Warwickshire and Hook Norton from Oxfordshire.

Accompanying their drinks offering you'll find a fantastic selection of locally sourced, seasonal home cooked dishes (including Vegan and Gluten Free), platters, snacks and locally baked cakes.

The recent renovation has modernised the pub whilst being respectful to the building's

history, and when you walk through the door you're greeted by a warm welcome, a roaring winter fire and a friendly lounge style atmosphere.

The Cherry Tree is now a place to eat, drink and relax, where conversation is king and TVs and loud music are both conspicuously absent.

*Gaynor Imrie*



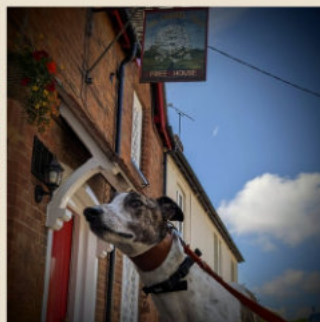
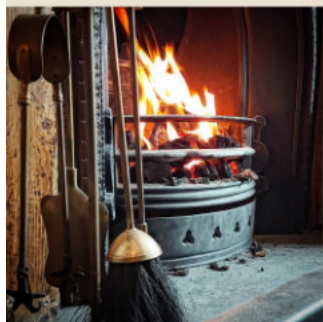
*Amy and Chris*

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# Beer and Fitness

Beer lovers have long argued that the amber brew is good for the mind as well as the soul.

Now they may claim a link to physical fitness as well!

According to the latest research in the journal *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, fitness is significantly related to beer.

The study of 38,653 healthy people aged 20-86 examined “whether higher levels of cardiorespiratory fitness are related to increased alcohol consumption.”

And, indeed, they are - moderate and highly fit people had greater odds of alcohol consumption than those in the low fitness group.

The findings could be explained in a number of ways. Professor Kerem Shuval, lead author of the study, says that running a 10K race might be perceived to provide a “license to indulge”.

Or it may be that exercise and beer lead to the same good feeling.



Professor Leigh Leasure at Austin Texas university says both lead to higher dopamine levels in the brain. People who seek a happy sensation through fitness also find it in beer.

Research closer to home delivers the same findings: I find that a 5-mile run around Rugby delivers a similar sense of happiness as a couple of pints with my friends. As described by academics in Austin, “both activities are often done socially, and social interactions can also be rewarding, so there is the potential to combine feel-good activities by working out and drinking with friends.”

Source [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34431829](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34431829)

*Ralph Kenna*

## Introducing...

### The New Secretary of Rugby and District CAMRA Branch

Let me introduce myself. My name is Janet Hale. With a name like that, how could I not love ale?

I am the newly appointed secretary of Rugby & District CAMRA and have some big boots to fill following Malcolm's 8+ years in the role. Thanks Malcolm. I'm sure I will have a few questions going forward.

I started my ale drinking days at Uni, occasionally sampling the local Welsh bitter whilst playing darts. I decline to say how many years ago that was!

I moved to Rugby about six years ago and already regularly imbibing at beer festivals across the nation, I felt it was time to join the local CAMRA group. Following a couple of very quiet years for beer festivals and pubs, it's really nice to be able to enjoy both again. Whether you are an ale or cider drinker, like your sports or music, fancy something different

for dinner or just want a good chat (many a world problem has been solved over an ale or two), between them Rugby pubs offer all.

Whether you are a new member of Rugby & District CAMRA or have been a member for a while, why not come along and meet everybody at our monthly meetings, which is a little business and lots of socialising. All meeting dates, venues and events can be seen on our Facebook page. Rugby & District CAMRA Branch.



*Welcome to your new role Janet*



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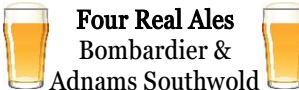


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# Jolly Boys - Out at Last

## Harrogate

Following a two year long hiatus due to the dreaded C word, the Jolly Boys ale tour was back on again this year, previously we'd planned to jet off to Bucharest but with forever changing travel restrictions we stayed in the UK and headed for a weekend in Harrogate at the beginning of October. The main contingent of the party is from Nottingham with me being an interloper from Rugby. So the first task is getting the train from Nottingham, via Leeds to Harrogate. This is as good an excuse as any to meet up in the excellent **Beerheadz Station Tap** and ensure we were fully refreshed before the trip.

We arrived in Harrogate late afternoon and made our way to our accommodation for the weekend, Arden House B&B, this turned out to be a great family run business with a superb breakfast and very reasonably priced.

Having dropped our luggage we made our way out to the **Devonshire Tap House** out on the Skipton Road, six hand pulls available including a Chocolate Orange stout that went down very nicely, there was also a large selection of canned craft ales available which seemed to be a bit of a staple across the area.

Next stop the **Swan**, also on the Skipton Road, this is a recently refurbished bar very much in the micro pub style with minimalist décor but a lively atmosphere and excellent kept beers, six hand pulls and three craft kegs.

**Harrogate Tap** was next on the list, another of the ever increasing station pubs, this one is a cracker, with a large bar running the length of the building, period features and more beer on tap than I could count – this would become one of the regular stop offs on the tour.

**Disappearing Chin** is one of the smaller bars we visited, very much



*The Jolly Boys*

a craft favourite, it also let me indulge my passion for picking beer purely on the pump clip and very tasty 2/3rds of Kraken were drunk in quick order.

Finally for the first night the **Little Ale House**, this would be a pub we visited again more than once, excellent selection of beer, a very popular bar and on both visits I stuck with aptly named 'A Dark Beer'.

Saturday was a trip to Knaresborough, walking the path that nears the river Knibb. We stopped half way at the **Gardeners Arms**, which was a very traditional Sam Smiths pub, the prices here helped us feel like we'd stepped back in time £2.40 for their own brand Mild!



*The Gardeners Arms*

Then into Knaresborough, firstly **Worlds End**, overlooking the river and **Mother Shiptons Cave** with plenty of outdoor seating as we were spoiled with an exceptionally sunny October day.

**Track and Sleeper** is another station tap room less than half the size of its counterpart in Harrogate but no less welcoming and again a great selection of

beer.

Just off the town square we visited **Six Poor Folk**, a Timothy Taylor house, with two guests but only Landlord and Golden Best on from the home brewery.

**Blind Jacks** is a must visit, extremely lively with great beers in what must be one of the oldest buildings in the town, worth seeking out the stairs to find the additional seating as the bar is quite small.

Making our way back towards the train station our next stop was the **Half Moon**, a favourite of mine and as you can see from the image it's the picture-perfect British Pub!



*The Half Moon*

Short train ride to Harrogate, rude not to stop off in the Tap



again, final stop of the night was **Major Tom's Social**, I don't really know how best to describe this place, it's a bit like a real ale night club, loud music dancing and great beer.

As usual Saturday is a slower day. Deciding to walk out to Hornbeam Park to visit the **Roosters**

**Brewing Co. Tap Room**,

Roosters is a firm favourite in the area with most of the pubs we visited having at least one of their home ales on tap, a very large tap at the end of an industrial estate but well worth the walk.

Back in the centre of Harrogate **Starling Independent Bar Café** was next, another micro pub style bar with three ales on tap and again the popular fridge full of tinned craft.

Harrogate seems to offer a similar night time scene as some of the larger cities we've visited, hence stops became longer and the list of pubs we could all fit in became shorter. We got in the **Old Bell** just as the evening was starting to get going.

**Hales Bar** is the oldest pub in Harrogate, with a slight nautical feel it reminded me of some of the pubs in Liverpool with it's high ceilings, wood cladding and multiple booths.

Penultimate stop of this year's tour was again the Little Ale House, thankfully recognised by Thursday nights bar man we were let in as they weren't keen on large groups turning up – again packed to the rafters but thankfully again due to the weather we were able to enjoy beer al fresco.

Last stop the **Blues Bar** and what a place to end, got there just in time to see the start of local hero Jed Thomas' set, wow, what a performer, he's a regular at the venue but standing room only from start to finish shows what a following he has, the influence of Roosters Yankee certainly had the feet tapping and the head nodding!

That's it for another year, but I'm already planning the next trip off to the Welsh borders and Shrewsbury.



*Worlds End*

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*Karl Hollings*

# Pubs at the Heart of the Community

Pubs are at the heart of every community. CAMRA recently commissioned research from Oxford University which shows that pubs play a key role in facilitating friendships and combating loneliness - people who go to a local pub are happier, more trusting and better-connected with their local community.

Pubs are one of the few places where you can meet people in a relaxed, social environment. With community centres and clubs all over the country closing, pubs offer a vital hub for locals to get together as a community. Pubs are taking an active part in tackling loneliness, such as running lunch clubs, chatting to regulars or just providing a place for people to meet. Many community pubs in rural areas are also stepping in to fill the gap in local services, such as running post offices and shops, cinema rooms and libraries, going well beyond just serving drinks.

The Oxford University research showed that:

- Nothing is more significant, both to our lives and to the national economy, than our health and happiness. The more friends you have, the happier and healthier you are.

- While 40% of people in the UK typically socialise with friends in their homes, a third of people prefer to do so in pubs.

- Pubs, particularly small community pubs, provide a safe environment where you can meet old and new friends face-to-face over a drink. The pub offers an enriching experience with the opportunity to meet a greater diversity of people from all walks of life than we would otherwise be able to do.

- Almost a quarter of the UK population said that they regularly used a “local”, close to where they live or work.

- People who patronise their local pub tend to have more close friends on whom they can depend for support. They are generally more satisfied with their lives and feel more embedded in their local community than those who don't visit a local pub.



- Friendships are created and maintained mainly by face-to-face interaction. However, people in large city centre pubs tend to be less engaged with their conversation group and are more likely to leave a conversation than those in smaller community pubs.

- Small community pubs tend to be more “beer-based” and less likely to be “wine/spirits-based”. People in smaller community pubs also tend to consume less alcohol than those in larger city centre pubs.

- By allowing us to meet face-to-face, modest consumption of alcohol enables us to build friendships and create a sense of community. There is also evidence to suggest that the size and quality of our social network has dramatic effects on our health, well-being, happiness and even survival.

- The research recommends that publicans and pub-owners work closely with their community to develop a local community atmosphere. It also recommends that city planners and developers make greater efforts to ensure that communities have local pubs readily available to them.

- The research also recommends that Government policy on beer tax and business rates relief should recognise the positive impacts that community pubs have on health and well-being.

- If we can encourage people to get off their smart phones and go down to the pub to actually talk to each other, it is likely to have a dramatic effect on their health and well-being, as well as community cohesion.

A recent YouGov survey conducted for CAMRA also showed that real ale drinkers are reaping the personal and social well-being benefits of pub-going. The survey found that 56% of regular real ale drinkers who go to pubs have made one friend or more there, compared to 35% of the general pub-going population. In fact, 30% of real ale drinkers said they had made five or more friends from their pub visits, compared to 16% of all pub-goers. Given the pivotal role that pubs play, CAMRA is calling for substantial reforms to better support the industry and keep pubs open and thriving. This includes introducing a preferential rate of duty for beer sold in pubs, giving more support for publicans tied to large pub-owning companies, and significantly reducing the business rates currently paid by our nation's pubs. Nik Antona, CAMRA's National Chairman, said "Pubs play a significant role in communities across the country, providing space for local people to meet, helping to tackle loneliness, and having a positive impact on the

personal well-being of pub-goers. It's vital that the government continues to act to reduce pub closures so that pubs remain at the heart of communities. In addition, it is imperative that beer-drinkers continue to support the pubs trade by visiting them."

*Steve James  
(Stourbridge and Halesowen CAMRA)*



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# Beer Tasting

## Would You be Interested?

Next time you pick up your copy of the Good Beer Guide (GBG) or look at the App check the Brewery section and pick out your favourite brewery. Find your best beer and read the description.

Do you agree or could you do better? You could be part of the team who tastes beers and forwards their opinion and thoughts about the beer to CAMRA's National database for inclusion to the GBG via your smartphone whilst sitting in the pub sampling the beer or later at home on your PC.

Everybody's taste is unique like their fingerprint so your opinion is true.

CAMRA has taken the initiative to train members in many roles to ensure that an educated approach to all beer and cider related activities is seen and realised. Whether your role is Beer Festival Organiser, Treasurer, Bar Manager, Beer taster or Beer Judge there is training available to give you those required skills. Taste training will offer you an opportunity to learn about beer from start to finish from ingredients to process and production, distribution to cellar work and on to tasting and defining.

You can complete the training and collect a certificate from CAMRA. You will then be eligible to drink beer and record your opinions and forward these electronically for inclusion to the Good Beer Guide.

If this whets your appetite for beer tasting at a recognised level there are sessions taking place on a Regional basis. If you are keen to hone your tasting skills contact Geoff Cross, your Regional



Tasting Coordinator, at [geoff.cross@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:geoff.cross@blueyonder.co.uk) with your CAMRA membership number and Branch. The cost of the training is under £15 which includes the beers tasted and consumables like water and biscuits for palate cleansing. On full completion of the training, which is a certain number of tastings submitted, a certificate will be issued by CAMRA. Taste training sessions will be held in Birmingham, Tamworth and other locations in the West Midlands on demand.

Good tasting!

*Geoff Cross  
West Midlands Regional Tasting Coordinator*

*Rugby and District CAMRA will be looking to facilitate a mini bus and go as a group. If this is something that interests you please email the [editor@inntouch.camra.org.uk](mailto:editor@inntouch.camra.org.uk)*

We would like to hear from you - the readers. Send us your ideas and articles to [editor@rugbycamra.org.uk](mailto:editor@rugbycamra.org.uk). Items and articles (around 450 words) need to be submitted by 1st March for the Spring Edition which is due out May 2022

**Calling CAMRA members or Inn Touch readers...**  
**Can you help to distribute the Inn Touch magazine to your local pub?**

Many hands make light work. Our volunteers deliver Inn Touch magazine four times a year to their local pubs in approximately 300 locations. Even if you can only manage to deliver to one pub, it'll help us deliver to all locations in town and our surrounding villages. Many Thanks

**To volunteer** Please contact your branch by emailing [chairman@rugbycamra.org.uk](mailto:chairman@rugbycamra.org.uk)

**Lastly, we would like to personally thank our new and regular advertisers for their continued support.**



# An Introduction to Cider

Cider, as we all know, is made from apples harvested, pulped and fermented to produce a variety of styles from very dry to incredibly sweet. The addition of other fruits and vegetables can also create a wide range of varieties, such as mango, rhubarb and even dandelion and burdock. It has to be said that whatever your taste there is bound to be a cider to suit.

From Neolithic times apples have been used to produce cider. 1204 AD has the first written record of cider, detailing a payment from a manor in Ruhnham in Norfolk, made with cider. During the dark ages monks created orchards and also produced cider. In the 1500's Henry VIII supported the introduction of several new varieties of apples from France, including the Pippin. The county of Kent became an area of great orchards during this time. The 17th century saw a great increase in cider production especially among the gentry, and by the 18th century cider was being enjoyed by all

classes, often given to farm labourers as payment. However the Truck Act of 1887 put a stop to payments of this kind. Today cider is being produced on a huge scale but does still follow the same basic principles and is increasing in its popularity.

Real cider is made from real fruit, not concentrates and is still, not fizzy and contrary to popular belief it is not all a high ABV. It is often no stronger than your average pint of beer or lager. So if you haven't tried some yet, give it a go. It's usually vegan friendly, suitable for coeliac sufferers, and there are numerous organic varieties too. A full listing of pubs that serve real cider can be found using [whatpub.com](http://whatpub.com) and ticking the 'Real Cider Available'

filter. As it is usually a 'bag in box' product, as long as it is kept cool it will stay fresh for several weeks which makes it a cost effective product for the licensee. So ask your local if they will stock it today if they don't do so already.

*Jan Lawton*



*Cider Apples Ready for Pressing*

## CAMRA members

Are you missing out on local branch activities?  
Not getting emails from your Branch?

**It would be worth checking the privacy settings  
of your membership on the CAMRA website.**

You may find you've not elected to receive electronic communications from your local branch, meaning you're missing out on details of events, trips and social activities.

It's simple to change your settings so that your branch can contact you.

**Sign in at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) and go to  
My Membership / Edit Membership details  
or call 01727 867 201**

# The Covid Impact

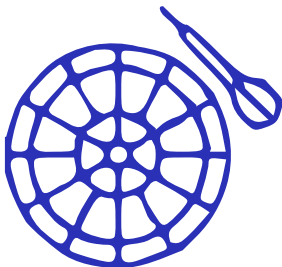
## Nothing Can Replace the Pub Experience

I don't know who originally came up with the phrase "You don't truly appreciate something until it's gone." It's a theme popular amongst song writers. Bill Withers, "Ain't No Sunshine When She's Gone"; "I'll be Seeing You" by Irving Kahal and Sammy Fain; "The Other Side of the World" by KT Tunstall and "The Living Years" by Mike and the Mechanics all examples of songs about a missing loved one. This is a sentiment that will be relevant to many people at the moment. In my case though it's not a loved one that I've been missing.

On March 20th 2020 there was a seismic change to life across the country, as we entered lockdown due to the Covid19 pandemic. For me that meant going from working in a busy office with around 60 staff, to sitting in a tiny room at home with just a telephone and PC for company for most of the day. Restricted to walking in my local area for exercise and being careful to socially distance whilst doing so. However the most heart wrenching and difficult thing I had to endure, the one thing I miss above all others....being able to visit the pub.

I didn't lack good beer. I was well supplied from local breweries and pubs. I enjoyed familiar favourites and made new beery discoveries. I convened with friends on video chats for virtual drinking sessions to maintain some social contact. However although this helped us to keep some semblance of sanity it was very much "the best we could do under the circumstances" rather than a proper substitute. Part of me ached for the pub and I know I was not alone.

I cannot point to one single aspect of the pub going experience that I was missing the most. I have long argued that pubs are far more than just places to drink and many of my feelings backed up this argument. I missed the door



swinging open before me to be greeted with the sound of people talking and laughing. I missed surveying the range of pump clips to decide what to order. I missed being greeted by a friendly face the other side of the bar, being asked how I am; the friendly banter when I'm asked what I'm having and catching up on news since I last saw them. I missed the noise of the hand pump being pulled and the sound of the till being opened and shut. I missed seeing the pub regulars who I would normally see almost every week. I longed to perch myself on my regular bar stool and take a swig of a pint of cool cask beer with a creamy head, freshly poured and feel the stresses of life fade into the background and be forgotten for a while. I missed the buzz of people coming and going to the bar around me, talking and asking for recommendations on what to drink. I missed dogs speculatively investigating me to see if I was a good prospect for obtaining a biscuit. I wanted to be able to turn around as a hand clamped on my shoulder and smile at seeing a friendly face and joke about what had taken them so long to get there. I miss laughing as I point a male punter who has almost just walked into the ladies toilets in the right direction. I yearned to catch up with friends face to face instead of being in our respective houses linked only by the internet; without having a microphone go off and having to resort to improvised sign language or a camera switch itself off and a laptop needing to be rebooted. I missed talking to the staff about beer and trying to persuade them to order my favourites. I miss the wink from the glass collector as I take back my empty glass and the chink as clean glasses are stacked and dirty ones are put in the washer. I miss the ring of the bell for last orders,



finishing my last drink, saying my goodbyes and making my way home having had a good night. This is by no means an exhaustive list, there are many other things too many to put them all down here. Pubs are an ensemble cast of sounds and smells, people and interactions, physical objects and places that can come together to bring welcome and escapism, joy and a bit of magic.

On occasions I have walked past an empty pub during the lockdown period and as I glanced in through the windows it has brought back fond memories but tinged with a great sense of loss, sadness and longing. The silence and the emptiness is eerie. The rooms that should exude a warm glow and a buzz of life are dark and lifeless. They are missing their soul and in turn not being able to visit them it feels like a part of mine is missing too.

Nothing can replace the pub experience. It is a part of our heritage and our culture. It's a part of me and without it life doesn't feel the same. Yes I loved pubs before this but truly I didn't appreciate them properly until they were taken from me. Absence has definitely made the heart grow fonder! If I were a more talented musician than I am I would pen a ballad, a love song to the pubs and how much I miss them but these ramblings shall have to suffice. That and I also think that this experience has shown us what a world without pubs might resemble, like looking into a portent of hell. More than ever it feels like pubs need our support. I for one will be fighting harder than ever to ensure that a publess world becomes just an unpleasant memory rather than a permanent state of affairs.

*Rob Carter*

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# The Rise of the Estate Pub

Two pubs that could have easily been lost have both reopened and their future looks bright. The Bear in Bilton opened in late November and the Jolly Abbot in early summer and they have both welcomed customers old and new alike.



*The Jolly Abbot*

In Bilton, **The Bear** is open after quite a transformation. It looks fabulous inside, the team behind the pub has made great efforts to make it look so good. It should now once again become the real hub of the community. A new menu is in place with many pub classics and grazing boards to tempt the diner. One of the most interesting things about the reopening is that it is the first pub in town to showcase beers from Bedford's new Brewpoint Brewery. After Charles Wells sold its old brewery and main brands to Marstons in 2017 a new state of the art facility was built called Brewpoint. The company is now called Wells & Co and on the bar of the Bear is their fascinating range of new beers. Look out for real ales like Origin, DNA and



*The Bear*

Legend and craft beers like Checkpoint, Midpoint and On Point.

In Lower Hillmorton, the **Jolly Abbot** opened in early summer. It's a pub I have a great deal of time for and the people in charge have done a great job in sprucing the place up. New signage now adorns the exterior, the bar has been revamped for the 21st century and work has been carried out in the garden too. The pub also benefits from being one of few pubs in town with both a bar and a lounge. Two cask beers are generally served, which include Greene King Abbot Ale. How good is it you have a beer named after your own pub! It's a pub I regularly use as



it's the halfway point on one of my dog walks and the two of us always get a warm welcome when we call in.

Here at Rugby & District CAMRA we offer both pubs the best of luck and a long and prosperous future.

*Richard Potter*

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If you would like to advertise in the next edition of **INN TOUCH** please drop an email to the Editor **[editor@rugbycamra.org.uk](mailto:editor@rugbycamra.org.uk)** or **[adverts@inntouch.camra.org.uk](mailto:adverts@inntouch.camra.org.uk)** by 1st March 2022

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We really look forward to hearing from you.



# Introducing the Vice Chairman

## Welcome to the Winter Edition of Inn Touch

Gaynor, your *Inn Touch* editor, asked me to say a few words about myself as I am currently the branch's vice chairman. CAMRA for me has been a bit of a life sentence. I joined when I was 21 and soon converted to life membership status, realising that I was never going to leave.

My first memories of pubs in town was the **Star** on the corner of St Matthews Street. I didn't go in, but I remember driving past on the way to the Rugby Lions club on a Saturday afternoon with my dad. My first pints were in the **Vic** on a Friday night after our Venture Scout meetings. Over the years I've done many things within the local branch. I edited the newsletter for seven years, I run the cider bar at our festivals and also try and fleece as much money out of you as I can as our Beer Festival auctioneer.

Things in town have changed tremendously in the 30 plus years since I joined, when Brew XI and Ansell's Bitter were the order of the day. There was real joy at a pint of Pedigree and when the **Half Moon** started selling Burton Ale and Caledonian Golden Promise we were in beer heaven. Now, many pubs in town sell a range that is better than our first festivals.

I still love a pint down the pub. Nothing beats the pleasure it brings. I hope to be doing so for another 30 years, when I'll still be a CAMRA member.

Rugby & District CAMRA is growing and now has over 400 members. We would really like to see



*Richard at the Copperhead Brewery Cooroy Queensland*

more members attending our monthly meeting, joining us on the monthly mystery mini bus trips and getting involved with the branch, so please try and attend the branch meeting where you will get a very warm welcome.

*Richard Potter*

## Thank you Malcolm Harding

Malcolm Harding has been a member of CAMRA since 1984 when he joined the staff at St Albans. Now after eight years as Secretary of the Rugby & District CAMRA he has stepped down, taken his final set of minutes and can now relax and enjoy CAMRA life without the challenges of a committee position. Malcolm, from all of the Branch many thanks for your dedication to the branch and CAMRA over the last 37 years.

*Rugby & District CAMRA Branch members*



*Malcolm Harding*

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Campaign  
for  
Real Ale

# Cask Ale

## The Fight Back Begins Now

There are more breweries in Britain than there have been for decades – around 2,300. They supply over 50,000 pubs, bars, hotels, restaurants and clubs with cask beers, making over 10,000 different beers available each year.

“It’s not just the number of cask beers on offer that is so impressive,” says Matt Eley, editor of the Cask Report 2019. “It’s the variety of styles. The choice of colours, strengths, flavours and aromas just keeps on growing as people become more adventurous in their tastes and brewers become more experimental.”

Of course, not all in the garden is rosy. There is an ongoing decline in on-trade beer consumption, fourteen pubs a week are closing and the average number of cask brands on the bar has reduced from 4.4 to 2.8 in two years. This means that competition for space on the bar is intense.

“Given the sheer scale of competition, and the level of support available from reputable brewers, it is perverse that there are still pubs that serve cask ale in poor condition,” says Matt.

He points to the fact that 70% of cask drinkers have at some point been served an off pint. “This deters them from going back to the pub (40%) and puts them off the brand (39%),” he says.

As part of the research for the Report, drinkers were presented with cask beers at different temperatures to try. A resounding 95% thought the temperature of those served at the industry recommended 11 to 13C was “just right”.

“Our research showed that licensees who are passionate about beer and proud of their cask ales are angry to see poor pints being served in other pubs. They view it as a grave disservice to everyone.”

The report contends that premiumisation – in terms of quality, strength and price – offers significant potential to the industry. “This is

where the Cask Fight-Back begins,” says Matt. “With premiumisation.”

### Premiumisation – Quality

Cask drinkers spend over £1,000 a year on food and drink at the pub. They are worth looking after. Too many brands and not enough throughput means poor quality. So does serving the beer too warm. A concerted effort to get the range right and serve each and every pint in top notch condition, at the right temperature, helps pubs to keep existing customers and to attract new faces through the doors.

### Premiumisation – Strength

Sales of premium-strength cask beers (4.2% to 7.5% abv) grew in the last four months versus the same period last year. Licensees should be looking to include them in their range, particularly for evening and weekend sessions when they are most popular.

### Premiumisation – Price

According to the research, 59% of drinkers think that cask should be more expensive than mainstream lager. Yet, despite being a natural, fresh product, usually made in smaller batches and with a short shelf life, cask ales are rarely priced much higher than standard lagers.

View the Cask Report 2019/20 at [bit.ly/caskreport2019](https://bit.ly/caskreport2019)

**“...it is perverse  
that there are still  
pubs that serve  
cask ale in poor  
condition”**





## The ARNOLD HOUSE

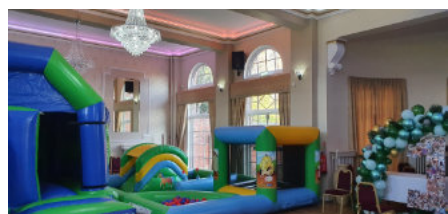
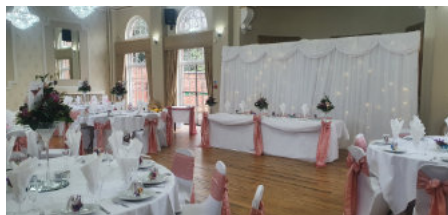
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