

Inn Touch

Free

RUGBY & DISTRICT BRANCH OF CAMRA

Winter 2022-23 edition

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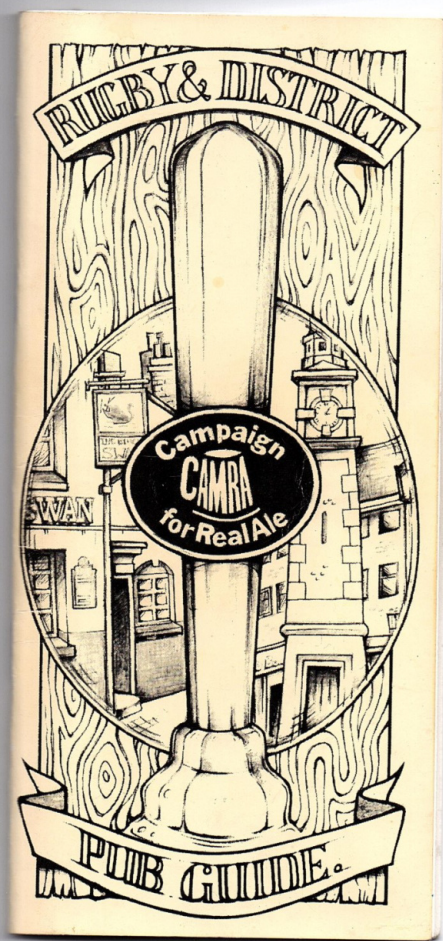
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There are worse places to be trying out pubs.



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Campaign
for
Real Ale

AWARD-WINNING BEERS BREWED IN COVENTRY



BRIGHT EYES
SESSION PALE 3.8%



AMBER GAMBLER
BEST BITTER 4.5%



FAIR LADY
MANGO IPA 4.5%



RED REBEL
IPA 6.2%



GHOST TOWN LAGER
PILSNER 4%



SKY BLUE ARMY
OFFICIAL LAGER OF CCFC
4.9%

Editor's introduction

Hello and welcome to this winter edition of 'Inn Touch'. As the incoming editor I'd like to thank the previous editor Gaynor for all her hard work on this publication. Thanks is also due to our local pubs and breweries for continuing to advertise in the current economic climate. It is only through them this magazine is possible.

I have a hope that more young people will get into drinking and enjoying real ale. This is not just to replace us more venerable CAMRA members, as there is also an environmental benefit. Consider one end of the carbon footprint as a stroll down your local pub for a locally brewed cask ale, served at cellar temperature, from cask to glass. No single use packaging. Contrast that with driving to a country pub in a 4x4 and ordering a single-use bottle of imported lager from the large refrigerated unit at arctic temperatures.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the magazine over a really decent pint.

Steve - Editor

Below: The editor at the Delirium Village in Brussels



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Printed four times a year with a distribution of 2000 copies in the Rugby & District area.

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BEER EXPERT

3 Enjoy CAMRA
BEER FESTIVALS
in front of or behind the bar

4 GET INVOLVED
and make new friends

5 Save
YOUR LOCAL

6 Find the
**BEST PUBS
IN BRITAIN**

7 Get great
**VALUE FOR
MONEY**

8 DISCOVER
pub heritage and the
great outdoors

9 Enjoy great
HEALTH BENEFITS
(really!)

10 HAVE YOUR SAY

What's yours?

Discover your reason
and join the campaign today:

www.camra.org.uk/10reasons



Campaign
for
Real Ale

Introducing the chairman

Earlier this year on our visit to the Roman Way Brewery and the Wheelwrights at Watford, Andy Imrie our former chairman let the cat out of the bag that he and his wife Gaynor were moving to sunnier climes. Their relocation to Fuerteventura left a vacancy, which I accepted. So from August this year I have been carrying out

carrying life member. I'm already finding it a great deal more work than I imagine, but have been greatly aided by the other members of the branch. Getting the stall at the Rugby Food Festival turned out to be a huge amount of work for an event I couldn't attend.

On a personal note I'm very happily married to my lovely wife Cheryl for almost 30 years. I have a beautiful daughter Rose at the University of York and a manic and loveable spoodle called Apple. I also squeeze in being a volunteer at Coombe and being a member of Rugby Bridge Club. After all this time I'm still a massive pub fan, with always another one or a hundred to visit. All of which are noted down in my legendary red book.

If there is only one thing I want to achieve during my time as chairman, it's persuading more members to become active in the branch. We have so many great social events lined up for beer lovers to attend. We also need help at our beer festival in 2023.

This will be the last edition of the year, so I would like to wish you all a happy and dare I say a merry Christmas. Happy drinking!

Richard Potter
Branch Chairman



Right:
new branch
chairman

the role.

It was about time I bit the bullet as I have been an active CAMRA member for over 35 years, most of that time being a gold card

THE REAL ALE Classroom

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(Steve runs
the Leicester
pub...)

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he's the
landlord

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cosy micropub
run by two ex
teachers, Ian
& Steve.

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and serve the
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canned beer in
the world!

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MONDAY: CLOSED
TUESDAY: 4-10
WEDNESDAY: 4-10
THURSDAY: 4-10
FRIDAY: 4-11
SATURDAY: 1-11
SUNDAY: 1-6

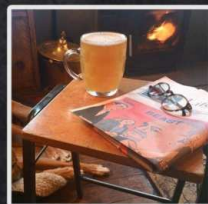


DOG
FRIENDLY!

LOCAL SPIRITS!

LARGE
GARDEN!
(with covered &
heated areas)

LOG BURNING FIRE!





Branch diary

3rd Wednesday of the month

Branch meetings take place on the 3rd Wednesday in the month with the venue (a town centre pub) publicised on the website.

Friday 16th Dec 2022

Bus trip to Everards Brewery Tap with a few pubs in Lutterworth.

Wednesday 28th Dec 2022

Christmas drinks and curry at the Seven Stars -8pm.

Saturday 14th Jan 2023

Cambridge pub crawl 10:30am - 6:00pm with 2 stops on the way back.

Friday 17th - Saturday 18th March 2023



Annual Beer Festival

Dear Rugby & District Branch CAMRA member,

We are proposing to hold our annual Beer Festival on the weekend of Friday, 17th March and Saturday 18th March 2023. In order to be able to run the festival we need volunteers to help set it up, staff it over the weekend, and dismantle and pack everything up on the Sunday. Over the years the regular group of people helping has become smaller and smaller, to the point where we may not have enough people to run the event.

We require help with the following:-

Set-up Monday, 13th March 6pm – 9pm, Tuesday 14th March 9am – 4pm or earlier.

Festival Friday, 17th March – any hours between 10am & 11pm,
Saturday, 18th March – any hours between 10am & 11pm.

Knockdown Sunday, 18th March – 9.30am – 12 noon approx.

If you would be willing to help with any of the above could you please let me know by e-mailing me at chris@rugby.camra.org.uk and indicating the days and times you would be available.

Many thanks

Chris Pickard
Beer Festival Organiser

The past is a foreign country: they do things differently...

In the 'good old' days, when life was simpler as the internet hadn't really got going and no one had a smart phone in their pocket, if you were visiting somewhere new and wanted to check out a few pubs a local CAMRA pub guide was the best place to start.

Rugby CAMRA produced an informative series of guides during

the 80s and 90s, covering the town and surrounding village's pubs.

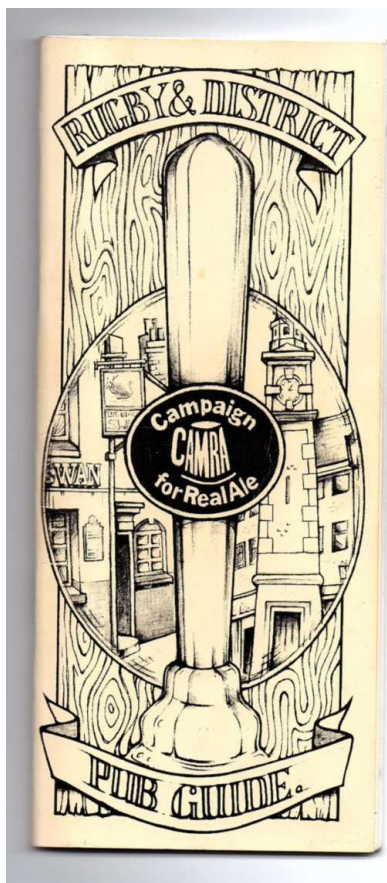
The last guide was produced 30 years ago, being published in 1993 though you would struggle to find a date as we didn't want it to look out of date as soon as it was on sale!

Despite being out of date as soon as it was published, the last guide gives us an interesting snapshot of the area's pubs at that point in time. As we are all aware pubs and breweries are probably under greater pressure now than at any time since World War 2 and reviewing the changes over the last 30 years may give us some ideas of how this may change in the next few years. This article will focus on the changes in the town's pubs and in the next 'Inn Touch' we will look at the village pubs.

Probably the biggest change has been the smoking ban which was introduced in 2007. When the guide was produced every pub in town allowed smoking and very few had a no smoking room or area. No smoking areas were a joke as smoke couldn't read the signs and if it could didn't take any notice of them but the fact they existed and the guide listed them for the first time in 1993 was a sure sign that things were beginning to change.

Surprisingly the total number of outlets that can be described as pubs has changed relatively little over the last 30 years.

The last Rugby & District Pub guide. (1993)



I have used What Pub for the list of current pubs but this includes bars which some may not classify as pubs. 11 pubs have closed, 3 are no longer pubs but could possibly be returned to a pub and 8 have opened. Of the pubs that have closed the majority like the Engine and London House were traditional pubs or boozers that had served generations of the working class. They were often smoky

'the working class shrank or found other forms of evening entertainment'

bars selling mild and bitter but have closed since the smoking ban came in, the working class shrank or found other forms of evening entertainment.

Probably the best symbol of change is the Avon Mill. 30 years ago this was a thriving M&B establishment with plush lounge, large bar and children's play area. The pub closed about 5 years ago and was recently demolished, with the site now soon to house a drive through coffee outlet (as if we need another one). Coffee seems to have replaced alcohol as the drug of choice for the masses!

The new pubs and bars are an interesting mix. Rugby didn't have a Wetherspoons when the guide was published and two have opened since, the first in the old indoor market is still operating while the second in

'Micro pubs hadn't been invented when the guide came out'

the old Boots shop on the High Street is still open but no longer a 'Spoons'. Micro pubs hadn't been invented when the guide came out and the Rugby Tap only opened in 2014 but since then has developed into one of the best real ale outlets in town. The other new pubs have been a mixture of new builds as

part of housing developments like the Steam Turbine or bars in converted premises like the Bacco Lounge or the Bank. As the guide was produced the Royal Warwicks had just opened and was hailed as an excellent conversion of an 80 year old building. After 5 years it was taken over and converted to the Merchants which is currently the Rugby CAMRA pub of the year; it is strange to think that the 'Merch' is such a relatively recent addition to the town's drinking scene.

The number of real ales available has increased massively since the guide was produced. Back then the town was dominated by Bass, M&B, Ansells, Marston's and Banks's with a bit of Charles Wells and the odd guest. No pub had more than 5 beers on with most only featuring 2. Today some of the better town centre pubs have more variety on than the whole of the town had 30 years ago! Whether the quality of the real ale has improved is a harder

'rarely these days do I have to return a beer for tasting like vinegar!'

question to judge. Personally I think it has, as rarely these days do I have to return a beer for tasting like vinegar!

Reviewing the old guide gives a good illustration of some of the societal changes over the past 30 years and how they have impacted our pubs. Predicting the future is a mug's game but when you think of our town's pubs the one thing you can guarantee is that we will continue to see a lot of changes over the next few years.

Ivan Farroll

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Branch Awards

Country Pub of the Year 2022

Awarded to the **Cherry Tree** at Catthorpe. The pub is having a triumphant year, having also reached the finals of the 'Great British Pub Awards' 2022.



Pub of the year 2022

Voting closes at midnight on the 16th December. Members vote as per instruction in branch email.

2024 Good Beer Guide

A date for voting will be set up in the new year.

Left to right: licensees Amy & Chris with Richard Potter, branch chairman

Opening Times

Monday & Tuesday 4-8

Wednesday 4-10

Thursday 4-11

Friday & Saturday 12-11

Sunday 12-7



Cask Ale from £3.30^{pint}

Craft Ale from £4.60^{pint}

Large Wine £4.60

G&T from £3.50

Shots from £2.00



Northampton trip

Over the years we have done trips to Northampton numerous times. It's convenient being just one stop on the train and the centre is about 10 min walk from

'in the past it has proved somewhat less than exciting'

the station. However in the past it has proved somewhat less than exciting with very few pubs worthy of being in the Good Beer Guide. This changed however on our last trip to Northampton just prior to lockdown with numerous pubs making it into the guide. So in October we set out to see what choice was still remaining. The good news is there are now no fewer than 8 entries. As this was a Friday and time was limited we decided to do those pubs that were both close to each other and close to the centre which included the following:

St Giles Ale House

It was good to see this cosy little micropub had survived the pandemic. 4 beers on with the bias toward local breweries and a great start to the evening.

The Maule Collective

This oddly named pub takes its name from the Maule Brewery which features prominently in amongst the 20 beers it has available. It's a modern style pub attracting a wide cross section of ages and was the busiest pub we

visited. However if it's real ale you're after then you will have to settle for one of their craft beers.

The Albion Brewery Bar

This brilliant traditional pub is situated next door to the King Billy Rock Bar and is the Phipps NBC brewery tap. 8 hand pumps with the Phipps beer in excellent form. Sadly we were virtually the only ones in.

The Pomfret Arms

On the southern edge of the city centre but just a short walk from the Albion. Fantastic range of Great Oakley beers in this popular pub.



Malt Shovel Tavern

Back in the day when there were few good real ale outlets in Northampton, this was probably the best real ale pub and still great today. The owner also has the Merchants Inn (Rugby CAMRA pub of the year) so you can always expect a great range of beers. This was surprisingly quiet on the night. We made this the last stop as it was the closest to the station.

Northampton is definitely back on the beer map with a impressive range of Good Beer Guide entry pubs. It's easy and inexpensive to get to on the train

from Rugby and there were

'worthy of a second visit'

sufficient decent real ale pubs to make it worthy of a second visit in the near future. What was more concerning was the lack of people in some of those pubs which is also something we are noticing in Rugby. So if you wish to see these and other pubs closer to home survive I suggest you pay them a visit... or two.

Stuart Caldwell



Serving an ever-changing range of cask and craft ales plus real ciders. Fine wines and a good selection of spirits also available.

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Pie & Pint Wednesday 5.30 pm - 8.30 pm / Sunday 1 pm - 5 pm.

Check out our Facebook page for events including coaches to Leicester Tigers, charity quizzes and live music.



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Pub News

August

In Kilsby village, the **George** reopened after an extensive refurb and its menu contains Indian dishes. However in Rugby town centre, the **Craft Inn** closed its doors this month. The town has lost its sole dedicated craft ale pub.

Right:
The George
at Kilsby



September

Opposite Right:
Sue Geraghty

In Rugby town centre, the premises which was the **Midas Lounge** has attained planning permission to become shops and flats. The landlord of the **Webb Ellis**, Derek, is moving on. Same with the landlord of the **Bull**, Andy, who has been there around 7 years. The new landlord, Aron is in place and we wish him well. Out into the sticks, the **Denbigh Arms** at Monks Kirby is taking over the **Bulls Head** at Wolvey.

October

This month, Downing Street shuffled around their prime ministers and performed a U-turn on beer duty. At the same time, the **Bell & Barge - Harvester**

reopened following its refurb. The **Paddox** at Hillmorton came under new management, and the **Raglan** brought in another new landlord, Mark.

Also in October the universally-liked landlady of the **Squirrel**, Sue Geraghty, sadly passed away. In a unique and fitting gesture 'Rugby



First' organised the setting of the flags at half-mast outside Rugby School.

Developments with the **White Lion** at Pailton were announced. "We have taken a major step forward in the Save the White Lion project, appointing a firm of project managers who will take us forward through the development stage. Greenwood Projects are highly experienced in managing heritage projects and in working with the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Their portfolio includes many community projects, including pubs.

There will be additional news once the rest of the design team are appointed. The development stage of our project is being funded with partnership funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Architectural Heritage Fund and the Public Works Loan Board. Thank you to the Pailton and broader communities for your support on this project.”

N^ovember

The **Arnold Arms** in Barby village is approaching the completion of its extensive refurb and targeting a pre Christmas opening date.



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SCAN ME



Scilly Drinking

The Isles of Scilly lie 28 miles off the Cornish coast, the five main inhabited islands being: St Mary's; Tresco; St Martins; Bryher and St Agnes. After years of saying, 'We must go there', we went in mid-

Five main
inhabited
islands



April 2022. Here's our experience of some hostelryes.

St Mary's

St Mary's, the largest island, is where we stayed. Most frequently we visited the **Scillonian Club**, which has a pub licence so welcomes visitors. Our main

'beer of choice was the amber Betty Stogs'

reason for visiting was to watch two important Liverpool FC matches. (Many of the friendly locals support LFC, making them even more likeable.) My beer of choice was the amber Betty Stogs, (4%), from Skinners of Truro. It

wasn't that enjoyable for me, to be honest. Having a distinctly bitter finish it didn't suit my preference for malty beers – however, see comments on Tresco's New Inn further on. Cost of a pint £4.95!

St Austell brewery owns **The Atlantic**, all three beers available at our visit being theirs: Tribute; Hicks Cornish Beer and Proper Job. The building was converted from three cottages in 1801. It's close to the harbour and has bags of maritime memorabilia on display.

Tribute is a 4.2%, amber beer with hops and some malt. The finish was bitter and fruity - I'm sure this would be perfectly acceptable to the drinker who prefers a bitter beer.

Hicks Cornish Beer, (5%), was darker and a bit more to my personal taste, but the lingering bitter on the palate was still there.

Proper Job, a 4.5% gold ale with citrus fruits. I didn't try this as it's readily available on the mainland.

The mid 19th century **Mermaid Inn** is now owned by Punch Taverns. Food is a big part of their offer. It has lots of character; the walls are covered in memorabilia of all kinds, including fishing scenes, ships and Star Wars. We were able to try Rev James (4.5%), one of our long standing favourites from Brains. It's a lovely mahogany colour and had that little extra sweetness that we enjoy in a pint. Meeting up with the Rev provided us with a nice treat!

I also tried Gem, (4.1%) from Bath Ales. Unfortunately, this was past its best and I was glad I'd only ordered a half.

The Bishop and Wolf hadn't yet opened for the season, although a member of our walking group said he'd had a pint there! Very strange.

St Agnes

The Turks Head claims to be the most south-westerly pub in the British Isles. I wouldn't dispute it - the island is 30 miles out in the Celtic Sea! The pub has a superb outlook across the waters and islands, possibly one of the best

'We had our favourite drink of the holiday there, which was Sea Fury'

you could ask for (illustrated by their Facebook© photo). The beer wasn't bad either! We had our favourite drink of the holiday there, which was Sea Fury (5.0%), a dark beer with plenty of malt and some spiciness from Sharps of Wadebridge. I also tried the Turks Head (4.3%), a light-coloured, hoppy beer. It was selling well at £4.99 per pint.

Tresco

The New Inn is a trendy food pub which features in the Good Beer Guide. It's an expensive place to eat and drink. The price of a pint was well over £5.00 and a bowl of soup with a roll cost an eye-watering £9.00! The Betty Stogs on offer here, though, was really well kept; although not my type of beer it was easy to tell that it was in superb condition - much better than the Scillonian Club.

The Ales of Scilly Brewery is based in St Mary's so is the most south-westerly brewery in the UK. We could only find their bottled beers but we know they provide

'beers are named after ships wrecked in the seas'

cask ale as the New Inn on Tresco has it occasionally. Their beers are named after ships wrecked in the seas in and around the Scillies! The bottled porter, TW Lawson (4.5%) had a malty flavour with hints of spice and only a slight hop finish, so was fine by us.

Summary

We found the beer choice not the greatest (excepting Sea Fury), especially for people who prefer dark brews. Saying that, the holiday season was not really in full swing, which probably didn't help with the beer turnover. Not surprisingly in such an out-of-the-way place, the beers available were predominately from major Cornwall breweries. As you would expect in a holiday destination, food is to the fore at many of the

'not easy to get there but worth it'

establishments. We do recommend visiting the Isles of Scilly, though. It's not easy to get there but worth it for the lovely beaches, stunning views, attractive towns/villages and cracking boat trips between the islands.

John and Fern Robson

Fosse Way Brewing

One of the lesser known local breweries - the **Fosse Way Brewing Company** - has just moved closer to Rugby. The company has this year moved from Warwick to Bishops Itchington, just south of Southam. It was formed out of the ashes of the Long Itch Brewery and is owned by long time South African resident Tony Hobson. He graduated from the famous Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh and then worked for South African Breweries in various roles in Pretoria and Durban.



The brewery is concentrating on bottling their beers and I met up with Tony at a craft fair at Coombe Abbey recently. On sale was their best seller Aurora, an easy drinking pale ale flavoured with the Mosaic

Screaming Dwarf / Sisters of Mercy

hop. Also Sisters of Mercy, which is an American pale ale with citrus and grapefruit notes. Thirdly there was Screaming Dwarf, which is brewed in collaboration with the Red Moon brewery in Yardley. It's another APA, hopped with Columbus and Cascade hops.

Their beers are all very drinkable and well worth seeking out.

Richard Potter



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