



Summer 2023

Wheatsheaf, Crick White Lion, Brinklow Barley Barn, Newbold

Barley Mow, Newbold

Wheatsheaf Inn, Braunston

Shoulder of Mutton, Grandborough

Seven Stars

Bear

Bell, Hillmorton

Bull

Chequers, Swinford

Crown, Newbold

**Rugby Tap** 

Griffin

Red Lion, Crick Queens, Bretford Knightley Arms, Yelvertoft Merchants Inn

Inside: listings of summer pub events in the local area



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## **About Inn Touch**

Inn Touch is the quarterly magazine of the Rugby and District branch of CAMRA. It has a print run of 2000 copies and is distributed by branch members to over 100 pubs in the local area.

www.rugby.camra.org.uk or 👍



## In the summer edition

#### 4 Editor's intro

Introducing the summer edition of Inn Touch. Also, it's now time to vote for Country Pub of the Year.

#### 5 Beer of the festival

Runners up receive their certificates for beer of the festival from our 38th Rugby beer festival in March.

#### 6-7 What's on

To advertise

editor@rugby

.camra.org.uk

next time

contact:

A listing of festivals, live music etc. to be enjoyed at our local pubs (and clubs) over the summer months.

#### 8-9 Tamworth Tap

A visit to the National CAMRA pub of the year, along with some other hostelries nearby.

#### 10-11 Whatever happened to mild?

Mild. Is it destined to fade away; consigned to be a beer of the past? This article looks at the history of the dark brew and what's to be overcome for it to have a resurgence.

#### 12 Pub Hero awards

The Chequers pub in Swinford is a finalist for this national award.

#### 13 A knight's tale

Pub feature on the Knightley Arms in Yelvertoft.

#### 15 Lutterworth

Stalwarts from the branch take a minibus over to Lutterworth to 'review' its pubs.

#### 17-18 Braunston

A bus ride to a pub crawl around this picturesque village.

#### 18 Pub news

News just in before going to print.

#### 19 Contacts

Contact details for committee members and officers of the Rugby and District branch. Also how to join CAMRA.

The views expressed in this magazine are those of individuals and Rugby and District CAMRA accepts no liability in relation to accuracy of advertisements.



Welcome to the summer edition of 'Inn Touch'. Here you will find a selection box of interesting beer-related articles from our branch members coerced into putting pen to paper. Along with adverts from a few of our great local pubs, the edition is rounded off with a handy listing of the summer events going on. Plenty to slurp up!

It may not always be easy in the current financial climate to justify getting out to the pub. However if the pocket can stretch

# **Editor's intro**

to it what better way is there to spend those hazy, lazy days of summer? Especially if last year's heat wave should be repeated.

For those who can, think back to how summer was in our pubs before CAMRA led the way in improving the beer in the UK. It was still probably enjoyable, but lacking the broad selection of quality ales and ciders now available. Worldwide, I wonder if I would be enjoying a quality stout and IPA at a seafront brewery in St Lucia (see pic) if it were not for what the CAMRA organisation fought for here.

Anyway, enough of me. I'm off to the pub. Cheers.

Steve

Left: the Antillia Brewing Company, St Lucia

## **Country Pub of the Year voting**



Now that summer is approaching, it is time to start visiting our country pubs to select our Country Pub Of The Year for 2023. Please use this as an excuse to travel to village pubs that are further afield.

The criteria is that the pub is in the countryside, the licensee has been in place for the last 6 months and you have visited the pub this year. Please refer to your voting invitation email for the list of eligible country pubs in our area. When you have decided on your choice please use the email voting@rugby.camra.org.uk. Voting will close at midnight on 16th July 2023.

Important:

Please include your:

Name

Membership number Pub you are voting for

Thanks,

Mike Yates - Secretary

## **Beer of the festival awards**

After our beer festival in March, we had the pleasure of handing out our beer of the festival awards. It was especially pleasing to present the 2nd and 3rd place awards to local breweries.

Right: Richard with Matt and Spike from Zero Six The bronze award was won by the Windmill Hill Brewery in Leamington, for the cask version of their Session IPA. Usually only available in bottle or keg form, on cask it is a beautifully hopped, easy drinking beer. It was a firm favourite with all the staff at the festival and we delivered their certificate to the brewery's first pub in the town.



Above: Richard presenting the certificate to Windmill Hill 44 Cafe Bar on Clarenden Street is a bistro serving tapas and a range of the brewery's beers. There was only one cask beer available when Lee from Windmill Hill accepted the award. Session IPA is a great beer and it would be great to see it over in Rugby some time.

The 2nd place award went to Lutterworth brewers Zero Six, for their beer Hakuna Ma Strata. Matt and Spike from the brewery were overjoyed at their first CAMRA award.



The beer is made using the American hop variety Strata and a fruit purée cocktail added later in the boil. This unusual fruit beer uses a mix of pineapple, peach, kiwi and lime in the purée, while the strata hops have notes of passion fruit, strawberry and cannabis! As you can imagine it's an incredibly fruity beer and it's great to see this fledgling brewery win with such an individualistic beer.

The first place gold award went to Alter Ego's Milky Joe from Alfreton in Derbyshire. We will be delivering their award in July and will report about it in the next edition.

> Richard Branch Chairman

# What's on



In the pub guide of the Rugby and District branch of CAMRA, there are close to 80 pubs listed. Here is a roundup of some of their summer events.

#### June

**16th** - The Griffin Live Music: Kevin & Kerry

17th - The Seven Stars Seven Years at The Seven Stars Party

**22nd** - The Barley Barn, Newbold Ascot Ladies' Day

**23rd** - The Bear Live Music: Muve-On

**24th** - The Chequers, Swinford Gig in the Garden

**24th** - The Crown, Newbold Ladies' Day

**24th** - Shoulder of Mutton, Grandborough Live Music: Revival

**24th** - The Red Lion, Crick Mr & Mrs Game Show Night

**25th** - The Seven Stars Sunday Funday Music: Peter James

**25th** - Bull Pride After Party

**30th** - The Bear Live Music: Magindara

#### July

**1st** - Knightley Arms, Yelvertoft First Anniversary Party **1st** - The Bear Horse Race Night

**6th** - The Bear Charity Music Bingo Night

**7th-9th** - The Seven Stars Sausage and Cider Festival

**8th-9th** - Wheatsheaf, Crick Scarecrow Weekend

**9th** - The Red Lion, Crick Live Music: Oli Mellor

**13th** - The Barley Mow, Newbold Fun Paint Nite

**13th** - The Wheatsheaf, Crick Mediterranean Night

**16th** - The Cherry Tree, Catthorpe Weekend Dog Walk

21st-23rd - Shoulder of Mutton, Grandborough Beer Festival with Food/Music/ Disco

**20th** - The Wheatsheaf Inn, Braunston nJoy Art

**20th** - Rugby Tap #Thirstday

**21st** - The Bear Live Music: Omnishambles

**25th-31st** - The Merchants Inn Cider & Craft Beer Festival

**28th** - The Bear Live Music: Filthy Lucre

**29th-30th** - White Lion, Brinklow Lion Fest

**30th** - The Bear Charity Bingo Night

**Date TBC** - Queens, Bretford Relaunch Evening

#### **August**

**4th** - The Bear Live Music: ACSIA

**5th** - The Wheatsheaf, Crick South African BBQ

**5th** - The Cherry Tree, Catthorpe Mini Craft Market

11th - The Bear

Shaun e b, UB40 & Reggae Tribute

**12th** - The Red Lion, Crick Country and Western Night

**17th** - Rugby Tap #Thirstday

**27th** - The Red Lion, Kilsby PATFEST Music Festival

**28th** - The Cherry Tree, Catthorpe Bank Holiday Dog Walk

#### September

**8th-10th** - The Seven Stars Rugby World Cup Beer Festival

15th - The Bear

Live Music: Paul Sammon

**16th** - The Bell, Hillmorton Live Music: The Record Covers

29th - The Bear

Live Music: A Tribute to The Blues

**Brothers** 

**Date TBC** - The Wheatsheaf, Crick 8os Night

# The Red Lion, Kilsby Pub and Dining.





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# Tamworth Tap

## National CAMRA pub of the year visit

Every year since 1988 the National CAMRA organisation has been presenting a Pub Of The Year Award (POTY). This involves every branch in the country and every member if they want to cast a vote.

It starts at branch level with a pub in each branch's area being awarded the local Pub Of The Year. This year ours was the Merchants Inn. These then go up against other branch POTYs in the region. The winner in each region is pitted against winners in other regions, eventually giving us an overall national winner. Given that this pub has been judged the best in the country it is therefore quite a prestigious award.

Below: The Tamworth Tap



This year's winner was the Tamworth Tap in Tamworth centre. Few (if any) of us had ever been so we had the perfect excuse to travel over to not only sample a beer in the Tap but also try a few other local hostelries.

The Tap itself, to be brief, is wonderful. I did fear that success may have made it over popular and that we wouldn't be able to get in the door. Thankfully that was not the case and although busy we did get in and even got a seat.

The bar usually has 8 beers and can include their own Tamworth Brewery beers. The main room had a Belgian café feel to it and there was additional space upstairs along with seating to the front and a courtyard to the year. The beer was, unsurprisingly, in top form. All in all, a worthy winner, and I am sure we will be returning soon.

The other good news about Tamworth is that this is not the only great pub in the town. On the night we paid the following a visit:

**The King's Ditch:** Great little micro pub. At least 4 beers on and large range of ciders. A cosy downstairs room along with a

small upstairs seating area. Watch out for the opening hours as it closed at 9pm on a Friday when we visited.

#### The Old Bank House:

Fantastic Victorian building that was converted from a bank in 2021. Usually 5 interesting and unusual beers available.

**Market Vaults:** A classic, unspoilt pub with a large range of Joules ales available.

**Phoenix:** With up to 8 beers on at any time this was well worth a visit.

**Sir Robert Peel:** Who said pubs are losing trade? You wouldn't think that if you visited this one. Very popular. 5 quality

beers available when we visited.

With the exception of the Market Vaults and the Phoenix, all are in the Good Beer Guide. We also used the local Tamworth Town Ale Trail produced by the local CAMRA branch. A total of 9 pubs are listed in the Trail including all those we visited. Thanks to Lichfield, Sutton and Tamworth CAMRA for producing this excellent Ale Trail.

Stuart Events Organiser



Enjoy a wide selection of drinks in a relaxing atmosphere, overlooking the William Webb Ellis statue and the birthplace of rugby football

Cask Ale from £3.40pint Craft Ale from £4.80pint Large Wine £4.75 G&T from £3.50 Shots from £2.00

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# Whatever happened to Market Property of the Pr

In the last couple of issues of Inn Touch I have focused on pub closures in Rugby and the surrounding area in the last 30 years. But it is not just the pubs that have changed in that time period- the ales on the bar are radically different. In the 1980s and early 1990s most pubs had just two real ales: mild and bitter, usually from the same brewery. Bitter is still to be found, often categorised as amber, and has evolved into a range of blond ales and so-called IPAs. Pubs in town often feature several examples on the bar from different brewers and supplement these with a stout, porter or heavily fruit infused substance. But what became of mild?

Milds brewed in the West Midlands were generally dark amber to black in colour, though lighter versions existed and were lightly hopped, hence the name 'mild'. They were low in alcohol, usually in the range 3.3% to 3.6% abv, and traditionally drunk by manual workers in large volumes at the end of a long hard shift to slake their thirst. Larger traditional breweries such as

Ansells, M&B and Banks's produced at least one, with the Highgate brewery in Birmingham only brewing mild. The small independents including Bathams and Holdens brewed them and still continue to do so. Sarah Hughes produce a stronger one at 6% but this style is more reminiscent of pre-WW1 brews.

outside of a few areas like the Black Country, mild has pretty much disappeared

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CAMRA used to run a campaign called May Mild Month to encourage drinkers to support mild which the Rugby branch actively supported. In 1989 we produced a 'Real Mild in and Around Rugby' guide which featured 34 pubs that sold real mild but even this was down from 50 in 1983. So, what happened to Mild Month and for that matter, mild? CAMRA is still trying to promote mild, holding a Mild Day in May each year but outside of a few areas like the Black Country, mild has pretty

much disappeared. Today it is occasionally seen on the bar as a guest beer, but I am not aware of any pub in the area that sells it regularly.

I think there are a number of reasons why mild has disappeared. Its traditional drinkers have gone as more and more factories have closed and there are very few manual workers needing a few pints at the end of the shift. As sales

style and improve the marketing for what is a traditional low alcohol beer there may be hope but until then, on the few occasions vou do see a mild on the bar, try and drink a pint or two to try keep it going.

Ivan

cloth capped manual workers drinking it in smoky pubs has given mild a serious image problem

slumped barrels of mild were taking longer to sell and, being low in alcohol, turned sour fairly quickly. Asking for a pint in a pub often resulted in being served a dark, amber liquid with the smell and taste of vinegar: guaranteed to put a drinker off! This and the association with cloth capped manual workers drinking it in smoky pubs has given mild a serious image problem; a big issue for those breweries still producing it and pubs prepared to sell it.

Is there any hope for mild or will it disappear completely? Until recently I would have said no hope but in the last couple of years we have seen the revival of several traditional dark beer styles, including Milk Stouts which had all but disappeared. This gives hope to mild. If several of the new generation of breweries can start brewing the

Below:: the cover of the CAMRA produced guide in 1989



# Chequers finalist in Pub Hero awards



Above: Brian (centre) with his staff and local MP (far left) The Chequers at Swinford reached the final stages of this year's 'Charity Fundraising Pub Hero' Awards. This is a national competition organised by PubAid and the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group (APPBG) and sponsored by Matthew Clark.

On 28<sup>th</sup> March this year, landlord Brian Priest and members of his staff travelled down to the House of Commons to be presented with a certificate. Also present was the MP for South Leicestershire, Alberto Costa.

Brian posted on Facebook, "We were nominated in the 'Charity Fundraising Within the Community' category which is something we have been doing for the last 36 years at The Chequers! This has involved supporting many organisations,



local groups, raising thousands of pounds and having fun along the way.

It was an honour to be a finalist and whilst we weren't winners, a great day was had by all."

Further to this, Brian has also received notification that he is through to the quarter-finals of the Licensee of the Year 2023 Awards. We wish him well.

Steve Editor

# A knight's tale

#### **Pub feature**

In July last year the Knightley Arms in Yelvertoft reopened after a period of uncertainty. Now, just before its first anniversary, it has had a contemporary and tasteful renovation and is looking forward to the summer.

Partners Jac and Carl have introduced a new menu for Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and of course Sunday lunches too. There's also fish and chip Fridays and pizzas at the weekend.

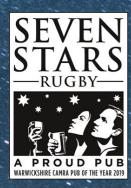
Three rotating real ales are always available. When I last visited there were beers from the



Oakham, Pennine and Theakston breweries. Finally, no country pub is compete without a lovely garden. Underneath the dappled shade of the massive eucalyptus, go and sit and sup a satisfying pint.

Above: Jac and Carl at the Knightley Arms

Richard Branch Chairman



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

Bar snacks available including hand-crafted scotch eggs, pork pies and rolls. 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.



#### This summer:

7 – 9 July Sausage & Cider Festival

8 – 10 September Rugby World Cup Beer Festival

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# Lutterworth pub review



Top: the review team hard at work

At a recent meeting we realised we hadn't properly surveyed all the pubs in Lutterworth for some time despite the fact it's right on our doorstep. I say survey but it's more like a thinly veiled excuse to go out to a bunch of pubs and drink beer. This is something we do from time to time to ensure we are up to date on locals so that they can be considered for entry into the Good Beer Guide (GBG) or for branch awards such as Pub of the Year (POTY) or even Summer Pub of the Year (SPOTY).

Lutterworth is a great little town to visit having numerous pubs and even its own brewery (Zero Six). However, how many of them sell real ale and of those how many would we like to see in the GBG? All was revealed on our visit.

On the evening we knew there would be at least six pubs to cover so split the group to cover the Elms and the Red Arrow and joined forces at the Real Ale Classroom. Pubs visited were:

**The Elms:** is very much a food and family orientated modern pub with a good pint of Marston's tried by our surveyors.

The Red Arrow: is a modern estate pub which is definitely bucking the trend of declining attendance in these out of town venues. Busy on the night and a good pint of Greene King Abbot available alongside two others.

The Real Ale Classroom: had its 'usual' selection of unusual and interesting real ales alongside craft beers. Small and cosy with a great garden for the summer months.

The Greyhound Coaching Inn: has a lovely cosy lounge and three real ales. Years since I've been here and delighted to see it doing so well.

The Unicorn Inn: is very much a traditional pub and a GBG regular for many years now. Great pint of Timothy Taylor Landlord.

The Fox: was our last port of call for the evening being on the southern edge of town. Also a regular in the GBG and also a good pint of Landlord.

The Shambles: was missing from this list due to the fact it was closed due to a fire at the time of our visit.

There are other bars in Lutterworth but to our knowledge they do not serve real ale. Now, armed with all the facts, we just need to decide which ones we want to put in the Good Beer Guide. If you want more information on these or any pubs in the country check out goodbeerguide.org.uk. Also available on hard copy. Happy drinking.

Stuart Events Organiser







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## Braunston pub crawl by bus

The picturesque
Northamptonshire village of
Braunston overlooks the junction
of the Grand Union and Oxford
Canals and has four pubs. The
Stagecoach RD1 bus service
(stagecoachbus.com for
timetable) serves the village
Monday to Saturday. The bus
stops at The Green (opposite The
Wheatsheaf), near the church
opposite the disused windmill
(500 yards from the Old Plough)
and on the A45 opposite The
Boat House.

Alighting from the bus at The Green walk back along Welton Road in the direction you've come from (east) then turn right after 200 yards down Dark Lane to Little Braunston and the Admiral Nelson.



The Admiral Nelson: This Everards owned pub was built circa 1730 and pre-dates the adjacent Grand Union Canal. The five cask ales are Tiger and Old Original, along with three guest beers — often Everards' limited editions. There is lots of outside seating next to the lock and on the lawn beside the canal. The menu offers a choice of

traditional home-cooked food mixed with a few more exotic options.

Cross the humpback bridge and turn right along the canal towpath passing Braunston Pumping Station and Braunston Marina. Walk under the concrete A45 road bridge and turn left to reach the main road. Cross the canal and head to The Boat House which is 100 yards along the road on the left.



The Boat House: This is a large, modern Marston's pub situated on the A45 with a garden and terrace overlooking the canal. The four cask ales are Pedigree, Wainwright's, Hobgoblin IPA and Courage Directors. The extensive menu features burgers and steaks, alongside a range of specials.

Turn right and cross the main road at the turning for the village. On the right side of the junction there is a footpath heading up hill towards All Saints Church. Turn right at the end and walk 600 yards along High Street to the Old Plough.

Continued overpage



The Old Plough: This two roomed traditional pub reopened at the end of March following a refurbishment. There is a south facing patio and lawn at the rear. The cask ales are Doom Bar, Hobgoblin, Timothy Taylor's Landlord plus a guest beer. Food is available.

Continue along the High Street to The Wheatsheaf.

The Wheatsheaf: Traditional stone built pub overlooking The Green with lots of outside seating. On my last visit at the beginning of June three cask ales were available – Draught Bass, Doom Bar and a house beer Wheatsheaf Blonde.



The route could be started at any of the pubs and walked in either direction. The villages of Kilsby (George & Red Lion), Barby (Arnold Arms) and Willoughby (Rose) are also on this bus route. Further details of the pubs and opening hours can be found at whatpub.com. It is also possible to walk to or from Braunston along the Oxford Canal towpath or by footpaths via Barby.

Chris - Pubs and Clubs Officer

## Pub news

White Hart, South Kilworth: Dave & Lisa re-opened the White Hart at the beginning of March. The cask ales currently available are Greene King Abbot, Langton Inclined Plane plus a guest beer.

New Crown Inn, Stockton has four real ales available: Roman Way Senate Gold, St Austell Tribute, Wye Valley Butty Bach plus a guest beer.

**Shoulder of Mutton, Grandborough** have two beers from the Roman Way Brewery, Weedon – a house beer Shoulder's Gold (4.1%), plus a guest.

Caldecott Arms, Long Lawford have two cask ales from Coventry's Byatt's Brewery which are now available – Phoenix Gold plus a guest.

Zero Six Brewery, Lutterworth will be opening a bottle shop at 16a High Street at the beginning of August. They are planning trips to Belgium and Germany to source hard to find stock



#### Join CAMRA today

Join us, and together we can protect the traditions of great British pubs and everything that goes with them.

Become part of the CAMRA community today - enjoy discounted entry to beer festivals and exclusive member offers. Learn about brewing and beer and join like-minded people supporting our campaigns to save pubs, clubs, your pint and more.

Join the campaign today at camra.org.uk/ioinup

\*Price for paying by Direct Debit and correct at 1 July 2021. Concessionary rates available. Please visit camra.org.uk/membership-rates †Joint members receive £40 worth of vouchers



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