



Spring 2020

FREE

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



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inntouch.camra.org.uk

White Lion, Pailton Saved by the Community

Now the hard work begins
Follow their Journey on Page 8
and in future InnTouch editions



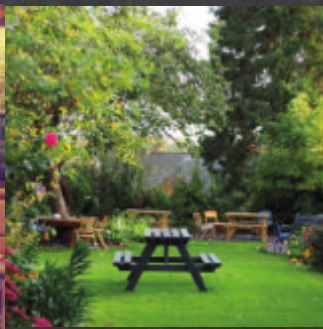
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Branch Diary & Events

The following events are open to all CAMRA members. Non-members are welcome to attend social events.

Details are correct at the time of going to press. Please visit our website, rugby.camra.org.uk for up to date information. Find a local beer festival at bit.ly/WestMidBEER

Branch Meetings

March 2020

6th-7th - **Rugby & District CAMRA Beer Festival, Arnold House. See website for details** rugby.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=95003

Wednesday 18th - Branch Meeting at Raglan Arms, Rugby CV22 6AD from 8:30pm

April 2020

Wednesday 15th - Branch Meeting at Rugby Tap, Rugby CV21 3BY from 8:30pm

May 2020

Wednesday 20th - Branch Meeting at Seven Stars, Rugby CV21 2SH from 8:30pm

June 2020

Wednesday 17th - Branch Meeting at Raglan Arms, Rugby CV22 6AD from 8:30pm

Branch Social Events

Mystery Mini Bus trips - First Come First Served



Contact Steve Durant 07969 199 135

Leave the **Raglan Arms** at 7:15pm

Friday 27th March, Friday 24th April, Friday 29th May, Friday 26th June, Friday 31st July





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Vice Chairman's Introduction



Welcome to the Spring Edition of *Inn Touch*.

Gaynor, your Editor, asked me to say a few words about myself as I am currently the branch 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 memory of a pub 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 Ansells 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 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.

We would like to hear from you - the readers. Send us your ideas and articles to editor@rugbycamra.org.uk. Items and articles (around 450 words) need to be submitted by 26th April for the



Richard Potter
Vice Chair Rugby & District CAMRA

Summer Edition which is due out on 1st June 2020.

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

Lastly, we would like to personally thank our advertisers for their continued support.

Cheers all
Richard and Gaynor

Bridgnorth in a Day

A grey January day saw a bus full of thirsty Rugby & District CAMRA members cross the river Severn and enter the town of Bridgnorth, after a sharp left turn we arrived at the Severn Valley Railway (SVR) station on the edge of the town. Though there were no trains running the SVR volunteers were busy maintaining the steam railway's facilities but we had other things on our mind, so headed to the first port of call the **Railwayman's Arms**

located in one of the old waiting rooms. A fine bank of beer engines welcomed us and a quick pint of GWB's Hambrook pale ale was consumed as we worked out a plan for the day.

Bridgnorth's town centre is located on top of a hill which explains why it is called High Town! This was presumably a good defensive position in the days when these things mattered but today caused a long line of drinkers huffing and puffing their way up. The reward, for those that made it, is a historic compact town centre with a good range of pubs which are rarely more than a couple of minutes walk apart, and often a lot closer. Due to Bridgnorth's location close to the Black Country the beer on offer was a mixture of traditional brewers (Bathams, Holden's and Banks's) and newer more rural locals.

The Bell & Talbot, a 19th century coaching inn, rewarded our climb with a pint of Bathams Best Bitter, this traditional beer tastes slightly sweet by modern standards but is still a fine pint. The pubs then came quickly as we headed to the high street and sensibly switched to halves, the slightly posher



View from the Funicular Railway



The Bell & Talbot

King's Head offered Hobsons Twisted Spire, the **Golden Lion** a Holden's pub served Toffee Porter which fortunately had no discernible taste of toffee and the **Harp** a Banks's pub. The locals were friendly and made several recommendations for other pubs to try, taking their advice we descended back towards the river via the steep twisting cartway on which was located the **Black Boy**, the only pub left on the road which apparently used to be home to over twenty! The board outside proclaimed they

were a CAMRA award winning pub so we entered and could soon see why, it was very busy and served a good range of beer from which I tried the excellent dark Bewdley Severn Side Stout.

We completed our descent back to river level and crossed to the **Black Horse** and were

then left with a decision, should we head back up the hill for another one or back to the start on the level path. The answer was back up hill but using the easy option of the funicular railway, this gave great views out across the Severn and deposited us back in the town centre. Next stop was the **White Lion** which was originally the Hop and Stagger brewpub, but the brewery has now moved a few miles up the road and it now acts as the tap. An excellent scotch egg was washed down with the very good citrusy Strategic Blonde.

We were now running late for our pick up so rushed back to the SVR station via a very modern looking foot bridge leading directly to the station and wishing we had more time to explore an excellent drinking town.

Ivan Farroll

Meet the Licensee

The Bull, Sheep Street, Rugby

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@inntouch.camra.org.uk

Andy Dunkley 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 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, Wadworth 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 and his team.



Andy behind the bar



A large advertisement for the London Calling pub. The background is a photograph of the pub's exterior on a street. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top left, it says "LONDON CALLING". Below that, it lists "LIVE MUSIC FRIDAY & SATURDAY", "BREAKFAST SERVED THURSDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY", and "REAL ALES LIVE SPORT". In the center, there is a silhouette of a rugby player and the text "Rugby's best music venue!". Below this, it lists "Great bands every weekend", "The best breakfasts in town", and "Friendly welcome day & night". At the bottom, it provides the Facebook link "facebook.com/londoncallingrugby" and the website "londoncallingrugby.co.uk". On the bottom left, there is a small image of a man in a military uniform with the word "YOU" below it. On the bottom right, there is a Union Jack flag with the text "SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL PUB". At the very bottom, it says "CASTLE STREET, RUGBY CV21 2TP".

Saving the White Lion, Pailton

Episode One

Pailton used to have numerous shops and pubs. Our last shop is now closed and the last remaining pub the **White Lion**, an old coaching inn, has been empty for about six years now. The building has fallen into disrepair. It is a grade II listed building, parts of which are possibly 16th and certainly 18th century.

Pailton Parish Council (PPC) has just purchased the White Lion public house on behalf of the community of Pailton. It is a now community asset. In order to do this the "Save the White Lion Committee" (set up by PPC) delivered flyers to every household, explaining that they were suggesting purchasing the pub as a community hub in the heart of the village to benefit the whole community. It gave details of an Extraordinary PPC Meeting for Monday 12th August, where the Save the White



experts. We have recently consulted with the community via a questionnaire as to what people would like the building to contain, e.g. pub, restaurant, shop, post office, cafe, accommodation, garden etc. We are also researching possible funding streams, compiling fundraising ideas and sourcing costs and quotes in order to compile a business plan. Alongside this we are looking into conservation structural surveys, asbestos surveys, woodwork surveys etc. All of this information will be shared with the village before a decision is made on how to proceed.

At this stage we have also cleared up the land outside the pub as it had become unsightly. We have improved the security of the building and taken basic steps to see that the building does not decline further. We do not intend to begin any renovations until stage 2 is complete and we have consulted further with the Community.

Rugby & District CAMRA will be following the progress of this venture, next episode in the summer edition.

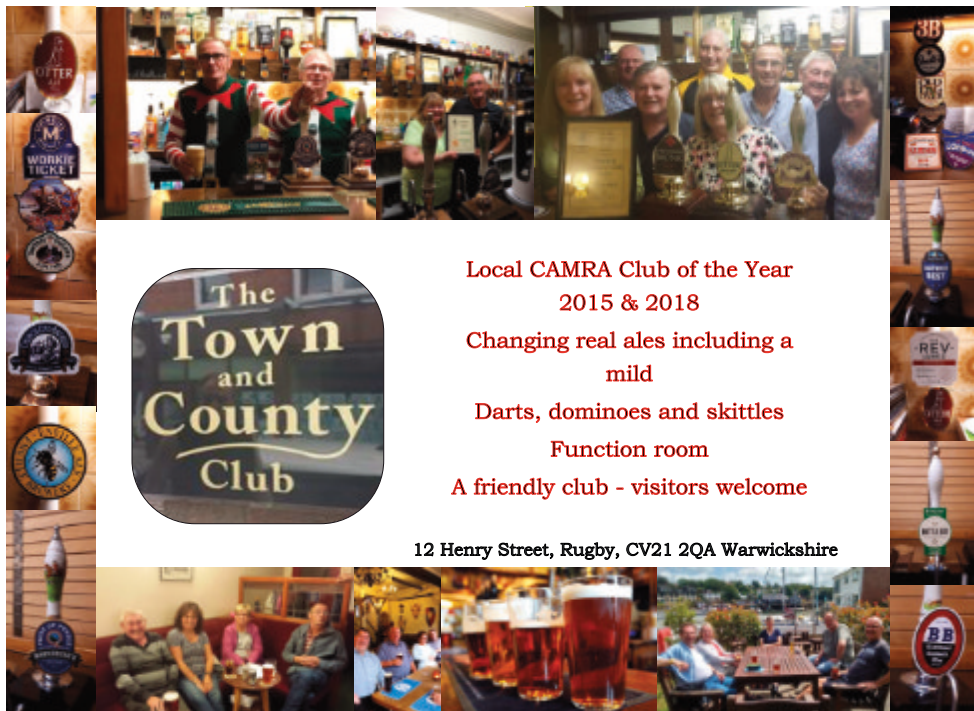
Tina Simpson



Lion Committee gave a presentation on a business plan in three stages. Stage 1 to buy the building by applying for a loan from the Public Works Loan Board. Stage 2 to complete research and consultation on possible business ideas for the building. Stage 3 to renovate the pub if it proved to be a viable business venture. The community voted in favour of stage 1 and the PPC voted to apply for the loan. Having secured the loan we then put a bid in for the purchase of the pub, which was successful. Stage 1 complete.

We are now in Stage 2 of our plan. We are consulting with planners, conservation architects, accountants, building companies and health & safety





Windmill Inn



Gary and Sim welcome you to this 19th Century coaching inn, completely refurbished and serving up to 15 cask ales and cider.

Why not try our new traditional pub grub served 12-3 Tue-Sat. Traditional Sunday lunch served 12-3.

Cobs, pork pies, home-made scotch eggs and sausage rolls. Homemade cakes

We are dog friendly.



1 North Street, CV21 2AB Rugby, Warwickshire

Incredible Takeover

Two local country pubs have reopened after being closed for a number of months. Both of their futures looked in doubt until their leases were taken over by the Inn Credible Pub Co. This is great news and they are now part of a small, but thriving pub company.

In October the **Duck on the Pond** in Long Itchington reopened after being closed for almost six months. Local CAMRA branches were worried that the pub would disappear as it's on a large plot of land in the middle of the village. The Duck has been classily refurbished and has three interesting cask ales: St Austell Tribute and the unusual Charles Wells Pale Ale are joined by local guest ales from the likes of Purity and Church Farm.

Inn Credible was founded by two young entrepreneurs, husband and wife team Daniel and Lauren Wiles (pictured).

They lease pubs off both Charles Wells and Everards and currently have seven pubs in their portfolio. Their first pub was the **Dove** at Evington in south east Leicester. Since then they have added such pubs as the **Racehorse** in Warwick, the **Church Inn** in the Jewellery Quarter of Birmingham and the **Cricketers** next to Grace Road in Leicester. This pub even has its own balcony to watch the county cricket from.

The Duck on the Pond is open from 9am for breakfasts and each evening there are various offers on the wide and tasty looking menu. Manager Paul Zummo is looking forward to his first full year in charge of this popular village pub.

The second pub Inn Credible is reopening is perhaps their biggest acquisition yet. They have got the lease of the **Olde Coach House** in Ashby St Ledgers. It's a classic country pub, which is situated in the historic Gunpowder Plot village. The pub's fortunes have wavered over the last few years but now it has a chance to thrive and relive its former glories. The



Coach House will reopen as we go to press and a full report will appear in our summer edition.

Rugby & District CAMRA members are thrilled that both of these village pubs have reopened and are in safe hands. So many village pubs have closed for good. It's good to see Inn Credible bucking the trend.

Richard Potter



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Rugby & District CAMRA Awards

Pub of the Year and Inn Touch

Rugby & District Pub of the Year

At the end of each year Rugby & District CAMRA members are invited to vote for their Pub of the Year.

Those members who've asked to receive emails (80% of the Branch membership) are contacted with an email address to send their vote to. Details also appear on the Branch website.

Votes are automatically forwarded to the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary who each tabulate the votes independently. No single Officer can therefore affect or influence the votes received.

The numbers are then totalled and the results announced early in the New Year with a presentation evening at the winning pub.



Seven Stars

The results are all in and counted.

For the third year running Rugby & District CAMRA Pub Of The Year goes to:

Seven Stars - Well Done Lisa James and Graham Proud and team

The **Squirrel** - Second Place. Well Done to Sue Garaghty and team

The **Merchants** - Third Place. Well Done to James Reeve and team



Squirrel

Many thanks to all the CAMRA members who voted.

Inn Touch wins CAMRA Best New Magazine

Rugby & District CAMRA is delighted to have won the CAMRA West Midlands Region Magazine of the Year (new magazine category).

Presenting the award Cy Day CAMRA Regional Director said "It's not an easy job producing a magazine, with editorial content, advertising, distribution and costs to consider, all of which can lead to the success or failure of a branch magazine. In particular, getting enough advertisers and collecting the fees are



Merchants

both daunting and time consuming tasks, especially when the same volunteers on the magazine have other branch jobs as well. Some branches have lost their magazines due to these difficulties, but there are outside organisations that will produce the magazine for branches with editorial input, while taking away a lot of the onerous time consuming work. So, I would like to recognise a branch that has taken this route to relaunch a magazine, with great endeavour and zeal, and therefore I'm pleased to say that the Best Newcomer award goes to *Inn Touch* from Rugby & District Branch".

Brett Laniosh from Catshill Design (designer of *Inn Touch*) said, "Congratulations to Gaynor and the branch for winning this award. It is not easy to launch a new magazine and it is great to see that Gaynor's efforts in doing such a brilliant job have been recognised. It is a pleasure to work with her".



L to R - Christine Lewis- Magazine contributor and proofreader, Cy Day CAMRA Regional Director, Gaynor Imrie InnTouch Editor

Editor's Note

Thanks to all who have provided content for the three editions to date. Special thanks to Christine Lewis, Richard Potter, Brett Laniosh, Ivan Farroll and all our great sponsors - cheers guys great team effort.

Cider Report

Warwickshire Producer - Caney's

Festival time will soon be on us and each year Rugby & District CAMRA try to bring you beers and ciders you haven't tried before. On this year's cider bar I have tried to keep things reasonably local and one of the suppliers will be Caney's Cider from Studley.

Caney's has been professionally operational for 3½ years now and was the brainchild of John and Victoria Caney. Like many brewers and cider makers, John was unsatisfied with what he was drinking and thought he could do better. So 15 years ago he started making cider as a hobby. His first few years were a mixed affair and it wasn't until he met Jon Procktor from Lenches Cider near Evesham that things started to improve. Victoria Caney said it was only then that they realised they could ditch their 9 to 5 jobs and live their cider dream.

Initially the fledgling company was aided by Victoria's father Philip Stenton. He was a Royal Navy officer and their first cider and one that will be available at our

festival is called The Officer. It is a 6.5% vintage cider that has been matured in a bourbon barrel. The second cider is also wood matured and is an oak aged medium.

John and Victoria's apples are mainly sourced from fruit farms in their neighbouring county of Worcestershire. They have, however, planted their own 50 tree orchard containing varieties like dabinette and kingston black. It and other small local orchards are used for making specific small batches of cider for friends and special customers.

Caney's Cider is currently only available in the west of the county and east Worcestershire. Victoria is hoping that their appearance at our festival will propel their ciders into the Rugby area. We hope you enjoy them and try them again in the future around Rugby.

Richard Potter

The Alexandra Tavern

New Look and New Name

The **Alexandra Tavern** has reopened after a major refurbishment and with a new name! Gone has the Arms with the pub being now known as the Alexandra Tavern.

The home of Atomic, Rugby's only brewery, it has already been altered quite a bit recently. Now after knocking through from the front bar last year, the back bar has now been split into two. There is a separate games area, which is home to the pub's own pool team and a cosy rear lounge for couples and groups.

The Alex will increase its menu to beyond just one day. For a year they have been serving excellent Sunday lunches and will now be selling their home cooked delights seven days a week. On the bar are five real ales, two of which are brewed just yards away in the garden brewery. Those beers were Atomic Scientist and Blackout when I last visited.

Owner Keith Abbis really wants the pub to shed its old image and get the Rugby beer drinkers back in the pub. Don't just walk by, go in the Alexandra Tavern - Rugby's only brewery tap.

Richard Potter



West Midlands Beer Scoops Gold

Fixed Wheel Brewery has scooped gold in CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition held on the first day of the Great British Beer Festival Winter at The New Bingley Hall, Birmingham, with Blackheath Stout, a 5% ABV stout packed with malts, fruits and hops.

Following more than a year of local tasting panels and regional heats, Blackheath Stout was named overall champion, with beer writer Roger Protz describing it as "a very fine example of a stout." He added: "We were all very impressed by its rich malty flavour, its fruity hop aroma and the overall flavour of the beer."

Runners up were Elland Brewery's 1872 porter (silver) and Hawkshead Brodie's Prime Export (bronze).

Scott Povey, who owns Fixed Wheel Brewery alongside his partner Sharon, said: "I'm just really shocked. It's amazing news for us,

fantastic! Blackheath Stout is the first beer we brewed, and is named after where we're based. We're really pleased to see it get the recognition it deserves – we'll probably have to brew it a bit more now! Thank you to all the judges for voting for us."

Available all year in cask and keg, Blackheath Stout is a full-bodied fruity stout dedicated to the home of Fixed Wheel's Blackheath brewery. It is brewed with New Zealand and English hops to give an oaky bitterness and dark fruits finish.

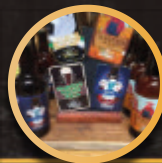
Gary Timmins, CAMRA's National Director responsible for the competition, says: "Congratulations to Fixed Wheel for winning the Champion Winter Beer of Britain award, which is one of the highest accolades in the beer world."





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Beer Tasting

Would You be Interested in a New Skill?

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 in 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 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



Beers and Tasting Notes

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 throughout 2020. If you are keen to hone your tasting skills contact Geoff Cross, your Regional Tasting Coordinator, geoff.cross@blueyonder.co.uk with your CAMRA membership number and Branch. The cost of the training is £10 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, CAMRA West Midlands Regional Tasting Coordinator

* Note Rugby & District CAMRA will be looking to facilitate a mini bus (costs to be confirmed) and go as a group. If this is something that interests you please email editor@inntouch.camra.org.uk





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pieminister



What is That in My Beer?

First Rant of the Year (please 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 smoothie, which believe me is not pleasant!

But there is one ingredient that seems to be coming 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.

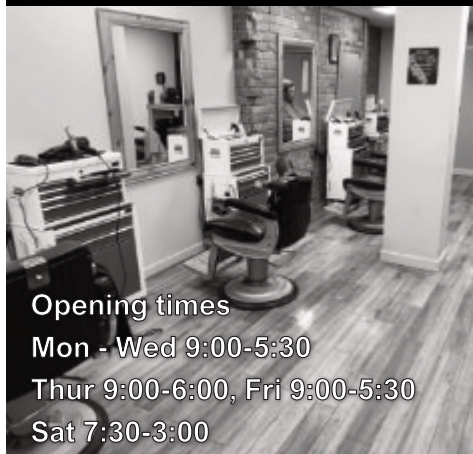
In my opinion, this awful trend must stop! If you are a brewer please stop adding these terrible substances to your beer, if you are publican please stop giving them bar space and if you are a drinker ask yourself why are you drinking beer that tastes nothing like beer, do you not like beer?

Ivan Faroll

Note the beer displayed is an example only.



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VE Day Celebrations

Following the rescheduling of the Mayday Bank Holiday from Monday 4th May to Friday 8th May 2020, to mark the 75th Anniversary of VE Day in 1945, it has been announced that all Licensed Premises (Pubs, Clubs, etc) **may** stay open until 1am.

Commemorative events will take place over the 3-day weekend across the country, including:

- the Nation's Toast, where over 20,000 pubs will encourage patrons to raise a glass to the Heroes of World War II



- bagpipers playing the traditional Battle's O'er at the top of the four highest peaks in the UK – Ben Nevis in Scotland, Scafell Pike in England, Mount Snowdon in Wales and Slieve Donard in Northern Ireland
- bells in churches and cathedrals across the country joining forces in a special Ringing Out for Peace
- local street parties and celebrations across the 3-day weekend

To find out more follow the link
veday75.org/downloads



Spring Recipe

Rarebit Crumpets

Ingredients

2 spring onions green and white parts separated, both finely chopped

25g butter

2 tbsp plain flour

100ml beer

1 large egg, beaten

50g fresh breadcrumbs

250g extra-mature cheddar or vegetarian alternative, grated

8 crumpets



1. In a small pan, soften the white parts of the spring onions in the butter then stir in the flour for 1 min. Very gradually, stir in the beer to make a thick sauce (like when making a white sauce). Take off the heat and stir in the green parts of the spring onion, the egg, breadcrumbs and cheddar. Season and chill until you're ready to use.

2. Lightly toast the crumpets and heat grill to high. Arrange crumpets on a baking sheet, pile rarebit mixture on top and grill for a few mins until piping hot and golden brown.

Yummy.

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

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We look forward to hearing from you.

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



CAMRA members

Are you missing out on local branch activities?

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Join up, join in, join the campaign



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.

*Price for paying by Direct Debit and correct at April 2019. Concessionary rates available. Please visit camra.org.uk/membership-rates

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10 HAVE YOUR SAY

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

Matt Eley is editor of the Cask Report 2019



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