Pint Taken
Worcestershire County CAMRA Magazine – Winter 2018/19

Articles, Pub and Brewery news and MORE from across Worcestershire
5 GENERATIONS OF HARD CRAFT

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5.0% ABV

AMERICAN RYE
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HOP BOMB
4.6% ABV

WEST COAST PALE

FORGED IN THE BLACK COUNTRY
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Cover photo: The Dragon, Worcester. Worcestershire County Pub of the Year 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The front cover photography and many other photos are kindly provided by AndyCheckettsConsultancy. Where this is the case photos are marked ACC. We are also grateful to other photographers who will be noted individually.

Pint Taken EXTRA
Go to pinttaken.org.uk/extra where you can find additional articles and features to complement those in the magazine. New items include an article about the Old Cock in Droitwich.
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Editor’s Introduction: Andy Checketts

Our Winter edition boasts a range of articles covering county pub/club awards, pub and brewery news, more in our Readers’ Comments section plus debates about beer in a bottle or can, book reviews, the trend towards low alcohol beers, events and dates for the future and more.

Congratulations to Katie and her team at The Dragon, in Worcester for its award as CAMRA’s Worcestershire County Pub of the Year 2018 (see front cover).

Thank You to the team of unpaid volunteers that contribute to and produce our county CAMRA magazine, distribute it and to those that advertise in it. Read Pint Taken online too at www.pinttaken.org.uk and see other articles in the new online section called Pint Taken EXTRA.

If you have something to share, drop an email to editor@pinttaken.org.uk by 26 January 2019 for the next edition.

Fly the flag for Worcestershire! Cheers

Andy Checketts
the Fleece Inn
Bretforton

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Openings and updates

**Vaughan's Tapas & Cocktail Bar** has opened in Headless Cross. It is being run by the previous tenants of the White Hart and although its main theme is tapas and cocktails (does what it says on the tin), it is also serving real ale.

**Black Cross, Bromsgrove** has new tenants, is still tied to Marston's and will hopefully be serving ales from across the Marston's estate. Let's hope that the new tenants are able to make a go of it and bring back one of Bromsgrove’s most iconic pubs.

**The Crown, Catshill** has undergone a £200k facelift which has seen the creation of a cosy bistro area in what used to be the bar. It still serves ales from the Greene King range including Abbot Ale and St. Austell’s Tribute.

**The Hill Tavern, Clent** has reopened following a period of closure earlier in the year, and it offers Enville Ale. However, it operates restricted hours, basically weekends. See whatpub.com for details.

**Bewdley Brewery** has extended its tap room bar to five hand pulls. Open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons, visitors can partake of Worcestershire Way, Sway, Mucklow’s Mild, Sir Keith Park and a changing or seasonal Bewdley beer. All the beer engines are magnificent genuine half pint pulls which give an authentic finish to the beers. From next Easter there’ll be street food events in the newly ‘poshed-up’ courtyard.

**Hampstall Inn, Astley Burf**, on the banks of the Severn near Stourport, has reopened after a complete refurbishment. The new ramped access leads up to a beer terrace overlooking the river. The bar, with log burner, offers meals and four beers. A separate extensive dining area has a central feature stove.

**The Bell at Pensax** has changed hands after many years, being bought and run by Trudy (RIP) and John Greaves in 1999. Ian Mercer, the manager, has moved on. He joined the team in 2003 as barman and chef and is well known to drinkers and diners due to his warm welcome and his ability to keep great beer and cook hearty traditional meals. Wyre Forest Branch of CAMRA would also like to wish him well and the new owners of The Bell every success into the future and trust that they will continue to maintain the high esteem that is held for this classic pub by beer lovers everywhere. (See separate article on page 23 The Bell at Pensax - Ringing the Changes’ by Nick Rubery.)

**Ye Olde Horseshoes** at Belbroughton welcomes new licensee Mick Anderson (formerly of Belbroughton Club) and he continues with traditional meals and HPA, Tribute and Butty Bach.
JIM JONES SAYS!

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Of the 57 entries in the Worcestershire section of the 2019 Good Beer Guide, **Clent Club, Clent** is the only club within this prestigious group. Congratulations to licensee Dawn Bubb and her husband Steve who have developed this community club through a great beer range which includes Wye Valley, Sharps, Holdens, Salopian and Oakham beers plus Thatcher’s Traditional and a guest cider such as Rosie’s Pig or Apple Shed. Full credit also needs to be given to their cellarmen Gary Carpenter, for the high quality beers and ciders on offer. Following a refurbishment of the main room, which, with a small stage is used for live events, the club’s second reception room has been made into an additional bar/function room with smart soft furnishings. Both are good for the many social events and clubs that meet here including the local cricket team, darts teams and the Morgan Three-Wheeler club. The Clent Club has received a number of awards, including being the current Redditch and Bromsgrove branch Club of the Year 2018.

Ollie and Jenni Pierson are the new managers at **The Old Greyhound** a Marston’s pub in Reindeer Court, Worcester.

A new pub has opened beneath Worcester’s viaduct. **The Arch Rivals**, which is situated on Netherton Court under the railway arches in the city centre, opened in September 2018. The beer selection is definitely more on the real ale side than craft — featuring at the moment a very decent line up from Sadler’s, Wye Valley Brewery, and some ciders from Barbourne Cider Co. Although it took owner Mike Davis only two months to build his bar, decorate and get the stock sorted, it’s an idea he has wanted to see come to life for a while now. He says “The trains rumbling overhead is actually a really cool feature. It’s not at all disruptive, nothing shakes or wobbles, it just adds to the quirkiness of the pub.”

**The Vine Inn**, Ombersley Road, Worcester has been operating on restricted hours, but is now fully operational again and adorned with exterior vine murals.
There’s a Beer Festival EVERY DAY at the following fabulous pubs:

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Hollybush, Mitton Street, Stourport DY13 9AA

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Wyre Forest CAMRA Pub of the Autumn 2018
Closed Pubs

Victoria Works, Studley. Planning permission has been approved for the demolition of the Victoria Works. Formerly known as the Nag's Head, the last tenant of the pub was Dave Smith who owns the nearby Weatheroak Brewery, but gave the lease up in 2016 when he opened the smaller Weatheroak Tap House in the High Street. It is believed that the site will be used for housing.

White Hart, Headless Cross is currently closed and has changed hands. It is believed that it is being refurbished, but as yet it's not known what it will re-emerge as in the future.

The Gate Hangs Well, Stoke Prior is under threat of demolition. The pub has been closed for some years now, but a planning application to demolish the pub and build houses in its place is currently being considered. Anyone who would like to object can do so on the Bromsgrove Council website https://publicaccessbromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk/online-applications/

Sadly a number of pubs have recently closed around the Worcester district: The Maltster, Corn Market, Worcester, The Alma Tavern, Droitwich Road, Worcester, The Brewers Arms, West Malvern and Plough and Harrow, Drakes Broughton. The future of The Coach and Horses, Upper Tything, Worcester is uncertain and appears to be closed.

CAMRA

Worcestershire Pub of the Year 2018

The Dragon Inn, Worcester has been awarded Worcestershire’s Pub of the Year 2018 by the Campaign for Real Ale. Katie Elliot took over the Dragon in September 2015 when Church End Brewery bought the pub. Katie set about plans to breathe fresh air into the pub whilst still maintaining the Dragon’s long tradition of serving quality real ales. In January 2017 the pub was closed for a major refurb with the pub literally being stripped right back to bare bricks; the ceilings were taken down and the
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bar was taken out. After a couple of months the pub reopened looking a lot brighter and bigger, with the pubs function room reinstated and, for the first time, indoor toilets!

The CAMRA Pub of the Year awards recognise all the criteria that make a great pub, including atmosphere, decor, customer service, value for money, clientele mix and most importantly, the quality of the real ale.

Bill Ottaway, Worcester CAMRA branch Press Officer, stated “This is the first time a Worcester pub has received this award. It's a fantastic achievement and recognises the hard work Katie, and her team, have invested in keeping this traditional city pub alive, expanding the pub, attracting new clientele and offering several quality ales. In this day and age, it’s really pleasing to see a vibrant and bustling pub.”

Katie Elliot, licensee at the Dragon Inn, stated “Receiving this award is the icing on the cake. I came here from a country pub with lots of space around it, so very different from the Dragon. I wanted to make several changes to the pub, such as relocating the toilets inside, but I didn't want to lose the pub's character, which happens a lot when big chains take over and refurb pubs. Initially, I didn't have any plans for the beer garden, but I was surprised at how much use our customers made of it, so decided to make it more welcoming and increase the amount of seating. We are extremely thrilled to have received this recognition by CAMRA.”

Wyre Forest CAMRA Awards

2018 was certainly a record-breaking Summer and one which resulted in a lot of thirsts to quench. At times it was even too hot to sit out in the traditional beer garden, and somewhere with a degree of shade was required. This was a factor in Wyre Forest CAMRA’s choice of Pub of the Summer — the King & Castle at Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster.

With an extensive covered Station concourse and a fine selection of 8 real ales and 2 real ciders, the pub proved a very popular venue for the Summer of 2018. This is reflected by the pub having a high volume of consistently good beer scores across the range of beers on offer. CAMRA members can score the beers for any pub they drink in which helps to identify where the best beers are to be found.

Chair of Wyre Forest CAMRA, Nick Yarwood, said “The bar team did a great job of welcoming visitors to Kidderminster and the railway, and that all adds colour and joy to the
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experience. Competition for the summer award was hot, and Branch members decided this one had the edge. Well done to all of the King & Castle team.” In the picture are manager Gavin Chance and the bar team receiving their award.

A short walk away the Chester Road Sports & Social Club, also in Kidderminster, had a great summer as well. With a thriving membership of a thousand, cricket in the sunshine, great beers and a comfortable and popular members’ lounge it was the choice for Summer Club of the Season.

The club has a long and proud history since moving to the location in 1915, hosting County and even international cricket matches in its time. The members’ lounge is well-used most days along with the large function room, both served with three real ales on hand pulls. Steward Adam Loveridge is pictured with bar staff Kayleigh and Cal receiving the award from Wyre Forest CAMRA Chairman Nick Yarwood.

Pub of the Autumn was won by Ye Olde Seven Stars in Kidderminster town centre. The oldest surviving pub in the town, the lounge and main bar could tell a tale or two from over two centuries as a hub of the community. The landlord, Laurence Goodwin, and the bar team of April, Kirsty, Will and Ed are friendly and welcoming to everyone that enters. They arrange charity events, such as the Autumn Cask Ale Pull around pubs in the town as well as food tasting competitions in which customers compete for the accolade of the best curry, chilli and so on. And the five real ales are presented in excellent condition.

Well done to all three establishments for serving their communities and customers with skill, attention and good humour.
King & Castle  Kidderminster
Great Western Railway style pub

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Wyre Forest CAMRA Pub of the Spring 2017 and Pub of the Summer 2018
**Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA awards**

The Cross, Finstall was presented with the Summer Pub of The Season award by branch chairman Gez Quinn in September. The Cross reopened in April following a complete refurbishment and is now a thriving cosy pub. Ryan Carr and his team have been providing a great selection of ales all served to a high standard. These include five changing guest beers as well as three regular beers from Black Country Ales. A popular feature at the Cross is home-made cobs, pork pies and scotch eggs.

**Book review**

CAMRA has published a number of new books that make ideal presents. They are available from camra.org.uk/shop at discounted rates for CAMRA members

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2019 by CAMRA Books £15.99**

Now in its 46th edition, the beer-lovers’ bible is fully revised and updated each year to feature 4,500 recommended pubs across the United Kingdom that serve the best real ale. The GBG is completely independent, with listings based entirely on evaluation by CAMRA members. The unique breweries section lists every brewery — micro, regional and national — that produces real ale in the UK as well as mentioning their beers. Tasting notes for the beers, compiled by CAMRA-trained tasting teams, are also included. This is the complete book for beer lovers and for anyone wanting to experience the UK’s finest pubs.
The following articles have been submitted by our readers and may not reflect the opinions of CAMRA. We would welcome your articles and news which can be submitted at: pinttaken.org.uk/send-news

Beer Festivals - a response
Neil Berry

In response to the (Worcester based) Bull Baiters' licensee's letter in Pint Taken Autumn 2018 I feel that he is being too negative. There is no doubt that on the days the festival is on, there will likely be less patronage of the local pubs although if people have come from afar and are staying locally then there may well be an increase on some days. As a bar volunteer at this year's Worcester festival I would estimate at least 10%, possibly a lot more, of the public I served had never had real ale before and felt this was THE place to give it a go. Despite the availability of "fantastic local brews" in (what was described as) "Worcester's only real ale dedicated pub" it would appear they had never crossed the threshold. Hopefully those people I served will now be convinced enough (most seemed very taken with the quality and taste) to visit Worcester's amazing selection of pubs including the aforementioned one in St Johns. My wife worked the (festival) cider bar and found that she was introducing even more customers to the delights of traditional cider and perry. I do hope The Bull Baiters benefits in the LONG run.

Beer Disruption - A response
Neil Berry

Having just returned from a 3½ week rail trip across the USA sampling craft and real ale I would add to Nick Yarwood's Beer Disruption article (from Summer 2018 edition). He says “What starts in the States often migrates to the UK”. What does appear to have happened in the USA is that they have seen what an amazing success story CAMRA has been in the UK and decided they'd had enough of drinking tasteless beer and would follow our lead and fight back. They've done it in a different way, mainly based in brewpubs and warehouse taps similar to Germany and Australia and in a different style of beer to us, but the seed was sown here.

(Ed. This echoes my experience in Orlando, Chicago and Washington DC. See Goose Island and Lagunitas breweries.)

Head or Not - The joys of running a micro pub
Chris Hankins (Licensee at the Bull Baiters Inn, Worcester)

A beer's head is the layer of foam formed by bubbles of carbon dioxide in the beer rising to the surface and being held together with surface tension. In terms of a normal-sized head, is a head a good thing or a bad thing? The thickness of the head depends on the particular beer, and the shape and cleanliness of the glass. Smell is an integral part of beer enjoyment and natural carbon dioxide in a good head intensifies the complex aromas from the beer that otherwise might be lost to the nose and the palate.
So in order to enjoy a beer to its full potential, you should let it develop a natural head on the pour. It’s important to remember that our senses of taste and smell are intimately interwoven. In fact, at times a specific characteristic that a drinker may describe as taste is actually detected by his/her nose. Foam brings more odour compounds to the surface of your beer. Allow the head to pass your lips and coat your tongue. You will notice even more flavour and complexities than ever before.

Beer sommelier Max Bekker points out, the foam is where you are going to taste the sweetness of the malt and the bitterness of the hops but the foam also protects the integrity of the aroma of the beer through each sip. Never drink beer straight out of the bottle or can because it excludes your nose from the process.

The issue of a drinkers’ right to have a full pint measure of liquid, however, has been debated in CAMRA circles for decades. The general expectation from industry practice appears to be that the pint equates to 95% liquid and 5% head. Cask-conditioned ale, however, is not so accommodating and, depending on the brew, the licensee cannot physically pour a less than 5% head without considerable wastage. Lined glasses at first appear to solve the problem, but the licensee is then dispensing more than a pint on every pour. Not a problem to the drinker who gets the ‘full’ pint and the benefits of the head. It has been estimated that global introduction of lined glasses would raise the price of a pint by 7p to cover the lower yield.

It’s a simple formula from the pub’s point of view: more head, less waste, cheaper beer; no head, more waste, dearer beer.

A good head is in fact a legal and often desirable part of the pint unless your personal preferences are for less head in which case you should ask for a top up. If a customer asks for a top-up, such requests should always be received with good grace and should never be refused. I don’t use sparklers often, but some customers will ask for the sparkler to be removed which is also done with good grace.

The insinuation that publicans are deliberately pouring pints with an extra large head to make more profit is flawed. I would worry if all the beer from a particular outlet was ‘flat’. On the other hand, anyone offered a beer with a ridiculously large head will ask for a top up and no publican will refuse.

Expectations of what may be a reasonable head, however, can vary depending on geography and believe it or not this is recognised in the case law. The amount of head should also depend on the type of beer rather than the drinkers’ perception of being ripped off - if you order a pint of Guinness, would you prefer no head and the black stuff to go to the rim of the pint? Probably not. Expectations of what may be a “reasonable” head, however, can vary depending on geography and believe it or not this is recognised in the case law.

My advice, don’t get too hung up on the ‘must have my money’s worth no matter what’ concept. Enjoy CAMRA’s success in achieving so many great real ale pubs.
For the last two years the political landscape has been dominated by the Brexit debate and people wondering what’s going to happen after March 2019. But despite this, life goes on and we need to make sure that we don’t take our eye off the day to day issues that still impact upon us.

With this in mind, CAMRA arranged a Mass Lobby Day on 30th October at Parliament when hundreds of CAMRA members gathered to lobby their MPs about protecting pubs. The original plan for the Lobby day was to raise some budget issues around beer duty, but the Chancellor then decided to move the budget to the day before the lobby, so plans had to be revised.

As Chair of Redditch and Bromsgrove Branch, I went along to lobby my own MP Sajid Javid.

The key messages that we wanted to get across were:

- The introduction of a beer only duty which would replace the existing duty that covers all alcoholic drinks. Introducing this new duty (which isn’t under current EU regulation) would mean that different rates could be charged for “onsales” i.e. in pubs as opposed to supermarkets where beer is sold at below cost.

- A review of Business Rates, based upon turnover pubs currently pay a greater proportion of Business Rates than other businesses. On-line businesses pay a lot less in business rates than shops and pubs and a fairer method needs to be found.

- A review of the Pubs Code. This was introduced two years ago after serious campaigning from CAMRA. However, we believe that pub companies are not playing fairly
with pub tenants and the terms of
the code need to be tightened and
properly enforced.

Unfortunately, Sajid wasn't available
to meet me on the day, so instead I met
with one of his senior researchers, Peter
Backhouse, and we discussed the key
issues above. He took my comments on
board and promised to raise the issues
with the relevant government bodies
accordingly.

It should be noted that in the budget
the Chancellor froze beer duty and
reduced business rates by a third for
smaller businesses, and whilst these
changes are very welcome, they are only
short-term sticking plasters and the
need to review both measures remains
if we are to protect our pubs.

The day came to a rousing end
with a rally where we listened to
some speeches from Jackie Parker,
CAMRA Chairman, Ian Garner, CAMRA
Director, and MPs from the All Party
Parliamentary Beer Group including the
Chair, David Wood MP, and Vice-Chair,
Ruth Smeeth MP.

We've all seen pubs slowly
disappearing as they are snapped up
one by one by developers to be replaced
by soulless brick boxes. Pubs are
valuable assets within our communities
and play an ever-increasing role in
combating issues such as isolation and
loneliness in today's society. If you agree
and would like to join in the campaign,
I would strongly encourage you to write
to your MP (you can get the address at
www.parliament.uk) and ask them to
support these issues. We've shown in the
past that mass campaigns like this can
have an impact on government policy,
so every email or letter helps.

Being involved in an event like the
Mass Lobby Day may not appeal to
everyone, but being able to visit the
Houses of Parliament with all its
history, whilst lobbying my MP on some
serious issues was a great experience
and I for one enjoyed the day, let's hope
it makes a difference in the end.
Campaigners Welcome Duty Freeze

In the October budget, held the day before the Mass Lobby Day, Chancellor Philip Hammond announced that the government had abandoned its plans for a 3.4% tax rise for beer, cider and spirits. The price freezes mean that drinkers will be spared a rise of between 1p and 2p for a pint of cider or beer. Wine drinkers however, will see a 7p increase to an average bottle.

There will also be a cut in business rates, with the treasury cutting these by a third for businesses with a rateable value of less than £51,000. This reduction will come into effect from April 2019 for two years.

The news was welcomed across the drinks industry.

Mike Clist from The British Institute of Innkeepers said, “We are delighted to hear that business rates have been cut by one third for many of our members running businesses with a rateable value of under £51,000. This will provide much needed help to the most vulnerable pubs in our communities. In the longer term, root-and-branch business rate reform will be required to tackle the disparity between high street businesses and online retailers. The freeze on duty for beer, cider and spirits was unexpected, but very welcome, and will provide a much needed boost to our industry.”

The Chancellor’s surprise decision to freeze Beer Duty has also been welcomed by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Thousands of emails were sent by CAMRA members to MPs ahead of the Budget, which saw the unexpected announcement of a freeze in duty on beer and cider. Pub-going is increasingly becoming an unaffordable activity for many, driving consumers from their local to supermarkets. With pub closures at 18 per week, pubs are becoming an endangered feature of our high streets, suburbs and villages.

Jackie Parker, National Chairman of CAMRA said, “A decision to freeze Beer Duty is welcome, and will no doubt go some way to keeping the British pub-going tradition affordable. However, the decision to implement the business rates relief for some and not all pubs is not enough to help protect pubs from extinction — we need wholesale reform of the business rates system to tackle the grossly unfair burden placed on pubs.”

Book review

CAMRA’s Essential Home Brewing by Andy Parker & Graham Wheeler £11.99

This new book, based on a best-selling classic CAMRA title, includes 30 exciting recipes from all over the world. It is a practical pocket-sized reference book that provides an introduction to home-brewing in an easy-to-understand way. The recipes are from leading British and international craft breweries for keen brewers to recreate at home. The book is suitable for first-timers trying out a new hobby or old hands looking to develop their brewing repertoire. The book is of interest to all beer lovers (even those who do not brew) interested in what goes into beer and how it is made.
Many of our readers will have visited the nationally renowned ‘Bell at Pensax’ over the past decades and will remember the pub with great affection.

The Bell, constructed in 1883 as a Hunting & Fishing Lodge to Abberley Hall, was converted into the pub we know today in 1984. Over the past 35 years there have been a number of changes and the observant amongst us will have noticed the three bay screen in the front corridor and the tiny room behind from where beer was dispensed from hand pulls in the early days. This and other historic features are recognized in Paul Ainsworth’s CAMRA publication Real Heritage Pubs of the Midlands.

The Bell at Pensax, with the exception of a 1 year glitch, has featured in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide since its launch in 1972.

Given the above, you will I am sure, be as surprised and concerned as I was on hearing that the pub had been sold and that the present Manager, Ian Mercer, had been given notice to leave. The pub has been in the ownership of John & Trudy Greaves since 1999 and in 2003 Ian joined the team working initially as a barman and chef. During 2012 John & Trudy decided to take a less ‘hands on’ role in the day to day running, Ian took on the role of manager. Over this period the pub has benefitted from Ian’s investment in both staff and internal/external decoration, but most importantly, Ian’s personal dedication to keeping a great Real Ale selection.

West Midlands Region Pub of the Year
3rd Place 2015

Ian’s passion for maintaining his beers in excellent condition is clear the first time you speak to him and has been reflected in the Bell’s consistent top beer scores from CAMRA members as recorded on the WhatPub database. His dedication has been rewarded by winning CAMRA accolades including, Wyre Forest Branch ‘Gold’ POTY award on many occasions, progressing to become Worcestershire POTY in 2015. Other awards include CAMRA Pub of the Decade in 2011, celebrating 25 years in the GBG in 2013 and Wyre Forest CAMRA Pub of the Season 2017. The numerous
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DY9 9QL North Worcestershire at the foot of the Clent Hills
certificates decorating the walls in the bar tell the full story!

Ian and his team have always extended a warm welcome to all of their customers and have offered a true ‘community focus’ for locals as well as pub lovers and CAMRA members alike. The Wyre Forest Branch on behalf of all CAMRA members wish Ian every success in whatever direction his future career takes him and look forward to perhaps meeting him again at the helm of another great pub.

Wyre Forest Branch of CAMRA would also like to wish the new owners of The Bell every success into the future and trust that they will continue to maintain the high esteem that is held for this classic pub by beer lovers everywhere.

Nick Rubery presenting Wyre Forest CAMRA Country Pub of the Summer 2017 to Ian Mercer

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Redditch & Bromsgrove CAMRA
Pub of the Year 2011

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Thu 1pm to 12am, Fri 1pm to 2am,
Sat 12pm to 2am, Sun 12pm to 10pm
Landlords Andy and Maria look forward to welcoming you to The Black Star - a friendly pub serving an extensive menu of tasty food and a fine selection of Wye Valley Brewery and guest ales.

The Black Star is listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2018, is the Wyre Forest CAMRA Pub of the Year Silver Finalist 2018.

It provides all the comforts of a traditional pub in a truly beautiful setting. It has a lovely garden overlooking the canal and is just a short walk from the canal basin and Stourport town centre.

The Swan at Blakedown

Village Pub and Free House serving local Real Ales from Sadler's, Wye Valley, Purity, Holdens and guest ales from around the country.

Bar and Restaurant serving excellent value home cooked food and a specially selected wine list.

Large patio and garden with children’s play area, and dogs are welcome in the bar.

OPEN 11-11 Mon-Sat 11-10.30 Sun

FOOD served 12-9pm every day
20p off a pint of any cask ale when showing your CAMRA card.

theswanblakedown@hotmail.co.uk

01562 700 229
Cask Beer In Pubs

The British Beer and Pubs Association beer barometer shows that beer sales in the first quarter of 2018 were down nearly 2% and that last year’s rise in duty was a factor. The growth and interest in the craft sector has seen a significant rise in the number of beers served in both bottles and cans. Nevertheless, the key choice will still be between cask and keg. Some countries such as Belgium have a long history of selling quality beer in bottles and this is spreading into the UK. Unpasteurised, flavoursome and interesting beers are also being developed in cans with many of the new smaller breweries making a success of this market.

Cask would appear to have many downsides compared with keg. It needs more care when setting up, it contains sediment that makes beer cloudy if disturbed and has a shorter shelf life of 3 days. But unlike keg beer, cask undergoes a secondary fermentation that improves the flavour of the beer. Many consider a well-kept pint of British cask-conditioned beer to be the ‘pinnacle of the brewer’s art’. Most importantly for the licensee, it is a drink that is almost uniquely drunk in a pub.

It is easy for drinkers to buy keg beer in a supermarket, but when it comes to real ale they need to go to a pub. Ian Rigg is the licensee of the award-winning Taps in Lytham St. Annes and has found that promoting cask ale results in year on year growth. In Ian’s words, “The supermarkets can copy other things, but they can’t copy real ale. As long as it’s served correctly, I’ve got the supermarkets stuffed!”

The important message is that quality is key. Far too many pubs are selling poorly kept beer, so training and information about beer and how to look after it is vital.

The Cask Report 2018 found that cask drinkers are...
- Twice as likely to return to the pub than other alcohol drinkers
- Twice as likely to stay for another drink
- Almost twice as likely to recommend your pub.

It makes sense for pubs to promote cask beers, but it is vital that the beers chosen are top quality and are served at the peak of their condition and at around 10-12 degrees C. Get it right and you will have a winning formula with happy customers staying for another beer, as well as returning and recommending your pub to their friends.

Brett is an independent beer consultant at beerconsultancy.co.uk
Bottles available from brewery in cases of 12 or just 1 bottle

18 pint, 36 pint and 72 pint containers always available with 3 days notice

www.bewdleybrewery.co.uk
Brewery shop: 01299 405148

WEATHEROAK TAP HOUSE
STUDLEY

Weatheroak Brewery’s very own Free House
Situated on the high street in Studley, a unique, small and very friendly micro pub offering a vast selection of Weatheroak Brewery ales and guest ales too! Also on offer is a range of draught ciders, wines and spirits

Open 7 Days
MON 4.00pm - 9.00pm
TUE 12.30pm - 10.30pm
WED 12.30pm - 10.30pm
THU 12.30pm - 10.30pm
FRI 12.30pm - 11.00pm
SAT 12.00pm - 11.00pm
SUN 12.00pm - 9.00pm

21a High Street, Studley, B80 7HN. For further information call 01527 854433, email toby@weatheroakbrewery.co.uk or visit our website www.weatheroakbrewery.co.uk
Editor: When draught is not available... do you choose bottles or cans? Locally, Malvern Hills Brewery produces a range of craft beers in cans through an innovative canning plant on site. MHB's Head Brewer Julian Hawthornthwaite, who originally hails from an engineering background, ingeniously designed, and made his very own beer can filling machine with his father, Tom. Julian says

“These new types of cans actually hold the taste better and are more reminiscent of the beer that’s available in local pubs through a traditional hand-pull. Essentially, a can is a smaller version of a cask.”

Can the Can?

Ian Boyd: Historically, canned beer has had very bad press. It has been associated with cheap and nasty products and mass-produced brands. There is the belief that cans impart an undesirable metallic taste to the contents. But, does beer from a can really taste metallic? After all, beer starts off being mashed in a metal vessel. It is then boiled, fermented and matured in metal tanks before being transported to the pub cellar in metal casks, where it is subsequently pulled through metal pipes to your glass in the bar. And how often do you detect any metal impurities in your glorious pub pint?

**Beer stored inside a can is never actually in contact with any metal.** All beer cans, since their introduction in 1935 in the UK by Felinfoel Brewery in Wales, have been specially lined to stop any liquid making contact with the metal.

All metal casks AND cans are now coated inside with an impervious polymer lining to inhibit any liquid/metal contact. Beer, after all, is slightly acidic, and readily attacks metal. So, the can is simply a mini cask. It vents...
A family owned and run traditional village pub with FOOD
Roaring Fires & Pretty Garden

**FAMILIES, RAMBLERS, DOGS, CYCLISTS ALL WELCOME**

**WE’RE IN THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 2019**

4 Hand Pumps
2 Permanent Ales & 2 Guest Ales – Constantly changing
CAMRA Member’s Discount – 50p Off Pints of Real Ale EVERY Monday

**Christmas Fayre Meals** £16.95 2 course £19.95 3 course
Pre orders & bookings required (December dates available)

**Full Menu available daily LUNCH & EVENINGS**
(Sun lunch only)
Themed Menus, Buffets & Private dining

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**The Postal Order**

Foregate Street, Worcester
Tel. - 01905 22373

Cask Marque Approved

A traditional Wetherspoon’s pub offering a wide range of cask conditioned real ales and traditional ciders. A minimum of 6 real ales on at any time and 2 ciders.

A small smoking area has been constructed in the rear to accommodate those who wish to have a drink and a smoke.

Opening times: Sunday – Thursday 8am ‘til Midnight
Friday/Saturday 8am ‘til 1am
Good value meals are served all day every day from 9am ‘til 10pm
when you open it, as does a bottle, and ideally you should quaff the contents after pouring into a glass.

(Ed: This allows the drinker to see the colour, really enjoy the beer’s aroma and determine an amount of head.)

The Sierra Nevada brewery in the USA recently performed a blind sampling with 25 tasters to test if there was any perceived difference between bottled and canned beer. Although only by a small margin, more tasters preferred the canned beer to the bottled product. Slight majority, or not, the main point to be drawn from the experiment is that, **modern canned beer does not taste any different from bottled beer**.

Taste aside, it might be further argued that beer packaged in an aluminium can has other advantages over bottled beer.

For example, aluminium cans are significantly lighter than glass bottles and take up less space. This makes both haulage and storage of canned beer cheaper due to weight and this significantly reduces the carbon footprint involved with transport.

Furthermore, glass is fragile, making bottle handling more difficult and more prone to accidental damage than with cans - not only in the production process, but also in after-sales portability, e.g. shop or brewery to car, or home to picnic, boat or rucksack. Cans are also acceptable at venues where glass is not, such as sporting or festival venues, beaches and parks etc.

Beer cans need NO additional instrumentation to open, unlike bottles, and result in one unit of litter, rather than two.

Heat travels faster through metals than through bottles. Hence, cans take much less time to cool down to drinking temperature than bottles.

Most bottled beers these days are packaged in brown glass, which is largely opaque to UV and visible light, and this minimises spoiling of the contents by photochemical light striking. With cans, NO light whatsoever can penetrate even the very thin metal, thus completely eliminating any possible light-induced photochemical reactions within the beer.

Then there is the recycling issue. Cans are much more environmentally friendly than bottles. Aluminium cans are the most recycled beverage containers the world at around 70%. By comparison, only 25% of glass bottles are recycled, and since they need to be sorted and processed differently. Unlike with aluminium, which is craved by automobile and aeronautical industries, demand for recycled glass is significantly weaker. So, in terms of the physical, chemical and optical properties of the materials involved it seems to be a no-brainer that aluminium cans have more than an edge over bottles for packaged beer.

The question is are you convinced and will you allow these facts to counteract your prejudices?

When asked if I prefer cans or bottles, I reply “cask”. There is nothing better than going to your local pub and quaffing a freshly poured pint directly from the cellar. So, I suggest, where possible, drink green, drink cask, and keep your pubs open!
The Wyche Inn

Free House

Good Beer Guide 2011 to 2018

4 Star Inn Accommodation

We have a selection of ever changing real ales from small and micro breweries far and wide

A welcoming traditional pub and B&B in an elevated position in the Malvern Hills looking out across the Three Counties Showground and the Cotswolds.

Opening times:

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Food Serving times:

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<td>Mon-Fri</td>
<td>12-2.30 &amp; 6-8.30</td>
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<td>Sat</td>
<td>12-8.30 (Snacks only 2.30-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>12-3.30 &amp; 6-7.30</td>
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74 Wyche Road, Malvern, WR14 4EQ  Phone: 01684 575396  Website: thewycheinn.co.uk  Email: thewycheinn@googlemail.com
Low Alcohol Beer Sails In
Fergus Fitzgerald - Head Brewer at Adnams Brewery

Editor: Low alcohol beers tend to be comparatively cheap, as they attract less duty, but how are they produced and what’s the future? I asked Fergus Fitzgerald (Head Brewer at Adnams Brewery) about his journey with low alcohol beers ... and how he gets such great results. Maybe some of our Worcestershire brewers are trying it too? Let us know.

Fergus: Adnams Brewery is famous for its Ghost Ship Pale Ale at 4.5%. However, we’ve been considering low alcohol beer for a long time and it started with us producing Sole Star Pale Ale, at 2.7% ABV. This we modified to only 0.9% in 2016. Now we have Ghost Ship in a 0.5% version. We brew these beers specially via a restricted fermentation, which means we don’t use much malt and the malt that we do use is mostly adding flavour so there isn’t a lot of sugar for the yeast to ferment. Also, we ferment it colder than normal, doing everything we can do to slow down and restrict the fermentation of the beer and then we add a lot of dry hop for a fuller flavour. We wanted the flavour of a regular beer. We are using Reverse Osmosis, which means that we can filter out alcohol and water leaving the flavours of the beer behind, and it’s all done at really cold temperatures. This was by far the best method of producing flavoursome alcohol free beers. We’ve been running trials for a year, tweaking the recipe ... we’ll continue to do that, but we are really happy with where we’ve gotten to.

We also do a version of this for Marks & Spencers called Southwold Pale Ale at 0.5%. (Which is brilliant, when one can find it - Ed) It’s very similar, except in that we use more hops to help give the beer more complexity to make up for the lower amount of malted barley used. These beers work very well, so we’ve created a low alcohol version of our well known Ghost Ship ale - this is still available at its regular 4.5% - and now as the new 0.5% version. We will try other beer styles as well in due course.

(Can anyone recommend another great low alcohol beer? Email editor@pinttaken.org.uk)

M&S Southwold Pale Ale 0.5% Exceptional!!
In the first year that Worcestershire has included the Pub category in its awards our community pub has been awarded **WINNER of the Best Tourism Pub** at the Visit Worcestershire Awards for Excellence 2018.

We pride ourselves on our selection of real ales and ciders, with an emphasis on local products, throughout the year – not just for our two Summer Festivals. Why not pay us a visit and see what we have to offer? We have great food too! Also see our website [www.elmleycastle.com](http://www.elmleycastle.com) for information on special theme nights and other events.

- **Monday (Bank hols Sunday hours)**
  - 1800-2100 (Drinks only)

- **Tuesday, Wednesday**
  - 1100-1430 & 1730-2300
  - Food 1200-1400 & 1800-2100

- **Thursday to Saturday**
  - 1100-2300
  - Food 1200-1400 & 1800-2100

- **Sunday**
  - 1100-2000
  - Sunday Roast 1200-1600

Immerse yourself in historic Elmley Castle!!

**Bookings now being taken for our 2018 Festive menu 1-24 December - see our website**

**Main Street, Elmley Castle WR10 3HS**

- 01386 710251
- qc@queenelizabethinn.co.uk
- www.elmleycastle.com

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**AleWrightNow**

Need a bar for your party, wedding, fete or other event?

Give us a call.

We specialise in using real ales and ciders.

[www.alewrightnow.co.uk](http://www.alewrightnow.co.uk)

email info@alewrightnow.co.uk  Tel 07817 573471
What draws individuals into a pub?

Reasons? For example, to meet with friends and socialise, to enjoy our drink of choice, to attend an event, enjoy a snack, a meal out, or maybe a quiet period of contemplation or to read.

Decline in alcohol consumption amongst the younger generation has been in the news recently. In a survey of ten thousand individuals, 29% of 16 to 24-year-olds say they didn’t drink at all in 2015, up from 18% a decade ago. Society’s social habits are undergoing change.

But does that mean that there is any less social interaction? Social media undoubtedly plays a part. There are many alternative places to meet such as fast food outlets, cake shops and a fast-growing number of coffee shops. It seems that coffee is becoming an alternative stimulant to alcohol. They cater really well for the connected world to attract customers — reliable free fast WiFi, plenty of power points and even USB outlets to recharge phones.

Whether young or older, we all know from experience that each generation takes new paths. For those that enjoy alcohol it’s gins, interesting wines and tasty ‘craft’ beers that are the new attractions.

Cask beer is important to the established and loyal pub users. When it’s in excellent condition and there’s a choice including modern styles then young drinkers can be attracted to try it. But if it’s not in good condition and
The **GOLDEN LION**
George St
KIDDERMINSTER

**a**

**TRADITIONAL**

**FRIENDLY PUB**

7 Different Ales!
Local beers
often from
Bewdley
Enville
Wye Valley

Pork Pies and Cobs
always available

Live Music
every
Wednesday evening

Beer Garden
Children welcome
Dog friendly

Open every day
12 noon to 11pm

The **GOLDEN LION**
George St
KIDDERMINSTER

**a**

**TRADITIONAL**

**FRIENDLY PUB** WiFi

7 Different Ales!
Local beers
often from
Bewdley
Enville
Wye Valley

Pork Pies and Cobs
always available

Live Music
every
Wednesday evening

Beer Garden
Children welcome
Dog friendly

Open every day
12 noon to 11pm
enjoyable then why would anybody have another?

**Into the Future**

Generations evolve in their use of social venues, arguably faster now than ever before. That sets a challenge for pubs to keep pace and adapt. There are potential customers out there, each with their own expectations.

There are significant numbers of people with mobility, sight and hearing impairments that like to use pubs, and they have the same right as anybody to socialise. More could do so if there were fewer or no physical obstructions, level access to the main areas along with adapted facilities - and that’s not just adapting for wheelchair users, which isn’t always physically possible. Often accompanied by friends or carers, that’s more potential customers.

Quality of beers is paramount for attracting and retaining beer drinkers and it’s entirely in the hands of the pub and the bar staff to ensure that every pint from the start to the end of a shift delivers pleasure for the customer. They’re paying good money for it, after all.

For those not interested in beer or alcohol, good quality coffee, hot drinks and snacks can be reasons to enter. Alongside providing comprehensively for the connected world, it potentially opens up a whole new audience, particularly the younger generation.

Pubs already demonstrate adaptability by specialising in music, food, gins, wines and so forth.

There’s plenty more potential to adapt and thrive.

If you run a pub, what would you consider doing? (email editor@pinttaken.org.uk)
The Robin Hood Inn is located within the picturesque hamlet of Drayton, near Belbroughton. A jewel in the heart of the English countryside.

The bar and restaurant offers a wide variety in modern British cuisine including classic steaks and appetizing fish dishes. These are prepared using fresh and local produce accompanied with a tempting selection of real ales and fine wines.

Our service is excellent and our staff friendly, catering for all your needs.

There is a children’s adventure playground and with its country charm, extensive woodland gardens and with our large outside seating area for al fresco dining.

Food is served from 12 noon until 9.30 pm. Monday to Saturday and from 12 noon until 9.00 pm on Sunday.

We also serve a traditional Roast Sirloin of Beef, Pork and Chicken with all the trimmings. Enjoy a beautiful walk from Belbroughton village to Drayton along the brook passing around the mill pools and return across the fields with a view of Clent hills. Look out for birds & waterfowl on your route back to The Robin for lunch.
Branch Diaries

The following events are open to all CAMRA members, but non-members are welcome to join us.

Redditch & Bromsgrove Branch
Contact tony@rb.camra.org.uk
or call Paul: 07974 889553;
for social trips e-mail
mark@rb.camra.org.uk or visit our
website: www.rb.camra.org.uk
Meetings held on 4th Tuesday of the
month and start at 8pm.

**Tue 11th December** Xmas Social Crawl around Headless Cross, Redditch. We’ll be starting at the Rocklands Social Club B97 4LB at 8pm and then visiting various other pubs around Headless Cross.

**Tue 22nd January** Branch Social at the Old Cock Inn, Droitwich WR9 8EQ

**Tue 26th February** Branch Social at the Black Tap, Redditch B98 8BP

Worcester Branch
Contact@worcester.camra.org.uk
or call Mark Griffiths: 07968 337487
www.worcester.camra.org.uk
Members’ meetings are on the second Wednesday of every month 7.45 for 8pm.

**Sat 8th December** Worcester City North Pub Survey Tour - Contact for details

**Sat 15th December** Worcester CAMRA Christmas Social - Contact for details

Wyre Forest Branch
Contact@wyreforest.camra.org.uk
or call Nick Rubery: 07812 451547
www.wyreforest.camra.org.uk
Members’ meetings start at 7.45pm

**Tue 4th December** Members’ meeting at the Stourport Workmen’s Club DY13 8SB

**Thu 13th December** Curry and pub tour of Kidderminster starting at the Penny Black DY10 2AZ 6.30pm

**Wed 2nd January** New Year Social, Chester Road Sports & Social Club, Kidderminster, DY10 1TH 7.30pm

**Sat 12th January** Pub tour of Stourport starting at the Swan, DY13 8BX 2pm

**Sat 26th January** Pub tour of Bewdley starting at the Black Boy, DY12 2UE 2pm

**Tue 5th February** AGM and Members’ Meeting, Severn Valley Suite, King & Castle, Kidderminster DY10 1QX

**Tue 5th March** Members’ meeting, Bellmans Cross, Shatterford, DY12 1RN

Shakespeare Branch
contact@shakespeare.camra.org.uk
www.shakespeare.camra.org.uk
Covering Evesham area

**Worcestershire Tastings Panel:**
Breweries are welcome and encouraged to send info and tasting notes on any new beers.
Panel Chair Nick Yarwood
WorcsTastings
@wyreforest.camra.org.uk

Check branch websites for the latest information.
Go to pinttaken.org.uk/extra where you can find additional articles and features to complement those in the magazine.