

Autumn 2025

FREE

Pint Taken

Award Winning Worcestershire County CAMRA Magazine



In this issue

- Pub and Brewery News
- Local and National Awards
- Visits to Neighbouring Counties
- ...and lots more

pinttaken.org.uk

 CAMRA

S The Swan



Family run by Chris & Tracy



The Swan at Blakedown

Village Pub and Free House serving local Real Ales from Hobsons, Bewdley, Wye Valley, Hop Shed and more.

Bar and Restaurant serving excellent value home cooked food and a Traditional Sunday Lunch. Booking advised.

Large heated patio and garden with children's play area, dog friendly and alfresco dining.

OPEN from 12 daily, closed Mondays apart from Bank Holidays.

FOOD served 12-8, 12-8 Fridays & Saturdays, 12-6 Sundays.

20p off a pint of any cask ale when showing your **CAMRA** card.

theswanblakedown@hotmail.co.uk

01562 700 229



THE FREEMASONS ARMS



Children Welcome

Dog Friendly (to be kept on lead)

Real Ales and Thatchers Traditional Cider

Purity Gluten Free & Vegan Lagers

Brewdog Stout, Craft Beers and Bottle Conditioned Ales

Special artisan wines by the glass or bottle.

Great walks along the canal and in the park

Covered outside drinking areas and Garden with Pool Table

Snacks available and special Food Nights

6 Bromsgrove Road, Droitwich WR9 8RL 07973 238041
Open Monday to Friday 4pm - 11pm Saturday to Sunday 12 noon - 11pm

Editor's Introduction

In common with several CAMRA branches, congratulations go to Redditch & Bromsgrove branch as they reach their 50th birthday.

As always with milestones such as this, we tend to look back and see what has been achieved in that time. Of course, much of what CAMRA has achieved has been on a national level in taking on the big boys of the brewing world and ensuring that we still have something decent to drink, as I'm quite sure that without CAMRA, we would all be drinking the likes of Watneys Red Barrel and Double Diamond or their modern successors.

But local branches also have their part to play in local campaigns to keep pubs and breweries open, urging local politicians to go into battle on our behalf and running beer festivals to raise vital funds to keep the campaigning going.

So well done to everyone concerned, both past and present and keep up the good work for as long as it's needed.

CAMRA has announced that Mild by Penzance Brewery is this year's Champion Beer of Britain (see page 28), what a great thing it is for a mild to win this prestigious award. Living where we do, it may not come as a surprise that a mild could win, but in a world dominated by IPA's, Double IPA's, Hazy and fruit beers and chocolate and coffee Stouts, this really is a David and Goliath win as many around the country haven't even heard of mild, let alone know it's still available. So let's all celebrate this win and seek out your nearest mild and make sure that our brewers continue to produce this great beer style.

If you'd like to comment on anything within this magazine, or any other beer or CAMRA related issues, please get in touch

editor@pinttaken.org.uk Please include your name, even if you don't want it included as we can't publish anonymous comment.

Gez Quinn editor@pinttaken.org.uk

The copy deadline for the Winter edition of *Pint Taken* is 26th October.

Cover photo: *The Holly Bush, Belbroughton* by Jamie MacDonald.

Pint Taken is published by the Redditch & Bromsgrove, Wyre Forest and Worcester branches of CAMRA.

10,000 copies of *Pint Taken* are distributed across the county of Worcestershire and beyond.

Read *Pint Taken* online, download previous editions and find out more at pinttaken.org.uk

Advertising rates are available at pinttaken.org.uk or further details via adverts@pinttaken.org.uk



Articles, letters and photos for publication are welcome and should be sent to editor@pinttaken.org.uk

Pint Taken is designed and printed by Catshill Design design.catshill.com

Trading Standards Consumer Helpline 0808 223 1133 or visit citizensadvice.org.uk

Plan Your Journey
traveline.info

The views expressed in *Pint Taken* are not necessarily those of CAMRA © Ltd.



Pub and Brewery News

Pub News

For more details on pubs visit camra.org.uk/pubs

The French Hen in Clent closed down just before Christmas but has now been refurbished and reopened under its former name **The Woodman**. It is now a steak restaurant and cocktail bar but also serves three cask beers, Hobsons and Wye Valley were on the bar when last visited.

The **Holly Bush** in Belbroughton (pictured below) has reopened after a sympathetic refurbishment that has retained its pub atmosphere and is proving very popular.

A garden and rear entrance have been added. Five well-kept independent cask beers, typically including examples from Enville, Hobsons, Three Tuns, Wye Valley, and Church End are available. A fresh new “intentionally small” menu is in place. The MacDonald brothers have established a successful freight business, and this is their first venture into the pub trade. Their priority was “to preserve a piece of local heritage by purchasing this much-loved pub and saving it from closure”.



The **Hill Tavern** on Adams Hill in Clent has recently reopened as a cafe bar. The Hill Tavern has been closed for some time now so it's great to see it open again, although in a slightly different guise. This was a favourite in the past with walkers and dog walkers and hopefully will become a favourite again. Their own house beer is available under the name of Waldron's - the name of the first owner of the Hill Tavern.

Weavers has opened another one of their 'beer emporiums' at 54 Foregate Street beside Foregate Street railway station in Worcester.



Three real ales from Fownd Brewery in Kidderminster and three guest ales from independent breweries near and far are on the bar. With the loss of Wetherspoons Postal Order this is a welcome return of a very useful 'between trains' venue as well as longer stays of course.

The **Millers Arms** in Pershore has been put up for sale by Wadworth at £390,000 which includes two-bedroom living accommodation.

The **Fox and Hounds** at Lulsley near Worcester, after being on the market for sale, may now be turned into residential as the owners have applied for planning permission for the change.

We've received reports of a pub on the Gloucestershire border that is doing well, the **Railway Inn** at Ripple. No sign of a railway station anymore but this is a welcoming village pub with a separate bar serving four well kept ales and well worth a visit.



The Church in Kidderminster (pictured above) is a brand new pub and restaurant in the town centre in Church Street, next to the Swan Centre.

It opened with great excitement on 1st August when the first visitors enjoyed cask ales from Bewdley and Fownd breweries along with beers on tap, including from Copper Beech and other local brewers. It's in one of two buildings, previously the United Reformed Church, and offers a fine and varied menu in the glorious setting of a historic red sandstone listed building, complete with stained glass windows and a balcony. Access and facilities for people with disabilities is incorporated into the conversion.

The larger building, with balconies along each side and complete with its working organ, is being converted into a music and events venue. Already looking splendid, it is expected to be open at the end of the year or early in the next.

The **Little Lark** in Studley has reopened after an extensive refurbishment.

Brewery News

Teme Valley Brewery have announced that the much anticipated Green Hop festival will take place at the Talbot in Knightwick on October 10th - 12th this year.

Bewdley Brewery had a collaboration day with Hook Norton Brewery. See their Facebook site facebook.com/bewdley.brewery for pictures of the day which includes the brewery's fabulous steam engine which used to drive machinery there and which your scribe has seen working.



Copper Beech Brewery in Worcester is now brewing cask beer along with their keg series of beers.



Copper Beech Brewery Tap at 6-8 Britannia Street is parallel to The Tything just a few minutes' walk north of Foregate Street station.

Pub and Brewery News

The **Hop Shed Brewery** team has grown again – Tommy (pictured) joined as a brewer apprentice in July and has fitted in brilliantly; he and Rob can be heard chatting all things beer and brewing all day long!

The seasonal specials are selling out really quickly which means the brewery has a new beer on offer every three to four weeks. The beer line up for the autumn includes: Squeeze the Day – a blood orange IPA brewed with three different hop varieties that all give orangey flavours – a really juicy beer! Also planned are two different Green Hopped beers; being situated on a Hop Farm means the brewery can produce the freshest Green Hop beer possible.

The brewery's labels and pump clips are being redesigned, but the logo is not changing, so you



should still be able to spot the excellent beers if you look out for the shed logo.

Brewery news is compiled by Neil Berry

To submit pub or brewery news go to pinttaken.org.uk/send-news



GREEN HOP BEER FESTIVAL

from The Talbot at Knightwick

FRIDAY
10th OCT

11am - 11pm

SATURDAY
11th OCT

11am - 11pm

SUNDAY
12th OCT

11am - 6pm

LIVE MUSIC LINE-UP TBC

FREE ENTRY - ONSITE PARKING
- OVERNIGHT CAMPING & CARAVAN SPACES -

The Talbot at Knightwick, WR6 5PH, 01886 821235

For more information: chris@temevalleybrewery.co.uk

the Old Bush

AT CALLOW END

The Old Bush
Upton Road
Callow End
Worcester
WR2 4TE

01905 830792

Matt@old-bush.com

www.old-bush.com



Traditional pub – Real Ales – Bar Snacks – Dinner Menu

Farm shop Café – Campsite – Glamping Pods

Large Garden – Play Area

OPEN ALL DAY EVERYDAY

SERVING FOOD 12PM-2PM – 6:30PM-9PM

Home of award winning Old Bush Blues festival

The Dragon Inn

WORCESTER



Traditional Pub



Award Winning Cask Ales



Beautiful Beer Garden



Monday - Thursday 4pm - 11pm

Friday - Saturday 12pm - 11.00pm

Sunday 12pm - 10.30pm

51 The Tything, WR1 1JT

0190525845



A View From Behind The Bar

In our last edition we had an article from Angus McMeeking, a Director of Black Country Ales, talking through the challenges facing the pub industry today. This time around we have an interview with Ursula Downes who runs **The Hollybush** in Stourport, to give us her view of managing a pub in these turbulent days.

Ursula, when did you take over as licensee?

Kaj and I took over The Hollybush on 10th March 2020. At that time Covid 19 was about and there was a lot of talk about potential lockdowns etc. but no one ever thought it would happen. But then having only taken over the pub 10 days ago, the lockdown started.

So what have been your biggest challenges since taking over the pub?

Well we had quite a few hurdles to negotiate right from the start in navigating the various Covid lockdowns in 2020 and 2021.

When we were finally allowed to reopen we had to cope with many restrictions .

These included:

- providing a “substantial meal” for customers even though we don’t serve hot food! But luckily my daughter used to be a chef, so we got together and sorted a very reasonably priced menu.
- Managing the number of customers who came through the doors, with reduced space and it got to the point we had to turn people away.
- Providing table service in the garden. With one of the biggest beer gardens in the local area our staff had to walk miles on their shifts and a few of us, including myself, greatly improved our figures and level of fitness.

All the restrictions led to reduced capacity, table service and the need for additional staff - all on reduced trading income.

Another big challenge we faced was undergoing the pub refurbishment in 2022 when Black Country Ales decided to extend the pub into the cottage attached next door. It was hard work and



Angus McMeeking with Ursula Downes

we erected a huge marquee in the beer garden where we traded for 10 weeks. It would often get cold and the floor was not always even, but it was worth it in the end.

Finally, the most recent hurdle I faced was losing my partner Kaj on 12th August 2024. He did have health issues, but his death was not expected at that time and came as a shock. Obviously, I was extremely upset and heart broken. However, Black Country Ales were very supportive and the staff here were amazing as well as my family and the amazing customers and friends we have here.

What is your view of the challenges facing the pub industry as a whole at present?

The biggest issue all pubs are facing are the rising costs of literally everything. In the five years we have been here we have been battling with trying to keep the costs of drinks as affordable as possible whilst staying afloat without compromising on service. We have swapped and changed a few products we offer to be more affordable, and the change of 20% VAT for all food served, rather than just hot food also puts up prices.

Another challenge is lower footfall since people got used to staying at home during Covid, and the



The Hollybush, Stourport

disparity of prices of alcohol between supermarkets and pubs, making pubs less accessible to many people.

We are very lucky to be part of the Black Country Ales pub chain. They do look after us well and treat us fairly. However, we know of other chains that drive a really hard bargain for their tenants and licensees.

What regular events do you hold at the pub?

We play and take part in local darts and crib leagues, and have regular quizzes and cheese nights.

We also have fortnightly Jamming nights on Thursdays and live music normally the last Friday of the month and we're an official Hand of Friendship Lodge for a local house of Buffaloes.

What changes are you looking to introduce over the next 12 months?

This year, we are hoping for some good weather and would like to utilise our garden more. We would like to see if we could get a Summer Jam - weather and available musicians permitting.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

We pride ourselves on being a friendly welcoming pub. We always plan to offer at least 10 hand pulled real ales and have Sky Sports and TNT Sports.

Everything we do here is only possible because I have a great team of staff working for me, one of whom, Keir Lines, has been nominated and chosen as Stourport's Bar Tender of the Year.

The pub trade is something I have always had a passion for; it may be hard work, but the customers and people within the industry make it what it is. And this is the place I plan to stay for many years to come.

Fred Carter



Gareth & Hayley offer a warm welcome at

The HOP POLE



A Good Selection of Traditional Ales and Ciders.
G&H Pale Ale from Woodcote Brewery. Regular
Offerings from Wye Valley, Two Ever Changing
Guests, Two Craft Ales and Robinsons Flagon Cider

40 Friar St, Droitwich Spa, WR9 8ED

Find us on Facebook

CAMRA Branch Visit Derbyshire

Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA visit Derbyshire in April

Following this trip one of our passengers remarked that it had everything ... a 'pretty' pub, a 'heritage' pub, a 'quirky' pub, a 'community' pub and modern 'micro' pub. We aim to please!

Our first stop was at the very picturesque Fradley Junction where the Coventry Canal spurs off the Trent & Mersey, and where the **Swan Inn** has an enviable location. An Everards pub with Labyrinth Amber Ale and a limited-edition Hummingbird American IPA. A small cosy pub with plenty of outdoor seating to enjoy the views. Here you may be fortunate to meet Mike Ashcroft, a regular and resident of nearby Fradley, painter and author, apparently his book *Secret Encounters* makes *Fifty Shades of Grey* look pale!

Onwards and northwards to the wonderful late



Swan, Fradley

interior is made up of two rooms which still retain the house atmosphere and there is an outside decked area. Exclusive to Creaky Floorboard is Nailed It - an amber ale from Derby Brewing, and also available was Black Magic, a Chocolate Porter from Oakham alongside their classic Citra.

Our penultimate stop was to the **Falstaff**, home to Falstaff brewing tucked away in the back streets of Derby and local CAMRA Pub of the Year 2023 full of brewery memorabilia from their connections with the original Offilers brewery that closed in 1968. Some great names for the ales including 'A Fistful of Hops'.

Last, but not least, was our stop at **The Tap at No. 76,**

Ashby-de-la-Zouch, tap

house to Tolgate Brewery with a number of their own ales and a guest from Iron Pier. Late Saturday afternoon, there was a real buzz about the place.

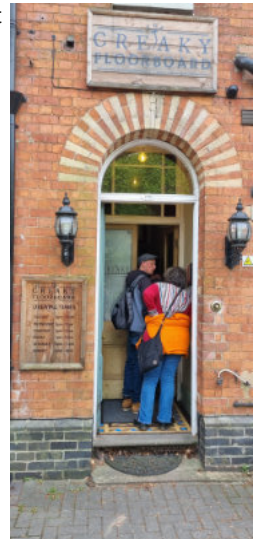
Tim Craig, Redditch & Bromsgrove CAMRA Social Secretary,
social@rb.camra.org.uk



Holly Bush, Mackeney

17th Century Grade II-listed **Holly Bush**, at Mackeney. There are historic interior features throughout and reputedly Dick Turpin drank here as well as the son of a landlord, maybe he felt at home, we certainly did. No less than eight cask ales were available including Pipeline, a session IPA collaboration between Ossett and Titanic, Thornbridge Jaipur and Burning Sky a West Coast IPA, and others.

We started our return journey with a stop at the **Creaky Floorboard**, on the outskirts of Derby. The building is on the end of a line of terraced houses and formerly a guest house with a very grand entrance - some very smart brickwork here. The



Creaky Floorboard

CAMRA Branch Visit Herefordshire

Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA visit West Herefordshire in June

One of our regular passengers was especially looking forward to this trip as it included the **Sun Inn**, Leintwardine, Herefordshire.



The Sun Inn (pictured above) was one of the first pubs to be saved from closure as a direct result of CAMRA intervention, and was well worth saving too as it is steeped in history. One of the last surviving “parlour pubs”, where ales would be served from the kitchen and had been run by the legendary Florence Lane “Flossie” who lived and worked here for 95 years! The front two rooms are as original whilst to the rear there is a well-designed modern pavilion-style extension, overlooking the garden. An excellent first stop with a good selection of ales; Ludlow Blonde & Stairway, Hobson Best Bitter and WV Butty Bach. CAMRA Herefordshire recently voted The Sun Inn as their Summer Pub of the Season.

Our second stop was **Watsons Firkin Lounge** (formerly Ale House), Knighton, Wales (just). A new micropub in a premises that was originally a tea room and before that a butcher’s shop. For a small outlet it was great to see three ales available; Bowland Brewery’s Hoppy Hedgehog, a

hoppy golden ale from Monty’s and WV Butty Bach. It was also great to see a mobile phone charging point which seemed to cater for most types of phones. A pub regularly used by walkers undertaking the challenging Offa’s Dyke Path which roughly follows the border between England and Wales. Here we played good Samaritan and gave a lift to a walker who had bitten off more than he could chew, Pete was grateful for the spare seat on our minibus.

We delivered our extra passenger to our next stop, the **Greyhound Inn**, Llangunllo, Wales.



This unique sixteenth century village pub (pictured) is set in picturesque countryside and owned by Paul Hardware, a local CAMRA member. The views from the rear were spectacular and apparently the topography ideally suits red kites and one or two were spotted. To assist your bird watching you could partake from Bristol Beer Factory Start Line, All Nations Home Brewed Ale and Hop Back Crop Circle.

Back in England and as part of our return journey we called at **The Olde Tavern**, Kington. CAMRA Pub of the Year 2025 for Herefordshire branch. Once called the Railway Tavern (the railway station closed in the 1950s before the infamous Beeching report). There is some original bar timberwork and a fine flagstone floor to be viewed. On offer here was Ludlow Gold, Three Tuns Solstice and 2X (not as often seen as 3X) and Thornbridge Jaipur.

Our penultimate stop was to **The Boot Inn**, Orleton. The Boot reopened under community ownership in 2019, following a period of closure



The group at Bewdley

and is in a lovely village location. We had seen a number of their ales on our trip so far but the Hobsons Maypole (a Polish hopped ale) was a welcome change.

Our last stop was due to have been the **Live & Let Live** at Neen Sollars, however there had been a burst water main earlier that day and

they had been unable to open. One of our passengers quickly recalled their boy scout days and re-routed us to Bewdley and we called in at the Bewdley Brewery Tap to sample their usual great range including Red Hill and Sunshine.

Tim Craig, Redditch & Bromsgrove CAMRA Social Secretary, social@rb.camra.org.uk

THE HOP SHED

NEW LOOK TAP ROOM

PINT-TAKEN PROMO
FREE PINT
 BRING THIS COUPON FOR 1 x FREE PINT OF HOP SHED BEER! (valid till 30/9/23)

- BAR OPEN FRI 4PM - 9PM / SAT 1PM - 7PM
- STREET FOOD
- INDOOR & OUTDOOR SEATING
- DRINK WHERE THE BEER IS BREWED!

THE OLD CHICKEN SHED, SUCKLEY, WR6 5EQ





FREE HOUSE

MICRO PUB - REAL ALES, GUEST ALES, CIDERS, WINES, GINS & MALTS.

Open 7 days a week

MON & TUE 4:00pm – 9:00pm WED & THUR 4:00pm – 10:30pm
 FRI & SAT 12:00pm – 11:00pm SUN 12:00pm – 9:00pm

21a-21b High Street, Studley B80 7HN Tel: 01527 854433 sales@studleytaphouse.co.uk



*Dogs Welcome
 Warm and
 friendly*



WE'RE OPEN

Tuesday - Thursday	4pm - 9pm
Friday, Saturday	12pm - 9pm
Sunday	12pm - 3pm

 @bewdleybrewerytap
 the_bewdleybrewery_tap



A Visit to the Night Owl Brewery

In July, my wife and I had the pleasure to visit the brewpub that is the **Night Owl Brewery and Bar**. Emily Stephens and husband Miles made us extremely welcome. Having said that, it wasn't the first time we had met. Their previous brewery was in Frensham in south-west Surrey near where we used to live and ten years ago, we accompanied Gerald Daniels, the proprietor of Crookham Travel Rail Ale Rambles, when he visited the brewery.

Now, with all of us living in Worcestershire, we paid the new brewery and its tap a visit. The location in Storridge on the county border is idyllic with rolling hills fore and aft. The beer on offer was Flight being just what was required for a hot steamy day. It uses english Cascade and Columbus hops. Two other brews were being prepared for the Worcester beer festival namely Forest, a chestnut bitter and Moonbather, a dark distinctive roasted barley stout. The welcoming tap room is open from noon to 6pm on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. On the first Saturday of the month there is a venison burger event but check with Emily first at info@nightowlbrewery.co.uk or their Facebook page. However, on our visit in the middle of the month, there was a choice of pies from Legges of Bromyard which were delicious. Seating is available inside and out



where the location can be truly appreciated.

The BrewBox shop within the brewery sells gin, cider and other artisan products. The building has a connection with cider and outside it's not hard to miss the enormous wooden cider fermenter.

Hopefully, if Night Owl Brewery beers sampled at the Worcester Beer Festival have whetted your appetite, then make a visit to the brewery itself.

Neil Berry

Redditch & Bromsgrove CAMRA...

The Campaign for Real Ale was established in 1971 when a few like-minded beer enthusiasts got together with the aim of preventing the large brewing concerns decimating local breweries and reducing the choice of beers to the general drinking public.

From this small beginning, the newly formed organisation started attracting more and more followers and began to set up individual branches across the country to campaign locally. In 1975, the Redditch & Bromsgrove branch came into being with Paul Benson taking the helm as Branch Chairman, assisted by an enthusiastic team of volunteer committee members and supporting branch members. Since then, eleven other brave souls have been in the hot seat organising branch events, social trips, beer festivals and producing this magazine. We also make sure we're engaged at all levels of CAMRA with the aim of campaigning for pubs, pints and people.

Today, the branch has around one thousand members in the Redditch, Bromsgrove, and Droitwich area. Over the years, we've seen a decline in our local breweries and pubs, and also lost some very good friends along the way, but wherever we go, we always seek to create good times, find new members, and always seek out the best beer, cider and perry that our area has to offer.



Breweries & Pubs

As far as beer is concerned, the majority of our pubs were in the hands of large national companies, although they were run under local brands such as M&B or Ansells. We also had Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, which included Banks's and Hanson's and a sprinkling of others such as Bathams and Davenports. Freehouses in those days were few and far between with the notable exceptions of the Coach & Horses in Weatheroak and the Bell at Pensax.

Over the last 50 years, the big National breweries that we were up against have mostly fallen by the wayside; they have all stopped brewing and most have become pub companies, unfortunately, they have all sold off their breweries and sold out to large multi-national conglomerates such as Coors, Carlsberg, AB Inbev, Heineken, Asahi etc.

We have had our own share of local breweries in our branch that have come and gone giving us a range of different flavours and beer styles, including Ambridge (Wyre Piddle), Cannon Royal, Studley, Birds, Brickyard Lane, Red Cross, 3 Chaps and Weatheroak.

And we currently have three breweries in our branch area that are continuing the tradition: Brew61, Weatheroak Hill and Woodcote.

But the big danger we face now is the dwindling number of pubs in our area that are

...50 Years On



under threat from their pub owners who seem bent on extracting every last penny they can from their tenants, unfair taxes such as Business rates and the ever-decreasing amount of disposable income that we the drinkers, have in our pockets.

Other Prices in 1975

So what else was happening when Redditch & Bromsgrove was born?

- The average UK price of a pint was 28p - though I'm sure I was paying 16p for a mild!
- 20 cigarettes cost 42p
- A pint of milk was 7p
- A loaf of bread was 12p
- Maggie Thatcher had just been elected as leader of the Conservative party
- The average price of a house was £11k
- A new Ford Cortina cost £1,765

Beer Festivals

Our records show that our first branch beer festival was held in Redditch in 1978, possibly at the Abbey Stadium (some of you may still have the glass!). The first Bromsgrove Beer & Cider Festival was due to be held at the Drill Hall on Recreation Road in 1983 (now a retirement community!). Former Festival Organiser John Ross recalled that volunteers were preparing to open the doors but at the last minute the venue decided to withdraw the license, making it a festival that never happened!

Since then, the festival has established itself as an annual



event at Bromsgrove Rugby Club and we held our 21st festival this year. It has acquired a good reputation across CAMRA as a whole and is one of the few held in a marquee. The branch also hosted the Redditch Winter Ale Festival in February for several years, but ultimately, holding two festivals a year became too much.

However, the branch has acquired a great deal of experience over the years and hope to continue over the coming years.

Next 50 Years?

As we contemplate the next 50 years, who knows what we'll face? Some would say that CAMRA's original *raison d'être*, i.e. maintaining a wide choice of beer for drinkers to choose from rather than being told what to drink by large multinationals, has been achieved. However, we are now facing a more pernicious threat from these multinational factories as they take over and close our brewing heritage, and we seem to be losing more and more of our pubs than ever before as they are priced out of the market. So it would appear that the threat hasn't gone away, it's just changed and is coming from an even more faceless International direction.

We'd like to thank all of our members and supporters over the years, and hope that you can continue to support us in the years to come. Here's to the next fifty. Cheers!

Worcester CAMRA Trip to Bristol

After breakfast in Worcester, members of the branch joined the 9.52am train for the whole of its journey to Bristol Temple Meads where arrival half an hour before opening of the first venue allowed us time for a quick visit to **Knights Templar Wetherspoons**.

A short walk to the other side of the wide Feeder Canal from the River Avon to the Victorian docks area, brought us to **Little Martha Brewery** situated in a railway arch alongside other outlets including a bakery. Mainly producing keg beers, they did have one cask ale. We found a similar situation at **Moor Brewery** just five minutes' walk away before heading to the Barley Mow. This is a true survivor located adjacent to a vast area of new concrete and glass office blocks. It's now owned by the renowned Bristol Beer Factory and features four of theirs and four guest beers in this classic double fronted pub.

The party now split for a while enabling your scribe to visit **Wiper and True Old Market Brewery**, an enormous premises on an industrial estate to the north of the Temple Meads area we were covering. Although essentially majoring on keg beers, their Kaleidoscope cask beer was excellent and enjoyed before we caught a bus for a few stops which brought us to within a short walk of The Left Handed Giant Brewpub on the banks of the Feeder Canal. Well, what a place! It's cavernous and was crowded with people enjoying both keg and cask beers, I tried two of the pale ales. I had a sneak view from upstairs looking down on to the brewery itself.

In total contrast to the Left Handed Giant brewpub we met up with the rest of the party fresh from their visit to the **Bridge Inn**, at the time-warped that is the **Kings Head**. I confess to not knowing this magnificent pub existed and so close to Temple Meads station. Its origins date back to 1660 but the most impressive historical feature is a mid-Victorian bar-back. The beers didn't disappoint either. Despite



Wiper and True Brewery

being now owned by local Good Chemistry brewery, there had just been a Burton Bridge tap takeover so it was hard to resist one of theirs.

The rest of the group left to visit the **Seven Stars** and the **Cornubia**, both well known free houses. We were set to join them when I noticed a dark beer on the bar and so settled back to enjoy a superb pint of Oxymoron, a black IPA from Cwrw Otley, a Welsh brewery from Pontypridd. The landlord then came over for a chat and before we knew it, it was time to head for the train back to Worcester. We certainly know where to head for next time we find ourselves changing trains at Bristol Temple Meads.

It was a most enjoyable trip organised by Worcester branch's social secretary and all the trains ran to time.

Neil Berry



L: Kings Head R: Left Handed Giant Brewery

Visited All Seven of Our Worcestershire Pubs?



THE CROSS INN
Finstall



THE HANBURY TURN
Bromsgrove



THE MARKET TAVERN
Tenbury Wells



THE IMPERIAL TAVERN
Worcester



THE SARACEN'S HEAD
Worcester



THE REAL ALE TAVERN
Bewdley



THE HOLLYBUSH
Stourport



**Proudly Brewing in
The Black Country.**

Follow Black Country Ales on
Facebook and Instagram for updates
on our people, pubs and beer.

Bromsgrove Beer & Cider Festival 2025



Beer Tasting Panel

After a warm June spell, volunteers and friends of Redditch & Bromsgrove CAMRA got ready for the 21st Bromsgrove Beer & Cider Festival at the beginning of July. In celebration of the branch's fiftieth anniversary, a special festival logo and commemorative glass was produced for the event, which was held at Bromsgrove Rugby Club.

Over 1,700 visitors enjoyed our great selection of beer, cider, and perry, and drank over 7,000 pints including over 1,500 pints of cider. On the opening day we were joined by Bromsgrove's MP Bradley Thomas who was impressed with the number of local producers. The Bromsgrove Court Leet also popped in for an official ale tasting, and after sampling a stout brewed in Ludlow named Silent Knight, declared that the ales were 'fit for consumption for the people of Bromsgrove'.

This year, the festival took part in the Champion Beer of Britain Competition, and a judging session took place of premium pale, blond and golden ales that were voted for by CAMRA members. The winner of this prestigious title was Hobsons Town Crier, and Bromsgrove's very own Town Crier, Kevin Ward, was on hand to announce the winner!

Amongst the other festival favourites were Brew 61's Summer Breeze and Sarah Hughes's Snowflake (an 8% ale), which were the first barrels to run dry. Snails Bank's Raspberry Ripple was the most popular cider. Friday evening saw a lively entertainment programme where we were joined by Got 2 Sing Choir and the Kemastree Set. And on Saturday the music kept coming with visits from the Alvechurch Morris Men, Blackwell Concert Band and local singer/songwriter Clare Portman.

During the event, we managed to sign up 40 new members to the campaign (welcome!), and our generous visitors helped to raise over one thousand pounds for the Primrose Hospice in



The Court Leet



Alvechurch Morris



Kemastree Set



Bromsgrove who offer amazing care and support to people living with life-limiting illnesses. So whether you drank, volunteered, sponsored or supplied us, we'd like to thank everyone involved with this year's event.



Paul Richards, Festival Organiser (photos courtesy of Keith Woolford)



The Queen Elizabeth Inn

A pub with a 500 year story

We are an award-winning, community run, 16th century inn, at the heart of beautiful Elmley Castle. We have a great selection of local real ales and ciders and feature a wide range of pub food using locally sourced produce, plus Bessie's our all day café offering breakfasts, cakes and pastries. And we're dog-friendly!



Opening Times

MONDAY 18.00 – 21.00

No food available

TUESDAY - FRIDAY 09.30 – 23.00

Breakfast 9.30 – 11.30 Lunch 12.00 – 14.00

Dinner 17.30 – 20.30

SATURDAY 9.30 – 23.00

Breakfast 09.30 – 11.30 Lunch 12.00 – 15.00

Dinner 17.30 – 20.30

SUNDAY 9.30 – 20.00

Breakfast 9.30 – 11.30 Lunch 12.00 – 16.00

Main Street, Elmley Castle WR10 3HS - 01386 710251
qe@queenelizabethinn.co.uk - www.queenelizabethinn.co.uk

Our CAFÉ is also open from 09.30 to 17.00 from Tuesday to Sunday, serving a wide selection of Teas, Coffees, Scones, and Cakes



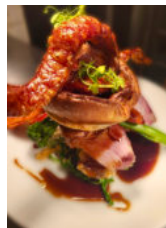
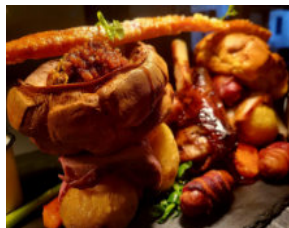
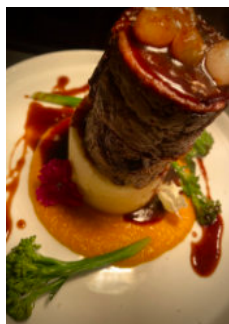
In the heart of the historic city

The King Charles House



The King Charles House is one of the most beautiful and historic buildings in Worcester.

It was built in 1577 and still keeps its original infrastructure from the day it was built- Including our famous 'eubliette', otherwise known as the dungeon!



29, New St, Worcester WR1 2DP
Tel 01905 726100 • info@thekingcharleshouse.co.uk

The Crooked House - What's Going On?

Campaigners who want to rebuild the Crooked House, razed in 2023, wrote an open letter to the authorities to mark the two-year anniversary of its destruction, as they battle to keep the plight of the famous wonky pub in the spotlight.

There is growing frustration among members of *Save the Crooked House (Let's Get it Re-Built)* group at what it sees as a lack of action in the investigation by the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) into the events on Saturday 5 August 2023 when the Himley pub was destroyed by fire and then bulldozed just two days later.

Six people were arrested on suspicion of arson with intent to endanger life and conspiracy to commit arson with intent to endanger life. They were bailed while the police investigation continued and were then freed from that bail.

South Staffordshire Council issued an enforcement notice ordering those responsible for the demolition of the pub to rebuild it and a public inquiry was planned in February this year but postponed following a High Court appeal.

Now Paul Turner, who started the Save the Crooked House campaign in the wake of its demise, penned an open letter to the *Express & Star* in July calling for answers and action.

In the letter he said: "The case appears to remain open but attempts have been unsuccessful to find out what progress, if any, has been made towards a decision.

"We are a campaign group with over 37,000 supporters who are angry and upset that our heritage was attacked in this way and wish for the process to be expedited.

"This cannot happen while either the CPS or Staffordshire Police are allowing such a long unexplained delay in the process. We would like some information about the timescales involved and if, indeed, anything is happening at all."



MP Mike Wood has pledged his support for the group as part of his pub bill campaign.

Wood said: "Nearly two years after the devastating fire at the Crooked House, and we need those responsible to be held accountable for this attack on our local heritage.

"But we also need to make sure that other historic pubs are protected so that other communities don't lose their iconic boozers.

"I'm disappointed that instead of working with me to change the law, government whips chose to kill off my Heritage Public Houses Bill. It shows how little the government understands or cares about our local heritage."

A spokesperson for the Crown Prosecution Service said no charges had been brought and the matter was still under investigation by the police.

Tim Hampson

Join CAMRA.
Save on beer.
Support pubs.

Pubs, Pints, People.

CAMRA

Get Drinkers Back into Pubs

At the **Great British Beer Festival** that was held at the NEC Birmingham in August, the Campaign had a stark warning for the government ahead of the Autumn Budget.

New polling from YouGov reveals 45 per cent of pubgoers say they are going to the pub less often in the past 12 months due to the rising cost of living. This is a clear signal that urgent action is needed to protect the nation's pubs, publicans and brewers.

CAMRA chairman Ash Corbett-Collins said:

"People want to support their local pubs, but the reality is, they're being priced out. With lower disposable incomes and publicans being forced to put up prices through no fault of their own by rising running costs, for a lot of people a regular night out at the pub just isn't affordable.

"This is a warning sign for the future of our locals. If people can't afford to go, pubs can't survive. But luckily, the chancellor can use the Autumn Budget to help fix this.

"We are demanding the Government uses the upcoming Autumn Budget to help make pubs more accessible - starting by rolling back on the disastrous hike in National Insurance contributions, cutting VAT for pubs just like they're planning to do in Ireland, introducing significantly lower business rates bills for pubs and brewers, and cutting tax specifically on pints served in pubs. These measures are desperately needed to secure the future of our beloved locals, world-renowned breweries and to stem further price hikes for drinkers."



**the
Holly
Bush**
BELBROUGHTON

Scan for
Website



The Holly Bush Inn
Bromsgrove Road,
Belbroughton, DY9 9UG
Tel: 01562 730207

thehollybushbelbroughton.co.uk

Proper Food - Proper Beer - Proper Pub



Free House - Country Pub
Real Ales & Ciders
Homecooked Food & Bostin Cobs
Beer Garden / Dog Friendly
New Guest ales each week



Local and National CAMRA Awards

Worcestershire Pub of The Year

In our last edition we announced the winners of the various Pub of the Year awards in each of the four CAMRA branches in Worcestershire.

Since then those pubs have been judged to see who should become Worcestershire Pub of the Year and after some exhaustive judging, both in terms of distance travelled and beers consumed, it was agreed that the best of the four was the **Fleece Inn** in Bretforton.



Worcestershire Club of the Year

As with the Pub of The Year, we also run a Club of the Year competition. Again the branch winners from each branch were judged together and the title of Worcestershire Club of the Year was awarded to **Astwood Bank Club** in Astwood Bank.



Congratulations are due to both the Fleece Inn and Astwood Bank Club for winning their accolades.

Regional Award Winners

The Worcestershire Pub and Club winners above both went into the next round of the competition against pubs and clubs from Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire to determine the West Central Regional Pub and Club of the Year.

The Regional winners were

Pub of the Year - **The Pelican**, Gloucester

Pub of the Year Runner-up - **The Red Lion**, Horley, Oxfordshire.

Club of the Year - **Cheltenham Motor Club**, Gloucestershire

Club of the Year Runner-up - **Astwood Bank Club**, Worcestershire

Cider Pub of the Year - **Carpenters Arms**, Westrip, Gloucestershire

Cider Pub of the Year Runner up - **Yew Tree**, Peterstow, Herefordshire

CAMRA West Central Regional director Brett Laniosh congratulated the winners, and said that it was heartening to see so many superb pubs and clubs winning awards in the first year the competition has been run with the new regional structure.



Pelican, Gloucester

Pubs Should be Parent Friendly

It was the loneliest I'd ever been.

A few years ago, I took parental leave when our first-born was still a baby and found myself with days in front of me without work and, crucially, a social network to rely on. I tried various playgroups, activities and classes but I found myself encroaching on female spaces with not much to add to their conversations.

I expected none of this when my partner and I worked out that I would at times be the primary carer of our children. And a time I thought would be full of purpose and adventure, turned into the opposite.

That was until I went to the pub and a female bar manager, who was Italian, decided to support me and my fledgling family by creating a space that was inclusive. For her, running a pub for all was second nature because she viewed hospitality as not just a career but a mission to make lives better to all who stepped through the pub doors.

It also helped that, for some reason, both my children didn't make much noise when they were babies, but more than made up for it years later as my neighbours will attest.

Soon my routine involved the pub and other parents joined in, leading me to remember this time fondly. Having experienced this in a so-called, wet-led pub, I do feel the narrative of children in pubs is all wrong as it seems to be focusing on this idea that we as a nation either have two options: create adventure playgrounds in pubs or ban children all together.

But first, let's deal with the elephant in the room. The reason I was the outlier, and continue to be, is women still do the most childcare (and housework), a situation exacerbated by systemic issues, such as low pay and paltry paternity leave. So if men are more likely to work and be paid more, then they're more likely to rise to managerial positions and be the type of bloke who gets to change rules in a pub chain.

And I might be wrong here, and I'm happy to be corrected, but Marston's pubs installing a

Woodie's Sweet Factory sounds like a headline-grabbing marketing idea with little thought of the effects. Worst of all it stereotypes children and the way they should act.

As mentioned, my kids are at the age where they are noisy but if I take them to the pub, they are well drilled on what I expect from them. I'd rather they left their playground antics at the playground because I want their fun to not be at the expense of others.

But some children have different needs and I'm fortunate enough to not have to worry about unpredictable behaviour, noise or high energy levels. (Sidenote: the **Red Lion** desi pub in West Bromwich has a quiet room designed for families with children with additional needs). You could also say, rightly, I'm privileged to be able to visit pubs a lot because of my job.

“I do feel the narrative of children in pubs is all wrong”

The other extreme is to ban children which is the worst option and I think this is where as a society we are wrongly choosing to go down the route of polarisation. We need pubs to be of mixed demographics, especially when it comes to ages. By celebrating families, the old

meet the new and they might even start to learn from each other. But most of all there are women and men who desperately need spaces when they're looking after their children to have a few moments to just be themselves.

If I hadn't been welcomed into the pub with the baby in the sling and not patronised then that loneliness would've maybe become unbearable. Instead, I look back fondly at the community I found and I want future generations to feel the same.

David Jesudason



Cycle Friendly Pubs - Update

Our list of Cycle Friendly Pubs is growing every month. Since our last edition, we have been contacted by three more pubs that would like to welcome cyclists and provide them with a relaxing break on their ride.

The pubs that have contacted us are:

The **Fleece Inn** Bretforton (this year's Worcestershire Pub of the Year), the **Bull Baiters** in St John's Worcester and the **Bridge Inn** in Tibberton.

We've updated the list accordingly and have made it available to everyone on the *Pint Taken Extra* website which can be found at pinttaken.org.uk/extra or scan the QR code.

If anyone would like to add/update this list please get in touch
editor@pinttaken.org.uk



Pubs, Pints, People.

Ever
seen a
Ginger
Panther?

No, but we've tried one...

Join CAMRA, save on beer,
support pubs.



Champion Beer of Britain

Mild by Penzance Brewing Co was crowned CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain 2025 at the Great British Beer Festival in the NEC Birmingham.

A dozen finalists were whittled down to the Gold, Silver and Bronze winners by the expert judging panel.

The long-standing CAMRA award is one of the most coveted and well-respected cask beer competitions in the world, putting the winner firmly in both the UK-wide and international spotlight.

The competition is fiercely independent, with judging taking two years to complete. Each year kicks off with individual nominations from CAMRA members and volunteer tasting panels, then regional competitions. Every round of judging uses a strict blind tasting policy.

Richard Hickman and Lewis Elliott of Penzance (pictured) said: "It's quite overwhelming. I'm really glad the style has come back. It's down to the founder of our brewery Peter Elvin and his nephew Rob, who showed me the ropes. I can't



believe we are here right now, it's mad!"

Silver went to **Snowflake** from Sarah Hughes and **Fallen Angel** by Church End took Bronze.

CAMRA awards director Gary Timmins said: "I'm over the moon for Penzance, with Mild being a deserving Champion Beer of Britain. From CAMRA members nominating their favourites, through to those tough regional rounds, to the final panel of judges, this is a vigorous and fiercely independent competition, and Mild has come out on top."



48 High Street Feckenham B96 6HS
01527 892188

Website: www.roseandcrownfeckenham.co.uk
email: info@roseandcrownfeckenham.co.uk

Open: Mon – Thurs 12 – 3 & 6 – 11 Fri, Sat & Sun open all day

A family owned and run traditional village pub with FOOD

*Roaring Fires & Pretty Secluded Garden with heated gazeboes,
summerhouses and comfortable seating*

Families, ramblers, dogs, cyclists ALL welcome

Fecken' Beer Festival held annually August Bank Hol Weekend

We're in the Good Beer Guide

2 Permanent Ales & 1 Guest Ale – Regularly changing

CAMRA Member's Discount – 50p Off Pints of Real Ale EVERY Monday

Full Menu available daily LUNCH & EVENINGS

(Sun lunch only)

Themed Menus, Buffets & Private dining available

Please call to discuss your requirements

Independent Brewery Checker

Do you know where your favourite beer is brewed? New research shows almost a third (31 per cent) of young beer drinkers surveyed now recognise the Indie Beer campaign, which has set out to promote beer from genuinely independent brewers.

You can find the Indie Beer Campaign and brewery checker at indiebeer.uk

The YouGov research of more than 2,000 consumers, commissioned by the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA), found 18-24 year olds were much more likely (31 per cent) to be aware of the campaign compared to just over one in 10 (11 per cent) of beer drinkers nationally.

Indie Beer campaign organiser Neil Walker said: "What this research clearly shows is that the Indie Beer campaign is resonating with younger consumers, many of whom are drinking less but drinking better – choosing quality beers from local, independent breweries.

"The campaign is all about ensuring that every person who is trying to support independent beer is actually doing so and making it easier for people to make an informed choice."

A key part of the Indie Beer campaign has been to use social media and pub point of sale to promote a brewery checker tool which allows people to quickly check any brewery to find out if it is genuinely independent or owned by a global beer company such as Heineken, Budweiser, Asahi or Molson Coors.

The Indie Beer website has seen more than 52,000 brewery check searches since launch and now has more than 28,000 active users.

There are now more than 500 independent breweries across the UK signed up in support of the campaign, and that number is growing as the Indie Beer campaign attempts to shake things up in the beer market and make consumers think about what they're buying.

YouGov found 75 per cent of people surveyed believe consumers are being misled when purchasing beer from once independent craft breweries, such as Beavertown, Camden, and Fuller's that are now owned by global beer giants Heineken, Budweiser and Asahi respectively.



When told these breweries were owned by global companies and not independent, 75 percent of people surveyed said they felt consumers were being misled, with the figure for the beer drinkers surveyed even higher at 81 percent who believe consumers are being misled.

Tim Hampson



the Fleece Inn
Bretforton

Owned by the National Trust, run with a love of tradition
Great beers, real fires, large orchard
Bretforton, Evesham, WR11 7JE
01386 861173 thefleeceinn.co.uk





CARDINAL'S
HAT

Cosy, historic pub with rooms, Worcester's oldest pub
Great beers, woodburners, quiz & games nights
31 Friar Street, Worcester, WR1 2NA
01905 724006 the-cardinals-hat.co.uk



A DIVINE DINING EXPERIENCE

Church Street, Kidderminster.
Set back from the roadside in its own
0.6 acre conservation site

The Church Restaurant & Bar is really something special.
Serving an amazing modern British menu freshly cooked each day, and
a large range of beers and spirits including two real ales.

The Church boasts two spacious beer gardens and outdoor bar with
plenty of covered seating for dining & drinks.

This stunning restaurant resides in a beautiful old
Church Hall which sits next to The Church

Bookings now being taken
Tel: 01562 320420
www.thechurchvenue.com



This is a dining experience not to be missed!

WYTHALL CHARITY BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

2025



FRI 10TH & SAT 11TH OCTOBER
12PM - 11PM



20+ REAL ALES, CRAFT
BEERS & CIDERS

LIVE MUSIC

WYTHALLCOMMUNITYCLUB.ORG.UK

WYTHALL HOUSE, SILVER STREET, WYTHALL, B47 6LZ.

Raising funds for Wythall Community Association
(Registered Charity No 243332)



WYTHALLBEER

CAMRA Events and Contacts

Events below are open to all CAMRA members, and non-members are welcome to join us.

September

Tue 2nd Members' Meeting (WF) - Hollybush, Stourport DY13 9AA

Tue 23rd Members Social (RB) - The Cross Inn, Finstall, B60 1EW, 7.30pm.

October

Tue 7th Members' Meeting (WF) - Angel, Stourport, DY13 9EW

Tue 21st Members' Social and "Meet the Brewer" (RB) - Old Cock Inn, Droitwich, WR9 8EQ. Come along and meet our guest Sarah Saleh from the Hop Shed brewery. *Note change of date to 21st October begins 7.30pm.*

November

Tue 4th Members' Meeting (WF) - Weavers at Park Lane, Kidderminster, DY11 6TG

Tue 25th Members' Meeting (RB) - Rose & Crown, Feckenham, B96 6HS, 7.30pm. This is our annual meeting to start choosing our candidates for the 2027 Good Beer Guide and nominate your pubs and clubs for Pub of The Year.

Branch Contacts

Redditch & Bromsgrove Branch (RB)

Email paul@rb.camra.org.uk or call Paul Richards 07974 889553 Website rb.camra.org.uk Facebook facebook.com/groups/rbcmra Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month and start at 7.30pm. **Note new starting time for all meetings.**

Worcester Branch (WO)

Email contact@worcestercamra.org.uk or call Mark Griffiths 07968 337487 Website worcester.camra.org.uk Members' meetings are on the second Wednesday of every month 6.45 for 7pm to 9pm.

Wyre Forest Branch (WF)

Email contact@wyreforest.camra.org.uk or call Rob Budworth 07845 901706 Website wyreforest.camra.org.uk See Facebook facebook.com/wyreforestcamra for latest details of social events. Members' meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, start at 7.45pm.

Shakespeare Branch

Email contact@shakespeare.camra.org.uk or visit shakespeare.camra.org.uk Covering Evesham area.

Worcestershire Tasting Panel

CAMRA members wishing to join the panel and breweries with info on new beers are very welcome to make contact. Panel Chair Nick Yarwood worcstastings@wyreforest.camra.org.uk

Beer Festivals

September

12th - 13th - Moreton Beer & Cider Festival
Moreton-in-Marsh Cricket Club.
northcotswoldcamra.org.uk

24th - 27th - Shrewsbury Beer & Cider Festival
St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury.
Facebook/shrewsalefest

November

27th - 29th - Dudley Winter Ales Fayre
Dudley Town Hall, Dudley
dudley.camra.org.uk

North Cotswold CAMRA & Moreton C.C.

**18th BEER
& CIDER
FESTIVAL**

at Moreton in Marsh Cricket Club
12th & 13th September 2025

thcotswoldcamra.org.uk



THE WEIGHBRIDGE INN

OPEN 7 DAYS PER WEEK
Real Ales & Beer Garden



Alvechurch Marina
Scarfield Wharf, Worcestershire, B48 7SQ

THE-WEIGHBRIDGE.CO.UK
0121 445 5111

Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA
Pub of the Year 2025