

Autumn 2026

FREE

Pint Taken

Award Winning Worcestershire County CAMRA Magazine

The Weavers Real Ale House

In this issue

- Pub and Brewery News
- Award Winning Pubs and Clubs
- Beer Festivals
- Trips and Tours
- ...and lots more

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 CAMRA

BEWDLEY

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SEPT & OCT 2026



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Editor's Introduction

There's been plenty to talk about this summer, whether it was the scorching temperatures we've experienced, the World Cup and the growing soap opera surrounding FIFA, the escalating situation in the Middle East or indeed the appointment of yet another Prime Minister - our 7th in the last 10 years and the 4th under our current King.

You could be forgiven if you missed the recent launch of a new report by CAMRA called *Beer in the UK* - A consumer perspective on the real state of UK brewing and supply of beer to pubs in 2026

This hard-hitting report lays out the bare facts about our once flourishing brewery and pub industry that has been decimated by unscrupulous owners and sold off to foreign conglomerates who appear to be hell-bent on destroying what's left of our independent brewers.

I first joined CAMRA in 1983 following the Great British Beer Festival that was held in Bingley Hall Birmingham, and at that time the big threat was the Big Six - six giant brewing companies that dominated UK brewing and owned the vast majority of our pubs, but 98% of these companies were British owned and at least paid lip service to maintaining our traditional legacy.

Fast forward to today and 80% of our brewing industry is now owned by four multinational conglomerates whose main goal is to make as much money as they can and trample over any traditions in their pursuit of the mighty dollar.

One of the key findings in the report is how drinks are marketed. You will no doubt have noticed the proliferation of "foreign" lagers being sold at premium prices. But were you aware that the majority of these drinks are manufactured to an inferior "UK only" recipe in brewing factories around the UK? By the same token, if you're partial to a craft beer, is your favourite indie still independent or has it been quietly bought up by one of these giants and brewing moved elsewhere.

The magic formula to profit seems to be, to use the economies of scale - cut down the number of products available, brew as bland a version as possible and sell it for as much as you can.

To find out the truth about our beer industry, head to page 16.

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

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You'll have noticed that we like to include stories of trips that our branches and members have undertaken. As well as interesting places to visit, they celebrate what CAMRA is all about, getting together to have fun and enjoying what we like most i.e. pubs and beer. If that's the sort of thing you'd like to get involved in, whether as a one-off or on a regular basis, get in touch. See page 31 for contact details.

If you'd like to comment on anything within this magazine, or any other beer or CAMRA related issues, please email 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: Weavers, Great Malvern

Pub and Brewery News

Ember 55, in Bewdley, has opened in the former Mo's Bar, with one cask beer from Hobsons. There's a pleasant, quiet, garden with a weekend pizza bar.

The former Spencer's Arms, lately the Wychbury Inn in Hagley, has reopened as **Spencer's**, a desi pub with Punjabi food and a large garden.

The **Bridge Inn**, Stourport, has reopened and has a new manager.

The **Wheatsheaf**, Stourport, is currently on the market although Marston's will continue to operate it.

The **Loom & Shuttle**, Kidderminster, freehold is currently also on the market from Marston's who will continue to operate it.

The **Duke William**, Callow Hill near Bewdley, has shut whilst its owners, Admiral, are seeking a tenant. It's conveniently located opposite the Wyre Forest Visitor Centre.

The **Talbot** in Knightwick is aiming to hold its annual and excellent Green Hop beer festival on the 9th, 10th and 11th October featuring beers from local breweries as well as the adjacent Teme Valley Brewery. The Talbot is accessible by bus for between three to five hours on Fridays and Saturdays using LMS route 423 from Worcester bus station. The timetable can be viewed at LMStravel.co.uk/services/423

The **Longbridge Tap** has been opened in a shop unit opposite Longbridge Station by Birmingham Brewing Co. Currently only serving craft beers, but there are plans to add two or more cask ales soon.

The **Eagle & Sun** in Hanbury has now reopened after closing some six months ago. It has been refurbished and has been taken on by the former licensees of the Cross Keys in Ombersley. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 9am for breakfast.

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

Hop Shed Brewery will be celebrating its 10th Anniversary this October so a party is planned for Friday 30th October at the Tap Room with live music, fun and games and a special 10 hopped beer called Decade which they will also be selling to pubs so may appear in your local; keep a look out from the end of October!



As many of you will know the brewery is surrounded by hop fields and the harvest occurs during September, meaning it's Green Hop Beer time and two beers will be produced again. The first will be a 3.8% golden ale with one of the more traditional hop varieties, as

these are usually ready to harvest first. Then towards the end of the hop picking, a 4.2% Pale Ale will be brewed with one of the more modern hop varieties which give more fruity flavours and aromas. The exciting thing about brewing Green Hop beers is that the brewery can never be sure which hops will be picked on the days that have been allocated to brew these two beers. The brewery has so far brewed fifteen Green Hop Beers and your scribe has enjoyed many of them. Another treat for beer lovers is to watch the tractors bringing in the hops whilst enjoying a pint at the Tap Room, open 4 to 9pm on Fridays and 1 to 7pm on Saturdays.



Bewdley Brewery Issie Handley, the brewery's new Digital Marketing and Sales Apprentice, reports that throughout the season, the brewery has received several prestigious awards, all of which they are incredibly proud as receiving recognition from respected bodies is a fantastic achievement for the whole team.

At the International Brewing Awards, William Mucklow's Dark Mild received a Gold Award in the International Dark Beer Competition. Severn

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Pub and Brewery News

Storm Nitro Stout, brewed by Wild River Brew Co (another brewing arm of Bewdley Brewery) was awarded Bronze in the same competition. At the Ludlow Festival Awards, judged by SIBA, Red Hill won Gold in the Bottle & Can Amber, Brown & Red Ale category, while Malt Madness secured Gold in the Bottle & Can Speciality & Flavoured Beer category. This beer is matured in a whisky cask for six weeks after brewing, creating its distinctive aroma. Meanwhile, Sabrina, a Session Pale Ale from Wild River Brew Co, earned a Silver Award in the Keg Session Pale Ale category.

The brewery supports apprenticeship schemes within the business as it plays an important role in both the wider community and for the individuals.



Ben, their apprentice brewer, has completed the course and is now a fully qualified brewer. This is fantastic news and CAMRA's Worcestershire branches send him our heartfelt congratulations.

The brewery bar continues to be open (check on the website

for opening times) and hosts a range of popular events that bring together customers and the local community.

Their Quiz Night, held on the second Thursday of every month, has become increasingly popular and continues to attract growing numbers of participants. Street Food Saturdays will continue until October, offering a variety of delicious cuisines, from Turkish dishes and gourmet burgers to freshly made pizzas and much more. They are also proud to be supporting the final Bewdley Beer Festival, taking place over the August Bank Holiday weekend which coincides with the release of this edition of *Pint Taken*.

Grinnbull Brewing James Bull, the man behind one of Worcester's newest and, for now, smallest breweries, was interviewed by Worcester News. In the excellent article we learnt about the history of the brewery, from its beginnings in a terraced house in Barbourne to its

current location in his father-in-law's farm in Ombersley as well as the name being derived from his and his wife's maiden name. CAMRA's Worcester beer, cider and perry festival got a mention as well, as James had brewed a plum dark ale for the event.

Brewery news is compiled by Neil Berry

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

Good Beer Guide Awards

Congratulations to two North Worcestershire pubs that have been recognised by Bromsgrove, Redditch and Droitwich CAMRA for their remarkable long-term inclusion in the Good Beer Guide.



Both pubs were featured in the very first edition of the Guide in 1974 and continue to serve Bathams Mild and Bitter, a testament to their enduring commitment to quality beer.

The **Swan**, Chaddesley Corbett (above), has appeared in an impressive 37 editions. The **Plough**, Shenstone (below), has achieved the remarkable milestone of 40 appearances.

These awards recognise decades of consistently excellent cask ale and are a well-deserved tribute to both licensees and their teams.



Awards

The **King & Castle**, at the Severn Valley Railway station in Kidderminster, has won **Worcestershire Pub of the Year 2026**.

A large crowd gathered to see the presentation made by Rob Budworth (right), the competition organiser, to the dedicated staff and managers Kat Forty and Chris Dainty. Rob paid tribute to the team saying "The pub stands out as a fantastic community pub with a welcoming atmosphere. They have achieved a remarkable transformation from a couple of years ago, offering a comfortable, relaxing environment that encourages conversation and enjoyment combined with a diverse array of consistently changing high-quality cask beers, real ciders, and other refreshments." Chris Dainty said: "Thank you to everyone for their support, to our staff and all our regulars. This is beyond what we ever thought we could achieve! We set out to ensure everyone gets a warm welcome here at the King and Castle and a great drink every time, whether in for the night or having just missed a train!"

Worcester CAMRA are pleased to announce the **Nag's Head** in Malvern as their **Branch Pub of the Year 2026**.

The official certificate presentation (below) to landlord Alex Whistance and his team took place on 1st July 2026. Alex has run the pub for 18 years, and that long-term commitment is clear. The Nag's Head consistently delivers on the key elements of a great pub: A welcoming atmosphere, attentive service and knowledgeable staff, a comfortable, well-kept environment and a central role in the local community.



The real ale selection remains a major highlight. On the evening of the presentation, there were 14 cask ales available, close to their usual 15. This extensive choice does not compromise quality; every pint is well maintained, a credit to the cellar management skills of Alex and his team.

This is a well-deserved award for a venue that maintains high standards. If you haven't visited recently, it is well worth a look.



Celebrating Club of the Year Winners

This year's Bromsgrove Redditch & Droitwich CAMRA Club of the Year awards celebrate some fantastic clubs across our region, recognising the hard work, commitment and community spirit that keep them thriving.

The awards reflect the dedication shown by club committees, bar staff, helpers and members. Many of these people are volunteers who give their time freely, helping clubs provide an invaluable facility to the communities they represent.

Only three clubs can receive formal recognition through the awards, as voted for by CAMRA members and the CAMRA Committee. However, there are currently 47 clubs of various types within the Bromsgrove, Redditch and Droitwich area, and each plays an important role in local life. Whether social clubs, sports clubs, golf clubs, cricket clubs or other community venues, these clubs provide places to meet, socialise and connect. With continued support from their members and visitors, they can continue to serve their communities for years to come.

Club of the Year Awards 2026

Bronze Award: Wythall Community Club



Wythall Community Club has worked hard to improve its facilities over the past couple of years, from upgrades to toilets and general decoration to a stronger bar offering, including regular and guest real ales. The club hosts regular beer festivals, showcasing local ales and cider alongside live entertainment. With a broad range of events held throughout the year, Wythall is a truly community-focused club.

Silver Award: Belbroughton Club



Belbroughton Club continues to provide a welcoming, all-encompassing venue for members and guests alike. It serves an excellent range of cask beers, alongside other bar favourites. Recent refurbishment work has made the club even more inviting, while regular events including the popular B-Fest in the garden which brings local and established bands together for a musical extravaganza. For those looking for a pub and club atmosphere, Belbroughton Club is well worth a visit.

Gold Award: Astwood Bank Club

For the second-year running, Astwood Bank Club has claimed the top spot. The club consistently provides a well-run, relaxed environment where both long-standing and new members feel at



home. While there may not be a large selection of real ales on the bar, the cask ale that is available is kept consistently well and is a pleasure to drink. Work is currently underway to develop the building and extend the bar. A visit to Astwood Bank will not disappoint.

Other clubs across the area will no doubt be looking to break into the top three next year too, and CAMRA members will be out and about sampling the many delights offered by our local club community. If you feel your club deserves a visit or mention, get in touch.

Graham Clements



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Regional Pub of the Year Winners

CAMRA West Central Region Announces Pub of the Year Winners for 2026

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) West Central Region is delighted to announce the winners of its prestigious 2026 Pub of the Year Awards, recognising excellence in real ale, cider, hospitality and community pubs across Oxfordshire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.

Pub of the Year 2026: The Alma, Linton, Herefordshire (HR9 7RY)

Set in an acre of attractive grounds on the edge of the picturesque village of Linton, five miles from Ross-on-Wye, The Alma is a welcoming free house renowned for its excellent beer and friendly atmosphere. The pub features a cosy front bar, rear pool room and wood-panelled restaurant and function room. Freshly prepared pub classics, seasonal specials and bar snacks are served throughout the year. A popular destination for both locals and visitors, The Alma also hosts a programme of professionally organised events and festivals in its extensive grounds.

Runner-up – Pub of the Year 2026: The King and Castle, Kidderminster, Worcestershire (DY10 1QX)



Located beside Kidderminster's mainline station, this unique railway-themed bar recreates the atmosphere of a Great Western Railway terminus refreshment room. It serves up to eight cask ales, a selection of traditional still ciders, a full menu during the day, cobs and bar snacks. As the gateway to the Severn Valley Railway, it attracts both railway enthusiasts and real ale lovers alike.

Club of the Year 2026: Cookley Sports Club, Cookley, Worcestershire (DY10 3RH)



This popular sports and social club combines excellent real ale with first-class facilities. It features a comfortable lounge bar, snooker room and two meeting rooms, while the outdoor terrace offers spectacular views across north Worcestershire. Regular beers from Wye Valley Brewery and Hobsons Brewery are complemented by three changing guest ales. Visitors are welcome as guests, and CAMRA members are admitted on production of a valid membership card. Club members also enjoy discounted bar prices.

Cider Pub of the Year 2026: The Hoptician, Dursley, Gloucestershire (GL11 4ND)

The Hoptician is an award-winning micropub that opened in May 2024 in the former premises of a local optician – inspiring its distinctive name. The pub serves five carefully selected cask ales alongside an excellent range of locally produced real ciders, offering a warm welcome and an outstanding drinking experience.

Regional Director Brett Laniosh said: "These awards recognise some of the very best pubs and clubs in the West Central Region. Each winner has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to serving quality real ale and cider while providing a welcoming atmosphere and playing an important role in its local community. Congratulations to all our winners and everyone involved."

Gloucestershire Trip

Bromsgrove, Redditch & Droitwich CAMRA visits the area around Gloucester

In a break with tradition from our typical minibus trips, we actually spent a couple of hours in one place as we visited the city of Gloucester. Primarily we were here to visit the **Pelican Inn** as one of the four finalists for the CAMRA Pub of The Year 2025 competition and winner of our new West Central region.



The city of Gloucester is not only home to the Pelican Inn but also other great pubs.

We started our mini tour with a visit to the **Fountain Inn** down an alley off Westgate Street leading into the courtyard, a nice little sun trap to enjoy our first ale. This Grade II listed 17th century inn is on the site of an ale house, known to have existed in 1216. No less than seven ales were available to choose from including Dartmoor Brewery Jail ale, Stroud Brewery Ol' Chestnut, Bristol Beer Factory Independence and bath ales Gem.



Literally a 50-yard walk from our first stop is the **Drunken Duck**. Here we go from 13th Century origins right bang up to date with a much more recent micro pub and Gloucester's smallest bar. Although in its relatively new form the building has original historic character and has a very grand mosaic entrance to its home in Bull Lane. Here four ales were



available with a Citra Pale ale from Tiny Rebel, Lucky Drop Stout from Butcombe, Wilde Child's Humble Beginnings and Spring Haze from The Drink Valley Brewpub and some real Ciders.

Our final stop before we left the city was to the Pelican Inn. Dating from 1679 and Grade II Listed. The pub has always been known as the Pelican Inn apart from a brief period as The College Arms. Licensed as an alehouse in the 17th-Century, people believe that some of its beams could have come from Drake's Golden Hind which began life as the Pelican. Rescued and refurbished by Wye Valley Brewery in 2012 and clearly put on the road to success. Our group is pictured at the Pelican with host Mike Hall on the left.

No less than seven Wye Valley ales were available, both by handpump and direct from the barrel, as well as accompanying guests from Fownes and Twisted Oak. A very fine selection.

We left Gloucester and by massive contrast to the history and architecture of the city headed for the very modern surroundings of the **Clavell & Hind Brewery Tap** room, after a brief stop at the **Old Elm Inn**, Churchdown. Here on their shiny stainless-steel pumps was the pale ale Blunderbuss, IPA Liberty, Dawn Run bitter and Coachman Golden ale.



L - R Clavell & Hind Tap room, Lode Inn



Tim Craig, Bromsgrove, Redditch & Droitwich
CAMRA Branch Social Secretary
social@brd.camra.org.uk

Our final destination was the **Lode Inn**, Forthampton. An attractive 15th-century brick-built pub standing enviously in three acres of lawns with river frontage, looking across the River Severn to Tewkesbury Abbey. We could have stayed much longer combining the sunshine, panorama and the selection of ales from Ludlow Brewery, Church End, North Cotswold, Clavell & Hind and of course Wye Valley. What's not to enjoy!



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Ledbury Visit

One Saturday in April, several members of Worcester Branch took the train (and bus) to Ledbury. Upon arrival we headed straight to the **Prince of Wales** where we had arranged to meet Ant from Ledbury Ales. Having bought our beers we awaited his arrival and were not disappointed. He gave us a fascinating talk about his brewery and the science of growing and selecting hops. His passion for brewing really came across, as we all consumed the end product whilst listening.

A question and answer session then followed where a question was raised about supplying beer to beer festivals which resulted in a plan being hatched for a beer to be specifically brewed for the Worcester Festival, ably assisted by members of our branch. I hope those of you who attended the festival were able to sample this unique brew.

Following the talk, we made our way to the **Feathers Hotel**, which had three Ledbury beers on: Gold, Bitter and a Citra. A glorious day in the garden with great ales, what could be better?



Our group separated at this point, with members visiting various different pubs. We went to the **Lion**, a small micropub, which was serving Hop Shed and Three Tuns beers.

Our final stop before catching the train back was the **Horseshoe** which offered Wye Valley Butty Bach and HPA. Their secret garden was a real sun trap and a delightful spot.

I can only conclude that Ledbury is definitely worth a visit, not being too far away, and accessible by train and bus, I would recommend a look.

My thanks go to the staff at the Prince of Wales for

accommodating us and to Ant at Ledbury Ales, for taking the time to come and meet us.

*Viv Clarke, Social Secretary,
Worcester Branch*



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You're Being Lied To

CAMRA issued a report in July showing how today's drinkers are being lied to everyday by a group of four international conglomerates.

The report which can be found at camra.org.uk/beer-report is called Beer in the UK and shows how the UK brewing industry has been systematically decimated by these same four companies and are continuing to ensure that what remains of our independent brewing heritage is squeezed out in favour of their bland factory-created products.

In 1980, annual beer production was around 12 billion pints and 96% of that was brewed by British-owned breweries.

Today, production has halved to just 6 million pints and 80% of that is brewed by foreign companies, mostly UK subsidiaries of those four conglomerates namely AB-InBev, Heineken, Carlsberg and Molson Coors.



It also found:

- seven of the top 10 selling “craft beers” in the UK are made by just four global brewing conglomerates
- many of the UK's favourite “continental” and “imported” lagers are brewed in the UK
- data from the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA) shows demand for independent beer is 280% higher than its share of the pub market

CAMRA chairman Ash Corbett-Collins said: “Ordinary drinkers are being short changed when it comes to choice and quality at the bar. Our report proves how the global players are exploiting the status quo to squeeze out independent brewers, to the detriment of ordinary publicans and beer drinkers.

“The government needs to step up, start taking the issue seriously, and take action that matches up to its statements about supporting pubs and the communities they serve.

“Andy Burnham recently said that ‘people need to be able to look forward to a night out’. The best way he can deliver on that is by ordering a proper market investigation to sort this mess out and deliver a fair deal for publicans and drinkers, and the independent brewers that they want to support.

“If this report makes you as angry as it makes me, that's good. CAMRA is fighting for changes to the status quo, and I hope you'll join us and get involved.”



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Report editor Tim Webb said: “The fact that a narrow clique of multinational corporations dominates the UK brewing industry is a national embarrassment. They only make beers that suit their production facilities, ignoring the types that beer lovers want to drink. They do not know how to reverse beer’s downward spiral, make little profit, and brew nothing worth exporting. They cannot grow the UK economy.

“The way that better, independent, brewers are excluded from the on-trade beer market is scandalous. Brewing is a business that competition authorities need to investigate, take apart, and reassemble, so the UK can return to playing a leading role in the world of beer.”

Since the report was published the government has announced that business rates for pubs are to be reduced next year by 20%, which is very welcome for pubs but doesn’t address the long term decline in the UK brewing industry.

CAMRA is therefore asking for the following actions:

- a market investigation from the Competition and Markets Authority to free up the UK beer market to give fair access to smaller independent producers



- End the routine deception of customers. Beers sold in the UK should clearly name the company that owns the brand, and the place where it is brewed.
- Challenge the UK’s abnormally high level of beer taxation and justify what it’s for.

If you’d like to know more about what you thought you knew, go to camra.org.uk/beer-report and if you’d like to do something about it, join CAMRA now.

A campaign was launched in July spearheaded by TV Chef and publican Tom Kerridge aimed at getting a cut in the VAT rate for hospitality businesses e.g. pubs, cafes, restaurants, clubs, hotels etc.

The campaign calls for a 10% cut in VAT to reduce the ever-increasing costs of running such establishments.

The campaign would like a cut to bring UK hospitality in line with VAT rates across the EU where it is 10% in France, Italy and Spain, and 7% in Germany.

Of course, as with all such campaigns not everyone agrees, it is said that cutting VAT across the board in this way will greatly favour the large pub companies, whereas the small independent cafes and freehold pubs will only save a relatively small amount.



10% is fair for hospitality

If you would like to sign up to the campaign you’ll find the petition at vatstheproblem.co.uk, at the time of writing the petition had reached 300,000 signatures.

West Berkshire Trip

Bromsgrove, Redditch & Droitwich CAMRA visits West Berkshire and Oxfordshire

This minibus trip took us so far out of our area that our minibus driver could be forgiven for having a nose bleed and joked about going to Aberdeen for our next trip! But we were on a mission to visit a very special pub. Indeed all our pubs on this trip were special in their own way.

Our first stop was the **Bell Inn**, Aldworth, Berkshire, winner of two national Pub of The Year (POTY) awards in 1990 and 2019 and more recently Regional POTY 2025 for South Central. An absolute gem of a pub in many ways; a wonderful village location with front view towards an historic well, the small square bar serves a terrific selection of local ales, including Elleorde, an English Pale Ale brewed by The Aldworth Brewing Company behind the pub! The walls are adorned with various CAMRA certificates endorsing the Bell Inn as a serial winner.

When the very first charter of the Concorde took off on 19th September 1978, all the passengers were local to the village, as a result of an idea hatched in the pub, by a regular at the time who was a Concorde pilot.

We next visited the **Crown**, South Moreton, Oxfordshire. The Crown is a classic example of a pub reinvented and reborn as a community pub. Originally part of the Wadworth estate but closed in 2015 and was under real threat of being redeveloped as housing before the local community won a court battle to have the pub listed as an 'asset of community value'. Following this there was a successful community purchase and in 2019 The Crown re-opened as the community pub that it is today. The community have



invested heavily in The Crown; re-equipped and recommissioned the cellar, and the state-of-the-art kitchen. There is also a stunning hand-crafted oak pergola for al fresco dining and events. Three ales were available including the Crown's very own Ye Olde Dash & Tipple and a session IPA from Amwell Springs Brewing Co.

Our third stop was to the **Plum Pudding**, Milton, Abingdon, Oxfordshire. Plum pudding is apparently a well-known alternative or nickname name for the local rare-

breed Sandy and Black Pig which explains the many pig related features throughout the pub. The pub has a well-furnished interior and an excellent garden area with plenty of shade. Three ales were available here including the very local "OG" a flagship 4.1% hand-crafted extra pale ale from LoveBeer, Milton, just around the corner from the pub. Three real ciders were also available.



Our penultimate stop was at the **White Hart**, Wolvercote, Oxfordshire. Grade II listed. A house in the mid 17th century it has been a pub since at least 1763 and known as the White Hart from 1834, and since 2014 has been a community-run. Four ales were available including Points of Brew, a collaboration between Hook Norton and The Five Points Brewing Company.

We could have stayed at our last stop the **Peyton Arms**, Stoke Lyne, Bicester for much longer but we had a schedule to keep to! The Peyton Arms is a glorious rural gem with a simple unspoilt bar at its heart. The pub has no hand pumps, ales are poured directly from the casks and served from a small room



From top: Historic Well in front of the Bell, Peyton Arms signage, Pig feature at the Plum Pudding,



behind the bar, for us this was Hook Norton's Bitter and Old Hooky. The walls are adorned with memorabilia gathered throughout the years.

The pub is listed in CAMRA's National Inventory of Pub Heritage as having an interior of outstanding National historic importance. Landlord Mick "the hat" Weston had been primed for our arrival nevertheless one of the locals came to his assistance so that we could all be served quickly, we immediately felt relaxed in this idyllic one-roomed pub and everyone's choice of beer was served in a jug, it was perfect!



Tim Craig, Bromsgrove, Redditch & Droitwich CAMRA Branch Social Secretary social@brd.camra.org.uk



From top left: The group outside the Bell, the Crown, inside the Peyton Arms

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Pub Campaigning Award Returns

Nominations are now open for CAMRA's Pub Saving Award, which celebrates groups that have fought for their pub, saving it from demolition or conversion.

The award is more important than ever following the three-year anniversary of the unlawful demolition of the iconic wonky pub, the Crooked House in Himley, South Staffordshire.

The competition thrusts pub-saving campaigns into the national spotlight, inspiring others to investigate community ownership for their own local. CAMRA supports community pubs and is keen to assist groups interested in going down this road.

Pub Saving Award coordinator Paul Ainsworth said: "The return of the Pub Saving Award coincides with the grim third-year anniversary of the fire and complete demolition of the Crooked House, which shocked the nation. It is bitterly disappointing that we are still waiting for justice.

"The Crooked House saga unveiled a wider scandal of potentially unlawful pub conversions and demolitions across the UK, and we continue to demand tighter, stronger planning policies and a requirement in law to rebuild pubs brick-by-brick.

"The industry needs meaningful support, including better planning protections in each nation of the UK, or we risk losing thousands more pubs.

"When a local closes its doors, it is incredibly difficult to open them again, which is why these community champions and selfless volunteers, who dedicate years to save much-loved pubs, deserve to be applauded."

The award can be made to any group which has carried out campaigning activity to save a pub from closure over the last 12 months.

Nominations close on 12 November 2026.

The nomination form and eligibility criteria is at camra.org.uk/awards



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SUNDAY

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Wyre Forest CAMRA Visit Sheffield

Over a dozen people from Wyre Forest branch chose Sheffield for their annual spring trip at the end of May. Recent destinations have included Liverpool, Nottingham, Oxford, Scarborough and York.

Sheffield has been called the 'real ale capital of the world', with a high concentration of historic pubs, micropubs and thriving breweries. Our visit coincided with Sheffield CAMRA's annual 'beer census', which identified 399 different cask beers from 166 breweries being served on one day in 191 city pubs surveyed (about half the total).

The weather was kind, and the publicans of Sheffield extended a very warm welcome. Between us, we must have visited several dozen of the city's renowned pubs, both traditional and modern, enjoying many beers that are rarely if ever found in our own area.

Among the pubs to stand out as highlights – for different reasons – were the Bath Hotel, Dog & Partridge (picture above), Fargate, Fat Cat, Grapes,



Harlequin, Head of Steam, Kelham Island Tavern, Perch, Rutland Arms, Shakespeares, Sheffield Tap, Two & Six, Vocation & Co and Wisewood.

Of course, our spring trip is not just about beer and pubs, not quite anyway. The Kelham Island Museum was a highlight for many with its history of steel making, tools and cutlery, and the biggest working steam engine in the country. People also enjoyed Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet and the Botanical Gardens. The 7 Spices Balti hosted us for an excellent group curry.

We would like to thank several colleagues from Sheffield & District CAMRA who gave invaluable advice while we were planning the outing and who joined us in the garden of the St Mars of the Desert Brewery (picture left) for a social afternoon.

Now that connections have been made, several from the visiting group are intending to return to Sheffield for CAMRA's Steel City Beer Festival in October, and we hope some ale drinkers from Yorkshire will visit Kidderminster Beer & Cider Festival in November.



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or scan the QR code to
get started



A Pint with Parliament

Following on from our April meeting with Bromsgrove MP Bradley Thomas, members from the Bromsgrove Redditch and Droitwich branch of CAMRA met with both Redditch MP Chris Bloore and Droitwich MP Nigel Huddleston.

This was an opportunity to tell our local MPs how we campaign for pubs and clubs at a local, grass roots level, including Pub/Club of the year, seasonal awards, social meetings and events/trips for our members, and our award-winning quarterly magazine *Pint Taken*.

We met Chris Bloore at the **Black Tap** in Redditch on Friday 19th June.



Chris mentioned how he had worked very hard to lobby the Treasury for a better business rates deal for Pubs/Clubs after the shock fallout from the Autumn budget statement. Hansard, the official record of proceedings in Parliament, reports that when a 15% bill reduction in business rates for pubs was announced by Dan Tomlinson, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury on 27th January, Chris was one of a small handful of MPs thanked for being a “relentless advocate for businesses” in their constituencies. We very much thank Chris for his efforts in this respect. Chris did suggest that a more positive response to CAMRA campaigning might be achieved by focusing on further business rates relief for pubs and clubs, especially for those in rural communities where their social value can be better recognised.

We met Nigel Huddleston on Friday 3rd July at the **Hop Pole** in Droitwich, our branch 2026 Pub of the Year. We had a very similar conversation with Nigel as previously with Chris.



In an outbreak of cross-party unity Nigel also suggested that a focus on business rates may be more fruitful as this is an area where Pubs and Clubs have recently seen some ‘gains’ and from a CAMRA viewpoint can be targeted to pubs and clubs specifically. Nigel mentioned that he was due to lead an opposition debate focused on the hospitality sector (including leisure and tourism) and criticising the government’s economic policies, specifically higher employer National Insurance contributions and the impact of new Employment Rights, which he believes has had a negative impact on pubs and clubs and to young people in general in respect of valuable first-hand working experiences.

As we wait to see how the new government shapes up, we await potentially better news for pubs and clubs.

Tim Craig

Visited All Eight of Our Worcestershire Pubs?



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Bromsgrove



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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

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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



Bathams - More Than Just a Tradition

In the early 1980s I lived in south-west Surrey where real ale from independent breweries was very difficult to find. However, The Sandrock in Wrecclesham near Farnham was an exception. The owner only dispensed beers from the Black Country, so in our late twenties we were introduced to the delights of Holdens, Bathams and Simpkins. I

believe his father used to regularly travel to and from the breweries to bring casks south. Subsequently my wife and I organised four or five car loads of us to visit Dudley and the surrounding area once a year in the 1980s for a weekend of sampling the delights at source. I couldn't have known that many decades later I would be living in Worcestershire and therefore be able to sample Bathams beers regularly.

As a member of the Brewery History Society, I was invited as part of their AGM to a tour of Bathams brewery in Brierley Hill. Due to personal circumstances, I was only able to be away from home for a few hours but the society was kind enough to let me 'cherry pick' a tour of this iconic brewery. A journey of two trains and the same number of buses saw me at the brewery at 10:30am in place for the 11 o'clock start. In fact, the door to the **Vine** aka the Bull and Bladder was opened before then for the group of nine of us to await the start of the tour in the pub lounge. We were then introduced to no less than Alice Batham, the direct descendant of five generations who have brewed there and the current head brewer.



The first room we entered was where there hangs a lovely black and white picture of Myra Batham who married Daniel Batham (2nd generation). The brewery is a classic tower design so shortly afterwards we headed up several flights of stairs, some akin to ladders to the top. Alice then took us through the various stages of the brewing process as we descended,

naturally finishing up where the casks were filled.

Brewing takes place four times a week and uses only whole cone English hops, namely Goldings and Fuggles from Charles Faram. The Malt comes from Crisp maltings in Norfolk having previously been sourced from Tuckers in Newton Abbot before they closed. The spent grain goes to a local farmer. All cask ale is brewed at Brierley Hill whereas that for the bottled beer comes from Robinsons in Stockport who brew strictly to the recipe and then bottle the beer. An exception is the XXX 6.3% winter ale which is brewed at Brierley Hill and bottled by nearby Holdens brewery. We were shown the open fermenters, always a treat for lovers of traditional beer as well as the hop cone and fierce oven for boiling the wort.

The brewery, like many others, had a frightening time during Covid. As all the pubs were closed during this time, Alice's father who was head brewer then, was forced to mothball the brewery. Alice was working at Thornbridge brewery in Bakewell and was brewing beers like Jaipur as fast as they could for the drink-at-home trade. Once brewing was allowed to restart at Brierley Hill, it





was found the yeast needed to be renewed which was obtained from the National Collection of Yeast Cultures. However, it took a while for it to settle back into life in the brewery and hazy beer was encountered for a short while, happily now a distant memory.

A fascinating revelation to me was the story Alice told of how the iconic Best Bitter came into being. In 1951 Bathams bought the Swan Inn at Chaddesley Corbett where customers requested a lighter beer than the traditional Black Country dark mild which up to that point was the only beer the brewery produced. Daniel Bertram Arthur Batham, Alice's Grandad, devised the recipe for the Best Bitter to satisfy this thirst and the rest, as they say, is history.

And so ended a wonderful hour from where we adjourned to the public bar for a pint of mild and a pint of best bitter before the long journey began back to Pershore.

Neil Berry



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12 – 14 November 2026

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Kidderminster Beer and Cider Festival is back!

After a year's break in 2025, the festival returns this Autumn to **Kidderminster Harriers Social & Supporters Club** from **Thursday 12th to Saturday 14th November**.

The festival follows the successful model of previous years, set in one large room with plenty of seating and the bars, with around 40 cask ales as well as local ciders, perries and craft beers from independent breweries. There's also a local gin bar.

This year we are excited that it includes a special selection of Scottish cask beers, in an exchange arrangement with CAMRA's Glasgow Real Ale Festival.

We're also recruiting new volunteers to be part of it all. For more information, search for Kidderminster Beer Festival 2026 or contact Wyre Forest CAMRA.

You can also get updates from wyreforest.camra.org.uk

More CAMRA Beer Festivals

Visit camra.org.uk/events and check out the latest CAMRA beer festivals.

Harbury Beer & Cider Festival 4th - 5th Sept, Harbury Village Hall, nr Leamington Spa.

Shrewsbury Beer & Cider Festival 23rd - 26th Sept, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury.



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The Swan -
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CAMRA Events and Contacts

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

September

Tue 1st Social Stroll (WF) - 7pm, starting at the Rising Sun, Bewdley DY12 1JE

Mon 7th Lunchtime Social (BRD) - 12pm at the Old Cock, Droitwich WR9 8EQ

Wed 9th Members Meeting (WO) at the Cocky Anchor, Worcester WR1 3LY

Thu 24th Social Meeting (BRD) - 7.30pm at Coach & Horses, Weatheroak Hill B48 7EA - celebrating the launch of the Good Beer Guide

Sat 26th Joint social in Worcester (WO & WF), 12.30pm start at the Cocky Anchor, Worcester WR1 3LY

October

Mon 5th Lunchtime Social (BRD) - 12pm at the Hop Pole, Bromsgrove B61 0DF

Tue 6th Members' Meeting (WF) - Old Waggon & Horses, Ismere, DY10 3NX



Branch Contacts

Bromsgrove, Redditch & Droitwich (BRD)

Email contact@rb.camra.org.uk or call Paul Richards 07974 889553 Website brd.camra.org.uk
Facebook facebook.com/groups/brdcamra Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month and start at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated.

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 worcstastings@wyreforest.camra.org.uk

Wed 14th Social Members Meeting (WO) - Venue to be confirmed

Wed 21st (WF) - Visit to Sheffield Beer Festival staying overnight.

Tue 27th Social Meeting (BRD) - 7.30pm at the Cross Inn, Finstall B60 1EW

November

Mon 2nd Lunchtime Social (BRD) - 12pm at the Rising Sun, Redditch B98 8AE

Wed 11th Members meeting (WO) - Dragon, Worcester WR1 1JT

Tue 24th Members Meeting (BRD) - 7.30pm at Rocklands Social Club, Headless Cross B97 4LB. A first look at pub selection for 2028 Good Beer Guide and voting for Pub of the Year

December

Mon 7th Lunchtime Social (BRD) at the Red Lion, Droitwich WR9 8AT

Tue 8th Christmas Social Pub Trail (BRD) start at the Freemasons Arms, Droitwich WR9 8LR

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