

Summer 2026

FREE

Pint Taken

Award Winning Worcestershire County CAMRA Magazine



In this issue

- Pub and Brewery News
- Upcoming Beer Festivals
- Historic Pub Interiors
- Clent Pub Trail
- ...and lots more

pinttaken.org.uk

 CAMRA

DRINK WHERE THE BEER IS BREWED



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Breakfast 9.30 – 11.30 Lunch 12.00 – 14.00

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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

Main Street, Elmley Castle WR10 3HS - 01386 710251
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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



Editor's Introduction

Summer is traditionally the time of year when you can't move for festivals, whether they be music festivals, flower festivals or indeed Beer Festivals.

The biggest festival we have in these parts, **Worcester Beer Cider and Perry Festival** is back looking to build on last year's success.



Close by, **Beer on The Wye** in Hereford makes a welcome return after a year off. Unfortunately, Bromsgrove Beer & Cider Festival hasn't made it this year, but we're hopeful it will return in some form or another. You'll find further details about these and more in our Festivals Roundup on page 29.

You'll see mention throughout the magazine of Bromsgrove, Redditch & Droitwich CAMRA; this is the new name of Redditch & Bromsgrove branch. It was proposed last year that after 50 years, a change was warranted to better describe the area that the branch covers, so branch members were given a choice of new names - including staying as is - and the new name came out on top. So it'll be Bromsgrove Redditch & Droitwich CAMRA from now on.

Those of you that like to score your beers on the CAMRA website will notice a change from 1st June. The numerical scores have been replaced with

Pint Taken is published by the Bromsgrove, Redditch & Droitwich, 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 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

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descriptive ratings. See page 26 for more details of what this means.

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 Summer edition of *Pint Taken* is 26th July.

Cover photo: *The King and Castle, Kidderminster and joint manager Kat Forty.*

Pub News

In central Kidderminster, **The Church Venue** opened on 2nd May with Soul Saturday, a day of soul and Motown. The fabulous converted former church building, next to the pub/restaurant of the same name, is the setting for music, comedy and other events. It has its own bar serving Hobsons Town Crier and a variety of beers on tap.

In Bewdley, up Wyre Hill, the **Black Boy** has new owners. The oldest pub in Bewdley, dating from 1468, has four beers from nearby breweries at very reasonable prices and the new owners have arranged a summer of live music at weekends. It's a pub full of character and worth the climb from the town (or a ride on the bus).

The **Loom & Shuttle**, Kidderminster, is for sale. The resident operator and leaseholder, Marstons, says that it will be unaffected by the sale.

The **Hope & Anchor**, in Stourport, has reopened as a proper pub serving three cask ales and crusty cobs. It has its own branded beer, Revenge of the Gilgal. The pump clip depicts a fearsome-looking octopus.

The **Oak** in Upton Snodsbury has closed, the owners citing rising costs. The villagers hope that it will reopen soon as this was the last pub in the village. The **Crown** at Peopleton has recently reopened after a thankfully short closure.

The **Bush and Vine** (formerly the Bush) at St. Johns, Worcester is now open. It currently has two cask ales, both from Birmingham based independent breweries. The plan is to increase to four cask ales. The owners also run the **King Charles II** and the **Worcester Arms**.

The **Oddfellows Arms** in Astwood Bank has reopened. In our last edition we reported that locals were looking at options to get this pub back open, well it has now been reopened by Greene

King with a new licensee and is serving Wye Valley HPA and a Greene King house beer.

The **Woodland Cottage** in Southcrest, Redditch, is now under new management. The previous licensee, Annie, has decided to move on and is now running a pub in Bodmin. Hopefully the new licensee is able to carry on the work that Annie started.



The Bush & Vine, Worcester

The **Rising Sun** in Redditch, has reopened and is serving up to three cask ales. The Rising Sun was sold by JD Wetherpoon over two years ago and had lain like a time capsule since, but was taken on just before Christmas by an independent licensee.

BCM Evesham has moved home to larger premises at Unit 30, The Valley, Twyford, Evesham, WR11 4DS. The craft beer

tap and bottle shop used to be based at Bridge St, Evesham, and the Jinney Ring centre in Hanbury, but have now consolidated both shops into one, more details at bcmevesham.com

Black Country Ales has completed the purchase of the former **Droitwich Working Men's Club** at 107 Friar Street, Droitwich Spa, WR9 8EG.



The pub company said, "Our intention is to respect and celebrate the heritage of the former Working Men's Club by carefully looking after its character, while bringing it into use as a traditional real ale pub. The aim is to serve local regulars and visitors alike, and to ensure the building continues to play an active role in the town's community for years to come".

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





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Brewery News

Hop Shed Brewery of Suckley uses only locally grown hops in all of their beers which means, of course, 100% of the hops they use are British. It is becoming more popular to use British hops as people are realising the amazing array of aromas and flavours available, assisted by the work of Charles Faram, but there are perhaps very few who realise that only Hop Shed uses 100% locally grown hops.

Sarah Saleh, the brewery owner, tells us that the summer will see a couple of seasonal beers that use other local ingredients, as well as locally grown hops. In June they are releasing Stinger, a 4.5% nettle pale ale. They have collaborated with The Fold Organic Community Farm at Bransford who are going to harvest 10kg of nettle tips for them, after which I guess they'll need a pint or two! Tommy, an apprentice at the brewery who has a background in horticulture, has designed this recipe. Sarah commented that the test brew Tommy did had a deliciously refreshing, slightly herbal taste, and was a winner at the Hop Shed Tap Room and at the Talbot Beer Festival in April where it was one of the first two beers to sell out!

A recent edition of BBC's Escape to the Country had a substantial feature on Hop Shed Brewery starring Sarah Saleh herself. The programme also showed a brief glimpse of one of Worcester branch's favourite pubs, the **Three Kings** at Hanley Castle.

Later in the summer Hop Shed will be using Woodruff Bank Honey, produced in Suckley, to make a delicious golden ale called Honey Trap.

The brewery shop is open Mon to Fri 10-4pm for bottle / mini cask / merchandise sales and the Tap Room is open Friday 4-9pm with rotating selection of local food offerings and Saturdays 1-7pm with wood fired pizza. Live music continues once a month at the Tap Room on a Saturday evening,



with the next events being Friday Club on 27th June and Carol Lee Sampson Trio on 18th July. See thehopshed.co.uk for Tap Room event details.

Traditional IPA from **Grinnbull Brewing**, just north of Worcester city, has often been on the bars of the the **Dragon** and **Cocky Anchor** and has now been seen at the award-winning **Chester Tavern** in Kidderminster.

Night Owl Brewery on the Worcestershire and Herefordshire border has had its first evening's culinary collaboration of great food and drink which was a fantastic success. Keep in touch with their social media for the next date and don't forget it's a gorgeous spot on a summer afternoon and evening on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Teme Valley Brewery will be holding their excellent Green Hop Fest from 9th to 11th October.

Spilsbury and Jones Brewery. There's an event every weekend at the brewery tap house on Friday from 5pm and Saturday from 1pm until the end of September including May Spring Bank Holiday Bonanza and August Bank Holiday Big Summer Party. It is the most idyllic location by hopfields in the heart of the Worcestershire countryside. See their Facebook site for the calendar.

The on-site brewery of **Friday Beer Co** at the **Malvern Tavern** will be running initial brews in June for the first time.

Fownd Brewing tap room in Kidderminster is open Fridays 5-11pm, Saturday 12-11pm and Sunday 12-8pm.

Weatheroak Hill Brewery, based at the **Coach and Horses** in Weatheroak, has recently made a few tweaks to the recipe for their Icknield Pale Ale to round off some of the harsher notes in its flavour and renamed it simply as Icknield Pale. There have also been a couple of recipe changes to their 4.9% Cofton Common beer.

Brewery news is compiled by Neil Berry

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

Awards

Wyre Forest CAMRA Pub of the Year 2026

This year's Wyre Forest CAMRA Pub of the Year winners have consistently excellent cask ales, friendly bar staff, and plenty of varied features that make them great pubs to visit.

The Gold Award was won by the **King & Castle**, in Kidderminster.



Nick Yarwood presents the award to Kat Forty and Chris Dainty. Photo Colin Hill.

Members were impressed by the friendly welcome, the range of interesting beers on the bar, comfortable ambience and calm atmosphere in which to enjoy a pint and a chat.

The consistently high quality of cask beers is a huge credit to the dedicated bar staff and their cellar skills. The pub has also introduced real ciders, which is a very welcome development, helping to support traditional cider producers.

Managers Chris Dainty and Kat Forty said "We'd like to give a massive thank you to the staff and customers for making this pub so special. We set out to ensure everyone gets a warm welcome and a great pint every time, whether in for the night or waiting for a train. We would also like to dedicate this award to Louis Chance, our previous manager, who sadly passed away last year".

The Silver Award for the **Chester Tavern**, Kidderminster, celebrates a vibrant community pub, friendly service and the reliably high quality of cask beers. The pub's manager, Andy Hipkiss, uses local breweries in Worcestershire for cask and craft beers, helping to support the long

tradition of brewing interesting and tasty beers by independent breweries.

The Chester is a regular live music venue as well as being a popular pub to meet and have a chat. Andy said "It's great to have won this award. It's a credit to the staff and I'd like to thank them and our fantastic customers for their support since we opened in 2022".



Rob Budworth with Andy Hipkiss and Matt Lamb (Chester Tavern). Photo Colin Hill.

The Bronze Award goes to the **Hollybush**, Stourport. The pub has a great range of cask beers, served in excellent condition, and is popular with locals and visitors to the town. In summer the tranquil beer garden is a suntrap, and there are regular charity events, music jam sessions and the weekly Wednesday cheese evening. Manager Ursula Downes said "I'm absolutely thrilled to receive this award again. I love this pub, but I couldn't do it without the support of my amazing staff, customers and Black Country Ales. Thank you CAMRA".



Paul Compton presents the award to Ursula Downes. Photo David Humphreys.

Awards

Wyre Forest CAMRA Club of the Year 2026

Cookley Sports Club, near Kidderminster, has done it again! Against stiff competition, it won the accolade that it first won in 2023.

The popular and friendly village social club welcomes visitors and club members to enjoy five, very well kept, changing cask ales from mainly local breweries.

The sun terrace overlooking the sports field and meadows, and the weekend food pavilion, add to the atmosphere.

As a sports club, there are resident sports teams,



Nick Yarwood with Josh Barnes. Photo Karin Bareford

and live events on TV draw in the crowds. At other times the screens are on silent for socialising, having a chat and enjoying the excellent beers. Live bands on Saturday nights add to its popularity, and the annual May beer festival attracts plenty of visitors.

The club's manager, Josh Barnes, was very happy to receive the award. He thanked all the regular club members that make the club very friendly and special, and CAMRA members for their recognition of what a fantastic club it is.

Wyre Forest CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year 2026

The **Anchor** in Causall, near Kidderminster, has a very long and continuous history of selling real cider. This year's Cider Pub of the Year award recognises that it serves real barrel cider. Trace Richardson, Wyre Forest CAMRA's Cider Representative said "You can walk into The Anchor any time and find real cider available. Barbourne Cider is served there permanently, straight from the barrel".



Cider served by Jane

(pasteurised bag in box), local cider maker Richard Reynolds, of Barbourne Cider, who happened to be a cousin of one of our suppliers, jumped in and took a couple of barrels of Heritage to replicate it. After a few batches he perfected Barbourne Traditional Worcestershire Cider. It's a 6% unpasteurised, still cider."

Pete Green, the owner of The Anchor, recalls the history. "Barrel cider has been on the bar in The Anchor since 1974. We originally sold Bulmers Medium (the same as my dad Jim Green sold in the Red Lion in Cookley) until they changed the recipe. I gave the rep for Thatchers at the time (early to mid 90s) a barrel of the original Bulmers medium (orange cider) to "replicate" and that is where Thatchers Heritage is said to have originated from."

Simon Brooks, the pub manager, continues with the tradition. "When Thatchers announced they were discontinuing Heritage and moving to Stans



Bar team Archie, Jon, Jane, Francesca with Trace Richardson

Awards

In March, on behalf of the Bromsgrove, Redditch & Droitwich branch of CAMRA, Chair Paul Richards presented an award and congratulated Mark “Harry” Callaghan on 25 years as licensee of the **Gate Hangs Well** in Headless Cross, Redditch.

To have survived in the pub industry for 25 years in this day and age shows great stamina. During that time many pubs have gone through a change of management, closures and reopenings, so to have remained at the same pub for all that time is something that needs to be recognised.

Mark picked up his nickname of “Harry” when it was coined by one of his teenage friends after watching *The Enforcer* at a local cinema starring



“Harry” Callaghan with Paul Richards

Clint Eastwood as the nonsense and somewhat unorthodox cop Dirty Harry Callaghan.

The nickname has stuck ever since and is so well known that locals typically refer to going to “the Gate” as going to “Harry’s”!

During his 25 years, Mark has maintained a great pub with up to 6 cask ales available. The Gate also hosts several local events which has led to it being acknowledged as a great community pub.

We wish Mark, who is supported by wife Karen, all the best for the future and we

are pleased to hear that he has no current plans for retirement.

Wythall Community Club

Wythall House, Silver St, Wythall. B47 6LZ



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[wythallcommclub](https://www.wythallcommclub.org.uk)
[wythallcommunityclub.org.uk](https://www.wythallcommunityclub.org.uk)



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2026

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12PM - 11PM

20+ REAL ALES,
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Awards

The Hop Pole - Pub of the Year 2026

This year the Bromsgrove, Redditch & Droitwich branch declared that their Pub of the Year for 2026 was the **Hop Pole** in Friar St. Droitwich, and licensees Gareth Jones and Hayley O'Donnell were presented with their certificate and trophy in April, just two weeks before their wedding!

The Hop Pole has long been acknowledged as one of the best pubs in Droitwich, having appeared in the *Good Beer Guide* uninterrupted since 2007 and are previous winners of the Pub of the Year award, so to have won the award again is well deserved. Gareth and Hayley took over the Hop Pole in early 2020 just before the Covid lockdown - great timing! However, Gareth used the time to carry out much needed work on the pub including a full renovation of the rear outdoor area and the toilets, as well as providing takeouts to loyal customers.

Since then the pub has gone on from strength to



Photo Andy Checketts

strength and, amongst the six beers available, Gareth has managed to get Bathams Bitter in on a permanent basis, as well as Bathams Mild as a regular guest ale alongside a variety of other guest beers.

The Pub of the Year competition is based upon the beer scores submitted by CAMRA members throughout the previous 12 months. A shortlist of the best scoring pubs is then judged by a selection of members who visit and rate each of the

finalists against a set of criteria.

Runner up in the competition was the **Holly Bush** in Belbroughton who pick up the Silver Award followed by the **Studley Taphouse** in Studley who pick up the Bronze Award.

As well as being awarded Pub of the Year for Bromsgrove Redditch & Droitwich, the Hop Pole now goes forward to the next round to find the Worcestershire Pub of the Year.

Gez Quinn

Death or Glory?
Just a pint please,
actually...

**Join CAMRA,
save on beer,
support pubs.**

Pubs, Pints, People.



CAMRA

Steak and Stout Pie



Serves 6

- 500g diced stewing beef
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 tbsp flour
- Olive oil
- 1 onion chopped
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 4 sticks celery, chopped
- 2 parsnips, chopped
- ¾ tbsp fresh mixed herbs (rosemary, thyme, basil)
- 500ml bottle conditioned stout such as Wye Valley Wholesome Stout
- 1 x 400g and 1 x 200g tins of tomatoes
- 1 x 500g pack of puff pastry
- 1 egg beaten

Step 1 – Hob (50 min)

Season the beef generously with salt and pepper, sprinkle with flour and toss until coated.

Heat 1-2 tbsp olive oil in a large iron casserole and fry meat in two batches until golden brown. Heat oven to 180°C for step 2.

Add the onion and fry for 1 minute then add carrot, celery, parsnips and herbs. Fry for 4 minutes then pour in stout. Add tins of tomatoes and bring to boil. Stir well.

Step 2 - Oven (2 hours)

Cover and place in 180°C oven for two hours. Season and reserve (in fridge for up to five days) and/or freeze.

Step 3 – Pies (Prep plus 45min in oven)

Heat oven to 220°C. Place meat filling into a large pie dish. Brush beaten egg on the rims of the dish and place a puff pastry lid over the top. Brush the lid with more egg and lightly score with a crisscross pattern. Bake in the middle of the oven for 45 minutes. Serve with vegetables of your choice.



S The Swan



Family run by Chris & Tracy

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Open Monday to Friday 4pm - 11pm Saturday to Sunday 12 noon - 11pm

Branch Visit to North Oxfordshire

Bromsgrove, Redditch & Droitwich CAMRA visits the area around Banbury

For our first minibus trip of 2026 we visited North Oxfordshire and specifically the Banbury area. Our ultimate destination was the **Red Lion** at Horley outside Banbury that had won the Oxfordshire CAMRA branch Pub of The Year 2025, but we also found some very nice stops on our route.

Our first stop was the **Fox Inn** at Souldern, a former coaching inn and free house dating from 1784 on the site of what was originally Fox Hill farm.



There were many fox related pictures around the pub, we almost expected fox to be on the lunch menu! We had arrived early and were very appreciative that landlord Johnny opened up early for us and presented a great range of ales with Farmers Best and Deer Stalker from Ramsbury Brewery, Wiltshire and St Austell Tribute. The small garden created a lot of interest as there was an Aunt Sally installation. Aunt Sally is a traditional English game usually played in pub gardens, especially in Oxfordshire, in which players throw sticks or battens at, originally, a model of an old woman's head, but which is now substituted with a more politically correct small skittle, in the theme of a fairground coconut shy. The game is played by teams drawn from pubs

and other organisations and played seriously enough for league tables to be involved; silverware was present in the pub indicative of some local success.

The backdrop for the Aunt Sally was sponsored by The Wiggly Monkey brewery in Bicester, sadly they announced their closure in May 2024 after six years of trading, at least their memory lives on here in the garden of the Fox Inn.

We moved onto the **Great Western Arms** at Aynho, on the Northants and Oxfordshire border and in between the former Great Western Railway, Oxford Canal and the River Cherwell. As part of the Hook Norton estate Hooky, Old Hooky and Hooky Mild were available but also a seasonal Double Stout brewed to an original 19th Century recipe. In addition to their regular ales available throughout the year Hook Norton is planning ten seasonal ales, I think we were lucky on this occasion to have been able to sample the Double Stout, there were very positive comments throughout our group.

Our next stop was to the **Coach & Horses**, Adderbury. Listed Grade II early eighteenth-century stone pub adjacent to the village green. As a Wadworth pub the classic Wadworth 6X original ale was available alongside the seasonable Swordfish, a rum infused ale. One or two of our group visited one of the other pubs in the village.

Our penultimate stop was at the **Butchers Arms**; we were reminded that we were very much in the heart of Hook Norton territory but a variation here is that the beers are served straight from





casks behind the bar. Local CAMRA Pub of the Year and Regional Pub of the Year 2023. Built in two stages during the 18th and 19th Century, it has been a Hook Norton pub since 1878 and apparently was once an abattoir!

Our trips recently have been blighted by poor weather, as you can see from the Butcher's Arms pictured on page 14, we experienced some well overdue blue sky, well some of it anyway!

Our final destination was the **Red Lion**, Horley. CAMRA branch Pub of Year 2025 and Oxfordshire County CAMRA Pub of the Year 2025. A nicely laid out pub with three hand pumped ales available all year round with a fourth added for special occasions. For our visit Hook Norton Hooky, Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Church End Brewery's Fallen Angel were available, all excellent choices. Fallen Angel won its category in the 2025 CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain competition and came third overall collecting the bronze medal.

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

The Dragon Inn

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Traditional Pub

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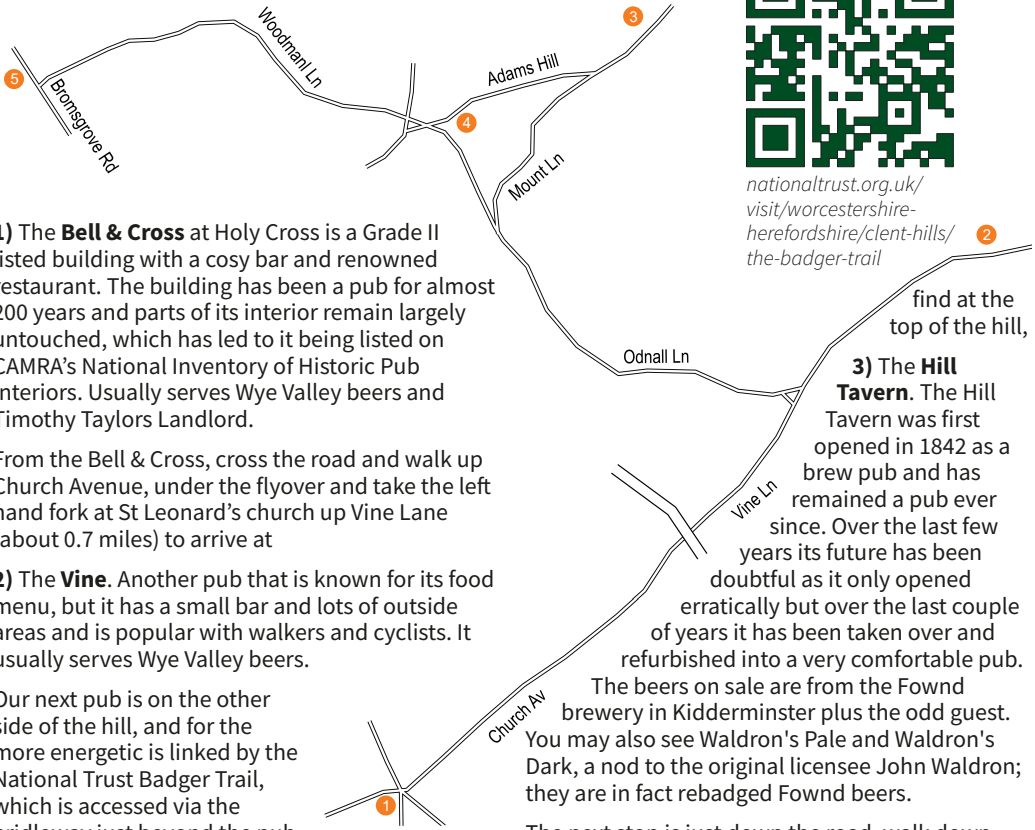
Clent Pub Trail

The availability of pubs in Clent has undergone a transformation in the last 12 months, so much so that it's now possible to have a very enjoyable day out walking and sampling some very good beers. Given the nature of the Clent Hills you can expect a little walking up and down hills but by using this route the general trend is downhill.

KeV's Buses operates a bus service, the 318, that runs from Bromsgrove to Stourbridge through Fairfield, Belbroughton, Clent and Hagley. It usually runs every two hours but there is an extra school service in the afternoon making it hourly. Bustimes.org is a useful site that provides up to date bus times and even a tracker service for all bus services. Please note that on some of these lanes there isn't always a pavement so please take extra care.

Pub opening hours can vary through the year so please check them out before setting out.

The mid-morning service that leaves Bromsgrove Railway station at 11.30am should get you to the first stop on this trail for about 12.10pm.



1) The Bell & Cross at Holy Cross is a Grade II listed building with a cosy bar and renowned restaurant. The building has been a pub for almost 200 years and parts of its interior remain largely untouched, which has led to it being listed on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. Usually serves Wye Valley beers and Timothy Taylors Landlord.

From the Bell & Cross, cross the road and walk up Church Avenue, under the flyover and take the left hand fork at St Leonard's church up Vine Lane (about 0.7 miles) to arrive at

2) The Vine. Another pub that is known for its food menu, but it has a small bar and lots of outside areas and is popular with walkers and cyclists. It usually serves Wye Valley beers.

Our next pub is on the other side of the hill, and for the more energetic is linked by the National Trust Badger Trail, which is accessed via the bridleway just beyond the pub see QR Code. Alternatively you can walk back down Vine Lane to the church and turn right into Odnall Lane and then right again up Mount Lane and onto Adams Hill (about 0.8 miles) where you'll



nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/worcestershire-herefordshire/clent-hills/the-badger-trail

find at the top of the hill,

3) The Hill Tavern.

The Hill Tavern was first opened in 1842 as a brew pub and has remained a pub ever since. Over the last few years its future has been doubtful as it only opened erratically but over the last couple of years it has been taken over and refurbished into a very comfortable pub.

The beers on sale are from the Fownd brewery in Kidderminster plus the odd guest. You may also see Waldron's Pale and Waldron's Dark, a nod to the original licensee John Waldron; they are in fact rebadged Fownd beers.

The next stop is just down the road, walk down Adams Hill (about 0.2 miles)

4) The Fountain is a cosy pub and has built a reputation over several years for serving very good food however, this came to an abrupt stop in

March 2025 when its former licensee died suddenly. As a result the pub closed for much of the year, underwent a major refurb, and re-opened just before Christmas, re-establishing its former reputation. Beers are usually from the Marstons range.

From the Fountain turn right and head down Woodman Lane (about 0.3 miles) to find

5) The Woodman - formerly the French Hen. The pub was purchased at the end of 2024 and refitted as a Steak Restaurant and Cocktail Bar, as well as

reverting to its former name. There's a pleasant bar at the front and a pleasant outdoor seating area and it serves up to three beers including Hobsons and Wye Valley.

You can catch the 318 to return home from outside the Woodman, check [Bustimes.org](https://www.bustimes.org) for the times. Alternatively, the Worcestershire On Demand service also serves The Woodman.

Hopefully you'll find this little trip a pleasant way to spend a day in and around Clent.

Putting the 'C' back into Campaign

Back in April, Bromsgrove, Redditch & Droitwich CAMRA branch met with Bradley Thomas, MP for Bromsgrove and the Villages, to discuss and highlight issues concerning pubs and clubs.

Branch Chair Paul Richards with a number of members, were appreciative of the time Bradley spent with us at the **Ladybird Inn**, Aston Fields, Bromsgrove and we discussed all aspects of our concerns and the campaign.

CAMRA not only campaigns at a branch level but also at a national level where it works with the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group (APBBG) which is an informal, cross-party interest group of UK MPs and Peers, rather than an official parliamentary group. It may not be so surprising that the Beer Group, comprising over 300 MPs and Peers from various political parties and set up in 1993, is one of the largest and most active All-Party Parliamentary Groups in Westminster!

Their objective is to promote the interests of pubs, clubs and the brewing industry. They organise events, hold meetings, and foster dialogue between parliamentarians and the drinks industry to inform policy discussions and raise awareness of the issues affecting the beer and pub sector. Most recently CAMRA nationally submitted a report to the APBBG outlining that with the right



changes to regulation and government policy, the beer and pub/club sector can be empowered to thrive and be a key driver of the Government's growth mission. This covered increasing the relief on draught alcohol duties, a new preferential business rates regime, a reduction of VAT for hospitality, changes to the policy on increased Employer National Insurance

Contributions, better protection of pubs/clubs from a planning perspective, energy cost support and a Pubs Code to permit rights for tied pubs to sell guest beers from small and independent brewers.

CAMRA nationally also point to the social, community and well-being value of the sector and we embrace this fully at branch level with regular monthly socials both on an evening and lunchtime, organise visits to local breweries and arrange minibus trips to explore other areas, not forgetting this very magazine, *Pint Taken*, with its editorials and member contributions enabling pubs and clubs to advertise themselves in a distribution covering the wider Worcestershire area.

Want to join the campaign to support your local pubs and clubs? See Branch Contacts on page 31.

Perry's Act of Rebellion!

After reports of “perry is dead”, a rebellion rose from the ranks of makers and enthusiasts alike.

A campaign led by the Three Counties Cider and Perry Association challenged the claim. The underdog in the world of fermentation fought back, with producers and advocates calling out against a dumbing down for consumers and dismissal of an ancient drink.

Should a product that needs a sprinkling more of understanding be eradicated from existence? None would claim sourdough is dead or question the validity of a product that requires conscientious craft or appreciation. Why should such a claim be accepted for perry?

In an era of a blossoming abundance of artisan perry makers, the claim of the death of something so widely venerated seems grossly distorted. A marketing ploy aimed to rile the players in the market, to gain coverage or simply to communicate an approach to sales strategy? Regardless, the sweeping statement drew some impassioned attention.

Was it right to state perry is dead? A more considered response specific to Weston's intentions could better have addressed consumers' confuddlement by the term perry, rather than retire the term entirely. Like it or not, the move to delete the term perry from mainstream view does raise an issue that should be addressed; most people don't understand what perry is. Or the difference (or similarity) between a perry and a pear cider.

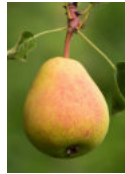
Who can blame them when it's complicated? Only 35 per cent juice content is legally required to be called a cider or perry. Those juices (apple or pear) can be from concentrate. Pear cider is technically a perry. Which can be 100% eating pears. Pear ciders can be produced with up to 25% apple juice. So how do customers know what they're choosing to drink?

For some there will be no interest in the actual content of their drink but there are steps that could be taken to clear the waters muddied by a legal definition that blurs the lines between cider, pear cider and perry. Clarity of labelling and product definition are key to education of consumers, not dumbing down of nomenclature. Appreciation of ingredients and provenance is

optional, but provision of that information should be essential, not exceptional.

Rather than a denial of its existence, all producers should be nurturing an appreciation for the craft in creating real perry. To relegate perry made from perry pears cheapens the product. In a time when the future of perry pears as a species hangs in the balance, we should be supporting an appreciation for a drink that could, one day, become a thing of the past. Appreciation for the value of perry trees and their fruit is diminished if their produce is not acknowledged.

A contributing factor to the rarity of perries is that planting perry pear trees doesn't yield rapid returns. With trees that can take more than 30 years to crop fully, few farmers or orchardists will see trees they plant now reach their prime in their



working lifetime. The success of future harvests also lies under the shadow of climate change and the rage of fire blight sweeping across the Three Counties. Yet, in spite of the challenges, perry pear trees are being planted by a devoted following. Tom Nancarrow (of Adam's Apples) sells out of hundreds of perry pear trees every year.

Given the tiny proportion of perries available, particularly outside supermarkets, it comes as no surprise that perry is misunderstood. Many people we chat to don't have a clear understanding of what perry is, few marvel at the opportunity to try a perry, often deterred by price point of a real perry over a pear cider. That price represents the time, skill and knowledge taken for it to be corralled, gentled, to tame the unpredictable fermentation. Commercial producers of pear cider harness the muscle of fining agents and fine filters to wrestle the juice into submission and dampen its wilful spirit. Artisans rarely so, employing honed intuition to harness the tempestuous juice and creating fine beverages of exceptional quality. Drinks with incredible complexity and diversity.

Artisan producers and perry aficionados continue to forge a way forward in the rebellion against the erasure of real perry. The Malvern show hosted its inaugural perry competition in 2025.

Perry didn't die last year – it thrived! Long may the rebellion continue.

Claire Daniels

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Two Trains and a Brewpub

Actually, considerably more trains and pubs than in the title. I travelled by rail, with my wife, from our Pershore home to Worcester, then Birmingham and finally Walsall for the first part of the adventure. I was taking part in the Black Country Real Ale Trail and two of their pubs in the old leather town were required to receive a stamp in the booklet. From there it was a direct train to Wolverhampton where my wife, Wendy, checked into the Premier Inn situated beside the old GWR Low Level station whilst I continued my Ale Trail quests to delightful Albrighton and Shifnal for a further three pubs. Back in Wolverhampton my day concluded with a visit to the iconic Holden's **Great Western** pub (pictured) by the station (well it would be wouldn't it) and finally the Black Country Ales pub in the town centre.



The next day dawned, as we with our friends from Pershore and Hook Norton, waited on Wolverhampton station for the UK's youngest main line steam locomotive to arrive from Birmingham New Street with a charter train, operated by vintagetrains.co.uk, for Carlisle. Although there was a diesel attached to the rear of the train it was only used for shunting and was taken off at Crewe. The journey north was spectacular given the sunny day and the views across the Lake District along with the steam loco's beat was music to our ears. She was built in Darlington, emerging in 2008. It was a remarkable day for anyone at the lineside or intermediate stations as there was another steam hauled

charter to Carlisle that day and the two followed each other within minutes at speeds at 75 mph on the West Coast Main Line.

In Carlisle we headed for **West Walls Brewery**, about five minutes' walk from the station where the owners have done a fantastic job converting an old building into a wonderful and inviting brewery and tap. And it was crowded; we only just got seats. There were four ales on, two of their own and two guest ales along with keg beers from independent breweries.



Chatting to the locals in the brewery tap they informed us that the pub on Carlisle station had reopened. It opened originally some years ago as '301 miles from London' and it was a great loss to travellers like us when it closed a couple of years ago. Good news is that Lancaster Brewery has reopened it as Scott & Brassey and a large range of their beers is on offer. Using £400,000 from the DfT and Railway Heritage Trust the heritage themed venue, located on Platform 4, has been carefully renovated by Network Rail with support from Avanti West Coast train company.

Meanwhile the first steam train departed the Citadel station and headed for Preston via the infamous Settle and Carlisle line followed a couple of hours later by our train with Tornado on the front in glorious late afternoon light. The loco sped the train back to Wolverhampton and Birmingham having amassed over 400 miles in the day.

Real ale and steam trains seem to go together rather well.

Neil Berry

the Old Bush

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Cask Beer = Cultural Heritage?

Derby South MP Baggy Shanker has secured a parliamentary debate on protecting cask ale and recognising its production and serving as Intangible Cultural Heritage, after working with CAMRA.

Shanker has been working with the Campaign to support efforts to give cask beer greater recognition and protection, amid concern over the long-term decline in production and sales plus the growing pressure facing pubs, clubs and taprooms across the country.

The debate will allow MPs to discuss the importance of cask beer to Britain's brewing tradition, the traditional skills involved in making and serving it, and the role pubs play in local economies and community life.

Shanker said: "Cask ale is part of our British heritage, and something we should be proud of. It is not just about what is in the glass. It is about the tradition, skill and care that goes into brewing it and serving it properly, and about the pubs that

keep that tradition alive in communities across the country.

"I know how much our locals mean to people, so I'm proud to have secured this debate to make the case for our pubs, our brewers, the skilled workforce behind them and a great British tradition that deserves to be recognised."

CAMRA chairman Ash Corbett-Collins said: "CAMRA is proud to have worked with Baggy Shanker to help bring this debate to parliament. Cask ale is a living part of Britain's brewing tradition, still brewed, still served and still enjoyed in pubs across the UK.

"It reflects generations of skill and care, from the brewery to the cellar, but without stronger recognition that tradition is at risk. The long-term decline in production and sales should concern anyone who cares about consumer choice, brewing heritage and the future of our pubs.

"Parliament now has the chance to act. Recognising the production and serving of cask ale as Intangible Cultural Heritage would raise its profile, celebrate the expertise behind it, and strengthen the case for protecting and promoting it before more of this proud tradition is lost. Cask ale has earned its place in our national story. Now it is time to protect it."

CAMRA Derby branch campaigns officer Alan Pickersgill said: "It's great to see we, through working with Baggy, have spearheaded this campaign for this vital issue to be debated in parliament. This is a proud day for myself and the Derby branch."

The debate marks an important next step in the campaign to protect cask beer, support the pubs and brewers behind it and give greater recognition to a tradition that remains part of Britain's national story.

The debate application has been approved by the Backbench Business Committee, with a date now to be confirmed by parliamentary clerks.

The full debate title is: that this House has considered protecting consumers and promoting cask ale by recognising its production and serving as Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Timothy Hampson

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THE REAL ALE TAVERN
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THE OLD ROYAL LIBRARY
Malvern



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Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors

Despite the turmoil in the licensed trade over recent years, Britain remains blessed with many pubs that retain traditional, and often beautiful, historic interiors. Over thirty years ago, a body of CAMRA members began compiling a National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. Initially, they aimed to identify and record the most intact pre-war pub interiors, regardless of their architectural distinction. Before long, it was decided also to include pubs with special features or rooms of national significance. By then, around 270 pubs had inventory status.



Layout - survival of historic layout and internal divisions, either intact or readily discernible.

Historic fittings and decor - particularly old or original bar counters, bar-backs (gantries), fixed seating, fireplaces, plasterwork, vestibules, panelling, tiling and other ceramics.

Notable rooms and features - such as partitioned snugs; counter-less pubs; tiled paintings; snob screens etc.

The rarity of both historic layouts and historic fittings counts very

high in the selection process.

The next step was to develop regional inventories, capturing interiors that fell short of the criteria for the national list but were nonetheless of significant historic interest. Around the same time, early post-war pubs built on traditional lines and still intact also became eligible for inclusion.

The current grading system is simple and easy to understand. Within the single National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors are three grades:

A few years ago, CAMRA's Pub Heritage Group (PHG) agreed to move to a single inventory, based around a grading system using star ratings. Interiors are eligible for consideration if they have remained essentially unaltered for at least 50 years. There are three key aspects for assessments:

Three Star pubs are of outstanding historic importance. They will have stayed wholly or largely intact, in terms of layout and fittings, and/or retain rooms or features that are truly rare or exceptional. Only limited loss of such components is allowable before an interior fails



© Michael Slaughter LRP5

© Michael Slaughter LRP5



this standard. Currently 303 pubs are in this category.

Two Star pubs are of very special historic interest. They are highly important but fall just short of Three Star levels of overall intactness and/or rarity. Lost elements, often of layout, are clearly in evidence. There are presently 270 such pubs.

One Star pubs, by far the most numerous category (740), are of special historic interest. They have either readily identifiable historic layouts or retain rooms or features of special interest. More significant changes are allowable in this category than for the first two categories.

PHG keeps gradings under continual review and makes changes where appropriate. Generally, this is because alterations to an interior have impacted on the pub's historic importance. In other cases, members will re-assess current gradings, especially where a pub has not been surveyed for a long time or where a wider range of views is felt to be beneficial.

PHG also campaigns hard to protect and promote these precious heritage assets. Over the years, we've been able to get many of them statutorily listed so that they enjoy an extra layer of protection from unwanted

alterations. Where inventory pubs come under threat of closure or unsympathetic change, we'll do what we can to save them. On a positive note, we seek to raise awareness of the delights these pubs provide, through our website and a range of publications.

You can find much more information about the National Inventory, and heritage pubs generally, at camra.org.uk/heritage-pubs. A complete list of inventory pubs is at camra.org.uk/heritage-pubs/national-inventory. We also issue a monthly bulletin featuring news about heritage pubs. To subscribe, email bulletin@pubheritage.camra.org.uk with Subscribe as the subject.

We are always keen to hear from visitors to the listed pubs, especially where there have been changes that we might not know about. Thank you.



Paul Ainsworth, Chair, Pub Heritage Group

*Images:
Opposite from top:
Fleece, Bretforton. Paul Pry, Worcester*

*This page from top:
Bell and Cross, Holy Cross. Mughouse,
Claines. Three Kings, Hanley Castle,*

Beer Scores and the Good Beer Guide

Rating	Description	Your reaction
Excellent	Exceptional and clear (if intended to be) with fantastic aromas, flavours and ideal carbonation.	Superb! You tell your friends and compliment the cellar manager.
Very good	Satisfying and well-kept with a great appearance, good carbonation and enticing aromas and flavours.	You consider having another and may cancel plans to move to another pub.
Good	Nice appearance, good carbonation, aromas and flavour.	Pleasant but not memorable. You're happy to have another but might consider something else.
Acceptable	Unremarkable and ordinary, with no noteworthy characteristics.	You're unlikely to have another unless it is all there is and there isn't another pub to go to.
Poor	Noticeably imperfect.	Drinkable with resentment, but you politely ask for a replacement.
Undrinkable	Unpleasant to drink, likely with a disgusting taste, incorrect appearance and off/foul aroma.	You politely ask for it to be replaced and consider asking the publican to take it off.

There are tens of thousands of pubs across the country serving cask beers, and many of those serve really good pints.

For lovers of a decent pint, it's important to be able to find them. CAMRA's Good Beer Guide has been the 'bible' for finding the very best ones since 1974 and continues to be relied upon by tens of thousands of people. CAMRA's online pub guide camra.org.uk/pubs can also help because beer quality is indicated by the '3 Pints' symbols that CAMRA members can see when logged in.

Pubs and clubs that serve really excellent pints, and serve them consistently well, can be potential candidates for the Good Beer Guide.

To help identify them, CAMRA members score their pints whenever they have the opportunity. Their scores help local branches determine candidates for the Guide, and these can change year on year because the standards are high. Serving live cask beer requires skill in the cellar and attention by bar staff all the time. Competition for a place is stiff because only 4,500 places are available.

Up until now, the scoring system has used a numbering system of 0 to 5. But there are problems with this. It requires memorising the

criteria for each score and using them consistently, but memories can be variable. Some people genuinely struggle with numbers, so they don't take part. It becomes open to individual interpretation with resulting inconsistency between scorers. There's also the potential for individual bias and a reluctance to 'award' high scores.

We all know when we are drinking a good pint that's been well-kept, and we also know when a pint is very good or excellent – who cannot resist telling everyone else about it! And likewise, a pint that is simply OK or, hopefully not often, undrinkable.

So to make things easier for everyone, a new intuitive ratings system is being introduced, which is more descriptive of the beer being drunk.

Each of the new ratings has a description and a likely reaction to help you pin down the most appropriate rating.

Ratings can be recorded on CAMRA's online pub guide camra.org.uk/pubs by all CAMRA members so start rating your beer now. If you're not a CAMRA member but would like to rate your beers then head over to camra.org.uk/membership.





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Beer Festivals 2026

Stratford Beer & Cider Festival

5-6 June Stratford Racecourse CV97 9SE

stratfordbeerfestival.org.uk

All are welcome to the 18th Stratford-Upon-Avon Beer and Cider Festival at Stratford Racecourse. With 40+ beers and 20 ciders from across the country you'll be sure to find something to tingle those taste buds. Saturday afternoon we have The Lockdown Layabouts back by popular demand. Well behaved children and dogs welcome | Designated drivers' get free entry and a soft drink. Food vendors available at all sessions. All entrance packages include: £10 beer & cider tokens, non-refundable glass and programme. Advance ticket information and prices available on the website.



Beer on The Wye

10-12 July Hereford Rowing Club HR4 0BE

beeronthewye.wixsite.com/beeronthewye

Herefordshire's biggest beer & cider festival returns to the beautiful banks of the River Wye and this year is set to be better than ever.

135+ incredible beers from every corner of the UK, 130+ ciders & perries, including the largest collection of Herefordshire draught cider under one roof. An amazing International Beer Bar curated by the legendary Hereford Beer House team. Live bands and entertainment all weekend long. A stunning riverside setting in the heart of historic Hereford. A relaxed, friendly atmosphere that keeps thousands coming back every year. Last time the festival welcomed over 6,000 festival-goers. Whether you're a seasoned ale enthusiast, cider lover, craft beer explorer or just looking for an unforgettable summer weekend with friend, Beer on the Wye has something for everyone. Get ready for sunshine, music, laughter, riverside vibes and some of the best beer and cider you'll find anywhere in the UK.



Worcester Beer, Cider and Perry Festival 2026

13-15 August Worcester Racecourse

festival.worcester.camra.org.uk

After a super successful festival in 2025, the Worcester CAMRA Beer, Cider and Perry festival will once again be held in its new home at the Grandstand on Pitchcroft racecourse.

The Grandstand offers the festival a fantastic setting overlooking the Worcester skyline and offers plenty of indoor and outdoor seating, creating the best beer garden in Worcester for the duration of the festival.

The festival is a great place to meet your friends, meet new friends, put the world to rights, catch up on old times and enjoy the festival vibe.

This year, there will be over 100 local and national beers alongside over 50 ciders and perry's, 16 of which will be fruit ciders, representing 7 counties and 15 producers. In addition, there will be fruit and grape wines, prosecco, food vendors, and live music performances.

The festival is having a strong ales theme (ABV over 6.5%) and will be hosting the CAMRA Regional Strong Ale and Barley Wine competition. To tie in with this, there will be a festival special ale, which is being brewed by Worcester's new nano brewery, Grinbull Brewing, who will be using Worcester Plums to create a dark ale at around an ABV of 7%.

If you are not a fan of strong ales, don't worry as there will still be over 90 lower alcohol ales of all styles, including low alcohol and no alcohol options.

The festival is being held 13-15 August, opening at midday on each day. Tickets can be bought in advance, at a discount, from the festival site where more details on the festival can be found festival.worcester.camra.org.uk.

With the reduction in the amount of CAMRA festivals in the area, the organisers of the Worcester Festival are expecting it to be even more popular than usual and are recommending people to get tickets in advance to guarantee entry.

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WORCESTER RACECOURSE, GRANDSTAND WRI 3EJ

13TH - 15TH AUGUST 2026

QR CODE

Kidderminster Beer & Cider Festival

12-14 November Harriers Supporter Club DY10 1NB

wyreforest.camra.org.uk

Having missed out last year, the Kidderminster Beer Festival is coming back this year to the Harriers Supporters Club in November.

We'll have more details in the Autumn issue of *Pint Taken*. You can also get updates from wyreforest.camra.org.uk

Bromsgrove Beer & Cider Festival 2027?

Due to rising costs and the changing landscape of events, we've made the difficult decision to cancel this year's Bromsgrove Beer & Cider Festival.

We're using this time to find a new home and redesign the festival experience. Stay tuned—we're planning to be back in 2027 with a fresh approach!

If anyone has any suggestions for possible venues, please get in touch - chair@brd.camra.org.uk

More CAMRA Beer Festivals

CAMRA Beer Festivals happen across the country and over 100 of them offer free entry to members. Visit camra.org.uk/events and check out the latest unmissable CAMRA beer festivals.

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SUNDAY 12.00 - 20.00

CAMRA Events and Contacts

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

June

Mon 1st Lunchtime Social (BRD) - 12pm to 2pm, Hop Pole, Friar St. Droitwich WR9 8ED

Tue 2nd Garden Social (WF) - 7pm, New Inn, Shrawley, WR6 6TE

Thu 25th Members Meeting & Social (BRD) - 7.30pm at The Eagle Inn, Crabbs Cross Redditch B97 5JA

July

Mon 6th Lunchtime Social (BRD) - 12pm, The Swan Inn, Chaddesley Corbett DY10 4SD

Tue 7th Social Stroll (WF) - 6pm, starting at The Anchor, Caunsall DY11 5YL

Thu 16th Social lunch (WF) - 1pm, Tap House, Hartlebury station DY11 7YJ

Tue 28th Members Meeting & Social (BRD) - 7.30pm at the Robin Hood Drayton DY9 0BW

August

Mon 3rd Lunchtime Social (BRD) - 12pm at The Black Tap Redditch B98 8BP

Tue 4th Members' Meeting (WF) - 7.30pm, Black Star, Stourport DY13 8YP

Tue 25th Members Meeting & Social (BRD) - 7.30pm, The Hill Tavern, Adams Hill, Clent DY9 9PS

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



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](https://www.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](https://www.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

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Real Ales & Beer Garden



Alvechurch Marina
Scarfield Wharf, Worcestershire, B48 7SQ

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Autumn Beer Festival 2026
Friday 18th and Saturday 19th September