

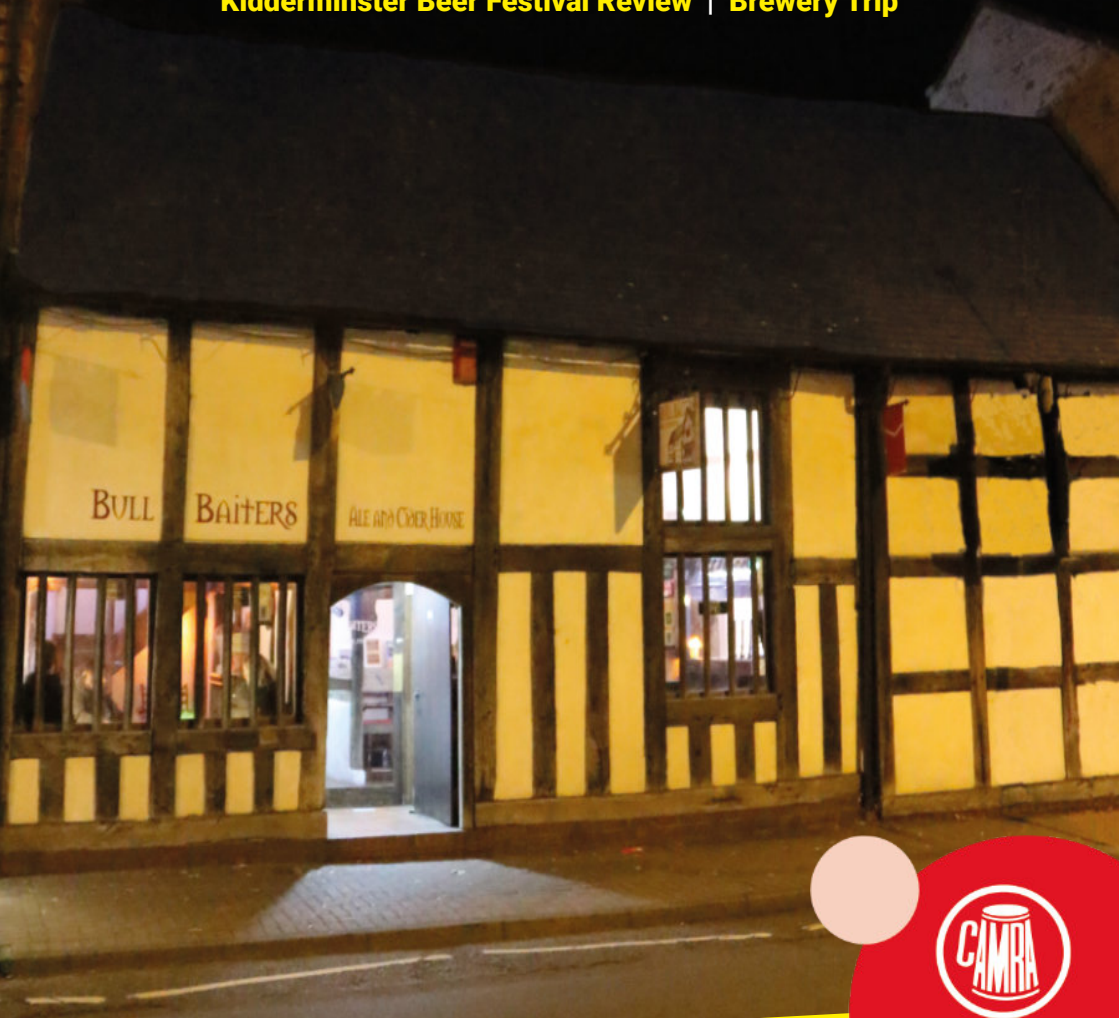
Winter 2022/2023

FREE

Pint Taken

Award Winning Worcestershire County CAMRA Magazine

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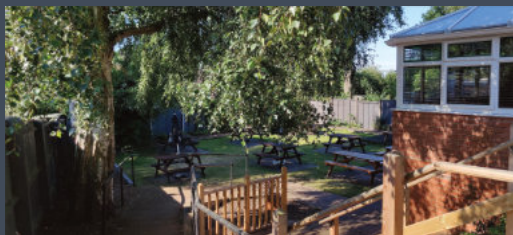
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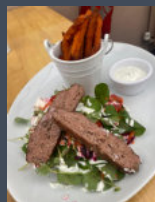
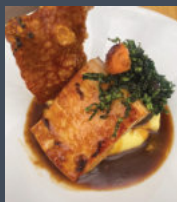
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Editor's Introduction

Welcome

Three prime ministers and two monarchs. In old money, that's half a lifetime, but in these crazy times, that's the pace of change I've witnessed while I've been editor of this very magazine.

Sadly my tenure as editor hasn't been filled with the same number of issues of the magazine as any of my predecessors, given that the UK spent several hundred days in lockdown. Anyway, we've done that at length in the past, so let's skip over that!

I always feel it's a great idea to keep things fresh, and with that in mind, it's now time for me to hand over the reins in 2023 to a brand new editor, who will no doubt continue the brilliant work this regional publication does to both inform and entertain. I haven't been able to get out and about in the local area in recent months due to doing a job that takes me all over the Home Counties and the South West. I can tell you about some fantastic micropubs in Essex and fantastic pubs in Wiltshire, but this wouldn't be in keeping with a focus on Worcestershire and the surrounding area.

We've had a lot of reader content submitted for the magazine over the past few months, so this issue is dedicated to you, the readers. I've had an absolute blast since 2019, my first issue commemorating the anniversary of this magazine, if we can all remember back that far! I will now be able to relax as a reader of the magazine, and I'm looking forward to hearing what you've all been up to.

Cheers and all the best

James

P.S. We are always on the lookout for editorial content submitted by our readers. Please don't feel you have to be a writer - we're always interested in featuring those who want to submit content, whether that be news, reviews, or lists of your favourite beer or cider. Email editor@pinttaken.org.uk

The copy deadline for the Spring issue of *Pint Taken* is 26th January.

Cover photo by Neil Berry: Bullbaiters, Worcester

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

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Pub News

Celebrations are happening at the **Swan** in Blakedown for Chris and Tracy Lowe, who've not only been in charge for 15 years this November, they've also entered the Good Beer Guide for the first time. The pub offers two or three well-kept real ales from local breweries and a menu of home prepared food and desserts which also includes gluten-free and vegan options. CAMRA members are offered a discount on real ales.

Kidderminster's oldest pub, **Ye Olde Seven Stars**, closed temporarily in October whilst Admiral Taverns seek a new tenant.

The **Bell** at Pensax, for many years one of Worcestershire's premier real ale and cider pubs and in almost all editions of the Good Beer Guide until 2019, closed suddenly in October when the business went into administration. Its future is uncertain at the time of going to print.

In Bewdley, the **Little Pack Horse** reopened under new management in October after a short closure. The first week included an acoustic music fund-raising night for Women's Aid, and the new menu has vegetarian and vegan-friendly options, as are some of the ales.

In Pershore, the **Millers Arms** has closed and owners Wadworth are looking for a new tenant. It is understood that a local entrepreneur was believed to have taken it over but this is no longer happening.

The Ounce Bar and Kitchen in the Tything, Worcester is opening at the **Dolphin** at Bishampton on December 15th.

The **Swallow's Nest**, Romsley is due to reopen in December after a period of closure for refurbishment.

The **Hart** (formerly White Hart) at Headless Cross in Redditch re-opened in October after a ten-month closure and a £400,000 refurbishment including an all-weather courtyard, though there are no hand pumps on the new bar and real ale is

not available. The Hart does serve food but is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Alex Savage of the **Fox and Goose**, Droitwich writes to tell us: 'The rumours you heard were

true. We (my partner Ana and I) reopened the pub at the end of June. the two differences from last time are that we have a card machine and Humphrey isn't responsible for this pub anymore, his son Samuel is our area manager. We open at 12pm every day and close at 11pm (10:30 Sunday) although we are closed on Tuesdays. We have an active facebook page'.



Tracey and Chris celebrate in the Swan, Blakedown

The **Throckmorton** opposite Coughton Court near Studley has kindly offered to provide a 30p discount off a pint to card-carrying CAMRA members. Beers from Wye Valley and Purity are regularly featured alongside a Throckmorton Pale Ale house beer.

After a three month closure following former licensee John Hodgett's retirement, we are pleased to report that the **Oddfellows Arms** in Astwood Bank is open again. Three real ales are available, and so far Greene King Yardbird and Black Sheep Best Bitter have been spotted alongside Wye Valley HPA.

The **Cross & Bowling Green** in Branson's Cross closed in July. The existing pub is to be demolished and planning permission has been granted for a new pub with bed and breakfast accommodation to be built in its place.

The **Swan** in Studley has recently been refurbished and re-opened in November. It's operated by the Craft Union Pub Company (Stonegate), who also run the Woodland Cottage in Redditch.

The **Rising Sun** in Redditch is one of the announced 32 venues that pub operator Wetherspoons has put forward for closure. The company announced that it was "a commercial decision" as costs continue to rise. The pub will continue to trade under its current agreement

until a new operator for the property has been found. Wetherspoons also operates the Royal Enfield in Redditch which is less than 400m away from the Rising Sun.

After 13 years at the **Nailers Arms** in Bournheath, Phil Witherford and his team are making careful preparations to pass the pub onto a new licensee. Three years ago they also acquired the freehold of the **Swan** in Upton Warren, and despite their heartfelt best efforts, they have announced on social media that it's been difficult to manage both venues. They will continue to manage the Nailers until a new licensee can be found.

At the **Old Cock**, Droitwich, licensees Nick and Claire have extended their wide range of beers and re-established its reputation for pub games and activities. Along with regular Marston's/Wychwood/Banks's beers it now stocks Young's London Special, dark beers like Banks's Mild and Brain's SA. Many games and activities are played in the pub including new innovative board games that entertain drinkers.

This cosy multi-roomed pub offers great value, classic pub meals and discounts for CAMRA members.

After some turbulent periods of management at the **Doverdale Arms** in Droitwich, during which cask ales have been unavailable, the Heineken owned pub has been taken over by a real ale committed couple, Neil

and Marie. They are an experienced couple, who had great success in turning the Castle in Kidderminster from 'not much' to a CAMRA awarded real ale pub. Currently selling only Wye Valley HPA, but with the intention of increasing the range as real ale demand grows. *Smithy* has reported, "The beer tastes extremely good, and reflects the pride they have in keeping a



The Old Cock, Droitwich

great pint. The pub is predominantly a community pub, with significant interest in sport, and includes a separate large room for functions".

The **Brewers Arms**, West Malvern has been bought by the local community after a ten-month process to buy it. Local Worcestershire CAMRA member Andy Wood was part of the initial steering committee that guided the sale towards its successful conclusion, and he was obviously delighted. "It's taken a lot of time and effort to get here, especially if you factor in the fact that we first

indicated our willingness to buy the pub in 2016, but it is totally worth it. As a community-owned pub we aim to get the Brewers back to being the beating heart of the village." Mark Haslam, another member of the committee noted "On the first Sunday of ownership, over 40 locals, pub-supporters and shareholders turned out, mop buckets in hand, to clear out and give the pub a much overdue heavy clean. It was in desperate need of some TLC." Throughout October there have been regular working parties

cleaning, painting and repairing, as well as attacking the pub's overgrown garden. This will continue in November. The community company plans to appoint tenants to run the pub business, the aim being for it to be a genuine free house selling local beers and providing simple, but wholesome pub meals and snacks. The search is on for the 'right people' to run the pub.



The Brewers Arms, West Malvern, a community pub

Contact Mark via mdhaslam@btinternet.com or ring 07771 831048. It is anticipated the pub will re-open in December. More details at brewerscommunitypub.co.uk

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

Save Our Inn Signs

Founded in 1990, the Inn Sign Society raises awareness of the nation's pub signs and compiles a record for the benefit of future generations. Many pub names have links with events from the past or personalities of national and local importance, and the Society provides a forum for members to research the history of inns and pub names.

It has an active web site and a quarterly full-colour journal to which members are encouraged to submit articles, pictures of pub signs and news from their areas.

As inns and pubs close at an alarming rate, much local heritage is in danger of being lost forever. Pubs are not just a place to enjoy a drink, they are often at the heart of the community and can reflect its history.

Many members take a general interest in all signs, with some specialising in particular breweries, counties, aircraft or railways, to name but a few.

The local Midlands Group meets three or four times a year at the **Mare & Colt**, near Kidderminster, to enjoy a lunch followed by a slideshow of pub signs.

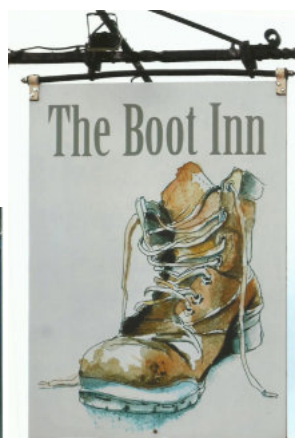
The Inn Sign Society is seeking to recruit more members and bring in new blood to

help continue the good work done over the last 32 years.

For more information, including on how to join, see the website at innsignsociety.com

If the Inn Sign Society doesn't research, capture and save our pub sign heritage, perhaps no-one else will.

Iain Perks, Membership Secretary Inn Sign Society



*Left: Farriers Arms Worcester
Above: Boot Inn, Flyford Flavell*

Thank you!

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Explore Your Clubs

Across the county, we have dozens of social clubs that welcome new members and offer quality real ale, cider and perry. They offer a lively environment, often with live music and rooms to hire for your own events. They are a unique aspect of our real ale scene and offer much for families and social groups too, such as stop-off points for ramblers, cyclists etc. and venues for parties. What clubs are there near you? Please email editor@pinttaken.org.uk to tell readers what they are missing and support your local clubs.

Near me, just a few miles north of Bromsgrove we have **Belbroughton Social Club**, at the heart of the village in the High Street, Belbroughton.

It has multiple drinking areas, a large garden, widescreen TV, ideal for sporting events plus a large function room upstairs with a bar which can be hired for your events.

Ginny on the bar enthusiastically offers Wye Valley beers plus the locally brewed Woodcote Brewery

beers such as XPA 3.9% and Crusade English Pale Ale 4.5% a straw-coloured ale which initially seems sweet, then a complex dry hoppy taste soon comes through. Visitors are welcome. Details from belbroughtonclub.org.uk or Facebook

Andy Checketts



Belbroughton Club, Belbroughton

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Clent Community and Social Club, Clent

Brewery News

4 Chaps started brewing in April 2021 from their brewery in Wythall. Their cask and keg beers have been featured at the Weighbridge, Alvechurch and they have had a number of pop-up events at Wythall Village Hall. More details from 4chapsbrewery.co.uk

Ambridge Brewery has currently suspended brewing. We will update readers in the next issue of the magazine.

Bewdley Brewery has just completed a collaboration beer with Brew 61 Brewery near Bromsgrove called Wokka Wokka named after the sound of a Chinook helicopter where the proceeds will be going to The Royal British Legion. As well as Chinook, Challenger and Admiral Hops are added. Another collaboration with **Brew 61 Brewery** has been a 5% stout using five British hops and six different malts. Their sales manager was a welcome attendee at one of the recent Worcester branch meetings.

Brothers of Ale Brewery Tap House in Stourport-on-Severn is open on Fridays from 5pm to 11pm, on Saturdays from noon to 11pm and on Sundays from 2pm to 7pm

Boat Lane Brewery Tap Room near Evesham is open from noon on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday to 8pm, Sunday to 6pm and Friday to 11pm

Copper Beech Brewery, as well as having held various events throughout the autumn, will be holding a pop-up tap at the Wolverhampton Christmas market from 16th to 18th December. The



4 Chaps beer featured at the Weighbridge, Alvechurch

brewery is now using a small piece of kit so that experimental and limited editions can be tested and brought to the market quickly.

Friday Beer in Malvern sell mainly bottle-conditioned beers and these are widely available across the county.

Gander Brewery. Two new beers are forthcoming from this Worcester brewery, a 4% English Pale Ale called El Jefe which is delicately hopped with

Citra and Cascade using a specialist English yeast and a 4.6% New England Pale Ale called Dreaming Of. This uses two New Zealand hop varieties, Motueka and Rakau which provide moreish, tropical fruit aromas and flavours to the finished beer.

Hartlebury Brewery will be holding a Christmas craft market on 4th December at their Tap House which is also open daily. The brewery itself is open office hours on weekdays except for Tuesday.

Hop Shed Brewery will be having two new cask beers for the Autumn / Winter. A 4.3% deep golden ale which delivers a burst of apricot followed by mellow caramel and orange flavours and this will be available from the beginning of November. As the beers produced thus far at the brewery have used up all the good chicken breed names they can find, this one will be called 'Fly the Coop'. The second beer is currently under development, but they are aiming to have a Gingerbread Latte Stout ready for December! The tap room hours remain the same throughout the winter; Friday 4 – 9pm and Saturday



Bewdley & Brew 61's Wokka Wokka

2 – 6pm with different food offerings every Friday evening. The Worcester CAMRA branch recently spent a wonderful Friday evening sampling the beers in the Tap Room including the excellent Green (Emperor) Hop pale ale.

Malvern Hills Brewery report the Taproom is going well and the local community is enjoying it. Just a reminder, it is open Thursday to Sunday from 6pm to 10pm but Sundays are only for group bookings.

Sociable Beer Company in Worcester are believed to be brewing a small range of beers for the local market.

Teme Valley Brewery held another Green Hop festival in October, an event always eagerly awaited by the real ale drinkers of Worcestershire and beyond. In the same month they received a visit from the area's MP Harriett Baldwin to discuss beer duty and the issues facing the hospitality industry.

Weatheroak Brewery beers are still available from their tap house in Studley.



Teme Valley Green Hop Festival

Weatheroak Hill beers were enjoyed by Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA at their meeting in the Coach and Horses, Weatheroak. Featured on cask were Icknield Pale Ale (3.8%), Cofton Common (4.5%) and the naturally hazy Slow Lane (4.4%).

Worcester Brewing Company operates from Arch 49 in the centre of Worcester.

Woodcote Brewing had a festival in late October at Fairfield Village Hall at which a specially brewed Pumpkin IPA (6%) was featured. Three of their beers (Randan, Helles and Mango IPA) were featured at the European Beer Consumers Union Parliamentary Reception, Brussels in September.

Brewery news is compiled by *Neil Berry*

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



Left: Woodcote Pumpkin IPA. Right: Beers at the parliamentary reception in Brussels

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Pub of the Season Award

On a sunny Sunday afternoon, members of Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA gathered at the **New Inn** at Bournheath to present their Autumn Pub of the Season Award to licensees Sharon and Gary Butler alongside their team.

The pub has seen a number of licensees come and go in recent years, and it hasn't been easy for country pubs to attract and retain regular customers, especially with so many other great pubs in the northwest Bromsgrove district. But licensees Sharon and Phil have done a fantastic job of keeping the pub operational since they took over the pub two years ago.

The bar stocks two Wye Valley beers alongside an occasional guest which are kept in excellent



Sharon and staff celebrate with Redditch & Bromsgrove CAMRA members

condition, and Sunday lunches are very popular. The pub also ran a mini beer festival during last year's Bromsgrove Beer Week with extra casks on the bar. Seeing a country pub do so well in uncertain times is fantastic.



Family run by Chris & Tracy

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Dear Pint Taken

Dear Pint Taken...

It was an absolute pleasure to be the chosen charity for the 2022 Bromsgrove Beer and Cider Festival. Not only was it great fun to attend, giving us a chance to speak to so many people within our community about the important work we do, but we also raised an amazing total of £1936.61 from the weekend. We raise our glasses to the hard-working CAMRA volunteers who made it happen!

Rebecca Stone, Fundraising Manager, Primrose Hospice

Thanks Rebecca for your kind comments, I speak for everyone involved when I say that we felt Primrose Hospice was an extremely worthy cause and I too am grateful to everyone for raising such a fantastic amount of money! - Ed



L-R: Mark Duncan and Kevin Joyce from Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA present the cheque to Rebecca and Gabrielle from Primrose Hospice

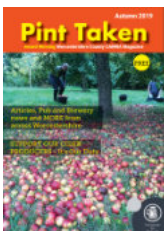
My wife likes walking and I like real ale. So when she said she had been reading my copy of *Pint Taken* and noticed an interesting walk in the magazine involving 4 real ale pubs from Alvechurch to Tardebigge she suggested we should do it. The walk in question was 6.5 miles in length but your magazine suggested it can be done in two halves which is the option we decided to take. The Alvechurch to Tardebigge section is a canal-side walk which also took us through woodland and country roads which started at the Weighbridge pub and finished at the Alestones pub a delightful watering hole within Tardebigge court which is a selection of small businesses. We would have never have found the Alestones pub without the help of your informative magazine.

We hope to see more walks revolving around real ale pubs featured in future issues of your magazine in that way we can both be kept happy.

Andy (and Maggie) Lynch.

See, Andy, that's the beauty of what we do at Pint Taken, we inform, we entertain and we quench your thirst, too. What more can you ask for? In this instance, we're also key to a happy marriage too, it seems... Compromise is key, of course!! - Ed

How great it was to see a class live band, namely the Reflections, providing great pop music at the Bromsgrove Beer Festival back in the hot summer of 2022. It's what the festival has needed for a long long time, many of us feel. The band was like a human jukebox, moving quickly from one number



to another, very listenable and danceable - many numbers reflecting the festival's Beatles theme, but broadly covering the 1960/70s classics - never too loud and with plenty of breaks for those who wanted to chat - ideal. A very mellow tribute to the Beatles was also provided by Mark Collinson and his wife - a regular and valued CAMRA trip organiser and musician. Well done David Wheeler, the festival organiser. It's great to attract visitors of all ages with beer, cider, perry, music and food. We look forward to doing it all again in 2023. Thank you to all of the organisers and volunteers.



The Reflections playing at Bromsgrove Beer & Cider Festival 2022

Andy Checketts

Thanks Andy. Comments duly noted regarding the festival music. These of course in direct response to a PT reader who, last issue, considered the aural

entertainment a bit too loud so thanks for coming back out to us with a balanced view - Ed

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A Walk in Grimley

This walk and many others can be found at walks.catshill.com where you can comment on the walk and report any issues. Details of the pubs can be found at WhatPub.com.

This five mile circular walk starts at the **Camp House**, Grimley, WR2 6LX near Holt Fleet (A443). The terrain is good, following a towpath, through fields and woods. The footpaths followed are clearly marked or signposted.

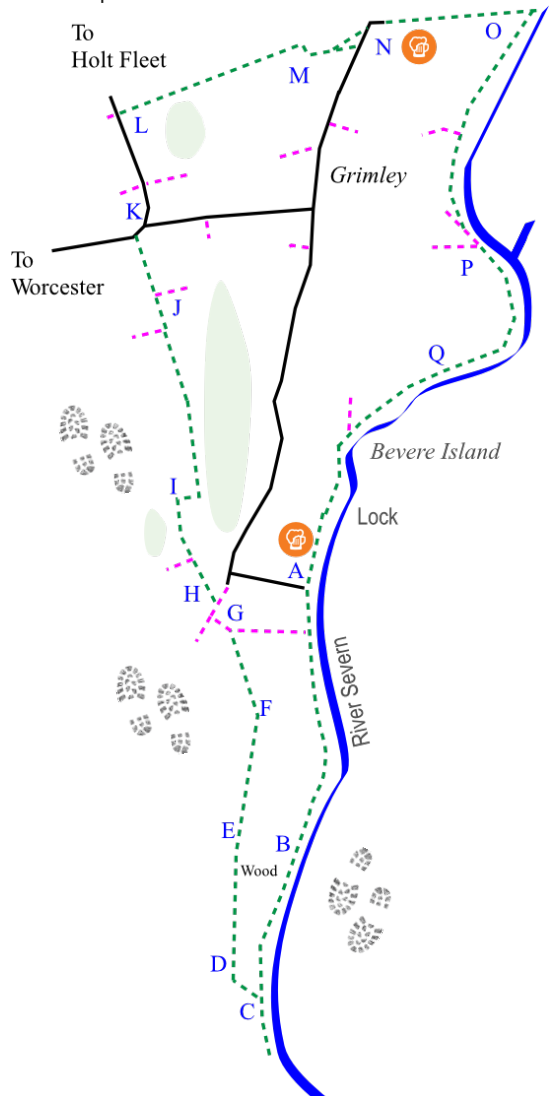
The Camp House car park (**A**) is at the end of Camp Lane. Follow the path around the pub and head south following the course of the river over stiles and through gates. After going through fields you will enter a wood (**B**). Continue to follow the river south until you meet the path (**C**) to the right which you will take. Still in woodland and before the wooden footbridge take the path (**D**) to the right.

Leave the wood at the ancient oak (**E**) and follow the path straight on and parallel to the hedge on your right. Through the gate (**F**) the path veers slightly to the left, under a power line and towards the corner of the field (**G**). Follow the track to the left but ignore the path on the left until you reach the tarmac drive. Ignore the bridleway left and turn right and then first left. This path (**H**) may be very overgrown so you can follow the track which runs parallel and to the left. The path continues with fishing lakes to the right and left at which point make sure you are on the footpath and follow this through the wooded section until you reach the open field (**I**).

The path marker suggests you should go straight on but it is better to turn right towards the lake and then turn left. Follow a straight path (with the coppice on your left) heading to the bottom corner of the field and parallel to the lake. In the next field ascend slightly and ignore the path to your right (**J**) until you meet the road (**K**). Follow the road right and then left past the vicarage. Ignore the first path but take the next to the right (**L**) just before the main road junction.

The path leads across a field to the left of the lake. Go through the gate and ascend in a straight line until you meet another gate (**M**). Go through the gate and follow the path to the

right and then left. Go straight on or take the path right through the churchyard until you meet the road and the Wagon Wheel pub (**N**). Follow the road and then the track until it meets the river (**O**) when you turn right. Follow the path alongside the river ignoring the paths on the right but noting the junction of the Droitwich Barge Canal (**P**). You pass gates and a copse (**Q**) and walk alongside Bevere Lock until you reach the Camp House.





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FRI	12.30pm	- 11.00pm
SAT	12.00pm	- 11.00pm
SUN	12.00pm	- 9.00pm

Dogs are welcome



21a High Street, Studley, B80 7HN. For further information call 01527 854433, email toby@weatheroakbrewery.co.uk or visit our website www.weatheroakbrewery.co.uk

Hopshed Brewery Trip

In Suckley between Worcester and Bromyard is the **Hopshed Brewery**. It is sited on a working hop farm and boy can you smell the hops when you visit!

The brewery tap bar is open to visitors on Fridays to 9pm and Saturdays to 6pm.

Worcester CAMRA ran a bus on Friday 30th September to check out the beers on sale and we weren't disappointed!

Beers ranged from session IPAs to porters and were very reasonably priced at £3.60 a pint. The friendly staff behind the bar gave good information about each beer style so those not familiar with such a range of ales could choose one to suit their taste.

Personally, my favourite was the Green Hop Pale Ale made with Emperor hops and coming in at 4% ABV but all the beers on sale were in good

condition and well served.

To accompany the beers a mobile Sri Lankan curry van was situated just outside selling a range of meat and vegetarian dishes - the type of food sold varies from week to week.

By early evening the place was packed with good-natured drinkers enjoying the atmosphere and the beers!

I thoroughly recommend a visit to the Hopshed but get there early to reserve your seat.

Alan Grainger



A great trip to Hopshed Brewery by Worcester CAMRA



Vacancy

We are looking for an editor for Worcestershire best pub magazine. Its a fun and rewarding role and you'll be working alongside a great team of CAMRA members from the three Worcestershire CAMRA branches. No previous experience is necessary but you will need to have good written communication skills and a love of pubs. You will get lots of support from our design team too.

If you are interested and would like to know more about what this voluntary role involves we would love to chat with you. Email editor@pinttaken.org.uk and we will be in touch.

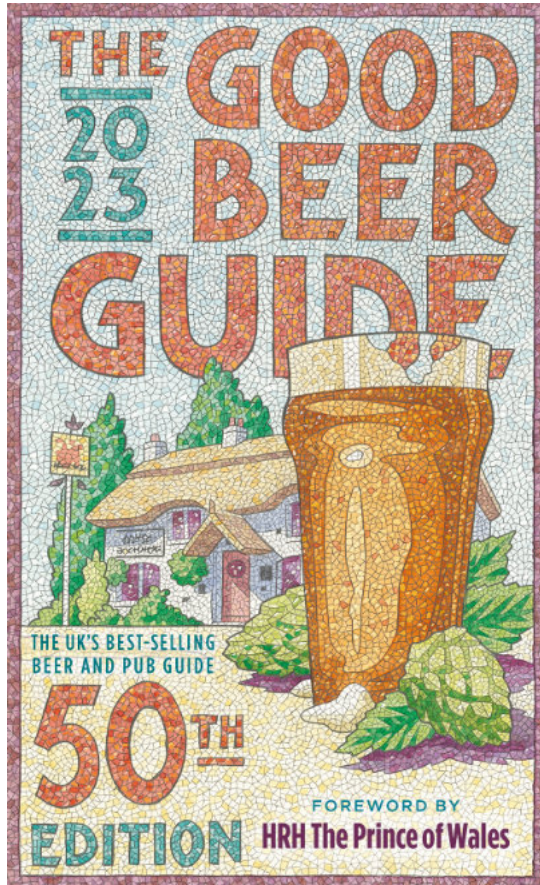
50 Years of the Good Beer Guide

CAMRA has launched the Good Beer Guide (GBG) for 2023 in time for Christmas - this is the 50th edition of the guide dedicated to Real Ale pubs. The 1973 edition was just listings on sheets of paper rather than a book, but in 1974 a 96-page book was produced showing all of the breweries (on two pages) and a selection of the best real ale pubs by county. There were just 105 brewing companies named compared with 1864 in the new guide. The initial print run sold well but was withdrawn following legal action by Watney's. The wording was slightly changed and a second print run was produced.

The Worcestershire section of those early editions included Dudley, Netherton and Stourbridge with about half the pubs listed being in Worcester itself. No pubs were listed in Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Evesham, Malvern or Redditch and the county only showed one brewery (and that was Ma Pardoe's Home Brew in Netherton). All the pubs were shut by 2.30pm and reopened at 6pm.

The **Fleece** at Bretforton was not yet in the hands of the National Trust and was shown as being run by the same family for 300yrs and effectively unchanged. Most beers were from M&B, Banks's and Marstons, but Bass, Ansells, Courage, Davenport's, Hansons, Bathams, Pardoes and Simpkiess were also available if you knew where to go.

Only five pubs in the UK have made every edition of the GBG, none of which are in the Midlands.



However, there are a few which were in the first guide which have maintained a presence over the years **Swan** (Chaddesley Corbett), **Black Boy** (Wyre Hill, Bewdley), **Plough** (Shenstone), **Queen Elizabeth** (Elmley Castle), **Fleece** (Bretforton) and the **Imperial** (Worcester).

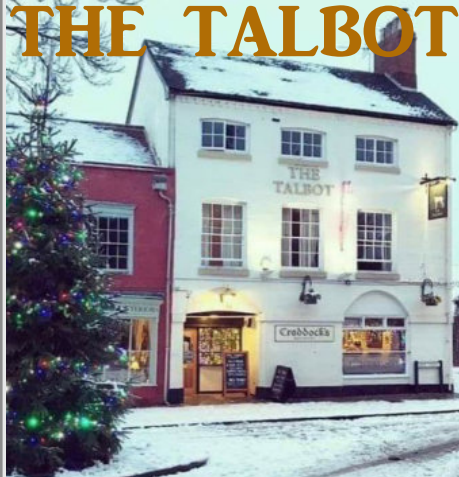
The 50th edition has a forward which was written in August by the then Prince Charles. Much has happened in the last few years and our pubs and breweries are under financial pressure like never before. CAMRA is encouraging drinkers to use the Guide to seek out good ale around the country whilst still supporting their local.

Worcestershire has 15 breweries and 56 pubs featured in the latest CAMRA Good Beer Guide serving the

county and beyond. Some breweries have their own tap houses where you can buy beer exactly where it's brewed such as at Hartlebury, Hop Shed Brewery (Suckley), Bewdley Brewery and the Malvern Hills Brewery. Pubs are social centres, community assets, meeting places for fun, gatherings of friends and neighbours as well as places to seek out as a visitor to a new area and sources of employment. Check them out in the 2023 CAMRA Good Beer Guide available online at camra.org.uk/publications at good book stores and at www.amazon.co.uk

Graham Chapman with thanks to Andy Checketts

CHRISTMAS AT THE TALBOT



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Sat 3rd Dec - live music from 7pm with The Dollhouse

Tues 6th Dec - Quiz Night

Sat 10th Dec - live music from 7pm with Joseph Morris

Thu 15th Dec - Christmas open mic night

Sat 17th Dec - The Talbot annual Christmas knees up with DJ Sean + Santa and his elves, 7pm til late!

Tues 20th Dec - The Big Christmas charity quiz

Fri 23rd Dec - live music with The Juke Box Heroes from 7pm

Sun 25th Dec open 12 til 2pm

Sat 31st Dec - live music with The Duvets from 7pm. Open until 1am

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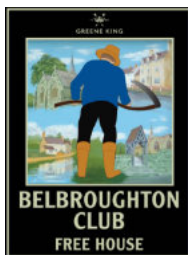
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www.belbroughton.club

Cider in The Lenches

For those of you unfamiliar with the pretty villages of The Lenches east of Worcester, they are worth a trip, but you could also visit the Lenches Cider Company situated next door to the church in Rous Lench.

The cider maker, John Whitfield, brews and sells a variety of delicious ciders from his delightful cider barn at the back of his house.

John describes why and how he started brewing cider as follows:

“Forty years ago I was a regular cider drinker at the **Wheelbarrow Castle** pub in Rous Lench. They sold traditional still cider from a barrel on the bar. One day they replaced it with Woodpecker on tap, which was not a patch on the traditional cider I enjoyed.

A friend suggested I make my own and I started on a journey of discovery into traditional cider making. I went on courses, spoke to many small

cider makers, and apprenticed myself to an aged local cider maker. He packed up and I bought my own equipment from a rural life museum and started a small business with his son in law. We

built the business up supplying farm shops and making up to 50 forty gallon barrels of juice for individual customers.

My partner left the business and I am now a sole trader working within the 7000 litre limit with modern equipment. I do supply to farm shops and pubs but mainly sell from

my own off licence premises.

Currently I am supplying the **Red Lion** at Evesham, the **Fleece** at Bretforton and the **Broomfield Tavern** at Coventry.

I have a passion for making cider with 100% fresh cider apple juice and using wild fermentation with little chemical intervention. I enjoy experimenting with different varieties. I am continually learning and hopefully improving. I lean towards making cider that is to my taste but am always trying different real ciders – often very difficult to find in most pubs. My aim is to provide an alternative to industrial cider and welcome the support from organisations like CAMRA. Encouraging pubs to stock and serve local products gives customers more choice and helps to preserve regional differentiation.”

John has a website lenchescider.co.uk which offers information about his ciders and where you can find his contact details.

Sue Rose



John Whitfield serving his cider



Gareth & Hayley offer a warm welcome at

The HOP POLE



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Threat to Ma Pardoes

The **Old Swan**, Netherton (also known as Ma Pardoes), is facing closure due to rising costs and reduced footfall, with the Grade II listed pub now selling only half the amount of beer compared to pre-lockdown. Located in the Black Country, The Old Swan is listed in CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors and is famous for brewing its own beer, and the associated Olde Swan Brewery would also close. The pub was one of only four remaining brewpubs when CAMRA was formed.

Licensee Tim Newey says they 'haven't really had any help with the rent' from owners Star Pubs & Bars. Tim also submitted a rate reduction application to the council a year ago, following an increase of 60%, which has not been resolved. And he also cites the burden of paying back the

government's bounce back loan.

Dudley and South Staffs CAMRA is actively helping Tim to try and resolve these issues and have contacted the council as a matter of urgency.



A Beer Poem

Worcestershire Poet Heather Wastie loves her beer and has penned a poem about serving pints.

The Pull

Instructions from the ale-wife:

The glass is the key to the beer's nose.
Grease destroys the head.
A beer should never be poured straight down.
Remember what I said.

Approach the pump.
For a stout
place the glass on the drip tray.
With lager or bitter
hold the glass at 40 degrees.
For Real Ale make sure
the nozzle's well down
for the further it falls
the more it will foam.
A beer should never be poured straight down.
Remember what I said.

Pull down strongly and smoothly
then make sure the nozzle is clear of the beer.
Three or four pulls will fill the glass
but don't stop till it overflows
as the foaming head will cloud your view.
The foaming head will cloud your view.
Listen to what I'm telling you.

The head should measure at least a quarter of an inch
and if the beer is light and clear with a polished hue
your fingertips should be visible through the glass.

But the foaming head will cloud your view.
The foaming head will cloud your view.
Listen to what I'm telling you.
A beer should never be poured straight down.
Remember what I said.

© Heather Wastie



Railway Station Pubs and Bars

I love getting out and about and our trains are the backbone of travel in Britain. I also love a nice pint, but here's where combining those two activities works at its best. Whether travelling for business or pleasure, these are my favourite pub discoveries in stations.

The Sheffield Tap, Sheffield

A *stunning* restoration job on Platform 1B of Sheffield train station, this Edwardian former refreshment room turned free house and microbrewery is well worth a visit – although you may very well miss your train.

The King and Castle, Kidderminster

Another one in a refreshment room setting and an establishment very familiar to *Pint Taken* readers, this ambient pub backs out onto the Severn Valley Railway platform and living museum. Sit and watch the steam trains, smell the soot in the air and sip on a well-kept pint of cider or beer – what more can you ask for?

The Railwayman's Arms, Bridgnorth

... And at the other end of the Severn Valley Railway in beautiful Shropshire sits the Railwayman's Arms, the first happy thing to greet you off the train! It's managed to remain open since the closure of the railway route, and now an essential part of the heritage railway as it is. Possibly seen on BBC comedy show 'Oh Doctor Beeching', which was filmed on the SVR.



Stalybridge Buffet Bar, Manchester

Small, friendly, and located on platform 4 of Stalybridge station in Greater Manchester, this is the one venue on the list I made a special visit to (rather than happily being in the right place at the right time. Oozing with Victorian charm, the real attraction here is the original marble bar and beautiful ornate ceiling.



Codsall Station, Staffs

Fantastic pub in an old stationmaster's house that's well worth a visit. It's beautifully bright, airy and traditional with a fantastic old conservatory, this is good for a quiet pint in a place that overlooks the station platforms.



James Griffiths

Footnote

Many railway pubs and bars have unique and historic interiors.

The definitive guide to unspoilt pubs that have escaped major changes has been compiled by CAMRA's Pub Heritage Group and can be found at pubheritage.camra.org.uk

They range from simple unaltered village pubs to glorious late-Victorian extravaganzas. Each is very special in its own way



Photos from the top: Sheffield Tap, Sheffield; King and Castle, Kidderminster; The Railwayman's Arms, Bridgnorth; Stalybridge Buffet Bar, Manchester; Codsall Station, Staffs



10 great reasons to join CAMRA

1 CAMPAIGN
for great beer, cider and perry

2 Become a
BEER EXPERT

3 Enjoy CAMRA
BEER FESTIVALS
in front of or behind the bar

4 GET INVOLVED
and make new friends

5 Save
YOUR LOCAL

6 Find the
**BEST PUBS
IN BRITAIN**

Get great
**7 VALUE FOR
MONEY**

8 DISCOVER
pub heritage and the
great outdoors

Enjoy great
9 HEALTH BENEFITS
(really!)

10 HAVE YOUR SAY

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and join the campaign today:

www.camra.org.uk/10reasons



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Kidderminster Beer & Cider Festival

Kidderminster Town Hall was again buzzing this year, in early November, with happy festival visitors enjoying meeting up with friends to enjoy the ciders, beers and specialty gins. Not deterred by the lack of trains on two of the three days, many found other ways to get there, so strong is the draw of Wyre Forest CAMRA's friendly annual event.



Steve Day, Kidderminster Town Crier and CAMRA member

The festival's organisers were anticipating reduced numbers of visitors, particularly on the Friday, due to no trains running. There was a queue to get in at midday, and the magnificent Kidderminster Town Hall filled up as if nothing had changed! What was even more surprising was that the evening session was the best ever!

Saturday was also busy, and by late afternoon all of the 41 beers had sold out and there was hardly any cider left.

Local band Spanner in the Works entertained the crowd, and local caterer EAT of Hartlebury, who had thankfully stepped in at the last minute after the original caterer pulled out two weeks earlier, kept everyone fed. It seems that whilst the lack of trains hindered folks getting to Kidderminster, more local people attended who could not travel elsewhere. Happy days all round!

Visitors were very complimentary and appreciative of the selection of beers and ciders, and almost all had been sourced from within 25 miles, including from local breweries Bewdley, Brothers of Ale and Hartlebury. The Beer of the Festival, voted for by visitors, was Titanic Plum Porter Grand Reserve, and



Cider of the Festival was Gwatkin's Pyder.

CAMRA festivals around the Midlands host the regional rounds of the Champion Beer of Britain each year for different beer categories. The winner of Speciality Ales - differently produced, was from a Birmingham brewery, Burning Souls' Belgian IPA. It's different because of the Belgian yeast used in its fermentation, which imparts rich fruity aromas and flavours of subtle mango with a hint of pear. It's a complex and delicious beer, and a worthy winner which goes forward to the next round of the competition against winners from other CAMRA regions.

Grateful thanks go to local businesses for their support and sponsorship of individual casks and adverts in the festival programme, with particular thanks to Brew61 of Bromsgrove for the fantastic staff tee shirts, Wigley DIY of Stourport for the floor covering, the Bear & Wolf pub in Kidderminster for the programme, and the Black Star in Stourport.

Several hundred pounds were raised for this year's charity, Home Start, who provide support to struggling families with children so that they have a better start in life.

In January, Kidderminster Town Hall closes for 18 months for a major overhaul and transformation. The festival will likely be at the Kidderminster Harriers Social and Supporters Club next year - hope to see you there!

Branch Contacts

Redditch & Bromsgrove Branch (RB)

Email paul@rb.camra.org.uk or call Paul 07974 889553 Website rb.camra.org.uk Facebook facebook.com/groups/rbcamra 2023 meetings held on fourth Tuesday of the month and start at 8pm.

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 7.45 for 8pm.

Wyre Forest Branch (WF)

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

Shakespeare Branch

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

Worcestershire Tasting Panel

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

Events on the following page are open to all CAMRA members, and non-members are welcome to join us.



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Opening times
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Tuesday, Wednesday
1100-1430 & 1730-2300
Food 1200-1400 & 1800-2100
Thursday to Saturday
1100-2300
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Sunday
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www.elmleycastle.com

Branch Diaries

December

Tue 6th Members' meeting (WF) - Chester Tavern, Kidderminster DY10 1TN

Tue 13th Branch Social (RB) - Swan, Chaddesley Corbett DY10 4SD

Wed 14th Branch Meeting (WO) - Venue TBA. See Branch website

Thur 15th Branch Social (WF) - Bird-in-Hand, Stourport DY13 9BD

January

Wed 4th New Year Social (WF) - With food and beer, Chester Road Sports & Social Club, Kidderminster DY10 1TH

Wed 11th Branch Meeting (WO) - Venue TBA. See Branch website

Tue 24th Branch Social (RB) - Crown, Withybed Green B48 6AX

Thur 26th Branch Social (WF) - Fedoras, Stourport DY13 9EQ

February

Wed 8th Members' meeting and AGM (WF) - King & Castle Valley Suite, Kidderminster DY10 1QX

Wed 8th Branch Meeting (WO) - Venue TBA. See Branch website

Tue 28th Branch Social (RB) - Talbot, Droitwich WR9 8EJ

March

Tue 7th Members' meeting (WF) - Old Waggon & Horses, Ismere DY10 3NX



Beer Festivals

February

The Great British Beer Festival Winter

16th-18th, Burton Town Hall, Burton upon Trent, DE14 2EB

ukwinter.gbbf.org.uk



The **Great British Beer Festival Winter** takes place in Burton upon Trent between 16th and 18th February.

As the winter counterpart to CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival, visitors will find a fantastic range of not only dark and winter brews but a great selection of light and hoppy ales to sample over the period.

The festival will feature hundreds of cask and craft beers, ciders, perries and gin in the beautiful surrounds of Burton Town Hall, where visitors can also enjoy a range of entertainment and food throughout the weekend.

More details from winter.gbbf.org.uk



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