

WIN BREWERY TRIPS TO STROUD & ULEY, A DAY AT BREWHOUSE & KITCHEN WIN A ONE-NIGHT STAY AT THE ROYAL HOP POLE HOTEL TEWKESBURY WIN TICKETS TO THE LAST LINTON FESTIVAL



free

**PLEASE
TAKE
ONE**

the tippler

SUMMER 2026

INSIDE

**Summer Festivals
throughout the County**

**Sustainable Brewing
at Cotswold Lion**



GREAT BEER MADE HERE.



INDEPENDENT
ORGANIC
SUSTAINABLE

BREWED IN THE COTSWOLDS



PIA
NEW ZEALAND
PALE ALE

4.0% ABV

GRAPEFRUIT
ZESTY
CRISP



**SHIFT
HAPPENS**

LOW ALC
PALE ALE

1.0% ABV

FULL FLAVOUR
LESS ALCOHOL



SIDEQUEST

STEAM BEER
(CALIFORNIA
COMMON)

4.4% ABV

FRUITY
CARAMEL
CRISP



**SUMMER
KRUSH**

SESSION IPA

4.0% ABV

CITRUS
TROPICAL
EASY



100% ORGANIC
INGREDIENTS
Better for beer,
better for the planet.



POWERED BY
RENEWABLES
We brew and power our taproom
with 100% renewable energy.



INDEPENDENT
SINCE 2006



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ROTATING
TAPS

GREAT
FOOD

DOG
FRIENDLY

EVENTS
& MORE



FRONT COVER: The amazing Prince Albert
on Rodborough Hill, Stroud – read all about
it on page 36

Welcome to



the tippler

SUMMER 2026

THE MAGAZINE OF THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE
BRANCHES OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

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CAMRA NEWS IN BRIEF

Congratulations to the following branch Pubs and Clubs of the Year:

- The Nottingham Arms, Tewkesbury – Tewkesbury Pub of the Year**
- The Cross House Tavern, Tewkesbury – Tewkesbury Cider Pub of the Year**
- The Eight Bells, Chipping Camden – North Cotswold Pub of the Year**
- The Conservative Working Men's Club, Winchcombe – North Cotswold Club of the Year**
- Chalford Sports and Social Club – Stroud Club of the Year**

In addition, congratulations to

The Hoptician, Dursley

which has been voted Gloucestershire CAMRA's Cider Pub of the Year



EDITORIAL . . .



It's a rare thing that I get all loquacious, some may say even mellifluous, but in this case I will hand over and quote one of England's greatest ever writers. I can't stand him myself, but every now and then, I find a gem and this is one of them:

'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness...'

So, what is all this about? Well take a read through our resident Beer Ticker's feature about his 'Tale of Two Festivals' on pages 70-73. Dickens, a noted drinker, had it just right. It may not be the French Revolution I'm speaking about, but a revolution may be necessary nonetheless.

The biggest bugbear I hear about running a CAMRA beer festival is the amount of restrictive paperwork, health and safety, accountancy, insurance, licences etc., etc.

Like many organisations, the administration machine becomes more important than the product, service, or indeed, customers. The actual beer choices and enjoying the event come a long way down the list of wanted outcomes. It's no wonder so many have disappeared in recent years. We need to get back to the most important people involved: the visiting drinkers.

Notwithstanding the above rant, if you haven't been to a beer festival yet, well, what are you waiting for? There's a great competition to get tickets for the very last Linton Festival, one of the best around, so look out for that.

In the meantime, carry on enjoying your beer!

Chris Leibbrandt, Editor

THE NOTTINGHAM ARMS

Tewkesbury CAMRA Pub of the Year 2026

130A High St, Tewkesbury, GL20 5JU • www.nottinghamarms-tewkesbury.co.uk

**CHECK OUT
WHAT'S
POURING
ON FACEBOOK**



**NO GIMMICKS
NO GAS
JUST GREAT
ALE & CYDER
FROM THE BARREL**

THE INDEPENDENT ALE & CYDERHOUSE IN THE HEART OF TEWKESBURY

REAL ALE + REAL CYDER + REAL PUB

A BEER FESTIVAL EVERY DAY

UP TO 10 REGIONAL ALES & 8 CYDERS/PERRIES

**TEWKESBURY CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR 2023/24
& CYDER PUB OF THE YEAR 2023/24/25/26**



INTRODUCING

NANNY MAC'S

TWO NEW REAL ALES BREWED IN TEWKESBURY

PALE ALE

A sweet and refreshing
real ale; 4.3%

GOLDEN ALE

An English gem with
hints of caramel; 4.4%



A collaboration between Daryl Tanner & John Moore
of The Tewkesbury Brewing Company, and landlord
of The Cross House Tavern, Lawrence Mills

ENJOY ONLY AT THE CROSS HOUSE TAVERN OR THE TEWKESBURY BREWERY TAP ROOM,
UNIT 29 HIGHFIELD BUSINESS PARK, GL19 4BP (OPEN SAT 12NOON- 6PM)

OPEN DAILY ALL YEAR ROUND 11.30AM - 10.30PM

The Cross House Tavern, 108 Church Street,
Tewkesbury, Glos GL20 5AB Tel 07931 692227

thecrosshousetavern.tewkesbury@gmail.com



FREE WI-FI



DOG FRIENDLY

Letters to the Editor



Some of us old codgers are still happy to use the services of the Royal Mail, and we actively encourage all forms of (preferably printable!) communication. So get writing letters, sending emails and get your news, views and comments will be published!

Hello there, Chris,

Your magazine still going strong, which is to be expected. Just a comment – yes, Tewkesbury deserves the mentions about beer and cider but can you please give more of a shout about the Forest of Dean? Yes, I am biased but not criticizing your brilliant magazine.

Lynn Morgan

Hello Lynn,

Many thanks for the email, and thanks for the good wishes.

Regarding the coverage that various of our areas get, this is, in general, dictated by what the various areas' officers send in to me, with some help from breweries and pubs. Some magazines have loads of local coverage that is all about the people getting involved.

The best way to ensure that we get more coverage is to become one of the volunteers in the local areas, get onto the management teams and get the information to me.

At the back of the magazine is a listing of all the contacts to connect to and I am sure they'd be delighted to get willing volunteers who want to be more involved in CAMRA and keeping real ales and pubs alive as well.

Cheers!

Dear Chris,

I was glancing at the latest copy of Tippler magazine (Spring 2026), and happened to notice the photo of the Drillmans Arms on

page 50. I took that photo in 2017, and it appears on the Pubs Galore web site I also noticed the top of the photo is missing, it was probably cropped to eliminate the 'Pubs Galore' water mark.

Whilst it is flattering to have a photograph that I took appear in your magazine, it would have been nice to be acknowledged as the photographer. As pub photography is my hobby, I could have supplied you with a more recent photo of The Drillmans Arms and other pubs, as long as I am credited as the photographer.

Yours sincerely, Helen Iwanczuk

Hello Helen,

Many thanks for the email, I am sorry that we have inadvertently used your image, Pete, my design and business partner, and I have been in publishing and design for over 60 years between us, and are careful where we acquire our images and always check for sources and attributions.

This one, had watermark or copyright notices – we wouldn't have used it if there were. We concluded that it had obviously been used or moved before.

We are always struggling for pub images, so wondered if you would be interested in helping us when we are in need of an image? Of course we would ensure your attribution of the image.

I look forward to hearing from you and possibly working together in the future.

To conclude, I have published the formal apology at the top of the page and trust that this will help to mitigate any inconvenience we have caused.

Cheers!

Hello there, Chris,

Hi Chris,

Mention of the declining fortunes of The Golden Heart, is certainly close to my own Heart, since it was very much one of my most favoured locals, when I bought my first property in Coberley, way back in the late 60's.

Since those halcyon days there have been several other local casualties with my great favourite, The Five Mile House at Duntisborne, long closed, and The Kilkenny has now been boarded up for six months. Ironically The Severn Springs was not in existence then, but it's loss will not be mourned by many.

'Survival of the fittest' comes to mind, but it is interesting to note that in our rather upmarket area, it is the pubs that offer extra facilities, especially accommodation, which command a premium and longevity in The Cotswolds. So both The Green Dragon and The Highwayman offer this and it's a pity that The Golden Heart with all their outbuildings and land couldn't realize the extra potential. After all, they have had quite a few years of notice whilst the plans for The Missing Mile got to fruition. At the end of the day, it may be that The Missing Mile will be exchanged for yet another priceless Missing Pub.

Guy Vowles

Hello Guy,

It is interesting that many of the iconic pubs that are favoured by real ale enthusiasts are often the casualties of progress. Perhaps it is the ambience of a real pub that is being lost in the frenzy of moving their offerings to the 'gastro-pub' side of the trade. Wet led pubs are, without many exceptions the most vulnerable, but also the most characterful.

Let us hope that, with newer investors, the Golden Heart could be saved.

Cheers!

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I look forward to hearing from you and possibly working together in the future.

Again, many apologies for the inconvenience we have caused you.

Cheers!

Letters to the Editor



PRIZE LETTER

Gloucester Brewery are now the sponsors of the new Tippler T-Shirt prize letter where you can win one of our coveted Tippler T- Shirts.

Send your letters, along with your T-shirt size, by either email, or by old-school post, to the Editor at:

The Tippler, 23 Theocs Close,
Tewkesbury GL20 5TX



**GLOUCESTER
BREWERY**

COMPETITION WINNERS

Spring Issue 2026

Brewhouse & Kitchen (Gloucester) Prize Crossword:

The featured brewery is 'Brew York' and the 3 winners are **Danielo Calderone, Christian Honeychurch and Susan Fenton**

Uley Brewery Prize Wordsearch:

The answer was 'Blessed is the mother who gives birth to a brewer' and the four winners are **Sadie Tazewell, John Moustache, Jessica Mayo and Paul Ingram**

Stroud Brewery Caption Competition:

The two winners are **Jo Clarke** with 'If that's Elf & Safety, you can kiss my Fuzzy Duck', and **Stephen Hawkesworth** with 'What the Duzzy ***k happened there?!'

Wetherspoons Name That Pub Competition:

The featured pub is **The Royal Hop Pole Hotel** in Tewkesbury and the winner is **Dan Connor**.

Tippler Tee-Shirt Prize Letter Competition:

The winner is **Martin Broadribb**.

Yes, people really do win our competitions!
Send your entries for this issue to chris@thetippler.co.uk

THE INDEPENDENT PUB AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY



Black Bear
est. 1308

**A BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED PUB THAT HAS SEEN
ITS UNIQUE CHARACTER RESTORED & IMPROVED**

WIDE RANGE OF FINE ALES & CIDERS

REGULAR EVENTS, LIVE MUSIC, QUIZ NIGHTS

GREAT FOOD, LARGE RIVERSIDE GARDEN

**JOIN US FOR
TEWKESBURY
LIVE
FREE MUSIC FESTIVAL
JULY 24- 26TH**



AS FEATURED ON THE GREAT BRITISH PUB CRAWL:

**'The Black Bear Tewkesbury has to be one of the most impressive pubs
we've ever visited.'**

68 High Street, Tewkesbury GL20 5BJ

Hours: Mon closed; Tues – Thurs 10:00-0:00 Fri – Sat 10:00-1:00 Sun 10:00-0:00



THE HUNTER'S COLUMN

Our intrepid hero looks at the words on everyone's lips: 'AI'. No, not the process of getting cows pregnant, but that other stuff that's supposed to be intelligent, like the Black Country language.



IA, AI?

If you're not from the Black Country and let's face it, most of us aren't, you may have some difficulty in understanding the above question.

The Black Country is that ill-defined, but not ill inclined, area of the industrial West Midlands north of Birmingham; that mecca for real ales, where they once (and still might) put a pig on the wall to watch the brass band march past. It's the home of purveyors of 'stile-ish' pork scratchings and, for better or for worse, Wolverhampton Wanderers.

With its rich industrial legacy, the Black Country was the home of one of the Fathers of the Industrial Revolution, Abraham Darby, who was born on a farm at Wren's Nest, Dudley, not far from, but long before, Sarah Hughes' Beacon Hotel and Holden's Brewery at nearby Woodsetton existed.

Abe was born in 1677 or 1678 (they're still arguing the toss in the Beacon), dying relatively early in 1717 and he 'became the first ironmaster to successfully run a long-term coke-fuelled blast furnace'. Abe died at the age of 40 but in his short time on the planet managed to start a revolution. It must have been really thirsty work with all of the



The Beacon Hotel



Abraham Darby

coke dust and heat from the furnaces. His tongue must have been hanging out all day long. It was no good going to the Beacon, it wasn't built until the 1850's. I've waited patiently at bars before but even I couldn't wait that long.

He would have had to have queued even longer for a Dark Ruby Mild as Sarah didn't start boiling up the kettles until 1921, and even then it took years to perfect her beer recipes and ales that we are still queuing up for now. Edwin Holden took over the Park Inn in 1915, a few years before Sarah lit up the Beacon, and that is where he established his brewery. The memory of 'local boy made good' Abraham Darby lingered on and Holden's honoured him in 2017 with Abraham Darby 1st Molten Glow Special, a 4.6% pale ale. Abe's grandson, Abraham Darby III, went on to build the world's first iron bridge, located in, you've guessed it... Ironbridge, Shropshire. It opened in 1781 to get the drinkers from the smaller mining town of Madeley across to the industrial town of Broseley and vice versa. It was a win-win situation where everybody was happy except for the local ferryman, who jumped into his coracle and was never seen again. They're still looking for him in Deerhurst, where they could do with a local Uber Coracle service to get them over the Severn to the Yew Tree in Chaceley Stock on the opposite bank. Otherwise, it's a long walk, nearly 2 hours to be exact. You can still enjoy a drink at, if not with, Abraham Darby in the Merry Hill - also known as



Merry Hell - Shopping Centre, which was built on the site of the old Round Oak Steelworks, where our old friends at J D Wetherspoon have named their pub after the young, Black Country revolutionary.

AI or Artificial Intelligence wasn't around in Abe's day. Neither was keg beer. Everything was real then. Abe was real intelligent too. He knew a thing or two about coal and iron ore and had to figure it all out for himself. As he was from a Quaker background, it probably didn't bother him too much that Holden's Golden and Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild were about 200 years away.

Although, given that the water was of such poor quality in his time, I imagine that he necked the odd pint or three. All that coke dust, all that molten heat.

Artificial intelligence won't keep the pubs open. It's probably been responsible for the sudden abundance of zero alcohol beers, which in my book should be given zero tolerance. I can sit at home and be miserable and don't wish to do the same in the hospitable surroundings of a pub, knocking back flagons full of zero, which means nothing to me. How would people have survived the industrial revolution or even a hot day without a proper pint?

The Black Country had invented its own language long before AI, and its own accent. Just in case you find yourself lost in Lower Gornal one day, this might get you out of (or into) a tight spot, depending upon how you say it:

Black Country Speak	The King's English
It wor me, ar day do it	It wasn't me, I didn't do it
Bostin'	Excellent or great. e.g. 'That curry was bostin''
It's black over at mother's	Dark Clouds and stormy weather approaching
Owamyas?/Ow bin ya?	A friendly greeting e.g. 'Owamyas bab?'
Gorra cob on	Feeling grumpy or annoyed e.g. 'She's gorra a cob on today'
I bost a gut	Laughing uncontrollably
Yow've gorra face like a dropped pie	You look miserable
and finally	
IA, AI?	'I haven't have I?' or 'I'm not am I?'

That lot would never have been invented by Artificial Intelligence. Superficial Intelligence? Maybe, but all the better for it.

The Hunter

Pub Beer Scoring is Changing

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 find them.

CAMRA's Good Beer Guide has been the 'bible' for finding the very best beers since 1974 and continues to be relied upon by tens of thousands of people. CAMRA's online pub guide (www.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.

Why do we score beers?

Pubs and clubs that serve 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.

Why do we need change?

Up until now, the scoring system has used numbers. However, 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.

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.

To make things easier for everyone, an intuitive ratings system is being introduced in June. Each one has a description and a reaction to help pin down which is most appropriate. The new ratings are in the table on the previous page.

- This will replace the score scale and remove the use of half points;
- The ratings will still have the numerical value (0-5) attached to them for 'back end' purposes to allow for calculation of and analysis of scores for pubs;
- Using features from the current descriptions, CAMRA have added a set of 'reactions' that should help members choose the rating most aligned to the beer they are drinking;
- There will be a new tick box, separate from the ratings, for 'no cask beer available'.

Nick Yarwood
CAMRA Regional Pub Data Co-ordinator
West Central and
West Midlands Regions



Help get your local into the Good Beer Guide

Entries in the good Beer Guide depend on beer scoring. So make sure you score the beers you drink and help get your favourite pub noticed.

CAMRA Members – Are you Missing Out?

If you're not receiving emails from your local CAMRA branch, you could be missing updates on upcoming events, trips, and social activities happening near you.

The good news – it's quick and easy to fix.

You may simply need to update your communication preferences to allow emails from your branch.

To update your preferences:

- 👉 Sign in at camra.org.uk
- 👉 Click the circle with your initials (top right) → My Profile
- 👉 Edit Profile → Edit Membership Details (including email) → Save
- 👉 My Profile → Marketing Preferences → Save
- 👉 Or call 01727 867 201 for assistance.

Stay connected and make sure you don't miss out on what's happening locally.





Cotswold Beer Festival 2026

Thought to be the longest-running beer festival of its kind which has stayed in the same place, the 48th Cotswold Beer Festival is nearly here: and it's bigger and better than ever.

The event will take place at Postlip Hall from Friday, 17th July to Sunday, 19th July, with a new ticketing system, new bus routes to the festival, and an expanded beer and cider offering.

This long-standing festival, in the unique surroundings of Postlip Hall and Tithe Barn, is run wholly by volunteers, and offers a warm welcome to everyone from beer buffs and music lovers to families alike. With over 110 real ales, 45 ciders, a variety of bottled beers, a gin and prosecco bar, an array of food vans, plus a burger barbeque run by the Postlip Hall community, you're bound to find something that takes your fancy.

The Friday evening ticket (6pm–11pm) is for those wanting to sample the full range of food and drink in the finest beer garden in the world, or maybe just listen to our headline act and hit the dance floor.

The Saturday all day ticket (12pm–9pm) is the family friendly session—under 18s go free (when accompanied by adults) and there will be circus skills, entertainers, live music and more. For those pressed for time, there's a Saturday evening

only ticket (5pm – 9pm). Having learnt from last year, when the beers ran out, there will be some additional beers set aside only for this session, although you're unlikely to have access to the full range.

On Sunday (12pm to 3pm) entry is free for everyone. We aim for zero waste, so if everything goes to plan there should only be a dozen or so ales and ciders left.

Beer and soft drinks are bought with tokens – you can pay for these by card or with cash. Food can be purchased by card from the onsite food trucks.

Ticketing

Ticketing arrangements (and offers) can be found at <https://tckty.camra.org.uk/e/515/cotswold-beer-festival-2026>. A new special offer for CAMRA members means one ticket now gives access to all three festival sessions. It is valid for any or all of: Friday (6pm–11pm), Saturday (12pm–9pm), and Sunday (12pm–3pm). The ticket also includes £5 IN TOKENS to get you to that first pint more quickly,

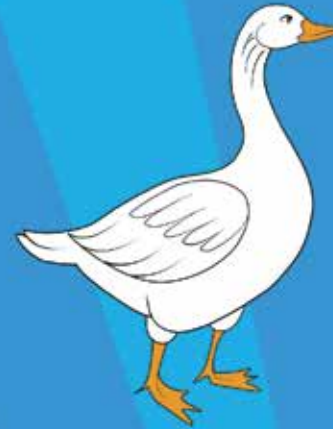
(Cont'd overleaf)



Tickets from
£13 inc.
£5 tokens!

POSTLIP HALL
WINCHCOMBE
GL54 5AQ

Friday 17th - Sunday 19th July 2026



THE 48TH
COTSWOLD
BEER
FESTIVAL
2026



FACE PAINTING
CIRCUS SKILLS
MAGICIANS
ICE CREAM
TEWKES TOWN BAND
OLA SAMBA

STEP FREE ACCESS
& ONSITE TRANSIT

POSTLIP BBQ
SRI-LICIOUS
COTSWOLD PIZZA COMPANY
SIBLINGS GIN & PROSECCO BAR

BUSES FROM
CHELTENHAM
WINCHCOMBE
& NOW BISHOPS CLEEVE!

IRRESISTIBLE
LIVE MUSIC
FRI & SAT

The **BEER** brings you here
The **memories** bring you back

150+ BEERS CIDERS & PERRIES | FREE PARKING | CAMPING





plus a souvenir pint glass and programme. At just £10, all this is available for a price lower than a single session for non-members.

For non-CAMRA members, tickets include single-day and all-weekend passes. Festival bus tickets and camping reservations are also available via the same ticket link. Tickets now include £5 in tokens to cut queue times. Entry prices remain unchanged since 2022.

New bus routes

The most convenient way to get to and from the festival is by one of our regular dedicated festival buses from Cheltenham, Winchcombe, and now Bishop's Cleeve. Tickets need to be bought in advance but are valid for unlimited journeys.

Drinks

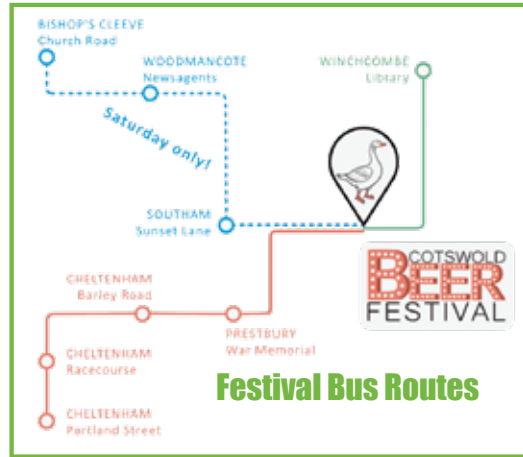
Beer fans can look forward to an expanded selection of cask ales from across the UK, making this the largest cask beer offering at any Gloucestershire festival. For this year's festival we aim to have a selection of those traditional beers we used to love, but now hardly see, alongside the most modern forward-looking beers from our leading breweries. Altogether there will be around 112 different beers for you to enjoy. To avoid the problem of beer running out, some casks are being held back for Saturday night. We are having a special beer brewed for the festival by renowned Gloucestershire brewer, Jonny Mills.

Our Cider & Perry Marquee will contain a local and national selection of around fifty different varieties. The Craft Beer Bar will have the finest cooled bottled and canned beers, as well as a range of non-alcoholic lagers and beers. Other soft drinks will be available onsite.

To cater for all tastes, Sibling Distillery are bringing a delicious blend of the finest local gins. So, whether your tittle is a prosecco, a Negroni, or a classic G&T, there are options for all tastes.

Food and entertainment

Food vans will be serving for each session. Pizza, local handmade burgers, and Sri-Lankan Curry will be on the menu. Gluten free, vegan, and vegetarian options will be available.



Musically, we welcome a headline act on Friday night. A programme of roving artists on Saturday sees everything from brass to samba; with a headliner to close the evening. Updates will appear on <https://www.facebook.com/cotswoldbeerfestival>

Beer competitions

Reflecting the increased importance of the Cotswold Beer Festival in CAMRA circles, there will now be two beer competitions at the festival. Breaking new ground, the festival will host a round of judging for Champion Beer of Britain for the first time. Judges will select beers from two CAMRA regions with the winner going forward to the national finals round.

This extra judging will mean changes for the Gloucestershire Beer of the Year competition, shortening the number of beers judged, whilst still ensuring that every brewer in the county will still have beer in the competition.

Book now as tickets are selling fast. More information about the festival can be found at:

<https://postlip.camra.org.uk/>



DRINK FRESH BEER FROM WOODCHESTER UNFINED UNFILTERED AVAILABLE AT PUBS AND FESTIVALS IN GLOS OR AT UNIT 25 GL5 5EX BREWERY TAP THU-SUN

THE INN AT FOSSEBRIDGE



N COTS CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR 2024

Located on the Fosse Way, The Inn at Fossebridge is a famous ancient character inn with stone walls and flagstone floors



- Passionate about well kept ales
- Outstanding popular pub food
- Stunning riverside garden
- Roaring log fires in winter
- 7 beautiful en-suite bedrooms



01285 720721

Email: reservations@innatfossebridge.co.uk
Fossebridge (A429), Nr Cheltenham, GL54 3JS

www.fossebridgeinn.co.uk



North Cotswolds Pub of the Year

The Eight Bells in Chipping Campden has been voted the North Cotswolds Branch Pub of the Year

Branch Chair Martin Jones, presented the winner's certificate to the landlord, Neil Hargreaves, who has been running the pub for nearly 30 years and, during that time has been a previous winner.

The pub has a fascinating history, the building dates from the 14th Century when it is believed it was built by stonemasons who constructed the nearby Church of St James and was later used to store its bells, hence its name.

On the bar are four real ales and two ciders from North Cotswold, Wye Valley and Hook Norton breweries along with local cider from Pearsons.

Neil was keen to praise his suppliers and CAMRA. 'We are absolutely delighted. We've been runners-up a few times and won the award a few years back, but it's nice to get. It's a real reflection of not just the pub, but the breweries we choose to use. They are all local. We use Hook Norton, Wye Valley, and North Cotswold. It means an awful lot to win the award because real ale is not a product that is ready when you get it. It has to be finished in one's own cellar. It's a reflection of how we manage the cellar and our technique.

It's about selectivity, local beers, and local flavours. We steer away from national breweries because using local reduces beer miles. There's a real commitment by local breweries to get it right, and boy, do they get it right!

Locals and visitors often notice the certificates and are both very supportive and happy to have chosen to drink at a pub that is recognised by a wider audience. It's all about promoting real ales.



Neil Hargreaves (l) and Martin Jones (r)

Real ales are a fairly unique product to the UK, and so visitors from all over the world are very enthusiastic about trying them. A lot of them do a lot of research before they visit, which always surprises me.

Neil also went on to praise CAMRA for the work they do for the pub business in general.

'CAMRA have been campaigning for many years and are very much the unsung hero spreading the message everywhere from Downing Street to Chipping Campden about the importance of pub, real ale and cider.'

The voting teams who surveyed the pub praised its consistency of offering and quality of product. Supporting local breweries and cider makers is key to the success of the whole pub business and the Eight Bells is a great example of this.

Pipped at the post, The Inn at Fossebridge was the branch runner-up, and like the Eight Bells it has also been a previous winner of the prestigious award.

Martin Jones, Branch Chair

North Cotswolds Club of the Year

The Conservative Working Men's Club in Winchcombe is the North Cotswolds Branch Club of the Year

North Cotswold Branch have awarded the Club based in Winchcombe as its club of the year. This is the first time we have awarded a Club of the Year as a Branch, and the Conservative Working Men's Club is a worthy winner.

Club Chair, Martin Jones, presented the winners certificate to Oli Jones, the club steward, who accepted it on behalf of all the hard-working committee and staff of the club.

The Club is situated on Abbey Terrace in the centre of the town in an imposing old school building.

Oli outlined the ethos and activities the club supports.

'Winchcombe CWM Club, situated in the centre of the historic town of Winchcombe, is a private members social club that has been established for over 100 years. We are community focused, being the hub of the Winchcombe & District Darts League, as well as running our own skittles league, and home to Winchcombe Working Men's FC, a Sunday league football team. We also offer an array of events throughout the year, including regular quizzes, bingo nights, live entertainment, discos and pop-up food events.

The club benefits from a skittle alley, two full size snooker tables, a pool table, three dart boards, Sky and TNT Sports TV, and a lovely upstairs function room that is available for hire.

'Aside from our own events, we also fundraise for charity through our charity book sale, which has raised over £1,500 for local causes, and our Race Preview evenings every March, which have raised over £3,000 for local charities and The Injured Jockey's Fund.

'Being a wet sale led club, our ethos is to ensure that the quality of our draught products is the best it can be. On our bar you will find three cask ales and one real cider. Our 'house' beer, Wye Valley Butty Bach, has become a staple, and the two guest ales offer our members and their guests a variety of good quality ale from all over the UK.

'The club welcomes CAMRA members, and anyone interested in becoming a club member, please do enquire at the bar and one of our team will be happy to help you.'

Martin Jones, Branch Chair



Oli Jones (l) and Martin Jones (r)

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chris@thetippler.co.uk



The Sun Always Shines On Cotswold Lion

In this article from out of the county, Mike Goldwater, a member from Enfield and Barnet CAMRA, travelled to the Cotswold Lion Brewery where he interviewed head brewer Don Burgess for an insightful look into how the brewery operates.

Nestled deep within the Gloucestershire countryside resides Hartley Farm, where amongst a modest set of farm buildings you'll find the Cotswold Lion Brewery. Established in 2012 by Andy Forbes, it was named after a local Sheep breed known for its distinctive golden coloured wool.

Initially operating from a grain store within a farm, it was moved to its present location in 2021. Two years ago, Andy retired and sold the brewery to Dan Powell, who incidentally, is the grandchild of the head brewer from the former Stroud Brewery which closed in 1967.

Dan subsequently employed Don Burgess as head brewer, overseeing the daily operations of the brewery. Don was introduced to Powell via a mutual friend who knew him from a previous brewery; tiring of long commutes, the prospect of working at a 'shire' brewery appealed to him. He notes: 'The concept of a solar powered brewery using local resources and barley from malt produced on the farm really ticked the right boxes for me!'

Don has over 30 years' experience in the brewing industry and was an early champion of sustainable brewing practices and the use of local organic/fairtrade ingredients. He learned this craft at his former Forest of Dean brewery, Freeminer, so in retrospect, he is a perfect fit for Cotswold Lion.

They run on a sustainable production model, powering the equipment via solar panels while using wood-chip biofuel to heat the buildings. Don explains: 'We have almost 50Kw of solar power on the roof of one of the farm buildings, enough to boil a 10 BBL copper, and to heat our process water in the hot liquor tank (HLT) as a way of storing electric



power as energy for use in the process. We also recover heat exchanger water after the wort chill. The heated water tank is used to heat the HLT via a plate heat exchanger, we refer to the heat store as 'the battery'; not all batteries store electricity!

As well as being good for the environment, there is also a financial incentive to consider, he adds: 'Sustainable production means an improved bottom line, less environmental impact, and reduced use of natural resources. Also taking measures to reduce energy use, recover heat energy, and offset CO2 production in the face of rapidly increasing climate change, benefits everyone.' The focus at Cotswold Lion is on local ingredients, the malt is sourced from barley grown on the farm, which is then processed at Warminster Maltings; while the hops come from hop growers based within the Three Counties (Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire) and their water comes from the Seven Springs, notably, one of the sources of the River Thames.

While the brewing industry is generally obsessed with using imported hops, Don champions the use and potential of English hops, 'I have always felt that UK hops showed huge potential due to their unique environmental locations and variety.'

Also due to the hop development programme at Hereford's Charles Faram, there are new flavours and aromas appearing year on year from our own shores.' While he has used American and New Zealand hops in the past, he notes they come with a big carbon footprint, so it makes ecological sense to utilise often overlooked, yet excellent, legacy heritage hop varieties available on his doorstep,

which in turn is beneficial to local hop growers and suppliers.

Don takes a dim view on the preponderance of brewers who tend to produce bigger, stronger and hoppier beers, infused with all manner of adjuncts (hear, hear! - Ed.). Burgess contends there is plenty of scope for brewers to innovate with traditional English styles, made to a premium quality and a sensible price. 'Taking traditional styles and reinterpreting them with modern innovations in hops and production has enabled huge leaps in quality and presentation without leaning towards the theoretical made flesh.'

This is reflected in the roster of traditional English style beers Cotswold Lion produces through its core range, from the likes of Shepherd's Delight (3.6%) a light hoppy pale ale, to the session bitter, Top Notch (4%) and stronger examples like Golden Fleece (4.4%) a Golden IPA, and their ESB, Top Tup (4.8%).

Since Burgess joined the brewery, their beers have been sold in various pubs around Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds. Notably, last July, Golden Fleece was available on draught at Jeremy Clarkson's pub The Farmer's Dog in Burford; and later that Autumn the brewery started to expand their cask sales outside the county to pubs in the West Midlands. Looking to the future, Don hopes promote the brewery further, 'I am working

on keeping our Facebook feeds more active, we are getting more followers as the new beer styles I have introduced at Cotswold Lion are finally getting more recognition.' He also hopes to raise more awareness about the green credentials of the brewery from its solar powered production, to its usage of locally grown barley, hops and water.

While the brewery's reputation builds traction, he ruminates, 'we hope to do more 'Open Door' days, I have several plans up my sleeve, some interesting one-off beers are in the brewing book. At the moment, with our standard sales growing, it's keeping the wheels on the wagon, it's easy to over promise, so we're keeping growth steady with quality to the fore.'

Don notes he was very lucky to know a number of 'old school brewers' in his time, 'I learned many tips and techniques from them, and definitely some to avoid! I developed a style of creating the new, pushing the envelope, but keeping familiarity there to encourage the drinker to try the beers.'

With his beers, he likes to generate as much novel flavour as possible whilst staying within the confines of using local ingredients, and revive heritage beer styles, along the way, giving a few new varieties a modern facelift, without needing the use of hop rockets and every fermentable adjunct under the sun.

Mike Goldwater

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Awards Night in Tewkesbury

it was that time of the year again where we had to decide on which pub in our region is selected for the award of Pub of the Year (POTY) and Cyder Pub of the year (CPOTY).

The selection Process for POTY is achieved by beer score average taken from the CAMRA beer scoring system, coupled with pub survey results, undertaken over the months by members going out to potential candidates and completing a pub survey (whilst having a pint or two). It's a tough job but someone has to do it.

CPOTY is selected based on the range of traditional cyders and perrys on offer at the various pubs.

The winners this year were **The Nottingham Arms for POTY** and **The Cross House Tavern for CPOTY**, and our Chairman wanted to give a special award to **The Britannia Inn for Most Improved Pub**, recognising the hard work Paula has put into the pub since taking it over in late 2024.

So, on Thursday 26th March a merry band of CAMRA members congregated at The Nottingham Arms to present the certificate to Ant and Jazz and have a pint or two before quiz night started.

The pub was packed with locals and CAMRA members all celebrating the hard work Ant, Jazz and the team have put into the pub since their arrival in August 2025, not to mention having had a baby boy in October just to add to the workload.

Then it was time to move onto The Britannia Inn across the road to present Paula with her award and have another pint or two. The pub was full of locals and CAMRA members celebrating the hard work Paula and her team have put into the pub making it one of the go-to real ale pubs in our town, a great achievement in a short space of time.

Then finally we meandered down to The Cross House Tavern to award Laurence and his team the CPOTY certificate in recognition of the great range of local traditional cyders and perrys on offer (and have another pint or two, as you do).

It was a most enjoyable evening, a good time was had by all and I would highly recommend popping in to support these great pubs when you are out and about in Tewkesbury. Well it would be rude not to!

Ian Mence
Tewkesbury Branch Secretary



Award 1: John Roberts, Tewkesbury Chairman, with Ant and Jazz at The Nott



Award 2: With Paula at The Brit



Award 3: With Laurence at The Cross House

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Good Beer
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Chairman's Update

With the short days and long nights behind us it a wonderful time of year to enjoy the social side and friendship that CAMRA membership brings.

Congratulations to this year's award winners The Nottingham Arms, The Cross House Tavern and The Britannia Inn. Well done to all three and their promotion of real ale and cider.

Since the last edition of The Tippler, members have had the chance to visit the Three Kings Worcester, Chipping Campden, and the Ludlow Spring Festival, all trips being well attended.

Personal highlights were calling in at the Red Lion, Evesham (Worcester Branch Area Pub of the Year) on our way back from Chipping Campden, and the Ludlow Spring Festival which included a beer festival, a classic car show, food festival, and

the pubs in town of course. A terrific way of saying thank you to our Winter Ale Festival volunteers.

Looking ahead, the Summer BBQ Social is planned on the 8th August at the Lower Lode – well worth noting on your calendar and details will follow shortly.

I attended the National Members weekend for the first time this year, pleased to represent the branch and came away feeling positive. St Albans was turned into 'The City of Ale' so an impressive social time was had. From a business perspective the presentations were balanced and informative, being open about the challenges that are facing us. I would be pleased to go into more detail with anyone who is prepared to listen!

The next Branch meeting will be at the Black Bear on the 2nd July 7.30pm.

John Roberts
Tewkesbury Chair

Forest of Dean socials

Our forthcoming social events are:

June 4th	The Fountain Inn, Parkend
June 18th	Rising Sun, Moseley Green
July 2nd	The Bailey Inn, Yorkley
July 16th	The White Horse, Soudley
July 30th	Forest Brewery, Lydney
Aug 6th	Bells Hotel and Country Club and the Forest Hills Golf Club
Aug 20	Miners Arms, Whitecroft

All meetings are at 8pm; location and times subject to change.

Chris Laming
Forest of Dean CAMRA Chairman

Cirencester socials

Our forthcoming social events are:

Tuesday 12th May	Gloucester
Tuesday 30th June	Cirencester
Tuesday 7th July	London via National Express
Tuesday 11th August	Cirencester
Tuesday 8th September	Bristol via Train and/or Stagecoach.

We welcome guests from all branches and non-members to join us on these outings.

Please contact Area Coordinator Patrick Mills for details and timings.

James Brown



The Britannia Inn

30 HIGH SREET, TEWKESBURY

A traditional town centre pub with a warm welcome and a reputation for well kept cask ales and fresh, home cooked food

Tewkesbury CAMRA Most Improved Pub of the Year 2026



- Bright and airy atmosphere
- Regularly changing line-up of ales
- Popular home cooked sunday roasts, bookable in advance
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The Britannia Inn, 30 High St, Tewkesbury, Glos GL20 5AT
Opening: Mon/Tues (bar only) 12–9.30pm; Wed to Sat 12–11pm (Kitchen 12–3pm & 5–8.30pm); Sun 12–10pm (Kitchen 12–4pm)




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chris@thetippler.co.uk

The Hoptican wins Cider Pub of the Year

Take an optician and add an 'H'. Dursley's successful micropub, The Hoptican, goes from strength to strength, this year being chosen as Gloucestershire CAMRA's Cider Pub of the Year.

The presentation was made on April 9th by Peter Bennetts, Chair of Mid-Glos CAMRA. Also present was Guy Vowles, aka 'The Cider Man'.

I spoke to licensees Kevin (Farmer) and Kirsty to find out all about this successful micropub's inception. Kevin is a Man of Kent and this might explain his enthusiasm for establishing a micropub. As an article in the latest CAMRA 'Beer' magazine tells us, the micropub concept was born east of the Medway. Kevin had run a pub in Canterbury in the '90's and personally knew Martyn Hillier who later earned an MBE for creating the first micropub.

'Martyn had no keg beer,' said Kevin, 'although I'm a cask beer man myself, I felt it was wrong to alienate keg drinkers.' Kevin and Kirsty decided to go down a different route, as he explained later.

So what brought a man who had spent most of his life in Kent to Dursley?

'I wanted a change of direction in life and decided to research micropubs,' he explained. Not only had he had experience of running a pub, but so had Kirsty who came from a family of licensees. When they saw the empty Norville's Optician's shop for sale in an online catalogue, and realised it suited their purpose, he and Kirsty decided to bid for it, securing it just within their target price.

'I didn't know where Dursley was until we came and looked.'

Before they made the move westward, they visited dozens of micro pubs in the south east and home counties, not only those in Kent like Herne Bay, Whitstable and Bromley, but also Brighton, Lewes, London – all over. They were genuinely able to call this massive pub-crawl 'research'! One venue that prompted them to stock cider in 'The Hop' was the sadly, now-closed, Turk's Head in Gloucester.

'Cider has a longer shelf life than beer, but it is also a link between Kent and Gloucestershire, they both have a long tradition in cider making.' (What else did the Romans ever do for us? – Ed.)

Kevin and Kirsty sought to create a venue that they would want to drink in. Much of the development of the interior and exterior decor was random or improvised, they agreed.

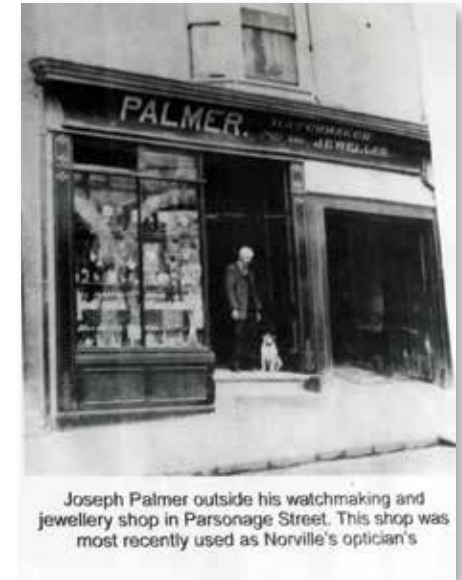
'It was a real mess when we bought it,' said Kevin, 'we uncovered a long-hidden medley of vintage brick and local stone, and complemented this with fittings and furnishings we picked up here and there: cinema seats, a vinyl-era record player,

old games machine, and, to greet customers once they open the door and climb the three steps to the inner drinking area and bar, a female mannequin that changes outfits frequently.' I always say Hullo.

The presence of the Bank Café next door, which already had tables on the wide pavement next to the historic Market Hall, has proved a boon. Firstly, the council could hardly refuse to let the new micropub have outdoor railed-in seating, but customers can now order food from the café to eat in the pub. Another bonus was the regular Dursley Out-of-Hours free music event within the pillared area of the Market Hall established some years before. The Hop's first trial opening could not fail, being joined at the hip (hop?) with this popular event.

On sunny days, there is not much better than sitting outside with a cider, cask, keg or canned beer looking down the two main streets to Dursley's iconic hills and woods. Then I feel I could be in Bergerac – Dursley's newly twinned town.

David Ashbee,
Coordinator, Dursley area CAMRA



Joseph Palmer outside his watchmaking and jewellery shop in Parsonage Street. This shop was most recently used as Norville's optician's



GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAMRA CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR 2026

THE HOPTICAN
MICRO PUB

THE MICRO PUB IN THE CENTRE OF DURSLEY

A TRADITIONAL ALEHOUSE

- Up to 5 varied cask ales
- Up to 15 local & national ciders
- House bitter (Uley) & craft lager

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'HEARING TESTS' EVERY SUNDAY 4PM

The Hoptican, 4 Silver Street, Dursley, Gloucestershire

FIND US ON

The Tegestologist

Welcome to a series all about Tegestology, the little known term for the collection of beer mats. This issue we're looking at pedantry and readers' favourites: Scriblings and Misprints...



I first started collecting mats back in the early 1970's when at school. One kid, JB, had pub-landlord grandparents, and he would bring mats for us to play with. The older boys had them decorating walls in their prefect's room -luckily, I didn't need to visit often, but they had all gone by the time I reached the sixth form.

I used to write the date and pub name on the mat, and continued that until university, by which time I had too many to annotate, and anyway, presumed it would devalue them. It probably does if it's possible to go below zero! But I still keep my original, even if I find a clean version. Here is one of my early ones from holiday in Cornwall, (shown right, Devenish cat.24 of 1974). I didn't get many in those days as kids weren't allowed in most pubs, so we would normally sup on a ginger beer in the carpark or garden, hunting out horny-back toads. (Well, it was the time Yellow brick road was released).

Of course, I was not alone in recording the donor pub. I once found a German collection from 1930's all neatly recorded, unlike my (still) terrible writing, and here are a couple given by a colleague of my wife. Her father, like many, collected mats whilst on National Service in Germany. It's a very good vintage, but always a shame that servicemen picked up the mats from abroad, but rarely the ones from home. You will see on this mat from Hercules (right), it also has pen marks indicating the number of beers ordered. These are tallied up and the bill settled at the end. Can you imagine that happening here in pubs nowadays?

Here is another example, Walkers cat.17 from 1956, five years before it was picked up from the tables. It was a Warrington pub and I sometimes keep them in case I am in the area, then I can repatriate the mat, and have an interesting chat with the landlord. It won't be possible to visit now



as it was converted to flats some 10 years ago, but maybe I can offer it to the tenants as a valuable keepsake?

In our collectors' society (BBCS) we catalogue beer mats from breweries, and separately, ones advertising pubs. Mats that have a brewery one side and the pub the other are normally exclusive to that hostelry and therefore harder to find. Some pubs, however, overprint the blank reverse of mats, which make them interesting, but cannot be catalogued as they are 'home-made' and not issued by the brewery. Here is one such example of a Donnington brewery mat, rubber stamped for the Black Horse at Naunton. The mat is cat. 5 issued in 1979, but I think these overprints were made around early 1980's.

It's one thing writing a number or address on a mat, but there is a chap from the Midlands who goes to far greater lengths. His pen name is Mario-Lanza, and he removes the back of some mats (whether in the pub or at home, I do not know) and adds a sketch and slogan, then leaves them on tables in pubs around the area. This one (right) I picked up in Worcester, and I can only imagine I just missed the Banksy of the tegestology world. There were two, but I left one for some other lucky punter. I hope they appreciated it rather than spoil it with beer. So, I only have the one, and as its not an official issue beer mat it won't be catalogued, but good sport all the same. Perhaps you know him?

This Banksy's mat (I'm surprised he doesn't use Banksy's mats) found in a Marston's pub, which perhaps with all the guest beers available is not so uncommon these days. Sometimes it's possible to find that the printer has incorrectly added a different brewer on the reverse to that of the front. Again, these do exist intentionally, especially where collaboration brews are made or the one brewer has been bought out by the other. If you find a misprinted stamp or banknote you stand to be holding something of rarity and value...alas, misprints in beer mats are pretty worthless!

Here are a couple of examples which were certainly not intentional. When printed in 1963, this Butler mat (left) was overprinted with the Hey's design on the SAME side. I wonder how many were made like that and were they all used on tables? The Harp mat has the black layer misaligned, so all we see is the barmaid's head. Finally, here is an old Spanish mat (right) where their logo has been double printed out of kilter, making it a 10-pointed star, so not their logo at all!

Russell Murfitt



The (Public) House of The Rising Sun

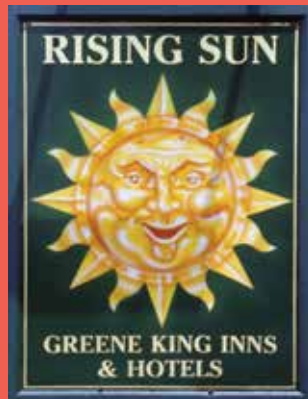
There is a house, in the Forest of Dean, they call the Rising Sun ...

In fact, there are four pubs of that name in the Forest – in Bream, Moseley Green, Woodcroft and Woolaston Common.

Four excellent real ale pubs all worthy of a visit this summer. If you consider the Rising Sun in Ruspidge, now serving as a bar attached to the Ruspidge Fish & Chips and Indian Restaurant, and maybe the Gamekeepers Inn located at Five Acres (which was originally called the Rising Sun), that brings the tally of Forest of Dean pubs historically called the Rising Sun to six. The Rising Sun at Broadwell closed in 2001.

Perhaps the best place in Gloucestershire to enjoy a pint whilst watching a magnificent summer sunset is from the garden of the Rising Sun Hotel on Cleeve Hill. It's a simple pleasure that has been enjoyed since Victorian times. In June 1880 an advert in the Cheltenham Mercury noted that the Rising Sun Hotel 'is picturesquely situated, commanding varied scenery extending over seven counties. The Valley of the Severn, the Malvern Range, the Welsh Mountains, and the Bristol Channel are prominent features in the landscape; and for salubrity and healthfulness the neighbourhood is unrivalled.' As the sun sets in the west and rises in the east, the name of the Cleeve Hill establishment should, in theory, be the Setting Sun.

So why The Rising Sun? After all, with a very few exceptions, pubs are not open in the early morning for drinkers to enjoy the sunrise. There are two explanations of the origins of the Rising Sun as a pub sign. It is thought that it could be a reference to the badge of Edward III – 'the sun in splendour', King of England from 1327 (almost half past one). But I like the theory that innkeepers simply favoured hanging a sign depicting the sun high above their



Cleeve Hill



Winchcombe

premises so that they could claim their beer was 'the best under the sun.'

Using the search-engine on my Gloucestershire Pubs website to find inns called the Rising Sun, I've located over twenty pubs of that name of which some are listed below. Of those listed only six are trading as pubs today (marked with an asterisk). The Rising Sun at Frampton Cotterell in South Gloucestershire is in the 2026 CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

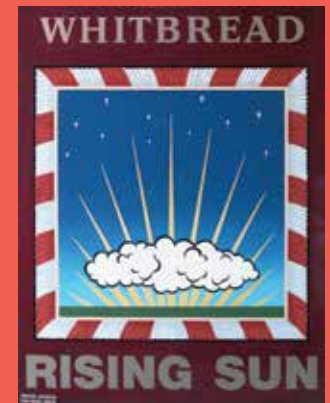
Through my website I am aiming to document all the pubs in the old county of Gloucestershire both past and present, and the following list is based on a licensing book of 1903 giving details of breweries supplying the pubs in early Edwardian times. It may be a document 123 years old, but it's fascinating that beers from far and wide had already been introduced into Gloucestershire conveyed by the developing rail infrastructure and the introduction of steam wagons.

There were also pubs in Gloucestershire simply called the Sun Inn. These being in Cheltenham (Lower High Street), Cirencester (Market Place), Tewkesbury (High Street), Winchcombe (North Street). The Sun Inn at Winchcombe closed in 2013. Another sunshine themed pub is the Golden Ball Inn at Lower Swell situated not far from the Donnington Brewery, and continuously selling their excellent beer for at least 125 years.

So, whether the weather be fine, or whether the weather be not, whether the weather be cold, or whether the weather be hot, we'll whether the weather in the Rising Sun Inn, whether we like it or not.

www.gloucestershirepubs.co.uk Use the search engine for more information on the above pubs.

Geoff Sandles



Cinderford



Frampton Cotterell

Current Rising Sun Pubs in our region

Rising Sun*, Bream (W.J. Rogers & Co, Jacob Street Brewery, Bristol)

Rising Sun, Broadwell (Forest of Dean) (Free from tie)

Rising Sun Hotel*, Cleeve Hill (Cheltenham Original Brewery)

Rising Sun (now Gamekeepers)*, Five Acres near Coleford (Monmouth Brewery)

Rising Sun Frampton Cotterell * (Bristol United Brewery)

Rising Sun, Eastgate Street, Gloucester (Thomas Salt, Burton on Trent)

Rising Sun, Hiams Lane, Hartpury (Ind Coope & Co, Burton on Trent)

Rising Sun*, Moseley Green, nr Parkend (Anglo-Bavarian Brewery, Shepton Mallet)

Rising Sun, Randwick (Stroud Brewery)

Rising Sun, Ruspidge (Nailsworth Brewery)

Rising Sun, Shortwood Green, Nailsworth (Stroud Brewery)

Rising Sun*, Woodcroft (Bristol United Brewery)

Rising Sun*, Woolaston Common (Free from tie)

Rising Sun, Bradley Road, Wotton-under-Edge (Arnold Perrett & Co., Wickwar Brewery)

Uley Brewery 2026 Specials



FEBRUARY 23RD

A brand new beer for Uley. This will be a 3.8% dark beer, brewed using the English hop Phoenix and dark crystal and chocolate malt.



MARCH 30TH

A remake from 2025, but this year we will use Charles Faram's experimental hop CF277 for a beer with hints of orange, spice and floral overtones.



MAY 4TH

GB meets the USA! We will blend the spicy English hop Olicana, with an American classic hop.



JUNE 15TH

We promise you a deliciously summery straw colour beer, but the rest is a surprise for now...



SEPTEMBER 11TH

You talked, we listened and this favourite from 2025 is making a very cheeky return.



OCTOBER (MID)

Ken has his heart set on a hop called Mystic for this year's green hopped beer. Fingers crossed.



23RD NOVEMBER

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- Ale House
- Bell
- Buthay
- Cobblers
- Crown
- Falcon
- Fleece
- Fox Inn
- George Inn
- Hog
- Lamb
- Mount
- New Inn
- Plough
- Ram Inn
- Red Hart
- Retreat
- Royal
- Star
- Strand
- Swan
- Tivoli
- YewTree
- York

- 1 Find the listed regional breweries in the grid (these were all open before the COVID lockdown).
- 2 They can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal, forward or back.
- 3 The unused letters spell out some sound advice from the great philosopher Homer Simpson

Send your entry to chris@thetippler.co.uk

Hop to it...



OK, so we know it isn't in Gloucestershire, rather the Three Counties, but this unique young brewery is worth a visit over the border to sample something special. Chris Leibbrandt, our editor and a native to the Kent hop fields, samples a big dollop of nostalgia as he travels out into 'the sticks' to visit the Hop Shed. Based on the Worcestershire/Herefordshire border, The Hop Shed has become one of the region's most distinctive modern breweries, combining traditional farming roots with a contemporary approach to brewing...

Based on Stocks Farm in Suckley, the brewery was founded in 2015 by Hani and Sarah Saleh in a converted chicken shed on a commercial hop farm surrounded by the hop poles and bines.

Brewing officially began in 2016 using a 10-barrel plant, with the business initially trading as Unity Brew House. In 2018 they adopted the name 'The Hop Shed' to better reflect its unique identity and connection to hop growing.

What makes The Hop Shed stand out is its commitment to brewing exclusively with British hops, many of them grown literally on its doorstep. Although, as we can see from the image above, harvesting is a bit different from when I was a lad.

While many breweries look overseas for fashionable hop varieties, The Hop Shed has championed local growers and British hop character from the very beginning. The brewery creates the perfect blend of tradition and innovation as they infuse new British hop varieties into classic beer styles, creating a tantalisingly modern flavour palette.

Last year saw a fresh rebrand for the brewery, with updated visuals, refreshed packaging and a sharper modern identity that reflects how far the business has developed since its early Unity Brew House days.

While the brewery remains firmly rooted in the traditions of Worcestershire hop farming, the new look gives greater prominence to its 'Hop Farm Brewed' ethos and award-winning range of beers. The refresh has helped strengthen recognition of the brand while retaining the friendly, independent spirit that regulars value so highly.

At the heart of the operation is the Tap Room, which has become a real destination for beer lovers across the three counties. Housed within the brewery itself, drinkers can enjoy a pint surrounded by brewing vessels while looking out across the hop yards. The tap room offers a constantly changing selection of The Hop Shed's own beers with up to seven different cask ales each weekend, alongside locally sourced cider, wine, spirits and soft drinks.



Fridays feature a range of visiting street food vendors, while Saturdays are known for wood-fired pizzas, helping to create a relaxed and sociable atmosphere.

More than simply a brewery bar, The Hop Shed Tap Room has become a community hub. Dogs and families are welcome, local events are regularly hosted, and the atmosphere strikes the perfect

balance between rural charm and modern craft beer culture.

For CAMRA members seeking a brewery experience that genuinely reflects its surroundings, The Hop Shed remains one of the local area's finest examples of beer rooted in local provenance.

Chris Leibbrandt

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BEER IS
BREWED



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A Singularly Different Venue

Fancy something unusual? Try The Prince Albert in Rodborough – pub, music venue, community hub, it's all those things and more.

There are things in life that are hard to describe, the colour indigo for example. Equally, there are things that are hard to define, the music of Pink Floyd comes to mind. Then there are places that challenge both definition and description. The Prince Albert pub*, nestled on a cross roads, half way up the hill in Rodborough is one such place.

Pete, my design partner and I visited the pub on the day before the latest beer festival that featured over 30 ales and a decent handful of ciders too. We sat outside in the garden area and chatted about what makes the Prince Albert the pub it is. What is patently obvious after only a few minutes in their company is that Lotte Lyster and Miles Connolly who run the place, make this pub such a vital part of the local community.



Miles and Lotte planning their next Beer Festival

I am lucky I live in Tewkesbury, because if I were in Rodborough, I doubt I'd get out of the pub. I was struck by a real sense of nostalgia as it reminded me of some of the South London music and theatre venues I visited back in late seventies, vibrant, anarchic, and essential for creative minds to flourish.

Bohemian is the best way I can describe Lotte and her partner Miles who run this extraordinary venue. In my world, Bohemian is a very good thing, brought up with interesting parents as I was, it sums up the spirit of people I naturally lean towards. Wordy, musical, artistic with a hint of anarchy and political activism thrown in for good measure.

Fair enough, it's a pub, but that only tells a tiny bit of the story, it's also an breakfast cafe, eating house, real ale seller, a music venue, arts centre, music school and community hub. It's as interesting outside as it is indoors, a raised level garden area that is full of the most interesting items that

seem, in some cases, to have been abandoned. This garden is a voyage of discovery and also memorabilia from bygone days. If it sounds a bit chaotic, then I guess you'd be on the right track.

Lotte has just celebrated 30 years of running the pub, with Miles weighing in with a decent 22 year stretch. The pub is, unusually for such a singularly 'different' venue, part of the Punch

PubCo. Since appearing on Tom Kerridge's 'Saving Britain's Pubs', however, the owners have been supportive partners that helped install two hand pumps that are now 'free of tie' meaning they can now source from wider than the normal SIBA offer. There is also a brand new kitchen that produces pizzas and burgers until 9:30 most nights.

Perhaps its strongest persona is as a music venue, and judging by the number

of posters of artists, many of whom feature on BBC Radio 3 and 6, who have performed there, it punches way above its weight. This should come as no surprise as Miles is a roadie for 'Squeeze' and is currently on tour with them now. The high-end, state of the art PA equipment that seems out of place in a pub, is testament to the quality of the music that is on offer. The Saturday free gigs lean towards folk music as a focus, but one criterion that is important is that its original. The Sunday and Monday gigs are, however ticketed. If you are a fan of harp (not the lager) music, then 7pm on Thursday would suit you as there are music lessons for up to ten students in one corner of the pub.

There are so many facets to this extraordinary community pub, there isn't the space to fit it all in here, so I really do recommend that you visit their website for more details on how you can enjoy something very special.

www.theprincealbertstroud.co.uk/whats-on

Chris Leibbrandt

*Shown on the front cover of this magazine

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LINTON FESTIVAL

last event after 25 years
music, real ale & cider festival

nr Ross-On-Wye, Herefordshire
19th to 21st June 2026



The final event after 25 years

Linton Festival returns to The Alma Inn, near Ross-on-Wye, from 19th – 21st June 2026. It marks 25 incredible years of live music, great beer, and festival spirit. What began as a humble idea to host a few local bands in the pub one night has grown into a three-day celebration that welcomes thousands of festival-goers, attracts international artists, and has raised £150,000 for local charities along the way.

To mark this special milestone, organisers promise to make Linton Festival 2026 the biggest and best yet – a fitting finale to a quarter-century of unforgettable performances, good times, and generosity.

The festival's 2026 line-up features three show-stopping headliners:

Friday: Dark Side of the Wall – an unmissable Pink Floyd tribute experience.

Saturday: King King – multi-award-winning British blues-rock at its finest.

Sunday: The Magic of Motown – closing the weekend with soul, sparkle and nostalgia.

LINTON MUSIC, REAL ALE & CIDER FESTIVAL

Over the years, the festival has welcomed legendary performers including Ruby Turner, Suzi Quatro, Wilko Johnson, Walter Trout and Geno Washington, along with rock icons such as Bernie Marsden of Whitesnake and Peter Green of Fleetwood Mac. Countless memories have been made. After all, who could forget the moment 'Freddie Mercury' was lifted above the stage in a sponsor's cherry picker?

Linton Festival has created a true musical legacy, built on passion, quality and the loyalty of its audiences.

Entirely run by volunteers, Linton Festival remains true to its roots, raising funds for local good causes at the same time as offering an unbeatable

weekend of live music, fine food, and **the best beer and cider Herefordshire has to offer**. Visitors can enjoy on-site camping, hot showers, cooked breakfasts, and food from top local suppliers. It is all set in the picturesque grounds of The Alma Inn in Linton near Ross-on-Wye, a pub consistently recognised by CAMRA as Herefordshire's Pub of the Year.

Dave Lambert – Chairman: 'After 25 incredible years of Linton Festival, raising vital funds for local charities and welcoming outstanding national and international artists to our small village, we're preparing to host our final event on 19th–21st June 2026 at the Alma Inn. I encourage everyone to join us for this last celebration of a true Herefordshire heritage festival and enjoy the music, the ales, the local ciders and the fantastic food one more time.'

TICKETS NOW ON SALE

Tickets are on sale now ranging from a day pass from £30 to a full weekend blowout for £110. They can be purchased online and at The Alma Inn.

Visit

www.lintonfestival.org

for details on the full line-up and event details.

WIN TICKETS

The Tippler has a pair of weekend tickets (worth £220) to give away! To be in with a chance of winning this fantastic prize, just answer the question on the right, then email your entry entries to:

chris@thetippler.co.uk
by 16th June at the latest.

Just answer this question!

The Tippler has a pair of weekend tickets (worth £220) to give away. To be in with a chance of winning this fantastic prize, just answer the following question:

**How long has the
Linton Festival
been running?**

Send your answer to
chris@thetippler.co.uk
by 16th June at the latest
to be included in the Prize Draw

last event after 25 years
music, real ale & cider festival

LINTON FESTIVAL

nr Ross-On-Wye, Herefordshire
19th to 21st June 2026

25 YEARS

DARK SIDE OF THE WALL KING KING THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN
NINE BELOW ZERO MIKE SANCHEZ & THE APOCALYPSE AYNLEY LISTER ALASTAIR GREENE CHANTEL MCGREGOR THOMAS ATLAS JAMES OLIVER BAND
BURNING ROPE SLOWBURNER CHRIS BEVINGTON ORGANISATION rePunK'd

Run by a team of enthusiastic volunteers, this is the festival's last year after 25 years. Taking place in the grounds of The Alma an idyllic country pub, it has everything you could want from a 3 day festival... 14 bands, local food, beers and ciders, a campsite and tree parking, over £150k raised for national and local charities.

Find us on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter and Instagram //lintonfestival

for ticket information see www.lintonfestival.org



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A Spa Day Out with a difference



Pittville Pump Room in Cheltenham is the venue for the 'Spa Sessions' Beer Festival in early September – below, organiser Darren MacDonald tells us a little more about it and why it's going to be such a unique day out.

Gloucestershire Beer Week has been around for a few years now and has raised £1000s for local charities – in the past by selling a collaboration beer to local pubs and bars who hosted special beer related events alongside. There is a small team of four of us organising 2026's event and for this year we are hosting a beer festival at Cheltenham's magnificent Pittville Pump Room.

As some readers will know, there are many strands to organising a festival of this nature – not just the beer! The most important element of course is the beer and we have persuaded breweries from all over the UK to join us for the event, from Edinburgh's Vault City to Pipeline from Cornwall, including many in between. Each brewery will be sending two staff to Cheltenham who will be serving their own beer while chatting with their customers – they may also have some merchandise for sale. As organisers, we have taken care to try and produce a varied list of breweries, with some recognised for producing IPAs, some for stouts and some for sours – ensuring each attendee has a varied list of beers to work through.

One of the features of the event will be tutored tastings from some of our breweries. This will give customers a chance to try even more of the beer available at the event under guidance from the people that have produced the beer! Due to limited space, only our VIP guests will have access to this part of the day.

A key fundraiser in the past has been a collaboration beer and this year will be no

exception. The team at Left Handed Giant will be producing this beer which will be made available to venues around the county as well as being poured at the festival. We are delighted to be working with LHG, a brewery we have known for years with some of us holding shares in the company. We look forward to both brewing and tasting the beer.

Finding a venue to host the event was easy. We wanted somewhere with some outside space for food vendors and with availability on a September Saturday for the event. The team at the Pump Room have made us welcome and we are sure that the event will work very well there. There will be plenty of seating and space for the brewers to serve from. We will be able to have a quiet room and space for the tastings.

A festival of this size always requires some food vendors and we have located some local producers who will offer a variety including vegetarian and vegan options.

This brings together 'Spa Sessions' which we hope will become a regular feature of the Gloucestershire beer calendar. The first event is on Saturday September 5th, with afternoon and evening sessions. Pittville Pump Room is on a bus route from Cheltenham Spa station, which will make travel to and from the event easier.

Further information can be found at <https://www.glosbeerweek.com/spasessions>.

Tickets are available currently, priced at £16.25 (standard) and £26.25 (VIP) for each session. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

GBW PRESENTS SPA SESSIONS

SATURDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER

Pittville Pump Room

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Stroud CAMRA Club of the Year 2026



Ali and Rob Brady receiving their award from Tony Hill, Chair of Stroud CAMRA

Image: Ben Green

The Chalford Sports & Social Club is once again Stroud CAMRA Club of the Year, for the sixth year running. Ali and Rob Brady were duly presented with a certificate recording this achievement at a presentation ceremony and celebration on Sunday 29 March. It was, as always, a very enjoyable occasion.

While nothing much seems to have changed on the outside at the club, appearances can be deceptive. There has been continuous investment in the fabric of the building and its facilities, fixtures and fittings. The clubhouse remains an unprepossessing flat-roofed, concrete-block bunker, but the roof has been renewed and garnished with solar panels backed up by battery storage. There are new curtains in the lounge, with new blinds to come in main hall where the skittle alley has pride of place. The chairs in the lounge have been reupholstered. The skittle alley, the jewel in the club's crown, is the biggest earner and on which 10 teams play, has been renewed and resurfaced at a cost of £6,500.

There was a good turnout of Stroud CAMRA members and locals, many lured by the promise of a game of skittles. We always arrange the presentation for when the alley is available.

Skittles is a sadly endangered species in pubs these days, and one of the distinctive features of pubs (and clubs) in the southwest of England and south Wales. Any pub closure is to be regretted, but it is always particularly saddening when it involves the loss of a skittle alley – as with the closure of the Kites Nest Inn at Lightpill on the Bath Road, where the skittle alley has disappeared under a terrace of new houses. And also the Shunters in Stroud, where the pub is now Sorrento's, an Italian restaurant, and the skittle alley has succumbed to a cramped courtyard of new flats.

Many Stroud CAMRA members are enthusiastic players, including me. So to find a pub or club with a well-maintained and supported skittle alley is a boon.

We played an energetic game of skittles with Ben Green winning for the club, leading to further

speculation about Tony Hill's future. Alas, we had no time to play 'killer', a fast and furious game, which is usually the high-point of our visit.

The beer range was imaginative and eclectic, confirming the Chalford Sports & Social Club as worthy winners of the Club of the Year accolade. There was Cereal Killer, a so-called 'session IPA' (3.8%) from Newport's Tiny Rebel, Big Cat (4.5%), a beefy stout from Stroud Brewery, and Juicy IPA (4.8%) a punchy gluten-free English IPA flavoured with New World hops from Rude Giant, a new Wiltshire brewery. So a good range of tastes, strengths and styles was catered for. All but the Big Cat were new to me and probably to most other people, making for an adventurous tasting session.

The Chalford Sports & Social Club sits right at the top of Chalford Hill with a glorious southerly aspect across its own tennis courts. The club is the sporting and social hub of the village, with over 500 members. It is an astonishing resource at the heart of the community, offering a wide variety of social and sporting opportunities, from craft clubs to skittles, fitness classes to sport on TV. It is a warm and welcoming place, very family-orientated and where children are always welcome.

The club is justifiably proud of its sporting prowess. With youth and adult football teams, two cricket sides and no less than five tennis teams, with their top players battling it out against the best in the area in the premier division. The club boasts five floodlit courts, including two synthetic clay ones.

The clubhouse may be externally unprepossessing, but it proves to be an Aladdin's cave when it comes to the range of facilities and activities within. The main hall is big enough to accommodate 150 people and is a popular choice for wedding receptions, parties, concerts and family events. It is also used for short mat bowls, with several sessions each week. There is a dartboard in the main hall and another one in the comfortably-furnished lounge.

But skittles is at the heart of the club, with 10 teams, regular competitive and social events throughout the winter and a weekday league in summer.

Ali Brady became manager in March 2018 and from that point on it was all change on the beer front. In came the handpumps and on came the real ale, and overnight the club changed from serving only pressurised keg beers to an oasis for real ale, courtesy of the Good Beer Company, run by Ali's husband Rob Brady. Rob is solely a volunteer at the club but takes care of beer ordering, line cleaning and also serves behind the bar.

The Chalford Sports & Social Club now goes forward to the next round – to compete for the title of CAMRA West Central Club of the Year. And so on until one pub out of a shortlist of four is crowned national CAMRA Club of the Year for 2026.

**Tim Mars
Pubs Officer Stroud CAMRA**



Chalford Sports and Social Club

Image: Bill Hicks



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the tippler PRIZE Crossword



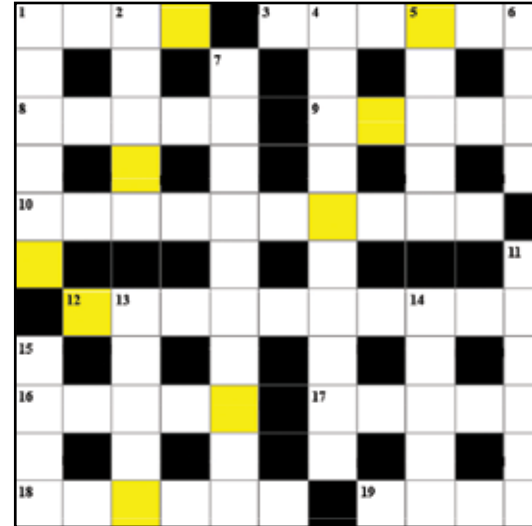
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QUAYS

What you can win

Brewhouse & Kitchen Gloucester Quays have donated a brilliant prize of three **Brewery Experience Days** to give away to the winners of this tricky crossword competition.

So get puzzling and send your solutions to the address below.

Rearrange the yellow squares to find a brewery



ACROSS

1. Grain starts my ale looking tasty (4)
3. Tweak part of bad justice (6)
8. I turn wrong way in Italy (5)
9. Truth contains everything, but is just one aspect (5)
10. Within school allow drugs, but not fully (10)
12. Sick vicar returns with rodents in thin pasta (10)
16. Brewing liquor contains salt, which isn't good (5)
17. Live in a bidet! (5)
18. Chickens in coats? (6)
19. Put snare back, but not all of it (4)

DOWN

1. Joined up with boy to make measuring system (6)
2. Cyril alters word he sings (5)
4. Poor quality French covering on Paddington (10)
5. Long hair in its original form (5)
6. Archbishop in a short skirt! (4)
7. Mean meteor breaks measuring instrument (10)
11. Short time in a section is halved (6)
13. Relay mix-up is ahead of schedule (5)
14. High-flying dog at end of instrument (5)
15. Run away and begin a week of loving (4)



Send your entry to
chris@thetippler.co.uk



CASK CHRONICLES

With Alex Jordan

In a spare few minutes at the latest Ludlow Festival, Alex Jordan reflects on the importance to the trade (and consumers) of beer competitions.

Beer competitions play a vital role in the success and development of microbreweries across the UK. In an increasingly crowded and competitive craft beer market, awards and recognition can help small breweries stand out, build credibility, and attract new customers.

For many microbrewers, competitions provide independent validation of the quality of their beer. Awards from respected organisations such as CAMRA, the Society of Independent Brewers Association (SIBA), or the world beer awards, act as trusted endorsements. Consumers are often more willing to try a beer that has received industry recognition, especially when purchasing from unfamiliar breweries. A medal or award logo on pump clips, cans, or marketing materials can significantly increase customer confidence.

Competitions also create valuable marketing opportunities. Many microbreweries operate with limited advertising budgets, meaning award wins can generate publicity that would otherwise be difficult to achieve. Success in competitions often leads to local press coverage, increased social media engagement, and greater interest from pubs, bars, and retailers. For breweries trying to expand

distribution, competition success can demonstrate consistency and professionalism to potential stockists.

Beyond commercial benefits, competitions encourage brewers to improve standards and refine their products. Feedback from experienced judges can help identify technical flaws, recipe improvements, or areas for development. This can be especially valuable for newer breweries looking to establish themselves in the industry. Competitions also foster a sense of community within the brewing sector, bringing brewers together to share ideas, celebrate innovation, and promote British beer culture.

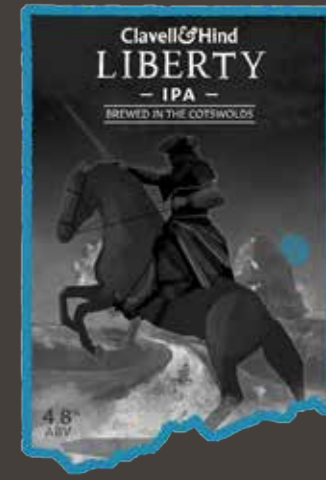
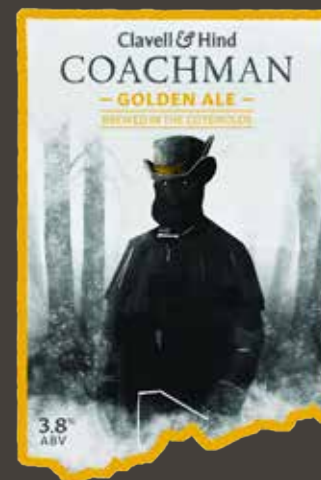
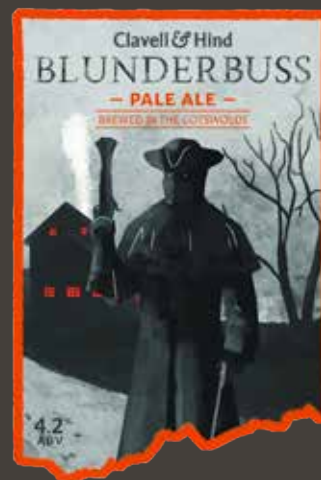
Finally, beer competitions help strengthen the reputation of the UK's independent brewing industry as a whole. They highlight regional brewing talent, showcase diverse beer styles, and encourage consumers to support local producers. In a challenging economic climate, competitions can provide microbreweries with both recognition and momentum, helping them survive and grow within a highly competitive marketplace.

Alex Jordan



Clavell & Hind

QUALITY GLOUCESTERSHIRE ALES

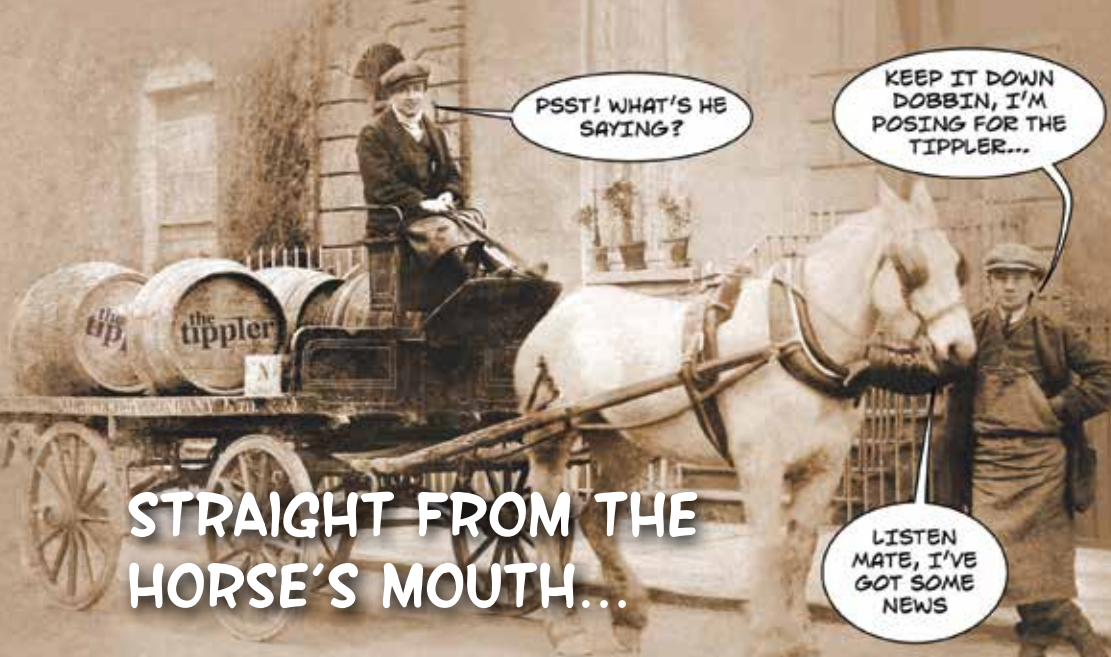


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STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH...

Pub & Brewery News

BREWERY NEWS

Arkells Brewery The Riverside Inn in Lechlade, Gloucestershire, has reopened following a £350,000 refurbishment, bringing a range of improvements designed to enhance both the customer experience and the day-to-day running of the popular riverside pub. While many of the improvements are behind the scenes, they will help support the pub team in delivering better service to customers. Customers will also notice several front-of-house enhancements, including new dining seating increasing capacity by 28 covers, updated lighting, new furniture and a completely rebuilt bar.

Managing Director George Arkell said: 'We are delighted to have The Riverside back up and running just in time for the early sunshine, and it's looking fantastic. This refurbishment has allowed us to improve the pub in ways that customers will see and enjoy particularly on those popular summer days when people flock to The Riverside for its wonderful riverside location.'

Seen here are (left to right) James Arkell, Sophie New (Assistant manager, The Riverside),



George Arkell, Gareth Chapman (Manager, The Riverside)

For further information on The Riverside Inn: <https://www.riverside-lechlade.com/>
In June/July the Arkells beer release is The Showboater. This is a returning recipe being released for the World Cup. At 3.7%, light and crisp, this one will have you back for a second pint.



The Aug/Sept beer release is Bee's Honey Pale Ale, a Pale Ale based on a popular beer brewed regularly many years ago. This time, however, they've sourced local honey from just behind the brewery, adding a rich honey sweetness that's perfect for the sunny months.

Clavell and Hind Brewery are looking for a new Assistant Brewer after André left in November

Corinium Ales have had been working at a fast pace to the first half of the year and saw a significant amount of our beers going out to some new local pubs and beer festivals. As we head into summer their focus is on brewery events, including a couple of 'food & music' nights in June and our annual summer BBQ in July when they'll be

celebrating 'X summers in the doghouse' with the Alternative Syren Belly! They're also be preparing for their real ale micro bar at the one and only Phoenix Festival over the August Bank Holiday weekend, in Cirencester.

They'll be brewing some thirst-quenching seasonals, including their 3.8% pale ale Pliny the Elderflower and big 6% IPA Pako for the summer BBQ. Caligulager, a cool and refreshing 5.2% lager is proving popular too and great for the summer months.

If you've not yet been to their brewery or tasted their beers do get along and visit. They're open on Fridays & Saturdays (3pm to 7pm) and

May–Sept on Sundays too (2pm to 5pm). They also run brewery tours & tastings and on 12th September (1.30pm to 3pm) will be running a free and informal 'open brewery tour' as part of the Heritage Open Days 'Every Day Lives'.

They can now be found as permanent cask ales in The Kings Head and Fleece Hotels in Cirencester as well as guests at many others in the area. See their Facebook and Instagram pages for special events coming up.

Stroud Brewery have a special session pale ale, Easy Peasy, that has had a stellar year. After winning gold at SIBA's Wales & West Regional Heats three years running, it's now earned two Bronze awards at this year's Nationals. The brewing team are understandably delighted, and have channelled their magic straight into three new releases.

Two limited editions join the brewery's summer menu: Summer Krush, a 4% ABV, easy-drinking session IPA with zesty lime, tropical notes which is light on the palate, and lighter on the planet.; and the return of Pia, a 4% a fruity New Zealand Pale Ale hops bringing oodles of grapefruit and piney characteristics.

The third is Shift Happens, a very low alcohol beer which is still a work in progress. The first batch is a rebellious 1% instead of the intended 0.5% – an independent spirit that's 'very Stroud!' The brewers' botanical alchemy continues to try to make it behave but, in the meantime, the first batch is on offer in the taproom.

Now then, here's a philosophical question to ponder: does a pint taste better when it's free? The brewery's new loyalty scheme lets you investigate: every pint in the taproom earns a stamp, and nine stamps earn a free pint (or a tea/coffee). Alternatively, book a ticket in advance to the Malty Story Festival (5th – 7th June) and enjoy a free pint.

The Little Avon Brewery tap in Wotton's main street now stocks three of their own ales plus two changing beers from other breweries.

Uley Brewery's seasonal beer, Crossbreed, using experimental hops from Charles Farram, seemed to divide drinkers dramatically. Distinctly bitter in an Old World way, it was highly praised by myself and a local landlord. But Kevin Farmer at The Hoptician said it didn't sell!

PUBS IN CHELTENHAM

The Merryfellow, Charlton Kings Is now being run by the former team at the Suffolk Arms, Cheltenham.

The Suffolk Arms reopened at the end of April with a new management team.

BrewDog, in the Brewery Quarter, Cheltenham.

Now permanently closed following company administration.

Sandford Park Alehouse, to celebrate the end of winter, held a very popular 'Dark Side of the Ale' beer festival at the end of March. Described as 'a full week of dark beers, live music, events, and everything that makes this side of ale worth exploring.' This is likely to be an annual event.

The Railway, New Street, Cheltenham, have launched a new monthly event – Sip & Spin Sundays. Vinyl played all Sunday 12pm–10:30pm. 'Bring your own vinyl to add to the listening queue and get one of our themed cocktails for £6.50 or a pint of Deya Railway Pale for £5.'

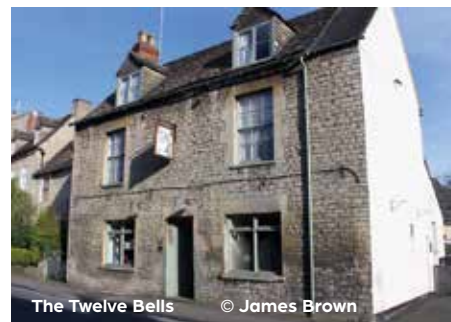
The Tavern, Royal Well, Cheltenham has now reopened. Taken over by the team behind Prithvi.

Brewhouse and Kitchen, closed for a 10-day refurbishment in April and has now reopened.

The Apple Tree, Woodmancote has undergone a full refurbishment during May. It is planned to reopen on Saturday, 6th June.

PUBS IN CIRENCESTER

The Twelve Bells in Cirencester (seen below) remains under new ownership and it is clear that the new owners have and had no intention of opening as a pub. The latest news is good news for the pub. The new owners had submitted a change of use application to turn this well loved and successful pub into a single house. This resulted in serious opposition and more than 150 letters of objection



The Twelve Bells © James Brown

were submitted to the council. At the request of the ward councillor, Mr Joe Harris, the case was considered by the Planning Committee and, despite a recommendation to allow by the planning officer, the application as rejected by 8 votes to 0 with 1 abstention. The decision greeted by an eruption of applause from the packed public gallery. This was in no small part due to Mr Harris' impassioned plea (which also drew tremendous cheers) and James Brown, local CAMRA member who spoke against the proposal. We now await the decision of the owners on how they will proceed.

The Kings Arms in The Street in Didmarton has been acquired by Inn The Sticks, a growing collection of country pubs on the edge of the Cotswolds. The total number of pubs in the group now stands at five, with Gloucestershire's the Kings Arms joining The Bull plus Wiltshire pubs The Need Arms in Grittleton, The Langley Tap in Langley Burrell and The Wellesley Arms in Sutton Benger. 'Inn The Sticks', founded by Mark Florey and Mark Holton, has unveiled proposals for 'a careful and sympathetic refurbishment' of the venue, with its interiors and rooms enhanced while the inn's character as a village pub is preserved.

The Tunnel House, Coates is very close to re-opening (May/June 2026) after extensive refurbishment by new management. Those of you who visit the Bell at Sapperton will know what to expect from Peter and his team.

The Wild Duck at Ewen continues to entertain large numbers since its recent opening under the Country Creatures ownership.

The Queen Matilda, Avening has had its change of use application refused.

The Royal Oak, Tetbury, is up for sale.

The Falcon, Poulton, is up for sale.

The Trouble House, Tetbury, is up for sale.

The Crown, Lechlade, is up for sale.

The Talbot Inn, probably the subject of Cirencester's worst kept secret has seen five good friends invest in the soon to be reopened pub.

The businessmen include, tech-titan, James Burgess, of Gbics.com, he is the director of the IT company based in Cirencester's Love Lane. Chef Ethan Rodgers, formerly of the Lucky Onion Group, and Cirencester Park Polo Club, Neil Robson, a front-of-house hospitality consultant. Fourth is Cirencester's experienced, entrepreneur, and magnate – John Henry. They are joined by Jono Rooke, owner of Straight-PR, a communications consultancy, also based in the Cotswold town.

PUBS & CLUBS NEWS

There is plenty of pub news in this edition, but they all need to be visited on a regular basis to make sure they survive. The aphorism 'Use it or lose it.' couldn't be more apt.

One pub in Newent has a campaigning landlord who is making a difference. **Wayne Childs**, landlord of the Kings Arms in Newent, has been recognized for his leadership and commitment to the Hands Off Our Pubs (HOOP) campaign, which began in the Forest of Dean and has grown to support over 500 hospitality businesses across England. HOOP is a UK-wide pressure group formed to fight against rising costs, unfair taxation, and the ongoing wave of pub closures.





The Hoptician, Dursley's very own micropub has just become West Central Region's Cider Pub of the Year. Drinks all round!

PUBS IN NORTH COTSWOLDS

The Corner Cupboard in Winchcombe has re-opened under new management with one cask ale on at the moment but hope is to have more guest ales as they settle in. The team who already run the Stirrup Cup in Bisley have put managers in the Pub and it is good to see a local pint of Goffs Joust on the Bar.

The Reservoir Inn on the A40 in Dowdeswell that has been a restaurant for many years has plans to be converted back to a pub and re-named The Fox. This a welcome development for this well-known landmark pub as you enter Cheltenham.

The Halfway House in Kington is closed for a makeover for a month from May with the tenants, Nathan Eades and Liam Goff, along with Donnington Brewery working to update the pub with something special. We await the results and look forward to tasting the quality of the Donnington's Beer in the new surroundings.

The other two pubs run by Nathen and Liam have attracted national interest:

The Hollow Bottom, Guiting Power, has attracted national interest, being reviewed by the Times columnist Giles Coren, is also run by Nathan Eades and Liam Goff.

The Horse and Groom at Bourton on the Hill, similarly run by Nathan Eades and Liam Goff has been heralded as the Best Pub in the Cotswolds by the Telegraph.

The Farmers Arms in Guiting Power has new tenants Luke McDonagh and Kelsie Duffy who are transforming the pub with a garden makeover and outside bar and grill. Luke has a long-term relationship with Donnington Brewery as his parents ran both the New Inn at Willersey and the Coach and Horses at Longborough where he ran the kitchen.

The Farriers at Todenham is now a shell of a building as it is being extensively rebuilt with no timescale on its return.

The Churchill at Paxford which is encased in scaffolding but little work taking place since its extensive fire damage.

'Rumours began to circulate that it was going to be a carvery, even an Indian, so we want to stop this now, and say that it is going to be a pub, with great beer and drinks, top British food, and will include the five bed and breakfast rooms,' James Burgess said.

'We have got a great team together, and I am excited to get into a new kitchen,' Ethan Rodgers added. 'Neil will be managing the venue with me, I have worked with him before, and he is equally looking forward to a new challenge, perhaps not his biggest this year, as he is also getting married – sadly their nuptials will not be at the pub, but we will be celebrating with them.

'We plan to reopen in mid-May, and announcement of the date will be made soon, we hope you like what we have done to the place, oh, we have also changed the name, so keep an eye out for the new sign.' He added.

The pub has been leased to them by Arkell's Brewery, who also own Cirencester's Golden Cross Inn, and The Brewers Inn. They have 92 pubs across their own county of Wiltshire, as well as Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Hampshire. 'Arkell's have been extremely supportive,' Jono Rooke said. 'I have worked with them for a number of years so when one of their venues came up for grabs, in a town where two of us were brought up, I suggested it to the group, first in jest, sadly, I joke, they thought it was a good idea.'

For further information about the pub, contact: Jonathon Rooke of Straight-pr on 01285 640021, 07999 767555 or email contact@straight-pr.co.uk

PUBS IN DURSLEY

The Pepperpot a Quality Inns owned pub in Wick near Charfield has been rebranded as a cafe. It is understood that it will no longer sell beer.

PUBS & CLUBS AWARDS NEWS

PUBS & CLUBS IN CHELTENHAM

At the Cheltenham Branch Meeting, in March, the winning venues of the year were chosen. This was achieved after studying a combination of 'Whatpub' beer scoring statistics, the branch members popular vote, and the vote from the county Tasting Panel members. The results were:

Pub of the Year

Jolly Brewmaster, Painswick Road, Cheltenham.

Club of the Year

Cheltenham Motor Club, Upper Park Street, Cheltenham.

Cider Pub of the Year

Dunkertons Cider Taproom, Dowdeswell Park, London Road, Cheltenham.

Hearty congratulations!

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Pubs offering CAMRA discounts

A number of pubs and businesses are offering discounts to CAMRA members, a scheme backed by CAMRA National with promotional posters available to landlords.

The ones we know of are listed below – just wave your CAMRA card and you'll be entitled to the discount. If you know of any more, please get in touch and we'll add them to the list.

Establishment	Where	Offer
THE BELL HOTEL	TEWKESBURY	10% OFF REAL ALES
THE BERKELEY ARMS	TEWKESBURY	10% OFF REAL ALES
BREWHOUSE AND KITCHEN	CHELTENHAM	10% OFF REAL ALES
BREWHOUSE AND KITCHEN	GLOUCESTER	10% OFF REAL ALES
BUTFORD ORGANICS CIDER & PERRIES	BODENHAM HEREFORD	10% OFF WEEKEND SHOP PURCHASES (MIN £20 SPEND)
CHALFORD SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB	CHALFORD STROUD	50P OFF REAL ALES
THE CANTERBURY	TEWKESBURY	10% OFF REAL ALES
THE HOPTICIAN	DURSLEY	20P OFF REAL ALES
THE NOTTINGHAM ARMS	TEWKESBURY	50P OFF REAL ALES, MON & TUES
THE OLD SPOT	DURSLEY	20P OFF REAL ALES
THE PRINCE ALBERT	STROUD	20P OFF REAL ALES



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the tippler **NAME
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Where's this?

Like so many others, we are committed supporters of Gloucester Rugby at The Tippler.

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An award winning pub I hear you ask? You could be on the right lines there.



What you can win

Wetherspoons are generously offering the lucky winner a **one night stay for two people** at the fabulous **Royal Hop Pole Hotel in Tewkesbury**.

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Good Luck!



Send your entry to
chris@thetippler.co.uk



www.thetippler.co.uk

Tall Tales from the Cider Shed...

Summer's upon us and what could be more summery than a spot of haymaking? Until it goes wrong, that is...

Summer means only one thing on the farm: haymaking. Father would always be ready to start haymaking the day after the Three Counties Show, and if the weather was set fair, it would be all systems go.

Haymaking was never my favourite job. Not only was it hard work, it also came right in the middle of the village cricket season, when I would just be finding a bit of form with the bat, getting into double figures. But, as the old saying goes, 'you've got to make hay while the sun shines', so the cricket had to come to a stop.

Father would have spent hours sharpening the blade on the fingermower, ready to start cutting the grass. Later on, he bought me a drum mower, which was quicker than the fingermower, but had a knack of losing one of its drums every now and then, meaning a call to International Rescue – Ted Franklin – and him having to do a big operation on it.

We were lucky that our neighbour, Les Bundy, would let us borrow his mower to finish off the job.

Pete Stone told me a true story about Father mowing the grass. One day, Pete and a complete stranger were watching father mowing when the

stranger noticed that every couple of circuits, father would stop and go to the hedgerow. 'Do you think that mans got trouble with his bladder?' the stranger asked. To which Pete replied, 'No, he's got a jar of cider in the hedge!'

Once the mowing was done, the grass was turned by a hay turner, or spread around with a hay bob. Not too much can go wrong with these two implements, apart from a flat tyre or two. When the hay was ready, after three or four days, it would be ready to bale. But you are always in the lap of the weather gods; and if the weather isn't perfect, it could take a lot longer.

Once it was ready, it would be put into rows where it would be baled up. Baling hay, when the baler is in full flow, is one of the most therapeutic sounds you could wish to hear. And with the sun shining and after a couple of tots of cider, you can become quite drowsy. That is, until you hear the dreaded BANG, CLANG, CLANG, CLANG, meaning that there is something gone wrong with the baler.. It could be just a shearbolt or something far more serious, meaning another call out for International Rescue. With rain probably forecast for the next day, things can get very fraught.

There are lots of things that can go wrong with a baler, as I found out the first time I baled hay after Father passed away. It was down the road at Bishop Robin's field. Everything, I thought, was going well until I looked around to see some loose bales in the sledge. When I got off the tractor to see what was wrong, I found out it was another problem: I hadn't greased the knottor. Father was probably looking down thinking, 'Stupid boy!'

When the hay is eventually baled up, it is stacked into eights where it would be picked up by a Perry loader and put onto the trailer. The Perry loader was actually invented by a local man called Dennis Perry. It's good to see that the Perry family are still farming on the same farm in Bushley in such challenging times. When the trailer was full, it would be mine and Deputy's job to unload the bales onto a bale elevator, where my brother David and father's apprentice, Colin Franklin, would have the hard job of stacking the bales in the barn.

There were so many people that helped us with the haymaking: people like Arthur Quinlan, Billy the Kid, Mike Bolton, Tony Wilson; the list could go on. Even young Bill Round helped for a season after

he left school. After the haymaking was finished, it would be time to start on the straw. So long as the weather was good, all would hopefully be safely gathered in by the start of September, giving me the chance to go back to Eldersfield to play the last few games of the cricket season, where I would once again struggle to hit the ball off the square. Was it any wonder my cricketing nickname was Captain Deadbat?

Dereck Hartland



Loading straw with the Perry loader



Those were the days! Father in his element



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DEAF BOY WANDERIN' JOHN



Breaking completely with protocol, our wayward wanderer has this issue decided to wax lyrical over a walk he recently took in New Zealand. Who are we to argue?

Haere Mai Walkers! There are some walks that are so memorable that they shine like diamonds in the memory. This walk is definitely in that special category.

Recently, I had the overwhelming privilege to re-visit the Cathedral Cove Walk in the North Island of New Zealand that I first walked in 1990. I wondered if, 36 years later, the magic of that walk would still be there.

Doubts emerged as I was instructed to go to a car park on the edge of a nearby settlement and catch a shuttle bus to the top of the walk. A great change from 1990, when I just parked the car on the side of the road (unsealed of course) and followed a dusty trail through the bush. The bus dropped me at a turning point near the summit of a large hill.



Cathedral Cove arch

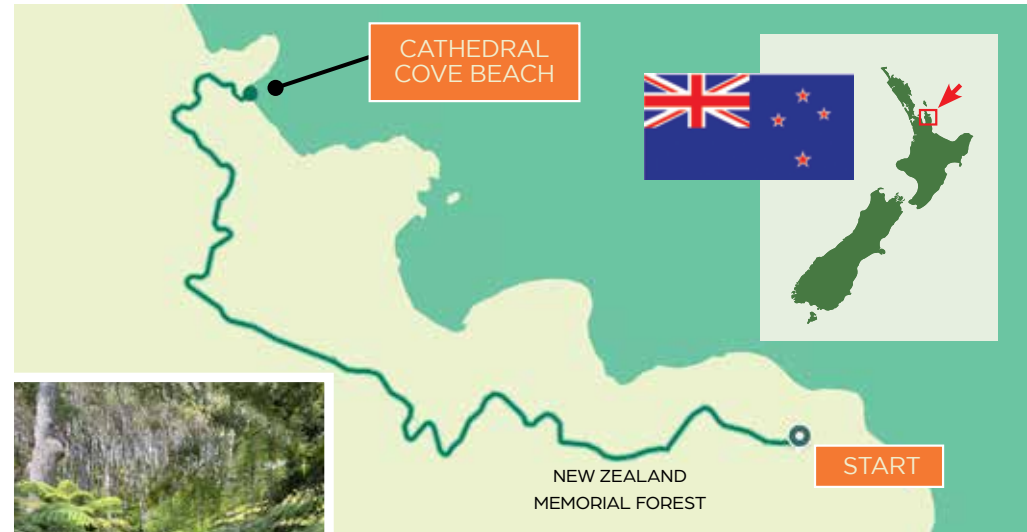


Through the arch

Unlike my previous visit, the walkway was now concreted and firm underfoot rather than slippery and very dusty. A look-out and information board marked the start of the walk proper and gave one the first glimpses of stark white cliffs bordered by an azure blue sea. Another change, but what hadn't changed was the sheer natural beauty of the area.

Initially, the path led across a grassy downwards slope with forested cliffs pointing to the sky. Walking slowly, taking everything in, I was ignoring the athletes whose focus was to blindly get to the end as quickly as possible, whilst ignoring the wonderful terrain they were actually walking through.

As the descent continued, the path started to enter a forest, called The New Zealand Memorial Forest. This forest is a living memorial to those men



of two golden sandy beaches. The first beach is hemmed in on all sides by towering cliffs of white rock that glow in the sunshine. Walking further towards the waves lapping the shore, your eyes are inevitably drawn to a natural arch that gives access to yet another amazing beach. Looking through this cathedral-like archway is like getting a

glimpse of paradise. Make sure you visit the cove at low tide or you could find yourself having to swim through it one way or another.

The view through the arch is absolutely stunning and reveals another stark white headland topped by a pine tree and I am not exaggerating, which is beauty beyond belief. In 1990 my family and I had the whole place to ourselves, but, despite the fact that there were more tourists about, it still had a splendour that left people silenced by the beauty of Mother Nature. Do as Nailsworth's late incomer and celebrated supertramp, W.H. Davies, advised: 'What is this life if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare'. Like the great majority of visitors, I stopped and stared...and stared.

A walk that just keeps on giving from start to finish. 12,000+ miles is not too long a journey to make to what is a truly special and unforgettable place. Back in the UK next time!

of the A.N.Z.A.C.S. (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) who were killed at Gallipoli in the First World War.

The path curled round into the trees and I enjoyed the sensation of the bush closing around and over me and appreciated the easy-to-follow path. This was akin to walking through an elongated green tunnel. Everywhere there were scores of enormous tree ferns, spreading their cooling fronds across the path. It was like looking at a hugely expensive green carpet, given the price of small tree ferns in UK Garden centres. In the background, dwarfed by even taller cliffs, were a group of ancient, stately pine trees, a sight to boost even the most sagging morale. I was mesmerised by the variety of plant and bird life, which made walking a very deep pleasure.

Eventually the last part of the path giving access to the beach came into view. Instead of a set of rickety ladders that I scrambled down in 1990 there were now a series of wide, safe wooden steps. These gave much easier access to the first

Back in the UK next time!

Back in the UK next time!

Back in the UK next time!

Deaf Boy

The Pub Whisperer

In this series about local pub life we drop in on various pubs around the county as the journey continues...

The perfect inclusive pub – The Beehive Montpellier

It's Saturday and of course this busy back street pub is busy. All tables are filled with most people drinking the wide range of ales and only a handful eating from the interesting and varied menu.

The chatter is loud, and the crash of glasses being inserted into the dishwasher adds to the general jolly atmosphere. There are some sat at the bar and a couple of groups sat on the stools beneath the TV, both window tables adjacent to the front door are occupied. One couple enjoy fish and chips and a ham terrine with chutney.

There's another crash of glasses as they are rescued from the hot dishwasher and chinking as they are returned to their temporary home before being employed again: to be filled with delicious and intoxicating ales. There is the occasional glass of white wine to be seen but most glasses are filled with golden ales. Regulars welcome one another as they arrive for some ale sustenance. Some stand by the windows as the summer sun permeates the pub casting shadows and sunbeams on the happy throng. An occasional dog lies quietly or sits quietly knowing they are in for a long session.

At the darker end of the pub the four tables are again full of groups enjoying each other's company

and the odd one finishing a replete dinner. A group of women celebrating a wedding the next day sat round a large table at one end of the pub and enjoy champagne and sing songs.

The dining room – snug – has two of its four tables occupied and they are able to have a relatively quieter engagement. It's been a day of showers, and nobody is sitting out the front or back yard which may account for the warm jolly, pleasant atmosphere inside and another group arrive and no doubt they will enjoy this popular pub that does not rely on music to engender a pleasant and enjoyable atmosphere. It's a great local boozer that is also a destination pub famous for its traditional pub atmosphere. It is a traditional and much appreciated pub as another three drinkers arrive and immediately peruse the available ales and get into a discussion with the knowledgeable female staff about each ale on offer. A perfect pub.

Celebrating the Freehold Acquisition

There are 42 champagne glasses sitting on the bar in a rectangle 6 x 7 ready for the celebration. From 5.30 there is a free bar for an hour. The first group arrive a little before the start but the informality of the occasion takes priority and the landlord passes

over some filled glasses for them. They make use of the rear courtyard in the shade as it is an unusual 20 degrees. Other groups congregate out the front to soak up the sun that has turned up too, or was it asked to put in an appearance? The music has been turned up a little. The next celebrants stick to the beer and lager except for the female member who joins in the celebrations by taking away a flute and again they disappear into the sun. Molly taps a new barrel, for the show must go on.

The owner arrives, dressed casually, as is the style he prefers for the pub itself – relaxed and welcoming and he joins the ale drinkers by having a pint. There are only half a dozen folk inside but 20 plus outside front and back. It's a low-key celebration, as is desired by the owner. A photographer takes some shots, probably asked by the owner to record the event.

A daily regular, who must leave early gives the owner a full embrace as he offers congratulations. A third member of staff arrives and we anticipate the manager may well vacate his role behind the bar and join the celebratory throng. A very committed regular who organises charity days at the pub is also celebrating for his family. After 25 years of renting, his offer on a house in a good location has been accepted. The pub begins to fill about six-ish but they are being forced to sit inside as all seats outside are occupied. However, the fit and healthy stand around.

By now, there are over 70 people attached to the pub and the bubbly is flowing. The chatter and laughter drown out the music and it has been

rested in favour of the social music of the crowd. Tony, who provides the pub with specialist ales appears, maybe to consume one of his midland contributions. Meanwhile, more happy faces pile in and the numbers grow to a century. Another bar staff member arrives and just as well. The landlord hasn't been able to escape service and opens another bottle of bubbly. There as many people standing outside as there are sitting and the bar is full. It's like an early evening after a race meeting or a day during the cricket festival.

This is a pub that plays a central part in many Cheltonians lives and if they cannot be everyday regulars they come from across the town whenever they can, even on a Wednesday.

One fellah came from Worcester to see a mate who lives here and where did they come to socialise? The Beehive.

A singer sets up his equipment slowly and chats to acquaintances as well as distributing a list of songs he can sing and play so the punters who will select his renditions. This is typical of the pub culture generated by the owner to ensure that punters are first and foremost the centre of his commitment. This is a low-key celebration focused on the purchase of the Freehold by the owner who has leased it for 17 years. The advertising was by word of mouth to a very large network who appreciate the care and commitment the leaseholder and, now owner, has ensured to maintain this backstreet pub's warm unique culture. Long may it continue to be a gem in Cheltenham's pub landscape.

'Other groups congregate out the front to soak up the sun that has turned up too, or was it asked to put in an appearance?'





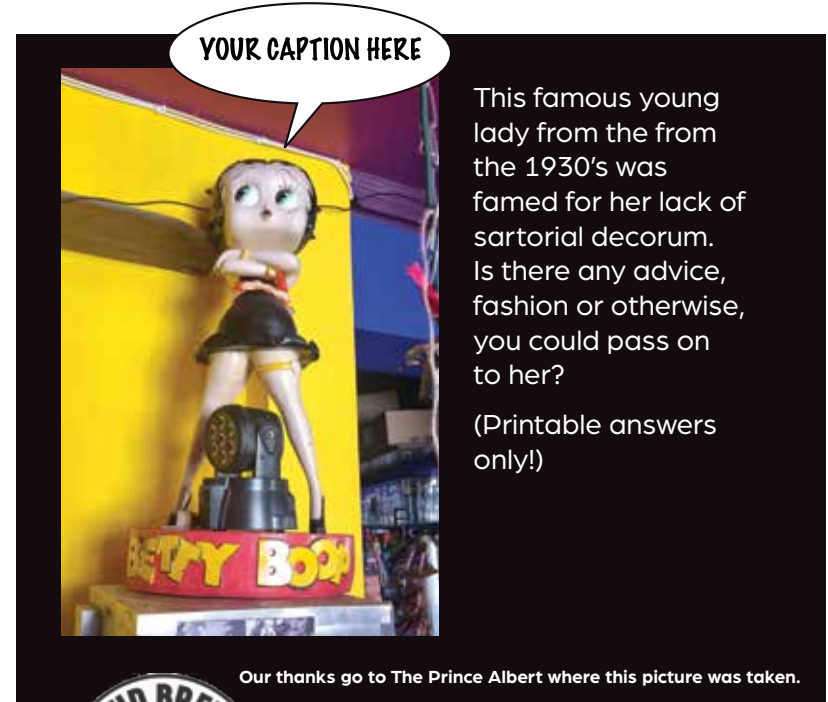
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the tippler **CAPTION** Competition

Sharpen your pencil, as well as your wits, and come up with a suitable caption for this unusual photo



YOUR CAPTION HERE

This famous young lady from the 1930's was famed for her lack of sartorial decorum. Is there any advice, fashion or otherwise, you could pass on to her?

(Printable answers only!)

Our thanks go to The Prince Albert where this picture was taken.



What you can win

Stroud Brewery are offering two lucky winners the chance to experience one of their Brewery Tours. Each winner will receive **two Brewery Tour Tickets** plus a case of 12 assorted beers.

So have a think about a caption and send it in - what have you got to lose?

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CIDER & PERRY MAN



In this series, the cider representative for Cheltenham CAMRA keeps us up to speed in the world of cider and perry in and around Gloucestershire

A Liquid Comparison?

When you mention Cheltenham to an 'outsider', they might think of a nice Cotswold town, or maybe think of GCHQ, but would they realize that we have two of the largest independent drink producers in the West Country. Both names start with D and both started up here just over 10 years ago.

In the second half of the last century, the name of Whitbreads, and their Cheltenham brewery was known to everyone, and the name still lives on in the new brewery quarter. Now, hard by the railway station is Deya, who are producing a very large range of craft beers and have a commodious taproom.

Of course the CAMRA mantra is all about cask real ale and Deya do produce a small quantity, but the lines of demarcation have become a little blurred in recent times, and their best selling beer, Steady Rolling Man, is certainly very popular, and motoring ahead.

Dunkerton's had more than a head start on Deya having been established over in Herefordshire since 1980. Ivor Dunkerton passed it on to his son Julian, who had already made a fortune in his clothing business, and he moved the cidery over to Dowdeswell in 2016, where he already owned considerable property.

By my own estimation, I reckon the business must have quadrupled since the move from the old farm premises to the new state-of-the-art set up. They certainly are the largest independent real cider producer in Gloucestershire, and this has been achieved with 100% apple production, using organic methods, which are really important to them.

Fronting onto the production area, they have built an area that feels like a village, containing the large bar, a stage area for events, and a deli for off sales of their large range of ciders, as well as high quality food stuffs. Surrounding this, are maybe ten or so food outlets offering different cuisines.

I have never been a great fan of such foodie places, called Food Halls in London or other cities. Last Christmas, however, I had my youngest son arriving with his large family and wishing to escape home catering, my mind turned to Dunkerton's, especially since the family, including my vegetarian daughter-in-law, all had different tastes.

Apart from the loud background music, it was a great success, and I managed to talk my eldest grandson through the different range of ciders which we both thoroughly enjoyed.



Simon Hall of Dunkertons (l) receives his award from Guy Vowles (r)

Selecting the Cider Pub of the Year

CAMRA Judging time soon came up in the new year and during my tenure in the last two years, we had not considered Dunkerton's. I had never thought of it as a real pub. However, it was (gently!) pointed out to me that Clavel and Hind's tap room was already in the GBG, as was The Stroud Brewery, so that I ought to think again.

It was a close run thing between Dunkerton's and The Jolly Brewmaster in town, but in the end, the greater range of ciders and all the food offerings clinched it for the former. I had also appreciated the expert and friendly service there on my two visits.

Shortly after that decision we had to judge the County award, of which The North Cotswold Branch did not put in a nomination for a Cider Pub of the Year and neither did branches in Cirencester, Gloucester or the Forest of Dean, which is a great shame, but possibly shows the (perceived?) lack of real cider available in those areas.

That left us with just three candidates. Firstly, The Cross House Tavern in Tewkesbury, which is also a micropub. It's a most atmospheric building and they have a great little range of local ciders and perries. Our second consideration was Dunkerton's,

which our group had now visited separately several times. The third entry was very close in that The Hoptician in Dursley had outscored The Carpenter's Arms at Westrip for the Mid-Gloucestershire Branch award.

It was a pity that we had two such strong cider pubs in the same area, and more especially since 'The Carps' had got into the last four CAMRA Cider pubs in the whole of the UK for last year's competition.

We had a really good visit to The Hoptician and were bowled over by the great range of ciders and perries offered. Being another micropub, with the limited space, means you get to talk to all the locals, and it must be one of the friendliest pubs I have visited for some time. We were all unanimous in making it our chosen CAMRA Gloucestershire Cider Pub Of The Year.

Apart from my local trips around the county, I managed another really interesting mini bus trip down in Somerset, visiting three top cideries, after The CraftCon Cider Conference, but details of that visit will have to wait for the next edition of this magazine.

Guy Vowles

PODGY TICKER?

THE CONTINUING TALES OF A BEER COLLECTOR

In this edition, our collector has serious collecting on the agenda, visiting two very different beer festivals not far from each other...and a contrast of polar opposites...

A Tale of Two Festivals

I do my best to try to get around to a few beer festivals through the year. Some are relatively small affairs at pubs, others are larger gatherings organised by local CAMRA branches of varying size.

As I look back at the festivals of 2025, there are two that stand out for me, one which has become my new favourite (Dudley Winter Ales Fayre, known as DWAF) and the other which was a bit of a disappointment (the Great British Beer Festival or GBBF). So, here is the tale of two festivals, in which I will explain why I think one was a great success and the other wasn't.

These two festivals, the GBBF at the NEC in August, and DWAF in Dudley at the end of November, were about 20 miles apart. Both required me to catch a train to Birmingham New Street and then a connecting local train. They both allowed me to book a ticket online in advance and were both manned by CAMRA volunteers. This is pretty much where the similarities end, though. Everything else about them was quite different.

Location

The NEC is easy to get to. My train dropped me just a short walk from the exhibition halls. Dudley town centre is a little more challenging, but still quite manageable. The train this time dropped me at Dudley Port station, which then meant a fifteen-minute journey by bus (the no. 74) into town, followed by a short walk through the centre of Dudley to the Town Hall. The big difference in location is that DWAF was in a busy town centre, whereas the GBBF was in the middle of nowhere.

The thing is, many beer drinkers enjoy exploring the area around a festival, visiting some local pubs and maybe catching a meal nearby. This is easy to do in Dudley, not so easy at the NEC. Holding a festival in a town centre also gives you a ready population of locals, who will probably stay drinking all through the evening until the festival closes. I have little doubt that the GBBF evening sessions would have been rather quiet, as all visitors would need to leave quite early to get home at a reasonable time.



Venue

I have attended quite a few iterations of the GBBF, but only ever at Olympia in London up until 2025. Olympia is a splendid venue and its Victorian architecture provides a rather stately backdrop to any event. It is quite different to the NEC. If you have never been in the NEC exhibition halls, then try to imagine vast aircraft hangars, in which, doubtless, several jumbo jets would sit with comfort.

The GBBF was held in two of these enormous halls with steps leading down from one higher hall to the second lower one. I must admit that this colossal space was quite overwhelming. The GBBF bars are very impressive and I love the fact that you can stare along multiple rows of twenty or thirty handpumps, each serving fresh real ale. This is beer on a scale seldom seen. However, these wonderful bars were dwarfed by the huge space around them, especially the height above them, so the sense of scale was sadly missing. This was brought home to me even further when I made the trek to the loo, which involved a walk across a desert-like space covering about half of the upper hall behind some of the main bars. It felt a little soulless.

Dudley Town Hall is, of course, a venue on a totally different scale. Its like can be found in many towns of a similar size. It contains a concert hall with stage and wooden floor, plus several attached rooms suitable for seating and food stalls. On festival day, the beer stillage lined one wall of the main hall, tables and chairs were scattered around the other edges of the room and there was space for standing in the centre. A typical festival set-up! It felt like home.

Beer selection

This is a tricky one to compare, because of the difference in scale. At the NEC, over 700 beers were available! Dudley had less than 10% of this enormous number, 64 beers in total. So, does that mean the GBBF had a better selection? I don't think it's as straightforward as that. For a start, no one can get through 700 beers – or even 64 for that matter. So, there is an argument that says beyond a certain number (shall we say 50?), how many more than this are on offer makes little difference. I chose 50 there fairly randomly. I tend to order

third pints at a festival, if available, and so will generally taste a maximum of about 18 beers. You may get through considerably more or less than this, but hopefully you see my point. As long as there are 18 different beers of interest to me, then I'm happy, regardless of how many others there are. There's a bit more to it than that, of course. You may be quite particular about what beer style you want to drink. For example, you may be in search of 18 different stouts and these are typically less well represented on many beer festival lists, so your 'magic number' of total beers may need to

increase. I'd be very surprised, however, if your 'magic number' needed to be anywhere near 700! Also, there are probably plenty of visitors who balk at the prospect of having to decide what to choose from a list of 700 potential drinks.

For me, being a collector, new beers (that is beers that have not yet been collected) are crucial and new breweries

(those that I have not collected any beer from yet) are the holy grail. So, the more newbies the better. At Dudley, there were six new breweries, mostly from the West Midlands. This is a very impressive figure, representing almost 10% of the total beers

Dudley Winter Ales Fayre was a joy... and it represented astonishing value for money.

The GBBF at the NEC was a disappointment...and it was horrendously expensive.



DODGY TICKER?

available, which is pretty rare when I visit festivals. At the GBBF, there were seven new UK breweries available (yes, you read that right – just one more than Dudley!). There were plenty of other new breweries available to me as well, but they were either on the European Keg Bar or the US Cask Bar. I am very happy to drink beers from outside the UK, of course, but at the Great BRITISH Beer Festival, I sort of feel a bit short-changed when I end up drinking just a handful of UK beers and then fill up on interesting foreign ones.

Value for money

My ticket for the GBBF cost £6. This included a 2025 festival glass, but not any beer. My ticket for DWAF cost £10. When I arrived at the Town Hall, I was handed £10 worth of beer tokens and a free 'old' glass (ironically, my glass was from the GBBF!).

I drank 13 thirds at Dudley (there were quite a few strong ones!). Seven of these were priced at £1.40, three at £1.60 and three at £1.80, including the 10% Full Centurion from Kinver. If the 11% Sexual Chocolate Rum BA from Green Duck had not all been drunk before I turned up, that too would have cost just £1.80 per third. Fabulous prices! The average works out at £1.54 per third pint.

At the NEC, I drank 18 thirds, ranging from £1.60 to £3.00. Only two of them were below £2, a whopping eleven were £2.50 or more! Remember, these are third pints we're talking here. That means that most of the beers I chose to drink were priced between £7.50 and £9.00 per pint. You are probably thinking that I must have been concentrating on the highest ABV beers available. Not so. I did have a couple of 7% Belgian beauties, but only one other was over 6%. The average works out at £2.48 per third. This average rises to £2.82 if you include the £6 spent on the ticket.

Was the GBBF 2025 the most expensive beer festival I have ever attended? Yes. Would I consider the beer to be better (more than a pound a third better on average) that at Dudley? Certainly not!

Overall thoughts

I enjoyed both festivals. Give me a day spent drinking beer and I will have a big smile on my face. The thing is I left the NEC feeling thankful that not all beer festivals were like that, while I walked out of

Dudley Town Hall wondering why all beer festivals couldn't be like that!

Dudley Winter Ales Fayre was a joy. The location was manageable, the venue was great, the atmosphere was friendly and busy, the beer selection was very impressive and it represented astonishing value for money.

In comparison, the GBBF at the NEC was a disappointment. The location was unsuitable, the venue was too overwhelming, it had the atmosphere of a trade show, the beer selection lacked sparkle, particularly for a collector, and it was horrendously expensive.

We now know that the GBBF 2025 was a financial disaster and CAMRA do not intend to have another one in 2026. Will I miss it? Of course I will. Despite all my criticisms, I would buy a ticket for another one like a shot – and ask my boss for an extra day of work to pay for it! But does it have to be like that? If the grand folk of Dudley and South Staffs CAMRA can put on a show like DWAF, is it possible for there to be a better version of the Great British Beer Festival? Somehow, I doubt it and it is almost certainly its scale which is its downfall. There have been no attendance figures released for 2025, but at its peak in 2010 just under 67,000 people visited. A festival of this size requires a mighty venue and suitable venues of this magnitude are not only thin on the ground, but also outrageously expensive to hire, I would imagine. I understand CAMRA's desire to put on a 'flagship' festival, gathering its supporters from across the country and providing valuable publicity opportunities to spread the good news about British beer. But I feel a little like one of those loyal football supporters, who turns out for their team at every match, but is then forced to fork out five hundred quid for a ticket to watch the opening group game at the World Cup, which ends up as a dull 0-0 draw.

It saddens me to suggest it, but maybe CAMRA should give up on trying to create a festival on such a scale. Maybe its energy would be better spent putting on a series of more manageable regional festivals instead. Then, maybe they might come close to recreating the joy of Dudley.

Pete Searle

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Meetings are listed here – <https://tewkesbury.camra.org.uk/diary>

Contact Ian at secretary@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk or visit the website www.tewkesbury.camra.org.uk



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