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ONE

# the tippler

SPRING 2026

INSIDE

## Bank's Brewery – RIP

## The Dodgy Ticker in Belgium

the tippler  
EDITORS  
AWARD  
2025/26





STROUD BREWERY TAPROOM IS WHERE GOOD BEER MEETS GOOD PEOPLE. ORGANIC PINTS, FRESH POURS, AND A PROPER LOCAL ATMOSPHERE, PART PUB, PART COMMUNITY LIVING ROOM. COME FOR A BEER, STAY FOR THE BANTER.



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FRONT COVER: Contented punters at The Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival

Welcome to



# the tippler

SPRING 2026

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

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## CAMRA NEWS IN BRIEF

It's Pub of The Year time again and hearty congratulations are due to the four Gloucestershire venues which have recently won Regional awards:

**The Dog & Muffler, Coleford – Forest of Dean Pub of The Year**

**The Crown & Sceptre, Stroud – Stroud Pub of The Year**

**The Drillmans Arms, Stratton – Cirencester Pub of The Year**

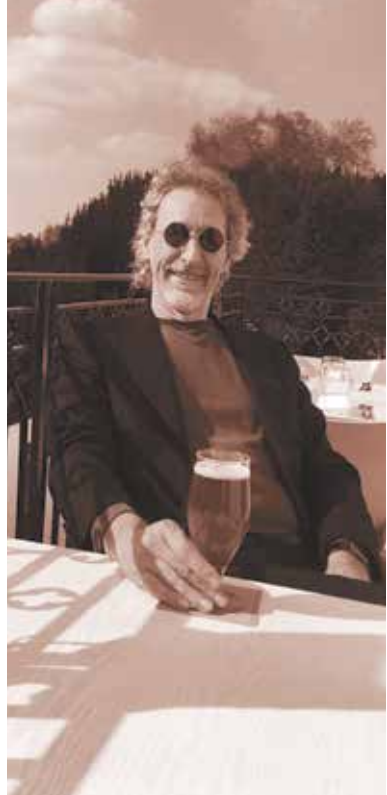
**The Old Spot, Dursley – Dursley Pub of the Year**



MMMM, IF ONLY I HADN'T TALKED TO HIM ABOUT THE COPENHAGEN INTERPRETATION OF QUANTUM MECHANICS AS APPLIED TO EVERYDAY OBJECTS...

I SAY GLADYS, IS THIS SCHRÖDINGER'S CAT SOME KIND OF NEW CRAFT BEER?

## EDITORIAL . . .



**Another year already a quarter gone! Let's hope it's just the start of a good one for pubs, clubs, hotels and of course real ale!**

The biggest buzz in the north of the county is of course, the Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival (TWAF), a fantastic event, a packed venue full of real ale and beer enthusiasts. It has now come and has come and gone with a massive success, so well done everyone who did all the work for this.

If you haven't been to a beer festival yet, well, what are you waiting for? There will be plenty to get to in the coming months as the weather gets better so look out for them in the the Tippler, other regional CAMRA magazines and the local press. Always worth a go!

So, you'll find all the usual features, articles and lively letters pages, not forgetting the competitions that continue to be ridiculously popular. We must thank all of our competition sponsors and advertisers for their generosity, as without them you couldn't enjoy the benefits of the prizes, or indeed, the magazine.

Our other advertising supporters, especially new ones, should also be mentioned because without them you wouldn't be reading this. So please support them all, the pubs, clubs, breweries, cider and perry makers, get out into the towns and countryside and enjoy our great drinking heritage.

Enjoy the warmer spring season! Cheers!

Chris Leibbrandt

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**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 published!

Hi Chris,

This is an E-mail with the answer for the Name that Pub, the pub in the picture is The Britannia Inn, Tewkesbury. I would also like to point out that the picture underneath the competition is of The Great Malvern Hotel and not the Wetherspoons as pictured. Both are in Great Malvern but are different establishments.

I enjoy your magazine very much and believe it to be one of the best in the country; I get my copy from the 3 Kings Hanley Swan one of the best pubs in the country.

All the best, Andy Bannister

Hello Andy,

**Many thanks for the email, I am delighted to say that the answer is correct. I have, therefore, added your name to the list for the draw for winning tickets.**

**Good spot regarding the hotels, the main thing is: the prize is right.**

**Many thanks also for the totally unbiased assessment of the magazine, I thoroughly approve of that!**

**I also tend to agree about the Three Kings too, it's a one in a million kind of place, what a shame we have to encroach on our northern neighbours to get the Tippler out there in beer land.**

Cheers!

Hi Chris,

Please find below my letter for consideration for publication in "The Tippler".

About twice a year I visit my nephew in Rockhampton, a highlight of which is a visit to the Salutation Inn in Ham. This is a fabulous pub. I tried all of the cask ales, Tiley's or otherwise. Beer condition was spot on in all cases, and staff

friendly and well trained, serving brim measures on every pint pulled. The pub itself is lovely, with a real fire warming us on a cold January afternoon. The best of the British traditional pub.

You may be waiting for a 'but', and there is one. When I went to pay the policy was 'card only, no cash'. Not so traditional. I find this inconvenient. Of course this pub is far from alone in adopting this policy; it's fast becoming the norm. I understand what the pubs get out of this, but it is not great from a customer perspective. The customer is clearly no longer king.

CAMRA policy on this is not clear to me. It doesn't seem to appear on judging notes for pub assessments. Considering how CAMRA seeks to preserve pubs as part of our cultural heritage, shouldn't it also be concerned about the demise of cash as a valid payment type, as it has been within the British economy since the late 17th century?

Regards,

Anthony Dent

**Many thanks for the email Anthony. Interesting reading.**

**I completely agree about the Salutation, a great pub with so much going on for the community, it's all good; Pete Tiley, the landlord, should be recognised for all of that hard work.**

**I also agree about cash, I am quite passionate about keeping it. I rarely leave the house with a phone, ID or credit cards and always use cash. I came across this card only hassle a few years ago and had to leave the premises, even more annoying is, after ten minutes, getting to the front of a queue and being told the outlet or service is card only.**

**I know why they do it: no need to visit the bank with takings, not worrying about cashing-up and if, and only if, it is an issue, it stops pilfering.**

**I doubt whether or not this would be a CAMRA issue, but it would be a worthy cause!**

Hello Chris,

I did smile when I saw the name Harveys become clear (last issue's crossword answer - Ed.).

I do go to Sussex a fair bit as you'll know from the magazines from the area that I've dropped off at your home. Best is good but Old Ale on draft is great (bottled version is quite different and a lower ABV).

BTW, did I let you know about the Uley Brewery tour. Four of us went (so I split the two free tickets so we effectively paid half price). The team were great - happy that I took some nibbles/snacks with us and the beer tasting was really enjoyable. Only six of us in total but the other two had previously worked for a brewery (in South Wales) so it was a nice mix. Best of all was pulling our own pints at the end of the tasting so we could enjoy our favourites more.

Cheers,

Laurence Morton

**Many thanks for the email Laurence, and the news about Harvey's. Being a bit of a southerner, I know Harvey's beers very well and agree with your assessment, a good brewery to get to know.**

**Also, many thanks for the feedback on the Uley trip, I really love the place and their latest beer 'Cheeky Swine' is a marvel! Let's hope there are many more visitors via the competition, something we can only thank them for.**

Cheers!

Dear Chris

A celebratory New Year drink gone very sour this evening, I am afraid: we went this Friday night in search of a beer or three at the Golden Heart, which we found dark yet again.

We turned back to the Highwayman on the same road, to be told the owners at the Golden Heart have just applied for change of use - this

great hostelry was once the UK Pub of the Year in the Good Pub Guide.

I'm inconsolable. Many precious hours spent with my late Dad in that quintessential country pub, with two well kept real ales at the bar. Let's hope the application is refused and some enthusiastic licensees take over what would be an ideal off the (new) road pub...

Please alert your readers to this!

Greetings

Giles Francis

**Many thanks for the email about the pub. Currently, looking on their website, which is still functioning, they are "Currently Closed".**

**I too, have spent a few weekend days in this gem of a pub a couple of memorable beer/ blues festival dates spring to mind.**

**The future of many rural or 'country' pubs is in jeopardy with the drink/drive laws that are in force. I happen to agree with them, but have never quite figured out how a regular dullard like me can work out how much I have consumed. I guess that many drinkers just use the 'nil by mouth' approach, better safe than sorry.**

**Whilst I was musing on this it struck me that the future of rural pubs may well be in the hands of brewers. For drivers, the ever increasing number of decent tasting zero alcohol beers is a godsend. I wondered whether or not the CAMRA vouchers could be supplemented with vouchers for nominated drivers who choose the zero alcohol beer route. Probably too difficult to administer I suppose, but it may be worth considering?**

**The Golden Heart pub was always going to be vulnerable to the 'missing link' major roadworks, so I guess we will have to wait and see what happens.**

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# Letters to the Editor



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.



**GLOUCESTER  
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## PRIZE LETTER

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

For a list of last issue's competition winners, please see page 66.



# The Britannia Inn

HIGH SREET, TEWKESBURY



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- Regularly changing line-up of ales
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(Kitchen 12-3pm & 5-8.30pm); Sun 12-10pm (Kitchen 12-4pm)



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# THE HUNTER'S COLUMN

Our intrepid hero looks back, at the A38, to one of its singing sensations and forward to a symbiotic culture and ends up wondering: is all of this helathy stuff good for you?



## WHISPERING GLASS

If it's not too personal, can I ask you a question?  
No need to broadcast the answer.

If you are sitting in a quiet corner of a pub, like we all should be, you can just whisper it quietly into your glass. Although, if we were all sitting in the corner of the pub, it would be extremely crowded, no longer quiet and look a little suspicious with everybody whispering into their glasses.

Whispering Glass! The Chinese cover version of the 1975 Don Estelle and Windsor Davies hit.

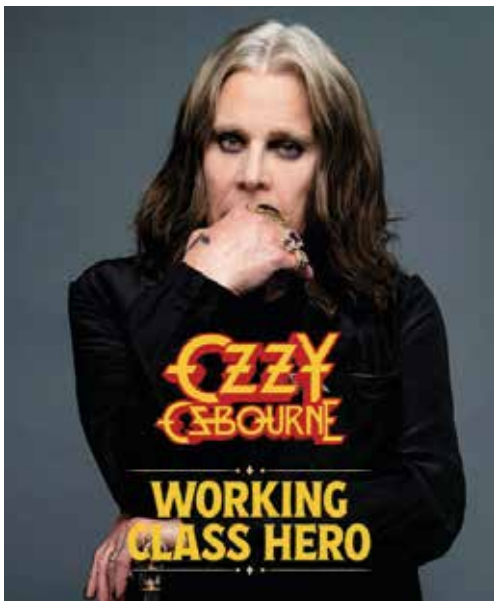
What do you mean, who are they? Don Estelle used to call in at The Forest pub in Bromsgrove on the A38 and now also sitting on junction 1 of the M42. It didn't then. Don would stand at the bar and just start singing and that was before he'd had a drink. They couldn't shut him up. There were no quiet corners in The Forest when Don was out and about.

Anyway, back at Spy HQ, that quietly crowded corner of the pub with glass whisperers galore, they did eventually manage to shut Don up. He was getting very Black Sabbath with all that whispering... very "Paranoid".

It wasn't really Don's scene. He didn't fit in, not in his khaki 'It Ain't Half Hot Mom' shorts. He did a quick version of 'Into The Void', made his apologies and left. I didn't have time to ask him any questions.

On a visit to Birmingham recently, I noticed that the Museum and Art Gallery have an exhibition on called Ozzy Osbourne: Working Class Hero. Now Beatle John Lennon recognised and aspired to that, but Ozzy Osbourne? Working Class Hero? Ozzy was a Working Class Car Crash, out of his box half the time and even he used to say that he shouldn't be alive.

He was funny though and, if you haven't read it, I can recommend his book, 'I Am Ozzy'. Even his band mate Geezer Butler said, 'Prince of Darkness?



The Forest, just off the M42 Junction 1

If anything he was the Prince of Laughter. He'd do anything for a laugh, a born entertainer'.

I think he would have got on well with It Ain't Half Hot Don. In the bar, Don would have been on "shorts" but Ozzy, what would he be drinking?

Beer-wise he would have had a choice. Derby's Brunswick Brewing Company brew Black Sabbath, a 6% award-winning dark ale with liquorice flavours. He could have got Paranoid (again!) with either Green Duck Brewery or the Attic Brew Co., or, downed an Iron Man Lager at New York's Decadent Ales. Iron Man? No, I can't quite picture Ozzy Osbourne doing the ironing.

Meanwhile, I appear to have left all these drinkers in the once quiet corner of the pub and given them nothing to whisper into their glasses.

What I was going to ask them was whether they had had a good Tryanuary and, slightly more personally, how they were doing with their New Year resolutions.

Tryanuary is the nationwide campaign to promote local beer in January and the more locals you visit, the more beer you can drink.

However, if you are into the more sinister sounding Dryanuary, you can still visit the local and support them through their range of non-alcoholic drinks, including beers, on offer.

Resolutions? I used to find that the best way to keep them was to keep them secret - even from yourself. Then no one gets disappointed, nobody gets hurt, everyone's a winner and you can look forward to a New Year without guilt or any sense of failure. It's a win win situation.

There's nothing wrong in being healthy. Even Ozzy, when his health began to fail, adopted a healthier lifestyle. The horse may have bolted but he was still looking for it.



Eau Virtueuse - just 2% ABV

On the BBC Radio 4 programme 'Sliced Bread' recently they investigated kefir. The series 'investigates the latest ad-hyped products and trending fads promising to make us healthier, happier and greener'. Kefir seemed to come out of it well and so I delved a little deeper and discovered Kefir Beer. Wonderful, I thought. At last, I can drink my way to good health. It is 'produced by brewing malted barley or other grains with kefir cultures (bacteria and yeast) and has probiotic, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and anti-ulcerogenic qualities'.

Well, whatever that meant, it sounded good, so I looked further and discovered the King of Kefir living in the Boyne Valley, 20 minutes from Dublin. Their motto is 'Trust Your Gut'. Their beer Hopped Culture included 3 of my favourite hops - Amarillo, Citra and Mosaic - but appears to be non-alcoholic. Kefir beers do tend to be low in alcoholic content.

Undaunted I ventured on and discovered an alcoholic version, Eau Vertueuse, which means Virtuous or Healthy Water. That put me off a bit. Virtually water? It sounded like it at 2%. I was surprised they were allowed to make it in Belgium, especially having recently sunk a splendid Duvel Belgian Blonde at 8.5%.

It turns out that kefir seeds are not from plants but are a SCOBY (Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast) like a Ginger Beer plant. Kefir is believed to have its origins in the Northern Caucasus Mountains, east of the Black Sea, where it was traditionally fermented in animal skin bags. If that hasn't put you off, I don't know what will.

However, it does give us all a 'Scoby do'-able New Year's resolution for next year... not to drink anything that has been fermented in animal skin bags.

You can whisper that one into your glass now.

The Hunter



## Cotswold Beer Festival 2026

**Planning for the 48th Cotswold Beer Festival is progressing smoothly, with the budget now approved.**

The event will take place at Postlip Hall from Friday, 17 July to Sunday, 19 July. Advance tickets, including single-day and all-weekend passes, will be available via the festival website (<https://postlip.org>).

camra.org.uk) shortly. Festival bus tickets and camping reservations will also be available online.

Further details will be published in the summer edition of the Tippler. Attendees 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.

## Third win for Ashton Brewery

**Ashton Jaffa Cake won 'Beer of the Festival' at Swindon Beer Festival 2025. This is the third award for this beer in the last twelve months.**

Previously, this beer won Silver at the Gloucestershire Beer of the Year competition held at the Cotswold Beer Festival in 2025. Jaffa Cake also won first place at the highly competitive 2025 Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival.

Jaffa Cake is a 6.2% strong stout, which features a subtle addition of orange peel and roasted cacao nibs. This gives the beer a citrus bitterness with hints of dark chocolate.

Pete Clark (2nd from right below) relocated Ashton Brewery from Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire, to Cheltenham in 2020, where he continues to brew on a 160-litre (1 BBL) microbrewery in his home's converted garage.



*Compliments of the season to all our customers and Tippler readers!*

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# 23rd GWR ALE & STEAM WEEKEND

**12th to 14th June 2026**

10:30 to 18:00 Friday

10:30 to 19:00 Saturday

10:30 to 16:00 Sunday

## WINCHCOMBE & TODDINGTON STATIONS

50 Beers total – 20 at Toddington  
Hot & Cold Food with Soft Drinks

### CAMPING near station at Winchcombe

Come by Train: Extra trains for this event.  
Frequent trains between Cheltenham RC and Broadway  
Additional early and late trains on Fri/Sat  
See timetable on GWR Website.  
A train ticket on the day is required.  
or you need a platform ticket for entry.  
Plenty of car parking at Toddington

North Cotswold Branch once again propose to hold two beer festivals this year: the first being the Ale and Steam at the GWSR sites at Winchcombe and Toddington on 12th to the 14th of June, and the second the ever popular Moreton Beer and Cider Festival at Moreton Cricket Club on the 11th and 12th of September.

The continued support from our other county and regional Branches to make these festivals a continued success is very welcome indeed.

Some very welcome good pub news regarding The Seven Tuns in Chedworth. Just before Christmas the local Save Our Pub campaign celebrated a victory. Local resident, Mr David Beach, announced his purchase of the Seven Tuns from the Wellington Pub Group. We understand that his plans are to appoint an architect, restore the pub and find someone with a track record to run it on a long lease.

In news from the Save our Pub (Brockhampton) group an appeal against the Craven Arms Asset of Community Value (ACV) listing was dismissed.

A First Tier Tribunal hearing took place in January. The outcome of the appeal has now been published, and the appeal has been dismissed.

The five page Decision Notice from Judge Hughes makes the following statement: "There is also evidence that several individuals have been interested in acquiring the property and continuing its use as licensed premises as a pub/restaurant. While there may be disputes as to the price for which the Craven Arms might be sold; there is ample evidence of an interest in running it as a pub and as such it would further the social wellbeing of the community."

This is a great result for the village, and we extend a big thank you to the Parish Council which worked closely with Cotswold District Council in opposing the appeal.

## Pubs offering CAMRA discounts

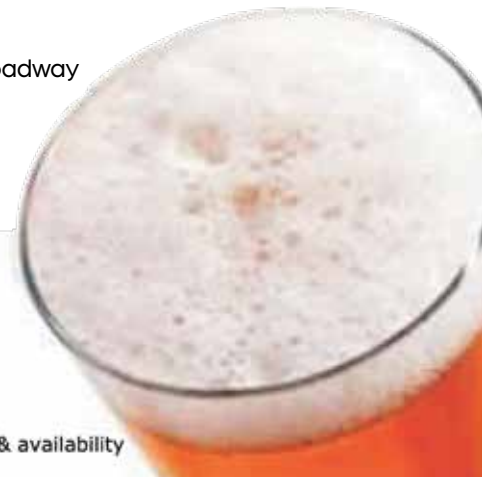


A number of pubs and businesses are offering discounts to CAMRA members, a scheme backed by CAMRA National with promotional posters available to landlords.

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)
THE CANTERBURY	TEWKESBURY	10% OFF REAL ALES
THE HOPTICIAN	DURSLEY	20P OFF REAL ALES
THE NOTTINGHAM ARMS	TEWKESBURY	50P OFF REAL ALES, MON & TUES CAMRA LOYALTY CARD SCHEME <b>NEW</b>
THE OLD SPOT	DURSLEY	20P OFF REAL ALES
THE PRINCE ALBERT	STROUD	20P OFF REAL ALES

www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk



Subject to change & availability

# TWAF 2026

The 29th running of The Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival was yet again a big success, reports Festival Director, Callum Willis



## Same procedure as every year, same result

So, this year's Festival started with a party celebrating last year, eleven months ago. A couple of pints with volunteers and friends at The Nottingham Arms to thank them for sponsoring our 28th Festival, receiving feedback and giving out first hints of our success. We made a profit, the beer selection was phenomenal and somehow we managed to convince 32 new members to join CAMRA. Huge success, but a high bar set.

The next few months went by; my wife had a baby (which the local branch has adopted as our mascot), the summer was hot and dry. Then suddenly, we need to vote on whether we are having another Festival – a resounding yes! So, with the committee coming together and our sponsor all set, we began planning. The Black Bear was our main sponsor this year, having approached us over a year ago!

Fast forward to this year's Festival. On the Thursday, we opened with our Branch Chairman

and both Town and Borough Mayors. Smiles and beer all round. Due to the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics, we were able to show the rugby a day earlier than last year (France vs Ireland). We had the tasting panel for the **Champion Beer of Britain (CBOB)** join us, trying out local beers. Then somehow managed to sign up six new members on our members only night! Fantastic start.

Friday opened and it was business as usual. Smiles and fantastic beer. Unfortunately there was no rugby to enjoy but that didn't make a difference to the atmosphere throughout the Festival. The Festival tasting panel voted for the **Gloucestershire Beer of the Festival**, each Gloucestershire brewery being allowed to enter one beer.

This year's winners were:

- 1st **Corinium Ales – Imperial Porter 8.4%**
- 2nd **Ashtons – Dubbel Entendre, 7.0%**
- 3rd **Goffs – Vanilla Stout, 4.6%**

Then, before we knew it, a few of the beers started running low and needed to go on rest. They needed it after creating an atmosphere that was enjoyable.

Whilst all this was happening, new members kept joining, and our 'New Members' white board kept ticking over. By the end of the day, we had 25 new members. Great second day.

The Last day didn't disappoint either. The Town Band out did themselves yet again, finishing with Dambusters, and the hall was filled with a wing of coloured paper aeroplanes. This is definitely one of the highlights of the Festival.

The rugby was on again and helping the atmosphere England won their match. More importantly though, yet more new members joined us. Then I had the honour of standing up on stage, an hour and a half early, to announce that we are out of beer! What a great feeling, to have no beer or cider wasted. And that was that.

I would like to welcome all 34 new members, and congratulate Corinium Ales (Imperial Porter) for being Gloucestershire Beer of the Festival and New Bristol Brewery (Millionaire Shortbread Stout) for being Beer of the Festival.

A huge well done and a massive thank you to all 75+ volunteers, our sponsors and everyone involved.

Hopefully we will see you all next year for our 30th Anniversary Festival – keep the first weekend in February free!

- Beer of the Festival** (first barrel to run out)
- New Bristol Brewery**
- Millionaire Shortbread Stout, 6.0%**



5th – 7th February 2026



The exciting bit: 70 barrels of beer arrive – and fast forward a week, we're ready to go

John and Alistair doing a vital spot of product testing; our young mascot Rex already learning the ropes; and a group of Cheltenham cyclists proving why Gloucestershire is central to the aviation industry.

## Tewkesbury Chairman's report

The last few months have seen the Tewkesbury branch having a strong focus on Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival. There is a great article already in this edition on the festival so I'd just like to give my personal thanks to all the volunteers who contributed to its success.

### Xmas Bash

Our Xmas social bash was held in December and we had a full house of over 55 people. This contributed to a lovely atmosphere supplemented by an excellent buffet and quiz.

### Socials

We have managed to fit in a trip to Newent during February to support our pub scoring. I was very pleased to try The Black Dog for the first time and enjoyed my pint, or two, between visiting The Kings Arms and Cobblers.

A trip to Stroud is taking place on Thursday 12th March. Places will fill quickly, so book early.

Future dates to put in the calendar are:

- **Thursday 7th May. Branch meeting – venue TBC.**
- **Saturday 8th August. Summer Social – Lower Lode. Further details to follow.**

**John Roberts, Chairman**

## Our editor gets an award

For his work on The Tippler, Chris Leibbrandt won an award

Every year Tewkesbury CAMRA presents one of its members with The Chairman's Award, a shield with many venerable names inscribed. It goes to the person who, in the Chairman's opinion, has contributed the most to the Branch during the past year, but without being a serving Officer within the Branch. This year it went to Chris – you could say he was mighty chuffed.

Chris is pictured here receiving his award from Chairman John Roberts at the recent Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival



## Forest of Dean Pub of the Year

### The Dog & Muffler, Coleford

The Dog & Muffler, Coleford was presented with its Pub of the Year award by Chris Laming, (seen here on the left) Chairman of the Forest area of CAMRA.

### The Forest of Dean Christmas Social & Others...

The Christmas social was at the Red Hart on 11th December. Photo (above) shows the gathering from left to right; myself (looking overwhelmed), Frank, Liz, Carol and Howard (seldom seen without a beer in hand!)

**The next social (start at 8:00pm) is on March 19th at the Railway Inn, Newnham**





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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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.lintonfestival.org)

# ALL HOP NO HYPE FOR DRINKERS NOT FOLLOWERS

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Let me introduce myself. I am David Ashbee, and I have taken on Peter Corfield's mantle as Chair of Dursley CAMRA, except that as Dursley is a sub-branch I am now known as Co-ordinator. Seen here on the right, making the presentation of the certificate as our Pub of the Year 2026, to Will Sutton, manager of the The Old Spot, Dursley



Peter has done the job for over a decade, through many hospitalisations and trips abroad. He was thanked and given a presentation by the members who attended the last sub-branch meeting. He will continue to record beer scores and I hope a few other things that I have less interest in than he.

I joined CAMRA 10 years ago when I realised that at the OAP rate of membership, with vouchers and discounts, it was a no-brainer. Since then, my only involvement with the branch has been regular drinking sessions at The Old Spot with the committee. Their meetings clashed with another regular commitment of mine so I seldom attended. I did, however, submit beer scores to Peter and voted for our Pub of the Year. I should like to encourage Dursley CAMRA members to do so too, but as it involves visiting the six shortlisted pubs in the space of a few months, I can understand why not many do. My sole reason for taking on my role is that if I hadn't, Dursley sub-branch would no longer exist. With some of the best pubs in the region in our area, that would be tragic. Three of our pubs have gone on to be regional winners and two, The Old Spot and the Salutation at Ham, became national winners.

I am passionate about real ale. I won't drink keg or craft, bottled or canned. This passion dates back to a Road to Damascus moment at least 55 years ago. I was then happy to drink Whitbread Tankard and when I tried West Country Pale Ale at The New Inn, Gloucester, I vowed to stick to Tankard. Not that I knew much about the different ways of serving ale. That's how it was back then. The big brewers had broken the back of our tastes from an early age.

So when I turned up at a long-vanished pub in Lower Westgate Street, almost empty on a Saturday night, I was miffed when the landlord

said he didn't stock Tankard (a sensible man – Ed.). He offered me what he called his Cheltenham mild and said if I didn't like it I could have any drink on the house. I'd never heard of Cheltenham mild but one of our group who worked for Whitbread at the Eastern Avenue depot explained that it was what some people called West Country P.A.

I told the landlord I didn't like it. He asked where I had had it and when I said The New Inn he laughed. "Let me pour you half of my mild and I think you'll find a difference."

He was right. The soft creamy ale he served was like nothing I'd ever drunk, despite having been drinking in many Gloucester pubs for a few years. He talked about keeping his lines clean which to me then was meaningless. I now know that the management of hand-pulled ales in those days was terrible, and the breweries did nothing about it because they could sell their kegs at a higher price.

Two years later CAMRA was formed. British drinkers were on the verge of a revolution. But I didn't join. I couldn't see the point. It's plain now that CAMRA has achieved its aims from back then and I'm honestly not sure what it's about these days. But I'll leave all that, perhaps for a later article. My aim is to keep Dursley area pubs in the spotlight, because I want others to enjoy real ales as much as I have done since that Saturday evening in Gloucester and for our beers and outlets around here to be known throughout the county and beyond.

David Ashbee

DURSLEY CAMRA  
CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR  
2025




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## CAMRA Members — Are You Missing Out?

Not receiving emails from your local CAMRA branch? You could be missing details of upcoming events, trips, and social activities!

It's easy to fix — simply check your privacy settings on the CAMRA website.

You may not have chosen to receive electronic communications from your local branch.

To update your preferences:

- Sign in at [camra.org.uk](http://camra.org.uk)
- Select the circle with your initials → My Profile
- Edit Profile → Edit Membership Details including email → Save
- My Profile → Marketing Preferences → Save

Or call 01727 867 201 for assistance.

**Stay connected — don't miss out on what's happening locally!**

# 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 the theme of humour and jokes and beer mats, read on for much hilarity...

**Whenever my wife comes back from a girlie night out, she reels off loads of gossip. Who's doing what, that so & so is poorly, and regales the symptoms and diagnosis. Where friends have been on holiday, or where they are off to next.**

Yet when I come back from a night down the pub, chances are I can't remember any facts. If I recall one snippet, say about a friend's new dog, it's followed up with a secondary question of what breed? and what's it called? – Blank expression. Then, "What do you blokes talk about all night when you're down the pub?"

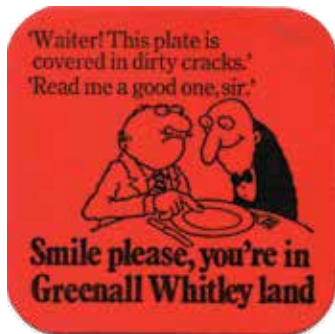
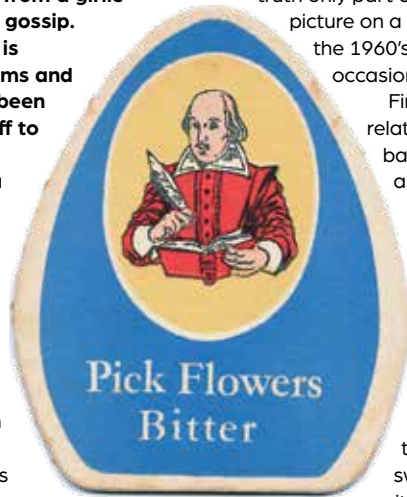
Good question. Sport. Always football, the weather, work, the beers, which pubs you have been to, oh and tell a few jokes. Yes! that's it, we exchange jokes– though I can never remember them either. Luckily, all mine are written on beer mats. Not scribbled down you understand, but properly printed versions, a bit like chat-up lines perhaps?

So, William Shakespeare goes into a pub, and the landlord says "Get out! – You're Bard". In

truth only part of that is printed on a mat– his picture on a series of Flowers mats from the 1960's. But I thought it apt on this occasion.

Finding beer mats with facts is relatively easy, and examples go back many years, even as far as 1930's. Quiz mats are a little more recent– perhaps from 1960's, but jokes appeared quite late in 1970's or 80's. Greenall Whitley from Warrington issued a set of 12 mats in 1973 with yellow background on the front and red on the reverse. They then issued another batch of 30, then a year later confusingly switched the colours around, as with cat 263 here. In 1976 they

did a set with jokes on one side with a standard front, then a final version of single jokes on a smaller 8.2cm mat in 1978. Some are not so PC for today's woke times, but think I'm safe with this cat 409. They issued 128 in total over the five years, so they must have been a jolly lot up there in Cheshire!



They were quite easy to locate in my cabinets, as there are so many, but generally there are only the odd one or two comedic mats and they aren't always picked out with a search engine to enable me to find them.

There must be many more, which I'll probably come across once this Tippler has gone to print.

However, fear not, there are still a few more to show you. This Black Sheep mat was one of four for Xmas 2024. I found this one in The Fountain in Gloucester. They used the same design for 2025 (which is like their standard mat but with the addition of a little red Santa hat). The reverse was just a one-off Noughts & Crosses game this time, but also from The Fountain. It's as good a reason as any to revisit this wonderful warm and busy pub, and the beers aren't 'arf bad too.

I have featured one of these Hardy Hanson mats before. Here is cat 121 the other mat of the pair. Xmas mats once again, – I think it's because they are always pretty corny jokes and ideally suited to Christmas Crackers.

Bruce's breweries Ltd., started life in 1979 with two pubs in London. Named the Fox, and the Goose, to which he added the word Firkin. It was in the heyday of brewpubs in the UK, and David Bruce hit upon the idea for his chain of brewpubs to carry over the Firkin theme and also stick with the alliteration of F, or Ph in all of them. The Goose remained the sole exception. He also used great artwork and corny slogans for each. This one is for The Fox. He built the chain up to 12 or 13 pubs, and each time he added one, he reissued

the set of beer mats adding the new brewery to the list on the reverse. The chain was ultimately sold to Allied in 1991, whom really expanded the idea, renaming many of their pubs to Firkin, (as well as the chain itself), but very few actually brewed beer. Do you remember the Faust & Firkin in Tewkesbury? It was one of the 160, and is still there, but now called The New Plough.

Some of the Jokes are DIY ones like Guinness 359 from 1978. Part of a series of 4 competition mats, one of which is harder to find than the others

for some strange reason. It's a shame they don't reissue the mat with the winning entry so we can all have a laugh. More recently, only 8 years ago, Guinness issued a set of mats for the Galway Comedy festival. Each had a photo of the comic, (some well-known like Jon Richardson), but alas no sample joke to go with it, so none to show here. Actually, I don't have any of them to share – it was probably a short print-run to promote the festival locally in Ireland.

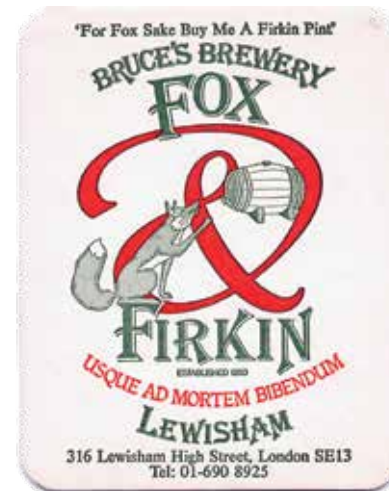
If you find these articles interesting, and collect

beer mats yourself, why not join the British Beer Mat Collectors Society? You'll find details at

[www.britishbeer mats.org](http://www.britishbeer mats.org)

and you'll expand your collection in no time and find out even more about tegestology!

Russell Murfitt





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**WE'RE ON THE  
COTSWOLD WAY &  
WE'RE DOG-FRIENDLY**





Photo: Henry Bloomer

## THE CROWN & SCEPTRE IS STROUD'S PUB OF THE YEAR

**The Crown & Sceptre is Stroud CAMRA's Pub of the Year for 2026. On a sunny Saturday afternoon, Stroud CAMRA presented licensee Rhiannon Roberts with a framed certificate recording the pub's triumph. Rhiannon and her partner Owen Isserlis only took over the pub in November 2024, so this victory (in a secret ballot) was secured in record time.**

Rhiannon is from north Wales and previously ran the Red Lion at Redfield in Bristol. She had been living in Nailsworth for seven years and drinking at the Crown & Sceptre when she heard that the remainder of licensee Rodda Thomas's lease was for sale. She bought the lease, with six years left to run, including the fixtures and fittings and that intangible value known as 'the goodwill'. The pub is leased from a private landlord and is free of tie. Rodda advised on Rhiannon and Owen's suitability as tenants.

This is the second time the 'Hat & Stick' has been crowned as Stroud CAMRA's Pub of the Year. The first was in March 2010, shortly after Rodda Thomas took over in the previous August. The Stroud CAMRA chairman at the time, Bob Brooks, said: "Rodda Thomas has taken a tired, struggling pub and turned it into a thriving real ale-led community local in a remarkably short space of time."

"I always really wanted that pub," said Rodda, previously landlord of the Woolpack in Slad and Stroud pubs the Golden Fleece and the Pelican. "It was always a little gem that simply needed polishing."

And polish it he did. Even going so far as to commission stained glass: a crown and sceptre in the fanlight over the front door and the word GENTS picked out in gold within a blue and black oval (or is it a rugby ball?) above the passage to the men's loo. The walls and ceiling of the Gents are covered in posters for bands performing at the pub, alongside Easy Rider, Jimi Hendrix and The Prisoner (among much else), while the Ladies are palatial, with a chandelier and wallpaper crowns.

The secret of Rhiannon and Owen's success is how carefully they have respected and nurtured Rodda's legacy. The fixtures and fittings remain the same, including those that reflect his passion for motorcycling. A Janis Joplin wannabe sits astride her machine, running her hand through a luxuriously long mane of hair, in a picture above the front bar. A poster for the 2013 Pendine Sands Speed Trials ('pre-1990 motorcycles only') still adorns the back bar. As does a map of the Isle of Man with all the Castletown Brewery pubs near the TT course marked. Everywhere Rhiannon and Owen

have shown restraint and avoided reaching for the broom. A new broom may sweep clean but, as the proverb warns, the old broom knows the corners.

This is a pub overflowing with character and idiosyncratic charm. It is a Stroud institution, the quintessential 'Stroudie' pub—STROUD AND PROUD, as a sign proclaims. All this is down to Rodda, a Cornishman who has indelibly stamped the pub with his personality and his passions. Rhiannon and Owen have wisely left almost all of this alone.

Uley Bitter and Pigs Ear remain fixtures on the bar. A battered rusting enamel sign on a beam proudly proclaims:

### BREWERS OF SPINGO STRONG REAL ALES

and the legendary Spingo from the Blue Anchor brewpub in Cornwall remains a regular presence on the bar. Beyond that, the guest beers have been far more adventurous and original, countenancing strengths and styles that Rodda

shied away from, except at beer festivals. Who can forget such heady delights as Arbor Rocketman (6.0%), Siren Broken Dream Breakfast Stout (6.5%) or Fresh Standard Export Porter (6.8%)? There is (as before) a single guest cider on handpump.

The entire pub is a cabinet of curiosities, and itself contains two glass-fronted cabinets of curiosities. There is an eclectic collection of bric-a-brac and memorabilia, but not random tat or standard pub fitters' fare. School science laboratory stools line the bar. Assorted animal skulls with horns adorn the chimney breast nearest to Horns Road (geddit?), while pinned spiders in entomology frames are displayed in the back bar overlooking Spider Lane. Led Zeppelin pose beside the Starship, their customised Boeing 720, in the side room. Nearby, on a more down-to-earth note, a photo shows smartly dressed customers sitting in a charabanc outside the pub, bound for Weston-super-Mare.

A twin-blade aeroplane propeller affixed to the underside of a beam in the front bar turns lazily above your head when provoked. A Junkers JU 88 Airfix model is suspended from ceiling—said to commemorate a dogfight over Stroud when a Hurricane and a Spitfire engaged the German bomber. A polished steel and aluminium British Rail luggage rack still serves much the same purpose in its new location, and is a poignant reminder

of the era of corridor carriages to trainspotters and those of a certain age. The interior boasts a motley collection of green utility lampshades, some now spotted with rust on the inside and slightly compromised by the range of LED filament bulbs they house, all with slightly different colour casts.

One of the striking features of the pub is the



range of newspapers and magazines on display. You might expect a single daily paper, but the Crown & Sceptre stocks the Guardian, the i paper, the Observer and... the Morning Star! When it comes to magazines and periodicals, the range is even more catholic and extensive. Which other pub do you know that takes the New Scientist, Private Eye, Viz and The Oldie? And subscriptions to these publications do not come cheap!

This is a pub that is at the very heart of its community, a 'local' in the fullest sense. It is noteworthy (and not always a given elsewhere) that either Rhiannon or Owen or both are very present in the pub, whether behind the bar or drinking with customers in front of it. A large oak table in a room to one side is popular with local groups and for impromptu folk sessions. A south-facing terrace at the rear offers panoramic views across the Stroud valley to Rodborough Common, and serves as a hang-out for smokers. The garden makes the pub a magnet for families at the weekend. The pub's Sunday lunch remains a big draw, as do the ever-changing Wednesday evening UP THE WORKERS! specials.

How lucky am I that the Crown & Sceptre also happens to be my local!

**Tim Mars**  
Pubs Officer, Stroud CAMRA

# THROTTLE CLUB

The 'Throttle Club' is a Turks Head (sadly currently closed) social drinking boys and girls club with only one rule: behave! Recently we decided to head off to Gloucester Docks in search of a decent pint of ale. What could possibly go wrong?

So here we go. I no longer have a pub. It was 'The Turks Head Inn' half a dozen doors from The Regal in Kings Square in Gloucester. Sadly I have become poorly and not sure I could run the pub anymore - oh bugger, lets see...

So today six of us started at The High Constable in The Docks. Very nice boozery, very good ales, and a sunny day so early in the year. We sat outside the back of the pub looking out over the harbour. What a beautiful view. All of us sat watching the odd boat that came through the lifted Llanthony bridge.

To enjoy the day we bought beer! Their beer is very nice and sells very quickly. That day I decided to sip either Jaipur, Doom bar or Abbott Ale all at only £2.35 a pint. There were more, but my brain doesn't stretch too far so early in the day!

So, using my 50p discount voucher I have as a CAMRA member, I was charged £1.85 for a pint. Wow! Still only the start of the day but traditional Abbot Ale I had, to remind me of my College days...

Next stop was only two minutes away - The Brewhouse and Kitchen. What a great boozery. Overlooking the canal with loads of outside seating. Anyway, I had a choice of Session IPA or Stevedore Best - both made on the premises and during the daytime only £3.50 a pint (not missing Cheltenham today). Wow! These were pretty exotic ales and well strong as they'd say in 'sarf' London. For braver ones they also had their own 'Whiskey Stout', but it was a little early in the day for me to try that one!



It's a lovely pub with ceiling fans and some cool quiet music. Anyway the beers are beautiful.

So we said goodbye to the wonderful young Manager (pictured) and headed next door for a nose at the odd/exotic "Coal House and kitchen". Only it was closed! Then I heard a rumour that the company was going bust! I hope not, so my fingers are crossed for them.

Well, we then decided to visit The Tall Ship on Southgate street. It's now famous for fish and chips. Yummy, I am sure this will be a great success, though the real ales can be a disappointment and only remain in bottles. That may have changed by now of course. The food of "Large" fish, chips and mushy peas came in at £13.95. Not too bad!

So, as I am retiring from 'The Turks', we decided to go next to the Turkish known as The Anatolian Palace still in the docks, 100 yards away. As I was born in Turkey I couldn't resist a nibble. They offer great food, but the beer is weird. They have one draught - it's Turkish and on the menu it says "Efes Draught Beer". Good price, lovely taste - but it comes in bottles! Yep, a large bottle, look it up online, A 500ml Efes Draft... weird but very nice. It's a strange country Turkey sometimes.

So, a five minute walk across the docks, over Llanthony bridge to Warehouse 4, Gloucester Brewery's Tap. It's a massive old warehouse all laid up with wooden benches and paintings on the walls for sale. Well all their beers are certainly fun to plough through (though maybe a bit expensive).

Lastly, Christine, the missus, got an invite to a ladies brewing day in Brewhouse and Kitchen brewing day. Wow! Some industrial Intelligence next...

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THE STRONG OPTIMIST

# Bank's Brewery - RIP



Geoff Sandles remembers a time when Bank's beers were much sought after

**The closure of Bank's Brewery in Wolverhampton at the end of September might have been received with a degree of nonchalance and ambivalence here in Gloucestershire.**

In recent years Bank's Amber was perceived as more of an understated product of the international Carlsberg Britvic conglomerate rather than a cherished local Black Country beer. Indeed, many would associate Bank's Amber as the cheap, boring and bland 3.4% beer available in supermarkets for less than one pound a bottle. Understandably the closure of Park Brewery in Wolverhampton, in its traditional heartland, was greeted with anger and dismay of the loss of a once loved and local tradition but in our area, just a weak sigh of 'Oh, what a pity. Never mind.'

Rewind the clock 40 to 50 years, Bank's Mild and Bitter were truly 'unspoilt by progress', wonderful beers and eagerly sought after. My first encounter with Bank's was in 1975 when I went to college in Hereford. Approaching the city from the Ledbury direction the Cock of Tupsley was, and still is, the first building you pass on the left-hand side after climbing up from the Lugg valley. Today the pub is a non-descript Marston's estate pub, hardly noticeable and more than likely avoided. At the time 'The Cock' was a new-built pub constructed by the Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries and it was their only pub in Herefordshire. It was a pleasant surprise to find mild at 19p a pint and bitter at 23p a pint – back then Whitbread beers (West Country PA) cost about 26 pence a pint and Wadworth 6X sold for an extortionate 30 pence a pint. Bank's Mild and Bitter tasted fantastic but they appeared to be served in the Cock of Tupsley through keg-type plastic illuminated fonts – no handpumps to be seen. It was reassuring to discover that the beers were drawn to the bar using electric pumps and served in oversized pint glasses. Not only did Bank's beer taste great, but with the

electric dispense you were guaranteed a full pint every time – a swirling visual delight resulting in a fantastic looking beer with a defined tight creamy head. Truly bostin'.

After the delights of drinking Bank's Mild and Bitter in Hereford, returning to Cheltenham to sup Whitbread made me realise how much I missed Bank's. In the mid to late 1970's the nearest Bank's pub from my home in Bishops Cleeve was the Marlbank Inn between Welland and Little Malvern, in the shadow of the Malvern Hills. It was

probably an hour and a half cycle ride to get there but well worth the effort – just to get my top lips covered in the creamy froth of either traditional mild or bitter (but probably both). On the way back via Upton on Severn, more beer might have been partaken at the Talbot Head (Davenports) and Plough Inn (Marston's).

The only time I deliberately avoided drinking Bank's was on my rare visits to the Black Country itself to seek out the delights of Bathams, Holdens, Ma Pardoes and Simpkiess. In those halcyon days it seemed like there was a pub every few yards in the Black Country, tempting you with either Bank's or Hanson's beers. There were also plenty of M&B and Ansells pubs too. The signage of Bank's & Hanson's pubs were almost identical, brown and yellow rectangle signs with a semi-circle top. Across the road from the celebrated Old Swan 'Pardoe's'

home-brew pub in Netherton was the Junction Inn – Hanson's Dudley beers. Fortuitously Hanson's celebrated mild was only 3.2%.

Bank's and Hanson's – trading for nearly 50 years as the combined Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries – effectively came to an end in the spring of 1992 with the closure of Julia Hanson's Dudley Brewery. A sad but inevitable process of rationalisation with all the company beers now brewed in Wolverhampton. This was despite a £2m investment in the Dudley Brewery in 1983.

Perhaps I look back with exaggerated affection for the now defunct brewery, after all in 1983 they were also engaged in an acrimonious battle to take over Davenports of Birmingham with a bid of £24m. The motive was to acquire Davenport's tied houses to give Bank's beers new outlets in and around Birmingham – a take-over bid that was ultimately thwarted – only for Davenports to be acquired by Greenhall Whitley three years later and closed. In retrospect Davenports might have been in better hands with 'Bonkses' – Wolverhampton and Birmingham Breweries?

On May 9th 1985 Bank's Brewery opened their first 'new-build' pub in Gloucestershire – The Basket Maker in Quedgeley. The following year saw the opening of the Clock Tower at the Lillybrook Hotel in Charlton Kings, followed by another pub built on the site of the old Gloucester Greyhound Track in Longlevens – appropriately called the Greyhound. In all three pubs both traditional Bank's Mild and Bitter were served through electric pumps. All seemed well.

In 1991, when Whitbread were disposing of pubs in their tied estate to comply with the 'Beer Orders' of 1989, Bank's acquired another seven pubs in Gloucestershire (Cheltenham – Gold Cup, Railway Inn, Mitre Inn, Victoria Inn, St Pauls; and in Gloucester – Lower George Hotel, Pelican Inn, and the Victoria in Oxford Street). At the same time Bank's bitter was introduced into the local free trade.

The electric dispense of beers ensuring a guaranteed pint measure every time in oversized glasses were phased out by the company in favour of lined brim glasses with beer drawn from handpumps. The decision was claimed to be a positive step with hand pulled beer being more in keeping with tradition, yet cynics argued that by using lined glasses more pints could be drawn from a cask to the detriment of the customer – full pints no longer guaranteed, increased profit margins for the brewery.

With a strong degree of irony Bank's were successful in acquiring Marstons of Burton on Trent in 1999, yet in 2007 the decision was made to adopt the Marston's name as company branding and many Bank's pub signs were replaced by generic and unobtrusive Marstons signage, including their Gloucestershire pubs.

"Fide et Fortitudine", Bank's once proud Latin motto which translates to 'continuing faithfulness to a cause and strength when facing trouble' was probably in breach of the advertising code by this time and was quietly dropped from marketing.

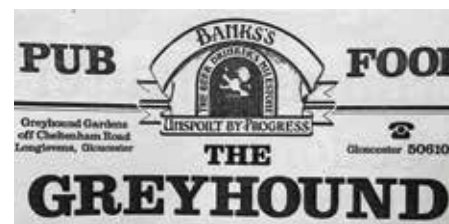
Progress was certainly spoiling the reputation of the brewery when inexplicitly Bank's Mild was rebadged Bank's Original and, a few years later, Bank's Bitter was relaunched as Bank's Amber. The addition of Sunbeam to their portfolio, a hoppy golden ale, however, was warmly welcomed. The Park Brewery in Wolverhampton was modified to become a clone manufacturing plant reproducing beers that were originally brewed in Bedford (Bombadier), Cockermouth (Wainwright), Mansfield (Mansfield Cask) and Witney (Hobgoblin). The brewery was also able to accept contract brewing. Things weren't like they used to be.

The last pint of Bank's Bitter that I thoroughly enjoyed was in the confines of the Black Country Living Museum in the magnificently reconstructed Elephant & Castle – once a pub in Wolverhampton.

With Bank's paraphernalia surrounding me, including old brewery showcards, the crystal-clear beer with a tight white head looking resplendent in a traditional dimpled pint glass was a delight to just look at, and it tasted superb. It was like being back in the 1970's. I've also bought a few bottles of 3.4% Bank's Amber from my local discount supermarket, with the magic words 'Brewed at the Park Brewery, Wolverhampton.' Sentimental value, cheap beer, but it probably won't impress me much.

Bank's RIP – before you were busted you were proper bostin'.

Geoff Sandles





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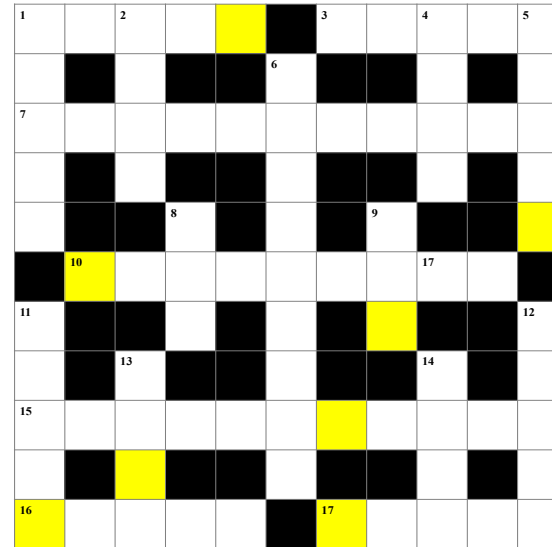
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So get puzzling and send your solutions to the address below.

**Rearrange the yellow squares to find a brewery**



#### ACROSS

1. Beer needs a large rethink (5)
3. Turn over steady noise in infection (5)
7. Fella missed wrong creatures (11)
10. Group carriage is where everyone wants to be (9)
15. Nervy Arians scrap commemoration (11)
16. Balk at altered capital (5)
17. Weird alteration makes it less of a squeeze (5)

#### DOWN

1. Boy at start of endeavour is heavily loaded (5)
2. Wild birds are ready for action (4)
4. Remove light from dark place to get its measure (4)
5. Thickly growing park (5)
6. True walls crumble into lake (9)
8. Creature nibbles part of plant (3)
9. Grow old at end of marriage (3)
11. Learner in store is expressionless (5)
12. Local leader elected in May or June (5)
13. Superior person starts speaking noisily over Brian (4)
14. Dawn breaks her magic stick (4)



Send your entry to  
[chris@thetippler.co.uk](mailto:chris@thetippler.co.uk)



# CASK CHRONICLES

With Alex Jordan

If I were a bus conductor/beer tour guide, where would my beer bus go? Hop on with me for some delicious tipples and exception-ale beers!!

As we turn to a new season, spring dawns and brings us the joy of the longer days, warmer weather, and the reopening of our favourite beer gardens!

I'd like to share a few of my favourites with you, and the reasons why they are so highly regarded to me as well. Now, I don't mind paying upwards of £6.50 for a pint, if the quality is right – so please keep that in mind for my recommendations!

First off, we've got the Jolly Brewmaster in Montpellier, Cheltenham.

The standard of real ale service there is truly fantastic – with a wide selection of pale ales, goldens and darks and bitters, wines, spirits and ciders, you can't really go wrong for a great pub experience! The garden itself is warm and welcoming, with lots of outdoor seating, and a lovely, sheltered atmosphere inside the bar area too! It does get busy though, so make sure to get there ahead of the evening crowds!

Secondly, a frequented spot for me has been the Beehive, Montpellier, Cheltenham.

Now, at this point, you may think that I'm referring to a part of the Bath-Road-Run – and you'd be right! Whether by myself, or by visiting with a group, I would recommend the Beehive for its cosy interior and the friendly nature of the service! The beers kept there too are an added bonus! Personally, you can't go wrong with a pint of Timmy Taylor's Landlord! The Beehive have been accredited by the exceptional standard of service for their TT dispense!

Next up, The Butcher's arms, Sheepscombe.

If you're a fan of delicious, traditional Sunday roast dinners, like taking countryside walks to build an appetite for a hearty dinner and are a well kept Cask ale connoisseur, then this is the pub for you! The Butcher's arms boasts a great selection of local hikes (centered around the pub) and a fantastic dinner menu! It really is a hidden gem. Make sure to visit it at-least once this year, once the weather warms up!



The Jolly Brewmaster



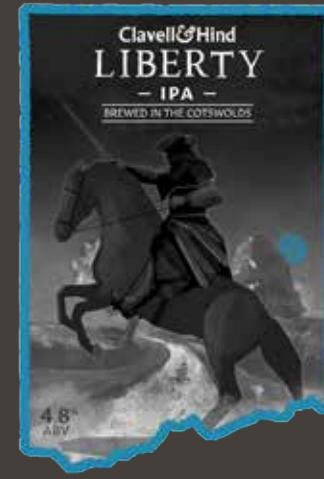
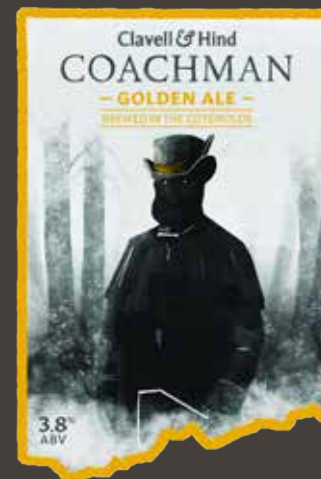
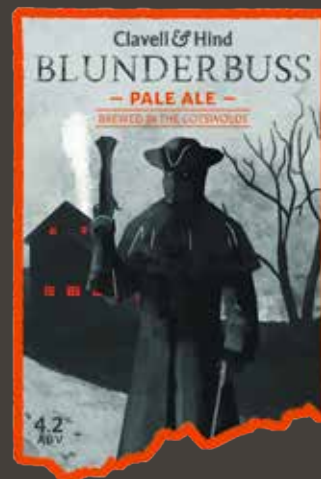
The Beehive



The Butcher's Arms

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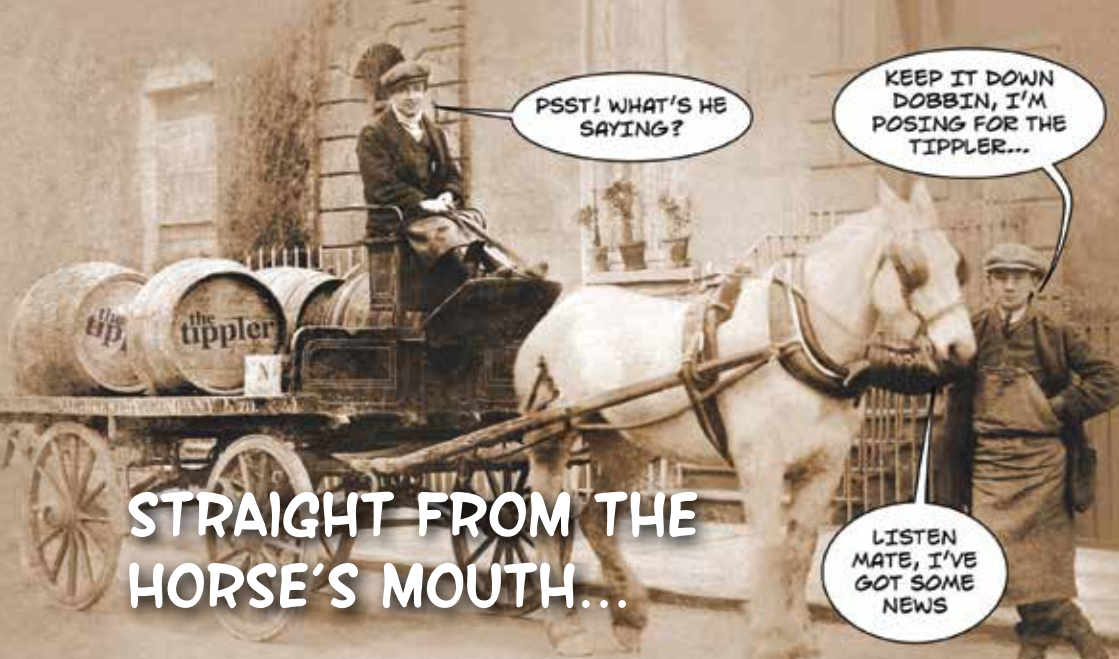
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STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH...

## Pub & Brewery News

### BREWERY NEWS

**Arkells Brewery** are looking at 2026 as a big year for English sport, with the men's rugby team looking strong for the Six Nations in February and the men's football team hoping for glory at the World Cup in the USA this summer. Alex Arkell, their head brewer and sports fan comments:

"To help our boys along, we've got two sport themed beers lined up. First up is Tap Tackle for the Six Nations. We've gone dark and moreish with a smooth, light bodied mild ale that will be superbly sessionable for the big games. For the football, we have The Showboater, a returning recipe that has always kept the pubs busy during big cup matches. At 3.7%, light and crisp, this one will have you back for a second pint."

The brewing team at Arkells were also keen to bring back two seasonal favourites this year, Spring Hopper, and Sir Noel, suiting Spring and Winter like ducks to water. Light, easy and tempting for Spring, and strong, deep, and warming for Winter.

For 2026, Arkells have two 'specials' on the cards. Alex Arkell comments: "Bee's Honey Pale Ale is based on a popular beer we brewed regularly many years ago. This time, however, we've sourced

local honey from just behind the brewery, adding a rich honey sweetness that's perfect for the sunny months. The second comes from our neighbours at Donnington Brewery in the Cotswolds. SBA is one of their oldest and most flavoursome beers, an exciting change for the Autumn."

**Ashton Brewery** has added another accolade to its list. Jaffa Cake won beer of the festival at Swindon Beer Festival 2025. This is the third award for this beer in the last twelve months (see separate article).

**Cotswold Lion Brewery** have had a change to their core beer range. Only two of the original beers remain, both brewed to new recipes.

**DEYA Brewery** have announced a three year partnership deal with the Cheltenham Jazz Festival (April 29 - May 4). Festival-goers will be able to enjoy DEYA's beers in the expanded 900 capacity venue, renamed the DEYA Arena, in the Montpellier Gardens Festival Village.

To commemorate this special collaboration, DEYA is brewing a limited-edition beer to celebrate 30 years of Cheltenham Jazz Festival and to toast to its future.

# BEER RELEASES 2026

## BREWERY NEWS

**Corinium Ales** won first place at Tewkesbury Winter Ale festival for their fabulous 8.4% Imperial Stout. A presentation is taking place on Thursday 5th March at The Black Bear in Tewkesbury. Locals to Cirencester are lucky to have the wonderful Corinium Ales Brewery Tap in Cirencester where they get to sample this award winning ale at this time of year.

**Lucifer Brewhouse** of Wotton-under-Edge brewed a special beer called 'Pete the Pint' for The Falcon Steakhouse in memory of a local printer, one of the pub's regulars, who died recently.

However, later this year the brewers are relocating to the Isle of Wight.

**Lydbrook Valley Brewery** (aka Forge Hammer pub) is to recommence brewing in early March with a new brew available in April. As well as the new brew there will also be guest beers from Goffs and other local breweries.

**Mills Brewing** has moved from its base at Berkeley and will now be under the wing of Stroud Area.

**Stroud Brewery** currently has two special beers on offer. Contact Sales (01453 887122) to secure a cask or two. The first is Ol' Chestnut (4.3% ABV). With this rich cask best bitter, drinkers can expect sticky date and raisin balanced by a malty, sweet finish, thanks to its dark crystallized malt.

To mark International Women's Day, the brewery is releasing a dry, fruity and zingy 4.5% pale ale inspired by times past when brewers were principally women who, before hops, utilised botanicals for flavour. "Brew Belles" is orange in colour and flavour with subtle botanical flavours, aiming to widen beer's appeal to new audiences. This unique small batch brew is only available exclusively at the Stroud Brewery taproom.

Like all Stroud Brewery's beers, these are 'pints with purpose' proving that great taste and social responsibility can go hand-in-hand. March is B Corp Month, highlighting the B Corporation certified companies – like Stroud Brewery – which align caring for people and the planet alongside profit. Stocking or drinking the brewery's beer is a great way to show that you care, too.

**Uley Brewery** BLO Chris Arrowsmith reported: "2025 was a great year for Uley, Head Brewer Ken and his brewers produced 10 great ales, starting in March with Hogs Wallop, ending in December with Pigor Mortis. All beers were excellent, the Boarbeer of Seville brewed with oranges? It was excellent. The brewery is now back to their routine production, I have hints of another specials to come, not yet decided, will report back next time."



## PUBS & CLUBS NEWS

### PUBS IN CHELTENHAM

**The Tavern**, Royal Well, in Cheltenham has closed. It was sold by Lucky Onion to Youngs in February 2022 and sold again to new management in January 2025. The pub closed January 2026 due to circumstances beyond management control. There is no news about reopening or future use of the building.

**St Georges Vaults**, this popular Cheltenham town centre pub, popular with racegoers, has appeared on a list of pubs for sale by Stonegate. There is no news regarding future use.

**Whittle Taps**, Stonegate the owners, are looking for a new tenant for the Whittle Taps, Regent Street, Cheltenham.

**The Miller**, Located next door to Wetherspoon's Moon Under Water pub, Stonegate's The Miller (a former night club and bierkeller) and now a large town centre sports bar, appears to be closed. Stonegate are marketing the venue.

**The Merryfellow**, Charlton Kings, has new landlords.

**Botanica**, in Cheltenham's Brewery Quarter, is up for sale.

### PUBS IN CIRENCESTER

**The Twelve Bells** in Cirencester remains under new ownership and it is clear that the new owners have and had no intention of opening as a pub and they are now operating a plumbing business from

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## PUBS & CLUBS NEWS

the building. Following CAMRA submitting breach of planning notices the owners have submitted a retrospective application for change of use to which there have been over 150 objections.

This has been an excellent response to what was a very disappointing development regarding what was once one of the best pubs in our area and at one time in Gloucestershire and there is absolutely no reason why this can't be again under the right ownership.

**The Wheatsheaf** Cirencester application for change of use was permitted and work is underway to convert to housing.

**The Queen Matilda** in Avening remains closed and awaiting decision from Cirencester District Council for change of use, it was for sale as a pub but we cannot find its listing, we are currently unaware of what is happening.

**The Tunnel House** in Coates has now been taken on by Peacefield Pubs Ltd who run the Bell at Sapperton and the Bathurst Estate website states that the pub will reopen following refurbishment in the Spring. This is very good news as The Bell is very well run and offers a number of locally sourced cask ales, including one from Corinium Ales in Cirencester. We very much look forward to visiting this unique pub in a fabulous location.

**The Wild Duck** at Ewen is now under the ownership of Country Creatures Pubs and has undergone a huge refurbishment which is now nearing completion, this was delayed by planning issues. The opening date is 2nd March so we look forward to the reopening of another long closed pub/hotel on our patch. Country Creatures operate The Double Red Duke and The Masons Arms both in Clanfield Oxfordshire, I have not visited but they appear to be high end establishments that offer cask ales so we are very much looking forward to visiting soon.

**The Talbot Inn**, Arkell's Brewery's pub, has been snapped up by five local businessmen who have invested in the pub's resurrection, and have announced that it will reopen next month March 2026, after a full refurbishment.



The Talbot Inn in Cirencester

The large, 'cosy, but quirky' pub, that sits on Cirencester's Victoria Road, has been an Arkell's pub since 1877, but has been closed since previous landlord and landlady Dave and Ann Holliss retired in October last year. Rumours began to circulate that it was going to be another pub-to-house or flats, there was even town-talk it was to be a Japanese restaurant or Irish folk music venue.

Arkell's Brewery, who own 92 pubs across their own county of Wiltshire, as well as Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Hampshire, are pleased to confirm that the lease has been taken by five Cirencester, Cotswold businessmen, who want to operate The Talbot as a "pub, with great beer and dining, with alongside excellent bed and breakfast, as it was intended," said a spokesperson for the group, taking over the inn.

George Arkell said: "We were really worried when Dave and Ann retired that in the current climate, we would not find a new landlord for The Talbot, but we are really excited to have a new team investing in a local community pub."

Group spokesperson added: "There are some great restaurants and hotels in Cirencester, one very close to us, at The Talbot, Ingleside and Teatro, and a smattering of pubs, but every time you look around, we are losing one. The Talbot has history and character, and we are confident, with the team we have, we will return it to a community pub. Arkell's have been fantastic and have put in a considerable

## REGIONAL PUBS & CLUBS AWARDS

amount into the pot to help us realise what we want to achieve.

"Now all we have to do is open our freshly painted doors, and welcome you in, but we are not ready for that yet. An opening date will be announced very soon, we promise."

### PUBS IN DURSLEY

**The Royal Oak** at Cromhall has reopened tentatively. No news of the hours, but one of our members reported it as busy when he passed by.

**The Fleece**, the managers of the Fleece Community pub in Hillesley are returning to South Africa. It is believed that they will be replaced this year by the licensee of the Royal Oak at nearby Leighterton. Both pubs are in The Good Beer Guide so the GBG status should not be affected.

**The Old Crown** at Uley has decided to stay open all winter apart from a short closure in February closure. Its hours were announced as closed Mon and Tue, Wed and Thurs 4-10, Sat 12-10, Sun 12-9. Kate and Tom released a statement on the pub's Facebook page on the current pub situation which is well worth reading.

### PUBS IN THE FOREST OF DEAN

**The Dog & Muffler** was presented with its Pub of the Year award by Chris Laming, chairman for the Forest area of CAMRA.

**The Miners Arms** in Sling has closed suddenly, Tipplers delivered on a Friday boarded up on the following Monday. We await further details.

### PUBS IN THE NORTH COTSWOLDS

**The Hollow Bottom** at Guiting Power under new management has been freed from its Youngs ownership yoke and now is a genuine free house with four cask ales on offer from North Cotswold, Hook Norton and other local breweries. The joint owners, Nathen Eades and Liam Goff, also run Donnington Pubs The

Halfway House at Kineton which is a Michelin Guide Restaurant and The Horse and Groom at Bourton on the Hill.

**The Horse and Groom** – Upper Oddington. The pub is undergoing extensive works as the new owners look to bring into the fold of the Bamford estate of premises. We have no idea at this time how this will turn out but their premises do usually offer a couple of cask ales.

### CLUB NEWS

**Cheltenham Motor Club** has, once again, been placed in the top four clubs in the country in the CAMRA National Club of the Year competition. However, they lost out to the Billingham Catholic Club, on Teesside. The former Roman Catholic school has featured in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide for almost two decades.

The Motor Club has launched a monthly 'cheese club', held on the last Saturday evening of every month.

A graphic for the Cheltenham Motor Club CAMRA National Club of the Year award. It features the club's logo on the left, which is a circular emblem with a shield in the center. The text on the right reads: "CHELTENHAM MOTOR CLUB CAMRA NATIONAL CLUB OF THE YEAR 2013, 2017 &amp; 2020". Below this, it says: "Winning numerous CAMRA awards in recent years, we have been in the Good Beer Guide since 2005. Our 'Wheel Ale' beer festival is held in September." Further down, it states: "HOME TO MOTORING AND MOTORSPORT IN THE COTSWOLDS FOR OVER 100 YEARS". Below that, it says: "We are one of the oldest active Motor Clubs in the UK. From club to international level, we are involved in motorsport at all levels, competing, marshalling and organising." At the bottom, it provides contact information: "Open 7 nights a week, all day Saturday, new members welcome.", "Upper Park Street, Cheltenham, GL52 6SA", "T: 01242 522590 E: cmc@cheltmc.com W: www.cheltmc.com".

# Cirencester area Pub of the Year

Our pub of the year 2026 is again The Drillmans Arms, Stratton.



We had a fantastic turnout for the presentation of the certificate on a Tuesday evening in January and a big thanks to Matt and Jordan for putting on a fabulous spread for the evening which was most unexpected. It was well publicised to the locals and the place was absolutely packed for the presentation. The beer selection for the evening was excellent with an Electric Bear Mild, Corinium Ales Mosaic both in fabulous condition alongside an Otter Brewery Pale and the regular Doombar.

## Cirencester area GBG selection

Cirencester area Good Beer Guide Pubs for 2026 are: -

- The Drillmans Arms, Stratton**
- The Marlborough, Cirencester**
- The Hop Kettle, Cirencester**
- The Royal Oak, Leighterton**
- The Bell, Avening**
- The Bell, Sapperton**

This year we have a first reserve for which we have selected The Old George in South Cerney which serves 4 cask ales in excellent condition including Stroud Brewery Budding and Tom Long, Wadworth 6X, Timothy Taylor Landlord and a guest ale which last summer was Gloucester Session Pale which was a very hoppy hazy pale and always in excellent condition.

## Cirencester CAMRA Socials

We run some great social days out, mainly on public transport where possible, listed below are a few from last year: -

**May** saw a visit to Cheltenham via the Stagecoach bus which is always a good crawl to include the motor club, The Jolly Brewmaster, The Sandford Alehouse among others.

**July** was our annual London trip via National Express which is always a great success and last year saw us

visit The Kings Arms in Roupell Street (just behind Waterloo Station) and the first pub of the day The Roebuck near Southwark which was a stunning building and some great beers.

**September** saw us in Tewkesbury with a visit to The Inferno brewery tap which was great, the landlord even providing a bit of Tewkesbury Tapas.

**November** was a visit to Gloucester with an 11.30 start in Wetherspoons with a surprisingly good stout, and visiting some great pubs including The Pelican, Drunken Duck.

We also visit the Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival in February, Postlip Beer festival in July and Swindon beer in October.

Above is a very small sample of our socials and we do one, generally on the second Tuesday of the month but the dates do alter subject to availability of public transport.

Please contact me at  
**Patrick@thebarn2018.co.uk**  
 if you wish to join us.

**Patrick Mills, Cirencester CAMRA**



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SCAN FOR THE  
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 EVENTS & NEWS

# Tall Tales from the Cider Shed...

In which we hear of the origins of The Good Cider Guide and a visit to rural Gloucestershire to taste the delights of the country Cider Shed

When the Campaign for Real Ale was formed in 1971, cider and perry were only a small player in the CAMRA team. That all changed seventeen years later when a National Cider Committee was formed within CAMRA called APPLE, which as all you cider experts know, stands for the Apple and Pear Produce Liaison Executive.

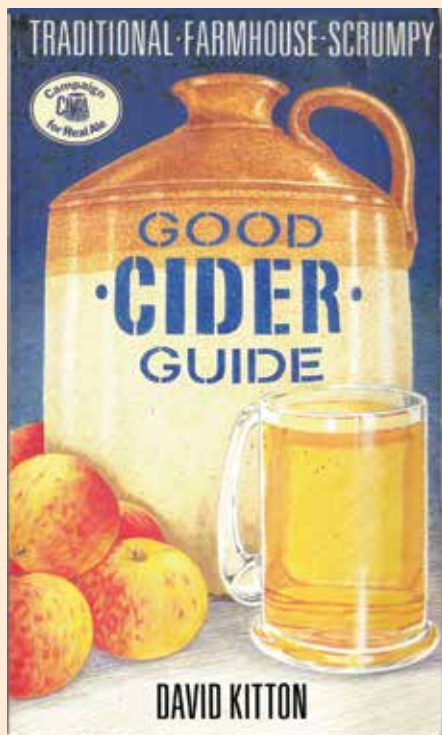
Their aim was to promote smaller cider and perrymakers, and get more cider and perry into beer festivals, something which they successfully achieved in doing. Suddenly cider and perry became more popular.

At about the same time, cider festivals started to appear, mostly in London, where you would be guaranteed to meet cider legend Mick Lewis working his magic behind the bar.

The previous year, the first Good Cider Guide had been written by another cider enthusiast, a gentleman called David Kitton. The book told the general public which pubs sold real cider and perry, as well as listing all the cider makers of the time and where you could buy a flagon or five. David Kitton was a good advert for cider and he certainly liked a drink or two, that's for sure.

An excerpt about Hartlands Cider from the first Good Cider Guide, published in 1987 and introduced as 'the appleholic equivalent of the Good Beer Guide' on its Welcome page:

It is best to allow plenty of time for your visit. Life is delightfully relaxed in rural Gloucestershire, and Ray and Derek will keep you entertained for hours with country tales that will make you imagine you've stepped into the script of The Archers. All the while you will, I am sure, have a glass in your hand, and be trying the magnificent product, which will spoil you for ever for the bland offerings on the supermarket shelves. It is obviously a totally addictive drink: most of the village seems to live on it, and even the former Bishop of Worcester, who lives nearby, comes in for a drop.



David Kitton

So when we were told he was coming to visit us at Flat Farm to write about us in the Good Cider Guide, father made sure we had plenty of food and drink, and a good afternoon was had by all.

The only trouble was that David had to walk back to Gloucester to catch his train back to London. So when his time came to leave the farm, he decided the shortest route back was along the riverbank starting at Haw Bridge – not the safest of routes if you'd had as much cider and perry as David had drunk that afternoon. Fortunately he got back all right and gave us a good write up in the Good Cider Guide. Father's hospitality had worked!

One of the lines he wrote about us in the book was 'Life is delightfully relaxed in rural Gloucestershire and Ray and Derek will keep you entertained for hours with country tales that will make you imagine you stepped into the script of The Archers', which was quite apt because we knew the creator of The Archers, a man called Godfrey Baseley. Like Terry Biddlecombe, Godfrey also lived at Corse Lawn in a house, believe it or not, called Ambridge. He used to tell me that even back then

he would often get his house sign nicked.

Godfrey was a real country gentleman who used to ride around the village on a three-wheel bicycle trike. We used to get on really well with him and even picked some apples off his lawn.

However, that all changed one day when Father's favourite brother Billy the Kid missed the turning by the garage in his van and ended up ploughing through Godfrey's fence into the very same lawn. Things were never quite so good after that!

There was another time when The Archers got in touch with us about recording us making cider, which seemed a bit strange as they contacted us in early summer, when we were nowhere near starting to make any cider.

I see this year The Archers are celebrating their seventy fifth anniversary. Good friend and avid Archers listener Todd Carter tells me it has changed a lot over the years and has moved with the modern times, something that some of us old codgers are quite reluctant to do. I just wonder what Godfrey would think of the modern day Archers, if he was still alive today.

*Dereck Hartland*

wetherspoon

## THE ROYAL HOP POLE HOTEL CHURCH ST, TEWKESBURY



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# Uley Brewery 2026 Specials



**FEBRUARY 23RD**

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**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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## the tippler PRIZE Wordsearch

Uley Brewery are proud to be the sponsor of the incredibly popular Tippler Wordsearch.

You have a chance to win one of four Brewery Tour tickets for two, a brilliant prize that comes highly recommended. There's a lot more than you think going on at this truly fascinating traditional brewery.



- |            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| Bell       | Ormond    |
| Buthay     | Plough    |
| Cobblers   | Ram Inn   |
| Crown      | Red Hart  |
| Falcon     | Retreat   |
| Fleece     | Royal     |
| Fox Inn    | Star      |
| George Inn | Strand    |
| Lamb       | Swan      |
| Mount      | Tipputs   |
| New Inn    | Tivoli    |
| Old Spot   | Vine Tree |
|            | 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 a beer-centric saying from the Czech Republic

Send your entry to [chris@thetippler.co.uk](mailto:chris@thetippler.co.uk)

# DEAF BOY WANDERIN' JOHN



This issue finds our aurally challenged wanderer investigating a hidden reach of the river Severn and discovering wrecks and relics from the Victorian Age

**This 5–6 mile walk has something for everybody: sunken ships, a collision on the Severn and a collapsing railway bridge, which reminds me of one of those black and white World War II films that are shown at Christmas and every Bank Holiday.**

However, all of this actually happened and your walk will make it come alive. The walk commences at the Salmon Inn in the village of Wanswell, surprise surprise named after an ancient water leak known as Holywell Spring. The Salmon Inn serves quality food and has a good range of locally brewed beers.

Leaving behind the considerable comforts of the Salmon Inn use either one of the various footpaths or minor roads that give the walker to access the Gloucester to Sharpness Canal at Purton.



Follow the canal towpath that continues parallel to the mighty Sabrina, as named by the Romans and now known as the Severn, who believed that the river was sacred and protected by a goddess, pause and look at one of the longest rivers in the U.K. Beware the placid looking nature of the Severn, it can be lethal, having the second highest tidal rise and fall in the world at 15m (50ft).

If you are using this route, I would suggest consulting the Severn Bore timetables so that you can plan your walk and witness one of nature's most amazing events. Stand well back, as you may see more of this infamous wave of water than is good for your continuing health.

At low tide it is possible to see the various shifting sandbanks that make this stretch of the Severn so difficult to navigate.

The canal owes its very existence to the fact that boats frequently ran aground on the sandbanks, got permanently stuck fast and gradually broke up and rotted away completely. The canal acted as a watery by-pass for ships sailing to and from Britain's most inland port at Gloucester.

This leads into the sight of a ship's graveyard known as

The Purton Hulks. This is an amazing site, where between 1909 and as recently as 1970, vessels were deliberately beached along this part of the River Severn to shore up the riverbank. This was done in order to protect the land between the canal and the river from flooding that would otherwise have been caused by the eroding effects of wind and tides.

Silt from the river gradually fills the empty boats, which weighs the boat down keeping them in place. There are the remains of over eighty vessels ranging from schooners, barges, docks boats, work boats and Severn Trows.

The Severn Trow was a specially designed shallow, flat-bottomed boat that carried South Wales coal up the Severn to Worcester and Stourport. It was designed to be strong enough to cope with the choppy tidal conditions on the Severn and shallow enough not to get in difficulties on the sandbanks.

The Purton Hulks is a photographers and historians' paradise, but be careful when exploring – that dangerous river is close by and there are no handy lifebelts around. The Friends of Purton group have published histories of each vessel and it would be a good idea to use their website before walking to the hulks. On my last visit some of the hulks had small informative plaques by them. It is truly an unusual place.

Close by is what remains of the once impressive Severn Railway Bridge. As totally expected, the Victorians saw the Severn as a challenge to be conquered. In true girth style it only took them four years to construct an amazing bridge, consisting of twenty one metal spans built on top of a series of metal columns. Not only that, they built a swing bridge across the adjacent canal to allow ships to sail up it unhindered. The towpath actually takes you round and under the remains of the supporting piers of the swing bridge.

This marvellous Victorian structure came to an awful inglorious end, when on a foggy night in October 1967, two tankers carrying cargoes of black oil and petroleum spirit collided on the Severn.



The vessels hit the bridge supports and a girder fell and hit the tankers. A large explosion occurred killing five crew members and bringing down two of the twenty one spans. You didn't need Dr Beeching to tell you that was, 'the end of the line' for that particular monument to Victorian engineering.

The final section of the walk leads you into Sharpness Docks, quite interesting in themselves. Originally opened in 1827, various expansion schemes means that it is now ranked as the eighth largest port in the South West of England.

After all that Victorian and industrial history, it is time to navigate your way back to the nearby village of Wanswell and to the twenty first century embrace of the Salmon Inn.

**Deaf Boy**



Remains of a barge, Purton Hulks



Remains from the Severn Railway Bridge



The impressive Severn Railway Bridge from a contemporary postcard



# The Pub Whisperer

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

## Superwoman descends into hell

**Super Laura is at it again. Disappearing down the stairs to the gents toilet (not a place you want to frequent if you don't have to) with a large bucket and a mop to clear up someone's stomach contents.**

As she opens the door to the stairs she says to the male colleague behind the bar, in a desperate tone, "Oh I can see it from here," and she descends into hell. After a few minutes the door to hell is opened and a strong smell of disinfectant and 'fresh air' wafts up the stairs, an unusual experience. She returns triumphant, but disgusted with the scene, "it was everywhere, on the floor, on the toilet seat, on the door."

Once again, superwoman has leapt to forefront of keeping this pub secure from all rodents as she did last time there was a rat in the building. Apparently, it was her responsibility as the manager on duty (who is paid extra for the shift) rather than the other male bar person taking the lead. Such is the commitment she shows to her responsibilities. A minute later she is pulling down the awning outside to shelter the outside residents from the wind. There is nothing she will not do to fulfil her role as client

carer. Half an hour later there is another emanation. Her usually smiling character faces a challenge as she presumes "it's someone here!" She dons some plastic gloves and once again heads down to hell with a bucket, mop and lots of disinfectant and an unusually stern face which normally smiles and laughs all the time. We can smell the disinfectant in the bar as she cleans the stables of hell. She reports there was a "gherkin in it this time," and that she will find the culprit. All in a session's work for superwoman.

Our pubs are so lucky to have such committed staff who make our residency so comfortable.

## No strangers, only those you've not yet met...

Alex was a young woman aged 20 who had a job in Cheltenham for two months from June to July. She lives in Austin, Texas but took the opportunity for travel when offered a temporary job in England. She spent May in Florence and June and July in Cheltenham, London, and Falmouth. She has loved her adventure and learned to be content with her own company, enjoying English culture. She found the pub drinkers warmer and more friendly than those in the 'bars' in the USA and has enjoyed

sitting outside our pubs chatting to these 'strangers', something that happens far less in American bars.

We got chatting outside the Rotunda one warm evening, a senior of 78 and a zed generation woman. She has enjoyed living an independent life and has realised that she is content with her own company. She found our pubs suited her new independent life, where she could sit and enjoy a drink and chat to people who were respectful and gracious. We talked about how my generation began the progressive movement towards feminism and anti-racism. How this was replicated in America at the same time and how her generation benefitted from it. We also noted how new obstacles to these freedoms are creating challenges in today's world. We discussed 'real ale', (an imperative for me) and she told us how it and some of the ciders she had tried here went down so easily compared with gassy bottled beers in her hometown. She took away one of the CAMRA magazines, the Tippler, as an example of local pub culture and real ale support, and promised to look for brew pubs in her hometown when she returned.

She wants to return with her step-grandfather who is English and loves horses to experience Cheltenham races as well as Gatcombe and Badminton three-day eventing.

An old geezer chats to a young generation zed visitor from Texas in one of our open friendly, social pubs and they explore a range of issues. It is to be hoped that she returns to Cheltenham and recalls our encounter in the future, and I will recall it regularly with a smile whilst having a pint in my local.

## Quiet social takeover

Up to 15 people invade the pub and take over the

back room slowly. They don't make any noise but talk quietly. Gradually a few buy a drink but most just sit and chat. The staff do not worry. The group rises to 20. Groups of four or five slowly slip off to the bar to get some drinks, but again all is quiet. The women wear long skirts, dresses or trousers and the men are in tee-shirts and jeans. Pints are drunk in abundance including by the women. They continue to chat quietly in small groups; they've colonised the whole of the back bar some sitting, some standing. There is no preference given to women for seats. All are equal here. One woman has a leaf attached to her long skirt which might imply they have been sitting in the gardens opposite.

Did they know they would be able take over a bar in a local pub when they entered? Have the staff seen this in the past? The staff coped with it very well. The group listen to each other and contribute quietly and seriously with counter arguments that use quiet humour to provide amusement.

They are friends who met for an outdoor pizza, but the rain encouraged them to come to this pub for a drink. They drink slowly, occasionally one or two slip off to the bar for another, but no rounds are now purchased. Quiet engagement with each other, respectively, joy is the priority, not the ale.

Pubs entertain a wide variety of groups from lads and lasses on a noisy celebratory night out to quiet 20+ year olds who just came in from the rain. They then begin to depart in small groups, but the remainder spread themselves across their space. They told the staff they like it here and they promised to return. Pubs that provide a large self-contained space can be used for small groups to gather or for a large group to enjoy other's company. They are lucky to have found one.



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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 is a picture of Tewkesbury CAMRA's Health & Safety Officer, Phil Comens, and as you can see, he's a little damp.

He was tapping one of the beers before the recent TWAF and it proved to be a little lively.

The Name of the beer? Elf and Safety (from the Fuzzy Duck Brewery). You couldn't make it up.

What do you think he might he be saying?



## 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?



Send your entry to  
[chris@thetippler.co.uk](mailto:chris@thetippler.co.uk)



# 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

## 'TRUST' in PUBS

Ownership of pubs can often be difficult to unravel but one of the lesser known owners are **The National Trust**. There are apparently some **39 in total of which I know just a handful**.

Historically the NT have often taken on large estates, with many incumbrances. I know the background to one such, since my old school was originally Stowe House, and owned by Lord Cobham, a leading politician in the 18th century. He has so many admirers wishing to visit his great estate, that he had a pub built a couple of miles from the house, where they could be accommodated, and which he suitably named, **The New Inn**. When the fortunes of the family declined many decades later, the pub became a casualty, but with the surrounding land it became New Inn Farm. The NT acquired the grounds from the school in the 1980's but wishing to relocate the school's golf course from it's prominent position, which was rather too close to the main buildings, their acquisitive eye fell on New Inn Farm, which was now rather decrepit, and it has now become a rather nice visitor centre, with a rather better golf course now laid out nearby.

One of my favourite, all time, country pubs has to be **The Fleece Inn at Bretforton** outside

Evesham. I mentioned this in an earlier article in Tippler, but my friend Brian has now settled into his cottage, which is within walking distance of the pub. The NT acquired the pub from a very long standing landlord some 30 or so years ago, but the history goes even further back than Stowe, since there is a collection of Jacobean pewter plates still viewable in an adjoining snug. The present tenant is extremely active and apart from a good range of real ales, and local ciders, they offer really interesting menus, which include their famous Asparagus suppers, available from Spring onwards, for a couple of months.

The landlord of the Fleece also looks after another NT pub which is **The Cardinal's Hat** based in Worcester. This is very much a town pub and also has a good range of real ales and cider but the day I was there last year, there was a young part-timer behind the bar, who wasn't very forthcoming about the ciders available, or much else. The pub is reputed to be one of the oldest in the city.

My third NT pub is **The Spread Eagle** which is just outside the beautiful Stourhead estate in Wiltshire and was probably built by the Hoare, banking family, for much the same reason as the one at Stowe. This is a very comfortable dining pub,

and when I last visited a few years ago, I was not so involved with CAMRA, so didn't 'clock' the quality of the ales and ciders on offer.

Going back to Worcestershire, I was very pleased to learn of another small cider maker, since there are not that many in the county, and hardly enough to get into double figures. A friend of mine was recently given a bottle from Peopleton Press. They come from the village of the same name, which lies in a triangle between Worcester, Pershore and Evesham. They seem to be quite ambitious with several local pubs keeping one of their several brands available and they also distribute through a number of farm shops and delis in the county.

Another county with even less cider makers is Berkshire, but I was recently handed a copy of their own CAMRA magazine 'Mine's a Pint' since it had an article inside of another small cidery called Seven Trees. This being the original number of apple

trees in the owners garden. They were having an open day just before Christmas so I just had to visit. The house with a garage converted to cider pressing was deep in the heart of suburbia, but there was a steady stream of other punters visiting, including the postman who delivered the mail, but left with a few bottles of cider.

Reading, like most cathedral cities, has a really good selection of pubs, and I also discovered that they have recently opened up a Cider Club in one of their main pubs. I may have mentioned Cider Clubs before, and have heard of them down in darkest Dorset, but now I have also heard of yet another, a bit closer to home, in Bedminster, Bristol so that's another excuse for a trip before too long, and I hope to persuade Veronica to organize one of her Ale Trails down there.

Guy Vowles



The Fleece Inn, Bretforton

# PODGY TICKER?

THE CONTINUING TALES OF A BEER COLLECTOR

In this edition, our collector gets all Hercule Poirot and decides to investigate the multiple delights of Belgian beers...

In 2025 I had a significant birthday and my lovely wife suggested a week in Belgium as a treat! I am always happy to go on holiday – but a week in a country that has a reputation for high quality beer on every street corner, that was a treat indeed. Everyone raves about Belgian beer, don't they.

You can pick up a growing range of bottled Belgian beers in our supermarkets these days and they are increasingly common along the bar too, although, to be fair, Belgian beer on draught is still a rarity. I guess Stella Artois (5%) and Leffe Blonde (6.6%) are the most prevalent on draught, but these are both brewed by AB-Inbev, a giant amongst global brewers and a long way from the independent artisan brewer that many of us search out. You can read plenty of online comments that suggest Westvleteren 12, a 10% Trappist beer produced by the Brouwerij de Sint-Sixtusabdij van Westvleteren, is the very best beer in the World. So, I thought I'd use my birthday treat to find out a little more about Belgian beer: its history and its reputation.

Belgium has a brewing heritage that probably goes back to Roman times. Then, in the Middle Ages, monasteries started to play a crucial role in brewing, each monastery brewing enough beer for their own consumption and some to sell to local people. After all, beer was safer to drink than water back then. Initially, a mix of herbs and spices called gruit was used for flavouring, but by about the 14th century, hops had been adopted as they improved quality by preventing spoilage. The tradition of monastic brewing continued, with many popular Belgian beers originating from or associated with abbeys and monasteries. At the same time, a unique brewing style emerged using wild yeasts and spontaneous fermentation to create Lambic with its distinctive tart flavour.

The closure of many monasteries in the late 18th century disrupted brewing and many recipes and techniques were lost, but there was a resurgence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries which saw the birth of new styles, such as Blonde, Tripel and Saison.

The oldest continuously family-run brewery in Belgium is Brouwerij Roman, which was founded

in 1545. Den Hoorn, the precursor to Stella Artois, was founded even earlier in 1366. Affligem can trace its roots back further still, as monks began brewing there in 11th century, although it has not become a commercial brewery for much of that time. Timmermans, established in 1702, is the oldest Lambic brewer in the World.

So, in short, Belgium has a long tradition of brewing and many breweries have been perfecting their recipes for hundreds of years.

How is Belgian beer different? Belgian beer is generally yeastier, sweeter, less bitter, and higher in alcohol content than British beers (with the exception of the sour beers – Lambic, Flemish Red and Oud Bruin). Also, Belgian yeast strains are quite different and will add fruity or spicy esters during fermentation. You will not find any real ale in Belgium. All beers there are served cold from a keg. In fact, I found that in most bars, serving your beer was like an artform in itself. First, the right glass must be used. Many brewers have their very own unique style of glass, some even have a different glass for each different beer (one coconut beer I ordered was served not in a glass, but in a half coconut!). The beer will be served with a large head, which is then scraped level with a knife. The glass is finally cleaned either by dipping in or spraying with water and tapped dry on a towel, before being placed on a tray, possibly on a little paper doily, often with a small bowl of snacks.

Don't expect to be served pints! Serving sizes vary a little, but generally draught beer is available in a 250ml serving, sometimes 330ml and you may be offered a larger 500ml serving, but not with the stronger beers. Some bars will offer a flight, which can be good value and this allows you to taste more. Taster sizes tend to be around 150ml. Your beer will not be cheap. I was surprised to find

that there seemed to be little correlation between price and beer strength. The 8% tripels were often a similar price to a 6% dubbel or even a 4.5% fruit Lambic. I generally paid between 4 and 6 Euros for a single 250ml beer. The pound and the Euro are almost on a par now, so we're talking around a five for a small beer, but when that beer is a Trappist 8% Tripel and you are sitting in the sunshine beside a gleaming canal watching the World go by, I'd say it's money well spent!

What styles should you expect? The main Belgian styles are Witbier, Blonde, Dubbel, Tripel, Quadrupel, Saison, Lambic, Flemish Red and Oud Bruin.

**Witbier** – hazy wheat beer with a distinctive citrus and spice flavour.

**Blonde** – golden, highly carbonated ale with a rich foam, malty flavour and spicy yeast character.

**Dubbel, Tripel, Quadrupel** – these are the classic Abbey styles. They are darker and stronger (Dubbel 6%+, Tripel 8%+, Quadrupel 10%+) with complex and rich flavours of dark fruit, caramel and malt.

**Saison** – a farmhouse ale, often characterised by earthy, spicy flavours, sometimes with a touch of tartness.

**Lambic** – a very tart beer (sour), sometimes mixed with fruit (e.g. Kriek with cherries) or expertly blended with other Lambics to produce a Gueuze.

**Flemish Red and Oud Bruin** – sour ales with distinctive fruitiness and a tart flavour from aging in barrels.

You may not be familiar with the term Trappist, so what's that all about? Dubbels, Tripels and Quadrupels are described as abbey beers because of their monastic heritage, but most are no longer brewed by monks, they just retain the link with a monastic past. To be able to use the term



The Beerwall in Bruges



## DODGY TICKER?

Trappist, the beer must still be brewed by monks and be situated at or in a working monastery. Understandably, there are just a few breweries that can claim this – 13 around the World (including one in the UK, brewing the lovely 7% amber ale Tynt Meadow), although three of these have not been recognised as such by members of the ITA (International Trappist Association) as they either no longer brew on the site of the monastery or brewing is not overseen by monks. Also, two (St Joseph's in the US and Stift Engelszell in Austria) have recently closed. Five of the eight remaining that can use the 'Authentic Trappist Product' label are in Belgium: Chimay, Orval, Westmalle, Rochefort and Westvleteren. A sixth, Achel, was recognised as Trappist until 2023 when the abbey was sold to a private individual. As a collector, tracking down Trappist beers is all part of the game and I still have a few to add to the list – I haven't made life easy by insisting that beers in my collection have to be draught, as I suspect some of the Trappist beers will never be available in anything other than a bottle.

My little birthday treat consisted of four days in Bruges and a day in Brussels. Bruges is a stunning city, full of historic buildings and medieval charm, cobbled streets and cute little bridges over its many canals. I would thoroughly recommend a visit there, but expect crowded streets and bars between

about 11am and 5pm when all the day-trippers turn up in their coaches or on the train. There is good quality Belgian beer everywhere. My favourite places were Brouwerij Bourgogne des Flandres, De Garre, Bieratelier, Le Trappiste and 2BE with its famous beer wall. Brussels does not have the same charm as Bruges and is much larger and dirtier, much like any European capital city, but there is a great choice of bars. My favourite was GIST, an authentic Belgian bar serving 18 draught beers, which was much quieter than some of the bars on the main boulevards. I was able to add 20 new breweries to the collection during our few days away. This means that the brewery total for Belgium is now at 75, sending it above New Zealand on the international list into second place behind the USA.

Of course, you don't need to travel to Belgium to drink Belgian beer. Local beer shops have a good selection of Belgian bottled beers, including some of the Trappist brews. We also now have a dedicated Belgian Beer bar at the back of the Thirsty Pine in Gloucester. Here you will find a large array of bottles plus up to nine draught beers. Most of these taps stay the same, but two change from time to time, so keep an eye out for what's new.

Pete Searle

## COMPETITION WINNERS

### Winter Issue 2025

#### Brewhouse & Kitchen (Gloucester) Prize Crossword:

The featured brewery is 'Harveys' and the 3 winners are **Sam King, Paul Long & Robert Hudson**

#### Uley Brewery Prize Wordsearch:

The answer was 'Cenosillicaphobia is the fear of an empty glass' and the four winners are **Derek Mallinson, George Bailey, Clare Dickerson & Rowena Absalom**

#### Stroud Brewery Caption Competition:

The two winners are **Alan Brown** with 'And I thought that gooseberry bush was a new bitter', and **Paul Baker** with 'Somebody's on their third bottle...and it's not the baby!'

#### Wetherspoons Name That Pub Competition:

The featured pub is **The Kings Arms** in Newent and the winner is **Joe Mancell**.

#### Tippler Tee-Shirt Prize Letter Competition:

The winner is **John Morrish**.

**Yes, people really do win our competitions!**

**Send your entries for this issue to [chris@thetippler.co.uk](mailto:chris@thetippler.co.uk)**

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\*Apologies to The Foley Arms, Malvern for printing the wrong picture of the hotel last  
issue - it won't happen again.



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Meetings on second Wednesday or Thursday of the month at 8.00 pm.

Call: Rob Coldwell 07752 740488 For more details see website [www.cheltenham.camra.org.uk](http://www.cheltenham.camra.org.uk)

## North Cotswold Branch

Email: [chairncb@northcotswoldcamra.org.uk](mailto:chairncb@northcotswoldcamra.org.uk)

For more details see website [www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk](http://www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk) or the Facebook page: [pagehttps://www.facebook.com/North-Cotswolds-CAMRA-the-Campaign-for-Real-Ale-in-the-North-Cotswolds-1022351584505679/?fref=nf1](https://www.facebook.com/North-Cotswolds-CAMRA-the-Campaign-for-Real-Ale-in-the-North-Cotswolds-1022351584505679/?fref=nf1)

Call: Martin Jones on 07879 015881.

## Mid-Gloucestershire Branch

Website: <https://www.midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/456426941062201>

Email: [chair@midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk](mailto:chair@midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk) – Peter Bennetts

Email: [branchcontact@midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk](mailto:branchcontact@midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk) – Chris Hall

Branch Meetings first Tuesday of alternate months 7.30pm at the Pelican, Gloucester. Email: [chair@](mailto:chair@)

**Cirencester Area** Email: [cirencester@midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk](mailto:cirencester@midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk)

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**Dursley Area** Email: [dursley@midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk](mailto:dursley@midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk)

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**Gloucester Area** Email: [gloucester@midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk](mailto:gloucester@midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk)

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**Stroud Area** Email: [stroud@midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk](mailto:stroud@midgloucestershire.camra.org.uk)

Meetings on second Wednesday of the month at 7.30 pm at the Ale House, Stroud.

Contact Area Coordinator: Tony Hill

**Tewkesbury Branch** Email: [chair@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:chair@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk)

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

Contact Ian at [secretary@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:secretary@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk) or visit the website [www.tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](http://www.tewkesbury.camra.org.uk)

# CAMRA Branch Contacts



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## NORTH COTSWOLD CAMRA Branch

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\*Apologies to Lawrence at The Cross House Tavern in Tewkesbury, whom we somehow managed to miss off the list of advertisers last issue. And didn't he let us know!

## Got something to say?

### Then please get in touch!

We value feedback and news from around the county, so, if you want to make a contribution, compliment or criticise, contact:

The Editor, The Tippler, 23 Theocs Close, Tewkesbury. GL20 5TX  
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