

Mild & Bitter

Keeping Derby CAMRA drinkers informed since 1975

Why not Stand for Committee and Influence Branch Activity?

Derby CAMRA has an annual Beer Festival in an historic, city centre location; two newsletters and we're proud to have led the way in the Handpump Hi-Jack campaign. In order to progress further, it would be beneficial to see one or two new faces on the committee as new committee members always bring fresh ideas in relation to Branch activity. We'd therefore welcome nominations from anyone with a little time to spare. You'll need to be a current CAMRA member, as will your seconder. Nominations with membership numbers before the AGM on 4th February to Branch Secretary, Nic Scott secretary@derby.camra.org.uk

Important Notice About M&B

This edition of M&B is being emailed using both the CAMRA 'Comms' system and the commercial Mailchimp service.

We are now switching delivery to Comms only. To ensure that you continue to get M&B, please follow the instructions in the email by which this edition was sent.

If you pay to get M&B by post, no action is needed, but we'd encourage you to switch to email if possible.

Derby Beer Girls' First Meeting in 2026

The new year's first one will be at the Good Beer Guide listed **Furnace**, Duke Street, Derby, starting at 730pm on **Tuesday 20th January**. A wide selection of drinks is on sale here. Further meet-ups are planned for Wednesday 18th February at the Brunswick Inn and Monday 16th March at the Silk Mill.

.....And There are More Socials in January
Saturday, 17th Royal Oak, noon. **Wednesday 21st**, Golden Eagle evening. **Tuesday 27th**, New Zealand Arms plus other(s). See page 4 for more details. **January needn't be dull.**

CAMRA Branch Meetings

Derby: Thursday, 8th January, Royal Standard, Derwent Street, Derby – 8.00pm.

Amber Valley: Tuesday, 13th January at the Dead Poets, Holbrook – 8.00pm. Please note this is on a **Tuesday**.

Ashbourne: Tuesday, 6th January Smith's Tavern at 8.00pm to discuss annual awards and meetings etc.
Tuesday, 27th January at The Queen's Vaults, Ashbourne – 8.00pm.

Still Time to be a Judge in the Annual Awards

The more judges for Pub of the Year the better. Many judges mean any potential personal bias is minimised when assessing the merits of individual pubs. Judging will take place in January and early February and **Cider Pub of the Year judges are especially welcome**. Please contact Pubs' Officer, Kat Higgins pubsofficer@derby.camra.org.uk if you'd like to help; it doesn't matter where you live.

Motions for Debate Invited for the AGM

If you have a motion for debate at the AGM on 4th February at the Victoria, Midland Place, please let Branch Secretary, Nic Scott have it before the meeting which starts at 8.00pm. secretary@derby.camra.org.uk You will need a proposer and seconder both of whom must be CAMRA members.

The Hug and Heave Opens in Ashbourne

The Hug and Heave, St John Street, Ashbourne has opened, serving three real ales. The premises were once occupied by Artisan, the local CAMRA Pub of the Year in 2017.

Opportunity Knocks for Volunteers in Derby

Derby CAMRA has a number of interesting roles for those with a few hours to spare. Please contact Branch Secretary, Nic Scott secretary@derby.camra.org.uk for more information. Age/gender are irrelevant.

Keep Those Beer Scores Coming in

It's vitally important that we maintain a high level of beer scoring from as many members as possible to retain impartiality in Good Beer Guide selection and Pub of the Year. Please go to the CAMRA website on your phone.

2026 Good Beer Guide Available at These Pubs

The Alexandra, Brunswick, Smithfield, Furnace and Shiny Tap, Little Eaton all stock the 2026 Good Beer Guide, should you want a copy of this uniquely informative publication.

Former Pub of the Year will Close Imminently

The Druid Inn, Birchover, west of Matlock, is set to close on 5th January. It was Matlock and Dales CAMRA Pub of the Year in 2017 and last featured in the Good Beer Guide in 2019.

Beer Festivals

9th to 10th January: Westy Beer Festival, Aldershot, Hampshire.
15th to 17th January: Exeter CAMRA Festival of Beer, Corn Exchange, Exeter.
16th to 18th January: Lion Beer Festival, Therberton, Leiston, Suffolk.
16th to 18th January: Whittlesea Straw Bear, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire.
23rd to 24th January: Salisbury CAMRA Winterfest, The Guildhall, Market Place, Guildhall Square, Salisbury, Wilts..
28th to 31st January: 17th CAMRA Winter Beer Festival, Arts Centre, Church Street, Colchester.
29th January to 1st February: BeerMuda Triangle Beer Festival in Newark pubs.
29th January to 1st February: Mallard Inn Beer Festival, Carlton Road, Worksop.
30th to 31st January: Beer Festival, Community Centre, High Street, Tarporley.
30th January to 1st February: Coopers Arms Beer Festival, Crowborough, East Sussex.
6th to 7th February: Chesterfield CAMRA Beer Festival, Winding Wheel, Holywell Street, Chesterfield.
19th to 21st March: Burton on Trent CAMRA Beer Festival at the Town Hall.

Letter From CAMRA's Chair to Chancellor of the Exchequer Regarding Pubs' Business Rates

I am writing on behalf of CAMRA, our 144,000 members, and pubgoers across the country to raise our deep concerns about the impact of decisions made in the Budget. We want to see thriving pubs, social clubs, breweries and cider makers in every community across the UK. However, decisions in the Budget put the future of our pubs in jeopardy, and many more locals will be lost forever as a result. That's bad for communities and bad for the economy. We are bitterly disappointed about the "reforms" to business rates for hospitality businesses in England. Rather than support small businesses, they will squeeze them even tighter when they are already struggling. At a time when costs continue to rise, including through increased alcohol duties and employer National Insurance contributions, pubs needed vital support in the Budget. Instead, they now face even higher costs which could threaten otherwise viable businesses. This is devastating for both licensees and pubgoers. I have spoken to publicans who have told me that as a result of this Budget, and specifically the proposed increase in business rates, money that they would have otherwise invested in employing staff, maintaining their businesses and serving their communities will now be spent on this increased taxation. Others have told me they simply don't have the money to cover this bill. It is not right or fair for pubs to be facing increased business rates bills due to revaluation and the ending of the rates relief scheme next year. Especially when they were promised targeted support and lower business rates bills. A system that relies on more transitional relief to reduce costs means that the reforms have not worked. We urge you to consider what more can be done to support pubs in England through the business rates system, including by further lowering the multiplier to offset the increases licensees are facing through revaluation and the ending of the 40% relief. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes, **Ash Corbett-Collins, CAMRA Chairman**
 We hope to publish the Chancellor's reply.

Branch Meeting Venue Given new Lease of Life

The Travellers Rest, Ashbourne Road, has been given a smart, new look after a £320,000 refurbishment by Admiral Taverns. In the past, the Travellers hosted many a Derby CAMRA Branch meeting. Some inter-war architectural features have been retained including baffles, a fireplace and decorative floor tiling. Entertainment includes TV, darts, pool, and further improvements are anticipated such as an enhanced outdoor drinking area at the rear. Dancing Duck and Draught Bass feature regularly. On **Wednesday 14th January** there's a **Britpop** event from 8.00pm where you can hear the sounds of Liam Gallagher, Blur etc.



Thank you Party for Amber Valley Volunteers

This is taking place upstairs at **Arkwright's**, Belper, from 4.00pm on **10th January**. There will be vouchers for free beer handed over to eligible volunteers (by attending meetings or working either at Belper beer census or The Eyes Have It Festival) plus a food buffet; guests are welcome although they pay for their own beer. Please kindly RSVP me if you & another plan to attend. noraharper@hotmail.com

Bespoke News

Long standing member, Steve Copestake, reports his involvement with Bespoke Inns is now mostly confined to the **Boot**, Repton, which has three regular beers: Clodhopper, Boot Bitter, Draught Bass and two guest beers. The two guests often come from the likes of Alter Ego, Pentrich, Bang the Elephant, Red Dog, Aldwark, Ashover, Little Critters, Lenton Lane and Green Duck. Also, Steve speaks highly of Will, the new manager of **Harpers**, Melbourne, who previously received training at the Boot. Bespoke has signed a lease with the Duchy of Lancaster to provide a new restaurant and an events space at Tutbury Castle from this summer.

Inn Brief

Contracts have been exchanged at **The Babington**, Babington Lane, and we understand that it will close for a week in January for alterations, then reopen as a pub. The **Greyhound**, Cromford Market Place, has closed, temporarily at least. The **Roston Inn**, Roston, which older members may recall colloquially as "the Shant", closed last month.

Derby Drinker Distributor Required

We need a distributor as follows: Breaston, Draycott, Long Eaton, Sawley and Ilkeston. Please contact Gareth Stead derbydrinker@derby.camra.org.uk if you can help.

Ashbourne will be a Destination in February

John Smith, the enterprising licensee of the Victoria, Midland Place, Derby, is organising a trip to Shrovetide Football on Ash Wednesday including a bacon and sausage cob beforehand. So, make a note of Wednesday 18th Feb if you'd like to be on the coach, and the price will be announced soon.

Gibbo's Gongs

Pub of the Year: Spread Eagle, Main Street, Etwell.

There aren't many successful wet led pubs these days but the Spread Eagle is one of them. Conversation and laughter rule here and it's invariably busy. It's run by former Hardy and Hanson's brewery public liaison officer Alan Shepherd and his business partner Karen Scotson. They offer a quartet of real ales familiar to CAMRA members plus a couple of interesting, changing guests e.g. Gates of Burton, and unsurprisingly it's Good Beer Guide listed.



Beer of the Year: Buxton - Gatekeeper.

In the past year I've had Gatekeeper at The Hoppy Place, Alexandra and Flowerpot and it never fails to satisfy. It's a traditional Porter brewed in Buxton, and don't be deceived by its modest 4.1% abv strength because it really packs a punch.

Shiny News

The Pattenmakers, Crown Street, Duffield is reportedly enjoying brisk trade. If you're headed for the Shiny Tap, behind the Queen's Head, Little Eaton, please note it's closed on New Year's Day. The Shiny Tap was Derby CAMRA Country Pub of the Year in 2025.

Sheffield Bucks the Trend in Declining Beer Festival Attendances

There was an interesting discussion at a recent Branch meeting in which it was revealed that, across the country, beer festival attendances had been in decline. There was though an outlier, namely Sheffield Branch. Apparently, festival beer mats are distributed around Sheffield pubs six months in advance of the festival. I wonder if there is an over reliance on social media and whether Councils could help by displaying banners?

How About This for a Day's Takings?

In the late 1990s, a nephew worked at the Standing Order, Derby, and he said, back then, its weekly takings were circa £50,000. On a recent visit to the Old Arcade near the Principality Stadium, Cardiff, a member of staff said that when Wales play England, the pub is cleared of tables and chairs for rugby fans, whose aggregated payments are £50,000 on a matchday. There's a full range of Brain's beers.

Paul and Cheryl Brew Call Time at the Spanker

The popular couple will leave The Spanker, Nether Heage, near Belper on January 9th after six years in charge. Trade slackened markedly in autumn, and energy and water alone cost £2,745 per month. Paul and Cheryl no longer feel that working 60 to 70 hours a week is sufficiently rewarding. They were the first couple to run the Spotted Cow, Holbrook, after it was purchased by villagers and supporters around a decade ago, so we thank Paul and Cheryl for their endeavours and wish them well in the future.

Photograph Appeal

We've had a request for a photograph of the (Black) Panther pub now known as the Oaklands, on Oaklands Avenue. If you can oblige, please contact M&B.

Why not Take Advantage of the Member-get-Member Initiative?

You should, by being in receipt of M&B, be a CAMRA member. Why not help to grow the CAMRA community by inviting others to join with our *new referral scheme*? Your friends will get £5 off their CAMRA membership when they use your unique *referral link or code*. As a thank you, you'll receive six months of free Tastecard membership (worth £39.99) which saves you money on dining out with 2-for-1 meals, discounts at popular restaurants, cinema tickets and more. The initiative is available for every member – please go to the CAMRA website.

Minutes of the Ashbourne & District CAMRA Meeting at the Bowling Green, Ashbourne, on Tuesday, 25th November 2025

Welcome:

Graham welcomed everyone.

Attendance:

Graham Burke (Chair), Colin & Alison Terry, David O'Dell, Rob & Mandy Hodson-Walker, Konrad Machej, Martin Sales, Melvyn Whitehead

Apologies: Mark Grist, Diane Grist, Mike Burrows

Declaration of Interest: Rob & Mandy Hodson-Walker – House of Beer.

Minutes and actions from previous meeting:

Minutes of the last branch meeting were not circulated in advance. Graham to arrange circulation.

Chair's notes:

Beer Tasting course - 13 attended the course at the Smith's Tavern (6 from Ashbourne branch and 7 from Derby branch).

Very positive reviews including "New appreciation of beer tasting", "Very good process", "Eye opener", "Science lesson", "Really useful", "More complex than expected".

Very good presenter.

Graham suggested that branch try and arrange another event – on a Saturday or Sunday.

Profit of £12 on the event. Profit will be credited to Festival bank account.

Derby CAMRA meeting - Graham reported that a small profit (no loss) was made on the beer festival. Dates for festival next year to be discussed in the near future. **Mild & Bitter** – M&B changing. This will now be circulated via CAMRA distribution rather than by mass mailing (cost reduction). Suggestion that Branch meeting minutes are circulated via M&B – TBC – distribution timing may not align with branch meetings.

Beer Scores – Limited number of people are scoring beers. These scores will be used for the Good Beer Guide 2027.

Pub/Club of the season: 4 nominations/scores as follows: Pavilion score 0; House of Beer score 5; Sycamore (Parwich) score 0; Barley Mow (Kirk Ireton) score 1. Graham will present certificate in due course

Pub of the Year:

Nominations are required for the branch Pub of the Year. Currently the House of Beer and Watt Russell Arms (season winners) on the list of nominations. At least 6 are required. Graham suggested extra meeting on 6th January 2026 to discuss PotY and branch visits for 2026.

Membership: 79 as of 1st November.

Cider News: None.

Minutes of the Ashbourne Meeting, Continued

Local Pub/Brewery news:

Hug and Heave (Ashbourne) opening 29th November 2025. 3 cask beers available. **Roston Inn** (Roston) closing December 2025. **Machine Inn** (Ashbourne) under new management.

AOB: None.

Next meeting will be Christmas Social on Tuesday 23rd December 2025. Meet 7.00pm Smith's Tavern for pub tour of Ashbourne. 6th January 2026, Smiths Tavern. Meet 8.00pm to discuss Pub of the Year and plan 2026 branch visits. Tuesday 27th January – Queens Vaults, Ashbourne 8.00pm. Tuesday 24th February – Hug and Heave, Ashbourne 7.30pm.

Derby Branch Diary

JANUARY

Mon 5th - COMMITTEE MEETING – New Pin, Swarkestone Road, Chellaston – 8.00pm.
Thu 8th – BRANCH MEETING, Royal Standard, Derwent Street – 8.00pm. Meeting room is up a flight of stairs.
Sat 17th - Royal Oak Midday Social - noon to 3.00pm 55 Green Lane, Ockbrook, Derby DE72 3SE.
Tue 20th - Derby Beer Girls meet up for the first time in 2026 at the Furnace, Duke Street, Derby – 8.00pm.
Wed 21st - Golden Eagle Social, Agard Street, Derby - 8.00pm onwards.
Tues 27th - New Zealand Arms Social, Peel Street - 8.00pm to 9.00pm before visiting other pub(s) in the locality.

FEBRUARY

Wed 4th – AGM, Victoria Inn, Midland Place, Derby - 8.00pm. A fine selection of Leatherbritches beers from Smisby plus a guest or two. Please bring your membership card in the eventuality of a committee election vote.
Wed 18th – Shrovetide Football outing from the Victoria Inn, Midland Place, Derby. More information from the pub.

Amber Valley Diary

JANUARY

Sat 10th - Volunteer thank you party, Arkwright's, Campbell Street, Belper. Starts (upstairs) at 4.00pm.
Tues 13th - BRANCH MEETING at the Dead Poets, Holbrook – 8.00pm.

FEBRUARY

Tues 17th - GBG'27 selection meeting, Hunter's, Kilburn.

MARCH

Thu 26th - AGM at The Old Oak, Horsley Woodhouse.

JUNE

Fri 5th - Sun 7th Belper Goes Green, Branch is running the real ale and cider marquee.

JULY

Thu 2nd - Sun 5th - The Eyes Have It Music festival, Duffield, Branch is running the real ale & cider marquee.

Amber Valley Contact

Chairman: Chris Rogers 01332 880041

Ashbourne Diary

JANUARY

Tues 6th - Informal meeting to discuss annual awards, meetings etc. Smith's Tavern – 8.00pm.
Tues 27th – BRANCH MEETING at the Queen's Vaults, Ashbourne town centre - 8.00pm.

Ashbourne Contact

info@ashbourne.camra.org.uk

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DERBY CONTACTS

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M&B Copy Deadline

Copy to *mildbitter@derby.camra.org.uk* by **Tuesday 20th January**
Derby Drinker Deadline
5th January
derbydrinker@derby.camra.org.uk
 Advertising:
ads@derby.camra.org.uk