

Mild & Bitter

Keeping Derby CAMRA drinkers informed since 1975

A Warm Welcome Awaits Members Old and New at Derby's Latest Real Ale Pub

Thursday 9th April sees the Branch meeting at the Victoria and Albert Vaults on the corner of Mackworth Road and Watson Street. Mark and Becci run Derby's newest real ale outlet with three ales on offer at the meeting which starts at 8.00pm. Perhaps you haven't been to a Branch meeting for a while or, indeed, have never been to one, but either way we'd be pleased to see you at the new corner pub.



Bias Against Cask Ales

I recently learnt of an industry truth/malpractice that works against cask ales. Apparently, it is now, and has been for the last six months, a requirement in brewery owned group pubs such as Heineken (Star Bars) to expect a 103% return out of every cask. To do this, licensees have either to serve beer with a head, to have no ullage or to water the beers, which is an impossible situation for a decent licensee. The penalty for not meeting these standards is to have licensees' pay cut in the form of bonus reductions.

This is true also across Marston's houses I am told. I doubt Castle Rock, the Brunswick or Everard act this way. It would be interesting to check around to see if other pub companies e.g. Stonegate act this way. Derby is lucky in having a decent number of free houses who equally are not so constrained. This is a big incentive for pubs not to serve Cask Ales and in my opinion it should be highlighted with pub groups shamed accordingly. **John Arguile**

CAMRA Meetings

Derby: Thursday, 5th March, Peacock, Nottingham Road, Derby – 8.00pm.

Amber Valley: Tuesday, 26th May, Groovers, Peasehill, Ripley – 8.00pm.

Ashbourne: Tuesday, 31st March at the House of Beer, Ashbourne - 8.00pm.

Festival Fans Will be Flocking to Railway Terrace in April

Once again, the Brunswick and Victoria Inns are hosting beer and cider festivals simultaneously between the 15th and 18th April. A grand total of 60 beers are available.

Smithfield Ale House is Trading as per Normal
Flood defence work adjacent to the Meadow Road riverside pub has unfortunately closed the car park. The 2026 Smithfest won't happen but it should go ahead next year. Notwithstanding this, Ben and Emily want to emphasise that the pub is **trading normally**.

Burnt Pig is Toast of Erewash Valley CAMRA
Congratulations to Ben Rigby for his stewardship of the Burnt Pig, Market Street, Ilkeston, which again has won Erewash Valley CAMRA Pub of the Year. A suitable celebration was held in March.

AGM can be Experienced on-line

If you can't attend the AGM in person, then you can go to the CAMRA website to register for the event which is between 17th to 19th April in St Albans.

Red Lion is Matlock and Dales Pub of the Year
Members of the Matlock Branch have adjudged the Red Lion, Matlock Green, as their Pub of the Year. Moot Ales brew here and in March, a county CAMRA meeting was held here.

Ashbourne Beer and Cider Festival Confirmed
The popular event will be held between the 27th and 29th August at Ashbourne Town Hall.

Spanker Gets a New Lease of Life

The Nether Heage pub is in good hands again after Steve Thomas recently took over with Draught Bass and guest beers available. Steve has added the Spanker to his other pub, the Rising Sun, Middleton by Wirksworth which has increased trade year on year since 2020. Both pubs offer good food with the Spanker having a sun trap garden and is located near to Heage windmill.

Opening hours: Monday: 3.00 to 9.00pm. Tuesday: noon to 10.00pm. Wednesday to Saturday: noon to 11.00pm. Sunday: noon to 9.00pm.

Beer Festivals

25th to 29th March: Bar 189, Blenheim Drive, Allestree.

26th to 29th March: Murkfest at the Smithfield Ale House, Meadow Road, Derby. A dozen of the murkiest, haziest, unfiltered beers around.

27th and 28th March: Coventry CAMRA 40th Festival at the rugby football ground.

3rd to 6th April: Hope Valley beer festival at the Old Hall Hotel, Hope. 173 and 272 buses call close-by and Hope railway station is a short hop away.

15th to 18th April: Railway Terrace joint enterprise at the Brunswick Inn and Victoria Inn, Midland Place. Collaboration to present 60 real ales between the pubs.

22nd to 25th April: Rotherham ale and music festival.

24th and 25th April: Nottingham Castle Beer Festival.

24th to 26th April: Old Nag's Head, Edale, Derbyshire.

30th April to 3rd May: Star, Beeston, has circa one hundred beers at its beer festival.

1st to 3rd May: Sheffield Students' Union – 3 locations.

1st to 4th May: Hope Valley beer festival at the Old Hall Hotel, Hope. 173 and 272 buses call close-by and Hope railway station is a short hop away.

14th to 17th May: Rail Ale, Barrow Hill Beer Festival.

21st to 23rd May: Lincoln Beer Festival. Direct trains from Derby to Lincoln.

22nd to 25th May: Hope Valley beer festival at the Old Hall Hotel, Hope. 173 and 272 buses call close-by and Hope railway station is a short hop away.

23rd to 25th May: Railway, King Street, Belper. Beer and cider festival plus live music in the large garden.

29th to 30th May: Red Lion, Matlock Green. X17 bus stops close-by.

12th to 14th June: Craft beers, wines and spirits Festival, Market Hall, Derby between 1.00pm and 10.00pm.

Thu 2nd - Sun 5th July- The Eyes Have It Music festival, Duffield. There's a real ale & cider marquee.

27th to 29th August: Ashbourne CAMRA beer and cider festival at the Town Hall.

12th September: Derby Pride, Markeaton Park. Gareth Gates will be headlining.

2nd to 4th October: Craft beers, wines and spirits Festival, Market Hall, Derby between 1.00pm and 10.00pm. **Don't forget, as a member you have free admission to all CAMRA Beer Festivals.**

Inn Brief

The **Travellers Rest**, Ashbourne Road has a new function room with its own bar. The **Pentrich** brewery tap has opened. The **Cross Keys**, Market Place, Belper sells a range of four changing ales. The family run **Bulls Head**, Belper Lane End, serves three Thornbridge beers plus Draught Bass. The pub has an enviable reputation for good food and there are extensive children's play facilities in the large rear garden. Cheryl Gibson (no relation) is the new licensee of the classic **Coopers Tavern**, Cross Street, Burton on Trent.

Local Journalist Relaunches Beer Blog

Colston Crawford was the author of the Derby Telegraph's Beer Hunter column and he's altered his on-line blog to: <https://www.colstoncrawford.com>

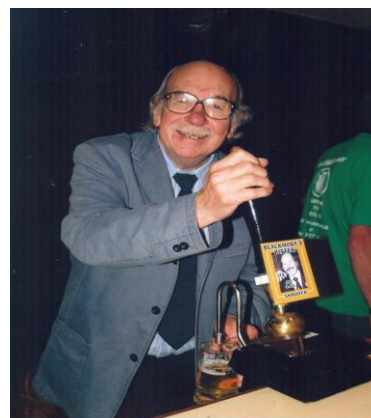
City Charter Beer Festival Pioneer Passes Away

Derek Blackmore was the Chair of the first Derby City Charter Beer Festival in April 1978. This was no mean undertaking: the Derby Branch had been formed only four years previously; there was very limited experience in CAMRA generally of running beer festivals; and the branch had insufficient funds to cover the costs that would have to be committed.

Thanks to Derek, it was a resounding success and laid the foundations for the immensely popular 60+ festivals that followed. Not only was it a financial success but it also set the standards for excellence in the way the beers are kept and presented. Furthermore, licensees, who had opposed the sale of beer by 'amateurs', were won over by the extra trade it brought through their doors.

Derek was the ideal person for the job, a little older than most of us, unruffled, urbane, witty and, unlike the rest of us, ran his own business and had the skillset needed to engage with and get the best out of people. Derek was highly sociable, and often seen, affable as ever, in the pubs of Derby with his wife Margaret, who died in 2014, and their great friend, the late Ron Beddows.

The funeral will be at 11:30 on Tuesday April 7th at the Markeaton Crematorium (probably the small chapel), then afterwards at The Broadway. **Tim Williams**



Derek Blackmore

Branch Account Report Period February 2026

Opening cash in bank £11,130.11.

Income £811.00. M&B £140.00. DD £666.00 (including £250.00 campaigning budget). Memorabilia £5.00.

Expenses £1,250.08. M&B £82.82. inc VAT. DD £927.52 including VAT. GBG 2026 £160.00. Pub of the Year £79.74 inc VAT. Closing cash in bank £10,691.03.

Andrew Norman, Treasurer

Brewery Historian Publishes Book on "Big Six"

John Arguile has published "The Big Six" which recounts the formation, growth and demise of Britain's six largest breweries between 1955 and 2025. It looks at the key players involved and the most notable beers are recounted by employees. Priced at £9.90, you can obtain a copy from the Alexandra, Siddals Road, Derby and Poynton's in the Derbion shopping centre stock it too. Alternatively, please send a cheque for £13.35 (including postage and packing) made payable to Mr J Arguile to 71 Elms Avenue, Littleover, Derby DE23 6FB. It's an incredibly well researched book.

Coach and Horses is Reopening

The attractive, Arts and Crafts fronted pub on Mansfield Road is now being run by Seb Leheup-Jones after he had a new kitchen installed and carried out extensive redecoration. Meat for Sunday roasts will be sourced from Croots Farm thus ensuring quality. Weekdays will see bingos, quizzes and free pool. Seb also runs the Windmill, Breadsall Hill Top.

Fabulous Fish Fridays at the Red Cow

On a Friday evening recently, it was good to see the Red Cow busy in old Allestree village with punters enjoying the food and beer. Well-kept Greene King IPA vies for attention with Dancing Duck Ay Up and Doom Bar. Friday sees four fish on offer, served with fresh vegetables. The food is restaurant quality and should help this ancient, former Offiler's pub to thrive. In the 19thC it had just two licensees and before that it was thatched. And with summer just around the corner, there's a nice garden to relax in. Telephone 01332 553279 if you want to book a table.



Red Cow

Nothing's New!

Non-alcoholic beer has seen a huge surge in popularity in recent times but did you know that Hewitt's of Grimsby were producing it as far back as the 1890s? According to the latest Brewery History Society magazine, back then, alcohol was removed after fermentation, whereas today, alcohol doesn't enter the process.

Legless

In the past I have been almost legless after parties or beer festivals enjoying a little too much real ale. Now, however, the word has taken on another meaning As a poisoned toe and foot required an above the knee amputation so I became physically legless. This required some thought as to how to indulge my love of cask conditioned, hand pumped beer. Luckily I have friends who would let me hop into their cars then take me to the accessible pubs. We surveyed a number of pubs to gauge, steps, ramps, and accessibility, as well as disabled toilets. Fortunately we were able to find a number of pubs that were able to accommodate the wheelchair and me. So don't be discouraged if anyone is like me. You can access many good pubs and still satisfy your love of real ale.

Beer King, Les Baynton

Minutes of the Ashbourne & District CAMRA Branch

**Meeting at the Hug and Heave, Ashbourne,
on Tuesday, 24th February 2026**

Attendance:

Graham Burke (Chair), Mark Grist, Colin & Alison Terry, David O'Dell, Jon Chamberlin, Bob Barker, Martin Sales, Alan Shenton & Paul (RBL, Parwich).

Apologies:

Diane Grist, Kevin Woolley, Hannah Barton, Rob & Mandy Hodson-Walker, Stephen Asbury.

Declaration of Interest:

Mark Grist – Smith's Tavern, Alan Shenton – RBL, Parwich.

Minutes of previous meeting inc. accuracy/action:

Taken as read.

Chairman:

Reported on attendance at the Derby AGM; committee unchanged; membership approximately 2,000. I was unable to attend the last Uttoxeter branch meeting as hoped, but I remain in close touch. Confirmed that planning has been started for the return of the beer & cider festival. Announced results of branch POTY judging, carried out by Uttoxeter members.

Club of the Year – RBL, Parwich.

Cider Pub of the Year – Red Lion, Kniveton.

Town Pub of the Year – Smith's Tavern.

Rural Pub of the Year – Red Lion, Kniveton.

Overall Branch Pub of the Year – Red Lion, Kniveton. Congratulations to all category winners; certificate presentations to be completed by middle of March. The Red Lion will move forward into the Derbyshire POTY round and it and the RBL will progress into the regional voting rounds for Cider POTY (Red Lion) and COTY (RBL, Parwich).

Secretary:

Membership as of 5th Feb – 70 (down 3). Nominations are invited for the Spring Pub of the Season. Two candidates received so far, all nominations by the date of the next meeting after which the winner will be voted on

Cider: No report.

Pub News:

The Yew Tree, Ednaston - no further update available on possible sale as going concern. Confirmation that The Old Dog, Thorpe has moved to 7-day opening. It is understood that Kerry Edwards is due to relinquish The Horns, Ashbourne shortly, to concentrate solely on Ye Olde Vaults. No information yet on who the new management may be.

Beer Festival:

The securing of the venue has now been agreed with the Town Council. The festival dates have been booked as Thursday 27th to Saturday 29th August. A save-the-date message will be sent out to all previous volunteers. A formal schedule of planning meeting dates has not yet been set, but is expected to be monthly from the end of March.

Branch dates:

Tuesday 31st March – Branch meeting – House of Beer.

Tuesday 28th April – Branch meeting – Old Dog.

Tuesday 26th May – Branch AGM – Smith's Tavern.

Derby Branch Diary

APRIL

Wed 8th – Committee meeting, Chequers, Ticknall, 8.00pm.

Thu 9th – BRANCH MEETING – Victoria and Albert Vaults, Watson Street/Mackworth Road – 8.00pm.

Tue 14th - Midday Social in Tutbury

A discourse group of CAMRA members has organised a day trip to **Tutbury**. Below is their schedule. I am unsure of my availability so I may not be attending but if I am contact me on 07510 161151 to find where we are. Suggested bus is the villager from Derby bus station (bay 4) at 12:05. 1. **Dog & Partridge**, High Street DE13 9LS 12:45 - 13:20 Traditional country town hotel. 2. **New Inn** 13:25 - 14:00 Black Country Ales. 3. **Cask & Pottle** 14:00 - 14:30 Micropub N.B. This pub is shown on Google as opening at 12 and closing at 2:30pm, then opening again at 5pm. (The CAMRA website shows the same early hours, but strangely omits the evening reopening.) This micro is between the Dog & Partridge and the New Inn, so we can check it out on the day. If it is not open, other times will be adjusted accordingly. 4. **Vine** 14:30 - 15:05 Marston. 5. **Leopard** 15:10 - 15:40 Bass Walk (less than five minutes) to bus stop at Lower High Street for Villager bus at 15:47 to Hatton. 6. **The Tavern** (formerly the Railway Tavern) 15:55 - 16:40 Free house (opens 3.00pm) Bass Bus stop close to the pub for the 401 bus at 16:43. (There is a Villager at 16:27.) For those averse to buses, it's a 25 minute walk from the Leopard to the Tavern, and about 30 minutes back to Tutbury for the next pub. 7. **Cross Keys** 17:00 - 17:30 Burton Bridge DBA (opens 5pm) [8. Cask & Pottle 17:35 - 18:10 If this pub turns out to be open in the evening but not at lunchtime!]

James Williams

Sat 25th Survey Trip - Melbourne and Ticknall

Starting with the No.2 bus from derby bus station (plt 18) at 11:49 arriving at the Hardinge Arms, Main Street, King's Newton, DE73 8BX at approx 12:35. Staunton Lane 1.2 mile walk (weather, time & ability dependant) (depending on group 20-45 minute walk to Tollgate Brewery Milking Parlour with a shortcut back to the Chequers Inn in Ticknall.

MAY

Fri 1st Craft & Cask Social between 19:30 and 23:30.

Tiny Tap, Unit 23, Northedge Business Park, Alfreton Rd, Darley Abbey, Derby DE21 4BN, **Little Chester Ale House, Furnace** & finishing at **Suds & Soda**. Contact James on 07510161151 to find where we are. Plan to spend about an hour in each pub so if joining later you should easily find us. Look out for the small blackboards on the tables or ask at the bar to find where we are.

Amber Valley Diary

MAY

Tue 26th – BRANCH MEETING at the Groovers, Peasehill, Ripley – 8.00pm.

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

MARCH

Tues 31st – BRANCH MEETING at the House of Beer, Ashbourne town centre - 8.00pm.

APRIL

Tues 28th – BRANCH MEETING at the Old Dog, Thorpe – 8.00pm.

MAY

Tues 26th – Branch AGM at the Smith's Tavern – 8.00pm.

Ashbourne Contact

info@ashbourne.camra.org.uk

DERBY CONTACTS

COMMITTEE

Chair: Mark Fletcher *chair@derby.camra.org.uk*

Secretary: Nic Scott *secretary@derby.camra.org.uk*

Treasurer: Andrew Norman *treasurer@derby.camra.org.uk*

Membership: Gillian Hough
membership@derby.camra.org.uk

Pubs Officer: Kat Higgins
pubsofficer@derby.camra.org.uk

Ashbourne Chairman: Graham Burke
info@ashbourne.camra.org.uk

Campaigns' Coordinator: Alan Pickersgill
campaigns@derby.camra.org.uk

Cider and Perry Officer: Post vacant.

Socials: James Williams *socials@derby.camra.org.uk*

Press and publicity: Alan Pickersgill
publicity@derby.camra.org.uk

Derby Drinker: *derbydrinker@derby.camra.org.uk*

Beer Festival: Russell Gilbert
BeerFest@derby.camra.org.uk

NON – COMMITTEE

Derby Drinker Distribution: Kevin Hepworth
derbydrinkerdist@hotmail.com

Derby Drinker advertising manager: Vacant
ads@derby.camra.org.uk

Derby CAMRA Tasting Panel Chair: Les Williams
lescamra39@yahoo.co.uk

M&B Copy Deadline

Copy to
mildbitter@derby.camra.org.uk by
Monday 20th April

Derby Drinker Deadline

5th May
derbydrinker@derby.camra.org.uk
Advertising:
ads@derby.camra.org.uk