



Issue 214
Apr / May 2026

DERBY D**rinker**

FREE



Cheers

Covering Most of Derbyshire and Beyond



Derby CAMRA Awards Night



A SUMPTUOUS DAY OUT ON THE V3



Dog Friendly Pub Walks



Further details inside plus loads, loads, more ▶▶▶▶





DERBY RAILWAY TERRACE BEER FESTIVAL

APRIL
15

APRIL
16

APRIL
17

APRIL
18

Brunswick Inn & Victoria Inn

JOINT BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

April 15th - 18th 2026
(60 cask ales between 2 pubs)

1 RAILWAY TERRACE DERBY DE1 2RU

12 MIDLAND PLACE DERBY DE12RR

DERBY DRINKER INFORMATION

Derby Drinker is distributed free of charge to pubs in and around Derby by Kevin Hepworth & his team.

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Contact us at:

subs@derby.camra.org.uk,

or send a cheque made payable to 'Derby CAMRA' to :

**Derby Drinker by Post,
59A Mile Ash Lane, Darley Abbey, Derby,
DE22 1DE.**

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www.derby.camra.org.uk

Welcome

Hello & welcome to *Derby Drinker* the magazine of the Derby Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale which is produced five times a year and is distributed all over Derbyshire and beyond.

We hope you enjoy reading it and if you have any comments or opinions please e-mail the Editor with your observations. We would also like to hear from you if you have any news, articles, photos or details of events that might be happening throughout the area as we'd love to promote anything we weren't aware of. Just drop us a line to **derbydrinker@derby.camra.org.uk**

Free Advertising

Would you like to get your pub, brewery, event, etc advertised for FREE on Derby CAMRA's website and throughout all their social media platforms? Well now you can by taking out an advert in *Derby Drinker* we will also guarantee to promote it at no additional costs across all our formats. The advert rates are set out opposite and we offer a range of sizes to suit your budget so just drop us an e-mail and we'll see what we can do for you - **ads@derby.camra.org.uk**

The Derby CAMRA Branch area

We often get asked about the exact area that Derby CAMRA covers, well it is quite extensive and includes the following:- **All of Derby City, Aston-on-Trent, Duffield, Coxbench, Melbourne, Ockbrook, Repton, Shardlow, Ticknall, Weston-on-Trent and Willington.**

We also have a **Sub-Branch** which covers the **Ashbourne** area and they have a regular page of news and features within *Derby Drinker* so check out the updates from that Branch there or take a look at their website

<https://www.facebook.com/AshbourneCAMRA/>

CAMRA Member Discounts on Real Ales

Did you know if you are a CAMRA member you can get a discount with your membership card in many pubs throughout the Country. Derby & Derbyshire pubs offer varying degree of discounts and Derby CAMRA's website has the latest list of participating pubs **www.derby.camra.org.uk/discount-scheme** so please check it out.

And if you would like your pub to join the scheme and get some free publicity through our website and social media outlets then please contact the Pubs Officer -

pubsofficer@derby.camra.org.uk



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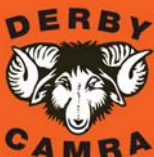
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Derby CAMRA Branch

Derby CAMRA Pubs/Clubs of the Year

Derby Branch selected their pubs and club of the year 2026 at a special awards night recently. See separate article on the centre pages to see who won what.

Derby CAMRA Heritage Beer Festival

As we went to press a major announcement on this year's Beer Festival was due. After 2 years at the Museum of Making we are moving to a new home in the autumn in a larger City Centre venue. To find out where and when keep an eye on the Derby CAMRA Heritage Beer Festival Facebook page for the latest information and also other Derby CAMRA social media outlets as well. Derby Drinker will have further details in the next issue which will be out at the beginning of June.

Free Entry to CAMRA Beer Festivals

From 2026 CAMRA members will get free entry to all Beer Festivals that are organised by CAMRA. This won't apply to Beer Festivals that are jointly organised with another party though. But remember to check out the Festival's website first as there will be different arrangements for entry to each Festival. So, even more of an incentive to join as you get thirty pounds of 50p off beer vouchers every year as well and also some discounts at pubs too. You can join online at camra.org.uk/join or in person at most CAMRA events, just look at for the CAMRA stand.

Upcoming Nearby CAMRA Beer Festivals

Now we are into Spring there's still a few CAMRA supported Beer Festivals with the nearby ones listed below. And remember, if you are a CAMRA member then this year most CAMRA Beer Festivals have free entry.

Lincoln - 21-23 May – Southside.

Other Local Beer Festivals

Derby Drinker is delighted to promote the following events and you'll see their adverts listed in this or previous issues. To get your Beer Festival listed here you will need to take an advert out with us.

Railway Terrace - 15-18 April - Brunswick & Victoria, Derby.

Castle Fest - 24-25 April - Nottingham.

Rail Ale - 14-17 May - Barrowhill.

Tap into Tutbury - 14-17 May - Tutbury pubs.

Furnace Inn - 20-24 May - Derby.

Milking Parlour - 22-25 May – Calke.

Burton Ale Trail - 4-7 June - Burton pubs.

Old Dog - 11-14 June - Thorpe.

White Hart - 24-28 June - Bargate.

Derby CAMRA



Website –
www.derby.camra.org.uk
Facebook – DerbyCAMRA

Contacts:-

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Pub Preservation – Mark Fletcher pubpreserve@derby.camra.org.uk

Social Media – Gillian Hough socialmedia@derby.camra.org.uk

Young Members Officer - YMG@derby.camra.org.uk

Derby CAMRA Branch Diary

Everyone is welcome at Derby CAMRA socials, meetings and trips.
Here is a list of forthcoming events:

APRIL

Thu 9th - Branch Meeting - Victoria & Albert Vaults, Derby - 8pm.

Tue 14th - Social - Dog & Partridge, Tutbury - 12.45pm.

Sat 25th - Survey Trip - Melbourne & Ticknall - Afternoon.

MAY

Fri 1st - Social - Tiny Tap, Derby - 7.30pm.

Thu 14th - Branch Meeting - TBC - 8pm.

Contact the Social Secretary, by email -
socials@derby.camra.org.uk

(Check www.derby.camra.org.uk for all upcoming events)



Here's an update on our major campaigns, Handpull Hijack and Business Rates.

Campaign Update

Following on from our visit and lobbying of our MPs in Parliament on 15th December, we have an update, some of which you may have already seen.

Parliamentary time is being spared to allow for a lot of major issues, such as the Iran war, Peter Mandelson, and so on. However we are still expecting Handpull Hijack to get it hearing now after Easter. Although this is still frustrating, it's understandable. Baggy Shanker, MP, is very much still working on this, and I will keep the pressure on.

We have won a reprieve regarding business rates, a temporary solution which allows 75% of our



Baggy Shanker MP, Alan Pickersgill, Kat Higgins, Tim Webb.

pubs little or no further rise in business rates payable.

However we must keep pressure on to achieve long term business rates reform. I will personally not allow this to just be "kicked into the long grass." Business rates need

to be fair and affordable to help our pubs survive.

So, there is a lot of work and a lot of campaigning still to do.

I can guarantee, however, that we have the ear of our two Derby MPs. And I promise you I intend to hold them to account.

So what's next? Once we achieve something meaningful further, I'd like to look at pubs as a central part of our communities as, I am sure you know, they absolutely are!

We press on for our great cask ale and our great British pubs.

Alan Pickersgill

Campaign & Publicity Officer, Derby CAMRA

Advertise with us and get your pub or event seen in almost every pub in Derbyshire?



As Derby Drinker copies are delivered all over Derbyshire and Beyond.

Full Page - £170 (Back Page £195)
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Take out 5 adverts and get the 5th FREE if you pay up front for all the adverts.

Advert deadline next Issue - 15/05/26

Contact Us
e-mail - ads@derby.camra.org.uk

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THE MULTI CAMRA AWARD WINNING VILLAGE FREE HOUSE







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2023 2024 2025

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PUB OF THE YEAR
OVERALL WINNER 2024 2026
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CIDER & PERRY PUB OF THE YEAR
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RURAL PUB OF THE YEAR
2026

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www.theredlionkniveton.co.uk



Ashbourne & District CAMRA Branch

Contact Mark Grist m.grist2@sky.com

Branch Awards 2026

So, February is both an exciting and a busy time for branches as we chose our POTY (pub of the year) and this year we decided to do things a little differently. After nominating eight pubs and three clubs it was decided to have a town POTY, a Rural POTY, a Club of the year and a Cider Pub of the Year.

The second thing we did differently was to work with our CAMRA neighbours from Uttoxeter in the West Midlands Region. Two teams from Ashbourne went to score their pubs and teams from Uttoxeter came over to score our pubs/clubs. This produced an unbiased result and an opportunity to visit pubs outside of our area.

And so, to the results: -

Club of the Year 2026 – Parwich Royal British Legion



RBL, Parwich.

For the fifth year running, it was a pleasure to present the award to Alan and his team who always have a warm welcome for both members and guests. They not only stock a good range of ales but also support the village with functions and the 'hub' on Friday morning selling bacon cobs and coffee between 9.30 and 1pm. They will now go through to the Derbyshire round of judging.

Town Pub of the Year 2026 – Smiths Tavern



Smith's Tavern, Ashbourne

Well deserved, Mark and his team often have up to six cask ales on offer, including a guest, often from a local brewery and there is always a warm welcome in this traditional town pub.

Rural Pub of the Year 2026 – Red Lion at Kniveton



Red Lion, Kniveton

It is always an absolute pleasure to visit Kevin Sumac and Hannah in this country pub, central to the village of Kniveton. Local quality cask ales kept well together with excellent service and good food make this pub a winner with both locals and visitors alike. Sunday was quiz night so even better to give the awards in a packed pub with a very appreciative audience!

Overall Ashbourne & District Pub of the Year 2026 – Red Lion at Kniveton.

They will now go through to the Derbyshire round of judging.

Cider Pub of the Year 2026 – Red Lion at Kniveton

Famous for its own brand of Kniveton Cider together with many other real fruit ciders on offer, Kevin Sumac and Hannah have so much knowledge and passion for cider that they are happy to share with both visitors old and new. They will now go straight through to the East Midlands round of Judging.

Good luck to all our entries in the county/regional finals.

Branch Diary

(subject to changes)

Tue 28th April – Branch Meeting – Old Dog, Thorpe.

Tue 26th May – AGM – Smith's Tavern, Ashbourne.

27-29 August - Beer Festival - Town Hall, Ashbourne.

BARTRAM'S EVENTS PRESENTS

THE MOST ATMOSPHERIC DRINK & MUSIC FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR!

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14th - 17th MAY 2026



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12AM - 6PM

TRADE DAY

6:30PM

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Madness

FRIDAY

12PM - 11PM

Music all day
with headliners:

ABBA PARTY BAND

SATURDAY

12PM - 11PM

Music all day
with headliners:

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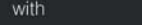
The show that DEFINES the
80's

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with



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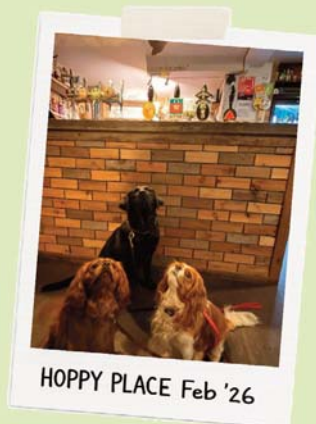
Ashover Cider, Bentley Brook Brewing,
Blue Monkey, Bradfield Brewery,
Dog & Spoon Distillery, Oakham,
Thornbridge, Timothy Taylors
& Titanic Brewery



Hoppy Place

After walking the dogs in Chaddesden Park, we stopped at this welcoming micropub. Open just two years, it has already made its mark as a finalist for Suburban Pub of the Year. Landlord Adam offered a warm greeting, while a dog station stocked with treats from Soap and Pawrey makes it a popular stop for dog walkers. The bright, modern interior — once a coffee shop — creates a sociable space that was packed for the weekly Wednesday quiz, with board games also on hand. Four real ales were on during our visit, including Little Brewing's Norse Code, Bass, Duck Norris from Dancing Duck and Dark Drake, alongside a good range of craft cans.

A cosy rear garden is perfect in warmer weather, with table skittles perfect for the competitive amongst us. Adam has chosen for the Hoppy Place to raise money for Prostate Cancer UK this year, with regular events on Sunday's concerts and gaming nights so keep an eye out. Great beer, community spirit and wagging tails make this a true local gem.



The Vic

Opposite Derby's railway station, the Victoria Inn has become a real local success story after being saved from conversion into flats four years ago. Run by John, Emma and the team, the pub offers a warm welcome to all — especially dogs, who were happily treated to biscuits behind the bar.

The drinks range is excellent, with 10 beers and 12 ciders available. On our visit we enjoyed Epiphany from Little Brewing Company and a crisp Citra from Leatherbritches Brewery, both in great condition.

Inside the pub is cosy and full of character, while outside there's a large beer garden. Live music is a regular feature, especially on weekends, with a focus on local artists. They keep their Facebook and website up to date so take a look there. Community spirit runs deep, with fundraising for Derby Pride and Macmillan Cancer Support, there is an upcoming a joint beer festival with The Brunswick Inn on 15 April will feature more than 50 beers.



The Last Post

Just down the road from Markeaton Park, this friendly micropub has recently been saved by new owners — former Olympian Matt Stephens, his wife and their friend. Only a week into their stewardship, it's already clear how much the community values keeping the pub alive. Inside, it's cosy and sociable, with a handful of tables, benches along the walls and bar stools around the bar. Board games are ready for visitors, while cycling memorabilia nods to the landlord's sporting past.

Four real ales are available, including brews from Brunswick Brewery, Dancing Duck Brewery and Falstaff Brewery, offering a good mix of well-kept local beer. Dogs are warmly welcomed too, with treats and plenty of fuss from behind the bar. With a friendly atmosphere and live music returning on Fridays from April, this small pub already feels firmly back where it belongs — at the heart of its community.



Written by Kat Higgins Derby Pubs Officer, with help from Rosie, Gizmo and Maverick 🐾

Suffering In The Tropics

I'm a local electrician who's spent around three decades working on and off as a marine engineer on Greenpeace ships. This has been really interesting. I have been to some fantastic places, had some amazing experiences and met some great people around the world.

However, one drawback has been the lack of "proper" beer. You sometimes find an Irish bar selling Guinness in tourist spots, and Oz, New Zealand, British Columbia, and so on, are fine but, apart from that, it can be a bit of a problem.

For around ten years from the late nineties onwards, I was one of two electricians rotating on the second Rainbow Warrior. I used to share the job with Dave Haussmann, a Kiwi. (Later on, Haussy was one of the "Arctic 30" who spent three months in a Russian jail after they climbed on an oil rig in international waters.) Anyway, I'd get on the ship and Haussy would get off.

I was told by the office in 2003 that I'd be joining in Mumbai in a couple of months for a tour around South East Asia. At the time the Rainbow Warrior was in Iceland and was dropping into Cardiff in a week or two.....So, I hatched a cunning plan.

In the electrician's cabin there was an unused space under the bunk, so I contacted Haussy about putting it to good use and filling it with beer in Cardiff. In his typical laid-back Kiwi style he said, "No problem, mate." So I drove over there with a van full of slightly out of date Ruddles County in plastic two-litre bottles that I'd picked up here in Derby. I'd slightly miscalculated as, when I got there I'd not quite filled the space. So I picked up a couple of slabs of Guinness locally. I told Haussy if the boat runs out of beer or anything on the crew-run bar, then break it out and give me my money back later.

So a couple of months later I arrived in Mumbai, but I wasn't allowed to join the boat as they were all under house arrest, having upset some powerful locals after doing an action against the ship-breaking yards in Alang. Basically, ships are broken up by hand on the beach. Of course it provided local employment but there were no Health and Safety or pollution controls. It was a fairly bad scene, all in all.

I was put in a hotel by Greenpeace and was allowed to visit the Rainbow Warrior, so I spent a couple of weeks running around getting spare parts, electric motors, bearings, tobacco and any other essentials for the crew, which

was really interesting. I saw parts of Mumbai that no tourist would see. However, I felt for the crew stuck on board in a hot, noisy, smelly dock, andthey were running out of beer.

Three weeks on, I was finally allowed to join in Colombo, Sri Lanka, after the boat was released, and was relieved to find that Haussy had kept my beer stash quiet. He's not a big drinker, preferring more herbal remedies when at home in New Zealand. Happy days!

So we set sail to Jakarta launching the next campaign which was trying to protect the forests in Kalimantan (Borneo). These were (and still are) under threat due to

Dark Drake ABV - 4.5%
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Exquisite, full flavoured IPA

dcuk ABV - 4.3%
Fashionable Pale Hoppy Ale

22 ABV - 4.3%
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We've been brewing great beer in Derby since 2010, the team are all passionate about ale and work their socks off to make sure that every pint we make is consistent and delicious.

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www.dancingduckbrewery.com

various organisations stripping the forest to establish palm oil plantations. This is devastating for the locals who see minimal benefit, and the orangutan population is in rapid decline due to loss of habitat.

A Greenpeace campaigner, Faye, and the local office had arranged a party on the boat for the campaign launch, which involved inviting as many influential people as possible: politicians, top admirals, various consular staff, and so on.

It was decided that the crew needed smartening up, so a box-load of dodgy looking Hawaiian shirts and cheap saris for the women arrived on the boat for the guys. There are no uniforms on



View from the deck of the Rainbow Warrior

Greenpeace boats and, whilst there are some very professional sailors and engineers on board, at the end of the day we are basically a bunch of scruffy hippies for the most part. Anyway, all of a sudden it was like you were in a surreal

dream - you were in your home and all your family were suddenly walking around in dodgy clothes. Very funny.

At the party, a bunch of lads from the British High Commission DFID (Department for International Development, sadly no longer existing) turned up with their guitars as they were a bit of a blues/rock band, which was cool. I got chatting to them about life away from home and the subject of the lack of "proper" beer came up.

I said, "I bet you'd love a pint of Ruddles right now."

The answer was a rather sad, "Yes." I said, "OK, I'll go and get some then." It turned into a good night raiding my real ale stash!

Two days later we were still in Jakarta. I was in the engine room and a crew member came down and said, "Dave, there's a guy up on the dock come to see you." I went up to find one of the DFID chaps who handed me a six-pack of Abbot Ale in glass bottles. "There you go, Dave. Thanks for the other night."

"Where did you get this?" I asked, "Is there, like, Ye Olde Abbot Ale Shoppe on Jakarta High Street by any chance? Because if there is, I'm going there now!"

He said, "No mate, Diplomatic Bag." This came as a bit of a surprise to me, "I thought it was for confidential documents, government business, et cetera."

He said, "It is. However, every month a list comes round and you tick off what you want: baked beans, cheese, chocolate, mushy peas..... all the essentials from Blighty!"

My Ruddles lasted a good couple of months, so I survived the trip. Also, one night Richard Pearson (an onboard mechanic from Cannock) and I drank cold Abbot Ale from glass on the deck of the Rainbow Warrior, sailing in the South China Sea, courtesy of the British Government. Cheers!

Dave Caister

RIP my mate, Richard Pearson, who sadly died whilst working for Greenpeace on board the Arctic Sunrise in Spain, in October 2025.

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9 MARTIN TURNER - EX WISHBONE ASH	JUNE
10 LA VILLA STRANGIATO	5 CHASING MUMFORD (MUMFORD & SONS TRIBUTE)
11 ULTIMATE LEPPARD	6 NICKELBACK UK
17 THE UB40 EXPERIENCE	12 FLEETWOOD BAC
18 STRAIGHTEN OUT (STRANGLERS TRIBUTE)	13 DAVY KNOWLES BAND
23 LAURENCE JONES (SOLO)	18 MARK CHADWICK - THE LEVELLERS
24 FRED ZEPPELIN	19 R.E.M. BY STIPE
25 GLAM45 & SWEET45	20 ULTIMATE COLDPLAY
MAY	26 FLASH: A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN
1 U2UK	JULY
2 SOUND OF THE LIONESS	2 PHIL ODGERS & BOBBY VALENTINO
8 EVERLY PREGNANT BROTHERS	3 THE FILLERS (THE KILLERS TRIBUTE)
9 CYDONIA KNIGHTS - MUSE TRIBUTE	4 DURAN DURAN EXPERIENCE
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SPEND LANE, THORPE, DE6 2AT

Inn Focus: Victoria and Albert Vaults, Watson St/Mackworth St



For upwards of eighty years the premises were hairdressers but, having secured a lease, Mark and Bekki set about converting the corner house into licensed on-premises and naming it in deference to the closed Victoria opposite and the nearby Albert Vaults, Whitecross Street, demolished in 1968. The Victoria was the first pub built by Derby brewery, Offiler's, at the end of the 19th century.

Bekki has worked in pubs in Derby and in the sticks, and three generations of her family ran the Kensington Tavern at the town end of Drewry Lane, so she is well versed in the licensed trade.

The Kensington is still trading today. Bar fittings have come courtesy of local pubs including The Mile, or the Garrick as some will have known it, thus lending a lived-in appeal. Currently, unlike some pubs, the V&AV is open seven days a week from noon to 10:30pm. A trio of changing real ales has seen Falstaff, Tiny Rebel and Castle Rock amongst others feature, and Peakstones Rock from Alton, Staffordshire was due to appear when I called in. If you're feeling peckish, home-made snacks include fresh ham cobs, sausage rolls baked on the premises, black pudding, scotch eggs, chorizo and plenty of pickled offerings which should tempt

the taste buds. On a Sunday between noon and 5:00pm, hot roast cobs with potato and gravy are available.

There's a room at first floor level with a comfy settee beneath distinctive artwork and the toilet is well fitted out. Mark and Bekki have plans to develop the place and, subject to planning permission, hope to have the garden licensed for summer which they assured me is a sun trap. If granted a temporary events licence, a gin and rum festival is in the offing for Easter, followed by a beer festival later this year.

This, then, is a pub to watch.

Paul Gibson



DERBY CAMRA AWARDS

The Derby Branch of CAMRA recently held their first ever awards evening at the home of last year's Pub of the Year Winner, the Flowerpot in Derby. The star-studded evening was attended by upwards of fifty members, licensees, bar staff, and both of Derby's MP's - Catherine Atkinson & Baggio Shanker who were on hand to present the awards.

In true awards ceremony fashion, the results were not known in advance and were announced on the night by Derby CAMRA's Pubs Officer, Kat Higgins with the winners and finalists invited on stage to collect their certificates.

A great night of socialising was had by all present including a marvellous spread of food kindly laid on by the Flowerpot.



The 2026 Roll of Honour

The winners of this year's awards are all listed below: -

The **City Pub of the Year** is the **Brunswick Inn** on Railway Terrace beating finalists the Flowerpot and the Smithfield Alehouse to the title. They have also taken the title of overall **Branch Pub of the Year** for the first time since 2017 which is a fantastic achievement for licensees, Alan Pickersgill & Philippe Larroche.



City Pub of Year Finalists

They will now go forward into the Derbyshire Round of the competition.

The **Suburban Pub of the Year** is the **Falstaff** in Normanton beating finalists the Creaky Floorboard on Kedleston Rd and the Hoppy Place in Chaddesden to the title. This is two years in a row that the Falstaff has won this particular award with licensees, Jim Hallows and Steph Briggs continuing to run a cracking back street local.



Overall Pub of the Year Winner

Awards Evening 2026



The **Country Pub of the Year** is the **Bank of Beers** in Melbourne beating finalists the Spirit Vaults in Melbourne and the Spread Eagle in Etwell to the title. It is the first time that the pub in its current incarnation has won this award which is a great accomplishment for the team running this excellent micropub.

The **Cider & Perry Pub of the Year** is once again the **Brunswick Inn** on Station Approach



Suburban Pub of the Year Finalists

in Derby beating the Smithfield Alehouse and Victoria Inn to the title. It is the tenth time the pub has won this award which is a fine accolade for licensees, Alan Pickersgill & Philippe Larroche and the pub now goes forward into the East Midlands round of the competition.

The **Club of the Year** is the **Liberal Club** on Moor Street in the centre of Spondon winning for the second year in a row beating finalists, the Jubilee Club, in Chaddesden and the Victory Club in Allenton. It now goes forward into the Derbyshire round of the competition.

Also, on the night a **Special Award** was presented to licensees, John Smith & Emma Middleton at the **Victoria Inn** for reviving the pub and associated charitable works.

Congratulations then to all the winners and finalists and a selection of presentation photos from the evening is featured on these pages.



Country Pub of the Year Finalists



Special Award



Cider Pub of Year Finalists



Club of the Year Winner

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BURTON ALE TRAIL

kicks off in June

The semi-legendary Burton Ale Trail (aka. BAT) is back in Burton upon Trent this June and this time it's kicking off in true World Cup style. With the tournament starting just days later, the town's biggest pub celebration is tapping straight into football fever.

With every Ale Trail having its own theme, organiser Ian Webster says this year's was an easy decision.

"Our mascot is a bat called Marvin and he adopts a new persona for each trail. Last year he was Ozzy Osbourne; this summer it felt only right to recreate the famous 1966 World Cup image for the poster," Ian explains. "We'll have T-shirts on sale as always, but we've gone one better this time and there will be a second design available for anyone who might not fancy celebrating English football."

Launched in 2021, the Burton Ale Trail has quickly become a firm fixture in the town's social calendar.

"The idea came about during COVID when the only way to get a proper pint was via off-sales or home delivery. The local CAMRA festival had been cancelled at the eleventh hour,

so a beer festival spread across multiple venues seemed like the perfect solution. When the final whistle was blown on lockdown, the Burton Ale Trail was born.

"It genuinely gave the town its first post-COVID party. The pubs were packed, and people were asking when the next one would be held before the first beer had even been sold."

Over the past five years, more than twenty venues have taken part, reflecting the ever-evolving real ale scene in Burton. The team selection for June is still under wraps.

"It's too early to name the squad. We are waiting on a few last-minute fitness tests but we'll be playing to our strengths," Ian says. "Join the Facebook group to keep up to date."

2026 sees the BAT sponsored for the first time.

"I am looking forward to working with Burton Bridge Brewery, who are our main sponsors, and Samuel Allsopp & Sons Ltd. who feature on the second T-shirt. Bass, Double Diamond, G3, Joules and Real Ale Finder will all feature on the shirt and our digital platforms."

One of the trail's greatest strengths is Burton's geography. The town is tailor-made for a pub crawl, with most venues within easy walking distance.

"If you start at The Elms in Stapenhill and finish at The Oak & Ivy near the Town Hall, it's around two miles and it's pretty flat. In some parts of the trail there are only a few steps between pubs. You can almost fall out of one and straight into the next."

Burton upon Trent built its global reputation on beer. While the brewing industry may not match its late 19th century peak, the quality of its pubs remains second to none and the Burton Ale Trail showcases them at their very best.

"I feel obliged to squeeze in a few more football clichés," laughs Ian, donning a sheepskin coat. "It'll be a game of two halves, but probably in the same glass. Lace up your drinking boots and get on the pitch! Buy a shirt (or two), work on your tactics, try to hit the bar as much as possible and remember to keep your dribbling under control."

Derbyshire Pub News

Things are constantly changing on the pub scene, so it is nice to catch up on everything we know about in our area. You may already be aware of some of this information but other things you might have missed so we recap here.....

And we start with some news from Derby first: - A new micropub, the **Victoria & Albert Vaults** has opened on the corner of Watson St and Mackworth Road serving 3 Real Ales (see article in this issue).

The Coach & Horses on Mansfield Road has had a mini refurb and change of licensee who has been running the Windmill in Breadsall. The pub will be serving food including Sunday lunches.

The Jonty Farmer on Kedleston Road has re-opened after a refurbishment by Marstons along a 'sports bar' theme with screens everywhere.

The newly refurbished **New Zealand Arms** on Langley St now serves food including Sunday dinners and has 3 Real Ales on offer.

The **Travellers Rest** on Ashbourne Road, which had a recent refurbishment has now opened a new function room at the rear with its own bar.

The **Babington Arms** on Babington Lane is still open as a Wetherspoons pub but remains on the market.

The **Merry Widows** opposite the railway station has plans by owners, Trust Inns to turn it into a brewery tap in collaboration with Roebuck Brewing Company of Draycott in the Clay.

The lease on the **Horse & Groom**, Elm Street expired at the end of March with an uncertain future.

The **Last Post** on Uttoxeter Old Road has re-opened under new owners.

The **Lodge** in **Alvaston** has closed for a refurb by owners Greene King.

Works are progressing at **The Yard** on Station Road in **Mickleover** but no date for opening has been given for this new venue serving Real Ale.

The **Kings Head** in **Duffield** is closed for essential repair work following a leak on the premises.

The **Bull's Head** in **Denby**, which has been closed since August 2024, will be receiving a makeover by Star Pubs. No date has yet been given for re-opening.

he former **Bear Trap** bottle shop in **Belper** has now been converted into a café.

The owners of Brewed Awakening in **Ripley** are opening a new beer/wine/tapas bar in a former candle factory close by. Dating from 1830, it will be known as **Candlemaker** and is due to open

spring 2026.

The former Regal Nightclub in **Ripley** is to be converted into a bar/diner to be known as **Mary Lou's Smokehouse & Craft Bar**.

The **Hurt Arms** in **Ambergate** is set to re-open in May after being closed since 2023 due to extensive flood damage. A full refurb has taken place.

The **Greyhound** in **Cromford** is still closed but Admiral Taverns are looking for a new licensee with the promise of a full refurbishment.

The **Spanker** in **Nether Heage** is back open with a new licensee who also runs the Rising Sun in Middleton.

The **Yew Tree** in **Ednaston** is being offered as a going concern on a 5-year lease, despite fears it may be sold off for housing development.

The **Roston Inn** (The Shant) in **Roston** has re-opened.

The **Malt Shovel** in **Shardlow** has re-opened after a refurb by Marstons.

Harpurs in **Melbourne** has been renamed **The Boot** after joining the Bespoke Inns pub company.

The **Melbourne Inn** (ex-Lamb), in **Melbourne**, will be opening the lounge as Jo Jo's, a Country and Western themed bar with open mic nights once a week.

The **Mount Pleasant Inn** in **Repton** is undergoing a refurb which will include a roof terrace.

Rumour has it that there will be yet another micropub in **Heanor** near the Market Place.

The **Church Inn** at **Darley Dale** has re-opened following a refurb by Admiral Taverns.

The **Chequers Inn** at **Froggatt Edge** is up for sale.

The **Queen Anne Inn** in **Great Hucklow** is for sale but remains open.

And finally, The **Knockerdown Inn** near **Carsington Water** is expanding its car park and reconfiguring the caravan park with a toilet and shower block.

Derby Drinker would like to thank other local newsletters and CAMRA members for these updates, but the usual disclaimer applies to the info provided.

Derbyshire Brewery News

Pentrich Brewery have opened a taproom at their Brewery in Asher Lane Business Park, Ripley. It will be open Friday-Sunday 12-10 featuring 4 cask ales and loads of craft.

Crich Brewery in Belper has successfully applied for extended opening hours at their Tap and it now closes at 8pm. They have also brewed four seasonal ales to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Jedediah Strutt's first cotton spinning mill in Belper and 300 years since Jedediah's birth. The first of these, Pull Your Socks Up Porter, was launched on 13

February. Further brews, all with locally themed names will be North Mill Mild, appropriately in May, Slater the Traitor's American IPA, due in summer, and Belper Best Bitter in autumn. All will be available at the Tap.

The **Alter Ego Brewery** taproom in Alfreton will open on the last Saturday & Sunday of the month from March to September.

Derby Drinker Q&A Meet the Publican - **Alexandra Hotel, Derby**

Ralf Edge,
Alexandra Hotel,
Siddals Road, Derby

How old are you?

- Too old, 41 already... No idea how that happened...

When did you get into pubs?

- I did my school work experience at Burton Bridge Brewery and my parents introduced me to real ale and pubs once I was 18.

What inspired you to follow this line of career?

- Work experience at Burton Bridge with Bruce Wilkinson & Geoff Mumford, enjoying beer and doing something I enjoy. I got a job at the Brunswick from Uni and fell in love with working in pubs.

What is your USP in your pub?

- A proper traditional beer focussed pub with 6-7 rotating guest beers from a variety of strengths and styles. There's plenty of memorabilia to absorb railway or brewery enthusiasts depending if you're in the bar or the lounge.

What do you look for in



selecting beers to showcase at the Alex?

- Tasty beers. It's my sweet shop so quite often I buy what I fancy so I can share it with everyone!

If you weren't a Publican, what profession would you do realistically and as a dream, and why?

- Realistically, probably a chef, cheffing and business studies is what I studied at university.

- Dream profession I've no idea, I love doing what I do...

What do you think CAMRA locally and nationally should focus on?

- Saving pubs, the real ale battle has been well fought and won.

Who is the most inspiring person in your life, personally and professionally? And why?

- Personally Mike Peters (guitarist and front man with The Alarm) great lover of his music and talent. He fought a long battle with cancer but never let it get in the way or control his life. He always gave 120% to everything.

- Professionally, Steve Birkin from The Rowditch Inn Derby, unflappable, welcoming and a really good host.

Tell us something we don't know about you?

- I've met Sooty three times, and seen him live five times.

Anything else you want to add?

- I don't think so these questions have challenged the grey matter enough


Cheers, Ralf

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Ticknall: a Small South Derbyshire Village with a Big Beer Offer

Not many villages can boast of having three pubs, but Ticknall can, and a while back my curiosity was piqued when I read that the Wheel had reopened, serving a selection of Theakston's North Yorkshire beers, including Old Peculier, a truly iconic strong ale.

I caught the no. 2 Arriva bus from Derby bus station and alighted near the **Wheel** just past the entrance to Calke Abbey on Main Street. After looking at the fine, courtyard garden I entered the L-shaped bar with a low, beamed ceiling and contemporary decor. Licensee Jason Billingham has a quartet of Theakston's hand-pulled ales, together with Nowt Peculier, a zero-alcohol bottled beer. No alcohol beers are without doubt increasingly popular. It's a cosy bar, and upstairs is the busy, beamed restaurant offering an extensive menu including salmon fillet at £19, and 7oz prime Derbyshire fillet steak at £33.95. The coffee smelt divine.



Around the corner on High Street, is the tall, Georgian **Staff of Life** run by licensee/owner, Jane. This is a true freehouse which enables it to source beer from any brewery in Britain, and I happened to gatecrash the launch of a Ticknall themed book!



On the bar were Taylor's Landlord and Little (Derby) Taj, and I sat

down in one of the two rooms with quarry-tiled floors. Food is of the home cooked variety and eight en suite rooms include three which have been stylishly fashioned from the former stables. This makes it an attractive proposition if you're needing somewhere to stay before or after an East Midlands Airport flight.

A little further along High Street is the Grade II listed **Chequers**, and it says something for its popularity that a third room has been brought into the public domain by licensee Tony Matthews. The rooms are warmed by open fires and ooze the sort of character one would anticipate from an inn of this antiquity. Amid the hubbub of conversation you can choose from Draught Bass and a couple of changing guests which when I visited were Leatherbritches Purple Rain and Dancing Duck Ay Up. The latter was a very reasonable £4.30. The aforementioned Theakston's Old Peculier is popular in this Good Beer Guide listed pub and frequently features. Colston Crawford, a retired Derby Telegraph journalist who penned the Beer Hunter column for upwards of two decades, is a familiar face in the Chequers, and Colston was Derby Drinker's first editor in 1983.



If you're in the area, you may wish to visit the National Trust property,

Calke Abbey, which attracts around 300,000 people annually. Just outside the estate is Southwood Farm, now home to Tollgate Brewery and the Good Beer Guide listed **Milking Parlour**. This is a clever conversion of the cows' milking shed and full of rustic charm where the stalls have been retained, providing privacy as individual seating areas. A courtyard has extensive seating for fair-weather drinking and the hot summer of 2025 saw the area regularly packed as walkers and cyclists sought out this rural destination. Pizzas are available from Wednesday to Saturday and three or four Tollgate beers are on hand-pull.

Or you could call during their annual **Spring Bank Holiday beer festival from 22-25 May** for even more choice (see advert in this issue).

As an alternative to the Milking Parlour, you can try Tollgate beers at the **Town Street Tap** on the main A6 in Duffield, or at **The Tap at no. 76**, Ashby De La Zouch.



Paul Gibson

BEERS FEST



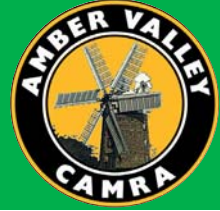
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Amber Valley CAMRA Branch



Derbyshire CAMRA Branches

Derbyshire is covered by a number of different CAMRA Branches not just Derby & Ashbourne but Amber Valley who cover the Alfreton/ Belper/Ripley areas, Erewash who cover the Heanor/Ilkeston Long Eaton areas, Burton who cover the South Derbyshire area and Mansfield who cover the South Normanton area. If you live in any of these areas please give your local Branch some support by attending their meetings and socials, they'd love to see you. Check out their websites or facebook pages for details or see diary dates below:-

Amber Valley

- Tues 26th May** - Branch Meeting - Groovers, Ripley - 8pm.
- 5-7 June** - Belper Goes Green, beer & cider tent run by the Branch.
- 2-5 July** - The Eyes Have It Festival, Duffield, beer & cider tent run by the Branch.
- Sat 1st Aug** - Multiple route survey crawl of Belper and surroundings.

Pub & Cider Pub of the Year 2026

A packed **Dead Poets Inn** at Holbrook greeted Amber Valley CAMRA on Thursday 12th March when their Chairman, Chris Rogers, and several members visited. They were there to present a certificate awarding the **Dead Poets Amber Valley Pub of the Year 2026** and also **Cider Pub of the Year 2026**. The pub had laid on food and, as usual, there were plenty of real ales and ciders to partake of.

The awards were received by hosts Natasha and Andy with Alan Pickersgill from their sister pub, the Brunswick in Derby, looking on



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ST ALBANS 2026

Friday 17 – Sunday 19 April 2026
The Alban Arena, St Albans

Hosted by South Hertfordshire Branch

A SUMPTUOUS DAY OUT ON THE V3

Littleover

Catching the **trentbarton V3** from bay 3 of Derby bus station soon sees one dropped off opposite the **Half Moon**, Burton Road, Littleover, which is open all day, every day. There's a large interior subdivided into different areas with comfy banquette seating in the front rooms. A darts league is a new innovation and TV screens broadcast separate sporting events simultaneously so you won't miss anything here! Indeed, with the World Cup looming, the Half Moon will broadcast every match live from the USA, Canada and Mexico. Atop the big bar servery are handpumps dispensing Draught Bass, Wainwright Amber and Pedigree, which was good when we visited. There's live music every Saturday night and an elevated terrace/garden to the rear. Whilst in Littleover, it's well worth dropping down Shepherd Street to the Good Beer Guide listed **White Swan** run by Brendan Donahue and which always has a good selection of real ales and a notable food offering.

Heatherton

Hopping back onto the hourly V3, alight at the Nuffield Hospital or Aldi for the attractively fronted **Hollybrook Tavern**, part of the Ember Inns chain. A modern, cosy interior includes a gas fire that has a welcoming open fire effect. We found a large beer range including a trio from Sharp's of Cornwall augmented by Fuller's London Pride, Taylor's Landlord, Marston's Pedigree and Draught Bass. The pub majors on food with Wednesday being curry night and Thursday evening sees two steaks for just £23. Juniors are made welcome with a youngsters' menu. Outdoor seating to three elevations offers plenty of scope for alfresco drinking and dining. (Subsequent to this article being written, it's been announced that the Rock Brewery in Cornwall is to close, but Molson Coors may have Sharp's brewed elsewhere.)

Willington

Back aboard the V3, passing Mercia Marina, the biggest of its kind in Europe, and one is in the centre of Willington where three handily positioned pubs await. We called in at the low-slung **Green Man** first where an olde worldle ambience is enhanced by a low, L-shaped beamed ceiling. Landlady, Jane Macmanaman, has reported that trade has been brisk over the last year, adding that it was much better than 2024. Frankly, it's not hard to see why, as chicken, ham hock and leek pie with mashed potato, runner beans and peas were delicious and just £11.30. Beer buffs can enjoy Proper Job and Tribute from St Austell together with Draught Bass and Pedigree. Clearly, Jane is doing all the right things in terms of cellarmanship as the place is Good Beer Guide listed and a wide-ranging (all day) menu has broad appeal. All of this shows that if licensees engage in good, time-honoured practices they can succeed no matter what economic winds are blowing. There is a garden to the rear.

Across the road is a friendly local, the wet-led **Rising Sun** where Marston's Pedigree has been a staple ever since this traditional pub's inclusion in the first Good Beer Guide, way back in 1974. An elongated public bar with darts and a pool table at one end and banquette seating at the other is served by a bar with Union flags. The landlord has a large, friendly St Bernard dog and there's a more intimate, beamed room at a higher level.

Around the corner is **The Dragon**, clearly a composite of adjoining buildings, and run by Bespoke Inns who own a clutch of pubs in south Derbyshire. Their pubs have built a reputation for serving quality food but you're unlikely to be disappointed if you just fancy a pint at The Dragon. We found a brace from Boot Brewery, Blue Monkey Infinity IPA, Pedigree and Lenton Lane Twist and



Half Moon



The Holly Brook



Rising Sun



White Swan



The Green Man



The Dragon

Stout from Nottingham vying for attention. I only had time for one, Twist and Stout, which was excellent. The pub has a stripped back interior and, outside, the garden next to the Trent and Mersey Canal will doubtless be heaving in summer. Tuesday is quiz night.

Repton

Next stop on the V3 is the historic village of Repton that served as the ancient capital of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia. It is renowned for St Wystan's Church with its 8th-century crypt which acted as a royal mausoleum and later a shrine, alongside a 1557 boarding school. It is well worth a walk around the village before you wet your whistle again.

On the pub front there are three different pubs to choose from and one club. The ones closest to the bus stop are the **Boot** & the **Red Lion**. The **Boot** on Boot Hill is located close to the 'Repton Cross' at the centre of the village, this pub has been brought back to life by the local Bespoke pub company with a refurbishment that originally included an on-site microbrewery in a small building at the back of the main pub building. The pub serves different Boot Brewery beers plus guests, and food and accommodation are also catered for.

The nearby **Red Lion** on Burton Road is a traditional friendly local pub that has undergone changes in recent times from a traditional town pub to an open plan bar. The pub usually has four ales on which included Bass, Pedigree, Landlord and Old Peculiar on my visit with live music a feature on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Walking away from the town centre down High Street will bring you to the Repton **British Legion** which is a deceptively large club set back from the main street. It consists of one large room with the bar on the left and has a local friendly atmosphere. Marston's Pedigree is a staple on the bar.

Further down the road is the **Bulls Head**, a quirky cattle themed decor has been used around this

extensively modernised pub in recognition of its early 1800's origins as a slaughterhouse and butchery. The pub attracts a wide age group, and its wood-fired oven pizzas are popular. There is a large eating and drinking area around a central bar and extensive covered gardens at the rear which also cater for diners. 3 Real Ales featured when I called - Pedigree, London Pride and Hophead.

Retracing your steps back down the Hight St to the centre will bring you back to the bus stop. **NOTE** There is another pub in Repton tucked away on Mount Pleasant Road called The Mount Pleasant Inn which is currently undergoing refurbishment.

Newton Solney

The next port of call on the V3 is Newton Solney which is a historic village situated at the junction of the rivers Trent and Dove, with roots tracing back to Anglo-Saxon settlers in the 6th century and is recorded in the 1086 Domesday Book. The village's two pubs are both fairly close to each other.

The **Unicorn Inn** is a popular 19th-century local with a plain but bright and tidy interior which includes an attractive bar area, featuring a wooden bar counter and bar stools, which is linked to a small "lounge" on one side with a separate 21-seater dining room on the other. A separate function/TV room, the Stable Bar, with its own bar counter, has been created in the old stables at the rear where the stall partitions have been retained. Bass and Landlord were on the bar when I popped in.

The **Brickmakers Arms** was bought recently from the Burton Bridge Brewery estate by the Actor, Neil Morrissey's Pub Company. This cosy local is located at the end of an 18th-century terrace of cottages. Internally, it features a narrow central bar with a small room at one end served through a hatch, and an impressive oak panelled room at the other, plus a meeting/club/TV room to the rear. A great selection of different ales has helped the pub



Boot



British Legion



Unicorn Inn



Red Lion



Bulls Head



Brickmakers Arms

become Burton CAMRA's South Derbyshire Pub of the Year 2026. The Thornbridge Imperial Stout 7.7% brewed on the Burton Union system was particularly impressive on my visit.

Burton upon Trent

Back on the V3 again will take you to the outskirts of Burton upon Trent coming first to **The Sump** which is a large imposing detached building overlooking the River Trent, bedecked with hanging baskets and flower troughs in summer. Formerly the Royal Oak but nicknamed the Sump for many years from the hollow/dip by the river where the pub and a former old flour mill are sited. Internally it has a large single room with conservatory. There's outdoor drinking on a patio at the rear, offering fine views overlooking the river which is perfect for sunny days. Mainly food orientated, Pedigree was the only ale on offer when I called.

Catching the V3 from here you have a choice of several options: - either stay on the bus into Burton itself or get off at the stop before the road bridge over the Trent. Here you can walk 14 minutes into Winshill village where the **Anglesey Arms** and **Waterloo** are located or walk 10 minutes towards Stapenhill where the imposing **Elms Inn** looms large.

Staying on the bus takes you over the Burton Bridge dating from 1864 where the appropriately named **Buton Bridge Inn** soon appears on the other side. This 17th-century pub and Burton's oldest running brewery tap is home to Heritage Brewing Company and Burton Bridge Brewery who have been producing ales on site since 1982. It has two rooms served from a central bar. The smaller front room, with wooden pews, displays many awards, brewery memorabilia, and some old, framed maps of Burton. The partly divided back room features oak beams and panels. A small function room and a skittle alley are upstairs and available for hire. There is a decent sized brewery yard garden and private meeting rooms which are available for hire too. Brewery tours are available with prior booking. There are eight ales on the bar from their own range making this a good place to finish off but if you are in the mood for more you can either jump back on the bus or walk into the centre of town.

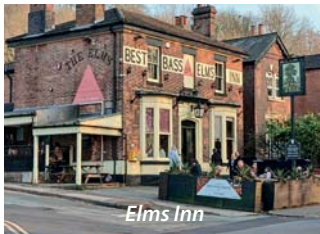
All in all then, the V3 offers a sumptuous day out with plenty to see along the way and a variety of pubs to visit with lots of different ales to enjoy.

The trentbarton V3 is an hourly service from Derby Bus Station with late buses back from Burton on Trent.

Paul Gibson & Gareth Stead



The Sump



Elms Inn



Burton Bridge Inn

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20TH - 24TH MAY 2026

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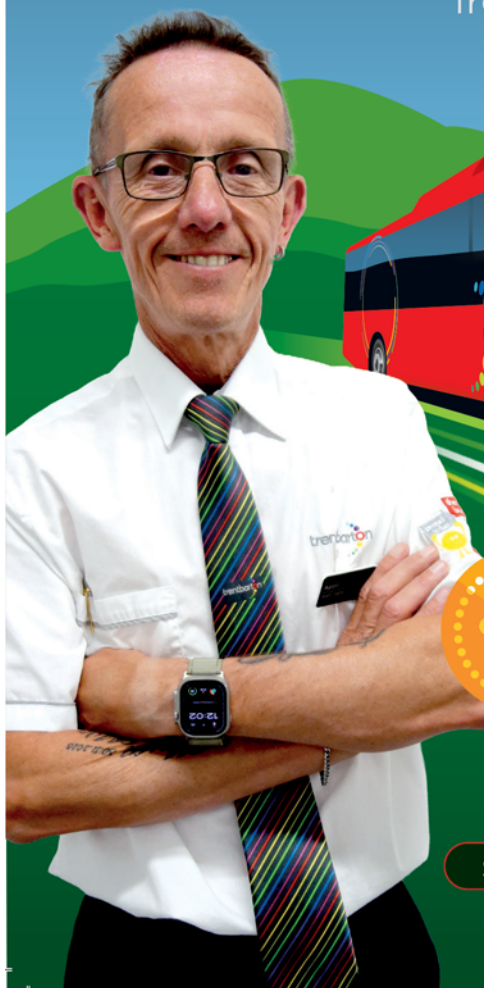
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