



Issue 215  
Jun / July 2026

# DERBY D**rinker**

FREE



Cheers

Covering Most of Derbyshire and Beyond



## Heritage Beer Festival Moves to the Market Hall



## Beer Day Britain



## CAMRA Derbyshire Pub of the Year 2026

Dead Poets Inn - Holbrook



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



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## **DERBY DRINKER INFORMATION**

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Mail to:

**44 Duke St, Derby. DE1 3BX**

E-mail:

**[derbydrinker@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:derbydrinker@derby.camra.org.uk)**

Website: [www.derby.camra.org.uk](http://www.derby.camra.org.uk)

*Design & layout by:* Jam Print  
[www.jamprint.co.uk](http://www.jamprint.co.uk)

*Additional contributors:*

Jok Arguille, Graham Burke, Paul Gibson, Kat Higgins, Chris Perry, Alan Pickersgill, Gareth Stead.

*Additional photographs:*

Graham Burke, Paul Gibson, Kat Higgins, Alan Pickersgill, Gareth Stead.

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**[subs@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:subs@derby.camra.org.uk),**

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

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[www.derby.camra.org.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:pubsofficer@derby.camra.org.uk)**



## Derby CAMRA Branch

### Derby CAMRA Heritage Beer Festival moves to the Market Hall

After 2 years at the Museum of Making Derby Beer Festival is moving into the heart of the City at the historic, re-vamped Market Hall from **14-17 October 2026**.



This will represent a chance for the festival to expand and grow in a larger space inside this magnificent Victorian building with its spectacular barrel-vaulted, cast-iron roof structure which originally opened in 1866 and has operated as a market hall for most of its existence. The event itself will take place in the central trading area where the stillage will be installed containing 100-150 different beers and ciders. The existing traders in the hall will remain open providing a diverse range of stalls including food outlets to compliment the Beer Festival. And music acts will also feature heavily each evening to provide an atmospheric backdrop for this popular event. Plans are still being finalised and full details of entry prices, beers available and bands playing will be announced in due course so keep an eye on the Derby CAMRA Heritage Beer Festival Facebook page or check out the next Derby Drinker for further details.

### Beer Day Britain

Beer Day Britain takes place on 15th June every year and Derby CAMRA will be celebrating this national event at their Pub of the Year, the Brunswick Inn on Railway Terrace in Derby. Come along and raise a glass to celebrate all things related to British beer and pubs from 6.30pm on **Monday 15th June**. Glasses will be raised at 7.00pm.





# Derby CAMRA Branch

## 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](http://camra.org.uk/join) or in person at most CAMRA events, just look at for the CAMRA stand.

## Upcoming Nearby CAMRA Beer Festivals

Now that summer is here there's a few CAMRA supported Beer Festivals coming up with the nearby ones listed below. And remember, if you are a CAMRA member then this year most CAMRA Beer Festivals have free entry.

- Leicester** - 18-20 June – Abbey Pumping Station.
- Stockport** - 18-20 June - Guildhall.
- Rutland** - 26-28 June - Oakham.
- Worcester** - 13-15 Aug - Racecourse.
- Peterboro** - 25-29 Aug - Embankment.

## 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.

- Burton Ale Trail** - 4-7 June - Burton pubs.
- Old Dog** - 11-14 June - Thorpe.
- Dead Poets** - 17-21 June - Holbrook.
- White Hart** - 24-28 June - Bargate.
- Steampacket** - 24-26 July - Swanwick
- RBL Club** - 14-16 Aug - Parwich.

## UK Beer Festival Listings

If you, like me, love attending Beer Festivals then <https://www.beer-festival-calendar.co.uk/> is the site for you with probably the most comprehensive listings of upcoming Beer Festivals in the whole Country. Both CAMRA and non-CAMRA events are included and help you plan ahead for a great day out. You can also upload any Beer Festival that you know about for free and get it listed on the site to help the publicity for the event.

## Derby CAMRA

Website – [www.derby.camra.org.uk](http://www.derby.camra.org.uk)  
Facebook – DerbyCAMRA

**Contacts:-**

- Chairman** – Mark Fletcher [chairman@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:chairman@derby.camra.org.uk)
- Secretary** – Nic Scott [secretary@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:secretary@derby.camra.org.uk)
- Treasurer** – Andrew Norman [treasurer@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@derby.camra.org.uk)
- Membership** – Gillian Hough [membership@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:membership@derby.camra.org.uk)
- Pubs Officer** – Kat Higgins [pubsofficer@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:pubsofficer@derby.camra.org.uk)
- Press & Publicity** – Alan Pickersgill [publicity@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:publicity@derby.camra.org.uk)
- Derby Drinker** – Gareth Stead [derbydrinker@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:derbydrinker@derby.camra.org.uk)
- Socials** – Jamie Williams [socials@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:socials@derby.camra.org.uk)
- LocAle** – [locale@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:locale@derby.camra.org.uk)
- Pub Preservation** – Mark Fletcher [pubpreserve@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:pubpreserve@derby.camra.org.uk)
- Social Media** – Gillian Hough [socialmedia@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:socialmedia@derby.camra.org.uk)
- Young Members Officer** – [YMG@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto: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:

**JUNE**

- Thu 11th** - Branch Meeting - Maypole, Derby - 8pm.
- Sat 27th** - Tamworth Pubs - 11.08am train.

**July**

- Thu 2nd** - Social - The Tannery, Derby - 7.30pm.
- Thu 9th** - Branch Meeting - Babington, Derby - 8pm.

**Contact the Social Secretary, by email - [socials@derby.camra.org.uk](mailto:socials@derby.camra.org.uk)**

*(Check [www.derby.camra.org.uk](http://www.derby.camra.org.uk) for all upcoming events)*

## Derby Beer Girls' Social Gatherings

This is a monthly meeting group for \*all\* women who want to sip and chat together once a month. You don't \*have\* to be a CAMRA Member to come along. You don't have to drink beer (or cider even). You just have to enjoy having some space to meet with other women while supporting the pubs of Derby. We have our own Derby Beer Girls Instagram and Facebook pages. Follow us to see what we are up to and where we've been. Our next few gatherings are listed below:-

**Wed 10th June** at the Creaky Floorboard, Derby.

**Tue 7th July** at the Five Lamps, Derby.

**Tue 18th Aug** at the Hole in the Wall, Mickleover.

All of these socials are from 7.30pm.

## Cheap Bus Travel to the Pub & Beer Festivals

The Government backed National scheme on cheap bus travel will carry on in 2026 but the fare cap has risen to £3 per single bus journey. This is still great for a day out visiting pubs, beer festivals & breweries further afield in different towns and cities. From Derby you can travel to the likes of Chesterfield on the Comet or Leicester on the Skylink or Buxton on the Transpeak to name but a few so why not get out & about and make the most of the scheme while it lasts.



## PARfest Beer Festival '26

Parwich RBL Club\*



Friday 14 & Saturday 15 August

1pm - 11pm

Sunday 16 August 1pm - 6pm

Why not come by Connect Bus  
to book your journey call 01335 342951

Also Camping Available at Foughinside Farm  
Parwich, DE6 1QF - Call 01335 390228

Ashbourne & District CAMRA Branch  
CAMRA Club of Year 2025 for the 5<sup>th</sup> year running  
\* Parwich DE6 1QJ

Featuring Local Ales, Lagers  
Ciders & Cocktail Bar  
Food & Music



Free Entry : Free PARfest Glass



# Ashbourne & District CAMRA Branch

Contact Mark Grist [m.grist2@sky.com](mailto:m.grist2@sky.com)

## Spring Pub of the Season



It's always a nervous time when a new management team take over a pub, but Emily, Hannah and Paula have done an amazing job at the **Queens Vaults**, always a friendly welcome and a great range of beers/styles served in perfect condition. So it was my absolute pleasure to present the Pub of the Season certificate on behalf of the Ashbourne & District CAMRA members. Pub update: new chiller for the cellar installed, so no more warm beer in summer !

## Special Award



It was great to visit Ashbourne's newest pub and to present Andy & Becks with a CAMRA Rising Star certificate, voted for by Ashbourne & District CAMRA members. Their enthusiasm and commitment is clear to see and together with other family members, in just 4 months they have made the **Hug & Heave** a great place to visit. And they managed to get a Mild in May, well done guys !

## Branch Beer Festival

August bank holiday **27th to 29th** and it's festival time again at the Town Hall. Ashbourne CAMRA 10th beer and cider festival planning is well underway, our range of 30 beers will be selected by Leatherbritches brewery, ciders by Kniveton Cider, so you know quality will be top notch. No entertainment to distract you from your drinking. Times and ticket information to follow. Check out our Facebook site.

## Derbyshire Club of the Year

The **RBL club in Parwich** has won the Derbyshire Club of the Year and now goes forward into the East Midlands round of the competition.

## Other News

First week in July, The Red Lion at Kniveton have their annual Cider and Perry festival, not to be missed.

In May, Colin, Stephen and Graham joined the Uttoxeter tasting panel at the Night Inn to score 7 excellent beers, 4 draft and 3 bottled.

**Note from our Chair**, when on holiday always try to seek out those special pubs or beers, while in Ireland I found the Tig Bhric Brewery (Bric's brew pub) on the Dingle peninsula that brewed a very rare cask dark Mild, and an absolutely excellent drink it was too. They also did a superb porter. If you have ever been to Ireland you will know that all beers are keg.

## Branch Diary

(subject to changes)

Branch Meetings - 8pm

Tue 30th June - Shoulder of Mutton, Osmaston.  
Tue 28th July - Okeover Arms, Mapleton - 7.30pm.  
Tue 25th Aug - Royal Oak, Wetton.

# Brewery Historian Publishes Book on “Big Six” Breweries

Local brewery historian, John Arguile has published a book called “The Big Six - The Rise and Fall of the UK Brewing Industry”.

It gives an account of the formation, growth, and demise in the period 1955 to 2025 of the six major UK brewing companies:

Allied Breweries, Bass Charrington, Courage, Scottish & Newcastle, Watney Mann and Whitbread; of the key players involved and the most notable beers, as recalled by employees of those companies. It is well worth a read and has received plaudits from two national brewing sources and was serialised by the Brewery History Society.

You can obtain a copy from [johnarguile@gmail.com](mailto:johnarguile@gmail.com) by sending him an address for delivery and the price of the book £9.90 (+postage and packing if sent by post) - He can also deliver if you live in Derby itself. Payment can be made by bank transfer.



REMEMBER THE PAST • FIGHT FOR YOUR FUTURE

## DERBY'S SILK MILL LOCKOUT PROCESSION & FESTIVAL

FREE ENTRY

📅 **SATURDAY 20TH JUNE 2026**

<span>🎵</span> <b>Live Music</b>	<span>🍽️</span> <b>Food Stalls</b>
<span>👤</span> <b>Community and Union Stalls</b>	<span>🎤</span> <b>Speeches</b>

All trade unions and the people of Derby are invited to join our march and festival - with music, stalls, speeches, and a chaplet-laying for the 1833-34 Silk Mill workers who were locked out for refusing a pay cut and defending their right to unionise.

*SOUND FAMILIAR?*

**10:00 - 11:00**

Assemble at Market Place for march

---

**From 12:00**

Rally, stalls & live music at Cathedral Green

*To get in touch regarding a stall or donations, or with any questions, please contact*  
[fraser.mcguire@unitetheunion.org](mailto:fraser.mcguire@unitetheunion.org)



## The Alexandra Hotel

Just a short walk from Bass' Recreation Ground and close to the railway station, The Alexandra Hotel is a must-visit for dog walkers and real ale fans alike. After a stroll around the rec, the pub's spacious beer garden provides the perfect place to relax, with plenty of room to spread out and enjoy a pint. The garden even features a locomotive cab, adding to the pub's unique railway character. It's a pub which always takes a spot in the Good Beer Guide and has won various CAMRA awards over the years.

Inside, there's a lively main bar alongside a quieter lounge area, giving visitors plenty of choice when they want a chatty atmosphere or somewhere peaceful to unwind. Anna and Ralph have looked after the pub for 15 years and are known for keeping a constantly interesting ale selection, with at least seven real ales on the bar. A standout recent pint was a super IPA from Ticking Clock Brewery.

Freshly made cobs and excellent sausage rolls are always popular, while Ralph's special themed food nights — especially Burns Night — have become local favourites.

### Merry Widows

Perfectly placed for commuters from the train station and locals, The Merry Widows is a welcoming stop just a short stroll from Bass' Recreation Ground. Popular with dog walkers using the nearby park, the pub offers a warm reception for four-legged visitors, making it an ideal place to relax after a riverside wander or a run around the rec.

Inside, the cosy long bar creates a friendly traditional atmosphere, helped along by the jukebox and cheerful staff led by Jo. The pub's location near the train station also makes it a favourite with rail travellers exploring Derby's famous railway triangle — and showing a train ticket earns customers a handy 10% discount.

Real ale is back on the bar at the Merry Widows, with two cask ales now regularly available. Current choices include Blue Bee Five Malt Mild for Mild in May alongside Old Speckled Hen, with Timothy Taylor's Landlord arriving next on the bar.

### Mr Grundy's Tavern

Perfectly placed near Markeaton Park, Mr Grundy's Tavern and Hotel is a fantastic stop for dog walkers, real ale lovers and anyone looking for a relaxed pub atmosphere. After a stroll around the park, muddy paws are warmly welcomed here, with dog treats always on hand and plenty of space for four-legged visitors to settle in comfortably.

The huge beer garden is one of the pub's highlights, offering lots of outdoor seating, including sheltered areas that make it a great spot whatever the weather. Inside, the spacious pub is packed with interesting memorabilia and has a friendly, lively feel.

Real ale fans are well catered for with four cask ales regularly available, including beers from Mr Grundy's own brewery alongside favourites from Black Hole Brewery, Little Eaton Brewery and Abbot Ale. Add in daily food service and wood-fired pizzas from Thursday to Saturday, and it's easy to see why this pub has become such a local favourite.



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

# Flying to Ilkeston!

It takes less than half an hour from bay 9 in Derby Bus Station to travel on modern, frequent trentbarton Ilkeston Flyer buses to South Street, Ilkeston, where a plethora of pubs and bars await.



Alighting in South Street, where better to start than the current Erewash Valley CAMRA Pub of the Year, the **Burnt Pig** on neighbouring Market Street, just two minutes away? Ben Rigby has placed the repurposed corner shop firmly on the East Midlands' real ale map by winning this region's Pub of the Year title last year. And it's not hard to see why with half a dozen constantly changing ales sourced from more than 60 breweries. Three rooms are festooned with brewery memorabilia, including hundreds of beer mats glued to the ceilings, and the welcoming Burnt Pig sells snacks such as scratchings and pork pies.

Close-by on Stanton Road is the **General Havelock**, a nod to the north easterner who played a prominent role in the Indian Rebellion of the late 1850s. A

central bar serves a spacious, stylish interior which includes a snooker room and Art Deco features abound, right down to the Terrazzo floor in the gents! Draught Bass and Adnams Ghost Ship can be enjoyed in the resplendent garden.

Around the corner on Derby Road, is the unassuming **Three Horseshoes**, where a lovely, low beamed lounge is integral to a multi-roomed configuration. A choice of Blue Monkey, Pheasantry and Castle Rock beers vied for attention when I called, and a Freddie Mercury tribute act was due to appear. Large TV screens will also attract punters during the imminent World Cup. A large yard with seating to the rear is a sun-trap.

On South Street itself is the colourful **Spanish Bar**, open all day, every day and privately

owned for upwards of two decades. Dancing Duck DCUK, Doom Bar and local Blue Monkey beers sate the thirst of the many regulars who appreciate the frequent live music. Don't miss the rear patio where floral displays are a joy to behold. Across the road is the two-roomed **Prince of Wales** run by Chris Mason, who was serving Hobgoblin IPA and Wychwood Gold during my visit.

A little further along is the **Crafty One**, established a decade ago. Its glazed frontage makes for a light, airy feel on split levels, and the two cask ales compete with multiple craft keg offerings which include Shiny from Little Eaton. A bottle shop has upwards of 200 world beers and the dog friendly establishment has brewery ephemera adorning the walls.



*Burnt Pig*



*Three Horseshoes*



*Prince of Wales*



*General Havelock*



*Spanish Bar*



*Crafty One*

Past the iconic, old Art Deco cinema is **Hogarth's**, converted eleven years ago from the former Post Office, and boasting a beautifully appointed deep interior. Just one outstanding feature was the intricately carved fascia to the bar servery, upon which hand-pulls dispensed Shipstone's Red Star and Gold Star, a steal at just three quid a pint. These are now brewed at Old Basford as opposed to New Basford where the original **Shipstone's Star brewery** was located (see photo). The room on the right as you enter has deep-buttoned, banquette seating beneath a highly decorative chandelier, and I confess the place was a real surprise!

The Georgian **King's Head**, overlooking the Market Place and St Mary's parish church, has an irregular shaped, re-configured interior, partly stone flagged. The solitary real ale, but welcome nonetheless, was Timothy Taylor's Landlord and a bargain at just £3.40. Photographs of old "Ilson" provide historical interest and there are plenty of games to keep folk entertained. Another Market Place pub is the Good Beer Guide

listed **Observatory**, a former supermarket. Greene King Abbot and their Ruddles Bitter vie for attention with four or more changing guests and all the customary Wetherspoon accoutrements are available. An unexpected delight is the roof terrace reached by a flight of stairs.

Not to be missed is the **Stanton Cask** picked out by ornate upper storey Victorian architecture at the bottom of Bath Street. It's a characterful little pub whose name refers to the Stanton Ironworks which back in the day employed thousands locally. Lenton Lane Cloudburst, Alter Ego Protagonist, Full Mash Warlord and Urban Chicken Gunmetal Buildings Coffee Porter formed an interesting choice of beers. I chose the latter which was nice and I understand that the Stanton Cask's sister pub, the Market Cask, Heanor, is doing brisk business.

Last but certainly not least, is the renowned **Middleton** at the bottom of Station Street, past the retail park, near the new railway station. In 1997 this fine,

little-altered Victorian corner house, then known as the Dew Drop, was crowned CAMRA East Midlands' Pub of the Year and although licensee Danny Meakin has long since left, his excellent *modus operandi* has endured. This includes a regularly changing roster of guest beers complementing staples, Thornbridge Jaipur and the aforementioned Full Mash Warlord. It's rated a maximum three stars on CAMRA's National Inventory of well-preserved interiors and there's a good patio out at the back.

With the **Ilkeston Flyer** running every ten minutes during the daytime, you don't even have to plan your journey, so why not hop on, admire the countryside en-route and visit this old market town? Please check opening times when planning your itinerary.

**Paul Gibson**



Hogarth's



Observatory



Shipstone's brewery



Kings Head



Stanton Cask



Middleton

# Open All Hours

The liberalisation of the licensing laws in 1988 and 2005 was widely welcomed, enabling pubs to extend their opening hours as they pleased. Post-pandemic, however, we've noted a change in drinking habits which has seen some pubs' opening hours contract. Indeed, some close altogether early in the week. Here, in alphabetical order, we look at certain pubs in Derby which open seven days a week and at least ten hours a day.

When Ripley architect, Mike Wood, set about restoring the derelict building which would become known as the **Abbey** in the 1970s, carbon dating showed the roof timbers to be commensurate with the Augustinian Abbey of St Mary De Pratis. It opened as a free house in 1979, winning a national award for its conversion, and four years later North Yorkshire brewery, Sam Smith's, bought the Abbey. Today, you'd be hard pressed to find a more welcoming couple than licensees Martin and Maria, pictured at the Heritage Beer Festival last September. You can find the pub in Darley Street, Darley Abbey, where Old Brewery Bitter is served together with lunchtime and evening meals.

Ralph and Anna Dyson-Edge have run the **Alexandra Hotel**, Siddals Road, since 2010 and their enthusiasm for finding interesting guest ales to complement Castle Rock beers shows no sign of waning. Brewery and railway memorabilia abound in two rooms of this perennially listed Good Beer Guide pub which hosted Derby CAMRA's inaugural meeting in 1974.



The **Babington Arms**, Babington Lane, is no longer a Wetherspoon house and now is in the hands of Dave West and Darren Brett from Reading, who seek to continue its tradition of long opening hours and a broad range of changing real ales, accompanied by tasty food cooked on the premises, in good helpings. It's suggested that it will have large screens broadcasting sporting events, most notably the World Cup.

Food is served until 9:00pm and opening hours are Friday and Saturday 8:00am to 1:00am, Sunday to Thursday 8:00am to 11:00pm. When I called, Front Row and Falstaff breweries were to the fore and my pint cost less than £3. Value for money is key here.

Paul Hurst has owned the **Bell Hotel**, Sadler Gate, since 2013 and it will continue to play an important part in this old street's revival. This 17th century coaching inn with a Brewer's Tudor façade has long been a favourite of those who appreciate all things traditional. Food is served along with changing, well-kept real ales and the pub's website shows evening entertainment events. The refurbished former ballroom towards the back hosts wedding celebrations and parties.



The **Blessington Carriage**, Chapel Street, is open from noon to midnight, serving a trio of real ales including Draught Bass. The "Bless", much extended since opening in 1977, has regular Friday and Saturday night discos, weekly quizzes and a tasty nachos and pizza menu. Perhaps, though, the pub is best known for its fortnightly comedy club on a Monday evening which attracts punters looking for a little levity. Two covered gardens are at the back.

The **Brunswick Inn**, Railway Terrace, has recently been crowned Derby CAMRA Pub of the Year which is unsurprising given the vast choice of real ale and real cider which saw it voted the best cider pub in Derby too. The oldest purpose-built railway pub in existence reopened in 1987 after magnificent restoration by Trevor Harris and the late John Evans following its purchase from Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust. Its reputation extends far beyond Derby.



The **Dolphin Inn**, Queen Street, is Derby's oldest pub with a jettied frontage and a fabulous four-roomed interior positively oozing character. Greene King Abbot, Draught Bass and Pedigree are regularly available with Robinson's of Stockport making an appearance. From 8:30pm on a Sunday there's a general knowledge quiz and there's a music quiz on Tuesday evenings. Live music has been introduced here – see its Facebook page.



The **Exeter Arms**, Exeter Street, has long been a favourite of beer buffs despite brewing ceasing here in 1969 which left Derby bereft of commercial brewing for fully twenty years. It's one of a clutch of pubs run by Martin Roper and Denise Sage, benefitting from offering Dancing Duck beers, Pedigree and a guest or two. Over the years, it's been extended but happily it's lost none of its cosy cottage character and its imaginative culinary offering merely enhances the place's patronage.



The **Five Lamps**, Duffield Road, has Dancing Duck Ay Up, Oakham Citra and Draught Bass complemented by interesting guest ales making it a favoured haunt for many. Craft keg beers are available for those with a penchant for this beer type. The Lamps has comfortable furnishings in a tasteful, contemporary interior and is served by multiple bus services into and out of the city.



The mural paying homage to Derby's history makes the **Golden Eagle** unmissable on Agard Street, and an open plan room has five ales sourced from around the country. DJs Soul Stew and Jinxie host the Record Rendezvous and invite you to bring your own vinyl on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The next one is on 24th June and themed food evenings also attract custom.



**Mr Grundy's**, integral to the Georgian House Hotel, Ashbourne Road, has characterful décor including much wooden wall panelling, and on the bar expect to find Black Hole beers brewed in Little Eaton, and others including Greene King Abbot. There's a lovely garden to the rear and food is served six days a week.



Stevie and Amber Bristowe run the **Iron Ram**, Iron Gate, on behalf of Amber Taverns, who invested £1.4m into the former Wetherspoon pub, the Thomas Leaper. Two real ales, multiple TV screens, shuffle boards, interactive darts and karaoke booths make this an entertainment hub.



**Little Darley**, formerly the Papermill, is opposite the Abbey and can be reached by a well-used riverside walkway from the city. Smartly modernised by Derby Brewing and serving a brace of their beers plus an occasional guest, this is proving to be a popular destination. Fortnightly quizzes feature, good quality snacks are served and food trucks make appearances.



The **Silk Mill**, Full Street, another of Martin Roper's leased pubs, has a similar beer range to the Exeter Arms and the menu can be viewed outside by the front door. The colourful gable end mural depicts the 1833 Silk Mill factory lock-out, beneath which is a sun-trap patio.



The **Smithfield Ale House**, Meadow Road, hasn't looked back since being bought by local Westminster Building Company in 2017. Licensees Ben Miller and Emily Bowler oversaw successive Derby CAMRA Pub of the Year accolades on the back of the riverside pub being akin to a permanent, small beer festival with nine rotating ales and Draught Bass. Adjacent flood prevention work has not affected operating hours.



J D Wetherspoon converted the NatWest bank, Iron Gate, into the **Standing Order** in 1993, immediately winning universal laudation for its lavishly decorated, high ceilinged interior surrounding Derby's only island bar. In recent years, the pub's been extended into the adjacent estate agent's and the cathedral can be viewed from the large patio to the rear. There's no shortage of choice with the customary Wetherspoon accoutrements.

The **Tiger Bar**, next to the refurbished Market Hall in Lock-up Yard off the Cornmarket, was once part of a coaching inn fronting the Cornmarket. In the latter part of the 18th century the Derby Society of

Musicians met here, one of whom was the renowned local artist, Joseph Wright. Today, Bill and Jo Upton serve Dancing Duck DCUK, Landlord and Pedigree in convivial surroundings, whilst the seating outside is a superb summer suntrap. It's a pity more pubs don't follow the Tiger's example by externally displaying their hours. It closes at 8:00pm on Sundays.



The **Victoria Inn**, Midland Place, has enjoyed a revival since John and Emma's arrival, which was acknowledged by Good Beer Guide listing and an award earlier this year from Derby CAMRA. Up to ten real ales, including a few from Leatherbritches, vie for attention with real cider. Bands regularly play in the back room, continuing a fine tradition started by former licensee Micky Sheehan, and beyond this room there's a patio for alfresco drinking (pictured).



The **Victoria and Albert Vaults**, Mackworth Road/Watson Street, is Mark and Bekki's conversion of a former hairdressers which has utilised some bar fittings from local pubs, lending some "lived in" character. Rooms are on two levels and there are three changing real ales in which to indulge.

The **Woodlark**, Bridge Street, is a great survivor in Derby's West End and this friendly local is packed on Rams' match days when they feature on TV. Draught Bass and Dancing Duck are the most likely beers to be seen and food is served.



**Paul Gibson**

**THE STEAMPACKET ANNUAL BEER AND CIDER FESTIVAL**

**Fri 24th - Sun 26th July 2026**

**30 CASK ALES**

**20 TRADITIONAL CIDERS**

**Live entertainment all weekend!**

**Fri 24th 8.30pm Black Top Sliders**

**Sat 25th 8.30pm Groundhog Days**

**Sun 26th 3pm Molly's Lips**

**OUTSIDE BAR**

Food available over the weekend from **Swanwick Network Scouts**

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*PS it's very good ale!*

Contact David Edwards

Tel. 07891 350908

e mail. [dedwards@peakstonesrock.co.uk](mailto:dedwards@peakstonesrock.co.uk)

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**We produce a range of award winning cask beers.**

# 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:-*

Exciting things are happening on Sadler Gate with the opening of two new Brewery Tap rooms. Buxton Brewery have taken over the old Vines place with a bar called **Dukes** and Ashover Brewing Co are opening a bar called **The Tannery** in the old Carnivore steakhouse. Both should be open in June.

The **Babington Arms** on Babington Lane is no longer a Wetherspoons pub and has re-opened under new ownership still serving real ales & food but now with sports screens throughout.

The **Horse & Groom** on Elm Street has been taken over by a new lessee.

The **Friary Hotel** on Friar Gate which was closed by the Stonegate Group may re-open as a jazz bar.

The **Lodge** in **Alvaston** has been refurbished by owners Greene King.

There is still no date yet for the opening of a new venue in **Mickleover** called **The Yard**.

The **Bubble** at **Stenson** has re-opened after refurbishment by Bespoke Inns.

The **Kings Head** in **Duffield** was due to re-open at the end of May after refurbishment.

The **Bull's Head** in **Denby**, which had been closed since August 2024 has now re-opened after receiving a makeover by Star Pubs.

The **Talbot Hotel** in **Belper** closed in April due to retirement but local new owners plan to reopen it in June, most likely as a restaurant.

The owners of Brewed Awakening in **Ripley** opened a new beer/wine/tapas bar in a former candle factory close by. Dating from 1830, it is named the **Candlemaker**.

The **Elements Live Lounge** is a new café bar on Grosvenor Road in **Ripley**; becoming an entertainment venue in the evening, no cask ales reported.

The former Regal Nightclub in **Ripley** has been converted into a bar/diner known as **Mary Lou's Smokehouse & Craft Bar** with craft keg but no cask ales.

The **Hurt Arms** in **Ambergate** has re-opened after being closed since 2023 due to extensive flood damage and real ales are available.



The **Royal Oak** in **Ockbrook** has been sold but will remain as a pub.

A new micropub, the **Looking Glass** has opened on Derby Road in **Long Eaton**.

The **Little John** in **Hathersage** has re-opened after refurbishment.

Star Pubs have plans to upgrade the **Punch Bowl** in **West Hallam** and the **King Alfred** in **Alfreton**.

The **Prospect Street micropub** in **Alfreton** closed at the end of April but may open for occasional events until the premises lease expires.

And finally, in the village of **Findern** which doesn't have a pub since the Wheel Inn closed in 2024, a local café, **Find** has successfully applied for an alcohol license despite objections by locals.

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

# AmberValley 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

**5th-7th June** - Real Ale & Cider tent - Belper Goes Green, Belper Cricket Club.

**Sat 20th June** - Survey trip by minibus.

**2nd-5th July** - Real Ale & Cider tent - The Eyes have it Music Festival, Duffield.

**Tue 28th July** - Branch Meeting - Spanker, Heage - 8pm.

**Sat 1st Aug** - Belper Beer Census.

### Derbyshire Pub of the Year

Our Branch Pub of the Year, the **Dead Poets Inn** in Holbrook has gone on to win the Derbyshire Pub of the Year 2026 and a presentation took place at the beginning of June. It now goes forward into the East Midlands Round of the competition. See separate article on page 18.

## Real Ale & Cider Tents at forthcoming Events

The Branch will be running Real Ale & Cider tents at two forthcoming events and we would love to see you there if you can make it. The first of these is at **Belper Goes Green 5-7 June** at Belper Cricket Club. Weekend tickets from £5.50 or

day tickets are available. This will be followed by **The Eyes Have it Music Festival 2-5 July** in Duffield. As it's a music festival tickets are more expensive but you could come along on the Thursday night for £7.50 but remember to book in advance as it sold out last year.

**Dark Drake** ABV - 4.5%  
Deep, Rich Oatmeal Stout

**Nice Weather** ABV - 4.1%  
Copper Coloured Session Ale

**Ay Up** ABV - 3.9%  
Generously Hopped Pale Ale

**Abduction** ABV - 5.5%  
Exquisite, full flavoured IPA

**dcuk** ABV - 4.3%  
Fashionable Pale Hoppy Ale

**22** ABV - 4.3%  
Beautifully Balanced Best Bitter

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.

We're serious about beer but we're not too serious about anything else!

www.dancingduckbrewery.com



# Here's an update on our major campaign, Handpull Hijack

## Campaign Update

We are thrilled to announce we have secured parliamentary time for a debate and vote on protecting cask ale, thank you to Derby South MP Baggy Shanker for facilitating this.

The debate should take place before the summer recess however in politics things muddy the waters occasionally, leadership challenges, Iran War, etc.

Hopefully this will not delay things too much !



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

RAW PROMOTIONS & GOOD 2 GIG PRESENTS LIVE AT

# THE FLOWERPOT

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6 NICKELBACK UK	<b>OCTOBER</b>
12 FLEETWOOD BAC	1 THE BLUETONES
13 DAVY KNOWLES BAND	2 ALBERT LEE
18 MARK CHADWICK - THE LEVELLERS	3 LAID - JAMES TRIBUTE BAND
19 R.E.M. BY STIPE	8 MARTIN McALOON (PREFAB SPROUT)
20 ULTIMATE COLDPLAY	9 CHANTEL McGREGOR
26 FLASH: A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN	10 ABSOLUTE BOWIE
<b>JULY</b>	16 THE JOHN OTWAY BAND
2 PHIL ODGERS & BOBBY VALENTINO	17 BLONDIED
3 THE FILLERS	23 UPBEAT BEATLES
4 THE DURAN DURAN EXPERIENCE	24 THE ROLLIN' STONED
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	29 JOHN BRAMWELL (I AM KLOOT)
5 FOO FIGHTERS GB	30 FRED ZEPPÉLIN
11 AC/DC UK	31 LOVE DISTRACTION
17 GERRY McAVOY'S BAND OF FRIENDS	<b>NOVEMBER</b>
17 WISHBONE ASH	6 DOM MARTIN
19 ZZ TOPPD	20 THE CHRISTIANS
25 THE BRYAN ADAMS EXPERIENCE	21 NINE BELOW ZERO

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[WWW.SEETICKETS.COM](http://WWW.SEETICKETS.COM) [WWW.GIGANTIC.COM](http://WWW.GIGANTIC.COM)  
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**PHIL "SWILL" ODGERS & BOBBY VALENTINO**  
 FROM THE MEN THEY COULDN'T HANG  
**THE FLOWERPOT, DERBY**  
**THURSDAY 2nd JULY 2026**  
 SEATED/STANDING GIG

If we are successful, and I cannot believe we will not be, cask ale will be protected by law. The process of serving through a hand pull of traditional cask conditioned real ale.

Derby CAMRA will be in Parliament when this happens.

**Alan Pickersgill**  
**Derby CAMRA Campaigns**  
**Coordinator**  
**Derby CAMRA Press Officer.**



*Alan Pickersgill, Kat Higgins,  
Tim Webb,  
Catherine Atkinson MP.*

# Inn Focus: Dead Poets Inn, Chapel Street, Holbrook



The announcement that the Dead Poets has been judged Derbyshire CAMRA Pub of the Year comes on the back of winning the last three Amber Valley Pub of the Year contests. Indeed, back in 2010, it was the Branch's inaugural Pub of the Year, when this most characterful of country haunts was run by Bill and Sue Holmes. Also, it's been almost ever-present in the Good Beer Guide this century

Rewinding to the late 1990s, the then Cross Keys was acquired by David Brown who set about stripping back wall panelling and removing carpets which revealed many of the pub's original features,

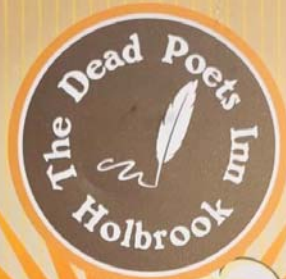
some dating back to 1800. A new, traditional style bar servery was installed upon the stone flagged floor and the original fireplace was brought back into use. The delightful little snug was once a milking parlour for cows.

Today, the pub is owned by Everards brewery and leased by the Brunswick, Derby, with Natasha Kemp as licensee, backed by Andy Kidd When I called in mid-May, Oakham Citra vied for attention with Brass Castle Bad Kitty, Whim Hartington IPA, Thornbridge Quasar, Brunswick Rocket, Everards Old Original, Draught Bass and a couple of craft keg offerings from

Everards. Locally made Three Cats Cider is amongst up to two dozen ciders. Real Ale Finder will enable you to find out what's on the bar.

The former car park is utilised as a seating area making for a large outdoor space in which to enjoy the annual Sausage, Cider and Ale Festival. It's between 17th and 21st June with over 25 ciders and perries and 14 ales, so why not come along and join in the fun? Holbrook is served on Monday to Saturday daytimes by the 71 Derby to Belper bus service and the 138 Belper to Heanor service.

**Paul Gibson**



*Annual Sausage*  
**CIDER & ALE FESTIVAL**

**17th - 21st June 2026**

**25 + CIDERS/PERRIES, PLUS 14 ALES**

**SAUSAGE THEMED SPECIALS  
ON THE MAIN DAYTIME MENU**

**SAUSAGE BBQ WED THRU SAT EVENINGS (5-7PM)**

**CROSSROADS PLAYING FRIDAY 6:30PM - 9:30PM**

**STICKY BONES JONES SAT 8PM - 10PM**

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