Magazine for Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA and Beyond

Beer at Heart

Issue 44 | Winter 2026/27

FREE



The Villagers in Norton Bridge are trying to save The Railway Inn. Read about their campaign and how you could help on page 16

THE

ROYAL OAK

CHURCH EATON



TRADITIONAL ALE, CIDER & HOMECOOKED FOOD

HEART OF STAFFORDSHIRE CAMRA

★ PUB OF THE YEAR 2025 & 2026 ★

FACEBOOK The Royal Oak ◆ **INSTAGRAM** royaloakchurcheaton

Beer at Heart

Covering Stafford • Stone • Eccleshall • Penkridge • Gnosall and beyond

Published Quarterly by
Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA
Circulation: 2,000

Designed & Edited by
Steven Pejica
editor@hos.camra.org.uk

Printed by
DC Print (Yorkshire) Ltd
dcprintyorkshire.co.uk

Views expressed in this magazine are those of the individual authors and not necessarily supported by the editor or CAMRA

To download the pdf version of this issue scan the QR code

Beer at Heart is © CAMRA Heart of Staffordshire Branch

In this issue

Opening Round	4
Pub & Brewery News	6
Summer Pub of the Season	7
Meet the Publican	8
Brewery History Society	10
News from the Potteries	12
Beer Scores & the Good Beer Guide	14
Saving the Railway Inn	16
Branch Pub of the Year 2026	18
51 Years Ago	20
Urban Pub of the Year 2026	23
On the Buses	24
Just for Fun	26
Dry January?	27
Branch Diary	28
Vote for Your Branch Pub of the Year 2027	29

Next Issue
out 1st March 2027

Advertising copy and articles for inclusion to the editor by end of January 2027

editor@hos.camra.org.uk

Thank You

to the advertisers, contributors, distributors & all branch members who helped produce this magazine, without you it would not have happened

CHEERS

Cover Photo: Villagers from Norton Bridge outside The Railway Inn

Opening Round

Read side by side, the responses from the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA), SIBA (the independent brewers' trade body), the British Institute of Innkeeping (BII) and CAMRA to October's budget show a striking amount of agreement. Nobody disputes that the business rates cut, the higher rates threshold, the boost to Small Producer Relief and the guest beer right are real steps forward. Independent brewers in particular have won something they have campaigned for over many years. If the guest beer right is brought in properly, it could change what is on offer in thousands of tied pubs

Almost everyone also agrees on what went wrong. The duty rise will push up the price of a pint just as drinkers are already feeling the pinch. Rising wage costs threaten to cancel out the rates savings for the average pub. And on the big-ticket items, VAT, energy bills and employer National Insurance, there was nothing.

There is common ground on what comes next, too. The BBPA says the expectation to deliver more remains. CAMRA wants the Access to Market Review published and acted on, and the detail of the guest beer right got right. The BII wants VAT brought into line with the rest of Europe. All of them are clear that this Budget should be a first step, not the last word.

For drinkers here in the Heart of Staffordshire, the message is a familiar one: our pubs need us. Prices at the bar may creep up again, but every pint bought in a local pub helps keep it open. And once the guest beer right comes in, it is worth asking your landlord which local beers they plan to put on. The more drinkers ask for them, the stronger the case for independent beer on every bar.

The cavalry may not have arrived this time. But as the industry has made very clear, the campaign to bring it is far from over.

Steven Pejica
chair@hos.camra.org.uk





Hannah, Paul & the team invite you to visit the The Swan Inn at Whiston, CAMRA Award Winning Pub nestled down a country lane near Penkridge and a popular stop off point for CAMRA members, cyclists, walkers and the local farming community.

Whiston, Penkridge, Staffordshire, ST19 5QH
T: 01785 716200
E: bookings@swanwhiston.co.uk
www.swanwhiston.co.uk

- Dedicated Bar
- 5 Real Ales on at all times
- Large selection of traditional Cider's
- Bar Menu & snacks including Cobs, Pork Pies, Sausage Rolls
- Cosy open fire
- Darts, Dominoes, Cards & Pool Table
- Separate Lounge & Restaurant
- Large Beer Garden
- Campervans welcome

PREMIER PUBCO LIMITED

INDEPENDENT WHOLESALE DRINKS COMPANY

ESTABLISHED 2001

ALL MAJOR ON-TRADE PRODUCT GROUPS STOCKED

SAME DAY DELIVERY AVAILABLE SIX DAYS A WEEK

01543 500 933
www.premierpub.co.uk
info@premierpub.co.uk
07713 622 560

FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED

Pub & Brewery News

In Gnosall: ***The Horns*** has been taken over. No reports of real ale as yet.

In Haughton: The bar at ***The Shropshire Inn*** has finally closed.

In Norton Bridge: Fund raising efforts continue to save the ***The Railway***.
See article on page 16

In Stafford: With Terry & Dee moving onto pastures new, ***The Bird in Hand*** is under new management.
Having closed earlier this year, work to change ***The Wagon & Horses*** into, amongst other things, a barbers appears to have been undertaken without the necessary planning in place.
The council Enforcement Consultant has been made aware.
By the time you read this, ***The Pickled Sow*** in what was latterly The Tavern may be open.
The planning application to demolish ***Highfields Social Club*** and build on the site was passed in October
There has been a change of management at ***The Bear***

In Stone: ***The Royal Exchange*** has a new manager.

In Yarnfield: Good news, ***The Labour in Vain***, closed since 2022, has been bought by a village resident and work is underway to refurbish the building and reopen it as a pub.

Congratulations
to Debbie and Steve from The Oxleathers in Stafford who won a Community Hero Award at the PubAid Awards in September

Lymestone BREWERY

Lymestone Brewery
The Old Brewery, Mount Road, Stone, ST15 8LL

lymestonebrewery.net

The brewery celebrated their 18th birthday with a party on the 11th of September.

They run monthly brewery tours, usually on the third friday of the month. Check their socials for details.

Fancy a beer subscription? You can receive a case of beer delivered to your door.

Details at:
lymestonebrewery.net

YOUR pub or brewery news could be on these pages in our next edition new openings, new publicans, new beers, special events, beer festivals
We'd love to spread the word – both here and on our social media

Drop an email to editor@hos.camra.org.uk

The UK's No. 1 beer and pub guide



Recognise the best, with the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2027. The definitive beer drinker's guide for those seeking the best pints in the nation's pubs.

Order your copy now at shop1.camra.org.uk

SCAN ME
ORDER NOW

Meet the Publican

This time we pose our ten questions to Keith Parkes & Matthew Allen who, earlier this year, took over The Pheasant in Stone



What inspired you to run a pub?

The great spectrum of people you get to meet

Why should people come to your pub?

Well, we do serve beer!

What will we find behind the bar to delight our tastebuds?

We offer great cask ale as a main staple along with a zero percent option alongside it. Also, refreshing lager, ciders a range of spirits and wine with soft drinks available as well.

Do you have any regular or occasional events?

We have 2 x darts teams, a dominoes team, BBQ (weather permitting) and fund raisers to benefit the local community

What are the best & worst parts of the job?

Best – no 2 days are the same.
Worst – early morning deliveries

You have some time off – what do you do?

Apart from catching up on sleep we visit local pubs nearby

Any funny moments you can share?

Over the years, too many to mention!

What three words best describe your pub?

Warm Clean Friendly

How could CAMRA (local & national) help support you?

To keep doing what they do promoting real cask ales, real people & running traditional old-school pubs

Tell us you best (or worst) pub joke

A weasel strolls into a bar. The bartender says "Woah, I've never served a weasel before, what would you like" ? "Pop" goes the weasel

The Pheasant Inn
Old Road, Stone ST15 8HS

facebook:
The Pheasant Inn Stone



CAMRA
Heart of Staffordshire

If you run a pub in the Heart of Staffordshire area and would like to take part in a future 'Meet the Publican' feature, please get in touch: webmaster@hos.camra.org.uk

Brewery History Society



Like all good ideas the Brewery History Society (BHS) emerged from a conversation in a pub. In this case, back in 1972, three enthusiasts in Kent wondered about the once familiar historic brewery names that were rapidly dissappearing and they decided to start researching them. Although decades before the internet, word soon got round and membership steadily grew. It now stands at around 450.

Our mission is to research and document British brewery history, making it as widely available as possible. We started life with a simple Newsletter with news and short articles produced on the (dreadful) copiers of the day. This evolved into an A5 Journal with many more articles and was then joined by a more informal Newsletter for shorter articles and society news. These publications have since evolved further with the Journal now quarto in size and full of in-depth research, often PhD theses, whilst the Newsletter is a less formal full colour A4 publication. Examples of both can be seen on the BHS web site and are archived in many national and international collections.

We also publish a range of books, the first being the famous 'Where Have All the Breweries Gone' by Norman Barber and jointly published with CAMRA in 1981 with a number of revised editions over the years, the current iteration being 'Brewers of the British Isles, 1890–2021' with almost 400 pages and entries for over 10,500 breweries. The most recent publications include 'Royal Ales', a directory of Berkshire breweries from 1200 to 2024, another huge volume; 'Chester Ales' with 450 pages.

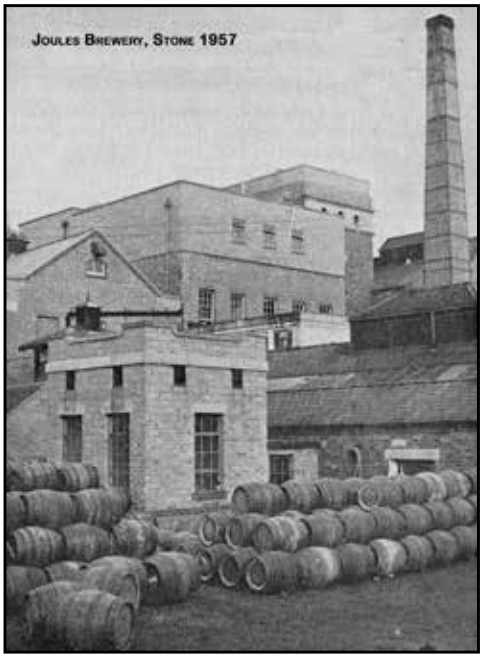
Details of all of these can be seen on the BHS web site. This also hosts a Wiki – Brewerypedia, where you can enter a search term , e.g. Staffs (30 entries) or Staffordshire (279 entries), Stafford (131), Stone (280 – including an article on 'Montgomery's Brewery Company and Bents's Brewery Co. Ltd. of Stone '), or a brewery name, for example. Note that the results will be a simple match so Stone may be the place or a name from elsewhere. Do explore the resources on the website.

continued....

We undertake a number of meetings and visits throughout the year and the website shows those that are planned as well as past ones. These visits often include seeing 'behind the scenes' rather than just the public tour.



We are a very broad church with our membership including people from all walks of life and interests. Most simply have a passion for beer and its history, perhaps through collecting breweriana, but we also have a wide range of historians – of IA, local history and social history – beer has such a wide reach (think just how many soaps have the pub as the hub of the community); academics, beer writers and bloggers, along with many tied to the industry, either currently or in the past. This variety provides a rich seam of articles and memories for sharing.



Membership starts at just £15 for electronic copies of the Journal and Newsletter, or £33 (£30 retired / unwaged) for paper copies in the UK, with additional options for overseas and Corporate members.

Why not explore our web site and our Facebook Group, now with around 10,000 members, and perhaps come and join us. We would love to welcome you to the fold.

Cheers
Jeff Sechiari
BreweryHistory.com

News from the Potteries Branch

Last year we as a branch changed our awards.
Instead of Pub of the Month, we now have awards for Pub of the Season
These are our seasonal award winners for 2026

Winter 2026
Staff of Life, Stoke



Spring 2026
The Furlong, Pittshill



Summer 2026
Post Office Vaults, Burslam



Autumn 2026
Artisan Tap, Hartshill



Beer scores and awards in the Potteries

Scoring real ale and registering that score using the CAMRA website is one of the easiest ways as a CAMRA member you can help out. Members rating the quality of real ale served in pubs and clubs, are helping the branch (in part) to decide which pubs should be included in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide
In the Potteries we mainly rely on members votes, for the pubs they wish to be in the Good Beer Guide, pub of the season, pub of the year etc. To be included pubs must also have an average beer score of 3.3 and above, with at least 5 different scorers. We are thankful to members from branches across the UK who visit and score our beers, in addition to our own local members.

Are you a Moorlands CAMRA member?

We have been made aware of several 'glitches' in the HQ membership database, resulting in a few Moorlands members having their personal contact details registered as being a Potteries member instead of being correctly listed as a Moorlands member. This is particularly the case if you have been a long-standing member before the Staffordshire Moorlands sub-branch was set up in 2013 or are a 'LIFE' member. Your details will be stored as which branch covered your home address at the time of joining, unless you have informed HQ since then.

If you live in the Moorlands area or would prefer to be registered as a Moorlands member, you will need to get in touch with membership services at CAMRA HQ to inform them of your preferences.
This can be important to make sure you receive branch members emails and occasional notifications of meetings, social events and especially when the Moorlands and Potteries branches ask their members to cast votes for such things as Pub of the Year, Club of the Year, or other such voting that takes place from time to time. You can contact CAMRA using the following contact details:
CAMRA, Unit 9 Finway, Dallow Road Luton LU1 1TR
email: camra@camra.org.uk phone: 03301539924

Steve Barton, Chair Staffordshire Moorlands & **Andy Parkin**, Chair Potteries

Are you receiving emails from CAMRA?

If not, you won't receive emails about voting etc. This may be because you opted out when you renewed your membership, which you should be able to fix by going online and unticking a box. But if this doesn't work, or if you didn't opt out, but still don't receive emails, you'll need to call the membership department at CAMRA using the contact details above.

A warning about 'Fresh Ale'

Fresh ale starts life as cask ale but is served pressurised from a keg, often misleadingly using hand pumps. It isn't cask ale because any live yeast has been removed and secondary fermentation stopped.

If the hand pump says something like 'brewery conditioned', it is fresh ale and not cask. Fresh ale cannot be scored on the CAMRA website



CAMRA Potteries

Beer Scores & the Good Beer Guide

For lovers of a decent pint, it's important to be able to find them. CAMRA's Good Beer Guide has been the 'bible' for finding the very best ones since 1974 and continues to be relied upon by tens of thousands of people.

Pubs and clubs that serve really excellent pints, and serve them consistently well, can be potential candidates for the Good Beer Guide.

To help identify them, CAMRA members score their pints whenever they have the opportunity. Their scores help local branches determine candidates for the Guide, and these can change year on year because the standards are high. Competition for a place is stiff because only 4,500 places are available.

We all know when we are drinking a good pint that's been well-kept, and we also know when a pint is very good or excellent – who cannot resist telling everyone else about it! And likewise, a pint that is simply OK or, hopefully not often, undrinkable.

So, to make things easier for everyone, a new intuitive ratings system is being introduced, which is more descriptive of the beer being drunk.

Each of the new ratings has a description and a likely reaction to help you pin down the most appropriate rating.

Ratings can be recorded on CAMRA's online pub guide **camra.org.uk/pubs** by all CAMRA members so start rating your beer now.

Rating	Description	Your Reaction
Excellent	Exceptional & clear (if intended to be)with fantastic aromas and ideal carbonation	Superb! You tell your friends and compliment the cellar manager
Very Good	Satisfying and well-kept with a great appearance, good carbonation and enticing aromas & flavours	You consider having another & may cancel plans to move to another pub
Good	Nice appearance, good carbonation, aromas & flavour	Pleasant but not memorable. You're happy to have another but may consider something else
Acceptable	Unremarkable & ordinary, with no noteworthy characteristics	You're unlikely to have another unless it is all there is & there isn't another pub to go to
Poor	Noticeably imperfect	Drinkable with resentment, but you politely ask for a replacement
Undrinkable	Unpleasant to drink, likely with a disgusting taste, incorrect appearance & off/foul aroma	You politely ask for it to be replaced & consider asking the publican to take it off

SCORE YOUR BEER

CAMRA members: swipe to see how easy it is!

CAMRA

STEP 1: FIND THE PUB



Go to **camra.org.uk/pubs** and find the pub or club page

You can score from the pub, or later if that's more convenient for you

CAMRA

STEP 2: CLICK TO SCORE



Click 'Beer Score'

(on a desktop, it looks like this!)



CAMRA

STEP 3: PICK YOUR RATING



Decide which rating best fits the **quality** of your beer

(There's descriptions and reactions to help you choose)

You can also add the price of your drink

CAMRA

STEP 4: SUBMIT

You're all done!

You just helped:

- Select pubs for the Good Beer Guide
- Update our beer and pub data
- Other beer lovers find pubs and brewers

CAMRA

NOT A CAMRA MEMBER?

Join today and you can score your beers too!

camra.org.uk/join

CAMRA

Saving The Railway Inn



The Railway Inn in the 1990s

The Railway Inn at Norton Bridge closed in January 2025 and has stood empty since then and is sadly deteriorating.

The Railway Inn Community Pub Limited was formed to save this much loved, but little altered gem of a pub and turn it into a space that has something for everyone to enjoy. We plan a community pub with a tearoom, meeting rooms and outdoor community space.

We think that the pub is the oldest railway pub in Staffordshire and therefore an important part of Staffordshire's railway heritage. It certainly has an interesting history, being part 18th century farmhouse with a later Victorian frontage added, and it retains its original features.



The Railway Inn c1900

The front bar will be themed to reflect its railway heritage and the back bar to acknowledge Izaak Walton, the famous fisherman, whose cottage is nearby. We plan wildflower areas, and a community garden/orchard on a nearby field.

We are seeking to raise £275,000, mainly through selling shares in the pub. Each share costs £1, with a minimum purchase of 250. Buying shares entitles you to vote at the AGM of the company and enables shareholders to stand for the management committee and to vote to elect the management committee.
Tax relief is available on share purchases and higher values of shares attract rewards once the pub is purchased.

For details of how to purchase shares and for more details of our plans, see our website **www.railwayinn.org** or email on **contact@railwayinn.org**

Don't want to buy shares? You can donate to our **GoFundMe** me page

gofundme

Sue Wardle

Chair
Railway Inn Community Pub Limited

Be part of the CAMRA story

Real ale is just the start...

Our story is your story.
So join us in supporting everything from pubs and drinkers rights, to licensees and breweries, uniting us in the story we all love.

To thank you for being a hero in our story, you receive great membership benefits, such as **£30 of beer vouchers, quarterly BEER magazine,** access to the online news platform What's Brewing, **partner benefits and discounts...** just a few perks of joining us.

Join the CAMRA story
camra.org.uk/join

CAMRA



Real stories, real people, real ale

Branch Pub of the Year 2026

This year, for the second year running, the Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA pub of the year was The Royal Oak, Church Eaton

There is a particular happiness in walking into an English village pub and finding it exactly as it ought to be, and The Royal Oak supplies it in abundance. Listed in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, it offers real ales, traditional cider, keg beers and enough wines and spirits to occupy a diligent person for several winters.

The food is hearty and homecooked, built to fortify against the British climate, and now and then a street food vendor rolls up to add a note of the exotic. No one leaves hungry, thirsty or disappointed.

It very nearly didn't survive. Threatened with closure, the pub was rescued by a village consortium that refused to let it go without a fight, with the quiet determination the English reserve for queues, cricket and beer. Licensee Adam Caton and his partner Karly Davies took over in the summer of 2024 and have poured an alarming amount of energy into making it what every village pub should be: the beating heart of its community.

Here, "pub life" means a good deal more than pulling pints. The Oak is home base for committees, groups and sports teams, and for the countless lively conversations that make a pub feel like a second living room, only with better beer and someone else doing the washing-up. It also raises thousands of pounds for charity every year. The crowning glory is Oakfest, an annual music festival held each August, which brings together two of life's great universal joys, music and beer.



The Royal Oak, Church Eaton



High Street
Church Eaton ST20 0AJ

tel: 01785 823078

royaloakchurcheaton.co.uk

facebook: The Royal Oak

instagram: royaloakchurcheaton

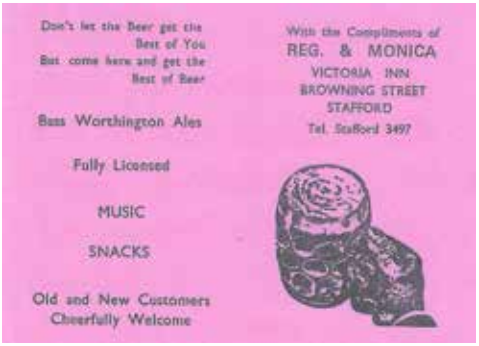






51 years ago

Paul Mudge remembers Stafford and Stone CAMRA during winter 1975–'76

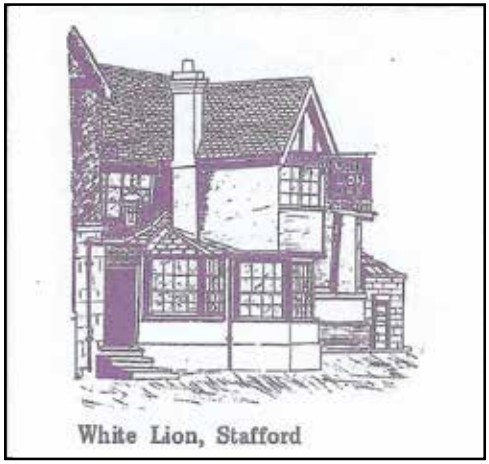


By early December 1975 Stafford and Stone CAMRA Branch were publicising their Xmas Dinner & Party to be held on Thursday 11th in the Lounge of the Victoria (now the House of Bread charity's Café 43) on Stafford's Browning Street which had been taken on that year by Reg and Monica Ainsworth. The Food at 7.15pm was an "Xmas Fare Buffet (soup, turkey etc, mince pies, plum pud)" at "not more than £1.50 (½ price of anywhere else)" and then the Party was "free & open to all from 8.30pm, including Xmas Quiz". A good time was had by all. The Victoria's cask beers then were M&B Mild at 20p, M&B Springfield Bitter at 21p and Bass at 22p a pint.

A week later, Thursday 18th December, was a Social for "Last Respects to pubs due to close on 1st January for [the] ring road development", the Queensway dual carriageway. They were the White Lion on Lichfield Road, at 8pm, and the Unicorn on Lammascote Road, from 9.15. In the new year Gordon and Joyce Eccles moved from the White Lion to the Chains (now the Market Vaults) and Brian and Pauline Deakin moved from the Unicorn to the Sun. The historic


UNICORN, STAFFORD

timber framed White Lion was carefully dismantled although its promised rebuilding elsewhere never happened.


White Lion, Stafford

January 1976 was a relatively quiet month for the Branch with – all in Stafford at 8pm on Thursdays – a social at the Chains on 8th for "the 'opening night' under the new landlord",

continued...

the usual Campaign Meeting at the Railway in Castle Street on 15th and a Swop Shop Night on 29th. The "exchange & barter of beer mats, bottles & all other real ale mementoes" was at the Dog and Partridge in South Walls (now a dental surgery) which had been taken on the previous year by Roy "Rastas" Bates from Rugeley who stayed there until 1979.

February 1976 started with a Rural Pub Crawl, lifts leaving Stafford's Railway Inn at 7.45pm prompt on Thursday 5th. Neither the Wem Brewery beers in the Royal Oak at Church Eaton nor the cask conditioned Marstons in the Rising Sun at Bromstead were available in Stafford and so a couple of pints in each pub meant not venturing any further.

The Campaign Meeting at 8.30 prompt on the next Thursday was the "last chance to decide branch policy for [the] national AGM" which was held in Brighton at the end of February. The fifth of thirty motions on the Agenda was Stafford and Stone's "That CAMRA branches be urged to adopt, wherever practical, local pub contact schemes. In such a scheme each participating CAMRA member would be given individual responsibility for furthering CAMRA's aims in a small number of specified pubs". It was one of nineteen motions carried at CAMRA's fifth national AGM which declared that "CAMRA is now the consumers' organisation for all people who go into pubs" (a similar proposal eight years ago derailed the Revitalisation Project).

CAMRA Meets Folk was a special Thursday evening on 19th February, a "Joint Social with FALCON FOLK CLUB at the best possible venue : ANCHOR, High Offley" and a "joint sing-song and booze-up" at what the 1975 Good Beer Guide rightly described as a "superb basic canal-side pub". A good time was again had by all. The Anchor is thankfully Unspoilt by Progress and since then has hosted many joint Stafford and Wolverhampton Branch socials on the Sunday lunchtime before Christmas (with carol singing but not Wolverhampton members in recent years and scheduled for 20th December this year). The Folk Club was based at the Falcon on Stafford's Foregate Street, then a Bass Charrington pub, which suffered three changes of name under various ownerships before closing about twenty years ago.


CAMRA MEETS FOLK
In the deep midwinter at the Anchor, High Offley.
Thursday 19th February.
Choice of ales served direct from the barrel, and music by the Falcon Folk Club.
COACH LEAVES STAFFORD BUS STATION AT 7.30p.m. prompt.
Ticket No 36... Cost 40p


THE ANCHOR INN, HIGH OFFLEY

To ensure the continued production of this magazine

we are looking for

A D V E R T I S E R S



available on-line and in pubs and clubs all over the heart of staffordshire branch area and beyond

- with adverts costing as little as £40 -

what better way to reach your target audience?

contact editor@hos.camra.org.uk for more info

Urban pub of the year 2026



A warm, welcoming pub, the Pickled Pig is a worthy winner of our Urban Pub of the Year Award for 2026.

Since opening in April 2025, the Pickled Pig has built a strong reputation for its real ale, with a great range of rotating guest ales, complemented by a good selection of wines, spirits and soft drinks.

Salter Street
Stafford ST20 0AJ

tel: 01785 560446

pickledpigstafford.co.uk

email:
piginntaverns@gmail.com

facebook:
The Pickled Pig At The Bank House

You enter through the central doorway with a well appointed room either side, the bar is to the left with another comfy room to the right where, on a Friday, evening you will usually be entertained by live music from around 6:30pm.

For those with a pang or two of hunger, freshly made pizzas are on offer along with baps, pork pies and scotch eggs, not forgetting the free cheese board on a Sunday afternoon.

All in all, when opening the pub with the idea of running the sort of place they'd actually want to drink in, Scott and Sara Morgan appear to have created somewhere the pub goers of Stafford want to drink in too.

CAMRA
Heart of Staffordshire

The Pickled Pig, Stafford

On the Buses: 841

Back on the 841 (other buses are available – ed) Paul Dykta takes us on a trip to Uttoxeter

Hi Folks, where ya bin?

Today it was straight to Uttoxeter, with no stops on the way. On arrival we headed to our first port of call, 'SHOE ZONE'– I wondered why Hilly was so keen! With the shoes in the bag, we went to the Uttoxeter Brewery tap, the Night Inn.



We found three ales on the four pumps: two of their own, Uxonian Pale Ale and Bartley Bitter, and a third, Sinbin from Front Row. We both went for the Bartley, which was pretty average.



Time for lunch, so over the road to Spoons, aka the Old Swan.

Not everyone likes Wetherspoons pubs, but you know what? They deliver good quality cask ale at a good price, and if you want feeding, you know what to expect. That said, the meal we had here was one of the best I've eaten in any Spoons, and the beer, Milky Way from Black Hole Brewery, was excellent.

Hunger sated, we walked up to the Uttoxeter Brewery. By now it was warming up, so a seat outside seemed right to sample their own pale ale and gold, served by Tom, one of the brewers. He's a nice gentleman I remember well for the help he and the other staff (sorry, names elude me) always gave us at our beer festivals.

On to our last pub of the day, the Horse and Dove, and another seat



continued...

in the open air to drink a fine pint of Coffee Porter from North Riding Brewery. As this is my preferred style of ale, it only just pipped Milky Way at Spoons as beer of the day.

Folks, I've just stopped at my daughter's in Warwick, so look out in a future edition or on the website for a social trip to said town. Remember, you don't have to be a member to come along.

Cheers for now
Paul D

Check the CAMRA website for pub opening times as well as bus timetables as they can both change according to the day

If you have a favourite jaunt on public transport and would like to share it in a future issue, please get in touch by email to editor@hos.camra.org.uk

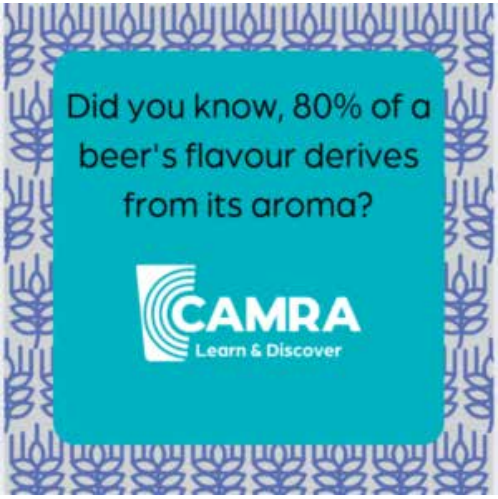
The Red Lion
Great Chatwell
17th Century country pub offering quality cask ales and traditional pub grub set in the South Staffs countryside



email: redlionfreehouse@gmail.com
facebook: thelionroarsagain
Bun Lane, Great Chatwell TF10 9BJ

CAMRA
Heart of Staffordshire





Just for Fun

Answers at the foot of P28

Wot 3 words lead you to a Heart of Staffordshire watering hole ?

A: doddle unto bag

B: blur cob sketch

C: sly ales mower

Can you name this pub from the sign alone?



It was a pub but now it's a Pub no More – can you name it?



Solve these cryptic pubs

A: Preserved drunk's ham (8,3)

B: Where one might back a runner and drink to the chase? (9,3)

C: Underground chambers where shares might rise? (6,6)

A termite walks into a bar and asks, "Is the bartender here?"

It's funny how my wife waits for me in the kitchen all night till I come back from the pub just to ask me what time it is

People who have a 'local' rate themselves as significantly happier, and have more close friends



Let's talk about it at the pub. www.camra.org.uk/wellbeing

CAMRA

Dry January? Go down the pub

January. The month when everyone decides to become a monk. Your mates who spent December downing pints like Viking raiders are now sipping herbal tea and saying "detox" with a straight face. Meanwhile it's dark by four, payday is a distant rumour, and the highlight of your week is bin day.

Which is precisely why you should go to the pub.

Consider the alternative: an evening at home with a salad you're pretending to enjoy, scrolling through other people's holiday photos. That isn't self-improvement, it's a hostage situation with lettuce. The pub, on the other hand, is warm, friendly, and the only place you can have a good moan about life with people who genuinely understand. An hour of proper conversation will do more for your January blues than any app promising mindfulness.

And if you've made resolutions, relax. Today's pub has more alcohol-free options than a yoga retreat: low and no beers, decent soft drinks, proper food. You can keep your halo polished and still enjoy a night out. It was never about excess. It's about company.

Better still, your local will be delighted to see you. January is brutal for pubs, so every pint, pie or posh lemonade helps keep the doors open for when you need them next December.

So grab your coat, ignore the drizzle and head down to your local. You'll be supporting a vital part of your community, lifting your spirits, and starting the year on a positive, sociable note.



Branch Diary

Friday 11 December 2026
Branch Xmas meal & drinks

Sunday 20 December 2026
Carols at the Anchor Inn, High Offley
Join us for an afternoon of carols

Wednesday 20 January 2027
Branch meeting & social
Venue TBC

Wednesday 17 February 2027
Branch meeting & social
Venue TBC

Visit our website *hos.camra.org.uk* for up to date events information

A **BIG** thank you to the following for hosting our recent branch meetings:

In August
The Swan Inn, Whiston

In September
The Pheasant, Stone

In October
George & the Dragon, Gnosall

If you would like to host a future branch meeting & have a quiet space to accommodate a dozen or more real ale drinkers, please get in touch

CAMRA
Heart of Staffordshire

The Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA branch continues to offer a varied programme of social activities for the real ale community. These events give beer enthusiasts the opportunity to meet outside formal branch meetings, connect with new people and build lasting friendships.

Activities typically include **pub socials, brewery visits, beer festivals and organised trips**. They provide a relaxed way to meet fellow members while supporting pubs and breweries across the country. Details are shared through our monthly newsletter, which is sent to all members, as well as on Facebook and the Heart of Staffordshire website. We are also exploring other digital channels.

These events are a great opportunity to socialise, discover different venues and enjoy the local pub and real ale scene in Staffordshire and further afield.
I am new to the branch social role this year and am keen to develop ideas that will encourage more people to attend, meet like-minded members and get involved, so suggestions for future activities are very welcome.

I am happy to be contacted at ***paulhewitt@hos.camra.org.uk***

Cheers
Paul Hewitt
Social Secretary

Just for Fun Answers:
A: Dog and Doublet (Sandon) B: Butchers Block (Stone) C: Wolseley Arms (Wolseley Bridge)
Pub No More: Crown Inn (Yarlet) Pub Sign: Fitzherbert Arms (Swynnerton)
Cryptic Pubs: A: Pickled Pig (Stafford) B: Geyhound Inn (Stafford) C: Market Vaults (Stafford)

Vote for branch pub of the year 2027

Heart of Staffordshire CAMRA members are invited to vote for our branch pubs of the year

Every year we award prizes to the best pubs in our branch area in two categories: Urban and Rural.

The first stage is to invite our members to vote for their favourites – you can vote for up to five pubs.

If you vote for five pubs, your first choice will be awarded five points, your second four points and so on down to your fifth choice which will score one point. If you vote for only one pub, it will be awarded one point.

When voting please state the town or village where the pub is located, or your vote may not count.

Once the votes are counted judges will be appointed to visit and assess the six finalists (the top three from the Urban and Rural categories).

The outcome will be an Urban and a Rural Pub of the Year (PotY); the highest scorer will be our overall PotY and enter into the competition to find the Staffordshire PotY.

Any member can volunteer to be a judge but note you must undertake to visit all six pubs (to ensure consistency) or your judging will not count.

The branch committee would encourage **ALL** branch members to vote.

My choice for Pub of the Year:

1st _____

2nd _____

3rd _____

4th _____

5th _____

Name _____

Membership No _____

I would like to be a judge Y / N

If you would like to be a judge please provide a contact email:

_____

How to Vote

Take a photo of the filled in form & email it to secretary@hos.camra.org.uk with a subject of POTY 2027

or, **Vote OnLine**

tinyurl.com/HoSPotY

Deadline for Entries
31 December 2026

Beer at Heart

Covering Stafford • Stone • Eccleshall • Penkridge • Gnosall and beyond

CAMRA
Heart of Staffordshire

Branch Chair
Steven Pejica
chair@hos.camra.org.uk

Secretary
Andy Bevington
secretary@hos.camra.org.uk

Membership
Kavan Wilkinson
members@hos.camra.org.uk

Keep in Touch

We endeavour to contact all our members regularly via email with details of what's happening in our branch area.
If you aren't receiving these emails and would like to, please update your details via the camra website or contact our branch secretary

Socialise with us

Facebook
CAMRA Heart of Staffordshire

Instagram
heart_of_staffs_camra

Got an idea for a social event?
contact Paul Hewitt
social@hos.camra.org.uk

For up to date news and events visit hos.camra.org.uk

Advertising Rates

Full Page (A5) £120 / Half Page £70 / Quarter Page £40
Discounts for 4 issues (paid in advance)
Advertising copy and articles for inclusion in the next issue to the editor by end of January 2027

editor@hos.camra.org.uk

Last orders

Always remember

"A pub is not just for Christmas"

Stay connected with CAMRA

WHAT'S BREWING

Our dynamic online news platform is updated daily with stories from the pub & brewing industries, Campaign news & opinion pieces



wb.camra.org.uk





Tune in via Spotify or Apple Podcasts for great chat about pubs, clubs, beer and cider

camra.org.uk/podcast

BEER

Our colourful quarterly magazine is full of interesting features from the biggest voices in the trade



Available in print and online



MICRO PUB

THE STAG & SCOTCH

FIND YOUR HERD AT THE BAR

5	2	9
REAL ALES	TRAD CIDERS	KEG BEERS

Settle into one of our intimate booths and savour our finest hand pulled cask ales, great wines, craft and keg beers, premium spirits and soft drinks in a traditional atmosphere.

No gaming machines, no loud music, no telephones, just good old fashioned conversation, laughs and interaction with friends, both new, old and yet to be met!



← WE'RE IN IT! CAMRA

71 HIGH STREET, NEWPORT, SHROPSHIRE

WWW.THESTAGANDSCOTCH.CO.UK

SCAN TO VISIT WEBSITE