

# Ullage

ONLINE ONLY EDITION

THE MAGAZINE OF WEST BERKSHIRE CAMRA

WINTER 2021-22

[www.westberkscamra.org.uk](http://www.westberkscamra.org.uk)



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## Good Beer Guide 2022 at The Lion, Newbury

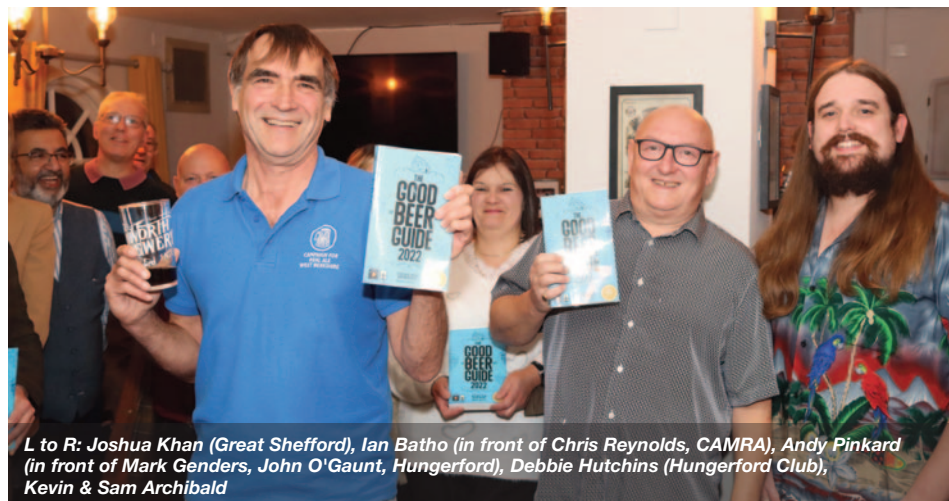


Photo: Richard Lock

L to R: Joshua Khan (Great Shefford), Ian Batho (in front of Chris Reynolds, CAMRA), Andy Pinkard (in front of Mark Genders, John O'Gaunt, Hungerford), Debbie Hutchins (Hungerford Club), Kevin & Sam Archibald

Publicans and CAMRA members received a warm welcome at The Lion in West Street for CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2022 launch event on Monday 22 November, 2021.

Kevin Archibald has run the Wadworth pub with his son, Sam, since October 2019. In previous roles at other Newbury pubs, Kevin worked with Warwick Heskins (Catherine Wheel) and Joshua Khan (King Charles Tavern) who both also attended, with their pubs in the Guide. Grace Webber, the new manager at the King Charles Tavern, was also present.

Hugh Macaulay (Bell Inn, Aldworth) and Dave Higgins (Wheatsheaf, Thatcham) were unable to attend but their pubs are featured on pages 2 and 4 inside. The Bell has been in every Guide since 1979 while the Wheatsheaf's only previous appearance was in 2000.

In a brief speech, Andy Pinkard, West Berkshire CAMRA's Chair, mentioned that it was a pleasure to hold the event in a pub again as last year the Good Beer Guide packs for publicans could only be delivered individually. Andy explained that publication of the Guide had been

intentionally delayed this year in order to give more time for CAMRA members.

Andy said 'It is fantastic to see how pubs in West Berkshire have come through the hiatus and how they have pivoted their offer to survive. If you're looking for the best cask conditioned ales then the pubs listed in the Guide are the places to go to.'

The Good Beer Guide is the UK's best-selling beer and pub guide. The 49th edition features over 4,500 pubs, split into counties, and a comprehensive brewery section with beer details. It includes a foreword by James Blunt, the singer-songwriter and Chelsea pub owner.

The GBG can be purchased from bookshops for £15.99. There is a £2 discount for members who login and purchase via [CAMRA shop](https://www.camra.org.uk/shop).



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Photo: Zoë Andrews



## Bucklebury Brewery



Ray Herbert & Steve Harris 20/11/2021

Steve Harris and Ray Herbert talked about Bucklebury Brewery at an event organised by Ian Batho at Newbury's Cow & in November.

The brewery was set up in April 2020 and initially supplied beer in kegs to the Cottage Inn, Upper Bucklebury. Bottled beers were first produced for Christmas 2020 and are now on sale in five local outlets including Cook & Butcher, Thatcham. Casks were introduced for the Newbury Real Ale Festival in September 2021.



Photo: Bucklebury Brewery

Ticket holders enjoyed sampling the brewery's core range of Bucklebury Best, Gold, Black and Harvest and then two new beers on trial.

See the [Local Breweries](#) News feature posted on our website for more details and photos.



## Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the seventh online only issue of *Ullage*. We are looking at going back into print with the Spring 2022 issue – watch this space!

Guest contributors to this issue include new editors of two local branch magazines – see below. Please contact me if you would be interesting in becoming the new editor of *Ullage*, as this position is available and full support is offered to anyone willing to take on this rewarding role.

Thanks to the talented Matt and Zoe for allowing *Ullage* to feature extracts from their articles about Green Shed Cider and Reading's Village in the Town (pages 5 and 7).

Thanks to regular contributor Alan Haselden who has contributed an illustrated account of an ale trail from Hampstead to the river Thames following the course of the (submerged) river Fleet (page 6).

Recently published CAMRA books are featured on pages 5 and 7 and would make ideal Christmas presents for cider or beer lovers.

Our regular columnists have both recently noticed the phenomenon of pubs turning grey (page 9).

To provide easy navigation to online information, blue text is used to indicate weblinks.

Enjoy reading *Ullage* and please encourage friends and colleagues to do the same. Cheers!

Tim Thomas [editor@westberks.camra.org.uk](mailto:editor@westberks.camra.org.uk)

## Guest Contributors

**Matthew Rogers** became editor of *CAMRA*

*Angle*, the Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead branch magazine in March 2020. Matt also designs, illustrates and writes for the magazine. Recently, he has been nominated for the Adnams Award for Best Beer Writer (Regional Media) and the Fuller, Smith & Turner Award for Best Young Beer Writer in The British Guild of Beer Writers Annual Awards 2021.



**Zoë Andrews** took over from Phil Gill as editor of Reading & Mid Berkshire *CAMRA's*

*Mine's a Pint* magazine from the Spring 2020 issue. Her [Zoëonpop](#) blog includes writing on beer, music and popular culture. She enjoys travel and photography and recently joined [The British Guild of Beer Writers](#).

December events at the **White Hart**, Hamstead Marshall, include a Christmas Quiz (Thursday 2/12) and Carols with Kintbury's Opus 2 Choir (Wednesday 15/12). Saviour ales are brewed on site. Members of the [Saviour Pennies Club](#) can book a free lift home in advance when dining on a Friday or Saturday evening (10 miles limit).



## Swift halves

■ **Ramsbury Brewery** is situated on Stock Lane, north west of Ramsbury and south west of Aldbourne.



Ramsbury 506, a blonde beer, was first brewed as a tribute to the American 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, who were accommodated in Ramsbury and nearby villages during 1943, in preparation for D-Day.

On 17 September, the anniversary of Operation Market Garden, there was a celebration in the brewery beer garden to mark the rebranding of the beer in partnership with the [Night Fright C-47 Restoration](#).



The Ramsbury Estates website includes Pub of the Week reviews featuring outlets for Ramsbury beer and spirits. The following local pubs can be found in the [News & Events](#) webpages:

The Pheasant, Shefford Woodlands 26/8/2021;  
The Queen's Arms, East Garston 18/6/2021;  
Three Swans, Hungerford 4/6/2021;  
The Royal Oak, Yattendon 28/5/2021;  
The Dundas Arms, Kintbury 7/5/2021;  
The Jack Russell, Facombe 23/4/2021;  
Ramsbury Brewery beer garden 19/4/2021



Photo: Alan Haselden

■ **60 Minutes**, an award winning CBS News programme featured 'England's pubs look for post-pandemic rally' on 17 October. Presenter Jon Wertheim spoke to comedian Al Murray, beer writer Pete Brown and Heather and Hugh Macaulay at the **Bell Inn** 'a pub resistant to time ... in the oh-so-English village of Aldworth in Berkshire'. To see the transcript and photos visit [60 Minutes](#).

■ The [newburypubwalks.org.uk](http://newburypubwalks.org.uk) website has details of over 30 circular walks from pubs near Newbury including linear walks from pubs on the Kennet and Avon canal.



Photos: West Berkshire Brewery

■ **Yule Fuel** is a seasonal special from **West Berkshire Brewery** (WBB) available on draught and in 440ml cans and 500ml bottles. Tasting notes for the deep amber 4.5% ABV Winter Ale mention 'subtle chocolate character alongside blackcurrant, fig and molasses'. Food matching suggestions include blue cheese and fruit cake.

There will be a Christmas Market at the



Yattendon brewery on the first three Sundays in December. View the [online Events calendar](#) for more details and dates of Good Old Boys' Club meetings and the WBB Quiz.

In partnership with Reading Football Club, celebrating their 150th anniversary season, WBB brewed Reading FC 150 Lager. The 4.1% ABV lager is available on draught from the brewery bar at the stadium's fan village and in bottles available from the brewery shop.



Previously, 106 pale ale was brewed by WBB to celebrate the Reading FC record points tally in the promotion-winning season of 2005-6.

West Berkshire Brewery was one of 16 UK breweries honoured with a 'Pints' Golden Award in *CAMRA's* 50th anniversary year, for going above and beyond in delivering excellence or innovation over the years.



■ Kevin Brady of **Indigenous Brewery** supplied beers and volunteered at Newbury RFC 25th anniversary at Monks Lane celebration (above) and Ascot Beer Festival.

Tickety-Boo golden ale was available at both events. Cream of the Crop, a 6% ABV Amaretto milk stout, was a festival special at Ascot.



Beers from Indigenous Brewery are served at the nearby Ibex Inn, Chaddleworth. Other outlets include Newbury's Cow & Cask, Frilsham's Pot Kiln and Aldworth's Bell Inn.





■ The **Wild Weather** brewery at Easter Park lies 1.7 miles west-northwest from the important historic site of Calleva Atrebatum / Silchester Roman Town. Calleva was chosen for the name of a new cask-only beer described as 'bright, pale and sessionable with a lingering citrus and pine hop character'. For more details, read Head Brewer Jamie 'JD' Duffield's [Calleva blog post](#) which elaborates on the Blonde Ale style and the geography and history of the place.

Maple Latte may replace Full of Beans as Wild Weather's core range stout. Maple, locally sourced chestnut honey and locally roasted Indian espresso give sweetness balancing the bitter chocolate notes of the coffee.

For details of new collaborative beers, including Queenie (Gingerbread Stout - Weather Station), Aim High Shoot Amarillo (West Coast DIPA - Weird Beard) and The Lost IPA (New England Kveik DIPA - New Lion) read recent posts on the Blog tab at [www.wildweatherales.com](http://www.wildweatherales.com) which also has tabs for Shop and The Weather Station.



■ Recently refurbished, **The Club Bar & Bistro**, 5 Cheap Street, Newbury, is open to all, with reduced bar prices for members. Initial cask ales offered were Arkell's Wiltshire Gold and Wadworth 6X. Facilities include three snooker tables and a skittle alley.

■ Warwick and Pauline Heskins have renewed their lease for another five years at the **Catherine Wheel**, Newbury. Six cask ales and a range of ciders are available. The wide range of Pieminister pies includes four vegan pies.



■ The freehold of the **Rising Sun**, Stockcross has been offered for sale through **Carter Jonas**. The boarded-up pub closed in October 2017.

■ Taryn and Paul of **Two Cocks Brewery** have been busy brewing to get stocks in place for a busy December. The **Online Store** offers include gift boxes, holding 3 bottles or 2 bottles and a branded glass. Next brews are 1643 Cavalier and 1643 Flintlock, the refreshing IPA they created, which has become their strongest seller.



■ Meals are available again at the **Bowler's Arms**, Wash Common and the **Bacon Arms**, Newbury. Illustrated features on both pubs have been added to Local Pub News on the [Branch's website](#).

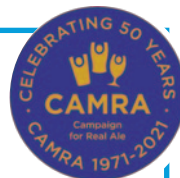
■ Bridgewood Plc have applied to convert the former **Prince of Wales**, Kintbury, to a single residential dwelling (West Berkshire [21/02405/FULD](#)).

■ **West Berkshire Heritage** has arranged two talks by local historians at **West Berkshire Museum** in Newbury on Wednesday 16 February to tie in with the special exhibition 'Barrels and Bottles'.

At 1pm Sue Ellis gives a free talk about pubs, beer and brewing. Advance booking only.

At 7pm Phil Wood presents 'The breweries of Newbury' covering those that once operated in the town. £5 tickets can be booked online. All bookings close at 4pm the day before.

## Responding to the Autumn Budget, CAMRA National Chairman Nik Antona said:



"The Chancellor has listened to thousands of CAMRA members who have long called for a change in the way alcohol is taxed. A new, lower rate of duty for draught beer and cider served in pubs and clubs establishes an important principle in the taxation system - that pubs are a force for good in our communities and should be supported to help them survive and compete with the likes of supermarkets.

"Our task before this new duty rate is implemented in 2023 is to make sure that the new, lower draught duty rate applies to beer and cider served in smaller containers too, so that as many pubs, breweries and consumers as possible can benefit. We will be using the Government's consultation on how this new system should operate in practice to make this case.

"In the meantime, measures like duty freezes and a 50% cut in business rates in England for another year will be welcomed. Our pubs and breweries are still recovering from the pandemic, face rising bills and costs and will continue to need as much support as they can get so they can rebuild their businesses and thrive in the years to come.

"Cutting tax for lower ABV drinks will incentivise lower strength alcoholic drinks, whilst new financial support for smaller producers - including cider producers - and continuing discussions around a 50% minimum juice content are encouraging news for both cider makers and consumers. These measures should help to improve quality and choice at the bar. CAMRA will continue to engage with the Government on the planned reforms to Small Brewers Relief and call for a solution that doesn't require some of the smallest breweries to have to pay more tax."

■ A planning application on behalf of Boxford Restaurant Limited proposes partial redevelopment of the former **Bell at Boxford** to provide a new bar and dining restaurant (West Berkshire [21/02825/FUL](#)).

■ The winter issue of **Beer** magazine, a CAMRA membership benefit, includes features by Laura Hadland (Community owned pubs p6), Emma Inch (Christine Cryne - Real Ale Hero p24) and Jeff Evans (Adnams Ghost Ship p34).



■ Newbury's **Hatchet Inn** and **King Charles Tavern** were both closed during part of November to allow for refurbishment work.

## LocAle

Many LocAle pubs in our branch area serve beer brewed within 25 miles.

Pubs shown in bold serve beer brewed onsite or within one mile.

[pubsofficer@westberksamra.org.uk](mailto:pubsofficer@westberksamra.org.uk)

See also the LocAle Pubs page on [www.westberksamra.org.uk](http://www.westberksamra.org.uk)

### LocAle Pubs - WEST of A34

<b>The Ilex Inn</b>	Chaddleworth
The Downgate	Hungerford
The Eastbury Plough	Eastbury
<b>The Five Bells</b>	Wickham
The Fox at Peasmore	Peasmore
The Great Shefford	Great Shefford
<b>The John O'Gaunt Inn</b>	Hungerford
The Queens Arms	East Garston
The Red House	Marsh Benham
The Tally Ho!	Hungerford Newtown
The Three Swans Hotel	Hungerford
<b>The White Hart</b>	Hamstead Marshall



## 10 great reasons to join CAMRA

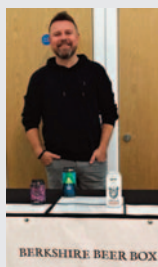
<b>1 CAMPAIGN</b> for great beer, cider and perry	<b>2 Become a BEER EXPERT</b>
<b>3 Enjoy CAMRA BEER FESTIVALS</b> in front of or behind the bar	<b>4 GET INVOLVED</b> and make new friends
<b>5 Save YOUR LOCAL</b>	<b>6 Find the BEST PUBS IN BRITAIN</b>
<b>7 Get great VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	<b>8 DISCOVER</b> pub heritage and the great outdoors
<b>9 Enjoy great HEALTH BENEFITS</b> (really!)	<b>10 HAVE YOUR SAY</b>

### What's yours?

Discover your reason and join the campaign today:  
[www.camra.org.uk/10reasons](http://www.camra.org.uk/10reasons)







■ The new **Hermitage Village Hall** opened on 24 July, 2021. A first **Oktober Beer Fest** was held there on 16 October, featuring live music in Pinewood Hall and beer and cider stalls in Furze Hall with access to the caterers: kitchen, serving a variety of sausages with beer braised onions.

Pictured above, Richard Marshall and Tony Calvertz-Jons (Hermitage Brewery), Catherine and Tim Wale (Tutts Clump Cider), Ray Herbert

and Steve Harris (Bucklebury Brewery) and Jymi Plumer (Berkshire Beer Box) served customers from 5pm until 10.30pm.

Jane Staunton, event caterer and a trustee of the Village Hall, reported that 140 adults attended, raising £1450 to fund equipment for clubs based at the village hall in Pinewood Crescent.

Saturday 15 October has been set for the Hermitage Oktober Beer Fest 2022.



■ Deliveries of November's **Berkshire Beer Box** included beers from: Reading's Double-Barrelled Brewery and Finchampstead's Hogwood Industrial Estate neighbours - Elusive Brewing and Siren Craft Brew.

■ Chris Marriage won the Oktober Beer Fest raffle for a pin of **Hermitage Brewery** Lodestone Mild, brewed by Richard Marshall.



Look out for Star Gazing Porter, made with fresh plums, at local outlets and Inn at Home, Newbury.

■ Complimentary bread, pâté and cheese were served for the **Cow & Cask** 7th birthday on Saturday 13 November. 707 different cask ales have been served since 2014.

Customers were saddened to hear that Andy Love, also a member of the micropub's award-winning crib team, had died in the same week as Andy Tillen's burial on 10 November. (Andy Love is standing on right in photo below).



■ **World's End** - a pale ale, hopped with German Huell Melon and US-grown Citra, is 'now almost a core feature' in the **Delphic Brewing Co** cask range. Recent canned beer releases shown on the [delphicbrewing.com](http://delphicbrewing.com) store include: pluckin' in the bushes - a fruited sour brewed with foraged blackberries and raspberries; It's just the one hop actually - a juicy pale ale hopped only with Sabro giving 'tangerine, coconut, tropical fruit and stone fruit aromas'.

■ **The Wheatsheaf Inn**, Thatcham, in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2022, serves Wheatsheaf bitter from Delphic Brewing Co, brewed less than a mile away.



■ The **Cold Ash & Hermitage Mummers** plan to perform their Mummers' Play at local pubs on Friday 10 and Friday 17 December.

■ **The Five Bells**, Wickham, holds an artisan market with bread, pastries and honey on the second Saturday of the month from 9am – 12 noon. There is a Christmas market on Saturday 4 December.



■ Events at the **Woodpecker**, Wash Water, include Christmas market (Saturday 4/12 11am-3pm) and Christmas raffle (Sunday 19/12 4pm) with money raised going to Dingley's Promise charity.

■ There will be carol singing, mulled wine and mince pies at the **Old Boot Inn**, Stanford Dingley on Thursday 16 December from 6pm.

■ The **Crown & Horns**, East Ilsley, is holding a Christmas market from 10am on Saturday 19 December. Tel 01635 281545

■ Pubs with **quiz** nights include:

**Yattendon:** West Berkshire Brewery Taproom

**Hampstead Norreys:** White Hart

**Upper Bucklebury:** Cottage Inn

**Hermitage:** White Horse

**Cold Ash:** Castle Inn; Spotted Dog

**Wickham:** Five Bells

**Newbury:** Globe; King Charles Tavern;

Lion; Plough on the Green;

Two Watermills; Woodpecker

**Hamstead Marshall:** White Hart

**Hungerford:** Plume

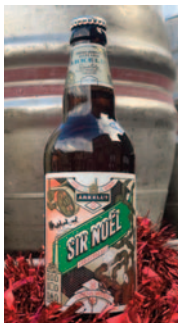
**Hungerford Newtown:** Tally Ho

Further details can be found on the **West Berkshire Quizzes** public group on Facebook.



■ In September, four new fermenting tanks, seen above, were installed on the first floor of **Arkell's** brewery using specialist lifting equipment. This investment was made to provide additional capacity for Malthouse Craft Lager and Voyager American Pale Ale. With each tank holding up to 7,000 pints, head brewer Alex Arkell said 'With these new beauties, we now have more fermenting tanks than ever in our 178 year history'.

Sir Noel, Christmas Ale, is named after Alex Arkell's great grandfather who was born on Christmas Day. The 5% ABV full-bodied Winter Warmer is surprisingly pale in colour.



Arkell's outdoor Christmas food and craft market is on Saturday 11 December (10am - 3pm) at the brewery in Stratton, Swindon.



Andy Tillen (2nd left) Cow & Cask 16/2/2016

**Andrew Tillen died on 29 October 2021, aged 71, after a short illness.**

Andy had been a CAMRA member since 1993 and would often attend social events and brewery tours. He enjoyed his beer and pub visits. He was particularly fond of a pint of Ruddles Best in a Wetherspoon's pub and loved any beer from Indigenous Brewery. Andy was able to tick off pubs in the Good Beer Guide as he travelled around the country with his courier job.

Andy enjoyed his sport, especially cricket and horse racing. He was a keen follower of Hampshire County Cricket Club and of course could enjoy a beer while watching a match!

Andy was a regular customer at the Cow & Cask since we first opened in 2014. He would walk in and seeing the other regulars proclaim 'Same old faces' and when another arrived he would say 'Look out, here comes trouble', but always with a smile! He always joined in the conversation and would chat to new customers and visitors and make them welcome.

Andy loved playing Cribbage and was the captain and the driving force behind the Cow & Cask crib team. He was very proud that we had won the Thatcham and District Crib League for the last three years. He loved teaching people how to play and would often ask for a crib board and pack of cards to give an impromptu lesson. During his last few days, he was organising the crib team from his hospital bed and asked that we texted the scores through to him.

He will be missed by many people.

*Ian Batho, Cow & Cask*

## LIVE MUSIC



Follow @SoundNewbury on Twitter & Facebook for weekly updates

**ACE Space**, St. Nicolas Road, Newbury  
www.acespace.org.uk  
Unplugged Open Mic on 1st Friday of month



**Arlington Arts**, Mary Hare School, Snelsmore  
www.arlington-arts.com



**The Angel**, Woolhampton  
www.jazzangel.co.uk



### NEWBURY area

**Bacon Arms** Catherine Wheel  
**The Club** The Globe  
**The Lamb**  
**Lock Stock & Barrel**

**The Monument** - Saturdays  
Open Mic night on Thursdays  
FB @TheMonumentRocks

**The Newbury**  
Open Mic night on Thursdays

**Old London Apprentice**  
**Plough on the Green**  
**Starting Gate** Woodpecker  
**Waggon & Horses and Canal Bar**

### THATCHAM area

**Kings Head** Mill  
**Swan** White Hart  
Cold Ash: **Castle Inn**; **Spotted Dog**

### HUNGERFORD area

**Borough Arms** Plume  
**Railway Tavern**  
Hungerford Newtown: **Tally Ho**

### OTHER areas

**Blue Ball**, Kintbury  
**Crown & Horns**, East Ilsley  
**Fox Inn**, Hermitage  
**Ibex Inn**, Chaddleworth  
**Old Boot Inn**, Stanford Dingley

Please send details of gigs for the March - May issue, by 11/2/2022, to: editor@westberkscamra.org.uk



**Social Media**



@WBCAMRAcider  
@WBCAMRA  
@UllageBeer  
@BerkshirePubs  
@CAMRA\_Official

West Berkshire Campaign for Real Ale:  
@WBCAMRA  
(National) CAMRA:  
@campaignforrealale

## Real Cider & Perry



CAMRA Books published **Modern British Cider** by Gabe Cook after a successful Kickstarter campaign, which raised over £5,800 to produce the book.

Also known as **The Ciderologist**, Gabe may be familiar as the resident cider expert on C4's Sunday Brunch.

His book features 101 diverse and talented cider makers from across the British Isles.



Katy is the latest **Tutts Clump** single variety cider crafted from Katy eating apples. Initially, the Herefordshire grown apples were pressed and fermented near Maidenhead by Dave Snowden from Crazy Dave Cider in 2020.

Tutts Clump Mulled 6% ABV cider, based on Traditional Farmhouse medium dry cider, is popular during the winter months and can be served cold or warm.



www.tuttsclumpcider.co.uk

**Green Shed Cider** is a traditional craft cidery based in Newbury, and like the name suggests is a small green shed at the bottom of David Bailey's garden. Set up in 2018, *Green Shed Cider* produces around 6000 litres of cider per year using 100% juice from apples hand-picked in local orchards often within 5 miles of Newbury. A total of 6 ciders and a pear perry are currently available, with more apple variants and blends planned for the future.

David has been making cider as a hobby for 13 years, ever since a chance conversation with a friend regarding an unused pear tree. Constructing a makeshift cider press from a fencepost and car jack, David's initial ventures into cider making were not an immediate success. 'Cider making is hard work, and getting better is a slow process as you need to wait for the apples to be ready,' said David. Through much trial and error, David improved his cider making skills by researching new methods, maintaining clean apparatus and investing in more efficient equipment.

The natural progression in both the quality and quantity of cider led to the conception of

Find the most comprehensive list of real cider and perry in the UK

Is your cider #NotFromConcentrate?

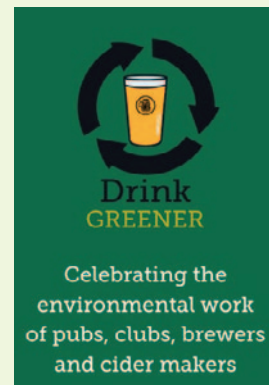


Visit [camra.org.uk/cider](http://camra.org.uk/cider)



CAMRA has formed an Environmental Working Group associated with #DrinkGreener and environmental benefits. Two of the key messages are:

- Traditional cider and perry is usually made close to the orchard where the fruit was harvested and is often sold to local consumers, which reduces transport emissions
- The orchards that produce fruit for cider and perry absorb carbon and contribute to biodiversity



**Green Shed Cider.** 'The decision was partly due to the fact that the improved equipment and methods generated quite a lot of cider,' explained David. 'Too much certainly for self-consumption and there is only so much you can take to parties.' *Green Shed* currently harnesses a 90-litre hydro press, capable of producing up to 800 litres of juice in a day - a far cry from the rudimentary origins.

An extract from *A Shed Load of Fun* by **Matt Rogers** on pages 18/19 of **CAMRA Angle** - Summer 2021, the Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead CAMRA magazine.



Photo: greenshedcider.co.uk

Read the full article to discover David's views on sweetening and carbonating cider and why he likes selling cider at farmers' markets (like Newbury's - on the first Sunday of the month). [www.greenshedcider.co.uk](http://www.greenshedcider.co.uk)



# River Fleet ale walk

## Alan Haselden

Kentish Town's Mem's Cafe was the Saturday morning meeting place for four friends / colleagues and me, and its no-frills British Isles breakfast with coffee was the pleasing kick-start we needed to get us going on our seven-mile ale pub tour, following the course of London's most famous lost river - the River Fleet. The Fleet emerges from Hampstead Heath, famous for its panoramic vista of London's iconic skyline, yet from here it has, since the Victorian era, been channelled into a sewer where it continues its covert, shadowy journey down to the River Thames at Blackfriars.



Ambling down from London's rooftop on the Heath, we picked up Fleet Road and Malden Street that penetrate residential areas, and soon we arrived at our first pub stop, Castle Road's Tapping The Admiral. Venerating Admiral Nelson of yore (or the pub's eponymous sleepy black cat), it comprises a U-shaped bar area, one arm broader than the other, and a canopied yard area out back. For curiosity-seekers, a thicket of historical memorabilia and peculiar decorative artefacts adorn the walls.



Importantly, the friendly barman was delighted to greet us and offer us eight cask ales and two still ciders. With a name suitably apposite given the subterranean theme of our walk, 'Underworld' was the ale chosen by most of us. Brewed by Surbiton's Big Smoke Brewery, the 5% stout is lean and sweetish with lingering dark chocolate notes.

Continuing our walk towards Regent's Canal, we passed a former Charrington's pub, The Prince Albert, which is distinctive for its vibrant, tiled frontage and traditional interior. And it is through the round road grid, opposite this pub, that the Fleet's reverberant babble and sparkle can be heard and glimpsed. Onward to the busy Regent's Canal towpath, we continued past St. Pancras Old Church and, once beyond Kings Cross station, we were onto the tranquil back lanes west of Grays Inn Road. The lanes trace out a broad, shallow dip in the landscape, passing beneath Rosebery Avenue and Holborn Viaduct such that the locale is a geographical testament to



View from Hampstead Heath

the River Fleet's prior existence as an open, flowing river.

Emerging onto the bustle of Fleet Street, the sight of the imposing, majestic St. Paul's cathedral seized us from the east. However, we ventured



west to the Grade II-listed Old Bank of England, run by Hertfordshire's McMullen's Brewery. The pub's interior is extravagant, spacious and has a central, island bar with enormous chandeliers suspended overhead. We stayed here for dinner and enjoyed pie and mash or fish and chips, served in generous portions at a fair price. Three McMullen's cask ales were on sale, a bitter, a seasonal ale and the 3.7% 'AK', a pale-coloured mild. While the mild was on satisfying form, it would be better



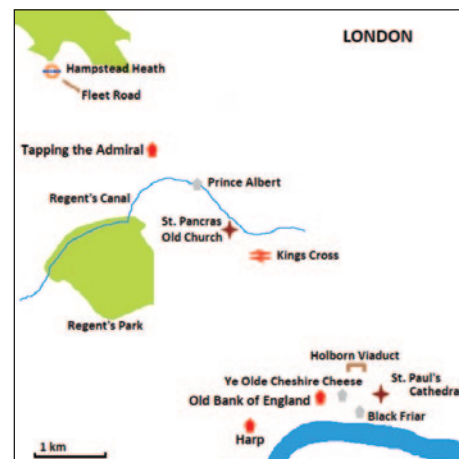
described as an easy-drinking, low-hopped session bitter.

This Fleet Estuary quarter is graced with at least two other Grade II listed cask ale pubs of note - Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, owned by Samuel Smith's and a former haunt of lexicographer Dr. Samuel Johnson, and the Black Friar, owned by Nicholson's. But knowing that the Fleet's egress tunnel at Blackfriars is obscured, due to super sewer development works, we terminated our River Fleet tour at Fleet Street.



Photos: Nick Monaghan

It was a short walk west from Old Bank of England to the Harp, which is a snug, back street boozer, near Charing Cross station. Typically rammed with discerning ale drinkers, our team of five did find space and respite in the pub's upstairs room. Of the eight cask ales, we enjoyed a final round of drinks comprising the 4.5% 'Sleepy Badger', a sturdy, dry stout from Sheffield's Little Critters Brewery. The Harp's buoyant liveliness stifled conversation somewhat but, with an exceptional stout in superb form to savour, conversation hardly mattered!





# The Village in the Town

People talk about a particular area of Reading, just off Watlington Street, north of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, as 'The Village'. The title of F.C. Padley's small book, *A Village In The Town*, first published in 1972, refers to the triangular shaped [Eldon Square Conservation Area](#). This triangular area is currently home to three East Reading pubs.

In further extracts from her fully illustrated [online article](#), also printed in Reading CAMRA's *Mine's A Pint* (MAP 54 / autumn 2021) magazine, its editor - [Zoë Andrews](#) - writes:

We're incredibly lucky to have three pubs within this small area, but all of them have changed hands or risked closure in the last few years – like anything else, you have to use them or risk losing them.

**The Lyndhurst** – on the corner of Watlington Street – has changed hands many times. Most recently, it came under new ownership back in 2019, continuing its good reputation as a pub offering excellent food. The team, led by Sheldon and Dishon, offers a fantastic menu with a good mix of pub favourites and regularly changing specials.

The Lyndhurst continues to stock a variety of draught beer and cask ale (you'll often see West Berkshire's Good Old Boy on) and has once again been Cask Marque accredited.

**The Retreat** on St John's Street is renowned for being Reading's last standing 'back street boozer'. It's a wonderful pub split into two rooms, each with its own bar: a front room always filled with regulars who like to chat, and a quieter back room which doubles up as the space for the bands that regularly play. The landlord, Brian Moignard, has built a genuine community around his pub.

When it comes to beer, the Retreat has a regularly changing selection of cask ales across five pumps and four kegged beers. Brian has also kept a lovely selection of bottled Belgian beers on site and stocks Sam Smith's moreish Organic Chocolate Stout, a real favourite of mine when the nights




Photo: Zoë Andrews

start drawing in. Like many pubs over the past 18 months, a lack of garden has made things hard for The Retreat, but this did give time to deliver a wonderful refurbishment, and Brian and the locals now make the most of their space outside the front of the pub.

Up on Eldon Terrace is **The Weather Station**, previously known as the Eldon Arms. Manager Kane brings lots of enthusiasm to the pub and encourages everybody to give things a try. There are eighteen kegged lines, two cask and a well stocked fridge full of bottles and cans from breweries across the country and further afield. The Weather Station has a small garden to the rear, which has been vastly improved under their management, and there are regular tap takeovers, quiz nights and gigs.

The Lyndhurst  @thelyndie  @thelyndie

The Retreat  @pub\_retreat  @theretreatpub

The Weather Station  @WtherStion  @The\_Weather\_Station



Recent books published by CAMRA include *Modern British Beer* by Matthew Curtis (see review on page 9) and *Modern British Cider* by Gabe Cook (see page 5 for details).

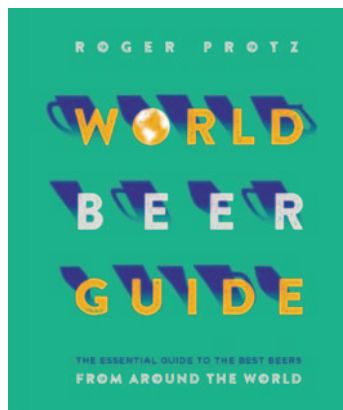
The fully updated and revised third edition of *London's Best Beer Pubs & Bars* by Des de Moor was published on 26 October 2021.

The [Beer Culture with Des de Moor website](#) lists launch events including tasting and book signings at some of the 140 breweries and 180+ venues

featured in the book including: Beerblefish Taproom (19/12/2021); Bohem Taproom (20/1/2022) and Ora Beer Taproom (28/1/2022).

After the publication was delayed by the Coronavirus pandemic, Des tweeted 'Yes @LdnBestBeer is officially here, 6.5 years after the last edition, 2.5 years since it was commissioned, 3,827 km of research trips including 710 km on foot, 804 places visited. And it's looking good, though I say so myself.'

The 336 page book is organised by area and fully illustrated in colour throughout. The detailed information on opening hours, local landmarks and public transport links simplify planning any excursion.



*World Beer Guide* by Roger Protz was published on 22 October 2021.

CAMRA's Learn & Discover online resource includes [Intro to the world of beer](#) where Roger writes:

*In 1995 I published a book called the Ultimate Encyclopaedia of Beer. It looks like a book from a different age. Back then there were 2,000 craft breweries in the United States and around 800 in Britain. Today there are 8,000 in the U.S. and more than 2,000 here.*

The feature includes more information and photographs from the 228 page hardback book which includes introductory sections on the history of beer-making and an explanation of the brewing process using non-technical language, followed by a comprehensive country-by-country breakdown of key breweries and the beers they produce.

Previously only available in hardback, a paperback edition of *The Family Brewers of Britain* by Roger Protz, was published on 24 November, 2021.

**Books published by CAMRA can be purchased from the [online shop](#). Members should log in first for discount offers.**

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## Curmudgeon

### A touch of grey

Up and down the country, the past few years have seen an ever-growing number of pubs cast off their old guise to adopt a new grey uniform.

It's a very definite trend. Boak and Bailey wrote about [Why are all the pubs going grey?](#) earlier this year. As they say:

*Our assumption is that this is about trying to attract a newer, more aspirational crowd – or, at least, not to put them off. This preference for would-be classy neutralness mirrors recent trends in home décor sometimes referred to disparagingly as 'the grey plague'.*

I would be genuinely interested to hear someone explain the thinking behind this, because to my mind deliberately painting pubs in a cold, drab shade only serves to make them less appealing. A few years ago, there was a fashion to remove whitewash and return pubs to their natural brickwork. But if pubs are to be plastered, then surely they are much more welcoming if it is done in white or cream, or in the pinks and pale blues that are often seen in the West Country and East Anglia.

There are numerous fads that seem to spread across pubs over the years where it is hard to understand the rationale. Examples include posing tables, scatter cushions, getting rid of beermats, dispensing with zeros in menu prices, and replacing carpet with bare wood flooring. A while back, although it seems to have passed now, there was a vogue for installing shelves of dusty old books that nobody would ever read. And nobody can ever satisfactorily explain why. People can sometimes come up with post-facto rationalisations, such as claiming that doing away with beermats makes tables easier to clean, but that isn't the real reason.

As pubs are owned by a whole host of businesses of varying sizes, these trends cannot be blamed on a single controlling mind, and instead seem to spread organically in the same way that fashions in clothing do. We now look back aghast that people ever wore such things as platform soles. But are there certain influencers of taste in the pub world from which the wider population refreshing the decor of their pubs take their cue?

Of course, it's only a coat of paint on the exterior, and it can easily be removed in the next refurbishment. On its own, it makes no difference to the customer inside the pub. But this trend has extended to interiors too, and in fact predated its application to external walls. To my mind at least, if a pub is decorated and furnished in cold pastels rather than warm browns, creams and reds it does detract from the experience. But it seems that the current fashion is for pubs to be edgy rather than cosy.

The Pub Curmudgeon blog posts, including the full illustrated version of [A touch of grey](#), can be read on [pubcurmudgeon.blogspot.com](#)



*The King Charles Tavern, Newbury. Three photos above show that after blending in with the colour scheme of frontages on Cheap Street and Kings Road West in 2013 (lower photo), new signage was introduced (middle photo) and then the outside walls were painted grey in 2018.*

Before and after photos in the Curmudgeon blog post show Stockport pubs that have turned grey like the Swan with Two Necks, the Armoury and the Jolly Crofter.

The Langton, Bristol and the White Harte, Warmley, are grey pubs whose photos appear in the referenced Boak & Bailey blog post.

West Berkshire pub goers may notice that Compton's Foinavon, Kintbury's Blue Ball and Newbury's Cross Keys have also recently turned shades of grey.



[Matthew Curtis](#) is an award-winning freelance writer and photographer who writes about the emotion and culture of beer. He is the co-founder of *Pellicle*, a magazine and podcast devoted to exploring beer, wine, cider, food and travel. The author of *Modern British Beer* and *An Opinionated Guide to London Pubs*, Matthew's work has also featured in *Beer*, *Ferment*, *Good Beer Hunting* and *Hop & Barley*. After spending 15 years living in London, he moved to Manchester in 2020.

## Boak & Bailey

### BOOK REVIEW: Modern British Beer by Matthew Curtis

Modern British Beer (RRP £15.99, 256 pages) by Matthew Curtis comprises a series of short pieces covering 80 or so beers that the author feels reflects the breadth and range of beer on offer in the UK today.



As in our [review of the official history of CAMRA](#), we'll start with an observation that this is an interesting choice of book for CAMRA to commission and publish.

It suggests they've moved quite comprehensively past the debate about whether it is ever appropriate for the Campaign to support or endorse beer that isn't 'real'.

The book features a good spread of breweries, from the very new to stalwarts of the real ale scene such as Durham and Oakham. It's fair to say, though, that the book leans towards those founded in the 21st century.

We often feel we've fallen out of the loop since writing *Brew Britannia* and all too often fall into the trap of writing off a lot of modern beers as hazy and/or sweet, and not to our taste. A book that provides a manageable hit list and helps us find our way to the good stuff in a crowded market might, we hoped, make us feel more on top of things.

This book delivers precisely that. Like the book we started out with all those years ago, Michael Jackson's *500 Great Beers*, it offers page after page of delightful descriptions accompanied by enticing photography.

Perhaps wisely, the choice of image goes beyond glossy product or pack shots and instead seeks to convey a sense of what 'modern British beer' means in practice. That is, lots of stainless steel, industrial units and taprooms.

We've drunk maybe only a third of the beers listed. There are a few breweries in the book we've never come across in the wild and which, having read Curtis's impassioned tributes, will definitely be seeking out.

We know we won't like everything he recommends but the hit rate is likely to be higher with a guide than without. ...

[See [21 September 2021 blog post](#) for the full review.]

### We're Boak and Bailey

We write under the names Jessica Boak and Ray Bailey, and live in Bristol. We've been blogging about beer since 2007, covering real ale, craft beer, pubs and British beer history. [www.boakandbailey.com](#)



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Advertising opportunities are available for future printed issues - please contact adverts@westberkscamra.org.uk with advertising proposals.

## Diary Dates 2021-22

The following is a list of all forthcoming meetings of the West Berkshire branch of CAMRA. Some are 'social' meetings, lively and friendly occasions where we enjoy a few beers; others are 'branch' meetings, which are slightly more formal and where we discuss beer and pubs issues. Unless stated, our meetings are open to all-comers - and new members are particularly welcome!

**Wednesday 15 December 12.30pm**  
**Christmas Lunch Social**  
(Find table with CAMRA items display)  
Hatchet Inn, Newbury

**Wednesday 26 January 7.30pm**  
**GBG Selection Meeting 1 (Members Only) after Branch Meeting**  
Wheatsheaf, Thatcham.

**Wednesday 16 February 1pm and 7pm**  
**West Berkshire Heritage talks on local pubs & breweries**  
See page 3 for more details  
West Berkshire Museum, Newbury

**Monday 21 February 7.30pm**  
**GBG Selection Meeting 2 (Members Only)**  
Cow & Cask, Newbury

Late additions, amendments & further details on our website: [www.westberkscamra.org.uk](http://www.westberkscamra.org.uk)

Ullage is published by the West Berkshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale and is copyright of CAMRA. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributor and are not necessarily endorsed by the Production Team or The Campaign for Real Ale. Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in Ullage is correct, but the publishers accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions.

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## CAMRA Events

**30 November - 4 December 2021**  
**Pig's Ear Beer & Cider Festival**  
The Round Chapel, Hackney, London E5 0LY  
[www.pigsear.org.uk](http://www.pigsear.org.uk)

**8 - 10 April 2022**  
**CAMRA Members' Weekend**  
**AGM & Conference**  
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Eastbourne BN21 4BP



**22 - 23 July 2022**  
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