

The magazine of CAMRA Rutland Branch

Tiny Pint

Issue 31 Summer Edition 2026

A green circular graphic containing text about the 13th Beer Festival. The text is white and centered within the circle. The CAMRA logo is at the top, followed by the event name and dates, and the location details at the bottom.

CAMRA
Rutland

13TH BEER FESTIVAL
Fri 26th - Sun 28th June

County Museum,
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LE15 6HW

IN THIS EDITION

- Oakham Ale Trail
- Pub & Brewer News
- Meet the Landlord
- Will's pub walk and more!

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Where? Greetham Community Centre,
Great Lane, Greetham, LE15 7NG



See www.greethamfestival.info for details and tickets
Early bird tickets just £10 each, limited availability

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Editors' Welcome

A warm welcome to this edition of Tiny Pint.

So, what delights do we have for you in this edition? There's pub news of course plus exciting news from Rutland's brewers. Our new chairman, Kevin Thompson, introduces himself and we discover the county's favourite beers. Will Hetherington takes us on one of his pub-peppered walks and we go Wassailing at Cidentro Cider House.



We've launched a new landlord questionnaire to help us all get to know the people behind our wonderful pubs. Dan at the Wheatsheaf was brave enough to go first, and we're hoping to gently coax a few more landlords into the spotlight for future issues.

December brought a cracking Christmas social at Empingham Cricket Club. If you haven't yet sampled Russ's ales, you're missing out — he never fails to put something interesting on the bar.

Pop 26th–28th June in your diary and come raise a glass with us at the County Museum in Oakham for our 13th Beer Festival. Our thanks go to the many sponsors of the beer barrels; there's still a few spaces left if you'd like to be a sponsor, and full details can be found on our website. Extra helping hands are always welcome. If you're a member and would like to be involved, please contact secretary@rutland.camra.org.uk

Cheers & Wassail

Manuela Croft and David Whittle

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Pub News

A brief round-up of the news and activities from the pubs within the care of Rutland CAMRA branch

Starting in the north...

The **Black Bull** (Market Overton), nominated as a candidate for Rutland branch's winter Pub of the Season, serves Timothy Taylor's Landlord as a regular beer with three changing beers. Quizzes take place on the last Thursday of the month. CAMRA 50p vouchers accepted. There are plans for the pub to receive a major facelift – a brand new thatched-roof is to be installed in the near future.

Despite being renowned for the quality of its meals, The **Wheatsheaf** (Greetham) closed its kitchen on New Year's Day and has recently re-opened as a wet-only establishment (Thursday – Sunday). The lease is up for renewal in the spring and we understand that long-term tenants, Scott and Carol, will be heading for pastures new.

The **Plough** (Greetham), winner of Rutland branch's winter Pub of the Season, now serves two regular beers - Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Milestone Classic Dark Mild, plus two changing beers and up to two real ciders. CAMRA 50p vouchers accepted. Weekly quiz and live music on various Saturdays. Yorkshire puddings Wednesday and Fish and chips Friday.

In the heart of the village The **Sun Inn** (Cottesmore) serves a range of Everard's beers including Tiger, Old Original and Sunchaser plus one guest beer. Bingo every Tuesday night with comedy nights to be announced.

We say farewell to another long-serving couple at The **White Lion** (Whissendine). Chris and Yolanda are stepping down but the tenancy of the pub is being kept in the family. Yolanda's son and daughter-in-law, Adam and Hebe, will be taking over the reins. We wish them every success in following in the family footsteps.

Over at The **Blue Ball** (Braunston) Timothy Taylor's Landlord is the regular beer with Fuller's London Pride being added occasionally. Traditional country pub menu, with a special 'Curry night' on the first Tuesday of every month (take-aways available).

At the **Grainstore Brewery Tap** (Oakham) a warm welcome is extended to new licensees Richard and Andrea Moore who are settling in well and putting their own stamp on the popular venue. They have introduced

a new menu and are preserving the longstanding Grains events of Open Mic Night (first Sunday in month), Quiz Night (first Wednesday - booking essential), Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club (first Saturday). The 14th Rutland Cider & Sausage Festival will be held over Bank Holiday weekend Thursday 21st to Sunday 25th May.

Jinky's Bar (Oakham) has two cask pumps with changing beers - often Parish special Bitter and Wainright's Worth the Walk, Gold. A generous 20% discount off a pint of ale is available to CAMRA members on production of a valid membership card.

The **Captain Noel Newton** (Oakham), Rutland's only JD Wetherspoons, continues to offer a changing range of ales and customers are encouraged to request their favourites from the seasonal lists.

If it is cider you are seeking then around eight real ciders can be found at The **Wheatsheaf** (Oakham) alongside their range of Everards ales. Due to popular demand their monthly quiz has been expanded to a twice-monthly event - taking place every other Thursday (booking essential).



A popular sports bar and meeting venue, The **Crown Tavern** (Oakham) is under the new ownership of Chris Collins: we welcome him and wish him every success. Serving Old Speckled Hen in a bustling environment, there are to be regular events evenings e.g. darts matches, quizzes etc.

Another venue under new management: we welcome Chris Burton as the new licensee of The **Lord Nelson** (Oakham) who brings with him a wealth of experience in the licensed trade. Four hand-pumps are in operation with a fifth serving a flat cider. Grainstore Ten Fifty and Bass are regular beers with two changing beers. The venue is open from noon until 23.00 every day and now accepts the CAMRA 50p voucher. The ground floor is a traditional pub offering food, while upstairs has board games to use, buy or hire.

Having recently re-opened under new management The **Angler** (Oakham) operates predominantly as a restaurant and has ceased the sale of cask ales.

Hunters Bar (Oakham) in the Wisteria Hotel has no cask ale but serves Adnams bottled beers and a keg.

The **Fox and Hounds** (Exton) remains closed pending the completion of building work designed to create letting accommodation to the rear of the property. Additional planning applications have been submitted to erect an orangery to the side of the building.

An Everard's house The **Wheatsheaf** (Edith Weston) serves Tiger and one other ale. Rosie's Pig cider is also available. An extensive range of food is available and with the anticipated onset of spring there is plenty of outdoor seating to enjoy.

The **Horse and Jockey** (Manton) serve their house beer, Jockey, plus a guest ale. The new interim Manager, Simon, is keen to support additional local breweries so there may well be familiar guest ales in the near future. This will become a popular venue for walkers and cyclists as the seasons change.

After nearly 11 years at the **The Fox** (North Luffenham), nominated as a candidate for Rutland branch's winter Pub of the Season, Jason and team continue to pride themselves on the quality and variety of their real ales. With four hand-pumps (two regular, two changing) a warm and friendly welcome is extended to both locals and visitors alike. Monday night quiz remains extremely popular (starting at 8.30pm, maximum of 6 per team and cash prizes up for grabs.) Back by popular request Uppingham Jazz and Soul band will be playing live on the patio from 15.00 on Sunday 24th May (Bank Holiday). Expect a great afternoon of music, vocals and socialising.

Having re-opened last summer the **Hub at Rutland Point** (Morcott) has re-branded to become the **Café A47** because it's a café and it's on the...er...A47. Bottled Grainstore beers are available.



At The **Old Pheasant** (Glaston) two regular beers are available – Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Morland's Old Speckled Hen. Look out

for live music evenings on the last evening of the month.

Look out for forthcoming events at The **George and Dragon** (Seaton) which typically include live music, quizzes and themed meals. Three cask ales available on hand-pump – currently Grainstore's Ten Fifty, Langton's Inclined Plane and the G&D house ale.

Despite there being only one cask ale on offer at **The Marquess of Exeter** (Lyddington) - Ringwood's Fortyniner – there is talk of a second ale being added on hand-pump. Being a Marston's house, it will come from their stable.

Greene King's IPA is the regular beer at **The Old White Hart** (Lyddington) served alongside the establishment's house beer – Old White Hart Winter Ale; which doubtless will become Spring Ale in due course. Lunchtime meals are, for the foreseeable future, being offered at 50% discount.

The Blue Bell in Belmesthorpe, our Autumn Pub of the Season winner and runner up Pub of the Year, serves a wide range of ales on its six hand-pumps and a real cider. They hold a quiz on the last Wednesday of the month.



...and finishing in the south

No cask ale is available at **The Castle Inn** (Caldecott) although a limited range of Grainstore ales is available in bottles.

The **Plough** (Caldecott) has re-opened and is currently serving three ales with food planned for the coming months.

(You are strongly advised to view a venue's social media for the most accurate and up-to-date information.)

Rutland Pubs Offering Discounts to CAMRA Members

We're very appreciative of a number of our great Rutland pubs offering discounts to CAMRA members.

The **Green Dragon** at Ryhall offers 30p off the cost of a pint and **Jinky's** in Oakham offers 20% off the cost of a pint, both will require production of a valid CAMRA membership card.

CAMRA members 50p off a pint discount vouchers are accepted at **The Captain Noel Newton**, **The Lord Nelson** and **The Grainstore Brewery Tap** in Oakham, **The Plough Inn** in Greatham, and **The Black Bull** in Market Overton.

We believe this is an accurate and up to date list but if you are aware of any other pubs offering discounts or accepting the vouchers please let us know by emailing chair@rutland.camra.org.uk

Introducing our new Chair, Kevin Thompson



The November branch meeting was preceded by a special extraordinary meeting at which I was appointed as the new branch Chair. This would have normally happened at our annual general meeting in August, and whilst at this meeting Rich stood down as

Chair, no one came forward as his replacement.

In order for the branch to continue, it is a CAMRA requirement that key roles are filled, one of which is the branch Chair. Therefore, I took the plunge as I didn't want the branch to become a sub-branch of another branch, most likely Leicester.

One of the reasons for taking on the role was the great support the branch gets from its members and the enthusiasm demonstrated by the turnout at our monthly branch meetings. However, I made it clear that I was not the same as the previous outgoing chair, who did an excellent job, and therefore don't expect everything to run as smoothly or in the same way that

Rich ran things. For one thing Rich is retired whilst I still work.

CAMRA has and always will be a grassroots volunteer-led organisation and therefore nothing happens unless people volunteer to do it. For people to volunteer there needs to be enjoyment in what they do and some reward for it. To this end, socialising goes hand-in-hand with undertaking CAMRA business. When I mention this to pub-goers they think it's a great excuse to go out, to score beer quality and judge our best pubs for the many rewards that we issue. 'You have the best job in the world!' someone said to me in a pub.

Protecting our pubs is essential for the wellbeing of the nation. For many this is the centre of their communities and the antidote to the great scourge of loneliness. CAMRA does what it can to protect our pubs, but they will only remain in business whilst they are being used. My role is to support our CAMRA members as they do what they can to promote real ale and our pubs, to secure their long-term future.

Kevin Thompson

BAKER'S DOZEN TRIUMPHS AGAIN!

UK's best Indie Beers revealed in historic night for British brewing - SIBA - Society of Independent Brewers and Associates Rutland's Baker's Dozen Brewery has once more proven its brewing brilliance, scooping multiple accolades at these awards. Judged by expert beer sommeliers, master brewers, and industry professionals, these awards celebrate excellence in appearance, aroma, flavour, and overall quality.

Having succeeded in the East section, Landlady X (ABV 8%) shone brightest, winning Gold and being crowned Category Champion in the Bottle & Can Double & Triple IPA (7.5% and over) class.

The Ketton-based brewery also secured two silver medals, both of which were named Category



Champions — meaning that of the three beers entered, all three emerged as champions and went on to compete in the National Finals in Liverpool in March.

At the National Finals Baker's Dozen won Overall Champion in the bottle / can competition with their bright and refreshing 3.2% "Agua Fresca Sour". As the UK's best beer in a bottle or can Baker's Dozen will now get automatic entry into the World Beer Cup in America, judged against the best beers from around the Globe. And as a bonus this great local brewery also won silver for Undertow & Gold for Landlady X!!

Full article - UK's best Indie Beers revealed in historic night for British brewing - SIBA - Society of Independent Brewers and Associates

WHICH BEERS GET OUR TOP SCORES?

CAMRA members have been busy rating their pints throughout the year, and those scores play a key role in selecting our Pub of the Season contenders — and ultimately the pubs that earn a place in the Good Beer Guide. They also reveal something we all love to debate: which beers truly rise to the top.

This year's standout is Bakers' Dozen, whose Electric Landlady has been crowned our 2025 Beer of the Year. Grainstore also impressed, with Ten Fifty and Rutland Panther both securing spots in the top ten. A huge cheer for our Rutland brewers, who continue to punch well above their weight.

Rounding out the local successes, Round Corner's Market Pale and Oakham Ale's Bishop's Farewell earned places in the top 20 while Nene Valley took 2nd and 3rd places with Release the Chimps and Egyptian Cream— a testament to the depth and quality of brewing across our region.

Result	Brewery	Beer
1	Bakers' Dozen	Electric Landlady
2	Nene Valley	Release The Chimps
3	Nene Valley	Egyptian Cream
4	Ossett	White Rat
5	Grainstore	Ten Fifty
6	Brains	Rev James Original
7	Grainstore	Rutland Panther
8	Batemans	5g
9	Marston's	Draught Bass
10	Black Sheep	Best Bitter

Raise a glass to all our brilliant local breweries — they've earned it.

National Beer Scoring System (NBSS)

The National Beer Scoring System is CAMRA's simple way for drinkers to record the quality of the cask ale they enjoy — and to help highlight the pubs and clubs that consistently serve it well. Whether you're a long standing CAMRA member or someone who loves a good pint, your scores play a real part in championing great beer. Every score submitted contributes to the selection process for the Good Beer Guide, helping ensure that venues serving the best cask ale get the recognition they deserve.

How to Score Your Beer

Submitting a score is quick and straightforward. After visiting any pub or club listed on CAMRA's website, you can log in, choose the venue, and record the date and quality of the beer you were served. It's an easy way to pass on your experience to fellow drinkers looking for reliably good pints.

The NBSS uses a 0–5 scale to describe beer quality. The system was created to help CAMRA branches assess pubs for the Good Beer Guide and to build a national picture of cask ale standards, based on reports from members across the UK and beyond.

If you're already a CAMRA member, your scores are invaluable. If you're not, it's a great reason to join one of Europe's most successful consumer organisations.

What the Scores Mean

0: No cask ale available - This can be because the pub never has it or it's run out

1: Poor - Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment

2: Average - Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in anyway, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing

3: Good - Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again

4: Very Good - Good Excellent beer in excellent condition

5: Perfect - Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely

Our Chairman, Kevin, has produced a short video that shows how easy it is to submit a beer score: it can be found on YouTube Beer Scoring via the CAMRA website - YouTube.

Or via the QR code -



Rutland CAMRA Autumn Pub of the Season

The Blue Bell, *Belmesthorpe*

Matt Thompson took over The Blue Bell, in the tiny hamlet of Belmesthorpe, last year and has been instrumental in reviving its fortunes with an ever-changing cast of 6 ales supporting national and local brews and real cider. Matt, his partner Hannah, and the team were presented with their certificate by our Chairman Kevin Thompson in early December.

We'd like to extend our congratulations to the runners up this season - The Plough in Greetham and The Wheatsheaf in Oakham.



Exciting news from The Rutland Brewing Company

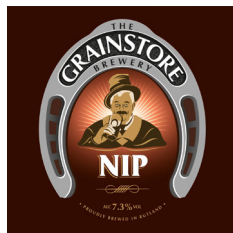


The business has purchased Musket Brewery, bringing it out of administration. Sadly, for Musket Brewery, the impact of COVID proved impossible to overcome. Like so many hospitality businesses, it faced rising costs and falling footfall, prompting difficult conversations about long-term sustainability and ultimately leading to the decision to close.

Managing Director William Davis described the acquisition as an important step in expanding the company's brewing operations. Musket Brewery was identified as a strong fit alongside their existing brands, The Grainstore Brewery and The Rutland Cider Company. Although no jobs in Kent could be retained, the company plans to recruit locally in Rutland as it develops the business over the coming years.

Silver Success for the Grainstore Brewery

At the Liverpool Beer Festival, The Grainstore Brewery earned a silver medal for their Nip (7.3%) in the Barley Wines & Strong Ales category at CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain — a showcase of the finest traditional winter ales.



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CHRISTMAS SOCIAL GATHERING

Instead of our usual December meeting, this year we once again opted for a festive social evening at the Cricket and Social Club in Empingham – and what a brilliant decision it was. The beer and cider were, as ever, superb; Russ clearly knows his way around a cellar, so returning for Christmas 2025 felt like the obvious choice.

The Uppingham Hopper was on hand to collect members from Uppingham and Oakham, driven by the wonderful volunteer Mel. He was one of the few unable to sample the ales but still joined wholeheartedly in the fun. Many thanks to Mel – and apologies for the enthusiastic singing on the journey home.

Russ proved an excellent host, and the club looked wonderfully festive. Even the Ladies' loo had its own Christmas tree. Amongst the many ales on offer were Bakers' Dozen's Electric Landlady, Falstaff's 3 Faze. Shivering Sands Brewery's Maumsell, Juration's G'Day, Market Porter and Nitro on keg. A generous buffet was organised by Bina and Pauline and supported by a couple of helpful elves, ensured everyone was well fed, with plenty of contributions from members including Gerry's wonderful curry. Our very own Silver Fox, Eddie

Markey, kept spirits high with a great selection of tunes that added a real party atmosphere.

During the evening, a raffle in aid of Rutland First Responders was held, and when combined with the winnings our Quiz Team has accumulated over recent months, Neil, our Treasurer, was delighted to present more than £250 to Jeremy, one of the First Responders, who accepted the donation on their behalf. He offered a brief but heartfelt thank you, noting how much the contribution was appreciated, especially as the Responders are required to purchase their own equipment and uniform.

As a special "treat" (depending on your feelings about Morris dancing), the Rutland Morris performed their traditional Mummers' Play – a wonderfully eccentric take on the legend of St George, complete with an eclectic array of props and costumes. It truly has to be seen to be believed.

All too soon the evening drew to a close. The elves rallied once more to tidy up and leave the club in good order. Same again next year, please, Russ!



BRANCH DIARY

MAY

Thursday 21st – Monday 25th

Grainstore Cider & Sausage Festival

Friday 22nd – Sunday 24th

Beer Festival at The Vaults, Uppingham

JUNE

Thursday 4th

Presentation to the runner up Pub of the Year – The Blue Bell, Belmesthorpe. 7:30pm

Saturday 20th - Sunday 21st

Sat, 20th(10:30 – 23:00) Sun, June 21st (10:00 – 17:00) – Castle Bytham Midsummer Festival Fishponds

Meadow, St Martins Lane, Castle Bytham, NG33 4SB

Friday 26th – Sunday 28th

Rutland CAMRA Beer Festival – County Museum Oakham. (Friday & Saturday 11am – 8pm, Sunday 12pm – 6pm)

AUGUST

Tuesday 25th – Saturday 29th

Peterborough Beer Festival

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 12th

The Greatham Community Centre are holding an "Ale & Cider" festival

MEET THE LANDLORD: “BEHIND THE BAR”



Dan Lacey Landlord of The Wheatsheaf, Northgate, Oakham



What's your name and current role at the pub?

Dan Lacey, Landlord of The Wheatsheaf, Northgate, Oakham.

How did you first get into the pub trade?

Whilst already having a full-time job I got a part time job as a barman when I was 19 to earn some extra cash to pay for my social life.

What other roles or pubs have you worked in before this one?

There's a bit of list...

Red Lion, Rothley (1995 – 1998) - Part-time Barman, leading to full-time Bar supervisor then Trainee Assistant Manager.

The Bucket and Spade, Weston-Super-Mare (1998 – 2000) - Live in Assistant Manager

Craddock Arms, Leicester - Assistant Manager (2000 – 2001)

Red Cow, Leicester Forrest East - Deputy Manager (2001 – 2002)

The Unicorn, Trumpington, Cambridge - Manager (2002 – 2004)

The Fort St. George, Cambridge (2003 – 2004) - Manager (ran alongside The Unicorn)

The Horseshoe, Oakham (2005 – 2013) - Tenant/Landlord

The Wheatsheaf, Oakham (2013 – Present Day) - Tenant/Landlord

What's been the most rewarding part of your career so far?

To get to where I am today, running my own successful pub alongside my wife Kerry.

Any memorable stories or characters you've encountered along the way?

There's been so many characters on my journey it's really hard to pick one out. One reason that attracted me to the pub trade was people watching, the things that people get up to and conversations that you overhear is far better than Corrie or Eastenders! I've met local heroes, celebrities. I've even barred Jeffrey Archer!

When was the pub established, and what's its origin story?

The original part of the pub was a stand-alone, thatched pub roughly in late 1500s, then with buildings attached to it. The right-hand side of the pub used to be a rope shop before becoming "room 4" of the Wheatsheaf.

Has the building or ownership changed over time?

Yes. Before Everards it belonged to Melbourne Inns. Before that I'm not sure.

MEET THE LANDLORD: "BEHIND THE BAR"

Are there any local legends, ghost stories, or quirky traditions tied to the pub?

We have a tradition on New Years Eve where we get everyone to go outside to the front at midnight, wait for the church bells to ring and all sing Auld Lang Syne (this year was the first year the church bells have actually rung!).

What makes your pub unique compared to others in the area?

Me!... also, we are a pub in the centre of town. We don't have gimmicks, pool tables, fruit machines, just background music and great banter. The regulars are also great welcoming every stranger in. We also have an award-winning garden that in the summer is the perfect place to drink and relax.

How does your pub engage with the local community?

We have various groups that use the pub: retiree luncheon club, a knitting group organised by Julie from wool zone and various competitions raising money for local charities.

What regular events or themed nights do you host?

We have steak deal every Thursday night (2 x 8oz Hambleton sirloin steaks for £28) and we do a quiz night twice a month raising money for local charities. This is really popular so you can only book in once a month to give everyone a chance of booking in.

Do you support local breweries or showcase regional ales?

We are an Everards pub so we are tied to them, which is not a bad thing as they are very popular and they do a lot of limited guest ales.

How many real/cask ales and real ciders do you serve?

We serve between 4 and 5 real ales at any one time and up to 10 real ciders.

What's your proudest moment as a landlord in this community?

There have been many, from winning CAMRA awards, garden awards, cellar awards, to raising thousands of pounds for local charities. I'm mostly proud that in the climate and challenges we face in the pub industry we

continue to increase trade in what is already a successful pub.

What's your favourite drink to serve-and your personal go-to?

I love pouring real ales and just watching it settle until it's crystal clear with a nice creamy head, but my go-to drink has to be Guinness - drank it all my life.

If your pub had a motto or catchphrase, what would it be?

You're Lucky to Get It!

What's one thing you wish more people knew about running a pub?

There's more to running a pub than just standing behind a bar. Paperwork and regulations take up so much time; I've seen the trade change dramatically over the last 30 years. It used to be a lot simpler. Friday night is my social night; it always makes me laugh when people see me on the other side of the bar and they say "hard at work again are we?" not realising that I did start at 8 in the morning.

Any advice for someone dreaming of becoming a landlord?

Get a job with a chain company, get paid by them whilst learning the skills, and try and get a manager's job before going alone. Make mistakes with someone else's money not yours!

Finally, describe your pub in three words.

Traditional, Friendly, Welcoming.

Did you know?

Almost three-quarters of UK drinkers have tried a low or no alcohol product, with 32% choosing these products 'semi-regularly'



Source: portmangroup.org.uk. "Consumer views on Low and No Alcohol products" (2022)



Oakham Ale Trail

The **Oakham Ale Trail** returns for this year's festival, and is proudly jointly sponsored by The Wheatsheaf and The Lord Nelson.

From **Monday 22nd June to Sunday 28th**, we're encouraging festival goers to explore and support Oakham's fantastic pubs in the days leading up to the main event. And with the festival closing at **8pm on Friday 27th and Saturday 28th**, and **6pm on Sunday 29th**, there's plenty of time afterwards to continue your ale adventures and enjoy the brilliant beers our town has to offer.

After all, our pubs aren't just for Christmas or the Ale Trail — they rely on us all year round.

We're lucky to have such a great selection of real ale pubs in Oakham. Below is a short introduction to each one, numbered to match the accompanying town map.

1. **The Grainstore Brewery Tap** has been cleverly converted from a derelict Victorian railway building and retains some original features. Here you can sample from a total of 10 hand pumps. The Grainstore is a regular local CAMRA branch award winner and accepts CAMRA 50p discount vouchers.

2. **The Wheatsheaf** is very attractive looking traditional British pub and a regular CAMRA award winner and entrant in the Good Beer Guide. A very popular pub with a strong local following, it serves a good range of Everard's beers and excellent choice of ciders. This pub also has a beautifully well-kept garden which has won many awards

3. **The Captain Noel Newton**, a Wetherspoons pub and often a contender for Pub of the Season. The 50p CAMRA discount vouchers are also accepted here.



Welcome to the Oakham Ale Trail

22-28 June

jointly sponsored by



&





Key to map

- WC Toilets at Church Street
- P Parking

Scan for more info



Map reproduced with kind permission of Discover Rutland
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Key to pubs on the trail

- 1 The Grainstore
- 2 The Wheatsheaf
- 3 The Captain Noel Newton
- 4 The Admiral Hornblower
- 5 The Lord Nelson
- 6 The George
- 7 The Crown Tavern
- 8 Jinky's
- 9 Ovation
- 10 The Wisteria Hotel

Key to buildings

- 1 Town Pump
- 2 Oakham Castle
- 3 Butter Cross
- 4 School Chapel
- 5 The Old School
- 6 All Saints Church
- 7 Signal Box
- 8 Hudson's Cottage
- 9 St John & St Anne's
- 10 Friends Meeting House
- 11 Victoria Hall
- 12 Flores House
- 13 Rutland Museum
- 14 Oakham School

4. **The Admiral Hornblower**, formerly a 17th century farmhouse, is a popular hotel & restaurant on the High Street in the centre of town with a welcoming front bar and separate restaurant and dining areas. Great for a summer's day with a large outside patio area. Another pub that accepts CAMRA discount vouchers.

5. **The Lord Nelson**. You'll find this quirky pub in the top right-hand corner of Market Place. Under new management since Christmas. There are 4 handpumps with 2 regular ales and 2 guests plus a real cider on the 5th pump. This pub also accepts CAMRA discount vouchers outside of 'Happy Hour'. Board games are available for hire to play while you enjoy the ales.

6. **The George Hotel** has been in the Market Place since the late 16th Century and has been extensively renovated having been formally known as the Whipper-Inn. There is a very cosy lounge, a separate bar area and lovely restaurant. Serves one regular ale.

7. **The Crown Tavern** can be found at the end of Crown Walk and is a smart, stylish family friendly sports bar serving ale on one pump.

8. **Jinky's** has been run by the same family for 18 years. All visitors to this quirky and quite different little pub with its unique decor are assured of a warm welcome. CAMRA members are offered a generous 20% off their pint with their CAMRA card. There are two cask pumps here with changing ales.

9. **Ovation** is a modern, friendly, bar serving quality wines and cocktails. Whilst no cask ale is available here, there is a selection of craft and keg beers.

10. **Hunters Bar** (Oakham) in the **Wisteria Hotel** has no cask ale but serves Adnams bottled beers and a keg.

And whilst Oakham is blessed with a good choice of real ale pubs, there are over 50 hostelrys within Rutland, all of which deserve a visit.

Wassail at Cidentro Cider House, Twyford

Hiranthi Cook, founder of Cidentro and a good friend of the branch, reports on this year's Wassail: An annual Wassail takes place in the orchards of cider-making villages up and down the country. It's the old tradition of wishing the trees good luck for the forthcoming harvest and giving thanks for last year's apples. At Cidentro Cider House in Twyford dressing up in wassailing outfits is very much encouraged to make this family event all the more enjoyable, together with delicious mulled cider to drink from the 'Wassail Cup'! Toast dipped in cider is hung on the trees and music played round the bonfire. This year there were 80 people attending Cidentro's Wassail making it their largest attendance to date. To join next year's Wassail (held every January) and find out about other events at the cider house you can join Cidentro's e-newsletter from their website www.cidentro.co.uk Wassail!

Photography by Matt Parker @Papamattzzi



Desert Island Drinks



I've spent most of my life somewhere between a bar counter and a barrel store. Over the years I've worked for pubs, cider makers, and even had a stint as a landlord myself.

Although I grew up in Australia, I eventually found my way to the orchards and rolling countryside of Herefordshire before settling in Oakham, where you'll find no shortage of well-kept, characterful ales if you know where to look.

Some of you may know me from my time as chair of Rutland CAMRA, a role I was proud to hold for three years. It gave me the perfect excuse to talk endlessly about good beer — not that I ever needed one.

So, when I was asked to choose the beers I'd take to a desert island, I jumped at the chance. After all, if I'm going to be stranded somewhere, I might as well make sure the drinks are worth staying for.

West End Draught, The South Australian Brewing Co. Ltd.

Growing up in South Australia and starting my working life at the actual brewery, West End was my introduction to beer. Sadly, a recent trip back to Oz revealed that while West End Draught is still available it's now brewed interstate in Victoria and the SA Brewing Co. no longer exists!

Wadworth's 6X

One of my first jobs when I returned to travel around the



UK was in a village pub in rural Herefordshire. On the bar was Waddys 6X. It was my introduction to British beer and I still enjoy a pint of it today if I see it about.

London Pride, Fullers

Living and working in London in the early 80s it tended to be Fullers pubs we visited and Pride was our go to tippie. I occasionally drink it these days and my taste buds have probably changed more than the beer but it doesn't quite seem to taste the same.

Red Stripe Lager, Desnoes & Geddes

What's this doing on the list you may say? Well, this one is definitely all about the memories most of which I can't possibly share. The explanation behind choosing Red Stripe is that I worked for a number of years at HP Bulmer when it was still a family-owned cider maker. What a great place to work it was. Charles Wells used to brew Red Stripe under licence and Bulmers was in a distribution partnership with them. As a result Red Stripe was on the bar in the staff social club and available in the staff shop. We used to run an annual trip to the Edgbaston Test Match and several slabs of Red Stripe tinnies would be consumed on the day.

Brains SA

We ran a pub for a few years, and although we were tied one of the first guest ales available to us was Brains SA. I'd always enjoyed Brains SA since being introduced to it in the Old Arcade in Cardiff. My personal preference for the beer was a big part in us choosing it as our guest ale. Being the only pub in the area that stocked it worked well for us, so fond memories indeed.

Butty Bach, Wye Valley Brewery, Herefordshire

A great name for a beer. I think it means 'little friend' and it was certainly a pint I enjoyed whilst living in Herefordshire. The Barrels pub in Hereford which was where the Wye Valley Brewery was established serves a great pint of Butty and is a must visit on trips back to the 'shire.

Electric Landlady, Baker's Dozen Ten Fifty, Grainstore

After recently serving as chair of Rutland CAMRA for three years, it's only appropriate that my last two choices lie with our two great Rutland breweries. The Grainstore has been brewing for over thirty years and Baker's Dozen celebrated their tenth anniversary last year. I'll take one from each to the island please: a pint of Electric Landlady for when the sun's shining, and if the weather is less than balmy a pint of Ten Fifty would be just the ticket.

And if the fire alarm goes off in the pub, which of the eight drinks would you grab first as you rush out?

Ahhh! For the memories of one's halcyon days it would

have to be the original West End Draught brewed by The South Australian Brewing Company!

Rich Harris

CIDER DISCOVERIES IN CAMBRIDGE

The Rutland CAMRA trip to Cambridge began with all 25 of us descending on the Devonshire Arms, recently crowned Cambridge Cider Pub of the Year. As an avid cider drinker, I'd been particularly looking forward to this stop — and it certainly lived up to expectations. Above the bar hung an impressive array of cider labels, hinting at a long history of variety, but nothing prepared me for what came next. When Natalie, the manager, served us, I asked which, from those labels might be available today. "All Fifty," she replied. I began with a half of Gwynt y Ddraig's Black Dragon (6.5%), perfectly chilled and enjoyed alongside the generous lunch spread she'd arranged for us. Assuming I'd misheard that a total of 50 ciders were available, I decided I must check again later when the bar was quieter — but yes, they really do keep around 50 on at all times. No wonder they won the award, especially as the previous winners stocked around 20.

Despite only having a small cellar, Natalie somehow, with creative space planning, manages to juggle more than 100 boxes down there, carefully arranged and constantly rotated, with at least two of each cider ready to go as they run out so quickly. I knew I wouldn't be allowed down there for a look, but she kindly took my phone with her and returned with photos.

Next, I tried a third of Celtic Marches' Alice (4.6%), and Natalie soon appeared with four more tasters she'd chosen for me — all excellent, and all demonstrating her deep knowledge and enthusiasm for cider. We chatted about producers, styles, and the joys of discovering new

favourites. I offered to pay for the tasters, but she was simply delighted to share them and would happily have let me taste all 50!

Our conversation moved on to perries. Like me, Natalie hadn't always been a fan, but had grown to appreciate them. I'm still on that journey, though I did enjoy Paradise Perry from Blue Barrel, a local Cambridgeshire cidery — so pale it was almost clear. Keeping with the local theme, I sampled Cromwell's Olivers Choice from Huntingdon, and Waken (4.2%) from Kent, both beautifully kept and perfectly chilled.

Eventually, we tore ourselves away to rejoin the rest of the group at The Kingston Arms, Cambridge CAMRA's Pub of the Year, where five real ciders were on offer, including Gwynt y Ddraig's Welsh Warrior (6%). A brief stop at the Alexandra followed — water only for me this time, though Rosie's Pig and Old Rosie were available — before we continued to the Geldart to admire the musical-instrument handpumps. One of them was serving Normandy Orchard (6.4%) from Simon's Cider, another local producer, which we enjoyed while sitting at the glass piano.

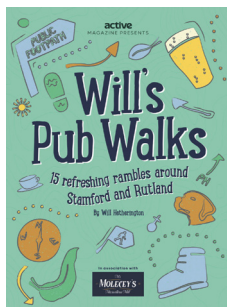
Our final stop was the Elm Tree, where I rounded off the afternoon with Alchemy from Dorset-based Isaac's (6.5%), a dry and refreshing cider to finish on. It was a wonderful day, full of variety, discovery, and some truly delicious ciders.

Manuela Croft



The Warm Embrace of the Pub

When you mix a very long walk in the English countryside with a village pub, what do you get? Will Hetherington found out on one stormy autumn day.



There were about 20 of us in the group when we set off from the cricket ground on the eastern edge of Uppingham at 9am on Saturday 4 October last year. Storm Amy was paying a visit that weekend and while the worst had already passed we had a significant tailwind – no bad thing as

we were planning to walk the magnificent 17 miles across Rutland all the way to Stamford, marginally over the border in Lincolnshire.

The first village on the route is little Bisbrooke with its utterly charming church, then there is a peaceful hidden valley with a wooden bridge over the babbling brook. On this occasion we encountered an advanced Gundog class at the far end of the field, and I am sure we provided some helpful distraction training. The ascent out of this piece of paradise brings you to the brink of the Welland valley and the next village is Seaton, where the George & Dragon lies in wait, but not at 10am and with many miles to go. Should you be there during opening hours then do not miss out – it's a cracking place run by good people.

From Seaton we descended into the valley bottom with the imposing and fabulous viaduct looming ahead. With 82 arches it's more than a kilometre long and I always feel it's rather overlooked when reading about Rutland and the east Midlands. Maybe it's better that way?

After Harringworth, it's a decent trek along the Welland initially to Barrowden, where the Exeter Arms lies in wait. Could there be a more quintessential setting for a

village pub than overlooking the village green and the duck pond in this prettiest of Rutland settlements? It's a cracking spot and a lovely pub with a superb garden for the summer months. If you get there before the pub is open there is also a nice picnic bench down by the pond to enjoy your cheese and pickle sandwiches and pork pie.

Barrowden is roughly halfway on this route so it's psychologically important, as is the next section to Tixover when you really break the back of the walk. The meandering river means it's also a meandering route, albeit rather lovely through the fields and woods. After crossing the A47 at Tixover and passing Tixover Grange there is a long straight stretch to Ketton where we have noticed Collyweston church up on the hill never gets any closer or further away. Morale can sometimes dip here, probably because it's a straight line and the scenery doesn't really change for half an hour or so.



However, on this occasion we had a bit more spring in our step because it was approaching 2pm, and that just happens to be when the doors of Nirvana open at The Railway Inn. As we positively skipped up the little footpath which brings you to those very doors, we could already see a couple of thirsty souls

The Warm Embrace of the Pub



waiting to quench their thirst. And then, like a blessing, the doors opened as we arrived. I doubt I need to tell the readers of this publication just what that felt like – after all, The Railway is one of the brightest jewels in the local pub crown and landlord Jamie is a genuine diamond.

Having already covered a glorious 12 miles in rather stormy conditions we could not have been more ready for a pint. If you are familiar with the pub you will know that on the right as you approach the bar there is a perfect area for a group of weary walkers to spread out in front of the big window, and so we did. Not for nothing is this pub a CAMRA darling and, after the first pint of the simply superb Bicycle Thief from Round Corner Brewing disappeared, the second swiftly followed.

At this point, the most dutiful members of the group started to look a bit twitchy, eyeing up their rucksacks and waterproofs. And, as sure as night follows day, the leader of this elite unit soon declared they were about

to resume the route up the hill to Easton and then back into Stamford before it was too late.

As we waved them goodbye the rest of us clearly knew our walking was done for the day. I mean, I ask you, after 12 miles of idyllic Rutland, why would we leave the warm embrace of one of the finest pubs you could hope to find, and with Amy still kicking up a fuss outside too? For those of us who felt the over-riding urge to support a local business, the final few miles were covered in taxis well after dark on this particular adventure, and I make no apology for that.

Observant readers will have noted in the opening paragraph that I wrote 'we were planning' to walk to Stamford. If I'm honest, I was planning to walk to Ketton and see what happened. And The Railway happened – very happily.

Will Hetherington

Will Hetherington is the author of the Will's Walks series of books, covering the wider Rutland and Stamford area, and Will's Pub Walks is the latest. You can buy it in shops across the area or from theactivemag.com

CAMRA PUB NUTTERS QUIZZERS

Rutland CAMRA is keen to support our local pub quiz nights.

Here is the team (which didn't quite come last!) at the Empingham Sports & Social Cricket Club in March.

If you'd like to join us and help make up a quiz team please contact our Quiz Coordinator Eddie Markey: quiz@rutland.camra.org.uk.



New Year trip to Peterborough

On one of the coldest days of the year on the first Saturday in January, four hardy CAMRA members assembled in the waiting room at Oakham railway station to catch the 11:40 to Peterborough. On arrival we made a beeline for the Bumble Inn on Westgate, our first stop of the day. Opened in 2016, Peterborough's first micropub was previously a chemist's and has since been awarded the branch pub of the year. We were greeted by five handpumps all serving excellent ale. and there were three real ciders too. Abbeydale's Moonshine was my choice, a good thirst quencher.



Chatting to the locals we soon realised that we needed to change our itinerary as the Frothblowers in Werrington was closed for the first two weeks in January. Instead, we embarked on our longest walk of the day over to The Shed Tap & Deli located behind the Passport Office in an old engine shed, part of the Peterborough East rail station which closed in the 1960s. This relatively new addition to the Peterborough drinking scene has three handpumps serving two Nene Valley brewery beers and Old Speckled Hen on our visit, but no real ciders. The smart interior is full of railway memorabilia, from working signal lamps to a huge 'Peterborough East' station sign and a model train tooting around above the bar.



Our next establishment was to be the Wonky Donkey; to speed things up we all squeezed into a taxi for the short journey. Our second micropub of the day, it was recently opened in Fletton and was awarded

Peterborough City Pub of the Year in 2025. There was a range of interesting beers on offer including a good selection of real ciders. I had the Hazmat brewed by Beermats, which received an excellent score. It was a little cold in there, the heating struggling to keep up with the cold day, so we had to keep our coats on.



On departure from the Wonky Donkey, we chose to catch a bus back into the city. Turning the wrong way out of the pub meant we ended up on a bus going towards Yaxley instead. This was quickly corrected by a bus stopping for us even though we hadn't reached the bus stop, which dropped us a short stroll away from the Yard of Ale.

Six ales were on offer at the Yard of Ale and I was delighted to try the Grainstore Nip which is rarely seen, even at the Grainstore Brewery Tap. At 7.3% it was only a half pint, accompanied by a half of Abbeydale Absolution. We also took the opportunity to tuck into some well-deserved cheese and onion rolls.



Almost next door, the Palmerston Arms was our next port of call. This Batemans house serves the beer straight from casks which can be viewed from a window behind the bar. Another six real ales were available and three ciders. I enjoyed the Batemans Salem Porter, my first dark beer of the year.

Our final visit was to Charters, a Dutch grain barge, moored in the banks of the river Nene. The bar is

New Year trip to Peterborough

downstairs in the hull of the boat where eight real ales were served from handpumps, four from Oakham Ales who have the freehold to the establishment. Of the four guests my favourite of the day was from the Buxton Brewery, Nuts & Crosses a peanut butter milk stout. I gave it a 4.5 out of 5.



From Charters we walked back to Peterborough station in time to catch a train back to Oakham. Despite the cold weather everyone enjoyed the day out, a great introduction to 2026.

Kevin Thompson

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