

Æ | RISING TUN

Spring 2023

Issue 131



Campaign
for
Real Ale

THE COTSWOLD CIDER CO

REAL GOOD CIDER



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THE GLUE POT

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The pub is named for the glue pots nearby coachbuilders would bring into the pub at lunchtime and place on the central stove to keep warm.

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5 Regular ales
and 2 changing ales

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Monday:
4.30pm to 11pm

Tues-Thurs:
12 noon to 11pm

Fri and Sat:
11.30am to 11pm

Sunday:
12noon to 10.30pm

From the Editor...

Well, it's been quite a gap between this issue and the previous one. You would need to be living in a parallel universe not to understand how the cost of living and especially the energy price increases, have affected our pubs and clubs. The cost of keeping you all warm and toasty is colossal in these large high ceiling buildings. I was astonished to read some of the monthly bills that large pubs are having to cope with. As most of you know this modest publication is only able to go ahead because of the generosity of our advertisers. When it's a choice between carrying on in business at all and spending money is on advertising and PR that is not absolutely essential to survive, it's quite understandable that landlords and companies were forced to reduce their advertising spend. The good news is that we are now back and I would please especially commend you to have a look at the advertisers in this edition and do whatever you can possibly to support their businesses in the way they support us.

Changing the subject slightly, I want to go all the way back to October when despite a number of pessimistic opinions, our Great Beer Festival at STEAM was an outstanding success. We pretty much sold out of the beers and ciders even though we had to charge a little more as our suppliers had radically increased prices in many cases. Of special note to me, was the fact that your committee decided to support Swindons newest community mental health charity, The Kelly Foundation, which I have founded in memory of two of my children, who both died as a result of poor mental health. We receive no government grant so all of our money to operate comes from our Trustees, Donors and our fundraising events. The unused beer tokens which you kindly dropped in the box on the way out, raised a quite astonishing £450 and I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Foundation, sadly rather belatedly, to sincerely thank you all for your generosity and of course the committee for their nomination.

If you are in need of help or wish to find out more about our charity, go to www.4kelly.org. Thank you for helping us help others.

John Stooke
Editor

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editor@swindon.camra.org.uk

RISING TUN

'THE RISING TUN' is the magazine of Swindon and North Wiltshire branch of CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale)

THE LOCAL DIARY

All meetings and social events are relaxed and friendly. Why not come along and join us? Members and non members are equally welcome to attend. Check the website before setting out in case of any last minute changes. Meetings usually begin at 8.00pm. Upcoming dates are:

MARCH

Wednesday, 8th (GBG Meeting)

The Manor
Cheney Manor Rd,
Swindon SN2 2NX
(starting at 7:30 PM)

Monday, 13th

The Brown Jack
Priors Hill
Wroughton SN4 0RT

APRIL

Monday, 17th

AGM
The Goddard Arms
High Street
Swindon SN1 3EG

JOKES

My physiotherapist said that orthopaedic shoes would help me with my posture, I didn't really think so ... but I now stand corrected.

MARSTONS,

“Ales On The Move”

Those of you who peruse these columns regularly will remember my warning in November 2020, that Danish lager giant Carlsberg (famous for their Special Brew, to be seen on a park bench near you) taking over the brewing operations of Marstons, (of course presented as a merger), was always going to be bad news for any of us who delight in the nuances that local brewing of ale provides.

So it was little surprise when in October last year the “painful” decision was taken to close Jennings Cumberland Brewery and relocate the brewing to Burton, 190 miles away. Their accountants know the cost of everything and the value of nothing. Pretty soon I expect the rather wonderful Cocker-Hoop to be indistinguishable from Pedigree. Whilst Marstons had faithfully kept it small regional brewers apart (as they were exactly that), the accountants will see their closure and integration into the Burton site has being ... in business speak ... “an opportunity”.

Whilst Jennings is the first casualty of this “opportunity”, a brewery who have been in Cockermouth in the Lake District since 1874, it may not be the last. I always liked Jennings beers, cask ales brewed with lakeland water drawn from the brewery’s own well, using screened and crushed malt rather than ground and whole flaked hops instead of the increasingly popular hop pellets. Their beers will now be brewed in Burton alongside Pedigree, Banks and a plethora of other brands which will likely all taste the same. How can Jennings beers genuinely survive as they won’t conjure up the soul of the Lake District and certainly won’t support vital jobs in a rural town in an area with heavy seasonal downturns.

Whilst the Carlsberg accountants in Copenhagen won’t understand, losing another of our country’s



historic breweries is a sad day to be lamented by all of us who value the diverse regional character of our island and the delightful subtlety that only British brewed ales can provide.

Finally, and this really irks me, why are all the decisions made after “much thought and regret”,

or are “painful” , or “extremely difficult”? ... after all the real pain accrues to those losing their jobs and not the crocodile tears shed by senior company executives and their inflation proofed pensions. Such platitudes also do nothing for ale enthusiasts who appreciate the regional variations, the different waters, the yeast strains, the smaller hop fields and independent barley producers, but most of all nothing for the erstwhile employees as they collect their P45s!

Carlsberg still maintain Ringwood in Hampshire (which now brews Wainwright Ales), Wychwood Brewery in Witney which brews Henley and the Hobgoblin (although they have closed the brewery tap there overnight), and Charles Wells in Bedford who now brew Young’s beer. Are all these destined for Burton-on-Trent as the accountants sharpen their pencils and talk excitedly of rationalisation? Perhaps the term ‘gone for a Burton’ (originally coined by those wishing a new, cheap suit), couldn’t be more appropriate?

Ed

THE BEEHIVE

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www.bee-hive.co.uk

R.I.P

Chas Wright

I have just heard that Uley Ales founder and stalwart, Chas Wright passed away on January 31st. Chas founded the Uley Ales brewery in 1985 in order to brew genuine Cotswold beer. He had an interesting prior life and I may do more of a bio in the next edition.

I knew him briefly from the Frocester Festivals back in the day, so, as he would often say, “Keep taking the medicine (which in his case was Uley Old Spot!).



STEAM RAILWAY CLOSED

A popular Swindon pub is currently in the middle of a long-awaited major refurbishment. The Steam Railway Co pub in Newport Street is usually full of people enjoying a pint and watching sport but it closed its doors at the end of January. Landlord Steve Griffiths said “We’re looking forward to welcoming you all back but just for now, we can’t work around you”.



Hidden Gems Where We Least Expect Them!



The Wheatsheaf, a Gastropub in the picturesque village of Chilton Foliat, Wiltshire, provides a full range of cask beers, lagers and ciders along with great homemade fresh food. It's landlord and owner Ollie Hunter is passionate about food and the environment and has written several sustainable cookbooks describing how to make brilliant meals using fresh environmentally sourced ingredients.

The restaurant offers seasonal food with 70% grown in Britain and most within 30 miles from the Pub, minimising food miles. The Pub aims to eliminate food waste by using every part of the product, buying free range organic meat from local farmers with a “nose to tail ideology” which uses all parts of the animal killed for food. While

we were there they were finishing off the venison and preparing to receive a whole matured beef carcass which will be sold over the next few weeks. They also only select ethically produced chocolate; fish is selected by using the Marine Conservation Society guidelines and they buy fair-trade coffee and tea. They grow some of their fruit and vegetables on site, the rest is purchased from local organic growers. Locals with an excess of vegetables from their allotment can bring them along for the kitchen in return for free beer!

The Wheatsheaf was awarded the “Best Organic Eat Out” certificate 2020 from the Soil Association and 3-star certificate for sourcing organic produce, 80% of the food and drink on the menu is organically produced. Organic farming

(not adding chemicals) is kinder to the planet and massively helps in supporting biodiversity.

As well as sourcing organic food and drink, the Pub does everything to make its operation sustainable. All cooking and heating uses renewable wood, with a centrally located wood burner to keep the locals warm in the winter. They use “green” electricity from Ecotricity.

They avoid the use of plastics and recycle all bottles and cans as well as planning a small commercial composting unit to provide organic fertiliser, and possibly heat an intended new greenhouse. The Pub uses repurposed beautifully crafted aged furniture which gives a homely feel.

Like every Pub, the Wheatsheaf is the Hub of the Community, serving the locals as a social meeting place and hosting arts and music events. The great food attracts people from the surrounding towns and villages, and it is part of Britstoppers which welcomes Motorhomes to stay overnight in their car park free of charge and enjoy the generous Wiltshire welcome.

The Pub offers local craft beers and “homemade” slow food which tastes great, produced by a team who care about quality and the environment.

As pubs come under increasing pressure to attract customers, control costs and provide a unique community experience, Ollie has created a pub for the future filled with atmosphere, heritage, fresh produce and sustainably sourced organic or locally produced products.

The Wheatsheaf shows us how we can have with great food and at the same time reduce the negative impact on the environment.

I'm grateful to Tim O'Rourke for telling me all about this splendid pub.

Ed



JOKes

Jackie's therapist told her she needs to “embrace her mistakes” ... so she came home and gave me a hug...

Carlsberg Accountants Take Another “Difficult” Decision

Marston's has closed its visitor centre in Burton, with one brewery enthusiast saying it was “another hole in the reputation of Burton as the brewing capital of the world”. The news as come as the town also saw the closure of the National Brewery Centre. Marston's Brewery, in Shobnall Road, used to offer brewery tours alongside running a replica pub but these are no longer being offered, the firm has revealed.

Tours were held at the brewery twice a day on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays by pre-booking. It included a tour of the Victorian Brewhouse and the Burton Union System of brewing. Those on the tour could learn about the brewing process from mashing to fermentation, and see how traditional brewing methods have evolved. There was also a drink at the end.

TOUGH TO TEACH AN OLD DOG NEW TRICKS

Poor old James Watt, owner of Brewdog has been having a torrid time recently.



A misleading advert by the craft brewing giant has been banned after appearing to suggest its fruit flavoured beers count as one of your five-a-day! Government guidelines recommend that people consume five portions

of fruit and vegetables per day as part of a healthy lifestyle but, sadly for Brewdog, this does not include alcoholic beverage, even when they may have a high fruit content! Upholding the complaint, the ASA said the subject heading 'one of your five-a-day' may not be interpreted by some consumers as a humorous nod to the ale brand name. (Is this really true? Ed)

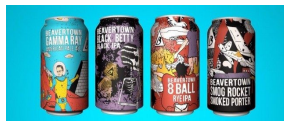


Worse was to come however when Watt's 'Willy Wonka' inspired promotion to dispense a few of his products in gold cans became a PR nightmare.

Clients who won the gold cans argued that they were gold plated and not solid gold! Brewdog felt this would be understood, because solid gold would be much too soft a metal to contain the product, but in fairness to Watt, he agreed to refund those consumers who felt they had been misled with a gold plated can, and tossed in £500,000 of his own money to dig his brewery out of the PR mess they had fallen into. Two and a half years salary he said (back to Gloucester Old Spots over Dursley!)

NORTH LONDON BREWER BEAVER TOWN TAKES THE MONEY AND RUNS

North London brewer Beaver Town sold its final 51% stake to Heineken for a substantial yet undisclosed sum. This move,



follows the makers of Gamma Ray and Neck Oil, having already sold a 49% stake in the

business to Heineken, in June 2018 for £40 million. To say the founder Logan Plant is laughing all the way to the bank may well be an understatement!

I've never been much of a fan of craft ale, particularly that which arrives in tins, but there's no doubt Beaver Town had a bit of a cult following, with Logan Plant eulogising on the importance of standing up to the beer giants!!! (yeah right)

They have always had a loyal following in North London and had struck a deal with Tottenham Hotspur to open a microbrewery and tap room in the new Tottenham stadium. Plant will now depart the business to continue as a 'consultant', (although I expect he will be consulting more with his millions of the Heineken pounds).

Lager giant Heineken speaking about the acquisition said that "Beaver Town will continue to expand and flourish while remaining committed to its independent creativity. The current Beaver Town management will continue to operate the company as a separate business" (but then I recall the Chinese said that about Hong Kong?)

BEERY BITS

*A Random News Round-up
From the World of Real Ale*

More than 400 pubs were forced to close in the past year as rocketing energy bills and staffing pressures blighted the industry. Fortunately in Swindon we have been very lucky, as our growing population seems to be able to support most of the pubs that we have in our midst. Nationally the number of pubs shutting their doors for good was 13% lower however than that recorded in 2021, where lots of businesses were supported by the furlough scheme. It's also been reported nationally that many pubs have reduced their trading hours or reduced their menu size in the

wake of soaring bills but again, that's not something that's too common around here thankfully.

Broad Town Brewery has jumped into the space at STEAM Museum left by the demise of Box Steam Brewery (see page 9) You can now find Springback session ale, Black Llama Porter. Broad Town Best, Settlers Pale Ale and Silbury Hill Saison on sale at the museum shop. You can access the shop by walking over from the Designer Centre without paying to go into the museum.

PUB NEWS...

SWINDON AND NORTH WILTSHIRE BRANCH

The **Inn with the Well in Ogbourne St George** is on the market with the owners retiring after 31 years. It originates back to the 17th century and for £650,000 you get six en-suite letting rooms thrown into the deal. The **Wagon and Horses in Royal Wootton Bassett** we are told is now open. In Aldbourne the **Blue Boar** has now reopened. In Fleet St, the Waiting Room has a new manager. Looking toward Liddington, the much loved **Village Inn** we think is closed whilst Arkells seek out a new tenant (if you're looking to get into the pub game you could do worse than contact George Arkell and take a look), Purton now and the **Angel** has appointed Dan and Tracey Brackenbury who you may remember from the Tawny Owl in 2017, or from one of my 'meet the publican articles'. They have now returned to the trade, and whilst on Purton, we understand the **Red House** private club is now been rebranded as a pub but at the moment we are not sure about the planned offer of real ale. The **Rolleston Arms** is now open again with ex-Wetherspoon's manager Dan Harrison at the helm and promising extended opening hours, but he is sadly unlikely to have brought his Wetherspoon's pricing with him? The previous boss Violet McLaren sold the Commercial Road tavern so that she could focus on its sister pub the Victoria in Old Town. Daniel's family ran the Clifton previously. The **Runner** has a new team and will be serving Nepalese food (yum!) At the **Rusty Garage** Marek has indicated he intends to close his tap room with the words "I'm minded to close the taproom ... not sure if this means he will or is just thinking about it?"

FESTIVALS

The 2023 **Chippenham Beer Festival** is at the Olympiad for its 30th event. It will be held over three sessions ... on the evening of 31st March, 5:30 PM to 11 PM, and on Saturday, 1 April lunchtime 11 AM to 4 PM and 7 PM to 11 PM. There will be food over all three sessions and live music on the Saturday sessions with an acoustic performer at lunchtime and a band on the Saturday night. Sounds great .. how I wish I could enjoy the ales!

Bath Beer Festival is due on 17th and 18th of February at Whitcomb Social Club in Bath. Sadly I fear by the time you read this edition, the festival may have come and gone and we can only hope that 2024 sees the Bath Festival return.

The **Reading and Wantage Festivals** are cancelled. **Wanborough Festival** is 9th and 10th June and **Old Town Festival** on 12th and 13th May. More details later.

WHERE CAN I SPEND MY CAMRA VOUCHERS?

The Dockle Farmhouse, The Savoy, The Sir Daniel Arms, The Goddard Arms, The Wyvern Tavern, The Brunel in Chippenham, The Bridge House in Chippenham, The Bear in Melksham, The Bridge Tap in Salisbury and The Bath Arms in Warminster.

Cheers!

JOKes

Never let anyone tell you what you can or cannot do! Just look at Beethoven, everyone told him he would never be a musician, just because he was deaf. But did he listen?



Wadworths Look Forward to the Next 150 Years



One of Wiltshire's most recognisable breweries, Waddys, has unveiled its plan for a new brewery site in Devizes. The site is a five minute drive from the well-known historical brew house in the centre of Devizes, and Wadworth tell us that the new brewing facility will make their work more 'sustainable' (what else?) and enable them to be sensitive to changes in the beer market. Sustainable initiatives include using natural refrigerant gases in their refrigeration technology, reducing their water reliance on Wessex Water by using boreholes, reducing bulk tanker deliveries by generating

food grade nitrogen on the site and improving the energy efficiency in the new building.

In fairness they have chosen local family firms Gage and Dolman as building contractors and building surveyors respectively and for all other suppliers are mainly drawn from the Devizes area. As we know, Wadworth date back to 1875 when Henry founded the business and it grew to occupy its Northgate site, the one it's now leaving, by the turn-of-the-century. Wadworth have already appointed Backhouse Homes, who have come up with a design to convert and build around the Northgate Street site which, according to CGI visuals, looks impressive (see below).

I suppose the bad news for us is that the new site Wadworth will now be brewing lager known as 'Helles and Back' (Helles or Hellish?) and apparently Managing Director Toby Bartholomew is excited about this development? I'm not so over the moon. There seems much less said about 6X, Horizon, Swordfish and Henry's IPA and some of the more unusual recipes we've got to know and love on Wadsworth bars in the recent past.



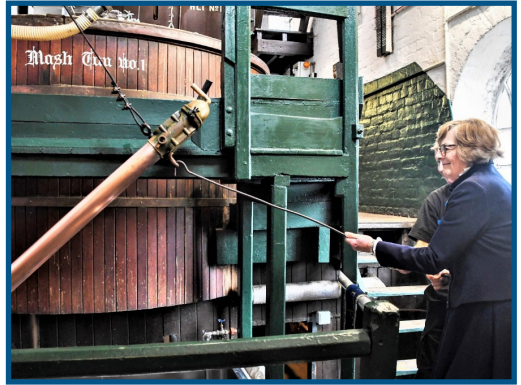
ARKELLS

A Quite Remarkable Milestone!



Arkell's Brewery, undoubtedly one of the oldest companies remaining in Swindon, this year are celebrating 180 years of continuous brewing at Kingsdown.

The anniversary has been noted by Alex Arkell brewing a new celebratory session beer to be known as 'Tradition', 3.4% ABV, which he describes as "an easy drinking, deep red beer, with a warming fruit biscuity taste and aromas of mango and peach".



Further there are big plans for this year including an ale trail competition around the huge number of Arkells pubs locally, a weekly brewery tour (small charge) for the general public starting this month, and what Arkells describe as a 'big birthday bash' in September, with live music and lots of beers to try.

The photograph shows the High Sheriff of Wiltshire, The Marchioness of Lansdowne doing something with Alex's new 'Tradition ale' (I'm not quite sure what!)

Image credit Richard Wintle.

Swindon BEEREX 1979

I came across this in an old file, and is one of the very early posters, designed by David Backhouse, and advertising the fourth annual beer festival in 1979.

Admission was only £1 per session and you could buy tickets at the Duke of Wellington, the Lamb and Flag or the Black Horse in Wanborough. How things change!

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BEEREX
1979**

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Emlyn Square, Swindon
(Rear of Railway Museum)**

THREE SESSIONS

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Sat. 27th Oct. 11-2.30p.m. & 7-10.30p.m.

**Admission by ticket only £1 per session
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OR BY POST: SEND £1 PLUS S.A. TO CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE, PO BOX 100, SWINDON
OR BY POST: SEND £1 PLUS S.A. TO CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE, PO BOX 100, SWINDON

Asahi and Meantime

Apologies for yet more news on craft breweries. From someone who doesn't think much of craft ale I'm sorry to bore you with all this news but Japanese drinks giants Asahi, who own Dark Star beers, are moving the portfolio over to the Meantime brewery in Greenwich away from its traditional Sussex home. Dark Star, which began in the basement of the Evening Star pub in Brighton before expanding to a brewery in West Sussex, has been historically revered as one of the most influential breweries in the British craft beer revolution, prior to becoming a pawn in the acquisition trail. Initially Dark Star sold out to London brewer Fuller for a sizeable sum, with Fuller's promising to invest and increase sales of brands such as Hop Head, APA, Dark Star original and Revelation.

In 2019 Fullers shocked the beer world by selling its own brewery, including brands such as London Pride and Dark Star to Japanese brewer Asahi.

Meantime, which also began as a craft brewery, was then seduced by the huge sums of money the global brands have on offer, and sold to SAB Miller for £420 million in May 2015 ... before AB InBev acquired SAB Miller for £71 billion in December 2015. If all these numbers are beyond your understanding, I'd go and get another pint in because it gets even more complicated.

Asahi then waded in and paid AB InBev £2 billion for Peroni, Grolsch and Meantime brands in a deal which was designed to satisfy the Monopolies Commission.

If you have had enough of the all this craft beer stuff so have I, so will leave the story there, and focus on our beloved artisan breweries and not In Bev who apparently account for one in three of all beers sold worldwide, or should I say or lagers sold worldwide, Yuk!

All Aboard, Next Stop BBF!

A very successful trip to Bristol was enjoyed by 60 CAMRA members in November 2022. A full Barnes coach left Swindon at 11.00 and following 2 hours sampling the amazing beers that make up the Bristol Beer Factory collection, we were off to King Street for a look at a huge concentration of real ale pubs, before our final stop at 2 micros, Wiper and True and Fierce and Noble in St Werburghs, next to the M32.

Due to the excess weight on board the coach needed an unscheduled stop at Leigh Delamere services on the way back!!



Sexy Shop to an even Sexier Real Ale House

10 years ago a Swindon sales rep (known affectionately to us all as Jason Putt) decided to turn a disused sex shop into a pub. He seemingly followed his mum and dad's footsteps by becoming a pub landlord, with his wife Karen Griesel, in 2012. We now know his first venture as the Little Hop of course, specialising in the rather nice Arbor Ales. As Jason was a wily and well versed businessman, he soon expanded along Devizes Road by snapping up the old Pig on the Hill, following the previous owners failure in 2019.



I'm delighted to say that both pubs are still going strong and benefitted from a fundraiser in the middle of the pandemic which raised £11,000, much to Jason's surprise and delight. I believe there is a board inside the door dedicated to those who helped with this lifeline.

Of course it's getting tougher and tougher for local business but the Hop Inn is now doing quite a decent turn on food and his son Ben is enjoying his role in leading the Hop as Jason adopts a slightly lower profile (does he? Ed).

I have to say it really is a popular and first-class pub, well-run and playing a significant part in the local community. It quite rightly won our CAMRA award for Pub of the Year and let's hope that this first 10 years is the start of years and years and years of more excellent beer and fine company into the future!

The Committee Says A Thankyou



A coach of 49 people, mainly beer festival volunteers left Swindon on Saturday 28th January to be at Tewkesbury for the opening of their Saturday session at 11am.

We enjoyed a wide selection of dark winter beers including some over 8% that had to be treated with respect. As has become a tradition a brass band played the Dambusters' March and paper aeroplanes filled the hall towards the end of the afternoon. We left at 5pm having had a very pleasant day.

Our own Ashton's won an award Festival. 1st was Stroud Brewery with Dubbel Trubbel 2nd was Inferno Brewery with Flaming Pud 3rd was Ashton Brewery with King's Speech. Ashton's "King's Speech" is a strong winter ale at 54% abv brewed with five different malts and English hops.

JOKES

Although I've now gone mostly bald, I still keep the comb I've had for 20 years now ... Somehow I just can't seem to part with it.

JOIN US AT CAMRA....COME ALONG, MEET NEW FRIENDS, GET INVOLVED...

You perhaps pick up the 'Tun' occasionally, or maybe this is your first time, and you get to this last bit and think ... Why should I bother to join? What's the offer ... terrific fresh real ale, chance to get away and chat, the company of warm, welcoming, like minded friends, and knowing you play a part in one of the biggest and

most successful pressure groups in UK history. We meet monthly and organise lots of social events. Give it some serious thought. If you are still not quite sure, why not call Richard on Swindon 618921 and chat it over.

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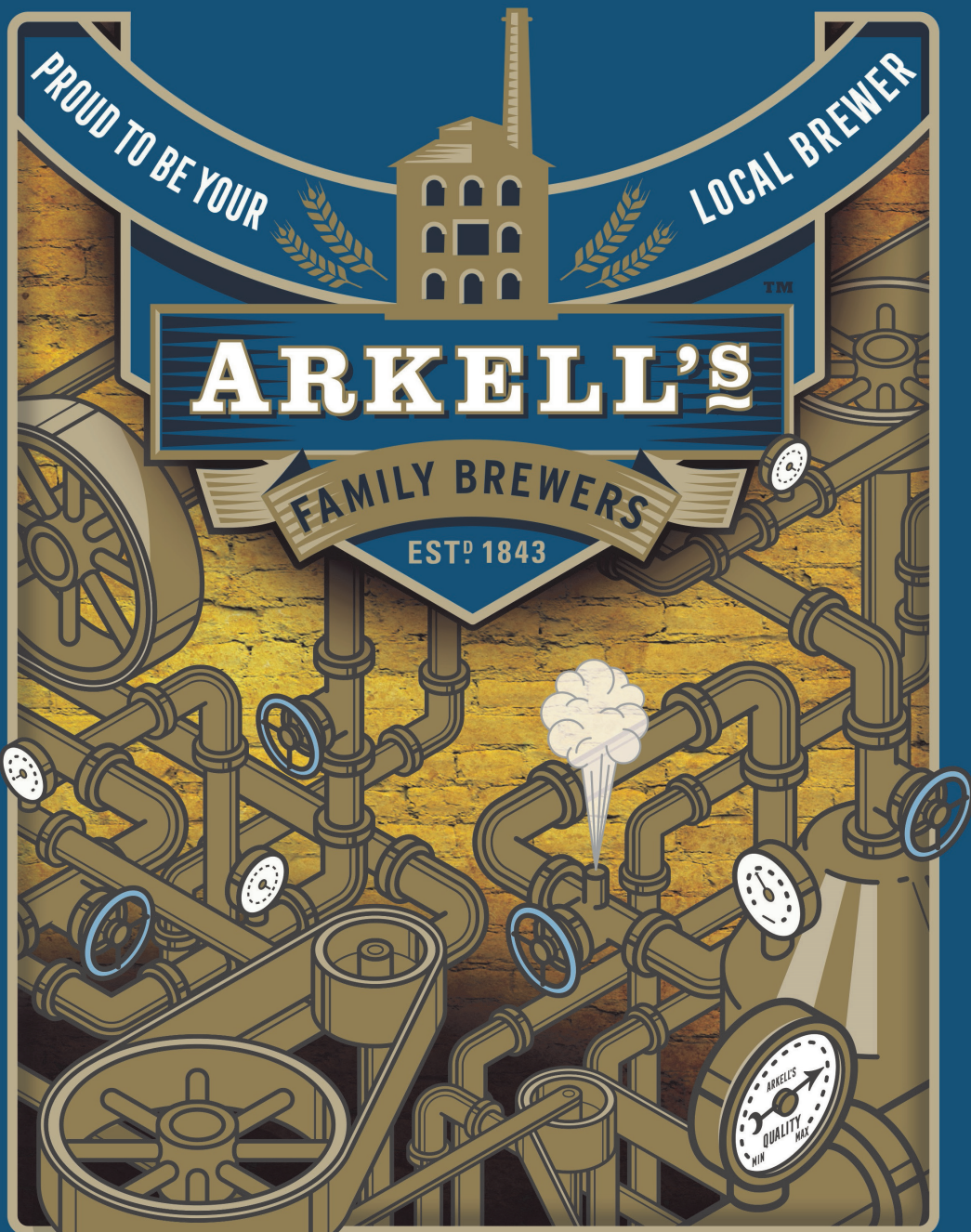
Become part of the CAMRA community today - enjoy discounted entry to beer festivals and exclusive member offers. Learn about brewing and beer and join like-minded people supporting our campaigns to save pubs, clubs, your pint and more.

Join the campaign today at
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*Price for paying by Direct Debit and correct at 1 July 2021. Concessionary rates available. Please visit camra.org.uk/membership-rates
[†]Joint members receive £40 worth of vouchers.



Campaign
for
Real Ale



Quality
REFINED THROUGH THE GENERATIONS
www.arkells.com

A man wearing a tan cap, glasses, a red t-shirt, and a brown apron is smiling broadly while holding a large, silver metal cask. He is standing in what appears to be a brewery or industrial setting with pipes and equipment in the background.

LWC

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