

CAMRA Bromley Branch

Newsletter

April 2020



Dear CAMRA Member

Hello and welcome to the April edition of the Bromley Branch Newsletter. I do hope that you and your family are all safe and well at this very difficult time.

Needless to say, much of this edition will relate to Covid-19 and its immediate, and potential long term, impact on our lives, our pubs/clubs, the breweries and CAMRA, however we have managed to find some non-virus items, which we hope you will enjoy whilst drinking a beer supplied by one of the few pubs, clubs, or craft beer outlets still open for business.

The branch AGM was held on 14th March. A new Committee was elected at the AGM, as a result of which there have been a few changes on the Committee; more information about this is in the report below by our Branch Secretary.

Your previous Editor, Martin Gee, stood down at the AGM and I will now be editing the newsletter for the next 12 issues. I'm very pleased to say that Martin will be continuing on the Committee as the Area Rep for BR1. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Martin for his work as Editor for the last year, which saw the newsletter grow in size from just a few paragraphs to several pages each month. I hope to try to build on that success in future issues, by which time I would hope that there will be some better news to report.

Bob Keaveney (Newsletter Editor and Beer Score Coordinator)

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Email problems, our apologies

Please accept our apologies that, for reasons beyond the control of Bromley CAMRA, the emails which were sent out to all Bromley members on 3rd March and 17th March, were both delivered twice to many members.

Emails such as this are not dispatched directly by the branch, but go via CAMRA's office, using the central membership records. We have asked them to investigate why the previous mailing went out twice.

We sincerely hope that this problem is not repeated with the mailing that is used to send out this newsletter.

Bromley Branch has a New Chairman



Charles Tucker was elected as Branch Chairman at the AGM last month. He's been a member of CAMRA for 33 years. Although enjoying many branch socials and volunteering at previous beer festivals, he only took the plunge to join the Branch Committee in autumn 2019.

Charles is a keen, and award-winning, home brewer and has written a number of pieces about home brewing in previous editions of this newsletter; elsewhere in this issue he describes how he has recently installed a handpump in his under stairs bar.

He takes over leadership of the branch at a time when CAMRA, breweries, pubs and clubs face unprecedented challenges due to the restrictions imposed to try to control the Covid-19 pandemic.

Here Charles writes about immediate challenges of the role from the new Chairman's perspective and his hopes for the future of CAMRA and our branch.

Sometimes by losing a battle you find a new way to win the war¹

May I first say "Vishnu" - no, not a greeting in a strange language, but perhaps what the new Chairman's name should be! I'll come back to this later.

After the AGM it is customary for the incoming Chairman to write an article for the next newsletter. Scanning previous year's newsletters for guidance, I see the Chairman's missive after the AGM has generally concerned reporting the AGM outcomes and committee changes, along with positive comment on the upcoming Beckenham Beer Festival. Further words around enjoying beers, going out in lighter and warmer evenings, exciting social events, awards to pubs, ongoing campaigns, etc., are all also touched upon – this with heady enthusiasm and looking forward to a joyful branch year ahead.

Then we come to March 2020 and it's my year. Here I am, your newly elected Chairman, eager to succeed, make changes, and desperately wanting to add value to the branch. But what do we find? A national crisis. Massive changes to our accepted way of life. Shops, restaurants, pubs, clubs, breweries, beer festivals – all forced to close down. Our own beloved Beckenham Beer Festival, the highlight of our branch year, along with even the CAMRA GBBF, cancelled. No sports events, no social gatherings, no meetings, and no group drinking. No passing the time of day with family and neighbours. No embracing, no kiss on the cheek, not even a handshake. No closer than two metres to the next human being on the street. Even going on the street is banned, unless for very specific reasons. You can go down to the hardware store and buy a plug, but you can't buy a pint in the pub as you pass it. People's livelihoods and jobs are at risk, along with the stability of our economy. And let's not forget the poor souls who are currently ill and those who have died. This will not be remembered as my glorious Chairman's year, but as the year of the Coronavirus.

But, believe it not, as the new Chairman I AM OPTIMISTIC. I have always been a glass half full person, rather than a glass half empty one. Let me try and share some of that optimism with you, our committee, and our branch members, while also trying to focus on a better future.

¹ Sometimes by losing a battle you find a new way to win the war. Don't ever get down on yourself; just keep fighting - in the end, you WIN! Donald Trump (of all people!), May 23, 2014 on Twitter.

So what is there to be positive about? Let's start at the top. You will all probably remember the 2018 'Revitalisation Project' on changes to CAMRA's Articles of Association to decide its future. There was much internecine argument on where the organisation's focus should be, including whether it should represent all drinkers and all types of beers, ciders and perries. In the end, although some changes occurred, the emphasis remained on securing the long term future of real ale, real cider and real perry.

However, recriminations carried on with many members believing the remit of CAMRA should have been widened. Move on to 2020 and there is no dissent. CAMRA's aims have suddenly become extraordinary clear and agreed by all members – to make sure pubs, breweries, cider makers and taprooms can survive the COVID-19 pandemic. Whether the drink is 'real' or not now seems trivial and secondary. It's where we drink that suddenly matters more. The "Pulling Together" campaign, alongside the WhatPub changes and The Red (On)Lion virtual pub, are really positive examples of what an organisation can do when focused. It gives our branch the opportunity to join in and work together on a clear mission and purpose.

On a more everyday level, the shutdowns give breweries, cider makers and pubs, the opportunity to catch up on maintenance that's outstanding or long overdue. In my small brewery for instance, I have been cleaning kegs that I am embarrassed to say I stored away unwashed from the last filling. I've also been cleaning beer lines and bottles, as well as reflecting on my brewing portfolio for the year ahead. Additionally, although not desirable, the shutdowns do give publicans a break from their 24 x 7 workloads. We all know how hard they work normally.

It's also good to see on a smaller scale that brewing has actually increased in one sector – that of home brewing. I have tried to replenish my brewing ingredients and have found that the online home brew shops are fast running out of stock. There's two good reasons why the home brew sector is now of increased importance. Firstly, hop growers, farmers, and maltsters are going to see a big drop in the demand for their products with all the breweries closed. The home brewing sector offers them a growing outlet for their products. Secondly, it ensures that the art of brewing itself will not be lost by the brewery closures as it now continues in the thousands of small brewers like me up and down the country. Incidentally, anyone who wants to start brewing their own beer is welcome to contact me.

It will take a long time for the economic damage to be repaired. In human terms, sadly, there is damage that can never be repaired. Inevitably, this will be reflected in the drinks and leisure sector. Some pubs and breweries may never open again. We don't know what permanent changes there will be to spending patterns. People's drinking and social habits will undoubtedly change. Are there wider social changes that we can barely envisage? Despite many years of vigorous and effective campaigning, it seems CAMRA has been beaten overnight by an unseen enemy that is harming people as well as our shared interests in beer, cider and the pub way of life.

Sometimes by losing a battle you find a new way to win the war. The trick, peering ahead through the Coronavirus fog, is to identify what we reasonably do know, what we can make a guess at, and what we absolutely cannot know. The latest information from China confirms something that we pretty much did know – that eventually, economies and societies do recover. People will still love to drink beer and cider. The basic human need will mean people will once again want to congregate in pleasant and friendly surroundings, chatting and laughing with each other.

This current hiatus gives all members, especially those on the Committee, time to reflect on our roles and to think about what you want to see or do in the future to ensure the success of CAMRA and its aims, both locally and nationally. CAMRA is not just another consumer organisation, but a passionate community – a family even, especially at branch level.

Use local beer and cider delivery services wherever you can. Contact your area publicans by phone, email, or letter. Thank them for what they have done in the community. Ask what you can now do for them. Pubs may be shut, but daily exercise is allowed and we have some fine walks on our branch [website](#). Encourage others to use them and every time you pass a closed pub, applaud them, pop a note in the door wishing them good fortune and saying that our branch and CAMRA will be there supporting you when things return to normal.

Now, finally, back to my opening paragraph and “Vishnu”. Robert Oppenheimer was wartime head of the Atomic Bomb Project. As he witnessed the detonation of the first nuclear weapon on July 16 1945, a piece of scripture ran through his mind: “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds”. It is, perhaps, the most well-known line from the Bhagavad-Gita, the fifth century Hindu scripture. The words were said by the warrior god Vishnu before going into battle. Since I became Chairman, our present world of beer and cider interests has been destroyed. What we live for, what we love as CAMRA members, has gone, and may never be the same again. Hopefully, although our local pubs are closed and our beer festival is cancelled, I am not a reincarnation of Vishnu and thus bring disaster with me.

However, although not a destroyer, I do believe I am warrior. With the help of my ‘troops’, the committee and branch members, I will fight to restore what we love. We will make it better and stronger in spite of the crisis. As my brewery motto says “Vires Cervisiam” – “Strength through beer”. I thank you all for supporting me, our branch, and CAMRA. We will prevail.

Charles Tucker (Branch Chairman and Festival Coordinator)

Covid-19

This is a round-up of news about the virus, as relating to CAMRA, our members plus the local pubs, clubs, bars, tap room and bottle shops. *This includes contributions from the Branch Chairman, Secretary, Webmaster, Pub Database Officer and Editor.*

As most members will already be aware, even before the closure of the pubs, CAMRA’s National Executive had instructed all branches to cancel all events, meetings, socials etc for a 3 month period. This advice is being reviewed and updated on a rolling two weekly basis, so as at Friday 27 March, events are cancelled through to 26 June and so on every two weeks.

This meant the cancellation of the National AGM and Members’ Weekend which was due to be held in York on 3rd to 5th April; the festivals at Bexley and Kidbrooke in our neighbouring branches plus the Great British Beer Festival in August. Also, as mentioned above by our Branch Chairman, Bromley Branch Committee has now reluctantly had to take the decision to postpone our Beer and Cider Festival by 12 months until July 2021.



What’s CAMRA been doing?

With the problems that Coronavirus is bringing, CAMRA has been busy in its support for pubs, the brewing industry and members.



The Campaign aims to try to support pubs, clubs and breweries through the Covid-19 crisis, which is a time of unprecedented challenges for the industry. CAMRA is doing this by promoting those pubs, clubs and breweries that are still able to offer services at this time (mainly food and beer delivery services) and highlighting pubs which are helping the response to the Covid-19 crisis in their local community.

On 26 March, CAMRA's IT team made some temporary changes to WhatPub to enable users to search for pubs/clubs etc that were offering a takeaway or delivery service.

Why not log onto [WhatPub](#) and see which pubs/clubs near you are offering such services?

CAMRA has also created a directory list of [breweries](#) offering deliveries or take away initiatives to make this easier for Members and the public to search for a brewery near them.



CAMRA has now created a virtual pub for beer drinkers and pub-goers to get together for a beer and tackle the loneliness and social isolation felt during the Coronavirus lockdown and closure of the nation's pubs.



This is a video platform where anyone can join the public bar for a lively chat over a beer or book a table to set up video conferencing for up to four participants. Coming soon: The virtual pub can also stream various pub quizzes, activities and events taking place online, bringing all virtual social activities in one place for the pub-seeker.

Visit: [The Red \(On\)Lion](#)

What Bromley CAMRA is doing

The branch social media ([Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)) has been re-posting/re-tweeting any information we receive about pubs/clubs/breweries/off licences who are still open for take-ways and/or deliveries. Please note that you don't have to be signed up to either Facebook or Twitter to view the Bromley CAMRA social media sites.

A new page has been set up on the branch website which lists all the information that we have about places in Bromley which are offering takeaway or delivery. See:

<https://bromley.camra.org.uk/covid19/>

This information has also been added to the WhatPub database to allow those places offering takeaway or delivery services to be listed using the new special search facility on [WhatPub](#) (see above).



A brewery home delivery in Orpington

As soon as the restrictions are lifted and the pubs and clubs can reopen we'll be doing our utmost to support them:

- We'll use our website, social media and newsletter to try to keep you up to date on what the pubs/clubs are doing and when real ale becomes available;
- Normally we have to plan our social programme at least 2 months ahead (to meet publication deadlines), but we'll be arranging a series of events to try to get to as many pubs and clubs as possible in the weeks following the lifting of restrictions. We'll be promoting these events on the branch website, social media and in the newsletter;
- We had to postpone the planned presentation events for the branch Pub and Club of the Year winners, and for the pub joint runners-up. We'll be agreeing suitable new dates for these events with those pubs and the club.

How you can help

Bromley CAMRA are endeavouring to create and maintain a full list of what services - if any - each pub, club, bar, and bottle shop in our borough is offering. You can see our current knowledge by clicking [here](#).

We believe that pubs shown on that list with a red status are fully closed, whilst those with a green status are definitely offering a service which will be shown in WhatPub and on the [Covid page](#) of our branch website. We have built up this data mainly using pub websites or their social media feeds.

But we don't have information for the pubs with a yellow status. **Bromley CAMRA members can really help us** - if you live near any of the pubs with a yellow status - by letting us know the situation for the pub concerned by emailing news@bromley.camra.org.uk.

Of course, please observe social distancing procedures whilst you do so.

Branch AGM report

Thankfully, before other meetings had to be cancelled, our branch AGM was held on the 14 March at the Orpington Liberal Club. The numbers attending were a little down on last year but perhaps not surprising given the Coronavirus issues. However, a good number of Committee members, plus a few others were able to attend, making us well above the quorum level required. We were also pleased to once again welcome Geoff Strawbridge, CAMRA Greater London Regional Director, who gave us an update on various CAMRA matters.

During the meeting, the financial accounts for 2019 were, as required, reviewed and adopted. The Election of Branch Officers was carried out according to CAMRA procedures and the new Committee members were elected in post for the next 12 months. The out-going Committee members were thanked for their work over the previous year.

Bob Keaveney conducted the meeting as the outgoing 'Acting Chair' and a new Chairman, Charles Tucker, was elected. A full, updated, list of all the new committee members and vacant posts will be posted shortly.

Of course, in setting out the Committee for the forthcoming year, it would be remiss of us not to thank the outgoing Committee members for their help and assistance to the Branch, be it for one year or many. In this respect we would like to thank those who have stood down:

- Bob Gordon (*Pub Protection Officer and Bromley Lead Judge for the London Regional Pub of the Year*);
- Martin Gee (*Newsletter Editor*);
- Edd Charnley (*Young Members Representative*)
- Paul Graydon (*2018/19 Festival Coordinator*).

We do have some positions unfilled so if you are interested in joining the Committee, using your skills (or learning), we do need the following:

- Pub Preservation and Protection Officer;
- Cider Representative;
- Womens Representative;
- Young Members Representative.

Kent Sadler (Branch Secretary)



After the close of the AGM, Geoff presented the club with the 'National Finalist' award plate, in recognition of the club reaching the 'final four' in the judging for the National Club of the Year.

(L to R: Geoff Strawbridge, Peter Muldoon, Phil Wheeler)

News from Shropshire

Many members will remember, or know of, Grace Goodlad (*formerly Chair of this Branch, 2014 to 2016*) and her husband Duncan Borrowman (*formerly a member of the branch Committee and Chairman of Orpington Liberal Club*).

In early 2016 they stood down from the Committee and moved to Oswestry, having bought a rundown pub in the town's market square. The *Bailey Head* has been transformed under their management and now normally offers 6 cask ales and 3 key kegs. During the past 12 months more than 600 different draught beers were sold.

During the last 4 years they have won several CAMRA awards, including being the local branch pub of the Year. At the SIBA awards last month the pub was awarded the title of '*Best UK independent Craft Beer Pub or Bar - Rural*'.

On behalf of Bromley Branch I would like to congratulate them on their success.

You can read about the Bailey Head on WhatPub [via this link](#).



Duncan and Grace, with members of the pub team. Duncan is holding the award, but it's made of glass, so you can't see it!

About the Branch Newsletter

Since 2018 until February of this year, we have been using something called CAMRA's '*Comms Tool*' to produce the newsletter. The *Comms Tool* is a mechanism which allows branches to send emails directly to all their members who have opted to receive branch emails. This system is normally very easy to use, and avoids the need for branches to hold members' contact details, however it only has very limited formatting options, and is not really suited for documents larger than a few paragraphs.

Last month we experimented with using a different format, which can be viewed on, or downloaded from, the branch website. This new format significantly increases the scope for enhancements to the layout and appearance of the newsletter. Over the next few months we hope to be able to introduce a few changes, including the inclusion of more photographs.

From next month, May, we will be aiming to publish the newsletter on the **1st of the month**, rather than the 10th as in the past. The final deadline for the submission of any items for inclusion in the newsletter will always be **5 days** before publication.

Please contact me if you have any questions, comments or suggestions about the newsletter: newsletter.editor@bromley.camra.org.uk.

Bob Keaveney

The pleasures of home brewing and a home bar



All is not doom and gloom during the COVID-19 crisis.

With idle time on my brewing and drinking hands I can get on with some beer related chores. In my case, it has given me the opportunity to set up and use a hand pump that I refurbished.

On tap now are an English IPA and a Baltic Porter. Have a look [here](#) at how I set up my beer engine.

I will post the English IPA recipe for my next 'Home Brewing' article.

Charles Tucker

In the [November 2019](#) edition of the newsletter, Charles wrote about brewing a traditional English Pale Ale, using *Target*, *Cascade* and *Fuggles* hops grown in my small suburban back garden in Beckenham.

Charles is now planning to brew another beer this autumn using some of the 2020 harvest. Over the next few issues of the newsletter we'll keep you updated as the hops grow and the cones develop ready to be picked in early September.

Hops die down to the ground in the autumn, and new growth comes from the roots in the following spring. The photo shows the *Fuggles* on 28th March.

Bob Keaveney



The April Quiz

This month's quiz, in these difficult times has the theme of "Entertainment". There are no prizes to be won, it's just for fun. *Thank you to Martin Gee for supplying the questions*

- 1) Which British female vocalist claimed "*I only want to be with you*" in the UK top 5 in 1963?
- 2) Who played Professor X in the 2000 film *The X men*?
- 3) Who won the Best Supporting Actress Oscar in 2000 for her role in the film *Girl Interrupted*?
- 4) In which Australian city were the group *The Hoodoo Gurus* formed?
- 5) Released in 1982, which album by Michael Jackson sold more than 20 million copies, to become the biggest selling album in history?
- 6) Which actress plays the title role in the film *Erin Brockovich*?
- 7) Which was the title of Whitney Houston's debut single in the UK, which hit the number 1 spot in 1985?
- 8) Which was the Oscar winning song from *Mary Poppins*?
- 9) Which writer created *The Saint*?
- 10) Which US girl group hit the number 1 spot with *Survivor* in 2001?

The answers will be printed in the May newsletter

Answers to the March Quiz

- 1) Scotland; 2) Joseph Stalin; 3) Marco Polo; 4) Prince Albert; 5) Jimmy Carter; 6) Cubit; 7) 1997;
- 8) The Golden Hind; 9) Renaissance; 10) 1993



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