

Out *Inn* CHESHIRE

The independent guide
for the discerning pub-user

Free!



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Issue 76
Winter 2017

Real Ale - why and how?

Real Ale = Cask Beer = Cask Ale

We feel Real Ale is the best way to serve good beer; it allows the taste and aroma to bloom, avoiding the cold or gassiness of many *keg* or so-called 'craft' beers.

...in the pub -

Typically, it's on a **hand pump**.

You can see the bar person physically pulling the beer to serve it.

You may occasionally see beer served direct from the cask, by gravity from a tap. You often see this at a Beer Festival.

Go for the tasty real thing on the hand pump.

...in the supermarket or off-licence -

Read the label.



There may be a CAMRA logo like this >

or the label may refer to a **yeast sediment**, to **cloudiness** or may actually call it

"**Real Ale in a Bottle**" or "**Bottle Conditioned**".

Don't be misled by the silly names or fancy

bottles and labels; you have to do your homework and read the label!



What's it all about?

Surely there is plenty of real ale: what is CAMRA needed for any more?

Lots of reasons!

Much-loved pubs are closing at a frightening rate, more than 20 a week are lost for ever.

Pubs with a good choice of local Real Ales stop trying and sell only boring national brands, or even worse, **no cask beer** at all. **We do our best to support our pubs.**

So what can you do about it?

⇒ **Go to the pub more often.**

There are many alternatives competing for your precious time and cash, but the only one of them that is rapidly disappearing after serving the people of this happy land for centuries, is the traditional pub.

There is a pub for everyone. Our pubs are a part of our precious heritage.

Very simply, you must **use them or lose them.**

⇒ **Be less timid when you go to the bar.**

With literally thousands of Real Ales to choose from in this blessed island, only the staggeringly unadventurous would stick to the handful of heavily advertised mass market brands.

You might find a truly great beer; **go for the hand pump.**

⇒ **Join us.**

The campaign is growing rapidly and has **191,000 members.**

People of all types and ages, united by a love of quality and choice.

Europe's most successful consumer organisation and its best social club.

Give us a call, or talk to us at one of our socials or Beer Festivals.

You will be most welcome.

Your membership application form is on the inside back cover.





CAMRA: The Campaign for Real Ale...

is a volunteer organisation;
the only body speaking for all pub users.



We are all doing this in our spare time,
because we care about good pubs and great beer.

CAMRA; the most successful consumer organisation of all time;
the voice of the consumer can make a difference,
even against uncaring Big Business.

We can't do it without you; we need your help.

New members are always very welcome.

We are open to new ideas and value your skills and enthusiasm

We want to widen our use of social media - you can help.

We are keen to find new ways be relevant to the needs of pub users, beer drinkers
and the trade; you can help.

If you have joined CAMRA but not shown yourself yet, please feel free to get in touch
so you can join in with the campaigning - and the fun.

Even if you are not a CAMRA member, we value your views;
feel free to contact us electronically or face to face at any of our events.

What's happening?

There are lots of ways to keep up with what is
going on in the bar, pub and beer scene in Cheshire.
Websites are good, with the national CAMRA site
and one for each area in the County.



Twitter is a continuous stream of information;
dig in and see what you can find.

You can follow your editor at [@editorcamra](https://twitter.com/#!/editorcamra). I "re-tweet" every message from any
pub in Cheshire and further afield which says what cask beers it has on tap and what
music, quiz or community events are happening. **Follow me for a one-stop-shop!**

All pubs are encouraged to take to Twitter so I can pass it on.

THE COVER SHOT

Our cover shot is an inviting night-time view of the
Cholmondeley Arms at Cholmondeley. A former school
house, it has been tastefully converted into a fantastic pub,
with a range of local cask ales, excellent food, occasional
music, a quiz and community events. There is accommodation
too, so you can make a real occasion of your visit.



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Beer Quality; why it is important

Poorly presented cask beer lets us down.

What should the licensee be doing?

First, let's look at what factors can affect beer quality. I hesitate to try to teach Granny to suck eggs, but some pubs are getting things wrong!



The **brewing**. Good cellarmanship can't make a bad beer good (but the reverse is true!).

Temperature. Not usually a problem, but ale should be served at about 10 degrees C.

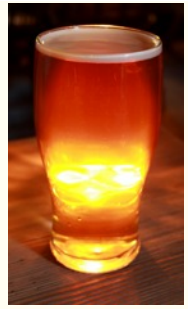
Conditioning. More than just leaving it to settle for x days. The beer should be checked for appearance, aroma and taste. Use a Race spile or hard peg between sessions.

Dispense. Pour into a clean, glass so that you get a nice head. If using hand pumps, clean the lines after each beer.

Freshness. Ideally you'd sell the whole firkin in one day. Do not keep a beer on too long; you may make a few quid, but you will lose customers. Pull the beer though and **taste** it at the start of each session.

Check the taste often and don't be afraid to take beer off sale if it's out of condition. **Train** all your bar staff to be aware of this.

Have a no quibble **returns** and replacement policy.



- 4 So how do you achieve consistently high quality? You need people to buy it. So you must either have or create demand. This can be a bit chicken and egg. What comes first, the ale selection or the ale drinkers?

You have got to put on what sells, and just as every beer is different, there is no typical pub and no prescriptive advice that can be given. A single beer isn't enough but 3 could be too many. Choose beers of **different styles**; too many pubs have three, four or five hand pumps with every one dispensing a citrusy golden ale around the 4% abv. Why? With so many wonderful brews around it is a shame that to offer so little choice to your customers.

Start with just one real ale thereby ensuring, at least, quick **turnover**. Only add a new line when you are confident of turnover. Try a guest, to give extra interest and allow seasonal variation such as winter warmers.

With rotating guest beers, you are going to get mixed quality. Don't get defensive if you are told it's in poor condition - replace it with an apology and try to find out what went wrong.

What should the customer be doing?

Few customers when served a poor pint of cask will say anything; many will leave the pub, often not to return. But, we all need to be able to say something, and that pubs should welcome the **feedback** they need in order to improve.

The vast majority of bar staff try hard to give the best experience possible - but knowing how and when to give feedback is important as consumers; if we don't things won't improve. Bear in mind that the person behind the bar may not be at fault. They may be new or they may not be responsible for looking after the cellar.

Always be **polite and reasonable**. Your complaint will be dealt with more seriously if you do it quietly and discreetly.

CAMRA members may be well informed about what constitutes a poor pint, and should be better placed to say something than most. They know it can be tackled in a >>>



>>> neutral **non-confrontational** way, but of course, many don't. feel they can speak They need confidence. Confidence to approach the bar staff, to describe why it's not acceptable, to have the right words to use, to know what lies behind poorly presented beer, and that it was the pub rather than the brewer.

Although the beer may simply not be to your taste rather than there being anything wrong with it, if it's a beer you are familiar with you should say something.

With just a little guidance you can learn to recognise off-flavours and poor aromas and you don't need a fancy vocabulary.

- Before you drink, check the **AROMA**. Most beers smell inviting, perhaps malty or aromatic with citrus or floral hops. Any hint of toward vinegar or mustiness is likely to be a problem. And if it smells of really bad, there is no doubt that you should take it back.
- **APPEARANCE**; nothing should be floating around in the glass. Un-fined or wheat beers often have an acceptable haze but fined beers should look bright and polished.
- **TASTE**. There should be no "off" flavours such as apple, bananas, cheese, metal, sulphur, popcorn or vinegar. All these indicate a beer which is not what you paid for.
- The degree of fizz is also important. While few beers should have high levels of **CARBONATION**, a well-kept beer should have a refreshing touch of conditioning when you drink it; a slight prickle on the tongue, no more - and not be completely flat and lifeless.
- **TEMPERATURE**. Tastes vary, of course, but beer should be served cool, well below room temperature (but not really cold, which inhibits flavour). A cold pint can always warm up to ideal temperature as you drink but a warm pint is never going to get any better.



So if you're not getting the above, politely point out what's wrong as soon as you notice it; don't say a beer is off when you have drunk most of it.

Usually you will be offered a replacement and most pubs will appreciate being told (*discreetly*) if a beer has gone off, or there is something else amiss.

If a pub is quiet, the first pint of the day from a pump might be warm and flat – don't be afraid to ask gently if it has been pulled through.

If you just leave, the pub doesn't know why. It needs to know. I don't think it is helpful to make an indelible criticism on a review site if the problem was isolated and you did not give the pub the chance to rectify it.

If your complaint is dismissed and ignored, however, talk to your local CAMRA to take it further. Regrettably there is a small minority of staff who take a sip and pass it back with an unhelpful "*tastes okay to me*", or a spurious "*it's meant to be like that*".

You might even contact the brewer directly if you've had a bad experience with their beer in a particular pub. They don't want their reputation soiled by a poor pub and they'll be keen to solve quality issues.

Ultimately, we can all promote and praise those pubs which do get it right.

And, to end on a positive note; when you enjoy a beer; tell the staff; they will appreciate it! And tell your friends, tell CAMRA and tell social media.

How Twitter helps you know what's going on

This is fun. I have found out all sorts of useful stuff, from new pub and bar openings, to beer festivals and interesting new beers, comedy nights and live music. As an Out Inn Cheshire service, I pass this on by "Re-Tweeting" to my followers (930 individuals, pubs & brewers).



I re-tweet every message I see about any pub in Cheshire, whether from the pub itself or its customers, with details of the cask ales on sale, quiz or music nights, special offers, community events etc. The Twitter feed now appears on our website; www.outinncheshire.co.uk, so you don't even need to sign up to Twitter to read the latest pub news from all over Cheshire. I am very happy to do this as a way of spreading news to you, the pub-user.

Licensees; let me know anything that you want to share.
(It is surprising that so few pubs and brewers use this incredibly easy and free way to publicise their business. I urge all licensees and brewers to join in.)

Pub-users; follow me for a one-stop-shop of pub and beer information! [@editorcamra](#)
If you follow me, you don't need to find all those other pubs to follow!

...and you can help out the busy licensee of your local either by helping them sign up to Twitter or sending me Direct Messages with key pub news.

Many CAMRA local groups also use Twitter;

6 Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA is [@MECCAMRA](#), we have [@NorthCheshCAMRA](#) and [@HaltonCamra](#), [@THCAMRA](#) for Trafford & Hulme while Chester & South Clwyd is [@CAMRACaSC](#) and Wirral has [@WirralCAMRA](#)

To keep up to date with pubs, beers, breweries and CAMRA events in your area, you can use **Twitter**. Simply go to www.twitter.com and sign up. I found it very straightforward.

There is a river of information flowing unseen past your door; dip your toe in it. You have nothing to lose but ignorance. It works for me!

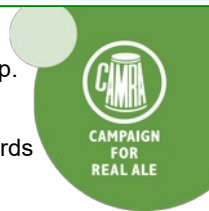
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YOUR RIGHTS AS A PUB CUSTOMER

You should receive a **full pint**, not 90% - don't hesitate to ask for a top up.

If you suffer a poor customer experience, let the staff know, politely.

If they won't put things right, then as appropriate contact Trading Standards or Environmental Health (-or call us!).



Advertise with us - let our readers be your customers!

Out Inn Cheshire welcomes new advertisers, no matter what your business.

Reach 50,000 discerning readers!

We publish quarterly, with a print run of **11,000** being distributed free to over 400 pubs, off-licences and other outlets across the county.

We are happy to design your ad for you!

New advertisers are always welcome.

Out Inn Cheshire is a not-for-profit publication of the Campaign for Real Ale; itself a not-for-profit Consumer Group. Printing costs are funded entirely by advertising income.

We accept advertising from just about anybody, so long as it does not offend our campaigning or other sensibilities!

ADVERTISING RATES

	Colour	Black & White
Small	£75	£50
Medium	£150	£90
Full page	£300	£180

advertising@outinncheshire.co.uk

Substantial discounts for regular slots

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