



# St Helens & Districts CAMRA Newsletter

MARCH 2018

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 11

WEBSITE:

<https://sthelenscamra.org.uk>

EMAIL:

[contact@sthelenscamra.org.uk](mailto:contact@sthelenscamra.org.uk)

FACEBOOK / TWITTER:



[/St-Helens-Districts-CAMRA-164286400299734](https://www.facebook.com/St-Helens-Districts-CAMRA-164286400299734)



[@StHelensCAMRA](https://twitter.com/StHelensCAMRA)

## Contents

CAMRA news	1
Branch news	2
Pub & brewery news	2
Forthcoming Events	3
Articles	4
Next committee meeting	8
Next branch meeting	8

## CAMRA News

### Revitalisation Project

Just a gentle reminder to all people still considering participating in the project, voting is open. If you have something to say about the future then all the information can be found at this address <http://revitalisationdecision.camra.org.uk>

### AGM & Conference 2018 (Members Weekend)

Over 900 members have already pre-registered to join us in Coventry next month – and pre registration is open until 3rd April (although members can register in person over the Weekend).  
You can register online at: <https://agm.camra.org.uk> – the dedicated site where members can find information about volunteering; voting in the AGM; activities and trips.

### Cider News

Cider and perry can still be baffling to some members, and as there's a push to improve Real Cider Sold Here window stickers and cider/perry getting more of a mention in what pubs are currently serving on <https://whatpub.com>, here's some help and advice for all those wanting to know more and help promote real cider and perry not just in either May or October, but throughout the year as well. The range of different styles and flavours now available also creates confusion among members, regarding which are actually recognised as being real, so check out these links, or track down a member of the APPLE committee for some useful information and help put more apples on the real ale map.

A list of ciders considered **not** to be real according to CAMRA's definition

<http://www.camra.org.uk/cider-not-recognised-as-being-real>

Your Regional Cider Coordinator (RCC) <http://www.camra.org.uk/regional-cider-coordinators>

## Branch News

### AGM 2018 - Branch

The AGM for the branch will once again be held at the Sefton Arms on Wednesday April 25<sup>th</sup> at 8pm.

### March 2018 Cider Report

The judging for Branch Cider POTY has now been completed, and the result submitted for scoring in the regional round. Following an initial assessment of which pubs within the St Helens area currently stock cider/perry, the 12 identified pubs were assessed independently by the judges, with visits taking place on a couple of different days, to ensure balance. The judging was undertaken by 6 judges, forms were then completed and submitted, to be used to determine the final result. Our winner is The Cricketers Arms, and a branch award is being organised.

Having 12 known pubs regularly serving ciders and perries is great, and many of them were scored quite highly by our judges on the relevant criteria.

There is also at least one other pub which has shown an interest in stocking cider.

Cider and Perry popularity in St Helens is very good generally, both in the town centre and in some of the outlying areas, with many pubs getting it for the first time some months ago and others slowly increasing their supply following trial runs.

Brief update on the 12 known Cider pubs: The Junction Inn in Rainford is back up to two ciders. The Phoenix Inn now has one cider. The Cricketers Arms has reduced their range from 20 to 10 ciders/perries for the winter months, with plans to increase back to 20 in the summer. The Skew Bridge Alehouse in Rainhill reduced to three/four ciders for winter months, likely to increase again in the summer. The Watchmaker and Royal Oak in Prescott each has one cider. The Talbot Alehouse has a variable number of ciders/perries, which was recently noted as six. The Turks Head has a slightly variable number of ciders, around ten. The Lamb has two ciders plus a mulled one. The Connoisseur Brewery & Tasting Rooms has around ten ciders/perries. The Glass House has three ciders. And the Sefton Arms has one cider.

If there are any other pubs currently serving real cider/perry that we've not listed here (or considering getting some or wanting some advice about it), please let us know by contacting [cider@sthelenscamra.org.uk](mailto:cider@sthelenscamra.org.uk)

## Pub & Brewery news

*If anyone would like to include any Pub & Brewery news in the newsletter please send it us via email [pubsofficer@sthelenscamra.org.uk](mailto:pubsofficer@sthelenscamra.org.uk).*

## Forthcoming Events

### Rail Ale trip Bury

Branch social to East Lancs Railway (ELR) and Bury market on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Cost is £7.50pp. Coach will be leaving the Cricketers Arms at 11am and returning at 6pm. To secure a place on the trip, just pop into the pub and find a member of staff.

## Local Pub/Club Beer Festivals (NOT CAMRA events)



### Socials in 2018

We are actively seeking ideas about pulling together a program for 2018. If anyone has any ideas about any good beer festivals or places of beer & cider interest please get in touch and let us know what you have in mind.

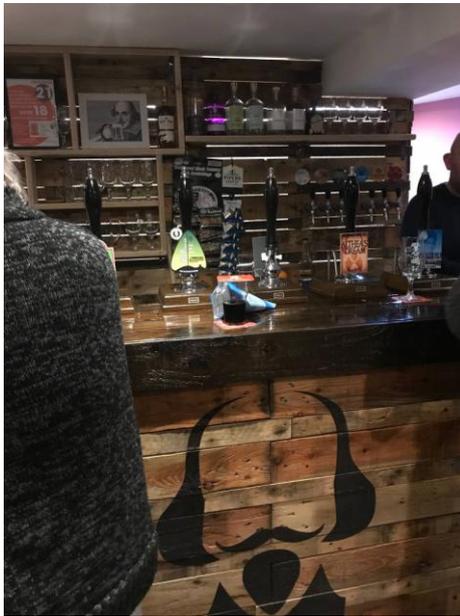
*If anyone would like to publicise an event in the newsletter please send it us via email [newsletter@sthelenscamra.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@sthelenscamra.org.uk).*

# Articles

## An outing in Prescot – February 14<sup>th</sup>

(Clock Face – The Bard – The Royal Oak – The Watchmaker)

So it was decided that we take another one of our pub walks in Prescot. Liverpool FC was on the TV and the rest of the population were looking forward to a romantic evening. However, a few CAMRA members had other ideas. We had heard that a certain pub in Prescot (The Bard) was opening that night and decided to include it on our walk. Although, as you can see from our first picture, at The Clock Face, no members were present and this wasn't our table of drinks. Some cider tasting also took place, to help with the branch's cider pub of the year judging for 2018.



## An Introduction to the Tastes of Real Cider and Perry

Ever wondered what these weird and wonderful fruit based drinks taste like?

Worry no more as here's a handy guide to help you on your way. And who knows, you may find yourself with a glass the next time you're in a pub serving these award winning drinks.

### Styles and Attributes

All the styles and attributes described below also apply to perry (which is fermented pear juice), and pyder (which is a mix of perry and cider). It is difficult to separate styles and attributes. Styles are generally considered to be geographic in origin, and attributes are generally considered to be based on taste, appearance, or production method. The widely accepted cider styles are West Country Style, Eastern Style, and Kentish Style. Taste attributes include tannic, sharp, fruity, cask matured and wine-like. Appearance attributes include clear, hazy and cloudy. Production method attributes include single variety, blended, cask matured and keeved. An important aspect of real cider and perry is that the taste and appearance can not only vary from year to year, but also vary from batch to batch. This is because apples and pears vary from year to year, and from orchard to orchard.

### Typical Taste Attributes

Sweetness	The level of sugar in the drink.
Fruitiness	The taste of fruits (as opposed to sweetness).
Sharpness	The taste of fruit acids (malic or citric acid). Not to be confused with vinegar, which is acetic acid.
Tannin	The sensation of drying in the mouth (astringency), similar to that found in tea and red wine.
Wine-Like	See Kentish Style below.
Cask Matured	The taste of oak, whisky, rum, wine, or sherry you get from maturing the drink in a previously used wooden cask. Other tastes include tart, sour, bitter, and "farmyard".

### West Country Style

This is cider made from cider apples, which are not pleasant to eat. These apples contain tannin, which causes the juice to go brown when exposed to air. As a result, West Country style cider is often dark in colour. Cider apples are often classed as either Bitter Sharp or Bitter Sweet. Bitter Sharp apples are high in tannin and high in acid. Bitter Sweet apples are high in tannin and low in acid. Some well known cider apples include Kingston Black, Dabinett, Yarlington Mill, and Stoke Red. Traditionally, perry is made using perry pears, which are high in tannin and acid, and are not pleasant to eat. We now use the term West Country Style, rather than West Country as such cider can be made in any part of the country. Traditionally, cider apples were only grown and used in the West Country (Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall) and Three Counties (Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire). However, Dorset, Wiltshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Wales are also known for their West Country style cider. Ciders from the West Country tend to have a high degree of acidity and have less clarity than those from further north in the Three Counties. They also tend to be darker in colour, but there are always exceptions!

### Eastern Style

This is cider made from eating and/or cooking apples. These apples contain little or no tannin, which normally results in the cider being pale in colour. Eating and cooking apples are often classed as either Sharp or Sweet. Sharp apples are low in tannin and high in acid. Sweet apples are low in tannin and low in acid. Some well known eating apples used for cider include Cox, Discovery, Spartan, and Gala. Eastern style cider often has more of an apple taste than West Country style cider. Dessert pears are used to make an Eastern style perry. Traditionally, Eastern style cider was made in East Anglia (Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Hertfordshire). However, this style is common in all areas that do not traditionally grow cider apples. It is sometimes made in the West Country and Three Counties.

### Kentish Style (Wine-Like)

The Kentish style can be considered as a sub-style of the Eastern Style. It is made from eating and/or cooking apples, but tastes much more like wine than cider. This is achieved by using certain wine yeasts rather than cider yeasts. Not all ciders from Kent are wine-like, so do not conform to the Kentish Style. Wine-like ciders can be made anywhere.

### Single Variety Vs Blended

A single variety cider is made from just one type of apple, whereas blended is made from more than one type of apple. In general, a blended cider has a good aroma, initial taste, main taste, and after taste. A single variety cider often lacks most of these elements, however, a few varieties can have most of them, for example, Kingston Black.

### Keeved (naturally sweet cider or perry)

This is cider that has been made using a process called keeving, where the yeast is intentionally starved of nutrients before all the sugar has been fermented to alcohol. Starving the yeast is achieved by encouraging a pectin gel to form at the top of the cider that absorbs the nutrients. Without these nutrients, yeast will stop fermenting.

St. Helens Pub Bats Well Above Average  
by Chris Simm

Andy Evans: Man or Myth?

Successful pub landlord, or stark raving mad (he has been known to sing to his casks in the cellar)?

Well that's for you to decide. Whatever he is, he's managed to achieve what no other pub landlord has achieved in this town before. Andy and his wife Denise, along with all the staff who have worked (and continue to work) at the pub over the years, have helped the Cricketers Arms on a steady rise to the top since 2014. Not only does the pub champion ales on both the light side and the dark, it also champions a wide range of ciders and perries ranging from dry to sweet, and has been known to serve up to 20 ciders during the summer months.



Of course, it didn't start out like this. With only a small number of handpulls in the beginning, they slowly built their way up to what would eventually become an entire rugby league team on the bar (13 handpulls). As the quantity of ales on the bar increased, so too did the range of ciders and perries. At one time it was pointed out by a very eagle-eyed pub goer that they had more real ciders/perries available than real ales. Having so many ales and ciders is easy, providing you have the space of course; looking after them correctly is another matter entirely. Because the beer and cider was so well kept, the pub began to attract attention and slowly

picked up awards from the branch (and later the region) for both their real ale and cider, thanks to word of mouth and people scoring their beers on <https://whatpub.com/>. Their ultimate goal being the top pub at national level, and more determined with each award earned, the pressure was incredible when they achieved a spot on the list of four finalists nationwide.



Over the years the pub has gone through several changes, and there is no sign of this progress slowing any time soon. It's not known where the ideas come from, or indeed the space required to implement a lot of them. It's as if Andy has stumbled across the Dummies Guide to Gallifreyan Technology, with the subtitle of It's Bigger on the Inside.

Many notable events have taken place at the Cricketers, including the pub being invaded by 'pirates' on more than one occasion. Not too many pubs in St. Helens can say that. On one particular visit from said pirates, Andy was briefly made captain, as the picture will attest to.

The town of St. Helens has never before achieved recognition for any of its pubs this high up the scale, until now. Earning the awards they have done over the years, it is now in the Discworld Year of the Justifiably Defensive Lobster, 2018 that the Cricketers Arms on Peter Street has reached such dizzying heights, making it CAMRA's number 1 pub in the country. The rise of the pub and the achievements along the way have at times been described as meteoric, and likened to making an album. I'm not going to mention any band names that may have been used in previous speeches for accepting awards, as I'm sure they'll be blasting out of the pub at some point during the day. What I will say is that we don't want a certain song by a popular british heavy metal band playing, or bugles sounding as it may excite the horses (note: due to the weather conditions, sadly the horses did not make an appearance). But here's hoping Andy and Denise, and all the staff at the Cricketers Arms, have found what they've been looking for.



You were never really going to get a seat for this event. Not unless you happened to arrive before the pub was open. Standing room only the closer it got to 1pm. It was like a rock concert at the Cricketers Arms. Thankfully Andy Evans wasn't singing, although reports of him singing in the cellar earlier on in the day are still unconfirmed. For the average drinker this would have been a very peculiar site, especially as they closed the bar while the presentation was made. But for the real ale drinker and members of CAMRA this was going to be a day to remember.



A pub of this size has never been so quiet as everyone listened intently to what was being said. This was obviously down to the presence of TV and Radio broadcasters, recording the event for later transmissions. So it was no surprise when all the presentations and congratulations were complete there was a mad dash for the bar.

Thankfully there was enough room available for the bar staff who were stranded by the pool table, to find a way through the crowds and begin serving again. The pub had never been so full. And there were plenty of hungry customers on hand to devour the trays of hotpot laid out by the pub after the area was cleared. If that wasn't enough, more buffet came out some while later. It was clear that no one was going home early from this event.

The hours flew by and before long it was time for the broadcast of what happened earlier on in the day. An almighty cheer went up as people watched the screens around the pub. It was truly an eventful day.

So with the dust settled, the award presented and congratulations issued, it was time to reflect on the day. Interviews galore and lots of pictures of Andy with the award. Would this pub simply sit there for the next 12 months proud of its achievement?

Definitely not. Shortly after the event, the pub is going through another planned series of changes to maximise the space and improve the whole drinking experience for the pub goer.

Congratulations to The Cricketers Arms for winning the 2017 CAMRA National Pub of the Year!



If anyone would like to write a short article or news story for the newsletter please send it us via email [newsletter@sthelenscamra.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@sthelenscamra.org.uk).

## NEXT Committee Meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday March 14<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the Skew Bridge Alehouse in Rainhill at 8pm.

Committee meetings usually take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. All CAMRA members are welcome to attend these meetings. Committee meetings are always held at local pubs that serve real ale. All are welcome to attend our Committee meetings, but only Committee members can vote.

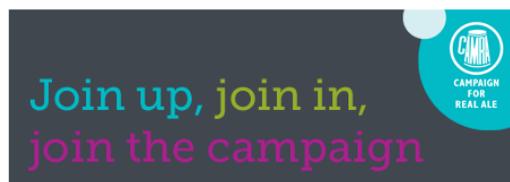
Information about the Branch, including the dates and venues of future meetings and social events, can be found on our website (<https://sthelenscamra.org.uk>), our Facebook page (/St-Helens-Districts-CAMRA-164286400299734), Twitter (@StHelensCAMRA) and via our monthly Newsletter. If you need any more information about the Branch please contact us by email at [contact@sthelenscamra.org.uk](mailto:contact@sthelenscamra.org.uk). If you have any news about the beer and/or cider in your local, or any news about events being held locally, please contact the Pubs Officer via [pubsofficer@sthelenscamra.org.uk](mailto:pubsofficer@sthelenscamra.org.uk).

## NEXT Branch Meeting

The next Branch meeting will take place on Wednesday March 28<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the Phoenix in St. Helens at 8pm.

Branch meetings usually take place on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss current issues and have a general catch up with local brewery, pub, and beer festival news. These meetings are quite informal and fairly short (on average between an hour and an hour and a half). Our CAMRA Branch meetings are always held at local pubs that serve real ale.

**NOTE:** If you are a St. Helens CAMRA member and you are attending your first meeting we will buy you a pint as a welcome to the branch!!!



CAMRA is more than just promoting great beer.

- It's very sociable - you'll meet others who share your interest in all things beer (or cider/perry!)
- CAMRA offers a range of training for volunteers - including Emergency First Aid, Food Hygiene, Stewarding and Health & Safety
- You'll gain skills to enhance your CV
- CAMRA volunteers are a wonderful mix of people, of all ages, from all walks of life

If you are interested in joining CAMRA all the relevant details can be found at <http://www.camra.org.uk>

