

CAMRA in Gloucester AGM 2014 Chair's report

It seems incredible that it is just over a year since I was elected Chair of CAMRA in Gloucester. A lot seems to have happened in that time, not least the contribution to the County debate about the future of Cheltenham. Well that is resolved now, and we now have two Branches in the County, Cheltenham is one, and Gloucestershire of which we remain a part, is the other.

During the year I have had excellent support from my committee, who work hard behind the scenes to make CAMRA in Gloucester happen. The website I think is one of the best in CAMRA, so do visit it if you haven't already. Thank you Mike, and to Ruth, who has a hard task to keep me on track at meetings. Ali has the unenviable task of trying to keep information about the pubs up to date, and the general committee members, Owen, Theo and Darrel, who turn up at the meetings with their views, ideas and moral support. Neil and Caz have put together an excellent programme over the last year, and have some really interesting ideas for next year. Finally I need to thank Steve, who puts up with me on a daily basis, and supports everything I need to do to fulfil the role of Chair.

Gloucester once again ran a very successful beer and cider festival at Blackfriars, so much so that we will be doing it all over again next April, 17th and 18th. Once again this could not be done without people volunteering, and I thank them for their contribution. If you feel you could help next year, we are always on the look out for help, whether it be in the planning stages, or turning up on the day to pull a few pints.

Although an item on the agenda later, we introduced the idea of Pub of the Season, which is voted for by the members, particularly as a way of recommendation to other members to try out a particular pub, which may have changed or just may be worthy of giving them a bit of publicity. Winners have been The King Edward VII, The Fountain Inn, and most recently the Englands Glory. One of our dilemmas is the Pub of the Year, and how we identify it. We currently have a City Pub and a Rural or Country Pub of the Year. These were The Pelican and the Golden Heart at Nettleton Bottom respectively, but we can only put one of them forward, which was the Pelican, for our CAMRA in Gloucester pub of the year which is then judged against the other sub branch pubs for the Branch Pub of the Year. Later we will discuss how the members would like to see this dealt with in the future. One thing is clear, the Landlords/ladies really appreciate the recognition for their pubs and the efforts both they and their staff have put in.

Our social programme has been interesting and varied, and we will have a separate report on this. Some members are regular attendees, where others can only get to one or two because of timing or areas of interest. It would be good to see more attend, as not only does this reflect an active membership, an aim of CAMRA, but it supports our pubs and brewers, and even more importantly, we all enjoy a good time out and have fun.

More recently we have reintroduced the News, Views and Events, because members told us that they missed it, even if it was only to provide easy access to our events list.

Finally, please do take the opportunity to give feedback to any member of the Committee on any aspects of what we do in Gloucester. We can only know if we are doing a good or bad job if people tell us! I know on a personal level it can be quite demoralising when there is little or no response to requests for feedback, information, or help. Fortunately some of you do, and it does make a difference.

Thank you.

Margaret Wilkins
Chair