



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

**(Kingston & Leatherhead
Branch)**

**Members'
Handbook**

1. EMAIL, INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Branch sends regular updates on our activities to members by email, so please ensure we have your current email address. You can check this by logging in to the CAMRA members' website at <https://members.camra.org.uk/>, where you will also find lots of other information about how to make the most of your CAMRA membership. To log in you will need your membership number and password, which by default is set to your home postcode (all capitals with no spaces)

Details of branch events and activities can also be found on the Surrey CAMRA website at <http://www.camrasurrey.org.uk/kingston-leatherhead>. The branch has a Yahoo group which is used to interactively share information over the Internet such as pub news and beer related events in and around our area. Details of branch activities are also published on it. Over 180 members have subscribed to this free service so far. To join the group, click on: http://groups.yahoo.com/subscribe/CAMRA_Kingston_Leatherhead and follow the instructions. Alternatively you can send an email with subject "Subscribe" to CAMRA_Kingston_Leatherhead-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

We have also set up a group on **Facebook** called Kingston & Leatherhead CAMRA and can be followed on **Twitter** @CAMRAKL.

2. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

At all our socials, everyone is welcome. We are very pleased to see all our members, their friends and acquaintances. We encourage anyone interested in traditional beer and pubs, whether or not they are interested in joining CAMRA, to come along.

You can find details of future socials in "What's Brewing", "London Drinker", on the diary page of the Yahoo Group and at the CAMRA Surrey Branches web site at www.camrasurrey.org.uk/kingston-leatherhead/k-l-diary. These will tell you whom to contact if you need to book places for any event such as a brewery trip, etc., or if you need more information on any subject.

We recognise that it can be difficult for someone who doesn't yet know us to join in. We do keep an eye out for newcomers and do our best to make them welcome. Hopefully it is not too difficult for newcomers to find us - we're usually in a group, and often sporting some CAMRA insignia, be it on sweat-shirts or badges. At Branch Meetings we usually display a CAMRA sign to show where we are.

Branch Socials

Two or three times a month we have an informal get-together, mostly in pubs within our Branch area, for a pint or two and a chat. A start time is always shown and all are welcome, whether for the whole event or just to look in. On some occasions, socials are run jointly with neighbouring branches and if you happen to be in another branch area at any time you are welcome to look up their events and attend. Details of other branches' events can be found in What's Brewing.

Sometimes a social will take the form of several pub visits, in which case the first couple of pubs on the route will be publicised, but the rest of the itinerary may well be decided by the members who turn up on the night.

Other social events organised by the branch include minibus trips, barbecues, an annual Christmas meal and an occasional trip to Europe (typically Belgium or the Czech Republic).

Brewery Visits

Brewery visits are arranged from time to time, usually by the Social Secretary. The way in which breweries treat CAMRA may vary, but we're generally well received and looked after. Places on these trips are often limited, so bookings are taken on a first-come first-served basis.

While these visits are interesting and enjoyable, it's worth remembering that we are, in a small way, representing CAMRA, and should therefore behave politely and responsibly; although a certain amount of slurring is understandable!

Beer Festivals

The first Kingston Beer Festival was held in late June / early July 2000. This has now become an annual event although from 2011 the festival moved to May and is held at the Kingston Workmen's Club in Old London Road. Watch What's Brewing, the Yahoo Group, the CAMRA Surrey web site or local newsletters for more news. Branch members are encouraged to help at the event, if only for a few enjoyable hours, either behind the bar during the event or with setting up and taking down. The festival currently begins on Thursday evening and runs through until Saturday night, with a staff party after we close.

The branch also supports other beer festivals locally with branch members volunteering to work at these events. The main ones close to us are London Drinker in March, Ealing in July, Wallington and Twickenham in October, Woking in November and, of course, the Great British Beer Festival in August.

Generally only CAMRA members are allowed to work at CAMRA Beer Festivals, so if you would like to volunteer all support is gratefully accepted. All the jobs at the Festivals are unpaid, but rewards come in cheap beer and food and the satisfaction of helping to run an enjoyable event while making a campaigning statement. Jobs cover a wide range including bar work, stewarding, membership, products, fund-raising and front of house.

We all have a good time working at these Festivals, so there's a good chance that you will enjoy it too. If you would like to help at any festival, details can be found in the months leading up to the event in the Beer Festivals page of What's Brewing. Please contact me if you would like to know what to expect.

Of course if you just want to come along as a customer and drink beer that too will be greatly appreciated. Your CAMRA membership card will always get you reduced price or even free entry.

3. ORGANISATION AND MEETINGS

The Committee

The Branch is run by a Committee of around nine members who are elected annually. Committee posts comprise Chairman, Secretary, Social Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Pubs Officer, Press Officer and usually two ordinary members. One of the Committee acts as a Branch Young Members Coordinator. The Committee is responsible to the National Executive (NE) of CAMRA via a Regional Director. Committee meetings in the Kingston and Leatherhead Branch are kept to a minimum and all business is usually discussed at branch business meetings, which are open to all branch members.

Branch Membership

Any paid-up CAMRA member may become a member of the Kingston & Leatherhead Branch. It does not matter whether or not they live inside the Branch area (a map of this can be found on the branch website at www.camrasurrey.org.uk/kingston-leatherhead) and there is no separate subscription or formal signing-on.

Branch Business Meetings

These are held once each month. We have no fixed venue or day of the week (normally Tuesday - Thursday), but tend to move around between selected pubs with, of course, good real ale. The intention is to have a meeting in all parts of the branch area during the course of the year. Everybody is more than welcome to attend and get involved in the discussions. Many and varied topics are discussed at branch business meetings. Inevitably there has to be a bit of discipline about these meetings, but there is always a good deal of humour, and we try to be as informal as possible. Activity at these meetings is not restricted to business - names are taken for trips and new events are publicised. Meetings are well punctuated with beer breaks and there is always time to socialise afterwards.

Branch AGM

The Branch Annual General Meeting (AGM) is normally held in February. Its main purposes are to elect a new Committee, to present the annual accounts and to debate any motions.

The AGM is the most important meeting in the year, and sets the tone for the year ahead.

If members wish to vote at the Branch AGM they should have their CAMRA membership card with them at the meeting.

4. WEBSITES, PUBLICATIONS & SALES

What's Brewing

What's Brewing is CAMRA's national newspaper for members. It is produced professionally by CAMRA staff with contributions from members, and is delivered monthly to every member either by post or email. Apart from a wide range of interesting articles, What's Brewing provides the sort of information that travelling CAMRA members like to have - where and when the local beer festivals are, what local beer guides are available and where they can be obtained.

London Drinker

London Drinker is the magazine of the Greater London Branches of CAMRA, which is issued every other month, and is available free from selected pubs. It can also be accessed online at <http://www.london.camra.org.uk/londondrinker>.

News and Ale

News & Ale is produced by the Surrey/Hants Borders branch with input from all of the Surrey branches of CAMRA. It is published quarterly and is available free from selected pubs.

The Surrey Branches Web Site

Surrey was the first complete county to have a CAMRA Web Site on the Internet in 1996. Each branch in Surrey, including our own, has pages within the web site to publicise events and campaigns. The site also has pages publicising local guides and other CAMRA activities. There are links to the National CAMRA site and others of interest to beer drinkers. The site can be found at: www.camrasurrey.org.uk

Beer Scoring, whatpub.com and the Good Beer Guide

CAMRA maintains a national on-line pub database, **whatpub.com** which provides details of over 96% of Britain's real ale pubs, including all those in our branch area. The site also provides a convenient way to submit **beer scores** to CAMRA, which the branch uses to shortlist pubs for inclusion in the **Good Beer Guide (GBG)**. The decision on which of the shortlisted pubs to include in the Guide is taken after each pub has been surveyed by a branch member, at a special GBG selection meeting which usually takes place towards the end of February. As with the Branch AGM, membership cards should be brought to this meeting. The selection meeting also identifies a further shortlist of three potential Pubs of the Year in both the Surrey and Greater London parts of our branch area. These are then judged by volunteers against the national CAMRA Pub of the Year criteria to find a winner in each county. We would like more members to get involved in the Good Beer Guide and Pub of the Year voting, so please try to attend future selection meetings when you can. If you cannot attend in person please contact me for a postal vote.

All branch members are encouraged to submit beer scores when they visit pubs in the area. To submit a score, log in to the whatpub.com website either on a PC or mobile device, using your membership number and password (the default password is your postcode, all in large case and with no spaces). Once logged in, the mobile version of the site includes the facility to quickly identify pubs near where you are and to submit beer scores using a simple sliding scale of 0 - 5. There is also space in the "comments" area to add information about beers regularly on sale in the pub but not listed or scored (note you may need to click "show advanced options" to do this).

Members are also encouraged to submit any updates or corrections to the pub details on the site. The same request is made of behalf of other CAMRA Branches, who would welcome scores or updates for pubs in their areas, wherever you are drinking.

5. CAMPAIGNING

Spreading the Message

The main regular campaigning activity of the branch is publicising the merits of real ale. To help do so, we are involved in several publications which are detailed in Section 4. Beer festivals also come into this general category - they show keg and lager drinkers what they are missing. We also use the local and national media whenever we can get our point across.

Specific Protests

From time to time specific problems come along: a brewery is to stop selling a particular beer or close altogether; a pub is to close and be redeveloped; short measure is becoming rampant - to give a few examples. These we take up on a case-by-case basis. Some will be strictly local issues, some we will help tackle as part of a national campaign. Whilst we don't always win, we do at least try, and we do ensure that those with the power to change things know that at least some drinkers feel strongly about the issue.

Pub Preservation

Many CAMRA members feel as strongly about preserving traditional pubs as they do about traditional beer. Some are interested in the architectural aspects; others more in preserving the traditional atmosphere that distinguishes a pub from a bar. CAMRA has a national Pubs Group and there is also a London Pubs Group. If you become aware of any plans to ruin a pub, you should inform the branch.

It is now possible to apply to a local authority to list pubs as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). The application can be from a CAMRA Branch, a community group of at least 21 people or a Parish Council. We are currently seeking to identify suitable pubs in the branch area for listing as ACVs, for which CAMRA nationally has developed an easy process for us to follow. If you are aware of a pub that you think merits ACV listing please let me know. We may also be contacting members locally to suggest information in support of any ACV applications we make in the future.

BLO (Brewery Liaison Officer) System

Branches appoint Brewery Liaison Officers for breweries in their areas. The BLOs provide a two-way channel of information, complaint, etc. All formal contact with the breweries is via them. We are aware of three operational breweries in our branch area at present.

LocAle



CAMRA LocAle scheme promotes pubs stocking locally brewed real ale, reflecting growing consumer demand for quality local produce and an increased awareness of 'green' issues. In our branch we define 'local' as being within 30 miles by road, so it includes all Surrey breweries, most in Greater London and some in North Sussex, West Kent and East Berkshire.

If you know of any pubs that always have at least one beer from a local brewery served in good condition then please let us know. A current list can be found at <http://www.camrasurrey.org.uk> and on the Branch Yahoo Group

6. HOW YOU CAN HELP

Here is a brief list of some of the ways in which you can help the branch:

1. Attend branch events, including branch meetings, the AGM and GBG selection meeting. In this way, we can keep in touch with you and you with the branch events and general organisation. In addition, you will get to know a group of very sociable people!
2. Let us know if you have a bad pint, or a superb pint, in any pub in the branch area (you can easily do this using the whatpub.com website). We would also like to know of any pubs that are to undergo refurbishment; whose landlord is leaving; whose range of ales has changed; or any other relevant information. The branch Yahoo group was set up with this sort of purpose in mind, so please use it.

3. Campaign for real ale on a personal level. Help others to appreciate real ale, maybe even persuade people to join CAMRA - members are the lifeblood of the Campaign. Your monthly What's Brewing should provide you with sufficient ammunition. Also, join in with the branch's own organised campaigns.
4. Help spread the message and make people aware that they have a choice and that they are in danger of losing that basic freedom due to the malpractice of the large pub and brewery owning companies. Drop the subject of 'Real Ale' into social or work conversations where you can! Remember one of our key campaigning goals is to get more people drinking a wide range of real ales.
5. Other areas in which help is always needed include Beer Festival staffing (with cheap beer as an incentive); London Drinker and News & Ale distribution to local pubs; and pub surveying, both for the Good Beer Guide and whatpub.com. Be assured that there is always something to be done; always a point to be made; and never a shortage of campaigning objectives.
6. Last but by no means least, DRINK REAL ALE!

More details on how you can help the Campaign in general are provided on the members' website at <https://members.camra.org.uk/>. If you have any specific questions or would like to know more about how you can help, please contact me by email at jburnsklc@gmail.com.

Cheers!

John Burns

Branch Membership Secretary