

Local CAMRA Branch announces its Lockdown Heroes

Pubs and restaurants were forced to close under the Covid lockdown restrictions. A lot simply closed their doors and waited for the go ahead to reopen and start serving drinkers again. Some pubs however chose to start supporting their local communities. This was not necessarily selling alcohol, a number of pubs chose to cook meals for NHS staff or those in need. As pubs had access to supply chains not available to the public some chose to offer food boxes of hard to source things such as pasta or flour.

These pubs were not necessarily ones that CAMRA have championed for the quality of their beer, I'm not sure if they all even serve Real Ale, but they definitely went out of their way to support their communities in the lockdowns.

The Surrey Hampshire Border branch of CAMRA have honoured these pubs as "Lockdown Heroes" and are presenting them with certificates. The winners are:



The Wheatsheaf at Heatherside, Camberley. The new publican has turned around what used to be a rather uninviting pub, full of big TV screens, into a much more cosy environment offering local ales, a fine selection of other beers and quite a gin collection. The pub has a brilliant location, with a nice garden overlooking Heatherside Green, but previously this was not fully used as the pub was not that family friendly. Ben took over the pub not long before lockdown and he has been brilliant at supporting and encouraging local morale during the difficult times. He has regularly walked around the estate dressed as a bear, to the delight of the local children, and has displayed both inside and on the fence outside the pub lots of artwork by them.

The Cricketers in Pirbright, despite a serious fire they have continued with a temporary kitchen and take away meals and drinks and the Yurt has been open all the time for coffees and snacks. They have been offering food boxes and helped customers obtain provisions that were in short supply at the start of lockdown.





Hogs Back Brewery have been delivering monthly cases of beer to their customers along with operating a drive through take away beer shop and doing a very enjoyable virtual Beer Tasting.

The Royal Oak in Guildford quickly converted to a take-away operation with a great selection of bottles, cans, pies and other snacks as well as well kept draught beer. When the government inexplicably didn't allow this to reopen the pub converted to 'click and collect'.



The Garibaldi in Knaphill for providing takeaway food and drinks, including real ale when available, throughout lockdown. For local deliveries, no charge has been made, but customers have instead been asked to make a donation to the Woking & Sam Beare Hospices. Throughout the lockdown period nearly £2,500 has been raised in this way.

The Plough & Horses in Cove because landlord Chris Bick took over the pub in March 2020, 3 days before the National lockdown. Given the short time that he had been in control of the pub meant it was unable to qualify for the furlough scheme. Not only did hundreds of pounds worth of stock go to waste due to its shelf life but Chris had to pay some staff out of his own pocket. At the start of the first lockdown, the pub gave away rolls and sandwiches to local people in need and then started to provide hot meals and sandwiches for local Key-workers, doctors surgeries, the ambulance station, Frimley Park Hospital etc. They were then approached by various organisations working to help those shielding, vulnerable adults and the elderly. So they started making meals for them too. By mid June they had supplied 1,996 hot meals, over 3,000 sandwiches and hundreds of care packages to Key-workers and the most vulnerable in the local community and raised over over £1,125 through their cooking for Key workers appeal. In subsequent lockdown they have been providing a takeaway food and drink service and also a weekly online quiz to keep the local community engaged.



The Snow Goose in Cove is a shining example of a pub really making a difference and putting the community first during the pandemic gaining recognition through the Brewing Good Cheer Campaign. Licensees Kate Hayden and Paul Warriner and staff members were quick to act during the first lockdown. The pub donated hampers, loaves, eggs and toilet rolls to NHS staff struggling to buy basics due to panic buying in the first lockdown. They also arranged for vulnerable people to order meat and bread from the pub's butcher and baker and to collect it from The Snow Goose so they could avoid supermarket queues, and staff even delivered elderly customers' newspapers to their homes. The help for NHS workers proved so successful that they set up an ongoing NHS essentials service providing milk, bacon, eggs and bread at cost to key workers and NHS staff. In addition, The Snow Goose ran a food bank for self-employed residents struggling without incomes. Providing social contact was another key part of the pub's outreach programme. A special phone line manned by staff for customers wanting a chat was set

up, and social media has also been monitored so the pub could reach out to Farnborough residents in need. They also brought cheer to the community, too, from letting the pub's pigs out daily for passing children to look at to delivering Easter eggs to the children's ward at Frimley Park hospital.



The Star in Godalming because during the first lockdown they provided a food and takeaway service including real ales. They also offered cheap community meals with a 20% discount for NHS Staff. Continued an online virtual quiz throughout all lockdowns. Christmas hampers were available. Regulars of the pub raised money to keep the pub going by commissioned a one off piece of artwork consisting of a selfie of contributors to form a collage from the photos. Pub staff dyed their hair crazy colours for the Meath charity fundraiser raising £1,875.

Ascot Brewery have been providing a delivery and collection service throughout the lockdown the brewery also held a wide range of innovative events throughout the summer when they were allowed to. This included a Beer Festival - the only one in the area last year - free magic nights, comedy nights and a number of other themed evenings.



Red Mist Brewery who opened a new pub in Farnham just pre covid and seemed to have bucked the trend by buying another nearby which will open later this year. At the start of the pandemic Red Mist started food deliveries. There were veg boxes, fruit boxes, all sorts of locally sourced products such as Chalk Stream trout as well as flour! They also do 5L containers of their beer. When the last lockdown started Red Mist got going again with home deliveries and we had food and beer deliveries from them again. They also have a drive in cinema at one of their pubs. Very entrepreneurial!