

# Real ale lovers form new branch in town

Picture: Kevin Fern Photography CHKF20141002H-001\_C



**KEEPING IT REAL:** Toasting the upcoming Cheltenham CAMRA branch launch at Sandford Park Alehouse is chairman Veronica Emary and fellow members John Crossley, Tony Lucas, John Pickles and landlord Grant Cook

A POPULAR pub in Cheltenham will host the launch of a new CAMRA branch to aid the search for the best real ale in town.

Beer and ale lovers will raise a glass at The Sandford Park Ale House to toast the campaign's arrival.

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) is starting its own organisation in the town after previously being a sub-branch of Gloucestershire.

It has more than 900 members and will see the new group putting on Cheltenham's first CAMRA beer festival in August next year.

It has a new committee as well, which will also allow members to vote for pub of the season.

The Cheltenham branch's launch will take place at 7pm tomorrow at the High Street ale house - CAMRA's 2014 Pub of the Year.

Members of CAMRA will be able to talk about the

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branch's future plans and meet brewers.

Chairwoman Veronica Emary said: "Gloucestershire CAMRA Branch has been a great success, but with Cheltenham sub-branch membership standing at more than 900, local members voted to form a full branch.

"This will mean that local CAMRA members will have access to a branch which is able to make independent decisions and respond quickly to local campaigning issues, and drive forward the causes of real ale and pub survival and vitality in Cheltenham.

"We will, of course, continue to support CAMRA festivals and events right across Gloucestershire as we have always done."

She added: "It's an exciting time for Cheltenham CAMRA.

**"If you can serve it correctly, real ale is the most popular drink in the country"**

*Robin Carter*

"Irrespective of where they live, we hope to see as many CAMRA members as possible at the launch event."

The Royal Union in Tivoli is known for its quality of beers and had been named as pub of the season in the first membership vote held this summer.

Robin Carter, who has been landlord there for six years, said: "CAMRA was set up to protect real ale and there is no doubt that if you can serve it correctly it is the most popular drink in the country.

"It counts for 80 per cent of our wet sales and we sell it through eight pipes so it is incredibly important."

Grant Cook, landlord at Sandford Park Ale House,

said: "The experience of the campaign around the country shows that, when CAMRA are in a town, there is high interest in real ale.

"It attracts entrepreneurs to the town and new pubs may be set up that will serve new beer.

"I can see that any new pubs will be competition for me but I think that it is an important thing not to fear competition, rather see it as something that will help Cheltenham grow.

"I am very enthusiastic about the new CAMRA branch because I feel it will put Cheltenham on the real ale map in the long term."

Visit [cheltenham-camra.org.uk](http://cheltenham-camra.org.uk) to find out more.

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## Enthusiasts on tap

**R**EAL ale continues to prove increasingly popular across the generations.

The launch of a new Cheltenham branch of the Campaign for Real Ale shows just that. Its sub-branch of Gloucestershire CAMRA has become so big it has more than 900 members.

With the availability of real ale across the county it would be easy to assume its work is done.

But CAMRA continues to be a significant voice in an more important campaign - keeping community pubs open and viable in the first place.