

FREE!



The Chiltern Tapler

The magazine of the Mid-Chilterns branch of The Campaign for Real Ale

Autumn 2024 | www.midchilternscamra.org.uk

Ciders, Perrys and Golden Ales!



The Rising Sun, Berkhamsted. Mid-Chilterns CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year 2024

Championing Real Ale & Real Cider and Local Pubs & Breweries,
and telling the story of beer and brewing in the Chilterns

INSIDE THIS EDITION

PUB NEWS

What's on Tap and Where?

BREWERY NEWS AND BREWS

News from Breweries in the Area

SPOTLIGHT ON A LOCAL PUB

This issue: The Alford Arms, Frithsdon

INTERESTING ARTICLES AND CAMRA CAMPAIGNS

Interesting Articles from Contributors and CAMRA

SPECIAL FEATURES

Hemel Old Town Beer Festival Review

October is Perry Month

A New Cider Company in the Mid-Chilterns Area

FEATURE

Beer Styles: Blonde and Golden

Beer Scores

FUN STUFF

Wordsearch

CAN WE HELP YOU?



Valuations



Disposals



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Rosie Hallam - Valuation & Lease Advisory

☎ 07786 193 771

✉ Rosie.Hallam@fleurets.com

Elysia Wilson-Gunn - Sales & Acquisitions

☎ 07810 541 579

✉ Elysia.Wilson-Gunn@fleurets.com

contents

regulars

- 03 Contents**
- 04 Welcome**
- 05 Advertising & subscription details**
Copy deadlines, publishing dates, subscription details and advertising rates.
- 06 Dates for your diary**
Details of socials, branch meetings, pub trails and beer festivals.
- 07 LocAle**
What it is LocAle and pubs participating in LocAle in the Mid-Chilterns Branch area, and a list of breweries.
- 09 Pub news – what's on, where?**
A round-up of what is on tap at pubs, in the Mid-Chiltern's area.
- 12 Pub watch**
News on pub closures, re-openings, refurbishments, and other changes in the Mid-Chiltern's area
- 13 Brewery news and brews**
News from breweries in the region including new brews, tasting sessions and festival details.
- 19 Spotlight on a local pub**
This edition we feature the Alford Arms, Frithsden.
- 22 Interesting articles and CAMRA campaigns**
Articles on selected topics of interest.

special features

- 33 Hemel Old Town Beer Festival Review**
You raised £8000!
- 34 October is Perry month**
A deep dive into the world of perry.
- 37 A new cider company in the Chilterns**
Introducing The Chiltern Cider Company, the only one in Mid-Chilterns.




features

- 40 Beer Styles: Blonde and Golden**
Focus on blonde and golden ales.
- 43 Beer scores**
Why we need your help. Rate your favourite pubs.
- 46 Fun stuff**
A thematic wordsearch puzzle for you to try based on breweries in the Hemel Old Town Beer Festival.
- 47 Branch contacts**
Committee members and contact details.



As a reminder, the *Chiltern Tapler* is on the branch website, and if you scan the QR code it takes you to the Tapler page.

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Welcome – Autumnal Delights!

Welcome to the Autumn 2024 edition of the *Chiltern Tapler*, the quarterly magazine from the Mid-Chiltern's CAMRA branch.

After a damp start, the summer turned into a scorcher, with temperatures into the mid-20s plus for long periods, ideal for lazy afternoons in a beer garden enjoying a pint or two and sharing company with friends.

We were spoiled for sport by the Euros, and we came so close again; the opening ceremony of the Olympics and the magnificent festival of sport that followed. We also can't forget Wimbledon and a stunning final. Despite losing the final Djokovic got his dream win in a re-run of the Wimbledon final. Lastly, we can't forget all the fabulous music festivals.

The Hemel Old Town Beer Festival was a roaring success, with over 1000 attendees over the long weekend, and hardly a drop of beer or cider left when the festival closed. Indeed, there had to be a procurement of extra Tring Alchemist and cider to meet demand. At the time of writing there are still major festivals coming up which I am sure will be huge successes with the big one being the 27th CAMRA St Albans Beer and Cider Festival

In the diary you will find both CAMRA and non-CAMRA festivals this Autumn, with lots of local beers and ciders on offer, as well as socials and branch meeting dates. The AGM is being held on the 9th of October, at the Full House, Hemel Hempstead, so the please attend if you can.

In this issue you will find a feature on The Alford Arms, Friithsden, brewery reports from Chiltern, Farr Brew, Mad Squirrel, Pope's Yard, Rebellion, Tring, and Windsor & Eton, as well as what is being served and where. There is a features section on a review of the Hemel Old Town Beer Festival and October is Perry Month. There is a special feature on the Chiltern Cider Company, and our chosen beer

style this issue is Golden and Blonde Beers. There are articles on pub updates in Pub Watch, and articles from various contributors, as well as interesting articles from CAMRA.

As is usual there is a Wordsearch Puzzle with the word list consisting of some of the breweries featured in the Hemel Old Town Beer Festival.

So, settle down with a pint or several of well-kept cask ale or cider and enjoy this edition.

Cheers,

Andy & Richard

Thank you to our all advertisers and please support them. Without the advertisers we wouldn't be able to produce this magazine for you and distribute it free of charge.

We acknowledge picture credits and articles courtesy of CAMRA's What's Brewing and other sources. Our aim is to bring you a magazine to interest you and broaden your knowledge of beer and explore pubs you may never have been to before, as well as CAMRA's latest campaigns.

It just remains for me to say, support your local pubs and breweries, and try and enjoy new beers and favourites alike!! Brewing is an ever-evolving art! Follow CAMRA for campaigns to preserve our pubs and brewing industry, and news from around the country.

If you are passionate about beer, cider and pubs and would like to contribute articles for the magazine then please send them to tapler@midchilternscamra.org.uk

Please look at the diaries for branch meetings, socials and pub crawls, festivals, and other events diary for known events in the area and nationally.

New and existing members are always welcome at any event.

www.midchilternscamra.org.uk

Why not let potential customers know what your pub/brewery has to offer? Advertise your range of beers, ciders, and other drinks; special events; food (especially seasonal menus); quiz evenings; beer and cider festivals; beer gardens, themed evenings; cosy warm roaring fire or whatever else, *The Chiltern Tapler* will get the message out there!

To enquire about advertising in *The Chiltern Tapler*, contact the Editorial Team: Andrew Harvell or Richard Abraham at tapler@midchilternscamra.org.uk or call 07748 103190 (Andy), or 07900 907175 (Richard).

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Autumn – Sept/Oct/Nov	22 August 2025	Late August/Early September

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(tapler@midchilternscamra.org.uk)

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CAMRA is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England: company no. 1270286, run at a national level by an elected, unpaid board of directors (the National Executive) and at regional level by its regional directors both backed by a full-time professional staff. CAMRA promoted good-quality real ale and pubs, as well as acting as the consumer's champion in relation to the UK and European beer and drinks industry. It aims to **1.** Protect and improve consumer rights. **2.** Promote quality, choice, and value for money **3.** Support the public house as a focus of community life **4.** Campaign for greater appreciation of traditional beers, ciders and perries, and the public house as part of our national heritage and culture **5.** Seek improvements in all licensed premises and throughout the brewing industry. *The Chiltern Tapler* will not carry editorial and advertising that counter these aims.

The views expressed in this magazine are those of their respective authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the editor or CAMRA.

Campaign for Real Ale Limited,
230 Hatfield Road,
St Albans,
Herts
AL1 4LW
T: 01727 867201

The Mid-Chiltern's area is not only blessed with fine countryside but also a plethora of excellent pubs often tucked away in places off the beaten track but serving the best in craft beers and real ales. Whether you are a CAMRA member or not, why not come along to see what it is all about. We try to visit as many pubs as possible throughout the Mid-Chiltern's area and this is a great way of visiting pubs that you would not otherwise have thought of trying.

SEPTEMBER

Wed 25 - Sat 28: 27th CAMRA St Albans Beer & Cider Festival

Alban Arena, St. Peter's Street, St Albans, AL1 3LD

Thu 26: Launch 2025 edition of Good Beer Guide

OCTOBER

Wed 02 – Sat 05: 46th Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

St Paul's Square, Bedford, MK40 1SL

Fri 04 – Sat 05: Hertfordshire Oktoberfest
Cassiobury Park, Watford

Fri 04 – Sat 05: Ascot Beer Festival 2024
High St, Ascot, Berks, SL5 7JX.

Sat 05: Oktoberfest Hemel Hempstead 2024

12pm – 11pm, Gadebridge Park, HP1 1DN

Wed 09: Branch Meeting / AGM – Hemel Hempstead

8pm, *The Full House*, 128 Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1EZ

Sat 12: Autumn Social - Amersham

Meet 12 pm - Venues to be advised via

<https://www.midchilternscamra.org.uk>.

NOVEMBER

Wed 6: Branch Meeting - TBA

8pm, Venue to be advised via

<https://www.midchilternscamra.org.uk>

DECEMBER

Wed 4: Branch Meeting - TBA

8pm, Venue to be advised via

<https://www.midchilternscamra.org.uk>

Sat 7: Christmas Social - Tring

Meet 12pm at *Tring Brewery* for a tour of the brewery and tasting followed by a tour of local hostellers.

2025

FEBRUARY

Wed 12 – Sun 15: GBBF Winter 2025

Magna Science Adventure Centre, Rotherham

APRIL

Sat 12 – Sun 13: Members's Weekend + AGM 2025

Riviera Centre, Chestnut Ave, Torquay

Mid-Chiltern 50th Anniversary celebrations will be throughout the year. See website for further details/events.

GBBF will be back in 2025!

Are you holding a beer festival in the Mid-Chilterns or surrounding area? Contact the [Webmaster](#) with details, and have your event posted on this site.

Details of local and national Beer Festivals are correct to the best of our knowledge, but it would be worth checking with the pub/venue before you plan to visit a venue. We cannot accept responsibility for festivals not being on as we have been given the information in good faith.

All are welcome to our socials, especially members whom we have not previous seen at socials, or potential new members who want to find out more. All CAMRA members are welcome to attend Branch meetings.

Dates may be subject to change.

Please check the Branch Website www.midchilternscamra.org.uk for the latest information or Contact the Social Secretary if you need more information.

CAMRA LocAle is an initiative that promotes pubs stocking locally brewed real ale. The scheme builds on a growing consumer demand for quality local produce and an increased awareness of environmental issues.

LOCAle

LocAle promotes pubs stocking locally brewed real ale in order to reduce the number of 'beer miles' from brewery to pub cellar.

Learn more at camra.org.uk/locale



What is LocAle?

The CAMRA LocAle scheme was created in 2007 by CAMRA's Nottingham branch which wanted to help support the tradition of brewing within Nottinghamshire, following the demise of local brewer Hardys & Hansons.

Participating CAMRA branches award accreditation to pubs that regularly stock at least one real ale. Real ales from regional and national breweries as well as from microbreweries can be regarded as "local" if they are brewed within what the branch has decided as being the local area.

Why support LocAle pubs?

Everyone benefits from local pubs stocking locally brewed real ale, including:

- **Public houses** as stocking local real ales can increase pub visits.
- **Consumers** who enjoy greater beer choice and diversity.
- **Local brewers** who gain from increased sales.
- **The environment** due to fewer 'beer miles' resulting in less road congestion and pollution. ***This rules out breweries who deliver beer via distant distribution centres.***
- **The local economy** because more money is spent and retained locally.
- **Tourism** due to an increased sense of local identity and pride – let us celebrate what makes our locality different.

CAMRA LocAle Breweries & Pubs

Although it is not set in stone, what counts as a LocAle is taken to be *approximately* 30 miles between brewery and bar. The Mid-Chilterns area stretches over quite a large area and depending on where you are in that area, the following breweries fall within that category:

Aylesbury: Aylesbury Brewhouse Co, Chiltern Brewery.

Borehamwood: Better World Brewing Ltd. **Brill:** Vale.

Chiswick: Fuller's. **Hatfield:** The 3 Brewers of St Albans.

Henley-on-Thames: Chiltern Valley Winery & Brewery, Lovibonds Brewery Ltd, Luxtons.

Hoddesdon: New River Brewery.

Leighton Buzzard: Leighton Buzzard Brewing Co. **Long Crendon.** XT Brewing Company.

Maidenhead: New Wharf Brewing Co Ltd. **Marlow:** Rebellion Beer Co Ltd.

Pinner: Pinnora Brewing. **Potten End:** Mad Squirrel.

Reading: Ridgeway Brewing. **Rickmansworth:** Creative Juices Brewing Co.

Tring: Tring Brewery. **Watford:** Pope's Yard. **Wheathampstead:** Farr Brew.

White Waltham: Stardust Brewery. **Windsor:** Windsor & Eton Brewery.

There are probably others that we have missed, but you get the idea. If you fall into the category and think that we have missed you out, then please contact the Editor.

Below is a list of pubs in the Mid-Chilterns area that meet the LocAle criteria.

Amersham: King's Arms, The Crown. **Apsley:** Paper Mill, White Lion. **Asheridge:** Blue Ball.

Berkhamsted: Bull, Crown, George, Goat, Mad Squirrel Brewery Shop, Rising Sun.

Botley: Hen & Chickens. **Bourne End:** White Horse. **Bovingdon:** Bell. **Boxmoor:** The Grapes. **Briden's Camp:** Crown & Sceptre.

Cheddington, The Old Swan. **Chenies:** The Red Lion. **Chesham:** George & Dragon, Mad Squirrel Brewery Shop, Queen's Head, Trekkers. **Chesham Vale:** Hungry Olive (Black Horse).

Coleshill: Harte & Magpies.

Dagnall: Red Lion. **Flamstead:** Spotted Dog. **Flaunden:** Brick Layers Arms, Green Dragon.

Great Missenden: The Nags Head. **Hawridge Common:** The Full Moon.

Hemel Hempstead: The Full House. **Ivinghoe:** Rose & Crown.

Ivinghoe Aston: Village Swan. **Kings Langley:** Saracen's Head.

Leverstock Green: Green Man, Leather Bottle. **Ley Hill:** Crown, Swan.

Little Chalfont: White Lion. **Long Marston:** Queen's Head.

Markyate: Plume of Feathers. **Marsworth:** Angler's Retreat, Red Lion.

Mentmore: Stag. **Penn Street:** The Squirrel.

Seer Green: Jolly Cricketers. **St Leonards:** The White Lion.

Swan Bottom: Old Swan. **The Lee:** Cock and Rabbit.

Tring: Robin Hood, Anchor, Kings Arms, Castle.

Whelpley Hill: White Hart. **Wiggington:** Greyhound.

Wilstone: Half Moon. **Winchmore Hill:** Plough, Potters Arms.

Accreditation

If your local pub has a policy of always serving a decent pint of real ale from a local brewery, then we would be happy to help promote them by including them on our "LocAle accredited pubs list". We will also provide publicity materials such as posters, leaflets, beer mats and pump clip crowners to make it quite clear to pub visitors that you are proud to show.

What's on Tap and Where?

The Mid-Chilterns area has a lot of wonderful pubs serving a variety of quality beers and ciders, often in a lovely country pub environment. What could be better? On recent visits to pubs in the area, the following beers and ciders were on offer. Please note that this is only a snapshot on the day and that some pubs may have one or two real-ales on permanently, whilst they may rotate or change others regularly.

AMERSHAM: Mad Squirrel was serving MS London Porter and MS Navigator, when visited late August. The **Boot & Slipper** offered Tring Liberator, Greene King IPA, Old Speckled Hen, Old Golden Hen, Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Rebellion Roasted Nuts. Meanwhile, the **Harte and Magpies** was serving Vale Best Bitter and Rebellion Smuggler. **OLD AMERSHAM:** In late August the **Eagle** was serving Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Timothy Taylor's Marmalade Best. The **King's Arms** had Rebellion IPA, St Austell Tribute, and Rebellion Loop-the-Loop. The **Saracen's Head** had Old Speckled Hen, and St Austell Tribute on offer. Whilst the **Crown** was serving Rebellion IPA, whilst the **Elephant & Castle** had Fuller's London Pride, Tring Piggeries and Rebellion IPA on. The **Chequers** was serving Wainwright's Gold. **APSLEY:** During a late August visit, the **White Lion** had Fuller's London Pride, Tring Side Pocket for a Toad, and Tring Ridgeway on the pumps. Nearby, the **Oddfellows Arms** had Iron Maiden (Robinsons) Trooper, Adnams Ghost Ship and St. Austell Tribute, whilst the **Paper Mill** had Dark Star Hophead, Fuller's ESB, London Pride, and Oliver's Island Golden Ale. **BERKHAMSTED:** Late August, The **Crown** was offering Greene King Ruddles Best and Abbot, Bradfield Farmers Brown Cow, 3 Brewers Golden English Ale, Sharp's Doom Bar, and Robinsons Trooper. The **Boat** was selling Fullers London Pride and ESB, Dark Star Hophead and Stroud Budding Organic Pale Ale. The **Rising Sun** had Adnams Southwold Bitter, Chiltern Beechwood, Harvey's Sussex Best. and Riser Bitter by Tring Brewery. The **Bull** offered three Tring beers, Sidepocket for a Toad, Liberator, Rye House and was about to put on Hell Fire

mid-September, and the **Mad Squirrel Shop** was serving Mad Squirrel Evolve with Navigator and Rivendale on rotation, in mid-September. At the end of August, the **George** was serving Marston's 61 Deep Pale Ale, Tring Brewery Piggeries, and Timothy Taylor's Landlord. The **Goat** was serving Tring Side Pocket for a Toad and Fuller's London Pride. In the **Highwayman** had Sharpe's Doom Bar Timothy Taylor's Landlord and St Austell Tribute on handpump mid-September. The **Crystal Palace** was serving Tring Liberator and Timothy Taylor's landlord at the end of August. **BOURNE END:** The recently re-opened **Anchor** had Tring Side Pocket for a Toad, Tring Rye House, Greene King Abbot Ale and Courage Director's that had just been tapped at the end of August. The **White Horse** had McMullen AK Mild, Country Best Bitter, and Rivertown Ivel, on next door, with Rivertown Gade due on imminently. **BOVINGDON:** The **Halfway House** was only offering Greene King IPA, in late August, while back the **Bell** had Tring Side Pocket for a Toad, Young's IPA, and Tring Squadron Scramble. **BOXMOOR:** Alongside regular beers Greene King IPA and Abbot the **Three Blackbirds** offers up to three guest beers. In late August it had Hop Monster Banshee Porter, Jester Brew Big "30" Pale, and Hop Alliance Oakham with Salopian Harmonic. In early September the **Steam Coach** offered Greene King Abbot, Tring brewery Squadron Scramble, Timothy Taylor's Landlord and St Austell Tribute. The **Grapes** was serving Tring Side Pocket for a Toad and St Austell Tribute, whilst down the road, the **Fishery Inn** had St Austell Proper Job and Tribute on the bar and would be changing to Dark Star Hophead at the time of an early September visit.

BRIDEN'S CAMP: On the bar at The **Crown & Sceptre** was Greene King IPA, Vale Tickety Brew, Church End Brewery What the Fox's Hat and Tring Brewery Squadron Scramble. **CHALFONT ST GILES:** The **Ivy House** had Fuller's London Pride, and Fuller's Golden rays on offer. **Merlin's Cave** was serving Young's London Original Bitter and Special Bitter, and Chiltern Beechwood Bitter. Greene King Old Speckled Hen, and Deuchars IPA was being served at **The Feathers**, whilst **The White Hart** was serving Greene King IPA and Abbott Ale. **CHEDDINGTON:** The **Three Horseshoes** was serving Wadworth Horizon, Crisp Golden Ale, Sharpe's Doom Bar, Eagle Brewery Bombardier, and Wainwrights Gold, whilst the **Old Swan** had Tring Ridgeway, and Tring Liberator, and Timothy Taylor's Landlord. **CHENIES:** The **Bedford Arms** was serving Young's Original London Bitter, and Chiltern Beechwood Bitter, whilst the **Red Lion** had Adnams Southwold Bitter, Windsor and Eton Boarman on offer, in a late August visit. **CHESHAM:** In early September the **Queen's Head** was selling Fuller's London Pride, Gales Seafarers Ale, ESB, Stone Daisy Cow Down Special Pale Ale and Social Pale Ale. The **Jolly Sportsman** was serving Timothy Taylor's Landlord, and Moorland Old Speckled Hen, mid-September. The **Griffin** was offering Tring Side Pocket for a Toad, and Robinson's Unicorn Premium Golden Ale. Also, in late August **Trekkers** had Tring Brewery Side Pocket for a Toad and Rebellion Smuggler on cask. The **Mad Squirrel** taproom was serving Mad Squirrel Evolve Modern Bitter and London Porter. The **Pheasant** had their new regular Fuller's London Pride on recently, with guest beers Sharps Atlantic and Hobgoblin Gold due to come on too. The **George and Dragon** was serving Tring Side Pocket for a Toad, and Robinson's Unicorn. **CHIPPERFIELD:** When visited in April the **Windmill** was selling Greene King IPA, Tring Ridgeway and Sharp's Doom Bar. The recently re-opened **Chipperfield Boot** had Tring Side Pocket for a Toad and Wainwright's

Golden Ale on. **COLESHILL:** The **Red Lion** rotates between Vale Gravititas, Rebellion IPA, and Timothy Taylor's Landlord. **DAGNALL:** The **Red Lion**, in early September, was serving Vale VPA, Mauldens Mole Trap, and Tring Side Pocket for a Toad and Oakham Citra. **FLAUNDEN:** Rebellion Overthrow, Rebellion Smuggler, Youngs London Original, and Timothy Taylor Landlord were on the pumps at the **Green Dragon** when visited in late August. Whilst at the **Bricklayers Arms** Tring Brewery Side Pocket for a Toad is a regular, and 3 Brewers IPA, 3 Brewers Golden English Ale, and Bricklayer's Arms Rambler's Rest by St Austell, were on as guest beers. The guest beer rotates between 3 Brewers, Vale Brewery, Chiltern Brewery and Mad Squirrel. **The Alford Arms, FRITHSDEN,** had Tring Brewery Side Pocket for a Toad, 3 Brewers Golden Ale and IPA being served in the last week of August. **GREAT MISSENDEN:** The **George Ale House** was serving Vale Tickety Brew, Verdant Lamanva, Five Point Best Bitter, and Wylam Gold, in mid-September. Meanwhile, the **Wild Kite Bottleshop** was serving Tring Side Pocket for a Toad, and Chiltern Brewery Beechwood Bitter. **HEMEL HEMPSTEAD:** Alongside regular beers Greene King IPA, Abbot and Sharps Doom Bar, the **Full House**, had Brains Rev James, Vale Ticket Brew, Twickenham Naked Ladies, Mad Squirrel Dry Irish Stout and two being changed in a mid-September visit. The **Olde Kings Arms** was selling Adnams Ghost Ship. The **Rose & Crown**, in **IVINGHOE**, had Chiltern Pale Ale, Tring Brewery Side Pocket for a Toad, Goff's Cheltenham Gold, and Sandford Orchards Deveon Red (real cider), on in early September. **The Village Swan** in **IVINGHOE ASTON**, had Tring Sidepocket for a Toad and Fuller's London Pride, on. **KING'S LANGLEY:** The **Saracen's Head** was serving Tring Side Pocket for a Toad, Timothy Taylor's Landlord, and Courage Directors, on an end of August visit. **LITTLE GADDESSEN:** The **Bridgewater Arms** had Greene King Yard

Bird Pale Ale, Old Golden Hen, and IPA, and Tring Side Pocket for a Toad about to come on, in a late-August visit. **LITTLE MISSENDEN:** The **Crown** was serving Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Otter Bitter, Harvey's Sussex Best and St Austell Tribute. **MENTMORE:** The **Stag** was serving Tring Piggeries, and Wadworth's 6X. **NASH MILLS:** The **Red Lion** was serving White Rat from The Rat Brewery on a late August visit, whilst the **Three Tuns** had Ringwood Razorback on tap. **NORTHALL:** The **Swan** was offering Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbott Ale, and St Austell Proper Job in late May. **PENN:** The **Hit or Miss** had Badger Tanglefoot, Best Bitter and Fursty Ferret on in a late August visit, whilst the **Squirrel** was serving Sharp's Doom Bar and Tring Side Pocket for a Toad. **POTTEN END:** The recently opened **Martin's Pond** was serving Sharp's Sea Fury, and rotates between that, Sharp's Doom Bar and one from Tring

Brewery. **TRING:** Recently on the bar in the **Anchor** was Greene King IPA, and King Mango, Tring Squadron Scramble, and Side Pocket for a Toad. The **King's Arms** offered regulars Tring Brewery Side Pocket for a Toad, and Moongazing, Chiltern Brewery Paris Gold, and Oakham OPA. Along the road in the **Bell**, Farr Brew Lock In, Curfew, Pale, and Rosie's Pig cloudy cider. On rotation are other Farr Brew beers. The **Robin Hood** had Fuller's London Pride, ESB, Oliver's Island and Dark Star Hop Head. **TROWLEY BOTTOM:** The **Rose & Crown** always has Otter Bitter on hand pump. **WHELPLEY HILL:** The **White Hart** was serving Tring Side Pocket for a Toad and Tring Moongazing. **WINCHMORE HILL:** The **Potters Arms** was serving Rebellion Overthrow, IPA, and Roasted Nuts. **WINKWELL:** The **Three Horseshoes** had regulars Fuller's London Pride and Adnams Ghost Ship on when visited in late August.

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Hertfordshire
HP2 6EY

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News on Pub Re-Openings and Closures in the Mid-Chilterns Area

After the difficulties experienced for the hospitality sector during the pandemic, local pubs have been undergoing refurbishments and re-opening.

The Chequers, Amersham

Currently looking for a new tenant.

The Hop Tap, Hemel Hempstead

The exciting news from Tony & Tracey Hosier, who own the Hops & Apples, in Hemel Hempstead, is that they have been granted a licence to open a tap room in what was the much beloved Monks Inn premises. Once the legals have all been sorted they are going to redecorate, etc. The opening date is yet to be confirmed, so please refer to social media

The King's Arms, Tring (POTY)

Unfortunately, The Kings Arms wasn't selected as the Central Southern regional final of the POTY competition. It was up against the Bell, Aldworth and Cross Keys, Wallingford, with the Bell being selected.

The Lamb, Berkhamsted

The pub is currently closed and is boarded up, however we have been informed that the pub is going to reopen on Friday 18 October (all being well) under new management. We wish them well in what has been a 'revolving door' open/close pub in recent years.

Martin's Pond, Potten End

The pub was recently bought by new owners and has re-opened. It is being run by the new tenant, Gary, who has run other pubs in the areas previously. There is only one real ale, Sharp's Sea Fury, currently on offer, but if the demand is there Gary may add more. We wish

Gary success with his new venture and please support this pretty country pub.

The Old Bell Gate, Hemel Old Town

This pub is closed again now, with no indication when it will re-open.

The Swan, Ley Hill

The owners of the Swan have appealed against the refusal of their application for change of use.

The White Lion, Apsley

Following its inclusion as one of the pubs that Fuller's was divesting to Admiral Taverns, the White Lion had a new manager, Ryan, running it, when visited in late August. It is understood, that the current publicans are staying on but currently on holiday.

Contributors: The Editors, Committee.

Local Real Ale Pub News

If you know of a pub that has closed or re-opened recently, or are the owner or manager of a pub or club in the Mid-Chilterns area, and want to share news about your premises, or any other updates, please contact the Editor:

@ tapler@midchilternscamra.org.uk

Save your local from extinction:
email your MP now

camra.org.uk/saveourpubs



News from some of the breweries in the LocAle area

Chiltern Brewerywww.chilternbrewery.co.uk**Paris Gold – latest seasonal beer**

A draught beer brewed to celebrate the Paris Olympics 2024, to cheer our athletes on!



Thirst quenching and only 3.4%, Paris Gold is gold-medal bright and brewed with a French hop, Barbe Rouge.

Our brewers selected Barbe Rouge, specially imported from the Games' host nation, to celebrate these Olympic Games. The hop provides floral, strawberry and redcurrant aromas and tastes.

Please see their website for more details on brewery tours and latest beers.

Farr Brewwww.farrbrew.com

As Farr Brewery is relocating and will be one of the breweries supplying pubs in the Mid-Chilterns branch area, we are initiating coverage. Richard has written the report.

I had a chat with Matt Elvidge, one of the two main men at the brewery, the other being Nick Farr. As they spoke, he was standing in a very large (23 x 18 metre) and hollow former grain store at Great Revel End Farm, Gaddesden Lane, Redbourn, AL3 7AR. The brew kit has now been re-located – though I was unsure as

to how far the installation has gone - from their former 'home' at Samuels, Coleman Green Lane where Nick started about ten years ago. Richard got the impression that there is still much left to do before the whole operation is up and running, though there are on it full time! From what Matt was saying, their new landlords (the Stanbridge family – who I think I may know) are in this for the 'long haul'.

As, until the kit is installed, they cannot start brewing, they have quite a supply of cask 'ready to go' – some of them, though I don't know which, will already be on the bar at their only pub in our region, The Bell, Tring.

These are:

'Mannered' 4.4% Dark Mild.

'Farr Well' 4.2% Hazy Pale.

'Pocket Will' 5% Stout

Plus, two other Pales at 3.6% % 4.2%.

Their contact is as it always has been at info@farrbrew.com – which goes to both Nick & Matt.

Mad Squirrel Brewerywww.madsquirrelbrew.co.uk

Latest limited releases from Mad Squirrel.

'Pine – West Coast Pale'

Strength: 4.4%

A West Coast Pale that takes you on a wild ride through a forest of flavour. Bursting with the zesty brightness of Amarillo and Citra, it offers waves of juicy orange and tangy grapefruit. Simcoe adds a bold twist, infusing the brew with a rich, earthy pine aroma. A hoppy adventure in every sip!

Vegan friendly. Contains gluten.

'Post Paddle' – Pale Ale



Strength: 4.4%

A pale ale crafted to invigorate your senses after a day on the water. Showcasing the innovative CRYO303 hop blend,

delivering vibrant notes of tropical fruit and citrus with a smooth, balanced bitterness. The light malt creates a crisp and refreshing finish. Perfect for unwinding after your latest paddle adventure!

Vegan friendly. Contains gluten.

The brewery supports local causes and have recently presented a cheque to the Hospice of St. Francis from their sales of 'Top Dog' with £1.00 from every can sold going there.

Private brewery tours are now available weekday evenings only.

www.madsquirrelbrew.co.uk/brewery/brewery-tour

Pope's Yard Brewery

www.popesyard.co.uk



The brewery hopes to restart brewing later in the year.

For more information email:

ale@popesyard.co.uk

Rebellion Beer Co

www.rebellionbeer.co.uk

Cask Monthly Specials:

September - Gold Digger



Strength: 4.2%

Golden & Crisp

A relatively simple malt base creates a crisp and biscuity golden ale. Pilgrim hops are a relatively modern British variety that add a citrusy twist to this well balanced and easy drinking beer

October – XX Ale



Strength: 4.2%

Ruby & Fruity

Originally brewed as X ale to celebrate the first 10yrs of Rebellion Beer Co Ltd, this beer was bought back as XX Ale to commemorate the 20th anniversary year.

A classic bitter with a rich Ruby colour and fruity and floral hops.

November – Old Codger



Strength: 4.7%

Amber & Malty

A premium bitter, satisfyingly rich and malty whilst remaining well balanced and easy drinking. Deep amber in colour with a floral and earthy hop aroma.

December – Humbug



Strength: 4.2%

Amber & Citrus

An amber beer with fruity hop character. Amarillo hops give a fresh aroma of orange, grapefruit and peach to the beer, yet Amber remains as crisp and clean as a winter's morning.

New Small Batch Beer

Dry-hopped Kellerbier Beer



Strength: 3.4%

Golden & Crisp

This modern take on a kellerbier has been dry hopped with Styrian

Dragon & Styrian Wolf hops, giving it a hoppy blast of floral, citrus, and berry flavours and aromas.

Tring Brewery

www.tringbrewery.co.uk

TRING BREWERY AUTUMN NEWS

AUTUMN SEASONAL SPECIAL: SQUADRON SCRAMBLE

Tring have launched a Autumn seasonal special - Squadron Scramble (4.0% Golden Ale).



"A debonair golden hue and daredevil maltiness compliments a courageous aroma from the finest Mount Hood hops."

Squadron Scramble is available on draught from the brewery shop and all good pubs now Perry Vale perry and Farmhouse Cloudy Scrumpy cider are available to buy (500ml bottles) in the brewery shop now.

SEPTEMBER MONTHLY SPECIAL: RYE HOUSE

The September monthly special is the eighth in a series of brews supporting Hector's House, Tring's 2024 Charity of Choice.



"Citrus and spice combine harmoniously in this pale beer, which has been brewed with rye malt. Pale rye provides a sweet and rounded palate, Amarillo (US) hops bring marmalade and pine."

This year's monthly specials are inspired by local legend, and each sport an important message from Hector's House.

Rye House takes its namesake and imagery from a Grade-I listed manor in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire.

Rye House made national headlines in 1683, as news spread of a murderous plot against the monarchy. The eponymous 'Rye House plot' was a plan to ambush King Charles II and his brother, the Duke of York, as they journeyed from Westminster to the horse races at Newmarket. As a fortified manor near to the royal's route, Rye House was an ideal place for perpetrators (extreme members of the Whigs) to keep a secret garrison of men, ready to strike the convoy at a moment's notice.

In an unpredictable turn of events, major fires broke out in Newmarket and put a stop to nearby races, halting King Charles' travel plans. Though the ambush had been stifled, word spread of a potential uprising against the crown. Whigs were summarily arrested, imprisoned and even executed for acts of high treason - a grizzly episode for one of Hertfordshire's most historic buildings.

Rye House is available on draught from the brewery shop and all good pubs until the end of September.

PARTY TIME

Tring have also unveiled a new 'party portal' on their website. If you are holding a party or event, they have party sizes available, ranging from 9 pints through to 88 pints.

Their 9-pint tins are packaged into presentation mini kegs and 18-pint/36-pint sizes are decanted into bag-in-box packaging, each with a low-maintenance tap for dispensing your fresh draught ale.

NEW: LINDR MACHINES FOR ALCHEMIST, RAVEN KING OR LUNARDI'S ON DRAUGHT

Tring's Lindr machines can be used to dispense either 30L (53 pints) or 50L (88 pints) from a branded stainless-steel keg, and apart the Lindr machine and the keg, no other equipment is required – simply 'plug-in-and-play' with mains power!

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☎ 01442 890721

🌐 www.tringbrewery.co.uk



To find out more? Head to their website (tringbrewery.co.uk) and select 'party sizes' from the shop dropdown menu.

Monthly special ales are available on draught from local pubs and the Dunsley Farm brewery shop. Details for brewery members' nights, online raffle launch, and other supplementary activities will be announced via Tring Brewery social media and newsletter channels throughout the year.

The latest up to date information as well as tour booking dates and times (subject to local council and government advice) can be found at www.tringbrewery.co.uk. any updates will be published via their email newsletter (sign up through the website) and across their social media channels - @tringbrewery.

Vale Brewery

www.valebrewery.co.uk

EST 1995



In case you missed this announcement earlier this year.

ABC returns for 2024!

We're very excited to announce that in 2024 **ABC is BACK!**

Pre-pandemic, Vale owned and operated **Aylesbury Brewhouse Co** - a sub-brand that brewed small-batch experimental beers on a smaller brewery kit at the excellent **Hop Pole** in Aylesbury.

Now the kit at the Hop Pole is no longer operational, but from this year we're going to be brewing new beers (and bringing back some old favourites!) under the ABC banner, all brewed at the main brewery.

www.midchilternscamra.org.uk

So, expect a new monthly one-off beer across a range of different styles: high/low ABVs, hazy/juicy IPAs, new world flavours etc...



The core and seasonal Vale beers will of course be continuing in a range of classic ale styles.

ABC beers will be available for draught takeaway from the Tap Room, and bottle and can coming soon.

To kick off - the return of one of one of our best-loved ABC brews: **Calico Jack's Port Royal Return**.



At 5.0%, this rich and velvety stout balances a healthy bitterness with a coconut twist throughout.

Windsor & Eton

www.webrew.co.uk

Windsor & Eton successfully completes second equity crowdfunding round.

Windsor & Eton has just completed a second equity crowdfunding round, using Seedrs, which raised £384,524 from 427 investors in 43 days, 183% of the target of £200,002. The money raised is going to be used to expand beyond Windsor and they are planning to open new pubs across the Thames Valley.

Brewery News

Want your brewery featured next time?
Contact the Editor:

@ tapler@midchilternscamra.org.uk



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Takeaway or
online

This issue we are shining the spotlight on The Alford Arms, Frithsden. Andy recently paid a visit to the Alford Arms.

The Alford Arms, Frithsden – Championing sustainability and local produce



If you drive out of Hemel on the Leighton Buzzard Road (B440) towards Leighton Buzzard, just past the Red Lion at Water End, you will see a signpost for Potten End on the left-hand side of the road, followed by the sign for Frithsden and Nettleden. Turning up that road and following for 1 mile turn left at the T-junction and then take the next right after 1/4 mile. 100 yards down the lane on the right you will come across the pub. The Alford Arms is a gem of a country pub nestled on the edge of the Chiltern Hills, in beautiful countryside.



James, the charismatic and very efficient general manager was not on duty, the day I visited, and I met with the also very amiable Charlotte, deputy manager, an economics graduate of Sussex University. Charlotte gave me a potted history of the pub and a tour round. Ellen and Kate round off the front of house team. In all there are about 30 staff.

The pub is owned by Becky and David Salisbury, who have had the pub for 25 years, and at one point also owned the Royal Oak in Marlow, the Swan in Denham, Queen's Head in Penn, and the Black Horse in Fulmer. Having divested of the four pubs in their portfolio, they now just have the Alford Arms.

The pub used to be located where the current rear carpark is. Unfortunately, approximately 100 years ago, there was a fire that completely destroyed the pub, and it was rebuilt further forward towards the road, in its present location. In 2016, bad luck struck again and a fire in the upstairs damaged the pub, and it was closed for six months.

Becky and David, worked in London before owning the pub, and had been on the lookout for a country pub that they could bring London quality dining to a country pub, but not make it a gastro pub. After searching for a while, they came across the Alford Arms which ticked all the boxes.

Their ethos is to support local suppliers and cut food miles to a minimum. For example, rather than using olive oil, they use rapeseed oil from Chiltern Rapeseed Oil, flour from Redbournbury Watermill, St Albans, The Cracking Egg Company, Mursley Farm, Native Beef and Lamb, Sarratt, and Chiltern Fish and Game, Tring, to name some n their list of local suppliers.

Not only is the Alford Arms, renowned for its cuisine, but also for its superb range of drinks. It was the first pub in the area to serve Campfire Gin, by Puddingstone Distillery, Wilstone, Tring. Complementing Campfire Gin and continuing the philosophy of using locally produced food and drink, they also stock Amersham Gin, distilled in the King's Arms, Amersham. There is also Henley Gin and Scratch Rum, which is also made in Hertfordshire.

Wines are also only sourced from the New World to keep down the food miles, and until Nettleden Vineyard closed, the pub stocked some of their still and sparkling wines.



Turning to beers that are on tap or hand pump. The pub stock Camden Brewery beers on tap: Camden Pale, Camden Helles, and Camden Stout.

On hand pump, the ethos is still to use

locally source products. Tring Brewery is the main supplier with Side Pocket for a Toad, usually being available. They also use Chiltern Brewery, Farr Brewery, 3 Brewers and New River Brewery.



Food is served between 12 and 3:30 pm, and 5:30 and 8:30 pm. The covered outside areas, with bench seats covered in sheepskin, and the rear seating area inside the pub need to be booked, but the bar area runs a walk-in service with no booking.

In the summer the pub is very popular with walkers doing the Ashridge Walk, and very

busy outside. In the winter it tends to be locals and walkers, and the pub is dog-friendly, so is a very popular stop off.

The Alford Arms is a welcoming local pub, sourcing local produce with an ethos of sustainability and using organic produce where possible, bringing London quality to the



Chilterns, and recycling as much is possible.

Not only can the pub be accessed from Hemel Hempstead by car, but also Berkhamsted, and from Berkhamsted Railway Station by a lovely 5km stroll from the station.

If you are in Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead,

or one of the outlying villages, The Alford Arms is now served by the HertsLynx on-demand bus service.

Operating until 7pm on weekdays and until 4pm on weekends, you can be picked up from a host of locations and brought to the pub's door. And it costs just £2 per person, per one-way trip.

Contact details:

- The Alford Arms
Frithsden
Nr. Hemel Hempstead
Herts HP1 3DD
- GPS Co-ordinates
Longitude -0.527883
Latitude 51.777826
- What 3 words – Comic.Mint.Power
- 01442 864480
- info@alfordarmsfrithsden.co.uk



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In this section we have collected articles which readers may find of interest. It covers topical items as well as CAMRA articles including campaigns, industry news and opinion.

Cask Ale Week 2024: 19-29 September

Cask Ale Week is an annual celebration of Britain's national drink – cask conditioned beer.

Cask Ale Week acts as a yearly platform for pubs and breweries to champion real ale, through public events, incentives and other special activities that are made available to thousands of discerning drinkers.

Formed in the early noughties by Cask Marque, Cask Ale Week is supported by major trade organisations, brewers & pub groups as well as The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

The 11-day event aims to celebrate the nation's unique heritage of cask-conditioned beer, with photos and other content to mark the occasion, shared over social media channels under the #CaskAleWeek and #StandUpForCask hashtags.

“Cask Ale Week is something round which pubs, bars, pubcos and breweries can rally. They can do their own thing but doing it under one banner will give cut-through that's unachievable by working alone.” – Paul Nunny, Executive Director at Cask Marque

To find your nearest #CaskAleWeek promotion, visit the official website at caskaleweek.co.uk.

However, you are celebrating #CaskAleWeek, we hope you have a good one, from all of the committee at Mid-Chilterns CAMRA.

Assets of Community Value

Almost always in the CAMRA local magazines, of which I am a collector, there is mention of Assets of Community Value (ACV) but rarely is it explained exactly what the term means, and from whence it stems. Likewise, what are the benefits for pubs and for the wider community in which it is located.

Under the Localism Act 2011, an ACV listing for a community asset, to which pubs can qualify, is awarded by a District or Borough Council upon a submission from a community or local interest group provided it meets certain criteria. These are that such a building or other land is an asset of community value if its main use has recently been or is presently used to further the social wellbeing of the local community and could do so in the future. The Localism Act states that 'social interests' include cultural, recreational and sporting interests.

If awarded, an ACV brings some safeguards for pubs. Should the owner of the property decide to sell then a six-week moratorium period can be triggered in which the community group can register a decision to make a bid. If that should be the case, then the owner must allow a further six-month period for the community to raise the necessary funds and make a reasonable offer. If the six months expires and no offer has been made, then the owner is free to sell to any other bidder. Once an ACV is awarded it is in place for five years. A community or interest group can be a Parish Council or consortium of 'pub friends' if the latter is set up by twenty-one or more local signatories.

An ACV status can also prevent unwanted planning applications for a change of use on the premises because most planners regard such as strong evidence that the pub is valued by its community and should therefore be protected.

Details of how to make an ACV application can be found on Borough and District Council websites, where a register of all successful bids will also be shown. Another source of advice is https://camra.org.uk/campaign_resources/nominating-a-pub-as-avc-camra-guide.

The first recorded community owned pub is not a million miles from our region being the Red Lion, Preston, near Hitchin, in local ownership since 1983. As of January, this year, according to the Plunkett Foundation, there are 174 such pubs in the United Kingdom, the long-term survival rate of community owned pubs stood at 96%; with a five-year rate showing 99%. Again, these are figures from the Plunkett Foundation, their 2021 report can be found at <https://plunkett.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Plunkett-Foundation-Better-Business-Report-2021-Community-Pubs.pdf>

In short, if you are aware of a local pub that might benefit from ACV status, don't assume that someone else will be on the case! Always remember that a pub converted to another use is unlikely to ever be a pub again, and one demolished is gone forever. To quote CAMRA's Les Middlewood and Paul Ainsworth, **"Britain's heritage is at stake"**.

Cheers to fourteen years: my bittersweet farewell to a job like no other.

In the heart of any community lies a pub. Not a bar. A real pub, with real regulars, real beer (and real crisps). Whether the country declares war, or there's a birth in the village, the pub is where all go to discuss, mourn, or celebrate. After fourteen years spent either front or back of house, navigating the ins and outs (and dramas) of the pub trade, I find myself reflecting on the myriad experiences that make working in or running a proper, traditional pub a unique and character-defining journey.

A pub is more than a watering hole. It's the sum of its community. From the seasoned regulars who have their designated tables (and be prepared for the furtive glances you get if you sit in their spots) to the newcomers seeking a quiet moment in the middle of their afternoon's shopping, the pub is a melting pot where stories are shared, friendships are forged, and the tapestry of local life is woven.

Managing this environment is not for the faint of heart. Early starts are marked with the stench of bleach and too strong coffee, while late nights become a battle with those ale-sozzled patrons unwilling for their revelries to end. You mop the floors on aching feet, and swig that glorious, well-earned closing pint by the door, before trudging home to force down a slice of toast and fall unconscious to do it all over again tomorrow. Like the myth of Sisyphus pushing the boulder up the mountain every single day, the monotonous rhythm becomes ingrained in the very fabric of your existence. Not enough sleep, and never the energy or motivation for healthy food or healthy habits. Always on the brink of burn-out, with never quite enough time off to fully recuperate.

At times it is rough, I will not deny it. And unless you have done it yourself, you cannot fully imagine how much it takes from you, both physically and mentally. So why do we do it? Why did I keep doing it as long as I did? And why is it that now I am out, I feel such a deep sense of loss, as though I am in mourning?

The answer is simple. It is you, my dear, sweet, hilarious, exasperating regulars. A pub has something intangible, and truly magical, that everybody wants – a sense of belonging stronger than anywhere else. Whether you are a bartender or a Friday-night drinker, or my lovely, wonderful old boys there every single day, you become family. I know you. I have seen you at your highest and your lowest and you have seen me at mine. The tableaux of existence that define what we are: "My husband just died," "My daughter is having a baby." I have been there. Sometimes invisible, sometimes included, but I have witnessed the moments of your lives that make you beautiful and divine, and deeply human.

Whether it is the comforting warmth of the fireplace or the carefully curated decor that tells tales of the pub's history (for a while we even had a regular's ashes on the shelf, above his spot), or just having someone who will stop

and listen to what you have to say, I hope all will always be able to find solace in the familiar embrace of their local.

I say farewell now, to such a large part of my identity for the last fourteen years. I carry with me a treasure trove of memories and wisdoms (sometime given to me whether I like it or not by one who has had a few too many), a fair number of random scars (both physical and mental), and a deep love for the most holy of British institutions, the pub.

From the most jovial banter at (and more importantly, behind) the bar, to the quiet moments of reflection during closing time, the traditional pub with all its quirks and charms, is not merely a business; it is a custodian of community spirit, an anchor in the ebb and flow of life. A place where the past lingers in every pint pulled and the future is toasted in the company of friends, old and new.

Cheers to fourteen years of stories, laughter (and tears), and the enduring legacy of the local pub.

And that is time at the bar.

A letter from Zee Gillespie, former Landlady at the Drapers Arms in Bristol, first published in Bristol CAMRA's "Pints West" – Spring 2024 – and reproduced with her permission.

Richard Abraham

Good Beer Guide Retrospective

Whatever CAMRA HQ wants to tell you, the first Good Beer Guide was published in 1974 and not 1975. I have my well-thumbed and annotated copy to prove it. The reason why the organisation wishes to disown the first of the line is for the rather prosaic reason that it covered only England & Wales – the campaign not then having got off the ground in Scotland or (if it ever did) in Northern Ireland.

Despite its diminutive size - only 97 pages - and thoroughly illogical layout, this thin publication undoubtedly had a bigger impact than any of its subsequent sisters. These were the days when CAMRA was an out and out

campaigning organisation, constantly exchanging abuse with the country's six largest brewers (who, to be fair, richly deserved it) and beginning to make a name for itself in the letter's pages of newspapers both national and local.

The guide lists beers produced by 96 different companies at 139 different sites and by the end of the year that number would have reduced by around ten as breweries, both nationally owned and independent continued to close in the seemingly unstoppable march towards centralisation. Some breweries were praised – 'very highly recommended' (Brakspear, then of Henley on Thames) or criticised, 'a disaster' (Gibbs Mew of Salisbury) but the guide reserved the peak of its ire for the products of the 'Big Six' and in particular those of the appalling Watney, Mann and Truman, usually known as just Watneys and later lampooned by Bill Tidy as Grotneys. It was this relationship that caused the biggest controversy and possibly the greatest boost the Campaign ever received in its 53-year history.

The story goes something like this; over the preceding couple of years, the members of the newly fledged organisation had been gathering information with a view to publishing a pub guide. This would list some 1500 pubs, chosen purely, if somewhat erratically, on the quality of their ale. Research was often poor and the information inaccurate, but nonetheless the resulting guide represented a milestone in not only the history of the Campaign but in the wider consumer movement then gathering pace. By the end of 1973 the information was in place and a printer, John Waddington's of Leeds, chosen. I can't remember exactly, but it was around April 1974 that the first batch was released to members. The guide slowly trickled its way into bookshops and pubs but just as it began to receive the odd inch or two of newspaper coverage halfway down page five, something happened which promoted it, and the Campaign in general to front page status.

After the first batch had been delivered, suddenly, Waddington's decided that the guide was too controversial, and they didn't want to have any part of it. The offending passage which spooked the printer was the guide's advice to readers regarding Watney's; 'Avoid like the plague' it stated in tiny print inside the back cover. The inference was of course that the brewer had 'got at' Waddington's. Whether this was true or not, was entirely irrelevant but whatever, the controversy acted as the Campaign's greatest recruiting sergeant.

It is undeniable that a disproportionately large number of the earliest members were journalists (Terry Pattinson of the Daily Mirror is one that springs to mind) and they set to work with gusto invoking the classic David versus Goliath scenario. Watney's (and indeed Waddington's) were pilloried by virtually every newspaper in the land. In the end a compromise was reached and the advice regarding Watney's changed to the comparatively glowing 'Avoid at all costs'. But, if indeed they were involved, Watney's had scored as big an own goal as any brewer in history. Starved of publicity, it is debatable whether the Campaign could have achieved the success which it went on to have but those four little words, 'avoid like the plague' gave it star status and the brewing industry, not only in the UK but arguably throughout the world, would never be the same again.

The following year's Good Beer Guide, the one which the Campaign likes to call the first, was a more professional, more accurate publication encompassing the whole of the United Kingdom, although I don't recall any pubs in Northern Ireland – perhaps there just weren't any that qualified. The publication itself doubled in size, then trebled and carried on growing until it reached true door-stopping proportions. But none will ever have as much of an impact as that skinny, inaccurate apology for a guide published by a motley collection of boozers, students and cub reporters exactly fifty years ago.

Another pub saved – a good news story!

Although not in our Mid Chilterns region there is a connection when the Swan, Stewkley re-opens under new ownership, as Nell Saint and her General Manager, Paul Darvell take on 'another' Swan! Nell, as readers of The Chiltern Tapler will know, is the owner of The Old Swan in Cheddington, which is a very successful and popular village local pub serving high quality meals.

Situated at 1 Chapel Square in Stewkley, the Swan (sometimes in its history the 'Old' or 'White' Swan) opened in 1796, and in the 19th, Century was also the principal brewery for the village with its own maltings, also sending beer to London. That was because an earlier landlord, Thomas Hedges, was also landlord of the White Horse Hotel on Islington Cattle Market. Hauled by horses from the village to London in the late 1800s, it is said that the market drovers 'loved the beer' which they called "Old Stewkley". At the beginning of the 20th Century the 'Old Swan' – as it was then – sold beer from the Berkhamsted brewer Locke & Smith but, when they went into receivership in 1913, the Watford brewers Benskins took over. The Swan finally closed its doors in March 2022.

So now, a new lease of life for this Grade II listed venue doubling the number in the village which once boasted ten public houses. At the moment they are unsure which specific ales they will have on cask, but they will be sourcing from Tring and Chiltern, plus possibly other Locales – one they may well call "Old Stewkley". The Mid Chilterns region and Chiltern Tapler wish Nell, Paul and their team every success in the future.

Richard Abraham

Real ale could do with a little democracy

Opinion



There are more than 1,800 breweries in the UK, but the beer we actually see on tap in most of our local pubs and on supermarket

shelves provides a damning representation of this diversity. Around 80 per cent of the beer sold in the UK is produced by a handful of internationally owned brands, including Carlsberg, Heineken, AB InBev, Molson Coors and Asahi. And let's not forget the ubiquitous Guinness – parent-company Diageo claims it is now the best-selling beer in the country by value. Through a combination of clever marketing and shrewd acquisition of smaller breweries over a number of years, these multinational entities have pulled the wool over the eyes of the consumer-at-large, creating the illusion of choice, when in reality they're limiting it. Energetically marketed, contemporary brands like Brixton, Beavertown and Camden Town have allowed the largest operators within the British beer market to court an entirely new generation of drinkers. Trends such as the emergence of Madri – a faux-Spanish lager brand produced by Molson Coors has generated revenue totalling £430m since it was launched in 2024 – have helped them mop up existing consumers as popularity of some larger brands has waned over time. Although several legacy brands including Carling, Budweiser and Stella Artois still dominate to this day. The real ale market doesn't look much better. Double-digit decline in the sector over the past two decades means that cask beer now only accounts for 4.3 per cent of beer produced in the UK, occupying just 15 per cent of the draught beer market. Again, much of this category is dominated by a handful of brands, such as Doom Bar, produced by the Molson Coors-owned Sharp's. The multinationals have continued to eat into this sector, with Asahi taking on Fuller's in 2019. This July, Carlsberg took on the full portfolio of Marston's brands, which includes Pedigree, Hobgoblin, Wainwrights

and several others, as the legacy British brand moves solely into the management of its pubs. This leaves true independents with a pittance of a market share, and even among them larger companies such as Adnams, St Austell and Timothy Taylor's make up the majority of the real ale category that isn't occupied by internationally owned breweries. This leaves well over 1,000 small breweries with just tattered shreds of the market to work with. These are the brands without marketing budgets, or sales staff, but in many instances are producing some of the best beer in the country. There are organisations, however, with the power to provide these breweries with the platform they need to present themselves. CAMRA does this thanks to its local, branch-led beer festivals, as does SIBA, the Society for Independent Brewers, which represents around 700 small independents within the UK, and champions them via its regional and national beer awards. We Are Beer, the company behind successful events including the London Craft Beer Festival, and sister events in Manchester, Bristol and Edinburgh has also recently platformed a number of independent breweries. In July 2024 the company unveiled a list of the UK's Top 50 Beers which features 46 UK breweries, selected by a panel of 150 industry insiders. Full disclosure, I was one of them, but none of the five beers I picked (and only one of the breweries) made the final list. Looking at how the list breaks down, it's an interesting mix, once again largely focusing on brands that have managed to expand, and in many cases enter into the supermarket trade including BrewDog, Northern Monk, Vocation and Lost and Grounded. A huge positive is that real ale has remarkably strong representation, with 11 of the final 50 beers appearing regularly in cask. It should come as no surprise that Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Harvey's Best both feature, as does Theakston's Old Peculier. But it's refreshing to see modern real ales from smaller breweries like Fyne Ales and Manchester's Track Brewing also on the list.

Where it falls apart, however, is through its heavy regional bias, largely focusing on breweries from London. Despite around five per cent of the breweries currently operating in the UK being based there, 26 per cent of the beers on the list are from London-based beer makers. Greater Manchester features just twice, despite having 70 breweries to London's 105. Yorkshire, which has more breweries per capita than anywhere else in the UK, features six times, less than half of the 13 instances in which London breweries appear. It's another example of how many small breweries are so often ignored, either through their lack of access to market, or because of the geographical position they're tied to. Where are the RedWillows or the Rudgates? The Goose Eyes or the St Mars of the Deserts? The Black Iris' or the Good Chemistrys? I actually feel like the publication of an arbitrarily selected list such as this example from We Are Beer has as much capacity to damage the independent beer market as it does to boost the fortunes of those lucky enough to make the cut. In February this year we lost Elland, winner of the Champion Beer of Britain award in both 2013 and 2023 for its exceptional 1872 Porter. And yet it was rarely part of the conversation, and certainly not making lists like the one represented above. How many more world-class breweries do we need to lose before we realise that in order to promote good beer, and indeed preserve the fortunes of cask in the UK, that we need to be more democratic with our praise and ensure that it is not just evenly distributed around the country, but to the small, exceptional breweries who truly deserve it.

Matthew Curtis, 13/07/2024, WB

CAMRA calls on government to bolster pub protection

Campaign

CAMRA has marked the anniversary of the demolition of the Crooked House pub, Himley, by calling on the new government to improve

planning options for councils. On 5 August 2023, a fire destroyed much of the interior of the Crooked House and, under 48 hours later, the remaining structure of the building was demolished without planning permission. In



2017 planning laws were changed so that pubs in England could not be converted or demolished without planning permission. However, reports from CAMRA volunteers across the country show many pubs continue to be demolished or converted without apparent planning permission. These include at least 10 in the six months in the run up to the demolition of the Crooked House, and a further 29 in England since, which are currently being investigated by CAMRA. CAMRA's pub campaigns director Gary Timmins said: "In the wake of this story last year, I wrote to the previous housing and planning minister to let them know that the complete destruction of this iconic pub brought the nationwide scandal of the non-enforcement of pub protection legislation to the forefront of people's minds. "In the year since we have supported the determined efforts of local campaigners to keep the story of the Crooked House alive. "We met with government ministers to lobby for the protection of pubs and worked with the West Midlands Combined Authority to encourage the statutory listing of other local pubs, in the hope that they receive the protection that the Crooked House deserved." "Now with a new government in place, the fight continues to

ensure improvements to planning enforcement powers for councils. Marking the year anniversary of the unlawful demolition of the pub, CAMRA national chairman Nik Antona said: “The events at the Crooked House were a tragedy that captured the emotions of pub lovers across the UK. Yet the scandal of unlawful pub conversions and demolitions continues. “Over this last year, we have been tireless in our campaigning and our message that more protection is needed for pubs across the UK. It is vital that this new government echoes this sentiment, and we see real change to policy to secure the future of our pub stock and cultural heritage.”

Timothy Hampson, 07/08/2024, WB

Standing on the shoulders of giants

Opinion



A merger has been announced that, for once, is good news for beer drinkers. It will ensure the future of an acclaimed brewery and it will revive historic beers in Burton-

upon-Trent. As I reported last month, the breweries are Burton Bridge and Heritage. I've now spoken to the manager of the merged company and can put flesh on the bones. Burton Bridge opened in 1982 and has been run by Geoff Mumford and Bruce Wilkinson for an astonishing 43 years. They have Burton beer in their DNA. They worked for Ind Coope in Burton and were involved in designing the recipe for Draught Burton Ale, the only beer brewed by a national brewer that has won the Champion Beer of Britain award. At Burton Bridge their range of beers included Stairway to Heaven, Golden Delicious, Bridge Bitter, Burton Porter and Bramble Stout. After the hard slog of mashing and boiling for 43 years, Geoff and Bruce were keen to retire but they were adamant they would only sell to a trusted partner. It has come in the shape of Heritage, owned by Planning Solutions that ran the National Brewery Centre on land owned by

global brewer Molson Coors. The brewing plant was first called William Worthington and specialised in reviving old Bass beers such as a cask version of Worthington E along with Charrington IPA and Offilers' Bitter. Molson Coors owned the Worthington brand name and wouldn't release it or allow the brewery to make the legendary 19th-century IPA Worthington's White Shield. As a result, the name of the brewery changed to Heritage and head brewer Steve Wellington, now retired, brewed a beer called Masterpiece (5.6 per cent) that is White Shield in draught form. Molson Coors closed the brewery centre in 2022, and Heritage had to look for a new site, which will be at Burton Bridge. Emma Cole of Planning Solutions is the manager at Burton Bridge, and she has recruited Al Wall from Cloudwater in Manchester as head brewer. He has quickly made his mark by winning second place for his Spring Ale in the annual Burton Ale Trail competition. “I am standing on the shoulders of giants,” he said, “and I know I can make some great beers here.” Cole said new brewing kit will be installed as the Burton Bridge equipment is past its sell-by date. She stressed many of Geoff's and Bruce's beers will continue to be brewed and she will add Masterpiece among other Heritage ales. “The recipe for Masterpiece has changed a bit over the years and I need to go back to find the original one,” she said. She plans to revive Burton Bridge's Empire Pale Ale (7.5 per cent), a bottle-conditioned beer that was Geoff's and Bruce's great love and cemented their relationship with Burton-upon-Trent. It won CAMRA's champion bottle-conditioned beer award in 1997 and it's brewed in the Burton 19th-century tradition with just pale malt and brewing sugar, with no darker grains. The hops are English Challenger and Styrian Goldings from Slovenia. Before the beer was bottled it was aged in cask for three months at the brewery to replicate the length of a sea journey to India in Victorian times where the Raj, the top echelon of civil servants and army officers, demanded a pale and refreshing

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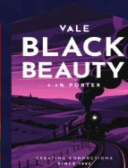
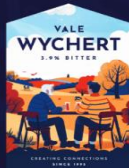
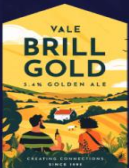
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beer. Cole said she also plans to bring back Bass's P2 Stout and will also brew some barrel-aged beers. Michael Stickland of Planning Solutions said: "The merger opens the door to new opportunities and sets the stage for innovation in the brewing landscape. Watch this space for exciting developments."



One of the developments is under wraps at the moment but if it comes to fruition, it will restore a historic method of brewing that will once again make

Burton the capital of beer. As the man says, watch this space.

Roger Protz, 30/06/2024, WB

The insanity of cask beer

Opinion

At Timothy Taylor's brewery, everything feels perfectly normal – full of life and as though the world is at peace. Soft summer light lends a warm glow to the olive-green livery that adorns the many brewery buildings, while voluminous steam rises with fervour from the stainless-steel chimney at the heart of this sprawling campus, tucked behind a hill in the town of Keighley, West Yorkshire. Inside it's slightly less calm, as a multitude of brewers go about their tasks with both care and full of intent. Brewing vessels are cleaned and prepped, while bucket after bucket of whole leaf Golding's hops are added to the boil kettle, filling every cavity of this space with an intense, zesty lemon aroma. Further down the line, hundreds upon hundreds of firkins are filled and racked with beers that many would consider to be household names. Beers with names like Boltmaker, Knowle Spring, and, of course, the most famous of them all: Landlord. In the boardroom I meet the brewery's chief executive of the past decade, Tim Dewey. An American, Tim talks about how he moved here after meeting his wife-to-be on a train to Cardiff. He also tells us about his background in spirits, working with multinational brands

including Drambuie and Smirnoff, even alluding to the fact he may well be responsible for the launch of Smirnoff Ice in the United Kingdom. As it happens, when it comes to managing one of the most storied, and not to mention well-respected family breweries in the country, this kind of experience is valuable indeed. It turns out that Timothy Taylor's is thriving, to the point where it is cash rich, with £8m in the bank, saved in case of a particularly rainy day. It's refreshing to hear, antithesis to the constant news of struggle, hardship and brewery closures. News like Asahi closing the Meantime brewery and moving production to Fuller's, Black Sheep being bought out of administration by an investment firm, and Adnams admitting to its own financial struggles. This is not a happy time in the long history of British brewing. We discuss the beer market for several minutes, but then Tim mentions something that causes me to sit up and pay extra attention, something he refers to as "the insanity of cask beer". Picking up a framed letter from the mantelpiece behind him – one that's stacked high with various awards and accolades for Taylor's beers – he begins to read. It was a letter from the then purchasing manager for the Wetherspoon pub chain informing the brewery that it would no longer be stocking its beer, because the price was not low enough to meet its stocking requirements. Tim then reads the reply, written by his predecessor, Charles Dent, informing the pub chain that the reason Timothy Taylor's is priced at what some may consider to be a premium, is because of its quality. At the time it was something that Dent refused to compromise on, and it seems that it is an attitude also instilled into Tim and may well be the root of this brewery's apparent continued success. The "insanity" Tim refers to, is in part a tirade against the category's constant race to the bottom. But I also detect some frustration, a feeling I can empathise with, that cask is not valued by British drinkers to the extent that it should be. A confession: I am not a believer that the notion

premiumisation will save the cask beer category. I believe that for cask beer to succeed now and in the future, it must be considered democratically. This includes price, where beer that is more expensive to make should be sold at a higher rate, and vice versa. But also, I feel that holding it up to the parapet and declaring that it is somehow better than other styles or those served via different methods of dispense is the wrong approach. It is just beer, and should be treated as the most normal, ordinary thing in the world. What should be celebrated is how crucial it is to the formation, and indeed, celebration, of British gastronomic culture. Log on to any beer news site, or social media forum, and someone will tell you what is wrong with cask beer, before suggesting how they might fix it. It's too expensive, it's too cheap, the quality isn't good enough, not enough women are drinking it, not enough young people are drinking it, it has an image problem. Tim Dewey, however, doesn't seem to find these particular issues a challenge to his own brand, so how has Timothy Taylor's and brands like Landlord succeeded where others have failed? Perhaps it's because his approach to cask beer is a democratic one:

make a product to as high a standard as possible, and then sell it for a price that you consider to be fair. This being a democracy means you don't have to agree with him that it is fair. However, sitting later on with a pint of Boltmaker in the pub that is this beer's namesake, the Boltmakers Arms, I find nothing to complain about in terms of either quality or price. Here, in this glorious little pub, with a lovely pint of beer, well, it just feels like the most normal thing in the world.

17/08/2024 by Matthew Curtis

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HEMEL OLD TOWN BEER FESTIVAL - OVER £8,000 RAISED

We've been radio silent for little over a month, reminiscing on the many great memories made at this year's Hemel Old Town Beer Festival.

It was incredible to see our beery community come together over the weekend, with over one-thousand guests welcomed at the stunning St. Mary's Church.

Reminiscing is not the only thing we've kept busy with, as numbers have been crunched for our fundraising efforts.

Festival goes, we are excited to announce that you have raised **£8,613** for our not-for-profit causes!!

Your impact

As generated by you, the event surplus will help to promote and protect St. Mary's Church. Grade-I listed and dating back to 1140, Hemel Hempstead's oldest building is still central to life in the historic Old Town. Markets, art galleries and bike shows are among events welcomed to the church and its leafy grounds, with external support for nearby charities fulfilled by Reverend John and the clergy at St. Mary's.

Surplus funds stand to benefit another time-honoured pillar of British community, the local pub. Through funds raised for CAMRA, the

campaign (Europe's largest consumer group) champions community pubs and brewers, preserving the nation's unique culture of cask-conditioned ale.



How this was achieved

This surplus is close to ten-fold that of the first Hemel Old Town Beer Festival in 2023. As margins at the bar saw no change this year, this growth can be attributed wholly to public support (footfall quadrupled that of our inaugural event!) and

assistance from our amazing volunteers and sponsors.

One for the road

There is nothing more satisfying than affecting real and positive change. We hope to share the effects of our surplus as they happen - broadcasting the positivity that you have helped create through our social media and Tapler magazine channels.

Thanks again to our volunteers + sponsors and a special thank you to our food vendors and live music acts (as curated by Hemel Old Town Market).

A final big thanks to you our branch members and festival guests - here's to yet another enjoyable and fruitful year at the Hemel Old Town Beer Festival.

To mark CAMRA's annual 'Perry Month', we're taking a deep dive into the world of perry.

Perry is a fermented, alcoholic drink made from pear juice, usually from eponymously named perry pear varieties, though culinary pears such as Comice and Conference are used also.

Perry is generally straw gold in colour, big on fruity flavours ranging from bone-dry to sweet and commonly found in the United Kingdom and France (with smaller markets in Austria, Germany and Switzerland).

Pears are grown in orchards. Pears may be classed as cooking, eating or perry varieties.

On the palate, perry is widely compared to both cider and sparkling white wine. Whilst straddling this line is no mean feat, perry is often over-shadowed by cider at the bar as both are grouped for their similarities.

In the face of this relative obscurity (and myriad production hardships), perry is championed by avid drinkers and makers alike, now amplified as a single voice through CAMRA's 'Perry Month' campaign each October.



It's
#PerryMonth!
camra.org.uk/perry

Perry Month celebrates the unique flavours and aromas of a drink that boasts a storied history, one featuring pagan gods, Napoleon Bonaparte and UK television firsts.

So, you may ask, what exactly is perry?

'Perry, tastes like cider, right?'

Although perry is a drink in its own right, it can be very tricky to produce, meaning it is almost always made as an ancillary product by cider-makers.

Cider-makers capitalise on their expertise in orchard-fruit pressing and fermenting, crafting a drink that is highly comparable to their mainstay apple beverages in both process and palate.

When talking of palate, perry can mirror cider's tart fruitiness and then some. Smacks of pear dominate, with luscious high notes of tropical fruit and gooseberry. Sherbet, white grape, apricot and honeysuckle are not uncommon tasting notes. Floral aromas suggest fragrances of elderflower and grass.

Like cider, perry balances a structure of tannins, sugars and acids. The presence of citric acid in perry (which is not found in cider) boosts the drink's fragrance, evocating flavours not unlike white wine. Playing into perry's wine-like qualities is the suggestion that the drink was favourite of no other than Napoleon Bonaparte, allegedly referring to it as 'the English Champagne'.

Considering the shared similarities of perry and cider, plus perry's additional layer of citric acid, perry is surprisingly less mainstream than its apple-based buddy.

So why is this – why does perry remain so niche?

Perry: a labour of love

Historically, cider and perry were both farm-made drinks, crafted alongside each other to similar strengths of alcohol. Through this shared lineage, both drinks hold a 'quintessentially British' image in the national conscious, conjuring thoughts of rolling green landscapes and flowing flagons passed over ancient farm gates.

These wistful ideals, however, form a stark contrast to the actualities of professional perry-making, a task more risk-fraught than

cider-making, once described by Tom Oliver of Oliver's Cider and Perry as "more dangerous than deep sea-diving... more dangerous than filming sharks".



The hardships of perry production start in the orchard, as fickle-to-grow pear trees encompass large areas of orchard real estate, taking a long time to reach full maturity (that is, if they grow fully). At fruiting, pears need to be handpicked in a watertight window of time, too early and the fruit will be unripe, too late and pears will fall to the floor, bruising and mashing their flesh.

Once picked, pears are pressed to extract their juices. Selecting pears can be very hard, meaning the fruit cannot be processed through the same industrial machinery as cider.

Juices extracted and it is time for fermentation. Perry is known for its light body and delicate composition, this fine balance makes the drink susceptible to undesirable bacteria, leading to common infections such as 'mouse' which spoils entire batches without discrimination. (Mouse is an off-flavour that occurs in infected perrys – fausty in the mouth and displeasingly funky in taste, like a mouse cage, hence the name).

Post-fermentation and extra sweetness are provided by sorbitol, an unfermentable sugar

that occurs naturally in perry pears (though not in cider apples, another difference in the make-up of perry and cider respectively). Whilst sorbitol brings a welcome sweetness from its unfermented sugars, it may also induce a laxative effect when consumed in large quantities. Quite undesirable indeed!

At bottling the drink's delicate form works against it once more, as loose sediment clumps on occasion to form a visible 'brain'. These 'brains', sometimes marketed as 'perry diamonds', are harmless-to-consume bodies of matter that can compromise the aesthetic of an otherwise crystal-clear perry. In some cases, a disconcerting 'snowglobe' effect can take control. Whilst 'brains' and 'snowglobes' are not detrimental to the balance of a quality perry, they are generally undesirable for the consumer and act as yet another point of caution for budding producers.

If, and only if a perry overcomes these obstacles, the drink can be enjoyed en-masse from bottles, kegs, cans or polypins at home or in a pub that is willing to stock it.

All the above may explain perry's modest commercial output, and sounds like a case for why not to make it, so how has the drink survived to this day?



A brief history of perry

To understand perry's unwavering nature is to understand the heritage of its mysterious fruit, the pear.

Our story begins at the end of the ice age, with a new warm period ushering in a flourishing of wild pears across Europe. In Britain

specifically, orcharding skills arrived with conquerors from Rome, spurring the growth of common pears across the isles.

Domestic orcharding knowledge was lost when the Roman Empire fell back, though pears remained fruitful as chance seedlings sprouted across the UK. Some years later a medieval warm period arrived, facilitating the keeping of vineyards. As the climate warmed, so too did thirst for fruit-based tipples.

The mediaeval warm period was proceeded by a little ice age that summoned cooler temperatures. This climatic shift favoured orchard growth over that of vineyards, allowing cider and perry to rise atop the fruit-booze podium. Regarding a renewal in British orcharding knowledge, it's thought that the lost skills from Roman days had made their way back from the fruitful Eastern world via Northern Africa, through Spain and France. All factors now in place, the stage was set for

perry and cider to rule Britannia.

As British orchards became widespread with culinary and cooking pears, select varieties began to be bred for the purpose of drinking. It is believed that the growers of the May Hill area in Gloucestershire were those responsible for cracking perry pear cultivation, igniting a trade for commercial perry production. Perry's commercial reputation reached fever pitch as England warred with France, celebrated by domestic aristocracy as the perfect replacement for fine wine (wine suffered from geopolitical blockading at the time).

Taking a few steps forward in time and industrialisation transformed Britain beyond imagination. Almost inevitably, the hard-to-work-with pear and its orchards were sidelined in favour of burgeoning beer and cider markets. The death-knell for perry was sounded.



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Introducing. The Chiltern Cider Company.

Mid-Chilterns CAMRA are excited to learn of a new cider-maker based in the branch area. As the sole cider-maker located in the Mid-Chilterns area, we were thrilled to chat with Bryan and Pippa Hart (cider-maker and sales & marketing respectively), the faces behind The Chiltern Cider Company and its tasty Black Lab Cider.



The Chiltern Cider Company is based on Furzeffield Farm in The Lee, near Great Missenden in Buckinghamshire.

How did 'Chiltern Cider Company' come about?

P: "The Chiltern Cider Company was established in 2015, though Bryan had been making cider for years, before that and it was just shared with friends and family.

The family moved to Furzeffield Farm in Lee Gate in 2000 and by the end of 2003 we had planted our first orchard. There were a couple eaters but predominantly it was filled with 16 cider apple trees sourced from Somerset.

Our first harvest was in 2008. A little consortium of five local friends had contributed to buying an apple mill from the Czech Republic and with a few new fermenting vessels the production of "Furzeffield Fizz" began. Initially this was bottled in reused champagne bottles (sourced from a local caterer). We also relied on apples from villagers to swell the yield from our very young orchard. The result was a great hit with friends and family and launched at an inaugural 'Cider & Sausage party' in 2009!"

What ethos do you have regarding cider-making?

B: "We all wanted cider drinking to be fun, local, without additives and minimal interventions – not specifically a moneymaking enterprise. This causes us several paradoxes with the customer wanting a clear, fizzy, long-life product and with cider, in its natural form, being very dry and cloudy."



Cider-making on Furzeffield Farm is natural and low-intervention.

What happened from there?

B: "Sadly that was it for another few years as we were busy housebuilding and the barn was used to store all our worldly goods, so cider production took a back seat. Production recommenced in 2013 with a couple of variations on the names of different batches – Furzeffield XO & Hart to Hart!

We experimented with single variety ciders and all of them were different and equally delicious but a great deal of hard work. Bryan decided that single sourced bottling was too much effort with little tangible reward.

In 2014 things were starting to get more serious and there were five new batches – one of which was Black Lab as by then our lovely

Labrador, Bibi, had joined the family! Our black lab always joins us for cider making and constantly retrieves apples and joins in the fun.



Orchards and apple-picking at Furzeffield Farm.

In 2015 we registered The Chiltern Cider Company, though had come to a bit of a dead end on working out how to bottle going forward. Everyone loved the champagne bottle size and fizz, but it was hard to produce this without sediment at the bottom of the bottle and the amount of fizz was hard to predict. Time stood still for a while as we tried to make up our minds on labelling and proceeding with a more traditional 500ml bottle. In the interim we were not idle – planting another 200 cider apple trees, all traditional varieties, and creating a new orchard on our land with some interesting new varieties of apple. This fitted into our wildlife preservation objectives and seemed to be the opposite with the turmoil in the farming world.

In the meantime, several years' worth of cider was maturing nicely in the barn, and this was finally successfully bottled professionally and labelled by a company in Surrey in Summer 2021. Following the bottling, Black Lab as you see it today was launched on the local market.”

Tell us about the operation today and your farm in The Lee?

B: “We still welcome apples from friends and neighbours in the village but as the big orchard matures, we should have a massive crop. Every year is going to be different, just like grapes the land, the sun, the winter, the spring, the rain etcetera will affect the taste, and I do not intend to overly blend the product. It is what it is, it will be what it will be – but it will be good.”



Bibi, the eponymous and beloved black lab!

What is Black Lab?

P: “Our cider-making is an annual family affair, based from our home in the Chiltern Hills. The apples from our orchards, and those of our neighbours, are different every year as they reflect the weather, the tree variety, and the terroir. After pressing we blend and balance the juice to make Black Lab, a slowly made discerning cider that matures with age.

Black Lab is a dry natural product, its naturally strong at 6.5% but this high alcohol level means there is minimal intervention between the raw cider and the finished drink. People are amazed that you can add a little honey or sugar to your taste and the drink is completely different”.



Black Lab is a medium-dry natural cider, 6.5% ABV.

What next for The Chiltern Cider Company?

P: “We are working on developing a new range of ciders, probably a less dry, lower-alcohol version and a proper sharing bottle once I get to grips with the ‘Méthode Champenoise’ or ‘Méthode Traditionelle’ ways of bottling, in order to give a really new style for us. Answers on a postcard for new names!

We also hope to branch out with a slightly sweeter alternative in the future and are working on a way to deliver 20litre cider-in-a-box for pubs and events.

It is very early days in our marketing and distribution, but “Black Lab” is currently on sale at Fan Fan Pizza in Great Missenden, the newly renovated Cock & Rabbit Inn in the Lee, Shop at the Lee, Peterley Manor Farm, Kings Farm, Buckmoor End Farm Shop, and the Tring Brewery shop. If anyone would like to stock it, please, give us a call.”



Find Black Lab in good local stores and pubs. To contact the Chiltern Cider Company email sales@thechilterncidercompany.co.uk or call 07785323232.

One for the road...

So, there we have it, our very own local cider-maker in the Mid-Chilterns area, how immensely exciting!

If you are looking to try Black Lab, or learn more about The Chiltern Cider Company, please visit <https://www.thechilterncidercompany.co.uk/>

Raise a glass of Black Lab, to The Chiltern Cider Company!



Blonde and Golden Beer

My own recollection of first encountering blonde and golden ales was being told by several landlords that these styles were first brewed to entice young lager drinkers away from the mass produced – and frankly not very good – beverages they were currently imbibing. Whilst I have no idea if that was ever the breweries intention, we shall instead look at the facts of these two styles both of which – I confess – I'm a big fan.

Golden beer has been produced in the United States since the 1800s but these were mostly of a pilsner style taken over the pond by German immigrants. In the UK it has only been around for thirty-six years with the first such ale credited to John Gilbert of Hop Back Brewery, when he created 'Summer Lightning' (5% ABV) in the cellar of the Wymondham Arms, Salisbury in 1988. This was such a success that other brewers quickly followed suit producing golden ales, many of a more modest ABV. Golden ales are often just a little sweeter due to a gentler malt profile and less hoppy than pale ales or a traditional bitter.

Local examples now include Tring's iconic 'Side Pocket for a Toad' (3.6% ABV) and a seasonal one for August this year, 'Hawbucks' (4.1% ABV). Mad Squirrel 'Resolution' (4.2% ABV), Farr Brew 'Farr and Away' (4.5% ABV) which, though described as an American IPA seems to me to contain the style of a golden ale. In some of our region's pubs you can also find Rebellion 'Gold' (4.4% ABV). The Stag at Mentmore recently had Timothy Taylor 'Golden Best' (3.4% ABV) which they described as a 'golden *mild*'. Also, in at least one local pub you can find Wainwright's 'Gold' (4.1% ABV) now though produced by the Carlsberg Marston Brewing Company.

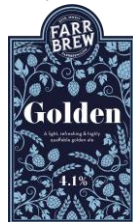


Blonde beer again originated in America in the 1980s but very quickly spread across the globe. These are typically light,



fruity and have a smooth and pale malt character that allows the other ingredients to shine through. Local examples are Rebellion 'Blonde' (4.3% ABV), Tring Brewery 'Fanny Ebbs' (3.9% ABV) – a

true summer ale, and Farr Brew 'Golden' (4.1% ABV) – which was the first ale produced by the brewery. If you are very lucky, you may also find Young's (Eagle Brewery) 'London Original' (3.7% ABV) or Harvey's 'Armada Ale' (4.5% ABV) locally.



These days – especially if you are an aficionado of these styles as I am – it can be difficult to accurately differentiate between golden and blonde. Even Untappd and many of the producers now describe them as golden/blonde so it's almost as if they've melded into a more similar single style.



Was the original alleged intention to lure the lager drinkers onto blonde and golden cask ales a success? Who knows? But, without doubt these ale styles are now firmly established across the land and, if anything, appear to be growing in popularity. Whether you drink them or not, it adds to the diversity of choice in pubs and that can only be a good thing.



Richard Abraham



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Wednesdays—Pie & a Pint Night £18 (*other drinks available*)

Thursdays—Steak Night £48 for 2 steaks and a bottle of house wine

First Sunday of the month—**Quiz Night** 6:30pm £2pp



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Alternatively you can join online at join.camra.org.uk or call **01727 798440*** (Weekdays 9am to 5pm). All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

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Title* Surname*
Forename(s)*
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)*
Address*
.....
..... Postcode*
Email address*
Daytime Tel
.....

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname
Forename(s)
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)
Email address

We will process your data in accordance with our Privacy Policy which can be found at camra.org.uk/privacy-policy. We will only send you communications you have consented to, see relevant tick boxes, and service-based communications. To manage your full set of communication preferences, please visit your online member account at account.camra.org.uk.

Direct Debit Instruction

Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to: Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW
Email: membership@camra.org.uk Telephone: 01727 798440*

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Please indicate whether you wish to receive award winning quarterly magazine **BEER** by email OR post: Email Post

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We will ask for your consent in future communications and you can log-in to account.camra.org.uk and edit your membership preferences at any time.

Concessionary rates are available only for Under 26 Memberships.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association which can be found on our website.

Signed

Date

Applications will be processed within 21 days.



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*Price of single membership when paying by Direct Debit. *Calls from landlines charged at standard national rates, cost may vary from mobile phones. The data you provide will be processed in accordance with our privacy policy in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

Calling all Publicans...and Drinkers – we need your help

Publicans

CAMRA's WhatPub website is Britain's most comprehensive database of the nation's pubs, listing almost 30,000 pubs, clubs and bars. It provides customers with free access to information about YOUR PUB. So, having brought customers to your front door, let's not disappoint them by giving the wrong description and out-of-date opening times!

It is important that your WhatPub entry is kept up to date, and whilst the local branches work very hard trying to make the information relevant and current, CAMRA members can't be everywhere all the time! This is where YOU, the publican, can help CAMRA to help you.

Go to WhatPub.com, search for your pub (name and part address/post code) and check the information. Maybe something needs correcting, opening hours, regular beers, facilities, transport connections? Or perhaps the description of the pub, its history and the photo can be improved upon?

It's very simple to contact CAMRA with your changes using a phone or laptop/PC/tablet.

See '**How to update WhatPub**', opposite.

Drinkers

Sitting in your local, enjoying a quiet pint, might be a good time to check if the WhatPub entry is up to date. Has one of the regular beers changed? Has the pub stopped showing live sport on the TV? Is there something else you've noticed? Take a look at the pub's entry by searching whatpub.com. If you think a change is needed, see '**How to update WhatPub**', opposite.

Once that's done how about using WhatPub to plan your own 'ale trail' (or 'pub crawl' as some of us still call them)? A geographic search by county, town, first part of the post code, etc., is easy, as using the filters to narrow down your choice based on a list of features and facilities. And as WhatPub is provided by CAMRA, a filter on the homepage allows a search for only those pubs and clubs that serve real ale.

All pubs are included from village locals to destination pubs, from town community pubs to city centre bars, and from historic pubs of architectural interest to slick modern outlets.

Whatever your taste, you're almost guaranteed to find a suitable pub in any part of the country.

How to update WhatPub

Non-CAMRA Publicans and Drinkers

1. Search for your pubs, then click on '**updates on the pub**' in the pink box (you can also use '**Submit Updates**' if on a PC/laptop).
2. In the three boxes enter **Your Name, Your Email Address, Your Message**. Your message should list the required amendments and let WhatPub know if you are the publican.
3. Now confirm that you're not a robot and click on '**Send to CAMRA**'.
4. You will receive an email from CAMRA with a copy of your message and confirmation of the Local CAMRA branch it has been forwarded to.
5. Your suggested amendments will be received by a designated CAMRA Officer from the Local Branch. Once authorised, WhatPub will be updated.

CAMRA Members:

1. Search for your pub, then click on '**updates on the pub**' in the pink box (you can also use the '**Submit Updates**' if on a PC/laptop).
2. Click on '**Go to Login page**'.
3. Enter your **Membership Number** and **Password** then click on '**Login**'.
4. Scroll down the list and click on '**Yes**' next to the item you want to change. This will open a drop-down box.
5. Type your change(s) in the box.
6. Repeat for each item you want to change.
7. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on '**Send to CAMRA**'.
8. Your suggested amendments will be received by a designated CAMRA Officer from the Local Branch. Once authorised, WhatPub will be updated.

Your help is needed!

Why?? ...Because now most Branches use beer scores (as per CAMRA's recommendations) in order to decide their shortlist for the Good Beer Guide pub

selection. We have a meeting each December to look at the beer scores for the previous 12 months. We then try and visit the top ones to check out the quality of beer and in January we shortlist the top 8 pubs from Bucks and top 8 pubs from Herts (we can only put 8 from Bucks and 8 from Herts in the Guide). If you want your favourite pub to stand a chance of meeting the criteria, please submit beer scores for the quality and condition of their beer. Mid Chilterns Branch has 850+ members but only about 30 of those submit scores.

The National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) is an easy-to-use system that has been designed to assist CAMRA branches in selecting pubs for the Good Beer Guide and also monitor beer quality by encouraging CAMRA members from any part of the world to report beer quality on any pub in the UK. If you are a CAMRA member, we want you to tell us about the quality of beer in the pubs you visit.

You can score your beer online at home or if you have a smart phone in the pub!

To submit your scores just visit <http://whatpub.com>. Log into the site using your CAMRA membership number and password. Once you have found a pub on the site, you can start scoring. You can find out more at <http://whatpub.com/beerscoring>

You need to record the location and name of the pub (WhatPub mobile can work this out!), The date you visited the pub, a score out of 5, the name of the beer/brewery.

The scores mean the following:

0 - No cask ale available

1 - Poor. Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.

2 - Average. Competently kept, drinkable pint but does not inspire in any way, not worth

moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.

3 - Good. Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.

4 - Very Good. Excellent beer in excellent condition.

5 - Perfect. Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

You can also enter half scores, e.g., 3.5 for good to particularly good beer. You should not mark down a beer just because you do not like it because if the beer is in good condition, it should be marked accordingly. It is not about personal preference; it is about the quality and condition of the beer.

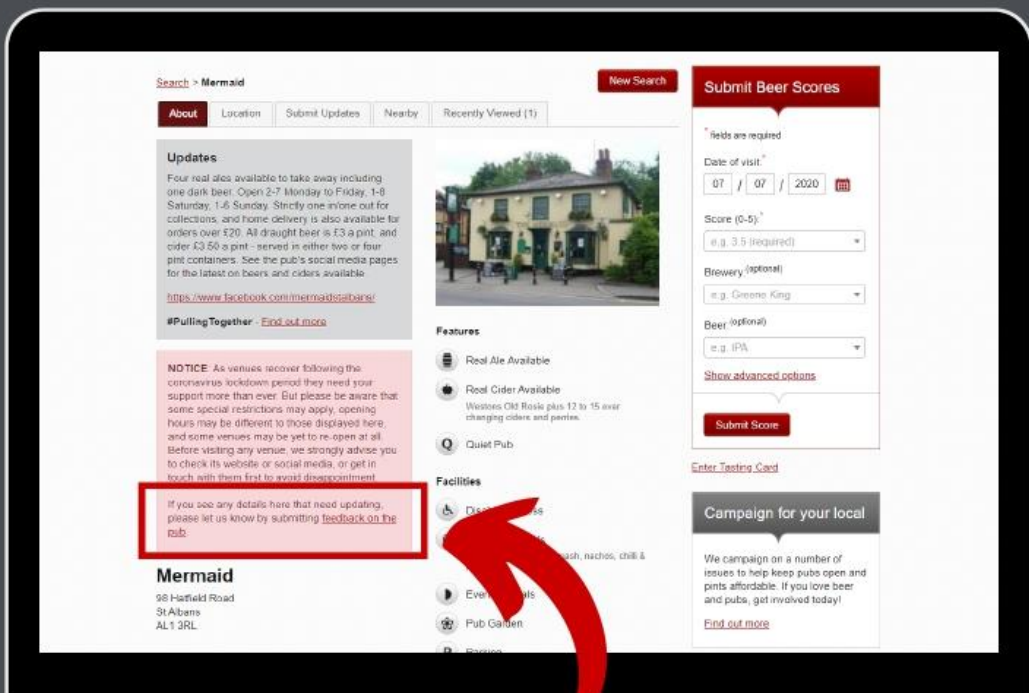
Once beer scores have been submitted online, CAMRA branches can download them and use them to help in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide selection process. For more information, go to <http://camra.org.uk/nbss>

branch members scoring as the committee can't get to every single pub in the branch (nearly 200) more than once a year, if that, so we rely on local members scoring their local pubs. Landlords often ask us why they aren't in the Guide, as do members occasionally, but we need at least 5 different people to put in a score per pub each year and at least 10 different visits to the pub in order for it to have an average score and a chance of being on the shortlist.

PLEASE help us and the local pubs by submitting scores on a regular basis. I would also ask Landlords to encourage their regular CAMRA members to put their scores in. Thanks very much.

Nigel Harris

Help us power What?Pub



Things are a little different right now. Help CAMRA keep WhatPub up to date by using the feedback form to let us know about any changes at the pub:
www.whatpub.com



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As a bit of fun, the Wordsearch grid below contains the names of the words in the list below. The words can run up or down, left to right, backwards, or at an angle. Punctuation is ignored. Each puzzle is based on a relevant beer or cider related theme.

Breweries featured at the Hemel Old Town Beer Festival

O	N	L	Y	W	I	T	H	L	O	V	E	N	L	K	U	G	Y	S	I
A	Y	I	R	P	B	R	E	W	P	O	I	N	T	O	D	Y	M	Q	C
B	B	G	N	Z	M	A	D	S	Q	U	I	R	R	E	L	I	T	A	K
P	I	G	Y	Z	C	S	R	D	O	H	O	R	N	E	S	F	H	H	J
E	O	H	V	A	N	S	F	T	B	K	J	Y	K	M	K	G	O	K	L
N	T	Y	A	A	P	F	Y	N	E	A	L	E	S	D	A	U	R	I	E
T	B	K	I	R	W	I	N	D	S	O	R	E	T	O	N	U	N	R	I
R	D	W	H	Y	V	V	E	R	D	A	N	T	R	Z	W	L	B	K	G
I	D	F	E	T	C	I	C	L	O	U	D	W	A	T	E	R	R	S	H
C	R	V	H	N	R	U	E	J	S	U	K	V	D	S	D	E	I	T	T
H	U	O	I	A	K	I	U	S	M	T	X	K	E	G	L	V	D	A	O
I	J	C	A	S	R	E	N	U	T	R	I	L	W	A	W	V	G	L	N
C	K	A	J	K	F	V	H	G	R	O	P	T	V	B	J	X	E	L	B
H	S	T	H	L	H	Y	E	E	B	P	U	S	A	X	L	B	U	G	U
I	B	I	K	J	A	A	I	Y	A	R	K	N	J	N	E	K	J	U	Z
L	A	O	X	R	G	P	M	S	S	S	E	E	S	R	I	B	E	M	Z
T	D	N	A	Z	N	E	P	Y	P	B	D	W	Y	G	G	C	C	S	A
E	E	H	X	O	W	O	R	W	N	Q	F	N	E	N	H	D	V	T	R
R	Y	A	R	X	H	N	O	U	Y	U	I	N	M	R	M	J	E	V	D
N	A	I	J	Q	A	C	F	N	L	T	B	U	E	R	Y	E	G	R	V

The words in the grid can be found from the lists of breweries below. Ignore spaces and special characters.

BREWPOINT
 CHILTERN
 CLOUDWATER
 DEYA
 FYNE ALES
 HARVEY'S
 HARVIESTOUN
 HOPS & APPLES

HORNES
 IRON PIER
 KIRKSTALL
 LEIGHTON BUZZARD
 MAD SQUIRREL
 OAKHAM
 ONLY WITH LOVE
 PENTRICH

THORNBRIDGE
 TINY REBEL
 TITANIC
 TRING BREWERY
 VALE
 VERDANT
 VOCATION
 WINDSOR & ETON

Branch Contacts

The Mid-Chilterns CAMRA Branch Officers are all unpaid volunteers, but please feel free to contact us about local pubs, breweries, and events.

Chair

Jared Ward-Brickett

chairman@midchilternscamra.org.uk

Vice-Chair

William Powell

secretary@midchilternscamra.org.uk

M: 07890 010844

Branch Contact

William Powell

secretary@midchilternscamra.org.uk

M: 07913 939761

Treasurer

Charles Teuma

treasurer@midchilternscamra.org.uk

LocAle Officer

Committee

locale@midchilternscamra.org.uk

Pubs Officer

William Powell

pubs@midchilternscamra.org.uk

M: 07913 939761

Tapler Editor

Andrew Harvell

tapler@midchilternscamra.org.uk

M: 07748 103190

Tapler Editorial Assistant

Richard Abraham

M: 07900 907175

Membership Secretary

Richard Healey

membership@midchilternscamra.org.uk

M: 07890 010844

Social Secretary

Alex Baker

social@midchilternscamra.org.uk

Brewery Liaison Officer (Tring)

Richard Healey

membership@midchilternscamra.org.uk

M: 07890 010844

Brewery Liaison Officer (Mad Squirrel)

Richard Abraham

Brewery Liaison Officer (Pope's Yard)

Charles Teuma

treasurer@midchilternscamra.org.uk

Branch Secretary and Club's Officer

William Powell

secretary@midchilternscamra.org.uk

Beer Information Officer

Nigel Harris

Cider Officer

Vacant

cider@midchilternscamra.org.uk

Young Members Contact

Vacant

youth@midchilternscamra.org.uk

Beer Scores Officer

Nigel Harris

beerscores@midchilternscamra.org.uk

T: 0845 644 6700

Webmaster

Jared Ward-Brickett

chairman@midchilternscamra.org.uk

Press Officer

Jared Ward-Brickett

chairman@midchilternscamra.org.uk



DAYLA

DRINKS

4.0M
PINTS

OF CASK ALE SOLD ANNUALLY

500+
WINES

IN PORTFOLIO

450
GINS

IN PORTFOLIO

800
SPIRITS

IN PORTFOLIO

30
VEHICLE
FLEET

169
YEARS
IN THE INDUSTRY

120
EMPLOYEES

20+
AWARDS

8 QUALIFIED
TECHNICAL
ENGINEERS