

FREE!



The Chiltern Tapler

Magazine of Mid-Chilterns CAMRA

Winter 2025

Mid-Chilterns Pubs of the Year 2025



MID CHILTERN'S PUBS OF THE YEAR 2025

9 NOVEMBER 2025

RICHARD ABRAHAM 2025
(CAMPAIGNER OF THE YEAR) 😊

A seasonal depiction of the Pubs of the Year courtesy of Richard Abraham

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Championing Real Ale & Real Cider, and Local Pubs & Breweries,
and telling the story of beer and brewing in the Chilterns
www.midchilterns.camra.org.uk

THE GRAND JUNCTION ARMS

CASK CLUB

Cask Pints
£4 all day
every
Tuesday



50p discount for
CAMRA
members
(rest of the
week)

We're excited to launch Cask Club at the newly reopened Grand Junction Arms
£4 cask pints all day, every Tuesday

Join us for a pint, stay for lunch

NEW Lunch Menu now available | 12pm-4pm | Monday-Saturday
Join our Lunch Club and get £3 off our lunch menu, for you & up to five friends

Visit our website or pop in for details



The Grand Junction Arms
Bulbourne, Tring, HP23 5QE

grandjunctionsarms@craftlocals.com
www.thegrandjunctionarmstring.co.uk

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Find us on social media:



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<https://twitter.com/midchilterns/>



<https://instagram.com/midchilternscamra/>



A word from the editors

Usually, as we get into the autumn, the British way is to reflect on the summer recently past and bemoan just how damp, dull or downright miserable it was. Not so this year as we have had the hottest summer since 1976, and what an excellent one it was! Pub gardens came to the fore and hopefully the warmth helped the industry to put a little more much needed revenue in the tills, partly as a buffer against the trade slowing down into the winter.

On the subject of that coming season, welcome to your Winter Chiltern Tapler which we hope you will enjoy reading as much as the Editorial Board are told you have appreciated our earlier editions. The rate they 'disappear' from our recipient pubs and other outlets would certainly seem to support that.

So, grab a copy and find a barstool or chair by the pub fire and settle in – with pint to hand of course – and catch up on what is happening in the Mid Chilterns Region and beyond, articles from the What's Brewing CAMRA circulations, pieces on local breweries and pubs, a personal journey in beer, about choices on the bars and much more.

Any publication is only as good as its content and we believe the Tapler to be among the best, but we want it to be THE best. So, please give us your opinion. What would you like to see within these pages which isn't already covered? What should we possibly leave out? We would welcome articles written by Landlords about their pubs, by brewers similarly and by historians if any read our magazine. As a member of both The Brewery History Society and The Pub History Society – both of which produce excellent and interesting publications – I know that there is a raft of material 'out there' which could be of interest to readers of the Tapler.

As usual there are articles on pub updates in Pub Watch, Diary Dates, Brewery News, an update on the Hemel Old Town Beer Festival 2025, A Special Feature on Richard's Life So

Far in Beer, articles on the controversy around fresh ale, low alcohol beers, and what hops went into your beer, as well as Campaign, Industry and Opinion articles from CAMRA, and the Wordsearch Puzzle with the word list based on traditional pub games and newer ones, often involving drinking.

If you are a CAMRA member in our area, or would like to join, feel free to join us at a meeting, or social, however, there are other things you can do to help us out too – for example submit beer scores online at camra.org.uk and help distribute the **CHILTERN TAPLER** magazines to pubs, clubs, beer shops and other outlets. We are also looking for people to send in news and write articles for the magazine, including photos where possible. Please send them to tapler@midchilterns.camra.org.uk.

Please join us for the late Winter Social at the end of February, in Leighton Buzzard. Look out for more information in newsletters and the Mid-Chilterns CAMRA website. The popular Pig's Ear Festival is coming up and that is something to look forward to in the colder days. See the Festival Dates Section. Look out for announcements on our website www.midchilterns.camra.org.uk.

Change of URL

Please also note the change of format of the website and email addresses, with an additional dot between midchilterns and camra. Emails to the old domain will be forwarded to the new one for a short period.

It just remains for us 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.

Cheers

Andy & Richard

About the Chiltern Tapler ("Tapler")

Support our sponsors

The magazine you are reading is free. This is because of the pubs, breweries, and other businesses that have sponsored an advert in this publication. We salute our advertisers, and you can do the same by visiting them. Why not say you found them in the Chiltern Tapler at the same time? Thank you.

Crafted by passion

No one who writes for the Chiltern Tapler, and the editorial team, is paid. We are all volunteers. We produce this magazine because we believe passionately in promoting pubs, breweries, real ale, and local business. Advertising revenue goes towards printing

costs, and any excess goes towards funding future issues.

Acknowledgements and credits

We thank all our contributors for their fascinating articles on various beer related subjects - we couldn't produce this magazine without you! We also would like to 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 news of CAMRA's latest campaigns.

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Contributors

| Page (s) | Contributor | Page (s) | Contributor |
|-------------|-----------------|----------|------------------|
| 4,31,34,42 | Richard Abraham | 13 | George Jenkinson |
| 21 | Tim Amsden | 27 | David Jesudason |
| 37 | Christine Cryne | 24 | Les Middlewood |
| 16,25,26,28 | Timothy Hampson | 10 | Jared Ward |
| 43 | Nigel Harris | 22 | Sarah Wragg |
| 4,46 | Andrew Harvell | | |

regular | ADVERTISING AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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@midchilterns.camra.org.uk or call 07748 103190 (Andy), or 07900 907175 (Richard).

The Chiltern Tapler is published four times a year as follows...

| Edition | Copy Deadline | Publication |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| Spring – Mar/Apr/May | 20 February 2026 | Late March/Early April |
| Summer – June/July/Aug | 23 May | Late May/Early June |
| Autumn – Sept/Oct/Nov | 21 August | Late August/Early September |
| Winter – Dec/Jan/Feb | 20 November | Late November/Early December |

Advertising Rates

| Size | Invoiced Post Publication | Prepaid |
|-----------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Back page A5 | £160 | £145 |
| Inside cover A5 | £120 | £110 |
| Full page A5 | £120 | £110 |
| Half page | £72 | £65 |
| Quarter-page | £45 | £40 |

10% discount for advance payment for one year/4 issues

The copy deadline for submissions/adverts for the next edition is 20 February 2026.

Note: It is assumed that once an advert is placed, it is carried until cancelled by email to the editor.

Subscriptions: Subscribe to *The Chiltern Tapler* and have it delivered direct to your door. To receive 4 quarterly (seasonal) issues, send 8x2nd class stamps (UK) only, along with your postal address to:

Tapler Subs, 10 Dean Field, Bovingdon, Herts. HP3 0EW

THE CHILTERN TAPLER

Editorial & Design: Andrew Harvell & Richard Abraham
(tapler@midchilterns.camra.org.uk)
Published by: Mid-Chilterns Branch of CAMRA Ltd
Advertising: Contact the Editor or Chairman

Printed by:

Bluetree
Design & Print
Ltd T/A www.instantprint.co.uk
Unit A Brookfields Park, Manvers Way,
Manvers, Rotherham, S63 5DR
The Chiltern Tapler is printed on
130g/sm FSC Gloss Paper.



THE CHILTERN TAPLER is the quarterly magazine published by the Mid-Chilterns branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. CAMRA campaigns for real ale, real pubs, and consumer rights. It is an independent, voluntary organisation with nearly 200,000 members and has been described as the most successful consumer group in Europe. *The Chiltern Tapler* is distributed free every three months to members of the Mid-Chilterns branch of CAMRA and to pubs and other outlets in the area covered by the branch and beyond. *The Chiltern Tapler* currently has a circulation of around 1,500 copies. Material for publication, including press releases, should preferably be sent by email to the editor or tapler@midchilternscamra.org.uk. All contributions to this magazine are made on a voluntary basis. To join CAMRA, help preserve Britain's brewing and pub industry, get *The Chiltern Tapler* free – and a host of other membership benefits – visit camra.org.uk. © copyright 2025 CAMRA Mid-Chilterns Branch; all rights reserved

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.

The diary contains CAMRA events and some local beer festivals that may be of interest.

DECEMBER

Weds 3: Branch Meeting (8pm)

Three Blackbirds, Boxmoor. 194 St John's Rd, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1NR

Tues 2 – Sat 6: Pig's Ear 2025

Pig's Ear is the festival of East London & City branch of CAMRA, showcasing East London breweries and their cask ales. It will be featuring about 175 casks but with limited space to only rack 100 at one time. Round Chapel, 1d Glenarm Road, London, E5 0LY
Noon until 10:30 pm Tues – Thurs, 11 pm Fri and 9 pm Sat

Weds 10 – Sat 13: Cambridge Winter Beer Festival 2025

Cambridge Corn Exchange, 2 Wheeler Street, Cambridge, CB2 3QB

Sat 13: Social - Informal get together (noon onwards)

Pre-Christmas informal social. Come along for some festive cheer and share a pint or two in the latest taproom.

The Piggeries, Tring Brewery, Dunsley Farm, London Road, Tring, Herts, HP23 6HA

2026

JANUARY

Weds 7: Branch Meeting (8pm)

The Stag Inn, Mentmore. 7 The Green, Mentmore, Leighton Buzzard LU7 0QF

FEBRUARY

Weds 4: Branch Meeting (8pm)

Grand Junction, Bulbourne. Bulbourne, Tring. HP23 5QE

Sat 28: Winter Social Leighton Buzzard

Leighton Buzzard Brewery, The Sun, The Black Lion, The Picture House, The Golden Bell, The Buckingham, The Globe, and The Boat Inn

MARCH

Weds 4: The Pheasant, Chesham. Waterside, Chesham HP5 1QE

APRIL

Weds 8: Branch Meeting (8pm)

Three Blackbirds, Flamstead. 2 High St, Flamstead, St Albans AL3 8BS

MAY

Weds 6: Branch Meeting (8pm)

Red Lion, Chenies. Village Road, Chenies, Rickmansworth, WD3 6ED

JUNE

Weds 3: Branch Meeting (8pm)

The Bull, Berkhamsted. 10 High Street Berkhamsted Herts HP4 2BS

JULY

Weds 1: Branch Meeting (8pm)

The White Lion, Little Chalfont. White Lion Road, Amersham, HP7 8LJ

Fri 17 – Sun 19: Hemel Old Town Beer Festival 2026

St Mary's Church. High St, Hemel Hempstead HP1 3AE

Why not come along to a branch meeting or a social? Look out for announcements on the website or in branch newsletters.

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.midchilterns.camra.org.uk for the latest information or Contact the Social Secretary if you need more information.

Hemel Old Town Beer Festival 2025

Mid-Chilterns CAMRA and St Mary's Church are proud to announce the surplus of Hemel Old Town Beer Festival 2025, having raised £7500.



The event, which will return in 2026, tallied a record number of attendees, a record number of pints sold, and a joint record for most new CAMRA members enlisted at St Mary's.

New CAMRA members enjoyed themselves alongside existing supporters and members of the public alike, as the event came to life over the weekend of July 18-20th. Thirty-six real



ales were offered, flanked by two local keg beers and a new standalone bar offering ten ciders and perries. Another new feature at the festival was tasting sessions, where crowds of festival goers were led to quiet areas to delve into exciting talks that were complemented by a tipples or two, naturally.



Festival co-organiser Reverend John Williams curated a range of bottled ales to compliment a talk on the shared history of the church and beer which received great plaudits. The Chiltern Cider Company led a well-attended event showcasing their Black Lab Cider, made within

the branch in Great Missenden. The event was co-hosted by Friday's guest speaker, Rosie Marcel, an

actress most known for her role as Jac Naylor on Holby City. Two additional guest speakers graced St Mary's over the weekend, with



Mayor of Dacorum Catherine McAreyve opening festivities on Saturday, and Bishop Rob Wickham blessing the casks on Sunday.

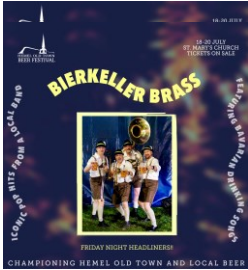


Bishop Rob's appearance is his second at the CAMRA event – joining a festival alumni of sorts – with returning faces such as

Just A Cappella, Happy Helly Choir and singer Sian Turner also coming back to St. Mary's



this year, getting attendees rocking and swinging over the weekend.



New faces to the entertainment roster included Bierkeller Brass and Hemel Rock Choir. Bierkeller Brass brought the house down on Friday, blasting Oompah-style renditions of

Brit-Pop classics, spliced with traditional Germanic drinking anthems. Hemel Rock Choir exuded a staggering soundscape on Sunday, with fifty local vocalists harmonising classic tunes, modern hits and more.

A special thanks should be paid to Hemel Old Town Market, who fulfil the provision of entertainment and street food players each year. The festival's street food vendors included Papa Bear's Texas Style Smokehouse, Arancini Italiani, Toi's Thai Kitchen and Snax Indian Kitchen. Peckish punters were afforded yet more choice with the church's



tuckshop open for business - slinging pork scratchings, nuts and other classic pub staples. The church coordinated provisions extended to an event-first no-alcohol bar, in the form of a modest range of zero-booze beers in bottle and can, an effort which was received enthusiastically by attendees.

The festival surplus will go towards helping the church and its affiliated charitable causes, as well as being used to campaign on behalf of local pubs and brewers. A big thank you to all that attended the record-setting Hemel Old Town Beer Festival 2025.



The Hemel Old Town Beer Festival will return across the weekend of 17th-19th July 2026. Keep an eye on our social media and newsletter channels, as well as The Tapler, for more news very soon.



To another corking year at Hemel Old Town Beer Festival – cheers!

Jared Ward, Chair of Mid-Chilterns CAMRA and The Old Town Beer Festival



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?

The scheme builds on growing consumer demand for quality local produce and an increased awareness of 'green' issues. 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.

Learn more at camra.org.uk/locale

The idea of the scheme is very simple: pubs are eligible to sign up if they permanently serve a least one beer from at least one local brewery. Although it is not set in stone, for our scheme we define a local brewery to be *approximately* 30 miles between brewery and bar.

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. **Redbourn:** Farr Brew. **Rickmansworth:** Creative Juices Brewing Co.

Tring: Tring Brewery. **Watford:** Pope's Yard.

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, The Post Office. **Briden's Camp:** Crown & Sceptre.

Cheddington: The Old Swan. **Chenies:** The Red Lion. **Chesham:** George & Dragon, Mad Squirrel Brewery Shop, Queen's Head, Trekkers.

Chipperfield: Chipperfield Boot, Windmill, Blackwells. **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, Hop Tap, White Hart. **Ivinghoe:** Rose & Crown.

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

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

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.

Potten End: The Plough.

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

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

Tring: Anchor, Black Horse, Kings Arms, Robin Hood.

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 happening in the Mid-Chilterns Area

News on closures, re-openings, refurbishments and corporate news affecting local pubs.

The Hop Tap, Hemel Hempstead

This popular micropub has just celebrated its first birthday and had events on over the weekend of 14/15/16th November to mark the anniversary. Owners Tony & Tracey Hosier said that they were planning many future events and would have an event each month to support a different charity.

The Old Palace, Kings Langley

The pub has re-opened, after being closed for a short period and is now being run by a former barman (see the Spotlight on Local Pubs section).

The Saracen's Head, Kings Langley.

This popular pub, situated in the centre of Kings Langley, has recently switched to Coors as its beer and cider supplier, leading to a larger range on offer. There are still three hand-pumps on permanently: two serving Tring Brewery beers and one guest, Timothy Taylor Landlord, was on at the time of writing.

The Windmill, Chipperfield

The pub has unfortunately closed, following the departure of Mary, the former tenant, and there is a for lease sign outside. This magazine has been told that it is going to reopen under new management and may well have done so by the time you read this.

The Grand Junction, Bulbourne

The pub reopened on Thursday, 6 November under the ownership of Craft Local, who also own the Red Lion, Chenies. It had been one of the venues closed and put up for sale, following Oakham Pubs, going into administration (see the article in the Spotlight on Local Pubs section).

The Piggeries, Tring Brewery

Tring Brewery have recently opened their first taproom at the brewery, located at Dunsley

Farm, Tring. The taproom, located in an old open-top double-decker bus named "Olive", is serving a full-range of Tring beers, ciders, wines, full-range of spirits and snacks in the summer, whilst a new bar is being setup in a newly restored barn, furnished with reclaimed furniture. There is a large courtyard area for drinking outside when the weather is more clement. See the article by Timothy Hampson "All Aboard New taproom", in the Brewery News Section, under Tring Brewery.

The Castle, Tring

It has been heard, by one of our contributors, that the current owner is looking to sell for private housing use (presumably after applying for change of use). The pub has been closed for a few months, though peering through the windows the machinery still seems to be there (a few weeks ago).

In previous visits to the pub our contributor had failed to get real ale and reported they seemed to have just stopped selling it. He heard that the upstairs area had not been maintained and was not liveable, and only the public areas were maintained; even then he said in his opinion, it looked... dog eared.

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

News from some of the breweries in the LocAle area

Chiltern Brewery

North Lee Road, Terrick, Aylesbury,
HP17 0TQ

www.chilternbrewery.co.uk



Celebrating 45 Years of Beers! (1980-2025)

Roger's Bodger's Barley Wine – A Toast to Friendship and Craft

This year, The Chiltern Brewery has brewed something truly special: **Roger's Bodger's Barley Wine**, a collaborative beer created

with renowned beer writer and erstwhile editor of The Good Beer Guide, **Roger Protz**. Limited to just **1,000 bottles**, this rich, chestnut-coloured ale celebrates both the Brewery's **45th anniversary** and a **35-year friendship** between Roger and founder **Richard Jenkinson**. The collaboration revisits a recipe first brewed by Richard back in **1990**, marking the Brewery's 10th anniversary. That original **Bodger's Barley Wine** went on to become one of Chiltern Brewery's most celebrated beers — a multiple **Great Taste Award winner**, earning three Gold Stars and a coveted **Top 50 Product** place. It was even featured by Roger himself in his *World Beer Guide*, recognised for its depth and craftsmanship.

Brewed together at the brewery in **April 2025**, Roger's Bodger's Barley Wine is an **IPA-style**



THE CHILTERN BREWERY

ROGER'S BODGER'S BARLEY WINE

Celebrating the long friendship between our Founder Mr. Richard Jenkinson, and Mr. Roger Protz Founder of the British Guild of Beer Writers.

A special IPA-style Barley Wine, based on our multi-award-winning Bodger's Barley Wine, first brewed by Richard in 1990, for our 10th Anniversary.





SAVE £4.20
for 12 x 330ml

Limited Edition

Endeavour hops

8.4% abv

SAVE £2.10
for 6 x 330ml

Brewed with Mr. Roger Protz

Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm

www.chilternbrewery.co.uk






interpretation of the classic. It uses **Maris Otter malt** for its rich chestnut colour and biscuity backbone, balanced by traditional **Fuggles hops** and modern **Endeavour hops**, which lend a subtle, spicy blackcurrant note. Bottle-conditioned and naturally carbonated, it's a warming 8.4% ABV — the perfect winter beer for sipping slowly with hearty stews, mature cheeses, or rich desserts.

Speaking about the collaboration, Tom Jenkinson, a family member and Partner at The Chiltern Brewery said how proud he was to return to the Chiltern brewhouse:

“This beer is a celebration of friendship, tradition, and the enduring pleasure of proper British brewing.”

Only 1,000 individually numbered bottles have been produced, each carrying both Roger's and Tom's signatures — a fitting tribute to two lifelong champions of real ale.

Roger's Bodger's Barley Wine is available directly from the Brewery Shop in Terrick, and online while stocks last. Raise a glass this winter to **heritage, friendship, and the craft of fine, local, English brewing.**

George Jenkinson, Partner

Seasonal and new brews



Festive

Foxtrot: Their winter seasonal – dark, mellow,

fruity and cunningly tasty. A beer to celebrate cold winter evenings, stews, broths and conviviality. 3.9%



Oak Aged Vintage

Part of their celebration of 45 years of beers. They are re-brewing one of our most popular bottled beers, this time in draught. 6.0%

Export Original Imperial Stout – 8.4%



Full-Bodied - Silky - Luxurious

Brewed to celebrate 45 years of Chiltern brewing, this rich, full-bodied Imperial Stout returns by popular demand. Last brewed five years ago, it's back from the archives — deep, smooth, and satisfyingly indulgent.

Brewed with five grains including Maris Otter, Chocolate, and Roast Barley, and balanced with **Fuggles hops**, this is a beer to savour: **warming, velvety, and unmistakably Chiltern.**

Limited Edition | 8.4% ABV | 1,000 Bottles | Bottle Conditioned

Small batch brews (SBB)

Their core range, seasonals and small

batches will be available in their Brewery Shop in Terrick, as well as online.

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

Farr Brew

Great Level End Farm, Redbourn AL3 7A

www.farrbrew.com



The tap room is fully up and running too and is open every weekend. The current opening hours are Saturday 12 pm to 6 pm, although they expect to expand opening hours once the weather gets warmer. See their website for details of opening hours.

Check out their video to see what makes Farr Brew so special.

For further information, contact info@farrbrew.com – which goes to both Nick & Matt.

Mad Squirrel Brewery

Unit 18, Boxted Farm, Potten End, Berkhamsted Rd HP1 2SG

www.madsquirrelbrew.co.uk



Brewery news

'Fog Off' New England IPA (6%) has launched in cans in Tesco and Waitrose. They have also

launched Czech lager Budvar on draft in all their taprooms

New Limited Release Cask Beer

Winter's Tail Dark Bitter 4.5%



New Releases

Viennese Swirl Vanilla & Choc Stout 8.0%



Amberillo American Amber 4.5%



Dark Tides Baltic Porter 5.6%



Brewery Tours

This is a 45-minute tour through the brewery where one of their experts will give an in-depth explanation of the brewing process from start to end.

The tour also includes beer tasting (4x 1/3 pint) of Mad Squirrel beer and ends in their brewery taproom where you will enjoy a handmade pizza.

The bar and shop will be open for more drinks to have in or take away, plus a selection of merch from clothing to glassware to choose from.

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

Pope's Yard Brewery

Unit 12, Paramount Industrial Estate,
Sandown Road, Watford WD24 7XA

www.popesyard.co.uk



No update this issue.

For more information email:

ale@popesyard.co.uk

Rebellion Beer Co

Bencombe Farm, Marlow Bottom,
Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 3LT

www.rebellionbeer.co.uk

Cask Monthly Specials: 2025 Greek Mythology

December – Festive Nectar



Brewed with new hop variety Alora which promises to deliver a full horn of plenty's worth of fruity character

Hops: Alora

Malt: Pale, T50, Munich

Rebellion Winter Royal – Ruby & Warming 5.4%



2025 Beer - Brewed using Marlow Bottom Malt!!!

Originally brewed by the Wethereds Brewery in Marlow, Winter Royal became one of their flagship beers until the brewery closed in 1988. We are proud to be reviving this

popular beer using the original Wethered's recipe.

Traditional Fuggles and a Goldings hop variety add to the authenticity of this classic English beer. The result is a deep, ruby winter warmer at 5.4%, with a rich maltiness, soft bitterness and a fantastic late and dry hop aroma.

Hops: Fuggles, WGW

Malt: Pale, Crystal, Dextrin

Tring Brewery

Dunsley Farm, London Road, Tring,
Herts HP23 6HA

www.tringbrewery.co.uk



All aboard new taproom

Industry

Tring brewery has launched an on-site taproom and courtyard space – the Piggeries – at its Dunsley Farm site in Hertfordshire. The Piggeries (above) is the result of Tring's efforts to restore a barn space on the farm, featuring reclaimed pub furniture, vintage signs and mirrors, and newly laid Welsh slate

flooring. Outside the barn is Olive, a 1980s double-decker bus which has been converted to serve beer, cider, wine, with a full backbar of spirits. There's further seating on Olive's top-deck with views of the Farm. "We're



thrilled to offer visitors the wow factor, with Olive the bus and the now-restored barn space," said taproom manager Claudia Phillips. "But that's just the beginning. As Tring's official tap, we're pouring 14 fresh beers year-round. There are plans for small-batch ales to feature, too, some exclusive to the Piggeries." "While the team is proud of our drinks range, our eye for quality encompasses gourmet snacks and street food, too. We're happy to be supporting local with our gourmet runny-yolk Scotch eggs, from Hertfordshire outfit A Good Egg, with crisps, nuts, and scratchings from Chesham-based Salty Dog. "Though we've been open for less than a month, we've already hosted a variety of street-food vendors here. The street-food players are a popular offer, and we intend to make them a staple on Saturdays." Tring MD Andrew Jackson said: "We are so happy with the restoration of the barn and courtyard here on Dunsley Farm. "The Piggeries opens a new chapter for Tring brewery, now serving punters brewery-fresh beer straight from the tank — an historic first in our 32 years as a local business." The Piggeries is open Thursday (5-9pm), Friday, and Saturday (noon-9pm) welcoming families and well-behaved dogs. It can be found at

www.midchilterns.camra.org.uk

Dunsley Farm, London Road, Tring HP23 6HA, with on-site parking available. Founded by Richard Shardlow in 1992, Tring brewery produces classic styles such as bitters, golden ales, stouts, and milds on cask, today complemented by keg lines such as Alchemist Lager and Raven King Hazy IPA. The flagship beer, Side Pocket for a Toad, was recently named Hertfordshire beer of the year in a competition run by South Herts CAMRA, hosted at St Albans Beer and Cider Festival. Side Pocket for a Toad was first brewed in 2000, the same year that Shardlow was joined at the brewery by Andrew Jackson. The Piggeries taproom is a one-minute walk from bus route X500/500, and approximately a four-minute drive from Tring train station.

03/11/2025 by Timothy Hampson

Seasonal Special

Santa's Little Helper – 4.8% - Warming winter ale. (December)



Warming winter ale, this festive special is the perfect balance of roasted malt and premium aroma hops. This tippie would warm even the cold heart of

Scrooge.

Food Pairing

Well, it's got to be the full Christmas dinner, with all the trimmings. Remember to save a couple of pints to have with the bubble and squeak on Boxing Day.



HAVE A LEGENDARY CHRISTMAS



- ▶ BOTTLED & DRAUGHT BEER TO TAKEAWAY
- ▶ BOTTLED CIDER & GIN
- ▶ PRESENTATION GIFT SETS
- ▶ GIFT CARDS & ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP
- ▶ LOCAL PRODUCE
- ▶ MERCHANDISE & BREWERY TOUR VOUCHERS

Throughout 2025 our Monthly Specials have been raising funds and awareness for



TRING

BREWERY Co.

Dunsley Farm, London Road, Tring HP23 6HA

☎ 01442 890721 🌐 www.tringbrewery.co.uk 📱 📺 📷

▶ LEGENDARY BEER FROM HERTFORDSHIRE

Monthly Special**Ho-Ho-Hoe – 4.0% - Fruity, seasonal bitter**

A stocking-full of hedgerow fruit flavour has been derived from Bramling Cross (UK) hops. A merry tipples with gentle hop bitterness, set in an

amber malt body.

Food pairing

Let's stick traditional – Bubble & Squeak, topped with a free-range poached egg and oak-smoked bacon lardons. Lovely-jubbly!

The latest tour booking dates and times 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

**Tramway Business Park, Ludgershall
Rd, Brill, Aylesbury HP18 9TY**
www.valebrewery.co.uk

EST 1995

V A L E
B R E W E R Y

Seasonal beers.**Santa's Ale – Amber Ale 4.1%**

Brewed by our jolly elves for the big man himself, Santa's Ale is made for yuletide cheer. But don't be thinking this is a beer as heavy and stodgy as a Christmas pudding;

this ale is smooth easy drinking, perfect for quaffing down throughout the festive season.

Hops: First Gold, Phoenix

Malt: Pale Planet, Munich, Crystal

Good King – Ruby Ale 4.9%

A beer for dark wintery nights, this full-bodied ruby ale is generously layered with roasted malt flavours.

Hops: Fuggles, Mount Hood, Pulawski

Malt: Pale Planet, Munich, Crystal, Roasted Barley

Brewery Tours

See how it all comes together with a hands-on look at the brewing process from start to finish.

Head Brewer of 25 years, Dave Renton, shows you how to create top-quality ales, and the care and attention that goes into each beer and brew.

Finishing with drinks in the taproom, this is the perfect gift for those who love beer.

Please note: ticket price is for 1 person and includes 1x tasting paddle of beer at the end of the tour.

Dates: 13/12/25, 17/01/26, 14/02/26, and 14/03/2026.

Windsor & Eton

1-4 Vansittart Estate, Duke Street,
Windsor, Berks SL4 1SE
www.webrew.co.uk



Seasonal beer.

Silent Knight of the Garter – Golden Ale 3.8%



“Silent Knight of the Garter” is a seasonal rebadging of Knight of the Garter, a golden ale brewed by Windsor & Eton Brewery. It’s a light and easy-drinking beer with a straw colour and citrus notes from Amarillo and other New World hops. The beer is named in honour of the annual Ceremony of the Garter held at Windsor Castle and has won awards, including Best Cask Golden Ale in London & the South East in 2017.

Brewery News

Want your brewery featured next time?
Contact the Editor:

@ tapler@midchilternscamra.org.uk

🌿 Welcome to Your Friendly Country Pub 🍷

Where great food, live music, and a relaxed atmosphere come together. Tucked away in the heart of the countryside, we're the perfect spot for locals and visitors alike to unwind, dine, and enjoy.

🍷 Kitchen Open Daily 12pm – 8pm

🍷 Featuring our popular Sunday Roasts – comfort food at its best!

🎵 Live Music Most Weekends

🍷 Kick back with a drink and enjoy great local talent every Friday and Saturday night.

🎯 Darts Board & Pool Table

🎯 Challenge your mates to a friendly game – or join in the fun every week!

🏊 Free Pool Tuesdays 6–8pm

🏊 Yes, you read that right – free pool every Tuesday evening!

🐕 Dog Friendly

🐕 Water and treats always available for our furry four-legged friends.

👶 Children Welcome Until 9pm Daily

👶 A relaxed, family-friendly setting for all ages.

☀️ Beer Garden

☀️ Make the most of sunny days in our spacious garden – the perfect spot to relax with a cold drink.

Whether you're here for a roast, a round of pool, or a pint in the sun, we've got everything you need for a perfect pub experience.



🕒 Opening Hours:

Mon: 10:30–23:00

Tues: 12:00–23:00

Wed – Thurs: 10:30–23:00

Fri: 10:30–00:00

Sat: 12:00–00:00

Sun: 11:30–22:30



Three Blackbirds, Flamstead, 2 High Street, AL2 8BS
www.threeblackbirdsflamstead.com

07547831168
info@threeblackbirdsflamstead.com

This issue we have some thoughts on the Full Moon, Hawridge Common, and the Old Palace, Kings Langley

The Full Moon, Hawridge Common

The article in the summer edition of The Chiltern Tapler brought back happy memories for one who much frequented the Full Moon fifty years ago. The pub has a special place in Mid-Chilterns Branch history, for it was there that the very first, exploratory, meeting was held in April 1974. Back then the licensee was Wally Pope.

In those days the overwhelming majority of pubs in Berkhamsted, Hemel, Chesham, King's Langley, Aston Clinton, Aylesbury and Tring and the villages sold just one dismal beer – Ind Coope Bitter, served more often than not under CO2 top pressure as 'Superdraught'. Discerning drinkers had to look elsewhere.

One of the main attractions of the Full Moon for local drinkers was the fact that it belonged to Thomas Wethered and Sons of Marlow. Other pubs of theirs included the Pheasant at Ballinger and the Elephant and Castle in Amersham, along with pubs in Chalfont St Giles, Seer Green, Hedgerley and Denham. They were mostly very traditional locals which had stuck with ale from the cask, sometimes a wooden one at that. Wethereds functioned much like an independent local brewer, and in some respects, they gave their rivals Brakspears a run for their money.

Compared with so many, Wethereds was one lucky brewery – taken over in 1948 by Strong's of Romsey, it had survived. When Strong's themselves were taken over by Whitbread in 1968 it survived again, brewing a mild, an 'ordinary' bitter (their own, but badged as Whitbread Trophy), and SPA or Special Bitter. Under respected head brewer Lance Ogden, Marlow beers were perhaps the best in the whole Whitbread group, and at the time, that was saying something.

In the 1980s, as CAMRA's influence was felt, the company was allowed to promote itself,

using Wethereds branding on drays and pump clips and launching the formidable 5% Winter Royal. Ultimately, of course, Whitbread was only interested in keg and lager and running huge, centralised breweries. Nowadays, having disappeared up its own fundament, it is merely a hotel chain. When Marlow was closed down in 1988, a substitute version of its bitter was procured from Cheltenham or somewhere, but it didn't last very long.

At least the fine old brewery buildings still stand, converted into flats. A few years later, along came Rebellion, with a mission to avenge the loss of Wethereds; their IPA comes close, but their take on Winter Royal is absolutely spot-on.

Pub-going habits were very different in those days. With regulated hours, it was all about the drinking. These days, pubs are busy early on but often die when the diners leave; Wally's food offering was crisps, or crisps, but the place got steadily busier as the evening went on.

Tim Amsden

CAMRA National Chairman, 1980-82

The Old Palace re-opens with sights on return to heyday

The new landlord of The Old Palace has fulfilled a long-time dream of running the pub and has promised to bring it back to its former glory.

Haydon Chart reopened the Langley Hill pub on 31 October after a brief spell of closure while interior renovations were carried out.

He told Village News he is committed to creating a community pub where everyone is welcome.

He said, 'I worked here in 2014 under Lesley and Pete and loved it so much that when I moved to Colchester, I commuted back for a weekly Friday night shift.

'I saw the pub in its heyday and want to bring that back. As someone who genuinely loves this pub, I'm so excited for what we can do here.'

Haydon, who has taken on the pub with his partner Luke Gregory, has big plans to integrate The Old Palace with village life, including hosting special events on the evening of the Christmas lights switch on, a Carnival after party and even coffee and cake mornings for those residents of Kings Langley's care homes who are able to travel.

He most recently worked behind the bar at The Saracens Head, so will be a familiar face for many in the village, and believes his experience gives him a unique insight into what the community wants from the pub.

Haydon said, 'There are some good venues in King Langley which all offer different things, and we want to add to that, not dilute it. This will be a community pub for people to come with friends or family, to meet other locals over a pint and feel part of this great village.'

As well as bar snacks, the pub will initially offer Sunday roasts, though is not positioning itself as a restaurant. Behind the bar, there will be two house ales plus a rotating guest ale, and six lagers - including an alcohol-free option. Major sporting events will also be broadcast, but the pub will not show sport round the clock.

And Haydon is open to hearing from his customers, saying, 'I will be putting an online suggestions box on my website - the pub is for the village and needs to work to local needs.'

Written by Sarah Wragg, Chair, Kings Langley Beer & Fizz Festival, for Kings Langley Village News. Used by permission.

The Grand Junction Arms, Bulbourne

When Oakman Inns went into administration in July of this year and large concrete 'tank traps' closed off the car park it appeared that this would be another pub permanently closed. When fourteen of the previous owner's pubs were bought, The Grand Junction was

not one of them which only enhanced that belief.

Not so! Along came Craft Locals Limited and owner Dan Fox. Already having the Red Lion, Chenies in his company, Dan knows the business from the success of that pub. Scroll forward to Thursday 6 November and the Grand Junction re-opened, and I visited three days later.

Warmly welcomed by Dan, his Manager Jon Egerton and their staff, by 12.30pm the pub was vibrant with diners and those, like me, just in for a pint. With six cask pumps – Harvey's 'Sussex Best', Rebellion 'IPA' and 'Roasted Nuts', Adnams 'Ghost Ship', Mad Squirrel 'Diablo' and not forgetting Tring 'Side Pocket for a Toad', we ale drinkers are very well provided. With four or five keg beers including a genuine original 'Budvar' offering and indeed Double Diamond! With one of the bar staff sporting a T shirt with the familiar 'DD' logo on the front, and 'Works Wonders' on the back it rather brought back memories of the 1970s. Thankfully a very different beer from those days and now brewed at Kirkstall Brewery, Leeds owned by Jamie Allsopp – a direct descendant of the founder of the 218 year old Allsopp's brewery, this is a 3.8% ABV session pale ale on keg.

The kitchen – where Dan himself was on duty – appeared to be going well catering for a large number of satisfied diners all served by efficient and smiling staff.

Currently the pub is 'card only' but they hope to alter that in the near future. With Quiz Nights, Monday to Thursday 'Lunch Specials', Wednesday 'Homemade Pie Day' and the Tuesday 'Cask Club' – all ales at £4.00 a pint – it is fair to say that Dan, Jon and their young team have 'hit the ground running'.

Richard Abraham

The Hop Tap

Market Square Hemel Hempstead



Open Daily at 12 Noon

Award Winning
Community Pub

Dog Friendly

Ever Changing Range
Independent Family
Run



www.thehoptap.co

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

A place in our Herts – pub campaign

The Hertfordshire CAMRA branches have launched a campaign urging people to regularly visit the county's pubs.

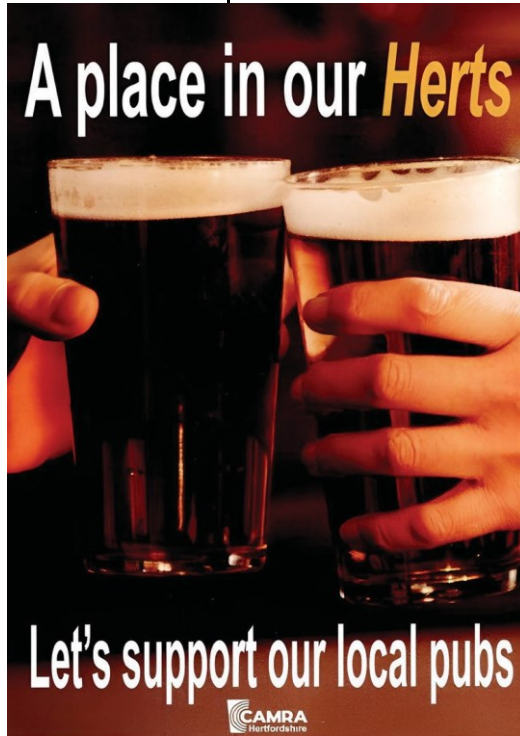
The initiative is being promoted through posters in pub windows, at local tourist offices, at Hertfordshire CAMRA beer festivals, and via social media.

Well-publicised national economic pressures have negatively affected pubs across the country, resulting in many closing for extended periods, or, worse still, pulling down the shutters for good.

As the financial noose tightens, so the queue of new publicans for tenancies shortens. And high costs for landlords

have often led to an inevitable increase in bar prices, which has dissuaded many people from crossing the pub threshold for a pint, on a regular basis. It is clearly a difficult squeeze for landlord and drinker alike.

Nevertheless, pubs are at the very heart of Hertfordshire's tradition, remain great social centres for conversation and are



our top choice when meeting friends for both celebration and commemoration. But if they are going to survive and prosper, we need to convince more people to see it that way and to visit more regularly.

While CAMRA nationally continues to petition government for beer duty relief, a reduction in business rates and changes to make the VAT system fairer, in Hertfordshire we feel it is also time

for our locally led pub-supporting campaign, to increase visibility on the ground at pub level, so that as many people as possible get the message.

It really is time to enjoy a pint in *yourLocal* – do please spread the word, pubs should always have “*A place in our Herts*”.

Les Middlewood
Pubs Protection Officer
South Herts CAMRA

This is an update on the article we carried last issue.

Pubs' social value revealed

Industry



British pubs and publicans have been at the heart of their areas for centuries meeting social needs and connecting communities, but new research has put a figure on just how much social value they bring. The groundbreaking research comes from Pub is The Hub, the not-for-profit organisation that helps locals to diversify and provide essential services and activities. Called Pub is The Hub: Social Value, it has established that for every £1 invested in services and activities in the local, an average social value worth £8.28 is created. It confirms pubs offer social value that supports community cohesion, job security, well-being, increased social interaction and resilient communities. The report also reveals pubs help people overcome social isolation and replace the loss of services in rural and deprived areas. Backed by the National Lottery Community Fund, the report measures the social value delivered by publicans and their pubs, through Pub is The Hub support, to help provide a range of vital services and activities in their areas. Calculating social value is an academic process that measures the added value an initiative brings to society and refers to the wider positive impact an activity, project or organisation has beyond just financial or economic returns. The evaluation, which focuses on Pub is The Hub projects

implemented between 2022 and 2024, analysed the impact of adding new services and activities. It examined how the introduction of amenities such as stores, cafes and allotments, as well as events such as theatre and arts performances, help to reduce social isolation and address community needs. The evaluation also highlighted the crucial role of the publican in these efforts. It concluded that diversified pub-based initiatives will have lasting effects on the overall improved local well-being for individuals and their families as well as in reducing loneliness, improving mental health and giving people greater independence. The evaluation also found the social value created by pubs meets several of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. It aligned the Pub is The Hub projects with a broader impact including tackling issues such as poverty, inequality, good health and local wellbeing. Pub is The Hub chief executive John Longden said: "Publicans and their pubs have a vital social role in supporting local communities and helping people to overcome social isolation and alleviate feelings of loneliness. They have a significant social value that is beyond economic impact. They are crucial in helping to bring people together and helping with the provision of lost services and amenities. "There needs to be wider recognition of the important role that individual publicans and the vital role their pubs have in rural communities and deprived areas as social hubs. Pubs contribute to the general wellbeing of locals and help drive social cohesion and community resilience in local areas."

29/09/2025 by Timothy Hampson

Women In Beer unveils awards shortlist

Industry



Women in Beer (WiB) has announced the finalists for its inaugural awards, which has seen 280 nominations in nine categories. WiB founder Amelie Tassin said: “I was not expecting to see so many nominations for our first awards, but it confirmed there’s a need to celebrate the women who work and shape the beer industry. “It’s been a real joy to get to know so many talented women through the nominations, and I am in awe of the judges who had a very tough job selecting the shortlisted and the winners.” The finalists in each category are: Brewer of the Year – sponsored by SIBA Kate Hyde – Hand Brew Co. Sophie Ashdown – Buxton brewery Lara Lopes – Round Corner Brewing Rising Star Award – sponsored by Simpsons Malt Katie Sanders-Pope – Old Cannon brewery Natalie Tunnacliffe – Tandle Hill Tavern Sophie Whitcher – Lost and Grounded Lucy Stevens – Closet Brewing Communicator of the Year – sponsored by Crisp Malt and the Malt Miller Joanne Love Tori Powell Kimberley Spivey Ruvani de Silva Katie Mathers Entrepreneur of the Year – sponsored by Charles Faram Jane Peyton Elizabeth Townsend – Keroo Brewing Lucy Do – Dodo Micropub Lily Waite–Marsden – Queer Brewing Beer Expert of the Year – sponsored by Yakima Chief Hops Alix Blease – Lallemand Brewing Joanne Love –

BarthHaas X Christina Wade Natalya Watson – WSET Mentor of the Year – Sponsored by Keg Warehouse Dawn Maskell – International Centre for Brewing and Distilling at Heriot–Watt University Kate Hyde – Hand Brew Co. Kelly Johnson Industry Champion of the Year – sponsored by SSV Jane Peyton Sara Webber – SA Brain & Co. Lucy Do – Dodo Micropub Catherine Webber – Attic Brew Co. Beer Creative of the Year – Sponsored by WHC Lab Kimberley Spivey – freelance Charlotte Waite-Marsden – Queer Brewing Amy Haselden – Track Brewing Co. Vik Kastenbauer Stronge – Lost Cause Brewing Co. Hospitality Leader of the Year – sponsored by Hit Training Joanna Whalley – Wigan Central Margaret Elliott-Tredinnick – Dog and Duck Inn Lucy Do – Dodo Micropub Aimee Harbison-Roper – Barrel Drop Women in Beer 2025 – Industry Icon (judge’s choice) – sponsored by CAMRA Dawn Maskell Jane Peyton Lucy Do Melissa Cole Jaega Wise The winners will be announced on 28 October at Eko Brewery and Taproom in London.

13/10/2025 by Timothy Hampson

Freebies tax could be a gift to indies

Opinion



In news that will have seen some beer writers crying into their gifted Fuller’s Vintage Ales, HMRC has recently clarified that content

creators must declare all donations as income on their self-assessment tax return. That's right. Those crates of beer, jets to foreign breweries and VIP festival passes will now have to be taxed at their market value. (Disclaimer: this is HMRC so some of the guidelines are as muddy as a drain pour smoothie IPA.) It's caused a few privileged writers to heroically proclaim that they are now refusing unpaid press trips and goodie bags. These virtuous announcements can only mean that a period of austerity will have to be endured; if you see a downtrodden freelance scribe at the bar, maybe buy them a half. At this point, you're probably wondering why I'm relishing the news so much as I – full disclosure – have received such largesse in the past? As it turns out I'm as weak as a table beer and a hypocrite to boot. But I'm jolly because when I consider the ramifications it could mean a recalibration of how writers look at beer. Your local pub or small brewery won't have the funds to offer substantial gifts and hospitality, and these are the establishments that need to be championed the most by the media. I have two examples which show how writers historically have failed beer by only covering the grand. Firstly, on a trip recently to the first micropub, the Butcher's Arms in Herne, Kent, the publican Martyn Hillier told me decades ago he had to pay a prominent writer expenses to travel there and instead of seeing how inspiring the place was, they complained about the length of the journey. These days the commission – and trip – I hope would be relished by most. Micropubs should've been championed at the start of the century and more should've been publicised about how they can rejuvenate high streets well before Martyn's speech to the CAMRA AGM in 2009. Secondly, for years I've been messaged by publicans and brewers who despise the narrative that says only big breweries and tied pubs can save beer. SIBA has told me that cask beer sales are growing in the independent sector – which even includes large brewers, such as St Austell –

but the only demise is in the multinational portfolios. Look at the success of Boddington's, brewed by family firm JW Lees, which has seen its distributor inundated with queries for cask from across the UK. I'm sure this detail wouldn't have been so overlooked if it wasn't so damn inconvenient. There's also something a bit icky about how so many in the trade will uncritically boast about their free hauls online – as was shown when mixed martial artist (MMA) Conor McGregor's brewery Forged sent out crates of Irish stout, pint glasses and baseball caps. The same MMA who has faced numerous charges throughout his professional life for assault, disorderly conduct, driving offences and rape. Freebies are also the reason why every year your social media feeds will fill up with photos of drinks, such as Fuller's Vintage Ales courtesy of Asahi Group Holdings, net worth £13bn. The counter argument – which is persuasive – is that these types of gifts are needed because writers are under paid, the fees keep decreasing and novices (especially those from underrepresented backgrounds) struggle to fund their careers. How could one fund beer reviews or maintain their knowledge without a few free bottles? I would say, though, that writing needs to speak truth to power and this is impossible when one becomes compromised by gifts; there's a reason why a large multinational wants hacks to see its shiny new brewery complete with infra-red control forklifts. It's also obvious why an MMA wants good press when they have to defend rape allegations. And if we want to support those that are historically underrepresented in the media, who are championing the small, then please subscribe or donate to their independent websites, blogs and newsletters. Whatever the case, I'm optimistic that this HMRC policy could have the knock-on effect of ensuring more underrepresented voices gain a voice in the beer world.

01/11/2025 by David Jesudason

New hope for Burton's brewing heritage

Industry



Burton on Trent's world-famous brewing heritage is set for a new chapter with planning approval granted for the Old Brewery Quarter, a major regeneration project bringing new life, leisure and hospitality to the town centre. Securing planning permission for a series of cultural and heritage schemes has been described as a "defining moment" for Burton on Trent's regeneration and will revitalise the area and lay the groundwork for economic growth. The projects have collectively been named the Old Brewery Quarter, celebrating Burton's brewing heritage. "It sets a new standard for regeneration in the town and reflects the ambition and vision of our community," said East Staffordshire Borough Council cabinet member Louise Walker. National Brewery Heritage Trust chairman Dr Harry White said: "The trust has been working closely with East Staffordshire Borough Council on this flagship project, so we are very pleased that planning permission has now been granted. "This is a major step forward in an exciting project that will showcase the town's brewing and pub heritage and is a key foundation in preserving it for future generations. "Burton has long been regarded as the capital of Britain's beer industry, and we commend the council for its commitment to regenerating this important part of the town.

"We are delighted that the development is to be named the Old Brewery Quarter – a term which sums up the rich past of a town still at the forefront of a great British industry." The authority also announced that food-and-beverage operator Loungers was the first to sign up to open a cafe-bar within the town's historic Bass House. The new venue will serve beers brewed in the town and is due to form part of a wider visitor attraction within the building. The Burton Lounge will serve beers brewed in the town connecting the brand directly with the area's brewing story. The venue will form part of a wider brewery and social history visitor attraction within Bass House. The Old Brewery Quarter is due to be delivered in phases. Approval has been granted for Bass House to be opened as a heritage experience, featuring interactive exhibits, a working pilot brewery and the National Brewery Heritage Archive. Nearby, Town House will be restored, preserving its architectural heritage while adapting it for flexible future use. The Water Tower will be repurposed as a visitor attraction, featuring a rooftop viewing platform with panoramic vistas across the Washlands. A new events space will be created on the footprint of the former Trent House office building, designed as a hub for festivals, performances and community events. It would also serve to connect the town centre with the historic brewery buildings and the Washlands, the council said. The Washlands Visitor Centre, developed in partnership with the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, will provide educational and exhibition spaces as well as interactive classrooms, a cafe and a riverside terrace. Meanwhile, the former Molson Coors headquarters at Carling House is set to be converted into a hotel. Initial groundworks are due to begin on site in early 2026, the council said.

01/11/2025 by Timothy Hampson

Pubs in frontline in fight against loneliness

Industry



With worries about loneliness on a par with peak pandemic levels, new polling by the British Beer and Pubs Association (BBPA) shows two out of three see pubs as vital in the fight against isolation. However, two in five say they have seen pubs close in their area, prompting calls for urgent support for the “cherished institution” in the next Budget. With pubs struggling under a heavy tax and regulatory burden, more than 2,000 have closed since 2020, and one is predicted to close every day in 2025. The same poll found that, nationally, six in 10 are concerned about pub closures in their area, and seven out of 10 consider the pub important or very important for their area’s social life. The BBPA’s Long Live the Local campaign said this underlined the urgent need for the government to use the Budget to deliver fairer taxes and action on rising costs to save these beloved institutions. The survey shows a regional picture of where people view pubs as a solution to isolation and closely reflects where closures have hit hardest. In the North of England, 71 per cent of people agree pubs are vital in tackling loneliness and isolation, underlining the role pubs play as informal support networks and community hubs. In Wales, 64 per cent feel the same, while in Scotland, 63 per cent back the idea that pubs are part of the solution to the UK’s loneliness crisis. Since 2021, the BBPA has recorded a net closure of 291 pubs across the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber, Wales has seen

the net closure of 132 pubs and Scotland 206. According to Office of National Statistics figures from October 2025, 26 per cent of Britons report feeling lonely at least some of the time, a figure that has remained consistently high since records began in 2020, during the Covid pandemic. Similarly, 30 per cent of people surveyed for the BBPA’s Long Live the Local campaign say they or someone they know has felt isolated and lonely due to the loss of their local pub. BBPA chief executive Emma McClarkin said: “This polling confirms that for many, the local pub is a lifeline, not a luxury, and the loss of a pub can have a real and devastating impact. “It’s made all the more concerning given our prediction that one pub will close every day this year, with heavy tax and regulatory costs often at the heart of why they’ve been forced to shut. “The government must use this once-in-a-generation Budget to reset and reform the unfair tax burden and costs, which would help pubs keep their doors open and continue to fend off loneliness, which is affecting so many.” Professor of Historical and Cultural Geography at the University of Cambridge and author of the book *Pub* Philip Howell said: “When pubs are ripped out of communities and neighbourhoods, the damage to social cohesion is incalculable. “With rapidly rising levels of loneliness, we need pubs more than ever. As the survey suggests, the cost of standing by and watching pubs close will be measured in even greater isolation and the fracturing of our communities.” The BBPA is urging supporters to join Long Live the Local and email their MP before the Budget, calling for an overhaul of business rates, a duty cut in line with European averages and action on spiralling regulatory costs.

04/11/2025 by Timothy Hampson

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This edition, Richard, co-editor of this magazine, puts down his thoughts on his beer discovery journey, culminating in his own micropub in his garden.

A Lifetime – so far – in Beer



Having recently entered my seventy-ninth year I thought it might be an idea to reflect and record my – thus far – lifetime love affair with the most consumed alcoholic beverage on the planet; seventh on the list if you include non-alcoholic liquids. To do that I have to go back to my idyllic childhood in a small Somerset village along the main road from Cheddar, and my then age of ten or eleven.

It was to my great advantage that the Landlord and Landlady of one of the two village pubs – the one two minutes' walk down the Street from our cottage – were family friends: my younger brother and I often being in the company of their youngest son. One of the many games we played was hide and seek, often taking in the lower part of the village around the railway line and sidings yard – a favourite though forbidden playground – and opposite his pub home. It was sometimes the case that when the other 'competitors' returned home at the end of the game, for Corona and Tizer, we instead repaired to the private room in the pub – already familiar to local youngsters as it contained one of the

only televisions in the village; "all welcome for Children's TV" – where we were allowed a bottle of Courage Brown Ale to share. Almost certainly that would have been my first taste of beer.

Moving into my early teens - that pub Landlord was an agent for a Manchester fruit and vegetable wholesaler which meant that during the Strawberry Season, after the demise of our railway traffic, fruit from the valley travelled by road daily; the lorries based at our pub. It was great fun/ though hard work to travel on the back of these flatbed lorries – no Health and Safety considerations back then – around the smallholdings collecting trays of strawberries; I can still tie the "lorry drivers knot" which was used to keep the full loads in place. Thirsty work too after which we went into the pub for a half – a pint if we could get it – of bitter.

Choice back then was bitter, mild or scrumpy – pubs often kept those in large wooden barrels and, knowing now what I didn't know then, would have meant that often it was past it's best when served. The fact that bits were floating in the ale – 'fishes' the landlords used to say – didn't stop someone aged fourteen from drinking it and feeling lucky to be allowed to do so.

Our local had been owned by Oakhill Brewery which was then taken over by Georges of Bristol, and subsequently Courage, Barclay and Simmonds, later just Courage Western. That then changed the line-up of available ales in our local to Courage 'Bitter', 'Best Bitter' and 'Director's'. By then in my mid-teens, I was allowed the weakest (this was long before the days of listed ABVs though it would have been about 4%) 'Bitter', described to us by the landlords of the day as "Boy's Beer". When we passed our tests – and I was in the Army aged seventeen by then – it became known as "Driving Beer!" How times – probably for the best – have changed!

Incidentally, these descriptions of the lowest ABV ales have been well documented to the extent that this is quoted against my name on page eleven of Laura Hadland's brilliant and authoritative book, "50 Years of CAMRA".

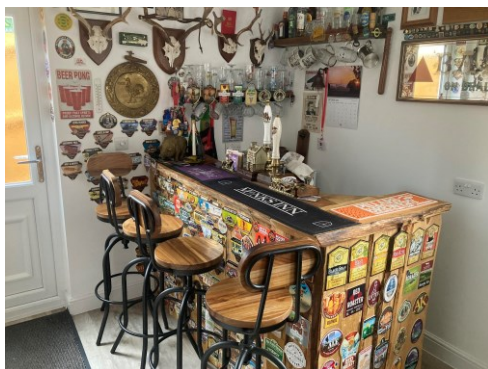
As we all know the sixties brought about the keg beers which became synonymous with nationally available brands such as 'Watneys Red Barrel', 'Worthington E', 'Whitbread Tankard', 'Charrington Toby', 'Flowers' (also from Whitbread), 'Courage Tavern Keg' and 'Double Diamond'. It is to my shame, and that of my fellow mid-teenagers, that we embraced these bland quaffable keg beers – relatively weak at between 3.6% to 4% ABV – and consumed them in large quantities. In my defence I was finally getting a clear beer, without 'fishes' or other detritus within, because of which I then believed they were good beers! In fact, during my three years in Germany with the Army the English beer in both the Naafi and Mess was 'Double Diamond'. Whether it 'worked wonders' – as the advertisements declared - or not I have no idea, but my colleagues and I drank many a keg dry in short order!

Then along came CAMRA. To my shame I dismissed the first of the campaign 'disciples' I encountered with some derision as being well meaning but misguided crusaders. After all, what was wrong with these clear keg beers which were the same from Yorkshire to Somerset and thus available everywhere? Coming into pubs with long-serving landlords and telling them that their product was bland, 'dead', uninteresting and not real beer! How dare they? Often, we locals gave them short shrift, but they continued with their campaigning undeterred by such as us and thank goodness they did! Without those early pioneers in pursuit of good ale those of us who eventually saw the light, and those more intelligent than us who were already stood in its beams, would not have the remarkable range of cask ales now available.

Were it not for CAMRA I guess beer drinkers would still be imbibing the bland stuff churned out in the sixties and seventies, much as Heineken, AB InBev, Carlsberg Britvic, Molson Coors et al are doing today with their mass-produced keg beers and lagers, many purporting to be from abroad yet produced in the UK.

So, when did I become a convert? Given that I'm now in my late seventies I guess you could answer that question as – rather late in fact. At an Olympia Great British Beer Festival about a dozen years ago was when I signed on the CAMRA dotted line and have not regretted it for a single second. Later still I attended an Annual General Meeting of the Mid Chilterns Branch, found some like-minded and very welcoming folk, and joined the committee; again, I'm delighted that they offered to have me aboard.

So, what now of my life in ale? Where I live, I am very fortunate to be surrounded by a number of excellent pubs, with first rate cellarmen and women, serving cask ale in exceptional condition; and these I frequent very regularly. In addition, when moving to our lovely Buckinghamshire village four years ago our astute son-in-law thought that the back part of our garage would make a very good pub; no persuasion was required! As a result, the 'Pig & Whistle' came to life. A beautiful bar



made of oak from the Ashridge Estate, two hand pulls, numerous bottled and canned beers plus all the paraphernalia one would

expect to find in a trading (we do not trade) hostelry – pump clips, bar mirrors, including two rare ones, glasses of all types, antlers, shields and much more.

Also, as an Editorial Assistant and feature writer on this magazine, I am much more involved in all things pertaining to pubs and ale than ever before. To write on any subject one has to do the research, speak to those in whatever field you are looking at, and read a lot – all of this is my abiding pleasure. In the

past, when asked my hobbies – and having been in paid employment for over sixty years up to November 2023, these had to be fitted in when one had the time – my usual response was ‘pubs and beer’. Whilst that has always been true – pretty much from my earliest years as above - in recent times it has taken that pastime to a whole new, much higher level. Long may that continue.

Richard Abraham



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Following the controversy surrounding 'Fresh Ale', Richard investigates and asks the question

Do Ale Drinkers Know What They're Drinking?

There is nothing better to draw a reader's attention to an article than to give it a title bearing an apparently foolish question. But is it as questionable a heading as it would at first appear? As I do not believe so, let me explain.

Most readers of the magazine you are holding will know a number of facts about their pub drink of choice. For example, the name of the brewery (after all it's on the pump clip), whether it's an ale, lager, stout etc – all those are a given – but not all understand who owns that name or even where it is brewed. Now, you can say, that provided it is their tipples of choice and that it tastes OK, then it's only 'anoraks' like me who care. If you believe that to be true you can stop reading here.

It is my belief that there would be little point in my being a member of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) and a life-long imbibers of cask ale if I didn't care. Historically, pubs were largely owned by the producers of the ales they sold, the breweries, and that was mostly the case until the 1970s when what are now known as Pub owning companies (Pubcos) first came upon the scene. The infamous six brewers of those days, of which we thought we were rid – in no small part thanks to CAMRA - have been resurrected by those of today, the global giants – AB InBev, Heineken, Carlsberg Britvic, Molson Coors/Carling, Asahi/Fuller's and Diageo, owners of Guinness. These companies provide 90% of all beer made and sold in the UK.

Given that many of the flagship brands of these – despite purporting to be Spanish, Italian, Japanese or the lagers of other nations, and badged in support of that – are made 'under licence' within our shores. In the case of casks, your Fuller's 'London Pride' (Asahi), Black Sheep 'Bitter' (Breal, now re-badged as Keystone Brewing Group), Doom

Bar (Molson Coors), Wainwright's (Carlsberg Britvic) and so many more, the list goes on. If one included all the foreign sounding lagers that catalogue would be almost endless.

To add to the confusion, Carlsberg Britvic – in the brief period it was the Carlsberg Marston Brewing Company – started to promote their 'Fresh Ale', which is actually keg beer dispensed through a beer engine handpump. This has two downsides, one being it takes a pump away from serving cask ale and the other that it hoodwinks the customers into believing they are drinking real ale. The Otter Brewery in Devon, brewer of some excellent cask conditioned ales, website state that it was their idea in the first place and produces a 'Fresh Ale'. This marketing ploy is obviously working as there has been a steady increase in sales since this misleading product was launched two years ago. At the bar the pump should exhibit a notice stating the beer is 'brewery conditioned'. In fairness, I can accept why a landlord struggling through these beleaguered times would consider serving this product because, as opposed to a 'bar life' of three days for cask ale, the keg 'Fresh Ale' will last for twelve, but that doesn't make it right nor indeed honest. All ale is brewery conditioned but cask continues that process in the pub cellar. Both CAMRA and the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA) have branded this concept as 'Handpump Hijack' and ask to be appraised of where and what is offered through this form of dispense. In the case of Carlsberg Britvic this is likely to be Wainwright 'Gold', Wainwright 'Amber' and Hobgoblin 'IPA', and from Otter, 'Amber Fresh'.

We are immensely fortunate in our area to have a number of independent brewers – Tring, Vale, Chiltern, XT, Mad Squirrel, 3 Brewers, Rebellion and more – who can actually get their ales into pubs in this region. That is very much not the case throughout the

UK which is supported by the fact that in 2024 a total of one hundred independent breweries, 5.5%, closed. Figures from SIBA show that only a tiny amount – about 6% - of beer sales in pubs are from the independent sector. Back to the 'big boys' again! These conglomerates keep schtum about your supposed 'indie' ale – doesn't state their owning corporation's name on any pump clip I've seen – nor necessarily where it is brewed. The Pubcos have a history of taking over family and small, some with great history, breweries and closing them down. Think Jennings, Wychwood, Banks's and more.

On my annual long weekend in Exford, I consume a reasonable amount of Exmoor Ales but their forty-five-year-old brewery in Wiveliscombe is closing. This was one of the earliest small independent breweries, starting in 1980 – incidentally their 'Gold' (a wonderful ale) was the first golden ale brewed in this country – but no longer on Exmoor. Not necessarily all doom and gloom as they have a new arrangement with Hogs Back Brewery which will continue their ales, though an Exmoor beer brewed in deepest Surrey cannot be quite what it was. Another good news story is that Jennings Brewery in Cockermouth, Cumbria – together with their iconic ales – has been re-opened as an independent and the hope is that they will still be able to get their ales into the pubs they formerly supplied.

To further illustrate the point I'm making, cask ale sales by volume in the UK for 2024 were:

1. Sharps 'Doom Bar' (Molson Coors)
2. Timothy Taylor 'Landlord' (Independent)
3. Greene King 'IPA' (CK Asset Holdings)
4. Fuller's 'London Pride' (Asahi)
5. Wainwright 'Gold' (Carlsberg Britvic)
6. Greene King 'Abbot Ale' (CK Asset Holdings)
7. St. Austell 'Tribute' (Independent)
8. Marston's 'Pedigree' (Carlsberg Britvic)

9. Morland 'Old Speckled Hen' (CK Asset Holdings)

10. Black Sheep 'Best Bitter' (Keystone Brewing Group)

Therefore, only two fully independent brewers in that list. However, to be fair to Greene King, Fuller's and Black Sheep their ales are brewed in Bury St. Edmunds, Chiswick and Masham respectively as they always have been. If we look at the best-selling beer by value in the UK, then Timothy Taylor 'Landlord' leap-frogged 'Doom Bar' to take the top slot; good news for at least one independent brewer which originated in Keighley in 1858.

As stated, it is a constant struggle for the smaller independents to get their ales onto the bar of pubs for a couple of obvious reasons – one being that they cannot produce and supply the volume of the 'big boys' nor, secondly, match them on the wholesale price. For those that do succeed in getting their product into Pubco venues the margins are minute. This then becomes something of a quandary – do they take the risk on that smaller sum to get their ales more widely known – or not? It makes that decision more difficult if we consider ales going into pubs miles away, Yorkshire beer in the south for example. To do that distribution companies are probably required and, when they have taken their 'cut', the bottom line for the brewer has seriously diminished still further.

So, if there is any message – some might say, point – in my ranting opinion it is to encourage cask ale drinkers to discover who brews their pint, and where it comes from. Small independent brewers depend – as do all suppliers of goods – on customers buying their products. Might I suggest that possibly you give 'Doom Bar' and others -especially 'Fresh Ale' – a swerve and have a pint from an independent brewery when you find one in your local?

Richard Abraham

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We feature two articles from Christine Cryne, beer writer on low/no alcohol beers. The first is one written in 2024, outlining the process involved in producing a low/no alcohol beer. The second is an update on the current state of the low/no alcohol beer market.

No and low alcohol beers – a brief exploration

As we get older and inevitably experience health scares, it is not unusual to be told to cut back on alcohol. For me, it was high iron levels that led to me exploring the world of low and no alcohol beer. This is however a booming market, reflected by the average growth of 28.8% each year between 2018 and 2023.

Fortunately, the quality of no and low alcohol beers has improved over this time. Judging this category at beer competitions such as the World Beer Awards (WBA) or International Beer Challenge (IBC) used to incur a sense of dread but those days are long gone. In both 2020 and 2021, low alcohol beers won IBC's Supreme Champion Award (Athletic Brewing Co's Free Way IPA and Harvey's low alcohol Old Ale respectively) and the WBA continue to see an increase in entries and in medals. Deciding to concentrate on low alcohol beers for six months therefore gave me some regret but no trepidations!

To be called a low alcohol beer in the UK, the beer has to have an ABV (alcohol by volume) of 0.5% or less. I'm sure that it is no surprise that making a good low alcohol beer is not easy; think about the skills needed to make a decent, tasty mild and then quadruple them. There are two simple ways to produce a low alcohol beer; either you make a concentrated beer and then dilute it to get to the right alcohol level, or you stop or limit its fermentation to prevent the alcohol rising above 0.5% ABV. A

lot of work has gone into the latter with yeast producers such as Lallemand developing a strain especially for this purpose. The choice of malt can also help towards a tastier beer and Crisp Malt has some suggestions that can help the brewer.

Producing a no alcohol beer can be as simple as having no fermentation in the first place but replacing the flavour is a real art. The other way is removing all or some of the alcohol once a beer has been brewed. There are a number of ways to do this:

Steam distillation: alcohol has a lower boiling point than water so, if you heat it, you remove the alcohol, but this not only removes the alcohol but, sometimes, some of the flavours as well. It can also impact on the other flavours by creating 'cooked' notes. There are ways around this such as vacuum distillation. This means the alcohol boils off at a lower temperature and by using something called the Spinning Cone System, the flavours that have boiled off can be collected and added back once the alcohol has been removed

Water vapour and gas stripping: this again involves heating the beer under vacuum but here water vapour is passed through the beer, and it is the vapour that removes the alcohol. Once again, this risks removing the flavours as well. To reduce the impact, the flavours can be separated from the alcohol extracted and then put back.

Reverse osmosis: this is where the beer is put through a membrane. This allows water



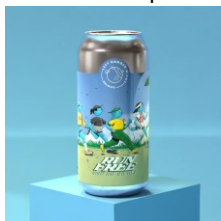
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and alcohol to pass through while capturing larger molecules, such as flavour molecules. Water is then mixed with the resulting concentrated beer.

So, you can see that creating a low alcohol beer is often more complex than creating a 'normal' beer and the equipment can be more expensive. This could explain why a number of low alcohol specialists use third parties to produce their beers. There is also the problem that, without the alcohol, low alcohol beers can be more susceptible to spoilage due to microorganisms. To help prevent this, some brewers use potassium sorbate. The beer is

also prone to 'off' flavours in the same way as ordinary beer due to oxidation. The latter can be controlled by reducing the oxygen content in packaging, but it won't stop the



beer ageing. Although many low alcohol beers are often great on keg, I have tasted a number where, quite simply, the pub hasn't been serving enough of it. The solution is either to ask for a taste or stick to cans or bottles.

The best draught low alcohol beer I have tasted was '*Left Handed Giant's Run Free*', which was developed for a running club. The canned equivalent is equally drinkable but lacks the 'ah' factor. We are fortunate in London in having a number of brewers selling a low alcohol beer on draught in their tap rooms. Try the award-winning Zed from Hammerton's or '*Great Beyond's Fresh*'. Ollie, one of the founders, swears by it for getting him through many a long session working in the tap room. One of the reasons for Zed's fruity flavour profile is that it has added hop extract and it is not unusual to see 'natural flavours' listed as an ingredient. Guinness 0.0, Brewdog's Elvis and Leffe Blond 0% are just three that do this. Interestingly, Guinness introduced a draught version of 0.0 into Irish pubs last year and in August it arrived in the UK, having gone on sale first at the

Devonshire in Soho. Rumours are that the difference in taste echoes the difference in the Left-Handed Giant's beer in that the draught is tastier.

One of the issues with low alcohol beers is the light mouthfeel. Some brewers have tried to address the lack of body by adding oats and lactose; sometimes this works and sometimes it doesn't. Big Drop have been in the business of making low alcohol beer for a number of years, taking many medals in the World Beer Awards, and their Galactic Milk Stout and Pine Trail Pale Ale are good examples of how lactose can be used effectively. While the use of these two ingredients does help mouthfeel,



it can also take away the 'freshness' of a pale or golden ale, so they are not the complete answer. Different grains, particularly those that do not ferment, can also help the mouthfeel and add to the flavour profile. Wheat beers such as Erdinger are very

drinkable and have a layer of complexity, so long as you remember to put the sediment in! For Ghost Ship, both the alcohol and low alcohol packaged versions, Adnams use rye, which adds spicy notes. Similarly, the use of flavoursome darker malts, as used in Brookland's Hoppy Lager, gives some depth to the flavour.

A beer style that does lend itself to low alcohol versions is sours, where the alcoholic versions tend to be light in mouthfeel. Nirvana's Lemon Gose is a good example of this. But, as always, with any beer, what I prefer maybe not your choice. What is certain is that you need to put aside your perception that a low alcohol beer will be the same as one with alcohol. Tests to compare the respective tastes of a number of beers and their low alcohol equivalents have shown that, even with the best of them, alcohol does add depth. That said, drinking low alcohol beers is a great way to reduce alcohol consumption and still feel sociable; there is only so much mineral water and tonic water that can be drunk at one sitting! Most tap rooms and pubs have one or two, with Wetherspoon's increasing their range of late. Over the last six months, I have tasted over 50 low alcohol beers. If you would like to see all my notes, go to the articles section on my website.

In the meantime, here are some of my top packaged beers (in alphabetical order):

- **Adnams Ghost Ship** – one of the few beers that is not a lager or a golden ale.
- **Big Drop Pine Trail IPA** – lemony with noticeable piney hops.
- **Birra Moretti Zero** - an easy drinking lager.
- **BrewDog Hazy AF** – based on their Hazy Jane, this is one of a number of low alcohol beers that BrewDog produce; citrusy and refreshing.
- **Brooklyn Hoppy Lager** – amber beer with Marzen characteristics.

- **Cloudwater's A Dream That's As Real As It Can Be** – creamy biscuit pale gold beer dominated by American hops.
- **Guinness Zero** – roasty character is balanced by fruit, more than the usual Guinness.
- **Maisel Weisse** – plenty of the wheat beer flavours you would expect in a German wheat beer (available in the Queen's Head, Acton Street WC1). Erdinger is a reasonable alternative.
- **Nirvana Lemon Gose** – lemony tart beer with biscuit and spicy notes.
- **Thornbridge Zero** – gold beer with zesty tropical notes.

Christine Cryne

This article first appeared in the London Drinker, September 24, 2024, and is reproduced with permission.

Low alcohol beers – here to stay

Despite the fairly recent increase in coverage in the media, low alcohol beer has been in the UK for over four decades. The first beer launched in the UK was Barbican, a non-alcoholic lager introduced by Bass in 1979. Guinness' first entry in the UK market was with Kaliber. However, although there was growing interest, it wasn't until the last decade that the drinkers really started to engage with the idea.

Despite the fact that a half pint of a 3.8% ABV beer is one unit compared to two units for a 175ml glass of 12% wine, the growth of the UK low/no alcohol beer market has been phenomenal. It is estimated to have increased by 325% from 2018 to 2024 and is predicted to continue to grow by an average of 7% per annum over the next few years. This compares to an overall decline in beer sales of circa 9%.

A number of factors seem to have driven this growth:

feature | NO AND LOW ALCOHOL BEERS

- Tax Reform – The government introduced new duty legislation, which reduced duty on beers of 3.5% or less.
- A shift towards healthier lifestyles leading to some consumers reducing their alcohol consumption. Doctors and the NHS are active promoters of this.
- Innovation – the no/low alcohol beers are generally of a better quality than when Barbican entered the market.

So, what is the impact on breweries? Not surprisingly, this growth has resulted in interest by the big international brewers with Heineken, AB InBev and Carlsberg currently being the biggest producers in the UK. But smaller breweries have started to take note, aided by the development of new yeasts that produce a 0.5% ABV beer rather than having to invest in expensive technology such as Guinness has done.

SIBA reported last year that their members had seen volumes grow by 40% on 2023. Most of these beers are from breweries that produce low/no alcohol as an add on to their usual range but there are now a numerous number that are dedicated to this style. Some have their own brewery, such as Nirvana, who set up nine years ago. Many others, such as Big Drop, who set up the same year, have different approach, using brewing partners.



The range of beers from Nirvana, the UK's first dedicated low/no alcohol brewery

These dedicated specialist brewers are increasing, with even one in Herts. Taking a similar route to Big Drop, Hertford based, UNLTD, was set up by husband and wife, Johnny and Antonia Johnson, in 2020. They

have two beers, an IPA and a Lager, brewed by Hepworth in Sussex. They have received a number of awards for their beers including Great Taste and the World Beer Awards.

Pubs are aware of the growth in this market; 86% of pubs are now stocking one or more low alcohol beers. Regretfully, with the exception of dedicated beer pubs, it's not usual to see a beer from a small independent brewer. Fortunately, the move to drinking less alcohol might not mean a falling out of love with the pub; with sales of these beers showing significant growth. There is also evidence of 'mix and match' drinking with pub users drinking both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beer in an evening.

The trends towards less alcohol consumption are not going away; it's interesting to note that the eighth biggest USA craft brewery is

Athletic, the low alcohol brewer.

So, ways to embrace it and help support brewers

(particularly smaller

independents) and pubs in this journey is

something CAMRA is going to have to think about.



Postscript: The Great British Beer Festival (5-9th August 2025 at the NEC) ran a low/no alcohol bar, enabling drinkers to taste some low/no alcohol beers mainly from small independent brewers. Christine, also, did a tutored tasting of some of the best low/no alcohol beers she has sampled and covered the various ways in which they can be made.

With thanks to Christine Cryne, for allowing us to reproduce this article. Photos added in by the editor.

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What hops went into your beer?

Often when a beer is described as 'hoppy' it sometimes lists which hops went into producing it. Of course, these days – it wasn't always the case – all beers contain hops. So, with my grateful thanks to the list compiled for a recent beer festival at the Black Lion, Leighton Buzzard there follows what flavour the drinker can expect from the hops most often in general use.

Admiral – Bold bitterness

Amarillo – Strong fruity aroma

Azacca – Tropical fruits, citrus

Bru-1 – Intense fruits, spicy notes

Centennial – Citrus, floral

Challenger – Spicy, herby, earthy

Chinook – Pine, spicy notes

Citra – Intense zesty, refreshing



Citra Hops. Picture credit - Brewswag

Columbus – Earthy

Ekuanot – Herbal, citrus, tropical fruits

El Dorado – Fruity

Enigma – Fruity

First Gold – Spicy, fruity, floral

Fuggles – Earthy, floral, minty

Goldings – Floral, earthy, slight spice

Harlequin – Fruity, aromatic

Idaho-7 – Powerful tropical fruit, citrus

Jester – Tropical fruits, blackcurrant

Krush – Intense tropical fruits

Mosaic – Fruity, floral, earthy

Motueka – Vibrant citrus, tropical fruits

Nectaron – Intense tropical fruits

Nelson Sauvin – Fruity

Olicana – Tropical fruits, citrus

Pacific Gem – Spicy fruity, earthy

Perle – Earthy, citrus

Pioneer – Lemon, herbal, earthy

Riwaka – Powerful citrus

Simcoe – Earthy, herbal



Simcoe Hops. Picture credit - Mainbrew

Sladek – Fruity, floral

Strata – Tropical fruits, herbal

Topaz – Tropical fruits, grassy notes

Talus – Floral, grassy, citrus

Vic Secret – Tropical fruits

Waimea – Strong citrus

Warrior – Smooth bitterness

Willamette – Mild earthy, spicy notes

Richard Abraham

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

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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.

Pub games – traditional and more modern

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

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

AUNT SALLY
 BACKGAMMON
 BAR BILLIARDS
 BEER PONG
 BILLIARDS
 CHESS
 CONDOTTIERE
 CONTRABAND
 CORX
 COWABUNGA
 CROWN TO SHIVE
 DARTS

DOMINOES
 DRAUGHTS
 FOOSBALL
 FRUIT MACHINES
 MARBLES
 MONOPOLY
 NOUGHTS AND CROSSES
 PASS THE PIGS
 PERUDO
 PICKOMINO
 PINBALL
 POOL

QUIZ MACHINES
 RING TOSS
 RINGING THE BULL
 SABOTEUR
 SCRABBLE
 SHOVE HA'PENNY
 SHUFFLEBOARD
 SKITTLES
 SKULL
 SNOOKER
 SORRY!
 THREE MEN'S MORRIS

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