

The Chiltern Tapler

Magazine of Mid-Chilterns branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)

Spring 2026 (March – May)



The Piggeries Beer Bus, Tring Brewery – Mid-Chilterns latest tap room

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

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DISCLAIMER

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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.



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NEXT EDITION

The next edition of *The Chiltern Tapler* will be published in late May/early June 2026. Articles, photos and other contributions are welcomed and should be sent to

tapler@midchilterns.camra.org.uk no later than **Friday 23 May**

SOCIAL MEDIA

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

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A word from the editors

Welcome to our Spring issue which contains articles and reports relevant to both the region and the hospitality industry. Without wishing to involve politics or negative issues it has to be understood that pubs – and other small businesses – are facing unprecedented and parlous times. As we all know Covid hit businesses very hard and it has taken a long time for them to partially recover. Now, with successive budgets – and I'm guessing more of the same to come – many believe that the sector is dying. That is not my personal view as pubs, clubs and other venues in the industry have always shown massive resilience to survive.

It is beyond belief that given the great value they supply that our national leaders seem oblivious. The sector provides a unique service by:

- Hosting a great many events for the good of their communities.
- Giving young people their first jobs and thus aiding their development.
- Contributing to local sports groups, associations and community – and National – charities.
- Providing a safe place for those who live alone, enabling them to meet others and thus improving their mental health.
- Welcoming families.
- Sourcing food and drink produce locally where possible.
- Contributing billions to the UK Economy.

Taxation and other Government strictures are causing great hardship and pub closures; last year approximately one pub every day! The industry is currently taxed at 20% VAT where in Europe the average is 10.79%. Whilst mentioning numbers in 2009 pubs made a profit of roughly 84p on a pint, last year that was 12p. It is just guesswork to calculate what even that will reduce to in April this year.

Energy bills have increased by 28% and food cost inflation for raw materials is at around 5%.

Our reason for putting this in our editorial is to demonstrate just how vital your support of our pubs is to the one you're sitting in and all the others which are still open for business.

About this issue

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.

Get involved and help the campaign

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 Spring Social on 23 May. We are doing a canal pub trail in Berkhamsted. Look out for more information in newsletters and the Mid-Chilterns CAMRA website. Look out for announcements on our website www.midchilterns.camra.org.uk.

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

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 and campaigns.

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.

Advertisers' Directory

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Contributors

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9,10, 22,23, 45, 48	Andrew Harvell	30	Christine Cryne
11	Emily Ryans, South Herts CAMRA	33, 36	Richard Abraham
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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
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
Spring – Mar/Apr/May	20 February 2026	Late Feb/Early March

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 23 May 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

About the magazine

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 145,000 members across the UK, with currently 600 plus member in the Mid-Chilterns branch. CAMRA 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 1,750 copies. Material for publication, including press releases, should preferably be sent by email to the editor or tapler@midchilterns.camra.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.

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About CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale)

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 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 and 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.

WEDS 4 MAR

Branch Meeting, 20:00 - 22:00

The Pheasant, Chesham. Waterside, Chesham HP5 1QE

THURS 2 APR – MON 6 APR

Cask & Cider Festival (Non-CAMRA)

The Three Blackbirds, Boxmoor, St John's Road, HP1 1NR.

Featuring 12 Ales and 10 Ciders, with entertainment planned all weekend.

WEDS 8 APR

Branch Meeting, 20:00 - 22:00

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

FRI 17 – SUN 19 APR

Members' Weekend 2026 St Albans.

The Alban Arena – Civic Close, St Albans AL2 3LD, and local pubs and breweries

SAT 25 APR

Beer of the Year Presentation, 13:00

The Piggeries, Tring Brewery, Dunsley Farm, Tring HP23 6HA

WEDS 6 MAY

Branch Meeting, 20:00 - 22:30

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

SAT 16 MAY

Vale Brewery Bottomless Glass 12 to 6pm. Brewery Tour, Live Music, Travel Included. Meet from 10:30. Free breakfast included. £45pp

Vale Brewery, Tramway Business Park, Ludgershall Rd, Brill, Aylesbury HP18 9TY

MON 18 – SAT 23 MAY

Cambridge Beer Festival 2026 (CAMRA).

17:00 – 22:30

Jesus Green, Victory Ave, Cambridge CB4 3AX

[This event is free for CAMRA members.](#)

SAT 23 MAY

Late Spring Social – Berkhamsted Canal Pub Trail 12:00 – 18:00

Starting at Berkhamsted railway station the suggested trail is The Crystal Palace, Station Rd; The Boat Berkhamsted, George St; The Rising Sun, George St; The Bull at Berkhamsted, London Rd; The Goat, 83 High St; Mad Squirrel Taproom, 104 High Street

JUNE

WEDS 3 JUN

Branch Meeting, 20:00 - 22:00

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

JULY

WEDS 1 JUL 2026

Branch Meeting, 20:00 - 22:00

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

FRI 17 – SUN 19 JUL

Hemel Old Town Beer Festival 2026

Fri 12:00 – 22:30. Sat 12:00 - 22:30, Sun 12:00 – 18:30

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

[This event is free for CAMRA members.](#)

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.

Reports from recent Mid-Chiltern socials and an update on the Hemel Old Town Beer Festival

The Pre-Christmas Get Together

On Saturday, 13 December, a group of us descended on the Piggeries, Tring Brewery, for an unofficial pre-Christmas get together. It was a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon in good company, enjoying a variety of real ales from Tring Brewery.



Some of our members enjoying a drink together at the Piggeries, Tring Brewery

Thanks to the brewery, their delicious scotch eggs were enjoyed by all, which made for a very convivial afternoon.

Late Winter Social

The late Winter social took place on Saturday, 21 February, and was a trail round Leighton Buzzard pubs. Disappointingly, only five people turned up, and it was good to see Charles, Richard Healey, Nigel, Amanda and I made the effort. We were also joined by Nigel's daughter, Lizzie, who lives in Leighton Buzzard.

Amanda and I had been to Leighton Buzzard a couple of weeks beforehand to put the trail together and check what pubs were serving cask ales.

For those of us travelling up from Hemel railway stations, it was a 23 minute, or so, journey depending on where you started from. Charles, Amanda and I, who had taken the train and met at Leighton Buzzard Station, started at the White Horse. The landlady was very accommodating and had just opened when we arrived. There were five handpumps there, with three on that day, and waiting for deliveries for the other two. On that day was GK Scrum Down (4.1%), to mark the Men's Six Nations Rugby; Mad Squirrel Redwood

IPA (5%) and Timothy Taylor's Landlord (4.1%). The latter being the resident beer.

From the White Horse we went to the Golden



The bar at the White Horse, Leighton Buzzard

Bell, whilst Charles met the others at the Black Lion. The Golden Bell had Timothy Taylor's Landlord on, which was in good condition. We then proceeded to the Black Lion to meet with Richard, Nigel, Lizzie and Charles. The Black Lion is a beer connoisseur's mecca and had eight real ales on hand pump. The beers being served were Grey Trees Drummer Boy (4.2%); Bass, Adnams Old Ale (4.1%), Hook Norton Double Stout (4.8%), Harviestoun Brewery Bitter & Twisted Golden Ale (3.8% and put on after we arrived), Pure Ubu Purity Prem Amber Ale (4.5%), Nethergate Suffolk County (4%), and Oakham Citra (4.2%). As usual the pub was very lively and busy. We



The bar at the Black Lion, Leighton Buzzard

had lunch there consisting of their amazing large pork pies, and a selection of cheeses

with cheese biscuits. Nicky and the team made us very welcome.

Whilst others went to the Black Horse to watch the rugby, Amanda and I decided to pay a trip to the Bottle House, a community-first craft tap room, a few doors away from the Black Horse. Although it does not serve cask beer there, they serve a wide range of craft beer served from Key Kegs, through coolers. Of note was Mad Squirrel Sumo (4.7% hazy IPA), Siren Lumina Session IPA (4.2%), both personal favourites, and Verdant Garage Project (4.2%). Although small, there was a very friendly crowd in there and we were made very welcome.

We then joined the others at the Black Horse, and whilst sports bars are not normally a typical venue on a pub trail, the purpose was to go and watch the rugby (rather disappointing if you were an England fan, as it turns out), and surprisingly the pub had three hand pumps on serving Tring beer.



The Men's Six Nations rugby being shown at the Black Lion, Leighton Buzzard

After the rugby finished, we made our way to the Bald Buzzard, Hockliffe Street. A micro pub, owned by Leighton Buzzard Brewing Company. It's interesting as all the beers, both keg and cask, are kept in a bespoke cold room accessed behind the bar by a sliding doors. There are two rotating cask ales and six Key Keg lines, and that day they had Oakham Inferno (4%), and Leighton Buzzard Restoration (4.6%). The latter being one of the best beers on the trail, by popular opinion.



The bespoke chiller room at the Bald Buzzard, Leighton Buzzard

Amanda and I departed, leaving the others in the Bald Buzzard, and set off back to the railway station. On the way we stopped in at the White Horse and had a quick drink in there. By now the pub was really busy and showing a football match.

One pub we did not go to, but I am told is worth a visit, is the Stag, Heath Road. It is a traditional Fuller's pub with wood panelling and is child and dog friendly.

All-in-all, a very enjoyable afternoon and would highly recommend a visit.

Andy

The Hemel Old Town Beer Festival

The business plan has now been approved by CAMRA, and we had the first festival meeting on Wednesday 25 May.

It was decided at that meeting that the festival would also include a Fizz Bar, for the first time, and more keg beers, aimed at attracting a wider spread of drinkers.

There will be a call for volunteers shortly, so lookout in newsletters and on the website. We will also be looking for sponsors, so if you are interested, please contact one of the committee, or look on the festival website, which will be up and running shortly.

Members' Weekend 2026 – check out St Albans: City of Ale

With CAMRA's Members' Weekend coming up from 17-19 April, the South Herts organising team has taken the wraps off the St Albans: City of Ale website. City of Ale is a St Albans-wide programme of beer, cider and pub-focused activity taking place around Members' Weekend and beyond (16-20 April). Rather than everyone huddling in one hall, the team urges you to get out and explore St Albans' vibrant and welcoming pubs, clubs and venues — many of which have something special lined up for the occasion. The new website brings all of this together in one place. You'll find: – confirmed events — from tastings and tap takeovers to live music and special presentations— pub trails — great routes for sampling the city's best cask beer, ciders and perries while taking in historic sights – travel and accommodation

info — handy advice on getting here and where to stay.

Already featured are festivals, tastings and entertainment across a range of great venues and more events are being added all the time. There's something for everyone, whether you're a passionate cask fan, craft beer enthusiast, cider devotee or just looking forward to a fun spring weekend in a beautiful, historic city. If you haven't taken a look yet, please do and keep



coming back as the programme grows.

St Albans: City of Ale website is now live at stalbanacityofale.org.uk Emily Ryans is the deputy chair of South Hertfordshire CAMRA and Members' Weekend Local organising committee chair



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. **Bulbourne:** The Grand Junction Arms

Cheddington: The Old Swan. **Chenies:** The Red Lion. **Chesham:** George & Dragon, Mad Squirrel Brewery Shop, The Pheasant, 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 Black Horse, Chesham Vale

This pub was originally closed in 2023 and re-opened as the Hungry Olive but was closed again at the end of 2024. The old Black Horse pub sign has been put up and a new company Black Horse Pub (Chesham Vale) Ltd, was incorporated in January 2026. We await announcements concerning its re-opening.

The Five Bells by Lussmans Berkhamsted.

This popular brasserie serving Mad Squirrel keg beers, has now closed after this and the Highgate site were put into a pre-pack administration process. Andrei Lussman, the founder, cited the downturn in the economy and the upturn in costs created challenging trading conditions.

He added the troubles were “compounded by the impact of last autumn’s Budget and the uncertainty leading up to last week’s Budget”.

Staff were offered relocation to remaining branches.

The Old Bell Gate, Hemel Old Town

There is a notice up to say that the pub is under new management.

The Three Blackbirds, Flamstead, St Albans

This pub owned by Stonegate, had been closed following the departure of the previous tenant and had been actively looking for a new publican to take on the tenancy. Happily, one has been found and the pub re-opened on 20 Feb.

The new tenants, De and his business partner have refurbished the inside and are keeping on three hand pups, and say they are going to run it as a traditional English pub, with the exception that they will be offering Chinese cuisine, instead of the British, served previously.

The Trooper, Aldbury

The Trooper has recently reopened, bringing delicious seasonal menus and a renewed sense of community spirit. Still true to its roots as a welcoming village pub, with great food, friendly service, and a warm atmosphere — the perfect spot for a Sunday roast, a drink with friends, or a well-earned pint after an Ashridge walk.

The Saracen’s Head, Kings Langley.

This popular pub, situated in the centre of Kings Langley, has recently been refurbished inside and has re-opened.

The Rose & Crown, Ivinghoe

The current owner, Mick Bushnell, who also worked in the kitchen, has sold the pub to Thrust Inns Ltd. They have their head office in Chorley, Lancashire, and own 350 pubs from Scotland to Cornwall. They are actively seeking a new tenant and the pub remains open.

The Windmill, Chipperfield

The pub re-opened in November, following the departure of Mary, the former tenant. The New tenant is Adam, and the pub is open from 12 pm to 11pm, seven days a week. It has three cask beers on hand pump. A changing Tring beer, Greene King IPA and Sharp’s Doom Bar. The latter two being permanent beers.

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@midchilterns.camra.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)

Seasonal and new brews**Early March**

Marmalade Ale — 4.0%

A much-loved seasonal with notes of orange zest and gentle spice, designed to ease us toward spring.

Mid-March

Easter Ale — 4.5% (Small Batch Brew)

Fresh, rounded and quietly complex — a perfect beer for the new season.

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.

...The King's Head is showing its age...!

**Recognised Among England's Oldest Pubs**

Chiltern Brewery are proud to share that *The King's Head* has been featured in the Daily Telegraph's article on England's oldest pubs, recognising its place among a small number of genuinely historic coaching inns still trading today.

First mentioned in print in 1455 (hand-written velum!), and understood from the cellars to be even older, The King's Head has stood at the heart of Aylesbury for centuries — welcoming travellers and locals long before the modern pub took shape.

It's a reminder that when you step through our doors, you're not just visiting a pub, but becoming part of a living history — one that continues to be enjoyed, shared and celebrated today.

Brewery tour dates

Dates up to July 2026, are now available on their website

Farr Brew

Great Level End Farm, Redbourn AL3 7A

www.farrbrew.com



The brewery recently announced that it is going to keep the taproom closed until spring as it has been proving impossible to keep it warm.

It should reopen in March/April when the farm starts looking less muddy!

They have also announced that they are closing the Elephant and Castle pub, as the numbers didn't stack up. It was a difficult decision to make, and they thanked everyone for their custom there.

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



New taproom

The Hertford Shop opened before Christmas and is going well. It is located at 32-36 Railway Street, Hertford SG14 1BA.



Photo courtesy of Mad Squirrel

Brewery news

To celebrate, Mad Squirrel's return to Hertford, a new collaborative brew with Hertford Brew Club – a home brewing group – has produced a keg red IPA 'Crimson Hart'.



This bold Red IPA showcases resinous pine bitterness layered with vibrant tropical fruit and bright citrus, all balanced by a rich ruby malt backbone

for a delicious, modern hop-forward pint.

With a 5%ABV, this a one-off brew which will be available in their beer shops. Featuring Columbus and Mosaic hops, this non-vegetarian but vegan friendly beer has an IBU of 40 and has a Red IPA beer style.

Expansion news

The two new 250HL tanks are now installed and in operation. To put that in perspective they hold 850 x 30L kegs. Prior to these all tanks were 120HL. The new tanks are currently holding lager, but the plan is to store 'Sumo' in them. The latter being dry hopped and the fact that the new tanks are outside requires a piece of adaptive kit at the top to prevent any external contamination when the hops are added.

New Limited Release Cask Beer

Redwood IPA 5.4%



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

POPE'S YARD BREWERY

With so many more pubs closing and breweries struggling, they considered themselves quite lucky to have the extra income from filming, which seemed more reliable than beer sales nowadays. They would keep on doing both, but currently the focus was more on the filming.

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: 2026 British Folklore

March

Selkies 4.0% Hoppy, Tropical, Berry

Relatively heavily hopped with Krush – an American variety that was first released in 2024. It has an extremely fruity character and is notable for the amount of mixed berry aroma alongside tropical fruit notes. We're very excited about this brew!



March's monthly beer is named after Selkies. A mythical shapeshifting beings from Scottish and Irish folklore. They live as seals in the sea but can shed their skins to become human on land.

Many bittersweet tales tell of a selkie whose seal skin is stolen, trapping her ashore. Though she may build a life on land (often as a wife and mother) her heart always belongs to the ocean. When she finds her hidden skin, she returns to her home in the waves.

Tring Brewery

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

www.tringbrewery.co.uk



Tring Brewery announce charity of choice in 2026

Berkhamsted and District Community First Responders have been named as Tring Brewery's charity of choice in 2026 – raising funds and awareness for their volunteers throughout 2026.

The Community First Responders (CFRs) scheme was established in 1994, training



volunteers to attend local emergency calls, offering life-saving care in the vital minutes before an ambulance crew arrives. Tring will be joining forces with local branch **Berkhamsted and District CFR**, who were established in 1998 and

are trained by the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST).

The brewery will produce monthly special beers to raise awareness for the local CFR group, and plans to host unique fundraising events throughout the year.



Covering Tring, Northchurch, Berkhamsted and surrounding villages for approximately 10 miles, Berkhamsted and District CFRs are on call for an average of fifteen to twenty hours per week, responding to at least one call-out per week per volunteer. Aiming to provide support 365 days a year, volunteers also work to raise funds for the cause, and offer defib/first aid instructional courses to groups in the local area.



Each monthly beer will enjoy namesake and imagery inspired by health services, finished with a roundel design that has been based on the local CFR branch.

Ale releases started with January pale ale **Ambrewlance**, clocking in at 4.0% with notes of citrus and pine.

Donations to the CFRs will help fund life-saving equipment, and care for the dedicated volunteers in our locale.

Fundraising occasions, such as ToadFest and their exciting online raffle, will be announced via their social media and newsletter channels throughout the year.

Temporary shop

Following a vehicle collision earlier this year, the brewery shop has been temporarily relocated to the Piggeries and Courtyard.

While they have been serving up their usual goodies from inside the bar, this was always a short-term measure, and space is needed for

their screening of the Six Nations rugby in the barns.

From then until the original shop reopens (they hope will be very soon and may already be open by the time this goes to print), the brewery shop will be located inside the porta-cabin, affectionately titled 'The Pocket'. The Pocket Porta-cabin will be open the usual shop times offering their usual retail loveliness. The customer experience should remain completely unchanged.



For now, they hope that customers enjoy the Pocket Porta-cabin, and the brewery will keep customers in the loop

with all developments concerning the original shop site, which they are sure will come thick and fast.

Seasonal Special

BRING ME SUNSHINE – 4.2% - Hopyy golden brown ale. (Spring)



“Fact – the sun always shines on Tring the day we release this beer. Cascade hops and light roasted malts are the base for this fruity, hopyy golden-brown ale. Get some ‘Sunshine’ in your life.”

Monthly Specials

March

Skeleton Session

Traditional bitter 4.0%

Get ready to race head-first into a palate of sweet biscuit and caramel. Ernest hops have been used for a gentle bitterness, bringing each sip to a mellow, triumphant finish. This is a beer boasting sled-loads of flavour.

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Dunsley Farm, London Rd,
Tring HP23 6HA

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🌐 www.tringbrewery.co.uk



April

Thirst Responder

American Pale Ale 3.9%

Flavours of mango, lychee and lime arrive just in time, ready to refresh and ailments of the palate with a tropical, thirst-quenching profile. This pale session beer features El Dorado and Chinook, both US hops, braced for action.

May

ON THE SCENE

ESB 4.4%

Rich flavours are present and able in this Extra Special Bitter. Warming flavours of molasses and roasted malts are first on the scene, thanks to Black Malt, followed by a respectable bitterness attained from premium British hops.

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



Seasonal beers.

Good Day Sunshine – Light Golden Ale
4.0%

20 THE CHILTERN TAPLER Spring 2026

Sparkling like the summer sun, this crisp and refreshingly light golden ale glides down with ease.

Hops: Willamette, Northdown, Phoenix

Malt: Pale Planet

Into the Void – Stout 4.1%



Vale's homage to the Prince of Darkness himself. Inky black depths with a lingering velvety mouthfeel.

Hops: Phoenix, Goldings

Malt: Pale Planet, Munich, Crystal, Brown

Vale Brew No. 4615 – English IPA 5%



Vale are celebrating their 30th birthday with their 4,615th brew: a true all-English IPA with fruity hop flavours over our signature pale ale base.

Hops: Bramling Cross, First Gold, Goldings

Malt: Pale Planet, Munich, Caramalt

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

Dates: 14/03/2026, 11/04/2026, 16/05/2026, and 13/06/2026.

Windsor & Eton

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



The 75 Range.

Windsor & Eton Brewery are now doing a range of selected beers in 75cl champagne bottles. These include Scumbag Maggot, Guardsman XV, and Wasteland DIPA

Scumbag Maggot Imperial Stout – 9% ABV



Described as The Pogues in liquid form. Brewed with juniper and smoked malt for a robust, fruity, and malty character.

Guardsman XV – 7.5% ABV



A rich, strong bitter with smooth caramel sweetness and deep plum notes.

Wasteland DIPA



A rich Double IPA bursting with vibrant fruit and luscious caramel flavour. 10% ABV

National Brewery News

“Big news in the brewery world this week. No, not that one. I don’t talk about that one. Yes, Molson Coors have said that they are planning to close Sharp’s Brewery in Rock by the end of the year, putting 50 direct jobs at risk, and many more indirectly.

The brewery began in 1994 and ended up creating what became, for many years, Britain’s biggest selling cask ale - Doom Bar. They wanted to make an amber ale which was exciting and fresh. Take on the stuffy, old-man image of bitter. Sorry to any old men reading. That’s not my perspective.



Anyway, Doom Bar was the go-to cask ale in unfriendly pubs where the alternative was imported lager for a very long time, at least as far as I remember it. Quite a decent

pint until maybe 10 or so years ago.

Sure, Timothy Taylor’s Landlord is now the no.1 cask seller in the country and Doom Bar saw a 13.8% drop in value last year, according to the Morning Advertisers figures, down to a mere £62.4m. But production has also dropped by 18.8% over the last year. Excuse me for being a little bit slow on the uptake, but if you make 1/5 less of something, you can’t sell as much...

The only beer in the top-sellers list that has seen such a dramatic drop in production is Carlsberg Britvic’s Pedigree - also 18%. I have to say it feels like the continued disinterest of the global brewers in cask, once again.

Anyway, that’s just my inner cynic getting out. A couple of equally cynical BlueSky commentators have pointed out that it really is probably quite valuable land in Rock down there too. But that’s probably just coincidence, it’s really the decline of the beer industry as we know it that has driven the decision to consolidate production and potentially remove all connection between the Sharps name and Cornwall.” Laura Hadland



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Illustration by debbieshrimptonillustrates.co.uk

  [lambberkhamsted](https://www.facebook.com/lambberkhamsted)

This issue we shine the spotlight on the Oddfellows Arms, Apsley

The Oddfellows Arms, Apsley

The Oddfellows Arms isn't your typical pub. It's not only a hub for the community but also known as a great music venue, popular with locals with a very welcoming atmosphere, and three cask ales kept in tip-top condition. After recently having an extensive exterior refurbishment, your editor paid the pub a visit and interviewed Brett Hulme, who with his partner Kim Nairne, run the pub.



I started by asking Brett a little about the pub and how he came to run it. He told me that he had previously been a market trader, and brickie for 35 years, but got disillusioned with the building industry and he and Kim looked around for something else to do. Brett was interested in the pub trade and did his personal licenses, and went for the Plough Pub in Potten End, but were unsuccessful. So, he went back to building for a couple of years, and they decided to look online and see what pubs were available in the Hemel Hempstead area. As it happens the Oddfellows Arms had just come up. It was owned by Punch Taverns at the time, and the previous tenant had handed the pub back. After about 8 months of interviews, they bought the tenancy. About five years ago Star Pubs and Bars took over the ownership of the pub from Punch Taverns. By that time, they had been at the Oddfellows Arms for 10 years but still had to put together a business plan for the new owners. As Brett

said, the pub was doing well, so it was really just a formality. As of June, this year (2026), Brett and Kim will have been running the Odds, as it is affectionately known, for 15 years.

Before Brett and Kim took over running the Odds, the pub had music once a week and was more karaoke than live music. They then started with music on Saturday and Sunday afternoons but moved to Saturday evening as the afternoon didn't work. There is now live music on Friday and Saturday evenings, and



Sunday afternoons. As time went by the bands became better and the Odds became a sought-after venue to play at. Indeed, there are now about 60 bands a year that play there, in what is now regarded as Hemel Hempstead's top music venue. A testament to its popularity, with each evening being packed. They have party bands, ska bands, rock bands, acoustic bands, and tribute bands. The venue has a great stage area and when the lights go down and the stage lights up it creates a proper setting for live music, now also air conditioned to keep you cool on hot summer nights.

Alongside the live music there is a rock disco on a Saturday evening once a month, and an Open-Mic/jam session every other Tuesday, hosted by Brett, featuring live music acts as well as poets, and readings.

Brett plays in the Odds house band called the "Odds and Sods", made up of some of the top musicians in the area, accompanying participants on the Open-Mic evenings. He has played the guitar for 41 years, and also plays the mandolin, and piano, as well as vocals. He's



also got an album out entitled 'Lanigiro Journey' (original spelt backwards), which he sent to Abbey Road Studios, London, to be mastered by them, and was recorded with Rob Beedon of Tattoo Shed.

As well as being known for its music and welcoming atmosphere, it also has a second bar with a large screen TV, pool table and darts board. On Monday evenings there is a darts match, and free pool after 7 pm. Wednesdays there is a pool match. The pub has two pool teams, A and B, with



each one playing at home and away every other week. On the last Thursday of the month there is a quiz evening with surplus going to charity. On non-quiz Thursday's there is a free jukebox all evening.

Charitable achievements

Brett estimates that over £50,000 has been raised over 15 years for various local charities. Every quiz night is a charity event.

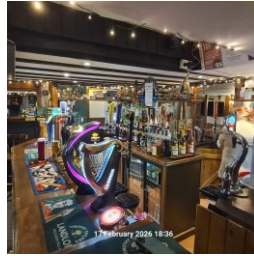
On the last Sunday in August nearest the bank holiday, there is a charity event with six bands playing: three in the garden and three inside. Each band being paid a nominal £30, and the rest going to charity. The event usually raises between £2,000 to £2,500, and the event is always a sell-out.

Cask Beers

The pub has three hand pumps with a high-turnover ensuring the beer is always in excellent condition. There are two regular

beers, Iron Maiden (Robinsons) Trooper, and St Austell Tribute. The middle pump is always a guest beer, and was Tomothy Taylor's Landlord when visited, but has been St Austell Proper Job IPA, and Adnams Ghost Ship, to name a couple.

Other beers, wines and spirits



The pub has a very large selection of gins, whiskies, wines and lager/craft beers. Alcohol free drinks are available, as are a range of soft drinks.

Food and Snacks

The pub serves a wide range of bar snacks and pizza is provided on Darts Match evenings.

Rock and pop memorabilia



The pub is full of rock and pop memorabilia collected from various sources over the years, and definitely worth a visit just to see that.

Location and contact details:

Address, 113, London Road, Apsley, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP3 9SP

Tel: 01442 249338 / 07931 830940

Nearest train station, Apsley

Opening hours:

Sunday	noon - 11pm
Monday	3pm - 11.30pm
Tuesday	3pm - midnight
Wednesday & Thursday	3pm - 11.30am
Friday & Saturday	noon - midnight

Details of the gigs can be found on lemonrock.com/oddfellowsarmshemel Hempstead

Andrew Harvell

Some photos courtesy of Lemonrock.com

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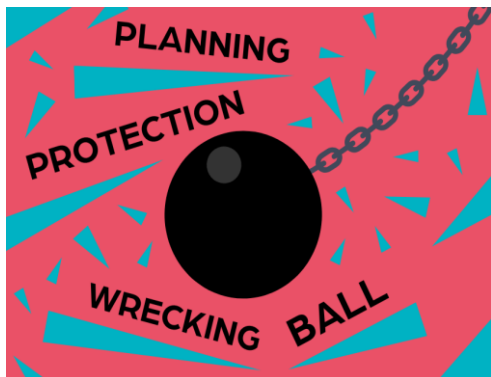


The Hop Tap Market Square, Marlowes Hemel
Hempstead HP1 1EP or call 07810 607586

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.

Write now to save our pubs

Campaign



CAMRA is calling on members to email their MP, asking them to halt government plans to water down vital planning protections for pubs. The government is proposing to change national planning rules, so a pub is only protected from conversion or demolition if it is the last one in an area instead of the restrictions applying to all locals. If the plans succeed it will make it easier for greedy developers to convert pubs into houses, shops or takeaways and to demolish them entirely. When the Campaign asked members to email their MPs about unfair changes to business rates, supporters responded in their thousands and helped to get the government to think again. Now CAMRA needs your support again to make sure pubs are properly protected and can't be converted or demolished against the wishes of local communities. CAMRA national planning policy director Paul Ainsworth said: "If the level of planning protection that pubs have is severely weakened in this way, councils will find it difficult to refuse applications to change the use of pubs or to demolish them altogether. Objections by local people won't be given the same consideration as they are now, because

the application to redevelop or demolish will be in line with the new national planning policy which local decisions need to follow." Emailing your MP to save planning protections for pubs only takes a minute with CAMRA's simple lobby tool. Take part in the campaign here.

17/02/2026 by WB Reporter

How pubs help us to mourn

Opinion



It was a battleship-grey January afternoon but the mood for one man inside the pub was even more ashen. While the fruit machines luridly flashed and laughter undulated at the bar, his expression remained fixed, a pained gargoyle at odds with the technicolour background. I shattered the silence with a simple opening: "I'm sorry for your loss." At first, he was startled but then he realised I'd overheard his attempts to tell the bartender that his dog had died. "I have mental health problems and my Staffy, well, he was my best friend." I'm not sure how much I helped but I listened to his love for his pet and how he felt pain after having taken it to the vet for the last time a few days ago. Two heartbeats in his house had become one. He'd been indoors for a week, and this was the only place he felt comfortable showing his face – somewhere he would hopefully find some companionship. When he left after his second pint I began to think about how fortunate I was to have a loud, full house as you'd expect with someone gifted with a young family. And it's a gift that I've recently felt is something that can easily – but shouldn't ever be – taken for granted. It's natural to believe that death is something that only the old have to deal with, but news shocked us when a child in our community, the same age as my youngest, died in his sleep. No one puts a five-year-old

Tips to spot Carlsberg 'Fresh Ale'



Carbonation

Lower carbonation than keg and may be slightly fizzier than cask

Brands

Wainwright Amber, Wainwright Gold, Hobgoblin IPA

Dispense

Cask handpull, might look 'jerky' during pouring

Mouthfeel

Smooth with a slight fizziness

Taste

Slight 'tinniness'

On the bar

'Brewery-conditioned' on the pump clip



Think you've spotted it?
Take a photo and report
it here



to bed expecting him not to wake up in the morning. The pub would seem like an odd place to deal with such subjects but as our local high street shrinks and hubs, such as libraries and community centres, close pubs are perhaps the only place for social cohesion left. If I took my pain to a local bookmaker or a Tesco Metro then I'd probably be ridiculed – perverse, considering how much taxation they don't pay especially compared to pubs. But working through death in pubs is a leitmotif. Last month, I visited the Three Hounds micropub in Beckenham at opening time and the one lovely customer there was telling me how he manages with his two kids after his wife died of cancer a few years ago. His explanations of how he survived the tragedy and looked after his kids successfully, were punctuated by the support the owner, Matt Walden, gave him. Matt would never tell me about this kind of relationship – he's far too modest – but I suspect this role isn't rare and he cares for his community as much as his many beer lines he offers. Even though it's not all about the beer, it is fabulous. And herein lies the horrible conundrum we find ourselves in 2026. If we view pubs as just places to sell pints then – yes – why do they deserve more protection than other struggling businesses? But if you actually sit in a pub and see the community cohesion in work then you realise a key part of our resilience as a nation needs to be preserved. Because there's going to be nowhere to deal with death when the pubs die.

14/02/2026 by David Jesudason

Revised beer styles revealed

Campaign

As any beer lover in the UK knows, beer styles are not static. Just take today's pale ales, many of which, 10 years ago, would probably have been described as golden. Earlier in 2025, brewery liaison officers and tasting panel chairs were asked for their views on a number of beers which were proving problematic to put into a style category. They also had a chance to feedback on beers that

were occurring frequently enough to require greater definition. Based on the feedback, a revised beer style leaflet has now been issued. Christine Cryne, who led the review, said: "The purpose of allocating a beer to a style is to make it easier to judge entries for CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain and to give some help to drinkers. Because the way



the competition operates, CAMRA puts beers together in style categories, grouping similar beers together because not every brewer brews to a particular style. This allows beers that straddle one or more styles to be judged objectively. This leaflet is key to publicising the work that so many volunteers have put in and we are very grateful to Cask Marque for its support once again, which has enabled us to print it." Cask Marque founder Paul Nunny said: "We are pleased to be associated with the beer style guide. Today, beers come in so many different forms and this is a very important classification guide to CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain categories. It's helpful that people have an understanding of beer styles when judging and this guide is written with accessibility in mind. We chair the Guild of Beer Sommeliers, and we will be encouraging them to use this styles brochure when educating consumers about beer and beer styles." Copies of the leaflet were available at Liverpool Beer Festival, where the Champion Winter Beer of Britain is being judged, plus at Members' Weekend 2026 in St Albans.

23/12/2025 by Timothy Hampson



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The Three Blackbirds, Flamstead

Under new management of Chef patron David, De, and Gosia.



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of keg beers, wines and spirits.

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The Swan is a cosy, dog-friendly, family-run pub serving a wide range of well-kept ales, guest beers, and carefully chosen drinks.

Our kitchen focuses on good, honest food using locally sourced ingredients, with regularly changing specials and much-loved Sunday roasts. Open fires and a relaxed atmosphere make it the perfect spot year-round.

With friendly staff, a welcoming beer garden, and a busy calendar of live music and events. The Swan is a place for everyone. Recently taken over by our family, we're proud to be building a warm, community-focused local.

Opening Hours

Monday:	Closed
Tuesday:	12:00-11:00
Wednesday:	12:00-11:00
Thursday:	12:00-11:00
Friday:	12:00-00:00
Saturday:	12:00-00:00
Sunday:	12:00-20:00

Ales & Guest Beers • Good Food & Specials • Cosy with Open Fire • Dog-friendly • Music & Events



The Swan, Chapel Square, Stewkley, LU70HA

01525306595

thestewkleyswan@gmail.com

Christine Cryne takes a look at the beer scene in Greece, more known for its wine than beer.

Think of Greece and beer does not automatically come to mind; Greece is more famous for its wine than beer!

Despite this, the country hosts the Greek Beer Awards and there is archaeological evidence to show that beer has been brewed in the country for over 4000 years. Today, most of the breweries are less than 30 years old. The exception is the Fix Brewery, which is thought to be the oldest still going. Johann Fix founded his brewery, (Φιξ in Greek), in Athens in 1864; although his father, reportedly, brewed beer in Greece around 30 years earlier.



19th-century advertisement about the 'Steam-driven European Brewery' of Karl Fix

Fix had pretty much a beer monopoly for over a century, despite there being a number of breweries set up during the late 1800's. Notwithstanding Fix's success, including the takeover of Olympus-Naoussa Brewery in 1926, the business declared bankruptcy in 1983. But that wasn't the end; the beer was re-introduced again in 2009 under new ownership but with the same branding.

Despite Fix's heritage, it is by no means Greece's biggest brewer. Like many countries, the largest breweries in Greece are now owned by international companies. The top



two are Carlsberg, known for Mythos¹, which Carlsberg purchased in 2008, and the Athenian Brewery, who is known for its Alfa beer, has been part of the

Heineken Group since 1965. The third largest, is now a wholly Greek owned brewery, Atalantis (also known as EZA)



although it once too had international links; it was originally founded as a subsidiary as Lowenbrau.



Small brewers started to gradually emerge around 2005. The first microbrewery was thought to be the Craft Microbrewery in 1997.

However, local knowledge indicated that it was probably ahead of its time. Supermarkets wanted quantity and the quality was reported to have suffered. However, the Brewery, which is outside Athens, still survives. The main boom for craft started in 2009 and the term microbrewery started to become better known.

According to figures released by "The Brewers of Europe²" in 2011, Greece had only seven micro-breweries. As of 2017, the number had jumped to 30, while the current estimate (by the Hellenic Association of Brewers³) is that there are around 75 breweries with a number of gipsy brewers bringing the total to about 100.

A visit to Septem's Brewery, a microbrewery located on the largest Greek island, Evia, offered a chance to talk to their founder, Sophocles Panagiotou. Sophocles is a

¹ Mythos was established in 1997 and Alfa Brewery, who first brewed Alfa, in 1961

² A federation of 29 associations of brewers from 29 countries

³ The Hellenic Association of Brewers

chemist and oenologist and founded the brewery in 2009. He is also President of the Hellenic Association of Brewers but is just about to step down after 7.5 years. He said, "It's an unpaid role and I feel that I have done what I can. It's time for someone else to take over".



Septem has a large range of beers, which are distributed all over Greece and abroad and the brewery has won a number of awards

Fortunately for Greece's brewers, beer consumption in Greece has grown steadily, driven by the increasing urban population and the growing middle class. As part of this, it is clear that, with the increasing interest in craft beer, the number of microbreweries and beer sales are rising. This is forecast to be around 5% year on year for the next few years. But being a small brewer is not easy; because as found in the UK, there are limited profits to be had.

Costs, like for most breweries in Europe, have been increasing in 'a crazy manner'. This includes energy and ingredients, with the bulk of the malt and hops being imported not helping. Also, breweries usually need to have a distributor, and these costs have increased too. Most of the bars in Greece are independent and thus have to be approached on a one-by-one basis.

As in the UK, there are some tax advantages, Sophocles explained "A microbrewery brewing less than 200k hectolitres have a 50% tax saving. But we'd like to see a graduated tax, rather than the drop off that we have currently, to encourage growth".

And it isn't a level playing field for brewers versus wine producers. Sophocles said, "A winery can have a tap room as part of their business. In comparison, a brewery is not allowed to sell its beer on the premises. So, a brewery can't have a tap room unless it is

separate with two separate licenses and



incurs the associated costs".

There are also some strange restrictions on what can be brewed; for example, you can add honey but not fruit.

Nicola Radisis, founder and director of the Greek Beer Awards, who organised the trip, gave more details on the Hellenic Association of Brewers. "The Association has only 17 members. Membership is open to all, but the smaller brewers are suspicious of the bigger brewers. This is despite the fact that there are a lot of issues that affect both and need a joint approach to lobbying the government. We need to reduce the bureaucracy that affects the Greek beer market and change our taxes to be more supportive of small business."

The Greek Beer Awards is a reflection of the growing interest in beer, not only in that country, but in a number of less traditional beer countries. The first competition was set up in 2014 as the BeerBartender Awards. As the Greek beer market grew, in 2017, a blind tasting was introduced, and breweries were invited to submit beer to be judged. Then in 2020, this was widened to encompass other evolving beers such as Southeastern and East European countries plus countries that 'share the Mediterranean Sea'.

Nicola said, "We want to encourage newer craft brewers in Greece and all Mediterranean countries as well as further afield, such as Balkan countries; places that are less known for their beer".

special feature | THE BEER SCENE IN GREECE

Today, the competition has expanded to 50 different beer style categories, broken down into top fermented beers, bottom fermented beers and 'other' (such as low alcohol, Kolsch and Radlers). The number of entries has continued to increase with 130 entries in 2025. The competition has developed a solid reputation with beers assessed by a select group of experienced beer judges from all over Europe. In 2025, the judging took place in Athens, which enables the judges to enjoy the local culture and food as well as the beer.

Nicola is optimistic about the future. "There is a lot of work to do" he said. "We want a sustainable beer industry. We see education of the public and the trade, both brewers and

pubs as key to this. We are looking to provide this in the future to support quality and growth".

So, whether you are in London or Athens, there are a lot of similarities in both beer markets with hurdles and opportunities. So, if you are off to Greece this year, seek out the craft beers and bars and give them a little support.

If you would like to see the 2025 winners and to find out more about the Greek Beer Awards, visit: <https://greekbeerawards.eu/>

Christine Cryne, kindly reproduced with permission.



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Have you ever wondered how the device that pulls cask ale from the pub cellar to the handpump came about?

The Beer Engine

Whilst my first cask ales long years ago were poured straight from a wooden barrel by gravity dispense, far and away most are served by way of beer engines and their hand pulls. This we take for granted and rarely think about it beyond seeing these adorn the bar tops, often admiring the hunting scenes or other illustrations on the handle itself. Sitting in the Thames Head Inn – a fine pub between Cirencester and Tetbury in Gloucestershire – a few months ago my attention was drawn to two framed pieces of brewing history; and of a company, Farrow and Jackson, of which I had never heard until then. This has led me to research them and discover what I could about beer engines, specifically the old type multi tap variety, and of the company itself.

The invention of the beer engine

The invention of the beer engine is attributed to a London based Dutchman, John Lofting around 1688 – who also invented the ‘fire hose and pump for extinguishing fires’ – but it (what we know as a beer engine) was further developed by a hydraulic engineer Joseph Branah, who patented it in 1795 or 1797; the date is unclear. In 1798, Farrow & Jackson – founded by Norfolk boy Benjamin Farrow – was based at 16 Tower Street, London, and listed as Armourers and Braziers (also known as Coppersmiths). A Freeman of the City from 1805, Farrow was a maker of wine bins by 1824, and by 1850 was known as an ironmonger, wine bin and wine coppers’ toolmaker.

Farrow & Jackson, ironmongers

From 1860 Farrow’s name became associated with Richard Jackson, another ironmonger and six years later they became Farrow and Jackson. Over the next few years, the company made and supplied everything which, what we now call the hospitality trade, could possibly require from champagne and carbonated water (becoming important in the


mid to late Nineteenth Century) containers, through bread slicers to sausage warmers, to everything required for producing and dispensing beer for breweries, alehouses, inns and taverns.

First appearance in a trade catalogue


Address for Telegrams: "FARROW—JACKSON, LONDON." 134

BEER ENGINES.

No. 1A.



No. 2A.



No. 1A.

Mahogany Case, Curved Top, Lever-action, Porcelain Handle, Brass Mounts and Stop Cocks, Pewter-lined Sink, Tapping Cocks for Cask, and Spanner.

LIGHT PATENT.	
2-Lever	£4 10 0
3 "	5 6 0
4 "	8 0 0
5 "	10 3 0
6 "	12 2 0
8 "	16 0 0

For particulars of patented apparatus for decarbonising by Carbonic Acid Gas, see page 131.

No. 2A.

Mahogany Case, Curved Top, Lever-action, Porcelain Handle, Brass Mounts and Stop Cocks, Pewter-lined Sink, Tapping Cocks for Cask, and Spanner.

STANDARD PATENT.	
2-Lever	£5 16 0
3 "	7 18 0
4 "	9 5 0
5 "	11 16 6
6 "	15 16 0
8 "	17 12 0

For Oak Pot-Stands see page 134.
For Culling Unions, &c. see page 116.

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The first appearance I have been able to find of large beer engines is in the Farrow and Jackson catalogue of 1894 where they advertise either four or six tap fully encased units, those casings being offered in mahogany, walnut, marble or pewter – with all taps being in brass. By this time the company were producing and/or supplying just about everything for the trade – tankards, glasses, all methods of dispense then available, early CO2 gas systems (the forerunner of keg), taps, bar tops, bottles, ceramic casks and what their catalogues described as all bar requisites and licensed victualler sundries. Add to that list tills, labelling machines and

Feature | DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DRINKING?

labels, cask branding irons, cork cutting equipment and much more, thereby cornering the market.

1930 to ceasing trading in 1957

In 1930, a new company called Farrow, Jackson & Purdey Limited was registered and appears to have acquired all assets of Farrow



& Jackson but then trading under the name of Purdy Patent Machinery Company continuing the original business

but also taking on the manufacture of various and extensive agricultural machinery, chemicals and the sort of preparations with which I've no doubt Alf Wight MRCVS (aka 'James Herriot') would have been familiar. There was some suggestion that Purdey was the same as the then, and now, makers of fine English guns but I can find no evidence that they are connected, and it certainly is not mentioned on the gunsmith's website. It has not been possible to establish when Farrow & Jackson ceased trading but in a newspaper advertisement from 1957, they are mentioned as still producing 'wine bins of any shape made to order'. Back to their roots in 1824.

Modern times

Scroll forward to modern times and there are now very few companies producing beer engines, the oldest of these being Masons (established 1803), Colin Farrar Brewing Services Ltd, (1967), Angram (1974), and RLBS, part of Samuel Hodge Limited (1982) – now incorporating Colin Farrar. Although Masons can supply a multi-pump fitting with four, five or six handles, my research has discovered that coming across the 'old style' large pewter drip tray unit, with simple brass

taps fitted with the lever to regulate/stop the flow is akin to finding hen's teeth!

A local example

Step forward Martin at The Crown & Sceptre, Briden's Camp near Hemel Hempstead. This pub has the only one I have seen anywhere in



Two handle beer engine at the Crown & Sceptre, Briden's Camp. Photo: Andy

many a long year and I would be delighted if any readers of this article could direct me to any others. Behind the wooden frontage the hydraulic beer engine system – with non-return cylinder – is much the same whichever company produces them, but it is the aesthetics which appeal to me. That

and the fact that the design has not changed – with the exception of plastic instead of glass cylinders – very much since the one shown in the Farrow & Jackson 1898 advertisement displayed at the Thames Head Inn.



Four handle beer engine at the Crown & Sceptre, Briden's Camp. Photo: Andy

Richard Abraham

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Bass beer was not only a first but is a survivor! Here we tell the story of a beer with one of the most recognisable logos in the world – the distinctive red triangle.

It started with a first

On the last night of 1875, legend has it that an employee of the Bass Brewery was standing at the head of a queue and facing the prospect of a quite a mild (unusually the temperature was around 15 degrees) start to the new year. Whilst it is unlikely that he was enamoured of his task in fact he was to be present at a moment of history in the evolution of brands in Britain.

On 1 January 1876, the new “**Trade Marks Registration Act 1875**” was coming into effect, and the man had been ordered to queue overnight outside the registrar’s office to be the first to take advantage of it. As a result, the distinctive Bass red triangle logo – which the company had been using of their

painting “A Bar at the Folies-Bergère, Paris”, where a bottle of Bass is shown partially hidden behind the champagne on the bar, and another in clearer view by the bottle of Crème de Menthe, on the right.



A Bar at the Folies-Bergère, Paris - Edouard Manet, 1882



Bass's first trade mark. UK00000000001

bottles since the late 1840s – became official and is now Britain’s oldest trademark, an instantly recognizable symbol of what, in my personal opinion, is still one of the finest ales available. Such was the popularity of the new logo that it appeared in much more than early advertising. Probably the first time and one of the most famous is in Edouard Manet’s 1882

Prior to the founding of his brewery in 1777, incidentally believed to be one of the first in Burton-upon-Trent, William Bass was predominantly a carrier of ales for another long-forgotten brewer. His new brewery was a success from the beginning with Bass supplying their bottled beers around the world – to Russia in 1784 and to North America by 1799 - by 1850 it was producing more than 100,000 barrels per year and by 1888, the Bass brewery complex covered 145 acres of land and employed more than 2,500 workers, with output approaching the million-barrel mark. Unsurprising then that Bass became the country’s largest private rail network linking its numerous properties within Burton-upon-Trent; the National railway network being how sales were then distributed throughout the country and indeed to ports such as Hull for the export trade.

There is one shipping abroad which sadly failed to arrive as scheduled when the RMS Titanic sank in 1912 as it was carrying 500 cases (12,000 bottles) of Bass ale. In the late 1990s during the expedition and recovery

effort, nine bottles were found and lifted to the surface from the debris field.

Over the ensuing years Bass, as at one time the largest brewer in the land, took over a number of other breweries, including Walkers in 1923, and Worthington in 1927. When the London Stock Exchange was established in 1935, Bass was one of the original companies listed. Over the next fifty plus years, Bass maintained its dominance by acquiring such brewers as Mitchells & Butlers (1961), Sidney Fussell & Sons Ltd (1962), Charrington's (1967), Bents-Gartside's (1967), John Joule & Sons (1968), William Stones (1968), and Grimsby's Hewitt Brothers Ltd (1969), being variously known as Bass, Mitchells and Butlers or Bass Charrington.

Then in 1989 came the now infamous Beer Orders. These were the days of the "Big Six" brewers – Allied, Courage, Grand Metropolitan, Scottish & Newcastle, Whitebread and, of course, Bass. They represented 75% of all beer production and 74% of the brewer-owned retail estate. Most pubs (86%) were 'tied houses', owned by one of the brewers, and mostly selling its products. On the advice of the Monopolies & Mergers Commission in their report entitled "The Supply of Beer: A Report on the Supply of Beer for Retail Sale in the United Kingdom", investigating the nature of the beer industry, various recommendations were made which led to the break-up of these monopolies and would compel the breweries to dispose of a large percentage of their pub estate. For example, Bass went from owning approximately 7,190 pubs in 1989 to about 2,077 in 2014 - by then actually by its successor company Mitchells & Butlers. As we all now know, the Beer Orders led to the formation of pub owning companies – Pubcos – and non-brewing, property owners and ultimately asset stripping organisations.

The title of this abbreviated history of Bass dates from over one hundred years ago, when it was an advertising slogan, and I believe that

is still the case though the iconic brand is now actually owned by one of those Pubcos! The reason being that by the end of the 20th century Bass was one of only two large remaining breweries in Burton, so they decided to focus on hospitality selling their brewing business to the Belgian brewer Interbrew, who became Anheuser-Busch (AB-InBev) in June 2000. Again, the Government stepped in raising concerns about that deal, and instructed Interbrew to dispose of the Bass brewery facility in Burton along with various brand names which were all sold to Coors (now Molson Coors), but Interbrew was to retain the rights to the Bass Pale Ale brand.

For five years until 2005 when their licence came to an end, Bass was produced by Molson Coors in Burton, in the original Bass brewery. After that a new licence was awarded to Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries (now Marston's PLC), which transferred production of Bass to its own brewery, also in Burton. The original Bass brewery being sold for redevelopment.

According to the legend who is Roger Protz, just twenty years ago Bass was the leading cask ale in the country but in that ensuing time that very much ceased to be the case. In truth, the portents weren't good, with production massively reduced to 30,000 barrels a year once acquired by AB-InBev, and increasingly difficult to find pubs selling it. But consumer demand and active campaigning have seen a rise in production – there is even an unofficial National Draught Bass Day on 11 April, the birthday of William Bass. A website which chronicles the trials and tribulations of this special ale <https://nationalbassdirectory.wordpress.com> and Facebook pages "Bass Ale Appreciation Society" and one that mirrors my heading, "Great Stuff This Bass".

Brewed in its original home of Burton-upon-Trent under licence by Marston's (also brewers of 'Pedigree', Bass's rival back in the day) which is owned by Carlsberg Schweppes

feature | GREAT STUFF THIS BASS

but for that company's global rival AB-InBev – one Pubco brewing beer for another - strange bedfellows indeed. Obviously, it is not known how long this relationship will last but – again according to Roger Protz - last year, AB-InBev announced that it was to promote Draught Bass with new pump clips on bars, branded glasses and merchandise. Good news indeed and whilst it may in some ways differ from the original beer of old, Draught Bass is still a fine 4.4% ABV classic English bitter which can now be found in an increasing number of pubs



and, biased though I am, you will never find it in better condition than in my town local, The Black Lion, Leighton Buzzard. In fact, join me for a pint and to celebrate 150 years of the iconic Trademark No. 1, the red triangle.

To quote from HM Government's Intellectual Property Office blog:

"Think about what that red triangle has survived: more than 30 changes to trade mark law, two world wars, the decline of traditional British brewing, multiple changes of ownership, and the complete transformation of how we consume media and advertising. Yet there it sits on the register, as valid today as it was in 1876. The Bass red triangle demonstrates everything a successful trade mark should be highly distinctive, instantly recognisable, and built to last. It proved that protecting your brand isn't just about legal rights – it's about creating something that becomes woven into the cultural fabric."

Indeed, very much like the drink itself. As I've said, "Great stuff this Bass".

Richard Abraham

(With thanks to Roger Protz, and Boak & Bailey's Beer Blog at <https://boakandbailey.com>)

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From Field to Pint: Bucks Barley is at the Heart of Our Beer. George Jenkinson, partner at Chiltern Brewery takes us through from the choice of barley for the malt, to the malting process.

One of the great pleasures of brewing in the Chilterns is being surrounded by some of the finest farming land in the country. Beer, after all, begins long before it reaches our pint glasses – it starts quietly in the fields, with soil, sunshine, rain, and hard patient work.



Photo 1: fields of gold - Ollie Pemberton, Farm Manager at Waddesdon Farms; Tom Jenkinson, Partner at the Chiltern Brewery

Just a few miles from our brewery, on the Rothschild Estate at Waddesdon, malting barley is grown that plays an important part in almost every beer we brew. We use traditional English malting barleys prized for their flavour, reliability, and the wonderful depth they bring to our beers. We are fortunate that they can be grown so successfully right here on our doorstep, making our beers truly rooted in the local landscape.

Last June, ahead of harvest, we had the pleasure of visiting the Waddesdon fields. Standing among the barley as it rippled in the summer breeze was a reminder that brewing is still, at its heart, a natural and unhurried craft. The fields were full of promise – green and gold ears forming, the crop maturing under long days of summer sun. It is easy to forget that, when enjoying a beer, each pint owes as much to farmers and the seasons, as to the passion and skills of brewers.

We were also delighted when Waddesdon's farming team visited us at the brewery. It was a wonderful opportunity to show how we continue the thread of skills and intense interest to the next step of the story: how their

barley, once harvested, eventually becomes malt and then beer.

Once harvested, the barley begins its transformation at the maltings. We are proud to work with two excellent maltsters, each bringing their own specialist skill to our brewing. Our pale malts are produced by **Warminster Maltings**, one of the oldest working maltings in the country, renowned for their traditional methods and exceptional consistency. Their pale malt forms the backbone of many of our classic beers, providing a clean, dependable base upon which flavour can be built.



Photo 2: visiting Warminster Maltings - Dave McGovern, Head Brewer at the Chiltern Brewery; Nick, Production at Warminster Maltings; Robin Appel, owner of Warminster maltings and Tom Jenkinson, Partner at the Chiltern Brewery

For our darker beers, we use a specialist maltster much closer to home: **French & Jupps**, who have been producing in Hertfordshire (just over the border!), the quality dark malts we have used for over 45 years. Malting is a craft in its own right – soaking, germinating, drying, and carefully preparing the grain so that we can unlock its natural goodness during brewing. Their dark malts bring richness, depth and colour to our stouts, porters and darker ales.



Photo 3: visiting French & Jupps - Dave McGovern, Head Brewer at the Chiltern Brewery; Tom Jenkinson, Partner at the Chiltern Brewery

At the brewery, the malt is mashed-in with hot water to draw out its natural goodness, then boiled and charged with hops, before fermentation begins. This is where the wonder of brewing occurs – but it all relies on the quality of the ingredients we start with, and the people who produce them.



Photo 4: Tom Jenkinson, Partner at the Chiltern Brewery; Annabelle Degroot, French & Jupps MD and James Marinos, French & Jupps Growth & Marketing Manager visit the Brewery

In an age when everything seems to travel hundreds or thousands of miles, we have something worth celebrating because so much of what goes into our beer comes from right here, on our doorstep. From Waddesdon's barley fields to Warminster and French & Jupp, and finally to our brewery in the Chiltern Hills, it is a truly local story – one we are proud to share every time we brew.



Photo 5: the finished product, a pint of Beechwood

Cheers!

George Jenkinson, Partner at the Chiltern Brewery

Photos courtesy of Chiltern Brewery.

Paul Mossman, from Wirral CAMRA explains the gospel unwritten rules of pub going

I have become aware of a shocking trend... Some people don't know how to use a pub! They seem completely unaware of the gospel unwritten rules of pub going. They come across as rank amateurs, irritating bar staff and fellow customers through their ignorance.

For example, I recently found myself in a bit of a "foody pub" and I was stood at the bar... It's where I like to stand... it's where the random conversation happens. I sense a presence; someone is stood behind me... He thinks I am the front of a queue! I moved away from the bar to observe this peculiar phenomenon; some customers are queuing while others are stood at the bar waiting to be served in the normal, time-honoured way. The bar staff are asking who's next. They should know who is next, but everyone is being terribly polite. I have a theory that it's the food ordering and card payment that causes the queuing. You need to be near the till to place an order for food and to pay for it. However, I have seen this same thing in pubs without food. Good bar staff should be able to see people as they come to the bar acknowledge them and know who is next. Please don't queue!

Right, while I am having a rant, let's look at your order and how you place it. Know your order, don't keep calling back to the table "What's such and such having?" Don't drip feed your order: "3 vodka and cokes... Yeh and two generic English lagers... Yeah and can I have a taster of the old jockstrap... no... what about the Satan's enema... Oh yeh a pint of that... Yeah thanks and a pint of Guinness." By the time you have done this the people who were served immediately before you will be back at the bar for their next round! Also, the member of bar staff serving you will be cursing your existence inwardly. Put the drinks in order, Guinness first, real ale next, both of these require time to settle, and the staff can be preparing your other drinks while they do. Shorts are quick and should be left to the end. I should probably refrain from comment

regarding "generic English lager" as my legal team is non-existent but what the hell! Just don't! Meanwhile, if you want a cocktail that will take five minutes to prepare...well that's my own soft fault for coming here! Don't get me started on ordering coffee at the bar in a pub! As you can tell I am old cantankerous, but I am still right!

Time has passed; I am in a non-foody pub... It has food but beer is the focus. The bar staff weren't sure who to serve next and attempted to serve the gentleman next to me who instantly responded that this gentleman (that's me) was ahead of him. A few issues of this magazine ago, my editor wrote an article "Be nice or leave" suggesting you should be considerate to bar staff and those waiting on well this extends to the other customers. Be polite, wait your turn and if you know someone is ahead of you highlight it and you will get a warm feeling and they will think you are really great. Also, if you are drinking at the bar and it is busy be prepared to let others get to the bar, so they don't have to shout to the bar staff over you.

In conclusion, some golden rules to remember: Don't queue, stand at the bar making full use of its length and wait your turn. Sort your order out before you come to the bar and don't drip feed it to the bar staff who are quite capable of remembering more than one thing. Be polite, considerate and courteous to the bar staff and other customers. Oh, and one final thing, have your cash, card or phone ready to pay. With some people this part of the transaction seems to take them by surprise and then they go fishing around in their pockets...meanwhile the bar staff stand looking awkwardly waiting and those waiting to be served roll their eyes and check their watches. Remember these golden rules and act on them, it will make the lives of bar staff easier and endear you to them and your fellow drinkers. Ignore them and you'll be "That knob who doesn't know how to use a pub."

OPENING TIMES

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Fri 9 - 8
Sat 12 - 6
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Six Hills Brewing Adopts the Latest Innovation in Beer Packaging for both Keg & Cask

As a Tap Room brewery, the search for a packaging solution for our beers has always been a challenge. Because we put most of our beer through their own taps, I've always struggled to find an affordable packaging solution that we can use in house but also ship or deliver to the wider UK market.

Packaging Challenges and Past Solutions

Because of this problem, I sadly, gave up producing Cask Ale. This was because we couldn't easily clean our own kegs or casks in house - we simply don't have the room or the storage space. The good news is that a modern 'green' alternative is now available.

Over the years, I've used, KeyKeg, PolyKeg®, i-Keg and Kegstar over the years, but never found a one size fits all solution. We finally settled on a combination of bagged i-Kegs and Kegstar, i-Kegs for serving in our Tap Room and Kegstar for distribution to other venues. Nevertheless, we always thought that there must be a better more sustainable ecofriendly solution to be found. Shipping heavy steel kegs across the country didn't seem very ecofriendly, plastic KeyKeg or Polykegs, never sat well with us either, as we always struggled to have other breweries plastics recycled.

Discovery of Beer Concept FreeKeg

So, it was to my surprise during in visit to BrauBeviale, Nuremberg in 2024 Trade Fair, I came across Beer Concept and immediately realised that this was the perfect solution for us! The concept of a reuseable keg that can be reused by inserting a new bag is not new. I've been using I-kegs for a few years now. The problem with that system is that it can't be shipped without potentially losing the cost of the keg (£50ish). In contrast, FreeKeg containers have the potential to be returned by end users (pubs and bars) into a distribution

network for reuse at other breweries, much like standard returnable keg.



30 and 20Lr FreeKegs. Photos courtesy Murphy & Sons

In speaking to Janus Hansen from Denmark's Beer Concept in Nuremberg, the company behind FreeKeg, it seems that finally the problem is solved. A fully reusable keg with a bag that is the **same price point as a Keykeg**, which of course, is a one-trip container that's non-reusable.

At last, a game changer of a product, that if adopted fully in the UK, will save 80% of plastic waste, reduce shipping costs associated with steel kegs, and will encourage breweries to collect these kegs to refill them, using new bags.

I was so excited by this product that I invited Janus and his colleagues to Stevenage to stay at my home, so that we could test the product in the brewery. Six Hills was the first to fill these kegs in the UK. It's taken a while to get the first stock of kegs and bags, but they arrived finally



and once again we are the first to fully adopt them.

They are very easy to fill and store, the beer pours perfectly, and they seem to be more robust than some other bagged systems – to date there has been no leaking bags or bags that have lost their vacuum seal.

Implementation and Revival of Cask Ale

As of yesterday (15th July 2025) I even started serving Cask once again. Our West Coast Pale Ale conditioned in the FreeKeg, served using an adapted KeyKeg coupler. This is also a Game Changer. Perfectly sealed Cask Conditioned Ale with very little chance of spoilage that can be shipped at reduced a cost with no beer wastage and fully reusable keg. I can only imagine how many pints are wasted every year because of spoilage. It will take some adaption of beer lines to suit the new keg, but the upside is enormous. We can also start selling and serving in smaller quantities as the kegs are 30 or 20 litres.

This system could make Cask ale more accessible with very little adaption to existing cellar set ups and maybe it can revive the real ale market.



FreeKegs connected up to dispensing equipment. Photo courtesy Murphy & Sons

With a little help from us Janus has now secured access to market via Murphy & Sons in Nottingham and is currently touring the UK and demonstrating the product. It seems that the early signs are very positive, and I hope to see a steady roll out of these innovative kegs.

A version of this article first appeared in the Winter Edition of Pints of View, written by Paul Clinton, founder and former CEO, Six Hills Brewing, and its use is gratefully acknowledged

Some technical details

Ergonomic lightweight keg strong like steel.

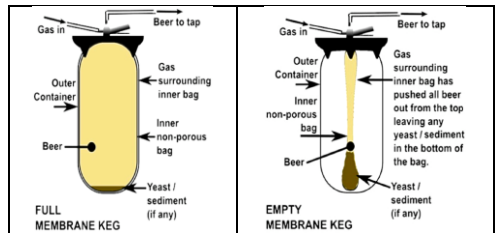
The latest version of the FreeKeg, where functionality, quality, and price come together to meet market demands, offers economic benefits for both export and local recycling markets.

FreeKeg suits it all; FreeKeg now supports both 20-liter and 30-liter kegs and all types of couplers, from type A, which is most commonly used in Asia, to KeyKeg, which is most used in North Europe along with type S in central Europe, as well as the Europe and American type D.

The support for the KeyKeg head is a result of high engineering standards and dedicated hard work to bring it to life. Their solution is patented to ensure customer safety and to set a new industry standard with a focus on sustainability and minimizing the planet's resources by reducing plastic waste. The KeyKeg support is exclusively designed to fit the FreeKeg.

They believe in the synergy of having a keg that can both circulate among breweries' own customers and be used for export, where after use, it gets a new life at nearby microbreweries.

The price of the FreeKeg is based on the global PET index price for one-way kegs; the FreeKeg will always follow the index and be 10% below the PET price.



Score Your Beer

Most Branches use beer scores in order to decide their shortlist for the Good Beer Guide pub selection, and also in judging various awards such as Pub of the Year and Cellarmanship.

Entering your scores is quick and simple and you can score your beer online at home or, if you have a smart phone, in the pub!

- Using your phone on the pub's Wi-Fi or your phone's network, open camra.org.uk/pubs
- Find the entry for the pub – there is a button labelled 'Nearby' or 'Nearby pubs' to save you doing a full search
- Click on 'Submit Beer Scores'
- Press the Member Login bar (if you have forgotten your password, you can request a link to reset it from an email)
- You may be able to set your phone to save your password for later pub visits
- You can then follow the screen, first setting the beer score (as above) followed by details of the beer
- Please always give the brewery and beer name (ignore the note that says optional)
- Press the button which says |Submit Beer Score
- If you make a mistake, you can correct it later (it's easiest to do this on a laptop/desktop)
- If you do not have a smart phone to enter scores while in the pub, you can use a laptop/desktop computer at home
- You can review and amend your own scores at a later date

Scoring beer in pubs is really easy!

The National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) is a 0-5 (0 = No cask ale available) point scale for judging beer quality in pubs.

It 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.

If you are not a member, why not join Europe's most successful consumer organisation?

What Do the Scores Mean?

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.

A few rules and things to note:

- Only CAMRA members can submit beer scores.
- Submit scores only for real ales. We do not accept scores for cider or keg beers.
- We do not accept scores where there may be a potential conflict of interest such as pub licensees, managers, bar staff or anyone else closely connected with any Mid-Chilterns pub.

feature | BEER SCORES – WE NEED YOUR HELP!

- Any unrealistic scores will be disregarded – for instance where the individual always scores a very high mark for every beer on every visit to their favourite local.

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.

How the scores are used

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>

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 9 pubs from Bucks and top 10 pubs from Herts (we can only put 6 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 600+ members but only about 30 of those submit scores.

We rely on 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.

Why isn't my pub in the GBG?

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.



Not enough scores
Not enough scorers
Not a GBG candidate



Enough scores
Enough Scorers
A GBG candidate



Your pub needs your beer scores!

Graphics courtesy of West Berkshire CAMRA

Pubs, Pints, People.



Death or Glory?

Just a pint please, actually.

CAMRA membership expands your choice of beer, pubs and festivals. Find the best pints, and the places you want to drink them.

Get £30 of beer vouchers, discounts on real ale, save on entry to 160+ beer festivals around the UK and more with membership.



FIND OUT MORE

Join and save on beer.
camra.org.uk/join



The new source for everything to do with beer, pubs, and scoring

The new CAMRA website helps you get to the pints you want to drink the most, in the places you want to drink them, as easily as possible. Whether you're on holiday, visiting a friend, or simply searching your local area, our website brings you the best pubs, beers and breweries straight to you in an instant.

We have brought all our data and standalone websites together, so you can access everything you need to know about pubs and clubs, beer and cider and our campaigning efforts in one convenient place.

The newly enhanced online features with easy-to-use smart tools are designed to help you enjoy more of the beer, pubs and festivals you love:

- Search for over 55,000 pubs around the UK by a variety of filters
- Identify Good Beer Guide recommended pubs, now as part of your membership
- Plan pub trips and create itineraries of places you want to visit
- Score your beers at all the pubs and clubs you visit
- Search our database of beers and find out where they are served. Save your favourites or even list those you'd like to try
- Access information on breweries from around the UK and save these as favourites for later too
- Read CAMRA verified beer tasting notes
- View CAMRA beer rating scores and recommendations
- Plus, so much more!

To date, more members have logged in to the new site than the previous site had in its whole lifetime! In 2025 alone, 13,000 venues have

been favoured by users, and a massive 45,000 pub visits have been recorded on the website.

Whenever you order a pint of cask beer, remember to log in to our website to submit and keep track of your beer scores. This is one of the easiest and most fun ways to volunteer for CAMRA and helps local branches find out which pubs are serving quality cask. There is more brewery data on the site, and you can now update this data too.

You can help power CAMRA's campaigning by submitting updates about pubs. Simply go to a pub's listing on the website and scroll down to the 'suggest an edit' section. This will alert the local branch that the pub's information needs to be updated. It couldn't be easier!

Don't forget, even if you are not a CAMRA member, you can still access some of our website's great features by becoming a subscriber for as little as 99p a month.

As the website is now the go-to platform for your campaign, beer and pub needs in one helpful place, combining the ability to upload beer scores and update pub information, the standalone website WhatPub was shut down on 25 August 2025. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped create the site and collected the pub data that powered years of CAMRA campaigning!

Check out camra.org.uk and discover more ways to enjoy your favourite pubs and beers.



Search for a pub or social club

Help keep our information accurate!

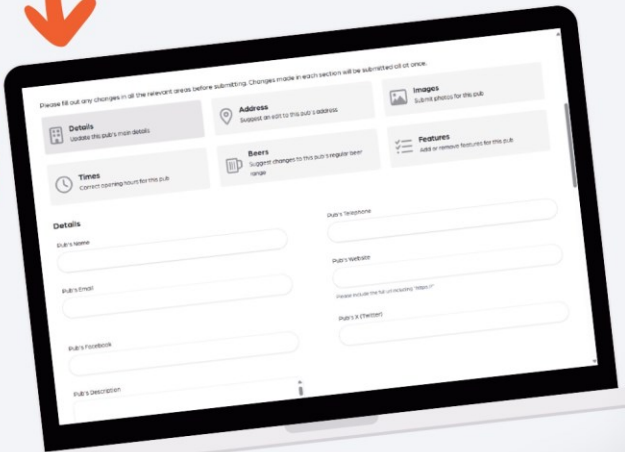
Notice an error or missing details? Help us keep our pub & club information accurate by sharing any corrections or updates you spot.

Suggest an edit



Scroll down to suggest an edit

Help update our pub data



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.

Cask beer dispensing equipment

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

The words in the grid can be found from the lists of cask beer dispensing equipment below. Ignore spaces and special characters.

ALE EXTRACTOR
 BARREL
 BEER ENGINE
 BEER LINE
 BREATHY
 BREWERY NUT
 BROACHER
 CASKJ
 CASK BREATHY
 CASK STILLAGE
 CASK TAP

CELLAR COOLING
 CHECK VALVE
 CHOCKS
 CLEANING KIT
 DIPSTICK
 FIRKIN COLING PROBE
 FLEXIBLE COOLING PROBE
 FLOATING EXTRACTOR
 GRAVITY DISPENSE TAP

HAND PUMP
 HARD SPILE
 HOP FILTER
 HOSE TAIL
 INSULATED CASK JACKET
 KEYSTONE
 SHRIVE
 SOFT SPILE
 SPARKLER
 TAP BRUSH

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

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Awards Officer

Vacant

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members
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