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The Chiltern Tapler

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

Summer 2026 (June – Aug)



Hemel Old Town Beer Festival Team ready to welcome drinkers to the 2026 Festival

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DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the editorial team or of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)

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TRADING STANDARDS

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NEXT EDITION

The next edition of *The Chiltern Tapler* will be published in late August/early September 2026. Articles, photos and other contributions are welcomed and should be sent to tapler@midchilterns.camra.org.uk no later than **Friday 21 August**

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

As with all CAMRA branches we constantly stress the need to 'use it or lose it' for the pubs and clubs in our region, or wherever else you find yourselves. To which end this edition includes an article on Pub Closures written in March by Tim Hampson who, having been associated with the industry for over forty years, is better placed than most to have knowledge of the present parlous position in which many establishments find themselves and their business.

Interestingly enough I've recently picked up a new (to me) statistic from no less an august publication as Country Life magazine. Given that pubs have been around since the Roman's somewhat violent incursion in 43AD – in those days they were known as Tabernae (actually roadside shops selling fortified drinks and food to soldiers), and that name morphing into Taverns of course. From then on sale of various alcoholic beverages – firstly wine and then ale – could be produced and sold by anyone having the means or desire so to do. It was not until 1552 that liquor licensing was invented.

Sorry, I digress – the statistic. Twenty-five years after licensing first came to be, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, her Privy Council commissioned what is believed to be the first survey on licensed premises. That found that there was roughly one drinking establishment for every two hundred people in England and Wales. As of now there are approximately 29,000 "pubs and bar business units" – a 0.7% decrease since last year - in the United Kingdom, thus around three per 10,000 residents. All the more reason I believe to 'use them or lose them!'

With this edition we all hope to welcome the better weather and the opportunity to make use of the many excellent pub gardens in our region. As regular readers will know those are not a feature of my pub going – at or by the bar being my much-preferred position – but many welcome the opportunity to drink in the

sunshine. There are certainly plenty to choose from with well-kept gardens, views of our beautiful countryside, on the canal and many other attractions for alfresco imbibing.

No apologies for repeating what I said in this Editorial last year. Since The Chiltern Tapler 'came back' after the pandemic we have gone from strength to strength and our feedback is that the magazine is a welcome addition to the well over one hundred pubs and other venues we supply. The print run is now 1750 and is paid for wholly by our generous advertisers, allowing us to distribute it to you free. It is still possible for us to grow in size and to include more of what we hope you enjoy reading about, so if you would like to advertise then please get in touch. Also, we would like to see a few more on our Mid Chilterns committee – all meetings are held in pubs so that could be an incentive – and there are only twelve a year. We have a lot of fun and lively debate and that then dictates how the branch operates and, to an extent, what goes into the magazine you have in your hand. Please get in touch as we would love to hear from you.

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 2026, Branch and National CAMRA Awards, as well as Campaign, Industry and Opinion articles from CAMRA, and the Wordsearch Puzzle with the word list based on keg dispensing equipment.

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.

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

Page (s)	Contributor	Page (s)	Contributor
11	Sarah Wragg	35	Roger Protz
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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
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 2027	Late Feb/Early March
Summer – June/July/Aug	21 May	Late May/Early June

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 21 August 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 on the following section is some local beer festivals and those further afield that may be of interest.

JUNE

WEDS 3 JUN

Branch Meeting, 20:00 - 22:00

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

SUN 21 JUN

Marsworth Steam and Classic Vehicle Rally 11:00 – 17:00

Startop Farm, Marsworth HP23 4LL

Family entertainment, rides, attractions and beer tent featuring local real ales.

JULY

WEDS 1 JUL

Branch Meeting, 20:00 - 22:00

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

FRI 10 – SAT 11 JUL

11th Berkhamsted Beer, Music & Comedy Festival (BerkoBeerFest)

Kitcheners Field, Castle Hill, Berkhamsted, HP4
1HE

berkobeerfest.co.uk

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.](http://hemeloldtownbeerfestival.co.uk/)

hemeloldtownbeerfestival.co.uk/

AUGUST

TUES 25 – SAT 29

47th Peterborough Beer Festival

Tues: Trade session 3pm. 5:30 – 11pm £7

Weds – Sat: Noon – 3pm £3; 3pm – 11 pm £7.

The Embankment, Peterborough PE1 1EF

[This event is free for CAMRA members.](http://pborobeerfest.camra.org.uk)

pborobeerfest.camra.org.uk

SEPTEMBER

WEDS 2 SEPT

Branch Meeting (8pm)

The Greyhound, Chesham Road, Wigginton, Tring,
HP23 6EH

WEDS 23 - SAT 26 SEPT

St Albans Beer and Cider Festival 2026

The Alban Arena, St Albans, Civic Centre, AL1 3LD

[This event is free for CAMRA members.](http://STALBANSBF.ORG.UK)

STALBANSBF.ORG.UK

FRI 25 - SUN 27 SEPT

Kings Langley Beer & Fizz Festival

All Saints Church, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire,
WD4 8JS

<https://www.klbeerandfizz.co.uk>

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

Spring Social – Berkhamsted Trail

On Saturday, 23 May, a group of 12 of us met in Berkhamsted to do a canal side pub trail. It was a fantastic day for a pub trail along the canal as the sun was shining and it was very warm for the time of year. Very unusual for a bank holiday weekend!



Some of our members enjoying a drink together at the Rising Sun, Berkhamsted

The first stop was the Crystal Palace but was a disappointment from the real-ale point of view. From there we walked along the canal to the Boat, a Fuller's Premium Pub. Unfortunately, owing to the perfect weather, all the outside seating and tables were taken, so we all sat inside in the cool enjoying ESB and some dark bottled beers. From there we moved onto the Rising Sun, Cider Pub of the Year, and sat in the lower covered area, which was perfect and meant we could all sit together. Even more welcome, was a couple of pints of Chiltern Beechwood courtesy of the owners, Mark and Nigel. Thank you both. It was shared between six of us and was very tasty!

Amanda and I ducked out from the Rising Sun, as I had not been well most of the week and was taking it easy. The rest of the group went onto the Bull, branch Pub of the Year 2026. The next on the trail was the Mad Squirrel Tap Room, but on finding there was no cask ale on tap, the group moved onto the Wetherspoon's pub, The Crown.

www.midchilterns.camra.org.uk

The Hemel Old Town Beer Festival

Mid-Chilterns CAMRA are delighted to announce the return of **Hemel Old Town Beer Festival** for 2026, taking place over the weekend of **July 17th-19th**.

As well as cask ales, keg beer, and cider, for the first time there will also be a fizz bar serving Prosecco and sparkling rose wine.

TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW – secure yours at hemeloldtownbeerfestival.co.uk

Held at the historic St. Mary's Church located between Gadebridge Park and Hemel Hempstead old town high street, the festival hopes to serve over thirty cask beers alongside numerous ciders and perries.

As with last year, the bar offering will be accompanied by an array of street food vendors to suit all tastes, each day punctuated by live music acts performing throughout the day.

As a non-profit event, in conjunction with St. Mary's church, all proceeds will go towards protecting local pubs and helping the church with community projects and ancillary charities.

Want to volunteer?

Fill in the online form at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/20SOI2/> or email

beerfestival@midchilterns.camra.org.uk, for free entry to all sessions, free beer and more!

The website is now up and running and tickets are now available to be purchased (use the QR code or go to hemeloldtownbeerfestival.co.uk/

The entertainment lineup has now been finalised for the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the festival.

FRIDAY

Henry Nurse

Hemel Rock Choir

Summer 2026 **THE CHILTERN TAPLER** 09



HEMEL OLD TOWN
BEER FESTIVAL
2026

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JULY 17-19TH ST. MARY'S CHURCH | HEMEL HP1 3AE



**TICKETS
£5**

TICKETS



FREE ENTRY FOR CAMRA MEMBERS

**A NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMMUNITY EVENT
ORGANISED BY ST.MARY'S CHURCH
AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE**

SATURDAY

Codename Colin
HappyHellyChoir

SUNDAY

Sian Turner
Just A Capella
Organists

We look forward to seeing you at **Hemel Old Town Beer Festival 2026**.

Kings Langley Beer & Fizz Festival

It's incredible to think it's five years since we held the first Kings Langley Beer & Fizz Festival, which started out as a fundraiser gathering in All Saints Church, inspired by our friends at St Saviour's in St Albans.

What was a low-key event attended by locals has now become a three-day extravaganza that attracts people from far and wide - not just beer lovers but live music fans, families and foodies too. And the best bit is that every penny of profit is spent supporting good causes - last year a total of £20,000 was donated to local, domestic and international charities.

This year's event, which is being held from 11-13 September, will offer the same vast selection of craft beer, cask ales, lager and cider (as well as the Prosecco, champagne, sparkling wine and Cava that make up the Fizz element!) and will build on our 2025 commitment to supporting local breweries.

We are working with a number of local breweries, including Mad Squirrel, Creative Juices, Tring and Rebellion, to bring you a fantastic range of beverages to tempt every palate.

And in the spirit of providing a weekend to remember, we have also got an array of excellent live music, including headline sets from Razorz on Friday from 8pm, and Groove

Generation, who are back for the third year in a row, this time on Saturday from 8pm.

Finally, while the food options are still being finalised, we can confirm we will have the mouthwatering Wood Fired Pizza Company with us, as well as a BBQ catered by the inimitable Langley Butchers in Kings Langley.

Buy your tickets now - early bird discounts on offer for a limited time - through our new ticketing partners at <https://tinyurl.com/bdhw7sp6> For all information see klbeerandfizz.co.uk.

Sarah Wragg, KL Beer & Fizz Festival Committee Member.

11th-13th SEPTEMBER 2026



FRIDAY 4-11PM | SAT 12-11PM | SUN 12-7PM
[KIDS WELCOME UNTIL 6PM SAT AND ALL DAY SUN]

35+ CRAFT BEERS, REAL ALES, LAGER & CIDER
CHAMPAGNE & PROSECCO
HOT FOOD & LIVE MUSIC

AT ALL SAINTS CHURCH, WD4 8JS
Tickets at klbeerandfizz.co.uk

Festival Dates

The following is a comprehensive list of national festival dates, both put on by CAMRA and non-CAMRA organisations, compiled by Richard. CAMRA members enjoy free entry to many CAMRA festivals (not including souvenir glass and programmes) when booking tickets in advance.

JUNE

Thurrock Beer and Cider Festival, 2 - 6 June

Civic Hall Blackshots Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2JU

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

thurrock.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=242456

Hitchin Beer and Cider Festival, 4 - 6 June

Hitchin Rugby Club, Old Hale Way, Hitchin, SG5 1XL

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

hitchinbeerciderfestival.org.uk

Twyford Beer Festival, 4 - 6 June

Stanlake Meadow Recreation Ground, Waltham Road, Twyford, Berkshire, RG10 0AB

<https://www.twyfordbeerfest.co.uk>

Stratford-Upon-Avon 18th Beer and Cider Festival, 5 - 6 June

Stratford On Avon Racecourse, Luddington Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9SE

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

shakespeare.camra.org.uk/festival

Chester Beer Festival, 5 - 6 June

Chester Town Hall, Town Hall Square, Chester, CH1 2HQ

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

<https://westcheshire.camra.org.uk/beerfestival>

CAMRA KESR Railway Real Ale and Cider Festival, 5 - 6 June

Kent and East Sussex Railway, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6HE

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

afm.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=230145

Kingston Beer Festival, 11 - 13 June

Kingston Workmen's Club & Institute, 25 Old London Road, Kingston-upon-Thames

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

<https://www.facebook.com/KingstonBeerFest>

Braintree Real Ale Festival, 11 - 13 June

Bocking Arts Theatre, Bocking End, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9AE

braintreebeerfestival.co.uk/

Barnsley Beer Festival, 11 - 13 June

Barnsley Civic, 46 Eldon Street, Barnsley, S70 2JL

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

barnsleycivic.co.uk/event/barnsley-beer-festival

Taproom Halesworth Beer Festival, 11 - 14 June

YouDrink Bottle Shop & Taproom, Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 8AH

<https://www.facebook.com/YouDrink21>

Winchester Beer & Cider Festival, 12 - 13 June.

University Of Winchester Student Union, Sparkford Road, Winchester

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

<https://winchesterbeerfestival.camra.org.uk/>

GWR Ale and Steam Weekend Festival, 12 - 14 June

Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway, Winchcombe and Toddington Stations, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, GL54 5DT

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

[Rail Ale Festival - Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway](#)

'Investival' Summer Beer Festival, 13 June

Mad Squirrel Brewery, Unit 18, Boxted Farm, Hemel Hempstead HP1 2SG.

<https://madsquirrelbrew.co.uk>

Stockport Beer and Cider Festival, 18 - 20 June

Masonic Guildhall, 169-171 Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3UA

stockportfestival.org.uk

Leicester Beer Festival, 18 - 20 June

Abbey Pumping Station, Corporation Road, Leicester

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

<https://leicester.camra.org.uk>

Perseverance Wraysbury Summer Beer Festival, 19 - 21 June

The Perseverance, Wraysbury, Staines, Surrey, TW19 5DB

<http://the-perseverance.co.uk/>

Stockport Beer and Cider Festival, 19 - 21 June

Stockport Guildhall, 169-171 Wellington Road South, Stockport, Greater Manchester, SK1 3UA

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

stockportfestival.org.uk/

CAMRA Cricket Tent Kent v Middlesex, 19 - 22 June

Kent County Cricket Club, Old Dover Road, Canterbury, CT1 3NZ

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

kent.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=281836

THE ULTIMATE FESTIVAL IS BACK...
...AND WE'RE BEEFING THINGS UP



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STALBANSBF.ORG.UK

28th South Downs Beer Festival, 12 - 13 June

Lewes Town Hall Corn Exchange, Fisher Street, Lewes, Sussex, BN7 2QS

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

brighton.camra.org.uk/

7th Annual Leighton Buzzard Beerfest, 26 – 27 June

Leighton Buzzard Brewing Company, Standbridge Road, LU7 4FF

<http://leightonbuzzardbrewing.co.uk>

Haddenham Beer Festival, 26 – 28 June

Tibbs Road Recreation Area, Pegasus Way, Haddenham, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8FJ

[Haddenham Beer Festival Trust | Haddenham Beer Festival](#)

Winchester Beer and Cider Festival, 27 - 28 June

University of Winchester Student Union, Sparkford Road, Winchester, Hampshire, SO22 4NR

winchesterbeerfestival.camra.org.uk/

12th Rutland CAMRA Beer Festival, 26 - 28 June

County Museum, Catmos Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HW

rutland.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=241929

JULY

Totnes Beer and Cider Fest, 2 - 4 July

Totnes Civic Hall, High Street, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5SF

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

southdevon.camra.org.uk/

Maidenhead Beer and Cider Festival, 3 - 4 July

Summerlease Park, Off Summerlease Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 8SP

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

maidenheadbeerfest.camra.org.uk/

Chorlton Beer and Cider Festival, 2 - 4 July

St. Clements Church, Edge Lane, Chorlton, Manchester, M21 9AE

chorltonbeerfestival.org.uk/

Devizes CAMRA 24th Beer and Cider Festival, 4 - 5 July

The Wharf, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1EB

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

devizescamra.org.uk/

Ealing Beer Festival, 8 - 11 July

Walpole Park, Mattock Lane, London, W5 5EQ

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

ebf.camra.org.uk

11th Berkhamsted Beer, Music & Comedy Festival (BerkoBeerFest), 10 – 11 July

Kitcheners Field, Castle Hill, Berkhamsted, HP4 1HE

berkoberfest.co.uk

Salisbury Craft Beer Festival, 10 - 11 July

Salisbury Arts Centre, Bedwin Street, Salisbury, SP1 3UT

[Salisbury Craft Beer Festival | Wiltshire Creative](#)

Beer on the Wye XIX, 10 - 12 July

Hereford Rowing Club, Greyfriars Avenue, Hereford, HR4 0BE

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

beeronthewye.wixsite.com/beeronthewye

Stony Stratford Cricket Beer Festival, 10 - 12 July

Ostlers Lane, MK11 1AR

[Stony Stratford Cricket Club | Stony Stratford | Facebook](#)

Chelmsford and Mid-Essex Summer Beer and Cider Festival, 13 - 18 July

Admirals Park, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2PL

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

cbcf.camra.org.uk/

Hemel Old Town Beer Festival, 17 - 19 July

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

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

hemeloldtownbeerfestival.co.uk/

London Craft Beer Festival, 17 - 18 July

Southwark Park, Gomm Road, London, SE16 2ET

[London Craft Beer Festival 2026 - London Craft Beer Festival](#)

48th Cotswold Beer Festival, 17 - 19 July

Postlip Tithe Barn, Postlip Hall, Winchcombe, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL54 5AQ

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

postlip.camra.org.uk/

Totternhoe Summer Beer Festival, 18 - 22 July

Totternhoe Memorial Hall, Castle Hill Road, Totternhoe, Bedfordshire, LU6 1QJ

<https://www.totternhoememorialhall.com/summer-beer-festival.html>

Wolverhampton Summer Festival of Beer and Cider, 23 - 25 July

Wolverhampton Arts Centre, Dunkley Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN

facebook.com/events/1278590133432991

Market Bosworth Rail Ale Festival, 24 - 26 July

The Goods Shed, Station Road, Market Bosworth, Leicestershire, CV13 0PF

battlefieldline.co.uk/rails-ales



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PHOTO BY JOHN MOORE

Windsor Beer Festival 24 - 26 July

Hosted by Windsor & Eton Brewery
1-4 Vansittart Estate, Duke Street, Windsor, Berks
SL4 1SE
<https://webrew.co.uk/windsor-beer-festival-2026/>

Epping Ongar Railway Real Ale & Cider Festival, 24 - 26 July

North Weald Station, North Weald, Epping, Essex,
CM16 6BT
eorailway.co.uk/events/real-ale-and-cider-festival/

AUGUST

Aston Clinton Beer Festival, 31 July - 2 August

Aston Clinton School, Twitchell Lane, Aston Clinton,
Aylesbury, HP22 5JJ
<https://www.astonclintonbeerfestival.com>

Glasgow Real Ale Festival (G-RAF), 6 - 8 August

The Brigait, 141 Bridgegate, Glasgow, G1 5HZ
[This event is free for CAMRA members.
g-raf.camra.org.uk](https://www.g-raf.camra.org.uk)

Worcester Beer, Cider and Perry Festival, 13 - 15 August

The Grandstand, Worcester Racecourse,
Worcester, WR1 3EJ
[This event is free for CAMRA members.
festival.worcester.camra.org.uk](https://www.festival.worcester.camra.org.uk)

47th Peterborough CAMRA Beer Festival, 25 - 29 August

Tues: Trade session 3pm. 5:30 – 11pm £7
Weds – Sat: Noon – 3pm £3; 3pm – 11 pm £7.
Embankment Road, Peterborough,
Cambridgeshire, PE1 1EF
[This event is free for CAMRA members.
pborobeerfest.camra.org.uk](https://www.pborobeerfest.camra.org.uk)

East Anglian Beer and Cider Festival, 26 - 31 August

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Angel Hill, Bury St
Edmunds, IP33 1LS
[This event is free for CAMRA members.
burystedmundsbeerfestival.com](https://www.burystedmundsbeerfestival.com)

Clacton Beer and Cider Festival, 26 - 29 August

St James Hall, 56 Tower Road, Clacton-on-Sea,
CO15 1LE
[This event is free for CAMRA members.
tending.camra.org.uk/clacton-on-sea-real-ale-cider-festival](https://www.tending.camra.org.uk/clacton-on-sea-real-ale-cider-festival)

SEPTEMBER

Harbury Beer and Cider Festival, 4 - 5 September

Harbury Village Hall, South Parade, Leamington
Spa, CV33 9JE
[This event is free for CAMRA members.
how.camra.org.uk/page_id=79](https://www.how.camra.org.uk/page_id=79)

CAMRA Bar at Faversham Hop Festival 2026, 5 – 8 September

East Street, Faversham, ME13 8AF
[This event is free for CAMRA members.
kent.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=282070](https://www.kent.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=282070)

St Albans Beer and Cider Festival 2026, 23 – 26 September

The Alban Arena, St Albans, Civic Centre, AL1 3LD
[This event is free for CAMRA members.
STALBANBSF.ORG.UK](https://www.stalbanbsbf.org.uk)

Calderdale Beer and Cider Festival 2026, 24 – 26 September

Arden Road Social, Arden Road, Halifax, HX1 3AG
[This event is free for CAMRA members.
hxcalderdale.camra.org.uk/2026-calderdale-beer-and-cider-festival](https://www.hxcalderdale.camra.org.uk/2026-calderdale-beer-and-cider-festival)

Kings Langley Beer & Fizz Festival, 25 – 27 September

All Saints Church, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire,
WD4 8JS
<https://www.klbeerandfizz.co.uk>

OCTOBER

Nottingham Robin Hood Beer and Cider Festival, 7 – 10 October

Trent Bridge Cricket Ground, Bridgford Road,
Bridgford, NG2 6AG
[This event is free for CAMRA members.
nottinghambf.camra.org.uk](https://www.nottinghambf.camra.org.uk)

DECEMBER

Pig's Ear Beer Festival 1 – 5 December

Round Chapel, 1D Glenarm Rd, E5 0LY
[This event is free for CAMRA members.
www.pigsear.org.uk](https://www.pigsear.org.uk)

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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. **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 Marchmont Arms, Piccotts End, Hemel Hempstead

This pub, part of the Mitchells & Butlers Premium Country Pub Collection, has recently undergone a major refurbishment.

As their website says "Step into our beautifully refreshed space, where elegant interiors meet warm hospitality and a menu brimming with indulgent dishes. Whether it's a romantic date night, celebratory cocktails with friends, or a leisurely Sunday roast with the family, your favourite pub is now more inviting than ever."

The Bridgewater Arms, Little Gaddesden

As part of their strategy to dispose of managed pubs, Greene King has put the Bridgewater Arms up for sale. It's on Rightmove at £650,000 freehold.

The Three Blackbirds, Flamstead

The Three Blackbirds is now under a new management team and is serving Chinese food to eat in and for delivery/takeaway.

The Black Horse, Chesham Vale

This historic pub is set to reopen after a two-year closure.

The Black Horse, located on Vale Road in Chesham and first licensed in the 17th century, is set to welcome customers back on June 12 following an extensive renovation, and so will have re-opened by the time you read this.

The relaunch comes under new ownership and with a fresh focus on high-quality gastro dining, while still retaining the pub's original charm through careful refurbishment.

Nigel Schroder, joint owner, said: "We're incredibly excited to bring The Black Horse back to life.

"It's been closed for two years, and we know how much it means to the local community.

"We've already seen such a positive response from people locally who are thrilled to see it return.

"Our aim is to restore it to what it has always been, a welcoming pub at the heart of The Vale, while also offering a high-quality dining experience."

The pub is now owned by Nigel, Sue, Ben, and Sam Schroder, along with hospitality professional Jack Lander.

The team brings a mix of business and hospitality experience to the venture, including head chef Jack Lander, who previously worked as a senior chef at the renowned Kitty Fisher's in Mayfair.

The Red Lion, Bierton

Mid-August sees the re-opening of the Red Lion, Bierton, a Grade II listed building, closed for 7 years. The Red Lion joins the George, Berkhamsted, and George and Dragon, Northchurch, run by Simon and Charley.

Contributors: The Editors, Committee, Bucks Free Press.

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](mailto: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)

Muddy Stiletos Awards 2026

Chiltern Brewery recently shared the exciting news that they have been shortlisted for **Best Artisan Food & Drink Producer** in the **Muddy Stiletos Awards 2026 (Bucks & Oxon)**.

Seasonal and new brews

Early June

Ale of Two Halves — 3.4%

Crisp Citrus. Light Touch. Great Finish.

Mid-June

Summer Meadow — 4.5%

Apricot, Citrus, Hedgerow. Gold in colour with delicate hop notes and a bright, gentle finish.

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.

Brewery tour dates

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

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www.chilternbrewery.co.uk

THE CHILTERN BREWERY

Beechwood Bitter
amber, nutty, toffee, fruity 4.3% vol

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Mad Squirrel Brewery

Unit 18, Boxted Farm, Potten End,
Berkhamsted Rd HP1 2SG
www.madsquirrelbrew.co.uk



Branding Evolution

At Mad Squirrel, standing still has never really been their thing.

If you've been with them on the journey so far, you'll know they've always walked the line between tradition and evolution. That balance is at the heart of their latest chapter, as they unveil a refreshed look across the brand. This isn't a reinvention. It's a refinement. A considered step forward that brings a sharper, more modern edge to everything you see, while staying true to everything we are.

You'll start to notice cleaner lines, bolder colours, and a more cohesive feel across our core and limited releases. The aim was simple: create something that feels unmistakably Mad Squirrel, but with a clarity and confidence that reflects where we are today. Think of it as polishing the lens rather than changing the view.

Behind the visual refresh sits the same philosophy that's always guided us. Great beer, brewed with care, and a mindset that's never content to coast. The rebrand is just one expression of that. It's about making sure the outside reflects the quality and character that's always been inside the can.

That spirit of evolution extends beyond design. They've been listening closely to how tastes are shifting, with more people looking for beers that deliver full flavour at a more

sessionable strength. So, alongside the new look, they've been fine-tuning their core range to better match how people actually drink today. Balanced, approachable, and still packed with character.

Community has always been a huge part of what they do, and that hasn't changed either. In fact, it's become even more central. From shaping ideas to influencing design decisions, the people who drink their beer continue to play a role in where they go next. It keeps them grounded, and it keeps things real.

New Limited Release Cask Beer

3 Squirrels English Pale 4.0%



Pomelo Citra Pale Ale 4.2%



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

No update as yet.

For more information email:

ale@popesyard.co.uk

Rebellion Beer Co

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

www.rebellionbeer.co.uk



New Releases

Liquid Football 3.4% Session Pale Ale

Liquid Football, a crisp and easy drinking Session Pale brewed for long afternoons watching the footy. Packed with Azacca and Krush hops, it delivers bright tropical fruit character, a refreshing finish, and plenty of drinkability at just 3.4% ABV.

Belgium Quad 10.5% Dark Ale

At the other end of the spectrum is Belgian Quad 2026, a rich, contemplative dark ale weighing in at 10.5% ABV. Expect layers of

plum and toffee, all enhanced by months of ageing in Chardonnay, Harrow and Hope barrels. Deep, complex and full bodied, it's a beer made to savour.



Cask Monthly Specials: 2026 British Folklore

June

Zebedee 4.7% Traditional Ale



A straw gold pale ale brewed with First Gold, Goldings and Citra hops for a crisp bitterness and bright drinkability. Citra added in the hopback brings a gentle stone fruit

aroma, giving the beer a clean, fresh and uncomplicated character.

Light, balanced and refreshing, Zebedee is an easy-going pint that's perfect for when you want something bright, lively and reliably satisfying.

Tring Brewery

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

www.tringbrewery.co.uk



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Pigjam

Tring Brewery are holding their First annual charity event featuring live music, beer and cider festival, and more!

Pigjam is being held in the Piggeries Taproom and Courtyard on 20 June, midday to 9:30 pm.

Admission is £10 and free for under 16s, with all ticket sales going to their charity, Berkhamsted & District First Responders.

The shop

The shop is now fully re-opened following the lorry crash earlier in the year. Whilst refurbishing the opportunity was taken to revamp the layout inside the shop with movable stands and shelving.

Seasonal Special

Fanny Ebbs – 3.9%



Thirst quenching summer ale. (June to August)

We're not sure if Fanny Ebbs was a blonde but we know this beer is. It's also amazingly crisp with very low bitterness and late citrus hop aroma from a combination of Saaz and Cascade varieties.

Hot summer day, pint of Fanny Ebbs and an assortment of pork scratchings, nuts and crisps. Done.

Monthly Specials

June

Priority 1 - 3.7% ABV

Thirst-quenching summer session ale



A first-place pale. This beers' strikingly light complexion is paramount to its profile. Second-to-none US hops, Idaho 7, have been used to impart

bright aromas.

June monthly special – brewed in support of Berkhamsted and District Community First Responders, Tring Brewery's charity of choice for 2026.

Light, bright and zippy. It's recommended to go with Japanese-style yuzu chicken with a side of tangy pickled slaw. Citric flavours from both the dish and the beer should blend pleasantly, whilst the hop character should cut through the chicken and pickle.

Each of their 2026 food pairings have been curated and written by their accredited in-house Beer Sommelier.

July

Dr ABC - 4.0% ABV

Pale ale with aromas of papaya and pine.

August

Stitched Up - 4.1% ABV

Classic British bitter.

Tring Toad tapped in Strangers Bar

One of Hertfordshire's best-selling beers has been served at Strangers' Bar in the Houses of Parliament, with MPs enjoying the local brew. Side Pocket for a Toad at 3.6 per cent, Tring brewery's flagship beer, was nominated through the parliamentary guest beer initiative by Harpenden and Berkhamsted MP Victoria Collins. As part of the nomination, Tring beer sommelier Jared Ward was invited to parliament for a tour, and a tippie of Toad at Strangers' Bar – parliament's private pub.



Named following Tring's theme of local

legends, Side Pocket for a Toad takes its title from an old-Hertfordshire saying for uselessness, akin to a “chocolate teapot”. Far from useless as a beverage, Side Pocket celebrated a quarter-century of production last year and was Hertfordshire Beer of the Year at the St Albans Beer and Cider Festival in November. Strangers' Bar and its Thameside terrace are located within the Houses of Parliament, restricted to MPs, officers of Parliament and parliamentary staff. Members of the public may be admitted as guests of officials only. Ward said: “To have Side Pocket for a Toad nominated for service at Westminster is truly historic. What started as an unconventional name and playful mascot 25 years ago soon morphed into the brewery’s champion ale and remains top of the pack after all these years. We’d like to thank Victoria Collins for her work in getting Tring ale into Strangers' Bar. We relished the opportunity to tour the hallowed halls and chambers, and to prop up the bar at one of the country’s most exclusive pubs. To have our local representative give us this platform is a very special moment indeed for Tring brewery.” LibDem MP Collins said: “It has been great to be able to champion a brewery within the Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency. It was such fun to pour a pint of Side Pocket for a Toad in Strangers' Bar. Here’s to supporting local.” Pictured: Toad tipplers – Victoria Collins and Jared Ward

28/05/2026 by Timothy Hampson

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



Seasonal beers.

Marathon Runner – Golden Ale 4.0%



Thirst-quenching perfection. 10p from every pint donated to Victa, supporting children and young adults who are blind or visually impaired.

Hops: Goldings, Fuggles

Malt: Best Ale

Mad Hatter – pale Ale 4.3%



Curiouser and curiouser! A bold, bright pale ale bursting with hoppy springtime flavours

Hops: Emperor, Opus

Malt: Best Ale

The Beautiful Game – Pale Ale 4.0%



The perfect match for the beautiful game. Bright citrus notes, a punchy hop character and the kind of refreshment that sees you through to extra time.

Hops: Melon, Hallertau Blanc, Madarina Bavaria, Northern Brewer

Malt: Light Munich

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: 13/06/2026, 11/07/2026, 15/08/2026, 12/09/2026, 17/10/2026, 14/11/2026, 12/12/2026.

Windsor & Eton

1-4 Vansittart Estate, Duke Street,
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www.webrew.co.uk



High flying tribute to last of the few

Windsor and Eton brewery is releasing Hurricane IPA to coincide with the reopening of its riverside bar in Kingston-upon-Thames. The beer is a well-balanced and quaffable 4.5 per cent IPA brewed with a blend of two hops, Chinook and Lemondrop, for a fruity aroma and big tangy taste.

The pumpclip features a Hawker Hurricane in the markings of 85 Squadron flown by John "Paddy" Hemmingway.

In August 1940, Paddy was shot down over the Thames Estuary during the Battle of



Britain. Paddy parachuted to safety while his plane crashed at Fobbing Marshes in Essex.

In March 2019, his Hurricane was recovered and is now under full restoration at Hawker Restorations in Suffolk.

Windsor Beer Festival 2026



Hosted by
Windsor & Eton Brewery
July 24 - 26

This year's festival promises to be our biggest yet, featuring **over 100 exceptional keg and cask beers** from some of the UK's most loved breweries, alongside exciting new names in the craft scene.



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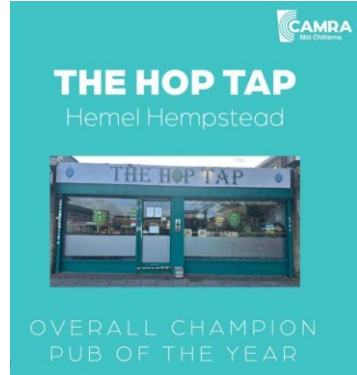
CAMRA are delighted to announce branch and national awards for 2026

Branch Pub of the Year Awards 2026

Mid-Chilterns CAMRA were pleased to announce their annual ‘Pub of the Year’ awards for 2026, with *The Hop Tap*, Hemel Hempstead taking overall champion ‘Pub of the Year’.

Congratulations to Tony, Tracey and all of their team at the pub.

Pub of the Year Runner up was the *The Three Blackbirds*, Boxmoor.



Mid-Chilterns Branch Awards 2026 Summary

Award	Position	Awarded To	Location
Pub of The Year	Overall Winner	The Hop Tap	Hemel Hempstead
Pub of The Year	Runner-up	The Three Blackbirds	Boxmoor
Cider Pub of The Year	Overall Winner	The Rising Sun	Berkhamsted
Cider Pub of The Year	Runner-up	The Fishery Wharf cafe	Boxmoor
Most Improved Pub of The Year	Winner	The Grand Junction Arms	Bulbourne
Community Pub of The Year	Winner	The Red Lion	Dagnall

Congratulations again to all of our winners!

Champion Beer of Britain 2026



Independence (4.6 per cent), a premium pale ale by Bristol Beer Factory has been crowned CAMRA’s Champion Beer of Britain 2026 at the Cambridge Beer Festival.

The competition is strongly independent with judging taking two years to complete. Each year kicks off with individual nominations from CAMRA members, volunteer tasting panels, and then regional competitions. Every round of judging, including the final at Cambridge Beer Festival, uses a strict blind tasting policy.

Champion Beer of Britain judging coordinator Christine Cryne described Independence as: “A pale strong beer. Strong enticing citrus nose, with piney hops. Caramelised citrus, tangerines,

grapefruit and digestive biscuits lead to dry peppery bittersweet finish, which lingers. Refreshing, full flavoured, fruity and smooth.”

The silver and bronze winners were:

Silver: Wildcat (5.1 per cent), a premium bitter by Cairngorm. Judges described Wildcat as: “Toffee, malt hops and a little orange on the nose, with flavours of dark orange marmalade with honey. The spicy hops develop and then linger in a dry bitter finish, which is balanced by some toffee notes. Well balanced and satisfying.”

Bronze: Alfie’s Revenge (6.5 per cent), a strong ale by Driftwood Spars. Judges describes Alfie’s Revenge as: “Fruity aroma with toffee and some pear notes. Flavours are estery overlaid with toffee and caramelised fruit. Finish remains sweet, with a bitterness which grows, alongside a little dryness. Full flavoured and rich.”

CAMRA awards director Shelly Bentley said: “I’m thrilled to bits to see Independence by Bristol Beer Factory claim the 2026 title of Champion Beer of Britain! It is a more than deserving winner.

“All 12 finalists in the coveted competition are fantastic examples of how the quality of UK brewing continues to climb to new heights. Government must improve the access to market for the UK’s amazing independent brewers, who are being blocked from getting space at the bar by the giant global brewers which have a stranglehold on our pubs.

“Let’s raise a pint and cheers to Bristol Beer Factory – a thoroughly deserving Champion Beer of Britain!”

20/05/2026 by WB Reporter

Who won what

Category	Award	Brewery	Beer	ABV (%)
Overall	Gold	Bristol Beer Factory	Independence	4.6
	Silver	Cairngorm	Wildcat	5.1
	Bronze	Driftwood Spars	Alfie’s Revenge	6.5
Mild	Gold	Shortts	Two Tone	3.8
	Silver	Harrogate	Nidd Mild	3.7
	Bronze	Magic Dragon	Old Magic	3.6
Session Bitter	Gold	Purple Moose	Cwrw Glaslyn/Glaslyn Ale	4.2
	Silver	Dancing Duck	22	4.3
	Bronze	Ludlow	Ludlow Best	3.7
Premium Bitter	Gold	Cairngorm	Wildcat	5.1
	Silver	Daleside	Monkey Wrench	5.3
	Bronze	Langham	Best	4.5
IPAs (English and New World)	Gold	Blue Monkey	Infinity Plus 1	5.6
	Silver	Oakham	Green Devil	6.0
	Bronze	Gun	Zamzana	6.5
Session Pale, Blond & Golden Ales	Gold	Blue Monkey	BG Sips	4.0
	Silver	Burning Sky	Plateau	3.4
	Bronze	Ossett	White Rat	4.0
Premium Pale, Blond & Golden Ales	Gold	Bristol Beer Factory	Independence	4.6
	Silver	Two by Two	Snake Eyes Pale	4.7
	Bronze	Surrey Hills	Collusion	5.2

Brown and Red Ales, Old Ales and Strong Milds	Gold	Harvey's	Old Ale	4.3
	Silver	Elmtree	Nightlight Mild	5.7
	Bronze	RedWillow	Sleepless	5.4
Session Stouts and Porters	Gold	Cairngorm	Black Gold	4.4
	Silver	Green Jack	Lurcher Stout	4.8
	Bronze	Blackjack	Manchester Stout	4.8
Strong Stouts and Porters	Gold	Green Jack	Baltic Trader Export Stout	10.5
	Silver	Ramsgate	Gadds' Black Pearl	6.2
	Bronze	Five Kingdoms	Dark Storm	6.9
Speciality, Differently Flavoured	Gold	Farm Yard	Hoof	4.3
	Silver	Titanic	Cappuccino Stout	4.5
	Bronze	Cerne Abbas	Gurt Coconuts Rum Stout	6.7
Speciality, Differently Produced	Gold	London Brewing	Beer Street	4.0
	Silver	Papworth	Koura	5.7
	Bronze	Dorset	Jurassic	5.9
Barley Wines and Strong Old Ales	Gold	Driftwood Spars	Alfie's Revenge	6.5
	Silver	Grainstore	Nip	7.3
	Bronze	Holden's	Old Ale	7.2

Members' Weekend 2026 round up

CAMRA's Members' Weekend took place in St Albans from Thurs 16 to Mon 20 April. Details of award winners are below.

AWARDS

Chairman's Award

Winner: **Disciplinary Review Group** – Robert Hamnett-Day, John Perry, Maria Freeman, Adrian Zawierka, and Kate Ahern

Winner: **Terry and Frances Lock**

Terry and Frances Lock were awarded the Chairman's Award for their exceptional service to CAMRA festivals, having been instrumental in how events are planned and approved.

Magazine of the Year

Runner up: **London Drinker**, London branches, edited by Tony Hedger

Bronze: **Nottingham Drinker**, Nottingham branch, edited by Danielle Jeffery

Silver: **Pints West**, Bristol and District branch, edited by Steve Plumridge

Gold: **Beer Matters**, Sheffield and District branch, edited by Andy Cullen

Website of the Year

Runner up: **Reading and Mid-Berks** branch, website coordinator Timothy Hayward

Bronze: **Kingdom of Fife** branch, website coordinator Dave Hollingsworth

Silver: **Shrewsbury and West Shropshire** branch (above), website coordinator Nick Smith

Gold: **Norwich and District** branch, website coordinator Ian Stamp

Campaigner of the Year

Winner: **Northern Ireland** region of CAMRA

THE HOP TAP

CHAMPION PUB
OF THE YEAR 2026



THE HOP TAP

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Hemel Hempstead

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.

Intuitive beer scoring system launched

Campaign

How's your cask beer?

Rating	Description	Your reaction
Excellent	Exceptional and clear (if intended to be) with fantastic aromas, flavours and ideal carbonation.	Superb! You tell your friends and compliment the cellar manager.
Very good	Satisfying and well-kept with a great appearance, good carbonation and enticing aromas and flavours.	You consider having another and may cancel plans to move to another pub.
Good	Nice appearance, good carbonation, aromas and flavour.	Pleasant but not memorable. You're happy to have another but might consider something else.
Acceptable	Unremarkable and ordinary, with no noteworthy characteristics.	You're unlikely to have another unless it is all there is and there isn't another pub to go to.
Poor	Noticeably imperfect.	Drinkable with resentment, but you politely ask for a replacement.
Undrinkable	Unpleasant to drink, likely with a disgusting taste, incorrect appearance and off/foul aroma.	You politely ask for it to be replaced and consider asking the publican to take it off.

CAMRA has revamped its beer scoring system, bringing in a new intuitive rating scheme making one of the key factors in selecting pubs for the Good Beer Guide easier to use. For lovers of a decent pint, it's important to be able to find them. CAMRA's Good Beer Guide has been the bible for finding the very best since 1974 and continues to be relied upon by thousands of cask lovers. CAMRA's online pub guide camra.org.uk/pubs can also help because beer quality is indicated by the 3 Pints symbols that members see when logged in. Pubs and clubs that consistently serve excellent pints are candidates for the Good Beer Guide. To

help identify them, CAMRA members score their pints whenever they have the opportunity. Their scores help branches determine entries for the guide, and these can change year on year as the standards are high. Competition for a place is stiff because only 4,500 are available. Up to now, the scoring system has used a 0-to-5 system. But there are problems as it requires memorising the criteria for each score and using them consistently. Some people struggle with numbers, so they don't take part. It becomes open to individual interpretation with resulting inconsistency between scorers. There's also the potential for individual bias and a

reluctance to award high scores. We all know a good pint that's been well-kept, and if it is very good or excellent plus when it is simply okay or, hopefully not often, undrinkable. To make things easier, a new rating system is being introduced, which is more descriptive (pictured). Each of the new ratings has a description and a likely reaction to help you pin down the most appropriate rating. Ratings can be recorded on CAMRA's online pub guide camra.org.uk/pubs by all members, so start rating your beer now. If you're not a member but would like to rate your beers, then head over to camra.org.uk/membership.

01/06/2026 by Nick Yarwood

Community pubs' key role for young workers

Pub

Community-owned pubs are a proven part of the solution to rising youth unemployment,



particularly in rural areas where opportunities are most limited, according to Plunkett UK. The call comes as national media coverage highlights growing concern over young people's access to work. Plunkett UK is calling for greater recognition and targeted support for community-owned hospitality through its Save Rural Hospitality campaign helping more communities to establish and sustain locally owned pubs, cafés and essential services. The latest Office for National Statistics figures show nearly one million 16–24-year-olds are not in education, employment or training

(NEET) – the highest level in more than a decade – underlining the scale of the challenge facing young people entering the workforce. At the same time, the first rung of the career ladder is disappearing, with fewer entry-level roles available for young people to gain vital early experience. Across the UK, community-owned hospitality businesses are already helping to bridge that gap creating accessible, local pathways into employment where traditional opportunities are declining. Plunkett chief executive James Alcock said: “Hospitality has traditionally provided that crucial first step into work, but in many communities those opportunities are disappearing. Community-owned pubs and cafés are stepping in to fill that gap, creating accessible, local jobs where they are needed most.” In rural areas, where transport links are limited and job opportunities are fewer, the challenge is even more acute. Community-owned businesses provide flexible and inclusive routes into employment, from volunteering and training through to paid roles. Plunkett's research shows that more than half of community businesses employ 16–25-year-olds, underlining their importance as a vital source of first jobs, skills development and work experience. For many young people, particularly Gen Z, work is not just about income but also connection, purpose and community – something community-owned hospitality is uniquely placed to provide. At the Auctioneer's Arms in Caverswall, Staffordshire, a community-owned pub supported by Plunkett UK, one young person's experience highlights the life-changing impact these businesses can have. Tilly joined the pub as a teenager, initially struggling with anxiety and low confidence. In a supportive, community-run environment, she gained experience, completed an apprenticeship, and progressed into a deputy manager role. At the White Horse in Stonesfield, Oxfordshire, Skye's experience shows the wider role community hospitality plays for young adults navigating uncertain career paths. “When I graduated university

and came back to the village, I wasn't 100 per cent sure what to do, both jobwise and just in general. Loneliness and isolation were big things. But working at the pub gives you a sense of being part of something – you're involved with your co-workers, with the community, with those visiting. You feel like you're important and you make a difference for other people." Her experience highlights how community-owned venues not only create employment opportunities but also tackle isolation and support young people's wellbeing and sense of belonging.

02/06/2026 by Timothy Hampson

Government urged to listen to cidermakers

Industry



Thatcher's Cider MD Martin Thatcher called on the government to listen to the industry to create the right

environment for long-term success. Thatcher, who is also the National Association of Cider Makers chair, said at a Houses of Parliament reception for the industry: "Cider makers are not just producers; we are farmers and hospitality workers too. Our annual wasail held last month – a cherished tradition where communities come together to bless the orchards for a prosperous harvest – reminded us of the importance of caring for today's resources to ensure tomorrow's prosperity. "The administrative burden created by new taxes and policies, changes to inheritance tax, business rates, national insurance rises and on-going duty rises, are all placing significant pressure on our industry. These challenges extend to our supply chain, affecting our suppliers and customers. "With the government's ambition for economic growth, our goals are aligned. We ask policymakers to listen to the cider industry, understand its needs and take meaningful action. By working

together, we can create the right conditions for long-term success." The reception for the industry, which contributes £2.7bn to the economy and supports more than 65,000 jobs, was hosted by Sarah Dyke, MP for Glastonbury and Somerton. She said: "Cider is a proud part of our heritage in Somerset and across the UK. Events like this, when the industry can come together to honour the dedication and craftsmanship of British cider makers are such wonderful occasions. I'm delighted to raise a glass in parliament to recognise their vital contribution to our rural communities and economy." Pictured Sarah Dyke and Martin Thatcher

28/04/2026 by Timothy Hampson

Staying cool on planet Earth

Opinion

One of the astronauts on the mission to the moon in April said planet Earth looked



beautiful when seen from space. But planet Earth runs the risk of being burnt to a crisp unless all of us – governments, industries and the

general populace – take action to tackle climate change. It's therefore encouraging to find brewers and farmers joining forces to help save the planet. "Regenerative farming" may not trip easily off the tongue, but it's a system that avoids artificial fertilisers and agrichemicals, allowing barley and other plants to grow naturally. The pioneers of the system are the Rothschilds, the financiers and benefactors who farm at Waddesdon Manor, 6,000 acres of prime land on the Bucks/Oxon border. The estate includes a hotel and the manager contacted the Chiltern brewery with a view to stocking its beers. Chiltern was founded in 1980 and is one of the country's oldest small craft breweries. It was founded by Richard Jenkinson and is now run by his sons Tom and George who produce such delicious

beers as Beechwood Bitter and Bodgers Barley Wine. They did me the great honour in 2025 of making a special edition of the barley wine called Roger's Bodgers to thank me for my support for the independent brewery sector. The Jenkinsons use, as far as possible, all British ingredients and they were impressed with Waddesdon's farming methods. As a result, the farmers now grow Maris Otter, considered the finest malting barley due to its rich biscuit and honey flavours and its ability to work in harmony with yeast. When the grain is harvested it travels to Warminster Maltings in Wiltshire where it is turned by hand on heated floors rather than germinating in rotating drums that use far more energy. From start to finish the grain is grown, harvested and malted in tune with the environment. And now bigger brewers are joining the fray. As reported in What's Brewing (30 April) the Japanese brewer Asahi, which owns Fuller's in West London, is buying its malt from farmers using the regenerative system. Asahi is working with Boortmalt to encourage British farmers to lower greenhouse gas emissions when they grow grain. We're talking of large amounts of grain: 3,050 metric tonnes of pale malt a year that accounts for 90 per cent of all the malts used at the Chiswick brewery. Participating farmers will be encouraged to cover the surface of their soil to allow it to feed on the natural sugars produced as plants grow. Two crops are grown side by side but only one is harvested. The second crop is left to feed the soil. Boortmalt says the system reduces tillage while crop rotation leads to a reduction in the use of fertilisers. There's enhanced soil fertility, higher crop yields and better water conservation. Asahi is also supporting two pioneering PhD research projects through FOR HOPS UK to raise awareness of the challenges facing hop farmers as a result of climate change. Rising temperatures and erratic rainfall lead to degraded soil and lower alpha acid content in the hops – it's the acids that give essential bitterness to beer. With poorer soil, it's harder for hops to recover and

grow a fresh batch. And there are fears that climate change will affect the flavour and quality of hops. There are only 45 hop farms left in the country and if that number falls, brewers will be forced to buy from abroad, leading to greater food miles and carbon emissions. Brewers of all sizes are taking steps to control carbon dioxide produced during fermentation. Even brewers who still use open fermenters have placed hoods above the vessels to stop CO₂ leaching into the atmosphere. The admirable efforts being made by brewers and farmers to combat climate change are playing a vital role as we face unprecedented challenges. The Guardian reported on 29 April the depth and severity of that challenge: "The Nordic heat wave is part of a record year that saw temperatures scorch most of Europe." Make sure your beer stays cool.

09/05/2026 by Roger Protz

Getting people to care is the key

Opinion



I didn't used to care. If it tasted okay and wasn't too expensive on the way to that warm fuzzy community feeling, I was happy. All the better if you were buying! Pushing through weighty, dark wooden doors towards a table surrounded by friends gathered as the day draws to an end. Sinking into familiar surroundings with well-worn seats and sympathetic ears. Glass in hand and not a thought for what was in it or how it had gotten there. It took a life-changing pivot in direction, and a more mindful approach to process and drinking habits, to shine the light on why I should care. Be it through age or circumstance, not everyone has an experience that moulds a new era of appreciation. I recently attended a discussion

between Sheila Dillon and Mallika Basu on what shapes what we eat and drink, and why it matters. Basu has written a book on the disconnect that humans in modern society have with their food and drink. Much of the discussion was on how history has shaped our relationship with food. From colonial influence on indigenous diets and cooking, to the enclosures act and industrialisation. Each has had its own influence and played its part in reshaping the place that food has in our lives. The discussion grappled the ways in which busy people with busy lives and little disposable income can rediscover the relationship that our ancestors, however distant, had with their diet. As I listened my mind kept slipping back to the parallels with what we drink. As food production has become ever disconnected from its source, so has drink. Does the environmental impact of apples shipped thousands of miles, even in concentrated form, or juice chilled to preserve its availability across unnatural seasons cross the mind of the consumer? Does the ecological impact of spraying crops, including orchards, play any part in product choice? How can these things be influential in consumer choice when green washing is so closely entwined with a whirling maelstrom of dazzling marketing spin? Who defines what local means? What do regenerative, rewilding, organic, sustainable, small producer, artisan, craft all mean? Where practices can be loosely adopted and terminology misinterpreted, consumers are being wilfully misdirected and manipulated. Provision of the facts is not the only factor in gaining an understanding. Clarity of concept and definition of terms are key ingredients to getting people to care. We have to ensure that the method and language of engagement is in a format that can be interpreted and understood. The market is as broad as it is for many reasons. When supermarkets care little of local products, exposure is reduced. Where so many pubs are tied in the products they

sell, the diversity of creativity is suppressed. Economies of scale and prioritisation of profit does both the craft and consumers an injustice. It's impossible to imagine retracing hundreds, if not thousands, of years of societal evolution, but can we hope that there can be a retracing of steps back to a time when craft was widely appreciated and valued over industry? Where craft averts from industry is getting people to care – one of the great pleasures of appreciation and devotion. If you're the grower – you care. If you're the maker – you care. If you're the avid fan – you care. If you're a connoisseur – you care. The work we do in supporting any link in the chain – pubs, bars, hospitality, orchards, cider, perry, makers and creators in any artistic endeavour is in getting people to listen and to care. The proof is in the palate. An industrially produced product can barely muster a retort to the character and profile of real ingredients and process. Where less really is more. Modern, commercial processes do not result in the same depth and lavish profiles as those from heritage methods. A can from a supermarket shelf wilts against the strength within a keved bottle direct from a maker. Of course, not everyone has the financial ability to choose real cider or real perry (any "real"). Small-scale, slow production costs more. Makers know and accept that but if there is no transparency, no honesty, no facts for the consumer to make an informed decision with; can we really say they're making a choice at all? "Thirty bags of apples were handpicked from that orchard there and juiced to make this cider." "One hundred trailers of apples from an orchard in France, were juiced to make this cider. That juice was concentrated and shipped for miles before it was then diluted with water, then sugar and some chemicals were added before it was carbonated". I know which I'd rather drink.

24/05/2026 by Claire Daniels



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and Debbie Goacher in 1983 and is still run by them and their eldest son, Howard, so one would think they should be very much in the IFBB firmament.

Some of the ales produced by the breweries on the IFBB list can be found in our region's pubs, notably Fuller's 'London Pride', Timothy Taylor 'Landlord' and 'Boltmaker', St. Austell 'Tribute' and 'Proper Job', Harvey's 'Sussex Best', and should you include Wetherspoon's then quite often a number of others – Hook Norton, Hogs Back, Theakstons, Titanic and more. Also, in our area The Greyhound, Aldbury, is owned by Hall & Woodhouse, as is The Cock just over the region border in Sarratt.

Finally, to quote from the IFBB website, *"Family brewers are at the heart of the UK's brewing and pub tradition. With our values, standards and culture, we are custodians of*

the genuine Brewery Tie model. Our perspective is for the long term. We invest in our people, our breweries, our beers and our pubs with a clear and sustained focus that brings employment and prosperity to local rural communities".

With my sceptical head on and my professional background I know a corporate mission statement when I see one. However, if after thirty-three years they are indeed in it 'for the long term' and will bring 'employment and prosperity to local rural communities' they get my vote and I would encourage support of their breweries and pubs. The family brewing legacy goes back over two hundred years and – although changed over time – I believe that the principles espoused way back then are as sound and viable now as they were at their inception.

Richard Abraham


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Pub and bar company closures have doubled over the last five years as operators battle rising costs, taxes and changing habits.

Nearly 800 pubs and bars closed last year in England, Scotland and Wales, up three per cent on 2024.

The sector is fighting to cope with high staff, energy and ingredients costs, increased regulatory demands and changes to consumer behaviour.

Revolution Bars is the biggest casualty of 2026 so far and more insolvencies are expected.

The number of pubs and bar companies collapsing into insolvency rose 2.6 per cent from 769 to 789 over the year to 31 December, according to an analysis of insolvency data by UHY Hacker Young.

That increase was largely driven by a 33 per cent rise in the number of pub businesses closing in Scotland, where the failures rose from 40 to 53 last year. Pub and bar business insolvencies rose in England and Wales from 729 to 736.

The 789 pubs and bars groups in England, Scotland and Wales that fell into insolvency last year was more than double the 367 that went under in 2020. Among the notable failures in 2025 was cricket-themed chain Sixes, which was backed by England captain Ben Stokes, and Oakman Inns, the pubs and hotels chain.

This year has already seen the collapse of Revolution bars owner the Revel collective, as well as the closure of 38 out of the 49 bars operated by collapsed BrewDog.

Peter Kubik, partner at UHY Hacker Young, said more operators are likely to fall into insolvency as they battle ongoing headwinds, ranging from increased staffing costs, higher energy and food and drinks bills, and increased red tape, such as changes to waste disposal regulations.

Additionally, pubs and bars operators have to contend with fewer people going out due to the

squeeze on household finances, reduced alcohol consumption and price competition from supermarkets. For operators carrying heavy debt, it has compounded the problems they already face with rising interest rates.

“Pubs and bars are firefighting on several fronts and with the exception of Covid-19 and 2024, insolvencies have risen every year over the past decade. I would not be surprised to see more,” Kubik said.

“Pub groups will be worried how war in the Gulf is going to impact their energy prices. The government will be giving pubs a 15 per cent discount on pubs and bar groups’ business rates bills from April, but it simply is not enough when you look at the costs and burdens they face. It is like giving someone facing a tidal wave in a small boat a bucket.”

Since 2020, the average cost of a pint of lager across the UK has risen from £3.75 to £4.83, with even steeper price rises in major cities like London. Cost-of-living concerns have made people more reluctant to spend on going out after work or at weekends, especially when supermarkets’ alcohol prices are far cheaper.

Pubs and bars after work footfall is depressed due to the number of people that still work from home, as is the increasing number of non-drinkers. In England, 24 per cent of the population did not touch alcohol during the course of 2024, up from 19 per cent in 2022, rising to 39 per cent for people aged 16-24.

Kubik said: “The demographic and behaviour changes pubs and bars face are particularly concerning. Young people are drifting away from having a drink after work and drinking at all, which means pubs and bars’ customer base is getting older and will continue to decline unless something changes.”

Timothy Hampson, 24 March.

Pints, Places and Stories: Summer with The Chiltern Brewery. As spring gives way to summer, there is always a sense of excitement around the Brewery. George Jenkinson looks forward to summer brews.

The days lengthen, the pub doors open wider, and the first proper warm afternoons suggest that a well-kept pint must be one of life's more sensible ideas!

With this in mind, we think you will enjoy a look at what is currently pouring, what is waiting in our vessels, and what else is happening just down the road at our historic brewery tap, The King's Head in Aylesbury.

First, the beer. Our Brewers' Forecast of Pints in the Pipeline is looking especially inviting, with returning favourites, seasonal specials and a handful of limited Small Batch brews on the way. Already available is our **Oak Aged Vintage Ale**, a 6.0% limited edition bottle-conditioned ale with rich notes of vanilla, caramel, dark malt and a warming oak character. It is one of those beers made for lingering over, and each individually numbered bottle feels rather special.

Also out now is **Come Rain or Shine**, a 4.3% hazy New Zealand pale ale, bright with lime, tropical fruit and a soft, modern finish from Motueka and Nectar hops. It is fresh, juicy and very much made for the kind of British weather that can never quite make up its mind!

Coming next are several beers worth watching for. **Chalk Stream**, a 4.6% Small Batch brew, is clean, golden and beautifully drinkable Kolsch-style beer, with a crisp finish made for late spring and early summer. Our **Father's Day Flagon** also returns: a 100cl annual favourite that has become something of a tradition for beer-loving dads, grandads and flagon enthusiasts.

Then, with summer properly underway, there is **Ale of Two Halves**, a 3.4% session ale brewed with the football in mind: smooth, balanced and carrying a crisp citrus note. Following that is **Summer Meadow**, a 4.5% Cheers!

Small Batch brew with soft bitterness, citrus and floral notes, golden in colour and gentle in finish. As ever with our Small Batch releases, once they are gone, they are gone.

All of these beers can be found through the Brewery Shop and local pubs, where there is always something interesting to discover, whether you are stocking up, trying something new, or simply looking for a good excuse to call in.

Beer is only part of the story though; The King's Head tells the rest! Our brewery tap is far more than a pub. Dating back to 1455, it is one of England's oldest public houses, and its rooms, beams, cellars and corners carry the marks of centuries of Aylesbury life.

We started this year with the introduction of Pub Tours. These are relaxed, story-led and informal and a chance to step behind the scenes, hear tales from the bar and cellar, see rooms and artefacts not usually open to guests, and ask questions along the way. No two tours are quite the same, which is very much part of their charm.

Tours have proved so popular they have all sold out weeks in advance, so we have recently added extra guided tours in and July due to demand.

So, whether your interest lies in a new seasonal pint, a Small Batch bottle, or the stories hidden inside a remarkable old pub, we would be very pleased to welcome you.

For beer, visit the Brewery Shop or **chilternbrewery.co.uk**.

For King's Head tours, visit **kingsheadaylesbury.co.uk**.

George Jenkinson, Partner at the Chiltern Brewery

The tale of Vale – a brewery renewed

Tim Hickford, Beer Sommelier, took a look at Vale Brewery.



The beers of Vale Brewery have been a regular feature in the pubs of our region for three decades, but those with a keen eye may have noticed a discernible ramping up of activity by the Brill based business in the last couple of years. That is since

local brothers Joe and Jimmy Brouder purchased the company in 2021.

Originally founded in 1995 in Haddenham, Buckinghamshire, before moving to Brill in 2007. Vale had appeared to be somewhat on the wane by the time of the pandemic. The company had sold off the several pubs it had owned, and the beers were slowly becoming harder to find in the regions watering holes. However, this apparent lull was, thankfully, short lived.

Following their purchase, the Brouder brothers immediately set to building up production once more and pushing Vale brews back into pubs. It appeared to be a return to business as normal. However, things went up a gear in 2024, when the company underwent a complete rebrand, visually bringing the business into the modern era, whilst enhancing its aesthetic ties with the local area. This rebrand went on to win 'rebrand of the year' at the Brewers Congress Awards 2025.

The beer range has since also been expanded to include new brews such as Electric Sheep

(4.3%) a pale ale, brewed with American Citra Hops, which has joined long-time staples such as Gravitas pale ale (4.8%) Black Beauty porter (4.4%) and, my personal favourite, Black Swan mild (3.9%). Due to the growing demand for their brews, production capacity has been increased several times in recent years, with the latest increase coming from the installation of two new fermentation vessels, which were added to the brewery in March of this year. Each one of these new tanks is capable of holding up to 5,280 pints at a time and combined, they should help produce around a quarter of a million more pints, every

single year! These newly installed vessels are called uni-tanks, a type of conical-bottomed pressurised fermenter, which make it far easier to produce modern style hop-forward keg ales and lagers. A new hazy pale ale called Arcadia (5.0%) has already been released and has won its first permanent listing at The Hop Pole pub in Aylesbury. Vale have also recently released



Cloudburst (4.2%) a hazy pale, brewed with Citra, Simcoe, Idaho 7 and Azacca hops. No doubt both Arcadia and Cloudburst will start to appear shortly in pubs within the Mid-Chilterns region, if they haven't done so already.

Beer is always best drunk fresh, and it doesn't get much fresher than drinking it at the brewery itself. Vale has a taproom on site at the brewery. It's open Thursday-Sunday (hours change seasonally) for drinking in, whilst take-out beers can be bought every day of the week. The taproom hosts street food vendors on regular Saturdays throughout the warmer months too, so lovely pints of Vale

feature | ONE FOR THE ROAD

ales can be accompanied by delicious dishes. Brewery tours are held monthly on Saturdays and are a great opportunity to find out how their beers are brewed.

Most recently, Vale have relaunched their sub-brand, ABC. ABC is the experimental arm of the business, in which a new, innovative beer is produced every single month; a one-off batch, never to be repeated. Old Toby, (5%) a smoked porter brewed with the heritage malt variety Chevallier was a recent offering, who knows what will come next!

All this activity in recent years goes to show that under Joe and Jimmy's ownership, Vale are a brewery keen to grow, willing to adapt, and eager to move with the times. That sounds like a recipe for success to me.



www.valebrewery.co.uk

Tim Hickford is a local beer sommelier. Further beer articles can be found on his website Beerwithtim.co.uk. He can be followed on Instagram @beerwithtim

This article first appeared in Vale Life May/June 2026

EST 1995

VALE BREWERY

Shop
Bottles • cans • gifts
Mon - Thur 9 - 4:30
Fri 9 - 8
Sat 12 - 6
Sun CLOSED

Taproom
Drinks in • draught takeaway
Mon - Thur CLOSED
Fri 3 - 8
Sat 12 - 6
Sun CLOSED

Buy online!

- ✓ MONTHLY BREWERY TOURS, STREET FOOD & LIVE MUSIC
- ✓ BEER FOR PARTIES & EVENTS
- ✓ FRESH DRAUGHT TO TAKEAWAY
- ✓ JOIN THE BEER CLUB FOR FREE BEER, 10% OFF EVERYTHING & MORE
- ✓ TAPROOM PRIVATE HIRE AVAILABLE
- ✓ GIFT SETS, VOUCHERS AND MERCHANDISE

VALE BRILL GOLD 3.1% GOLDEN ALE

VALE BEST 3.7% IPA

VALE WYCHERT 3.9% BITTER

VALE VPA 4.3% PALE ALE

VALE RED KITE 4.1% CHESTNUT BITTER

VALE BLACK BEAUTY 2.1% PORTER

VALE GRAVITAS 4.3% PALE ALE

X f @ValeBrewery | www.ValeBrewery.co.uk

Vale Brewery, Ludgershall Road, Brill, HP18 9TY

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.

How's your cask beer?

Rating	Description	Your reaction
Excellent	Exceptional and clear (if intended to be) with fantastic aromas, flavours and ideal carbonation.	Superb! You tell your friends and compliment the cellar manager.
Very good	Satisfying and well-kept with a great appearance, good carbonation and enticing aromas and flavours.	You consider having another and may cancel plans to move to another pub.
Good	Nice appearance, good carbonation, aromas and flavour.	Pleasant but not memorable. You're happy to have another but might consider something else.
Acceptable	Unremarkable and ordinary, with no noteworthy characteristics.	You're unlikely to have another unless it is all there is and there isn't another pub to go to.
Poor	Noticeably imperfect.	Drinkable with resentment, but you politely ask for a replacement.
Undrinkable	Unpleasant to drink, likely with a disgusting taste, incorrect appearance and off/foul aroma.	You politely ask for it to be replaced and consider asking the publican to take it off.

Scoring beer in pubs is really easy!

The National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) is how we judge the availability and quality of beer in pubs and clubs across the UK.

It is an easy-to-use rating system that has been designed to help CAMRA branches select pubs for the Good Beer Guide and monitor beer quality.

If you are a CAMRA member, we want you to tell us what you're drinking and how you would rate the beer, whenever you drink it in a pub or club.

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

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

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.
- 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.

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!

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](https://www.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!

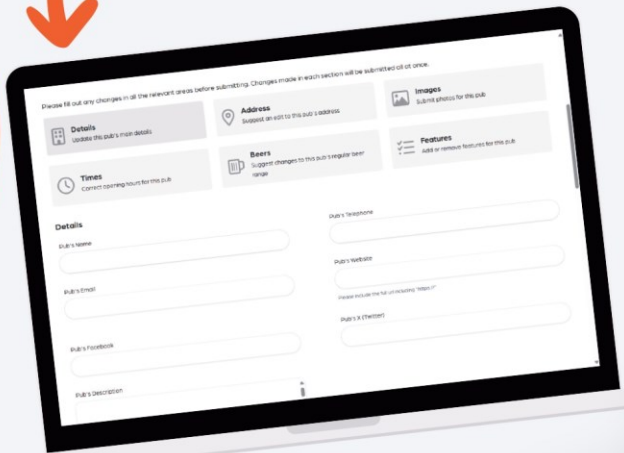
Notice an error or missing details? Help us keep our pub & club information accurate by sharing any corrections or updates you spot.

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.

Keg beer dispensing equipment

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

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

AIR DUCTS
 AIR LINES
 BEER LINES
 BREATHER
 CARBON DIOXIDE
 CLEANING KIT
 COMPACT COOLER
 DRAFT SHANK
 DRAFT TAPS
 DRAFT TOWER

DRIP TRAY
 FORCED AIR BLOWER
 GAS BLENDER
 GAS CYLINDER
 GLYCOL CHILLER
 GLYCOL TRUNK LINE
 JOCKEY BOX
 JUBILEE CLIPS
 KEG CART

KEG CLEANING KIT
 KEG COUPLER
 KERERATOR
 KEGS
 KEY KEG
 NITROGEN
 PRIMARY REGULATOR
 PUMP
 TAP HANDLE

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THE BLACK LION

FREE HOUSE

8 REAL ALES

8 TRADITIONAL
CIDERS

100+
CONTINENTAL
BEERS

OVER 300
PREMIUM GINS
& SPIRITS



DOG FRIENDLY

14 CRAFT
BEER LINES

LARGE
COURTYARD
GARDEN

UNDER 21s
WELCOME
UNTIL 5PM

THE BARN:
MON-FRI from 3PM
SAT-SUN from 12PM

UPCOMING EVENTS

JAZZ WEEK: 6th - 12th JULY

HOPS IN THE TROPICS: 24th - 31st AUGUST

LIVE MUSIC EVERY WEDNESDAY FROM 5PM



@BLACKLION.LB
@THEBARN_BLACKLION_LB



THE BLACK LION
LEIGHTON BUZZARD



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LEIGHTON BUZZARD
LU7 1EA