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The Chiltern Tapler

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

Autumn 2026 (Sept – Nov)



The Greyhound, Aldbury

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NEXT EDITION

The next edition of *The Chiltern Tapler* will be published in late November/early December 2026. Articles, photos and other contributions are welcomed and should be sent to tapler@midchilterns.camra.org.uk no later than **Friday 20 November**

SOCIAL MEDIA

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

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A word from the editors

Welcome to your Autumn issue of the Tapler where Andy and I, indeed our entire Mid-Chilterns Branch committee, hope you have had a great summer – difficult though it was at times not to melt! Should you be an aficionado of our region's marvellous pub gardens – which you will know, I am not – then you have certainly enjoyed a summer almost without parallel.

As regular readers of this fine tome will know, in addition to my not being fan of pub gardens, you will also be aware – amid my scribbings – that I am an avid reader of regional CAMRA seasonal publications. Currently my list, though not exclusive, includes those from York, Hereford, The Wirral, Bristol, Norfolk and more. This is not solely because I've enjoyed – for some sixty-eight years – reading about all things pubs, ales and community involvement. My other somewhat (to be fair, rather ale-orak) self-interested rationale for this is because I remotely 'pick the brains' of some great writers, and dare one say, thinkers on our mutually enjoyable subject. Often that is from the 'pen' of the likes of the great Roger Protz, Laura Hadland or others of the Guild of Beer Writers, that body recently joined by our esteemed Chairman, Jared Ward-Brickett - when I always rightly give them full credit with their name beneath the article. In this issue, I have been permitted to use a piece on 'How Old is your Local' by the Buckinghamshire professional genealogist and house historian, Cathy Soughten.

But, by reading the output of those – though they may not be older – they are likely wiser and more experienced than am I, I learn all sorts of stuff I did not know. One of these is statistics which, whilst very important in relation to pub closures, Pubcos ownership, leases and the bottom line etc, I do try not to bang on about too much: the details are all available on the internet, CAMRA website and many other places. Reading a West Country CAMRA publication, I came across the term

'third places' – of which I was blissfully unaware – a descriptive location where our beloved pubs find themselves. Easy to understand I guess as first place is home, second is work and along comes the third! Places which are spaces for socialisation (something of a mouthful) and includes cafes, sports clubs/gyms, churches, village halls, social clubs, various associations and – you'll not be too surprised to hear – in first place in the UK is pubs!

That statistic (sorry, didn't mean to mention that word) alone should convince those who fail to understand what the great British pub is all about, that these establishments are very important to our economy, mental wellbeing, sense of community, social interaction, and a raft of other vital requirements of our society. From central Government down (or up, depending on your perspective) this message should be dinned into all those who hold any sway in decision making where the hospitality industry is concerned.

It took a Frenchman, Hillaire Belloc, in his essay of 1912 to state the bleedin' obvious when he wrote, "Change your hearts, or you will lose your inns, and you will deserve to have lost them. But when you have lost your inns, drown your empty selves - for you will have lost the last of England". For England, read the rest of the United Kingdom too. A more up-to-date reference to those who work in pubs, which is absolutely spot-on, is that "bar staff are the unpaid social workers of Britain, and pubs are 'non-government community centres'"

Please enjoy this magazine and if you find it in the many pubs in our region, take a copy home and share it with family and friends. You may also consider, unless already a member, joining CAMRA as we are the predominant campaigning organisation for real ales, ciders and – most importantly – pubs. In fact, we are Europe's largest beer consumer group and

one of its most successful consumer organisations.

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

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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.

Contributors

Page (s)	Contributor	Page (s)	Contributor
5, 13, 50	Andrew Harvell	30	WB reporter
5, 13, 34	Richard Abraham	41	George Jenkinson
10	Mike Goldwater	40	Tim Hickford
28, 32, 33	Laura Hadland		
29, 31, 32, 38	Roger Protz		

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regular | ADVERTISING AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

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

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

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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
Autumn – Sept/Oct/Nov	21 August	Late August/Early September

Advertising Rates

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	1-3 issues	4 issues	
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Inside cover A5	£120	£110	£110
Full page A5	£120	£110	£110
Half page	£72	£65	£65
Quarter-page	£45	£40	£40

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

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

Note: Once an advert is placed, it will run until you cancel it 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.

SEPTEMBER

WEDS 2 SEPTEMBER

Branch Meeting (8pm)

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

17 – 27 SEPTEMBER

Cask Ale Week (National)

The annual celebration of Britain's national drink
<http://www.caskaleweek.co.uk>

WEDS 23 - SAT 26 SEPTEMBER

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

24 SEPTEMBER

The Good Beer Guide 2026 is Published

OCTOBER

WEDS 9 OCTOBER

Branch Meeting and AGM (7:30pm)

The Full House, 128 Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1EZ

SAT 31 OCTOBER

Autumn Social (12 pm) – The Wendover Trail

Start at The King & Queen (South Street), Shoulder of Mutton (Pound Street), The White Swan (High Street), Craft Yard, The Red Lion, The George & Dragon, and The Pack Horse.

Public transport: Travel by Carousel 1 towards High Wycombe, from Hemel Hempstead Bus Station to Amersham, and then by train on the Chiltern Line to Wendover from Amersham.

By road: Take the A41 to the Tring/Wendover turnoff and follow the signs to Wendover.

NOVEMBER

WEDS 4 NOVEMBER

Branch Meeting (8pm)

The Black Horse, The Vale, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 3NS

DECEMBER

WEDS 2 DECEMBER

Branch Meeting (8pm) – with Christmas Trimmings

Boot and Slipper, 2 Rickmansworth Road, Amersham, HP6 5JN

SAT 5 DECEMBER

Winter Social (12pm) – Bloomsbury Trail

Details to follow.

SAT 12 DECEMBER

Social – Informal get together (noon onwards) – The Piggeries, Tring Brewery

Pre-Christmas informal social. Come along for festive cheer and share a pint or two with friends.
 The Piggeries, Tring Brewery, Dunsley farm, London Road, Tring, HP23 6HA.

JANUARY 2027

WEDS 6 JANUARY

Branch Meeting (8pm)

The Paper Mill, Stationers Place, Apsley, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 9RH

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

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

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

Dates may be subject to change.

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

Hemel Old Town Beer Festival

Review of the Hemel Old Town Beer Festival 2026 by a visiting fellow CAMRA member.



On the third weekend of July, the Hemel Old Town Beer Festival rolled into town in again, now in its fourth year. Since its inception back in 2023, it has been held at the grounds of St. Mary's Church, markedly the oldest building in Hemel Hempstead, dating from the 12th century. This festival is co-organised between Mid Chilterns CAMRA branch and St Mary's Church, since it's a non-for-profit event the proceeds are split between the two organisations with any surplus going towards the upkeep of the church building and local pubs. This year's festival selection was organised by beer orderer Alex Baker (former



cellar manager of a Pub of the Year award within their branch). Among the selection were a number of beers from one of Hertfordshire's largest brewers, Tring, including core-brand fixtures like **Mansion Mild (3.7%)**, seasonal specials in the form of the gloriously drinkable summer ale **Fanny Ebbs (3.9%)** and the festival exclusive **Colley's Glory (6.2%)**, a blend of their ruby-coloured ESB, **Colley's Dog (5.2%)**, with the barley wine **Death or Glory (7.2%)**. The main festival bar was located in the church building itself, there were over 30 cask ales on offer,

mainly from local breweries located in the Herts/ Bucks region like Tring, Vale, Rebellion and Mad Squirrel respectively, but with a decent representation from breweries across the UK as well.

The main bar was split into two, with the larger John Lomax bar offering bitters, pales, golden ales, IPA's and strong ales, while the smaller Dave Lewin Bar was dedicated to dark ales, offering a small yet decent selection of porters, stouts and milds. This kind of arrangement is unusual for a beer festival, but it ensured that all drinkers were catered for.



Two volunteers busy serving beer in the Dave Lewin Bar

Many of the beers on offer were sponsored by local businesses and individuals, among the highlights of the beer selection were classics like **Bass (4.4%)**, **Pale Rider (5.2%)**, **Wobbly Bob (6%)** and **Boddington's Bitter (4.4%)**, a Mancunian icon which was relaunched on cask last Autumn by J.W. Lees, a traditional amber-gold bitter it was a flavoursome display of gentle bitterness blended with grassy hops and bready malt. There were also a number of local regional favourites like **Wychert (3.9%)** and **Roasted Nuts (4.6%)** and the very local **Jupiter Heights (4.2%)** from the nearby Hop Tap micropub, even Champion Beer of Britain 2026, **Independence (4.6%)** from Bristol Beer Factory made an appearance. Over on the darker end of the EBC scale, there were a mixture of popular icons like **Landlord Dark (4.3%)** and the eminently light-bodied yet

malt-forward **Gravedigger's Mild (3.8%)** with its distinct chocolate and coffee notes, also on offer was a special collaboration beer in the form of **Old Toby (5%)** developed in conjunction between Vale Brewery and their subsidiary ABC, a smoked porter which lived up to its name, giving a smoky counterpoint to the bittersweet chocolate and coffee flavours engineered by the use of heritage malt variety Chevalier. There was even some pastry stouts on the roster including **Cherry Tonkoto (5.5%)** to the ridiculously sweet **Double Trouble Birthday Cake Stout (5%)** which surely holds the title for the best titled beer at the festival.

To cater for a wide range of drinkers, in the adjacent church hall building, the organisers



The cider/keg bar (left) and fizz bar (right), in the church hall

additionally set up a cider and perry bar, also holding the fort was a small keg bar primarily dominated by Tring Brewery, and a prosecco bar for the wine drinkers. On the cider/ perry front there were around 15 examples on display, there were well-known classics like **Devon Red (4.5%)** to cider and perry blends in the form of **Gardenia (4.8%)** made with Conference pears and elderflowers, there was even the likes of **Kingston Black (6.5%)** a rare dark cider that takes its name from the apple variety it uses, which gives off a distinct copper-red hue. While the traditional cider/perry growing regions of Devonshire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire were well represented there were some examples from

further afield like **Whisky Cask Cider (6.9%)** from Thistly Cross based near the east Lothian coast of Scotland, where the cider is matured in casks from Glen Moray distillery, giving a distinct Scottish take on cider. Moreover, there was also a healthy number of fruit ciders available like **Dance Commander Sour Cherry (3.9%)**, **Cloudy Strawberry Cider (4.8%)** and **Berry Lime Blitz (3.4%)**, if there is such a thing as craft cider, then assuredly this would be a reasonable interpretation.



Drinkers waiting to be served at the John Lomax Bar

Despite the relatively small number of beers, ciders and perries on offer, the festival was eminently popular with hundreds of punters flooding the venue, while most of the visitors were sprawled over the surrounding grounds



Festival goers enjoying drinks and picnics in the church grounds

soaking in the summer sun, a good deal took shelter inside the main-building and church hall. Such is the popularity of this festival, I

was informed by one of the volunteers that in the past they used to run low on stock by the end of the 2nd day; though festival organiser and Mid Chilterns CAMRA branch chairman Jared Ward-Brickett (also PR Director at Tring Brewery) has endeavoured to remedy this situation by personally sourcing more beer and cider from his brewery's cold store if required, they have also upped their beer



Drinkers enjoying the entertainment in the church

purchasing year on year based on forecasting with the option to restock on the interest of maximum surplus and minimal wastage. Moreover, when it came to the number of non-drink stalls, I found them rather modest in my opinion, while there were several on-site caterers perhaps a more diverse range of stalls including a snack booth, book stand, tombola, and a Brewerania table within the vicinity wouldn't have gone amiss, though admittedly this is often difficult for festival organisers to arrange when they are constricted to a small area. Yet as beer festivals go, the drinks selection was wide and varied, catering for all tastes, not bad for a festival limited not only by space but by the number of drinks it could supply punters, which is a measure of the organisers ingenuity. Although at its heart it is a small-scale festival catering for the local community, it offers a unique microcosm of larger festivals, giving both seasoned real-ale drinkers and newcomers the opportune insight into the wonderful world that beer, cider and perry has to offer.



Cheers to successful future Hemel Old Town Beer & Cider

By Mike Goldwater, Barnet & Enfield CAMRA.

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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.

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

East Malling Beer and Cider Festival, 5 September

East Malling Research Centre, New Road, East Malling, ME19 6BJ

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

[https://mmk.camra.org.uk/festival](http://mmk.camra.org.uk/festival)

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

Tamworth Beer Festival, 10 – 12 September

Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Corporation Street, Tamworth, B79 7DN

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

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

Moreton Beer and Cider Festival, 11 – 12 September

Moreton in Marsh Cricket Club, Batsford Road, Moreton in Marsh, GL5 9QA

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

<https://www.northcotswold.camra.org.uk/>

Kings Langley Beer & Fizz Festival, 11 – 13 September

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

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

Newbury Real Ale Festival, 12 September

Northcroft Playing Fields, Northcroft Lane, Newbury, RG14 1RS

<https://www.newburyrealale.co.uk/home>

Hogs Back Hop Harvest Festival, 12 September

Hogs Back Brewery Ltd, Manor Farm, The St., Tongham, Farnham, GU10 1DE

<https://hogsback.co.uk>

York Beer and Cider Festival, 16 – 19 September

St Lawrence Parish Church, Lawrence Street, York, YO10 3WP

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

<https://yorkbeerfestival.uk/>

Bluebell Railway Beer Festival, 18 – 20 September

Bluebell Railway, Railway Approach, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 1EB

<https://www.bluebell-railway.com/>

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.](#)

STALBANSBF.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.](#)

calderdale.camra.org.uk/2026-calderdale-beer-and-cider-festival

26 September

Unit4 Taproom, Windsor & Eton Brewery, Unit 1 Vansittart Estate, Duke Street, Windsor, SL4 1SE

11th-13th SEPTEMBER 2026



FRIDAY 4-11PM | SAT 12-11PM | SUN 12-7PM
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OCTOBER

Ayrshire Beer and Cider Festival

1 – 3 October

Tron Concert Hall, South Beach, Troon, KA10 6EF

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

www.ayrshirebeerfestival.co.uk

London Oktoberfest

1 – 3 October

Finsbury Park, Hornsey, London N4 1EE

<https://ondon-oktoberfest.co.uk>

Carmarthenshire CAMRA Beer and Cider Festival, 1 – 3 October

St Peter's Civic Hall, 1 Nott Square, Carmarthen, SA31 1BA

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

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

“Beer From the Boundary”, Leverstock Green Cricket Club Beer Festival, 2 – 4 October

The Green, Bedmond Road, HP3 8LJ

<https://lgcc.hitscricket.com/>

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

48th Bedford Beer & Cider Festival, 7 – 10 October

Bedford Corn Exchange, St Paul's Square, MK40 1SL

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

<https://northbeds.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=278029>

Forest Tavern Beer Festival, 9 – 11 October

173 Forest Ln, Forest Gate, London, E7 9BB

<https://foresttavern.co.uk>

Orpington Liberal Club Autumn Real Ale & Cider Festival, 9 – 11 October

7 Station Rd, Orpington, BR6 0RZ

<https://orpingtonliberalclub.co.uk/real-ale-and-cider-festival/>

Derby Heritage Beer Festival, 14 – 17 October

Derby Market Hall, Market Hall, Derby, DE1 2DB

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

https://derby.camra.org.uk/Derby_Beer_Festival/

Portobello Beer Festival at the Royal Albert, 15 – 18 October

460 New Cross Road, London, SE14 6TJ

<https://royalalbertpub.co.uk/beer-festival/>

Weymouth Octoberfest, 16 – 17 October

The Weymouth Pavilion, The Esplanade, Weymouth, DT4 8ED

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

<https://camrawdorset.org.uk/>

Steel City Beer and Cider Festival, 21 – 24 October

Kelham Island Museum, Alma Street, Sheffield, S3 8RY

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

<https://sheffield.camra.org.uk/scbf/>

Redhill Beer Festival, 21 – 24 October

Merstham Village Hall, Station Road North, Merstham, RH1 3ED

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

<https://ems.camra.org.uk/festival>

Norwich Beer Festival, 26 -

The Halls, St Andrew's Plain, Norwich, NR3 1AU

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

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

Carlisle Beer and Cider Festival, 29 – 31 October

Station Hotel, Court Square, Carlisle, CA1 1QY

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

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

Datchet Beer Festival, 30 – 31 October

Datchet Village Hall, 3 Allen Way, Berkshire, SL3 9HR

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

Poole Beer Festival, 30 – 31 October

St Aldhems Centre, Poole Road, Branksome, Poole, BH12 1AD

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

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

Woolston Beer Festival, 30 – 31 October

Pear Tree Church Hall, SO19 7GZ

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

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

Castle Inn Halloween Ale & Cider Festival, 30 October – 2 November

The Castle Inn, 12 – 14 Fitzroy Street, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 8HY

<https://www.facebook.com/castle.sandown>

NOVEMBER

Belfast Beer and Cider Festival, 5 – 7 November

Banana Block, Port View Trade Centre, Belfast, BT4 1HE

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

<https://belfastbeerfestival.co.uk>

Teddington Beer Festival, 5 – 8 November

Landmark Arts Centre, Ferry Road, Teddington, TW11 9NN

<https://landmarkartscentre.org>

Alloa Real Ale and Cider Festival, 6 – 7 November

Alloa Town Hall, Marshall, Alloa, FK10 1AB

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

<https://www.facebook.com/events/s/33rd-alloa-real-ale-and-cider-2803077986722420>

Egham Beer Festival, 11 – 14 November

United Services Club, 111 Spring Rise, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9PE

www.eghambeerfestival.co.uk/

Beer by the Sea, Southend, 12 – 14 November

Palace Hotel, Per Hill, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 2AL

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

www.see.camra.org.uk

Kidderminster Beer and Cider Festival, 12 – 14 November

Kidderminster Harriers Sports & Social Club, Stadium Close, Kidderminster, DY10 1NB

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

<https://www.wyreforest.camra.org.uk/>

Newark Winter Beer and Cider Festival, 20 – 21 November

Newark Town Hall, Market Place, Newark-on-Trent, NG24 1DU

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

<https://newark.camra.org.uk/index.php/beer-festival/>

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

Haddenham Beer Festival, 12 – 14 December

Banks Park, by Village Hall, Haddenham, Bucks, HP17 8EE

www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk/winterfest

JANUARY 2027

Exeter Festival of Beer, 14 – 16 January

Exeter Corn Exchange, Market Street, Exeter, EX1 1BV

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

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

Source: UK Beer Festival Calendar (beer-festival-calendar.co.uk), Richard Abraham. CAMRA.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: Chiltern Brewery. **Bedford:** Brewpoint (Wells & Co).

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

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

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

Hoddesdon: New River Brewery.

Leighton Buzzard: Leighton Buzzard Brewing Co. **Little Horwood:** Church Street Brewery.

Long Crendon: XT Brewing Company.

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

Milton Keynes: Hornes Brewery, Bucks Star, Blackened Sun.

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. **Colehill:** 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. **Wigginton:** 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 crownners 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 Old Palace, Kings Langley

The Old Palace has been nominated for the 2026 Community Pub Hero Awards following a survey conducted by Gagan Mohindra, MP for Southwest Hertfordshire.

The MP said that the number of nominations for The Old Palace from residents was “overwhelming” and commend it for being “a proper community pub”.

The ceremony for the national award is set to take place at the House of Commons on Tuesday, September *, in partnership with the All-Party Parliamentary Group.

The award is organised by Pub Aid who aim to celebrate the unsung heroes of the local community. With four categories available to nominate local pubs under the wide contributions pubs make to their communities are finally able to be recognised.

The Old Palace has been under new management since September 2025 and said they were thrilled to have been nominated.

Kings News, August 2026.

The Alford Arms, Frithsden

The Alford Arms in Frithsden, just outside Berkhamsted, has been taken over by Little Gems Country Dining following 28 years under the ownership of David and Becky Salisbury.

Known for its food, drink, and “warm hospitality,” the pub will now be operated by Little Gems Country Dining group.

The business is led by Jack and Millie Ashmore who already operate two other highly regarded pubs in and around the Chilterns – The Swan Inn in Denham and the Old Queen's Head in Penn.

The existing team has stayed on under the new management.

Herts Advertiser, 5 August.

Black Horse, Chesham Vale

The pub was recently renovated and re-opened on 12 June. It is traditional pub in The Vale, Chesham, Buckinghamshire, offering a warm, welcoming atmosphere alongside a modern British menu focused on high-quality local produce.

Blending classic pub charm with thoughtful contemporary design, The Black Horse has quickly become a go-to destination for locals and dog walkers across Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire.

Whether you're joining us for a relaxed lunch, evening drinks, or a traditional Sunday roast, The Black Horse is a place to eat, drink, and connect.

It is in the process of building a padel court, for the popular new sport, and already has a padel café.

The Akeman, Tring

The pub has changed its name to The Tufted Duck and is now under the ownership of Acorn Pubs.

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

News from some of the breweries in the LocAle area

Chiltern Brewery

North Lee Road, Terrick, Aylesbury,
HP17 0TQ

www.chilternbrewery.co.uk



Muddy Stilettos Awards 2026

Chiltern Brewery was the Bucks and Oxon Winner for **Best Artisan Food & Drink Producer** in the Muddy Stilettos Awards 2026 (Bucks & Oxon).

Seasonal and new brews

September

Kop Hill Ale — 3.7%

Amber, Tangerines, Smooth

Chiltern Dunkel – 5.0%

Toasted, Silky, Light Biscuit

October

Copper Beech – 4.4%

Burnt Orange, Smooth, Spicy, Rounded

Green Hop Ale 2026 – 4.0%

Herbal, Fresh, Lively

November

Oatmeal Stout – 4.1%

Black, Creamy, Smoky, Liquorice

Festive Foxtrot 3.9%

Claret, Mellow, Fruity and Rounded

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THE CHILTERN BREWERY
Beechwood Bitter
AWARD WINNING ALE

f X Instagram YouTube

December**Festive Foxtrot 3.9%**

Claret, Mellow, Fruity and Rounded

Hops in Blankets 4.4%

Stone Fruits, Passion Fruit, & Citrus Notes

Small Batch Brews (SBB)

Their core range, seasonals and small batches will be available in their Brewery Shop in Terrick, as well as online.

Alongside a **Session IPA** and new Small Batch Brew **Coast to Coast**, there are two Small Batch Brews in the pipeline, **Chiltern Dunkel** and **First Pick**.

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

Brewery tour dates

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

Mad Squirrel Brewery

Unit 18, Boxted Farm, Potten End,

Berkhamsted Rd HP1 2SG

www.madsquirrelbrew.co.uk**New Limited Release Cask Beer****The Shire Pale Ale 3.7%****Diablo IPA 4.8%****Brewery Tours**

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

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

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

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

Pope's Yard Brewery

Unit 12, Paramount Industrial Estate,

Sandown Road, Watford WD24 7XA

www.popesyard.co.uk

No update as yet.

For more information email:

ale@popesyard.co.uk

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EVENTS

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kitchen is now open
on Sundays!

FIND OUT MORE HERE

SCAN ME



📍 Marlow, Bucks, SL73LT
🌐 rebellionbeer.co.uk
📷 [rebellionbeer](https://www.instagram.com/rebellionbeer)
📘 [rebellionbeerco](https://www.facebook.com/rebellionbeerco)

Rebellion Beer Co

Bencombe Farm, Marlow Bottom,
Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 3LT
www.rebellionbeer.co.uk



Cask Monthly Specials: 2026 British Folkore

September: Harvest Spirit – 4.1%



Malty, comforting and full of harvest character, this is a beer that celebrates the season and the grains that make it possible. A combination of barley, wheat and oat malts add

layers of cereal flavour. UK hedgerow grown First Gold hops add an orange marmalade note.

October: Knucker - 4.2%.

A characterful red ale with a balanced hop profile.

November: Hellhound Porter - 4.4%.

A rich, dark porter with plenty of roasted malt character.

December: Holly King - 3.4%.

An easy-drinking amber ale with bright citrus notes.

Barrel-Aged Beer

The next release in our barrel-aged series will arrive in November. This Belgian Blonde has spent six months maturing in oak barrels previously used by our neighbours at Harrow & Hope vineyard. We're excited to discover the character these freshly emptied wine barrels have imparted to the beer.

Small Batch Range

Our ever-popular Small Batch range continues to showcase a varied selection of beers; each brewed in limited quantities and available for only a few weeks.

Releases planned for the remainder of the year include a Porter, Cardamom White Stout, Spruce Tip Ale and NEIPA.

Brewery News

The brewery is now open every Sunday! Our Shop, Drive-Through and Tap Yard are all open, so you can stop by for a beer and pick up some of your favourites to take away.

The Rebellion Kitchen is also serving food every Sunday from 10am to 4.30pm, with breakfast baps available from 10am to noon and Yorkshire pudding wraps served from noon to 4.30pm.

Tring Brewery

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

www.tringbrewery.co.uk



Pigjam

Tring Brewery held their first annual charity event featuring live music, beer and cider festival, and more!

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

All ticket sales went to their charity, Berkhamsted & District First Responders, with a magnificent £3,787.83 raised.

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🌐 www.tringbrewery.co.uk



Seasonal Special

Squadron Scramble – 4.0% (September to November)

Brewed to commemorate the Battle of Britain.



Brewed to commemorate the Battle of Britain, this ale is characterised by a debonair medium light colour and a daredevil maltiness that compliments

a courageous hop aroma from the best Mount Hood hops.

This works well with a good welsh rarebit – brown bread, strong cheddar and smoked bacon for the sauce, wholegrain mustard.

Santa's Little Helper – 4.8% (December)

Warming winter ale.



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

cold heart of Scrooge.

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

Monthly Specials

September

Citrus n'Sirens - 3.9% ABV

Zippy and zingy US Pale

This session pale is enlightened by vivid fruity US hops Simcoe and Citra, blended with oats for a smooth palate. Glints of citrus and pine oscillate throughout.

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

September is one of the best months to visit your local pub. Experience the change of seasons as fleeting glints of sunlight illuminates the beer garden. Not before long, as the air begins to cool, hurried retreats are made to log-fire warmed snugs. Pub-grub comes through on both these instances. Try gammon, egg and chips in the sun. The dish's salinity and obligatory pineapple slice will taste great matched with the beer's citrus-led American hops. For a more cockle-warming plate, such as beer-battered cod with a squeeze of lemon juice, mushy peas and tartar sauce – floral notes sing once more as tart citrus combines with the zingy hops. An added bonus; the beer's zippy palate cuts through heavy, stodgy mouthfuls.

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

October

Shock Horror – 4.3%

A thrilling incantation of an Extra Special Bitter.

A direct currant of malty goodness is administered upfront. Hop bitterness courses through a robust grain bill featuring rich Black Malt. This beer is a bold incantation of an Extra Special Bitter.

It is said that, before anything else, the success of a beer and food matching hinges on intensity. With this, a big beer commands a hearty plate. We've gone for a national staple in the roast dinner as both pairing components – the beer and the food – are rich and complex. For the meat we've chosen beef, accompanied by in-season potatoes, parsnips and cauliflower (in the form of cauli-cheese). When meat is cooked, the Maillard reaction teases out deep, roasty flavours as the colour of the food deepens. This roasty profile can likewise be found in the beer, while the malt bill's lighter notes, such as brioche and honey, will complement the seasonal vegetables. Time to plate up!

November

Brews and Twos -

Smooth, session-strength US pale

Good things come in pairs, such as the duo of American hops used in this highly drinkable session beer. Azacca features with notes of tropical fruit and mango, while Citra brings lemon and lime flavours to this US-style pale ale.

The sun is gone and nights are long – we've flung open the kitchen cupboards to raise the temperature. Keep things easy with the time-honoured matching of pale beer and a hot curry. You could dissect the universal celebration of this pairing, though we've chosen to cast off gastronomic inspection for the sake of straightforward enjoyment. Simple yet stunning – beer and curry is match made in heaven.

December

Holly & The IV – 4.0%

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

Festive, indulgent and wonderfully matched. This beer is just begging for a generous portion of Bubble & Squeak, topped with a free-range poached egg and oak-smoked bacon lardons. Lovely-jubbly!

The latest tour booking dates and times can be found at www.tringbrewery.co.uk. Any updates will be published via their email newsletter (sign up through the website) and across their social media channels - @tringbrewery.

Vale Brewery

Tramway Business Park, Ludgershall

Rd, Brill, Aylesbury HP18 9TY

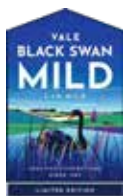
www.valebrewery.co.uk

EST 1995



Seasonal beers.

Black Swan Mild – Mild 3.4%



Celebrate a classic style with this masterclass in a dark mild: smooth and creamy with light notes of sweet caramel.

Hops: Pilgrim

Malt: Best Ale, Dark Munich, Crystal 240, Crystal 400, Brown

Selected Cask Ales

White Swan – 3.7% IPA



A proper English IPA, plain and simple. A blend of Pilgrim and Challenger hops create a beer that's balanced, refreshing and very drinkable. A true

session pint.

Hops: Challenger, Pilgrim

Malt: Best Ale, Torrefied Wheat, Roast Barley

Brewery Tours

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

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

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

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

Dates: 17/10/2026, 14/11/2026, 12/12/2026.

Windsor & Eton

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



Oktoberfest – 26 September

Unit4 Taproom

The legendary DDFK Oompah Band join us at The Taproom this Oktoberfest! Their shows are a blend of tradition, Schlager favourites, and the kind of party anthems that make Oktoberfest unforgettable!

Join us for one of our biggest events of the year, packed with incredible beers, delicious food, live entertainment, and an unbeatable Oktoberfest atmosphere. Whether you're a craft beer enthusiast or simply looking for a fantastic day out, there's something for everyone.

XT Brewing Co

**Notley Farm, Long Crendon,
Buckinghamshire HP18 9ER**
www.xtbrewing.com

This edition we are restarting coverage of XT Brewing Co, including their Heritage Cask Beers brewed in association with the Dead

Brewers' Society, and their seasonal Animal range of Cask Beers.

Permanent Cask Beers

XT3 American style IPA – 4.2%



Packed with Chinook, Columbus and Cascade hops from the American North West – crisp, clean and refreshing with a lasting hoppy bite.

Hops: Chinook, Columbus, Cascade

XT4 Session Amber – 3.8%



A modern session amber ale – a blend of English and Belgian malts matched with American and English hops.

Hops: Cascade, Bramling Cross

Seasonal Cask Beers

Golden Fleece Golden Ale – 4.3%

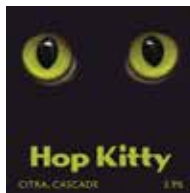


Golden Fleece is a golden ale with three all British hops: Brewers Gold, First Gold and Goldings give orange, spice and blackcurrant

notes.

Hops: Brewers Gold, First Gold, Goldings

Hop Kitty – 3.9%



This Kitty has swallowed up even more of those zesty Citra hops and crisp English malt, making this bottled cat a real hop-nip treat.

Hops: Citra, Cascade

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.

How brewing is meeting the climate challenge

Opinion



I've been tracking how breweries are making themselves more sustainable for five years. In 2021, it was already pretty standard for

brewers to send their spent grain to local farms for animal feed, and the installation of solar panels was getting commonplace, for example. But since then, the way breweries take action to become more climate resilient has noticeably shifted up a gear. With the UK experiencing significant stifling heatwaves already in 2026, it feels like this hasn't come a moment too soon. The Bluestone Brewing Co, in a beautiful part of Pembrokeshire, has really had environmental welfare baked into its activities since its inception in 2013. Based on a working family farm, it uses water from its own well to brew and powers the process through solar. Bluestone's efforts were recognised in 2018 as it became the first brewery in the world to receive Green Key Accreditation. Now, Bluestone's sustainability initiatives have gone well beyond the everyday, as it collaborates with Swansea University in a project that captures by-products of the brewing process and turns the waste into something useful. Carbon dioxide generated by the brewery is piped into a nearby polytunnel where there is a 400-litre photobioreactor and raceway tank. Within it, there is spirulina growing – a blue-green algae that uses carbon to fuel its photosynthesis. When grown, the algae culture is harvested, and studies are underway to find potential commercial applications for it – perhaps in the food, cosmetics, health or pharmaceutical industries. This project is fascinating because Bluestone is not just reacting to the threat of

climate change but actively leading the way in critical research that could help fight it as well as potentially creating a long-term income stream that may strengthen the foundations of its own business. The project has already sparked interest from other companies. Gower brewery is reportedly exploring installing a similar system, but on a larger scale. The Welsh government has touted the project as a model for Wales' Net Zero 2050 plan. Feeling geeky? Read the full report into the research on MDPI. Not every environmental action needs to be as big as this to make a significant impact. St Austell in Cornwall launched a clever biodegradable beer mat in May, which is embedded with seeds. This small, plantable piece of marketing has a QR code that customers across the 45 St Austell pubs can scan to find out more about the broader actions the venerable independent brewer has been taking to brew greener beer. Its actions, set out in the Crafting a Brighter Future strategy, include running all of its pubs on 100 per cent renewable energy and reporting a 91 per cent reduction in fossil fuel emissions across its sites since 2022. While the beer mats are a small, fun gesture, they are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the serious commitment that St Austell has made in creating a business that is both greener and increasingly energy efficient meaning this historic brewery is truly getting fit for the future. These are just two examples of breweries that view sustainability as an integral and vital part of everything they do. There are plenty more I can offer; Castle Rock in Nottingham, Wiper and True in Bristol and Hobsons of Shropshire spring to mind immediately. The industry is taking notice not only of the clear need for brewing to become more environmentally responsible, but also the financial incentive that comes from being more self-reliant in terms of energy and emissions. Perhaps the most encouraging sign of changing attitudes within the industry is the launch of a new MSc

in advanced sustainability for brewing and distilling by Heriot-Watt University. This qualification will be offered full-time and part-time on-campus and online to allow existing brewing professionals to access it, as well as people planning on entering the workforce for the first time. The MSc is intended to provide “the knowledge base to facilitate enhanced sustainable practices across the entire holistic process of brewing and distilling”. The university’s commitment to deliver the best possible research-led learning focused on responsible production is clear from its plan to build a new £35m Centre for Sustainable Brewing and Distilling. Such a centre would be a key constituent of the knowledge transfer and cross-disciplinary research that is needed to bring the brewing industry closer to the ultimate goal of a net-zero future.

19/07/2026 by Laura Hadland

Madhouse economics

Opinion



Greene King’s shock decision to sell its Old Speckled Hen brands to the Spanish lager brewer Damm has shone a light on the

rapacious profiteering of giant supermarkets. Old Speckled Hen is one of Greene King’s major brands but the income from sales to the off trade is tiny as a result of the deep discounts demanded by the retailers. As the football World Cup gets under way this month, we will all be confronted in supermarkets by what are known as “slabs” – boxes of 12 beers for around £12 – sold as cheaply as bottled water. The beers are brewed by the giant global brewers that account for 80 per cent of all the beer produced and sold in this country. They can afford the discounts as a result of the volumes they sell through supermarkets. Some years ago, when Bass was still involved in brewing and owned Carling, a senior

executive confided in me that the profit on a can of the lager was just two pence. This is the economics of the mad house – except at the time Bass was producing two million barrels of Carling and the pennies stacked up. The lager is now owned and brewed by the Canadian/American giant Molson Coors. Greene King is a big company but it’s not in that league. It has invested £40m in a new brewery in Suffolk that will concentrate on cask and craft beers, and its brewing and retailing strategy has changed as a result. A spokesman told me: “We’re moving to our new brewery in 2027 and we’re streamlining our brewing operations to focus on beers for our pubs and the wider on trade. “We’re stepping away from supplying bottles and cans to supermarkets and have agreed the sale of the Old Speckled Hen family to Damm UK.” Damm, best known for Estrella Damm, owns the former Charles Wells’s Eagle brewery in Bedford. It’s not new to the game. The brewery was founded by a German family in Barcelona 150 years ago and is now one of the leading Spanish breweries. It has been brewing in Bedford for four years and has clearly taken a long, hard look at the way the British market operates. The Spaniards must be confident they can make a living from the off trade without being taken to the cleaners by the supermarkets. All I can say is “Buena suerte con eso” – good luck with that. Greene King owns a massive estate of 2,600 pubs, restaurants and hotels. It supplies those outlets with draught and packaged beers with no middlemen creaming off the profits. Its two main cask brands, IPA and Abbot, are popular in its pubs and also, as the spokesman said, in the wider on-trade, meaning free-trade pubs or those owned by other brewers or pub companies that allow their tenants to sell guest beers. And as part of the deal with the Spanish brewer, Greene King will continue to sell Old Speckled Hen in its own outlets. You could say it’s a case of Dammed if you do or Dammed if you don’t. One bottled beer, Strong Suffolk Ale, will stay in Suffolk. The 6 per cent

beer is of historic importance and needs to be loved and promoted by its owners. Strong Suffolk is a now rare example of what was called in the 18th century “country beer”. It’s a style that depends on slow maturation in oak casks and is then blended with young, fresh beer. It’s similar to the sour red beers of West Flanders in Belgium. In the case of Strong Suffolk, a 12 per cent beer known as 5X is stored in oak casks for many months and is then blended with a fresh, young beer, BPA (5 per cent), standing for Best Pale Ale. As a result of the wood ageing, the finished beer has a hint of lactic sourness, balanced by oak, spices and a sherry-like fruitiness. The beer used to be brewed on a regular basis but in recent years it has been reduced to small and occasional batches. The beer is not bottle conditioned with live yeast and my frequent requests for Greene King to allow the beer to mature naturally without filtration or pasteurisation have fallen on deaf ears. When the new brewery opens in 2027, surely that would be the time to produce a draught version of Strong Suffolk and have it standing proud on bars alongside IPA and Abbot Ale.

30/05/2026 by Roger Protz

CAMRA calls for UK beer market investigation

Campaign



A new report, published by CAMRA, shows how independent brewers are being excluded from bars across the UK, and sets out the case

for Competition and Markets Authority action. Beer in the UK is the authoritative consumer view on how the UK beer scene actually works, or doesn't, for drinkers and independent brewers. The report lays bare the stark state of British brewing – dominated by four international conglomerates with little affinity with our brewing heritage, or what beer drinkers want. It also found: seven of the top 10 selling “craft beers” in the UK are made by just four global brewing conglomerates.

Many of the UK's favourite “continental” and “imported” lagers are brewed in the UK

data from the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA) shows demand for independent beer is 280 per cent higher than its share of the pub market CAMRA chairman Ash Corbett-Collins said: “Ordinary drinkers are being short changed when it comes to choice and quality at the bar. Our report proves how the global players are exploiting the status quo to squeeze out independent brewers, to the detriment of ordinary publicans and beer drinkers. “The government needs to step up, start taking the issue seriously, and take action that matches up to its statements about supporting pubs and the communities they serve. “Andy Burnham recently said that ‘people need to be able to look forward to a night out’. The best way he can deliver on that is by ordering a proper market investigation to sort this mess out and deliver a fair deal for publicans and drinkers, and the independent brewers that they want to support. “If this report makes you as angry as it makes me, that’s good. CAMRA is fighting for changes to the status quo, and I hope you’ll join us and get involved.” Report editor Tim Webb said: “The fact that a narrow clique of multinational corporations dominates the UK brewing industry is a national embarrassment. They only make beers that suit their production facilities, ignoring the types that beer lovers want to drink. They do not know how to reverse beer’s downward spiral, make little profit, and brew nothing worth exporting. They cannot grow the UK economy. “The way that

better, independent, brewers are excluded from the on-trade beer market is scandalous. Brewing is a business that competition authorities need to investigate, take apart, and reassemble, so the UK can return to playing a leading role in the world of beer.” The full report can be read [here](#).

06/07/2026 by WB Reporter

Looking on the bright side

Opinion



There's been much talk about the year 1976 of late – and it's nothing to do with football, you will be relieved to hear. It was the year when a blistering

heatwave struck the country in June and sales of lager took off like the proverbial steam train. I had joined CAMRA's head office team in February that year and just six months later it seemed the cask beer revolution had stalled in the heat. The national brewer Whitbread, which produced Heineken in Britain, forecast that lager would soon account for 80 per cent of beer sales. It was a grim prospect as the version of the Dutch beer brewed by Whitbread was a risible 3.6 per cent – the Dutch original is 5 per cent. Other big brewers rushed to produce their watery interpretations of European beer, and it seemed CAMRA, having kicked such keg beers as Watneys Red, Double Diamond and Worthington E into the long grass, now faced a new and greater opponent. But the heatwave ended, the beer market stabilised and drinkers went back to cask in great numbers. Today we face a new challenge. Experts predict that Britain will face endless summers of almost intolerable heat and beer drinkers will look for cool and refreshing pints. I pondered this problem as the needle nudged the 30s while I was supping a pint of Jurassic Pale Ale in the Mary Shelley in Bournemouth. It's a Wetherspoon pub, comparatively small and even intimate by the standards of the pub group. It stands across the road where Shelley, creator of

Frankenstein, is buried. It was a good choice of pub in the monstrous heat. I got into conversation about favourite beers with the man at the next table who was also drinking cask. We were in a tiny minority, surrounded on all sides by men and women consuming glasses of yellow fizz. Once again, cask beer is wilting in the heat and, unlike 1976, the heat is here to stay. It's clear that if cask is to survive then brewers and pub owners must take urgent steps to keep it cool and convince customers the end product is suitably refreshing. I turned for advice to Cask Marque, which is funded by the brewing industry to monitor beer quality and temperature. The group awards plaques to pubs that regularly serve cask beer in tip-top form. Founder and executive director Paul Nunny said: "Beer in the glass should be between 11 and 13 degrees C." He grasps the challenge of heatwaves and said: "We need cask beer to be served at the lower end of the spec all year round." He recommends temperature-controlled cellars, pythons and cooling jackets. Removing the mystery from the technology, a python is an insulated tube that holds the pipe carrying beer from the cask to the bar with other lines containing cold water or glycol. The python prevents the beer warming on its journey to the customer's glass. Nunny also recommends a cooling jacket and cylinder under the bar in order that the beer is cooled further before being served. John Keeling, former head brewer at Fuller's in West London and now the brewery's beer ambassador, is not a fan of under-bar cylinders. He recalls that when Fuller's launched a golden ale called Discovery it installed cylinders to deliver extra-cool pints. "But the cylinders knocked the CO₂ out of the beer, which was then flat in the glass – and customers didn't want flat beer." Nunny thinks the cylinders must have been set too cold, and the beer could have been served at an acceptable temperature and with a good head if poured slightly warmer. Getting the serving temperature right is critical. Fergus Fitzgerald,

operations director and former head brewer at Adnams in Suffolk, said: “Too much cask beer is served warm these days. High temperatures lead to flat beer.” Controversially, he added: “I’m happy to drink cask beer at 8 degrees. After all, it quickly warms up in the glass.” Nunny, who was a director at Adnams before founding Cask Marque, disagrees with his former colleague. He said cask beer served that cold will have a chill haze, which is as unacceptable to drinkers as warm pints. Most pubs are now run by pub companies and their role is critical. After a couple of excellent and cool pints in the Mary Shelley I naturally spoke to Wetherspoon for its view on beer temperature. Jen Swindells said the group has an all-encompassing approach. “Cellars are cooled to 11 to 13 degrees C,” she said. “Remote coolers are used to regulate cask beer temperatures, and they are set between 11 to 14 degrees. Water coolers are set between 7 and 8 degrees. And pythons keep the beer lines cool.” Jen added that cellars and technicians are available for call out if a pub has a problem. While cooling cylinders have their backers and critics, everyone I spoke to is a keen supporter of pythons. As Eric Idle of the Monty Python team once sang: “Always look on the bright side of life.”

01/08/2026 by Roger Protz

Double Diamond – still working wonders?

Opinion



I never tried the original Double Diamond. Production ceased some 30 years ago long before I was of legal drinking age, or indeed at the slightly lower bar (at the time) of the North West’s mean underage drinking

age. It is a beer that, until last week, existed for me only in an apocryphal pantheon – that of history’s most despised beers. Double Diamond sat with such delights as Watney’s Red Barrel and Worthington E as beers I am glad never to have been around to drink, such is the vitriol and scorn poured upon them by the people who did. The epitome of the bland, fizzy keg beers that inspired the four founders of CAMRA to stand up and start doing something about the decline in quality, traditional brewing in the UK in the early 1970s. Naturally I jumped at the chance to visit the Blue Stoops, the Allsopp’s-run Kensington gastropub, to try Double Diamond for myself. I still don’t understand why I really wanted to try it, but there was certainly an allure. Presumably, nay, hopefully, it tastes nothing like it used to. And I wouldn’t know if it did anyway. But there is something compelling about these forays into nostalgic brands that seems to be hugely de rigueur at the moment. The Blue Stoops itself is marvellous. Its refurbishment in 2024 is detailed and precise, with the whole venue centred around the Allsopp’s brewing history. Even the menu has a beautifully traditional British slant, with a seasonal steamed pudding always on the menu. Allsopp’s advertising and branded products from over the decades adorn every wall. I was particularly taken with the bespoke 3D relief tiles featuring the Allsopp hand in a glorious blue around the bar - only to discover on my return home that they were crafted just around the corner from me in Jackfield, Shropshire, by Craven Dunnill. Unsurprisingly, it has already picked up several awards for this stunning piece of work. The tastefully lit, dark-wood bar is adorned with four cask handpulls – three for the core Allsopp’s range and one for Kirkstall brewery’s Ascension Extra Pale Ale. All of Allsopp’s beers are currently made at the Leeds brewery, thanks to Kirkstall’s Steve Holt being the one to, by chance, pick up the old Allsopp’s brewing ledger at auction – the document which inspired Jamie Allsopp to revive his family’s

brewing legacy. There are Allsopp's and Kirkstall keg beers in the mix at the Blue Stoops too. The Allsopp's stout and pilsner stand proud on their font, adorned with the familiar red hand logo. Alongside them, in blazing yellow and red, there it was. Double Diamond. A 3.8 per cent ABV pale ale, featuring the classic Little Man mascot, who has been rebooted by illustrator Satoshi Hashimoto. The diminutive chap has had a few years added – his grey hair now a nod to his pedigree and smart yellow and red chequered trousers bring him stylishly on-brand. This is a carefully thought-out relaunch. Even the italicised, uppercase font from the original adverts has been restyled in its entirety by lettering artist Alec Tear, with diamond punctuation to keep the brand running throughout. It is retro chic in high resolution, laid out for the modern drinker. The design community is effuse in its praise for these careful layers of hard work. Nostalgia marketing is noted as being effective at reaching younger demographics, particularly Gen Z (those born after 1997) by promoting a sense of authenticity and longevity. With signs pointing to that generation being increasingly won over by both craft and cask beer (just look at the success of the recent Boddingtons relaunch) it feels like the return of Double Diamond couldn't be better placed to hit the current zeitgeist. Perhaps most importantly, those younger drinkers are unlikely to have the same grasp of Double Diamond's past reputation that I do, only recognising and admiring, the cute, vintage stylings that give visual clues of the brand's age. However, I can't say I had any trepidation as I raised that first glass to my lips. The modern Allsopp's has re-established its reputation for quality and easily shaken off any residual tarnish left by its time with Allied, as is proper. Kirkstall is a cracking brewery in its own right. The pedigree is there. And Double Diamond is absolutely reasonable. A light gold pale ale that is easy drinking and a pleasant, sessionable ABV. It is dominated by citrus and

light tropical fruit flavours as you'd expect from a modern pale made using Citra and Mosaic hops. The beer is light in body, no doubt thanks to its sub-4 per cent ABV, with an easy bitterness that keeps it crisp. Overall, it's a clean, well-made beer. Does it work wonders, as the promotional material would still have us believe? Probably not. It's not going to set the world on fire. But there's absolutely nothing to turn your nose up at. It's tasty and refreshing. Put the badge makers away everyone, there's no need for the "DD IS K9P" slogan to get a 2026 reboot too.

06/06/2026 by Laura Hadland

Hidden barriers to beer

Opinion



I'm painfully aware that my own experience and needs very much informs the consumer issues I notice in the pub. Happily, people who read my writing are often generous in pointing out the areas I've missed. Recently, something pretty big has been brought to my attention that had utterly passed me by. It's allergen labelling. Not the most riveting subject, I grant you, but an important one. Now, I thought that the only information that is legally required on a pumpclip is the ABV. But I was wrong, if the beer contains allergens, they must be declared also. I am fortunate not to suffer from any allergies, so this wasn't on my radar. Since 2014, the declaration of the 14 major allergens in food and drink has been

a legal requirement thanks to the Food Information Regulations. The ones we're most likely to be dealing with in relation to beer are cereals containing gluten, nuts, peanuts and milk, possibly sulphur dioxide too. The British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) issued some very helpful guidance at the time, so pubs could make sure they were compliant. The BBPA highlights that alcoholic beverages dispensed from a bulk supply into a glass – like beer – are considered to be a “non pre-packed food” and so fall within the legislation. This is where it gets a little murky. For packaged beer, I think we're good. I'm not sure any brewer out there is producing bottles or cans without allergens highlighted on the ingredient list. But, there is no clear stance on how this information should be conveyed to customers at the bar. All we are told is that the information must be immediately available at the point of ordering. Details could be written on the pumpclip or a beer list on the wall. It is allowable for staff to verbally relay the information to customers, but the BBPA does not recommend it since pubs can be busy, making it hard to relay complex information. Also, there may be a very large set of products making it difficult for staff to be accurate about remembering the precise detail. To make life even harder for bar staff, where a non-pre-packed food item, like cask beer, is made with “cereals containing gluten” (which is probably all the ones that aren't labelled as gluten free) the specific ingredient must also be identified; wheat, rye, barley, for example. I hadn't realised this, but some people are only allergic to specific glutes, so this information really does matter. Compounding the problem, even where a beer is legally gluten free (containing 20ppm or less of gluten), the charity Coeliac UK points out that if it was made from barley and then had the gluten removed the label should still legally state “contains barley”. Of course, it could just be me who had this blindspot, but looking over it now, I don't think I'm seeing a lot of compliance out there. I took

a straw poll, by scrolling through the last 20 photos of pumpclips I'd taken on my phone. Two of them were highlighted as gluten free. The other 18 did not mention allergens at all. Brewers are certainly putting ingredient lists on cask labels, so the information exists. Theoretically, a publican can nip down to the cellar and check that label whilst serving a customer. “Virtually every pub we've been to is happy to do this,” my correspondent informed me. “But it's an unnecessary inconvenience, not least at busy times.” More to the point, such practices arguably don't meet the legal requirements, as the information is not immediately to hand at the point of ordering. If informing a customer of allergens verbally, the staff must also have immediate access to written proof, if asked. They are unlikely to want to take the customer down to the cellar to check the labels on the cask for themselves during a busy service. It does not feel like an insurmountable issue. Pub staff could write the allergens on the back of the pumpclip when the beer goes on or add a note to their beer list if one is prominently displayed. But wouldn't it just be easier if brewers start adding allergen information routinely to pumpclips? There are some brewers which have already adopted this practice. I've spotted specific allergen labelling on North Riding, Rudgate and Cairngorm pumpclips, for example. They are definitely in the minority, though. I can imagine that if you have an allergen to a specific type of gluten, having to ask about it constantly gets exhausting. To the point where you might just give up and pick something else to order instead. We're all inclined to take the route of least resistance. Proper allergen labelling is a way of making beer more accessible, instantly.

23/08/2026 by Laura Hadland

Welcome to a new feature we are calling 'Just Over the Border' starting with an iconic pub well known in South Bedfordshire and over our region.

The Black Lion, High Street, Leighton Buzzard



The Black Lion, Leighton Buzzard. Photo credit: Richard Abraham

The Mid Chilterns Region of CAMRA covers a wide area from Mentmore in the North to Chalfont St. Giles in the South, encompassing Amersham, Chesham, Berkhamsted, Tring and Hemel Hempstead, together with all the villages surrounding those towns. As a result, this magazine is delivered free to all pubs across that area. But you'll point out, not Leighton Buzzard. Nor Mursley, Stewkley, Wingrave, Wing or Soulbury but The Chiltern Tapler goes to pubs there too. This with the kind consent of the South Bedfordshire branch as their former excellent magazine, Beer in Beds, closed during Covid.

Whether on our exact 'patch' (as we used to say in my law enforcement days) or not The Black Lion is very well known to many in the Mid Chilterns region and rightly so. In my approximately sixty-five years of ale imbibing, I have, as you might expect, been in some very fine pubs. But without question, I have never been in a better one than The Black Lion. Therefore, we have decided to feature an article tracing the history of this town centre

pub and the more I've delved into it the more interesting it has become, hopefully you will find it so too.

It is one of Leighton Buzzard's oldest and most historic establishments. Its roots trace back more than three hundred years, during which it has operated from two different buildings on opposite sides of the High Street: the old 17th-century site and the current Grade II listed part-18th century building. The original Black Lion or Lyon was situated across the High Street (where Ravenstone Chambers and T.G Jones – formerly WH Smith are located). It was first recorded in 1672 and was one of a bustling row of six drinking establishments on the north side of the High Street. These were of course the days when almost anyone could open an alehouse, often from their front rooms but there is no record if these six were of that type or something larger which would be more recognisable as a pub of today. This original location ceased operating as a pub in 1860.

On 1 August 1865, the Black Lion name and license – owner and licensee George W. Harper - was moved across the High Street to its present position, following the closure of the Old Black Lyon (formerly The Raven Inn) over the road. The present building too has much history as it was first recorded as a public house in 1676 when it was called Bullhead, before later changing to Sow and Pigs.

However, the present Black Lion is a part 18th century building, constructed of local bond brickwork with grey headers and red brick quoins, and two very impressive door surrounds. It was granted Grade II listed status in 1954, with Department of the Environment inspectors noting older, 17th-century brickwork hidden within its walls from a previous structure. Back then the pub was a complex of buildings with a brewhouse, extensive stables for horses, a large market room, and up to eight bedrooms. If one

daydreams it is possible to imagine horses and drays entering the rear courtyard through the massive doors which are still to the right of the main entrance. The 1876 countywide register of licensed premises states that the public house was then owned by the licensee George Andrew and that it had first been licensed in 1864. That last not quite the case as the Bullhead shows up in records dating from 1676.

When in August 1865 George Andrew applied for a licence for "a refreshment house to be called the Black Lion", he was resurrecting the ghosts of the old Sow and Pigs and the Bullhead, both inns which had been sited on this central part of the High Street. The Sow and Pigs had closed its doors at the end of the C18th having changed its name from the Bullhead, which was named as early at 1676. Both names reflect the front row seat which the pub had for the markets and fairs held in the town's High Street. In 1870 Andrew and his new inn were in the Leighton Buzzard Observer at the centre of an assault case. The trouble at the October 24th Runaway Fair - held every year since 1447 - began when the victim Thomas Linnell from Brickhill was employed to sell a horse at the Fair. During the course of the day, he was threatened and assaulted several times by two men. The whole thing was witnessed by two people and as a result both defendants were found guilty and fined and ordered to pay £1.13s to replace a bottle of oil which was being carried by Linnell.

In the late 19th century, the pub was twice put up for auction, firstly in 1883 by George Andrew when it failed to sell, and again after his death in 1890 when it was sold for £1,670, to Saint Albans brewers Bingham, Cox & Company, and later owned by Benskins Watford Brewery who carried out various alterations in 1969. Unusually for a pub there is available a full list of licensees from 1864 to the present day. However, the name of Richard Edward Palmer does not appear on the list. Palmer was the lead singer of a 1960s

group The Barron Knights and allegedly served as landlord around that time. An anecdotal 'fact' only perhaps?

The building interior is very impressive with original beams, joists and an oak post in the front bar which was originally the outside wall of the houses which was then extended to the right when the back of that bar was constructed in half timbering circa 1630. Many exposed black beams, wooden flooring and an early 19th century fireplace make The Black Lion a very historic and aesthetic place in which to enjoy your visit. Also, as a lover of all things quirky The Black Lion appeals to me on that level too. For example, on a couple of beams is the legend, "To avoid accident or injury to your child whilst the little darling is running around this establishment... why not hand the little poppet to a member of staff who will be happy to nail it to your table for you." This first appeared about twelve years ago and caused some consternation from those with no sense of humour and though placed tongue in cheek it also addresses those parents who allow their offspring to run rampant in licensed premises! That is not to say that children and young people, with their parents or minders, are not welcome. The opposite is very much the case but only until 5.00pm, and I often see family groups on my lunchtime visits.

Other features include historic and colourful metal wall signs many relating to breweries long gone – that theme also extends to the courtyard walls – and pump clips adorning the ceiling of the rear bar. For those such as me – cask ales drinkers of course - there are eight on the front bar – three regulars (Nethergate 'Suffolk County', Oakham 'Citra' and 'Draught Bass') with the others constantly changing. There is also a full range of real ciders – those available displayed on the wall of the front bar.

The Black Lion is a wet-led pub but with a food offering of hand-raised pork pies and mini cheese truckles, and the usual bar snacks. However, customers are more than welcome to bring in food from local traders and shops to

eat on the premises. The only menu available – apart from the pork pie and cheeses blackboards – are the leather clad ones for beers of the world: some eighty plus continental and English bottled beers which are always served in the appropriately branded glass. Another quirk is that The Black Lion does not sell Guinness – shock, horror! However, they have Sam Smith's Stout (the only non-Smith pub I've ever been in which sells their beers, including some bottles) and during the winter months stouts and porters are usually on offer among the cask ale pumps.

Recently re-roofed and refurbished is a building in the rear of the courtyard which boasts fourteen craft beer lines and 400 plus spirits, including craft gins, vodkas, tequilas, rums, single malt whiskies and more. This 'gin palace', 'craft bar' or The Barn, as it is now known, opens from 3.00pm in the week and at midday at weekends.

The building itself is owned by Gary Burlison, the Burlison Inns Group – owners of nine other pubs across the Midlands, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and more local – but this excellently run business is solely that of Nikki Garrett.



The Black Lion, 20 High St, Leighton Buzzard LU7 1EA.
Telephone 01525 853725

Opening times:
12 midday to 11.00pm – Monday to Thursday.

12 midday to 12.00am – Friday and Saturday.
12 midday to 10.00pm – Sunday.

Website: TheBlackLionLeightonBuzzard

Facebook: The-Black-Lion-Leighton-Buzzard/1720493741502780

Instagram: #blacklion.lb

Richard Abraham

The Three Blackbirds, Flamstead

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



Newly refurbished and running as a traditional English country pub with three cask beers, a wide selection

of keg beers, wines and spirits.

Serving Chinese Cuisine, with a takeaway and delivery service with a six-mile radius.

SUNDAY Buffet 'Eat as much as you like' from 12 to 4 pm; 241 Cocktails every **THURSDAY** from 5 to 10 pm



The Stewkley Swan

Traditional Pub • Warm Welcome

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

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

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

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

Opening Hours

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



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Roger Protz explores how brewers and farmers have joined forces to help save the planet.

Staying Cool on Planet Earth

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 an 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

feature | STAYING COOL ON PLANET EARTH

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.

Roger Protz

CAMRA What's Brewing – 9 May 2026



Is your local pub under threat?

CAMRA has the tools to help you save it

camra.org.uk/saveyourlocal



George Jenkinson, partner at Chiltern Brewery, looks at the relationship between Stoke Farms, grower of Maris Otter barley, and the brewery.

Growing Beer Here: The Chiltern Brewery and Stoke Farms

There are few better sights in high summer than a combine harvester moving steadily through a golden field of barley. Add a clear Buckinghamshire sky, a few fields between crop and brewhouse, and the knowledge that this grain will become beer next year, and it really does begin to feel rather special.



Harvesting the ripe barley using a combine harvester

Last week, Antony Pearce of Stoke Farms harvested a crop of Maris Otter malting barley grown literally a few fields from The Chiltern Brewery gate at Terrick. It is a partnership we are genuinely proud of; local farmer, local brewery, local beer — with the journey from field to glass kept short, straightforward and rooted in the Chilterns.

For anyone who enjoys a pint of cask ale, Maris Otter is more than just an ingredient. This heritage variety of English malting barley has long been prized by brewers for the depth, character and reliability it brings to traditional beers. It gives a lovely, rounded malt backbone, allowing the English hops that we use to sit properly in balance and giving the finished beer a fortitude of flavour. We use Maris Otter malt in almost all the beers we brew, so to see it growing across the fields so close to home is a wonderful step for us.

The field itself carried a sign over the growing season reading “Growing Beer Here” — a simple message, but one that rather neatly sums up the whole idea. Before a pint reaches the handpump, the bottle, or the table, it begins with soil, weather, skill and patience. It begins with farmers like Antony watching the crop through the season, judging the right moment, and working with the land rather than apart from it.

Harvest time is the moment when that connection becomes visible. The barley moves from field to trailer, then from trailer to maltster, before eventually returning to us as one of the essential building blocks of Chiltern beers. Brewing may happen in the brewhouse, but good beer starts long before the mash tun is warmed.



Unloading the harvested barley into a trailer before being taken to the barn

It is a reassuringly wholesome process: neither hurried nor artificial, and perhaps not especially glamorous in the modern sense of the word. We feel rather differently. It is practical, seasonal and rooted in craft. A good crop needs the right field, the right variety, a skilled farmer and a little help from the weather. A good beer needs much the same spirit: good ingredients, experienced hands, patience and respect for the finished pint.

feature | GROWING BEER HERE

For us, working with Stoke Farms is also about strengthening the local links that have always mattered to us as an independent, family brewer. The Chiltern Brewery has been rooted in Buckinghamshire since 1980, and we have always believed that beer should belong to the place it comes from. Being able to point to a



Happy harvesters!

nearby field and say, quite literally, “that is where next year’s beer begins” is an exceptionally rare privilege.

Of course, the barley harvested last week will not become beer overnight. It still has its own journey to make before it reaches the brewery. But when it does, it will carry with it a little of the field, the farm, the harvest and the partnership behind it.

So next time you enjoy a pint of Chiltern Brewery ale, there may be more local story in the glass than you first imagined: a few fields, a good farmer, a heritage barley variety, and a brewery gate not very far away at all.

A Buckinghamshire partnership worth raising a pint to!

George Jenkinson, Partner at Chiltern Brewery

A large graphic featuring a hand pouring golden barley from a burlap sack into a glass of beer. The glass is filled with a dark beer topped with a thick white head of foam. The background is a scenic view of a green field with a hill in the distance under a blue sky with white clouds.

GROWING BEER HERE

THE CHILTERN BREWERY

Stoke Farms

The Chiltern Brewery and Stoke Farms are delighted to be in partnership for plints – the barley growing here will be beer next year (so please tread carefully!)

There are brazen spectres who haunt the villages and towns across England. Ghosts of revelry writ large and high, swinging in insult to all who pass by. I am talking about old pub signs. Those that are left up after domestic conversions.

I have worked around pubs, spoken to enough publicans and read enough industry reports to understand that there are numerous economic and societal reasons why pubs shut for good. This isn't a post lamenting that some pubs are simply no longer viable or that circumstances conspire to see them permanently close. This is about after that.

Sometime after the Publican locks the door for the last time, the keys find their way into the hands of an aspiring homemaker.

Change of use planning application is submitted and approved. With a pen stroke A4 becomes C3. Work can begin. Builders come in and gut the interior, before rebuilding it into a domestic dwelling. Inside is broadly unrecognisable from its previous incarnation.

Perhaps one or two small architectural trinkets are left to signify the buildings history; a licensee plaque above the front door, or the last orders bell, now hanging at the bottom of the stairs. But these relics are really for the personal enjoyment of the homeowner. No one will see them unless invited in to do so. But in the homemakers misplaced mawkishness they decide that leaving the hanging pub sign up on

the front of the building is a good idea. I feel strongly that it is not.

Even unviable pubs had customers. Not enough customers, but some. It might be a small group of old boys who meet for a lunchtime pint on Tuesdays, a Monday night darts league team, a couple who come for a roast every Sunday. Even if some customers didn't drink there much in the last year or two,

there will be people in in the local area who used the pub at some point. People who have a fondness for the pub as it was at the time they frequented. When that pub is turned into a house it is gone forever. It's not coming back, and customers, past and present, frequent or not, are permanently evicted. Having the sign up is a constant reminder to the community of what they have lost. The sign mocks those that miss what it



signifies. It says to the neighbourhood, "if only you'd popped in a bit more often, maybe I'd still be here." To me it reads as a vulgar display of arrogance. This public space has become my personal domain. Tough luck. Here's what you could have won.

Keep the sign. It is a heritage piece. Besides, it was included in the price for the house. It's

yours. I plead to all homeowners of ex-pubs though, move it out of public display. Hang it off the fence in your garden, turn it into a statement piece in your hallway, mount it onto the ceiling of the loft conversion. Just don't leave it hanging high outside, sardonically taunting those who's lost their social hub so you could gain an open plan kitchen diner.

Post note:

Having spotted yet another sign for a now ex-pub earlier this week, which prompted this blog I conducted a straw poll on this topic on my Instagram stories. "A pub is turned into a house, keep the sign up?" The options were

"it's a nod to heritage, keep it up", or "it's disingenuous, remove it." The results were 48/52% in favour of removing it. With only 50 participants in the vote this doesn't really prove anything, but I felt it was worth mentioning, nonetheless.

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

OPENING TIMES

Shop	Taproom
Bottles - cans - gifts	Drinks bar - draught takeaway
Mon - Thur 9-4:30	Mon - Thur CLOSED
Fri 9-8	Fri 3-8
Sat 12-5	Sat 12-5
Sun CLOSED	Sun CLOSED

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V A L E

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V A L E

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4.4% ABV

V A L E

VPA

4.2% ABV

V A L E

RED KITE

4.2% ABV

V A L E

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V A L E

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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.



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**Search for
a pub or
social club**

Help keep our information accurate!

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

Suggest an edit



**Scroll down
to suggest
an edit**

**Help
update our
pub data**



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

Hops in the Tropics – Black Lion, Leighton Buzzard, Beer Fest 2026

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

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

AROMATICA
BISHOPS FAREWELL
BOUDICA
BRANDX
BROTHER RABBIT
CHRONICLES OF HERNIA
CONCHORD
CREAM OF THE CROP
FEAR AND LOATHING
GRAZING GIRLS

HIGH FIVES
HUBBLE
IN YOUR HEAD
LADY BAY
LIBERTY
LIQUID HOPTIMISM
MOONSHINE
MOUNTAIN MAMA
NONCHALENT SHARK
POKE-YA-CAR

PROMETHEUS
RIGHT ABOUT NOW
ROPSLEY GOLD
RUSTLING SUBSTANCE
SILVER DARLING
SUBLIMINAL CITRA
THUNDERBOLT
TIME TRAVELLING TAXI
TROPICAL TOM
TWO LITTLE DUCKS

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Awards Officer

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THE BLACK LION

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8 REAL ALES

8 TRADITIONAL
CIDERS

100+
CONTINENTAL
BEERS

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& 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



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