

FREE



Hertfordshire

Pints of View



Summer Edition 2025

Issue No. 314

24-27 September 2025

st albans

beer

& cider
festival
2025

celebrating the centenary of Ballito Hosiery Mill, 1925-1970



Logo sparks mass debate!



Guest columnists – Annabel Smith, Christine Cryne, Des de Moor, Laura Hadland, Pete Brown, Roger Protz, Simon Webster, Steve Bury, Tim Martin, Tim Webb



New Wetherspoon pubs in London

COMING SOON

Opening in July 2025

Walham Green

Fulham Broadway



Opening in September 2025

The Sun Wharf

London Bridge



NEWLY OPENED

The Lion & The Unicorn

Waterloo station

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The Sidings (near platforms 20-24)



The Captain Flinders

Euston

One minute's walk from London Euston station

34-38 Eversholt Street, Camden, NW1 1DA
When leaving the station's main exit, turn left.



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PUBLISHER


South Herts CAMRA
230 Hatfield Road,
St Albans, Hertfordshire.
AL1 4LW.
Tel. 01727 867201

NEXT ISSUE

PoV315
Aut/Winter 2025

COPY DEADLINE

10 Oct 2025

 pintsofview.camra.org.uk

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CKN Print Limited
<https://cknprint.co.uk>

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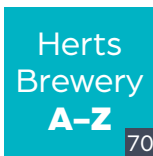
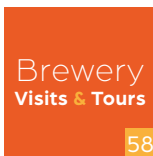
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Starting Pint



CAMRA Members' Weekend is something that will mean nothing to some readers, so I'll briefly explain in one l-o-n-g sentence...

Every year, up to 1,000 members of an organisation that now numbers nearly

150,000 gather in an iconic town or city to meet friends, discuss CAMRA business, listen to guest speakers, attend talks & workshops, receive awards, learn about beer, cider, pubs & breweries, and, hopefully, enjoy significant volumes of the pale, amber and dark nectars.

It's a cracking weekend that I can thoroughly recommend. If you haven't been to one before, why not make next year's your first - when Members' Weekend 'comes home' to Hertfordshire's City of Ale, St Albans? Put 17-19 April 2026 on your calendar, and turn to page 73 for further details.

For a review of this year's event, I recommend checking out 'A Long Weekend in Torquay', written by South East London CAMRA member



Maria Freeman for the June/July 2025 issue of *London Drinker* magazine (Vol. 47, No. 3, pp. 44-45).

A shorter version of the article appears in the Summer 2025 edition of *Norfolk Nips* magazine (No. 208, p. 46).

Talking of *Norfolk Nips*, I've long been a fan of the magazine's style and content, and was delighted to see it win an award in the 2024/25 CAMRA Magazine of the Year Competition. Editor Lucy Cousins was in Torquay for the presentation, so - after offering my congratulations over a pint in the Members' Bar - I took the opportunity to find out from an expert what *Pints of View* needs to do better!

With great humility, Lucy suggested the magazine would benefit from larger photos,

and more 'white space' - which, dear readers, is the main reason that this edition has grown to 80 pages. Another reason is the addition of articles from three new guest columnists: renowned beer writers Laura Hadland and Des de Moor, and Knight of the Realm, Sir Tim Martin.

Style	Total casks	Empty casks
Milds	13	2
Pales & Blonds	8	8
Bitters	18	1
Stouts & Porters	12	2
Speciality / Other	3	0
	54	13



I mentioned the Members' Bar at Torquay. For some, it may have been a highlight - but not for me. The meagre eight casks of pales, blondes, and IPAs had all been drained before Saturday evening had properly got underway. In stark contrast, those with a penchant for milds, stouts & porters, and bitters were spoilt for choice, with no fewer than 38 casks still pouring.

Whilst a stillage full of non-pale beers might excite many traditional 'socks and sandals' CAMRA members, if we truly want to attract a new generation of beer drinkers looking for something different, this isn't the best way to do it.

Here's hoping that the beer choice at St Albans 2026 will be rather better balanced.

Paul Donatantonio
Editor

Laura in Beerland

Beer Festivals: A 'Great British' tradition!

The idea for writing a book about beer festivals first came to me in late 2021. It seemed like a good topic that would bring together the areas I like to write about - beer history and culture, plus interesting stories from the people involved. Upon doing a little research, I was surprised to discover that no one has ever written a dedicated beer festival book before. With CAMRA's role so pivotal to the story, it made sense to pitch the idea to CAMRA books.

I first started talking to Alan Murphy, the commissioning editor, in November 2021. After much discussion, I wrote a proposal and sent it through in May 2022. It took

more than a year for it to wend its way through gaining approval from the relevant committees.

We'd always set our sights on publication in the summer of 2025, to coincide with the 50th anniversary of CAMRA's first national festival at Covent Garden, so the delays didn't worry me too much at first. But by the summer of 2023, I was starting to get concerned. I knew that I would need to do a decent amount of research and interviews at GBBF that year to get things rolling, and I didn't have a contract in place.

On the 27 July - 5 days before GBBF kicked off - I was given the official go-ahead. This



Festivals, festivals, festivals!



GBBF, Olympia, London. Credit: Helen Anne Smith



instilled me with blind panic. I knew that it was important to get all the right interviews and ask all the right questions, but I did not have much time to prepare!

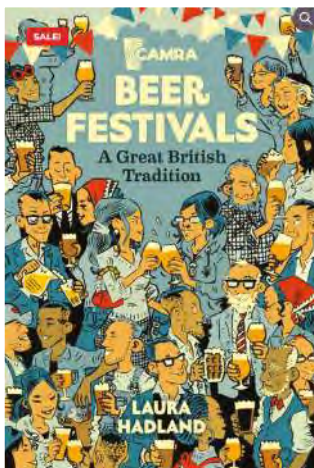
All there was to go on was my one-page proposal and a few notes from the publishing committee.

I took my usual approach and winged it, hoping for the best. I interviewed as many people as I could, took several hundred photos and determined to untangle it all later. It's a good job that I seized the opportunity really, since the cancellation of GBBF 2024 meant that it was my only chance to visit Britain's biggest beer festival with the book in mind.

From there, it was a whistlestop 15 months of festival visits (around 40 in total), interviews (some 100 people) and archival research to try and put a workable draft together. I took pictures along the way, so a large proportion of the book is illustrated with my photographs.

Many of the most significant connections were made by blind luck - I happened, by chance, to introduce myself to one of the Fyne Ales brewers at GBBF, for example. He was enthused by the book's concept and so early plans were formed for a visit to

FyneFest in late May 2024. It turned out to be one of the most fun trips I undertook, at one of the UK's most notable festivals.



RRP: £15.99 - <https://shop1.camra.org.uk/product/beer-festivals-a-great-british-tradition/>

The book is not a travel guide, nor is it intended to be comprehensive. There have been thousands of beer festivals over the last half century (and before) in hundreds of locations. There was no realistic way I could cover them all. Instead, I focused on the strongest stories and best anecdotes, held together by a thread of serious research that examined what beer festivals are, how they started and how they have evolved over time.

That research has led me to believe that beer festivals are a significant part of British culture and have played a pivotal role in shaping today's beer landscape - for cask ale,

for other types of beer, and for cider and perry too. But if you'd like to know more about how and why that happened, you'll have to order a copy of the book and read it for yourself!

Laura Hadland

Food & Drink Writer

Author, 50 years of CAMRA

<https://linktr.ee/laurahadland>

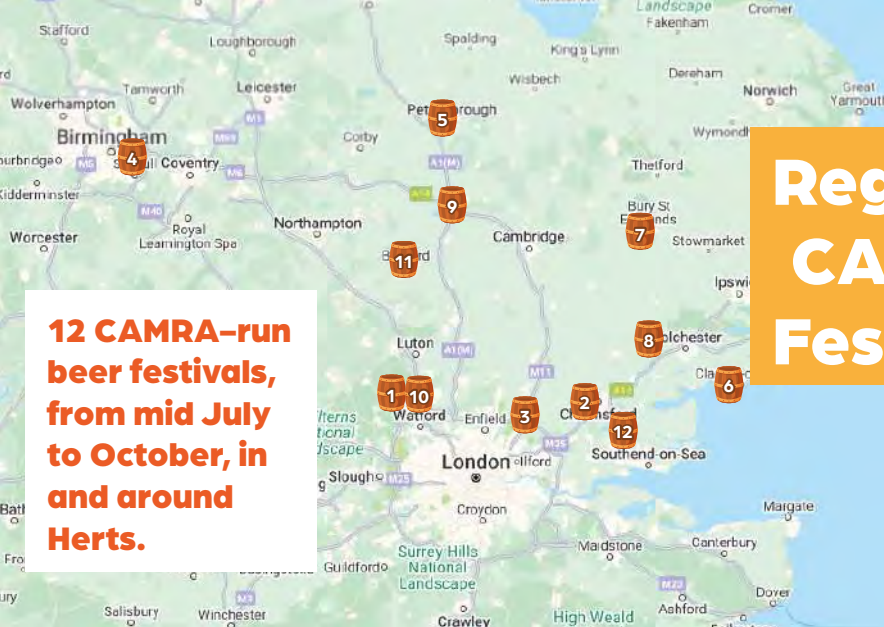
Telford & East Shropshire CAMRA



FyneFest, Cairndow, Argyll. Credit: Matt Curtis



SABCF, St Albans, Herts. Credit: Will Lewis



Regional CAMRA Festivals

12 CAMRA-run beer festivals, from mid July to October, in and around Herts.

Many festivals have **100s OF COOLED, DRAUGHT BEERS, CIDERS & PERRIES** to choose from along with a variety of street food.

Most offer discounted or free entry to CAMRA members and some incentivise non-members to 'sign-up' with **FREE ENTRY & TWO FREE PINTS.**



St Albans Beer & Cider Festival 2024

JULY 2025

1 **Fri 18 – Sun 20 July**
Hemel Hempstead Old Town Beer Festival
 St Mary's Church, High Street, Hemel Hempstead, Herts
hemeloldtownbeerfestival.co.uk

2 **Tue 15 – Sat 19 July**
Chelmsford Summer Beer & Cider Festival
 Admirals Park, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, Essex
cbcf.camra.org.uk

3 **Fri 25 – Sun 27 July**
Epping & Ongar Railway Real Ale Festival
 North Weald Station, Station Road, North Weald Bassett, Essex
eorailway.co.uk/events/real-ale-and-cider-festival

AUGUST 2025

4 **Tue 5 – Sat 9 August**
Great British Beer Festival
 National Exhibition Centre, Pendigo Way, Marston Green, Birmingham
greatbritishbeerfestival.co.uk

5 **Tue 19 – Sat 23 August**
Peterborough Beer Festival
 The Embankment (Behind Key Theatre), Embankment Road, Peterborough, Cambs
pborobeerfest.camra.org.uk

6 **Wed 20 – Sat 23 August**
Clacton Beer & Cider Festival
 St James Hall, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex
tendingcamra.org.uk/clactonfest.html

7 **Wed 20 – Sat 23 August**
East Anglian Beer & Cider Festival
 St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk
burystedmundsbeerfestival.com

SEPTEMBER 2025

8 **Tue 9 – Sat 13 September**
Chappel Summer Beer Festival
 East Anglian Railway Museum, Chappel, Essex
chappelbeerfestival.org.uk

9 **Tue 18 – Sat 20 September**
Booze on the Ouse (Huntingdon) Beer Festival
 Comrades Club, Cambridge Street, Godmanchester, Cambs
hunts.camra.org.uk/festival

10 **Wed 24 – Sat 27 September**
St Albans Beer & Cider Festival
 Alban Arena, St Peter's Street, St Albans, Herts
stalbandsbf.org.uk

OCTOBER 2025

11 **Wed 1 – Sat 4 October**
Bedford Beer & Cider Festival
 Corn Exchange, St Paul's Square, Bedford
northbeds.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=243327

12 **Thu 2 – Sat 4 October**
South Woodham Ferrers Beer & Cider Festival
 Village Hall, South Woodham Ferrers, Essex
maldonanddengiecamra.org.uk/swfbeerfestival

Herts Pub, Club & Church Festivals

Date	Festival	Pub/Club/Church	Town	No. of Beers	Advert
31 July - 3 Aug	Summer Beer	Old Cross Tavern	Hertford	20	--
9 Aug	Annual Beer	Cask & Stillage	Potters Bar	10+	11
21 - 25 Aug	Aug Bank Holiday	Mermaid	St Albans	10 (+ 10 ciders)	16
4 - 7 Sep	Beer & Sausage	Horse & Groom	Hatfield	12	35
5 - 7 Sep	Billetfest	Crooked Billet	Ware	15 (+ 3 ciders)	22
12 - 13 Sep	Beer	Harpenden Common	Harpenden	40 (inc ciders)	34
26 - 28 Sep	Beer & Fizz	All Saints Church	Kings Langley	30+ (+ ciders)	35
24 - 26 Oct	Harvest Ale	Great Northern	St Albans	22 (+ 5 ciders)	23
30 Oct - 2 Nov	Halloween	Old Cross Tavern	Hertford	18	34
14 - 16 Nov	Winter Beer	Orange Tree	Baldock	24 (+ 12 ciders)	17

29th Watford Beer Festival

Thursday 21st to Saturday 23rd August 2025

Halsey Hall, Rickmansworth Road, Watford, WD18 0JE

Open Thu 4pm - 11pm; Fri/Sat 11am - 11pm

£2.50 Entry or FREE to CAMRA members

www.watfordbeerfestival.org.uk

@watfordcamra



THE CASK & STILLAGE

Annual Beer Festival

REAL ALE & LIVE MUSIC ALL DAY

SATURDAY 9TH AUGUST

CAMRA MEMBERS FREE ENTRY

12PM - 9PM

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www.facebook.com/casknstillage

Cask and Stillage
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SHWINGS
Chicken Truck

St Albans Beer & Cider Festival 2025

Back at the Alban Arena in September, 2025 will mark our 28th festival in this iconic city centre venue, but, once again, we're changing a few things to give Hertfordshire's ultimate beer & cider event a fresh new feel.

First and foremost, we'll be hosting a record **EIGHT Brewery Bars** in the hall, giving you the opportunity not just to try the full ranges of some incredible producers, but to meet the people behind the beer too. We'll be joined by **Mad Squirrel, Oakham, Ossett, Siren, Timothy Taylor's, Tring, Tripleff** and **Wantsum** breweries.

But the range and diversity doesn't end there. Because as well as showcasing a huge array of other brewers on our **Stage Bar**, with a large number of rare finds guaranteed, we'll also have a new-look and newly-located **Herts Bar** featuring craft KeyKeg for the first time, plus the institution that is our **International Bar** returns on the lower floor with a brand new selection from overseas. Meanwhile, outside on the **Patio Bar**, our regional spotlight will be shining on the cask ales of a specific part of the country: this time **Tyneside**.

The festival will also, as always, bring you the biggest selection of ciders & perries to be found anywhere in Herts. Plus, our wine & spirits options, introduced last year, will be joined by a choice of soft drinks – so even if your friends don't love beer or cider as much as you do, they can still join you and have a great time!

Drinks aside, there'll be a new line-up of **quality food vendors** offering a wide choice of sustenance options. And in the entertainment department we'll have **SEVEN live bands** throughout the festival, while on the Saturday we'll be showing the **Women's Rugby World Cup Final** on the biggest screen in St Albans.

100s of Beers & Ciders on 12 Bars (inc. 8 Brewery Bars)



After trialling our unique **Pop Music Bingo** game on our opening day last year, we'll now be offering people the chance to play every evening at 7pm, with a '70s round on Wednesday, '80s on Thursday, '90s on Friday and noughties on Saturday. It's completely free to play, lots of fun, and there are great prizes to be won - you just need to be in the hall when it starts.

We're also inviting experts from the world of beer writing, brewing, food, and pub heritage, to host special talks and tastings, details of which will be confirmed soon on our website.

St Albans Beer & Cider Festival really is the festival for everyone, catering for the true connoisseur as well as providing a great atmosphere and welcoming environment for newcomers and beer novices. But not only is it one of the best festivals anywhere, it's also one of the best value. While everything else may seem to have gone up over the past year, we've held 2024's prices for our online advance tickets, most of which come with drinks and a souvenir glass included. And for those who really can't get enough and want to join us on more than one day, there are season passes to save you even more.

Tickets are available now - and booking online not only saves you money but also guarantees you entry when it gets busy. For more information, please head to stalbansbf.org.uk. You can also keep up to date by searching for us on Facebook, Instagram or X.

Ben Wilkinson
SABCF
Publicity Officer

7 Bands provide the Live Music



After
Eve



Bear Pit
Band



Vinyl
Frontier



Plus:

Blissful Thinking
Meantime
Cherry
Sweetcornbread

Logo sparks mass debate!

Festival Publicity Manager, Ben Wilkinson, explained in PoV313 that this year's SABCf logo was inspired by the Ballito Hosiery Mill – a historical St Albans landmark that opened in 1925 and would be celebrating its centenary had it not closed more than 50 years ago.

Opinion is divided; whilst many love the logo, some don't.

Here is a collection of comments that I found on both Facebook and CAMRA's Discourse forum.

So, are you FOR (green), AGAINST (red) or UNSURE (yellow)?

Paul Donatantonio



Have your say! Email editor@pintsofview.camra.org.uk

I don't like it. I have feminist views and take exception to this logo. **Alexandra**

The St Albans Times love the logo. **Alicia**

It's great. Yellow and blue theme. My quirky mind would have put her on the edge of a huge pint glass in that pose. **Charlotte**

Clever link to the local history and Ballito. I think this also might encourage women that drinking beer can be enjoyed by all. It will generate comment! **Vanessa**

Deliberately provocative. **Richard**

Nice logo, didn't think that it would provoke such a conversation. **Christopher**

The logo still very much "gives me the ick". **Laura**

Loving the blue and yellow dress! And yes, women drink pints. Great poster, great nod to St Albans history and stockings factory. **Niima**

Love the logo and even better with the script. Well done! **Dins**

Ooh, you can see her stocking top. Raunchy! Fgs the logo is fine. **Kelly**

Brilliant to see those Ballito Bombshells being celebrated! **St Albans Museums**

To me, this woman strikes an empowering pose, and firmly challenges the stereotype that drinking pints of beer is just for men. **Emily**

Why take any notice? **Maz**

I think we need to reflect on the kind of image we want to project as an organisation. **James**

Love this! It's so important to celebrate our history as we embrace new residents to our city. **Hillary**

I think we've taken a few steps backward with this logo. **Gary**

I like it. **Gavin**

A woman confident in herself and dispelling the stereotype of beer being a man's drink. **Janet**

This is being discussed on Jeremy Vine on CH5 9:15 this morning. **Jan**

It's fine! Shows a women drinking beer, therefore not sexist! **Gill**

Pints of View 314 Summer 2025 Hertfordshire Pub Numbers Competition

FOUR winners each receive

St Albans Beer & Cider Festival 2025

FREE ENTRY + £10 BEER TOKENS + SOUVENIR GLASS

or

2026 CAMRA Good Beer Guide

How many different Hertfordshire pubs are mentioned in this issue (including in adverts)?

You can have five attempts, but in the event of there being more than four correct entries, the person with fewest attempts will be declared the winner. If a draw, entrants will go into a hat.

Number of Herts pubs

Attempt 1)

Attempt 2)

Attempt 3)

Attempt 4)

Attempt 5)

Entries by Fri 12 Sep 2025 to:

PoV Competition, 5 Manor Way,
Potters Bar, Herts. EN6 1EL

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....



BEEHIVE	BOOT	DYLAN'S KINGS ARMS	FARMER'S BOY	FARRIERS ARMS
GARIBALDI	GOAT	GREAT NORTHERN	HARE & HOUNDS	LOWER RED LION
MERMAID				PEAHEN
PORTLAND ARMS				ROBIN HOOD
ROYSTON SOCIAL CLUB	SAINT & SINNER	SIX BELLS	SNUG/ FLEUR DE LYS	VERULAM ARMS
WATEREND BARN	WHITE HART HOTEL	WHITE HART TAP	WHITE LION	YE OLDE FIGHTING COCKS

Pints of View 313 Pub Photo Competition

Congratulations
to our 4 winners!

Bob Moore
(St Albans)

John Gaskzn
(Shefford)

Anthony Toole
(Welwyn Gdn City)

Caroline Winter
(St Albans)

The Mermaid St Albans

AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL!

Thursday 21st - Monday 25th August

**Celebrate the last bank holiday of the summer
in style with two of our favourite things:
Real Ale and Real/Traditional Cider!**

Here's what to expect:

10 Real Ales
pales, mid/ambers, & darks

**10 Real/Traditional
Ciders & Perries**

Food Trucks
Friday/Saturday/Sunday

**Live Music from
the incredible
Pat & the Butchers
Sunday 5 - 7pm**



 **CAMRA** We're proud to have earned a number of 2025 CAMRA Awards:

East Central CAMRA - Runner-up: Regional Cider Pub of the Year

Hertfordshire CAMRA - Gold: County Cider Pub of the Year

South Hertfordshire CAMRA - Gold: Branch Cider Pub of the Year

South Hertfordshire CAMRA - Bronze: Pub of the Year

The Mermaid, 98 Hatfield Road AL1 3RL 01727 845700 mermaidstalbens@gmail.com

The Orange Tree

Norton Road, Baldock, SG7 5AW



Traditional multi-award winning, multi-roomed 17th century pub!

Diary date... Fri 14 - Sun 16 November
Winter Beer Festival
24 beers / 12 ciders +
Chapman's 'Legendary' Sausage BBQ!



5 Permanent Ales, with up to 4 Guests.
Up to 7 Real Draught Ciders

Titanic Plum Porter, Brewster's Hophead, Tring Mansion Mild,
Greene King Abbot and IPA permanently on sale



Herts County Pub of the Year 2024 & 2025



North Hertfordshire

Pub of the Year 2024 & 2025

Opening hours

Mon-Thu: 12-2pm & 4.30-11pm

Fri-Sun: All day 12-11pm

Traditional Pub Food

Mon-Sat: 12-2pm

Quiz Night - every Tuesday

Folk Club - every other Wednesday

Live music nights - check Facebook!

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Why big breweries do not work in the UK

Part 2: the lack of imagination

At the end of 2024, in a move leaked ahead of time, Carlsberg, the UK's third largest brewer, announced that it was stopping the production of eight cask ale brands and three other draught beers. Instead, it would focus on "fewer and bigger brands", citing Tetley's and Wainwright as its flagship cask ales.

For many in the industry, this made good business sense. If something is not selling, get rid of it, and consider putting something in its place. For me, this approach

epitomised the soggy thinking that passes for imaginative leadership in the world the big brewers inhabit. Incapable of creating stylish and flavoursome beers, they find new ways of living in the past.

Even the quality brands they acquire from others in takeovers are not safe in their hands - whether it be a hop-forward IPA like Lagunitas, or a classic cask ale like Banks's Mild. Five pioneering UK craft breweries have failed since takeover, because they only buy the brand, sacrificing the methods and the people behind it.

Bye-bye British brewers

One of the reasons behind this collective failure is that little of the UK brewing industry is actually UK-owned - certainly no more than 20%, perhaps only 15%. The four huge foreign conglomerates (AB-InBev, Heineken, Carlsberg and Molson Coors) have little to gain by exporting their beers to countries where they are already made. Asahi (of Japan), and Greene King (now Chinese-owned) export little too.

In Germany, the Czech Republic and Belgium, the three other countries with beer cultures that survived beer's 20th century descent into commoditisation, the excise duty and VAT applied beer is a fraction of that imposed in the UK. Those countries want to support their brewing industries, while in the UK we prefer to make way for Bud Light to be made for pennies a pint, then sold at luxury prices.

Lost opportunities

When considering the future of an iconic beer like Banks's Mild, the corporate mind sees its sales steadily reducing and thinks "Will anyone notice if we ditch this?" Would a more intelligent question not be "Something is wrong, so how do we revive this?"

Heineken has spent a small fortune creating yet another dull lager, Heineken Silver, aimed at younger drinkers seeking a lower-strength alternative to mainstream brands. When

Carlsberg took Marston's, it was gifted a genuinely different, tasty, low-alcohol ale, called Banks's Mild, but no effort was put into aiming it at a generation seeking something "other". Revive the maltiness, exploit its low strength and keep the flat caps, perhaps?

Another victim was Ringwood Old Thumper, which pioneered higher strength ales in the 1980s, its creator Peter Austin going on to build an export trade in UK-made small breweries. A third was the relative newbie, Marston's Old Empire, which had the potential to lead the market in newer pale ales, though not any more.

Time to move over

Internally, Carlsberg uses the slogan "Fewer - Bigger - Better", to describe the future of

its cask ales. Are they really so stupid as to choose Wainwright and Tetley's because they think cask is northern, but want to respect the trans-Pennine divide? Or is the logic that taking cask to a new level of mundanity will see it off?

Drink less, drink better only makes sense if better means tastier. The bigger brewers' self-serving ways need to be exposed for what they are, and independent brewers must get the breaks they deserve. It is time for CAMRA to get to work.

Tim Webb

Beer Writer

*Co-author, The World Atlas of Beer
Exeter & Devon CAMRA*





Brewer's View

The fact is that we are now brewing more cask beer than at any other point in our twenty-year history, driven by steadily growing demand.

From day one, our focus has been on quality and consistency. At a time now when people are more mindful about where they spend their money, they are increasingly turning to products they trust and, fortunately for Thornbridge, our cask beer meets that need. Cask is a drink for everyone that offers a broad range of styles and stands out as the most artisanal beer on the bar, requiring not only the skill of the brewer but also the care and expertise of the publican to ensure it is served in peak condition.

Thornbridge operates pubs in Birmingham, York, Leeds, five in Sheffield and a large Taproom in Bakewell. The response across all these sites has been fantastic as we are seeing a diverse range of customers enjoying cask-conditioned beer, including a noticeable rise in interest among 18 to 24-year-olds – a trend reflected nationally in the SIBA Independent Beer Report 2025.

Looking ahead, we're excited to be opening two new Thornbridge & Co locations by the end of this year. One will be based in a net-zero-carbon development in Holborn, London, and the other will sit at the heart of

Past, Present, Future...

Cask-iron Confidence

Despite a broader narrative, often driven by the global brewers, suggesting that cask beer is in decline and unlikely to regain its former prominence, our experience tells a very different story. At Thornbridge, we are proving that with a steadfast commitment to quality and a drive to innovate within our range, cask can actually thrive. And by keeping cask beer exciting, relevant and accessible, we're confident that we will continue to grow its reach and bring it to more people than ever before.



The Union

Sheffield City Centre, serving as a flagship venue aligned with the council's recent redevelopment efforts.

One of our long-standing aims has been to increase the spread of Jaipur and, in support of this, we have deepened our partnership with J D Wetherspoon to make this premium cask option available in nearly all their locations. This has allowed us to reach new drinkers across the UK, and the feedback on the beer has been outstanding,

While some like to pigeon-hole cask as a more affordable option, we've proven that premium cask beer can perform exceptionally well. Along with our commitment to quality and consistency, is our desire to stand out with a vibrant range of styles. In 2024, we introduced our Hazy Session IPA, Green Mountain, into cask – a move that quickly made it a key part of our core cask range. We also love to collaborate with other breweries and this year alone, we have created new beers in partnership with Castle Rock, Attic, Bundobust and others.

Another exciting chapter in our cask journey has been rescuing a Burton Union set from Carlsberg Marston's, following the company's decision to retire theirs last year. It has been a real honour to preserve and operate this piece of British brewing heritage that dates back to the 1890s. We've brought it to life with a variety of beer styles and collaborations, working with industry legends like Odell, The Kernel, Burning Sky, and



Garrett Oliver. The reception to each beer has been phenomenal.

While we also package our beers in cans, kegs and bottles and continue to keep our presence in retail and international markets – cask remains our best-selling format, and we see no sign of that slowing down. Looking ahead to the rest of 2025 and beyond, cask beer will remain the foundation of everything we do at Thornbridge.

Simon Webster
Co-Founder and CEO,
Thornbridge Brewery
Sheffield & District CAMRA



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Beer Belle

we serve ale. In most pubs in the North and Midlands, ale is served through a sparkler attached to the dispense spout. During dispense, sparklers force the beer through tiny holes, creating a solid rocky head on a pint.

Commonly in the South (particularly the Southeast) cask ale is dispensed without a sparkler, using a 'short spout'. Well-conditioned beer pours with a looser, frothy head, with the bubbles containing air.

So, why do we have this North/South divide? In a word: hops.

Hops add flavour, bitterness, impart aroma to beer and aid head retention.

Historically, hops have always been grown in abundant quantities in the southern counties of England. They were cheap and plentiful for Southern-based brewers, who added shed loads of hops to infuse the ale with tons of aroma.



The Great North/South Divide Sparklers!

I'm a born-and-bred Northerner

and home is in Yorkshire, but I spend at least half my working week in the south of England, mostly in London. After a hard day's work, I usually pop to the nearest pub for a glass or two of beer.

The ale I'm presented with in the South usually looks very different to beer I'm served in my local pub. The tight, creamy head is replaced with a looser, frothier head, which leads most Northerners to (wrongly) assume that Southern beer is flat.

Well, it's not. If it was, I would take it back to the bar and ask for something different. Any ale which tastes flat is badly kept ale.

However, we drink with our eyes, so for this article I thought you may be interested why we have this North/South divide in the way

It's far trickier to grow aromatic hops in the North of England because the climate is too cold. Historically, Northern brewers had to purchase most of their hops from the South, which made hops an expensive ingredient for them. Therefore, they used less hops during the brewing process.

To compensate for the lack of hops, sparklers were invented to squeeze all the hop oils into the head of the beer. This maximised the aroma and bitterness of the added hops and created a satisfying bitterness in the first gulp of the foam, redressing the lack of hops in the actual body of the beer. Kind of like a beer cocktail.

If you're sceptical, ask your local pub to pour an ale through a sparkler. Take a teaspoon and scoop some of the head from the beer and taste it. It's intensely bitter because

it contains lots of hop oils. Then drink the ale through the head and see how the combination of the bitter foam and the sweet beer below makes it more balanced and drinkable. Try the same beer poured without a sparkler, and you'll get a totally different drinking experience.

Is there a right or wrong way? No. It's the drinker's preference whether the beer is poured with or without a sparkler. Some drinkers like a looser, frothier head to allow all the aroma of the hops to escape. Other drinkers like to see a tight creamy head and experience the balance of flavour.

If you ask for a sparkler to be removed before the beer is poured, that's fine. That's the way you like your beer. It's not wrong, it's just a preference, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise!

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Annabel Smith

Beer Sommelier & Writer
Wakefield CAMRA



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Cryne... into beer

A number of factors seem to have driven this growth:

- **Tax Reform** – the government introduced new duty legislation in 2023, which reduced duty on beers of 3.4% or less. The FT reported that this led to a doubling of sales of these beers that year.
- **Healthier Lifestyles** – the trend continues, leading to more consumers reducing their alcohol consumption. Doctors and the NHS are active promoters of this.
- **Innovation** – the no/low alcohol beers are generally of a better quality than when Barbican entered the market.
- **Driving Drinkers** – an alternative beverage to soft drinks as availability of low/no alcohol beers increased.

Here to stay Low alcohol beer

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

Despite the fact that a half pint of a 3.8% ABV beer is one unit compared to two units for a 175ml glass of 12% wine, the growth of the UK low/no alcohol beer market has been phenomenal. IWSR reported that low/no alcohol beer grew 20% in 2024 vs 2023 and predict this will continue to grow at an average 7% per annum over the next few years. This compares to an overall decline in beer sales of circa 2% (2022-23).

So, what is the impact on breweries? Not surprisingly, this growth has resulted in interest by the big international brewers with Heineken, AB InBev and Carlsberg currently being the biggest producers in the UK. But smaller breweries have started to take note,

Max ABV	UK Description	
	Labelling Guidance 2023 (Voluntary Code)	Licensing Act 2023 (Legislation)
0.05%	Alcohol-free	Alcohol-free
0.50%		Alcohol-free
1.20%	Low alcohol	
3.49%	Reduced alcohol	



Complies with UK Legislation
and Voluntary Code



Complies with UK
Legislation

aided by the development of new yeasts that produce a 0.5% ABV beer, rather than having to invest in expensive technology such as Guinness has done.

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

These dedicated specialist brewers are increasing, with even one in Herts. Taking a similar route to Big Drop, Hertford-based, UNLTD was set up by husband and wife, Johnny and Antonia Johnson, in 2020. They have two beers, an IPA and a Lager, brewed by Hepworth in Sussex. They have received a number of awards for their beers including Great Taste and the World Beer Awards.

Pubs are aware of the growth in this market; 86% of pubs are now stocking one or more low alcohol beers. Regrettably, with the exception of dedicated beer pubs, it's not usual to see a beer from a small independent brewer. Fortunately, the move to drinking less alcohol might not mean a falling out of love with the pub; with sales of these beers

showing significant growth. There is also evidence of 'mix and match' drinking with pub users drinking both alcoholic and non alcoholic beer in an evening.

The trend towards less alcohol consumption is not going away; it's interesting to note that the eighth biggest USA craft brewery is Athletic, the low alcohol brewer. So ways to embrace it and help support brewers (particularly smaller independents) and pubs in this journey is something CAMRA is going to have to think about.

Christine Cryne

*Beer Tutor & Master Trainer
EBCU Accredited Beer Judge
British Guild of Beer Writers
North London CAMRA*

Postscript: If you would like to taste some low/no alcohol beers mainly from small independent brewers, then the Great British Beer Festival (5-9 August at the NEC) is running a low/no alcohol bar featuring both draught and small-pack beers. Also, I am running a tutored tasting of some of the best low/no alcohol beers I have sampled and will be covering the various ways in which they are made.
www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice-and-support/alcohol-free-drinks/alcohol-free-drinks



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Tips to spot Carlsberg 'Fresh Ale'



Carbonation

Lower carbonation than keg and may be slightly fizzier than cask

Brands

Wainwright Amber, Wainwright Gold, Hobgoblin IPA



Dispense

Cask handpull, might look 'jerky' during pouring

On the bar

'Brewery-conditioned' on the pump clip

Taste

Slight 'tinniness'

Mouthfeel

Smooth with a slight fizziness

Think you've spotted one?

- 1) Take a photo
- 2) Report it here



For Pete's Sake

Love cask... *flirt with keg!*

Since CAMRA's foundation, some real-ale devotees have insisted that cask is the only beer worth taking seriously. But times have changed... and so has beer.

Within the hallowed history of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), there are many stories and legends. One of the most surprising is that when the four journalists founded CAMRA, they didn't even know what cask ale was. What they *did* know was that some beer on the bar was good, and a lot was awful. Lager – soon to become the perceived arch-enemy of good beer – was still a distant glimmer on the horizon.

Originally called the 'Campaign for the Revitalisation of Ale', the fledgling organisation had been going for a full year before a sympathetic pub landlord took the beer-loving founders into his cellar and showed them the difference between carbonated keg ale and fresh, live cask. It was only then that they had their lightbulb moment – there was a technical difference between bad beer (keg) and good beer (cask).

To be fair, at the time it would have been a pretty good measure. Keg beer was, in the main, fizzy and tasteless, and, if you were in the right pub, cask tasted far better. The styles of beer we were drinking then – ales, bitters and milds at a relatively low ABV – had evolved alongside cask dispense to become layered and flavourful, thanks to the wonders of maturation in the cask (i.e. secondary fermentation, or cask conditioning). The renamed Campaign for Real Ale said cask was real, and keg was, and always must be, inferior. This was the start of a revolution in British beer.



But imagine if CAMRA's four founding fathers had met in the US. Like the Americans, they may have decided 'real ale' could only be made by small, independent breweries traditional ingredients and no adjuncts. That would also have been a perfectly good description of 'real ale' – in fact, the first-ever attempt to describe a craft brewery in the US concluded that beer produced by such breweries should be known as 'real beer'.

Or, imagine if they'd met in, what was then, Czechoslovakia, the world's greatest lager-drinking country. They would probably have decided that 'real beer' was lager brewed with bottom-fermenting lager yeast and conditioned for a minimum of four to six weeks.

Cask ale is remarkable, easily one of the wonders of the beer world. But for many drinkers who have grown up loving it, there's a belief that it is objectively the best way to serve all beer. And this is where things can become problematic.

If, when we say 'best', we mean 'my favourite', there's not a brewer or beer writer on the planet who can tell us we're wrong. Your palate is unique to you. But if we mean 'cask beer is better quality than any other beer, regardless of style', then we're doing both beer and ourselves a disservice.

Anyone who enjoys Pilsner lager can agree that it's more enjoyable cold and carbonated

(but not necessarily 'fizzy') than if it were on cask. "Well, yes," says the cask loyalist. "But ale is better than lager, and any ale of any style is going to be better on cask than keg."

This may, possibly, have been true in Britain in 1971, when any beer we drank was the continuation of a single, British ale tradition dating back to the late 19th century. (Those who say cask ale is beer as it has always been made, aren't quite correct - it's a pretty modern beer in its own way.) Now, we're lucky enough to have access to different traditions from around the world and those traditions are mingling and cross-fertilising - as they have always done.

A big revelation for me was when I tasted hoppy American IPAs for the first time. They had the depth of ale, the bite of lager, and a character all of their own. Because they were developed without cask dispense, they used hops in a different way from British brewers to add character, placing far more emphasis on aroma than traditional British brewing did.



CAMRA's four founders attempt to blow out keg

"Think how good they'd be on cask though", you could be forgiven for saying. But here's the thing. When American brewers started to experiment with cask, the intensity of the hop character didn't work. They were designed to

counter the fact that carbonation strips out a lot of flavour and delivers it as aroma. Take the carbonation out and all that hop character stays in the body of the beer and can give it an oily, cloying character.

The simple fact is that if an ale wasn't designed for cask, then cask dispense will not necessarily improve it - and may even make it worse.

Pete Brown
Author,
Broadcaster,
Beer Lover

*Beer Writer of the Year 2021, 2016,
2012, 2009.*

www.petebrown.net/pete-brown-blog
Norwich & District CAMRA



Photo: © Allendale Brewery, Hexham



Moor beer



Though only around 20% of pubs retain their brewery tie, another 30% are tied to pub companies who resell beer brewed by third parties to their leaseholders at a steep mark-up, while many more are part of big managed chains like Wetherspoon.

These companies prefer to buy a relatively small range of beers cheaply in bulk from bigger suppliers, making it difficult for smaller independents to find room on their local bars.

The local **Reinvented**

At first glance, it seems paradoxical that in recent decades British pubs have closed by the thousands while brewery openings have increased exponentially. Of course, breweries are, on average, much smaller than they used to be, and UK beer production volume, like pub numbers, has almost halved since 1980. But though we're drinking less, we're undoubtedly more discerning about *what* we drink, and more appreciative of diversity and local provenance.

The traditional pub sector has struggled to respond to these changes. There are several factors driving pub closures, not least the increasing real cost of drinking out. But arguably a bigger issue is the way big and cumbersome companies dominate the sector. Regulatory changes in the early 1990s dismantled the old tied-house system, when most pubs were owned by breweries and exclusively stocked their owner's beer. Though this initially opened a window for independent producers, the arrangements that subsequently evolved have resulted in the window closing to restrict choice and flexibility, once again.



Butcher's Arms, Herne Bay

"My customers know there are dozens of great breweries nearby," one frustrated licensee recently told me, "but I can't get their beers through my pubco, so people come in, see well-known beers made hundreds of miles away on the handpumps, and just walk out again." South London brewery, Anspach & Hobday, gave up a lease on a Stonegate pub last year after only six months, as keg choice was restricted to multinational brands and whilst they could sell their own beer on the cask pumps, it had to be bought back from the pubco at a premium. But making it more difficult to run

a successful pub doesn't seem to bother the pubcos, who view their venues as property assets that can be closed and sold on for a quick return.

Little wonder, then, that some of the places where we now enjoy good beer don't look much like pubs. A shopfront or railway arch that wasn't previously licensed provides one way of sidestepping the tie. While commentary on pub closures tends to evoke the popular image of old-fashioned pubs in purpose-built premises, this obscures the emergence of new styles of beer venue.

One example is taprooms in breweries themselves, almost unheard of prior to the 2010s. Most were conceived primarily to appeal to beer enthusiasts, but many now

traditional pub values, but they're an entirely modern invention facilitated, like taprooms, by legal changes in 2003 that transferred licensing from magistrates to councils and introduced more flexible categories. Their size is better suited to modern consumption patterns than the big purpose-built corner pub.

And management and staff at both taprooms and micropubs tend to be closely invested in the business, engaged with its customers and enthusiastic and knowledgeable about what's on sale. Compare that to some chain and pubco pubs, even those with a better than average beer offer, where a request for recommendations is met by a blank look or a response like, "Sorry, I don't drink the ales".

It's not only local pubs that serve beers from local breweries



Small Beer Co Tap, Bermondsey

attract a much wider range of customers, fulfilling the functions of the 'local'. Sometimes this is driven by pub closures nearby, but the style and atmosphere of a taproom may be better suited to the local community. Numerous brewery staff have told me how proud they are of providing a safe and welcoming space for women, families, LGBT people and those from a range of ethnicities and backgrounds – something that can't always be said of the local pubs.

Micropubs are another example: they're sometimes presented as a return to

None of this should surprise us. Pubs aren't museum pieces but commercial enterprises that have always responded to social and economic changes. And though demand has undoubtedly declined, our appetite for enjoying the pleasures of drinking and socialising in communal spaces certainly hasn't gone away.

Des de Moor

Beer Writer

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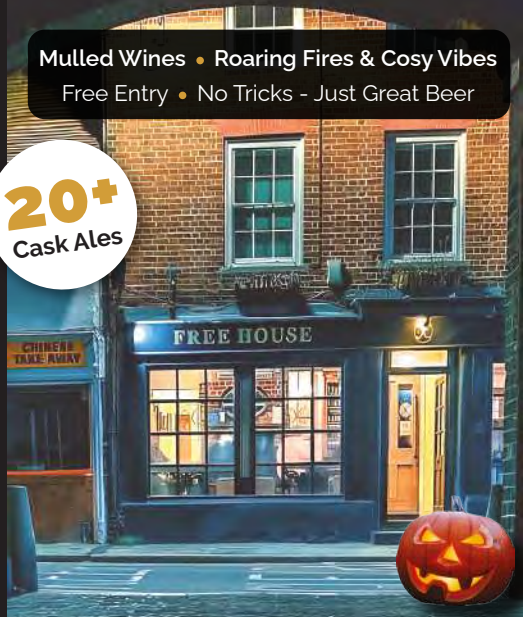
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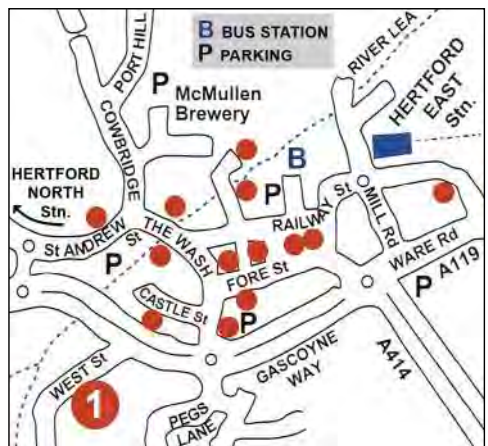
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rate for small businesses), For 2025/26 the multiplier is 0.555.

Therefore, a large pub pays Business Rates calculated as $0.555 \times 10\% = 5.6\%$ of its annual turnover.

Put another way, for every £1 of sales, the pub will pay business rates of 5.6p. That's 28p on every £5 pint of beer.

Let's now compare this with the supermarkets.

Back in December 2020, Reuters reported that Asda "*will pay business rates of £340m... ..to the UK government... ..waiving tax relief.*"

Asda's sales were about £23bn in that year so the Business Rates payable were just under 1.5% of sales, meaning a £5 pint cost them only 8p.

But it's worse than that.

With their much lower overheads, the average cost of beer in a supermarket will be far, far less than £5.

For the pile-'em-high, sell-'em-cheap bottles and cans that they sell so many of, the price may be as little as £1 a pint, meaning a Business Rate 'levy' of only 1.5p.

So, 1.5p in a supermarket versus 28p in a pub... which is nearly 20 TIMES more. I told you!

Tim Martin

Chairman

JD Wetherspoon plc
Watford & District CAMRA

Ed says: *Being of a sound but naturally suspicious mind, I thought I should check that Asda weren't an unrepresentative example, cherry picked by Sir Tim to help support his case.*

Here's what I discovered...

For 2023 (the latest year for which I could find both sets of figures), the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows sales across the whole retail sector were £426bn (excluding automotive fuel), with Business Rates, according to the British Retail Consortium (BRC), totalling £6.6bn.

And $6.6 = 1.5\%$ of 426.

What's the future for Cask Ale?

I'm very hopeful that cask beer will be an important and growing category of the on-trade. Cask ale is a unique and historic product that is inextricably linked to the success of pubs. But cask ale won't take its rightful place in the social culture, if pubs, the only outlet for cask, perish. And for pubs to be vibrant, they need tax equality with supermarkets - that means zero VAT on food sales, like supermarkets, and the same business rates per pint. Pubs, on average, can be paying nearly 20 TIMES more than supermarkets.

Don't believe me? I'll try to explain...

The Rateable Value of any business is set by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), and is equal to the yearly rent the property could have been let for on the open market on 1 April 2015.

For a pub, this is something called the Market Rent, which is typically 10% of the pub's annual turnover. Therefore, the Rateable Value of a pub is typically 10% of its turnover.

OK, but how are the actual Business Rates calculated? Well, this is based on a multiple of the Rateable Value, set by government, and called the National Non-Domestic Rate Multiplier (NDRM) (there's a slightly lower

VoucherCodes

A recent chat on Discourse, CAMRA's web forum, was prompted by the question:

"After a lovely time in Torquay, we are currently in the second Wetherspoon pub this week (Torquay and Exeter) which doesn't accept vouchers on real cider, saying that 'the till doesn't allow them to accept vouchers on cider'. Has anyone experienced the same and does it represent a change of policy nationwide?"

Emily

I put the question to JDWHQ and received the following reply:

Hi Paul

The vouchers can be used on the real ciders that some pubs have as guest ciders, though they cannot be used on the keg ciders.

Thanks

Jen Swindells | Marketing
jdwetherspoon.com

I followed-up by asking if all Wetherspoon pubs are obliged to accept genuine in-date vouchers and was advised:

Yes Paul, they should accept an in-date valid voucher when supported with a membership card.

Thanks

Not that I've ever been asked (must be my trustworthy face) but it makes sense and, had I looked previously, would have seen T&C number 2 on the reverse of the voucher.

Paul Donatantonio



CAMRA Voucher Scheme terms and conditions

1. Voucher must have valid date
2. Membership card must be shown when using the voucher
3. No cash alternative offered
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Promoter: CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire. AL1 4LW.

Fergus... the new MASTER!

Congratulations to Fergus McMullen who has been appointed Master of The Worshipful Company of Brewers, or Brewers' Company as it is more commonly known. One of the ancient Livery Companies of the City of London, it was once responsible for governing the beer trade in London, and today remains closely connected to the brewery industry, supporting it alongside a responsibility for several inherited charitable Foundations and Trusts. Distributing around £2m annually, the Company supports four London schools and awards grants that focus on young people and the needy.

Dating from the 13th century, its first Royal Charter was received in 1438 from Henry VI, and since 1994, the Company has been open

to brewers throughout the UK. In fact, today, members include subsidiaries of global giants, as well as many of the UK's independent breweries. Its first hall was destroyed in the Great Fire of London of 1666, whilst its replacement was bombed during the 1940 blitz. Rebuilt in 1960, the present hall is in Aldermanbury Square at the heart of the City.

Fergus took up his new role on 10 July and retains his post as Non-Executive Director at McMullen's.



Les Middlewood
McMullen Brewery Liaison Officer (BLO)
South Herts CAMRA

The Great Northern 'DecaFest'

Spring finally sprung

at the Great Northern pub in St Albans on the final weekend of March. Not only was the weather bright, clear and slightly chilled – so were the beer offerings!

To celebrate their first decade at the pub, Emma and Sheri hosted a 'small' beer and cider festival, with a selection of a dozen ales and four ciders, split between the main inside bar and the exterior 'Doghouse bar' in the beer garden.

The beer range included a bit of nostalgia – not some funky new 'old style' IPA, but the return of three ales from their first festival hosted in

2015 - *Black Sheep Ale* 4.4%,
Redemption Pale Ale 3.8%
and *Mad (née Red) Squirrel Hopfest* 3.8%

The above were supplemented by a mix of best and hoppy bitters, with a well-represented 'dark side' covering a potent mild (6%), a stout and a porter, plus an eclectic cider selection – Emma's guesswork/knowledge/inspiration (delete as applicable) coming up trumps again.

The event was well attended by locals and visitors alike, and included willing participants celebrating a birthday



Sarah, hard at work in the 'Doghouse'!

event and Mothers' Day.

A barbecue (Fri) and pizza oven (Sat) ensured punters were well fed and thirsty for more liquid! Here's to the next 10 years!!

Steve Thompson
South Herts CAMRA

Events, beer boy, events

Tring Brewery has just opened its new events space, adjacent to the brewery shop. The first event, *Street Food Heroes*, took place on Thursday 1 May, and featured seven street-food vendors alongside hundreds of enthusiastic visitors at Dunsley Farm. With a fully stocked bar and a resident DJ, spirits were kept high!

Street Food Heroes events at Tring Brewery's new space will take place on the first Thursday of every month up-until-and-including September, with FREE ADMISSION for all ages.

Tring Brewery's annual charity event *ToadFest* was the second to use the space and a Saturday 4 May sell-out! Over 300 attendees supped open-tap beer from 5-10PM, whilst boogying to 'noughties' rock hits played by local band *The Elastic*

Cats (fronted by Tring Brewery drayman Tom). Delicious beer-steeped burgers from Harpenden-based *Jelley's Meat* lined our stomachs. As with every *ToadFest* event, all proceeds went to Tring's annual charity of choice - this year *The Repair Shed*. Keep an eye out for next year's *Toadfest* offering!

Alongside the summer *Street Food Heroes* events, Tring Brewery is brewing monthly special beers to raise awareness for *The Repair Shed*. These include *Tinkerer's Tipple* in June (a 3.7% ABV American Pale Ale), *Clawhammer* in July (a 4.1% ABV American IPA), and *Bolt & Barrel* in August (a 4.0% ABV English Bitter). As is tradition, Tring's summer ale *Fanny Ebbs* is set to be released at the start of June - a 3.9% traditional golden ale.

Jared Ward-Brickett

*Tring Brewery PR Director
Mid-Chilterns CAMRA*

LEGENDARY BEER FROM HERTFORDSHIRE



ORDER ONLINE >>



- ▶ DRAUGHT & BOTTLED BEER (INCLUDING PARTY SIZES)
- ▶ T-SHIRTS, GIFTS & GOODIES
- ▶ GIFT VOUCHERS
- ▶ GOLDEN TOAD MEMBERSHIP
- ▶ LOCAL PRODUCE
- ▶ BREWERY TOURS
- ▶ CIDER AND SPIRITS

In 2025 our Monthly Specials are raising funds and awareness for *The Repair Shed*



TRING
BREWERY Co.

Dunsley Farm, London Road, Tring HP23 6HA

☎ 01442 890721 🌐 www.tringbrewery.co.uk



Ale Trips & Trails

5 Pub Walk – Cuffley/Goffs Oak/Newgate Street



4. The Crown

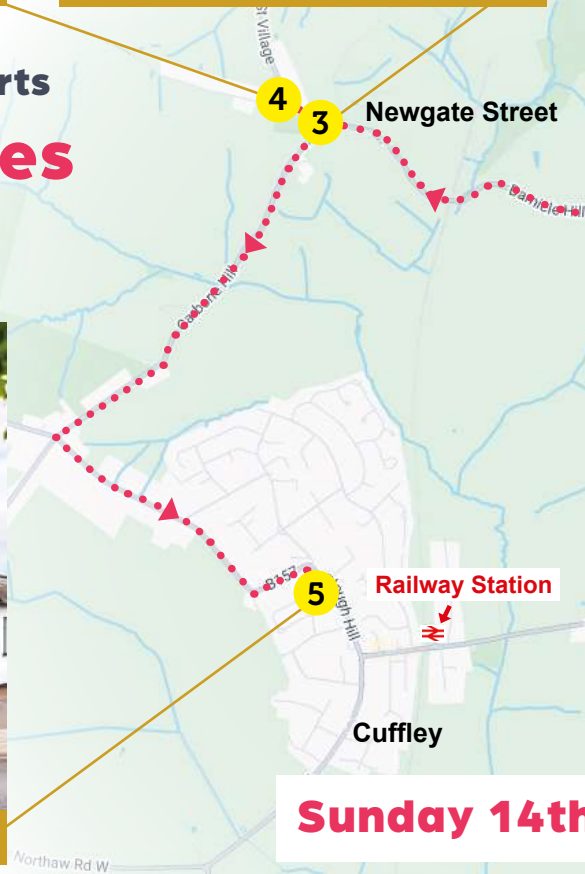


3. The Coach & Horses

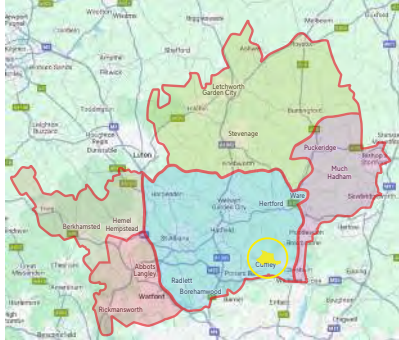
South Herts / North Herts Cross-Branches Social



5. Plough



Sunday 14th



2. Prince of Wales

	Arrival Time	Distance (Time)
Pub 1 - The Goffs Oak EN7 5RH	12.30	0.7 miles (15 mins)
Pub 2 - The Prince of Wales EN7 6SL	13.30	2.6 miles (1 hr)
Pub 3 - The Coach & Horses SG13 8RA	15.15	0.1 mile (2 mins)
Pub 4 - The Crown SG13 8RA	16.15	2.1 miles (46 mins)
Pub 5 - The Plough EN6 4DW	18.00	

Return journey

19.15 - Bus departs Cuffley Station (for Potters Bar & St Albans)
 19.16 - Train departs Cuffley Station (for Hertford & Stevenage)

SUNDAY 14th SEPTEMBER 2025	Train Steve-Mgate	Bus 242
Stevenage railway station	12.00	
Hertford North railway station	12.14	
Cuffley railway station*	12.22	12.25
Goffs Oak war memorial		12.28
The Goffs Oak (Pub 1)		0.1 mile walk 12.30

*Alternatively, 1.1 mile walk from station to pub

SUNDAY 14th SEPTEMBER 2025	Bus 84	Bus 242
St Albans St Peter's Street	11.11	
Potters Bar railway station	11.43	12.10
Goffs Oak war memorial		12.28
The Goffs Oak (Pub 1)		0.1 mile walk 12.30



1. Goffs Oak Cheshunt

September

New booklet - The Hertford Loop Line Rail Ale Trail

Following on from last year's free New River Line Rail Ale Trail booklet (from Hertford East station to Broxbourne) a similar free pocket-sized guide now celebrates the pubs and local history along the Hertford Loop Line. With guidance from HCC's Community Rail Partnership and input from local CAMRA branches, Friends of Gordon Hill Station and Enfield Chase Station Partners, arms of The Enfield Society have created a 24-page, full-colour, illustrated booklet covering the twelve stations on the Loop Line route from Alexandra Palace through Hertfordshire's Cuffley, Bayford and Hertford North to Watton-at-Stone and pubs within walking distance of each station.

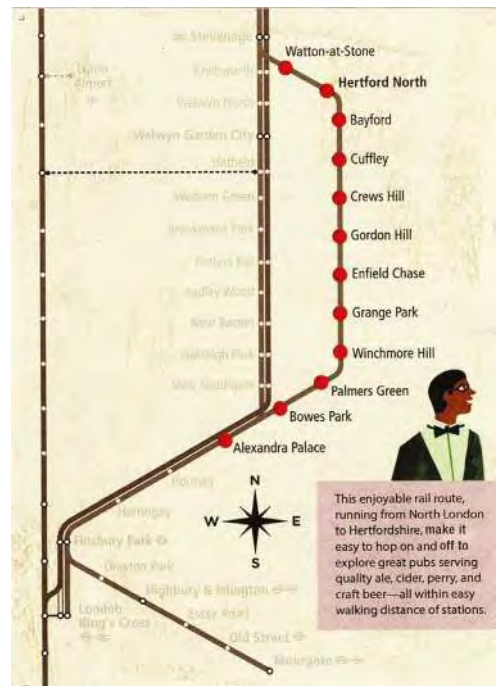
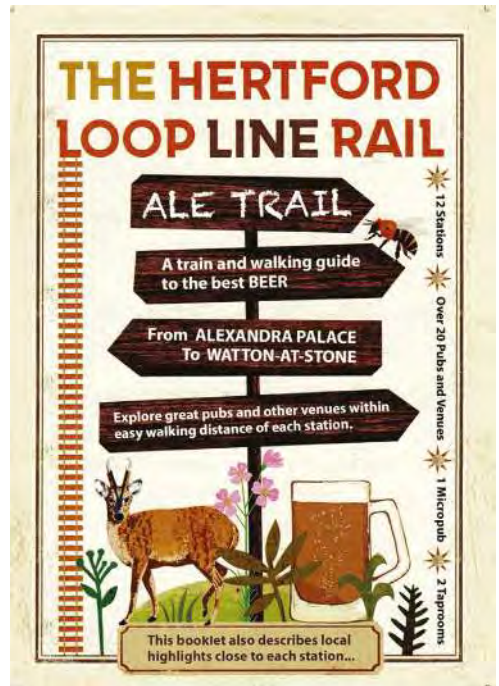
The booklet includes maps, local exploration tips and pub descriptions. The Society's John Cole said *"This guide is a celebration of community, heritage and good beer."*

We hope it encourages people to explore the Hertford Loop Line in a new way - supporting local pubs, travelling sustainably by train and appreciating the creativity and culture around our stations."

The project is funded by Community Rail Network and Great Northern Rail with a contribution from Hertford brewer, McMullen. The Trail also forms part of Railway 200, a year-long celebration marking 200 years of rail innovation and culture.

Booklets are available at most participating pubs and stations along the Loop Line, from the Hertford Tourist Information Centre, the Enfield Society and at Enfield and Barnet CAMRA and South Herts CAMRA branch events. A digital version is now available at <https://enfieldsociety.org.uk/documents/books/rail-ale-trail-ebook.pdf>

Les Middlewood
South Herts CAMRA



Another one that didn't
make the grade



A.I. is too important to be left in the hands of machines

The A.I. we're referring to isn't Artificial Intelligence, it's Ale Intelligence, of course. We're not technophobes, we just don't trust anything incapable of smelling, feeling or tasting to create something as delicately balanced as Landlord. That's why we have five hands-on, Heriot-Watt

trained brewers involved in every step of the process, from barley delivery to filling the cask. This way, we can make sure that every sip of Taylor's is as delicious as humanly possible. Machines may one day take over the world, just be thankful you won't be around to drink their terrible beer.

All for that taste of Taylor's



Campaign Column

Thou Shalt allow Guest Beer!

Understandably, a pub-owning Independent Family Brewer might be concerned about legislation requiring their estate to offer guest beers.

However, the idea recently proposed by Steve Dunkley (*Brewer's View - PoV312 & 313*), would not only affect just the two largest Independents, but, more importantly, only to a very small extent.

As the table shows, of the 25 Breweries, **Shepherd Neame** would be required to have guest beer in **12 of their 300 pubs**, and **Robinsons 1 of their 254**.

Due to having estates of fewer than 250 pubs, no others would be required to offer guest beers.

The concern should not be with what Steve is proposing, but with what the government might conjure up - either if left to its own devices or, worst, bending to lobbying from the globals.

Paul Donatantonio

	Approx Number of Pubs in Estate	Number of Pubs required to offer Guest Beer
Shepherd Neame	300	12
Robinsons	254	1
Daniel Thwaites	198	0
Hall & Woodhouse	180	0
St Austell	160	0
Everards	150	0
Wadworth	147	0
J W Lees	128	0
Joseph Holt	127	0
McMullen	122	0
Arkell's	100	0
Palmers	53	0
Batemans	49	0
Hydes	48	0
Adnams	46	0
Harvey's	45	0
Elgood's	36	0
Hook Norton	31	0
Ossett	23	0
Holdens	22	0
Theakston	20	0
Timothy Taylor's	19	0
Donnington	18	0
Daniel Batham	12	0
Thornbridge	5	0

0 of 250 pubs
Required to offer
Guest Ales



62 of 500 pubs
Required to offer
Guest Ales



312 of 1,000 pubs
Required to offer
Guest Ales



1,312 of 2,000 pubs
Required to offer
Guest Ales



Get to Know Cask Ale

Look out for beer mats and posters getting behind CAMRA's new "Learn & Discover" thrust to promote cask ale. Launched in January 2025 (just prior to the branding change) the beer mats are double sided, the plain obverse with a simple message, whilst the reverse has a selection of beer-related questions and facts – there are five in the set for you to collect! The A4 posters suggest beer styles that might entice drinkers away from their usual tittle. The A3 posters give pub-goers a basic guide to cask ale, its attributes and what to order at the bar.

We always need to be on the front foot in promoting cask ale – CAMRA's new material aims to support our pubs and brewers, keeping cask ale to the fore in our pubs, enticing people to try some of the amazing cask beers that are on offer, be they bitters, golden ales, milds, stouts or porters.

Those of you new to these pages might be wondering...

What is Cask Ale?

Dubbed 'real ale' by CAMRA some 50 years ago, cask ale is a 'living' product known more properly as cask-conditioned ale. In comparison to other types of beer where yeast is killed off and beer is forcibly infused with CO₂ or nitrogen gas prior to serving, each cask of cask ale contains live yeast allowing the beer to continue to ferment as it conditions in the pub cellar until it is ready for serving. Like any artisan product, cask ale requires skilful handling and storing to ensure best quality and taste. Well-kept cask ale served at the right temperature should be cool, not overly cold, lively, naturally carbonated and flavourful – representing the pinnacle of brewing art. To select cask ale at the bar, consumers in Hertfordshire should opt for beer served from the traditional handpump or, in some cases, direct from the cask.

Les Middlewood

*McMullen Brewery Liaison Officer (BLO)
South Herts CAMRA*



Readers Write

Indie Brewer's View

Hi there

I refer to the recent Guest Ale articles [*Brewer's View - PoV312 & 313*] regarding proposed legislation.

My comments:

1. It would be beneficial to our customers and smaller brewers in our industry if there was more access to cask and keg lines in free trade pubs.
2. Same goes for Pub Cos that are tied by default due to equipment installs etc.
3. This should be broader than simply cask, as this is a reducing prize, whilst keg is growing and presents greater opportunity, especially for those smaller brewers.
4. From our perspective, the upside is that we could potentially supply more to other pubs, rather than being overly concerned about the impact on our own sites.

Regards

Jenny Hanlon

Chief Executive Officer
Adnams plc

Ed says: *Many thanks for taking time to write in and share your views. I love the overall upbeat message!*

With a nationally-recognised heritage brand and an interesting range of quality beers, you have every reason to be confident that, far from being a threat, well-drafted 'guest beer legislation' should benefit your business by opening up supply into other tied estates.

With regard to legislation being restricted to cask, that is certainly NOT our intention. However, whilst, as you state, cask has recently been a 'reducing prize' at a national level, some brewers (independents, not globals) are reporting a growth in both sales and profitability of this quintessentially British format.

Simon Webster, Co-Founder & CEO of Thornbridge, tells his company's good-news story in this month's Brewer's View on pages 20-21.



Have your say! Email editor@pintsofview.camra.org.uk

Mac's challenge

Hi Paul

Love *Pints of View* and read it often, particularly when I get a quiet moment in my Old Hatfield locals; keep up the good work.

I'm a CAMRA member and a long-time cask fan who has lived near to and drunk in McMullen's pubs most of my life, though I now tend to drink elsewhere. Reading the McMullen response 'Mac's Pride' to Steve Dunkley's suggestion for widening availability of guest beers hit a nerve that I'd like to comment on:

Tom McMullen passionately defends his family's right to serve only their own beers in their pubs, citing generations of investment as justification. But if McMullen's beers were truly as strong as claimed, why the reluctance to allow competition?

Tellingly, Mr McMullen admits that "*our route to market... is the only reason our brewery survives.*" That's not the sign of a thriving product - it's a frank admission that the brewery business would die if the restrictive practices possible because of pub ownership were to be lifted.

As Steve Dunkley rightly points out, simply allowing one or two guest beers in tied pubs shouldn't pose a threat to any brewery genuinely confident in its product. If a guest beer starts outselling the house brand, it's not the guest that's the problem...

This reliance on property ownership suggests a worrying complacency. Where is the broader demand for McMullen's beers? Why is the bottled beer range not available in independent shops, nor prominently displayed in McMullen's pubs? Many of today's breweries thrive on competing in open markets, adapting to changing tastes, collaborating with other breweries and winning over drinkers with flavour and innovation.

If McMullen truly believes in the strength of their beers, they should let them earn their place on the bar - on merit, not monopoly. Until then, this defence of exclusivity looks less like tradition and more like protectionism.

Customers deserve choice and variety in their local pubs - one of the joys of cask is the diversity available.

Yours sincerely

Lawrence Shulman
Hatfield

Ed says: Thank you for writing in. Love the way you calmly open with an uncontroversial first paragraph, praising the magazine!

And then you get going..

South of Stevenage

Dear Editor

Through the pages of *Pints of View* I would like to issue a dire warning to pub goers in the Hertfordshire area, by relating a crass and despicable injustice inflicted on myself and my partner last year.

For 16 years we were regulars at a local pub called XXXXXXXX in the village of XXXXXXXXX. But not any more. One evening last year the bar was full, and all the usual seats and tables were taken. So we found ourselves sitting alone in the dining area at the rear of the pub.

Later on, some people came in with two badly-behaved children who became increasingly rowdy and noisy. After half an hour, or so, my partner turned to me with a weary look and said: "I really can't stand anymore of this; shall we go and sit somewhere else?" I agreed, so we then started discussing where else would be quieter.

Then this demented nut case, on the table next to ours, suddenly stood up and started screaming out for us to leave the pub! He even had the cheek to insist that if we didn't like all the noise from his (rowdy and undisciplined) kids then it was OUR problem. I could have said the same thing. If he didn't like the conversation my partner and I were having, then surely that was HIS problem?

The shouting and the abuse continued, and, next thing, he snatched a carrier bag from out of my hands and hurled it across the room. While all this was happening a young waitress was standing right next to our table.

When we went to the bar to complain to the manager, he told us to leave the pub for making a fuss!



I have since written to the pubco on several occasions, but to no avail. They simply don't believe my account of what happened, despite the young waitress having witnessed the whole appalling incident.

They also say that they do not have a policy of speaking to parents who don't control their noisy and unruly kids; unlike many other pubs and restaurants that display notices to this effect.

We now find ourselves banned and punished due to somebody else's bad behaviour and a pub's cavalier attitude to dealing with it. All we can do is steer clear of other pubs owned by XXXXXXXXX and warn others of our experience.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Townsend
North Hertfordshire

Ed says: My apologies for having to significantly edit down your letter, for reasons of space. On this occasion, I've decided to redact the pub/pubco names as I do not have their version of events.

That said, I sympathise and share your immense frustration. It annoys me when the staff of a pub in my hometown allow young children to run around, shouting and bumping into people, whilst their parents carry on drinking after the meal, seemingly in blissful ignorance.

What are the views and experiences of other readers?

Calling all St Albans Home Brewers

Hi there,

I am a member of CAMRA and also a local homebrewer (St Albans). I was wondering if you have any homebrewers in your CAMRA region who might be interested in meeting up to share stories, recipes, brews, etc?

Or perhaps there is a local group already that I don't know about?

I am aware of the Beds and Herts Home Beer makers, but they meet in Luton, which would be a 40 minute drive each way for me.

Regards,

Mike Busby
St Albans

South Herts CAMRA

Ed says: *What a good question! We're not aware of any group local to St Albans currently in place, but perhaps Pints of View readers might know otherwise, or want to be part of setting one up?*

The Hertford Brew Club - <https://facebook.com/hertfordbrewers> - already exists and is slightly closer than Luton.

Alternatively, Brewer's Friend, which appears to be an online community, though with some interest from St Albans - <https://thehomebrewforum.co.uk/threads/hi-from-st-albans-uk.105753/>

Good luck - do let Pints of View readers know how you get on.

Car park to reopen, says the good Lord

Paul,

Just for information and a need to update the POV pub listing on the Branch website. It concerns the Horse & Groom in Old Hatfield. The car park to the rear of the Great Northern no longer exists at present as His Lordship is re-developing Salisbury Square. It is not known with certainty if ANY parking area or spaces will be made available when the building works are completed.

As an aside, I thought the listing of public houses was excellent but is one able to download it all? Would certainly save a lot of ink when I need to transfer entries.

Regards,

Kevin Hamblett
South Herts CAMRA

is pulled from the new CAMRA Experience website (WhatPub's replacement) and relies on pub-goers and publicans for updating. Go to <https://camra.org.uk/pubs> It is not currently possible to download the list, so I have forwarded your idea to CAMRA's IT department, as I'm sure many would find a spreadsheet with filters extremely useful.

Concerning Old Hatfield parking, I received this reassuring response from land-owner Gascoyne Cecil: "The car park immediately to the rear of The Great Northern is currently closed until Spring 2026 when the redevelopment of Salisbury Square is complete. The plan is for the car park to re-open, with some bays dedicated to the new homes and businesses, but there will be visitor parking too. In the meantime, the railway station car park, three other car parks and on street parking within Old Hatfield are available to patrons."

Ed says: *The 'Pub Map for Herts Branches' on the PoV website, includes a list of 'Herts County Pubs selling Real Ale'. Data*

Not really a bad pub...

Hi

Just reading Les Middlewood's article about the Herts Real Draft Beer guide and wanted to say I still have my guides from both 1978 and, I think, 1994. Amusing comments about our local, the White Horse, on Hatching Green, Harpenden!

Best regards

Rob Edwards

Harpenden

Ed says: *Not being familiar with the establishment, I consulted WhatPub for an up-to-date description: "The White Horse is best known for its popular restaurant." Hmm, so probably never been a 'socks & sandals CAMRA member' type of pub!*

HATCHING GREEN C3

White Horse

On the B478 [OS: TL134130]

Tel: 3428

Wethered



H

Suit and tie required here

■ WHITE HORSE (Map Ref 20)

Redbourne Lane, Hatching Green

Tel: 0582 773428

Marstons Pedigree (H) Boddington

Bitter (H)

CP GD ME ML MR PG RF SN

Recently extended and enlarged with an eating emphasis. This is not really a bad pub and the beer is fine - it's just the clientele...

Positive News

Hi Paul,

It was really nice to read Ian's article about my Friday afternoon visit to St Albans [PoV313 'Dry January' and the wet-led pubs of St Al(e)bans p34-35], so thank you for sharing that.

More recently, I enjoyed a crawl around Pompey [Portsmouth] - another British city claiming to have more boozers per square mile than any other. Well, it would be remiss of me not to go round a few of the contenders, though none are quite so charming as St Albans!

Best wishes

Gavin Haines

Bristol

Freelance journalist

Ed says: *That's high praise, indeed! Maybe visit again, but spend a bit more time. We have our four-day Beer & Cider Festival starting 24 September...*

At sixes and sevens

An amusing report (again!) [*PoV*313 *Wether Report* p48-49], this time mainly promoting The Admiral Byng in Potters Bar. Paul has just one minor concern, the staff attitude towards real ale. Many of the Wetherspoon outlets I visit have the same problem, (particularly St Albans!). Usually it's the younger staff who don't seem to have any concept of the latter, many being students who aren't interested in a career.

As regards the Admiral, I have never seen 6 or 7 guest ales available in there, usually 5 on display and 4 available. The only Wetherspoons in Hertfordshire, to my knowledge, with 6-7 guest ales are The Full House in Hemel Hempstead and The Railway Bell in East Barnet. Across the border northwards in Bedfordshire are 2 that I've visited with 6 ales available, The White House in Luton and The Pilgrims Progress in Bedford, all with different prices between £1.99 and £2.89, but obviously cheaper than inner London.

Robert James
Borehamwood

Ed says: The 6 or 7 ales normally on offer at the Byng that I referred to in the previous Wether Report included guest beers. That said, there ARE occasionally 6 guest ales on, plus 3 regulars - a total of 9 being the maximum possible - normally during a 'Spoons festival, or tap-takeover.

Just for you, Robert, is a table summarising the number of different beers that were on offer each day of 2024.

By the way, I noticed you include The Railway Bell within Hertfordshire, rather than Greater London. Me too - I grew up in what was then New Barnet, Herts. And, by my reckoning, still is!

No. of different beers	No. of days
4	1
5	19
6	149
7	132
8	36
9	29
Total	366

True Grit

Paul,

I've been meaning to message you for a while, so here it is!

Since you took over, I have enjoyed *PoV* more and more. It is slightly more heavy-weight than previously, but by no means boring. I like the wider breadth of contributors and the grittier issues.

Please keep going as you are.

Thanks and regards,

John Schmitz
Potters Bar
South Herts CAMRA



Have your say! Email editor@pintsofview.camra.org.uk

*Ed says: Thanks, John - how nice of you to write in. Ironic timing, given that this issue sees some changes, as explained in Starting Pint!. My intention is that *PoV* remains in the 'heavy-weight division', but dresses rather more snappily. Do write in again and let me know what you think - good or bad.*

Herts CAMRA Awards

Watford & District 'of the Year' Gold Awards

Watford & District branch is delighted to announce that the **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty** in Heronsgate is the branch **Pub of the Year** for 2024. It's a well-deserved win for licensees Martin Few and Gill Gibson, who celebrate their 20th year in the pub.

As well as serving excellent beer year-in and year-out, the pub has also raised huge amounts for charity, thanks to events such as the regular charity quiz nights, when the winnings are donated, and the victors get to choose the charity. So far, the pub has raised over £43,000 and the number keeps rising. Martin and Gill also have excellent relationships with small breweries, which have led to 'Meet the Brewer' evenings with XT, Abbeydale and, most recently, Froth Blowers Brewing Company...

...whose David Woodhead, co-director, entertained the pub on the evening of Wednesday 30 April with the history of Ye Ancient Order of Froth Blowers, a spoof Order who raised money for charity between 1924 and 1931 and eventually achieved a membership of 700,000 people across the world. David's stepson, Andrew Williams, brews the beer, which is most often found in the brewery's Midland heartlands, but David gets in his car and delivers the beer personally to the Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty, which is the only pub in the Southeast to stock these excellent beers.

Congratulations are also due to Michael Ash and Kat Perry of **Two Trees Micro** in Watford, which was named branch **Cider Pub of the Year** for its excellent Real Cider selections from suppliers such as Ascension and Ross-on-Wye. The micropub also serves superb quality ales from a wide range of small brewers and was runner-up in the Pub of the Year award. Two Trees Micro also arranges

Meet the Brewer events and Tap Takeovers. The most recent one was Vocation Brewery in March, and more are being planned.

Two Trees Micro often stocks beers from **Oxhey Village Brewery**, who are involved in organising the annual **Oxhey Village Brewfest**. Earlier in the year it looked doubtful whether the event would take place in 2025 after the closure of the Rifle Volunteer, which was the pub where the Brewfest started. However, the pub has reopened under new management and Watford & District branch was delighted to learn that the festival would be returning on Saturday 28 June, with more pubs involved than ever before. Expect to see **Oxhey Village Brewery** beers and a selection of ales from other local breweries at the Load of Hay, Railway Arms, Rifle Volunteer, Royal Oak, Victoria and Villiers Arms. Watch out for more details nearer the time.

Speaking of beer festivals, the **Watford Beer Festival** takes place from Thursday 21 to Saturday 23 August 2025 at Halsey Masonic Hall in Watford. Put those dates in your diary and we hope to see you there.

Andrew Vaughan
Chair
Watford & District CAMRA

CAMRA's 'of the Year' Awards are across three categories: Best Pub, Best Club and Best Cider Pub/Club. Each involves CAMRA members judging eight criteria including: Quality of Beer/Cider, Range of Beers/Ciders, Welcome from Bar Staff, Atmosphere, Pub Decor and Sympathy with CAMRA's Aims.

To find out more, why not become a CAMRA Member?

South Herts 'of the Year' 2025 Gold Awards

South Herts CotY 2025 Gold Award for Hertford Club

Congratulations to the **Hertford Club** in Bull Plain, Hertford – winners of the 2025 South Herts Branch Club of the Year Competition. The club has excelled with its annual July Literary Festival (this year from Friday 4 to Saturday 5 July), its monthly quizzes, its regular music events and by hosting the weekly Tuesday Hertford Chess Club, the fortnightly Four Rivers Folk Club on Wednesdays, the Revolution rock nights every other Thursday, and Jazz Jam once a month on a Thursday. With a welter of other community events and happenings throughout the weeks and months, not least the April Beer Festival, members and visitors are also assured of a well-kept pint of cask ale – the Club a regular in the Good Beer Guide. CAMRA members are welcome and may be signed in on production of a membership card. There's a new-look menu with enticing meals available from Wednesday to Sunday and the walled garden and riverside terrace has some new seating ready for the summer warmth. Lombard house is a Grade II* building dating in part from the 15th Century. The **Hertford Club** was formed in 1878 moving to the building in 1897. Today, it is an independent club managed and maintained by its members.

Our photograph, taken in the Club's garden, shows Club Manager Aiden Perrins receiving the award from South Herts Branch Chair Ian Boyd.

Aiden said: *"After a few years of the Club being a bridesmaid in the competition, it's great to be the bride again! We always strive to be a friendly club, set in our Hertford community and appealing to a wide range of people and local groups – with great cask beer and traditional cider & perry. We keep the traditions of the Club alive, while also welcoming more modern aspects and trends."*

Les Middlewood
South Herts CAMRA



Hertford Club, Hertford
SH Club of the Year
(L-R): Ian Boyd (CAMRA), Aiden Perrins



Robin Hood, St Albans
SH Pub of the Year
(L-R): Ian Boyd (CAMRA), Jim Pratt & Liz Draper, Daisy Cooper (MP)



Mermaid, St Albans
SH Cider Pub of the Year
County Cider Pub of the Year
Regional Cider Pub of the Year (runner up)
(L-R): Janet Tansley (CAMRA), Mark Powell, Grace Simpson & John Cusworth, Timara Easter & Ian Boyd (CAMRA)

North Herts 'of the Year' 2025 Gold Awards

Awards to the branch's two 'otY' winners, the **Orange Tree**, in Baldock, and **Garden City Brewery & Bar**, in Letchworth Garden City, were made during their own events - which both hold frequently throughout the year.

The early May Bank Holiday saw the **Orange Tree** hold an Indie Beer Festival featuring 30 real ales plus 14 ciders. Landlord Rob Scahill has warmly embraced the Indie Beer campaign and has long been a dedicated supporter of independent brewers, which always outnumber the Greene King staples on site - Buntingford, Titanic, Brewsters and Tring are all regulars.

Rob knew we would present the North Herts Pub of the Year 2025 certificate and branch stag trophy, BUT, we kept it a surprise that the pub had won Herts County Pub of the Year for the second successive year. Rob was, literally, speechless, with tears in his eyes, before recovering and thanking CAMRA, encouraging us and SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers and Associates) <https://www.siba.co.uk> to keep campaigning for independent pubs and breweries. He then let out a "County Pub of the Year!!!!" roar to the delight of pub-goers. Later, on Facebook, Rob wrote "This one is for all the staff at The Orange Tree - keeping great beer is only half the challenge, it's the serve, the presentation, the knowledge, and above all else, the smile and the thank you! Cheers to all the staff here, this award is just as much yours as it is the Landlord's!"

Earlier that week, during a 'Brewery Sessions' music night, **Garden City Brewery and Bar** were presented with their branch Cider Pub of the Year 2025 certificate and, formally, their Herts Beer of the Year 2024 third place award. The bar constantly features real ciders and guest ales alongside their own Garden City Brews. Commenting on Facebook, Holly Rolfe, co-proprietor with her husband Nick, wrote "Yes, we are CAMRA North Herts Cider Pub Of The Year again!" and promised 10 brand new (to them) ciders from all around



Orange Tree: (L-R) Dean Barrett presents the award to (speechless) Rob Scahill.



Garden City Brewery: (L-R) Dean Barrett, Holly Rolfe, Mike (Brewer) and John Hamblin (BLO)

the UK for the then forthcoming late May Love Letchworth Food & Drink Festival! Brewery Sessions is staged on the last Wednesday of each month. The 30 April event was 'Band Karaoke', with regulars accompanying the house band on bangers all the way from the fifties to today. So pumped up were revellers that the award speeches were drowned out by cheering - their favourite local had won again!

Dean Barrett
Chair

CAMRA North Herts

HEB Club of the Year 2025 Gold Award

With the gardens in bloom, the long hours and an unseasonal nippy wind from the east, it was time to begin the Herts & Essex Borders branch awards. Tuesday 13 April saw us turn up, once again, at the **Sports Trust** in Bishop's Stortford, where there is always a jolly welcome and a good spread of well-kept beers to savour. All CAMRA members are welcome, no signing-in required, and there is a discount.

A good crowd was in to watch the live Villa v PSG match on the big screen, but over in our quiet corner, chairman Graham



Darby presented the award to the evening's bar staff – Will Allen, Lucla Van-eck and Harvey Parrish.

On offer at the bar were *Buntingford Twitchell* 3.8%, *Tonbridge Easy Street*

3.9%, *Woodforde's Wherry* 3.8% and *Timothy Taylor's Landlord* 4.3%.

Norman Samuels

*Pubs Officer
Herts & Essex Borders
CAMRA*

HEB – Back from the Brink & Beyond

Following the conclusion of CAMRA's Regional Review, Herts & Essex Borders survival has finally been confirmed, with the branch remaining very much as it was. It still crosses two counties, but will now report, for most matters, to the newly created East Central region, along with all other Herts branches.

Unfortunately, an unrelated problem that arose with South West Essex did not end quite so happily, and resulted in the closure of a

very active branch. Several pubs were left without representation, but these have now been allocated to the three neighbouring branches, one of which, ironically, is HEB. So instead of being carved up, as originally feared, our branch has actually grown in size!

As HEB marches eastwards, albeit not as dramatically as NATO and the EU, a dozen or so pubs, hotels and golf-course bars have been acquired.

Branch members have dutifully been heading into wild Essex to survey the acquisitions, sample the beers and update Whatpub.

You can find details of our meetings and socials at <https://heb.camra.org.uk/> on the web and at Herts/Essex Borders Branch Camra on Facebook.

Norman Samuels

*Pubs Officer
Herts & Essex Borders
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The Hertford Brewery



South Herts members outside the brewery – a thirsty looking throng!

Mac'sing out at the Hertford Brewery

A sunny Thursday in April saw South Herts Branch members enjoy a visit to McMullen in Hertford for a tour of the brewery and a catch-up with the county's last remaining family brewer.

Founded in 1827 and now approaching its 200th year, just imagine the many significant moments in Britain's history – good and bad – that must have been marked with a pint of Mac's!

Brewery Visits & Tours

We were met in the brewery yard by Non-Executive Director, Fergus McMullen and Head Brewer, Chris Evans.

First, the guided tour. The landmark Victorian brewery and its associated buildings to the north of Hartham Lane were sold around 20 years ago and converted to residential accommodation and a Sainsbury's supermarket. Today, the compact brewery operation on the south side comprises offices, the brewery itself, a training centre, and warehousing. The modern stainless-steel brewery – designed and overseen by Chris and Fergus – became operational in 2004 and uses water pumped from a 120-foot borehole that reaches the underlying chalk aquifer. Last year, 9,200 cubic metres of water was extracted, softened, and further treated to reduce pH acidity levels.

Brewing malt is sourced from Crisp Malt, the East Anglian maltster, and coloured malt from French & Jupps in Stanstead Abbots. Some crushed malt and lager malt are also used, along with a small amount of flaked maize to help with beer head retention. Mac's Heritage range of cask beers (AK Original Mild, Country Bitter, and IPA) is brewed using a selection of British whole-leaf hops, whilst their Rivertown-branded beers, first introduced in 2017, use hops from continental Europe, the USA, and New Zealand. The yeast is maintained as a 'cake' and stored in two separate locations to ensure its continuity.

AK still accounts for 40% of cask production – though this remains some way short of pre-Covid levels. A new in-house training programme for managers, tenants, and staff, aims to reinvigorate interest, boost sales, and maximise the quality of Mac's cask beers at the bar.

Brewing typically takes place from Monday to Wednesday – when the pleasant aromas waft through the Hertford air – with the entire operation managed by a surprisingly small

team. Cask beer is in firkins and pins, non-cask in 30- and 50-litre kegs, and small-pack is bottle-only (no cans).

We retired to the Mac's House, an on-site shop and occasional taproom, set in the brewery yard, for pints of Tide, Mac's current seasonal quaffing cask ale, and a chat about the current state of play.

McMullen's tied estate of around 125 pubs – of which only 35 are tenanted – now stretches much further afield than before, with pubs in Hampshire, Surrey, and Kent, and a growing presence in Central London. Fergus said that the company had always churned its pubs – selling the less profitable and acquiring new ones – but he is keen to retain a balanced estate comprising rural, town and destination pubs. Around £6-7m per year is invested in refurbishments.

The company works closely with new tenants whilst they establish themselves – developing a business plan and monitoring the pub's accounts. At the time of writing, a half-dozen pubs are available for tenancy. Interested? There are no ties on wines, soft drinks and spirits, but draught beers and ciders are sacrosanct and must be purchased from Mac's.

Trading conditions continue to be challenging, yet covering increased tax demands will require Mac's to find an additional £5-6 million this year. However, there are bright moments, such as staff at the Jolly Farmers in Enfield recently preparing 600 meals on Mothering Sunday. Fergus is clearly proud of the company's employees, both senior and junior alike.

The company's independence is important, as



Artwork inside the brewery – nature's gift

necessary qualifications and skills – perhaps a seventh generation of McMullens will soon emerge! The role of Chairman, however, which was occupied for 22 years by Charles Brims, remains outside the family, with Stephen Gould, former Managing Director of Everards, taking over in March.

Looking to the future, not only does Mac's remain in a sound financial position, the company's passion continues to shine through – years of diligent management have counted for much. Fergus adds that brewers have often demonstrated their ability to adapt to difficult moments, citing Covid and the smoking ban as examples. Having navigated through these challenges, he's confident that the company will overcome the current

ones as well, shaping its brewery and pubs to meet the needs of a new generation of pub goers and drinkers. The business is in safe hands.

The talk over, we departed the Mac's House and made our way to the nearby Woolpack for a welcome lunch, accompanied by cask AK, Country, IPA, and Tide – and a chance to peruse the pub walls, which feature many pieces of Mac's history.

A big thank you, on behalf of the branch, to Fergus and Chris for their hospitality, and an enlightening brewery visit. I'm looking forward to 2027, when Mac's will be celebrating its bicentennial with a year of festivities across their pubs – and, hopefully, some special celebratory cask ales!

Les Middlewood
McMullen Brewery Liaison Officer (BLO)
South Herts CAMRA

Herts CAMRA Obituaries

Brian Sheridan R.I.P. (1943 – 2025)

It is sad to report that Brian Sheridan, of South-West London branch, died in the first week of April. He was one of CAMRA's pioneers, having joined the campaign in the early 1970s within its first two years of formation. Brian was not a regular drinker in Hertfordshire, but he could often be found in the 'CAMRA favourites' of London.

Always outspoken and a regular at CAMRA's annual conference, Brian made many contributions from the rostrum.

One of his dislikes was microbrewers, as he felt that many of them were producing lacklustre beer with little or no quality control. He blamed the leadership and others in the campaign for being too eager to embrace new-wave brewers at the

expense of the established regional family cask ale producers. I remember publishing a somewhat lengthy but well-argued article on the subject during my time as editor of *Pints of View* [Ed: *The article's title was also lengthy: "A first blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Micro P*sseries" – PoV265 June/July 2014 page 8*].

Brian, for a time, was editor of *London Drinker* where he invented a correspondent by the name of Gary Gobshite, whose writing style and views, unsurprisingly, were very similar to Brian's!

Brian was fearlessly outspoken and unconcerned if his views caused offence. This, of course, guaranteed he would never receive universal approval, though his abilities commanded respect.

Steve Bury
Chair
Swale CAMRA

Dee Hilliard R.I.P. (1962 – 2025)

CAMRA North Herts has said goodbye to a much loved and valued member of the branch. Dee passed away on 21 May 2025 after a short battle with cancer, and was immediately missed at Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival, for which she was Assistant Treasurer and a member of the festival organising committee. At previous festivals, Dee had worked tirelessly behind the scenes and on the refunds and glass return. A tribute was made to Dee in the festival programme. Beyond festivals Dee was branch Accounts Examiner and, with her partner Adam Walsh, was

a regular at branch socials, meetings and judging trips.

Other than CAMRA, Dee's big passion was for 'Steampunk' (Google it!), creating elaborate costumes, which she wore at the Lincoln Asylum Festival. Sailing had also been a big part of her life; a long-time treasurer and twice commodore of the local sailing club. Dee was also a keen horse-rider.

Professionally, Hitchin-born Dee leaves behind a career as an aerospace engineer. Starting as a technical apprentice at British Aerospace, Dee progressed



to space-propulsion systems, concluding her career at Airbus Defence & Space in Stevenage.

At her funeral, a packed chapel comprised family along with many colleagues and friends from her career and pastimes. All will miss her dearly.

Dean Barrett
Chair
CAMRA North Herts

Martyn Cornell R.I.P. (1952 – 2025)

A renowned beer writer, brewing historian and ex-Chair of CAMRA North Herts, Martyn, pictured left with his brother Dave, died suddenly in June, age 72, just days before the publication of his major academic study of porter and stout.

Born in London, he moved to Stevenage aged two, and spent his formative years in the town, gaining a thirst for cask ale that prompted him to join CAMRA in the early 1970s, eventually becoming Branch Chair. He also wrote 'The Cornell Column' for *Pints of View's* forerunner, *The Hertfordshire Newsletter*.

After working as a journalist for several years - first at the *Stevenage Comet*, then in London and abroad - he moved back to London forty years ago. There, his passion for beer and the brewing tradition ignited, leading Martyn to full-time beer writing.

Prominent among his award-winning books are *The Story of the Pint* (2003), which traces the roots of brewing through to the present day, and *Amber, Gold and Black* (2010), a fascinating history of beer styles. In 2024, he published *Brewing in Hertfordshire* - a comprehensive summary of Herts brewers, past and present.



Martyn's monthly beer blog, *Zythophile*, was keenly followed, and he regularly wrote articles for Brewery History Society journals. His research often challenged the claims of other beer writers, as he dispelled previously long-held "facts" that were sometimes lazily repeated. He was an engaging speaker.

Moving to Norfolk four years ago, his *Porter and Stout: A Complete History* was carefully finished - a book to satisfy everyone with a deep interest in the subject.

Martyn was a lover of beer and brewers. His respected canon of work will be consulted and built upon by future beer writers - so sad that he will no longer be around to share his mass of accumulated knowledge.

Les Middlewood
South Herts CAMRA

Dear Readers

It's inevitable that, as time goes on, an increasing number of CAMRA members will 'drink their last pint' between publications of *Pints of View*. It is, therefore, entirely possible that obituaries may have to be shortened or even omitted entirely, which I sincerely hope does not cause offence. The decision will often depend on the number of readers likely to have known, or known of, the deceased.

Paul Donatantonio

Down Your Way

Hertfordshire Pubs & Clubs

Changes since
the last edition

This section contains information from a large number of sources and occasionally errors may occur or the information may be out-of-date upon publication. Comments or additional information should be sent to the editor (see page 3 for contact details).

ALDENHAM Good to hear that three cask ales are regularly available at **Aldenhams Social Club**, located in Church Lane. Memberships can be applied for.

AMWELL In January, the **Elephant & Castle** was cited by the Financial Times as being one of Britain's cosiest pubs. They said "Tucked away down a rural Hertfordshire lane, the 18thC Grade II listed pub offers wood-burning stoves, local beers (Farrbrew) and low doorways to mind your head on. A delightfully welcome stop for cold and thirsty rambles, cyclists and dog-walkers on a winter afternoon". It's pretty good in the summer too.

ASHWELL Landlord Martin Nisbet is back running the **Bushel & Strike** after a seven-year absence. There's now a full menu, the pub open from Wednesday to Sunday.

ASPENDEN Having closed in February at short notice, the **Fox** reopened in late May. Welcome to, new leaseholders, Stewart and Gina!

BAYFORD "The Friends of the **Baker Arms**" community group continue to seek funding opportunities in their quest to see the pub reopened. In conjunction, we understand that McMullen are in pre-planning application discussions with EHDC about plans that might retain part of the pub but add housing to the rear.

BEDMOND According to information provided in March, the **Bell** is selling real ale again.

BENINGTON In May, the Friends of the **Bell** held a further meeting in their attempts to find a way to see their village pub reopened. We understand that the Planning Inspectorate are due to visit in the near future.

BOREHAMWOOD Punch Taverns are advertising the lease at the **Wellington** in Theobald Street which remains open.

BRAUGHING The **Brown Bear** closed in March with the freehold up for sale at £500k through Keith Ian estate agents.

BRICKET WOOD New leaseholders at the **Gate** which is now open 7 days a week.

BUSHEY Welcome to Tim and Michael, new leaseholders at the **King Stag** in Bournehall Road. No strangers to the area, they also run the **Royal Oak** on Watford Heath.

CHESHUNT In the Spring, McMullen completed a refurbishment at the **Old Anchor**, High Street, now known simply as the **Anchor**. AK Original and Country Bitter can be found at the bar. A pub loss in the town has finally been confirmed. Thought to date as a pub from the late 17thC, **O'Shea's** in Turners Hill is likely to be demolished to make way for a new retail unit and flats. Closed since 2022, it was formerly known as the **George** and the **Force & Firkin**.

CHISWELL GREEN A planning application for significant refurbishment work at the **Three Hammers** has been submitted to St Albans City Council.

CROXLEY GREEN In a shock move, the award-

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winning *Sportsman* in Scots Hill closed on 28 February. The pub has been a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide over many years, including the 2025 edition, and was much loved by its devoted regulars. The Save Our Sportsman campaign was quickly launched by concerned locals and Croxley Green Parish Council have submitted an application for the pub to become an Asset of Community Value, which has now been approved. It seems that the owners have put both the lease and the freehold on the market.

DANE END The closed *Boot* was sold at auction in May. We wait to see if the new owners intend to reopen it as a pub.

FLAMSTEAD The *Three Blackbirds* is once again on the market with Stonegate looking for a new leaseholder.

FLAMSTEAD END Closed for many months, Star Inns are now advertising the lease at the *Freemasons* in Flamstead End Road as 'coming soon'.

GOFFS OAK At the *Prince of Wales* in Burton Lane, there's a quiz on the last Monday of the month and music bingo mid-month on a Tuesday with live music at weekends. The menu includes changing specials with Fish & Chip Fridays and Sunday roasts. The cask ales from McMullen can be enjoyed in the large grassed and tree-lined garden. In

Newgatestreet Road, the food-led *Goffs Oak* has a quiz every Wednesday and cask ales from Fuller's and Timothy Taylor's, along with a summer seasonal guest ale – the extensive menu is changing as we enter the summer. Enjoy your beers in the internal contemporary atmosphere or the large garden at the rear.

GREAT HORMEAD The *Three Tuns* frustratingly remains closed. There is a growing local annoyance at the lack of action by the owners and the seeming indifference of East Herts District Council.

HARPENDEN At the *Gibraltar Castle* in Batford, welcome to new landlords Ross and Sharon McInnes,

previously at the **Queen's Head** in Sandridge. Fuller's beers are on the handpumps.

HERTFORD: In a change, the **Old Barge** on Folly Island now features beers from the Adnams range plus a third cask ale. There's also a new summer menu. The **White Horse** in Castle Street has opened its kitchen for Sunday lunches available between 12.30 and 17.30 and they are also keen to start a darts team - the dart board and oche are in one of the upstairs rooms which are bookable for functions and by local groups. The **Quiet Man** and the connecting **Hertford House Hotel** in Fore Street have been put up for sale by administrators, priced £2.2m - they currently remain

open and are seemingly trading well. Stonegate have announced the closure of **Core**, the nightclub in Bull Plain, formerly known as Popworld and the Stone House and once a pub known as the **Prince Regent**. In its heyday the nightclub was a 'rite of passage' for many of the young in the town - no news yet on what it will become next.

HERTFORD HEATH Congratulations to Jason and the team at the **Silver Fox** on gaining Cask Marque accreditation for their cask beers. The London Road pub has launched a new menu and to work up a thirst, why not join the regular Wednesday 5k run - starts 7pm.

HITCHIN Plans have been

submitted for a new bar/coffee shop in Walsworth Road, adjacent to the **Albert**. Also, see **Walsworth** below.

HODDESDON In Burford Street, the spacious 16thC **Bell Inn** hotel reopened in early July, as the **Bell Hotel and Tea Rooms** with 11 bedrooms and a WWII theme. In the 1940's the pub was just around the corner from the former Christie's brewery, long since demolished. There is mention of a bar in advertising but we wait to see if this extends to cask ale. The **King William IV** in Lord Street remains closed and still awaits a planning decision by Broxbourne Borough Council on a submission to convert the pub into three dwellings.



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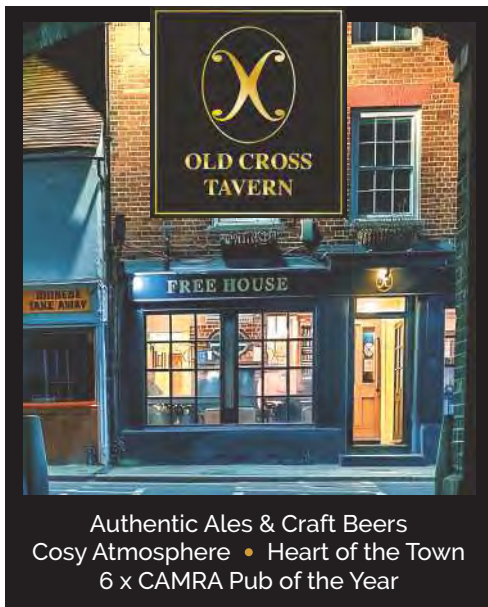
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KIMPTON In June, a fresh Change of Use planning application on the **White Horse** (similar to a previous one) was rejected by North Herts Council - for conversion of the pub to housing, whilst retaining a micro-pub. It spurred a huge number of objections from local residents wanting to see the Grade II listed pub reopened in its entirety. A Council decision is awaited. Now closed for over 10 years, concerns are also being expressed about the building's deteriorating condition and the lack of upkeep. Updates from the Save Our White Horse community group can be found at www.facebook.com/SaveOurWhiteHorse.

LITTLE WYMONDLEY The **Bucks Head** has reopened under new management. The lease at the **Plume of Feathers** is being advertised through Admiral Taverns.

LONDON COLNEY There's a change of hands at the **Green Dragon**, Waterside.

MILL GREEN The reopening of the **Green Man**, shut since 2011, has been yet further delayed. We hear that the reopening will be at some point during this Summer.

OAKLANDS The **North Star** has been sold by McMullen to Griggs Developers who want to convert it into a children's nursery - there are already two in the village. They have submitted a Change of Use

planning permission to this effect. Posts on the Welwyn Hatfield Times website indicate much sadness at the loss - a loss which will undoubtedly be felt by locals and regulars alike who will no longer be able to wander in for a pint - the village is losing its *only* pub. The Parish Council is now to submit an application to list the building as an Asset of Community Value via Welwyn Hatfield District Council.

OLD BRICKET WOOD Fantastic to hear that the once threatened **Old Fox** reopened on 1 July after a full refurbishment, having being mothballed for eight years in a Change of Use planning row. The new owners and landlords, Danny

and Julie Harding, style the pub as a «family friendly free house» serving Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Fullers London Pride, with Tring Brewery's Side Pocket as the current guest ale. Full report in our next edition.

OXHEY The *Rifle Volunteer* in Villiers Road reopened on 17 February.

PIRTON The *Motte & Bailey* has new tenants and is back up and running after a short closure. Open from 12 noon every day, the gastro-pub has a new menu, with food available all day. And if you are local, look out for Fish & Chip Thursday evening takeaways.

PUCKERIDGE It's farewell to Sarah and Dave

publicans at The *White Hart* (McMullen), High Street, who left the pub at the end of March after 10 years' service. The pub is closed and the lease available.

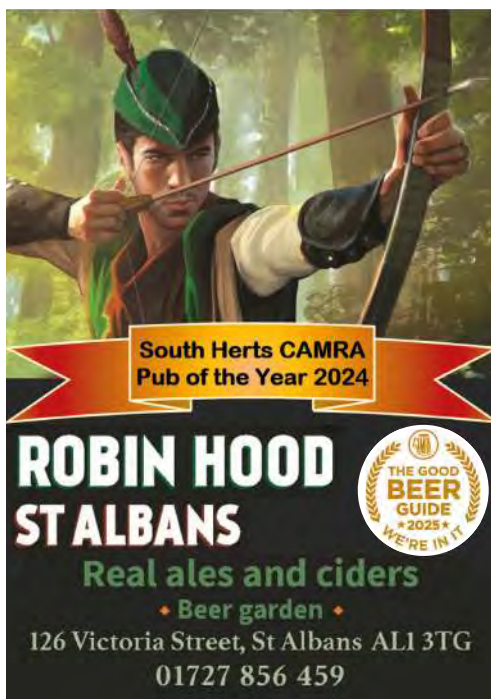
REED 10 years since closing, the saga at the *Cabinet* is not over. When it was recently put up for sale, a hotel group showed interest but have since pulled out. However, villagers still have a vision of this once great pub reopening - we must hope that positive news will be forthcoming.

RICKMANSWORTH The *Halfway House* in Uxbridge Road has reopened after months of closure. Planning and listed building consent applications have been

submitted to convert the *Tree* in Rickmansworth to a Thai massage centre. The *Fox and Hounds* in the High Street reopened in June, after refurbishment.

RUSHDEN The *Moon and Stars* has remained closed for many months. *Pints of View* would welcome information on the future of the pub.

ST ALBANS Farewell to Kevin Yelland, longtime landlord at the popular *Farmers Boy* in London Road - he completed a thirteen-year stint at the pub. Kevin was also brewer at the award-winning Alecraft brewery when it once occupied space adjacent to the pub. During the Covid lockdowns, his home delivery




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and takeaway service provided a lifeline for cask drinkers, which was much appreciated. Following an extensive refurbishment, the **Rat's Castle**, in Hatfield Road, re-opened on 5 June with a change of name to the **Old Toll House**. The new name is derived from a turnpike toll house that once stood on the site. Incoming landlord Tim Skinner is offering Harvey's Sussex Best and Timothy Taylor's Landlord, on handpump and has already introduced a Cask Ale Loyalty Scheme. In March, refurbishment commenced at the **White Lion** in Sopwell Lane, the pub reopening in April with Andrew Metcalfe at the helm. The pub is now a Punch Taverns 'Fireside Pub'. Young's **Albans Well** in St Peter's Street closed at

the end of March, just 4 years after opening. No reasons were given for the retail unit closure. Restoration and refurbishment work is now underway at the **Rose & Crown** in St Michaels – we look forward to hearing of progress and a projected reopening date, which is likely to be some months away.

ST PAUL'S WALDEN

Landlord Danny Blackmore is leaving the **Strathmore Arms** at the end of June after 23 years in charge. In his time, over 4,500 different cask ales have been kept and sold in top condition, from over 1,000 different breweries. There have been regular beer festivals and trips abroad for the pub's keen band of beer

afficionados. Furthermore, the pub has been an ever present in the Good Beer Guide and has achieved the North Hertfordshire Pub of the Year accolade. Quite a proud record. Look out for our last beer festival in June. Prior to his **Strathmore** years, Danny had spells in charge at the **Plough**, Ley Green and the former **Sunrunner** in Hitchin. We wish him all the best for his well-earned retirement.

SANDRIDGE Welcome to David and Lou Wainwright, new landlords at the **Queen's Head** in Church End. The existing range of cask ales is to be maintained. Departing landlords, Ross and Sharon, after a long stint here, are moving to the **Gibraltar Castle** in Batford, Harpenden.

Is your local pub under threat?

CAMRA has the tools
to help you save it

camra.org.uk/saveyourlocal



Save your local

STEVENAGE After a short period of closure for refurbishment the **Coopers Arms** in Magpie Crescent reopened in March with a fresh menu and Sharp's Doom Bar on handpump – plus occasionally a second cask beer. Wetherspoon has refurbished the **Standing Order** in the old town High Street. As usual, there is a good range of cask ales at the bar.

THERFIELD Welcome to Sian and Sam, new leaseholders at the **Fox & Duck**. They also run the **Rose & Crown** in Ashwell.

THORLEY A planning application has been submitted for minor internal alterations and external improvements at McMullen's Grade II listed **Coach and Horses**, on Thorley Street.

TONWELL Very sad to report that the **Robin Hood & Little John** has closed. Owned and run by Julian and Sheila Harding for the last 35 years as a Free House, it is currently unclear what the future holds for the pub. This is a village that has lost its shop, school, church, and now its Grade II listed pub. *Pints of View 302* (May 2022) featured a full-length article on the pub.

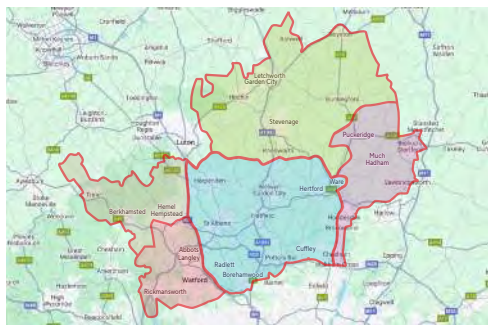
WALSORTH Greene King reopened the **Anchor** in June after a full refurbishment – news of cask ales is awaited.

WARE The refurbished **Bell** opened at the end of February. Reverting to its old name after years as the Vine or, more recently, the Snug, the High Street pub is now operating as a Stonegate Craft Union outlet initially offering two real ales – Fuller's London Pride and Wychwood Hobgoblin Gold. Opens at 10am each day with a late licence on Fridays and Saturdays. No food but you can play pool and darts, and watch sport TV. Dog friendly.

WATFORD The **Horns** briefly reopened on 14 March under its original name after a short stint as Ava Bar. It then closed again on 28 April but reopened once more on 28 May after Stonegate Pub Company found new managers. The **Cother Arms** in North Watford is serving real ale again according to the pub's Facebook page.

WELWYN The **Steamer** in London Road reopened in April after a short period of closure. Mac's cask ales are back including Locomotive Ale, a Mac's-brewed golden ale. The pub is open all day from noon. Punch Taverns are advertising the lease at the **White Horse** which remains open.

WELWYN GARDEN CITY The **Attimore Hall**, on The Ridgeway, reopened on 10 May after a significant refurbishment – with Sharps Doom Bar, Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Adnams Ghost Ship and Hogs Back Surrey Nirvana at the bar.



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Herts Brewery A-Z

3 Brewers of St. Albans

Symondshyde Farm, nr Hatfield AL10 9BB
www.3brewers.co.uk



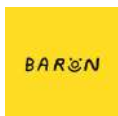
Limited end April release of popular Dry-Hopped *Blonde 4.2%*, first brewed last year, sold well. It was available in and around St Albans at the Great Northern, Lower Red Lion and Plough, Sleepshyde.

The Brewery will be the start/finish for the 3 Brewers 10k on 27 July, supporting local charity 'Earthworks', and, as usual, will be hosting the annual Beer & Music festival - this year on 30 August. Check Facebook for details of 7 band line up.

Steve Thompson, BLO

Baron Brewing

Great Hormead, Buntingford SG9 0PB
www.baronbrewing.co.uk



Brewery has continued to expand its output in recent months with a variety of beers hitting the shelves including Double IPA *Hard Truth 8.0%* and Pilsner *Moment of Clarity 5.4%*. Owner Jack plans to have opened the Taproom again in June, so watch this space.

Simon Dewhurst, BLO

Buntingford Brewery

Therfield Rd, Royston SG8 9NW
www.buntingfordbrewery.com



It's festival season! Cambridge Beer Festival headlined with a 'BuntBrew' bar and their old ale *Tis Only A Scratch 6.2%* won beer of the festival. Beers also appeared at Biggleswade, Hitchin, Whaddon and Cambridge City FC festivals. July and August are busy with BuntBrew beers at community events.

Sunstar 4.3%, the seasonal summer brew is back, as will be *Royston Red 4.8%* for another season from mid-September.

John Hamblin, BLO

Creative Juices Brewing

Woodoaks Farm, Rickmansworth WD3 9XQ
www.creativejuicesbrewingcompany.com



The company has bought Griffiths Brothers Distillery, Maple Cross. Along with the distillery equipment, they have also employed the head distiller, Henry Winter. Henry was head brewer and owner of Lock 81 Brewery before it closed, and has continued brewing at Creative Juices alongside his distilling duties. At the time of writing, the brewery was preparing to launch a new beer; *Soul Ascending Pale Ale 3.4%*.

Andrew Vaughan, BLO

Crossover Blendery

Lannock Manor Farm, Weston SG4 7EE
www.crossoverblendery.co.uk



For the 2025 season starting April, the Taproom opens Saturdays 12-7pm and Sundays 12-5pm. Improvements for this year include more seating inside and out, and a permanent food offering from May. In addition to their award-winning, spontaneously-fermented, barrel-aged beers, available on draught or bottle, they now have their own house pale ales, IPAs and lagers on draught. Check their website for events and latest news.

Jeremy Kitson, BLO

Garden City Brewery

22 The Wynd, Letchworth Garden City SG6 3EN
www.gardencitybrewery.co.uk



The Brewery celebrated its 9th birthday in early June! Recent beers have included *Oatmeal Stout 4.6%* and the annual beer with an ever-changing recipe *Beer for Bertie 5.4%*.

John Hamblin, BLO

Mad Squirrel Brewery

Berkhamsted Rd, Hemel Hempstead HP1 2SG
www.madsquirrelbrew.co.uk



New limited-edition beers include, on cask; *Hulk IPA 5%* (single hop/single malt) and on keg; *Ariba Lager 4.5%* (Mexican hop 'Zappa') and *Sunburst Sour 5%*.

The mobile bar will be visiting venues including the Hertfordshire Show and 'Foodie Festivals' at Brighton and Cardiff, amongst others.

The brewery is awaiting a new 24,000 litre tank exclusively for *Zealous Pilsner 4.4%* to double the beers capacity.

Richard Abraham, BLO

McMullen Brewing & Pubs

26 Old Cross, Hertford, SG14 1RD

www.mcmullens.co.uk



No new pub acquisitions in this quarter but the company website shows five Hertfordshire pubs currently seeking new leaseholders. Mac's summer seasonal cask ale is

Cove Golden Ale 3.8%.

At the brewery, there was a Festival Weekend over 14-15 June, featuring live music on the Saturday and brewery visits on the Sunday (Fathers' Day) plus plenty of family fun!

Les Middlewood, BLO

New River Brewery

Pindar Rd, Hoddesdon EN11 0FF

www.newriverbrewery.co.uk



The brewery is doing another one-off of a popular previous beer - *Natural Blonde Ale 4.0%*.

As 2025 marks the brewery's 10th anniversary, look out for 'something new' this summer to celebrate!

Tim Vaughan, BLO

Six Hills Brewing

29b High St, Stevenage SG1 3BG

www.sixhillsbrewing.co.uk



One new(ish) beer has joined the line-up since last PoV: *Marie Who Waits For Me 6%*, an American-style IPA with abundant New World hops giving juicy fruit

and piney undertones. Like all Six Hills beers, it's unfiltered and hazy.

Adam Walsh, BLO

Tring Brewery

Dunsley Farm, London Rd, Tring HP23 6HA
www.tringbrewery.co.uk / Tel: 01442 890721



A new events space is now open that will host Street Food Heroes events on the first Thursday of every month over the summer from 4-9pm: 5 June, 3 July, 7 August and 4 September.

Tring ales & lager, plus cider, wines, soft drinks, a choice of the very best street foods and the brewery's resident DJ. See page 39 for more details.

**Jared Ward-Brickett,
Tring Brewery PR Director**

Two Bob Brewing

www.facebook.com/p/The-Two-Bob-Brewing-Company-100031566857163/
twobobbrewco@gmail.com



Whilst busy gearing up for the festival season and numerous community events, the brewery is excited to be releasing *1175 4.7%* to celebrate the 850th anniversary of local parish church All Saints, Datchworth.

The bottled beer is brewed in a pale ale style with hints of fuggles and crystal malt, and made its cask debut at Datchworth open gardens on 25 May.

John Hamblin, BLO

Other Hertfordshire breweries



The Belgian Brewer

Raynham Road, Bishop's Stortford CM23 5NZ
www.thebelgianbrewer.co.uk



Farr Brew

Great Level End Farm, Redbourn AL3 7A
www.farrbrew.com



Pope's Yard Brewery

Paramount Ind. Est. Watford WD24 7ACX
www.popesyard.co.uk

Herts CAMRA Meetings & Contacts

All Herts Branches

Hertfordshire County Coordinator:

Dean Barrett

dean.barrett@camra.org.uk

Herts Liaison Meeting

SEPTEMBER

Thu 25: St Albans

7pm. **Beer Festival**, Alban Arena

South Herts CAMRA

 southherts.camra.org.uk


Chair: Ian Boyd

chair@southherts.camra.org.uk

Branch contact: Ben Wilkinson

contact@southherts.camra.org.uk

 facebook.com/camrasouthherts

 instagram.com/southhertscamra

 x.com/SouthHertsCAMRA

Branch Meetings

JULY

Sat 19: St Albans

1pm. **Royston Club**, College Road

AUGUST

Note. There is no **Branch Meeting** in August.

SEPTEMBER

Wed 10: Redbourn

8pm. **Cricketers**, East Common

OCTOBER

Wed 15: St Albans

8pm. **Royston Club**, College Road

NOVEMBER

Wed 12: Hertford

8pm. **Black Horse**, West Street

Sat 22: St Albans (SABCF Review Meeting)

2.30pm. **Royston Club**, College Road

DECEMBER

Wed 3: Hatfield

8pm. **Red Lion**, Great North Road

North Herts CAMRA


 northherts.camra.org.uk


Chair: Dean Barrett

chairman@northherts.camra.org.uk

Branch contact: Jeremy Kitson

secretary@northherts.camra.org.uk

 facebook.com/CAMRANorthHerts

 instagram.com/camranorthherts

Branch Meetings

SEPTEMBER

Thu 18: Letchworth

8pm. **The Storeroom (TBC)**, next to Garden City Brewery & Bar, The Wynd

Watford & District CAMRA

 watford.camra.org.uk

Chair: Andrew Vaughan

chair@watford.camra.org.uk

Branch contact: Andrew Vaughan

branch@watford.camra.org.uk

 facebook.com/watfordcamra

 x.com/watfordcamra


Branch Meetings

OCTOBER

Mon 27: Watford (Open Meeting)

8pm. **Essex Arms**, Langley Road

Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA

 heb.camra.org.uk

Chair: Graham Darby
chair@heb.camra.org.uk

Branch contact: Graham Darby
secretary@heb.camra.org.uk

 facebook.com/hertsessexborderscamra

Branch Meetings


AUGUST

Mon 11: High Wych
 8.30pm. *Rising Sun*, High Wych Road



Not a CAMRA member?
 Go straight to
camra.org.uk/join/

CAMRA's Members' Weekend 2026 comes to St Albans!

CAMRA has announced that its 2026 Members Weekend will be held at the Alban Arena in St Peter's Street, St Albans over the weekend of 17 - 19 April. The event includes CAMRA's Annual General Meeting and is an opportunity for members to hear of national campaigning activity and to debate Motions concerning internal and external matters - a gathering of over 1,000 members from all over Britain. A feather in the cap for South Herts Branch, the event will also provide a boost for the pubs in the City as CAMRA members spend time meeting friends and seeking out great beer. Look out for more details in these pages throughout the coming year.



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Herts CAMRA **Socials & Festivals**

LATE JULY – NOVEMBER 2025

Fri 18 July: Visit to Hemel Hempstead Old Town Beer Festival

Fri 18 – Sun 20 July: Hemel Hempstead Old Town Beer Festival

Sat 19 July: Willian Walk & Garden City Social – Letchworth

Fri 1 August: Old Cross Tavern PotY Presentation & Social

Sat 2 August: Summer Social – Old Stevenage

Sat 16 August: Summer Social – Windsor

Wed 20 August: Summer Evening Social – Royston

Thu 21 – Sat 23 August: Watford Beer Festival

Sat 23 August: Mermaid PotY Presentation, Beer Festival & Social

Sat 30 August: 3 Brewers Summer Festival – near Hatfield

Sat 6 September: Country Cycle Tour Social – Knebworth

Sun 14 September: 5 Pub Walk – Cuffley/Goffs Oak/Newgate Street

Wed 24 – Sat 27 September: St Albans Beer & Cider Festival

October: New Members Social – St Albans

Sat 29 November: The Annual Hertford Ale Trail – Hertford

For full event details, see below.

JULY

Fri 18 July **Visit to Hemel Hempstead Old Town Beer Festival**

Join South Herts Branch members at the Festival, for an afternoon and evening of merriment.

Fri 18 – Sun 20 July **Hemel Hempstead Old Town Beer Festival**

St Mary's Church, High Street, Hemel Hempstead HP1 3AE. For further details, see page 9 or festival website hemeloldtownbeerfestival.co.uk

Sat 19 July

Willian Walk & Garden City Social – Letchworth

Family & Friends absolutely welcome! Arrive in Letchworth Garden City to enjoy lunch in one of the plentiful cafés and restaurants or visit any of The **Broadway Hotel** bar, the **Platform**, or **Crafty's**, all less than 5 minutes from the station. Meet up at the **Arena Tavern** around 2:30pm before we leave at 3pm for a leisurely summer walk to Willian Village (~40 minutes) taking in historic sites and enjoying a drink in each of the **Fox** and the **Three Horseshoes** (5 minutes apart) before heading back via a different route for an evening social, including meet the brewer, at **Garden City Brewery** in

The Wynd. Here's the route on Google Maps maps.app.goo.gl/Uiy9rUEAQuguwThTA

AUGUST

Fri 1 August

Old Cross Tavern PotY Presentation & Social

7.30pm. Join South Herts Branch members for award presentation and celebratory drinking.

Sat 2 August

Summer Social – Old Stevenage

2pm. Join North Herts Branch members for an afternoon wander around the Old Town taking in any of the *Dun Cow, Broken Seal, Red Lion, Standing Order, Old Town Bar, Marquis of Lorne* and the *Chequers*.

Check for updates nearer the time at northherts.camra.org.uk or facebook.com/CAMRANorthHerts All CAMRA members from around the county are welcome.

Sat 16 August

Summer Social – Windsor

Join South Herts members on a visit to the pubs and breweries of Windsor. For further details check <https://southherts.camra.org.uk/> nearer the time.

Wed 20 August

Summer Evening Social – Royston

8pm. Join Branch members as we sample the ales starting at *The Heath Café Bar*, off Baldock Road, SG8 5BG. We suggest non-locals arriving by train choose one to arrive by 7.30pm for the walk out of town. We'll then walk back to the *King James, Jolly Postie* and *Manor House*.

Thu 21 – Sat 23 August

Watford Beer Festival

Halsey Masonic Hall, Rickmansworth Road, Watford, WD18 OJE. For further details, see advertisement on page 10.

Sat 23 August

Mermaid PotY Presentation, Beer Festival & Social

3.30pm. Join South Herts Branch members for award presentation and celebratory drinking.

Sat 30 August

3 Brewers Summer Festival – near Hatfield

Join South Herts Branch members for an afternoon of cask ale at the *3 Brewers* brewery, the Potato Shed, Symondshyde Farm, Symondshyde Lane, near Hatfield.

SEPTEMBER

Sat 6 September

Country Cycle Tour – Knebworth

Cycle or take a train to meet at the *Station*, Knebworth by 2pm. Non-cyclists to arrange ride share or designated drivers. Details of the tour closer to the time on northherts.camra.org.uk or facebook.com/CAMRANorthHerts

Sun 14 September

5 Pub Walk – Cuffley/Goffs Oak/Newgate Street

12.30pm. *The Goffs Oak + 4 other pubs*. Circular walk. Cross-branches Social with CAMRA North Herts. See details including map on pages 40-41.

Wed 24 – Sat 27 September

St Albans Beer & Cider Festival

Alban Arena, St Peter's Street, St Albans. The 28th Festival held at the Arena. For further details see advert on back cover or Festival website stalbandsbf.org.uk

OCTOBER

Date and pub TBC

New Members Social – St Albans

Say hello to new South Herts CAMRA members who signed-up at St Albans Beer & Cider Festival. All welcome, but only card-carrying new members get a FREE PINT!

NOVEMBER

Sat 29 November

The Annual Hertford Ale Trail – Hertford

1pm. The trail will include eight notable town pubs, starting at 1pm at the Black Horse in West Street. The full itinerary will be posted on <https://southherts.camra.org.uk/> nearer the time.

Steve's Shout

Does topping the sales list sound the death knell for cask beer?

I read with interest our Editor's article about sales statistics in the last Edition. As he rightly says, the figures generated by CGA for the Morning Advertiser (MA) don't stand up to scrutiny. That said, there's little point in arguing about the detail when the trend is clear - ownership of the UK's most popular beers is dominated by companies based overseas.

Breal, rebranded Keystone Brewing Group early last year, is a private equity firm who bought out Black Sheep brewery in 2023. Their Best Bitter has snuck into tenth place, despite a volume decrease compared with the previous year. The company has made a number of brewing acquisitions, including Purity, Fourpure, Brick, Brew by Numbers, Magic Rock, and North Brewing. Several of the breweries facing financial difficulties were then closed down - which raises the question: *"Why buy them in the first place?"*

To remind readers, on the list of sales by value, 1st place Timothy Taylor's Landlord, and 7th place St Austell Tribute are the only other UK-owned independents. Sales by volume shows a swapping of top spot with Landlord in 2nd place and Sharps Doom Bar, owned by multinational Molson Coors, taking pole position. Presumably this ubiquitous beer is being retailed at a lower price than Landlord?

I've been around long enough to remember those years when the table was topped by Boddingtons Bitter, brewed at Strangeways, Manchester, and Tetley's Bitter, brewed in Leeds. The trouble was that these national beers were transported excessive distances around the country, including to pubs unable to keep and serve cask beer due to poor cellarmanship. Consequently, quality and then interest suffered. Both of the breweries closed.

Handpumps still being Hijacked - Having written about Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company (CBMC)'s "Handpump Hijack" in the last edition, it was interesting to see an April update in the MA. Apparently, Fresh Ale (Keg) has shown a

steady sales increase in the year since its launch. Marston's say that the three "Fresh Ale" beers: Wainwright Gold, Wainwright Amber and Hobgoblin IPA have "brewery conditioned beer" on the pump clips to inform customers. Does this really mean anything to the general drinking public who, seeing a handpump, will wrongly assume they're getting real ale? CMBC suggest that this will somehow protect and increase cask sales, which quite obviously won't be the case. According to the MA update, after broaching, cask-conditioned beer lasts only three days whilst fresh ale lasts twelve. A year ago, national CAMRA made a challenge on CBMC's misleading dispense to West Northampton Council Trading Standards. You may be wondering, why that particular council? Well, CMBC's headquarters have been in Bridge Street Northampton, on the site previously occupied by the old Phipps brewery until 1973. CAMRA have been told that the result is imminent...

Also producing "Fresh Ale" is Devon-based Otter Brewery, the company that started it all in 2023. CAMRA is about to publish a list of their beers to look out for. As mentioned previously, if you experience a "Handpump Hijack", whoever the brewer, please contact your local branch of CAMRA or, if easier, *Pints of View*.

Finally, I do find it worrying that another contributor to this magazine, Annabel Smith, wrote the MA's "Fresh Ale" launch article. In her March 2024 piece, she defended the handpump as being synonymous with cask-conditioned beer, but then contradicted herself by saying that CMBC were not intending to deceive customers. Or am I mistaken?

Steve Bury
Chair
Swale CAMRA





Roger... and out

Gold brewer now more ex than Exmoor

The closure of a brewery in Somerset may seem of scant interest to readers in Hertfordshire but it's symptomatic of the crisis facing the independent brewing sector.

Exmoor Ales should be celebrating 40 years of beer making but owner Jonathan Price has pulled down the shutters on his plant in Wiveliscombe. He lays the blame on lost sales during the Covid lockdowns followed by rises in National Insurance and the Minimum Wage.

Jonathan has reached a deal with Hogs Back to brew his beers. But Exmoor Ales brewed in Surrey won't have quite the ring for supporters in the West Country. It's a sad loss. Exmoor, one of the earliest small independent breweries, announced its arrival in 1980 by winning Champion Beer of Britain at the Great British Beer Festival with only its 13th brew.

It claimed more attention when launching Exmoor Gold, the first golden ale brewed in Britain. Other brewers rushed to make similar beers in an effort to wean younger drinkers off insipid lagers and appreciate the joys of cask.

The reason 2025 would have marked Exmoor's 40th anniversary is that it moved to a new, custom-built plant in 1985. Since then, Britain's independent brewing sector has boomed - there are now some 1,500 breweries, so choice should be abundant.

But the sector faces powerful headwinds. More than 90 per cent of beer made and sold in Britain comes from a handful of global giants: AB InBev, Heineken, Carlsberg, Molson Coors/Carling, Asahi/Fuller's and Diageo, owners of Guinness.

SIBA, the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates, the voice of the small brewers, says in its 2025 annual report that tax rises and

cost increases mean members' main priority is survival - forget about making a profit.

The number of independent breweries fell by 5.5 per cent in 2024, with 100 closing. A similar number are expected to pull down the shutters this year.

SIBA says its members account for six per cent of total beer sales. If the market was genuinely open, it adds, it would be around 30 per cent. But the indies say they struggle to get their beers into 60 per cent of pubs in their trading areas.

The problem is the marketing muscle of the global brewers, selling to free-trade pubs at prices the indies cannot match whilst make a living. The globals can afford to offer discounts by producing beers more cheaply. This is achieved not only by "economies of scale" - big volumes and cheaper ingredients - but also the scam of lowering the strength of beer and paying less excise duty as a result.

In the past couple of years, such global brands as Foster's, Kronenbourg, Heineken and Grolsch have all been reduced in strength. Sol, brewed by Heineken, has been reduced from 4.2% ABV to 3.4%. Grolsch, 5% ABV in the Netherlands, has gone from 4% to just 3.4% here. Stella Artois, 5.2% ABV in Belgium, has been reduced here from 4.8% to 4.6%. AB InBev says it did so with the health of drinkers in mind. Did you hear a horse laugh?

According to the Alcohol Research Group at Sheffield University, just a small cut in duty can save a big brewer £250 million a year. Is it any wonder small brewers are struggling to survive? As we mourn the loss of Exmoor Ales, let's redouble our efforts to Think Local and Drink Local.

Roger Protz
*British Guild of Beer Writers
South Herts CAMRA*

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11. Cask & Stillage	25. Podge's Belgian Beer Tours
63. Cross Keys	69. Pubs in Town
23. Great Northern	79. Queen's Head
34. Harpenden Beer Festival	66. Robin Hood
65. Hertford Club	57. Royston Club
35. Horse & Groom	80. St Albans Beer & Cider Festival
35. Kings Langley Beer % Fizz Festival	67. Six Bells
63. Lordship Arms	43. Timothy Taylor's
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34 & 65. Old Cross Tavern	10. Watford Beer Festival
	2. Wetherspoon
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Cider Pub of the Year 2022 - 2025**

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**UK National CAMRA
Cider Pub of the Year 2022
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