

Cask Calling



Issue 4 Summer 2026



SUMMER SUNSHINE, BEER GARDENS AND AWARDS

The local branch has announced that its Summer Pub of the Year award has been won by the **George and Dragon** in Quainton. A crowd of regulars gathered in the pub's bar cheered as Mike Clarke, branch chairman, presented a certificate to licensee George Newman.

The award was made following a vote by CAMRA branch members, with the **George and Dragon** being crowned winner, ahead of second-placed the **Chequers** in Fingest and third-placed, the **Swan** at Great Kimble. All pubs were praised by members for providing inviting and convivial outdoor spaces in which customers can enjoy a pint of well-kept real ale in the open air.

Mike said: "Our members were especially enthusiastic about the **George and Dragon's** idyllic location on Quainton's village green. The pub has a number of benches outside and some on the green itself. What could be more summery than enjoying a pint with a fantastic view of the Quainton windmill?"

The pub itself is a hub of the local community and is consistently highly rated for its real ales. Four or more handpumps offer a consistently reliable selection of cask ales, many from local breweries, such as *Vale*, *Chiltern* and *Tring*.

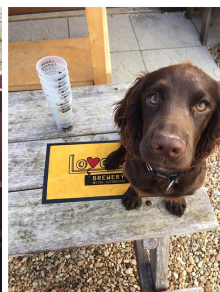
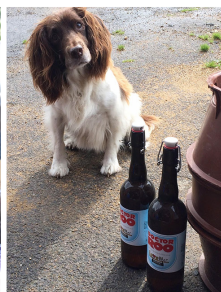
Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe CAMRA



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Sunshine Came Softly ...

Well, perhaps not, the successive heatwaves have caused concern to many, but pubs with congenial and attractive outdoor spaces have probably benefitted from the increased customer footfall and they've allowed the branch to give another award to a deserving pub — Summer Pub of the Year to the **George & Dragon** in Quinton

Aside from praising our wonderful pubs and breweries, this issue is slightly different in that Branch Pub and Brewery News has moved to the early pages, as some feedback has indicated readers like to find and read the local news.

CAMRA nationally is possibly more active as an organisation that might appear from the pages of branch magazines, *What's Brewing*, once the monthly hard-copy newspaper mailed to members kept all reasonably up to date. Though publication as a physical newspaper has ceased, it is still available to members each month, if only on-line. There are other initiatives that percolate to members and branches, and CAMRA has seriously revised and simplified the criteria for the NBSS, which we cover on p. 10, with some personal comments following on p. 11.

A major national initiative has been the publication of CAMRA's report on *Beer in the UK* — an in-depth report from the consumer viewpoint, highlighting the control by supranationals — that hazy hoppy craft American IPA you're drinking wasn't brewed by a dedicated artisan in an archway in London,

but more likely by one of the Big Four in Bourton-on-Trent, as is that 'continental' lager you made is drinking. Independent breweries (we are lucky to have four very active cask brewers in our branch, *Chiltern, Rebellion, Vale*, and *XT*) nationwide have great difficulty penetrating into the market dominated by the Big Four: a situation very similar to that which led to the founding of CAMRA in the 70s, except that now, the dominant industrial breweries are not British-owned, but supranational companies with little connection nor affinity to the UK. No doubt they are all very open and honest in their business accounts and prepared to pay their dues to the UK government.

The report can be accessed here:
<https://camra.org.uk/beer-report>.

At the local level, aside from the regular Caskiteers and Crossword, there are articles on barley growing in Bucks, the growth of community ownership, wanders in Wendover, the origin of Beaconsfield's new 'Spoons, why we don't home brew in summer, historic pub interiors and more.

One further issue is planned for this year, with a move to four issues in 2027. As you read this planning for the fifth issue, due November, will already be advanced, and schedules being prepared for 2027. Contributions from members and non-members are always welcome, via editor@aww.camra.org.uk. We would prefer to receive comments or article proposals for the next issue by the end of September, to allow for planning and editing.

Red Acteur



Pub and Brewery News

Aylesbury

New licensees took over on 15 May at the **Bricklayers Arms**, Walton Street. Puja and Apurva Patel succeed Des Power (aka Rogers) and Sara Hill, Sara having been the DPS (Designated Premises Supervisor — which probably all understand as Landlord, Landlady, or Licensee) since 2021. The pub remains a community focus with a distinct sports and music focus, and adventurous food opportunities.

The **Horse & Jockey**, Buckingham Road, closed on 21 June for refurbishment by owners Ember Inns. Reopening on 8 July, the refurbishment has been thorough, including carpets, furniture, walls, paintwork, landscaping and new benches for outdoor areas. Gareth Evans, General Manager is quoted as saying ‘There’s nothing better than seeing both new and familiar faces settling in at our pub. We can’t wait for everyone in the community to see what we’ve done with the place’ and Assistant Manager Ellie Lamoon, who has been at the **Horse & Jockey** for 8 years, says ‘it was a needed refurbishment, I’m looking forward to continuing to work here and showing our customers what we’ve achieved’.

The **Old Millwrights Arms** is having a *Triple FFF* tap takeover over the weekend 19/20 September with brewery representation and special discounted prices.

A listed building application has been made to partially demolish an outbuilding at the **Queen’s Head** to allow expansion of the beer garden.

Aston Rowant

The **Lambert Arms** serves *Rebellion IPA* and a *Rebellion* seasonal (World Cup-themed *Liquid Football* on a recent visit). The popular Sunday carvery continues in their Kite restaurant, and over the horizon, they are hosting a Motown Soul tribute night on Saturday 5 September, tickets for which include a 3-course meal.

Beaconsfield

The freehold of the **White Horse**, on a ‘free of tie’ lease, is being offered for sale by Everard Cole. The pub closed in January.

Bierton

The **Red Lion**, a Grade II listed building believed to date back to the 16th-century and closed since autumn 2019, will be reopening in mid-August following a £34k refurbishment by *Heineken*-owned Star Pubs. New tenants, Simon Jukes and Charlotte Summers, also run two other pubs in the area, the **George** at

Berkhamsted and the **George & Dragon** at Northchurch.

Bledlow

The **Lions of Bledlow**, our branch joint Pub of the Year for 2026, is in its element now we are firmly in the summer months, reverting to its summer hours, and welcoming hikers, bikers, dog walkers and everyone else in between. *Wadworth 6X* remains the **Lions’** session bitter, and the four other pumps see a mix of local and national ales (with a pleasing slant towards the former). A recent visit saw *Adnam’s Ghost Ship*, *Chiltern Pale Ale* and *Rebellion Roasted Nuts* accompanying *6X*, with empty barrels from *Loddon*, *Loose Cannon*, *Renegade* (formerly *West Berks*) and *Tring* to the side of the pub. Securing a bench seat on the triangular green out front is a must.

Bourne End

The lease of the **Walnut Tree** is up for sale as the current leaseholders are planning to retire.

Brill

Vale Brewery continue their programme with the *ABC* monthly beer series, following *Juggernaut*, *Old Toby*, a 5% smoked porter, *Angel Tears*, a 4.5% hazy IPA, and *Opalescence*, a 3.9% session pale ale have featured. Members of the Vale Beer Club receive regular notifications

of their availability in the brewery taproom. Under the **Vale** label, the brewery has produced *White Swan*, a 3.7% English IPA available from May, *Marathon Runner*, a 4.0% golden ale in tribute to the London Marathon (also available in bottles), *The Beautiful Game*, a 4.0 pale ale from June (wonder what that's about!) and to follow *Smart Big Fish* celebrating Jaws. The brewery has also commenced a partnership with Oak Taverns, and in addition



to the availability of **Vale** ales, will be supporting Oak's association with The Dead Brewers' Society, with the first historic brew being *Hunt Edmunds* from Banbury's 1939 *IPA*. National successes for **Vale** have been Wetherspoons taking *Black Beauty*, Stonegate *Red Kite*, and from July Punch will be taking *Electric Sheep*.

Cadmores End

The branch held a social at the newly reopened **Old Ship**, Cadmore End on Wednesday 22 April.



The 17th century pub had been closed since 2010 and reopened due to the sterling efforts of landlord Chris Leadbeater. The pub serves up to three cask ales and Chris is pictured behind the handpumps during our visit.

Chinnor

Chinnor Beer Festival returns for a 17th year, to be held on Saturday 29 August at White's Field, off Mill Lane. Expect 30+ local real ales, along with a selection of ciders, wine, cocktails and mocktails. The day will feature live music throughout and a variety of local food vendors serving delicious food and refreshments.

Chinnor's only GBG-listed pub, the **Red Lion** continues with its four-ale line-up. A recent visit found session ale *Vale Tickety Brew* accompanied by *Burning Sky Plateau*, *Oakham Citra* and *Siren Lumina*. Local ales feature regularly here, including those by *ABC (Vale)* and *Animal (XT)*, along with beers from some of the country's best independent breweries. Food vans of varying cuisine are usually *in situ* each Wednesday and Friday through to Sunday. Outside of the weekly Quiz Night, they are hosting a Rum & Reggae evening on Saturday 8th August, featuring live music and all manner of rum-flavoured punches.

The **Crown**, with custodians Craig and Jodie now in their fourth year at the helm, continue to steer the ship in the right direction. They created a fanzone in their upper car park for the World Cup and opened for the late Mexico–England game on the Sunday/Monday (inside guests only). *Timothy Taylor Landlord* remains their sole ale, almost always served in impeccable condition. Keg *Rebellion IPA* and a *Rebellion* seasonal are also available, along with bottled versions of *Mar-Low Pale Ale* (0.5%)

Food has returned to the **Wheatsheaf**, with Sunday roasts proving popular. Also look out for Sunday braais (South African BBQs), where you get a hefty plate of SA favourites for £19.50. *Greene King IPA* remains their sole ale.

Although the **Community Pavilion** and wine bar **Grapes & Flavours** are keg-only, they both serve beer from local breweries.

Cryers Hill

A planning application for the **White Horse** was submitted in May for a change of use to a children's day nursery and residential development of nine dwellings. The pub has been closed since November 2024. Local residents have arranged a meeting with their MP Greg Smith to fight these plans.

Cuddington

The **Crown** has been bought by the community. The pub reopened at the beginning of July. Manager and licensee Abbi Armstrong will be familiar to many, having run the **King's Head** in Haddenham as a Punch Tavern from 2017 until the Heineken buyout in 2021. The former Fuller's pub closed in January. It will serve two *Chiltern* beers and *Harvey's Sussex Best*.



Dinton

The 11th Dinton Beer Festival will once again be hosted at the community-owned **Seven Stars**, on 15 August, opening at 12.00 midday until 6.00 pm or when the beer runs out.



It takes place in the pub garden, with at least 12 firkins of real ale from a variety of different breweries from around the UK. There will also be a Pimms tent plus several real ciders and BBQ food will be served by landlady Steph.

A very family-oriented event where dogs are welcome, the pub will be open for other drinks including soft drinks. Further congratulations to Steph Guirate, who secured Muddy Stilettos Best Loved Local Pub award.

Downley

Long term tenants of **Le De Spencer Arms** Mark and Sarah Shayler retired on 22 May, to a new adventure with Maison Lassalle in Oô, France, with new tenants Darren and Lucy Richardson taking over the **Le De**.

Emmington

With three local ales on at any one time (e.g. *Loose Cannon*, *Rebellion*, *Vale*, etc.), the **Inn at Emmington** freehouse is always worth dropping into to check the line-up. The traditional home-cooked food remains popular, and along with occasional live music; they have frequent 'Boozy Bingo' events, you will need to check their social media for more details!

Haddenham

The **King's Head** is understood to be changing hands in October, Paul Cossey has been running the *Heineken*-owned pub with Jennifer Cossey since 2021 under a five-year contract with *Heineken's* Star Pubs & Bars.

With family circumstances changing, and the options with Star Pubs & Bars being



either a new five- or 25-year contract rather than a five-year rolling contract, as well as the well-documented uncertainties within hospitality generally Paul feels it is time to move on. Paul and Jenn's plan is to take some well-earned time off, skiing in the French Alps before exploring careers elsewhere.

Although the new tenants have not yet been announced, they are understood to be running a number of pubs already, with the possibility of taking on two more.

The majority of Paul's existing staff, including his daughter Kiera, will remain, having been 'TUPEd' (Transfer of Undertakings [Protection of Employment] Regulations 2006) over. As the employee with the most experience across the business, one could conjecture that Heidi could become an important asset for the incoming management, helping to retain a familiar feel.

Hardwick



Nick Smith, ex-landlord of the **Whip Inn** in Lacey Green, a much-missed *Good Beer Guide* stalwart, reopened the **Bell** at Hardwick on Thursday 30 April. The pub had been closed for over a year.

We visited Nick at the **Bell** on Saturday 2 May.

The pub is on the bus route between Aylesbury and Buckingham with a bus stop nearby.

Henton

The **Peacock Country Hotel** has returned to a two-ale line-up, with *Sharp's Doom Bar* and *Rebellion IPA* the usual suspects on the pumps here. Bottled *Vale* ales are also available.

High Wycombe

The **Antelope** reopened in mid-May under new management. Although there was no real ale available initially, we have had a report that *Sharp's Doom Bar* and

Rebellion IPA were on tap in mid-June.

The **Spindle & Thread** which reopened in March following a month's closure for refurbishment was a family-oriented dining pub with a large dining area, a quiet atmosphere and an indoors play area for children. The refurbishment has seen the pub become oriented more to the sports bar concept, dominated by an area given over to pool, darts, poker and large television screens showing football. There is a much reduced dining area and carvery area though real ale is still available.

The freehold of the **Bell** is up for sale via Auction House and is also being advertised by Christie & Co. The **Bell** closed in 2018 and became the **Sosh Club** and then the **Air Raid Shelter Café**.

The **Chiltern Taps** is being advertised for let by Chandler Garvey. The pub closed in March 2024 when owners RedCat went into administration.

The **Flint Cottage** closed in mid-April with Wells & Co looking for new tenants.

O'Neills reopened in early June having been closed for three weeks for refurbishment.

The freehold of the **Snug** is being advertised for sale through Everard Cole.

Loudwater

Whitbread have announced that they plan to close all their Brewers Fayre and Beefeater restaurants. They plan either to sell them or incorporate them directly into Premier Inns. This will impact the **Papermill** in Loudwater and **Crows Nest** outside Aston Clinton.

Subsequent to a change of use for the **Happy Union** being allowed on appeal a further planning application was made in March. This has been refused.

Naphill

The branch presented a special certificate to the licensees of the **Wheel**, Naphill, Mark and Claire Christian. This marked their twentieth anniversary of taking over the pub in the summer of 2006.



Branch deputy chairman, Elvis Evans, presented the certificate to Mark and Claire at the pub's "Ronfest" on 11 July. Ronfest is a music and beer festival that is held for charity annually at the pub in memory of local resident and pub regular Ron Williams, who passed away in 2021.

Mike Clarke, branch chairman said, "We recently held a

branch meeting at the **Wheel** and when we heard it was Mark and Claire's twentieth anniversary at the pub then we immediately decided it should be honoured with a certificate. The **Wheel** is hugely popular with local real ale drinkers and can always be relied upon to serve a well-kept pint."

When Mark and Claire took over the pub in 2006, it had seen better days but they rapidly transformed it into a real-ale destination. It has been a regular fixture in CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide* for almost the whole time Mark and Claire have run the pub. It is also a hub of the local community in Naphill and, being close to countryside in the Chilterns National Landscape, is popular with walkers.

Postcombe

The **England's Rose**, named after Princess Diana, who visited the pub, is currently conducting a large charity sale, including a plethora of Diana memorabilia. They continue with keg *Rebellion IPA*, along with a wide range of bottled ales, including some alcohol-free options. Their fantastic two-acre beer garden is available for private hire.

Skirmett

The **Frog** which closed in January 2024 is due to reopen as the **King's Cow**. It is described as 'the vision of a chef (Charlie Jeffreys) and an architect (Michael Spink); one

passionate about field-to-fork food, the other about the English landscape and design'.

Sydenham

With a slant on food and dining, the **Crown** could be forgiven for taken a casual approach to their ale selection, but there are usually two or three ales available here: *Rebellion IPA* plus a seasonal *Rebellion*, and sometimes *Timothy Taylor Landlord*. Aunt Sally has also been resurrected at the rear for the summer, and visitors are welcome to throw a batten or two at the dolly.

Terrick

Our congratulations go to the **Chiltern Brewery** for coming first in Bucks & Oxon 'Best Artisan Food & Drink Producer' category in the 'Muddy Stilettos' 2026 Awards.

Tetsworth

The **Old Red Lion**, which doubles as the village shop continues to serve *XT 4* as its session ale, usually accompanied by another *XT* and/or *Animal* brew. Securing a bench out front on a Saturday afternoon allows you a chance to watch cricket on the green opposite.

Thame

The **Black Horse**, a Heartwood Inn, reopened on 4 June, having been closed for refurbishment from 11 May. The refreshed décor includes new soft furnishing and enhancements to the garden,

as well as doubling the bar area, with two T-bars for the keged lines, and the retained four handpumps on the right-hand bar.



The regular beers are *Fuller's London Pride*, *Timothy Taylor Landlord*, *Loose Cannon Gunners Gold* and *XT 4*.

The **Falcon** under the stewardship of Sarah and Steve Payne continues to thrive, hosting a monthly charity quiz, which has raised over £550 for local charities; seeing the launch of *Spring Light*, a new **Hook Norton** spring beer, hazy with



coriander notes. The beer was introduced by a visit from Managing Director James, and Head Brewer Ed, Clarke. *Hooky Gold* in its 20th

year followed and was very popular. Of particular note, a permanent fixture on the bar is *Hooky Original Cider*, pressed in Worcestershire in collaboration with Oldfields Cider, it is

one of a very few ciders in our branch area that meet CAMRA's definition of real cider. The rotation of Hooky ales, and the availability of real cider have helped the couple achieve recognition from the brewery, as within their first six months of trading they are consistently in the top 25% of Hooky pubs for sales of Hooky products.

Towersey

The **Three Horseshoes** is currently rotating session ales and has seen *Timothy Taylor Golden Best* and *Landlord*,

Morland Old Speckled Hen and *Black Sheep Bitter* occupy its stumps of late. Lots going on here as always: in addition to their excellent food offerings (booking always essential), their pizzas are extremely popular — every Wednesday to Saturday between 5.30pm and 8pm you can buy a 12-inch pizza and get a second for half price. They also have monthly Quiz and Live Music evenings.

Wooburn

New tenants Debbie Church and Lester Gittenstook over the **Old Bell** on 3 April, and following a swift refurbishment re-opened 10 April. Alongside food and accommodation, the pub has a Community Lunch Club on Tuesdays, and a quiz and trivia night on Wednesdays. The cask ale range now includes *Timothy Taylor Landlord*.

Cask Calling

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Beer Scores and *the Good Beer Guide*

There are tens of thousands of pubs across the country serving cask beers, and many of those serve really good pints.

For lovers of a decent pint, it's important to be able to find them. CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide* has been the 'bible' for finding the very best ones since 1974 and continues to be relied upon by tens of thousands of people.

CAMRA's online pub guide camra.org.uk/pubs can also help because beer quality is indicated by the '3 Pints' symbols that CAMRA members can see when logged in.

Pubs and clubs that serve really excellent pints, and serve them consistently well, can be potential candidates for the *Good Beer Guide*.

To help identify them, CAMRA members score their pints whenever they have the opportunity. Their scores help local branches determine candidates for the *Guide*, and these can change year on year because the standards are high.

Serving live cask beer requires skill in the cellar and attention by bar staff all the time. Competition for a place is stiff because only 4,500 places are available.

Up until now, the scoring system has used a numbering system of 0 to 5. But there are problems with this. It requires memorising the criteria for each score and using them consistently, but memories can be variable. Some people genuinely struggle with numbers, so they don't take part. It becomes open to individual interpretation with resulting inconsistency between scorers. There's also the

potential for individual bias and a reluctance to 'award' high scores.

We all know when we are drinking a good pint that's been well-kept, and we also know when a pint is very good or excellent — who cannot resist telling everyone else about it! And likewise, a pint that is simply OK or, hopefully not often, undrinkable.

So, to make things easier for everyone, a new intuitive ratings system is being introduced, which is more descriptive of the beer being drunk.

How's your cask beer?

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

Each of the new ratings has a description and a likely reaction to help you pin down the most appropriate rating.

Ratings can be recorded on CAMRA's online pub guide camra.org.uk/pubs by all CAMRA members so start rating your beer now.

If you're not a CAMRA member but would like to rate your beers then head over to camra.org.uk/membership.

Scoring your Beer — a Personal View

Beer scoring has become a recognized and useful tool within CAMRA branches, and here in Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe branch we do encourage branch members to score whenever they can. It is a significant aid, not only in helping the branch select the best in our branch for inclusion in the annual *Good Beer Guide*, but also in the selection of pubs for the various other awards we try to bestow.

CAMRA have introduced, after some due consideration, an updated and simplified guide to beer scoring (see opposite). While it is hoped that this will encourage more members to score their beers regularly (I admit I'm not the most avid of scorers) some historical context may be of interest.

CAMRA officially launched the NBSS (National Beer Scoring Scheme) in 2007, and it has been developing with increased use and integration into other aspects of the Campaign's overall targets.

Ranging from 0.5 to 5 (0 being no cask-conditioned real ale) it did allow 0.5 increments, so for the members scoring, if they felt a beer was between 3 and 4 in meeting the criteria, the option was 3.5.

The accepted criteria, tabulated were:

0.5–1	Undrinkable to poor	Abysmally poor or barely drinkable
2	Average	Drinkable but unremarkable
3	Good	The minimum threshold for <i>Good Beer Guide</i> consideration. Enjoyable and competently kept
4	Very Good	Stands out in excellent condition
5	Perfect	Exceptional, maybe a one-in-a-thousand pints

Which to some seemed simple enough, and many followed the scoring criteria. It is of course open to individual opinion, for example it is conceivable that a particular member might score a well-kept *Greene King IPA* at 5 and a similarly well-kept *Gales HSB* at 2.5 just on personal preference.

Not all branches necessarily adopted the criteria straightaway: for example, for many years, North Oxon branch used a 1–5 decimal system, often down to two decimal places. The joint Pubs Officer (I was the other), who maintained the database had no problem with this (it was my previous branch). Many other branches would use their own scoring criteria, often utilising pen and paper!

Through 2015–2016 the NBSS received a major digital upgrade, integrating it into the Campaign's main website, which allowed members to enter scores nationally online, or via apps such as Whatpub whilst down the pub (provided you had internet access).

Certainly this was advantageous; on a personal level I scored more often (though not nearly enough). All praise to the assiduous members who can keep copious notes, and later remember to enter them on the website, sadly that is not me, age and a butterfly brain are no helpers!

This has been the *status quo* until this year, when CAMRA revised approach, believed to be easier to understand, as they are non-numeric, went live. I can empathize.

CAMRA Discourse (an online forum for CAMRA members) has posts that are both supportive and critical — CAMRA members are not noted for their reluctance to criticize — but time will be on the side of the new approach.

Richard Palmer

GROWING BEER HERE: THE CHILTERN BREWERY AND STOKE FARMS

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



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

For anyone who enjoys a pint of cask ale, Maris Otter is more than just an ingredient. This heritage variety of English malting barley has long been prized by brewers for

the depth, character and reliability it brings to traditional beers. It gives a lovely, rounded malt backbone, allowing the English hops that we use to sit properly in balance and giving the finished beer a strength and depth of flavour. We use Maris Otter malt in almost all the beers we brew, so to see it growing across the fields so close to home is a wonderful step for us.



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

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

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

GROWING BEER HERE: THE CHILTERN BREWERY AND STOKE FARMS

spirit: good ingredients, experienced hands, patience and respect for the finished pint.

For us, working with Stoke Farms is also about strengthening the local links that have always mattered to us as an independent, family brewer. The *Chiltern Brewery* has been rooted in Buckinghamshire since 1980, and we have always believed that beer should belong to the place it comes from. Being able to point to a nearby field and say, quite literally, “that is where next year’s beer begins” is an exceptionally rare privilege.

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



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

A Buckinghamshire partnership worth raising a pint to!

George Jenkinson (Partner)
The Chiltern Brewery

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Bronze Award
in Buckinghamshire



Community-Owned Pubs

the Way Forward?

We have a number of community-owned pubs in our branch, so a Google AI-assisted search seemed relevant — perhaps the right question wasn't asked as Google only seems to know of two: the **Russell Arms**, Butlers Cross and the **Garibaldi**, Bourne End. Odd, when several come easily to mind: the **Ash Tree** in Ashendon, bought by Ashendon Community Pub Society Limited (a Community Benefit Society) in September 2024; the **Chandos Arms** in Oakley, where the freehold was bought by the parish council in 2021; not sure whether the **Crown** in Sydenham, which is 'owned by a group of locals' has the status of community-owned; and of course, possibly the epitome for community ownership in our branch, the **Seven Stars** in Dinton — and that is just in the west of the branch area.

Operation and management for these community-owned assets varies, depending on the manner of ownership, commitment and intent of the communities themselves, the example of the **Seven Stars** is a notable and long-running success.

Following some 10 years of the pub being part of Punch

Tavern's 'non-core assets' and a succession of ten landlords, with increasing periods of closure and uncertainty a group of villagers decided to try to buy the pub for the community. Seven Stars Dinton Ltd was established and community investors were found. With some 66 shareholders contributing over £400,000, a grant from the Leader Project and a bank loan it was purchased on 16 November 2011 and a lease immediately signed with David Berry and Stephanie Guiraut to run the pub.

The doyenne of publicans, Steph soon started to accumulate accolades, from the overall winner of the Aylesbury Vale Village Pub Competition 2013/14, to the latest, Regional winner, Bucks and Oxon, of Muddy Stilettos 2026 Best Loved Local Pubs competition.



A popular destination for diners, with its 40-cover restaurant, the pub is

quintessentially a community pub, with many locals regularly to be found in the bar, often with accompanying dogs. It is often taken over completely to support or host local events, from children's parties to seniors' Christmas meals.

One can almost excuse Google AI's ignorance of the latest pub in our area to reopen in community ownership, the **Crown** in Cuddington.

Again with a history of changing landlords, temporary closure and uncertainty, some four years ago the community sought to buy the pub from then owners Fullers, Smith & Turner — no longer the brewers of Fullers beers, which since 2019 has been owned and operated by the Japanese brewers **Asahi**. Led by Mike Cottman with the support of three close friends and a £400k surety, they were initially unsuccessful, but persisted when each of the changing landlords left again.

The four formed a Community Benefit Society (CBS), Village Blue Sky Ltd, initially with a committee of four, with Mike Cottman as Chairman, Tim Stevens as Secretary, since expanded to

Community-Owned Pubs: the Way Forward?

12 committee members with some 207 investors from the village and surrounding area, proving, in Mike's words, 'the community is greater than just the village'.



After the pub closed again in January this year, the CBS raised £657k in 6 weeks, and were successful in their latest attempt at purchase — Fullers, Smith & Turner acknowledging that village pubs such as the **Crown** did not sit comfortably with their core business, and on 8 June this year it became a community asset.



The pub was quickly redecorated and refurbished by local volunteers, even down to the reupholstery of the furnishings, and reopened to the general public on 3 July. A remarkable turnaround.

The committee have employed Abbi Armstrong as manager. With over 18 years in hospitality, including 5 years as licensee of the **King's Head** in Haddenham, Abbi intends to remain at the **Crown** for the long-term, certainly the foreseeable future — might we be seeing a second Step in Abbi?



The refurbished dining areas, as well as the comfortable outdoor seating areas will undoubtedly be a draw for many. Abbi informs that the food offering will be kept simple and a mid-price range; 'good quality affordable food'.

Chiltern Brewery have also been supportive of the pub, refurbishing the cellar and providing cellar services. The **Crown** currently has

three handpumps, two with **Chiltern** beers, whilst the third is dedicated to **Harvey's Sussex Best**. Sussex born and bred, it remains Mike Cottman's favourite beer. The first firkin, available for volunteers and investors prior to the general opening, sold out within six hours.



Red Aacteur

Meat raffle drawn at 4pm every sunday from local farm shops/ butchers	
Quiz Night every other Tuesday from 8pm	
Open Mic last Thursday of every month	
Live Music last Friday of every month	
Stocking local ales, including Tring Brewery and Rebellion. FOOD AVAILABLE Bar Snacks, Lunch/Main Menu and Sunday Lunch. DRINKS OFFERS Beat the barman Wednesday 5-6pm (a chance to win half price round) Fizz Friday £15 bottle of prosecco	

Caskiteers

Part 18

Harry scrutinised his phone sitting on a repurposed pew in the **Eaten Trifles** bar one summer morning just before opening time.

"Jakes, the socials are giving us grief," Harry complained as he scrolled. "Two stars here — 'The beers have cool names but they all taste the same'. Three stars 'They're such old-style hipsters they don't realise that moustaches are the new beards'".

"I'm ahead of them there," Jacob says, looking in the mirror. "My chin is now a hair-free zone, it's all upper-lip from now on."

"Me too, but I've forgotten how to shave," Harry replied, uncomfortably stroking his beard. "Oh jeebers — a one-star review!"

"Now, that is a crisis," Jacob said, alarmed.

Harry continued reading from his phone.

"Their beer is cloudy as a river contaminated with Thames Water sewage discharge. It's so aggressively over-hopped that there are bines floating in it and it's as flat as my pater's croquet lawn — sounds like that deserves at least four stars."

"Ah, it's just a style preference," Jacob twiddled the ends of his new moustache.

"Yah," Harry agreed. "That's how Shackney beer is meant to be — barely drinkable, samey, not living up to its promise."

"Indeed," Jacob said. "But we need to counter the one-star review and the solution is to embrace new styles. It might be time to put you, as an irredeemable southerner, out to grass and to inject some new blood. It might be time to replace you with a Northerner!"

Two weeks later a newcomer sat in Harry's place

in the **Eaten Trifles** pew. Being clean-shaven and with a short, pudding-bowl haircut he would have looked out of place in Shackney even without his polyester, sky-blue Manchester City football shirt. This was Danny.

Danny surveyed the interior of **Eaten Trifles**. "Put a few traffic bollards in here and a DJ and it'd be right like the **Hacienda** after a few pints."

He gestured at a range of pint glasses arrayed on the distressed wood table.

"All pints, Jakey. None of your soft southern thirds or halves in here anymore." Danny's accent was so piercingly Mancunian that he could have taken elocution lessons from Liam Gallagher.

"Obviously not, Danny my old stick ... I mean mate." Jacob made a feeble attempt at shortening his Received Pronunciation vowels.

"Now look at that." Danny lifted one of the pints in front of an industrial light fitting's filament bulb. "**Madchester Magic**. Sound as a pound. Clear as a bell."

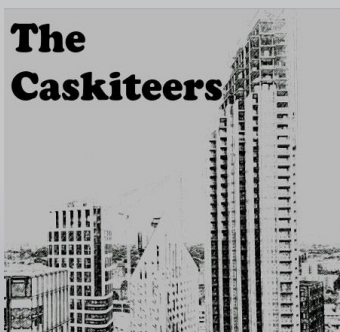
Jacob looked at the beer in horror. "But Danny you can see right through it. We've never had a clear beer at **Eaten Trifles** before. The customers will surely send it back."

"Folks won't know till folks have tried it out, I tell you, lad," Danny insisted. "And while we're at it, yer pint pouring's all gone to pot. That lass in the brewery, wha'sername?"

"Ruthie?" Jacob suggested.

"Aye, Ruthie, she were pouring beer right up to top of glass, right she were, like a daft apeth."

"Isn't that what we're meant to do, legally speaking?" Jacob asked.



Caskiteers - Part 18

"Oh no, oh no," Danny scolded Jacob. "Follow me and you might pick up a thing or two."

Danny led Jacob to the bar and proudly put his hand on a wooden handpump.

"Erm, are those some sort of skittles you've installed on the bar?" Jacob asked, perplexed.

"You just need a bit of elbow grease," Danny said, pulling the handpump towards him.

"Good grief, is that beer coming out of that spout?" Jacob sputtered as Danny filled a glass below the pump.

"None of your fancy light-up signs, we're going to send all of them t' tip." Danny held up the glass after he'd finished pouring.

"Erm, what's that white stuff at the top?" Jacob asked in wonderment.

"That is what we call the head — the cream of Manchester," Danny said, holding up a pint glass that contained around one-third foam to two-thirds liquid. He lifted the glass and took a glug, leaving him with a foam-covered moustache.

"Cripes, you've changed since we shared a dormitory at prep school, Danny," Jacob said. "Since you moved there after uni, you've become a proper Mancunian."

"Aye, salt of the earth nowadays." Danny sunk the rest of his pint.

Danny replaced all **Eaten Trifles**' hazy, flat Shackney-style beers with *Madchester Mild*, *Madchester Bitter* and *Madchester Mental*. At first the massed Shackney hipsters were reluctant to try these clear, brown pints with a large frothy head but once a few moustaches had been dunked in the foaming beer, word started to spread about this curious new beer that was served by arm power. One of Jacob's friends, Florence, even relocated her 6am exercise class to the **Eaten Trifles** bar so handpump pulling could be part of the fitness regime.

"How thrilling," Arthur, Jacob's fourth cousin thrice removed, commented when presented with a glass of *Madchester Mental*. "Beer you can see through! Who would have thought of such a thing?"

"Does it make you slightly nostalgic for the days of *Flemish Phlegm Gose* or *Twitter Pilon Quintuple Sour*," Jacob asked Arthur.

"Certainly not. This foam is so much fun," Arthur replied.

"Me neither. All those hazy, flat beers were Harry's idea," Jacob said.

The Manchester beers became so popular that the hipsters adopted a northern fashion style when visiting **Eaten Trifles**.

The uniform of flat caps, rolled-up sleeves and armless, striped sweaters and a *de rigueur* pair of clogs could be seen in the long queues to enter the bar.

Therefore, when the trading standards officer from Shackney Council arrived he immediately stood out from the crowd when ordering a pint of *Madchester Mental*. Rather than drink it, he poured it into a bucket with a measuring scale.

"This is only sixty five percent liquid," the trading standards officer declared. "We at Shackney Council are punctilious in ensuring a beer is one hundred percent liquid with no head whatsoever. Who is responsible for this serious criminal offence?"

"My dear sir, it's this rascal — Jacob St John Smyth Bogg. He's the licensee," Danny said in perfectly enunciated Received Pronunciation. He pointed to Jacob.

The trading standards officer cordoned off the handpumps and handed Jacob a notice of prosecution.

"Now, if you'll excuse me, I must make my way back to my pater's Sussex mansion," Danny said as he ran for the door.

Charlie Mackle

ONE DOOR CLOSES; A CINEMA DOOR OPENS

On Sunday 11 January 2026 the doors closed at the **White Horse**, Beaconsfield. On Tuesday 13 January 2026 the doors opened at the new **Chiltern** pub in Beaconsfield. Some sort of yin and yang experience maybe? Don't know. But we lost a potentially pretty good pub and gained an even better one. And why a "cinema door" you ask. Because that's what the **Chiltern** pub once was.



The first cinema in Beaconsfield was at Burkes Hall and later became known as the Old Picture House. No trace of this building survives today. The replacement was known as The Picture House and it opened on 15 September 1927 and, at first, showed only silent films. Talking films came not long afterwards. The name changed to the Chiltern Cinema around 1962. This is the building we will be talking about.

The cinema closed on 29 September 1989 and soon afterwards became a Prezzo restaurant. This, in turn, closed in 2021. Around July 2022 the building was bought by J.D.Wetherspoons with the initial intention of turning it into a pub.

The firm changed its mind and put the building up for sale in 2023. It seems there were no takers so it was necessary to revert

to the previous plan and turn it into a Wetherspoons pub after all with this decision happening around January 2025. Work initially went slowly but, by January 2026 and at a cost of 3.4 million pounds, the new Wetherspoons was ready to open. And jolly nice it is too.

The pub is one of the smaller 'Spoons being smaller inside than those at Aylesbury, Wycombe, Marlow, Maidenhead and Slough (for instance). There are 10 real ales on and Sam Garvey, the manager, has them all in use. He was previously the manager at the *Good Beer Guide*-listed **J.J.Moon's** in Ruislip Manor.

The beer is very reasonably priced for an upmarket town like Beaconsfield and the food is standard 'Spoons fare at standard 'Spoons prices. Good value for money in other words.

The frontage of the building has retained the look it had when it was a cinema and it looks good. Only accessible through large bi-fold doors at the rear of the bar area is a large enclosed terraced garden.

It's right in the centre of Beaconsfield New Town and thus near the bus stops and the railway station. Also the toilets, although up some stairs, are in the same town as the pub and Sherpa guides are not really necessary.

For those wanting to experiment with craft keg beer there is the **Beaconsfield Taps** just around the corner. The two places complement each other well.

So this is highly recommended for those visiting Beaconsfield perhaps on a visit there to honour the town of writers Enid Blyton and Terry Pratchett. Perhaps you want to find out where Airey Neave lived.

ONE DOOR CLOSES; A CINEMA DOOR OPENS

Perhaps you will visit Bekonscot model village which is probably the oldest still-surviving model village in the world, and its pub, the **Earl of Bekonscot**, but be advised space at the bar is hard to find.

Or maybe just sample some fine real ale.

Elvis Evans



HOME BREWING — OR NOT

Actually, no. In the current hot weather brewing beer at home becomes difficult. Proper cooling apparatus is required to maintain the correct brewing temperature and most people starting in home brewing will not have this equipment. So what can we do? One thing we can do is to make wine. There are many books on home wine-making and much information online. So that's all worth looking at. Country wines can be made from all sorts of fruit found growing in the countryside or in orchards and it's all coming into season right about now. I have made good wines from plums, cherries, strawberries and blackberries. If you're lucky you may find the rather rare Aylesbury plum (also known as the Aylesbury prune) which is no good for eating as it is but can be used for cooking and does make a fine wine.

So now let's have a basic recipe for a blackberry wine. First pick your blackberries when they are ripe, sweet and at their most juicy. You need about 2 kg of berries for one gallon of wine. Put the blackberries into a bucket or large saucepan and crush them well. A potato masher does this very well. Now strain the pulp using a sieve to get the juice into the demijohn. Add 1 kg of ordinary sugar and some water. The sugar needs to be mixed in to change it as much as possible from its crystalline state. The demijohn should now be about two thirds full of liquid. Add a general-purpose red wine yeast and leave it for a couple of weeks. When fermentation slows down the level of the liquid

can be topped up with water to nearer the full gallon. Then leave it for a few weeks for the fermentation to completely finish before bottling (six standard 75cl bottles to the gallon).

Note that plums are not as juicy and, if making plum wine, you need more like 3kg of the fruit for the gallon of wine.

It really is all very simple.

Elvis Evans

Answers to *Calling's* Crossword No. 3

ACROSS

1. Might
4. Damage
9. Novella
10. Third
11. Etna
12. Longbow
13. Soy
14. Bath
16. Meek
18. Ply
20. Unlucky
21. Lego
24. Naval
25. Oak tree
26. Rarest
27. Torch

DOWN

1. Manner
2. Given
3. Toll
5. Autonomy
6. Amiable
7. Endows
8. Sally
13. Shackles
15. All over
17. Runner
18. Pylon
19. Joseph
22. Error
23. Skit

A Wander 'Round Wendover

The quaint Buckinghamshire town of Wendover is about 20 minutes by car from my home in Chinnor, and unlike my village, has managed to cling onto most of its pub stock over the last 20–30 years. Driving through the town late last year, a seed was planted in that a research trip might be worth undertaking and be worthy of a *Cask Calling* article. So a pre-World Cup Saturday jaunt was planned (there was no way I would risk missing any of Uzbekistan's Group games ...).

Having secured a lift to Wendover, and accompanied by my son, Will, we began proceedings at **The Shoulder of Mutton**. Next-door to Wendover's train station, this is one of *Greene King's* Chef & Brewer chain of — according to their website, “traditional country pubs that serve delicious food and stock a range of expertly-chosen drinks.” Which was nice.



Although there were a couple of GK ales available, *Abbot Ale*, *Old Golden Hen* and World Cup-themed *4-4 Brew*,

a couple of local ales were also available, *Tring Ridgeway* and *Chiltern Chalk Stream*, the latter of which was past its best. The *4-4 Brew* although no world-beater was in fair shape, so this was a solid start.

A couple of doors down from **The Shoulder**, are two establishments that conform to CAMRA's sometimes tenuous definition of a pub; i.e. “you can just get a drink in there” — **Tres Corazones** tapas bar & restaurant, and **No. 2 Pound Street** cheesemonger, deli and wine shop, which also sells a handful of bottled and canned beers which can be consumed on the premises. Despite my Iberian roots, we eschewed the Estrellas and tactfully dropped in to the latter and enjoyed a cheese and charcuterie sharing board along with a can of *Deya Into The Haze* (me) and a bottle of *Tring Pale Ale* (Will).

All cheesed-up, a 5-minute waddle down South Street took us to our second ‘proper’ pub of the day, **The King & Queen**. Joint runner-up in the Branch's 2025 Pub of the Year, this is a cosy two-roomer, that serves ales in great condition. Two *Timothy Taylor* ales were on — *Boltmaker* and *Landlord*, alongside *Adnams Broadside*

and *Weston's Old Rosie* cider. I went for the *Boltmaker* with Will opting for a keg, *Adnams Mosaic Pale Ale*. The left-hand bar on entry features numerous music-related photos, including snaps of Dire Straits, Johnny Cash, Patti Smith, The Clash and The Velvet Underground, alongside Black Flag and Dinosaur Jr-themed skateboards. There was an issue with the card reader, but fortunately we had brought some cash with us and were able to transact in the old-fashioned way.



Returning whence we came and turning right onto the High Street we reached the first of three establishments within close proximity of each other. **Craftyard** is the second in a small, local chain (after its original incarnation

in Aylesbury) and focuses on, you've guessed it, that much-maligned drinks category — 'craft beers'. I class them as a medium between keg beers and real ale and see them as a gateway to the latter for those who prefer their drinks colder and more effervescent (like my son). We eagerly partook — Will taking a *Damm Lemon*, and me plumping for the Strata-hopped version of *Kernel Pale Ale*.



Opposite **Craftyard** is the tiny and narrow **White Swan**. Renowned for their televised sport, my only visit here prior to this was in April 2013, where Borussia Dortmund vs Real Madrid was on TV and the night where Robert Lewandowski came of age, in a European sense, with an almost Proustian display of modern existentialist football, bagging all four goals in a 4–1 win. A freehouse with three handpumps, and a plethora of pump clips adhered to the numerous ceiling beams, we were presented with *Tring*

Ridgeway and **Fuller's ESB**, with *St Austell Tribute* settling in the cellar; the *Ridgeway* here proving to be my pint of the day.



Crossing the road once more, we entered the **Red Lion**. Now trading under the moniker **Bel & The Dragon at The Red Lion** (try saying that after six pints of Stella...) it is a Grade II-listed coaching inn dating back to 1669, with sumptuous dark wood panelling and giving off the air of an Oxbridge common room. As a *Fuller's* house, we had the choice of *London Pride*, *ESB*, and an interloper in *St Austell Golden Times* (with a classic handwritten substitute pumpclip). A sucker for a new beer, I went for the *St Austell* beer which was in good shape.

Not quite stumbling out we crossed the road (again) and turned right heading down the High Street to the mini-roundabout at the bottom, where the **George & Dragon** — Wendover's oldest pub — is located on Aylesbury Road. A Thai'd house, serving meals (succulent Oriental meals), *Tring Side Pocket For A Toad* was available in which I felt compelled to partake. Quiet

for a Saturday afternoon, we settled on watching the qualifying for the Monaco GP on the big screen — to me, always the quirk of the F1 season.



A less-than-5-minute canter up Tring Road, passing the long-closed **Nag's Head** *en route*, (closed mid-60s and now a private cottage) took us to the day's final pub, the **Pack Horse**. A cosy locals' pub occupying a corner plot it is heavy on pub games (darts, dominoes and cribbage), this is clean and presentable inside, offering *Shepherd Neame Spitfire* and *Otter Bitter* when we visited; I opted for the latter. We sat by the fireplace and I pored over the list of licensees dating back to 1773 which hangs on the wall next to the bar. Wendover successfully woven, we made our way back to our pre-arranged pick-up spot outside the **Shoulder of Mutton** and returned home.

Notable mentions, or "shoutouts" to use influencer-speak, to a couple of other former Wendover pubs include the **Rising Sun**

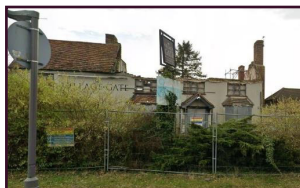
A Wander 'Round Wendover

(closed 1993), further up Tring Road and next-door to the current Tesco Express store; the **Rose & Crown**, even further up on Tring Road, and close to RAF Halton (closed c. mid-2000s and demolished for housing); and the **Two Brewers** (closed c. 1990) back on the High Street.

Sadly the forlorn **Village Gate** pub in Worlds End, Wendover (the former **Marquis of Granby**), remains derelict after it was destroyed by a devastating fire in August 2019.

A number of planning applications have been made to demolish the pub and

develop houses and flats on the site but these have not progressed.



In the March 2026 issue of *Wendover News* it was reported that Haddenham-based Rectory Homes is proposing a housing development on a field partly opposite the **Village Gate** site. One cannot but hope that if this goes ahead someone might be encouraged to resurrect the pub as there is already

a substantial population at that end of Wendover, a full thirsty mile away from Wendover town centre, whom have been bereft of a local pub for six years.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning: we will remember them.

For more information on Wendover's pub's, visit the CAMRA Experience site at camra.org.uk.

For a full list for Wendover's former pubs, visit The Lost Pubs Project at closedpubs.co.uk/buckinghamshire/wendover.

David Slade



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What's Inside Our Beloved Pubs?

Stupid question I surely heard someone say, we all know what's inside a pub. But do we?

We all use pubs — for readers of our magazine that is almost a given. Personally, reviewing the 60+ years that I've visited pubs in most parts of the British Isles (except IOM, The Scillies, and Northern Ireland — yet) I cannot recall two in any location that could be considered identical. Pubs by their nature are individual, even those operated by large chains.

Indeed, pubs are a deeply embedded part of our cultural heritage, albeit they have changed in concept, form and practice over the centuries.

Whilst the convenience of a modern bar, with a gallery of taps for the ubiquitous fizz, and the newer 'craft' kegs (which can be very tasty, different and appealing), with a token handpump or two purportedly serving a national cask, though possibly a misleadingly-labelled 'Fresh Ale' may suit many in a busy urban environment, the quintessential tourist concept is of the quaint old English pub, serving warmish brown beer to local yokels (with straw in their teeth) and a wet dog drying in front of a log fire.

I've not found one yet. With some 45,000 pubs still operational across the UK perhaps it is out there somewhere. Interestingly, thousands of these pubs are in listed buildings, Thame for example has 9 of the 10 that are still open as listed buildings (many that were pubs are also listed), though it is predominantly external features that dominate the listings.

CAMRA, however, maintains its own inventory of historic pub interiors. The following article, from CAMRA, explains in much greater and lucid detail just what it is and does.

Knowing now of its existence, the thought was, which of our local branch pubs have

notable, currently listed historic interiors?

The CAMRA listing is searchable and there are three 'star' categories (explained in full on pp 24–25). Also the listings are by county, alphabetically, which is good for Bucks, but less so for Oxon, much further through the listing, as the county is preceded by the two 'Greater' metropolitan areas of London and Manchester.

Buckinghamshire has only one 3-star listed pub interior — the **Swan** in West Wycombe, which happily is in our branch.



*The only current public bar area of the **Peyton Arms***

Oxfordshire has two, though neither is in our branch; the **North Star** in Steventon, south-west of Abingdon and the A34 and, closer to our branch, the **Peyton Arms**, Stoke Lyne, just north of Bicester. A regular *Good Beer Guide* entry, it is essentially unchanged over many years, the landlord, Mick the Hat, who is probably the longest serving tenant of **Hook Norton Brewery** (I think I've known Mick for well over 20 years, though visit rarely since moving from North Oxfordshire CAMRA's area).

Two-star status is achieved by one pub in Bucks, again in our branch, the **Royal Standard of England**, Forty Green; allegedly one of the oldest free houses in England.

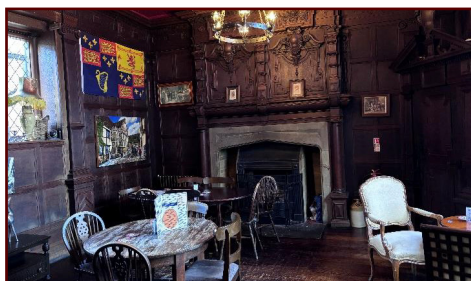
Oxfordshire has four, again none in our branch area; Oxford City branch unsurprisingly has two, the **Bear Inn**, Alfred Street (off the High) and the **Rose and Crown**, North Parade (off Banbury Road).

What's Inside Our Beloved Pubs?

South Oxfordshire branch has the other two: the **Black Horse**, Checkendon and the **Crooked Billet**, Stoke Row, in reality a restaurant rather than a pub as drinks are only available with a meal (both west of Henley).

Our branch fairs well with 1-star listed pubs, having one, but possibly two, depending on CAMRA's proposed boundary changes, in Bucks, though none in that part of Oxfordshire within our area; the **Stag & Huntsman** in Hambleden, west of Marlow is definitely within the branch area, whereas the **White Horse**, Hedgerley, south of the M40 is currently within Slough Windsor and Maidenhead branch.

The five that are in Oxfordshire are, close to home, South Oxfordshire's the **Fox & Hounds**, Christmas Common, near Watlington is easily within reach on a day out. White Horse Branch (yet another nearly adjacent branch) has the **Radnor Arms**, Coleshill, which is in Oxfordshire, but nearer Swindon than Oxford — which of course garners two, the **Punchbowl**, Market Place, Abingdon (yes, Abingdon and Witney are both in Oxford City!) and the **King's Arms** in Holywell. North Oxon CAMRA's **Olde Reindeer Inn**, a Hooky pub in Parsons' Street, noted for its Globe Room (an oft used venue for many CAMRA meetings).



*The elegantly panelled Globe Room in Banbury's
Olde Reindeer Inn*

That is probably the few that are listed in CAMRA's Heritage interiors close enough to the branch area to be readily visited. But it does beg the question, surely we have more that could or should be thus listed?

An example that readily comes to mind is the Grade II* listed National Trust property and **Chiltern Brewery's King's Head Hotel** in Aylesbury — it is difficult not to be impressed by the buildings and particularly the interiors: some are indeed stunning.

Input from members independently from any branch or national input might raise awareness within CAMRA itself, and more of our local gems could be listed.

Richard Palmer

CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors

Despite the turmoil in the licensed trade over recent years, Britain remains blessed with many pubs that retain traditional, and often beautiful, historic interiors. Over 30 years ago a body of CAMRA members began compiling a National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. Initially they aimed to identify and record the most intact pre-war pub interiors, regardless of their architectural distinction. Before long it was decided also to include pubs with special features or rooms of

national significance. By then around 270 pubs had inventory status.

The next step was to develop regional inventories, capturing interiors that fell short of the criteria for the national list but were nonetheless of significant historic interest. Around the same time early post-war pubs built on traditional lines and still intact also became eligible for inclusion.

CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors

A few years ago CAMRA's Pub Heritage Group (PHG) agreed to move to a single inventory based around a grading system using star ratings. Interiors are eligible for consideration if they have remained essentially unaltered for at least 50 years. There are three key aspects for assessments:

Layout — survival of historic layout and internal divisions, either intact or readily discernible.

Historic fittings and decor — particularly old or original bar counters, bar-backs (gantries), fixed seating, fireplaces, plasterwork, vestibules, panelling, tiling and other ceramics.

Notable rooms and features — such as partitioned snugs; counter-less pubs; tiled paintings; snob screens etc.

The **rarity** of both historic layouts and historic fittings counts very high in the selection process.

The current grading system is simple and easy to understand. Within the single National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors are three grades:

Three-Star pubs are of outstanding historic importance. They will have stayed wholly or largely intact, in terms of layout and fittings, and/or retain rooms or features that are truly rare or exceptional. Only limited loss of such components is allowable before an interior fails this standard. Currently 303 pubs are in this category.

Two-Star pubs are of very special historic interest. They are highly important but fall just short of Three Star levels of overall intactness and/or rarity. Lost elements, often of layout, are clearly in evidence. There are presently 270 such pubs.

One-Star pubs, by far the most numerous category (740), are of special historic interest. They have either readily identifiable historic layouts or retain rooms or features of special interest. More significant changes are allowable in this category than for the first two categories.

PHG keeps gradings under continual review and makes changes where appropriate. Generally this is because alterations to an interior have impacted on the pub's historic importance. In other cases members will reassess current gradings, especially where a pub has not been surveyed for a long time or where a wider range of views is felt to be beneficial.

PHG also campaigns hard to protect and promote these precious heritage assets. Over the years we've been able to get many of them statutorily listed so that they enjoy an extra layer of protection from unwanted alterations. Where inventory pubs come under threat of closure or unsympathetic change, we'll do what we can to save them. On a positive note, we seek to raise awareness of the delights these pubs provide, through our website and a range of publications.

You can find much more information about the National Inventory, and heritage pubs generally, at camra.org.uk/heritage-pubs. A complete list of inventory pubs is at camra.org.uk/heritage-pubs/national-inventory. We also issue a monthly bulletin featuring news about heritage pubs. To subscribe, email bulletin@pubheritage.camra.org.uk with **Subscribe** as the subject.

We are always keen to hear from visitors to the listed pubs, especially where there have been changes that we might not know about. Thank you.

Paul Ainsworth
Chair, Pub Heritage Group

My Quota of Ale

Back in 1965, as a time-honoured preparation for the potentially daunting task of public speaking, I invested 10s.6d. in *The Penguin Dictionary of Quotations*. It has sustained me in the years since, not least in its varied references to ale and beer:

... Bring us in no browne bred,
for that is made of brane, /
Nor bring us in no white bred,
for therein is no gane, / But
bring us in good ale ! Anon,
Bring us in Good Ale.

... I can not eat but little meat,
/ My stomach is not good;
/ But sure I think, that I can
drink / With him that wears a
hood. / Though I go bare, take ye no care, /
I am nothing a-cold: / I stuff my skin, so full
within, / Of jolly good ale and old. Attributed
to William Stevenson (1546?–1575) *Gammer
Gurton's Needle*, song.

... To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.
Shakespeare (1564–1616), *Othello*.

... I will make it a felony to drink small beer.
Shakespeare (1564–1616), *Henry VI, Pt. 2*.

... A quart of ale is a dish for a king.
Shakespeare (1564–1616), *The Winter's Tale*.

... Then to the spicy nut-brown ale. John
Milton (1608–1674), *L'Allegro*.

... For he by geometric scale / Could take the
size of pots of ale. Samuel Butler (1612–
1680), *Hudibras*.

... I have fed purely upon ale; I have eat
my ale, and I always sleep upon ale. George
Farquhar (1678–1707), *The Beaux' Stratagem*.

... Hermit hoar, in solemn cell, / Wearing
out life's evening gray; / Strike thy bosom,
sage! And tell / What is bliss and which the

way ? / Thus I spoke, and speaking sighed, /
Scarce repressed the starting tear, / When the
hoary sage replied, / 'Come, my lad, and drink
some beer'. Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784),
Anecdotes of Johnson by Mrs Piozzi.

... But if at the Church they
would give us some ale, / And a
pleasant fire our souls to regale,
/ We'd sing and we'd pray all
the livelong day, / Never once
wish from the Church to stray.
William Blake (1757–1827),
Songs of Experience, 'The Little
Vagabond'.

... What two ideas are more
inseparable than Beer and

Britannia ? Rev. Sydney Smith (1771–1845),
The Smith of Smiths.

... Champagne certainly gives one merry
gentlemanly ideas, but for a continuance, I
don't know but I should prefer mild hale. R.S.
Surtees (1803–1864), *Jorrocks's Jaunts and Jollities*
No.9.

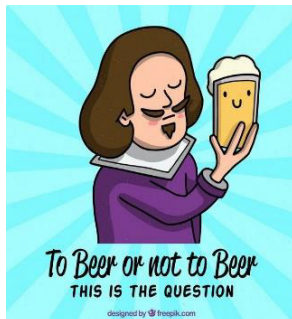
... Life is with such all beer and skittles;
/ They are not difficult to please / About
their victuals. C.S. Calverley (1831–1884),
Contentment.

... O Beer ! O Hodgson, Guinness, Allsop,
Bass ! Names that should be on every infant's
tongue ! C.S. Calverley (1831–1884), *Beer*.

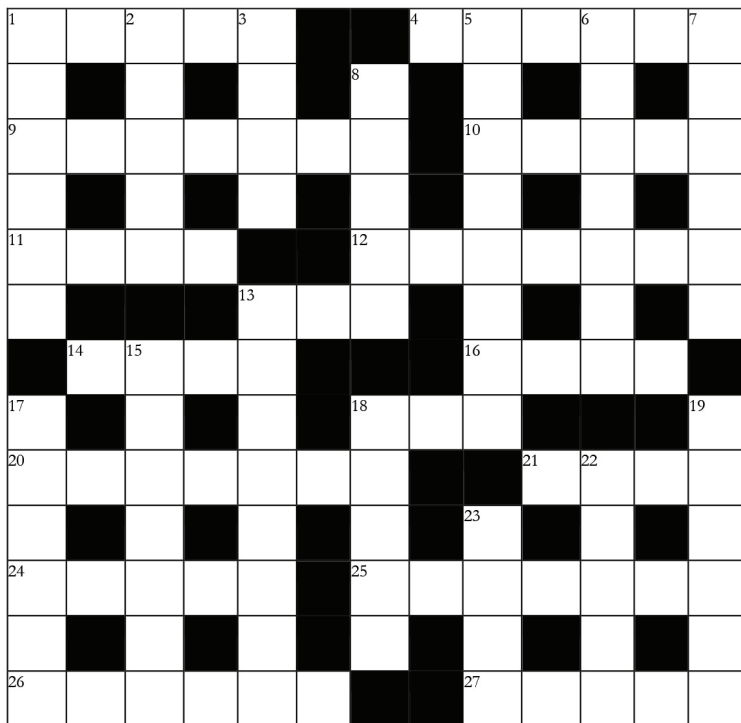
... Ale, man, Ale's the stuff to drink / For
fellows whom it hurts to think. A.E. Housman
(1859–1936), *A Shropshire Lad*.

Suffice it to say. I never once found the
opportunity to weave one of the above
quotations into a speech. But I do urge Count
Binface to adopt the above quote from *Henry
VI, Pt. 2* as a policy.

Giles du Boulay



Calling's Crossword No. 4



ACROSS

1. The best of the Lotus sports cars (5)
4. His gin for Khartoum (6)
9. Mix the dismissed drink so that the tree has more canopy (7)
10. The drug for racing drivers (5)
11. The goat is hidden in the rib extension (4)
12. Placed around the container during the day (7)
13. Insect that's the second letter on drugs (3)
14. Baby's first words might be an art movement (4)
16. Good for fermentation without tea. It's not difficult (4)
18. Michael Jackson is modest about the quality of his singing (3)
20. He votes for a tec role (7)
21. The god doesn't have any means of identification (4)
24. Using all voices but only part of an ice-cream (5)
25. Supervise but it sounds like you do it abroad (7)
26. Lacking the first part of going but it is the last part (6)

27. Whichever way you see it, it's chain home (5)

DOWN

1. The girl gets confused but likes a nice pastry (6)
2. One wise man has the look (5)
3. Muslim lord is hiding among them Irish (4)
5. Old boys fixed. It's hidden (8)
6. Arriving soon, the girls become governesses (7)
7. Don't fight about a small lump (6)
8. Asahi elated with their Chiswick brew (5)
13. He will perform as a mixed-up very naughty boy, or a camel (8)
15. Changed, altered and warned (7)
17. Porsche's insect (6)
18. Tolerate a stream that sounds poetical (5)
19. Wearing clothes or about to move off (2, 4)
22. A note in the betting figures is what the doctor did (5)
23. We all like this, don't we? (4)

(For Answers see issue 5)

Let's Talk About It at the Pub

Loneliness is more than a passing feeling. It's a public health concern that's grown into a quiet epidemic, affecting people from all walks of life.

For many, the first experience of true isolation came during the COVID-19 lockdowns. But long after the pubs reopened and restrictions faded, that sense of disconnection lingers for millions.

A 2022 study by the Campaign to End Loneliness found that nearly half of adults in the UK feel lonely at least occasionally, with an estimated 3.8 million living in chronic loneliness.

It's not just an issue in later life — research suggests that younger adults are some of the most affected.

That's why building strong, local communities is more important than ever — to be there when life goes a bit quiet or when someone finds themselves without the support they need. And there's one place that's already been quietly doing this work for generations: the pub.

The Pub as a Lifeline

A proper local isn't just somewhere to get a decent pint — it's often a vital lifeline for people experiencing isolation. CAMRA-commissioned research from Oxford University shows that having a local pub is linked with greater happiness, more close friendships, a stronger connection to your community and better overall life satisfaction.

The **Candelo Lounge** in Thame opens as a Chatty Café on Mondays between 10.00am and 12.00am and the **Peacock Inn**, Henton hopes to offer Chatty Café sessions shortly. Additionally, pubs across the Branch area provide the opportunity to meet and chat.



Across the country, licensees are creating welcoming spaces with events big and small: live music, quizzes, walking groups, history talks and even dog socials. Something as simple as a communal Sunday lunch or a baby-friendly coffee morning can provide a crucial connection point.

Gary Timmins, CAMRA's National Director for Pub and Club Campaigns, says: "Loneliness can have a terrible impact on people's health and wellbeing, but in many cases, pubs and social clubs offer a solution. They provide stability and regular human contact for people who would otherwise face social isolation. It's just another reason why these venues must be treasured as the community assets they are."

He adds: "It doesn't matter if you're 18 or 81 — anyone could be feeling lonely, and a visit to your local might be the thing that turns your day around. We want to encourage more pubs to get involved, and to show people that they're not alone — there's always someone happy to see you at the bar."

CAMRA's Campaign to Connect

CAMRA branches are getting involved by working with local venues to promote the social side of pub going — whether through events, local magazine articles or social media shout-outs. Some are teaming up with pubs to host speaker nights, quiz evenings or even communal dinners. The idea is simple: make it easy for people to find connection, one pint or pub night at a time.

CAMRA is also reminding members that getting involved in your local branch — whether that's joining a social event, brewery tour or helping with a festival — can offer a huge social boost. As Gary puts it, "Sometimes a simple invite is all it takes to make someone feel part of something again."

Andy's Man Club: A Safe Space to Talk

Of course, loneliness can go deeper than just wanting company. Sometimes it's a sign that someone's struggling with their mental health — and that's where groups like Andy's Man Club are making a real difference.

Founded in memory of Andrew Roberts, a young man who tragically took his own life in 2016, Andy's Man Club runs free peer-to-peer support groups for men across the UK. The aim is to break the stigma around men's mental health and provide safe, welcoming spaces where men can talk — or simply listen — without fear of judgement.

The sessions take place every Monday evening at 7pm (except bank holidays), often held in community centres, sports halls and pubs. The format is deliberately low-pressure. There's no obligation to speak, no waiting list, and no cost. The power lies in the room — in shared experience, and the realisation that no matter how bad things might feel, you're not alone.

As their motto says: #ItsOkayToTalk.

Groups in the Branch area are already supporting hundreds of men every week, and many venues that host Andy's Man Club have seen their communities grow stronger as a result. If your pub is looking for a way to support mental health in the community, becoming a host venue or simply helping spread the word could be one of the most meaningful contributions you make.

Whether it's through pulling pints, pulling up a chair at a chatty table, or pulling together in tough times, pubs can — and do — make life better. So next time you're thinking about where to go or who to reach out to, remember: your local might be exactly where someone needs you to be.

To learn more:

- Visit www.camra.org.uk/wellbeing
- Find your nearest Andy's Man Club at www.andysmanclub.co.uk or a Chatty Café at <https://thechattycafescheme.co.uk/>

Based on an article featured in Canny Bervy (Autumn 2025) and included here with thanks to the Tyneside and Northumberland Branch.

Simon Heap

Did you know?

Almost three-quarters of UK drinkers have tried a low or no alcohol product, with 32% choosing these products 'semi-regularly'



Source: portmangroup.org.uk, "Consumer views on Low and No Alcohol products" (2022)



Branch Events, Beer Festivals and Social Diary

AUGUST

Saturday 15th

Branch Social, 12.30, **Le De Spencer Arms**, Downley Common, Downley HP13 5YQ.
11th Dinton Beer Festival, 12.00–18.00, **Seven Stars**, Stars Lane, Dinton, HP17 8UL

Wednesday 26th

North Aylesbury Social: 19.15, **Rose and Crown**, The Green, Wingrave HP22 4PD; 20.00, **Five Elms**, 4 Stockaway, Weedon HP22 4NL; 20.30, **Bell**, Lower Road, Hardwick HP22 4DZ.

Friday 28th–Monday 31st

White Horse, Village Lane, Hedgerley, SL2 3UY, Hedgerley Beer Festival (Fri 11.00–23.00, Sat 11.00–23.00, Sun 12.00–22.00, Mon 11.00–22.00).

Saturday 29th

17th Chinnor Beer Festival, White's Field, off Mill Lane, Chinnor OX39 4RF.

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 5th

Black Country Trip.

Monday 7th

Branch Meeting, 19.00, **The Old Millwrights**, 83 Walton Road, Aylesbury HP21 7SN.

Wednesday 16th

Afternoon Social: 14.00, **Grand Assembly**, 2-3 Market Square, Marlow SL7 3HH; 16.00, **Rebellion Brewery Tap Yard**, Bencombe Farm, Marlow Bottom SL7 3LT.

Thursday 24th

Good Beer Guide Launch Social: 19.00, **Hop Pole**, 83 Bicester Road, Aylesbury HP19 9AZ.

Wednesday 30th

Wooburn Social: 19.00, **Old Bell**, Town Lane, Wooburn HP10 0PL; 19.45, **Coach House**, 24 The Green, Wooburn Green HP10 0EJ; 20.30, **Falcon**, Watery Lane, Wooburn Moor HP10 0NE.

OCTOBER

Wednesday 7th

Princes Risborough Social: 19.00, **George and Dragon**, 74 High Street, Princes Risborough

HP27 0AX; 19.30 **Whiteleaf Cross**, Market Square, Princes Risborough HP27 0AN; 20.00, **Bell**, 21-23 Bell Street, Princes Risborough HP27 0AA; 20.30, **Bird in Hand**, 47 Station Road, Princes Risborough HP27 9DE.

Saturday 17th

Joint Social with Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead Branch, 12 noon. Itinerary to be announce but understood to involve pubs either side of the river. Start Bourne End area, tbc.

Tuesday 20th

Branch Meeting: 19.00, **Belle Vue**, 45 Gordon Road, High Wycombe HP13 6EQ (tbc).

NOVEMBER

Monday 23rd

Branch Meeting: 19.00, **The Chiltern**, 12 Station Road, Beaconsfield HP9 1QR (tbc).

DECEMBER

Saturday 12th

Haddenham Winterfest, 12.00–18.00, last entry 17.00, Banks Park, by Village Hall, Haddenham HP17 8EE (Summerfest has been paused for 2026)



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