British Beer Sales Up for the First Time in Ten Years

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- Total beer sales up 1.3 per cent in 2014, ending a decade of decline=
- Off-trade sales overtake on trade, for the first time on record
- A third duty cut is vital, says BBPA's Brigid Simmonds

A decade of decline in UK beer sales has come to an end, with a 1.3 per cent rise in UK beer sales in 2014, it has been announced today. The startling turn around in the fortunes of Britain's favourite pub drink follows two historic cuts in beer duty by the Chancellor. The figures are reported in the latest 'Beer Barometer' from the British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA). The 1.3 per cent rise in 2014 followed nine consecutive years of decline, which saw beer sales slide by an astonishing 24 per cent – 6.7 million fewer pints sold, per day. The BBPA says that huge tax rises were the major culprit, with a devastating beer duty hike of 42 per cent from 2008 to 2013, under the disastrous beer tax 'escalator' policy. This sent the duty (plus the VAT on the duty) from 42p, to 65p on a typical pint. The period saw 7,000 pubs close, with 58,000 jobs lost.

With taxes still much higher than they were a decade ago, the BBPA is leading calls for a much-needed hat-trick of beer duty cuts in the Budget on 18th March.

Beer sales in pubs have begun to stabilise, showing a small decline of 0.8 per cent in 2014, but this was the smallest decline in sales since 1996. Off-trade sales grew by 3.5 per cent, matching the growth of last year, and taking off-licence and supermarket sales above on-trade sales, for the first time on record.

BBPA Chief Executive Brigid Simmonds comments:

"British beer is back in growth – and we want to keep it that way. But with seventy per cent of pub drink sales being beer, the picture for our much loved pubs is still fragile.

"That is why another duty cut from the Chancellor is vital. It will build on the success of two very popular tax cuts in the past two years, and boost jobs in an industry that employs 900,000 people, almost half of whom are 16-24 year olds. That has got to be good news."

Notes to editors:

Beer and pubs – key facts:

- The beer and pub sector supports almost 900,000 jobs - 46 per cent are 16 to 24 year olds
- 82 per cent of the beer sold in Britain is made in Britain
- One job in brewing generates 18 jobs, in pubs, one in agriculture, one in the supply chain and one in retail.
- Pubs rely on beer sales - seven in every ten pub drinks sold is beer.
- Under the beer duty escalator (2008-2013) beer tax rose by 42 per cent. During this period, 7,000 pubs closed and 58,000 jobs were lost.
- The two, one penny beer duty cuts have secured 16,000 jobs.
- After years of above inflation tax rises, beer taxes are still too high. Britons pay 40 per cent of all EU beer duties, but drink just 12 per cent of the beer.
- Beer prices increases in pubs are at their lowest since the 1980s.

The British Beer & Pub Association is the leading body representing Britain's brewers and pub companies. The Association is more than a century old and was originally founded as the Brewers' Society in 1904. Our members account for some 90 per cent of beer brewed in Britain today, and own around 20,000 of the nation's pubs.

The BBPA has a long-established and authoritative reputation for the publication of statistics on the UK's brewing and pub sector. The BBPA's Beer Barometer is generally available within one month of quarter-end. Data is sourced directly from the Association's brewing members, and accounts for 100 per cent of all beer sold in the UK.

In addition to the data available with this news release more detailed data is available to purchase from the BBPA. This includes a more detailed look at category performance and monthly breakdowns. For information about purchasing other data from the BBPA, please contactmtettenborn@beerandpub.com.

The spreadsheet can be downloaded here.

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