

BEDLAM BREWERY IS 10 YEARS OLD ON 18TH FEBRUARY 2021!



Let's crack open a few cans of Brou HaHa or flip the tops off a bottle of Benchmark and raise a glass to a real success story born in the shadow of the South Downs National Park in the West Sussex village of Hurstpierpoint.

Back in 2010 craft brewing was not what it is today. Brewdog was only 3 years old, Camden Town Brewery was born in 2010, but the Craft Beer movement in the UK was well and truly up and running. Meantime Brewing Company in Greenwich had been around 10+ years and had started to really grow and the likes of Thornbridge in Derbyshire were making big noises. In the local 'Sussex' market, Longman was yet to be born and only Dark Star had taken up the mantle from 1994 challenging 'the big boys' of Brewing for 15+ years.

So when a bunch of friends, who spent Saturday mornings watching their kids play tennis in Hurstpierpoint, came up with the idea that they could get together and set up a Brewery, they probably never expected this day to arrive. I mean, who hasn't drunk a pint of beer that they thought wasn't that great and then said to themselves, you know what, Brewing can't be that hard, I can do a better job than this... then do absolutely nothing about it?

Led by Nick Cooper, the group of friends turned the 'chat' into a reality. Established in a barn on Nick's Farm they managed to buy some Brewing kit from Brewdog of all people and then found someone who actually knew what they were doing when it came to Brewing and before you knew it Bedlam was up and running.

The name came from a bit of local knowledge. Bedlam Street was an old Roman Road that ran through West Sussex and actually ran through the farm that became Bedlam's first home. So why not, let the Bedlam begin!

If only it was that easy.





Even after the first beer was Brewed by Steve Medniuk ; Golden Ale, an American Hopped Ale, there was still so much to do. After all, they were all complete novices at this game! Once they had produced some beer the next task was to sell and distribute it! So, with tasks divided up amongst the group of friends, they set about bringing the whole supply chain to life. I'm sure they had some fun, I bet there were a few highs, the odd scratching of heads and certainly a lot of questioning – “no one told us it was going to be this hard”. It was tough and success was hard to come by and even though they managed to produce a Best Bitter as their 2nd beer, they still found getting traction in the market tough, which is no surprise as it was still very much a hobby at that point.

Fast forward 4 years for the first real gear change. Bedlam was established, but by 2015 it was by no means a raging success. What it needed was more focused attention, higher quality product and some financial investment to give it some va va voom. A couple of key people were introduced to the business. Dominic Worrall, a local multiple pub operator came on board with a track record in operating successful businesses in the hospitality sector. Rob Shepherd was brought on board to bring some financial governance and help open up the opportunity increased investment in the business could bring. While, Fabio Israel was recruited, from Craft Brewer, London Fields, to develop the portfolio of beers and evolve the existing brews.

The Bedlam brand had a makeover with what is now the iconic “B” and seed cone of hops around it and our classic Porter was produced.

Fabio, used his German heritage to produce a lovely buttery Pilsner and Bedlam moved into the world of keg beers! Bedlam appeared at Craft Beer Rising for the 1st time. Sales were going up, the beer tasted great and more investment was needed. So in the background, Nick, Rob and Dom set about sorting the infrastructure of the business by launching the first successful fund raise on Crowdcube and the search started for a new site.





Moving forward another 5 years and here we are today. 10 years old, in the middle of lockdown 3, but well into our 3rd chapter at Bedlam Brewery. We've won 7 SIBA Gold Medals! We've got 4 Beers in Cans, 3 in 500ml Bottles, 3 in 330ml bottles and a range of quality Cask and Keg beers that are the envy of many in the industry. COVID19 means the market has changed somewhat, but the team has grown and we are making even better beers than ever under the stewardship of new Head Brewer, Lee Tweed. Danny Hoskins, Head of Sales, led the Bedlam sales line close to 700k per annum prior to COVID19. Most impressively of all, we are now located on St Helena Farm, at the foot of the South Downs, with a solar powered Brewery, where the grain comes out of the Mash Tun and is delivered to the cows on the farm to enjoy their favourite meal of the day. This July we will take delivery of a new Brewhouse and associated kit as we increase capacity ready to meet the demand for all the Bedlam Beers we love producing.

There will be many more hurdles and challenges for us to face at Bedlam over the next 10 years, but thanks to a lot of hard work from the founders, additional effort and contribution from all those that have joined the journey since and the belief of all the Shareholders who have invested in the business, we sit here today with a business to be proud of, one that we believe will seize the day when COVID19 restrictions are lifted and we go back to our ordinary life.

I am proud to say I've watched Bedlam grow from the start and to have become a member of the team as CEO, so please raise a glass, can or bottle of your favourite Bedlam Beer and thank the group of friends in Hurstpierpoint who thought, "Hey, let's start a Brewery; surely we can make better beer than the pint I drank last night." Because they did! So here's to Bedlam!

Cheers!
Bob Emms
CEO

