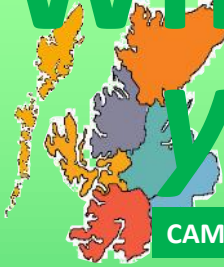


# What's yours then?



CAMRA Highlands & Western Isles FREE Newsletter | Spring 2013



- Branch Pubs of the Year and Beer of the Year
- Great Glen Pub Crawl (page 15)
- More bars with Ale
- Autumn 2012 Torridon Minibus trip report
- Branch Brewery Updates (see page



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**



# GOOD THINGS BREWING IN THE HIGHLANDS



AWARD WINNING BEERS

## PERMANENT BEERS



Cairngorm Brewery is based in the Cairngorms National Park. With a full range of permanent and seasonal cask beers to suit all tastes, ten of its products are available throughout the year in 500ml bottles.

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- Booking Essential for Groups and Weekend Tours

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Or email [colleen@cairngormbrewery.com](mailto:colleen@cairngormbrewery.com)

## SPECIAL ALES FOR 2013

(March to December)



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E: [info@cairngormbrewery.com](mailto:info@cairngormbrewery.com)

[www.cairngormbrewery.com](http://www.cairngormbrewery.com)

**W**elcome... to the Spring issue of our quarterly newsletter. In this edition:

- > Our Brewery Updates
- > Autumn Torridon & West Coast Trip report
- > Branch POTYs and BOTY
- > Pubs and Ale News
- > Great Glen Walk report
- > Xmas Social Ale report
- > Wetherspoons' Autumn Festival ale report
- > Focus on - Merlin Sandbach
- > Real Cider News
- > Updated Real Ale Pubs list
- > Updated Branch Diary

If you would like to place an advert, please contact one of the branch officers (see Diary page).

#### Advertising rates

Full Page Advert..... £87.00

Half Page Advert..... £49.00

Quarter Page Advert..... £27.00

There is a discount on placement of your fourth consecutive advert. Adverts are accepted on condition that inclusion does not necessarily imply an endorsement or approval of content.

We can help you in preparing your advert if you wish.

**An average of 3,500+ copies** are distributed to CAMRA Branch members, to Highlands & Islands brewers, to Good Beer Guide listed and Real Ale pubs; plus extra copies to advertisers.

We welcome your letters, news, views and opinions. Let us know what is happening at your local, or tell us about pubs you have visited.

Thanks to all who have taken trouble to send in pub and beer reports, or articles, who keep us up-to-date with brews and what is happening in local pubs.

Please note that the editor reserves the right to edit contributions sent for publication.

Summer edition **deadline** is 1<sup>st</sup> June, with publication in time for the main tourist season.

**S**pring has sprung! And we have probably enjoyed the best weather we are going to get this year already (if it's like last year anyway). No matter the weather, we can always enjoy good ale wherever we can find it, with good, like-minded company.

In this, bumper-sized issue of "What's yours then" (52 pages now—another 8 pages of articles and adverts added for you to enjoy) the committee has endeavoured to put together a round-up of how our local breweries are developing— some very positive and encouraging.

It may be that you spot some graphics on some pages that are a bit "fuzzy" in this issue—especially compared to the high quality of the previous 2 issues. That is not the fault of our printers (Jamprint) but is down to the fact that this issue has not benefited from being assembled by the very experienced talents of Mike Hammersley. When Mike was putting the Winter issue together for me last November, he was fighting pneumonia and since then he has been a patient in Raigmore hospital. He is slowly on the mend, and in another few months, hopes to be able to get back behind the keyboard and even start drinking small amounts of ale again.

I have not mentioned CAMRA's biggest campaign in this issue (Scrapping the stupid Progressive Beer Duty Escalator) but another issue is gradually getting more attention from CAMRA—the misleading dispense of Craft KEG. A growing number of breweries are using the same pumpclip design and name for the Cask and Keg versions of their beer. Confusing for drinkers but also dishonest and probably breaking the Trade Descriptions Act. Watch this space. Cheers! Ed.

#### Trading Standards Office:

Contact details for issues such as no price lists or consistent short measures - 0845 600 4 222

**e-mail** - [consumer.advice@highland.gov.uk](mailto:consumer.advice@highland.gov.uk)

## More bars with Ale in Inverness

3 more bars in the City now have or may have Cask Ale after Punch Taverns helped them renovate. All 3 establishments reopened early in December 2012 after the few weeks work was carried out.

**The Corriegarth** in the Crown has benefitted



from a major renovation and modernisation by Punch and the licensee, Christopher O'Malley. This includes the addition of 4 handpumps, 2 of which have been in use so far, offering "Corriegarth Cask Ale" and **Happy Chappy** which is going well. The new bar design has created much more space, integrating the old, small lounge and the room that was behind the old bar but has kept some major features of the old bar area creating a pleasant and contemporary area but still giving the feel of a traditional style of lounge bar in which to enjoy a pint or 2.



**The Chieftain Hotel** on Millburn Road, has had the most spent on it by Punch and Liz Lawson, the licensee which has refurbished the whole hotel inside and out. The Sports bar area of the hotel has been refurbished and redecorated and now has 2 handpumps for Cask Ale, 1 of which is being used so far. Liz expects the 2nd pump to be operational during the busier, tourist season.

In both establishments the standard ale is Tetley Bitter but in the summer months this should be supplemented with other ales from the Punch inventory.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> bar to benefit is **The Gellions** on Bridge Street, one of Inverness' oldest surviving establishments which was sold to a pub co. several years ago. Punch and licensee Rory Munro have redone and updated all areas of the place while keeping the Scottish style and the emphasis on good food and live music. Rory hopes to be able to offer Cask ales in the summer – here's hoping.

**The Keg** in Baron Taylor's Street was also refurbished back in the summer of 2012 but does not plan to offer real ale.

These costly and comprehensive renovations were sanctioned by the owners, Punch Taverns but the licensees had to partly finance the works. In these recessionary times, this must have been pretty tough and brave to manage, especially when the licensees don't own the places. It is difficult to comprehend how they can afford to take on something like that and still be able to make a living from running the venues. Good luck to them anyway.

At the time of writing, it is noticeable that advertising for the re-openings talks about

*(Continued on page 6)*



**BANDSTAND**  
BAR & RESTAURANT

CAMRA Highland & Western Isles  
**PUB OF THE YEAR 2009 & 2011**  
Inverness & District South  
**PUB OF THE YEAR 2009 - 2012**

NAIRN'S 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**BEER FESTIVAL**

## 100+ Real Ales & Real Ciders

All dispensed by hand pump *See Website for details*

**29 March – 7 April**

**Free Entry**

**LIVE MUSIC - PUB QUIZ - BREWER TALKS  
GREAT FOOD - BARBECUE  
ALE PROMOTIONS - MEMORABILIA**

**Sea View Restaurant & Bar Meals  
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10% discount on accommodation for CAMRA Members

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email: [info@braevalhotel.co.uk](mailto:info@braevalhotel.co.uk)



(Continued from page 4)

“Cask Ales”, not “Real Ales”. It may be that the ales are not being kept and dispensed to be fully classed as “Real” but the simple fact that Punch are including handpumps being put into venues that previously were only offering cold and fizzy keg beers and lagers is a good sign. We wish all 3 establishments well and hope they are able to reap the benefits of offering good, real ale to their customers.



Reports are also reaching us that **Lauders** on the corner of Baron Taylor’s Street and Church Street has an Orkney ale hand-pump. This has been confirmed by Orkney

Brewery. **Lauders** is a city centre bar on a corner site that has the look and feel of a great, traditional Scottish bar but for the past few years has just been a lower denomination keg bar. Here’s hoping this real ale offering helps **Lauder’s** to thrive.

2 CAMRA members from Leicestershire enjoyed another tour of the North of Scotland including Orkney in February. They were both very pleased with the quality and availability of ale here and to the North, including Wick, but specifically mentioned The **Central Hotel** and The **Commercial Hotel** in **Thurso** which had 1 well kept ale on each.



## Highlands & Western Isles Pub-of-the-Year 2010



# The Castle Tavern

Taigh-òsda à chaisteil

Open all day, food served all day, a great range of Real Ales  
At the top of Castle Street, Inverness, overlooking the River Ness  
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FOR  
REAL ALE**



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Enjoy a real ale in one of the most stunning beer gardens  
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Now with three hand pull pumps serving real ales from only  
Scottish breweries



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Or for 'whats on tap' updates, follow us on Twitter  
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## Torrordon trip 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012

And there we are on our last beer trip of the year, leaving Inverness under a cloud, unable to stop at the best coffee retailer in Scotland, because of a major refurbishment, (*the BP station, according to it's manager – Ed*) to make our way towards our first stop at the Kinlochewe hotel. This recent GBG re-entry is run by Andrew and Gail Staddon. Recently they decided to switch from Skye to Orkney breweries. We took the time to take some pictures with the Camra camera, operated by yours truly.

1<sup>st</sup> stop Kinlochewe Hotel

**An Teallach, Kildonan, Corncrake, Dark Island, 3 Sisters.** Lovely hoppy, fruity An Teallach; scored a 4 by both Gareth and myself. Corncrake (3.5); Kildonan (3.5). As on previous visits we really enjoyed the beers and the craic in this establishment. It is clear that Andrew really takes pride in providing his guests with both good hospitality and good beer.

2<sup>nd</sup> stop Old Inn at Gairloch

After a few less than positive reports the Old Inn lost its place in the GBG, hopefully



this will give them a wakeup call.

Beers on: **Tradewinds**(3.5); **Suilven**(2) ; **Flowerdale** (Brewhouse' own brand)(3). The Flowerdale is certainly a positive step in the right direction, brewed on the prem-

ises it is a malty and fruity bitter, that promises a lot on taste and does not disappoint. Maybe a bit lifeless in the glass, but certainly lively in the mouth. This year we had a member of staff interested in the product and talking to us about it; a huge improvement on our last two visits.

3<sup>rd</sup> stop Badachro Inn

This visit the landlord admitted to using



top pressure. As such he was advised that this was the reason why his establishment is not in the GBG (*it would be a strong contender – Ed*) and he was naturally disappointed. The scenery as breath-taking as ever, but the decking probably needs a bit of tender loving care. From the number of people visiting it would seem that it is still a popular destination with sailors.

4<sup>th</sup> stop Torrordon Inn

And our next stop was the annual Torrordon Beer Festival with a large selection of beers from An Teallach. It would seem that **Ben Damp** is brewed exclusively for Torrordon Inn, and the **Torrid One** especially for this beer festival. Also available at the time of writing are **An Teallach**, Inveralmond's **Lia Fail**, Skye's **Heilan Coo** and **Red Cuillin**, and Loch Ness' **Hoppyness**. The adventure started with Ben Damp (3.5), followed by Heilan Coo (3) followed by a smashing Torrid One (4) and a strange but well-conditioned Red Cuillin (3.5). The

(Continued on page 10)



# Clachnaharry Inn

**4 Real Ales on tap, good selection of fine wines & spirits and with good food served all day**



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

**Featured in  
Good Beer  
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**continually  
since 1996**

**Priding ourselves on the use of  
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**Tel: 01463 239806**

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**The Clachnaharry Inn**



**Real Ale**

**Real Food**

**Real Log Fires**

**Real Local**

(Continued from page 8)

last beer in this lovely inn in arguably the most beautiful setting in the world was Lia Fail by Inveralmond, (4.5) which was as close to perfect as a beer could have been today.

5<sup>th</sup> stop Lochcarron Hotel

Last stop of the day and by no means the worst. Skye's **Hebridean Gold** and **Cairngorm Gold** both on (as ever). Both a well-deserved 3.5. It is a shame that this Hotel as well as other establishments is on the market.

After a few pints in Lochcarron we made our way back to Inverness where we arrived a bit later than planned. We all agreed that we'd had another successful trip where the quality and diversity of the Scottish real ales again was showcased and for the 4<sup>th</sup> trip in a row not a bad pint was to be had. It certainly promises a lot for next years' trips.

A S, branch Social Secretary.

## More Punch Refurbishment:

**The Argyll Hotel** in Ullapool has also had a refurbishment – again during November, re-



launching in early December. Licensees Franner and Nigel Jordan along with Punch Taverns, the owners, spent £100,000 on improving the whole hotel – the bars, coffee shop, restaurant, bedrooms and exterior. The bar, the bit that we CAMRA members are most interested in, received new flooring, furniture and decoration while the bar



itself was renewed giving the whole area a cosier feel. The beers are reported to be excellent as usual.

## Branch Pubs of the Year

As our branch area is so huge and diverse, we split it into 8 areas so that more of our great pubs can be awarded for their dedication and hard work in helping to promote Real Ale.

For this year, the following have won:

Inverness & District North; **Benleiva Hotel** (**The Anderson** just missed an equal first),

Inverness & District South; **Blackfriars**,

Aviemore & Cairngorms; **Cairn Hotel**,

Caithness & Sutherland; **Dornoch Castle Hotel**,

Fort William & Lochaber; **Grog & Gruel**,

Wester Ross; **Argyll Hotel** and **Kinlochewe Hotel**,

North Skye & Hebrides; **Stein Inn**,

South Skye & Lochalsh; **Plockton Hotel**.

The overall, Branch winner is **The Benleiva Hotel**. It will go forward to be judged for Scottish POTY. **Congratulations to all!**

## Branch Beer of the Year

Our BOTY for this year goes to the ale which has consistently been highly appreciated in many bars in our area since it appeared at the end of 2011;

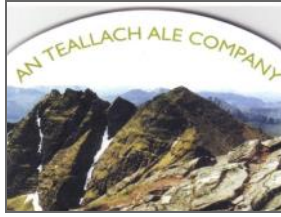
Cromarty, **Happy Chappy**.



Real Ales

Real Cider

70+ Malt whiskies



GREAT FOOD TOO !

like our beers we take time and care to bring you the best local produce cooked with pride ~ for you to enjoy

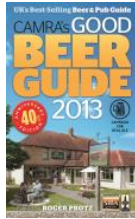
We are very proud of our  
Real Ales & Cider  
- so you can enjoy  
them at their best



Kinlochewe Hotel

Kinlochewe, by Achnasheen

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**Kinlochewe**

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## Bits and Bobs



The annual, October beer festival at Ullapool's **Morefield Motel** went well again this year with around 8 or 9 beers on at a time. The report we have received states that all those tasted were in "good nick".

### Blackfriars ties – a correction

In our last issue, you may remember our joke photo showing a few of the branch committee wearing ties with the caption: *"The rumours that Blackfriars is a tie-d pub are untrue!"*.



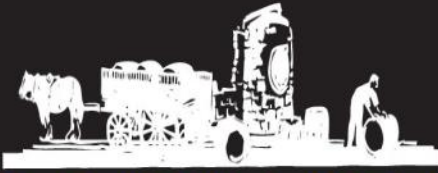
Unfortunately, Blackfriars in Academy Street is a tied pub. Perhaps as a result of the accidental publicity that Del and Janette "enjoyed" last November, the new owners of Blackfriars, Heineken, known as "Star Pubs and Bars", have reintroduced more normal arrangements for the licensee of a venue which is owned by a pub company. For the past 2 years, while the building, which was owned by one of our lovely,

responsible, Scottish banks, (can you spot the sarcasm?) was on the market, Blackfriars was able to champion Scottish and more particularly, Highland and Islands breweries' real ales. Now the real ales on offer will be from Heineken's restricted menu of ales, almost all from South of the border - some of them have been really tasty - with only one hand pump free for the dispensation of ale from our Scottish, independent breweries.

During the first few months of the new, tied arrangement, the supply chain that Heineken uses has been pretty poor only supplying about half of the ordered ales – this has allowed a few more Highlands and Islands ales to be on.

Heineken is holding out hopes for the future when a new licensee not only takes on the lease but also brings in finances to renovate at least the bar floor of the building. Your reporter does not know if Heineken would do what Punch has done (see piece on Corriegarth, Chieftain and Gellions) and contribute towards the costs of the work – Good Luck with that!

Some positive changes are planned which will greatly improve the area and make it busier. Academy Street is going to be "streetscaped". Another new hotel is planned to be built beside the sadly deteriorating former foundry building, where "Deeno's" the sports, fizz bar is on the ground floor (another historic Inverness building which has been up For Sale for over 2 years). Also, a large, 8 storey, student accommodation hotel is planned to be built behind The Panasonic Shop building.



# STRATHAVEN *Ales*

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**weekly**  
throughout  
**Scotland**”



Craigmill Brewery Strathaven ML10 6PB  
Tel: 01357 520419 [www.strathavenales.co.uk](http://www.strathavenales.co.uk)

The long closed Munloch Hotel has reopened as the **Allangrange Arms**.



The building was bought last year and after a full and comprehensive refurbishment was returned to its' coaching house name. The bar, lounge and dining areas are tastefully fitted out in a croft house sort of style of painted, sawn wood. So far only 1 real ale has been on – Cromarty, **Happy Chappy** but there is bar space for more handpumps. Worth visiting and long needed in the Munloch area where you had to travel 3 or 4 miles to get good ale.

## 2nd Orkney trip

After the fun that was had on the 1st trip last October, (see "Scapa Flowed" in the Winter issue), Del Graham of Blackfriars has arranged another trip for the weekend of 13th April. For the cost of about £140, it consists of a long weekend staying at The Ferry Inn and extra ales from Highland Brewing and Orkney Brewery will be laid on in the bar. A couple of trips including a brewery visit will take place as well. Orkney is a highly regarded tourist destination—well worth seeing. Phone Inverness 233881 to book places.

## Beer Festivals!

It is the time of year when we have several beer festivals coming up in our area. First up starting on the 29th of March, is the annual **Bandstand Beer festival** at the Braeval Hotel in Nairn. Gordon Holding has been increasing the size of this festival every year and this year, is breaking through the 100 ales barrier! An amazing achievement! (see advert on page 5) Over the 10 days there will be a very wide range of beers as well as ciders on to enjoy and compare.

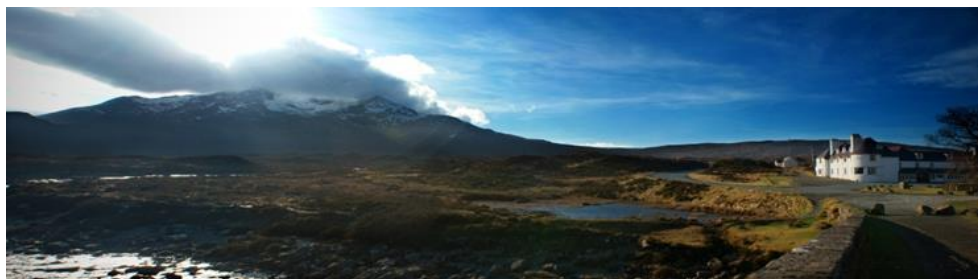
Later in April is the 2nd **Springfest Beer Festival** at The Benleva Hotel in Drumnadrochit. This is the little brother of the Loch Ness Beer festival which happens in September. (see diary page 47)

The Argyll Hotel in Ullapool is having a 4 day beer festival starting on the 24th of May. (see advert on page 46)

A week later is the **Great Grampian Beer Festival** at The Dick Donald Stadium, Aberdeen. It opens on Thursday 30th of May for 3 days. This is our closest CAMRA beer festival and is well worth a special visit to Aberdeen. (see advert on page 37).

On 14th of June for 10 days, the **Grog & Gruel** in Fort William is having it's annual beer festival. Haven't heard much about this but they are well experienced so it should be good. Check out their website for more details.

Lastly, Scotland's big one—CAMRA's **Scottish Real Ale Festival**. It is at The Corn Exchange in Edinburgh for the 2nd year but a few weeks later than before, starting on Thursday 11th July for 4 days.



## Centenary Celebrations

A unique location in the heart of Skye, Sligachan is a legendary destination for walkers, climbers and discerning travellers. It has been in the same family for 100 years, maintaining its historical ambience, yet providing modern day facilities. Its award winning 350 malt whisky selection and Cuillin Beers is complimented with all day food, using the best of local produce. It is a natural "stopping-off" place. We look forward to seeing you!

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## Cuillin Brewery

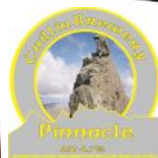
Beers handcrafted from the water of the Cuillin

**Skye Ale now available in Bottles**

"Definitely brewed on Skye"



Cask Ales also on tap



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# Duke Of Gordon Hotel

Newtonmore Rd, Kingussie, PH21 1HE  
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- Fine Home Cooked Meals cooked to order using fresh Scottish produce.
- Food served 12 noon to 8.30pm daily
- 2 Cairngorm Ale Hand Pumps
- Selected Bottled Ales
- Large Selection of Malt Whisky
- Fine Wines
- Accommodation – all rooms ensuite
- Live Entertainment most evenings



## Kingussie Beer Festival 18th & 19th October 2013



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3 Real Ales on Tap



Open all day,  
food & drinks  
available all day



Substantial Bar Meals Menu available all day

Range of Malt Whiskies and Fine Wines,  
an Open Fire and a Warm Welcome

A popular Rendezvous for Inn Guests, Outdoor  
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## the finest steaks in town!

The Steakhouse is already a well-established favourite with local diners. A wide choice and grills available for dinner.

Open every night: 5.30pm - 9.30pm

The Steakhouse Restaurant,  
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## THE LONGEST PUB CRAWL IN BRITAIN?

Walking is one of those activities people tend to associate with real ale, like Morris dancing, folk music and talking nonsense after six pints. The walk usually involves passing six pubs where the ale is not as great as the seventh where it is, and then staggering home afterwards.

Only this time, it was going to be a bit longer – the seventy-three mile Great Glen Way along the Caledonian Canal, around lochs and over hills from Fort William to Inverness. Our expedition started more leisurely though with a pub crawl of Glasgow. Our first port of call was the Bon Accord where the choice of ten exciting ales meant it proved to be a very short pub crawl! We did set one ground rule for the holiday – no more than 4 pints a night. Already that target was in danger of being broken after tasting the excellent Fyne **Rune** (reminded us of Thornbridge **Wild Swan** in both strength and taste) Clydesdale **IPA** and two from Kelburn (**Pivo** and **Dark Moor**). The scenic three hour bus ride the next day to Fort William not surprisingly built up a good thirst. We headed for the Grog and Gruel to try, between us, Cairngorm **Trade Winds**, Ben Nevis **Eighty Shillings**, **An Teal-lach** and two from River Leven (**Dark** and **IPA**). At the other end of the High Street we finished on a Cairngorm **Black Gold** in the Cobbs of Nevisport.

The walking started for real the following day with the eleven mile hike along the Caledonian Canal to Gairloch. We spend the night in Spean Bridge and enjoyed a few pints of Cairngorm **Jacobite** (an alias for **Stag**) at the Old Station Restaurant. There we met an English CAMRA couple from Aberdeen who, not surprisingly, were enjoying

the same ale.

No sooner had we started walking the following morning than we met them again and enjoyed their company for twelve miles to South Laggan, talking about such erudite subjects as ales and pubs for much of it. They were walking on to Invergarry and missed the delight of the Eagle Barge at Laggan Loch with four good ales on: River Leven **Blonde** and **IPA**, Orkney **Dark Island** and **Beinn Dearg**. It was only half an hour's walk from our B&B, so we returned to complete our limit in the evening. As if that was not magical enough, we were given a lift there by our host and a ride back by the kind landlord.

We somehow made the halfway point of the walk the next day at Fort Augustus and were rewarded with two good ale bars, The Bothy Bar where we enjoyed Isle of Skye **Red Cuillin** and Loch Ness **Wilderness** and the Caledonian Hotel with two well kept Cairngorms (**Trade Winds** and **Stag**). At the latter we managed to introduce the Trade Winds to a visiting couple from Washington DC and a grateful group of Swedes. Walking around Loch Ness, The Great Glen Way started to climb and we were pleased to find **Red Cuillin** on at the Glenmoriston Hotel in Invermoriston, conveniently next door to our B&B. Unfortunately the ale was not as good as it had been in The Bothy. In fairness, the barmaid realised this, either from the way it chugged out of the pump, or, more likely, from our disappointed expressions after trying a few sips. She offered to change it to either keg Caledonian Best or a choice of three bottled Orkney beers. I'll let you guess which we chose.....After we had finished the cold fizz (only kidding!) a new barrel of Red Cuillin had appeared. We just had to try it

*(Continued on page 20)*

# TOMLINSONS



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Real Ale and Cider To Take Home  
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View the whole range with tasting notes at:



[www.tomlinsonsbeershop.co.uk](http://www.tomlinsonsbeershop.co.uk)

(Continued from page 18)

and this was much better (even if it did arrive in a Magners glass).

Our penultimate stop brought us to The Benleiva Hotel in Drumadrochit, home of the Loch Ness Brewery and twice yearly beer festival. Among the excellent ales available, we enjoyed Orkney **Raven**, **Hebridean Gold** and two from Loch Ness – **Red** and **Dark**. I regret I have to confess that number one rule was broken that night, but only just! And we still had to face the longest walk and highest climb the following day.

Not surprisingly it took us most of the day to drag our feet the eighteen miles to Inverness. Even when you finally see Inverness in the distance, a sign cheerfully reminds you that it's still another four miles to Inverness Castle, the end of The Great Glen Way. The adventure finally finished, conveniently at the Castle Tavern across the road from the castle. Alas, we were in no fit state to enjoy the ales and somehow staggered on wobbly legs to our final B&B across the river. I never realised that you could get aches in so many parts of the body! and blisters can be as real as the ales!

However, before flying home from Inverness the following evening, we had time to make up for the missed pleasures of the Castle Tavern. The superb tastes of An Teallach, **Beinn Dearg**, Isle of Skye **Flora Macdonald** and Cairngorm **Highland IPA** rounded off the holiday rather splendidly. Yes, it was a rather long pub crawl but the enchantment of the Highlands is a memorable experience and, with the added magic of so many great ales along the way, we must have put on more weight than we took off.

Sue Irvine

(West Sussex CAMRA member 238836)



*The Castle Tavern at the end of the Great Glen Way, well worth the seventy-three mile walk!*

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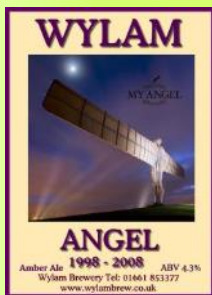
*Check website for details:*

*[www.blackfriarshighlandpub.co.uk](http://www.blackfriarshighlandpub.co.uk)*

# Tasting Panel Report

October 30<sup>th</sup> 2012, Castle Tavern

On a cold Tuesday evening, a warm, cosy pub is a great place to visit and meet like-minded friends. On this evening, only 3 of us have gathered to taste and rate the available ales but soon after starting our first beer, we are joined by Nick from Lincoln who is up visiting his daughter for the week. He is gradually exploring the pubs during his visits and has passed on his appreciation of ales as his daughter is also an ale drinker. In The Castle Tavern, we are faced with an eclectic mix of ale and start with “Angel” from Wylam brewery. This very



pleasant quintessential English bitter had a good mix of malt, fruit and hops turning to a dry bitter finish. A copper coloured brew, which was a very drinkable 4.3%. Score was an average of 7 out of 10. Next, we try “Black Hunter” (4%) from Gundog Brewery, Northumberland which has been going for just over a year. The ale is a darker coloured bitter with a more complex and perhaps less balanced mixture of tastes – roasted malts with a touch of vanilla and a growing bitterness

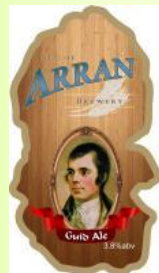


(7/10). On to Caledonian’s “Devil’s Advocate” (4.2%) a seasonal, special brew of ‘black lager’ although this ale was more a



brown, malty brew with a blackcurrant background and was a bit on the thin side. This scored 7. Last beer of the night was the just on, Isle of Arran, “Guid

Ale”, a very pleasant, 3.8% golden ale which turned out to be dominated by grapefruit hop flavour, with a slight astringency throughout - definitely an easy, session ale (surprise, surprise 7/10 again).



As ever, the tasting evening was enjoyable and sociable – a great way to learn more and get more enjoyment of ales.

## Fyne Ales brewery award

Fyne Ales was given the award of “Brewery of the Year” by The Beer Cast web site last year. Fyne recruited new staff and embarked on a major improvement/ expansion last year which included a new visitor centre/brewery tap (see the adverts in our previous editions). They also launched a series of new beers – including a major IPA project, culminating in the ‘new Jarl’ – **Rune**. As well as their annual beer festival they launched various other beers. A great year – long may they continue. See <http://thebeercast.com/2012/12/fyne-ales-boty.html> for more details.



## New Bar for skiers

Opened in November, the **Pine Marten Bar** at Glenmore is offering grateful skiers a chance to sample Cairngorm beers. This is Bill Wilson's first venture into the licensed trade and the hostelry is a cosy alpine lodge style. Hopefully it has done well and will continue to add something more for the Cairngorm tourists to enjoy.

## The Old Forge at Inverie –

famous for being Scotland's if not Britain's most remote pub, is in new hands. The Old Forge has been bought by Jean-Pierre Robinet, a former sales manager of the Leading Hotels of the World Group. He fell in love with the place on previous visits and says he is not going to change a thing.

## The Tippy Laird in Kingussie has new



licensees. Joe and Julie took over at New Year and there are plans to refurbish. Ales from Cairngorm have been on since they took over. They are also hoping to run a beer festival – watch out for announcements locally and on our web site - [highlandcamra.org.uk](http://highlandcamra.org.uk)

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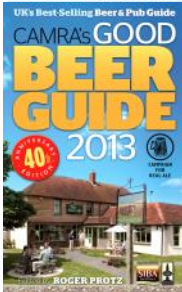
**Listed in the Good Beer Guide for the 6th year.**

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[www.ullapoolbeerfestival.co.uk](http://www.ullapoolbeerfestival.co.uk)

**Real Ale in the Real Highlands**



**Supporting Local breweries**

## Inverness Xmas 2012 Walkabout.

A record breaking 27 members gathered in Blackfriars for this annual event. Members from Nairn, Drumnadrochit, Culloden, Kirkhill, Black Isle, and Kinlochbervie joined the Inverness based locals to see what real ales were available in all of the Inverness central pubs.

We gathered in **Blackfriars**; Caledonian Elf Esteem (2), Caledonian Double Dark (4), Caledonian Flying Scotsman, Plockton Plockton Bay (4), Batemans Rosie Nosey.

**Clachnaharry**; Inveralmond Santa's Swallow (4), Inveralmond Thrappledouser (4), Orkney Raven (2), Green King Abbot Ale.

**Waterfront**; Cairngorm Santa's Sledgehammer (3).

**Phoenix**; Caledonian Deuchars (1).

**Innes Bar**; Caledonian Deuchars (0), Theakstons Old Peculier (0).

(soon after this, we had a report of a very pleasant visit and the Old Peculier was very good).

**Snowgoose**; Caledonian Deuchars (3), Harviestoun Natural Blonde (3), Harviestoun Old Engine Oil (3.5).

**Heathmount**; Houston Jock Frost (3), Cromarty Happy Chappy (3).

**Corriegarth Hotel**; Tetley's Bitter (3), Cromarty Happy Chappy (3.5).

**Kings Highway**; Caledonian Double Dark (3), Caledonian Deuchars, Greene King Abbot Ale, Houston Warlock Stout (3), Strathaven Lord Kelvin (2), Atlas Blizzard (4), Caledonian Autumn Red (4).

**Hootananny**; Black Isle Red Kite (2), Black Isle Heather Honey (3).

**Mercure Hotel**; Cairngorm Tradewinds (3), Caledonian; Caledonian Deuchars (2).

**Johnny Foxes**; Cromarty Happy Chappy (3.5).

**Palace Hotel**; Pump clip turned around, none on (0) (for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year running).

**Glen Mhor Hotel**; Cairngorm Tradewinds (2) - their popular jazz night was on.

**Number 27**; Cromarty Happy Chappy (4), Cromarty Red Rocker (5) - making it the beer of the night!

Also spotted here was the award winning, Welsh farmhouse cider, Gwynt Y Ddraig on handpump!

About half of us made it to the end in **The Castle Tavern**; Cairngorm Tradewinds (4), Caledonian Flying Scotsman, Lancaster Chestnut Red (2), Adnams Old Ale, Houston Jock Frost, Orkney Andrews Ale (2). Another very enjoyable Christmas Walkabout social evening made all the better by the large number of members taking part.

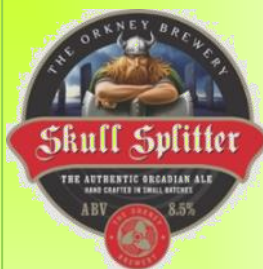
## Orkney Exports

Orkney brewery has proudly started exporting draft Skull Splitter to the United States. The bottled version of the iconic 8.5 per cent brew – named after the sev-

enth Viking Earl of Orkney, Thorfinn Hausakluif - has been one of the most popular Scottish ales in the US market for many years.

Special one-way

kegs were container-ed across the Atlantic in January to be launched in Philadelphia and then New York City before being rolled out nationally.



## Winter Beer Of Britain awards

Elland Brewery's 6.5% **1872 Porter** has won the WBOB for the 2nd time.

Scotland's Kelburn Brewery's **Dark Moor** won a Bronze award.



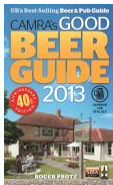




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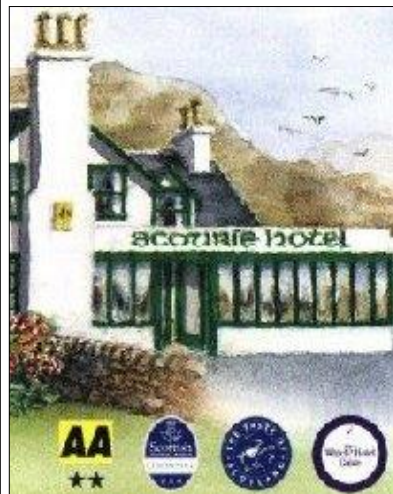


The Glen - an Oasis within the  
'Real Ale Desert of Badenoch



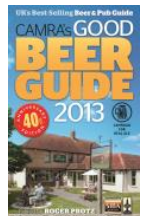
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## Scourie Hotel

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To connoisseurs of game fishing there is simply nothing to compare to the 25,000 acres of Loch, River and Hill Loch fishing held for the guests of Scourie Hotel. The Hotel has 36 fishing beats held exclusively for guests, plus 3 beats on Loch Stack and Loch More for sea trout and salmon. Additional salmon fishing is taken on local salmon rivers.

## Real Ale Pubs List

These Inns and Hotels are known to sell (or to have recently sold) cask-conditioned ale. Please let us know about the quality of real ales on offer, particularly if you think Good Beer Guide inclusion is merited. We make no claims as to the quality of the beer, and you should note that some of the pubs listed may only stock real ale on a seasonal (S) basis. (TP) - served by using top pressure.

We have taken the liberty of listing some pubs which fall within adjoining Branch Areas - Glasgow & West of Scotland (G&WS), Aberdeen & Northern Isles (A&NI) - but which are not very far from our "border" and merit a visit.

### Inverness & District North

**Allangrange Arms**, Munlochry  
**The Anderson**, Fortrose  
**Aultguish Inn** by Glascarnoch Dam  
**Benleva Hotel**, Drumnadrochit  
**Clachnaharry Inn**, Inverness  
**Castle Hotel**, Portmahomack  
**Conon Bridge Hotel**  
**Cromarty Arms**  
**Glen Affric Bar**, Cannich  
**Glenmoriston Arms Hotel**, Invermoriston  
**Inchbae Lodge Hotel**, Garve  
**Loch Ness Inn**, Lewiston  
**Old North Inn**, Inchmore  
**Palace Hotel**, Inverness  
**Plough Inn**, Rosemarkie  
**Poachers**, Lewiston  
**Royal Hotel**, Cromarty  
**Slaters Arms**, Cannich  
**Station Hotel**, Avoch  
**Steading Bar & Restaurant**, Kilmartin (TP)  
**Struy Inn**, Strathglass, near Cannich (S) (TP)  
**Waterfront**, Inverness ??

### Inverness & District South

**Bandstand Bar**, Braeval Hotel, Naim  
**Blackfriars**, Inverness  
**Bothy**, Fort Augustus  
**The Caledonian**, Inverness  
**Caledonian Hotel**, Fort Augustus (S)  
**Castle Tavern**, Inverness  
**Cawdor Tavern**, Cawdor  
**Cheftain Hotel**, Inverness  
**Corriegarth Hotel**, Inverness  
**Dores Inn**  
**The Exchange**, Inverness  
**Golf View Hotel**, Naim (TP)  
**Heathmount Hotel**, Inverness  
**Hootananny**, Inverness  
**Innes Bar**, Inverness

**Inverness Airport Café bar**  
**Johnny Foxes**, Inverness (TP)  
**Kings Highway**, Inverness  
*(Wetherspoons)*  
**Lauders**, Inverness  
**Lock Inn**, Fort Augustus  
**Lovat Arms Hotel**, Fort Augustus  
**Nico's Bar**, Glen Mhor Hotel, Inverness  
**Number 27**, Inverness  
**Old Mill Inn**, Brodie (A&NI)  
**Phoenix Bar**, Inverness  
**Ramada Jarvis Hotel**, Inverness (TP)  
**Snowgoose**, Inverness  
**Whitebridge Hotel**, Loch Ness South

### Fort William & Lochaber

**Alexandria Hotel**, Fort William  
**Ben Nevis Bar**, Fort William  
**Ben Nevis Hotel**, Fort William  
**Ben Nevis Inn**, Fort William  
**Clachaig Inn**, Glencoe (G&WS)  
**Chlachain Inn**, Mallaig  
**Cobbs at Nevisport**, Fort William  
**Corran Ferry Hotel**, Onich  
**Crofters Bar & Restaurant**, Fort William  
**The Eagle**, Laggan Locks  
*(An inn on a barge on the Caledonian Canal)*  
**Four Seasons**, Onich  
**Glenfinnan House Hotel**  
**Grog & Gruel**, Fort William  
**Glen Nevis Restaurant & Bar**  
**Glenuig Inn**, Lochailort  
**Glenuig Village Hall**  
**Ice Factor**, Kinlochleven  
**Invergarry Hotel**  
**Kings House Hotel**, Glencoe

(G&WS)  
**Laroch Bar**, Ballachulish (G&WS)  
**Letterfinlay Lodge Hotel**, Loch Lochy  
**Lochailort Inn** (TP)  
**Loch Oich Restaurant/Bar**, South Laggan  
**Loch Leven Hotel**, Ballachulish (G&WS)  
**Loch Shiel Hotel**, Acharacle  
**MacDonald Hotel**, Kinlochleven  
**Mamore Lodge**, Kinlochleven (S)  
**Moorings Hotel**, Banavie  
**Old Forge**, Inverie  
**Old Station Restaurant**, Spean Bridge  
**Roy Bridge Hotel**  
**Steam Inn**, Mallaig  
**Stronlossit Hotel**, Roy Bridge  
**Tomdoun Sporting Lodge**  
**West End Hotel**, Fort William  
**West Highland Hotel**, Mallaig

### Aviemore & Cairngorms

**Ben Macdui**, Aviemore  
**Ben Mhor Hotel**, Grantown-on-Spey ??? (Possibly closed.)  
**Boat Hotel**, Boat of Garten  
**Craig Bar**, Grantown-on-Spey  
**Cairngorm Hotel**, Aviemore  
**Cairn Hotel**, Carrbridge  
**Croft Inn**, Glenlivet (A&NI)  
**Dalfaber Country Club**, Aviemore  
**Duke of Gordon Hotel**, Kingussie  
**Glen Avon Hotel**, Tomintoul (A&NI)  
**Glen Hotel**, Newtonmore  
**Glenmore Lodge**, Nr Aviemore

## Real Ale Pubs List

**Highlander Inn**, Craigellachie (A&NI)

**Kingussie Golf Club**

**Loch Insh Boathouse**, Nr Aviemore

**Lodge Hotel**, Newtonmore (TP)

**Mash Tun**, Charlestown of Aberlour (A&NI)

**Muckrach Lodge Hotel**, Dulnain Bridge

**Old Bridge Inn**, Aviemore

**Pine Marten Bar**, Glenmore

**Seafield Lodge Hotel**,

Grantown-on-Spey

**Silver Fjord Hotel**, Kingussie

**Suie Hotel**, Kincaig

**Typsy Laird**, Kingussie

**Winking Owl**, Aviemore

### Wester Ross

**Applecross Inn**

**Arch Inn**, Ullapool

**Argyll Hotel**, Ullapool

**Aultbea Hotel**

**Badachro Inn** (TP)

**Ceilidh Place**, Ullapool

**Summer Isles Hotel**,

Achiltibuie (S)

**Drumchork Hotel**, Aultbea (S)

**Dundonnell Hotel**

**Ferry Boat Inn**, Ullapool

**Glendale House**,

South Erradale (S)

**Kinlochewe Hotel**

**Lochcarron Hotel**, Lochcarron

**Milleroft Hotel**, Gairloch

**Morefield Motel**, Ullapool

**Myrtle Bank Hotel**, Gairloch (S)

**Old Inn**, Gairloch

**Seaforth Bar & Restaurant**, Ullapool

**Steading Cafe & Restaurant**, Gairloch (S)

**Strathcarron Hotel**

**Tigh-an-Eilean Hotel**, Shildaig

**Torridon Inn**

### North Skye & Hebrides

**An Lanntair**, Stornoway

**Bakur Bar**, Uig

**Bosville Hotel**, Portree

**Borrodale Hotel**, South Uist (S)

**Carlton Tavern**, Stornoway

**Dark Island Hotel**, Benbecula (S)

**Edinbane Inn**

**Ferry Inn**, Uig

**Flodigarry Hotel**

**Harris Inn**, Tarbert (S)

**Isles Inn**, Portree

**Langass Lodge**, North Uist (S)

**Lochmaddy Hotel**, North Uist

**The Lodge at Edinbane**

# Stein Inn

THE OLDEST INN ON SKYE



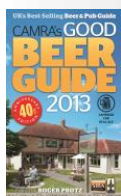
Highland & Western Isles area winner since 2007

Magical places do exist ... just journey down a narrow winding road that leads to the sea and nestled in a charming hamlet is the very place of your dream: the Stein Inn.

An eighteenth-century inn on the sea shore that will have you yearning to visit again and again to experience the warm Scottish welcome, fine food, superb accommodation, traditional highland bar offering real ales and over 125 malt whiskies.

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The finest and freshest seafood and local produce is readily available transformed at the Stein Inn into mouth-watering, home-cooked dishes.

## Real Ale Pubs List

**Mote Bar**, Hotel Hebrides, Tarbert (S)

**Old Schoolhouse Restaurant**, Dunvegan (S)

**Royal Hotel**, Portree, Skye

**Stein Inn**, Watemish, Skye

**Tigh Dearg Hotel**, Lochmaddy, North Uist

**Uig Hotel**, Uig

**Westford Inn**, North Uist

### South Skye & Lochalsh

**Ardvasar Hotel**

**Clachan Bar**, Dornie

**Claymore**, Broadford

**Dunollie Hotel**, Broadford

**Hebridean Hotel**, Broadford

**Isle Ornsay Hotel**

**Jac-o-bite Restaurant**, Kintail

**Kinloch Castle**, Rum

**Kintail Lodge Hotel**

**Old Inn**, Carbost

**Plockton Hotel**, Plockton

**Plockton Inn**, Plockton

**Saucy Mary's Lodge**, Kyleakin (S)

**Sconser Lodge Hotel**

**Sligachan Hotel (S)** Skye *Closed November to February*

**Taigh Ailean Hotel**, Portnalong

### Caithness & Sutherland

**Achness Hotel**, Rosehall, Lairg

**Alexander Bain**, Wick

*(Wetherspoons)*

**Altnacealgach Inn**, nr. Ledmore Junction (S) ??

**Bay Owl Restaurant**, Dunbeath

**Belgrave Hotel**, Helmsdale

**Ben Loyal Hotel**, Tongue

**The Caberfeidh**, Lochinver

**Castle Hotel**, Dornoch

**Castletown Hotel**, Castletown

**Central Hotel**, Thurso

**Commercial Hotel**, Thurso

**Crask Inn**, by Lairg

**Dunroamin Hotel**, Bonar Bridge

**Eagle Hotel**, Dornoch (S)

**Golspie Inn (S)**

**Inchnadamph Hotel (S)**

**Invershin Hotel**

**Kylesku Hotel (S)**

**MacKay's Hotel**, Wick

**Norseman Hotel**, Wick

**Scourie Hotel**, Scourie

**Seaview Hotel**, John O' Groats

**Sutherland Inn**, Brora

**Tongue Hotel**

**Trentham Hotel (S)**

**Ulbrster Arms Hotel**, Halkirk

**The Weigh Inn**, Scrabster, Thurso

# WESTFORD INN

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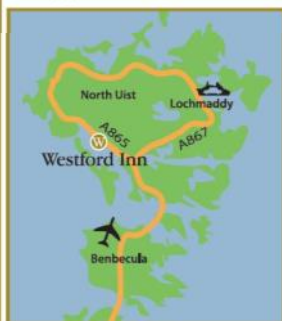
Real ale from the award winning Isle of Skye Brewery. Range of bottled ales and malts. Simple home cooked pub food. Good Beer Guide Listed every year from 2008 to 2013

Summer opening 2013, midday to 11:00pm (Sunday 12.30pm to 10.30pm). Kitchen open 12.30pm until 2.30pm, and in the evening from 6pm to 9pm.

Outside seating; real fires in inclement weather.

Accommodation available in small stone cottage in grounds.

Dog friendly



## Wetherspoon's Autumn Beer Festival

Well, I failed. After 47 out of 50 last time, once again all 50 of the Wetherspoons' festival ales were featured at the Kings Highway in Inverness and despite selfless dedication ..... I still missed one.

It must have been delicious, a 5.5% **Australian IPA** from Feral Brewery in Perth which was brewed at Banks' Brewery in the West Midlands by Brendan-Varis, the brewer at Feral. This was one of the ten International brews which had been crafted at breweries around the UK by the visiting brewer. Brewers from USA, Italy, Japan, Canada, Lithuania, Holland, Belgium and Australia had been invited over. To be honest, for me, this time around only a couple of these brews were stand-out good.

The 4.2% abv, **Tutto Fa Brodo** (8/10) from Birra Del Borgo in Italy was a pale golden ale brewed with bergamot peel, orange peel, dried pineapple, dried rose and dried raisin, in fact so many adjuncts I would have normally given it a wide berth, however I have to say it came across as a really good golden ale with some spicy fruit flavours, soft malt and gentle bitterness. The **Avery 3 Point 5 Session Ale** (7) was brewed at Adnams in Suffolk by Steve Breezley from the Avery brewery in Colorado, USA. Hop dominant and a bit unbalanced it was an easy drinking session ale at 3.5%. Another American brew, **Cambridge Heather Ale** (7) was brewed at Wadsworth in Wiltshire by Will Meyers who hails from Massachusetts. The beer contained Scottish heather flowers and other traditional brewing herbs and at 4.0% came across as a lighter version of our own Fraoch Heather Ale which is brewed by Williams in Alloa. Batemans in Lincolnshire was the base for Patrick Hendriske and Bart Obertop from Brouwerij't Ij in Holland. Their 6% **Ijbok** (8) was a good strong bitter which drank less than its abv and had a good balance of malt and fruit and was slightly sweet over bitter.

Three Scottish breweries featured this time around. Harviestoun **Wild Hop Gold** (8) was a great golden ale with spicy fruit hops and a good bitter bite. The **Silver Mist** (5) from Traditional Scottish Ales was a very ordinary light and fruity beer but had a flavour which suggested the malt had been burnt. Caledonian **Devil's Advocate** (6) was like a thin fruity porter. Word has it that in

the Spring Festival there will be a Scottish ale featured from nearer to home.

With a couple of other five scores most of the other brews were good, scoring sevens and eights. A good balance of styles meant there were 21 light beers, 23 browns beers and 6 dark beers featured throughout the festival and for me seven other beers stood out, all worthy of eight and a half scores. Butcombe **Rare Breed** was a 4.2% fruity, refreshing best bitter with just a hint of sulphur.

The 4.3% **Hopocalypse Vale** from Vale in Buckinghamshire had loads of grapefruit hop with a hint of peach and was a crisp ale with a good bitter bite.

Adnams **Fisherman** 4.5% was an excellent well balanced best bitter with the malts and roast giving a nutty chocolate taste accompanied with a hint of fruit. Brewster's **Andromeda** was a 4.8% strong ale with masses of tropical hop, a soft malt background and gentle bitterness. Oakleaf **Liberty Boat** was dangerously drinkable at 5%. Classed as a strong bitter, it was really a smooth, creamy, easy drinking golden ale with berry hop flavours and light bitterness. Okells **Steam Beer** which hails from the Isle of Man was a very tasty strong bitter at 5%, with an excellent blend of malts and hops and a sweetness which turned to a soft bitter aftertaste. Finally, the strongest beer of the festival, J W Lees **Moonraker** was one of the best.

(Aint that nearly always the case!) At 6.5% it was a wonderful fruity winter warmer with flavours of fruitcake and toffee, rich and sweet.

For lovers of the apple (and pear) there was a choice of 10 ciders and perry. A couple with fruit and other bits added which is to be expected nowadays I suppose. The rate of sale of these I gather from the Kings Highway was disappointing and it looks like that going forward, real cider will only be stocked at festival times. Perhaps it will be reviewed for the summer.

All in all another excellent festival with all the beers in very good condition as you would expect from this GBG listed pub. Roll on the next festival. In fact by the time you are reading this it could even be on. Happy (responsible) Drinking, remember three thirds are available for the price of a pint at festival times. Here's to 50 out of 50 next time. Cheers

Highland Beer Hunter

**wetherspoon**

# The Torridon Inn



Great Accommodation



Great Food



Great Ale Selection

The Torridon Inn is proud to announce a new CAMRA member discount for 2012, save 10% on accommodation on stays of 2 nights or longer.

We will be open full time from Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March.

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Live Music – The Lochcarron Session Band – 9pm til late

Keep an eye on our website for all the latest ale updates

as well as information on our live music

and Real Ale Festival 2013

**We hope to see you there!**



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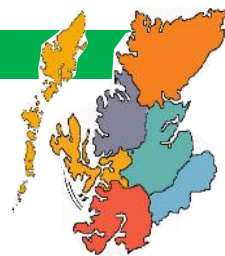
Tel: 01445 791242

Email: [info@thetorridon.com](mailto:info@thetorridon.com)

The Torridon Inn  
Annat, By Achnasheen

IV22 2EY

## Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2013



**Isle of Skye Brewery** - Based at Uig, by the Western Isles ferry terminal, brewing since December 1995. Ales include Red & Black Cuillin, Young Pretender Hebridean Gold, and Blaven. Seasonal, House, and special event ales are also brewed. (merging with Isle of Arran)

**Valhalla Brewery** - Most northerly brewery in the UK, brewing on Unst since December 1997. Ales include White Wife and Auld Rock.

**Black Isle Brewery** - Started brewing in December 1998 in converted farm buildings. Ales include Red Kite and Yellowhammer. Organic ales are a speciality. Much enlarged, new brewery opened 2011.

**Isle of Arran Brewery** - Located close to Brodick Castle. Opened in late March 2000. Ales include Blonde, Dark, and Sunset. (Merging with Isle of Skye)

**Fyne Ales Brewery** - Based in Argyll, at the head of Loch Fyne, brewing started on St Andrew's Day 2001. Ales include Piper's Gold and Maverick. Brewery expanded in 2012 (see advert)

**Cairngorm Brewery Company** - Set up in late 2001. Ales include Trade Winds, Wildcat, Stag, Highland IPA, and Black Gold. Seasonal ales are regularly brewed. Expanded in 2011 and expanding again.

**Hebridean Brewing Company** - Based at Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides. Brewing since January 2002. Beers include Islander Strong Ale, Berserker Export Pale Ale, and Clansman Ale (first ale ever brewed in Stornoway). (Beers are becoming difficult to find.)

**River Leven**—Brewing in one of the old Alcan smelter buildings in Kinlochleven since 2011.

**An Teallach Brewery** - Moved to the family's croft, near Dundonnell, in March 2003. Ales include An Teallach Ale, Beinn Dearg Ale, and Crofter's Pale Ale.

**Islay Ales Co Ltd** - Established in an old Tractor Shed in Bridgend, in March 2004. Ales include Finlaggan, Black Rock, and Dun Hogs Head; plus seasonal brews.

**Cuillin Brewery** - The brewery was born on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2004, in the old public bar of the Sligachan Hotel. Skye, Eagle, Pinnacle, Black Face, and Glamaig Ales are brewed.

**Highland Brewing Company** - Located in the old Swannay cheese factory at Birsay, on Orkney Mainland. Ales include Scapa Special, Orkney Blast, Dark Munro among others.

### **Sinclair Breweries Ltd** -

Formed in 2006 by local hotelier and restaurateur Norman Sinclair, who purchased the **Orkney** - which originally commenced brewing in 1988 at the Old Schoolhouse in Sandwick on Orkney mainland—and **Atlas Breweries**. Ales regularly brewed include Three Sisters, Latitude, and Nimbus from Atlas; plus Raven Ale, Dark Island, Red MacGregor, and Skull Splitter from Orkney. Much expanded in 2011—12. (see advert)

**Glenfinnan Brewery** - irregularly brewing on a 4 bbl plant since October 2006 - Regular brews are Glenfinnan Gold, The Standard Ale, and Glenfinnan Dark (for the Winter).

**Colonsay Brewery** - First brews in March 2007. IPA, 80/- and Lager (Limited real ales).

**Plockton Brewery** - The first brew was produced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007. Craggs Ale and Starboard IPA may usually be found in Plockton, and at other local outlets.

**Oban Bay Brewery** - Brewing since mid 2009. 5 barrel brewery attached to Cuan Mor.

**Old Inn (Gairloch) Brewery** - 100 litre micro-brewery. First brews in February 2010. (see advert)

**Loch Ness Brewery** - First brews in September 2011. RedNess, HoppyNess, Dark..... Etc. (see advert)

**Cromarty Brewery** - First brews in December 2011. Happy Chappy, Brewed Awakening, Red Rocker, Hit The Lip. Increased brewing kit in early 2013.

**Spey Valley Brewery**—a “nano brewery” started in 2012 producing 5 cask conditioned real ales—found round and about the Keith area.

**Windswept Brewery**—started commercial brewing in 2012 in the Lossiemouth area.

**Speyside Craft Brewery**—started commercial brewing at Forbes in 2012.

*Not all of the breweries listed are in our branch area: the Highland Brewing Co, Valhalla and Orkney are all in the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles area; the Arran Brewery falls in the Ayrshire & Galloway area; while Fyne, Islay, Mull, Colonsay & Oban Bay Breweries are covered by Glasgow & West Scotland. Similarly for Highlands & Islands pubs listed in the GBG, pubs in Orkney and Shetland are submitted by the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles Branch, and the Clachaig Inn somehow falls within the Glasgow & West Scotland branch area!*

## Focus on ...

### *Merlin Sandbach*

Merlin is Operations Manager for Cairngorm Brewery. He lives in Aviemore with his wife and two daughters.

**Q. Where are you originally from?**

A. I am originally from Cornwall and moved to Aviemore 30 years ago with my parents who were starting a business in the retail trade. I did get a bit of stick at school because of my name “Merlin” but another lad from Yorkshire started school the same day and his name was Gwynne so we stuck together and are still best mates!

**Q. What is your background?**

A. I started in retail management within my parents business after leaving school and then moved to hotel management. After having our first daughter I decided the hotel industry did not suit our family life very well and moved into sales, firstly in the wine trade and then into the real ale industry at Cairngorm Brewery.

**Q. When were you introduced to real ale?**

A. I was introduced to real ale properly when I started work at Cairngorm Brewery, 12 years ago.

**Q. What styles/types of real ale do you like?**

A. I like a wide mixture of styles and types and there seems to be more and more available. I do always like to try something new, but again I like a lot of the old favourites, especially traditional Scottish ales like Black Gold and Wildcat.



**Q. Other than Cairngorm, which real ales are your favourites?**

A. There are far too many other Breweries and ales to mention, but I do feel most of the best real ales that I have tried recently, have been produced by Scottish Breweries. A few of the top ones being Highland Brewing Company, Fyne Ales, An Teallach and Harviestoun

**Q. Which is your favourite Cairngorm beer?**

A. Black Gold is a hard ale to beat and is probably my favourite, although White Lady and Wildcat are also very good. This goes against what we actually sell quantity wise, as Trade Winds is our biggest selling ale.

**Q. What area do you cover for Cairngorm?**

A. I deal with the sales and distribution for Cairngorm throughout Scotland directly. But I also deal with wholesalers throughout the UK and abroad going as far afield as Australia.

**Q. What is the best part of your work?**

A. The best part of the job is installing a hand pump into a new pub or an outlet that has not previously sold real ale. Also, the



area that I cover with my sales and locations which I visit, are some of the most stunning you can get.

**Q. What is the worst part of your work?**

A. There isn't any "worst" parts of my job really but it can be a bit frustrating travelling around Scotland visiting hundreds of lovely pubs and not being able to sit down relax and enjoy a pint or two of real ale!

**Q. What hobbies/interests do you have?**

A. I love spending time with my family which does not leave much time for many other hobbies and interests. But I do enjoy taking them swimming, skiing and cycling at the weekends when possible.

**Q. Favourite song/group?**

A. I do like lots of different styles of music and bands but my favourites have to be U2, Roger Waters and the Doors

**Q. Favourite film?**

A. The Star Wars Films

**Q. Favourite book?**

A. Lord of the Rings

**Q. What is your favourite part of Scotland?**

A. I do love the local area I live in and the West Coast is hard to beat.

**Q. What are the future plans for The Cairngorm Brewery?**

A. Now that we have a new bottling plant and we are in control of our own destiny, we can not only keep up with demand for our bottled products but also reach new markets in Europe and the rest of the world. We will also be looking to provide a sub contract bottling service for other breweries. The £1.6m development project is nearing completion which has allowed us to very much plan for the future.

## New Ales from Orkney

Launched in February, "1878" named after the year the old Victorian school which houses the Orkney Brewery was built. Head brewer Andrew says that at 5.5%, it is a full bodied auburn beer with big fruit and spice/hop flavours balanced by a soft sweet malt.



"Norseman" - newly produced in bottles for the Up Helly Aa festival in Shetland will appear in cask in April or May. At 4.4% it is described as a strong, lively, pale ale with a deep gold colour.



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## Branch Breweries Updates

Here in the Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA branch, we are blessed with quite a few breweries of differing sizes and ages. Like any industry, brewing beer is an on-going and developing process and there is always some new development or news of brews which can be reported from our breweries. This article attempts to bring you, the reader, up to date and possibly, give a peak in to the future, of our branch breweries.

In previous editions of this newsletter, we also report news on the breweries outside our branch area which are nearby and therefore probable that their beers will be available in bars in our 'patch'. This article sticks to 'our' breweries and the news on each one is in no particular order.



### CROMARTY;

Since launching his first beer in to local pubs in December 2011, Craig Middleton has had to work hard and long with the help of his parents to keep up with demand. As well as trying out various beer styles he has made an impact in the Edinburgh and to a lesser extent the Glasgow areas as well as Aber-



deen and of course, round and about Inverness and the Black Isle. A year in to the history of the new built brewery with new, Eastern European sourced brew kit he has settled on a portfolio of 5 beers which are characterful examples of their style. "**Happy Chappy**" - "new wave pale ale", "**Brewed Awakening**" - "coffee infused stout", "**Red Rocker**" - "red rye hop extravaganza",

"**Hit The Lip**" - "fruity hoppy heaven" and the occasional, "**Rogue Wave**" - "extra pale ale". He is also bottling on a small, hand bottling line in the brewery when he has the time, people power and beer to do it with. The bottled beer is filtered but not pasteurised. Still very much into experimenting with beer styles and ingredients, Craig has done the occasional brew with partner breweries in other parts of Scotland and rumour has it that a new ale will possibly appear this year. Bottles of 6.7%, "**AKA IPA**" - "a beer for the flavour junkies" are now in the shops along with the other beers. Early this year, he took delivery of 4, Scottish made conditioning tanks to add to the 2 he had. 2 of the new ones are double sized - this will give him the capacity to brew more often and have supplies on hand of most beers to keep up with demand be it casks, filtered but not pasteurised bottles or (whisper it) kegs.

*(Continued on page 36)*

*(Continued from page 35)*

## Isle of Skye;

This is one of our larger and older breweries having been started by 2 teachers in 1995. This almost coincided with the birth of our Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA branch and the branch and Isle Of Skye brewery have grown up together. Over the years, Isle of Skye has expanded and their beers have won numerous awards. Their bottled beers are widely available and indeed are exported to several countries.

Back in November 2012 it was announced that the Isle of Skye and Arran Breweries would be merging and would come under the name of Arran Brewery plc. This is not a take-over, as Angus MacRuary, owner of the Isle of Skye Brewery, will be swapping shares in his business for stock in the new venture and taking a place on its board. Arran Brewery owner, Gerald Michaluk, is involved in a multimillion-pound fundraising initiative for the new business. Mr Michaluk also runs Marketing Management Services International in Glasgow and has interests in other businesses. Isle of Skye brings to the business 18 years of brewing experience, which includes award winning beers such as **Cuillin Beast**, **Hebridean Gold** and **Black Cuillin**.

Angus MacRuary said that he had admired



the way in which Gerald had turned Arran Brewery around after his acquisition of it in 2008 out of liquidation. He added "This is an opportunity for us to grow the combined breweries into a national and international force in the brewing industry".

How will this affect the Isle of Skye Brewery? Angus MacRuary had intended to retire but has been persuaded to have an active role in the new business. Head Brewer, Pam MacRuary, is to oversee all the

brewing operations. Expansion is being planned for the Brewery, to upgrade its facilities and increase production by 250%.

Setting up exportation of beer is expensive and Isle of Skye already exports to America and Scandinavia. Arran has just sealed its first export deal to Japan and new countries are planned as a joint venture. A chain of pubs are also in the pipeline, the first, a former bank in Glasgow, should open in spring this year will be called Arran on Hope Street. This is planned to have a German beer hall style cellar, with the ground floor being a more traditional real ale pub style plus a separate whisky lounge. More places are already being looked at throughout Scotland (including Inverness) and will have the theme names of "Arran on...Street" or "Skye on ...Street". They will



*(Continued on page 38)*

Fed up with tasteless lager and bland fizzy beer?

Then treat yourself by visiting CAMRA's

# 27th Great Grampian Beer Festival

**Richard Donald Stand  
Pittodrie Stadium, Aberdeen**

**Thursday 30th May 4pm - midnight**

**Friday 31st May 3pm - midnight**

**Saturday 1st June noon - 11pm\***

\* subject to beer range availability and staffing level requirements

## 100 Real Ales

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(Continued from page 36)

feature both Isle of Skye and Arran real ales along with an international selection of craft beers on draught, there will also be a couple of guest real ales and a large selection of bottled beers and whisky.

The Rosebank Distillery by the Forth-Clyde Canal in Falkirk has also been added to the business, being very central and with good distribution links. The Distillery dates back to 1813 but closed in 1993. Plans for these buildings include installation of brewing equipment to start The Rosebank Brewery; gin production; whey wine production; cider production; a small museum; bar-restaurant; visitor centre; bottling hall; and eventually whisky (a clause in the sale said no distilling until 2017). This is hoped to eventually create 70 jobs.

As if that is not enough, the company has sealed a deal to bottle and distribute beer from the famous Munich Hofbrauhaus in the UK. This will also mean brews from Isle of Skye and Arran going the other way as well.

For strategic reasons the formal merger will not take place for some time but both Gerald and Angus agree that they are "merged in the mind" already and are working very closely together.

## Stop the Press!!

BUT, at the end of February, the merger was put in danger due to the first round of grant applications (for Arran Brewery) to the Scottish Government being turned down. This can be appealed and we shall have to wait and see what becomes of this major deal for Scottish ale brewing. The timescale for the merger has been lengthened not cancelled as some of the press have said. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-21607894> for a report on this setback.

## An Teallach;

This 5 barrel brewery opened in 2003 by Davie and



Wilma Orr beside their house by Little Loch Broom. Their ales are: "**Beinn Dearg**", "**An Teallach**", "**Crofters Pale**", "**Suilven**", "**Kildonan**" and "**Hector**". These ales were widely available across the Highlands and well regarded. The beers are mostly found in the Torridon area now but are still as good as ever as you can read elsewhere in this issue. In 2012 the brewery and house were put up for sale and recently phone calls and emails have been unanswered. But, An Teallach, **Crofters Pale** is on in the King's Highway this week and is tasting "wonderful" so there is life there yet.

## Hebridean;

Not much can be added to the information on the breweries page of the newsletter: Hebridean Brewing Company - Based at Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides. Brewing



since January 2002. Beers include "**Islander Strong Ale**", the famous "**Berserker Export Pale Ale**", and

(Continued on page 40)



# The Old Inn

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**FOR GOOD FOOD AND ALES - NATURALLY!**

*(Continued from page 38)*

“**Clansman Ale**” (first ale ever brewed in Stornoway) and more recently “**Celtic Black Ale**”. Various negative rumours about Hebridean have been heard but no hard information has been forthcoming for over 2 years and phone calls and emails go unanswered. Draft Hebridean ale has not been sighted for a long time and bottles of their ales are becoming rare but are still stocked in various shops so we can only assume that the brewery is still operational.

### **Glenfinnan;**

A classic, ‘brewery in a garage’, the 3 partners have been



brewing irregularly on their 4 barrel plant since 2006 on the basis of when they all felt like doing a brew. Producing “**Glenfinnan Gold**”, “**The Standard Ale**” and “**Glenfinnan Dark**”. Almost all of their beer goes to the nearby Glenfinnan House Hotel. We hear nothing from any of the brewers or ale drinkers in the area so can’t report anything else.

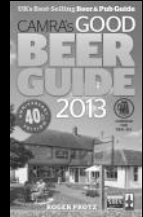
### **Black Isle;**

David Gladwin built a 5 barrel brew plant in 1998 in a converted farm steading, specialising in Organic beers. These include: “**Blonde**”, “**Goldeneye**”, “**Heather Honey**”, “**Hibernator Oatmeal Stout**”, “**Porter**”, “**Red Kite**”, “**Scotch Ale**”, and “**Yellowhammer**”. The beers have won quite a few awards over the years and like any natural, crafted product have altered slightly as ingredients have changed slightly or a new brewer has taken over in the little brewhouse. A new, much bigger, 30 barrel brewery became operational in 2010 and a

*(Continued on page 41)*

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*Good Beer Guide since 2005*



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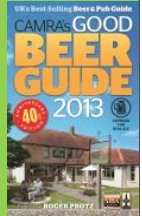
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*(Continued from page 40)*

sophisticated automatic bottling line was commissioned that year. The past 2 years have seen “Jocktoberfests” – music and beer at the brewery early in September as well as other special events. Several, ex-



perimental brews have been produced recently, mostly being made available at special events at pubs in Edinburgh or sometimes Glasgow, often in keg but sometimes in cask. Last Christmas, they released an 8.4% Imperial Stout which they called **Black Run**, which we found out about up here in Inverness from our local newspaper in February. Black Isle has increasingly focused on large scale orders of bottled beer in recent years and is exporting beer to Japan and Scandinavia. Bottles of several Black Isle beers are widely available in many shops. This February, they launched their low tax rated, 2.8% beer, “**Cold Turkey Breakfast Beer**” in time for the 6 Nations Rugby tournament in bottles and at a few bars in Edinburgh. Hootananny’s in Inverness is the only bar in our area which does 2 or 3 of the Black Isle beers on draught.

*(Continued on page 42)*

(Continued from page 41)

## Loch Ness;

Expansion complete... for now



After the success of their small 2-barrel plant in their small Bothy beside the Ben-

leva Hotel for just over a year, Loch Ness Brewery have moved and expanded. They have purchased the unloved Blarmor Bar in Drumnadrochit, which had been closed for a few years, from Carlsberg and installed an 8-barrel plant. This property has a lot of space and the old bar area has been ripped out and a concrete floor put in to make the main brewery. The 8-barrel equipment was built and installed by John Trew of Oban Ales, who are based in Fort William. Other rooms are available for storage of hops, grains and casks as well as an office, kitchen, toilets and social area. They have also purchased a small hand-bottling kit, with which they intend to do batches of bottled conditioned

beers. Owners, George Wotherspoon and

*(Continued on page 43)*



Just a few reasons to visit the Benleva Hotel by Loch Ness

CAMRA North of Scotland PUB of the YEAR 2012

2nd Loch Ness Spring Beer Festival - 18th to 21st April 2013

Home of the Loch Ness Brewery



[www.lochnesshotel.com](http://www.lochnesshotel.com)

[www.lochnessbrewery.com](http://www.lochnessbrewery.com)

(Continued from page 42)

brothers Allan and Steve Crossland have



been busy over the last 6 months, first getting the brewery up and running and then brewing flat out. Steve says 'The new brew plant has really helped the quality of our ales, and of course enabled us to supply many more outlets too'.

The first brew was their 3.9% **LightNess** and was ready for December. Since then they have gone through all their other core brews; **WilderNess** 3.9%, **RedNess** 4.2%, **LochNess** 4.4%, **DarkNess** 4.5% , **HoppyNess** 5% and their 10% **Prince of DarkNess**. Over the winter they have been busy brewing for the tourist bottle market as well, taking their beer over to the Isle of Skye Brewery for bottling. Tomlinsons, Castle Street Beer Shop in Inverness stock their bottles and deliveries have already started to other places in Scotland. Allan says 'We hope that Loch Ness beer will be available – in cask or bottle - all around the loch once the season gets underway'.

Towards that aim, they are launching their brewery shop during the Springfest Beer Festival.

The Benleva Hotel in Drumnadrochit has two or three of their beers on permanently, The Loch Ness Inn in Lewiston has one or two beers on permanently and a few other local outlets take their beers as guests. They have

a regular delivery to Edinburgh with a few drop offs en-route. George said 'Plans for the future are to have a number of quality pubs who take our beer on a regular basis so drinkers will know where to go to try a Loch Ness ale'

## **Plockton;**

Plockton Brewery first brewed in April 2007 in a converted chicken shed in the owner, Andy Will's, garden. This shed has been expanded, Andy is brewing to his 2.5-barrel capacity and cask and bottles are available locally and at some beer festivals. The 5 well regarded cask ales produced so far are;

**Hitched, Ciste Dhubh, Starboard!, Plockton Bay and Fiddler's Fancy.**

## **Cuillin;**

The Cuillin brewery is housed in what was the public bar of the Sligachan Hotel on Skye which is much loved by walkers and climbers.

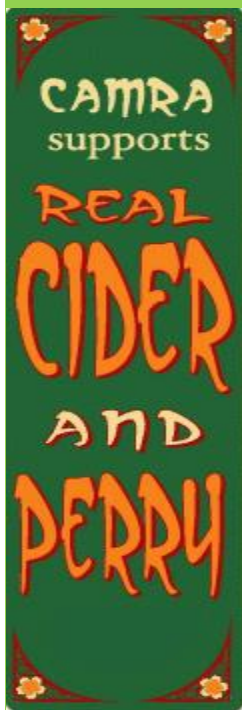


Brewing was started in 2004 although, like the hotel, the brewery is closed during the winter months every year. Brewer Eric produces **Skye, Eagle, Pinnacle, Black Face, and Glamaig** Ales. We were able to try and enjoy 4 of the ales on our minibus trip to Skye last summer. Most of the brewery's production is consumed in the spacious, family friendly, wood lined, Seumas Bar and Mackenzies Bar at the Hotel.

## **Brewhouse at The Old Inn,**

(Continued on page 45)

## Traditional Cider Matters



**Real Cider** and/or **Real Perry** is sold (or has recently been sold) in the following inns & hotels.

(Please note that some may be seasonal outlets).

Please let us know if you find additional outlets selling real cider or perry.

**The Anderson, Fortrose** - Thatchers Heritage Cider

**Eagle - Inn on the Loch, Laggan Locks** - Thatchers Original Cider

**Stronlossit Inn, Roy Bridge** - Thatchers Cheddar Valley Cider

**Strathcarron Hotel** - Thatchers Cider (rotated with cask ales)

**Glen Hotel, Newtonmore** - Westons Old Rosie or 1<sup>st</sup> Quality Cider

**Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit** - Westons 1<sup>st</sup> Quality Cider all year round, plus good selection of real ciders for September festival

**Scourie Hotel** - Two Westons Ciders on handpump

**King's Highway, Inverness** - Real Cider will be on draft during their 2 beer festivals each year

**Alexander Bain, Wick** - Westons Old Rosie & Organic Draught Vintage Cider; Thatchers Heritage & Dry Cider

**Badachro Inn** - Westons Cider is served here

**Argyll Hotel, Ullapool** - Westons ciders from the box

**Altnacealgach Inn**, nr Ledmore Junction - Mike & Kate are giving some thought to serving a real cider. (This outlet is For Sale so best to check.) Tel: 01854 666260

**Torridon Inn** - Westons Ciders are served in the bar.

**Kinlochewe Hotel**, at the foot of Beinn Eighe, is serving Westons 1<sup>st</sup> Quality Draft Cider

**Clachaig Inn, Glencoe** - Westons cider on hand pump.

**Bandstand Bar, Nairn** - Westons ciders on handpump plus wider selections at their festivals.

**Grog & Gruel, Fort William** - Thatchers Heritage cask cider. On tap for as long as sales make it viable - could be all year round but unfortunately sales usually drop dramatically during winter months.

**Glen Affric Bar, Cannich** - serving Westons Cider after requests from hill-walking customers.

**No. 27, Inverness** — Gwynt Y Ddraig on handpump.



(Continued from page 43)

**Gairloch**; a micro brewery in a small container behind the inn, since 2010, they have brewed **Flowerdale**, **Slattadale** and **Erradale** for the bar in the Old Inn.

## Cairngorm;

Formed by taking over the failing Tomintoul and Aviemore breweries in 2001, Cairngorm has grown and established a range of ale styles. **Trade Winds** has become it's "house" beer, winning awards along with several of the others but the other permanent beers are; **Wildcat**, **Stag**, **Cairngorm Gold**, **Sheepshaggers** Gold, and the multi award winning, **Black Gold**. These are also joined by **Nessie's Monster Mash** and **Blessed Thistle**. Over the past 3 years, a major expansion of the brewery has taken place. The main brewing plant is now a 20 barrel brew length which is fully utilised. Physical expansion was obvious with the construction of a large, additional building which gives plenty of



**Cairngorm Caille**, **Howler**, **Highland IPA**, **Autumn Nuts**, **Witches Cauldron**, **Winter Flurry** and **Santa's Sledgehammer**. Last Autumn, 2 new ales were launched. 1 with the blessing of the local MP, Danny Alexander; **Ginger Rodent**, the other a re-launch of a Scottish traditional recipe style, **Brochan**. At this time a major expansion funding was announced which will allow the installation of a semi-automatic cask racker and hopefully, a new energy efficient wort boiling system. The brewery shop which has done sterling service for several years has already been totally re-fitted giving a much nicer space to give brewery tours from, as it overlooks the brewing vessels as well as giving lots more space for brewery merchandise. A honey beer called **Pollination** is being developed for the next Wetherspoon's beer festival. The brewery is also starting trials of a craft/keg product to eventually develop beers specifically for keg. They will make sure there is no problem with misleading dispense.

So, there you have it. That brings you up to date with the breweries in our branch area. Or as much as we can manage anyway.

The "new kids on the block" are showing great style and producing great beers. Some of our older breweries have responded positively, expanding their portfolio of beers producing a wider range of equally great ales.

This adds up to the fact that we Real Ale drinkers are quite spoilt for choice in our area. When you find a pub with some of the local ales on, they are predominantly full of taste and character and well worth savouring and enjoying when compared to much (but not all) of the ale that is available through Pubco ties. Our local brewers richly deserve our appreciation and custom.



space for conditioning tanks, offices and the installation of a sophisticated, automatic bottling line which they are now using for their own beers as well as bottling for 5 other local breweries so far with the possibility of others in the pipeline. During this time a growing number of seasonal ales have been developed; **Mountain Blue**, **Scottish Bard**,

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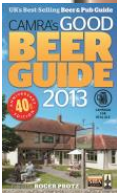
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Wester Ross Pub of  
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## Branch Diary (meetings start at 7.30 pm) (all welcome)

All these events are open to CAMRA members and non-members, including committee meetings. \* Not all events are necessarily organised by CAMRA.

This diary is as much about the local real ale scene as it is about CAMRA branch activities.

### April

29th MARCH to 7th—Spring Bandstand Beer Festival \*

Bandstand Bar, Braeval Hotel, Nairn

Saturday 30th MARCH

Branch Social, Bandstand Beer Festival

Tuesday 9th

Branch members meeting—The Dores Inn

12th to 15th \*

Orkney beer trip—book with Del Graham

18th to 21st—Springfest Benleva Beer Festival \* Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit

Saturday 27th

Minibus trip, East of Inverness and Strathspey. Book a place with Gareth.

Meet at Inverness townhouse 10.45 am

Tuesday 30th

Tasting Evening—The Anderson, Fortrose

### May

Tuesday 14th

Committee meeting—Cawdor Tavern

24th to 27th

Argyll Hotel, Ullapool Beer Festival \*

Thursday 30th to Saturday 1st June

Great Grampian Beer Festival, Aberdeen

### June

Tuesday 11th

Branch members meeting Kinlochewe Hotel

14th to 23rd—Grog & Gruel Beer Festival \*

Grog & Gruel alehouse, Fort William

Saturday 15th

Minibus trip, Fort William & district

Book a place with Gareth.

Meet at Inverness townhouse 9.30 am

Saturday 29th

Full Tasting Course, Benleva Hotel, Drum.

2.00 pm Book a place with Eric Mills.

### July

Tuesday 9th

Committee meeting—Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge

Thursday 11th to Sunday 14th

Scottish Real Ale Festival, Edinburgh.

## Your local CAMRA branch .....

**Protect your pleasure! Become actively involved with your local branch.**

We need your help! Not a massive time commitment, just an hour or two will help our small committee in supporting the local publicans and brewers who together provide us with such a wonderful range of real ales to enjoy.

Please see our regularly updated on-line diary at [highlandcamra.org.uk](http://highlandcamra.org.uk)

Our web site features;

an elegant, photo-led design; Interactive Pub Map; Archive of Awards; Links to current CAMRA campaigns; Twitter feed; Blog; link to Whatpub.com to submit your beer scores.

Go to [highlandcamra.org.uk](http://highlandcamra.org.uk)

..... Needs YOU!

## Contact Details

**Gareth Hardman** (Secretary & Branch Contact) -  
01463 238462 18, Scorguie Gardens, Inverness, IV3 8SS.  
[contact@highlandcamra.org.uk](mailto:contact@highlandcamra.org.uk) or [Secretary@highlandcamra.org.uk](mailto:Secretary@highlandcamra.org.uk)

**Eric Mills** - 01456 459343 [chair@highlandcamra.org.uk](mailto:chair@highlandcamra.org.uk)

**Gordon Streets** - 01463 715637 [news@highlandcamra.org.uk](mailto:news@highlandcamra.org.uk)

150,000  
members  
and growing!

# CAMRA Membership Benefits

For just £23\* a year, that's less than a pint a month, you can join CAMRA and enjoy the following benefits:

- A quarterly copy of our magazine BEER which is packed with features on pubs, beers and breweries.
- Our monthly newspaper, 'What's Brewing', informing you on beer and pub news and detailing events and beer festivals around the country.
- Reduced entry to over 160 national, regional and local beer festivals.
- Socials and brewery trips, with national, regional and local groups.
- The opportunity to campaign to save pubs and breweries under threat of closure.
- The chance to join CAMRA / Brewery Complimentary Clubs that are exclusive to CAMRA members. These clubs offer a variety of promotions including free pint vouchers, brewery trips, competitions, and merchandise offers.
- Discounts on all CAMRA books including the Good Beer Guide.



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
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 <p>£20 worth of JD Wetherspoon Real Ale Vouchers.**</p>	 <p>15% discount with National Express coach services.</p>	 <p>10% discount on toprooms.com.</p>
 <p>10% savings at Cotswold Outdoor.</p>	 <p>15% off boat hire with start locations form Falkirk to Hilperton.</p>	 <p>20% off brewery and beer tasting tours.</p>
 <p>10% discount on booking with cottages4you.</p>	 <p>10% discount on booking with Hoseasons.</p>	 <p>Up to 52% off - with attractions for the family too numerous to name.</p>

For more on your CAMRA Membership Benefits please visit [www.camra.org.uk/benefits](http://www.camra.org.uk/benefits)

\* This price is based on the Direct Debit discount. \*\* Joint CAMRA memberships will receive one set of vouchers to share. CAMRA reserves the right to withdraw any offer at any time without warning and members should check CAMRA website for updated and details of current offers.



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## Drink in a Real Ale Pub? - Rate the Beer!

Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA needs your help in surveying the pubs in our massive Branch area. To tell us which pubs are worth considering for the Good Beer Guide, use CAMRA's 6-point NBSS (National Beer Scoring Scheme) to record Beer Quality. The info you give us helps us judge which outlets could go in to The Good Beer Guide, which outlets merit an award of area POTY and Branch POTY and which of our local beers merits the award of BOTY. It's easy!

### What do the scores mean?

**0** - No cask ale available.

**1/2** - **Undrinkable.** Beer so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it.

**1 - Poor.** Beer that is between barely drinkable and drinkable with considerable resentment.

**2 - Average.** Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.

**3 - Good.** Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.

**4 - Very Good.** Excellent beer in excellent condition.

**5 - Excellent.** Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

Simply email us which bar, the beer(s) and your scores plus any real ale and real cider news to our Branch Contacts (see Diary page).

CAMRA members can use the new website: [whatpub.com](http://whatpub.com)

Log in to it using your normal CAMRA login details and fill in the boxes on the form.

You can do this for any pub in the country. Thanks!



*What's yours then? is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Highlands & Western Isles Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale.*

*The views & opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, CAMRA, nor its Branches.*



*We hope you have enjoyed reading our Spring newsletter. Unless you intend to keep it for some reason, please **DO NOT** throw it away. Why not pass it on to a friend, or just leave it in a pub somewhere for others to read. Newsletters are often found many miles from source!*

*The next edition will be out in **July**.*

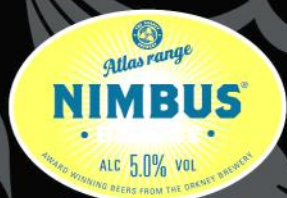
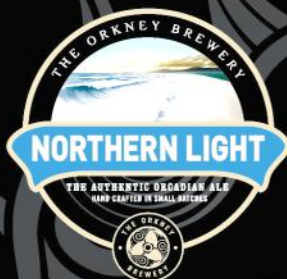
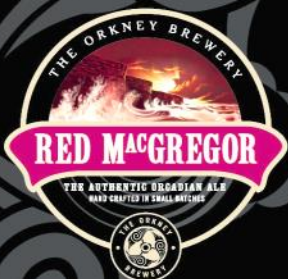
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