

What's yours then?



CAMRA

Highlands & Western Isles



Contains Full List of Highlands & Western Isles Real Ale Outlets

"No Real Beer in Scotland"

- Shock claim!

More beer choice arrives
in Inverness



Highland Breweries - Old and New
add new beers

More awards for Highland
breweries

Order! Order! Our dis?-honourable
members enjoy Highland beer

In memory of John Aird



Spring 2012

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, eight of its products are available throughout the year in 500ml bottles.

Why not visit the brewery shop in Aviemore. Open Monday to Saturday. Tours Monday - Friday (Booking Essential)

SPECIAL ALES FOR 2012

(January to June)



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E: info@cairngormbrewery.com

www.cairngormbrewery.com

Welcome... to the Spring edition of our quarterly newsletter. In this edition:

- > John Aird remembered
- > Updated Branch Diary
- > Socials, Tastings & Outings - Reports
- > Awards news
- > Focus on - new Editor, Gordon Streets
- > Your Letters and E-mails
- > Real Cider News
- > Pub & Brewery News
- > Updated Real Ale Pubs list

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, but especially to regulars Eric, Gareth, Steve and Jack, 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. All marks and copyright are acknowledged.

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

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

Advertising rates are as follows:

Full Page Advert..... £58.00 (£87.00 colour)

Half Page Advert..... £33.50 (£49.00 colour)

Quarter Page Advert..... £18.00 (£27.00 colour)

Black & White advert rates will be increasing by 10% as of the summer edition to help with the increased cost of the new production.

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.

One of the joys of enjoying real ale is the continual changes and developments that you find.

The way that real beer develops over the days that it is being served in one of our good pubs, the way that brewers tweak and develop their beers so that you are continually comparing and appreciating,

Here in the Highlands, we are enjoying 2 new, local breweries starting / increasing the beer they are producing and selling. There is the news of another new brewery being established in the Elgin area, and yet another new brewery may be brewing this year in the Glen Urquhart area.

Some of our bigger, established breweries are producing new beers and even more seasonal, experimental beers.

On the flipside of these positive developments, increases in raw materials costs and the recession make running any business a challenge.

Another positive - a specialist beer shop has opened in Inverness offering an increase in the choice of bottled beer available to buy as well as take-home draft beer.

I hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative— any omissions or errors that annoy you or positive comments can be discussed by contacting me through the normal channels. (see Diary page)

Enjoy! Cheers!

Ed.

As you can see, with a new editor comes a new look. The plan is for full colour on every page eventually. What do you think?

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

www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/highland

More awards for Highland Breweries

At this year's CAMRA National Winter Ales festival in Manchester, 2 of our Highlands & Western Isles Breweries added to their tally of awards.

Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2012 was chosen from the various category winners.

Overall Silver went to **Cairngorm brewery's Black Gold**.

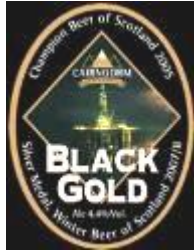
It had achieved the top, Gold, award in the Stouts category.

This well deserved accolade means that Black Gold will automatically be entered into the final for Champion Beer of Britain at the Great British Beer Festival, Olympia, London, in Aug. (7th-11th).

In the **Barley Wines** category, **Isle of Skye's Cuillin Beast** won bronze.

Here in the Highlands, we know that both these beers are well worth seeking out. Congratulations to both Cairngorm and Isle of Skye.

Champion Winter Beer of Britain is **Driftwood brewery's (of St Agnes, Cornwall) 'Alfie's Revenge'**. A 6.5% ABV old ale, described as 'strong and fruity, well-balanced premium ale'.



Anderson Burns Festival

28th & 29th January saw the welcome return of the Burns Weekend Real Ale Festival at The Anderson in Fortrose. Our genial host Jim had prepared a varied and interesting selection of ales to brighten the dark winter, including two specials :- Highland 4yr old Porter from Rob Hill (9% ABV) and Chilly Chappy at 8% a brand new ale from Cromarty Brewing in collaboration with Sand Man.



As well as the ales, there was a fermentation of brewers on the Saturday with representatives from Cairngorm, Cromarty, Black Isle and Loch Ness



imparting wisdom and picking up tips.

Full ale list, many of which were

appearing for the first time in the Highlands :- Cairngorm Roggen (4.3%), Allgates All Black (3.6%), Phoenix Double Gold (5%), Potton Shannon IPA (3.6%), Dark Star American Pale Ale (4.7%), Loch Ness Sleekit Ness (4%), Hoggleys Reservoir Hogs (4.3%), Pictish Alchemists Ale (4.3%), Parish Farm Gold (4.2%), Chalk Hill Old tackle (5.6%), Derby Billy Bonka's Chocolate Stout (4.3%).

The weekend seemed to be a resounding success with the 2 specials selling out quickest. Of the other ales, the Dark Star was a narrow favourite. Well done to Jim for putting on an event at a usually quiet time of the year.



SC



"In a country where some things are confusing . . ."



"Some things are clear . . ."

A crisp golden ale with a citrus finish . . .

"Sweet FA"

BREWERY AND SHOP

Opening hours:

Mon – Sat : 10am -4pm Sun : 12.30pm – 4pm

Just off the A83 at the top of Loch Fyne

Tours by appointment - www.fyneales.com

Branch Diary (Meetings start at 7.30 pm)

(All these events are open to members and any non member, including committee meetings.)

Tue 13th March - Committee Meeting - Station Hotel, Avoch

Wed 14th March - Sun 1st April *Wetherspoon Real Ale & Cider Festival - Kings Highway, Inverness and The Alexander Bain, Wick.

Sat 24th March



Cairngorm Brewery and Hostelrys in Badenoch & Strathspey

Thur 29th March - Sun 1st April * 1st Loch Ness Spring Beer Festival - Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit

Sat 7th April - 2.00 pm - Nairn Beer Festival Branch Social—Bandstand Bar

Fri 6th April -Sun 15th April * 4th Bandstand Bar Beer Festival - Nairn

Tue 10th April - Branch Meeting - Kings Highway, Inverness

Tue 24th April - Tasting Evening -The Anderson, Fortrose

Tue 8th May - Committee Meeting - Castle Tavern, Inverness

Sat 19th May - 1.00 pm Scottish & Northern Ireland Branches meeting - Castle Tavern (COMMITTEE MEMBERS ONLY)

Fri 25th May - Sat 2nd June *Mayfest - Clachaig Inn, Glencoe

Thurs 31st May - Sat 2nd June - Aberdeen Beer Festival - Pittodrie Stadium

Sat 2nd June - Sun 3rd June *FyneFest - Fyne Ales Brewery, Cairndow, Argyll

Sat 9th June



Fèis Bheag na Leanna - Isle of Skye

Tue 12th June - Branch Meeting - Dores Inn

Sat 16th June - 2.00 pm Tasting Course - Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit

Thurs 28th June - Sat 30th June - Scottish Traditional Beer Festival - Corn Exchange, Edinburgh

Tues 10th July - Committee Meeting - Caledonian Hotel, Fort Augustus

Tues 24th July - 5.00 pm



Loch Ness Circular


* Not all events listed are necessarily organised by CAMRA.

This diary is as much about the local Real Ale scene as about Branch activities.

CAMRA Needs YOU!

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

We have a new WEB SITE!! After 18 months of construction, our new Highland & Western Isles web site is online! It features; an elegant, photo-led design; Interactive Pub Map: Archive of

Awards: Link to current CAMRA campaigns: New TWITTER feed; New BLOG.

POTY and BOTY voting along with SUBMIT YOUR BEER SCORES will be added soon!

If highlandcamra.org.uk gives you the old web site, try highlandcamra.co.uk



Contact Details



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Gordon Streets - 01463 715637

chair@highlandcamra.org.uk

news@highlandcamra.org.uk

**April is Community
Pubs Month
"Celebrating the
Great British Pub"**



**May is Mild Month—
Celebrate with a
mild in May**



Bits & Bobs

The Isle of Skye Emporium and Brewery Shop opened in Portree at the end of last year. (see advert on back cover) It is run by Tony and Clare Ord who will be selling local craft products as well as bottles of Isle of Skye beer and brewery goods.

- The Isle of Skye brewery will be bringing out their seasonal beer "Cuillin Gorm" made with Blaeberreries in April.
- Fyne Ales are planning some new beers this year— watch this space!
- An Imperial Pale Ale with lots of hops and a strength of between 6.8% and 7.3% should be available from Black Isle brewery by the time you are reading this.
- The new brewery "in the Elgin area" now has premises in Forres and hopes to be brewing soon.
- There is rumour of a Spey Brewery up and running and
- plans for a possible West Beach Brewery in Lossiemouth.

After more than 13 years, Orkney brewery have finally got round to brewing their No 1 beer!

Our Pub of the Year 2012

The scores are in and the result is:

The Benleva Hotel in Drumnadrochit is our branch POTY, narrowly beating Blackfriars into 2nd place. You will find adverts for the "Ben" and it's Loch Ness Brewery in our newsletters. The comfortable, welcoming, dog friendly, "shabby chic" bar in The Benleva hosts an excellent beer festival every September and for the first time, is trying a Spring beer festival this year. A special effort is made through May to always have a mild on for every day of the month. As part of it's community activities, Steve's pub quiz is always a busy hoot as well as folk music nights and weekly poker nights among other events.

The area winners this year are:

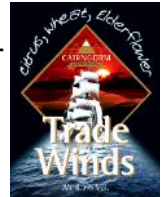
Blackfriars, Inverness
Grog & Gruel, Fort William
Caim Hotel, Carrbridge
Argyll Hotel, Ullapool

Plockton Inn, Plockton
Steinn Inn, Watermish
Castle Hotel, Domoch
Congratulations to all involved - certificates are on their way!

These 8 winners and 2 other pubs, Castle Tavern, Inverness and Bandstand Bar, Braeval Hotel, Naim were looked at by all eligible committee members using the official CAMRA voting forms. The Benleva will be put forward to represent our branch in the Scottish rounds.



Branch Beer Of The Year
Once again, one of our area's biggest breweries, Cairngorm, grabs the prize with Tradewinds!



I would just like to respond to a comment made in your Winter 2011 Newsletter

On page 41 your writer Ian Simm makes the comment that when he visited the Bothy Bar in Fort Augustus

that the beer was cold (Cask Marque accreditation strikes again).

Cask Marque criteria for beer temperatures is that which the majority of brewers would like their beer to be drunk at (11-13 +/- 1 degree C). We visited the Bothy Bar on 7th Feb and the beer was being dispensed at a perfect 12.6 degrees. It is of course possible that the temperature changed between our visit and Mr Simm's visit. However, contrary to some people's views, Cask Marque do not encourage cold beer. If the beer is cold enough to get a chill haze then it will automatically fail our inspection.

We share very similar aims with CAMRA and that is to improve the quality of cask ale in the UK.

Kind regards,
Alastair Macnaught
Operations Manager
Cask Marque Trust

the glen hotel

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December Inverness Walkabout

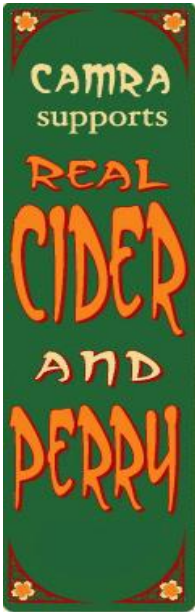
It was a cold, blustery, wet night as 14 of us met at The Castle Tavern. 4 others met us as we toured the real ale outlets. A busy Castle Tavern offered **Isle of Skye - Old Worthy** (made with peat smoked barley which gives a slight whisky taste), **Atlas Three Sisters**, **Cairngorm Wildcat**, **Caledonian Deuchars**, **Caledonian Flying Scotsman** and **Orkney Dark Island**. All were in excellent condition and Dark Island was to become one of our beers of the night (BON). As usual we then split into groups, each with a list of real ale outlets to visit and wandered around meeting up as we went. Heathmount had a very good **Houston Blonde Bombshell**. Number 27 had OK **Caledonian Deuchars** and **Green King Old Speckled Hen**. The Caledonian had three Cairngorm brews and being a Tuesday had their special offer of £1.75 a pint making them the cheapest pint of the night. **Santa's Sledgehammer** and **Tradewinds** were OK but **Nessies Monster Mash** was just drinkable. Johnny Foxes had **Black Isle Yellowhammer**, which we have been told is on top pressure, but despite that, it was excellent (BON). The Waterfront had an excellent **Cairngorm Blessed Thistle** (BON).

Soon after this evening, The Waterfront suffered a kitchen fire which badly damaged their lounge area. They tried to

keep the bar open but had to close while arranging for repairs. As of publishing, the building was still covered by waterproof canvases and not trading.

Hootananny had very good **Black Isle - Heather Honey** and **Red Kite**. Some did try the **Black Isle** craft **Porter** and thought it was far better than some similar keg ones. The Exchange has had its hand pump removed and there is still no real ale on the hand pump in Sammi's Bar. On to The Kings Highway where **Belhaven - Howells - Frosty Bells**, **An Teallach Ale**, **Orkney - Andrews Ale** and **Houston - Barachan** were all very good. **Isle of Skye - Blaven** was poor and taken off and **Wooden Hands - Elves Bells** was just drinkable. **Green King - Abbot and Caledonian - Deuchars** were also available but not tasted. The Innes Bar, recently started selling real ale after their refurbishment. A very busy pool evening greeted us in this very well set out place. A very good **Caledonian - Deuchars** was available and they usually have a second hand pump with another Caledonian brew on. The Phoenix had a just drinkable **Hebridean - Berserker** plus **River Leven - Dark** (brewing since September in the old Atlas brewery in Kinlochleven), **Caledonian - Eildelwiess** and **Orkney - Corncrake** which were all OK.

Sadly, the Phoenix has so far not been able to rise from the "ashes" it has lain in for the



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 1st Quality Cider

Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit - Westons 1st 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 - Westons Old Rosie & Organic Draught Vintage Cider; Thatchers Heritage & Dry Cider

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. Tel: 01854 666260

Torridon Inn - Westons Ciders are served in the bar.

Kinlochewe Hotel, at the foot of Beinn Eighe, is serving Westons 1st Quality Draft Cider

Clachaig Inn, Glencoe - An initial trial (at Mayfest 2010) but (with your support) continuing through the Winter, Westons cider on hand pump. Having had difficulties getting hold of the Thatchers we've had over the last few years we've been looking for a change. (From Website)

Bandstand Bar, Naim - Westons ciders on handpump.

Grog & Gruel, Fort William - has been selling Thatchers Heritage cask cider since 1st April 2010. On tap for as long as sales make it viable - could be all year round but unfortunately sales usually drop dramatically during winter months.

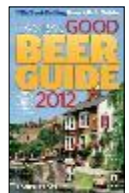
Glen Affric Bar, Cannich - serving Westons Cider after requests from hill-walking customers.

past 2 or 3 years. At the end of January, a management company were put in to run the establishment temporarily.

The plan was to finally meet up at Blackfriars for some of Del's excellent stovies and of course some more beer. **Highland - Orkney IPA** joined our list of four beers of the night. **Caledonian - Santa's Little Helper, Caledonian - Double Dark, Atlas - Blizzard and Loch Ness' Festive**

Ness (brewing since September in Drumnadrochit) were all very good. A great night in Inverness and we would like to thank Del for the lovely stovies and for the pubs for stocking a good selection of different brews.

34 of the pubs listed are in the *Good Beer Guide* - We cannot tell you which, you will have to buy the guide for that, but there is a chance you may find clues somewhere in this newsletter.



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dalfer@macdonald-hotels.co.uk

New Inverness Beer Shop!

In an interesting development, a specialist beer shop was proposed in 2011. Planning permission was sought to use an empty unit in Castle Street, Inverness (the ex British School of Motoring shop/office). After minor difficulties were overcome, work was started on refurbishing and outfitting the premises during the cold, damp weather of the Christmas holidays. At the end of January the shop signage was put up and work continued inside. Sean Tomlinson and his wife Tracy are now going to be selling a selection of ales in



Inverness's first specialist beer shop. Sean is the brewing director at Cairngorm Brewery, Aviemore with a wealth of experience. The idea is to stock a range of some of the best Scottish brewed bottled beers, many of which are not available in

Inverness, along with other styles of beer from Belgium, Germany, America — in fact from all over the world.

There will also be available draught real ale

and cider to take away in 2 and 4 pint jugs, 5 litre mini kegs etc.

Sean hopes to be open by the time you are reading this. Here's hoping!



BANDSTAND BEER FESTIVAL

6 – 15th April 2012

NAIRN

BANDSTAND BAR

CAMRA Highland

PUB OF THE YEAR 2009 & 2011

CAMRA Inverness & District South

PUB OF THE YEAR 2009, 2010 & 2011

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Scottish & English
Plus 6 Real Ciders**

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See our website
for programme & detailed
ale list with tasting notes



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beers
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Our 2 newest Highland breweries have enjoyed excellent starts since beginning brewing in 2011.

so, expansion? Craig Middleton's Cromarty Brewing Co. got off to a cheery start in December with

**"Happy Chap-
py"**, a golden, hoppy ale, which was well received in the various outlets he was able to supply. In January, Craig was contemplating trying a beer from the opposite end of the spectrum - a porter. He plumped for a coffee infused stout which he called **"Brewed Awakening"**.



Here's hoping both breweries continue in this positive vein.

www.lochnessbrewery.com
www.cromartybrewing.co.uk



Loch Ness Brewery at the Benleiva Hotel in Drumnadrochit, has been very busy brewing several times a week and trying various styles.

Co-owner, Steve Crossland has a habit of coming up with possible beer names when in company. "Any word -ness" seems fair game! As their experience and range grows, their beers are gaining more appreciation. Demand for the beers is high and already expansion is being thought about in the traditional Highland manner e.g. it took 5 years for the brewery to happen,

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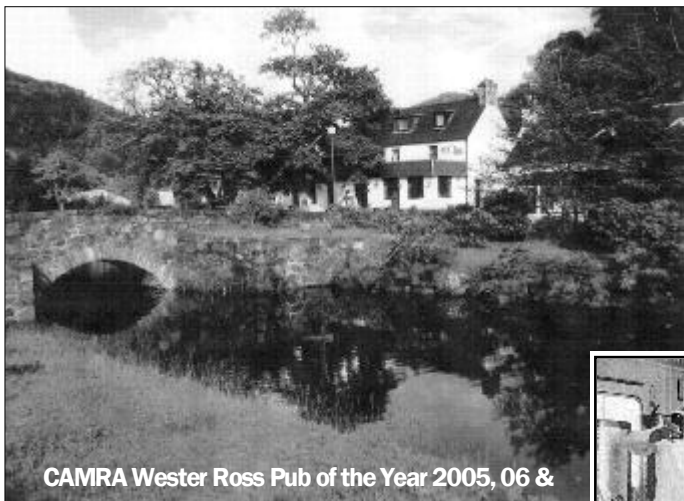
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Real Ale in the Real Highlands



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The Old Inn



CAMRA Wester Ross Pub of the Year 2005, 06 &



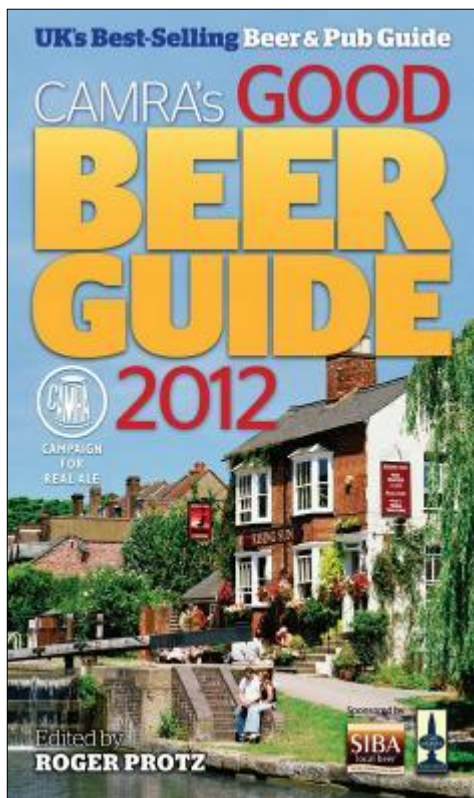
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Good Beer Guide 2012

The 39th edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2012 has been fully revised and updated, and includes details of more than 4,500 pubs across the country serving the best real ale.

From country inns to urban style bars and backstreet boozers, all selected and reviewed by over 125,000 CAMRA members, this is your definitive guide to finding the perfect pint!

The unique brewery section contains a list of all UK breweries - micro, regional and national - that brew real ale, with tasting notes for hundreds of their beers written by trained CAMRA tasting panel members.

£10.00 (online members price)

£12.99 (online non-members price)

Buying direct from CAMRA, rather than other retailers, means we make more profit which is invested directly into campaigning for real ale, community pubs and

drinkers' rights.

Highlands & Western Isles

A total of 34 pubs in our Branch area are listed in the guide. New for 2012:

Torridon Inn - Lying close to the shore of Loch Torridon the inn enjoys spectacular views of the Torridon mountains. One ale from An Teallach is served in winter, with up to six in summer, including brews from the Isle of Skye and Cairngorm breweries. An excellent base for outdoor activity enthusiasts and families alike, the inn serves very good food from locally sourced ingredients. Traditional music is featured weekly in the summer and the inn runs a beer festival in September.

Congratulations to **Benleva Hotel** and **Cobbs at Nevisport** who both celebrate their tenth successive entry in the guide.

Long term successive entries, under the same ownership or stewardship, in the Highlands & Western Isles include the **Old Inn** at Gairloch (23), the **Grog & Gruel** in Fort William (16), the **Old Forge** at Inverie (16), and the **Stein Inn** (13) at Watnish on the Isle of Skye.

Blackfriars and **Clachnaharry Inn** are able to boast 17 consecutive entries, albeit under a number of owners or tenants. David Irvine at Clachnaharry and Dougie Fraser at Blackfriars placed these Inverness hostleries firmly on the Highlands real ale map in the nineties, and today Del & Janette Graham (Blackfriars) and Mark Kilby (Clachnaharry Inn) continue to serve real ales in the very best of condition.

Good Beer Guide E-Book

The future of pub guides has arrived...

CAMRA books has launched the *Good Beer Guide 2012* e-book in the widely compatible e-Pub and Kindle formats.



GOOD BEER GUIDE GOES MOBILE!

Good Beer Guide 2012 Mobile App is available for purchase and download from the Apple AppStore and the Android™ Market.

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Both priced at just £5.00

The
Torridon

The Torridon Inn



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Great Ale Selection

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a fantastic base to explore the Highlands from.

**Keep an eye on our website for all the latest ale updates
as well as information on our live music
and Real Ale Festival 2012**

We hope to see you there!



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The Torridon Inn
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FOCUS ON

Gordon Streets lives in Inverness and is a school teacher in Drumnadrochit. He has been on the Branch Committee for 18 months and has now taken over as



Editor of "What's Yours Then?"

Q. Where are you originally from?

I'm from Dunfermline, the capital city of The Kingdom of Fife – that's where I was born and lived for a large part of my childhood.

Q. How did you end up in The Highlands?

Having to move a large distance was caused by the common reason – my father got a new job which meant moving to the far-east corner of Scotland – Fraserburgh. My job as a teacher was settled in Aberdeenshire until I changed for a place in a Highland school.

Q. How were you introduced to real ale?

As a student in Aberdeen in the late 70s, early 80s, it was natural to be exposed to a wide range of hand pulled ale. When I started drinking in bars, I was appalled at the horrible tasting fizzy stuff that was available. In Fraserburgh at my "local", we preferred to drink bottled Whitbread beer rather than anything on draught. Drinking in Aberdeen was a continuing revelation – the choice in The Prince of Wales alone was fabulous! I would seek a fork to drink Old Peculier!

Q. When and why did you join CAMRA?

During a holiday trip to London in 1995 with my then wife, it was the week of the GBBF. I knew of CAMRA having enjoyed several Aberdeen beer festivals in the 80s and we took the tube out to Olympia and spent a very pleasant few hours in the "biggest pub in the world" trying. It was fantastic and almost overwhelming. I joined CAMRA soon after that but only became an active member once I was single again!

Q. What do you look for in a pub?

*I'm quite normal and boring in my preferences – a steady buzz of conversation, a gentle welcome and a choice of real ale available to try and enjoy. I'm quite happy for music to be on in the background but a pub is a place to meet with friends and catch up, chat and eventually set the world to rights, have a laugh and/or talk a load of s***e!*

Q. What is your favourite beers/beer styles?

I have a particular weakness for a good, meaty porter. However, with the different categories of beer being so "moveable", some stouts and milds are equally partial to my tastes. I name my favourite beer as Sarah Hughes' Ruby Mild which I have only tried twice – both at beer festivals. The saying must be true – "Absence makes the heart grow fonder."!

Q. What hobbies/interests do you have?

Beginning when I was a student, along with most of my mates, for 20 years, I was a member of The Sealed Knot – the 20,000 strong, British-wide historical re-enactment group that demonstrates and educates on the 17th century civil wars - which started in Scotland. I am also a reasonable DIYer now improving my 3rd house.

Q. What is your favourite part of Scotland?

How do you choose a favourite part of Scotland where there are so many wonderful, beautiful parts to choose from? Edinburgh is a great city to visit with its many and varied attractions and its unique "feel" of a big city made up of many parts. Inverness is the best place to live in Scotland – it's big enough to have everything you need but has a small town feel and the greenery and mountains are within spitting distance.

Q. What is your favourite song/singer/group?

My favourite song for many years has been Robert Plant's "Big Log" – a unique, deep, bluesy rock song which makes little sense but sounds epic. My favourite group is Twisted Blues at Blackfriars – just my kind of music played live really well.

Q. Favourite film?

Bladerunner – an immense, multi-faceted, realistic take on a possible future. It will never be eclipsed! In my top 10 films are also Cars, The Incredibles, The Matrix, Some Like It Hot, Lawrence of Arabia, Zulu, Star Trek (2009), In The Heat of The Night and Brazil.

Q. Favourite book?

The Great McGonagall – the book of the film by the genius and spelling error, Spike Milligan.

Q. What plans do you have for the Newsletter?

To carry on the high standard set over the past few years and create a professional looking, colourful, attractive but still informative "frontpage" for our Highlands & Western Isles branch which is a tall order since I have no creative imagination!

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:

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.

TP - Served using top pressure

Inverness & District North

The Anderson, Fortrose
Aultguish Inn
Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit
Clachnaharry Inn, Inverness
Castle Hotel, Portmahomack
Commercial Inn, Balintore (S)
Conon Bridge Hotel
Cromarty Arms
Glen Affric Bar, Cannich
Glenmoriston Arms Hotel, Invermoriston
Inchbae Lodge Hotel, Garve
Loch Ness Inn, Lewiston
Munlochy Hotel (TP)
National Hotel, Dingwall
Old North Inn, Inchmore
Palace Hotel, Inverness
Plough Inn, Rosemarkie
Richmond Hotel, Strathpeffer
Royal Hotel, Cromarty
Slaters Arms, Cannich
Station Hotel, Avoch
Steading Bar & Restaurant, Kilmartin (TP)
Struy Inn, Strathglass, near Cannich
Struy Inn (S) (TP)
Waterfront, Inverness

“a beer drinker’s
mecca”

Good Beer Guide since 2005



real ale
80 Belgians

real cider
200 malts

Highlands & Western Isles

Pub of the Year 2008

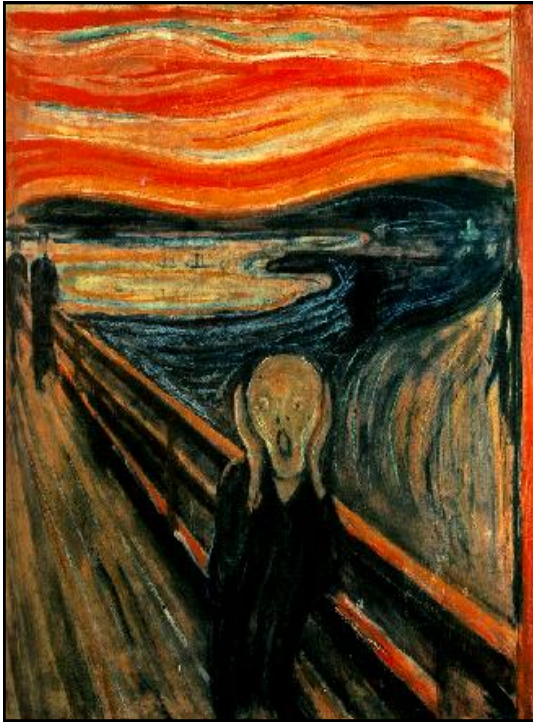
the
ANDERSON

restaurant • bar • accommodation

Fortrose, by Inverness

tel. 01381 620 236

www.theanderson.co.uk



Edvard was distraught to find his local had run out of Loch Ness Beer

*Loch
ness
brewery*

*for more info and beer range
go to
www.lochnessbrewery.com*

ORDER! ORDER!

In a nationally significant publicity coup, the owners of the Loch Ness Brewery have managed to get one of their beers in to a very exclusive British bar. Through their local, political contacts, casks of Loch Ness' "**Ness Minister**" was supplied through Flying Firkin and served in the Strangers Bar in the house of



commons in March. Strangers Bar is so-called as it is where MPs and their guests (strangers) can meet and drink. It overlooks the commons terrace on the Thames side of the building. Brewery Co-owner, Steve Crossland is chuffed, to say the least - and there was no sign of any brawling! The Scottish Lib-Dem conference here in Inverness was also supplied with **Ness Minister** (see later) but there is still no sign of it helping them make better decisions!



*Blackfriars
Highland Pub
& Restaurant
Great Beers*



*Traditional Highland Food with **Seafood Specials***

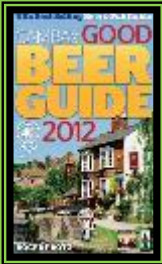
Meals cooked to order using freshly prepared local produce

Scottish & Highland Real Ales & Cider on tap

Open all day, 6 days a week

Food served every day

from 11am until 9pm



Regular Live Entertainment



Check website for details:

www.blackfriarshighlandpub.co.uk

Brewery Events

FyneFest—as you may have noticed in the diary, **Fyne Ales** are hosting a festival “Jubilee” weekend on the 1st —4th June. It will feature a comedy night, more than 50 beers, live music and food stalls. You can camp at the festival as well. More info from www.fynefest.com. Fyne Ales also hope to have their brewery tap for visitors open in May. They are expanding and recruiting more staff for their new ventures one of which is creating new beers. An IPA project is planned, releasing 3 pairs of “IPA” beers with differing combinations of ingredients to compare and contrast. A double IPA is also planned in bottle form and more seasonal beers, many of which will be available at FyneFest.



Black Isle Brewery are hoping to repeat their successful Summer Shindig again in early June which, last year saw about 1000 people enjoy a weekend of camping, music, a giant campfire,



food and of course, beer. Black Isle are also experimenting with new variations of their beers with new staff from the new, hugely expanded brewery. This includes some amazing one-off beers. Unfortunately, some of this experimenting involves producing craft beers i.e. nitro-kegged beer which takes it away from the interest of CAMRA.

Lots more info including their very interesting blog from www.blackislebrewery.com.

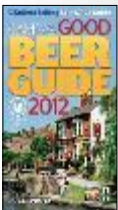
Stein Inn

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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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Isle of Skye, IV55 8GA
Tel: +44 (0)1470-592362
angus.teresa@steininn.co.uk

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hotel*

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Restaurant

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and the 11th Loch Ness Beer Festival 21st to 29th September 2012**



Benlewa Hotel - Kilmora Road - Drumadrochit - IV63 6UH - Tel 01463 450090

What's Yours Then? Newsletter of Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA - Spring 2012

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

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
Claymore Hotel, Naim
The Corner Grill, Inverness
Dores Inn
The Exchange, Inverness
Golf View Hotel, Naim (TP)
Heathmount Hotel, Inverness
Hootananny, Inverness
Innes Bar, Inverness
Invermaime Hotel, Naim (S)
Johnny Foxes, Inverness (TP)
Kings Highway, Inverness (*Wetherspoons*)
Lock Inn, Fort Augustus
Lovat Arms Hotel, Fort Augustus
Nico's Bar, Glen Mhor Hotel, Inverness
Number 27, Inverness

Real Ale Pubs List contd.

Old Mill Inn, Brodie (A&NI)

Phoenix Bar, Inverness

Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Inverness (TP)

Seaforth Club, Naim (Members only) (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

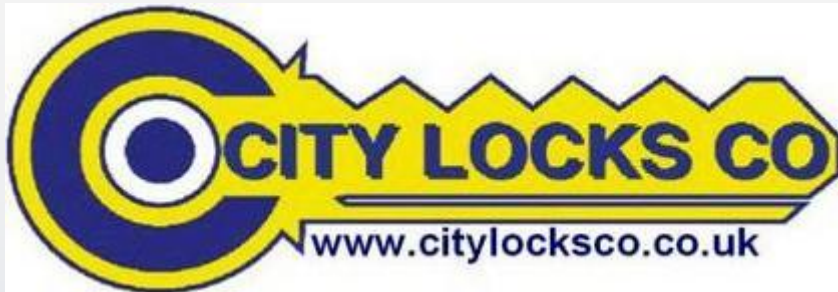
(An inn on a barge on the Caledonian Canal)

Four Seasons, Onich

Glenfinnan House Hotel

Grog & Gruel, Fort William

Glen Nevis Restaurant & Bar



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Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2012

Orkney Brewery - Brewing commenced in March 1988, at the old schoolhouse in Sandwick on Orkney Mainland.

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 brewed.



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.

Isle of Arran Brewery - Located close to Brodick Castle. Opened in late March 2000. Ales include Blonde, Dark, and Sunset.

Fyne Ales Brewery - Based in Argyll, at the head of Loch Fyne, brewing started on Andrew's Day 2001. Ales include Piper's Gold and Maverick.



St



Cairngorm Brewery Company - Set up in late 2001 to market the beers of the Tomintoul & Aviemore breweries, which they own. Ales include Trade Winds, Wildcat, Stag, Highland IPA, and Black Gold. Seasonal ales are regularly brewed.

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).

Atlas Brewery - Closed. Brewing moved to Orkney late in 2010.

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 10th September 2004, in the old public bar of the Sligachan Hotel. Skye, Eagle and Pinnacle 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.

Isle of Mull Brewery - From May 2005 in Tobermory. Sold plant to Oban Bay in 2009.

Sinclair Breweries Ltd - Formed in 2006 by local hotelier and restaurateur Norman Sinclair, who purchased the Orkney 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.



Glenfinnan Brewery - 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 (no real ales).

Plockton Brewery - The first brew was produced on 1st 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.

Loch Ness Brewery - First brews in September 2011. RedNess, HoppyNess, Dark.....

Cromarty Brewery - First brews in December 2011. Happy Chappy, Brewed Awakening.

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 Cachaig Inn somehow falls within the Glasgow & West Scotland branch area!

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 Mhor Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey
 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
 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
 Seafielde Lodge Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey
 Silver Fjord Hotel, Kingussie
 Suie Hotel, Kincaig
 Topsy Laird, Kingussie
 Winking Owl, Aviemore

Real Ale Pubs List contd.

Wester Ross

Applecross Inn
 Arch Inn, Ullapool
 Argyll Hotel, Ullapool
 Aultbea Hotel
 Badachro Inn
 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
 Loch Maree Hotel
 Millcroft Hotel, Gairloch
 Morefield Motel, Ullapool
 Myrtle Bank Hotel, Gairloch (S)
 Old Inn, Gairloch
 Rockvilla Hotel, Lochcarron
 Seaforth Bar & Restaurant, Ullapool
 Steading Cafe & Restaurant, Gairloch (S)
 Strathcarron Hotel
 Tigh-an-Eilean Hotel, Shieldaig
 Torridon Inn

South Skye & Lochalsh

Ardvasar Hotel
 Clachan Bar, Dornie
 Claymore, Broadford
 Dunollie Hotel, Broadford
 Hebridean Hotel, Broadford
 Isle Omsay 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) *Closed October - March*
 Taigh Ailean Hotel, Portnalong

North Skye & Hebrides

An Lanntair, Stomoway
Bakur Bar, Uig
Bosville Hotel, Portree
Borrodale Hotel, South Uist (S)
Carlton Tavern, Stomoway
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
Old Schoolhouse Restaurant, Dunvegan (S)
Royal Hotel, Portree
Stein Inn, Waternish
Tigh Dearg Hotel, Lochmaddy, North Uist
Uig Hotel, Uig
Westford Inn, North Uist

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
Dunroamin Hotel, Bonar Bridge
Eagle Hotel, Dornoch (S)
Golspie Inn (S)
Inchnadamph Hotel (S)
Invershin Hotel
MacKay's Hotel, Wick
Norseman Hotel, Wick
Scourie Hotel, Scourie
Seaview Hotel, John O'Groats
Sutherland Inn, Brora
Tongue Hotel
Trentham Hotel (S)
Ulbster Arms Hotel, Halkirk
The Weigh Inn, Scrabster, Thurso

Real Ale Pubs List contd.

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"NO REAL BEER IN SCOTLAND!"

SCOTTISH CAMRA MEMBERS WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN SHOCKED TO READ IN CAMRA'S NATIONALLY DISTRIBUTED **BEER** QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR SPRING THIS YEAR THE DECLARATION IN AN ARTICLE FEATURING ADRIAN EDMONDSON AND HIS BAND MATES;

ADE: "WE KNOW THAT THERE IS NO REAL BEER IN WALES OR SCOTLAND."

THIS BREATH-TAKING, WRONGHEADED GENERALISATION WAS FURTHER COMPOUNDED BY THE SUB HEADING OF THE ARTICLE INCLUDING:

"... LEARN WHY THERE'S NO GOOD BEER IN SCOTLAND, ..."
OUR REDOUBTABLE BRANCH SECRETARY QUICKLY COMPLAINED TO THE **BEER** EDITOR AND WE AWAIT THE NEXT EDITION OF **BEER** TO SEE IF THIS ATTENTION SEEKING DECLARATION AND POOR, UN-BALANCED SUB-EDITING IS APOLOGISED FOR.

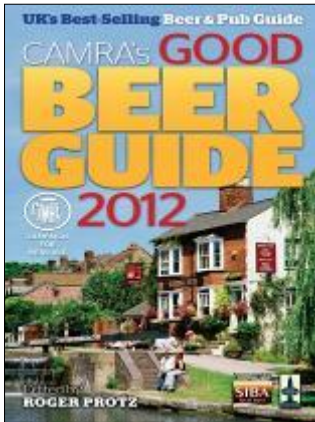
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Guide
2012**

cask-conditioned ale sold per day.

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As well as beers from our 'regulars'

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www.scourie-hotel.co.uk

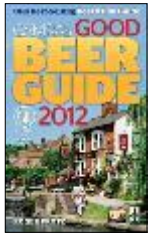
Cask Ales and Real Cider are served

An ideal base for game fishing, hill-walking, bird watching (Handa Island is nearby), or exploring the famed empty quarter of Western Sutherland, a lunar landscape of lochs and mountains.

Overlooking Scourie Bay and with views to the distant tops of Ben Stack, Arkle, and Foinaven.



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.



WESTFORD INN

Claddach Kirkibost, North Uist HS6 5EP
Telephone 01876 580 653

A small, traditional pub (established 1896), part of a historic listed eighteenth century house set in its own grounds on the west coast of North Uist in the Outer Hebrides. Opposite Kirkibost Island on the A865, between the Kirkibost Centre and Balranald bird reserve, 15 minutes drive from Lochmaddy ferry terminal.

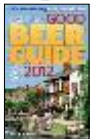
Real ale from the award winning Isle of Skye Brewery. Range of bottled ales and malts. Simple home cooked pub food. Good Beer Guide Listed every year from 2008 to 2012

Summer opening 2012, 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



ONE FOR THE STAIRS

You may or may not have noticed that on the right hand side of the staircase that leads down to the “facilities” in the Castle Tavern, Inverness is a board showing local pub signs. *You’d have to be blind, Or blind drunk, to miss it! Ed*

One of those depicted, “The Bishops Table” particularly intrigued me and I made the decision, fatally as it proved, to ask a local at the bar if he knew where this establishment was or used to be situated. He did not, but with the determination of a Tam Dalziel he would not let this subject drop and roped in several innocent by-standers. It was not long before a fair sized crowd had gathered halfway down the stairs peering closely at “The Bishops Table” sign. This invariably led to glazed looks, muttering of the name and finally a shake of the head by all concerned. My main concern by this time was the backlog of people vainly trying to ascend from or descend to the aforementioned “facilities”. Eventually I convinced everyone that “it didn’t really matter”, though the following week I was triumphantly informed that the Bishops Table was part of the Eden Court set up.

The matter did not quite end there as it was pointed out that the content on the board was hardly all embracing as it omitted places such as Gellions etc.

For what it is worth, therefore, the following is a list of Inverness Taverns given in Slaters Scottish Directory 1860.

Alma Inn (Elizabeth Laing) Culcabock

Balaclava Inn (Elizabeth MacDonald)
2 Meal Market Close

Castle Hill (Charles T Gray) Castle
Wynd

Eagle (Donald Forbes) Baron Taylors
Lane

Farmers Home (Helen Fortune) 1
Cumming Close

Gellions Inn (Gellon) 37 Bridge Street

Grapes (James Tulloch) Grants Close

Haugh Tavern (George Urquhart) 12
View Place

Kessock Inn (Donald Mackay) Kes-
sock Ferry

Loch Gorm Inn (William Macintosh)
33 Petty Street

Macphails Inn (Duncan Macphail) 2
Church Street

New Market Inn (Isabella Mactavish) 2
New Market Close

Ord Cellar (Andrew Walker) Grants
Close

Park Inn (Mary Park) 6 Bridge Street

Plough Inn (Kenneth MacLennan) 44
Petty Street

Ship Inn (D. MacGregor) 11 Shore
Street

Stags Head (Donald Kennedy) 1 Low-
er Kessock Street

Starr Inn (James Reid) Grant Street

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CLICK ON THE YOUR ROUND LINK (in the beer shop page of the web site) FOR FULL BEER LIST AND TASTE NOTES.



Tomnahurich Inn (Alex Fraser) Tomnahurich Street
Trades Arms (Donald Grant) 1 School Lane

There is also a formidable list of “Vintners” but these twenty establishments still form a good basis for any Christmas walkabout should a party of friends so wished. Of course there is no way of knowing if the above list is complete, is there?

Two brewers are also listed in the publication:

George Black, Thornbush Brewery
John Buchanan, Haugh Brewery.

You could deduce from this that all the wares on offer were most certainly “real ales”.

Perhaps they were given local “brand names” such as “Maggots Best” or perhaps a “Rainings” for the more educationally inclined, as in a series of letters written by Edmund Burt to a friend in London during the 1720s the ale is described as “Disagreeable in the extreme, with a tendency to give one a dose of the (how shall I put this?) “Tradewinds””.

The crafty locals apparently laced the beer with brandy or whisky.

In 1719 an act of Parliament gave Inverness Council the right to charge duty of 2 pence (Scots) on every pint of ale brewed and sold in the Burgh for a period of 19 years! The aim of this was to reduce the towns debts and undertake public works. In the first

month £48 13s 8d was raised, representing a total of 5842 pints. Over the next twelve years £3,066 was collected reducing the debt to a mere £232 and work on a new harbour was able to go ahead.

You would have thought, with some justification, that the drinkers of Inverness deserved a well earned pat on the back for all of this, but no, in 1816 the Courier newspaper puts us all in our place:

“An alarm being spread that a gang of coiners and thieves were on their way from Aberdeen, the magistrates, by way of precaution desired all the publicans to be brought before them, licensed and unlicensed.”

A total of 128 appeared although it was thought that another 32 had failed to do so.

The Courier continues:

“A number which, considering the population of Inverness, must have a very pernicious effect on the morals of the people”

Local directories to which I have access would yield up a list of local pubs for every decade between 1860 and 1970. It may be an undertaking worth doing, especially if it could be extended further afield in our area. You decide- I'm off to have “one for the stairs”.

RB



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N ews Snippets from our area;

“Brewery Wars!”

As is normal in a “free” market, customers come and customers go. These changes can be caused by seemingly inconsequential events...

Isle Of Skye brewery and the **Cuillin** brewery are winning and loosing outlets.

Orkney are winning more places on bars, **An Teallach** have come out of their short hibernation and are brewing and delivering beers again. *The beer is as fantastic as ever according to one of their biggest fans!* Plans for the **Moray** brewery have been put on hold for

now.

Great Glen Way look to have doubled the size of their brewery and hope to be selling beer this year.

The rumour of a brewery in **Fort Augustus** remains----- a rumour!

Cromarty are winning bar places on it’s very **Locale** area of the Black Isle.

Black Isle beers are being seen around a bit more than of late.

Another rumour of a possible new brewery, this time in **Dumess** has gone quiet and **Dee-side** brewery have a new brewer and we expect to see their beers back in some of our pubs again. *They have also had a free advert on STV news this evening (Wed 7th March)!*

Tasting meeting

The last Tuesday of February was a tasty treat as 6 of us gathered in Blackfriars for one of our tasting meetings. These are focused on tasting the beer, filling in the official, CAMRA score cards for beer. We compare our individual scores and discuss the varied tastes that each beer divulges.

We started with 1/3 pints of **Beinn Dearg** which was in fine, hoppy form after An Teallach's "hibernation" as they overhauled and enhanced their kit. Scores varied but it averaged an overall 7 (out of 10). The new Orkney beer, **Orkney No. 1** was tried next and was warmly received. A full tasting beer that had caramel and hops building up nicely through the swallow and leaving a good bitter and hoppy aftertaste. This 4.3% beer scored 8's all round. As well as some iced water we were treat-

ed by Del and Janette with baskets of small sausage rolls to refresh our palates between beers. Next up was Cairngorm's seasonal **Capercaille**. Nicely hopped beer at 3.8% with complex tastes but slightly hazy despite being broached 3 days previously. It also had a slight underlying taste of green apples which can point to the beer not being fully conditioned at the brewery. It averaged a score of 5. Last but not least was Highland Brewery's **Orkney Blast**. Dangerously easy to drink at 6%, this beer gives a huge taste which lasts. Underlying sweetness and a fruity taste is accompanied by the warming effect of the alcohol and overall the beer scored an average of 8 giving it equal status with **Orkney No. 1** as our beer of the evening.

4 beers were plenty for any palate so it was then more chat and beer, but pints for those who wanted.

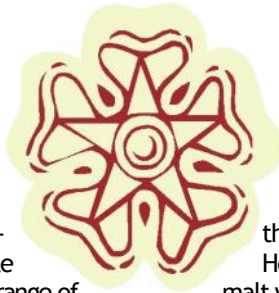
Any CAMRA member can join in these tasting / social meetings so check the diary (page 6 or www.highlandcamra.org.uk) for our next one.

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One of our newest breweries, The Loch Ness Brewery, have been making friends in high places recently.

Not only is **NESS MINISTER**, a 4.5% red ale, on its way to Strangers Bar at The House of Commons, (*see "Order! Order!"*) but the same beer was officially requested to be in attendance at the Scottish Liberal Democrat Conference held recently at Eden Court in Inverness.

Stephen Crossland, co-founder of the Loch Ness Brewery is seen here supping a pint of their special brew with Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg and local MP and Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander.

The beer was also requested by the Palace Hotel in Inverness where the majority of the delegates were staying.

Both expressed their approval of the ale.

"It was (a) great privilege to have our ale at the conference. The brew was specially concocted

for Westminster using a coalition of malts, a liberal use of yeast, a conservative amount of hops to avoid a bitter taste and a great deal of labour in the background" Stephen joked.

We wish he and fellow brewer George Wotherspoon well when they head to sample the beer at Westminster and presume we will hear all about it - but hopefully not on the nine o'clock news!



N.B. CAMRA and its H&WI branch is a non-political organisation! Ed.

R eports from the North

Inverness & District North

Commercial Hotel, Balintore. I am delighted to report that my local "The Com" is now under new management and real ale has been re-introduced. Orkney IPA is presently being dispensed but there are plans to introduce a second handpump in the summer season.

Caithness & Sutherland

Inchnadamph Hotel. Looks somewhat derelict and the locals say it's rarely open and does not sell real ale in the winter months. A further visit during the summer season is planned.

Altnacealgath Inn. Visited here the same day (Friday 30th Dec 2011). Inside lights were on but the door was locked. The owner appeared to tell me that the place was not open. I asked him if he sold real ale and was told there was none on and he emphasised that the place was closed – (*obviously not having a good day!*)

Castle Hotel, Domoch. Several further visits have been made. The ale has been consistently in superb condition.
JD

This is an excellent example of the kind of info anyone can send us to keep us informed of the pub estate in our huge area which we can then publicise — good and if need be, bad. Email us (see page 6) Ed.

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John Aird

We are saddened to announce the passing away of John Aird in February, aged 88. Although born in Dumfries-shire, the call of the mountains and a job vacancy meant a move to Inverness in 1953. He was a very active person with hobbies of long distance walking, mountain climbing, cross

country skiing, orienteering, windsurfing, scuba diving and working on the Strathspey railway. Indeed on his 80th birthday he went snorkelling in Loch Carron! Most of these activities involved visiting a pub for another of his hobbies, drinking real ale. During his time up here, he was Commandant of The North Highland Army Cadet Force, a member of The Scottish Rights of Way Society and Governor of Eden Court Theatre. With all these activities, he still had time for his full time job, as a very respected Solicitor. He joined CAMRA in 1976 and when our Branch formed in 1993, he joined the Committee and was a very active member until into his 80's. His favourite beers were from the Isle of Skye and Cairngorm breweries, along with Harviestoun's Bitter and Twisted. He will always be remembered as an excellent raconteur with his ability to recall beers, breweries, places and dates in such detail. He was a true gentleman and time spent in his company was always very pleasurable.

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Drink Real Ale in a 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.

What do the scores mean?

0 - Undrinkable. No cask ale available or so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it.

1 - Poor. Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to 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 (Please see page 6).



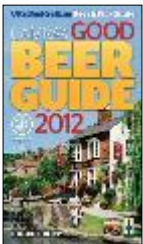
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We hope you have enjoyed reading our Spring newsletter. Unless you intend to keep it for some reason, please **DO NOT** throw it away. Why not pass it on to a friend, or just leave it in a pub somewhere for others to read. Newsletters are often found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

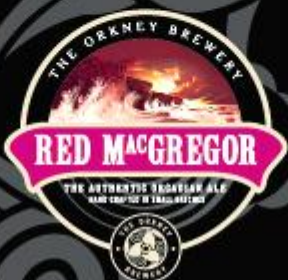


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