

# What's yours then?



CAMRA Highlands & Western Isles | FREE Magazine | Autumn 2015



**Cairngorm Black Gold wins CAMRA  
Champion Beer of Scotland 2015**

**CAMRA awards for Highlands &  
Islands breweries**

**North Hop report**

**POTY winners**

**Glencoe bus beer trip**

**Breweries News**

**Pubs news**

**Visitors' article**



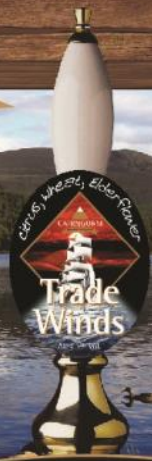
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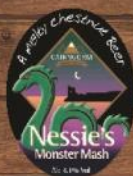
HOME OF "BLACK GOLD"

# GOOD THINGS BREWING IN THE HIGHLANDS



AWARD WINNING BEERS

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Cairngorm Brewery, based in Aviemore in the Cairngorms National Park has a range of permanent and seasonal cask beers to suit all tastes.

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## SPECIAL ALES FOR 2015

(March to December)



**W**elcome... to the Autumn issue of our quarterly magazine. In this edition:

not only, but also:

- > CAMRA H & I beers awards
- > POTY winners
- > Brewery and Beers news and pubs news
- > Glencoe beer trip report
- > Updated Real Ale pubs list
- > Focus on .. Alan Pearson
- > Scotland road trip article from visiting CAMRA member
- > Updated branch diary
- > North Hop report

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

Full Page Advert..... £95.00

Half Page Advert..... £55.00

Quarter Page Advert..... £30.00

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.

**Please be aware that the CAMRA logo is copyrighted and should not be used in pub adverts.**

**An average of 3500+ 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.

It's Autumn so less visitors, this issue is **4000copies**.

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, keeping 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.

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Winter edition **deadline** is Monday 23rd Nov, for publication by mid December.

**A**s you can guess and see in this edition, the branch are very pleased to see 3 out of the top 4 real ales in Scotland coming from breweries in our branch area. Cairngorm has been around for quite a long time now and has many, many awards for it's beers. Black Gold is one of my personal favourites—I tend to prefer the dark side—(pause for a slurp of Dark Island) – so for it to get the Champion Beer of Scotland is brilliant! Rob and Lewis at Highland (Swanney) (Aberdeen and Northern Isles branch) must be well pleased with the Silver award and Cromarty getting Bronze for Red Rocker is great—especially a brewery that is only 3 years old.

A momentous branch AGM will take place in the Phoenix on 12th January and it is vital that as many people as possible turn up to it.

Also, please take 5 minutes to log on to [CBOBvoting.org.uk](http://CBOBvoting.org.uk) and put in your votes for your favourite beers. You don't have to give votes in every category, just the ones you know and love. This small thing will mean that you are an active CAMRA member and helping real ale.

Cheers,  
Ed.



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# Highland and Islands Breweries gather more CAMRA Awards

At the Scottish Real Ale Festival (SRAF) held in Edinburgh earlier this year, the Champion Beer of Scotland (CBOB) was chosen. In a great scoop for the Highlands and Islands, the top ales all came from “up North”.

The Champion for 2015 is Cairngorm **Black Gold** and Cairngorm can now add “Champion Beer of Scotland 2015” to their pump clips, etc.—if they can fit it on beside all the other awards! (See presentations photos further on in the magazine)



Silver went to Highland (or is that Swannay Brewery now? They are in the middle of a large production expansion and re-branding and are very proud and pleased with this accolade as well as many others.)

**Scapa Special** and the Bronze award went to Cromarty **Red Rocker**. Cairngorm **Wildcat** got 4th place.

Also in the shortlist were: Houston **IPA**, Williams **Black**, Stewart **Edinburgh No.3**, Kelburn **Jaguar** and Broughton **Old Jock**.

Also at SRAF, 2 heats of CAMRA’s Champion Beer of Britain (CBOB) were held.

In the **Stouts** category, the results were:

- 1st Cairngorm **Black Gold**
- 2nd An Teallach **Hector**
- 3rd Loch Ness **DarkNESS**
- 4th Highland **Sneaky Wee Orkney Stout**
- 5th Kelburn **Cart Noir**

In the **Barley Wines/ Strong Old Ales** category the results were:

- 1st Orkney **Skull Splitter**
- 2nd Loch Ness **Prince of DarkNESS**
- 3rd Isle of Skye **Cuillin Beast**
- 4th Highland **Old Norway**
- 5th Broughton **Old Jock**.

The category winners go through to the next round to be judged at next year’s Great British Beer Festival.

Congratulations to all the breweries on these

worthy achievements.

Speaking of GBBF, as usual, this years CBOB awards were announced on the first day of the festival at Olympia.

Scottish entries did well and gained the following awards:

Runner up to the Supreme Champion of 2015 was Kelburn **Jaguar**.

Williams **Black** was awarded Gold in the Mild category  
Highland **Scapa Special** won Silver in the Best Bitter category  
In the Golden category, Kelburn **Jaguar** won Gold

Lastly in these awards, Fyne Ales got the Silver award for their **Superior IPA** in the Champion Bottle-Conditioned Beer.

Also at the GBBF this August, Cromarty’s **Red Rocker** was a CBOB 2015 finalist as was Cairngorm **Wildcat**.



**Orkney Brewery** celebrated another award this summer. Their new **Orkney Gold** a 4.5 % craft keg lager won Silver in the Premium Lager and Pilsner category at the SIBA North region competition in Nottingham.

Back to CAMRA and at the Glasgow Real Ale Festival held at The Briggait at the end of June, **Wooha Porter** was voted the beer of the festival by the attendees out of more than 150 beers!



Ray Turpie, CAMRA Scotland & Northern Ireland Regional Director presenting the CBOB Quaich to Cairngorm’s Ian McBean, Head Brewer and Alison Graham, Sales Executive.



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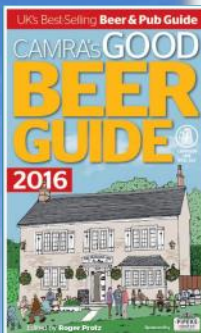
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# A few days in Stornoway

*As you should know, the Western Isles are part of our huge branch area. Loch Ness Brewery's involvement in HebCelt gives the opportunity for a snapshot of the real ale "scene" - at least in Stornoway. About 15,000 people attend — a great, family, music event — on a Scottish island! - Ed.*

**HebCelt** In July the Hebridean Celtic Festival celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the Isle of Lewis. Fringe events were happening around the area over the 4 days but the main music event which included Karen Matheson, Afro Celt Sound System, Shooglenifty, Le Vent du Nord, Alasdair White and Iain Morrison was in the main arena, in the grounds of Lewis Castle. There was plenty of food stalls, a circus tent, a magician, craft stalls, bouncy castle, face painting, kids workshop and a musicians signing and products

tent – something for all the family. Now, thunder and heavy rain was forecast for the Friday but other than some wind, did not happen. We had drizzle most of Saturday afternoon but we did also have some sunshine. The weather did not affect the music in the two marquees or the acoustic tent. The Loch Ness Brewery had their bar in the acoustic tent and had 10 of their beers on in rotation on the 6 hand pumps plus some cider. On the first night, Thursday, 18 gallons of **HopyNESS** was the first to finish. There was also some **SaaziNESS** served on gravity in the VIP bar. There were quite a few 'regular' customers that have built up over the last 3 years and a few others that had heard that the bar was there. However, there were still some turning up on Saturday in dismay that they had missed real ale on the previous nights.

**Hebridean Brewery** The Hebridean Brewery is



Steve and Isla tending the Loch Ness bar in the acoustic tent

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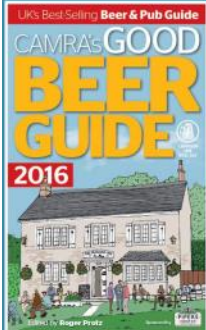
**REAL ALES FROM ONLY SCOTTISH BREWERIES**



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**PUB OF THE YEAR**

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TENT AND  
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**JUST A FEW OF THE MANY BREWERIES**



now fully open in their larger premises closer to the ferry terminal. Andy Ribbens showed me around and told me of plans to turn a section into a visitors centre and shop with a bar. They are in full production, mainly with bottles at the moment, which are out in many shops and restaurants on the islands and also on the mainland. Cask is available and will be more prominent as they find outlets. They are in negotiations with An Lanntair to re-instate their hand pump there.

**Carlton** Has two hand pumps in the bar and will take the beers through to the lounge. They sell Isle of Skye beers and while I was there **Cuillin Beast** was the only one on, a bit strong for a session but it tasted very good. This is where quite a few of the local real ale drinkers have been popping in over the years and I met up with two local CAMRA members Jim Bruce and Don Catteral.

**Crown Inn** Punch Taverns took over and recently finished refurbishing this harbour front hotel and are advertising it as a Craft Beer Bar. Upstairs is the dining room overlooks the harbour with a lounge bar and downstairs the main bar which is called the Harbour Bar. Staff



The refurbished Harbour Bar at the Crown Inn

are still getting use to running this new bar and had a very busy weekend with customers of all ages. There are two hand pumps in each bar and depending on custom, have one or two real ales on – the same cask goes to each bar. Their beers come from the Punch list and while I was there they had Shepherd Neame **Spitfire**, Robinsons **Trooper** and Caledonian **Deuchars** which were OK. The real ale did run out with nothing ready to replace them on the Saturday night.

**Elsewhere** At present there are no other real ale outlets in Stornoway. I did have a very good bottle of Skye Gold in the excellent Digby Chick Restaurant – their early evening menu is a very good deal.

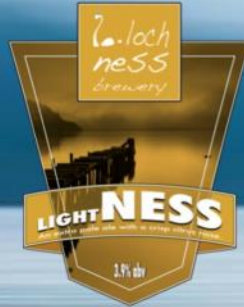
## **FERMENT**

While in London, I picked up a copy of “FERMENT” “experiments in the global craft alcohol movement”. This 24 page, colour newspaper is produced ,mainly in Edinburgh, to promote craft beer and features a mix of top writers and illustrators. It is very “hip” and is following and promoting fashions in beer—the current fashion seems to be “saison” style beers. It is so hip and trendy that some of the writers use swears and wordies! (*you might detect some sarcasm here — the lowest form of wit — for which I apologise—Ed.*)

A major reason for the paper is to advertise beer52.com an online, bottled beer shop which promotes “THE FRESHEST BEER from brewery to your glass in 4–6 weeks of being brewed”. Harumph, still, no denying that craft beer is big and growing rapidly.



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# How much for a half?

As you can read in the Glencoe trip piece, CAMRA is now in the process of gathering information on half pint prices. This follows a successful CAMRA AGM resolution which, in part, condemned the practice of some licensed premises charging much more than half the price of a pint of ale for a half pint.

Although less profitable for a bar to be selling half pints, it makes a lot of sense to try half pints of ale. The imbibers can try more of the available ales, it is healthier and if driving, in these days of the reduced drink—drive limit in Scotland, if a driver **chooses to have an alcoholic drink**, it is much more sensible and safer to just have a half pint rather than a pint. If the bar has them, the driver might then choose to take home a couple of pints of their chosen ale in a carry out container.

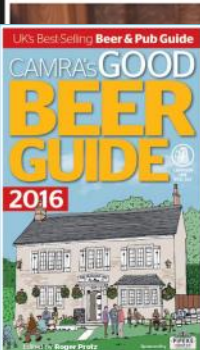
So far in the Highlands, we are pleased to find that the majority of real ale places do charge exactly half. Exceptions include three places in Inverness that overcharge and two rural places that, it turns out, for a half pint — undercharge!

## Deenos in Academy Street

For the past two years, we have been waiting for the historic, former Foundry building in Academy Street to begin to be restored, made useful and eventually, the bar to be “reborn” into a real ale “palace”. Another summer (what summer?) has rolled by and nothing has happened. As the building is such an icon, the design and planning is very complex and time consuming. Cairngorm are very pleased with the success they have made by renovating the Winking Owl in Aviemore — very well done — so hopefully, something will happen soon.



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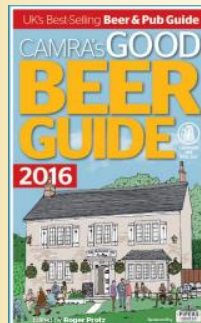
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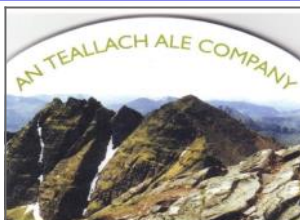
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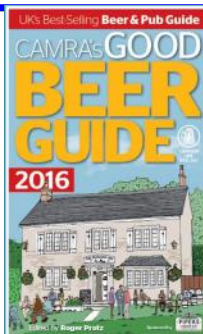
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### A Motorhome trip around Scotland

For the last four years my wife, our son and I have toured continental Europe in our motorhome during the summer, with several weeks being spent sampling some of the wonderful beers produced in Germany. This year, however, we decided to stay closer to home and spend a month touring Scotland. Apart from the odd short trip previously we had not spent any length of time north of the border, and I had not really had the chance to appreciate the quality and variety of cask ales available. So armed with a copy of the 2015 Good Beer Guide and a smartphone with access to WhatPub we decided to brave the midges and travel in June.

..... *Taking their time to get up to the Highlands, the travelers included a very successful visit to FyneFest at Fyne Ales brewery. ....*



..... Now it was on to the Highlands and Western Isles branch of CAMRA, which seems to cover a massive area compared to the relatively small patch that is the Bristol and District branch, where the furthest pub is only about 45 minutes from the city centre. Glencoe was our first stop here at the Camping & Caravanning Club site next to visitor centre. The campsite wardens told us it was too dangerous to walk along the main road to the GBG-listed **Clachaig Inn**, but recommended the **Glencoe Gathering** in the village. This was a short walk along a footpath and on arrival at



the pub we were pleasantly surprised to find that it served two cask ales from the local River Leven brewery. Both were in good condition and we lingered a while for a game of pool. (This pub was not on WhatPub, so I submitted an update to the branch on my return to Bristol).

Next day we carried on northwards through Fort William, past Ben Nevis, then briefly visiting the Isle of Skye, via the Skye Bridge (as it is now free!), then back to Plockton where we called at the **Plockton Hotel** for an early even-



*(Continued on page 14)*

ing pint of the excellent Cromarty brewery **Kowabunga**. After a free overnight stop in a layby above Loch Carron we had a very scenic drive to Poolewe, where we found the Camping & Caravanning club site near the beautiful Inverewe Gardens – well worth a visit. It was a short walk into the village where at the **Poolewe Hotel** there were two cask ales from the local An Teallach brewery available, both in good condition. Next day we walked around Inverewe Gardens (National Trust for Scotland), where there were exotic plants from all over the world (as well as some midges – the first time we had really been troubled by them), before another walk into the village for more An Teallach beers and fish and chips from the mobile van that arrived in the village.

Another scenic drive followed the next day, along the coast and then eastwards to Inverness, where we found a campsite just outside the city centre. It was a very pleasant walk along the River Ness into the city and over the next couple of days we sampled some excellent Scottish beers at the **Phoenix Ale House, Blackfriars, Castle Inn, King’s Highway, Number 27 Bar** and, the oldest pub in Inverness,

off at **Blackfriars**, which seemed to have a collection of various branch magazines for perusal. The beer quality in all of these pubs was very good and I was particularly impressed with the range of styles available, including beers from Cairngorm, Loch Ness, Isle of Skye and Speyside breweries.



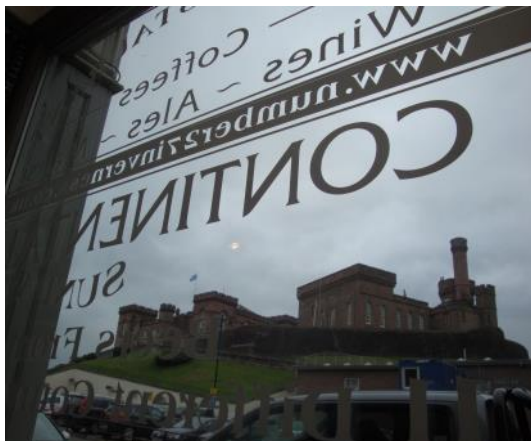
... They continued and managed to do a complete circle around Scotland - East, South-East and then West to eventually head back down to Bristol. ....

All in all it had been an excellent four weeks in Scotland despite the mixed, mainly damp, weather. But the weather seemed to deter the midges so there was a silver lining. Pub and beer quality was in nearly all cases very good (all scored on NBSS on WhatPub!) and we were lucky to be able to sample a selection of beers rarely available south of the border. We will return!

Martin Gray

Bristol & District CAMRA

*Thank you Martin, a great advert for visiting the Highlands & (an) Island and thanks for putting in your WhatPub scores and update. – Ed.*



**Gellions** where we escaped the heavy rain and were treated to some live Scottish music to go along with our well-kept Cromarty beers. I even managed to drop a copy of the latest edition of the (award-winning!) Bristol & District CAMRA branch magazine, Pints West,

## MacGregor’s Bar?

It looks like Brian MacGregor is pushing ahead with his plans to turn the OLD car showroom at the end of Academy Street, almost opposite The Ironworks, into a bar/venue. We await developments with interest but at least it will improve Academy Street.

# Glencoe Minibus Trip

Our second minibus trip of the year was down to Glencoe with one of the goals to visit the **Clachaig Inn**. Our Highlands & Western Isles Branch has only recently "acquired" this inn, along with the nearby **Kings House Hotel** from our neighbouring Glasgow Branch. Although obviously in the Highlands, historically Glasgow had always held these pubs but successful raiding parties over a couple of regional meetings has now meant they are located in their logical CAMRA branch home.

Leaving the Inverness Townhouse at 9am on Sat 27th June, our first port of call on the way to Fort William was the **Stronlossit Inn** at Roy Bridge. A Good Beer Guide regular for many years we were delighted to see owners Maurice & Sandra have been able to move up to four handpumps. On offer today were Cairngorm **Tradewinds** & **Wildcat** with Orkney **Red Macgregor** and Highland **Island Hopping**. All in excellent condition warranting CAMRA beer scores of 4's and 4.5's. As we were enjoying these super ales Sandra, very kindly, provided us with some bacon rolls. Wishing we could have stayed longer it was time to hit Fort W. As we drove into Lochaber district, the wel-



come to Lochaber road sign raised a smile with its picture of two crossed Lochaber Axes, which hardly portray welcome! Anyhow I have always thought they should have been two crossed windscreen wipers as right on cue it had started raining - good old Lochaber weather. To be fair only a brief shower and when we reached the Wetherspoon's **Great Glen** in town it was fine again. Seven ales available here plus **Old Rosie** cider. Their house ale from Strathaven, **Great Glen** was very good (4). Also tried were Black Wolf **Florida Stout**, Atlas **Wayfarer** and Strathaven **500**, scoring 2.5 and 3's. **Deuchars**, **Broadside** and Titanic **Desert Hero** were also available. A short walk to the **Ben Nevis Bar** where we had Harvestoun **Bitter & Twisted** and Taylor's **Boltmak-**

**er** both scoring 2.5. Also on was **Deuchars**. A change of ownership has sadly meant Loch Ness Brewery beers are no longer stocked. Mid high street and into the **Grog & Gruel** where there was Skye **IPA & Red**, **Wildcat**, River Leven **IPA** (1.5) and a very good AnTeallach **Sheneval** (4). Down to Crofter Bar there were clips for **Deuchars** & **Flying Scotsman** but no ale to go with them, (*on a busy Saturday!* - Ed.) so on to **Cobbs at Nevisport** pausing for a minute to watch the brilliantly staged and funny sheep racing which was great for the many tourists! The interior has been redecorated and very smart and light it is too, without taking away the homely bar ambience. Orkney **Puffin & Dark Island** and Skye **IPA** on tap, all three scoring 3.5's. Also, a friendly, informative chat with a local which is common place at this pub whenever we visit.

Time to hit the road again and a short drive took us to the busy **Ben Nevis Inn** which is located at the bottom of the tourist path to the mountain. Cairngorm **Tradewinds** (3.5) & **Wildcat** plus River Leven **Blonde** (2.5) on here. A busy pub with a small cellar means this is one of very few places which takes beer in great big 18 gal casks instead of the regular 9 gal. Next stop was a new outlet to us, the **Loch Leven Hotel** where we had arranged to meet Harry Heskey the owner of River Leven Ales. The hotel is located in beautiful surroundings and we able to enjoy both River Leven **Blonde** (3) and **IPA** (4). River Leven Ales is a one man operation with Harry covering all aspects of the business which means nearly all the output is supplied to the local area with some deliveries to Edinburgh. Harry has also recently produced a 4.8% keg **Pilsner** which was on the bar here. We had a good chat with him and then we had to get on with our schedule. Harry left on his beautiful, self restored, classic Norton.





# CAWDOR TAVERN

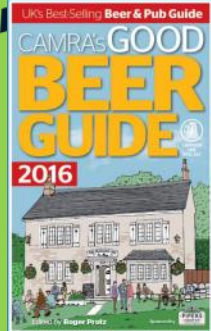
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Now on to our two newly "acquired" outlets. Onto the **Clachaig Inn** where we turned off the main road just after the Glencoe Visitor centre where we dropped 3 of our party off before heading to the **Kings House Hotel** which is further down the A82 Glasgow road. You turn off the main road and a little way down is the hotel. Remote it may be, but people obviously seek it out as it was busy. Two Cairngorm ales on here **Stag & Tradewinds**, both scoring 4's. The added bonus of its situation is that deer often venture very close to the building and quite a few folk were taking photos of the magnificent stag which was feeding close by with a few female deer around. A very friendly & Scottish feeling hotel without being twee.



Going back on ourselves to Glencoe we arrived back at the **Clachaig** to find our forward party. Being a Saturday, the Boots bar was already geared up for a busy evening with a tremendous array of twelve ales on offer.

Our opening ale of Williams **7 Giraffes** was sadly below par only worthy of a 1. Everything else we tried was on good form scoring from 2.5 to 4 and they would have scored even higher if they had been a little cooler - we were there during the afternoon lull which meant the ales were going very slowly. **Black Wolf Gold Digger** (3) and **Big Red**, **Orkney Raven & Corncrake**, **Cairngorm Tradewinds** and **Highland IPA** (3.5), **An Teallach Sheneval** (3.5) & **Beallach Na Ba** (2.5) - (named after "The pass of the cattle" near Applecross.), **Loch Lomond Southern Summit** (4) & **Ale of Leven** and **Atlas Latitude** (4).

In addition to all these ales there was a large array of keg beers without a national brand in sight. Very heartening and a little brave I would think. No Guinness here but **Loch Ness Stout** and **Cairngorm Black Gold**, both regular and in extra cold!. A range of lagers featuring **Cairngorm**

**Lager**, **Williams draught lager** and **Caesar Augustus plus Orkney Gold**. Also available was **keg Thistly Cross 4.4% cider** as well as the **6.9% Whisky Cask** on handpump. Good to see only Scottish produced beer from our excellent breweries - just what I would want to find if I was a visitor to the Highlands.

Just as the walkers started to arrive back from the mountains and hills it was time for us to head home.

We stopped off in Onich at the **Four Seasons**, a chalet and camping site which has a welcoming onsite bar. One handpump on with **River Leven Blonde** (3). We managed to get to **Fort Augustus** before we needed a comfort stop and took the opportunity to call in and see Chris at the **Caledonian Hotel**. Open between Easter and October the hotel always has ale on as Chris is an enthusiast. Both **Cairngorm Stag** and **Highland IPA** were on, scoring 3's.

On this trip we were monitoring the price differential between halves and pints and are very happy to report that in most places the smaller measure was half the price of the pint with the exception of the **Loch Leven Hotel** where there was a 10p levy as was the case in the **Ben Nevis Inn**. This is now something CAMRA HQ is looking into as it penalises drinking in smaller amounts and trying more ales. Personally, I think a 5p difference is ok but we are aware of a couple of establishments on our patch where it is more than 10p and I don't think this is acceptable. Pricewise, apart from **Wetherspoons** at £2.16/£1.08, we had **Cobbs** at £2.95/£1.48 and points in between to **Loch Leven Hotel** at £3.90/ £2.05. An excellent trip out, with thanks to **Sandy** from **Fraser's Coaches** for his usual safe driving and calm acceptance of our route demands and to **Maurice & Sandra** at the **Stronlössit** for their kind hospitality.

One down point was that the bus was only half full. Why not join us on the 26th September for our trip to **Aviemore & beyond**? We plan to be visiting **Cairngorm Brewery** and with a 90 minute stop in **Aviemore**, there are a good few places to choose from! Onwards then to all (or most) of the real ale places either side of the A9 as far South as **The Glen** in **Newtonmore**, returning via **Suie** (**Kincaig**) with a last port of call at **Rowanlea Bar** at the **Cairn Hotel** in **Carrbridge**. Fares are only £15 for CAMRA members.

HBH

## Champion Beer Presentations



Most of the staff at Cairngorm Brewery with the Champion Beer of Scotland (CBOS) 2015 Quaiich for **Black Gold** gathered in the brewing hall — and the 2 CBOS award certificates for this great Real Ale, presented by H&WI Committee member Simon Urry and Cairngorm Sales Director, Merlin Sandbach in the right hand photo.

*Unfortunately, taking photos using a normal digital camera in a warm and humid brewing hall with bright ceiling lights does not work very well. Editor's apologies to branch committee member, branch webmaster and professional photographer, Steve Wilson.*



Yours truly presenting Craig with the CBOS Bronze award certificate for Cromarty **Red Rocker** on the left and most of the happy band of Cromarty brewery staff with the certificate in the right hand photo.

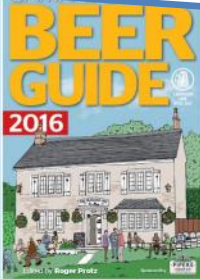
*Photos taken outside in bright, dry weather!*



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# Visit to GBBF 2015

After enjoying GBBF 2013, my better half suggested a 2 day trip to London and what do you know? It was the week that GBBF was on! I got tickets for the Thursday session and after our bleary eyed, 7.00 am Easyjet trip down to a wet Gatwick, we arrived at Olympia mid afternoon.

The huge hall (and 2nd hall) were noticeably quieter but I think we were on a Friday in 2013, so this time it was easier to get served.

As I like my dark ales, I started with the 4.5% **Oatmeal Stout** from 360 degrees in East Sussex. It was lovely, nicely balanced between malt and bitter chocolate with plenty of underlying licourice in the taste. However, I found that the ale "died" about halfway down my glass. This happened to a couple of the other ales I tried which all began really well.



At another of the CAMRA bars, I just had to try Thurston's of Surrey's 4.5% **Milk Stout**. As the festival tasting notes said, it had a sweetish taste through it with plenty of malt balance and a slightly dry finish but I couldn't detect any chocolate taste. The sweet taste actually did remind me of the taste of milk which is going off! It was a good ale.

After trying great ales from Marble brewery in Manchester at The Bandstand, I tried Marble's 6.8% **Earl Grey IPA**. A good version of an IPA, it had plenty of taste and was dangerously drinkable.

Ales from Yorkshire are usually good so I tried **Scarborough Fair** - a 6.0% ale from Wold Top, North Yorkshire. Plenty of hops in this brew and very pale - also gluten free. Very nice.

At the Shepard Neame, Battle of Britain themed bar, their new **Red Sails Cherry Porter** beckoned.

A 4.0%, so session strength, porter with plenty of cherries added. The cherries were very apparent on the nose and throughout the taste but were well balanced with traditional porter notes. Lovely and even Val liked it. In fact it was so nice that we had a 2nd later on which goes against the point of attending a beer festival but, ach! If you like it .....

This year there was noticeably more seating with picnic benches in many areas and plenty of seats upstairs on the public gallery. After her 2nd ale, Val decided to go to her preferred, white wine - helped by a wine bar in the hall being open. We were also able to sit at tables here so win-win. Casting the beer net wider, from the Belgain Beers bar, De Ryck's **Special** 5.5% was tried. It was supposed to have honey, malts and herbs in the aroma with sweet malts up front and a bitter finish. It was in great nick but a Belgian sourness was prevalent. From Kekom, their **Bloesem** 7.1% was poured from a chilled bottle - a light, cloudy, copper coloured ale with plenty of floral hop aromas. Slightly sweet malty tastes were well bal-

*(Continued on page 23)*

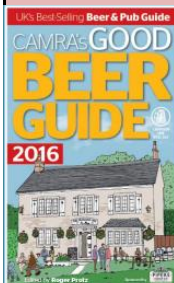


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# Westford Inn

The Westford Inn at Claddach Kirkibost, on the Western side of North Uist was one of ten places on the Western Isles that sold real ale and has even appeared in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide over a number of years.

After hearing reports of its closure earlier in the year, the branch made enquiries with the then owner, Elisabeth Jarvis, who confirmed Westford Inn had indeed closed, and was on the market.



On checking the agents listings in May we found an asking price of £235,000. Referring to local press reports, there were concerns that the only “pub” on North Uist would be lost and would become a private home.

Of course, there are other places on North Uist that sell Real Ale. These include **Lochmaddy Hotel** and **Hamersay House** (both in Lochmaddy) and seasonally, **Langass Lodge** (Loch Elport) which are all hotels, but still have a bar / lounge open to the general public who can use the facility without having to stay in the hotel, or have a meal in the restaurant - this meets the CAMRA definition of a “pub”.

However, referring to a map, it is clear to see that the Westford Inn is remote from

the others, and indeed serves the needs of the immediate local community.

We saw a series of articles in Island News and Advertiser about the potential community buy-out. If this had gone through we believe that this would have been the second such community buy-out in Scotland, the first being **The Crook Inn** (just off the A701 road between Moffatt and Broughton) in the Scottish Borders which is now run by the Tweedsmuir Community Company.

Interested in the development of this opportunity, we contacted Western Isles Councillor Neil Beaton who kindly regularly kept us informed of developments. Neil was delighted to advise us that, with massive approval of the community, Colin and Eilidh Murray have now bought Westford Inn and they managed to reopen in September.

Eilidh’s parents live in nearby Scolpaig (less than 10 miles away) so she is very much a “local girl”.

The locals are very much looking forward to the Westford Inn once again being the hub of the community, and welcoming the many tourists who visit the Western Isles, and Real Ale being available again - including Neil!

We wish Colin and Eilidh and their one year old son, Struan, all the very best for the future years, and invite any one reading this to visit the “new” Westford Inn - and tell them “CAMRA sent you”.

We also look forward to reports from not just CAMRA members but also members of the public who will once again be able to enjoy real ale at Westford Inn on North Uist.

## Pub News - Autumn 2015

**Castletown Hotel** - Castletown, nr Thurso, and **Norseman Hotel** - Wick - have both stopped RA, still bottled Orkney available. They are sister hotels run by the same family.

Also in the Western Isles, **An Lantair**, in Stornoway, has been confirmed as having the real ale hand pull removed. However, a Hebridean Brewery hand pump might be going in soon! Bottled beer is still available.

Also on the Western Isles, North Uist this time, we are pleased to report that **Westford Inn** has now been sold to Colin and Eilidh Murray who intend to put the Pub back into the heart of the community. It reopened in September. (see report) In June, the **Melvaig Inn**, North of Gairloch closed. With such a magnificent view, Ian the owner has decided to convert it to a private house for himself.

Apparently the locals in Melvaig have a site and are hoping to open a community owned and run pub soon .

After refurbishment, **Scotch & Rye** (use to be Sammis) opened at the end of July at 21 Queensgate opposite the Main Post Office In Inverness. Owned by the same people as Bar One, it will mainly offer cocktails etc, but it is understood that bottled real ale and “craft” beers will be available. Martin Grey, a CAMRA member from Bristol reported River Leven Ales available at **Glencoe Inn**, on the other side of the road

from the village.

Although we previously advised that **The Plough Inn** in Rosemarkie would be re-opening mid June, there were additional and substantial works that needed doing so that date was missed. However we are pleased to confirm that it opened its doors on Friday 14 August. The two hand pumps are offering Cromarty ales. We are also pleased to advise that **Plough Inn** are offering a discount of 20p/pint, 10p/half for CAMRA members.

Although the intention was to take real ale after Easter, **Culbokie Inn** has decided to stick with kegged Cromarty Happy Chappy. **The Glen** Newtonmore, no longer offers cider on the fourth hand pump, however it is now being used to serve an additional real ale!

Also in Newtonmore, we are saddened to hear that **The Lodge** has been demolished after a long closure.

Further down, off the A9, in Kingussie, the **Silver Fjord** has been closed for some-time.

However, good news in Kingussie is that the Scot House Hotel has recently changed ownership and they have 2 real ales on.

**Golspie Inn** - Has a new minibus and is offering to collect and return people to Golspie Inn on a free of charge basis. They are also intending to use the minibus during the day for heritage, golf and local tours and airport transfers.

As one door closes, several open!

## More Praise for Cromarty Brewing

In the Autumn BEER magazine which is free to CAMRA members, Des de Moor, the bottled beer expert and CAMRA writer, praised Cromarty Rogue Wave — “all superbly balanced.”

In his column he started that paragraph : “I featured Cromarty Brewing Company ..... in this column only recently, but I make no apologies for highlighting it again”



anced against sour notes. Too easy to drink at that ABV.

Some excellent food was tried before a last beer was chosen - this time, from the American draught bar. Connecticut's Overshores Brewing Co. offered their 6.4% **Blanc de Blanche Dry Hop** - their version of a Belgian Wit style beer. It was a lovely, huge beer to finish on.

That afternoon's band - "Creagan & Co" - run by Jim Creagan who played lead guitar and co-wrote with Rod Stewart, many of his early hits, - was excellent and underappreciated by the noisy crowd. By 7 it was busier and there was more "buzz".

One mystery from 2013 was solved. Back then, I noticed and reported the cheer that would ripple round the huge exhibition hall from time to time - it was like a sonic, Mexican Wave. Well, this visit I witnessed the start of several. It happened when ever a *butterfingere*d individual dropped and smashed their festival beer glass!

Relaxing at the wine bar, allowed people watching and 1 thing that struck us were the CAMRA stewards. Many of these marvelous, helpful souls were getting about with the help of a walking stick or a full-on hospital crutch. GBBF and indeed the entire structure of CAMRA would not be possible without the commitment of volunteers but GBBF attracts thousands of punters, many not CAMRA members. The CAMRA image these non members get a snapshot of is a mixed one. Many attendees are young-ish and now I come to think about it, unlike the demographic of the London area, the overwhelming majority I saw were white, Anglo-Saxon.

I suggest CAMRA could spread it's Real Ale message wider and attract a greater mix of people. To finish, I have to re-iterate that attending a GBBF is a must for anyone who appreciates good Real Ale. It is an amazing experience to take part in what will always be the biggest ale festival anywhere in the world.

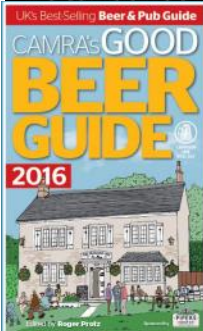


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# H&WI Breweries News

As part of CAMRA's support for real ale and real ale breweries, volunteers from among the branch membership can be Brewery Liaison Officers. BLOs keep in contact with "their" brewery, encouraging and if appropriate, advising.

BLOs are asked to make a progress report to CAMRA every 3 months, via the CAMRA website.

In Highlands & Western Isles branch, we now have 12 or 13 breweries. Our magazine is also quarterly so what follows is the news we have over the past 3 months.

Other CAMRA branch magazines publish news from their breweries written by the breweries themselves. This is free publicity to the very customer base that you want to appeal to.

Some of our breweries don't even have a CAMRA member on their staff but we would be happy to take any news you care to pass on to us—see the contact info on the diary page.

## Cromarty Brewing Co;

Working hard as ever to try to keep up with demand for their beers. The new, 2nd brewer, Italian brewster, Alessandra Confessore who joined the brewery in July after working at Harviestoun and then Drygate, is settling in well, taking some of the brewing load off Craig (and Jenni).

A fully automatic, 2000 bottles per hour bottling line is being delivered in September to take most of the labour intensity out of bottling the beer. It will replace the semi-automatic, 4 bottles at a time, line and once it is in and fully operational, will ensure even better consistency in the bottled beer. The new line will be squeezed in to an alcove in the busy brewery hall.

## Black Isle Brewing Company;

The old, 5 barrel brew kit has been moved

from the original brewery building for speciality, one off brews. A Hefe-Weizen was brewed recently. Had a busy bar again at Belladrum and a busy weekend at the annual Jocktober Fest which takes place at the brewery.

## Loch Ness Brewery;

Their first order of casks have gone to New England. An extra large order of bottles have gone to Russia which has meant they have had to do extra brews. They have taken on a third brewer, Mal Anderson. Andy Lach has joined as the new delivery driver.

## Cairngorm Brewery;

Bottle Tradewinds with a "Gentlemen of the Road" label especially for the Aviemore "Stopover" music festival was produced. One local store sold 90 dozen bottles of it in just 5 days. At the festival itself over 200 casks of Cairngorm ale were sold. Had another busy weekend in Aviemore when the Harley's came up for Thunder in the Glen and did a special label run of bottles for that event.

## Cuillin Brewery;

Nothing new reported this quarter.



## Hebridean Brewing Company Ltd;

The Hebridean Brewery is now fully open in their larger premises closer to the ferry terminal. Plans to turn a section into a visitors' centre and shop with a bar. They are in full production, mainly with bottles at the moment, which are out in many shops and restaurants on the islands and also on the mainland.





Cask is available and will be more prominent as they find outlets.

**An Teallach Ale Company;**

Nothing new heard from them.

Their **Crofters Pale Ale** was on 1 of the CAMRA bars at GBBF and going well.



**Isle of Skye Brewing Co;**

A new beer is out, mainly in bottles called **Yer Ben** and is a 5.5% creamy smooth hopped golden ale. This is a collaboration between



the Brewery and Scotland's Michelin star chef Tom Kitchen who has a restaurant in Edinburgh. Crowd funding is still on-going as they expand their business. They have added 60 barrels of fermenting and conditioning storage, bringing fermenting up to 140 barrels and condition-



ing up to 180 barrels. Isle of Skye were the main sponsors of this years Scottish Real Ale Festival in Edinburgh.

**Plockton Brewery;**

Nothing new reported this quarter.



**Old Inn Brewery;**

No News. The 100 litre, micro brewery which is housed behind the Old Inn at Gairloch and when they have brewed some can be tried in the bar. No BLO yet—any takers?

**Glenfinnan Brewery;**

No News. Another of our small, remote, Highland breweries. Apart from travelling to Glenfinnan, the most accessible place to try their ales is the Grog and Gruel. No BLO - anyone in that area?



**River Leven Ales**

We had a pleasant meeting with Harry Heskey during the Clachaig trip. He continues to be a one man band so that and the cost of transport means that his beers are just available in the local area. He now has a keg Pilsner available. Harry continues to keep up with demand for his beers—see report on Glencoe beer trip.



**Wooha Brewing Company (Nairn)**

Launching a 6.4% Wheat beer and a 6.2% IPA during September. Test bottles of the Wheat were on offer at North Hop—a lovely, golden ale well balanced with the wheat. Heather chose not to create a “heavy” wheat beer. They have added two more staff—an Assistant Brewer and a Sales manager.



**New!**

Just before this edition was "put to bed" we are pleased to reveal that there is a NEW brewery in our patch!

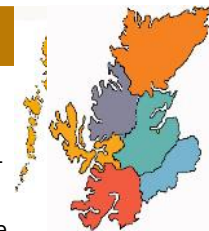
The **John O'Groats Brewery** has done some trial brews and are awaiting delivery of a four barrel (4 \* 9 gallon) kit which will be installed in the old fire station. The Seaview Hotel (virtually opposite) is involved in the project and it is hoped to be selling a 4% golden ale called Golden Groat early next year. Future expansion will depend on local interest. Hopefully more news in the Winter edition of Wyt?.



**New! (again)**

Yet another small brewery is starting up in Beauly. A couple who live locally are calling it “**Liquid Mountain**” and they plan to offer ‘something a little bit different’. More news as and when.

# Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2015



**Isle of Skye Brewery** - Based at Uig, by the Western Isles ferry terminal, brewing since December 1995. Started major expansion and rebranding in 2013. Expansion continuing in 2015. (see advert)

**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. Concentrates on large scale bottling.

**Isle of Arran Brewery** - Located close to Brodick Castle. Opened in late March 2000. Ales include Blonde, Dark, and Sunset. Expansion and rebranding started in 2013.

**Fyne Ales Brewery** - Based in Argyll, at the head of Loch Fyne, brewing started on St Andrew's Day 2001. Ales include Jarl and Maverick. Brewery refocused and expanded in 2012. Further expansion underway.

**Cairngorm Brewery Company** - Set up in late 2001. Ales include Trade Winds, Wildcat, Stag, Highland IPA, and Black Gold among others. Seasonal ales are regularly brewed. Expanded in 2011 and still expanding in 2013. Much expanded and improved brewery shop opened in late 2013. (see advert)

**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) and now Seaforth. 2014/15—now in new premises.

**River Leven Ales** - 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 2001. Ales include An Teallach Ale, Beinn Dearg Ale, and Crofter's Pale Ale among others. Greatly expanded in 2012.

**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. Started offering bottled beer in 2013.

**Highland Brewing Company** - Located in the old Swannay cheese factory at Birsay, on Orkney Mainland. Well regarded 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—also in bottle.

**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..... Etc. New, bigger brewery in 2012. Expanding again in 2015/16. (see advert)

**Cromarty Brewery** - First brews in December 2011. Ales include Happy Chappy, Brewed Awakening, Red Rocker, Hit The Lip, AKA and a growing portfolio. Increased brewing kit in 2013, 2014, 2015. Brewery shop. (see advert)

**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. Blonde, APA and Wolf are proving popular along with Tornado and Weizen.

**Speyside Craft Brewery**—started commercial brewing at Forres in 2012. Bottlenose Bitter, Randolph's Leap, Moray IPA and Bow Fiddle Blond are the ale portfolio so far.

**Lerwick Brewery**—started in 2014 and have grown at an astonishing rate achieving nationwide market penetration of their 3 bottled ales. Launched a cask ale, IPA, this May.

**Wooha Brewing Company**—have now set up in Nairn and are producing bottle conditioned lager and porter.

*Not all of the breweries listed are in our branch area: the Highland Brewing Co, Valhalla, Lerwick, Orkney, Spey Valley, Windswept and Speyside are all in the Grampian & Northern Isles area; the Arran Brewery falls in the Ayrshire & Galloway area; while Fyne, Islay, Colonsay & Oban Bay Breweries are covered by Glasgow & West Scotland.*



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# Real Ale Pubs List

These Pubs, Inns and Hotels are known to sell (or to have recently sold) cask-conditioned ale.

They are listed in geographical area and area lists are in an order that would allow a continuous pub crawl if you have safe transport.

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 basis (S).

(TP) - ale served using top pressure so not fully real ale.

Additional note in *italics* gives discounts for card carrying CAMRA members .

## Inverness

Blackfriars  
Caledonian  
Castle Tavern  
Clachnaharry Inn  
Corrigarth Hotel  
Fairways Loch Ness Golf Course  
Gellions  
Glen Mhor Hotel (Nicos Bar)  
Heathmount Hotel  
Hootananny  
Innes Bar  
Johnny Foxes  
Kings Highway *JDW 50p — which has a CAMRA info board near the main entrance*  
Lauders  
Mercure Hotel (Arts Bar) (TP)  
Number 27  
Palace Hotel  
Phoenix Ale House  
Room  
Snowgoose  
Tomlinson's Beer Shop  
Waterfront

## Strathspey (route from N to S) Speyside

Gun Lodge — Ardersier  
Inverness Airport (D'Lish)  
Golf View Hotel & Spa (TP) - Nairn  
Braeval Hotel (Bandstand) - Nairn  
*10% off rooms*  
Cawdor Tavern *20%/pint*  
Haugh Hotel — Cromdale  
Craig Bar — Grantown on Spey  
Garth Hotel and Restaurant — Grantown on Spey  
Grant Arms Hotel — Grantown on Spey  
Seafeld Lodge Hotel (Lodge Bar) - Grantown on Spey  
Muckrach Lodge Hotel — Dulnain Bridge

Boat Hotel — Boat of Garten  
Cairn Hotel (Rowanlea Bar)  
Carrbridge *20p/pint*

## Aviemore

Ben Macdui  
Cairngorm Brewery  
Cairngorm Hotel  
Dalfaber Country Club  
Mackenzies Highland Inn  
Old Bridge Inn  
Roo's Leap  
Skiing Doo (Doo Below)  
Winking Owl *20p/pint*  
Hilton Coylumbridge Hotel (Woodshed Bar)

## Badenoch

Glenmore Lodge (Lochain Bar)  
Pine Marten Bar — Glenmore  
Loch Inch Boathouse (Quarter Deck Bar) - Kincaig  
Suie Hotel — Kincaig  
Kingussie Golf Club  
Topsy Laird — Kingussie  
Scot House Hotel—Kingussie  
Duke of Gordon Hotel (Ghillies Rest Bar) - Kingussie  
Glen Hotel - Newtonmore *20p/pint*

## Easter Ross

### Black Isle

Royal Hotel — Cromarty  
Cromarty Arms  
Plough Inn — Rosemarkie *20p/ pint*  
Anderson — Fortrose *B&B deal*  
Station Hotel — Avoch  
Allangrange Arms - Munlochry *20p/ pint*

### Inverness to Dingwall

Bog Roy — Inchmore  
Conon Bridge Hotel  
Edderton Inn (Hotel)  
Inchbae Lodge Hotel — Garve  
Aultguish Inn — Garve,

## Strathconon

Slaters Arms — Cannich  
Tomich Hotel  
Struy Inn

## Loch Ness (c/w from Inverness)

Dores Inn  
Craigdarroch Inn - Foyers  
Whitebridge Hotel  
Stravaigers Lodge — Fort Augustus  
Bothy Bar — Fort Augustus  
Caledonian Hotel (S) - Fort Augustus  
Lock Inn — Fort Augustus  
Lovat Arms Hotel (TP) — Fort Augustus  
Glenmorrison Arms Hotel—Invermorrison  
Cobbs at Urquhart Castle, Drumadrochit  
Loch Ness Inn - Lewiston  
Benleva Hotel — Drumadrochit

## Fort William Fort William (North)

Invergarry Hotel  
Great Glen Water Park — South Laggan  
Eagle Barge (S) - South Laggan  
Old Station Restaurant — Spean Bridge  
Stronlossit Hotel — Roy Bridge  
Corrou Station House Restaurant (restaurant) — Corrou Estate

## Fort William (Town)

Moorings Hotel - Banavie  
Ben Nevis Bar  
Ben Nevis Inn — Achintee  
Cobbs @ Nevisport  
Crofter Bar & Restaurant  
Glen Nevis Restaurant  
Grog & Gruel  
Great Glen *JDW 50p*  
West End Hotel

## Real Ale Pubs List

### Fort William (South)

Four Seasons - Onich *10p/pint*  
Onich Hotel  
Loch Leven Hotel - Ballachulish  
Glencoe Inn  
Clachaig Inn - Glencoe  
Kings House Hotel - Glencoe  
Ice Factor - Kinlochleven  
MacDonald Hotel - Kinlochleven

### Fort William (West)

Glenfinnan House Hotel  
Glenuig Inn  
Glenuig Village Hall  
Loch Shiel Hotel - Acharacle  
Salen Hotel  
Ariundle Centre — Strontian  
Arisaig Hotel (Crofters Rest)  
Chlachain Inn — Mallaig  
Steam Inn — Mallaig  
West Highland Hotel (S) - Mallaig  
Old Forge — Inverie

### Wester Ross

#### Cluanie to Kyle of

#### Lochalsh

Cluanie Inn  
Glenelg Inn  
Kintail Lodge Hotel (Kintail Bar) -  
Glenshiel Bridge  
Jac-o-bite Restaurant —  
Glenshiel  
Dornie Hotel  
Clachan Bar — Dornie

#### Plocton to Gairloch

Plocton Inn  
Plocton Hotel  
Strathcarron Hotel  
Lochcarron Hotel  
Applecross Inn (TP)  
Tigh an Eilean Hotel — Shildaig  
Torriddon Inn (TP) — Annat  
Kinlochewe Hotel  
Ledgowan Lodge Hotel —  
Achnasheen  
Loch Maree Hotel — Talladale  
Badachro Inn (TP)

### Gairloch

Old Inn  
Myrtle Bank Hotel  
Millcroft Hotel

#### Gairloch to Ullapool

Poolewe Hotel  
Aultbae Hotel (Jam Jar Bar)  
Drumchork Hotel (S) - Aultbae  
Dundonnell Hotel (Broombeg  
Bar)

### Ullapool

Arch Inn  
Argyll Hotel *20p/pint, B&B deal*  
Ceilidh Place (TP)  
Ferry Boat Inn *20p/pint, B&B deal*  
Morefield Motel  
Seaforth Bar & Restaurant

### Ullapool North

Summer Isles Hotel —  
Achiltibuie

### Caithness and Sutherland

#### West Coast

Altnacealgach Inn — Ledmore  
Junction  
Inchnadamph Hotel (S) - Assynt  
Caberfeidh — Lochinver  
Kylesku Hotel (S)  
Scourie Hotel ?? (new owners)

#### North Coast

Sango Sands Oasis (S) - Durness  
Smoo Cave Hotel (S) - Durness  
Ben Loyal Hotel (S) - Tongue  
Tongue Hotel (S)  
Weigh Inn (Ashes Bar) - Thurso  
Commercial Hotel - Thurso  
Central Hotel (Top Joes) - Thurso  
Holburn Hotel (Bar 16) - Thurso  
Ulbster Arms Hotel (S) - Halkirk  
Northern Sands Hotel — Dunnet  
Seaview Hotel — John O'Groats

#### East Coast

Alexander Bain — Wick *JDW 50p*  
Mackays Hotel - Wick  
Bay Owl Restaurant — Dunbeath  
Bannockburn Inn (TP) - Helmsdale  
Belgrave Arms Hotel — Helmsdale  
Sutherland Inn — Brora  
Golspie Inn  
Trentham Hotel — Poles, nr Dornoch  
Eagle Hotel — Dornoch  
Dornoch Castle Hotel  
Dunroamin Hotel — Bonar  
Bridge

Invershin Hotel  
Achness Hotel — Rosehall (SW  
of Lairg)  
Crask Inn — N of Lairg

### Skye

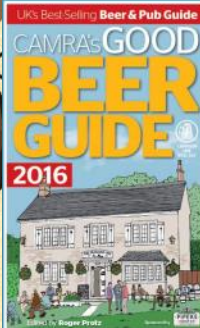
Sligachan Hotel (Seumas' Bar) (S)  
Old Inn — Carbost  
Taigh Ailean Hotel (Munros Bar)  
- Portnalong *20p/pint & B&B deal*  
Old School Restaurant (S) - Dunvegan  
Stein Inn — Waternish  
Edinbane Inn  
Lodge at Edinbane  
Uig Hotel  
Bakur Bar — Uig  
Ferry Inn — Uig  
Flogidgarry Country House Hotel—Staffin  
Bosville Hotel - Portree  
Isles Inn — Portree  
Royal Hotel (MacNab's Inn) - Portree  
Sconser Lodge Hotel  
Broadford Hotel (Gabbro Bar)  
Dunollie Hotel - Broadford  
Claymore Restaurant — Broadford  
Hebridean Hotel - Broadford  
Saucy Marys Lodge (S) - Kyleakin  
Isle Ornsay Hotel - Sleat  
Ardvasar Hotel (Hideout Bar)  
**Western Isles N to S**  
An Lanntair Arts Centre - Stornoway, Lewis (S)  
Carlton, Stornoway, Lewis  
Crown Inn (Harbour Bar) - Stornoway  
Hotel Hebrides (Mote Bar) (S) - Tarbet, Harris  
Isle of Harris Inn (S) - Tarbet, Harris  
Hamersay House — Lochmaddy, N Uist  
Lochmaddy Hotel - N Uist  
Langass Lodge (S) - Loch Elport, N Uist  
Westford Inn, Claddach, Kirkbost, N Uist  
Borrodale Hotel (S) - Daliburgh, S Uist  
Polochar Inn — Lochboisdale, S Uist



## the Winking Owl



The legendary "Winky" is now managed by Cairngorm Brewery, following extensive refurbishment. A cosy, warm atmosphere, serving outstanding food and an impressive range of award winning keg & craft ales brewed right here in Aviemore.



### Opening Times

Monday to Wednesday - 11.00am until 12.00 midnight  
Thursday to Saturday - 11.00am until 1.00am  
Sunday - 12.30pm until 12.00 midnight

### Food served all day

Monday to Saturday  
12.00 midday until 9.30pm

Sundays  
12.30pm - 9.30pm

Grampian Road • Aviemore • PH22 1RH  
T: 01479 812368 E: [info@thewinkingowl.co](mailto:info@thewinkingowl.co)  
[www.thewinkingowl.co](http://www.thewinkingowl.co)

Winking Owl is the site of the Aviemore Inn where Robbie Burns was served breakfast in 1787!

## Branch POTY Presentations

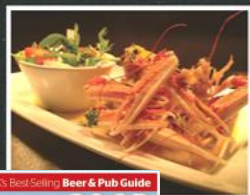
Branch Secretary Gareth presenting owner Gordon Holding with the area POTY certificate for The Bandstand bar in the Braeval Hotel, Nairn.



Alan Pearson at The Plockton Hotel accepts his area POTY certificate from Gareth during their Real Ale and Scottish Gins festival.

George Maclean, owner of the Phoenix Ale House, happily accepts the Inverness area POTY certificate in the bar from Gareth.





Newly  
Refurbished  
Bedrooms  
now open

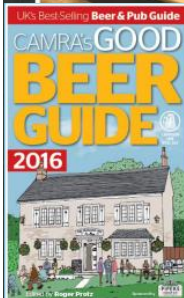
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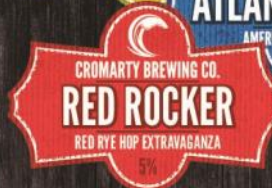
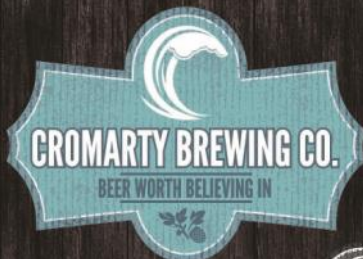
54 Millbank Road, Munloch, IV8 8NL

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# Aberdeen and North

## East Beer Festival 2015

First of all CAMRA would like to thank all of those of you who attended the 29th Great Grampian Beer Festival held at Pittodrie Stadium 4th – 6th June, 2015. We hope you enjoyed the event, found some beers, cider and perry that you enjoyed and will be back for more next year. Please don't forget that Real Ale is not just for beer festivals, get down to your favourite pubs and clubs and hustle the licensees to get some of your favourite beers in all year round.

We knew this year would be a challenge as we had to wait until after the football season finished before we could hold the



George Howie manning the merchandising products stall

event and with summer championships, the season finished after the end of term times so the students who live locally were gone. Not being as busy as usual made it an ideal opportunity for those who did not want to take part in what can be a hectic Friday crush or if you were travelling from further afield.

My highlight of the week came on the Thursday evening when after 20 years of TRYING we finally had all 100 beers on at one time. Never let it be said there isn't enough choice. We opened on the final day with 87 beers and thanks to some steady drinking it was whittled down to 42 beers left at the close with a really good spread of beer styles. So much for the persistent reputation of "they always run out on the last day" which hasn't been the case for many, many years. However we'd love you all to come along and try to drink us dry next year. And with free re-entry if you bring back your commemorative glass why not come for more than one visit?

### **Beers from far and wide -**

Beers were sourced from all over the UK, Shetland in the north to Cornwall in the south, Isle of Skye in the west to Suffolk in the east.

Grampian was represented with beers

*(Continued on page 35)*



### **Del Graham**

50's, 60's, 70's and country singer / entertainer  
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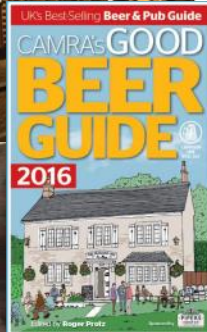
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# The King's Highway

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A recently refurbished, 27 room JD Wetherspoon, hotel.

2015 Good Beer Guide entrant with 10 hand pulls serving Caledonian Deuchars IPA as our house ale at £1.95 and Green King's Abbot at £2.29. We have a network of 50 brewers from across the UK, rotating quarterly plus regular beers from Strathaven, TSA, Houston, Cairngorm, An Teallach & Orkney.

Food served daily from 7am-11pm (8am Saturday & Sunday) and free wi-fi throughout the bar & hotel. Free pint of any ale with any burger, steak or hotdog every day.



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from **Burnside Brewery** in Laurencekirk, **six°north** based in Stonehaven together with **Spey Valley** from Mulben, **Speyside Craft** from Forres, **Deeside** of Banchory, and of course this year's featured brewery **Windswept** of Lossiemouth. The branch area also has three breweries in the Northern Isles who do cask beers, namely **Valhalla** from Unst together with **Orkney** and **Highland** from Quoyloo and Evie respectively.

Once again there were a lot of enquiries as to why there were no beers from the brewery in Ellon (*which used to be based nearer Fraserburgh*). To keep the record straight, beers were requested but once again they declined to sell us any, in fact they didn't even reply to any of our enquiries.

There were 101 beers from 72 different breweries, including 71 beers and 31 breweries which had not been seen at the beer festival before. The festival's featured brewery was **Windswept** Brewery who had six of their beers **Blonde, APA, Wolf, Tornado, Weizen** and **Marooned** on offer.

Scottish breweries having a first outing at the festival were **Fallen** from Kippen, **Jaw** from Glasgow, **Pilot** from Leith, **Spey Valley**



Organiser Richard Jones with Windswept's Al Read launching their new Marooned beer

from Mulben and **WooHa** from Nairn. As well as the festival and showcase brewery logos each glass was printed with the message "Don't Drink & Drive" as part of our joint campaign with Grampian Police road safety division. After all we want you to have a good time, get home safely so that you can come and join us again and again.

**And the winner was .....**

As usual, we had our own competition for the punter's favourite beer. This year's winner was Fallen Brewery's **Just The Ticket** whilst Windswept's **Marooned**, which was the fastest selling beer, was runner up. In joint 3rd place came Bingham's **Hot Dog Chilli Stout** & Chimera's **IPA**.

The Strong Bitter category of Champion Beer of Scotland (**CBOS**) was also held and Tryst **Raj IPA** was voted best by the six judges, 2nd was Cromarty **Rogue Wave** and 3rd Loch Ness **HoppyNESS**.

**Charity** - This year it was the turn of Archway, who collected nearly £1,400 in cash and unused beer token donations, to be spent helping all those in need of respite care for young adults with learning difficulties. On their behalf we would like to thank all those who generously donated.



Father Steve and daughter Tessa Armstrong, a couple of the volunteers

(Continued on page 37)

We would be delighted to share our amazing food and drink with you at...

# The Applecross Inn

Scotland Pub of the Year 2012!

CAMRA Wester Ross, Highlands and Islands Pub of the Year



Food served all Day / **The Freshest Seafood** /  
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*Great food, modern rooms and quaint bar on the banks of Loch Ness, between Drumnadrochit and Urquhart Castle, We look forward to giving you a warm welcome...*

Dining in the Lewiston restaurant is more than just food; it's an experience. You can enjoy your food and drink all day inside or out. House speciality's include our famous Applecross Bay Prawns and locally sourced ingredients, a seasonal specials board, with something for everyone.

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Michelin Pub Food Guide 2012/13

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The Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles branch of CAMRA would particularly like to thank the following organisations for their help with the festival: First and foremost this year's showcase brewery **Windswept Brewery** and our hosts at Pittodrie, Aberdeen Football Club plc. Also Flying Firkin, all the supplying breweries, Hallam Cider and Deeside Drinks Emporium who supplied the beers, cider and perry. Also thanks to Alex at Meuhlhan Industrial Ser-

vices (Maritime Scaffolding) who support us both literally and figuratively with the scaffolding, Gordon at Arrowdown for the beer vouchers and volunteer shirts, Paul at Agility Logistics & Dave at HSS for storage, transport and equipment loans and Richard at APAL.

We would also like to thank all those individuals, far too many to list individually, who gave their time, help, knowledge, experience, energy and passion to enable this festival to go ahead.

The next festival, the 30th Great Grampian Beer Festival is now being planned for 19th, 20th, 21st May 2016. See

[www.aberdeencamra.org.uk](http://www.aberdeencamra.org.uk) very soon for details.

Cheers,

RA Jones

Festival Organiser

*("Wyt?" Aberdeen Chief Correspondent—although he's getting a demotion as I had to correct one of his brewery's geographical location! - Maybe he was testing me?—Ed.)*



Bar Managers for the last 20 years; Scott Wilson, Eric Mills, Richard Jones and Ron Buchan



Since the last edition of Wyt?, we have had WhatPub notification of the following beer scores of **5** (perfect);

- 13th of June: Clachaig Inn, Glencoe - Cairngorm - **Wildcat**
- 14th of June: Clachaig Inn, Glencoe - Loch Lomond Brewery - **The Ale of Leven**
- 19th of June: Clachaig Inn, Glencoe - Cairngorm - **Wildcat**
- 24th of June: Blackfriars, Inverness - Orkney - **Dragonhead**
- 20th of July: Plockton Hotel, Plockton - Fyne Ales - **Jarl** (two reports)
- 22nd of July: Blackfriars, Inverness - Cairngorm - **Black Gold**
- 8th of August: Blackfriars, Inverness - Inveralmond - **Rascal London Porter**
- 10th of August: Blackfriars, Inverness - Cromarty - **Kowabunga**



## 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)

**Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit** - Thatcher's Heritage Cider all year round, plus bottled ciders, including Loch Ness Cider and selection of real ciders for festivals

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

**King's Highway, Inverness** - Real Cider is 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** - several ciders are usually always available—more during festivals

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

**Kinlochewe Hotel**, at the foot of Beinn Eighe, is serving Westons Family Reserve 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.

**Blackfriars** - Thistly Cross ' Jaggy Thistle— the real scrumpy cider.



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# Belladrum Tartan Heart Festival 2015

For the second year running our Branch was asked to run a bar at this sell out 18,000 music festival near Beaulieu. This year opening a day earlier on Thursday and with headlining acts of The Proclaimers, Manic Street Preachers, Eddi Reader, The Stranglers and Kaiser Chiefs. Also with the good weather, it was a success. We were again in the walled garden running the Burke and Hair Bar with it's own stage showing local acts and house band. This area had more stalls and events happening this year and the plan is to add more each year.



We had cut back to 9 hand pumps with beers from the following breweries; **Wooha** (based in Nairn and have been brewing around 6 months mainly for the bottle market); two breweries from the Black Isle: **Cromarty** near Davidston making some excellent hoppy brews - we had their Happy Chappy here for the second year and **Black Isle** near Munloch which also had real ale on their bar near to the main stages where they sponsor the Grass Roots Stage : **Isle of Skye** (One of the oldest breweries in our area and based in the north of the island at Uig. They have been re-branded under new owners recently), **Windswept** (based in Lossiemouth and are getting known for their excellent brews especially their Weizen wheat beer which we had again this year), **Loch Ness** (based

in Drumnadrochit and famous for their excellent AnythingNESS brews. They gave us tremendous help with the set up and running of this event); **Spey Valley** (based near Keith and their 'Sunshine on Keith' was ordered for the name similar to the Proclaimers song). Different this year was the availability of cider, as **Loch Ness Cider Company** organised some cider in a box and their own bottles of Gold and Vintage. We also had white, red and rose wines and some bottles of soft drinks. The first cask to finish was Cromarty **Happy Chappy**, soon followed by **Black Isle Blonde**, both on the Thursday night. Soon after opening on the Friday, the first cask of **Skye IPA** and **HoppyNESS** followed. After a re-supply of Black Isle and Loch Ness beers we managed to keep going until 10 minutes before closing with real ale but had some bottles left to finish the night.

This is a volunteer run bar which was there



to advertise CAMRA, what it is all about and hopefully get people to join the Highlands and Western Isles Branch. We relied upon CAMRA members to volunteer but we were short of numbers at times (work and holidays etc accepted but where were the others?). We had a lot of excellent comments and one main theme was that the atmosphere was excellent with the entertainment and real ale combining so well.

A special thanks to all the volunteers and breweries who supported us this year.



# Stein Inn

THE OLDEST INN ON SKYE



Highland & Western Isles area winner since 2007

Highland & Western Isles branch POTY 2015

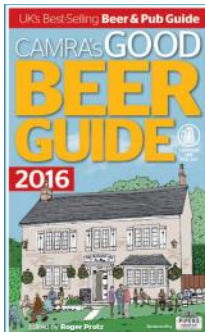
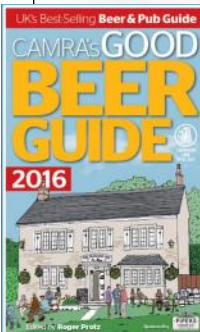
Magical places do exist ... just journey down a narrow winding road that leads to the sea and nestled in a charming hamlet is the very place of your dream: the Stein Inn.

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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[angus.teresa@steininn.co.uk](mailto:angus.teresa@steininn.co.uk)

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



## The Castle Tavern

Taigh-òsda à chaisteil

Open all day, food served all day, a great range of Real Ales  
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# North Hop 2015

The North Hop returned to Eden Court for the second time, after the same format was used at Aberdeen earlier this year. As soon as we entered, it was good to see improvements based on last year's experience.

This year there were 3, six hour "sessions", Fri evening, Sat afternoon and evening which allowed a total of 1500 to pass through the doors, the numbers (venue) limited to 500 per session.

H&W! CAMRA were invited to the "press" session before the public were allowed in, and we also took up the kind offer of two complimentary passes to the Saturday afternoon session.

"Our" local breweries included **Cromarty, Loch Ness** (Drumnadrochit) and **Wooha** (Nairn), with close neighbours **Windswept** (Lossimouth), **six\*north** (Stonehaven) (the Belgian beer specialists) and **BrewDog** (Ellon).

Also from Scotland:- **Barney's** (Edinburgh), **Eden Mill** (St Andrews) (who also distill gins), **Fyne** (Cairndow, Argyll) and **Drygate** (Glasgow).

From slightly!! further afield was **Weihenstephan** from near Munich, Germany (the oldest brewery in the world).

Although not a brewery (cider is fermented, not brewed) **Thistly Cross** from Dunbar were also there with many of their ciders and the Loch Ness bar had some **Loch Ness real Cider** on offer in bottles.

Of course there was also lots of different "street" food, gins and cocktails.

The ten breweries were offering a mix of nearly 40 craft keg and cask beers, and also six different ciders from Thistly Cross and two ciders from Loch Ness.

Currently some CAMRA members "frown" upon keg beers, but clearly this is a growing and important market, and as such, these breweries are offering both keg and cask to a new generation of drinkers who are clearly shunning the bland tasteless "fizz" of so called lager and bitter produced by the big conglomerates.

- We all know who they are, but for legal reasons we cannot name!

What might be one person's favourite might be "battery acid" to their mate and vice versa.

Fortunately, no two people are going to like the same beers or cider, but that is the whole essence of such an event, you can find out what you like and discuss (or argue?) about it.

The important thing is that everyone attending tried something

different, had an opinion and enjoyed the event and the opportunity.

Although last year was a success, on canvassing the brewers, this year was even better with an excellent mix of knowledgeable people attending, bands, and upstairs the "cocktail" area with the festival gin from Dunnett Bay Distillers proving popular.

As a showcase for the breweries, it worked really well. One big question that we CAMRA guys had was - what is North Hop? Is it a festival of beer? Is it a festival of food and drink (bearing in mind the ciders and gins and all the good food on offer)? Is it a music festival (the bands we witnessed on the stage were high quality but, of course, noisy)? Maybe it needs that mix to attract the younger people who have grasshopper minds?

Whatever, the atmosphere was great and we had good conversations with some of the brewery folks. Especially impressive was Scot from Eden Mill who showed us the throw-away "e-kegs" which held their unfiltered, unpasteurised, brewery conditioned beer in a silvered bag inside a clear, polycarbonate shell. This shell had a keg fitting on it's top and they had a fancy piece of kit that chilled the beer on dispense and the beer was pushed out by air being pumped in to the shell to squeeze the beer out of the bag. Brilliant! Air never touches the beer so the beer doesn't "go off". The only downside is that there is no "cask conditioning" as the bag gradually empties. This means that it isn't strictly real ale. The closest relation is that it is a giant "real ale in a bottle". Almost all the chilled, keg beers we tried were lovely and the cask ales were struggling as without a lot of cooling care, some casks were getting warm in the hall.

As a venue, Eden Court supplies a high quality environment with plenty of services - hopefully more of a "connection" can be made between the main hall and more of the upstairs areas for next year when, happily, it will be happening again!

Well done Michelle Russell and colleagues and here's to next year!



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# Inverness venues sweep the board at 2015 Best Bar None National Awards

One of Inverness's leading (*busiest*) licensed premises, **Johnny Foxes and The Den**, was crowned Best Bar None National Champion 2014-2015 and Best Independent Bar at the Best Bar None National Awards ceremony held on Thursday 26 March at BT Murrayfield Stadium, Edinburgh.

Johnny Foxes and The Den took the night's overall prize competing against all 46 venues taking part from across Scotland.

The awards reflect the winners' efforts in looking after their customers and creating a safe and responsible drinking environment.

Don Lawson who owns Johnny Foxes and The Den said:

"It was great to have won the prize for Best Independent Bar but to have picked up the National Champion 2014-15 Award was a complete shock and I really can't wipe the smile from my face!

"I am beyond delighted for the team at Johnny Foxes and The Den but also for Inverness. To have two winning venues from the city is a great testament to the talent here.

"Best Bar None is a great initiative to be a part of and the awards are really taking over others in the industry as it's so focussed and structured."

Mandy Haeburn-Little, Director of Scottish Business Resilience Centre, hosted the awards ceremony with prizes for all ten categories presented. These included;



Pub, Independent Pub, Bar, Independent Bar, Hotel Bar, Night Club, SEV (Specialist Entertainment Venue), Best Use of Innovation, Best Public Health Initiative and Heart of the Community.

She said:

"It is a great honour to announce the team at Johnny Foxes and The Den as the National Champion for 2014-2015 and Best Independent Bar and a huge congratulation to **Arts Bar** (*in the Mercure Hotel, Church Street*) as well for taking home the prize for Best Hotel Bar. Both venues have shown an excellent standard of practice and take great pride in their premises and surroundings.

"These awards look to recognise the best examples of Best Bar None venues which focus on public safety and customer care, together with the key principles of preven-

tion of public nuisance, protecting and improving public health and the protection of children from harm in order to positively enforce Scotland's night time economy.

"Anyone looking for a good, safe night out in Inverness should look out for a Best Bar None venue knowing it has been through a rigorous accreditation process and demonstrated high standards across a range of important criteria."

Three other Inverness venues were also shortlisted including; **The Kings Highway**, **The Auctioneers** and **G's Nightclub**.

Best Bar None National Awards 2014-2015 were produced with support from the Scottish Government Alcohol Industry

Partnership and SGL Security.

The Best Bar None initiative has accredited over 400 premises throughout Scotland and works with the licensed trade, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, suppliers, The Scottish Licensed Trade Association and Scottish Government to celebrate and reward licensed premises for responsible management and efforts made to combat alcohol related crime and disorder.

*We had an information article about Best Bar None in last year's Autumn edition—this was aimed at all bar staff who might then wish to join the safety scheme.—Ed.*

## Situation Vacant—Branch Secretary

After more than 10 years of dedicated effort in the committee post, Gareth Hardman is standing down this November. His encyclopaedic ale and brewery knowledge and finely tuned ale palate have earned him the greatest respect of his CAMRA colleagues and bar staff across the Highlands and further afield. He is the very definition of affable.

His standing down means that the Highlands & Western Isles branch needs a branch secretary. You need not fear that Gareth is a tough act to follow as CAMRA HQ is developing online assistance for most branch committee posts. The post mostly consists of being the first point of contact for anyone trying to get in touch with us. You would liaise closely with the branch Chairman, preparing meeting agendas and keeping meeting minutes. (The diary page shows how often these meetings are.)

Anyone interested in giving some of their spare time to help to continue to promote good Real Ale in the Highlands, please contact the branch in the usual way—contact info at the bottom of the diary page.

**Be aware that the AGM in January will see several branch committee posts become vacant — more details in the Winter edition of this magazine which is out before Christmas.**

# Duke Of Gordon Hotel

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## Focus on ..... Alan Pearson

Alan's family own and run the palm fringed Plockton Hotel.

think it was in 2000!

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

**A.** I really like bitter/pale ales. My favourite



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

**A.** Eskbank – Just outside Edinburgh.

**Q. What is your background?**

**A.** We left in 1984 when I was 11 and moved to Stranraer where my parents decided to get into the hospitality business and bought a lounge bar/restaurant.

**Q. What made you move to Plockton?**

**A.** My parents sold their business in 1990 and moved to Plockton in 1991 when they bought the hotel.

**Q. How/when were you introduced to real ale?**

**A.** My first introduction to real ale was when we started selling Deuchars I.P.A — I

brewery is The Highland Brewing Company with Orkney Best and Scapa Special being favourites. I also love the Cromarty Brewery's Kowabunga.

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

**A.** I like the satisfaction of knowing that we have served lots of happy customers – especially on a really busy night.

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

**A.** The hours! With young children, it's not always easy.

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

**A.** I love to play golf – although I don't often get the chance since the parents have retired!





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**Q. What is your favourite book?**

A. I have a few. I like to listen to a lot of audiobooks whilst driving, with either Birdsong by S. Faulks or Rage by Wilbur Smith being my favourites.

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

A. Anything by the Killers.

**Q. What is your favourite film?**

A. Too many to mention – ranging from a good war film like Dambusters to Toy Story!

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

A. It has to be Plockton in the sunshine!

Especially living in Bank street it is so peaceful. We like to escape to Nairn to my parents when we can. Great Beaches, golf courses, weather and a great selection of real ales at the Bandstand Bar!

**Q. Why should we go to The Plockton Hotel?**

A. We are situated on the waterfront, fringed with palm trees in Plockton – the jewel of the highlands. We serve local fish, shellfish and the very best of Highland Beef. Accompanied with a great selection of Scotland’s finest real ales - it’s the perfect setting!

Alan, Thank you.

# **Good Beer Guide**

The 2016 Good Beer Guide was published on 10 September and to mark the occasion, we looked into its history.

The first Good Beer Guide (GBG) was published in 1972, and was little more than a couple of typed sheets of A4 stapled together. The first “proper” GBG was published in 1974 and was in a very slim booklet form and specifically excluded Scotland!

Interestingly, the very first print run made “adverse” reference towards some of the major pubcos of the time, and mentioned “avoid like the plague”. The later copies just moderated that to “avoid at all costs”. A “plague” copy was recently sold for about £75 on eBay!

Scotland was considered a “real ale desert” and there were no Scottish entries until 1975, when suddenly 55 entries appeared. The solitary Highlands & Western Isles (H&WI) representation was The Albert Inverness, now MacDonaldis, opposite the Town House. After that there were no Highlands & Western Isles mentions again until 1978.

Up to and including 2015, the three places appearing most in GBG are:- Clachaig - Glencoe (32); Clachnaharry - Inverness (30) and Old Inn - Gairloch (25)

In recent years H&WI have maintained 35 entries, out of the 4500 listed in GBG. Whilst the number of places selling real ale has increased year on year, as with the rest of the UK, in H&WI this currently stands at just over 200. So we think just 35 out of 200+ is rather unfair.

As with all of the 215 branches in the UK, H&WI CAMRA have to choose which of the places in their “patch” should be included. Many are “worthy”, and first we have a “long list” based on beer scores, then “short list” of 45. The committee then decides who are one of the 35, and who are not. It is a very difficult decision to make, many excellent contenders fall at the final hurdle.

Whilst the GBG lists those who are “IN”, the WhatPub website lists ALL of the places in H&WI that sell real ale, and even some “fizz” pubs too!

If you have a particular favourite place that sells real ale, or maybe somewhere that has recently added real ale to their offerings, please let the branch know.

CAMRA (UK) are very keen to encourage people to buy the 2016 Good Beer Guide, so even we are not allowed to mention who from our H&WI area are in it (*although you might spot a clue in some of our adverts—Ed.*) - you will have to buy the book!

The New Inn · Foggiebar.

# Ale Festival

24<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>  
September  
2015

Over 20 Real Ales  
Local Whiskies  
Scottish Gins  
Live Music  
Traditional Pub Food



After the success of Gary and Maxine's first Ale Festival in 2014 at The New Inn, Aberchirder, a second one has been planned over four days from the 24th until 27th of September 2015. There will be a large selection of Real Ale from all over the UK including Scotland, England and Wales.

For a little bit of nostalgia two Real Ale Hand Pulls will be in use which were originally from the set of Aidsensfield Arms in the popular television series Heartbeat, set in North Yorkshire. The 2015 Festival will also host a variety of local Whiskies and a wonderful selection of Scottish Gins.

On the evening of Friday 25th, talented Chris Grant will play a live set in the public bar. On Saturday 26th from 2pm in the hall there will be music from 'Neon' a very successful Duo from the Highlands who play popular music from the 60's and 70's.

The New Inn is well known for its traditional pub food and a variety of meals and snacks will be available over the course of the festival.

As part of the Speyside Whisky Festival a bus tour has been organised picking up from The Whisky Museum, Dufftown on the 26th & 27th. There will also be a pick up and drop off service from Huntly Railway Station on both of these days. Please see [www.whisky.dufftown.co.uk/events](http://www.whisky.dufftown.co.uk/events) for further details.



Gary Smith, Maxine Smith  
& Tommy Hagston  
Ale Festival 2014

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

## 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.

### September

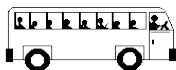
18th to 26th  
the 14th Benleva Beer Festival,  
Drumnadrochit \*

18th to 20th  
Autumn Beer Festival — Bandstand, Nairn \*  
(see advert on page 5)

18th to 20th  
Cromarty Brewery Tap takeover — Blackfriars  
\* (see advert on page 19)

19th at 2pm Branch Social at  
Benleva

Saturday 26th Minibus beer  
trip—Aviemore and beyond  
— meet townhouse at 10am



### October

9th to 11th  
the 7th Torridon Inn Beer Festival \*

Tuesday 13th  
Meeting at Cawdor Tavern

16th to 1st November  
Wetherspoons' Autumn Ale Festival \*

22nd to 24th  
the 10th Ullapool Beer Festival, Morefield  
Motel \*

### November

Tuesday 10th  
Meeting at Phoenix Ale House

Friday 13th at 6 pm  
Tasting Evening Social at No 27, Castle  
Street, Inverness

### December

Tuesday 8th  
Meeting at Clachnaharry Inn

Tuesday 15th  
Inverness Xmas Walkabout  
meet at Innes Bar, 7 pm — finish at  
Corriegarh Hotel (If you can)

### January 2016

Tuesday 12th  
AGM at Phoenix Ale House

## 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 a month 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.

Branch activities might have to be changed—Please check the branch website to confirm the dates, times and places of meetings and socials—  
[www.highland.camra.org.uk](http://www.highland.camra.org.uk) (new address—no, really!)

### Contact Details

**..... Needs YOU!**

**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)  
(Until November)



**Eric Mills** - 01456 459343  
[chair@highlandcamra.org.uk](mailto:chair@highlandcamra.org.uk)  
**Arnold Stout** (social secretary)  
[socials@highlandcamra.org.uk](mailto:socials@highlandcamra.org.uk)  
**Gordon Streets** (editor)  
[news@highlandcamra.org.uk](mailto:news@highlandcamra.org.uk)

# Vote for your Beer of the Year

during September and October. Last year we sent out letters to every branch member with their newsletter and it was advertised in What's Brewing and still only 10% of you voted. We do not have the time to do this again this year.

So go to

[cbobvoting.org.uk](http://cbobvoting.org.uk)

and vote for your favourite beers in all the categories. Even if you only like milds, then go to the mild section and vote. It is an easy drop down list for each category and you put in up to 5 votes - your no.1 gets 5 points no.2 gets

**4 points etc.** These votes are important as it can get beers into CAMRA Competitions.

Thanks to those who voted last year and an input from the Tasting Panels, Cairngorm's **Black Gold** was entered into the stout category and eventually won this years Champion Beer of Scotland.

## Scottish POTY and COTY

The judging of Scotland's top pubs and clubs for 2015 is complete. Our entry, **The Stein Inn** on Skye, did not get beyond the first round of the finals.

The winners were judged to be the **Stockbridge Tap** in Edinburgh and the SCOTY is the **Ravenswood Club** (Royal British Legion in Banchory).

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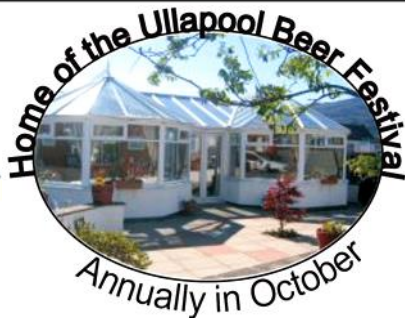
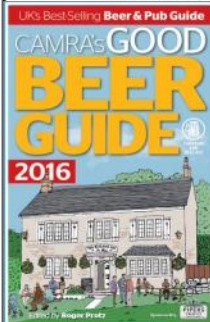
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[www.ullapoolbeerfestival.co.uk](http://www.ullapoolbeerfestival.co.uk)

Real Ale in the Real Highlands



Supporting Local breweries

## 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! (if you are not sure about your score for a beer—half scores are fine—i.e. 1½ for an OK beer but you wouldn't have another pint)

### What do the scores mean?

**0** - No cask ale available.

**½** - **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 website: **whatpub.com**

Log in to it using your normal CAMRA login details, search for the pub and then click on "Submit Beer Scores" - fill in the boxes on the form, scrolling down and then click "Submit Beer Score". You can do this for any pub in the country. If you have been on a CAMRA beer tasting course and are then registered as an accredited beer taster, you will be offered to fill in a CAMRA tasting card online too. Thanks!

*What's yours then?* is a quarterly newsletter magazine 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 Autumn magazine. Unless you intend to keep it, 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? Our magazines are often found many miles from source!*

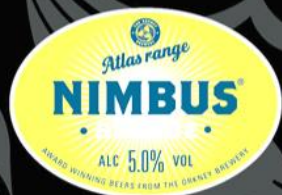
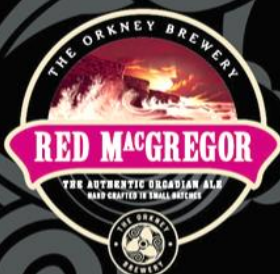
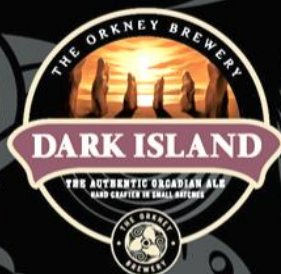
*The next, Winter, edition will be out mid to end of December.*

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