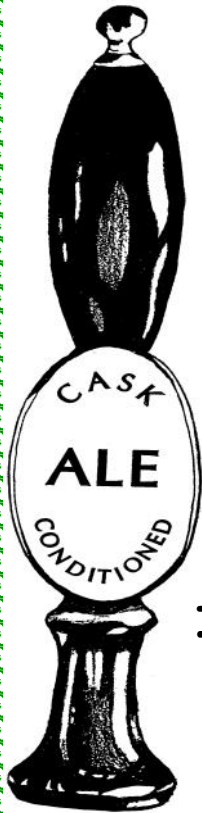


What's Yours Then?

Inverness & Highland Branch
Free Newsletter



Inverness & Highland
Pub-of-the-Year
Awards (Revised)



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Winter 2004

Welcome to the Autumn edition of our branch newsletter.

In this edition -

- > Revised Pub-of-the-Year Awards
- > AGM Report
- > Focus on Stephen Crossland
- > Your letters and pub reports
- > 2005 Branch Diary
- > Pub Review
- > Updated real ale pubs list
- > A legend in our midst

Letters, views & opinions, articles, etc., are all welcome. Let us know what is happening at your local, or tell us about pubs you have visited.

The Spring Newsletter **deadline** will be 1st March 2005, with publication in time for the Easter visitor.

NB The views and opinions expressed within this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor, nor of the Campaign for Real Ale.

If you would like to advertise in this newsletter, please contact one of the branch officers (see page 6).

If at all possible, please send your advertisement in Microsoft Publisher compatible (JPEG is best) electronic format. The need to scan in hard copy may lead to loss of quality in reproduction. We can help in preparing your advert if you wish.

Full Page Advert.....£55.00
 Half Page Advert.....£32.00
 Quarter Page Advert.....£17.00

2000+ copies are distributed to Branch members, to Highland & Island brewers, to Good Beer Guide listed and Real Ale pubs; plus extra copies to advertisers.

The twelfth Inverness & Highland **AGM** in November brought to an end another very successful year for the Branch. Chairman Bill Tring was able to report that the Branch continues to go from strength to strength. Another sell-out at the popular Marymas Festival real ale bar, enjoyable outings to Cairngorm, An Teallach, and Isle of Skye Breweries, and a regular newsletter attracting letters from readers both within and outwith the branch. There are a record number of real ale outlets in the Highlands and Islands, and with a first Inverness real ale festival at the Clachnaharry Inn to compliment the annual Benleva event.

In his report Secretary Eric Mills echoed the Chairman's comments and noted that there are now 130+ real ale outlets in the Branch area. The quality of real ale on offer almost certainly means that for 2006 we will exceed our maximum GBG quota for the first time! This year has again seen committee and branch meetings held at pubs throughout our region, and thanks are due to our hosts for their (often generous) hospitality.

Branch finances are in a healthy state, thanks to the Marymas sell-out, and to newsletter costs being covered by advertising revenue. Membership has topped the century mark for the first time.

The committee for the forthcoming year consists of:

- Chairman** - Bill Tring
- Secretary** - Eric Mills
- Treasurer** - Mike Whittall
- Committee** - John Holloway

Additional committee members are needed
(Continued on page 4)



Premium Highland Ales

Available in Casks & Bottles

Permanent Cask Beers

Cairngorm Gold	4.5%
Wildcat	5.1%
Stag	4.1%
Nessie's Monster Mash	4.4%
Trade Winds	4.3 %
Sheepshaggers	4.5%

Seasonal Cask Beers

Highland IPA	3.6%
White Lady	4.7%
<i>(Award winning Bavarian style Wheat Beer)</i>	
Black Gold	4.4%
60 Shilling	3.7%
Witches Cauldron	4.9%
Santa's Sledgehammer	6.3%



Highland IPA
ABV 3.6 %

A pale ale session style beer



Trade Winds
ABV 4.3 %

Award winning light golden beer with masses of hop, fruit and citrus flavours



Wildcat
ABV 5.1 %

Smooth deep amber coloured ale, with complex malt, fruit and hop flavours

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Tel: 01479 812222 Fax: 01479 811465

info@cairngormbrewery.com

www.cairngormbrewery.com

ed, and can be co-opted as required. Let us know if you would like to help out.

Bill heads up the local tasting panel, as well as carrying out local Brewery Liaison Officer (BLO) duties. Eric and John also have BLO commitments and Eric, as the branch Social Secretary, organises trips and outings. Mike is the Membership Secretary as well as Treasurer.

Real Ale Trails

Enjoyed some fine ales on our Autumn trip. En route I found a great B&B in Moffat, a lovely Victorian building, enormous breakfast. Also enjoyed real ale & good food at the Black Bull, a great pub.

Next day it hissed it down all the way, but when I got to Glencoe it looked a bit more promising so took on Bidean (nam Bian) - my first solo Munro! Had a great afternoon, although lost my glasses somewhere in the hidden valley! After coming down it was off to the Clachaig for a few pints of Red MacGregor (Rated 4).

Next day the weather was excellent and I went up the Ben (Nevis). Tourist track up, but took out the zigzags on the way down for a bit more adventure. Some great views on the way up and from the top. Then off to the Grog & Gruel to celebrate - Dark Island (Rated 4), and Beinn Dearg (Rated 3); but beer at the Grog never disappoints.

The rest of the party arrived next day and we got most of the way up a Munro at the end of Glen Etive, before heading to the Atlas Brewery for an excellent tour with tasting of fresh brew of 3 Sisters (rated off the scale). Interesting looking at the climbing centre, and the ice wall is

amazing! Just had time to fit in a couple of Nimbus at the Tailgate (Rated 3).

Next day the weather was poor, and the party had aching legs, so did the walk from Gairloch along the loch, through the dark mile to the waterfall at Clunes - very impressive at this time of the year. It made my day when I saw the first red squirrel I had seen since we first went camping in Scotland - goodness knows how long ago that was. With a touch of *deja vu* I felt confident taking the party to the Factors Inn. However, the 3 Sisters was poor and pints had to be returned - the Nimbus was then tried but it was cloudy and sour tasting. To the latter the bar staff were unsympathetic and needless to say it seems there are some places you should not go back to. We moved to the Laroch Bar in Ballachulish for some very passable pints of Latitude.

Base camp for the next few days was the Ballachulish Hotel, very comfortable and excellent food, but no real ale. The keg 80/- was passable but, unsurprisingly, at £2.80 a pint not a lot was consumed. We sampled a wide range of malts instead, and I find I am gradually getting more of a taste for the peaty variety - although Laphroaig is still "on bog" too much!

Just to finish off I cannot tell you how gob-smacked I was last Wednesday to walk into my local pub and find that the handpump normally reserved for draught Worthington was serving Orkney Dark Island. I was only able to have a couple of pints, but it made me feel very mellow. The warm inner glow and nutty flavour brought back fond memories of Scottish trips.

Big Al, Gloucester.



Fine cask
keg and
bottled ales



Contact - 01856 841 802 [Brewery] or 07831 213 603 [Rob Jenner, Sales Manager]

2005 Branch Diary (Meetings start at 7.30 pm)

4th Jan	Committee Meeting	Blackfriars
1st Feb	Joint Branch & Committee Meeting	Clachnaharry Inn
1st Mar	Committee Meeting	Benleva Hotel, Drumadrochit
5th Apr	Committee Meeting	Invernairne Hotel, Nairn
12th Apr	Branch Meeting	The Anderson, Fortrose
17 th April	Lochcarron/Plockton Social/Outing	
3 rd May	Committee Meeting	Bothy, Fort Augustus
7 th June	Committee Meeting	Heatherbrae, Nethybridge
11 th June	Far North Social/Outing	
5 th July	Committee Meeting	Inchbae Hotel, near Garve
12 th July	Branch Meeting	McNabs Bar, Columba Hotel
2 nd August	Committee Meeting	Royal Hotel, Cromarty
13 th August	Marymas Real Ale Bar	
4 th Sept	Isle of Skye trip Social/Outing/Branch Meeting	
6 th Sept	Committee Meeting	Cairngorm Hotel
16 th - 24 th Sept	4 th Loch Ness Beer Festival	Benleva Hotel
18 th Sept from 13:00	Beer Festival Social	Benleva Hotel
* End of Sept	2 nd Clachnaharry Beer Festival	Clachnaharry Inn
* 30 th Sept from 15:00	Beer Festival Social	Clachnaharry Inn
4 th Oct	Committee Meeting	Snowgoose
3 rd - 5 th Nov	Aberdeen Beer Festival	
8 th Nov	Annual General Meeting	Clachnaharry Inn
6 th Dec	Committee Meeting	Phoenix
20 th Dec	Inverness Walkabout & Social	(Meet at Blackfriars at 19:00)
* (To Be Confirmed)		

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mike.whittall@talk21.com

Clachnaharry Inn *biting* You

Up to 10 Real Ales on at any one time, and with food served all day - famous for its lentil soup and stovies, this award winning pub will always make you welcome..



*Inverness
& Highland
Real Ale Pub
of the Year
2000, 2001,
2002 and 2003*

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Focus on Stephen Crossland

Stephen Crossland is one of three joint owners of the Benleva Hotel in Drumnadrochit. Stephen and his partners bought the run down hotel three years ago and they have been gradually upgrading it. Stephen is the organiser of the Loch Ness Beer Festival, and is now planning for the fourth year. Recently married to Becki, the local Post-mistress, they live in Lewiston.



Q: Where were you born?

A: In Dunblane, Perthshire, 2nd May 1971, in the house my parents still live in.

Q: How did you find your way to The Benleva?

A: The road to Benleva was a fairly long and winding one, starting in 1988 at Edinburgh University studying for a law degree. Five years of doing that was more than enough so I ended up on Skye at the Sligachan Hotel, trying to avoid the legal profession and developing an enthusiasm for cask ale and malt whiskies. The powers of darkness eventually grabbed me and I went to Dunfermline to complete my traineeship. This done, I was by now certain that the legal world was not for me so I ran back to the Slig where I became Assistant Manager to Norrie MacLeod. Over the next few years we developed the Slig into the finest real ale venue in the Highlands, with a Beer Festival to match. Then, having met Jamie Beaton on the golf course at Sconser, we decided one drunken evening that his talents as a chef and my thirst for ale could be combined into a successful business. After getting my brother Allan on board, we found the Benleva and haven't looked back!

Q: Who has influenced you with real ale?

A: Norrie obviously, and his now boss Angus MacRuary at the Isle of Skye Brewery.

Q: Describe your typical working day.

A: Full! Serving breakfasts, dealing with (mostly!) happy guests, sorting out the cellar. During the day we tend to be fairly quiet, giving me time to process all the accounts, wages, etc. and prepare for the busy evenings. Then a short walk home to our new house, usually at about 9 pm, to spend quality time with my wife Becki.

Q: What beer/beer types do you like?

A: Varies depending on my mood! My favourite during university days was Younger's No. 3. Now my favourites would probably be Hebridean Gold, Trade Winds, Red Smiddy and Stirling Brig.

Q: What is the best part of your job?

A: Sampling the ales, to ensure quality control! Most importantly I still enjoy seeing

satisfied customers leaving and, even better, coming back. When that stops mattering to you, it's time to find a different way of earning a living.

Q: What is the worst part of your job?

A: Just the long hours really. Becki's job is pretty much 9 to 5 whereas our busiest times are in the evening, which doesn't leave a lot of time together - still, stops us getting bored with each other!

Q: What do you think of no smoking in pubs?

A: Tricky one. Personally speaking, I'd rather have a smoke-free atmosphere but then again we have 2 separate bars - one smoking, one non-smoking so people do have the choice. I think it probably will be banned, for employment law reasons, but I would rather have less legislation affecting our business, not more.

Q: Why organise a Beer Festival in what was a 'beer desert'?

A: Because I like it! Our festival on Skye was very successful and, with Norrie & I leaving the Slig, there was no longer a beer festival there, so the gap needed to be filled. The Loch Ness Beer Festival has grown every year and we anticipate next year's being bigger still. (16th - 24th September 2005!). There are, fortunately, more places around here now waking up to the benefits of cask ale. We are an area that relies on visitors who want to try local produce wherever possible when they visit. With so many Highland breweries to choose from, all producing

OPEN
ALL
YEAR

Benleva Hotel

Drumnadrochit, Loch Ness

www.lochnesshotel.com

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Highland Pub of the Year 2003

4th Loch Ness Beer Festival

16th - 24th September 2005

En-suite Accommodation

Excellent Food Every Evening

excellent quality ales, there really is no excuse not to serve it - and at a reasonable price!

Q: What does the future hold for you?

A: Hopefully expansion of the business. We have quite a large area of land attached to the hotel, ripe for development and even, further down the line, perhaps a second premises elsewhere in Scotland.



Benleva Visitors - On Tuesday October 5th the Liverpool Masonic formation drinking team, having some time to spare, paid a visit to the Benleva Hotel.

The ale was all in superb condition and we naturally tried all three on offer, our favourite was the Red Smiddy this suited our delicate palates particularly well. The hosts Steve and Becky were most welcoming and enthusiastic regarding real ale. After a few well spent hours we took our leave with fond memories of a superb drinking place, though as you would expect naturally not before the Red Smiddy ran out.

I can assure you WE WLL BE BACK.

Michael Melling.

Sounds interesting! Ed.

Good Beer Guide 2006

"2006?? But I have barely opened my GBG 2005 copy.." I hear you mutter.

For committee it is time to compile the list of pubs we think merit entry into the next Good Beer Guide. During the Winter meetings we will be reviewing the reports we have received throughout the year, plus the pub surveys we carried out this year on trips to Speyside, Isle of Skye, and Wester Ross.

Have the GBG 2005 pubs continued to serve high quality real ale? Remember, these entries are based on surveys and reports from March 2003 to February 2004. Are there other real ale outlets which now deserve to be in the guide?

Once committee has agreed which pubs should be recommended for inclusion, what is the total number? Have we exceeded our quota for the first time? If so, there will, no doubt, be a heated debate and more close scrutiny of evidence before the final list is agreed. A brief description must be written for each pub - CAMRA insist that a new description is written for pubs which are entered again - and committee members will be allocated a number of pubs from our list. The last and most tedious task is to complete a CAMRA form for each entry. Hopefully this year we may at long last be able to submit our entries in electronic format?

And all this must be done and dusted by 7th March, 2005, so that you may enjoy your next edition of the Good Beer Guide sometime in September 2005!!

Please let us know if you visit pubs which you think should be in the GBG, and also let us know if current entries do not come up to scratch. Thanks. Ed.

Your business needs . . .



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Investor in People

Pub Reports -



Newtonmore Wanderers - On the Road Again

Here are the tasting notes from our jaunt around the islands at the end of the summer, using the CAMRA 0-5 scoring system

Plockton Inn - Greene King Abbot Ale rating 4, Fullers London Pride not tried

Plockton Hotel - Isle of Skye Skyclight rated 3, this beer was starting to get tired, also on Deuchers IPA not tried

Nevis Bar, Fort William - Isle of Skye Black Cuillin rated 3, not at its best. We also tried the Grog and Gruel but it was closed (11.45 am)

Old Forge, Inverie - Isle of Skye Black Cuillin rated 3, Isle of Skye Thunderstorm not tried, it went off as we arrived, we then went to pitch our tent and on our return these two beers had been replaced with Isle of Skye Skyclight rated 4 and Shepherd Neame Spitfire rated 4. We highly recommend this pub not just for its beer but for its friendliness and wonderful food, it may be totally out of the way but we will be back next year without a doubt.

Royal Hotel, Portree - Isle of Skye MacNabs rated 3, lacking taste, also Hebridean Gold but this was resembling gravy, so taken back, no rating.

Isles Hotel, Portree - Caledonian Isles Ale rated 3. We feel this is a re-badge of a regular Caledonian beer, maybe 80/-.

Bosville Hotel, Portree - Isle of Skye Misty Isle rated 4, at last a good beer in Portree!!! Served at correct temperature and very tasty.

Sligachan Hotel, Sligachan - Houston Big Lusty Mae, Houston Cuillin Conqueror, Houston St Peters Well and Houston Big Tosser (the wife received a funny look from another customer when she ordered this one??). All these beers rated 4, all in good condition, the pub now only operates four handpumps (quality not quantity). The **Cuillin Brewery** should now be complete and test brews starting to come through, we were shown around the very roomy 6 barrel plant (formerly Physician & Firkin Brewery of Edinburgh). They plan to have brewing courses for visitors starting next year.

Pub on the Pier, Uig - Isle of Skye Black Cuillin, very rare for me as I rated this beer 5, excellent flavour, correct temperature - a perfect pint!!!!

Ferry Inn, Uig - Hebridean Clansman rated 3+, Isle of Skye Black Cuillin rated 3. This inn was not as close to the ferry as we thought it was (about 1 mile away).

Uig Hotel, Uig (near the Ferry Inn) - Isle of Skye Red Cuillin rated 3+

King Haakon Bar, Kyleakin - No real ale, the single handpump was covered over with a cloth bag and had not been used for a while. The Isle of Skye range and Heather Fraoch Ale were available in bottles.

Hebridean Brewery, Stornoway - We were given a tour around the brewery. We found the staff very friendly and informative, and they were very happy to answer any questions about the brewery and who sold their beers locally. We turned up without prior notice and were welcomed with opened arms as they don't get many CAMRA members visiting the brewery (I can't think why not, maybe they are slightly out of the way).

Whalers Rest, Stornoway - Hebridean Clansman rated 4. and Hebridean Islander Strong Ale rated 4.

Royal British Legion, Stornoway - Hebridean Clansman rated 3, we had no problem getting into the Legion on showing our CAMRA cards. The beer tasted nicer than it was due to being only £1.79 a pint!!

No. 27 Bar, Inverness - Entered the bar just as they had a power cut, so they couldn't serve us due to the tills not working. We left with An Teallach Ale and Atlas Latitude sitting in darkness on the bar ??????????

Blackfriars Inverness - Hyde's Tickety Boo rating 4

Kings Highway, Inverness - Cairngorm Wildcat rated 4 - Yes, that is correct, 4 in a Wetherspoons outlet.. Very rare ..

This concluded our trip except, for a couple of days in Edinburgh and Glasgow in search of beers not tried by us before..

Craig & Louise Whitwell

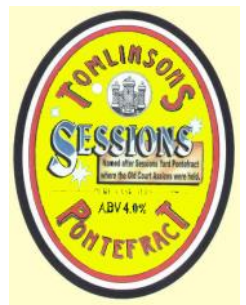
Another wide-ranging and comprehensive report from Craig & Louise; please keep them coming. Reports such as these are a massive help for the committee when it comes to recommending pubs for entry into the Good Beer Guide. With such a large geographical area it is difficult to regularly visit all pubs and so we rely upon your reports to keep us up-to-date regarding which pubs are selling real ale that is consistently in good condition. Ed.

Legend -The secret is out! Local real ale drinkers probably knew already, but the December issue of CAMRA's What's Brewing publication confirmed that in brewer Sean Tomlinson we have a legend in our midst!! A feature on the Cairngorm Brewery notes that "Cairngorm didn't really set the world on fire until early 2003 with the arrival of a genuine legend as brewery manager."

Sean brewed at Tomlinson's Old Castle Brewery in Pontefract, and he pioneered the re-introduction of liquorice in brewing before moving to Scotland to help set up the Black Isle Brewery.

Tomlinson's Three Sieges 6% ABV Liquorice Stout was re-brewed to Sean's original recipe at the Fernandes Brewery for the 2004 Pontefract Liquorice Festival.

Nice to see Highlands & Islands breweries and brewers in the spotlight. Ed.





Selecting our Pub of the Year

Just in case you were curious about our 'Pub of the Year' awards.. In the past we have made two awards per year - one for a Town and one for a Country Pub of the Year - one of these being our overall Pub of the Year. We try not to forget that, whilst our awards are made to pubs, it's the hardworking licensees & their staff who have earned them.

Following a proposal by a local member, and in recognition of the massive geographical area covered by the branch, we have increased the number of awards to seven. This will allow us to promote more of the local pubs who regularly sell good quality real ale.

All Inverness & Highland Branch members are welcome (and encouraged) to vote - members can vote for a pub in each area if they wish - the winners are declared and certificates are presented at a later date.

Why you should vote for a particular pub is up to you, but here are some good reasons for making your choice:

- ◆ Consistently good Real Ale - The most important single factor
- ◆ Atmosphere - Whether it's a rural gem or a back street boozier
- ◆ Service & Welcome - Friendly? Given full measure or top-up without asking?
- ◆ Clientele Mix - A good cross section of people & ages, an inclusive pub
- ◆ Support for CAMRA's aims - Lined glasses, Mild, Real Cider, etc.
- ◆ Good Value - In the widest sense.

To win an award, a pub doesn't necessarily have to offer a large selection of ales from microbreweries (though it helps) - sometimes we might recognise the pub with a solitary handpump, dispensing quality beer in a real ale desert.

We expect that the winners will either be *Good Beer Guide* entries, or will be from our list of Real Ale Pubs on pages 26 & 27 of this newsletter. If not, and if we have somehow missed a pub which you feel merits your Pub-of-the-Year vote, then please let us know immediately so that we can update our list!!

We want as many people as possible to get involved (there are over 100 fellow real ale fans in our branch). Vote by e-mail, by post, or in person at a branch meeting. All contributions are very welcome. These are *YOUR* awards - a way of saying 'Cheers' to your favourite Highlands & Islands pubs & pub folk.

See pages 18 & 19.



**CAMPAIGN
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Join CAMRA Today - Membership Form on Page 27

The Old Inn

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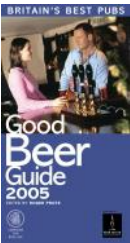
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Up to eight Real Ales

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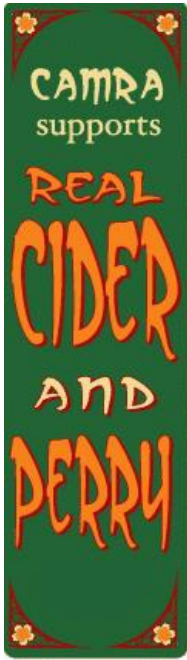
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Inverness & Highland CAMRA Country Pub-of-the-Year for 2004



October was Cider Month but, with precious little happening in the Inverness & Highland area, it meant we had no option but to head south in the camper van in search of the real thing.

Tyre problems on the M6 led to an unscheduled stopover at Wolverley in the West Midlands. The campsite warden was waiting; he checked us in, and then answered the question before it was asked - "The pub is on the left just through the gate." How did he know? "Do they have real ale?" I asked. "No idea," he replied, "they all drink cider around here."

Weston's Old Rosie on handpump, at the nearby Lock Inn, made up for the motorway hassle and got the trip off to a very good start..

We next camped a few miles outside Bath. The nearby Bath-Bristol Cycle Track offered easy access to the centre of Bath. At the Coeur de Lion, the smallest pub in Bath, we found Archer's Autumn Ale, a fruity seasonal offering plus Bombardier, Cumberland Ale, and Abbot. In the Grade II listed Old Green Tree we found Abbey Ales Steeplejack (a one off limited edition ale brewed for the Bath Beer Festival), Hidden Brewery's Old Sarum, and RCH Pitchfork - all very drinkable, but Mr Perret's Stout (5.9% ABV) from the Wickwar

Brewery was definitely the pick of the bunch. No real cider at either pub, but the GBG suggested we may have better luck at the Hop Pole. It was not to be, but we enjoyed the Bath Ales Barnstormer. On the way back we cycled to the Bird in the Hand at Saltford. This large and busy pub is right next to the cycleway. Very much a foody pub, we thought, but with a good selection of real ales, and we were able to quench our thirst with a couple of pints of Thatcher's Dry Cider - at £1.60 a pint!

After Bath we headed south-west again, stopping in Newton Abbot to visit one of only four surviving cider houses in the whole of Britain. Ye Olde Cider Bar is the genuine article, selling only cider, perry, and draught country wines - but absolutely no beer or spirits!! (Soft drinks are also sold). The main focal point in this friendly and welcoming bar is an array of massive oak cider casks, surrounded by the familiar polycasks - some containing more varieties of cider or perry, and others an incredible range of wines: from birch to blackberry, parsnip to peach, elderflower, cowslip, sloe, and many more. We sampled (Winkleigh) Sam's and Thatcher's ciders, dispensed by gravity from the giant oak casks. Wonderful cider at any cost but, at £1.50 per pint (£9.60 per gallon to carry out), any chance to visit this gem should not be missed.

We had only planned for an overnight halt near Bodmin, but when we awoke the sun was shining and it was too good a day for driving. Friends had recommended we visit Padstow and so we headed for the Camel cycle trail. A 28 mile round trip is as far as I have ever cycled in one outing, but it was a glorious October day and views along the estuary were stunning. Fish and chips from Rick Stein's harbour-side take-away

were all you would expect, and were washed down with Cornish Cyder in the Old Custom House. The hotel is one of 156 St Austell Brewery pubs, and the range of cask ales on offer included their Tribute, HSD, IPA, and Tinnars ales.

Next day was spent in the fascinating Lost Gardens of Heligan. We camped at Veryan but didn't find the Vineyard. We bought some Veryan Cornish Cyder from the village shop. The brochure notes that wine making techniques are used in the making of this 7.4% ABV cider, and have presumably contributed to the wine-like cost! Nevertheless this was one of the best bottled ciders I have ever tasted!!

Now heading northwards, we detoured off the main road to the Blisland Inn. This former National CAMRA Pub-of-the-Year and regular award winner is a must.

Eight ales, mostly from local breweries, were dispensed by handpump, as was the Thatcher's Cheddar Valley Cider. Landlord Gary Marshall, a colourful ex-navy man, likes to serve ales and ciders from the wood. He has his own wooden barrels which he sends to be filled! A shelf near the bar held a collection of CAMRA newsletters from around the country, and we added a copy of *What's Yours Then*.

There was no cider to be had in the pubs near our Woolacombe campsite, but by now we had some stocks on board! The Kings Arms at Winkleigh is a delightful thatched inn in the village square, and the Butcombe Bitter and Skinner's Cornish Knocker would have been tempting were it not for Sam's Dry Poundhouse Cider. We were given directions to Winkleigh Cider

(Continued on page 34)

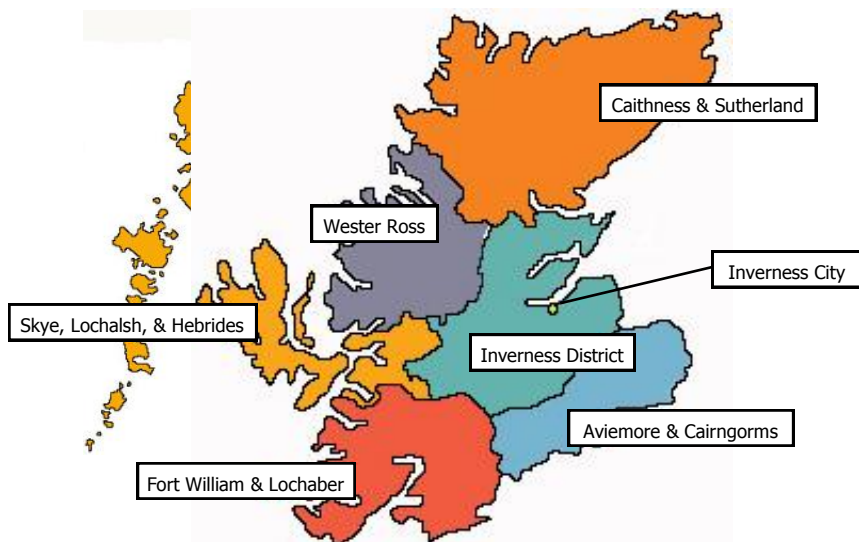


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The www.visithighlands.com website has been used as a reference.

1. Inverness City

The name is self-explanatory, we hope!

2. Inverness District

This is a combination of two areas, "Inverness, Loch Ness & Nairn" and "Black Isle, Mid Ross & Easter Ross", but not including Inverness itself.

3. Aviemore & the Cairngorms

As shown on the www.visithighlands.com website.

4. Skye, Lochalsh & Hebrides

Skye and Lochalsh, as shown on the www.visithighlands.com website, plus the Outer Hebrides.

5. Fort William & Lochaber

As shown on the www.visithighlands.com website, but part of the "Glencoe & Loch Leven" area, including South Ballachulish, plus the King's House and Clachaig Inn, is in Argyll and so outwith our area.

6. Wester Ross

As shown on the www.visithighlands.com website.

7. Caithness & Sutherland

As shown on the www.visithighlands.com website.

Reproduced from www.visithighlands.com by kind permission of The Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board

Pub of the Year (POTY)

There are seven awards -

1. *Inverness City*
2. *Inverness District*
3. *Aviemore & the Cairngorms*
4. *Skye, Lochalsh & Hebrides*
5. *Fort William & Lochaber*
6. *Wester Ross*
7. *Caithness & Sutherland*

There is obviously any number of ways to divide up the branch area. We have given this matter a good deal of thought but we are sure that our final choice will lead to much debate in hostelryes up and down the land..

And hopefully lots of letters! Ed.

Pubs have now been listed by POTY area.

- All Branch members are allowed to vote in all seven categories.
- All votes to be returned to the secretary by **end of February**.
- All entries must serve real ale.

- In the event of a tie the committee will decide the result by consensus.
- Winning pubs, in each area, will be visited by the committee who will then decide which of the seven winners will represent the Branch in the Scottish Pub of the Year.
- All nominated pubs must be within the branch boundary.

Past Winners (Inverness/Country)

- | | |
|------|---------------------------------------|
| 2000 | Clachnaharry Inn
* Ferry Boat Inn |
| 2001 | * Clachnaharry Inn
Sligachan Hotel |
| 2002 | Clachnaharry Inn
* Ferry Boat Inn |
| 2003 | Clachnaharry Inn
* Benleiva Hotel |
| 2004 | Blackfriars
* Old Inn, Gairloch |

* Scottish POTY entry, won by Clachnaharry Inn in 2001.



Inverness & Highland Branch of CAMRA 2005 Pub of the Year Voting Form

Inverness City

Inverness District

Aviemore & Cairngorms

Skye, Lochalsh & Hebrides

Fort William & Lochaber

Wester Ross

Caithness & Sutherland

Member's Name/No.

Please return by end of February



Out & About

Had a trip to the Western Isles in mid September:

Saturday - Harris Inn, Tarbert: 2 hand pumps, clip for Hebridean Clansman sadly not on, however Red Cuillin was superb (4). Found out later from Andy at Heb brewery they had taken their last order for the season. By Wednesday no real ale.

British Legion in Stornoway had Heb Celtic Black which was good (3). Called in at the Hebridean Brewery where Andy said he had had a good year but could still only get the Whalers to stock real ale, however Islander is selling well here, they were on their 6th firkin of the week by Friday, and it was good (3). The guys at the brewery were disappointed that the Whalers Rest was overlooked for the GBG, but to be honest, despite the beer being good, the food was very average and the same song was repeated 6 times in the lounge bar when I was there!! Other more deserving cases for the GBG I think.

On the way home stopped for a night at the Old Inn in Gairloch. What can I say, all expectations exceeded; from the warm welcome, the accommodation, superb food and of course the beers. Tetley's bitter, An Teallach, Atlas 3 Sisters, and Cairngorm Wildcat, all in top condition. Fully deserves Country Pub-of-the-Year award.

Back in Inverness, Snowgoose had Deuchar's IPA and Bass, both good as usual. Blackfriars mid week - am I being churlish in saying ONLY five beers on? This went to four when McEwen's 80/- went off leaving Old Peculier, Trade Winds, OS Hen, and Cuillin Beast. The OP was ok (2+).

Managed to get to Benleiva on Thursday afternoon (for the festival), found all the beers good. An Teallach (2+), Valhalla Auld Rock (3), Cuillin Beast (3), Orkney Red MacGregor (3+), Tryst Brockville Pale (3), and Inveralmond Independence (3+), this one being my favourite and the first time I have tried a draught Inveralmond beer; shame they are not more widely available up here. GH, Inverness.

Looks like a good trip, and a first pub report for Harris! Many thanks, Ed.

...I was in the Wetherspoons in Wick and I had an excellent pint of Cairngorm Black Gold at £1.55 a pint. Also a half of Pedigree at £1.30 in Ebeneezers Bar.

On my way back from Orkney, I popped in past the Central Hotel (in Thurso) and had a borderline pint of Deuchar's at £2.15 (also had Bombardier and Flowers IPA, both at £2.20). Also I notice that the bar has been refurbished and is more open plan than before.. Dod Howie, Grampian Branch.

Not sure if "borderline" refers to the measure or the condition? Ed.

Do you know of any reason why the Stronlossit at Roybridge is not in the GBG? Its been serving excellent real ale for 2 or 3 years now. Jim, Newtonmore.

A few more reports from readers would be a start.. Ed.



THE HEBRIDEAN BREWING COMPANY

Taste of the Islands

18a Bells Road
Stornoway, Isle of Lewis
HS1 2RA

Tel: 01851 700123

Fax: 01851 700234

www.hebridean-brewery.co.uk

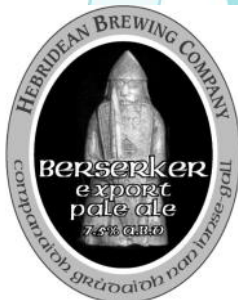


CLANSMAN Ale

3.9% ABV



Islander
strong premium ale
4.8% abv



Celtic Black Ale

3.9% ABV



Berserker
Export Ale 7.9%

Hebridean Brewing Company Quality Guarantee

At the Hebridean Brewing Company we have a belief that quality is fundamental to our products. We create traditional craft brewed ales full of flavour using only the best ingredients and Hebridean water.

Although brewing on island and the extra transport costs associated with this keep our beers at a premium, you the customer are assured that everything from milling to bottling is carried out in the islands.

We believe that the unique taste of the islands owes much to the Hebridean water and the care we take in making our fine ales. We therefore refuse to brew our beers under licence on the mainland to cut costs and increase supply, whilst keeping the credence given to Island brewed beers.

So next time you try a pint of Hebridean beer, you can be assured it was made with only the best malt, hops, yeast, Hebridean water and a love of making quality ales.

WE WON'T PUT OUR BADGE ON ANYTHING ELSE.

ANDREW MURDO RIBBENS
HEBRIDEAN BREWING COMPANY

Festival News

The **Clachnaharry Inn 1st ever Real Ale Festival** has certainly set the scene for future events. Landlord George MacLean (pictured) built a wooden platform above the beer garden on which a large marquee was erected. Ivory pleated linings and chandeliers completed the décor in this impressive venue.

A long row of handpumps had been installed in the marquee to supplement the regular selection of six real ales in the main bar. An impressive seafood buffet complimented the wide range of mainly Highlands and Islands real ales on offer, and the window panels in the marquee allowed drinkers and diners to enjoy the fine views across the Caledonian Canal and Beaulie Firth to the mountains beyond.

The festival, held in conjunction with the annual Highland Food & Drink Festival, attracted a good turnout of both locals and visitors. Music was provided by Schiehallion, and there was also a "Jam" session on Sunday evening.

The vote for Beer-of-the-Festival went to Cairngorm Brewery's Trade Winds.

The marquee was a big success, and George intends to use it for Christmas lunches and private functions - as well as, we hope, for future beer festivals!



Win Some, Lose Some

A brief report which somehow encapsulates the best and the worst of my experience of real ale in Inverness: Last Friday saw me with half an hour to kill, waiting for Alison at the Palace Hotel. A visit to the bar there proved fruitless, with no real ale on offer, although I was assured by the bar staff that that it would return "sometime". I walked next door for my first visit to the refurbished Columba Hotel. The bar seemed OK and I was pleased to see Black Isle Red Kite on offer but, sadly, the pint poured for me was undrinkable. In addition to being cloudy, it had a vinegary aftertaste. The bar staff seemed mystified, looked at the pint as if doing so might make it clear (or me go away!), pulled a further sample which looked just as bad and asked me if I would like another pint! I opted for a refund which was not given in particularly good grace and without an apology.

Sunday saw, thankfully, an experience at the other end of the spectrum - a visit to the Clachnaharry Inn for their first Real Ale Festival. Despite the interesting range of beers available in the marquee, I opted for a pint of Black Sheep Special from the bar (I have a weakness for Yorkshire beers, having been a native of that parish in my formative years). It proved to be in good condition and I was just enjoying it when I fell into bad company (Mike and Kay) and spent a pleasant half hour with them. After they had left I wandered back out to the marquee for an excellent pint of Cairngorm Black Gold and stayed to listen to the good live folk music on offer. I rounded off the visit with my first pint of Orkney Dragonhead

Stout. It was an interesting contrast to the Black Gold which, on balance, I think I preferred. Here's hoping George continues with the event in the years to come.

Cheers, DS.

Thanks for an honest report. Hopefully just early teething problems at Columba. Everyone we've spoken to about Clachnaharry Inn Real Ale Festival has said that they very much hope that it is the first of many!! Ed.

The Loch Ness Beer Festival continues to go from strength to strength. For the third year of the festival organiser Steve Crossland had gathered 42 Scottish beers to tempt the real ale drinker to Drumnadrochit's Benleva Hotel. There was a variety of tastes and styles to keep everyone happy, with ales from the southern most brewery, Sulwath, to the most northern, Valhalla, and all at only £2 a pint during the festival

A couple of non-deliveries meant some last minute changes but in addition to the Isle of Skye, Cairngorm, An Teallach and Caledonian regulars there were ales from Inveralmond, Tryst, Hebridean, Orkney and Atlas breweries. Kelburn Brewery's Red Smiddy and the Bridge of Allan brews were very popular, and impressed the customers. This year there were special beer festival glasses for collectors, embossed with the Benleva Hotel and Isle of Skye Brewery logos.

Music was provided by Topsy Laird, Buskoe Sike Ceilidh Band, Ness River Rhythm Kings and Penny Dogs. Oh, and there was also Steve's Pub Quiz to keep the brain cells working. There was a visit from some 17th century re-enactment players,

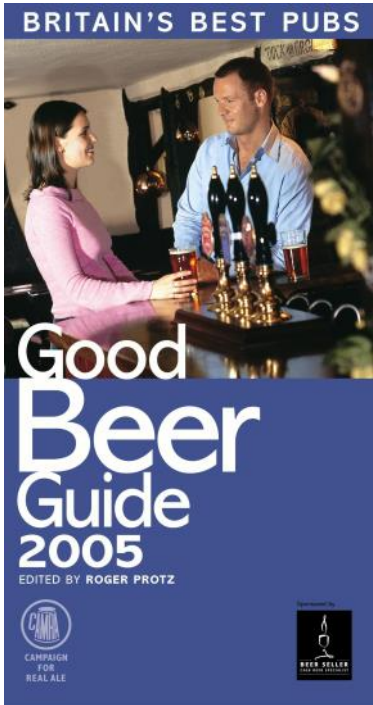
the Sealed Knot, who were still dressed in their costumes. Our Sunday Branch social attracted seven members, some to return later in the week. There were visitors from all over the world during the week long festival, and some now make this an annual trip.

Voting for Beer-of-the-Festival was very fierce with a total of 17 different beers attracting votes. Winner was Cairngorm Trade Winds, followed by Kelburn Red Smiddy and Bridge of Allan Stirling Brig. Note the dates for next year, 16th to 24th September, and keep your diaries clear for the fourth Loch Ness Beer Festival.

A massive 3,000 people turned up at the **18th Aberdeen Beer Festival** to drink the 77 different beers from as far south as Skinner's in Cornwall to Valhalla, this years sponsor, in the Shetland Isles.

The Festival jointly sponsored a 'Do Not Drink and Drive' promotion with Grampian Police. Over 2000 thirsty souls packed the halls on Thursday and Friday and the beers sold quickly. Saturday was a much quieter affair with only 28 beers remaining, despite having a much larger beer order than the previous year. The winner of Beer-of-the-Festival was Hebridean Clansman Ale, second Cairngorm Trade Winds, and third O'Hanlon's Double Champion. An even bigger festival is planned in 2005 (3rd - 5th November).

Reports are coming in that the Isle of Skye Brewery's **Cuillin Beast** is again on the rampage, 240 cases having been shipped across the Atlantic in time for the festive season..



Good Beer Guide 2005

32nd Edition of Britain's long running, best-selling guide to good beer and good pubs offers discriminating drinkers:

- * The best pubs in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and Isle of Man that serve cask-conditioned real ale in tip top condition. All beers listed by strength and style.
- * Pen portraits of the pubs: history, architecture and anecdotes. Plus information on food, entertainment, accommodation, and facilities for families. E-mail and website addresses where given.
- * Our unique Breweries section - something only CAMRA can provide - that lists all the producers and their beers, with tasting notes, information of beers suitable for vegetarians, and the growing number of organic and bottle-conditioned beers. There is also an up-to-date information on breweries, mergers and takeovers along with details of the new, powerful pub groups.

Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2004

Orkney Brewery - Brewing commenced in March 1988 at the old schoolhouse in Sandwick. Ales include Dark Island and Red MacGregor.

Isle of Skye Brewery - Based at Uig by the Western Isles ferry terminal. Brewing since December 1995. Ales include Red & Black Cuillin and Blaven. Seasonal, House, and special event ales are brewed.

Valhalla Brewery - The most northerly brewery in the UK started brewing on the island of Unst in December 1997. Ales include White Wife.

Black Isle Brewery - Started brewing in December 1998 in converted farm buildings. Ales include Red Kite and Yellowhammer. Organic ales are a speciality.

Far North Brewery - Melvich brewpub. Ales include Real Mackay & Fast Reactor.

Isle of Arran Brewery - Located close to Brodick Castle. Opened late March 2000. Ales include Blond and Dark.

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

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

Hebridean Brewing Company - Based in Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis. First beer was produced at end-January 2002.

Atlas Brewery - Brewing in one of the old Aluminium Smelter buildings at Kinlochleven since February 2002. Ales include Latitude and Wayfarer.

An Teallach Brewery - Brewing moved to the family croft at Camusnagaul, near Dundonnell, during March 2003. Ales include An Teallach and Beinn Dearg.

Islay Ales Co Ltd - Established in an old Tractor Shed in Bridgend, in March 2004. Ales include Finlaggan and Blackrock.

Not all of the breweries listed are in our branch area and Orkney and Shetland are submitted by Aberdeen, Grampian & N.Isles Branch. The Arran Islands in the Galloway area; the Isle of Skye is covered by the Glasgow & West Scotland. Similarly, the Orkney & Shetland Islands (OSBG), pubs in Orkney and Shetland are submitted by Aberdeen, Grampian & N.Isles Branch.



Good Beer Guide Listed Pubs - 2005

Inverness City

- Blackfriars
- Clachnaharry Inn
- Glen Mhor Hotel
- Hootananny
- Snowgoose

Inverness District

- Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit
- The Anderson, Fortrose
- Plough Inn, Rosemarkie
- Invernairne Hotel, Nairn

Aviemore & Cairngorms

- Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore
- Old Bridge Inn, Aviemore
- Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge
- Heatherbrae Hotel, Nethy Bridge
- Glen Hotel, Newtonmore

Fort William & Lochaber

- Grog & Gruel, Fort William
- Nevisport Bar, Fort William
- * Clachaig Inn, Glencoe
- Tailrace Inn, Kinlochleven
- Four Seasons, Onich
- Nether Lochaber Hotel, Onich
- Old Forge, Inverie

Isle of Skye, Lochalsh & Hebrides

- Sligachan Hotel
- Stein Inn, Waternish
- Uig Hotel, Uig
- Plockton Hotel, Plockton
- Plockton Inn, Plockton

Wester Ross

- Applecross Inn, Applecross
- Old Inn, Gairloch
- Loch Carron Hotel, Lochcarron
- Ferry Boat Inn, Ullapool

Caithness & Sutherland

- Scourie Hotel, Scourie
- Central Hotel, Thurso

Orkney Islands

- Bothy Bar, Kirkwall
- Ferry Inn, Stromness
- Stromness Hotel, Stromness

Shetland Islands

- Baltasound Hotel, Island of Unst
- Spiggie Hotel, Scousburgh
- Inn on the Hill, Whiteness

* Strictly, the Clachaig Inn is in Glasgow & West of Scotland branch area but it is not very far from the "border" and is certainly worth a visit.

Amendments & deletions can be found at www.camra.org.uk on the GBG page.

Real Ale Pubs

In addition to Good Beer Guide entries, the following list of Inns and Hotels are known to sell (or to have recently sold) cask-conditioned beer. Please let us know about the quality of real ales on tap, particularly if you think inclusion in the Good Beer Guide is merited. We make no claims as to the quality of the beer, and would point out that some of the more remote pubs may only stock real ale on a seasonal **(S)** basis:

Inverness City

Columba Hotel
Heathmount Hotel
Inshes Gate - **(TP)**
Kings Highway
(Wetherspoons)
Number 27 - GBG 2004
Palace Hotel - GBG 2004
Phoenix Bar - GBG 2004
Thistle Inn

Inverness District

Bogroy Inn, Inchmore
Cawdor Tavern, Cawdor
Caledonian Hotel, Nairn
Tomatin Inn, Tomatin
Richmond Hotel, Strathpeffer
Inchbae Hotel, Garve
Clansman Hotel
Cobb's, Drumnadrochit **(S)**
Drumnadrochit Hotel
Urquhart Castle, Drumnadrochit **(S)**
The Lock Inn, Fort Augustus
The Bothy, Fort Augustus
Glenmorrison Arms

Aviemore & the Cairngorms

Dalfaber Country Club, Aviemore
Glenmore Lodge, Nr Aviemore
Winking Owl, Aviemore
* Mash Tun, Charlestown of Aberlour
* Highlander Inn, Craigellachie
* Boat Hotel, Boat of Garten
Glen Mhor, Grantown-on-Spey
Strathspey Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey
* Croft Inn, Glenlivet

Suie Hotel, Kincaig - **(TP)**
Silver Fjord Hotel, Kingussie
Typsy Laird, Kingussie **(S)**
The Lodge Hotel, Newtonmore
* Glenavon Hotel, Tomintoul

Fort William & Lochaber

Invergarry Hotel - GBG 2004
The Eagle, Laggan Locks
(An Inn on a boat on the water)
Inn at Ardgour
Arisaig Hotel
* Laroch Bar, Ballachulish - GBG 2004
Tradewinds, Corpach
Alexandra Hotel, Fort William
Ben Nevis Inn, Fort William
Capercaillie, Fort William
Milton Hotel, Fort William
Tradewinds Bistro, Fort William
* Kings House Hotel, Glencoe
Glenfinnan House Hotel
Mamore Lodge, Kinlochleven
Antler Bar, Kinlochleven
Stronlossit Hotel, Roy Bridge
Tomdoun Sporting Lodge
Factor's Inn, Torlundy
(Closed Sun/Mon, No Smoking)

Skye, Lochalsh, & Hebrides

Isle of Raasay Hotel
Ardvasar Hotel
Claymore, Broadford
Dunollie Hotel, Broadford
Hebridean Hotel, Broadford
Old Inn, Carbost
Coruisk House, Elgol
(Restaurant - Real ale served with food only)
Duntulm Hotel
Dunvegan Hotel
Edinbane Hotel
Lodge Hotel, Edinbane
Flodigarry Hotel
Greshornish Lodge
Isleornsay Hotel
King Haakon Bar, Kyleakin
Bosville Hotel, Portree
Isles Inn, Portree
Royal Hotel, Portree
Sconser Lodge Hotel

Skeabost Hotel
 Ferry Inn, Uig
 Pub on the Pier, Uig
 Cluanie Inn
 Kintail Lodge Hotel
 Clachan Bar, Dornie
 Loch Duich Hotel, Dornie
 Balmacara Hotel
 Cuchulainn's, Kyle of Lochalsh
 Langass Lodge, North Uist
 Dark Island Hotel, Benbecula
 Isle of Benbecula House Hotel
 Borrodale Hotel, South Uist
 Royal British Legion, Stornoway
 The Whalers Rest, Stornoway
 Shawbost Inn, Isle of Lewis
 Isle of Harris Inn, Tarbert

Badachro Inn
 The Loch Inn, Gairloch
 The Myrtlebank, Gairloch
 Rockvilla Hotel, Lochcarron
 Strathcarron Hotel
 Tigh-an-Eilean Hotel, Shieldag
 Argyll Hotel, Ullapool
 Caley Inn Bar, Ullapool
 Morefield Hotel, Ullapool
 Seaforth Hotel, Ullapool

Cairnness & Sutherland

Inchnadamph Hotel
 Castle Hotel, Dornoch
 Invershin Hotel
 Melvich Hotel
 Mackays Hotel, Wick
 Alexander Bain, Wick (Wetherspoons)

* Not in Inverness & Highland Branch area

TP - Dispensed using top pressure
 (not approved by CAMRA for GBG).

S - Seasonal or not, it is always a good idea
 to phone ahead to avoid disappointment
 if you plan to make a detour for a pint.

Wester Ross

Ledgowan Hotel, Achnasheen
 Ben Dampn Lodge, Torridon
 Drumchork Hotel, Aultbea
 Dundonnell Hotel
 Kinlochewe Hotel



Application to join CAMRA (Full/Joint British Isles/EU Membership)

Title:Surname:
 Forename(s):
 Date of Birth:
 Partner (if joint membership):
 Address:

 Postcode: Date:
 Telephone:
 E-mail Address:

Signature:

Remittance (payable to CAMRA) enclosed for:

Single Membership	£16.00	£18 from Jan 2005
Joint Membership	£19.00	£21 from Jan 2005
Under 26 and Over 60s	£9.00	£10 from Jan 2005

Send to: The Membership Secretary, CAMRA,
 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL 1 4 LW



Inverness & Highland Branch



Real Ale on a Boat ??

For an unusual setting for your next pint of real ale (and a first class meal if you are so inclined), then why not visit Gordon Mallach on his converted 1927 Dutch

Barge at Laggan Locks on the Caledonian Canal? A strange setting you must admit, but rest assured the boat is quite secure and you are unlikely to be served a cloudy pint.

In fact I doubt you will have any complaints at all. No worries about

its seaworthiness either, as on my last visit it had just returned from a compulsory (for insurance purposes) inspection

and survey in dry dock at Banavie. Expertly carried out by Corpach Boat Builders, I was asked to mention.

'Eagle - The Inn on the Water' is not easy to find. There are no signs on the A82 Fort William to Inverness road, you just have to take the side road to the locks and head for the nearest barge tied up in the Canal. Situated directly on the Great Glen Way, the crossing of a lock gate away from the Great Glen Cycle Route, and within easy walking from a Youth Hostel, it is a not to be missed visit for anyone 'doing' the Great Glen on foot, bike or boat. And there is more to it than the well looked after Atlas Brewery beer available from the single handpump.

Gordon does not advertise, he does not have to. His satisfied customers do that for him; and there are plenty of those.



With his friendly helpful attitude he has given a new meaning to the term 'Highland Welcome'. On my first visit a couple of young walkers had just called in, hoping for a meal at the end of a hard day on

the Great Glen Way. As usual, Gordon was fully booked for meals and was busy serving dinner and dispensing at the bar. 'I will not see you starve', he said to the hungry walkers, knowing how far it was to the next food establishments in the area. 'I will knock you up something. just give me half an hour or so'. At a stroke he

negated all the other bad experiences this writer has had in trying to obtain sustenance at the wrong time of the day



at other tourist places. I am sure you will all recognise the scene: 'the chef is off today'; 'the kitchen closes at five to two'; 'We don't serve food on Wednesday and Thursday lunchtimes, especially in the middle of the tourist season'; and so on. I'll stop before my frustratingly gained cynicism overcomes me. Gordon must be one of the few landlords who realise that tourism is one of Scotland's biggest earn-

the glen hotel

NEWTONMORE

Monarch of the Glen Country

Fine Food

Lunchtime & evenings

Entertainment

on selected nights

Accommodation

stay the night and relax...

Four Hand Pumps

Plus selected bottled ales



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



Tel: 01540 673203
www.theglenhotel.co.uk

ers, and a satisfied customer is your best (and cheapest) form of advertising.

The past owner of two pubs and a hotel in the Gloucester area, before moving here, he has considerably downsized. As a fully qualified chef you can imagine just how comfortable he is with his present 'one man band' situation. 'Well on top of the job' is the term that comes to mind. He bakes his own bread each morning and tends to be fully booked most nights. You usually need to book in advance and, although his preference is to regale you with his sea food culinary expertise, he will, within reason and given enough time, cook to order. He can seat a maximum of sixteen, and only has one serving. Oh, and yes, don't forget to take an appetite. The portions are large and filling.



The interior of the barge has a cosy feel to it and is a tribute to wood. Fitted out by Gordon, of course, the floorings and bar are made from old lock gates from Banavie, whereas the stairway includes a spectacular piece of Wiltshire elm. While enjoying a pint of Atlas ale (the only beers served), or waiting for your meal, you can sit in a comfortable lounge suite in front of a large fire which more than adequately keeps the place warm,

even on the coldest of winter days. Alternately, if the weather is fine, beer drinking locations do not come much better than sitting on deck with your pint, enjoying the views of the spectacular Lochaber Mountains thrusting skywards above the steep banks of Loch Lochy.

I should also mention that Gordon openly admits to being an eccentric and has strong views on most subjects, especially American politics. If you have political views to air, then make sure that your facts are correct, or simply keep quiet and enjoy the food and beer. Gordon is a political animal and he enjoys nothing more than a lively debate or argument. He has appeared on the Jeremy Vine show on a number of occasions, often at the behest of the BBC.

The beer, the food, the chat; whatever the reason to visit; I'm sure you will be more than satisfied with what is on offer at this unusual setting for real ale.

Fascinating! Please let us know if you have found anything out of the ordinary on your travels. Ed.

Inns and Things

There can be few better pubs in which to enjoy a game of rugby than Edinburgh's Guildford Arms. The Springboks were in town and there were plenty of green and yellow shirts in the bar, and one or two Welsh supporters too!

It seems to be impossible to visit the Guildford without bumping into real ale drinkers from Inverness and, after the game, we spotted some familiar faces enjoying a couple of pints before the long journey home. The choice of beers on

offer included Atlas Nimbus, Cairngorm Trade Winds, Orkney Dark Island and Red MacGregor, and Arran Blonde. Easy to see why regulars from Clachnaharry Inn or Blackfriars might feel at home! Traquair's Stuart Ale, Dent Lambourghini, Harviestoun Schiehallion, and Kelburn Misty Law, plus the inevitable Caley 80/-, completed the excellent selection of ales on offer at this lively town centre pub.

We also found time to visit the Bow Bar and if there is a better real ale drinkers' pub in Edinburgh I have yet to find it! This bar offers an ever-changing range of guest ales, and you are always likely to find something out of the ordinary. On this visit the selection included Fyne Ales Highlander (4.8% ABV), Tower Brewery's Thomas Salt Pale Ale (3.8%), and Black Abbot (5.3%) from the Durham Brewery.

No Real Ale - The Taigh Ailean Hotel at Portnalong no longer sells real ale, and so do not be misled by their web site which states "cellars brimming with real ales from the Isle of Skye Brewery".

We hear that "Punch Taverns have given the **Isles Hotel** in Portree permission to take Skye beers again, although you might get the occasional southern beer".

The new **Cuillin Brewery** at Sligachan hope to be in full production when the hotel re-opens after their winter break. Initially they will brew just for the hotel, and hope to bottle. The brewer is Eric Jones, who formerly brewed for the Isle of Skye Brewery. They have brewed a couple of trial beers: 'Ecstasy' (an 80/- style beer), and 'Wedding Ale'. Brewery tours are planned.

THE AN TEALLACH ALE COMPANY

**An Tealla
ABV 4.2 %**

**ers Pale Ale
ABV 4.2 %**



**Beinn Dec
ABV 3.8 %**

**use Special
ABV 4.4 %**

Dundonnell, Camusnagaul, Little Loch Broom, Nr Ullapool, IV 23 2 QT
Tel/FAX: 01854 633 306 E-Mail: anteallachale@dundonnell.freemove.co.uk

News of Brews



Re-launch of the Devanha Brewery

Originally located at the river end of what is now South College Street, and at the foremost of Aberdeen's breweries, it was founded as Wm. Black & Co. in 1803 and acquired by Wm. Younger & Co. Ltd. in 1930. Brewing ceased and the premises were used as a distribution point before finally closing just after World War II. The site remains visible today although most of the old buildings have gone and the rest are in a sorry derelict state. The beers were extensively available as far south as London. Devanha XXX Imperial Stout was much prized as one of the finest of its kind.

In 1982 Dixie Taylor re-launched the Devanha Brewery, now based in Alford. The initial beer was Devanha XXX, a robust dark beer similar in type to Younger's No. 3. This was followed by Devanha XB, a lighter hopper, 70/- strength product. The beers were popular but the trade was difficult with many publicans being unwilling to break the stranglehold of the majors. The guest beer scenario had yet to be developed. The Brewery ceased brewing in 1986.

In 2004 a new company was formed by Dixie Taylor to revive the Devanha name. There is no brewery at present and the Isle of Skye Brewery, because of its proven pedigree and award winning beers, has the contract to brew the Devanha brews under license. The XXX has been recreated in the close image of its illus-

trious predecessor, and it is hoped it will be third time lucky. The official launch took place at the Aberdeen Beer Festival this year. Initially the beers will be available around the Aberdeen area and in two of our Branch's top establishments, the Benleva Hotel in Drumnadrochit and the Clachnaharry Inn in Inverness. Look out for the Devanha brews and try them. Let us know your verdict.

Champion Bottle-Conditioned Beer of Scotland

1st Bridge of Allan "Brig O' Allan"
2nd = Isle of Skye "Misty Isle"
2nd = Bridge of Allan "Allan Blonde"
Selected at the Troon Beer Festival

From the Glasgow Guzzler:

*Seven (Glasgow & West Scotland Branch) worthies arose early on Saturday 16th October and drove to Kinlochleven via the Bridge of Orchy Hotel and the Clachaig Inn to present the Glasgow Branch Beer of the Year Trophy to Atlas Brewery for their fine brew **Latitude** Cask Pilsner. We were well entertained in this remote West Highlands outpost.*

In over more than 20 years of presenting the trophy it should be noted that this is only the third time that a West Coast beer has won the accolade.

Seasonal Brews - Watch out for warming brews from local brewers :

Santa's Sledgehammer - 6.3% ABV
(Cairngorm Brewery)

Isle of Skye Cuillin Beast - 7% ABV

Atlas Blizzard - 4.7% ABV

ATLAS BREWERY



**Latitude Cask Pilsner
(3.6% abv)**



**Three Sisters Scottish
Ale (4.2% abv)**



**Nimbus Strong Pale
Ale (5.0% abv)**



Seasonal Range:

- Spring - Equinox Pale Gold Ale 4.5% abv
- Summer - Wayfarer India Pale Ale 4.4% abv
- Autumn - Tempest Wheat Beer 4.9% abv
- Winter - Blizzard Winter Beer 4.7% abv



**Wayfarer India Pale
Ale (4.4% abv)**



**Tempest Wheat Beer
(4.9% abv)**



**Blizzard Winter Beer
(4.7% abv)**



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farm shop where we were served by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable young lady. Cider could be purchased in small or large polycasks or drawn by handpump from the wood into your own container.

On to Somerset and a trio of handpumps in Washford's White Horse Inn served Cotleigh's Tawny Ale, Flowers IPA, and Rich's Farmhouse Cider. The Torre Cider Farm shop was memorable for the selection of ciders and country produce, but not for the service offered by a mature serving lady who clearly thought she was doing you a favour in taking your money.

Somerset really is serious cider country!! There is an abundance of cider producers and farm shop outlets such that there is no need to seek out real cider - you just follow the signs! Most pubs serve cider and by now we were moving on to the next if real cider was not on offer!

The George Inn at Croscombe held a beer, cider, and cheese festival; part of the Mendips Food and Drink Week, but our time spent there is another story..

We spent an hour or more driving around the Somerset Levels, a cross between the far north Flow Country and Lincolnshire's Fens, in search of Roger Wilkins' Cider Farm at Mudgely. We squeezed the van into his sloping car park and headed into the barn. A large traditional cider press took centre stage and behind it stood some 6 ft tall wooden barrels. A lively mix of young and old chatted as they sampled ciders. "Would you like a drink?" a voice asked. "Yes please". "Sweet or Dry?" I asked for Dry and a half pint glass was filled from one of the barrels.

Delicious! "Would you like to try the Sweet?" "Why not." Another half pint and no mention of money changing hands! We left with two gallons of farm cider, a Dry and a Medium (50/50 Dry/Sweet).

It is a great pity that real cider is not more widely available, but encouraging to see that farm ciders are still being made from the old cider apple varieties and by using traditional methods.

Camper Van Man, Inverness.

Former Ferry Boat Inn landlord Richard Smith was a keen cider man and, as well as serving a fine pint of Addlestones, he would bring Scrumpy back from trips south. The only cider handpump I've seen in Inverness was taken out of Blackfriars after Dougie Fraser left. Ed.

Islay Ales have been operating at close to capacity since they started brewing in March. All brewing, casking and bottling takes place at their 4 barrel brew plant at Bridgend, using traditional methods.

The beers first went on sale in the Port Charlotte Hotel at Easter; and An Tigh-Seinnse (Portnahaven), Lochside Hotel (Bowmore), and the Ardview Inn (Port Ellen) have all taken beers on draught. The bottle-conditioned beers are widely available on Islay and at the Jura Stores. Most of the beer has been sold locally, but about 30 casks have made their way to Beer Festivals or pubs on the mainland. Regular mainland distribution is planned. Visitors are welcome, and the brewery shop is open Monday to Saturday.

A very short summary from co-founder Paul Hathaway's comprehensive three page update. Many thanks Paul, Ed.



The *land restaurant*
GLEN Hotel

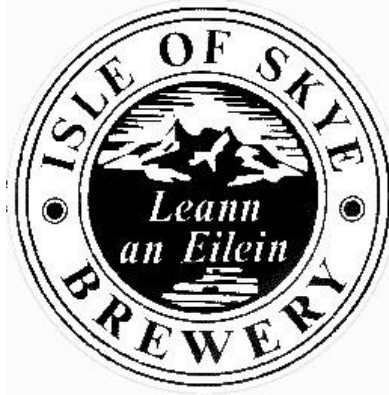


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