

What's Yours Then?

Inverness & Highland Branch
Free Newsletter



Look out for
**Autumn
Beer Festivals**

at these
Highland Pubs:

Clachnaharry Inn
Morefield Motel
Blackfriars
King's Highway
Alexander Bain



www.highlandcamra.org.uk



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Autumn 2005

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

- > (Beer) Festivals in the Highlands
- > Focus on John Barron
- > Updated Branch Diary
- > Far North Trip Report
- > Your letters and pub reports
- > Real Cider News
- > Pub & Brewery News
- > New Look Real Ale Pubs list



Apology

A massive apology is due to Robbie Walker and the team at the **Cairngorm**

Brewery: The front page of our Summer newsletter carried a collage of Highlands & Islands brewery logos and we somehow managed to omit a reference to this award-winning brewery!

The Cairngorm Brewery has been trading since 2001 and is based in Aviemore within the boundary of Cairngorm National Park.

The brewery has a 10 barrel mash tun and copper, 90 barrels of fermentation capacity and 100 barrels of conditioning capacity. All malts are milled on site and whole hop flowers are used; both aid in ensuring that consistent high quality is maintained. The majority of the beers are racked and leave the site in cask format.

The brewery has 14 different brews; some brewed all year round, others as seasonal brews. Six of the brews are also bottled. See press release on page 32

Brewer Wilma Orr has told us that there is no foundation for the comments about the Brewhouse Special (page 20, Summer edition) being a 'mistake Brew'.

We are delighted to have been inundated with letters, e-mails, on-line Rate-our-Beer reports, and beer report cards. It really is encouraging to find that our newsletter and recently-launched website are generating so much interest in the Highlands & Islands real ale scene, from locals and visitors alike.

We have only been able to include a small proportion of your letters, etc., and often only extracts from some fantastic reports.

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.

Winter Newsletter **deadline** will be 1st December 2005, with publication in time for Christmas/New Year holidays.

Thanks to all who have taken trouble to send in pub and beer reports, or articles, but especially to regular writers Chairman Bill & Secretary Eric.

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

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

We prefer to receive artwork as a PDF or JPEG file, or Word document. We can help in preparing your advert if you wish.

2500+ copies are distributed to Branch members, to Highlands & Islands brewers, to Good Beer Guide listed and Real Ale pubs; plus extra copies to advertisers.

What's Yours Then is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Inverness & Highland Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, CAMRA, nor its Branches.

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www.cairngormbrewery.com

A Branch Outing to the Far North

Eight Branch members and two guests would not have believed, as they set off in early June on a trip to the real ale outlets of the North East Highlands, that one of the highlights of the day would be a visit to a family grocer in Thurso.

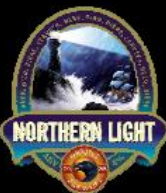
Our transport was again provided by Charlie Fraser of Munloch, and driver Gordon picked us up promptly from the Town House. We left Inverness and headed north-east, picking up three of our party at the Nigg roundabout before turning inland at Bonar Bridge. Unfortunately the Loch Shin Hotel was closed and so we could not try the Skye beer available there. Evidently most of the trade is now from the local Youth Hostel and they are doing other things at midday on Saturday! Some were pleased to leave the rather desolate parts of Sutherland behind them and enjoy the refreshment on offer at the Tongue Hotel (the first find of the day: it not being noted in our list of real ale outlets). The Deuchar's IPA was a little on the cold side but nevertheless very welcome. Along the coast to the east next for the main item on the agenda, a visit to Peter Martin's Far North Brewery at the Melvich Hotel. Here we were very well entertained by Peter, with scampi and chips which were washed down by quite a few pints of Split Stone Bitter (4.2%) and Fast Reactor (4.8%); perhaps just as well that the Edge of Darkness at 6.5% was not available. Refreshments were followed by a very instructive visit to the small brewing plant.

Next stop was in Thurso where the smoky atmosphere of the GBG-listed Central Hotel proved too much for most of the party, although the few who braved the unhealthy atmosphere reported that John Smith's Magnet Pale Ale, Deuchar's IPA and Palmers of Dorset were all in fine condition. The atmosphere in the Commercial Hotel was much better though, unfortunately, the Young's Waggle Dance was not; resulting in a number of half empty glasses being left on the bar.

A visit to JA Mackay's family owned and run Licensed Grocers, opposite the Central Hotel in Thurso, had been recommended. We had been told that Andy Costello keeps a good selection of bottled beers. What an understatement! There must have been about ten metres of shelf space given over to bottled beers, and each single file held a different variety. The lucky beer drinkers of Thurso should be proud that they can merit such a selection in this small town. This writer has not seen such a choice anywhere else, including in the supermarkets of Inverness. A must for any real ale visitor to north Caithness. Andy generously offered a few tastings, and also passed around a fine 12 year old Highland Park malt to sample. All were agreed that Andy's was the best family grocer's shop anyone had visited in a long time. Naturally a number of the party came away with a few carry-outs, but I do not think any were tempted to buy the £800 plus single malt whisky on display.

South to Wick, and to the newish Wetherspoons outlet, the Alexander Bain, where we were surprised to be greeted by Garry, an ex-manager of both the Phoenix and Findlay's in Inverness. Possibly the best pub atmosphere of the day in this light, and

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2005 Branch Diary (Meetings start at 7.30 pm)

29 th Sept - 6 th Oct	2 nd Clachnaharry Beer Festival	Clachnaharry Inn
30 th Sept from 15:00	Beer Festival Social	Clachnaharry Inn
4 th Oct	Committee Meeting	Snowgoose, Inverness
15 th Oct	Cider Tasting (see page 10)	The Anderson at Fortrose
21 st - 23 rd Oct	1 st Ullapool Beer Festival	Morefield Motel
26 th Oct - 2 nd Nov	Beer Festival	Blackfriars, Inverness
31 st Oct - 13 th Nov	JD Wetherspoon's Autumn Beer Festival	King's Highway, Inverness & Alexander Bain, Wick
3 rd - 5 th Nov	Aberdeen Beer Festival	Mclymont Halls
8 th Nov	Annual General Meeting	Clachnaharry Inn
6 th Dec	Committee Meeting	Phoenix, Inverness
20 th Dec	Inverness Walkabout & Social	(Meet at Blackfriars at 19:00)
February 2006	1 st Aviemore Feis	Old Bridge Inn

Provisional 2006 dates are now on-line - to be confirmed in the Winter edition.

Contact Details

See on-line diary at www.highlandcamra.org.uk



Eric Mills 17 Blaven Court, Forres, Moray, IV 36 1 EH
01309 675837 secretary@highlandcamra.org.uk

Bill Tring - 01463 231448 chair@highlandcamra.org.uk
Mike Whittall - 01463 831259 news@highlandcamra.org.uk

airy, and typical JD Wetherspoon pub where a young lady's birthday party added to the convivial atmosphere. The beers on tap included the usual Deuchar's IPA and McEwan's 80/-, plus Cairngorm Wild Cat; all in good condition. Where can one obtain the large range of beers so proudly described in the Wetherspoon's literature? At Mackay's Hotel the Old Peculier was given a "thumbs up" by most of the party.

We enjoyed our final pints of cold but tasty Deuchar's IPA at the Castle Hotel in Dornoch, before Gordon deposited us at our various dropping points.

A most enjoyable trip, though the beers available were dominated rather by the '&' Brewery. The important thing was to find that there were so many available outlets in what was once a complete desert on the Highlands & Islands real ale map.

Thanks to all the licensees, the brewers, the grocers, the driver, and all who turned up for making the day and our first trip to the "Far North" such an enjoyable one.

The Far North sounds like another candidate for a regular trip.. Ed

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Marymas Festival Real Ale Bar

After so any good weather days for this popular event, 2005 brought the weather we had all dreaded. After a dry morning the forecasters were proved correct when it poured down all afternoon. All the more disappointing as we had tapped an extra (fifth) cask following the early afternoon sell-outs on the warm and sunny festival days of the last couple of years.

All five ales sold well, but once again the stout drinkers ensured an early end to the full-bodied 4.4% ABV Cairngorm Black Gold. The fruity light straw coloured 3.6% ABV Atlas Latitude, and distinctive 4.3% ABV Isle of Skye Hebridean Gold, plus the stronger ales, a deep ruby 4.8% ABV Hebridean Islander Strong Ale, and the golden orange 5% ABV Isle of Skye Blaven, completed the varied choice of beers for drinkers.

The heavy downpour brought a premature end to proceedings and meant that, even after filling a number of 2 pint carry-outs, we still had to pour away some gallons of these wonderful brews. Early calculations indicate that we have probably managed



to make a small profit, and for this we must thank all our regular and loyal supporters who did not let the wet conditions spoil their real ale day. The shelter of our gazebo helped, as did the three umbrellas provided for drinkers closer to the bar. The feeling is that the decision by the committee to go for five casks this year has certainly paid off. Okay, it can be argued that if we had only had four casks we would have made a good profit. King profit does not necessarily rule though, as our annual presence at Marymas is to introduce the people of Inverness to real ale and provide it at its best for the seasoned real ale drinker. Far better, we think, to provide a good selection of beers at different strengths and flavours than to worry too much about selling every last pint. Let's face it, had it not rained the beer would have run out by early afternoon as usual, and committee would be discussing the possibility of having six casks next year. Now there's a thought!



Marymas regular John Barron enjoys his pint. See focus on page 18

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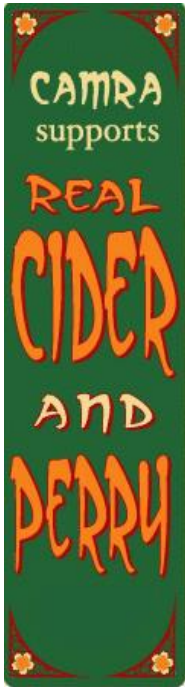
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On Saturday 15 October at 3:00pm, **The Anderson in Fortrose** will host a blind tasting of ciders made from apples grown by **Ryefield Farms of Tore**. This will be the first time Ryefield's ciders will have been tasted side-by-side. Apples are a new crop for Ryefield Farm, which is just a few miles away from Fortrose on the idyllic Black Isle. They are best known for their strawberries and raspberries, which draw fruit-lovers from the four corners of the Highlands. But recently owner **Torquil Fraser** began to grow apples with cider-making in mind.

The ciders are made from different combinations of Howgate Wonder, Bramley and Discovery, varieties not normally associated with cidermaking. "This is a long-term project," says Fraser, who makes the cider himself. "A real cider made from local apples is something nobody's doing in the Highlands."

"Since replacing Strongbow with Addlestone's cask-conditioned cider in the spring of 2005, cider sales have increased threefold," says **Jim Anderson**, resident Beer Geek at The Anderson. "This interest in a return to artesialan cider bodes well for what Ryefield is doing." The Anderson has been recommended both by **The Good**

Beer Guide and **Good Beer Guide Belgium** for their selection of real ale & cider as well as their vast selection of Belgian ales.

The blind tasting will include six of Ryefield's ciders, which each guest will taste and rate as to appearance, aroma, flavour and balance. The results of the tasting will go directly to Ryefield for use in shaping the flavour profile of the final product, which they plan to make commercial in the near future, both in 750ml bottles and limited-edition casks. Admission to the tasting is £15 per person, and will include the ciders, an apple-based buffet from the highly-regarded kitchen of The Anderson, as well as a 10% discount on dinner that evening. A package that includes the tasting and B & B is available for £35 per person

"OUR RANGE OF CIDERS IS UNBEATABLE" *According to JD Wetherspoon*

"Cider fans can now enjoy a fantastic range of drinks at Wetherspoon pubs and Lloyds bars. All of the company's outlets (with the exception of airport sites) are serving six ciders, many of which are not normally available outside of the areas in which they are produced. The range features Westons organic vintage draught cider, Westons Old Rosie cloudy scrumpy draught cider and Westons bottled cider, as well as Thatchers Perry (bottled cider made from pears), Magners Irish cider and Sheppy's Oakwood flagon."

*We have heard that **Weston's Old Rosie** is being served in the **King's Highway**. Ed.*

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Real Ale Trails

Extracts from the log of yacht 'Cavalle' for August 2005 - may be of interest to those planning a trip west -----

Fri 5th - Windless motor down to Fort Augustus. Moored pontoon for night.

Lock Inn: Tetley's Imperial (2) Would have been 3 had it not been in plastic glass for outside consumption: ship's dog not allowed in bar.

Sat 6th - Joined by guests for the day. Stopped at Laggan locks for night.

The Eagle: 3 Sisters (3/4) Keeps perfectly at bilge temperature. Real Cider loving guests delighted to find **Thatchers cask cider** on; Pronounced it definite 4! Excellent meal ***

Sun 7th - Chugged to Corpach.

Tradewinds Bar: Single guest pump not on. Had bottles of both **Red and Black Cuillin**, of which friendly staff managed to find some that had not been chilled to death. Good fodder.

Mon 8th - Escaped from Caledonian canal and sailed to Dunstaffnage Marina.

Wide-Mouthed Frog: Galleon Gold (3) from Isle of Mull Brewing Co. very tasty pint to wash down yet more seafood.

Tues 9th - Short passage to Puilldorain (excuse spelling) an excellent anchorage by the island of Seil. Walked over hill to the 'Bridge over the Atlantic' and

Tigh na Truish: Highlander (3) and Maverick (3) More excellent fodder.

Wed 10th - Discover rope and several Tesco bags wrapped round propeller. Move to head of pool and wait for tide to drop. Interesting time with diving mask

and the bread knife lashed to boat hook.

Too late to move on now so back over to

Tigh na Truish: McEwan's 80/- (3)

Don't remember it being this good, maybe swallowed too much of the briney?

Thurs 11th - Sailed to anchor in Loch Aline, Morven. No ale found

Fri 12th - Sail to Tobermory.

Mishnish: Deuchars (2) and

MacGochan's Bar: Mull Brewery 'McCaig's Folly' dark ale (2)

Sat 13th - Day in Tobermory.

Mishnish: Deuchars (3) - not as chilled as yesterday and greatly improved.

Sun 14th - Sail to Dunstaffnage.

Wide Mouthed Frog: Galleon Gold (3)

Mon 15th - Oban.

Oban Inn: 3 Sisters (2)

Tues 16th - Sail Corpach.

Tradewinds Bar: Still nothing on pump

Wed 17th - Up 'Neptune's Staircase' to Banavie. No ale

Thurs 18th - Canal to Laggan Locks.

The Eagle: 3 Sisters (still 3) Another excellent meal

Fri 19th - Canal to Fort Augustus.

Lock Inn: Nothing on pump.

The Bothy: Gyre (?) 2000 (2)

And then home. Must check anchorage for Loch Ness Beer Fest next month.

Cheers, MB (Inverness)

We have received Real Ale Trail reports from walkers, cyclists, motorists, caravan and campervanners.. Great to receive a water real ale trail report. Ed.

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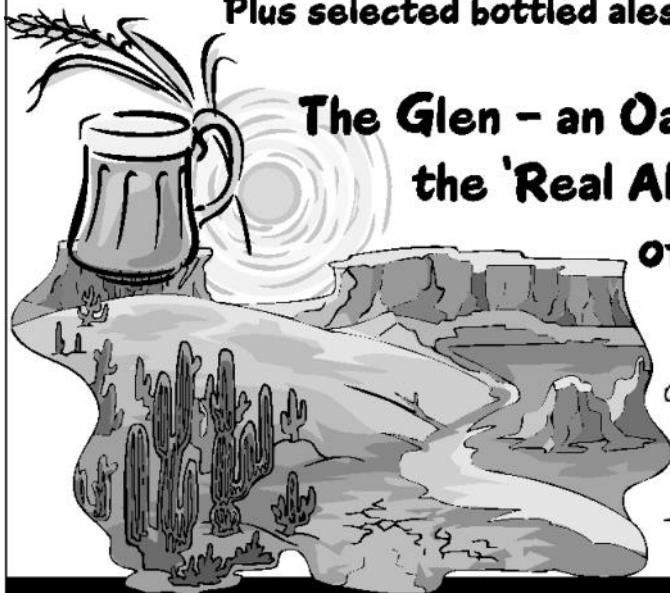
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Rating the Beer

I've just finished a fortnight in Scotland, and picked up your excellent newsletter at Scourie. Having come across the invitation to rate the beer, and had a look at the form on the website (and being only on a dial-up internet connection) I decided it would take too long to fill in 'n' forms, so I hope you will accept these comments, although I realise that you won't use them as GBG judgements.

However, there maybe some new info. in here for you. If you want to use anything in here as the basis for a 'filler' for the newsletter, I've no objections. I'm also aware that some of these places are outside your area, but have included them anyway. Please excuse idiosyncratic diversions ... and thanks for the information on where to drink on my annual visits up north (ie: not just the GBG ones).

I am a lapsed CAMRA member (joined in 1974, lapsed about 10 years later (other commitments), but I always drink the proper stuff).

25th June - **The Crown** at Biggar: Sorry, forgot to note what it was, but gave it 3.
Old Mill, Aviemore: The most expensive beer in the Highlands (and probably anywhere else in the UK, outside the effete South East, for that matter). Still, the Trade Winds rated a 3.

The Highlander, Craigellachie: The pub had been in new hands for 'about a week' and had Cairngorm Trade Winds. Also a 3. The food was up to its usual standard. New licensee seemed friendly enough, if a bit too earnest.

Mash Tun, Aberlour: Also Trade Winds.

I'd give it a 3. I've had better here in previous years, but still no complaints.
26th June - **Ferry Boat**, Ullapool: Deuchars IPA. Only a 1. It hadn't had a chance to settle. Caley 80/-: 2. Pub the same as it has been for the last 'n' years, including many of the regulars!

Am Fuaran, Altandhu (near Achiltibuie): Didn't expect to find real ale, but they had Dundonnell An Teallach. Competently kept, but it was *just* too warm, and that on a chilly day! (It makes a change from those places round here where the ale is *just* too cold). Rated it at 2, would have been 3 if just a little cooler. The place has had some renovation since I was last here, and the food is now good.

Summer Isles Bar, Achiltibuie: Skyelight (from Uig): The first time I've come across the beer, but wonderful, and worth a 4. They also had Hebridean Gold (not tried), and another (not tried or remembered!). Good atmosphere amongst the locals (as it always seems to be) - landlady friendly.

27th June - **Old Inn**, Gairloch: Dundonnell An Teallach, which was a 3, and Skye Blind Piper of Gairloch (the house beer - a blend of Black Cuillin and Blaven? you tell me!), a 4. Only 3 beers on - the other was Greene King Abbot - but others ready to go on 'shortly'. They said their policy was for up to 6 beers: a weaker and a stronger English one, a weaker and a stronger Scottish one, and one from each of their local breweries (Dundonnell and Skye), but you'll know that anyway. A nice idea to offer customers a snifter of the beers in a small glass.

Argyll, Ullapool: Dundonnell An Teallach,

The Old Inn

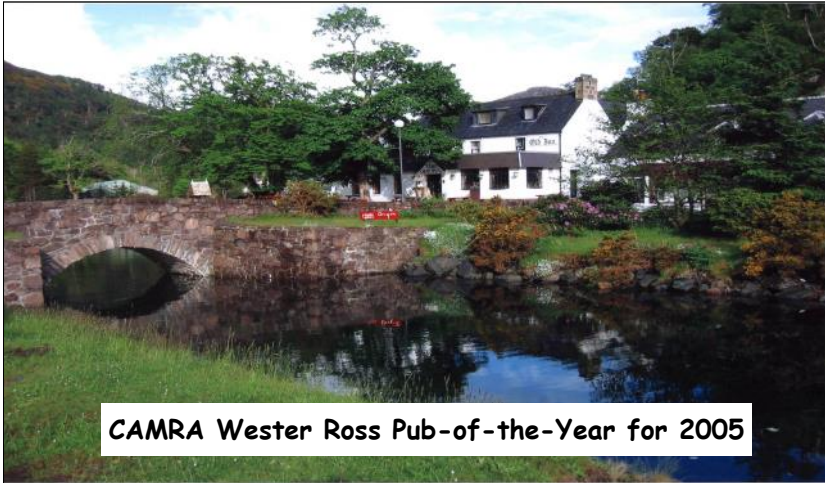
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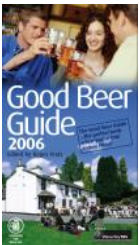
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Inverness & Highland CAMRA Country Pub-of-the-Year for 2004

scored at 3. (The other was Red Cuillin).

Am Fuaran, Altandhu: Has to be rated 0. The An Teallach was poured; I looked at it, then at the barman: obvious end-of-barrel; he took it back. There was no more available, 'we only get a bit at this time of year, but sell more in the season'.

Summer Isles, Achiltibuie: Skyelight again, and another 4. I'm now welcomed with a 'hello Dave'.

28th June - **Tongue Hotel**, Tongue: Deuchars IPA, and a 2, but after 2 pints it finishes, and there is no suggestion of putting a new barrel on.

Craggan Hotel, Melness: Unfortunately still no real ale, which is a pity, as it's the best food for miles!

29th June - **Mey Arms**, Mey, and **Northern Sands**, Dunnet: No real ale.

Melvich Hotel, Melvich: Fast Reactor. Afraid I can only give it a 1.5 (can I do that?). It was too young, and hadn't quite cleared, but was going down well with a party of tourists, who ordered a jug brought through from the lounge.

30th June / 1st July - **Scourie Hotel**, Scourie: Castle Eden (plus one other not recorded). I could only give it a 2 for each visit. On the first visit it was a new barrel, and the beer was fine enough, but there were a few snarlies in the glass, which suggests that the lines aren't cleaned as often as they might be. A shame to see so many English beers on the 'Coming Next' list, when I'd like to sample a more local product. Live music was pleasant enough (and more sober than when I was here last year!).

Kylesku Hotel, Kylesku: Under new management, and the food is as good as usual, but, as usual, no real ale.

2nd July - Camping on the West Coast with gales forecast didn't seem to be a good idea, so.....

The Anderson, Fortrose: Directors, which was a 3 - might have been more but Directors isn't one of my favourites. (The other beer was Helga's Big Juggs). Friendly licensee - American? - who amused himself and his son by playing at water-pistols in the yard, then having a conversation with me while he was on top of the fire escape, and me on the ground. Good potential!

Plough, Rosemarkie: Have to confess that I was so engrossed in the fall of Australian wickets on the TV that I forgot to note the name of the beer, but it was a 4. **Highlander**, Craiggellachie: Now with two real ales. McMullens AK, which rated 3, and Trade Winds (not tried).

Mash Tun, Aberlour: Houston Killellan, and another 3. The 'internationally acclaimed and world-famed band' (Coconut Dog) turned out to be 4 local lads (we've all been there), good fiddler, competent acoustic guitars and bass, and crap vocals.

3rd July - **Udny Arms**, Newborough: Directors again, and a 3. The soup was good.

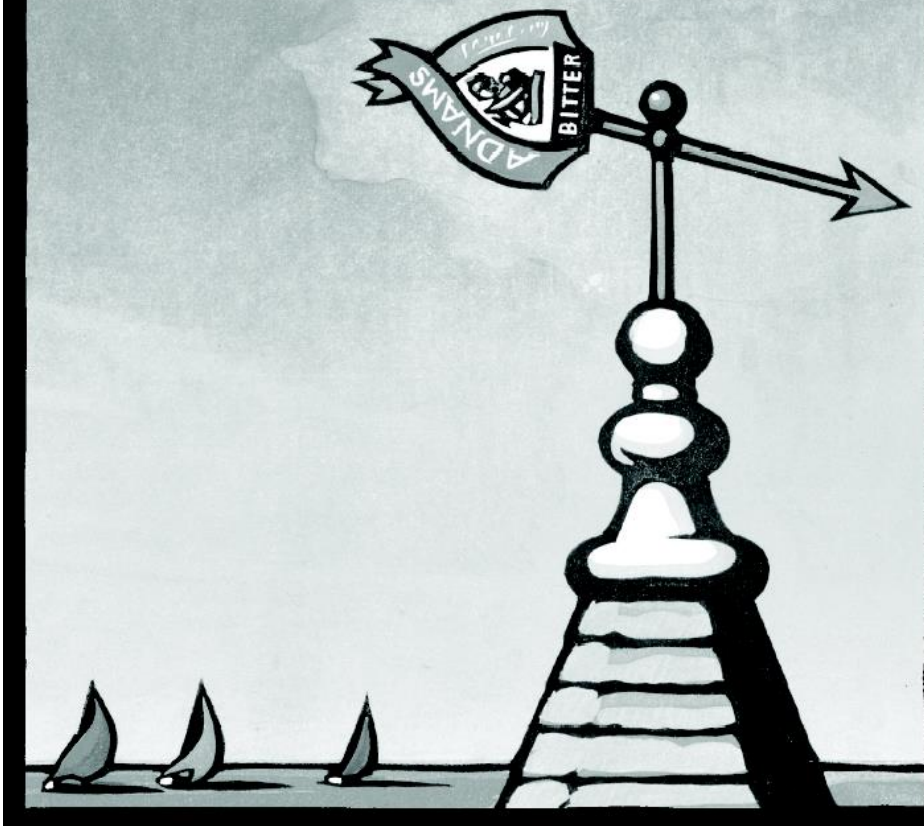
Country Park Inn, Mintlaw: Afraid it was Orkney Skull Splitter, and I'm not sampling that at 5 o'clock on a Sunday afternoon! If there's only one real ale, please can it be sensible.

Hope this is useful, and forgive the idiosyncracies. Dave.

Dave has certainly covered some ground during his "Rating the Beer" expedition, and he has given us a fascinating view of the pubs he has visited. We could not fit in the last 4 days (a further 13 pub/ale reports). Hopefully we can make room in

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Focus on John Barron

John Barron is a Branch founder member and a regular on Branch outings to pubs and breweries. John is retired and lives with his wife in Inverness.

Q: Where do you originate from?

A: I was born in 1927 in Dornoch and I spent my early years there and in Aberdeen. In 1938 my parents came back to Inverness where I have lived ever since, except for a spell in the Royal Marines from 1945 to 1948, and six years in Edinburgh studying Classics and Law and serving a law apprentice.

Q: What made you settle in this area?

A: I chose Law partly at least because it would let me work in Inverness, and I did spend my working life as a solicitor in a local firm from which I retired in

1992. For twelve of these years I was also a part-time public prosecutor.

Q: Why did you join CAMRA?

A: It was a Branch member, John Aird, who introduced me to CAMRA but I am a little vague about my introduction to real ale itself. When I first became familiar with beer in the mid 1940's most beers were what we now call real ale and this persisted until relentless brewery takeovers and closures and the spread of keg beers changed the traditional scene.

Q: Your favourite beers/beer styles?

A: In my Edinburgh days my regular tipple was a 'Happy Day' - a Fowlers Prestonpan's Wee Heavy in a pint glass topped up with Bernards or Campbell Hope and King's Heavy. I suppose this

was real ale albeit blended in the glass. At any rate a Happy Day cost less than two shillings and so a ten bob note (50p) was sufficient funding for Saturday night. I don't have any single favourite beer or style and I like to sample as many real ales as I can, both Scottish and English, and the choice and quality now seem better than ever. I am rather partial to the products of the small breweries of northern Scotland. I recall being pleasantly surprised to find Orkney Dark Island drawn direct from a wooden barrel in deepest Cornwall. It travelled well.

Q: What do you look for in a good pub?

A: The way the beer is kept and the feeling of being made welcome are most important but I find so much else depends on subjective factors such as the company one is in; one's state of mind at the time, and even the degree

of thirst. But defiantly no loud music and not too much smoke. Some of my favourites in this area: Clachnaharry Inn, Cawdor Tavern, Heatherbrae in Nethy Bridge, Cairn in Carrbridge and the Kimberly in Findhorn.

Q: You always go on our Branch day trips. Which was your favourite?

A: All the outings have been enjoyable, north, south, east, west; but perhaps the annual trip to Skye stands out.

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: I am an omnivorous reader and my outdoor pastimes are walking and cycling in our wonderful countryside (more so the older one gets), and the cultivation of the soil. In my earlier years I was a keen hill walker and I still run a Church walking group which, I am glad to say, enjoys a stop at any real ale pub on the homeward journey.

www.ullapoolbeerfestival.co.uk

Real ale in the Real Highlands



Ullapool's



First



Beer Festival

21st, 22nd & 23rd October 2005

Held at the

Morefield Motel, North Road, Ullapool, Highlands

01854 612161



Accommodation & food available

ATLAS
BREWERY

Real Ale Pubs

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 being served (see Rate-our-Beer on page 25), particularly if you think inclusion in the Good Beer Guide is merited. We make no claims as to the quality of the beer, and you should note that some of the more remote pubs may only stock real ale on a seasonal **(S)** basis:

Inverness City

Blackfriars
Caley Inn (S)
Chieftain Hotel
Clachnaharry Inn
Glen Mhor Hotel
Heathmount Hotel
Hootananny
Inshes Gate (TP - Top Pressure)
Kings Highway (*Wetherspoons*)
McNab's Bar, Columba Hotel
Number 27
Palace Hotel
Phoenix Bar
Snowgoose
Thistle Inn

Inverness District

Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit
Cobbs, Drumnadrochit
Loch Ness Lodge, Drumnadrochit
Clansman Hotel
Slaters Arms, Cannich
Lock Inn, Fort Augustus
Bothy Bar, Fort Augustus
Dores Inn
Glenmorrison Arms
Duck, Conon Bridge
Culbokie Inn
Royal Hotel, Cromarty (S)
Cromarty Arms
The Anderson, Fortrose
Plough Inn, Rosemarkie
Old North Inn, Inchmore
National Hotel, Dingwall

Richmond Hotel, Strathpeffer
Inchbae Lodge Hotel, Garve
Caledonian Hotel, Portmahomack
Cawdor Tavern, Cawdor
Caledonian Hotel, Nairn
The Classroom Bistro Bar, Nairn
Invernairne Hotel, Nairn
The Deerstalker, Daviot
Tomatin Inn, Tomatin (S)

Aviemore & Cairngorms

Cairn Hotel, Carbridge
Heatherbrae Hotel, Nethy Bridge
Boat Hotel, Boat of Garten
Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore
Dalfaber Country Club, Aviemore
Glenmore Lodge, Nr Aviemore
Old Bridge Inn, Aviemore
Winking Owl, Aviemore
Suie Hotel, Kincaig - (TP)
Glen Hotel, Newtonmore
Lodge Hotel, Newtonmore
Silver Fjord Hotel, Kingussie
Typsy Laird, Kingussie (S)
Ben Mhor Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey
Strathspey Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey (S)

* Strictly the following four pubs are in the Aberdeen, Grampian, & North Isles branch area, but are barely outside the Cairngorms and are worth a visit.

Mash Tun, Charlestown of Aberlour
Highlander Inn, Craigellachie
Croft Inn, Glenlivet
Glenavon Hotel, Tomintoul

Skye, Lochalsh & Hebrides

Isle of Raasay Hotel
King Haakon Bar, Kyleakin
Ardvasar Hotel
Isle Ornsay Hotel
Claymore, Broadford
Dunollie Hotel, Broadford
Hebridean Hotel, Broadford
Old Inn, Carbost
Coruisk House, Elgol
(*Restaurant - Real ale served with food only*)
Sconser Lodge Hotel
Sligachan Hotel
Taigh Ailean Hotel, Portnalong

Dunvegan Hotel
 Stein Inn, Watrnish
 Edinbane Hotel
 Lodge Hotel, Edinbane
 Ferry Inn, Uig
 Uig Hotel, Uig
 Pub at the Pier, Uig
 Flodigarry Hotel
 Duntulm Hotel (*coming soon*)
 Greshornish Lodge
 Bosville Hotel, Portree
 Isles Inn, Portree
 Royal Hotel, Portree
 Cluanie Inn
 Kintail Lodge Hotel
 Clachan Bar, Dornie
 Loch Duich Hotel, Dornie
 Balmacara Hotel
 Kyle Hotel, Kyle of Lochalsh
 Tingle Creek Hotel, Erbusaig
 (*by Kyle of Lochalsh*)
 Plockton Hotel, Plockton
 Plockton Inn, Plockton
 Carinish Inn, North Uist
 Langass Lodge, North Uist
 Lochmaddy Hotel, North Uist
 Westford Inn, North Uist
 Dark Island Hotel, Benbecula
 Isle of Benbecula House Hotel
 Borrodale Hotel, South Uist
 Orasay Inn, South Uist
 Lochboisdale Hotel, South Uist
 Polachar Inn, South Uist
 Cladh Inn, Stornoway
 Royal British Legion, Stornoway
 Whalers Rest, Stornoway
 Shawbost Inn, Isle of Lewis
 Harris Hotel, Tarbert (S)

A Fine Day for a Great Ale?



A Great Day for A Fyne Ale!

Drumchork Hotel, Aultbea (S)
 Dundonnell Hotel
 Kinlochewe Hotel
 Loch Torridon Country House Hotel
 Badachro Inn
 Loch Inn, Gairloch
 Myrtle Bank Hotel, Gairloch (S)
 Steading Cafe & Restaurant, Gairloch
 Old Inn, Gairloch
 Lochcarron Hotel, Lochcarron
 Rockvilla Hotel, Lochcarron

Please check www.highlandcamra.org.uk for latest real ale pubs list

Wester Ross

Applecross Inn, Applecross
 Summer Isles Hotel, Achilitibuie (S)
 Am Fuaran Bar, Altandhu (S)
 Ledgowan Hotel, Achnasheen

Strathcarron Hotel
 Tigh-an-Eilean Hotel, Shieldag
 Argyll Hotel, Ullapool
 Caley Inn Bar, Ullapool
 Ferry Boat Inn, Ullapool
 Morefield Motel, Ullapool

(Continued from page 21)

Seaforth Hotel, Ullapool

Caithness & Sutherland

Scourie Hotel, Scourie
Inchnadamph Hotel
Castle Hotel, Dornoch
Invershin Hotel
Sutherland Hotel, Golspie
Tongue Hotel
Melvich Hotel
Mackays Hotel, Wick
Alexander Bain, Wick
(*Wetherspoons*)
Central Hotel, Thurso
Commercial Hotel, Thurso

Fort William & Lochaber

Ben Nevis Inn, Fort William
Capercaillie, Fort William
Grog & Gruel, Fort William
Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William
(*formerly the Milton Hotel*)
Nevisport Bar, Fort William

Invergarry Hotel (S)

The Eagle, Laggan Locks

(*An Inn on a boat on the water*)

Spean Bridge Hotel

Roy Bridge Hotel

Stronlossit Hotel, Roy Bridge

Tomdoun Sporting Lodge

Factor's Inn, Torlundy

Glenfinnan House Hotel

Steam Inn, Mallaig

Old Forge, Inverie

Ben View Hotel, Strontian

Four Seasons, Onich

Nether Lochaber Hotel, Onich

Inn at Ardgour

Mamore Lodge, Kinlochleven

Tailrace Inn, Kinlochleven

* Strictly the following three pubs are in Glasgow & West of Scotland branch area, but are not very far from the "border" and are worth a visit.

Laroch Bar, Ballachulish

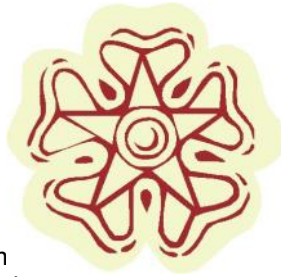
Clachaig Inn, Glencoe

Kings House Hotel, Glencoe

Stronlossit Inn

at Roy Bridge

Freephone:
0800 0155321



Open all day,
food & drinks
available all day,
3 real ales on tap

Stronlossit is a real gem of tradition - a warm, welcoming character. The Lounge Bar has an impressive range of malt whiskies, an open fire and pulled cask beers, making it a popular rendezvous for Inn guests, outdoor enthusiasts and the local regulars alike. All amidst some of the wildest and most captivating scenery in the Scottish Highlands, in "Western Europe's last great wilderness", as Lochaber is known.

'Real Ales, and a substantial Bar Meals Menu in "The Stronlossit Lounge.'

"The hospitality of the house will compliment the experience"

Your hosts: Maurice and Sandra Valley

www.stronlossit.co.uk

E-mail: stay@stronlossit.co.uk

Visitor's Comments

It doesn't seem that long ago that I would have been so grateful to find any real ale in the Highlands that I would have accepted beer where the quality wasn't too good. It is a measure of how far expectations have changed that not only do I want to get real ale but I'd like it be a 3 at the very least and preferably a 4. Incidentally, I've never managed to find a 5 - or too many 0's. Last year most of this group stayed in Drumnadrochit for a week and couldn't believe how good the Benleva was for both beer and food. I also liked the fact that they were only serving Scottish beers. RR. We just came back from a 200+ mile cycling trip round your area, and were unprepared for your local real ale experience, other than what was in GBG 2005. Ong.

My usual first port of call is the Clachnaharry Inn and this was no exception this time around. Whilst there I picked up a copy of What's Yours Then? These newsletters are always welcomed by me (and the Mrs) as they give a list of real ale outlets outwith the GBG as well as local news on the real ale scene. A very useful asset in a real ale desert! Invernairne Guest House - Visited before (in Hotel format) on many occasions and has never let me down. Good to see the new owners are following in Barbara and Paul's footsteps. Nice to learn that Kay is originally from Coventry - small world. Trade Winds 4 (2.70 a pint though!) DW, Coventry & North Warwicks. Had the Red Cuillin at Nevisport - as good as I remember on my infrequent trips North. Picked up the latest edition of the newsletter there. Buteobuteo.

We recently visited your area on holiday and are writing a piece for our local CAMRA branch's newsletter "Alesman". We want to give your branch a well-deserved plug but can't remember the name of your newsletter - what is it? Thank you.

AB, Keighley and Craven branch. www.keighleyandcravencamra.org.uk

*Thanks again for **all** your letters and comments. We would love to publish more, but space is limited, We are sorry if you had hoped to find your correspondence in this newsletter but have not so far. Please do write again. Cheers, Ed.*

Pub-of-the-Year Update

North Area: Benleva Hotel - 194; Ericht Ale House - 176; Redgarth - 169

Central Area: Halfway House (Edinburgh) - 301; Bon Accord - 284; Commercial Inn - 281; Four Mary's - 273.

West & NI: White Horse (NI) - 284; Steam Packet - 274; Masonic Arms - 271; Coanes - 246.

In a very close final the **Halfway House** (287) was voted Scottish Pub-of-the-Year ahead of Benleva Hotel (281), and the White Horse (278). by the CAMRA judging panel. The Halfway House will now be judged against the Robin Hood in Jarrow (GBG 2006, Pg 471), the Musketeer, Leigh in Greater Manchester (Pg 326) and the Taps in Lytham (Pg 246) in the next round of judging for CAMRA Pub-of-the-Year. A full list of top 16 pubs can be found on the main CAMRA website - www.camra.org.uk.

Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2005



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

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



Valhalla Brewery - The most northerly brewery in the UK started brewing on the island of Unst in 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.

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 in Argyll, 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 & Aviemore breweries, which they own. Ales include Trade Winds, Wildcat, Stag, Highland IPA, and Black Gold. Seasonal ales are regularly brewed.

Hebridean Brewing Company - Based at Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides. Began brewing in January 2002, now producing five regular and some seasonal ales. Beers include Clansman Ale (first ale ever brewed in Stornoway), Islander Strong Ale & Berserker Export Pale Ale.



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

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



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

Cuillin Brewery - The brewery was born on September the 10th, 2004, in the old public bar of the Sligachan Hotel. Skye and Eagle Ales are brewed.

Highland Brewing Company - Started brewing in late 2004 at Moorhouses (Lancs). Brewery is to be located in the old Swannay cheese factory at Birsay, on Orkney.

Oyster Brewery - Located in Ellenabeich, on the Isle of Seil, near Oban. Set up late in 2004, first brews in the Spring of 2005. Ales include Easd' Ale, Red Pearl, and Oyster Gold.

Isle of Mull Brewery - Started in May 2005 with a 5 barrel plant in Tobermory. McCaig's Folly and Galleon Gold ales.

* The **Atlas** and **Orkney** Breweries merged in 2004 to form a new business, called **Highlands and Islands Breweries**, but are dedicated to developing the two brands at the existing breweries.

Not all of the breweries listed are in our branch area are all in the Grampian & Isles area; Brewery Ayrshire & ea; while Islay Ales, Breweries Glasgow & ilarly for Hig- rianus & islands pubs listed in the GBG, pubs in Orkney and Shetland are submitted by the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles Branch.



Join CAMRA Today - Membership Form on Page 38

Rate our Beer

Inverness & Highland CAMRA would appreciate a little help in surveying the pubs in our Branch area. To help us decide which pubs in the Highlands & Islands are worth considering for the Good Beer Guide, we are using CAMRA's 6-point scale to record Beer Quality, month by month.

Please use the on-line Rate-our-Beer form on our website.

What do the scores mean?



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

1 Poor. Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.

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

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

4 Very Good. Excellent beer in excellent condition.

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



We would really welcome your regular input, to help ensure that local pubs who consistently serve good quality real ale make it into the 2007 Good Beer Guide.

Carry-Out Caravanners

As lovers of Scotland and of real ale, we decided to spend our main holiday north of the border and do some sampling. We took our touring caravan, aiming to spend 5 nights in Oban area, 5 at Craigellachie and 5 at Scone.

We would have loved to include the full article, but we pick up the story as our happy caravanners approach our area Ed.

Our next trip out was in Oban on Sunday and we tried Isle of Mull McCaig's Folly 4.2 and Atlas Three Sisters 4.2 in the Oban Inn. The Atlas beer was not up to standard but the Isle of Mull was fine. On our way back to site, we collected a pint of Fyne Highlander 4.8 from the Wide Mouthed Frog. We often take beer back to the caravan in plastic pint milk bottles, and this was enjoyed with our evening meal.

Monday saw us heading out on a tour round some Good Beer Guide pubs. We went up to Fort William to try the 2 pubs there. Ray drives and I do the imbibing, so at Nevisport I had Atlas Wayfarer 4.4 and took a pint of Isle of Skye Red Cuillin 4.2 back for later, and at the Grog and Gruel I had An Tealoch Brewhouse Special 4.4 and took An Tealoch Kildonan 4.4 in a bottle. Both were very friendly bars and all the beers went down well.

Our next port of call was the Tailrace at Kinlochleven where I enjoyed a much better Atlas Three Sisters 4.2. While here we tried to visit Atlas Brewery but found that they were cleaning and were not open to visitors. We carried on to the Clachaig Inn at Glencoe, and here there was a lot of choice and we had fun with

the bar staff as we filled 3 bottles to take out. Atlas Nimbus 5.0, Isle of Skye Black Cuillin 4.5 and Isle of Skye Red Cuillin 4.2. All were enjoyed later.

We went in search of a new brewery on Tuesday and traveled down to the Oyster Bar at Ellenabeich on the Isle of Seil. I had Oyster Floridale 4.2 and Oyster Old Tosser 5.0. Both the beers were in good condition and much enjoyed but unfortunately Ray was unable to have any as this was the only bar on our holiday that refused to fill our milk bottles. We had rung ahead the day before to see the brewery, but on the day were told that the brewer was not available and they needed 48 hours notice.

We called at the Tigh-an-Truish Clachan Seil on the way back to get some beer for the evening session, and they filled our pint milk bottles with Caledonian Deuchers IPA 3.8 and Fyne Maverick 4.2, both of which we enjoyed back at the caravan site.

On Wednesday we caught the ferry to visit the Isle of Mull and took the bus to Tobermory to visit the brewery at MacGochan's bar. I had an excellent Isle of Mull McCaig's Folly 4.5 and we took a pint back for the evening session.

We traveled up to Craigellachie on Thursday so did not go out till Friday when we went to a garage in Inverness to have the car brakes looked at. While there we were not far from the Clacknaharry Inn so called there for lunch. What a gem. I had Cameron's Long Leg 4.8 and we had a pint of Hebridean Celtic Festivale 4.2, both in excellent condition. George told us about Rob Hill's Highland Brewing Co.

that had recently set up on Orkney, and that he had Scapa Special in the cellar that would be on over the weekend, so we decided we would make the trip again to sample it.

Saturday saw us off on another tour. We started at Elgin where Flannagan's filled the bottles with Kelburn Dark Moor 4.5 and Houston Barochan 4.1. I had a Cairngorm Wild Cat 5.1 in the Muckle Cross, and then we had a bottle filled with Houston Marilyn's Draught 3.9 at the Sunninghill. We went to the Gordon Arms Hotel at Fochabers but did not have a drink there, followed by the Mash Tun at Charlestown of Aberlour where I had a Cairngorm Trade Winds 4.3 before going back to the caravan to enjoy the excellent ales collected during the day.

Sunday we were going back to Inverness, but called at Findhorn on the way. Two brilliant bars here with friendly staff and customers making our visit very enjoyable. We had a bottle of Cairngorm Black Gold 4.4 at the Crown and Anchor, and at the Kimberley I had Cairngorm Sheepshaggers Gold 4.5 and we took a bottle of Black Isle Heather Honey Beer 4.7 back with us. At the Clachnaharry Inn I had a Highland Brewing Co Scapa Special 4.2 and we also took a pint back with us. We went on to the Plough at Rosemarkie where I had An Teallach Beinn Dearg 3.8 and we took a pint of An Teallach Crofters Pale Ale 4.2 back with us. At Andersons I had Robinson's Sunny Jim 3.8 and we took a pint of that one back too. On our way back we traveled down all the one

DISCOVER

Real Caledonian Flavour



track roads to find the Black Isle Brewery but arrived at 5.00 on the dot and discovered that they closed at 5.00 on a Sunday so we missed out again. We discovered another friendly bar at Alves on the way back. The Crooked Inn served an excellent Cairngorm Witches Cauldron 4.9 and we took a pint back too.

On Monday 1.8.05 we decided to work our way along the coast and headed for Banff.

Our reporters filled their milk bottles several more times along the north east coast, and enjoyed their time at Scone. They took a train to Edinburgh on Friday 5.8.05 so that they could both have a drink in the bars, and a marathon ale sampling day it was too. We pick up the story again on their last day when they visited two of Scotland's finest..

Saturday 6.8.05 was to be our last day in Scotland and we went up to Blairgowrie to the Ericht Alehouse. We had to kill time as it did not open until 1.00 but I had Inveralmond Ossian 4.1 and we took a bottle of Inveralmond Inkie Pinkie back. At the Meikleour Hotel at Meikleour I had Inveralmond Lure of Meikleour 4.2 and we took a pint of Fyne Highlander 4.8 back with us.

We had a wonderful holiday, enjoying a lot of hospitality and tasting many fine ales. We will return

Cheers, R & GS

Redditch & Bromsgrove CAMRA

An innovative and environmentally-friendly way of recycling those old milk containers! A super letter, and please let us know about future visits. Ed.

Inns & Things

The **Pub at the Pier** in Uig, Isle of Skye, now has an impressive bank of 10 hand-pumps, with around 6-8 operating at any one time, including beers from Hebridean, Isle of Skye, and Cuillin breweries.

Sadly the branch is about to lose one of its most welcoming and popular landlords. The **Heatherbrae** at Nethybridge has been sold and the new owners will take over in early October. Jan and Maureen have turned the Heatherbrae into one of the most friendly pubs imaginable; a true village local, always buzzing with happy and contented customers. This hard-working couple are heading back to their home in Aberfeldy for a well earned rest, but may move back into the leisure business in the future. Jan has been a great supporter of CAMRA and was always very appreciative of their Good Beer Guide entry, often telling us how much business it brought him. The branch wishes them both a successful and happy future. We hope the new owners are as supportive of CAMRA and continue the success of this very fine hostelry.

Welcome to Graham & Bev Alexander who have taken over the reins at **Blackfriars**.

Real Ale is widely available in the Uists. Additional outlets include **Carinish Inn**, **Lochmaddy Hotel**, and **Westford Inn** in North Uist; **Orasay Inn**, **Lochboisdale Hotel**, and **Polachar Inn** in South Uist. The **Isle of Benbecula House Hotel** and **Langass Lodge** (NU) and have both added a second handpump.

Skeabost House Hotel and Cuchulainn's (Enterprise Inns) no longer stock real ale.



THE HEBRIDEAN BREWING COMPANY.

taste of the islands

clansman ale 3.9% ABO

**Beer of Festival, Aberdeen, Gram-
pian and Northern Isles Camra festival
2004**



Golden Hebridean bitter, brewed with Scottish malts.

Lightly bittered, a session ale with a light golden colour.

Good all day beer, plenty of hop and malt character, with lots of malt in the finish.



islander strong premium ale 4.8% ABO

SIBA beer of Scotland, Bronze 2002, Silver 2003. Premium Ale

Brewed with special coloured Scots malt, deep ruby in colour and predominantly malty with robust hopping to match.
Complex like the Hebrides themselves.

celtic black ale 3.9% ABO

Siba Beer of Scotland, Bronze 2004. Milds Category

Runner up North Hertfordshire Camra Beer of Festival 2004

A dark porter style ale full of flavour, balancing a aromatic hop combined with a subtle bite and a pleasantly smooth caramel aftertaste.



**BERSERKER
EXPORT PALE ALE 7.5% ABO**

Brewed using traditional methods and based on 19th century recipes. Then matured over a number of weeks to develop a smooth intricate flavour.

Brewed with a robust bitterness blended with a sweet smooth aftertaste and a hoppy aroma.

New seaforth ale 4.2% ABO

A classic blonde ale brewed with a variety of hops giving a complex fulsome bite balanced by pleasant refreshing citrus aftertaste.



Brewed and bottled entirely in the Outer Hebrides



Member of the Society of Independent Brewers

Festival News

I hope that by the time you pick up this newsletter you will have had a seriously enjoyable time at the annual Loch Ness Beer Festival. Having whetted/wetted your appetites you'll be delighted to know that more festivals are just around the corner. The 2nd **Clachnaharry Inn Beer Festival** will get October off to a good start, and following a **Cider Tasting at The Anderson** (see page 10), the Ullapool (first ever, at the **Morefield Motel**) and **Blackfriars** (first since the days of Dougie Fraser) beer festivals will see the month out very nicely. Please see diary page, adverts, and website links for more information. The **King's Highway** and **Alexander Bain** will be participating in JD Wetherspoon's Autumn Beer Festival.

Meanwhile in Grampian the **Aberdeen Beer Festival**, sponsored this year by the Atlas Brewery, will run from 3rd to 5th November at the McIymont Halls, 43a Holburn St, Aberdeen. Staff required, please contact Bob Frost on 01224 329244. Due to the early finish last year more beer has been ordered. and a choice of 75 different beers is planned.



Marymas Stillage - Simple, but very effective

The Old Bridge Inn ~ Aviemore



Roaring log fire, cheerful atmosphere, excellent food and fine selection of wines, cask ales and malt whiskies.

The varied menus, featuring the very best of Highland produce from river, sea and land, are carefully designed to tempt every palate

the Aviemore Feis

a festival of Real Ale and Music

February 2006

23 Dalfaber Road, Aviemore, PH 22 1 PU
Tel: (01479) 811137 - www.oldbridgeinn.co.uk

GBBF 2005

After missing out for three years, at last I managed to get to CAMRA's flagship event at Olympia again. Once more it lifted my spirits and gave me a lot of pride as a CAMRA member to see such a massive event, with 700 different real ales, and thousands of drinkers enjoying themselves with hardly a hint of any trouble. It is certainly an extremely well run event and hard to believe that it is organised by volunteers. Everything is so well thought out and organised, from the provision of free B&B accommodation for helpers, to the provision of a more than adequate float for each of the many bars. I strongly advise any member to make an effort to attend this event, either as a helper or visitor. WAT, Inverness.



UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT



Five Real Ales plus selection of bottled ales.

Selection of Malt Whiskies and Wines.

Food served 12 - 9pm 7 days

Ceilidh Nights Wed and Thur

Live music Saturday Night



BEER FESTIVAL

*Join us from Wednesday 26th
October for our celebration of
award winning cask ales from
throughout the British Isles.*



A warm welcome and a friendly atmosphere.

News of Brews

I had a beer in the box from the **Cairngorm Brewery** on the 16th June which was an experimental **Heather Ale**, and "Good" it was too. I don't know what the story is behind it (I was in too much of a rush) but it will be interesting to know how and whether this becomes an addition to their range, and where they are getting the heather from - is there any tie-up with the more famous heather brew, for example? JH, Newtonmore

Atlas Latitude tied with Hanby Ales' Shropshire Stout for Champion Beer of Walsall 2005 at their April festival. In

July Walsall CAMRA members travelled to the brewery to present the award.

Isle of Skye Brewery have brought out a special beer to commemorate their 1,000th brew. '**Skye's Grand Ale**' is a 4.3% brew and contains torrified wheat, lager malt, and Hersbrucken and Goldings hops. It is a light golden colour, very dry and refreshing.

Isle of Mull Brewery started brewing in May, with a 5 barrel plant behind Mac-Gochans Bar in Tobermory. Two beers are currently brewing, **McCaig's Folly** 4.2%, and **Galleon Gold** (5% fruity blonde ale). The beers are named after

Trade Winds, blowing in the right direction for Cairngorm

The Cairngorm Brewery scooped the prestigious Champion Speciality Beer of Britain award with their fine ale "Trade Winds" at the 2005 Great British Beer Festival held by CAMRA, the consumer organisation, at Olympia in London in August.

This is the second year running that Trade Winds has won this top honour and the company can now regard itself as one of Scotland's leading breweries being the only Scottish brewery to gain a placing in this UK competition.

The beer is noted as a speciality beer due to additional natural flavours being mixed with the hops. Sean Tomlinson, Brewing Manager for Cairngorm, describes the beer "as having a light golden colour with a high proportion of wheat and corn giving it a clean fresh taste, on top of which there is masses of hops, fruit and citrus flavours".

The brewery has built an outstanding reputation for quality. As well as winning the GBBF Champion Speciality category, the brewery has also won the Champion Beer of Scotland for two years running and also runner up position this year.

The brewery is based in Aviemore in the Highlands and Managing Director, Robbie Walker commented, "The number of quality awards that the brewery has received over the last 18 months is exceptional and really cements the reputation of the company for quality".

But it's not only the quality reputation of the company that's improving. Merlin Sandbach, Sales Manager, commented "consumers, publicans and wholesalers alike demand quality and such success and exposure really creates a point of difference between Cairngorm and the competition." He added that significant growth has been realised both for cask and bottled product.

local stories and they are about to start producing their third beer called "The Terror of Tobermory". They are hoping to grow over the next couple of years and move into a custom made brewery, which

already has planning, in Tobermory.

We understand that, despite the recent liquidation scare in papers, it is business as usual at the **Bridge of Allan Brewery**.

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Pub Reports - *A small selection only from the many on-line reports filled in. Ed.*

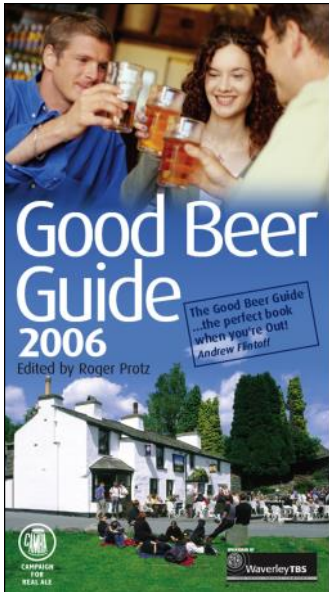
- 01-May **Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore** - Cairngorm Red Mountain Porter 4, Very pleasant staff and both child and dog friendly. Many drinkers are not aware that the bar is open to the public. JB, Aberdeen 
- 29-May **No 27, Inverness** - Orkney Dark Island 2, Only 1 ale on offer!. SA, Inverness
- 24-Jun **Blackfriars** - Everards Sunchaser 3/4, A pleasant Summer cooking ale. CVM,
- 29-Jun **Duck, Conon Bridge** - Cairngorm GoldenEye 5, Excellent ale which I decided to drink all night. Probably would have got a 4 but gave 5 due to atmosphere of pub, friendly Mein Host, free nibbles, a free drink. Inaugural quiz night. SA
- 05-Jul **Nico's, Inverness** - Belhaven Ossian's Ale 2, Timothy Taylor Landlord 2. Both tasted a bit sour for my palate. They are perhaps supposed to taste like that but I prefer my ale to be flowery and sweet - probably a girl thing!. Jazz night, not smokey. SA, Inverness
- 08-Jul **Blackfriars** - Hopback Summer Lightning 4, A very fine pint. CVM, Inverness
- 14-Jul **Blackfriars** - Jennings Crag Rat 3. SA, Inverness
- 14-Jul **Heathmount, Inverness** - Cairngorm Black Gold 3, .SA, Inverness
- 19-Aug **Clachnaharry Inn** - Adnams Broadside 4, Seriously Good!. CVM.
- 01-Sep **Clachnaharry, Inn** - Atlas Nimbus 4, A very good start to the new month. A splendid brew and best pint of Atlas beer I have had for some time. CVM,
- 01-Sep **Plockton Hotel** - Not sure. Forgot. 4, I cant remember the beer but it was very good!!!! Food very good. SJ, Edinburgh
- 02-Sep **Uig Hotel** - Isle of Skye Red Cuillin 4, Isle of Skye Cuillin Beast 4, Stayed a few nights. Great food. Accommodation fine but missed the branch visit as I don't get the branch newsletter (hint hint). SJ, Edinburgh
- 04-Sep **Inn on the Pier, Uig** - Orkney Red Macgregor 4, Orkney Raven Ale 4, Isle of Skye Black Cuillin 3. Good reasonably priced food, Good variety of well kept beers. Interesting clientel!! Would def. go back again. Hope these reports have been of use (on my honeymoon!!). SJ, Edinburgh
- 05-Sep **Clachaig Inn, Glencoe** - Atlas 3 Sisters 3. A good few pints but a poor memory!! Quality as I have come to expect from a quality pub. SJ, Edinburgh

Congratulations to Chris Goodhill at the **Glen Hotel** in Newtonmore, and to George Maclean at the **Clachnaharry Inn**, who have both been awarded Cask Marque.



Cask Marque Stands for:

-  Excellence in the service of cask ale.
-  Awarded to the licensee rather than to the pub.
-  Jointly funded by brewers and retailers.
-  Inspections made twice a year.



Good Beer Guide 2006

"The Good Beer Guide... the perfect book when you're Out" Andrew Flintoff - England Cricket All-Rounder.

The Good Beer Guide details 4,500 of Britain's best pubs.

These pubs are regularly surveyed by CAMRA members who visit them and you can therefore rely on this being the most up to date and well vetted of all pub guides. There are no fees charged for selection of pubs, just honest opinion from the people who know... your fellow beer drinkers!

Find out the best pubs to visit in towns, cities, and the countryside throughout the UK. For each of the 4,500 pub entries you will find full details of beer food, entertainment, family facilities, history, and architecture.

The guide contains an expanded Breweries Section which lists every brewery that produces cask beer. The majority of beers have tasting notes provided by trained CAMRA tasting panels. Keep up to date on the brewing scene, and find out who is in, and who is out this year.

CAMRA Members can purchase the GBG 2006 from their branch committee for £10:00. This is a saving of £3.99, and gives the local branch a small profit which is used to promote branch activities in support of local pubs and breweries.

Good Beer Guide 2006

This year we have nominated a record 33 Highlands & Islands pubs for the guide, including five new entries -

- Alexander Bain, Wick
- Bothy Bar, Fort Augustus
- Bosville Hotel, Portree
- Glenmoriston Hotel, Invermoriston
- Whaler's Rest, Stornoway

The **Alexander Bain** in Wick, the most northerly Wetherspoon outlet, has been converted from a telephone exchange. Caledonian Deuchars IPA and 80/- are served, plus a variety of guest beers.

The **Bothy** in Fort Augustus is beside the Caledonian Canal and on the Great Glen Way. Two handpumps serve mainly Isle of Skye Brewery beers plus an occasional guest from Cairngorm Brewery.

The atmosphere in the **Bosville Hotel** is both friendly and relaxing. The hotel, which overlooks Portree harbour, boasts an award winning restaurant.

The **Glenmoriston Arms Hotel** in Invermoriston is another ideal stopping point along the Great Glen Way, Loch Ness, and the road to Skye. Isle of Skye Brewery beers are on handpump in the Tavern Bar and from the wood in the Morison Bar.

The **Whaler's Rest** in Stornoway is the first GBG entry for the Outer Hebrides island of Lewis. There are occasional guest beers in addition to two regular beers from the local Hebridean Brewery.

The family-owned **Cawdor Tavern**, listed in the guide in the 80's and early 90's, makes a welcome return. One Cairngorm brew and award winning food are served.

The number of pubs which we consider merit inclusion in the *Good Beer Guide* has grown almost every year and, until now, all pubs recommended by the branch have been included. For the 2006 edition of the guide the committee were faced with the unenviable task of deciding which pubs to put forward and which not to. The number of pubs in the Highlands & Islands serving GBG-quality real ale now exceeds our allocation of 33.

(Orkney and Shetland pubs are listed in the guide under Highlands & Islands, but are submitted by Aberdeen, Grampian and Northern Isles branch).

Recommendations for inclusion in the guide are based upon reports on the ale quality received from CAMRA members. All reports are carefully recorded by the branch, and help us to monitor the quality of real ale throughout the year. Please keep sending in your pub reports.

As publicised in "What's Brewing", the CAMRA monthly newspaper, GBG 2006 is available to members at the specially discounted price of £8.50 if purchased at a branch meeting in October or November. Our AGM on 8th November qualifies as a branch meeting, but please let us know beforehand if you want to buy a copy.

The new GBG is on the streets, and our Branch year is drawing to a close. Local brewers continue to go from strength to strength and real ale is ever more widely available in the Highlands & Islands. Of course quantity does not guarantee quality, and the real ale scene is ever-changing, but reports do indicate that there is an ever larger number of pubs selling high quality ales. Currently there is no shortage of new brewers, and more publicans are trying real ale. We wish them all every success.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Inverness & Highlands Branch of CAMRA will be held on Tuesday 8th November 2005 in the Clachnaharry Inn, Inverness. All local branch members are invited to attend. Please make every effort to come along and support your Branch. So what do the local committee do?

With your help we monitor real ale outlets in our area and recommend, for entry into the *Good Beer Guide*, pubs which consistently serve good quality real ale. We run a real ale bar at the Marymas Fair, selling ales from local brewers. We organise visits to local breweries and pubs, and try and hold branch meetings in a pub near you. We organise the annual Pubs-of-the-Year (POTY) vote, and then decide which pub goes forward to represent Inverness & Highland in the overall Scottish Pubs-of-the-Year. We publish a newsletter on a quarterly basis - letters & articles are most welcome. We launched a website in February 2005 to provide up-to-date information about Highlands & Islands breweries, pubs, and beer festivals; plus items of interest.

If you would like to play an active part in the local real ale scene (other than just drinking the ale!!) then please let us know. Additional pairs of hands on committee would be very helpful, but simply keeping us up-to-date with the ale quality in the pubs in your area is a significant contribution. All contributions are very welcome.

Wester Ross Weekend

I was in the Highlands briefly a few weeks ago and thought you may be interested to have a bit of feedback:

17 Jun - **Applecross Inn/Skye/Small Isles/3**. The landlord denied that Small Isles was a blend, and asserted it was a seasonal brew that proved popular so Skye kept it on for the time.

17 Jun - **Applecross Inn/Skye/Hebridean Gold/2**. This was rather too hazy for comfort but was eminently drinkable nevertheless. The pub was getting through lots of real ale and I think they put this one on before it was really ready.

18 Jun - **Plockton Hotel/Skye/Hebridean Gold/3**, Caledonian/Deuchars IPA/4

18 Jun - **Plockton Inn/Thwaites/Lancaster Bomber/2**. Felt this one was getting a bit 'tired', but not bad enough to complain about. Anyway, good to see the village of Plockton has real ale in it - a big difference from my last visit several years ago. And the pubs were very busy on a fine summer's evening (it was a Saturday, of course). The Plockton Inn had a terrific atmosphere, obviously popular with the locals; the hotel was a bit more tourist-orientated, it seemed.

18 Jun - **Strathcarron Hotel/Atlas Latitude/3**. Vast improvement from the last time I visited. The bar is more 'public' than 'lounge' in atmosphere and clientele than the casual visitor might expect from the outside, but it's none the worse for that! Cheers, Rod. Cornwall. *Rod, a CAMRA Branch Chairman, is a regular visitor to our area and always keeps us up-to-date on pubs and beers he tries. Thanks, Ed.*



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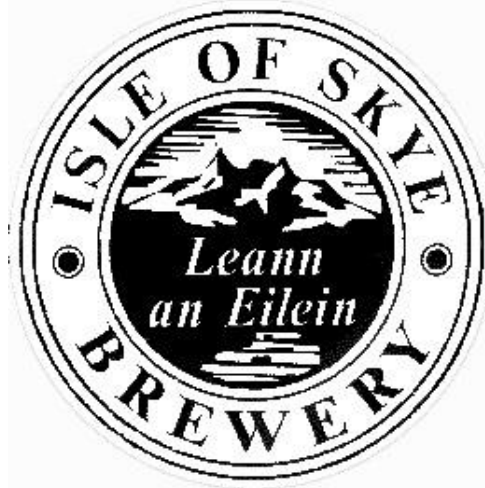


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