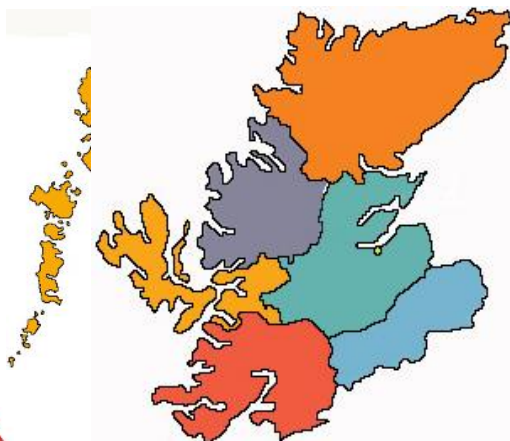


What's Yours Then?

Highlands & Western Isles Branch **Free** Newsletter

Highlands & Western Isles
Pubs-of-the-Year - *Winners*



No Smoking
in Scottish Pubs
from 26th March 2006



Spring 2006 

CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

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

- > Best Local Brew - Your chance to vote
- > Pubs of the Year - Results
- > Focus on Bev Alexander
- > Updated Branch Diary
- > Your letters and pub reports
- > Real Cider News
- > Pub & Brewery News
- > Updated Real Ale Pubs list

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.

Summer Newsletter **deadline** will be 1st June 2006, with publication in time for the Summer visitor.

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 Highlands & Western Isles Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. The views & opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, CAMRA, nor its Branches.

The **Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Bill** was introduced to Parliament on December 17, 2004, formally proposing that smoking should be banned in enclosed public places such as workplaces, pubs and restaurants.

The Bill was approved by MSPs on June 30, 2005, by a majority of 97 to 17 with one abstention.

It received Royal Assent on August 5, 2005, and the new Act came into force on **Sunday March 26, 2006.**



Information and guidelines relating to the new Act may be found at

www.clearingtheairscotland.com

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e-mail - consumer.advice@highland.gov.uk
www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/highland



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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%
Red Mountain Porter	4.5 %
Witches Cauldron	4.9%
Santa's Sledgehammer	6.3%



Black Gold
ABV 4.4 %

Award winning Scottish Stout with a rich dark colour, traditional smooth sweetness with underlying roast barley hints



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

CAMRA Beer Festival Volunteers

November 2005 was my tenth year working at the Aberdeen Beer Festival. The main work is during the festival week where 95 planks, 110 pieces of scaffolding, 166 firkins of beer, 80 taps, 166 new nappies, 3,000 glasses, 25 pallets, 240 square metres of plastic, 80 ice cream tubs (empty of course), and numerous smaller items are transformed into a beer festival. All workers are volunteers (a few drinks is the only pay), and this year around 60 CAMRA members worked for as much as their jobs or available time would allow. Some for a few hours, some for the whole week. There are jobs for all, ranging from building scaffolding, lifting full casks, stapling tickets, cleaning glasses, selling refreshments or CAMRA products, taking money on the door, and (of course) selling the beer. Key posts are taken by the local branch, where there is now a good core of experienced people, and who are willing to pass on training to new volunteers.

On Monday evening we take over the Mclymont Halls from the Table Tennis Club, who run this council building. Our equipment is taken out of storage, and replaced by any halls items not required. Plastic is put down under the bar areas and all is prepared for the next day. Tuesday is an 08:30 start for the heavy lifting day, with deliveries of scaffolding, planks, glasses and the beer. Hopefully all arrives, although over the years glasses have turned up as late as Thursday, the logo has not been as ordered, beers do not turn up or are different than ordered or are out of date. There is a lot of work, which at times can be very busy, but also

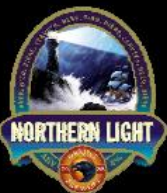
a lot of fun. We try to keep the traffic flowing as we unload vehicles as quick as possible. Finally we vent and tap the first casks for use. By the end of the day as we have a well deserved beer, the halls look more like a beer festival.

Wednesday is a day of consolidating, cleaning the glasses, putting up posters, setting out products and food tables, making sure the tills and public address system work, putting out publicity information, picking up beer lists, press and TV visits, telephone interviews, damping down the clean nappies (they act as coolers on the casks) and eventually the Bar Managers taste the beers for quality control.

Thursday sees more checks and tasting before opening at 4pm. After closing each night stock checks are done, casks are moved forward and vented, floors are cleaned, rubbish is thrown out, and we have a beer. On Friday and Saturday mornings we make more final checks in readiness for opening.

Sunday is another heavy lifting day as everything is taken down and put away, transforming the halls back as they were. On Monday morning the scaffolding and planks are picked up and we hand back the halls. That's it, well um, not really as there is a wash-up meeting in January where the planning for next year starts. Booking the venue, attracting a sponsor, designing a logo, replacing items broken; liaising with police, environmental health, fire brigade, etc., and finding ways of getting more staff and making the next year even better. If you are interested in helping out, or working at any CAMRA Beer Festival, check the beer festival page in *What's Brewing* for details!

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2006 Branch Diary (Meetings start at 7.30 pm)

Sat 8 th April		Social/Outing to Cairngorm Brewery & Speyside Pubs
22 nd April	Beer Tasting Course	Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit
2 nd May	Committee Meeting	Stronlossit Hotel, Roy Bridge
9 th May	Branch Meeting	The Duck, Conon Bridge
12 th - 14 th May	* Street Festival	Gairloch (Real ales, local food, music, local arts & crafts)
6 th June	Committee Meeting	Glen Hotel, Newtonmore
23 rd /24 th June		Social/Outing to Hebridean Brewery and Stornoway Pubs
4 th July	Branch Meeting	The Anderson, Fortrose
11 th July	Committee Meeting	Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge
Sat 12 th August	Real Ale Bar	Marymas Fair, Inverness
Sat 9 th Sept		Annual Social/Outing to the Isle of Skye
22 nd - 30 th Sept	* 5 th Loch Ness Beer Festival	Benleva Hotel
Sat 23 rd Sept	* 5 th Loch Ness Beer Festival	Social/Outing
End of Sept	* 3 rd Clachnaharry Beer Festival	Clachnaharry Inn TBC
3 rd October	Committee Meeting	Plough Inn, Rosemarkie
20 th - 22 nd Oct	* 2 nd Ullapool Beer Festival	Morefield Motel
2 nd - 4 th Nov	20 th Aberdeen Beer Festival	McClymont Halls
7 th November	Annual General Meeting	Clachnaharry Inn, Inverness
5 th December	Branch/Committee Meeting	Heathmount Hotel, Inverness
19 th December	Inverness Walkabout & Social	Meet at N ^o . 27 at 7 pm

* Not all events listed are necessarily organised by CAMRA.

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

Please see the regularly updated on-line diary at www.highlandcamra.org.uk

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chair@highlandcamra.org.uk

Mike Whittall - 01463 831259
news@highlandcamra.org.uk



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Festival News

A good beer festival, in the eyes of this correspondent at least, is one which gives drinkers a choice of the best of local ales, but also opportunity to try brews they rarely (if ever) find in their local pub. Blackfriars Spring Beer Festival did just that.

The festival kicked off with Fyne Ales Piper's Gold (3.8 % ABV), Cairngorm Trade Winds (4.3) and Wildcat (5.0), Atlas Nimbus (5.0), Caledonian 80/- (4.1), and Orkney Dark Island (4.6). Two ales from south of the border, the popular Timothy Taylor Landlord (4.3) and, from Somerset, Cotleigh Tawny (3.8). Something for everyone in the style and strength of beers and, for cider lovers, Westons Old Rosie completed the selection. Bar meals were served all day, and the Rooty Ma Toot Big Band again entertained Saturday afternoon drinkers.

By Tuesday night Cairngorm Howler (4.2), Elgood Pageant (4.3), Deuchars IPA (3.8), Everards All Black (4.3), and Robinsons Old Tom (8.5) were on stream following a busy weekend.

Next visit was on Friday afternoon, when Isle of Skye Young Pretender (4.0) & Cuillin Beast (7.0), O'Hanlon's Yellow Hammer (4.2) and Shepherd Neame Kent's Best (4.1), provided yet more variety of strength and flavour to savour. The last two ales on the beer list, Coachhouse Flintlock (4.4) and Wychwood The Dog's Bollocks (5.2) had yet to appear, but no doubt would have put in an appearance by close-of-festival on Saturday evening.

This really was an excellent festival: all beers tried were in very good nick and would have scored 3 or 4 on the CAMRA National Beer Scoring System scale (page 25). As for Robinson's Old Tom, how do you score nectar??

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CAMRA Highland Pub of the Year 2003 & 2005

Inverness District Pub of the Year 2006

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Well done to Bev Alexander and the **Blackfriars** team for another successful festival; congratulations also on being awarded Cask Marque on the eve of the festival.

Thank-You to all the CAMRA members, from near and far, who sent in beer reports during the past year.

The committee has just finished the annual task of deciding which local pubs merit our recommendation for entry into the next Good Beer Guide. By the time you read this the entry forms, with pub details and descriptions, will be with the CAMRA HQ staff who are compiling the 2007 edition, due to be published in the Autumn.

As the number of pubs within the Branch area serving real ale continues to grow, so we become ever more dependant upon the beer reports we receive to provide a true picture of the quality of beer on offer. In particular we need regular reports, sent in throughout the year, to help us to gauge the consistency of quality.

If you are a publican serving real ale in top condition, it is very likely that you will be complemented by drinkers. Please make sure to encourage your clientele to send us an e-mail or visit our website and fill in an on-line report. They need not necessarily be CAMRA members - if we hear that good real ale is on offer we will certainly make every effort to visit your pub to find out more. You may even see your inn or hotel mentioned in this widely read newsletter!

As noted above, the recommendations for inclusion in the Good Beer Guide 2007 have been submitted - but please keep sending in your reports, the process is ongoing and collection of scores for use early next year when deciding which pubs to recommend for Good Beer Guide 2008, has started.

“a
beer drinker’s
mecca”
Good Beer Guide ‘05, ‘06



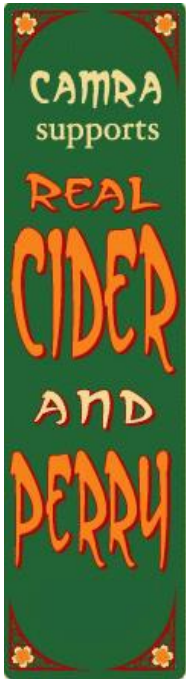
real ale
80 Belgians

real cider
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Traditional Cider Matters

Blackfriars, Inverness

Despite the popularity of Westons ciders during their Autumn festival, real cider has not been available during the Winter months. Westons Old Rosie was again on tap at their early Spring festival, the cask sold out on the first day!! Suitably encouraged, we have been told that Old Rosie will be regularly available on handpump from now on.

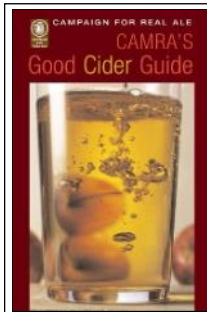
Westons Old Rosie Draught Scrumpy, named after their 1921 Aveling and Porter Steam Engine, is allowed to settle out naturally after the fermentation process, which gives it the traditional cloudy appearance and character of true old-fashioned scrumpy. It has a robust character, suitable for many occasions, easy to drink and suitable with any food, especially barbecues. CAMRA Gold Award - Best Cider 1999.

Kings Highway, Inverness:

21st December Report - "There was literature in the bar advertising Westons Old Rosie and Organic Draught Vintage ciders. There was an Old Rosie handpump on the bar. Alas, when I asked for a pint the bar person said "They have both run out, there will be more tomorrow".

Scourie Hotel, Scourie:

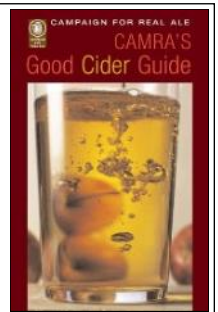
The hotel re-opens on Saturday, 1st April, after their Winter break . We



Good Cider Guide

This is the guide for real cider-loving connoisseurs. Fully revised and updated, this long-awaited fifth edition is available, for the first time, in two colours throughout.

Set in the same style as the Good Beer Guide. All of the listings are organised into counties, and the guide contains maps, listings of producers, and a selection of approximately 600 real cider outlets.



The **SradFest** is being held in Gairloch on the weekend of **12th/13th/14th May**.

Venues: The Old Inn and Gairloch Highland Lodge.

Music from the sensational Alex Harvey Band, plus Box o' Bananas, Wang Dang Delta Blues Band, Stereoglo, Davie Amos Band, Davie Cowan, Tarney Backle, Empty House, Bob Pegg. Bouncy Castle. Attractions for all the Family. A wide range of Real Ales, local seafood, and products from Wester Ross.

Contact the Old Inn, 01445 712006.

"This isn't specifically a real ale festival, but we plan to have between 20 - 30 ales available between the Marquee & the Old Inn."

Dates have been confirmed



20th/21st/22nd October 2006



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Highlands & Western Isles Beer-of-the-Year Award

Your chance to vote for the best beer brewed in the Branch area.



Following a suggestion made at our AGM in November we have decided to present a Branch area Beer-of-the-Year Award.

Local brews win awards at beer festivals throughout the land, and feature regularly in the Scottish Beer-of-the-Year awards. We thought it really was about time that real ale drinkers were given the opportunity to vote for the best beer brewed within the Branch area.

Real Ales from these local breweries qualify for your vote:

- An Teallach Brewery
- Atlas Brewery
- Black Isle Brewery
- Cairngorm Brewery Company
- Cuillin Brewery
- Far North Brewery
- Hebridean Brewing Company
- Isle of Skye Brewery

So what are the criteria for deciding on your best beer? How should you measure one pint against another? We will leave that up to you - a beer you enjoy every week which is a consistently good pint, or a seasonal one-of-you thought to be the best beer you sampled all year. A beer that has been around for years, or a new brew. The choice is entirely yours to decide.



Please vote for your favourite three beers; all scores will be totalled.

Please add any comments, scores, etc. Although not part of the voting process, all beer reports (see page 25) are helpful.

Voting closes on 1st June, and the result will be published in the Summer edition of this newsletter. We then hope to serve your favourite beer from our real ale bar at the Marymas Fair in August.



**Highlands & Western Isles Branch of CAMRA
2006 Beer-of-the-Year Voting Form**

- | | | |
|----|---------------|------------|
| 1. | Brewery | Beer |
| 2. | Brewery | Beer |
| 3. | Brewery | Beer |



Please post your form to the Secretary (address on page 6). Alternatively you can either e-mail your selection to the secretary or use our on-line voting form. Further information at www.highlandcamra.org.uk

the glen hotel NEWTONMORE

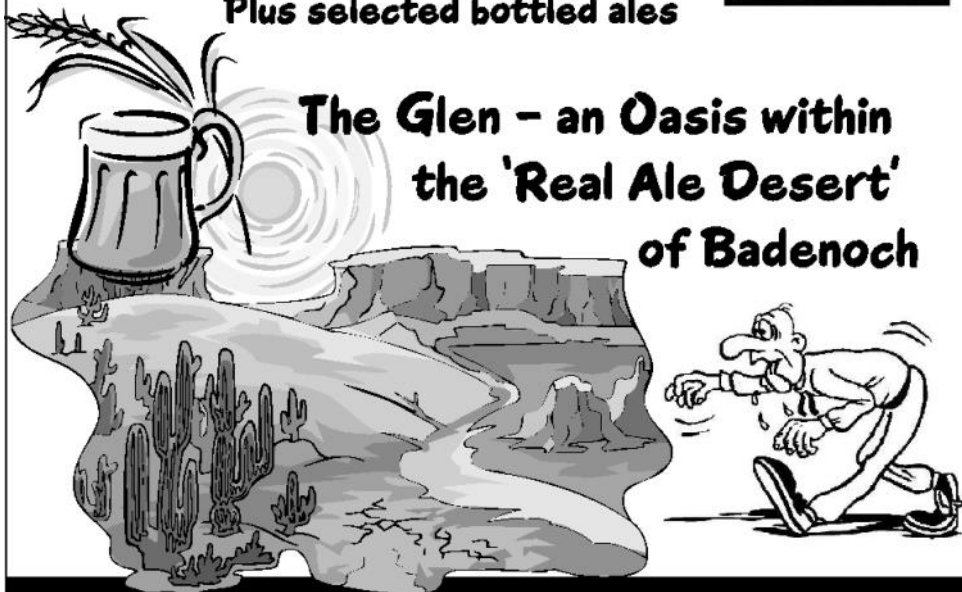
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Good Beer / Good Pub ?

When submitting Pubs-of-the-Year votes, one local member made some interesting observations:

Some weighting should be given to the "ambience" in choosing the winners. You call it pub of the year when all you really measure is the real beer.

The Benleva may well have a justified good reputation for real ale, but by no stretch of the imagination is it a nice comfortable homely bar.

The Good Pub Guide itself is a misnomer. It should probably be more rightly given the hideously long title "The Good Real Beer in a Pub Guide". Some of the catalogued pubs I have visited have provided excellent beer in what could only be described as a basic pigsty. No ambience whatsoever. A combination of the 2, beer and pleasant surroundings, is surely a minimum requirement. DM, Nairn.

Strong words, but perhaps a little unfair on the popular Benleva Hotel. Okay, so the uncarpeted public bar of the Benleva Hotel might be described as spartan, but the very cosy lounge bar is most certainly comfortable and homely.

Comfortable and homely? Were public bars ever thus? One-time drinking bars, in some parts of the country for men only (e.g. the vaults of Manchester), where darts, dominoes, and other pub games were played. How expectations have changed. The haunt of the working man is now more regularly frequented by mixed parties, often with children, and a full-scale food menu is expected to be served at all hours of the day in clean and comfortable (carpeted!) surroundings, and where working clothes and dirty boots are often scorned and sometimes barred. Changed days, and how often do we hear of "foodie pubs" which have little or no space for customers who just drop in for a pint or two to stand or sit?

Good Pub Guide misnomer - We think you mean Good **Beer** Guide? Hopefully none of our GBG entries could be described as a basic pigsty. We are very fortunate (in my view) to have some classic pubs which have "comfortable and homely" bars?*

Full CAMRA guidelines for Branches to select their Pub-of-the-Year may be found on our website. Perhaps the same rules should apply to GBG entries? Ed.

* The Good Pub Guide is not a CAMRA Publication.

We are on the Web!

The list of real ale pubs in this newsletter was correct when we went to press, but our on-line list is updated within hours of changes being reported to the Branch. You can also find information about pubs near campsites, or where food is served all day, and lots more. This newsletter can be downloaded, as can past editions. There are links to pubs and breweries, plus various Highlands & Islands websites, which we hope are useful for visitors looking for information when planning a trip.

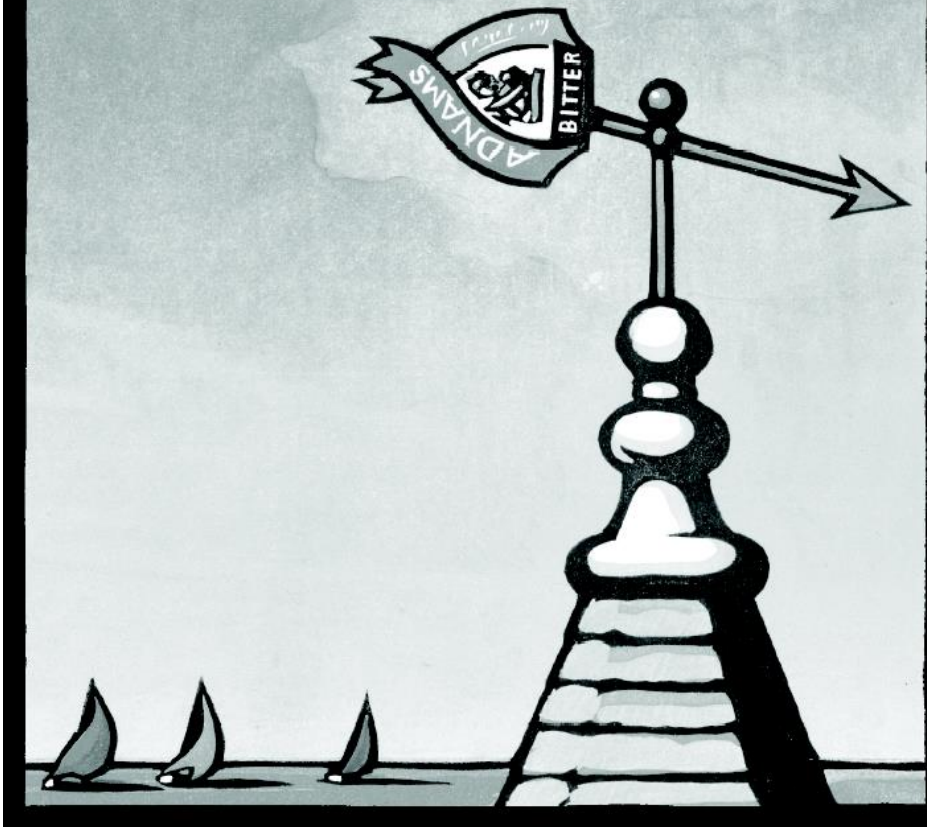
We try to keep the information on our website up-to-date, but we rely on **you** to help us out. Let us know if you have ideas for improving our site.

Please visit www.highlandcamra.org.uk and give us some feedback.



ADNAM'S. BEER FROM THE COAST.

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A Letter to CAMRA HQ

The editorial in our Winter edition has provoked much comment, including this letter to CAMRA HQ in St Albans, which was copied to our Branch Secretary:

Whilst not a CAMRA member, I do take a keen interest in real ale. Having lived in West Sussex I was somewhat spoilt for choice, the old King & Barnes ales being my personal favourites. Since moving up to the Highlands in October 2003 the quarterly "What's Yours Then" has been a very welcome insight into real ale in this area.

I question the unwelcome pressure that your Scottish & Northern Ireland Director of CAMRA is imposing on the local CAMRA "Highlands & Western Islands" (previously Inverness & Highland) Branch over its identification of GBG listed pubs. If the listings in WYT were verbatim, plagiarised copies of the GBG I would understand the position taken, but on reviewing the last couple of WYT I do not feel that this is the case.

I enclose a copy of the Winter 2005 WYT newsletter and draw your attention to the editorial on p16. I am one of those people who bought a 2006 GBG to replace the dog-eared and out of date 1998 edition as a direct result of reading WYT and have used the GBG as a travelling companion to identify pubs selling real ale. Indeed the 2006 GBG came into its own when I visited Lincolnshire in the New Year and specifically sought out The Three Kings Inn (P276) for the first time. The White Horse (p266) was also visited.

I find the quarterly WYT newsletters very interesting and augment the entries in GBG and, by virtue of their regular publication, include more up to date information than is in the current GBG.

In the big cities and other heavily populated areas of Great Britain there may be a ready market for public houses irrespective of their GBG recommendation. The (civil) Highland Council Region has a population of just over 200,000 who live in 11,000 square miles. The economy of the region relies on tourism and WYT provides an essential route to market not only for information about locally available real ale, but it certainly forwards the CAMRA cause itself through the identification of GBG listed pubs (and breweries) which must be a win-win scenario for all concerned.

In short, the WYT local newsletter through its listings promotes CAMRA's cause for both residents and the many visitors to the Highlands alike, keeping in line with the points in CAMRA's "Summary of Policy". Not everyone may buy GBG after picking up WYT, but more importantly, some might.

I would ask you to reconsider the petty restrictions you are placing on the local branch and indeed support and encourage the branch in identifying GBG listed pubs. SU, Ross-shire. (Full name & address supplied)

We would be interested to know how CAMRA HQ respond to this letter. Ed.

The Old Inn

Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BD

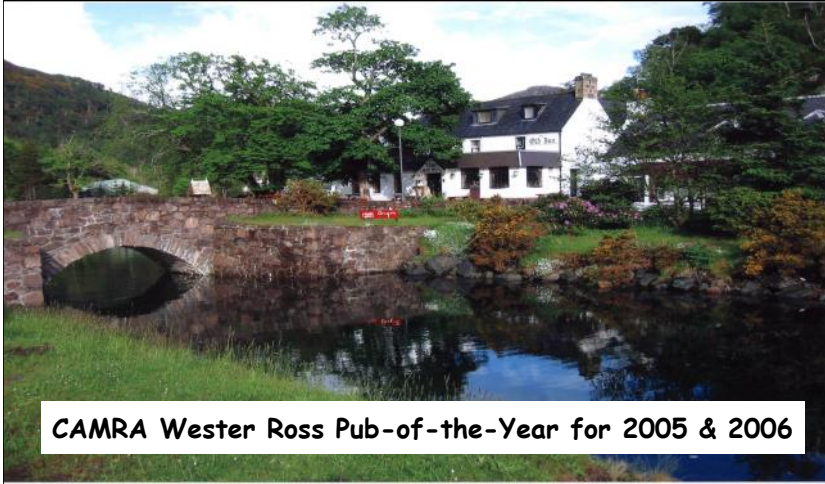
Telephone: 01445 712006 Enquiries - *Call Free* - 0800 542 5444

Scottish Tourist Board 3 Star Inn

AA Best Seafood Pub for Scotland 2005/06

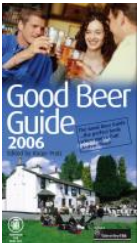
Abbot Ale Perfect Pub for Scotland 2005/06

AA Pub of the Year for Scotland & Northern Ireland 2003



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

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Focus on Bev Alexander

Bev Alexander took over the reins at Blackfriars last June, and is committed to serving a varied and high quality range of food and drink. Bev is keen to take Blackfriars back to the top of Inverness real ale hostelry list.

Q: Where are you originally from?

A: I was brought up in Ellon, Aberdeenshire, although since leaving college I've worked all over the UK.

Q: What is your background?

A: I studied at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen for a BA in Hotel and Catering Management. Once I had graduated I started with Tennents as an Assistant Manager in pubs around Aberdeen. I then became a Manager and then an Area Manager. While an

Area Manager I worked in a number of brands and places as the company regularly changed name and focus.

Q: How were you introduced to real ale?

A: When I was manager of Triple Kirks in Aberdeen it had a good reputation for real ale and it was during this time I began taking an interest in real ale.

Q: Why take over at Blackfriars?

A: I feel it has real potential to be a true traditional Scottish pub providing good quality service, beer, food and entertainment. The trend seems to be to move away from traditional values and for pubs to have high spec modern finishes. Although I'm sure there is a market for these places there is still



a desire for the traditional pub atmosphere where customers know what's on offer is both traditional and good quality.

Q: Favourite beers/beer styles?

A: My favourite is (Cairngorm Brewery) Trade Winds; I like the light refreshing flavour. I'm also fond of (Isle of Skye Brewery) Cuillin Beast; it's a bit strong for my tastes so I don't drink it much, but I enjoy seeing the smiles it puts on the faces of my customers.

Q: Hobbies and interests?

A: I don't get much time for hobbies, but when I'm not working I like to relax with my family. Although my husband and I normally end up discussing the pub and plans for the future, you never really switch off from the business.

Q: Describe a typical working day.

A: Drop my daughter at nursery; Open the pub and set to work; Organise the day's events and discuss things with the staff; Make sure the cellar and kitchen are as they should be; collect my daughter from nursery mid afternoon; spend a few hours with her and an hour with my husband when gets home; then back to the pub for the evening shift. I'm lucky as I have a good team who are capable of looking after the pub, which means I do get some days off!

Q: What is the worst part of your work?

A: The worst part is not being able to make all the changes I want to or put

all my plans into action instantly because of cost. Sadly it is the reality of running a business.

Q: What is the best part of your work?

A: Seeing customers enjoy their Blackfriars experience and knowing that they are appreciating the improvements I'm striving to make. It's always good to know that what you are doing is making a difference and it encour-



ages the team and I to carry on with our plans for the future.

Q: What are your plans for the future at Blackfriars?

A: The main plan is to further develop the cask ale range along with the food business. Hopefully this will further Blackfriars reputation as the place in Inverness city centre for real ale and good food. I also want to further expand the malt whisky range so that we represent all that is associated with a traditional Scottish pub. We've been building links with other businesses in the tourism industry, so I would like to further those links and develop others.

Real Ale Pubs

These Inns and Hotels are known to sell (or to have recently sold) cask-conditioned ale. Please let us know about the quality of real ales on offer (see 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 pubs may only stock real ale on a seasonal **(S)** basis:

Inverness City

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

Inverness District

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

Ben Wyvis Hotel, Strathpeffer
Inchbae Lodge Hotel. Garve
Caledonian Hotel, Portmahomack (S)
Castle Hotel, Portmahomack
Edderton Inn, Edderton
Cawdor Tavern, Cawdor
Caledonian Hotel. Nairn
The Classroom Bistro Bar, Nairn (TP)
Invernairne Hotel, Nairn (TP)
The Deerstalker, Daviot
Tomatin Inn, Tomatin (S)

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
Tradewinds Bistro, Corpach
Invergarry Hotel (S)
The Eagle, Laggan Locks
(*An Inn on a boat on the water*)
Spean 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 (S)
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

Aviemore & Cairngorms

Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge
Heatherbrae Hotel, Nethy Bridge
Boat Hotel, Boat of Garten
Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore
Dalfaber Country Club, Aviemore (TP)

Glenmore Lodge, Nr Aviemore
 Old Bridge Inn, Aviemore
 Winking Owl, Aviemore
 Suie Hotel, Kincairg
 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

Caithness & Sutherland

Scourie Hotel, Scourie
 Inchnadampf Hotel
 Burghfield House Hotel, Dornoch
 Royal Dornoch Golf Club
 Castle Hotel, Dornoch
 Invershin Hotel
 Sutherland Arms Hotel, Golspie
 Tongue Hotel
 Melvich Hotel
 Mackays Hotel, Wick
 Alexander Bain, Wick
(Wetherspoons)
 Central Hotel, Thurso
 Commercial Hotel, Thurso (S)

Wester Ross

Applecross Inn
 Summer Isles Hotel, Achilitibuie (S)
 Am Fuaran Bar, Altandhu (S)
 Ledgowan Hotel, Achnasheen
 Drumchork Hotel, Aultbea (S)
 Dundonnell Hotel
 Kinlochewe Hotel
 Loch Torridon Hotel & Ben Damph Inn
 Badachro Inn
 Glendale House, South Erradale
 Loch Inn, Gairloch
 Myrtle Bank Hotel, Gairloch (S)
 Steading Cafe & Restaurant, Gairloch (S)
 Old Inn, Gairloch



Lochcarron Hotel, Lochcarron
 Rockvilla Hotel, Lochcarron
 Strathcarron Hotel
 Tigh-an-Eilean Hotel, Shieldag
 Argyll Hotel, Ullapool
 Caley Inn Bar, Ullapool
 Ferry Boat Inn, Ullapool
 Morefield Motel, Ullapool
 The Seaforth, Ullapool
 Autgish Inn

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, Waternish
 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
 Glenelg Inn
 Kintail Lodge Hotel
 Clachan Bar, Dornie
 Loch Duich Hotel, Dornie
 Balmacara Hotel
 Kyle Hotel, Kyle of Lochalsh

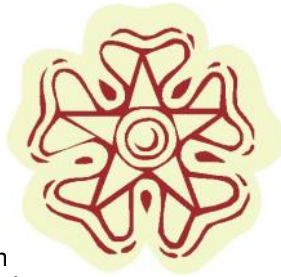
Tingle Creek Hotel, Erbusaig
(by Kyle of Lochalsh)
 Plockton Hotel, Plockton
 Plockton Inn, Plockton
 Lochmaddy Hotel, North Uist
 Tigh Dearg Hotel, Lochmaddy, North Uist
 Carinish Inn, North Uist
 Langass Lodge, North Uist (S)
 Westford Inn, North Uist
 Dark Island Hotel, Benbecula
 Isle of Benbecula House Hotel
 Borrodale Hotel, South Uist
 Orasay Inn, South Uist (S)
 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)

* In total 33 of the pubs listed are in the Good Beer Guide (GBG). We cannot indicate the entries, you will have buy the guide for that. You may find some clues elsewhere in this newsletter.

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, welcom character. The Lounge Bar has 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.

Authentic Scottish highland inn-style Hotel of class and impressive range of malt whiskies,

'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

Yorkshire Visitors

*Last year several CAMRA members from the Keighley & Craven Branch spent time on holiday in the Highlands & Islands. Some extracts of their experiences were published in the Winter edition of their **Alesman** magazine:*

F&BJ: Towards the end of May we went camping in Kinlochleven, home of Atlas Brewery. The village is located at the head of Loch Leven, on the West Highland Way between Glencoe and Fort William. It was developed in the 1900's when the North British Aluminium Company built a hydroelectric scheme and smelter in the area. The smelter closed in June 2000, since when the village has become a centre for small business and tourism. Atlas brewery is housed in the old Carbon Factory, where large anodes of carbon were produced for use in the electrolysis process of aluminium smelting. The village proved to be a very good spot to be based for both walking and drinking. We enjoyed walking in the bluebell woods above the village, visiting the famous Grey Mare's Waterfall (one of the most spectacular waterfalls in Scotland), and up into the Mamore hills. We also used the West Highland Way one day to trek over to Glencoe and walked down the Glen to visit the Clachaig Inn. This is a well known Real Ale outlet and here we tried Fraoch (Heather Ale), Atlas Latitude, and Orkney Raven, all in good condition.

On some of the wetter days, of which there were a few, we travelled on the bus to visit various hostelries. There is a regular bus service between Fort William and Kinlochleven. In Fort William itself we found the best real ale in the Ne-

visport Bar and in the Grog and Gruel, both of which are Good Beer Guide pubs and sell a range of different beers, mostly from Scottish breweries. One of our favourite bars in the area was at the Nether Lochaber Hotel in Onich, near the slipway to the Corran ferry. Once a temperance hotel, not allowed to sell alcohol, the bar is built onto the back with it's own entrance. The beers here were Black Cuillin and Hebridean Gold from the Skye brewery. We arrived at 12.45pm on a Sunday, expecting the bar to be open, it wasn't, but fortunately we didn't have to wait long as it opened at 1.10pm, when the ferry arrived. Another fine real ale outlet we found was the Laroch Bar in Ballachulish village. We visited this pub 3 times. They had one handpump with a beer from Atlas brewery, which varied, but was in good condition each time. They had Nimbus on our first visit then subsequently the beer was Latitude.

Back in Kinlochleven the bar we ended up in each evening was at the Tailrace Inn. Only a few hundred yards from Atlas brewery this sold 2 Atlas beers, Three Sisters Scottish ale and Atlas Latitude, a pale ale. We also tried the Mamore Lodge Hotel, nestled amongst the trees on the hillside to the north of Kinlochleven. On our visit there wasn't any real ale available, although we understand they do normally sell one real ale. Never the less it was worth the visit for the view.

I&AB: Our contribution is from July 2005 when we went to the far north of mainland Scotland in search of good beer, scenery and wildlife, not necessarily in that order.

(Continued on page 28)

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, Young Pretender 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 Blonde, Dark, and Sunset.



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, Black Rock, and Dun Hogs Head; plus seasonal brews.

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 & Orkney are all in the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles area; Arran & Orkney Breweries are in the Ayrshire & Alloway area; while Islay Ales, Glasgow & Orkney Breweries are covered by the Highlands & Islands Branch. Similarly for Highlands & 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

Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA would appreciate a little help in surveying the pubs in our massive Branch area. To help us decide which pubs in the Highlands & Western Isles 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, or send us an e-mail.

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 which consistently serve good quality real ale make it into the next Good Beer Guide.

Highlands & Western Isles Pubs-of-the-Year for 2006

Votes were received for a total of 29 real ale pubs throughout the Branch area, which goes to show that there is no shortage of pub-of-the-year candidates in the Highlands and Islands. Although we received more votes than ever before, the seven winners are the same as in 2005. This does not mean however that it was a foregone conclusion, and some of the regular suspects only narrowly held on to their prestigious awards. Winners who rest on their laurels may well perish next time out! Congratulations to -

Inverness City - Clachnaharry Inn

Lively traditional coaching inn on the outskirts of Inverness near the Caledonian Canal sea lock. An ever-changing selection of up to 10 real ales, and good value bar meals, are served all day. All are made welcome in the cosy bars, which are warmed by real log fires in Winter. The beer garden has fine views over Beauly Firth to Ben Wyvis.

Inverness District - The Benleva Hotel, Drumadrochit

This 300 year old former manse, home to the Loch Ness Beer Festival, should not be missed by real ale enthusiasts wishing to sample the best of Highland & Island beers. A friendly welcome is always guaranteed, and there is every chance of enjoying some traditional music in the bar after a day out monster hunting on nearby Loch Ness.

Aviemore & the Cairngorms - Glen Hotel, Newtonmore

Elegant Edwardian hotel in the heart of the Highlands, close to the Monalldiath and Cairngorm Mountains, and where lovers of outdoor pursuits are spoiled for choice. The welcoming bar boasts a real log fire. The popular BBC series 'Monarch of the Glen' was filmed nearby, and the Glen-Bogle Ale is from the Isle of Skye Brewery.

Skye, Lochalsh & Hebrides - Stein Inn, Waternish, Isle of Skye

The oldest inn on the Isle of Skye is located in a delightful shore-side setting on the north-west of the island. There are three real ales regularly on tap in this traditional Highland bar, and the seafood on the menu will have been freshly landed at the nearby jetty. Shower facilities are available for seafarers who tie up in the bay.

Fort William & Lochaber - Grog & Gruel, Fort William

Lively town centre pub with an ever-changing range and high turnover of real ales, many from Highlands & Island brewers. Popular with locals, and with a busy tourist trade in summer. Regular beer festivals are held, typically at Easter, in October, and at Christmas. Owned by the same family as Glencoe's Clachaig Inn.

Wester Ross - Old Inn, Gairloch

Traditional Highland coaching inn in a beautiful riverside setting at the foot of the Flowerdale Glen. Up to eight real ales are served in summer, mainly from Scottish brewers. Close to Loch Maree and the Beinn Eighe Nature Reserve. The enticing home-cooked menu features locally caught seafood and Highland game dishes

Caithness & Sutherland - Scourie Hotel

Popular with hill-walkers, bird watchers and fishermen (25,000 acres of loch, river and hill loch fishing are available to guests), this beautifully situated inn gets through up to 12 casks a week in summer, mostly from Scottish and English independent brewers.

» Selected by Highlands & Western Isles Branch of CAMRA Members «

Highlands & Western Isles Pub-of-the-Year for 2006 - Overall Winner

We are very pleased to announce that the **Clachnaharry Inn** has been selected as overall winner, and will go forward to represent Highlands & Western Isles Branch of CAMRA in the national Pub-of-the-Year. Congratulations to George MacLean and his hard-working team!! Congratulations also to all the publicans and staff at pubs which have been voted by local members as their Pubs-of-the-Year for 2006.

CAMRA Pub-of-the-Year guidelines (see website for details) were used to grade the overall winner. Marks were awarded by committee members against guideline criteria, and then totalled to find the overall Branch winner. Voting was very, very close, and totals were carefully checked.

Highland Fling

One wet and windy December Friday the adventure began. The trip to present the Darlington Rhythm 'n' Brews beer of the festival award to the Cairngorm brewery.

The intrepid explorers were myself, 'Chairman Moon' Ian Jackson, and the 'Saga Boys' - beer festival organiser Alan Holmes and his brother Colin.

Once around Edinburgh we pulled in at the **Moulin Inn** brewpub, near Pitlochry. The Inn dates back to the mid-19th century and was welcoming, with roaring fires. The Beers were Moulin Light, Braveheart, Ale of Atholl (my favourite) and Old Remedial. After a couple of pints our abstemious driver Alan dragged us away, vowing to return on the way back.

In Inverness we went straight to Kemps Guest House (64 Telford St, I can recommend it) to freshen up and then out for a brisk walk to, what I would say, is the best pub in town, the **Clachnaharry**. This lovely 17th century coaching inn had eight beers in, including Isle of Skye Blaven from the wood and Clachnaharry Village Ale, Hebridean Moo Cow Brew and Highland Brewing Co Scapa Special - the best by far. We had a great welcome from the landlord, George, who was so kind he gave us a miniature of whisky each and at closing time a lift back to our B&B.

Next morning we headed for Aviemore and the **Cairngorm Brewery**. Sean the head brewer (a Pontefract lad) welcomed us with

Tradewinds on handpull - thought I'd gone to heaven. He gave us a tour, a pint of our festival winner Black Gold and a new brew, Blessed Thistle, which uses powdered thistle for bittering.

After presenting the award we headed to the **Anderson**, Fortrose. A roaring fire, comfy sofas and two ales suited us fine, I plumped for Black Isle Red Kite. Then back to Inverness to the **Snowgoose**: Deuchars and Bass.

After dark we headed to the Good Beer Guide-listed **Blackfriars**: four beers on. I went for Cairngorm Black Gold. Onto the **Hootananny** (owned by Black Isle) which is a packed local music/food bar with long tables. There we had Black Isle Heather Honey and Blonde. Next we had a great surprise and **No.27**, an ultra-modern wine bar. They had Deuchars and the best pint of the night - Black Isle Yellowhammer. So good we stayed for two pints.

We finished the night off at the **Phoenix** which had Bass, Deuchars, 80/- and lovely pint of Orkney Dark Island.

Next morning we headed back via Loch Ness and the Moulin. A great weekend - and every drop of beer that crossed my lips was Made in Scotland. *Pete Fenwick*

Reproduced from Darlington Drinker 159, the Feb/March 2006 edition of Darlington CAMRA Newsletter.

Sounds as if our CAMRA colleagues from south of the border enjoyed their trip! Ed.

(Continued from page 23)

We'd like to start with our thanks to the Inverness & Highland Branch of CAMRA for their newsletter and comprehensive website, which provided us with useful information on good pubs and campsites.

Our first stop was at Onich (just south of Fort William on the west coast). There are two Good Beer Guide (GBG) pubs, so there was an instant attraction. We stayed in a cabin at Inchree Holiday Centre, because there wasn't a campsite that accepts tents, but we've heard that Bunchrew Caravan Site is excellent. The Four Seasons Bar at the Inchree Centre appeared to mainly serve Atlas Brewery beers - 3 Sisters was on when we were there...

Obviously, we also visited the Nether Lochaber Hotel by the Corran Ferry, where the friendly landlord dispensed mainly Isle of Skye beers. From Onich we drove to the end of Loch Leven to find where Atlas comes from - Kinlochleven and the Tail Race Inn, in particular.

Next to Applecross, where the Applecross Inn overlooks the scenic Applecross Bay. The pub specialises in local seafood, and beers come from the Isle of Skye Brewery. We camped 200m from the pub, 175 of which were vertical. It's remote and a good place to chill out - in good weather.

Northwards to Gairloch, where we had stayed before. The campsite at Strath is friendly and has good views - the people in charge come from Foulridge. The campsite is about 2 miles from the Old Inn at Gairloch which has been in the GBG for years and deservedly so. You can now break your walk by stopping at the Loch Inn, which looks uninspiring from the out-

side but serves a range of Isle of Skye beers inside. Where the footpath from the sea front level climbs back to the road it's to the left.

The campsite at Scourie is superbly located overlooking the bay. Unfortunately, this also meant the tent was somewhat exposed, worrying when the shipping forecast warns of a force 9 for the Hebrides. We were a little disappointed with the GBG pub the Scourie Hotel, which was only selling beers we can get at home from the Enterprise Inn guest list when we were there. From here we took the "ferry" (aka a tin bath with an outboard motor) to Handa Island, which is run by the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Our knowledge of seabirds improved on this holiday, we now know our guillemots from our razorbills!

Finally we made it to the north coast at Durness, which has lovely beaches but is a beer desert. Dare I say it, there is more to life than beer! [Hum IB].

It was an interesting drive south from there to Inverness, through remote countryside. We camped at Bunchrew, we'd been here before and it is nice, on the banks of the Beaully Firth.

The Clachnaharry Inn, which regularly wins awards from the local CAMRA branch is between Bunchrew and Inverness on the main road and bus route. You can sit outside at the back overlooking the railway line, if you want. We caught the bus into Inverness and visited most, if not all, of the GBG pubs and the Dickens Restaurant. The best pint was from the Wetherspoons in a former cinema building.

(Continued on page 32)



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

News of Brews

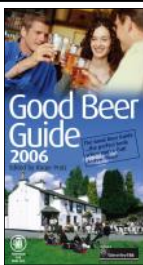
Congratulations to Highlands & Islands brewers on winning awards in the recent Champion Winter Beers of Britain 2006.

A over T, a 9% ABV Barley Wine from the Hogs Back brewery in Surrey, was named as the Supreme CAMRA Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2006 by a panel of judges at CAMRA's National Winter Ales Festival, held in Manchester.

Isle of Skye Cuillin Beast was awarded Silver in the Barley Wine category, and **Orkney Dark Island** took Bronze in the Old Ales & Strong Mild category.

Full list of winners at www.camra.org.uk

Cairngorm Brewery's Blessed Thistle is now on trial in bottles, although it is not a bottle-conditioned beer. The brewery plan to bottle White Lady and a stronger version of Blessed Thistle as bottle-conditioned ales, and to brew a different seasonal beer for each month during 2006, to supplement their regular seasonal brew range.



GBG Tasters

1. Clachnaharry Inn

A friendly atmosphere is always guaranteed in this very popular, CAMRA award-winning, 17th century coaching inn. Up to 10 real ales are served, at least one from the wood. Good value bar meals are served all day in the cosy bars, warmed by real log fires.

2. Glen Hotel, Newtonmore

Set in Monarch of the Glen country, the main bar of this 10 bedroom hotel has been tastefully refurbished by new owners. There is a thriving local trade, and visitors are well catered for. The house ale, Glen-Bogle, is from the Isle of Skye, and a variety of guest beers are served.

Full details for the Clachnaharry Inn, Glen Hotel, and all the top Highlands & Western Isles real ale pubs can be found in the Good Beer Guide.

Winds in a Bottle

Cairngorm Brewery is about to manufacture its award-winning **Trade Winds** beer in a 500ml bottle as the Aviemore company seeks to increase its presence in supermarkets and off licences.

The beer has picked up the Champion Speciality Beer of Britain award for the past two years and joins the brewery's stout Black Gold in bottle format.

"We are now very confident that the flavours in the cask version have been replicated in the bottle," sales manager Merlin Sandbach said. "This, as any brewery knows, is not always an easy task."

Cairngorm said that initial uptake from the trade for Trade Winds had already surpassed expectations.

From the Inverness Courier, 31.01.2006

Atlas Brewery have launched bottled versions of Latitude, Nimbus and Three Sisters. Since January, Nimbus and Three Sisters have been available in all 55 of Morrisons supermarkets.

Popular Ale

The Tigh Dearg Hotel in Lochmaddy on North Uist in the Western Isles has found that its own brand of real ale is proving a big hit with its customers. When the hotel opened at the end of the year, owner Iain MacLeod asked the Isle of Skye Brewery to provide them with the special beer and the hotel can hardly keep up with demand for the Tigh Dearg Ale. It has run out on a number of occasions.

"Some of the tourists are drinking the beer on tap and then asking for bottles to take away with them. Some even wanted to know if they could order the ale on the website," he said.

From the Press & Journal, 27th Feb 2006

We have heard that the Atlas Brewery are distributing Thatcher's Draught Heritage Cloudy Cider (5.3% ABV).



Black-

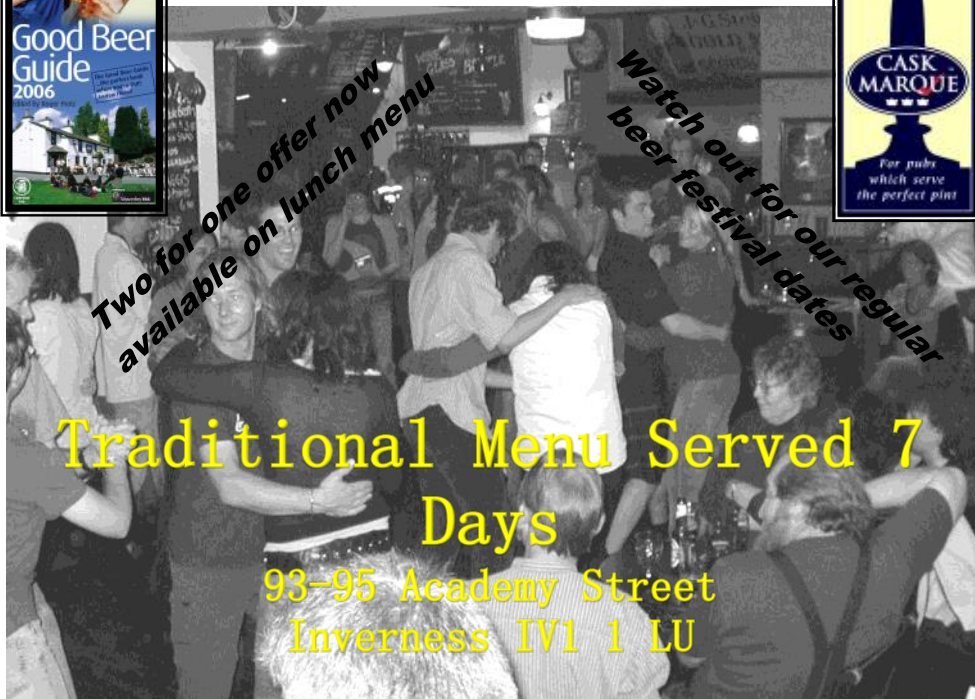
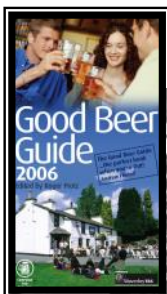
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(Continued from page 28)

In the search for good beer in particular, we stayed at the Benleva Hotel in Drumadrochit (Loch Ness Monster territory), which made a pleasant change from sleeping in tent. Since we returned we have learned that it has been voted branch Pub of the Year. The staff there were very friendly, the food was good and they knew their beer. The beers kept changing, but while we were there they were serving beers from An Teallach (we checked the spelling), Cairngorm, and Isle of Skye breweries. Didn't see the monster - must not have drunk enough!

Our itinerary wasn't well organised, hadn't noticed 2 GBG pubs close together on the Black Isle. The pubs sounded interesting, and there was a Camping and Caravanning

Club site between them. For anyone who hasn't been to a CCC site before, beware, they tend to be fairly regimented, expensive but very clean. Fortunately they let us on, and we had a view overlooking the Moray Firth. The added bonus is that just along the coast at Chanonry Point, is a popular spot for dolphin watching from the shore. While we were there they were filming for the BBC TV series "Coast". The Plough Inn at Rosemarkie is an evening stroll away. There is a friendly small front bar, then behind is an extensive eating area. The Anderson at Fortrose is a similar distance away, appealing to a different clientele with an Art Deco feel. Both establishments had their appeal, selling a variety of different quality beers. The Anderson prides itself on the number of Belgian beers and Scottish whiskies available, and the barman was very knowledgeable. Although we were only a couple of miles away, we were surprised that we didn't see any Black Isle Brewery beers for sale on draught.

As far as beer was concerned, we thought our last stop was the best, perhaps because it was a pleasant surprise. We had been to many of the other places before as we tend to navigate by the GBG. By the end of the holiday we had visited most of the GBG pubs in the Inverness and Highland CAMRA branch area, and still managed a bit of walking and wildlife.

*Many thanks to Anne Berry for sending us the copy of their **Alesman** magazine, and to Keighley & Craven Branch for giving permission to publish this article. Ed.*

*Anne also sent us an article she spotted in Southport CAMRA's **Ale & Hearty** magazine (see page 38). Thanks again, Ed.*

The **£3 Pint** has arrived in the Highlands:

I had a pint of the "Columba Hotel McNabs" earlier tonight. It was a nice, refreshing pint, well kept and worth a 4. I would have definitely had at least one more had it not

been for the price; at £3.00 a pint it seemed a bit steep. DS, December 2005.

Meanwhile, the **Glen Hotel** in Newtonmore is offering 10 pence off a pint of real ale to all card carrying CAMRA members.

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Inns & Things

Developments continue at Aviemore's **Old**

Bridge Inn: a new toilet block for ladies and gentlemen will replace the existing facilities which were getting a bit tired. "Clean, warm and secure toilets" will be appreciated by customers.

A major redevelopment is a total refurbishment of the kitchens to reflect the increasing demand for good quality food; the final stage will be the restructuring and resiting of the bar, again, to reflect increasing demands. The new bar will be purpose-built: designed to stock, store and serve quality products, especially cask ales, in an appropriate environment.

The **Glen Mhor Hotel** in Inverness will be changing hands soon. Nicol Manson has put it up for sale in order to reduce his commitments, and to concentrate on his other businesses which include the nearby Waterside. It is to be hoped that the new owners will continue to sell real ale and maintain the clientele that Nicol has built up over the years. We're sure that regulars will be keeping their fingers crossed that the well known local 'Trad' band, the Ness River Rhythm Kings, continue to entertain there as they have done for many years.

The January storms of 2005 caused the sea to take a significant amount of land from the Stein waterfront. Thanks to the storms government monies were made available for some rock armouring along the whole of the seafront at Stein. This was recently completed and should ensure that the Stein Inn, the oldest inn on the Skye, will be around for a few years to come. *Thank goodness for that! Ed.*

Andrew Lee is no longer 'mine host' at the popular Deerstalker pub and restaurant at

Daviot. Sadly the owner does not wish to continue leasing the premises, and intends to demolish the building and build two houses. This will be a serious amenity loss to the local community and to visitors who holiday at the adjacent camp site.

Three "F"s, at Clachnaharry Inn recently stood for a **Fillet for a Fiver in February**. A six ounce fillet steak, served on a bed of haggis with fried onions, pepper sauce, and a side salad, was a very tasty 28-day bargain on their specials board.

We hear that there is a new landlord at the Edderton Inn, and that he is serving real ales from the S&N range. This comes as welcome news for drinkers in an area which is a bit of a real ale desert.

Building works are taking place in the Clachnaharry Inn beer garden, where a new patio area is being constructed which will house facilities for customers who wish to smoke. Landlord George MacLean has promised that "Clachnaharry Inn will continue to be a smoker-friendly pub".



GBG Tasters

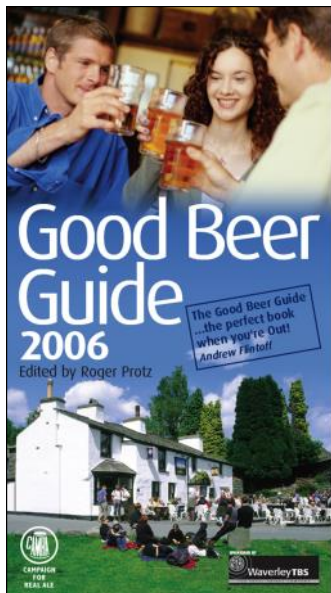
3. Old Forge, Inverie

Most remote pub on mainland Britain, reached by a ferry ride or a 15 mile hilly walk. An ideal base for exploring the 'rough bounds' of Knoydart. The all day menu includes locally caught seafood. Informal atmosphere prevails.

4. The Anderson, Fortrose

A beer drinker's mecca which offers a regularly changing choice of beers, mainly from Scottish independent brewers. 80 bottled Belgian beers, real cider, and nearly 200 malts are available. The owner is a self-confessed 'beer geek'!

Full details for the Old Forge, The Anderson, and all the top Highlands & Western Isles real ale pubs can be found in the Good Beer Guide.



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.

Members can purchase the GBG 2006 from their Branch committee for £10:00, a saving of £3.99, and gives the Branch a small profit which is used to promote local pubs & breweries. **Sorry, sold out, please contact CAMRA HQ directly.**

Inverness Walkabout 2005

Nine local members met at Blackfriars on a fine, dry, winter's night in December. The excellent selection of real ales on offer included some seasonal Christmas brews to compliment the regular choice. Cairngorm's Santa's Sledgehammer and Black Gold, plus Marston's Christmas Ale, were all found to be very good. Over the road to the Phoenix, with it's traditional island-style bar, where the Isle of Skye Brewery Red Cuillin was tasteful but a bit hazy, and the Hebridean Brewery Clansman was cloudy but not undrinkable. Next to the King's Highway (Wetherspoons); not much selection considering the number of handpumps, but the Black Isle Red Kite and Caledonian 80/- were very good, and not as cold as the beers have often been found here. Next stop was at Hootananny's where the Black Isle Red Kite was on very good form. Pubs had started to fill up as we headed for Number 27. We all seemed to go for Orkney White Christmas, which was very good. Down and along the river to the Glen Mhor Hotel where the Ness River Rhythm Kings were in full flow, and where the Timothy Taylor's Landlord finished off our evening very nicely.

Good Beer Guide Update

The Branch has reluctantly had to withdraw the Invernairne Hotel from the current edition of the Good beer Guide. Top pressure is being used to dispense beers, a method not approved by CAMRA.

Full list of updates at www.camra.org.uk

Pub Reports - *A small selection only from the many on-line reports & e-mails. Ed.*

Just been up to Fort William and the surrounding areas for a week. I read your fantastic What's Yours Then, absolutely the best CAMRA type newsletter I have seen.

Used as my bible for what should have been a walking holiday, saved by the weather there I think.



Any how the Spean Bridge Hotel, one I have visited for the past 3 years at various points of the year, this year may well be the final one, though. Food not served on a Sunday or Monday, contrary to the signs within, stop serving food at 19:30 on a Friday(!), despite being told it was until 20:00!

The real disappointment was the beer selection, advertised on the boards outside:

2004 - 1 pump with Hebridean Gold on, scored 4,

2005 - 1 pump without any beer,

2006 - 1 pump no beer.

Not expecting any beers soon, very, very poor turnout, and sadly not one to be repeated.

The **Nevisport Bar** however a bit pricey, but great cellar, (Atlas) Blizzard 4, (Isle of Skye) Cuillin Beast 4 & Hebridean Gold 3.

I look forward to my next visit. Kevin.

The **Tipsy Laird** in Kingussie, this bar has kept excellent ale right through the Winter (mainly from Cairngorm Brewery). The new owners from Brighton have resurrected this bar from nothing to well worth a visit. CW, Badenoch.

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Highlands & Western Isles

Some extracts from "A Scottish Safari (Part 3)", will be of local interest:

Next day the final northward section on the A838 took us through Caithness past the eastern edge of the lonely and dramatic Cape Wrath (no road and ferry connection except in Summer) into Durness, before changing course eastward along the tortuous and winding route along the Scottish northern coast. Winding inward, then outward, past Loch Eriboll, then bridging the Kyle of Tongue, we came into the small village of Tongue - amazingly a reasonable lunchtime pint available in the form of Deuchars IPA in the deserted Tongue Hotel.

Continuing on the A838 we arrived in Melvich, where the eponymous hotel is the home of the Far North Brewery (it is the farthest north brew pub on the mainland). The owner, also the brewer, Peter Martin, kindly opened up the deserted hotel to serve us up a pint of John O'Groats Dark Ale and a new brew, IPA, both of which were in good condition, despite the apparent absence of drinkers.

After this we continued on the A836 along the remaining north coast into the famous John O'Groats where there was not much to see except tourist shops. Then we retraced our route, taking a diversion via Dunnet Head - the most northerly point on the British mainland - and then into Thurso, where we visited the modern Central Hotel. We sampled here Deuchars IPA; also available was John Smiths Cask and Morland Old Speckled Hen.

This intrepid party then crossed the Pentland Firth to Orkney, where ales from the Orkney Brewery and Highland Brewing Company were sampled and enjoyed..

Spotted in Southport CAMRA's Ale & Hearty magazine.



The and restaurant
GLEN Hotel



H O E

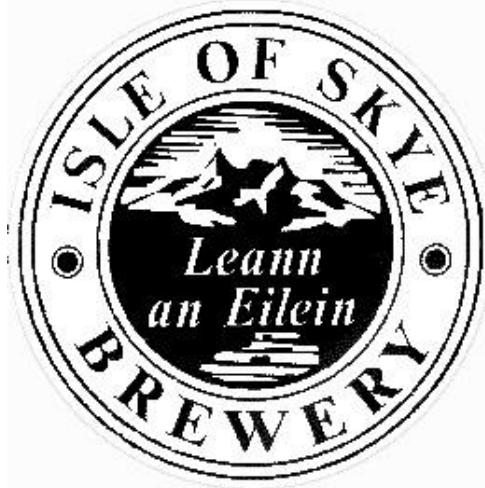


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