

# What's Yours Then?

## Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA **Free** Newsletter



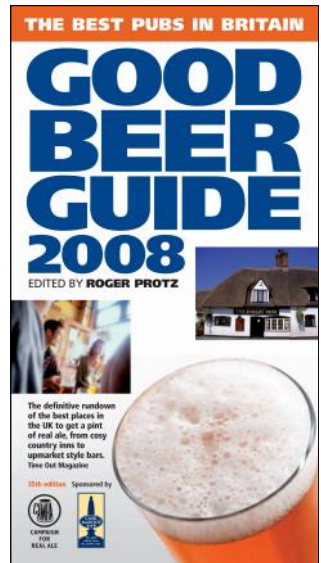
*Contains Full List of Highlands & Western Isles Real Ale Outlets*



**Autumn is  
Highland  
Beer Festival Time:**

**Loch Ness, Inverness, and  
Ullapool; at Benleva, Castle,  
Clachnaharry, and Morefield.**

**Time to  
celebrate  
the best  
of locally  
brewed  
Real Ales**



# Autumn 2007



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

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

- > Good Beer Guide 2008
- > Updated Branch Diary
- > Socials & Outings - Reports
- > More on USA Micros
- > Focus on - Eric Mills
- > Your Letters and Pub Reports
- > Real Cider News
- > Pub & Brewery News
- > Updated Real Ale Pubs list

We welcome your letters, news, views and opinions. Let us know what is happening at your local, or tell us about pubs you have visited. Thanks to all who have taken trouble to send in pub and beer reports, or articles, but especially to regulars Chairman Bill & Secretary Eric, who keep us up-to-date with brews and what is happening in local pubs.

Please note that the editor reserves the right to edit contributions sent for publication. All marks and copyright are acknowledged.

Winter edition **deadline** is 26<sup>th</sup> November, with publication in time for Christmas.

If you would like to place an advert, please contact one of the branch officers (page 6). Advertising rates are as follows:

Full Page Advert..... £58.00  
Half Page Advert..... £33.50  
Quarter Page Advert..... £18.00

There is a discount on placement of a fourth consecutive advert. Adverts are accepted on condition that inclusion does not necessarily imply an endorsement or approval of content.

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

**3,000+ 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 2008 **Good Beer Guide** was launched on 12th September. CAMRA are celebrating 35 years with a limited hardback edition, available to members only. Ten pubs, from England and Wales, have appeared in every addition and each will be awarded a commemorative plaque to mark this outstanding achievement.

In the early years of the Guide the Highlands and Islands was truly a real ale desert without oasis! Thankfully this is no longer the case.

The Guide is the culmination of much hard work by unpaid CAMRA members the length and breadth of the country. A listing results from reports and surveys by real ale drinkers.

As noted by editor Roger Protz, "Any pubs that appear in the Good Beer Guide have to have been nominated by their local CAMRA branch after serving consistently high quality real ale."

It is becoming an increasingly difficult job to keep up-to-date with the real ale trade. In times gone by a licensee would usually own or manage a pub for many years. Beer quality and service to be expected would become established and well known. In more recent times, it seems, pubs are frequently changing hands and no sooner has a real ale outlet become established then it changes hands and we wait with fingers crossed to see if a) real ale will continue to be served, and b) real ale will regularly be served in top condition.

The Boat Hotel in Boat of Garten is a case in point. Having served real ale for a couple of years, supported by Cairngorm Brewery who provided help and advice on keeping beer in tip top condition, the hotel was nominated for inclusion in the 2007 GBG. Sadly new owners decided not to serve real ale and so we had to withdraw the Boat Hotel. This news came only after final proofs had been submitted, and so the Boat also appears in the 2008 GBG.

Amendments & Deletions to the Good Beer Guide are published in What's Brewing, and can be found on-line at **www.camra.org.uk**

**Trading Standards Office:** Contact details for issues such as no price lists or consistent short measures - 0845 600 4 222

**e-mail** - consumer.advice@highland.gov.uk  
[www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/highland](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/highland)



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<b>Cairngorm Gold</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>Wildcat</b>	<b>5.1%</b>
<b>Stag</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
<b>Nessie's</b>	
<b>Monster Mash</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
<b>Trade Winds</b>	<b>4.3 %</b>
<b>Black Gold</b>	<b>4.4%</b>

## Seasonal Cask Beers

<b>Glen Ample</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>Horizon</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>Blessed Thistle</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>Red Mountain Porter</b>	<b>4.5 %</b>
<b>Witches Cauldron</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
<b>Winter Flurry</b>	<b>3.8%</b>
<b>Highland IPA</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
<b>Mountain Dew</b>	<b>4.6%</b>
<b>Santa's</b>	
<b>Sledgehammer</b>	<b>6.3%</b>



### **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



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## Wester Ross Outing

It was on a grey and damp June day when our minibus headed north west from Inverness in search of real ale in Wester Ross.

Happily the rain soon cleared and we were able to enjoy the rugged and spectacular scenery along the way. Our route took us past Ben Wyvis and along the winding roads linking scenic lochs: Little Loch Broom, Gruinard Bay, Loch Ewe, Loch Gairloch, Loch Maree, Loch Torridon, Loch Carron; and high mountains: Beinn Dearg, Sgurr Mor, An Teallach, Slioch, Beinn

Eighe, Beinn Damph, and more. Wonderful country for the Munro bagger, and the tourist, but what of the beers?

**Dundonnell Hotel** – Waterside location at the end of Little Loch Broom, in a sparsely populated area. Welcomed by two friendly staff we sampled the An Teallach Ale (average mark 2). and also on handpump was Weston's Perry (4). A short distance along the Loch to:

**An Teallach Brewery** – Beautiful but rugged scenery surrounds this small husband and wife run business. David Orr was busy finishing his Saturday chores and so was all too pleased to show us around and give us some entertaining stories. Since our last visit an extension has been built which houses a bottling plant, plus extra beer storage. 18-25 barrels a week are regularly brewed and the previous two months had been the busiest since they have been in production. Wilma Orr is the brewer, and David spends his time delivering the beers around the Highlands, south to the Central belt, and even into the Borders. As if this was not enough they have an arrangement to swap beer with the Broughton Brewery, and they also deliver Weston's Cider and Perry. All this and looking after the family craft! We tasted some excellent Crofters Pale Ale on gravity, and bottled Beinn Dearg Ale. We could have all settled in for the day but we had to continue our journey to:

**Drumchork Hotel** – Set above Aultbea and looking over Loch Ewe. Not only boasting over 500 Whiskies, but they now have their own Distillery, the Loch Ewe Distillery. One real ale

handpump dispensed Isle of Skye Red Cuillin (3). Some had a taste of their 'Spirit of Loch Ewe' whisky and a look at the £700 a shot



bottle. Then on our way again to:

**Old Inn at Gairloch** – This GBG listed outlet is set in a picturesque situation between the beautiful Flowerdale Glen and the harbour. Beers on tap in this popular Inn were Orkney Dark Island (2), Harviestoun Schiehallion (4), An Teallach Ale (4), Charles Wells Bombadier (4), and Adnams Bitter (4). While here some took the opportunity to enjoy the award winning food. Well fed it was onward to:

**Kinlochewe Hotel** – New owners have taken over since our last visit and have refurbished this hotel in the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve. They now have three handpumps serving Isle of Skye beers, two were available today - Red Cuillin (2) and their house brew Beinn Eighe (3). A short journey took us to:

**Torridon Inn** – A friendly welcome at this inn, located within the grounds of the Loch Torridon Country House Hotel and forming part of a base for 'Torridon Activities' which includes archery, clay shooting, mountain biking, kayaking, team building, and woodland walks. Beers on tap were Cairngorm's Wildcat (3) and Stag (4), Isle of Skye Summer Blonde (4), and the Torridon House Ale (3) which is also brewed by Isle of Skye. They hold a Beer Festival here every August. A short journey along Upper Loch Torridon to:

**Tigh-an-Eilean Hotel at Shieldaig** – A classic waterfront hotel with parking across the road and views over the bay. The small and very friendly Shieldaig Bar is tucked away to one side of the hotel, and was very busy with diners and drinkers. *(Continued on page 8)*

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## Branch Diary (Meetings start at 7.30 pm)

Tues 2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	Committee Meeting	Cawdor Tavern
Sat 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct	 Social/Outing to Ullapool Beer Festival (Meet at Inverness Town House at 10:00)	
19 <sup>th</sup> - 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct	* 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ullapool Beer Festival	Morefield Motel, Ullapool
19 <sup>th</sup> - 27 <sup>th</sup> Oct	* Octoberfest (Beer Festival)	Clachaig Inn, Glencoe
<b>Change of Date &amp; Venue</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> Aberdeen Beer Festival <b>Please see below</b>		
Tues 6 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b>Annual General Meeting</b>	Clachnaharry Inn
20 <sup>th</sup> - 22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov	21 <sup>st</sup> Great Grampian Beer Festival	Richard Donald Stand Pittodrie Stadium, Aberdeen
Tues 27 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Tasting Panel Meet	Blackfriars, Inverness
Tues 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Committee Meeting	Castle Tavern, Inverness
Tues 18 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Annual Winter Walkabout around the Inverness Real Ale Hostelrys (Meet at the Phoenix at 7 pm)	
Tue 8 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Committee Meeting	Blackfriars, Inverness
Tue 29 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Tasting Panel Meet	Kings Highway, Inverness
Tue 5 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Committee Meeting	Clachnaharry Inn
Tue 26 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Tasting Panel Meet	Heathmount Hotel, Inverness
Tue 4 <sup>th</sup> March	Branch Meeting	Glen Mhor Hotel, Inverness
Tue 25 <sup>th</sup> March	Tasting Panel Meet	Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit
Tue 1 <sup>st</sup> April	Committee Meeting	Plough Inn, Rosemarkie
Sat 19 <sup>th</sup> April	 Social/Outing to Cairngorm Brewery and Speyside Hostelrys	
Tue 29 <sup>th</sup> April	Tasting evening	The Anderson, Fortrose
Tue 6 <sup>th</sup> May	Committee Meeting	TBA
Tue 27 <sup>th</sup> May	Tasting Panel Meet	Suie Hotel, Kincaig

\* 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](http://www.highlandcamra.org.uk)

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(Continued from page 4)

A very good Isle of Skye Black Cuillin (4) was available with the new pump clip which has a very classy picture of the mountain and embossed name. Next scheduled stop was to be Lochcarron, and some thought was given to taking the scenic but longer route via Applecross and then over the Pass of the Cattle, the highest vehicular ascent in Scotland. All were in favour, especially at the thought of a visit to the GBG listed Applecross Inn, but time was against us and we took the short route to:

**Rockvillia Hotel** – This compact and very busy GBG listed outlet had 3 beers available. Cuillin Brewery Pinnacle (2, furthest we have seen this beer from the brewery at Sligachan on Skye), Isle of Skye house ale Rockvillia Ale (3) and Young Pretender (3), which ran out and was replaced by Red Cuillin (not tasted). Next a short walk around the corner to:

**Lochcarron Hotel** – The front dining and easy sitting areas have excellent views over the Loch. Beers available were Isle of Skye Red Cuillin (3), Old Speckled Hen (3), and we found Isle of Skye Cuillin Beast in the rear bar

(not tasted, probably a bit late in the day for such a strong beer).

Lochcarron Hotel was to be our last stop of the day, and we settled down for the journey back to a rainy Inverness. For once we were a little ahead of schedule and in good time for those with buses to catch to Tain, Nairn and Forres. No late buses along Loch Ness, but our pals from Drumnadrochit had no trouble in finding a taxi. A good day was had by all, and thanks must go to all the hostellers visited for their hospitality, and to our driver Sandy from Fraser's Coaches of Munlochry for looking after us so well. A special thank-you goes to the west coast midges, who did not join us.

- Douglas Gibson, a new member from Wester Ross, would be interested to hear from other CAMRA members in either Gairloch or Wester Ross in general. Contact [douglasg@ecosse.net](mailto:douglasg@ecosse.net)
- Sadly real ale is no longer on tap at the Glenmoriston Arms Hotel at Invermoriston. Their website is incorrectly advertising: "We are unique in that Isle of Skye (Brewery) supply real ale to us in Oak Barrels".

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Real Ale in the Highlands

## **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Ullapool Beer Festival**

will take place between

19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October 2007

at the

Morefield Motel, North Road, Ullapool

Live Music by

Crash Banjos - Friday

Pat Strachan's 4 on 6 - Saturday

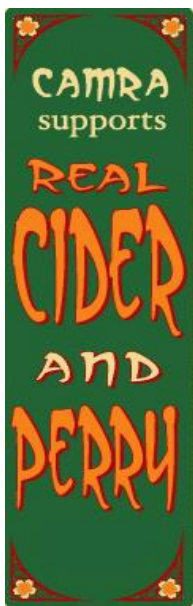


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## Traditional Cider Matters

**Real Cider** and/or **Real Perry** is sold (or has recently been sold) in the following inns & hotels. (Please note that some may be seasonal outlets). Please let us know if you find additional outlets selling real cider or perry.

**The Anderson, Fortrose** - Thatchers Heritage Cider

**Eagle - Inn on the Loch, Laggan Locks** - Thatchers Original Cider

**Blackfriars, Inverness** - Westons Old Rosie from the box

**Stronlossit Inn, Roy Bridge** - Thatchers Cheddar Valley Cider

**Strathcarron Hotel** - Thatchers Cider (rotated with cask ales)

**Glen Hotel, Newtonmore** - Westons Old Rosie or 1<sup>st</sup> Quality Cider

**Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit** - Westons 1<sup>st</sup> Quality Cider

**Scourie Hotel** - Westons 1<sup>st</sup> Quality Cider

**King's Highway, Inverness** - Westons Old Rosie & Organic Draught Vintage Cider; Thatchers Heritage & Dry Cider

**Alexander Bain, Wick** - Westons Old Rosie & Organic Draught Vintage Cider; Thatchers Heritage & Dry Cider

**Clachnaharry Inn, Inverness** - Westons Old Rosie & Organic Draught Vintage Ciders are usually served at their Autumn Real Ale Festival.

## Scottish Cider

In our Spring Edition we reported that Dennis McGillivray of Peterhead was denied planning permission last December to make cider at a small orchard based on a stretch of the former Formartine and Buchan railway line near Ellon. Happily, we are now able to report that Mr McGillivray has now been granted permission on appeal to Scottish ministers, following the refusal by Aberdeenshire councillors.

He can now build the production plant close to his small apple orchard, on the former Ellon to Cruden Bay railway, in farmland near the A90 Toll of Birness junction.

Two rows of apple trees, planted before the application, will be used to create a "niche"

cider drink initially to sell at farmers' markets and small north-east outlets.

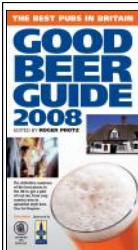
*We look forward to sampling his wares. Ed.*

Dear Ed, with reference to page 10 of the Spring edition of What's Yours Then. Cider is being produced by Peelwalls Brewery in Ayton in the Borders region. They have been on the go since 2004 and supplied real cider to the Scottish Traditional Beer festival last year. At present they make Philiphaugh Estate Cider and Dry Farmhouse Cider, and fruit ciders, but have stopped brewing real ale. Contact 07933 479 019 and email [peelwallsltd@aol.com](mailto:peelwallsltd@aol.com).

Hope this helps for the future,

Cheers RC, Edinburgh & SE Scotland CAMRA.

*Perhaps Scottish cider at a local festival? Ed.*



## The Good Beer Guide 2008 - 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition

The *Good Beer Guide* is the longest established pub guide, and is beloved by beer enthusiasts. Featuring 4,500 of the UK's top pubs, it contains details of the beers they serve, opening hours and addresses, and additional information on food, amenities for families, and atmosphere.

As well as being a pub guide, the book contains information on all of the country's breweries from the largest company to the smallest microbrewery. Tasting notes for the vast majority of beers brewed in the UK are also included. Indispensable for beer lovers and features a selection of articles on beer, brewing, and pubs.

You can buy the *Good Beer Guide* from bookshops, price is £14.99, or CAMRA members can buy directly from the local Highlands & Western Isles Branch at £11.00 while stocks last.



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## Yorkshire Visitor's Report

Greetings to all, I'm Pub Womble and I live in Calderdale in the extreme West of the lovely county of Yorkshire. On 20th June myself and my partner journeyed north into the wonderful Highlands stopping off first at Fort Augustus where we sampled some of the house ale from Isle of Skye at the Bothy Inn, close to the Caledonian Canal. It was rather late by now and we were intending to reach Smoo Cave before the solstice although we found time to pay a visit to the Corran Inn on the shores of Loch Linnhe close to Fort William. A lovely little inn with a good atmosphere we again tried some of the Isle of Skye ale on offer before recommencing our journey.

We arrived at Smoo Cave on the Northern Atlantic coast in the early hours and set our alarm for the solstice. At the time of the solstice the weather conditions were not conducive to viewing anything and we set off for our next goal which happened to be Melvich near Thurso to seek out the home of the Far North Brewery at the Melvich Hotel. We managed to book ourselves in for the night at the Melvich and after our evening meal we sampled the brewery's own Fast Reactor named after the nearby nuclear power station at Dun Rae. We later visited the public bar of the Melvich and tasted some other ales on offer, namely those from Isle of Skye and Hebridean breweries.

During our stay we chatted to owner Peter Martin who told us he is discontinuing brewing operations in September and selling the hotel, although he is to begin bottling the John O'Groats range for Isle of Skye. (*See p.38, Ed*)

Next morning we set out for Ullapool where we visited the charming Ferryboat Inn on the shores of Loch Broom. At first glance the inn appeared to be what could be termed a "smuggler's inn" and its age certainly justifies the term. A warm atmosphere greeted us and while there we sampled Crofter's Pale from the An Teallach Brewery at Dundonnell on the shores of Little Loch Broom. We stopped off at the brewery to chat with head brewer Wilma Orr who was hard at work with new brews while husband Dave was installing pumps at the Dundonnell Hotel nearby. The brewery supplies 60 pubs in the region.

Continuing our journey we stopped off at the Old Inn at Gairloch, a 17th century coaching inn which is family run and where again we found ourselves trying the Isle of Skye house ale, this time the specially brewed Blind Piper of Gairloch. Unfortunately the An Teallach had sold out before we arrived. After a hearty lunch and some good conversation with staff we continued our journey and stopped off at Loch Carron where we visited the Rockvilla Hotel, a former cafe. Here we had some of the Isle of Skye brews on offer before setting off on our long journey back south. This was my first visit to the Highlands having only been briefly at all to Scotland and it was a truly memorable and very enjoyable (if somewhat tiring) experience. We both are really looking forward to our next visit which will hopefully be very soon.

Keep Wombling, Pub Womble.

## Festival Update

Locals and regularly returning visitors eagerly look forward to the annual beer festivals held in September and October.

The Loch Ness Beer Festival, held at the Benleva Hotel in Drumnadrochit, is in its sixth year, again boasting a bigger range of beers than the previous year. This well-established festival concentrates on beers from Scottish micros, but for the second year running will feature brews from an English brewery, this time Thornbridge Brewery in the High Peak.

George MacLean hosts the 4th Inverness Beer Festival in conjunction with the Highland Feast Festival, and is running a twin venue event simultaneously between the Clachnaharry Inn and Castle Tavern. In addition to real ales, and ciders, the live entertainment includes Street Theatre artistes, with Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon Barbeque Bites in both pubs. Transport will be available to ferry Real Ale enthusiasts to and from the two venues.

A few seats are left on the bus for our outing to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ullapool Beer Festival. We have heard from owners Tony & Bev Oulton that everything is organized for a weekend full of good beer, fantastic music and great craic at the Morefield Motel. The festival is primarily aimed at promoting Highlands and Islands micro-breweries. Miss it at your peril.

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## **Good Beer Guide 2008**

This year we have nominated a total of 34 Highlands & Western Isles pubs, our full GBG allocation, including eight new entries -

Cluanie Inn, Glen Shiel  
Dornoch Castle Hotel  
Lock Inn, Fort Augustus  
Morefield Motel, Ullapool  
Old Inn, Carbost, Isle of Skye  
Sutherland Inn, Brora  
Westford Inn, North Uist  
Whitebridge Hotel



**Cluanie Inn** - Set in the remote Glen Shiel, midway between Loch Ness and the Isle of Skye, this inn has been welcoming guests for over a hundred years. It is a perfect base for Munro bagging, with the Five Sisters of Kintail, Cluanie Ridge, and Glen Shiel Ridge on the doorstep. Local Isle of Skye Brewery beers, an extensive range of malt whiskies, and the menu caters for every taste and appetite.

**Dornoch Castle Hotel** - 15<sup>th</sup> century hotel in beautiful walled gardens opposite Dornoch Cathedral. With original stone walls, wooden floors, and an open fire, the comfortable bar provides a relaxed and informal atmosphere. Head Chef Grant MacNicol, Young Chef of the Year 2007 winner, prides himself in using local Scottish Highland produce. A beautiful beach and a world-famous championship golf course are only 5 minutes walk from the hotel.

**Lock Inn, Fort Augustus** - Located on the Caledonian Canal, one of Scotland's finest engineering wonders, the Lock Inn is in the centre of Fort Augustus in close proximity to Loch Ness and the Great Glen Way. The cosy bar is popular with walkers, locals and passing visitors. Good food is served all day, every day, and a changing range of guest beers are served from the single handpump.

**Morefield Motel, Ullapool** - Locally caught seafood is the speciality on the menu at this friendly and welcoming hostelry. Comfortable motel accommodation encourages an overnight stay to sample the three real ales, sourced mainly from local Highland breweries.

Home of the increasingly successful Ullapool Beer Festival which takes place in October. A pleasant stroll along the river bank takes you to the harbour at the heart of the village.

**Old Inn, Carbost, Isle of Skye** - Sitting on Loch Harport with breathtaking views to the Cuillin mountains. Old stone walls and bare boarded floors are representative of a relaxed atmosphere. The two handpumps dispense a rotating range of beers. Traditional pub food is served and families are welcomed. There is live traditional music played at the weekends. Accommodation includes six en-suite rooms with sea views and a 24 bed bunk house.

**Sutherland Inn, Brora** - Dating from 1853, this recently renamed inn has two bars, one with a welcoming open fire. A variety of food is served, including steaks and seafood, with vegetarians being catered for. In addition to beers from the Isle of Skye Brewery a wide range of whiskies is available. The lounge bar and restaurant feature an exhibition of local photography, which is available for purchase.

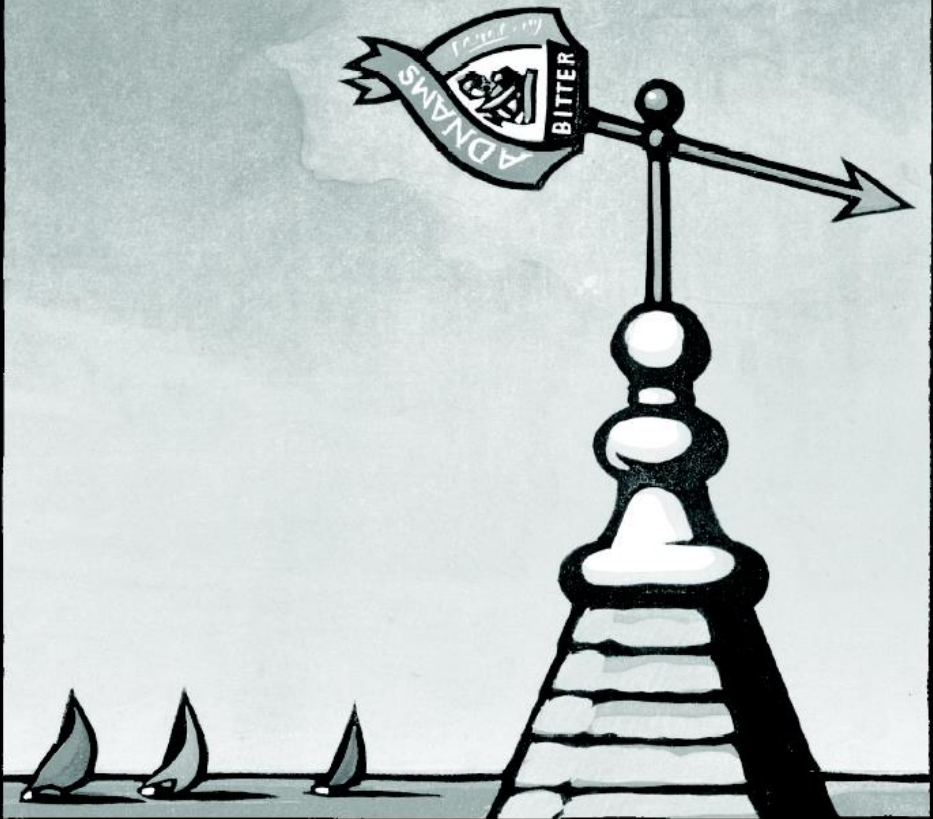
**Westford Inn, North Uist** - Popular with both locals and tourists this very cosy and dog friendly pub has a traditional atmosphere where a quick drink can turn into a ceilidh. A Georgian listed building on the edge of the Atlantic in a crofting community, it features traditional and modern live music. Home cooked food is available late into the evening, and real fires are fuelled by locally cut peat.

**Whitebridge Hotel** - Built in 1899, this hotel is situated on one of General Wade's military roads amid the foothills of the Monadhliath mountains. There is a classic Wade bridge nearby and the famous Falls of Foyers are within walking distance. Isle of Skye beers are regularly on tap, and a second handpump is used for a variety of Scottish ales in summer. Most of the traditional food is home cooked.

You can buy the *Good Beer Guide* from bookshops, price is £14.99. CAMRA members can buy directly from their local Branch at £11.00 while stocks last. As advertised in the August edition of *What's Brewing*, members can buy at the special price of £9.50 if attending a Branch meeting in October or November. The Branch Social at the Ullapool Beer Festival, or our AGM would qualify. Please order in

ADNAM'S. BEER FROM THE COAST.

# Adnams Broadside Always available at the Clachnaharry Inn



## Focus on (Secretary) Eric Mills

Eric has lived in the north of Scotland for most of the last 23 years. An active member with the Aberdeen CAMRA Branch, when he lived in Moray, he moved to Drumnadrochit in 2000. Eric took on the post of Social Secretary for the Branch, introducing more trips and visits to outlets outwith the Inverness area. He is now Branch Secretary, tasting panel stalwart, and Brewery Liaison Officer for Isle of Skye Brewery. Eric manages bars at the Grampian and Scottish Traditional Beer Festivals.

Q. Where are you originally from?

A. I was born in a small fishing village called Mevagissey, in Cornwall, and when I left school I joined the Royal Air Force. This took me to Suffolk, Cotswolds, Germany, Lincolnshire, Devon, Moray, Shropshire and finally Moray again, with short detachments to Cyprus, Bahrain and Croatia. After retiring from the RAF, my wife (from Sheffield) and I went into tourism, running a holiday cottage business in Drumnadrochit.

Q. Why settle in this area?

A. We liked the beautiful scenery and the quietness of the area, and when the RAF sent us back for a second tour we decided to find a business and settle here. We have to suffer busy roads and cities on our visits south to see family and friends, but we are always glad to get back to the peace and quiet of the Highlands.

Q. When did you join CAMRA?

A. When I was in the Cotswolds, a friend, Ronnie Lee, had a Good Beer Guide and I had a car, so he took me to some fantastic pubs and micro-breweries where I tasted some great real ale. We also visited some places accessible by public transport so that I could sample a few more beers, even the odd real cider. I had always been drinking real ale, as I never got into lager or keg drinking; I wanted taste. I got to know more about CAMRA but a posting to Germany delayed my joining. I ended up joining, as a life member, around 17 years ago. It was not until I started talking to Barry Malone, the owner of my local (The Tiddly in Ellerdine Heath in Shropshire), that I started to become more active.

When I moved back to Moray, Richard and Donna Jones in Aberdeen encouraged me to get more involved.

Q. Favourite real ales / beer styles?

Q. We are very lucky here in the Highlands and Islands. At present, you cannot beat the dark ales of Highland Dark Munro, Isle of Skye Black Cuillin, Orkney Dark Island; the lighter Inveralmond Ossian, Fyne Ales Piper's Gold, Isle of Skye Hebridean Gold; the complex brown/red Inveralmond Lia Fail and Orkney Red MacGregor; and the stronger Isle of Skye Cuillin Beast, Orkney Skullsplitter or Highland Orkney Blast.

My travelling around over the years has introduced me to some excellent breweries and their brews; Theakstons (Old Peculier was nectar but has been ruined); Greene King (when they were small); Samuel Smiths; Wadworths (Old Timer from the wood was worth waiting for winter); Wood (Wonderful and Christmas Cracker were my favourites at the time); St Austell (not too keen on most of their brews over the years, the best being XXXX Mild, which sadly is no longer brewed. My favourite is probably Proper Job. I even went to school next door to the brewery); Sarah Hughes; Hop Back; Moorhouses; Batemans; Stewart's Brewing; Kelburn - I could go on.

Q. What do you look for in a pub?

A. Welcoming, friendly staff that make you feel like you are in your local, where over a few drinks you can put the world to rights and catch up with local news and gossip. Clean, without arcade noise - a bit of background music is OK - but not so loud that you cannot have a conversation. Of course they must know how to serve their real ale, preferably local ales and a changing guest.

Q. Do you get paid for CAMRA activities?

A. No, we are all volunteers. There are a few expenses for travel, accommodation, food and beer at some official meetings, courses, events and Beer Festivals.

A. What are your hobbies/interests?

Q. I used to play most sports but I now do more armchair viewing. I keep fit by going to the Gym 3 or 4 times a week, by walking

# The Old Inn

Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BD

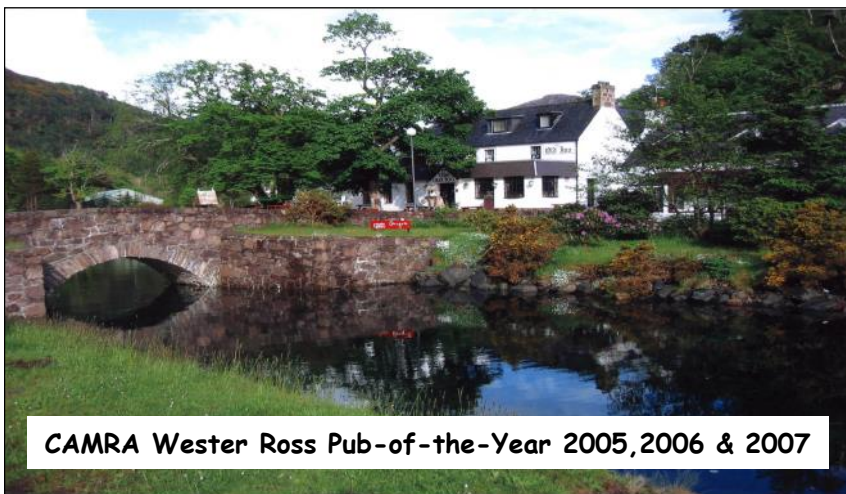
Telephone: 01445 712006 Enquiries - *Call Free* - 0800 542 5444

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



**Real Ale, Real Food, Real Fires, Real Welcome  
Accommodation - All rooms en-suite - Families welcome**

Nestling at the foot of the Flowerdale Glen, with the river flowing under its charming old stone footbridge, The Old Inn is a traditional coaching inn located in a picturesque setting with spectacular views across Gairloch Harbour to Skye and the Outer Isles.



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Beer Garden

Food served all day

Website: [www.theoldinn.net](http://www.theoldinn.net)

E-mail: [enquiries@theoldinn.net](mailto:enquiries@theoldinn.net)



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

# THE AN TEALLACH ALE COMPANY

**An Teallach**  
**ABV 4.2 %**



**ers Pale Ale**  
**ABV 4.2 %**

**Beinn Dec**  
**ABV 3.8 %**

**ouse Special**  
**ABV 4.4 %**

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

in this beautiful countryside, and I climb a Munro now and again. I like travelling and sightseeing, both at home or abroad. I enjoy food - cooking and eating good local products - and will try anything once. Organic gardening has been a passion since we moved into our first house, and I grow as much fruit, vegetables, and herbs as I can for us to cook.

- Q. How do you see the future of CAMRA in the Highlands and Western Isles?
- A. We are in the best state that we have ever been in and improving all the time. Are we at a real ale saturation point? There are only so many people who either like real ale or can be converted, it is not to everyone's taste. Our CAMRA Branch area, the largest in the UK, has gone from 35 real ale outlets in 2000 to 170 today, and there are now nine breweries in the whole area. We have 160 local members, 8 of whom are on the committee. Large pub chains now own quite a few outlets and often restrict which real ales, if any, can be sold - usually not local brews. The local breweries have done

a fantastic job in converting so many pubs to real ale in such a short time. Most of the pubs are doing a great job in delivering a quality product in great condition. Some are recognised by inclusion in the Good Beer Guide, but numbers are restricted and we now fill our allocation; some great pubs unfortunately miss out. The committee has introduced Pub of the Year and Beer of the Year, so please vote as this encourages everyone involved. We visit as many pubs and breweries as possible, and try to cover the whole area over a two year period. We do not quite make it, and we do need more feedback to keep up-to-date with the whole area. Our panel of trained tasters is helping local beers to find their way into national CAMRA competitions. We run a real ale bar at the annual Marymas festival and hope to one day run our own CAMRA Beer Festival. We will need help to do this. Our Website and Newsletter are well established and we are putting the Highlands & Western Isles well and truly on the CAMRA real ale map. Please join and support us.



## **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 that 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 pubs listed may only stock real ale on a seasonal **(S)** basis:

### **Inverness City**

Blackfriars  
Caley Inn (S)  
Castle Tavern  
Clachnaharry Inn  
Nico's Bar, Glen Mhor Hotel  
Heathmount Hotel  
Hootananny  
Johnny Foxes (TP)  
Kings Highway (*Wetherspoons*)  
Masonic Club  
Number 27  
Palace Hotel  
Phoenix Bar  
Snowgoose



### **Inverness District**

Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit  
Loch Ness Lodge, Drumnadrochit (S)  
Clansman Hotel  
Slaters Arms, Cannich (S)  
Bothy Bar, Fort Augustus  
Caledonian Hotel, Fort Augustus (S)  
Lock Inn, Fort Augustus  
Dores Inn  
Whitebridge Hotel, Loch Ness South  
North Kessock Hotel  
Culbokie Inn  
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  
Richmond Hotel, Strathpeffer  
Inchbae Lodge Hotel. Garve  
Castle Hotel, Portmahomack  
Edderton Inn, Edderton  
Star Inn, Tain  
George Inn, Ardersier



“a beer drinker’s  
mecca”

*Good Beer Guide 2005-2007*



real ale  
80 Belgians

real cider  
200 malts

**Inverness District  
Pub of the Year  
2007 (tied vote)**

the  
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Cawdor Tavern, Cawdor  
Bandstand Bar, Braeval Hotel  
Classroom Bistro Bar, Nairn  
Havelock House Hotel, Nairn  
Invernairne Hotel, Nairn (TP) (S)  
Tomatin Country Inn, Tomatin (S)

### Wester Ross

Applecross Inn  
Summer Isles Hotel, Achiltibuie (S)  
Am Fuaran Bar, Altandhu (S)  
Ledgowan Hotel, Achnasheen  
Aultbea Hotel  
Drumchork Hotel, Aultbea (S)  
Dundonnell Hotel  
Loch Maree Hotel  
Kinlochewe Hotel  
Loch Torridon Country House Hotel  
Torridon Inn  
Badachro Inn  
Glendale House, South Erradale (S)  
Loch Inn, Gairloch  
Millcroft Hotel, 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  
Arch Inn, Ullapool  
Argyll Hotel, Ullapool  
Caley Inn Bar, Ullapool  
Ferry Boat Inn, Ullapool  
Morefield Motel, Ullapool  
Seaforth Bar & Restaurant, Ullapool

### Fort William & Lochaber

Jacobite Steam Train (S)  
Grog & Gruel, Fort William  
Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William  
Ben Nevis Inn, Fort William  
Nevisport Bar, Fort William  
Invergarry Hotel  
The Eagle, Laggan Locks  
*(An Inn on a boat on the water)*  
Loch Oich Restaurant/Bar, South Laggan  
Old Station Restaurant, Spean Bridge  
Spean Bridge Hotel (S)  
Stronlossit Hotel, Roy Bridge

# Stein Inn

THE OLDEST INN ON SKYE  
1790

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



An eighteenth-century inn on the sea shore that will have you yearning to visit again and again to experience the warm Scottish welcome, fine food, superb accommodation and traditional highland bar offering local real ales and over 99 malt whiskies.

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

Angus & Teresa McGhie,  
Stein Inn, Waternish,  
Isle of Skye, IV55 8GA  
Tel: +44 (0)1470-592362  
[angus.teresa@steininn.co.uk](mailto:angus.teresa@steininn.co.uk)

Tomdoun Sporting Lodge  
 Glenfinnan House Hotel  
 Café Rhu, Arisaig (S)  
 Steam Inn, Mallaig  
 Loch Shiel Hotel, Acharacle  
 Old Forge, Inverie  
 Ben View Hotel, Strontian  
 Strontian Inn (S)  
 Four Seasons, Onich  
 Corran Inn, Onich  
 Inn at Ardgour  
 Ice Factor, Kinlochleven  
 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  
 Ben Mhor Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey  
 Muckrach Lodge Hotel, Dulnain Bridge  
 Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore  
 Dalfaber Country Club, Aviemore (TP)  
 Glenmore Lodge, Nr Aviemore  
 Old Bridge Inn, Aviemore  
 Winking Owl, Aviemore  
 Suie Hotel, Kincaig  
 Glen Hotel, Newtonmore  
 Lodge Hotel, Newtonmore  
 Kingussie Golf Club  
 Silver Fjord Hotel, Kingussie  
 Topsy Laird, Kingussie

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

Old Mill, Brodie  
 Mash Tun, Charlestown of Aberlour  
 Highlander Inn, Craigellachie  
 Croft Inn, Glenlivet  
 Glen Avon Hotel, Tomintoul

#### **Caithness & Sutherland**

Inchnadampn Hotel  
 The Caberfeidh, Lochinver  
 Scourie Hotel, Scourie  
 Altnacealgach Motel, nr Ledmore Junction  
 Burghfield House Hotel, Dornoch

## **A Fine Day for a Great Ale?**



## **A Great Day for A Fyne Ale!**

Castle Hotel, Dornoch  
 Dunroamin Hotel, Bonar Bridge  
 Invershin Hotel  
 Sutherland Arms Hotel, Golspie (S)  
 Sutherland Inn, Brora  
 Tongue Hotel  
 MacKay's Hotel, Wick  
 Alexander Bain, Wick (*Wetherspoons*)  
 Central Hotel, Thurso  
 Commercial Hotel, Thurso (S)

#### **Skye, Lochalsh & Hebrides**

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



King Haakon Bar, Kyleakin  
 Saucy Mary's Lodge, Kyleakin  
 Duisdale Hotel  
 Isle Ornsay Hotel  
 Ardvasar Hotel  
 Broadford Hotel  
 Claymore, Broadford  
 Dunollie Hotel, Broadford  
 Hebridean Hotel, Broadford  
 Sconser Lodge Hotel  
 Sligachan Hotel (S)  
 Old Inn, Carbost  
 Taigh Ailean Hotel, Portnalong  
 Isle of Raasay Hotel  
 Dunvegan Hotel  
 Stein Inn, Waternish  
 Edinbane Hotel  
 The Lodge at Edinbane  
 Ferry Inn, Uig  
 Uig Hotel, Uig  
 Pub at the Pier, Uig  
 Duntulm Castle Hotel  
 Greshornish Lodge  
 Bosville Hotel, Portree

Isles Inn, Portree  
 Royal Hotel, Portree  
 Tigh Dearg Hotel, Lochmaddy, North Uist  
 Carinish Inn, North Uist (S)  
 Langass Lodge, North Uist (S)  
 Westford Inn, North Uist  
 Dark Island Hotel, Benbecula (S)  
 Isle of Benbecula House Hotel (S)  
 Borrodale Hotel, South Uist (S)  
 Orasay Inn, South Uist (S)  
 Polachar Inn, South Uist (S)  
 Shawbost Inn, Isle of Lewis  
 Clachan Bar, Stornoway  
 Cladh Inn, Stornoway  
 Royal British Legion, Stornoway  
 Whalers Rest, Stornoway  
 Harris Inn, Tarbert (S)

A total of 34 of the pubs listed here are in the *Good Beer Guide*. We cannot indicate GBG entries, you will have buy the guide for that, but you may find some clues elsewhere in this newsletter.

Publicans should note that if you are listed in the guide you may use this artwork in adverts and on your website.



# Stronlossit Inn

**at Roy Bridge**

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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.

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## Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2007

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

**Isle of Skye Brewery** - Based at Uig, next to 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 until September 2007. May brew elsewhere.*

**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 in Stornoway, main town in the Outer Hebrides. Began brewing in January 2002, now producing five regular ales. Beers include Islander Strong Ale, Berserker Export Pale Ale, and Clansman Ale (first ale ever brewed in Stornoway),



\* **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 from Lochaber to the family's croft at Camusnagaul, near Dundonnell, during March 2003. Regular 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, Eagle and Pinnacle Ales are brewed.

**Highland Brewing Company** - Started brewing in late 2004 at Moorhouses (Lancs). Brewery is now 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 in 2004, first brews in early 2005. Ales include Easd' Ale, Red Pearl, and Oyster Gold.

**Isle of Mull Brewery** - Started in 2005 with a 5 barrel plant in Tobermory. McCaig's

Folly and Galleon Gold ales.


**Glenfinnan Brewery** - The first beer, A' Chiad Fhear, was brewed in their 4-barrel plant in October 2006 - a limited edition of 1,000 bottles plus one barrel.

**Colonsay Brewery** - First brews in March 2007. IPA, 80/- and Lager (all bottled)

**Plockton Brewery** - First brew, on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007, Craggs Ale, is available in Plockton.

\* The **Atlas** and **Orkney** Breweries were taken out of administration in June 2006 by **Sinclair Breweries Ltd**, a company formed by local hotelier & restaurateur Norman Sinclair, and his wife Christine.

*Not all of the breweries listed are in our branch area & Orkney are all in the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles area; Brewery Arrans in the Ayrshire & Islay Ales, while Breweries Oyster Glasgow & similarly for Highlands & Islands pubs listed in the GBG, pubs in Orkney and Shetland are submitted by the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles Branch.*



## Rate our Beer

Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA would welcome your 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 NBSS (National Beer Scoring Scheme) to record Beer Quality.

### What do the scores mean?

- 0 - Undrinkable.** No cask ale available or so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it.
- 1 - Poor.** Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
- 2 - Average.** Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
- 3 - Good.** Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.
- 4 - Very Good.** Excellent beer in excellent condition.
- 5 - Excellent.** Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.



Your regular input will help ensure that pubs consistently serving good quality real ale make it into the next Good Beer Guide.

Alternatively you can now submit your scores online at [www.beerscoring.org.uk](http://www.beerscoring.org.uk), or our own website, or send us an e-mail.

You can get NBSS cards from your local CAMRA branch or download from the members area of the national website.

CAMRA National Beer Scoring Scheme	
Surveyor	_____
Mem.No.	_____ Date of survey _____ / _____
Pub	_____
Location	_____
GBG County/Area	_____ Score 0-5 _____
Beer	_____ (optional)

Sample



# The Castle Tavern

Taigh-òsda à chaisteil

Open all day, food served all day, a great range of Real Ales  
At the top of Castle Street, Inverness, overlooking the River Ness  
at the start/finish of the Great Glen Way Tel: 01463 718178

## Micros in Maine

In the summer edition of *What's Yours Then?* Angus MacRuary from Isle of Skye brewery penned a very interesting piece about beer in Boston and how the micro breweries around New England are increasing the availability of their ales in cask condition.

In early June, not long after Angus' Boston visit I was on holiday in Maine. It was on a peninsula called Rutherford Island on the east coast about two hours drive from Portland which is in turn about two hours from Boston. I was hoping for some cask ale but unfortunately the area I was staying in had no large conurbations just many small towns.

The fear of nothing but draft Coors, Millar, Bud, etc. was quickly eliminated when I found that most restaurants had three draught taps selling micro brewery ales. In fact I only saw a "big" name draught in a couple of establishments, probably due in part to the fact that Maine has more micros per head of population than nearly any other State. OK, the ales were under CO<sub>2</sub> and a little cold, but most of the

breweries declare they are cold filtered and unpasteurised and, credit where credit is due, they were full of flavour and without doubt a blessing compared to what might have been!

There was plenty of choice in local supermarkets with many breweries being represented, predominately in 6 packs of 12oz bottles (about ½ a pint), but it was interesting to note they all brewed their own version of an IPA, Porter, Best Bitter or Export, and Scottish Ale. Most of the ones I tried were good and quite faithful to the style but, as Angus noted in his article, the "Hop-heads" do take over and the IPAs were very hop dominant.

English and Scottish influence is undoubtedly there with breweries importing ingredients from the UK, and boasting that they only use "proper" grains and none of that rice and corn that pops up in that "King of Beers" (sic) which has the red and white label. If I was wondering about an English influence I was stopped in my tracks in one store when I saw packs of Ringwood's Old Thumper, an old favourite of mine when living down south.

This was brewed by the Shipyard Brewery of Portland with the permission of Ringwoods in Hampshire. Shipyard brewer Alan Pugsley learnt his craft at Ringwood under tutorage of founder Peter Austin. All the ingredients are imported from England and, I have to admit, the flavour was an excellent match to the original, especially when I tried it on draught. David Geary of D.L Geary Brewing, Portland was also helped in his trade by UK brewers when Peter Maxwell Stuart of Traquair House arranged for him to work in Scottish Highlands and English breweries back in the early 80's. The other interesting fact I discovered was that despite the fact that the brew length of a lot of the micros was around 20 barrels (700 gallons) they had automated bottling lines handling the filling, capping and labelling of the 12oz bottles. This must have represented a massive investment in the brewery when compared to the cost of the brewing equipment and I can only assume that it is viable because most of production goes to bottle rather than cask. I was unable to verify this as the nearest breweries to where I was staying

were not open when I tried to visit.

Maine is a great State to visit and, if I had been able to, I would have spent time seeking out more cask ales before flying back from Boston. I can recommend Sheepscot Valley Brewing's Pemaquid Scottish Ale with a fresh Maine lobster which I had from a restaurant/pub which (on top of 3 draught micro ales) sold the entire range of Samuel Smith's bottled beers imported from Yorkshire!

That English influence again? GNH Inverness

### **Greetings from Snowdonia**

I was in Inverness last week and picked up a copy of your excellent Newsletter. Simple question, how do you manage to survey pubs over such a huge area? Here in the South Gwynedd Sub Branch (part of Eryri a Môn Branch) we struggle, with just five active members, to even know what pubs we have on our patch - which covers everywhere in Gwynedd except the northern coastal strip. We suspect that there are some gems of pubs waiting to be found, but don't have the time or resources to search!



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Excellent beer up your way, you are well blessed with micros. We are lucky with the Purple Moose Brewery in Porthmadog (I am BLO) - superb beer, including Gold Medal for Best Bitter at the GBBF.

I visited three pubs in Inverness, the first (where I picked up WYT?) was in the same street as the Railway Station, but I forget its name - a real pub with trough below the bar - excellent. Then Wetherspoons, I walked out in disgust at the "Display pump clip, but no beer" attitude. Also went to the Castle - very good.

My business was "Up North" at John O'Groats (I am part time safety adviser to a Company up that way - plus other things); in the Groats Bar there is some bottle-conditioned ale.

Stayed at the Weigh Inn in Thurso - no ale.

Keep up the good work! Best wishes, RL.

### Observations

Some observations gleaned from a trip to your area last weekend:

1. Enjoyable visit to Cairngorm Brewery; good to see it going from strength to strength.

2. Lunch at Alexander Bain's, Wick. A fine example of JDW's virtues BUT of the three cask beers being served none was less than 5.0% ABV (Wildcat, Abbot, and a 5.2% from Titanic?). As I was driving, and as it was lunchtime, I drank lemon and ginger tea!!

3. As advised by Cairngorm I checked out the Dunroamin at Bonar Bridge, which was indeed offering Cairngorm Trade Winds.

BUT (a) it was cloudy - "it's often like that" I was told, and (b) it was served ice-cold "that's the cellar temperature" and, of course, (c) it was undrinkable. Such treatment of a flagship real ale can only damage the reputation of both the brewery and CAMRA.

4. In stark contrast I was warmly welcomed, at the Cairn Hotel in Carrbridge, by a knowledgeable barman who served Scapa Special, easily rated 4, as well as Cairngorm Trade Winds in perfect condition.

Generally, there really has been a dramatic improvement in real ale availability in the Highlands but much missionary work remains, particularly in Sutherland.

I last visited Scourie a few years ago but was

## *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



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then not greatly impressed; and friends have travelled further than me to reach Melvich only to find no real ale available. What will appear in the 2008 Guide?

6. A personal favourite is the Crask Inn (north of Lairg towards Tongue) where the full range of Black Isle bottles is always available; last weekend a cask of Red Kite had just been finished but that is a rare phenomenon. I think the very splendid owners could be encouraged in that direction though some educating on temperature control, etc. would be necessary at this specially welcoming inn.

7. Finally, congratulations on your Newsletter which I'll continue to enjoy online.

IW (address not provided).

*We think IW might enjoy a return to Scourie; under the tenure of Patrick and Judy Price the Scourie Hotel is now considered a premier sporting hostelry. The menu features fresh local produce such as salmon, venison and seafoods, and GBG quality real ales are served. Only TV addicts might be disappointed! Ed.*





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**Beer of Festival, Aberdeen, Grianian and Northern Isles Camra festival 2004**

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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% ABV**

**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% ABV**

**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  
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**Champion Winter Beer of Scotland 2006**

**New seaforth ale 4.2% ABV**

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

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### **Do They Mean Us?**

On a recent railway tour of your region I came across a couple of real ale places which I cannot yet find on your useful website.

The first is the Duisdale House Hotel at Isle Ornsay on the Isle of Skye and the second is the 'Jacobite' Steam Train which runs daily between Fort William and Mallaig.

I've scored the beers at these two places on the NBSS website so I expect you or your colleagues will have already seen them. There are also one or two where no real ale was available - e.g. Lochalsh Hotel; Steam, Mallaig. Finally I found your newsletter most useful and I have sent the following bit of news to my local CAMRA Branch in England, for inclusion in their next newsletter:

**WHERE AM I?** This CAMRA Branch has a long coast line and its pubs are spread across more than one county. It has many pubs high in the hills, a steam railway serving real ale on handpump and is allocated 33 entries in the GBG. Its newsletter has three words in the title and comes out quarterly. The Spring 2007

issue lists all 167 real ale pubs plus a few more just into neighbouring branches.

On a recent rail tour of this region it was two days before I found any real ale. Then *eureka* here was a copy of **What's Yours Then?** and my trip to Scotland was back on track.

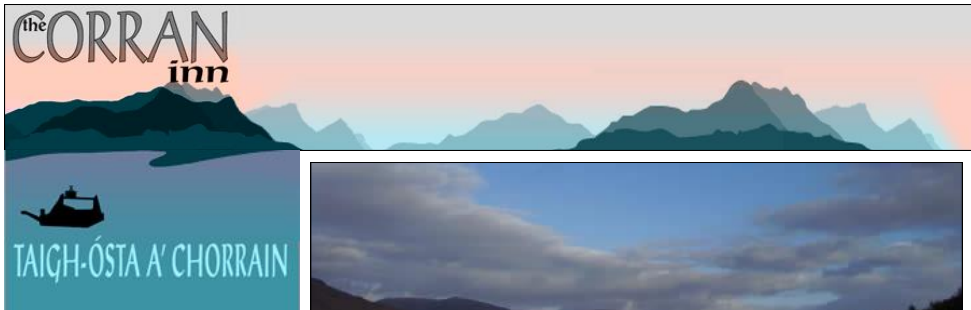
Particularly good pints in the Highlands and Western Isles were found at:

**Bosville Hotel**, Portree, Isle of Skye where Cuillin Brewery's Pinnacle was one of two beers on handpump,

**Jacobite Steam Train** from Mallaig to Fort William where the buffet car was dispensing Glenfinnan Standard Ale on handpump and

**The Bothy** by canal locks at Fort Augustus had Hebridean Gold from Isle of Skye and Deuchars IPA. All the best, JS.

*Thanks for the report, and for letting us know about real ale on the Jacobite Steam Train. We had added Duisdale Hotel to our real ale pubs lists, having been advised by Isle of Skye Brewery. It would be helpful if all breweries kept us informed of new real ale outlets, so that we can let everyone know! Ed.*



## Welcome to the Corran Inn

Sitting on the shores of Loch Linnhe, beside the Corran ferry, the Corran Inn is just 10 minutes from Fort William and Ben Nevis and 10 minutes from Glencoe. With 5 comfortable rooms, a traditional bar and relaxing coal fires, the Inn provides the ideal base to explore this beautiful part of the Scottish Highlands. Whether you're walking, climbing, touring by car or just sitting with your feet up watching the world float by on the loch, The Corran Inn will give you a friendly welcome and make you feel at home.

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We believe in giving our guests what they want! So, we serve full cooked breakfasts from 7am every day. In fact, we serve good food all day, every day until 9:30 in the evening. We also stock an excellent range of real ales and have almost 50 single malt whiskies to help you relax after your meal!

For Hill walkers and climbers, if you let us know in advance, we'll serve cooked breakfasts as early as you like (We've done it at 4am for climbers heading for Tower Ridge on Ben Nevis) and will serve you an evening meal up until 11pm. We'll look after your kit as well! We have a drying and laundry room available to get your gear dry for the next day.

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## NOTES FROM A WET SCOTTISH JAUNT WITH FAMILY IN TOW

### **ACHILTIBUIE - Summer Isles Bar**

The Summer Isles Hotel in Achiltibuie has a well-earned reputation as one of Britain's best boutique hotels. In an impossibly remote setting, on the Atlantic coast of northwest Scotland, opposite the Summer Isles, the hotel has been offering excellent pampering and exquisite cuisine for long enough to make it a virtually permanent entry in the Good Food Guide and many others.

Its bar was revamped only fairly recently. Although in the same building as the hotel it has an entirely separate entrance and runs quite separately, though under the same light-touch, finely judged management as the main business.

The stylishly simple bar area has a darker inner area mainly for drinking and an outer area mainly for eating, plus a small terrace and, across the lane, a larger garden area.

The food is superb, ranging from massive sandwiches, often on home-baked bread, via vegetarian pancakes and great plates of seafood to full meals featuring Aberdeen Angus steaks, locally sourced lamb chops and baked fish. Desserts run the same length from simplicity to great sumptuous piles of delicious fattening goo.

Deuchars IPA (H)

Isle of Skye Hebridean Gold (H)

Isle of Skye Red Cuillin (H)

Recommended for Good Pub Food Guide, any local guides and potentially GBG. Logic says they must use a cask breather though I could not taste it in any of the beers I tried.

### **APPLECROSS - Applecross Inn**

The Applecross Inn already features in the GBG. It should also feature in the Good Pub Food Guide and Beer Bed & Breakfast. The former is because of the excellence of the chef's specials - both Scottish fillet and Applecross peninsular venison, and the excellent seafood, plus the actually rather excellent if downmarket haddock and chips - the latter because of spruce, clean, OK small, but comfortable rooms. The gag here is that Applecross really is a very long way from any-

where. The pretty route from the North is 24 miles across rough terrain, mainly on single track road with passing places and fab views of Raasay and Skye.

The quick route is a mere 12 miles off the "A" 896 single track main road, over the steepest highest access road in mainland Britain. You cannot get any more isolated than this, though Applecross is a community, not an outcrop of rock with a pub. The inn has been under the same ownership for nearly twenty years and as well as **two real ales (usually from Isle of Skye)**, an excellent menu of fresh locally sourced produce and a real local-pub-for-all-comers atmosphere there are wee extras like a decent wine list, several good bottled beers and some ancient single malts to die for. Good walking and a couple of great headlands and a pretty decent bay too.

**FORTROSE - Anderson Inn** - You're so lucky. Could not fault a single component - beers, cider, food, rooms, whiskies, welcome and ambience all brilliant. OK, the scrambled eggs at breakfast had too much milk in.

*Tim Webb, Good Beer Guide to Belgium.*

Tim Webb has been compiling Beer Guides to Belgium since 1992, including one written



entirely in Dutch. The latest edition, published in October 2006, gives details of all 120 breweries, over 800 beers, and more than 500 specialist beer cafés.

Just in case you think that sells you short, it tells you all the ways to get to Belgium,

how to get around and gives tips on where to stay and what to look out for on the menu.

For the first time all the regular beer festivals are also listed, plus all the beer-related tourist attractions, which breweries allow you to visit, and where you can buy beer to take home. The section on Belgian beer in the UK is also expanded to include nearly fifty top outlets.

If you find an undiscovered gem with a good beer list that you think fits the Guide's criteria, let Tim know on [BelgiumGBG@aol.com](mailto:BelgiumGBG@aol.com), and you may earn yourself a free copy.

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## Inns & Things

• Hi, I'm just back from Assynt where I've learnt that the landlord from the Castle Hotel in Portmahomack has moved to the Altnacealgach Motel near Ledmore Junction. I'm afraid I didn't catch his name. The good news is that he has a chilled cellar with Caledonian 80/- and Deuchars IPA permanently on handpump, and with ambitions for a third (and possibly local) brew. I'd give both a "3". A welcome outlet in a remote, but surely most stunning location. If anyone is passing that way, could they drop off some branch newsletters and chivvy him into becoming a member. The bad news is that the Castle may need reviewing. JH

• Hi, Please publish this letter, to name check the Bandstand bar at the Braeval Hotel in Nairn. Gordon Holding, the proprietor, is in a small way attempting to create an oasis for real ale drinkers in Nairn (a small bunch admittedly). He has recently upped his taps from 2 to 3 to cope with the seasonal demand. It remains to be seen how the winter season goes. His house ale is Cairngorm Trade Winds (not tried - I cannot stand it).

He has recently had on:-

Cairngorm Nessies (Monster Mash) - no better than a 2

Greene King Old Speckled Hen - 3

Arran Ale - 4 (the best tried so far)

Timothy Taylor Landlord - 3 & 4 on different occasions

Marstons Pedigree - 2 & 3 on different occasions

Fullers London Pride - 3 & 4 on different occasions.

He is trying to source different ales from his supplier, and we look forward to trying other Scottish/English ales in the near future. Let us hope he is successful, and that the Nairn drinkers support him. Cheers, DM

*Here, here! Ed.*



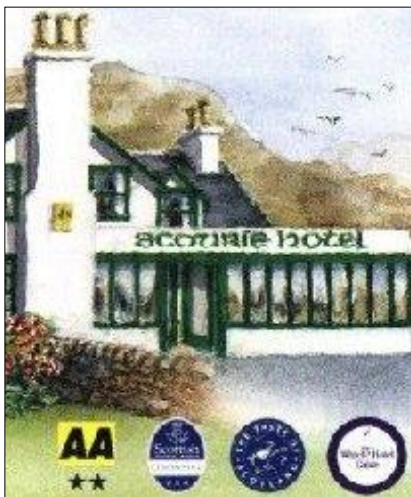
- What is now known as Saucy Mary's used to be the Kyleakin Hotel and is beside the old Trident Hotel, now the Youth Hostel.

Saucy Mary is indeed a historical character. Legend has it that she was a Norse Princess who stretched a chain across the narrow Kyle between Kyleakin and Kyle of Lochalsh, and charged a toll to every ship that passed by. So she was a forerunner to the Skye Bridge Company in the extortion stakes! Slainte, AM.

- Hi, Went to the Boat Hotel, Boat of Garten last night (28/07/07) to be told it was in new ownership, and that real ale was no longer being served. PM (CAMRA Member).
- On a recent tour of Scotland (end May), we made our last night's stay at the Invergarry Hotel. Though a great hotel it was a massive disappointment not to find the advertised real ale, but only a range of chilled undrinkables. The explanation was that there was not enough demand at certain times - 'so tough'. They still managed dishes with real ale as ingredient but could not even offer a bottle. I am sure they offer real ale at festival times,

but members need to check before staying here or TYO. Regards MH, Cheshire.

- Dear sir, I had the pleasure to visit the Applecross Inn and found it a most wonderful pub. I was with a coach load and was treated like a regular at my local. Please give it a mention in your local newsletter. PB, Oxford.
- From 5th October the Melvich Hotel will be under new ownership and will not be selling real ale as far as we know. Peter Martin is taking his Far North Brewery plant with him and hopes to start brewing again soon.
- The Ben Nevis Inn at Achintee, at the foot of the so-called "tourist route" up Ben Nevis, is going from strength to strength. They are selling around two casks per day, and are thinking of putting in another handpump.
- Welcome to Craig and Lisa McMath, new owners at Sconser Lodge, who are continuing to sell Isle of Skye Brewery real ales.
- Aviemore's Winking Owl has re-opened and real ales are reported to be on tap.



## Scourie Hotel

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### News of Brews

• We have heard little about our two newest local breweries - Glenfinnan and Plockton - other than that Glenfinnan Ales are served on draught in the local Glenfinnan House Hotel and Jacobite Train; Plockton Ales are on tap at both Plockton Inn and Hotel. A quick look at their websites reveals that construction of the Glenfinnan Brewery site seems to have stalled in May, while the Plockton Brewery site is showing the following message -

"The best laid plans o' mice and men gan aft  
The best laid plans aglae."

I just haven't had time to update the site properly. However, Craggs Ale is now available in the Plockton Inn and Plockton Hotel.

I will endeavour to work on the web-site when I have some time left over from producing ale!

Andy Will, [andy@theplocktonbrewery.com](mailto:andy@theplocktonbrewery.com)"

• After seven years at the Cairngorm Brewery Sales Manager Merlin Sandach has taken up the position of Operations Manager at Sinclair Breweries where, among other tasks, he will

be involved in the development of the new visitor centre in Orkney. All at the Branch wish Merlin every success in his new role.

• A selection of local ales, varied in strength and character – the refreshingly fruity Beinn Dearg (3.8% ABV, An Teallach); dark ruby Three Sisters (4.2, Atlas); pale, easy drinking Scapa Special (4.2, Highland Brewing Co); light golden Trade Winds (4.3, Cairngorm); and the strong flavoured Black Cuillin (4.5, Isle of Skye) – was enjoyed by visitors to the **Marymas Medieval Fair** in August.

For a third year the weather gods were not on our side, but our gazebo provided a welcome area in which to relax away from the steady drizzle. As usual, Barbara Tring kept the beers flowing, ably assisted by Chairman Bill, Secretary Eric, Allan and Gareth.

**Scapa Special** was declared our Beer of the Festival, based on the cask selling out first.

Thanks to Mike Coulburn and his Highland Council staff for having the stall ready, and for providing other necessary facilities on the day.



# *Blackfriars Highland Pub Great Beer*

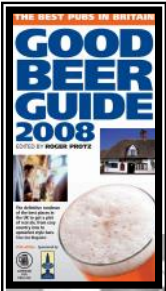


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Highlands & Western Isles Branch

**Branch Matters**

As Autumn approaches it is time once more to reflect on the real ale matters in the Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA Branch. All looks to be going well, with a record number of real ale outlets which, reports lead us to believe, are mostly serving brews in good or very good condition. Our membership is at an all time high, and trips to breweries, festivals and real ale hosteleries are better attended than ever. Our local **Tasting Panel** is very active, with regular monthly meetings (reports are on our website). Time to celebrate, we think, but why not come along to our **AGM** in November and let us know what you think.

The **Aberdeen Beer Festival**, organised by the neighbouring Grampian & Northern Isles Branch of CAMRA, has been held at council owned McClymont Halls for ten years or more and a date had been fixed for the event this year. With no warning the council gave all users of the halls a mere three months notice

to find alternative premises.

A frantic search ended with Pittodrie Stadium being booked for the 2007 festival. Dates had to be changed, to fit with the Premiership fixture list, and the new dates are Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November.

A flagship **Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA Beer Festival** has been suggested: when and where would we hold it? At what time of year would it fit in with the local real ale calendar? Some food for thought. It could only happen with your help. Let us know what you think..

**Womble Report** - We have followed this up and can confirm that neither the Isle of Skye nor Cuillin brewery has any link with Peter Martin's Far North Brewery. Ales from Isle of Skye or Hebridean breweries, on offer at the Melvich Hotel, would have been bottled beers.

**An apology** to Iain Loe, CAMRA Research and Information Manager, for managing to spell both his Christian name and his surname incorrectly in our Summer edition!

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

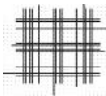




The and restaurant  
**GLEN** Hotel

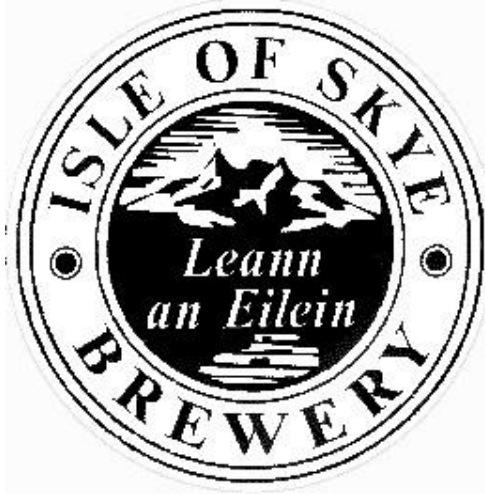


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