

What's Yours Then?

Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA

Free Newsletter



Contains Full List of Highlands & Western Isles Real Ale Outlets

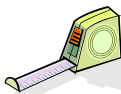


Real Ale under Real Pressure



How accessible
is your pub?

Do you
measure up?



Summer 2008

**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

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

- > Socials & Outings - Reports
- > Updated Branch Diary
- > Focus on - John Aird
- > Beer Festival News
- > Your Letters and Pub Reports
- > Tasting Panel Update
- > 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 Bill, Eric, Gareth, and Caroline, 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.

Autumn edition **deadline** is 1st September, with publication in time for Autumn visitors.

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.

3,500+ 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.

Real Ale under Real Pressure

We were both shocked and saddened by the news that the award-winning Arran Brewery Company has called in the administrators after running into cashflow problems.

In early May Graham Martin & Laurie Manson of PricewaterhouseCoopers were appointed as joint administrators.

The past year has seen a doubling in the cost of malted barley and a five-fold increase in some varieties of hops. The massive increase in fuel costs has added to brewers' costs as they impact both on the import costs of raw materials and the export costs of casks and bottles, as well as their energy costs.

There are over forty microbreweries operating in Scotland and the worry is that others could suffer the same fate in the current commercial climate. We understand that there has been talk in the trade over the last year that there would have to be a shakedown of the number of breweries that can operate profitably.

A False Dawn? More on page 25.



Do You Measure Up?

A letter from a wheelchair user has drawn our attention to the difficulties experienced: a) in even gaining access to some pubs, and b) most pubs do not have toilet facilities, even many newly refurbished pubs supposed to have installed them by law.

In his letter (page 12) SM of Oxford, but soon to be Nairn, expressed an interest in becoming an active CAMRA member. Welcome to the Highlands & Western Isles, and many thanks for supplying pub detail which has enabled us to publish information on our website.

We do however recognise that each person's ability to access a particular environment will depend upon a number of additional personal factors known only to that individual, and therefore inclusion on our website does not imply 'access for all', nor 'compliance' with the Disability Discrimination Act or other legislation.

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Cairngorm Brewery and the Hostelries of Strathspey & Badenoch

At 10 am on a cool Saturday morning our jolly party of CAMRA members and real ale fanciers clambered onto the coach for our outing to the Cairngorm Brewery; followed by visits to the various hostelries in the Strathspey and Badenoch district. It was not an auspicious start. Our driver stalled the coach in the middle of Inverness town centre! Still, after a bit of ribbing from those at the back of the coach he restarted and we were off.

First stop on the agenda was the Cairngorm Brewery where we were greeted by Head Brewer Sean Tomlinson and members of his team in their new brewery shop.

Awaiting us on handpump were Tradewinds, a favourite with many real ale drinkers, and Howler, one of the many seasonal beers brewed by Cairngorm. At 4.2%, Howler is a malty reddish brown ale, with a roast malt flavour and a fruity hop finish. Only whole hops and not pellets are used in this brew. Also on offer were bottled samples from the Cairngorm range.



Taking refills, Sean (pictured) kindly took us on a tour of the brewery. He gave an informative talk on brewing beer which resulted in a few giggles about alcoholic cattle and bags of ginger from Tesco. Lots of questions were asked and we were able to see for ourselves the various stages of the different brews currently being produced. On our return to the shop we were treated to delicious hot bacon rolls. John said there was a notable upturn in visitors coming to the shop. Some B&B's were putting bottles of Tradewinds and other Cairngorm beers into the guest rooms (lucky guests!), and leaflets giving information on the brewery. Our Chairman Eric presented Sean with a well deserved certificate for their delicious 4.4 % ABV Black Gold taking Bronze in our Highlands & Western Isles Beer-of-the-Year vote.

Dalfaber Country Club: Now this was a new one on me as country clubs or any sports oriented facilities are not usually known for serving real ale. However there was Tradewinds (4) on tap and in excellent order. The Club is a great place for the family and is a potential future entry for the

Good Beer Guide. Operations Manager Paul Brown said he sells 16 casks of Tradewinds per month and had just been 'cleaned out' of the Cairngorm Wildcat. Tradewinds is a permanent fixture, with one other Cairngorm brew on as a guest beer.

Next stop was in centre of Aviemore, where the party split: most went to the newly refurbished Winking Owl where they enjoyed Sheepshaggers and Stag (two Cairngorm ales). Both were given a score of 4 by the majority. The rest of our party went to the Cairngorm Hotel where we found Stag 4.1% on as usual (Score 3,4). Our last stop in Aviemore was at the Old Bridge Inn: Caledonian 80/- 4.1%, Deuchars IPA 3.8% (4) and Cairngorm Wildcat 5.1%.

The sun started to shine, everyone started to mellow and the chatter on the bus became more convivial. We were off to the Suie Hotel. On offer were Cairngorm Stag (4) and Tradewinds (5). I remembered this pub, although it was a couple of years ago since I had been. (On Grand National Day in fact and I lost my shirt on a no-hoper!). The beer now, as then, was superb. The roaring fire, the snow capped mountains and quality ales just rounded off the superb setting of this bar. This pub richly deserves top ratings. Landlord Mike Welding then supplied us with some tasty hors d'oeuvres.

Next to Kingussie and the Topsy Laird: Cairngorm Sheepshaggers (3) and Wildcat (3). The beers were a bit cloudy but drinkable. This establishment is not the sort of place you would think of as selling real ale, but pleased we were that it does. A special mention to Gail whose jovial banter with one of the party kept us amused. At the Silver Fjord pub we found Leann Buarach (3), a house ale from the Isle of Skye Brewery, as well as Tradewinds and Wildcat.

We found a very good selection at the Glen Hotel in Newtonmore:

(Continued on page 10)

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ATLAS
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Branch Diary (Meetings start at 7.30 pm)

Tue 29th July Tasting Panel Meet Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge
Tue 5th Aug Branch Meeting The Glen, Newtonmore

Marymas Mediaeval Fair - Sat 9th August at the Northern Meeting Park in Inverness from 11am to 5pm - A traditional festival which was held every year from 1590 until 1850 on the feast day of Mary (August 15), and was then revived in 1986. The fair begins with a horse and carriage procession the city centre, with participants dressed in medieval style costumes. Later the Marymas Queen is crowned in the presence of her four ladies-in-waiting. There will be over 50 trade and voluntary sideshows, delicatessen, tea tent, BBQ, entertainment, plus a number of performers and many other events.

Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA will be running a **Real Ale Bar**, which will offer Isle of Skye Brewery Hebridean Gold, your Highlands & Western Isles Beers-of-the-Year, plus another three or four brews from local Highlands & Islands breweries. We always offer a mix of beer styles and strengths, and we try to choose ales which are not regularly on offer in Inverness.

Tues 26th Aug Tasting Panel Meet Havelock House Hotel, Nairn
Tues 2nd Sept Committee Meeting Old Bridge Inn, Aviemore

Sat 13th Sept  Social/Outing to Isle of Skye Brewery,
and Skye & Lochalsh Real Ale Hostelrys
(Depart Inverness Town House at 09:00 am)

19th - 27th Sept * 7th Loch Ness Beer Festival Benleva Hotel

Sat 20th Sept Hill Walk, Social, and Beer Festival Tasting Benleva Hotel

Up Hill And Down Ale! The annual Loch Ness Beer Festival, held at the Benleva Hotel in Drumadrochit, is not to be missed. We regularly meet for a Branch social on the first Saturday of the festival, and in recent years we have made it a full day out. In 2006 we walked from Inverness, along the Great Glen Way, and enjoyed glorious weather on the trail. In 2007 we boarded an early morning bus to Invermoriston, and walked more of the Great Glen Way, dodging 150 or more cyclists heading in the opposite direction on the Three Glens Challenge!

This year we plan to work up a festival thirst by tackling Meall Fuar-mhonaid, a 699 metre hill with spectacular views over Loch Ness, but we may not necessarily start from sea level! Why not join the local Beer Festival Walking Club for 'Up Hill and Down Ale'.

For further details, please contact us nearer the time.

End Sept (TBC) * 5th Inverness Beer Festival Castle Tavern/Clachnaharry Inn

* 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

Contact

Gareth Hardman (Secretary & Branch Contact) - 01463 238462

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contact@highlandcamra.org.uk or secretary@highlandcamra.org.uk



Eric Mills - Phone No. pending
chair@highlandcamra.org.uk

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Walking the West Highland Way

Hello, here is my, somewhat belated, report from my trek up the West Highland Way. I have included all of the hostelries we stopped at, just in case any of your members want to take it on.

Sunday 6th April - Stayed in Milngavie, Glasgow. The GBG Listed Talbot Arms was good. Caledonian 80 (-), Deuchars IPA, and a slightly too cold Sharp's Doom Bar (What's that doing here?).

Monday 7th April - Lunch stop at the Ptarmigan Bar at the Winnock Hotel (GBG Listed): Deuchars IPA on good form. Oak Tree Inn at Balmaha: they only had Greene King IPA on handpull but it was excellent.

Tuesday 8th April - Beinglas Farm House at Inverarnan. No real ale. Not much else, either.

Wednesday 9th April - Bridge of Orchy Hotel (GBG Listed): Caledonian 80 and Deuchars IPA, both on excellent form. Arrived just too late for the Harviestoun Bitter & Twisted.

Thursday 10th April - Lunch at the Kingshouse, Glencoe: Atlas Latitude and Nimbus both

available on handpull. Nimbus was excellent. Evening at the Tailrace in Kinlochleven. Sad to report that where there were 2 handpulls there is now only one. Atlas 3 Sisters available. Not bad but a bit too liquorice for me. Friday 11th April - Grog & Gruel, Fort William. Lots of choice from seven occupied handpulls, but mostly mundane stuff. Caledonian 80 on good form.

Sadly we didn't get to the Ben Nevis Inn or the Nevisport, but there is always next time!! I hope you can use some or all of the content of our 'little ramble'

All the best. Eddie Povey, Solihull CAMRA.

Eddie wrote to us before his trip, and had invited us to join him in Kinlochleven for a pint or two. Sadly none of our committee, who are mostly based on the east coast, was able to join him but we were able to advise on real ale hostelries in our area. Great to see that Eddie found ale in good nick on his trek, many thanks for the report, and hopefully he and his son-in-law were successful in raising funds for Cancer Research UK. Ed.

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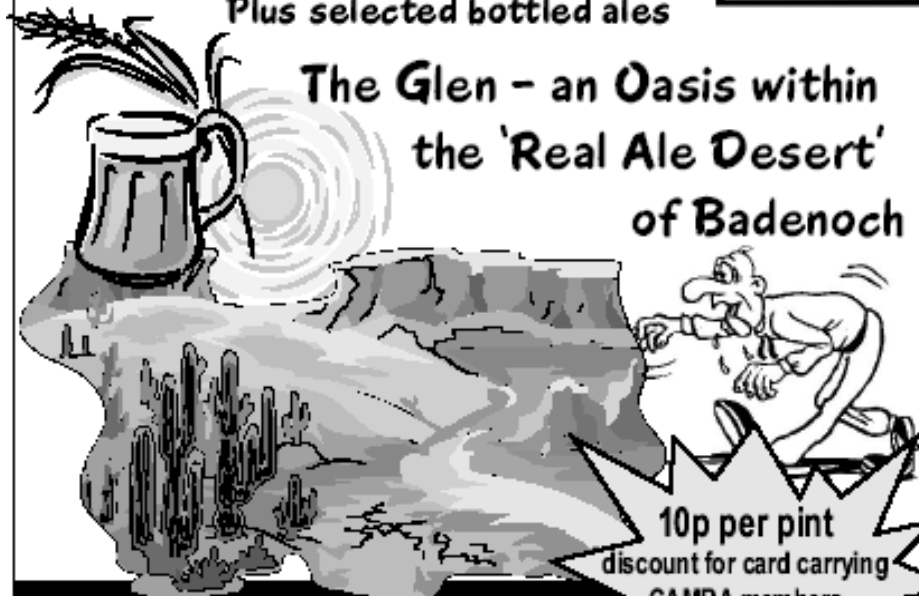
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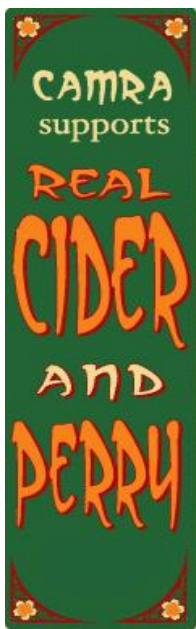


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Traditional Cider Matters

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 1st Quality Cider

Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit - Westons 1st Quality Cider

Scourie Hotel - Westons 1st 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

Dundonell Hotel - Westons Cider or Perry can usually be found here.

Badachro Inn - Westons Cider is served here

Altnacealgach Inn, nr Ledmore Junction - Mike & Kate are giving some thought to serving a real cider. Tel: 01854 666260

Argyll Hotel, Ullapool - New landlord Franner recently had 2 ciders on draught as part of their cider week! Tel: 01854 612422 or www.theargyllullapool.com

(Continued from page 4) Westons Old Rosie Cider 7.3%, Deuchars IPA (4), John Smiths Limited Edition 'Winners Tipple (cask) 4.2% (3, 4), and a seasonal 3.8% Caledonian Chocolate Drop (4) made with 100% organic choc-

olate and all pints less the usual CAMRA discount. Old Rosie (4) is on permanently. I love this cider. And its just as well I don't live nearer! The Caley Chocolate Drop had a wonderful hit of chocolate followed by a full on malty roast. Quite comforting, and a good session beer. Landlord Chris Goodhill was presented with the Aviemore & Cairngorms Pub-of-the-Year certificate (see picture), and we then settled down to some delicious bar meals on the house! Well done again, thanks for some great beers, and thanks for the very generous hospitality.

Our last port of call was at the Cairn Hotel in Carrbridge. Two real ales are regularly on tap here: on this visit Isle of Skye Red Cuillin 4.2% (3) and Black Isle Yellowhammer 3.9% (2). As usual, Landlord Andrew Kirk made us all very welcome, and provided us with some tasty fries to eat. Cheers Andrew!

Back onto the our coach where some took the opportunity to have five minutes shut eye on the journey back to Inverness. We had all enjoyed the day and, on behalf of all those present, I would like to say a big thank-you to all at the brewery and all the representatives of the various hostelries we visited.

Thanks also to our driver for always getting us all to our various destinations and returning us safely. Ta Chuck! CW.



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Hello and thanks!

Hi to all at the Highland branch.

Can I just say how much I appreciate your quarterly publication – absolutely invaluable in my many trips to the Highlands. I love my real ale and sometimes feel like a little boy in a toy shop as I enter a pub – eyes quickly searching for the pumps on the bar and to see what excitement is ahead! I am a regular festival goer and always seem to be drawn to the Scottish bar – having said that, I will never turn down a lovely pint of English either! Your guide now ensures that entering the pub will not be a disappointment. I have enjoyed my regular trips north so much that my wife and I have decided to move up permanently. So here's to the summer, and to our new life in Nairn and beyond – and hopefully becoming an active member in the local CAMRA branch.

The search for real ale establishments is getting easier – yet still too few and far between. My home will be in Nairn – which for far too long has been a desert for real ale. The one 'pub' that has been in the Beer Guide is not consistent with it's offering – and the fact that

it is a restaurant means it's not the most comfortable place to sit to enjoy a pint and read a paper. We can drive to Cawdor, east to Forres, south to Aviemore – or west to Inverness – but with all these options we're limited in our consumption.

Your magazine highlights The Bandstand and The Havelock House Hotel in Nairn town. These are two pubs trying to encourage real ale – and they both compliment each other by offering something different – local highland ales and National / Regional ones from Scotland and south of the border, whilst the Havelock concentrates on the lovely products from the Skye brewery. Over my three week stay in Nairn over Easter I was treated to Blaven (3), Young Pretender (2) and Red Cuillin (3) in the Havelock House. Most of my drinking was done in the Bandstand (the reason for this will become clear later). The top pint was Orkney Best (4) – truly a lovely pint. The Red Macgregor (3, moving to 2 toward the end of my stay) and 3 Sisters from Atlas (3) was mostly very quaffable, but the Timmy Taylor (2) was a bit tired. In general I think the Bandstand quality and choice of ale over all of my visits has been consistent and I wondered if you have considered it as an entrant in the Beer Guide for 2009?

I also enjoyed a lovely pint of Deuchars (3) in Nico's Bar in Inverness. Normally I travel much farther a field in the search for a good pint, but as this was my final holiday before the permanent move I wanted to sample the locality much more fully. That's not to say that come the summer I won't be travelling around the beautiful Highlands fulfilling my two passions – bird watching and real ale!

My love of real ale is tempered by two major concerns – one about the viability of selling real ale and the other a very personal one.

In every pub I visited in the Highlands I have very rarely witnessed other like minded drinkers purchasing the real ale on offer. All too often lagers and smooth flows are being chosen instead of the wonders and the choice on offer from the pumps. On the night when I revelled in the Orkney Best in The Bandstand a group of 15 men aged 25 – 45, on a visit



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to Nairn, all ordered lager and whatever smooth was on offer – with one of them laughing off the barmaids suggestion 'is that Orkney Best you ordered' when he meant Belhaven smooth! Now I know I can be a real ale snob and it's their loss at not experiencing the delights on offer – but how long can a pub continue to sell the real ale when so many customers seem to be ignoring it?

I read in 'What's Brewing' that sales of real ale are soaring – and that's great – but how much of this is reflected on the ground? Will the publican be able to maintain the quality and choice on offer if people just aren't buying it? Is there a danger (but I am not suggesting that the publicans will do this) that the quality will suffer as it sits around waiting to be sold – and then when first timers try it – it's too old and no good and puts them off for ever?

My second concern is a much more personal one. My love for visiting new pubs in the search for real ale is tempered by one aspect that is not a general concern to others. In fact I can guess that most publicans are fed up with it! Once in a pub my eyes search out the pumps – and once identified I then quickly seek out the toilet! That most basic of all human needs goes hand in hand with drinking! I am a permanent wheelchair user – a standard size, self propelled chair. I have now become brazen enough to enter a pub – search out the pumps, take a taste and leave without a purchase if the beer is not up to standard. But leaving because I can't use the loo even where the beer is good – is much more upsetting. Of course there are many pubs that I can't get in at all. I am yet to try the Clachnaharry Inn – that's where I'm heading on day one in the summer.

Now I know buildings are old and change can be restricted – but it's not rocket science!

I am also a wanderer across fields and the countryside, and I can accept being beaten by natural barriers such as ditches and hills as part of the ongoing consequences of my accident. But I am much more frustrated by man made barriers such as kissing gates and steps – due to the lack of imagination and willingness to be more accommodating to all potential customers. And thus truly disabling a

large section of the potential market from normal, pleasurable activity.

For instance - on questioning the bar staff about the lack of an accessible loo I am often confronted with 'it's an old building...' standard response. (This is normally the point at which I think to myself of just how far away the moon is, yet a man walked on it 40 years ago!!). Surely it is not beyond the wit of man to have two inch wider door to the toilet and a cubicle door that opens outwards – even in 'an old building'? Portable ramps are pretty useful too. The two regulars in Nairn are interesting cases. The Havelock has a couple of steps – which my wife manages to drag me and my chair up and down. There is a loo – but it's in the restaurant and I am not overly encouraged to use it when the restaurant is in use.

The Bandstand has relatively easy access which I can manage on my own and appears to have a very willing owner who plans to make the necessary changes to the loo. I'm trying to keep tabs to see if there is any progress. I have yet to talk to the owner of the Havelock – but the barriers seem very minimal – but then, still completely disabling when I'm on my own.

By the way - The George Inn in Ardersier (Black Cuillin 3) has a wonderful 'disabled' loo – but I couldn't use it as it was being used as a store cupboard and was completely packed with brooms, buckets and vacuum cleaners!

I don't want to be seen as a moaner, or as a single issue activist, I just wanted to illustrate to you my love and excitement about real ale and visiting good quality pubs (particularly in The Highlands), whilst I, like everyone else, need to use the loo and, with a bit of thought and will, this could so easily be achieved without any need to recourse to the law or great expense. (I've made it my ambition to find a pub that I can enter inconspicuously and use a loo – that serves real ale! Any ideas?)

I look forward to becoming neighbours in this most wonderful part of the world – and becoming an active member of the local branch of CAMRA, and hopefully joining you on some of your trips.

SM, Oxford – soon to be Nairn.

I'll drink to that. Cheers! Ed.



The Old Inn

Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BD

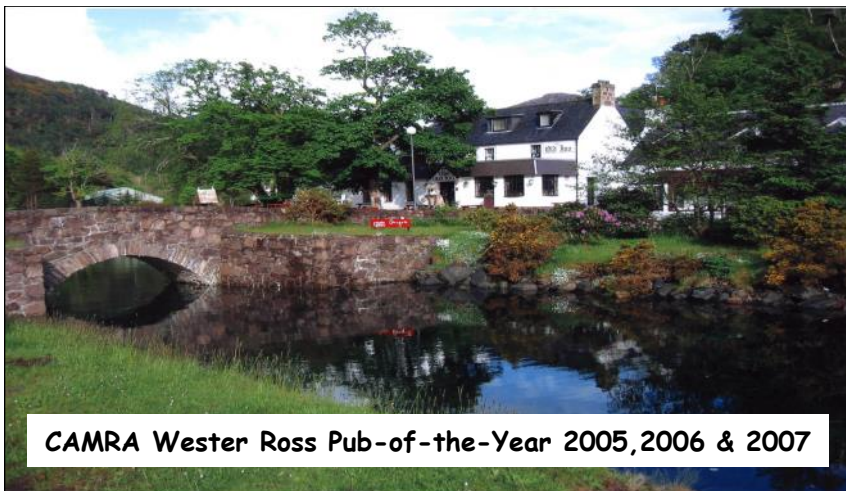
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Inverness & Highland CAMRA Country Pub-of-the-Year for 2004

Focus on John Aird

John is a retired Solicitor living in Inverness. In 1993 he helped form the Branch and was on the committee for 11 years. He is still very active and is a regular on our bus trips, he came to our annual Inverness Walkabout in December, and again joined us at the Aviemore Beer festival in March.



Q. Where were you born?

A. Closeburn, Nithsdale, Dumfries-shire.

Q. When and why did you move up to the Inverness area?

A. The call of the mountains. In 1953 a work position became available and I took it.

Q. When were you introduced to real ale?

A. During the 1970's. Before that, most beer was "real ale".

Q. What are your hobbies/interests?

A. Strathspey Railway (worked on track work 1976-2002), long distance walking, mountain walking, cross country ski-ing, scuba diving, orienteering, windsurfing, music and opera. Most were done a few years ago but I still have a big interest in them.

Q. What real ales/styles do you like?

A. There is no real ale I don't like! But unfortunately I do not have the same capacity as I had a few years ago. I like especially the Red and Black Cuillin beers from the Isle of Skye Brewery, and the Cairngorm beers, as well as Harviestoun's Bitter and Twisted.

Q. What type of pubs do you like?

A. Preferably those without television/musak/one armed bandits! I regard "sports bars" as an abomination. I also like a pub where you can get good food at reasonable prices.

Q. What changes in real ale have you seen over the years in Inverness?

A. There is much more choice than, say, 10 years ago. The problem is that too many pubs and hotels do not know how to look after it properly.

Q. How did you celebrate your 80th Birthday?

A. With a dinner at the Lochardil House Hotel on 22nd November 2003. Then on the 23rd I went for a snorkel in Loch Carron in Wester Ross (air temp 2C, water temp 6C)

Q. When and why did you join CAMRA?

A. About 1976. I was fed up with gassy bland beers such as Whitbread Tankard, and Watneys Red Barrel, not to mention McEwans Export.

Q. What is the best walk/climb you have done in the Highlands?

A. From Aviemore Station to the Lairig Ghru summit, then over tops of Braeriach, Angel's Peak, Cairntoul and The Devil's Point, and back to Aviemore station. 32 miles and approx. 5,500 feet of climbing. Nearly missed the last train back to Inverness. Of course this was when I was a lot younger and very fit, in July 1957.

Q. What did you think of the Alice Brewery?

A. The beer, if looked after, was excellent and the best outlet at the time was Dores Inn. There were numerous outlets in Inverness e.g. The Phoenix and Kingsmills Hotel. You could get it as far away as Newtonmore and Aviemore. The quality was very variable. Unfortunately it came too early in the "Real Ale revolution" and well before the Highland Branch of CAMRA came into existence.

John's knowledge of real ales past and present is second to none, and surpassed only by his ability to recall beers, breweries, places, and dates in such detail. Time spent in his company listening to his 'tales of ales' is always very pleasurable.

Cheers! Ed.





Blackfriars Highland Pub Great Beer

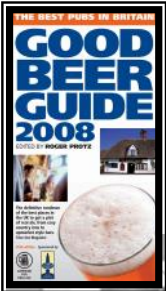


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Tasting Panel Matters

Our May tasting panel meeting was held at the Black Isle Brewery where we were welcomed by the new second brewer Craig Allan. After introductions those that had not been before were given a quick tour of the brewery and shop. The shop which is currently expanding and features some interesting malt whiskies, a range of unusual Belgium beers, Highland foods and, of course, the full range of Black Isle Brewery beers.

Onto the tasting and we were treated to Yellowhammer, a 3.9% amber coloured ale, straight from the conditioning tank. Slightly hazy with yeast, as was to be expected (because it was straight from the tank), although this took nothing away from the wonderful hoppy and citrus fruit flavours delivered by the ample use of Cascade hops. A great bitter taste which holds into the aftertaste makes this an excellent quaffing beer with lots of flavour for it's strength.

Sadly the Red Kite was not quite ready to be tried direct from the conditioning tank so it was on to the bottle-conditioned Wheat Beer at 5%. Not too much in the nose apart from the strong Belgium style yeast. This was also in the taste along with ample fruit and a touch of coriander and sharpness. A very refreshing wheat beer.

Last up was the bottle-conditioned 4.6% Porter. Packed full of malt and roast barley in the aroma with a touch of sulphur; with chocolate, coffee and blackcurrants coming through in the taste leading to a long lasting aftertaste of the roasts and malts. Plenty of value in this beer!

A very enjoyable tasting and maybe after getting a taste for the Belgium style of beer a few of our party could not resist the wares on sale, and purchased a few for trying another time. Our thanks to Craig and to the brewery for hosting an interesting session.

Craig, a biochemistry and brewing/ distilling graduate from Herriot Watt University, has also completed his Diploma in Vine Culture and Winemaking during a two year travelling sojourn in France. Most recently he has been a Fowler's Brewer at The Prestoungrange Gothenburg.

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, particularly if you think Good Beer Guide inclusion is merited. We make no claims as to the quality of the beer, and you should note that some of the pubs listed may only stock real ale on a seasonal **(S)** basis:



We have taken the liberty of listing some pubs which fall within adjoining Branch Areas - Glasgow & West of Scotland (G&WS), Aberdeen & Northern Isles (A&NI) - but which are not very far from our "border" and merit a visit.

Inverness & District North

Clachnaharry Inn, Inverness
Palace Hotel, Inverness
Old North Inn, Inchmore
Brockie's Lodge, Kiltarlity (S)
Benleva Hotel, Drumadrochit
Loch Ness Inn, Lewiston
Steading Bar & Restaurant, Kilmartin (TP)
North Kessock Hotel
Munlochy Hotel (TP)
The Anderson, Fortrose
Union Tavern, Fortrose
Plough Inn, Rosemarkie
Culbokie Inn
Cromarty Arms (TP)
Slaters Arms, Cannich (S)
Conon Bridge Hotel
Riverside Tavern, Conon Bridge
National Hotel, Dingwall
Ben Wyvis Hotel, Strathpeffer
Richmond Hotel, Strathpeffer
Inchbae Lodge Hotel, Garve
Star Inn, Tain (S)
Castle Hotel, Portmahomack
Edderton Inn, Edderton

Inverness & District South

Blackfriars, Inverness
The Caledonian, Inverness
Castle Tavern, Inverness
The Corner Grill, Inverness
Nico's Bar, Glen Mhor Hotel, Inverness
Heathmount Hotel, Inverness
Hootananny, Inverness
Johnny Foxes, Inverness (TP)
Kings Highway, Inverness (*Wetherspoons*)
Masonic Club, Inverness

TP - Served using top pressure

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Good Beer Guide 2005-2007



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 Phoenix Bar, Inverness
 Snowgoose, Inverness
 Tomatin Country Inn (S)
 Dores Inn
 Whitebridge Hotel, Loch Ness South
 Bothy, Fort Augustus
 Lock Inn, Fort Augustus
 Cawdor Tavern, Cawdor
 George Inn, Ardersier
 Bandstand Bar, Braeval Hotel, Nairn
 Classroom Bistro Bar, Nairn
 Claymore Hotel, Nairn
 Havelock House Hotel, Nairn
 Invernairne Hotel, Nairn (S)
 Seaforth Club, Nairn (Members only) (TP)
 Old Mill Inn, Brodie (A&NI)

Aviemore & Cairngorms

Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge
 Ben Mhor Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey
 Muckrach Lodge Hotel, Dulnain Bridge
 Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore
 Dalfaber Country Club, Aviemore
 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
 Typsy Laird, Kingussie
 Mash Tun, Charlestown of Aberlour (A&NI)
 Highlander Inn, Craigellachie (A&NI)
 Croft Inn, Glenlivet (A&NI)
 Glen Avon Hotel, Tomintoul (A&NI)

Fort William & Lochaber

Jacobite Steam Train (S)
 Grog & Gruel, Fort William
 Ben Nevis Bar, Fort William
 Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William
 Ben Nevis Inn, Fort William
 Nevisport Bar, Fort William
 West End Hotel, 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)

Stein Inn

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angus.teresa@steininn.co.uk**

Stronlossit Hotel, Roy Bridge
 Tomdoun Sporting Lodge
 Glenfinnan House Hotel
 Glenuig Hotel, Lochailort
 Café Rhu, Arisaig (S)
 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
 Laroch Bar, Ballachulish (G&WS)
 Clachaig Inn, Glencoe (G&WS)
 Kings House Hotel, Glencoe (G&WS)

Wester Ross

Aplecross 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 (S)
 Badachro Inn
 Glendale House, South Erradale (S)
 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

Caithness & Sutherland

Inchnadamph Hotel
 The Caberfeidh, Lochinver
 Scourie Hotel, Scourie

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



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

Altnacealgach Inn, nr Ledmore Junction
 Burghfield House Hotel, Dornoch
 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

South Skye & Lochalsh

Cluanie Inn
 Glenelg Inn
 Kintail Lodge Hotel
 Jac-o-bite Restaurant, Kintail
 Clachan Bar, Dornie
 Loch Duich Hotel, Dornie
 Balmacara Hotel
 Haven Hotel, Plockton
 Plockton Hotel, Plockton
 Plockton Inn, Plockton



Tingle Creek Hotel, Erbusaig
(by Kyle of Lochalsh)
 Kyle Hotel, Kyle of Lochalsh
 King Haakon Bar, Kyleakin
 Saucy Mary's Lodge, Kyleakin (S)
 Duisdale Hotel (S)
 Isle Ornsay Hotel
 Ardvasar Hotel
 Stables Restaurant, Armadale
 Broadford Hotel
 Claymore, Broadford
 Dunollie Hotel, Broadford
 Hebridean Hotel, Broadford
 Sconsar Lodge Hotel
 Sligachan Hotel (S)
 Old Inn, Carbost

North Skye & Hebrides

Isle of Raasay Hotel
 JJ's Bistro at Struan
 Dunvegan Hotel
 Stein Inn, Waternish
 Edinbane Hotel
 The Lodge at Edinbane
 Ferry Inn, Uig

Uig Hotel, Uig
 Pub at the Pier, Uig
 Flodigarry Hotel
 Duntulm Castle Hotel
 Greshornish Lodge
 Bosville Hotel, Portree
 Isles Inn, Portree
 Royal Hotel, Portree
 Lochmaddy Hotel, North Uist
 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)
 Borrodale Hotel, South Uist (S)
 Orasay Inn, South Uist (S)
 Clachan Bar, Stornoway
 Caladh Inn, Stornoway
 Carlton Tavern, Stornoway
 Formerly the Whalers Rest
 Harris Inn, Tarbert (S)



A total of 33 of the pubs listed here are in the *Good Beer Guide*. We are not allowed to indicate GBG entries, you will have to buy the guide for that, but there is a chance you may find some clues elsewhere in this newsletter.

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Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2008

* **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.

• **Isle of Arran Brewery** - Located close to Brodick Castle. Opened late March 2000. Ales include Blonde, Dark, and Sunset.

• Currently (June 2008) in administration and is being advertised for sale.

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 - Located in the old Swannay cheese factory at Birsay, on Orkney. Ales include Scapa Special, Orkney Blast, Dark Munro.

Oyster Brewery - First brews in early 2005. Originally on the Isle of Seil, moved to South Ballachullish in 2007. 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 1st 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 Arran & Islay Ales, while Islay Ales, Breweries Glasgow & similarly for Highlands & Islands pubs listed in the GBG, pubs in Orkney and Shetland are submitted by the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles Branch.

A map of Scotland with various regions highlighted in different shades of green and blue. The map shows the main island of Scotland and the surrounding islands of Orkney and Shetland. The highlighted areas correspond to the regions mentioned in the text: Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles, Arran, Islay, Glasgow & Highlands & Islands.

Real Ale under Real Pressure (continued from page 2)



A year or so ago everything in the real ale garden appeared rosy. Reports of a new decline in real ale were not supported by feedback from small brewers throughout the UK, and even in our own "Good Beer Guide 2008" editor Roger Protz wrote of a "new golden age for real ale". Sadly the 'new golden age' may turn out to be a False Dawn. The licensed trade and brewing industry are currently under unprecedented pressures from both the health lobby and from rising costs in raw materials, the like of which have not been experienced before. The March budget saw excise duty increased by the rough equivalent of 4p/pint on all beer, mainly as a result of the intense pressure the government has come under from the "health lobby" and those who see alcohol as the source of all public disorder. There is no doubt that alcohol abuse is a major contributor towards street violence and poor health, but to treat all alcohol as "bad" is surely to adopt a blunderbuss approach. Alcohol-abuse and violence do not stem from real ale drinkers, discerning consumers who have worked extremely hard to retain a uniquely British product in the marketplace in the face of continued opposition from the large brewers, but from those who misuse or binge-drink the types of alcohol which the government needs to target: "alco-pops", cheap multi-national and imported lagers, fortified wines, and strong ciders - products which are regularly the subject of irresponsible supermarket drinks promotions.

Cask ale is an environmentally-friendly product, mainly produced by local brewers, with fewer "food miles" than the multi-national brewers, and served in public houses and hotels which are at the heart of our communities. The overall effect of all the price increases will be fewer brewers, fewer pubs and hotels, and less choice to the consumer. Where the local brewers disappear their products will be replaced by those from further afield, most likely from larger, less environmentally-friendly brewers. Cask ale may disappear altogether from certain areas.

It is surely time to lobby intensively for cask ale to be treated differently for duty purposes. Reducing the amount of duty will aid in keeping costs down and enable small brewers, pubs and hotels to survive and so maintain the choice of quality ales available to the consumer. Progressive duty, which has helped smaller brewers, is not the answer here as it affects all beers the same. The case for Cask as a separate category must be made! We have taken this matter forward by making a submission to Scottish Branches and Scottish Campaigns as well as to our two national executive members. We very much hope that this issue will be picked up and that we can have some relief for our brewers, pubs, hotels and off-licenses.

Inverness & District South Pub-of-the-Year 2008



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Orkney Visit

Dear Ed, I visited Orkney at Easter and am pleased to report the following:

Brinkies Bar on MV Hamnavoe (90 minute ferry Scrabster to Stromness) has Caledonian 80/- and (Highland Brewing Co.) Dark Munro. The Dark Munro was superb. Easter Sunday - lunch in the Hamnavoe Lounge, first floor of the Stromness Hotel (CAMRA listed), was excellent value! The regular Sunday carvery is not to be missed. Enjoyed two pints of Rob Hill's Scapa which was on great form. (Rob Hill is the Highland Brewing Co. owner/brewer). The Ferry Inn (CAMRA listed), also in Stromness, was very busy with an "Old Firm" game on TV. Orkney Best, as ever, was a great pint. Food ticked all of the boxes too.

Whilst visiting Rousay I found Marion's Shop which was selling the full range of Shetland beers (£1.85/bottle) and most of Rob Hill's beers (£2.04) too. There were no Orkney Brewery beers on the shelf, but I was told they are normally stocked. The local 12 year old Highland Park single malt whisky was much cheaper than anywhere I have seen. If you are on the island Marion is well worth a visit for these near "duty free" prices.

I contacted Rob Hill some two weeks before our visit with a view to finding out more about the superb ales he has been brewing, and I have included a note of our dialogue. As a regular reader of WYT I have followed the general format of your "Focus On" column, with slight modifications, based on the Q & A with George MacLean in the Winter edition, in case you might wish to include it in a future edition. If you decide to use my script, please do contact Rob so that he may correct any inaccuracies. SU.

Focus on Rob Hill

Rob moved to Orkney with his wife, Michelle, and their family in 1995. He started brewing independently at Swannay in January 2006. Swannay lies at the North East tip of the Orkney Mainland and the brewery used to be a cheese making facility. We visited him at his brewery

on Friday 28 March, just after the Spring edition of WYT was published.

Q. How did your working life begin?

A. Originally I am from Glasgow and began my working career in the aerospace industry with Rolls Royce on the massive RB211 jet engines in Derby.

Q. When did you start your brewing career?

A. Crikey! That must have been in 1979 at Moorhouses Brewery

Q. Why Orkney?

A. Orkney offers a great quality of life as well as opportunities for my family. After living in the English Midlands the pace of life is to our liking. My 15 minute journey to work is sometimes slightly delayed by a farmer herding cows or sheep on the road. Here I am never caught up in traffic on the road which used to be a part of my everyday routine.

Q. What is the worst part of your job?

A. Travelling on mainland UK. Until recently I used to deliver my beer all over Scotland and England, and pick up ingredients on the way back. I seemed to spend all of my time on the road and not doing what I enjoy and do best: brewing. Fortunately I now freight my beer via a haulier, but I still have to drive all over Great Britain. The most recent trip was down to Kent, the thick end of a 2000 mile round trip, to meet suppliers.

Q. What is the best part of your job?

A. Living on Orkney.

Q. You have had many successes with your beers, all over the UK, most recently at SIBA where your Dark Munro picked up Bronze. Have you got any new beers for us on the cards?

A. Yes. I will be supporting CAMRA's Mild May campaign by launching Light Munro, which will be 3.0 - 3.2 ABV. Although generally stronger beers have been very successful in the past, I believe there is an increasing demand for less strong beers with more character; session beers if you like. Don't worry, I will still continue to brew Scapa Special, Dark Munro, Orkney Blast and my other beers that have been popular to date.

Q. Other than your own beers, which are your favourites?

A. Recently my wife got me some bottled Bombardier. Over the last 20 years it has always been 100% consistent. Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Marston's Pedigree also have to be up there as contenders.

Q. Do you remember your first pint?

A. Yes, my first pint was Draft Bass and cost 62p! It has remained consistent over the years.

Q. What are your plans for the brewery?

A. Expansion. At the moment I do all the brewery fetching and carrying, with no exception, other than a lady who does my books on a part-time basis for a couple of hours a week.

In the next few months I hope to be taking on an assistant to help me here at the brewery, and a sales manager. That will give me more time to do what I am good at, brewing beer and new brews. I have already got kit in place ready to expand and will soon get more kit from the old Randalls Brewery in Jersey. With more fermentation vessels and conditioning tanks I am hoping to considerably boost my production.



The site has great potential and in the not too distant future I hope to make the brewery a place to visit on Orkney. My plans include sectioning off the working brewery with glass panels, allowing visitors to "view the brewing process" from a sample cum tea room.

The site has so much potential and I am currently investigating building a home so that I can always be on site. The 10 mile drive here to check on a brew or crop the yeast can feel like a 100 mile round trip at busy times in the dark depths of winter. I am also toying with the idea of converting some of the redundant buildings into holiday lets.

Q. Do you get many people visiting the brewery?

A. I have enjoyed the occasional visitor but, unfortunately, I have not always physically been on Orkney, or I have been so busy, and so reluctantly have had to decline their visit.

Also the site is very much a building site, with holes in the floor, and so having the public calling is a bit of a Health & Safety nightmare for me. Hopefully over the next 12 months that situation will change and I will be able and pleased to accept visitors who can enjoy a beer at this wonderful location on Orkney.

A massive thank-you to SU for the comprehensive reports, for taking the time to arrange a meeting with Rob Hill and, finally, for such an great article. Ed.

Last Highland Stronghold? Hi, spent some time on the West Coast recently and it was refreshing (literally) to find real ales from local breweries, unlike in Inverness where beers from the various Greene King stables seem to be steadily taking over. We found An Teallach brews at Badachro Inn (Crofters Pale Ale), at the Millcroft in Gairloch (An Teallach Ale & Millcrofters, a house brew), and at Dundonnell Hotel (Kildonan). At Kinlochewe Hotel we enjoyed a range of ales (Hebridean Gold & Beinn Eithe, a house brew) from the Isle of Skye Brewery. We also found real ciders on tap at Badachro and Dundonnell, much appreciated by my good lady! ICT.



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Walkers and cyclists are welcomed, and cyclists following Sustrans NCN Route 7, which goes past our front door, can take advantage of secure dry storage provided for bikes.

A VISITING MEMBER'S THOUGHTS

Dear Secretary,

Please find attached a few thoughts I had while visiting the Highlands on business (for a month) recently.

It's a bit unstructured, but I hope that the pub scoring bit will be of some help; I've tried to follow the example of the Bristol and District chap who appeared in your Winter newsletter.

Please feel free to do as you wish with the attachment and its contents.

Sorry there are no pics.

I.S. Salisbury CAMRA Member

FROM OUR MAN IN SCOTLAND...

A month-long working visit to The Highlands gave me the opportunity to prove that Scotland isn't all about haggis and whisky (though these were very nice, of course). So, I made the most of what free time I had, put a lot of miles on the bicycle, drank some beer, met some great people and saw a few sights. I won't bore you with too much detail (apart from the bit at the end with loads of pubs in), so here are the highlights.

Best day out was the 79-mile cycle ride from Fort William to Fort George. In between the outstanding scenery I managed to visit all the pubs that were open as I got to them, one of which had the best beer of my month:

Orkney's Red MacGregor in the fantastic Benleva Hotel in Drumnadrochit (once I managed to find it). This trip also found the best pub food, in the Cawdor Tavern.

Most interesting – and frustrating – event was a visit to the Black Isle Brewery. Whilst there is no doubt that their beer is excellent (Heather Honey and Red Kite even managed to impress some of my lager-drinking colleagues), their catchline "Save the Planet, drink organic" doesn't stand up to scrutiny.

The co-director Mike Gladwin explained that some of his hops come from Eastern Europe, though he was hard to pin down as to exactly where (probably outside the Soil Association's area of influence), while others were flown in from New Zealand – organic, yes, but eco-friendly? Similarly, his malt is brought up from Wiltshire by road – again, not very planet-

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friendly. Finally, Mike pointedly remarked that he doesn't need to sell any beer in Britain to make a profit, as he gets so many orders from overseas.

So why the million-pound expansion, Mike? My most enjoyable session was in the quirky but thoroughly pleasant Anderson Hotel in Fortrose. A classical jukebox, some delicious European beers, first-class food, and a wonderful welcome from the superbly eccentric landlord made this a highly memorable experience. I even bumped into some CAMRA members from Aberdeen who were staying there for the weekend.

(For Highland CAMRA):

Following the lead in your superb quarterly newsletter, I have provided some feedback on all the pubs I visited, including those with no real ale. Numbers in brackets equate to the scoring system you used in the newsletter. Hope this helps.

Pubs Visited:



Avoch - Station Hotel - No real ale.

Cawdor Tavern - Atlas Tempest (4) plus one other ale. Excellent pub, best food of the trip.

Dores Inn - no real ale

Drumnadrochit - Benleva Hotel - Orkney Red MacGregor (5), Isle of Skye Young Pretender (4), plus 2 ales plus one cider. Best beer of the trip. Definitely gets my vote.

Fortrose - Anderson Hotel - Great Orme Orme's Bitter (4), La Chouffe (4), 4 more ales plus 2 European beers and one English cider on draft, 42 European bottled beers.

Fort Augustus:

The Bothy - Isle of Skye Young Pretender (1), plus one other ale. Not well kept at all. Hostile reception. Doesn't get my vote.

Lock Inn - Cil Chilmern Best Bitter (4), excellent beer, excellent pub. Yes to GBG.

Fortrose - Station Tavern - No real ale

Invermoriston - Glenmoriston Hotel - No real ale

Inverness -

Blackfriars - Harviestoun Ptarmigan (3), Highland Dark Munro (4). Five ales plus 1 cider and 2 RAIB. Food was simple and good value. Definite for GBG.

Castle Tavern - Hebridean Beserker (4), Skye Flora MacDonald (0) - landlady took it off as soon as I said it was off; it was a bad new barrel, Cairngorm Trade Winds (3), Renfrewshire Houston Texas. Four beers on. A must for GBG in future.

Clachnaharry Inn - Inveralmond Lia Fail (4) great pub. Must stay in GBG.

The Fluke - No real ale

The Gellions - No real ale.

Hootananny - Orkney Dark Isle (3), Black Isle Heather Honey (4) plus 1 other ale. Good live music. Must be candidate for GBG.

Johnny Foxes - Moorlands Old Speckled Hen (1), badly kept, only ale on. Not for GBG.

King's Highway (Wetherspoons) - Phoenix Navy (1), plus 4 ales. Doesn't get my vote for GBG as beer was not well kept and I had to ask twice to get a full pint.

The Moray - No real ale

Palace Hotel - Skye Brewery Red Coullin (2), took forever to get served and only one beer on. No to GBG.

The Phoenix - Black Isle Bitter (4), Excellent beer but only one on. Potential for GBG?

Royal British Legion - No real ale

Snow Goose - Timothy Taylor's Landlord (2), Caledonian Deuchars (1). Food was so dire I refused to pay for it. Does this pub deserve to be in GBG?

Waterside Hotel - No real ale.

Munloch Hotel - Hebridean Moo Coo Brew (2), only ale on.

Rosemarkie - The Plough - Cairngorm Tradewinds (3), only beer on, but nice pub.

International flavours again at JDW's

Five international cask beers were featured out of the 50 selected for the Wetherspoon's Spring beer festival. Two from Germany, one from Belgium and, more intriguingly, one from both Japan and the USA. Further research in the excellent tasting notes revealed that the Yo-Ho Tokyo, a 5% ABV porter style beer, was brewed by the Japanese head brewer at Marston's in Burton-on-Trent; whilst the 7% Stone California Double IPA was brewed by its head brewer at Shepherd Neame in Kent.

Having acquired a taste for the darker beers I was looking forward to trying out the





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Tokyo Black but my normal luck was going strong as I managed to miss it despite it being featured on two separate occasions. However the ten beers I did try on my four visits were all in very good condition, all scoring 3's and 4's on the CAMRA national beer scoring system.

I made use of the excellent one third pint glasses on offer where you could order three festival beers for the price of a pint, which was a very competitive £1.39.

Beers tried were Caledonian Chocolate Drop, Theakston Black Bull Bitter, Wadworth Horizon, Thwaites Wainwrights, Sharp's Eden Pure Ale, Shepherd Neame Early Bird, Wychwood Mad Hatter, White Horse Wayland Smithy, Marston's Pedigree Six and from Belgium Namslow Original Plum Beer. The ones that stood out for me were the Caley Chocolate Drop, a 3.8% almost mild type beer where the chocolate had not been overdone, allowing the traditional beer flavours to come through. The 4% plum beer was unbelievably sweet and tasted like plum juice with very little beer flavour - just about managed the 1/3 of a pint. The Wychwood Mad Hatter was a wonderfully quaffable hoppy and malty 4.2% ale and the Marston's Pedigree Six was a 6% version of the traditional Pedigree with it's distinctive Burton sulphurous aroma and malty almost spicy fruit taste.

One little moan - and why is there always one thing that seems to take the shine off JDW's? I went in on the Thursday, the one before the festival finished on the following Monday, to find no featured festival ales available and just one festival cider alongside the regular Abbot. Judging by the condition of the beers they were fairly rattling through them but you would have thought with some good cellar management festival ales could have been maintained throughout. That said I would not want to end on a negative note as I really enjoyed the range of ales and flavours, as well as the good condition they were all served in; so well done to all at the Kings Highway. GNH.

the loch ness

it's what's under the surface...



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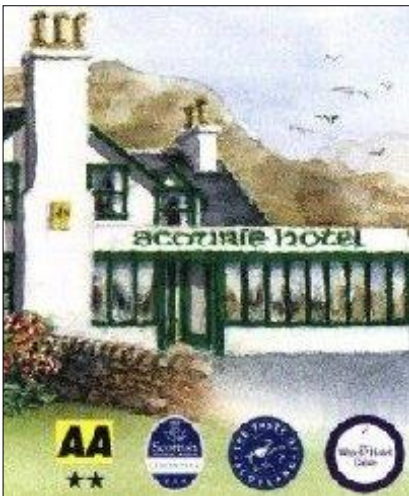
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Inns & Things

- A New Face at the **Clachnaharry Inn**:
We extend a warm welcome to Charlotte Boyle who has taken over the tenancy of the Clachnaharry Inn. Charlotte brings with her vast experience of the hospitality trade. Her parents were in the business and she has worked for some of the large hotel chains such as Trust House Forte, Stakis, and Hilton. More recently Charlotte ran the Argyll Hotel in Ullapool.
In taking over the Clach Charlotte has no plans to change the successful formula of value for money, good food, and real ales; and to hopefully continue with the annual beer festival. Her energies will be put into updating some of the behind the counter areas to make life a little easier for the hardworking and friendly staff, so that they can offer an even better service.
- Good morning. Regarding your list of real ale outlets on Lewis,
 1. The Whalers' Rest has now been sold and has reverted to its previous name, the

- Carlton Tavern, but they still sell Andy Ribbens' Hebridean Ale - lovely too;
2. Shawbost Inn is closed and up for sale;
 3. Ccorrect spelling is Caladh Inn, not Cladh;
 4. and An Lanntair has a reasonable range of beers, but not any cask ale, although it does sell Hebridean in bottle.
- Le durachdan. Stuart Rankin.

- **Ben Nevis Inn** - Tom Hadfield has taken over and has no plans to make any major changes. He has moved up from Manchester and thinks he is very lucky to get such a great pub in a great location. He will be continue to serve real ales, mainly from Sinclair Breweries.
- Sadly new owners at the **Crofters Café Bar** in Rosemarkie are not serving real ale.
- We hear from Lorraine Hook at the **Tongue Hotel** that they are currently selling a cask of Deuchars a week, but are unable to stock another ale due to space/sales constraints. Lorraine would also like to stock a range of Highlands & Islands bottled beers, especially



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if they go together with certain foods as she would like to match local beers with her local menu and also use some for cooking.

- **Big Band Sound at Blackfriars**

The first bank holiday weekend in May saw the Root Ma Toot Big Band play three consecutive nights at Blackfriars in Inverness.

I popped down on Saturday, the middle night, and the pub was jumping to the big band sound. In fact most of the pub joined the two guest singers when the band broke into "New York, New York" and to finish the evening, accompanied by the band, landlord Del Graham sang songs from his CD (available for a very reasonable £10 at the pub - do I get that free pint now?)

Great real ale & great entertainment - Well done Blackfriars! GNH.

- **The Loch Ness Inn**, formerly the Lewiston Arms, finally re-opened on 30th May after a massive refurbishment which followed many years of closure. The inn features a 70 seat restaurant, and the "Brewery Bar" is a direct reference to the building originally having been built in 1847 to house a local brewery.

- We had awaited the opening date with some concern, having scheduled a meeting there for the beginning of June, but happily we were able to enjoy the friendly welcome and sample Caley 80/- and Deuchars IPA.

The inn has a large temperature-controlled cellar which will no doubt be the envy of many publicans who struggle with small and less than ideal stillage space.

News of Brews

- Isle of Skye Brewery recently produced a limited edition brew called "March Stones Ale" to promote Freedom Lands and the March Stones of Aberdeen. The Brewery has been appointed as a "Guardian of the March Stones" by Aberdeen's Burgesses of Guild.

The Freedom Lands are commonly believed to have been gifted to Aberdeen by Robert the Bruce as a reward for the city's support during the Wars of Independence. These lands are marked and protected by more than 60 march stones - the word "march" is middle Scot for "boundary".

- "Flesh House Ale" is another Isle of Skye

Brewery limited edition, produced for the release of crime fiction author Stuart MacBride's fourth novel – Flesh House. This ale went into eight north pubs, and all who enjoyed a pint were entered into a draw for an autographed copy of the first edition of the book. Stuart MacBride designed the label and pump badge himself.

- **Black Isle Brewery** - Building work on new brewery is to start this summer adjacent to existing site. A new brewhouse has been ordered, a 30bbl mash and kettle with 180bbl conditioning capacity. An automatic bottling line is on order from Italy.

A second brewer has been employed (see page 18) ahead of the brewery expansion and Summer festival season, and production is at capacity in preparation for the Rock Ness and Beladrum events.

Two seasonal bottle-conditioned beers are being brewed: Goldeneye, a 5.6% Belgium style wheat beer, and Raspberry Wheat, 4.8% made with organic raspberries.

- Hebridean Brewery produced a new one-off 4.3% beer called Island Mist - Spring Ale.

On-line Discussion at www.bottledbeer.co.uk

- Posted - 01 March 2008 : 8:52:37 PM

Hi folks, I have a friend (who appreciates a good pint) who normally lives in York, but whose work has taken him to live in Scotland (near Edinburgh) for 6 months. I'm thinking of going up to see him one week-end. An ideal opportunity would be when there was a beer festival being staged somewhere near him. But neither of my normal sources (CAMRA and Quaffales) lists ANY beer festivals in Scotland at all! Do they not believe in Beer Festivals up there or something ? I would appreciate any info people can give me on Beer Festivals in Scotland. All the best. Martin.

- Posted - 03 March 2008 : 9:53:48 PM

Hi Martin, Took some finding, but try <http://www.highlandcamra.org.uk/diary.htm> - they seem to be more with it than the other Scottish CAMRA branches and have quite a few listed all over Scotland! When you're up there try to get hold of some Isle of Skye Black Cuillin - a sublime pint! Enjoy! Anth.

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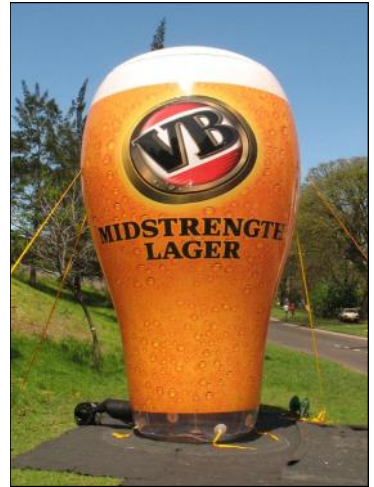
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E-Ale

- Hi Highland CAMRA, I was in Fort William for the first time in nearly two years on Saturday & visited the following pubs: The Ben Nevis Bar (Jacobite Lounge) in the High Street, which I don't think is on your outlet list, has Deuchars & Caley 80/- permanently plus one guest which was Atlas Latitude. I only tried the Latitude (3). Next up was the Ben Nevis Inn which had 3 handpumps but only Latitude on (3). The Ben Nevis Hotel had one handpump dispensing Red Cuillin which was a bit cloudy (2). The West End Hotel also had a single handpump: Latitude (a bit flat, 2). The Nevisport had four handpumps: 3 Sisters (3), Equinox (went off before I could try), Black Cuillin (3) & Red Cuillin which I didn't try. The Grog & Gruel had several ales on; I tried the Williams Kelpie (4), Gold (3) and An Teallach Ale (3). Overall I was impressed with the friendly & efficient service in all of the pubs which is an improvement on my previous visit. I would complain however about the price in

the first four bars: all coming in at £2.95 a pint which, considering all the ales are reasonably local, smacks of a bit of a cartel. Prices in the Nevisport and Grog & Gruel were more reasonable: £2.60 - £2.65 which compares pretty favourably with Glasgow. Cheers, NS, Glasgow CAMRA member.

- Hello, although there is a hand pump at the 'Star' in Tain it hasn't been used in an age, although I was told that perhaps there will be some real ale "... in the summer". BBW.
- Please note that we are the Altnacealgach Inn not Motel - the adjacent motel does not in fact sell alcohol, solely accommodation.

At the moment our resident ales comprise Deuchars IPA and Marstons Pedigree, though hopefully as the season progresses we will include An Teallach Ale from the brewery of that name, and perhaps a real cider. The Inn is open seven days from 11am, snacks/lunch are available, evening meals are served every day from 6pm, and Sunday lunch from 1pm. Mike Dwyer is your host supported by his partner Kate - a veterinary surgeon who, incidentally, runs the Altnacealgach Veterinary Service! We frequently host live music (mostly traditional). We look forward to enjoying your craic! Cheers, Mike & Kate.

- More Real Ale at the Bankfoot Inn
Hi there, an update for you and your members, we've added another handpump at the Bankfoot Inn (just off the A9, 6 miles north of Perth) and are offering seasonal ales from the Cairngorm Brewery in addition to serving the Inveralmond ales. We're also hosting monthly live music. For "What's on" details, see www.bankfootinn.co.uk
Rab & Susan Wallace
- Hi there, we have taken over at the Argyll Hotel in Ullapool 6 months ago and have reinstated the real ales there. We have 4 hand pumps providing a variety of ales, including local ales and recently had 2 ciders on draught as part of our cider week. We would be glad to provide any further information to your site so that real ale drinkers know the pub is back on the map again!
Thanks, Franner. 



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Highlands & Western Isles Branch

- Ale in Gairloch
 Just a wee note to say that the "Millcroft" Hotel in Gairloch is going from strength to strength at the moment: It has managed to get An Teallach Ales to come up with their own brand of ale.....Millcrofters..... and it's going down a treat locally. Quite a light beer, and a distinct flavour by comparison to the other An Teallach ales.

- Hello (Branch Chair) Eric, I got your email from the CAMRA website – a group of our regular real ale drinkers also met you in Drumnadrochit at the beer fest there.
 We are in the throes of planning a Beer Festival here at the Highlander Inn for 3 days, Friday 26th to Sunday 28th September.
 As it is the first such event we have planned I would warmly welcome any suggestions / advice from you as to what to do and what NOT to do. Hope you can help. Duncan Elphick, The Highlander Inn ~ Craiggellachie.

The Highlander Inn is just outside our Branch area, but both Eric and Great Grampian Beer Festival Organiser Richard Jones have given Duncan feedback and advice based on their long term experience of organising festivals. Please note the dates, and we wish Duncan all the best with this new festival. Ed.

- Glenmore Lodge Bar, Aviemore: Cairngorm Tradewinds (3), Cairngorm Stag (3). Well worth a visit if you are in the area - Open to non-residents. Bar open from 5-late. Good food. Dogs welcome. SJ, Edinburgh.
- Dear Ed, we stopped for a quick pint at the Kinlochewe Hotel. What a difference since our last visit a few years ago; clearly under new ownership who must have spent a fair sum on the refurbishment. A super bar now, a friendly welcome from the staff, and Isle of Skye beers (Hebridean Gold and a house beer, Beinn Eithe) in excellent form. We will definitely be back! CVM.

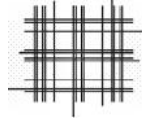
We hope you have enjoyed reading our Summer newsletter. Unless you intend to keep it for some reason, please **DO NOT** throw it away. Why not pass it on to a friend, or just leave it in a pub somewhere for others to read. Newsletters are often found many miles from source! The Autumn edition will be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



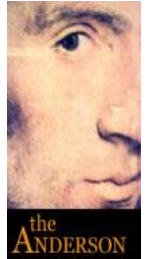
Cheers!



The and restaurant
GLEN Hotel

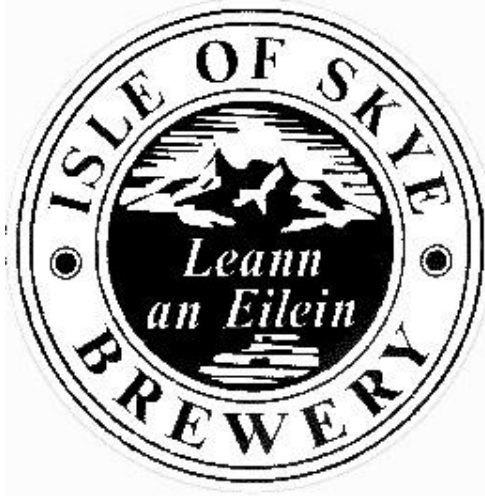


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