

What's Yours Then?

Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA



Free Newsletter

Contains Full List of Highlands & Western Isles Real Ale Outlets



Sun Shines on the Marymas Fair

A large crowd enjoyed our five Real Ales:

- Isle of Skye Brewery Blaven**
- Cairngorm Brewery Black Gold**
- Fyne Ales Piper's Gold**
- Atlas Brewery Three Sisters**
- Isle of Skye Brewery Skylight**

which sold out shortly after four o'clock



ATLAS
BREWERY



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Summer 2009

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

- > Updated Branch Diary
- > Tasting Panel Update
- > Socials & Outings - Reports
- > Festivals Update
- > Focus on - Patrick & Judy Price
- > Your Letters and E-mails
- > 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 Steven, 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 October holidays.

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.

Jonny Delap - Fyne Ales



It is with great sadness that we learnt of the very sudden death in late May of Jonny Delap, co-owner with his wife Tuggy, of Fyne Ales in Argyll. Jonny was one of the true gentleman of this world, and a larger than life character in the Scottish Brewing world, he will be sorely missed.

WANTED Newsletter Editor

Applicants are likely to be real ale enthusiasts. Must have desktop publishing skills, time to spare, and be able to meet publishing deadlines.

~~REWARD~~

*Please contact
Gareth Hardman
(see page 6)*

Updates to the 2009 Good Beer Guide

The following amendments and deletions have been notified to CAMRA HQ:

Page 668 - Corran Inn - Deleted (pub closed)

Please note - we have heard that the Corran Inn will be re-opening under new ownership. Any feedback about availability of real ale, or of real ale quality would be most welcome.

Page 670 - Whitebridge Hotel - Change of telephone number (486 226 not 486 413)

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



Good things brewing in the Highlands



2009 SPECIALS

Available
Apr/May



Available
May



Available
Jun/
Jul/Aug



Available
Sept

Available
Sept/Oct



PERMANENT BEERS



Black Gold
Supreme
Champion of
the Year 2009
as voted
by SIBA

tel: 01479 812 222

email: info@cairngormbrewery.com
www.cairngormbrewery.com

Why not visit our shop at the brewery in Aviemore, now open (Mon-Sat), or book a tour (available Mon-Fri) and see how we make our beer.

10% discount when you bring this ad along to the shop.

The Road to Lochaber

Late April and time for our first outing of the year, this time south-west on the A82 down the Great Glen to visit as many real ale outlets as possible between Inverness and Lochaber. It was a fine but overcast morning as we left Inverness in a Fraser of Munloch minibus, with our regular driver Sandy at the wheel, but the sun came out as we left Loch Ness.

First stop was at the Stronlossit Hotel in Roy Bridge. The large landscaped gardens are now taking shape after major works and even more works were being progressed as the owner, Maurice Vallely, showed us around the new cellar being built. On offer at this welcoming family run hotel were Cairngorm Trade Winds (NBSS average group score 4), Atlas Three Sisters (4) and Highland Orkney Best (4).

Onwards to Fort William where we took the minor road up to the base of Ben Nevis where the Ben Nevis Inn had Isle of Skye Red Cuillin (4) and Cairngorm Wildcat (4).



After sampling the beers on offer we made a presentation to John Aird. John joined CAMRA 35 years ago, helped to set up the Branch and despite being in his 80's still supports us when he can. One of the unsung heroes of the Branch over the years, John was presented with a Certificate, two bottles of Orkney Dark Island Reserve and a Branch sweatshirt.

Next to Fort William and a walk through the High Street where some took time out for a snack. The Alexander Hotel had Atlas Latitude (3), Cobbs at Nevisport had Atlas Nimbus (4) and Latitude (4), Isle of Skye Black Cuillin (4) and Tower Ridge (4) - a house ale blend.

The Ben Nevis Bar had Caledonian Deuchars (3), Caley 80 and Orkney Dark Island (both not tasted). The Grog and Gruel, fresh from their Easter Beer Festival, still had an excellent selection of brews; Traditional Scottish Ales Organic Ben Nevis 80/- (4), Young Pretender (2), Caley 80 (not tasted), Williams Brother's Kelpie (4), Rooster (4) and Gold (not tasted). Chairman Eric Mills presented the Grog & Gruel manager, Neil Dennison, with their Fort William & Lochaber Pub-of-the-Year Award.



South-west along Loch Linnhe and over the Ballachulish bridge to take the picturesque southern road along Loch Leven and into Kinlochleven. Better be careful now as we had crossed the border into the CAMRA Glasgow and Western Scotland Branch area!

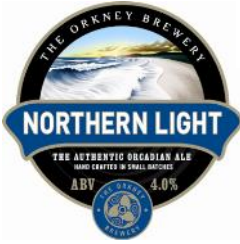
At the Atlas Brewery brewer John Rodgers and operations manager Merlin Sandbach were on hand to serve samples of their brews and to give us a tour of the brewery. In this 100 year old listed building, once part of the now closed aluminium works, we enjoyed three of their very fine brews; Latitude, Equinox, and Three Sisters. The Ice Factor, next door, has one changing Atlas brew and Latitude (2) was on tap today. Sadly, over at the Tailrace Inn, new owners have taken out the handpumps at this former GBG-listed pub.

All too soon it was time to head north, across the River Leven and back into our Branch area. Next stop, at 4.30, was in Onich at the Four Seasons. In the past they have opened up for us, ahead of their regular 5.30 opening time, but not today. A great shame as the beers there are usually very good. The Corran Inn at the ferry slope has been closed for



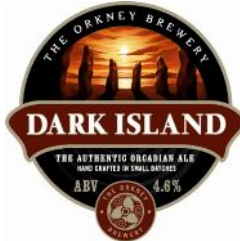
The Orkney Brewery

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CAMRA CHAMPION WINTER CASK BEER 2007

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e:info@sinclairbreweries.co.uk

Branch Diary (Meetings start at 7.30 pm)

Tue 28 th July	Tasting Panel	Aviemore hostelries
Tue 4 th August	Branch Meeting	Glen Hotel, Newtonmore
Tue 25 th August	Tasting Panel	Black Isle West
Tue 1 st Sept	Committee Meeting	The Anderson, Fortrose
Sat 12 th Sept		Social/Outing to Isle of Skye Brewery, and Skye & Lochalsh Real Ale Hostelries
18 th - 26 th Sept	* 8 th Loch Ness Beer Festival	Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit
Sat 19 th Sept	Hill Walk, Social & Tasting	Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit
Tue 29 th Sept	Tasting Panel	Black Isle East
End Sept (TBC)	* 5 th Inverness Beer Festival	Castle Tavern, Inverness
Tue 6 th Oct	Committee Meeting	Blackfriars, Inverness
22 nd - 25 th Oct	* 5 th Ullapool Beer Festival	Morefield Motel, Ullapool

* 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

Details

18, Scorguie Gardens, Inverness, IV 3 8 SS.

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



Eric Mills - Phone No. pending

chair@highlandcamra.org.uk

Mike Whittall - 01463 831259

news@highlandcamra.org.uk

(Continued from page 4)

some time, but new owners are rumoured to be taking over soon and reinstating real ale.

Time to get our sea legs on as we headed for the Eagle Barge, moored at Laggan Lochs.

This compact bar is full with very interesting, rescued and antique items, mainly nautical.

Janet and Paul Betts run the Barge as a bar and restaurant (bookings required because of limited room and so they can buy ingredients), although snacks are available during the day and, if not busy, in the evening too. Beers on tap were Orkney Red MacGregor (3), and two from Atlas: Three Sisters (4) and Equinox (4).

A short walk back along the Canal to our bus and onward to Fort Augustus. The Bothy had very cold Caledonian Deuchars (2) and Isle of Skye Hebridean Gold (2). The Lock Inn had a

house special Gill Chuilmein (3), but they would not tell us who brews it and there was no indication of strength on the pump clip.

A short trip took us to Inchnacardoch Hotel, where there is a new owner who likes his real ale and who has real ale available at times as he tries to build up a regular custom. We were told that Isle of Skye Young Pretender had been on earlier but had run out by the time we reached them. It looks good here and it is worth another visit. Last stop of the day was at the Benleva Hotel in Drumnadrochit where Isle of Skye Grand Ale (4), Cairngorm Wildcat (4), Atlas Latitude (4) and Orkney Dark Island (2) were all on tap. Some stayed when the minibus took the rest of us back to Inverness. Another great day out and thanks to Merlin and John at Atlas and to Sandy our driver.

Clachnaharry Inn *biting* You

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& Highland
Real Ale Town
Pub of the Year
2000, 2001, 2002,
2005, 2006 & 2007*

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The Clachnaharry Inn

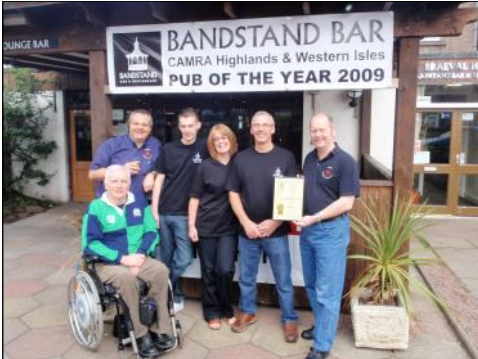
*Highlands & Western Isles
Pub-of-the-Year 2006 & 2007*

17-19 High Street
Clachnaharry
Inverness, IV3 8RB
Tel : 01463 239806
FAX: 01463 226986



Nairn Beer Festival

A few years ago most real ale drinkers would have thought a beer festival at a pub in Nairn would be about as likely as the A96 being made into a dual carriageway but, happily, in late March it happened at the Bandstand Bar, our newly crowned Pub of the Year.



Local members Des and Seamus reported a lively start to the festival on Friday which would have been down to excellent pre-start advertising. A good feature in the Press & Journal, as well as adverts in What's Brewing and WYT, coupled with banners around Nairn, ensured the word had got around. Indeed, at work, where it is known that I enjoy an ale, several people came up to me with, "Do you know there is a beer festival in Nairn this weekend?" Very encouraging.

Des reported a very good mix of Scottish and English ales on the eight handpumps: which were Moulin Light, Orkney Northern Light, Taylor's Golden Best, Isle of Skye Red Cuillin, Young's Special Bitter, Taylor's Ram Tam, Cairngorm Black Gold and "The Mystery Ale" When I arrived at around 1pm on Saturday the Golden Best and Northern Light had gone and were replaced by Sharps Doombar and Highland Orkney Best. Throughout the day the beers on tap were changing constantly and Harviestoun Bitter & Twisted, Kelburn Red Smiddy, Inveralmond Thrappledouser, Isle of Skye Hebridean Gold, Orkney Dark Island, Arran Blond, Morrissey/Fox Blonde, St Austell Tribute and Dark Star Hophead were featured. In fact, the Tribute and Hophead came on and went in a few hours, so fast that I questioned

the cask size, thinking they were 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon pins and not 9 gallon casks. Gordon soon put me right by dragging me to the cellar to prove that they were normal size casks! That meant there was an amazing seventeen different ales available throughout the day. Very wise then that special third of a pint festival glasses were available alongside the pints & halves.

Shortly after I arrived I was joined by more members from the Branch and a minibus load on an outing from the Isle of Skye Brewery. There were also regulars from Forres and Findhorn who use the frequent bus service to enjoy the ales at the Bandstand. Chairman Eric was able to present Gordon & Morag with their certificate for Highlands & Western Isles Pub of the Year when the Nairnshire Telegraph was down for a few photos, and before the Six Nations Rugby got under way. The lively mix of people ensured that there was plenty of good natured banter during the Calcutta Cup game between Scotland and England, and the free bar snacks on offer at half time were very welcome. This was followed by the Ireland - Wales game which saw Ireland clinch the Grand Slam in a very exciting match.



As well as guessing the mystery ale there were other events over the weekend, with a vote for beer of the festival, a quiz on Sunday and live music on all three days. Festival glasses and T-shirts were also on sale.

All the beers were in fine form with quite a few members from the Branch rating Red Cuillin, Black Gold, Tribute and Hophead as their favourites, so it was no surprise that Dark Star Hophead was

(Continued on page 10)

BANDSTAND BAR, NAIRN
CAMRA Highlands & Western Isles
PUB OF THE YEAR 2009

6 REAL ALE PUMPS

Selection of our Regular Ales



Youngs Special
Adnams Bitter
St Austell Tribute
Kelham Island Pale Rider
Timothy Taylor's Golden Best & Ram Tam
Isle of Skye Hebridean Gold & Red Cuillin
Highland Brewery Scapa Special & Best
Houston Brewery Killellan
Cairngorm Tradewinds
Arran Ale

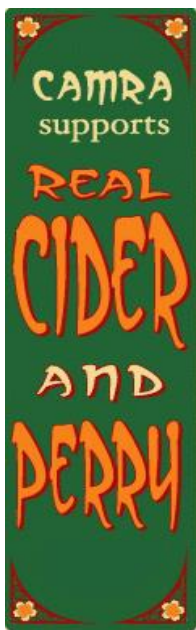


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Traditional Cider Matters

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

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 - Two Westons Ciders on handpump

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

Argyll Hotel, Ullapool - Westons ciders from the box

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

Kinlochewe Hotel, at the foot of Beinn Eighe, is serving Westons 1st Quality Draft Cider

Blackfriars, Inverness - Westons Old Rosie Scrumpy and 1st Quality Ciders on handpump

Clachaig Inn, Glencoe - Thatchers Heritage Cider was found here last August.

Ed, when popping into Blackfriars last week I could not help but notice that there are now two real ciders on offer. Weston's First Quality is now on tap alongside Old Rosie on the two hand-pumps to the left of that fine looking bank of five hand pulls which are used for ales. GNH.

voted beer of the festival.

The mystery ale that nobody guessed (shame on us CAMRA tasters) was the 4.2% ABV Standard Ale from Glenfinnan.

Well done and congratulations to Gordon and Morag and their hard-working team for hosting a very successful first festival. We were told that plans are already under way to make next year's even bigger and better.

Aberdeen Beer Festival

After the poor turnout last year at the new Pittodrie Stadium (home to Aberdeen FC), our Aberdeen, Grampian, & Northern Isles CAMRA colleagues were much cheered by the record Friday night attendance.

Orkney Dark Island Reserve, a 10% ABV brew matured in Highland Park whisky casks, is normally only available in bottles. A first cask to be seen outside the brewery was on tap at

£5 a pint. A few pints were sampled early on, but on the Friday night queues at the bar meant that 7 gallons were sold in 20 minutes.

All who have tried this wonderful brew know that £5 is by no means a high price to pay!

The festival finished early on Saturday, at 4.30pm, when all beers had sold out.

A Plan Brewing, or Growing Perhaps!

The Isle of Skye Brewery are hoping to brew a new beer using locally grown barley. They are working with a crofter in Kilmuir on a test growing of barley and possibly hops. Brewery owner Angus MacRuary said, "We currently go through around 100 tonnes of barley in a year. I don't really think we can look at replacing that quantity with Skye-grown barley.

What we would like to do is use Skye barley exclusively in new recipes such as a beer made entirely from Skye ingredients."

HIGHLAND OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Furniture solutions for home and office



END OF YEAR SALE

Prior to our annual stock-take, we have a surplus of new and excellent quality second hand office furniture

office desks office tables
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*20p real ale discount
for card carrying
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Enjoy the country pub atmosphere – log fire, malt whiskies, real ales and affordable food (soup, toasties and desserts served all day) in this family-owned village centre hotel.

Close to the historic 1717 packhorse bridge over the River Dulnain, and nestling in the very heart of the Scottish Highlands, the Cairn Hotel is the perfect base for exploring the Cairngorms, the Malt Whisky Trail, Loch Ness, Strathspey and Badenoch; and including the Cairngorm and Black Isle breweries.

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.

Newcastle Beer Festival

I was lucky enough to be able to attend this year's 33rd Newcastle Beer Festival in April. Combining a Beer Festival with the Grand National as well as the Virgin Poker Festival made for a perfect weekend for me!

The train down to Newcastle meant a change in Edinburgh which gave me just enough time to pop into the Halfway House for some Cullen Skink and some ales. Beers on offer were Cairngorm Wildcat, An Teallach Ale, Scapa Special and Kildonan. I needn't have bothered leaving the Highlands! All were in excellent nick as one would expect at this great pub.

Once in Newcastle I decided it was essential to visit the Newcastle Arms first to acquire some local knowledge, where a much needed Big Lamp Porter (4.2%) was greatly enjoyed. This is an excellent pub, just a goalkeeper's clearance away from St James' Park. In the week when Alan Shearer's return was announced, I have to say I didn't encounter any of the "mass hysteria" portrayed in the media. A short stroll to the Beer Festival, which was

held in the Students Union, where Highlands & Western Isles Newsletters were gratefully received in exchange for a half pint glass and a programme. After purchasing some beer tokens (£1.20 per half) it was off to the bar.

And what a bar! Around 160 ales, and every one on handpump. Scottish representatives included Fyne Ales, Glenfinnan, Highland Brewing, Inveralmond, Islay, Moulin, Orkney, Plockton, Trad Scottish Ales, Williams Bros and Tryst - I couldn't find Glenfinnan, Islay or Plockton ales but they may have been finished before I got there. Memories are admittedly hazy but judging by my notes the following ales were particularly outstanding: Acorn Barnsley Bitter, Allendale Curlew's Return, Spire Dark Side of the Moon, Thornbridge Jaipur IPA; my personal favourite was Black as Owt Stout from the Yard of Ale Brewery. Visits were also made to the Cider & Perry bar which had a fantastic selection.

The organisation of the Festival was superb. Whilst there were long queues to get in on the Friday evening, there was never long to wait at the bar and my advice is to get there early

and stock up on tokens! The staff were very friendly and well organised - the place was packed full of drinkers and never even a hint of trouble - quite a contrast to the city centre atmosphere at 3 am when I left the Casino.

Drink offerings in the Casino were desperate - in one bar the "best" they could offer me was a can of Guinness!! I made several return visits to the Newcastle Arms - including one to watch the National and see my fancies trailing home amongst the also rans.

The overall winner of the Beer of the Festival this year was Allendale's Adder Lager - which will hopefully be available at this year's Loch Ness Beer Festival. I'm already making plans for a return visit to Newcastle next year! SC.

April Tasting Panel Meet

A small turnout at Blackfriars threatened a quiet session, but the evening livened up as Allan and Gareth were joined by local member Bill Potter, and members Andy & Kirsty from further afield. First beer up was Highland Light Munro. This 3% brown/red coloured ale is not seen as often as the 4% Dark Munro, but is a very good light bodied mild ale. Roast and

caramel in the aroma was repeated in the taste to a stronger degree along with some blackcurrant fruit but with no evidence of hops which is quite normal in a mild ale. More sweet than bitter in the taste, this reversed in the aftertaste with bitter coming through along with roast. Good flavours for it's strength ensured an 8/10 score.

Inveralmond Independence, a copper coloured Perthshire brew, is classed as a 3.8% session bitter. Malt dominated the aroma and again in the taste which also had a nice hop and fruit balance. Although classed as a bitter the dominance of the malt gave a more sweet than bitter taste which is quite common in the traditional 70/- and 80/- style beers. A good quaffing beer which scored 7.

Caley Deuchars IPA is widely available and at 3.8% is another good session beer. Very little on the nose with just slight malt and hop aromas, the taste though was the familiar bitter/sweet balance with plenty of hop and fruit flavours. These flavours faded in the aftertaste with pale malt dominating. Not quite as good as usual it still scored 7. Most enjoyable! GNH.

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YEAR

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Drumnadrochit, Loch Ness

www.lochnesshotel.com

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CAMRA Highland Pub of the Year 2003 & 2005

Inverness District Pub of the Year 2006 & 2007 (tied)

8th Loch Ness Beer Festival
18th - 26th September 2009

En-Suite Accommodation
Excellent Food Every Evening
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Outer Hebrides
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Comments on the Uists

Dear Gareth, further to our conversation last week, as promised, see below my comments on the places visited in the Uists over the last couple of weeks:

Lochmaddy Hotel

No beer on first visit, but subsequently had Deuchars which I score 2 on the NBSS scale. Appears that they only occasionally have ale.

Red House (Tigh Dearg)

Appeared to be closed when we went past. Alastair at the Westford told us that it has recently been bought and reopened, but I have no information on the beer front.

Borrodale Hotel, South Uist - no real ale.

Carinish Inn has closed and work was firmly under way to convert it to a church.

Westford Inn - Excellent.

Red Cuillin - 4, Westford Ale - 4

Hebridean Gold - 4, bordering 5

You may gather from the scores that we think it should be in the GBG again. As I indicated, we have prepared a survey (see below) in

case you have not already had something sent in. You will wish to check our credentials - I am sure that Colin Valentine (CAMRA Festivals Director) will be happy to assist.

I hope this is helpful, and please come back to me if you need any more information.

Regards, Ben (and Robyn) Parr-Ferris.

Westford Inn - Surveyors Ben and Robyn Parr-Ferris of Herts Essex Borders branch.

Place - note that 2009 guide entry had the place name mis-spelt, although that could have been Mr Protz not being too familiar with his Gaelic! Cladach Chirceboist, North Uist (or use the anglicised version in the address).

Address: Westford Inn, Claddach Kirkibost, North Uist, HS 6 5 EP

Telephone 01876 580 653

Email: westford1@tesco.net

Web <http://www.westfordinn.co.uk>

Grid ref: NF775662

Opening hours (see note in description)

Oct - Easter: Mon - Sat 5 - 11, Sun 12.30 - 11

Easter - Sept: 12.00 - 11

Beer Range varies H (*Handpump dispense*)

Facilities: Real fire, Quiet area, Beer garden, B&B, Evening food, Lunch food (summer only), Separate public/lounge bars, Bus services, Pub games, Parking, Camping.

Description: Despite having what must be the most well secured pub sign in the world, it still has to be taken down each winter to save it from the ferocious weather in this remote corner of the Outer Hebrides. The imposing 18th century listed building contains two comfortable lounge rooms, heated by peat fuelled real fires. In the public bar to the side, local fishermen and football players mix easily with bird spotters, walkers and shooting parties. Beers from the Isle of Skye brewery are served. Dogs welcome. Note that opening hours can be dependent on trade especially in winter; call in advance to confirm the above times.

Thanks for a great report, especially helpful for pubs in this remote part of our massive geographical Branch area.

We will have to wait until September to see if the Westford Inn is in GBG 2010. Cheers, Ed!

The Old Inn

Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BD

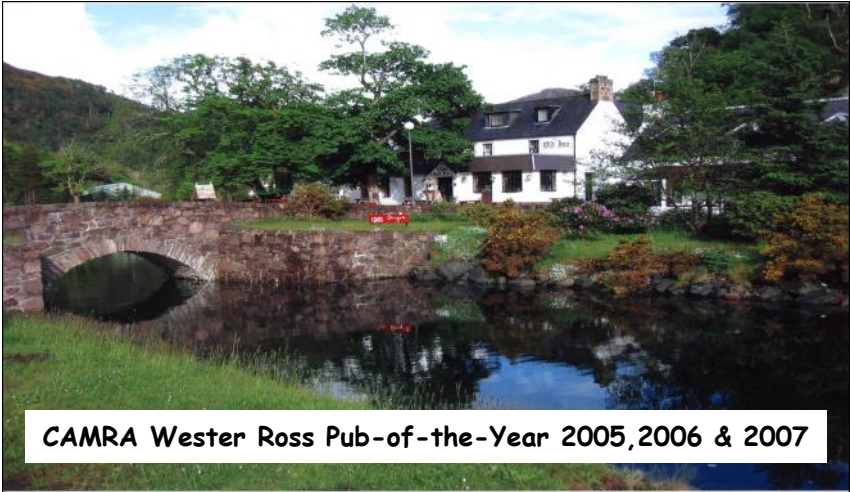
Telephone: 01445 712006 Enquiries - *Call Free* - 0800 542 5444

Scottish Tourist Board 3 Star Inn

AA Best Seafood Pub for Scotland 2005/06

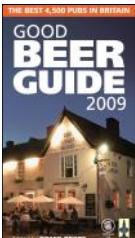
Abbot Ale Perfect Pub for Scotland 2005/06

AA Pub of the Year for Scotland & Northern Ireland 2003



**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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E-mail: enquiries@theoldinn.net



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

Focus on Patrick & Judy Price

Patrick and his wife, Judy, own and run the Scourie Hotel on the far north-west coast of Sutherland. The bar, open all year, has a thriving local clientele and is also popular with anglers, hill-walkers, and bird watchers who enjoy the game fishing, rugged landscape and, on the nearby Handa Island, one of the largest seabird colonies in north-west Europe

Q. Where were you born?

A. I was born in London although spent most of my childhood in Gloucestershire where I was brought up on a farm, my wife Judy was born in Westcliff-on-Sea and went to school there.

Q. What is your background?

A. When I left school I went into the merchant navy serving on deck then into a management career and finally into the hotel industry. Judy was in sales then really had her work cut out looking after our 3 children as well as helping to run our first hotel.



Branch Chairman Eric Mills presents Patrick and Judy with their Pub-of-the-Year award.

Q. Why did you move up to the far north?

A. We wanted to bring our children up in an area where they were as safe as is possible and where they could enjoy a healthy outdoor lifestyle. It had nothing to do with my long term love of fishing in wild places of course, perish the thought! We have always liked the peace and unspoilt beauty of Northern Scotland.

Q. When/where introduced to real ale?

A. Round about 1980 after several boisterous sessions on "Stella Artois Lager" (do I hear a sharp intake of breath?) I decided that there must be more to a Sunday morning other than a pounding headache and a mouth like the bottom of a parrot's cage. I decided to try Real ale, I liked it, it didn't give me a headache and what is more it tasted good. I've drunk it ever since.

Q. What real ale types/styles do you like?

A. I've been known to try any type of Real ale, but my preferences are for lighter hopper brews, like Trade Winds, Yellow Hammer, Cairngorm Gold and many others. In the winter I quite enjoy darker nuttier beers. We tend to keep a varied range of ales for our guests consumption and enjoyment, mainly from the more local brewers.

Q. What is the best part of your work?

A. I think that everyone in the hospitality industry would answer this question the same way. The best part of this job is to listen to guests who have enjoyed themselves and are happy and want to come back again. Whether they have come in for a meal, or for a pint, or are on holiday. If you don't get a buzz from that you are in the wrong job.

Q. What is the worst part of your work?

A. Probably the amount of hours that you have to put in, particularly if you have young children who you know you should be spending more time with but due to the demands of the Hotel you can't, especially when they see other children on holiday with their parents.

Q. What are your hobbies/interests?

A. I have had an interest in fishing since I was about 10, I am not sure whether this is classified as a hobby or a way of life, I cannot imagine not fishing, my wife doesn't fish but is amazingly tolerant at the amount of tackle lying around the house. We both have an interest in old furniture, and I am at the moment, when I have time, trying to restore an old cribbage board.

Q. What is your favourite part of Scotland?

A. Living and working in the stunningly beautiful West Sutherland, I would have to be



Blackfriars Highland Pub

Great Beer

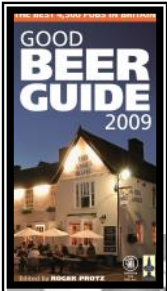


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www.ullapoolbeerfestival.co.uk

Real Ale in the Real Highlands



predictable and say here, but I also think that Dumfries and Galloway is a very underrated part of Scotland and would come a close second.

Q. What are your plans for the future?

A. This is a difficult question to answer, I suppose the mundane answer is that we would wish to continue what we are doing until our 3 children are settled and financially secure, (if that ever happens!! they are 23.. 21..and 18yrs old) then we might consider retirement, although the thought of not being "hands on" in a busy thriving business frightens both of us.

Q. What makes your business unique?

A. Judy and I are here all the time in the season and are very much hands on, our staff are excellent, cheerful and willing. We are fortunate to be in a very scenic area and above all we have for the use of our guests, 25,000 acres of brown trout, sea trout and salmon fishing. Real Ale, which we have been providing to guests for 15 years has gone from strength to strength and the introduction, 2 years ago, of two Real Ciders has proved a good decision.

Scottish Chef Awards 2009

Anne Anderson, head chef at The Anderson restaurant with rooms in Fortrose, came back from Glasgow in May with not one, but two medals in the Scottish Chef Awards 2009.

The awards were presented at a gala ceremony at the Radisson SAS in Glasgow. Most of Scotland's top chefs were in attendance.

Mrs. Anderson's first medal was a Bronze in the Gourmet Menu category for The Anderson's Neapolitan Wine Dinner held in March, for which she created a 5-course traditional Italian feast using local ingredients, including her own ricotta and mozzarella cheeses.

Anne was then called back to receive a Bronze in the Gastropub of the Year category for her daily-changing menu of high-quality, informal food served at reasonable prices.

Anne was the only chef at this year's awards to win more than one medal.

Amid all these 'tales of ales' it is often easy to forget the wonderful range of ingredients readily on hand in the Highlands & Western Isles. Congratulations to Anne on winning awards for her innovative high-quality food.

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 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
Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit
Loch Ness Inn, Lewiston
Inch (Inchnacardoch) Hotel, Fort Augustus
Steading Bar & Restaurant, Kilmartin (TP)
Munlochy Hotel (TP)
The Anderson, Fortrose
Union Tavern, Fortrose
Plough Inn, Rosemarkie
Cromarty Arms (TP)
Royal Hotel, Cromarty (TP)
Culbokie Inn
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*)

TP - Served using top pressure

**“a beer drinker’s
mecca”**

Good Beer Guide 2005-2007



real ale
80 Belgians

real cider
200 malts

**Highlands & Western Isles
Pub of the Year 2008**

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restaurant • bar • accommodation

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www.theanderson.co.uk

Number 27, Inverness
 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
 Golf View Hotel, Nairn (TP)
 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
 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
 Topsy 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)

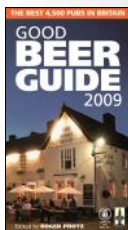
Fort William & Lochaber

Jacobite Steam Train (S)
 Grog & Gruel, Fort William
 Ben Nevis Bar, Fort William
 Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William
 Ben Nevis Inn, Fort William
 Cobbs at Nevisport, Fort William
 West End Hotel, Fort William
 Glen Nevis Restaurant & Bar
 Invergarry Hotel
 The Eagle, Laggan Locks
(An Inn on a boat on the water)
 Loch Oich Restaurant/Bar, South Laggan

Stein Inn

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 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 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

Old Station Restaurant, Spean Bridge
 Spean Bridge Hotel (S)
 Stronlössit Hotel, Roy Bridge
 Corroul Halt Tea Rooms (01397 732236)
 Tomdoun Sporting Lodge
 Moorings Hotel, Banavie
 Glenfinnan House Hotel
 Glenuig Hotel, Lochailort
 Loch Shiel Hotel, Acharacle
 Old Forge, Inverie
 Corran Inn (*under new ownership - please let us know if you find it open, and if real ale here*)
 Four Seasons, Onich
 Inn at Ardgour
 Ice Factor, Kinlochleven
 MacDonald Hotel, Kinlochleven
 Mamore Lodge, Kinlochleven (S)
 Laroch Bar, Ballachulish (G&WS)
 Clachaig Inn, Glencoe (G&WS)
 Kings House Hotel, Glencoe (G&WS)

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 (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, Shieldaig
 Arch Inn, Ullapool
 Argyll Hotel, Ullapool
 Ferry Boat Inn, Ullapool
 Morefield Motel, Ullapool
 Seaforth Bar & Restaurant, Ullapool

Caithness & Sutherland

Inchnadamph Hotel
 The Caberfeidh, Lochinver

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



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

Scourie Hotel, Scourie
 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
 Belgrave Hotel, Helmsdale
 Tongue Hotel
 MacKay's Hotel, Wick
 Alexander Bain, Wick (*Wetherspoons*)
 Central Hotel, Thurso
 Commercial Hotel, Thurso

South Skye & Lochalsh

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

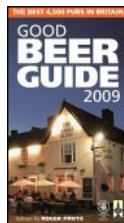


Plockton Hotel, Plockton
 Plockton Inn, Plockton
 Tingle Creek Hotel, Erbusaig
 Kyle Hotel, Kyle of Lochalsh
 Saucy Mary's Lodge, Kyleakin (S)
 Duisdale Hotel (S)
 Isle Ornsay Hotel
 Ardvasar Hotel
 Stables Restaurant, Armadale
 Claymore, Broadford
 Dunollie Hotel, Broadford
 Hebridean Hotel, Broadford
 Sconser 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
 Greshornish Lodge
 Bosville Hotel, Portree
 Isles Inn, Portree
 Royal Hotel, Portree
 Tongadale Hotel, Portree
 An Lanntair, Stornoway
 Clachan Bar, Stornoway
 Caladh Inn, Stornoway
 Carlton Tavern, Stornoway
 Harris Inn, Tarbert (S)
 Lochmaddy Hotel, North Uist
 Tigh Dearg Hotel, Lochmaddy, North Uist
 Langass Lodge, North Uist (S)
 Westford Inn, North Uist
 Dark Island Hotel, Benbecula (S)
 Borrodale Hotel, South Uist (S)
 Orasay Inn, South Uist (S)
 Castlebar Bar, Isle of Barra



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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at Roy Bridge

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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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11 Craigrory, North Kessock, Inverness. IV1 3XH

Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2009

Orkney Brewery - Brewing commenced in March 1988, at the old schoolhouse in Sandwick on Orkney Mainland.

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 in late March 2000. Ales include Blonde, Dark, and Sunset.



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



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

Hebridean Brewing Company - Based at Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides. Brewing since January 2002. Beers include Islander Strong Ale, Berserker Export Pale Ale, and Clansman Ale (first ale ever brewed in Stornoway),



Atlas Brewery - Has been brewing in one of the old Aluminium Smelter buildings at Kinlochleven since February 2002.

An Teallach Brewery - Moved to the family's croft, near Dundonnell, in March 2003. Ales include An Teallach Ale, and Crofter's Pale Ale.



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 Mainland. 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. **Now Closed?** Please let us know if you have any news.

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



Sinclair Breweries Ltd - Set up in 2006 by restaurateur Norman Sinclair, who purchased the Orkney Brewery and Atlas Brewery in Kinlochleven. Ales regularly brewed include Three Sisters, Latitude, and Nimbus from Atlas; plus Dark



Island, Red MacGregor, Raven Ale, and Skull Splitter from Orkney.


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 - The first brew was produced on 1st April 2007. Crags Ale and Starboard IPA may usually be found in Plockton, and at other local outlets.

All 668 British breweries (43 in Scotland) are featured in the 2009 Good Beer Guide.

Not all of the breweries listed are in our branch area & Orkney are all in the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles area; Brewery Ayrshire & 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.



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. Local Branch website, or simply send us an e-mail.

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

CAMRA HQ no longer accept the cards, but we are happy to receive your feedback in any format. Please send to Branch Contact (Please see page 6).

CAMRA National Beer Scoring Scheme

Surveyor _____

Mem.No. _____ Date of survey _____ / _____

Pub _____

Location _____

GBG County/Area _____ Score 0-5 _____

Beer _____ (optional)

Sample

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



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

National Cask Ale Week in Inverness

NATIONAL
Cask Ale
WEEK
6th - 13th APRIL 2009

This year CAMRA ran a national cask ale week to highlight the diversity of styles, flavours and choice of what really is our national drink. The

week was not just about Real Ale but also supporting the many fine pubs which sell it, so the Branch was delighted when two of our best real ale pubs in Inverness got involved.

Blackfriars ran a whole week of events, featuring a "meet the brewer night", quiz and race nights, and three live music sessions including a ceilidh. The **Castle Tavern** ran a beer festival from the Thursday before Easter through to Easter Monday.

I was really looking forward to meeting the brewer as Ken Duncan from Inveralmond was coming up to hold the session. You would think after hearing about the brewing process in some detail several times that there would not be too much more of interest, but nothing could be further from the truth when listening

to the enthusiasm of Ken. A perfectionist in his craft, as those who already enjoy the superb consistency of Inveralmond beers will know, I was surprised to find out that they still brew on a 10 barrel plant which produces 40 casks worth every brew. With sales growing year on year brewing has to be done in shifts to meet the demand, so no wonder all at the brewery are looking forward to a brewery expansion which will increase brew length to 30 barrels. 95% of production currently goes to cask with the remainder into bottles. Producing beer for bottling is no mean feat either as this is done in 60 barrel lots, so six consecutive brews of the same beer have to be planned into the production schedule to produce this quantity before it is shipped for bottling off site.

Not only did Ken bring his knowledge but a few days before he had also sent up a cask of their 3.8% Independence Ale for Blackfriars to feature at the session. Enjoyed by everyone who attended, this beer was in superb condition and fully justified my awarding a (rare from me) 5 on the CAMRA

(Continued on page 28)

Mostly Good in Torridon

Just returned from five days in Torridon staying at Kinlochewe Hotel. Everything was great - beer, food, welcome and service - even the weather was good to us. It was good to see your CAMRA magazine by the bar and I brought a copy home for friends and to consult when planning next year's trip. The range of real ale in Scotland seems to grow every year and we have never been disappointed with the choice (occasional quality slips with "tired" barrels are thankfully rare) and it is good to see that Beer Miles are making more local ales available. We always try to find real ale in out of the way places, we even called in at the croft/cottage that is the An Teallach brewery a couple of years ago to purchase some bottled ales and were made welcome. The only "blip" this year was on a visit to the Badachro Inn where there was no real ale available - one (clip) turned round and the Deuchars "died" on the first pull. We did offer to wait whilst a new barrel was put on but sadly there was no one available to do this. It was a shame as we have visited in previous

years and had real ale and they seemed to stock a good range of An Teallach ales if pump clips on display are anything to go by. I know it was Monday afternoon but we had made a special trip there so I guess we were just unlucky.

Our trips are predominantly for walking but real ale is always a bonus so I offer both these views as feedback if you are interested. Keep up the good work and we look forward to good ales on our trip next year - will check out your branch news in good time.

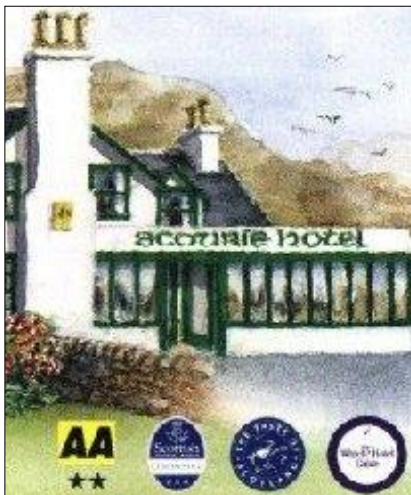
Ron Beaumont, Keighley and Craven Branch.

Pub Closures - Caley Inn Update

This former Inverness canal side pub has been put on the market at offers over £100,000.

The pub is currently owned by Scottish & Newcastle Pub Enterprises who have had the property on a 125-year lease since February 2005 from British Waterways.

S&N have placed a restriction on the property against future use as a pub and are marketing it as a restaurant. We understand this is because they have other interests in the area.



Scourie Hotel

Scourie, Sutherland, IV27 4SX

Tel: 01971 502396

FAX: 01971 502423

patrick@scourie-hotel.co.uk

www.scourie-hotel.co.uk

Cask Ales and Real Cider are served

An ideal base for game fishing, hill-walking, bird watching (Handa Island is nearby), or exploring the famed empty quarter of Western Sutherland, a lunar landscape of lochs and mountains.

Overlooking Scourie Bay and with views to the distant tops of Ben Stack, Arkle, and Foinaven.



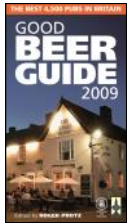
To connoisseurs of game fishing there is simply nothing to compare to the 25,000 acres of Loch, River and Hill Loch fishing held for the guests of Scourie Hotel. The Hotel has 36 fishing beats held exclusively for guests, plus 3 beats on Loch Stack and Loch More for sea trout and salmon. Additional salmon fishing is taken on local salmon rivers.

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



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

(Continued from page 26)

scoring system.

Thanks to Ken from Inveralmond Brewery and to Del & Janette at Blackfriars for hosting a very interesting evening.

Later on in Cask Ale Week I managed to get along to the beer festival at the Castle Tavern, organised by landlord George Maclean.

A second bar had been set up outside for the festival and featured four real ale handpumps and one for cider which featured Weston's First Quality, with Old Rosie to follow. With another five handpumps in service in the main bar there was a great choice for drinkers who may have thought independence had arrived already with Scottish breweries inside and English ones outside!

Quite a few English breweries not seen that often in the Highlands were featured including Brakspears, Hook Norton, Everards, St Austell and Jennings. As well as the regularly seen Broadside and Bitter from Adnams, their new carbon-neutral ale called East Green was on

offer. I have always enjoyed the beers from Adnams but I was a little let down by East Green. It was quite light with not too much body and some faint grassy hop flavour. It may have been carbon-neutral but to me it was pretty flavour neutral as well.

I did enjoy the 6X from Wadsworth, and the Tribute from St Austell, as well as some of the Scottish ales. Black & Tan from Houston was a beer I had not had before. A blend of some of their regular brews it unmistakably contained a proportion of the wonderful Warlock Stout.

If the split bars were a sign of competition between Scottish and English ales then I think the Scottish ales must have won hands down as by the Monday evening there was a large encroachment inside of English ales as most of the Scottish ones had been drunk!

Well done to George and Del for making a feature of Cask Ale Week.

National Cask Ale Week 2010

The week was such a success for the pubs, brewers and customers alike that Cask Ale Week will be running again in 2010 between Monday 29th March and Monday 5th April.

News of Brews

CAMRA recently announced that Travelodge, one



of Britain's biggest hotel companies, are to sponsor this year's Champion Bottled Beer of Britain competition, to be held at the Great British Beer Festival in August.

As a further commitment to bottle-conditioned beer, Travelodge have reacted to their own customer feedback by pledging to stock the winning beer in up to 100 of its hotel bars and cafes, giving the Champion brewer unrivalled access to the hotel chain's thirsty customers.

Paul Harvey, Managing Director of Travelodge, said: 'I am delighted that we will be selling the Champion Bottled Beer of Britain in our hotels. Our customers have told us that they want a real ale offer and what could be better than CAMRA's winning drink?' Past winners of the prestigious bottled-beer accolade include Wye Valley Dorothy Goodbody's Wholesome Stout, O'Hanlon Port Stout and Worthington White Shield. *Not a bad selection! Ed.*

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Beer Hunter wins Beer a Day

Gareth Hardman, our Branch Secretary, is always on the lookout for new brews to try and regularly explores the Internet for unusual brews from near and far. Whilst checking out the Wickwar Brewing Company website he added his name, as one does, to their monthly prize draw. A couple of weeks later Gareth



received a phone call from Wickwar and was surprised and delighted to learn he had won a prize - not the monthly 3 x 5L mini casks, but

the quarterly 365 x 500ml bottles of Banker's Draft! A beer-a-day for a year!

"You have to be in it to win it", as they say!

Local drinkers have been enjoying the 6.1% ABV Wickwar Station Porter, Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2008, in Blackfriars recently.

A Trip Out West!

Left Drumnadrochit just after 10am for a trip out west. Had a wander in the forest en route to the Badachro Inn.. Arrived to find the slightly disappointing offering of Deuchar's IPA or Caley 80/- but was quite happy with the quality of the Deuchar's. Normally An Teallach ales are to be found here but they'd sold out of them. None of our newsletters seem to make their way here but that situation was swiftly rectified and arrangements made for An Teallach to deliver some in the future. A truly wonderful setting and good beer, what more could you want? If there is a better outdoor place to have an ale in the Highlands I've yet to find it. Further along the road there are a couple of lovely beaches – particularly at Redpoint, which the three hounds appreciated



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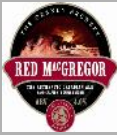
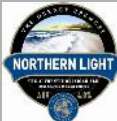
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greatly. On then to Gairloch.

A pit stop for a couple of sandwiches and a brief stop at the Old Inn. Again, no newsletters to be seen but a few were dropped off. Ales on tap were Young Pretender, Trade Winds, An Teallach Ale and (Thwaites) Nutty Black from England-shire. Two halves were sampled – YP & AT – and both were fine.

A quick stop at the Kinlochewe Hotel on the way back. More newsletters deposited and three ales on offer – Red Cuillin, Blaven and the house ale, Beinn Eithe, also from Skye, along with Weston's Cider on tap. The Red Cuillin was sampled and found to be very good. Sadly it was then time to go home, next time I'll find someone to drive me.

Cheers, Steve.

Lack of Real Ale

Hi there, Visited the following hostleries during June 2009 and am sad to report that none of them sold real ale. All Fort William / Lochaber region: Steam Inn in Mallaig, Strontian Inn, and Ben View Hotel, Strontian.

Also - pretty sure Cafe Rhu at Arisaig is ale

free. Closed when I passed, but no sign of hand pumps through window.

The region is a disaster area.

The Old Forge at Inverie did have Greene King IPA on, but what a tortuous, but pleasant way, to get a proper beer.

Any chance of Trade Winds ever making it to the English East Midlands? What a superb ale. Regards, Stuart Buxton.

Not good at all. On a happier note we can report that the Glenuig Inn, just off the Fort William - Mallaig road, has just reopened after a major refurbishment, with six handpumps. The bulk of supplies being from Cairngorm and Isle of Skye breweries. Ed.

Inns & Things

Stornoway - Can't remember if I mentioned this to (*Chairman*) Eric, but the last few times I've been in Stornoway, there is no beer in the Caladh or the Clachan. Norman Mackenzie.

Portree - Dear Ed, I am a life member within the Edinburgh SE Branch. Thanks for compiling the list of pubs on your website and also in the excellent "What's Yours Then". I find this

list very useful on my many trips up North. I appreciate it is difficult maintaining an accurate list but I was in Skye walking/drinking last week and there is a noticeable omission from Portree. The Tongadale sell a beer from the Cuillin Brewery and the landlady assured me it had been on sale for about a year. The beer was probably in the best condition(3.5) within the town. Cheers, Ross Elder

Congratulations to all at the **Applecross Inn** on winning 'Inn of the Year' in the Scottish Hotel Awards. The Inn has had some great publicity this year with the Monty Halls Great Escape TV series, which was based around his Beachcomer cottage nearby.

Monty was quoted in the series as saying the three main reasons to visit Scotland are 1. Edinburgh, 2. Stirling Castle, 3. Applecross Inn. I went over to the Applecross Inn for a midweek lunch in March. The alpine Pass of the Cattle was a bit foggy but good weather on the peninsular. My fresh seafood lunch was washed down with Isle of Skye's Red and Black Cuillin, both in excellent nick. All tables were taken with diners, so probably worth booking if you go over. EM.

The **Scourie Hotel** opened again on 1st April. The bar is open all year, with one alternating Cairngorm brew. There are around three handpumps on during the summer, alternating Cairngorm, An Teallach, Black Isle and a few guests. Cairngorm Howler (4) was on when I went. Worth a stop when passing as they specialise in seafood meals with produce brought in locally. They have a fishing theme throughout the hotel with sea fishing in the bar and loch and river in the lounge/cocktail bar. Very popular with fishermen and rooms get fully booked during the fishing season.

Re. What's Yours then?

I've just spent a week at Fort William, and wanted to say thanks for producing your magazine. It guided us to our drinks after a good day's walking (and sometimes at lunchtime as well). I thought I would contribute a couple of updates to your list of real ale pubs:

The Glen Nevis restaurant and bar, near Fort William should be added to the list. I enjoyed a pint there of Three Sisters (at least a 3 on your rating scale), and another handpump had

a Nimbus label turned round, so it looks as if they would usually have 2 ales on.

The Tailrace in Kinlochleven had no real ale, in spite of the sign outside saying "Atlas Brewery real ales", and being only 100 yards from the brewery. It only had Atlas ales in bottles, and Tennents Ember 80/- on tap, which was a pretty nasty pint. The barmaid said she didn't know why they had stopped the draught Atlas since last year, and wasn't very interested. Perhaps one of your local members would like to contact Trading Standards if they don't change the sign. It certainly deceived me.

Unfortunately the "season" at the Spean Bridge Hotel doesn't start till the end of May, although the barman seemed keen to stock it earlier. Perhaps you could try persuading the owners/landlord, for the sake of those of us who come earlier to avoid the midges.

Thanks again, and all the best,
Danny Gazzì, Eltham, London
Great feedback - Thanks, Ed.

Pub Websites

Blackfriars have got their website up and running at long last - check out -

www.blackfriarshighlandpub.co.uk

Mapman and Coast presenter Nick Crane spent some time in the **Clachaig Inn** with a BBC film crew recently. We understand from the Clachaig Blog that he interviewed 'Munro Baggers' in the Boots Bar for a programme about well..., Munros.. Some good publicity for the Isle of Skye Brewery as a picture on the blog shows Nick helping out behind the bar pulling a pint of Young Pretender! See -

www.glencoescotland.blogspot.com

Good and Bad in Lochalsh

Hello there, We were travelling around from Plockton a couple of weeks ago, and everywhere we visited was as described on your website except Glenelg; which had no ale, & nothing drinkable in bottles.

Normally under those circumstances we'll have a glass of wine, but the man behind the bar did not have a nice manner, very take it or leave it, so we left it.


Thanks for a good website.
Cheers, Anna, St Andrews.

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JDW Spring Festival

I managed to make several visits to the latest beer festival at King's Highway in Inverness.

These twice yearly Real Ale festivals now seem firmly established by Wetherspoons and this latest one, which ran between the 15th April and 4th May, featured fifty ales with eight of the listed beers brewed by different international brewers at breweries around the UK. There were also many ales which were specially brewed for the festival, some new brews, but also some which are not normally found in cask such as Gunhill, a new beer from Adnams which is usually available only in bottles.

Once again third of a pint glasses were available giving a chance to try three beers for a very good £1.39 or 89p if you used one of your 50p CAMRA Wetherspoons vouchers! First up was Brains Dark, a 3.5% ABV mild. Full of flavoursome roast and chocolate malts it was very tasty for it's strength and it was no surprise to discover that it had won many awards over the years. I followed this with Hook Norton Jackpot, a 3.8% golden bitter specially brewed for the festival. It was first brewed in 1955 and has not been available since 1993. As you might expect from Hook Norton this was a quality brew with a good bitterness and dry aftertaste giving plenty of value for it's strength. My third choice on this visit was Red Sloe Ale, another ale brewed for the festival from Sharp's of Cornwall. Readers of my previous JDW festival write-ups will know that I don't usually have a lot of luck when it comes to beers with fruit in them! Happily this was an exception as this 4% brew had a good bitterness and was not dominated by the fruit, allowing the regular beer flavours to come through.

My second visit only found two festival ales on although the regularly available Deuchars IPA and Abbot were on tap. I tried Moorhouse's 4.3% Old Boss, another beer brewed for the festival, which was based on their hop bitter from the late 1800's. Not quite to my taste it had some pale malt flavours and bitterness. The second festival ale on tap was 5% Epic Pale Ale, one of their international brewer's



beers. This was brewed by Luke Nicholas from New Zealand at Everards in Leicestershire, and was real hop juice with a woody malty flavour that was not overly bitter in the taste, but did

increase in bitterness in the aftertaste along with a huge hop flavour finish.

On subsequent visits I came across J W Lees' Hopping Mad, a 3.5% almost mild/bitter cross, quite thin but lots of flavour for it's strength.

Three B's Tackler's Tipple, a 4.3% best bitter from Lancashire, was my favourite beer of the festival. It had lovely roast malt flavours with good hop taste and a great bitter bite. I also enjoyed Cornish Mutiny from Wooden Hand, a 4.8 % ruby coloured well balanced beer; and an imported beer from Bavaria which was St Georgen Brau Keller Bier. This 4.9% brew is bottom fermented like lager, then matured in oak, and was fresh and crisp with good hop character and not overly carbonated.

Another festival special was Titanic Velvet Curtain, a 5% brew based on their award winning stout with the addition of chocolate and vanilla. Why bother? I would have much preferred their normal stout and save the chocolate and vanilla for an ice cream.

There were a number of beers featured which weren't on the festival programme, including no less than four Isle of Skye beers and some Houston brews on one of my visits. Perhaps the signs of a successful festival if an emergency call to Skye & Houston was needed to replenish stock? Nevertheless it was good to be able to try Skye Grand Ale again, a beer brewed to celebrate Isle of Skye Brewery's 100th brew some years back.

Although I didn't come across them it was good to see that two of our local beers, Howler from Cairngorm and Equinox from Atlas, were featured in the festival list, giving drinkers up and down the UK a chance to sample these excellent beers.

Well done to the King's Highway as this time round I thought the festival was better than last autumn and the majority of beers - apart from a couple which I scored 2 - were worthy of scores of 3 or 4 scores on the CAMRA NBSS (National Beer Scoring Scale). GNH, Inverness.

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Tasting Panel Matters

A full CAMRA tasting course, held at Benleva Hotel in Drumnadrochit at the end of March, was attended by nine real ale enthusiasts, including two publicans and a part-time bartender. The course was led by Branch Chair Eric Mills, who is a fully qualified taster.



This course is not just about drinking beer but trying to understand where all the aromas and flavours, good or bad, come from. A selection of local real ales, a Brewlab flavour analysis kit, some flavours from the beers and varieties of hops and malts, were sampled for smell and taste during the afternoon. Brewlab is part of the University of Sunderland where Dr Keith Thomas, who set up the original CAMRA tasting courses, runs brewing courses.

We started with An Teallach Crofters Pale Ale, a 4.2% ABV golden ale. This was followed by tasting different solutions of sugar, acetic acid and salt, and an explanation of which area of the tongue detects each flavour.

Malts were now put under scrutiny and some of the different types used in brewing were smelt and tasted: Pale, Crystal, Chocolate and Black. Onto our second beer, Isle of Skye Red Cuillin, a 4.2% best bitter.

Hops were next, with crushing and smelling of these flower heads: Fuggles, Herrsbrucker, Goldings and Cascade. Our third beer was Atlas Latitude, a 3.6% brew which they call a cask pilsner.

Now we were into the chemistry part with valeric acid (cheesy smell), di-acetyl (butterscotch), acetaldehyde (green apples), aldehydes (oxidation), phenolic (medicinal/

antiseptic), di-methyl sulphide (cabbage), etc. We went through the flavours and smells and discussed what was good and bad, and what causes them. While we cleansed our taste buds with water and crackers we went through a basic guide of beer styles and why they are categorised as such; milds, bitters, best bitters, strong bitters, speciality beers, golden ales, old ales/strong milds, porters, stouts, barley wines/strong old ales. Time to sample another beer, Highland Dark Munro, a 4% mild. We were now able to fill out the tasting forms with a bit more confidence!

Next a couple of 'speciality' brews to see if anyone could identify why they had been placed in this category. No one spotted the blueberries in Isle of Skye's Cuillin Gorm, but no prizes for recognising the next, Cairngorm's 4.3% Trade Winds; elderflower.

An explanation followed on how beers get into CAMRA competitions. There are two ways - one is through tasting cards submitted by trained tasters throughout the year, with the highest scoring beers going forward to the Scottish Beers-of-the-Year (BOTY) finals; and the other is through the local Branch BOTY selections. Members are asked to vote for beers in each category (please see our Winter newsletter) and the top beers go through to the Scottish finals to join those submitted by the tasting panel. Scottish winners go forward to the British Champion Beer finals.

Our final beer was Cairngorm Wildcat a 5.1% strong bitter, followed by some nibbles and some end of course socialising. All the beers sampled were in first class condition and were commended for their quality. A big vote of thanks to the breweries who supplied the hops and malts, it makes a big difference when tasting a beer to be able to smell and/or taste some of the ingredients. A special thank-you also to Steve and Allan Crossland for their generous hospitality at the Benleva Hotel.

Appearing for One Night Only

Whilst Del Graham, our singing landlord from Blackfriars, was making his debut at Eden Court theatre, performing a Jim Reeves tribute as part of the charity concert for Diabetes UK, your Branch secretary was also involved in 'a first' having recklessly volunteered his services

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Highlands & Western Isles Branch

behind the bar to enable the family to go along and support Del. Looked after with care, tenderness and much patience by Del's wife Janette's niece Sheree, the evening started smoothly with a steady flow of customers and a full bank of ales. The early evening crowd moved on and we were left with one nice chap enjoying a couple of pints. When he left we were left without custom on a Saturday night! With the band due to set up I had visions of them walking into an empty pub. Thankfully a few minutes before they arrived it was as if a bus had stopped outside the door and all the passengers had flooded inside.

That set the tone for the rest of the night as we were rushed off our feet and as most of the pints poured were real ale, one by one the ales started to run out until we were only left with Theakstons Mild and the 6% Wickwar Station Porter, both dark coloured ales.

Although I had never changed a cask in a pub I had set up casks before and I knew I needed

to get another ale on. Inveralmond Ossian was ready racked in the cellar and, having banged the tap in without dumping 72 pints on the floor, I cleaned the line (all in between serving customers as we were still mobbed) and out flowed a clear golden brew. Just in time as shortly after the Ossian went on the Theakstons finished! A few minutes later, thankfully, the cavalry arrived from Eden Court and a concerted team effort ensured all five handpumps were quickly back in action.

It was nice to eventually finish at 1:30 and enjoy my first pint of the evening but I have to say I had an absolute blast and I would certainly do it again (if Del will let me). As well as Sheree thanks also to Arnie who tirelessly collected and cleaned glasses all night for us. All the performers were on a high returning from such a successful evening at Eden Court which raised over £5,000 for Diabetes UK.

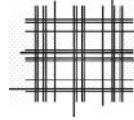
Congratulations and well done to all involved for a magnificent effort. Secretary Gareth.

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! Ed.*





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